'KENNARD REPORTS WITH DEVASTATING PRECISION'
NAOMI KLEIN

MATT KENNARD

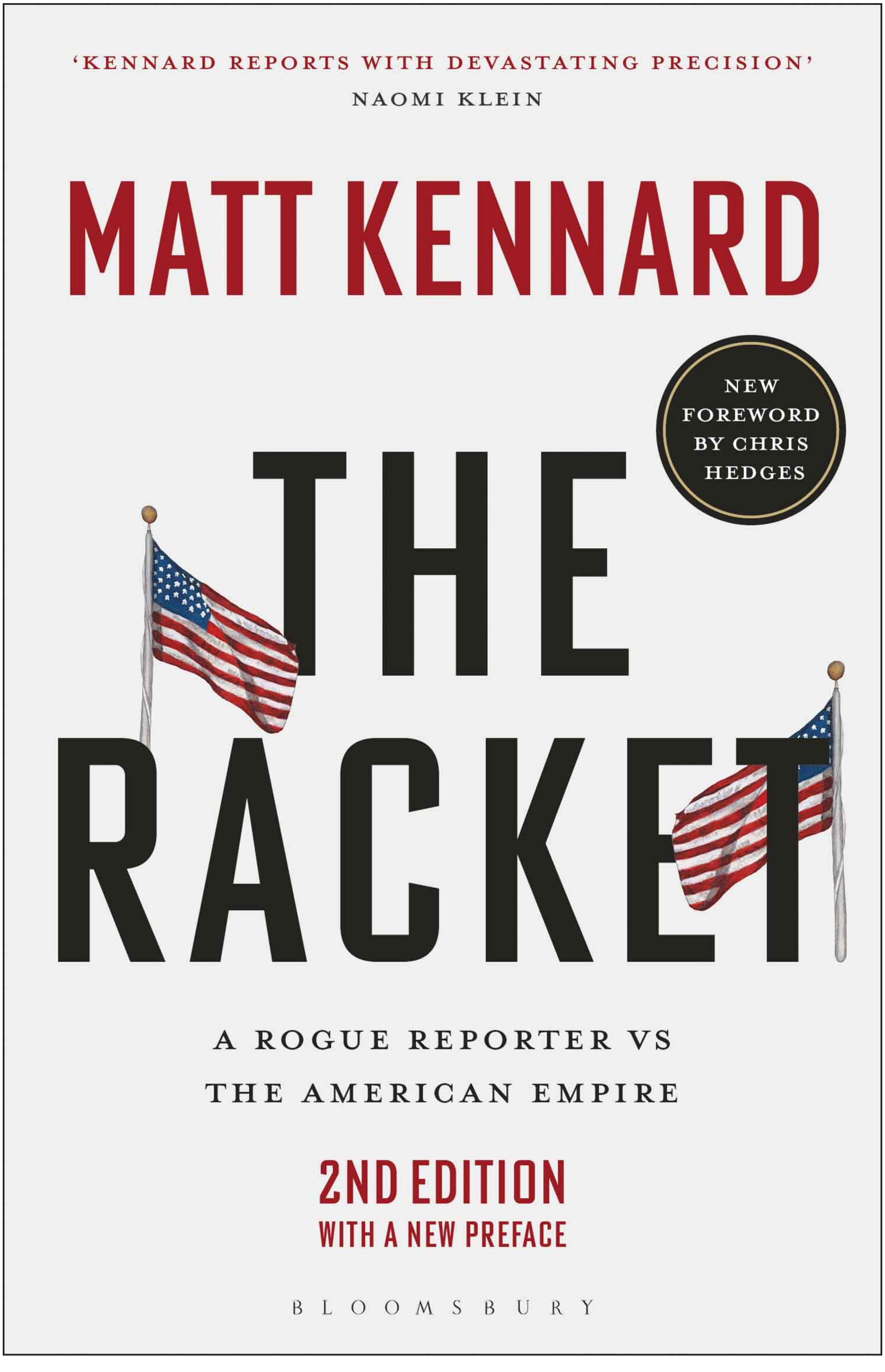
NEW FOREWORD BY CHRIS HEDGES

THE RACKET

A ROGUE REPORTER VS THE AMERICAN EMPIRE

2ND EDITION
WITH A NEW PREFACE

BLOOMSBURY



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt Kennard is co-founder, and chief investigator, at *Declassified UK*, a news outlet investigating British foreign policy. He was a fellow and then director at the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) in London, UK. He has worked as a staff writer for the *Financial Times* in Washington, DC, New York and London. He is the author of two other acclaimed books: *Irregular Army* (2012) and *Silent Coup* (2023).

For Ana and Dylan and Rosa,
who wrote this with me

And Chelsea Manning,
for helping us see the truth

MORE PRAISE FOR THE RACKET

"*The Racket* is an engaging insider's account of how the United States has spent the past 70 years constructing an intricate web of economic control across the globe – enforced by violence as a last resort – which sucks wealth and resources from the poor world to the rich."
Julian Assange, founder and editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks

"Kennard brings home in vivid and illuminating detail the reality of life and struggles of much of the world's population, their defeats and victories, their suffering and vitality and hope."
Noam Chomsky, author of *Hegemony or Survival* and *Failed States*

"A crucial exposé of the powerful, of injustice, and of the war against the poor. It should inspire all of us to fight back."
Owen Jones, author of *Chavs* and *The Establishment*

"*The Racket* is tough, angry, relentlessly researched and riveting, in the grand Chomskyan tradition but with the added value of the journalist's mobility and on the spot coverage. Kennard's range is wide, both geographically and topically, but with a single target – the depredations of the US superpower's corporate and political elites on their own home turf and abroad that the lap-dog media rarely touch."
Susan George, author of *The Lugano Report: On Preserving Capitalism in the Twenty-first Century*

"Like the best work of John Pilger, George Monbiot and Naomi Klein, *The Racket* is investigative, passionate journalism with a purpose – to defend the powerless against rapacious power. A hugely important tour de force, it will inform and inspire resistance movements for years to come."
Ian Sinclair, *Red Pepper*

“With this, his second book, Matt Kennard has announced his presence on the scene as the next generation’s John Pilger … Kennard does a brilliant job of tying the strands together and joining the dots between disparate struggles against corporate greed and imperial power around the world.”
Asa Winstanley, *Middle East Monitor*

“Timely and readable … Kennard ranges widely in his attempt to show the scope and depth of the Racket. From the ‘disaster capitalism’ imposed on an earthquake-traumatized Haiti to the undermining of democracy in Bolivia, Kennard lays bare the mechanics of the scam … This book is a valuable tool for anyone wishing to engage in the worldwide struggle for justice.”
New Internationalist

“Kennard decided to leave his comfortable job at the *Financial Times* and start to do some real journalism instead. *The Racket*, his second book, is very much the result of this transformation and it is nothing sort of marvellous. Angry, scornful and yet optimistic about the potential for change … the book makes a good case for Kennard being a true heir to John Pilger and the older generation of muckrakers.”
Morning Star

“*The Racket* is an exposé of the murky collusions between global high-finance and the militarised US state in the post-war era.”
Olivia Arigho Stiles, *Alborada*

“Matt Kennard threw away a cushy career with an establishment newspaper just to let you in on a secret: you don’t get the story, you get the cover-up.”
Greg Palast, author of *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy* and *Vultures’ Picnic*

“A brilliant atlas of what Kennard calls ‘heavy history’ – the hurricane-like path of global destruction wrought by neoliberalism and wars against the poor.”
Mike Davis, author of *Planet of Slums* and *In Praise of Barbarians: Essays against Empire*

"Matt Kennard exposes the failure of US neoliberalism and a major reason why China's star is rising while American foreign policy is imploding into a black hole."
John Perkins, author of *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*

"This firecracker of a book, written by a former insider journalist who realised the true, exploitative agenda of corporate media, unleashes a gonzo journey across the world of US empire. Read this book, be startled and then take action."
Antony Loewenstein, author of *Profits of Doom*

"I congratulate Matt Kennard for this brutally honest work."
Nawal El Saadawi, author of *Woman at Point Zero*

"Matt Kennard reveals the criminal and ruthless dynamics of global imperialism. His analysis is richly researched, keenly illustrative, and consistently on target. May this book get the wide readership it deserves."
Michael Parenti, author of *The Face of Imperialism*

"A masterpiece of engaged journalism."
Walden Bello, member of the House of Representatives of the Philippines

"Matt Kennard puts no deodorant on the reptiles' waste in the imperial barnyard."
Gavin MacFadyen, founder of the Centre for Investigative Journalism

"Includes unusually candid interviews with members of the World Bank and other financial institutions."
Publishers Weekly

"If I was editor of an old-fashioned newspaper, the kind that published and be damned, I'd hire Matt Kennard. *The Racket* is a front page story."
John Pilger, author of *The New Rulers of the World*

"In this important book, Kennard explores the direct impacts of militarized, globalized American capitalism on some of the most battered parts of our world. With devastating precision and a formidable sense of urgency, he reports on corporate shock doctors in Haiti, imperialist drug warriors in Honduras, pillaging coal and mining giants in southern Africa and Appalachia — and so much more. Most importantly, he never loses sight of the the growing numbers of resistors holding on to their creativity and self-determination in the face of these forces.”

Naomi Klein, author of *This Changes Everything* and *The Shock Doctrine*

“Kennard is no conspiracy theorist. Whatever you think about his conclusions, this is a first-class piece of radical investigative journalism.”

The Journalist

“This is radical journalism of the highest order. A very useful book.”

Socialist Review

“*The Racket* is a powerful tool for self-education: it offers essential information about the insatiable and sordid nature of global, elitist, exploitive, profit-blinded governments and institutions that have, together, perfected the task of making billions of people miserable, poor and fatally unhappy. It also offers testimony from activists and artists who are not giving in, giving up, or lying down.”

Alice Walker, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Color Purple*

“Matt Kennard left his secure job with the *Financial Times* on a mission to expose the world financial system as a gigantic racket operated by the United States of America for the benefit of a tiny number of extremely rich individuals. There is much that is good in his book. He has travelled the world, and has material to work on. There is no arguing with his analysis of the grotesque consequences of US financial imperialism in Latin America, or Washington’s refusal to confront Israel over its maltreatment of the Palestinian population.”

Peter Oborne, *New Statesman*

THE RACKET

A ROGUE REPORTER VS THE AMERICAN EMPIRE

MATT KENNARD

BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC
LONDON • NEW YORK • OXFORD • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

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FOREWORD

THE EMPIRE OF DELUSIONS

The public perception of the American empire, at least to those within the United States who have never seen the empire dominate and exploit the "wretched of the earth", is radically different from reality. These manufactured illusions, ones Joseph Conrad wrote so presciently about, posit that the empire is a force for good. The empire, we are told, fosters democracy and liberty. It spreads the benefits of "western civilization". These are deceptions repeated *ad nauseum* by a compliant media and mouthed by politicians, academics and the powerful. But they are lies, as all of us who have spent years reporting overseas understand.

Matt Kennard in his book *The Racket* – where he reports from Haiti, Bolivia, Turkey, Palestine, Egypt, Tunisia, Mexico, Colombia and many other places – rips back the veil. He exposes the hidden machinery of empire. He details its brutality, mendacity, cruelty and its dangerous self-delusions.

In the late stage of empire, the image sold to a gullible public begins to entrance the mandarins of empire. They make decisions based not on reality, but on their distorted visions of reality, one colored by their own propaganda. Matt refers to this as "the racket". Blinded by hubris and power they come to believe their deceptions, propeling the empire towards collective suicide. They retreat into a fantasy where hard and unpleasant facts no longer intrude. They replace diplomacy, multilateralism and politics with unilateral threats and the blunt instrument of war. They become the purblind architects of their own destruction.

Matt writes:

> A couple of years after my initiation at the *Financial Times* a few things started to become clearer. I came to realize a difference between myself and the rest of the people staffing the

> racket – the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) workers, the economists in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and so on. While I was coming to understand how the racket really worked, I started to see them as willing dupes. There was no doubt they seemed to believe in the virtue of the mission; they imbibed all the theories that were meant to dress up global exploitation in the language of "development" and "progress." I saw this with American ambassadors in Bolivia and Haiti, and with countless other functionaries I interviewed. They genuinely believe the myths, and of course are paid handsomely to do so. To help these agents of the racket get up in the morning there also exists, throughout the West, a well-stocked army of intellectuals whose sole purpose is to make theft and brutality acceptable to the general population of the US and its racketeering allies.

The United States carried out one of the greatest strategic blunders in its history, one that sounded the death knell of the empire, when it invaded and occupied for two decades Afghanistan and Iraq. The architects of the war in the George W. Bush White House, and the array of useful idiots in the press and academia who were cheerleaders for it, knew very little about the countries being invaded. They believed their technological superiority made them invincible. They were blindsided by the ferocious blowback and armed resistance that led to their defeat. This was something those of us who knew the Middle East – I was the Middle East Bureau Chief for the *New York Times*, speak Arabic, and reported from the region for seven years – predicted.

But those intent on war preferred a comforting fantasy. They stated, and probably believed, that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, although they had no valid evidence to support this claim. They insisted that democracy would be implanted in Baghdad and spread across the Middle East. They assured the public that US troops would be greeted by grateful Iraqis and Afghans as liberators. They promised that oil revenues would cover the cost of reconstruction. They insisted that the bold and quick military strike – "shock and awe" – would restore American hegemony in the region and dominance in the world. It did the opposite. As Zbigniew Brzezinski noted, this "unilateral war of choice against Iraq precipitated a widespread delegitimation of US foreign policy".[1]

THE WAR STATE

America since the end of World War II has become a *stratocracy* – government dominated by the military. There is a constant preparation for war. The war machine's massive budgets are sacrosanct. Its billions of dollars in waste and fraud are ignored. Its military fiascos in Southeast Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East disappear into the vast black hole of historical amnesia. This amnesia, which means there is never accountability, licences the war machine to leap from military debacle to debacle while it economically disembowels the country. The militarists win every election. They cannot lose. It is impossible to vote against them. The war state is a *Götterdämmerung*, as Dwight Macdonald writes, "without the gods".

Since the end of World War II, the federal government has spent more than half its tax dollars on past, current and future military operations. It is the largest single sustaining activity of the government. Military systems are sold before they are produced with guarantees that huge cost overruns will be covered.

Foreign aid is contingent on buying US weapons. Egypt, which receives some $1.3 billion in foreign military financing, is required to devote it to buying and maintaining US weapons systems.[2] Israel, meanwhile, has received $158 billion in bilateral assistance from the US since 1949, almost all of it since 1971 in the form of military aid, with most of it going towards arms purchases from American weapons manufacturers.[3]

The US public funds the research, development and building of weapons systems and then buys these same weapons systems on behalf of foreign governments. It is a circular system of corporate welfare.

In the year to September 2022, the US spent $877 billion on the military.[4] This was more than the next 10 countries – including China, Russia, Germany, France and the United Kingdom – combined. These huge military expenditures, along with the rising costs of a for-profit healthcare system, have driven the US national debt to over $31 trillion, nearly $5 trillion more than the US's entire Gross Domestic Product (GDP).[5]

This imbalance is not sustainable, especially once the dollar is no longer the world's reserve currency. As of January 2023, the US spent a record $213 billion servicing the interest on its national debt.[6]

THE EMPIRE AT HOME

The military machine, by diverting funds and resources to endless war, disembowels and impoverishes the nation at home, as Matt's reporting from Washington, Baltimore and New York illustrates.

The cost to the public – socially, economically, politically and culturally – is catastrophic. Workers are reduced to subsistence level and preyed upon by corporations that have privatized every facet of society from health care and education to the prison-industrial complex. Militarists divert funds from social and infrastructure programs. They pour money into research and development of weapons systems and neglect renewable energy technologies. Bridges, roads, electrical grids and levees collapse. Schools decay. Domestic manufacturing declines. Our public transportation system is a shambles. Militarized police gun down mostly unarmed, poor people of color and fill a system of penitentiaries and jails that hold a staggering 25 percent of the world's prisoners although Americans represent only 5 percent of the global population.[7] Cities, deindustrialized, are in ruins. Opioid addiction, suicide, mass shootings, depression and morbid obesity plague a population that has fallen into profound despair.

Militarized societies are fertile ground for demagogues. Militarists, like demagogues, see other nations and cultures in their own image – threatening and aggressive. They seek only domination. They peddle illusions of a return to a mythical golden age of total power and unlimited prosperity. The deep disillusionment and anger that led to Donald Trump's election – a reaction to the corporate coup d'état and the poverty afflicting at least half of the country – have destroyed the myth of a functioning democracy.

As Matt notes:

> The American elite that has grown fat from looting abroad is also fighting a war at home. From the 1970s onwards, the same white-collar mobsters have been winning a war against the people of the US, in the form of a massive, underhand con. They have slowly but surely managed to sell off much of what the American people used to own under the guise of various fraudulent ideologies such as the "free market." This is the "American way," a giant swindle, a grand hustle. In this sense, the victims of the racket are not just in Port-au-Prince and Baghdad; they are also in Chicago and New York City. The same people that devise the myths about what we do abroad have also built up a similar ideological system that legitimizes theft at home; theft from the poorest, by the richest. The poor and working people of Harlem have more in common

> with the poor and working people of Haiti than they do with their elites, but this has to be obscured for the racket to work. Many actions taken by the US government, in fact, habitually harm the poorest and most destitute of its citizens. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is a good example. It came into force in January 1994 and was a fantastic opportunity for US business interests, because markets were opened up for an investment and export bonanza. Simultaneously, thousands of US workers lost their jobs to workers in Mexico where their wages could be beaten down by even poorer people.

SELF-IMMOLATION

The public, bombarded with war propaganda, cheers on their self-immolation. It revels in the despicable beauty of US military prowess. It speaks in the thought-terminating clichés spewed out by mass culture and mass media. It imbibes the illusion of omnipotence and wallows in self-adulation. The mantra of the militarized state is national security. If every discussion begins with a question of national security, every answer includes force or the threat of force. The preoccupation with internal and external threats divides the world into friend and foe, good and evil.

Those such as Julian Assange who expose the crimes and suicidal folly of empire, are ruthlessly persecuted. The truth, a truth Matt uncovers, is bitter and hard.

> "While rising empires are often judicious, even rational in their application of armed force for conquest and control of overseas dominions, fading empires are inclined to ill-considered displays of power, dreaming of bold military masterstrokes that would somehow recoup lost prestige and power," the historian Alfred McCoy writes.[8] "Often irrational even from an imperial point of view, these micro military operations can yield hemorrhaging expenditures or humiliating defeats that only accelerate the process already under way."

It is vital we see what lies before us. If we continue to be entranced by the images on the walls of Plato's cave, images that bombard us on screens day and night, if we fail to understand how empire works and its self-destructiveness we will all, especially with the looming climate crisis, descend into a Hobbesian nightmare where the tools of repression, so familiar on the outer reaches of empire, cement into place terrifying corporate totalitarian states.

Chris Hedges
Princeton, New Jersey
June 2024

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PREFACE

THE EMPIRE IS EVERYWHERE

Four years after *The Racket* was first published, I started my own media outlet with historian and journalist Mark Curtis. It was a departure from what I had focused on before – the consequences of US imperialism around the world – because this new publication, *Declassified UK*, would cover British foreign policy.

Britain handed the mantle of world domination to the US after World War II and the received history is that it then retired from any kind of imperial role. I found out pretty quickly at *Declassified* that this was a misunderstanding. The truth is the empire never died. Britain merely became a "junior partner" to the US hegemon. London's adjunct status did not mean it was insignificant, however. The City of London's role as the world's financial capital which spreads neoliberalism around the world, the UK's vast network of military bases, alongside its corporate giants like BP and BAE Systems, showed Britain still served a critical imperial role for its senior partner.

But a more interesting realization for me came when I started to look at the institutions that make up the US empire and their role in Britain. I had spent years looking at what institutions like the CIA, the National Endowment for Democracy, or the US military were doing in the Global South, where their power was exercised against often weak states. A lot of this work is documented in this book. But I saw quickly that the infrastructure of the US empire which had colonized so much of the world had also colonized my home country, the country where I had lived nearly all my life. Britain, in fact, appeared to be more completely under the control of its American ally than any country I'd looked into around the world for this book.

The similarities did not stop there. Like the mainstream media could never mention the term “US empire” or explain its real role in world affairs, those same establishment journalists did not touch US influence in Britain. This was, again, an invisible empire, hiding in plain sight. The work I began doing would have never made it into the *Financial Times*, like so many truths in this book never could.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

The colonization by the US empire of Britain became particularly clear when the Labour Party elected Jeremy Corbyn leader in September 2015. A veteran anti-war and anti-imperialist politician and activist, Corbyn was a complete outlier within the British political system. He was dangerous to the rule of the British establishment, but also the ability of the US to retain the UK as a vassal state. The different pressure points that stay hidden in normal times, when the system is running like it should, quickly became exposed. This was made explicit in June 2019, when US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited the UK and was recorded saying privately: “It could be that Mr Corbyn manages to run the gauntlet and get elected. It’s possible. You should know, we won’t wait for him to do those things to begin to push back. We will do our level best. It’s too risky and too important and too hard once it’s already happened.”[1]

Pompeo had served as CIA director from 2017–18 and Corbyn later told me he believed Pompeo’s comments were intended as “a quite deliberate message” to him. Corbyn then mentioned the CIA-organised overthrow of Chile’s democratically-elected president Salvador Allende in 1973.[2]

Britain’s traditional subservience to the US “could have gone a different way at various points in modern history, recently if Jeremy Corbyn hadn’t been destroyed by a vicious media campaign,” Noam Chomsky has written.[3] But it was not a coincidence. The US was integral to building a British political system that made a “different way” next to impossible. I began looking at how the US state had been interfering in British politics to stop the rise of anti-imperialist leaders. The UK has never had a prime minister that was not signed up to the American imperial project. I started to realize this was not a mistake, but the result of concerted efforts from Washington.

BRITISH-AMERICAN PROJECT

One particularly interesting organization was the British-American Project which describes itself as "a transatlantic fellowship of over 1,200 leaders, rising stars and opinion formers from a broad spectrum of occupations, backgrounds, and political views."[4] Work to create the BAP began, with funding from the US embassy in London, in the early 1980s when Labour was headed by Michael Foot, the first non-Atlanticist Labour leader to emerge since World War II. The BAP's aim was to push British progressives into a pro-American political position at a time when the CIA was worried about the strength of the Labour left and its "anti-American" views.

Many Labour figures who became outspoken critics of Corbyn's leadership from 2015–20 were also involved in the BAP. Corbyn was the first non-Atlanticist Labour leader since Foot resigned in 1983.

Declassified files from the CIA show how concerned the intelligence agency then was by the left turn in Labour. The BBC noted "the deep level of concern inside the CIA about the strength of the Left within Labour in the early 1980s, a political force which the agency regarded as anti-American."[5] The CIA was particularly concerned about Foot winning the 1983 general election, with an internal report stating that "a Labor majority government would represent the greatest threat to US interests." Foot's 1983 election manifesto questioned "the programme for establishing American-controlled Cruise missiles on our soil" and noted that a new European security pact should end with the "phasing out" of NATO.[6]

DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS

The BAP's own official history notes that "the traditional British left-wing remained deeply suspicious of the United States, particularly on foreign policy and security issues" in the period, adding "this was the era of

Michael Foot's leadership of a Labour Party committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament."[7]

Historian Stephen Dorril has written that Eugene Rostow, President Reagan's director of the US arms control and disarmament agency, was in 1982 "concerned about the growing unilateralist movement" and "helped initiate a … propaganda exercise in Britain, aimed at neutralizing the efforts of CND."[8] Michael Foot was a founder and strong supporter of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), while Corbyn has been a member of the peace group since he was 15 and was now vice-chair.

The US neutralization campaign, which was leaked to the *Washington Post*, "would take three forms," Dorrill continued: mobilizing public opinion, working within the churches, and a "dirty tricks" operation against the peace groups. William Casey, then head of the CIA, met with the US Information Agency to organize the propaganda campaign in Europe. But in 1985, with Foot defeated and the BAP established, the CIA expressed concern that the Labour Party was still "in the hands of urban leftists given to ideological extremes."[9]

The CIA made its 1980s files about Labour available online in 2017, soon after Corbyn was elected leader. They were extensively covered by the British media and contained two specific references to Corbyn, who was a Labour MP at the time.

One file noted Corbyn's support in 1986 for an El Salvadoran trade union federation, Fenastras, which was linked to Marxist guerrillas during the country's civil war, while the Americans backed the military government.[10] Corbyn was also mentioned in a US diplomatic cable sent from Istanbul in 2002, and published by WikiLeaks, describing a protest in the city against the US push for war in Iraq, which embassy staff apparently monitored. "Union leaders made speeches and the crowd chanted anti-US and anti-war slogans including 'No to Imperialist War,' and 'We Will Not Be American Soldiers'," the cable noted, adding that "speakers included a British Member of Parliament, Jeremy Corbyn from the Labor Party."[11]

THE MEDIA

The BAP and its cultivation of the progressive forces in Britain to a pro-American position reminded me of what I had seen around the world, with the funding of civil society to keep target societies under US control. I started then looking at some of the specific institutions I'd seen enforcing US control in places like Bolivia and Ecuador. One of them – the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) – pops up regularly throughout *The Racket*. I quickly found that the NED was also working in the UK, funding media groups, something which had picked up around 2015, the year Corbyn was first elected leader of the Labour Party. A non-profit corporation funded by the US Congress, it had ploughed over £2.6m into seven British independent media groups in the five years up to 2020.[12]

The NED was "created … to do in the open what the Central Intelligence Agency has done surreptitiously for decades," the *New York Times* reported in 1997.[13] That included spending millions of dollars to "support things like political parties, labor unions, dissident movements and the news media in dozens of countries." Since the end of the Cold War, the NED had grown and been involved in trying to undermine or remove governments independent of Washington, including democratic ones in Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela, as I document in this book. Allen Weinstein, the director of the research study that led to creation of the NED in the 1980s, remarked in 1991: "A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA."[14]

The NED traditionally focused on Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia. But I found the organization had recently funded three British media outlets and four UK press freedom groups. All were seen as on the progressive end of the political spectrum.

INFRASTRUCTURE OF DEMOCRACY

The NED was created in 1983 by President Ronald Reagan, who actually set out the idea in a set-piece speech in Westminster, in front of prime minister Margaret Thatcher. The aim, he said, was "to foster the infrastructure of democracy". This was a time of embarrassing scandals for the CIA. A *Washington Post* article soon noted: "The old concept of covert action, which has gotten the agency [CIA] into such trouble during the past 40 years, may be obsolete."[15]

The NED was meant to defend against these scandals by putting certain programs out into the open. "The sugar daddy of overt operations has been the National Endowment for Democracy," the *Washington Post* continued. "Through the late 1980s, it did openly what had once been unspeakably covert." CIA whistleblower Philip Agee, who served in the agency in the 1960s, commented in 1995: "Nowadays, instead of having just the CIA going around behind the scenes and trying to manipulate the process secretly by inserting money here and instructions there and so forth, they have now a sidekick, which is this National Endowment for Democracy."[16]

John Kiriakou, a CIA officer from 1990 to 2004, told me that recent changes in the law have widened the potential targets of US information operations. "In 2011, the US Congress changed the law that forbade the Executive Branch from propagandizing the American people or nationals of the other 'Five Eyes' countries – the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand," he said.

"The National Endowment for Democracy, like Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, countless Washington-area 'think tanks', and Radio/TV Martí, are the vehicles for that propaganda," he added, referring to the US broadcaster that transmits to Cuba.

Kiriakou, who served in the agency's core Directorate of Operations, continued: "And what better way to spread that propaganda than to funnel money to 'friendly' outlets in 'friendly countries'? The CIA's propaganda efforts throughout history have been shameless. But now that they're not legally relegated to just Russia and China, the whole world is a target."

FUNDING

One particularly interesting case was Index on Censorship, the UK's foremost free expression group which monitors threats to free speech and publishes censored writers. It received £603,257 from the NED in 2016–21, according to its Charity Commission accounts.[17]

Index's chief executive, the former Labour MP Ruth Smeeth, was appointed in June 2020 – six months after losing her seat in parliament. A

US diplomatic cable, published by WikiLeaks in 2010, named Smeeth as a “strictly protect” informant for the US embassy in London.[18] The cable – written in 2009 by US deputy chief of mission in London, Richard LeBaron – noted: “Labour Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Burton Ruth Smeeth (strictly protect) told us April 20 that [prime minister Gordon] Brown had intended to announce the elections on May 12.” The cable continued that “a despondent Smeeth said” Brown had to abandon his election plan after a drop in Labour’s poll numbers following a media scandal. LeBaron added: “This information has not been reported in the press.” The cable was classified as “confidential” and “not for foreign eyes”.

One of the founders of Index in 1972, the poet Stephen Spender, had earlier resigned as editor of *Encounter* magazine when it was exposed as being funded by the CIA. Spender said he was unaware of the funding arrangements. Spender then founded Index, and quickly solicited a “substantial grant” from the Ford Foundation, which Frances Stonor Saunders states, in her award-winning work *The Cultural Cold War*, acted as a conduit for CIA funds in the period. Saunders told me it was “widely known at the time the Ford Foundation was a witting partner of the CIA.” In her book, Saunders wrote: “The foundation’s archives reveal a raft of joint projects.”[19]

This is how it works. Not just in the developing world, but, I was learning, in the developed world, too. In fact, the control was even deeper.

THE HIDDEN FIST

I soon understood that the US was not just interfering in the British political process, media and civil society. The hidden fist of the US empire which I’d seen deployed all over the developing world – the massive American military – was also occupying Britain.

I found the US Air Force (USAF) had 9,730 personnel permanently deployed throughout Britain, a number which was increasing rapidly.[20] Britain, in fact, hosted the third highest level of USAF personnel of any country in the world, ahead of historic US military outposts like South Korea and Italy. These American airmen had flown bombing missions to

Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya from their bases in Britain. “The USAF presence in Britain isn’t just some remnant of the Cold War, it’s ongoing and very active,” Kate Hudson, chair of the CND, told me. During Ukraine tensions in 2022, huge American B-52 nuclear-capable bombers were seen leaving and arriving at a RAF base in Gloucestershire. “The US says they were on a training exercise to ensure they are ‘ready’, presumably for war on Ukraine,” Hudson added. “Once again we have a situation where war or other military actions can be prosecuted from Britain without parliamentary scrutiny.”

Of the 55,223 active-duty US airmen deployed overseas in 2021, 16 percent were hosted in Britain. There were, in fact, more active-duty USAF personnel in Britain than in 40 of the US’s own States. This included Maryland, which hosts Joint Base Andrews, home to Air Force One and known as “America’s Airfield”. US military personnel in Britain are all in England, with access to 11 Royal Air Force (RAF) bases, stretching from Cambridgeshire to Yorkshire. They are known officially as United States Visiting Forces (USVF). Altogether there were 12,147 US military personnel in Britain in March 2022. A further 150 Americans are deployed with NATO, the majority at its intelligence center at RAF Molesworth in Cambridgeshire. The US military also had 100 personnel based in London, including 52 inside the American embassy, and a further 135 people deployed at multiple undisclosed locations across the UK.

THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN

The largest US military presence is at RAF Lakenheath, a 727 hectare site in Suffolk. Despite being called an RAF base, it is leased to the USAF, and its population is overwhelmingly American. There were 5,404 US Department of Defense personnel based there in 2022. A nondescript village with a population of 5,000 people, Lakenheath directly abuts the US base and has a clear American influence. The Turkish barbers proudly displays the Stars and Stripes alongside the Union Jack on its shop front. The Volvo car dealership on the outskirts sells only to US military personnel.

In the Co-Op on the quiet High Street, Klara, 24, is stacking shelves. She followed her boyfriend, an engineer, to Lakenheath a year ago after he found work nearby. “It has been quite weird at times, because obviously there’s a lot of people moving in and out throughout the year,” she told me. “Especially working in the shop, I do see a lot of new faces for such a small village.” She added, “There’s a lot of Americans coming in.” Klara said the US aircraft have become more frequent in recent months. “When I first moved here, they used to fly every three hours, just five or six planes at once, but recently, the past two or three months, they’ve been flying quite a few every few hours, so it’s got more over the months.” She added, “With the planes it does get loud sometimes.” Does she have any security fears about living next to a USAF base?, I asked. “Personally I do think about it. If war does happen, we are kind of like the target aren’t we, with the base right there, so yeah it is a bit scary sometimes, if you actually properly think about it.”

A road sign for cars exiting RAF Lakenheath reminds drivers to “Drive On The Left”. The issue has been on the national agenda since 2019 when 19-year-old Harry Dunn was killed by the wife of a CIA officer driving on the wrong side of the road near RAF Croughton, another US-leased base in Northamptonshire. The US helped the driver, Anne Sacoolas, leave the country soon after and later said she had diplomatic immunity for the alleged crime. As well as being a CIA base, RAF Croughton is a USAF communications station and accounts for 25 percent of all military communications from Europe back to the US.[21]

COMMAND AND CONTROL

The US is spending billions of pounds upgrading air bases in the UK to enable Washington to intercept international communications and launch military strikes from Britain more quickly. Some of the locations are hubs for offensive bombing missions. RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire is the USAF’s only bomber Forward Operating Location, or military base, in Europe.[22] The aircraft deployed there “enable US and NATO warfighters to conduct a full spectrum of flying operations”. Made available by the British government, it was used by US bombers during the war in Iraq in 2003. Just after I visited, two nuclear-capable American B-52 bombers were spotted leaving RAF Fairford for a "target acquisition" exercise over mainland Europe.[23]

But the UK appears to have very little control over what happens on the USAF-operated bases or the missions that are flown from them. The overarching framework for the stationing of US forces in the UK comes from two pieces of legislation. In 1951, NATO agreed a Status of Forces Agreement to govern hosting arrangements between its member states. The following year, The Visiting Forces Act incorporated the NATO agreement into UK law.[24] But Kate Hudson said that these agreements "ultimately reserve jurisdiction of US personnel to the US." Most of the American bases are called RAF stations and leased by the US. "Because of this, while the physical buildings comprising the bases are usually the property of the UK Ministry of Defence, very little of what happens in them is controlled by the British government," Hudson said. The empire never sleeps. And, despite the mainstream media working to keep it invisible, it's everywhere.

Matt Kennard
London
June 2024

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been a decade in the making and involved travel to all corners of the globe. The overwhelming feeling I came away with is that our world – judged by how it treats its human family – is in dire straits. But wherever I've gone I've been filled with hope by seeing the brave and courageous individuals and groups resisting the violence and misery inflicted by the US-led military and economic machine. From Palestine to Honduras, from South Africa to Haiti, I'd like to thank all the people who have filled me with faith against the odds, often in the face of great danger. They have been resolute in the face of an ideological system that endlessly tells them their pain is for their own benefit. Thank you for resisting the power and the lies.

I am a fellow at the Centre for Investigative Journalism, which is a dream place to work. The CIJ is an institution dedicated to furthering adversarial and revelatory journalism in a media setting that increasingly ignores it. In particular its director, Gavin MacFadyen, has been an inspiration for his passion and courage in supporting whistleblowers and journalists working in difficult environments. He is the model of what a journalist should be. Also at the CIJ I've been lucky enough to work closely with a great investigative journalist, Claire Provost. The Bertha Foundation's support, meanwhile, has allowed me to pursue controversial stories and concentrate on doing the journalism I love. Kika Sroka-Miller at Zed Books was brilliant in helping me form the ideas and structure of the book, so a big thank you to her. Also at Zed, Jonathan Maunder and Dan Och made countless invaluable and insightful suggestions to get the book in shape. Janet Law gave the text a rigorous and stringent copy-edit. As has probably been the case for millions of people around the world, Noam Chomsky has been the most influential person in my intellectual and political development. Since I was a student journalist in the middle of my political awakening he has responded consistently and over many years to my enquiries with patience and unfailing insight. Thanks for everything, Professor.

The book is dedicated to Ana, my soulmate and fellow rebel. So much of the reporting in this book has been done with her or because of her. Without her inspiration, help on the ground, and companionship and love, this book would have been impossible. It was in discussion with her that many of the ideas in this book formed. The book is also dedicated to Chelsea Manning, our generation's hero. At great personal cost she singlehandedly changed the course of history and gave us a historic glance at the true mechanics of power as wielded by the most powerful country in the world. History will judge her kindly, but she continues to suffer now. That should stop immediately. Her fellow whistleblowers Edward Snowden, Jesselyn Radack, Thomas Drake, William Binney, John Kiriakou, among many others, have also inspired me by their bravery and example.

My parents, Judy and Peter, gave me the tools for free thinking and supported me through the years of trying to understand the world as witnessed in this book. Without knowing they had my back and believed in what I was doing, it might have been overwhelming. The example they have set in their lives made it much easier to resist the seductions of the corporate world, which I briefly and unhappily glimpsed. My brother has been constantly supportive and believed in me always. Thank you, Dan. A continuous struggle against forces that sometimes appear inevitable can lead to despair, but I have been blessed with friends and family from when I was young (and some newer) who have always made me laugh and kept me energized. Thanks to: Harry, Frankie, Dave, Tom, Billy, Patrick, Jack, Declan, Luke, Jake, Dave C, Ellie, Nick T, Ishmail, Speak, Al D, Ivor, Adam, Lex, Shane, Stuart, Chris, Charlie, Watson, Whybrow, Loz, Dan J, Eugene, Alicia, Lucia, Pati, Nick, Pilar, Suey, my grandma Mary, William, Lucy, Camilla, Hugh and Ralph.

Although this book would have been impossible without the people listed above, none is responsible for what's written in the following pages.

I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902–1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested. Looking back on it, I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents.

Major General Smedley Butler, who died the most decorated US Marine in American history, in a speech given in 1933

racket / *n. slang* A trick, an underhand scheme; now usu. a scheme for obtaining money etc., by fraudulent or violent means; a form of organized crime. *gen*. An activity, a way of life, a business.

Oxford English Dictionary

INTRODUCTION

I started working as a reporter at the *Financial Times* soon after the financial crisis began and at the height of the so-called “War on Terror”. I was a young, ambitious reporter assigned to one of the world’s most respected broadsheets, ready to speak the truth. I learnt soon enough that this was not the place to do it. Maybe I should have guessed. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, I had had a partial awakening. As the war drums sounded in 2003, I learnt that the United States and the United Kingdom, despite now pushing for a war with him, had, in the 1980s, been supporting Saddam Hussein. The man we were presenting as the devil incarnate had only years earlier been our buddy. Soon after, I saw that my government thought nothing of rewriting intelligence to trick its own citizens into a totally illegal war. I thought, maybe naively, that working at the *FT* would allow me to continue learning, and in some senses I was right, though not the lessons they intended. There I was exposed to the other side of this war-industry coin – the world of high finance. These wars were not the vanity project of deluded leaders; they were merely the latest stage in a global elite’s prolonged war on the people of our world with the sole aim of pumping up their bottom line. I saw the real rulers of the world up close now – they were not the politicians but the big-money men behind them, the puppeteers who made everything move. I was stationed at their house organ, so raising the alarm did not, to put it politely, go well.

Over the following years, I witnessed first-hand how powerful the propaganda system that covers for these racketeers really is. It is almost impossible to go up against it as an individual on the inside (I tried). I was based at the *FT* in Washington, DC and New York, but I also traveled extensively during this period, reporting from four continents, more than a dozen countries and the same number of cities within the US itself.

Everything I saw contradicted what I had been told about how the world works. But as I wrestled with what I was doing, I knew in the back of my mind that, as a journalist, speaking out against this contradiction is a bad idea: doing so will instantly, and adversely, affect your career, which I suppose is why so few do it. If you speak out against the racketeers, well, you are instantly anti-American, you hate freedom, you love terrorists and so on. Ideological "training" of this kind is at its most potent in the racket-supporting media of the western world where I once worked (and it usually works to dispel independent thinking). I was actually taught this eyes-wide-shut philosophy first when I went to do a Masters at Columbia University's Journalism School in New York, apparently the best of its kind in the world, but in thrall to the racket and its lies, like the rest of the American elite. And the attempt to beat these critical thoughts out of my head continued as I progressed further up the hierarchy of the ideological system. On the day I left the *Financial Times*, for example, my boss told me simply: "Go away and do your 'save the world' stuff and maybe you can come back when you're a bit older." I took his advice, but I won't be back. Instead I present, eyes open still, the report they wouldn't send to press.

THE RACKETEERS

The United States emerged from World War II in a position of peerless global power. Western Europe and the Soviet Union were in ruins after six years of devastating warfare, and the imperial structures that had previously ruled most of the world were falling apart. The Americans meanwhile had made a miraculous recovery from the economic depression that had consumed the nation since the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and its place as No. 1 had been planned for *quite consciously* throughout the war. When it was realized in 1945, attention switched to extending the American elite's customer base, and so, at the close of World War II, the racket was set in place.

The Harvard evolutionary psychologist Steven Pinker once told me that power itself perverts human notions of morality and justice: "Dominance, fairness, and communality are three very different modes of thinking about social relationships. Someone in power will tend not to think of his relations to his or other peons in terms of fairness," he said. The American elite, its powerful big business players and allied governments (regardless of political party) are motivated by dominance, not fairness. The people in power know this – it is the population that is lied to. Of course, the need to pierce the propaganda bubble is not new. Every emperor, fat cat and superpower from time immemorial has willingly entertained myths about their actions so as to utilize the good-will of their people to pursue their own criminal enterprises. The historian Cornelius Tacitus said it best at the height of Roman dominion. "The Romans create a desert," he wrote, "and call it peace." These myths that Americans are treated to from a young age – and this ideological training reaches out beyond US borders – still present the US as an impressive discontinuity in the world of power politics. Unlike all previous superpowers, the United States is a "moral" power, driven by principles and values, as opposed to domination and greed. America is "exceptional" we are told – not exceptionally violent, which is the truth, but exceptional to the extent that it has a "higher calling"; it is a "shining city upon a hill". A brief foray into the world with eyes open teaches you quickly that this is the opposite of the truth. But keeping your eyes open will always be harder than seeking solace in your own divine moral superiority and the turpitude of your enemies. And so the myth takes hold. Repeat after me: when the US does it, Terror is *Peace-seeking*; Domination is *Partnership*; Fear is *Stability*. It's easy.

THE BELIEVERS

A couple of years after my initiation at the *Financial Times* a few things started to become clearer. I came to realize a difference between myself and the rest of the people staffing the racket – the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) workers, the economists in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and so on. While I was coming to understand how the racket really worked, I started to see them as willing dupes. There was no doubt they seemed to believe in the virtue of the mission; they imbibed all the theories that were meant to dress up global exploitation in the language of "development" and "progress". I saw this with American ambassadors in Bolivia and Haiti, and with countless other functionaries I interviewed. They genuinely believe the myths, and of course are paid handsomely to do so. To help these agents of the racket get up in the morning there also exists, throughout the West, a well-stocked army of intellectuals whose sole purpose is to make theft and brutality acceptable to the general population of the US and its racketeering allies. And this system of indoctrination is so ingrained in the media and university system that it is near impossible to even divine it. I remember writing an article for the *Financial Times* about former Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak, who was backed by over a billion dollars of US aid; the editors got rid of the factual prefix "US-backed" before Mubarak's name without even thinking. When I submitted another article using the prefix "Iranian-backed" for the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, it sailed through. That is how thought control operates and that is how the racket survives with its moral sheen intact.

Power has completely corrupted the minds of these people. When Rafael Correa, president of Ecuador, was closing down Manta, the US military base in his country, he told the Americans that they could keep it as long as they allowed Ecuador to put a military base in Miami. This was preposterous to Washington and its lackeys in the media – for them it is apparently a *natural law* that the US should be allowed the hundreds of military bases that disfigure sovereign states all around the world. That is the imperial mindset and it infects the entire American elite.

What will become clear as you read this book is that the patterns and modus operandi of the racket are repeated all over the world, over and over again. So, for example, the manner in which I saw American "aid agencies" and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) subvert groups organizing independently in Bolivia is repeated in Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil, all over Latin America, and in the rest of the world. The names of the individuals involved in each case are different but the dynamic is similar; the racket's method of control, so clever and hidden, is the same, and the names of the oppressors are interchangeable with any of the racketeers of the "American era". All have served the institutions that work to undermine individual or group sovereignty and increase the racketeers' control, whether the individuals staffing the racket be nice or horrible, good or bad, well-meaning or psychopathic – the institutions they serve continue to extinguish the yearning for independence of people the world over.

There is another, more insidious, part of this global control that will be discussed in the following pages as well. In addition to the dominance of the US elite, the succor given to American corporations by the racket has made the proliferation of US “culture” inevitable, creating a new dimension of so-called soft power. But, as you will see later, the racketeers are genuinely afraid of the creative arts. There exists the potential within our culture, and the arts, not just to expose the racket for what it is, but to help dismantle it. For this reason the racketeers continue to co-opt the arts and culture as much as possible: the CIA was supporting US arts throughout the Cold War, and no doubt continues to do so.

FOR YOUR OWN GOOD

The racket is bigger than the US elite, of course, and by now you may be thinking that it may have something to do with the capitalist system writ large. Yes, institutions like the World Bank represent a broad global capitalist class, but the US is the overwhelming power within these arrangements and the US military is the enforcer of capitalistic forces throughout our world. The mechanics of the racket have actually been pretty constant; the institutional structure erected to maintain a pretense of altruism while practicing savage domination has been replicated across the world for quite some time now. I witnessed not long ago, for example, US support for the military coup in Honduras in 2009, which threw out a democratically elected president so the racketeers could prop up the business community and their political puppets. But like I said before, you can be sure that a similar dynamic was in place when the US helped take out democratically elected presidents Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala in 1954 and Salvador Allende of Chile in 1973, unleashing decades of hell on the people of those countries. The needs of this rapacious racket remain the needs of every dominant imperial class, communist or capitalist – more markets for their products, and complete subjugation of popular forces in their satellites.

But there is a twist to this story.

The American elite that has grown fat from looting abroad is also fighting a war at home. From the 1970s onwards, the same white-collar mobsters have been winning a war against the people of the US, in the form of a massive, underhand con. They have slowly but surely managed to sell off much of what the American people used to own under the guise of various fraudulent ideologies such as the “free market”. This is the “American way”, a giant swindle, a grand hustle. In this sense, the victims of the racket are not just in Port-au-Prince and Baghdad; they are also in Chicago and New York City. The same people that devise the myths about what we do abroad have also built up a similar ideological system that legitimizes theft at home; theft from the poorest, by the richest. The poor and working people of Harlem have more in common with the poor and working people of Haiti than they do with their elites, but this *has to be obscured* for the racket to work. Many actions taken by the US government, in fact, habitually harm the poorest and most destitute of its citizens. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is a good example. It came into force in January 1994 and was a fantastic opportunity for US business interests, because markets were opened up for an investment and export bonanza. Simultaneously, thousands of US workers lost their jobs to workers in Mexico where their wages could be beaten down by even poorer people. The inevitable conclusion is that our entire world is at the mercy of an elite business community who run it in secret.

The economic imperatives of this racket trump even the *safety* of working Americans. During the Iraq conflict in 2003, large parts of the Pentagon and the British “intelligence” community did not want to attack Iraq because they believed it would increase the threat of terrorism. But the ideological zeal within the racket to maintain a grip over a region with immense oil production was a higher priority than decreasing the threat to American lives. The racket, then, is a disaster for those poor countries submissive to it, but also for the majority of Americans. The American elite is not in the business of helping out its fellow citizens.

Perhaps for you the extent of US domination is unknown, or perhaps you half suspect it, in which case the pages that follow will provide indisputable evidence. For those readers who feel they already know the damage done by US foreign policy, the revelation will come from evidence of the damage done at home where the war against poor and ordinary working Americans is just as fierce. A vast ideological edifice has been built which presents brutal violence against the poor at home and abroad as altruism. It must be targeted at its foundations. As Harold Pinter wrote in his Nobel Prize-winning speech in 2005, when it comes to the US "it never happened. Nothing ever happened. Even while it was happening it wasn't happening. It didn't matter. It was of no interest." He continued: "The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them. You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force for universal good. It's a brilliant, even witty, highly successful act of hypnosis."

The media would have you believe that there is no racket, that it's purely an accident that we live in a world where 85 people, *85 people*, own half the world's wealth while more children die of starvation every year than died in the Holocaust.[1] Of course it's not an accident, a mere quirk of history – it is the result of a huge injustice, the policies of a giant mob. To help our species and planet survive it is necessary to shake off the hypnosis and see the racket for what it is.

They know who they are; it's time to blow their cover.

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[1] *Working for the Few: Political Capture and Economic Inequality*, Oxfam Briefing Paper 178, January 20, 2014. More than 1.5 million children across Europe were killed by the Nazi regime. It is estimated that 3.1 million children each year die because of poor nutrition.

PART ONE

HOW WE OWNED YOU

ONE

CREATING A MODERN-DAY SLAVE STATE

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

I was standing open-mouthed outside the presidential palace in Port-au-Prince 18 months after the earthquake had devastated the city when a man approached selling his paintings. “What do you think of that?” he said, pointing to the collapsed palace behind us. I told him the truth: I was finding it hard to come to terms with the completeness of the destruction. The man, who later told me his name was Charles Renodin, smiled slightly. “Tell the world how we are living,” he requested. “Let them know.” He paused and added, “I live in the camp there,” pointing across the road, where opposite the crumbling presidential palace a vast expanse of tents – emblazoned with the logos of the US, China, Bill Gates, Carlos Slim, all competing shamelessly for brand recognition – spread out as far as the eye could see. “After the earthquake I lost my mum, my dad, one daughter, so I had to move to this camp. I don’t like it, it’s full of corruption, it’s run by gangs, and the little girls have to sell their bodies to eat,” he told me. “Little girls,” he added for emphasis. “Maybe eight or nine years old, getting raped every day. The police don’t do anything about it, the country has no law.” He told me that the Haitian people refer to the palace behind us, which should be a point of pride, as the “Devil’s House”. “It’s full of so much corruption, they don’t care about the people, they just want to make money, when the money comes they take it for themselves.” He was waiting on a house now so he could leave the camp, but he didn’t think it would happen any time soon: “The government has no plan.” In the camps, it was particularly bad news for women: “Because there is no work, women have to sell their bodies just to eat, the only job they have is to have sex for money. Men have to steal stuff – they have no choice."

Like most in Haiti, Charles had an ambiguous feeling toward the thousands of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in his country. "Some come to help, some come to make money, they like us living like this because they make more money." It is easy to dismiss such sentiments, but the global "rescue" industry really is big business. There is often a direct and positive correlation between American influence over smaller countries and the crises they experience. "After the earthquake they would give us food, water, but now everything has stopped. If you go inside this camp you don't see water, people have to walk six miles to get water. That's why crime is up." He became more agitated. "Everything is crazy right now, we're living just like animals. There is no everyday life, nobody has a job." Haiti has arguably had more US intervention in the last hundred years than any other country in the world – that it ended like this is not wholly accidental. As Doctor Maigot poignantly says to Mrs Smith, an American, in Graham Greene's *The Comedians*: "In the Western hemisphere, in Haiti and elsewhere, we live under the shadow of your great and prosperous country. Much patience and courage is needed to keep one's head."

The following day, I was driving down a long, dusty and typically bumpy road in the middle of Port-au-Prince when I came across some imposing metal gates. Behind them stood the E-Power electricity plant. The site was unlike the rest of the city, which lay in complete ruin, even a year and a half after the earthquake: it had burnished sheet-steel doors and perfectly tarmacked roads. I was on assignment with the *Financial Times* and being escorted in a 4x4 by the World Bank, which had its own particular kind of tour that seemed to ignore the massive tent cities whizzing past our windows. Here was the *optimistic* vision, they told me. In a capital city where electricity blackouts were a nightly occurrence, E-Power was the kind of company the international financial institutions (IFIs) running Haiti believed would lead "reform" – by taking power away from the state-run company, and running the business for profit. My World Bank guide was adamant that this was the way out of Haiti's tragic past and present. I soon found out the company was founded in 2004 by a group of Haitian venture capitalists excited by the departure of social democratic President Jean-

Bertrand Aristide. The aim, they said, was to “offer a solution to power generation in Haiti”. Sure enough, some years later, in 2006, the new US-backed President René Préval launched an open bid for a contract to provide electricity to Port-au-Prince. Seven companies took part. E-Power won.

For many in the Haitian business elite, such economic liberalization was to be the model for the new Haiti being built after the devastating 2010 earthquake. “The earthquake created trauma that could have been better exploited,” Pierre-Marie Boisson, board director at E-Power, told me as we sat in the upmarket air-conditioned offices at the plant. “Because of the political process that took place after that, it took too much time.” He added: “Earthquakes should be an opportunity because it destroyed. Where it is destroyed, we have to build. When we have to build we can create jobs, we can create a lot of changes, we can change a country.”

However, Mr Boisson’s cynicism about the slow rate of “exploitation” of the “opportunities” provided by the earthquake was not quite accurate. In the aftermath of the earthquake, the opportunity afforded by the destruction wreaked on Haiti was capitalized on immediately. As the dust was still settling in Port-au-Prince, the World Bank, the IMF and their regional analogues, alongside various US agencies – what became the *de facto* government in the absence of a Haitian alternative – carved up the society’s different sectors and doled them out among themselves. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) got education and water, the World Bank bagged energy, while the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – a body that will be examined later in this book – gratefully accepted the planned new industrial parks. Alexandre Abrantes, the World Bank’s special envoy to Haiti, told me how it worked: “We basically have agreed that where each of us has the competitive advantage, we then divide … the sectors among ourselves, and add in some sectors which go together.”

The mass privatization of state-run assets and the turning of Haiti into a Caribbean sweatshop – via an export-led garment production and cheap labor model that the US and the IFIs had been pushing from the mid-1990s through the 2000s – were now distinct possibilities. This could be enforced with minimal push back from a decimated civil society and a denuded government. All the extra-Haitian bodies, particularly the US government, shared this vision. “There is a lot of agreement, so I would say one of the unusual and very positive aspects about this project is that it is really done in partnership,” Jean-Louis Warnholz, a State Department official working on Haiti, told me when I was back in New York. (Mr Warnholz asked not to be named, but Haitians deserve to know the officials who are designing their destruction.) Haiti was to be the next Top Model on the World Bank and IMF catwalk. The “partnership” (in which the Haitian people had no part) believed that rebuilding the capabilities of the Haitian state should play no role in its reconstruction. Instead, the solution to Haiti’s problems lay in the creation of a flourishing private sector. “What’s really going to change Haiti and make this process different from all the previous ones is the development of the private sector, and I think there’s a consensus in that,” José Agustín Aguerre, the Haiti manager for the IADB, told me. The bank disbursed $177 million in grant money in 2010 – more than any other multilateral source – to push this agenda.[1] “Private sector is the big difference, it’s what will be creating wealth, creating jobs, not the public sector,” he added. It seemed there was no alternative.

After the election of President Michel Martelly in May 2011, things remained easy for this private-sector-led “consensus”: the IFIs and US not only had their Shock Event, but also their Shock President. Aristide, who was president in 1991, 1993–94, 1994–96 and 2001–04, continues to be the most popular politician in Haiti, but is banned from standing again for the presidency. In Martelly, the US government had found its “Chicago Boy”, a more-than-willing partner for their economic program (“Chicago Boys” is a term which refers to the University of Chicago economists who helped dictators impose neoliberal capitalism in its early stages). All the major business groupings and IFIs I spoke to in Port-au-Prince were effusive in their support for the president. Carl-Auguste Boisson, general manager at E-Power, told me: “I am pleased by what I heard Martelly saying about the importance of private investment, especially when he was campaigning he was talking about things like providing private provision of public services.” Kenneth Merten, the then US ambassador to Haiti, was similarly excited about the new president’s privatization agenda. “A few privatizations of flourmills, but aside from that you haven’t had much of anything in past decades,” he told me. “That’s the element that’s been lacking here, you need a government that understand investment and I think Martelly and his folks do.” For the US, a pliable figure like Martelly had been a long time coming. Despite many decades of effort, Haiti had not completely succumbed to the plans that its major patron had for it. And such recalcitrance had been causing increasing consternation in Washington.

HISTORY’S LONG SHADOW

In 1990, after the first democratic elections in Haiti’s 200-year history, the US became hopeful of breaking up the corrupt state institutions which had been run as the personal fiefdoms of Papa and Baby Doc, the US-backed Duvalier dictators who had ruled Haiti viciously for nearly 40 years. Private capital would then be able to penetrate deeper into the country, and an economic model conducive to the interests of the rich countries could take firm root. But it wasn’t going to plan. Instead of the US-orientated “reformer” many in Washington had hoped for, a huge mass movement, named Lavalas (“the flood”), propelled the social democrat priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide to a landslide victory. Over the next 20 years, the democratically elected Aristide would be ousted twice with US support, while the democratic hopes and dreams of Haiti’s people would be quashed time and again. Aristide had become a nuisance in the eyes of Washington and so when he was put back in power in 2001 it was under the tacit agreement that he would allow the World Bank, the IMF and the US to institute their plan. It had been 11 years since the democratic elections, and still economic “reform” was slow. Something had to change: democracy was fine, but it had to be of use.

In this period, René Préval, a former ally of Aristide who served as president from 2006 to 2011, seemed to offer some hope for the Americans. “In the context of the developing world, we would most accurately describe him as a neo-liberal, particularly in that he has embraced free markets and foreign investment,” notes one of the US embassy’s diplomatic cables, released by WikiLeaks, sent from Port-au-Prince in 2007. But the leader the US was really after in that period looked more like Haitian-American businessman Dumas Siméus. A resident of Texas, he assured the US embassy, according to a diplomatic cable sent in 2005, “he would manage Haiti like a business”. The same cable added: “Displaying abundant charm and energy, the 65-year-old said he had decided to run for President not only for Haiti’s benefit, but also as a gesture of thanks to the United States.” He was very clear about how he would do this: “The University of Chicago alum pledged to bring the ‘Chicago Boys’ to Haiti and establish a road map for change, promising investors would return.” It was exactly what the US embassy wanted to hear; Siméus was the candidate they had been searching for. The cable concluded by noting that the millionaire Texan was a “potentially viable candidate” who could, unlike Aristide, “govern responsibly and maybe effectively” – code in this case for “in the US interest”. The US deemed Martelly similarly “responsible”.

But in many ways, US exasperation at the apparent reluctance of Haiti’s leaders to sell off their country’s assets and create an economic playground for foreign capital remains hard to understand. From the mid-1990s through the 2000s, the “Chicago Boys” had to all intents and purposes come to Haiti; the process of opening up Haiti’s economy to the predations of foreign capital was well under way. The fetish of foreign investment was firmly rooted. In 1996 for example, the Haitian government had already, as one diplomatic cable published by WikiLeaks noted, “established legislation on the modernization of public enterprises, which allows foreign investors to participate in the management and/or ownership of state-owned enterprises.” Moreover, a November 2002 law explicitly acknowledged the “crucial role of foreign investment in assuring economic growth and aims to facilitate, liberalize, and stimulate private investment in Haiti”. The law gave foreign investors exactly the same rights and protections as Haitians. Months earlier in 2002, the Haitian parliament had voted for a new free trade zone law which provided “zones” with fiscal and customs incentives for foreign enterprises – for example, a 15-year tax exemption. In other words, post-Aristide, the government had “seen the light” and embraced the US-led vision for the post-dictatorship Haiti.

But these steps, it seems, were not enough. Only a “Chicago Boy” would do. Another WikiLeaks cable noted that in 1996 a “modernization commission” was set up to decide whether management contracts, long-term leases or capitalization was the best option for each of the companies to be privatized. The commission would also decide how much the Haitian government would retain of each asset, with a cap at 49 percent – a minority stake, stripping the Haitian people of control over their own industries.

This had an immediate effect. In 1998, two US companies, Seaboard and Continental Grain, purchased 70 percent of the state-owned flourmill. Despite this “progress”, a diplomatic cable from 2005 lamented, “Some investments, however, still require government authorization,” adding, “Investments in electricity, water and tele-communications require both government concession and approval. Additionally, investments in the public health sector must first receive authorization from the Ministry of Public Health and Population.” It sounded like a reasonable demand from a sovereign country, but a sovereign country is exactly what the US didn’t want Haiti to be. Two years after Aristide had been spirited out of the country by the Bush administration and the local oligarchs, and just before the victory of the “neoliberal” Préval in 2006, the US embassy noted witheringly: “Since the privatization of the cement factory, privatization has stalled and appears to have been put on hold.” It added plaintively: “None of the major infrastructure-related enterprises (the airport, seaport, telephone company or electric company) have been privatized.” The document continued: “Although these entities were supposed to have been privatized by 2002, persistent political crises, strong opposition from the former administration, and a general lack of political will have delayed the process indefinitely.” The cable then noted a more plausible reason why this massive privatization program had not been enacted quite as smoothly as the US had hoped: “Some opposition to the privatization of state enterprises continues from groups such as employee’s unions who have expressed opposition to workforce reductions that privatization might entail.” Those pesky Haitians.

By 2008, then, the US embassy was disconsolate at the slow rate of progress and local intransigence. “Despite assurances that privatization is still a priority for the government … we are increasingly skeptical that privatization, in whatever form, will happen,” one WikiLeaks cable noted. “Time is running out.” The US, however, remained steadfast. “We will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of privatization and/or private management,” one cable noted. It further advocated using IFIs such as the World Bank and the IMF to bribe the democratic government of Haiti, one of the staples of the "structural adjustment programs" explored later, although it is rare to see it spelled out in such clear language. "[The US embassy] repeats its recommendation … that privatization be a requirement under future agreements with the IFIs … to be negotiated with the new government," the cable to Washington noted.

THE SHOCK

Bribery might prove an effective strategy toward the poorest country in the western hemisphere, but it would still be messy. There was after all a Haitian parliament, populated with nationalist elements, which could continue to stall or even kill the massive privatization program the US favored. But as the US was honing its strategy for its latest push, on January 12, 2010 a huge earthquake hit Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas, creating one of the worst humanitarian crises in the history of the world. More than 300,000 people were killed, while millions became homeless. The capital city lay in ruins, including the majority of government ministries as well as the presidential palace. What was left of an already strangled civil society and social institutions was destroyed. Haiti was a blank slate.

The US and its allies in the IMF and World Bank did not waste any time – this was their opportunity to push through the radical neoliberal program from the 1990s with little resistance. The opposition to this privatization program – which had ranged from quasi-nationalist politicians to worker-based collectives – had all but disappeared. Without a government in place to agree or disagree with the US and the IFIs, which were soon running the country, Haiti was ready for the "shock doctrine" – the radical economic prescriptions enforced throughout the world and outlined in Naomi Klein's eponymous book. Klein's argument was that these policies were so unpopular among the populations of the target countries that the agents of big capital, such as the IMF and World Bank, would wait until there was a crisis "real or perceived", when people could not organize resistance, to push the reforms through. This is what happened in Haiti.

The first step was to entrench a decision-making system that took all power out of the hands of accountable democratic institutions run by

Haitians. The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC), which became the country's most powerful decision-making body in the aftermath of the earthquake, was the perfect example of this move. The IHRC was set up ostensibly to coordinate the response and spend donor money in the absence of a Haitian government. It had 26 members, 12 of whom were Haitian, leaving them without a voting majority (just as they were not allowed a majority stake in their industries). To those Haitian members, it was obvious they were window-dressing. In a December 2010 letter of protest to the IHRC chair, former US president Bill Clinton, they complained of being "completely disconnected from the activities of the IHRC", as well as having "time neither to read, nor analyze, nor understand – and much less respond intelligently – to projects submitted". According to one journalist based in Port-au-Prince: "These twelve board members surmised that their only function is to rubber-stamp, as Haitian-approved, decisions already made by the executive committee."

That was exactly the perception that the US and the IFIs were trying to avoid. When officials from the US and international agencies in Haiti were interviewed they were at pains to explain how they were "working for the Haitians" and the phrase of the day was "Haitian-led". It was the same all over the world – the US and its agencies were adept at making their domination be seen as *demanded by the victim*. In truth, there was, and continued to be, minimal Haitian involvement in the reconstruction (outside the business elite). An article in the *Washington Post* put it bluntly in January 2011: "There is a dramatic power imbalance between the international community – under US leadership – and Haiti. The former monopolizes economic and political power and calls all the shots." The financial benefits to the American private sector of this set-up were immediately obvious. An *Associated Press* investigation found that of every $100 of Haiti reconstruction contracts awarded by the American government, $98.40 returned to American companies.[2] The focus was never on building up indigenous capacity; any work was to be outsourced to foreign companies or NGOs by the IHRC. It was about making money for rich Americans. After Michel Martelly was sworn in as president in May 2011, it took months for the former pop star and former member of the savage Tonton Macoute militia (formed by the US-backed dictator 'Papa

Doc' Duvalier) to form a government, as his candidates for cabinet positions were repeatedly rejected by parliament. By the time his administration was in place in June 2011, 18 months after the earthquake, the coordinates of the economic reconstruction were already in place. Martelly's hands were tied by the very IFIs which claimed to be subordinate to the Haitians. Though in Martelly's case his hands didn't even need to be tied – he was a willing "shock president".

There were three elements that the US and IFIs wanted to build the "new Haiti" around: high-end tourism; export-processing zones; and a resurgent private sector in control of the previously state-owned assets. It was the racket's standard playbook. The architects of the reconstruction actually had other countries in mind that they believed could serve as a model. One was the Dominican Republic, the country next door to Haiti, which had long been an oasis for private capital in the Caribbean. In Haiti, using the model of its Hispaniola neighbor, the IADB planned to spend $22 million on a high-end tourism resort near the 19th-century citadel at Labadee, a port on Haiti's northern coast. Mr Almeida, Haiti manager for the IADB, told me the bank's money would "provide the means for the private sector to come and invest", adding that "in [the Dominican Republic] everything they have is all private. The airport is private, the roads are private, even the internal roads. So we could do the same thing [in Haiti]." (In the initial carve-up of Haitian society, the IADB was given road infrastructure.)

The other opportunity that had to be taken advantage of was speeding up the privatization process. The World Bank used the example of Teleco, formerly the national telecom operator, which in 2009 the bank's private-sector arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), had helped partially privatize. (The IFC was, incidentally, the brainchild of Nelson Rockefeller in 1951.) Mr Naim, the private-sector Haiti manager for the World Bank, told me that Teleco was an example of what the government should do to the ports and the airport. "[They can] really transform these assets that generally the government handles poorly," he said, adding that "It's better for the government to focus on social things" and let these assets be privatized. Teleco itself is now due for complete privatization under the guidance of the IFC. For the poorest country in the western hemisphere, it is hard – possibly even suicidal – to argue with the World Bank. In March

2010, the bank promised $479 million in grants; the IFC put $49 million-worth of direct investment into Haiti's private sector.

With Teleco on its way to privatization, the IADB had its own plans for the national water and sanitation authority (Dinepa), which had come under its domain in the initial carve-up. The bank soon handed over the authority's management duties to the giant Spanish company Aguas de Barcelona, which won a three-year contract to train and assist workers, and for which they received millions of dollars. "Many local companies are taking control of small towns' water systems," Mr Aguerre of the IADB told me excitedly. This essential commodity and basic human right was now being turned into a for-profit venture. "We are seeing good examples of places where no one paid for water services, and little by little they are paying," he added. Experts from Aguas de Barcelona became the leaders of discussions concerning the investment needed in Haiti's water system and the process of opening bids to different contractors for the completion of new pipelines and other systemic improvements.

In education, the IADB's plans were no different. Thanks to decades of neoliberal policies that prioritized the private sector above the Haitian ministries, even before the earthquake 80 percent of educational services were delivered outside the state (primarily by international bodies or the private sector). As a result, only half of school-aged children in Haiti went to school. For the IADB, this did not prove the folly of their enterprise. Contrariwise, they concluded that it meant they had not gone far enough. "It's too ambitious to think you can turn it around," Mr Aguerre said. The IADB settled on a voucher program that will allow the government to retain some "quality control", but means that education will be completely privately run. To ensure full access, the plan creates a publicly funded but privately run education system. The small print is that this public subsidy will cost the Haitian government about $700 million a year, seven times what it spends now on education. With no new revenue streams evident (in fact, as we shall see, the government's tax base was being all but destroyed), the obvious implication was that full access was not an aim (or even a hope). When the IADB's promised $500 million over three years runs dry, more than half of Haiti's children will still be locked out of the school system. The IADB rationalized this arrangement by arguing that the private sector would pick up the slack – explicitly holding Haiti's kids ransom to Hollywood film stars. “There are many private actors willing to put money in,” added Mr Aguerre. “Half of Hollywood is interested. Everyone wants their Susan Sarandon School of Arts.” Incidentally, Martelly has been approving of both vouchers and subsidizing private schools as methods to rebuild the Haitian education system.

With the complete privatization of telecoms, water and education, the final piece in the jigsaw for the IFIs and the US became the new “industrial parks” or “integrated economic zones”. These, so the propaganda went, would ensure the economic growth that could put Haiti and its people back on their feet. But two years after the quake, more than 500,000 Haitians still lived in ad hoc camps around Port-au-Prince and 8 million still lived without electricity. The throngs of jobless who lined the capital’s streets are a reminder of the 70 percent unemployment rate. “We need to be realistic and understand that it’s still five years after Katrina and New Orleans is still being rebuilt, it’s 10 years after September 11th and that site isn’t rebuilt complete, the process takes time,” Kenneth Merten, then US ambassador to Haiti, told me, adding, “One of the things Haitians can really do themselves is to move quickly on making a business-friendly climate.”

It might perhaps be hard for the hundreds of thousands of Haitians living in ad hoc campsites to do that. In Haiti, I went to the La Piste camp, a barren enclosure with rows of one-bedroom “houses” on steeples. The owner of one, a middle-aged woman, spoke to me slowly via an interpreter. She was a single mother with three children with no means of income. She was living off money the Red Cross had given her, alongside selling some trinkets, although customers are few and far between. “It’s much better here than the last camp,” she told me. In the last place she and her children lived, like most others, in a tent, which meant they were subject to the rain and animals who decided to look in. “This is a house, it’s safer,” she said, but added that the fence of the camp should be higher, or be turned into a security fence because of the burglaries. She also said the lack of lighting puts them in danger: it is pitch black at night and easy for people to break in. You realize walking around La Piste that these people are completely at the mercy of nature – be that the elements, or their fellow man or woman. There is no security, there is no rule of law, and there is no place to go with grievances; there is merely the hope that someone is looking out for you. Hope cannot thrive in such an environment. “I would like to have hope,” she told me, her face blank, refusing any emotion at all. “I just don’t know who is going to make anything happen.” It seemed rude to ask how she planned to make a business-friendly climate for foreign investors in Haiti.

THERAPY

The 30-minute drive to Codevi industrial park from the airport in Cap-Haïtien, northern Haiti, is the smoothest in the country. In a place famed for its poor infrastructure, particularly its undulating roads, the park and the surrounding area are something of an oasis. Beyond the small bridge and metal gates which divide Codevi from the town outside, there’s everything that the average Haitian doesn’t have: paved roads, a functioning health service, employment and even a (small) trade union – the only one in the country. The 2 million square foot Codevi Park was originally built by a Dominican textile company, Grupo M, on the Dominican side of the border, but operations were expanded to Haiti in 2003 (with the help of a large investment by the World Bank).

“It was created as a vision of expansion that Grupo M had to look for as the Dominican Republic became more complicated competitiveness-wise,” Joseph Blumberg, vice-president of sales for the company, told me as we sat in his air-conditioned office inside the park. “Haiti offered us the competitive edge that we needed in this region to maintain ourselves with the US market.” He added: “It had a labor cost which was the lowest in the region.” The minimum wage in Haiti now is 150 gourdes ($3.70) per day, which is nearly half that in the Dominican Republic. This “competitive edge” – in a layperson’s terms “slave wages” – combined with favorable trading terms with the US had caught the eye of the IFIs in the aftermath of the earthquake. The aim was to rebuild Haiti as a Caribbean sweatshop that could enjoy the full fruits of the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity for Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) Act, which was passed by the US Congress in 2006, granting tariff-free access for Haitian textile exporters to the US market. This was followed by increasingly favorable terms through HOPE II, in 2008, and the Help Act after the 2010 earthquake.

Parks like that at Codevi are known in the IFIs’ literature as integrated economic zones (IEZs): places where infrastructure, welfare services and other services are provided for the lucky few behind imposing metal gates. The literature justifying their existence argues that prospective foreign investors put off by the decrepit or non-existent roads, electricity-grid and water system throughout Haiti would here have access to a ready-made mini-city. There was already a huge industrial park of this kind near the airport in Port-au-Prince called Sonapi, which is fully owned by the Haitian government and had, at one point, nearly 40 companies based there. But the new IEZs would be under the sole control of its initial investors – mainly USAID and the IADB. This raises the question of what will happen outside these so-called "poles" of economic activity. What would the incentive be for the central government to develop infrastructure and social services throughout the country if they are being built on this micro-scale? And where would the money come from? Alexandre Abrantes, the World Bank's special envoy to Haiti, admits this is a problem; he told me that industrial parks "may not be sustainable if you were to do it as a policy everywhere".

Codevi is essentially an "export-processing zone" (increasingly common in the "developing" world) where exports pay no tax to the central government and there is no customs duty on imported materials. "You're in an extra-territorial concept so that your goods come in and out very quickly without much paperwork," said Armando Heilbron, a senior private-sector development specialist at the World Bank working on the IEZs in Haiti. Therefore, Haiti's reconstruction will take place in isolated small "poles", primarily in the northern part of the country, while the rest of the country's infrastructure and welfare services will fall further into disrepair.

Perhaps the biggest problem with the industrial parks is the unscrupulous nature of the companies that populate them. The public relations tour of Codevi, with its stops at the local doctor and training facilities, is a relief after experiencing the destruction that has been wrought in the rest of the country. But the tour does not include many of the most important episodes in its establishment. Codevi was originally built on farmers' land against their will – a process that destroyed the region's agricultural infrastructure to create sweatshops. It was a parable for the economic reconstruction that occurred after the earthquake. The diplomatic cables recount that there had been a "long-standing labor dispute between Dominican manufacturer Grupo M and workers in Ouanaminthe", a community in north-east Haiti. One said: "According to Yannick Etienne, a labor representative, the fight has its origins in the closed-door negotiations that established the Free Trade Zone (FTZ). The farmers were left out of the negotiating process until the day of the FTZ ground breaking ceremony in 2002, when they were told their land was being expropriated. Grupo M eventually published a social compensation plan in 2003, however, it came too late for the farmers whose land was already gone, and whose suspicions of the Dominicans were already aroused."

Grupo M and its patrons at the World Bank do not, of course, tire of outlining the countless benefits that accrue to the local population because of Codevi. Every program of exploitation has an ideology bolted on to legitimate it to the world – but also to those benefitting: very few people want to look in the mirror and see a monster staring back. When I asked to speak to workers, two were dutifully brought out to give monosyllabic positive comments about their jobs, perhaps wary of the manager sitting next to them. Neither was a member of the union, I soon found out. In fact, Grupo M claims it has no conception of how many workers are in the union. "Very little," is all Mr Blumberg would tell me. "It's not part of their priority. They're happy and when the workforce is happy they don't mind if anybody is doing anything for them or not." However, according to the diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks, the soothing words of Mr Blumberg do not reveal the whole story. "Dominican unions allege [Grupo M] discriminates against labor organizers, fires their members, and has created a fraudulent 'scab union' in order to circumvent the legitimate one," one cable notes.

It is clear that something similar has happened in Haiti. Grupo M did have a stronger union once – before it was busted after trying to exercise its rights. Just months after Codevi opened, the workers began complaining of "exploitation and mistreatment" by the management of Grupo M. Rounds of strikes and violence by union members were followed by a "series of employee terminations by the company throughout that summer".

Mr Blumberg explained it thus: "When we had the first union, there was a lot of growing pain. They didn't have the right groups guiding them, there were a lot of radicals, a lot of leftists." But, he added: "In the end, everything was straightened out and we're in peace and we're fine with the union." The union had been co-opted. Workers' rights would not be a high priority for the economic model that would design the new Haiti. In fact, the plan was predicated on the lack of rights for workers. In an internal IFC document that was presented to the Haitian government, the administration was implored to amend the labor code in order to “lift restrictions on 24/7 multi-labor shifts” while “streamlining” the process by which night-time salary supplements could be done away with. The plan was also predicated on a lack of tax revenue. Another incentive for the foreign companies was the so-called “economic free zones” (EFZs), which offer companies tax and duty-free rights if they set up operations in Haiti. In reality, these zones do not exist in physical space but rather constitute the whole country. In other words, Haiti would now be tax-free for foreign investors – further disabling the Haitian government’s ability to rebuild any public institutions. In 2011, the Haitian government brought in an estimated $1 billion of revenue, much less than the per-capita rate in sub-Saharan Africa.

The answer to this dilemma for the IADB was the “multiplier effect” whereby companies supplying services to the population would in turn have more income and therefore pay more tax to the government (at some time in the distant future). “It’s on that side that we see the benefits of anchoring in the zones and having these companies come, even if under the current regime they do not pay taxes for a while,” said Mr Almeida, IADB country director for Haiti. The idea essentially is that around the industrial estates other smaller Haitian businesses, such as travel agents and grocery stores, will pick up the slack of lost tax revenue. The problem for the IFIs was that even with slave wages and lax labor regulation it was proving hard to attract foreign investment. In the face of such reticence from investors around the world, Haiti should have focused on building indigenous capacity, perhaps through a massive public works initiative and the construction of state-owned facilities, like Sonapi. Haitians were instead again put at the mercy of international capital and its “race to the bottom”. For the US embassy, the only thing going for Haiti was that its people were made to work for peanuts. “Haiti has the lowest wages in the western hemisphere,” boasted one US embassy cable. To Haitians it was nothing to *boast* about. Camille Chalmers, a local economist, told the *Financial Times* that the wages paid in the textile sector, Haiti’s biggest industry, were a “veritable scandal”.

Amid manifold reservations from both international investors and labor-rights groups, the IADB and USAID finished the construction of the flagship project in the economic reconstruction of Haiti: the Caracol industrial park (CIP), just 40 miles down the well-paved road back toward the northern capital of Cap-Haïtien. The CIP was inspired by the perceived success of Codevi, with those designing Haiti's new-look economy trying to attract investment with the benefits that drew Grupo M into the economy: cheap labor and geographical closeness to the US, the world's largest market, where its exports are duty-free. It is one of five planned. The US poured millions of dollars into the CIP, but only Sae-A Trading, a South Korean textile company, has been enticed to set up shop in the park (and according to people involved in the deal, Sae-A was promised a rent holiday of four years). Sweatshop-based development had, in fact, never provided more than 100,000 jobs even in the 1980s.

The fact that the US taxpayer is building industrial parks for the benefit of South Korean companies also raised eyebrows. The US may be the most active foreign country involved in the reconstruction, but even its companies are still keeping their distance. "We are professional beggars," Mr Aguerre, the Haiti manager for the IADB in Washington, told me. The Haitian people would become beggars, too. For example, an internal IFC document on proposed IEZs argues that the reconstruction should be "propelled by private-sector-led development" even though the same document admits that "the existing Haitian Free Zone, Industrial Park and Investment Code policy and regulatory regimes have not been effective in attracting investments that are needed to create jobs".

"To say that the private sector is rushing into Haiti right now would not be exactly what's happening," Pamela Cox, the World Bank's vice-president for Latin America and the Caribbean, told me when I met her in Washington. So why were these institutions focusing so much on a foreign-investment-led reconstruction, rather than building up domestic and public Haitian capacity? Was the fact that this would not make any westerners rich merely a coincidence?

There are still further complications; namely, that offering generous inducements to foreign companies will adversely impact businesses already in Haiti. Grupo M, for example, is fearful of what the incentives offered for the CIP and other IEZs being planned might mean for it. "[New foreign companies] have to train their workforces, they have to prepare themselves for what is coming," said Mr Blumberg, vice-president of sales at Grupo M. "We want a level playing field if you will. We understand that [foreign companies] are getting a lot of things via grants and via sponsorships from different sources." But if investment is not forthcoming or indigenous industries are stifled, as many predict, Haiti will suffer stagnation and destitution for another generation.

Enthusiasm from donors for aid and other forms of sovereign investment is now dwindling as the international community loses interest and the financial crisis continues to bite. The Haiti Reconstruction Fund (HRF), which aggregates funds from countries and NGOs to fill gaps in investment, has raised $352 million so far, but, "We've reached a plateau," Mr Leitman, head of the HRF, told me. "I think the donors have been cautious and reluctant to contribute new money." In March 2010, at a major pledging conference held in New York City, $4.6 billion was promised for the first two years of reconstruction. Only $1.9 billion of that ever materialized. "If you look at estimates made about rebuilding Haiti after the earthquake, they were huge, you know $15 billion, even more than that," Mark Weisbrot, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) in Washington, DC, told me. "They haven't come up with anything like that, even a fraction of that. It's a small country but it's still 10 million people and so if you don't clear the rubble, you don't have roads, you don't have housing, you don't have water, you don't have sanitation, what kind of economy are you going to get out of that? That's the real problem."

The real fear back home in Washington, however, especially among politicians, is migration and drugs. "They feared Aristide was a Castro want-to-be," Larry Birns, an analyst in Washington, told me. "US policy has never been concerned with building a viable economy. The policies they followed destroyed Haiti's economy." On assuming power, Ronald Reagan proposed the Caribbean Basin Initiative to try, in a familiar story, to bring foreign investment to the region. It was a method of regaining control of the region, which seemed to be going on an independent path. Reagan even invaded Grenada on spurious grounds in 1983 to push that effort. The initiative was a failure, bringing little to no investment, but control was exerted. In that respect it was like John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress in Latin America, which sought to bring the region away from Soviet influence, under the guise of "development" and "investment". The prevailing spirit now in Washington is that Haiti is messy, and people will openly tell you (off the record) that Haiti is beyond the capacity to be reformed, a “loser situation”. They favor what they call “keeping it on life support” so that the US doesn’t get too many people coming in (Haitian refugees dying on the beaches of Florida caused havoc for Southern politicians in the 1980s). But what the US never seems to understand about Haiti and elsewhere is that you cannot have a society operate like clockwork when you have for years persistently undermined all credible efforts for that society to function in an effective way. Haiti is now actually well below its per capita income of 1960, the only country in the hemisphere to have made no progress in that period. Ironically, the economy grew from 1960 to 1980 under the Duvalier dictatorships because, despite their brutality, they actually had a development strategy. It wasn’t great but it did move the country forward. This is true for a lot of the region where many countries had more growth under dictatorships because they had more control over policy than they did in a more democratic era when, in the subsequent neoliberal phase, the World Bank and the IMF controlled policy, and nobody *allowed* them to have a development strategy. From 1991 to 1994 and from 2000 to 2004, in fact, there was a deliberate strategy to destroy the economy, and that’s how they got rid of President Aristide both times. “This is more about power. It’s hard for people to believe this, but the US really does care who runs the government,” said Mr Weisbrot. “They’ve overthrown the government twice, the US, Canada, France, and their allies. 1991 was more covert but it did come out that the CIA paid the people who did the coup, and they also financed death squads in the period after.”

The story of one Haitian I met while in the country, Robinson Deese, shows the human side of this brutality. “After the earthquake everything turned terrible,” he told me, as we sat in his bedroom. He lost his home and moved with his four children and wife to Golf, one of the biggest camps in Port-au-Prince on the capital’s only golf course. But he was given a lifeline. The Red Cross – one of the most influential and powerful NGOs working in Haiti – offered him a rent subsidy to move his family into permanent accommodation. The charity gave him 4,000 Haitian dollars toward the yearly rent of 6,000 Haitian dollars. (Prices have ballooned since the earthquake because of the squeeze on supply.) Now he lives in one small and sweltering room with six other people, including his wife, children and brother. Formerly a tailor, his working life was destroyed when he lost all his sewing machines in the earthquake. “We have to manage with this because we have no means to rent a bigger place right now, I have to work for other people now,” he said. “I preferred to take the subsidy because I didn’t have a piece of land where I could build a shelter. I decided the best option would be to start a small business for myself while I tried to save money, maybe get a piece of land.” He was also awarded a us$500 Livelihood Grant to start a business, which he said was not going well so far. In these conditions, saving is hard for a family like this, as he has to stump up money for tuition for his kids’ schooling as well as for books and uniforms. The Red Cross has helped countless people this way – it is one of three options they offer to some of the 500,000 Haitians still living in tent cities around Port-au-Prince. The other two are building a T-shelter on a greenfield site, or finding someone who will let them do it. But the program is a parable of the short-termism that has overtaken the reconstruction of Haiti. Mr Deese only qualifies for this subsidy for a year. After that, he and his family are back at square one unless he finds a job, which with 80 percent unemployment seems unlikely. “I can’t say I will have enough to cover next year’s rent,” he admitted. “It doesn’t stress me out right now, I know that I can work, I have two hands to work with.”

NO ROOM FOR AN ALTERNATIVE

Haiti is a notoriously difficult country to operate in: its institutions are frail, weakened by years of underinvestment, and the system is riven with corruption. For the economic managers post-earthquake, this was the default reasoning for their reliance on the private sector and “export-led” reconstruction. But there was nothing inevitable about such a program. There were plenty of reconstruction plans that could, most likely would, have created a fairer and more sustainable future for Haitians. The problem was and remains that these plans go against an ideology purveyed by the IMF, the World Bank and the US. For example, the Haitian government could have rebuilt the country’s crumbling infrastructure with a modern-day equivalent of the Marshall Plan from donors, which would have created public-sector jobs for Haitians to construct roads, ports and energy infrastructure which has either been non-existent or in disrepair. Everyone, after all, puts infrastructure as among the top problems for making Haiti work. Some 10,000 jobs could have been created just clearing the rubble. The Red Cross has, for example, created hundreds of jobs for Haitians reusing the rubble to build bricks and other building materials, clearing the city and creating employment. “We’re the only ones doing it,” the co-coordinator of the program in Port-au-Prince told me. “At the moment, now, all the rest goes down the dump, even though the cost of processing it is about the same as taking it down to the dump.”

Perhaps most importantly, Haiti could have focused on creating a new agrarian economy, a sector which had been thriving before President Clinton dumped tonnes of US rice in the country in the 1990s, destroying Haitian agriculture by completely distorting trading terms, something that will be explored in a moment. About 40 percent of the Haitian population, or 4 million people, live in rural areas. Promoting community-owned agricultural land would have instantly depopulated the overcrowded capital and provided a sustainable way of feeding its people (with any leftovers ready for export). It was never even discussed.

“Agriculture is still missing,” Mr Naim at the IFC told me. The IFC is yet to make one loan to an agricultural small or medium-sized enterprise (SME), instead training its focus on agribusiness rather than the smallholders that Haiti needs. Likewise, the World Bank has admitted that not enough priority is being given to agriculture. It has put $55 million into a new agricultural program (in the grand scale of things in Haiti, peanuts). “This is our first true agricultural project,” Mr Abrantes acknowledged. The US government claims it is not ignoring agriculture. The ambassador to Haiti told me the US has invested $200 million in the sector already; but, once again, the focus remains on produce for export as opposed to providing for the Haitian population, large portions of which are starving. The IADB, on the other hand, contends that infrastructure is important but “there are other needs” (such as “investing in the private sector” in order to import seeds). The bank has a plan to get a private company to buy the mangoes, centralize them, distribute them and then send them to the exporters. “We’re changing the dynamics of how we can do agriculture in Haiti,” said Mr Almeida at the IADB. This new dynamic is straight out of the neoliberal guidebook: providing vouchers to small producers so they can buy seeds through imports. With no public or community-held land, such ventures have to date not got very far. "It's not a big number of jobs," Mr Almeida admitted.

The internal Haitian market continues to be ignored by all parties, a travesty considering that 90 percent of eggs and poultry consumed in Haiti come from the Dominican Republic, while 80 percent of rice is imported. Changing that state of affairs through publicly funded subsistence farming is not an option. "When I say agriculture I say agribusiness," said Mr Almeida. The alternative, which is unthinkable in the world of these institutions, is that money is provided to subsidize domestic small-scale rice production.

An emblematic project of this "new dynamic" was brokered by the IADB: an initiative with Coca-Cola which has created a new soda called "Mango-Tango" that will be supplied with mangoes from newly developed producers. A similar deal with Starbucks coffee seeks to transform individual micro-farmers into cooperatives and then supply coffee to Starbucks and market it as Haitian coffee. Critical analysts call this the "sweatshops and mangoes" development model. "They need roads, they need irrigation in the countryside, but that's the one thing these guys won't do," said Mark Weisbrot, the analyst at the CEPR. But the Martelly administration's agriculture policy has so far followed the export-orientated agribusiness model of the Bretton Woods institutions to the letter. "What I hear from [the Haitian government] is that they want to go into the export mode, including the agriculture," said Mr Abrantes. In fact, Martelly had pushed the IFIs to go even further. "We were preparing traditional agriculture projects for Haiti which were basically focused on poverty alleviation, on the small farmers," added Mr Abrantes. "When the Martelly administration came in, they looked at the project and said, 'We would like it to have a different slant. We would like to have significant components on stimulating agribusiness', which is quite a different thing from what we had anticipated, and so I think the overall view is, even in agriculture, to encourage parts of the agricultural sector to move into export-production." Haiti remains a majority agrarian country; it needs an agrarian-based development model that distributes land among its homeless people for community-based subsistence cultivation. The economic managers of the country are not interested. The long-held dream of a Caribbean sweatshop is being born instead. Out of one of history's worst human catastrophes we have Mango-Tango. The racket’s victory was Haiti’s defeat, but this was no accident.

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1 Details given to the author by the World Bank.

2 Isabeau Doucet, “One year on, Haiti hasn’t ‘built back better’ ”, *The Nation*, January 12, 2011.

TWO

THE RACKET

A VERY BRIEF EXPLANATION OF WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AFTER WORLD WAR II

In a world based on the exchange of goods and services, the most effective way of controlling people – or nations – is to put them in your debt. This the US government understood clearly, and so at the end of the World War II American planners set about designing an international monetary system that would put the rest of humanity under the crack of their whip. But doing such a thing, while maintaining the customary public posture of spreading democracy and economic justice, would be no easy task. The US managed it mainly through the construction of a series of global institutions that would, from then on, decide how the world's poorest managed their economies. The ideology driving these institutions would be a US-backed form of capitalism that brooked no dissent from its precepts. The official, old world empires (whose decline picked up pace after 1945) were to be replaced by something more insidious, more hidden, something that to this day is still not recognized for what is: *debt slavery*. Debt would be used to strangle and crush any peoples that tried to free themselves from the shackles of the order being imposed.

The first of the new enforcers was the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which billed itself as the savior of countries in dire need of money to shore up unraveling economies. It would soon become a star player, one of the real big boys. Alongside it another body would be used to promote the racket's interests across the world: initially called the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), it would later become known as the World Bank. These institutions, which still oversee the world economy in the interests of the fattest of cats, were created in inauspicious surroundings: a hotel next to a railway station called Bretton Woods in New Hampshire. The stories and propaganda regarding the genesis of these institutions are almost completely false, but continue to be told to the present day. The World Bank, in *official* history, was meant to "facilitate private sector investment and reconstruction in Europe". Alongside that crucial calling, with Europe in ruins after the war, it was meant to deal more generally with "development" – a term that refers to the economic progress of countries that have been kept underdeveloped by the policies of the same people overseeing their "development". This second role would later become its chief purpose, as the World Bank became one of the main avenues through which poor countries would be lent money.

Two men dominated the process of designing the new global order. Harry Dexter White, a US diplomat, was there to make sure everything was set down with US interests in mind. He was up against a more honest and respected economist from Britain, John Maynard Keynes, whose ideas did not win out – the resulting arrangements prioritized American interests. White, after all, had considerable leverage, thanks to the United States' economic supremacy at the time. He followed the course laid down by Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who said early in the World War II: "Leadership toward a new system of international affairs in trade and other economic affairs will devolve very largely upon the United States because of our great economic strength. We should assume this leadership, and the responsibility that goes with it, primarily for reasons of pure self-interest."[1] And so it was. This self-interest is obvious when the Keynes' proposal is compared with that of White. It shows clearly that US interests were the priority all along, preventing any equitable solution. Essentially, the US saw the IMF and World Bank as tools in its goal to create new markets in which American exports could be sold and developed, further enhancing its already growing economy and helping to secure its position as the global superpower. But Keynes believed that trade relations between countries could not be changed without both the creditor and the debtor country making a commitment to their alteration. The powerful and the powerless in this sense both had responsibilities. Keynes had, for this reason, proposed an International Clearing Union (ICU) with its own independent currency called "the bancor". The bancor would be a universal unit of accounting that countries across the globe could use that would track trade deficits and surpluses. An “objective” unit would ensure that equal pressure fell on both the creditor and the debtor to balance their trade. But such a body would constrain the powerful creditor nations like the US, which were using their loans and export capacity as a method of control. For this reason, the ICU never happened; White opposed it. Instead, he wanted an International Stabilization Fund and the IBRD. The purpose of the Stabilization Fund would be to reduce foreign exchange controls, maintain steady exchange rates and lend money to nations in deficit. The bank would provide the capital that was desperately needed by faltering countries to rebuild after the war. And this was the formulation that was eventually agreed upon. It completely took the burden off the creditor nations (like the US) in terms of balance of trade. Put simply, there was now no restriction on the amount of surplus a successful exporting nation could enjoy. As a country borrowed more and more, interest rates just rose and rose. This formula was perfect for accelerating the racket’s dominance. Foreign countries became markets for American goods and started to rely, heavily, on US capital. As the levels of debt grew, so did the racket’s ideological and economic stranglehold.

Despite constant US propaganda to the contrary, such self-interest, or naked imperialism, was the main motivation – to sculpt a world in its image, to create a global population working for elite US interests, while at the same time thinking they were working for their own.

This is not ancient history – the same is happening today. I remember asking historian Walter LaFeber, one of the most esteemed voices on US foreign policy, about this, and he was more honest than most: “No government has ever proposed a plan unless it believed there was something in it for that government,” he told me, adding that the “post-World War II economic system was developed, not created, by the US officials to help their nation’s economic clout and survival.” His contention is, in fact, a common one: that the Bretton Woods institutions, as the IMF and World Bank soon became known, had originally had an “idealistic thread”. From there, the story goes, these same institutions were perverted by the US, as its power to maintain control over other countries diminished with decolonization, to re-establish its power – or what the planners and elite journalists like to call “stability”.

In 1945, of course, the system was conceived with the developing world's subservience pretty much guaranteed. But as various nations and peoples around the world gained independence, they had to be reintegrated into the racket so that it would remain as profitable as its predecessor. No problem. Since its original formulation, the Bretton Woods system has been an elaborate system of control. The Bretton Woods institutions are heavily biased in their voting capacities: votes are proportional to your contribution to the funds, and because the US contributes the most as the world's largest economy it has *de facto* control. For example, if the US did not want to lend to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, which overthrew a US-backed tyrant in 1979, then the Bretton Woods institutions would follow their lead. Functioning without this credit line is extremely difficult. Alongside this, the dollar gives the US more power because it is the global "reserve currency", which means that it is the most popular foreign exchange currency held by governments across the world. The interest rates set by the Federal Reserve in Washington, DC thus give the US significant power to manipulate the global economy. Some countries even surrender their economic sovereignty to the US completely by adopting the greenback as their currency. For example, El Salvador, a poor country in Central America that was the victim of a vicious civil war sustained by the US from 1980 to 1992, adopted the dollar in 2001, giving up its control over monetary policy *in toto*. Needless to say, the "right guys" won that war and the rewards for the US inevitably followed.

For LaFeber, the "real question is whether the Bretton Woods arrangements have helped solve problems for all the involved parties, and done so equitably". Initially, they may have, depending on your measuring stick. Economists and governments measure economic growth as the increase in economic activity within a country by the metric Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is a futile metric because it tells you nothing about how that wealth is being distributed within a given country or if the new economic activity is in areas that are socially useful. But, still, most governments in the world chase GDP growth as the ultimate goal.

In the 30 years after the establishment of the Bretton Woods institutions, global growth was indeed good – showing marked improvements on the pre-war period. But this does not alter the fact that these institutions were initially created to enshrine US control of the global economy. If there was any doubt about what the intended plan was, all one needs to do is look at what happened from the mid-1970s onwards. In 1971, President Richard Nixon removed the US from the gold standard, where currency in circulation had to correspond to a specific amount of gold. This move unleashed a large amount of what is known as “footloose capital”. The Bretton Woods system as initially conceived at this point “broke down” – but the institutions that composed it would soon become the bodies through which the rest of the world was made pliable to this new capital. The populations of poor countries from Africa to Latin America were put in service of getting profit on this money. Whole societies were transformed; power was taken away from democratic institutions and placed in the hands of private bodies, the racket’s new silent rulers. And while all this was going on, the world entered one of its periodic depressions. In what is known as the “business cycle”, economies inevitably rise and fall as the irrationality of the market creates “bubbles” and troughs from which the poor have to pull themselves out and from which the rich can profit: buying at the bottom is the best way to make a fortune. Imperialism had changed its face, or in fact hidden its face. No longer would there be garrisons full of foreign troops ensuring countries were made to service their rich patrons; this was an invisible imperialism, and for that reason much stronger and more durable. This was the signature strategy of the racket – don’t let your subjects know they are subjects; don’t let your functionaries in the field know they are imposing a brutal form of imperialism. Let them think they are free citizens of a free world, of which the US is merely the neutral arbiter. Meanwhile, suck out the money.

NOW YOU ARE INDEBTED

In the early 1980s a recession was imposed on the world by the Reagan administration carrying out a deflationary policy which put huge pressure on developing world countries with debts. It was the first worldwide economic recession since World War II, and countries that had borrowed heavily found themselves in dire straits: with deflation they had trouble meeting payments and some fell into default which meant they came under IMF control. Mob rules: as soon as they can’t afford to pay back a debt, you own them. The IMF could now impose specific conditions, instructing: “We won’t make any more loans unless you carry out certain programs.” These programs, officially called “structural adjustment programs”, were precisely attuned to what growing transnational corporations wanted from these developing world countries. Under IMF control they *had* to privatize. They had to cut back on public expenditure for things that would help ordinary citizens, such as public health and education, and they had to orientate their whole program not just to paying their debt, but they also had to welcome transnational corporations into the country on the nicest possible terms. It was a set of conditions serviceable only to the racket and incredibly damaging to ordinary people. It is like asking a friend if you can borrow $20, and them responding: “I’ll lend it to you if you let me wear all your clothes, use your computer whenever I want, sleep in your bed, and you pay me 10 cents extra every week until you pay it all back.” It is worth remembering, as an aside, that in many places the crippling debt that countries had incurred during the long boom after World War II was stacked up by dictators and tyrants backed by the US and their allies, for example General Suharto, the genocidal Indonesian dictator. The people who would have to pay back these loans with the destruction of their social provisions had had no say in the loans themselves, which often went on ingratiating the leaders that were oppressing them. Such debts are known as “odious debt” and many believe them to be not just wrong, but illegal. Still, they are used to control much of the world. Some nice examples for you: Indonesia has a massive $80 billion-worth of debts, but it is estimated that 50 individuals own 95 percent of these debts. After the West had bankrolled Suharto to power, they then loaned him huge amounts of money that did nothing to benefit his subjects (particularly the 200,000 East Timorese people who were murdered under his watch). But these debts were instantly socialized so that future generations like today’s young Indonesians have to pay the debts for the lavish lifestyle of Suharto and his friends. And it is not only “useless” countries like Indonesia that get themselves into heavy debt. What is often ignored is the fact that Britain, France and Italy all defaulted on US debts in the 1930s.

During the so-called “debt crisis” in Latin America in the 1980s, commercial banks would no longer lend to governments or companies in the region, so their reliance on the Bretton Woods institutions became even more acute. What these arbiters of economic control embarked on was the destruction of an economic model that had helped build Latin America into one of the economic powerhouses of the world, a model which had seen other great successes. Known as "import substitution industrialization", it was a system that sought to build up domestic industries by enacting protectionist policies to keep out foreign capital and products. It was, understandably, not a popular system for the racketeers seeking new markets in which to invest and export, so they brought it down. And so "export-orientated industrialization" – an economy oriented to producing exports for foreign countries using supplies often made elsewhere – was introduced. It was part of one of the oldest tricks in the racket's playbook to keep a poor country poor and "underdeveloped": allow a foreign company to extract minerals in the "developing" country, paying little in tax or royalties, then take that raw material out of the country, build the product back in their own rich country, creating jobs and industry, and then sell it back to the people in the original country at a huge mark-up. The economies of these "underdeveloped" countries were put at the mercy of the vagaries of the global economy, where demand and supply would create interminable instability; in essence, it meant that independent development was impossible. Again: not an accident.

The destruction of public control over industry – which is one of the staples of these programs – ignored the fact that the state has an important role to play in creating a flourishing domestic industry. The US should know; after all, it has been one of the most protectionist countries in the world. Protecting nascent industries by putting up barriers to foreign investment and products is vital when these industries are in their infancy. The structural adjustment programs are adamantly opposed to this erection of barriers. The idea is that structural adjustment makes weaker economies "more like the West", but it does nothing of the sort because the poorer countries have none of the economic base of their masters. Instead, it creates dependencies that rely completely on their western "sponsors" – it creates a situation where it is impossible for these countries to pursue their own path. And when nations start electing leaders that put the interests of their people ahead of those of western multinationals, you can bet that the Bretton Woods henchmen will be brought in to squeeze them into submission.

For Latin America, export-orientated industrialization was a prolonged disaster – huge amounts of capital flowed out of the continent, which helped depreciate its currencies (its currencies became less sought-after so their price fell), and in order to bring down inflation governments were instructed to raise interests rates – which in turn helped slow economies even further as it became harder to borrow money. The continent's economy contracted by 9 percent in the five years to 1985. It was the same period of ascendancy for Bretton Woods, and this was no coincidence. The economic managers used "structural adjustment programs" and levered the debt the IMF and World Bank were owed to transform economies. "Rescue" packages and loan "deals" were struck with poor nations, *on the proviso that they did certain things to their economy*. Their economies would be rebuilt with the interests of western capital at the forefront; the new economies would be "precisely attuned to what transnational corporations wanted". One specialist puts the program like this: "privatization of the means of production, deregulation of all economic activity, encouragement of competition … and [integration] into the wider world capitalist economic system."[2] The needs of the people – from healthcare to education – were thrown to the wind, as public institutions were forcibly privatized. Basic human rights were taken away as the poor were absorbed into the "global market" where fewer and fewer obstacles faced the holders of large amounts of capital. The penetration of the captured economy would be made much easier, as poor countries were bought up by western capital. The rich – centered in the capital of this economic system, the US – were growing richer, capital was draining from the poor world, and the destitute of humanity were crushed under the boot of adjustment programs. The racket was growing, as an aggressive form of capitalism, "neoliberalism", destroyed any institutions that represented those without capital.

Two professors from New York explain the result: "Half the people and two-thirds of the countries in the world lack full control over their own economic policy. Expatriate 'experts' managed by industrial country nationals and based in Washington DC regulate their macroeconomics, investment projects and social spending." To add insult to injury: "The principles guiding these instructions from afar are even known as a 'Washington Consensus'."[3] This consensus, in fact, stretches no further than the richest people on earth, the members of the racket. Of course, it is extremely hard to escape the lock that Bretton Woods puts on your country. One example of a leader and movement trying to do that was Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the former president of Brazil, who realized early on he would have a hard time borrowing money if he embarked on his more radical ideas to combat inequality in his country – the credit lines would be pulled. There is now a near-absolute rule in global politics that social democratic leaders become sell-outs. And why? Because the forces of capital and its enforcer the US are too powerful. Lula wrote a letter to his people at the start of his tenure explaining how far his hands were tied by foreign capitalists. Brazil, in other words, was far from a sovereign country. And that was no accident. "Either right before they take power, or right after they take power because the system has become so powerful, the constraints on the democratic leaders are so powerful that they really have a very limited range of choice, they have to work within very narrow bounds," Edward S. Herman, an economist at the University of Pennsylvania, told me, adding that "the system is a beautifully integrated whole", which makes it very hard for the victims to see the wood for the trees amidst the barrage of propaganda.

Another Latin American country, Argentina, actually became one of the poster boys for the failures of neoliberal policies when in 2001 its economy crashed. It should never have been an example of an economy in tatters, being at one stage among the most prosperous economies in the world. By the early 2000s it had become a basket case, thanks to its patrons in Washington and their local satraps. The crash came at the end of a long period in which the country had followed the prescripts of the Bretton Woods institutions, restructuring its economy in the interests of foreign capital. It wasn't meant to be like this. In the 1990s, the usual glorification by the media of the Bretton Woods precepts was ascendant. Argentina, we were told, was the "model pupil" in the neoliberal university being erected around the world. It was, we were told further, an "economic miracle" thanks to the liberalization of the economy that began in earnest under President Carlos Menem who came to power in 1989, when the economy was admittedly in bad shape. At the time inflation – which measures the decreasing value of currency – was sky-high, hitting 200 percent at the time. Menem had actually won power by promising Argentinians a return to the “good life” – one with increasing living standards, improved services, the full gamut of the usual election-speak. But this idealism crashed on to the rocks of the Bretton Woods institutions when he entered the Pink Palace in Buenos Aires. He became a neoliberal; maybe he had been one all along but had had to hide it because such policies are rarely popular with the majority of the people.

Menem’s first move was to allow private capital to profit from Argentina’s public institutions. “We are pragmatists,” he said, “state enterprises will be privatized to the extent that such action meets the government’s interests.” This was supplemented by other measures out of the IMF’s playbook: the Argentine government would remove all tariffs and other barriers to the free movement of capital. Now US companies would have no responsibilities if the economy went belly up – they could invest and disinvest freely. The peso was pegged to the dollar, giving the US even more tacit control over Argentina – the interest rates set by the Federal Reserve in the US would now have a considerable impact on Argentina’s economy. Social programs were eviscerated and fiscal controls lifted, creating a human crisis. A World Bank study lauded the new moves in 1993: “Provinces now have most responsibility for such social services as education, health, security, and housing. Improving efficiency of the delivery of these provincial social services could be one of the most effective ways to improve the standard of living in Argentina” (for “provincial responsibility” read “privatization”). The “Shock” Menem used to push through these unpopular reforms putting his country’s economy at the mercy of foreign capitalists was the hyperinflation that he had inherited. In fact, it continued even after his reforms. Money poured into Argentina initially as, in 1991, the US slumped into a recession and capital looked for new flesh to dig its teeth into. With its deregulation, Argentina was a common choice. In the one-year period 1991–92, foreign investment in Argentina nearly quadrupled from $3.2 billion to $11 billion. By 1997, the *Economist* thought wise to gush that the country’s prosperity “reminds some of a golden era, a century ago, when the pampas supplied imperial Britain with wheat, beef and wool, and Argentina was one of the ten richest countries”.[4]

But it was all a lie, a building constructed without girders. It soon came crashing down. Wall Street – the Holy Grail of global capitalism where many of the world's biggest banks are based and do their dirty – suffered another downturn. It was called the popping of the "tech bubble", which had mirrored Argentina's foreign investment bubble. When Wall Street crashed, the footloose capital which had been treated so kindly by the people of Argentina felt no loyalty and flew out of the country as quickly as it had gone in. Menem had discarded the controls that had been in place to prevent such a grand flight, so the people had no way to stop it. Economic historian Robert Brenner said that towards the end of the 1990s the US absorbed "all the world's mobile capital. In this situation, countries that had staked everything on attracting investment were up against the wall."[5] He added that the same period marked "the death knell for those peripheral economies that had tied their currencies to the dollar". Argentina had staked everything on attracting investment and had tied its currency to the dollar. In the resulting downturn, the Argentinian government imposed harsh austerity measures. The IMF offered a $40 billion loan but at this stage withdrawals from bank deposits had reached $1 billion a day. The relatively new President Fernando de la Rua declared, "I will never devalue", but this proved an empty promise, and eventually devaluation happened and the historic debt default followed. In 2001 popular protests erupted on the streets of Argentinian cities during which 27 demonstrators died. The final straw was the IMF's refusal to lend any more money because de la Rua had failed to meet its conditions on public-spending costs. He resigned but left a country in ruins. Public services had been systematically dismantled, fiscal controls had been eroded and foreign corporations had no responsibility to stay put, leaving the government and banks bankrupt. The Bretton Woods institutions had done their job.

YOU BETTER WORK

A class war is being fought and the poor are losing. The racket based in the West has the money and power to extend itself globally, and so workers are fighting each other for work across borders. The countervailing powers, such as strong organized labor groups, that previously had some check on business power have been eroded and fractured. Business can now, like never before, write laws, weaken and destroy labor rights and the environment, and control the media without the public service option. And it feeds itself – as business takes over there is less space for people with a dissenting view; it has a magnificent self-reinforcing quality. It is true that more trade unions and workers' movements are needed, but the head wind is strong. The power of profit-seeking money has managed to create a world in its own image, largely through the Bretton Woods institutions. By globalizing capital and its production, the racket is doing something very clever and advantageous (for itself). They are pitting workers against each other rather than highlighting the gap between themselves and the peons that make their profits. The pressure valve has been released on the anger, which should be sky-high, against executive bonuses, irresponsible speculation and the insane repackaging of debt; it is now firmly trained on workers from other countries, who have been equally exploited by the same business hounds. This tactic is well known to the business community and the prevalence of "free trade" areas over the last decades is the embodiment of this thought-process. In the case of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the US pushed for a "free trade" integrated area covering itself, Canada and Mexico, which would allow its businesses to go into Mexico's economy and produce at a much lower cost, because environmental regulations were looser and labor laws laxer. Consequently, working Americans were done out of work because they could be undercut by Mexican workers. Also, heavily subsidized American goods could be sold at cheaper prices than indigenous Mexican produce, so agriculture was destroyed in Mexico. The only NAFTA winner at the end of the day was the business community, and instead of solidarity with Mexican workers, often the American unions turned to jingoism. This whole dynamic is called in academe the "race to the bottom" and operates over the globalized economic system, where multinationals search for the least regulated country in which it can produce its goods cheapest. It describes a perfect world for foreign investors. It means that the workers who can pitch themselves most cheaply to oversized capital are the most "successful" in getting work. In the absence of any new International where workers can coordinate on a level that might counterpoise the "race to the bottom", the result is that they often turn on each other.

Like all imperial strategies, the racket find voices of support in the local intelligentsia, whose job it is to rationalize brutal power and make it acceptable to the minds of the population. In the US, one such bright spark is Thomas Friedman, who calls the system outlined a "Golden Straitjacket" – i.e. the poor countries have no choice but to accept it, but it is beneficial for them. His evidence is that in 1975 only 8 percent of countries worldwide had liberal, free-market regimes; at that time, foreign direct investment (FDI) totaled $23 billion. But by 1997, by which time the Bretton Woods institutions had done their most ardent work, this figure had soared to $644 billion.[6] For Friedman, the increasing gap between the rich and poor was irrelevant, the human reality behind these figures did not penetrate his thinking, and he was not alone. Fetishizing investment is a widespread malady. But investment, and even growth itself, has no correlation with the improvement of life for the majority of the population in developing countries. It enriches a local elite, Friedman's friends, his colleagues in the media and finance and the rest of the racketeers. But the people see none of it, and never have. In fact, the US knowingly pushed this strategy because, far from providing benefits to the debtors, it benefitted US multinationals. As governments in developing countries have been made to privatize and open up their economies at the behest of the IMF and other bodies, they have had to solicit investment. The most successful countries have become those that create the optimum conditions for transnational corporations – led by the US. These conditions, unsurprisingly, are lax labor and environmental laws and low corporate tax regimes. Transnational corporations have spent the past 25 years running this race, looking for the poorest country with the least social infrastructure in which they can produce most cheaply, turning the globe, or its poorest parts, into a wasteland of broken people and destroyed landscapes. This is all called "globalization" by the racket's intelligentsia. Referring to this, Martin Khor, director of the Third World Network, has said: "Globalization is what we in the Third World have for several centuries called colonization."[7] No one is arguing that more interconnectedness is bad, it's "investor-rights" globalization that is opposed, merely because it is an updated form of imperialism that neutralizes the agency of billions of people. The so-called Washington Consensus removes freedom of choice from poor countries.

They can no longer choose any development model that puts the needs of their own citizens ahead of the needs of international capital.

This “race to the bottom” also means that FDI has been uneven in developing countries. While Friedman may laud the increase in FDI, he fails to mention that there is a stark discrepancy between the few developing countries that have ridden on the crest of the “neoliberal”, US-led wave – “higher-tier developing countries” – and the rest who haven’t been so lucky. It is also quite clear that the real success stories of the period in question actually were the countries of East Asia who took a very different economic position than the neoliberalism that was rampant in Latin America and Africa. The state took on a heavy role in places like South Korea and Taiwan, and there were countless state programs to help the poor, bucking the neoliberal religion. South Korea is an anomaly – it doesn’t fit the usual model, it’s not a pure free-market economy at all – it’s a highly controlled economy with the government giving a lot of direction. Its success was due in good part to the fact it wasn’t following the structural adjustment rules. The same is true of countries like Taiwan – another controlled economy that didn’t move toward the radical free enterprise system according to structural adjustment rules. The former neoliberal colonies, like Bolivia and Venezuela, which are now renegotiating unfair contracts with western companies, are inevitably denounced but, according to Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize-winning economist who was formerly chief economist at the World Bank but turned against it, what they are doing “makes a lot of sense”. The previous contracts had given next to nothing to the people of either country – that’s what we call investment and they call imperialism. “The notion that you would want to invest more in education and health also makes a lot of sense,” adds Stiglitz. “What we don’t yet know is the extent to which they will be able to succeed in doing what the previous governments failed, which was to provide a broad basis for development. You need education and health, but some things take longer, and we don’t know the answer to that yet.” But if you take that course, as Hugo Chávez, the former president of Venezuela, did, you inevitably step on the toes of the racketeers. So it will try to take you out, as the US tried with tacit support for a 2002 coup attempt in Venezuela. Or in the case of another desperately poor country, Haiti, the US and its allies in Bretton Woods will wait until a crisis leaves you helpless to take full advantage.

As capitalism has taken on new – what philosopher Zygmunt Bauman calls "liquid" forms – it has been harder for people across the world to fight back. An asymmetry has emerged whereby those who own the capital, who own the means of production, are not in any way dependent on the workers who make their profits. If a worker raises a finger, tries to fight for better conditions for himself or his co-workers, then the bosses can just move operations to somewhere where they can pay even less, where the grass is greener for capital. Workers on the other hand are stuck in their place – most have responsibilities like family, children and unpaid debts. The idea of the free movement of workers is a sham; many people are in fact stuck to the ground for prosaic reasons of everyday life. So the rich increase their life chances and prospects – the poor stay rooted in a bleak existence with no way out. It creates two parallel existences, two discrete classes. "When one side is fixed to the ground and has no mobility then the concept of liquid modern life is of very little use for them," Bauman told me. "That situation differentiates very considerably the life situation, life prospects, life chances, of different kinds of pleasure – it is polarizing."

When I interviewed Stiglitz, he told me that the Washington Consensus actually comprised a long list of policies, some of which were apparently "appropriate" at some times. In Stiglitz's opinion, the problem was that this neoliberal ideology had become, in a sense, a religion, a set of extreme ideas that were seen to be a one-size-fits-all panacea for all the economic problems of the developing world. In layman's terms, this was "free-market fundamentalism". Stiglitz maintains that the Bretton Woods institutions have come to realize that their policies have been a failure, yet in his book, *The $3 Trillion War*, he looks at the economic system now imposed on Iraq after the war and occupation. "I think one of the last attempts to impose neoliberal doctrines was in Iraq," he told me. "After the World Bank had abandoned these ideas, the Bush administration was pushing it in Iraq: instant liberalization, instant privatization, even if it was against international law we tried to push it. It's played a role in the difficulty of recovery." The Bush administration had attempted to oversee the privatization of all the natural resources in the Iraqi economy, through the constitution itself. When I was at the *FT*, a senior executive at Japanese investment bank Nomura said to me in an off-the-record interview: "Well, we all know we went into Iraq to secure 3,000 barrels of oil a day." He thought it was funny that I had thought any different. This is how the racketeers talk behind closed doors. “I think one of the big, big worries is that the privatizations [in Iraq] will not have legitimacy and without legitimacy they may be reversed,” Stiglitz told me. “And if there is worry about them being reversed it will undermine investment, it will make it more likely that the privatizations will not have the beneficial effect that was hoped, and there will be asset stripping rather than wealth creation, so I think it was a very foolish thing to do.” Stiglitz was right that it would prove a disaster. He was wrong, though, to think that the World Bank and the IMF had learnt the error of their ways. They have not, because the logic of the system they oversee makes it impossible. These ideas remain popular, despite their failure, because they make the rich richer. And there are plenty more of these mad, bad ideas where this came from.

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1 Quoted in Murray N. Rothbard (2000) *A History of Money and Banking in the United States: The Colonial Era to World War II*, Ludwig von Mises Institute, p. 480.

2 Fidelis Akpozike Etinye Paki and Jude Cocodia (2011) “Africa in post-Cold War world politics”, *Africana* 5(3): 5.

3 Ute Pieper and Lance Taylor (CEPA) (1996; revised 1998) “The revival of the liberal creed: the IMF, the World Bank, and inequality in a globalized economy”, Globalization, Labor Markets, and Social Policy Working Paper No. 4.

4 David Rock, “Racking Argentina”, *New Left Review*, September–October 2002.

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6 Thomas L. Friedman (2000) *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

7 Karl Moore and David Lewis (2009) *The Origins of Globalization*, Routledge, p. xiv.

THREE

RIGGING THE SYSTEM

THE WHOLE TRUTH: FREE TRADE

"Almost every concern of the world, from the risks and safety of GMOs to climate change and biodiversity, from the protection of indigenous knowledge and resources to the reform of undemocratic and authoritarian global institutions like the WTO and IMF to global justice and fair trade, is reduced by the US to a question of 'free trade'."[1]

The fiction of "free trade" is one of the most potent weapons in the armor of the US in prizing concessions out of weaker countries and consigning them to an eternity of underdevelopment. More accurately, "free trade" refers to the freedom of America to do as it pleases in its trading relationships, while everyone else is forced to create economies conducive to being flooded by American goods. From the creation, as part of the Bretton Woods package, of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), later to become the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United States has preached the virtues of "free and fair trade". In reality it has practiced nothing of the sort. A particularly infamous example is the June 1930 Smoot–Hawley Tariff Act that raised US tariffs to historically high levels in order to keep out foreign products. In this case, extreme American protectionism backfired and the Smoot–Hawley tariff is now widely seen as a contributor to the crippling depression that enveloped the US in that period. The official story is that the Smoot–Hawley tariff was the "high-water mark of US protectionism in the twentieth century" and that in the aftermath of that "mistake" the US learnt the error of its ways and henceforth "generally assumed the mantle of champion of freer international trade" (quoted from the official State Department history). In fact, this is the opposite of the truth. Free trade has always been, rather, an ideal the US government supported when it served its purpose and spurned when it did not. In 1947 the GATT was signed with the ostensible purpose of economic liberalization, the obliteration of tariffs for import and exports, and the creation of stronger international cooperation. But as the historian John Bellamy Foster points out, the US put forward the GATT "with the intention of consolidating the economic control exercised by the center states, and the United States in particular, over the periphery and hence the entire world market".[2] A pattern begins to emerge.

In essence, the GATT became a forum for trade negotiations, with numerous rounds of talks. The most notable of these was the partially successful Kennedy Round of 1962–67 where real reductions were made in the trade barriers put up among the involved nations. This changed a decade after the Kennedy Round when the GATT assumed its role as a vehicle for US interests. Anthony Gamble, the economist, says that at this point the "US began to turn to a dual-track strategy with regard to trade liberalization". Gamble was pointing out a certain tendency that the US had developed: the US puts pressure within the GATT to pursue a multilateral approach (this eventually led to the Uruguay Round in 1986 which gave birth to the WTO), while at the same time pursuing a course of explicit national self-interest outside. This was achieved through various new forms of protectionism and the initiation of bilateral trade liberalization with strategic partners such as Canada and Israel. One academic notes further how the US actually "formally remained outside the GATT regime": the US Senate never ratified the GATT. But, he adds, the Senate "allowed the GATT system to work in a legal sense, by and large". This precarious relationship with the GATT was consciously created because it allowed the US to be largely unconstrained by agreements which could have damaging economic consequences, while taking advantage of markets that could be prized open through the organization. The US was also upset that some countries were refusing to become part of the racket's trade regime en masse. William E. Brock, the US trade representative in 1985 under President Ronald Reagan, is open about the workings. "The reasoning behind these efforts," he said in reference to bilateral agreements outside the GATT, "is that additional trade-creating, GATT-consistent liberalization measures should not be postponed while some of the more inward-looking contemplate their own economic malaise."[3] Reagan himself was maybe the West's most zealous preacher of laissez-faire and free trade but, according to *Foreign Affairs*, "presided over the greatest swing toward the protectionism since the 1930s".[4]

This led to the most notable bilateral agreement, the US–Canada free trade agreement, which was signed in 1989. It showed that the US was serious about forming arrangements outside the GATT and made economic sense for American business: Canada was the main single trading partner of the US. It imported $79 billion of US exports in 1989, nearly 22 percent of its total and almost double that taken by Japan. Liberalization across the US's other border, in Mexico, had seen US exports rise from $12.4 billion in 1986 to $25 billion in 1989. The supposed symbiotic trading relationship between these countries – the US, Canada and Mexico – eventually led to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which was signed in 1992 and put into force on January 1, 1994 (not without opposition as will be explored in a later chapter). Its selling point was the potential to bring together 360 million people and enjoin a collective GDP of approximately $6,239 billion. But this agreement followed the paradigm started in the 1970s. The economic model pushed by NAFTA and other bilateral arrangements with countries in Latin America was one of forced structural adjustment that reflected "the triumph of economic liberalism, of faith in export-led growth and of belief in the centrality of the private sector to the development process". This meant that any country wanting to trade with the US – a vital prerequisite for a developing nation to maintain a successful economy – had to adhere to this economic agenda. The US thus achieved its goal of making the rest of the hemisphere in its own image. The George Bush I administration, according to Anthony Payne, "conceived of NAFTA in wholly national interest terms, as devices by which to create an increasingly integrated hemispheric economy which the US could then use as the base from which to export ever more competitively to other, more distant, markets, preferably within the ambit of an extended GATT."[5] This thesis is supported by a comment made by Peter Hakim, staff director of the Inter-American Dialogue, who told Congress in March 1991: "Of every dollar Latin America spends on imports, 50 cents comes to the United States. There is nowhere else in the world where we enjoy that kind of advantage.” Another of the major myths promoted by the US and its agents is that “trade liberalization” – which is code for getting rid of obstructions to US products – is a vital prerequisite for development. The truth is very different. The East Asian economies that have developed impressively in the second half of the 20th century are market economies, but South Korea, for example, is far from a free-market economy. It is, in fact, highly controlled and has bucked the structural adjustment rules. Taiwan is the same: it refused to abandon the economic tools it had in place to protect indigenous industry. Economic success followed.

I spoke to Bernie Sanders, US senator for Vermont, self-described socialist, and opponent of the free trade agreements. According to him, such agreements are emblematic of what’s wrong with the global economy. “What happens to local agriculture, to farmers who are doing subsistence farming, feeding their families?” he said. “They may get driven off of the land because there’ll be some export crops available, whether it’s coffee, or something else.” This is exactly what I had seen in Haiti, where subsistence farmers were pushed off their land by rice dumped by the US in the 1990s; then they were told that with foreign investment subsistence farming was no longer viable and “export-orientated” production was the order of the day. The impact on domestic workers is also disastrous. Sanders continued: “My own view is that, especially for this country, the evidence is overwhelming that the function of these so-called free trade agreements is not to open up foreign markets for American products made in America, but to give corporations the opportunity to shut down here, and move abroad, and take advantage of cheap labor.” The effect for working Americans, and the economies of the weaker countries is clear.

Sanders continued: “What astounds me about this whole debate is I think the evidence is just crystal clear that China has cost us millions of jobs, NAFTA has cost us millions of jobs, and why people want to continue to go forward in a policy which just does not work for American workers, it really does speak, getting back to money, to the power of corporate America. You look at the polls out there; Republicans were saying, no, we don’t think free trade has done well for America, and yet, you’ve got Republicans and many Democrats who are defying the popular will, and defying all of the evidence, and that just speaks to the power of money.” The corporations benefit from free trade, which is why it is maintained. A major part of all free trade agreements is the entrenchment of a legal regime that enshrines "investor rights", which means that domestic constituencies are often overruled in favor of foreign interests. It is part of further integrating countries into a global economy run in the interests of international capital rather than people. "Free trade agreements" actually often have nothing to do with trade – in the sense of a mutual lowering of tariffs. They are used, instead, to entrench corporate ownership of society through changes to the law in favor of investors. The free trade agreements, and associated bilateral investment treaties (BITs), often include a mechanism called "investor–state dispute settlement" (ISDS) which allows multinationals to sue a state, in international venues, that regulates or acts in a way the company doesn't like. Power is drained from nominally sovereign governments and consequently their populations. Through this vast web of treaties and "agreements" criss-crossing the globe, our world's *real rulers* take control.

AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH: AID AND INVESTMENT

But "free trade" is not a lone star. Aid, and with it the obsession with "foreign investment", are the others jewels in the crown. The Marshall Plan – or the European Recovery Act – which was the $13.3 billion aid package ($1.5 billion in loans) given to 16 Western European nations by the US in 1947 is a good place to start. One Harvard historian describes the Marshall Plan as "the high-water mark of official unrequited transfers to foreign governments". Dexter Perkins, writing in 1948, said: "The feeling that security and the preservation of free institutions are at stake provided the motive-power behind the Secretary's program." The former US president George W. Bush called it "a moral victory that resulted in better lives for individual human beings". The tendency for this "gift" to be absorbed into the ideological framework of American beneficence is easy to understand. On the surface it appears to be motivated by the undoubtedly selfless goal of rejuvenating Europe's economies on the back of a demanding war. But on closer inspection things look somewhat different. According to the historian Melvyn Leffler, the Marshall Plan was devised to, quite simply, "benefit the American economy". When I went to the World Bank archives in Washington, DC, I found a document written in the aftermath of its establishment which outlined openly how "foreign aid" was being used to bolster the US economy after World War II. "In large part, the outflow of goods after the war was financed by the United States Government grants and loans, through the Marshall Plan and other programs", it read. "In broad terms, it can be said that the Foreign Aid programs of the [US] Government have financed over $30 billion of exports from 1946 to 1952, or about one-third of total exports for this period." The document pointed out that it wasn't just foreign aid; war was also good for business: "An added stimulus to the outward flow of goods was provided by the Korean war and the Western rearmament policy". The primary motive of the Marshall Plan, and to some extent the whole Bretton Woods package, was the rectification of what these documents called "the dollar gap". Before World War II there was a triangular economic arrangement, in which the US bought raw materials from colonies "owned" by Europe's powers and, in turn, the US could count on its exports being bought in Europe. It was extremely important for US interests that this symbiotic trade pattern be restored in the wake of the war. European (and Japanese) access to developing world markets thus became a very important strategic consideration. The best way for Marshall and his cronies to secure such a trade relationship was to introduce large-scale aid to Europe, so that it had enough economic clout to keep buying US goods. This is spelled out clearly and brazenly in internal planning documents from that period. Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson, in his call for economic aid to Europe in May 1947, talks at length about the "physical destruction" and "economic dislocation" across Europe; fair enough, but he frames his elegies to a lost European dominance with his desire for American supremacy. After listing the devastation in Europe, he laments: "the accumulation of these grim developments has produced a disparity between production in the United States and production in the rest of the world that is staggering in proportions."[6] This is the aforementioned "dollar gap". He then says: "Your Congress and your Government is carrying out a policy of relief and reconstruction today chiefly as a matter of national self-interest."[7] Simple as that.

With the far right defeated and discredited in Germany, Italy and Japan, however, the initial allure of Soviet-style communism was considerable. The disbanded resistance movements all over Europe had a large communist element and they were a real and present danger to the "class" interests of the US, especially in the face of the Soviet superpower. According to one historian, the Marshall Plan was used "to force Europe to soft-pedal welfare programs, limit wages, control inflation, and create an environment conducive for capital investment – part of it financed out of labor's pocket".[8] The US was aware that making Europe dependent and reliant on dollars would provide a fatal blow to the attempts of the Soviets to push their sphere of influence westward. Commenting on the rebuilding of Germany by the US, Leffler writes: "Whereas the Americans hoped that German power would be co-opted, controlled, and modulated, the Soviets naturally feared, as did many Western Europeans, that the steps to rebuild German power might in the long term have unfortunate consequences."[9] The scale of the Soviet apprehension about the intentions of the US in its "state-building" is revealed by their refusal to allow the Eastern European countries under their *de facto* control to participate in the Marshall Plan. Their hostility to American aid is understandable and was not misplaced. Internal planning documents that anticipated the Marshall Plan stipulated that a major purpose of US foreign aid would be "To reduce or to prevent the growth or advancement of national or international power which constitutes a substantial threat to US security and well-being and to oppose programs of coercion and infiltration, especially when effected by the use of armed minorities and to oppose the spread of chaos and extremism." The catch-all phraseology is undoubtedly aimed at the Soviet Union and its partisans of whom there was a burgeoning number post-1945. After the Cold War, and during, this actually meant using foreign aid to keep on a leash smaller powers that looked to be moving towards independent nationalism or any form of meaningful sovereignty. The western intelligentsia garnered the good-will of their citizens by harping on foreign aid – i.e. "free" money going to the developing world to help ameliorate health problems and poverty. Aid is, in fact, "often deployed to supplement private trade and financing"; it is a method of control, as we will see when we investigate USAID later in the book. Far from being the long-awaited break with a paradigm that has seen the West exploit and pillage the Global South for centuries, the "debt relief " and "aid packages" offered by the rich nations are a continuation of the same shameful modalities. Behind all the glistening propaganda about a "new era for Africa", and "the birth of western altruism", lay a dull and familiar blueprint for the export of the so-called "neoliberal" economic model, better represented as neo-imperialism. During one G-8 summit in the 2000s, the finance minister's statement stipulated that to qualify for debt relief developing countries must "boost private sector development" and "eliminate impediments to private investment, both domestic and foreign". These are the *sine qua non* for the entrenchment of the neoliberal economic model. It further transpired, when the self-congratulation had eased only slightly, that much of the money donated to the 18 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries was actually coming out of their aid payments. This meant that the increase in funding was negligible at best, and non-existent at worst. All those except the heavily myopic saw through the G-8 leaders' attempts to sublimate the spread of neoliberalism (and the easing of aid payments) into debt relief. As we see, after a little inspection of the small print, debt relief, as most people understand it – the effacing of all debts with no catches – is not, in fact, supported by any leader in the racket.

ANOTHER WAY OF DOING THINGS

Despite the fact that the racket has remained unchallenged for decades, this does not mean that the racketeers are paranoia free. Nowhere is the decline of US power and influence felt more than with the US's political and economic relationship with Latin America. US planners used to refer to Latin America as "our backyard". These days the new players in Latin America are, primarily, Asian. "What you have is a process of structural change in the trade patterns in Latin America, that is very significant and likely to continue to go in that direction," Augusto de la Torre, chief economist for Latin America and the Caribbean at the World Bank, told me in his office in Washington. "The region is becoming highly differentiated, with countries, mainly in South America, diversifying their export-destination markets significantly," he added. A decade ago, Asia accounted for roughly 5 percent of the region’s trade, but this has ballooned to 20 percent. Much of the growth is down to the region’s commodity riches, particularly iron ore, being sucked in by a booming China. The US’s most important trading bloc, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), is nearly two decades old and is starting to look its age. The share of trade between the three signatories – the US, Mexico and Canada – has fallen by nearly 10 percent in a decade: from 55 percent of the countries’ global exports in 1999 to 46 percent in 2009. President Barack Obama even campaigned for the presidency on his opposition to the NAFTA agreement in its current form and complained about former president George W. Bush’s attitude that “any trade agreement is a good trade agreement” and lamented the fact that NAFTA “did not have enforceable labor agreements and environmental agreements”, which was disgraceful and true. In power, Obama reneged on his promise to renegotiate the deal, like he did on so many things. Later, he even approved a trade agreement with Colombia, one that had been zealously backed by Republicans and business groups in Washington. Pressure from labor groups and unions had briefly given Mr Obama pause, but he eventually signed on the dotted line. The US–Panama accord, meanwhile, which was signed by Panama in 2007, had still not been ratified, with business groups using the common propaganda argument that delays have “allowed US rivals to capitalize”.

A move to regional trading blocs in Latin America has also begun to chip away at the racket’s control. The most significant of the groupings has been Mercosur, which was founded in 1985 and includes all South America’s main economies as full or associate members. But its progress has not been steady and, since the early 1990s, it has been stuck over the removal of barriers, witnessing in some cases reversals and new obstructions. Although a serious grouping, Mercosur accounts for only 11 percent of Brazilian trade, for example. The US has been happy with this, as it means more reliance on the empire upstairs. But Latin American governments could now choose who they deal with, which lowered the importance of appeasing US interests. The more recent grouping, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), was more scary to the Americans because it was largely set up as a political, rather than an economic, bloc, as an explicit way of avoiding the US dominating the people of the region.

One place the US still had direct control over was Colombia, which was the jewel in the crown of the racket in the region, the Israel of Latin America.

Stationed in the *FT* office in Washington, DC in 2011, I was asked to watch the passage of a free trade agreement that was being furiously debated in Congress. As we have seen, such agreements are intended to give preferential trade terms to producers in the respective countries, in this case the US in Colombia and vice-versa. At least that's the theory. What actually happens is that jobs leave the richer nation and go to the country where workers are paid a pittance, while goods from the richer country flood the poorer, pushing out indigenous production. The winners, once again, are transnational corporations who spread their tentacles further into foreign lands, with less regulation and increased freedom to pollute and destroy. In this case, the tariffs Colombia had in place on American goods would be eliminated. Tariffs are government taxes that are imposed on foreign products in an effort to protect indigenous industries that have to compete with (sometimes) cheaper goods. In eliminating these, the Colombian government was potentially destroying its own manufacturers. It is no surprise that Republicans – the chief representatives of the racket – were pressing President Obama hard to push through a deal. In Washington, I called a Republican congressman, Kevin Brady, who told me of his fears that China, the new kid on the block, was invading the US's traditional backyard: Latin America. The free trade agreement would help the US to stave off China's rise, which had recently become even scarier for imperial managers when it was revealed that China was planning to build an alternative "dry canal" across the Panama isthmus. The US had traditionally had complete control of the Panama isthmus through the Panama Canal, which remains the only sea path through the western hemisphere – from Canada to the bottom of Argentina. The US had signed a treaty with Panama in the early 20th century for control of the canal after its own US Army Corps of Engineers built it. Panama itself had been created with the help of the US when it seceded from Colombia in 1903.

Brady, who represented Texas's 8th congressional district, was a member of the committee overseeing the passage of the free trade agreement. "This shows how aggressively China and other US competitors are establishing markets in our backyard," he told me. "China is taking smart advantage of America's inexcusable delay of nearly five years in approving its free trade agreement with Colombia." Barack Obama, no real friend of working people, had been cautious to sign it because it would lose him support among the Democratic base and the unions who were ardently opposing the deal. The reasons were simple: the deal would destroy American jobs, as even more production was "off-shored" to other countries. Free trade agreements often only benefit labor (not wages) in the poorer country, while locking in an "investor-rights" economic climate. (And when I say "benefit" I should add that the type of work it locks poor countries into is often sweatshop labor, as subsistence or small-scale agriculture is destroyed by subsidized products from the US or Europe coming in without tariffs. The people have to leave the countryside and become part of this new "economic miracle" of working in sweatshops for slave wages six days a week.) Unions also pointed out the Colombian government's horrendous record with labor and human rights. The country ranks as the most dangerous in the world to be a trade unionist, as far-right paramilitaries, allied in many cases with the government, terrorize civil society. In the end Obama saw what he wanted to see and accepted the cosmetic changes that the Colombian premier, Juan Manuel Santos, promised. It is a familiar story: little to no real change.

For over 40 years there has been a civil war raging in Colombia between government forces and left-wing guerrilla groups, in which the US has been heavily involved. The ongoing battle for control over strategic areas has resulted in many civilians being caught in the crossfire. An estimated 70,000 people have been killed in the past 20 years. Of these, over 2,700 have been trade union leaders, the overwhelming majority of whom were targeted by government-sponsored paramilitary groups in an attempt to stamp out worker mobilization. According to the human rights organization Global Exchange, since the US began sending aircraft and on-the-ground training to Colombia in 2000, politically motivated killings have risen from 14 to 20 per day, and the number of kidnappings and disappearances has doubled. In 2004, Bush asked Congress to prolong the generous aid package to Colombia for the years to come, adding to the $3 billion donated over the previous five years (it was started under Bill Clinton's "Plan Colombia"). One in ten Colombians has been uprooted because of the violence. It is estimated that there are over 3.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country, the second highest number in the world after

Syria. Within this panorama of internal violence and forced acquisition of land, women have been adversely affected: around 65 percent of the displaced population are women (the effects of US imperialism are inevitably worse for women). This gender imbalance is a result of the common breakdown of families following the stresses of displacement, which in many cases causes the men to leave; or when the men are killed their wives and partners are forced to escape alone with their families. The experience of 17-year-old Yessika Hoyos is, sadly, not unusual. During her first month of law school in Bogotá – the capital of Colombia – her uncle showed up to fetch her from class. He told her that she was needed at the hospital. Yessika and her uncle made the hour-long car journey to the family's local hospital in the town of Fusagasugá. There, Yessika saw her mother and her siblings huddled together. Her 14-year-old sister had found their father lying in a pool of blood outside his friend's house. As she ran to attempt to resuscitate him, she found that he was riddled with bullets. Shot seven times in the head, he had died instantly.

"My father's name was Jorge Darios Hoyos Franco, he was a trade union leader and on the 3rd of March 2001 he was assassinated," Yessika, aged 25 when we met her, with a tone of self-assuredness that belies the horrors of the personal tragedy she was recollecting, told me and my colleague Ana Arendar. "Initially, like with all the trade unionists that have been assassinated in Colombia, the police claimed that it had been a murder of passion … We knew this not to be true as my father had been receiving death threats for months due to his trade union activity … so we had to really fight and struggle for the truth to come out." Yessika and her mother began to petition for her father's killers to be brought to justice. They gave interviews in the local media and worked with a national center for human rights to collect evidence. "Then my mother started receiving calls telling her that we had to keep our mouths shut or we would end up like my father," said Yessika. "People started coming to our house and threatening us, we were followed in the street, that's why two weeks later we were forced to leave our house and we became displaced. We went to Bogotá. In one year we moved house at least five times, because every time we moved they would find us and threaten us so we would have to move again."

This was also the case for Haydee Moreno, whose husband was assassinated by paramilitary factions in 1994. She was left widowed with a five-year-old son while four months pregnant. “We had to abandon everything we owned, all our belongings, our house and our land, and move,” she said. “It is the women who are most vulnerable in a situation of displacement. We have to think about how we are going to find food for our children, how we are going to make sure they get an education, while also worrying about how we are going to stay safe and provide for the family.”

A report by the non-governmental organization Refugees International highlighted sustained government failure in dealing with IDPs or developing adequate responses to the needs of specific groups such as women and children. The report identified the gender dimensions of displacement which have been largely ignored, these include: lack of access to healthcare – especially access to obstetric care; high levels of domestic abuse triggered by the increased stresses brought on the family; the psychological trauma suffered by women who have lost loved ones; the high number of women who have turned to prostitution as a means of supporting their families; and the high incidences of rape and sexual violence which have been continually used as an act of war by both sides of the conflict. This devastating injustice impelled the Constitutional Court in Colombia to rule that the government is failing in its duty to provide humanitarian assistance to the country’s displaced women. “The government now appear to be doing something but their efforts aren’t proving effective,” explained Isabel Ortiz Perez, president of Mujer y Futuro, a Colombian foundation that works to defend women’s rights. “There is no coordination between the programs they offer. For example they have been attempting to create housing for displaced women but they won’t create any education facilities. As a result displaced children aren’t able to go to school and mothers aren’t able to work as they have to look after their children during the day.”

Isabel thinks that the government should be focusing its efforts on the provision of childcare and helping women find employment within the formal sector. “At the moment the majority of displaced women are employed in the informal sector, selling sweets on the streets or working in the domestic sector. This is all work in the informal economy which means that these women are left without social services or healthcare.”

Yessika finished her law degree and now works for the José Alvear Restrepo legal collective (CAJAR), a human rights firm which is handling her father's assassination case. Despite the arrest of the men who shot her father, those who ordered the killing remain free. Yet Yessika considers herself to have been one of the lucky ones. When her family was displaced, her mother was able to keep her job as a schoolteacher and they had friends who helped them move to Bogotá. "My mum was able to continue with her work, if she hadn't I wouldn't be here now, neither would I have been able to complete my law degree," she said. "But most of the displaced women who arrive in Bogotá are peasants whose lives and customs revolve around cultivating the land. They often arrive in the city illiterate with no education and no possessions, what hope do they have?"

US support for this kind of barbarism might even be futile now, as China steps into the fold. "We're in a new era," Larry Birns, director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, told me when I interviewed him in Washington. "It's an era where strategy is defined more in terms of access to food and commodities, rather than naval bases and alliance policy. The Chinese are leading the way. US primacy was largely due to the fact it had no competitors, now it *only* has competitors," he added. Other countries are weary of the US style of imperialism, and see China as a way of escaping the investor-rights straitjacket imposed by the US. Brazil, the source of much of China's iron ore, which produces steel, is a good example. (The US helped overthrow the country's democratic government in 1964, installing a brutal security state which ruled for decades.) The move to a global economy revolving round commodities has also upset the traditional dominance of the US (and the EU). The US which used to rule the roost in trade discussions, through the WTO, is now being bypassed; any number of countries are becoming emergent countries, and they are benefitting even more because they are not *consumer* economies. The advantages that used to accrue automatically to the US have, to some extent, now slipped to the other side, to the poor nations, because they have agricultural commodities and oil. But the US-enforced system of corporate mining and resource extraction, a particularly vicious arm of the global racket, which gets these commodities out of the ground for a healthy profit, still causes untold suffering around the world.

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FOUR

CURSING YOUR RICHES

KILLING FOR TREASURE

One of the oldest money-making schemes of the racket is the pursuit of the natural minerals under the ground of another country. The mining industry is a multi-billion-dollar enterprise, which sees transnational corporations shift natural resources around the world. The annual turnover of many of these corporations is bigger than that of the countries from which they are extracting. The US is at the forefront of keeping economies in the Global South open to western mining companies – often by getting rid of governments that want to do things differently. The corporations are from all over the rich world, and they often destroy the environment of the local areas. The people on the ground, those who fight back, are never viewed kindly – and mining companies often, with the help of local proxies, will take them out. When I was covering mining at the *Financial Times*, I went through a period where, to put it simply, people kept being killed. Perhaps unsurprisingly, none of my contacts in the mining world would talk to me about it, but I'd see repeat newswire stories of people being gunned down on the streets by no-one-knew-whom. In a six-day period over Christmas 2010, for example, while I was working for the *FT* in London, two prominent anti-mining activists in El Salvador were shot dead in broad daylight. First, Ramiro Rivera Gómez, vice-president of the Cabañas Environment Committee (CEC), which was campaigning to stop Canadian mining company Pacific Rim from opening a gold mine in the area, was killed while walking with his 14-year-old daughter. Six days later, Dora "Alicia" Recinos Sorto was shot returning from washing laundry in a nearby lake. She was eight months pregnant and another prominent member of the CEC. Amnesty International called on the Salvadoran authorities to investigate the killings, but nothing happened.

So I decided to call the company. "This has nothing to do with Pacific Rim. It's a local family feud," Tom Shrake, chief executive of the company, told me, sounding agitated. I guessed *FT* journalists didn't ask these sorts of things very often. He continued: "There are radical elements out there that would like people to believe it's about mining, but it's not true." But stories of violence and disruption at mining sites around the developing world are common and consistent. In Mexico, also in that December, the authorities temporarily closed down a barite mine operated by another Canadian company, Blackfire Exploration, after indigenous leader and activist Mariano Abarca Roblero was shot in the head and killed by a passing motorcyclist. Abarca Roblero had been a leader of the Mexican Network of People Affected by Mining, and was involved in the resistance to an open pit extraction mine in Chiapas. I soon realized that similar deaths were happening all the time, everywhere. These incidents were indicative of a program of intimidation and murder for anyone who opposed the opening up of their land to foreign mining companies.

These stories brought back bad memories for an industry that had spent decades lavishing considerable amounts of money and time on trying to clean up its image – not because it cared about the people being displaced, but because it was starting to hurt the bottom line. In a 2007 article in the *Multinational Business Review*, Hevina Dashwood explained that mining companies "were caught in the mid-1990s with a significant gap between societal expectations and their institutionalized practices … For the industry as a whole, the gap had widened so much that companies experienced a legitimacy crisis." The industry-wide obsession with "sustainability" and corporate social responsibility (CSR) started around the turn of the millennium as mining companies started to feel the effects of their reputation in their ability to operate around the world and make money. This crisis was averted by a slew of new organizations dedicated to promoting CSR and improving the image of the industry. In 1999, nine of the biggest mining companies joined forces to create the Global Mining Initiative, intended to provide ideas and strategies for "sustainability in mining". In 2001, the representative body for the mining industry was transformed into the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), which dedicated itself to 10 principles – from education to the environment – to which the industry pledged to hold itself. The field of CSR was so popular in the mining industry during this period that the University of Queensland in Australia founded its own Sustainable Minerals Institute in 2001 to promote the practice. It was, the school said, established "in response to growing interest in and debate about the role of the mining and minerals industry in contemporary society".[1]

But in reality, despite cosmetic changes, nothing fundamental changed. The dynamic of capitalism meant it never could: the mining companies didn't go to these poor countries for charity; they wanted to take their minerals and make a profit on them. Paying workers well, or paying to clear up after themselves, hurt the bottom line and shareholders, which was what these institutions, by definition, cared about. "The recent murders of mining organizers in Mexico and Guatemala, and horrendous toxic waste spills such as at Barrick Gold's North Mara mine in Tanzania, make it very hard for the mining companies to convince us that their conduct has improved," Alexis Stoumbelis, executive director of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, which had spoken out about the assassinations in the country, told me. "What has changed is the mining companies' attention to and investment in projecting an image of themselves as socially and environmentally responsible." She was right.

But agents of the racket don't just come in the form of chief executives. These places employ people to improve their image – the black world of public relations. Tim Purcell, a director of the public relations firm CO_3, predictably disagreed: "The larger players have now had to tackle ICMM issues," he said. "Some [issues] are old as the hills, from indigenous tribal issues, to political insensitivity, to profound health and safety issues. But the industry does take these issues seriously, and it shares the concern and strategies about dealing with these things … About 10 years ago major mining companies had big reputational issues," he continued. "The criticisms … were starting to affect business. Companies weren't getting licenses to operate – things like that." When business was hurt, things had to change. Or at least the image of things had to change. In truth, the people in the countries, behind the paeans to foreign investment and new jobs, were slaves to an old and well-established form of imperialism that had consigned them to underdevelopment for centuries.

At that time, I also spoke to Kenmare Resources, a company that owns and operates a titanium mine in Mozambique which was one of the "success stories" of this trend for corporate concern about reputation in the mining industry. It won a Corporate Social Responsibility Award in 2009 from the Chamber of Commerce of Ireland for its Kenmare Moma Development Association (KMAD), which was founded in 2004. The company also won the Nedbank Socio-Economic Award for the same project. "Basically, right at the outset of the project, we knew that in order for this to be a long-term success, we had to make sure that people saw it as an economic good for them – not for the country, but for them directly," said Kenmare's managing director, Michael Carvill, parroting the official lies. "In order to achieve this, we set up a not-for-profit development organization with the objective of ensuring that the local communities benefit from mines." In the mining industry, making sure that local people actually have some benefit from their resources warrants copious prizes.

Carvill told me all the wonderful things KMAD provides to the local communities in Mozambique, from jobs to healthcare to agricultural training. "We even started a wildlife fund joint-venture, which provided agriculture technicians to tutor people in how to grow stuff that might be sold to the mine, and we lean on the mine so they buy," Carvill said. "It has given people who were in absolute poverty some money, and it has allowed for a better trickle-down effect. We've also built a couple of schools." The truth of Kenmare's venture for the people of Mozambique is in the fine print. The Moma mine operates in an industrial free zone (IFZ), which makes the processing plant exempt from corporate taxes, import duties, export duties and VAT, with a 1 percent turnover after six years of production. It is estimated that Moma could have annual revenues of $85 million over a 20-year period. This "arrangement" comes straight out the racket's playbook: you pay no taxes or royalties on the people's minerals and then act like Jesus Christ come to save the natives with schools and hospitals. No matter that these are of poor quality and cost well below the millions of dollars you've saved in taxes. PR job complete.

This kind of deal is often cut between governments and foreign companies, especially when capital costs will be high, and it's one of the main gripes of civil society groups in developing countries, which argue that while jobs and benefits may flow to the communities near the site, the rest of the country is left empty-handed, save for those elements of infrastructure needed to connect the site to the rest of the country. The argument from mining companies is that they have the capital and expertise that developing countries don't, which might be true. But the answer in that case is for developing countries to build up their indigenous expertise by building an engineering university. Of course, mining companies don't want to hear this because it would make them obsolete, so the trend continues: the developing countries stay underdeveloped and reliant on foreign capital – until they get a leader with the people's interests at heart, rather than the interests of foreign capitalists, as in Bolivia, which we'll look at later.

"When I first engaged in this industry, over 30 years ago, with very few exceptions it was rough-handed and red-necked," said John Elkington, founder of SustainAbility, a strategy consultancy and think-tank. "These people were real bruisers. In the same way it's said that you can't make omelets without breaking eggs, they argued that you couldn't dig mines without destroying the environment. They had no time for environmentalists." Now though, he said, things are different. "I genuinely believe that the ICMM process helped catalyze real progress – and some industry leaders have had some sort of crisis of conscience over the past decade or so."

It was all lies. Nothing has changed apart from appearances. Some in the mining industry admitted they didn't even know what "sustainability" actually means, even while they sing its praises. "I wouldn't actually know how to define it; it's very ill-defined and got such a broad spectrum," Dr Bernard Olivier, executive director of miner TanzaniteOne, told me in South Africa. "We care about making sure the local community is bought into the process, but I don't know if that's the definition of 'sustainability'." Chief executives of mining companies talk about the need for a "social license" – or a lack of community backlash – to work in foreign countries. The new paradigm was meant to make this easier. The mining meet-up I went to in Cape Town, South Africa, lasted only four days, but half of the schedule was given over to discussions of CSR. Despite this preoccupation, many leading mining companies also cannot provide definitive figures on how much they spend on CSR. I asked the five biggest companies – BHP

Billiton, Rio Tinto, Vedanta, Anglo American and Xstrata – to tell me what they spent. Only Vedanta provided a figure for CSR at the group level and the company could only provide two years of data. The other four said they don't account for CSR spending – under which fall local community projects and environmental awareness – as a discrete category. Anglo American, which said it could not provide any figures at all, commented: "For Anglo American, corporate social investment and responsible business practices are absolutely embedded in the way we operate." The figures from the other four show that spending in the categories which they pointed to as closest to CSR have risen significantly since 2004, but year-on-year increases have been patchy and inconsistent. Rio Tinto said the nearest it comes to accounting for CSR is its "external costs" accounting section. Xstrata provided figures for corporate social involvement (CSI), which only includes investment to initiatives or projects that benefit the broader community where it works, not the "significant expenditure" on day-to-day operational expenses. However, its CSI spending rose precipitously from £10.5 million to £102 million but fell by nearly half to £58.5 million in 2008.

KILLING FOR PROFIT

Despite CSR and CSI spending, despite all the PR, the human story was not getting any better, as became apparent when I started looking into contemporary legal battles. One of the most high-profile cases involving local resistance to a new mining project involved the company Vedanta. A tribal people in India called the Dongria Kondh are engaged in a civil disobedience campaign to stop the company from developing an open-pit bauxite mine in the Niyamgiri hills, in the state of Orissa, in eastern India. The Dongria worship Niyamgiri's peak as the seat of their god. Vedanta already has a bauxite mine at the base of the hills. A British government agency, the UK National Contact Point (NCP), which oversees the enforcement of Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) guidelines on business conduct, released a statement critical of Vedanta. It concluded: "Vedanta failed to engage the Dongria Kondh in adequate and timely consultations about the construction of the mine, or to use other mechanisms to assess the implications of its activities on the community, such as an indigenous or human rights impact assessment." And yet, since January 2009, after the financial crisis when the Vedanta share price was as low as 584p, the stock has quintupled to 2,106p. During this period the company received reams of bad press; the Church of England and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust sold their stock; and the company was condemned by the NCP. But only four days after the Rowntree announcement, Vedanta's share price jumped 72p in one day to £26.26. In August 2006, a proposed coal operation in Phulbari, Bangladesh, became the center of a protest that badly impacted the share price of GCM Resources which owned the asset. Local resistance had been building and eventually a crowd of 50,000 people marched to the offices of GCM. In this case, the police fired live rounds on the peaceful protest and killed three people and injured many more. "While the market should pay more than lip service to CSR, the reality is that it only cares if social unrest on the ground starts to impact a mine's operational performance," Joe Lunn, mining analyst at finnCap, told me. "Generally speaking, the assets of large mining companies are more diversified with enhanced geographical spread so are less affected than a small company with a single project." In the same month as the NCP ruling, the English High Court froze £5 million of assets belonging to another British mining company, Monterrico Metals, after 27 men and women were allegedly detained for three days at its Rio Blanco mine in northern Peru. The 27 were protesting the mine's development. In development circles the term "resource curse" has been invented to describe the tendency for these great sources of wealth to turn into destitution and violence for the citizens sitting on top of the deposits, while profits are sent abroad. It is, of course, not an *accident* that it ends like this.

When I was in South Africa in 2012, the mining honchos talked endless hot air about the wonderful safety standards upheld by the mining companies, as happy workers beamed out from glossy brochures. But at the same time the leading mining companies on the London Stock Exchange had failed to bring down the number of fatalities at their operations, despite constant rhetoric to the contrary. I surveyed four leading UK-listed mining groups – Rio Tinto, Vedanta, Xstrata and BHP Billiton – and found the number of fatalities had more than doubled since 2005. The companies recorded 23 deaths in 2005, while in 2008 the figure was 54. The *FT* published the story – derision ensued.[2] “It’s a difficult one because, I think, individually companies are seeing results,” said Carel Labuschagne, chief executive of the International Register of Certificated Auditors, a risk management group advising companies on safety issues. “The problem is the cultural change coming down from management is a process.” Rio Tinto asserted: “Safety is in everything we do. Our figures should be looked at in terms of an expanding workforce. But of course, any fatality is too many and we strive to keep it to an absolute minimum.” There are no binding regulations on mining safety although there are international “standards” – as with everything else in the industry, when it comes to social concerns the law constraining companies is merely a gentlemen’s agreement.

One mining executive I spoke to summed up the real reasons for the change in image, and also the reason why even the smallest improvements are, at root, undertaken for profit. “I‘d love to say our projects were entirely altruistic,” said Brad Sampson, executive director of Discovery Metals, a copper mining company operating in Botswana, “but the last decade or so, mining companies have realized that unless you bring along the local community, you can’t operate. If you don’t, you will not get a social license to operate. I’m not talking about paper – but that local communities can stop projects from developing. You have to get them on side. What you are doing with a mining project in a faraway part of the world, you are imposing a degree of change, which is difficult. I think there’s no question that the mining industry came with a messy reputation. Whether that is deserved you can debate.”

Over the last decade, the global mining industry has awakened to the need to address sustainability issues. But for this to be fully realized and its services utilized over the next decade, many within the industry believe that a binding international regulatory framework is the vital next step. “Voluntarism only takes you so far,” said Elkington of SustainAbility. “It helps promote experimental approaches and a degree of competitive behavior, but there will always be those companies that prefer not to follow the corporate-citizenship line. They have to be brought under control via appropriate governance – regulatory and legal mechanisms.” That hasn’t happened.

OUR LITHIUM

Evo Morales, the president of Bolivia, is at the forefront of a change in the attitude among developing-world leaders toward foreign – or, more specifically, western – mining companies. His country owns half the world's deposits of lithium, which could be hugely lucrative if developed. But his government is reluctant to let western companies in. Mining minister Luis Alberto Echazu has said: "We will not repeat the historical experience since the 15th century: raw materials exported for the industrialization of the West, which has left us poor." Instead, Bolivia has bucked conventional developmental economics – which outsources development and production to foreign companies expert in the field and with reserves of capital – and has endeavored to develop its deposits with state-owned companies, rebuffing the overtures of countless western companies. Morales needs to raise $800 million to construct the mines and processing plants needed for this approach. In an industry report, Bolivian mining was reported to have grown 13 percent in 2009.

In 2012, I went to see the Bolivian ambassador to the UK to find out what was behind this new way of doing things. She told me she doesn't get many requests for media interviews. When financial news outlets in the West write about Latin America, it's inevitably an article lauding the "economic miracle" ' of its Brazilian neighbor or a scaremongering editorial about the Red Menace of Venezuela. But a look at the media elsewhere – specifically emerging markets in East Asia – and the story isn't so monochrome. In fact, China's state news agency, Xinhua, covers pretty much every statement made by Bolivian President Evo Morales. Why? It's quite simple: a soft, silver-white metal called lithium. This landlocked country of 9 million people, which is the poorest in South America, has the world's largest reserves of a mineral that could become one of the most sought-after of the century. It's needed to make the batteries that will power the electric car revolution that many are waiting for, particularly in China.

But the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) has been in government since 2005 and it is pioneering a new development model, which, if successful, could become the norm across the developing world. What may worry multinational mining companies and their backers is that it takes no heed of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank orthodoxy, which has traditionally advocated minimal regulation on foreign direct investment. “I know that they are in some discussions with France, Korea and Japan about working in Bolivia to develop lithium, but we don’t want to be only raw material exporters. We want to create added value in the country,” said Ambassador Maria Beatriz Souviron, as she sat in the Bolivian embassy in Eaton Square. By “added value” Ms Souviron means building factories in Bolivia to manufacture the batteries within the country, rather than sending the metals abroad once they are out of the ground. It’s an idea that has an increasing number of proponents all over the world of emerging markets. In an interview in 2011, Nigeria’s State Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Akin Akinnigbagbe, said of his country’s cocoa exports: “We are equally embarking on what I will call value addition to the business of cocoa. This will take the form of processing it at home before selling into the international market. This will equally assist the farmers to get higher profit unlike in the past, when cocoa beans are exported directly to the international market; with the farmers having no control on the price.”[3] It could mean a harder time for western companies. “The policy of my government is to retain sovereignty over the investments made in the country,” said Souviron. “So if the people that want to invest in my country and follow that rule of value-added, then it’s fine. If not we’ll do it ourselves.” And the challenge to orthodox development models has so far been a success. The Bolivian government has managed to run a current account surplus of 12.1 percent of GDP in 2007, 11.6 percent in 2008, and 3.4 percent in 2009 as the government spent to keep the country from recession. Along with Venezuela and Argentina, Bolivia was the only country in the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean to be forecast a current account surplus by the IMF in 2010. So far the Morales administration has “inked” a Memorandum of Understanding with the South Koreans to develop the lithium after the president was happy with Korea’s “efforts to use clean technology” and its willingness to abide by the new endogenous growth model Bolivia is seeking.

The advent of the Chinese is also changing how business is done. The miner Bellzone, for example, agreed a deal with China for investment in its iron ore project in Guinea that stipulated funding infrastructure in return for mineral supplies. The iron ore project at Kalia in the West African country is substantial. It has a defined resource of 2.4 billion tonnes and the company is aiming for 50 million tonnes of production a year. With an eye on its insatiable appetite for steel, the China International Fund (CIF) agreed to spend about $3 billion on building the infrastructure needed for the project. Chinese companies are increasingly offering to build transport and energy infrastructure for mining companies in return for deals to buy the minerals produced, or off-take agreements. "It's a new form of pragmatism," Tim Williams, analyst at Ernst & Young, told me. "They don't want to bother with outright control, so they won't buy a majority stake, but will plough money into infrastructure." He added: "You've got companies with good assets but no money and no project finance. Most of the equity markets are still weak, so they have to look at something else." The Bolivians have gone into projects with the Chinese, reporting that they treat them like equals, in a way the Americans never have done.

In recent years, the owners of the mining industry have invented a curious language. When a country decides that its own people, instead of a foreign company, should profit from the minerals under their own ground at a fair price, foreign companies call this "resource nationalism", a pejorative term. I spoke to African Consolidated Resource (ACR) – a miner working in Zimbabwe – which had its mining license in the country's Marange diamond fields finally cancelled by the mining secretary, Thankful Musukutwa, after months of a protracted legal process. "We actually won in the High Court, which said our license was good in September," Roy Tucker, chief financial officer at ACR, told me. "But the government appealed to the Supreme Court, who have said nothing should be mined." The government invoked the Mine and Minerals Act which stipulates that certain lands are reserved against prospecting. "It's unconnected to the court case," said Mr Tucker. "They've proposed new grounds for cancellation, they suddenly discovered the ground where the license is, which was reserved against prospecting, apparently. The obvious suspicion is that something has been changed in the records." ACR and other companies operating in Zimbabwe were also up against a new law proposed by Robert Mugabe and his Zanu-PF party which will give the country a majority stake in any foreign company operating assets in Zimbabwe. For the foreign capitalists this was too much; they wanted it to be like Haiti where they had won and Haitians were forced into a minority stake in their industries – by law. “By some date in April companies are asked to submit plans so that 51 percent of the company is held in indigenous hands within five years, so we have to submit a plan,” said Mr Tucker, seriously agitated.

In South Africa, parts of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) government have been making statements about the nationalization of the mining industry since the end of apartheid, as was promised in the ANC’s famous and noble Freedom Charter. When I was in South Africa, Julius Malema, then president of the ANC Youth League, was saying that nationalization of the mining industry was now a strong priority, and it should be. Unfortunately, economic apartheid was never taken on in South Africa. “We are aware that there are efforts to topple and replace liberation movements with puppet governments … who exploit the minerals of Africa,” he said.

At the 2010 Mining Indaba – the most important resources conference in Africa – the mining minister, Susan Shabangu, felt compelled to tell the gathered mining industry – rich white men in suits – in no uncertain terms “there will be no nationalization of the mines in my lifetime”. The people who had so much to gain from this imperialism trotted out the usual arguments. “Nationalization of mines has never worked anywhere in the world and there is no evidence for it to work in South Africa,” David Nel, chief executive of Strategic Natural Resources, a coal miner working in South Africa, told me. “The South African GDP is significantly dependent on revenue earned from mining and the foreign investment this brings to South Africa; the disinvestment in South Africa would be catastrophic.” But what if they nationalized the mines and put them under South African control? What if the profits were repatriated not to London and New York but were invested in the schools of Soweto and Johannesburg? *Impossible*, they said. Even talk of imposing fairer royalty and tax agreements sparked the ire of the foreign companies. Most of the real action took place outside the convention center, where access to talks and company exhibits cost a cool $1,500. Decadent parties were thrown in bars and mansions around Cape Town by PR companies, investment banks and brokerages, all seeking new clients and trying to upstage each other as to who could put on the most spectacular show. Against this backdrop, the mining industry tried to manipulate political forces. One of the conference’s biggest themes, for example, was investor security in Africa. All the big African economies sent ministerial delegations to give talks and assuage investor fears, telling them how wonderfully they would be treated. They were trying to avoid things like the Nigerian government's 2012 Petroleum Industry Bill, which attempts to reform the lucrative oil sector by allowing the government to bring down the profits of foreign companies and impose more stringent taxes and royalties. The usual suspects were apoplectic in that case: independence and sovereignty for poor countries is incompatible with how the racket functions. However, if somehow they "lose" a country to independence, the racket turns to the enforcement stage, which is a central part of the criminal enterprise they oversee.

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2 Matt Kennard, "Miners' efforts fail to cut death toll", *Financial Times*, January 18, 2010.

3 "Nigeria: 'We want to add value to our cocoa' ", *All Africa*, February 25, 2010, http://allafrica.com/stories/201002251272.html

PART TWO

ENFORCEMENT

FIVE

THE MOB

YOUR FRIENDLY, LOCAL TYPES

In 1945 there was a genuine desire among the victors of World War II to devise an international political system that would ensure there would be no third world war. As the Nuremberg Trials drew to a close, a host of international laws were drawn up with this purpose in mind. The Geneva Conventions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, among others, were designed to give “rules of play” to war and enshrine certain inalienable rights for the whole of humanity. At the time many looked ruefully at the League of Nations which had been so ineffective in arbitrating Great Power conflict in the inter-war period, between 1918 and 1939. Memories of the gratuitously harsh Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which many still maintain led indirectly to the rise of Nazi Germany, played on the minds of planners. The need to get the postwar institutional structure right was paramount. The most important political and diplomatic institution set up at this point to rectify the mistakes of the past was the United Nations. There was lofty rhetoric about a “new paradigm” of cordial relations between the hitherto hostile powers. Some intellectuals of the time, such as Dexter Perkins, believed the UN was an example of noble “self-abnegation on the part of a great power”, because it “bound the United States to accept decisions that might run counter to the judgment of Washington”. For Perkins, this was proof that the United States had gone far to demonstrate its willingness to “submit its own policies to the collective opinion of states inferior to itself from the point of view of physical power”. But scrutiny of the composition of the nascent United Nations reveals the lengths that the great powers, led by the US, had gone to in their effort to *consolidate* their grip on power, not truncate it.

The UN was created as three separate legislative bodies, and the format devised in 1945 exists today without significant reform. The General Assembly is a forum to discuss issues related to international law and those pertaining to the functioning of the UN. Compared to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, its democratic credentials are luminous: it runs on a one-country, one-vote basis and needs two-thirds of the house to support a motion for it to be passed. Its sister institution, the Economic and Social Council, assists the General Assembly with economic and social dealings. It has 54 members, all chosen by the General Assembly. The most important body in the UN (and incidentally the most susceptible to corruption and manipulation) is the Security Council where all the most pressing international issues relating to "war and peace" are discussed and voted on. It was created in 1945 with five permanent members: the US, Britain, France, Russia and China. It has another 10 rotating members who serve two-year terms. The power of the Security Council derives from the fact that it can make member states enforce the UN Charter (which incidentally is broken by the US on a near daily basis with threats against foreign countries).

The crucial qualification was, and still is, that any of the permanent members of the UN Security Council have the power to unilaterally veto a prospective resolution. In 1945 this gave executive power to three western imperial powers – the United States, Britain and France – alongside another eastern imperial power, Soviet Russia. Archconservative Republican senator Arthur Vandenberg wrote in his diary in 1945 about the newly formed UN: "The striking thing about it is that it is so conservative from a nationalist standpoint. It is based virtually on a four-power alliance … This is anything but a wild-eyed internationalist dream of a world State … I am deeply impressed (and surprised) to find [Cordell] Hull so carefully guarding our American veto in his scheme of things."[1] The historian Ellen Meiskins Wood goes further, stating that the UN's "very existence" was geared toward "discouraging forms of international organization less congenial to the dominant powers".[2] The undemocratic nature of the Security Council would seem to support Wood's thesis, even though some historians argue that at the end of World War II the necessity of a rapprochement between the Great Powers was greater than any idealistic commitment to democracy.

Regardless of the historical contingencies and the original intent of the US planners, the treatment of the UN over the next 50 years certainly indicates that the institutional framework laid down in 1945 was consciously left open to manipulation. From its inception, the UN has enabled the US to enforce its own foreign policy objectives with a veneer of international support. Because of its legitimacy in the eyes of the international community, the UN is a part of the US effort to legitimate foreign wars in the eyes of its citizens (and its allies). When I spoke to the then British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, he was keen to repeatedly point to the pretext of UN resolutions when discussing the 2003 US/UK war in Iraq. "Look, we went into Iraq on the basis of United Nations resolutions," he told me at the Foreign Office on Whitehall in London. "Now, you can argue about whether we needed another resolution but there were about 15 resolutions already there. And they were very special circumstances. And Iraq would not have been caught up in all this trouble if it had not had a nuclear weapons program, a chemical weapons program, and a biological weapons program."

The US was held in check somewhat by the Soviet Union which had similar objectives throughout the Cold War. With the decline of the Soviet Union and the move to a unipolar international arrangement, American domination lost all inhibitions. There was also a marked change in the 1960s and 1970s when decolonization put many developing countries outside the sphere of influence of the US. This change is spelled out by former member of the Reagan–Bush State Department and now historian, Francis Fukuyama. He states quite openly and without sorrow that the UN has become "perfectly serviceable as an instrument of American unilateralism and indeed may be the primary mechanism through which unilateralism will be exercised in the future".[3] The UN also wrestles with the fact that the US has always been a large financial donor to the institution and so its very survival relies on it. The US was donating $2.4 billion by the end of the 20th century, which comprised 25 percent of the whole UN budget. When I asked the historian Michael Mann whether he thought the UN had become a rubber stamp for US policies he alluded to this fundamental flaw with the UN structure, saying that while there was "some negotiations" it was inevitably "around American leadership and that is how

American politicians would see it, both moderate Republicans and Democrats. After all, what can Europe do? If you want some kind of action somewhere in the world, a Rwanda or Sudan, what can Europe do? It can't point a thousand troops in any single direction. The only power that can is the US, especially if logistical capacity is needed."

The method used for maintaining primacy over the United Nations has primarily been the use of foreign aid. Available statistics demonstrate the corollary between US aid and votes at the United Nations – basically the US grants aid money when certain countries guarantee to vote in line with the US at the UN (and other multilateral bodies). For example, the airport in Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince was built by the US in exchange for the dictator of the time supporting the US in opposing Cuba's entry into the Organization of American States. J. Brian Atwood, the administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), told Congress in March 1998: "In many respects, [the foreign aid budget] is a bare-boned and balanced approach to development and humanitarian programs that will significantly contribute to achieving the administration's foreign policy objectives." If votes can't be bought, the US will veto. It has, by far, the highest veto record of any power on the Security Council in the period since the 1960s. It has consistently blocked resolutions calling on states to observe international law. Behind the US is Britain, with France and Russia far behind. Even when it does not block resolutions it will water them down or keep matters off the agenda entirely. The 1999 war in Kosovo did not pass through the UN at all, for example. But the US and its satrap, the UK, as mentioned, use the UN to legitimate their imperialism to this day. "Do you think the British or American troops being in Iraq is exacerbating the situation?" I asked Mr Straw in 2006 when he was Foreign Secretary. "No," he replied. "We're there now under a United Nations mandate and we're there on a time limited basis. The mandate will run out at the end of this year unless renewed. More particularly, we're only there as long as the Iraqi government – elected – says we should be there. And what we and the Americans and the other coalition partners are seeking to do is to build up the Iraqi forces so that we can then draw down our forces on a province by province basis." That was standard racket-speech: of course, we were only there at the request of a government. The fine print is important, though: we happened to install this government.

If all these methods fail, then the next step is to try to discredit the UN and accuse it of anti-Americanism and being anachronistic and out-of-touch. So when the US attacked Grenada in 1983, despite the disapproval of the UN, President Ronald Reagan said: “One hundred nations in the UN have not agreed with us on just about everything that’s come before them, where we’re involved, and it didn’t upset my breakfast at all.”[4] When I spoke to the hawkish historian Andrew Roberts and asked him about the UN’s conduct during the “Iraq crisis” in early 2003, he parroted the American president and poured scorn on the UN. “What astonished me,” he said, “was the way in which many in America and the British Isles seemed to assume that no war could be legitimate unless it had the sanction of the United Nations Security Council. When one looks at the United Nations Security Council – countries like [rotating member] Cameroon sitting on there. The idea that we should have our freedom of action circumvented by a bunch of kleptocracies in Africa is an absolute absurdity. Of course they are going to vote against the extension of democracy – that’s not in their interests. We fortunately, back in 1982 when the Falklands were invaded, didn’t give a toss what the UN thought – as it turned out the UN were on our side. But we would have still gone ahead with the action come what may.” Such disdain for the UN is common among the racketeers (when it does not vote their way). But most of the time, the UN and similar multilateral institutions act as a neo-imperialist system in which you do not have colonies but you have client states; these are tied to the US by military interchanges and loans made with the IMF or World Bank. Poor countries are tied into a system of *loose dependency*.

LET US HELP YOU

Without fail, aid programs are defined as altruistic. The so-called Truman Doctrine, coming as a response to perceived aggression from the Soviet Union in the Middle East, is exemplary. Attitudes towards the Soviet Union had been mixed in 1945. Eric Johnston, president of the US Chamber of Commerce, went so far as to say: “Russia will be our, if not our biggest, at least our most eager consumer.” There was a hope on the part of what Walter LaFeber calls “The Big Three” – Russia, the US and Britain – that they could put together a world order that relied heavily on them. The hope was short-lived as the US became more and more suspicious of the Soviet Union and the perceived advances it was making into Western Europe. President Harry Truman said privately in 1945, “Our agreements with the Soviet Union [have been] a one-way street”, and concluded somewhat undiplomatically that the Soviet Union “could go to hell”.[5] Eventually, a political program, christened “containment” by the influential State Department official George F. Kennan, was put in place. Its main function was to stop the march of communist forces that had achieved varying success in Turkey and Greece and various Arab countries. According to Kennan, whose sentiments were exposed in a “top secret” telegram sent to Washington from Moscow in February 1946, “Nothing short of complete disarmament, delivery of our air and naval forces to Russia and resigning of powers to American Communists” would placate Josef Stalin’s “baleful misgivings”.[6] Truman delivered his seminal address to a joint session of both houses of the Congress on March 12, 1947. “It must be the policy of the United States,” he said, “to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” Those “outside pressures” were strongly spelled out in the National Security Council’s Report 68 from 1950, which read: “The Soviet Union, unlike previous aspirants to hegemony, is animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world … The issues that face us are momentous, involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself.” Truman’s doctrine allowed for military and economic help to any regime deemed to be defending “civilization” against the “fanatic faith”. It also, more quietly, legitimated giving succor to any resistant element in foreign countries that had shown themselves to be intent on the “destruction … of civilization itself ”; ergo, any country with a planned economic model not conducive to American corporate interests. This ideology became the pretext for many of the battles America fought for the next 50 years. The conservative historian Samuel P. Huntington wrote: “You have to sell [intervention or other military action] in such a way as to create the misimpression that it is the Soviet Union that you are fighting. That is what the United States has done ever since the Truman Doctrine.”[7]

The Middle East itself before 1945 was largely under the remit of the British empire, alongside other imperial powers such as France. As the empires of Western Europe gradually crumbled after World War II, the United States took up the mantle and borrowed many of the techniques of imperial control pioneered by the British – divide and rule being its favored tactic. This area of the world was of particular importance to US planners because it had the biggest reserves of natural oil in the world. The State Department in 1945 explicitly called Saudi Arabia – with overtones for the whole region – "a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history".[8] The Americans picked up where the British left off. Strategic alliances were made with compliant states that became virtual vassals of the American superpower. Any state deemed to be taking the line of "independent nationalism" – a term applied to any regime whose leaders did not cede to all the dictates of US economic policy – was the target of subversion (political and economic). When he was Mayor of London, I spoke to Ken Livingstone, who by then had been strolling through the corridors of power for 30 years. He told me: "You've had 80 years of Britain and America and France intervening in Arab and Muslim countries – always around the issue of control of oil."

The overthrow of President Mohammad Mosaddeq in Iran in 1953 is an illuminating case because it shows very clearly the priorities of American political policy in the region, as well as marking the unofficial handover of power in the Middle East from the UK to the US. Mosaddeq himself was the head of a parliamentary democracy that, according to the prevailing ideology, should have made him a "friend" of America. He was also a "fervent nationalist" who had renationalized the country's oil that had hitherto been under the control of the British-run Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (originally the Anglo-Persian Oil company). The coup that overthrew Mosaddeq was a joint US–British machination, which demonstrates the overlap of the two imperial strategies. Up until Mosaddeq's attempts to divert the oil resources of his country back to his people, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company had allowed Iran only about 20 percent of the profits from its own oil. When Mosaddeq threatened the economic interests of the US and Britain, he put his own survival in jeopardy. On top of the economic interest, the threat of communist Russia "was palpable". The Russians had actually occupied parts of northern Iran at the conclusion of World War II and procured an oil concession in the area. There was concern among US planners that Mosaddeq was becoming "dangerously dependent" on Iran's communist party, the Tudeh. With the twin threats of "economic independence" and "Soviet Russia" on the horizon, the CIA, along with its British counterparts, arranged a coup. CIA agents solicited support on the streets of Iran, concentrating specifically on the military, and bribed a large portion of the establishment into acquiescence. After massive street demonstrations that threw the city into chaos, Mosaddeq was arrested and the Shah was put back on his throne. Owing to the vital role played by the CIA in bringing down Mosaddeq, the British now gave them a percentage of the oil revenue from Iran. Parroting the ideological pieties derived from the Truman Doctrine, John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State in President Eisenhower's administration, exulted in a victory over a "Communist-dominated regime". A version closer to the truth is explicated by one historian who wrote that, knowing "almost nothing about Iran", they installed a Shah who "would always seem beholden to the United States".[9]

America has been careful and brutal in its choice of allies from the end of World War II. Many alliances have been short-lived and based on a realpolitik geopolitical relationship – Saddam Hussein in the 1970s and 80s, for example – but the alliances with a number of other countries have been more durable. I am going to discuss here the "special relationships" with Britain and Israel because they have had the most political importance within the "international community". Since 1945 it has been said that Britain has a "special relationship" with the US. Jack Straw, the then UK Foreign Secretary, told me that he preferred the term "close relationship": "I've always thought – I mean, clearly people talk about 'special relationship' – I always think 'special relationship' sounds rather exclusive. Plenty of countries have a close relationship with the United States. It's a different relationship from that that we have with other countries but so is our relationship with France or Germany. The crucial thing about the US is that, first of all, there's this very strong historic tie. There's the fact that we have depended on them for victory in two world wars. That the world is, no question, safer if we're working together than if we're working against each other. And the fact that they account for a quarter of the world's economic activity and, rather more than that, of the world's scientific innovation. So you'd have to be nuts not to try and develop a close relationship with the United States."

But Straw's perception is not entirely accurate because nearly every British prime minister since World War II has been seduced by this idea of a "special relationship". On only one occasion since 1945 has a British prime minister refused to support the United States in its forays abroad. This was during the Vietnam War in the 1960s when the Labour premier Harold Wilson refused to send even a token dispatch of troops. On this occasion the uproar among American policy-makers was indicative of the role they saw Britain providing for US foreign policy. "Be British!" exclaimed one American official when the foreign secretary George Brown went to Washington in January 1968. "How can you betray us?" Clare Short MP, erstwhile member of the British cabinet, told me: "Every single post-war prime minister of both parties – apart from Edward Heath – has been obsessed with the special relationship as the centerpiece of British foreign policy. And I think this is a pathetic, 'lost after empire we never found a role' way of thinking. If the PM of Britain can pick up the phone – for example, Harold Macmillan would talk to President Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis and give him a bit of advice and then he thought he was an actor in this world drama. And it's pathetic but it's core thinking about Britain's role in the world. I mean, out of the Iraq crisis the country needs to stop that. Not that we fall out with the US but that we are not a lapdog, that we try to build a new multilateral order and use all our relationship to construct what is needed in these times. It's really interesting that Heath was fixated on getting the support of the unions so he didn't do it." The relationship is of particular import for the Americans because Britain has also played the "mediating role between the US and Europe". In international organizations and political dogfights – which have been frequent between the US and other Western European countries – the UK has always supported and backed the United States. Because Britain has a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, this unflinching support has proved important to successive administrations. There is also an army of British intellectuals and journalists who set the ideological ground for the US to maraud around the world with its British poodle in the background.

But it is unclear what the British get out of this relationship, apart from places for its soldiers to die. Other allies of the US at least get weapons of mass destruction to discipline their population or neighbors. Israel, for example, has used generous US aid for decades to discipline the Palestinians, the displaced indigenous people whose territory it has occupied for nearly 70 years.

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SIX

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE

SHEIKH JARRAH, PALESTINE

In a small house in the hills of East Jerusalem, I witnessed a microcosm of the slow-burn murder of a people. No American who reads the mainstream newspapers or watches the corporate TV news would have had any idea this was happening. But seeing it upfront there was no way to dispute the huge crime that was being perpetrated with American taxpayers' dollars and diplomatic support.

I spent a week sleeping on the floor in the home of the Hanoun family – a husband and wife and their three children, all Palestinian. I was there with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) – a brave collection of international activists who attempt to help Palestinians non-violently resist Israeli oppression. East Jerusalem was, by international law and basic morality, to be the capital of a future Palestinian state. After the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel had illegally occupied East Jerusalem, in contravention of international law, and has never left. In fact, Israel was working to take it all. At the time of writing, in August 2014, the Israelis have killed more than 2,000 Palestinians in Gaza, the vast majority civilians. There is talk in the mainstream Israeli media about depopulating Gaza and turning it into an Israeli tourist attraction. But during the time I was there the most pressing of the many issues were the attempts by an Israeli settler company to slowly cleanse East Jerusalem of its Arab population, focusing its efforts at that time on the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, which sits in a beautiful valley looking out toward Bethlehem. Longer-term activists were sleeping there as well, ready to document what everyone expected would be an imminent eviction. A few months later, at 5.30am, the Israeli border police did come and forcibly evict the Hanouns (so forcibly that the son Rami had to be taken to hospital). The activists were arrested, as were protesters who subsequently took to the streets. The Hanouns were offered a tent by the Red Cross. It was the culmination of a decade-long program of intimidation and harassment of the Sheikh Jarrah community that had seen lives destroyed to appease the most rancid kind of religious zealotry.

Sheikh Jarrah is situated in a valley down from the American Colony Hotel where Tony Blair, former British prime minister and possibly the most willing servant of the American racket in the world, was staying in a luxury suite when he graced Jerusalem with his presence as the racket's "Peace Envoy". When you looked out of the Hanouns' window, Blair's hotel was 30m away; Blair, I had no doubt, could see the Hanouns' house during his morning swim. Before I contacted his spokesperson, Blair had nothing to say about the evictions, and he said nothing in the aftermath. That was one side of the valley. On the other, the British consulate peered down from its high security peak. The British consulate had been only slightly better, calling the latest eviction "appalling", but had done nothing tangible to halt this obscenity. The US silence was even louder. The Hanoun family, like so many Palestinians, had been the victims of terror for decades as they fought off Israel's attempts to take their homes. Maher Hanoun, who continued to lead the resistance, spoke to me with eloquence and calm as he chain-smoked his way through the evenings and recounted what had befallen his family. Maher's father was a refugee from the Nakba, or "the Catastrophe", as Palestinians call the founding of Israel in 1948 when gangs of Jewish paramilitaries expelled 800,000 Palestinians violently from their homes. Maher's father was forced out of Nablus; his grandfather was forced out of Haifa at the same time. The Jordanian government gave them the houses in East Jerusalem in 1956 as compensation and transferred the ownership to them in 1962. Maher was born in 1958 so had spent his whole life, and brought up all his children, in his home. The Israeli settler company, Nahalat Shimon, backed by the Israeli courts, used a forged century-old Ottoman-era contract to claim ownership. Like all over East Jerusalem, the Israelis also tried to bribe Maher with an open check, if he would go quietly. He refused. "This is my home," he told me. "I would never respect myself if I sold my home for money. They want to build a settlement on our hearts, on our dreams." In the end, they succeeded.

The Israelis' tactics were what Maher calls "slow torture", and included arrests, bribery and violence. In 1998, after Maher refused to start paying rent to settlers, soldiers came to his house while his mother was very ill with leukemia and took all their furniture, including the bed. Maher had pleaded with them to leave it so his mother could die peacefully. In 2002, the Israelis succeeded and eventually kicked the Hanouns out for four years, before they returned in 2006; in 2002 his two girls were 9 and 13 years old. Across the way, and in the sightline of Mr Blair and the British consulate, there was a makeshift tent where a 62-year-old woman was now living after settlers took over her house. Initially they only took two parts of her house so she was literally living next to them. Then she was kicked out. Her husband had a heart attack when the Israelis violently repossessed their house with the help of over 50 soldiers (on the night of Barack Obama's 2008 election victory). After spending some time in hospital, her husband had another attack two weeks later and died. The family again refused a bribe of an open check – in the millions of dollars – from the Israelis to leave their homes. "I don't have a life now," she told me from her tent. "With my husband and house gone, there is no life. I just hope with the help of God that this occupation will stop and we can return to our homes." I never could find out what happened to this woman in the violent eviction by Israeli forces, but one report I read said even her tent had been destroyed.

I walked from Sheikh Jarrah to the British consulate (it took about five minutes) and asked Karen McLuskie, the spokesperson, what the British line was on the ethnic cleansing of what is meant to be the future capital of Palestine. "The British position is that Jerusalem has to be the shared capital of two states," she told me. "I think what is happening in Sheikh Jarrah is not unique, sadly. There are a number of sites around Jerusalem where these kinds of actions are taking place – demolitions, evictions and settlement encouragement." She specifically declined to comment on what the British government is actually doing to stop this illegal and inhuman destruction of Sheikh Jarrah. Ms McLuskie did concede, however, that: "The annexation of Jerusalem simply makes it harder to reach a peace deal, it simply cuts off the options." After I contacted Blair's spokesperson I was told that "Blair has raised the issue with the Israeli government", and that "it remains an issue of concern”. I asked if Mr Blair would make the three-minute walk down to the Hanouns’ to talk to them about their predicament, to which the spokesperson assured me: “Staff from his office have previously visited families who have been evicted.” Notice the past tense. Maybe when the Hanouns had actually been evicted, Blair would send an emissary to their tent. The Americans refused to give an interview.

When you look around East Jerusalem and the surrounding area, there are considerable plots of land without homes. If Israel wanted to (illegally) build new settlements without kicking out Palestinians in the area they could, there is space. The targeting of Sheikh Jarrah and other areas is a process of ethnic cleansing, the transformation of East Jerusalem into a unified Jewish Jerusalem. As Maher asked, “Why can’t they build a settlement on any other bit of land?” The one good thing about the Netanyahu–Lieberman administration, which was in power at the time, was that they were much more honest about their colonization program than their “centrist” predecessors. The Netanyahu administration was now willing to get rid of some “outposts” in return for continued expansion in East Jerusalem and “natural growth” in existing settlements throughout the West Bank. That was the same policy negotiated by Ehud Olmert and George W. Bush before the Annapolis conference in 2007. Netanyahu was just more honest in saying that it obviates the possibility of a Palestinian state. “I can’t see how we can have a capital if there is no land, no houses, no people,” agreed Maher.

The next stop in this attempt to cleanse the putative future capital of Palestine of its indigenous population was the al-Bustan area of Silwan, which sits in the valley down from the Dome of the Rock and the Western Wall. When I first arrived in Israel I went on the City of David tour, which functions as a three-hour Israeli propaganda extravaganza (dressed up as an archeological experience). King David in biblical lore is said to have been the first Jewish leader to settle the land in Jerusalem and his son King Solomon is said to have built the First Temple in the 960BC. In 2005, some archeological finds purported to provide evidence that supported this. Now the Israeli government was planning to turn the homes of the people of Silwan into an archeological theme park: 88 dwellings were due for demolition, home to about 1,500 Palestinians. At the end of the tour we went through the waterway that was built to connect the Old City to the spring outside the city walls. When I came out at the end of the tour, I didn't realize that the spring was located in Silwan. A few days later I went to the tent where the residents of al-Bustan were mobilizing against the destruction of their homes and realized, while watching the tourists being bussed back up the hill to the "City of David", where I had actually been. Again, as in Sheikh Jarrah, the people were defiant. "If they demolish my home, they will have to demolish my body too, I will die for my land," said Zaid Ziulany, 54, who lived with his family in house "38" which was due for demolition. "Where are we meant to go?" he asked. "Should we all just sleep on the street?"

THE PATRON

Israel is – by any definition of international law – a rogue, terrorist state that practices colonial policies and serial war crimes against the Palestinians and has done so for decades, all supported by US taxpayers. There is no shortage of evidence that can be produced to support this claim. Having been initially turfed out of their homes in 1948 to make way for the nascent Jewish State, Palestinians have since lived in the meager strips of land afforded them by Israel and the surrounding Arab states: the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Since then, any Jewish person who can prove their racial heritage has been entitled to settle in the Land of Israel while no Palestinian who was made a refugee in 1948 can go back to their home. This creates the insane scenario where I, owing to my Jewish heritage, can go to live in a place I have never really seen and have no connection to, whereas the estimated 4 million Palestinians living in refugee communities scattered around the Middle East, who were born and grew up in Palestine but had to flee in 1948 or 1967, cannot. Moshe Dayan, who was eventually Israel's "Defense" Minister, told the Palestinians: "You shall continue to live like dogs, and whoever wishes may leave, and we will see where this process leads." The same philosophy still prevails among Israeli elites. Since June 1967 when Israel fought a group of Arab states in the Six-Day War, Israel has occupied and built settlements that eat into the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The settlements in Gaza were withdrawn in 2006, and the Israelis turned to a medieval siege to maintain control of the population. All of this is in contradiction of international law – Israel has been condemned by the UN repeatedly for its transgressions. The Security Council adopted UN Security Council Resolution 242 unanimously in 1967 in the aftermath of the Six-Day War. Adopted under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter, it calls for the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict" and the "termination of all claims or states of belligerency". This still hasn't happened to this day: the mob doesn't have to abide by the law it sets for everyone else. Incidentally, the United States has vetoed all the subsequent resolutions brought against its client – that amounts to about 40 vetoes since 1972, all of which blocked votes unanimously supported by the other powers on the Security Council. It is these incursions into Palestinian land that motivate the violence and suicide bombing perpetrated by the Palestinian resistance and is at the root of all the international opprobrium directed toward Israel. But it has been Israeli state policy for the last 48 years to *sacrifice security for expansion* in the Occupied Territories.

The US propaganda runs that the Palestinians have been offered the West Bank and Gaza many times and rejected it. From the Oslo Accords in 1993 to the Camp David Summit in 2000, this is simply not true. The Palestinians have consistently been offered a deal which breaks up the West Bank into small, South African-style Bantustans with the right of return always denied. The one time a deal was struck with something resembling a fair final settlement – at Taba, Egypt in 2001 – the Israelis pulled out. In fact, in 2002 after a trip to the West Bank, the great South African freedom fighter and Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu compared the treatment of Palestinians under Israeli occupation with the treatment of blacks under the South African apartheid regime. "I've been very deeply distressed in my visit to the Holy Land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us blacks in South Africa," he said. "I have seen the humiliation of the Palestinians at checkpoints and roadblocks. They suffer like us when young white police officers prevented us from moving about. They seemed to derive so much joy from our humiliation." Israel has also built a "Security Wall" through the West Bank, again in contradiction of international law. The World Court at the Hague has said that "Israel is under an obligation to terminate its breaches of international law; it is under an obligation to cease forthwith the works of construction of the wall being built in the occupied

Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, to dismantle forthwith the structure therein situated”. It never did.

There is, in fact, no great controversy over the main historical points at issue, and the conclusions that one should draw are simple. The situation is often obfuscated and blurred by the Israeli side to distract neutrals from the glaring, incandescent truth that the Palestinians are involved in one of the last colonial struggles left over from the 20th century. Norman Finkelstein, a scholar of US–Israeli relations, says that the Israel–Palestine conflict is “remarkably uncomplicated”. “The stark truth is an unpleasant truth,” he told me. “And so the pretext is that what we see and what seems so stark, the claim is, that actually isn’t the case and so it’s supposed to make you question your most elementary, your most basic moral judgment and sensibility.” That the occupation of other people’s land is wrong? “An occupation is wrong, building a wall around these people is wrong, shooting children for throwing stones is wrong, stealing people’s land is wrong – that’s not very complicated at all.”

“They’re making profit on the occupation,” Jihad al-Wazir, Palestine’s central bank governor, told me when I interviewed him for the *FT* in New York. “They control the electromagnetic waves, they control the real estate, they control 60 percent of the West Bank and this is why they like the status quo and this is why they don’t want to have a Palestinian state because it’s nice the way things are. They’ve taken land and people are not fighting them.” Despite this obvious injustice, Israel remains the “third rail” in US political discourse because of the huge financing of the lobby that supports it. When I was at Columbia Journalism School my professor, who worked at the *New Yorker*, told me outright when I mentioned I wanted to do a piece critical of Israel not to do it. His words were: “Do it if you want, but criticizing Israel in the US is like railing against Mother Teresa: you’ll never work in the American media.”

The US alliance with Israel did not become economically or politically significant until the 1960s and 70s. Mr Finkelstein told me that “no one in America even cared about Israel for the first 20 years of its existence.” What changed was the decline in the efficacy of the “Arab façade” whereby control of much of the Middle East could be exerted behind the scenes through subservient local Arab rulers. So when, for example, an Arab leader such as Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt turned to the Soviet Union, Israel became the perfect buffer against Arab nationalism and hopes of true independence in the Middle East. Around the time of President Nixon there was a conscious effort to buttress American power with what the Defense Secretary Melvin Laird called "local cops on the beat". The perfect "local cop" in the Middle East was the Jewish "democracy" Israel. As the CIA put it at the time: "a logical corollary" of opposition to Arab nationalism "would be to support Israel as the only reliable pro-Western power in the Middle East".[1] As the CIA was trying to destroy secular nationalism in the Middle East, ironically it was Israel and Islamic fundamentalists (Hamas was helped out initially by Israel) who provided the perfect vehicle to do it. The burgeoning relationship between the two countries served the self-interest of both. In a controversial essay, two prominent academics, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, wrote that the pro-Israel lobby in Washington benefits Israel to the detriment of the US's own foreign policy objectives. The article caused great consternation among supporters of pro-Israel policies in the United States, but their argument was somewhat misplaced. The evidence would suggest that the relationship between the United States and Israel is much more symbiotic than Mearsheimer and Walt contend. Israel is, by far, the largest recipient of US aid presently. Since 1947 Israel has cost the US taxpayer nearly $84,855 million, which means that the taxpayer has paid $23,240 for every Israeli citizen alive.[2] This is not the result of a mystical, paranoid "Jewish lobby" or a completely anomalous foray into the politics of altruism. Israel plays a very important strategic role for the United States, one which is based primarily on political expediencies. There is the "cop on the beat" strand, but there were also concerns about the march of the Soviet Union in the Middle East. When Israel became reliant on US aid in the 1970s, its geopolitical outlook became much more western-oriented; its domestic society also became more unequal. Israel has long been the most loyal US supplicant in the Middle East and even globally. Together they supported apartheid South Africa and supplied weapons to fascist dictatorships in Latin America, among many other horrors. Israel also provided unflinching support for the US at the UN. The inventory of UN votes compiled by the State Department planner turned historian William Blum reveals that Israel reflexively votes with its patron on all matters, whether they are of strategic importance to Israel or not. In turn, according to Mr Finkelstein: “If you look at the record it’s Israel backed by the US who have been the obstacle to the resolution of the Middle East conflict, which the international community on the one hand and the Palestinians have supported.” Even though Israel has been condemned hundreds of times by the UN, even though it continues to occupy the West Bank and control the Gaza Strip, even though it has attacked its neighbors (Lebanon in 1982, killing 20,000), the US continues to provide support. There are evidently no conditions on the aid provided by America in terms of “good behavior”. Michael Mann, the historian, goes as far as to say: “I think Israel is actually the tail wagging the dog. Israel has more power there than the US does. It has a fifth column among the neo-cons and Zionists in the US and it can do whatever it likes.” All the US asks is that Israel remains a loyal “cop on the beat” to push US interests in the Middle East.

CRACKS IN THE OCCUPATION

While in Palestine, I also went to the capital of the Occupied Territories, Ramallah. I could sense the fatigue in the city. The feeling I got walking around the streets was that the Palestinians are weary of the struggle against the incremental destruction of their homeland, while the world looks the other way. I heard things like: “Our struggle has been long and it has got us nowhere.” And people asked how the world could stand by while the Israelis annex more land. It was a good question.

In one village the flame of non-violent resistance still burned. I went to the weekly demonstration against the annexation wall in Bil’in, where it cuts deep into the farmland of this old Palestinian village and the Green Line (the internationally recognized border of Israel–Palestine). Since Israel started building the wall here in 2005 (stealing about 60 percent of the village’s land), the people of Bil’in have been inventively and non-violently resisting. While helplessness pervades in occupied Palestine, the successful tactics of the people of Bil’in provide some hope and inspiration. Abdallah Abu Rahmah, the head of the Popular Struggle Committee in Bil’in, described the villagers’ various tactics, which so far successfully stalled the erection of a new settlement (called West Mattiyahu in Israeli legalese, which implies that it is merely a “neighborhood” of an existing settlement). First, to oppose the wall, Bil’in’s residents tied themselves to their olive trees to stop the bulldozers razing their land. Then, in sight of the settlements, they constructed a one-room house overnight on the other side of the wall, a building that became the basis for a legal challenge. The High Court slapped down their petition twice before they and their Israeli lawyer, Michael Sfard, realized Israel had made an administrative mistake under their own unfair rules. Generally the Israelis use two excuses for land-grabs: one, the land is uncultivated; and, two, there is a security threat. With Bil’in they tried both.

To maintain the interest of the media, essential to their demonstrations’ success, the Popular Committee brings out new initiatives every Friday in their non-violent struggle. When I was there, at the height of the swine flu hysteria in 2009, the Bil’in residents went down for the demonstration wearing face masks to say that they had all had occupation influenza for decades. On another Friday they had a slightly less subtle but equally creative tactic of filling balloons with chicken feces to chuck at the soldiers.

While the Bil’in residents maintain their adherence to non-violence, the same can’t be said for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The month before I was there, an activist from the village, Bassem Ibrahim Abu Rammah, was killed by a high-velocity tear-gas canister, and one 16-year-old child I spoke to survived a live round to the head. These are definitely not “mistakes”: when you shoot a high-velocity tear-gas canister horizontally and not up in the air you only have one goal. They managed to murder Bassem with a shot to the heart. This is where the chicken feces idea came from. “They shoot bullets at us, so we will respond with our animals’ feces,” said Abu Rahmah. At the demonstration hundreds of tear-gas canisters were shot at us, and rubber bullets were aimed at the children throwing stones. This Israeli tactic of harsh and violent repression has one goal: to stop Palestinian resistance through instilling fear. This is what happened during the second intifada, and it is happening again now, in 2015, as pockets of resistance are starting to form against the annexation of their land. And it works. I asked my Palestinian friend if she wanted to come with us on Friday. “No,” she replied, “I don’t want to die for nothing.” In recent months, since the Gaza War, the IDF has started to use a new cocktail of weapons against the Bil’in demonstrators, which includes stronger military-grade tear-gas with nerve toxins, high-velocity machinegun-style tear-gas and aluminum bullets that have crippled protesters. The IDF has also made it a tactic to come into the village in the middle of the night and arrest the members of the Popular Committee, and children as young as 13, as well as throwing around sound bombs and tear-gas.

According to a farmer from Bil'in, Farhan Burnat, aged 30, who spent eight months in prison after Israeli soldiers arrested him at a Friday demonstration, the Israelis take the kids to prison in Israel and keep them for four to six months as punishment for participating in the demonstration. In Ofer prison about 25 percent of the prisoners are children, he told me: "These lengthy periods of imprisonment severely stunt the educational development of our children."

I went down to the wall the day before the protest and talked to Wahid Salaman, a 44-year-old farmer from Bil'in who was walking home after work. "The ability of us to get to our land depends on the mood of the soldier," he said. "Sometimes we have to wait for five or six hours to get to our fields." Mr Salaman's land is on the wrong side of the wall so he has to go through a checkpoint every day to get to work. He pointed out a huge pole with a CCTV camera on top of it. "They watch us at all times as well," he said. The Israelis assign each farmer a number corresponding to points on the wall where he is allowed to go about his work. Afterwards we spotted a young boy going through the checkpoint with his herd of goats. "I look after the goats after school for my parents," he said. "The wall took 60 percent of our land, and as punishment for the demonstration we're not allowed to work on Fridays." He said that his goats had been injured by the barbwire around the wall. Like everyone in Bil'in, he said he misses his friend Bassem. "I feel very sad, but it will not stop me from doing the demonstration. We're strong enough to continue to do it. They shot Bassem because we are achieving something here."

The brutal behavior of the IDF at the demonstration has motivated a broad contingent of activists from around the world and Israel to descend on Bil'in every Friday – as they know the IDF will be less inclined to murder at will if they have passports belonging to the countries that give them the guns. When I was there, there was a 15-strong contingent of trade unionists, artists and charity workers from Canada, alongside a group of young Israelis. The IDF's explicit policy is not to fire live ammunition when Israelis or internationals are in the area, which gives you an indication of their attitude to the expendability of Palestinian life. It also makes it clear how vital it is that the brigade of internationals and Israelis continue to show up and protest peacefully alongside Palestinians. At a bleak time for Palestinians, when they were watching the live destruction of any hopes of a viable future state, the heroic and successful resistance of the people of Bil'in (and their analogues along the line of the annexation wall) provided a glimmer of hope, and a template of how to fight this epic injustice with a mixture of consistency, courage and creativity. They did it against huge odds – against one of the world's most vicious militaries, backed to the hilt by the most powerful military in the history of the world, and a global population continually lied to about the depredations of Israeli state power.

But foreigners are increasingly refusing to believe the lies they are told by their media. What I saw in Palestine was how important it is for concerned citizens to make the journey to the Occupied Territories, or any other place ruined by US imperialism, to make their presence felt. During the December–January 2008–09 Israeli attack on Gaza, the sickness that many people felt about the massacre was compounded by a feeling of helplessness. But there was a way to help out and attenuate the crimes of the occupation: what you realize in Palestine is that just having a foreign passport instantly civilizes the IDF when you are in their presence. I was, as mentioned, working with the ISM, which was set up in 2002 to bring internationals sympathetic to the Palestinian cause to witness and combat Israeli repression during the second intifada. Since then it has achieved a fair degree of infamy – like any organization that tries to protect Palestinians it has been traduced as "terrorist-supporting", "anti-Semitic" and all the rest. There are even a couple of organizations online set up exclusively to libel and destroy the ISM: Stoptheism.com tries to expose its activists and says the ISM represents "Hamas, and other terrorists under Yasser Arafat"; and the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America states that "ISM encourages members to place themselves in dangerous situations to protect terrorists or their homes". But after spending about an hour with the ISM in the West Bank you realize all these calumnies are baseless propaganda. From the start of my time there, I was impressed by the integrity and professionalism of the organization. The ISM runs a two-day training weekend in London, which instills in prospective volunteers the ethos of non-violence and the Palestinian-led modus operandi (i.e. everything members do has to be ratified by a Palestinian council). When you arrive in Palestine you have another two days of training, which takes you through the history of non-violent resistance in Palestine and the specifics of how to deal with violence from the IDF. When I was there I met inspirational activists from Scotland and the Czech Republic, who had spent months living with families in East Jerusalem, being illegally evicted by an Israeli settler company. This was not glamorous stuff; it was staying up all night and sleeping on a thin mattress in a single room together, day after day, month after month. I also met activists from Sweden who were manning checkpoints to make sure that no Palestinians were physically abused. I had my own experience of this on the way out of Nil'in, another Palestinian village fighting back, for the Friday demonstration against the annexation wall. I saw an IDF soldier kicking a Palestinian man at a checkpoint at the edge of this Palestinian village. I got the taxi to stop, and got out and just watched. I don't know what effect it had, but you could see a change in the eyes of the soldiers when they saw my camera pointing their way. There was a group of activists from Italy who lived in Hebron, which is a particularly disturbing example of the occupation in the West Bank, since settlers have occupied the downtown market which is now closed because of the harassment the settlers gave the Palestinians living there. When you walk through the now-defunct market there is grating overhead, and caught in it are all sorts of projectiles, bricks and debris.

The settlers in Hebron are famous for their extremism. They celebrate the anniversary of the 1994 Hebron massacre by Baruch Goldstein, and the presence of the 500 of them in Hebron makes downtown a militarized zone. In Hebron, ISM volunteers escort Palestinian kids to school to protect them from the settlers, who have been known to shoot at them wildly from their rooftops. The courageous 22-year-old ISM activist Tom Hurndall was killed doing work like this in Gaza in April 2003. He was moving Palestinian children out of the line of fire of IDF snipers and was shot in the head, despite carrying international signs. Hurndall's death shone the media spotlight on the conduct of the IDF in the Occupied Territories, only because he was British – Palestinians are shot with appalling regularity. And that is why the ISM activists are so brave: they are putting their lives on the line, solely because they know they are worth more in the eyes of the IDF. It is also why the Israeli authorities try to keep out the ISM, by blacklisting anyone they suspect of being involved. Many ISMers have been slapped with a 10-year ban from entering Israel, even though the ISM is a completely legal organization in Israel.

I went to the non-violent Friday demonstrations in Bil'in and the nearby Nil'in on alternate weeks. Again the local villagers say that even though those among their ranks had been killed at an alarming rate in the past year (two in Bil'in, five in Nil'in, including a 10-year-old with a live shot to the head), it would be much worse if the internationals didn't turn up. In 2011, US citizen and ISM activist Tristan Anderson was critically wounded by a high-velocity tear-gas canister. While I was in Nil'in, the IDF was aiming right for us as we stood on the verge. The only things the IDF are up against at these demonstrations are stones in slingshots. On one Friday, a Palestinian man was killed with a live round. "We always ask internationals to please come, because they are even more brutal when it is just us Palestinians," said the leader of the demonstration.

There are definitely dangers to volunteering in occupied Palestine, but it is a highly effective way of helping the Palestinians resist oppression, and because of our passports those risks are a fraction of those faced by any Palestinian who raises so much as a finger of resistance. My stay was short, and I did nothing compared to the brilliant and inspirational activists – who range from teenagers to pensioners – who have spent far longer and risked far more. But it is clear that through the solidarity of internationals, Israelis and Palestinians, the occupation can be fought. There are more losses than gains, and ISM and Palestinian activists will continue to be lost, but as George Orwell concluded in his essay "Looking back on the Spanish Civil War", during which he had fought against General Franco's fascists: "I believe that it is better even from the point of view of survival to fight and be conquered than to surrender without fighting." In this sense, "fighting" doesn't always have to be violent. Being in Palestine also further helped me understand how the truth about what our governments do in our name is invariably distorted by the media. That disconnect between the truth and what we digest is vital to maintaining the domestic US population's passive acquiescence to the great crimes being done in their name. The powers that be are aware that if people knew the truth they would push them to stop the atrocities, like the massacre in Gaza in 2014; or the massacre in Iraq which began in 2003 and endures until today. In fact, one of the most silent of all the ethnic cleansing programs done with US diplomatic and military support happened in the east of Turkey and again continues today.

DIYARBAKIR, TURKEY

I had been to Turkey before but never to the neglected southeast, the redoubt of the sizeable and bitterly oppressed Kurdish minority in the country. In 2012, I arrived in Diyarbakır, the capital of what the locals call Kurdistan, at four in the morning, and the airline had lost my baggage. I went outside to get a taxi, which took me to the imposing walls that ring the Old City, where I had a sleepless night in a grim hotel. I noticed that the guest book was full of names from Iraq, someone from Mosul, another from Kirkuk, and one more from Baghdad. Diyarbakır is just 160 miles away from Iraq, another country in which the Kurdish minority has been treated with brutality. Now, though, in the aftermath of the US–UK invasion and occupation of Iraq, the Kurds were enjoying more autonomy than ever before. The Turkish government, at the same time, was growing fearful of this newfound independence. When I woke in the morning it was as if I was no longer in Turkey. Diyarbakır looked centuries older than Istanbul with its Gucci advertising-hoardings and appearance-obsessed elites. I walked south out of the city walls and there was a vast panorama of rolling verdant hills with a stunning stone bridge in the far distance that traversed the Tigris River, which flows all the way into Iraq. I had organized to meet Nurcan Baysal, a Kurdish activist, who was a friend of a friend, at the offices of her non-governmental organization (NGO) on Lise Caddesi street just outside the city walls. It was a big, well-kept office, with reports written by the collective displayed on desks. Nurcan was an old hand at talking to journalists, but that didn’t stop the passion coursing through her voice. A young and inspiring Kurdish woman, she has been at the forefront of the fight for freedom and independence her people have been seeking for centuries. To take that fight forward she set up Disa, a Kurdish research organization, to combat the hold the Turkish state and its media had on the narrative about the conflict between it and the Kurdish population. “I’m angry at people who do research from the West," Nurcan told me. "There are many institutes in Istanbul and Ankara and they do research on Kurdish people, but they are run by Turkish people. Most foreigners know about the Kurdish question in the abstract, we know it by birth." Many institutions that work on the forced migrations in Turkey's southeast call the victims merely "internally displaced people", for example. "But when you use 'internally displaced people' you can translate it into Turkish in two different ways," she added. "The main translation makes it seem like what happened is very passive: like the Kurds came, and they left. Kurdish people want 'forced migration' used, they want people to understand that force was used."

In the 1980s and 1990s, with US diplomatic support and US-supplied weapons, the Turkish military cleared large parts of the Kurdish southeast in the name of fighting terrorism – in this incarnation, the Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK. It became merely a war against the Kurdish population, who, like indigenous people in Guatemala during their US-instigated civil war, became synonymous *as a whole* with the Leninist group regardless of their activities. Today in Diyarbakır there is a savage poverty mainly due to the thousands of people who came here after the forced migrations from the villages. The Kurdish people of Turkey have actually been through a prolonged nightmare since the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923. Kemal Ataturk, the war hero and founder of modern Turkey, aspired to an ethnocentric country, which meant Kurds were stripped of their identity and referred to as "Mountain Turks". Banned from speaking their own language or expressing their historic culture, they have spent the ensuing 90 years resisting a racist state that is trying to extinguish the merest memory of their different lineage. Ataturk massacred those Kurds who opposed his plan, but those who took on his mantle – called today, the Kemalists – have become more extreme than their idol. A secular, fascist-tinged elite have dominated Turkish politics since the time of Ataturk and liquidated democracy throughout the 20th century when anyone threatened to usurp their power. Meanwhile the elite established a Turkey that suited their interests: they tied themselves tightly to the US empire and its racket as it established its domination over the Middle East, filtering cash through international financial institutions to a well-served rentier class. The current set of authoritarian nationalists are still using a nasty little constitution instituted by fascist general Kenan Evren in 1981 after a military coup. That document has dogged Turkey ever since and caused thousands of lives to be wasted in jail or ended in cold blood for merely speaking out.

The tactics of the Turkish government in combating the Kurdish intifada in the 1980s were straight out of the handbook of the British empire the Turks had fought and beaten in their own war of independence. In 1985, Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal, who was a close friend of Margaret Thatcher, co-opted a small elite in the Kurdish villages of the southeast and plied them with US-supplied weapons and orders to do battle with the PKK. These paramilitary units, called Village Guards, were entrusted by the Turkish government to police the southeast from within and a blind eye was turned as they committed all sorts of atrocities. Human Rights Watch say they have opposed the village guard system since 1987, the year they released their first report on the subject, *State of Flux: Human Rights in Turkey*. Even that early it documented emerging evidence of "brutality and corruption among village guards". The brutal 1990s US-backed state clampdown on the southeast under the guise of a War on Terror, furnished with weapons by the John Major government in the UK and Bill Clinton in the US, saw the destruction of hundreds of villages in a scorched earth policy, and the displacement of thousands of Kurdish civilians. In the 2000s, the Islamist government of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) loosened restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language in the media and schools, which had previously been banned. Martial law in the area was lifted and the AKP has allowed the establishment of the first Kurdish-language television station; at the same time the imprisoning of Kurdish politicians and the shutting down of their parties abated somewhat. But in this period of glasnost and reconciliation under the AKP, the village guard system was left in place, even as its *raison d'être* disintegrated. There was a real hope that change was coming, as the Islamist party, which had been a victim of harsh repression itself, seemed to offer a different way of doing things. As the Kurdish proverb goes: "The victim understands the victim." But it wasn't to be. The "democratic opening" came to an abrupt halt in 2010 when seven PKK fighters arrived in Diyarbakır to cheers from the locals, many of whom were seeing long-lost relatives for the first time. Nurcan said she was in the office on that day. "I was with a young Kurdish student. I went to see what people were doing, and of course there were many congratulations to the fighters, it was like a festival. I was working and I thought, ‘Nurcan, don’t believe them, don’t be happy, something bad will happen,’ and I am 37, I saw the 1990s.” Her instincts were right. “I saw an old Kurdish woman crying,” she continued. “I asked her why she was crying, and the old woman said because today is ‘*bayram*’, which means celebration. I shook her and said, don’t believe them, there is no celebration, you don’t know the bad things they will do after today.”

Meanwhile, in the mainstream Turkish media the story was that the ungrateful Kurds were celebrating the return of the terrorist PKK. But what they didn’t say was that many of these people were celebrating the return of loved ones. “These are our children,” Nurcan said. “It’s a very important thing. I saw on the street many old women who saw those fighters return, and thought maybe my son will be next. For that reason they were out celebrating.” The seven fighters were eventually put in prison, alongside the thousands of Kurdish political prisoners held on spurious charges. The window for change closed, and repression as usual returned. “It’s hard to attract western media attention because Turkey is a US ally,” said Nurcan. “It’s also hard to get the attention of the Turkish public. Sometimes I feel like it is another world, we are not in the same country. What we saying here in Diyarbakır is different to what they are saying in Ankara or Istanbul. It is very hard to get their attention.” The Turkish media has never been a free media: ordinary Turkish people don’t know what is happening; if they want to know they have to check. Most Turks, like most Americans, don’t check.

Nurcan is an assimilated Kurd, and there are millions like her: they don’t know Kurdish, their dreams are in Turkish, Turkish is their main language. Millions of Kurdish people now live in the west of Turkey, in Izmir and in Istanbul, which has the biggest Kurdish population in the world (5 million Kurds). But they know what happened. And they do not intend to forget and let the oppressors win. “In my mind and in my heart I don’t know if I can forgive them for what they did,” she told me. Many Turks cannot see why someone like Nurcan, who has benefitted from modern Turkey, would complain. “They are telling me why are you sad because you don’t know your mother tongue? It’s very good that you grew up you knew Turkish, you had chance to go to those universities, just enjoy being a Turk. They don’t think that because I don’t know my mother tongue, because of the restrictions at that time, I never had a close relationship even with my mother, and I never had the chance to talk with my grandmother, or my aunt. It's like you are coming from nowhere, there is no past. They think they are doing a very good thing for us, it is crazy. After this meeting I will go to buy books and presents for my friends in prison. And when I tell my friends in Istanbul that all my friends are in prison in Diyarbakır they say 'Really?' And the thing is I still had some patience to deal with Turkish people, trying to tell them what is happening. But after a while I said, 'Why?' "

The most emblematic of the many sins against the Kurdish people carried out through the long "counter-insurgency" campaign of the 1980s and 1990s, and before, was the outlawing of the Kurdish language. In the Turkish state's quest to dissolve any sense of a Kurdish identity separate from Turkey, the destruction of the fundamental cultural artifact of language was central. Nurcan told me she saw someone shot in the street because he was heard speaking Kurdish, and in her school if a child was heard using a Kurdish word, even just one, they would be taken out and savagely beaten.

Kurds who refused to be assimilated as merely "Mountain Turks" were tortured, murdered and "disappeared", while whole villages were scorched in the battle against the "enemy", which was publicly the PKK, but actually became the Kurdish community at large, especially those who refused to abide by the cultural genocide being imposed on them. In Diyarbakır mainly people speak Turkish, but when you go to the peripheries of the city, they haven't forgotten Kurdish; the language is still used despite the attempts to literally beat it out of their heads.

Kurdish children in the 1980s didn't even know they were Kurds. The constant government and military criminalization of the idea of the Kurd meant that many were ashamed to be Kurdish. "My mother and father came from the village, they were not educated, and most of the families at that time, like this, their main aim was to protect us," said Nurcan. "I was thinking that the teacher is not using Kurdish, and they are saying that Kurdish is bad, so then someone who uses Kurdish is bad. My mind was working like this. And I was thinking that because my mother was sometimes using Kurdish, and I was wondering if she was bad. We were ashamed to be a Kurd at that time, because the school and all of society were telling us this. One side we were ashamed of it, the other side we were afraid of it. Because, for example, I broke all my teeth, and I needed to go to hospital every week to get them fixed, and I was afraid that if my mother said something Kurdish what will they do to us? Maybe they wouldn't do anything, but I was very afraid. I remember lots of people being killed in that period. Just for example in this street they killed someone I remember. They killed one of my friend's fathers because he was selling a newspaper. It wasn't even in Kurdish – it was just writing about the rights of the Kurdish people."

THE GOLDEN CHILD

The US has been a staunch Cold War ally of Turkey for over half a century. It is still selling guns to Turkey, and the Kurds were sold out many times by the US, famously in 1975 when Henry Kissinger allowed them to be massacred, and in 1991 when George Bush senior, after telling them to rise up against Saddam Hussein, allowed the dictator to massacre them again. The situation changed slightly after the attack on Iraq in 2003 when Kurds in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) believed they could become strong allies of the US because of the changing dynamics in the Middle East. The reasoning is that the US needs sound allies in the region, like the KRG and Israel. The people in the KRG believe, perhaps naively, the US cannot turn their back on them now. "If I was an American citizen I would ask myself why my taxes were buying these guns and killing people," said Nurcan. "I don't understand why they don't ask this. If we have war here today, I'm not saying it's because of America, of course, it is not, but it continues because of guns, and if there were no guns it couldn't continue … and the guns come from America."

One brave young American, Jake Hess, saw what was being done in his name and decided to do something about it. He went to live in Diyarbakır and surrounding areas of the southeast to investigate human rights atrocities being carried out with weapons his own taxes were paying for. What happened next was a terrifying but salutary tale. He was detained and deported in 2010 on "terror" charges, which specifically meant "knowingly or willingly supporting a terror organization without being part of its hierarchical structure".

“I was in custody for about 10 nights,” he told me. “During my interrogation, they asked me about my reporting on human rights abuses, contacts with NGOs in Britain and Turkey, and views on political issues.” Unlike other less fortunate Kurdish activists, Hess was not tortured. The government has a public posture that is “zero tolerance” for torture, but if you are one of the thousands of Kurdish political prisoners in Turkey – held often for years without a conviction – such high-minded rhetoric often does not translate into on-the-ground policy. The US embassy offered consular assistance to Hess to secure his release on the trumped-up charges, but he refused, citing the treatment that they allowed to go on unhindered against Kurdish political dissidents and activists. “In the 1990s, these people would have been disappeared or assassinated; now, they’re held in prison indefinitely,” he told me. “The US government has murdered journalists both directly and by proxy for years. They bombed Al Jazeera in Iraq and Afghanistan. They bombed the Radio Television of Serbia in 1999, killing 16 civilians. The US was Turkey’s chief military supporter as scores of journalists were being murdered there in the 1990s, and continues to provide key military and political backing for Ankara’s current assault on the Kurdish movement. Of course I couldn’t accept the embassy’s help in that kind of situation.”

Most Americans hearing about this brutality would be shocked to learn that their tax dollars have been instrumental in propping up this racist and genocidal policy against the Kurds in Turkey. In fact, the US and Turkey have had one of the most close-knit security tie-ups in the world since the beginning of the Cold War, as Turkey was viewed as a front-line state in the NATO alliance against the Soviet Union. In another part of unspoken history, it was the US placing of Jupiter missiles, armed with nuclear warheads, in Turkey in 1961 on the borders of the Soviet Union, that led the Russians to move nuclear warheads to Cuba, which, in turn, precipitated the Cuban Missile Crisis a year later. Operation Gladio, set up by NATO, created underground “stay-behind” armies to retain a position in the NATO states early in the Cold War. Many analysts now conclude that these forces went on to become the infamous “deep state” in Turkey, which, Hess said, “is basically an unelected shadow government that has been involved in political killings, coups, and generally fomenting chaos in the country”. In

Turkey, governments come and go – it’s the state bureaucracy and the army that run the country.

Such a state of affairs has been mirrored across the other crucible states within NATO that might become susceptible to communism, clearing the way for brutal campaigns against some of the same forces that had helped defeat Nazism, from Greece to Spain. JİTEM, the death squad that was established to murder Kurdish dissidents and intellectuals in the 1980s and 1990s, also grew out of these NATO structures. The military relationship continued even after the Cold War ended. During the dirty war against the Kurds in the 1990s, the US supplied Ankara with 80 percent of its weaponry, worth some $10.5 billion. Many human rights groups documented how US-supplied hardware was used to commit abuses, including extra-judicial killings and destruction of villages. Washington provided Ankara with more military aid during its war of terror in the southeast than it did during the entire Cold War.

Turkey is a relatively stable country in one of the most strategically important parts of the world, and the US has used it as a base for imperial operations. In 2003, Turkey refused to let the US open a northern front in Iraq from Turkish soil. However, Ankara later allowed the US to use its territory as a transport hub for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In a Congressional testimony in March 2007, Robert Wexler, a supporter of Turkey who was then Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee’s subcommittee on Europe, pointed out that “The US depends greatly on Turkey to pursue shared objectives in support of the Iraqi and Afghan people”, by which he meant the brutal military occupations of those countries. He went on, “Turkey’s grant of blanket over-flight clearances to US military aircraft is of critical importance to our military operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan”, and noted that “Turkey … provides extensive logistic supports to our troops in Iraq. This critical life line includes the cargo hub at Incirlik Air Base through which … we ship 74 percent of our air cargo into Iraq.” Indeed, Wexler explained: “The substantial majority of the military assets used by American troops are flown into Turkey, and then transported to Iraq.”

In an op-ed published in the *Wall Street Journal* in 1997, senior Republican foreign policy official Zalmay Khalilzad summarized the importance of Turkey for the geopolitics of energy. He argued that the US and Turkey “should work together to ensure the security of the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Basin regions. The US already has security commitments in the gulf, an area that is vital to the world’s oil supplies. The relative importance of the Caspian region is growing, though, due to its tremendous oil and gas reserves … Turkish military facilities provide an excellent location for projecting power to both the [Persian] gulf and the Caspian Basin. Much of the world’s energy resources are within 1,000 miles of Incirlik. Access to the Turkish bases can reduce the amount of military presence required in some of the Gulf Cooperation Council states. Turkey is also a viable pipeline route for bringing some of the oil and gas from the Caspian to world markets.”[3]

The US has fully backed Turkey’s war against the PKK, despite the fact that there’s near unanimous agreement that there is no “military solution” to the conflict there. The Bush and Obama administrations declared the PKK “a common enemy”, and the US supplies the Turkish military with intelligence on PKK movements in northern Iraq. WikiLeaks cables show that the US is enthusiastic about supplying Turkey with drones, despite its horrific human rights record, which never seems to come up in meetings between Turkish diplomats and US. The PKK is a left-leaning popular movement that has defied NATO’s second-largest army and its US patron for decades, so it has to be crushed. They’ve committed human rights violations over the years, but nowhere even approaching the level of Turkey, so US opposition can have no humanitarian basis.

Many thousands of activists and politicians, including elected mayors, human rights defenders, journalists, women’s rights advocates and students, have been arrested on “terrorism” charges. There have been very few convictions or acquittals up until now; thousands of people have been held without conviction for years. “I’ve looked at several of the indictments dealing with these cases, and it’s just beyond dispute that these people are being tried for political reasons,” Hess said.

In recent years, Turkey has become more involved in the Middle East. Its outreach to Syria and Iran, along with Hamas, has at points brought it into conflict with the US-Israeli-Saudi Arabian reactionary front in the region, leading to considerable outrage in Washington policy circles. Despite the extensive debate about how the West has “lost” Turkey in recent years, the

US may actually be happy that Turkey is playing a more assertive role in the Middle East as a sort of alternative or rival to Iran and Hezbollah, both of whom have seemingly lost influence since the Arab Spring. Basically, the US might be able to retain some of its waning influence in the region through an active and engaged Turkey. Turkey has suffered several of its own foreign policy setbacks in recent years, and it seems very unlikely that Ankara will entirely break from the US.

"I don't think Americans are all that aware of the situation," said Hess. Some American NGOs did great work documenting US-funded Turkish atrocities in the 1990s, but these received little attention, unlike, say, the atrocities in Bosnia or Kosovo. In recent years, corporate media outlets and more establishment-oriented think-tanks have started to criticize Turkey, mainly because Ankara has challenged Washington on a few important issues, especially the Israel–Palestine conflict. Hess added: "The coverage is nowhere near where it should be, and there are still no foreign correspondents based in southeastern Turkey. The media coverage leaves a lot to be desired. It's shocking how frequently people who are supposed to be experts on Turkey get basic details about the conflict wrong. For example, the PKK is almost universally described in the media as 'separatist' even though they backed away from their demand for an independent state in the early 1990s. Writers often disproportionately quote western or Turkish 'experts' when covering the Kurds, and for some reason feel compelled to constantly point out that the EU and US consider the PKK a 'terrorist organization'. Okay, but what do Kurds think about the PKK? Doesn't their perspective count? There seems to be this conceit that the only people who can comment on the Kurds are either American or Turkish 'experts' who speak English and have fancy titles. Beyond the Kurds, US media coverage of Turkey relies on very simplistic binaries that easily fit with western prejudices, like 'East vs West' or 'secular vs Islamic.' The press doesn't really reflect the reality of Turkey."

In 2004, while in Turkey, George W. Bush gushed about the AKP: "I appreciate so very much the example your country has set on how to be a Muslim country and at the same time a country which embraces democracy and the rule of law and freedom."[4] What Bush didn't mention, but was surely of interest to his administration and his friends at the International

Monetary Fund (IMF), was that while President Recip Tayyip Erdogan may be a moderate on religion, the AKP was economically fundamentalist, hell-bent on turning Turkey into an IMF experiment. Though the AKP campaigned on promises to the poor and working classes, only a month after it was elected in November 2002, the party announced its plans to embark on mass privatization of state-owned industries, from the national airline to the nationalized oil company. The deputy prime minister at the time, Abdüllatif Şener, admitted that his inspiration was Margaret Thatcher; his close associate Turgut Bozkurt, who was head of the Privatization Administration, spelled out their ambitions as straight from the Thatcherite handbook: "The basic goal is to transform the economy from a state-led economy to a market-driven liberal economy," he said. "Transferring state-owned companies to the able hands of private entrepreneurs will help rationalize structure and run according to rational or scientific principles in order to achieve desired results."[5]

As is the case for most close US allies, the economy of Turkey has gradually grown more and more like that of its patron. Agriculture died in southeast Turkey after the forced migrations of the 1990s and neoliberal economic policies in the 1980s. It is a common theme all across the "underdeveloped world". In southeast Turkey 20 years ago they were selling livestock around the world – like Haitian farmers once sold rice and Mexican farmers once sold maize. That was before the racket rode into town. Now in this region of Turkey they only *buy* meat. In one region near Diyarbakır there are lots of villages and in the not too distant past all the food from Diyarbakır was coming from that region. Now the children who don't still live there are picking through the rubbish of the western city of Izmir. Because of this lack of production, the major cities, particularly Istanbul, have been flooded with Kurdish people migrating from the rural areas. They now form an underclass, often living 10 people in one room, in adverse conditions. When you go to Istanbul, the children who clean there are Kurdish; when you go to Izmir, the children who pick through the rubbish are Kurdish. Most of the *gecekondus*[6] in Istanbul are also filled with Kurds. It's close to an apartheid situation – certainly economic apartheid. Every year more than 200 workers die because of no security at work. Most of them are Kurdish, their lives expendable. "I always think that if we had a color, if we were black or red, I am sure that then the Turkish people would see it," said Nurcan. "Now they don't see it, but the poverty in Turkey has a color, a race. It's like apartheid, and those in the worst conditions, they are Kurdish." But one thing the Turkish state didn't count on was that living at such close quarters and in such dire circumstances has created a highly political will among the Kurds. If they do decide to rise up again at some point they will have a lot of power, but the war against them will be fierce once again. The racket does not shy away from using force to realize its economic or geopolitical ambitions.

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1 Quoted in Noam Chomsky, "The Israel-Arafat agreement", *Z Magazine*, October 1993.

2 "U.S. financial aid to Israel: figures, facts, and impact", *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, www.wrmea.org/wrmea-archives/494-congress-a-us-aid-to-israel/9748-u-s-financial-aid-to-israel-figures-facts-and-impact.html

3 Quoted in Everett Thiele, "Whither goes Turkey?", March 17, 2003, www.antiwar.com/orig/thiele1.html

4 "Bush praise for key ally Turkey", *BBC News*, June 27, 2004.

5 www.thefreelibrary.com/TURKEY+-+Profile+-+Abdullatif+Sener.-a0116389955

6 Slum dwellings, translated literally as "built overnight", because the authorities tend to destroy them during the day.

SEVEN

MIGHT IS RIGHT

WAR

In the aftermath of World War II, the US emerged as one of the three biggest economic powers in the world, the others being Western Europe and the Soviet Union. This stayed pretty much constant, with the East Asian "Tiger economies" replacing the Soviet Union in the tripartite economic arrangement. The area where America overwhelming dominates is in military power. The Cold War was already in its embryonic stages in 1945. From then until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US and its western allies maintained they were "containing" the Soviet Union. It is more accurate to say that the Soviet Union was "containing" the United States. According to Edward S. Herman "the Soviet Union was actually a defensive and quite weak regional power". America, on the other hand, had been establishing security states throughout Latin America and Africa and had control of Western Europe through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Soviet Union did not pose a problem militarily in the way public rhetoric claimed. The problem was the "virus" of "independent nationalism" that was likely to infect the rest of the world with notions of equality and independence. The wish of American business elites to keep high-scale military spending up, and of the political elites to maintain a grip on their populations meant that the threat of Soviet invasion became a common trope. Military spending shot up in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, at this time, according to Ken Livingstone, the former MP and the first Mayor of London, who was involved in international politics throughout the period, "the Cold War was largely a fiction because the US had 20 times more nukes than the Soviets". The historian Niall Ferguson disagrees, writing that the Cold War was a period "when the containment of Soviet expansion, rather than democratic nation building, was the objective of policy". The excuse for military spending was destroyed along with the "Evil Empire" in the early 1990s; yet the continuation of bloated military spending demonstrates that America's aim was only loosely related to the Soviet Union. Throughout the 1990s and up until the present, American military power has had no rival. Since the end of the Cold War, almost all the world's military budgets have declined, except America's. In 2001, the US military budget comprised 36 percent of the entire world's – six times the size of the number-two power, Russia, and seven times the size of the next three together, France, the UK and Japan. The US budget for 2012 took it to over 40 percent of the world's total. It exceeds the spending of the next 10 states combined. All of this with no Soviet – or equivalent – menace. When the Soviet Union fell, the US turned to other covers, such as the "Drug War", to keep military budgets high, as we will see.

The late historian Howard Zinn told me when I met him in Boston: "Very often the economics of empire requires a militarization of the economy, which then starves the domestic economy and eventually causes collapse." In terms of military superiority, more important than nuclear or conventional firepower have been the military bases the United States spawned across the world during the Cold War. The Pentagon says there are currently military facilities in 132 countries. Only about half of these are fully operational but the existing bases mean that nowhere is beyond the range of an American strike. The executive has been consciously accruing these outposts since World War II and it has meant deals with unsavory regimes and, in the case of Diego Garcia in 1966, the repatriation of indigenous people. Noam Chomsky told me that so-called proxy wars became common because the government "intended at first to use US forces … but there was so much popular reaction that they turned to what is called 'clandestine war' ". This meant that a large-scale propaganda offensive was not needed and none of the high-minded idealism was given lip-service. Chomsky continued: "Clandestine means the war that everybody knows about except the American population – it's kept from them and it was fought with an international terrorist network, in which Britain contributed incidentally. So it was Taiwan, Israel, Argentine neo-Nazis until they were thrown out, Saudi Arabian funding, British assistance. So that's a kind of an international terror network that was used to support the murderous state terrorist governments of Central America and in the case of the one government where they didn't control the security forces, Nicaragua, they were used just to attack. There was a terrorist war against Nicaragua for which the US was actually condemned by the World Court and the Security Council – the US vetoed the resolution, Britain loyally abstained."

One of the main institutions of enforcement through violence is NATO, which was signed into force in April 1949. It is a military pact among western countries that is supposed to commit all countries to the defense of their allies should they be attacked. In practice it became a vehicle for the United States to protect its interests in Western Europe. According to historian Michael Mann: "The other states of the North had been under protection since 1945, unable to defend themselves against communism without American help." Consequently, "America dominated security organizations like NATO." At the time it was the first US military alliance with Europe in 171 years. Planners such as the influential Dean Acheson paid lip-service to the idea that NATO was designed to "develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."[1] It was said to be a wholly defensive organization. Walter LaFeber, the historian, on the other hand, contended that NATO was created by the US with the knowledge that "It could now dominate an alliance by using its partners to carry out US foreign-policy aims." The aims LaFeber mentions were twofold. The first was to restrict the percolation of Soviet communism into Western Europe, and the second to restore the independence and power of West Germany. NATO was largely successful in these aims and, aside from some pushback during Charles de Gaulle's presidency (1958–69) in France, the US managed to retain its singular role within the organization. In a memorandum to President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, de Gaulle complained of the "tripartite world strategy" that did not include France. Eisenhower, in turn, wrote that the "United States had no ambition to carry the heavy responsibility that had been forced upon it in NATO".

Even though the alliance stayed strong and grew to include a number of other countries over the decades, its first military operation did not occur until after the fall of the Soviet Union. It took place in Kosovo in 1999 and marked the apparent metamorphosis of this "defensive alliance" into a force for “humanitarian intervention”. NATO’s militarism now apparently marked a beautiful new moment in the racket’s altruistic program. President Bill Clinton remarked on June 10, 1999 at the end of the bombing of Serbia and Kosovo: “The demands of an outraged and united international community have been met … Because of our resolve, the 20th century is ending not with helpless indignation but with a hopeful affirmation of human dignity and human rights for the 21st century.”[2] The US and its allies had actually designed the peace talks – called the Rambouillet Agreement – to fail. By imposing the condition that NATO forces would be free to operate throughout not just Kosovo but all of Serbia, those pushing for war knew that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic could never accept it. It was a typically smart move on the part of the racketeers and one for the trophy cabinet of their enforcement mechanism.

Once again, scrutiny of the facts reveals a story that had much more to do with self-interest than any preoccupation with human rights and dignity. Before the war in 1999 US Defense Secretary William Cohen claimed: “We’ve now seen about 100,000 military-aged [Albanian] men missing … they may have been murdered.” When the bombing was over and investigations had failed to find any mass graves, the International War Crimes Tribunal said the total number killed on both sides was 2,788. The pre-war figures had turned out to be grossly inflated, with the leader of the Spanish forensic team lamenting the “semantic pirouette by the war propaganda machines”.[3] The purpose of the military offensive was to re-establish this diminishing military organization that many had perceived as obsolete at the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact (which had been its antonym). A White House official stated President Clinton’s position: “From the first day, he said we have to win this. It was absolutely clear. Because of the consequences for the US, for NATO, for his responsibilities as Commander in Chief, we had to win this.”[4] Columnist William Pfaff went further, stating, before the conflict: “The debate about intervention is no longer a dispute over the means to an end. It is a debate over abandoning NATO and the claim to international leadership”.[5] The Yugoslav government thus had to be destroyed to maintain US military supremacy in the institutionalized form of NATO.

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the point of NATO was unclear, but then NATO bombed Serbia and Kosovo in 1999 to ensure the break-up of Yugoslavia; 9/11 provided the West with a new enemy; and NATO employed new and different machinations to keep Russia out while expanding into Eastern Europe via Georgia and Ukraine. The role of Turkey, as explored, was also crucial: since 1951 it has supported this alliance without qualification. During Israel's 2006 war in Lebanon, Turkish soldiers were sent to be "peacekeepers", and there were 1,300 Turkish soldiers in Afghanistan at one point. NATO has been used in Turkey to combat Kurdish activists, trade unionists, socialists and other enemies of the state. NATO troops are supposed to be prepared for foreign invasions, but actually they are often *used against democrats*.

THE MOB RULES BY FEAR

It is true that there have been relatively few direct military interventions by the United States. Control, as already discussed, has largely been maintained by supporting right-wing elements within a country from a distance. Military force has been a last resort. The major exceptions to this modus operandi are the Korean War of 1953, the Vietnam War, the war in Afghanistan and those in Iraq. The "defensive" rationalization was used to legitimate direct military adventures during the Cold War. In fact, it was a desire to circumvent expansionary communist powers that would spread, to use Henry Kissinger's telling phrase, "the virus" of "independent nationalism". In the case of Afghanistan and Iraq, they fell under the rubric of the "war on terror" which, on the whole, maintained the same conceptual and institutional framework, with "terrorism" replacing "communism" as the Other that must be destroyed at all cost. Far from supporting "democracy-promotion", the US military has, in recent history, become a self-fulfilling prophecy. In his autobiography, Colin Powell, Secretary of State under George W. Bush, noted how Clinton's National Security Advisor Madeleine Albright asked him rhetorically: "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?"[6]

The philosopher Zygmunt Bauman links current militarism to the economic downturn in the US. He told me: "There is no competition in arms, there is no question about that. But if that is the case then America wants to make the world in its image; namely, that what decides in this world is application of force: who has more bombs, who has more smart missiles and things like that, the more mobile army and so on. And that's a danger. Economically the power has shifted already." The war in Iraq, which began in March 2003, is a perfect illustration of the United States' desire to use direct foreign invasion as a means to further its own economic interests. The war eventually deposed the dictator Saddam Hussein, but it was no coincidence that Iraq had the third largest reserves of oil in the world. Ostensibly the US is fighting a "war on terror" – the same war designed in the 1980s under Ronald Reagan – and "the liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror". In fact, Saddam Hussein had no hand in the September 11, 2001 atrocities in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, but those atrocities were used to pull a veil over a preconceived desire for regime change in Iraq. Many elements of George W. Bush's administration were previously members of a lobby group called Project for the New American Century. The most informative document produced by this think-tank is titled *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Forces and Resources for a New Century* (2000). It stated: "The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein." Much like the communist pretext was used to pursue violent conflict to establish favorable economic circumstances, "terrorism" falls into the same paradigm. The history of the Cold War shows that the US is also driven by questions of prestige, and is especially concerned to demonstrate to its supposed allies that it can do certain things. The Vietnam War occurred substantially because of the defeats in Korea and Laos: various presidents felt that the US had to demonstrate its power. Once the US was in Vietnam it was extremely difficult to get out without significant loss of prestige, so the conflict was prolonged. All leading American racketeers still share this view.

While speaking of Vietnam it would be remiss not to mention one of the most exalted mobsters in the whole system, Dr Henry Kissinger. When the then president of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was invited to campus at

Columbia University where I was studying at the Journalism School, there were weeks of debate about whether we should allow him to address us at our home. On the day he arrived hundreds of protesters spoke out against his pernicious statements on the Holocaust and his crackdown on dissidents, homosexuals and secularism back in Iran. The university president joined the chorus and opened his introduction with a rhetorical salvo against Ahmadinejad. All good. Except, soon after, Columbia Journalism School welcomed a speaker who was much worse than a Holocaust denier – he had been partly responsible for one; in fact, more than one. That man is Kissinger, the National Security Advisor and Secretary of State under presidents Nixon and Ford. There was none of the publicity, none of the protests, none of the ire – he was given a warm and effusive welcome and answered questions about his experience at the hub of the United States. Conceivably, the lack of publicity was an effort to stop the protest movement that follows Kissinger around the world. But at the end of his peroration, dewy-eyed students took photos alongside him and one even hugged him passionately. It is hard to know what is more worrying – that a reputable journalism school invites someone like Kissinger to speak every year, despite his past, or that the majority of students are oblivious to what the man has done. In his 2001 book, *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, the prominent late journalist Christopher Hitchens catalogued with tragic specificity the carnage that Kissinger consistently unleashed around the world during his time at the center of power. “Many if not most of Kissinger’s partners in crime are now in jail, or are awaiting trial, or have been otherwise punished or discredited,” he wrote. “His own lonely impunity is rank; it smells to heaven.” The first holocaust concerned the country of East Timor in East Asia. It was invaded by neighboring Indonesia on December 7, 1975. That same day, President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger concluded an official visit to Jakarta and flew to Hawaii. Ford and Kissinger are revealed by declassified files to have given the “green light” to the Indonesian dictator to start the invasion. East Timor was home to an independence movement called Fretilin, or the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor, whose leftist ideology put them on the wrong side of the Cold War divide and at the mercy of the Indonesian military. What ensued was nearly 25 years of mass slaughter, rape and torture and the near-destruction of a nation. It is estimated that more than 200,000 East Timorese were killed during the Indonesian occupation, a third of the population of the country. Proportionally, it remains one of the worst genocides of the 20th century, all backed by Kissinger and his boss.

It is not only the disregard for human life that is troubling, but the legal aspect. What Kissinger and Ford had supported was illegal: Indonesia had violated international law by invading a sovereign nation, they had also violated American law, which said that weapons supplied to Indonesia were only to be employed in self-defense. But this was the pattern with Kissinger. His disregard for human life was matched only by his disregard for legal niceties. His blood-soaked résumé includes other continents too. In 1973, the democratically elected government of Chilean President Salvador Allende was violently liquidated by the fascist leader of the military, General Augusto Pinochet. For the three previous years, Kissinger had been integral in trying to undermine the legal and internationally recognized Allende government. The campaign included a program to remove the coup-averse General René Schneider and replace him with a sharper toothed coup-hungry operator. A $50,000 sum was offered to anyone who could do it. Although the CIA backed out of its support for former army General Roberto Viaux shortly before the kidnapping and accidental murder of Schneider, enthusiasm for a coup was still strong among American leaders. Following the successful coup, 17 years of dictatorship were foisted on the Chilean people, while the economy was opened to western speculators. Over 3,000 people were killed, and countless others "disappeared" or were tortured. Similar scenarios were played out across the world during Kissinger's terms in office. The Kurds were massacred in droves between 1974 and 1975; rape, burning, torture – every conceivable horror visited on them after they had rebelled against Saddam Hussein with Kissinger's support. They were sold out and left to die.

The second holocaust Kissinger was partly responsible for was that in Cambodia under the genocidal maniac Pol Pot. During the Vietnam War, which Kissinger is thought to have prolonged in an effort to get Richard Nixon elected in 1968 (in Kissinger's life these titanic crimes only make the sidebar), Kissinger had ordered the secret bombing of Cambodia and Laos, two desperately poor countries that the US was not officially at war with. Between March 18, 1969 and May 1970, 3,630 bombing raids were flown into Cambodia. A Finnish government study estimates that 500,000 people died in this first phase, with 2 million refugees produced. Some analysts also argue that this bombing campaign, which depopulated large rural regions, led to the Pol Pot regime, which murdered 25 percent of the Cambodian population.

So there you have it: a veritable war criminal and facilitator of mass slaughter. And all of this information was in the public domain, available to any student with an enquiring mind. Fed up with the love-in at Columbia Journalism School, I asked Kissinger in front of his enraptured audience how he slept at night. “Do you think you are morally superior to me?” he asked after a pause. “Yes. I do,” I answered confidently, stunned that he might mistake me for a mass murderer. All the while there were groans in the room from fellow students and professors, a startled disbelief that a journalist might actually confront a powerful mobster rather than attempt to fondle his ego with the usual fatuous questions. Despite this, it is still assumed that Columbia University has the best journalism school in the country. But thinking about this pandering to and reverence of one of the racket’s most illustrious, I realized that to flourish in the corporate media, the destination of nearly all of these students, you have to block out the truth of how the world works. Looking at the racket with open eyes can spell career suicide, so, as Harold Pinter put it, “it never happened”. Kissinger is a cuddly old statesman, not a mass-murdering racketeer. In fact, a couple of days after I confronted Kissinger, one of the school’s top professors came up to me and said: “I heard you disgraced yourself the other day”. If I’m honest I wasn’t even surprised – this academic would never be teaching at Columbia Journalism School if he thought the purpose of journalism was to expose his own country’s mass-murderers rather than suck up to them. Power selects for obedience, and by now it was obvious to me that the most obedient are inevitably rewarded with fancy positions in universities or with newspaper columns. The closest I came again to holding another mobster to account was when I was covering the 2008 Republican National Convention in St Paul and I chased Karl Rove, President George W. Bush’s “brain” (he needed one), down the street asking him if he believed he was a war criminal. He pled the fifth before getting into a car.

THE DRUG WAR

Another method of enforcement devised by the US is the so-called "Drug War" or "War on Drugs", which is made up of two elements – the racialized war on the domestic poor, and the war on the rest of the world. It was formally started in the early 1970s by President Richard Nixon, focusing on eradication and interdiction all over the western hemisphere. The Drug War at home began as a way to deal with what some sociologists called the "superfluous population" – those people for whom there were just no jobs, the "permanent unemployed" that every capitalist economy has. It came in tandem with the growth of what is now called the "prison–industrial complex" whereby the privatization of corrections facilities offered all sorts of perverse incentives that made it in the interests of corporations (and the politicians whom they funded) to push for harsher sentences and more incarcerated people. Since the 1970s, the US has spent upwards of $1 trillion and seen thousands of people killed in this two-front fight.

In 2010 the US federal government spent over $15 billion on the Drug War at a rate of about $500 per second. But nearly everyone in policy circles admits it has been a failure. "I think that a lot of the arguments are quite convincing that current drug policy isn't working," Michael Shiftner, president of Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington think-tank, told me. "The evidence is strong, it has produced broad consensus of opinion." Even the Obama administration's own drug tsar, Gil Kerlikowske, was skeptical in 2011. "In the grand scheme, it has not been successful," he said. "Forty years later, the concern about drugs and drug problems is, if anything, magnified, intensified." The Obama administration did use a different tone on drug eradication policy, refusing to call it a war on drugs, and behind the scenes there is very little enthusiasm for the current approach. But the bureaucratic apparatus that has been built up over the past 40 years has made change difficult. The Obama administration requested $26.2 billion in its 2012 drug control budget for federal efforts to rein in the problem, an increase of 1.2 percent from the 2010 budget. Nearly 60 percent of that, or $15.5 billion, was directed to "supply reduction"; in other words, law enforcement and interdiction internationally and domestically.

It is worth considering why this massive outlay in capital and human life continues. It is no coincidence that it began at the height of the Cold War –

it was just another tool of control to shore up the “backyard”, or Latin America, the focus of most of the efforts. That control still needs to be exercised in a continent that is showing signs of moving away from US influence. The Drug War gave the US an excuse to keep a massive military presence in the region after the Soviet “threat” had disappeared. For example, a number of countries with drug problems – such as Colombia and Panama – have good relationships with the US, but even they seem to realize the war is not doing any good. Despite that, they let it go on because it allows them to fight their adversaries – in many cases, left-wing rebels – under the cover of the Drug War and thus escape censure from the US or anyone else.

But the conversation is building. Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said in 2011 that he was not against legalization. “If the world considers that [legalization] is a solution, I would gladly go along with that. I can understand the benefits, and I can understand the arguments,” he said.[7] A commission on drug policy was set up by former Colombian president César Gaviria, calling for decriminalization of drugs in the region. Many Latin American governments are hoping the US will realize the shortcomings and begin a debate about other options that would be more viable. Before that happens they are hedging their bets.

Mexico is one of the most important countries for the US to control, as they share a long border (half of Mexico was bought by the US in 1803 for next to nothing). The border region has become a hell as a result of the Drug War. It has witnessed 36,000 deaths since former President Felipe Calderón launched a crackdown on drug trafficking, soon after he came to power in 2006, with the encouragement of the US which promised $1.6 billion in aid to the effort through the Mérida Initiative. Human rights groups have reported huge numbers of atrocities by the Mexican military against indigenous communities and civil society, under the guise of the Drug War. The murder of Jaime Zapata, a US immigration agent, by a drugs cartel in Mexico in 2011 and continuing violence in the border region again attested to the costs of this futile war. If you looked at it objectively you would have to say it is not working. The traffickers are cultivating and selling drugs to a huge market in the US that is growing all the time. The US seems to be incapable of doing anything internally about the demand for drugs, and where there is demand there will be supply. If a Colombian or Bolivian peasant farmer is deciding between growing a hectare of banana trees or a hectare of coca, there's no comparison in terms of the return.

The US has had problems in recent years, as left-wing governments have sprung up in Latin America opposed to the program, making enforcement increasingly difficult. It has become harder to launch coups to get rid of them, too. This nascent movement in Latin America has made the enforcement side of the eradication policy by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) harder. Bolivia's leftist President Evo Morales kicked out the DEA, arguing that it was being used to pursue the geostrategic interests of the US, which was undoubtedly true. At the moment only Ecuador has followed suit, but this could change. The US's teetotal approach has also led it to oppose Bolivia's formal request to the UN to remove the ban on the chewing of coca leaves – an indigenous practice dating back more than 2,000 years. All over Latin America in recent history there have been moves to legalization. Argentina's Supreme Court ruled to decriminalize possession of drugs for personal consumption and there are continued efforts in Ecuador to reform its heinous drug law that was basically drafted under the guidance of the US. Senior figures in the region such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Ernesto Zedillo, the former presidents of Brazil and Mexico, have questioned the validity of the Drug War. Back in the US, it is the cowardice of the political establishment that stops anything from changing. "People are admitting it's a failure," Ron Paul, a Republican congressman from Texas, told me. "But they are intimidated. If they say it's a failure they are worried about being perceived as soft on drugs." He added: "I think we are making progress. I sense a major change with the people, but I don't think the government has caught up yet." The libertarian wing of the Republican Party has been increasingly pro-legalization and against the huge outlays in Latin America while the rise of the Tea Party has brought the issue to the fore, with some wings favoring a cessation of the policy. "I have had this position for years, people always thought I wouldn't be re-elected [in the] Deep South bible belt, but it's never been harmful politically," said Paul. "It has hurt so many people and so many families, there has been a realization that it's the war that is hurting people more than drugs themselves." And some Democrats are wising up, too. The Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission Act aimed to create a commission appointed in part by the president to re-evaluate the eradication and production-side emphasis of the US's drug policy in Latin America. Sponsored by Eliot Engel, a congressman from New York, it was defeated in the Senate in 2010 after passing through the House unanimously. Another act of the same name was introduced in 2014. "The War on Drugs is a failure, we still have problems with drugs," Engel told me. "In Mexico the cartels are even bolder." But it was only a failure if you believed the War on Drugs was about drugs. Honduras shows it is actually about something else entirely.

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1 The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington, DC, April 4, 1949, www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

2 Martin McLaughlin, "Clinton's speech on Yugoslavia: piling lie upon lie", *World Socialist Web Site*, June 12, 1999, www.wsws.org

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4 Blaine Harden, "Waging war on the Serbs: old problem, new lesson", *New York Times*, June 6, 1999.

5 William Pfaff, "Land war in Kosovo?", *New York Review of Books*, May 6, 1999.

6 Michael Dobbs, "With Albright, Clinton accepts new U.S. Role", *Washington Post*, December 8, 1996.

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EIGHT

A DRUG WAR COLONY

TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS

Tegucigalpa (Tegus) is an American-made disaster. Traditionally the most subservient and tightly controlled US client state in Central America, it has been the base from which the US has launched a terrorist war of aggression (against the Nicaraguans in the 1980s) and ignited a savage civil war (in neighboring El Salvador). There is barely a restaurant in the city that is not part of an American corporation, and on the surrounding beautiful, rolling hills sits Tegus's own version of the Hollywood sign – except this time it says Coca-Cola. There is barely anywhere in the city from which this imposing cutout is not visible.

When I arrived in the country in 2012, it had been three years since the US-backed coup that threw out the democratically elected president. I was told I could not leave the hotel, day or night, and had to take a taxi to interviews. The whole city was on lockdown. I did not comply – but as I walked the concrete streets of the center it was like a ghost town. There were various bits of graffiti, the walls being the last place for free expression in a country wrecked by authoritarianism and violence. *"El pueblo nunca olvidará"* (The people will never forget); *"Venceremos los dueños!"* (We will defeat the owners).

Honduras is one of the front-line states in the Drug War. It has become increasingly popular with traffickers owing to the corruption of its officials, the poverty of its people, and the fact that there are large tracts of barren land, particularly in the north of the country, that are off limits to the government. The geography is also a boon for narcos – Honduras is a halfway point for cocaine coming from South America to Mexico and the US. But combating drugs is like squeezing a balloon – when you push the drugs out of one region, they reappear somewhere else. Underneath all the puritan anti-crime rhetoric, the so-called Drug War, which is now a huge bureaucracy employing thousands of people all over the world, was always about control. This method of domination became more acute after the end of the Cold War when the US was running out of excuses to base its military personnel and agents throughout Latin America. The Drug War then became the perfect front for a sustained military presence in the region that would make all its countries slaves to US dictates: the situation that the planners wanted replicated was that of Honduras. Unsurprisingly, it was a plan the rest of the hemisphere was not too happy with. When I arrived in Tegucigalpa I was aware of the real reasons for the Drug War, but I wanted to hear from the horse's mouth what US operations were about. I organized an interview with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the major US agency dedicated to eradication of coca crops, to take me through it. The DEA agent, Jeff Sandberg, did not want to be named, but in the interests of full disclosure I will not conceal his identity. US agents don't deserve anonymity, like the programs they oversee. Incidentally, that's probably not even his real name – most US agents are given cover identities. He was a squat man with a shaved head and a wild-eyed look, the sort of proselytizing anti-drugs bureaucrat you might imagine would be working for the DEA in Honduras. When I asked him whether he felt he was winning the war against the cartels, he just laughed. "No, we're not winning, but we're trying very hard. The situation is very difficult, you have government institutions that have basically failed or are failing that require a lot of work and a lot of time to strengthen them and get them back on track." He was no doubt correct, but he forgot to add that the government, the country and the state it was in, were in large part down to non-stop US intervention for pretty much a century. Any time it looked like the people were slinging off the imperial giant upstairs, the US would come in and launch a coup, as it did in 2009, President Barack Obama's first coup. The problem had been the incumbent President Manuel Zelaya, who had had the temerity to raise the minimum wage for the poorest Hondurans. The local Honduran oligarchs saw the danger of a slightly more humane society and reached out to their natural allies, the US, overthrew democracy, kidnapped the president, dumped him in his pajamas on a runway, and reinstalled the political wing of the rich, the Liberal Party. The US initially called it a coup, then the position changed, the subsequent "elections" were validated, and Porfirio Lobo, the new and illegitimate president, was invited to tea at the White House.

Since the coup, a continuing phenomenon has been the huge increase in the number of human rights violations. This is not just perception. One human rights group told me that at a national level in 2008 they were dealing with 125 human rights violations throughout the whole year. In 2010, they had 2,700 cases, and in the period 2011–12 there was very clear targeting of specific groups. Among the countries of Latin America, Honduras has had the most journalists murdered in recent years. There has also been targeting of people who are aligned to the new political party, LIBRE, that has been set up by former president Zelaya and his wife, as well as people who are community activists involved in protest and resistance movements. When I was there the country had what Hondurans called (accurately) a "narco-congress", a group of rich legislators who are in bed with the narco-traffickers with whom the US was ostensibly at war. Mr Sandberg himself agreed. "I believe there are plenty of people that are involved [in the drugs trade], that would have to be involved, to allow what goes on here, high up the food chain." The number of deputies in the congress who have been assassinated in narco-related incidents has soared over recent years, while people at the local level will say openly which mayors, members of the city councils and deputies have been elected with narco funds.

NOTHING TO SEE HERE

The method of military control used in Honduras, under the guise of the Drug War, is simple: open a military base, but do not call it a base. This method is mirrored across other countries in the region and across the world. The US officially calls these areas Forward Operating Locations (FOLs), because apparently they are temporary, and it's embarrassing to call them bases as an American empire, of course*, does not exist*. In Honduras, just before I arrived, the US had opened four new FOLs, ostensibly to deal with drugs. But, in truth, Central America was also showing signs of moving away from US control, with left-wing governments in El Salvador and (briefly) Honduras. The truth is that the US was trying to reassert its control of Latin America after a decade of concern about the Middle East, during which time a raft of independent leaders, not subservient to US interests, arose in the region.

In the course of my interview with DEA agent Jeff Sandberg in the gardens of the US embassy in Tegucigalpa, he denied that the FOLs were new, saying that "they have been around for a number of years, maybe not in as much use as they've gotten in the last year or maybe in the upcoming time frame, but those locations have been around for actually a number of years, so they are not really new." This sounded like an admission that the US has had a surreptitious military presence at undisclosed locations through Honduras for "a number of years". The flack (journalistic slang for PR people) who sat in on our interview chimed in: "We have no military bases, there are Forward Operating Locations, which are actually Honduran facilities where there was just renovations that were done to support these types of air operations, it's not something that was built out of whole cloth. Even though I explained it's a small operation, but these were existing facilities where it was built so that there could be the staging for these helicopters into the air where we've identified that the drug trafficking activity takes place." The rhetorical gymnastics of imperialism. Of course, it was all smoke and mirrors. FOLs are the same thing as a military base, but the Americans don't want to appear the imperialists. The flack even said there is "not a US base at Soto Cano. Soto Cano is a Honduran base". But that same base houses the US Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B), which is a regional force whose main goal is apparently to "assist in disaster relief " – and other *more nefarious things*. "I do want to reject categorically the idea that there is an American base in Honduras," he told me. Imagine if the Hondurans had an elite team of Special Forces at a base in Florida, then said it didn't comprise a base. Incidentally, the use of "advisors" in South Vietnam by President Kennedy in the early 1960s was another way of covering up for the build-up of troops and the take over of a foreign country under the veil of "altruism" and the "at their behest" ideology.

To understand the massive ideological construct that is the Drug War, designed to disguise the imperialism at its root, it is necessary to examine US claims about its efforts. Money is given by the US, alongside military and drug personnel and training, to Latin American countries in an effort to interdict drugs that are being smuggled from Colombia and other areas of South America through Central America until they finally arrive on the streets of Baltimore or Chicago. Interdiction does happen – the propaganda is not completely hollow – in the form of night raids and drug busts, but even Mr Sandberg admitted to me that "interdiction is a very small part of the puzzle". In addition, the US's Drug War hasn't hit production levels at all, but has merely caused possibly millions of deaths and untold misery across the continent. When WikiLeaks released the US diplomatic cables, they revealed that the Americans in fact knew that the most powerful oligarch in Honduras, Miguel Facussé Barjum, was allowing drugs-laden aircraft to land on his property. Facussé, who had his own private militia that was killing campesinos fighting for land rights, was of course a US ally, so nothing ever happened. Many in Honduras believed Facussé was in fact behind the June 2009 coup, an allegation with some merit.

In short, the US is losing the war against drugs, but that doesn't matter because it *isn't about drugs*. The war will continue because it's the perfect mask, the perfect means of maintaining high levels of military force and control throughout the Americas now that the excuse of the Soviet Union has disappeared. The Soto Cano air base in Honduras, in fact, became a vital control point for counter-insurgency in the region, and in more recent times it has been the watching point for the supervision of drug trafficking and movement throughout this region. More importantly, the US can police the people when they vote the wrong way: it was clearly concerned about President Zelaya's policies in 2007–08, the entry of Honduras into the independent trade grouping ALBA, and the close relationship with Hugo Chávez. All of these set off warning bells for the US about whether it would lose access to the bases, so there was a coup, and the people of Honduras were crushed once again.

The functionaries at the front line of US imperial operations can't – won't – see it like this. "We're making some progress, we're trying to make more progress, what's the alternative?" asked Jeff Sandberg when I mentioned that the war looks to be failing. "To throw up our hands and say we give up? Then what happens? Chaos, in my estimation. Is that the better alternative? Not in my world, maybe some people think so, but I bet if those people lived in chaos they'd think otherwise." I later organized to meet with the heads of the United States Agency for International Development

(USAID) and the State Department to see what kind of narrative they had developed to explain the descent of this close American ally into tragedy. Like many individuals working in the US imperial system, they obviously believed the lies that had been concocted to legitimize, both morally and legally, the US presence in Honduras. In fact, I believe it would be impossible to not imbibe all these false theories about US benevolence – many of these people are good people who want to believe they are doing the right thing. It is the institutions that are pathological; they are merely its human form, so convoluted forms of legitimization are a must. Every now and then someone like Edward Snowden has a moral awakening and reveals the true face of American power. But the collection of officials I met comprised the standard fare. We sat around the table at the USAID building opposite the embassy and they came out with the usual lines, which are not worth quoting as they just perpetuate the myths.

CULPRITS RUNNING FREE

Like most campaigns waged by the US government to pursue its interests in a particular region, the result in Honduras has been unadulterated misery for the people living there. In fact, when I was in Honduras it had been transformed into the most dangerous country in the world. The homicide rate was higher than in war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan, two other countries destroyed by the US government and military. I talked to a number of people who had lost friends and relatives – it was unusual to meet someone who did not know someone who had been killed by a gang or political interests. No one had seen justice done. Julio Funes Benítez, for example, was shot dead in broad daylight outside his house in Tegucigalpa in early 2010. The assassins unleashed a hail of bullets in his direction while driving past on a motorbike. Mr Benítez had been active in the resistance movement which flourished after the coup. But nearly three years on, no one had been charged with his murder. “From when they killed my husband to now, I never got any support from the authorities,” Lidia Marina Gonzales, Mr Benítez’s widow, told me. “There was never an investigation, the culprits are free. The agent who was meant to investigate told me that if I wanted there to be an investigation I would have to pay.” The fact that Mr

Benítez's killers got away with murder is not an exception in modern-day Honduras. There are 91 murders per 100,000 people, or one every 74 minutes. Nearly all remain unsolved, and many, as in the case of Mr Benítez, are not even investigated. One of the big problems is that the quality of criminal investigation is absolutely appalling; sentencing is less than 3 percent. This pattern of violence cannot be attributed solely to the coup, but has been growing since around 2002. The Honduran government itself says it is focusing on modernizing the justice system and reforming political institutions in its effort to bring down the homicide rate. "The advance of narco-trafficking alongside the geographical position of the country and corruption in the police make it hard to combat," Julio César Raudales, the minister for planning in the Lobo administration, told me. "It is going to be a long road to reconstruct the social fabric, but that won't stop us."

As in all countries where the US has been intervening on the side of the oligarchs and the murderers, a heroic resistance, killed at a staggering rate, refuses to be cowed. Chief among these groups is Cofadeh, the Committee of the Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras, which is a non-governmental organization (NGO). I walked over to their offices to talk with Dina Meza, one of its human rights workers, who was herself living in fear because of her work. "There are many threats, defenders of human rights have a lot of threats," she told me in a coffee shop just down the street. "In my case they have increased since February of this year, text messages have come to me telling me to watch out, armed men have come to my house, I had to change my life radically, including where I live. I spend much more on security, but of course the government isn't investigating the threats. This office is watched, all our actions are watched. I had to leave with my family from where we lived because armed men were watching us at home, even though Cofadeh had told the police, they had never come to protect us, they wanted to kill us all. They gave me a number to call of the police if I get in a bad situation, but the number doesn't work, no one picks up. We have a state that doesn't work." So how does she go on? I asked. "I don't want to see a country with no human rights; we have to keep fighting for our children. Even if I die, we are fighting for democracy, rights, it's a natural bravery."

When you travel around the world investigating how the US has uniformly tried to stub out popular movements through the most heinous and brutal programs, people like Meza also pop up everywhere. These are people who refuse to become just another statistic buried by the US media, people whose names will never be known beyond their communities but who continue to fight every day, at great risk to themselves, positioned against the most powerful state and military in the history of the world. Meza didn't mince her words: "The US support the oppression of anyone lifting a finger against the coup government, I wish the American people could see this."

In the aftermath of the June 2009 coup, the resistance had been strong and was brutally suppressed. A new party emerged which was said to represent the disparate groups allied against the *de facto* regime – these included unions, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups and women's movements. It was called LIBRE and was led by Xiomara Castro, wife of the deposed president Zelaya. I met the international coordinator of the party, Gilberto Ríos Munguía, in Tegucigalpa. "The government doesn't have real power," he told me. "A *de facto* group have power in the country. They control the police and the military. It's a group of narco traffickers, from Mexico and Colombia; it's the same cartels that are in Mexico that control this place. They have more power than the state of Honduras; they have neutralized the functioning of the state, in police, investigations, in the military. This has provoked the high levels of violence."

After the US and oligarchs threw out the democratically elected Zelaya, the narcos gained near-complete control of the congress. Although the US denied being involved in the coup and, in WikiLeaks cables subsequently released, privately said it was illegal, it has strongly supported the coup regime under President Porfirio Lobo. Many people in Honduras suspect that the US was involved in the coup itself. There is a famous joke in Latin America that the US is the only country in the hemisphere to have never had a military coup because it is the only country in the hemisphere without a US embassy. "The CIA had a lot to do with the coup. Obama with the new coup, he didn't recognize the *de facto* government of [Roberto] Micheletti; however, he never did a commercial blockade, like in Cuba. In the case of Honduras he only criticized six months of *de facto* government, then recognized the government of the same coup," added Munguía.

Munguía believed that the US favors some cartels over others, a view that is gaining increasing currency in Central America and is backed up by revelations from Mexico. He held that “the DEA is very corrupt, it’s a cartel, and they are working with the cartels, in Mexico as well”. Like in Iraq and Afghanistan, where someone who has a score to settle will erroneously tell the Americans that their enemy is al-Qaeda, the cartels in Central America are informing on their enemies to the DEA in the hope that the biggest military power in the world can help them vanquish their rivals. “In Mexico, the country started going bad at the start of the war on drugs, and in Honduras we are worse than even Mexico,” said Munguía. The activists in LIBRE, like many others who are standing against the US-backed coup regime, feel in constant danger. “Many people of us are under threat of death, we have received many threats,” he said. “I have friends that have been assassinated, the mayor, the deputies. I lost a friend who was very close six months ago. The first deputy candidate [from the LGBT community], he was killed.” That activist was a young man by the name of Eric Martinez, who was murdered by anonymous forces for speaking out too forcibly against the US-backed regime. Munguía said that most of the assassinations were the work of the police or military, a situation mirrored in countries that the US controls across Central America.

LIBRE is a rare beacon of hope in Honduras, where a sense of hopelessness pervades. In a country where dissent and democracy is attacked mercilessly, its activists, in the face of violence and murder, are organizing from a grassroots base to take on the oligarchy and their backers in the US embassy. Before they are successful, however, a lot of blood will have to be spilt. It’s the same for those fighting US-backed tyrants around the world, from Egypt to Saudi Arabia. “Honduras is the most anti-democratic country in Latin America,” said Munguía. And of course it has to be this way, because as soon as real democracy appears and threatens US interests, it will have to be cut down. What the US likes, and promotes, is “low-intensity democracy”, a political system in which there are formal elections every four years but the social relations of the society, the control of a rich elite, is never questioned and the concerns of the country’s poor people are never heard.

Not long before I arrived in Honduras there was what became an infamous massacre. On May 11, a gun helicopter ship, US-owned but apparently Honduras-piloted (and overseen by DEA agents), murdered four people, including two pregnant women. "I wasn't there in the incident, nor was I here in the country," Jeff Sandberg said. I asked instead if there were regular firefights between the Honduran military and people they were ambushing. "I don't know if I would say regularly," he replied. "But there certainly have been incidents and there will be further incidents of government forces against people involved in the cartels." I asked about the role of the DEA in such operations. "Mentoring, advising, and building the capacity of the Hondurans to at some point function on their own without our help." It was the same excuse – of beneficence and aid – that had been used to control South Vietnam, Afghanistan and countless other countries. But many argue that the role of the DEA is much more hands-on. "In this case, that was a police operation not a military operation, and they were in a situation of trying to seize drugs out of a community that had a lot of arms," Lisa Kubiske, the US ambassador to Honduras, told me in her office in the embassy. What that operation did provoke was massive anti-American feeling in Honduras. Mr Sandberg added: "It's just part of the politics that goes along with any kind of country that is requesting assistance from another country, wouldn't have to be just the US. What happens if Hondurans ask Guatemala for assistance, and you have Guatemalan police or troops to assist and an attack happens where some civilians are killed by the Guatemalans, I'm sure the Hondurans would say the same thing." The problem for Sandberg and the Americans is that they work militarily in 130 countries around the world – no other country does that. Of course the dynamic is the same: *people don't like outsiders coming in and killing their people*. But those outsiders are nearly always American. Ask an Iraqi or Afghani or Honduran or Guatemalan. The flack representing the embassy at this point reminded me that the Americans were "here at the request of the government, working in areas that the government has identified". This is the oldest American propaganda line there is. Like all the best propaganda, too, it has a semblance of truth if decontextualized. So, of course, the Honduran government has invited the US, but it's a government the US installed and is backing to the hilt against their own people, so it would be a huge surprise if they rejected US solicitations to base themselves in the country. This is the problem of the American empire: it has to hide itself continually, it has to live in the shadows, not allowing detection, because the country is founded on strong anti-imperialist ideas, and its media class would implode if it reported the truth. So the military bases have to be “forward operating locations”, the military presence has to be at the behest of the “Honduran people”, the military operations have to be operated by Hondurans, and “overseen” by Americans. It’s a constant dance to cover up rapacious power and give it the gleam of legitimacy. Once you scratch the surface, however, it falls apart.

THE ECONOMY OF DESPAIR

Although Honduras is a major military outpost for the US empire, it pales into insignificance when you look at the “tonnes of personnel” (Sandberg) that the US has in Mexico and Colombia. “Every Central American country has DEA personnel assigned in Central America,” Sandberg said. In fact, the US set up multi-billion-dollar programs in both Mexico (the Mérida Initiative) and in Colombia (Plan Colombia), alongside the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), the US government program through which it filters money to countries in the region. Sandberg pointed to these two places as evidence of what might be achieved in Honduras. “There are many obstacles. I would say take a look at Colombia and Mexico. How long has it taken Colombia to get its handle on the drug trade and various anti-government entities operating in Colombia, it was a long time frame. Realistically it’s probably what it’s going to take here, but we have had tremendous success in Colombia, and I think we’re starting to have some very good success in Mexico, so it’s possible here.” Colombia, as has been noted, has the worst human rights record in the hemisphere; in Mexico, from 2004 to 2014, 200,000 people were killed in the Drug War fought by the military and the cartels. That’s what Honduras has to look forward to – courtesy of the US. But Sandberg was adamant that it’s the Hondurans who “need to change”, not the US. “Their country, their views, their legal system is what needs to be revamped, and I think that’s probably decades. Generations that have the wrong outlook, maybe, of how things function here, and accept how things function here, that’s what needs to change.” This is traditional imperial mentality. The colonial powers, and their agents, nearly always ascribe any faults in a country they are administering to the cultural mores of the local people. This provides an important function: it stops the colonial powers' administrators from ever having to question the system that created the mess in the first place, and which they oversee. Another point that the US might consider is that nearly all the demand for these drugs comes from within the US, as well as a large portion of the guns used by the cartels. If the US government could reduce the demand for drugs and supply of guns, the violence might very well start to abate.

In the big debate about the Drug War, most politicians turn to simple demonization of cartels and their members, as well as the trade itself. The cartels are brutal organizations, but they are a product of a destroyed economy. When young kids are growing up in Honduras or northern Mexico, and their choice is between a life of penury in the formal economy or joining a cartel and becoming fabulously wealthy, unsurprisingly they often choose the latter. In the May 11 killings, for example, even if the people killed were guilty, they are likely to have been dirt-poor kids moving product up the river because they had no other option. DEA agent Sandberg had actually put his finger on the problem, when I asked why there were such high levels of violence in Honduras: "I think because the legal system in Honduras and the other social systems are so broken that there's no impunity for people to not commit a crime, so it doesn't have to be focused or because of drugs, it's just a crime of opportunity or because you have a tonne of people who are living in poverty, people are trying to literally stay alive, and if that means committing a crime to get what is required to stay alive, then so be it. So I don't attribute it all to drugs and cartels." He did not, however, connect the state that Honduras was in to the fact that it had been the recipient of continuous US intervention. Was it a coincidence that Haiti, Honduras, and all the rest of these countries controlled by the US, were in tatters? Forcefully wrenching control from the people of any country, making it a dependency, a slave state for foreign capital, would, of course, not benefit the majority of the population.

Honduras economically is a playground for American capitalists, having been cursed by various neoliberal institutions. The multinationals operating in Honduras have nearly all been given tax-free holidays of up to 20 years to locate in Tegucigalpa, which has decimated government revenues. It is part of the reason why the justice institutions, education and health are so chronically underfunded. The profits are repatriated to the US and other western capitals, while the Hondurans spend their money in their restaurants. In this sense, Honduras is one of those unfortunate places where many facets of US imperial power converge – the neoliberal economics, the support for the military institution, the hysterical anti-leftist ideology. In such a situation, for people to retain their dignity and shake off the oppressor is extremely difficult. These tensions and problems contribute to the sluggish economy. When I was there, a “model cities” project was seen as a way to kick-start the economy, through creating privately run cities on Honduran land where immigrants from across Latin America could come to work in the *maquiladoras* (sweatshops). It was, however, rejected by the Honduran Supreme Court in October 2012 as “unconstitutional”, but it will, without doubt, be back.

“If you want security for citizens it’s interrelated with socio-economic conditions of country,” said US ambassador Kubiske. “If you have people who can earn enough money, they don’t have to be tempted by criminal activity. If they think there are no options, they may be tempted.” True – but the US has kept Honduras chronically undeveloped. Like Haiti, Honduras experienced neoliberal economics on top of an already desperate situation. Hurricane Mitch, which hit in 2002, destroyed large parts of the infrastructure of the country and the livelihoods of many thousands. There was a big surge in male migration up to 2006. Then after that there was a big internal migration, mainly of women who moved toward the *maquila* sector. The majority of these “free trade zones” were in the north, like San Pedro Sula, which is now the most deadly city in the world. As late journalist Charles Bowden has pointed out, this mix of ultra-violence and ultra-capitalism is an apocalyptic vision of all our futures, as capital reforms governments around the world to make their people slave to it. Honduras is a very unequal society, as are most US client states. The concentration of income that is being captured by the top 10 percent of the population is growing, while the percentage that has been captured by the poorest 20 percent is decreasing, from about 3.7 percent of national income to just over 2 percent over the last decade. This inequality and the blatant consumerism are evidence that there is a section of the population who are concentrating income, which inevitably leads to violence – petty and otherwise.

Debt, both internal and foreign, is also beginning to grow in Honduras. There is an urgent need for job creation that is not dependent on the sweatshops, as it is difficult for the Hondurans to compete with China on wages. Zelaya tried to raise minimum wage by 61 percent overnight to give some dignity back to the poorest Hondurans. The economy did not break down as had been predicted by the oligarchs, and the fact that they were able to pay it shows just how much money had been accumulated.

One industrial park now has 18,000 workers in one spot, making textiles, clothes and footballs. Sally O'Neil, head of Irish charity Troicaire, based in Tegus, told me: "When you got to the *maquilas* in Honduras, the really big ones that make Christian Dior, the workers aren't even allowed to bring in their handbags, it's incredible. We're working with a women's organization, which work on occupational issues like repetitive damage to people working for hours on the things. We weren't allowed to ask any questions or talk to any of the workers, but [when] we met the women afterwards we found out they have to have a pregnancy test every month. The women were given handouts. When they go through the turnstile in to work, they put their hands out, and they have to take the pill; before they used to throw it away, now they have to swallow it. You have to swallow it before you go out in front of them. Another one where the women we work with, they go in the morning, there's a big sack and you put your hand and take out a piece of paper and the piece of paper will have a time on it, and that's the time you can go to the loo, your one toilet stop. But you can start work at 6am and your toilet stop may be 7.15pm."

EXCUSES

I was granted the interview with Lisa Kubiske, whose first ambassadorship this was, probably because so few journalists were making it to Tegucigalpa, as the story was no longer "sexy" – another country destroyed by America, and forgotten. "If we have in Honduras a place that is democratic, and economically prosperous and has social inclusion for its people, has strong institutions of government, strong democratic institutions, that's good for Honduras, it's good for the region, and it's good for the US in a lot of different ways," she told me. Except I knew that wasn't true. A truly democratic Honduras, where the will of its population would be put ahead of the interests of foreign multinationals and the local oligarchs, was exactly what the US didn't want to see and had helped to shut down. Ms Kubiske refrained from mentioning that the US has implicitly backed a coup against a government whose biggest crime was raising the minimum wage, which would have pulled many people out of poverty.

So I asked about US support for the Lobo administration, which was a coup government that won the election merely because many did not vote in what they called an "illegitimate" contest. "Not only do we work with the elected government of the country if you think they were elected in a legitimate election, the reason we think that is because they were the candidates selected in primaries. We recognized this result." I asked if the coup made the situation worse, as many in Honduras hold, and whether the elections were illegitimate. "The violence of this society is perpetrated by many different actors, and that's the first thing," she replied. "The second thing is there has been a rising trend in violence that goes back several years before the coup. I'm going to say something like 2004, 2005, but you can look it up. So to say that the violence is a result of the coup, I wouldn't say that. I wouldn't say that." She added: "They have other cultural weaknesses. For many years they had problems with how they treated women – women getting killed, beat up, that kind of thing. The family issues, that's been there, it's just worsened in the last few years."

I mentioned that the militarization of law enforcement and drug interdiction, under the aegis of US forces and policy, has made the situation worse and resulted in murders like those on May 11. "I wouldn't characterize them as murders," the flack interrupted. "Killings, then," I said, and added, "some people say 'we are a sovereign country, we don't need the superpower upstairs here with their trained officials' ". Ambassador Kubiske answered: "I would refer them to surveys about US participations in their country. Firstly, we do really just go where we're invited." She said that most Hondurans ask for *more* intervention and use of Soto Cano as a counter-drugs base (which it already is). For a long time, the Honduran military had a fearsome reputation and was hated by the population for its brutality and human rights abuses. Now, the coin has flipped and the police are feared while the military enjoys a better reputation. This is not a sign of progress, but rather how far in people's estimation the police have fallen.

I mentioned I had spoken to human rights groups in Honduras, and Ambassador Kubiske shot back, "They don't all have the same views", which means that there are some critical and some supportive of the US. One of the major features of US imperial strategy is to maintain a pretense of an open civil society inside "low-intensity democracies" and then put money into certain human rights NGOs which are supportive of the US and its policies. So it looks as though the US is contributing to a vibrant civil society and human rights system, but actually it is creating bodies that shore up its position. It is structurally impossible for these organizations to threaten to upset the social relations of the country or impinge on the US-backed oligarchs. So you get "human rights" and control, with no need for a crisis of conscience.

Of course, the US doesn't control all civil society groups, and so the ones outside US control, like Cofadeh, support groups that fight for justice on a more general level. For this reason, they must be discredited. Cofadeh had asked me why it was that the US embassy released a strong statement after a lawyer was killed in Tegus, but had said nothing about the campesinos in Aguan Valley where private militias rented by the local oligarchs to clear the land of protests and occupation murdered 80 people. "It's very complicated," said Ambassador Kubiske, in a common refrain from US officials overseeing an unjust policy. "It could be private guards, one time it could be one campesino group on another campesino group, one time it could be narcos. So for what we're seeing, we're seeing lots and lots of different motives."

The case in Aguan was horrific – the wanton murder of powerless campesinos by private militias controlled by some of the wealthiest people in the region – but for the US embassy it was "complicated" because admitting that this was a horror show would mean taking on the oligarchs who represented their interests in the country and the region. "I think we're known in general society for being quite an active voice on behalf of human rights because it is important to us," said Ms Kubiske, ignoring the reality beyond the walls of the US embassy. When I asked about the huge private armies amassed by the oligarchs, she legitimized it as a natural reaction. "I can't comment on Facussé himself, but I've lived in a lot of countries that have weak police systems, and when you don’t think you are getting adequate security from the state, you tend to go and pay for your own to do that. What I’ve seen in Honduras and elsewhere before are middle-class people on up hiring private guards, lots of them because they can, the police aren’t there when you need them. That’s what I think is going on, I think it’s a natural response.” A natural response. The people of Honduras had been beaten down to the point where only a whimper could be heard. But elsewhere in the continent people were breaking free of the vast web of control the racket had imposed on the region. Welcome to Bolivia.

NINE

WAR ON HOPE

LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

In the middle of the night on April 16, 2009, an elite Bolivian police unit entered the four-star Hotel Las Americas situated in the eastern city of Santa Cruz, a hotbed of opposition to the President Evo Morales's government. Flown in from the capital, La Paz, the commandos planned to raid a group of men staying in the upscale lodgings. What happened in the early hours of that morning is still disputed, but at the end of the operation, three men who were asleep in bed had been killed in cold blood. Some say they were executed, while the Bolivian government claims its officers won out in a 20-minute firefight. In the aftermath, the story gained international attention when it was revealed that two of the dead were not even Bolivian. One was Michael Dwyer, a 26-year-old Irishman from County Cork, where he had been a bouncer and security guard before moving to Santa Cruz just six months earlier. Another, Árpád Magyarosi, was Hungarian-Romanian, and had been a teacher and musician before relocating to Bolivia at the same time. The third person killed in the operation was the ringleader of the group, Eduardo Rózsa-Flores, an eccentric Bolivian-Hungarian who had been born in Santa Cruz before fleeing the country during the US-backed dictatorship of Hugo Banzer in the 1970s. His family moved to Chile before the ascent of another US-backed dictator in that country, General Augusto Pinochet, and resettled finally in Hungary. Rózsa was a supporter of Opus Dei, the right-wing Catholic sect, and fought in the Croatian independence war in the early 1990s, founding the paramilitary International Platoon that many believed was aligned with fascistic elements. Two journalists, including a British photographer, died in suspicious circumstances while investigating the platoon. In Santa Cruz on that night, two others, Mario

Tadic, a Croatian, and Elöd Tóásó, also from Hungary, were arrested and remain in a high-security La Paz prison to this day. Two more suspects, both with Eastern European connections, were not at the scene and are still missing.

It transpired that the government had acted on intelligence indicating that these men comprised a cell of terrorists who were planning a program of war and violence in the country, which included a somewhat bizarre plan to blow up Evo Morales, the president, and his cabinet on Lake Titicaca, the biggest lake in the Andes and a major tourist attraction. The intelligence services, after a tip-off from an informer close to the group, had been following them for a number of months. They decided to act soon after a bomb exploded at the house of the Archbishop of Santa Cruz, Cardinal Julio Terrazas. The government appointed a seven-person committee to investigate the plot, headed by César Navarro, deputy minister for coordination with social movements and civil society, which spent the next five months until November 2009 looking into it. Among the items seized during the raid was Rózsa's laptop in which investigators claim to have discovered emails between ex-CIA asset and Cold War double-agent István Belovai. "There are emails between Rózsa and Belovai, he was the brains behind it," Mr Navarro told me in his office in the presidential palace in La Paz. "He would ask them logistical questions about escape routes, about whether the government or police would be able to get to them." Belovai, who died in 2010, was a spook who called himself "Hungary's first NATO soldier". Rózsa is thought to have become friends with Belovai in the 1990s during the Balkan war.

At the time of the attacks, the attitude of the US embassy, revealed through the cables sent from La Paz to Washington, was one of incredulity at the government's claims and worry about persecution of the opposition. One comment was headlined ' "Terrorism" excuse for mass arrests?" The US embassy was concerned about "raising fears of possible arrests of members of the Santa Cruz-based political opposition". Another cable did admit that in "an interview released posthumously, the group's leader [Rózsa] advocated the secession of Santa Cruz department, Bolivia's largest and most prosperous state". The reaction from the opposition was no less sympathetic. The right-wing governor of Santa Cruz, Rubén Costas, accused the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) government of "mounting a show” in the aftermath. The photos released by the government afterward told a different story. Rózsa and Dwyer can be seen posing with large caches of heavy weaponry including pistols and sub-machine guns, and a large rifle with telescopic sights. President Morales said the cell was planning to “riddle us with bullets”. A US embassy official met with a public defender assigned to alleged terrorist Tadic. She told the official that “the Santa Cruz leaders named by the government are most likely linked with the group” – these leaders were in fact intimately involved with the US embassy. Tadic, she said, had been stockpiling weapons and carrying out military training on rural properties outside Santa Cruz. She confirmed they were responsible for placing the explosive device in front of the cardinal’s house, while Tadic had testified that the next target was going to be Prefect Rubén Costas’ residence, and that Rózsa had advised Costas to strengthen his security gate to minimize the damage. The intent in targeting the cardinal and the prefect was to make it look like MAS supporters were carrying out the attacks.

The fact that the alleged terrorists were staying in a four-star hotel with no discernible day job suggested they must have had money coming from somewhere. The pictures of these foreigners partying in Santa Cruz – subsequently released – also show they were accepted and welcomed openly by some powerbrokers in the city – it seemed to go all the way to the top, even the prefect of the department. But none came more powerful than Branko Marinkovic, a local oligarch of Croatian origin, who had been a long-time friend of the US embassy and is now in exile in the US after being identified as one of those “most likely” to have been involved with the terrorist group. Juan Kudelka, Marinkovic’s right-hand man, said in March 2010 that he had been asked by Marinkovic to pass envelopes of money to Rózsa as part of the plan to support this terrorist group, called, he said, “La Torre”. Another suspect, Hugo Achá Melgar, a keen friend of a strange human rights group in New York, also soon fled to the US, where he was also welcomed with open arms. “[T]here are several factors that could induce the [government of Bolivia] to connect us to suspected extremist groups in Santa Cruz,” noted one US embassy cable released by WikiLeaks. “The petition of political asylum from alleged terrorist Hugo Acha and his wife, allocation of USAID assistance to a Bolivian organization suspected of funding a terrorist cell in Santa Cruz, and an implied [US Government] role based on the [Government of Bolivia's] assertion that the Santa Cruz cell leader organized meetings and had contacts in Washington." All of these assertions turned out to be true; in fact, the situation was worse than that. The US planned to bring the opposition from all over the country together in a supra-departmental business lobby in an effort to rid Bolivia of its socialist government.

At the time, the US embassy "reassured" Vice President Álvaro García Linera "that there was no US government involvement", and President Obama vouched for that too when asked by President Morales soon after. But Mr Navarro, the investigator, still didn't believe it. "The US didn't not know," he told me. When I brought Vice President Linera into the *Financial Times* office in London to speak to the union at the paper, he told me: "Nothing like this happens in Bolivia without the US knowing something about it." Even if we assume the US embassy didn't know of the cell, why would the US then provide a sanctuary to alleged funders of "terrorists" whose own public defender was telling the embassy that they were "most likely" guilty? The answer is long and complex and reveals the lengths to which the US has gone to undermine the democratically elected government of Evo Morales since it came to power in 2005.

TURNING THE TIDE

The raid and the deaths came at a pivotal moment in Bolivian history. At that time the poorest country in South America, it also had the highest proportion of indigenous people in the continent – 60 percent. In December 2005, there was a tectonic shift in the power structure of the nation, unheard of since independence from Spain, when the country elected its first ever indigenous president, the socialist trade union leader Evo Morales. It wasn't a sudden development but followed decades of confrontation and public protests that had escalated in the previous five years. In 2000, the so-called "Water Wars", centered in the city of Cochabamba in the middle of the country, had pitched the local communities en masse against the government and the World Bank which had overseen the privatization of the water industry and resultant soaring prices. Police had been instructed to arrest people collecting rainwater to avoid the new prices they could not afford. Over the next years, the indigenous movement, which is based around small micro-democratic communities, grew stronger. In 2003, mass protests spread and thousands of demonstrators went on to blockade La Paz before troops, allegedly under orders of the government, shot dead a score of protesters.

The presidential incumbent, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, more commonly known as Goni, was forced out and fled to Miami, where he lives to this day. It was in this ferment that Morales, a former *cocalero* (coca picker) turned trade union leader, and his party, MAS, came to power with a huge take of the popular vote. This turn of events, however, was not greeted kindly by the traditional elites in Bolivia and their international backers. The US had been sending its own political "experts" for years to try to avoid exactly this scenario: a 2005 documentary, *Our Brand is Crisis*, shows a team of slick campaign managers from Greenberg Carville Shrum, the political consultancy, successfully running Goni's campaign as he defeated Evo Morales in the 2002 presidential elections. This time it was different: the US was powerless to stop Morales, causing serious worry among planners. Bolivia remains one of the most unequal societies in the western hemisphere, but the established state of affairs had made some people very rich. As the *New York Times* put it when describing Santa Cruz: "Scenes of extreme poverty stand in contrast here with the construction of garish new headquarters of corporations from Brazil, Europe and the United States." On top of this, the land distribution has led some analysts to describe the set-up as akin to "semi-feudal provinces dominated by semi-feudal estates". Five percent of the landowners control over 90 percent of the arable land. When MAS came to power it sought to deal with this egregious inequality, which is marked pretty consistently along race lines, with the poor landless peasants largely comprising the indigenous population. As always, the US supported the oligarchy, which in turn supported the continued slavery of the country to US corporations.

A land reform program was started by Morales to break up the huge rural estates that had long been controlled by a small elite and to redistribute land that was fallow to landless indigenous peasants. The government stipulated that private ownership of huge estates would only be acceptable if put to "social use". But a plan like that was going to engender vociferous opposition from an entrenched elite that felt it was being usurped. One particularly illustrative case is that of Ronald Larsen, a 67-year-old American from Montana, who came to Bolivia in 1968 and who, by the time President Morales came to power, owned 17 properties throughout Bolivia (along with his sons), comprising 141,000 acres, or three times the size of the country's biggest city. The new Bolivian government accused Mr Larsen of keeping indigenous Guarani farmers as "virtual slaves", and tried to deliver seeds to them to help them escape from servitude. Mr Larsen responded: "These people, their main thing in life is where they're going to get their next bowl of rice. A few bags of rice buys a lot of support."[1] The government reported that it was fired on as it tried to deliver the said rice.

The reaction to land reform from the east of the country, where the majority of natural resources and wealth is located, was near hysterical. A class of magnates – most of European descent – own many of the businesses there and, over the next three years, with their allies in the *media luna* (the crescent-shaped "opposition" area of the country) worked to bring down the new President Morales. The US government and its agencies, which had for decades exercised overwhelming economic and political power over Bolivia in tandem with these newly displaced elites, was not a benign player in this period. It actively worked to help the opposition and undermine the democratically elected government. The spider web of US control was, and is, extensive, with many US agencies created at the height of the Cold War still in place, civilized language hiding their use, first, as a tool against Soviet influence in the region, and now to undermine the democratic socialism of MAS. Despite vast natural gas reserves, these agencies, alongside transnational corporations and their local *compradors* in government, have conspired to keep Bolivia the second-poorest country, and among the most unequal, in South America.

When the MAS government threatened to upend that social order, it was logical that the US would be nervous. One of President Morales' first acts in power was to shutter the CIA office that had until then, he said, been operating in the presidential palace. Morales' claims that the various agencies that make up the US foreign policy apparatus have been giving covert support to the opposition are dismissed by the US government as "conspiracy theories". Alongside the US government, a score of non-governmental institutions, some headquartered in New York, or US-ally

Colombia, have been working to undermine the democratic government in Bolivia and continue to this day.

PAYING CLANDESTINE VISITS

When I interviewed César Navarro, who headed the investigation of the April 2009 incident, in his office lined with pictures of Che Guevara and prominent members of Bolivian civil society, he spoke at 100 miles an hour, desperate to get all the information out as quickly as possible. “Rózsa didn’t come here by himself, they brought him,” he told me. “Hugo Achá Melgar brought him.” The prosecutor in the case had charged that one of Achá’s business cards was found in the backpack of one of the alleged terrorists. Further, it was claimed that Achá met with Rózsa on at least three occasions, while testimony from other terrorist suspects in custody implicated Achá as a financial supporter of the group. The Bolivian government has tried to request the extradition of Achá, who is currently in the United States, to no avail.

Achá’s story reveals a long trail that leads all the way to a set of plush offices in the midtown area of Manhattan. The husband of a prominent opposition congresswoman, Achá was the founder and head of a Bolivian version of the Human Rights Foundation (HRF), an American non-governmental organization (NGO) based in New York. Not very well known – but boasting Elie Wiesel and Václav Havel on its “international council” – the HRF was founded in 2005 by a character atypical of the NGO and human rights world. A rich playboy-cum-political talking head, Thor Halvorssen could be spotted on the Manhattan party scene, as well as giving his two-pennies-worth on Fox News.

His foundation is not typical either – Mr Halvorssen told *The Economist* in 2010 that he wanted his organization to break from the traditional NGO mold. First his group had an overt agenda, the magazine said, focusing “mainly on the sins of leftist regimes in Latin America”. But his tactics were different, too. “With the confidence of a new kid on the block,” the article continued, “he argues that the big players in human rights have become too bureaucratic, and disinclined to do bold things like pay clandestine visits to repressive countries.” From his midtown Manhattan office, Halvorssen said: “They work in these big marbled offices, where’s the heart in that?” It was in the dusty streets of La Paz that he wanted to be. In many ways, Halvorssen was merely a chip off the old block. HRF’s obsession with the “repressive” governments of, particularly, Venezuela and Bolivia was not something new to the family. Neither were clandestine activities. Halvorssen’s father, Thor Halvorssen Hellum, is a Venezuelan businessman, the head of one of the richest families in the country. In 1993, he was arrested and charged with homicide and other counts after a group of terrorists set off a series of six bombs around the capital, Caracas. It was named the “yuppie” terrorists plot because its planners were allegedly bankers and other gilded elite who hoped that the panic caused by the bombs would help them speculate on the stock market. The *Houston Chronicle* noted at the time: “Police have identified one alleged mastermind as Thor Halvorssen, a former president of telephone company CANTV, former presidentially-appointed anti-drug commissioner, and, according to officials, a former operative of the US Central Intelligence Agency in Central America.” Halvorssen Hellum eventually spent 74 days in prison before a superior court judge found him innocent of attempted homicide and all other charges related to the bombings. Many found the decision murky. And two hours after his release, another “human rights” NGO, the International Society for Human Rights, appointed him director of its Pan-American committee. During a CIA “anti-drug” campaign in Venezuela, which saw a ton of nearly pure cocaine shipped to the US in 1990, Mr Halvorssen Hellum, in his position as narcotics chief, was again in trouble. The *New York Times* reported that “[t]he DEA discovered that Halvorssen, who had his own links to the CIA, was using information from DEA cases to smear political and business rivals”.

Like father like son. Halvorssen Jnr’s own human rights project, the HRF, was set up, he said, to help in “defending human rights and promoting liberal democracy in the Americas”. HRF “will research and report on human rights abuses” and “produce memoranda, independent analyses, and policy reports”. But it is clear that the organization is set up, primarily, to malign the governments of Venezuela and Bolivia. It did have sizeable funds to carry out its tasks. The group’s financial accounts make interesting reading. In the year ending December 31, 2006, the first full year of operations, the group spent $300,518 on its programs. By the next year, ending 2007, this had more than doubled to $644,163. In 2008, this had gone down to $595,977, but it surged again in 2009 to $832,532, as political violence was reaching a head in Bolivia. Interestingly, in the year ended 2008, "general programs", which was the highest spending category, was $85,525, or 14.4 percent of total spending on "program services". By 2009, "general programs" spending was up 813 percent to $458,840, and comprised 55 percent of total spending. In the four years from 2006 to 2009, HRF has spent nearly $2.6 million on running costs. But where was the money going? We do know thanks to the WikiLeaks cables that when Branko Marinkovic, the oligarch, fled to the US from Bolivia, one of his first ports of calls was the HRF office in Manhattan. Unfortunately, we don't know what they talked about. In its six years of operations, the group has released two 30-odd page annual reports, and 16 other reports on varying topics related to "repressive governments". To be fair, the group did organize an Oslo human rights conference which, one *Wall Street Journal* journalist noted, was "unlike any human-rights conference I've ever attended", because "there was no desire to blame … the US or other Western nations".

In the same article, Mr Halvorssen laughed off claims that he, like his father, was in cahoots with the CIA, calling such claims "conspiracy theories". But links between his group and Achá, the man accused of buying the tickets for the terrorists in Santa Cruz, were closer than he let on. Mr Halvorssen maintained that the Bolivian group was "inspired by HRF's work" but is "a group of Bolivian individuals … a wholly independent group with a board of directors made up entirely of Bolivian nationals". Really? Achá was briefing the US embassy on his problems all through the period and officers from the embassy met with him in "his capacity as head of Human Rights Foundation – Bolivia", which the embassy was told was tightly linked to the New York-based organization. One cable notes that Achá's outfit is "an affiliate of the larger Human Rights Foundation group" – the one headed by Mr Halvorssen.

The HRF group in New York naturally still denies any wrongdoing by Achá, and is, according to some, likely helping him in his efforts to remain in the US. Its spokesperson told the press that "Human Rights Foundation in Bolivia has carried out extraordinary work denouncing human rights abuses in that country, and unfortunately the response of Morales comes in the form of insults and unfounded accusations … We have carried out an internal review and have found no evidence that Mr. Acha is linked to the group that the government claims is carrying out separatist activities.” As WikiLeaks cables reveal, the group further accused President Morales of “vilifying the reputation” of HRF due to HRF–Bolivia’s reporting on the “destruction of democratic institutions, the grand human rights violations in Bolivia” and the “anti-democratic character of the Morales Administration”. It was a typical response. The Bolivian human rights ombudsman (Defensor del Pueblo) Waldo Albarracin, referring specifically to the Human Rights Foundation, told the US embassy: “they do not have the facts and so any opinion they have is just that, an opinion.”

Achá was at one point arrested on suspicion of being involved in the plot. The cables reveal the concern of the embassy over the arrest of this “Embassy contact and leader of a human rights NGO”. Achá had even given the embassy a copy of the warrant for his arrest, which he linked to his “investigations” into a massacre in the Pando department of Bolivia (carried out, in fact, by far-right elements of the opposition). But, like many of the opposition figures, he was successful in persuading the US to grant him political asylum. The cable ends by saying that “Acha is currently in the US”. Providing a sanctuary for Bolivian suspects would become a theme of US policy. In fact, the US had been active in his alleged terrorist education. According to the WikiLeaks cables, Achá had actually participated in a Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies “Terrorism and Counterinsurgency” course in Washington in late 2008 – one assumes to gain knowledge for his own violent “counter-insurgency” terrorism back in Bolivia. Included in the course’s mandatory reading were “Left Wing Terrorism in Italy” by Donatella della Porta and “Lenin on Armed Insurrection” by Tony Cliff.

Roger Pinto, a senator for the opposition party, Podemos, told the US embassy that the government “has evidence that Acha was involved with the alleged Santa Cruz cell”. He added that Achá was involved in trying to solicit funds for the group from opposition leaders in the *media luna*, the opposition stronghold, but only in order to “set up a self-defense force for the Media … not to assassinate the President”. Pinto contended that, among others, Achá had approached the mayor of the central city of Trinidad, Moises Shriqui, with Rózsa to enlist his support. Pinto said that Shriqui flatly refused to get involved and discounted the group as “a really bad idea”. Another opposition Podemos deputy, Claudio Banegas, told the US embassy that the congressional investigation into the Santa Cruz group had revealed that Achá did in fact have a relationship with the cell. His colleague said his involvement was “not at the top of the lighthouse, just at the bottom”. In another cable from La Paz, Achá is called a “human rights lawyer” and it is noted that political officers from the embassy met twice with him in Santa Cruz while he was investigating the September 2008 massacre of indigenous peasants in the Pando department of Bolivia. “He was preparing a report detailing a high degree of Morales administration involvement to provoke violence in Pando,” the cable added. Halvorssen never mentioned whether this “wholly independent group” had received funding from the HRF for the task, but his own group came to similar politically motivated and erroneous conclusions about the Pando massacre. Incidentally, Thor Halvorssen contacted the *Financial Times* soon after I asked for an interview with a résumé of my apparent “radicalism” and precipitated my departure from the paper. These “believers in freedom”, as mentioned, only believe in freedom when it benefits them.

LA ESPAÑA GLORIOSA

Bolivian people, and particularly the business community in the country, have always had a strong disdain for a central government they see as interfering and stifling. To this purpose, in most areas of the country, there are institutions called civic committees, which organize and represent business interests. They have become especially important in the opposition stronghold of the *media luna*. In Santa Cruz, where the Rózsa group was foiled, the civic committee has become the major non-governmental voice of opposition to Evo Morales. Its presidency has been held by some of the most powerful businessmen and politicians in the country, including Rubén Costas, the current governor of Santa Cruz. Its funding comes from 220 businesses in the department. In its internal report on civil society in Bolivia (which I obtained through the Freedom of Information Act), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) reported that the two main columns on either side of the state are “the civic committees […]

on the right, and the large labor organizations on the left". There have been accusations that the Santa Cruz civic committee (SCCC) has members with fascist leanings involved in violence against indigenous citizens, particularly in the affiliated youth branch. Ignacio Mendoza, a senator in Sucre, who is part of the left-wing opposition to MAS, told me: "Against us there is the Santa Cruz Civic Committee and the Youth Union, which is a neo-fascist group. These groups always threaten." In the *New York Times*, correspondent Simon Romero noted: "It is no surprise that many Bolivian supporters of Mr. Morales view Santa Cruz as a redoubt of racism and elitism." He added: "This city remains a bastion of openly xenophobic groups like the Bolivian Socialist Falange, whose hand-in-air salute draws inspiration from the fascist Falange of the late Spanish dictator, Francisco Franco."

This would appear to include the SCCC. At the conclusion of a series of interviews at SCCC's offices, the group's spokesperson inexplicably allowed me to download a tranche of files from the computer in the main office. These included racist cartoons of Evo Morales, as well as a poem lauding the old colonial country, Spain.

One reads (my translation):

The grand Spain
with benign fate.
Here he planted the sign
Of surrender.
And it did in its shadow
An eminent people
Of clear front
A loyal heart

There is also a letter titled Filial Espana (Spanish affiliate) sent by the president of the committee to the president of the far-right civic committee in Spain, Carlos Duran Banegas, thanking him for his support and help. Another folder includes a coat of arms for Germán Busch who was a president of Bolivia in the 1930s and was believed by many Bolivians to have Nazi tendencies. Reports by the fascist-linked grouping UnoAmerica also feature prominently on the SCCC computer. In fact, among the documents there are photos taken, one must assume, by an SCCC photographer of UnoAmerica delivering its report on Pando to the Organization of American States (OAS) in New York.

The computer files I retrieved were also full of unhinged documents calling Chávez and Morales terrorists. One reporter accurately noted that the SCCC is “a sparkplug of separatist agitation in the East”. Despite these leanings, the US taxpayer, through USAID, is funding members of this group. In the WikiLeaks cables, under the subtitle “Blowing Smoke”, an August 2007 dispatch makes fun of Bolivian government claims about USAID activities being used to help the opposition. But inadvertently this proved it. It noted: “[a]nother USAID contractor, Juan Carlos Urenda (a Santa Cruz civic leader) described the MAS accusations as an attempt to cast a smokescreen over the ‘serious problems in this country’.” A search in the trove of documents from the SCCC’s computer turns up the same Mr Urenda, USAID contractor, as the author for the SCCC of a long article lauding the history of the department’s autonomy struggle. A prominent lawyer in the east, in 1987 he published a book called *Departmental Autonomies*, which, he noted, “outlines what will be the fundamental doctrine of the process of autonomy”. He went on: “Conscious of the error of having structured the country in a centralized way, [Santa Cruz] has not ceased in its attempt to decentralize the state throughout its republican history.”[2]

It turns out that Mr Urenda was actually one of the founders of the SCCC’s pre-autonomy council and one of the area’s most prominent ideologues. This finding makes a mockery of USAID’s claim to be apolitical. As its own report noted: “it is clear that Bolivian civil society in the first columns on both sides [civic committees and labor organizations] are playing roles that are less social and more political and governmental.”[3] Although they shy away from talking about direct aid, the top brass of the SCCC were full of praise for USAID when I talked to them. Documents from the computer also show extensive preparations for the Ferexpo 2007, a business show in the city, which US ambassador Philip Goldberg would attend. “USAID in Bolivia was supporting democratic organizations and tourism and fairs,” said Ruben Dario Mendez, the spokesperson. “They were interested in fomenting political participation. Evo doesn't like that, he doesn't like there to be freedom."

It's not just USAID that helps out. Mr Mendez noted that the Journalists' Association of Santa Cruz has an agreement with the US embassy that helps them print books and put on events, an agreement which is not in place in other parts of the country. "In some cases the US helps us," he said. "Anyone can submit a proposal to get help. I have attended events about political governance, about freedom of expression, human rights," he added. "There was a new penal prosecution code, and a workshop on that has been carried out by USAID for years." He was still optimistic about the ability of USAID to go about its work: "There are still organizations and people in Santa Cruz who believe in democracy. This was proved the other day when I went to the opening of a center for the support of democracy, USAID helped fund this, they work with the university president, and the vice-president of the civic committee helped set this up." He obviously thought that USAID believed in his type of democracy. "We have a totalitarian system here, if there was a democratic government there wouldn't be a problem here. The biggest problem in Bolivia is centralism." (A view echoed in USAID's reports.) The extensive cache of reports from both organizations on the office computer also reveals the links between the SCCC and the NGOs HRF and UnoAmerica. These were evidently being sent out as primers on the situation in Bolivia.

I found more evidence of US support for these right-wing opposition forces in Sucre, the judicial capital of the country, where in August 2006 President Morales announced the opening of the constituent assembly. It would spend six months redrafting the constitution with enhanced rights for indigenous communities, more economic control of the country's resources, as well as land reform. It was eventually passed by a referendum in 2009. "Sucre is like the dividing line between the east and the altiplano [poorer indigenous west] so the idea was it was a place that could bring peace between the two peoples," Mr Mendoza, the left-wing senator, told me as we sat in the local government headquarters. "But radical groups here connected themselves with Santa Cruz and all of a sudden it became about something bigger." The whole process was marred by violence, as the opposition set out to scupper the process. "It all comes down to racism," he added. "The constituent assembly was largely made up of indigenous farmers and that prompted racism. People were saying, ‘Whoever doesn’t jump is a llama’, acting superior to indigenous people and calling them llamas because they are from the altiplano.”

As the killings and lootings got under way, the US made no statement of condemnation. “They are setting fire to gas pipelines, and the US government does not condemn that?” asked Morales at the time. “Of course, they know they [the opposition groups] are their allies. So why would they denounce them?” He was right.

The tactics used by the SCCC mirrored those used in Chile when the US was trying to destabilize the government of Salvador Allende in the early 1970s; he was eventually taken out in a US-backed anti-democratic coup. In Bolivia, there was the violence from the local youth groups but also strikes – this time organized by the business elites – designed to bring the country to its knees and keep goods from being delivered to the west of the country. The Confederation of Private Businesses called for a national shutdown if the government refused “to change its economic policies”. Altogether this was called a “civic coup”. It failed, but around the same time the US was trying to rejuvenate the opposition, according to evidence uncovered during my time there. While in Sucre, I talked to the civic committee for the department of Chuquisaca, in which the city sits, still an opposition stronghold. Félix Patzi, the president, described the civic committee’s role as keeping “an eye on government projects to make sure they follow through on their promises”. But the US embassy had been in contact with a staggering request, he recalled. “They made an offer years ago. They wanted to finance a meeting of all the civic committees in the country to bring them together in 2007,” he said. The idea was “to bring together the works of the different civic committees to encourage communication between them”. He added: “I don’t know why the US did it, but we heard from Santa Cruz that the idea was to create a national civic committee.” The US obviously knew (from its own internal documents) that such a national civic committee would be right wing and take on a political and governmental role. That must have been its intention. Mr Patzi said the Chuquisaca committee refused because it doesn’t receive outside funding, but, he added, “I don’t how many other civic committees have accepted money from the US.”

Back at the SCCC I talked to other officials who gave the impression of a tight relationship with the US. “We’ve always tried to work so that civil society in Bolivia has its own place to develop,” said Nicolas Ribera Cardozo, vice president of the SCCC. “We’ve always had a conversation with the US about it.” He said that in the past year-and-a-half as vice president he had had two conversations with the head of communications and publications at the embassy. “What they put across was how they could strengthen channels of communication,” he said. “The embassy said that they would help us in our communication work and they have a series of publications where they were putting forward their ideas.” But things were even better under Bush. “There were better programs under Bush; there were programs from USAID and DEA [the US Drug Enforcement Administration] to deal with narco-trafficking.” He added that the US-funded National Endowment for Democracy had “held informative workshops for young people about leadership”. For him it was not controversial that these programs were designed to help the opposition. “Of course they were opposition, it’s a liberal train of thought, you train people to be more aware, productive.”

The most controversial aspect of the SCCC is its youth branch, the Unión Juvenil Cruceñista (UJC), who have been called by one Bolivia analyst “paramilitary shock-troops”. They roam the streets of Santa Cruz in times of unrest and have been involved in violent attacks and atrocities against indigenous peasants, as well as damage to government buildings. The US embassy noted that the UJC “have frequently attacked pro-MAS/government people and installations”, adding, “Their actions frequently appear more racist than politically motivated. Several months ago, a group of mainly white Youth Union members attacked an altiplano migrant … The Youth Union has boasted to the press that it has signed up 7000 members to participate in the [civil defense militias] – the number is likely inflated but many of those who have signed-on are militant.” Another cable noted: “the Santa Cruz youth union seems to be radicalizing: one group waving Santa Cruz flags drove through town in a jeep emblazoned with swastikas.” In the aftermath of the Rózsa plot, the police apprehended Juan Carlos Gueber Bruno, reportedly an advisor to the UJC, and former SCCC activist, who was known as “Comandante Bruno”.

"Youth Union violence was basically in retaliation to a threat," Mr Cardozo told me. "The youth groups did participate in these things but because they thought it was a threat and MAS started it."

I also talked to Samuel Ruiz, president of the UJC, at the SCCC headquarters, surrounded by photos of previous presidents, including Marinkovic and Costas. "The committee was formed in 1952 as a means to protect this region, it was under attack from other regions and felt it needed to protect itself," said Mr Ruiz. "The civic committee existed but it was felt it could do with a youth branch too." Now the UJC has 3,000 passive members, and 500 active, according to its president. Asked three times if it has any indigenous people as members, he avoided the question twice. On the third time of asking, he replied: "What percentage? I don't know. There are 20 representatives in different provinces that represent areas with indigenous people." He complained that when Morales came to power he got rid of USAID and other US groups – a false claim. "It has had a huge impact," he said. "When there were international agencies, Bolivia was much more peaceful, now we see loose arms and legs about the streets, there are kidnappings, it's violent and dangerous whereas it wasn't before." The UJC had taken matters into its own hands. He said that the government was bringing people from Chile and Peru to train farmers in military combat, and that Venezuelan and Cuban doctors were actually providing military training. His paranoia about Cuban and Venezuelan influence was similar to that shown in the cables from US officials. He claimed that Morales sent campesinos to Santa Cruz to start violence at the height of the tension, even though the cables noted that Morales went out of his way to avoid casualties. "[M]ilitary planners have told us that President Morales has given them instructions not to incur civilian casualties," one noted. "Field commanders continue to tell us they will require a written order from President Morales if asked to commit violence against opposition demonstrators." Another said: "A senior military planner told [an embassy official] December 13 that President Morales wants the military to be careful to avoid violent confrontations with demonstrators if called upon to support Bolivian police."

"We are monitoring government to see what they are doing," Ruiz claimed. "But for example they are getting people from Peru to come and train campesinos who kill my friends, and they are training campesinos in war, what are we meant to do?” On the resulting violence against indigenous people, Ruiz said it was self-defense. “After last elections, Evo sent campesinos to Santa Cruz to start aggression; our organization sent out its people but only to defend itself … It’s not a direct threat,” he admitted, but it worried him because they were “training campesinos who can’t even read or go out and feed themselves”. Ruiz claimed the UJC has never had any weapons – which is also demonstrably false.

The cables also revealed US suspicions in the same period that “some Crucenos are reportedly forming fighting groups”. They would know, as they were funding them. “Sources reported that Crucenos are developing fighting/defense groups and are equipped with weapons such as long rifles and hand guns.” Ruiz claimed that fighting campesinos caused the Pando massacre. “The Venezuelans killed the indigenous people. There are photos … The Venezuelans infiltrated by entering through the Cuban doctors,” he said. “They went to Pando to form military strategy for organization, so it wasn’t chaos, but all the campesinos, armed people, were drunk, and the Venezuelans killed them by mistake because they didn’t know what side they were on, and they also shot in the leg a Bolivian journalist because they wanted them to stop filming.” The SCCC were also implicated in the Rózsa plot by Ignacio Villa Vargas, a local fixer and driver for the group, who said that a number of their members had been involved. But the SCCC believed that the Morales government organized the Rózsa plot. They did, though, admit to me that Rózsa had been to their offices, but they claimed that he was trying to infiltrate the committee on behalf of the government, disguised as a journalist. I was shown screenshots of supposed emails between Rózsa and Vice President Álvaro García Linera, which were clearly faked, dating from August 2008 and March 2009, just before the raid in the Hotel Las Americas.

The cables revealed by WikiLeaks noted that the opposition “are nervous to the point of paranoia”. They were also trying to cover their tracks with delusional conspiracy theories. As noted above, one of those suspected of involvement in the terror cell was retired president of the SCCC, Branko Marinkovic, one of the wealthiest men in Bolivia, who owns a vast soybean business and large tracts of land in the east of country. His parents were emigrants from the former Yugoslavia in the 1950s and Marinkovic became a successful businessman before moving into politics, a well-trodden route in the east of Bolivia. When the Morales government came to power and embarked on a land reform program that took fallow lands from their owners to give to landless peasants, men like Marinkovic had much to lose. In a 2007 interview with the *New York Times*, Marinkovic predicted that Bolivia would soon be like Zimbabwe "in which economic chaos will become the norm". (The head of the International Monetary Fund's western hemisphere countries unit in the same year praised the Morales government for what he referred to as its "very responsible" macroeconomic policies.) But Marinkovic continued – "speaking English with a light Texas twang he picked up at Southern Methodist University" – with a veiled threat: "If there is no legitimate international mediation in our crisis, there is going to be confrontation. And unfortunately, it is going to be bloody and painful for all Bolivians." This was just before the Rózsa-Flores plot was scuppered.

The *New York Times* also noted that Croatian news services had investigated claims that Marinkovic "sought to raise a paramilitary force with mercenaries from Montenegro, where his mother was born". Marinkovic denied the claims, but there is no doubt he was pushing for a break-up of the country in the same way Yugoslavia had been split in the 1990s. On September 1, 2008, Marinkovic flew to the US, and when he came back just a week later the east of the country was in open revolt. At around the same time, US ambassador Philip Goldberg met in secret with the governor of Santa Cruz, Rubén Costas (the meeting was captured by a news organization). Initially Marinkovic filed a lawsuit against two government officials for "slander" for linking him with the Rózsa-Flores plot. His attorney declared that he "is in Santa Cruz, will stay in Santa Cruz, and will remain in the country", to prove he had no links to the terrorist cell. Except now he is in hiding. The UJC president divulged that he was in the US. "The government has already cast him as guilty and he can't defend himself from here so he asked the US for political exile and they granted it to him." Like Achá. He added that he didn't know if Marinkovic had ever met Rózsa. Maybe it's not so surprising. "The US has had a very good relationship with Branko Marinkovic," said Mr Navarro, MAS minister. "When he was head of civic committee they shared their opposition to the president." Marinkovic once jettisoned plans to visit Argentina due to distrust of the Morales-allied Kirchner government, fearing that he might be arrested there and extradited to Bolivia. During one of Marinkovic's trips to the US, he, contrariwise, participated in strategy meetings with political consultants Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and other polling and consulting firms, according to WikiLeaks cables.

When I had finished talking to the SCCC, I asked if there was anyone else I should speak to. The spokesperson recommended former general Gary Prado, who is infamous for being the man who captured Che Guevara and handed him over to his executioners. At the time Prado was a young captain in the Bolivian army. “Where do I find him?” I asked. “He usually has coffee over there in a little café about 4pm every day,” I was told. I subsequently found out that Gary Prado is under house arrest, but as it is not enforced he moves around freely. I head along to his house in an upmarket neighborhood of Santa Cruz. “I am under house arrest but I go to work every day so there’s not much point in that,” he said. Mr Navarro had told me there was “a group of retired generals who have advised the civic committee in the event of a government attack on them”. Prado is alleged to be among them. The government has drawn attention to a meeting Prado had with Rózsa at his house. “I gave an interview to Rózsa-Flores just like I’m giving to you, he came here to this same room, we had an interview about the guerrilla Che Guevara in Bolivia, he took a picture with me here, and that’s all the contact I had with him.” Rózsa apparently thought he was the new Che Guevara, as well as the new Hemingway. But from what Prado does know, he doesn’t believe that Rózsa planned to assassinate Morales. “There was no intent of assassination, never, absolutely not,” he said. Asked why they bought in foreigners, he replied: “They were brought to Santa Cruz by some people probably to try to create a group of mercenaries to defend Santa Cruz.” Then he added that the cell was “probably created to justify political repression”. He would not offer a guess on who bought the mercenaries in. The US, he added, merely “promote seminars about democracy and freedom”.

THE MASSACRE THAT WASN’T

In May 2008 political turmoil rocked Bolivia and threatened civil war. Santa Cruz held an autonomy referendum, which the government claimed was a move to secession by the eastern province. Rubén Costas, the governor of Santa Cruz, had said in the run-up that the vote – which was not legally sanctioned by the National Electoral Court or recognized by the OAS – would “give birth to a new republic”. (This is the same governor whom terror suspect Mario Tadic told authorities had met with the terror cell’s leader three times and vaguely discussed “organizing something”.) As things hurtled out of control with mass protests and violence, President Morales refrained from annulling the plebiscites which took place in other departments and called a recall referendum on his own mandate. He won resoundingly, with two-thirds of the national vote. At this point, desperate and bewildered, the opposition went on strike, and sent out the UJC (the far-right youth group) to attack government buildings and local indigenous people. The defeat at the polls led the opposition to unilaterally declare “autonomy” in four of the country’s eastern provinces. One of the platforms of the autonomy movement was the rejection of central government control over profits from the country’s natural gas reserves concentrated in the region. In the Bolivian context, therefore, the term was used as a euphemism for increased control over taxation, police and public works. If autonomy was granted in the form Santa Cruz wanted, Morales’ extensive reforms would be impossible – which was obviously the aim of the request.

The strategy of the autonomy movement was to take complete control of the *media luna*, provoke a national crisis to destabilize the government, and convince the army to remain neutral or move against Morales. The mayor of Santa Cruz, Percy Fernández, had already called on the military to overthrow Morales’ “useless government” just before the August referendum. In this heady tumult, in September 2008, 13 indigenous peasants in the Pando department of Bolivia were massacred in violence erupting across the region between pro-government and opposition forces. The atrocity remains relatively uncontroversial – unless you are the HRF, Achá, or the Bolivian opposition. A report by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) placed the blame for the killing of the peasants at the hands of people working for the local prefecture, which was led at the time by the opposition politician Leopoldo Fernández. Fernández is still in jail in La Paz, after being arrested, in the aftermath, on charges that he was involved in ordering the attack. The US embassy, in the WikiLeaks cables, noted that he was being held “under dubious legal pretext”.

The UN report unequivocally called it a “massacre of peasants” and a “grave violation of human rights”, concluding that the massacre was committed by personnel from the local road service office, members of the Pando civic committee and others linked to the prefecture. The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) also sent a delegation to investigate, headed by Argentina’s undersecretary for human rights who concluded that the Bolivian government had acted fairly and it was the opposition that was responsible for the murders. Chilean President Michelle Bachelet called an emergency meeting in Santiago of UNASUR to discuss the Bolivian crisis. The resulting Declaration of La Moneda, signed by the 12 UNASUR governments, expressed their “full and decided support for the constitutional government of President Evo Morales”, and warned that their respective governments “will not recognize any situation that entails an attempt for a civil coup that ruptures the institutional order, or that compromises the territorial integrity of the Republic of Bolivia”. Morales, who participated in the meeting, thanked UNASUR for its support, declaring: “For the first time in South American’s history, the countries of our region are deciding how to resolve our problems without the presence of the United States.”

But men like Achá and his “affiliate” HRF saw it differently. In October, a month after the massacre, HRF dispatched their own team to Bolivia to investigate – not the massacre but the “arbitrary detention” of “opposition members and at least one journalist”. HRF’s sources in Bolivia, presumably Achá, were telling it how serious the situation was. “Preliminary research done by our staff and reports sent to us from Bolivian civil society advocates suggest that the recent arrests of journalists and members of the opposition in Bolivia are politically motivated,” said Sarah Wasserman, chief operating officer of HRF. The report from Achá, as mentioned by the US ambassador, posited that the MAS government had actually initiated the murders. And the HRF went on to link the massacre to a speech by government minister Ramón Quintana exhorting government sympathizers to take Pando governor Leopoldo Fernández “to the end of the world” and “give him an epitaph: Prefect, rest in peace and live with the worms. “The speech preceded violence that erupted on September 11, 12 and 13 in Pando, where more than 20 people were murdered for political reasons,” they noted. The report by the Bolivian “affiliate” of the HRF blames the massacre on Morales and his national executive officers. “The deterioration of the rule of law, individual rights … do not allow the existence of a democratic system,” the report concluded. “In Bolivia, with this background, it outlines the installation of a regime despotic and dictatorial presided by Evo Morales.”

To be fair, there were other NGOs which came to a similar conclusion. One was the aforementioned UnoAmerica, another “human rights” group based in Colombia, whose logo shows crosshairs in the ‘o’ in their name. It was founded in 2008 by Alejandro Peña Esclusa, who is now detained in his home country, Venezuela, for allegedly being found with detonators and 2lb of explosives in his home. The Venezuelan government claims he has close ties to the CIA, and was involved in the 2002 US-backed coup that temporarily deposed Hugo Chávez. In one video, Esclusa is seen insisting on a plan for massive protests across Venezuela, making the government unable to control it. “It is a more efficient mechanism that generates a political crisis and a crisis of instability that forces the regime to withdraw the reform,” he says. UnoAmerica became heavily involved in Bolivia after the Pando massacre, sending a team on a five-day mission to investigate what had happened. To conduct the investigation they partnered with NGOs from Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela (whose names read like a Who’s Who of fascists in Latin America). Taking part from Argentina was El Movimiento por la Verdadera Historia, or Movement for the True History, a group which seeks to bring to justice “subversives” working against the US-backed fascist junta that ruled from 1976 to 1983 and murdered an estimated 30,000 people. One of its Argentina delegates was Jorge Mones Ruiz, an intelligence officer of the Argentine army in Bolivia during last dictatorship. (The government also claimed that the Rózsa cell had links with fascist groups in Argentina, which go by the name of *carapintadas* or “painted faces”.)

The joint report concluded that “the government of President Evo Morales had planned and executed the violent acts”. It claimed it had “sufficient information to demonstrate the responsibility of the Evo Morales administration in the so called Pando Massacre”. The WikiLeaks cables revealed that the US embassy was receiving highly questionable intelligence like this from Achá and other contacts in the opposition, without applying the constant cynicism it reserved for MAS statements. In conversation with a political officer from the embassy, one contact "alleged the MAS deliberately fomented unrest in Pando in September to justify a military siege, depose Prefect Leopoldo Fernandez, and arrest opposition-aligned leaders to swing the balance of power to the MAS in the Senate". It is not countered. Another cable noted after the September 2008 violence in Pando: "the government illegally jailed Prefect Leopoldo Fernandez and violently detained over forty more, many of them prominent political opposition members." The UN had said that Fernández's jailing was not illegal.

WE'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM

The most active of the many US agencies working in Bolivia is USAID, the main foreign aid arm of the US government. USAID poured money into the country: between 1964 and 1979, it contributed more than $1.5 billion, trying to build a citizenry and investor climate conducive to US corporate needs. For nearly half a century it has carried out its ostensible goal of providing "economic and humanitarian assistance" – a gift "from the American people". The agency operates around the world in a similar capacity, and invests billions of dollars annually on projects that span from "democracy promotion" to "judicial reform".

Its operations are controversial. The Morales administration has continually said that it uses its money to push the strategic goals of the US government under the cloak of "development", claims denied by the US government. The Bolivian government also derides the lack of transparency, in comparison with EU aid money, for its programs. Mark Feierstein, USAID assistant administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, put its *raison d'être* bluntly in December 2010 when he said: "USAID's programs are not charity … they are not only from the American people, as the agency's motto says, they are for the American people." As an aside, Mr Feierstein was a key campaign consultant to the former president Lozada (Goni) who fled to the US to avoid facing trial for the massacre of protesters in La Paz. There is now an attempt to prosecute him under the Aliens Tort Statute for his role in the murders. (Feierstein has never expressed regret about the campaign; in fact, the same firm did polling for Morales' opponent, Manfred Reyes Villa, in 2009.)

Like other methods and agencies used to control democracies in Latin America and around the world, it is hard to pin down USAID. But on-the-ground interviews, documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act and the WikiLeaks cables have made it possible to unearth the strategies this agency uses to keep its stranglehold on Bolivia, at the same time providing a template for how it is used across the region to undermine left-wing democratic governments. There is no doubt how USAID personnel felt about Morales before he came into power, and one young American student heard first-hand their plans for him. In the summer of 2005, he found himself in La Paz learning Spanish on a break from university when the powder keg of political resistance in the city blew up. President Carlos Mesa – who had taken over from Goni in 2003 after the massacre of protesters in La Paz – had just stepped down. The student decided to go on a bike trip. "Basically I went down the 'Death Road', the world's most dangerous road, with some other gringos," he said, not wanting to be named. "There were some folks from the US embassy and USAID on the trip. I remember them having a discussion on the road down to [the city of] Coroico, talking about not wanting Evo to get into power. They said something along the lines of, 'We can't let Evo get into power'."

In fact, the officials went further. "There were two things that were said, one was 'We can't let Evo get into power', and then something along the lines of, it struck me, it was harsher than that, it was something along the lines of, 'We'll have to take care of him'. It was ambiguous enough that it could be interpreted that we have to take him out, which I don't think is what they meant. But when they said it I thought, 'Whoa, I can't believe they are saying this, they don't even know me'." The conversation continued as the group descended the mountain. "I'm assuming they thought I was sympathetic," he said. "This was right in the middle of the protests and the president resigning, so a lot of the tourists had fled Bolivia, so perhaps they thought I was there because I was working for some sympathetic capacity, maybe working for an international corporation, or related to the embassy or something. It shocked me at the time. One, it seemed weird to have this conversation in public, because not everybody is sympathetic. And two it seemed like they were meddling in democracy, people that shouldn't be involved in those things, the US embassy and USAID shouldn't have anything to do with voting a president into power or not."

But involved they were and would remain as Morales eventually did take power.

Much important work has been carried out on this topic by the investigative journalist Jeremy Bigwood in the period before MAS came to power, but his Freedom of Information Act requests stopped being answered when he asked for information about projects after the election of 2005. What Bigwood unearthed from before 2005 supports the testimony of the American student. Early on, the MAS party was fingered as a problem for the US that had to be dealt with. In a declassified July 2002 letter from the US embassy, a planned USAID political party reform project was outlined which aimed to "help build moderate, pro-democracy political parties that can serve as a counterweight to the radical [MAS]". The next section, presumably more open on details, was redacted. A series of emails from USAID functionaries in Bolivia also detailed attempts to form relationships between the US government and indigenous groups in the coca growing region of the Chapare (the sector from which Morales emerged) and the eastern departments, aiming, as Bigwood explained, to "create a common USAID-guided front against … the MAS". A few years into the MAS government, USAID made itself so unpopular in the Chapare region that its local leaders in 2008 suspended all projects funded by the agency. They said they would replace the funding with money from Chávez's Venezuela. In Pando, the mayors signed a declaration in 2008 also expelling USAID. "No foreign program, least of all those from USAID, will solve our problems of poverty, physical integration, family prosperity and human development while we ourselves don't decide the future," it said.

I managed to procure documents that relate to the operations of projects since 2005, and they show a similar effort to weaken the power and popularity of the MAS government. The USAID tactic is not the overthrow of the government, but the slow transformation of Bolivian society from its participatory democracy to the type of democracy it had before: controlled by the US and good for investors. The Bolivian example is important because it provides a template of how USAID tries to control Latin

American democracies that have “got out of control” and make them work “for the American people”, or American business interests.

Of course, USAID pitches itself as something completely different. In one cable from La Paz, the ambassador wrote: “We will continue to counter misunderstandings about USAID’s transparency and apolitical nature with reality.” But the reality is that the agency is not transparent or apolitical. And its own internal documents reveal as much. USAID maintains it is transparent with the money it invests in the country, but the Bolivian government claims large sums are being handed out without its knowledge, in contravention of usual aid etiquette. In the WikiLeaks cables, Morales tells the US he wants to start an “open registry to monitor aid”, but it was not supported by the US. The Bolivian government’s estimate that 70 percent of aid money is unaccounted for appears overstated, but there is clear evidence that money was being spent without the knowledge of the government.

After one spate of criticism of USAID programs by Morales, the US ambassador noted that the country “cannot afford to risk USD120 million in assistance” from the agency (it works out as about $12 for every Bolivian). In another, it is noted: “we’re spending about $90 million annually to further social and economic inclusion of Bolivia’s historically marginalized indigenous groups and to support democratic institutions and processes, including decentralized governance.” But an American journalist living in La Paz was present at an emergency meeting called by the US embassy to explain USAID’s activities to foreign journalists, after another round of criticism. She was given a breakdown of spending by USAID. “This information was given to the small group of reporters gathered to use as background in stories,” she told me. It outlined $16.8 million to USAID health programs, $19.2 million to integrated alternative development (alternative to coca production), $15.3 million to environmental and economic development programs, and $22 million to counter-narcotics. It added up to $73.3 million. But the ambassador had said in the cable that $120 million was invested in Bolivia per year. Where was the other $50 million going?

Internal evaluation documents give an indication of why some projects are best kept secret. I procured a host of documents on USAID “democracy promotion” programs in Bolivia in the period after the Morales government was elected. In one, outlining the goals and success of its “administration of justice” programs which have run in the country for 17 years – “among the largest in Latin America” – the group was explicit about where its money was going. “USAID/Bolivia programs include support to promote decentralization and municipal strengthening, support to Congress and political parties,” it noted. There is no mention of which political parties it is “supporting” but this is candid language that the group and the US embassy have never used in public. (Morales has said that one mayor told him that USAID offered him $15,000 to $25,000 to oppose the president.) Decentralization in this context is also a euphemism for strengthening the opposition. One of USAID’s central functions in Bolivia, ramped up since 2005, has been moving power away from central government, an effort which clearly chimes with the interests of the opposition in the east.

The justice project was conceived by USAID and Bolivian officials before the 2005 election that brought Evo Morales to power, and coordinators admit that “the personnel changes at the higher echelons” of the government “completely changed the atmosphere” in which it worked. The project hoped to open a training school for public defenders, but in mid-2007 it was suspended, “a prime example of the project being ‘overtaken by events’ that were completely outside the control of … USAID,” the evaluation noted. Internally, USAID was very critical of the Morales government on the subject, commenting that the Bar Associations of Bolivia have been “significantly weakened in the past few years” by the government’s policies. As is customary in projects of this kind, USAID paid subcontractors to carry out their functions, enhancing the already intricate web of institutions and clouding accountability. This project was run by Checchi and Company Consulting, set up in 1973 by economist and Democratic donor Vincent Checchi, which then brought on board the State University of New York and Partners of the Americas. One of the main ways USAID exerts influence – in this justice program but also through its other activities – is through training programs. These programs school young Bolivians in the “American way”.

In Sucre, I spoke to Ramiro Velasquez, an administrator in the local government offices who has worked for a USAID-funded program in the city. He said it was set up by a consultancy firm, funded by USAID, which has a subsidiary called Fortalecimiento Identidad de Democracia, or

FIDEM. “They were looking for Bolivian operators in every department to do their work,” he said. “FIDEM was looking for an NGO to do the work and they would look for operators. They were in La Paz, Oruro, Potosi, and Sucre.” Mr Velasquez was asked to be an operator and told they wanted him to run courses on “democracy and participation”, a program eventually shut down by the Morales government. “This project was aimed at young people,” he said. “So to get young people, you had to get into universities and social movements and state institutions, even the church.” In the end 600 young people signed up. The courses took on two phases with the first workshops an opportunity to select around 20 young people to move on to La Paz for the second phase, carried out by FIDEM and another NGO. It was called “leadership training”, ostensibly to create a new generation of Bolivian leaders. But they had to have the right opinions. “They were teaching about democracy but not the type of democracy Evo and Bolivians have,” he said. “They were teaching them about representative democracy not participatory democracy … It was clearly to create leaders for the opposition.”

The cables from La Paz support such a conclusion. One visiting official went to a “civic education project funded by USAID through the NGO FIDEM and implemented by the Santa Cruz binational center”. Its aim was to grow a “civic responsibility” arm in addition to its educational and cultural activities. “The project was reaching 21,000 (out of 150,000) residents in the marginalized neighbourhood ‘Plan 3000’ which is widely thought to be a MAS stronghold,” it added, as if to explain why it was a good thing. The local residents were “enthusiastic” about the initiative, it noted. The same cable registered that Santa Cruz residents were “determined as much as possible to halt democratic back-sliding. Their main request to us is to report accurately to Washington and the international community what is really happening in Bolivia.” Vice President García Linera repeatedly told the US embassy he opposed democracy programs like FIDEM’s, because they strive to “win the hearts and minds”, presenting a vision of democracy that differs from the government’s. It was true. FIDEM works in eight of the nine departments in Bolivia (three of which are governed by democratically elected MAS prefects) providing the kind of state-building training and technical assistance that USAID and other donors provide worldwide. The work –

regional development planning, service delivery, financial planning and more – is technical and non-political. Its focus on departmental authorities was planned to weaken MAS, as was admitted in the cables: "MAS's goals [is] strengthening municipal governments to the detriment of departmental governments, thus weakening one of the MAS's main sources of opposition."

Also in Sucre, I talked to the MAS mayor, Verónica Berrios Vergara, who has been under concerted attack since taking her position in 2008. The city had been the venue of intense violent unrest in 2007 when the constituent assembly, given the responsibility of writing a new constitution, was placed there. In 2008, an opposition candidate was voted into the position of mayor in Sucre, but was disqualified because he was under a criminal charge. Ms Vergara took his place on a decision of the municipal council, causing an outbreak of violence and unrest. "Vested interests were behind the anger of the opposition and that led to us living the most difficult moment in Sucre in many years," she told me. She said various explosives were thrown at the mayor's headquarters and the dissidents tried to kill her on a number of occasions. "One of the questions we asked ourselves at the time is where these students got the money from, because they had the money to buy lots of explosives. They don't even usually have enough for rent and food, where did they get the money for them from?" She began to cry as she recounted her experiences at the sharp end of the turmoil in Bolivia. "I do fear that these groups are still waiting in the wings and at any point they could come out and do something to me," she said. "This is really about racism and also that this local government and national government are threatening business interests." She believed that USAID was behind the funding to some of these groups: "The fact that the Rózsa affair was taking place at the same time and there were question marks over USAID's work and suggestions they were trying to overthrow the government leads me to question where the money was coming from." At the time it sparked violence in the streets of the city, which Ms Vergara thinks USAID was behind. "They are in union with the opposition and media to stand in the way of the government's development plans in the country."

BUILDING ~~DEMOCRACY~~ AN INVESTOR-FRIENDLY BUSINESS CLIMATE

USAID had another reason to dislike President Morales and his government: they weren't good for business. The investment climate in Bolivia, which had been open for business to US transnationals for decades, was turning into a more hostile place. Their fears were shared by their natural allies among the oligarchy of European descent in the east of Bolivia. Both were increasingly scared of the economic program of the Morales government, which has provided a model for developing countries around the world: achieving high growth, as well as reductions in poverty, while part-nationalizing key industries. The Bolivian government, even when composed of ruthless dictators, maintained an investor-friendly business climate, which saw US mining companies, such as Coeur d'Alene Mines Corp, take advantage of the vast natural resources in the country as the Spanish had done before them. Bolivia's major exports to the United States are tin, gold, jewellery and wood products. For a long time, foreign investors were accorded national treatment, and foreign owners of companies enjoyed virtually no restriction. Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Bolivia grew to $7 billion in stock during 1996–2002, nearly all of which went to the business interests in the east.

Concern about nationalization crops up frequently in the cables from La Paz. "There is … rampant speculation about President Morales' traditional May 1st speech, in which he is expected by many to announce nationalization of companies based in Santa Cruz, potentially including Cotas or food industries," one reads. "If the latter, many expect Branko Marinkovic's cooking oil and other companies to be taken in the name of 'food security'." The cables from La Paz do not pull punches when outlining their opposition to the economic thinking of the MAS government. One advisor to Morales, an economics professor is, one cable notes, "steeped in outdated socialist economic theories and has yet to accept the practical realities of a globalized economy". It adds that he "may be beginning to understand the real impact of free trade on job creation", but, unforgivably, "he appears to believe that markets in Venezuela and China serve as alternatives to US markets. He has told Bolivian exporters to seek markets outside the United States, unconvinced that the US is crucial to their trade.” It notes that he recently returned from Venezuela after negotiating an agreement to buy Bolivian soy. “Additionally, he has regularly antagonized other businesses, telling them that the President’s Dignity Tariff, a new lower price meant to provide cheap electricity to Bolivians is a done deal, remarking that the private sector should either get on board or suffer.”

USAID had a plan to deal with this. One of the most important components of the justice project is “promotion of legal security”, through which “it was hoped that the business and investment climate in Bolivia would be improved”. The principal donor for this purpose was USAID and the project was budgeted $4.8 million over five years. It chimed with the sentiment in cables from La Paz, one of which noted, the “key areas of concern in Bolivia currently are democracy, narcotics, and *protection for US investments*” (my emphasis). The justice project sought “reforms in the commercial and administrative law areas” as well as “business organization assistance and training”. For this purpose, USAID funding would help develop a civil, commercial and administrative law curriculum for law schools in Bolivia. In a sign of the penetration of USAID into the highest echelons of the justice system, USAID and the Bolivian Supreme Court *jointly* published a document called *Civil and Commercial Justice in Bolivia: Diagnosis and Recommendations for Change*, which urged the creation of a specialized commercial law jurisdiction. It would “enhance the investment climate of Bolivia”, while the “establishment of a good business climate is essential to attracting investment” and will “maintain and improve its competitiveness”. It noted: “This component was important to the overall success of the … project due to the fact that it enlisted enthusiastic support from many private sector actors, while also furthering the goal of improving the investment and business climate in Bolivia.” The agency worked with its “partner organization”, the National Chamber of Commerce, in order to replicate and strengthen arbitration centers through local chambers of commerce (big donors to civic committees). “If Bolivia wants to attract foreign investment … then it will need legal security for investors,” it noted. “Should there be an opportunity to continue the work in this area, it would be of high importance for the development of Bolivia.” Their natural allies in this task were organizations like CAINCO, a business confederation in Santa Cruz. In the aftermath of the Rózsa shoot-out, another suspect, Alejandro Melgar, who was a key figure in CAINCO, fled the country. Eduardo Paz, the president of CAINCO, was also an investor in the Santa Cruz civic committee. One cable noted that “The main impact [of nationalization] has been to halt new investment in the [energy] sector, which Bolivia needs to meet domestic demand and fulfil contractual obligations to Brazil and Argentina.” It added that “[as] a political measure, however, the ‘nationalization’ remains wildly popular.” It was also successful. In June 2011, Standard & Poor’s, the rating agency, raised Bolivia’s credit ratings by one notch, praising President Evo Morales’ “prudent” macroeconomic policies which allowed for a steady decline in the country’s debt ratios.

The truth was that the US embassy was fearful for US mining investments, despite high-level Bolivian officials giving “repeated assurances that the Morales administration will respect existing US mining interests”.

Threats that the Bolivian government would nationalize the mining industry – including taking over a smelter owned by Swiss company Glencore (which had been sold by ex-president Goni) – scared them. “We continue to urge the [Government of Bolivia] to respect existing mining concessions and to limit tax and royalty hikes,” one cable noted. In other words, create a good “business climate” *at the expense of the population*. The US embassy viewed the Morales administration as contrary to its interests. “Strengthening and supporting democracy in Bolivia is our mission’s primary concern,” notes another cable. But in the next line it says: “Although the ruling MAS party and President Evo Morales were elected with a clear majority in fair and open elections, their actions since assuming power have often displayed anti-democratic tendencies.” Elsewhere the cables note the “overwhelming victory” of MAS in elections. Despite this, the US called Morales a “leader with strong anti-democratic tendencies” who “manipulates the media”. His closest advisors were compared to “back alley thugs”.

In fact, the democratic credentials and popular mandate of the MAS government are among the most stellar in the world. First elected to the presidency in December 2005 by 54 percent of the popular vote, nearly double the 29 percent of his nearest rival, Morales was re-elected in December 2009 by 67 percent of the public vote, more than double the percentage won by his nearest opponent, Manfred Reyes Villa. In between these landslides, Morales won the recall referendum called in the face of the "autonomy movement" in August 2008 with 67 percent of the public voting for him to be returned. Just five months later, in January 2009, Morales won the constitutional referendum with 61 percent voting in favor, to 39 percent against. In 2014, he won yet another landslide. But the embassy was disparaging of these achievements, saying Morales was "like a struggling student in the areas of economics and international relations decision-making". It also noted his apparent desire to become a dictator: "[As] an admirer of Cuban President Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, Morales probably is drawn by the longevity of their time in power and seeks to emulate their 'success'." It was rubbish. The referendum in 2009 stipulated a two-term limit for the presidency. On the occasion of a foreign dignitary visiting, the ambassador pushed him "to encourage Morales to follow a democratic path", alongside, of course, pushing him "to respect US mining interests to take advantage of free trade".

The cables are full of fear about US investments. "One US investment which is vulnerable is San Cristobal mine, which is 65 percent owned by Apex Silver," said one cable. "San Cristobal would be particularly hard-hit by a bill currently in Congress, which would increase mining taxes. Although the Bolivian government claims to want a fifty-fifty split of profits, the proposed tax increases actually result in, on average, a 60 percent government take of profits." Although fantastically rich in silver and other mineral wealth, in the past the Bolivian people had never benefitted and stayed poor.

TRADING BRIBES

The US was also using trade deals as leverage in trying to get MAS to change its economic outlook. In September 2008, President Bush suspended the crucial trade preferences that Bolivia enjoyed – alongside Colombia, Ecuador and Peru – under the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA). The country has lost millions of dollars in exports because of this punitive action. The ostensible reason was Bolivia's uncooperative attitude to coca eradication in the country, but political and economic motives were thought to be highly relevant. A *Reuters* article written a few weeks afterward noted that “the decision came one day after five leading US business groups urged the Bush administration and Congress to consider ending trade benefits for both Bolivia and Ecuador because of what they described as inadequate protections for foreign investors in both countries”.[4] The next month, in November, President Morales announced that the DEA would be expelled from the country. For decades, hundreds of DEA agents swarmed the northern Pando and Beni regions, destroying coca crops and, in the process, becoming implicated in massacres of the indigenous *cocaleros*. Largely given a free rein to carry out military operations or eradication by successive governments eager to please their masters, the former *cocalero* Morales wasn’t so easy to convince. He charged that the DEA was carrying out “political espionage”, and “financing criminal groups so that they could act against authorities, even the president”.[5]

The goal of the DEA, one cable noted, “is to provide assistance to achieve US goals while keeping the [government of Bolivia] out in front”. In 2008, Morales suspended DEA operations in Bolivia and expelled its 37 agents in the country. He named Steven Faucette, the regional agent of the DEA in Santa Cruz, as a spy, saying that he had made trips to cities in the *media luna* provinces of Beni and Pando with the objective of financing the civic committees which were committed to carrying out a “civic coup”. The US was also using its aid as leverage to keep the DEA in Bolivia. “The Ambassador suggested that if eradication is to be stopped and USG involvement in the Chapare ended … we could begin shutting off our multi-million dollar assistance programs now,” one cable noted. Many had long said that the DEA was acting as a front for the CIA in Bolivia. (The agency refused my request for information through the Freedom of Information Act, as did the National Security Agency.) The cables are full of criticism of Morales for failing to heed the US’s call for areas it specified to be cleared of coca. It also called the EU effort “relatively modest and narrowly-focused”.

But the US preoccupation with eradication in Bolivia, evidenced in the cables, is strange. According to one cable, the DEA estimated that “less than one percent of cocaine seized in the US can be chemically traced back to

Bolivia”. *One percent*. The US was also alone in blocking a UN resolution on making the coca leaf sacred in 2011. The tension surfaced even though the Morales government was being largely compliant. The cables present successes like 133 factories being raided in El Alto during the first 10 months of 2008. During the first full year of Morales’s tenure, the amount of coca grown in Bolivia increased around 5 percent. In Colombia, the US ally, it jumped 27 percent in the same period, according to UN statistics.

The opposition I talked to, interestingly, were all in support of the DEA. The spokesperson for the SCCC said that during his time as a journalist working on the topic of narco-trafficking, he saw the DEA and the US embassy dealing with the issue properly: “They were teaching us about how the drugs workers work, how they buy drugs, it helped us.” Another vital US agency which works in Bolivia is the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), created by President Ronald Reagan in 1983 to “promote democracy”, but with a history of doing the opposite. In Bolivia it has focused on potentially recalcitrant indigenous areas, promoting the “American way” to the young. I obtained the proposals for various Bolivian projects granted money by the NED. The tactic of “training civil society” to gain a stranglehold on communities around Bolivia was exactly the same as that used by USAID projects. One project, Observancia, which ran from 2008 to 2009 and cost $54,664, was typical. It worked in eight municipalities in the country and helped in the “training of municipal functionaries and civil society”. The aim was to create future “municipal candidates” who would be “inserted into government programmes”. Another project, from 2006 to 2007 and costing $48,000, focused on Uriondo, Tarija, which sits in the *media luna* opposition stronghold. The grant was given at a politically tumultuous time. The report mentioned that the area of Tarija has the largest hydrocarbon deposits in the country, and the project wants “to increase the capacity” and “strengthen local government” of Uriondo, particularly by improving how the media communicates with the locals. Other projects look to “encourage political citizenship among young people”.

In one project in Totora, Cochabamba, the proposal notes that the population are mostly Quechua speaking and a lot more “politicized” than in Uriondo, adding that “there exists … an obstinate opposition to what they term as ‘neoliberal’, and they reject any advances from such parties”.

Finally, it noted that the people of Totora organize themselves through a model of "corporativism" – the imposition of "a logic of the majoritarianism", which rejects a form of democracy respectful of any differences. "This prompts us to consider that in the future we should include democratic values, in all sectors of society, not just as a citizen's exercise when voting for their electoral representatives, but also with the logical respect that democracy has in other contemporary global societies," the proposal noted. But the fact that the people of Totora organize themselves into collectives and make decisions collectively is common among indigenous groups throughout the country. The organization writing the proposal, however, concluded that this is in fact undemocratic and that they should introduce programs that demonstrate how undemocratic this form of democracy is compared with "other global societies".

Another project called for better election monitoring. It suggested "revising the referendum votes for 2008 and 2009, where, in some regions, participation is registered at 100 percent and where the vote in favor of President Morales is of a similar percentage, something which does not have antecedents". This accusation is questionable because in many departments people vote collectively – a tradition within many indigenous groups.

One project awarded $36,450 to the Bolivian National Press Association. Its ostensible aim was to defend freedom of expression "through the supervision and documentation of violations and threats against journalists" and "improve the professionalism and impartiality of Bolivian journalists". However, its focus is trained on the government, in keeping with US embassy fears about Venezuelan influence. "The [National Press Association of Bolivia] denounces that the action the government of Morales has taken, something which has never happened under a democratic government, total control of the National Company of Bolivian Television (ENTB), when he integrated the directors with state ministers." In another project, in Totora, it was noted that they were "expecting – in the coming months – the installation of a community radio transmitter, financed by the Venezuelan government, which forms part of a communications network which that regime has been promoting". A later section called 2008 "the worst year for freedom of expression since the return to democracy" with "one dead and over a hundred attacks". The Santa Cruz UJC and its allies committed a number of these attacks. In one case: “A police officer sprayed pepper spray at a journalist who approached the Vice President of the Santa Cruz Youth Union.” The NED criticized Evo Morales for denouncing *La Razon* newspaper, even though coverage of the president Morales in that newspaper has been overtly racist for years, with racist caricatures and racist commentary.

VERY MEASURED

As in smaller countries in the region, such as Haiti, the US embassy in Bolivia wielded huge power through the second half of the 20th century, often more than the sovereign government itself. The US embassy in La Paz is the second largest in Latin America (slightly smaller than in Brazil), despite the country having a population of just 9 million people. Through the last 50 years, the US had supported coups to get “their” dictators in place (Hugo Banzer), lent public relations specialists to get “their” presidents in place when democracy returned (Goni), and sent their brightest economists to “restructure” the economy in their image (Jeffrey Sachs). Now, the US provides sanctuary for “their” presidents wanted for crimes against humanity (Goni, again). But such a situation could give rise to complacency. And the election of the democratic socialist government of MAS in Bolivia marked the first time the country threatened to break free of US control. As such, relationships with ambassadors from the US became increasingly strained as the power dynamic switched around, and the sovereign government issued orders to the embassy, not the other way around. Maria Beatriz Souviron, Bolivian ambassador to the UK, told me: “The US ambassador before Morales had a lot of influence over the politics in our country, even pushing to take domestic decisions at some points.” She added: “We want some sovereignty in our country and to make our own decisions. And of course the former ambassador [Goldberg] was involved with the opposition.”

The MAS government accused ambassador Philip Goldberg of “subversive actions” which included a “disinformation campaign” in the lead-up to the recall referendum, as he tried to unite the opposition. In late 2007, the US embassy began moving openly to meet with the right-wing opposition in the *media luna*. Ambassador Goldberg was photographed in Santa Cruz with a leading business magnate who backed the autonomy movement, and a well-known Colombian narco-trafficker who had been detained by the local police. Morales, in revealing the photo, said the trafficker was linked to right-wing paramilitary organizations in Colombia. In response, the US embassy asserted that it couldn't vet everyone who appeared in a photo with the ambassador. Goldberg was expelled because of his meetings with opposition figures at the most on-edge period of the battle with the MAS government. In 2008, he was photographed having a secret meeting with opposition governor Rubén Costas. The US embassy liked Costas. In one cable it was noted: "Costas' willingness to work with the United States would make him a solid democratic partner." It also praised his "politically savvy use of the media to advance the interests of the media luna".

This government anger at US embassy interference culminated in September 2009 when ambassador Goldberg was expelled from the country. He has still not been replaced, the US embassy having to make do with the diplomatic downgrade of a *chargé d'affaires*. The US retaliated by expelling the Bolivian ambassador to Washington. "The US embassy is historically used to calling the shots in Bolivia, violating our sovereignty, treating us like a banana republic," said Gustavo Guzman, the ambassador who was expelled from Washington. Goldberg had an interesting history, which made him a curious appointment by President George W. Bush in October 2006. Between 1994 and 1996 he had served as State Department desk officer for Bosnia and as special assistant to the late Richard Holbrooke, who had been instrumental in brokering the Dayton Accords and then the NATO military campaign against Serbia in 1999. From 2004 to 2006, Goldberg served as chief of mission in Pristina, Kosovo. In other words, he was used to dealing with countries that were breaking up into their constituent parts.

The leaders of the Santa Cruz Civic Committee certainly liked him. "My overall impression of Goldberg is that he was very measured politically," said its vice president. "Compared to the two ambassadors that preceded. They were very openly political, they got involved a great deal, and compared to them Goldberg was measured." The US embassy had been overtly hostile to Morales from the start, and the previous two ambassadors had openly tried to halt his rise to power. In 2002, when Morales narrowly lost his first presidential bid, US ambassador Manuel Rocha, the first Bush appointment, openly campaigned against him, threatening: “If you elect those who want Bolivia to become a major cocaine exporter again, this will endanger the future of US assistance to Bolivia.” In 2003, the second Bush appointment, David N. Greenlee, was put in place, and he had a long history with Bolivia. He served in the Peace Corps in Bolivia, 1965–67, and met his wife in the country. Later he served as a political officer at the US embassy in La Paz, 1977–79, dealing with issues, one think-tank noted, such as communism, military coups and Operation Condor, the continent-wide terror network set up by General Pinochet with the help of the US government. He returned as deputy chief of mission, 1987–89. When back as ambassador, Greenlee openly tried to scupper MAS’s ascent. In March 2003, for example, he sent a letter to Carlos Mesa, then president, alleging, falsely, that MAS was planning a coup in the summer. The MAS government hoped that things would change with President Obama’s election, but MAS officials say it has been no different. In fact, President Obama is now thought to have deployed special operations forces to Bolivia, while he supported the illegitimate post-coup election in Honduras. “President Obama lied to Latin America when he told us in Trinidad and Tobago that there are not senior and junior partners,” said President Morales in 2009.[6]

While in La Paz I arranged an interview with the US *chargé d’affaires*, John S. Creamer, who has served in embassies in Nicaragua, Argentina and Colombia. I was not allowed to record the interview, but took notes. “The Bush administration took a heavy toll on perceptions of the US, that’s an empirical fact,” he said. He denied knowing of the various foundations – HRF and UnoAmerica – but is “sceptical” they were involved in the Rózsa plot. It became clear later that the US embassy is aware of these groups, and is being briefed by them. Mr Creamer told me there was “growing opposition” from within MAS against the leadership, an interesting observation, as it is a strategy that the government itself is increasingly wary of. “Evo is now scared that the new tactic is the opposition infiltrating the government and MAS, in order to take power from within,” Mr Mendoza, the Sucre senator, had told me. The embassy is obviously still in close contact with the radical elements in the east, as Mr Creamer defends the violence of the UJC and other radical opposition elements, arguing self-defense. “It’s natural to defend yourself,” he said, as we finish.

The international community have also been accused of supporting the break-up of the country. I talked to the British ambassador, Nigel Baker, in La Paz, who seemed to agree with the autonomists. “I think the long-term destiny for Bolivia … is some form of federalist structure,” he said. “The topography of the country, the different character of different peoples in different parts of the country, different economic structures, all work in favor in Bolivia of greater autonomy.” He thought the US had entirely benign intentions: “I think historical record will show that the US was operating correctly in Bolivia and trying to work with all political groups, people of all political colors, to work with and strengthen Bolivian democracy.” The WikiLeaks cables reveal that opposition politicians were openly approaching the US embassy for support in elections. One opposition politician “stands out as a potential national opposition leader,” one cable noted, before adding that in a meeting with embassy officers he had “privately expressed his interest in obtaining US support to run for the presidency”.

One the major concerns for the US after Morales came to power was Bolivia moving out of its traditional sphere of influence and making alliances and economic deals with other countries: thumbing its nose at its traditional patron. Among the people consulted by USAID for one its projects was Eduardo Rodríguez Veltzé, a former president of Bolivia who controversially decommissioned the country’s only air-defense system, purchased from China, putting Bolivia under the basic military control of the US. It was people like this the US was used to dealing with. But Morales no longer countenanced such servility. At the same time, China embraced the MAS government openly (largely because of the lithium reserves, no doubt), and did not seem as intent to undermine the democratically elected government as the US was. They also provided an alternative source of investment, worrying US planners. And it wasn’t just China. In 2008, it was announced that Bolivia had signed a deal with state-owned Russian gas company Gazprom to explore and produce natural gas in the country. State-owned oil and gas company, YPFB, which was nationalized by the MAS government, signed the deal to exploit South America's second-largest reserves, concentrated in the southeast.

Bolivia also announced more military purchases from China and Russia, after the US blocked Bolivian purchases of Czech aircraft. Most worryingly for the US, Venezuela and Cuba were also increasing their presence, a fear constantly discussed in the cables. One cable from La Paz noted: "Cuban and Venezuelan advice, interference, and assistance continue to be a serious concern." The concern is listed as "Cuban doctors and newly inaugurated hospitals bring medical care to isolated communities", while Venezuela provided micro-credit financing to small businesses. Unlike USAID, of course, "Venezuelan funding is pouring into the country with no transparency or accountability, further damaging the democratic process." Venezuelan funding for the media was a particular "issue of concern", which, we have seen, was being fought as a proxy war through the NED's programs. One cable worried "that media will be sold without public knowledge, changing the opinion-leader landscape in the country", i.e. the anti-Morales bias. The cable even noted that the main newspaper, *La Razon*, has a "generally anti-[government of Bolivia] stance".

In February 2008, a story broke about a Fulbright scholar in Bolivia who had been asked to spy on Cubans and Venezuelans in the country. John Alexander van Schaick said that he was told by regional security officer Vincent Cooper at the US embassy "to provide the names, addresses and activities of any Venezuelan or Cuban doctors or field workers" he came across while he was in Bolivia.[7] His account was supported by similar testimony from Peace Corps members and staff who were all told by Mr Cooper to gather information on Cuban and Venezuelan nationals. Three days after the story broke, it was announced that Mr Cooper would not be returning to Bolivia. Morales called it the "expulsion" of a "man who conducted North American espionage", an accusation with some justice. Many believed it was the tip of the iceberg. "We had a mutual friend, and [van Schaick] approached me in December 2007," Jean Friedman-Rudovsky, the American journalist living in La Paz who broke the story, told me. "It took a couple months to get a hold on the Peace Corps angle, I had heard lots of rumors, but hadn't been able to substantiate them. The

Peace Corps duty director went on record at the time saying Vincent Cooper came and gave these inappropriate instructions to the group."

The volunteers were in a moral quandary about what to do. "Some kids were worried about the message coming from the embassy, one girl was planning on living with a Cuban family; she wondered if she would have to collect information on them," said Friedman-Rudovsky. The director and the Peace Corps staff complained to the US embassy, remonstrating that they couldn't act like an intelligence service for the US government. Four months later, however, van Schaick received the same instructions. "In general, not much has changed in terms of US-Bolivia since Obama came into power," said Friedman-Rudovsky. The ambassador never admitted it had happened; he merely commented that if these instructions had been given, it went against US policy. But it was the first ironclad proof of the US using its agencies to gather information in the country. "Every time Morales speaks on US-Bolivian relations in terms of US meddling in Bolivian affairs, he refers to this story, it's the only story with definitive proof of spying," said Friedman-Rudovsky. In the aftermath, the Bolivian foreign minister asked the US to establish exchange programs because the current US programs "are not transparent and we are suspicious when scholarship students are asked to spy on us". The US did not comply.

Another controversy erupted in 2008 when a police unit called the Special Operations Command (COPES) was implicated in a domestic surveillance scandal after it was revealed that the unit had been used to collect intelligence on areas outside its remit of narco-trafficking. The unit was funded by the US, and was ultimately answerable to the US embassy. The idea that no one there knew what was going on is hard to countenance. It was disbanded soon after.

There had been a long lineage for this kind of subterfuge. In 1997 testimony to Congress, James Milford, deputy administrator of the DEA, said: "The Intelligence and Special Operations Group (GIOE) is one of Bolivia's most successful drug enforcement programs. It was developed four years ago as a result of cooperation between DEA and the Bolivian National Police [and was] responsible for handling sensitive intelligence and conducting the most important complex criminal investigations in Bolivia."

The US had long-established law enforcement agencies in Bolivia operating under the guise of drug enforcement; these agencies could be used for different purposes, and no one could actually verify whether they were gathering intelligence. Later, President Morales alleged that the CIA had tried to infiltrate state-run oil firm YPFB through marketing director Rodrigo Carrasco, who had attended a number of "training courses" in the US, which involved intelligence, security and politics. Carrasco had been a member of COPES. In the aftermath, the US embassy still complained that the "threat to expel the CIA from Bolivia means that any one of us can be (mis)identified as a spy and kicked out should we do – or be falsely accused of doing – anything that displeases Evo". Spying was definitely taking place on a large scale. All through the cables there are allusions to "sensitive reporting" which is a euphemism for spying. One cable noted that a MAS official whom "many political analysts" consider "a radical" is "railroading controversial legislative measures", before adding: "Sensitive reporting indicates that Ramirez may be very vulnerable on corruption and human smuggling charges."

BEING A SOFTY

When in Sucre, I talked to Enrique Cortes, a professor at one of the universities in the city and a specialist in US-Bolivian relations. "Bolivia is still dependent," he said. "This position of dependency was from the beginnings of when the nation was created, we were always dependent on an international monetary system lately led by the US." He added: "There was a triangular relationship between the state, oligarchs and transnational organizations and these oligarchs responded to international money. When they lose power they use force to stop history from developing. Within that fits Rózsa-Flores and the Pando massacre, and Leopoldo." The move to democracy, he said, may not be permanent, and could be scuppered. "There was the fascist process, dictatorship, but it's not over. With Carter began the phase of controllable democracies, but now we think a new phase has opened. And this new phase is characterized by vital resources, and wanting control over these vital resources. So that's the central conflict with the US." He thought that the US could still put a brake on the process initiated by MAS to greater independence. "A coup is not the only way to put brakes on this. History shows there are other strategies, such as penetrating the popular organizations, and social movements using agencies like USAID." But coups have been the traditional US tactic in the country.

Declassified documents released in 2008 exposed US financial and political support for the military coup led by right-wing general Hugo Banzer in 1971, who ruled until 1978 (before making a comeback, democratically elected this time, from 1997 to 2001). The State Department at the time denied supporting the three-day coup that left 110 dead and hundreds more wounded. Banzer's dictatorship was a nightmare for organized labor and anyone who disagreed with his restructuring of the economy in the interests of foreign capital. He arrested 14,000 Bolivians without due process, and 8,000 more were tortured. Some 200 people were thought to have disappeared. Banzer had been trained at the notorious School of the Americas in Panama (Fort Gulick) and at Fort Hood in Texas, before becoming a military attaché in Washington. The declassified documents show that the Nixon administration had signed off $410,000 to be made available for politicians and military officers willing to take out the left-leaning dictator Juan José Torres. At a meeting in July 1971, the 40 Committee – chaired by the then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and overseeing covert operations around the world – discussion focused on giving this money to opposition figures who, the understanding was, would undertake a coup. Under-Secretary of State Alexis Johnson said: "What we are actually organizing is a coup in itself, isn't it?" The plan was approved and the same day that the coup began in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, a National Security Council staffer reported to Kissinger that the CIA had transferred money to two high-ranking members of the opposition.

A month earlier, Nixon and Kissinger had discussed the possibilities for dealing with the Bolivian leader who was leaning too far left.

Kissinger: We are having a major problem in Bolivia, too. And –

Nixon: I got that. Connally mentioned that. What do you want to do about that?

Kissinger: I've told [CIA Deputy Director of Plans, Thomas] Karamessines to crank up an operation, post-haste. Even the Ambassador there, who's been a softy, is now saying that we must start playing with the military there or the thing is going to go down the drain.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: That's due in on Monday.

Nixon: What does Karamessines think we need? A coup?

Kissinger: We'll see what we can, whether – in what context. They're going to squeeze us out in another two months. They've already gotten rid of the Peace Corps, which is an asset, but now they want to get rid of [US Information Agency] and military people. And I don't know whether we can even think of a coup, but we have to find out what the lay of the land is there.[8]

Fast-forward 40 years and not much had changed. The WikiLeaks cables reveal that as the political turmoil was peaking, the US embassy was contemplating the eventuality of a military coup. One noted that "there are strong indications the military is split and could be reticent to follow orders". Another complained that: "A strong commitment to institutionalism would require a rock-solid constitutional argument before commanders would participate in any action that could be considered 'political'." There is no doubt that these feelings were being communicated from within the military to the US embassy. "[Armed Forces Commander General Wilfredo] Vargas had been, publicly and privately, a supporter of US-Bolivian military relations," one cable noted. "Although he continues to cooperate enthusiastically with us at a working level, even giving awards to three [Military Group] officers December 13 his public comments in the last few months have irritated Bolivian military officers and raised eyebrows within the Embassy." (The Military Group is part of the US Department of Defense.) But there were reasons for optimism. "Evo does not have a network of personal friends within the military (although his Presidency Minister Juan Quintana does)," one cable noted. "[T]he military is leery of taking on any role considered remotely political. The military fears above all a repeat of the bloody military-civilian conflicts in El Alto in 2003, which brought down the Goni government." The Goni government – supported by the US, where he is now in exile.

Finally, we are told that Commander Vargas is too unreliable to count on. "Vargas remains an enigma," the cable noted. "Some commanders suspected, at least before his December 8 comments, that he might be sympathetic to a coup. He is widely characterized as an ‘opportunist’ ”. The cable added wryly: “We cannot expect him to stand behind his assurances.”

In a piece of bare-faced historical revisionism, USAID said that between 1985 and 2003 “fundamental economic and political rules of the game were liberalized”, adding, “organizations with a pluralistic view of democracy grew and flourished – especially in response to the availability of donor assistance”. It noted that, “Corporatist civil society organizations dominated citizen participation in the public sphere between 1952 and 1985”, which was the moment when the Bolivian government “began to change the direction of Bolivia’s economic policies and democratic practices”. Soon, as the fairytale went, “Pluralistic civil society then emerged, and was active – especially at the level of communities.” What that period, in fact, describes is the “Shock Doctrining” of the Bolivian economy and wider society. President Víctor Paz Estenssoro, who had been a supporter of US-backed dictator Hugo Banzer, ruled from 1985 to 1989 and instituted a neoliberal recipe to help put the staggering economy back on its feet. He repressed labor unions, sacked 30,000 miners, and privatized most of the state-owned companies. The broken society he and his successor Goni created would provide fertile ground for the Morales administration to grow in.

As its framework for the definition of civil society, USAID uses the work of Larry Diamond, a professor at Stanford University and fellow at the Hoover Institution where he coordinates the project on Democracy in Iran. He was a senior advisor on governance to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq and the founding co-editor of the National Endowment for Democracy’s *Journal of Democracy*. He has worked for the State Department, World Bank and USAID. In other words, the perfect intellectual to design democracy in Bolivia.

US weapons and military had been found in Bolivia. In June 2007, Donna Thi Dinh, a 20-year-old American woman, was detained at La Paz airport after arriving on a flight from Miami. The authorities found 500 rounds of .45-caliber ammunition in her luggage. Ms Thi had initially claimed to customs that she was carrying cheese. She was met at the airport by the wife of a military liaison at the US embassy in La Paz. US ambassador Philip Goldberg said that the bullets were for training and sport shooting and she did not realize that she had to declare them. This might be true, but at the very least it shows the impunity with which Americans felt they could act in Bolivia. Bolivia's director of migration, Magaly Zegarra, noted: "the fact that a North American citizen, related to the embassy, is carrying ammunition on a North American aircraft coming from Miami, a city where terrorists from all over Latin America are protected by the government, especially their teacher, as [Luis] Posada is called by the terrorists, and make a mockery of all [justice] mechanisms, is questionable."[9] In another incident, in March 2006, Triston Jay Amero, a 25-year-old from California, set off 300 kilos of dynamite at two hotels in La Paz. He was carrying 15 different identity documents. Two years later, security services uncovered the presence of two fake American journalists photographing presidential vehicles.

The US military itself was also using Bolivia as a base. In June 2010, it was revealed that the Obama administration was expanding the role of US special operations forces around the world in a "secret war" to combat al-Qaeda, with the *Washington Post* noting that they were placed in 60 to 75 countries, with about 4,000 personnel available in countries aside from Iraq and Afghanistan. Jeremy Scahill reported in *The Nation*, based on "well-placed special operations sources", that Bolivia was one of those countries. The role of the joint special operations command forces was to launch "pre-emptive or retaliatory strikes", but this was ambiguous. "While some of the special forces missions are centered around training of allied forces, often that line is blurred. In some cases, 'training' is used as a cover for unilateral, direct action," Scahill wrote. A special forces source told him: "It's often done under the auspices of training so that they can go anywhere. It's brilliant. It is essentially what we did in the 60s," adding, "Remember the 'training mission' in Vietnam? That's how it morphs." US armed forces did occasionally pop up in Bolivia. In 2008, just weeks before the raid on Hotel Las Americas, Iraq war veteran Lieutenant Commander Gregory Michel was arrested after he pulled a gun on a prostitute in Santa Cruz. The US embassy managed to secure his release on grounds of "diplomatic immunity". The WikiLeaks cables also show that C-130s and helicopters owned by the Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) at the US Embassy were being used to transport "eradicators and troops". Elsewhere, the embassy noted allegations that the DEA, US military and Bolivian national police headed Bolivian anti-narcotics efforts “from a US military base” in the Cochabamba department. In reference to this, the cable noted: “The US supports Bolivian anti-narcotics efforts at the Chimore Airport and has offices there, but there are no US military bases per se in Bolivia.” *Per se*. The WikiLeaks cables reveal an embassy concerned about renewing “mil-mil” (military to military) cooperation and establishing a “Status of Forces” agreement. But the Bolivian government was reticent about signing up – also refusing to ratify an “Article 98” which excuses US nationals from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, a common demand made by the US, a rogue nation intent on not abiding by international law.

But, as the US knows, Bolivia is still captive to the American military. A cable noted: “Bolivia has not spent any money on ammunition in two years, and the capacity to quickly move troops remains in doubt.”

SAYING THANK YOU

In early 2006, a cable from La Paz noted “the billions of US dollars of assistance in the past few decades”, and said that the ambassador observed that the US government “would sometimes appreciate a good word or thanks” from President Morales. To this day, the Morales government and his party, MAS, have not “thanked” the US for its support, because since 2005, and before, that support has been designed to finish them, and by extension democracy, in Bolivia. In many ways, Bolivia is the most democratic country in the world now. When you walk around the country you sense the involvement of the citizenry in the politics of their local community as well as on a national level, in a way that is markedly absent in the US or UK. There is a simple formula for US foreign policy in Latin America and beyond: support democracy if the people vote the right way. If they don’t, and the political party threatens to upset the “natural” order of things and with it the business interests of America and other foreign companies, then a program of subversion and destabilization gets under way. This investigation is focused on Bolivia in the specifics, but the general patterns have been replicated from Venezuela to Ecuador, from Brazil to Peru.

Another cable noted: “Evo Morales’ election in December 2005 was a political earthquake in Bolivia, sweeping aside political expectations that have defined Bolivian politics for generations and at the same time breaking open fissures and offering up new possibilities.” It is these new possibilities that scare the US government, the threat of the “virus of a good example”, a government that can provide for its citizens while growing the economy. Even Bolivia’s admirable lead on climate change is dismissed by the US embassy as a “vehicle for raising [Morales’s] and Bolivia’s international political stature”. The US is slowly losing the ownership it has had over Bolivian society for decades. For the first time in living memory, the Bolivian people are deciding their own destiny according to their needs, ideas and hopes – not those of the US. For this reason, war has been declared on Bolivian democracy, alongside any other democracy that does not see its *raison d’être* as supporting US interests to the detriment of its own people. But it was not just the indigenous people of Latin America who were proving a problem for the racketeers. When the financial crisis hit, its own indigenous population stopped being so easy to exploit as well. The racket abroad meets the racket at home.

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3 Matt Kennard, “Bolivian democracy vs the United States”, *OpenDemocracy*, June 3, 2013.

4 Doug Palmer, “U.S. moves to suspend trade benefits for Bolivia”, *Reuters*, September 26, 2008.

5 Carlos Quiroga, “Bolivia’s Morales bars ‘spying’ U.S. DEA agents”, *Reuters*, November 1, 2008.

6 Carlos Valdez, “Bolivian leader says Obama ‘lied’ about cooperation”, *Associated Press*, July 2, 2009.

7 Jean Friedman-Rudovsky and Brian Ross, “Exclusive: Peace Corps, Fulbright Scholar asked to ‘spy’ on Cubans, Venezuelans”, *ABC News*, February 8, 2008.

8 Conversation between the President’s assistant for national security affairs (Kissinger) and President Nixon, Washington, June 11, 1971, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve10/d101

9 Roberto Bardini, “Mal momento para ‘errores inocentes’ ”, *Tinku*, May 3, 2008.

PART THREE

REINFORCEMENT

TEN

THE FIRST PEOPLES OF AMERICA AND THEIR LAND

OKLAHOMA

When I met them, as the fog of economic crisis engulfed the community, the Delaware Nation tribe had a simple strategy for creating jobs for the nearly two-thirds of its members who were destitute and unemployed: it wanted to manufacture lighting. The Native American community already distributed lighting so they knew the industry well; now they wanted to produce LED lights. Except they couldn't. No one would lend them the money they needed to get started. They weren't white and had no natural resources on their arid reservations, so the financial players, the racketeers who make everything in America move, turned away. It was just the latest stage in a centuries-old battle for basic dignity by America's First People against the usurpers and financial wizards who have kept them condemned to underdevelopment. They were still losing. "The economy has taken a complete dive," Kerry Holton, the eloquent president of the tribe, told me. "Banks won't take any risk whatsoever, unless you have twice as much in assets than what you are loaning they are not interested." This meant the rich could borrow, but the poor, no way.

The indigenous Lenape people were originally located across large swaths of the eastern coast of the modern-day United States, including parts of New Jersey, New York, Delaware and Pennsylvania, and theirs was the first tribe to sign a formal agreement with the newly established government in 1778. Over 200 years later, the same people – now part decimated, wholly displaced – are called the Delaware Nation, a white man's name given to the people who migrated from the west coast and ended up in Oklahoma. In the 21st century, they are still suffering from the barbarism of their conquerors, who no longer come in the form of land-grabbing British colonists, but modern-day moneymen. The tribe today is suffering majority unemployment, has incurred an insurmountable level of debt, and across the land they have inhabited for 150 years there is a pervasive hopelessness typical of indigenous communities being buffeted by the financial industry. But the Delaware Nation is run more efficiently than the institutions of the state that massacred their ancestors and now loves to preach about the "exceptional" nature of its democracy. They have a small governing council of six members, divided between elders and younger members of the community, who make the decisions.

The Delaware Nation have just one casino – the patronizing gift of the white establishment as it took their land – which they want to use as a stepping stone for other economic developments, including developing green energy. But the tribe has no chance of getting the financing to kick things off. "We can do some of it ourselves, but we need millions to start these things," said Mr Holton. "We realized pretty quickly that the banks are no help. We want to create some jobs, but the casinos don't do that. It does create some, but it's not enough". The Delaware Nation have already done a leveraged buyout of a company to take a majority stake, becoming one of the leading semiconductor lighting distribution networks in the US. Everything is in place to move into manufacturing. "We just need capital to get inventory and contracts. But that has been difficult. Even if we have contracts, we go to any financial institution and can't get lending based on that contract." The 1,500-strong tribe is just one of the many Native American victims of the freeze in credit markets in the aftermath of the financial crisis.

Like pretty much everything else negative that happens in the US, the lack of available funds has hit tribes – always seen as a risky investment because they tend to rely on a single revenue stream – more intensely than any other group. The aftermath of the financial crisis hit Native American economies hard as many rely on casinos for their revenue, one of the discretionary spending sectors that was hit hardest in the recession. For many tribes like the Delaware Nation, the revenue stream from the casino is their tax base. They use the funds in the same way as municipalities or states use their tax revenue, to develop social services and educational programs, for example. When the recession hit and the casino revenues went down, it meant cutting back on many of the most crucial welfare and social services.

THE BUBBLE

Many of the tribes were tempted in the credit bubble to expand their, often high-end, business ventures. The Mashantucket Pequots, who have maintained the same reservation in Connecticut since 1666, announced in April 2008 plans for a “breathtaking” new $700 million resort at its Foxwoods Resort Casino, which was already the largest in the world, along with a new Hilton.[1] Within the days of it opening that summer, Lehman Brothers collapsed and with it the global economy slumped. Soon after, the tribe was battling to pay back the highly leveraged debt it had incurred. In January 2010, it managed to reach an agreement with senior lenders to extend debt forbearance and restructuring of $2.3 billion in arrears. “It’s the same old story,” said Joseph Kalt, co-director of Harvard University’s project on American Indian economic development. “A lot of cash flowing, tribes investing like mad and then getting hit by the recession.”

But the economic challenges of tribal governments are broader than the recent recession. It has always been difficult to attract high-quality credit. Tribes lack the taxing power of local governments, a predicament that has been exacerbated by state budgetary pressures and revenue or tax disputes between governments. Tribal governments have only enjoyed self-governance since the 1970s, when the Gerald Ford and Richard Nixon administrations made strides on the issue. Although they existed before the US itself, in a modern sense they have only had 45 years of self-determination. This has left them open to exploitation by banks. “Any tribe’s debt-managing policies have had relatively little time to refine government structures,” said Jeffrey Carey, managing director and specialist in tribal finance at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. Many believe this has made them more susceptible to the worst banking practices.

There has also been an erosion of the monopoly protection in gambling they enjoyed, while the macroeconomic environment continues to be a challenge with the dependence on the limited asset class versus the broad tax base of a state or locality. They also have collateral limitations because, under Federal Trust status, their assets are held in trusts by the federal government, which limits their ability to access the bond or capital markets. Holton told me: “One of the things that the recession has done is woken us up to the fact that we can’t do everything via casinos, we have to diversify so we can shore up those programs and make sure they are there when people need them. Everyone felt casinos were bulletproof but they aren’t.” “Diversification is now a theme for tribal economies,” added Mr Carey. “There’s more onus now on investing in infrastructure and services to citizens, alongside partnerships with non-tribal governments.” In Alabama, the Poarch Creek Indians work with local government on a variety of issues, including police protection and roads. It is a model for cooperation between tribal and non-tribal that is gaining traction across the country.

To add insult to injury, in the midst of this uncertainty, President Barack Obama’s administration decided to cut dramatically the Indian loan guarantee program, which backs tribal loans. For 2012 the program was slashed by nearly two-thirds to $3 million, down from the $8 million that was allocated in 2010. “The budget realities that we’re in right now require some reductions,” said Larry Echo Hawk, assistant secretary of the interior for Indian affairs. But it was all a lie. “The Obama administration has tried to make a difference, but it hasn’t trickled down to the tribes: it sounds good in the press, but when you go to tribes, it hasn’t been gainful,” said Holton. The tribal economic development bonds are unusable for many tribes because they lack the infrastructure to do anything with them. “The irony is that banks are now starting to make loans again but the damage has been done and the Obama administration’s proposed cuts will decimate the loan guarantee program,” Gavin Clarkson, a professor at the University of Houston and the country’s leading scholar on tribal finance, told me. “Indian country was given a test but the test was rigged.”

Mr Obama’s stimulus package included $2 billion in tax-exempt bond allocations for tribes. But the markets were so bad and the lending criteria so onerous that even though tribes had these allocations financial institutions effectively shut them out. “They were created for us, but you can’t do anything with them,” said Mr Holton. “They have been nothing more than paper.” The loan guarantee program primarily served tribes that did not have access to capital markets. That is now nearly gone, for Washington proof that Native Americans cannot attract investment. But like the colonists before them who wrote contracts on land which they then reneged on, the banks have always seen the Indian tribes as a chance to make a quick buck, an expendable sponge to squeezed and let go when times get tough. For example, in 2011, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) found that Wachovia bank had overpriced a tranche of collateralized debt obligations and sold them to the Zuni Indian tribe in New Mexico. The bank paid $11 million in penalties to the SEC, which caused the media to take note. But for those with knowledge of Indian economies it was nothing new. “The banks definitely take advantage of the tribes, especially if you have gaming,” Mr Holton said. “That’s what they want to attack; in the business world as a non-native, you get treated a lot differently to natives or members of tribes. They think they can get in your pocket, it’s very difficult, a lot of times it’s better to approach them and not tell them you are a tribe.”

The racketeers work to keep the poor world underdeveloped, and they do the same with the tribes within their own borders. “The large retail banks were happy to make oodles of money on the backs of tribes when they were financing casinos,” said Mr Holton. “But when it came to financing business or industry, things required for a functioning economy, it was always a challenge.” That is not a coincidence: building up the capacity of native communities to run their own affairs and not rely on handouts from the state could challenge their subservience to the system; this, of course, would not do. It’s a long story of financial savagery that has created this situation – there is nothing inevitable about it. Bank of America Merrill Lynch, meanwhile, estimated that more than $17 billion of tribal securities have been issued over the past decade as well as $25 billion of capital raised by tribal markets. But those statistics can be misleading as the bulk of this financing has gone to the select successful and thus creditworthy tribes. “The cutbacks disproportionately affect the tribes most in need, so it has been a big disappointment for Indian country to see it cut back just when they need it the most,” said Jeffrey Carey, managing director and specialist in tribal finance at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

The effect of the financial crisis has not been even across tribes. It is possible to classify them broadly into three distinct groups. Casino tribes, whose economy revolves around that one business, saw their revenues drop precipitously, by more than 30 percent in many cases. In Florida, the Seminole tribe was celebrated when Bank of America Merrill Lynch helped them to buy Hard Rock International in a $965 million buyout in 2006. The *Wall Street Journal* lauded it on their front page, and the financial press beamed. But when the financial crisis struck, the situation took a turn for the worse and it ended in the long- serving tribal chief stepping down.

A second set of tribes was not so severely affected because they were recipients of lucrative government defense contracts that were maintained in the crisis. The Flathead reservation in Montana has a company called S&K Electronics which produces items such as cooling fans for military helmets used in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Nebraska, the largest tribe does field preparation for military equipment, putting together the packs that soldiers take into the field. “The manufacturing tribes have generally weathered the recession very well because overall government contracting has been resistant because of the wars,” said Joseph Kalt.

Lastly, there are the tribes that have 70 to 80 percent unemployment, which were so poor and starved of investment – without casinos or government contractors – that the recession did not make much of a difference. Starting in the 1990s, around the time the dotcom bubble was inflating, a number of financial firms became interested as tribes gained economic self-sufficiency after political self-determination in the 1970s. They also gained assets from natural resources or the 1988 Gaming Act. Now there was a quick buck to be made, the financial world woke up. Merrill Lynch has had accounts with tribes since the 1960s, while Wells Fargo and Bank of America worked with tribes on a more regional basis instead. Leading up to self-determination, many tribes received land settlements or other reparations, monies for land or natural resources, which became investable assets. That increased in the 2000s as 50–100 more tribes gained investable assets and enterprise levels that warranted more than local bank coverage. “I think tribes have been subject to predatory practices throughout the history of the US,” said Jeffrey Carey.

As government grew from self-determination, the tribes faced a number of challenges, including developing investment policies. They were inexperienced, while the financial sector saw a potential killing. “There is a learning curve for tribes and it has been a challenge for them,” added Carey. “I think there have been predatory practices for hundreds of years. I’m sure there’s still an element of that that continues and it’s not limited to financial institutions, its developers, land or natural resources.” There was a broad-based assault on tribes that initially was led by federal government. There are 565 tribes in the US, and most of them are still at or below the poverty level and/or experience high levels of unemployment.

NAOMA

The racketeers, once they had taken the land from the indigenous Americans, are now trying to destroy it in their efforts to produce even more capital, in an unending cycle of greed and gluttony. The emblem of this in modern-day US is the literal destruction of some of the country’s most beautiful mountain formations, alongside the people living there, to unleash one of the world’s dirtiest energy sources: coal. The fact that man-made global warming is a specter hanging over the human race does not concern corporations because it is an “externality” – something we all have to pay for, while they privatize the profit. Mountaintop removal mining (MTM) is a relatively new method of extraction which involves blasting the top off mountains to access the coal inside. It has become increasingly popular across Appalachia despite the damage it does to the health of those who live in nearby communities as well as the harm it does to the natural environment. But, of course, money talks. And it goes on, but not without a fight.

Vernon Haltom, 48 and a father of three, used to live in the small West Virginia town of Naoma, near the bottom of a mountaintop mine. He left in 2009 after five years, because, he said, the mine made life impossible. “One of the things you really notice is the blasting,” he told me. “The companies detonate in Appalachia the equivalent of a Hiroshima bomb every week, in terms of the amount of explosives. It feels like an earthquake; sometimes you don’t hear it, you just feel it.” He has now become one of the outspoken fighters against the destruction of America’s natural heritage, and was the co-founder of Coal River Mountain Watch. In the process he has put himself in danger – another reason he left Naoma was the death threats he said he received from Massey Energy, the huge company which is at the forefront of mountaintop removal mining in the area. He also complained of the dust the blasting was sending down on to the communities. “The real problem of blasting is dust, silica dust from rock, whatever elements have been isolated from the surface for hundreds of millions of years are put into the atmosphere. The nitrate and other blasting by-products that come down on communities where people live and breathe, that’s something that the agencies are supposed to be regulating, but they refuse to do anything about it. They don’t think it’s an issue at all.”

He recalled one episode when he was going home from work and walking past Marsh Fort, the local elementary school. In the sky above the school, the sun could be seen only dimly through the dust cloud. “The agency never bothered to come out and investigate,” he told me, still angry years later.

A growing body of scientific studies has outlined the health impact on communities in the areas where mountaintop removal mining is being carried out. In July 2011, the peer-reviewed *Journal of Community Health* published a study which posited that among the 1.2 million people living in central Appalachian communities affected by mountaintop removal mining, there were an additional 60,000 cases of cancer directly related to the practice. In the previous month, a study by researchers at West Virginia University found higher rates of birth defects in Appalachian areas with mountaintop removal mining compared with non-mining areas. These include central nervous system and gastrointestinal defects.

The sad truth is that state agencies have been captured by the racket, and now work more for the companies than for the people they are meant to represent. Instead of acting on their powers to regulate the industry and enforce laws and regulations, they are merely the legitimizing tool through which big business operates. Corruption is built into the system in the form of revolving doors between the regulators and the companies. An inspector will spend a couple of years “regulating” then move on to a coal company without a bat of an eyelid. “We’ve had polls for years to show people are opposed to MTM, unfortunately politicians don’t care what’s right, they will be swayed more by wealthy companies that finance their campaigns rather than people,” said Mr Haltom. On West Virginia election day, both the Democrat and the Republican love mountaintop removal mining, he said. “Given the financing that the coal industry does, they butter bread on both sides. It doesn’t matter if you have a D or an R after your name, you should just have a C, for the Coal Party.”

“There is an emerging body of science [about] health effects in communities effected by MTM,” Melissa Waage, campaign director at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental advocacy group, told me. “Two important studies in the past month show higher rates of birth defects and higher rates of cancer, and the activists have picked up on that and have brought that to Washington and said this is literally killing us and we’re not going to take it.”

Of course, the functionaries of the racket were busy legitimating it with the usual excuse for exploitation: investment. “Mountaintop mining helped the economics of Appalachian coal miners,” said John Bridges, US coal analyst at JP Morgan. “It lowered cost and improved productivity in a competitive sector.” So all the people whose kids are dying of cancer should be thankful. But he admits it’s harder for these destroyers to go about their work now. “Now we have a situation where the easy opportunities have been mined and costs are going up. And environmental lobby is opposed to the method, so permits are much harder to come by.” The coal companies themselves chime in, mirroring what corporate interests use around the world, as we have seen in Haiti: “but we bring jobs!” “There is no question that the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] is stymying job creation at a time when the US economy is struggling, and when jobs and the economy are the top concern of most Americans,” said Deck Slone, vice-president of government relations at Arch Coal, one of the worst offenders. In 2010, the EPA elicited fury from coal companies and some local politicians when it tightened its guidance on the criteria for granting permits for mountaintop mining sites. It followed a move by the regulator to set aside 80 proposed mining projects for “enhanced review”.

Lenny Kohm, former campaign director of Appalachian Voices, one of the many grassroots organizations that have sprung up to oppose mountaintop removal mining, said the activism is working. “Without question it’s had an effect,” he said. “It used to be until several years ago that that industry had carte blanche. If they applied for permit it was automatically granted. Through the efforts of our group and others, through legislative channels, but also direct action and working on agencies, the EPA, which is responsible for issuing permits, about a year ago they took 80 permits and held them up for further review, while major permits have been denied." He added: "I would bet that within the next five years mountaintop removal doesn't exist at all. The most important thing that will get us across the finish line are our efforts on making this a national campaign, we've taken it all over the country. I will brag a little bit, I don't think there's many people left who haven't heard of it; six years ago nobody had heard of it."

The fight of the people of Appalachia for their homes and the rights of the natural environment shows that the needs of capital to reproduce itself incessantly can still be trumped when the wider population is awakened to the issue free from corporate-backed propaganda. In fact, there lies the key to defeating the racket. Both Republicans and Democrats rely on coal money to get re-elected so working within the political process can be futile.

The fight is made harder because the corporations have all the money – they have millions of dollars to bribe elected officials, to influence the national media and get their voice heard in Washington. The residents of Appalachia have no such money, but their voice was still heard above the din of lies and dissembling. "If you want to encapsulate our strategy, we want to form public opinion and then leverage it to get political will," Lenny said. The official political process is broken, so the people have to work outside it, building their own media outlets, and building consciousness of what this racket wants – its tentacles in every part of our lives.

FRACKING

One of the few bulwarks against the power of capital to run rampant in the US are the regulatory bodies which are there to enforce the rule of the law. For this reason, these bodies come under concerted attack. When I was in Washington, the issue burst on to the news agenda when a gas well in Pennsylvania exploded and sent thousands of gallons of fluids coursing through the drilling site and into a local tributary. The fluids were laced with a medley of dangerous chemicals, forcing seven families to evacuate their homes. The accident created more controversy for a method of gas extraction known as hydraulic fracturing. Its supporters in the corporate world claim it will end US reliance on foreign oil and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

"Fracking" has been around for decades, but only in the 2000s were big shale gas deposits found in the US. The racket could barely conceal its excitement. The accident happened on a drill site working the Marcellus Shale, which stretches over New York, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, the biggest natural gas deposit in US. As many as 100,000 wells are expected to be drilled along the shale over the next half century if allowed to go ahead unrestricted. Fracking involves injecting fluids into shale rock to unlock the natural gas inside. Many countries around the world are betting on shale gas as a big future source of energy as traditional sources of oil run out. But while the business press was in raptures and the mining companies sang the praises of this new frontier of profit-making, ordinary Americans were speaking out against a technique which has the potential to destroy communities and landscapes, and puts people in danger of cancer and other diseases. Cuadrilla Resources, the first company to explore for shale gas in the UK, suspended operations at one site in fear that it might have triggered two small earthquakes near Blackpool in northwest England. In the US, local communities have been up in arms over the practice. State legislatures across the country are passing new laws to stem the perceived environmental fallout: the fluids used to break up the rock can contaminate the water supply. "Clearly, water pollution is a big problem, as well as the impact on air quality," Myron Arnowitt of Clean Water Action, an environmental group, told me. "We need to make sure drinking water supplies are protected and stop waste water being discharged into rivers without real treatment."

The companies are also acting like Wild West criminals. The Pennsylvania state environmental agency found 1,200 environmental violations at gas drilling sites in 2010, and one in six wells had violations. There is a clear record that the fracking industry has poor environmental management and when things go wrong they are very significant for local communities. "The states are reacting to events on the ground, rivers being contaminated, well blowouts, leaks that they were seeing in well casings," said Mr Arnowitt. “The problem is that states never sit back and say, ‘Let’s stop drilling and think about what is going to happen if we drill all these wells’.” These same companies do not even have to divulge what chemicals they use. The Texas House of Representatives, of all places, passed a bill that would require fracking drillers to make public the chemicals they use. “Although there have been no cases of the process contaminating groundwater in Texas, the people say they want to know the contents of the fluid used in the process,” said the Texas bill’s sponsor, Republican Jim Keffer. Texas Railroad Commission chairman Elizabeth Ames Jones, meanwhile, told a US energy department hearing that it was “geologically impossible for frack fluid to migrate into the water table” because the process took place too deep in the earth. Texas is actually at the frontier of some of the biggest discoveries of shale rock, particularly in the south of the state. One recently discovered formation which runs from the Mexican border to the south of San Antonio has been called the largest onshore oil or natural gas find in the past 50 years. Bills, meanwhile, have been introduced in California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York to stop fracking.

The EPA, the only bulwark the American people have against big business in this case, has been responding extremely slowly to concerns. Its spokespeople were hesitant to take a line when I spoke to them. Of course, as an institution which might impinge on corporate bottom lines in America, it was under concerted attack by the corporate sector. “We will lose several years of development and have to spend money on bringing in natural resources from around the world [if the EPA intervenes],” said Ray Ludwiszewski, who was general counsel at the EPA in the 1990s and is now a lawyer at Gibson Dunn. This is another facet of the racket – racketeers will use any excuse to get their way. In the case of fracking, the companies and their lackeys were using the excuse that America has to rely on foreign oil – a serious concern – when shale gas can meet those needs.

SHEDDING THE REGULATOR

In 1998 Arch Coal, the second largest coal producer in the US, unveiled its plan to build the largest mountaintop extraction operation in West Virginia’s history, a 3,000-acre site with huge mineral deposits. The Missouri-based company spent the next decade clambering over various logistical obstacles until in 2007 it was granted a permit for the project by the US Army Corps of Engineers. But the project hit a snag in 2009 when the EPA vetoed the permit under the Clean Water Act. The EPA ruled that the new project "may result in unacceptable adverse impacts to fish and wildlife resources", adding, "the damage from this project would be irreversible". The project remains stalled. Arch Coal filed a lawsuit to defend the original permit against the EPA veto.

You may think that this was the EPA doing its job, acting in the interests of preserving America's nature and its people, but it was also stepping on the toes of big business, and that made it Public Enemy No. 1 in Washington. This story, alongside countless others, became *causes célèbres* for the Republican Party and its allies in the business community.

"This over-regulation all started with the Obama administration," William Kovacs, director of environment and regulation at the US Chamber of Commerce, told me. "Four months in, it became clear that they were moving very aggressively on greenhouse gases and there was a list of other rules they wanted to rewrite." Some might point out that saving the planet from global warming might not in fact be a bad thing, but there is scarcely a less extreme organization in the US than the Chamber of Commerce, the organization which represents the interests of Big Money. As the most powerful business lobby in Washington, it saw only the dollar signs – a disintegrating world didn't enter the equation. The US Chamber of Commerce published *Project No Project* which outlined a litany of projects around the country being held up because of "excessive regulation", including Arch Coal's mountaintop mine.

The EPA is targeted not because it is doing anything wrong, but because it is the most powerful and active regulator, with its rulings effecting large swathes of US business. Of course, the Chamber trotted out its usual excuse for allowing businesses to do whatever they want, saying "all too often EPA provides little consideration to the jobs lost or economic consequences of its actions". In this schema, everything that business wants to do is permissible, because any check on the power to expand and accumulate could impact on the number of people they can employ. It's a vision of apocalypse, but these forces are indeed winning in the US, and the spaces for people outside of the rat race of capital accumulation continue to shrink.

The Republicans, ever loyal to Big Capital, were trying to shift regulatory powers from the EPA to the Congress, including barring the EPA from regulating carbon emissions. “Big polluters would flout legal restrictions on dumping contaminants into the air, into rivers and onto the ground,” Linda Jackson, the EPA administrator, told Congress. I spoke to Henry Waxman, the ranking member of the energy and commerce committee and a senior Democrat who said: “The Republicans are science deniers. They don’t just want to limit regulations, they have a proposal to make a finding that the EPA was wrong in deciding greenhouse gases are a threat.” The American political establishment, though, did not just see the land as expendable. The people of the country, too, had for decades been sacrificed on the altar of the racket’s thirst for more dough.

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1 Unless noted, all the statistics and quotes for the chapters in Part 3 come from my work in the *Financial Times* from 2011.

ELEVEN

WORKING AMERICA

OCCUPY, NEW YORK CITY

In the early part of 2011, I heard about a protest happening down the road from our office in Washington, DC. Knowing it was not up the *Financial Times'* street – a sit-in at Bank of America – I decided to do a story on it. The group was called US Uncut and was setting up protests in over 50 cities across the US, targeting the massive cuts being made to public services to pay for the corporate greed that had bought about the financial crisis. It was based on a group that had done similar work in the UK, focusing on using tax revenue gained from the richest people in their society – which they avoided assiduously – to bring down the fiscal deficit. The group was armed with all the facts, pointing to a 2008 congressional study which found that nearly two-thirds of US corporations do not pay federal income taxes thanks to the use of loopholes and offshore tax havens. Bank of America was the first target of these coordinated sit-ins and protests because it was the biggest bank by deposits in the land. To add to the protesters' ire, this same bank had received $45 billion in federal bail-out money in the aftermath of the financial crisis. I decided to call up Bank of America to get its perspective on what seemed like completely legitimate protest. "I don't know they are protesting against us," said a bank spokesperson, not completely ingenuously. "The bank paid back all of the Tarp [federal bail-out money] in 2009 with interest. Our practice is to follow all relevant tax policies and pay taxes when taxes are owed."

The group's British analogue and inspiration, UK Uncut, had made headlines after targeting retailer Topshop and its owner Philip Green, as well as mobile phone company Vodafone, with spontaneous demonstrations at stores in London and around the country. Both companies had become famous for their tax avoidance.

The American economy's slow recovery from the great Recession had caused unfair cuts to public services while corporations were reaping record profits. Many, in fact, wondered why it had taken so long for a movement of this type to coalesce in the US. I called up US Uncut to see what they wanted to achieve. "In the UK, it's a wildly successful model for compelling people to organize themselves," said Rizvi Qureshi, an organizer based in Washington. The group called itself a decentralized, horizontally arranged network of people, using US Uncut's website as a messaging hub. It was a grassroots movement "aimed at resisting painful budget cuts by calling for an end to corporate tax dodging". The organizers of the movement hoped to channel the union and worker demonstrations in Madison, Wisconsin to create a wider "progressive Tea Party movement" and shift the emphasis away from an attack on entitlement programs to corporations and banks. US Uncut wanted to turn its protest sites into symbols of public institutions being cut in the latest 2011 budget. "One idea is for people to use props and turn the bank into a school to protest the cuts in funding for the vital Pell grant," said Mr Qureshi. Pell grants help support undergraduate education for students from low-income families. But, after this, the movement seemed to die down, and the precursor to Occupy is all but forgotten. The protests happened, the local media covered it, but then everyone went home.

Then one morning in September, by which time I had moved to New York, I saw a message online about a protest at Wall Street, which hoped to occupy the area and turn it into a democratic place where people could discuss the positive changes the country vitally needed. I told my editor, who again looked confused as to why I thought this was newsworthy. "Sure, go down, but these things happen all the time." So I did go down, as an activist more than anything else. And this was different; the touch paper had been lit. Over the next weeks and months Occupy Wall Street, the movement of the 99 percent, would thrust itself on to the American political scene. I covered every protest in the period for the *FT*, often with my colleague Shannon Bond, and saw upfront what resistance to the racket in America looks like. It was spreading like wildfire. In Boston, hundreds of demonstrators marched on the state house, while protesters in Chicago beat drums outside the Federal Reserve Bank. In New York, economics Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz, actress Susan Sarandon and filmmaker Michael Moore all stopped by Zuccotti Park to lend support. Despite a ban on tents and sleeping bags in the park, protesters had turned the area into a makeshift village. There were separate areas for sleeping and sign making, while free medical aid, clothing, toiletries and food were available. Another area was filled with people working on laptops and video editing equipment.

At Zuccotti Park one day, I got chatting to Victoria Sobel who told me how her parents had worked hard all their lives but were still struggling to make ends meet. That's why the 21-year-old Cooper Union student had been sleeping rough in downtown Manhattan for nearly three weeks and did not plan on going home any time soon. She had been there since the first day. "I'm fed up with the way our financial system is structured," she told me. "My parents work harder than anyone I know, but I've had to watch them really scrounge. That's the reality for me and many people. This is not a hypothetical situation," she added. "This is a critical situation, that is going to continue on past our movement." She told me she is not typical of the growing ranks of Occupy Wall Street protesters – because there is no typical protester. "We have a spectrum socially, ethnically and ideologically," she said. "It's very spread out." People were intent on creating a functioning and equal environment, right at the heart of the most insane system of money and greed the world has ever known. "The morale is high, we're at a crucial point," Victoria continued. "We really need to begin to address infrastructure and sustainability, we want to create an environment that is conducive to getting work done." Aware of how the corporate media usually present anyone who genuinely challenges powerful interests, private or public, Victoria believed that the protesters' image had to be cultivated. "We particularly need to be conscientious of what we are doing because we are being set a high bar," she told me. "I'm in for the long haul."

Some observers, including Van Jones, a former advisor to President Barack Obama, were already calling the Occupy Wall Street protests the start of a "progressive" version of the Tea Party movement. "You are going to see an American fall, an American autumn, just like we saw the Arab spring," Mr Jones said.

As the protests extended into a third week in New York and sparked similar demonstrations across the country, even Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke was asked about the growing movement during an appearance before Congress. “Like everyone else, I’m dissatisfied with what the economy’s doing right now,” Mr Bernanke said, adding that protesters had cause to be unhappy over the economy and political issues.

Of course, Occupy Wall Street and its spin-offs found little support among Democrats, outside of a few lawmakers on the left of the party. “I think [the movement] reflects an inchoate anger and frustration at the failure of the Bush and Obama administrations to hold people to account for malfeasance over the last few years,” Eric Foner, a Columbia University professor who teaches the history of American radicalism, told me. He said that if history was any judge, the fact that the demands of the Occupy Wall Street protesters were so far “unfocused” did not mean it would not develop into a mass movement. “In the 1930s labor had unfocused demonstrations and strikes, dealing with very specific things, then it developed into the modern labor movement.” He added that some of his students had joined the protests, many of them enthusiastic supporters of Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign. “I think it’s a warning sign for the Obama administration that that kind of enthusiasm doesn’t exist any more.”

“The message of Occupy Wall Street is we think both political parties are owned by the same guys,” David Graeber, a former professor of anthropology at Yale who joined in the protests, told me. “If democracy is to mean anything, it means that everybody has to weigh in on this process of how money is created and promises are renegotiated.” He added: “I think [Occupy Wall Street] is really promising because people realized after what happened in 2008 that the story we’d all been told is not true. Markets don’t really run themselves, the debts aren’t sacred.”

A MOVEMENT TAKES OFF

People sat in a semi-circle listening to other activists in Zuccotti Park, where the days were punctuated with what the protesters called “general assemblies”, forums in which activists discussed political and economic issues and announced plans of action. To amplify speakers’ voices, the crowd repeated every phrase, creating a call and response chant that echoed across the park. One speaker announced a march in solidarity with the 45,000 Verizon workers who were on strike. Another called for more people to join an early morning trip to the studios of Good Morning America, the ABC talk show. Over time the unions, representing working people across New York and the country, came out in force to show support for the protesters. The Transport Workers Union, which has 38,000 members, tried to bar the police and the city's transit authority from requiring drivers to transport arrested protesters, after police had commandeered city buses to carry some of the 700 demonstrators arrested on one march across the Brooklyn Bridge. A federal judge struck down the order. After they offered such a heroic helping hand, I called up the union to find out what they thought of this great uprising against the 1 percent. "The protesters have hit a chord with workers and working families," Jim Gannon, the union spokesperson, told me. "We are expected to pay for Wall Street's implosion with jobs and wages and benefits. Protesters are putting a spotlight on that. We're trying to do what we can to grow that spotlight." Mr Gannon said the union had been in contact with the organizers of Occupy Wall Street about how to help. "They said they don't need anything right now, they are organized," he added. "So we are going to provide moral support, and over the next weeks and months there will be material support as needed."

US labor unions used the momentum of anti-Wall Street protests as a way to amplify their members' concerns at a time when collective bargaining rights were under attack across the country. In Wisconsin, public sector workers lost collective bargaining rights after a drawn-out fight with governor Scott Walker, while New York's Public Employees Federation, which represents 54,000 state employees, accepted a three-year pay freeze that would save the state $400 million. It was the latest show of support for the protests spreading across the country from a labor movement that had been hit hard in the aftermath of the recession by job losses, high unemployment, state budget deficits and an often-hostile political environment.

Several hundred members of the SEIU's local 32BJ, New York's largest property service workers' union, rallied near the New York stock exchange in downtown Manhattan to call for better contracts and a "fair deal" for working Americans. The union, which represents 120,000 office cleaners and other property workers nationwide, also organized rallies in Philadelphia and Washington. Faidla Mrkulic, a 60-year-old office cleaner at Pfizer's midtown office, told me: "I was able to send my kids to school, to put food on the table, to pay my rent. The young generation deserves better. Whatever I had, I want them to have."

"This is the time to be in solidarity with labor," Nelini Stamp, an Occupy Wall Street representative, said. "Everyone is going through struggles – losing pensions, foreclosures, student debt." "The first few days were hard because most of us haven't experienced true democracy, which is what this is," said Danny Garza, 26, a student from Sacramento, California, who said he served in the Iraq war. "Everybody has a voice, an equal vote." Mr Garza said his goals were to "end corporate personhood", separate government from business and promote the rights of low-income citizens. "People on the outside think we don't know why we're here and what we want," he said. "This is a revolution." David Good, 24, an artist and Aids activist, said: "This is not about overthrowing the government, this is to bring attention" to inequality and the destruction of the social safety net. He added: "The people that we bailed out are raking in record profits … I would like to see Congress tax the hell out of them. I want the banks and Wall Street to pay their fair share."

I continued to follow the outpouring of anger against financial injustice as it bubbled up. In a march on Times Square, chants of "Occupy Wall Street, occupy Times Square, occupy everywhere" rang out across the demonstration, as police on horseback blocked off the road and protesters were forced to line the sidewalks. Rebekah, a student from Philadelphia who did not want to give her last name, told me: "I think it's important that we build a community of discontent about what is happening in US society." She said she had traveled to Manhattan for the day to join the protests. "I'm here because I am against inequality and the corporate ownership of our society."

THE STUDENT VICTIMS

In fact, students were flocking to the demonstrations en masse – they were another demographic seen as expendable by the racket. When the financial crisis hit, higher education, some of America's most vaunted institutions, was thrown under the bus. California's budget, just before the Occupy protests started, cut $650 million from the University of California's funding. The brilliant university, which I attended from 2004 to 2005 and comprises ten campuses across the state, was facing a $2.5 billion shortfall. Michigan, which had experienced a decade of declining state funding to its universities, at the same time cut 15 percent from higher education – dropping the proportion of the total cost of education the state covers to 22 percent, a record low. In comparison, in 1987 the state supported 60 per cent of costs. "It's a prescription for long-term disaster," Molly Corbet Broad, president of the American Council on Education, an advocacy group, told me. "The types of jobs that create exports are shifting radically, and require skills and educated people. If we lose a generation of college-age students because they don't have the opportunity to go to college, we will live with the consequences."

In the aftermath of the recession and resulting high unemployment, many young people in the US had seen university as a refuge from a difficult job market. But the cost of attending public school continued to rise, as the racket saw an opportunity to bring public universities into the "market". "It's a massive hidden tax on families," Michael Boulus, executive director of the Presidents Council of the State Universities of Michigan, told me. At the University of Michigan, the state's flagship campus, tuition for the current school year was 6.6 percent higher than the previous year. The University of California raised tuition 9.8 percent after an earlier 8 percent rise, and officials have proposed further increases in the future tied to expected cuts in state funding. "The UC system is on the rocks," Peter McLaren, a professor of education at the University of California, Los Angeles, told me. "It was supposed to be affordable to those who could get in, now it's not affordable to anyone. It's a dream that has not just been deferred but extinguished." Debt loads were also growing. Student loans jumped to $550 billion in the second quarter of 2011 compared with $90 billion in 1999. Faced with a higher bill for their education, many students were changing their priorities away from idealism to getting it over with. "I noticed a big difference in quality at the end," Victor Sanchez, a recent sociology graduate from University of California, Santa Cruz, told me.

"You see a lot of scaling back, which creates a lack of engagement. People have to focus on getting in and getting out."

Student debt had increased nearly sevenfold from $80 billion in 1999 to $550 billion at the end of June 2011. Other estimates from the Department of Education put outstanding student loans as high as $805 billion. But the unemployment rate for 20- to 24-year-olds was nearly 15 percent – higher than the overall 9.1 percent rate – compromising the ability of graduates to pay off their growing debts. Student loan delinquencies had risen from 6.5 percent in 2003 to 11.2 percent in June 2011, nearly as high as the 12.2 percent rate on credit cards. "The long-run outlook for student lending and borrowers remains worrisome," Moody's, the rating agency, said in a report. "Unlike other segments of the consumer credit economy, student loans have not demonstrated much improvement in performance despite some improvement in the broader economy."

Alberto Gutierrez, a 38-year-old doctoral student at the University of California, Los Angeles, told me he had had to borrow more money and take on a part-time job to cover his expenses, including a $3,000 monthly mortgage payment. He received some financial aid, but not as much as he had hoped. "It's a public university so they've been cut a lot. Resources are pretty slim," he said. To tide him over, Mr Gutierrez borrowed another $10,000. "I'm going to be about $25,000 in debt when I finish. I've never owed that much money." Mr Gutierrez is not waiting for a bail-out like the banks. He wants to stay in higher education when he finishes his degree, but finding work will be hard. He accepts he could go into delinquency. "In California, there's no university hiring, I will have to relocate and even then most are hiring for non-tenure track positions," he said. "I'm looking to end up with a temporary lecturer position, which I'll have to juggle with other part-time work."

The burden of rising educational lending has, as usual, fallen disproportionately on the poorest students. While the average family paid 9 percent less for college in 2010–11 than the year before, the amount paid by households making less than $35,000 a year increased 14 percent. To meet rising demand, low-income parents contributed more from income and loans. And while students received more grants and scholarships – funding that does not have to be paid back – most of that increase went to middle- and high-income families. The University of California had seen a jump in financial aid applications for undergraduates as the school has raised tuition to meet a growing budget gap. “Clearly we are also concerned and acknowledge that it’s tougher than it’s been,” Nancy Coolidge, associate director of student financial support for the University of California system, told me. More students qualify as needy, she said, and more families at all income levels have increased borrowing. The difficult job market has affected how readily students can pay back their loans. Ms Coolidge added: “We haven’t yet seen a big drop in those who get jobs but we have seen a flattening of earnings, especially within the first five years after graduation.”

The University of California and California State University systems have even eliminated programs ranging from nursing to computer technology to classics at some campuses, and the University of California, Riverside had postponed opening a new medical school because of funding constraints. “One of our concerns is that college and universities are moving more into a market system rather than producing knowledge for the benefit of society,” said John Curtis, director of public policy at the American Association of University Professors. “These things are pushing higher education in the direction of how much can someone earn rather than what they have a passion for.”

Students were not the only ones suffering. Officials complain that wage cuts, as well as less generous pension packages and fewer available tenure-track positions, make it hard to retain and compete for top faculty. “Most talented faculty members are being recruited away – to their homeland, to other nations or the highly endowed private universities,” said Ms Broad. The gap in salaries between public and private schools has increased in every academic year since the recession began in 2008. “The bottom line is that salaries have been stagnating during the past several years for full-time faculty,” Mr Curtis said. “There seems to be an increasing shift to hiring professors who are off the tenure track.” Increased uncertainty is also damaging the quality of teaching. “When faculty jobs are insecure, it’s a threat to academic freedom. They don’t feel they can raise controversial issues, they don’t have time to work with students …. they don’t have the time they need.” It was the perfect result for the racket – less troublesome critics for the system to deal with.

THE BATTLE NOT OVER

Back at Occupy, in the end, the owners of Zuccotti Park, Brookfield Properties, told the demonstrators to leave so the area could be cleaned. Brookfield asked the New York Police Department to clear the park and the administration of Michael Bloomberg, New York mayor, said protesters must leave temporarily. Occupy Wall Street called Brookfield's cleaning plans an "eviction" and urged their supporters to come to the park for a "non-violent action". The group also organized clean-up crews that worked on that day to sweep and mop the park ahead of the deadline. Shortly before the 7am deadline, however, the city said Brookfield had put off the cleaning operation. A statement from Cas Holloway, New York deputy mayor, said: "Brookfield believes they can work out an arrangement with the protesters that will ensure the park remains clean, safe, available for public use and that the situation is respectful of residents and businesses downtown, and we will continue to monitor the situation." "The fact they backed down is a clear sign that this movement is demonstrating a lot of power," said Yotam Marom, who had been living in Zuccotti Park.

People kept coming downtown to show support. "Aside from our personal feelings about corporate greed, we found out yesterday that our union had endorsed Occupy Wall Street," said Richard Addeo, a 60-year-old electrician from New Jersey who had come out with fellow members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. "We have to honor what they say and we also believe in it." Some corporate executives have also said they understand protesters' grievances. Even the racket's spokesmen were supportive. Laurence Fink, chief executive of BlackRock, said that he was "very encouraged" by the protests and surprised they had not occurred sooner. He said that it would also be foolish to "turn our back on this protest movement."

In New York, on October 10, we went to the home of Rupert Murdoch, chief executive of News Corp. Protesters stood in the doorway of his building on Fifth Avenue chanting: "Murdoch – pay your fair share!" After 10 minutes, organizers rallied marchers to the next stop, the home of David Koch, the co-owner of Koch Industries and a funder of right-wing Tea Party groups. "Murdoch is one of the worst – but there are plenty more millionaires and billionaires," shouted one demonstrator. Most of the placards and charts called for increasing taxes on the rich and reducing inequality. The Occupy Wall Street movement refers to itself as the "99 percent", in reference to the fact that 1 percent of Americans control 40 percent part of the country's wealth. The march marked a new strategy for the nascent New York movement, which had so far been based near Wall Street. "I think it's an excellent tactic. These people are symbols of a system based on greed," said Ted Auerbach, a 63-year-old activist. "This is not going to stop until somebody with great authority comes and talks to us," said Patricia Malcolm, a member of an inter-faith coalition of clergy that joined the protests. "Let's start with the millionaires, that's why we're going to their houses." One onlooker, Eric Breeding, who worked for an art auction house on the Upper East Side, said he was supportive of the demonstration. "It's a good way to get media coverage. Maybe some rich people will pay attention," he said.

The Occupy Wall Street movement now released a declaration outlining protesters' grievances, which ranged from stripping the collective bargaining rights of workers to the torture of foreign citizens to the perceived influence of corporate interests over politicians. "This is what an actual grassroots movement looks like," Tim Robbins, the actor, told me. "It's a bit sloppy and disorganized but full of passion." The mood was festive with some protesters in costume and groups chanting: "Blame Wall Street, not Main Street." One speaker drew a roar from the crowd by saying: "We have to start by taxing the rich." Most of the participants brought their own signs, with messages ranging from anti-war slogans to condemnation of police brutality. The vast majority singled out the financial sector and rising inequality in the US. One man held a placard that read, "Money talks, 99 percent walks".

On the last protest I attended, helicopters hovered in the sky above the park, while the New York Police Department used metal barricades to direct the heavy flow of pedestrian traffic. More students held up signs calling for relief on their loans. Ani Monteleone, 29, who graduated in 2006 from Oregon College of Art and Craft, said: "Our society isn't creating enough jobs to absorb the people who are graduating from college." "Things have gotten so bad that everyone wants to be a part of this," added Ross Fuentes, a 23-year-old holding a sign from the Freedom Socialist Party. He said he was one of the young people energized by Barack Obama's presidential run in 2008, but was now disillusioned. “Obama ran a great campaign, then he shut the gates,” he said. While the protests were largely characterized in the media as a young persons’ movement, it attracted older people, too. “It’s time people stood up and expressed the need for profound change,” said Barbara, a 70-year-old literary agent who declined to give her last name. Her husband, John, a retired publisher, also in his 70s, said he wanted to see higher taxes on wealthy Americans and a return to the Glass-Steagall Act separation of investment and commercial banking that was put in place during the Great Depression and repealed in 1999. “Things have been going downhill for the past 40 years,” he said.

THE DOWNFALL OF US WORKERS AND THEIR UNION

One man who had experienced “things going downhill” was Pat Buzzee, a softly spoken 58-year-old, who has spent his working life as a machinist for Electric Boat, a submarine manufacturer near his home along Connecticut’s Long Island Sound. Early in his career, in the 1980s, Mr Buzzee was one of 30,000 who worked in southern Connecticut’s thriving shipbuilding industry. He now works as an inspector, but the industry has shed 20,000 other workers in the region over the past two decades. Many are still out of work and others have had to accept lower wages elsewhere. Difficulties have persisted even for those who have held on to their jobs. “In the late 80s we were in competition with another shipyard here so the company, in order to stay competitive, would hold wages down,” Mr Buzzee told me. “For five years we never got a general wage increase. After a few years that really catches up with you. Costs are going up but your wages aren’t.” He added: “I see myself as working-class, and the last couple of decades have been very hard for people like me. If it wasn’t for the union, I wouldn’t have the standard of living I have today. I think everybody should have a right to join a union, if the laws were even on both sides, you would see more people organized.”

The economic figures reveal that the downward pressures Mr Buzzee has felt for years had long been spreading throughout the American middle class. Since 2006, median wages have continued to fall across the board in the US, and have never fully recovered from the 2000–01 financial crisis when the dotcom bubble burst. The real median household income peaked at $53,252 in 1999. For male workers in the US, the long-term trends have been even bleaker. "What's happened to the American man since the early 70s is quite dramatic," Michael Greenstone, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, told me. In 2009, full-time male workers aged 25–64 were earning on average $48,000 – roughly the same as in 1969 in real terms. Meanwhile, in the same 40-year period, the income of the top 2 percent of working-age men has jumped 75 percent. But the average American man has not only missed out on 40 years of wage growth; wages have actually been in free fall. As the labor force has fractured and become more flexible, increasing numbers of men have started working part-time or on short-term contracts. When part-time workers are included, the median wage for the American man has *dropped* 28 percent since 1970 in real terms. "It's a horrifying statistic. I think it changes everything," said Mr Greenstone. "To put that into perspective, in real terms it takes men back to where they were in the 1950s. I don't think there's been a period in American history where you've seen such a large, systemic, long-term decline."

Fewer American men are now able to work a steady 40-hour week, and their ability to provide for their family has diminished significantly as a result. "It has changed the character of the American family," said Mr Greenstone. At the same time the "life narrative" of the working American man has disintegrated. The path whereby a working or middle-class young man would choose a profession, train, join a union and follow in his father's footsteps no longer exists. In modern America, the foundations of the economic system have shifted, with the advent of computerization, technology and increased global trade. Facebook has replaced US Steel. "This new capitalism – the financial industries, the culture industries, high tech – is very elitist, so people with incomes in the middle who work in this sector stagnate and people at the top as we know get very rich," Richard Sennett, a professor at New York University and author of *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, told me. To compensate, he believes, unions need to rethink how they work and become more focused on workers' life narrative, not just wages. "It's very hard for men in this new form of capitalism to get much sense of self-respect out of their jobs," added Mr Sennett. Along the Connecticut coast, men blame their plight on a combination of factors:

falling union membership, jobs moving overseas due to the decline in the rate for profit for manufacturing and stagnating wages. The results of this on modern working life have created a new “precariat” class – a proletariat afflicted by endless precarious part-time jobs. There is also the “financialization” of the US economy since the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system in the 1970s which contributes little if anything to the real economy and may even harm it. “I was at church recently and in the parking lot I was talking to a guy and his wife, and he basically said to me, ‘We can’t afford to live anymore’,” recounted Joe Courtney, Democratic congressman for the district, which is home to the shipbuilding industry. “This guy wasn’t on food stamps or anything like that,” he told me. Like many in declining industrial towns, Mr Courtney, who is the major champion of the shipbuilding industry on Capitol Hill, blamed free trade pacts and the steady decline in union power since the era of President Ronald Reagan for killing jobs. “The decline in union membership is certainly attributable to free trade agreements. It has gone from a pretty heavily unionized state to a minority situation.” In the 1950s, about one-third of the US workforce was unionized; by 2006 the figure had dropped to 12 percent.

John Olsen, president of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in Connecticut for the past 23 years, put the blame for the stagnation of wages squarely on decades of attacks on unions. “If you look at the declining lines of wages and union membership, you see they both go down together, they correlate nearly exactly,” he said. “While the rich get richer, we’ve all noticed that we can afford less and less,” said Mr Buzzee, who has an unemployed wife and daughter to support. “Now you don’t have the same discretionary income where you can go out to eat a couple of times a week with the family. Now you might do it once every two weeks.” He isn’t optimistic about the future. When he was growing up, he remembers his parents and two siblings “never going without”. His mother didn’t have to work, and his father made enough in the Coast Guard. “We never seemed to want for food or anything, we had clothes on our backs.” But those days are gone now, he said, maybe never to return. “Nowadays it’s impossible for one parent to support the family, and even with two working it’s a real struggle.”

The aftermath of the financial crisis has also exacerbated the number of men earning nothing at all. Since 1970, their number has increased from 6 percent to 18 percent. In a taxpayer-funded career center in Largo, Maryland, a clutch of men in their fifties are the human face of that statistic. They sit trying to relearn skills they are rapidly losing while unemployed, desperate to find work. Bert Smith, 56, lost his last job in insurance soon after the financial crisis hit after 30 years in the sector. “I’m having difficulty in finding a job, my job skills are a bit rusty,” he told me. “If I want to get back into the job market right now, I will have to accept a significant drop in my wages.” However, the fact he has a wife and children to support may force that decision on him sooner than he would like. “I wish we were doing better but if you dwell on yourself, you’re going to get depressed,” he said. “At least I have the opportunity to find a job,” he added, grateful for small favors in modern America. “There are other economies that are falling apart.”

Soon after visiting the career center, I spoke to John Harris, who at 52-years-old did not expect to be living with his parents. But nearly two years after he lost his $150,000-a-year job at a chemicals company, he moved home to New Hope, a small town on the Pennsylvania–New Jersey border, to save cash. Even with a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from Penn State, he had struggled to find work. “Most of the jobs I see, I know I can do, I am qualified to do,” he said. “It’s the employers, they just aren’t hiring.”

Life was about to get even more difficult. For the past two years Mr Harris had received unemployment insurance, regular pay-outs from the multi-billion-dollar joint state and federal program that kept many unemployed people afloat after the recession. But the previous month, he had received his last payment. About 7.3 million US workers collect some form of unemployment insurance benefit, with the average weekly benefit just under $300 a week in 2011. This compares with 2.8 million in December 2007. Typically, state bodies pay benefits for 26 weeks and the federal government pays up to 73 weeks more. But as rising unemployment forced more people to rely on the benefit, both state and federal government increasingly wanted to limit their pay-outs.

Pay-outs totaled $159.4 billion in the year to June 2010, up from $31.1 billion in the 12 months to June 2006, in line with rising unemployment.

Now legislators intent on cutting spending had the payments in their sights. “I think that everybody is concerned that this drumbeat about how people aren’t actively looking for jobs is going to impact the program,” Jane Oates, assistant secretary of employment and training at the Labor Department, told me.

In 2011, six states had instigated unprecedented cuts to unemployment insurance programs, trying to reduce the length of pay-outs from the standard 26 weeks. Michigan, Missouri and South Carolina had all cut the maximum duration to 20 weeks, while Florida enacted a sliding scale which can be as low as 12 weeks. Many states also capped the maximum amount of money they will provide through unemployment insurance. Florida’s maximum weekly rate was set at $275. “Unemployment claims skyrocketed during the period from 2008 to the present,” George Wentworth, an analyst at the National Employment Law Project, told me.

As a result, 30 states’ unemployment trust funds – the money that employers pay as a tax on wages and from which unemployment insurance is paid – had become insolvent. “Most states did not save for a rainy day,” said Ms Oates. “When they had a few dollars in their trust fund, they eliminated the business tax, for example.” Federal extensions to state unemployment benefits were also under threat. During periods of high unemployment, Congress usually extends the number of weeks of unemployment insurance after state obligations finish. There is currently a maximum of 99 weeks of benefits, though it can vary from state to state. The high rate of long-term unemployment forced Congress to appropriate general revenues to cover payments.

Advocates of unemployment insurance argue that it has an important effect on the US economy during downturns, calling it a sort of “working man’s bail-out”. For every dollar spent on the benefit, the economy gets a $2 boost, the Labor Department estimates. “People receiving [unemployment] benefits aren’t putting the money in their mattress; it’s pumped right back into the local economy,” said Ms Oates. From where Mr Harris sits that view may seem a bit optimistic. “It’s very hard. I don’t spend money on anything,” said Mr Harris, who has two children in college. “Things will now get worse, but when I have a bad day, I just think about all the people around the country who are less fortunate than me.”

DIVIDE AND RULE

One of the racket's methods of breaking the working class and unions was to negotiate "two-tier" wage structures. In September 2011, the United Auto Workers (UAW) accepted a new deal with General Motors, which put in place two pay levels for incumbent workers and new employees. Soon after, Chrysler, the car manufacturer, reached an agreement with the UAW, which created 2,100 jobs. Although terms of the contract were not made public, it was assumed that some form of "two-tier" wages was part of the deal. The move reflected unions' weakened position in the aftermath of the recession, as companies threatened big lay-offs unless unions agreed to lower the bar in negotiations. This tactic had re-emerged in Detroit in 2007 when the UAW accepted contracts with three automakers implementing the two-tier wage system. New hires earned $14 an hour while established workers were paid nearly double.

The two-tier system began during the Reagan administration in the 1980s, but the new innovation did not last long; wages collapsed into a single tier within years of the contracts being signed. "It was done a lot early in the 1980s. Back then it was considered quite revolutionary," said Gary Burtless, a labor relations expert at the Brookings Institution. "In the end, unions made big concessions." The reappearance of the two-tier scheme reflects a union movement feeling the heat as it struggles to weather attacks from Republicans across the country. "These are certainly challenging times," Thea Lee, deputy chief of staff at the AFL-CIO labor federation, told me. "With the loss of so many jobs in unionized sectors, like manufacturing and construction, it poses a threat to our survival." She added: "When the economy is weak and unemployment is high, it makes it difficult to negotiate a strong contract."

Public sector workers in Wisconsin lost their ability to collectively bargain after a long fight that included an occupation of the state capital and an unprecedented recall election of conservative legislators. "The trend in recent years has been to strip public sector workers of their bargaining power," said Mr Burtless. "My reading is that that seems to have stuck; in other words the unions haven't been able to rebound." It was not just conservative states like Texas that experienced the shift. Even in traditional union strongholds such as Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin – states with

Democratic governors or legislative majorities – unions have still had to make big concessions.

Labor economists contended that, in the short run, the two-tier wage solution is popular with incumbents because it maintains wages for existing workers. “But essentially it’s a method of capturing unions,” said Mr Burtless. “In the long run a majority of union workers eventually are on the lower tier. The union leaders often get kicked out, or the two tiers merge. The voting members on the lower tier aren’t going to vote for getting lower wages for long.”

“In the private sector, if companies were on the verge of failing, unions were receptive to opening up contracts to help their employers weather the recession,” said Iain Gold, director of strategic research at the Teamsters trucking union. The Teamsters struck a two-tier deal with its largest trucking company, YRC Worldwide, in 2008. As financial markets collapsed, freight volumes fell through the floor, and YRC found it could not survive without significant concessions from its union. “In one context, the last thing we need is for employers to fail. Folks will do what’s necessary, but also required,” said Mr Gold. Membership is also down. Since the beginning of 2008, Teamsters membership has fallen by nearly half due to layoffs and closures. “This is a critical moment in our history,” he added.

While the attack on the public sector appears new and has attracted a lot of attention, Mr Gold argued that there has been a more subtle attack going on in the private sector since the 1980s. “The blatant attack in Wisconsin has shown public-sector workers what those in the private sector have been going through for decades. In the process, it has awoken organized labor across the country.” As part of the Occupy Wall Street protests, the largest private sector union in New York state planned a rally in the financial district in anticipation of negotiations over a new contract to replace one that was expiring. They were joined by workers from art auctioneers Sotheby’s, who had been locked out for more than two months in an ongoing dispute, as well as Verizon workers, who were pushing for a new contract.

More Americans are living in poverty now than at any time since records began more than 50 years ago; the weak economic recovery has failed to lift incomes. In 2010, 46.2 million American people fell below the poverty line, calculated as an annual income of $22,314 for a family of four and $11,139 for an individual, according to the US Census Bureau. The increase lifted the poverty rate to 15.1 percent of the US population, the highest since 1993 and almost 1 percentage point higher than the year before. “To have hit 15.1 percent is truly extraordinary,” Alice O’Connor, a professor who studies poverty at the University of California, Santa Barbara, told me. “We are entering territory which looks like the period before we even started fighting a ‘War on Poverty’ in the 1960s. It’s quite stunning. This is a terrible statement about the depths of the Great Recession but, even more, about the recovery, which has clearly left the poorest out completely.” The aftermath of the recession has seen a “two-speed” recovery for Americans, as the wealthiest maintain their spending habits and lifestyles while a record number of their fellow citizens are mired in poverty. “Income down, poverty up, health insurance coverage down or flat. The news on economic well-being in the US is not good,” Ron Haskins, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, told me. *Nearly a quarter of American children are living in poverty*. In 2011, child poverty was the highest since the mid-1960s. Analysts do not expect a turnaround any time soon. “Given the widely accepted projections that both unemployment and, in particular, long-term unemployment will continue at high rates for the next several years, we can expect this pattern of continuing low income and high poverty rates for many years,” Mr Haskins added.

Meanwhile, on the same day as the poverty figures were announced, Ipsos Mendelsohn, the media research group, released figures showing that things were apparently looking up for the top tier of US earners. The group’s annual survey of affluent Americans found that the number of households making more than $100,000 a year was 44.2 million in 2011, compared with 44.1 million the previous year. Their spending held steady at $1,400 billion after previously falling. “Their life has stabilized,” said Bob Shullman, Ipsos Mendelsohn president. “Everyone feels it when their income falls but, when you have less discretionary income, you feel it more. It doesn’t hurt [the rich] as much.” The survey, which polled 14,405 wealthy adults, found “almost all affluents are planning a wide range of activities in the next year, with travelling, remodelling, and investing topping this list”. But there was a vast majority of Americans who were living from day to day, trying their best to survive in a society that treated them like refuse, to be discarded when there was no money to be made.

TWELVE

DESTITUTE AMERICA

STARVING, WASHINGTON, DC

One of the fallouts from the financial crisis was the inability of millions of Americans to feed themselves for lack of money. In front of my computer in Washington, DC a small news ticker went across my screen that said 44.1 million Americans were, in the aftermath of the crisis, being fed in some part by the food stamp program, which had been rechristened the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). That number, the highest in the history of the US, seemed unconscionable to me; it was nearly a third of all adult Americans. It couldn't be right. The next day I went to the social security office in a rundown area of Washington. Just off New York Avenue I found Jamie Cremeans, a 31-year-old California native, smoking a cigarette outside with her boyfriend and waiting for the lifeline that is keeping them afloat. I got talking to them, and she spoke with sadness of their predicament, a narrative familiar to millions across the country, as the poor are made to pay for the financial crimes of the rich. Her boyfriend, Ronald, was partially blind and had been receiving disability benefits for years, but Jamie was new to this. She was receiving food stamps for the first time as she scrambled to find a job. The couple had moved to Washington to find work after she lost her job in the recession, but still nothing was working. "We moved here because there's no work there. I just wanna work," Jamie said, emphasizing the word *work*. "I probably apply for five jobs a week." Her last job was in early 2010, more than a year before, when she had done seasonal work with the US census. "In California I got paid to look after Ronald, as well," she said. "I don't get that here." Without accommodation, the couple was living with a friend in the northern outskirts of DC, and Jamie said it was nearly impossible to stave off depression. “The money we get, it’s not even enough for me, let alone two of us, to feed ourselves. And in California you could at least use the food stamps in a restaurant, you can’t here.”

The average food stamp allowance is $130 a month to cover food, nowhere near enough to keep a human being healthy. It is enough to keep someone alive – just. The racket does not want the embarrassment of people dying of hunger in the richest country in human history, but to have any sort of life, well, that would require more than $32 a week. “We never have enough food, sometimes we just go without,” Jamie told me. “But there are a lot of different programs, lots of churches help out with food.” You have to be near destitute to qualify for the program. It is available to anyone under the government’s designated poverty level who does not have more than $2,000 in liquid assets or own a home. It is dispensed through a debit card which is topped up automatically at the beginning of the month. I followed Jamie and Ronald inside the office, which is small and decrepit. People were shouting about what seemed like a refused application for food stamps.

As the US continued to reel from stubbornly high unemployment, the number of its citizens using the program has ballooned over the three years to 2011 by almost 17 million, an increase of 61 percent. On top of this, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that only 66 percent of those eligible actually claim the benefit, meaning that the true figure of those Americans qualifying for SNAP is 70 million, or just under a quarter of the entire population. In addition, the benefits of SNAP to communities where the money is spent has helped the program escape the eye of deficit hawks. The USDA estimates that every $5 of SNAP money spent in the local community generates $9 of economic activity. Very few people can afford to save their food stamps. In the mid-2000s, the last years for which there are records, 44 percent of SNAP household heads reported their race as Hispanic or African American, though they comprise 29 percent of the general population.

I wanted to speak to the people in government who oversaw this program. It was strange to me. In the rancorous battle over spending cuts, the program, which cost $69 billion in 2010, came out unscathed. This was odd because the Republican Party was adamant about cutting any program that helped the poor to avoid destitution and ruin. Why not food stamps? I found out that, of course, it was all about money. I went to see the undersecretary for food, nutrition and consumer services at the USDA, which administers the program. “The reason it enjoys political support is that it benefits growers and ranchers,” Kevin Concannon told me, adding: “It supports areas of the country that are more Republican than Democrat.” Food stamps have to be spent on foodstuffs; you can’t buy toothpaste or toilet paper or other non-food items, so the big chain supermarkets also benefit from the business generated. Once again, the power of the business community dictates the viability of the program. “The underlying principle is how to meet basic dietary guidelines at the lowest cost,” added Jean Daniel, spokesperson for the USDA.

There is no cap on the amount of time a family can receive food stamps, but single people with no children only qualify for three months of benefits. After that, the tap is turned off. “As part of SNAP they know what they are getting when they go in,” said Ms Daniel. “They work with social services to get back to work, there’s a job training program.” But the average time spent on food stamps for those eligible, according to USDA, is nine months, undoubtedly leaving some single and childless Americans with no food for long periods. “As Americans, we like to think highly of the good things in our country. We struggle with acknowledging that in our midst, there are people who go hungry,” said Mr Concannon. “In my remarks to groups, I often say, these feeding programs, such as are listed here, had never been as urgently needed as they are right now, in our lifetime, short of the Great Depression of the 30s.”

The financial crisis has forced many middle-class families on to the program and sparked a rethink among food companies previously against accepting SNAP payments. Before the financial crisis, for example, warehouse stores Costco and BJ’s were not part of the program but have since joined up. Costco was forced to make its new store in New York City SNAP-friendly after realizing its initial mistake in opting out. But many complain that even with these new stores taking part, SNAP entitlements are not enough to sustain healthy nutritional levels. “All the evidence is that it’s not enough for a healthy diet, it’s enough to keep people from starving, to keep people from very severe malnutrition,” said Jim Weill, president of the Food Research and Action Center, which does public research and advocacy. It is not just a lack of funds that can cause malnutrition for those enrolled in SNAP. “They may live in something called a ‘food desert’ where there’s a shortage of healthy food, and if it’s available, it’s often at a price,” said Alexandra Ashbrook, outreach coordinator of DC Hunger Solutions, which helps people process claims.

HOMELESS AMERICA

I walked to the Girard Street Family Shelter (GSFS) in Washington to talk to Juaquina Miller, a 25-year-old single mother of two who was being housed temporarily by one of the public programs under attack by the racket. After a childhood in foster care followed by an itinerant adolescence, this new home was a luxury she had rarely enjoyed. She told me she and her family live on an income of $306 a month. “I don’t know where we’d be without this place,” she said, sitting on a chair surrounded by kids’ toys in her apartment. “I’ve been homeless since I was 17.” The GSFS is one of many housing facilities across the US that provide a lifeline for the homeless population, which had swelled significantly in the years following the subprime mortgage crisis. It provides apartments to 20 homeless families with children, with on-site supportive services from treatment for substance abuse to job preparation. “I have to be quick,” said Ms Miller when we stepped into her living room. “I’ve got a class in a minute!” She said she wants to get a job in law enforcement. Unfortunately, although it felt like home, the accommodation was temporary and she had overstayed the typical six-month stay. She had been on the list for permanent housing since 2007, and was still waiting.

A couple of blocks away from the shelter, lawmakers on Capitol Hill had just passed a budget in which massive cuts were quietly made to the programs that attempt to ameliorate the number of Americans sleeping rough or moving from place to place. “We will see it hitting in a very concrete way,” Steve Berg, vice president of programs at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, which works on federal policy, told me. The situation was made worse by the continuing subprime crisis – there had rarely been a time in American history when social housing was as important as then, but to the Republicans and the capital they represent it was irrelevant.

The most significant cuts for the homeless population are two programs run by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The community development block grant funds help cities to pay for staff positions to get homeless people off the streets and into permanent accommodation. The Republicans had proposed 62 percent cuts to the program, while Barack Obama argued for an 8 percent cut. Eventually the budget provided $3.3 billion for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), a $650 million, or a 16 percent decrease from the previous year. "The 2011 cuts in community development and public housing funding were significant and will cause real pain for families as the economy is still rebounding," Robert Menendez, senator for New Jersey and chairman of the subcommittee on housing, told me. The main workers hit have been government employees who oversee different cities' programs, which will make it harder to organize existing facilities like GSFS.

The second cut hitting hard was the public housing program, which provides publicly owned apartment buildings at very low rent, the kind of place Juaquina Miller would like to move into but can't at the moment. The latest budget provided $4.6 billion for the public housing operating fund, a decrease of $149 million from 2010 levels. "The 2011 bill returns to long-term patterns of underfunding maintenance and repair work," said Berg. "Anyone in real estate knows that deferred maintenance means they will have to be boarded up, it means more homelessness." The problem of homelessness was getting worse in the US as the stuttering economy, the foreclosure crisis and high unemployment bit. It meant many people could no longer afford housing. The number was decreasing between 2005 and 2008, but since the recession the numbers have come back up, mainly because of the employment situation. The federal cuts came at a time when state and local budgets were in dire straits. Traditionally in that scenario, the federal government has stepped in to help out, but in the new fiscal budget, the opposite has happened. "To get an idea of size of the homeless population, we do a 'points in time count' that gives us a rough sketch of the amount on any given night," Mark Johnstone, deputy assistant secretary at HUD, told me. On one night in January 2010, the agency found about 650,000 people living outside in parks and train stations, as well as in homeless facilities like shelters. But this doesn't tell the whole story. "It's really about two million people that are homeless, because people are flowing in and out of homelessness all the time, and might have somewhere that night," said Johnstone. He added that each homeless person can cost states more than $40,000 per year for policing and medical services.

CAPTURED REGULATION

But in a political system that had stopped working, the likelihood of the homeless getting housing any time soon was nil (even if it did make economic sense). With these cuts, the poorest Americans, those who have never heard of a credit-default swap or a mortgage-backed security, were being asked to pay again.

Another victim from a different part of America, but still prey to the predations of the racket was Jylly Jakes. Over Christmas 2007, she realized she could no longer make her mortgage payments. Eighteen months after losing her job as a corporate bond trader, she was out of options. "I called up my bank servicer [the institution entrusted with collecting mortgage payments] and asked for a six-month forbearance," she told me. The bank said no. Ms Jakes found work at a boutique bond firm a few months later and offered to pay the missing five payments over 12 months and stay up-to-date on her mortgage. The bank said no again and began repossession proceedings. But in late 2008, she seemed to find a lifeline. Ms Jakes signed up for a federal government home mortgage modification program aimed at helping millions of American homeowners facing foreclosure. Three years later – after three trial modifications under the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) – Ms Jakes was still fighting the repossession of her home. The outstanding principal balance is now almost $50,000 more than the original mortgage because of monthly fees "It's designed to fail," she told me. "I think it was put out there as political theatre to make it look like Main Street was going to get a hand after being the victim of an artificially inflated housing bubble."

HAMP was announced with a fanfare by President Obama in February 2009, but it is widely viewed as a failure by those using it. As of October 2011, 735,464 homeowners were in modification programs, about 20 percent of the target. The $29.9 billion program, run by the US Department of the Treasury, was meant to help 3–4 million American homeowners modify their mortgages and avoid repossession. The Treasury reported that in November 2010 new permanent HAMP modifications had fallen to 26,000 from 40,000 the previous month. The Obama administration threatened to withhold payments to Bank of America and JPMorgan Chase under HAMP for a third consecutive quarter, saying neither institution had followed the letter of the law. By 2011, the US government had handed out $666 million in incentive payments to servicers, according to the Treasury. "We are disappointed with our rating, and will continue to work hard to improve our processes and controls," JPMorgan said. Bank of America added: "While we are disappointed with this decision, these financial incentives do not drive our efforts to help our customers in need of assistance."

Meanwhile, the foreclosure crisis showed no sign of abating. "We have 3.5 million first mortgage loans in foreclosure, or pretty close," Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's, the rating agency, said. "For context, we have just over 50 million first mortgage loans outstanding, so that's a lot of loans. So it's going to take a good, solid three, four, five years to really work off that foreclosure inventory." US banks are facing mounting pressure from politicians, the courts and regulators over their shoddy mortgage foreclosure procedures. Phyllis Caldwell, chief of the Treasury's Homeownership Preservation Office, which oversees HAMP, says the system in place for managing delinquent loans was not designed to cope with a foreclosures crisis of the present scale. "With the national delinquency spike, you had everything hit at once, there was a big customer servicing problem, people couldn't get through on the phone, lost documents," she said. Homeowners complain that HAMP fails to rectify skewed incentives which make it in the interests of the servicer to foreclose. "Ultimately, major banks responsible for servicing those mortgages have never been committed to the HAMP program in its design and the Treasury department hasn't been willing to enforce the rules," said Alan White, associate professor of law at Valparaiso University and a leading scholar on foreclosure. He believes HAMP has worked in the interest of mortgage servicers rather than looking out for homeowners. "People are incredibly frustrated with the servicers, the four largest of whom are also the four largest banks," he said. "They can't get through on the telephone, they send documents three or four times. It's really just been a performance problem on the part of mortgage servicers." Housing is perhaps the most crucial prerequisite for a human being to prosper. In America, if you are poor, however, you are on your own.

LIVING IN NEW YORK

When I lived in New York I decided to find out what life was like for those who did not live on the Upper East Side, or any of the other fabulously wealthy parts of Manhattan. One housing project in Brooklyn was attracting media attention and according to the press releases its work was going to plan. After decades at the mercy of unscrupulous slumlords, the residents of Noble Drew Ali Plaza housing complex in Brownsville had found themselves a savior in Mo Vaughn, former baseball player for the New York Mets, and his Omni New York LLC. This was the man, so the propaganda went, to transform the decaying five-building project from what narcotics officers referred to as "New Jack City" (after the 1991 Wesley Snipes film in which a drug lord turns a whole building into a crack cartel) into a clean and functioning complex.

Omni New York bought the 365-unit property for $20 million in June 2007 and on the back of the purchase the police arrested 35 residents in an early morning drugs bust. It was a statement of intent. Over the next months, dozens of security cameras started to appear all over the building, peering down at the residents in the plaza, the social center of the project – the target was 400 fully operational cameras. In came the security firm Secure Watch 24 and surveillance moved from an 8am to 4pm shift to 24 hours a day. Mo Vaughn invited the media in and toured them around the crumbling interiors in a pin-stripe suit, signing memorabilia and accepting the adoration of his clamoring fans. But this was where the fairytale stopped and the reality of Omni's takeover began. For the residents who were allowed to stay in the complex, there were good omens. There were promises of new stoves, kitchens and windows for everyone. The two most run-down buildings – 230 and 240 – were being completely renovated. But there existed another set of residents for whom Vaughn's arrival was less auspicious. Countless residents were dealt eviction orders and faced the street as their next habitation. Still more were living in buildings 230 and

240 as the whole place was ripped apart around them, dust and debris seeping into everything. This group included two wheelchair-bound men. It was the typical divide-and-rule tactics of rich developers in the US.

The Noble Drew project was built in 1972 in a poor part of Brownsville, surrounded by tenements and empty lots. "It was a wonderful place to be then," Paulette Jackson-Forbes, 45, the president of the tenants' association and a resident since its inception, told me. "We even had intercom on the TV so we could see who was downstairs. People were embarrassed if their floors weren't clean!" The first developer was Joe Jeffries-El, a University of Pennsylvania-trained manager. "There were 20 families of police officers, nurses, bus drivers, teachers – you name it," said Jackson-Forbes. "It was a utopian place to be." In the early 1980s the buildings were wrenched from Jeffries-El and the complex started its precipitous decline. In that decade the ownership and management changed hands four times. "We became atrocious then," said Jackson-Forbes. "People hanging out, crack epidemic, no security, drugs getting a free run – at that time we were really the victims." Eventually the tenants' association took action. A lawsuit was followed by a new owner, Lyndon Realty. "They did some decent renovation," said Jackson- Forbes. "They bought in a team of security – the owners were Jewish but they hired Muslim security – all the drugs went away. You could sleep with the windows up, the doors open, that type of thing." Eventually it was revealed that Lyndon Realty was stealing and misusing funds, using one of the buildings as a facade for its claimed renovation and actually funneling money back out of the complex. Arrests were made in 1992 and the building went back to a receiver.

It was then that Abdur Rahman Farrakhan, voted one of the 10 worst landlords in New York City by the *Village Voice*, bought the property for $10. His tenure ran all the way up until 2006 when the court passed management to West Center Management which still runs the day-day operations of the complex. "Under Farrakhan the place just disintegrated," said Jackson-Forbes. "No elevators, no hot water, no rebuilding, no security." It eventually transpired that Farrakhan and a partner had been swindling money out of the complex by receiving government funds for hostel services. They had emptied two buildings and made an agreement with the Department of Homeless Services to run those buildings as a shelter. The rent they accrued was nearly $3,000 per unit from federal subsidies, far higher than the rent from individual tenants which sometimes was as low as $68. Eventually Farrakhan was caught embezzling money. Legal proceedings brought by the tenants' association, represented by Attorney Mimi Rosenberg, began in February 2002 in what would eventually become a five-year battle. In 2007 they won the case – the defendant was declared bankrupt and the property was put up to be sold. The tenants demanded strict criteria: $28 million rehabilitation, restoration and help to secure Section A, which would guarantee that residents could start afresh in their rent payments and no arrears from the Farrakhan tenure would de demanded. Omni New York was the only company to meet these criteria.

LEAVING THEM TO ROT

When you walk into Noble Drew housing project today you are surrounded by residents angry about the new administration. A project of cleansing the complex has been under way from the police in combination with West Center Management. Certain residents, according to West Center, have not paid rent for the whole West Center tenure – some 14 months. They have been dealt with eviction notices. Dorothy Fields is one such person. A victim of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, she fled with her bedridden husband and was living out of a van next to Noble Drew, before Alicia Allen, assistant manager for West Center, took pity and called her bosses. They agreed to put her up in a room in one of the buildings. The Fields' apartment is in building 240, which has been under construction since Mo Vaughn initiated his regeneration program in July 2007. As you step in past the piles of bin bags, there is scattered debris and dust all over the lobby area. Workmen mill around with large sheets of glass, bits of piping and other construction tidbits. The floor is covered with concrete, collections of brick, shattered glass, plastic bottles – a construction site. The Fields are two of 16 people living in this block as builders are ripping down the building around them. Their apartment inside is in bad shape. Michael Fields, who was shot and cannot walk, lies in bed building a toy car. There is no natural light as the curtains are drawn and a weak yellow light illuminates the room. There's a TV that crackles in the background. “When they gave us this place they said we don't have to pay rent," Ms Fields said. "Now they are trying to make us pay $5,000, how the hell am I going to do that?" "I can't hardly breathe at times," said Mr Fields from his bed. "I'm also vomiting now which is horrible." "There's dust coming through the window, even I have been breathing up phlegm," Ms Fields chimed in. "And because of all that trash there's worms and dead cats all around here." Ms Fields showed me a note from her doctor cataloguing her respiratory problems and their links to her surroundings. On the front of building 240 is a sign that catalogues the asbestos work apparently taking place in the basement as workers remove the piping. It is being carried out by New York Insulation Inc. who have no website and don't return calls when I enquire about their work. When the West Center team come around later they try to take the asbestos sign down before realizing the work is due to finish in December. Jackson-Forbes told me later that under Farrakhan the pipes were going to be changed but he dropped the operation after asbestos was found. She is also convening a tenants' association meeting to discuss the dangers of asbestos.

Inside building 240, Mike Gorney, 28, foreman for DV Group, the construction subcontractors, said: "There's like six squatters in here, they can't kick them out yet." But yet West Center said that only half the 16 people living in building 240 are actually squatters. The other eight are just residents, there by right, with West Center's blessing. A mother and her four-year-old son living in building 240 reported that there was no attempt to rehouse them; in fact they are being evicted. "They didn't rehouse us and now we apparently owe $4,000." Her welfare claim has removed her son so she can't pay the rent. "My little son has asthma, how do you think all this dust is effecting him? I don't even want him in here. I was living in complex 37 but they moved me here."

In building 230, which is across the plaza, there is a sign on the outside which reads: "No tenants allowed in this building. Hard hats only." On a public holiday with no construction I found over 10 people living there, squatting, with the full knowledge of West Center it transpires, although the project manager for DV Group later claimed no knowledge of this. The hard hat regulation was apparently put up after a worker for DV Group had been hit on the head by a falling brick, and now all workers walk around with their heads covered – not the squatters though. One of the residents is

Ernest Bethel, 54, whom I find descending a flight of stairs on his bottom and pulling his wheelchair behind him. He has one leg, and obvious mental problems. He tells me that he has to pull himself down and up the stairs every time he wants to go out as only the construction workers use the elevators. It takes him about an hour, he said. Bethel has lived in the complex for over a year, according to West Center Management.

Another resident of building 230 is Rosemary Joiner, 69, who claimed she was thrown out of her apartment in another building and put in a single-bedroom apartment in building 230. West Center agreed this was the scenario, but they claimed she had not paid any rent. She now lives in 230 and is distressed and unkempt. When I was in the West Center office she was complaining that she had been kicked out of the room she was squatting in by her roommate. West Center Management won't give her the key to her old apartment to return her clothes there.

Building 230 is like a bombsite with detritus of every kind – clothes, bottles, garbage, electronics, concrete, brick, wood, metal – strewn over the floors. Every occupied apartment can be identified by the color of the door. Apartments that are being renovated have a new gray door; the doors in which the squatters are living are red because they cannot knock them down yet. There are all sorts of people – mostly old, and, according to West Center staff, drug users. West Center says these people are under eviction proceedings. Jaswinder Singh, project manager for DV Group, was incredulous. "Nobody lives there," he said. Is it safe for habitation? "No, it's not safe," he replied. He said that there is asbestos in the basement like building 240, but there is no sign on the outside detailing any work. Ravi Gukral, the project manager of the whole operation, said: "We follow orders, they have dates to get evicted."

On both buildings, Keish Frith, 29, administrative assistant in the West Center office on location, said: "They should have got the residents out before they started. When you are working with different people they work by their own rules. It may not be illegal, but it's not fair." "It's all for show," said a man wanting to be identified as Slasher. "They want it to look good on the outside, but really nothing is happening in here." He was waiting outside the management office to report a suspicious occurrence on the weekend. "They told me that they can't access the camera records until three days later," he said. "It's now three days later and now they say that the cameras inside the buildings aren’t working.” Slasher had spotted a man who he didn’t recognize on the fire escape at 4am looking through his window. “I told security that morning, and they said they didn’t have the ability to rewind!” He added, “I mean, someone died here two months ago, you would hope they had set the cameras up properly. I don’t even think they are turned on.” This lack of respect for the lives of the American poor was because they could not make the racket money. But unfortunately for these same people, before long the racket realized that locking up people was a way to make money off the destitute and hope-starved poor of America. It was called the “War on Drugs”.

THIRTEEN

LOCK-UP AMERICA

SOCIAL CONTROL

As in Latin America, the domestic version of the Drug War is also a naked effort at social control. It has focused almost exclusively on the black and Latino communities of the US, who make up 60 percent of the prison population, even though they are just 30 percent of the general population. It has also made billions of dollars as the racket works to pull the prison system out of the hands of the American people and run it for vast profit. In fact, the rise of private prisons has coincided nearly exactly with the rise, over the past three decades, of the so-called War on Drugs. One study found that "people of color are represented in private prisons at least ten percentage points greater than in state-run facilities."[1] Nearly half (48.8 percent) of prisoners in the US are behind bars for drugs offenses.[2] The racket, however, never throws its own in jail: just 0.4 percent of the prison population in the US is composed of those guilty of financial crimes.

The move to put hundreds of thousands of Americans behind bars began in the 1980s when "mandatory minimum sentencing" for drugs offenses was introduced. It meant that there was no chance for discretion in drugs cases; if someone was caught with something, anything, they would be going to jail. This was accompanied by a focus on what politicians, eager for votes, called "law and order", which meant more punitive sentencing as politicians vied with each other to prove who was toughest. They were driven in part by the racket, who could smell the money. Private companies pushed further into state prisons from their strong position in the federal system. They began by soliciting speculative prison building projects at the county level, creating what has become known as the "prison bubble". The private companies would go in to a rural county and say, you can build a jail that's much larger than anything you'll need for your own criminal justice problems, but you can lease out extra beds to receive contract prisoners from the federal government. In Texas nearly a dozen counties entered the bubble using taxpayer debt but now can't find prisoners to fill the buildings. At this point the private companies ditch the contracts and the taxpayers are left holding the bag. This is how capitalism works – the risk is socialized, and the profits privatized. The quantity of human misery and waste this system has created is horrifying. In the 20 years to 2007, the national prison population in the US trebled to 1.6 million people, or nearly 10 percent of adults, by far the highest in the world. Nine percent of these are held in private facilities, where the average cost of keeping an inmate housed for a year comes to $25,000. Unfortunately for the private interests making a killing, the bubble now appears to have burst: incarceration rates did not increase as fast in the five years to 2011, and in 2010 fell for the first time in 20 years. But you can be sure that these companies are coming up with ingenious ways of maintaining this lucrative business.

When I was in New York, this move to privatize the prison system was actually picking up again. The racket was using the excuse that state deficits had to be combatted, and that the American people should hand over "costly" prisons to private interests. The racket was using this same excuse to get its hands on all sorts of public institutions, and the prisons attack was working, despite the fact that it was not obvious it would save the states any money. There's a pretty simple rule for these things: once the racket get a foot in any industry or institution, there is an inevitable logic which says it will want more and more. It will never be happy with running just a part of something. So Florida alone was planning to privatize 29 of its prisons. I spoke to one analyst covering the private prison system at an investment bank in Atlanta who said it was "the single biggest privatization program of state or federal prisons in the history of the US". Arizona was also having a string of public hearings on a plan to add thousands of privately operated prison beds, while Ohio had announced plans to raise $200 million by selling off five state prisons. Something was definitely happening here. Others followed suit as private contractors pitched themselves as a solution to cash-strapped states' fiscal woes.

The Florida plan had a new twist. Instead of outsourcing only newly constructed prisons, the state planned to outsource existing beds as well. I called up the Florida state senator who was pushing this reform most forcefully. Elected representatives all over the US represent the racket, not their people, but it's still worth hearing their rationalizations. "Probably 5 percent of prisons in Florida are currently privatized," J.D. Alexander, an influential Republican, told me. "This expansion of privatization will bring it to one-third." As time went on, there was no doubt he, and his allies in the private prison business, were looking for 100 percent "penetration" of the market. The public would own nothing. Of course, this was merely the "American way". "I think competition makes us better, it's an American sort of view: let's create competitive environments, privatize a portion," he added. But it later emerged that the state would incur $25 million in losses from compensation paid to 3,800 workers who would lose their jobs in the privatization program. Corrections officers are already among the lowest-paid employees in the state. "During the privatization process, they will go into unemployment and foreclosure," said John Rivera, president of the Police Benevolent Association, which represents Florida's correction officers and was opposed to the privatization. "They will get their cars repossessed, they won't be able to pay for medical care, and so the state will have to pick it up. And those that have seniority, it will cost the state to relocate them." Lawmakers, largely Republican, and the contractors argue that private companies can run prisons cheaper – largely through savings on wages and benefits for workers. But analysts say the statistics do not match. These saves, for example, are mitigated by the fact you have higher turnover among employees and more lawsuits due to lack of sovereign immunity. Private companies also usually cherry-pick the lowest-cost offenders and leave the state to deal with serious and dangerous offenders who cost more. "A lot of the time when you see numbers for private prison costs to state costs it's not apples to apples because they are not taking most serious offenders," said Scott Henson, an analyst covering the corrections industry in the US. "In Texas the private facilities haven't wanted to take on serious offenders." Private prisons want the healthiest prisoners, not the "hard-core" troublemakers – the ones with misdemeanours or felonies – they want the state to bear those costs. But a lot of states have yet to realize that this is a scam, or have realized but it is making too many people rich for them to stop it. In private prisons you have less experienced officers, and a lower guards-to-prisoners ratio, so you really are running a risk of prison riots and prison escapes. The real reason why private prisons don't want real troublemakers, and want the least violent prisoners, is so they can run it like a college dorm rather than prison.

PERVERSE INCENTIVES

It is also in the companies' interest to keep more and more people locked up as it pumps up their bottom line. If you have a state-run prison there are fixed costs that are there whether it is full or half-full. For privately run prisons – where you are getting paid by the head – there is an incentive in the other direction. It sometimes crosses into overt corruption, such as paying judges to send children to prisons, which is an extreme example of the warped and unhealthy incentives that private incarceration creates. In February 2011, a juvenile court judge in Luzerne county, Pennsylvania, was convicted of racketeering after he accepted money from a private prison operator in exchange for handing down extremely harsh sentences in order to guarantee prisons would be full. "It simply does not save money," said Mr Rivera. "For example, recently they told legislators and the community that they would save $22 million a year yet now they are already $25 million over budget. The private prisons' selling point is they can do it more cheaply. If they are able to do it more cheaply, even though the evidence does not support it, they have to cut somewhere so they tend to cut staff … In prisons understaffing has consequences. In 2010, in Kinman, Arizona, three prisoners escaped from a private prison and the official inquiry found the private company at fault because of lax staff training. There are very real risks. If you understaff a prison the consequences can be very serious indeed."

Of course, the companies in the sector are big political players, being significant campaign donors in elections across the country. In reality, the privatization effort is more driven by political patronage than cost savings. It's quite simple: anytime you have profit as the main motivator for the safety of the public, it is a bad formula. Government's first responsibility should be to its people; a corporation's first responsibility is to its investors. "I'm reminded of the old adage, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is," David Fathi, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's national prison project, told me, accurately. “The claim that private corporations can do the same job more cheaply and still generate profits for stockholders is pretty implausible on the face of it,” he added. “It is in fact not true.”

Two companies dominate the US private prison sector: Corrections Corporation of America and GEO Group. Over the past decade the two “big ones” have gobbled up a host of smaller companies and consolidated the industry. In 2010, Geo acquired the third public company that operated in the market, Cornell, for $730 million in stock and cash, creating a “duopoly”. They are faceless, both refusing to be interviewed by me. This monopolization of markets is another feature of capitalism: power and capital centralize. The companies are not run particularly well. They are highly indebted and rapidly accumulating more debt. They both dip into day-to-day operations to service debt payments. But the racket obviously think they will get more business in the future: Corrections Corp’s shares rose 7.5 percent from 2006 to 2011. Wall Street is happy to lend them money at low interests rates.

The politicians are a product of this: they work for, and are probably funded by, the real power in this debate – not the plucky state senator, but the corporate behemoths that are devouring society and all its assets. They already own over 300 prisons nationwide and it’s getting worse. Now there are around 135,000 prisoners in private prisons in the US – 7 percent of all state prisoners and 16 percent of all federal prisoners. Private prison corporations are trying to expand the market for their services. In communications to shareholders they are forthright about the fact that they are looking to expand prison privatization and lobby and provide campaign contributions strategically. They are sophisticated in their efforts to generate business. “We are at a turning point for incarceration policy,” said Mr Fathi. “For the first time in 30 years, the prison population actually went down last year.” There is no question that private prison companies deliberately and strategically support and recruit politicians who will lead to increased incarceration. Just as Eisenhower warned about the military–industrial complex, we now have a prison–industrial complex. Prisons will make more money the more people we incarcerate.

The police, often, themselves see the poor they are employed to control as nothing more than scum. When I took a ride around Brooklyn, New York City, with two white cops, their disdain was obvious. The two partners are regular car buddies and they work the 3.30pm to 11.30pm shift. They had a real disdain for their constituents “More filthy people,” said Officer Cavanella as we passed a housing project. This theme continued as he tried his hand at quack sociology, appropriating shibboleths from extreme conservatism. “These are low-income people who just don’t care,” he said. “They don’t respect us, they don’t respect themselves, they don’t respect nobody.”

CUTTING JUSTICE

While profit was being made from the privatization of the prisons, funds were being savagely cut from the public side of the justice system, in keeping with the racket’s priorities. In New York, I met Jimmy Boone Amos waiting outside the arraignment court in downtown Brooklyn for her husband to appear. It was 4pm, but she had been sitting there since early that morning. “I’m tired of waiting,” she told me. Her husband was arrested 23 hours earlier for grabbing a woman in the street during what Ms Amos calls a diabetic attack. “I’m really worried about him,” she added. “They’ve had him for ages and not told me how he is. I don’t know if he has insulin or anything.”

United States law prescribes that anyone charged with a crime must be arraigned before a judge within 23 hours. But cuts at both the federal and state level meant that court budgets had been devastated and that the target is often not met. Over a single weekend in 2011, 57 percent of arraignments in Brooklyn went over the required period. But arraignment times are just one of many problems that cuts to the state budget have created in New York, and the US at large. The poorest and most vulnerable are hit hardest, as is often the case when public services are cut. Ms Amos is one of many New Yorkers who have had to suffer needless pain as the state draws back on its constitutional commitment to properly fund its justice system.

New York chopped $170 million from its $2.6 billion budget for 2011, around 6.5 percent. This had already had a serious impact far beyond arraignment times. Across New York, courts now close at 4.30pm instead of 5pm. The ability of judges to take in all the information they need is now compromised as they rush through cases so they can adjourn at the right time. The state used to have night family courts, where if a woman wanted support or an order of protection she could go after work or at an unsociable hour. These are now closed, putting at risk women who are victims of domestic abuse and other forms of violence.

Small claims courts in Manhattan, the Bronx and Queens used to be open for four nights a week, but that has been reduced to one (and in Staten Island's case, the reduction is from once a week to once a month). Small claims courts are where tenants can take on their landlords and consumers can challenge big corporations. Both those crucial functions are disintegrating. "In Staten Island now, if you wanted to sue Macy's for whatever reason you would have to wait nine months," said Dennis Quirk, president of the New York state court officers' association. "Certainly morale is lower than years past," added Howard Schwartz, a Brooklyn-based criminal defense attorney sitting outside the same downtown court. "There's more work for fewer people." He says it takes longer for clients to get into court, that cases take longer, and that judges now have to give less attention to arraignment cases because of the heavy load. "The system is overburdened," he added. In 2011, the New York court system laid off 441 workers, or about 3 percent, on top of the 2,000 who retired in 2010, swelling the hordes of unemployed in the city. Those still in a job are massively overworked. "The cuts are having system-wide effects," adds Mr Quirk. "Everybody has too much to do and it is having an effect on people getting their day in court and justice being served."

The US prides itself on its adherence to the rule of law, but starving the courts system of money is seriously affecting the ability of ordinary Americans to get justice served. Evidence is being more hastily assembled and analyzed, people are spending too long in cells before being charged, and vulnerable people are losing the slim protections they have against violent and abusive relatives or partners. Moreover, these cuts were not inevitable. In the three years that the emergency "millionaires tax" had been in place in New York, it generated $13.8 billion in revenue. The law raised the rate of income tax for New Yorkers making more than $500,000 by 2.1 percentage points to 8.97 percent. If that tax bracket were raised again, many of the New York justice system's problems could be solved, and the long wait of people such as Jimmy Boone Amos, and many more Americans across the country, could be made shorter. But the racket does not like such ideas. In the ruling ideology, that’s “class war”. But in many places around the world, the endless and empty propaganda is wearing thin, and people are taking things into their own hands. Here’s where hope begins.

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1 Michaela Pommelis, “Study: more people of color sentenced to private prisons than whites”, *Huffington Post*, February 21, 2014.

2 http://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_offenses.jsp

PART FOUR

WE’RE LOSING YOU

FOURTEEN

TURF WAR

THE MONROE DOCTRINE

A brief re-cap. The early 21st century has seen the biggest political shift in the western hemisphere since the murderous thug Christopher Columbus thought he had arrived in the Indian subcontinent but had actually "discovered" the (already inhabited) Americas. Since 1823 and the so-called Monroe Doctrine, the western hemisphere has been designated by American planners "our backyard", a vast resource-rich expanse open for pillage and exploitation for the gain of an elite class in the US and a handsomely rewarded quisling elite in the colonized countries. This dynamic has been constant and unbroken for two centuries. President James Monroe obviously didn't put it in these bald terms when he made his address to Congress on December 2, 1823, which forms the basis of this so-called doctrine. Monroe said that day that countries in the western hemisphere "are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power", which sounds like a good idea for the subjected peoples – until you realize Monroe instead gives his own country the right to take over from the European powers. "We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers," he continues, "to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety." He was telling the European powers simply, "It's ours now!" And it was. Under this naked imperialism dressed up in fusty diplomatic language, the US took Cuba from the Spanish in 1898 (the US still illegally occupies Guantanamo Bay today), and Puerto Rico in the same year (which the US still owns today).

As the European empires broke down after World War II, the idea of imperialism became increasingly untenable as indigenous people removed their oppressors at a rapid rate. But while Europe lay in ruins, the US was rising to its superpower status, and the racket wasn't going to lose control of their "backyard" during the ensuing Cold War with the Soviet Union. Occupations were frowned upon now, not least by an American population culturally averse to empire and imperialism. So instead the intelligence services turned to subverting any Latin American government that did not support American business interests, away from the attention of the American people. First went Guatemala in 1954, a coup against the center-left President Jacobo Arbenz who had the gall to redistribute land to landless peasants from the United Fruit Company. The CIA stepped in and installed a military junta and started one of the most horrendous civil wars in history that left 200,000 people dead.

Any country that elected any sort of left-wing politician would incur a terrorist war of anti-democratic aggression. The Dominican Republic in 1963, Brazil went down in 1964, Chile through the 1960s and eventually succumbing in 1973, Nicaragua in the 1970s, and on and on. All the governments I mention were democratic, and in many instances they were replaced with a collection of open neo-Nazis, fascists and other such dregs of humanity. It was all cloaked under the guise of the war against the "Evil Empire": Soviet Russia, much like today's Islamic fundamentalism, gave the US an excuse to do whatever it wanted. Hundreds of thousands of people were slaughtered across Latin America with the support of many US household names: John Foster Dulles starting the Guatemalan bloodbath, Henry Kissinger the dictatorship in Chile, Ronald Reagan supporting the fascist Contras against the democratically elected Sandinistas in Nicaragua. These figures are all hailed as great heroes to this day in mainstream American culture, although not by the rest of the hemisphere, for obvious reasons. John Perkins, who worked as what he called an "Economic Hit Man" for a US corporation for decades, has written a book exposing the type of work he did. He described it succinctly in an interview: "Basically what we were trained to do and what our job is to do is to build up the American empire. To bring – to create situations where as many resources as possible flow into this country, to our corporations, and our government, and in fact we've been very successful. We've built the largest empire in the history of the world. It’s been done over the last 50 years since World War II with very little military might, actually. It’s only in rare instances like Iraq where the military comes in as a last resort. This empire, unlike any other in the history of the world, has been built primarily through economic manipulation, through cheating, through fraud, through seducing people into our way of life, through the economic hit men. I was very much a part of that.”[1]

But even with this tragic history of exploitation and mass murder, optimism swept the hemisphere as the 21st century opened. The western hemisphere – especially Latin America – was finally shaking off the shackles of the imperial bully, and this time they were winning. No longer would democratically elected leaders from Chile to Bolivia to Brazil to Venezuela allow their sovereign nations to be balked by the giant upstairs. When they proposed economic plans to give the wealth of their land to the people who actually live in it rather than to rich corporations and exiles in Miami, they would no longer be resigned to the US trying to overthrow them, they would be ready.

In Bolivia, when the fascist paramilitary groups in eastern provinces like Pando massacred indigenous peasants and the pale-skinned traditional elite tried to start an uprising against democratically-elected President Evo Morales, he didn’t stand for the encouragement the US was giving: as we have seen, he kicked out the ambassador. He also brought the governor, who had incited the massacre, to justice. On top of this stern action, all the newly independent center-left leaders of the Latin American bloc came to Morales’ aid at the UN, they knew that together they were a powerful force that couldn’t be crushed under the boot of the American government.

Hugo Chávez in Venezuela followed suit and kicked out the US ambassador there. And who can blame him? In 2002 when he himself was ousted temporarily by a US-backed coup that put a millionaire businessman into power and suspended the constitution and democracy, the people of the Venezuelan barrios fought back, marching in their hundreds of thousands for the first leader that had ever considered them worthy of their own resources. He had to be reinstated because the people of Venezuela were too powerful and alive to their plight to watch history be repeated.

This particular generation of left-wing leaders has learnt from the past. They know about the CIA, the National Endowment for Democracy and other agents of US government, and they are consciously locked into a battle. In Bolivia, for example, the indigenous communities are equipping themselves to fight back; there is none of Salvador Allende's erroneous belief in pacifism – "if the right-wing try to liquidate democracy we will fight you to defend civility", is now the message. And because there is no Cold War, the US government and its conduits in the corporate media are finding it harder to paint any politician who is vaguely left of center as an agent of Soviet Russia. Having said that, the *New York Post* did without shame describe Chávez – one of the most frequently elected leaders in the world – as a dictator. In addition, the US imperial project is so bogged down in the Middle East – where support for dictators has been equally obscene – that they have in many ways taken their eye off the ball. It's arguable that without 9/11 the Venezuelan revolution would be history by now, as well as Morales. Further still, when in 1975 the US helped set up Operation Condor – a continent-wide terror network – with their surrogate General Pinochet, they could count on the compliance of the security states they had helped set up. Now the tables have turned. With Fernando Lugo's election in Paraguay the whole continent became a left-wing independent bloc; and although Lugo was unfortunately overthrown in what he called a "parliamentary coup in judicial dress" in 2012, for the first time in centuries, things are looking up in Latin America, and a strong alliance is building. Democracy, economic justice and dignity are returning to the continent and US influence has started to wane.

TAMPER-PROOF DEMOCRACY

In an essay in 2008, the historian and theorist Perry Anderson asked why the capitalist classes, after World War II, allowed democracy to flourish in Turkey but not in Spain. In two short paragraphs he explained the history of "western democracy" in the 20th century. In Spain after the war, he wrote: "democratization was an unthinkable option for [General] Franco because it would have risked a political volcano erupting again, in which neither army nor church nor property would have been secure." For Franco and his business supporters, dictatorship was the only option. But they needn’t have feared. After 36 years of the general’s nightmare rule “[e]conomic development had transformed Spanish society, radical mass politics had been extinguished, and democracy was no longer hazardous for capital. So completely had the dictatorship done its work that a toothless Bourbon socialism was incapable even of restoring the republic it had overthrown.” Now, in other words, Spain was safe for democracy, which was duly established in 1975. “In this Spanish laboratory could be found a parabola of the future,” continued Anderson, “which the Latin American dictators of the 1970s – Pinochet is the exemplary case – would repeat, architects of a political order in which electors, grateful for civic liberties finally restored, could be trusted henceforward not to tamper with the social order.”[2]

This *tamper-proof democracy*, sensitive to vested interests but not the will of the population, has been erected throughout the world, pushed primarily by the US government. Any disobedience to the “consensus” is punished harshly. Leaders who don’t subscribe to it are vilified in the American and general, western media, and in the event of any particular populations taking democracy too seriously, the US will put in a tyrant to prepare the ground for the right kind of democracy. Historical examples of democracy getting “out-of-control” are legion, from Aristide in Haiti to Mosaddeq in Iran. And the enforcers are notorious too, from the Contras in Nicaragua to Suharto in Indonesia. But history is lived in the present and the dynamics of international relations haven’t changed all that much. We are now living through the latest, possibly last, stage of this battle between a global population that wants a democracy that prioritizes the people, not big business and not capital, and a ruling class that wants it the other way round.

This time around, the fly in the ointment is Latin America, the main site of global resistance to tamper-proof democracy. It might not be a coincidence that the fight-back is being consolidated in a part of the world often dismissed as “irrelevant”: it’s probably the reason the US and its allies haven’t managed to stamp it out (although, to be fair, they’ve tried). This form of democracy so loved by the West and their satraps in the developing world – one of a disengaged population picking between two business parties every four years – is being seriously subverted all over the continent.

The great democratic pantomime we are subjected to in the West (and the nations we make in our image) isn't working on the people of Latin America. Their democracies are becoming safer for their people. There are real political parties, like Evo Morales's Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), with real principles and real objectives that are serious about tampering with the social order for positive change.

This percolation of knowledge into the US mainstream is naturally scaring the gatekeepers of political discourse, who have been able to expatiate on their love of democracy for decades without being troubled by the existence of alternative definitions. Now the pretense is becoming harder to maintain and the reaction is sadly predictable. The almost subconscious contempt for democratic movements in Latin America is the result of centuries of unthinking domination, a similar psychology to that of a schoolyard bully who's had his run of the yard for so long he gets complacent. Suddenly, when he's taken his eye off the ball in order to clobber some other poor kid for his bag of sweets, the first kid decides to finally stand up for himself. It's hard to take.

For Perry Anderson, the template of Spain after Franco's destruction of civil society "has become the general formula of freedom: no longer making the world safe for democracy, but democracy safe for this world". Through a confluence of historical factors, Latin America is the crucible where the last chance to make a world safe for democracy is being fought. The importance of this battle shouldn't be underestimated: if it fails, we might not get another chance.

CARACAS, VENEZUELA

Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, is the focal point of so many of the country's divisions. The center of the city is a mix of bustling street markets and modernist skyscrapers lined along wide avenues. In the mountainous suburbs the city's elites live in tree-lined streets peppered with flashy condos and fancy pizzerias. But Caracas is perhaps best known to outsiders for its barrios – the vast slums in which thousands of makeshift houses cling precariously to the foothills. The barrios have long been the hub of support for Chavismo. It was the people in the barrios who descended from the mountains to the presidential palace in their thousands to support Chávez when he was briefly deposed in a US-backed coup in 2002. When I was in Caracas, I took one of the city's new cable cars to visit the barrios. The cable cars were built to link different parts of the vast slums. The lines to get on the bus at the other end are long. It used to take two hours on the bus through the winding mountain roads that snake through the barrios; the same journey by cable car takes 17 minutes and costs 10 cents. The cable cars that hover over Caracas have transformed the lives of thousands of the poorest Venezuelans. They are state of the art, clean and run without any problems. It appears no money was spared in its construction. As you walk through the barrios, graffiti dedicated to Hugo Frias Chávez, the secular deity of Venezuela since his death, is commonplace. Some of them are stencils, obviously paid for and designed by the Chavista government itself, but many are improvised outpourings of thanks from the people.

Venezuela should be one of the richest countries in the world. With the world's second largest reserves of petrol, it has a natural resource that makes the swathes of ghettoes and palpable poverty in the country an embarrassment. For centuries before Chávez, this petrol had been extracted with the interests of the racket in mind: money flowed to western multinationals and their shareholders, alongside their oligarchical Venezuelan representatives. With Chávez, for the first time, the natural wealth of the country was spread throughout society, focusing as it should on the poorest. Missions of teachers and doctors were sent into the barrios to bring to an end the shame of poverty in such a naturally rich country. As a result, over the period of Chavismo, Venezuela has reduced poverty by more than any other country in Latin America, including Brazil and Bolivia. This is not to say there aren't problems with the country and some tenets of Chavismo. The lack of judicial independence is a significant problem, with Chavista control near absolute. There have been shortages of essential foods and inflation is sky high. Some of this is undoubtedly the fault of the traditional elites in the country who have tried to squeeze the economy to bring down Nicolás Maduro, the man who replaced Chávez after his death, as they tried during the huge strikes early in Chávez's tenure. This "making the economy scream" as Nixon called it, worked wonders in 1970s Chile, helping to create a climate in which General Pinochet could overthrow Chilean democracy. It looks less likely to succeed in Venezuela. Despite the anti-government protests of 2014 which called for “*la salida*” of Maduro (“the exit”), the Chavista government keeps winning democratic elections fairly. What is the racket to do?

In the frankly embarrassing hysteria that gripped the American media, Chávez was compared to Saddam Hussein, Pol Pot, Idi Amin and even, echoing Donald Rumsfeld’s idiocy, Adolf Hitler. “Mr Chávez shares much in common with these former dictators who killed and trampled human rights as a means to their own ends,” wrote Douglas MacKinnon in the *Washington Post*. Chávez had some of the most stellar democratic credentials in the world. Since being democratically elected in 1998 by a landslide victory, he went to the Venezuelan people again in 1999 and won approval for important constitutional changes. He won another general election in July 2000 when he was elected with 60 percent of the votes, which dwarfs figures from the “home of democracy” such as the US and UK. Later, in December 2000, he won a referendum that called for the state monitoring of labor unions’ elections. And then, a presidential recall referendum – which was enshrined in Chávez’s 1999 constitution – was triggered in August 2004 when opposition groups collected signatures from 20 percent of the electorate, as the constitution stipulated. Again Chávez won: 59 percent of the population voted “no” to the recall in an election overseen by the best election auditors in the world. By my reckoning, that counts as three general elections and two referendums in nine years. It is hard to find a more exercised populace in the entire world. This stands in stark contrast, of course, to George W. Bush, who, and it is now uncontroversial to say this, stole the election in 2000 in a dictatorial putsch more common to a banana republic. And this brief primer also leaves out the most telling part of recent Venezuelan history: the coup attempt by right-wing groups in 2002, which tried to use the military to topple the democratically elected president. The journalist Eva Golinger, in her book *The Chávez Code: Cracking US Intervention in Venezuela*, assiduously documents, through the revelation of previously secret US government documents, the succor and support that various of its agencies gave to this anti-democratic military coup, which briefly succeeded until hundreds of thousands of downtrodden people from Caracas took to the streets to demand the release of Chávez who had been incarcerated by the new business junta.

So why the lies and misinformation about Chávez? The answer is simple and is deeply rooted in the political and economic policies of the United States. Venezuela under Chávez provided a symbol to the rest of Latin America, and to the wider world, of what a more egalitarian society can look like. In the aftermath of his election, Chávez created what he called "Bolivarian Missions" after Simón Bolívar, the great Latin American liberationist from the 19th century, aimed at reducing the massive and crippling poverty in the barrios around Venezuela. Hundreds of free medical hospitals were built providing healthcare to many people for the first time, and local grassroots committees were established to adjudicate their affairs. The infant mortality rate came down by 18.2 percentage points from 1998 to 2006, while income for the poorest strata of Venezuelan society grew *more than 150* percent from 2003 to 2006. For the first time in many decades, the oil wealth of this nation extremely rich in natural resources was redirected back to its people, and not, as history has demanded, passed to rapacious foreigners and their elite lackeys in Venezuela.

This is a dangerous example to set, and the thirst for this kind of justice is likely to spread. Henry Kissinger, in the analogous example of Chile under socialist Salvador Allende in the 1970s, called it a "virus that could infect others". The racket continues to try to destroy it, but in the mountain-speckled skyline of south-eastern Mexico, the battle for survival and a dignified existence burns bright.

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1 "Confessions of an economic hit man: how the U.S. uses globalization to cheat poor countries out of trillions", interview with John Perkins, *Democracy Now!*, November 9, 2004.

2 Perry Anderson, "After Kemal", *London Review of Books*, September 25, 2008.

FIFTEEN

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

CHIAPAS, MEXICO

Oventik is two hours' drive from San Cristóbal de las Casas, the Spanish colonial town in the highlands of the Mexican state Chiapas. The roads are good apart from the potholes and the small animals that dart in the path of your motorbike. Breezeblock houses with corrugated iron roofs, the accommodation of the world's poor, punctuate the pavements on either side. Oventik is not indicated by anything more than a decaying sign by the side of road, and it's different here. "*Estas entrando tierra Zapatista*", says the sign ("You are now entering Zapatista land"). To the side is a gate manned by four people, all wearing balaclavas, black socks pulled over their faces with a slit cut in the middle, from which their eyes peer out. These are the members of the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation), fighting back in the poorest state in Mexico. Looking down the long drive that runs through the community, you can see grand murals on the walls of all the buildings: Che Guevara and Emiliano Zapata are recurring themes. When I put in a request to come inside, the guards take my passport and return half an hour later: "You can come in but no interviews", they told me. Oventik is one of 13 "*caracoles*" (meaning "snails" in Spanish) that are scattered throughout Chiapas. They were won by armed struggle by the indigenous revolutionary group, the Zapatistas, after they rose up on January 1, 1994, the date when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) signed with the United States and Canada came into force. As part of its provisions, the Mexican government had to change its near-century old constitution that granted common ownership of land. This was the straw that broke the back of the indigenous communities, who had suffered centuries of discrimination and oppression at the hands of the *latifundistas*, or large landowners. The neoliberal program of NAFTA, which quite simply removed Mexican sovereignty, had been edging closer in the preceding years. The *ejido* system, for example, was consecrated in Article 27 of the Mexican constitution. It's a form of land ownership, created after the revolution, whereby the *ejidatarios* have the right to the produce of the land that they work. This just and humane law was ended in 1991 with the modification of Article 27 by Washington favorite, President Carlos Salinas, who reformed the agrarian law in line with Bretton Woods dictates. Salinas also started the program of certification of land rights that transformed the lands into smaller properties. This move of sovereignty from the people to foreign capitalists set the ground for the Zapatistas, named after the Mexican freedom fighter and revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, who claimed Mexico back from international capital in the 20th century's first successful revolution.

The long path down to the bottom of the *caracol* is a muddy track. On either side stand wooden buildings dedicated to the "dignity of women", a hospital, a school, a basketball court. My guide is not interested in talking; the balaclava reveals only the eyes, and the eyes have had enough of questions. The *caracol* has many different meanings for the Zapatistas. One of their mottos is "*caminar al paso del mas lento*" ("walk at the pace of the slowest"), meaning that they can wait until the last member of the community is ready before they continue to move forward. There are murals peppered throughout the *caracol* depicting snails with the slogan "*lento pero avanza*" ("slow but moving forward") – again signifying that they will move at a snail's pace, but once they are all ready, they will progress. The Zapatistas adopt the tactic of using silence as a way of learning, to listen, not to shout. Rumor has it that they have been slowly preparing themselves and will soon re-emerge. Fuelling these rumors was the announcement when I was there that the Zapatistas would be organizing *escuelitas* ("little schools") to be held in five *caracoles*. In these *escuelitas* seasoned Zapatistas will "give classes on their thought and action on liberty according to Zapatismo: their successes, their failures, their problems, their solutions, the things which have moved forward, the things that have got bogged down, and the things that are missing, because what is missing is yet to come", according to Subcomandante Marcos, one of the Zapatistas' most eloquent spokespersons, who is now back in Chiapas after a stint living in Paris. In the *caracol*, there is a feeling of empowerment and independence rare in the world, especially in this region. The Mexican military – which has carried out countless attacks on the indigenous communities – is not allowed, in theory, to come into this community, and you can feel the difference. The Zapatistas are the most organized of the indigenous resistance groups. Part of this is because of the hard-fought battles of the mid-1990s, resulting in the San Andrés Accords signed with the Mexican government through which they achieved a degree of autonomy.

ACTEAL

Further up in the mountains, among the clouds and lawns of nature, is Acteal, a small indigenous town partly run by the Zapatistas. In 1996, the most brutal of the massacres committed against the Zapatistas was carried out here, when 45 people were killed by a paramilitary group while praying in the local church. Many suspect the US-backed Mexican government was involved or at least complicit in the massacre. Soldiers at a nearby military outpost did not intervene during the attack, which lasted for several hours. Many of them were seen the next day washing the blood off the walls of the church. The Mexican government had used paid mercenary militias to terrorize the Zapatistas at that time.

I arrived in the middle of one of the many downpours and walked down the main street into a basketball court sponsored by the EZLN. The entire town was gathered to cheer on their local team. As in Oventik, the outsides of the houses and community buildings were decorated with murals depicting left-wing revolutionaries from Latin America; saints wearing Zapatista balaclavas; and children of different races standing hand in hand. A local man approached me and asked if I had seen the monument built to commemorate those who died in the massacre, and he pointed me in its direction. The monument stood a couple of dozen feet high, half covered by the clouds which were quickly descending over the village. The monument is a clay construction in which the 45 faces of those massacred are depicted, merged together in a collective wail. I went down some steps to the site where the massacre took place. No longer a church (it was torn down after the massacre), it is now an outdoor auditorium with painted wooden crosses nailed to the walls in memory of each person killed. Among the dead were a number of children and pregnant women. A man approached me and I told him that I was visiting from the UK. He asked me: “Why didn’t you visit earlier, before they killed my friends?” I had no answer.

Back in San Cristóbal, I sat down with Roberto Chankin Ortega, one of the young activists who had been involved in the struggle from the beginning. We drank coffee in the café in the middle of the town’s main square. “It was a big surprise for a lot of people, the uprising of January 1, 1994. My father said there hadn’t been an uprising for 50 years, an indigenous uprising,” Ortega told me. “But after there was a lot of sympathy with the causes. The demands they had were very just, it touched a chord internationally.” He continued: “I was very young at the time so there was a romanticism about the armed struggle, the communiqués of Marcos, a new language which was very poetic, influenced by rock and roll. A new language of fighting. But it was also heavy at times, you couldn’t leave the house many times.”

Mexico is in many ways a failing democracy: the political class is divorced from the people and the education and healthcare systems for the poor are in disrepair. It should not be like this as Mexico is a country rich in resources and geographically fortuitously located.

FREE-TRADE SLAVERY

When the Zapatistas burst on the scene on New Year’s Day 1994, they garnered a great deal of press coverage and international support. This attenuated the brutality of the Mexican military’s fight-back. When the Zapatistas occupied San Cristóbal, many were armed with guns carved in wood, a symbol of resistance. But the Mexican military were too strong and to avoid a massacre they withdrew into the Lacandon jungle after threats. Chase Bank’s memo a few weeks later, “Political Update on Mexico”, echoed the concern of capitalists across the West and stated: “The government will have to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and security policy.” It was, of course, exploitation and a virulent racism, around since the era of colonialism, against the indigenous people that gave birth to the movement. For centuries the white interloper infantilized the indigenous population as a method of control – it tried to make them into children psychologically, through a racist paternalism. Crushed under the yoke of the white man's guns at first, then as slaves to their economic system, this changed finally in 1994. "They stood up for themselves," said Ortega. "They are more owners of their liberty. For the indigenous, this process has dignified them. The government has of course invested a lot of money to get rid of the movement, which worried the United States, too." The government essentially wants to displace the indigenous people of Mexico, or at least those who happen to inhabit land that foreign capitalists like the look of. The white society in Mexico, in reality, still thinks of the "indio" as *poor, destitute and subhuman*.

Despite this, the autonomous zones are a big achievement in the face of extreme oppression and pressure from the government and the US-supplied Mexican military, who cannot enter the *caracoles*. Inside these zones, the Zapatistas have their own driving licenses, hospitals and schools – a real community within a state. "They are continuing to construct autonomy and resist," said Ortega. "The media don't give them much coverage any more, but the Zapatistas don't care too much, they are focusing on working on autonomy and realities."

"They survive because of international support," said a university professor I talked to. This may be partly true, but they also survive because they are organized and focused squarely on their true oppressor.

The US has trained the Mexican military for decades, sharing their manuals of counter-insurgency, alongside supplying billions of dollars to aid in the fight against drugs, a cover which is often used to discipline the dissident parts of the population, including the Zapatistas. "All over the world, the US interests make it dangerous for a lot of people," Ortega told me. "NAFTA was a disaster. A lot of public policies which were enacted as part of NAFTA have brought about privatizing of land, campesinos have been kicked off land, had their land sold or closed down." That free trade agreement itself has helped to destroy large parts of the previously thriving industrial base in Mexico, giving the narcos even more unemployed cannon fodder with which to get a grip on the country. As the *New York Times* put it: "NAFTA produced results that were exactly the opposite of what was promised … domestic industries were dismantled as multinationals imported parts from their own suppliers.” But what the *New York Times* did not say is that NAFTA was designed like that on purpose. The aim was to make Mexico a slave state, even more so than it already was.

The Mexican establishment has presided over an economic model lauded by the Bretton Woods institutions and *Financial Times* editorials – i.e. high growth rates, big booty for foreign investors, and (this bit is kept quiet) yawning inequality. For example, the country’s growth was 5.5 percent in 2010, the highest in 10 years, but that same year the number of Mexicans living in poverty grew by more than 3 million, putting 52 million Mexicans below the poverty line, or nearly half the population. The *Financial Times* lauded such a state of affairs in a headline as “bloody but booming”. Bloody for poor people, booming for rich people – a succinct aphorism for the global economy.

“It’s not just the US, it’s international capitalists and their interests,” said Gaspar Morquecho, a Mexican intellectual based in Chiapas who is found most days in the Zapatista café in the heart of San Cristóbal. “In Africa, Asia, Latin America, everywhere, it’s the same, and it’s very hard to fight.” In 1992 Subcomandante Marcos defined this war against the world’s poor as World War IV. World War III had been the Cold War, won by the capitalists, and World War IV was being led by the victors – a war of the markets, the arms companies, the financiers, pushing forth and destroying countries, cultures and economies. In this sense, we are seeing in this the last stage of capitalism, and World War IV is the construction of a different way of living. “The US has many plans of war – they go by names like Plan Colombia, Plan Mérida,” said Morquecho, who describes himself as an adherent of the Declaration of Lacandon which outlined the Zapatistas’ goals. “It’s a project of control of the hemisphere and has been going on for the last 200 years. The interests of the US at the least is to control the region of Latin America, but not just that, they go to war in Middle East, provoke China in Asia. They are introducing their brutal military and billions of dollars per year spent on it. They aren’t weak; it has got worse, more intense in the operations in Mexico. There is no weakness in the empire, opportunities for the EZLN are hard to find.”

He is right, but the Zapatistas have shown the shape of a pocket, a pocket of resistance, an outline of how you can use modern techniques to create such public support that it is impossible for the powers that be to crush it and maintain the façade of nobility they feed on like bloodthirsty vultures. The repression against the indigenous people has been brutal since they took their destiny into their own hands. It has become more complicated in recent years because a lot of powerful economic forces have come to Chiapas to make a quick buck, attracted by the favorable "investment climate" after NAFTA. Mexico was now, like other US satellites, "open for business" as the neoliberals say; more accurate would be "Mexico is up for sale". These powerful economic forces are now trying to capture the political process completely to bypass resistance to the sell-off. The state-owned oil company Pemex is the latest of the Mexican people's assets slated for sale.

In the indigenous people's battle for their land, their enemies are not just governments on the federal or state level. Behind them, steering the ship, is the racket of private capital, the multinationals who want their resources, from water to petrol. In countries like Mexico, the state acts merely as an intermediary between foreign multinationals and the country's natural resources, giving corporate power a legitimate face as they open up the territory and evict the people. The state, contrary to its protestations, cares not a scintilla for the human rights of its own citizens. Such a state of affairs is the case in all the countries around the world that remain trapped under the US umbrella.

"The human rights situation has actually got worse over the past 20 years, in terms of the violence against the people," said Gubi Chamatus of Frayba, the human rights center in San Cristóbal which has worked closely on issues related to the Zapatistas. "Before all these mega-projects were going forward where they could, there was no resistance, the people just said OK. Now, however, these same people are arriving, and people are saying no, and they are standing in front of construction, so the violations have gone up, because the repression is harsher against these people; they don't want these situations, it's embarrassing, it's given the lie to all the talk of development and modernization." As Rosa Luxemburg put it: those who do not move, do not notice their chains.

FULL-FRONTAL ATTACK

The government of Mexico, like all states allied to the US, preaches the rhetoric of human rights but ordinary people don't see them. Before they stood up and took control, the indigenous people were anonymous, the powerful could call them free with no contradiction. When they took up arms, they became the enemy, they were no longer representatives of the "good indigenous". But the Zapatistas won the war for the hearts and minds of the world, so the Mexican military had to give concessions. The propaganda after the uprising declared "peace" in Chiapas. But 500 years of brutality and savagery will take a long time to rectify. The process for autonomy continues and with it violence. "The human rights of the indigenous, they aren't guaranteed," Chamatus told me as we sat in his office. "When an indigenous group isn't in accord with a mega-project or something like that, the state use the public force to repress it, or to move them." Once again the people of a region are held ransom to the God of Investment. The attack on the poor and indigenous is full frontal, coming from economic, social, political and military forces.

So far, in Chiapas, the Drug War-fuelled violence seen in the rest of Mexico has not arrived. The war started by President Felipe Calderón in 2006 has affected nearly every other state of Mexico. But in Chiapas it hasn't manifested, maybe because Chiapas has been heavily militarized since 1994 anyway; most of the state has seen a constant military presence since the uprising. Since that period, with US training and backing, there have been systematic violations of human rights in indigenous communities. In Chiapas, in fact, the pretext of the Drug War is being used to position more military in the state. "They are fortifying Chiapas," said Chamatus. "In our experience, the violations go up with the presence of the military. There is a strong correlation. One of the things that has changed in Chiapas is that, before, the presence of the military was for the EZLN, now it is more ambiguous, it could be for this or narco traffickers. It gives them license to do whatever they want under the guise of drugs." It was a familiar story, heard from Honduras to Colombia to Peru. It brought about a new strategy applied by the Mexican state, no doubt learnt from their American patron, whereby if a group speaks against the state it is speciously linked with organized crime, and from then on the state has *carte blanche* to do what it wants. "What they are looking to do is quite simple," added Chamatus. "They want to impugn the legitimacy of the organization, the credibility of the organization, and criminalize social protest, criminalize the defense of human rights, criminalize not being in accordance with state. This is the situation now in Chiapas."

It's a tactic as old as domination itself, and intended to target the EZLN communities because they continue in resistance. For this reason, they live in fear of the multi-billion-dollar military, which is typically the institution entrusted to enforce capitalists' interests when all other methods have been exhausted. In other words, the Mexican people pay tax for a military that is used to enforce foreign capital's interests.

There are more than 70,000 soldiers permanently placed in the beautiful hills and towns of Chiapas, a number that has been steadily rising since 1994, and the same number as in the whole of the rest of Mexico combined. From 1995 to 1999 the human rights situation deteriorated, particularly because the military and paramilitaries were sent in to "discipline" the indigenous people. The situation is not as serious now, but their presence remains strong, they routinely extort money from locals, and disfigure the landscape with roadblocks. The strategy of stamping on dissidence from the Zapatistas has moved to criminalization: they, and the human rights groups that support them, are branded as delinquents. It's an ideological war, too: rumors are spread that the Zapatistas are rich and stealing money. "The conditions of the country are in some ways worse than 1994," said Morquecho. "After 1994, there was a dirty war which had left 10,000 victims dead and many disappeared. In 2002, there was a new war with 70,000 victims, 50,000 displaced, 15,000 disappeared, and the last six years have been worse. Half the population is poor, that's 50 million people, and 15 million are outside of the labor market, in informal work. Half the population lives in extreme poverty, and this reflects in what is happening in the jungle. In this sense, we say the conditions are worse. But the other problem is, the capitalist system in this country is tremendously brutal and any act of rebellion, the answer politically is the military. In this sense, from 1994, the territory has been occupied by the military, and there is a strategy of counter-insurgency, and not a program to combat poverty. The objective is to drain the water of fish, to limit the process of resistance in the Zapatista communities. The Mexican state has the political and military clout to neutralize the EZLN and the bases of support, and it is still trying."

The indigenous still live in extreme poverty, without electricity or running water, in a virtual position of apartheid. But the process of 1994–95 is reversible, the gains of popular movements, whether of the Zapatistas or anyone else, are always vulnerable to being liquidated. When I was there the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) had returned to power; until 2000 it had been governing for 71 years in the "perfect dictatorship", riven with corruption and behaving as a serial human rights violator.

As usual, the US was on the wrong side of history. When the empire and its racket is long gone, washed up like the rest of the superpowers of history, we will be able to say this. But, for now, when the vast riches of a small number of people depend on its rapacious course, the truth will stay silent, and the Era of the Myth surges on, ripping through society after society.

SIXTEEN

REVOLUTIONARIES

CAIRO, EGYPT

On January 25, 2011 a march was planned for Cairo, the capital of Egypt. There was a lot of publicity on social networking sites, but this had happened before. People knew something was going to happen on the Tuesday but no one really knew what. On that day something started in Egypt that would upset the imperial order set up by the US in the Middle East after World War II. People rose up against the corrupt US-backed dictator, Hosni Mubarak, and demanded real rights for themselves and their country. In the ensuing violence, the military and police murdered hundreds of Egyptians who were fighting for a better chance in life – the so-called "lost generation" of unemployed, terrorized youth. The chants at the start of the uprising that pushed more people to join the protests were all economic. The people were hungry, for food and for basic human dignity, which had been ripped from them by the regime. In the end the people won the battle, if not the war. The military declined to murder them en masse, and for that the Egyptians were meant to be grateful.

I arrived in Cairo just over a year later to see how the revolutionary movement, which had not achieved its goal of overthrowing the regime but had merely diminished its power, had organized and what lessons could be learnt by other people crushed under the boot of a domestic dictatorship propped up by the most powerful country in the world. It was my first time in the Egyptian capital. There was a frenetic element to daily life on the street, with cars and people bursting from all the narrow sidewalks and roads. I met one activist, Sarrah Abdelrahman, who was something of a poster child for the Egyptian revolution, in a café on Talaat Harb Square. Before the historic events of January, the 24-year-old aspiring actress had been apolitical. Now you couldn't stop the self- described revolutionary talking about the struggle for dignity she and her people were engaged in. But 15 months on from those heady days, like many of the young secular left which spearheaded the revolt, she was disconsolate. "It's conceivable that we might end up with something even worse than Mubarak in a year's time," she told me. "I'm not going to lie. I thought the army and military were going to take the side of the people, but it seems now that they forced Mubarak to step down to save the regime, not to break the regime. I mean, the people in power now are criminals, actually they are worse than Mubarak." She added: "Now, half my generation is blind or limping or dead. The violence is out of control. When people go to a football match and then 70 kids die. They also massacred 25 Copts." But, she added: "I have hope for my generation because they were completely not politicized before, like me. Before if you asked anyone about politics or current events or wars in the region, they would only know about singers and football players, but now it's completely different." They had woken up.

THE BOGEYMAN

The US had gone quite straightforwardly from supporting the dictator, Mubarak, to supporting his replacement, the equally undemocratic Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), and then later the coup regime of Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. True to form the US had supported and armed Mubarak to the hilt since he came to power in 1981; his regime scared the US by using the bogeyman of the Muslim Brotherhood, saying they would take over if any moves to democratization were enforced. The regime put dissidents in jail through risible military trials and torture; no one could organize without incurring the wrath of a vicious regime. For that reason, Egyptian society, like so many in a US- designed Middle East, lacked a liberal left party, there was nothing. The one thing the US had feared since Nasser – the Soviet-allied Egyptian dictator – was the rise of independent Arab nationalism, which might see nationalizations and the growth of socialism. They worked actively to destroy it – including by promoting radical Islamists, like Hamas in Palestine. The unions that had not been completely co-opted by Mubarak provided some means of organization, but when the uprising succeeded in bringing on elections, the Muslim Brotherhood took advantage of the destruction of Egyptian civil society that had taken place during Mubarak's regime and won. The Brotherhood had a leadership, they had access to the media and, perhaps most important, they had God on their side. In a population with such low levels of literacy and education, large swathes of the population were swayed by this pious party, which had little interest in improving their condition. The Brotherhood had never been leaders of the uprising; they had been reticent at first and then became followers. One of the strengths of revolution was that it was leaderless, but this also had its drawbacks.

Ms Abdelrahman for her part said she was angry at the way the US had reacted. "Before the revolution a lot of people in my generation were rooting for Obama actually," she said. "His hope propaganda was very media sexy and idealistic. But from what I've seen, first of all the tear-gas that I've smelt was made in the USA, and just the way the statements from Obama and Hillary Clinton which were like, 'Oh we're just testing the waters to see what to do.' They were a complete let-down, they just go after their own interests." She added: "I mean, that's different from Hollywood, or the culture or the people, the American people are different from the government. US foreign policy is inconsistent, they just look after their own interests, and they just don't want anyone else to be the best apart from them."

The US soon started meeting with the Muslim Brotherhood, seeing them as a bulwark against the extremist Salafis and the Brotherhood had no qualms about selling out: they made deals with SCAF and met with John McCain and any other foreign dignitaries that made it to Cairo to solidify the position of the client state. "Imagine that Egypt is a woman who is covered in wounds and she is kind of bleeding all over but she's covered," said Sarrah. "What happened is the uprising kind of unveiled all these things, so you are starting to see all this mold, this pollution, these infected wounds."

The US gives the Egyptian military upward of $1.3 billion every year, alongside joint military training. In response to the mass murder of Egyptian protesters by the military and police, US Congress passed a law in October 2011 stipulating that Egypt has to prove it's moving toward democracy, while the $1.3 billion reaches the Egyptian people in bullet form. In addition, the $1.3 billion benefits the racket, creating a demand for American weapons exporters, and in Egypt it subsidizes the military's economic investments. M1 Abrams tanks, for example, come to Egypt in parts that need to be assembled, and so tank-assembling businesses are created. Many of these are expressly joint ventures with western companies, like for example the joint venture with Jeep to create armored and commercial vehicles. "Because the military are so opaque we don't know if it's 15 percent or 40 percent," Sharif Abdel Kouddous, an Egyptian journalist whom I first met working at *Democracy Now!* in New York, told me in Cairo. "That being the range says a lot about what we know."

Foreign policy in Egypt has for decades been merely reflective of US foreign policy – including the enforcement of the siege on Gaza since 2006, when Egypt allowed US warships through the Suez Canal. None of this, of course, reflects the popular will in Egypt. When Mubarak fell, Egypt was one of only three countries – the other two being the US and Israel – which did not have diplomatic relations with Iran. The secretary general of the Arab League was appointed foreign minister right after Mubarak fell and he asked why Egypt had its foreign policy dictated. He said the country would now have diplomatic relations with Iran, and open the Rafah border crossing into Gaza. Within a few weeks he was removed from the position.

The role that the US plays in backing the military was the essential core of the dictatorship. Mubarak had been in power for 30 years but the military had been ruling for 60 years and the military acts as a state within a state. "The US talked the same way as state media – they voiced support for Mubarak then realized it was too late for him, and they said he's got to go," said Kouddous. "But once he left, they voiced support for the SCAF, his replacement. The coverage in the US media has been very superficial. It skims the surface of what is happening. They wanted the narrative at the beginning that this was a western-friendly, Facebook-driven, young, cool crowd that led this, and they were at core of it. And they keep calling it a peaceful revolution, but at the end of the day, on January 28, there were 100 police stations that were burnt down, there's violence all the time. They over-simplify as they tend to do, and have been slow to expose the military's abuses, starting from the beginning but really in October with the massacre of 17 Coptic Christians in front of Maspero. The *New York Times* called that, for example, ‘sectarian riots’ when the army killed all those people. That kind of language distorts everything.”

The then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said initially, “our perception is the Mubarak regime is strong” which was implicit support for the dictatorship in the face of the protests. But as it became so clear that Mubarak could not continue, even the western press changed. Kouddous told me: “People like Anderson Cooper who came at the beginning and did the typical western media stenography – well, the Mubarak government says this and the protesters say this – but on the day the regime sent out thugs on camels they attacked western journalists. Cooper was hit in the head, and the next day, he changed. He was now saying, ‘This is a popular mass uprising against a 30-year autocrat’, which was the truth.”

The Mubarak dictatorship gave the Obama administration no choice but to support the people of Egypt with this kind of violence and eventually President Obama said that Mubarak must step down. But all the time the US were playing behind the scenes too in negotiations to secure what was coming next: first, this took the form of support for Omar Suleiman, Mubarak’s spy chief, to replace him. On February 10, 2011, Leon Panetta, then-director of the CIA, even said that Mubarak would step down before it happened. What the Obama administration wanted to see was secular young people who posed no threat to western neoliberal interests taking over the Arab world, but that didn’t happen, it was never the Arab Spring. The State Department and White House press briefings from the period very clearly show people in the administration proclaiming their support for Mubarak in the early days of the uprising. It was only when it became clear that this was not going to be viable – and the full story of what happened between the military, Mubarak and the US administration is still not known – there was obviously some kind of deal struck whereby the military decided to sacrifice Mubarak and take power. And then the US came out in support.

US policy toward the Arab Spring was incoherent – they supported protests in countries where the regimes were less friendly and, with the exception of Egypt, tended to be silent on places like Bahrain. A more coherent policy would mean they had to build genuine political alliances with civilian political forces across the region, something the US rarely does. “I think saying Obama was behind the Arab Spring is an insult to all Arabs, it’s an insult to my generation, and it’s an insult to all the people who were in Tahrir," said Soraya Morayef, an activist. "There's been a lot of rhetoric about how 'they couldn't have done this on their own'. Even Omar Suleiman famously said, 'They're being generated or supported by foreign elements, countries, someone with a political agenda.' The thing is it wasn't. It was organic, it was the coming together of so many different factions of society, not just the youth, not just liberals, it was workers, it was the disenchanted government officials, there were even conscripts from the military that were defecting and joining. It's very insulting to say that any country, especially the US, was behind this. Because one of the chants in Tahrir during the 189 days was chanting against Mubarak and Omar Suleiman being agents of the Americans, and saying 'US, this is what your money is doing, your money is killing our people', and you'd find tear-gas canisters and gunshot canisters with Made in US on it. The US never supported the revolution, I feel it is responsible in continuing to pay the army that kills its own people."

THE ECONOMICS OF REVOLUTION

In Egypt's case, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) did not impose the traditional strict structural adjustment programs after the revolution, but looked to remake Egypt through more indirect terms. In June 2011, the IMF offered a $3.2 billion loan "without conditions", which no one believed – and it was rejected by the military because it was dangerous politically for them to assume the loan. But Egypt needed foreign currency; they had imported so much that they only had enough to pay for three more months of imports. The government then formally requested the $3.2 billion loan. This time, however, sensing the desperation, the IMF said Egypt had to draw up an economic reform program. The result was an eight-page economic reform package, which included all the same policies of the Mubarak era – the magic words "structural adjustment", the usual "broadening the tax pool", "VAT increases", "sales tax".

In Egypt before the revolution, an extreme form of capitalism was being imposed, in line with Bretton Woods dictates. The rich were getting richer, while the poor got poorer. On top of this, the poor were routinely tortured and the army reacted viciously to strikes. They passed a law soon after the revolution criminalizing strikes and any other action stopping work, resulting in a fine and one year in prison. The Delta bus company had a huge strike for 12 days in December 2011, but the government made promises (which it didn't keep). The workers went back on strike again and this time the army broke the strike by getting soldiers to drive the buses.

It is important to note that the revolution did not occur in a vacuum; it didn't just happen as part of a domino effect after the Tunisian revolution. The Egyptian revolution was 10 years in the making through grassroots organizing. "It took years of coalition building to have grassroots movements behind you to have this thing explode," said Kouddous. "I think its success was the 18 days were seen as this utopia, where we created this Republic of Tahrir, and it had the values and the principles that everyone wanted to see in the rest of the country, or people in Tahrir did. And when Mubarak fell it was seen as this big moment, but I think a lot of people counted their success too early, and let forces in that should have been kept out and fought just as vigorously." He continued: "I think the revolution is really more a state of mind, it's a state of revolution we are living, so it's continuing, it's much more divisive and messy, but I would say that the lesson is that the fight is never easy, and some say never finished, you are always going to be trying to improve it. But when people come together, there's nothing that could have stopped it. I still think nothing can stop it now."

There was actually something unprecedented in history taking place in Egypt: a strike wave that had been going on for seven years *without worker organizations*. Other countries went through 10 years of strikes but they had unions, they had labor parties, they had revolutionary socialist parties. "Here in Egypt, I believe it's a miracle that you have a strike wave now that has been going for seven years and you don't even have functioning trade unions," Hossam el-Hamalawy, a prominent revolutionary and organizer, told me. In Egypt the structure is very similar to what existed in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe: government bureaucrats appoint officials who claim to represent the workplace but in fact they have nothing to do with the workplace. Actually, the state-run unions have been one of the main factors in why several important general strikes have failed; historically, they have always intervened in industrial actions *on the side of the police*. And yet these strike waves were happening despite the fact there were no worker- run trade unions. Egypt witnessed a rising curve of social struggle between 1968 to 1977, led by workers and students. But it all came to nothing in 1977 when a mini-uprising was crushed. From that point, until 2005, Mubarak managed to destroy every single organization that did anything in the streets. “Mubarak’s was not a totalitarian regime, it was an autocratic regime, it was all about him,” said el-Hamalawy. “The guy was so paranoid about numbers, to the extent that even one of our satellite sheikhs was forced to leave for Britain a few years ago for nothing, except maybe attracting some following amongst the youth. But in fact he doesn’t speak on politics at all, in fact he’s very reactionary. But the thing is that he had people around him – that flips out state security.” The seeds for revolution had actually been planted in December 2006 with a huge wave of strikes by workers. “Again, the state-run unions are not part of industrial actions unless it’s a factory that is being liquidated and the state-run union has not been given their share of bribes, so they are going to be fucked together with the workers. These were the only places I found the state-run unions are the forefront of the strike,” said el-Hamalawy. The uprising began with only three independent trade unions, but now in Egypt there is a federation of trade unions that claims to represent 2 million workers.

Nasser was initially affiliated to the Soviets, and the US only really became the major patron of Egypt with Anwar Sadat. But, el- Hamalawy said, Nasser really laid the ground for Sadat’s policies later. There was a steady restructuring of the public sector starting in around 1968. The common belief is that the neoliberal period in Egypt started in 1974 with the “intifah” policies of Sadat – in fact, it started in 1968. And in 1970, under the Rogers Plan, set out by US Secretary of State William Rogers to end the Israel–Palestine conflict, Nasser had already recognized Israel and said the 1967 Israel–Palestine borders were legitimate. But still it was Sadat who threw Egypt completely into the American camp, not just in terms of loyalty and affiliation to western imperialism, but in terms of economic policies. Sadat’s Egypt and Pinochet’s Chile were probably the first two countries to start enacting neoliberal reforms with a vengeance: Egypt in 1974, Pinochet in 1973. But the Egyptian neoliberal program got put on hold in 1977 during the uprising, and the government started procrastinating with the reforms. “They only got the courage and the balls to implement with the outbreak of our War on Terror,” said el-Hamalawy. In many ways, War on Terror and neoliberalism always go hand in hand. In Egypt in 1992, the Dirty War started and it was then that Mubarak signed the deal with the IMF and World Bank to implement the Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Programme (ERSAP), the usual package of neoliberal reforms conducive to the needs of foreign capital and a narrow local elite.

To understand how strange the lack of an organized mainstream left party is, it is necessary to step back from the western media narrative that presents the revolution as a snap uprising inspired by young westernized middle-class Egyptians on Twitter and Facebook. The roots of the current revolution go back to 2004 and involve years of heroic and inspiring actions by working people from Cairo to Alexandria and, in fact, all along the Nile delta. In 2004, the heir-presumptive of the Mubarak kleptocracy, Gamal, was handing out economic portfolios to his thieving friends who instituted IMF prescriptions attempting to privatize further a host of state-owned assets. Workers across the country fought back and started a string of successful strikes outside traditional trade unions, which were basically arms of Mubarak's corporatist state. These groupings greatly upped the number of strikes. In 2004 worker collective actions stood at 202 nationwide. By 2007 it had more than tripled to 614 – often met with severe brutality from the security forces.

THE FUTURE

This heavy history has to be defeated. "I would not say this revolution is successful unless US imperialism and Zionism are defeated in this region," said el-Hamalawy. "The local and the regional are interlinked, and the international of course, that's the third dimension. Make no mistake, people like me on the left believe our revolution will be completely destroyed if it is not exported to the rest of the region; you cannot build a democracy on an island in a sea of dictatorships. Egypt is the jewel in the crown of US imperialism in the region, the Americans are not going to leave it, the Israelis are not going to leave it, the Gulfies are not going to leave it, the Europeans are not going to leave it." In other words, if Egypt falls, the whole Middle East is going to fall – for the imperialist powers. "This current political movement here in Egypt it was all triggered by the

Palestinian intifada 11 years ago. I've seen the 1990s, there was nothing. You couldn't pull together anything. The turning point was the Palestinian intifada. For the first time in three decades, you could mobilize the streets, and these mobilizations were over regional issues it is true, but it didn't take more than 10 minutes to start shifting to deal with local issues. The police turn up, they beat people, then people start chanting 'Down with Mubarak'. You know the first time I heard 'Down with Mubarak' was 2002 and this was unprecedented, you couldn't chant against Mubarak in the 1990s, it was all about Palestine at the end of the day."

The West will never stay silent; they will always try to intervene. But the question for the revolutionaries is: are you going to let them intervene? Are you going to organize? It's been the case all through the history of the racket's local dictators – from the Shah of Iran to Suharto in Indonesia. No matter if you are a client of the Americans, the most powerful country in human history, if you get the revolution, the Americans can do nothing – the people create a new imagination. Nawal El Saadawi, the most famous feminist writer in the Middle East, was heavily involved with the uprising in Egypt. For her it was the culmination of a life dedicated to overthrowing dictatorship in her homeland. I went to see her in her one-bedroom apartment on the 13th floor of a tower block in the Shoubra neighborhood of Cairo, right on the banks of the Nile. "All the Gulf countries are colonized by the US. Wherever you have oil, you have the US," said El Saadawi. "We got rid of the head only, but the body of the regime is still there, militarily, economically, media, education, everything." So has she lost hope for this great uprising, then? "Oh, no, no," she said, smiling. "I am very optimistic, I never lose my hope. Hope is power, hope makes me smile, hope makes me live. I am a writer, a novelist, I need hope, I cannot live with a bleak attitude. So long as we have young people here and we go to Tahrir Square I will have hope. We live in a jungle; we don't live in a healthy society. It's about power, when the grandfather has money, prestige and power, he rapes the granddaughter, it's a matter of power. When we finish with this mentality – that it's not power that dominates, it's justice, freedom, love, equality – we have revolution, like in Tahrir Square, and we eradicate power."

In one of Egypt's neighbors in the Sahel they were close to ending their enslavement to the mentality of domination and power.

SEVENTEEN

SUCCESSFUL DEFIANCE

TUNIS, TUNISIA

I meet Mustafa and Kamal on Avenue Habib Bourguiba, where they protested in January 2011 to get rid of the dictator who had ruled their country with an iron fist for 23 years. Tunisia has changed a lot in the year since then. We ate at the Opium bar-restaurant, one of the many lining the French-style boulevard named after the dictator before Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. "We couldn't have done this before, no way," said Mustafa, a 25-year-old originally from Tabarka in the north of Tunisia. "I mean, the only thing I could have told you is how great Ben Ali is, what a good man he is." "If you wanted to talk politics in a bar and the police heard you, they will put you in prison," Kamal told me nonchalantly. "Now I can say what I want to you."

It was strange coming to Tunis and listening to the scale of repression and police abuse during the Ben Ali era. I had just never heard about it. Before this US/French-backed despot was overthrown, no one in the West seemed to care that we were propping up a police state in one of the UK's most popular tourist destinations. The US has provided $349 million in military aid since 1987 when Ben Ali came to power in a coup. The tyrant was trained at the former US Army intelligence school at Fort Holabird in Maryland, like so many of the world's monsters. But the next stage of western connivance in the subjugation of the Tunisian people was the widespread media and political fear over the democratically elected Al-Nahda Party, which was Islamist. The course from actively arming a kleptocratic dictator to pushing for the Tunisians to support "western values" is of course familiar. Franz Fanon wrote in *The Wretched of the Earth*: "As soon as the native begins to pull on his moorings, and to cause anxiety to the settler, he is handed over to well-meaning souls who … point out to him the specificity and wealth of Western values."[1] Any right-thinking Tunisian would, of course, see that the most consistent western value in their country is to *support dictators*. Initially, when people were getting shot by snipers on the streets of Tunis, Hillary Clinton, then Secretary of State, said the US "didn't want to take sides" and was worried about the effect of "unrest and instability" on the US relationship with Tunisia. In the end, over 200 perished. After the revolution won out, Clinton and France's President Nicolas Sarkozy moved on to praising "progress" in the country while also expressing apparent concern that Al-Nahda might impose Iranian-style dictatorship on the Tunisian people. (They didn't care when it was Pinochet-style dictatorship.)

Events followed the typical US imperial modus operandi during a popular uprising against one of its dictator satraps. It goes like this: public ambivalence about the protests alongside private support for the tyrant when it is unclear if the uprising will succeed. Then, when it looks as though the tyrant will not be able to hold on, a switch to public support for the uprising alongside private support for the same regime shorn of its now-discredited figurehead. Such a methodology worked in Egypt: the long-suffering Egyptians now have Mubarakism without Mubarak. Tunisia is different. As Fanon put it: those who were last are now first, while those who were first are now last (or in exile in Saudi Arabia in the case of Ben Ali). The fear of Al-Nahda was misplaced and based on western desire to remain in firm control. There are plenty of clear differences between Tunisia and Iran in 1979 when the revolution overthrew another western-backed torturing tyrant, the Shah. First, Al-Nahda had assembled a coalition including secular socialists and social democrats to form the government. The president, Moncef Marzouki, is a secular human rights activist who spent decades in the wilderness fighting the US-backed atrocities being committed against dissidents in Tunisia.

Second, Tunisian civil society is engaged with the process and will only grow. One of the retrograde patterns you see in a Middle East speckled with US-backed dictatorships is that Islamism is often the only avenue for expressing dislike of the current state of affairs. The space for secular left movements has been crushed since the pan-Arabism of Nasser in Egypt worried the US enough to extinguish the left across the region (helped along by an Israel fearful of the efficacy of the secular nationalism of Fatah in the Occupied Territories). Now that Ben Ali has gone, the lid has been taken off the boiling pot. There was space for young people – in fact, everyone – to breathe here, there were opportunities to engage freely with politics and to think outside of the box. And now outside that box the vista is broader than Islamism. It will take time – perhaps a couple of generations – but the secular left can now grow and will undoubtedly become more significant. Many of the revolutions of the Arab Spring have been led by the tech-savvy young secular left – particularly in Tunisia and Egypt with their large labor movements. Contrariwise, the Islamists – who in many ways had a symbiotic relationship with the brutal US-backed dictatorships they were at war with – will slowly become more irrelevant as these police states fade away. They will have less to feed on, and their policies will now stand the considerable test of governance.

Third, the military acted nobly in Tunisia, unlike in Egypt. Ben Ali fled after the military refused to murder their own people, making them wildly popular in the country. There is also little fear that they will launch a coup against the democracy the Jasmine Revolution created. “They are with the people” is a refrain heard often in Tunis. It is understandable: without them it is possible Ben Ali would still be in place and a river of blood would be flowing down Habib Bourguiba Avenue. In the Opium bar, Mustafa told me he voted for the CPR, a secular left-wing party headed by Mr Marzouki, because he thinks their program is good for the economy and women. But, he said, he doesn’t fear Al-Nahda. “I like them,” he added. Kamal, on the other hand, voted for Al-Nahda because he thinks they are “good people … They are not extreme. The Salafis are crazy, but they are not very important here.”

Clearly, what scared the West more than any Islamist is a secular revolutionary left opposed to the neoliberal order we set up over the past 40 years. That would really hurt the bottom line. Islamists themselves have often been quite welcoming to the Bretton Woods institutions and the neoliberal economic order. With the usual suspects now trying to impose those dictates on Tunisia, it was near impossible for the ruling parties to try something else (even if they wanted to). So far Tunisia has followed US and Bretton Woods dictates to the letter, privatizing many of its state-owned assets (at the same time plumping up Ben Ali's wallet) and eviscerating public institutions and subsidies for fuel and food. Many actually compare Al-Nahda to the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, and it is no secret that the AKP has been a dream for business and international capital. In their time in power, the AKP privatized a raft of public assets, including Tekel, the state-owned tobacco and alcohol company, which it agreed to sell off as part of the structural adjustments attached to a $16 billion loan agreement with the IMF. Before Erdogan started acting like the new sultan, the business press was in raptures about the AKP. This was why I worried for Tunisia – not because of Islamists, but because of neoliberals. As Fanon put it: "The apotheosis of independence is transformed into the curse of independence, and the colonial power through the immense resources of coercion condemns the young nation to regression." Or, in fewer words, take an independent course and starve.

With the period of dictatorship in Tunisia over, the economy is now the big issue, with 45 percent unemployment. It's what concerns Mustafa and Kemal, both students. "I want the government to help people with jobs," Mustafa said. "Maybe open some more universities." Bretton Woods dictates have proved a disaster around the world as a development model. Al-Nahda should look elsewhere, for its own survival. Tunis itself is unrepresentative of the country at large – the further you get from the capital and the coastal tourist regions, the worse the poverty. The government will have to deliver relatively soon – or face more unrest. The spark for the revolution was Mohamed Bouazizi (who now has a street named after him), who set himself on fire in Sidi Bouzid, a poor town 200km from Tunis. This is how it started, and it could erupt again if nothing improves. Expectations are running high. As Mustafa told me: "Before the only thing I could do was eating, drinking, smoking, and sleep. Now there's more." The fear has now also drained from the people. "Something in our hearts snapped," Kamal added as he sipped a beer. "People didn't care any more. People were telling the military to shoot them." He added quickly: "WikiLeaks helped people realize how corrupt Ben Ali and his family was."

As a thank you for helping get rid of this tyrant, the WikiLeaks leaker Chelsea Manning is now facing three decades in prison. Meanwhile, the US politicians and policymakers who propped up Ben Ali for 23 years are talking heads on US cable TV, able to laud the Arab Spring without irony.

At the same time, the great liberal President Barack Obama instructed his Department of Justice to launch a case against Julian Assange whose bravery (alongside Manning) helped unleash this unprecedented wave of people power across the Middle East. They are “high-tech terrorists”. The upside-down world.

THE GLOW OF REVOLUTION

In the aftermath of the overthrow of the US-backed dictator Ben Ali, there were immediate successes – committees were established for reform of the media, corruption and human rights. Freedom of speech blossomed: it was now possible to debate the many pressing political, economic, cultural and social issues. For the first time there was an election managed by an independent committee composed of civil society figures, involving people from all social groups; there was also important civil society work, with hundreds of new organizations founded working on human rights issues, and also new issues like citizenship education, media activism, internet mobilization of young people and tolerance.

I went to see Abdel Basset Ben Hassen, the head of the Arab Human Rights Foundation, in the east of Tunis. “I think the revolution was also about questioning what international relations we need for our country,” he told me. “This new order should be based on more equality, more respect. I have been working in human rights since 1990. I think that during the dictatorship era the European and western countries had not been very strong against Ben Ali’s regime. I think that the Tunisian people have been dignified by the revolution. Human rights were reintroduced in our history – before the revolution our image was really very low. I think that we are giving western countries and the entire world another image of how to be Arab, how to be Muslim, and to fight for democracy and freedoms.” The slogans on the streets were now about civil and political rights, and economic and social rights: the right to work, the right to health, the right to education. It was also about equality between social groups and between the interior of Tunisia and the capital, between the cities and rural areas. The revolution put these issues on the table, but they weren’t just Tunisian issues, these were global issues. “Working on human rights for the last two years was a kind of resistance," said Hassen. "Human rights work was a way to resist oppression and we trained thousands of Arabs on how to document human rights violations, how to write a report, how to organize a campaign. This was one achievement – how to resist."

What happened in the Arab countries was not just decades of dictatorship; it was centuries of a vertical approach to power. The Tunisian revolution opened an era of revolutions and reform and it will be long. All the social actors tried to redefine their roles after the disappearance of the old regimes. "We were waiting for an era to see that the Arab will claim their freedom, to end these ugly and horrible regimes," said Hassen. "We were waiting to give all this potential locked up in these countries, but at the same time we are conscious that it will be difficult. You know when you open the door to all these changes you will have positive tools to use, but you have all the problems that were waiting." Maybe what has helped Tunisia more than other Arab countries caught up in tumult was that the civil society in Tunisia was still strong. There was the powerful UGTT union federation, the Tunisian League for Human Rights, the judges' union, the lawyers' union, and the journalists' union. Young people when they graduated and went to work joined a union because it was the only place where you could criticize the government and not get arrested. Tunisia is actually one of oldest countries in the world: for nearly 3,000 years there has been a state in Tunis, Carthage. It was the first Arab state with an ambassador in the US, and it has a history of reformism. In 1846, slavery was forbidden in Tunisia, 17 years before the US, and two years before France. It also had the first constitution in the Arab world, while in 1956 it proclaimed the first law for the family, liberating women and abolishing polygamy. It was also the first Arab country to have a strong workers' movement, formally founded in 1927. Civic engagement and education are deeply rooted in the country and the populace is also educated. In the 1970s the government dedicated nearly 40 percent of the state budget to education: and when you introduce education you introduce criticism.

THE NEW GENERATION

These civil organizations and even the elites suffered a lot under Ben Ali's dictatorial regime. "There was also a big difference between the young generation and Ben Ali's generation," said Mr Hassen. "Those between 18 and 30 years old, and not only in Tunisia, said, 'We cannot accept these kind of old out-of-date regimes. The regimes in the Arab countries were so out of date, and the most stupid and totally closed regime was in Tunisia, and people at some time they cannot accept any more this kind of thing." Tunisians felt that they were not only oppressed by the police state but that their dignity was being attacked by a regime, by a family, that was ruining the country. The Ben Ali family were occupying and stealing everything. In many ways, the first uprising was against this attack on dignity. "You can accept the oppression but at some stage you cannot accept that your dignity is under attack," said Hassen. It started in Sidi Bouzid because the trade union was powerful and the elites were against the regime. "It was possible because all the social categories participated, and it was possible because the slogans of the revolution, it was about dignity, freedom – it was not religion, about tribal issues, about family, about regions, and this made it difficult for Ben Ali to stop this, because it was about universal things." The internal mechanisms of the regime were very weak at the end; despite the regime's strong appearance, it was a lie. The situation was explosive and when the first demonstration happened in Sidi Bouzid, the police did not try to stop it. It lasted for two days, and then other small cities followed. There was no political reaction, but confrontations were developing all around the country, becoming more and more violent. Then the police supported the protesters. Ben Ali's party did not hold counter-demonstrations, and the dictator was completely isolated.

I spoke to Ahmed Bouazzi whose party was in the resistance against the dictatorship, and worked to weaken the government of Ben Ali. "We were in a long struggle against Ben Ali," he said. "The West is scared of course because Nahda is working for a more independent national policy, more independence for Tunisia; fortunately, they are defending the interests of Tunisia better than under the Ben Ali era, and I am optimistic. I have a big confidence in the Tunisian people; in our history, the people showed that it is a pioneer. It is progressive. The West is scared of Islamism. I think they are still trying in Tunisia to get rid of Nahda and I think it's a big mistake, because Tunisians are pioneers, liberals, they are also very patriotic, they don’t accept that someone else makes their politics here, so Nahda will gain from this. Unless there is a coup, and a coup would be a disaster for the country, you have Algeria where 200,000 people died in a civil war.” He said further that the revolution had a perceptible effect on the soul of its citizens. “It’s very strange to be free. I was thinking about it today when I went to the Ministry of Interior, which is where the torture happened. People changed very fast, they were speaking very freely, and there was no auto-censorship. It is very different now, if I meet plain clothes policemen I am not afraid because they will not arrest me. Before that I was afraid because they could arrest me and I might spend I don’t know how long in prison until I got freed. Now it’s different, the relationship between citizens and policemen is completely different, there is none of the fear of policemen, it happened very quickly.”

The wall of fear had fallen, you could perceive it, and you could feel it in the streets. Tunisians were not silent any more; they didn’t respect authority like they used to do. There were sit-ins, protests. The Tunisian mind had been freed.

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1 www.openanthropology.org/fanonviolence.htm

EIGHTEEN

CULTURE AS A WEAPON OF RESISTANCE

WHAT’S ART GOT TO DO WITH IT?

> “A people’s art is the genesis of their freedom.”
>
> *Claudia Jones, pioneering political activist, 1915–64*

When Soraya Morayef, an activist and budding art curator, walked into Townhouse gallery in Cairo in the aftermath of the ousting of Hosni Mubarak, she expected the usual brush-off. Her friends had previously pitched exhibitions of their passion: graffiti and stencil-based work. Each time they had been turned away. But not now. “When I approached them I really didn’t think they would do it,” she told me. “I had no credentials, I had no background. But now there is this increasing new interest in graffiti and street art, that’s why they eventually took me.” Morayef was the beneficiary of a sea-change in the Egyptian art world since the country’s revolution sparked an explosion of paint and posters on walls in cities around the country. “The revolution has massively impacted the art scene in Egypt, it’s now a lot more diverse and there’s a lot of work inspired or based on the revolution,” said Morayef.

The same pattern has been seen across the Arab world as people shook their chains in the Arab Spring. Western intelligence officers no longer have to gauge the temperature of the “Arab street” through clandestine interviews; they just have to look at the walls around the cities. In Arabic, it is called “*el-fann midan*” – literally translated, “art in the square”. The mixed experiences of euphoria, mourning and loss have been creatively rendered all over the cities of the Levant.

“Art has played a major role in the Egyptian revolution, for the most part because street art and graffiti as in a western form simply didn’t exist, now it’s everywhere,” said Omar Ozalp, co-owner of the Articulate Baboon gallery on the outskirts of Cairo. “More importantly, each one carries a message, be it political or social, which for once has the Egyptian population thinking.” The other co-owner of the gallery, Adam Maroud, added: “Corner after corner after corner was suddenly emblazoned with a battle cry in rushed lettering or a perfect stencil of pop culture political satire and it was beautiful and stirring to watch it spread. Nothing to me personifies creative freedom more than a bold graffiti piece on a very public wall.”

And it’s not just the Middle East. Art has flourished around the world in this revolutionary torrent – from Haiti to Chile to China – as people fought back against totalitarian governments and tried to make sense of broken societies using brushes as well as bricks. For many young people, street art became the “perfect crime” when living in a closed dictatorship with no free press. If you do not get caught in the act, most of the time there is no way for the authorities to track you down.

“I think the creative output during this unfinished revolution is an integral part in its continuation and the direction it’s bound to take,” said Ganzeer, the most prominent street artist in Egypt, who was arrested for making posters at the height of the protests. His colorful paintings of martyrs killed by the security forces dot Cairo, as do his montages juxtaposing brutality inflicted on protesters with information about US aid to the military regime. Ganzeer added that the move out of galleries, as artists take their work to the people, also represents a “democratization” of the creative arts. “The streets are for everybody. The gallery is for an art-seeking niche. It’s very wrong for the streets to be so open to the brainwashing effects of capitalist-driven advertisers and so closed off to honest art. Galleries need to exist, but it shouldn’t be the only way to be able to experience art.”

In crisis-wracked Europe, the *indignados* in Spain, as well as young people in Germany, Greece and France, also used their city walls as canvases to get their message across. Evol is a German artist who had a gallery show in London, but the 39-year-old’s main work is stenciling windows on concrete slabs slung out on the street, turning them into drab housing estates. “Life is a reflection of the circumstances I live in,” he said. “Whatever happens to me I will try to transport into art.” Ganzeer feels something similar: “I feel the core purpose of creative arts lies in its social relevance.”

Street art has captured the imagination of the younger generation of artists in the West over the past decade, symbolized by British artist Banksy. But while the anonymous Bristolian has garnered much of the attention, there is now a dedicated phalanx of scribblers working alongside him – and their ranks have ballooned and “globalized”. For many of the new generation, the period where the pursuit of money appeared to rule all forms of creativity – viz. the canonization of Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst – is over. The postmodern ironies of the Young British Artists movement have been destroyed by the immediacy of the human crisis happening around the world. Young artists now feel the need to reflect on the chaos of global events through their art. They are not seeking to engage with the world retrospectively but as part of the ongoing struggles, hoping to bring about real, tangible change. In this sense, it is not just the venue that has changed – from the gallery to the street – but the content, too.

“Before the revolution we were falling into clichés and trying to express things between brackets,” said Khaled Hafez, a prominent Egyptian artist in the traditional gallery setting. “But since 9/11, more and more political issues are being expressed in art installation practices. The Arab Spring has really accelerated that.” Resistance artists are the modern-day heirs to a tradition that goes back hundreds of years and boasts some of the all-time greats, including Picasso and Goya. But even with such a rich and proud history, the prospects today are more exciting than ever. Art has been democratized by the capitulation of the tyranny that the highbrow crowd used to impose on aesthetic pursuits, and a revolution in technology that can put a camera, spray can or paintbrush in the hand of any kid with a thirst for creativity.

YOU CAN’T BUY THIS

The recent upsurge in revolutionary street art has rudely challenged many of the sacred cows in traditional art circles, paralleling the population’s political awakening. Since the seminal 1999 anti-World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, there has been a resurgence of forms of art engaged in social and political protest. Ideas of what constitutes art, where art is shown and who does art were all shaken violently. But the fight against the gallery-based model has been largely successful, and the traditional art world is now playing catch-up. More traditional, gallery-based art elites in the West have pushed back – and this is no different in Egypt. “We should remember that the Middle East is still conservative,” said Hafez. “Street art is not gallery art, but we are in a revolutionary situation, and it helped mobilize people. There was fabulous graffiti art, and personally, I think change is impending.” He added: “I have learnt a lot from the younger generation like Ganzeer.” Ganzeer agreed, and said the traditional sectors of the art world in Egypt have shot themselves in the foot by not showing more enthusiasm for the new generation. “I think the majority of the traditional art elite have proven the inability of their art to speak or relate to society via their inability to artistically engage in the revolution,” he said. “Many may have engaged as citizens, and protested just like everybody else, but few have been able to engage artistically.”

The direct engagement with societal issues in this way is not wholly new in the art world. It relates back to the work of the Russian Constructivists, such as Alexander Rodchenko and El Lissitzky, who wanted to make an art of constructed abstract elements that represented the movements in society and of the Bolshevik revolution. They stopped making one-off art works to produce printed material, posters, pamphlets, and placards that could be used by the Russian people. Their work was later banned under Stalin, who wanted a much more dictatorial form of art, or pure propaganda that didn’t engage in more avant-garde abstraction. We don’t have Stalin now, but we do have corporations who own all the available space in our public arena to advertise their products.

Political artists following on from the Constructivists include German anti-fascist artist John Heartfield, who devised a form of photomontage that became a weapon against the rise of Nazism. His work was so powerful that he was high on the Nazi hit list and had to flee Germany. In one of his most famous montages he showed Hitler doing his customary salute and a giant businessman handing him money, highlighting that behind all Hitler’s socialist rhetoric it was big business that supported his rise to power. The image wasn't shown in an art gallery: it was on the front cover of the German weekly magazine AIZ. In many ways, "street art" goes all the way back to the caves of Lascaux, where primitive men (and women) decorated their walls with pictures of horses, stags, and bison. Back then, there was no Egyptian security force or Chinese intelligence officers to imprison the artists. There are now.

Of course, art cannot initiate social transformation by itself, but it is increasingly vital in expanding the imaginations of those working toward it. Knowledge of how the world operates that comes solely from newspaper articles and academic books often affects our most cynical and fatalistic impulses; these impulses are pervasive among young people, and they get more frequent, not less, as the bad news comes faster. Looking at an image that connects events in ways you haven't yet conceived, or an installation that reconstructs in visceral form something you've read about, can propel this cynicism felt by the younger generation toward action. And it has. The possibilities for artistic collaboration and the ability to say something about the world without needing to steep it in the depressing banalities of everyday political discourse are providing a sanctuary for the younger generations, fed up with what is often called "mainstream" politics.

Some people say that all art is political. This is like saying that all politicians are political: it's technically true, but in reality the majority tailor their beliefs to the exigencies of their respective political systems and become model commissars. Power is the motivator, and the politics falls into line after. The same goes for art's own commissars whose work is conceived and sold as a commodified product, complete with conscious branding and the related newspaper fanfare about "controversy" or "celebrity buyers". There is nothing "political" about it; in fact, the branding is the antithesis of political because rather than questioning the contemporary situation, it accepts all its presuppositions – no matter how violent or unjust – and seeks to ride on the froth of money and fame that tops this wave. True political art, as distinguished from its banal and transient cousin, is trying to change the world as it is rather than observe it. It seeks to delve into the nightmares of the contemporary consciousness, investigate the deep cavities and expose the most diligently repressed secrets and terrors. It reformulates images and signs and gives us all a means through which to reinterpret the world. Joining the dots becomes revolutionary, which surely says less about the art than the prevailing ideology, which allows us to live happily without making the connections between the violence we unleash and the corpses all over the Middle East, East Asia, Africa and Latin America that are our testimony.

SHAKING OFF THE STRAITJACKET

I interviewed a number of famous musicians and actors who have strident anti-war, anti-racket politics. The lead singer of Massive Attack, Robert Del Naja, has always been extremely political. During the run-up to the Iraq war – with Thom Yorke of Radiohead – he took out a full-page advert in *NME* denouncing military action. He told me: “How we get our culture, how we get our politics spelt out to us, how the news is read to us, how our choices are laid out, does come through the media. These are the things that people should be more concerned with.” Why is this artificial barrier erected between politics and art, then? “It suits a lot of people’s business and political interests to try to separate the two when actually they are actually joined at the hip,” he said astutely. “I think sometimes when you’re trying to present music for music’s sake, sometimes you don’t want it to be politically charged because you want it to be about a simple music experience, an escape. Other times it is a very integral part of it, definitely.”

Gael García Bernal is a Mexican actor who has never shied away from giving political opinions, and speaks with real knowledge about the politics of Latin America and further afield too. The man who famously played Che Guevara in *The Motorcycle Diaries* film is unabashedly “of the left”, and has been an activist as far back as the 1994 Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, on the first day of the NAFTA. “I’ve been told, ‘You’re an actor, you cannot talk about politics, you know nothing about politics’,” he told me. “There still exists that mythology that no one who is not an ‘expert’ in politics can have an opinion on politics. It’s ridiculous because we’re such political animals.” He added: “As an actor it’s about exploring these uncertain areas rather than having a preconceived idea or answer. It’s more about provocation and asking the terrible questions. My position therefore is sometimes a bit greyish because I don’t buy into the pamphlet. What is motivating is when the audiences ask new questions, get new perceptions, not when you give them opinions digested, the complete answer, that has another shape.” Bernal is optimistic about the future of Latin America, especially the “pink tide” of democratic left-wing governments that has swept the region over the past decade, which shows no sign of being turned back (yet). “Like [Slavoj] Žižek says, Bush deserves a Nobel Peace Prize for having eradicated the hegemony of the United States, he singlehandedly completely destroyed it,” Bernal said. “Now it’s a whole different world. Argentina, for example, most of its business is with China, and Brazil as well. There is a lot of hope in that sense, it’s not the world we grew up in, it’s a whole different thing. I think that the left in Latin America still have lots of debts from the 1960s, ’70s, ’80s, things they have to complete, to deliver. Argentina is the only country that has looked back on the people that were part of the military coup and junta and put them in prison, it’s the only country that has done that, that is reason enough to support [President] Cristina Kirchner.” Bernal is unusual in the world of entertainment – he has a political opinion and can back it up at length and with real knowledge. It’s a rare quality in a world where some sort of bland, non-specific “social activism” is now a must for most celebrities, but questioning the PR lines fed to them by their handlers is almost non-existent. “I would love athletes, sports figures, to be more political,” he said. “Remember Socrates the Brazilian player was very critical of the junta there. Or the guys in ’68 here in Mexico City with black power. It adds so much depth to them, it’s incredible when they do it, but right now you don’t see them involved in anything.”

Damon Albarn, the lead singer of Blur and Gorillaz, has been at the forefront of the anti-war and debt cancellation movements. When I visited him at his house in south London, he told me: “The war in Iraq was the result of our inability to express what I think was a consensus that this was a terrifying idea and a very badly thought-out one.” He is particularly scathing about his fellow musicians who showed a shameful cowardice in not joining him and Massive Attack’s Robert Del Naja in speaking out. “It was very difficult to find anyone. And I don’t want to name names because they are people who I respect but for some reason, they were very reticent to stand with us … A lot of people who you would now associate with being anti-war at that particular point didn’t seem to be prepared to do it.”

Tom Morello, the guitarist of the band Rage Against the Machine, once remarked: “A good song should make you wanna tap your feet and get with your girl. A great song should destroy cop cars and set fire to the suburbs. I’m only interested in writing great songs.” When I met Radiohead’s Thom Yorke I asked him his opinion on this seemingly fraught relationship between the political and the creative. “I wonder if you did a Venn diagram of how they coincided, or if you did a straw poll of their sympathies in terms of art what you’d get back,” he said. “I guess it depends on how broad you see the definitions of politics, and how broad you see the definition of art or music. If you see art and music as something that extends beyond this little bit of plastic that goes in your CD machine, and if you see politics as something that’s happening not just in the Houses of Parliament, then I think you can’t use that argument at all – it’s utter bollocks.” But “you’ll never change them,” Yorke said when I asked about the temptation to lobby politicians. “They’re going to get more from you than you get from them, generally speaking.” Despite his evident passion, Yorke seemed reluctant to assume any role as a voice of his generation. “I’d dearly love to not be interested in it at all,” he said. “It is ultimately a very sterile, barren, place to spend your time thinking of things. Even back in college, you get involved in it initially and then you see all the petty wranglings going on, and you think, This is so pathetic, and you want to get the fuck out really.” When I asked Yorke about the awareness of the American populace of their country’s nefarious actions in the world, he exclaimed: “They have no idea! But I think the Iraq thing has been interesting – the mainstream press took a long time to come around, but when they did come round it was a big thing. When they did start, they were exposing it for what it was.”

ART AND POLITICS

The interface of politics and art has always been a tense one, with some of the more conservative elements in the art world accusing political art of being “agit-prop”. They argue that when you engage directly with politics, you deplete your sophistication. But things are changing. “There is a very reactionary strand in the art world that says that you shouldn’t make work that's overtly political," said Peter Kennard, a senior lecturer in photography at the Royal College of Art in London, one of Britain's foremost political artists, and my father. "You can imply, but that's also to do with the art world being about selling work." He added: "Our understanding of art has become over-aestheticized and I think the only thing that can change that, which is changing it, is the pressure of crisis in the world." If you look at Kennard's work, as well as being eerily beautiful, it is bleak and brutal. The poor and destitute scream out from the financial pages, arms dealers play roulette with million-dollar weapons, and medals are awarded to US and UK soldiers for war crimes. And yet, despite the pathos of his work, he retains a Gramscian "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will" type philosophy: the belief that critical art has the power to transform the world and attitudes. "People do think critically about the world through art," he said. "Because they can see the images they get in the news transformed, separate images connected up to give new meaning to them, to show how things connect in the world. So with photomontage you've got actual images of things that happened – someone took that image – and by putting it with other images you can then create the connections to show how the world is actually put together. In the media, we see everything disconnected – the adverts, the news stories – everything is disconnected and all over the place. When you put them together you can then show where the link is and that is very important."

In places like Palestine the use of artistic expression to make sense of the same disconnected world is very common. The most moving and powerful testament to the plight of the occupied peoples in the West Bank and Gaza has come in exhibitions like "100 Shaheed – 100 Lives" which opened in February 2001 and was a reaction to the escalation of Israeli violence in October 2000. The exhibition aimed to celebrate the ordinary lives of the first 100 victims of this violence by featuring everyday objects, gathered by a group of field researchers, that were held dear by each of the dead. This example in Palestine is a symptom of the gradual politicization of creativity, in literature as well as art, all over the world. "I think people are not so ironical and cynical now," Kennard said. "People are trying to work out how they relate as individuals to the world because the world is impinging on our lives so much – we can't deny it any more that there is a crisis going on in the world, so it is impinging on the work they do. It doesn't mean they do very direct images about it, but certainly that anxiety about how to live and what to do in the world is coming through in the work."

Obviously, being politically strident always carries risks, even in ostensibly free societies. Artists have always been regarded with suspicion by those who wield economic or political power – particularly when they are direct and trenchant in their work. Free creation has always been the direct antithesis of the cold logic of power.

A few years ago Kennard was commissioned by Damon Albarn to make a montage as part of mobile phone company Orange's "Light Up London" campaign. His photomontage of the Virgin Mary with the logo of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in place of a halo and the earth for a head never went up because it was censored by Orange who deemed it offensive to "grandmothers and small children". "All big shows now in galleries have to be sponsored because there isn't enough public money going in so they have to sponsor them," said Kennard. "The sponsor wants to get an image across that tallies in with their company so they like edgy Damien Hirst-type things which aren't specific, but if you're politically specific in what you do it's very difficult to get sponsorship and then it's very difficult to get a big public exhibition, so sponsorship does have a knock-on effect. It is much more quiet and insidious than censorship but it means that certain things don't get seen. So there is a façade that they are encouraging dissent but when it becomes too serious they cut it off." Does he think that the need for sponsorship blunts dissent? "Well, people work outside the system – they make their own spaces, they work collectively, they work in the street, and they work in smaller spaces," he said. "So there are lots of different ways to get work out. And there are lots of people working collaboratively." Is this censorship a new phenomenon? "No, it's always been like that. This century, very political work is being kept under covers – a lot of really good work is only allowed to come when the person is dead and the issues they are dealing with are over. It's not new but it's more powerful now in the sense that private money is so vital to the art world now that it's really difficult to work without it." As Kennard wrote in his comment piece for the *Guardian*: "censorship is something one doesn't speak of in the free-market – it brings back memories of Lady Chatterley and Lord Chamberlain."

The impingement of politics and violence on the everyday lives of artists may be new in post-9/11 England, but in Northern Ireland it has been this way for decades. As the Northern Irish artist Liam Kelly wrote: “In the North of Ireland over the intensive period of political troubles (1968–1998 and the first IRA ceasefire) landscape was not something to be celebrated but interrogated and petitioned.” The themes of land and territory come up time and time again as you look at resistance art in this troubled spot. Take Willie Doherty whose 1987 installation piece. In the Walls arranges text to settle over sections of a horizontal panoramic view of the Bogside area of Derry in daylight. This makes it so that, in the words of Kelly, “we/the artist or the colonized/the colonizer take in the view and take up a position”.

The collapse of the Argentine economy in 2001 also saw an explosion of artistic creativity. As the middle classes were depleted and 50 percent of the population plunged below the poverty line, many citizens began to use the objects and spaces around them to create art that spoke of their grievances and desire for change. A collective of artists, based in the coastal city of Mar del Plata, began taking over buildings that had become derelict as a result of the economic crash, and creating installations in them.

Similar things are happening in the Chiapas region of Mexico where the Zapatistas are fighting for land rights (as we have seen). Gustavo CP is a famous muralist from the Zapatista-controlled territories of southeast Mexico, and he is often in Europe showing the work he and others are putting together as part of one of the most exciting popular movements in the world. He said: “As in all acts in our lives, the ways of relating to each other, and the ways we make our dreams and put them together, are part of creating our cultural values. And to put them up in the walls, like with these murals, is not an easy job. It is not a one-person job either, or a job for just a specific group of people. It is a job for a whole society that by nature impacts on certain people, who, in return want to contribute to community. In this way a dynamic and enriching relationship of collective creation takes place, which can lead to many other dreams and possibilities”.[1]

In places like Afghanistan under the Taliban “photography was to all intents and purposes banned”, according to Thomas Dworzak who visited Afghanistan as a photojournalist in 2001. All depictions of living creatures, including animals, were erased from the public eye, and photographic portraiture was illegal. Studio photographers in Kandahar told Dworzak that members of the Taliban would come into the studio when passport photography was allowed again and would pose with make-up and guns in front of garish synthetic backdrops such as gardens full of flowers. These images have now become artworks in their own right, saying more about the narcissism and immorality of Taliban rule than a million words. The indestructible human instinct for art and images is evinced clearly by this vignette, and you hear stories about all kinds of resistance art coming from those who are living under stultifying dictatorships all over the world.

Since the earthquake struck in January 2010, leaving a whole society traumatized, one artist has been out decorating Port-au-Prince with beautiful murals and graffiti pieces as a way of expressing his own hopes and fears for the country. "I was never a big fan of politics," Jerry Rosembert told me, but added that the extent of the trauma in Haiti means he has had to engage. "I am obliged to commentate on my country because things are bad, and for me, it is the best way of giving my ideas worth and value." His art is just another way of communicating a message – a cry to be heard in a society rendered silent by a natural disaster. "Certain people do this their way sometimes in the newspapers or on the TV, but the graffiti, this represents me more, and this is a type of commentary I enjoy a lot."

The Art Spring has stretched to South America, too, with the Chilean student protests inspiring a surge in graffiti and cartoons on the streets of Santiago and other cities. Brazilian political cartoonist Carlos Latuff went to Chile during the protests and said he saw art students and passersby producing cartoons and paintings on the walls in support of the uprising to an extent he'd never experienced in Latin America. The cross-border pollination of art has been huge. Latuff is in high demand in Egypt and across other parts of the Middle East. Even before the January 25 protest that began the Egyptian revolution, Latuff was receiving requests for illustrations from protesters. "This was pretty amazing," he said. "I usually produce stuff and it will be used, but this was different – they were making specific requests. They felt cartoons and art could help their campaign."

At the beginning of the civil war in Syria, the most famous political cartoonist in the country, Ali Farzat, was attacked at night in his car in Damascus. "We will break your hands so that you'll stop drawing," the thugs told him, before doing exactly that. He was dumped by the roadside.

“This is just a warning,” they told him. In China, Ai Weiwei, the iconic artist whose work has bravely taken on themes of repression in his home country, was arrested by the authorities and held incommunicado for months on spurious charges, which still stand. In Honduras, the first two people arrested after the 2009 coup were President Manuel Zelaya and cartoonist Allan McDonald, who had published cartoons in support of the deposed president. In 2003, the US government asked for a tapestry version of Picasso’s anti-war masterpiece Guernica, which is on permanent display at the UN, to be covered with a blue curtain when Colin Powell made his notorious error-filled speech about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and the need for invasion. It seems counter-intuitive. Why would the most powerful country in the world care about a piece of art decorating a room at the UN? And why would the world’s newest superpower care about one man making piles of seeds in a studio in Beijing? “Artists, especially cartoonists, can make it easy for everyone to understand a difficult political statement,” said Carlos Latuff, whose cartoons have become an accompaniment to uprisings all over the world. “We have the ability to make fun of dictators and, of course, dictators are not fond of humor.”

ART ON THE STREETS

There is some debate as to what the term “street art” actually means. It is an appellation that describes a genre of art rather than work that is done outside. But Swoon, one of the few women in the field, thinks this is wrong. “For me, if I’m working outside, then fine, call it street art, but if I’m working inside, then it’s an installation,” she said. “For me it doesn’t seem useful.” Many practitioners believe the label is another way of demeaning an art form that is encroaching on a nervous elite. “Sometimes it seems that people need a name for something, if they don’t know it by a name they can’t grasp it,” said Evol. “I dislike the expression.” As Proudhon reminded us a century ago, property is theft, and using private property as a canvas to express yourself is a way of reclaiming privatized wealth and rendering it public. In that critical moment, the canvas of some bank building or shop front becomes yours, or ours. Ours because graffiti is one of the most altruistic art forms – colorful and complex pieces are put up for our benefit while we stroll the streets, at considerable financial and sometimes legal costs to the artist. Take, for example, advertising, which is everywhere – all over buildings, walls, transport, schools. This stuff is there purely to manipulate and make money out of us, but when advertising sneaks its way into every nook and cranny of our public and private spaces, there isn’t a law enforcement agency to be seen.

Artists like Banksy, meanwhile, haven’t been able to resist the zombification of their art by the mainstream. This process was called “repressive tolerance” by Herbert Marcuse and “the society of the spectacle”, by Situationist Guy Debord. It is a danger to all artists trying to subvert the racket while working within the racket. Work which started as a critique of war and social inequality can be brought into the mainstream and commodified and sold to the people of whom it was initially critical, emptied of its message. Naomi Klein mentions in her book *No Logo*, which was published in the weeks following Seattle, that Nike had begun employing young graffiti artists to graffiti Nike posters to give them more street-cred. With these corporate behemoths inhaling all creativity and co-opting any anti-establishment ideas, it’s a struggle for the artists who don’t want to end up making decoration for Goldman Sach’s lobby. When Diego Rivera, the famed Mexican muralist, painted a fresco at the behest of the Rockefellers for their center in Manhattan in the 1930s, he included a May Day workers’ parade and an image of Lenin. Rockefeller was deeply angry and asked him to remove Lenin; when Rivera refused, he ordered the destruction of the fresco.

The active repression of totalitarianism and the slow-burn repression of corporate control should be challenged by artists with integrity enough to continue standing outside the mainstream. Art and creative expression, because they exist beyond the normal coordinates of control, have the power to scare those at the top. The art-industry intellectuals and academics who have proposed for so long that political art is merely crude agitprop or literary doggerel are being made to look stupid by a new generation of artists who don’t see their role as making pretty pictures and designing clever concepts for boardrooms. They are using creativity as an integral part of a justice movement that is inchoate but growing in substance and definition. They have internalized Brecht’s timeless dictum that “Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer to shape it”.

The explosion of technology and social media has been a vital corollary to this movement. Facebook and Twitter have not just allowed activists to organize, but have also provided a key tool for disseminating pictures. They have accelerated this “democratization” of art by making it much easier to circumvent the gallery, which had previously been a prerequisite to building an audience. “Especially in the past year I have been using Twitter and Facebook to spread the artworks, which has played an important role in getting them out,” said Carlos Latuff. “If I upload a single cartoon it takes 15 minutes to get sometimes 3,000 hits, depending on the issue. It’s amazing how you put up a single cartoon and it spreads like a fire.” Moving outside of the gallery also changes the audience. In a revolutionary situation, the aim is often to reach as many people as possible. Street art is in some way inherently political, in a way gallery art isn’t. The people who see it have no choice in the matter – unlike those who venture into a gallery on a Sunday afternoon. Now, the wall is the gallery, and the audience has multiplied exponentially. “I use the space for everyone who is living or passing by there, I’m naturally speaking to anyone passing by,” said Evol. “No one asked me to do it so I can’t ask for a reaction in a certain way.”

Krzysztof Wodiczko is a Polish artist who teaches at Harvard University and is famous for his projections, including projecting a swastika on the South African embassy in London during the apartheid era. He has used his art to further the causes he believes in for the past 40 years. But, he said, he’s never been this excited. “In ’68 there was legitimate criticism that art was being too conservative in its choice of media, and therefore its capacity to reach those who really needed reaching. Artists were indulging in some posters, but what was needed was something to engage the mass media.” Now, he said, “the whole cultural geography of resistance benefits from mobile communication. Even though authorities will try to censor it, there will be ways around it with other inventions.”

CULTURE OCCUPIED

At the height of the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York, I was on a night march across the Brooklyn Bridge when we all suddenly felt like dissident superheroes. As we looked up, the Verizon building that stands at the foot of the bridge began to be illuminated with projections – exactly like those calling on Batman when he was needed to take on evil in Gotham City. A huge “99percent” was flashed up along with slogans like “Another World is Possible” and “Occupy Earth – we are winning”. Cheers went up among the protesters, but no one knew who was doing it. The big, impenetrable corporate office of Verizon – which was under pressure over its treatment of striking workers – was being hijacked and there was nothing the police or the company could do about it. Rumors flew about who the projectors were, but in the following days they were revealed as the Dawn of Man, a production company based in the city, which had been around for years but was only now doing directly political work. Like so many others, the uprisings of 2011 had pushed them into engaging for the first time. “Personally, I have been inspired,” said Max Nova, a young artist from Colorado and one-half of the Dawn of Man collective. “Not just to be political, but to do work that is directly focused on making a change, spreading awareness about important issues.” The Occupy movement has been synonymous with sign-making and art installations from the beginning. The first thing you noticed when arriving at Zuccotti Park was that everyone had their own signs, some scrawled on pizza boxes, some professionally printed photomontages. There was an evident need to creatively express dissatisfaction rather than just shout about it. Nova said the projections that night were made from a private residence. “We had cops looking into the apartment, but they couldn’t get in without a warrant,” he said. “It is interesting how art has become a fundamental factor,” he continued. “If you look at working groups in New York Occupy Wall Street, the arts and culture one is vastly larger than the other groups. A lot of artists find themselves drawn to this.”

Krzysztof Wodiczko actually draws a distinction between two different types of political art – the direct and indirect. “My experience in Poland under the previous regime was that because it had this image of an open system, or a system with a human face that transformed itself into more of democracy, it was in fact, very scared of dissent that may contradict this. So artists were allowed to speak, to deal with politics, as long as they were doing this indirectly, in a metaphoric way. Once they move into more of a direct link, or people recognize them as political activists, at the same time as artists, then they will be in jail, or prevented from speaking or communicating." Latuff is an example of this. He is banned from Israel because he has made cartoons critical of the government's treatment of Palestinians. In Brazil, he has been arrested three times for producing his pieces. "I believe in what Che Guevara called internationalism, solidarity with people," he said. "If I've got a skill, I think it's necessary to put this skill at the service of the social movement. The artist cannot ignore art as a tool for change. Especially not now."

The co-option of culture by the resistance, it seems, is the most potent example of how the fight against the racket is real, global and interlinked. From Occupy protesters to Palestinians resisting the oppression of the Israeli state, the racket is under joint attack from inside and outside its headquarters in the United States of America. The victims of this system – the 99 percent of humanity made into serfs – are seeing that they have more in common with people across national boundaries than they do with the racketeers at the top of their own society. Like these dissident artists, we must use all the available tools for change to smash the racket, crush its criminal syndicate and build a fair future. We all have a role to play. To paraphrase Arundhati Roy, now is the time to stop adoring our oppressors, who are the Living Dead, and learn to love ourselves. You know how it works: arm yourself and join the War of Independence to sever us from the racket once and for all.

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AFTERWORD

EMPIRE'S PROPAGANDISTS

Our world is ruled by a racket. This racket is an amalgamation of different players, including transnational corporations, banks, hedge and mutual funds, and insurance companies; in effect, the many different concentrations of private wealth we have in our society. We often don't know the names of the people who run these institutions, but they hold the real power in our world, and are backed by the US government, and as a last resort the US military.[1] But the racket is nothing without the media. They give this network's rapacious actions a moral sheen and maintain the potent ideologies whereby theft from the poor by the rich is translated into altruistic projects for the world's poor. In the aftermath of *The Racket's* publication, curious people asked me why – if what I was saying was true – this mafia-like elite got away with it so easily, and everyone was missing the real story. The answer is the media, and I will try in this afterword to show how it works in practice.

The most important consideration at the off is that the media is, of course, owned by the racket, so there is no surprise that it reflects the racket's priorities. In the US, six companies own 90 percent of the media.[2] In the UK, Rupert Murdoch's News International media company, even after the closure of the *News of the World*, still comprises 34 percent of newspaper circulation in the country and, had it not been for phone-hacking revelations, it would almost certainly have acquired 100 percent of broadcaster BSkyB.[3]

Second, everyone arrives at the top thinking the right things. At the *Financial Times* I learnt quite quickly that the racket and the media are in essence the same thing, and journalists do its bidding without conscious effort. There's no need for an intensive program of brainwashing. As a journalist, by the time you reach the heights of these ideological institutions your editors assume you will already have internalized what you can and can't say. You will know, for example, that the West is not like the rest of the world. The UK and US are noble, even if we sometimes make mistakes we are allowed to criticize. At the end of the day, when all is said and done, we are the Good Guys. That is another facet of how the charade is maintained: the media system in the West doesn't work by active censorship. The beauty of the system is that you don't need to tell journalists what to write – they support the status quo as a reflex. The proprietors work on the ethos that "you say what you like, because we like what you say". If you start testing the boundaries of our "free press" you will know about it – and be out of a job. Rosa Luxemburg, quoted in chapter 15, comes to mind again: those who do not move, do not notice their chains. Very few journalists in the corporate media are moving, so they believe our press is free. I can confirm it is not.[4]

As I saw young journalists coming up in the industry I noticed opinions changing or moderating as they became acclimatized to the institutions. A famous Winston Churchill phrase goes that if you're not a socialist in your twenties, you've got no heart, and if you're not a conservative in your thirties, you've got no brain. Churchill was half right, but he got the reason wrong. In terms of the media, if you're not a conservative by your thirties then it doesn't mean you haven't got a brain, it merely means you haven't acclimatized to the conservative media institutions that have been set up for you to enter. It's no coincidence that people get less idealistic as they get older. That's how the system works to root out ideas dangerous to it, maintaining control of those that sit at its apex. So, slowly, you stop expressing opinions that are different from everyone else's, and you shed any previously held idealism. If you do carry on thinking as before, you quickly become a "maverick" or, even worse, "immature" and "childish". It's hard to go into work every day for a whole career under this kind of groupthink pressure and stay sane. Few try for long. From my experience, it's not Machiavellian – people don't actively think "I'm going to become a neoliberal warmonger so I can get higher up the hierarchy of my newspaper". But people slowly temper their opinions, gradually shaving off their "rougher edges" in order to become part of the institutionalized thinking. If you enter somewhere like the *FT*, everyone has a very rigid idea of how the global economy works and if you don't share that idea, you'll be out. That's, of course, how all power systems work. They don't work by promoting dissidents or people that think differently from everyone else; they wouldn't last long if they did.

INHUMANITY

Because of the central role the business press plays in greasing the cogs in the economic system, following newspapers dedicated to covering the inner workings of the racket, such as the *FT*, is probably the best way into understanding the capitalist id. For me, the specialist financial media, especially the less polite parts of it, is the best means to understand the sickness that festers at the root of our world. In his landmark work *The Sane Society*, the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm wrote: "That millions of people share the same forms of mental pathology does not make these people sane." A *CBS News* report from the aftermath of the death of Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez is a perfect example. It reveals so beautifully the inhuman priorities of the racket's media, and by extension of our whole economic system. After talking about the reaction of the oil market on news of the death of Chávez – the democratically elected leader of Venezuela who had made massive successes in reducing poverty and destitution – the journalist continued (and bear in mind this is not satire): "Chavez invested Venezuela's oil wealth into social programs including state-run food markets, cash benefits for poor families, free health clinics and education programs. But those gains were meager compared with the spectacular construction projects that oil riches spurred in glittering Middle Eastern cities, including the world's tallest building in Dubai and plans for branches of the Louvre and Guggenheim museums in Abu Dhabi."[5]

In the capitalist id, way deeper than all the useful ideology about poverty reduction through economic growth and liberalization, lies this kind of calculation. Free health clinics and education for the poor majority, who for centuries have been locked out of their own country's mineral wealth, are irrelevant, unimportant. In this understanding of the world, the human being is second-class. What is important is the object, the flashy building where the rich can feel important and puffed up with status. This continues across the board, although the priorities of the racket media are not often so casually exposed. The day after the massacre of 34 striking mine workers in the South African town of Marikana, for instance, I was writing a market report for the *FT*, and the newspaper posted a blog entry about the company that employed the mine workers headlined "Lonmin: killings cast a long shadow". The long shadow wasn't the impact on the families of the dead, or the criminal responsibility of the company that the workers were striking against. Instead the post noted the tragedy that "Shares in Lonmin, the platinum mining group at the centre of the dispute, plunged by 10 percent in Johannesburg early on Friday as details of the shootings at the company's Marikana mining complex near Rustenburg were revealed." It continued that, even worse, "A tragedy of this scale will have a political, economic and social impact – which seems certain to affect the investment climate."[6] Ladies and gentlemen, the highest of crimes in the business press. Murdered workers – well, that's life. But hurting an investment climate – that's a crisis! In South Africa's *Business Day* journal, concern in the aftermath was similarly focused on what the massacre would mean for investors. "Deadly Marikana shootout could deter investment, economists warn," they cautioned.[7]

Examples of this inhumanity are legion. The *Wall Street Journal,* publishing an article on the death of mass-murdering US-armed Indonesian dictator General Suharto, noted that "The positive contributions of the man who made Indonesia a respected member of the international community deserve … emphasis."[8] This is a man who carried out, in East Timor, one of the worst genocides of the 20th century. He was, though, good for business, which is all we ask of him to qualify for a good write-up. When the conservative Colombian president Alvaro Uribe left office, the *Financial Times* ran an article with the headline "After the saviour, what happens next?"[9] This is a man who presided over killings on a mass scale and allied with hyperviolent right-wing paramilitaries in his war against the FARC, as well as dissidents on a wider level. "He … leaves a very big pair of shoes to fill," the *FT* concluded. Certainly true – if your gauge is how many kills you can rack up as president.

Often you can track the positive reaction of the financial press, and the wider press, too, by how nice leaders are to transnational corporations and foreign capital. Luíz Inácio ‘Lula’ da Silva, the president of Brazil from 2003 to 2010, became the darling of the Western press during his tenure because his social reforms – while good in themselves – did not challenge the rule of capital in his country. Evo Morales and Hugo Chávez, however, as we have seen, took power and gave it back to their people through nationalizations and cancellations of exploitative contracts. For that they were vilified as dictators and terrorists. One of my favorite *Wall Street Journal* articles, titled “Bolivia’s descent into rogue state status”, noted the country has become “a petri dish in which a culture of organized crime, radical politics and religious fundamentalism festers”. That’s the punishment waiting for you in the racket’s media if you put the interests of your people ahead of the bottom line of the 1 percent.

I recently picked up a copy of the *Economist* on holiday. You might think that having just written a book about the dodgy dealings of the American racketeers I would be used to such examples, but I was still shocked by the lack of any attempt at a cover-up. An article on Angola, the “economic wunderkind that comes a cropper”, was lamenting the slowdown in the Angolan economy. The pathologies of the capitalist id were out on show as the magazine stated that “On May 7 the government announced an end to fuel subsidies, which used to consume a whopping 4.5 per cent of GDP. This is generally sensible move – the subsidy distorted markets and encouraged smuggling – will hit the poor especially hard in an already highly unequal society.” Unpacked, that sentence says that a policy which “hits the poor especially hard in an already highly unequal society” is “generally sensible”. And it is – if you’re a rich investor or local oligarch, because the state helping its poorest citizens to be able to afford fuel to run their cars or homes is not important. In fact, the ideology of the free market – which holds that any state intervention on the side of the poorest is “market distortion” – makes such a move not only “sensible” but also *necessary*. Death for the poor is *necessary*. In a piece on Egypt in the same issue, with reference to the “successes” of the brutal mass-murdering Egyptian dictator Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the *Economist* could barely hide its glee about the killing that had been made not just by his troops – but by investors too! The article was entitled “The lure of Sisi”, and stated that

Egypt's stock market delivered the best returns for investors in 2014. So, yes, a *fantastic* year for investors.[10] But according to Amnesty International, the previous year wasn't so great if you were a peaceful protestor. In the six months towards the end of 2013 nearly one and a half thousand people died in protests – most at the hands of Egyptian security forces. Yet the *Economist* went on to say that "Sisi has consolidated power and ruthlessly crushed dissent. His firm rule and programme of economic development have also attracted much-needed investment. Freedoms must be sacrificed in the service of progress, the president argues. For now, at least, he may feel vindicated." *Vindicated*.

In some ways I admire the *Economist*'s honesty. The *New York Times* or *Washington Post* either ignore that the US is integral to upholding many deeply repressive, mass-murdering regimes, or they find some way of spinning this truth to make their liberal readers feel good about it – in Egypt's case, most likely the "threat" of the Muslim Brotherhood. At least the *Economist* has the honesty to say what it's really about – investors' ability to make a killing. The *Wall Street Journal* is similarly honest about which team they are batting for. In an op-ed after the coup in Egypt which bought Sisi to power, the writer claimed that "Egyptians would be lucky if their new ruling generals turn out to be in the mold of Chile's Augusto Pinochet, who took over power amid chaos but hired free-market reformers and midwifed a transition to democracy."[11] That "transition" the *Wall Street Journal* talks about took a coup d'état against a democratic and constitutional president, Salvador Allende, and 17 years of fascist dictatorship, alongside thousands dead, to implement. But, hey, a lot of people got rich.

THE FIG LEAF

When I left the racket's media and tried to write for other newspapers that I thought would be more reflective of my political outlook, I realized something even more disturbing than what I'd seen on the inside: the racket's stranglehold on the mass media is total. The liberal and left parts of the mainstream media are as compromised by corporate money and private interests as their conservative rivals, perhaps even more so. And it is these progressive outlets that are vital to maintaining the façade of a free and fair media. They give the impression of fighting against the racket when in fact they support it in the fundamentals. I learnt that, in fact, newspapers like the UK's *Guardian* – probably the most influential left-wing journal in the Western world – are among the most biased and self-righteous institutions around. They are full of private-school-educated Oxbridge graduates who see themselves as crusading liberals fighting against corporate and state power.[12] But if you step a bit to the left of them, you will know about it. They guard their left flank religiously, instructing the world that anyone operating there is beyond the pale. The same is true of the *New York Times* in the US.

When I started looking into it, I saw that the *Guardian* is actually intimately involved with the racket, and relies on the racket to run its day-to-day reporting operations. If you click on the Cities section of its website, you will find the whole section is sponsored by the neoliberal Rockefeller Foundation. If you go to the Global Development section, you will see it's sponsored by the equally neoliberal Gates Foundation. And this goes on and on.[13] Corporate power has its claws deep into the *Guardian*. Delve deeper into the website and you will find the Sustainable Business Zone, where its Social Impact section sponsor is the mining giant Anglo-American and its Sustainable Living section is sponsored by consumer goods giant Unilever. There, these companies are given free rein to publish corporate social responsibility nonsense – an effort to improve their image so they have less trouble exploiting the countries where they make their profits.[14] The *Guardian* itself officially says that this sponsorship has no impact on how it reports news. But I had my own experience of this maybe not being wholly true when I reported from a town in El Salvador called Nejapa, where many residents could not afford clean drinking water for themselves and their families, despite the fact they lived on top of a huge aquifer.[15]

When I was preparing the story with my colleague, the brewing company SABMiller, when asked for a quote, started getting heavy about what we might be putting in the article. They sent me a joint report on Nejapa they had authored with Oxfam (showing, in the process, how the racket now has its tentacles in NGOs as well). In the end, SABMiller were only briefly mentioned in our article, and one of their spokesmen was quoted in the piece.[16] But just a few days later I noticed that the *Guardian* was carrying a news article, sponsored by the Gates Foundation of course, on its website. It was a 900-word interview with Karl Lippert, president of the Latin American division of SABMiller, which read like a corporate press release. He was given long spaces to expatiate on his company's commitment to water security, without any pushback at all. Then he responded at length to the criticism in our article over corporate control of water in Nejapa. I thought this was a weird thing for the *Guardian* to run as a news story. Lippert is completely unknown and in much of the article he spoke about the story we had done. The *Guardian*, I later learnt, had a "partner zone" sponsored by SABMiller on its website.[17]

The *Guardian*'s analogue in the US is no better; in fact, it's worse. At least the *Guardian* didn't support the anti-democratic coup against the Hugo Chávez government in 2002. The *New York Times* did. Two days after the coup it described the overthrow of democracy, suspension of the constitution and installation of a millionaire tyrant like this: "The man in charge in the presidential palace went from a strong-willed populist known for his rambling speeches to a mild-mannered businessman who chooses every word carefully." It continued in another article: "With yesterday's resignation of President Hugo Chávez, Venezuelan democracy is no longer threatened by a would-be dictator. Mr. Chávez, a ruinous demagogue, stepped down after the military intervened and handed power to a respected business leader, Pedro Carmona."[18]

What hope do we have if this is the progressive extreme of the mainstream media in the US and UK?

The racket that rules us is enabled even more forcefully by the *Guardian* and *New York Times* than it is by Rupert Murdoch or the *Financial Times*, because they define what is acceptable progressive opinion, and tell us how far we can go and still be "respectable" and have a mainstream journalistic career. This restricts our imagination, forces us to worship our oppressors, and creates the illusion of fighting for justice while undermining the leaders and popular movements that will bring it about. The racket is deep in every crevice of the mass media, and we won't be free until that hold is broken.

Thankfully that hold is, indeed, breaking. Sprouting up around the world is a media independent of corporate control, unhinged from the fatalities of the racket's talking points. We are living through an exciting time for the media, but not the traditional media. What is happening now is a massive and irreversible shift of power to people. For two centuries, the upper class has owned the means of intellectual production, from the newspapers to the printing presses and everything else you needed to project your views on to society on a mass scale. But now, with the advent of the internet, there are many more ways to circumvent what has become a truly stagnant system. Be in no doubt: it scares the establishment senseless. They've had control over this for so long, and really don't want to let it go.

From Spain to Greece, the birth of people's movements has ushered true progressives into power, and it has been done largely by bypassing the stale old world media systems. Podemos managed to gain 21 percent of the vote in Spain's December 2015 elections – just two years after the party was founded, and in the face of a hugely hostile mainstream media. A few months before, in the UK, Jeremy Corbyn was voted leader of the Labour Party with an overwhelming mandate, galvanizing a long-dormant progressive current in Britain, again in the face of the most intense media political assassination campaign in recent history. Senator Bernie Sanders has similarly scrambled the political spectrum in the US with his hugely successful campaign for the Democratic nomination, even while the corporate media threw as much mud as possible on his self-avowed "socialism". Meanwhile, Syriza, a party of the left, has actually taken power in Greece, and remains popular, again despite the traditional oligarch-owned media being out for its throat. The realm of the possible is being stretched. People are looking outside their traditional outlets for news, and seeing that the truth does not lie in the "respectable" institutions they had previously trusted. The breakdown of the political center in the West is being paralleled by the breakdown of the media center. When both jobs are complete – and they will work in unison – we will be able to stare long and hard at the rotting machine that turns our economy, and dispatch it to the dustbin of history. The center cannot hold.

Matt Kennard London January 2016

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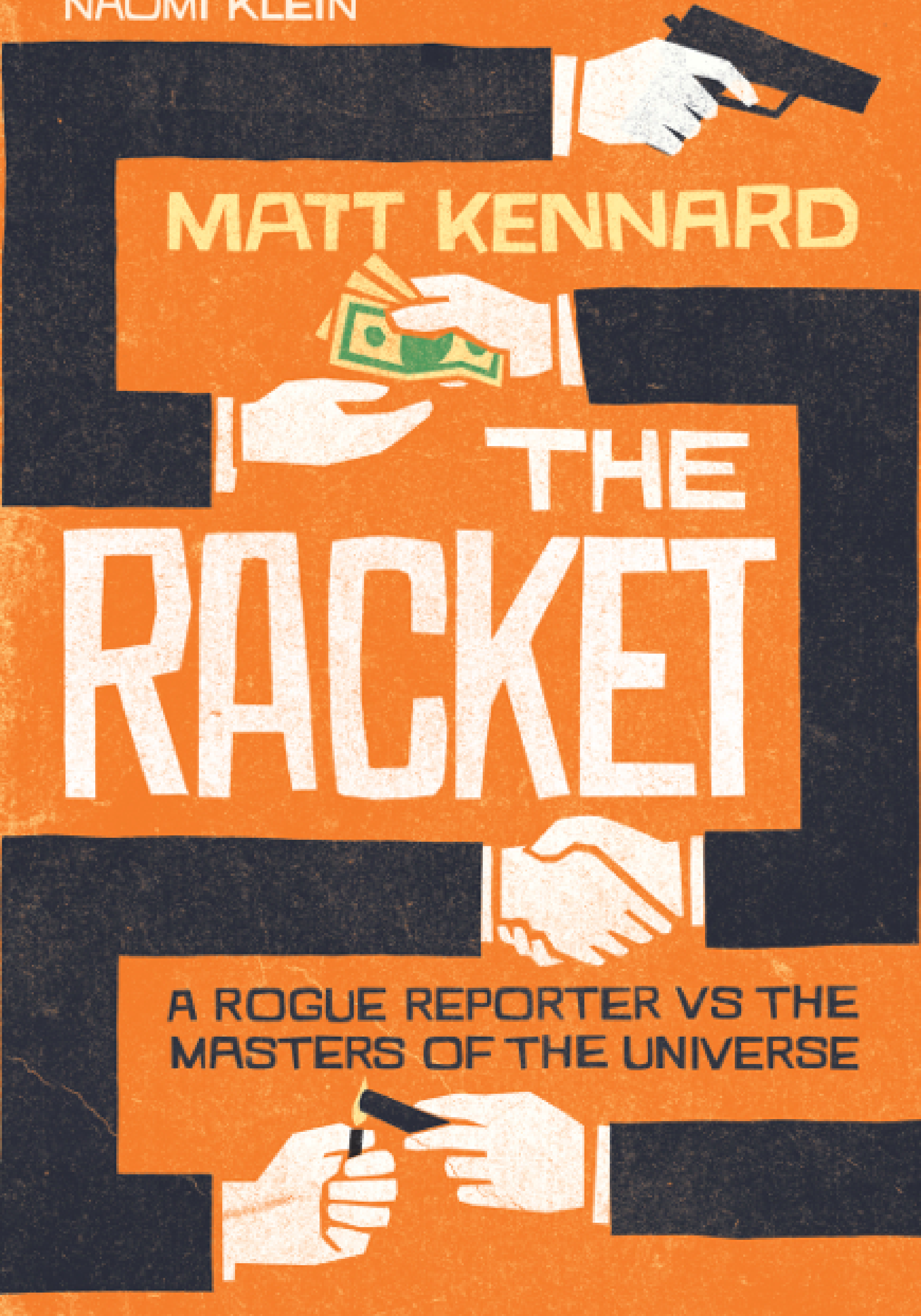

MATT KENNARD

THE RACKET

A ROGUE REPORTER VS THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

MORE PRAISE FOR THE RACKET

"This firecracker of a book, written by a former insider journalist who realised the true, exploitative agenda of corporate media, unleashes a gonzo journey across the world of US empire. From Palestine to Bolivia and America to South Africa, reporter Matt Kennard provides a roadmap of deformed economics, state violence and inspiring resistance. Read this book, be startled and then take action."

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Gavin MacFadyen, director of the Centre for Investigative Journalism

"Matt Kennard exposes the failure of US neoliberalism and a major reason why China's star is rising while US foreign policy is imploding into a black hole."

John Perkins, author of *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*

THE RACKET

A ROGUE REPORTER VS THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

MATT KENNARD

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For Ana,
who wrote this with me

And Chelsea Manning,
for helping us see the truth

I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902–1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested. Looking back on it, I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents.

Major General Smedley Butler, who died the most decorated US Marine in American history, in a speech given in 1933

racket / *n. slang* A trick, an underhand scheme; now usu. a scheme for obtaining money etc., by fraudulent or violent means; a form of organized crime. *gen*. An activity, a way of life, a business.

Oxford English Dictionary

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been a decade in the making and involved travel to all corners of the globe. The overwhelming feeling I came away with is that our world – judged by how it treats its human family – is in dire straits. But wherever I've gone I've been filled with hope by seeing the brave and courageous individuals and groups resisting the violence and misery inflicted by the US-led military and economic machine. From Palestine to Honduras, from South Africa to Haiti, I'd like to thank all the people who have filled me with faith against the odds, often in the face of great danger. They have been resolute in the face of an ideological system that endlessly tells them their pain is for their own benefit. Thank you for resisting the power and the lies.

I am a fellow at the Centre for Investigative Journalism, which is a dream place to work. The CIJ is an institution dedicated to furthering adversarial and revelatory journalism in a media setting that increasingly ignores it. In particular its director, Gavin MacFadyen, has been an inspiration for his passion and courage in supporting whistleblowers and journalists working in difficult environments. He is the model of what a journalist should be. Also at the CIJ I've been lucky enough to work closely with a great investigative journalist, Claire Provost. The

Bertha Foundation's support, meanwhile, has allowed me to pursue controversial stories and concentrate on doing the journalism I love. Kika Sroka-Miller at Zed Books was brilliant in helping me form the ideas and structure of the book, so a big thank you to her. Also at Zed, Jonathan Maunder and Dan Och made countless invaluable and insightful suggestions to get the book in shape. Janet Law gave the text a rigorous and stringent copy-edit. As has probably been the case for millions of people around the world, Noam Chomsky has been the most influential person in my intellectual and political development. Since I was a student journalist in the middle of my political awakening he has responded consistently and over many years to my enquiries with patience and unfailing insight. Thanks for everything, Professor.

The book is dedicated to Ana, my soulmate and fellow rebel. So much of the reporting in this book has been done with her or because of her. Without her inspiration, help on the ground, and companionship and love, this book would have been impossible. It was in discussion with her that many of the ideas in this book formed. The book is also dedicated to Chelsea Manning, our generation's hero. At great personal cost she singlehandedly changed the course of history and gave us a historic glance at the true mechanics of power as wielded by the most powerful country in the world. History will judge her kindly, but she continues to suffer now. That should stop immediately. Her fellow whistleblowers Edward Snowden, Jesselyn Radack, Thomas Drake, William Binney, John Kiriakou, among many others, have also inspired me by their bravery and example.

My parents, Judy and Peter, gave me the tools for free thinking and supported me through the years of trying to understand the world as witnessed in this book. Without knowing they had my back and believed in what I was doing, it might have been overwhelming. The example they have set in their lives made it much easier to resist the seductions of the corporate world, which I briefly and unhappily glimpsed. My brother has been constantly supportive and believed in me always. Thank you, Dan. A continuous struggle against forces that sometimes appear inevitable can lead to despair, but I have been blessed with friends and family from when I was young (and some newer) who have always made me laugh and kept me energized. Thanks to: Harry, Frankie, Dave, Tom, Billy, Patrick, Jack, Declan, Luke, Jake, Dave C, Ellie, Nick T, Ishmail, Speak, Al D, Ivor, Adam, Lex, Shane, Stuart, Chris, Charlie, Watson, Whybrow, Loz, Dan J, Alicia, Lucia, Pati, Nick, Pilar, Suey, my grandma Mary, William, Lucy, Camilla, Hugh and Ralph.

Although this book would have been impossible without the people listed above, none is responsible for what's written in the following pages.

INTRODUCTION

I started working as a reporter at the *Financial Times* soon after the financial crisis began and at the height of the so-called "War on Terror". I was a young, ambitious reporter assigned to one of the world's most respected broadsheets, ready to speak the truth. I learnt soon enough that this was not the place to do it. Maybe I should have guessed. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, I had had a partial awakening. As the war drums sounded in 2003, I learnt that the United States and the United Kingdom, despite now pushing for a war with him, had, in the 1980s, been supporting Saddam Hussein. The man we were presenting as the devil incarnate had only years earlier been our buddy. Soon after, I saw that my government thought nothing of rewriting intelligence to trick its own citizens into a totally illegal war. I thought, maybe naively, that working at the *FT* would allow me to continue learning, and in some senses I was right, though not the lessons they intended. There I was exposed to the other side of this war-industry coin – the world of high finance. These wars were not the vanity project of deluded leaders; they were merely the latest stage in a global elite's prolonged war on the people of our world with the sole aim of pumping up their bottom line. I saw the real rulers of the world up close now – they were not the politicians but the big-money men behind them, the puppeteers who made everything move. I was stationed at their house organ, so raising the alarm did not, to put it politely, go well.

Over the following years, I witnessed first-hand how powerful the propaganda system that covers for these racketeers really is. It is almost impossible to go up against it as an individual on the inside (I tried). I was based at the *FT* in Washington, DC and New York, but I also traveled extensively during this period, reporting from four continents, more than a dozen countries and the same number of cities within the US itself. Everything I saw contradicted what I had been told about how the world works. But as I wrestled with what I was doing, I knew in the back of my mind that, as a journalist, speaking out against this contradiction is a bad idea: doing so will instantly, and adversely, affect your career, which I suppose is why so few do it. If you speak out against the racketeers, well, you are instantly anti-American, you hate freedom, you love terrorists and so on. Ideological "training" of this kind is at its most potent in the racket-supporting media of the western world where I once worked (and it usually works to dispel independent thinking). I was actually taught this eyes-wide-shut philosophy first when I went to do a Masters at Columbia University's Journalism School in New York, apparently the best of its kind in the world, but in thrall to the racket and its lies, like the rest of the American elite. And the attempt to beat these critical thoughts out of my head continued as I progressed further up the hierarchy of the ideological system. On the day I left the *Financial Times,* for example, my boss told me simply: "Go away and do your 'save the world' stuff and maybe you can come back when you're a bit older." I took his advice, but I won't be back. Instead I present, eyes open still, the report they wouldn't send to press.

INTRODUCTION

THE RACKETEERS

The United States emerged from World War II in a position of peerless global power. Western Europe and the Soviet Union were in ruins after six years of devastating warfare, and the imperial structures that had previously ruled most of the world were falling apart. The Americans meanwhile had made a miraculous recovery from the economic depression that had consumed the nation since the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and its place as No. 1 had been planned for *quite consciously* throughout the war. When it was realized in 1945, attention switched to extending the American elite's customer base, and so, at the close of World War II, the racket was set in place.

The Harvard evolutionary psychologist Steven Pinker once told me that power itself perverts human notions of morality and justice: "Dominance, fairness, and communality are three very different modes of thinking about social relationships. Someone in power will tend not to think of his relations to his or other peons in terms of fairness," he said. The American elite, its powerful big business players and allied governments (regardless of political party) are motivated by dominance, not fairness. The people in power know this – it is the population that is lied to. Of course, the need to pierce the propaganda bubble is not new. Every emperor, fat cat and superpower from time immemorial has willingly entertained myths about their actions so as to utilize the good-will of their people to pursue their own criminal enterprises. The historian Cornelius Tacitus said it best at the height of Roman dominion. "The Romans create a desert," he wrote, "and call it peace." These myths that Americans are treated to from a young age – and this ideological training reaches out beyond US borders – still present the US as an impressive discontinuity in the world of power politics. Unlike all previous superpowers, the United States is a "moral" power, driven by principles and values, as opposed to domination and greed. America is "exceptional" we are told – not exceptionally violent, which is the truth, but exceptional to the extent that it has a "higher calling"; it is a "shining city upon a hill". A brief foray into the world with eyes open teaches you quickly that this is the opposite of the truth. But keeping your eyes open will always be harder than seeking solace in your own divine moral superiority and the turpitude of your enemies. And so the myth takes hold. Repeat after me: when the US does it, Terror is *Peace-seeking*; Domination is *Partnership*; Fear is *Stability*. It's easy.

THE BELIEVERS

A couple of years after my initiation at the *Financial Times* a few things started to become clearer. I came to realize a difference between myself and the rest of the people staffing the racket – the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) workers, the economists in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and so on. While I was coming to understand how the racket really worked, I started to see them as willing dupes. There was no doubt they seemed to believe in the virtue of the mission; they imbibed all the theories that were meant to dress up global exploitation in the language of "development" and "progress". I saw this with American ambassadors in Bolivia and Haiti, and with countless other functionaries I interviewed. They genuinely believe the myths, and of course are paid handsomely to do so. To help these agents of the racket get up in the morning there also exists, throughout the West, a well-stocked army of intellectuals whose sole purpose is to make theft and brutality acceptable to the general population of the US and its racketeering allies. And this system of indoctrination is so ingrained in the media and university system that it is near impossible to even divine it. I remember writing an article for the *Financial Times* about former

Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak, who was backed by over a billion dollars of US aid; the editors got rid of the factual prefix "US-backed" before Mubarak's name without even thinking. When I submitted another article using the prefix "Iranian-backed" for the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, it sailed through. That is how thought control operates and that is how the racket survives with its moral sheen intact.

Power has completely corrupted the minds of these people. When Rafael Correa, president of Ecuador, was closing down Manta, the US military base in his country, he told the Americans that they could keep it as long as they allowed Ecuador to put a military base in Miami. This was preposterous to Washington and its lackeys in the media – for them it is apparently a *natural law* that the US should be allowed the hundreds of military bases that disfigure sovereign states all around the world. That is the imperial mindset and it infects the entire American elite.

What will become clear as you read this book is that the patterns and modus operandi of the racket are repeated all over the world, over and over again. So, for example, the manner in which I saw American "aid agencies" and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) subvert groups organizing independently in Bolivia is repeated in Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil, all over Latin America, and in the rest of the world. The names of the individuals involved in each case are different but the dynamic is similar; the racket's method of control, so clever and hidden, is the same, and the names of the oppressors are interchangeable with any of the racketeers of the "American era". All have served the institutions that work to undermine individual or group sovereignty and increase the racketeers' control, whether the individuals staffing the racket be nice or horrible, good or bad, well-meaning or psychopathic – the institutions they serve continue to extinguish the yearning for independence of people the world over.

There is another, more insidious, part of this global control that will be discussed in the following pages as well. In addition to the dominance of the US elite, the succor given to American corporations by the racket has made the proliferation of US "culture" inevitable, creating a new dimension of so-called soft power. But, as you will see later, the racketeers are genuinely afraid of the creative arts. There exists the potential within our culture, and the arts, not just to expose the racket for what it is, but to help dismantle it. For this reason the racketeers continue to co-opt the arts and culture as much as possible: the CIA was supporting US arts throughout the Cold War, and no doubt continues to do so.

FOR YOUR OWN GOOD

The racket is bigger than the US elite, of course, and by now you may be thinking that it may have something to do with the capitalist system writ large. Yes, institutions like the World Bank represent a broad global capitalist class, but the US is the overwhelming power within these arrangements and the US military is the enforcer of capitalistic forces throughout our world. The mechanics of the racket have actually been pretty constant; the institutional structure erected to maintain a pretense of altruism while practicing savage domination has been replicated across the world for quite some time now. I witnessed not long ago, for example, US support for the military coup in Honduras in 2009, which threw out a democratically elected president so the racketeers could prop up the business community and their political puppets. But like I said before, you can be sure that a similar dynamic was in place when the US helped take out democratically elected presidents Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala in 1954 and Salvador Allende of Chile in 1973, unleashing decades of hell on the people of those countries. The needs of this rapacious racket remain the needs of every dominant imperial class, communist or capitalist – more markets for their products, and complete subjugation of popular forces in their satellites.

But there is a twist to this story.

The American elite that has grown fat from looting abroad is also fighting a war at home. From the 1970s onwards, the same white-collar mobsters have been winning a war against the people of the US, in the form of a massive, underhand con. They have slowly but surely managed to sell off much of what the American people used to own under the guise of various fraudulent ideologies such as the "free market". This is the "American way", a giant swindle, a grand hustle. In this sense, the victims of the racket are not just in Port-au-Prince and Baghdad; they are also in Chicago and New York City. The same people that devise the myths about what we do abroad have also built up a similar ideological system that legitimizes theft at home; theft from the poorest, by the richest. The poor and working people of Harlem have more in common with the poor and working people of Haiti than they do with their elites, but this *has to be obscured* for the racket to work. Many actions taken by the US government, in fact, habitually harm the poorest and most destitute of its citizens. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is a good example. It came into force in January 1994 and was a fantastic opportunity for US business interests, because markets were opened up for an investment and export bonanza. Simultaneously, thousands of US workers lost their jobs to workers in Mexico where their wages could be beaten down by even poorer people. The inevitable conclusion is that our entire world is at the mercy of an elite business community who run it in secret.

The economic imperatives of this racket trump even the *safety* of working Americans. During the Iraq conflict in 2003, large parts of the Pentagon and the British "intelligence" community did not want to attack Iraq because they believed it would increase the threat of terrorism. But the ideological zeal within the racket to maintain a grip over a region with immense oil production was a higher priority than decreasing the threat to American lives. The racket, then, is a disaster for those poor countries submissive to it, but also for the majority of Americans. The American elite is not in the business of helping out its fellow citizens.

Perhaps for you the extent of US domination is unknown, or perhaps you half suspect it, in which case the pages that follow will provide indisputable evidence. For those readers who feel they already know the damage done by US foreign policy, the revelation will come from evidence of the damage done at home where the war against poor and ordinary working Americans is just as fierce. A vast ideological edifice has been built which presents brutal violence against the poor at home and abroad as altruism. It must be targeted at its foundations. As Harold Pinter wrote in his Nobel Prize-winning speech in 2005, when it comes to the US "it never happened. Nothing ever happened. Even while it was happening it wasn't happening. It didn't matter. It was of no interest." He continued: "The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them. You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force for universal good. It's a brilliant, even witty, highly successful act of hypnosis."

The media would have you believe that there is no racket, that it's purely an accident that we live in a world where 85 people, *85 people*, own half the world's wealth while more children die of starvation every year than died in the Holocaust.[1] Of course it's not an accident, a mere quirk of history – it is the result of a huge injustice, the policies of a giant mob. To help our species and planet survive it is necessary to shake off the hypnosis and see the racket for what it is.

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[1] *Working for the Few: Political Capture and Economic Inequality*, Oxfam Briefing Paper 178, January 20, 2014. More than 1.5 million children across Europe were killed by the Nazi regime. It is estimated that 3.1 million children each year die because of poor nutrition.

They know who they are; it's time to blow their cover.

PART ONE

HOW WE OWNED YOU

ONE

CREATING A MODERN-DAY SLAVE STATE

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

I was standing open-mouthed outside the presidential palace in Port-au-Prince 18 months after the earthquake had devastated the city when a man approached selling his paintings. “What do you think of that?” he said, pointing to the collapsed palace behind us. I told him the truth: I was finding it hard to come to terms with the completeness of the destruction. The man, who later told me his name was Charles Renodin, smiled slightly. “Tell the world how we are living,” he requested. “Let them know.” He paused and added, “I live in the camp there,” pointing across the road, where opposite the crumbling presidential palace a vast expanse of tents – emblazoned with the logos of the US, China, Bill Gates, Carlos Slim, all competing shamelessly for brand recognition – spread out as far as the eye could see. “After the earthquake I lost my mum, my dad, one daughter, so I had to move to this camp. I don’t like it, it’s full of corruption, it’s run by gangs, and the little girls have to sell their bodies to eat," he told me. "Little girls," he added for emphasis. "Maybe eight or nine years old, getting raped every day. The police don't do anything about it, the country has no law." He told me that the Haitian people refer to the palace behind us, which should be a point of pride, as the "Devil's House". "It's full of so much corruption, they don't care about the people, they just want to make money, when the money comes they take it for themselves." He was waiting on a house now so he could leave the camp, but he didn't think it would happen any time soon: "The government has no plan." In the camps, it was particularly bad news for women: "Because there is no work, women have to sell their bodies just to eat, the only job they have is to have sex for money. Men have to steal stuff – they have no choice."

Like most in Haiti, Charles had an ambiguous feeling toward the thousands of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in his country. "Some come to help, some come to make money, they like us living like this because they make more money." It is easy to dismiss such sentiments, but the global "rescue" industry really is big business. There is often a direct and positive correlation between American influence over smaller countries and the crises they experience. "After the earthquake they would give us food, water, but now everything has stopped. If you go inside this camp you don't see water, people have to walk six miles to get water. That's why crime is up." He became more agitated. "Everything is crazy right now, we're living just like animals. There is no everyday life, nobody has a job." Haiti has arguably had more US intervention in the last hundred years than any other country in the world – that it ended like this is not wholly accidental. As Doctor Maigot poignantly says to Mrs Smith, an American, in Graham Greene's *The Comedians*: "In the Western hemisphere, in Haiti and elsewhere, we live under the shadow of your great and prosperous country. Much patience and courage is needed to keep one's head."

The following day, I was driving down a long, dusty and typically bumpy road in the middle of Port-au-Prince when I came across some imposing metal gates. Behind them stood the E-Power electricity plant. The site was unlike the rest of the city, which lay in complete ruin, even a year and a half after the earthquake: it had burnished sheet-steel doors and perfectly tarmacked roads. I was on assignment with the *Financial Times* and being escorted in a 4x4 by the World Bank, which had its own particular kind of tour that seemed to ignore the massive tent cities whizzing past our windows. Here was the *optimistic* vision, they told me. In a capital city where electricity blackouts were a nightly occurrence, E-Power was the kind of company the international financial institutions (IFIs) running Haiti believed would lead "reform" – by taking power away from the state-run company, and running the business for profit. My World Bank guide was adamant that this was the way out of Haiti's tragic past and present. I soon found out the company was founded in 2004 by a group of Haitian venture capitalists excited by the departure of social democratic President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The aim, they said, was to "offer a solution to power generation in Haiti". Sure enough, some years later, in 2006, the new US-backed President René Préval launched an open bid for a contract to provide electricity to Port-au-Prince. Seven companies took part. E-Power won.

For many in the Haitian business elite, such economic liberalization was to be the model for the new Haiti being built after the devastating 2010 earthquake. "The earthquake created trauma that could have been better exploited," Pierre-Marie Boisson, board director at E-Power, told me as we sat in the upmarket air-conditioned offices at the plant. "Because of the political process that took place after that, it took too much time." He added: "Earthquakes should be an opportunity because it destroyed. Where it is destroyed, we have to build. When we have to build we can create jobs, we can create a lot of changes, we can change a country."

However, Mr Boisson's cynicism about the slow rate of "exploitation" of the "opportunities" provided by the earthquake was not quite accurate. In the aftermath of the earthquake, the opportunity afforded by the destruction wreaked on Haiti was capitalized on immediately. As the dust was still settling in Port-au-Prince, the World Bank, the IMF and their regional analogues, alongside various US agencies – what became the *de facto* government in the absence of a Haitian alternative – carved up the society's different sectors and doled them out among themselves. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) got education and water, the World Bank bagged energy, while the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – a body that will be examined later in this book – gratefully accepted the planned new industrial parks. Alexandre Abrantes, the World Bank's special envoy to Haiti, told me how it worked: "We basically have agreed that where each of us has the competitive advantage, we then divide … the sectors among ourselves, and add in some sectors which go together."

The mass privatization of state-run assets and the turning of Haiti into a Caribbean sweatshop – via an export-led garment production and cheap labor model that the US and the IFIs had been pushing from the mid-1990s through the 2000s – were now distinct possibilities. This could be enforced with minimal push back from a decimated civil society and a denuded government. All the extra-Haitian bodies, particularly the US government, shared this vision. "There is a lot of agreement, so I would say one of the unusual and very positive aspects about this project is that it is really done in partnership," Jean-Louis Warnholz, a State Department official working on Haiti, told me when I was back in New York. (Mr Warnholz asked not to be named, but Haitians deserve to know the officials who are designing their destruction.) Haiti was to be the next Top Model on the World Bank and IMF catwalk. The "partnership" (in which the Haitian people had no part) believed that rebuilding the capabilities of the Haitian state should play no role in its reconstruction. Instead, the solution to Haiti's problems lay in the creation of a flourishing private sector. "What's really going to change Haiti and make this process different from all the previous ones is the development of the private sector, and I think there's a consensus in that," José Agustín Aguerre, the Haiti manager for the IADB, told me. The bank disbursed $177 million in grant money in 2010 – more than any other multilateral source – to push this agenda.[1] "Private sector is the big difference, it's what will be creating wealth, creating jobs, not the public sector," he added. It seemed there was no alternative.

After the election of President Michel Martelly in May 2011, things remained easy for this private-sector-led "consensus": the IFIs and US not only had their Shock Event, but also their Shock President. Aristide, who was president in 1991, 1993–94, 1994–96 and 2001–04, continues to be the most popular politician in Haiti, but is banned from standing again for the presidency. In Martelly, the US government had found its "Chicago Boy", a more-than-willing partner for their economic program ("Chicago Boys" is a term which refers to the University of Chicago economists who helped dictators impose neoliberal capitalism in its early stages). All the major business groupings and IFIs I spoke to in Port-au-Prince were effusive in their support for the president. Carl-Auguste Boisson, general manager at E-Power, told me: "I am pleased by what I heard Martelly saying about the importance of private investment, especially when he was campaigning he was talking about things like providing private provision of public services." Kenneth Merten, the then US ambassador to Haiti, was similarly excited about the new president's privatization agenda. “A few privatizations of flourmills, but aside from that you haven’t had much of anything in past decades,” he told me. “That’s the element that’s been lacking here, you need a government that understand investment and I think Martelly and his folks do.” For the US, a pliable figure like Martelly had been a long time coming. Despite many decades of effort, Haiti had not completely succumbed to the plans that its major patron had for it. And such recalcitrance had been causing increasing consternation in Washington.

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[1] Details given to the author by the World Bank.

HISTORY’S LONG SHADOW

In 1990, after the first democratic elections in Haiti’s 200-year history, the US became hopeful of breaking up the corrupt state institutions which had been run as the personal fiefdoms of Papa and Baby Doc, the US-backed Duvalier dictators who had ruled Haiti viciously for nearly 40 years. Private capital would then be able to penetrate deeper into the country, and an economic model conducive to the interests of the rich countries could take firm root. But it wasn’t going to plan. Instead of the US-orientated “reformer” many in Washington had hoped for, a huge mass movement, named Lavalas (“the flood”), propelled the social democrat priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide to a landslide victory. Over the next 20 years, the democratically elected Aristide would be ousted twice with US support, while the democratic hopes and dreams of Haiti’s people would be quashed time and again. Aristide had become a nuisance in the eyes of Washington and so when he was put back in power in 2001 it was under the tacit agreement that he would allow the World Bank, the IMF and the US to institute their plan. It had been 11 years since the democratic elections, and still economic “reform” was slow. Something had to change: democracy was fine, but it had to be of use.

In this period, René Préval, a former ally of Aristide who served as president from 2006 to 2011, seemed to offer some hope for the Americans. “In the context of the developing world, we would most accurately describe him as a neo-liberal, particularly in that he has embraced free markets and foreign investment,” notes one of the US embassy’s diplomatic cables, released by WikiLeaks, sent from Port-au-Prince in 2007. But the leader the US was really after in that period looked more like Haitian-American businessman Dumas Siméus. A resident of Texas, he assured the US embassy, according to a diplomatic cable sent in 2005, “he would manage Haiti like a business”. The same cable added: “Displaying abundant charm and energy, the 65-year-old said he had decided to run for President not only for Haiti’s benefit, but also as a gesture of thanks to the United States.” He was very clear about how he would do this: “The University of Chicago alum pledged to bring the ‘Chicago Boys’ to Haiti and establish a road map for change, promising investors would return.” It was exactly what the US embassy wanted to hear; Siméus was the candidate they had been searching for. The cable concluded by noting that the millionaire Texan was a “potentially viable candidate” who could, unlike Aristide, “govern responsibly and maybe effectively” – code in this case for “in the US interest”. The US deemed Martelly similarly “responsible”.

But in many ways, US exasperation at the apparent reluctance of Haiti’s leaders to sell off their country’s assets and create an economic playground for foreign capital remains hard to understand. From the mid-1990s through the 2000s, the “Chicago Boys” had to all intents and purposes come to Haiti; the process of opening up Haiti’s economy to the predations of foreign capital was well under way. The fetish of foreign investment was firmly rooted. In 1996 for example, the Haitian government had already, as one diplomatic cable published by WikiLeaks noted, “established legislation on the modernization of public enterprises, which allows foreign investors to participate in the management and/or ownership of state-owned enterprises." Moreover, a November 2002 law explicitly acknowledged the "crucial role of foreign investment in assuring economic growth and aims to facilitate, liberalize, and stimulate private investment in Haiti". The law gave foreign investors exactly the same rights and protections as Haitians. Months earlier in 2002, the Haitian parliament had voted for a new free trade zone law which provided "zones" with fiscal and customs incentives for foreign enterprises – for example, a 15-year tax exemption. In other words, post-Aristide, the government had "seen the light" and embraced the US-led vision for the post-dictatorship Haiti.

But these steps, it seems, were not enough. Only a "Chicago Boy" would do. Another WikiLeaks cable noted that in 1996 a "modernization commission" was set up to decide whether management contracts, long-term leases or capitalization was the best option for each of the companies to be privatized. The commission would also decide how much the Haitian government would retain of each asset, with a cap at 49 percent – a minority stake, stripping the Haitian people of control over their own industries.

This had an immediate effect. In 1998, two US companies, Seaboard and Continental Grain, purchased 70 percent of the state-owned flourmill. Despite this "progress", a diplomatic cable from 2005 lamented, "Some investments, however, still require government authorization," adding, "Investments in electricity, water and telecommunications require both government concession and approval. Additionally, investments in the public health sector must first receive authorization from the Ministry of Public Health and Population." It sounded like a reasonable demand from a sovereign country, but a sovereign country is exactly what the US didn't want Haiti to be. Two years after Aristide had been spirited out of the country by the Bush administration and the local oligarchs, and just before the victory of the "neoliberal" Préval in 2006, the US embassy noted witheringly: "Since the privatization of the cement factory, privatization has stalled and appears to have been put on hold." It added plaintively: "None of the major infrastructure-related enterprises (the airport, seaport, telephone company or electric company) have been privatized." The document continued: "Although these entities were supposed to have been privatized by 2002, persistent political crises, strong opposition from the former administration, and a general lack of political will have delayed the process indefinitely." The cable then noted a more plausible reason why this massive privatization program had not been enacted quite as smoothly as the US had hoped: "Some opposition to the privatization of state enterprises continues from groups such as employee's unions who have expressed opposition to workforce reductions that privatization might entail." Those pesky Haitians.

By 2008, then, the US embassy was disconsolate at the slow rate of progress and local intransigence. "Despite assurances that privatization is still a priority for the government … we are increasingly skeptical that privatization, in whatever form, will happen," one WikiLeaks cable noted. "Time is running out." The US, however, remained steadfast. "We will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of privatization and/or private management," one cable noted. It further advocated using IFIs such as the World Bank and the IMF to bribe the democratic government of Haiti, one of the staples of the "structural adjustment programs" explored later, although it is rare to see it spelled out in such clear language. "[The US embassy] repeats its recommendation … that privatization be a requirement under future agreements with the IFIs … to be negotiated with the new government," the cable to Washington noted.

THE SHOCK

Bribery might prove an effective strategy toward the poorest country in the western hemisphere, but it would still be messy. There was after all a Haitian parliament, populated with nationalist elements, which could continue to stall or even kill the massive privatization program the US favored. But as the US was honing its strategy for its latest push, on January 12, 2010 a huge earthquake hit Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas, creating one of the worst humanitarian crises in the history of the world. More than 300,000 people were killed, while millions became homeless. The capital city lay in ruins, including the majority of government ministries as well as the presidential palace. What was left of an already strangled civil society and social institutions was destroyed. Haiti was a blank slate.

The US and its allies in the IMF and World Bank did not waste any time – this was their opportunity to push through the radical neoliberal program from the 1990s with little resistance. The opposition to this privatization program – which had ranged from quasi-nationalist politicians to worker-based collectives – had all but disappeared. Without a government in place to agree or disagree with the US and the IFIs, which were soon running the country, Haiti was ready for the "shock doctrine" – the radical economic prescriptions enforced throughout the world and outlined in Naomi Klein's eponymous book. Klein's argument was that these policies were so unpopular among the populations of the target countries that the agents of big capital, such as the IMF and World Bank, would wait until there was a crisis "real or perceived", when people could not organize resistance, to push the reforms through. This is what happened in Haiti.

The first step was to entrench a decision-making system that took all power out of the hands of accountable democratic institutions run by Haitians. The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC), which became the country's most powerful decision-making body in the aftermath of the earthquake, was the perfect example of this move. The IHRC was set up ostensibly to coordinate the response and spend donor money in the absence of a Haitian government. It had 26 members, 12 of whom were Haitian, leaving them without a voting majority (just as they were not allowed a majority stake in their industries). To those Haitian members, it was obvious they were window-dressing. In a December 2010 letter of protest to the IHRC chair, former US president Bill Clinton, they complained of being "completely disconnected from the activities of the IHRC", as well as having "time neither to read, nor analyze, nor understand – and much less respond intelligently – to projects submitted". According to one journalist based in Port-au-Prince: "These twelve board members surmised that their only function is to rubber-stamp, as Haitian-approved, decisions already made by the executive committee."

That was exactly the perception that the US and the IFIs were trying to avoid. When officials from the US and international agencies in Haiti were interviewed they were at pains to explain how they were "working for the Haitians" and the phrase of the day was "Haitian-led". It was the same all over the world – the US and its agencies were adept at making their domination be seen as *demanded by the victim*. In truth, there was, and continued to be, minimal Haitian involvement in the reconstruction (outside the business elite). An article in the *Washington Post* put it bluntly in January 2011: "There is a dramatic power imbalance between the international community – under US leadership – and Haiti. The former monopolizes economic and political power and calls all the shots." The financial benefits to the American private sector of this set-up were immediately obvious. An *Associated Press* investigation found that of every $100 of Haiti reconstruction contracts awarded by the American government, $98.40 returned to American companies.[2] The focus was never on building up indigenous capacity; any work was to be outsourced to foreign companies or NGOs by the IHRC. It was about making money for rich Americans. After Michel Martelly was sworn in as president in May 2011, it took months for the former pop star and former member of the savage Tonton Macoute militia (formed by the US-backed dictator 'Papa Doc' Duvalier) to form a government, as his candidates for cabinet positions were repeatedly rejected by parliament. By the time his administration was in place in June 2011, 18 months after the earthquake, the coordinates of the economic reconstruction were already in place. Martelly's hands were tied by the very IFIs which claimed to be subordinate to the Haitians. Though in Martelly's case his hands didn't even need to be tied – he was a willing "shock president".

There were three elements that the US and IFIs wanted to build the "new Haiti" around: high-end tourism; export-processing zones; and a resurgent private sector in control of the previously state-owned assets. It was the racket's standard playbook. The architects of the reconstruction actually had other countries in mind that they believed could serve as a model. One was the Dominican Republic, the country next door to Haiti, which had long been an oasis for private capital in the Caribbean. In Haiti, using the model of its Hispaniola neighbor, the IADB planned to spend $22 million on a high-end tourism resort near the 19th-century citadel at Labadee, a port on Haiti's northern coast. Mr Almeida, Haiti manager for the IADB, told me the bank's money would "provide the means for the private sector to come and invest", adding that "in [the Dominican Republic] everything they have is all private. The airport is private, the roads are private, even the internal roads. So we could do the same thing [in Haiti].” (In the initial carve-up of Haitian society, the IADB was given road infrastructure.)

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[2] Isabeau Doucet, "One year on, Haiti hasn't 'built back better'", *The Nation*, January 12, 2011.

The other opportunity that had to be taken advantage of was speeding up the privatization process. The World Bank used the example of Teleco, formerly the national telecom operator, which in 2009 the bank’s private-sector arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), had helped partially privatize. (The IFC was, incidentally, the brainchild of Nelson Rockefeller in 1951.) Mr Naim, the private-sector Haiti manager for the World Bank, told me that Teleco was an example of what the government should do to the ports and the airport. “[They can] really transform these assets that generally the government handles poorly,” he said, adding that “It’s better for the government to focus on social things” and let these assets be privatized. Teleco itself is now due for complete privatization under the guidance of the IFC. For the poorest country in the western hemisphere, it is hard – possibly even suicidal – to argue with the World Bank. In March 2010, the bank promised $479 million in grants; the IFC put $49 million-worth of direct investment into Haiti’s private sector.

With Teleco on its way to privatization, the IADB had its own plans for the national water and sanitation authority (Dinepa), which had come under its domain in the initial carve-up. The bank soon handed over the authority’s management duties to the giant Spanish company Aguas de Barcelona, which won a three-year contract to train and assist workers, and for which they received millions of dollars. “Many local companies are taking control of small towns’ water systems,” Mr Aguerre of the IADB told me excitedly. This essential commodity and basic human right was now being turned into a for-profit venture. “We are seeing good examples of places where no one paid for water services, and little by little they are paying,” he added. Experts from

Aguas de Barcelona became the leaders of discussions concerning the investment needed in Haiti's water system and the process of opening bids to different contractors for the completion of new pipelines and other systemic improvements.

In education, the IADB's plans were no different. Thanks to decades of neoliberal policies that prioritized the private sector above the Haitian ministries, even before the earthquake 80 percent of educational services were delivered outside the state (primarily by international bodies or the private sector). As a result, only half of school-aged children in Haiti went to school. For the IADB, this did not prove the folly of their enterprise. Contrariwise, they concluded that it meant they had not gone far enough. "It's too ambitious to think you can turn it around," Mr Aguerre said. The IADB settled on a voucher program that will allow the government to retain some "quality control", but means that education will be completely privately run. To ensure full access, the plan creates a publicly funded but privately run education system. The small print is that this public subsidy will cost the Haitian government about $700 million a year, seven times what it spends now on education. With no new revenue streams evident (in fact, as we shall see, the government's tax base was being all but destroyed), the obvious implication was that full access was not an aim (or even a hope). When the IADB's promised $500 million over three years runs dry, more than half of Haiti's children will still be locked out of the school system. The IADB rationalized this arrangement by arguing that the private sector would pick up the slack – explicitly holding Haiti's kids ransom to Hollywood film stars. "There are many private actors willing to put money in," added Mr Aguerre. "Half of Hollywood is interested. Everyone wants their Susan Sarandon School of Arts." Incidentally, Martelly has been approving of both vouchers and subsidizing private schools as methods to rebuild the Haitian education system.

With the complete privatization of telecoms, water and education, the final piece in the jigsaw for the IFIs and the US became the new "industrial parks" or "integrated economic zones". These, so the propaganda went, would ensure the economic growth that could put Haiti and its people back on their feet. But two years after the quake, more than 500,000 Haitians still lived in ad hoc camps around Port-au-Prince and 8 million still lived without electricity. The throngs of jobless who lined the capital's streets are a reminder of the 70 percent unemployment rate. "We need to be realistic and understand that it's still five years after Katrina and New Orleans is still being rebuilt, it's 10 years after September 11th and that site isn't rebuilt complete, the process takes time," Kenneth Merten, then US ambassador to Haiti, told me, adding, "One of the things Haitians can really do themselves is to move quickly on making a business-friendly climate."

It might perhaps be hard for the hundreds of thousands of Haitians living in ad hoc campsites to do that. In Haiti, I went to the La Piste camp, a barren enclosure with rows of one-bedroom "houses" on steeples. The owner of one, a middle-aged woman, spoke to me slowly via an interpreter. She was a single mother with three children with no means of income. She was living off money the Red Cross had given her, alongside selling some trinkets, although customers are few and far between. "It's much better here than the last camp," she told me. In the last place she and her children lived, like most others, in a tent, which meant they were subject to the rain and animals who decided to look in. "This is a house, it's safer," she said, but added that the fence of the camp should be higher, or be turned into a security fence because of the burglaries. She also said the lack of lighting puts them in danger: it is pitch black at night and easy for people to break in. You realize walking around La Piste that these people are completely at the mercy of nature – be that the elements, or their fellow man or woman. There is no security, there is no rule of law, and there is no place to go with grievances; there is merely the hope that someone is looking out for you. Hope cannot thrive in such an environment. "I would like to have hope," she told me, her face blank, refusing any emotion at all. "I just don't know who is going to make anything happen." It seemed rude to ask how she planned to make a business-friendly climate for foreign investors in Haiti.

THERAPY

The 30-minute drive to Codevi industrial park from the airport in Cap-Haïtien, northern Haiti, is the smoothest in the country. In a place famed for its poor infrastructure, particularly its undulating roads, the park and the surrounding area are something of an oasis. Beyond the small bridge and metal gates which divide Codevi from the town outside, there's everything that the average Haitian doesn't have: paved roads, a functioning health service, employment and even a (small) trade union – the only one in the country. The 2 million square foot Codevi Park was originally built by a Dominican textile company, Grupo M, on the Dominican side of the border, but operations were expanded to Haiti in 2003 (with the help of a large investment by the World Bank).

"It was created as a vision of expansion that Grupo M had to look for as the Dominican Republic became more complicated competitiveness-wise," Joseph Blumberg, vice-president of sales for the company, told me as we sat in his air-conditioned office inside the park. "Haiti offered us the competitive edge that we needed in this region to maintain ourselves with the US market." He added: "It had a labor cost which was the lowest in the region." The minimum wage in Haiti now is 150 gourdes ($3.70) per day, which is nearly half that in the

Dominican Republic. This "competitive edge" – in a layperson's terms "slave wages" – combined with favorable trading terms with the US had caught the eye of the IFIs in the aftermath of the earthquake. The aim was to rebuild Haiti as a Caribbean sweatshop that could enjoy the full fruits of the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity for Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) Act, which was passed by the US Congress in 2006, granting tariff-free access for Haitian textile exporters to the US market. This was followed by increasingly favorable terms through HOPE II, in 2008, and the Help Act after the 2010 earthquake.

Parks like that at Codevi are known in the IFIs' literature as integrated economic zones (IEZs): places where infrastructure, welfare services and other services are provided for the lucky few behind imposing metal gates. The literature justifying their existence argues that prospective foreign investors put off by the decrepit or non-existent roads, electricity-grid and water system throughout Haiti would here have access to a ready-made mini-city. There was already a huge industrial park of this kind near the airport in Port-au-Prince called Sonapi, which is fully owned by the Haitian government and had, at one point, nearly 40 companies based there. But the new IEZs would be under the sole control of its initial investors – mainly USAID and the IADB. This raises the question of what will happen outside these so-called "poles" of economic activity. What would the incentive be for the central government to develop infrastructure and social services throughout the country if they are being built on this micro-scale? And where would the money come from? Alexandre Abrantes, the World Bank's special envoy to Haiti, admits this is a problem; he told me that industrial parks "may not be sustainable if you were to do it as a policy everywhere".

Codevi is essentially an "export-processing zone" (increasingly common in the "developing" world) where exports pay no tax to the central government and there is no customs duty on imported materials. "You're in an extra-territorial concept so that your goods come in and out very quickly without much paperwork," said Armando Heilbron, a senior private-sector development specialist at the World Bank working on the IEZs in Haiti. Therefore, Haiti's reconstruction will take place in isolated small "poles", primarily in the northern part of the country, while the rest of the country's infrastructure and welfare services will fall further into disrepair.

Perhaps the biggest problem with the industrial parks is the unscrupulous nature of the companies that populate them. The public relations tour of Codevi, with its stops at the local doctor and training facilities, is a relief after experiencing the destruction that has been wrought in the rest of the country. But the tour does not include many of the most important episodes in its establishment. Codevi was originally built on farmers' land against their will – a process that destroyed the region's agricultural infrastructure to create sweatshops. It was a parable for the economic reconstruction that occurred after the earthquake. The diplomatic cables recount that there had been a "long-standing labor dispute between Dominican manufacturer Grupo M and workers in Ouanaminthe", a community in north-east Haiti. One said: "According to Yannick Etienne, a labor representative, the fight has its origins in the closed-door negotiations that established the Free Trade Zone (FTZ). The farmers were left out of the negotiating process until the day of the FTZ ground breaking ceremony in 2002, when they were told their land was being expropriated. Grupo M eventually published a social compensation plan in 2003, however, it came too late for the farmers whose land was already gone, and whose suspicions of the Dominicans were already aroused."

Grupo M and its patrons at the World Bank do not, of course, tire of outlining the countless benefits that accrue to the local population because of Codevi. Every program of exploitation has an ideology bolted on to legitimate it to the world – but also to those benefitting: very few people want to look in the mirror and see a monster staring back. When I asked to speak to workers, two were dutifully brought out to give monosyllabic positive comments about their jobs, perhaps wary of the manager sitting next to them. Neither was a member of the union, I soon found out. In fact, Grupo M claims it has no conception of how many workers are in the union. "Very little," is all Mr Blumberg would tell me. "It's not part of their priority. They're happy and when the workforce is happy they don't mind if anybody is doing anything for them or not." However, according to the diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks, the soothing words of Mr Blumberg do not reveal the whole story. "Dominican unions allege [Grupo M] discriminates against labor organizers, fires their members, and has created a fraudulent 'scab union' in order to circumvent the legitimate one," one cable notes.

It is clear that something similar has happened in Haiti. Grupo M did have a stronger union once – before it was busted after trying to exercise its rights. Just months after Codevi opened, the workers began complaining of "exploitation and mistreatment" by the management of Grupo M. Rounds of strikes and violence by union members were followed by a "series of employee terminations by the company throughout that summer".

Mr Blumberg explained it thus: "When we had the first union, there was a lot of growing pain. They didn't have the right groups guiding them, there were a lot of radicals, a lot of leftists." But, he added: "In the end, everything was straightened out and we're in peace and we're fine with the union." The union had been co-opted. Workers' rights would not be a high priority for the economic model that would design the new Haiti. In fact, the plan was predicated on the lack of rights for workers. In an internal IFC document that was presented to the Haitian government, the administration was implored to amend the labor code in order to "lift restrictions on 24/7 multi-labor shifts" while "streamlining" the process by which night-time salary supplements could be done away with. The plan was also predicated on a lack of tax revenue. Another incentive for the foreign companies was the so-called "economic free zones" (EFZs), which offer companies tax and duty-free rights if they set up operations in Haiti. In reality, these zones do not exist in physical space but rather constitute the whole country. In other words, Haiti would now be tax-free for foreign investors – further disabling the Haitian government's ability to rebuild any public institutions. In 2011, the Haitian government brought in an estimated $1 billion of revenue, much less than the per-capita rate in sub-Saharan Africa.

The answer to this dilemma for the IADB was the "multiplier effect" whereby companies supplying services to the population would in turn have more income and therefore pay more tax to the government (at some time in the distant future). "It's on that side that we see the benefits of anchoring in the zones and having these companies come, even if under the current regime they do not pay taxes for a while," said Mr Almeida, IADB country director for Haiti. The idea essentially is that around the industrial estates other smaller Haitian businesses, such as travel agents and grocery stores, will pick up the slack of lost tax revenue. The problem for the IFIs was that even with slave wages and lax labor regulation it was proving hard to attract foreign investment. In the face of such reticence from investors around the world, Haiti should have focused on building indigenous capacity, perhaps through a massive public works initiative and the construction of state-owned facilities, like Sonapi. Haitians were instead again put at the mercy of international capital and its "race to the bottom". For the US embassy, the only thing going for Haiti was that its people were made to work for peanuts. "Haiti has the lowest wages in the western hemisphere," boasted one US embassy cable. To Haitians it was nothing to *boast* about. Camille Chalmers, a local economist, told the *Financial Times* that the wages paid in the textile sector, Haiti's biggest industry, were a "veritable scandal".

Amid manifold reservations from both international investors and labor-rights groups, the IADB and USAID finished the construction of the flagship project in the economic reconstruction of Haiti: the Caracol industrial park (CIP), just 40 miles down the well-paved road back toward the northern capital of Cap-Haïtien. The CIP was inspired by the perceived success of Codevi, with those designing Haiti's new-look economy trying to attract investment with the benefits that drew Grupo M into the economy: cheap labor and geographical closeness to the US, the world's largest market, where its exports are duty-free. It is one of five planned. The US poured millions of dollars into the CIP, but only Sae-A Trading, a South Korean textile company, has been enticed to set up shop in the park (and according to people involved in the deal, Sae-A was promised a rent holiday of four years). Sweatshop-based development had, in fact, never provided more than 100,000 jobs even in the 1980s.

The fact that the US taxpayer is building industrial parks for the benefit of South Korean companies also raised eyebrows. The US may be the most active foreign country involved in the reconstruction, but even its companies are still keeping their distance. "We are professional beggars," Mr Aguerre, the Haiti manager for the IADB in Washington, told me. The Haitian people would become beggars, too. For example, an internal IFC document on proposed IEZs argues that the reconstruction should be "propelled by private-sector-led development" even though the same document admits that "the existing Haitian Free

Zone, Industrial Park and Investment Code policy and regulatory regimes have not been effective in attracting investments that are needed to create jobs".

"To say that the private sector is rushing into Haiti right now would not be exactly what's happening," Pamela Cox, the World Bank's vice-president for Latin America and the Caribbean, told me when I met her in Washington. So why were these institutions focusing so much on a foreign-investment-led reconstruction, rather than building up domestic and public Haitian capacity? Was the fact that this would not make any westerners rich merely a coincidence?

There are still further complications; namely, that offering generous inducements to foreign companies will adversely impact businesses already in Haiti. Grupo M, for example, is fearful of what the incentives offered for the CIP and other IEZs being planned might mean for it. "[New foreign companies] have to train their workforces, they have to prepare themselves for what is coming," said Mr Blumberg, vice-president of sales at Grupo M. "We want a level playing field if you will. We understand that [foreign companies] are getting a lot of things via grants and via sponsorships from different sources." But if investment is not forthcoming or indigenous industries are stifled, as many predict, Haiti will suffer stagnation and destitution for another generation.

Enthusiasm from donors for aid and other forms of sovereign investment is now dwindling as the international community loses interest and the financial crisis continues to bite. The Haiti Reconstruction Fund (HRF), which aggregates funds from countries and NGOs to fill gaps in investment, has raised $352 million so far, but, "We've reached a plateau," Mr Leitman, head of the HRF, told me. "I think the donors have been cautious and reluctant to contribute new money." In March 2010, at a major pledging conference held in

New York City, $4.6 billion was promised for the first two years of reconstruction. Only $1.9 billion of that ever materialized. “If you look at estimates made about rebuilding Haiti after the earthquake, they were huge, you know $15 billion, even more than that,” Mark Weisbrot, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) in Washington, DC, told me. “They haven’t come up with anything like that, even a fraction of that. It’s a small country but it’s still 10 million people and so if you don’t clear the rubble, you don’t have roads, you don’t have housing, you don’t have water, you don’t have sanitation, what kind of economy are you going to get out of that? That’s the real problem.”

The real fear back home in Washington, however, especially among politicians, is migration and drugs. “They feared Aristide was a Castro want-to-be,” Larry Birns, an analyst in Washington, told me. “US policy has never been concerned with building a viable economy. The policies they followed destroyed Haiti’s economy.” On assuming power, Ronald Reagan proposed the Caribbean Basin Initiative to try, in a familiar story, to bring foreign investment to the region. It was a method of regaining control of the region, which seemed to be going on an independent path. Reagan even invaded Grenada on spurious grounds in 1983 to push that effort. The initiative was a failure, bringing little to no investment, but control was exerted. In that respect it was like John F. Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress in Latin America, which sought to bring the region away from Soviet influence, under the guise of “development” and “investment”. The prevailing spirit now in Washington is that Haiti is messy, and people will openly tell you (off the record) that Haiti is beyond the capacity to be reformed, a “loser situation”. They favor what they call “keeping it on life support” so that the US doesn’t get too many people coming in (Haitian refugees dying on the beaches of Florida caused havoc for Southern politicians in the 1980s). But what the US never seems to understand about Haiti and elsewhere is that you cannot have a society operate like clockwork when you have for years persistently undermined all credible efforts for that society to function in an effective way. Haiti is now actually well below its per capita income of 1960, the only country in the hemisphere to have made no progress in that period. Ironically, the economy grew from 1960 to 1980 under the Duvalier dictatorships because, despite their brutality, they actually had a development strategy. It wasn't great but it did move the country forward. This is true for a lot of the region where many countries had more growth under dictatorships because they had more control over policy than they did in a more democratic era when, in the subsequent neoliberal phase, the World Bank and the IMF controlled policy, and nobody *allowed* them to have a development strategy. From 1991 to 1994 and from 2000 to 2004, in fact, there was a deliberate strategy to destroy the economy, and that's how they got rid of President Aristide both times. "This is more about power. It's hard for people to believe this, but the US really does care who runs the government," said Mr Weisbrot. "They've overthrown the government twice, the US, Canada, France, and their allies. 1991 was more covert but it did come out that the CIA paid the people who did the coup, and they also financed death squads in the period after."

The story of one Haitian I met while in the country, Robinson Deese, shows the human side of this brutality. "After the earthquake everything turned terrible," he told me, as we sat in his bedroom. He lost his home and moved with his four children and wife to Golf, one of the biggest camps in Port-au-Prince on the capital's only golf course. But he was given a lifeline. The Red Cross – one of the most influential and powerful NGOs working in Haiti – offered him a rent subsidy to move his family into permanent accommodation. The charity gave him 4,000 Haitian dollars toward the yearly rent of 6,000 Haitian dollars. (Prices have ballooned since the earthquake because of the squeeze on supply.) Now he lives in one small and sweltering room with six other people, including his wife, children and brother. Formerly a tailor, his working life was destroyed when he lost all his sewing machines in the earthquake. "We have to manage with this because we have no means to rent a bigger place right now, I have to work for other people now," he said. "I preferred to take the subsidy because I didn't have a piece of land where I could build a shelter. I decided the best option would be to start a small business for myself while I tried to save money, maybe get a piece of land." He was also awarded a us$500 Livelihood Grant to start a business, which he said was not going well so far. In these conditions, saving is hard for a family like this, as he has to stump up money for tuition for his kids' schooling as well as for books and uniforms. The Red Cross has helped countless people this way – it is one of three options they offer to some of the 500,000 Haitians still living in tent cities around Port-au-Prince. The other two are building a T-shelter on a greenfield site, or finding someone who will let them do it. But the program is a parable of the short-termism that has overtaken the reconstruction of Haiti. Mr Deese only qualifies for this subsidy for a year. After that, he and his family are back at square one unless he finds a job, which with 80 percent unemployment seems unlikely. "I can't say I will have enough to cover next year's rent," he admitted. "It doesn't stress me out right now, I know that I can work, I have two hands to work with."

NO ROOM FOR AN ALTERNATIVE

Haiti is a notoriously difficult country to operate in: its institutions are frail, weakened by years of underinvestment, and the system is riven with corruption. For the economic managers post-earthquake, this was the default reasoning for their reliance on the private sector and "export-led" reconstruction. But there was nothing inevitable about such a program. There were plenty of reconstruction plans that could, most likely would, have created a fairer and more sustainable future for Haitians. The problem was and remains that these plans go against an ideology purveyed by the IMF, the World Bank and the US. For example, the Haitian government could have rebuilt the country's crumbling infrastructure with a modern-day equivalent of the Marshall Plan from donors, which would have created public-sector jobs for Haitians to construct roads, ports and energy infrastructure which has either been non-existent or in disrepair. Everyone, after all, puts infrastructure as among the top problems for making Haiti work. Some 10,000 jobs could have been created just clearing the rubble. The Red Cross has, for example, created hundreds of jobs for Haitians reusing the rubble to build bricks and other building materials, clearing the city and creating employment. "We're the only ones doing it," the co-coordinator of the program in Port-au-Prince told me. "At the moment, now, all the rest goes down the dump, even though the cost of processing it is about the same as taking it down to the dump."

Perhaps most importantly, Haiti could have focused on creating a new agrarian economy, a sector which had been thriving before President Clinton dumped tonnes of US rice in the country in the 1990s, destroying Haitian agriculture by completely distorting trading terms, something that will be explored in a moment. About 40 percent of the Haitian population, or 4 million people, live in rural areas. Promoting community-owned agricultural land would have instantly depopulated the overcrowded capital and provided a sustainable way of feeding its people (with any leftovers ready for export). It was never even discussed.

"Agriculture is still missing," Mr Naim at the IFC told me. The IFC is yet to make one loan to an agricultural small or medium-sized enterprise (SME), instead training its focus on agribusiness rather than the smallholders that Haiti needs. Likewise, the World Bank has admitted that not enough priority is being given to agriculture. It has put $55 million into a new agricultural program (in the grand scale of things in Haiti, peanuts). "This is our first true agricultural project," Mr Abrantes acknowledged. The US government claims it is not ignoring agriculture. The ambassador to Haiti told me the US has invested $200 million in the sector already; but, once again, the focus remains on produce for export as opposed to providing for the Haitian population, large portions of which are starving. The IADB, on the other hand, contends that infrastructure is important but "there are other needs" (such as "investing in the private sector" in order to import seeds). The bank has a plan to get a private company to buy the mangoes, centralize them, distribute them and then send them to the exporters. "We're changing the dynamics of how we can do agriculture in Haiti," said Mr Almeida at the IADB. This new dynamic is straight out of the neoliberal guidebook: providing vouchers to small producers so they can buy seeds through imports. With no public or community-held land, such ventures have to date not got very far. "It's not a big number of jobs," Mr Almeida admitted.

The internal Haitian market continues to be ignored by all parties, a travesty considering that 90 percent of eggs and poultry consumed in Haiti come from the Dominican Republic, while 80 percent of rice is imported. Changing that state of affairs through publicly funded subsistence farming is not an option. "When I say agriculture I say agribusiness," said Mr Almeida. The alternative, which is unthinkable in the world of these institutions, is that money is provided to subsidize domestic small-scale rice production.

An emblematic project of this "new dynamic" was brokered by the IADB: an initiative with Coca-Cola which has created a new soda called "Mango-Tango" that will be supplied with mangoes from newly developed producers. A similar deal with Starbucks coffee seeks to transform individual micro-farmers into cooperatives and then supply coffee to Starbucks and market it as Haitian coffee. Critical analysts call this the "sweatshops and mangoes" development model. "They need roads, they need irrigation in the countryside, but that's the one thing these guys won't do," said Mark Weisbrot, the analyst at the CEPR. But the Martelly administration's agriculture policy has so far followed the export-orientated agribusiness model of the Bretton Woods institutions to the letter. "What I hear from [the Haitian government] is that they want to go into the export mode, including the agriculture," said Mr Abrantes. In fact, Martelly had pushed the IFIs to go even further. "We were preparing traditional agriculture projects for Haiti which were basically focused on poverty alleviation, on the small farmers," added Mr Abrantes. "When the Martelly administration came in, they looked at the project and said, 'We would like it to have a different slant. We would like to have significant components on stimulating agribusiness', which is quite a different thing from what we had anticipated, and so I think the overall view is, even in agriculture, to encourage parts of the agricultural sector to move into export-production." Haiti remains a majority agrarian country; it needs an agrarian-based development model that distributes land among its homeless people for community-based subsistence cultivation. The economic managers of the country are not interested. The long-held dream of a Caribbean sweatshop is being born instead. Out of one of history's worst human catastrophes we have Mango-Tango. The racket's victory was Haiti's defeat, but this was no accident.

TWO

THE RACKET

A VERY BRIEF EXPLANATION OF WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AFTER WORLD WAR II

In a world based on the exchange of goods and services, the most effective way of controlling people – or nations – is to put them in your debt. This the US government understood clearly, and so at the end of the World War II American planners set about designing an international monetary system that would put the rest of humanity under the crack of their whip. But doing such a thing, while maintaining the customary public posture of spreading democracy and economic justice, would be no easy task. The US managed it mainly through the construction of a series of global institutions that would, from then on, decide how the world's poorest managed their economies. The ideology driving these institutions would be a US-backed form of capitalism that brooked no dissent from its precepts. The official, old world empires (whose decline picked up pace after 1945) were to be replaced by something more insidious, more hidden, something that to this day is still not recognized for what is: *debt slavery*. Debt would be used to strangle and crush any peoples that tried to free themselves from the shackles of the order being imposed.

The first of the new enforcers was the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which billed itself as the savior of countries in dire need of money to shore up unraveling economies. It would soon become a star player, one of the real big boys. Alongside it another body would be used to promote the racket's interests across the world: initially called the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), it would later become known as the World Bank. These institutions, which still oversee the world economy in the interests of the fattest of cats, were created in inauspicious surroundings: a hotel next to a railway station called Bretton Woods in New Hampshire. The stories and propaganda regarding the genesis of these institutions are almost completely false, but continue to be told to the present day. The World Bank, in *official* history, was meant to "facilitate private sector investment and reconstruction in Europe". Alongside that crucial calling, with Europe in ruins after the war, it was meant to deal more generally with "development" – a term that refers to the economic progress of countries that have been kept underdeveloped by the policies of the same people overseeing their "development". This second role would later become its chief purpose, as the World Bank became one of the main avenues through which poor countries would be lent money.

Two men dominated the process of designing the new global order. Harry Dexter White, a US diplomat, was there to make sure everything was set down with US interests in mind. He was up against a more honest and respected economist from Britain, John Maynard Keynes, whose ideas did not win out – the resulting arrangements prioritized American interests. White, after all, had considerable leverage, thanks to the United States' economic supremacy at the time. He followed the course laid down by Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who said early in the World War II: "Leadership toward a new system of international affairs in trade and other economic affairs will devolve very largely upon the United States because of our great economic strength. We should assume this leadership, and the responsibility that goes with it, primarily for reasons of pure self-interest."[1] And so it was. This self-interest is obvious when the Keynes' proposal is compared with that of White. It shows clearly that US interests were the priority all along, preventing any equitable solution. Essentially, the US saw the IMF and World Bank as tools in its goal to create new markets in which American exports could be sold and developed, further enhancing its already growing economy and helping to secure its position as the global superpower. But Keynes believed that trade relations between countries could not be changed without both the creditor and the debtor country making a commitment to their alteration. The powerful and the powerless in this sense both had responsibilities. Keynes had, for this reason, proposed an International Clearing Union (ICU) with its own independent currency called "the bancor". The bancor would be a universal unit of accounting that countries across the globe could use that would track trade deficits and surpluses. An "objective" unit would ensure that equal pressure fell on both the creditor and the debtor to balance their trade. But such a body would constrain the powerful creditor nations like the US, which were using their loans and export capacity as a method of control. For this reason, the ICU never happened; White opposed it. Instead, he wanted an International Stabilization Fund and the IBRD. The purpose of the Stabilization Fund would be to reduce foreign exchange controls, maintain steady exchange rates and lend money to nations in deficit. The bank would provide the capital that was desperately needed by faltering countries to rebuild after the war. And this was the formulation that was eventually agreed upon. It completely took the burden off the creditor nations

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[1] Quoted in Murray N. Rothbard (2000) *A History of Money and Banking in the United States: The Colonial Era to World War II*, Ludwig von Mises Institute, p. 480.

(like the US) in terms of balance of trade. Put simply, there was now no restriction on the amount of surplus a successful exporting nation could enjoy. As a country borrowed more and more, interest rates just rose and rose. This formula was perfect for accelerating the racket's dominance. Foreign countries became markets for American goods and started to rely, heavily, on US capital. As the levels of debt grew, so did the racket's ideological and economic stranglehold.

Despite constant US propaganda to the contrary, such self-interest, or naked imperialism, was the main motivation – to sculpt a world in its image, to create a global population working for elite US interests, while at the same time thinking they were working for their own.

This is not ancient history – the same is happening today. I remember asking historian Walter LaFeber, one of the most esteemed voices on US foreign policy, about this, and he was more honest than most: "No government has ever proposed a plan unless it believed there was something in it for that government," he told me, adding that the "post-World War II economic system was developed, not created, by the US officials to help their nation's economic clout and survival." His contention is, in fact, a common one: that the Bretton Woods institutions, as the IMF and World Bank soon became known, had originally had an "idealistic thread". From there, the story goes, these same institutions were perverted by the US, as its power to maintain control over other countries diminished with decolonization, to re-establish its power – or what the planners and elite journalists like to call "stability".

In 1945, of course, the system was conceived with the developing world's subservience pretty much guaranteed. But as various nations and peoples around the world gained independence, they had to be reintegrated into the racket so that it would remain as profitable as its predecessor. No problem. Since its original formulation, the Bretton Woods system has been an elaborate system of control. The Bretton

Woods institutions are heavily biased in their voting capacities: votes are proportional to your contribution to the funds, and because the US contributes the most as the world's largest economy it has *de facto* control. For example, if the US did not want to lend to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, which overthrew a US-backed tyrant in 1979, then the Bretton Woods institutions would follow their lead. Functioning without this credit line is extremely difficult. Alongside this, the dollar gives the US more power because it is the global "reserve currency", which means that it is the most popular foreign exchange currency held by governments across the world. The interest rates set by the Federal Reserve in Washington, DC thus give the US significant power to manipulate the global economy. Some countries even surrender their economic sovereignty to the US completely by adopting the greenback as their currency. For example, El Salvador, a poor country in Central America that was the victim of a vicious civil war sustained by the US from 1980 to 1992, adopted the dollar in 2001, giving up its control over monetary policy *in toto*. Needless to say, the "right guys" won that war and the rewards for the US inevitably followed.

For LaFeber, the "real question is whether the Bretton Woods arrangements have helped solve problems for all the involved parties, and done so equitably". Initially, they may have, depending on your measuring stick. Economists and governments measure economic growth as the increase in economic activity within a country by the metric Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is a futile metric because it tells you nothing about how that wealth is being distributed within a given country or if the new economic activity is in areas that are socially useful. But, still, most governments in the world chase GDP growth as the ultimate goal.

In the 30 years after the establishment of the Bretton Woods institutions, global growth was indeed good – showing marked improvements on the pre-war period. But this does not alter the fact that these institutions were initially created to enshrine US control of the global economy. If there was any doubt about what the intended plan was, all one needs to do is look at what happened from the mid-1970s onwards. In 1971, President Richard Nixon removed the US from the gold standard, where currency in circulation had to correspond to a specific amount of gold. This move unleashed a large amount of what is known as "footloose capital". The Bretton Woods system as initially conceived at this point "broke down" – but the institutions that composed it would soon become the bodies through which the rest of the world was made pliable to this new capital. The populations of poor countries from Africa to Latin America were put in service of getting profit on this money. Whole societies were transformed; power was taken away from democratic institutions and placed in the hands of private bodies, the racket's new silent rulers. And while all this was going on, the world entered one of its periodic depressions. In what is known as the "business cycle", economies inevitably rise and fall as the irrationality of the market creates "bubbles" and troughs from which the poor have to pull themselves out and from which the rich can profit: buying at the bottom is the best way to make a fortune. Imperialism had changed its face, or in fact hidden its face. No longer would there be garrisons full of foreign troops ensuring countries were made to service their rich patrons; this was an invisible imperialism, and for that reason much stronger and more durable. This was the signature strategy of the racket – don't let your subjects know they are subjects; don't let your functionaries in the field know they are imposing a brutal form of imperialism. Let them think they are free citizens of a free world, of which the US is merely the neutral arbiter. Meanwhile, suck out the money.

NOW YOU ARE INDEBTED

In the early 1980s a recession was imposed on the world by the Reagan administration carrying out a deflationary policy which put huge pressure on developing world countries with debts. It was the first worldwide economic recession since World War II, and countries that had borrowed heavily found themselves in dire straits: with deflation they had trouble meeting payments and some fell into default which meant they came under IMF control. Mob rules: as soon as they can't afford to pay back a debt, you own them. The IMF could now impose specific conditions, instructing: "We won't make any more loans unless you carry out certain programs." These programs, officially called "structural adjustment programs", were precisely attuned to what growing transnational corporations wanted from these developing world countries. Under IMF control they *had* to privatize. They had to cut back on public expenditure for things that would help ordinary citizens, such as public health and education, and they had to orientate their whole program not just to paying their debt, but they also had to welcome transnational corporations into the country on the nicest possible terms. It was a set of conditions serviceable only to the racket and incredibly damaging to ordinary people. It is like asking a friend if you can borrow $20, and them responding: "I'll lend it to you if you let me wear all your clothes, use your computer whenever I want, sleep in your bed, and you pay me 10 cents extra every week until you pay it all back." It is worth remembering, as an aside, that in many places the crippling debt that countries had incurred during the long boom after World War II was stacked up by dictators and tyrants backed by the US and their allies, for example General Suharto, the genocidal Indonesian dictator. The people who would have to pay back these loans with the destruction of their social provisions had had no say in the loans themselves, which often went on ingratiating the leaders that were oppressing them. Such debts are known as “odious debt” and many believe them to be not just wrong, but illegal. Still, they are used to control much of the world. Some nice examples for you: Indonesia has a massive $80 billion-worth of debts, but it is estimated that 50 individuals own 95 percent of these debts. After the West had bankrolled Suharto to power, they then loaned him huge amounts of money that did nothing to benefit his subjects (particularly the 200,000 East Timorese people who were murdered under his watch). But these debts were instantly socialized so that future generations like today’s young Indonesians have to pay the debts for the lavish lifestyle of Suharto and his friends. And it is not only “useless” countries like Indonesia that get themselves into heavy debt. What is often ignored is the fact that Britain, France and Italy all defaulted on US debts in the 1930s.

During the so-called “debt crisis” in Latin America in the 1980s, commercial banks would no longer lend to governments or companies in the region, so their reliance on the Bretton Woods institutions became even more acute. What these arbiters of economic control embarked on was the destruction of an economic model that had helped build Latin America into one of the economic powerhouses of the world, a model which had seen other great successes. Known as “import substitution industrialization”, it was a system that sought to build up domestic industries by enacting protectionist policies to keep out foreign capital and products. It was, understandably, not a popular system for the racketeers seeking new markets in which to invest and export, so they brought it down. And so “export-orientated industrialization” – an economy oriented to producing exports for foreign countries using supplies often made elsewhere – was introduced. It was part of one of the oldest tricks in the racket’s playbook to keep a poor country poor and “underdeveloped”: allow a foreign company to extract minerals in the "developing" country, paying little in tax or royalties, then take that raw material out of the country, build the product back in their own rich country, creating jobs and industry, and then sell it back to the people in the original country at a huge mark-up. The economies of these "underdeveloped" countries were put at the mercy of the vagaries of the global economy, where demand and supply would create interminable instability; in essence, it meant that independent development was impossible. Again: not an accident.

The destruction of public control over industry – which is one of the staples of these programs – ignored the fact that the state has an important role to play in creating a flourishing domestic industry. The US should know; after all, it has been one of the most protectionist countries in the world. Protecting nascent industries by putting up barriers to foreign investment and products is vital when these industries are in their infancy. The structural adjustment programs are adamantly opposed to this erection of barriers. The idea is that structural adjustment makes weaker economies "more like the West", but it does nothing of the sort because the poorer countries have none of the economic base of their masters. Instead, it creates dependencies that rely completely on their western "sponsors" – it creates a situation where it is impossible for these countries to pursue their own path. And when nations start electing leaders that put the interests of their people ahead of those of western multinationals, you can bet that the Bretton Woods henchmen will be brought in to squeeze them into submission.

For Latin America, export-orientated industrialization was a prolonged disaster – huge amounts of capital flowed out of the continent, which helped depreciate its currencies (its currencies became less sought-after so their price fell), and in order to bring down inflation governments were instructed to raise interests rates – which in turn helped slow economies even further as it became harder to borrow money. The continent's economy contracted by 9 percent in the five years to 1985. It was the same period of ascendancy for Bretton Woods, and this was no coincidence. The economic managers used "structural adjustment programs" and levered the debt the IMF and World Bank were owed to transform economies. "Rescue" packages and loan "deals" were struck with poor nations, *on the proviso that they did certain things to their economy*. Their economies would be rebuilt with the interests of western capital at the forefront; the new economies would be "precisely attuned to what transnational corporations wanted". One specialist puts the program like this: "privatization of the means of production, deregulation of all economic activity, encouragement of competition … and [integration] into the wider world capitalist economic system."[2] The needs of the people – from healthcare to education – were thrown to the wind, as public institutions were forcibly privatized. Basic human rights were taken away as the poor were absorbed into the "global market" where fewer and fewer obstacles faced the holders of large amounts of capital. The penetration of the captured economy would be made much easier, as poor countries were bought up by western capital. The rich – centered in the capital of this economic system, the US – were growing richer, capital was draining from the poor world, and the destitute of humanity were crushed under the boot of adjustment programs. The racket was growing, as an aggressive form of capitalism, "neoliberalism", destroyed any institutions that represented those without capital.

Two professors from New York explain the result: "Half the people and two-thirds of the countries in the world lack full control over their own economic policy. Expatriate 'experts' managed by industrial country nationals and based in Washington DC regulate their macroeconomics, investment projects and social spending." To add insult to injury: "The principles guiding these instructions from afar are even known as a 'Washington Consensus'."[3] This consensus, in fact, stretches no further than the richest people on earth, the members of the racket. Of course, it is extremely hard to escape the lock that Bretton Woods puts on your country. One example of a leader and movement trying to do that was Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the former president of Brazil, who realized early on he would have a hard time borrowing money if he embarked on his more radical ideas to combat inequality in his country – the credit lines would be pulled. There is now a near-absolute rule in global politics that social democratic leaders become sell-outs. And why? Because the forces of capital and its enforcer the US are too powerful. Lula wrote a letter to his people at the start of his tenure explaining how far his hands were tied by foreign capitalists. Brazil, in other words, was far from a sovereign country. And that was no accident. "Either right before they take power, or right after they take power because the system has become so powerful, the constraints on the democratic leaders are so powerful that they really have a very limited range of choice, they have to work within very narrow bounds," Edward S. Herman, an economist at the University of Pennsylvania, told me, adding that "the system is a beautifully integrated whole", which makes it very hard for the victims to see the wood for the trees amidst the barrage of propaganda.

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[2] Fidelis Akpozike Etinye Paki and Jude Cocodia (2011) "Africa in post-Cold War world politics", *Africana* 5(3): 5.

Another Latin American country, Argentina, actually became one of the poster boys for the failures of neoliberal policies when in 2001 its economy crashed. It should never have been an example of an economy in tatters, being at one stage among the most prosperous economies in the world. By the early 2000s it had become a basket case, thanks to its patrons in Washington and their local satraps. The crash came at the end of a long period in which the country had followed the prescripts of the Bretton Woods institutions, restructuring its economy in the interests of foreign capital. It wasn't meant to be like this. In the 1990s, the usual glorification by the media of the Bretton Woods precepts was ascendant. Argentina, we were told, was the "model pupil" in the neoliberal university being erected around the world. It was, we were told further, an "economic miracle" thanks to the liberalization of the economy that began in earnest under President Carlos Menem who came to power in 1989, when the economy was admittedly in bad shape. At the time inflation – which measures the decreasing value of currency – was sky-high, hitting 200 percent at the time. Menem had actually won power by promising Argentinians a return to the "good life" – one with increasing living standards, improved services, the full gamut of the usual election-speak. But this idealism crashed on to the rocks of the Bretton Woods institutions when he entered the Pink Palace in Buenos Aires. He became a neoliberal; maybe he had been one all along but had had to hide it because such policies are rarely popular with the majority of the people.

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[3] Ute Pieper and Lance Taylor (CEPA) (1996; revised 1998) "The revival of the liberal creed: the IMF, the World Bank, and inequality in a globalized economy", Globalization, Labor Markets, and Social Policy Working Paper No. 4.

Menem's first move was to allow private capital to profit from Argentina's public institutions. "We are pragmatists," he said, "state enterprises will be privatized to the extent that such action meets the government's interests." This was supplemented by other measures out of the IMF's playbook: the Argentine government would remove all tariffs and other barriers to the free movement of capital. Now US companies would have no responsibilities if the economy went belly up – they could invest and disinvest freely. The peso was pegged to the dollar, giving the US even more tacit control over Argentina – the interest rates set by the Federal Reserve in the US would now have a considerable impact on Argentina's economy. Social programs were eviscerated and fiscal controls lifted, creating a human crisis. A World Bank study lauded the new moves in 1993: "Provinces now have most responsibility for such social services as education, health, security, and housing. Improving efficiency of the delivery of these provincial social services could be one of the most effective ways to improve the standard of living in Argentina" (for "provincial responsibility" read "privatization"). The "Shock" Menem used to push through these unpopular reforms putting his country's economy at the mercy of foreign capitalists was the hyperinflation that he had inherited. In fact, it continued even after his reforms. Money poured into Argentina initially as, in 1991, the US slumped into a recession and capital looked for new flesh to dig its teeth into. With its deregulation, Argentina was a common choice. In the one-year period 1991–92, foreign investment in Argentina nearly quadrupled from $3.2 billion to $11 billion. By 1997, the *Economist* thought wise to gush that the country's prosperity "reminds some of a golden era, a century ago, when the pampas supplied imperial Britain with wheat, beef and wool, and Argentina was one of the ten richest countries".[4]

But it was all a lie, a building constructed without girders. It soon came crashing down. Wall Street – the Holy Grail of global capitalism where many of the world's biggest banks are based and do their dirty – suffered another downturn. It was called the popping of the "tech bubble", which had mirrored Argentina's foreign investment bubble. When Wall Street crashed, the footloose capital which had been treated so kindly by the people of Argentina felt no loyalty and flew out of the country as quickly as it had gone in. Menem had discarded the controls that had been in place to prevent such a grand flight, so the people had no way to stop it. Economic historian Robert Brenner said that towards the end of the 1990s the US absorbed "all the world's mobile capital. In this situation, countries that had staked everything on attracting investment were up against the wall."[5] He added that the same period marked "the death knell for those peripheral economies that had tied their currencies to the dollar". Argentina had staked everything on attracting investment and had tied its currency to the dollar. In the resulting downturn, the Argentinian government imposed harsh austerity measures. The IMF offered a $40 billion loan but at this stage withdrawals from bank deposits had reached $1 billion a day. The relatively new President Fernando de la Rua declared, "I will never devalue", but this proved an empty promise, and eventually devaluation happened and the historic debt default followed. In 2001 popular protests erupted on the streets of Argentinian cities during which 27 demonstrators died. The final straw was the IMF's refusal to lend any more money because de la Rua had failed to meet its conditions on public-spending costs. He resigned but left a country in ruins. Public services had been systematically dismantled, fiscal controls had been eroded and foreign corporations had no responsibility to stay put, leaving the government and banks bankrupt. The Bretton Woods institutions had done their job.

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[4] David Rock, "Racking Argentina", *New Left Review*, September–October 2002.

YOU BETTER WORK

A class war is being fought and the poor are losing. The racket based in the West has the money and power to extend itself globally, and so workers are fighting each other for work across borders. The countervailing powers, such as strong organized labor groups, that previously had some check on business power have been eroded and fractured. Business can now, like never before, write laws, weaken and destroy labor rights and the environment, and control the media without the public service option. And it feeds itself – as business takes over there is less space for people with a dissenting view; it has a magnificent self-reinforcing quality. It is true that more trade unions and workers' movements are needed, but the head wind is strong. The power of profit-seeking money has managed to create a world in its own image, largely through the Bretton Woods institutions. By globalizing capital and its production, the racket is doing something very clever and advantageous (for itself). They are pitting workers against each other rather than highlighting the gap between themselves and the peons that make their profits. The pressure valve has been released on the anger, which should be sky-high, against executive bonuses, irresponsible speculation and the insane repackaging of debt; it is now firmly trained on workers from other countries, who have been equally exploited by the same business hounds. This tactic is well known to the business community and the prevalence of "free trade" areas over the last decades is the embodiment of this thought-process. In the case of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the US pushed for a "free trade" integrated area covering itself, Canada and Mexico, which would allow its businesses to go into Mexico's economy and produce at a much lower cost, because environmental regulations were looser and labor laws laxer. Consequently, working Americans were done out of work because they could be undercut by Mexican workers. Also, heavily subsidized American goods could be sold at cheaper prices than indigenous Mexican produce, so agriculture was destroyed in Mexico. The only NAFTA winner at the end of the day was the business community, and instead of solidarity with Mexican workers, often the American unions turned to jingoism. This whole dynamic is called in academe the "race to the bottom" and operates over the globalized economic system, where multinationals search for the least regulated country in which it can produce its goods cheapest. It describes a perfect world for foreign investors. It means that the workers who can pitch themselves most cheaply to oversized capital are the most "successful" in getting work. In the absence of any new International where workers can coordinate on a level that might counterpoise the "race to the bottom", the result is that they often turn on each other.

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[5] Quoted in ibid.

Like all imperial strategies, the racket find voices of support in the local intelligentsia, whose job it is to rationalize brutal power and make it acceptable to the minds of the population. In the US, one such bright spark is Thomas Friedman, who calls the system outlined a "Golden Straitjacket" – i.e. the poor countries have no choice but to accept it, but it is beneficial for them. His evidence is that in 1975 only 8 percent of countries worldwide had liberal, free-market regimes; at that time, foreign direct investment (FDI) totaled $23 billion. But by 1997, by which time the Bretton Woods institutions had done their most ardent work, this figure had soared to $644 billion.[6] For Friedman, the increasing gap between the rich and poor was irrelevant, the human reality behind these figures did not penetrate his thinking, and he was not alone. Fetishizing investment is a widespread malady. But investment, and even growth itself, has no correlation with the improvement of life for the majority of the population in developing countries. It enriches a local elite, Friedman's friends, his colleagues in the media and finance and the rest of the racketeers. But the people see none of it, and never have. In fact, the US knowingly pushed this strategy because, far from providing benefits to the debtors, it benefitted US multinationals. As governments in developing countries have been made to privatize and open up their economies at the behest of the IMF and other bodies, they have had to solicit investment. The most successful countries have become those that create the optimum conditions for transnational corporations – led by the US. These conditions, unsurprisingly, are lax labor and environmental laws and low corporate tax regimes. Transnational corporations have spent the past 25 years running this race, looking for the poorest country with the least social infrastructure in which they can produce most cheaply, turning the globe, or its poorest parts, into a wasteland of broken people and destroyed landscapes. This is all called "globalization" by the racket's intelligentsia. Referring to this, Martin Khor, director of the Third World Network, has said: "Globalization is what we in the Third World have for several centuries called colonization."[7] No one is arguing that more interconnectedness is bad, it's "investor-rights" globalization that is opposed, merely because it is an updated form of imperialism that neutralizes the agency of billions of people. The so-called Washington Consensus removes freedom of choice from poor countries. They can no longer choose any development model that puts the needs of their own citizens ahead of the needs of international capital.

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[6] Thomas L. Friedman (2000) *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

This "race to the bottom" also means that FDI has been uneven in developing countries. While Friedman may laud the increase in FDI, he fails to mention that there is a stark discrepancy between the few developing countries that have ridden on the crest of the "neoliberal", US-led wave – "higher-tier developing countries" – and the rest who haven't been so lucky. It is also quite clear that the real success stories of the period in question actually were the countries of East Asia who took a very different economic position than the neoliberalism that was rampant in Latin America and Africa. The state took on a heavy role in places like South Korea and Taiwan, and there were countless state programs to help the poor, bucking the neoliberal religion. South Korea is an anomaly – it doesn't fit the usual model, it's not a pure free-market economy at all – it's a highly controlled economy with the government giving a lot of direction. Its success was due in good part to the fact it wasn't following the structural adjustment rules. The same is true of countries like Taiwan – another controlled economy that didn't move toward the radical free enterprise system according to structural adjustment rules. The former neoliberal colonies, like Bolivia and Venezuela, which are now renegotiating unfair contracts with western companies, are inevitably denounced but, according to Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize-winning economist who was formerly chief economist at the World Bank but turned against it, what they are doing "makes a lot of sense". The previous contracts had given next to nothing to the people of either country – that's what we call investment and they call imperialism. "The notion that you would want to invest more in education and health also makes a lot of sense," adds Stiglitz. "What we don't yet know is the extent to which they will be able to succeed in doing what the previous governments failed, which was to provide a broad basis for development. You need education and health, but some things take longer, and we don't know the answer to that yet." But if you take that course, as Hugo Chávez, the former president of Venezuela, did, you inevitably step on the toes of the racketeers. So it will try to take you out, as the US tried with tacit support for a 2002 coup attempt in Venezuela. Or in the case of another desperately poor country, Haiti, the US and its allies in Bretton Woods will wait until a crisis leaves you helpless to take full advantage.

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[7] Karl Moore and David Lewis (2009) *The Origins of Globalization*, Routledge, p. xiv.

As capitalism has taken on new – what philosopher Zygmunt Bauman calls "liquid" forms – it has been harder for people across the world to fight back. An asymmetry has emerged whereby those who own the capital, who own the means of production, are not in any way dependent on the workers who make their profits. If a worker raises a finger, tries to fight for better conditions for himself or his co-workers, then the bosses can just move operations to somewhere where they can pay even less, where the grass is greener for capital. Workers on the other hand are stuck in their place – most have responsibilities like family, children and unpaid debts. The idea of the free movement of workers is a sham; many people are in fact stuck to the ground for prosaic reasons of everyday life. So the rich increase their life chances and prospects – the poor stay rooted in a bleak existence with no way out. It creates two parallel existences, two discrete classes. “When one side is fixed to the ground and has no mobility then the concept of liquid modern life is of very little use for them,” Bauman told me. “That situation differentiates very considerably the life situation, life prospects, life chances, of different kinds of pleasure – it is polarizing.”

When I interviewed Stiglitz, he told me that the Washington Consensus actually comprised a long list of policies, some of which were apparently “appropriate” at some times. In Stiglitz’s opinion, the problem was that this neoliberal ideology had become, in a sense, a religion, a set of extreme ideas that were seen to be a one-size-fits-all panacea for all the economic problems of the developing world. In layman’s terms, this was “free-market fundamentalism”. Stiglitz maintains that the Bretton Woods institutions have come to realize that their policies have been a failure, yet in his book, *The $3 Trillion War*, he looks at the economic system now imposed on Iraq after the war and occupation. “I think one of the last attempts to impose neoliberal doctrines was in Iraq,” he told me. “After the World Bank had abandoned these ideas, the Bush administration was pushing it in Iraq: instant liberalization, instant privatization, even if it was against international law we tried to push it. It’s played a role in the difficulty of recovery.” The Bush administration had attempted to oversee the privatization of all the natural resources in the Iraqi economy, through the constitution itself. When I was at the *FT*, a senior executive at Japanese investment bank Nomura said to me in an off-the-record interview: "Well, we all know we went into Iraq to secure 3,000 barrels of oil a day." He thought it was funny that I had thought any different. This is how the racketeers talk behind closed doors. "I think one of the big, big worries is that the privatizations [in Iraq] will not have legitimacy and without legitimacy they may be reversed," Stiglitz told me. "And if there is worry about them being reversed it will undermine investment, it will make it more likely that the privatizations will not have the beneficial effect that was hoped, and there will be asset stripping rather than wealth creation, so I think it was a very foolish thing to do." Stiglitz was right that it would prove a disaster. He was wrong, though, to think that the World Bank and the IMF had learnt the error of their ways. They have not, because the logic of the system they oversee makes it impossible. These ideas remain popular, despite their failure, because they make the rich richer. And there are plenty more of these mad, bad ideas where this came from.

THREE

RIGGING THE SYSTEM

THE WHOLE TRUTH: FREE TRADE

"Almost every concern of the world, from the risks and safety of GMOs to climate change and biodiversity, from the protection of indigenous knowledge and resources to the reform of undemocratic and authoritarian global institutions like the WTO and IMF to global justice and fair trade, is reduced by the US to a question of 'free trade'."[1]

The fiction of "free trade" is one of the most potent weapons in the armor of the US in prizing concessions out of weaker countries and consigning them to an eternity of underdevelopment. More accurately, "free trade" refers to the freedom of America to do as it pleases in its trading relationships, while everyone else is forced to create economies conducive to being flooded by American goods. From the creation, as part of the Bretton Woods package, of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), later to become the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United States has preached the virtues of "free and fair trade". In reality it has practiced nothing of the sort. A particularly infamous example is the June 1930 Smoot–Hawley Tariff Act that raised US tariffs to historically high levels in order to keep out foreign products. In this case, extreme American protectionism backfired and the Smoot–Hawley tariff is now widely seen as a contributor to the crippling depression that enveloped the US in that period. The official story is that the Smoot–Hawley tariff was the "high-water mark of US protectionism in the twentieth century" and that in the aftermath of that "mistake" the US learnt the error of its ways and henceforth "generally assumed the mantle of champion of freer international trade" (quoted from the official State Department history). In fact, this is the opposite of the truth. Free trade has always been, rather, an ideal the US government supported when it served its purpose and spurned when it did not. In 1947 the GATT was signed with the ostensible purpose of economic liberalization, the obliteration of tariffs for import and exports, and the creation of stronger international cooperation. But as the historian John Bellamy Foster points out, the US put forward the GATT "with the intention of consolidating the economic control exercised by the center states, and the United States in particular, over the periphery and hence the entire world market".[2] A pattern begins to emerge.

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[1] Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies (2002) *Why Do People Hate America?*, Disinformation Company.

In essence, the GATT became a forum for trade negotiations, with numerous rounds of talks. The most notable of these was the partially successful Kennedy Round of 1962–67 where real reductions were made in the trade barriers put up among the involved nations. This changed a decade after the Kennedy Round when the GATT assumed its role as a vehicle for US interests. Anthony Gamble, the economist, says that at this point the "US began to turn to a dual-track strategy with regard to trade liberalization". Gamble was pointing out a certain tendency that the US had developed: the US puts pressure within the GATT to pursue a multilateral approach (this eventually led to the Uruguay Round in 1986 which gave birth to the WTO), while at the same time pursuing a course of explicit national self-interest outside. This was achieved through various new forms of protectionism and the initiation of bilateral trade liberalization with strategic partners such as Canada and Israel. One academic notes further how the US actually "formally remained outside the GATT regime": the US Senate never ratified the GATT. But, he adds, the Senate "allowed the GATT system to work in a legal sense, by and large". This precarious relationship with the GATT was consciously created because it allowed the US to be largely unconstrained by agreements which could have damaging economic consequences, while taking advantage of markets that could be prized open through the organization. The US was also upset that some countries were refusing to become part of the racket's trade regime en masse. William E. Brock, the US trade representative in 1985 under President Ronald Reagan, is open about the workings. "The reasoning behind these efforts," he said in reference to bilateral agreements outside the GATT, "is that additional trade-creating, GATT-consistent liberalization measures should not be postponed while some of the more inward-looking contemplate their own economic malaise."[3] Reagan himself was maybe the West's most zealous preacher of laissez-faire and free trade but, according to *Foreign Affairs*, "presided over the greatest swing toward the protectionism since the 1930s".[4]

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[2] John Bellamy Foster (2003) "The new age of imperialism", *Monthly Review*, 55(3).

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[3] Ernest H. Preeg (ed.) (1985) *Hard Bargaining Ahead: US Trade Policy and Developing Countries*, Transaction, p. 38.

[4] Quoted in Noam Chomsky, "The passion for free markets", *Z Magazine*, May 1997.

This led to the most notable bilateral agreement, the US–Canada free trade agreement, which was signed in 1989. It showed that the US was serious about forming arrangements outside the GATT and made economic sense for American business: Canada was the main single trading partner of the US. It imported $79 billion of US exports in 1989, nearly 22 percent of its total and almost double that taken by Japan. Liberalization across the US's other border, in Mexico, had seen US exports rise from $12.4 billion in 1986 to $25 billion in 1989. The supposed symbiotic trading relationship between these countries – the US, Canada and Mexico – eventually led to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which was signed in 1992 and put into force on January 1, 1994 (not without opposition as will be explored in a later chapter). Its selling point was the potential to bring together 360 million people and enjoin a collective GDP of approximately $6,239 billion. But this agreement followed the paradigm started in the 1970s. The economic model pushed by NAFTA and other bilateral arrangements with countries in Latin America was one of forced structural adjustment that reflected "the triumph of economic liberalism, of faith in export-led growth and of belief in the centrality of the private sector to the development process". This meant that any country wanting to trade with the US – a vital prerequisite for a developing nation to maintain a successful economy – had to adhere to this economic agenda. The US thus achieved its goal of making the rest of the hemisphere in its own image. The George Bush I administration, according to Anthony Payne, "conceived of NAFTA in wholly national interest terms, as devices by which to create an increasingly integrated hemispheric economy which the US could then use as the base from which to export ever more competitively to other, more distant, markets, preferably within the ambit of an extended GATT."[5] This thesis is supported by a comment made by Peter Hakim, staff director of the Inter-American Dialogue, who told Congress in March 1991: “Of every dollar Latin America spends on imports, 50 cents comes to the United States. There is nowhere else in the world where we enjoy that kind of advantage.” Another of the major myths promoted by the US and its agents is that “trade liberalization” – which is code for getting rid of obstructions to US products – is a vital prerequisite for development. The truth is very different. The East Asian economies that have developed impressively in the second half of the 20th century are market economies, but South Korea, for example, is far from a free-market economy. It is, in fact, highly controlled and has bucked the structural adjustment rules. Taiwan is the same: it refused to abandon the economic tools it had in place to protect indigenous industry. Economic success followed.

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[5] Andrew Gamble and Anthony Payne (eds) (1996) *Regionalism and World Order*, Palgrave Macmillan.

I spoke to Bernie Sanders, US senator for Vermont, self-described socialist, and opponent of the free trade agreements. According to him, such agreements are emblematic of what’s wrong with the global economy. “What happens to local agriculture, to farmers who are doing subsistence farming, feeding their families?” he said. “They may get driven off of the land because there’ll be some export crops available, whether it’s coffee, or something else.” This is exactly what I had seen in Haiti, where subsistence farmers were pushed off their land by rice dumped by the US in the 1990s; then they were told that with foreign investment subsistence farming was no longer viable and “export-orientated” production was the order of the day. The impact on domestic workers is also disastrous. Sanders continued: “My own view is that, especially for this country, the evidence is overwhelming that the function of these so-called free trade agreements is not to open up foreign markets for American products made in America, but to give corporations the opportunity to shut down here, and move abroad, and take advantage of cheap labor." The effect for working Americans, and the economies of the weaker countries is clear.

Sanders continued: "What astounds me about this whole debate is I think the evidence is just crystal clear that China has cost us millions of jobs, NAFTA has cost us millions of jobs, and why people want to continue to go forward in a policy which just does not work for American workers, it really does speak, getting back to money, to the power of corporate America. You look at the polls out there; Republicans were saying, no, we don't think free trade has done well for America, and yet, you've got Republicans and many Democrats who are defying the popular will, and defying all of the evidence, and that just speaks to the power of money." The corporations benefit from free trade, which is why it is maintained. A major part of all free trade agreements is the entrenchment of a legal regime that enshrines "investor rights", which means that domestic constituencies are often overruled in favor of foreign interests. It is part of further integrating countries into a global economy run in the interests of international capital rather than people. "Free trade agreements" actually often have nothing to do with trade – in the sense of a mutual lowering of tariffs. They are used, instead, to entrench corporate ownership of society through changes to the law in favor of investors. The free trade agreements, and associated bilateral investment treaties (BITs), often include a mechanism called "investor–state dispute settlement" (ISDS) which allows multinationals to sue a state, in international venues, that regulates or acts in a way the company doesn't like. Power is drained from nominally sovereign governments and consequently their populations. Through this vast web of treaties and "agreements" criss-crossing the globe, our world's *real rulers* take control.

AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH: AID AND INVESTMENT

But “free trade” is not a lone star. Aid, and with it the obsession with “foreign investment”, are the others jewels in the crown. The Marshall Plan – or the European Recovery Act – which was the $13.3 billion aid package ($1.5 billion in loans) given to 16 Western European nations by the US in 1947 is a good place to start. One Harvard historian describes the Marshall Plan as “the high-water mark of official unrequited transfers to foreign governments”. Dexter Perkins, writing in 1948, said: “The feeling that security and the preservation of free institutions are at stake provided the motive-power behind the Secretary’s program.” The former US president George W. Bush called it “a moral victory that resulted in better lives for individual human beings”. The tendency for this “gift” to be absorbed into the ideological framework of American beneficence is easy to understand. On the surface it appears to be motivated by the undoubtedly selfless goal of rejuvenating Europe’s economies on the back of a demanding war. But on closer inspection things look somewhat different. According to the historian Melvyn Leffler, the Marshall Plan was devised to, quite simply, “benefit the American economy”. When I went to the World Bank archives in Washington, DC, I found a document written in the aftermath of its establishment which outlined openly how “foreign aid” was being used to bolster the US economy after World War II. “In large part, the outflow of goods after the war was financed by the United States Government grants and loans, through the Marshall Plan and other programs”, it read. “In broad terms, it can be said that the Foreign Aid programs of the [US] Government have financed over $30 billion of exports from 1946 to 1952, or about one-third of total exports for this period.” The document pointed out that it wasn’t just foreign aid;

war was also good for business: "An added stimulus to the outward flow of goods was provided by the Korean war and the Western rearmament policy". The primary motive of the Marshall Plan, and to some extent the whole Bretton Woods package, was the rectification of what these documents called "the dollar gap". Before World War II there was a triangular economic arrangement, in which the US bought raw materials from colonies "owned" by Europe's powers and, in turn, the US could count on its exports being bought in Europe. It was extremely important for US interests that this symbiotic trade pattern be restored in the wake of the war. European (and Japanese) access to developing world markets thus became a very important strategic consideration. The best way for Marshall and his cronies to secure such a trade relationship was to introduce large-scale aid to Europe, so that it had enough economic clout to keep buying US goods. This is spelled out clearly and brazenly in internal planning documents from that period. Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson, in his call for economic aid to Europe in May 1947, talks at length about the "physical destruction" and "economic dislocation" across Europe; fair enough, but he frames his elegies to a lost European dominance with his desire for American supremacy. After listing the devastation in Europe, he laments: "the accumulation of these grim developments has produced a disparity between production in the United States and production in the rest of the world that is staggering in proportions."[6] This is the aforementioned "dollar gap". He then says: "Your Congress and your Government is carrying out a policy of relief and reconstruction today chiefly as a matter of national self-interest."[7] Simple as that.

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[6] Dean Acheson, "The requirements of reconstruction", May 8, 1947, http://slantchev.ucsd.edu/courses/nss/documents/acheson-reconstruction.html

[7] Quoted in Noam Chomsky (1991) *Deterring Democracy*, South End Press. Available at http://zcomm.org/wp-content/uploads/zbooks/www/chomsky/dd/dd-c01-s15.html

With the far right defeated and discredited in Germany, Italy and Japan, however, the initial allure of Soviet-style communism was considerable. The disbanded resistance movements all over Europe had a large communist element and they were a real and present danger to the "class" interests of the US, especially in the face of the Soviet superpower. According to one historian, the Marshall Plan was used "to force Europe to soft-pedal welfare programs, limit wages, control inflation, and create an environment conducive for capital investment – part of it financed out of labor's pocket".[8] The US was aware that making Europe dependent and reliant on dollars would provide a fatal blow to the attempts of the Soviets to push their sphere of influence westward. Commenting on the rebuilding of Germany by the US, Leffler writes: "Whereas the Americans hoped that German power would be co-opted, controlled, and modulated, the Soviets naturally feared, as did many Western Europeans, that the steps to rebuild German power might in the long term have unfortunate consequences."[9] The scale of the Soviet apprehension about the intentions of the US in its "state-building" is revealed by their refusal to allow the Eastern European countries under their *de facto* control to participate in the Marshall Plan. Their hostility to American aid is understandable and was not misplaced. Internal planning documents that anticipated the Marshall Plan stipulated that a major purpose of US foreign aid would be "To reduce or to prevent the growth or advancement of national or international power which constitutes a substantial threat to US security and well-being and to oppose programs of coercion and infiltration, especially when effected by the use of armed minorities and to oppose the spread of chaos and extremism." The catch-all phraseology is undoubtedly aimed at the Soviet

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[8] Ibid.

[9] "New perspectives on the Cold War: a conversation with Melvyn Leffler", *Humanities* 19(6) (November/December 1998).

Union and its partisans of whom there was a burgeoning number post-1945. After the Cold War, and during, this actually meant using foreign aid to keep on a leash smaller powers that looked to be moving towards independent nationalism or any form of meaningful sovereignty. The western intelligentsia garnered the good-will of their citizens by harping on foreign aid – i.e. "free" money going to the developing world to help ameliorate health problems and poverty. Aid is, in fact, "often deployed to supplement private trade and financing"; it is a method of control, as we will see when we investigate USAID later in the book. Far from being the long-awaited break with a paradigm that has seen the West exploit and pillage the Global South for centuries, the "debt relief" and "aid packages" offered by the rich nations are a continuation of the same shameful modalities. Behind all the glistening propaganda about a "new era for Africa", and "the birth of western altruism", lay a dull and familiar blueprint for the export of the so-called "neoliberal" economic model, better represented as neo-imperialism. During one G-8 summit in the 2000s, the finance minister's statement stipulated that to qualify for debt relief developing countries must "boost private sector development" and "eliminate impediments to private investment, both domestic and foreign". These are the *sine qua non* for the entrenchment of the neoliberal economic model. It further transpired, when the self-congratulation had eased only slightly, that much of the money donated to the 18 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries was actually coming out of their aid payments. This meant that the increase in funding was negligible at best, and non-existent at worst. All those except the heavily myopic saw through the G-8 leaders' attempts to sublimate the spread of neoliberalism (and the easing of aid payments) into debt relief. As we see, after a little inspection of the small print, debt relief, as most people understand it – the effacing of all debts with no catches – is not, in fact, supported by any leader in the racket.

ANOTHER WAY OF DOING THINGS

Despite the fact that the racket has remained unchallenged for decades, this does not mean that the racketeers are paranoia free. Nowhere is the decline of US power and influence felt more than with the US's political and economic relationship with Latin America. US planners used to refer to Latin America as "our backyard". These days the new players in Latin America are, primarily, Asian. "What you have is a process of structural change in the trade patterns in Latin America, that is very significant and likely to continue to go in that direction," Augusto de la Torre, chief economist for Latin America and the Caribbean at the World Bank, told me in his office in Washington. "The region is becoming highly differentiated, with countries, mainly in South America, diversifying their export-destination markets significantly," he added. A decade ago, Asia accounted for roughly 5 percent of the region's trade, but this has ballooned to 20 percent. Much of the growth is down to the region's commodity riches, particularly iron ore, being sucked in by a booming China. The US's most important trading bloc, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), is nearly two decades old and is starting to look its age. The share of trade between the three signatories – the US, Mexico and Canada – has fallen by nearly 10 percent in a decade: from 55 percent of the countries' global exports in 1999 to 46 percent in 2009. President Barack Obama even campaigned for the presidency on his opposition to the NAFTA agreement in its current form and complained about former president George W. Bush's attitude that "any trade agreement is a good trade agreement" and lamented the fact that NAFTA "did not have enforceable labor agreements and environmental agreements", which was disgraceful and true. In power, Obama reneged on his promise to renegotiate the deal, like he did on so many things. Later, he even approved a trade agreement with Colombia, one that had been zealously backed by Republicans and business groups in Washington. Pressure from labor groups and unions had briefly given Mr Obama pause, but he eventually signed on the dotted line. The US–Panama accord, meanwhile, which was signed by Panama in 2007, had still not been ratified, with business groups using the common propaganda argument that delays have "allowed US rivals to capitalize".

A move to regional trading blocs in Latin America has also begun to chip away at the racket's control. The most significant of the groupings has been Mercosur, which was founded in 1985 and includes all South America's main economies as full or associate members. But its progress has not been steady and, since the early 1990s, it has been stuck over the removal of barriers, witnessing in some cases reversals and new obstructions. Although a serious grouping, Mercosur accounts for only 11 percent of Brazilian trade, for example. The US has been happy with this, as it means more reliance on the empire upstairs. But Latin American governments could now choose who they deal with, which lowered the importance of appeasing US interests. The more recent grouping, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), was more scary to the Americans because it was largely set up as a political, rather than an economic, bloc, as an explicit way of avoiding the US dominating the people of the region. One place the US still had direct control over was Colombia, which was the jewel in the crown of the racket in the region, the Israel of Latin America.

Stationed in the *FT* office in Washington, DC in 2011, I was asked to watch the passage of a free trade agreement that was being furiously debated in Congress. As we have seen, such agreements are intended to give preferential trade terms to producers in the respective countries, in this case the US in Colombia and vice-versa. At least that's the theory. What actually happens is that jobs leave the richer nation and go to the country where workers are paid a pittance, while goods from the richer country flood the poorer, pushing out indigenous production. The winners, once again, are transnational corporations who spread their tentacles further into foreign lands, with less regulation and increased freedom to pollute and destroy. In this case, the tariffs Colombia had in place on American goods would be eliminated. Tariffs are government taxes that are imposed on foreign products in an effort to protect indigenous industries that have to compete with (sometimes) cheaper goods. In eliminating these, the Colombian government was potentially destroying its own manufacturers. It is no surprise that Republicans – the chief representatives of the racket – were pressing President Obama hard to push through a deal. In Washington, I called a Republican congressman, Kevin Brady, who told me of his fears that China, the new kid on the block, was invading the US's traditional backyard: Latin America. The free trade agreement would help the US to stave off China's rise, which had recently become even scarier for imperial managers when it was revealed that China was planning to build an alternative "dry canal" across the Panama isthmus. The US had traditionally had complete control of the Panama isthmus through the Panama Canal, which remains the only sea path through the western hemisphere – from Canada to the bottom of Argentina. The US had signed a treaty with Panama in the early 20th century for control of the canal after its own US Army Corps of Engineers built it. Panama itself had been created with the help of the US when it seceded from Colombia in 1903.

Brady, who represented Texas's 8th congressional district, was a member of the committee overseeing the passage of the free trade agreement. "This shows how aggressively China and other US competitors are establishing markets in our backyard," he told me. "China is taking smart advantage of America's inexcusable delay of nearly five years in approving its free trade agreement with Colombia." Barack Obama, no real friend of working people, had been cautious to sign it because it would lose him support among the Democratic base and the unions who were ardently opposing the deal. The reasons were simple: the deal would destroy American jobs, as even more production was "off-shored" to other countries. Free trade agreements often only benefit labor (not wages) in the poorer country, while locking in an "investor-rights" economic climate. (And when I say "benefit" I should add that the type of work it locks poor countries into is often sweatshop labor, as subsistence or small-scale agriculture is destroyed by subsidized products from the US or Europe coming in without tariffs. The people have to leave the countryside and become part of this new "economic miracle" of working in sweatshops for slave wages six days a week.) Unions also pointed out the Colombian government's horrendous record with labor and human rights. The country ranks as the most dangerous in the world to be a trade unionist, as far-right paramilitaries, allied in many cases with the government, terrorize civil society. In the end Obama saw what he wanted to see and accepted the cosmetic changes that the Colombian premier, Juan Manuel Santos, promised. It is a familiar story: little to no real change.

For over 40 years there has been a civil war raging in Colombia between government forces and left-wing guerrilla groups, in which the US has been heavily involved. The ongoing battle for control over strategic areas has resulted in many civilians being caught in the crossfire. An estimated 70,000 people have been killed in the past 20 years. Of these, over 2,700 have been trade union leaders, the overwhelming majority of whom were targeted by government-sponsored paramilitary groups in an attempt to stamp out worker mobilization. According to the human rights organization Global Exchange, since the US began sending aircraft and on-the-ground training to Colombia in 2000, politically motivated killings have risen from 14 to 20 per day, and the number of kidnappings and disappearances has doubled. In 2004, Bush asked Congress to prolong the generous aid package to Colombia for the years to come, adding to the $3 billion donated over the previous five years (it was started under Bill Clinton's "Plan Colombia"). One in ten Colombians has been uprooted because of the violence. It is estimated that there are over 3.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country, the second highest number in the world after Syria. Within this panorama of internal violence and forced acquisition of land, women have been adversely affected: around 65 percent of the displaced population are women (the effects of US imperialism are inevitably worse for women). This gender imbalance is a result of the common breakdown of families following the stresses of displacement, which in many cases causes the men to leave; or when the men are killed their wives and partners are forced to escape alone with their families. The experience of 17-year-old Yessika Hoyos is, sadly, not unusual. During her first month of law school in Bogotá – the capital of Colombia – her uncle showed up to fetch her from class. He told her that she was needed at the hospital. Yessika and her uncle made the hour-long car journey to the family's local hospital in the town of Fusagasugá. There, Yessika saw her mother and her siblings huddled together. Her 14-year-old sister had found their father lying in a pool of blood outside his friend's house. As she ran to attempt to resuscitate him, she found that he was riddled with bullets. Shot seven times in the head, he had died instantly.

"My father's name was Jorge Darios Hoyos Franco, he was a trade union leader and on the 3rd of March 2001 he was assassinated," Yessika, aged 25 when we met her, with a tone of self-assuredness that belies the horrors of the personal tragedy she was recollecting, told me and my colleague Ana Arendar. "Initially, like with all the trade unionists that have been assassinated in Colombia, the police claimed that it had been a murder of passion … We knew this not to be true as my father had been receiving death threats for months due to his trade union activity … so we had to really fight and struggle for the truth to come out." Yessika and her mother began to petition for her father's killers to be brought to justice. They gave interviews in the local media and worked with a national center for human rights to collect evidence. "Then my mother started receiving calls telling her that we had to keep our mouths shut or we would end up like my father," said Yessika. "People started coming to our house and threatening us, we were followed in the street, that's why two weeks later we were forced to leave our house and we became displaced. We went to Bogotá. In one year we moved house at least five times, because every time we moved they would find us and threaten us so we would have to move again."

This was also the case for Haydee Moreno, whose husband was assassinated by paramilitary factions in 1994. She was left widowed with a five-year-old son while four months pregnant. "We had to abandon everything we owned, all our belongings, our house and our land, and move," she said. "It is the women who are most vulnerable in a situation of displacement. We have to think about how we are going to find food for our children, how we are going to make sure they get an education, while also worrying about how we are going to stay safe and provide for the family."

A report by the non-governmental organization Refugees International highlighted sustained government failure in dealing with IDPs or developing adequate responses to the needs of specific groups such as women and children. The report identified the gender dimensions of displacement which have been largely ignored, these include: lack of access to healthcare – especially access to obstetric care; high levels of domestic abuse triggered by the increased stresses brought on the family; the psychological trauma suffered by women who have lost loved ones; the high number of women who have turned to prostitution as a means of supporting their families; and the high incidences of rape and sexual violence which have been continually used as an act of war by both sides of the conflict. This devastating injustice impelled the Constitutional Court in Colombia to rule that the government is failing in its duty to provide humanitarian assistance to the country's displaced women. "The government now appear to be doing something but their efforts aren't proving effective," explained Isabel Ortiz Perez, president of Mujer y Futuro, a Colombian foundation that works to defend women's rights. "There is no coordination between the programs they offer. For example they have been attempting to create housing for displaced women but they won't create any education facilities. As a result displaced children aren't able to go to school and mothers aren't able to work as they have to look after their children during the day."

Isabel thinks that the government should be focusing its efforts on the provision of childcare and helping women find employment within the formal sector. "At the moment the majority of displaced women are employed in the informal sector, selling sweets on the streets or working in the domestic sector. This is all work in the informal economy which means that these women are left without social services or healthcare."

Yessika finished her law degree and now works for the José Alvear Restrepo legal collective (CAJAR), a human rights firm which is handling her father's assassination case. Despite the arrest of the men who shot her father, those who ordered the killing remain free. Yet Yessika considers herself to have been one of the lucky ones. When her family was displaced, her mother was able to keep her job as a schoolteacher and they had friends who helped them move to Bogotá. "My mum was able to continue with her work, if she hadn't I wouldn't be here now, neither would I have been able to complete my law degree," she said. "But most of the displaced women who arrive in Bogotá are peasants whose lives and customs revolve around cultivating the land. They often arrive in the city illiterate with no education and no possessions, what hope do they have?"

US support for this kind of barbarism might even be futile now, as China steps into the fold. "We're in a new era," Larry Birns, director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, told me when I interviewed him in Washington. "It's an era where strategy is defined more in terms of access to food and commodities, rather than naval bases and alliance policy. The Chinese are leading the way. US primacy was largely due to the fact it had no competitors, now it *only* has competitors," he added. Other countries are weary of the US style of imperialism, and see China as a way of escaping the investor-rights straitjacket imposed by the US. Brazil, the source of much of China's iron ore, which produces steel, is a good example. (The US helped overthrow the country's democratic government in 1964, installing a brutal security state which ruled for decades.) The move to a global economy revolving round commodities has also upset the traditional dominance of the US (and the EU). The US which used to rule the roost in trade discussions, through the WTO, is now being bypassed; any number of countries are becoming emergent countries, and they are benefitting even more because they are not *consumer* economies. The advantages that used to accrue automatically to the US have, to some extent, now slipped to the other side, to the poor nations, because they have agricultural commodities and oil. But the US-enforced system of corporate mining and resource extraction, a particularly vicious arm of the global racket, which gets these commodities out of the ground for a healthy profit, still causes untold suffering around the world.

FOUR

CURSING YOUR RICHES

KILLING FOR TREASURE

One of the oldest money-making schemes of the racket is the pursuit of the natural minerals under the ground of another country. The mining industry is a multi-billion-dollar enterprise, which sees transnational corporations shift natural resources around the world. The annual turnover of many of these corporations is bigger than that of the countries from which they are extracting. The US is at the forefront of keeping economies in the Global South open to western mining companies – often by getting rid of governments that want to do things differently. The corporations are from all over the rich world, and they often destroy the environment of the local areas. The people on the ground, those who fight back, are never viewed kindly – and mining companies often, with the help of local proxies, will take them out. When I was covering mining at the *Financial Times*, I went through a period where, to put it simply, people kept being killed. Perhaps unsurprisingly, none of my contacts in the mining world would talk to me about it, but I'd see repeat newswire stories of people being gunned down on the streets by no-one-knew-whom. In a six-day period over Christmas 2010, for example, while I was working for the *FT* in London, two prominent anti-mining activists in El Salvador were shot dead in broad daylight. First, Ramiro Rivera Gómez, vice-president of the Cabañas Environment Committee (CEC), which was campaigning to stop Canadian mining company Pacific Rim from opening a gold mine in the area, was killed while walking with his 14-year-old daughter. Six days later, Dora "Alicia" Recinos Sorto was shot returning from washing laundry in a nearby lake. She was eight months pregnant and another prominent member of the CEC. Amnesty International called on the Salvadoran authorities to investigate the killings, but nothing happened.

So I decided to call the company. "This has nothing to do with Pacific Rim. It's a local family feud," Tom Shrake, chief executive of the company, told me, sounding agitated. I guessed *FT* journalists didn't ask these sorts of things very often. He continued: "There are radical elements out there that would like people to believe it's about mining, but it's not true." But stories of violence and disruption at mining sites around the developing world are common and consistent. In Mexico, also in that December, the authorities temporarily closed down a barite mine operated by another Canadian company, Blackfire Exploration, after indigenous leader and activist Mariano Abarca Roblero was shot in the head and killed by a passing motorcyclist. Abarca Roblero had been a leader of the Mexican Network of People Affected by Mining, and was involved in the resistance to an open pit extraction mine in Chiapas. I soon realized that similar deaths were happening all the time, everywhere. These incidents were indicative of a program of intimidation and murder for anyone who opposed the opening up of their land to foreign mining companies.

These stories brought back bad memories for an industry that had spent decades lavishing considerable amounts of money and time on trying to clean up its image – not because it cared about the people being displaced, but because it was starting to hurt the bottom line. In a 2007 article in the *Multinational Business Review*, Hevina Dashwood explained that mining companies “were caught in the mid-1990s with a significant gap between societal expectations and their institutionalized practices … For the industry as a whole, the gap had widened so much that companies experienced a legitimacy crisis.” The industry-wide obsession with “sustainability” and corporate social responsibility (CSR) started around the turn of the millennium as mining companies started to feel the effects of their reputation in their ability to operate around the world and make money. This crisis was averted by a slew of new organizations dedicated to promoting CSR and improving the image of the industry. In 1999, nine of the biggest mining companies joined forces to create the Global Mining Initiative, intended to provide ideas and strategies for “sustainability in mining”. In 2001, the representative body for the mining industry was transformed into the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), which dedicated itself to 10 principles – from education to the environment – to which the industry pledged to hold itself. The field of CSR was so popular in the mining industry during this period that the University of Queensland in Australia founded its own Sustainable Minerals Institute in 2001 to promote the practice. It was, the school said, established “in response to growing interest in and debate about the role of the mining and minerals industry in contemporary society”.[1]

But in reality, despite cosmetic changes, nothing fundamental changed. The dynamic of capitalism meant it never could: the mining companies didn’t go to these poor countries for charity; they wanted to take their minerals and make a profit on them. Paying workers well, or paying to clear up after themselves, hurt the bottom line and shareholders, which was what these institutions, by definition, cared about. “The recent murders of mining organizers in Mexico and Guatemala, and horrendous toxic waste spills such as at Barrick Gold’s North Mara mine in Tanzania, make it very hard for the mining companies to convince us that their conduct has improved,” Alexis Stoumbelis, executive director of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, which had spoken out about the assassinations in the country, told me. “What has changed is the mining companies’ attention to and investment in projecting an image of themselves as socially and environmentally responsible.” She was right.

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[1] www.aurecongroup.com/en/thinking/themes/urbanisation/resources-demand-and-community-impacts.aspx

But agents of the racket don’t just come in the form of chief executives. These places employ people to improve their image – the black world of public relations. Tim Purcell, a director of the public relations firm CO3, predictably disagreed: “The larger players have now had to tackle ICMM issues,” he said. “Some [issues] are old as the hills, from indigenous tribal issues, to political insensitivity, to profound health and safety issues. But the industry does take these issues seriously, and it shares the concern and strategies about dealing with these things … About 10 years ago major mining companies had big reputational issues,” he continued. “The criticisms … were starting to affect business. Companies weren’t getting licenses to operate – things like that.” When business was hurt, things had to change. Or at least the image of things had to change. In truth, the people in the countries, behind the paeans to foreign investment and new jobs, were slaves to an old and well-established form of imperialism that had consigned them to underdevelopment for centuries.

At that time, I also spoke to Kenmare Resources, a company that owns and operates a titanium mine in Mozambique which was one of the "success stories" of this trend for corporate concern about reputation in the mining industry. It won a Corporate Social Responsibility Award in 2009 from the Chamber of Commerce of Ireland for its Kenmare Moma Development Association (KMAD), which was founded in 2004. The company also won the Nedbank Socio-Economic Award for the same project. "Basically, right at the outset of the project, we knew that in order for this to be a long-term success, we had to make sure that people saw it as an economic good for them – not for the country, but for them directly," said Kenmare's managing director, Michael Carvill, parroting the official lies. "In order to achieve this, we set up a not-for-profit development organization with the objective of ensuring that the local communities benefit from mines." In the mining industry, making sure that local people actually have some benefit from their resources warrants copious prizes.

Carvill told me all the wonderful things KMAD provides to the local communities in Mozambique, from jobs to healthcare to agricultural training. "We even started a wildlife fund joint-venture, which provided agriculture technicians to tutor people in how to grow stuff that might be sold to the mine, and we lean on the mine so they buy," Carvill said. "It has given people who were in absolute poverty some money, and it has allowed for a better trickle-down effect. We've also built a couple of schools." The truth of Kenmare's venture for the people of Mozambique is in the fine print. The Moma mine operates in an industrial free zone (IFZ), which makes the processing plant exempt from corporate taxes, import duties, export duties and VAT, with a 1 percent turnover after six years of production. It is estimated that Moma could have annual revenues of $85 million over a 20-year period. This "arrangement" comes straight out the racket's playbook: you pay no taxes or royalties on the people's minerals and then act like Jesus Christ come to save the natives with schools and hospitals. No matter that these are of poor quality and cost well below the millions of dollars you've saved in taxes. PR job complete.

This kind of deal is often cut between governments and foreign companies, especially when capital costs will be high, and it's one of the main gripes of civil society groups in developing countries, which argue that while jobs and benefits may flow to the communities near the site, the rest of the country is left empty-handed, save for those elements of infrastructure needed to connect the site to the rest of the country. The argument from mining companies is that they have the capital and expertise that developing countries don't, which might be true. But the answer in that case is for developing countries to build up their indigenous expertise by building an engineering university. Of course, mining companies don't want to hear this because it would make them obsolete, so the trend continues: the developing countries stay underdeveloped and reliant on foreign capital – until they get a leader with the people's interests at heart, rather than the interests of foreign capitalists, as in Bolivia, which we'll look at later.

"When I first engaged in this industry, over 30 years ago, with very few exceptions it was rough-handed and red-necked," said John Elkington, founder of SustainAbility, a strategy consultancy and think-tank. "These people were real bruisers. In the same way it's said that you can't make omelets without breaking eggs, they argued that you couldn't dig mines without destroying the environment. They had no time for environmentalists." Now though, he said, things are different. "I genuinely believe that the ICMM process helped catalyze real progress – and some industry leaders have had some sort of crisis of conscience over the past decade or so."

It was all lies. Nothing has changed apart from appearances. Some in the mining industry admitted they didn't even know what "sustainability" actually means, even while they sing its praises. "I wouldn't actually know how to define it; it's very ill-defined and got such a broad spectrum," Dr Bernard Olivier, executive director of miner TanzaniteOne, told me in South Africa. "We care about making sure the local community is bought into the process, but I don't know if that's the definition of 'sustainability'." Chief executives of mining companies talk about the need for a "social license" – or a lack of community backlash – to work in foreign countries. The new paradigm was meant to make this easier. The mining meet-up I went to in Cape Town, South Africa, lasted only four days, but half of the schedule was given over to discussions of CSR. Despite this preoccupation, many leading mining companies also cannot provide definitive figures on how much they spend on CSR. I asked the five biggest companies – BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto, Vedanta, Anglo American and Xstrata – to tell me what they spent. Only Vedanta provided a figure for CSR at the group level and the company could only provide two years of data. The other four said they don't account for CSR spending – under which fall local community projects and environmental awareness – as a discrete category. Anglo American, which said it could not provide any figures at all, commented: "For Anglo American, corporate social investment and responsible business practices are absolutely embedded in the way we operate." The figures from the other four show that spending in the categories which they pointed to as closest to CSR have risen significantly since 2004, but year-on-year increases have been patchy and inconsistent. Rio Tinto said the nearest it comes to accounting for CSR is its "external costs" accounting section. Xstrata provided figures for corporate social involvement (CSI), which only includes investment to initiatives or projects that benefit the broader community where it works, not the "significant expenditure" on day-to-day operational expenses. However, its CSI spending rose precipitously from £10.5 million to £102 million but fell by nearly half to £58.5 million in 2008.

KILLING FOR PROFIT

Despite CSR and CSI spending, despite all the PR, the human story was not getting any better, as became apparent when I started looking into contemporary legal battles. One of the most high-profile cases involving local resistance to a new mining project involved the company Vedanta. A tribal people in India called the Dongria Kondh are engaged in a civil disobedience campaign to stop the company from developing an open-pit bauxite mine in the Niyamgiri hills, in the state of Orissa, in eastern India. The Dongria worship Niyamgiri's peak as the seat of their god. Vedanta already has a bauxite mine at the base of the hills. A British government agency, the UK National Contact Point (NCP), which oversees the enforcement of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines on business conduct, released a statement critical of Vedanta. It concluded: "Vedanta failed to engage the Dongria Kondh in adequate and timely consultations about the construction of the mine, or to use other mechanisms to assess the implications of its activities on the community, such as an indigenous or human rights impact assessment." And yet, since January 2009, after the financial crisis when the Vedanta share price was as low as 584p, the stock has quintupled to 2,106p. During this period the company received reams of bad press; the Church of England and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust sold their stock; and the company was condemned by the NCP. But only four days after the Rowntree announcement, Vedanta's share price jumped 72p in one day to £26.26. In August 2006, a proposed coal operation in Phulbari, Bangladesh, became the center of a protest that badly impacted the share price of GCM Resources which owned the asset. Local resistance had been building and eventually a crowd of 50,000 people marched to the offices of GCM. In this case, the police fired live rounds on the peaceful protest and killed three people and injured many more. "While the market should pay more than lip service to CSR, the reality is that it only cares if social unrest on the ground starts to impact a mine's operational performance," Joe Lunn, mining analyst at finnCap, told me. "Generally speaking, the assets of large mining companies are more diversified with enhanced geographical spread so are less affected than a small company with a single project." In the same month as the NCP ruling, the English High Court froze £5 million of assets belonging to another British mining company, Monterrico Metals, after 27 men and women were allegedly detained for three days at its Rio Blanco mine in northern Peru. The 27 were protesting the mine's development. In development circles the term "resource curse" has been invented to describe the tendency for these great sources of wealth to turn into destitution and violence for the citizens sitting on top of the deposits, while profits are sent abroad. It is, of course, not an *accident* that it ends like this.

When I was in South Africa in 2012, the mining honchos talked endless hot air about the wonderful safety standards upheld by the mining companies, as happy workers beamed out from glossy brochures. But at the same time the leading mining companies on the London Stock Exchange had failed to bring down the number of fatalities at their operations, despite constant rhetoric to the contrary. I surveyed four leading UK-listed mining groups – Rio Tinto, Vedanta, Xstrata and BHP Billiton – and found the number of fatalities had more than doubled since 2005. The companies recorded 23 deaths in 2005, while in 2008 the figure was 54. The *FT* published the story – derision ensued.[2] "It's a difficult one because, I think, individually companies are seeing results," said Carel Labuschagne, chief executive of the International Register of Certificated Auditors, a risk management group advising companies on safety issues. "The problem is the cultural change coming down from management is a process." Rio Tinto asserted: "Safety is in everything we do. Our figures should be looked at in terms of an expanding workforce. But of course, any fatality is too many and we strive to keep it to an absolute minimum." There are no binding regulations on mining safety although there are international "standards" – as with everything else in the industry, when it comes to social concerns the law constraining companies is merely a gentlemen's agreement.

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[2] Matt Kennard, "Miners' efforts fail to cut death toll", *Financial Times*, January 18, 2010.

One mining executive I spoke to summed up the real reasons for the change in image, and also the reason why even the smallest improvements are, at root, undertaken for profit. "I'd love to say our projects were entirely altruistic," said Brad Sampson, executive director of Discovery Metals, a copper mining company operating in Botswana, "but the last decade or so, mining companies have realized that unless you bring along the local community, you can't operate. If you don't, you will not get a social license to operate. I'm not talking about paper – but that local communities can stop projects from developing. You have to get them on side. What you are doing with a mining project in a faraway part of the world, you are imposing a degree of change, which is difficult. I think there's no question that the mining industry came with a messy reputation. Whether that is deserved you can debate."

Over the last decade, the global mining industry has awakened to the need to address sustainability issues. But for this to be fully realized and its services utilized over the next decade, many within the industry believe that a binding international regulatory framework is the vital next step. "Voluntarism only takes you so far," said Elkington of SustainAbility. "It helps promote experimental approaches and a degree of competitive behavior, but there will always be those companies that prefer not to follow the corporate-citizenship line. They have to be brought under control via appropriate governance – regulatory and legal mechanisms." That hasn't happened.

OUR LITHIUM

Evo Morales, the president of Bolivia, is at the forefront of a change in the attitude among developing-world leaders toward foreign – or, more specifically, western – mining companies. His country owns half the world's deposits of lithium, which could be hugely lucrative if developed. But his government is reluctant to let western companies in. Mining minister Luis Alberto Echazu has said: "We will not repeat the historical experience since the 15th century: raw materials exported for the industrialization of the West, which has left us poor." Instead, Bolivia has bucked conventional developmental economics – which outsources development and production to foreign companies expert in the field and with reserves of capital – and has endeavored to develop its deposits with state-owned companies, rebuffing the overtures of countless western companies. Morales needs to raise $800 million to construct the mines and processing plants needed for this approach. In an industry report, Bolivian mining was reported to have grown 13 percent in 2009.

In 2012, I went to see the Bolivian ambassador to the UK to find out what was behind this new way of doing things. She told me she doesn't get many requests for media interviews. When financial news outlets in the West write about Latin America, it's inevitably an article lauding the "economic miracle"' of its Brazilian neighbor or a scaremongering editorial about the Red Menace of Venezuela. But a look at the media elsewhere – specifically emerging markets in East Asia – and the story isn't so monochrome. In fact, China's state news agency, Xinhua, covers pretty much every statement made by Bolivian President Evo Morales. Why? It's quite simple: a soft, silver-white metal called lithium. This landlocked country of 9 million people, which is the poorest in South America, has the world's largest reserves of a mineral that could become one of the most sought-after of the century. It's needed to make the batteries that will power the electric car revolution that many are waiting for, particularly in China.

But the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) has been in government since 2005 and it is pioneering a new development model, which, if successful, could become the norm across the developing world. What may worry multinational mining companies and their backers is that it takes no heed of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank orthodoxy, which has traditionally advocated minimal regulation on foreign direct investment. "I know that they are in some discussions with France, Korea and Japan about working in Bolivia to develop lithium, but we don't want to be only raw material exporters. We want to create added value in the country," said Ambassador Maria Beatriz Souviron, as she sat in the Bolivian embassy in Eaton Square. By "added value" Ms Souviron means building factories in Bolivia to manufacture the batteries within the country, rather than sending the metals abroad once they are out of the ground. It's an idea that has an increasing number of proponents all over the world of emerging markets. In an interview in 2011, Nigeria's State Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Akin Akinnigbagbe, said of his country's cocoa exports: "We are equally embarking on what I will call value addition to the business of cocoa. This will take the form of processing it at home before selling into the international market. This will equally assist the farmers to get higher profit unlike in the past, when cocoa beans are exported directly to the international market; with the farmers having no control on the price."[3] It could mean a harder time for western companies. "The policy of my government is to retain sovereignty over the investments made in the country," said Souviron. "So if the people that want to invest in my country and follow that rule of value-added, then it's fine. If not we'll do it ourselves." And the challenge to orthodox development models has so far been a success. The Bolivian government has managed to run a current account surplus of 12.1 percent of GDP in 2007, 11.6 percent in 2008, and 3.4 percent in 2009 as the government spent to keep the country from recession. Along with Venezuela and Argentina, Bolivia was the only country in the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean to be forecast a current account surplus by the IMF in 2010. So far the Morales administration has "inked" a Memorandum of Understanding with the South Koreans to develop the lithium after the president was happy with Korea's "efforts to use clean technology" and its willingness to abide by the new endogenous growth model Bolivia is seeking.

The advent of the Chinese is also changing how business is done. The miner Bellzone, for example, agreed a deal with China for investment in its iron ore project in Guinea that stipulated funding infrastructure in return for mineral supplies. The iron ore project at Kalia in the West African country is substantial. It has a defined resource of 2.4 billion tonnes and the company is aiming for 50 million tonnes of production a year. With an eye on its insatiable appetite for steel, the China International Fund (CIF) agreed to spend about $3 billion on building the infrastructure needed for the project. Chinese companies are increasingly offering to build transport and energy infrastructure for mining companies in return for deals to buy the minerals produced, or off-take agreements. "It's a new form of pragmatism," Tim Williams, analyst at Ernst & Young, told me. "They don't want to bother with outright control, so they won't buy a majority stake, but will plough money into infrastructure." He added: "You've got companies with good assets but no money and no project finance. Most of the equity markets are still weak, so they have to look at something else." The Bolivians have gone into projects with the Chinese, reporting that they treat them like equals, in a way the Americans never have done.

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[3] "Nigeria: 'We want to add value to our cocoa'", *All Africa*, February 25, 2010, http://allafrica.com/stories/201002251272.html

In recent years, the owners of the mining industry have invented a curious language. When a country decides that its own people, instead of a foreign company, should profit from the minerals under their own ground at a fair price, foreign companies call this "resource nationalism", a pejorative term. I spoke to African Consolidated Resource (ACR) – a miner working in Zimbabwe – which had its mining license in the country's Marange diamond fields finally cancelled by the mining secretary, Thankful Musukutwa, after months of a protracted legal process. "We actually won in the High Court, which said our license was good in September," Roy Tucker, chief financial officer at ACR, told me. "But the government appealed to the Supreme Court, who have said nothing should be mined." The government invoked the Mine and Minerals Act which stipulates that certain lands are reserved against prospecting. "It's unconnected to the court case," said Mr Tucker. "They've proposed new grounds for cancellation, they suddenly discovered the ground where the license is, which was reserved against prospecting, apparently. The obvious suspicion is that something has been changed in the records." ACR and other companies operating in Zimbabwe were also up against a new law proposed by Robert Mugabe and his Zanu-PF party which will give the country a majority stake in any foreign company operating assets in Zimbabwe. For the foreign capitalists this was too much; they wanted it to be like Haiti where they had won and Haitians were forced into a minority stake in their industries – by law. "By some date in April companies are asked to submit plans so that 51 percent of the company is held in indigenous hands within five years, so we have to submit a plan," said Mr Tucker, seriously agitated.

In South Africa, parts of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) government have been making statements about the nationalization of the mining industry since the end of apartheid, as was promised in the ANC's famous and noble Freedom Charter. When I was in South Africa, Julius Malema, then president of the ANC Youth League, was saying that nationalization of the mining industry was now a strong priority, and it should be. Unfortunately, economic apartheid was never taken on in South Africa. "We are aware that there are efforts to topple and replace liberation movements with puppet governments … who exploit the minerals of Africa," he said.

At the 2010 Mining Indaba – the most important resources conference in Africa – the mining minister, Susan Shabangu, felt compelled to tell the gathered mining industry – rich white men in suits – in no uncertain terms "there will be no nationalization of the mines in my lifetime". The people who had so much to gain from this imperialism trotted out the usual arguments. "Nationalization of mines has never worked anywhere in the world and there is no evidence for it to work in South Africa," David Nel, chief executive of Strategic Natural Resources, a coal miner working in South Africa, told me. "The South African GDP is significantly dependent on revenue earned from mining and the foreign investment this brings to South Africa; the disinvestment in South Africa would be catastrophic." But what if they nationalized the mines and put them under South African control? What if the profits were repatriated not to London and New York but were invested in the schools of Soweto and Johannesburg? *Impossible*, they said. Even talk of imposing fairer royalty and tax agreements sparked the ire of the foreign companies. Most of the real action took place outside the convention center, where access to talks and company exhibits cost a cool $1,500. Decadent parties were thrown in bars and mansions around Cape Town by PR companies, investment banks and brokerages, all seeking new clients and trying to upstage each other as to who could put on the most spectacular show. Against this backdrop, the mining industry tried to manipulate political forces. One of the conference's biggest themes, for example, was investor security in Africa. All the big African economies sent ministerial delegations to give talks and assuage investor fears, telling them how wonderfully they would be treated. They were trying to avoid things like the Nigerian government's 2012 Petroleum Industry Bill, which attempts to reform the lucrative oil sector by allowing the government to bring down the profits of foreign companies and impose more stringent taxes and royalties. The usual suspects were apoplectic in that case: independence and sovereignty for poor countries is incompatible with how the racket functions. However, if somehow they "lose" a country to independence, the racket turns to the enforcement stage, which is a central part of the criminal enterprise they oversee.

PART TWO

ENFORCEMENT

FIVE

THE MOB

YOUR FRIENDLY, LOCAL TYPES

In 1945 there was a genuine desire among the victors of World War II to devise an international political system that would ensure there would be no third world war. As the Nuremberg Trials drew to a close, a host of international laws were drawn up with this purpose in mind. The Geneva Conventions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, among others, were designed to give "rules of play" to war and enshrine certain inalienable rights for the whole of humanity. At the time many looked ruefully at the League of Nations which had been so ineffective in arbitrating Great Power conflict in the inter-war period, between 1918 and 1939. Memories of the gratuitously harsh Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which many still maintain led indirectly to the rise of Nazi Germany, played on the minds of planners. The need to get the post-war institutional structure right was paramount. The most important political and diplomatic institution set up at this point to rectify the mistakes of the past was the United Nations. There was lofty rhetoric about a "new paradigm" of cordial relations between the hitherto hostile powers. Some intellectuals of the time, such as Dexter Perkins, believed the UN was an example of noble "self-abnegation on the part of a great power", because it "bound the United States to accept decisions that might run counter to the judgment of Washington". For Perkins, this was proof that the United States had gone far to demonstrate its willingness to "submit its own policies to the collective opinion of states inferior to itself from the point of view of physical power". But scrutiny of the composition of the nascent United Nations reveals the lengths that the great powers, led by the US, had gone to in their effort to *consolidate* their grip on power, not truncate it.

The UN was created as three separate legislative bodies, and the format devised in 1945 exists today without significant reform. The General Assembly is a forum to discuss issues related to international law and those pertaining to the functioning of the UN. Compared to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, its democratic credentials are luminous: it runs on a one-country, one-vote basis and needs two-thirds of the house to support a motion for it to be passed. Its sister institution, the Economic and Social Council, assists the General Assembly with economic and social dealings. It has 54 members, all chosen by the General Assembly. The most important body in the UN (and incidentally the most susceptible to corruption and manipulation) is the Security Council where all the most pressing international issues relating to "war and peace" are discussed and voted on. It was created in 1945 with five permanent members: the US, Britain, France, Russia and China. It has another 10 rotating members who serve two-year terms. The power of the Security Council derives from the fact that it can make member states enforce the UN Charter (which incidentally is broken by the US on a near daily basis with threats against foreign countries).

The crucial qualification was, and still is, that any of the permanent members of the UN Security Council have the power to unilaterally veto a prospective resolution. In 1945 this gave executive power to three western imperial powers – the United States, Britain and France – alongside another eastern imperial power, Soviet Russia. Arch-conservative Republican senator Arthur Vandenberg wrote in his diary in 1945 about the newly formed UN: “The striking thing about it is that it is so conservative from a nationalist standpoint. It is based virtually on a four-power alliance … This is anything but a wild-eyed internationalist dream of a world State … I am deeply impressed (and surprised) to find [Cordell] Hull so carefully guarding our American veto in his scheme of things.”[1] The historian Ellen Meiskins Wood goes further, stating that the UN’s “very existence” was geared toward “discouraging forms of international organization less congenial to the dominant powers”.[2] The undemocratic nature of the Security Council would seem to support Wood’s thesis, even though some historians argue that at the end of World War II the necessity of a rapprochement between the Great Powers was greater than any idealistic commitment to democracy.

Regardless of the historical contingencies and the original intent of the US planners, the treatment of the UN over the next 50 years certainly indicates that the institutional framework laid down in 1945 was consciously left open to manipulation. From its inception, the UN has enabled the US to enforce its own foreign policy objectives with a veneer of international support. Because of its legitimacy in the eyes of the international community, the UN is a part of the US effort to legitimate foreign wars in the eyes of its citizens (and its allies). When I spoke to the then British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, he was keen to repeatedly point to the pretext of UN resolutions when discussing the 2003 US/UK war in Iraq. “Look, we went into Iraq on the basis of United Nations resolutions,” he told me at the Foreign Office on Whitehall in London. "Now, you can argue about whether we needed another resolution but there were about 15 resolutions already there. And they were very special circumstances. And Iraq would not have been caught up in all this trouble if it had not had a nuclear weapons program, a chemical weapons program, and a biological weapons program."

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[1] Quoted in Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States*, HarperCollins, chapter 16. Avaliable at www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/zinnpeopleswar.html

[2] Ellen Meiskins Wood (2003) *Empire of Capital*, Verso, p. 132.

The US was held in check somewhat by the Soviet Union which had similar objectives throughout the Cold War. With the decline of the Soviet Union and the move to a unipolar international arrangement, American domination lost all inhibitions. There was also a marked change in the 1960s and 1970s when decolonization put many developing countries outside the sphere of influence of the US. This change is spelled out by former member of the Reagan–Bush State Department and now historian, Francis Fukuyama. He states quite openly and without sorrow that the UN has become "perfectly serviceable as an instrument of American unilateralism and indeed may be the primary mechanism through which unilateralism will be exercised in the future".[3] The UN also wrestles with the fact that the US has always been a large financial donor to the institution and so its very survival relies on it. The US was donating $2.4 billion by the end of the 20th century, which comprised 25 percent of the whole UN budget. When I asked the historian Michael Mann whether he thought the UN had become a rubber stamp for US policies he alluded to this fundamental flaw with the UN structure, saying that while there was "some negotiations" it was inevitably "around American leadership and that is how American politicians would see it, both moderate Republicans and Democrats. After all, what can Europe do? If you want some kind of action somewhere in the world, a Rwanda or Sudan, what can Europe do? It can't point a thousand troops in any single direction. The only power that can is the US, especially if logistical capacity is needed."

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[3] Quoted in Noam Chomsky (2003) *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance*, Metropolitan Books.

The method used for maintaining primacy over the United Nations has primarily been the use of foreign aid. Available statistics demonstrate the corollary between US aid and votes at the United Nations – basically the US grants aid money when certain countries guarantee to vote in line with the US at the UN (and other multilateral bodies). For example, the airport in Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince was built by the US in exchange for the dictator of the time supporting the US in opposing Cuba's entry into the Organization of American States. J. Brian Atwood, the administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), told Congress in March 1998: "In many respects, [the foreign aid budget] is a bare-boned and balanced approach to development and humanitarian programs that will significantly contribute to achieving the administration's foreign policy objectives." If votes can't be bought, the US will veto. It has, by far, the highest veto record of any power on the Security Council in the period since the 1960s. It has consistently blocked resolutions calling on states to observe international law. Behind the US is Britain, with France and Russia far behind. Even when it does not block resolutions it will water them down or keep matters off the agenda entirely. The 1999 war in Kosovo did not pass through the UN at all, for example. But the US and its satrap, the UK, as mentioned, use the UN to legitimate their imperialism to this day. "Do you think the British or American troops being in Iraq is exacerbating the situation?" I asked Mr Straw in 2006 when he was Foreign Secretary. "No," he replied. "We're there now under a United Nations mandate and we're there on a time limited basis. The mandate will run out at the end of this year unless renewed. More particularly, we're only there as long as the Iraqi government – elected – says we should be there. And what we and the Americans and the other coalition partners are seeking to do is to build up the Iraqi forces so that we can then draw down our forces on a province by province basis." That was standard racket-speech: of course, we were only there at the request of a government. The fine print is important, though: we happened to install this government.

If all these methods fail, then the next step is to try to discredit the UN and accuse it of anti-Americanism and being anachronistic and out-of-touch. So when the US attacked Grenada in 1983, despite the disapproval of the UN, President Ronald Reagan said: "One hundred nations in the UN have not agreed with us on just about everything that's come before them, where we're involved, and it didn't upset my breakfast at all."[4] When I spoke to the hawkish historian Andrew Roberts and asked him about the UN's conduct during the "Iraq crisis" in early 2003, he parroted the American president and poured scorn on the UN. "What astonished me," he said, "was the way in which many in America and the British Isles seemed to assume that no war could be legitimate unless it had the sanction of the United Nations Security Council. When one looks at the United Nations Security Council – countries like [rotating member] Cameroon sitting on there. The idea that we should have our freedom of action circumvented by a bunch of kleptocracies in Africa is an absolute absurdity. Of course they are going to vote against the extension of democracy – that's not in their interests. We fortunately, back in 1982 when the Falklands were invaded, didn't give a toss what the UN thought – as it turned out the UN were on our side. But we would have still gone ahead with the action come what may." Such disdain for the UN is common among the racketeers (when it does not vote their way). But most of the time, the UN and similar multilateral institutions act as a neo-imperialist system in which you do not have colonies but you have client states; these are tied to the US by military interchanges and loans made with the IMF or World Bank. Poor countries are tied into a system of *loose dependency*.

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[4] Quoted in Francis X. Clines, "It was a rescue mission, says Reagan", *New York Times*, November 4, 1983.

LET US HELP YOU

Without fail, aid programs are defined as altruistic. The so-called Truman Doctrine, coming as a response to perceived aggression from the Soviet Union in the Middle East, is exemplary. Attitudes towards the Soviet Union had been mixed in 1945. Eric Johnston, president of the US Chamber of Commerce, went so far as to say: "Russia will be our, if not our biggest, at least our most eager consumer." There was a hope on the part of what Walter LaFeber calls "The Big Three" – Russia, the US and Britain – that they could put together a world order that relied heavily on them. The hope was short-lived as the US became more and more suspicious of the Soviet Union and the perceived advances it was making into Western Europe. President Harry Truman said privately in 1945, "Our agreements with the Soviet Union [have been] a one-way street", and concluded somewhat undiplomatically that the Soviet Union "could go to hell".[5] Eventually, a political program, christened "containment" by the influential State Department official George F. Kennan, was put in place. Its main function was to stop the march of communist forces that had achieved varying success in Turkey and Greece and various Arab countries. According to Kennan, whose sentiments were exposed in a "top secret" telegram sent to Washington from Moscow in February 1946, "Nothing short of complete disarmament, delivery of our air and naval forces to Russia and resigning of powers to American Communists" would placate Josef

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[5] Quoted in William Henry Chafe (2003) *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*, Oxford University Press, p. 56.

Stalin's "baleful misgivings".[6] Truman delivered his seminal address to a joint session of both houses of the Congress on March 12, 1947. "It must be the policy of the United States," he said, "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." Those "outside pressures" were strongly spelled out in the National Security Council's Report 68 from 1950, which read: "The Soviet Union, unlike previous aspirants to hegemony, is animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world … The issues that face us are momentous, involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself." Truman's doctrine allowed for military and economic help to any regime deemed to be defending "civilization" against the "fanatic faith". It also, more quietly, legitimated giving succor to any resistant element in foreign countries that had shown themselves to be intent on the "destruction … of civilization itself"; ergo, any country with a planned economic model not conducive to American corporate interests. This ideology became the pretext for many of the battles America fought for the next 50 years. The conservative historian Samuel P. Huntington wrote: "You have to sell [intervention or other military action] in such a way as to create the misimpression that it is the Soviet Union that you are fighting. That is what the United States has done ever since the Truman Doctrine."[7]

The Middle East itself before 1945 was largely under the remit of the British empire, alongside other imperial powers such as France. As the empires of Western Europe gradually crumbled after World War II, the United States took up the mantle and borrowed many of the techniques of imperial control pioneered by the British – divide and rule being its favored tactic. This area of the world was of particular importance to US planners because it had the biggest reserves of natural oil in the world. The State Department in 1945 explicitly called Saudi Arabia – with overtones for the whole region – "a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history".[8] The Americans picked up where the British left off. Strategic alliances were made with compliant states that became virtual vassals of the American superpower. Any state deemed to be taking the line of "independent nationalism" – a term applied to any regime whose leaders did not cede to all the dictates of US economic policy – was the target of subversion (political and economic). When he was Mayor of London, I spoke to Ken Livingstone, who by then had been strolling through the corridors of power for 30 years. He told me: "You've had 80 years of Britain and America and France intervening in Arab and Muslim countries – always around the issue of control of oil."

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[6] Quoted in Greg Behrman (2007) *The Most Noble Adventure: The Marshall Plan and the Time When America Helped Save Europe*, Free Press, p. 21.

[7] Quoted in Noam Chomsky (1999) *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order*, Seven Stories Press, p. 140.

The overthrow of President Mohammad Mosaddeq in Iran in 1954 is an illuminating case because it shows very clearly the priorities of American political policy in the region, as well as marking the unofficial handover of power in the Middle East from the UK to the US. Mosaddeq himself was the head of a parliamentary democracy that, according to the prevailing ideology, should have made him a "friend" of America. He was also a "fervent nationalist" who had renationalized the country's oil that had hitherto been under the control of the British-run Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (originally the Anglo-Persian Oil company). The coup that overthrew Mosaddeq was a joint US–British machination, which demonstrates the overlap of the two imperial strategies. Up until Mosaddeq's attempts to divert the oil resources of his country back to his people, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company had allowed Iran only about 20 percent of the profits from its own oil. When Mosaddeq threatened the economic interests of the US and Britain, he put his own survival in jeopardy. On top of the economic interest, the threat of communist Russia "was palpable". The Russians had actually occupied parts of northern Iran at the conclusion of World War II and procured an oil concession in the area. There was concern among US planners that Mosaddeq was becoming "dangerously dependent" on Iran's communist party, the Tudeh. With the twin threats of "economic independence" and "Soviet Russia" on the horizon, the CIA, along with its British counterparts, arranged a coup. CIA agents solicited support on the streets of Iran, concentrating specifically on the military, and bribed a large portion of the establishment into acquiescence. After massive street demonstrations that threw the city into chaos, Mosaddeq was arrested and the Shah was put back on his throne. Owing to the vital role played by the CIA in bringing down Mosaddeq, the British now gave them a percentage of the oil revenue from Iran. Parroting the ideological pieties derived from the Truman Doctrine, John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State in President Eisenhower's administration, exulted in a victory over a "Communist-dominated regime". A version closer to the truth is explicated by one historian who wrote that, knowing "almost nothing about Iran", they installed a Shah who "would always seem beholden to the United States".[9]

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[8] Quoted in Noam Chomsky, "A modest proposal", *Znet*, December 3, 2002.

America has been careful and brutal in its choice of allies from the end of World War II. Many alliances have been short-lived and based on a realpolitik geopolitical relationship – Saddam Hussein in the 1970s and 80s, for example – but the alliances with a number of other countries have been more durable. I am going to discuss here the "special relationships" with Britain and Israel because they have had the most political importance within the "international community". Since 1945 it has been said that Britain has a "special relationship" with the US. Jack Straw, the then UK Foreign Secretary, told me that he preferred the term "close relationship": "I've always thought – I mean, clearly people talk about 'special relationship' – I always think 'special relationship' sounds rather exclusive. Plenty of countries have a close relationship with the United States. It's a different relationship from that that we have with other countries but so is our relationship with France or Germany. The crucial thing about the US is that, first of all, there's this very strong historic tie. There's the fact that we have depended on them for victory in two world wars. That the world is, no question, safer if we're working together than if we're working against each other. And the fact that they account for a quarter of the world's economic activity and, rather more than that, of the world's scientific innovation. So you'd have to be nuts not to try and develop a close relationship with the United States."

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[9] Quoted in Walter LaFeber (1989) *The American Age: US Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad 1750 to the Present*, WW Norton, p. 546.

But Straw's perception is not entirely accurate because nearly every British prime minister since World War II has been seduced by this idea of a "special relationship". On only one occasion since 1945 has a British prime minister refused to support the United States in its forays abroad. This was during the Vietnam War in the 1960s when the Labour premier Harold Wilson refused to send even a token dispatch of troops. On this occasion the uproar among American policy-makers was indicative of the role they saw Britain providing for US foreign policy. "Be British!" exclaimed one American official when the foreign secretary George Brown went to Washington in January 1968. "How can you betray us?" Clare Short MP, erstwhile member of the British cabinet, told me: “Every single post-war prime minister of both parties – apart from Edward Heath – has been obsessed with the special relationship as the centerpiece of British foreign policy. And I think this is a pathetic, ‘lost after empire we never found a role’ way of thinking. If the PM of Britain can pick up the phone – for example, Harold Macmillan would talk to President Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis and give him a bit of advice and then he thought he was an actor in this world drama. And it’s pathetic but it’s core thinking about Britain’s role in the world. I mean, out of the Iraq crisis the country needs to stop that. Not that we fall out with the US but that we are not a lapdog, that we try to build a new multilateral order and use all our relationship to construct what is needed in these times. It’s really interesting that Heath was fixated on getting the support of the unions so he didn’t do it.” The relationship is of particular import for the Americans because Britain has also played the “mediating role between the US and Europe”. In international organizations and political dogfights – which have been frequent between the US and other Western European countries – the UK has always supported and backed the United States. Because Britain has a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, this unflinching support has proved important to successive administrations. There is also an army of British intellectuals and journalists who set the ideological ground for the US to maraud around the world with its British poodle in the background. But it is unclear what the British get out of this relationship, apart from places for its soldiers to die. Other allies of the US at least get weapons of mass destruction to discipline their population or neighbors. Israel, for example, has used generous US aid for decades to discipline the Palestinians, the displaced indigenous people whose territory it has occupied for nearly 70 years.

SIX

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE

SHEIKH JARRAH, PALESTINE

In a small house in the hills of East Jerusalem, I witnessed a microcosm of the slow-burn murder of a people. No American who reads the mainstream newspapers or watches the corporate TV news would have had any idea this was happening. But seeing it upfront there was no way to dispute the huge crime that was being perpetrated with American taxpayers' dollars and diplomatic support.

I spent a week sleeping on the floor in the home of the Hanoun family – a husband and wife and their three children, all Palestinian. I was there with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) – a brave collection of international activists who attempt to help Palestinians non-violently resist Israeli oppression. East Jerusalem was, by international law and basic morality, to be the capital of a future Palestinian state. After the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel had illegally occupied East Jerusalem, in contravention of international law, and has never left. In fact, Israel was working to take it all. At the time of writing, in August 2014, the Israelis have killed more than 2,000 Palestinians in

Gaza, the vast majority civilians. There is talk in the mainstream Israeli media about depopulating Gaza and turning it into an Israeli tourist attraction. But during the time I was there the most pressing of the many issues were the attempts by an Israeli settler company to slowly cleanse East Jerusalem of its Arab population, focusing its efforts at that time on the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, which sits in a beautiful valley looking out toward Bethlehem. Longer-term activists were sleeping there as well, ready to document what everyone expected would be an imminent eviction. A few months later, at 5.30am, the Israeli border police did come and forcibly evict the Hanouns (so forcibly that the son Rami had to be taken to hospital). The activists were arrested, as were protesters who subsequently took to the streets. The Hanouns were offered a tent by the Red Cross. It was the culmination of a decade-long program of intimidation and harassment of the Sheikh Jarrah community that had seen lives destroyed to appease the most rancid kind of religious zealotry.

Sheikh Jarrah is situated in a valley down from the American Colony Hotel where Tony Blair, former British prime minister and possibly the most willing servant of the American racket in the world, was staying in a luxury suite when he graced Jerusalem with his presence as the racket's "Peace Envoy". When you looked out of the Hanouns' window, Blair's hotel was 30m away; Blair, I had no doubt, could see the Hanouns' house during his morning swim. Before I contacted his spokesperson, Blair had nothing to say about the evictions, and he said nothing in the aftermath. That was one side of the valley. On the other, the British consulate peered down from its high security peak. The British consulate had been only slightly better, calling the latest eviction "appalling", but had done nothing tangible to halt this obscenity. The US silence was even louder. The Hanoun family, like so many Palestinians, had been the victims of terror for decades as they fought off Israel's attempts to take their homes. Maher Hanoun, who continued to lead the resistance, spoke to me with eloquence and calm as he chain-smoked his way through the evenings and recounted what had befallen his family. Maher's father was a refugee from the Nakba, or "the Catastrophe", as Palestinians call the founding of Israel in 1948 when gangs of Jewish paramilitaries expelled 800,000 Palestinians violently from their homes. Maher's father was forced out of Nablus; his grandfather was forced out of Haifa at the same time. The Jordanian government gave them the houses in East Jerusalem in 1956 as compensation and transferred the ownership to them in 1962. Maher was born in 1958 so had spent his whole life, and brought up all his children, in his home. The Israeli settler company, Nahalat Shimon, backed by the Israeli courts, used a forged century-old Ottoman-era contract to claim ownership. Like all over East Jerusalem, the Israelis also tried to bribe Maher with an open check, if he would go quietly. He refused. "This is my home," he told me. "I would never respect myself if I sold my home for money. They want to build a settlement on our hearts, on our dreams." In the end, they succeeded.

The Israelis' tactics were what Maher calls "slow torture", and included arrests, bribery and violence. In 1998, after Maher refused to start paying rent to settlers, soldiers came to his house while his mother was very ill with leukemia and took all their furniture, including the bed. Maher had pleaded with them to leave it so his mother could die peacefully. In 2002, the Israelis succeeded and eventually kicked the Hanouns out for four years, before they returned in 2006; in 2002 his two girls were 9 and 13 years old. Across the way, and in the sightline of Mr Blair and the British consulate, there was a makeshift tent where a 62-year-old woman was now living after settlers took over her house. Initially they only took two parts of her house so she was literally living next to them. Then she was kicked out. Her husband had a heart attack when the Israelis violently repossessed their house with the help of over 50 soldiers (on the night of Barack Obama's 2008 election victory). After spending some time in hospital, her husband had another attack two weeks later and died. The family again refused a bribe of an open check – in the millions of dollars – from the Israelis to leave their homes. "I don't have a life now," she told me from her tent. "With my husband and house gone, there is no life. I just hope with the help of God that this occupation will stop and we can return to our homes." I never could find out what happened to this woman in the violent eviction by Israeli forces, but one report I read said even her tent had been destroyed.

I walked from Sheikh Jarrah to the British consulate (it took about five minutes) and asked Karen McLuskie, the spokesperson, what the British line was on the ethnic cleansing of what is meant to be the future capital of Palestine. "The British position is that Jerusalem has to be the shared capital of two states," she told me. "I think what is happening in Sheikh Jarrah is not unique, sadly. There are a number of sites around Jerusalem where these kinds of actions are taking place – demolitions, evictions and settlement encouragement." She specifically declined to comment on what the British government is actually doing to stop this illegal and inhuman destruction of Sheikh Jarrah. Ms McLuskie did concede, however, that: "The annexation of Jerusalem simply makes it harder to reach a peace deal, it simply cuts off the options." After I contacted Blair's spokesperson I was told that "Blair has raised the issue with the Israeli government", and that "it remains an issue of concern". I asked if Mr Blair would make the three-minute walk down to the Hanouns' to talk to them about their predicament, to which the spokesperson assured me: "Staff from his office have previously visited families who have been evicted." Notice the past tense. Maybe when the Hanouns had actually been evicted, Blair would send an emissary to their tent. The Americans refused to give an interview.

When you look around East Jerusalem and the surrounding area, there are considerable plots of land without homes. If Israel wanted to (illegally) build new settlements without kicking out Palestinians in the area they could, there is space. The targeting of Sheikh Jarrah and other areas is a process of ethnic cleansing, the transformation of East Jerusalem into a unified Jewish Jerusalem. As Maher asked, “Why can’t they build a settlement on any other bit of land?” The one good thing about the Netanyahu–Lieberman administration, which was in power at the time, was that they were much more honest about their colonization program than their “centrist” predecessors. The Netanyahu administration was now willing to get rid of some “outposts” in return for continued expansion in East Jerusalem and “natural growth” in existing settlements throughout the West Bank. That was the same policy negotiated by Ehud Olmert and George W. Bush before the Annapolis conference in 2007. Netanyahu was just more honest in saying that it obviates the possibility of a Palestinian state. “I can’t see how we can have a capital if there is no land, no houses, no people,” agreed Maher.

The next stop in this attempt to cleanse the putative future capital of Palestine of its indigenous population was the al-Bustan area of Silwan, which sits in the valley down from the Dome of the Rock and the Western Wall. When I first arrived in Israel I went on the City of David tour, which functions as a three-hour Israeli propaganda extravaganza (dressed up as an archeological experience). King David in biblical lore is said to have been the first Jewish leader to settle the land in Jerusalem and his son King Solomon is said to have built the First Temple in the 960BC. In 2005, some archeological finds purported to provide evidence that supported this. Now the Israeli government was planning to turn the homes of the people of Silwan into an archeological theme park: 88 dwellings were due for demolition, home to about 1,500 Palestinians. At the end of the tour we went through the waterway that was built to connect the Old City to the spring outside the city walls. When I came out at the end of the tour, I didn't realize that the spring was located in Silwan. A few days later I went to the tent where the residents of al-Bustan were mobilizing against the destruction of their homes and realized, while watching the tourists being bussed back up the hill to the "City of David", where I had actually been. Again, as in Sheikh Jarrah, the people were defiant. "If they demolish my home, they will have to demolish my body too, I will die for my land," said Zaid Ziulany, 54, who lived with his family in house "38" which was due for demolition. "Where are we meant to go?" he asked. "Should we all just sleep on the street?"

THE PATRON

Israel is – by any definition of international law – a rogue, terrorist state that practices colonial policies and serial war crimes against the Palestinians and has done so for decades, all supported by US taxpayers. There is no shortage of evidence that can be produced to support this claim. Having been initially turfed out of their homes in 1948 to make way for the nascent Jewish State, Palestinians have since lived in the meager strips of land afforded them by Israel and the surrounding Arab states: the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Since then, any Jewish person who can prove their racial heritage has been entitled to settle in the Land of Israel while no Palestinian who was made a refugee in 1948 can go back to their home. This creates the insane scenario where I, owing to my Jewish heritage, can go to live in a place I have never really seen and have no connection to, whereas the estimated 4 million Palestinians living in refugee communities scattered around the Middle East, who were born and grew up in Palestine but had to flee in 1948 or 1967, cannot. Moshe Dayan, who was eventually Israel's "Defense"

Minister, told the Palestinians: “You shall continue to live like dogs, and whoever wishes may leave, and we will see where this process leads.” The same philosophy still prevails among Israeli elites. Since June 1967 when Israel fought a group of Arab states in the Six-Day War, Israel has occupied and built settlements that eat into the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The settlements in Gaza were withdrawn in 2006, and the Israelis turned to a medieval siege to maintain control of the population. All of this is in contradiction of international law – Israel has been condemned by the UN repeatedly for its transgressions. The Security Council adopted UN Security Council Resolution 242 unanimously in 1967 in the aftermath of the Six-Day War. Adopted under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter, it calls for the “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict” and the “termination of all claims or states of belligerency”. This still hasn’t happened to this day: the mob doesn’t have to abide by the law it sets for everyone else. Incidentally, the United States has vetoed all the subsequent resolutions brought against its client – that amounts to about 40 vetoes since 1972, all of which blocked votes unanimously supported by the other powers on the Security Council. It is these incursions into Palestinian land that motivate the violence and suicide bombing perpetrated by the Palestinian resistance and is at the root of all the international opprobrium directed toward Israel. But it has been Israeli state policy for the last 48 years to *sacrifice security for expansion* in the Occupied Territories.

The US propaganda runs that the Palestinians have been offered the West Bank and Gaza many times and rejected it. From the Oslo Accords in 1993 to the Camp David Summit in 2000, this is simply not true. The Palestinians have consistently been offered a deal which breaks up the West Bank into small, South African-style Bantustans with the right of return always denied. The one time a deal was struck with something resembling a fair final settlement – at Taba, Egypt in 2001 – the Israelis pulled out. In fact, in 2002 after a trip to the West Bank, the great South African freedom fighter and Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu compared the treatment of Palestinians under Israeli occupation with the treatment of blacks under the South African apartheid regime. “I’ve been very deeply distressed in my visit to the Holy Land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us blacks in South Africa,” he said. “I have seen the humiliation of the Palestinians at checkpoints and roadblocks. They suffer like us when young white police officers prevented us from moving about. They seemed to derive so much joy from our humiliation.” Israel has also built a “Security Wall” through the West Bank, again in contradiction of international law. The World Court at the Hague has said that “Israel is under an obligation to terminate its breaches of international law; it is under an obligation to cease forthwith the works of construction of the wall being built in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, to dismantle forthwith the structure therein situated”. It never did.

There is, in fact, no great controversy over the main historical points at issue, and the conclusions that one should draw are simple. The situation is often obfuscated and blurred by the Israeli side to distract neutrals from the glaring, incandescent truth that the Palestinians are involved in one of the last colonial struggles left over from the 20th century. Norman Finkelstein, a scholar of US–Israeli relations, says that the Israel–Palestine conflict is “remarkably uncomplicated”. “The stark truth is an unpleasant truth,” he told me. “And so the pretext is that what we see and what seems so stark, the claim is, that actually isn’t the case and so it’s supposed to make you question your most elementary, your most basic moral judgment and sensibility.” That the occupation of other people’s land is wrong? “An occupation is wrong, building a wall around these people is wrong, shooting children for throwing stones is wrong, stealing people's land is wrong – that's not very complicated at all."

"They're making profit on the occupation," Jihad al-Wazir, Palestine's central bank governor, told me when I interviewed him for the *FT* in New York. "They control the electromagnetic waves, they control the real estate, they control 60 percent of the West Bank and this is why they like the status quo and this is why they don't want to have a Palestinian state because it's nice the way things are. They've taken land and people are not fighting them." Despite this obvious injustice, Israel remains the "third rail" in US political discourse because of the huge financing of the lobby that supports it. When I was at Columbia Journalism School my professor, who worked at the *New Yorker*, told me outright when I mentioned I wanted to do a piece critical of Israel not to do it. His words were: "Do it if you want, but criticizing Israel in the US is like railing against Mother Teresa: you'll never work in the American media."

The US alliance with Israel did not become economically or politically significant until the 1960s and 70s. Mr Finkelstein told me that "no one in America even cared about Israel for the first 20 years of its existence." What changed was the decline in the efficacy of the "Arab façade" whereby control of much of the Middle East could be exerted behind the scenes through subservient local Arab rulers. So when, for example, an Arab leader such as Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt turned to the Soviet Union, Israel became the perfect buffer against Arab nationalism and hopes of true independence in the Middle East. Around the time of President Nixon there was a conscious effort to buttress American power with what the Defense Secretary Melvin Laird called "local cops on the beat". The perfect "local cop" in the Middle East was the Jewish "democracy" Israel. As the CIA put it at the time: "a logical corollary" of opposition to Arab nationalism "would be to support Israel as the only reliable pro-Western power in the Middle East".[1] As the CIA was trying to destroy secular nationalism in the Middle East, ironically it was Israel and Islamic fundamentalists (Hamas was helped out initially by Israel) who provided the perfect vehicle to do it. The burgeoning relationship between the two countries served the self-interest of both. In a controversial essay, two prominent academics, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, wrote that the pro-Israel lobby in Washington benefits Israel to the detriment of the US's own foreign policy objectives. The article caused great consternation among supporters of pro-Israel policies in the United States, but their argument was somewhat misplaced. The evidence would suggest that the relationship between the United States and Israel is much more symbiotic than Mearsheimer and Walt contend. Israel is, by far, the largest recipient of US aid presently. Since 1947 Israel has cost the US taxpayer nearly $84,855 million, which means that the taxpayer has paid $23,240 for every Israeli citizen alive.[2] This is not the result of a mystical, paranoid "Jewish lobby" or a completely anomalous foray into the politics of altruism. Israel plays a very important strategic role for the United States, one which is based primarily on political expediencies. There is the "cop on the beat" strand, but there were also concerns about the march of the Soviet Union in the Middle East. When Israel became reliant on US aid in the 1970s, its geopolitical outlook became much more western-oriented; its domestic society also became more unequal. Israel has long been the most loyal US supplicant in the Middle East and even globally. Together they supported apartheid South Africa and supplied weapons to fascist dictatorships in Latin America, among many other horrors. Israel also provided unflinching support for the US at the UN. The inventory of UN votes compiled by the State Department planner turned historian William Blum reveals that Israel reflexively votes with its patron on all matters, whether they are of strategic importance to Israel or not. In turn, according to Mr Finkelstein: "If you look at the record it's Israel backed by the US who have been the obstacle to the resolution of the Middle East conflict, which the international community on the one hand and the Palestinians have supported." Even though Israel has been condemned hundreds of times by the UN, even though it continues to occupy the West Bank and control the Gaza Strip, even though it has attacked its neighbors (Lebanon in 1982, killing 20,000), the US continues to provide support. There are evidently no conditions on the aid provided by America in terms of "good behavior". Michael Mann, the historian, goes as far as to say: "I think Israel is actually the tail wagging the dog. Israel has more power there than the US does. It has a fifth column among the neo-cons and Zionists in the US and it can do whatever it likes." All the US asks is that Israel remains a loyal "cop on the beat" to push US interests in the Middle East.

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[1] Quoted in Noam Chomsky, "The Israel-Arafat agreement", *Z Magazine*, October 1993.

[2] "U.S. financial aid to Israel: figures, facts, and impact", *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, www.wrmea.org/wrmea-archives/494-congress-a-us-aid-to-israel/9748-u-s-financial-aid-to-israel-figures-facts-and-impact.html

CRACKS IN THE OCCUPATION

While in Palestine, I also went to the capital of the Occupied Territories, Ramallah. I could sense the fatigue in the city. The feeling I got walking around the streets was that the Palestinians are weary of the struggle against the incremental destruction of their homeland, while the world looks the other way. I heard things like: "Our struggle has been long and it has got us nowhere." And people asked how the world could stand by while the Israelis annex more land. It was a good question.

In one village the flame of non-violent resistance still burned. I went to the weekly demonstration against the annexation wall in Bil'in, where it cuts deep into the farmland of this old Palestinian village and the Green Line (the internationally recognized border of Israel–Palestine). Since Israel started building the wall here in 2005 (stealing about 60 percent of the village's land), the people of Bil'in have been inventively and non-violently resisting. While helplessness pervades in occupied Palestine, the successful tactics of the people of Bil'in provide some hope and inspiration. Abdullah al-Rahman, the head of the Popular Resistance Committee in Bil'in, described the villagers' various tactics, which so far successfully stalled the erection of a new settlement (called West Mattiyahu in Israeli legalese, which implies that it is merely a "neighborhood" of an existing settlement). First, to oppose the wall, Bil'in's residents tied themselves to their olive trees to stop the bulldozers razing their land. Then, in sight of the settlements, they constructed a one-room house overnight on the other side of the wall, a building that became the basis for a legal challenge. The High Court slapped down their petition twice before they and their Israeli lawyer, Michael Sfard, realized Israel had made an administrative mistake under their own unfair rules. Generally the Israelis use two excuses for land-grabs: one, the land is uncultivated; and, two, there is a security threat. With Bil'in they tried both.

To maintain the interest of the media, essential to their demonstrations' success, the Popular Committee brings out new initiatives every Friday in their non-violent struggle. When I was there, at the height of the swine flu hysteria in 2009, the Bil'in residents went down for the demonstration wearing face masks to say that they had all had occupation influenza for decades. On another Friday they had a slightly less subtle but equally creative tactic of filling balloons with chicken feces to chuck at the soldiers.

While the Bil'in residents maintain their adherence to non-violence, the same can't be said for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The month before I was there, an activist from the village, Bassem Ibrahim Abu Rammah, was killed by a high-velocity tear-gas canister, and one 16-year-old child I spoke to survived a live round to the head. These are definitely not "mistakes": when you shoot a high-velocity tear-gas canister horizontally and not up in the air you only have one goal. They managed to murder Bassem with a shot to the heart. This is where the chicken feces idea came from. "They shoot bullets at us, so we will respond with our animals' feces," said al-Rahman. At the demonstration hundreds of tear-gas canisters were shot at us, and rubber bullets were aimed at the children throwing stones. This Israeli tactic of harsh and violent repression has one goal: to stop Palestinian resistance through instilling fear. This is what happened during the second intifada, and it is happening again now, in 2015, as pockets of resistance are starting to form against the annexation of their land. And it works. I asked my Palestinian friend if she wanted to come with us on Friday. "No," she replied, "I don't want to die for nothing." In recent months, since the Gaza War, the IDF has started to use a new cocktail of weapons against the Bil'in demonstrators, which includes stronger military-grade tear-gas with nerve toxins, high-velocity machinegun-style tear-gas and aluminum bullets that have crippled protesters. The IDF has also made it a tactic to come into the village in the middle of the night and arrest the members of the Popular Committee, and children as young as 13, as well as throwing around sound bombs and tear-gas.

According to a farmer from Bil'in, Farhan Burnat, aged 30, who spent eight months in prison after Israeli soldiers arrested him at a Friday demonstration, the Israelis take the kids to prison in Israel and keep them for four to six months as punishment for participating in the demonstration. In Ofer prison about 25 percent of the prisoners are children, he told me: "These lengthy periods of imprisonment severely stunt the educational development of our children."

I went down to the wall the day before the protest and talked to Wahid Salaman, a 44-year-old farmer from Bil'in who was walking home after work. "The ability of us to get to our land depends on the mood of the soldier," he said. "Sometimes we have to wait for five or six hours to get to our fields." Mr Salaman's land is on the wrong side of the wall so he has to go through a checkpoint every day to get to work. He pointed out a huge pole with a CCTV camera on top of it. "They watch us at all times as well," he said. The Israelis assign each farmer a number corresponding to points on the wall where he is allowed to go about his work. Afterwards we spotted a young boy going through the checkpoint with his herd of goats. "I look after the goats after school for my parents," he said. "The wall took 60 percent of our land, and as punishment for the demonstration we're not allowed to work on Fridays." He said that his goats had been injured by the barbwire around the wall. Like everyone in Bil'in, he said he misses his friend Bassem. "I feel very sad, but it will not stop me from doing the demonstration. We're strong enough to continue to do it. They shot Bassem because we are achieving something here."

The brutal behavior of the IDF at the demonstration has motivated a broad contingent of activists from around the world and Israel to descend on Bil'in every Friday – as they know the IDF will be less inclined to murder at will if they have passports belonging to the countries that give them the guns. When I was there, there was a 15-strong contingent of trade unionists, artists and charity workers from Canada, alongside a group of young Israelis. The IDF's explicit policy is not to fire live ammunition when Israelis or internationals are in the area, which gives you an indication of their attitude to the expendability of Palestinian life. It also makes it clear how vital it is that the brigade of internationals and Israelis continue to show up and protest peacefully alongside Palestinians. At a bleak time for Palestinians, when they were watching the live destruction of any hopes of a viable future state, the heroic and successful resistance of the people of Bil'in (and their analogues along the line of the annexation wall) provided a glimmer of hope, and a template of how to fight this epic injustice with a mixture of consistency, courage and creativity. They did it against huge odds – against one of the world's most vicious militaries, backed to the hilt by the most powerful military in the history of the world, and a global population continually lied to about the depredations of Israeli state power.

But foreigners are increasingly refusing to believe the lies they are told by their media. What I saw in Palestine was how important it is for concerned citizens to make the journey to the Occupied Territories, or any other place ruined by US imperialism, to make their presence felt. During the December–January 2008–09 Israeli attack on Gaza, the sickness that many people felt about the massacre was compounded by a feeling of helplessness. But there was a way to help out and attenuate the crimes of the occupation: what you realize in Palestine is that just having a foreign passport instantly civilizes the IDF when you are in their presence. I was, as mentioned, working with the ISM, which was set up in 2002 to bring internationals sympathetic to the Palestinian cause to witness and combat Israeli repression during the second intifada. Since then it has achieved a fair degree of infamy – like any organization that tries to protect Palestinians it has been traduced as "terrorist-supporting", "anti-Semitic" and all the rest. There are even a couple of organizations online set up exclusively to libel and destroy the ISM: Stoptheism.com tries to expose its activists and says the ISM represents "Hamas, and other terrorists under Yasser Arafat"; and the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America states that "ISM encourages members to place themselves in dangerous situations to protect terrorists or their homes". But after spending about an hour with the ISM in the West Bank you realize all these calumnies are baseless propaganda. From the start of my time there, I was impressed by the integrity and professionalism of the organization. The ISM runs a two-day training weekend in London, which instills in prospective volunteers the ethos of non-violence and the Palestinian-led modus operandi (i.e. everything members do has to be ratified by a Palestinian council). When you arrive in Palestine you have another two days of training, which takes you through the history of non-violent resistance in Palestine and the specifics of how to deal with violence from the IDF. When I was there I met inspirational activists from Scotland and the Czech Republic, who had spent months living with families in East Jerusalem, being illegally evicted by an Israeli settler company. This was not glamorous stuff; it was staying up all night and sleeping on a thin mattress in a single room together, day after day, month after month. I also met activists from Sweden who were manning checkpoints to make sure that no Palestinians were physically abused. I had my own experience of this on the way out of Nil'in, another Palestinian village fighting back, for the Friday demonstration against the annexation wall. I saw an IDF soldier kicking a Palestinian man at a checkpoint at the edge of this Palestinian village. I got the taxi to stop, and got out and just watched. I don't know what effect it had, but you could see a change in the eyes of the soldiers when they saw my camera pointing their way. There was a group of activists from Italy who lived in Hebron, which is a particularly disturbing example of the occupation in the West Bank, since settlers have occupied the downtown market which is now closed because of the harassment the settlers gave the Palestinians living there. When you walk through the now-defunct market there is grating overhead, and caught in it are all sorts of projectiles, bricks and debris.

The settlers in Hebron are famous for their extremism. They celebrate the anniversary of the 1994 Hebron massacre by Baruch Goldstein, and the presence of the 500 of them in Hebron makes downtown a militarized zone. In Hebron, ISM volunteers escort Palestinian kids to school to protect them from the settlers, who have been known to shoot at them wildly from their rooftops. The courageous 22-year-old ISM activist Tom Hurndall was killed doing work like this in Gaza in April 2003. He was moving Palestinian children out of the line of fire of IDF snipers and was shot in the head, despite carrying international signs. Hurndall's death shone the media spotlight on the conduct of the IDF in the Occupied Territories, only because he was British – Palestinians are shot with appalling regularity. And that is why the ISM activists are so brave: they are putting their lives on the line, solely because they know they are worth more in the eyes of the IDF. It is also why the Israeli authorities try to keep out the ISM, by blacklisting anyone they suspect of being involved. Many ISMers have been slapped with a 10-year ban from entering Israel, even though the ISM is a completely legal organization in Israel.

I went to the non-violent Friday demonstrations in Bil'in and the nearby Nil'in on alternate weeks. Again the local villagers say that even though those among their ranks had been killed at an alarming rate in the past year (two in Bil'in, five in Nil'in, including a 10-year-old with a live shot to the head), it would be much worse if the internationals didn't turn up. In 2011, US citizen and ISM activist Tristan Anderson was critically wounded by a high-velocity tear-gas canister. While I was in Nil'in, the IDF was aiming right for us as we stood on the verge. The only things the IDF are up against at these demonstrations are stones in slingshots. On one Friday, a Palestinian man was killed with a live round. "We always ask internationals to please come, because they are even more brutal when it is just us Palestinians," said the leader of the demonstration.

There are definitely dangers to volunteering in occupied Palestine, but it is a highly effective way of helping the Palestinians resist oppression, and because of our passports those risks are a fraction of those faced by any Palestinian who raises so much as a finger of resistance. My stay was short, and I did nothing compared to the brilliant and inspirational activists – who range from teenagers to pensioners – who have spent far longer and risked far more. But it is clear that through the solidarity of internationals, Israelis and Palestinians, the occupation can be fought. There are more losses than gains, and ISM and Palestinian activists will continue to be lost, but as George Orwell concluded in his essay "Looking back on the Spanish Civil War", during which he had fought against General Franco's fascists: "I believe that it is better even from the point of view of survival to fight and be conquered than to surrender without fighting." In this sense, "fighting" doesn't always have to be violent. Being in Palestine also further helped me understand how the truth about what our governments do in our name is invariably distorted by the media. That disconnect between the truth and what we digest is vital to maintaining the domestic US population's passive acquiescence to the great crimes being done in their name. The powers that be are aware that if people knew the truth they would push them to stop the atrocities, like the massacre in Gaza in 2014; or the massacre in Iraq which began in 2003 and endures until today. In fact, one of the most silent of all the ethnic cleansing programs done with US diplomatic and military support happened in the east of Turkey and again continues today.

DIYARBAKIR, TURKEY

I had been to Turkey before but never to the neglected southeast, the redoubt of the sizeable and bitterly oppressed Kurdish minority in the country. In 2012, I arrived in Diyarbakır, the capital of what the locals call Kurdistan, at four in the morning, and the airline had lost my baggage. I went outside to get a taxi, which took me to the imposing walls that ring the Old City, where I had a sleepless night in a grim hotel. I noticed that the guest book was full of names from Iraq, someone from Mosul, another from Kirkuk, and one more from Baghdad. Diyarbakır is just 160 miles away from Iraq, another country in which the Kurdish minority has been treated with brutality. Now, though, in the aftermath of the US–UK invasion and occupation of Iraq, the Kurds were enjoying more autonomy than ever before. The Turkish government, at the same time, was growing fearful of this newfound independence. When I woke in the morning it was as if I was no longer in Turkey. Diyarbakır looked centuries older than Istanbul with its Gucci advertising-hoardings and appearance-obsessed elites. I walked south out of the city walls and there was a vast panorama of rolling verdant hills with a stunning stone bridge in the far distance that traversed the Tigris River, which flows all the way into Iraq. I had organized to meet Nurcan Baysal, a Kurdish activist, who was a friend of a friend, at the offices of her non-governmental organization (NGO) on Lise Caddesi street just outside the city walls. It was a big, well-kept office, with reports written by the collective displayed on desks. Nurcan was an old hand at talking to journalists, but that didn't stop the passion coursing through her voice. A young and inspiring Kurdish woman, she has been at the forefront of the fight for freedom and independence her people have been seeking for centuries. To take that fight forward she set up Disa, a Kurdish research organization, to combat the hold the Turkish state and its media had on the narrative about the conflict between it and the Kurdish population. "I'm angry at people who do research from the West," Nurcan told me. "There are many institutes in Istanbul and Ankara and they do research on Kurdish people, but they are run by Turkish people. Most foreigners know about the Kurdish question in the abstract, we know it by birth." Many institutions that work on the forced migrations in Turkey's southeast call the victims merely "internally displaced people", for example. "But when you use 'internally displaced people' you can translate it into Turkish in two different ways," she added. "The main translation makes it seem like what happened is very passive: like the Kurds came, and they left. Kurdish people want 'forced migration' used, they want people to understand that force was used."

In the 1980s and 1990s, with US diplomatic support and US-supplied weapons, the Turkish military cleared large parts of the Kurdish southeast in the name of fighting terrorism – in this incarnation, the Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK. It became merely a war against the Kurdish population, who, like indigenous people in Guatemala during their US-instigated civil war, became synonymous *as a whole* with the Leninist group regardless of their activities. Today in Diyarbakır there is a savage poverty mainly due to the thousands of people who came here after the forced migrations from the villages. The Kurdish people of Turkey have actually been through a prolonged nightmare since the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923. Kemal Ataturk, the war hero and founder of modern Turkey, aspired to an ethnocentric country, which meant Kurds were stripped of their identity and referred to as "Mountain Turks". Banned from speaking their own language or expressing their historic culture, they have spent the ensuing 90 years resisting a racist state that is trying to extinguish the merest memory of their different lineage. Ataturk massacred those Kurds who opposed his plan, but those who took on his mantle – called today, the Kemalists – have become more extreme than their idol. A secular, fascist-tinged elite have dominated Turkish politics since the time of Ataturk and liquidated democracy throughout the 20th century when anyone threatened to usurp their power. Meanwhile the elite established a Turkey that suited their interests: they tied themselves tightly to the US empire and its racket as it established its domination over the Middle East, filtering cash through international financial institutions to a well-served rentier class. The current set of authoritarian nationalists are still using a nasty little constitution instituted by fascist general Kenan Evren in 1981 after a military coup. That document has dogged Turkey ever since and caused thousands of lives to be wasted in jail or ended in cold blood for merely speaking out.

The tactics of the Turkish government in combating the Kurdish intifada in the 1980s were straight out of the handbook of the British empire the Turks had fought and beaten in their own war of independence. In 1985, Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal, who was a close friend of Margaret Thatcher, co-opted a small elite in the Kurdish villages of the southeast and plied them with US-supplied weapons and orders to do battle with the PKK. These paramilitary units, called Village Guards, were entrusted by the Turkish government to police the southeast from within and a blind eye was turned as they committed all sorts of atrocities. Human Rights Watch say they have opposed the village guard system since 1987, the year they released their first report on the subject, *State of Flux: Human Rights in Turkey*. Even that early it documented emerging evidence of "brutality and corruption among village guards". The brutal 1990s US-backed state clampdown on the southeast under the guise of a War on Terror, furnished with weapons by the John Major government in the UK and Bill Clinton in the US, saw the destruction of hundreds of villages in a scorched earth policy, and the displacement of thousands of Kurdish civilians. In the 2000s, the Islamist government of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) loosened restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language in the media and schools, which had previously been banned. Martial law in the area was lifted and the AKP has allowed the establishment of the first Kurdish-language television station; at the same time the imprisoning of Kurdish politicians and the shutting down of their parties abated somewhat. But in this period of glasnost and reconciliation under the AKP, the village guard system was left in place, even as its *raison d'être* disintegrated. There was a real hope that change was coming, as the Islamist party, which had been a victim of harsh repression itself, seemed to offer a different way of doing things. As the Kurdish proverb goes: "The victim understands the victim." But it wasn't to be. The "democratic opening" came to an abrupt halt in 2010 when seven PKK fighters arrived in Diyarbakır to cheers from the locals, many of whom were seeing long-lost relatives for the first time. Nurcan said she was in the office on that day. "I was with a young Kurdish student. I went to see what people were doing, and of course there were many congratulations to the fighters, it was like a festival. I was working and I thought, 'Nurcan, don't believe them, don't be happy, something bad will happen,' and I am 37, I saw the 1990s." Her instincts were right. "I saw an old Kurdish woman crying," she continued. "I asked her why she was crying, and the old woman said because today is '*bayram*', which means celebration. I shook her and said, don't believe them, there is no celebration, you don't know the bad things they will do after today."

Meanwhile, in the mainstream Turkish media the story was that the ungrateful Kurds were celebrating the return of the terrorist PKK. But what they didn't say was that many of these people were celebrating the return of loved ones. "These are our children," Nurcan said. "It's a very important thing. I saw on the street many old women who saw those fighters return, and thought maybe my son will be next. For that reason they were out celebrating." The seven fighters were eventually put in prison, alongside the thousands of Kurdish political prisoners held on spurious charges. The window for change closed, and repression as usual returned. "It's hard to attract western media attention because Turkey is a US ally," said Nurcan. "It's also hard to get the attention of the Turkish public. Sometimes I feel like it is another world, we are not in the same country. What we saying here in Diyarbakır is different to what they are saying in Ankara or Istanbul. It is very hard to get their attention." The Turkish media has never been a free media: ordinary Turkish people don't know what is happening; if they want to know they have to check. Most Turks, like most Americans, don't check.

Nurcan is an assimilated Kurd, and there are millions like her: they don't know Kurdish, their dreams are in Turkish, Turkish is their main language. Millions of Kurdish people now live in the west of Turkey, in Izmir and in Istanbul, which has the biggest Kurdish population in the world (5 million Kurds). But they know what happened. And they do not intend to forget and let the oppressors win. "In my mind and in my heart I don't know if I can forgive them for what they did," she told me. Many Turks cannot see why someone like Nurcan, who has benefitted from modern Turkey, would complain. "They are telling me why are you sad because you don't know your mother tongue? It's very good that you grew up you knew Turkish, you had chance to go to those universities, just enjoy being a Turk. They don't think that because I don't know my mother tongue, because of the restrictions at that time, I never had a close relationship even with my mother, and I never had the chance to talk with my grandmother, or my aunt. It's like you are coming from nowhere, there is no past. They think they are doing a very good thing for us, it is crazy. After this meeting I will go to buy books and presents for my friends in prison. And when I tell my friends in Istanbul that all my friends are in prison in Diyarbakır they say 'Really?' And the thing is I still had some patience to deal with Turkish people, trying to tell them what is happening. But after a while I said, 'Why?'"

The most emblematic of the many sins against the Kurdish people carried out through the long "counter-insurgency" campaign of the 1980s and 1990s, and before, was the outlawing of the Kurdish language. In the Turkish state's quest to dissolve any sense of a Kurdish identity separate from Turkey, the destruction of the fundamental cultural artifact of language was central. Nurcan told me she saw someone shot in the street because he was heard speaking Kurdish, and in her school if a child was heard using a Kurdish word, even just one, they would be taken out and savagely beaten.

Kurds who refused to be assimilated as merely "Mountain Turks" were tortured, murdered and "disappeared", while whole villages were scorched in the battle against the "enemy", which was publicly the PKK, but actually became the Kurdish community at large, especially those who refused to abide by the cultural genocide being imposed on them. In Diyarbakır mainly people speak Turkish, but when you go to the peripheries of the city, they haven't forgotten Kurdish; the language is still used despite the attempts to literally beat it out of their heads.

Kurdish children in the 1980s didn't even know they were Kurds. The constant government and military criminalization of the idea of the Kurd meant that many were ashamed to be Kurdish. "My mother and father came from the village, they were not educated, and most of the families at that time, like this, their main aim was to protect us," said Nurcan. "I was thinking that the teacher is not using Kurdish, and they are saying that Kurdish is bad, so then someone who uses Kurdish is bad. My mind was working like this. And I was thinking that because my mother was sometimes using Kurdish, and I was wondering if she was bad. We were ashamed to be a Kurd at that time, because the school and all of society were telling us this. One side we were ashamed of it, the other side we were afraid of it. Because, for example, I broke all my teeth, and I needed to go to hospital every week to get them fixed, and I was afraid that if my mother said something Kurdish what will they do to us? Maybe they wouldn't do anything, but I was very afraid. I remember lots of people being killed in that period. Just for example in this street they killed someone I remember. They killed one of my friend's fathers because he was selling a newspaper. It wasn't even in Kurdish – it was just writing about the rights of the Kurdish people."

THE GOLDEN CHILD

The US has been a staunch Cold War ally of Turkey for over half a century. It is still selling guns to Turkey, and the Kurds were sold out many times by the US, famously in 1975 when Henry Kissinger allowed them to be massacred, and in 1991 when George Bush senior, after telling them to rise up against Saddam Hussein, allowed the dictator to massacre them again. The situation changed slightly after the attack on Iraq in 2003 when Kurds in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) believed they could become strong allies of the US because of the changing dynamics in the Middle East. The reasoning is that the US needs sound allies in the region, like the KRG and Israel. The people in the KRG believe, perhaps naively, the US cannot turn their back on them now. "If I was an American citizen I would ask myself why my taxes were buying these guns and killing people," said Nurcan. "I don't understand why they don't ask this. If we have war here today, I'm not saying it's because of America, of course, it is not, but it continues because of guns, and if there were no guns it couldn't continue … and the guns come from America."

One brave young American, Jake Hess, saw what was being done in his name and decided to do something about it. He went to live in Diyarbakır and surrounding areas of the southeast to investigate human rights atrocities being carried out with weapons his own taxes were paying for. What happened next was a terrifying but salutary tale. He was detained and deported in 2010 on "terror" charges, which specifically meant "knowingly or willingly supporting a terror organization without being part of its hierarchical structure".

"I was in custody for about 10 nights," he told me. "During my interrogation, they asked me about my reporting on human rights abuses, contacts with NGOs in Britain and Turkey, and views on political issues." Unlike other less fortunate Kurdish activists, Hess was not tortured. The government has a public posture that is "zero tolerance" for torture, but if you are one of the thousands of Kurdish political prisoners in Turkey – held often for years without a conviction – such high-minded rhetoric often does not translate into on-the-ground policy. The US embassy offered consular assistance to Hess to secure his release on the trumped-up charges, but he refused, citing the treatment that they allowed to go on unhindered against Kurdish political dissidents and activists. "In the 1990s, these people would have been disappeared or assassinated; now, they're held in prison indefinitely," he told me. "The US government has murdered journalists both directly and by proxy for years. They bombed Al Jazeera in Iraq and Afghanistan. They bombed the Radio Television of Serbia in 1999, killing 16 civilians. The US was Turkey's chief military supporter as scores of journalists were being murdered there in the 1990s, and continues to provide key military and political backing for Ankara's current assault on the Kurdish movement. Of course I couldn't accept the embassy's help in that kind of situation."

Most Americans hearing about this brutality would be shocked to learn that their tax dollars have been instrumental in propping up this racist and genocidal policy against the Kurds in Turkey. In fact, the US and Turkey have had one of the most close-knit security tie-ups in the world since the beginning of the Cold War, as Turkey was viewed as a front-line state in the NATO alliance against the Soviet Union. In another part of unspoken history, it was the US placing of Jupiter missiles, armed with nuclear warheads, in Turkey in 1961 on the borders of the Soviet Union, that led the Russians to move nuclear warheads to Cuba, which, in turn, precipitated the Cuban Missile Crisis a year later. Operation Gladio, set up by NATO, created underground "stay-behind" armies to retain a position in the NATO states early in the Cold War. Many analysts now conclude that these forces went on to become the infamous "deep state" in Turkey, which, Hess said, "is basically an unelected shadow government that has been involved in political killings, coups, and generally fomenting chaos in the country". In Turkey, governments come and go – it's the state bureaucracy and the army that run the country.

Such a state of affairs has been mirrored across the other crucible states within NATO that might become susceptible to communism, clearing the way for brutal campaigns against some of the same forces that had helped defeat Nazism, from Greece to Spain. JİTEM, the death squad that was established to murder Kurdish dissidents and intellectuals in the 1980s and 1990s, also grew out of these NATO structures. The military relationship continued even after the Cold War ended. During the dirty war against the Kurds in the 1990s, the US supplied Ankara with 80 percent of its weaponry, worth some $10.5 billion. Many human rights groups documented how US-supplied hardware was used to commit abuses, including extra-judicial killings and destruction of villages. Washington provided Ankara with more military aid during its war of terror in the southeast than it did during the entire Cold War.

Turkey is a relatively stable country in one of the most strategically important parts of the world, and the US has used it as a base for imperial operations. In 2003, Turkey refused to let the US open a northern front in Iraq from Turkish soil. However, Ankara later allowed the US to use its territory as a transport hub for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In a Congressional testimony in March 2007, Robert Wexler, a supporter of Turkey who was then Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee's subcommittee on Europe, pointed out that "The US depends greatly on Turkey to pursue shared objectives in support of the Iraqi and Afghan people", by which he meant the brutal military occupations of those countries. He went on, "Turkey's grant of blanket over-flight clearances to US military aircraft is of critical importance to our military operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan", and noted that "Turkey … provides extensive logistic supports to our troops in Iraq. This critical life line includes the cargo hub at Incirlik Air Base through which … we ship 74 percent of our air cargo into Iraq." Indeed, Wexler explained: "The substantial majority of the military assets used by American troops are flown into Turkey, and then transported to Iraq."

In an op-ed published in the *Wall Street Journal* in 1997, senior Republican foreign policy official Zalmay Khalilzad summarized the importance of Turkey for the geopolitics of energy. He argued that the US and Turkey "should work together to ensure the security of the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Basin regions. The US already has security commitments in the gulf, an area that is vital to the world's oil supplies. The relative importance of the Caspian region is growing, though, due to its tremendous oil and gas reserves … Turkish military facilities provide an excellent location for projecting power to both the [Persian] gulf and the Caspian Basin. Much of the world's energy resources are within 1,000 miles of Incirlik. Access to the Turkish bases can reduce the amount of military presence required in some of the Gulf Cooperation Council states. Turkey is also a viable pipeline route for bringing some of the oil and gas from the Caspian to world markets."[3]

The US has fully backed Turkey's war against the PKK, despite the fact that there's near unanimous agreement that there is no "military solution" to the conflict there. The Bush and Obama administrations declared the PKK "a common enemy", and the US supplies the Turkish military with intelligence on PKK movements in northern Iraq. WikiLeaks cables show that the US is enthusiastic about supplying Turkey with drones, despite its horrific human rights record, which never seems to come up in meetings between Turkish diplomats and US. The PKK is a left-leaning popular movement that has defied NATO's second-largest army and its US patron for decades, so it has to be crushed. They've committed human rights violations over the years, but nowhere even approaching the level of Turkey, so US opposition can have no humanitarian basis.

Many thousands of activists and politicians, including elected mayors, human rights defenders, journalists, women's rights advocates and students, have been arrested on "terrorism" charges. There have been very few convictions or acquittals up until now; thousands of people have been held without conviction for years. "I've looked at several of the indictments dealing with these cases, and it's just beyond dispute that these people are being tried for political reasons," Hess said.

In recent years, Turkey has become more involved in the Middle East. Its outreach to Syria and Iran, along with Hamas, has at points brought it into conflict with the US-Israeli-Saudi Arabian reactionary front in the region, leading to considerable outrage in Washington policy circles. Despite the extensive debate about how the West has "lost" Turkey in recent years, the US may actually be happy that Turkey is playing a more assertive role in the Middle East as a sort of alternative or rival to Iran and Hezbollah, both of whom have seemingly lost influence since the Arab Spring. Basically, the US might be able to retain some of its waning influence in the region through an active and engaged Turkey. Turkey has suffered several of its own foreign policy setbacks in recent years, and it seems very unlikely that Ankara will entirely break from the US.

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[3] Quoted in Everett Thiele, "Whither goes Turkey?", March 17, 2003, www.antiwar.com/orig/thiele1.html

"I don't think Americans are all that aware of the situation," said Hess. Some American NGOs did great work documenting US-funded Turkish atrocities in the 1990s, but these received little attention, unlike, say, the atrocities in Bosnia or Kosovo. In recent years, corporate media outlets and more establishment-oriented think-tanks have started to criticize Turkey, mainly because Ankara has challenged Washington on a few important issues, especially the Israel–Palestine conflict. Hess added: "The coverage is nowhere near where it should be, and there are still no foreign correspondents based in southeastern Turkey. The media coverage leaves a lot to be desired. It's shocking how frequently people who are supposed to be experts on Turkey get basic details about the conflict wrong. For example, the PKK is almost universally described in the media as 'separatist' even though they backed away from their demand for an independent state in the early 1990s. Writers often disproportionately quote western or Turkish 'experts' when covering the Kurds, and for some reason feel compelled to constantly point out that the EU and US consider the PKK a 'terrorist organization'. Okay, but what do Kurds think about the PKK? Doesn't their perspective count? There seems to be this conceit that the only people who can comment on the Kurds are either American or Turkish 'experts' who speak English and have fancy titles. Beyond the Kurds, US media coverage of Turkey relies on very simplistic binaries that easily fit with western prejudices, like 'East vs West' or 'secular vs Islamic.' The press doesn't really reflect the reality of Turkey."

In 2004, while in Turkey, George W. Bush gushed about the AKP: "I appreciate so very much the example your country has set on how to be a Muslim country and at the same time a country which embraces democracy and the rule of law and freedom."[4] What Bush didn't mention, but was surely of interest to his administration and his friends at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was that while President Recip Tayyip Erdogan may be a moderate on religion, the AKP was economically fundamentalist, hell-bent on turning Turkey into an IMF experiment. Though the AKP campaigned on promises to the poor and working classes, only a month after it was elected in November 2002, the party announced its plans to embark on mass privatization of state-owned industries, from the national airline to the nationalized oil company. The deputy prime minister at the time, Abdüllatif Şener, admitted that his inspiration was Margaret Thatcher; his close associate Turgut Bozkurt, who was head of the Privatization Administration, spelled out their ambitions as straight from the Thatcherite handbook: "The basic goal is to transform the economy from a state-led economy to a market-driven liberal economy," he said. "Transferring state-owned companies to the able hands of private entrepreneurs will help rationalize structure and run according to rational or scientific principles in order to achieve desired results."[5]

As is the case for most close US allies, the economy of Turkey has gradually grown more and more like that of its patron. Agriculture died in southeast Turkey after the forced migrations of the 1990s and neoliberal economic policies in the 1980s. It is a common theme all across the "underdeveloped world". In southeast Turkey 20 years ago they were selling livestock around the world – like Haitian farmers once sold rice and Mexican farmers once sold maize. That was before the racket rode into town. Now in this region of Turkey they only *buy* meat. In one region near Diyarbakır there are lots of villages and in the not too distant past all the food from Diyarbakır was coming from that region. Now the children who don't still live there are picking through the rubbish of the western city of Izmir. Because of this lack of production, the major cities, particularly Istanbul, have been flooded with Kurdish people migrating from the rural areas. They now form an underclass, often living 10 people in one room, in adverse conditions. When you go to Istanbul, the children who clean there are Kurdish; when you go to Izmir, the children who pick through the rubbish are Kurdish. Most of the *gecekondus*[6] in Istanbul are also filled with Kurds. It's close to an apartheid situation – certainly economic apartheid. Every year more than 200 workers die because of no security at work. Most of them are Kurdish, their lives expendable. "I always think that if we had a color, if we were black or red, I am sure that then the Turkish people would see it," said Nurcan. "Now they don't see it, but the poverty in Turkey has a color, a race. It's like apartheid, and those in the worst conditions, they are Kurdish." But one thing the Turkish state didn't count on was that living at such close quarters and in such dire circumstances has created a highly political will among the Kurds. If they do decide to rise up again at some point they will have a lot of power, but the war against them will be fierce once again. The racket does not shy away from using force to realize its economic or geopolitical ambitions.

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[4] "Bush praise for key ally Turkey", *BBC News*, June 27, 2004.

[5] www.thefreelibrary.com/TURKEY+-+Profile+-+Abdullatif+Sener.-a0116389955

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[6] Slum dwellings, translated literally as "built overnight", because the authorities tend to destroy them during the day.

SEVEN

MIGHT IS RIGHT

WAR

In the aftermath of World War II, the US emerged as one of the three biggest economic powers in the world, the others being Western Europe and the Soviet Union. This stayed pretty much constant, with the East Asian "Tiger economies" replacing the Soviet Union in the tripartite economic arrangement. The area where America overwhelming dominates is in military power. The Cold War was already in its embryonic stages in 1945. From then until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US and its western allies maintained they were "containing" the Soviet Union. It is more accurate to say that the Soviet Union was "containing" the United States. According to Edward S. Herman "the Soviet Union was actually a defensive and quite weak regional power". America, on the other hand, had been establishing security states throughout Latin America and Africa and had control of Western Europe through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Soviet Union did not pose a problem militarily in the way public rhetoric claimed. The problem was the "virus" of "independent nationalism" that was likely to infect the rest of the world with notions of equality and independence. The wish of American business elites to keep high-scale military spending up, and of the political elites to maintain a grip on their populations meant that the threat of Soviet invasion became a common trope. Military spending shot up in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, at this time, according to Ken Livingstone, the former MP and the first Mayor of London, who was involved in international politics throughout the period, "the Cold War was largely a fiction because the US had 20 times more nukes than the Soviets". The historian Niall Ferguson disagrees, writing that the Cold War was a period "when the containment of Soviet expansion, rather than democratic nation building, was the objective of policy". The excuse for military spending was destroyed along with the "Evil Empire" in the early 1990s; yet the continuation of bloated military spending demonstrates that America's aim was only loosely related to the Soviet Union. Throughout the 1990s and up until the present, American military power has had no rival. Since the end of the Cold War, almost all the world's military budgets have declined, except America's. In 2001, the US military budget comprised 36 percent of the entire world's – six times the size of the number-two power, Russia, and seven times the size of the next three together, France, the UK and Japan. The US budget for 2012 took it to over 40 percent of the world's total. It exceeds the spending of the next 10 states combined. All of this with no Soviet – or equivalent – menace. When the Soviet Union fell, the US turned to other covers, such as the "Drug War", to keep military budgets high, as we will see.

The late historian Howard Zinn told me when I met him in Boston: "Very often the economics of empire requires a militarization of the economy, which then starves the domestic economy and eventually causes collapse." In terms of military superiority, more important than nuclear or conventional firepower have been the military bases the United States spawned across the world during the Cold War. The Pentagon says there are currently military facilities in 132 countries.

Only about half of these are fully operational but the existing bases mean that nowhere is beyond the range of an American strike. The executive has been consciously accruing these outposts since World War II and it has meant deals with unsavory regimes and, in the case of Diego Garcia in 1966, the repatriation of indigenous people. Noam Chomsky told me that so-called proxy wars became common because the government "intended at first to use US forces … but there was so much popular reaction that they turned to what is called 'clandestine war'". This meant that a large-scale propaganda offensive was not needed and none of the high-minded idealism was given lip-service. Chomsky continued: "Clandestine means the war that everybody knows about except the American population – it's kept from them and it was fought with an international terrorist network, in which Britain contributed incidentally. So it was Taiwan, Israel, Argentine neo-Nazis until they were thrown out, Saudi Arabian funding, British assistance. So that's a kind of an international terror network that was used to support the murderous state terrorist governments of Central America and in the case of the one government where they didn't control the security forces, Nicaragua, they were used just to attack. There was a terrorist war against Nicaragua for which the US was actually condemned by the World Court and the Security Council – the US vetoed the resolution, Britain loyally abstained."

One of the main institutions of enforcement through violence is NATO, which was signed into force in April 1949. It is a military pact among western countries that is supposed to commit all countries to the defense of their allies should they be attacked. In practice it became a vehicle for the United States to protect its interests in Western Europe. According to historian Michael Mann: "The other states of the North had been under protection since 1945, unable to defend themselves against communism without American help."

Consequently, "America dominated security organizations like NATO." At the time it was the first US military alliance with Europe in 171 years. Planners such as the influential Dean Acheson paid lip-service to the idea that NATO was designed to "develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."[1] It was said to be a wholly defensive organization. Walter LaFeber, the historian, on the other hand, contended that NATO was created by the US with the knowledge that "It could now dominate an alliance by using its partners to carry out US foreign-policy aims." The aims LaFeber mentions were twofold. The first was to restrict the percolation of Soviet communism into Western Europe, and the second to restore the independence and power of West Germany. NATO was largely successful in these aims and, aside from some pushback during Charles de Gaulle's presidency (1958–69) in France, the US managed to retain its singular role within the organization. In a memorandum to President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, de Gaulle complained of the "tripartite world strategy" that did not include France. Eisenhower, in turn, wrote that the "United States had no ambition to carry the heavy responsibility that had been forced upon it in NATO".

Even though the alliance stayed strong and grew to include a number of other countries over the decades, its first military operation did not occur until after the fall of the Soviet Union. It took place in Kosovo in 1999 and marked the apparent metamorphosis of this "defensive alliance" into a force for "humanitarian intervention". NATO's militarism now apparently marked a beautiful new moment in the racket's altruistic program. President Bill Clinton remarked on June 10, 1999 at the end of the bombing of Serbia and Kosovo: "The demands of an outraged and united international community have been met … Because of our resolve, the 20th century is ending not with helpless indignation but with a hopeful affirmation of human dignity and human rights for the 21st century."[2] The US and its allies had actually designed the peace talks – called the Rambouillet Agreement – to fail. By imposing the condition that NATO forces would be free to operate throughout not just Kosovo but all of Serbia, those pushing for war knew that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic could never accept it. It was a typically smart move on the part of the racketeers and one for the trophy cabinet of their enforcement mechanism.

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[1] The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington, DC, April 4, 1949, www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

Once again, scrutiny of the facts reveals a story that had much more to do with self-interest than any preoccupation with human rights and dignity. Before the war in 1999 US Defense Secretary William Cohen claimed: "We've now seen about 100,000 military-aged [Albanian] men missing … they may have been murdered." When the bombing was over and investigations had failed to find any mass graves, the International War Crimes Tribunal said the total number killed on both sides was 2,788. The pre-war figures had turned out to be grossly inflated, with the leader of the Spanish forensic team lamenting the "semantic pirouette by the war propaganda machines".[3] The purpose of the military offensive was to re-establish this diminishing military organization that many had perceived as obsolete at the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact (which had been its antonym). A White House official stated President Clinton's position: "From the first day, he said we have to win this. It was absolutely clear. Because of the consequences for the US, for NATO, for his responsibilities as

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[2] Martin McLaughlin, "Clinton's speech on Yugoslavia: piling lie upon lie", *World Socialist Web Site*, June 12, 1999, www.wsws.org

[3] Quoted in John Pilger, "Don't forget what happened in Yugoslavia", *New Statesman*, August 14, 2008.

Commander in Chief, we had to win this."[4] Columnist William Pfaff went further, stating, before the conflict: "The debate about intervention is no longer a dispute over the means to an end. It is a debate over abandoning NATO and the claim to international leadership".[5] The Yugoslav government thus had to be destroyed to maintain US military supremacy in the institutionalized form of NATO.

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the point of NATO was unclear, but then NATO bombed Serbia and Kosovo in 1999 to ensure the break-up of Yugoslavia; 9/11 provided the West with a new enemy; and NATO employed new and different machinations to keep Russia out while expanding into Eastern Europe via Georgia and Ukraine. The role of Turkey, as explored, was also crucial: since 1951 it has supported this alliance without qualification. During Israel's 2006 war in Lebanon, Turkish soldiers were sent to be "peacekeepers", and there were 1,300 Turkish soldiers in Afghanistan at one point. NATO has been used in Turkey to combat Kurdish activists, trade unionists, socialists and other enemies of the state. NATO troops are supposed to be prepared for foreign invasions, but actually they are often *used against democrats*.

THE MOB RULES BY FEAR

It is true that there have been relatively few direct military interventions by the United States. Control, as already discussed, has largely been maintained by supporting right-wing elements within a country from a distance. Military force has been a last resort. The major exceptions to this modus operandi are the Korean War of 1953, the Vietnam War, the war in Afghanistan and those in Iraq. The "defensive" rationalization was used to legitimate direct military adventures during the Cold War. In fact, it was a desire to circumvent expansionary communist powers that would spread, to use Henry Kissinger's telling phrase, "the virus" of "independent nationalism". In the case of Afghanistan and Iraq, they fell under the rubric of the "war on terror" which, on the whole, maintained the same conceptual and institutional framework, with "terrorism" replacing "communism" as the Other that must be destroyed at all cost. Far from supporting "democracy-promotion", the US military has, in recent history, become a self-fulfilling prophecy. In his autobiography, Colin Powell, Secretary of State under George W. Bush, noted how Clinton's National Security Advisor Madeleine Albright asked him rhetorically: "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?"[6]

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[4] Blaine Harden, "Waging war on the Serbs: old problem, new lesson", *New York Times*, June 6, 1999.

[5] William Pfaff, "Land war in Kosovo?", *New York Review of Books*, May 6, 1999.

The philosopher Zygmunt Bauman links current militarism to the economic downturn in the US. He told me: "There is no competition in arms, there is no question about that. But if that is the case then America wants to make the world in its image; namely, that what decides in this world is application of force: who has more bombs, who has more smart missiles and things like that, the more mobile army and so on. And that's a danger. Economically the power has shifted already." The war in Iraq, which began in March 2003, is a perfect illustration of the United States' desire to use direct foreign invasion as a means to further its own economic interests. The war eventually deposed the dictator Saddam Hussein, but it was no coincidence that Iraq had the third largest reserves of oil in the world. Ostensibly the US is fighting a "war on terror" – the same war designed in the 1980s under Ronald Reagan – and "the liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror". In fact, Saddam Hussein had no hand in the September 11, 2001 atrocities in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, but those atrocities were used to pull a veil over a preconceived desire for regime change in Iraq. Many elements of George W. Bush's administration were previously members of a lobby group called Project for the New American Century. The most informative document produced by this think-tank is titled *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Forces and Resources for a New Century* (2000). It stated: "The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein." Much like the communist pretext was used to pursue violent conflict to establish favorable economic circumstances, "terrorism" falls into the same paradigm. The history of the Cold War shows that the US is also driven by questions of prestige, and is especially concerned to demonstrate to its supposed allies that it can do certain things. The Vietnam War occurred substantially because of the defeats in Korea and Laos: various presidents felt that the US had to demonstrate its power. Once the US was in Vietnam it was extremely difficult to get out without significant loss of prestige, so the conflict was prolonged. All leading American racketeers still share this view.

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[6] Michael Dobbs, "With Albright, Clinton accepts new U.S. Role", *Washington Post*, December 8, 1996.

While speaking of Vietnam it would be remiss not to mention one of the most exalted mobsters in the whole system, Dr Henry Kissinger. When the then president of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was invited to campus at Columbia University where I was studying at the Journalism School, there were weeks of debate about whether we should allow him to address us at our home. On the day he arrived hundreds of protesters spoke out against his pernicious statements on the Holocaust and his crackdown on dissidents, homosexuals and secularism back in Iran.

The university president joined the chorus and opened his introduction with a rhetorical salvo against Ahmadinejad. All good. Except, soon after, Columbia Journalism School welcomed a speaker who was much worse than a Holocaust denier – he had been partly responsible for one; in fact, more than one. That man is Kissinger, the National Security Advisor and Secretary of State under presidents Nixon and Ford. There was none of the publicity, none of the protests, none of the ire – he was given a warm and effusive welcome and answered questions about his experience at the hub of the United States. Conceivably, the lack of publicity was an effort to stop the protest movement that follows Kissinger around the world. But at the end of his peroration, dewy-eyed students took photos alongside him and one even hugged him passionately. It is hard to know what is more worrying – that a reputable journalism school invites someone like Kissinger to speak every year, despite his past, or that the majority of students are oblivious to what the man has done. In his 2001 book, *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, the prominent late journalist Christopher Hitchens catalogued with tragic specificity the carnage that Kissinger consistently unleashed around the world during his time at the center of power. "Many if not most of Kissinger's partners in crime are now in jail, or are awaiting trial, or have been otherwise punished or discredited," he wrote. "His own lonely impunity is rank; it smells to heaven." The first holocaust concerned the country of East Timor in East Asia. It was invaded by neighboring Indonesia on December 7, 1975. That same day, President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger concluded an official visit to Jakarta and flew to Hawaii. Ford and Kissinger are revealed by declassified files to have given the "green light" to the Indonesian dictator to start the invasion. East Timor was home to an independence movement called Fretilin, or the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor, whose leftist ideology put them on the wrong side of the Cold War divide and at the mercy of the Indonesian military. What ensued was nearly 25 years of mass slaughter, rape and torture and the near-destruction of a nation. It is estimated that more than 200,000 East Timorese were killed during the Indonesian occupation, a third of the population of the country. Proportionally, it remains one of the worst genocides of the 20th century, all backed by Kissinger and his boss.

It is not only the disregard for human life that is troubling, but the legal aspect. What Kissinger and Ford had supported was illegal: Indonesia had violated international law by invading a sovereign nation, they had also violated American law, which said that weapons supplied to Indonesia were only to be employed in self-defense. But this was the pattern with Kissinger. His disregard for human life was matched only by his disregard for legal niceties. His blood-soaked résumé includes other continents too. In 1973, the democratically elected government of Chilean President Salvador Allende was violently liquidated by the fascist leader of the military, General Augusto Pinochet. For the three previous years, Kissinger had been integral in trying to undermine the legal and internationally recognized Allende government. The campaign included a program to remove the coup-averse General René Schneider and replace him with a sharper toothed coup-hungry operator. A $50,000 sum was offered to anyone who could do it. Although the CIA backed out of its support for former army General Roberto Viaux shortly before the kidnapping and accidental murder of Schneider, enthusiasm for a coup was still strong among American leaders. Following the successful coup, 17 years of dictatorship were foisted on the Chilean people, while the economy was opened to western speculators. Over 3,000 people were killed, and countless others "disappeared" or were tortured. Similar scenarios were played out across the world during Kissinger's terms in office. The Kurds were massacred in droves between 1974 and 1975; rape, burning, torture

– every conceivable horror visited on them after they had rebelled against Saddam Hussein with Kissinger's support. They were sold out and left to die.

The second holocaust Kissinger was partly responsible for was that in Cambodia under the genocidal maniac Pol Pot. During the Vietnam War, which Kissinger is thought to have prolonged in an effort to get Richard Nixon elected in 1968 (in Kissinger's life these titanic crimes only make the sidebar), Kissinger had ordered the secret bombing of Cambodia and Laos, two desperately poor countries that the US was not officially at war with. Between March 18, 1969 and May 1970, 3,630 bombing raids were flown into Cambodia. A Finnish government study estimates that 500,000 people died in this first phase, with 2 million refugees produced. Some analysts also argue that this bombing campaign, which depopulated large rural regions, led to the Pol Pot regime, which murdered 25 percent of the Cambodian population.

So there you have it: a veritable war criminal and facilitator of mass slaughter. And all of this information was in the public domain, available to any student with an enquiring mind. Fed up with the love-in at Columbia Journalism School, I asked Kissinger in front of his enraptured audience how he slept at night. "Do you think you are morally superior to me?" he asked after a pause. "Yes. I do," I answered confidently, stunned that he might mistake me for a mass murderer. All the while there were groans in the room from fellow students and professors, a startled disbelief that a journalist might actually confront a powerful mobster rather than attempt to fondle his ego with the usual fatuous questions. Despite this, it is still assumed that Columbia University has the best journalism school in the country. But thinking about this pandering to and reverence of one of the racket's most illustrious, I realized that to flourish in the corporate media, the destination of nearly all of these students, you have to block out the truth of how the world works. Looking at the racket with open eyes can spell career suicide, so, as Harold Pinter put it, "it never happened". Kissinger is a cuddly old statesman, not a mass-murdering racketeer. In fact, a couple of days after I confronted Kissinger, one of the school's top professors came up to me and said: "I heard you disgraced yourself the other day". If I'm honest I wasn't even surprised – this academic would never be teaching at Columbia Journalism School if he thought the purpose of journalism was to expose his own country's mass-murderers rather than suck up to them. Power selects for obedience, and by now it was obvious to me that the most obedient are inevitably rewarded with fancy positions in universities or with newspaper columns. The closest I came again to holding another mobster to account was when I was covering the 2008 Republican National Convention in St Paul and I chased Karl Rove, President George W. Bush's "brain" (he needed one), down the street asking him if he believed he was a war criminal. He pled the fifth before getting into a car.

THE DRUG WAR

Another method of enforcement devised by the US is the so-called "Drug War" or "War on Drugs", which is made up of two elements – the racialized war on the domestic poor, and the war on the rest of the world. It was formally started in the early 1970s by President Richard Nixon, focusing on eradication and interdiction all over the western hemisphere. The Drug War at home began as a way to deal with what some sociologists called the "superfluous population" – those people for whom there were just no jobs, the "permanent unemployed" that every capitalist economy has. It came in tandem with the growth of what is now called the "prison–industrial complex" whereby the privatization of corrections facilities offered all sorts of perverse incentives that made it in the interests of corporations (and the politicians whom they funded) to push for harsher sentences and more incarcerated people. Since the 1970s, the US has spent upwards of $1 trillion and seen thousands of people killed in this two-front fight.

In 2010 the US federal government spent over $15 billion on the Drug War at a rate of about $500 per second. But nearly everyone in policy circles admits it has been a failure. "I think that a lot of the arguments are quite convincing that current drug policy isn't working," Michael Shiftner, president of Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington think-tank, told me. "The evidence is strong, it has produced broad consensus of opinion." Even the Obama administration's own drug tsar, Gil Kerlikowske, was skeptical in 2011. "In the grand scheme, it has not been successful," he said. "Forty years later, the concern about drugs and drug problems is, if anything, magnified, intensified." The Obama administration did use a different tone on drug eradication policy, refusing to call it a war on drugs, and behind the scenes there is very little enthusiasm for the current approach. But the bureaucratic apparatus that has been built up over the past 40 years has made change difficult. The Obama administration requested $26.2 billion in its 2012 drug control budget for federal efforts to rein in the problem, an increase of 1.2 percent from the 2010 budget. Nearly 60 percent of that, or $15.5 billion, was directed to "supply reduction"; in other words, law enforcement and interdiction internationally and domestically.

It is worth considering why this massive outlay in capital and human life continues. It is no coincidence that it began at the height of the Cold War – it was just another tool of control to shore up the "backyard", or Latin America, the focus of most of the efforts. That control still needs to be exercised in a continent that is showing signs of moving away from US influence. The Drug War gave the US an excuse to keep a massive military presence in the region after the Soviet "threat" had disappeared. For example, a number of countries with drug problems – such as Colombia and Panama – have good relationships with the US, but even they seem to realize the war is not doing any good. Despite that, they let it go on because it allows them to fight their adversaries – in many cases, left-wing rebels – under the cover of the Drug War and thus escape censure from the US or anyone else.

But the conversation is building. Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said in 2011 that he was not against legalization. "If the world considers that [legalization] is a solution, I would gladly go along with that. I can understand the benefits, and I can understand the arguments," he said.[7] A commission on drug policy was set up by former Colombian president César Gaviria, calling for decriminalization of drugs in the region. Many Latin American governments are hoping the US will realize the shortcomings and begin a debate about other options that would be more viable. Before that happens they are hedging their bets.

Mexico is one of the most important countries for the US to control, as they share a long border (half of Mexico was bought by the US in 1803 for next to nothing). The border region has become a hell as a result of the Drug War. It has witnessed 36,000 deaths since former President Felipe Calderón launched a crackdown on drug trafficking, soon after he came to power in 2006, with the encouragement of the US which promised $1.6 billion in aid to the effort through the Mérida Initiative. Human rights groups have reported huge numbers of atrocities by the Mexican military against indigenous communities and civil society, under the guise of the Drug War. The murder of Jaime Zapata, a US immigration agent, by a drugs cartel in Mexico in 2011 and continuing violence in the border region again attested to the costs of this futile war. If you looked at it objectively you would have to say it is not working. The traffickers are cultivating and selling drugs to a huge market in the US that is growing all the time. The US seems to be incapable of doing anything internally about the demand for drugs, and where there is demand there will be supply. If a Colombian or Bolivian peasant farmer is deciding between growing a hectare of banana trees or a hectare of coca, there's no comparison in terms of the return.

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[7] "FT interview transcript: Juan Manuel Santos", *Financial Times*, February 13, 2011.

The US has had problems in recent years, as left-wing governments have sprung up in Latin America opposed to the program, making enforcement increasingly difficult. It has become harder to launch coups to get rid of them, too. This nascent movement in Latin America has made the enforcement side of the eradication policy by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) harder. Bolivia's leftist President Evo Morales kicked out the DEA, arguing that it was being used to pursue the geostrategic interests of the US, which was undoubtedly true. At the moment only Ecuador has followed suit, but this could change. The US's teetotal approach has also led it to oppose Bolivia's formal request to the UN to remove the ban on the chewing of coca leaves – an indigenous practice dating back more than 2,000 years. All over Latin America in recent history there have been moves to legalization. Argentina's Supreme Court ruled to decriminalize possession of drugs for personal consumption and there are continued efforts in Ecuador to reform its heinous drug law that was basically drafted under the guidance of the US. Senior figures in the region such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Ernesto Zedillo, the former presidents of Brazil and Mexico, have questioned the validity of the Drug War. Back in the US, it is the cowardice of the political establishment that stops anything from changing. "People are admitting it's a failure," Ron Paul, a Republican congressman from Texas, told me. "But they are intimidated. If they say it's a failure they are worried about being perceived as soft on drugs."

He added: “I think we are making progress. I sense a major change with the people, but I don’t think the government has caught up yet.” The libertarian wing of the Republican Party has been increasingly pro-legalization and against the huge outlays in Latin America while the rise of the Tea Party has brought the issue to the fore, with some wings favoring a cessation of the policy. “I have had this position for years, people always thought I wouldn’t be re-elected [in the] Deep South bible belt, but it’s never been harmful politically,” said Paul. “It has hurt so many people and so many families, there has been a realization that it’s the war that is hurting people more than drugs themselves.” And some Democrats are wising up, too. The Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission Act aimed to create a commission appointed in part by the president to re-evaluate the eradication and production-side emphasis of the US’s drug policy in Latin America. Sponsored by Eliot Engel, a congressman from New York, it was defeated in the Senate in 2010 after passing through the House unanimously. Another act of the same name was introduced in 2014. “The War on Drugs is a failure, we still have problems with drugs,” Engel told me. “In Mexico the cartels are even bolder.” But it was only a failure if you believed the War on Drugs was about drugs. Honduras shows it is actually about something else entirely.

EIGHT

A DRUG WAR COLONY

TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS

Tegucigalpa (Tegus) is an American-made disaster. Traditionally the most subservient and tightly controlled US client state in Central America, it has been the base from which the US has launched a terrorist war of aggression (against the Nicaraguans in the 1980s) and ignited a savage civil war (in neighboring El Salvador). There is barely a restaurant in the city that is not part of an American corporation, and on the surrounding beautiful, rolling hills sits Tegus's own version of the Hollywood sign – except this time it says Coca-Cola. There is barely anywhere in the city from which this imposing cutout is not visible.

When I arrived in the country in 2012, it had been three years since the US-backed coup that threw out the democratically elected president. I was told I could not leave the hotel, day or night, and had to take a taxi to interviews. The whole city was on lockdown. I did not comply – but as I walked the concrete streets of the center it was like a ghost town. There were various bits of graffiti, the walls being the last place for free expression in a country wrecked by authoritarianism and violence. *"El pueblo nunca olvidará"* (The people will never forget); *"Venceremos los dueños!"* (We will defeat the owners).

Honduras is one of the front-line states in the Drug War. It has become increasingly popular with traffickers owing to the corruption of its officials, the poverty of its people, and the fact that there are large tracts of barren land, particularly in the north of the country, that are off limits to the government. The geography is also a boon for narcos – Honduras is a halfway point for cocaine coming from South America to Mexico and the US. But combating drugs is like squeezing a balloon – when you push the drugs out of one region, they reappear somewhere else. Underneath all the puritan anti-crime rhetoric, the so-called Drug War, which is now a huge bureaucracy employing thousands of people all over the world, was always about control. This method of domination became more acute after the end of the Cold War when the US was running out of excuses to base its military personnel and agents throughout Latin America. The Drug War then became the perfect front for a sustained military presence in the region that would make all its countries slaves to US dictates: the situation that the planners wanted replicated was that of Honduras. Unsurprisingly, it was a plan the rest of the hemisphere was not too happy with. When I arrived in Tegucigalpa I was aware of the real reasons for the Drug War, but I wanted to hear from the horse's mouth what US operations were about. I organized an interview with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the major US agency dedicated to eradication of coca crops, to take me through it. The DEA agent, Jeff Sandberg, did not want to be named, but in the interests of full disclosure I will not conceal his identity. US agents don't deserve anonymity, like the programs they oversee. Incidentally, that's probably not even his real name – most US agents are given cover identities. He was a squat man with a shaved head and a wild-eyed look, the sort of proselytizing anti-drugs bureaucrat you might imagine would be working for the DEA in Honduras. When I asked him whether he felt he was winning the war against the cartels, he just laughed. “No, we’re not winning, but we’re trying very hard. The situation is very difficult, you have government institutions that have basically failed or are failing that require a lot of work and a lot of time to strengthen them and get them back on track.” He was no doubt correct, but he forgot to add that the government, the country and the state it was in, were in large part down to non-stop US intervention for pretty much a century. Any time it looked like the people were slinging off the imperial giant upstairs, the US would come in and launch a coup, as it did in 2009, President Barack Obama’s first coup. The problem had been the incumbent President Manuel Zelaya, who had had the temerity to raise the minimum wage for the poorest Hondurans. The local Honduran oligarchs saw the danger of a slightly more humane society and reached out to their natural allies, the US, overthrew democracy, kidnapped the president, dumped him in his pajamas on a runway, and reinstalled the political wing of the rich, the Liberal Party. The US initially called it a coup, then the position changed, the subsequent “elections” were validated, and Porfirio Lobo, the new and illegitimate president, was invited to tea at the White House.

Since the coup, a continuing phenomenon has been the huge increase in the number of human rights violations. This is not just perception. One human rights group told me that at a national level in 2008 they were dealing with 125 human rights violations throughout the whole year. In 2010, they had 2,700 cases, and in the period 2011–12 there was very clear targeting of specific groups. Among the countries of Latin America, Honduras has had the most journalists murdered in recent years. There has also been targeting of people who are aligned to the new political party, LIBRE, that has been set up by former president

Zelaya and his wife, as well as people who are community activists involved in protest and resistance movements. When I was there the country had what Hondurans called (accurately) a "narco-congress", a group of rich legislators who are in bed with the narco-traffickers with whom the US was ostensibly at war. Mr Sandberg himself agreed. "I believe there are plenty of people that are involved [in the drugs trade], that would have to be involved, to allow what goes on here, high up the food chain." The number of deputies in the congress who have been assassinated in narco-related incidents has soared over recent years, while people at the local level will say openly which mayors, members of the city councils and deputies have been elected with narco funds.

NOTHING TO SEE HERE

The method of military control used in Honduras, under the guise of the Drug War, is simple: open a military base, but do not call it a base. This method is mirrored across other countries in the region and across the world. The US officially calls these areas Forward Operating Locations (FOLs), because apparently they are temporary, and it's embarrassing to call them bases as an American empire, of course*, does not exist*. In Honduras, just before I arrived, the US had opened four new FOLs, ostensibly to deal with drugs. But, in truth, Central America was also showing signs of moving away from US control, with left-wing governments in El Salvador and (briefly) Honduras. The truth is that the US was trying to reassert its control of Latin America after a decade of concern about the Middle East, during which time a raft of independent leaders, not subservient to US interests, arose in the region.

In the course of my interview with DEA agent Jeff Sandberg in the gardens of the US embassy in Tegucigalpa, he denied that the FOLs were new, saying that "they have been around for a number of years, maybe not in as much use as they've gotten in the last year or maybe in the upcoming time frame, but those locations have been around for actually a number of years, so they are not really new." This sounded like an admission that the US has had a surreptitious military presence at undisclosed locations through Honduras for "a number of years". The flack (journalistic slang for PR people) who sat in on our interview chimed in: "We have no military bases, there are Forward Operating Locations, which are actually Honduran facilities where there was just renovations that were done to support these types of air operations, it's not something that was built out of whole cloth. Even though I explained it's a small operation, but these were existing facilities where it was built so that there could be the staging for these helicopters into the air where we've identified that the drug trafficking activity takes place." The rhetorical gymnastics of imperialism. Of course, it was all smoke and mirrors. FOLs are the same thing as a military base, but the Americans don't want to appear the imperialists. The flack even said there is "not a US base at Soto Cano. Soto Cano is a Honduran base". But that same base houses the US Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B), which is a regional force whose main goal is apparently to "assist in disaster relief" – and other *more nefarious things*. "I do want to reject categorically the idea that there is an American base in Honduras," he told me. Imagine if the Hondurans had an elite team of Special Forces at a base in Florida, then said it didn't comprise a base. Incidentally, the use of "advisors" in South Vietnam by President Kennedy in the early 1960s was another way of covering up for the build-up of troops and the take over of a foreign country under the veil of "altruism" and the "at their behest" ideology.

To understand the massive ideological construct that is the Drug War, designed to disguise the imperialism at its root, it is necessary to examine US claims about its efforts. Money is given by the US, alongside military and drug personnel and training, to Latin American countries in an effort to interdict drugs that are being smuggled from Colombia and other areas of South America through Central America until they finally arrive on the streets of Baltimore or Chicago. Interdiction does happen – the propaganda is not completely hollow – in the form of night raids and drug busts, but even Mr Sandberg admitted to me that "interdiction is a very small part of the puzzle". In addition, the US's Drug War hasn't hit production levels at all, but has merely caused possibly millions of deaths and untold misery across the continent. When WikiLeaks released the US diplomatic cables, they revealed that the Americans in fact knew that the most powerful oligarch in Honduras, Miguel Facussé Barjum, was allowing drugs-laden aircraft to land on his property. Facussé, who had his own private militia that was killing campesinos fighting for land rights, was of course a US ally, so nothing ever happened. Many in Honduras believed Facussé was in fact behind the June 2009 coup, an allegation with some merit.

In short, the US is losing the war against drugs, but that doesn't matter because it *isn't about drugs*. The war will continue because it's the perfect mask, the perfect means of maintaining high levels of military force and control throughout the Americas now that the excuse of the Soviet Union has disappeared. The Soto Cano air base in Honduras, in fact, became a vital control point for counter-insurgency in the region, and in more recent times it has been the watching point for the supervision of drug trafficking and movement throughout this region. More importantly, the US can police the people when they vote the wrong way: it was clearly concerned about President Zelaya's policies in 2007–08, the entry of Honduras into the independent trade grouping ALBA, and the close relationship with Hugo Chávez. All of these set off warning bells for the US about whether it would lose access to the bases, so there was a coup, and the people of Honduras were crushed once again.

The functionaries at the front line of US imperial operations can't – won't – see it like this. "We're making some progress, we're trying to make more progress, what's the alternative?" asked Jeff Sandberg when I mentioned that the war looks to be failing. "To throw up our hands and say we give up? Then what happens? Chaos, in my estimation. Is that the better alternative? Not in my world, maybe some people think so, but I bet if those people lived in chaos they'd think otherwise." I later organized to meet with the heads of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the State Department to see what kind of narrative they had developed to explain the descent of this close American ally into tragedy. Like many individuals working in the US imperial system, they obviously believed the lies that had been concocted to legitimize, both morally and legally, the US presence in Honduras. In fact, I believe it would be impossible to not imbibe all these false theories about US benevolence – many of these people are good people who want to believe they are doing the right thing. It is the institutions that are pathological; they are merely its human form, so convoluted forms of legitimization are a must. Every now and then someone like Edward Snowden has a moral awakening and reveals the true face of American power. But the collection of officials I met comprised the standard fare. We sat around the table at the USAID building opposite the embassy and they came out with the usual lines, which are not worth quoting as they just perpetuate the myths.

CULPRITS RUNNING FREE

Like most campaigns waged by the US government to pursue its interests in a particular region, the result in Honduras has been unadulterated misery for the people living there. In fact, when I was in Honduras it had been transformed into the most dangerous country in the world. The homicide rate was higher than in war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan, two other countries destroyed by the US government and military. I talked to a number of people who had lost friends and relatives – it was unusual to meet someone who did not know someone who had been killed by a gang or political interests. No one had seen justice done. Julio Funes Benítez, for example, was shot dead in broad daylight outside his house in Tegucigalpa in early 2010. The assassins unleashed a hail of bullets in his direction while driving past on a motorbike. Mr Benítez had been active in the resistance movement which flourished after the coup. But nearly three years on, no one had been charged with his murder. "From when they killed my husband to now, I never got any support from the authorities," Lidia Marina Gonzales, Mr Benítez's widow, told me. "There was never an investigation, the culprits are free. The agent who was meant to investigate told me that if I wanted there to be an investigation I would have to pay." The fact that Mr Benítez's killers got away with murder is not an exception in modern-day Honduras. There are 91 murders per 100,000 people, or one every 74 minutes. Nearly all remain unsolved, and many, as in the case of Mr Benítez, are not even investigated. One of the big problems is that the quality of criminal investigation is absolutely appalling; sentencing is less than 3 percent. This pattern of violence cannot be attributed solely to the coup, but has been growing since around 2002. The Honduran government itself says it is focusing on modernizing the justice system and reforming political institutions in its effort to bring down the homicide rate. "The advance of narco-trafficking alongside the geographical position of the country and corruption in the police make it hard to combat," Julio César Raudales, the minister for planning in the Lobo administration, told me. "It is going to be a long road to reconstruct the social fabric, but that won't stop us."

As in all countries where the US has been intervening on the side of the oligarchs and the murderers, a heroic resistance, killed at a staggering rate, refuses to be cowed. Chief among these groups is Cofadeh, the Committee of the Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras, which is a non-governmental organization (NGO). I walked over to their offices to talk with Dina Meza, one of its human rights workers, who was herself living in fear because of her work. "There are many threats, defenders of human rights have a lot of threats," she told me in a coffee shop just down the street. "In my case they have increased since February of this year, text messages have come to me telling me to watch out, armed men have come to my house, I had to change my life radically, including where I live. I spend much more on security, but of course the government isn't investigating the threats. This office is watched, all our actions are watched. I had to leave with my family from where we lived because armed men were watching us at home, even though Cofadeh had told the police, they had never come to protect us, they wanted to kill us all. They gave me a number to call of the police if I get in a bad situation, but the number doesn't work, no one picks up. We have a state that doesn't work." So how does she go on? I asked. "I don't want to see a country with no human rights; we have to keep fighting for our children. Even if I die, we are fighting for democracy, rights, it's a natural bravery."

When you travel around the world investigating how the US has uniformly tried to stub out popular movements through the most heinous and brutal programs, people like Meza also pop up everywhere. These are people who refuse to become just another statistic buried by the US media, people whose names will never be known beyond their communities but who continue to fight every day, at great risk to themselves, positioned against the most powerful state and military in the history of the world. Meza didn't mince her words: "The US support the oppression of anyone lifting a finger against the coup government, I wish the American people could see this."

In the aftermath of the June 2009 coup, the resistance had been strong and was brutally suppressed. A new party emerged which was said to represent the disparate groups allied against the *de facto* regime – these included unions, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups and women's movements. It was called LIBRE and was led by Xiomara Castro, wife of the deposed president Zelaya. I met the international coordinator of the party, Gilberto Ríos Munguía, in Tegucigalpa. "The government doesn't have real power," he told me. "A *de facto* group have power in the country. They control the police and the military. It's a group of narco traffickers, from Mexico and Colombia; it's the same cartels that are in Mexico that control this place. They have more power than the state of Honduras; they have neutralized the functioning of the state, in police, investigations, in the military. This has provoked the high levels of violence."

After the US and oligarchs threw out the democratically elected Zelaya, the narcos gained near-complete control of the congress. Although the US denied being involved in the coup and, in WikiLeaks cables subsequently released, privately said it was illegal, it has strongly supported the coup regime under President Porfirio Lobo. Many people in Honduras suspect that the US was involved in the coup itself. There is a famous joke in Latin America that the US is the only country in the hemisphere to have never had a military coup because it is the only country in the hemisphere without a US embassy. "The CIA had a lot to do with the coup. Obama with the new coup, he didn't recognize the *de facto* government of [Roberto] Micheletti; however, he never did a commercial blockade, like in Cuba. In the case of Honduras he only criticized six months of *de facto* government, then recognized the government of the same coup," added Mungia.

Mungia believed that the US favors some cartels over others, a view that is gaining increasing currency in Central America and is backed up by revelations from Mexico. He held that "the DEA is very corrupt, it's a cartel, and they are working with the cartels, in Mexico as well". Like in Iraq and Afghanistan, where someone who has a score to settle will erroneously tell the Americans that their enemy is al-Qaeda, the cartels in Central America are informing on their enemies to the DEA in the hope that the biggest military power in the world can help them vanquish their rivals. "In Mexico, the country started going bad at the start of the war on drugs, and in Honduras we are worse than even Mexico," said Mungia. The activists in LIBRE, like many others who are standing against the US-backed coup regime, feel in constant danger. "Many people of us are under threat of death, we have received many threats," he said. "I have friends that have been assassinated, the mayor, the deputies. I lost a friend who was very close six months ago. The first deputy candidate [from the LGBT community], he was killed." That activist was a young man by the name of Eric Martinez, who was murdered by anonymous forces for speaking out too forcibly against the US-backed regime. Mungia said that most of the assassinations were the work of the police or military, a situation mirrored in countries that the US controls across Central America.

LIBRE is a rare beacon of hope in Honduras, where a sense of hopelessness pervades. In a country where dissent and democracy is attacked mercilessly, its activists, in the face of violence and murder, are organizing from a grassroots base to take on the oligarchy and their backers in the US embassy. Before they are successful, however, a lot of blood will have to be spilt. It's the same for those fighting US-backed tyrants around the world, from Egypt to Saudi Arabia. "Honduras is the most anti-democratic country in Latin America," said Mungia. And of course it has to be this way, because as soon as real democracy appears and threatens US interests, it will have to be cut down. What the US likes, and promotes, is "low-intensity democracy", a political system in which there are formal elections every four years but the social relations of the society, the control of a rich elite, is never questioned and the concerns of the country's poor people are never heard.

Not long before I arrived in Honduras there was what became an infamous massacre. On May 11, a gun helicopter ship, US-owned but apparently Honduras-piloted (and overseen by DEA agents), murdered four people, including two pregnant women. "I wasn't there in the incident, nor was I here in the country," Jeff Sandberg said. I asked instead if there were regular firefights between the Honduran military and people they were ambushing. "I don't know if I would say regularly," he replied. "But there certainly have been incidents and there will be further incidents of government forces against people involved in the cartels." I asked about the role of the DEA in such operations. "Mentoring, advising, and building the capacity of the Hondurans to at some point function on their own without our help." It was the same excuse – of beneficence and aid – that had been used to control South Vietnam, Afghanistan and countless other countries. But many argue that the role of the DEA is much more hands-on. "In this case, that was a police operation not a military operation, and they were in a situation of trying to seize drugs out of a community that had a lot of arms," Lisa Kubiske, the US ambassador to Honduras, told me in her office in the embassy. What that operation did provoke was massive anti-American feeling in Honduras. Mr Sandberg added: "It's just part of the politics that goes along with any kind of country that is requesting assistance from another country, wouldn't have to be just the US. What happens if Hondurans ask Guatemala for assistance, and you have Guatemalan police or troops to assist and an attack happens where some civilians are killed by the Guatemalans, I'm sure the Hondurans would say the same thing." The problem for Sandberg and the Americans is that they work militarily in 130 countries around the world – no other country does that. Of course the dynamic is the same: *people don't like outsiders coming in and killing their people*. But those outsiders are nearly always American. Ask an Iraqi or Afghani or Honduran or Guatemalan. The flack representing the embassy at this point reminded me that the Americans were "here at the request of the government, working in areas that the government has identified". This is the oldest American propaganda line there is. Like all the best propaganda, too, it has a semblance of truth if decontextualized. So, of course, the Honduran government has invited the US, but it's a government the US installed and is backing to the hilt against their own people, so it would be a huge surprise if they rejected US solicitations to base themselves in the country. This is the problem of the American empire: it has to hide itself continually, it has to live in the shadows, not allowing detection, because the country is founded on strong anti-imperialist ideas, and its media class would implode if it reported the truth. So the military bases have to be "forward operating locations", the military presence has to be at the behest of the "Honduran people", the military operations have to be operated by Hondurans, and "overseen" by Americans. It's a constant dance to cover up rapacious power and give it the gleam of legitimacy. Once you scratch the surface, however, it falls apart.

THE ECONOMY OF DESPAIR

Although Honduras is a major military outpost for the US empire, it pales into insignificance when you look at the "tonnes of personnel" (Sandberg) that the US has in Mexico and Colombia. "Every Central American country has DEA personnel assigned in Central America," Sandberg said. In fact, the US set up multi-billion-dollar programs in both Mexico (the Mérida Initiative) and in Colombia (Plan Colombia), alongside the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), the US government program through which it filters money to countries in the region. Sandberg pointed to these two places as evidence of what might be achieved in Honduras. “There are many obstacles. I would say take a look at Colombia and Mexico. How long has it taken Colombia to get its handle on the drug trade and various anti-government entities operating in Colombia, it was a long time frame. Realistically it’s probably what it’s going to take here, but we have had tremendous success in Colombia, and I think we’re starting to have some very good success in Mexico, so it’s possible here.” Colombia, as has been noted, has the worst human rights record in the hemisphere; in Mexico, from 2004 to 2014, 200,000 people were killed in the Drug War fought by the military and the cartels. That’s what Honduras has to look forward to – courtesy of the US. But Sandberg was adamant that it’s the Hondurans who “need to change”, not the US. “Their country, their views, their legal system is what needs to be revamped, and I think that’s probably decades. Generations that have the wrong outlook, maybe, of how things function here, and accept how things function here, that’s what needs to change.” This is traditional imperial mentality. The colonial powers, and their agents, nearly always ascribe any faults in a country they are administering to the cultural mores of the local people. This provides an important function: it stops the colonial powers’ administrators from ever having to question the system that created the mess in the first place, and which they oversee. Another point that the US might consider is that nearly all the demand for these drugs comes from within the US, as well as a large portion of the guns used by the cartels. If the US government could reduce the demand for drugs and supply of guns, the violence might very well start to abate.

In the big debate about the Drug War, most politicians turn to simple demonization of cartels and their members, as well as the trade itself. The cartels are brutal organizations, but they are a product of a destroyed economy. When young kids are growing up in Honduras or northern Mexico, and their choice is between a life of penury in the formal economy or joining a cartel and becoming fabulously wealthy, unsurprisingly they often choose the latter. In the May 11 killings, for example, even if the people killed were guilty, they are likely to have been dirt-poor kids moving product up the river because they had no other option. DEA agent Sandberg had actually put his finger on the problem, when I asked why there were such high levels of violence in Honduras: "I think because the legal system in Honduras and the other social systems are so broken that there's no impunity for people to not commit a crime, so it doesn't have to be focused or because of drugs, it's just a crime of opportunity or because you have a tonne of people who are living in poverty, people are trying to literally stay alive, and if that means committing a crime to get what is required to stay alive, then so be it. So I don't attribute it all to drugs and cartels." He did not, however, connect the state that Honduras was in to the fact that it had been the recipient of continuous US intervention. Was it a coincidence that Haiti, Honduras, and all the rest of these countries controlled by the US, were in tatters? Forcefully wrenching control from the people of any country, making it a dependency, a slave state for foreign capital, would, of course, not benefit the majority of the population.

Honduras economically is a playground for American capitalists, having been cursed by various neoliberal institutions. The multinationals operating in Honduras have nearly all been given tax-free holidays of up to 20 years to locate in Tegucigalpa, which has decimated government revenues. It is part of the reason why the justice institutions, education and health are so chronically underfunded.

The profits are repatriated to the US and other western capitals, while the Hondurans spend their money in their restaurants. In this sense, Honduras is one of those unfortunate places where many facets of US imperial power converge – the neoliberal economics, the support for the military institution, the hysterical anti-leftist ideology. In such a situation, for people to retain their dignity and shake off the oppressor is extremely difficult. These tensions and problems contribute to the sluggish economy. When I was there, a "model cities" project was seen as a way to kick-start the economy, through creating privately run cities on Honduran land where immigrants from across Latin America could come to work in the *maquiladoras* (sweatshops). It was, however, rejected by the Honduran Supreme Court in October 2012 as "unconstitutional", but it will, without doubt, be back.

"If you want security for citizens it's interrelated with socio-economic conditions of country," said US ambassador Kubiske. "If you have people who can earn enough money, they don't have to be tempted by criminal activity. If they think there are no options, they may be tempted." True – but the US has kept Honduras chronically undeveloped. Like Haiti, Honduras experienced neoliberal economics on top of an already desperate situation. Hurricane Mitch, which hit in 2002, destroyed large parts of the infrastructure of the country and the livelihoods of many thousands. There was a big surge in male migration up to 2006. Then after that there was a big internal migration, mainly of women who moved toward the *maquila* sector. The majority of these "free trade zones" were in the north, like San Pedro Sula, which is now the most deadly city in the world. As late journalist Charles Bowden has pointed out, this mix of ultra-violence and ultra-capitalism is an apocalyptic vision of all our futures, as capital reforms governments around the world to make their people slave to it. Honduras is a very unequal society, as are most US client states. The concentration of income that is being captured by the top 10 percent of the population is growing, while the percentage that has been captured by the poorest 20 percent is decreasing, from about 3.7 percent of national income to just over 2 percent over the last decade. This inequality and the blatant consumerism are evidence that there is a section of the population who are concentrating income, which inevitably leads to violence – petty and otherwise.

Debt, both internal and foreign, is also beginning to grow in Honduras. There is an urgent need for job creation that is not dependent on the sweatshops, as it is difficult for the Hondurans to compete with China on wages. Zelaya tried to raise minimum wage by 61 percent overnight to give some dignity back to the poorest Hondurans. The economy did not break down as had been predicted by the oligarchs, and the fact that they were able to pay it shows just how much money had been accumulated.

One industrial park now has 18,000 workers in one spot, making textiles, clothes and footballs. Sally O'Neil, head of Irish charity Troicaire, based in Tegus, told me: "When you got to the *maquilas* in Honduras, the really big ones that make Christian Dior, the workers aren't even allowed to bring in their handbags, it's incredible. We're working with a women's organization, which work on occupational issues like repetitive damage to people working for hours on the things. We weren't allowed to ask any questions or talk to any of the workers, but [when] we met the women afterwards we found out they have to have a pregnancy test every month. The women were given handouts. When they go through the turnstile in to work, they put their hands out, and they have to take the pill; before they used to throw it away, now they have to swallow it. You have to swallow it before you go out in front of them. Another one where the women we work with, they go in the morning, there's a big sack and you put your hand and take out a piece of paper and the piece of paper will have a time on it, and that's the time you can go to the loo, your one toilet stop. But you can start work at 6am and your toilet stop may be 7.15pm."

EXCUSES

I was granted the interview with Lisa Kubiske, whose first ambassadorship this was, probably because so few journalists were making it to Tegucigalpa, as the story was no longer "sexy" – another country destroyed by America, and forgotten. "If we have in Honduras a place that is democratic, and economically prosperous and has social inclusion for its people, has strong institutions of government, strong democratic institutions, that's good for Honduras, it's good for the region, and it's good for the US in a lot of different ways," she told me. Except I knew that wasn't true. A truly democratic Honduras, where the will of its population would be put ahead of the interests of foreign multinationals and the local oligarchs, was exactly what the US didn't want to see and had helped to shut down. Ms Kubiske refrained from mentioning that the US has implicitly backed a coup against a government whose biggest crime was raising the minimum wage, which would have pulled many people out of poverty.

So I asked about US support for the Lobo administration, which was a coup government that won the election merely because many did not vote in what they called an "illegitimate" contest. "Not only do we work with the elected government of the country if you think they were elected in a legitimate election, the reason we think that is because they were the candidates selected in primaries. We recognized this result." I asked if the coup made the situation worse, as many in Honduras hold, and whether the elections were illegitimate. "The violence of this society is perpetrated by many different actors, and that's the first thing," she replied. "The second thing is there has been a rising trend in violence that goes back several years before the coup. I'm going to say something like 2004, 2005, but you can look it up. So to say that the violence is a result of the coup, I wouldn't say that. I wouldn't say that." She added: "They have other cultural weaknesses. For many years they had problems with how they treated women – women getting killed, beat up, that kind of thing. The family issues, that's been there, it's just worsened in the last few years."

I mentioned that the militarization of law enforcement and drug interdiction, under the aegis of US forces and policy, has made the situation worse and resulted in murders like those on May 11. "I wouldn't characterize them as murders," the flack interrupted. "Killings, then," I said, and added, "some people say 'we are a sovereign country, we don't need the superpower upstairs here with their trained officials'". Ambassador Kubiske answered: "I would refer them to surveys about US participations in their country. Firstly, we do really just go where we're invited." She said that most Hondurans ask for *more* intervention and use of Soto Cano as a counter-drugs base (which it already is). For a long time, the Honduran military had a fearsome reputation and was hated by the population for its brutality and human rights abuses. Now, the coin has flipped and the police are feared while the military enjoys a better reputation. This is not a sign of progress, but rather how far in people's estimation the police have fallen.

I mentioned I had spoken to human rights groups in Honduras, and Ambassador Kubiske shot back, "They don't all have the same views", which means that there are some critical and some supportive of the US. One of the major features of US imperial strategy is to maintain a pretense of an open civil society inside "low-intensity democracies" and then put money into certain human rights NGOs which are supportive of the US and its policies. So it looks as though the US is contributing to a vibrant civil society and human rights system, but actually it is creating bodies that shore up its position. It is structurally impossible for these organizations to threaten to upset the social relations of the country or impinge on the US-backed oligarchs. So you get "human rights" and control, with no need for a crisis of conscience.

Of course, the US doesn't control all civil society groups, and so the ones outside US control, like Cofadeh, support groups that fight for justice on a more general level. For this reason, they must be discredited. Cofadeh had asked me why it was that the US embassy released a strong statement after a lawyer was killed in Tegus, but had said nothing about the campesinos in Aguan Valley where private militias rented by the local oligarchs to clear the land of protests and occupation murdered 80 people. "It's very complicated," said Ambassador Kubiske, in a common refrain from US officials overseeing an unjust policy. "It could be private guards, one time it could be one campesino group on another campesino group, one time it could be narcos. So for what we're seeing, we're seeing lots and lots of different motives."

The case in Aguan was horrific – the wanton murder of powerless campesinos by private militias controlled by some of the wealthiest people in the region – but for the US embassy it was "complicated" because admitting that this was a horror show would mean taking on the oligarchs who represented their interests in the country and the region. "I think we're known in general society for being quite an active voice on behalf of human rights because it is important to us," said Ms Kubiske, ignoring the reality beyond the walls of the US embassy. When I asked about the huge private armies amassed by the oligarchs, she legitimized it as a natural reaction. "I can't comment on Facussé himself, but I've lived in a lot of countries that have weak police systems, and when you don't think you are getting adequate security from the state, you tend to go and pay for your own to do that. What I've seen in Honduras and elsewhere before are middle-class people on up hiring private guards, lots of them because they can, the police aren't there when you need them. That's what I think is going on, I think it's a natural response." A natural response. The people of Honduras had been beaten down to the point where only a whimper could be heard. But elsewhere in the continent people were breaking free of the vast web of control the racket had imposed on the region. Welcome to Bolivia.

NINE

WAR ON HOPE

LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

In the middle of the night on April 16, 2009, an elite Bolivian police unit entered the four-star Hotel Las Americas situated in the eastern city of Santa Cruz, a hotbed of opposition to the President Evo Morales's government. Flown in from the capital, La Paz, the commandos planned to raid a group of men staying in the upscale lodgings. What happened in the early hours of that morning is still disputed, but at the end of the operation, three men who were asleep in bed had been killed in cold blood. Some say they were executed, while the Bolivian government claims its officers won out in a 20-minute firefight. In the aftermath, the story gained international attention when it was revealed that two of the dead were not even Bolivian. One was Michael Dwyer, a 26-year-old Irishman from County Cork, where he had been a bouncer and security guard before moving to Santa Cruz just six months earlier. Another, Árpád Magyarosi, was Hungarian-Romanian, and had been a teacher and musician before relocating to Bolivia at the same time. The third person killed in the operation was the ringleader of the group, Eduardo Rózsa-Flores, an eccentric Bolivian-Hungarian who had been born in Santa Cruz before fleeing the country during the US-backed dictatorship of Hugo Banzer in the 1970s. His family moved to Chile before the ascent of another US-backed dictator in that country, General Augusto Pinochet, and resettled finally in Hungary. Rózsa was a supporter of Opus Dei, the right-wing Catholic sect, and fought in the Croatian independence war in the early 1990s, founding the paramilitary International Platoon that many believed was aligned with fascistic elements. Two journalists, including a British photographer, died in suspicious circumstances while investigating the platoon. In Santa Cruz on that night, two others, Mario Tadic, a Croatian, and Elöd Tóásó, also from Hungary, were arrested and remain in a high-security La Paz prison to this day. Two more suspects, both with Eastern European connections, were not at the scene and are still missing.

It transpired that the government had acted on intelligence indicating that these men comprised a cell of terrorists who were planning a program of war and violence in the country, which included a somewhat bizarre plan to blow up Evo Morales, the president, and his cabinet on Lake Titicaca, the biggest lake in the Andes and a major tourist attraction. The intelligence services, after a tip-off from an informer close to the group, had been following them for a number of months. They decided to act soon after a bomb exploded at the house of the Archbishop of Santa Cruz, Cardinal Julio Terrazas. The government appointed a seven-person committee to investigate the plot, headed by César Navarro, deputy minister for coordination with social movements and civil society, which spent the next five months until November 2009 looking into it. Among the items seized during the raid was Rózsa's laptop in which investigators claim to have discovered emails between ex-CIA asset and Cold War double-agent István Belovai. "There are emails between Rózsa and Belovai, he was the brains behind it," Mr Navarro told me in his office in the presidential palace in La Paz. "He would ask them logistical questions about escape routes, about whether the government or police would be able to get to them." Belovai, who died in 2010, was a spook who called himself "Hungary's first NATO soldier". Rózsa is thought to have become friends with Belovai in the 1990s during the Balkan war.

At the time of the attacks, the attitude of the US embassy, revealed through the cables sent from La Paz to Washington, was one of incredulity at the government's claims and worry about persecution of the opposition. One comment was headlined '"Terrorism" excuse for mass arrests?" The US embassy was concerned about "raising fears of possible arrests of members of the Santa Cruz-based political opposition". Another cable did admit that in "an interview released posthumously, the group's leader [Rózsa] advocated the secession of Santa Cruz department, Bolivia's largest and most prosperous state". The reaction from the opposition was no less sympathetic. The right-wing governor of Santa Cruz, Rubén Costas, accused the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) government of "mounting a show" in the aftermath. The photos released by the government afterward told a different story. Rózsa and Dwyer can be seen posing with large caches of heavy weaponry including pistols and sub-machine guns, and a large rifle with telescopic sights. President Morales said the cell was planning to "riddle us with bullets". A US embassy official met with a public defender assigned to alleged terrorist Tadic. She told the official that "the Santa Cruz leaders named by the government are most likely linked with the group" – these leaders were in fact intimately involved with the US embassy. Tadic, she said, had been stockpiling weapons and carrying out military training on rural properties outside Santa Cruz. She confirmed they were responsible for placing the explosive device in front of the cardinal's house, while Tadic had testified that the next target was going to be Prefect Rubén Costas' residence, and that Rózsa had advised Costas to strengthen his security gate to minimize the damage. The intent in targeting the cardinal and the prefect was to make it look like MAS supporters were carrying out the attacks.

The fact that the alleged terrorists were staying in a four-star hotel with no discernible day job suggested they must have had money coming from somewhere. The pictures of these foreigners partying in Santa Cruz – subsequently released – also show they were accepted and welcomed openly by some powerbrokers in the city – it seemed to go all the way to the top, even the prefect of the department. But none came more powerful than Branko Marinkovic, a local oligarch of Croatian origin, who had been a long-time friend of the US embassy and is now in exile in the US after being identified as one of those "most likely" to have been involved with the terrorist group. Juan Kudelka, Marinkovic's right-hand man, said in March 2010 that he had been asked by Marinkovic to pass envelopes of money to Rózsa as part of the plan to support this terrorist group, called, he said, "La Torre". Another suspect, Hugo Achá Melgar, a keen friend of a strange human rights group in New York, also soon fled to the US, where he was also welcomed with open arms. "[T]here are several factors that could induce the [government of Bolivia] to connect us to suspected extremist groups in Santa Cruz," noted one US embassy cable released by WikiLeaks. "The petition of political asylum from alleged terrorist Hugo Acha and his wife, allocation of USAID assistance to a Bolivian organization suspected of funding a terrorist cell in Santa Cruz, and an implied [US Government] role based on the [Government of Bolivia's] assertion that the Santa Cruz cell leader organized meetings and had contacts in Washington." All of these assertions turned out to be true; in fact, the situation was worse than that. The US planned to bring the opposition from all over the country together in a supra-departmental business lobby in an effort to rid Bolivia of its socialist government.

At the time, the US embassy “reassured” Vice President Álvaro García Linera “that there was no US government involvement”, and President Obama vouched for that too when asked by President Morales soon after. But Mr Navarro, the investigator, still didn’t believe it. “The US didn’t not know,” he told me. When I brought Vice President Linera into the *Financial Times* office in London to speak to the union at the paper, he told me: “Nothing like this happens in Bolivia without the US knowing something about it.” Even if we assume the US embassy didn’t know of the cell, why would the US then provide a sanctuary to alleged funders of “terrorists” whose own public defender was telling the embassy that they were “most likely” guilty? The answer is long and complex and reveals the lengths to which the US has gone to undermine the democratically elected government of Evo Morales since it came to power in 2005.

TURNING THE TIDE

The raid and the deaths came at a pivotal moment in Bolivian history. At that time the poorest country in South America, it also had the highest proportion of indigenous people in the continent – 60 percent. In December 2005, there was a tectonic shift in the power structure of the nation, unheard of since independence from Spain, when the country elected its first ever indigenous president, the socialist trade union leader Evo Morales. It wasn’t a sudden development but followed decades of confrontation and public protests that had escalated in the previous five years. In 2000, the so-called “Water Wars”, centered in the city of Cochabamba in the middle of the country, had pitched the local communities en masse against the government and the World Bank which had overseen the privatization of the water industry and resultant soaring prices. Police had been instructed to arrest people collecting rainwater to avoid the new prices they could not afford. Over the next years, the indigenous movement, which is based around small micro-democratic communities, grew stronger. In 2003, mass protests spread and thousands of demonstrators went on to blockade La Paz before troops, allegedly under orders of the government, shot dead a score of protesters.

The presidential incumbent, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, more commonly known as Goni, was forced out and fled to Miami, where he lives to this day. It was in this ferment that Morales, a former *cocalero* (coca picker) turned trade union leader, and his party, MAS, came to power with a huge take of the popular vote. This turn of events, however, was not greeted kindly by the traditional elites in Bolivia and their international backers. The US had been sending its own political "experts" for years to try to avoid exactly this scenario: a 2005 documentary, *Our Brand is Crisis*, shows a team of slick campaign managers from Greenberg Carville Shrum, the political consultancy, successfully running Goni's campaign as he defeated Evo Morales in the 2002 presidential elections. This time it was different: the US was powerless to stop Morales, causing serious worry among planners. Bolivia remains one of the most unequal societies in the western hemisphere, but the established state of affairs had made some people very rich. As the *New York Times* put it when describing Santa Cruz: "Scenes of extreme poverty stand in contrast here with the construction of garish new headquarters of corporations from Brazil, Europe and the United States." On top of this, the land distribution has led some analysts to describe the set-up as akin to "semi-feudal provinces dominated by semi-feudal estates". Five percent of the landowners control over 90 percent of the arable land. When MAS came to power it sought to deal with this egregious inequality, which is marked pretty consistently along race lines, with the poor landless peasants largely comprising the indigenous population. As always, the US supported the oligarchy, which in turn supported the continued slavery of the country to US corporations.

A land reform program was started by Morales to break up the huge rural estates that had long been controlled by a small elite and to redistribute land that was fallow to landless indigenous peasants. The government stipulated that private ownership of huge estates would only be acceptable if put to "social use". But a plan like that was going to engender vociferous opposition from an entrenched elite that felt it was being usurped. One particularly illustrative case is that of Ronald Larsen, a 67-year-old American from Montana, who came to Bolivia in 1968 and who, by the time President Morales came to power, owned 17 properties throughout Bolivia (along with his sons), comprising 141,000 acres, or three times the size of the country's biggest city. The new Bolivian government accused Mr Larsen of keeping indigenous Guarani farmers as "virtual slaves", and tried to deliver seeds to them to help them escape from servitude. Mr Larsen responded: "These people, their main thing in life is where they're going to get their next bowl of rice. A few bags of rice buys a lot of support."[1] The government reported that it was fired on as it tried to deliver the said rice.

The reaction to land reform from the east of the country, where the majority of natural resources and wealth is located, was near hysterical. A class of magnates – most of European descent – own many of the businesses there and, over the next three years, with their allies in the *media luna* (the crescent-shaped "opposition" area of the country) worked to bring down the new President Morales. The US government and its agencies, which had for decades exercised overwhelming economic and political power over Bolivia in tandem with these newly displaced elites, was not a benign player in this period. It actively worked to help the opposition and undermine the democratically elected government. The spider web of US control was, and is, extensive, with many US agencies created at the height of the Cold War still in place, civilized language hiding their use, first, as a tool against Soviet influence in the region, and now to undermine the democratic socialism of MAS. Despite vast natural gas reserves, these agencies, alongside transnational corporations and their local *compradors* in government, have conspired to keep Bolivia the second-poorest country, and among the most unequal, in South America.

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[1] Frank Bajak, "US rancher at center stage in Bolivia land dispute", *Associated Press*, February 8, 2009.

When the MAS government threatened to upend that social order, it was logical that the US would be nervous. One of President Morales' first acts in power was to shutter the CIA office that had until then, he said, been operating in the presidential palace. Morales' claims that the various agencies that make up the US foreign policy apparatus have been giving covert support to the opposition are dismissed by the US government as "conspiracy theories". Alongside the US government, a score of non-governmental institutions, some headquartered in New York, or US-ally Colombia, have been working to undermine the democratic government in Bolivia and continue to this day.

PAYING CLANDESTINE VISITS

When I interviewed César Navarro, who headed the investigation of the April 2009 incident, in his office lined with pictures of Che Guevara and prominent members of Bolivian civil society, he spoke at 100 miles an hour, desperate to get all the information out as quickly as possible. "Rózsa didn't come here by himself, they brought him," he told me. "Hugo Achá Melgar brought him." The prosecutor in the case had charged that one of Achá's business cards was found in the backpack of one of the alleged terrorists. Further, it was claimed that Achá met with Rózsa on at least three occasions, while testimony from other terrorist suspects in custody implicated Achá as a financial supporter of the group. The Bolivian government has tried to request the extradition of Achá, who is currently in the United States, to no avail.

Achá's story reveals a long trail that leads all the way to a set of plush offices in the midtown area of Manhattan. The husband of a prominent opposition congresswoman, Achá was the founder and head of a Bolivian version of the Human Rights Foundation (HRF), an American non-governmental organization (NGO) based in New York. Not very well known – but boasting Elie Wiesel and Václav Havel on its "international council" – the HRF was founded in 2005 by a character atypical of the NGO and human rights world. A rich playboy-cum-political talking head, Thor Halvorssen could be spotted on the Manhattan party scene, as well as giving his two-pennies-worth on Fox News.

His foundation is not typical either – Mr Halvorssen told *The Economist* in 2010 that he wanted his organization to break from the traditional NGO mold. First his group had an overt agenda, the magazine said, focusing "mainly on the sins of leftist regimes in Latin America". But his tactics were different, too. "With the confidence of a new kid on the block," the article continued, "he argues that the big players in human rights have become too bureaucratic, and disinclined to do bold things like pay clandestine visits to repressive countries." From his midtown Manhattan office, Halvorssen said: "They work in these big marbled offices, where's the heart in that?" It was in the dusty streets of La Paz that he wanted to be. In many ways, Halvorssen was merely a chip off the old block. HRF's obsession with the "repressive" governments of, particularly, Venezuela and Bolivia was not something new to the family. Neither were clandestine activities. Halvorssen's father, Thor Halvorssen Hellum, is a Venezuelan businessman, the head of one of the richest families in the country. In 1993, he was arrested and charged with homicide and other counts after a group of terrorists set off a series of six bombs around the capital, Caracas. It was named the "yuppie" terrorists plot because its planners were allegedly bankers and other gilded elite who hoped that the panic caused by the bombs would help them speculate on the stock market. The *Houston Chronicle* noted at the time: "Police have identified one alleged mastermind as Thor Halvorssen, a former president of telephone company CANTV, former presidentially-appointed anti-drug commissioner, and, according to officials, a former operative of the US Central Intelligence Agency in Central America." Halvorssen Hellum eventually spent 74 days in prison before a superior court judge found him innocent of attempted homicide and all other charges related to the bombings. Many found the decision murky. And two hours after his release, another "human rights" NGO, the International Society for Human Rights, appointed him director of its Pan-American committee. During a CIA "anti-drug" campaign in Venezuela, which saw a ton of nearly pure cocaine shipped to the US in 1990, Mr Halvorssen Hellum, in his position as narcotics chief, was again in trouble. The *New York Times* reported that "[t]he DEA discovered that Halvorssen, who had his own links to the CIA, was using information from DEA cases to smear political and business rivals".

Like father like son. Halvorssen Jnr's own human rights project, the HRF, was set up, he said, to help in "defending human rights and promoting liberal democracy in the Americas". HRF "will research and report on human rights abuses" and "produce memoranda, independent analyses, and policy reports". But it is clear that the organization is set up, primarily, to malign the governments of Venezuela and Bolivia. It did have sizeable funds to carry out its tasks. The group's financial accounts make interesting reading. In the year ending December 31, 2006, the first full year of operations, the group spent $300,518 on its programs. By the next year, ending 2007, this had more than doubled to $644,163. In 2008, this had gone down to $595,977, but it surged again in 2009 to $832,532, as political violence was reaching a head in Bolivia. Interestingly, in the year ended 2008, "general programs", which was the highest spending category, was $85,525, or 14.4 percent of total spending on "program services". By 2009, "general programs" spending was up 813 percent to $458,840, and comprised 55 percent of total spending. In the four years from 2006 to 2009, HRF has spent nearly $2.6 million on running costs. But where was the money going? We do know thanks to the WikiLeaks cables that when Branko Marinkovic, the oligarch, fled to the US from Bolivia, one of his first ports of calls was the HRF office in Manhattan. Unfortunately, we don't know what they talked about. In its six years of operations, the group has released two 30-odd page annual reports, and 16 other reports on varying topics related to "repressive governments". To be fair, the group did organize an Oslo human rights conference which, one *Wall Street Journal* journalist noted, was "unlike any human-rights conference I've ever attended", because "there was no desire to blame … the US or other Western nations".

In the same article, Mr Halvorssen laughed off claims that he, like his father, was in cahoots with the CIA, calling such claims "conspiracy theories". But links between his group and Achá, the man accused of buying the tickets for the terrorists in Santa Cruz, were closer than he let on. Mr Halvorssen maintained that the Bolivian group was "inspired by HRF's work" but is "a group of Bolivian individuals … a wholly independent group with a board of directors made up entirely of Bolivian nationals". Really? Achá was briefing the US embassy on his problems all through the period and officers from the embassy met with him in "his capacity as head of Human Rights Foundation

– Bolivia", which the embassy was told was tightly linked to the New York-based organization. One cable notes that Achá's outfit is "an affiliate of the larger Human Rights Foundation group" – the one headed by Mr Halvorssen.

The HRF group in New York naturally still denies any wrongdoing by Achá, and is, according to some, likely helping him in his efforts to remain in the US. Its spokesperson told the press that "Human Rights Foundation in Bolivia has carried out extraordinary work denouncing human rights abuses in that country, and unfortunately the response of Morales comes in the form of insults and unfounded accusations … We have carried out an internal review and have found no evidence that Mr. Acha is linked to the group that the government claims is carrying out separatist activities." As WikiLeaks cables reveal, the group further accused President Morales of "vilifying the reputation" of HRF due to HRF–Bolivia's reporting on the "destruction of democratic institutions, the grand human rights violations in Bolivia" and the "anti-democratic character of the Morales Administration". It was a typical response. The Bolivian human rights ombudsman (Defensor del Pueblo) Waldo Albarracin, referring specifically to the Human Rights Foundation, told the US embassy: "they do not have the facts and so any opinion they have is just that, an opinion."

Achá was at one point arrested on suspicion of being involved in the plot. The cables reveal the concern of the embassy over the arrest of this "Embassy contact and leader of a human rights NGO". Achá had even given the embassy a copy of the warrant for his arrest, which he linked to his "investigations" into a massacre in the Pando department of Bolivia (carried out, in fact, by far-right elements of the opposition). But, like many of the opposition figures, he was successful in persuading the US to grant him political asylum. The cable ends by saying that "Acha is currently in the US". Providing a sanctuary for Bolivian suspects would become a theme of US policy. In fact, the US had been active in his alleged terrorist education. According to the WikiLeaks cables, Achá had actually participated in a Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies "Terrorism and Counterinsurgency" course in Washington in late 2008 – one assumes to gain knowledge for his own violent "counter-insurgency" terrorism back in Bolivia. Included in the course's mandatory reading were "Left Wing Terrorism in Italy" by Donatella della Porta and "Lenin on Armed Insurrection" by Tony Cliff.

Roger Pinto, a senator for the opposition party, Podemos, told the US embassy that the government "has evidence that Acha was involved with the alleged Santa Cruz cell". He added that Achá was involved in trying to solicit funds for the group from opposition leaders in the *media luna*, the opposition stronghold, but only in order to "set up a self-defense force for the Media … not to assassinate the President". Pinto contended that, among others, Achá had approached the mayor of the central city of Trinidad, Moises Shriqui, with Rózsa to enlist his support. Pinto said that Shriqui flatly refused to get involved and discounted the group as "a really bad idea". Another opposition Podemos deputy, Claudio Banegas, told the US embassy that the congressional investigation into the Santa Cruz group had revealed that Achá did in fact have a relationship with the cell. His colleague said his involvement was "not at the top of the lighthouse, just at the bottom". In another cable from La Paz, Achá is called a "human rights lawyer" and it is noted that political officers from the embassy met twice with him in Santa Cruz while he was investigating the September 2008 massacre of indigenous peasants in the Pando department of Bolivia. "He was preparing a report detailing a high degree of Morales administration involvement to provoke violence in Pando," the cable added. Halvorssen never mentioned whether this "wholly independent group" had received funding from the HRF for the task, but his own group came to similar politically motivated and erroneous conclusions about the Pando massacre. Incidentally, Thor Halvorssen contacted the *Financial Times* soon after I asked for an interview with a résumé of my apparent "radicalism" and precipitated my departure from the paper. These "believers in freedom", as mentioned, only believe in freedom when it benefits them.

LA ESPAÑA GLORIOSA

Bolivian people, and particularly the business community in the country, have always had a strong disdain for a central government they see as interfering and stifling. To this purpose, in most areas of the country, there are institutions called civic committees, which organize and represent business interests. They have become especially important in the opposition stronghold of the *media luna*. In Santa Cruz, where the Rózsa group was foiled, the civic committee has become the major non-governmental voice of opposition to Evo Morales. Its presidency has been held by some of the most powerful businessmen and politicians in the country, including Rubén Costas, the current governor of Santa Cruz. Its funding comes from 220 businesses in the department. In its internal report on civil society in Bolivia (which I obtained through the Freedom of Information Act), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) reported that the two main columns on either side of the state are "the civic committees […] on the right, and the large labor organizations on the left". There have been accusations that the Santa Cruz civic committee (SCCC) has members with fascist leanings involved in violence against indigenous citizens, particularly in the affiliated youth branch. Ignacio Mendoza, a senator in Sucre, who is part of the left-wing opposition to MAS, told me: "Against us there is the Santa Cruz Civic Committee and the Youth

Union, which is a neo-fascist group. These groups always threaten." In the *New York Times*, correspondent Simon Romero noted: "It is no surprise that many Bolivian supporters of Mr. Morales view Santa Cruz as a redoubt of racism and elitism." He added: "This city remains a bastion of openly xenophobic groups like the Bolivian Socialist Falange, whose hand-in-air salute draws inspiration from the fascist Falange of the late Spanish dictator, Francisco Franco."

This would appear to include the SCCC. At the conclusion of a series of interviews at SCCC's offices, the group's spokesperson inexplicably allowed me to download a tranche of files from the computer in the main office. These included racist cartoons of Evo Morales, as well as a poem lauding the old colonial country, Spain.

One reads (my translation):

The grand Spain
with benign fate.
Here he planted the sign
Of surrender.
And it did in its shadow
An eminent people
Of clear front
A loyal heart

There is also a letter titled Filial Espana (Spanish affiliate) sent by the president of the committee to the president of the far-right civic committee in Spain, Carlos Duran Banegas, thanking him for his support and help. Another folder includes a coat of arms for Germán Busch who was a president of Bolivia in the 1930s and was believed by many Bolivians to have Nazi tendencies. Reports by the fascist-linked grouping UnoAmerica also feature prominently on the SCCC computer. In fact, among the documents there are photos taken, one must assume, by an SCCC photographer of UnoAmerica delivering its report on Pando to the Organization of American States (OAS) in New York.

The computer files I retrieved were also full of unhinged documents calling Chávez and Morales terrorists. One reporter accurately noted that the SCCC is "a sparkplug of separatist agitation in the East". Despite these leanings, the US taxpayer, through USAID, is funding members of this group. In the WikiLeaks cables, under the subtitle "Blowing Smoke", an August 2007 dispatch makes fun of Bolivian government claims about USAID activities being used to help the opposition. But inadvertently this proved it. It noted: "[a]nother USAID contractor, Juan Carlos Urenda (a Santa Cruz civic leader) described the MAS accusations as an attempt to cast a smokescreen over the 'serious problems in this country'." A search in the trove of documents from the SCCC's computer turns up the same Mr Urenda, USAID contractor, as the author for the SCCC of a long article lauding the history of the department's autonomy struggle. A prominent lawyer in the east, in 1987 he published a book called *Departmental Autonomies*, which, he noted, "outlines what will be the fundamental doctrine of the process of autonomy". He went on: "Conscious of the error of having structured the country in a centralized way, [Santa Cruz] has not ceased in its attempt to decentralize the state throughout its republican history."[2]

It turns out that Mr Urenda was actually one of the founders of the SCCC's pre-autonomy council and one of the area's most prominent ideologues. This finding makes a mockery of USAID's claim to be apolitical. As its own report noted: "it is clear that Bolivian civil society in the first columns on both sides [civic committees and labor organizations] are playing roles that are less social and more political and governmental."[3] Although they shy away from talking about direct aid, the top brass of the SCCC were full of praise for USAID when I talked to them. Documents from the computer also show extensive preparations for the Ferexpo 2007, a business show in the city, which US ambassador Philip Goldberg would attend. "USAID in Bolivia was supporting democratic organizations and tourism and fairs," said Ruben Dario Mendez, the spokesperson. "They were interested in fomenting political participation. Evo doesn't like that, he doesn't like there to be freedom."

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[2] Contained in documents obtained from SCCC computer.

It's not just USAID that helps out. Mr Mendez noted that the Journalists' Association of Santa Cruz has an agreement with the US embassy that helps them print books and put on events, an agreement which is not in place in other parts of the country. "In some cases the US helps us," he said. "Anyone can submit a proposal to get help. I have attended events about political governance, about freedom of expression, human rights," he added. "There was a new penal prosecution code, and a workshop on that has been carried out by USAID for years." He was still optimistic about the ability of USAID to go about its work: "There are still organizations and people in Santa Cruz who believe in democracy. This was proved the other day when I went to the opening of a center for the support of democracy, USAID helped fund this, they work with the university president, and the vice-president of the civic committee helped set this up." He obviously thought that USAID believed in his type of democracy. "We have a totalitarian system here, if there was a democratic government there wouldn't be a problem here. The biggest problem in Bolivia is centralism." (A view echoed in USAID's reports.) The extensive cache of reports from both organizations on the office computer also reveals the links between the SCCC and the NGOs HRF and UnoAmerica. These were evidently being sent out as primers on the situation in Bolivia.

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[3] Matt Kennard, "Bolivian democracy vs the United States", *OpenDemocracy*, June 3, 2013.

I found more evidence of US support for these right-wing opposition forces in Sucre, the judicial capital of the country, where in August 2006 President Morales announced the opening of the constituent assembly. It would spend six months redrafting the constitution with enhanced rights for indigenous communities, more economic control of the country's resources, as well as land reform. It was eventually passed by a referendum in 2009. "Sucre is like the dividing line between the east and the altiplano [poorer indigenous west] so the idea was it was a place that could bring peace between the two peoples," Mr Mendoza, the left-wing senator, told me as we sat in the local government headquarters. "But radical groups here connected themselves with Santa Cruz and all of a sudden it became about something bigger." The whole process was marred by violence, as the opposition set out to scupper the process. "It all comes down to racism," he added. "The constituent assembly was largely made up of indigenous farmers and that prompted racism. People were saying, 'Whoever doesn't jump is a llama', acting superior to indigenous people and calling them llamas because they are from the altiplano."

As the killings and lootings got under way, the US made no statement of condemnation. "They are setting fire to gas pipelines, and the US government does not condemn that?" asked Morales at the time. "Of course, they know they [the opposition groups] are their allies. So why would they denounce them?" He was right.

The tactics used by the SCCC mirrored those used in Chile when the US was trying to destabilize the government of Salvador Allende in the early 1970s; he was eventually taken out in a US-backed anti-democratic coup. In Bolivia, there was the violence from the local youth groups but also strikes – this time organized by the business elites – designed to bring the country to its knees and keep goods from being delivered to the west of the country. The Confederation of Private Businesses called for a national shutdown if the government refused "to change its economic policies". Altogether this was called a "civic coup". It failed, but around the same time the US was trying to rejuvenate the opposition, according to evidence uncovered during my time there. While in Sucre, I talked to the civic committee for the department of Chuquisaca, in which the city sits, still an opposition stronghold. Félix Patzi, the president, described the civic committee's role as keeping "an eye on government projects to make sure they follow through on their promises". But the US embassy had been in contact with a staggering request, he recalled. "They made an offer years ago. They wanted to finance a meeting of all the civic committees in the country to bring them together in 2007," he said. The idea was "to bring together the works of the different civic committees to encourage communication between them". He added: "I don't know why the US did it, but we heard from Santa Cruz that the idea was to create a national civic committee." The US obviously knew (from its own internal documents) that such a national civic committee would be right wing and take on a political and governmental role. That must have been its intention. Mr Patzi said the Chuquisaca committee refused because it doesn't receive outside funding, but, he added, "I don't how many other civic committees have accepted money from the US."

Back at the SCCC I talked to other officials who gave the impression of a tight relationship with the US. "We've always tried to work so that civil society in Bolivia has its own place to develop," said Nicolas Ribera Cardozo, vice president of the SCCC. "We've always had a conversation with the US about it." He said that in the past year-and-a-half as vice president he had had two conversations with the head of communications and publications at the embassy. “What they put across was how they could strengthen channels of communication,” he said. “The embassy said that they would help us in our communication work and they have a series of publications where they were putting forward their ideas.” But things were even better under Bush. “There were better programs under Bush; there were programs from USAID and DEA [the US Drug Enforcement Administration] to deal with narco-trafficking.” He added that the US-funded National Endowment for Democracy had “held informative workshops for young people about leadership”. For him it was not controversial that these programs were designed to help the opposition. “Of course they were opposition, it’s a liberal train of thought, you train people to be more aware, productive.”

The most controversial aspect of the SCCC is its youth branch, the Unión Juvenil Cruceñista (UJC), who have been called by one Bolivia analyst “paramilitary shock-troops”. They roam the streets of Santa Cruz in times of unrest and have been involved in violent attacks and atrocities against indigenous peasants, as well as damage to government buildings. The US embassy noted that the UJC “have frequently attacked pro-MAS/government people and installations”, adding, “Their actions frequently appear more racist than politically motivated. Several months ago, a group of mainly white Youth Union members attacked an altiplano migrant … The Youth Union has boasted to the press that it has signed up 7000 members to participate in the [civil defense militias] – the number is likely inflated but many of those who have signed-on are militant.” Another cable noted: “the Santa Cruz youth union seems to be radicalizing: one group waving Santa Cruz flags drove through town in a jeep emblazoned with swastikas.” In the aftermath of the Rózsa plot, the police apprehended Juan Carlos Gueber Bruno, reportedly an advisor to the UJC, and former SCCC activist, who was known as "Comandante Bruno".

"Youth Union violence was basically in retaliation to a threat," Mr Cardozo told me. "The youth groups did participate in these things but because they thought it was a threat and MAS started it."

I also talked to Samuel Ruiz, president of the UJC, at the SCCC headquarters, surrounded by photos of previous presidents, including Marinkovic and Costas. "The committee was formed in 1952 as a means to protect this region, it was under attack from other regions and felt it needed to protect itself," said Mr Ruiz. "The civic committee existed but it was felt it could do with a youth branch too." Now the UJC has 3,000 passive members, and 500 active, according to its president. Asked three times if it has any indigenous people as members, he avoided the question twice. On the third time of asking, he replied: "What percentage? I don't know. There are 20 representatives in different provinces that represent areas with indigenous people." He complained that when Morales came to power he got rid of USAID and other US groups – a false claim. "It has had a huge impact," he said. "When there were international agencies, Bolivia was much more peaceful, now we see loose arms and legs about the streets, there are kidnappings, it's violent and dangerous whereas it wasn't before." The UJC had taken matters into its own hands. He said that the government was bringing people from Chile and Peru to train farmers in military combat, and that Venezuelan and Cuban doctors were actually providing military training. His paranoia about Cuban and Venezuelan influence was similar to that shown in the cables from US officials. He claimed that Morales sent campesinos to Santa Cruz to start violence at the height of the tension, even though the cables noted that Morales went out of his way to avoid casualties. "[M]ilitary planners have told us that President Morales has given them instructions not to incur civilian casualties," one noted. "Field commanders continue to tell us they will require a written order from President Morales if asked to commit violence against opposition demonstrators." Another said: "A senior military planner told [an embassy official] December 13 that President Morales wants the military to be careful to avoid violent confrontations with demonstrators if called upon to support Bolivian police."

"We are monitoring government to see what they are doing," Ruiz claimed. "But for example they are getting people from Peru to come and train campesinos who kill my friends, and they are training campesinos in war, what are we meant to do?" On the resulting violence against indigenous people, Ruiz said it was self-defense. "After last elections, Evo sent campesinos to Santa Cruz to start aggression; our organization sent out its people but only to defend itself … It's not a direct threat," he admitted, but it worried him because they were "training campesinos who can't even read or go out and feed themselves". Ruiz claimed the UJC has never had any weapons – which is also demonstrably false.

The cables also revealed US suspicions in the same period that "some Crucenos are reportedly forming fighting groups". They would know, as they were funding them. "Sources reported that Crucenos are developing fighting/defense groups and are equipped with weapons such as long rifles and hand guns." Ruiz claimed that fighting campesinos caused the Pando massacre. "The Venezuelans killed the indigenous people. There are photos … The Venezuelans infiltrated by entering through the Cuban doctors," he said. "They went to Pando to form military strategy for organization, so it wasn't chaos, but all the campesinos, armed people, were drunk, and the Venezuelans killed them by mistake because they didn't know what side they were on, and they also shot in the leg a Bolivian journalist because they wanted them to stop filming." The SCCC were also implicated in the Rózsa plot by Ignacio Villa Vargas, a local fixer and driver for the group, who said that a number of their members had been involved. But the SCCC believed that the Morales government organized the Rózsa plot. They did, though, admit to me that Rózsa had been to their offices, but they claimed that he was trying to infiltrate the committee on behalf of the government, disguised as a journalist. I was shown screenshots of supposed emails between Rózsa and Vice President Álvaro García Linera, which were clearly faked, dating from August 2008 and March 2009, just before the raid in the Hotel Las Americas.

The cables revealed by WikiLeaks noted that the opposition "are nervous to the point of paranoia". They were also trying to cover their tracks with delusional conspiracy theories. As noted above, one of those suspected of involvement in the terror cell was retired president of the SCCC, Branko Marinkovic, one of the wealthiest men in Bolivia, who owns a vast soybean business and large tracts of land in the east of country. His parents were emigrants from the former Yugoslavia in the 1950s and Marinkovic became a successful businessman before moving into politics, a well-trodden route in the east of Bolivia. When the Morales government came to power and embarked on a land reform program that took fallow lands from their owners to give to landless peasants, men like Marinkovic had much to lose. In a 2007 interview with the *New York Times*, Marinkovic predicted that Bolivia would soon be like Zimbabwe "in which economic chaos will become the norm". (The head of the International Monetary Fund's western hemisphere countries unit in the same year praised the Morales government for what he referred to as its "very responsible" macroeconomic policies.) But Marinkovic continued – "speaking English with a light Texas twang he picked up at Southern Methodist University" – with a veiled threat: "If there is no legitimate international mediation in our crisis, there is going to be confrontation. And unfortunately, it is going to be bloody and painful for all Bolivians." This was just before the Rózsa-Flores plot was scuppered.

The *New York Times* also noted that Croatian news services had investigated claims that Marinkovic "sought to raise a paramilitary force with mercenaries from Montenegro, where his mother was born". Marinkovic denied the claims, but there is no doubt he was pushing for a break-up of the country in the same way Yugoslavia had been split in the 1990s. On September 1, 2008, Marinkovic flew to the US, and when he came back just a week later the east of the country was in open revolt. At around the same time, US ambassador Philip Goldberg met in secret with the governor of Santa Cruz, Rubén Costas (the meeting was captured by a news organization). Initially Marinkovic filed a lawsuit against two government officials for "slander" for linking him with the Rózsa-Flores plot. His attorney declared that he "is in Santa Cruz, will stay in Santa Cruz, and will remain in the country", to prove he had no links to the terrorist cell. Except now he is in hiding. The UJC president divulged that he was in the US. "The government has already cast him as guilty and he can't defend himself from here so he asked the US for political exile and they granted it to him." Like Achá. He added that he didn't know if Marinkovic had ever met Rózsa. Maybe it's not so surprising. "The US has had a very good relationship with Branko Marinkovic," said Mr Navarro, MAS minister. "When he was head of civic committee they shared their opposition to the president." Marinkovic once jettisoned plans to visit Argentina due to distrust of the Morales-allied Kirchner government, fearing that he might be arrested there and extradited to Bolivia. During one of Marinkovic's trips to the US, he, contrariwise, participated in strategy meetings with political consultants Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and other polling and consulting firms, according to WikiLeaks cables.

When I had finished talking to the SCCC, I asked if there was anyone else I should speak to. The spokesperson recommended former general Gary Prado, who is infamous for being the man who captured Che Guevara and handed him over to his executioners. At the time Prado was a young captain in the Bolivian army. "Where do I find him?" I asked. "He usually has coffee over there in a little café about 4pm every day," I was told. I subsequently found out that Gary Prado is under house arrest, but as it is not enforced he moves around freely. I head along to his house in an upmarket neighborhood of Santa Cruz. "I am under house arrest but I go to work every day so there's not much point in that," he said. Mr Navarro had told me there was "a group of retired generals who have advised the civic committee in the event of a government attack on them". Prado is alleged to be among them. The government has drawn attention to a meeting Prado had with Rózsa at his house. "I gave an interview to Rózsa-Flores just like I'm giving to you, he came here to this same room, we had an interview about the guerrilla Che Guevara in Bolivia, he took a picture with me here, and that's all the contact I had with him." Rózsa apparently thought he was the new Che Guevara, as well as the new Hemingway. But from what Prado does know, he doesn't believe that Rózsa planned to assassinate Morales. "There was no intent of assassination, never, absolutely not," he said. Asked why they bought in foreigners, he replied: "They were brought to Santa Cruz by some people probably to try to create a group of mercenaries to defend Santa Cruz." Then he added that the cell was "probably created to justify political repression". He would not offer a guess on who bought the mercenaries in. The US, he added, merely "promote seminars about democracy and freedom".

THE MASSACRE THAT WASN'T

In May 2008 political turmoil rocked Bolivia and threatened civil war. Santa Cruz held an autonomy referendum, which the government claimed was a move to secession by the eastern province. Rubén Costas, the governor of Santa Cruz, had said in the run-up that the vote – which was not legally sanctioned by the National Electoral Court or recognized by the OAS – would "give birth to a new republic". (This is the same governor whom terror suspect Mario Tadic told authorities had met with the terror cell's leader three times and vaguely discussed "organizing something".) As things hurtled out of control with mass protests and violence, President Morales refrained from annulling the plebiscites which took place in other departments and called a recall referendum on his own mandate. He won resoundingly, with two-thirds of the national vote. At this point, desperate and bewildered, the opposition went on strike, and sent out the UJC (the far-right youth group) to attack government buildings and local indigenous people. The defeat at the polls led the opposition to unilaterally declare "autonomy" in four of the country's eastern provinces. One of the platforms of the autonomy movement was the rejection of central government control over profits from the country's natural gas reserves concentrated in the region. In the Bolivian context, therefore, the term was used as a euphemism for increased control over taxation, police and public works. If autonomy was granted in the form Santa Cruz wanted, Morales' extensive reforms would be impossible – which was obviously the aim of the request.

The strategy of the autonomy movement was to take complete control of the *media luna*, provoke a national crisis to destabilize the government, and convince the army to remain neutral or move against Morales. The mayor of Santa Cruz, Percy Fernández, had already called on the military to overthrow Morales' "useless government" just before the August referendum. In this heady tumult, in September 2008, 13 indigenous peasants in the Pando department of Bolivia were massacred in violence erupting across the region between pro-government and opposition forces. The atrocity remains relatively uncontroversial – unless you are the HRF, Achá, or the Bolivian opposition. A report by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) placed the blame for the killing of the peasants at the hands of people working for the local prefecture, which was led at the time by the opposition politician Leopoldo Fernández. Fernández is still in jail in La Paz, after being arrested, in the aftermath, on charges that he was involved in ordering the attack. The US embassy, in the WikiLeaks cables, noted that he was being held "under dubious legal pretext".

The UN report unequivocally called it a "massacre of peasants" and a "grave violation of human rights", concluding that the massacre was committed by personnel from the local road service office, members of the Pando civic committee and others linked to the prefecture. The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) also sent a delegation to investigate, headed by Argentina's undersecretary for human rights who concluded that the Bolivian government had acted fairly and it was the opposition that was responsible for the murders. Chilean President Michelle Bachelet called an emergency meeting in Santiago of UNASUR to discuss the Bolivian crisis. The resulting Declaration of La Moneda, signed by the 12 UNASUR governments, expressed their "full and decided support for the constitutional government of President Evo Morales", and warned that their respective governments "will not recognize any situation that entails an attempt for a civil coup that ruptures the institutional order, or that compromises the territorial integrity of the Republic of Bolivia". Morales, who participated in the meeting, thanked UNASUR for its support, declaring: “For the first time in South American’s history, the countries of our region are deciding how to resolve our problems without the presence of the United States.”

But men like Achá and his “affiliate” HRF saw it differently. In October, a month after the massacre, HRF dispatched their own team to Bolivia to investigate – not the massacre but the “arbitrary detention” of “opposition members and at least one journalist”. HRF’s sources in Bolivia, presumably Achá, were telling it how serious the situation was. “Preliminary research done by our staff and reports sent to us from Bolivian civil society advocates suggest that the recent arrests of journalists and members of the opposition in Bolivia are politically motivated,” said Sarah Wasserman, chief operating officer of HRF. The report from Achá, as mentioned by the US ambassador, posited that the MAS government had actually initiated the murders. And the HRF went on to link the massacre to a speech by government minister Ramón Quintana exhorting government sympathizers to take Pando governor Leopoldo Fernández “to the end of the world” and “give him an epitaph: Prefect, rest in peace and live with the worms. “The speech preceded violence that erupted on September 11, 12 and 13 in Pando, where more than 20 people were murdered for political reasons,” they noted. The report by the Bolivian “affiliate” of the HRF blames the massacre on Morales and his national executive officers. “The deterioration of the rule of law, individual rights … do not allow the existence of a democratic system,” the report concluded. “In Bolivia, with this background, it outlines the installation of a regime despotic and dictatorial presided by Evo Morales.”

To be fair, there were other NGOs which came to a similar conclusion. One was the aforementioned UnoAmerica, another “human rights” group based in Colombia, whose logo shows crosshairs in the ‘o’ in their name. It was founded in 2008 by Alejandro Peña Esclusa, who is now detained in his home country, Venezuela, for allegedly being found with detonators and 2lb of explosives in his home. The Venezuelan government claims he has close ties to the CIA, and was involved in the 2002 US-backed coup that temporarily deposed Hugo Chávez. In one video, Esclusa is seen insisting on a plan for massive protests across Venezuela, making the government unable to control it. “It is a more efficient mechanism that generates a political crisis and a crisis of instability that forces the regime to withdraw the reform,” he says. UnoAmerica became heavily involved in Bolivia after the Pando massacre, sending a team on a five-day mission to investigate what had happened. To conduct the investigation they partnered with NGOs from Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela (whose names read like a Who’s Who of fascists in Latin America). Taking part from Argentina was El Movimiento por la Verdadera Historia, or Movement for the True History, a group which seeks to bring to justice “subversives” working against the US-backed fascist junta that ruled from 1976 to 1983 and murdered an estimated 30,000 people. One of its Argentina delegates was Jorge Mones Ruiz, an intelligence officer of the Argentine army in Bolivia during last dictatorship. (The government also claimed that the Rózsa cell had links with fascist groups in Argentina, which go by the name of *carapintadas* or “painted faces”.)

The joint report concluded that “the government of President Evo Morales had planned and executed the violent acts”. It claimed it had “sufficient information to demonstrate the responsibility of the Evo Morales administration in the so called Pando Massacre”. The WikiLeaks cables revealed that the US embassy was receiving highly questionable intelligence like this from Achá and other contacts in the opposition, without applying the constant cynicism it reserved for MAS statements. In conversation with a political officer from the embassy, one contact "alleged the MAS deliberately fomented unrest in Pando in September to justify a military siege, depose Prefect Leopoldo Fernandez, and arrest opposition-aligned leaders to swing the balance of power to the MAS in the Senate". It is not countered. Another cable noted after the September 2008 violence in Pando: "the government illegally jailed Prefect Leopoldo Fernandez and violently detained over forty more, many of them prominent political opposition members." The UN had said that Fernández's jailing was not illegal.

WE'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM

The most active of the many US agencies working in Bolivia is USAID, the main foreign aid arm of the US government. USAID poured money into the country: between 1964 and 1979, it contributed more than $1.5 billion, trying to build a citizenry and investor climate conducive to US corporate needs. For nearly half a century it has carried out its ostensible goal of providing "economic and humanitarian assistance" – a gift "from the American people". The agency operates around the world in a similar capacity, and invests billions of dollars annually on projects that span from "democracy promotion" to "judicial reform".

Its operations are controversial. The Morales administration has continually said that it uses its money to push the strategic goals of the US government under the cloak of "development", claims denied by the US government. The Bolivian government also derides the lack of transparency, in comparison with EU aid money, for its programs. Mark Feierstein, USAID assistant administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, put its *raison d'être* bluntly in December 2010 when he said: "USAID's programs are not charity … they are not only from the

American people, as the agency's motto says, they are for the American people." As an aside, Mr Feierstein was a key campaign consultant to the former president Lozada (Goni) who fled to the US to avoid facing trial for the massacre of protesters in La Paz. There is now an attempt to prosecute him under the Aliens Tort Statute for his role in the murders. (Feierstein has never expressed regret about the campaign; in fact, the same firm did polling for Morales' opponent, Manfred Reyes Villa, in 2009.)

Like other methods and agencies used to control democracies in Latin America and around the world, it is hard to pin down USAID. But on-the-ground interviews, documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act and the WikiLeaks cables have made it possible to unearth the strategies this agency uses to keep its stranglehold on Bolivia, at the same time providing a template for how it is used across the region to undermine left-wing democratic governments. There is no doubt how USAID personnel felt about Morales before he came into power, and one young American student heard first-hand their plans for him. In the summer of 2005, he found himself in La Paz learning Spanish on a break from university when the powder keg of political resistance in the city blew up. President Carlos Mesa – who had taken over from Goni in 2003 after the massacre of protesters in La Paz – had just stepped down. The student decided to go on a bike trip. "Basically I went down the 'Death Road', the world's most dangerous road, with some other gringos," he said, not wanting to be named. "There were some folks from the US embassy and USAID on the trip. I remember them having a discussion on the road down to [the city of] Coroico, talking about not wanting Evo to get into power. They said something along the lines of, 'We can't let Evo get into power'."

In fact, the officials went further. "There were two things that were said, one was 'We can't let Evo get into power', and then something along the lines of, it struck me, it was harsher than that, it was something along the lines of, 'We'll have to take care of him'. It was ambiguous enough that it could be interpreted that we have to take him out, which I don't think is what they meant. But when they said it I thought, 'Whoa, I can't believe they are saying this, they don't even know me'." The conversation continued as the group descended the mountain. "I'm assuming they thought I was sympathetic," he said. "This was right in the middle of the protests and the president resigning, so a lot of the tourists had fled Bolivia, so perhaps they thought I was there because I was working for some sympathetic capacity, maybe working for an international corporation, or related to the embassy or something. It shocked me at the time. One, it seemed weird to have this conversation in public, because not everybody is sympathetic. And two it seemed like they were meddling in democracy, people that shouldn't be involved in those things, the US embassy and USAID shouldn't have anything to do with voting a president into power or not."

But involved they were and would remain as Morales eventually did take power.

Much important work has been carried out on this topic by the investigative journalist Jeremy Bigwood in the period before MAS came to power, but his Freedom of Information Act requests stopped being answered when he asked for information about projects after the election of 2005. What Bigwood unearthed from before 2005 supports the testimony of the American student. Early on, the MAS party was fingered as a problem for the US that had to be dealt with. In a declassified July 2002 letter from the US embassy, a planned USAID political party reform project was outlined which aimed to "help build moderate, pro-democracy political parties that can serve as a counterweight to the radical [MAS]". The next section, presumably more open on details, was redacted. A series of emails from USAID functionaries in Bolivia also detailed attempts to form relationships between the US government and indigenous groups in the coca growing region of the Chapare (the sector from which Morales emerged) and the eastern departments, aiming, as Bigwood explained, to “create a common USAID-guided front against … the MAS”. A few years into the MAS government, USAID made itself so unpopular in the Chapare region that its local leaders in 2008 suspended all projects funded by the agency. They said they would replace the funding with money from Chávez’s Venezuela. In Pando, the mayors signed a declaration in 2008 also expelling USAID. “No foreign program, least of all those from USAID, will solve our problems of poverty, physical integration, family prosperity and human development while we ourselves don’t decide the future,” it said.

I managed to procure documents that relate to the operations of projects since 2005, and they show a similar effort to weaken the power and popularity of the MAS government. The USAID tactic is not the overthrow of the government, but the slow transformation of Bolivian society from its participatory democracy to the type of democracy it had before: controlled by the US and good for investors. The Bolivian example is important because it provides a template of how USAID tries to control Latin American democracies that have “got out of control” and make them work “for the American people”, or American business interests.

Of course, USAID pitches itself as something completely different. In one cable from La Paz, the ambassador wrote: “We will continue to counter misunderstandings about USAID’s transparency and apolitical nature with reality.” But the reality is that the agency is not transparent or apolitical. And its own internal documents reveal as much. USAID maintains it is transparent with the money it invests in the country, but the Bolivian government claims large sums are being handed out without its knowledge, in contravention of usual aid etiquette. In the

WikiLeaks cables, Morales tells the US he wants to start an "open registry to monitor aid", but it was not supported by the US. The Bolivian government's estimate that 70 percent of aid money is unaccounted for appears overstated, but there is clear evidence that money was being spent without the knowledge of the government.

After one spate of criticism of USAID programs by Morales, the US ambassador noted that the country "cannot afford to risk USD120 million in assistance" from the agency (it works out as about $12 for every Bolivian). In another, it is noted: "we're spending about $90 million annually to further social and economic inclusion of Bolivia's historically marginalized indigenous groups and to support democratic institutions and processes, including decentralized governance." But an American journalist living in La Paz was present at an emergency meeting called by the US embassy to explain USAID's activities to foreign journalists, after another round of criticism. She was given a breakdown of spending by USAID. "This information was given to the small group of reporters gathered to use as background in stories," she told me. It outlined $16.8 million to USAID health programs, $19.2 million to integrated alternative development (alternative to coca production), $15.3 million to environmental and economic development programs, and $22 million to counter-narcotics. It added up to $73.3 million. But the ambassador had said in the cable that $120 million was invested in Bolivia per year. Where was the other $50 million going?

Internal evaluation documents give an indication of why some projects are best kept secret. I procured a host of documents on USAID "democracy promotion" programs in Bolivia in the period after the Morales government was elected. In one, outlining the goals and success of its "administration of justice" programs which have run in the country for 17 years – "among the largest in Latin America"

– the group was explicit about where its money was going. “USAID/Bolivia programs include support to promote decentralization and municipal strengthening, support to Congress and political parties,” it noted. There is no mention of which political parties it is “supporting” but this is candid language that the group and the US embassy have never used in public. (Morales has said that one mayor told him that USAID offered him $15,000 to $25,000 to oppose the president.) Decentralization in this context is also a euphemism for strengthening the opposition. One of USAID’s central functions in Bolivia, ramped up since 2005, has been moving power away from central government, an effort which clearly chimes with the interests of the opposition in the east.

The justice project was conceived by USAID and Bolivian officials before the 2005 election that brought Evo Morales to power, and coordinators admit that “the personnel changes at the higher echelons” of the government “completely changed the atmosphere” in which it worked. The project hoped to open a training school for public defenders, but in mid-2007 it was suspended, “a prime example of the project being ‘overtaken by events’ that were completely outside the control of … USAID,” the evaluation noted. Internally, USAID was very critical of the Morales government on the subject, commenting that the Bar Associations of Bolivia have been “significantly weakened in the past few years” by the government’s policies. As is customary in projects of this kind, USAID paid subcontractors to carry out their functions, enhancing the already intricate web of institutions and clouding accountability. This project was run by Checchi and Company Consulting, set up in 1973 by economist and Democratic donor Vincent Checchi, which then brought on board the State University of New York and Partners of the Americas. One of the main ways USAID exerts influence – in this justice program but also through its other activities – is through training programs. These programs school young Bolivians in the "American way".

In Sucre, I spoke to Ramiro Velasquez, an administrator in the local government offices who has worked for a USAID-funded program in the city. He said it was set up by a consultancy firm, funded by USAID, which has a subsidiary called Fortalecimiento Identidad de Democracia, or FIDEM. "They were looking for Bolivian operators in every department to do their work," he said. "FIDEM was looking for an NGO to do the work and they would look for operators. They were in La Paz, Oruro, Potosi, and Sucre." Mr Velasquez was asked to be an operator and told they wanted him to run courses on "democracy and participation", a program eventually shut down by the Morales government. "This project was aimed at young people," he said. "So to get young people, you had to get into universities and social movements and state institutions, even the church." In the end 600 young people signed up. The courses took on two phases with the first workshops an opportunity to select around 20 young people to move on to La Paz for the second phase, carried out by FIDEM and another NGO. It was called "leadership training", ostensibly to create a new generation of Bolivian leaders. But they had to have the right opinions. "They were teaching about democracy but not the type of democracy Evo and Bolivians have," he said. "They were teaching them about representative democracy not participatory democracy … It was clearly to create leaders for the opposition."

The cables from La Paz support such a conclusion. One visiting official went to a "civic education project funded by USAID through the NGO FIDEM and implemented by the Santa Cruz binational center". Its aim was to grow a "civic responsibility" arm in addition to its educational and cultural activities. "The project was reaching 21,000 (out of 150,000) residents in the marginalized neighbourhood

'Plan 3000' which is widely thought to be a MAS stronghold," it added, as if to explain why it was a good thing. The local residents were "enthusiastic" about the initiative, it noted. The same cable registered that Santa Cruz residents were "determined as much as possible to halt democratic back-sliding. Their main request to us is to report accurately to Washington and the international community what is really happening in Bolivia." Vice President García Linera repeatedly told the US embassy he opposed democracy programs like FIDEM's, because they strive to "win the hearts and minds", presenting a vision of democracy that differs from the government's. It was true. FIDEM works in eight of the nine departments in Bolivia (three of which are governed by democratically elected MAS prefects) providing the kind of state-building training and technical assistance that USAID and other donors provide worldwide. The work – regional development planning, service delivery, financial planning and more – is technical and non-political. Its focus on departmental authorities was planned to weaken MAS, as was admitted in the cables: "MAS's goals [is] strengthening municipal governments to the detriment of departmental governments, thus weakening one of the MAS's main sources of opposition."

Also in Sucre, I talked to the MAS mayor, Verónica Berrios Vergara, who has been under concerted attack since taking her position in 2008. The city had been the venue of intense violent unrest in 2007 when the constituent assembly, given the responsibility of writing a new constitution, was placed there. In 2008, an opposition candidate was voted into the position of mayor in Sucre, but was disqualified because he was under a criminal charge. Ms Vergara took his place on a decision of the municipal council, causing an outbreak of violence and unrest. "Vested interests were behind the anger of the opposition and that led to us living the most difficult moment in Sucre in many years," she told me. She said various explosives were thrown at the mayor's headquarters and the dissidents tried to kill her on a number of occasions. "One of the questions we asked ourselves at the time is where these students got the money from, because they had the money to buy lots of explosives. They don't even usually have enough for rent and food, where did they get the money for them from?" She began to cry as she recounted her experiences at the sharp end of the turmoil in Bolivia. "I do fear that these groups are still waiting in the wings and at any point they could come out and do something to me," she said. "This is really about racism and also that this local government and national government are threatening business interests." She believed that USAID was behind the funding to some of these groups: "The fact that the Rózsa affair was taking place at the same time and there were question marks over USAID's work and suggestions they were trying to overthrow the government leads me to question where the money was coming from." At the time it sparked violence in the streets of the city, which Ms Vergara thinks USAID was behind. "They are in union with the opposition and media to stand in the way of the government's development plans in the country."

BUILDING ~~DEMOCRACY~~ AN INVESTOR-FRIENDLY BUSINESS CLIMATE

USAID had another reason to dislike President Morales and his government: they weren't good for business. The investment climate in Bolivia, which had been open for business to US transnationals for decades, was turning into a more hostile place. Their fears were shared by their natural allies among the oligarchy of European descent in the east of Bolivia. Both were increasingly scared of the economic program of the Morales government, which has provided a model for developing countries around the world: achieving high growth, as well as reductions in poverty, while part-nationalizing key industries. The Bolivian government, even when composed of ruthless dictators, maintained an investor-friendly business climate, which saw US mining companies, such as Coeur d'Alene Mines Corp, take advantage of the vast natural resources in the country as the Spanish had done before them. Bolivia's major exports to the United States are tin, gold, jewellery and wood products. For a long time, foreign investors were accorded national treatment, and foreign owners of companies enjoyed virtually no restriction. Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Bolivia grew to $7 billion in stock during 1996–2002, nearly all of which went to the business interests in the east.

Concern about nationalization crops up frequently in the cables from La Paz. "There is … rampant speculation about President Morales' traditional May 1st speech, in which he is expected by many to announce nationalization of companies based in Santa Cruz, potentially including Cotas or food industries," one reads. "If the latter, many expect Branko Marinkovic's cooking oil and other companies to be taken in the name of 'food security'." The cables from La Paz do not pull punches when outlining their opposition to the economic thinking of the MAS government. One advisor to Morales, an economics professor is, one cable notes, "steeped in outdated socialist economic theories and has yet to accept the practical realities of a globalized economy". It adds that he "may be beginning to understand the real impact of free trade on job creation", but, unforgivably, "he appears to believe that markets in Venezuela and China serve as alternatives to US markets. He has told Bolivian exporters to seek markets outside the United States, unconvinced that the US is crucial to their trade." It notes that he recently returned from Venezuela after negotiating an agreement to buy Bolivian soy. "Additionally, he has regularly antagonized other businesses, telling them that the President's Dignity Tariff, a new lower price meant to provide cheap electricity to Bolivians is a done deal, remarking that the private sector should either get on board or suffer."

USAID had a plan to deal with this. One of the most important components of the justice project is "promotion of legal security", through which "it was hoped that the business and investment climate in Bolivia would be improved". The principal donor for this purpose was USAID and the project was budgeted $4.8 million over five years. It chimed with the sentiment in cables from La Paz, one of which noted, the "key areas of concern in Bolivia currently are democracy, narcotics, and *protection for US investments*"(my emphasis). The justice project sought "reforms in the commercial and administrative law areas" as well as "business organization assistance and training". For this purpose, USAID funding would help develop a civil, commercial and administrative law curriculum for law schools in Bolivia. In a sign of the penetration of USAID into the highest echelons of the justice system, USAID and the Bolivian Supreme Court *jointly* published a document called *Civil and Commercial Justice in Bolivia: Diagnosis and Recommendations for Change*, which urged the creation of a specialized commercial law jurisdiction. It would "enhance the investment climate of Bolivia", while the "establishment of a good business climate is essential to attracting investment" and will "maintain and improve its competitiveness". It noted: "This component was important to the overall success of the … project due to the fact that it enlisted enthusiastic support from many private sector actors, while also furthering the goal of improving the investment and business climate in Bolivia." The agency worked with its "partner organization", the National Chamber of Commerce, in order to replicate and strengthen arbitration centers through local chambers of commerce (big donors to civic committees). "If Bolivia wants to attract foreign investment … then it will need legal security for investors," it noted. "Should there be an opportunity to continue the work in this area, it would be of high importance for the development of Bolivia." Their natural allies in this task were organizations like CAINCO, a business confederation in Santa Cruz. In the aftermath of the Rózsa shoot-out, another suspect, Alejandro Melgar, who was a key figure in CAINCO, fled the country. Eduardo Paz, the president of CAINCO, was also an investor in the Santa Cruz civic committee. One cable noted that "The main impact [of nationalization] has been to halt new investment in the [energy] sector, which Bolivia needs to meet domestic demand and fulfil contractual obligations to Brazil and Argentina." It added that "[as] a political measure, however, the 'nationalization' remains wildly popular." It was also successful. In June 2011, Standard & Poor's, the rating agency, raised Bolivia's credit ratings by one notch, praising President Evo Morales' "prudent" macroeconomic policies which allowed for a steady decline in the country's debt ratios.

The truth was that the US embassy was fearful for US mining investments, despite high-level Bolivian officials giving "repeated assurances that the Morales administration will respect existing US mining interests".

Threats that the Bolivian government would nationalize the mining industry – including taking over a smelter owned by Swiss company Glencore (which had been sold by ex-president Goni) – scared them. "We continue to urge the [Government of Bolivia] to respect existing mining concessions and to limit tax and royalty hikes," one cable noted. In other words, create a good "business climate" *at the expense of the population*. The US embassy viewed the Morales administration as contrary to its interests. "Strengthening and supporting democracy in Bolivia is our mission's primary concern," notes another cable. But in the next line it says: "Although the ruling MAS party and President Evo Morales were elected with a clear majority in fair and open elections, their actions since assuming power have often displayed anti-democratic tendencies." Elsewhere the cables note the "overwhelming victory" of MAS in elections. Despite this, the US called Morales a "leader with strong anti-democratic tendencies" who "manipulates the media". His closest advisors were compared to "back alley thugs".

In fact, the democratic credentials and popular mandate of the MAS government are among the most stellar in the world. First elected to the presidency in December 2005 by 54 percent of the popular vote, nearly double the 29 percent of his nearest rival, Morales was re-elected in December 2009 by 67 percent of the public vote, more than double the percentage won by his nearest opponent, Manfred Reyes Villa. In between these landslides, Morales won the recall referendum called in the face of the "autonomy movement" in August 2008 with 67 percent of the public voting for him to be returned. Just five months later, in January 2009, Morales won the constitutional referendum with 61 percent voting in favor, to 39 percent against. In 2014, he won yet another landslide. But the embassy was disparaging of these achievements, saying Morales was "like a struggling student in the areas of economics and international relations decision-making". It also noted his apparent desire to become a dictator: "[As] an admirer of Cuban President Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, Morales probably is drawn by the longevity of their time in power and seeks to emulate their 'success'." It was rubbish. The referendum in 2009 stipulated a two-term limit for the presidency. On the occasion of a foreign dignitary visiting, the ambassador pushed him "to encourage Morales to follow a democratic path”, alongside, of course, pushing him “to respect US mining interests to take advantage of free trade”.

The cables are full of fear about US investments. “One US investment which is vulnerable is San Cristobal mine, which is 65 percent owned by Apex Silver,” said one cable. “San Cristobal would be particularly hard-hit by a bill currently in Congress, which would increase mining taxes. Although the Bolivian government claims to want a fifty-fifty split of profits, the proposed tax increases actually result in, on average, a 60 percent government take of profits.” Although fantastically rich in silver and other mineral wealth, in the past the Bolivian people had never benefitted and stayed poor.

TRADING BRIBES

The US was also using trade deals as leverage in trying to get MAS to change its economic outlook. In September 2008, President Bush suspended the crucial trade preferences that Bolivia enjoyed – alongside Colombia, Ecuador and Peru – under the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA). The country has lost millions of dollars in exports because of this punitive action. The ostensible reason was Bolivia’s uncooperative attitude to coca eradication in the country, but political and economic motives were thought to be highly relevant. A *Reuters* article written a few weeks afterward noted that “the decision came one day after five leading US business groups urged the Bush administration and Congress to consider ending trade benefits for both Bolivia and Ecuador because of what they described as inadequate protections for foreign investors in both countries”.[4] The next month, in November, President Morales announced that the DEA would be expelled from the country. For decades, hundreds of DEA agents swarmed the northern Pando and Beni regions, destroying coca crops and, in the process, becoming implicated in massacres of the indigenous *cocaleros*. Largely given a free rein to carry out military operations or eradication by successive governments eager to please their masters, the former *cocalero* Morales wasn't so easy to convince. He charged that the DEA was carrying out "political espionage", and "financing criminal groups so that they could act against authorities, even the president".[5]

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[4] Doug Palmer, “U.S. moves to suspend trade benefits for Bolivia”, *Reuters*, September 26, 2008.

The goal of the DEA, one cable noted, "is to provide assistance to achieve US goals while keeping the [government of Bolivia] out in front". In 2008, Morales suspended DEA operations in Bolivia and expelled its 37 agents in the country. He named Steven Faucette, the regional agent of the DEA in Santa Cruz, as a spy, saying that he had made trips to cities in the *media luna* provinces of Beni and Pando with the objective of financing the civic committees which were committed to carrying out a "civic coup". The US was also using its aid as leverage to keep the DEA in Bolivia. "The Ambassador suggested that if eradication is to be stopped and USG involvement in the Chapare ended … we could begin shutting off our multi-million dollar assistance programs now," one cable noted. Many had long said that the DEA was acting as a front for the CIA in Bolivia. (The agency refused my request for information through the Freedom of Information Act, as did the National Security Agency.) The cables are full of criticism of Morales for failing to heed the US's call for areas it specified to be cleared of coca. It also called the EU effort "relatively modest and narrowly-focused".

But the US preoccupation with eradication in Bolivia, evidenced in the cables, is strange. According to one cable, the DEA estimated that

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[5] Carlos Quiroga, "Bolivia's Morales bars 'spying' U.S. DEA agents", *Reuters*, November 1, 2008.

"less than one percent of cocaine seized in the US can be chemically traced back to Bolivia". *One percent.* The US was also alone in blocking a UN resolution on making the coca leaf sacred in 2011. The tension surfaced even though the Morales government was being largely compliant. The cables present successes like 133 factories being raided in El Alto during the first 10 months of 2008. During the first full year of Morales's tenure, the amount of coca grown in Bolivia increased around 5 percent. In Colombia, the US ally, it jumped 27 percent in the same period, according to UN statistics.

The opposition I talked to, interestingly, were all in support of the DEA. The spokesperson for the SCCC said that during his time as a journalist working on the topic of narco-trafficking, he saw the DEA and the US embassy dealing with the issue properly: "They were teaching us about how the drugs workers work, how they buy drugs, it helped us." Another vital US agency which works in Bolivia is the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), created by President Ronald Reagan in 1983 to "promote democracy", but with a history of doing the opposite. In Bolivia it has focused on potentially recalcitrant indigenous areas, promoting the "American way" to the young. I obtained the proposals for various Bolivian projects granted money by the NED. The tactic of "training civil society" to gain a stranglehold on communities around Bolivia was exactly the same as that used by USAID projects. One project, Observancia, which ran from 2008 to 2009 and cost $54,664, was typical. It worked in eight municipalities in the country and helped in the "training of municipal functionaries and civil society". The aim was to create future "municipal candidates" who would be "inserted into government programmes". Another project, from 2006 to 2007 and costing $48,000, focused on Uriondo, Tarija, which sits in the *media luna* opposition stronghold. The grant was given at a politically tumultuous time. The report mentioned that the area of Tarija has the largest hydrocarbon deposits in the country, and the project wants "to increase the capacity" and "strengthen local government" of Uriondo, particularly by improving how the media communicates with the locals. Other projects look to "encourage political citizenship among young people".

In one project in Totora, Cochabamba, the proposal notes that the population are mostly Quechua speaking and a lot more "politicized" than in Uriondo, adding that "there exists … an obstinate opposition to what they term as 'neoliberal', and they reject any advances from such parties". Finally, it noted that the people of Totora organize themselves through a model of "corporativism" – the imposition of "a logic of the majoritarianism", which rejects a form of democracy respectful of any differences. "This prompts us to consider that in the future we should include democratic values, in all sectors of society, not just as a citizen's exercise when voting for their electoral representatives, but also with the logical respect that democracy has in other contemporary global societies," the proposal noted. But the fact that the people of Totora organize themselves into collectives and make decisions collectively is common among indigenous groups throughout the country. The organization writing the proposal, however, concluded that this is in fact undemocratic and that they should introduce programs that demonstrate how undemocratic this form of democracy is compared with "other global societies".

Another project called for better election monitoring. It suggested "revising the referendum votes for 2008 and 2009, where, in some regions, participation is registered at 100 percent and where the vote in favor of President Morales is of a similar percentage, something which does not have antecedents". This accusation is questionable because in many departments people vote collectively – a tradition within many indigenous groups.

One project awarded $36,450 to the Bolivian National Press Association. Its ostensible aim was to defend freedom of expression "through the supervision and documentation of violations and threats against journalists" and "improve the professionalism and impartiality of Bolivian journalists". However, its focus is trained on the government, in keeping with US embassy fears about Venezuelan influence. "The [National Press Association of Bolivia] denounces that the action the government of Morales has taken, something which has never happened under a democratic government, total control of the National Company of Bolivian Television (ENTB), when he integrated the directors with state ministers." In another project, in Totora, it was noted that they were "expecting – in the coming months – the installation of a community radio transmitter, financed by the Venezuelan government, which forms part of a communications network which that regime has been promoting". A later section called 2008 "the worst year for freedom of expression since the return to democracy" with "one dead and over a hundred attacks". The Santa Cruz UJC and its allies committed a number of these attacks. In one case: "A police officer sprayed pepper spray at a journalist who approached the Vice President of the Santa Cruz Youth Union." The NED criticized Evo Morales for denouncing *La Razon* newspaper, even though coverage of the president Morales in that newspaper has been overtly racist for years, with racist caricatures and racist commentary.

VERY MEASURED

As in smaller countries in the region, such as Haiti, the US embassy in Bolivia wielded huge power through the second half of the 20th century, often more than the sovereign government itself. The US embassy in La Paz is the second largest in Latin America (slightly smaller than in Brazil), despite the country having a population of just 9 million people. Through the last 50 years, the US had supported coups to get "their" dictators in place (Hugo Banzer), lent public relations specialists to get "their" presidents in place when democracy returned (Goni), and sent their brightest economists to "restructure" the economy in their image (Jeffrey Sachs). Now, the US provides sanctuary for "their" presidents wanted for crimes against humanity (Goni, again). But such a situation could give rise to complacency. And the election of the democratic socialist government of MAS in Bolivia marked the first time the country threatened to break free of US control. As such, relationships with ambassadors from the US became increasingly strained as the power dynamic switched around, and the sovereign government issued orders to the embassy, not the other way around. Maria Beatriz Souviron, Bolivian ambassador to the UK, told me: "The US ambassador before Morales had a lot of influence over the politics in our country, even pushing to take domestic decisions at some points." She added: "We want some sovereignty in our country and to make our own decisions. And of course the former ambassador [Goldberg] was involved with the opposition."

The MAS government accused ambassador Philip Goldberg of "subversive actions" which included a "disinformation campaign" in the lead-up to the recall referendum, as he tried to unite the opposition. In late 2007, the US embassy began moving openly to meet with the right-wing opposition in the *media luna*. Ambassador Goldberg was photographed in Santa Cruz with a leading business magnate who backed the autonomy movement, and a well-known Colombian narco-trafficker who had been detained by the local police. Morales, in revealing the photo, said the trafficker was linked to right-wing paramilitary organizations in Colombia. In response, the US embassy asserted that it couldn't vet everyone who appeared in a photo with the ambassador. Goldberg was expelled because of his meetings with opposition figures at the most on-edge period of the battle with the MAS government. In 2008, he was photographed having a secret meeting with opposition governor Rubén Costas. The US embassy liked Costas. In one cable it was noted: “Costas’ willingness to work with the United States would make him a solid democratic partner.” It also praised his “politically savvy use of the media to advance the interests of the media luna”.

This government anger at US embassy interference culminated in September 2009 when ambassador Goldberg was expelled from the country. He has still not been replaced, the US embassy having to make do with the diplomatic downgrade of a *chargé d’affaires*. The US retaliated by expelling the Bolivian ambassador to Washington. “The US embassy is historically used to calling the shots in Bolivia, violating our sovereignty, treating us like a banana republic,” said Gustavo Guzman, the ambassador who was expelled from Washington. Goldberg had an interesting history, which made him a curious appointment by President George W. Bush in October 2006. Between 1994 and 1996 he had served as State Department desk officer for Bosnia and as special assistant to the late Richard Holbrooke, who had been instrumental in brokering the Dayton Accords and then the NATO military campaign against Serbia in 1999. From 2004 to 2006, Goldberg served as chief of mission in Pristina, Kosovo. In other words, he was used to dealing with countries that were breaking up into their constituent parts.

The leaders of the Santa Cruz Civic Committee certainly liked him. “My overall impression of Goldberg is that he was very measured politically,” said its vice president. “Compared to the two ambassadors that preceded. They were very openly political, they got involved a great deal, and compared to them Goldberg was measured.”

The US embassy had been overtly hostile to Morales from the start, and the previous two ambassadors had openly tried to halt his rise to power. In 2002, when Morales narrowly lost his first presidential bid, US ambassador Manuel Rocha, the first Bush appointment, openly campaigned against him, threatening: "If you elect those who want Bolivia to become a major cocaine exporter again, this will endanger the future of US assistance to Bolivia." In 2003, the second Bush appointment, David N. Greenlee, was put in place, and he had a long history with Bolivia. He served in the Peace Corps in Bolivia, 1965–67, and met his wife in the country. Later he served as a political officer at the US embassy in La Paz, 1977–79, dealing with issues, one think-tank noted, such as communism, military coups and Operation Condor, the continent-wide terror network set up by General Pinochet with the help of the US government. He returned as deputy chief of mission, 1987–89. When back as ambassador, Greenlee openly tried to scupper MAS's ascent. In March 2003, for example, he sent a letter to Carlos Mesa, then president, alleging, falsely, that MAS was planning a coup in the summer. The MAS government hoped that things would change with President Obama's election, but MAS officials say it has been no different. In fact, President Obama is now thought to have deployed special operations forces to Bolivia, while he supported the illegitimate post-coup election in Honduras. "President Obama lied to Latin America when he told us in Trinidad and Tobago that there are not senior and junior partners," said President Morales in 2009.[6]

While in La Paz I arranged an interview with the US *chargé d'affaires*, John S. Creamer, who has served in embassies in Nicaragua, Argentina and Colombia. I was not allowed to record the interview, but took notes. "The Bush administration took a heavy toll on perceptions of the US, that's an empirical fact," he said. He denied knowing of the various foundations – HRF and UnoAmerica – but is "sceptical" they were involved in the Rózsa plot. It became clear later that the US embassy is aware of these groups, and is being briefed by them. Mr Creamer told me there was "growing opposition" from within MAS against the leadership, an interesting observation, as it is a strategy that the government itself is increasingly wary of. "Evo is now scared that the new tactic is the opposition infiltrating the government and MAS, in order to take power from within," Mr Mendoza, the Sucre senator, had told me. The embassy is obviously still in close contact with the radical elements in the east, as Mr Creamer defends the violence of the UJC and other radical opposition elements, arguing self-defense. "It's natural to defend yourself," he said, as we finish.

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[6] Carlos Valdez, "Bolivian leader says Obama 'lied' about cooperation", *Associated Press*, July 2, 2009.

The international community have also been accused of supporting the break-up of the country. I talked to the British ambassador, Nigel Baker, in La Paz, who seemed to agree with the autonomists. "I think the long-term destiny for Bolivia … is some form of federalist structure," he said. "The topography of the country, the different character of different peoples in different parts of the country, different economic structures, all work in favor in Bolivia of greater autonomy." He thought the US had entirely benign intentions: "I think historical record will show that the US was operating correctly in Bolivia and trying to work with all political groups, people of all political colors, to work with and strengthen Bolivian democracy." The WikiLeaks cables reveal that opposition politicians were openly approaching the US embassy for support in elections. One opposition politician "stands out as a potential national opposition leader," one cable noted, before adding that in a meeting with embassy officers he had "privately expressed his interest in obtaining US support to run for the presidency".

One the major concerns for the US after Morales came to power was Bolivia moving out of its traditional sphere of influence and making alliances and economic deals with other countries: thumbing its nose at its traditional patron. Among the people consulted by USAID for one its projects was Eduardo Rodríguez Veltzé, a former president of Bolivia who controversially decommissioned the country's only air-defense system, purchased from China, putting Bolivia under the basic military control of the US. It was people like this the US was used to dealing with. But Morales no longer countenanced such servility. At the same time, China embraced the MAS government openly (largely because of the lithium reserves, no doubt), and did not seem as intent to undermine the democratically elected government as the US was. They also provided an alternative source of investment, worrying US planners. And it wasn't just China. In 2008, it was announced that Bolivia had signed a deal with state-owned Russian gas company Gazprom to explore and produce natural gas in the country. State-owned oil and gas company, YPFB, which was nationalized by the MAS government, signed the deal to exploit South America's second-largest reserves, concentrated in the southeast.

Bolivia also announced more military purchases from China and Russia, after the US blocked Bolivian purchases of Czech aircraft. Most worryingly for the US, Venezuela and Cuba were also increasing their presence, a fear constantly discussed in the cables. One cable from La Paz noted: "Cuban and Venezuelan advice, interference, and assistance continue to be a serious concern." The concern is listed as "Cuban doctors and newly inaugurated hospitals bring medical care to isolated communities", while Venezuela provided micro-credit financing to small businesses. Unlike USAID, of course, "Venezuelan funding is pouring into the country with no transparency or accountability, further damaging the democratic process." Venezuelan funding for the media was a particular "issue of concern", which, we have seen, was being fought as a proxy war through the NED's programs. One cable worried "that media will be sold without public knowledge, changing the opinion-leader landscape in the country", i.e. the anti-Morales bias. The cable even noted that the main newspaper, *La Razon*, has a "generally anti-[government of Bolivia] stance".

In February 2008, a story broke about a Fulbright scholar in Bolivia who had been asked to spy on Cubans and Venezuelans in the country. John Alexander van Schaick said that he was told by regional security officer Vincent Cooper at the US embassy "to provide the names, addresses and activities of any Venezuelan or Cuban doctors or field workers" he came across while he was in Bolivia.[7] His account was supported by similar testimony from Peace Corps members and staff who were all told by Mr Cooper to gather information on Cuban and Venezuelan nationals. Three days after the story broke, it was announced that Mr Cooper would not be returning to Bolivia. Morales called it the "expulsion" of a "man who conducted North American espionage", an accusation with some justice. Many believed it was the tip of the iceberg. "We had a mutual friend, and [van Schaick] approached me in December 2007," Jean Friedman-Rudovsky, the American journalist living in La Paz who broke the story, told me. "It took a couple months to get a hold on the Peace Corps angle, I had heard lots of rumors, but hadn't been able to substantiate them. The Peace Corps duty director went on record at the time saying Vincent Cooper came and gave these inappropriate instructions to the group."

The volunteers were in a moral quandary about what to do. "Some kids were worried about the message coming from the embassy, one girl was planning on living with a Cuban family; she wondered if she would have to collect information on them," said Friedman-Rudovsky. The director and the Peace Corps staff complained to the US embassy, remonstrating that they couldn't act like an intelligence service for the US government. Four months later, however, van Schaick received the same instructions. "In general, not much has changed in terms of US-Bolivia since Obama came into power," said Friedman-Rudovsky. The ambassador never admitted it had happened; he merely commented that if these instructions had been given, it went against US policy. But it was the first ironclad proof of the US using its agencies to gather information in the country. "Every time Morales speaks on US-Bolivian relations in terms of US meddling in Bolivian affairs, he refers to this story, it's the only story with definitive proof of spying," said Friedman-Rudovsky. In the aftermath, the Bolivian foreign minister asked the US to establish exchange programs because the current US programs "are not transparent and we are suspicious when scholarship students are asked to spy on us". The US did not comply.

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[7] Jean Friedman-Rudovsky and Brian Ross, "Exclusive: Peace Corps, Fulbright Scholar asked to 'spy' on Cubans, Venezuelans", *ABC News*, February 8, 2008.

Another controversy erupted in 2008 when a police unit called the Special Operations Command (COPES) was implicated in a domestic surveillance scandal after it was revealed that the unit had been used to collect intelligence on areas outside its remit of narco-trafficking. The unit was funded by the US, and was ultimately answerable to the US embassy. The idea that no one there knew what was going on is hard to countenance. It was disbanded soon after.

There had been a long lineage for this kind of subterfuge. In 1997 testimony to Congress, James Milford, deputy administrator of the DEA, said: "The Intelligence and Special Operations Group (GIOE) is one of Bolivia's most successful drug enforcement programs. It was developed four years ago as a result of cooperation between DEA and the Bolivian National Police [and was] responsible for handling sensitive intelligence and conducting the most important complex criminal investigations in Bolivia."

The US had long-established law enforcement agencies in Bolivia operating under the guise of drug enforcement; these agencies could be used for different purposes, and no one could actually verify whether they were gathering intelligence. Later, President Morales alleged that the CIA had tried to infiltrate state-run oil firm YPFB through marketing director Rodrigo Carrasco, who had attended a number of "training courses" in the US, which involved intelligence, security and politics. Carrasco had been a member of COPES. In the aftermath, the US embassy still complained that the "threat to expel the CIA from Bolivia means that any one of us can be (mis)identified as a spy and kicked out should we do – or be falsely accused of doing – anything that displeases Evo". Spying was definitely taking place on a large scale. All through the cables there are allusions to "sensitive reporting" which is a euphemism for spying. One cable noted that a MAS official whom "many political analysts" consider "a radical" is "railroading controversial legislative measures", before adding: "Sensitive reporting indicates that Ramirez may be very vulnerable on corruption and human smuggling charges."

BEING A SOFTY

When in Sucre, I talked to Enrique Cortes, a professor at one of the universities in the city and a specialist in US-Bolivian relations. "Bolivia is still dependent," he said. "This position of dependency was from the beginnings of when the nation was created, we were always dependent on an international monetary system lately led by the US." He added: "There was a triangular relationship between the state, oligarchs and transnational organizations and these oligarchs responded to international money. When they lose power they use force to stop history from developing. Within that fits Rózsa-Flores and the Pando massacre, and Leopoldo." The move to democracy, he said, may not be permanent, and could be scuppered. "There was the fascist process, dictatorship, but it's not over. With Carter began the phase of controllable democracies, but now we think a new phase has opened. And this new phase is characterized by vital resources, and wanting control over these vital resources. So that's the central conflict with the US." He thought that the US could still put a brake on the process initiated by MAS to greater independence. "A coup is not the only way to put brakes on this. History shows there are other strategies, such as penetrating the popular organizations, and social movements using agencies like USAID." But coups have been the traditional US tactic in the country.

Declassified documents released in 2008 exposed US financial and political support for the military coup led by right-wing general Hugo Banzer in 1971, who ruled until 1978 (before making a comeback, democratically elected this time, from 1997 to 2001). The State Department at the time denied supporting the three-day coup that left 110 dead and hundreds more wounded. Banzer's dictatorship was a nightmare for organized labor and anyone who disagreed with his restructuring of the economy in the interests of foreign capital. He arrested 14,000 Bolivians without due process, and 8,000 more were tortured. Some 200 people were thought to have disappeared. Banzer had been trained at the notorious School of the Americas in Panama (Fort Gulick) and at Fort Hood in Texas, before becoming a military attaché in Washington. The declassified documents show that the Nixon administration had signed off $410,000 to be made available for politicians and military officers willing to take out the left-leaning dictator Juan José Torres. At a meeting in July 1971, the 40 Committee

– chaired by the then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and overseeing covert operations around the world – discussion focused on giving this money to opposition figures who, the understanding was, would undertake a coup. Under-Secretary of State Alexis Johnson said: "What we are actually organizing is a coup in itself, isn't it?" The plan was approved and the same day that the coup began in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, a National Security Council staffer reported to Kissinger that the CIA had transferred money to two high-ranking members of the opposition.

A month earlier, Nixon and Kissinger had discussed the possibilities for dealing with the Bolivian leader who was leaning too far left.

Kissinger: We are having a major problem in Bolivia, too. And –

Nixon: I got that. Connally mentioned that. What do you want to do about that?

Kissinger: I've told [CIA Deputy Director of Plans, Thomas] Karamessines to crank up an operation, post-haste. Even the Ambassador there, who's been a softy, is now saying that we must start playing with the military there or the thing is going to go down the drain.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: That's due in on Monday.

Nixon: What does Karamessines think we need? A coup?

Kissinger: We'll see what we can, whether – in what context. They're going to squeeze us out in another two months. They've already gotten rid of the Peace Corps, which is an asset, but now they want to get rid of [US Information Agency] and military people. And I don't know whether we can even think of a coup, but we have to find out what the lay of the land is there.[8]

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[8] Conversation between the President's assistant for national security affairs (Kissinger) and President Nixon, Washington, June 11, 1971, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve10/d101

Fast-forward 40 years and not much had changed. The WikiLeaks cables reveal that as the political turmoil was peaking, the US embassy was contemplating the eventuality of a military coup. One noted that "there are strong indications the military is split and could be reticent to follow orders". Another complained that: "A strong commitment to institutionalism would require a rock-solid constitutional argument before commanders would participate in any action that could be considered 'political'." There is no doubt that these feelings were being communicated from within the military to the US embassy. "[Armed Forces Commander General Wilfredo] Vargas had been, publicly and privately, a supporter of US-Bolivian military relations," one cable noted. "Although he continues to cooperate enthusiastically with us at a working level, even giving awards to three [Military Group] officers December 13 his public comments in the last few months have irritated Bolivian military officers and raised eyebrows within the Embassy." (The Military Group is part of the US Department of Defense.) But there were reasons for optimism. "Evo does not have a network of personal friends within the military (although his Presidency Minister Juan Quintana does)," one cable noted. "[T]he military is leery of taking on any role considered remotely political. The military fears above all a repeat of the bloody military-civilian conflicts in El Alto in 2003, which brought down the Goni government." The Goni government – supported by the US, where he is now in exile.

Finally, we are told that Commander Vargas is too unreliable to count on. "Vargas remains an enigma," the cable noted. "Some commanders suspected, at least before his December 8 comments, that he might be sympathetic to a coup. He is widely characterized as an 'opportunist'". The cable added wryly: "We cannot expect him to stand behind his assurances."

In a piece of bare-faced historical revisionism, USAID said that between 1985 and 2003 "fundamental economic and political rules of the game were liberalized", adding, "organizations with a pluralistic view of democracy grew and flourished – especially in response to the availability of donor assistance". It noted that, "Corporatist civil society organizations dominated citizen participation in the public sphere between 1952 and 1985", which was the moment when the Bolivian government "began to change the direction of Bolivia's economic policies and democratic practices". Soon, as the fairytale went, "Pluralistic civil society then emerged, and was active – especially at the level of communities." What that period, in fact, describes is the "Shock Doctrining" of the Bolivian economy and wider society. President Víctor Paz Estenssoro, who had been a supporter of US-backed dictator Hugo Banzer, ruled from 1985 to 1989 and instituted a neoliberal recipe to help put the staggering economy back on its feet. He repressed labor unions, sacked 30,000 miners, and privatized most of the state-owned companies. The broken society he and his successor Goni created would provide fertile ground for the Morales administration to grow in.

As its framework for the definition of civil society, USAID uses the work of Larry Diamond, a professor at Stanford University and fellow at the Hoover Institution where he coordinates the project on Democracy in Iran. He was a senior advisor on governance to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq and the founding co-editor of the National Endowment for Democracy's *Journal of Democracy*. He has worked for the State Department, World Bank and USAID. In other words, the perfect intellectual to design democracy in Bolivia.

US weapons and military had been found in Bolivia. In June 2007, Donna Thi Dinh, a 20-year-old American woman, was detained at La Paz airport after arriving on a flight from Miami. The authorities found 500 rounds of .45-caliber ammunition in her luggage. Ms Thi had initially claimed to customs that she was carrying cheese. She was met at the airport by the wife of a military liaison at the US embassy in La Paz. US ambassador Philip Goldberg said that the bullets were for training and sport shooting and she did not realize that she had to declare them. This might be true, but at the very least it shows the impunity with which Americans felt they could act in Bolivia. Bolivia's director of migration, Magaly Zegarra, noted: "the fact that a North American citizen, related to the embassy, is carrying ammunition on a North American aircraft coming from Miami, a city where terrorists from all over Latin America are protected by the government, especially their teacher, as [Luis] Posada is called by the terrorists, and make a mockery of all [justice] mechanisms, is questionable."[9] In another incident, in March 2006, Triston Jay Amero, a 25-year-old from California, set off 300 kilos of dynamite at two hotels in La Paz. He was carrying 15 different identity documents. Two years later, security services uncovered the presence of two fake American journalists photographing presidential vehicles.

The US military itself was also using Bolivia as a base. In June 2010, it was revealed that the Obama administration was expanding the role of US special operations forces around the world in a "secret war" to combat al-Qaeda, with the *Washington Post* noting that they were placed in 60 to 75 countries, with about 4,000 personnel available in countries aside from Iraq and Afghanistan. Jeremy Scahill reported in *The Nation*, based on "well-placed special operations sources", that Bolivia was one of those countries. The role of the joint special operations command forces was to launch "pre-emptive or retaliatory strikes", but this was ambiguous. "While some of the special forces missions are centered around training of allied forces, often that line is blurred. In some cases, 'training' is used as a cover for unilateral, direct action," Scahill wrote. A special forces source told him: "It's often done under the auspices of training so that they can go anywhere. It's brilliant. It is essentially what we did in the 60s," adding, "Remember the 'training mission' in Vietnam? That's how it morphs." US armed forces did occasionally pop up in Bolivia. In 2008, just weeks before the raid on Hotel Las Americas, Iraq war veteran Lieutenant Commander Gregory Michel was arrested after he pulled a gun on a prostitute in Santa Cruz. The US embassy managed to secure his release on grounds of "diplomatic immunity". The WikiLeaks cables also show that C-130s and helicopters owned by the Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) at the US Embassy were being used to transport "eradicators and troops". Elsewhere, the embassy noted allegations that the DEA, US military and Bolivian national police headed Bolivian anti-narcotics efforts "from a US military base" in the Cochabamba department. In reference to this, the cable noted: "The US supports Bolivian anti-narcotics efforts at the Chimore Airport and has offices there, but there are no US military bases per se in Bolivia." *Per se.* The WikiLeaks cables reveal an embassy concerned about renewing "mil-mil" (military to military) cooperation and establishing a "Status of Forces" agreement. But the Bolivian government was reticent about signing up – also refusing to ratify an "Article 98" which excuses US nationals from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, a common demand made by the US, a rogue nation intent on not abiding by international law.

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[9] Roberto Bardini, "Mal momento para 'errores inocentes'", *Tinku*, May 3, 2008.

But, as the US knows, Bolivia is still captive to the American military. A cable noted: "Bolivia has not spent any money on ammunition in two years, and the capacity to quickly move troops remains in doubt."

SAYING THANK YOU

In early 2006, a cable from La Paz noted “the billions of US dollars of assistance in the past few decades”, and said that the ambassador observed that the US government “would sometimes appreciate a good word or thanks” from President Morales. To this day, the Morales government and his party, MAS, have not “thanked” the US for its support, because since 2005, and before, that support has been designed to finish them, and by extension democracy, in Bolivia. In many ways, Bolivia is the most democratic country in the world now. When you walk around the country you sense the involvement of the citizenry in the politics of their local community as well as on a national level, in a way that is markedly absent in the US or UK. There is a simple formula for US foreign policy in Latin America and beyond: support democracy if the people vote the right way. If they don’t, and the political party threatens to upset the “natural” order of things and with it the business interests of America and other foreign companies, then a program of subversion and destabilization gets under way. This investigation is focused on Bolivia in the specifics, but the general patterns have been replicated from Venezuela to Ecuador, from Brazil to Peru.

Another cable noted: “Evo Morales’ election in December 2005 was a political earthquake in Bolivia, sweeping aside political expectations that have defined Bolivian politics for generations and at the same time breaking open fissures and offering up new possibilities.” It is these new possibilities that scare the US government, the threat of the “virus of a good example”, a government that can provide for its citizens while growing the economy. Even Bolivia’s admirable lead on climate change is dismissed by the US embassy as a “vehicle for raising [Morales’s] and Bolivia’s international political stature”. The US is slowly losing the ownership it has had over Bolivian society for decades. For the first time in living memory, the Bolivian people are deciding their own destiny according to their needs, ideas and hopes – not those of the US. For this reason, war has been declared on Bolivian democracy, alongside any other democracy that does not see its *raison d'être* as supporting US interests to the detriment of its own people. But it was not just the indigenous people of Latin America who were proving a problem for the racketeers. When the financial crisis hit, its own indigenous population stopped being so easy to exploit as well. The racket abroad meets the racket at home.

PART THREE

REINFORCEMENT

TEN

THE FIRST PEOPLES OF AMERICA AND THEIR LAND

OKLAHOMA, DELAWARE

When I met them, as the fog of economic crisis engulfed the community, the Delaware Nation tribe had a simple strategy for creating jobs for the nearly two-thirds of its members who were destitute and unemployed: it wanted to manufacture lighting. The Native American community already distributed lighting so they knew the industry well; now they wanted to produce LED lights. Except they couldn't. No one would lend them the money they needed to get started. They weren't white and had no natural resources on their arid reservations, so the financial players, the racketeers who make everything in America move, turned away. It was just the latest stage in a centuries-old battle for basic dignity by America's First People against the usurpers and financial wizards who have kept them condemned to underdevelopment. They were still losing. "The economy has taken a complete dive," Kerry Holton, the eloquent president of the tribe, told me. "Banks won't take any risk whatsoever, unless you have twice as much in assets than what you are loaning they are not interested." This meant the rich could borrow, but the poor, no way.

The indigenous Lenape people were originally located across large swaths of the eastern coast of the modern-day United States, including parts of New Jersey, New York, Delaware and Pennsylvania, and theirs was the first tribe to sign a formal agreement with the newly established government in 1778. Over 200 years later, the same people – now part decimated, wholly displaced – are called the Delaware Nation, a white man's name given to the people who migrated from the west coast and ended up in Oklahoma. In the 21st century, they are still suffering from the barbarism of their conquerors, who no longer come in the form of land-grabbing British colonists, but modern-day moneymen. The tribe today is suffering majority unemployment, has incurred an insurmountable level of debt, and across the land they have inhabited for 150 years there is a pervasive hopelessness typical of indigenous communities being buffeted by the financial industry. But the Delaware Nation is run more efficiently than the institutions of the state that massacred their ancestors and now loves to preach about the "exceptional" nature of its democracy. They have a small governing council of six members, divided between elders and younger members of the community, who make the decisions.

The Delaware Nation have just one casino – the patronizing gift of the white establishment as it took their land – which they want to use as a stepping stone for other economic developments, including developing green energy. But the tribe has no chance of getting the financing to kick things off. "We can do some of it ourselves, but we need millions to start these things," said Mr Holton. "We realized pretty quickly that the banks are no help. We want to create some jobs, but the casinos don't do that. It does create some, but it's not enough". The Delaware Nation have already done a leveraged buyout of a company to take a majority stake, becoming one of the leading semiconductor lighting distribution networks in the US. Everything is in place to move into manufacturing. "We just need capital to get inventory and contracts. But that has been difficult. Even if we have contracts, we go to any financial institution and can't get lending based on that contract." The 1,500-strong tribe is just one of the many Native American victims of the freeze in credit markets in the aftermath of the financial crisis.

Like pretty much everything else negative that happens in the US, the lack of available funds has hit tribes – always seen as a risky investment because they tend to rely on a single revenue stream – more intensely than any other group. The aftermath of the financial crisis hit Native American economies hard as many rely on casinos for their revenue, one of the discretionary spending sectors that was hit hardest in the recession. For many tribes like the Delaware Nation, the revenue stream from the casino is their tax base. They use the funds in the same way as municipalities or states use their tax revenue, to develop social services and educational programs, for example. When the recession hit and the casino revenues went down, it meant cutting back on many of the most crucial welfare and social services.

THE BUBBLE

Many of the tribes were tempted in the credit bubble to expand their, often high-end, business ventures. The Mashantucket Pequots, who have maintained the same reservation in Connecticut since 1666, announced in April 2008 plans for a "breathtaking" new $700 million resort at its Foxwoods Resort Casino, which was already the largest in the world, along with a new Hilton.[1] Within the days of it opening that summer, Lehman Brothers collapsed and with it the global economy slumped. Soon after, the tribe was battling to pay back the highly leveraged debt it had incurred. In January 2010, it managed to reach an agreement with senior lenders to extend debt forbearance and restructuring of $2.3 billion in arrears. “It’s the same old story,” said Joseph Kalt, co-director of Harvard University’s project on American Indian economic development. “A lot of cash flowing, tribes investing like mad and then getting hit by the recession.”

But the economic challenges of tribal governments are broader than the recent recession. It has always been difficult to attract high-quality credit. Tribes lack the taxing power of local governments, a predicament that has been exacerbated by state budgetary pressures and revenue or tax disputes between governments. Tribal governments have only enjoyed self-governance since the 1970s, when the Gerald Ford and Richard Nixon administrations made strides on the issue. Although they existed before the US itself, in a modern sense they have only had 45 years of self-determination. This has left them open to exploitation by banks. “Any tribe’s debt-managing policies have had relatively little time to refine government structures,” said Jeffrey Carey, managing director and specialist in tribal finance at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. Many believe this has made them more susceptible to the worst banking practices.

There has also been an erosion of the monopoly protection in gambling they enjoyed, while the macroeconomic environment continues to be a challenge with the dependence on the limited asset class versus the broad tax base of a state or locality. They also have collateral limitations because, under Federal Trust status, their assets are held in trusts by the federal government, which limits their ability to access the bond or capital markets. Holton told me: "One of the things that the recession has done is woken us up to the fact that we can't do everything via casinos, we have to diversify so we can shore up those programs and make sure they are there when people need them. Everyone felt casinos were bulletproof but they aren't." "Diversification is now a theme for tribal economies," added Mr Carey. "There's more onus now on investing in infrastructure and services to citizens, alongside partnerships with non-tribal governments." In Alabama, the Poarch Creek Indians work with local government on a variety of issues, including police protection and roads. It is a model for cooperation between tribal and non-tribal that is gaining traction across the country.

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[1] Unless noted, all the statistics and quotes for the chapters in Part 3 come from my work in the *Financial Times* from 2011.

To add insult to injury, in the midst of this uncertainty, President Barack Obama's administration decided to cut dramatically the Indian loan guarantee program, which backs tribal loans. For 2012 the program was slashed by nearly two-thirds to $3 million, down from the $8 million that was allocated in 2010. "The budget realities that we're in right now require some reductions," said Larry Echo Hawk, assistant secretary of the interior for Indian affairs. But it was all a lie. "The Obama administration has tried to make a difference, but it hasn't trickled down to the tribes: it sounds good in the press, but when you go to tribes, it hasn't been gainful," said Holton. The tribal economic development bonds are unusable for many tribes because they lack the infrastructure to do anything with them. "The irony is that banks are now starting to make loans again but the damage has been done and the Obama administration's proposed cuts will decimate the loan guarantee program," Gavin Clarkson, a professor at the University of Houston and the country's leading scholar on tribal finance, told me. "Indian country was given a test but the test was rigged."

Mr Obama's stimulus package included $2 billion in tax-exempt bond allocations for tribes. But the markets were so bad and the lending criteria so onerous that even though tribes had these allocations financial institutions effectively shut them out. "They were created for us, but you can't do anything with them," said Mr Holton. "They have been nothing more than paper." The loan guarantee program primarily served tribes that did not have access to capital markets. That is now nearly gone, for Washington proof that Native Americans cannot attract investment. But like the colonists before them who wrote contracts on land which they then reneged on, the banks have always seen the Indian tribes as a chance to make a quick buck, an expendable sponge to squeezed and let go when times get tough. For example, in 2011, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) found that Wachovia bank had overpriced a tranche of collateralized debt obligations and sold them to the Zuni Indian tribe in New Mexico. The bank paid $11 million in penalties to the SEC, which caused the media to take note. But for those with knowledge of Indian economies it was nothing new. "The banks definitely take advantage of the tribes, especially if you have gaming," Mr Holton said. "That's what they want to attack; in the business world as a non-native, you get treated a lot differently to natives or members of tribes. They think they can get in your pocket, it's very difficult, a lot of times it's better to approach them and not tell them you are a tribe."

The racketeers work to keep the poor world underdeveloped, and they do the same with the tribes within their own borders. "The large retail banks were happy to make oodles of money on the backs of tribes when they were financing casinos," said Mr Holton. "But when it came to financing business or industry, things required for a functioning economy, it was always a challenge." That is not a coincidence: building up the capacity of native communities to run their own affairs and not rely on handouts from the state could challenge their subservience to the system; this, of course, would not do. It's a long story of financial savagery that has created this situation – there is nothing inevitable about it. Bank of America Merrill Lynch, meanwhile, estimated that more than $17 billion of tribal securities have been issued over the past decade as well as $25 billion of capital raised by tribal markets. But those statistics can be misleading as the bulk of this financing has gone to the select successful and thus creditworthy tribes. "The cutbacks disproportionately affect the tribes most in need, so it has been a big disappointment for Indian country to see it cut back just when they need it the most," said Jeffrey Carey, managing director and specialist in tribal finance at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

The effect of the financial crisis has not been even across tribes. It is possible to classify them broadly into three distinct groups. Casino tribes, whose economy revolves around that one business, saw their revenues drop precipitously, by more than 30 percent in many cases. In Florida, the Seminole tribe was celebrated when Bank of America Merrill Lynch helped them to buy Hard Rock International in a $965 million buyout in 2006. The *Wall Street Journal* lauded it on their front page, and the financial press beamed. But when the financial crisis struck, the situation took a turn for the worse and it ended in the long-serving tribal chief stepping down.

A second set of tribes was not so severely affected because they were recipients of lucrative government defense contracts that were maintained in the crisis. The Flathead reservation in Montana has a company called S&K Electronics which produces items such as cooling fans for military helmets used in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Nebraska, the largest tribe does field preparation for military equipment, putting together the packs that soldiers take into the field. "The manufacturing tribes have generally weathered the recession very well because overall government contracting has been resistant because of the wars," said Joseph Kalt.

Lastly, there are the tribes that have 70 to 80 percent unemployment, which were so poor and starved of investment – without casinos or government contractors – that the recession did not make much of a difference. Starting in the 1990s, around the time the dotcom bubble was inflating, a number of financial firms became interested as tribes gained economic self-sufficiency after political self-determination in the 1970s. They also gained assets from natural resources or the 1988 Gaming Act. Now there was a quick buck to be made, the financial world woke up. Merrill Lynch has had accounts with tribes since the 1960s, while Wells Fargo and Bank of America worked with tribes on a more regional basis instead. Leading up to self-determination, many tribes received land settlements or other reparations, monies for land or natural resources, which became investable assets. That increased in the 2000s as 50–100 more tribes gained investable assets and enterprise levels that warranted more than local bank coverage. "I think tribes have been subject to predatory practices throughout the history of the US," said Jeffrey Carey.

As government grew from self-determination, the tribes faced a number of challenges, including developing investment policies. They were inexperienced, while the financial sector saw a potential killing. "There is a learning curve for tribes and it has been a challenge for them," added Carey. "I think there have been predatory practices for hundreds of years. I'm sure there's still an element of that that continues and it's not limited to financial institutions, its developers, land or natural resources." There was a broad-based assault on tribes that initially was led by federal government. There are 565 tribes in the US, and most of them are still at or below the poverty level and/or experience high levels of unemployment.

NAOMA

The racketeers, once they had taken the land from the indigenous Americans, are now trying to destroy it in their efforts to produce even more capital, in an unending cycle of greed and gluttony. The emblem of this in modern-day US is the literal destruction of some of the country's most beautiful mountain formations, alongside the people living there, to unleash one of the world's dirtiest energy sources: coal. The fact that man-made global warming is a specter hanging over the human race does not concern corporations because it is an "externality" – something we all have to pay for, while they privatize the profit. Mountaintop removal mining (MTM) is a relatively new method of extraction which involves blasting the top off mountains to access the coal inside. It has become increasingly popular across Appalachia despite the damage it does to the health of those who live in nearby communities as well as the harm it does to the natural environment. But, of course, money talks. And it goes on, but not without a fight.

Vernon Haltom, 48 and a father of three, used to live in the small West Virginia town of Naoma, near the bottom of a mountaintop mine. He left in 2009 after five years, because, he said, the mine made life impossible. "One of the things you really notice is the blasting," he told me. "The companies detonate in Appalachia the equivalent of a Hiroshima bomb every week, in terms of the amount of explosives. It feels like an earthquake; sometimes you don't hear it, you just feel it." He has now become one of the outspoken fighters against the destruction of America's natural heritage, and was the co-founder of Coal River Mountain Watch. In the process he has put himself in danger – another reason he left Naoma was the death threats he said he received from Massey Energy, the huge company which is at the forefront of mountaintop removal mining in the area. He also complained of the dust the blasting was sending down on to the communities. "The real problem of blasting is dust, silica dust from rock, whatever elements have been isolated from the surface for hundreds of millions of years are put into the atmosphere. The nitrate and other blasting by-products that come down on communities where people live and breathe, that's something that the agencies are supposed to be regulating, but they refuse to do anything about it. They don't think it's an issue at all."

He recalled one episode when he was going home from work and walking past Marsh Fort, the local elementary school. In the sky above the school, the sun could be seen only dimly through the dust cloud. "The agency never bothered to come out and investigate," he told me, still angry years later.

A growing body of scientific studies has outlined the health impact on communities in the areas where mountaintop removal mining is being carried out. In July 2011, the peer-reviewed *Journal of Community Health* published a study which posited that among the 1.2 million people living in central Appalachian communities affected by mountaintop removal mining, there were an additional 60,000 cases of cancer directly related to the practice. In the previous month, a study by researchers at West Virginia University found higher rates of birth defects in Appalachian areas with mountaintop removal mining compared with non-mining areas. These include central nervous system and gastrointestinal defects.

The sad truth is that state agencies have been captured by the racket, and now work more for the companies than for the people they are meant to represent. Instead of acting on their powers to regulate the industry and enforce laws and regulations, they are merely the legitimizing tool through which big business operates. Corruption is built into the system in the form of revolving doors between the regulators and the companies. An inspector will spend a couple of years "regulating" then move on to a coal company without a bat of an eyelid. “We’ve had polls for years to show people are opposed to MTM, unfortunately politicians don’t care what’s right, they will be swayed more by wealthy companies that finance their campaigns rather than people,” said Mr Haltom. On West Virginia election day, both the Democrat and the Republican love mountaintop removal mining, he said. “Given the financing that the coal industry does, they butter bread on both sides. It doesn’t matter if you have a D or an R after your name, you should just have a C, for the Coal Party.”

“There is an emerging body of science [about] health effects in communities effected by MTM,” Melissa Waage, campaign director at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental advocacy group, told me. “Two important studies in the past month show higher rates of birth defects and higher rates of cancer, and the activists have picked up on that and have brought that to Washington and said this is literally killing us and we’re not going to take it.”

Of course, the functionaries of the racket were busy legitimating it with the usual excuse for exploitation: investment. “Mountaintop mining helped the economics of Appalachian coal miners,” said John Bridges, US coal analyst at JP Morgan. “It lowered cost and improved productivity in a competitive sector.” So all the people whose kids are dying of cancer should be thankful. But he admits it’s harder for these destroyers to go about their work now. “Now we have a situation where the easy opportunities have been mined and costs are going up. And environmental lobby is opposed to the method, so permits are much harder to come by.” The coal companies themselves chime in, mirroring what corporate interests use around the world, as we have seen in Haiti: “but we bring jobs!” “There is no question that the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] is stymying job creation at a time when the US economy is struggling, and when jobs and the economy are the top concern of most Americans,” said Deck Slone, vice-president of government relations at Arch Coal, one of the worst offenders. In 2010, the EPA elicited fury from coal companies and some local politicians when it tightened its guidance on the criteria for granting permits for mountaintop mining sites. It followed a move by the regulator to set aside 80 proposed mining projects for “enhanced review”.

Lenny Kohm, former campaign director of Appalachian Voices, one of the many grassroots organizations that have sprung up to oppose mountaintop removal mining, said the activism is working. “Without question it’s had an effect,” he said. “It used to be until several years ago that that industry had carte blanche. If they applied for permit it was automatically granted. Through the efforts of our group and others, through legislative channels, but also direct action and working on agencies, the EPA, which is responsible for issuing permits, about a year ago they took 80 permits and held them up for further review, while major permits have been denied.” He added: “I would bet that within the next five years mountaintop removal doesn’t exist at all. The most important thing that will get us across the finish line are our efforts on making this a national campaign, we’ve taken it all over the country. I will brag a little bit, I don’t think there’s many people left who haven’t heard of it; six years ago nobody had heard of it.”

The fight of the people of Appalachia for their homes and the rights of the natural environment shows that the needs of capital to reproduce itself incessantly can still be trumped when the wider population is awakened to the issue free from corporate-backed propaganda. In fact, there lies the key to defeating the racket. Both Republicans and Democrats rely on coal money to get re-elected so working within the political process can be futile.

The fight is made harder because the corporations have all the money – they have millions of dollars to bribe elected officials, to influence the national media and get their voice heard in Washington. The residents of

Appalachia have no such money, but their voice was still heard above the din of lies and dissembling. "If you want to encapsulate our strategy, we want to form public opinion and then leverage it to get political will," Lenny said. The official political process is broken, so the people have to work outside it, building their own media outlets, and building consciousness of what this racket wants – its tentacles in every part of our lives.

FRACKING

One of the few bulwarks against the power of capital to run rampant in the US are the regulatory bodies which are there to enforce the rule of the law. For this reason, these bodies come under concerted attack. When I was in Washington, the issue burst on to the news agenda when a gas well in Pennsylvania exploded and sent thousands of gallons of fluids coursing through the drilling site and into a local tributary. The fluids were laced with a medley of dangerous chemicals, forcing seven families to evacuate their homes. The accident created more controversy for a method of gas extraction known as hydraulic fracturing. Its supporters in the corporate world claim it will end US reliance on foreign oil and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

"Fracking" has been around for decades, but only in the 2000s were big shale gas deposits found in the US. The racket could barely conceal its excitement. The accident happened on a drill site working the Marcellus Shale, which stretches over New York, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, the biggest natural gas deposit in US. As many as 100,000 wells are expected to be drilled along the shale over the next half century if allowed to go ahead unrestricted. Fracking involves injecting fluids into shale rock to unlock the natural gas inside. Many countries around the world are betting on shale gas as a big future source of energy as traditional sources of oil run out. But while the business press was in raptures and the mining companies sang the praises of this new frontier of profit-making, ordinary Americans were speaking out against a technique which has the potential to destroy communities and landscapes, and puts people in danger of cancer and other diseases. Cuadrilla Resources, the first company to explore for shale gas in the UK, suspended operations at one site in fear that it might have triggered two small earthquakes near Blackpool in northwest England. In the US, local communities have been up in arms over the practice. State legislatures across the country are passing new laws to stem the perceived environmental fallout: the fluids used to break up the rock can contaminate the water supply. "Clearly, water pollution is a big problem, as well as the impact on air quality," Myron Arnowitt of Clean Water Action, an environmental group, told me. "We need to make sure drinking water supplies are protected and stop waste water being discharged into rivers without real treatment."

The companies are also acting like Wild West criminals. The Pennsylvania state environmental agency found 1,200 environmental violations at gas drilling sites in 2010, and one in six wells had violations. There is a clear record that the fracking industry has poor environmental management and when things go wrong they are very significant for local communities. "The states are reacting to events on the ground, rivers being contaminated, well blowouts, leaks that they were seeing in well casings," said Mr Arnowitt. "The problem is that states never sit back and say, 'Let's stop drilling and think about what is going to happen if we drill all these wells'." These same companies do not even have to divulge what chemicals they use. The Texas House of Representatives, of all places, passed a bill that would require fracking drillers to make public the chemicals they use. "Although there have been no cases of the process contaminating groundwater in Texas, the people say they want to know the contents of the fluid used in the process," said the Texas bill's sponsor, Republican Jim Keffer. Texas Railroad Commission chairman Elizabeth Ames Jones, meanwhile, told a US energy department hearing that it was "geologically impossible for frack fluid to migrate into the water table" because the process took place too deep in the earth. Texas is actually at the frontier of some of the biggest discoveries of shale rock, particularly in the south of the state. One recently discovered formation which runs from the Mexican border to the south of San Antonio has been called the largest onshore oil or natural gas find in the past 50 years. Bills, meanwhile, have been introduced in California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York to stop fracking.

The EPA, the only bulwark the American people have against big business in this case, has been responding extremely slowly to concerns. Its spokespeople were hesitant to take a line when I spoke to them. Of course, as an institution which might impinge on corporate bottom lines in America, it was under concerted attack by the corporate sector. "We will lose several years of development and have to spend money on bringing in natural resources from around the world [if the EPA intervenes]," said Ray Ludwiszewski, who was general counsel at the EPA in the 1990s and is now a lawyer at Gibson Dunn. This is another facet of the racket – racketeers will use any excuse to get their way. In the case of fracking, the companies and their lackeys were using the excuse that America has to rely on foreign oil – a serious concern – when shale gas can meet those needs.

SHEDDING THE REGULATOR

In 1998 Arch Coal, the second largest coal producer in the US, unveiled its plan to build the largest mountaintop extraction operation in West Virginia's history, a 3,000-acre site with huge mineral deposits. The

Missouri-based company spent the next decade clambering over various logistical obstacles until in 2007 it was granted a permit for the project by the US Army Corps of Engineers. But the project hit a snag in 2009 when the EPA vetoed the permit under the Clean Water Act. The EPA ruled that the new project “may result in unacceptable adverse impacts to fish and wildlife resources”, adding, “the damage from this project would be irreversible”. The project remains stalled. Arch Coal filed a lawsuit to defend the original permit against the EPA veto.

You may think that this was the EPA doing its job, acting in the interests of preserving America’s nature and its people, but it was also stepping on the toes of big business, and that made it Public Enemy No. 1 in Washington. This story, alongside countless others, became *causes célèbres* for the Republican Party and its allies in the business community.

“This over-regulation all started with the Obama administration,” William Kovacs, director of environment and regulation at the US Chamber of Commerce, told me. “Four months in, it became clear that they were moving very aggressively on greenhouse gases and there was a list of other rules they wanted to rewrite.” Some might point out that saving the planet from global warming might not in fact be a bad thing, but there is scarcely a less extreme organization in the US than the Chamber of Commerce, the organization which represents the interests of Big Money. As the most powerful business lobby in Washington, it saw only the dollar signs – a disintegrating world didn’t enter the equation. The US Chamber of Commerce published *Project No Project* which outlined a litany of projects around the country being held up because of “excessive regulation”, including Arch Coal’s mountaintop mine.

The EPA is targeted not because it is doing anything wrong, but because it is the most powerful and active regulator, with its rulings effecting large swathes of US business. Of course, the Chamber trotted out its usual excuse for allowing businesses to do whatever they want, saying "all too often EPA provides little consideration to the jobs lost or economic consequences of its actions". In this schema, everything that business wants to do is permissible, because any check on the power to expand and accumulate could impact on the number of people they can employ. It's a vision of apocalypse, but these forces are indeed winning in the US, and the spaces for people outside of the rat race of capital accumulation continue to shrink. The Republicans, ever loyal to Big Capital, were trying to shift regulatory powers from the EPA to the Congress, including barring the EPA from regulating carbon emissions. "Big polluters would flout legal restrictions on dumping contaminants into the air, into rivers and onto the ground," Linda Jackson, the EPA administrator, told Congress. I spoke to Henry Waxman, the ranking member of the energy and commerce committee and a senior Democrat who said: "The Republicans are science deniers. They don't just want to limit regulations, they have a proposal to make a finding that the EPA was wrong in deciding greenhouse gases are a threat." The American political establishment, though, did not just see the land as expendable. The people of the country, too, had for decades been sacrificed on the altar of the racket's thirst for more dough.

ELEVEN

WORKING AMERICA

OCCUPY, NEW YORK CITY

In the early part of 2011, I heard about a protest happening down the road from our office in Washington, DC. Knowing it was not up the *Financial Times*' street – a sit-in at Bank of America – I decided to do a story on it. The group was called US Uncut and was setting up protests in over 50 cities across the US, targeting the massive cuts being made to public services to pay for the corporate greed that had bought about the financial crisis. It was based on a group that had done similar work in the UK, focusing on using tax revenue gained from the richest people in their society – which they avoided assiduously – to bring down the fiscal deficit. The group was armed with all the facts, pointing to a 2008 congressional study which found that nearly two-thirds of US corporations do not pay federal income taxes thanks to the use of loopholes and offshore tax havens. Bank of America was the first target of these coordinated sit-ins and protests because it was the biggest bank by deposits in the land. To add to the protesters' ire, this same bank had received $45 billion in federal bail-out money in the aftermath of the financial crisis. I decided to call up Bank of America to get its perspective on what seemed like completely legitimate protest. “I don’t know they are protesting against us,” said a bank spokesperson, not completely ingenuously. “The bank paid back all of the Tarp [federal bail-out money] in 2009 with interest. Our practice is to follow all relevant tax policies and pay taxes when taxes are owed.”

The group’s British analogue and inspiration, UK Uncut, had made headlines after targeting retailer Topshop and its owner Philip Green, as well as mobile phone company Vodafone, with spontaneous demonstrations at stores in London and around the country. Both companies had become famous for their tax avoidance.

The American economy’s slow recovery from the great Recession had caused unfair cuts to public services while corporations were reaping record profits. Many, in fact, wondered why it had taken so long for a movement of this type to coalesce in the US. I called up US Uncut to see what they wanted to achieve. “In the UK, it’s a wildly successful model for compelling people to organize themselves,” said Rizvi Qureshi, an organizer based in Washington. The group called itself a decentralized, horizontally arranged network of people, using US Uncut’s website as a messaging hub. It was a grassroots movement “aimed at resisting painful budget cuts by calling for an end to corporate tax dodging”. The organizers of the movement hoped to channel the union and worker demonstrations in Madison, Wisconsin to create a wider “progressive Tea Party movement” and shift the emphasis away from an attack on entitlement programs to corporations and banks. US Uncut wanted to turn its protest sites into symbols of public institutions being cut in the latest 2011 budget. “One idea is for people to use props and turn the bank into a school to protest the cuts in funding for the vital Pell grant,” said Mr Qureshi. Pell grants help support undergraduate education for students from low-income families. But, after this, the movement seemed to die down, and the precursor to Occupy is all but forgotten. The protests happened, the local media covered it, but then everyone went home.

Then one morning in September, by which time I had moved to New York, I saw a message online about a protest at Wall Street, which hoped to occupy the area and turn it into a democratic place where people could discuss the positive changes the country vitally needed. I told my editor, who again looked confused as to why I thought this was newsworthy. "Sure, go down, but these things happen all the time." So I did go down, as an activist more than anything else. And this was different; the touch paper had been lit. Over the next weeks and months Occupy Wall Street, the movement of the 99 percent, would thrust itself on to the American political scene. I covered every protest in the period for the *FT*, often with my colleague Shannon Bond, and saw upfront what resistance to the racket in America looks like. It was spreading like wildfire. In Boston, hundreds of demonstrators marched on the state house, while protesters in Chicago beat drums outside the Federal Reserve Bank. In New York, economics Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz, actress Susan Sarandon and filmmaker Michael Moore all stopped by Zuccotti Park to lend support. Despite a ban on tents and sleeping bags in the park, protesters had turned the area into a makeshift village. There were separate areas for sleeping and sign making, while free medical aid, clothing, toiletries and food were available. Another area was filled with people working on laptops and video editing equipment.

At Zuccotti Park one day, I got chatting to Victoria Sobel who told me how her parents had worked hard all their lives but were still struggling to make ends meet. That's why the 21-year-old Cooper Union student had been sleeping rough in downtown Manhattan for nearly three weeks and did not plan on going home any time soon. She had been there since the first day. “I’m fed up with the way our financial system is structured,” she told me. “My parents work harder than anyone I know, but I’ve had to watch them really scrounge. That’s the reality for me and many people. This is not a hypothetical situation,” she added. “This is a critical situation, that is going to continue on past our movement.” She told me she is not typical of the growing ranks of Occupy Wall Street protesters – because there is no typical protester. “We have a spectrum socially, ethnically and ideologically,” she said. “It’s very spread out.” People were intent on creating a functioning and equal environment, right at the heart of the most insane system of money and greed the world has ever known. “The morale is high, we’re at a crucial point,” Victoria continued. “We really need to begin to address infrastructure and sustainability, we want to create an environment that is conducive to getting work done.” Aware of how the corporate media usually present anyone who genuinely challenges powerful interests, private or public, Victoria believed that the protesters’ image had to be cultivated. “We particularly need to be conscientious of what we are doing because we are being set a high bar,” she told me. “I’m in for the long haul.”

Some observers, including Van Jones, a former advisor to President Barack Obama, were already calling the Occupy Wall Street protests the start of a “progressive” version of the Tea Party movement. “You are going to see an American fall, an American autumn, just like we saw the Arab spring,” Mr Jones said.

As the protests extended into a third week in New York and sparked similar demonstrations across the country, even Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke was asked about the growing movement during an appearance before Congress. “Like everyone else, I’m dissatisfied with what the economy’s doing right now,” Mr Bernanke said, adding that protesters had cause to be unhappy over the economy and political issues.

Of course, Occupy Wall Street and its spin-offs found little support among Democrats, outside of a few lawmakers on the left of the party. "I think [the movement] reflects an inchoate anger and frustration at the failure of the Bush and Obama administrations to hold people to account for malfeasance over the last few years," Eric Foner, a Columbia University professor who teaches the history of American radicalism, told me. He said that if history was any judge, the fact that the demands of the Occupy Wall Street protesters were so far "unfocused" did not mean it would not develop into a mass movement. "In the 1930s labor had unfocused demonstrations and strikes, dealing with very specific things, then it developed into the modern labor movement." He added that some of his students had joined the protests, many of them enthusiastic supporters of Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. "I think it's a warning sign for the Obama administration that that kind of enthusiasm doesn't exist any more."

"The message of Occupy Wall Street is we think both political parties are owned by the same guys," David Graeber, a former professor of anthropology at Yale who joined in the protests, told me. "If democracy is to mean anything, it means that everybody has to weigh in on this process of how money is created and promises are renegotiated." He added: "I think [Occupy Wall Street] is really promising because people realized after what happened in 2008 that the story we'd all been told is not true. Markets don't really run themselves, the debts aren't sacred."

A MOVEMENT TAKES OFF

People sat in a semi-circle listening to other activists in Zuccotti Park, where the days were punctuated with what the protesters called "general assemblies", forums in which activists discussed political and economic issues and announced plans of action. To amplify speakers' voices, the crowd repeated every phrase, creating a call and response chant that echoed across the park. One speaker announced a march in solidarity with the 45,000 Verizon workers who were on strike. Another called for more people to join an early morning trip to the studios of Good Morning America, the ABC talk show. Over time the unions, representing working people across New York and the country, came out in force to show support for the protesters. The Transport Workers Union, which has 38,000 members, tried to bar the police and the city's transit authority from requiring drivers to transport arrested protesters, after police had commandeered city buses to carry some of the 700 demonstrators arrested on one march across the Brooklyn Bridge. A federal judge struck down the order. After they offered such a heroic helping hand, I called up the union to find out what they thought of this great uprising against the 1 percent. "The protesters have hit a chord with workers and working families," Jim Gannon, the union spokesperson, told me. "We are expected to pay for Wall Street's implosion with jobs and wages and benefits. Protesters are putting a spotlight on that. We're trying to do what we can to grow that spotlight." Mr Gannon said the union had been in contact with the organizers of Occupy Wall Street about how to help. "They said they don't need anything right now, they are organized," he added. "So we are going to provide moral support, and over the next weeks and months there will be material support as needed."

US labor unions used the momentum of anti-Wall Street protests as a way to amplify their members' concerns at a time when collective bargaining rights were under attack across the country. In Wisconsin, public sector workers lost collective bargaining rights after a drawn-out fight with governor Scott Walker, while New York's Public Employees Federation, which represents 54,000 state employees, accepted a three-year pay freeze that would save the state $400 million. It was the latest show of support for the protests spreading across the country from a labor movement that had been hit hard in the aftermath of the recession by job losses, high unemployment, state budget deficits and an often-hostile political environment.

Several hundred members of the SEIU's local 32BJ, New York's largest property service workers' union, rallied near the New York stock exchange in downtown Manhattan to call for better contracts and a "fair deal" for working Americans. The union, which represents 120,000 office cleaners and other property workers nationwide, also organized rallies in Philadelphia and Washington. Faidla Mrkulic, a 60-year-old office cleaner at Pfizer's midtown office, told me: "I was able to send my kids to school, to put food on the table, to pay my rent. The young generation deserves better. Whatever I had, I want them to have."

"This is the time to be in solidarity with labor," Nelini Stamp, an Occupy Wall Street representative, said. "Everyone is going through struggles – losing pensions, foreclosures, student debt." "The first few days were hard because most of us haven't experienced true democracy, which is what this is," said Danny Garza, 26, a student from Sacramento, California, who said he served in the Iraq war. "Everybody has a voice, an equal vote." Mr Garza said his goals were to "end corporate personhood", separate government from business and promote the rights of low-income citizens. "People on the outside think we don't know why we're here and what we want," he said. "This is a revolution." David Good, 24, an artist and Aids activist, said: "This is not about overthrowing the government, this is to bring attention" to inequality and the destruction of the social safety net. He added: "The people that we bailed out are raking in record profits … I would like to see Congress tax the hell out of them. I want the banks and Wall Street to pay their fair share."

I continued to follow the outpouring of anger against financial injustice as it bubbled up. In a march on Times Square, chants of

"Occupy Wall Street, occupy Times Square, occupy everywhere" rang out across the demonstration, as police on horseback blocked off the road and protesters were forced to line the sidewalks. Rebekah, a student from Philadelphia who did not want to give her last name, told me: "I think it's important that we build a community of discontent about what is happening in US society." She said she had traveled to Manhattan for the day to join the protests. "I'm here because I am against inequality and the corporate ownership of our society."

THE STUDENT VICTIMS

In fact, students were flocking to the demonstrations en masse – they were another demographic seen as expendable by the racket. When the financial crisis hit, higher education, some of America's most vaunted institutions, was thrown under the bus. California's budget, just before the Occupy protests started, cut $650 million from the University of California's funding. The brilliant university, which I attended from 2004 to 2005 and comprises ten campuses across the state, was facing a $2.5 billion shortfall. Michigan, which had experienced a decade of declining state funding to its universities, at the same time cut 15 percent from higher education – dropping the proportion of the total cost of education the state covers to 22 percent, a record low. In comparison, in 1987 the state supported 60 per cent of costs. "It's a prescription for long-term disaster," Molly Corbet Broad, president of the American Council on Education, an advocacy group, told me. "The types of jobs that create exports are shifting radically, and require skills and educated people. If we lose a generation of college-age students because they don't have the opportunity to go to college, we will live with the consequences."

In the aftermath of the recession and resulting high unemployment, many young people in the US had seen university as a refuge from a difficult job market. But the cost of attending public school continued to rise, as the racket saw an opportunity to bring public universities into the "market". "It's a massive hidden tax on families," Michael Boulus, executive director of the Presidents Council of the State Universities of Michigan, told me. At the University of Michigan, the state's flagship campus, tuition for the current school year was 6.6 percent higher than the previous year. The University of California raised tuition 9.8 percent after an earlier 8 percent rise, and officials have proposed further increases in the future tied to expected cuts in state funding. "The UC system is on the rocks," Peter McLaren, a professor of education at the University of California, Los Angeles, told me. "It was supposed to be affordable to those who could get in, now it's not affordable to anyone. It's a dream that has not just been deferred but extinguished." Debt loads were also growing. Student loans jumped to $550 billion in the second quarter of 2011 compared with $90 billion in 1999. Faced with a higher bill for their education, many students were changing their priorities away from idealism to getting it over with. "I noticed a big difference in quality at the end," Victor Sanchez, a recent sociology graduate from University of California, Santa Cruz, told me. "You see a lot of scaling back, which creates a lack of engagement. People have to focus on getting in and getting out."

Student debt had increased nearly sevenfold from $80 billion in 1999 to $550 billion at the end of June 2011. Other estimates from the Department of Education put outstanding student loans as high as $805 billion. But the unemployment rate for 20- to 24-year-olds was nearly 15 percent – higher than the overall 9.1 percent rate – compromising the ability of graduates to pay off their growing debts. Student loan delinquencies had risen from 6.5 percent in 2003 to 11.2 percent in June 2011, nearly as high as the 12.2 percent rate on credit cards. "The long-run outlook for student lending and borrowers remains worrisome," Moody's, the rating agency, said in a report. "Unlike other segments of the consumer credit economy, student loans have not demonstrated much improvement in performance despite some improvement in the broader economy."

Alberto Gutierrez, a 38-year-old doctoral student at the University of California, Los Angeles, told me he had had to borrow more money and take on a part-time job to cover his expenses, including a $3,000 monthly mortgage payment. He received some financial aid, but not as much as he had hoped. "It's a public university so they've been cut a lot. Resources are pretty slim," he said. To tide him over, Mr Gutierrez borrowed another $10,000. "I'm going to be about $25,000 in debt when I finish. I've never owed that much money." Mr Gutierrez is not waiting for a bail-out like the banks. He wants to stay in higher education when he finishes his degree, but finding work will be hard. He accepts he could go into delinquency. "In California, there's no university hiring, I will have to relocate and even then most are hiring for non-tenure track positions," he said. "I'm looking to end up with a temporary lecturer position, which I'll have to juggle with other part-time work."

The burden of rising educational lending has, as usual, fallen disproportionately on the poorest students. While the average family paid 9 percent less for college in 2010–11 than the year before, the amount paid by households making less than $35,000 a year increased 14 percent. To meet rising demand, low-income parents contributed more from income and loans. And while students received more grants and scholarships – funding that does not have to be paid back – most of that increase went to middle- and high-income families. The University of California had seen a jump in financial aid applications for undergraduates as the school has raised tuition to meet a growing budget gap. "Clearly we are also concerned and acknowledge that it's tougher than it's been," Nancy Coolidge, associate director of student financial support for the University of California system, told me. More students qualify as needy, she said, and more families at all income levels have increased borrowing. The difficult job market has affected how readily students can pay back their loans. Ms Coolidge added: “We haven’t yet seen a big drop in those who get jobs but we have seen a flattening of earnings, especially within the first five years after graduation.”

The University of California and California State University systems have even eliminated programs ranging from nursing to computer technology to classics at some campuses, and the University of California, Riverside had postponed opening a new medical school because of funding constraints. “One of our concerns is that college and universities are moving more into a market system rather than producing knowledge for the benefit of society,” said John Curtis, director of public policy at the American Association of University Professors. “These things are pushing higher education in the direction of how much can someone earn rather than what they have a passion for.”

Students were not the only ones suffering. Officials complain that wage cuts, as well as less generous pension packages and fewer available tenure-track positions, make it hard to retain and compete for top faculty. “Most talented faculty members are being recruited away – to their homeland, to other nations or the highly endowed private universities,” said Ms Broad. The gap in salaries between public and private schools has increased in every academic year since the recession began in 2008. “The bottom line is that salaries have been stagnating during the past several years for full-time faculty,” Mr Curtis said. “There seems to be an increasing shift to hiring professors who are off the tenure track.” Increased uncertainty is also damaging the quality of teaching. “When faculty jobs are insecure, it’s a threat to academic freedom. They don’t feel they can raise controversial issues, they don’t have time to work with students …. they don’t have the time they need." It was the perfect result for the racket – less troublesome critics for the system to deal with.

THE BATTLE NOT OVER

Back at Occupy, in the end, the owners of Zuccotti Park, Brookfield Properties, told the demonstrators to leave so the area could be cleaned. Brookfield asked the New York Police Department to clear the park and the administration of Michael Bloomberg, New York mayor, said protesters must leave temporarily. Occupy Wall Street called Brookfield's cleaning plans an "eviction" and urged their supporters to come to the park for a "non-violent action". The group also organized clean-up crews that worked on that day to sweep and mop the park ahead of the deadline. Shortly before the 7am deadline, however, the city said Brookfield had put off the cleaning operation. A statement from Cas Holloway, New York deputy mayor, said: "Brookfield believes they can work out an arrangement with the protesters that will ensure the park remains clean, safe, available for public use and that the situation is respectful of residents and businesses downtown, and we will continue to monitor the situation." "The fact they backed down is a clear sign that this movement is demonstrating a lot of power," said Yotam Marom, who had been living in Zuccotti Park.

People kept coming downtown to show support. "Aside from our personal feelings about corporate greed, we found out yesterday that our union had endorsed Occupy Wall Street," said Richard Addeo, a 60-year-old electrician from New Jersey who had come out with fellow members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. "We have to honor what they say and we also believe in it." Some corporate executives have also said they understand protesters' grievances. Even the racket's spokesmen were supportive. Laurence Fink, chief executive of BlackRock, said that he was "very encouraged" by the protests and surprised they had not occurred sooner. He said that it would also be foolish to "turn our back on this protest movement."

In New York, on October 10, we went to the home of Rupert Murdoch, chief executive of News Corp. Protesters stood in the doorway of his building on Fifth Avenue chanting: "Murdoch – pay your fair share!" After 10 minutes, organizers rallied marchers to the next stop, the home of David Koch, the co-owner of Koch Industries and a funder of right-wing Tea Party groups. "Murdoch is one of the worst – but there are plenty more millionaires and billionaires," shouted one demonstrator. Most of the placards and charts called for increasing taxes on the rich and reducing inequality. The Occupy Wall Street movement refers to itself as the "99 percent", in reference to the fact that 1 percent of Americans control 40 percent part of the country's wealth. The march marked a new strategy for the nascent New York movement, which had so far been based near Wall Street. "I think it's an excellent tactic. These people are symbols of a system based on greed," said Ted Auerbach, a 63-year-old activist. "This is not going to stop until somebody with great authority comes and talks to us," said Patricia Malcolm, a member of an inter-faith coalition of clergy that joined the protests. "Let's start with the millionaires, that's why we're going to their houses." One onlooker, Eric Breeding, who worked for an art auction house on the Upper East Side, said he was supportive of the demonstration. "It's a good way to get media coverage. Maybe some rich people will pay attention," he said.

The Occupy Wall Street movement now released a declaration outlining protesters' grievances, which ranged from stripping the collective bargaining rights of workers to the torture of foreign citizens to the perceived influence of corporate interests over politicians. "This is what an actual grassroots movement looks like," Tim Robbins, the actor, told me. “It’s a bit sloppy and disorganized but full of passion.” The mood was festive with some protesters in costume and groups chanting: “Blame Wall Street, not Main Street.” One speaker drew a roar from the crowd by saying: “We have to start by taxing the rich.” Most of the participants brought their own signs, with messages ranging from anti-war slogans to condemnation of police brutality. The vast majority singled out the financial sector and rising inequality in the US. One man held a placard that read, “Money talks, 99 percent walks”.

On the last protest I attended, helicopters hovered in the sky above the park, while the New York Police Department used metal barricades to direct the heavy flow of pedestrian traffic. More students held up signs calling for relief on their loans. Ani Monteleone, 29, who graduated in 2006 from Oregon College of Art and Craft, said: “Our society isn’t creating enough jobs to absorb the people who are graduating from college.” “Things have gotten so bad that everyone wants to be a part of this,” added Ross Fuentes, a 23-year-old holding a sign from the Freedom Socialist Party. He said he was one of the young people energized by Barack Obama’s presidential run in 2008, but was now disillusioned. “Obama ran a great campaign, then he shut the gates,” he said. While the protests were largely characterized in the media as a young persons’ movement, it attracted older people, too. “It’s time people stood up and expressed the need for profound change,” said Barbara, a 70-year-old literary agent who declined to give her last name. Her husband, John, a retired publisher, also in his 70s, said he wanted to see higher taxes on wealthy Americans and a return to the Glass-Steagall Act separation of investment and commercial banking that was put in place during the Great Depression and repealed in 1999. “Things have been going downhill for the past 40 years,” he said.

THE DOWNFALL OF US WORKERS AND THEIR UNION

One man who had experienced "things going downhill" was Pat Buzzee, a softly spoken 58-year-old, who has spent his working life as a machinist for Electric Boat, a submarine manufacturer near his home along Connecticut's Long Island Sound. Early in his career, in the 1980s, Mr Buzzee was one of 30,000 who worked in southern Connecticut's thriving shipbuilding industry. He now works as an inspector, but the industry has shed 20,000 other workers in the region over the past two decades. Many are still out of work and others have had to accept lower wages elsewhere. Difficulties have persisted even for those who have held on to their jobs. "In the late 80s we were in competition with another shipyard here so the company, in order to stay competitive, would hold wages down," Mr Buzzee told me. "For five years we never got a general wage increase. After a few years that really catches up with you. Costs are going up but your wages aren't." He added: "I see myself as working-class, and the last couple of decades have been very hard for people like me. If it wasn't for the union, I wouldn't have the standard of living I have today. I think everybody should have a right to join a union, if the laws were even on both sides, you would see more people organized."

The economic figures reveal that the downward pressures Mr Buzzee has felt for years had long been spreading throughout the American middle class. Since 2006, median wages have continued to fall across the board in the US, and have never fully recovered from the 2000–01 financial crisis when the dotcom bubble burst. The real median household income peaked at $53,252 in 1999. For male workers in the US, the long-term trends have been even bleaker. "What's happened to the American man since the early 70s is quite dramatic," Michael Greenstone, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, told me. In 2009, full-time male workers aged 25–64 were earning on average $48,000 – roughly the same as in 1969 in real terms. Meanwhile, in the same 40-year period, the income of the top 2 percent of working-age men has jumped 75 percent. But the average American man has not only missed out on 40 years of wage growth; wages have actually been in free fall. As the labor force has fractured and become more flexible, increasing numbers of men have started working part-time or on short-term contracts. When part-time workers are included, the median wage for the American man has *dropped* 28 percent since 1970 in real terms. "It's a horrifying statistic. I think it changes everything," said Mr Greenstone. "To put that into perspective, in real terms it takes men back to where they were in the 1950s. I don't think there's been a period in American history where you've seen such a large, systemic, long-term decline."

Fewer American men are now able to work a steady 40-hour week, and their ability to provide for their family has diminished significantly as a result. "It has changed the character of the American family," said Mr Greenstone. At the same time the "life narrative" of the working American man has disintegrated. The path whereby a working or middle-class young man would choose a profession, train, join a union and follow in his father's footsteps no longer exists. In modern America, the foundations of the economic system have shifted, with the advent of computerization, technology and increased global trade. Facebook has replaced US Steel. "This new capitalism – the financial industries, the culture industries, high tech – is very elitist, so people with incomes in the middle who work in this sector stagnate and people at the top as we know get very rich," Richard Sennett, a professor at New York University and author of *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, told me. To compensate, he believes, unions need to rethink how they work and become more focused on workers' life narrative, not just wages. "It's very hard for men in this new form of capitalism to get much sense of self-respect out of their jobs," added Mr Sennett. Along the Connecticut coast, men blame their plight on a combination of factors: falling union membership, jobs moving overseas due to the decline in the rate for profit for manufacturing and stagnating wages. The results of this on modern working life have created a new "precariat" class – a proletariat afflicted by endless precarious part-time jobs. There is also the "financialization" of the US economy since the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system in the 1970s which contributes little if anything to the real economy and may even harm it. "I was at church recently and in the parking lot I was talking to a guy and his wife, and he basically said to me, 'We can't afford to live anymore'," recounted Joe Courtney, Democratic congressman for the district, which is home to the shipbuilding industry. "This guy wasn't on food stamps or anything like that," he told me. Like many in declining industrial towns, Mr Courtney, who is the major champion of the shipbuilding industry on Capitol Hill, blamed free trade pacts and the steady decline in union power since the era of President Ronald Reagan for killing jobs. "The decline in union membership is certainly attributable to free trade agreements. It has gone from a pretty heavily unionized state to a minority situation." In the 1950s, about one-third of the US workforce was unionized; by 2006 the figure had dropped to 12 percent.

John Olsen, president of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in Connecticut for the past 23 years, put the blame for the stagnation of wages squarely on decades of attacks on unions. "If you look at the declining lines of wages and union membership, you see they both go down together, they correlate nearly exactly," he said. "While the rich get richer, we've all noticed that we can afford less and less," said Mr Buzzee, who has an unemployed wife and daughter to support. "Now you don't have the same discretionary income where you can go out to eat a couple of times a week with the family. Now you might do it once every two weeks." He isn't optimistic about the future. When he was growing up, he remembers his parents and two siblings "never going without". His mother didn't have to work, and his father made enough in the Coast Guard. "We never seemed to want for food or anything, we had clothes on our backs." But those days are gone now, he said, maybe never to return. "Nowadays it's impossible for one parent to support the family, and even with two working it's a real struggle."

The aftermath of the financial crisis has also exacerbated the number of men earning nothing at all. Since 1970, their number has increased from 6 percent to 18 percent. In a taxpayer-funded career center in Largo, Maryland, a clutch of men in their fifties are the human face of that statistic. They sit trying to relearn skills they are rapidly losing while unemployed, desperate to find work. Bert Smith, 56, lost his last job in insurance soon after the financial crisis hit after 30 years in the sector. "I'm having difficulty in finding a job, my job skills are a bit rusty," he told me. "If I want to get back into the job market right now, I will have to accept a significant drop in my wages." However, the fact he has a wife and children to support may force that decision on him sooner than he would like. "I wish we were doing better but if you dwell on yourself, you're going to get depressed," he said. "At least I have the opportunity to find a job," he added, grateful for small favors in modern America. "There are other economies that are falling apart."

Soon after visiting the career center, I spoke to John Harris, who at 52-years-old did not expect to be living with his parents. But nearly two years after he lost his $150,000-a-year job at a chemicals company, he moved home to New Hope, a small town on the Pennsylvania–New Jersey border, to save cash. Even with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Penn State, he had struggled to find work. "Most of the jobs I see, I know I can do, I am qualified to do," he said. "It's the employers, they just aren't hiring."

Life was about to get even more difficult. For the past two years Mr Harris had received unemployment insurance, regular pay-outs from the multi-billion-dollar joint state and federal program that kept many unemployed people afloat after the recession. But the previous month, he had received his last payment. About 7.3 million US workers collect some form of unemployment insurance benefit, with the average weekly benefit just under $300 a week in 2011. This compares with 2.8 million in December 2007. Typically, state bodies pay benefits for 26 weeks and the federal government pays up to 73 weeks more. But as rising unemployment forced more people to rely on the benefit, both state and federal government increasingly wanted to limit their pay-outs.

Pay-outs totaled $159.4 billion in the year to June 2010, up from $31.1 billion in the 12 months to June 2006, in line with rising unemployment. Now legislators intent on cutting spending had the payments in their sights. "I think that everybody is concerned that this drumbeat about how people aren't actively looking for jobs is going to impact the program," Jane Oates, assistant secretary of employment and training at the Labor Department, told me.

In 2011, six states had instigated unprecedented cuts to unemployment insurance programs, trying to reduce the length of pay-outs from the standard 26 weeks. Michigan, Missouri and South Carolina had all cut the maximum duration to 20 weeks, while Florida enacted a sliding scale which can be as low as 12 weeks. Many states also capped the maximum amount of money they will provide through unemployment insurance. Florida's maximum weekly rate was set at $275. "Unemployment claims skyrocketed during the period from 2008 to the present," George Wentworth, an analyst at the National Employment Law Project, told me.

As a result, 30 states' unemployment trust funds – the money that employers pay as a tax on wages and from which unemployment insurance is paid – had become insolvent. "Most states did not save for a rainy day," said Ms Oates. "When they had a few dollars in their trust fund, they eliminated the business tax, for example." Federal extensions to state unemployment benefits were also under threat. During periods of high unemployment, Congress usually extends the number of weeks of unemployment insurance after state obligations finish. There is currently a maximum of 99 weeks of benefits, though it can vary from state to state. The high rate of long-term unemployment forced Congress to appropriate general revenues to cover payments.

Advocates of unemployment insurance argue that it has an important effect on the US economy during downturns, calling it a sort of "working man's bail-out". For every dollar spent on the benefit, the economy gets a $2 boost, the Labor Department estimates. "People receiving [unemployment] benefits aren't putting the money in their mattress; it's pumped right back into the local economy," said Ms Oates. From where Mr Harris sits that view may seem a bit optimistic. "It's very hard. I don't spend money on anything," said Mr Harris, who has two children in college. "Things will now get worse, but when I have a bad day, I just think about all the people around the country who are less fortunate than me."

DIVIDE AND RULE

One of the racket's methods of breaking the working class and unions was to negotiate "two-tier" wage structures. In September 2011, the United Auto Workers (UAW) accepted a new deal with General Motors, which put in place two pay levels for incumbent workers and new employees. Soon after, Chrysler, the car manufacturer, reached an agreement with the UAW, which created 2,100 jobs. Although terms of the contract were not made public, it was assumed that some form of "two-tier" wages was part of the deal. The move reflected unions' weakened position in the aftermath of the recession, as companies threatened big lay-offs unless unions agreed to lower the bar in negotiations. This tactic had re-emerged in Detroit in 2007 when the UAW accepted contracts with three automakers implementing the two-tier wage system. New hires earned $14 an hour while established workers were paid nearly double.

The two-tier system began during the Reagan administration in the 1980s, but the new innovation did not last long; wages collapsed into a single tier within years of the contracts being signed. "It was done a lot early in the 1980s. Back then it was considered quite revolutionary," said Gary Burtless, a labor relations expert at the Brookings Institution. "In the end, unions made big concessions." The reappearance of the two-tier scheme reflects a union movement feeling the heat as it struggles to weather attacks from Republicans across the country. "These are certainly challenging times," Thea Lee, deputy chief of staff at the AFL-CIO labor federation, told me. "With the loss of so many jobs in unionized sectors, like manufacturing and construction, it poses a threat to our survival." She added: "When the economy is weak and unemployment is high, it makes it difficult to negotiate a strong contract."

Public sector workers in Wisconsin lost their ability to collectively bargain after a long fight that included an occupation of the state capital and an unprecedented recall election of conservative legislators. "The trend in recent years has been to strip public sector workers of their bargaining power," said Mr Burtless. "My reading is that that seems to have stuck; in other words the unions haven't been able to rebound." It was not just conservative states like Texas that experienced the shift. Even in traditional union strongholds such as Ohio, Michigan and

Wisconsin – states with Democratic governors or legislative majorities – unions have still had to make big concessions.

Labor economists contended that, in the short run, the two-tier wage solution is popular with incumbents because it maintains wages for existing workers. “But essentially it’s a method of capturing unions,” said Mr Burtless. “In the long run a majority of union workers eventually are on the lower tier. The union leaders often get kicked out, or the two tiers merge. The voting members on the lower tier aren’t going to vote for getting lower wages for long.”

“In the private sector, if companies were on the verge of failing, unions were receptive to opening up contracts to help their employers weather the recession,” said Iain Gold, director of strategic research at the Teamsters trucking union. The Teamsters struck a two-tier deal with its largest trucking company, YRC Worldwide, in 2008. As financial markets collapsed, freight volumes fell through the floor, and YRC found it could not survive without significant concessions from its union. “In one context, the last thing we need is for employers to fail. Folks will do what’s necessary, but also required,” said Mr Gold. Membership is also down. Since the beginning of 2008, Teamsters membership has fallen by nearly half due to layoffs and closures. “This is a critical moment in our history,” he added.

While the attack on the public sector appears new and has attracted a lot of attention, Mr Gold argued that there has been a more subtle attack going on in the private sector since the 1980s. “The blatant attack in Wisconsin has shown public-sector workers what those in the private sector have been going through for decades. In the process, it has awoken organized labor across the country.” As part of the Occupy Wall Street protests, the largest private sector union in New York state planned a rally in the financial district in anticipation of negotiations over a new contract to replace one that was expiring. They were joined by workers from art auctioneers Sotheby's, who had been locked out for more than two months in an ongoing dispute, as well as Verizon workers, who were pushing for a new contract.

More Americans are living in poverty now than at any time since records began more than 50 years ago; the weak economic recovery has failed to lift incomes. In 2010, 46.2 million American people fell below the poverty line, calculated as an annual income of $22,314 for a family of four and $11,139 for an individual, according to the US Census Bureau. The increase lifted the poverty rate to 15.1 percent of the US population, the highest since 1993 and almost 1 percentage point higher than the year before. "To have hit 15.1 percent is truly extraordinary," Alice O'Connor, a professor who studies poverty at the University of California, Santa Barbara, told me. "We are entering territory which looks like the period before we even started fighting a 'War on Poverty' in the 1960s. It's quite stunning. This is a terrible statement about the depths of the Great Recession but, even more, about the recovery, which has clearly left the poorest out completely." The aftermath of the recession has seen a "two-speed" recovery for Americans, as the wealthiest maintain their spending habits and lifestyles while a record number of their fellow citizens are mired in poverty. "Income down, poverty up, health insurance coverage down or flat. The news on economic well-being in the US is not good," Ron Haskins, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, told me. *Nearly a quarter of American children are living in poverty*. In 2011, child poverty was the highest since the mid-1960s. Analysts do not expect a turnaround any time soon. "Given the widely accepted projections that both unemployment and, in particular, long-term unemployment will continue at high rates for the next several years, we can expect this pattern of continuing low income and high poverty rates for many years," Mr Haskins added.

Meanwhile, on the same day as the poverty figures were announced, Ipsos Mendelsohn, the media research group, released figures showing that things were apparently looking up for the top tier of US earners. The group's annual survey of affluent Americans found that the number of households making more than $100,000 a year was 44.2 million in 2011, compared with 44.1 million the previous year. Their spending held steady at $1,400 billion after previously falling. "Their life has stabilized," said Bob Shullman, Ipsos Mendelsohn president. "Everyone feels it when their income falls but, when you have less discretionary income, you feel it more. It doesn't hurt [the rich] as much." The survey, which polled 14,405 wealthy adults, found "almost all affluents are planning a wide range of activities in the next year, with travelling, remodelling, and investing topping this list". But there was a vast majority of Americans who were living from day to day, trying their best to survive in a society that treated them like refuse, to be discarded when there was no money to be made.

TWELVE

DESTITUTE AMERICA

STARVING, WASHINGTON, DC

One of the fallouts from the financial crisis was the inability of millions of Americans to feed themselves for lack of money. In front of my computer in Washington, DC a small news ticker went across my screen that said 44.1 million Americans were, in the aftermath of the crisis, being fed in some part by the food stamp program, which had been rechristened the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). That number, the highest in the history of the US, seemed unconscionable to me; it was nearly a third of all adult Americans. It couldn't be right. The next day I went to the social security office in a rundown area of Washington. Just off New York Avenue I found Jamie Cremeans, a 31-year-old California native, smoking a cigarette outside with her boyfriend and waiting for the lifeline that is keeping them afloat. I got talking to them, and she spoke with sadness of their predicament, a narrative familiar to millions across the country, as the poor are made to pay for the financial crimes of the rich. Her boyfriend, Ronald, was partially blind and had been receiving disability benefits for years, but Jamie was new to this. She was receiving food stamps for the first time as she scrambled to find a job. The couple had moved to Washington to find work after she lost her job in the recession, but still nothing was working. "We moved here because there's no work there. I just wanna work," Jamie said, emphasizing the word *work*. "I probably apply for five jobs a week." Her last job was in early 2010, more than a year before, when she had done seasonal work with the US census. "In California I got paid to look after Ronald, as well," she said. "I don't get that here." Without accommodation, the couple was living with a friend in the northern outskirts of DC, and Jamie said it was nearly impossible to stave off depression. "The money we get, it's not even enough for me, let alone two of us, to feed ourselves. And in California you could at least use the food stamps in a restaurant, you can't here."

The average food stamp allowance is $130 a month to cover food, nowhere near enough to keep a human being healthy. It is enough to keep someone alive – just. The racket does not want the embarrassment of people dying of hunger in the richest country in human history, but to have any sort of life, well, that would require more than $32 a week. "We never have enough food, sometimes we just go without," Jamie told me. "But there are a lot of different programs, lots of churches help out with food." You have to be near destitute to qualify for the program. It is available to anyone under the government's designated poverty level who does not have more than $2,000 in liquid assets or own a home. It is dispensed through a debit card which is topped up automatically at the beginning of the month. I followed Jamie and Ronald inside the office, which is small and decrepit. People were shouting about what seemed like a refused application for food stamps.

As the US continued to reel from stubbornly high unemployment, the number of its citizens using the program has ballooned over the three years to 2011 by almost 17 million, an increase of 61 percent. On top of this, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that only 66 percent of those eligible actually claim the benefit, meaning that the true figure of those Americans qualifying for SNAP is 70 million, or just under a quarter of the entire population. In addition, the benefits of SNAP to communities where the money is spent has helped the program escape the eye of deficit hawks. The USDA estimates that every $5 of SNAP money spent in the local community generates $9 of economic activity. Very few people can afford to save their food stamps. In the mid-2000s, the last years for which there are records, 44 percent of SNAP household heads reported their race as Hispanic or African American, though they comprise 29 percent of the general population.

I wanted to speak to the people in government who oversaw this program. It was strange to me. In the rancorous battle over spending cuts, the program, which cost $69 billion in 2010, came out unscathed. This was odd because the Republican Party was adamant about cutting any program that helped the poor to avoid destitution and ruin. Why not food stamps? I found out that, of course, it was all about money. I went to see the undersecretary for food, nutrition and consumer services at the USDA, which administers the program. "The reason it enjoys political support is that it benefits growers and ranchers," Kevin Concannon told me, adding: "It supports areas of the country that are more Republican than Democrat." Food stamps have to be spent on foodstuffs; you can't buy toothpaste or toilet paper or other non-food items, so the big chain supermarkets also benefit from the business generated. Once again, the power of the business community dictates the viability of the program. "The underlying principle is how to meet basic dietary guidelines at the lowest cost," added Jean Daniel, spokesperson for the USDA.

There is no cap on the amount of time a family can receive food stamps, but single people with no children only qualify for three months of benefits. After that, the tap is turned off. "As part of SNAP they know what they are getting when they go in," said Ms Daniel. "They work with social services to get back to work, there's a job training program." But the average time spent on food stamps for those eligible, according to USDA, is nine months, undoubtedly leaving some single and childless Americans with no food for long periods. "As Americans, we like to think highly of the good things in our country. We struggle with acknowledging that in our midst, there are people who go hungry," said Mr Concannon. "In my remarks to groups, I often say, these feeding programs, such as are listed here, had never been as urgently needed as they are right now, in our lifetime, short of the Great Depression of the 30s."

The financial crisis has forced many middle-class families on to the program and sparked a rethink among food companies previously against accepting SNAP payments. Before the financial crisis, for example, warehouse stores Costco and BJ's were not part of the program but have since joined up. Costco was forced to make its new store in New York City SNAP-friendly after realizing its initial mistake in opting out. But many complain that even with these new stores taking part, SNAP entitlements are not enough to sustain healthy nutritional levels. "All the evidence is that it's not enough for a healthy diet, it's enough to keep people from starving, to keep people from very severe malnutrition," said Jim Weill, president of the Food Research and Action Center, which does public research and advocacy. It is not just a lack of funds that can cause malnutrition for those enrolled in SNAP. "They may live in something called a 'food desert' where there's a shortage of healthy food, and if it's available, it's often at a price," said Alexandra Ashbrook, outreach coordinator of DC Hunger Solutions, which helps people process claims.

HOMELESS AMERICA

I walked to the Girard Street Family Shelter (GSFS) in Washington to talk to Juaquina Miller, a 25-year-old single mother of two who was being housed temporarily by one of the public programs under attack by the racket. After a childhood in foster care followed by an itinerant adolescence, this new home was a luxury she had rarely enjoyed. She told me she and her family live on an income of $306 a month. “I don’t know where we’d be without this place,” she said, sitting on a chair surrounded by kids’ toys in her apartment. “I’ve been homeless since I was 17.” The GSFS is one of many housing facilities across the US that provide a lifeline for the homeless population, which had swelled significantly in the years following the subprime mortgage crisis. It provides apartments to 20 homeless families with children, with on-site supportive services from treatment for substance abuse to job preparation. “I have to be quick,” said Ms Miller when we stepped into her living room. “I’ve got a class in a minute!” She said she wants to get a job in law enforcement. Unfortunately, although it felt like home, the accommodation was temporary and she had overstayed the typical six-month stay. She had been on the list for permanent housing since 2007, and was still waiting.

A couple of blocks away from the shelter, lawmakers on Capitol Hill had just passed a budget in which massive cuts were quietly made to the programs that attempt to ameliorate the number of Americans sleeping rough or moving from place to place. “We will see it hitting in a very concrete way,” Steve Berg, vice president of programs at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, which works on federal policy, told me. The situation was made worse by the continuing subprime crisis – there had rarely been a time in American history when social housing was as important as then, but to the Republicans and the capital they represent it was irrelevant.

The most significant cuts for the homeless population are two programs run by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The community development block grant funds help cities to pay for staff positions to get homeless people off the streets and into permanent accommodation. The Republicans had proposed 62 percent cuts to the program, while Barack Obama argued for an 8 percent cut. Eventually the budget provided $3.3 billion for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), a $650 million, or a 16 percent decrease from the previous year. "The 2011 cuts in community development and public housing funding were significant and will cause real pain for families as the economy is still rebounding," Robert Menendez, senator for New Jersey and chairman of the subcommittee on housing, told me. The main workers hit have been government employees who oversee different cities' programs, which will make it harder to organize existing facilities like GSFS.

The second cut hitting hard was the public housing program, which provides publicly owned apartment buildings at very low rent, the kind of place Juaquina Miller would like to move into but can't at the moment. The latest budget provided $4.6 billion for the public housing operating fund, a decrease of $149 million from 2010 levels. "The 2011 bill returns to long-term patterns of underfunding maintenance and repair work," said Berg. "Anyone in real estate knows that deferred maintenance means they will have to be boarded up, it means more homelessness." The problem of homelessness was getting worse in the US as the stuttering economy, the foreclosure crisis and high unemployment bit. It meant many people could no longer afford housing. The number was decreasing between 2005 and 2008, but since the recession the numbers have come back up, mainly because of the employment situation. The federal cuts came at a time when state and local budgets were in dire straits. Traditionally in that scenario, the federal government has stepped in to help out, but in the new fiscal budget, the opposite has happened. "To get an idea of size of the homeless population, we do a 'points in time count' that gives us a rough sketch of the amount on any given night," Mark Johnstone, deputy assistant secretary at HUD, told me. On one night in January 2010, the agency found about 650,000 people living outside in parks and train stations, as well as in homeless facilities like shelters. But this doesn't tell the whole story. "It's really about two million people that are homeless, because people are flowing in and out of homelessness all the time, and might have somewhere that night," said Johnstone. He added that each homeless person can cost states more than $40,000 per year for policing and medical services.

CAPTURED REGULATION

But in a political system that had stopped working, the likelihood of the homeless getting housing any time soon was nil (even if it did make economic sense). With these cuts, the poorest Americans, those who have never heard of a credit-default swap or a mortgage-backed security, were being asked to pay again.

Another victim from a different part of America, but still prey to the predations of the racket was Jylly Jakes. Over Christmas 2007, she realized she could no longer make her mortgage payments. Eighteen months after losing her job as a corporate bond trader, she was out of options. "I called up my bank servicer [the institution entrusted with collecting mortgage payments] and asked for a six-month forbearance," she told me. The bank said no. Ms Jakes found work at a boutique bond firm a few months later and offered to pay the missing five payments over 12 months and stay up-to-date on her mortgage. The bank said no again and began repossession proceedings. But in late 2008, she seemed to find a lifeline. Ms Jakes signed up for a federal government home mortgage modification program aimed at helping millions of American homeowners facing foreclosure. Three years later – after three trial modifications under the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) – Ms Jakes was still fighting the repossession of her home. The outstanding principal balance is now almost $50,000 more than the original mortgage because of monthly fees "It's designed to fail," she told me. "I think it was put out there as political theatre to make it look like Main Street was going to get a hand after being the victim of an artificially inflated housing bubble."

HAMP was announced with a fanfare by President Obama in February 2009, but it is widely viewed as a failure by those using it. As of October 2011, 735,464 homeowners were in modification programs, about 20 percent of the target. The $29.9 billion program, run by the US Department of the Treasury, was meant to help 3–4 million American homeowners modify their mortgages and avoid repossession. The Treasury reported that in November 2010 new permanent HAMP modifications had fallen to 26,000 from 40,000 the previous month. The Obama administration threatened to withhold payments to Bank of America and JPMorgan Chase under HAMP for a third consecutive quarter, saying neither institution had followed the letter of the law. By 2011, the US government had handed out $666 million in incentive payments to servicers, according to the Treasury. "We are disappointed with our rating, and will continue to work hard to improve our processes and controls," JPMorgan said. Bank of America added: "While we are disappointed with this decision, these financial incentives do not drive our efforts to help our customers in need of assistance."

Meanwhile, the foreclosure crisis showed no sign of abating. "We have 3.5 million first mortgage loans in foreclosure, or pretty close," Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's, the rating agency, said. "For context, we have just over 50 million first mortgage loans outstanding, so that's a lot of loans. So it's going to take a good, solid three, four, five years to really work off that foreclosure inventory." US banks are facing mounting pressure from politicians, the courts and regulators over their shoddy mortgage foreclosure procedures. Phyllis Caldwell, chief of the Treasury's Homeownership Preservation Office, which oversees HAMP, says the system in place for managing delinquent loans was not designed to cope with a foreclosures crisis of the present scale. "With the national delinquency spike, you had everything hit at once, there was a big customer servicing problem, people couldn't get through on the phone, lost documents," she said. Homeowners complain that HAMP fails to rectify skewed incentives which make it in the interests of the servicer to foreclose. "Ultimately, major banks responsible for servicing those mortgages have never been committed to the HAMP program in its design and the Treasury department hasn't been willing to enforce the rules," said Alan White, associate professor of law at Valparaiso University and a leading scholar on foreclosure. He believes HAMP has worked in the interest of mortgage servicers rather than looking out for homeowners. "People are incredibly frustrated with the servicers, the four largest of whom are also the four largest banks," he said. "They can't get through on the telephone, they send documents three or four times. It's really just been a performance problem on the part of mortgage servicers." Housing is perhaps the most crucial prerequisite for a human being to prosper. In America, if you are poor, however, you are on your own.

LIVING IN NEW YORK

When I lived in New York I decided to find out what life was like for those who did not live on the Upper East Side, or any of the other fabulously wealthy parts of Manhattan. One housing project in Brooklyn was attracting media attention and according to the press releases its work was going to plan. After decades at the mercy of unscrupulous slumlords, the residents of Noble Drew Ali Plaza housing complex in Brownsville had found themselves a savior in Mo Vaughn, former baseball player for the New York Mets, and his Omni New York LLC. This was the man, so the propaganda went, to transform the decaying five-building project from what narcotics officers referred to as "New Jack City" (after the 1991 Wesley Snipes film in which a drug lord turns a whole building into a crack cartel) into a clean and functioning complex.

Omni New York bought the 365-unit property for $20 million in June 2007 and on the back of the purchase the police arrested 35 residents in an early morning drugs bust. It was a statement of intent. Over the next months, dozens of security cameras started to appear all over the building, peering down at the residents in the plaza, the social center of the project – the target was 400 fully operational cameras. In came the security firm Secure Watch 24 and surveillance moved from an 8am to 4pm shift to 24 hours a day. Mo Vaughn invited the media in and toured them around the crumbling interiors in a pin-stripe suit, signing memorabilia and accepting the adoration of his clamoring fans. But this was where the fairytale stopped and the reality of Omni's takeover began. For the residents who were allowed to stay in the complex, there were good omens. There were promises of new stoves, kitchens and windows for everyone. The two most run-down buildings – 230 and 240 – were being completely renovated. But there existed another set of residents for whom Vaughn's arrival was less auspicious. Countless residents were dealt eviction orders and faced the street as their next habitation. Still more were living in buildings 230 and 240 as the whole place was ripped apart around them, dust and debris seeping into everything. This group included two wheelchair-bound men. It was the typical divide-and-rule tactics of rich developers in the US.

The Noble Drew project was built in 1972 in a poor part of Brownsville, surrounded by tenements and empty lots. "It was a wonderful place to be then," Paulette Jackson-Forbes, 45, the president of the tenants' association and a resident since its inception, told me. "We even had intercom on the TV so we could see who was downstairs. People were embarrassed if their floors weren't clean!" The first developer was Joe Jeffries-El, a University of Pennsylvania-trained manager. "There were 20 families of police officers, nurses, bus drivers, teachers – you name it," said Jackson-Forbes. "It was a utopian place to be." In the early 1980s the buildings were wrenched from Jeffries-El and the complex started its precipitous decline. In that decade the ownership and management changed hands four times. "We became atrocious then," said Jackson-Forbes. "People hanging out, crack epidemic, no security, drugs getting a free run – at that time we were really the victims." Eventually the tenants' association took action. A lawsuit was followed by a new owner, Lyndon Realty. "They did some decent renovation," said Jackson-Forbes. "They bought in a team of security – the owners were Jewish but they hired Muslim security – all the drugs went away. You could sleep with the windows up, the doors open, that type of thing." Eventually it was revealed that Lyndon Realty was stealing and misusing funds, using one of the buildings as a facade for its claimed renovation and actually funneling money back out of the complex. Arrests were made in 1992 and the building went back to a receiver.

It was then that Abdur Rahman Farrakhan, voted one of the 10 worst landlords in New York City by the *Village Voice*, bought the property for $10. His tenure ran all the way up until 2006 when the court passed management to West Center Management which still runs the day-day operations of the complex. "Under Farrakhan the place just disintegrated," said Jackson-Forbes. "No elevators, no hot water, no rebuilding, no security." It eventually transpired that Farrakhan and a partner had been swindling money out of the complex by receiving government funds for hostel services. They had emptied two buildings and made an agreement with the Department of Homeless Services to run those buildings as a shelter. The rent they accrued was nearly $3,000 per unit from federal subsidies, far higher than the rent from individual tenants which sometimes was as low as $68. Eventually Farrakhan was caught embezzling money. Legal proceedings brought by the tenants' association, represented by Attorney Mimi Rosenberg, began in February 2002 in what would eventually become a five-year battle. In 2007 they won the case – the defendant was declared bankrupt and the property was put up to be sold. The tenants demanded strict criteria: $28 million rehabilitation, restoration and help to secure Section A, which would guarantee that residents could start afresh in their rent payments and no arrears from the Farrakhan tenure would de demanded. Omni New York was the only company to meet these criteria.

LEAVING THEM TO ROT

When you walk into Noble Drew housing project today you are surrounded by residents angry about the new administration. A project of cleansing the complex has been under way from the police in combination with West Center Management. Certain residents, according to West Center, have not paid rent for the whole West Center tenure – some 14 months. They have been dealt with eviction notices. Dorothy Fields is one such person. A victim of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, she fled with her bedridden husband and was living out of a van next to Noble Drew, before Alicia Allen, assistant manager for West Center, took pity and called her bosses. They agreed to put her up in a room in one of the buildings. The Fields' apartment is in building 240, which has been under construction since Mo Vaughn initiated his regeneration program in July 2007. As you step in past the piles of bin bags, there is scattered debris and dust all over the lobby area. Workmen mill around with large sheets of glass, bits of piping and other construction tidbits. The floor is covered with concrete, collections of brick, shattered glass, plastic bottles – a construction site. The Fields are two of 16 people living in this block as builders are ripping down the building around them. Their apartment inside is in bad shape. Michael Fields, who was shot and cannot walk, lies in bed building a toy car. There is no natural light as the curtains are drawn and a weak yellow light illuminates the room. There's a TV that crackles in the background. "When they gave us this place they said we don't have to pay rent," Ms Fields said. "Now they are trying to make us pay $5,000, how the hell am I going to do that?" "I can't hardly breathe at times," said Mr Fields from his bed. "I'm also vomiting now which is horrible." "There's dust coming through the window, even I have been breathing up phlegm," Ms Fields chimed in. "And because of all that trash there's worms and dead cats all around here." Ms Fields showed me a note from her doctor cataloguing her respiratory problems and their links to her surroundings. On the front of building 240 is a sign that catalogues the asbestos work apparently taking place in the basement as workers remove the piping. It is being carried out by New York Insulation Inc. who have no website and don't return calls when I enquire about their work. When the West Center team come around later they try to take the asbestos sign down before realizing the work is due to finish in December. Jackson-Forbes told me later that under Farrakhan the pipes were going to be changed but he dropped the operation after asbestos was found. She is also convening a tenants' association meeting to discuss the dangers of asbestos.

Inside building 240, Mike Gorney, 28, foreman for DV Group, the construction subcontractors, said: "There's like six squatters in here, they can't kick them out yet." But yet West Center said that only half the 16 people living in building 240 are actually squatters. The other eight are just residents, there by right, with West Center's blessing. A mother and her four-year-old son living in building 240 reported that there was no attempt to rehouse them; in fact they are being evicted. "They didn't rehouse us and now we apparently owe $4,000." Her welfare claim has removed her son so she can't pay the rent. "My little son has asthma, how do you think all this dust is effecting him? I don't even want him in here. I was living in complex 37 but they moved me here."

In building 230, which is across the plaza, there is a sign on the outside which reads: "No tenants allowed in this building. Hard hats only." On a public holiday with no construction I found over 10 people living there, squatting, with the full knowledge of West Center it transpires, although the project manager for DV Group later claimed no knowledge of this. The hard hat regulation was apparently put up after a worker for DV Group had been hit on the head by a falling brick, and now all workers walk around with their heads covered – not the squatters though. One of the residents is Ernest Bethel, 54, whom I find descending a flight of stairs on his bottom and pulling his wheelchair behind him. He has one leg, and obvious mental problems. He tells me that he has to pull himself down and up the stairs every time he wants to go out as only the construction workers use the elevators. It takes him about an hour, he said. Bethel has lived in the complex for over a year, according to West Center Management.

Another resident of building 230 is Rosemary Joiner, 69, who claimed she was thrown out of her apartment in another building and put in a single-bedroom apartment in building 230. West Center agreed this was the scenario, but they claimed she had not paid any rent. She now lives in 230 and is distressed and unkempt. When I was in the West Center office she was complaining that she had been kicked out of the room she was squatting in by her roommate. West Center Management won't give her the key to her old apartment to return her clothes there.

Building 230 is like a bombsite with detritus of every kind – clothes, bottles, garbage, electronics, concrete, brick, wood, metal – strewn over the floors. Every occupied apartment can be identified by the color of the door. Apartments that are being renovated have a new gray door; the doors in which the squatters are living are red because they cannot knock them down yet. There are all sorts of people – mostly old, and, according to West Center staff, drug users. West Center says these people are under eviction proceedings. Jaswinder Singh, project manager for DV Group, was incredulous. "Nobody lives there," he said. Is it safe for habitation? "No, it's not safe," he replied. He said that there is asbestos in the basement like building 240, but there is no sign on the outside detailing any work. Ravi Gukral, the project manager of the whole operation, said: "We follow orders, they have dates to get evicted."

On both buildings, Keish Frith, 29, administrative assistant in the West Center office on location, said: "They should have got the residents out before they started. When you are working with different people they work by their own rules. It may not be illegal, but it's not fair." "It's all for show," said a man wanting to be identified as Slasher. "They want it to look good on the outside, but really nothing is happening in here." He was waiting outside the management office to report a suspicious occurrence on the weekend. "They told me that they can't access the camera records until three days later," he said. "It's now three days later and now they say that the cameras inside the buildings aren't working." Slasher had spotted a man who he didn't recognize on the fire escape at 4am looking through his window. "I told security that morning, and they said they didn't have the ability to rewind!" He added, "I mean, someone died here two months ago, you would hope they had set the cameras up properly. I don't even think they are turned on." This lack of respect for the lives of the American poor was because they could not make the racket money. But unfortunately for these same people, before long the racket realized that locking up people was a way to make money off the destitute and hope-starved poor of America. It was called the "War on Drugs".

THIRTEEN

LOCK-UP AMERICA

SOCIAL CONTROL

As in Latin America, the domestic version of the Drug War is also a naked effort at social control. It has focused almost exclusively on the black and Latino communities of the US, who make up 60 percent of the prison population, even though they are just 30 percent of the general population. It has also made billions of dollars as the racket works to pull the prison system out of the hands of the American people and run it for vast profit. In fact, the rise of private prisons has coincided nearly exactly with the rise, over the past three decades, of the so-called War on Drugs. One study found that "people of color are represented in private prisons at least ten percentage points greater than in state-run facilities."[1] Nearly half (48.8 percent) of prisoners in the US are behind bars for drugs offenses.[2] The racket, however, never throws its own in jail: just 0.4 percent of the prison population in the US is composed of those guilty of financial crimes.

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[1] Michaela Pommelis, "Study: more people of color sentenced to private prisons than whites", *Huffington Post*, February 21, 2014.

[2] http://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_offenses.jsp

The move to put hundreds of thousands of Americans behind bars began in the 1980s when "mandatory minimum sentencing" for drugs offenses was introduced. It meant that there was no chance for discretion in drugs cases; if someone was caught with something, anything, they would be going to jail. This was accompanied by a focus on what politicians, eager for votes, called "law and order", which meant more punitive sentencing as politicians vied with each other to prove who was toughest. They were driven in part by the racket, who could smell the money. Private companies pushed further into state prisons from their strong position in the federal system. They began by soliciting speculative prison building projects at the county level, creating what has become known as the "prison bubble". The private companies would go in to a rural county and say, you can build a jail that's much larger than anything you'll need for your own criminal justice problems, but you can lease out extra beds to receive contract prisoners from the federal government. In Texas nearly a dozen counties entered the bubble using taxpayer debt but now can't find prisoners to fill the buildings. At this point the private companies ditch the contracts and the taxpayers are left holding the bag. This is how capitalism works – the risk is socialized, and the profits privatized. The quantity of human misery and waste this system has created is horrifying. In the 20 years to 2007, the national prison population in the US trebled to 1.6 million people, or nearly 10 percent of adults, by far the highest in the world. Nine percent of these are held in private facilities, where the average cost of keeping an inmate housed for a year comes to $25,000. Unfortunately for the private interests making a killing, the bubble now appears to have burst: incarceration rates did not increase as fast in the five years to 2011, and in 2010 fell for the first time in 20 years. But you can be sure that these companies are coming up with ingenious ways of maintaining this lucrative business.

When I was in New York, this move to privatize the prison system was actually picking up again. The racket was using the excuse that state deficits had to be combatted, and that the American people should hand over "costly" prisons to private interests. The racket was using this same excuse to get its hands on all sorts of public institutions, and the prisons attack was working, despite the fact that it was not obvious it would save the states any money. There's a pretty simple rule for these things: once the racket get a foot in any industry or institution, there is an inevitable logic which says it will want more and more. It will never be happy with running just a part of something. So Florida alone was planning to privatize 29 of its prisons. I spoke to one analyst covering the private prison system at an investment bank in Atlanta who said it was "the single biggest privatization program of state or federal prisons in the history of the US". Arizona was also having a string of public hearings on a plan to add thousands of privately operated prison beds, while Ohio had announced plans to raise $200 million by selling off five state prisons. Something was definitely happening here. Others followed suit as private contractors pitched themselves as a solution to cash-strapped states' fiscal woes.

The Florida plan had a new twist. Instead of outsourcing only newly constructed prisons, the state planned to outsource existing beds as well. I called up the Florida state senator who was pushing this reform most forcefully. Elected representatives all over the US represent the racket, not their people, but it's still worth hearing their rationalizations. "Probably 5 percent of prisons in Florida are currently privatized," J.D. Alexander, an influential Republican, told me. "This expansion of privatization will bring it to one-third." As time went on, there was no doubt he, and his allies in the private prison business, were looking for 100 percent "penetration" of the market. The public would own nothing. Of course, this was merely the "American way".

"I think competition makes us better, it's an American sort of view: let's create competitive environments, privatize a portion," he added. But it later emerged that the state would incur $25 million in losses from compensation paid to 3,800 workers who would lose their jobs in the privatization program. Corrections officers are already among the lowest-paid employees in the state. "During the privatization process, they will go into unemployment and foreclosure," said John Rivera, president of the Police Benevolent Association, which represents Florida's correction officers and was opposed to the privatization. "They will get their cars repossessed, they won't be able to pay for medical care, and so the state will have to pick it up. And those that have seniority, it will cost the state to relocate them." Lawmakers, largely Republican, and the contractors argue that private companies can run prisons cheaper – largely through savings on wages and benefits for workers. But analysts say the statistics do not match. These saves, for example, are mitigated by the fact you have higher turnover among employees and more lawsuits due to lack of sovereign immunity. Private companies also usually cherry-pick the lowest-cost offenders and leave the state to deal with serious and dangerous offenders who cost more. "A lot of the time when you see numbers for private prison costs to state costs it's not apples to apples because they are not taking most serious offenders," said Scott Henson, an analyst covering the corrections industry in the US. "In Texas the private facilities haven't wanted to take on serious offenders." Private prisons want the healthiest prisoners, not the "hard-core" troublemakers – the ones with misdemeanours or felonies – they want the state to bear those costs. But a lot of states have yet to realize that this is a scam, or have realized but it is making too many people rich for them to stop it. In private prisons you have less experienced officers, and a lower guards-to-prisoners ratio, so you really are running a risk of prison riots and prison escapes. The real reason why private prisons don't want real troublemakers, and want the least violent prisoners, is so they can run it like a college dorm rather than prison.

PERVERSE INCENTIVES

It is also in the companies' interest to keep more and more people locked up as it pumps up their bottom line. If you have a state-run prison there are fixed costs that are there whether it is full or half-full. For privately run prisons – where you are getting paid by the head – there is an incentive in the other direction. It sometimes crosses into overt corruption, such as paying judges to send children to prisons, which is an extreme example of the warped and unhealthy incentives that private incarceration creates. In February 2011, a juvenile court judge in Luzerne county, Pennsylvania, was convicted of racketeering after he accepted money from a private prison operator in exchange for handing down extremely harsh sentences in order to guarantee prisons would be full. "It simply does not save money," said Mr Rivera. "For example, recently they told legislators and the community that they would save $22 million a year yet now they are already $25 million over budget. The private prisons' selling point is they can do it more cheaply. If they are able to do it more cheaply, even though the evidence does not support it, they have to cut somewhere so they tend to cut staff … In prisons understaffing has consequences. In 2010, in Kinman, Arizona, three prisoners escaped from a private prison and the official inquiry found the private company at fault because of lax staff training. There are very real risks. If you understaff a prison the consequences can be very serious indeed."

Of course, the companies in the sector are big political players, being significant campaign donors in elections across the country. In reality, the privatization effort is more driven by political patronage than cost savings. It's quite simple: anytime you have profit as the main motivator for the safety of the public, it is a bad formula. Government's first responsibility should be to its people; a corporation's first responsibility is to its investors. "I'm reminded of the old adage, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is," David Fathi, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's national prison project, told me, accurately. "The claim that private corporations can do the same job more cheaply and still generate profits for stockholders is pretty implausible on the face of it," he added. "It is in fact not true."

Two companies dominate the US private prison sector: Corrections Corporation of America and GEO Group. Over the past decade the two "big ones" have gobbled up a host of smaller companies and consolidated the industry. In 2010, Geo acquired the third public company that operated in the market, Cornell, for $730 million in stock and cash, creating a "duopoly". They are faceless, both refusing to be interviewed by me. This monopolization of markets is another feature of capitalism: power and capital centralize. The companies are not run particularly well. They are highly indebted and rapidly accumulating more debt. They both dip into day-to-day operations to service debt payments. But the racket obviously think they will get more business in the future: Corrections Corp's shares rose 7.5 percent from 2006 to 2011. Wall Street is happy to lend them money at low interests rates.

The politicians are a product of this: they work for, and are probably funded by, the real power in this debate – not the plucky state senator, but the corporate behemoths that are devouring society and all its assets. They already own over 300 prisons nationwide and it's getting worse. Now there are around 135,000 prisoners in private prisons in the US – 7 percent of all state prisoners and 16 percent of all federal prisoners. Private prison corporations are trying to expand the market for their services. In communications to shareholders they are forthright about the fact that they are looking to expand prison privatization and lobby and provide campaign contributions strategically. They are sophisticated in their efforts to generate business. “We are at a turning point for incarceration policy,” said Mr Fathi. “For the first time in 30 years, the prison population actually went down last year.” There is no question that private prison companies deliberately and strategically support and recruit politicians who will lead to increased incarceration. Just as Eisenhower warned about the military–industrial complex, we now have a prison–industrial complex. Prisons will make more money the more people we incarcerate.

The police, often, themselves see the poor they are employed to control as nothing more than scum. When I took a ride around Brooklyn, New York City, with two white cops, their disdain was obvious. The two partners are regular car buddies and they work the 3.30pm to 11.30pm shift. They had a real disdain for their constituents “More filthy people,” said Officer Cavanella as we passed a housing project. This theme continued as he tried his hand at quack sociology, appropriating shibboleths from extreme conservatism. “These are low-income people who just don’t care,” he said. “They don’t respect us, they don’t respect themselves, they don’t respect nobody.”

CUTTING JUSTICE

While profit was being made from the privatization of the prisons, funds were being savagely cut from the public side of the justice system, in keeping with the racket’s priorities. In New York, I met Jimmy Boone Amos waiting outside the arraignment court in downtown Brooklyn for her husband to appear. It was 4pm, but she had been sitting there since early that morning. “I’m tired of waiting,” she told me. Her husband was arrested 23 hours earlier for grabbing a woman in the street during what Ms Amos calls a diabetic attack. “I’m really worried about him,” she added. "They've had him for ages and not told me how he is. I don't know if he has insulin or anything."

United States law prescribes that anyone charged with a crime must be arraigned before a judge within 23 hours. But cuts at both the federal and state level meant that court budgets had been devastated and that the target is often not met. Over a single weekend in 2011, 57 percent of arraignments in Brooklyn went over the required period. But arraignment times are just one of many problems that cuts to the state budget have created in New York, and the US at large. The poorest and most vulnerable are hit hardest, as is often the case when public services are cut. Ms Amos is one of many New Yorkers who have had to suffer needless pain as the state draws back on its constitutional commitment to properly fund its justice system.

New York chopped $170 million from its $2.6 billion budget for 2011, around 6.5 percent. This had already had a serious impact far beyond arraignment times. Across New York, courts now close at 4.30pm instead of 5pm. The ability of judges to take in all the information they need is now compromised as they rush through cases so they can adjourn at the right time. The state used to have night family courts, where if a woman wanted support or an order of protection she could go after work or at an unsociable hour. These are now closed, putting at risk women who are victims of domestic abuse and other forms of violence.

Small claims courts in Manhattan, the Bronx and Queens used to be open for four nights a week, but that has been reduced to one (and in Staten Island's case, the reduction is from once a week to once a month). Small claims courts are where tenants can take on their landlords and consumers can challenge big corporations. Both those crucial functions are disintegrating. "In Staten Island now, if you wanted to sue Macy's for whatever reason you would have to wait nine months," said Dennis Quirk, president of the New York state court officers' association.

"Certainly morale is lower than years past," added Howard Schwartz, a Brooklyn-based criminal defense attorney sitting outside the same downtown court. "There's more work for fewer people." He says it takes longer for clients to get into court, that cases take longer, and that judges now have to give less attention to arraignment cases because of the heavy load. "The system is overburdened," he added. In 2011, the New York court system laid off 441 workers, or about 3 percent, on top of the 2,000 who retired in 2010, swelling the hordes of unemployed in the city. Those still in a job are massively overworked. "The cuts are having system-wide effects," adds Mr Quirk. "Everybody has too much to do and it is having an effect on people getting their day in court and justice being served."

The US prides itself on its adherence to the rule of law, but starving the courts system of money is seriously affecting the ability of ordinary Americans to get justice served. Evidence is being more hastily assembled and analyzed, people are spending too long in cells before being charged, and vulnerable people are losing the slim protections they have against violent and abusive relatives or partners. Moreover, these cuts were not inevitable. In the three years that the emergency "millionaires tax" had been in place in New York, it generated $13.8 billion in revenue. The law raised the rate of income tax for New Yorkers making more than $500,000 by 2.1 percentage points to 8.97 percent. If that tax bracket were raised again, many of the New York justice system's problems could be solved, and the long wait of people such as Jimmy Boone Amos, and many more Americans across the country, could be made shorter. But the racket does not like such ideas. In the ruling ideology, that's "class war". But in many places around the world, the endless and empty propaganda is wearing thin, and people are taking things into their own hands. Here's where hope begins.

PART FOUR

WE'RE LOSING YOU

FOURTEEN

TURF WAR

THE MONROE DOCTRINE

A brief re-cap. The early 21st century has seen the biggest political shift in the western hemisphere since the murderous thug Christopher Columbus thought he had arrived in the Indian subcontinent but had actually "discovered" the (already inhabited) Americas. Since 1823 and the so-called Monroe Doctrine, the western hemisphere has been designated by American planners "our backyard", a vast resource-rich expanse open for pillage and exploitation for the gain of an elite class in the US and a handsomely rewarded quisling elite in the colonized countries. This dynamic has been constant and unbroken for two centuries. President James Monroe obviously didn't put it in these bald terms when he made his address to Congress on December 2, 1823, which forms the basis of this so-called doctrine. Monroe said that day that countries in the western hemisphere "are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power", which sounds like a good idea for the subjected peoples – until you realize Monroe instead gives his own country the right to take over from the European powers. "We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers," he continues, "to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety." He was telling the European powers simply, "It's ours now!" And it was. Under this naked imperialism dressed up in fusty diplomatic language, the US took Cuba from the Spanish in 1852 (the US still illegally occupies Guantanamo Bay today), and then Puerto Rico in 1898 (which the US still owns today).

As the European empires broke down after World War II, the idea of imperialism became increasingly untenable as indigenous people removed their oppressors at a rapid rate. But while Europe lay in ruins, the US was rising to its superpower status, and the racket wasn't going to lose control of their "backyard" during the ensuing Cold War with the Soviet Union. Occupations were frowned upon now, not least by an American population culturally averse to empire and imperialism. So instead the intelligence services turned to subverting any Latin American government that did not support American business interests, away from the attention of the American people. First went Guatemala in 1954, a coup against the center-left President Jacobo Arbenz who had the gall to redistribute land to landless peasants from the United Fruit Company. The CIA stepped in and installed a military junta and started one of the most horrendous civil wars in history that left 200,000 people dead.

Any country that elected any sort of left-wing politician would incur a terrorist war of anti-democratic aggression. The Dominican Republic in 1963, Brazil went down in 1964, Chile through the 1960s and eventually succumbing in 1973, Nicaragua in the 1970s, and on and on. All the governments I mention were democratic, and in many instances they were replaced with a collection of open neo-Nazis, fascists and other such dregs of humanity. It was all cloaked under the guise of the war against the "Evil Empire": Soviet Russia, much like today's Islamic fundamentalism, gave the US an excuse to do whatever it wanted. Hundreds of thousands of people were slaughtered across Latin America with the support of many US household names: John Foster Dulles starting the Guatemalan bloodbath, Henry Kissinger the dictatorship in Chile, Ronald Reagan supporting the fascist Contras against the democratically elected Sandinistas in Nicaragua. These figures are all hailed as great heroes to this day in mainstream American culture, although not by the rest of the hemisphere, for obvious reasons. John Perkins, who worked as what he called an "Economic Hit Man" for a US corporation for decades, has written a book exposing the type of work he did. He described it succinctly in an interview: "Basically what we were trained to do and what our job is to do is to build up the American empire. To bring – to create situations where as many resources as possible flow into this country, to our corporations, and our government, and in fact we've been very successful. We've built the largest empire in the history of the world. It's been done over the last 50 years since World War II with very little military might, actually. It's only in rare instances like Iraq where the military comes in as a last resort. This empire, unlike any other in the history of the world, has been built primarily through economic manipulation, through cheating, through fraud, through seducing people into our way of life, through the economic hit men. I was very much a part of that."[1]

But even with this tragic history of exploitation and mass murder, optimism swept the hemisphere as the 21st century opened. The western hemisphere – especially Latin America – was finally shaking off the shackles of the imperial bully, and this time they were winning. No longer would democratically elected leaders from Chile to Bolivia to Brazil to Venezuela allow their sovereign nations to be balked by the giant upstairs. When they proposed economic plans to give the wealth of their land to the people who actually live in it rather than to rich corporations and exiles in Miami, they would no longer be resigned to the US trying to overthrow them, they would be ready.

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[1] "Confessions of an economic hit man: how the U.S. uses globalization to cheat poor countries out of trillions", interview with John Perkins, *Democracy Now!*, November 9, 2004.

In Bolivia, when the fascist paramilitary groups in eastern provinces like Pando massacred indigenous peasants and the pale-skinned traditional elite tried to start an uprising against democratically-elected President Evo Morales, he didn't stand for the encouragement the US was giving: as we have seen, he kicked out the ambassador. He also brought the governor, who had incited the massacre, to justice. On top of this stern action, all the newly independent center-left leaders of the Latin American bloc came to Morales' aid at the UN, they knew that together they were a powerful force that couldn't be crushed under the boot of the American government.

Hugo Chávez in Venezuela followed suit and kicked out the US ambassador there. And who can blame him? In 2002 when he himself was ousted temporarily by a US-backed coup that put a millionaire businessman into power and suspended the constitution and democracy, the people of the Venezuelan barrios fought back, marching in their hundreds of thousands for the first leader that had ever considered them worthy of their own resources. He had to be reinstated because the people of Venezuela were too powerful and alive to their plight to watch history be repeated.

This particular generation of left-wing leaders has learnt from the past. They know about the CIA, the National Endowment for Democracy and other agents of US government, and they are consciously locked into a battle. In Bolivia, for example, the indigenous communities are equipping themselves to fight back; there is none of Salvador Allende's erroneous belief in pacifism – "if the right-wing try to liquidate democracy we will fight you to defend civility", is now the message. And because there is no Cold War, the US government and its conduits in the corporate media are finding it harder to paint any politician who is vaguely left of center as an agent of Soviet Russia. Having said that, the *New York Post* did without shame describe Chávez – one of the most frequently elected leaders in the world – as a dictator. In addition, the US imperial project is so bogged down in the Middle East – where support for dictators has been equally obscene – that they have in many ways taken their eye off the ball. It's arguable that without 9/11 the Venezuelan revolution would be history by now, as well as Morales. Further still, when in 1975 the US helped set up Operation Condor – a continent-wide terror network – with their surrogate General Pinochet, they could count on the compliance of the security states they had helped set up. Now the tables have turned. With Fernando Lugo's election in Paraguay the whole continent became a left-wing independent bloc; and although Lugo was unfortunately overthrown in what he called a "parliamentary coup in judicial dress" in 2012, for the first time in centuries, things are looking up in Latin America, and a strong alliance is building. Democracy, economic justice and dignity are returning to the continent and US influence has started to wane.

TAMPER-PROOF DEMOCRACY

In an essay in 2008, the historian and theorist Perry Anderson asked why the capitalist classes, after World War II, allowed democracy to flourish in Turkey but not in Spain. In two short paragraphs he explained the history of "western democracy" in the 20th century. In Spain after the war, he wrote: "democratization was an unthinkable option for [General] Franco because it would have risked a political volcano erupting again, in which neither army nor church nor property would have been secure." For Franco and his business supporters, dictatorship was the only option. But they needn't have feared. After 36 years of the general's nightmare rule "[e]conomic development had transformed Spanish society, radical mass politics had been extinguished, and democracy was no longer hazardous for capital. So completely had the dictatorship done its work that a toothless Bourbon socialism was incapable even of restoring the republic it had overthrown." Now, in other words, Spain was safe for democracy, which was duly established in 1975. "In this Spanish laboratory could be found a parabola of the future," continued Anderson, "which the Latin American dictators of the 1970s – Pinochet is the exemplary case – would repeat, architects of a political order in which electors, grateful for civic liberties finally restored, could be trusted henceforward not to tamper with the social order."[2]

This *tamper-proof democracy*, sensitive to vested interests but not the will of the population, has been erected throughout the world, pushed primarily by the US government. Any disobedience to the "consensus" is punished harshly. Leaders who don't subscribe to it are vilified in the American and general, western media, and in the event of any particular populations taking democracy too seriously, the US will put in a tyrant to prepare the ground for the right kind of democracy. Historical examples of democracy getting "out-of-control" are legion, from Aristide in Haiti to Mosaddeq in Iran. And the enforcers are notorious too, from the Contras in Nicaragua to Suharto in Indonesia. But history is lived in the present and the dynamics of international relations haven't changed all that much. We are now living through the latest, possibly last, stage of this battle between a global population that wants a democracy that prioritizes the people, not big business and not capital, and a ruling class that wants it the other way round.

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[2] Perry Anderson, "After Kemal", *London Review of Books*, September 25, 2008.

This time around, the fly in the ointment is Latin America, the main site of global resistance to tamper-proof democracy. It might not be a coincidence that the fight-back is being consolidated in a part of the world often dismissed as "irrelevant": it's probably the reason the US and its allies haven't managed to stamp it out (although, to be fair, they've tried). This form of democracy so loved by the West and their satraps in the developing world – one of a disengaged population picking between two business parties every four years – is being seriously subverted all over the continent. The great democratic pantomime we are subjected to in the West (and the nations we make in our image) isn't working on the people of Latin America. Their democracies are becoming safer for their people. There are real political parties, like Evo Morales's Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), with real principles and real objectives that are serious about tampering with the social order for positive change.

This percolation of knowledge into the US mainstream is naturally scaring the gatekeepers of political discourse, who have been able to expatiate on their love of democracy for decades without being troubled by the existence of alternative definitions. Now the pretense is becoming harder to maintain and the reaction is sadly predictable. The almost subconscious contempt for democratic movements in Latin America is the result of centuries of unthinking domination, a similar psychology to that of a schoolyard bully who's had his run of the yard for so long he gets complacent. Suddenly, when he's taken his eye off the ball in order to clobber some other poor kid for his bag of sweets, the first kid decides to finally stand up for himself. It's hard to take.

For Perry Anderson, the template of Spain after Franco's destruction of civil society "has become the general formula of freedom: no longer making the world safe for democracy, but democracy safe for this world". Through a confluence of historical factors, Latin America is the crucible where the last chance to make a world safe for democracy is being fought. The importance of this battle shouldn't be underestimated: if it fails, we might not get another chance.

CARACAS, VENEZUELA

Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, is the focal point of so many of the country's divisions. The center of the city is a mix of bustling street markets and modernist skyscrapers lined along wide avenues. In the mountainous suburbs the city's elites live in tree-lined streets peppered with flashy condos and fancy pizzerias. But Caracas is perhaps best known to outsiders for its barrios – the vast slums in which thousands of makeshift houses cling precariously to the foothills. The barrios have long been the hub of support for Chavismo. It was the people in the barrios who descended from the mountains to the presidential palace in their thousands to support Chávez when he was briefly deposed in a US-backed coup in 2002. When I was in Caracas, I took one of the city's new cable cars to visit the barrios. The cable cars were built to link different parts of the vast slums. The lines to get on the bus at the other end are long. It used to take two hours on the bus through the winding mountain roads that snake through the barrios; the same journey by cable car takes 17 minutes and costs 10 cents. The cable cars that hover over Caracas have transformed the lives of thousands of the poorest Venezuelans. They are state of the art, clean and run without any problems. It appears no money was spared in its construction. As you walk through the barrios, graffiti dedicated to Hugo Frias Chávez, the secular deity of Venezuela since his death, is commonplace. Some of them are stencils, obviously paid for and designed by the Chavista government itself, but many are improvised outpourings of thanks from the people.

Venezuela should be one of the richest countries in the world. With the world's second largest reserves of petrol, it has a natural resource that makes the swathes of ghettoes and palpable poverty in the country an embarrassment. For centuries before Chávez, this petrol had been extracted with the interests of the racket in mind: money flowed to western multinationals and their shareholders, alongside their oligarchical Venezuelan representatives. With Chávez, for the first time, the natural wealth of the country was spread throughout society, focusing as it should on the poorest. Missions of teachers and doctors were sent into the barrios to bring to an end the shame of poverty in such a naturally rich country. As a result, over the period of Chavismo, Venezuela has reduced poverty by more than any other country in Latin America, including Brazil and Bolivia. This is not to say there aren't problems with the country and some tenets of Chavismo. The lack of judicial independence is a significant problem, with Chavista control near absolute. There have been shortages of essential foods and inflation is sky high. Some of this is undoubtedly the fault of the traditional elites in the country who have tried to squeeze the economy to bring down Nicolás Maduro, the man who replaced Chávez after his death, as they tried during the huge strikes early in Chávez's tenure. This "making the economy scream" as Nixon called it, worked wonders in 1970s Chile, helping to create a climate in which General Pinochet could overthrow Chilean democracy. It looks less likely to succeed in Venezuela. Despite the anti-government protests of 2014 which called for "*la salida*" of Maduro ("the exit"), the Chavista government keeps winning democratic elections fairly. What is the racket to do?

In the frankly embarrassing hysteria that gripped the American media, Chávez was compared to Saddam Hussein, Pol Pot, Idi Amin and even, echoing Donald Rumsfeld's idiocy, Adolf Hitler. "Mr Chávez shares much in common with these former dictators who killed and trampled human rights as a means to their own ends," wrote Douglas MacKinnon in the *Washington Post*. Chávez had some of the most stellar democratic credentials in the world. Since being democratically elected in 1998 by a landslide victory, he went to the Venezuelan people again in 1999 and won approval for important constitutional changes. He won another general election in July 2000 when he was elected with 60 percent of the votes, which dwarfs figures from the "home of democracy" such as the US and UK. Later, in December 2000, he won a referendum that called for the state monitoring of labor unions' elections. And then, a presidential recall referendum – which was enshrined in Chávez's 1999 constitution – was triggered in August 2004 when opposition groups collected signatures from 20 percent of the electorate, as the constitution stipulated. Again Chávez won: 59 percent of the population voted "no" to the recall in an election overseen by the best election auditors in the world. By my reckoning, that counts as three general elections and two referendums in nine years. It is hard to find a more exercised populace in the entire world. This stands in stark contrast, of course, to George W. Bush, who, and it is now uncontroversial to say this, stole the election in 2000 in a dictatorial putsch more common to a banana republic. And this brief primer also leaves out the most telling part of recent Venezuelan history: the coup attempt by right-wing groups in 2002, which tried to use the military to topple the democratically elected president. The journalist Eva Golinger, in her book *The Chávez Code: Cracking US Intervention in Venezuela*, assiduously documents, through the revelation of previously secret US government documents, the succor and support that various of its agencies gave to this anti-democratic military coup, which briefly succeeded until hundreds of thousands of downtrodden people from

Caracas took to the streets to demand the release of Chávez who had been incarcerated by the new business junta.

So why the lies and misinformation about Chávez? The answer is simple and is deeply rooted in the political and economic policies of the United States. Venezuela under Chávez provided a symbol to the rest of Latin America, and to the wider world, of what a more egalitarian society can look like. In the aftermath of his election, Chávez created what he called "Bolivarian Missions" after Simón Bolívar, the great Latin American liberationist from the 19th century, aimed at reducing the massive and crippling poverty in the barrios around Venezuela. Hundreds of free medical hospitals were built providing healthcare to many people for the first time, and local grassroots committees were established to adjudicate their affairs. The infant mortality rate came down by 18.2 percentage points from 1998 to 2006, while income for the poorest strata of Venezuelan society grew *more than 150* percent from 2003 to 2006. For the first time in many decades, the oil wealth of this nation extremely rich in natural resources was redirected back to its people, and not, as history has demanded, passed to rapacious foreigners and their elite lackeys in Venezuela.

This is a dangerous example to set, and the thirst for this kind of justice is likely to spread. Henry Kissinger, in the analogous example of Chile under socialist Salvador Allende in the 1970s, called it a "virus that could infect others". The racket continues to try to destroy it, but in the mountain-speckled skyline of south-eastern Mexico, the battle for survival and a dignified existence burns bright.

FIFTEEN

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

CHIAPAS, MEXICO

Oventik is two hours' drive from San Cristóbal de las Casas, the Spanish colonial town in the highlands of the Mexican state Chiapas. The roads are good apart from the potholes and the small animals that dart in the path of your motorbike. Breezeblock houses with corrugated iron roofs, the accommodation of the world's poor, punctuate the pavements on either side. Oventik is not indicated by anything more than a decaying sign by the side of road, and it's different here. "*Estas entrando tierra Zapatista*", says the sign ("You are now entering Zapatista land"). To the side is a gate manned by four people, all wearing balaclavas, black socks pulled over their faces with a slit cut in the middle, from which their eyes peer out. These are the members of the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation), fighting back in the poorest state in Mexico. Looking down the long drive that runs through the community, you can see grand murals on the walls of all the buildings: Che Guevara and Emiliano Zapata are recurring themes. When I put in a request to come inside, the guards take my passport and return half an hour later: "You can come in but no interviews", they told me. Oventik is one of 13 "*caracoles*" (meaning "snails" in Spanish) that are scattered throughout Chiapas. They were won by armed struggle by the indigenous revolutionary group, the Zapatistas, after they rose up on January 1, 1994, the date when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) signed with the United States and Canada came into force. As part of its provisions, the Mexican government had to change its near-century old constitution that granted common ownership of land. This was the straw that broke the back of the indigenous communities, who had suffered centuries of discrimination and oppression at the hands of the *latifundistas*, or large landowners. The neoliberal program of NAFTA, which quite simply removed Mexican sovereignty, had been edging closer in the preceding years. The *ejido* system, for example, was consecrated in Article 27 of the Mexican constitution. It's a form of land ownership, created after the revolution, whereby the *ejidatarios* have the right to the produce of the land that they work. This just and humane law was ended in 1991 with the modification of Article 27 by Washington favorite, President Carlos Salinas, who reformed the agrarian law in line with Bretton Woods dictates. Salinas also started the program of certification of land rights that transformed the lands into smaller properties. This move of sovereignty from the people to foreign capitalists set the ground for the Zapatistas, named after the Mexican freedom fighter and revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, who claimed Mexico back from international capital in the 20th century's first successful revolution.

The long path down to the bottom of the *caracol* is a muddy track. On either side stand wooden buildings dedicated to the "dignity of women", a hospital, a school, a basketball court. My guide is not interested in talking; the balaclava reveals only the eyes, and the eyes have had enough of questions. The *caracol* has many different meanings for the Zapatistas. One of their mottos is "*caminar al paso del mas lento*" ("walk at the pace of the slowest"), meaning that they can wait until the last member of the community is ready before they continue to move forward. There are murals peppered throughout the *caracol* depicting snails with the slogan "*lento pero avanza*" ("slow but moving forward") – again signifying that they will move at a snail's pace, but once they are all ready, they will progress. The Zapatistas adopt the tactic of using silence as a way of learning, to listen, not to shout. Rumor has it that they have been slowly preparing themselves and will soon re-emerge. Fuelling these rumors was the announcement when I was there that the Zapatistas would be organizing *escuelitas* ("little schools") to be held in five *caracoles*. In these *escuelitas* seasoned Zapatistas will "give classes on their thought and action on liberty according to Zapatismo: their successes, their failures, their problems, their solutions, the things which have moved forward, the things that have got bogged down, and the things that are missing, because what is missing is yet to come", according to Subcomandante Marcos, one of the Zapatistas' most eloquent spokespersons, who is now back in Chiapas after a stint living in Paris. In the *caracol*, there is a feeling of empowerment and independence rare in the world, especially in this region. The Mexican military – which has carried out countless attacks on the indigenous communities – is not allowed, in theory, to come into this community, and you can feel the difference. The Zapatistas are the most organized of the indigenous resistance groups. Part of this is because of the hard-fought battles of the mid-1990s, resulting in the San Andrés Accords signed with the Mexican government through which they achieved a degree of autonomy.

ACTEAL

Further up in the mountains, among the clouds and lawns of nature, is Acteal, a small indigenous town partly run by the Zapatistas. In 1996, the most brutal of the massacres committed against the Zapatistas was carried out here, when 45 people were killed by a paramilitary group while praying in the local church. Many suspect the US-backed Mexican government was involved or at least complicit in the massacre. Soldiers at a nearby military outpost did not intervene during the attack, which lasted for several hours. Many of them were seen the next day washing the blood off the walls of the church. The Mexican government had used paid mercenary militias to terrorize the Zapatistas at that time.

I arrived in the middle of one of the many downpours and walked down the main street into a basketball court sponsored by the EZLN. The entire town was gathered to cheer on their local team. As in Oventik, the outsides of the houses and community buildings were decorated with murals depicting left-wing revolutionaries from Latin America; saints wearing Zapatista balaclavas; and children of different races standing hand in hand. A local man approached me and asked if I had seen the monument built to commemorate those who died in the massacre, and he pointed me in its direction. The monument stood a couple of dozen feet high, half covered by the clouds which were quickly descending over the village. The monument is a clay construction in which the 45 faces of those massacred are depicted, merged together in a collective wail. I went down some steps to the site where the massacre took place. No longer a church (it was torn down after the massacre), it is now an outdoor auditorium with painted wooden crosses nailed to the walls in memory of each person killed. Among the dead were a number of children and pregnant women. A man approached me and I told him that I was visiting from the UK. He asked me: “Why didn’t you visit earlier, before they killed my friends?” I had no answer.

Back in San Cristóbal, I sat down with Roberto Chankin Ortega, one of the young activists who had been involved in the struggle from the beginning. We drank coffee in the café in the middle of the town’s main square. “It was a big surprise for a lot of people, the uprising of January 1, 1994. My father said there hadn’t been an uprising for 50 years, an indigenous uprising,” Ortega told me. “But after there was a lot of sympathy with the causes. The demands they had were very just, it touched a chord internationally.” He continued: “I was very young at the time so there was a romanticism about the armed struggle, the communiqués of Marcos, a new language which was very poetic, influenced by rock and roll. A new language of fighting. But it was also heavy at times, you couldn’t leave the house many times.”

Mexico is in many ways a failing democracy: the political class is divorced from the people and the education and healthcare systems for the poor are in disrepair. It should not be like this as Mexico is a country rich in resources and geographically fortuitously located.

FREE-TRADE SLAVERY

When the Zapatistas burst on the scene on New Year’s Day 1994, they garnered a great deal of press coverage and international support. This attenuated the brutality of the Mexican military’s fight-back. When the Zapatistas occupied San Cristóbal, many were armed with guns carved in wood, a symbol of resistance. But the Mexican military were too strong and to avoid a massacre they withdrew into the Lacandon jungle after threats. Chase Bank’s memo a few weeks later, “Political Update on Mexico”, echoed the concern of capitalists across the West and stated: “The government will have to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and security policy.” It was, of course, exploitation and a virulent racism, around since the era of colonialism, against the indigenous people that gave birth to the movement. For centuries the white interloper infantilized the indigenous population as a method of control – it tried to make them into children psychologically, through a racist paternalism. Crushed under the yoke of the white man's guns at first, then as slaves to their economic system, this changed finally in 1994. "They stood up for themselves," said Ortega. "They are more owners of their liberty. For the indigenous, this process has dignified them. The government has of course invested a lot of money to get rid of the movement, which worried the United States, too." The government essentially wants to displace the indigenous people of Mexico, or at least those who happen to inhabit land that foreign capitalists like the look of. The white society in Mexico, in reality, still thinks of the "indio" as *poor, destitute and subhuman*.

Despite this, the autonomous zones are a big achievement in the face of extreme oppression and pressure from the government and the US-supplied Mexican military, who cannot enter the *caracoles*. Inside these zones, the Zapatistas have their own driving licenses, hospitals and schools – a real community within a state. "They are continuing to construct autonomy and resist," said Ortega. "The media don't give them much coverage any more, but the Zapatistas don't care too much, they are focusing on working on autonomy and realities."

"They survive because of international support," said a university professor I talked to. This may be partly true, but they also survive because they are organized and focused squarely on their true oppressor.

The US has trained the Mexican military for decades, sharing their manuals of counter-insurgency, alongside supplying billions of dollars to aid in the fight against drugs, a cover which is often used to discipline the dissident parts of the population, including the Zapatistas. "All over the world, the US interests make it dangerous for a lot of people," Ortega told me. "NAFTA was a disaster. A lot of public policies which were enacted as part of NAFTA have brought about privatizing of land, campesinos have been kicked off land, had their land sold or closed down." That free trade agreement itself has helped to destroy large parts of the previously thriving industrial base in Mexico, giving the narcos even more unemployed cannon fodder with which to get a grip on the country. As the *New York Times* put it: "NAFTA produced results that were exactly the opposite of what was promised … domestic industries were dismantled as multinationals imported parts from their own suppliers." But what the *New York Times* did not say is that NAFTA was designed like that on purpose. The aim was to make Mexico a slave state, even more so than it already was.

The Mexican establishment has presided over an economic model lauded by the Bretton Woods institutions and *Financial Times* editorials – i.e. high growth rates, big booty for foreign investors, and (this bit is kept quiet) yawning inequality. For example, the country's growth was 5.5 percent in 2010, the highest in 10 years, but that same year the number of Mexicans living in poverty grew by more than 3 million, putting 52 million Mexicans below the poverty line, or nearly half the population. The *Financial Times* lauded such a state of affairs in a headline as "bloody but booming". Bloody for poor people, booming for rich people – a succinct aphorism for the global economy.

"It's not just the US, it's international capitalists and their interests," said Gaspar Morquecho, a Mexican intellectual based in Chiapas who is found most days in the Zapatista café in the heart of San Cristóbal. "In Africa, Asia, Latin America, everywhere, it's the same, and it's very hard to fight." In 1992 Subcomandante Marcos defined this war against the world's poor as World War IV. World War III had been the Cold War, won by the capitalists, and World War IV was being led by the victors – a war of the markets, the arms companies, the financiers, pushing forth and destroying countries, cultures and economies. In this sense, we are seeing in this the last stage of capitalism, and World War IV is the construction of a different way of living. "The US has many plans of war – they go by names like Plan Colombia, Plan Mérida," said Morquecho, who describes himself as an adherent of the Declaration of Lacandon which outlined the Zapatistas' goals. "It's a project of control of the hemisphere and has been going on for the last 200 years. The interests of the US at the least is to control the region of Latin America, but not just that, they go to war in Middle East, provoke China in Asia. They are introducing their brutal military and billions of dollars per year spent on it. They aren't weak; it has got worse, more intense in the operations in Mexico. There is no weakness in the empire, opportunities for the EZLN are hard to find."

He is right, but the Zapatistas have shown the shape of a pocket, a pocket of resistance, an outline of how you can use modern techniques to create such public support that it is impossible for the powers that be to crush it and maintain the façade of nobility they feed on like bloodthirsty vultures. The repression against the indigenous people has been brutal since they took their destiny into their own hands. It has become more complicated in recent years because a lot of powerful economic forces have come to Chiapas to make a quick buck, attracted by the favorable "investment climate" after NAFTA. Mexico was now, like other US satellites, "open for business" as the neoliberals say; more accurate would be "Mexico is up for sale". These powerful economic forces are now trying to capture the political process completely to bypass resistance to the sell-off. The state-owned oil company Pemex is the latest of the Mexican people's assets slated for sale.

In the indigenous people's battle for their land, their enemies are not just governments on the federal or state level. Behind them, steering the ship, is the racket of private capital, the multinationals who want their resources, from water to petrol. In countries like Mexico, the state acts merely as an intermediary between foreign multinationals and the country's natural resources, giving corporate power a legitimate face as they open up the territory and evict the people. The state, contrary to its protestations, cares not a scintilla for the human rights of its own citizens. Such a state of affairs is the case in all the countries around the world that remain trapped under the US umbrella.

"The human rights situation has actually got worse over the past 20 years, in terms of the violence against the people," said Gubi Chamatus of Frayba, the human rights center in San Cristóbal which has worked closely on issues related to the Zapatistas. "Before all these mega-projects were going forward where they could, there was no resistance, the people just said OK. Now, however, these same people are arriving, and people are saying no, and they are standing in front of construction, so the violations have gone up, because the repression is harsher against these people; they don't want these situations, it's embarrassing, it's given the lie to all the talk of development and modernization." As Rosa Luxemburg put it: those who do not move, do not notice their chains.

FULL-FRONTAL ATTACK

The government of Mexico, like all states allied to the US, preaches the rhetoric of human rights but ordinary people don't see them. Before they stood up and took control, the indigenous people were anonymous, the powerful could call them free with no contradiction. When they took up arms, they became the enemy, they were no longer representatives of the "good indigenous". But the Zapatistas won the war for the hearts and minds of the world, so the Mexican military had to give concessions. The propaganda after the uprising declared "peace" in Chiapas. But 500 years of brutality and savagery will take a long time to rectify. The process for autonomy continues and with it violence. "The human rights of the indigenous, they aren't guaranteed," Chamatus told me as we sat in his office. "When an indigenous group isn't in accord with a mega-project or something like that, the state use the public force to repress it, or to move them." Once again the people of a region are held ransom to the God of Investment. The attack on the poor and indigenous is full frontal, coming from economic, social, political and military forces.

So far, in Chiapas, the Drug War-fuelled violence seen in the rest of Mexico has not arrived. The war started by President Felipe Calderón in 2006 has affected nearly every other state of Mexico. But in Chiapas it hasn't manifested, maybe because Chiapas has been heavily militarized since 1994 anyway; most of the state has seen a constant military presence since the uprising. Since that period, with US training and backing, there have been systematic violations of human rights in indigenous communities. In Chiapas, in fact, the pretext of the Drug War is being used to position more military in the state. "They are fortifying Chiapas," said Chamatus. "In our experience, the violations go up with the presence of the military. There is a strong correlation. One of the things that has changed in Chiapas is that, before, the presence of the military was for the EZLN, now it is more ambiguous, it could be for this or narco traffickers. It gives them license to do whatever they want under the guise of drugs." It was a familiar story, heard from Honduras to Colombia to Peru. It brought about a new strategy applied by the Mexican state, no doubt learnt from their American patron, whereby if a group speaks against the state it is speciously linked with organized crime, and from then on the state has *carte blanche* to do what it wants. "What they are looking to do is quite simple," added Chamatus. "They want to impugn the legitimacy of the organization, the credibility of the organization, and criminalize social protest, criminalize the defense of human rights, criminalize not being in accordance with state. This is the situation now in Chiapas."

It's a tactic as old as domination itself, and intended to target the EZLN communities because they continue in resistance. For this reason, they live in fear of the multi-billion-dollar military, which is typically the institution entrusted to enforce capitalists' interests when all other methods have been exhausted. In other words, the Mexican people pay tax for a military that is used to enforce foreign capital's interests.

There are more than 70,000 soldiers permanently placed in the beautiful hills and towns of Chiapas, a number that has been steadily rising since 1994, and the same number as in the whole of the rest of Mexico combined. From 1995 to 1999 the human rights situation deteriorated, particularly because the military and paramilitaries were sent in to "discipline" the indigenous people. The situation is not as serious now, but their presence remains strong, they routinely extort money from locals, and disfigure the landscape with roadblocks. The strategy of stamping on dissidence from the Zapatistas has moved to criminalization: they, and the human rights groups that support them, are branded as delinquents. It's an ideological war, too: rumors are spread that the Zapatistas are rich and stealing money. "The conditions of the country are in some ways worse than 1994," said Morquecho. "After 1994, there was a dirty war which had left 10,000 victims dead and many disappeared. In 2002, there was a new war with 70,000 victims, 50,000 displaced, 15,000 disappeared, and the last six years have been worse. Half the population is poor, that's 50 million people, and 15 million are outside of the labor market, in informal work. Half the population lives in extreme poverty, and this reflects in what is happening in the jungle. In this sense, we say the conditions are worse. But the other problem is, the capitalist system in this country is tremendously brutal and any act of rebellion, the answer politically is the military. In this sense, from 1994, the territory has been occupied by the military, and there is a strategy of counter-insurgency, and not a program to combat poverty. The objective is to drain the water of fish, to limit the process of resistance in the Zapatista communities. The Mexican state has the political and military clout to neutralize the EZLN and the bases of support, and it is still trying."

The indigenous still live in extreme poverty, without electricity or running water, in a virtual position of apartheid. But the process of 1994–95 is reversible, the gains of popular movements, whether of the Zapatistas or anyone else, are always vulnerable to being liquidated. When I was there the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) had returned to power; until 2000 it had been governing for 71 years in the "perfect dictatorship", riven with corruption and behaving as a serial human rights violator.

As usual, the US was on the wrong side of history. When the empire and its racket is long gone, washed up like the rest of the superpowers of history, we will be able to say this. But, for now, when the vast riches of a small number of people depend on its rapacious course, the truth will stay silent, and the Era of the Myth surges on, ripping through society after society.

SIXTEEN

REVOLUTIONARIES

CAIRO, EGYPT

On January 25, 2011 a march was planned for Cairo, the capital of Egypt. There was a lot of publicity on social networking sites, but this had happened before. People knew something was going to happen on the Tuesday but no one really knew what. On that day something started in Egypt that would upset the imperial order set up by the US in the Middle East after World War II. People rose up against the corrupt US-backed dictator, Hosni Mubarak, and demanded real rights for themselves and their country. In the ensuing violence, the military and police murdered hundreds of Egyptians who were fighting for a better chance in life – the so-called "lost generation" of unemployed, terrorized youth. The chants at the start of the uprising that pushed more people to join the protests were all economic. The people were hungry, for food and for basic human dignity, which had been ripped from them by the regime. In the end the people won the battle, if not the war. The military declined to murder them en masse, and for that the Egyptians were meant to be grateful.

I arrived in Cairo just over a year later to see how the revolutionary movement, which had not achieved its goal of overthrowing the regime but had merely diminished its power, had organized and what lessons could be learnt by other people crushed under the boot of a domestic dictatorship propped up by the most powerful country in the world. It was my first time in the Egyptian capital. There was a frenetic element to daily life on the street, with cars and people bursting from all the narrow sidewalks and roads. I met one activist, Sarrah Abdelrahman, who was something of a poster child for the Egyptian revolution, in a café on Talaat Harb Square. Before the historic events of January, the 24-year-old aspiring actress had been apolitical. Now you couldn't stop the self-described revolutionary talking about the struggle for dignity she and her people were engaged in. But 15 months on from those heady days, like many of the young secular left which spearheaded the revolt, she was disconsolate. "It's conceivable that we might end up with something even worse than Mubarak in a year's time," she told me. "I'm not going to lie. I thought the army and military were going to take the side of the people, but it seems now that they forced Mubarak to step down to save the regime, not to break the regime. I mean, the people in power now are criminals, actually they are worse than Mubarak." She added: "Now, half my generation is blind or limping or dead. The violence is out of control. When people go to a football match and then 70 kids die. They also massacred 25 Copts." But, she added: "I have hope for my generation because they were completely not politicized before, like me. Before if you asked anyone about politics or current events or wars in the region, they would only know about singers and football players, but now it's completely different." They had woken up.

THE BOGEYMAN

The US had gone quite straightforwardly from supporting the dictator, Mubarak, to supporting his replacement, the equally undemocratic

Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), and then later the coup regime of Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. True to form the US had supported and armed Mubarak to the hilt since he came to power in 1981; his regime scared the US by using the bogeyman of the Muslim Brotherhood, saying they would take over if any moves to democratization were enforced. The regime put dissidents in jail through risible military trials and torture; no one could organize without incurring the wrath of a vicious regime. For that reason, Egyptian society, like so many in a US-designed Middle East, lacked a liberal left party, there was nothing. The one thing the US had feared since Nasser – the Soviet-allied Egyptian dictator – was the rise of independent Arab nationalism, which might see nationalizations and the growth of socialism. They worked actively to destroy it – including by promoting radical Islamists, like Hamas in Palestine. The unions that had not been completely co-opted by Mubarak provided some means of organization, but when the uprising succeeded in bringing on elections, the Muslim Brotherhood took advantage of the destruction of Egyptian civil society that had taken place during Mubarak's regime and won. The Brotherhood had a leadership, they had access to the media and, perhaps most important, they had God on their side. In a population with such low levels of literacy and education, large swathes of the population were swayed by this pious party, which had little interest in improving their condition. The Brotherhood had never been leaders of the uprising; they had been reticent at first and then became followers. One of the strengths of revolution was that it was leaderless, but this also had its drawbacks.

Ms Abdelrahman for her part said she was angry at the way the US had reacted. "Before the revolution a lot of people in my generation were rooting for Obama actually," she said. "His hope propaganda was very media sexy and idealistic. But from what I've seen, first of all the tear-gas that I've smelt was made in the USA, and just the way the statements from Obama and Hillary Clinton which were like, 'Oh we're just testing the waters to see what to do.' They were a complete let-down, they just go after their own interests." She added: "I mean, that's different from Hollywood, or the culture or the people, the American people are different from the government. US foreign policy is inconsistent, they just look after their own interests, and they just don't want anyone else to be the best apart from them."

The US soon started meeting with the Muslim Brotherhood, seeing them as a bulwark against the extremist Salafis and the Brotherhood had no qualms about selling out: they made deals with SCAF and met with John McCain and any other foreign dignitaries that made it to Cairo to solidify the position of the client state. "Imagine that Egypt is a woman who is covered in wounds and she is kind of bleeding all over but she's covered," said Sarrah. "What happened is the uprising kind of unveiled all these things, so you are starting to see all this mold, this pollution, these infected wounds."

The US gives the Egyptian military upward of $1.3 billion every year, alongside joint military training. In response to the mass murder of Egyptian protesters by the military and police, US Congress passed a law in October 2011 stipulating that Egypt has to prove it's moving toward democracy, while the $1.3 billion reaches the Egyptian people in bullet form. In addition, the $1.3 billion benefits the racket, creating a demand for American weapons exporters, and in Egypt it subsidizes the military's economic investments. M1 Abrams tanks, for example, come to Egypt in parts that need to be assembled, and so tank-assembling businesses are created. Many of these are expressly joint ventures with western companies, like for example the joint venture with Jeep to create armored and commercial vehicles. "Because the military are so opaque we don't know if it's 15 percent or 40 percent," Sharif Abdel Khouddous, an Egyptian journalist whom I first met working at

Democracy Now! in New York, told me in Cairo. “That being the range says a lot about what we know.”

Foreign policy in Egypt has for decades been merely reflective of US foreign policy – including the enforcement of the siege on Gaza since 2006, when Egypt allowed US warships through the Suez Canal. None of this, of course, reflects the popular will in Egypt. When Mubarak fell, Egypt was one of only three countries – the other two being the US and Israel – which did not have diplomatic relations with Iran. The secretary general of the Arab League was appointed foreign minister right after Mubarak fell and he asked why Egypt had its foreign policy dictated. He said the country would now have diplomatic relations with Iran, and open the Rafah border crossing into Gaza. Within a few weeks he was removed from the position.

The role that the US plays in backing the military was the essential core of the dictatorship. Mubarak had been in power for 30 years but the military had been ruling for 60 years and the military acts as a state within a state. “The US talked the same way as state media – they voiced support for Mubarak then realized it was too late for him, and they said he’s got to go,” said Khouddous. “But once he left, they voiced support for the SCAF, his replacement. The coverage in the US media has been very superficial. It skims the surface of what is happening. They wanted the narrative at the beginning that this was a western-friendly, Facebook-driven, young, cool crowd that led this, and they were at core of it. And they keep calling it a peaceful revolution, but at the end of the day, on January 28, there were 100 police stations that were burnt down, there’s violence all the time. They over-simplify as they tend to do, and have been slow to expose the military’s abuses, starting from the beginning but really in October with the massacre of 17 Coptic Christians in front of Maspero. The *New York Times* called that, for example, ‘sectarian riots' when the army killed all those people. That kind of language distorts everything."

The then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said initially, "our perception is the Mubarak regime is strong" which was implicit support for the dictatorship in the face of the protests. But as it became so clear that Mubarak could not continue, even the western press changed. Khouddous told me: "People like Anderson Cooper who came at the beginning and did the typical western media stenography – well, the Mubarak government says this and the protesters say this – but on the day the regime sent out thugs on camels they attacked western journalists. Cooper was hit in the head, and the next day, he changed. He was now saying, 'This is a popular mass uprising against a 30-year autocrat', which was the truth."

The Mubarak dictatorship gave the Obama administration no choice but to support the people of Egypt with this kind of violence and eventually President Obama said that Mubarak must step down. But all the time the US were playing behind the scenes too in negotiations to secure what was coming next: first, this took the form of support for Omar Suleiman, Mubarak's spy chief, to replace him. On February 10, 2011, Leon Panetta, then-director of the CIA, even said that Mubarak would step down before it happened. What the Obama administration wanted to see was secular young people who posed no threat to western neoliberal interests taking over the Arab world, but that didn't happen, it was never the Arab Spring. The State Department and White House press briefings from the period very clearly show people in the administration proclaiming their support for Mubarak in the early days of the uprising. It was only when it became clear that this was not going to be viable – and the full story of what happened between the military, Mubarak and the US administration is still not known – there was obviously some kind of deal struck whereby the military decided to sacrifice Mubarak and take power. And then the US came out in support.

US policy toward the Arab Spring was incoherent – they supported protests in countries where the regimes were less friendly and, with the exception of Egypt, tended to be silent on places like Bahrain. A more coherent policy would mean they had to build genuine political alliances with civilian political forces across the region, something the US rarely does. "I think saying Obama was behind the Arab Spring is an insult to all Arabs, it's an insult to my generation, and it's an insult to all the people who were in Tahrir," said Soraya Morayef, an activist. "There's been a lot of rhetoric about how 'they couldn't have done this on their own'. Even Omar Suleiman famously said, 'They're being generated or supported by foreign elements, countries, someone with a political agenda.' The thing is it wasn't. It was organic, it was the coming together of so many different factions of society, not just the youth, not just liberals, it was workers, it was the disenchanted government officials, there were even conscripts from the military that were defecting and joining. It's very insulting to say that any country, especially the US, was behind this. Because one of the chants in Tahrir during the 189 days was chanting against Mubarak and Omar Suleiman being agents of the Americans, and saying 'US, this is what your money is doing, your money is killing our people', and you'd find tear-gas canisters and gunshot canisters with Made in US on it. The US never supported the revolution, I feel it is responsible in continuing to pay the army that kills its own people."

THE ECONOMICS OF REVOLUTION

In Egypt's case, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) did not impose the traditional strict structural adjustment programs after the revolution, but looked to remake Egypt through more indirect terms. In June 2011, the IMF offered a $3.2 billion loan "without conditions", which no one believed – and it was rejected by the military because it was dangerous politically for them to assume the loan. But Egypt needed foreign currency; they had imported so much that they only had enough to pay for three more months of imports. The government then formally requested the $3.2 billion loan. This time, however, sensing the desperation, the IMF said Egypt had to draw up an economic reform program. The result was an eight-page economic reform package, which included all the same policies of the Mubarak era – the magic words "structural adjustment", the usual "broadening the tax pool", "VAT increases", "sales tax".

In Egypt before the revolution, an extreme form of capitalism was being imposed, in line with Bretton Woods dictates. The rich were getting richer, while the poor got poorer. On top of this, the poor were routinely tortured and the army reacted viciously to strikes. They passed a law soon after the revolution criminalizing strikes and any other action stopping work, resulting in a fine and one year in prison. The Delta bus company had a huge strike for 12 days in December 2011, but the government made promises (which it didn't keep). The workers went back on strike again and this time the army broke the strike by getting soldiers to drive the buses.

It is important to note that the revolution did not occur in a vacuum; it didn't just happen as part of a domino effect after the Tunisian revolution. The Egyptian revolution was 10 years in the making through grassroots organizing. "It took years of coalition building to have grassroots movements behind you to have this thing explode," said Khouddous. "I think its success was the 18 days were seen as this utopia, where we created this Republic of Tahrir, and it had the values and the principles that everyone wanted to see in the rest of the country, or people in Tahrir did. And when Mubarak fell it was seen as this big moment, but I think a lot of people counted their success too early, and let forces in that should have been kept out and fought just as vigorously." He continued: "I think the revolution is really more a state of mind, it's a state of revolution we are living, so it's continuing, it's much more divisive and messy, but I would say that the lesson is that the fight is never easy, and some say never finished, you are always going to be trying to improve it. But when people come together, there's nothing that could have stopped it. I still think nothing can stop it now."

There was actually something unprecedented in history taking place in Egypt: a strike wave that had been going on for seven years *without worker organizations*. Other countries went through 10 years of strikes but they had unions, they had labor parties, they had revolutionary socialist parties. "Here in Egypt, I believe it's a miracle that you have a strike wave now that has been going for seven years and you don't even have functioning trade unions," Hossam el-Hamalawy, a prominent revolutionary and organizer, told me. In Egypt the structure is very similar to what existed in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe: government bureaucrats appoint officials who claim to represent the workplace but in fact they have nothing to do with the workplace. Actually, the state-run unions have been one of the main factors in why several important general strikes have failed; historically, they have always intervened in industrial actions *on the side of the police*. And yet these strike waves were happening despite the fact there were no worker-run trade unions. Egypt witnessed a rising curve of social struggle between 1968 to 1977, led by workers and students. But it all came to nothing in 1977 when a mini-uprising was crushed. From that point, until 2005, Mubarak managed to destroy every single organization that did anything in the streets. "Mubarak's was not a totalitarian regime, it was an autocratic regime, it was all about him," said el-Hamalawy. "The guy was so paranoid about numbers, to the extent that even one of our satellite sheikhs was forced to leave for Britain a few years ago for nothing, except maybe attracting some following amongst the youth. But in fact he doesn't speak on politics at all, in fact he's very reactionary. But the thing is that he had people around him – that flips out state security." The seeds for revolution had actually been planted in December 2006 with a huge wave of strikes by workers. "Again, the state-run unions are not part of industrial actions unless it's a factory that is being liquidated and the state-run union has not been given their share of bribes, so they are going to be fucked together with the workers. These were the only places I found the state-run unions are the forefront of the strike," said el-Hamalawy. The uprising began with only three independent trade unions, but now in Egypt there is a federation of trade unions that claims to represent 2 million workers.

Nasser was initially affiliated to the Soviets, and the US only really became the major patron of Egypt with Anwar Sadat. But, el-Hamalawy said, Nasser really laid the ground for Sadat's policies later. There was a steady restructuring of the public sector starting in around 1968. The common belief is that the neoliberal period in Egypt started in 1974 with the "intifah" policies of Sadat – in fact, it started in 1968. And in 1970, under the Rogers Plan, set out by US Secretary of State William Rogers to end the Israel–Palestine conflict, Nasser had already recognized Israel and said the 1967 Israel–Palestine borders were legitimate. But still it was Sadat who threw Egypt completely into the American camp, not just in terms of loyalty and affiliation to western imperialism, but in terms of economic policies. Sadat's Egypt and Pinochet's Chile were probably the first two countries to start enacting neoliberal reforms with a vengeance: Egypt in 1974, Pinochet in 1973. But the Egyptian neoliberal program got put on hold in 1977 during the uprising, and the government started procrastinating with the reforms. "They only got the courage and the balls to implement with the outbreak of our War on Terror," said el-Hamalawy. In many ways, War on Terror and neoliberalism always go hand in hand. In Egypt in 1992, the Dirty War started and it was then that Mubarak signed the deal with the IMF and World Bank to implement the Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Programme (ERSAP), the usual package of neoliberal reforms conducive to the needs of foreign capital and a narrow local elite.

To understand how strange the lack of an organized mainstream left party is, it is necessary to step back from the western media narrative that presents the revolution as a snap uprising inspired by young westernized middle-class Egyptians on Twitter and Facebook. The roots of the current revolution go back to 2004 and involve years of heroic and inspiring actions by working people from Cairo to Alexandria and, in fact, all along the Nile delta. In 2004, the heir-presumptive of the Mubarak kleptocracy, Gamal, was handing out economic portfolios to his thieving friends who instituted IMF prescriptions attempting to privatize further a host of state-owned assets. Workers across the country fought back and started a string of successful strikes outside traditional trade unions, which were basically arms of Mubarak's corporatist state. These groupings greatly upped the number of strikes. In 2004 worker collective actions stood at 202 nationwide. By 2007 it had more than tripled to 614 – often met with severe brutality from the security forces.

THE FUTURE

This heavy history has to be defeated. "I would not say this revolution is successful unless US imperialism and Zionism are defeated in this region," said el-Hamalawy. "The local and the regional are interlinked, and the international of course, that's the third dimension. Make no mistake, people like me on the left believe our revolution will be completely destroyed if it is not exported to the rest of the region; you cannot build a democracy on an island in a sea of dictatorships. Egypt is the jewel in the crown of US imperialism in the region, the Americans are not going to leave it, the Israelis are not going to leave it, the Gulfies are not going to leave it, the Europeans are not going to leave it." In other words, if Egypt falls, the whole Middle East is going to fall – for the imperialist powers. "This current political movement here in Egypt it was all triggered by the Palestinian intifada 11 years ago. I've seen the 1990s, there was nothing. You couldn't pull together anything. The turning point was the Palestinian intifada. For the first time in three decades, you could mobilize the streets, and these mobilizations were over regional issues it is true, but it didn't take more than 10 minutes to start shifting to deal with local issues. The police turn up, they beat people, then people start chanting 'Down with Mubarak'. You know the first time I heard 'Down with Mubarak' was 2002 and this was unprecedented, you couldn't chant against Mubarak in the 1990s, it was all about Palestine at the end of the day."

The West will never stay silent; they will always try to intervene. But the question for the revolutionaries is: are you going to let them intervene? Are you going to organize? It's been the case all through the history of the racket's local dictators – from the Shah of Iran to Suharto in Indonesia. No matter if you are a client of the Americans, the most powerful country in human history, if you get the revolution, the Americans can do nothing – the people create a new imagination. Nawal El Saadawi, the most famous feminist writer in the Middle East, was heavily involved with the uprising in Egypt. For her it was the culmination of a life dedicated to overthrowing dictatorship in her homeland. I went to see her in her one-bedroom apartment on the 13th floor of a tower block in the Shoubra neighborhood of Cairo, right on the banks of the Nile. "All the Gulf countries are colonized by the US. Wherever you have oil, you have the US," said El Saadawi. "We got rid of the head only, but the body of the regime is still there, militarily, economically, media, education, everything." So has she lost hope for this great uprising, then? "Oh, no, no," she said, smiling. "I am very optimistic, I never lose my hope. Hope is power, hope makes me smile, hope makes me live. I am a writer, a novelist, I need hope, I cannot live with a bleak attitude. So long as we have young people here and we go to Tahrir Square I will have hope. We live in a jungle; we don't live in a healthy society. It's about power, when the grandfather has money, prestige and power, he rapes the granddaughter, it's a matter of power. When we finish with this mentality – that it's not power that dominates, it's justice, freedom, love, equality – we have revolution, like in Tahrir Square, and we eradicate power."

In one of Egypt's neighbors in the Sahel they were close to ending their enslavement to the mentality of domination and power.

SEVENTEEN

SUCCESSFUL DEFIANCE

TUNIS, TUNISIA

I meet Mustafa and Kamal on Avenue Habib Bourguiba, where they protested in January 2011 to get rid of the dictator who had ruled their country with an iron fist for 23 years. Tunisia has changed a lot in the year since then. We ate at the Opium bar-restaurant, one of the many lining the French-style boulevard named after the dictator before Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. "We couldn't have done this before, no way," said Mustafa, a 25-year-old originally from Tabarka in the north of Tunisia. "I mean, the only thing I could have told you is how great Ben Ali is, what a good man he is." "If you wanted to talk politics in a bar and the police heard you, they will put you in prison," Kamal told me nonchalantly. "Now I can say what I want to you."

It was strange coming to Tunis and listening to the scale of repression and police abuse during the Ben Ali era. I had just never heard about it. Before this US/French-backed despot was overthrown, no one in the West seemed to care that we were propping up a police state in one of the UK's most popular tourist destinations. The US has provided $349 million in military aid since 1987 when Ben Ali came to power in a coup. The tyrant was trained at the former US Army intelligence school at Fort Holabird in Maryland, like so many of the world's monsters. But the next stage of western connivance in the subjugation of the Tunisian people was the widespread media and political fear over the democratically elected Al-Nahda Party, which was Islamist. The course from actively arming a kleptocratic dictator to pushing for the Tunisians to support "western values" is of course familiar. Franz Fanon wrote in *The Wretched of the Earth*: "As soon as the native begins to pull on his moorings, and to cause anxiety to the settler, he is handed over to well-meaning souls who … point out to him the specificity and wealth of Western values."[1] Any right-thinking Tunisian would, of course, see that the most consistent western value in their country is to *support dictators*. Initially, when people were getting shot by snipers on the streets of Tunis, Hillary Clinton, then Secretary of State, said the US "didn't want to take sides" and was worried about the effect of "unrest and instability" on the US relationship with Tunisia. In the end, over 200 perished. After the revolution won out, Clinton and France's President Nicolas Sarkozy moved on to praising "progress" in the country while also expressing apparent concern that Al-Nahda might impose Iranian-style dictatorship on the Tunisian people. (They didn't care when it was Pinochet-style dictatorship.)

Events followed the typical US imperial modus operandi during a popular uprising against one of its dictator satraps. It goes like this: public ambivalence about the protests alongside private support for the tyrant when it is unclear if the uprising will succeed. Then, when it looks as though the tyrant will not be able to hold on, a switch to public support for the uprising alongside private support for the same regime shorn of its now-discredited figurehead. Such a methodology worked in Egypt: the long-suffering Egyptians now have Mubarakism without Mubarak. Tunisia is different. As Fanon put it: those who were last are now first, while those who were first are now last (or in exile in Saudi Arabia in the case of Ben Ali). The fear of Al-Nahda was misplaced and based on western desire to remain in firm control. There are plenty of clear differences between Tunisia and Iran in 1979 when the revolution overthrew another western-backed torturing tyrant, the Shah. First, Al-Nahda had assembled a coalition including secular socialists and social democrats to form the government. The president, Moncef Marzouki, is a secular human rights activist who spent decades in the wilderness fighting the US-backed atrocities being committed against dissidents in Tunisia.

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[1] www.openanthropology.org/fanonviolence.htm

Second, Tunisian civil society is engaged with the process and will only grow. One of the retrograde patterns you see in a Middle East speckled with US-backed dictatorships is that Islamism is often the only avenue for expressing dislike of the current state of affairs. The space for secular left movements has been crushed since the pan-Arabism of Nasser in Egypt worried the US enough to extinguish the left across the region (helped along by an Israel fearful of the efficacy of the secular nationalism of Fatah in the Occupied Territories). Now that Ben Ali has gone, the lid has been taken off the boiling pot. There was space for young people – in fact, everyone – to breathe here, there were opportunities to engage freely with politics and to think outside of the box. And now outside that box the vista is broader than Islamism. It will take time – perhaps a couple of generations – but the secular left can now grow and will undoubtedly become more significant. Many of the revolutions of the Arab Spring have been led by the tech-savvy young secular left – particularly in Tunisia and Egypt with their large labor movements. Contrariwise, the Islamists – who in many ways had a symbiotic relationship with the brutal US-backed dictatorships they were at war with – will slowly become more irrelevant as these police states fade away. They will have less to feed on, and their policies will now stand the considerable test of governance.

Third, the military acted nobly in Tunisia, unlike in Egypt. Ben Ali fled after the military refused to murder their own people, making them wildly popular in the country. There is also little fear that they will launch a coup against the democracy the Jasmine Revolution created. "They are with the people" is a refrain heard often in Tunis. It is understandable: without them it is possible Ben Ali would still be in place and a river of blood would be flowing down Habib Bourguiba Avenue. In the Opium bar, Mustafa told me he voted for the CPR, a secular left-wing party headed by Mr Marzouki, because he thinks their program is good for the economy and women. But, he said, he doesn't fear Al-Nahda. "I like them," he added. Kamal, on the other hand, voted for Al-Nahda because he thinks they are "good people … They are not extreme. The Salafis are crazy, but they are not very important here."

Clearly, what scared the West more than any Islamist is a secular revolutionary left opposed to the neoliberal order we set up over the past 40 years. That would really hurt the bottom line. Islamists themselves have often been quite welcoming to the Bretton Woods institutions and the neoliberal economic order. With the usual suspects now trying to impose those dictates on Tunisia, it was near impossible for the ruling parties to try something else (even if they wanted to). So far Tunisia has followed US and Bretton Woods dictates to the letter, privatizing many of its state-owned assets (at the same time plumping up Ben Ali's wallet) and eviscerating public institutions and subsidies for fuel and food. Many actually compare Al-Nahda to the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, and it is no secret that the AKP has been a dream for business and international capital. In their time in power, the AKP privatized a raft of public assets, including Tekel, the state-owned tobacco and alcohol company, which it agreed to sell off as part of the structural adjustments attached to a $16 billion loan agreement with the IMF. Before Erdogan started acting like the new sultan, the business press was in raptures about the AKP. This was why I worried for Tunisia – not because of Islamists, but because of neoliberals. As Fanon put it: "The apotheosis of independence is transformed into the curse of independence, and the colonial power through the immense resources of coercion condemns the young nation to regression." Or, in fewer words, take an independent course and starve.

With the period of dictatorship in Tunisia over, the economy is now the big issue, with 45 percent unemployment. It's what concerns Mustafa and Kemal, both students. "I want the government to help people with jobs," Mustafa said. "Maybe open some more universities." Bretton Woods dictates have proved a disaster around the world as a development model. Al-Nahda should look elsewhere, for its own survival. Tunis itself is unrepresentative of the country at large – the further you get from the capital and the coastal tourist regions, the worse the poverty. The government will have to deliver relatively soon – or face more unrest. The spark for the revolution was Mohamed Bouazizi (who now has a street named after him), who set himself on fire in Sidi Bouzid, a poor town 200km from Tunis. This is how it started, and it could erupt again if nothing improves. Expectations are running high. As Mustafa told me: "Before the only thing I could do was eating, drinking, smoking, and sleep. Now there's more." The fear has now also drained from the people. "Something in our hearts snapped," Kamal added as he sipped a beer. "People didn't care any more. People were telling the military to shoot them." He added quickly: "WikiLeaks helped people realize how corrupt Ben Ali and his family was."

As a thank you for helping get rid of this tyrant, the WikiLeaks leaker Chelsea Manning is now facing three decades in prison. Meanwhile, the US politicians and policymakers who propped up Ben Ali for 23 years are talking heads on US cable TV, able to laud the Arab Spring without irony. At the same time, the great liberal President Barack Obama instructed his Department of Justice to launch a case against Julian Assange whose bravery (alongside Manning) helped unleash this unprecedented wave of people power across the Middle East. They are "high-tech terrorists". The upside-down world.

THE GLOW OF REVOLUTION

In the aftermath of the overthrow of the US-backed dictator Ben Ali, there were immediate successes – committees were established for reform of the media, corruption and human rights. Freedom of speech blossomed: it was now possible to debate the many pressing political, economic, cultural and social issues. For the first time there was an election managed by an independent committee composed of civil society figures, involving people from all social groups; there was also important civil society work, with hundreds of new organizations founded working on human rights issues, and also new issues like citizenship education, media activism, internet mobilization of young people and tolerance.

I went to see Abdel Basset Ben Hassen, the head of the Arab Human Rights Foundation, in the east of Tunis. "I think the revolution was also about questioning what international relations we need for our country," he told me. "This new order should be based on more equality, more respect. I have been working in human rights since 1990. I think that during the dictatorship era the European and western countries had not been very strong against Ben Ali's regime. I think that the

Tunisian people have been dignified by the revolution. Human rights were reintroduced in our history – before the revolution our image was really very low. I think that we are giving western countries and the entire world another image of how to be Arab, how to be Muslim, and to fight for democracy and freedoms." The slogans on the streets were now about civil and political rights, and economic and social rights: the right to work, the right to health, the right to education. It was also about equality between social groups and between the interior of Tunisia and the capital, between the cities and rural areas. The revolution put these issues on the table, but they weren't just Tunisian issues, these were global issues. "Working on human rights for the last two years was a kind of resistance," said Hassen. "Human rights work was a way to resist oppression and we trained thousands of Arabs on how to document human rights violations, how to write a report, how to organize a campaign. This was one achievement – how to resist."

What happened in the Arab countries was not just decades of dictatorship; it was centuries of a vertical approach to power. The Tunisian revolution opened an era of revolutions and reform and it will be long. All the social actors tried to redefine their roles after the disappearance of the old regimes. "We were waiting for an era to see that the Arab will claim their freedom, to end these ugly and horrible regimes," said Hassen. "We were waiting to give all this potential locked up in these countries, but at the same time we are conscious that it will be difficult. You know when you open the door to all these changes you will have positive tools to use, but you have all the problems that were waiting." Maybe what has helped Tunisia more than other Arab countries caught up in tumult was that the civil society in Tunisia was still strong. There was the powerful UGTT union federation, the Tunisian League for Human Rights, the judges' union, the lawyers' union, and the journalists' union. Young people when they graduated and went to work joined a union because it was the only place where you could criticize the government and not get arrested. Tunisia is actually one of oldest countries in the world: for nearly 3,000 years there has been a state in Tunis, Carthage. It was the first Arab state with an ambassador in the US, and it has a history of reformism. In 1846, slavery was forbidden in Tunisia, 17 years before the US, and two years before France. It also had the first constitution in the Arab world, while in 1956 it proclaimed the first law for the family, liberating women and abolishing polygamy. It was also the first Arab country to have a strong workers' movement, formally founded in 1927. Civic engagement and education are deeply rooted in the country and the populace is also educated. In the 1970s the government dedicated nearly 40 percent of the state budget to education: and when you introduce education you introduce criticism.

THE NEW GENERATION

These civil organizations and even the elites suffered a lot under Ben Ali's dictatorial regime. "There was also a big difference between the young generation and Ben Ali's generation," said Mr Hassen. "Those between 18 and 30 years old, and not only in Tunisia, said, 'We cannot accept these kind of old out-of-date regimes. The regimes in the Arab countries were so out of date, and the most stupid and totally closed regime was in Tunisia, and people at some time they cannot accept any more this kind of thing." Tunisians felt that they were not only oppressed by the police state but that their dignity was being attacked by a regime, by a family, that was ruining the country. The Ben Ali family were occupying and stealing everything. In many ways, the first uprising was against this attack on dignity. "You can accept the oppression but at some stage you cannot accept that your dignity is under attack," said Hassen. It started in Sidi Bouzid because the trade union was powerful and the elites were against the regime. "It was possible because all the social categories participated, and it was possible because the slogans of the revolution, it was about dignity, freedom – it was not religion, about tribal issues, about family, about regions, and this made it difficult for Ben Ali to stop this, because it was about universal things." The internal mechanisms of the regime were very weak at the end; despite the regime's strong appearance, it was a lie. The situation was explosive and when the first demonstration happened in Sidi Bouzid, the police did not try to stop it. It lasted for two days, and then other small cities followed. There was no political reaction, but confrontations were developing all around the country, becoming more and more violent. Then the police supported the protesters. Ben Ali's party did not hold counter-demonstrations, and the dictator was completely isolated.

I spoke to Ahmed Bouazzi whose party was in the resistance against the dictatorship, and worked to weaken the government of Ben Ali. "We were in a long struggle against Ben Ali," he said. "The West is scared of course because Nahda is working for a more independent national policy, more independence for Tunisia; fortunately, they are defending the interests of Tunisia better than under the Ben Ali era, and I am optimistic. I have a big confidence in the Tunisian people; in our history, the people showed that it is a pioneer. It is progressive. The West is scared of Islamism. I think they are still trying in Tunisia to get rid of Nahda and I think it's a big mistake, because Tunisians are pioneers, liberals, they are also very patriotic, they don't accept that someone else makes their politics here, so Nahda will gain from this. Unless there is a coup, and a coup would be a disaster for the country, you have Algeria where 200,000 people died in a civil war." He said further that the revolution had a perceptible effect on the soul of its citizens. "It's very strange to be free. I was thinking about it today when I went to the Ministry of Interior, which is where the torture happened. People changed very fast, they were speaking very freely, and there was no auto-censorship. It is very different now, if I meet plain clothes policemen I am not afraid because they will not arrest me. Before that I was afraid because they could arrest me and I might spend I don't know how long in prison until I got freed. Now it's different, the relationship between citizens and policemen is completely different, there is none of the fear of policemen, it happened very quickly."

The wall of fear had fallen, you could perceive it, and you could feel it in the streets. Tunisians were not silent any more; they didn't respect authority like they used to do. There were sit-ins, protests. The Tunisian mind had been freed.

EIGHTEEN

CULTURE AS A WEAPON OF RESISTANCE

WHAT'S ART GOT TO DO WITH IT?

"A people's art is the genesis of their freedom."

Claudia Jones, pioneering political activist, 1915–64

When Soraya Morayef, an activist and budding art curator, walked into Townhouse gallery in Cairo in the aftermath of the ousting of Hosni Mubarak, she expected the usual brush-off. Her friends had previously pitched exhibitions of their passion: graffiti and stencil-based work. Each time they had been turned away. But not now. "When I approached them I really didn't think they would do it," she told me. "I had no credentials, I had no background. But now there is this increasing new interest in graffiti and street art, that's why they eventually took me." Morayef was the beneficiary of a sea-change in the Egyptian art world since the country's revolution sparked an explosion of paint and posters on walls in cities around the country. "The revolution has massively impacted the art scene in Egypt, it's now a lot more diverse and there's a lot of work inspired or based on the revolution," said Morayef.

The same pattern has been seen across the Arab world as people shook their chains in the Arab Spring. Western intelligence officers no longer have to gauge the temperature of the "Arab street" through clandestine interviews; they just have to look at the walls around the cities. In Arabic, it is called "*el-fann midan*" – literally translated, "art in the square". The mixed experiences of euphoria, mourning and loss have been creatively rendered all over the cities of the Levant.

"Art has played a major role in the Egyptian revolution, for the most part because street art and graffiti as in a western form simply didn't exist, now it's everywhere," said Omar Ozalp, co-owner of the Articulate Baboon gallery on the outskirts of Cairo. "More importantly, each one carries a message, be it political or social, which for once has the Egyptian population thinking." The other co-owner of the gallery, Adam Maroud, added: "Corner after corner after corner was suddenly emblazoned with a battle cry in rushed lettering or a perfect stencil of pop culture political satire and it was beautiful and stirring to watch it spread. Nothing to me personifies creative freedom more than a bold graffiti piece on a very public wall."

And it's not just the Middle East. Art has flourished around the world in this revolutionary torrent – from Haiti to Chile to China – as people fought back against totalitarian governments and tried to make sense of broken societies using brushes as well as bricks. For many young people, street art became the "perfect crime" when living in a closed dictatorship with no free press. If you do not get caught in the act, most of the time there is no way for the authorities to track you down.

"I think the creative output during this unfinished revolution is an integral part in its continuation and the direction it's bound to take," said Ganzeer, the most prominent street artist in Egypt, who was arrested for making posters at the height of the protests. His colorful paintings of martyrs killed by the security forces dot Cairo, as do his montages juxtaposing brutality inflicted on protesters with information about US aid to the military regime. Ganzeer added that the move out of galleries, as artists take their work to the people, also represents a "democratization" of the creative arts. "The streets are for everybody. The gallery is for an art-seeking niche. It's very wrong for the streets to be so open to the brainwashing effects of capitalist-driven advertisers and so closed off to honest art. Galleries need to exist, but it shouldn't be the only way to be able to experience art."

In crisis-wracked Europe, the *indignados* in Spain, as well as young people in Germany, Greece and France, also used their city walls as canvases to get their message across. Evol is a German artist who had a gallery show in London, but the 39-year-old's main work is stenciling windows on concrete slabs slung out on the street, turning them into drab housing estates. "Life is a reflection of the circumstances I live in," he said. "Whatever happens to me I will try to transport into art." Ganzeer feels something similar: "I feel the core purpose of creative arts lies in its social relevance."

Street art has captured the imagination of the younger generation of artists in the West over the past decade, symbolized by British artist Banksy. But while the anonymous Bristolian has garnered much of the attention, there is now a dedicated phalanx of scribblers working alongside him – and their ranks have ballooned and "globalized". For many of the new generation, the period where the pursuit of money appeared to rule all forms of creativity – viz. the canonization of Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst – is over. The postmodern ironies of the Young British Artists movement have been destroyed by the immediacy of the human crisis happening around the world. Young artists now feel the need to reflect on the chaos of global events through their art. They are not seeking to engage with the world retrospectively but as part of the ongoing struggles, hoping to bring about real, tangible change. In this sense, it is not just the venue that has changed – from the gallery to the street – but the content, too.

"Before the revolution we were falling into clichés and trying to express things between brackets," said Khaled Hafez, a prominent Egyptian artist in the traditional gallery setting. "But since 9/11, more and more political issues are being expressed in art installation practices. The Arab Spring has really accelerated that." Resistance artists are the modern-day heirs to a tradition that goes back hundreds of years and boasts some of the all-time greats, including Picasso and Goya. But even with such a rich and proud history, the prospects today are more exciting than ever. Art has been democratized by the capitulation of the tyranny that the highbrow crowd used to impose on aesthetic pursuits, and a revolution in technology that can put a camera, spray can or paintbrush in the hand of any kid with a thirst for creativity.

YOU CAN'T BUY THIS

The recent upsurge in revolutionary street art has rudely challenged many of the sacred cows in traditional art circles, paralleling the population's political awakening. Since the seminal 1999 anti-World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, there has been a resurgence of forms of art engaged in social and political protest. Ideas of what constitutes art, where art is shown and who does art were all shaken violently. But the fight against the gallery-based model has been largely successful, and the traditional art world is now playing catch-up. More traditional, gallery-based art elites in the West have pushed back – and this is no different in Egypt. "We should remember that the Middle East is still conservative," said Hafez. "Street art is not gallery art, but we are in a revolutionary situation, and it helped mobilize people. There was fabulous graffiti art, and personally, I think change is impending." He added: "I have learnt a lot from the younger generation like Ganzeer." Ganzeer agreed, and said the traditional sectors of the art world in Egypt have shot themselves in the foot by not showing more enthusiasm for the new generation. "I think the majority of the traditional art elite have proven the inability of their art to speak or relate to society via their inability to artistically engage in the revolution," he said. "Many may have engaged as citizens, and protested just like everybody else, but few have been able to engage artistically."

Of course, art cannot initiate social transformation by itself, but it is increasingly vital in expanding the imaginations of those working toward it. Knowledge of how the world operates that comes solely from newspaper articles and academic books often affects our most cynical and fatalistic impulses; these impulses are pervasive among young people, and they get more frequent, not less, as the bad news comes faster. Looking at an image that connects events in ways you haven't yet conceived, or an installation that reconstructs in visceral form something you've read about, can propel this cynicism felt by the younger generation toward action. And it has. The possibilities for artistic collaboration and the ability to say something about the world without needing to steep it in the depressing banalities of everyday political discourse are providing a sanctuary for the younger generations, fed up with what is often called "mainstream" politics.

Some people say that all art is political. This is like saying that all politicians are political: it's technically true, but in reality the majority tailor their beliefs to the exigencies of their respective political systems and become model commissars. Power is the motivator, and the politics falls into line after. The same goes for art's own commissars whose work is conceived and sold as a commodified product, complete with conscious branding and the related newspaper fanfare about "controversy" or "celebrity buyers". There is nothing "political" about it; in fact, the branding is the antithesis of political because rather than questioning the contemporary situation, it accepts all its presuppositions – no matter how violent or unjust – and seeks to ride on the froth of money and fame that tops this wave. True political art, as distinguished from its banal and transient cousin, is trying to change the world as it is rather than observe it. It seeks to delve into the nightmares of the contemporary consciousness, investigate the deep cavities and expose the most diligently repressed secrets and terrors. It reformulates images and signs and gives us all a means through which to reinterpret the world. Joining the dots becomes revolutionary, which surely says less about the art than the prevailing ideology, which allows us to live happily without making the connections between the violence we unleash and the corpses all over the Middle East, East Asia, Africa and Latin America that are our testimony.

SHAKING OFF THE STRAITJACKET

I interviewed a number of famous musicians and actors who have strident anti-war, anti-racket politics. The lead singer of Massive Attack, Robert Del Naja, has always been extremely political. During the run-up to the Iraq war – with Thom Yorke of Radiohead – he took out a full-page advert in *NME* denouncing military action. He told me: "How we get our culture, how we get our politics spelt out to us, how the news is read to us, how our choices are laid out, does come through the media. These are the things that people should be more concerned with." Why is this artificial barrier erected between politics and art, then? "It suits a lot of people's business and political interests to try to separate the two when actually they are actually joined at the hip," he said astutely. "I think sometimes when you're trying to present music for music's sake, sometimes you don't want it to be politically charged because you want it to be about a simple music experience, an escape. Other times it is a very integral part of it, definitely."

Gael García Bernal is a Mexican actor who has never shied away from giving political opinions, and speaks with real knowledge about the politics of Latin America and further afield too. The man who famously played Che Guevara in *The Motorcycle Diaries* film is unabashedly "of the left", and has been an activist as far back as the 1994 Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, on the first day of the NAFTA. "I've been told, 'You're an actor, you cannot talk about politics, you know nothing about politics'," he told me. "There still exists that mythology that no one who is not an 'expert' in politics can have an opinion on politics. It's ridiculous because we're such political animals." He added: "As an actor it's about exploring these uncertain areas rather than having a preconceived idea or answer. It's more about provocation and asking the terrible questions. My position therefore is sometimes a bit greyish because I don't buy into the pamphlet. What is motivating is when the audiences ask new questions, get new perceptions, not when you give them opinions digested, the complete answer, that has another shape." Bernal is optimistic about the future of Latin America, especially the "pink tide" of democratic left-wing governments that has swept the region over the past decade, which shows no sign of being turned back (yet). "Like [Slavoj] Žižek says, Bush deserves a Nobel Peace Prize for having eradicated the hegemony of the United States, he singlehandedly completely destroyed it," Bernal said. "Now it's a whole different world. Argentina, for example, most of its business is with China, and Brazil as well. There is a lot of hope in that sense, it's not the world we grew up in, it's a whole different thing. I think that the left in Latin America still have lots of debts from the 1960s, '70s, '80s, things they have to complete, to deliver. Argentina is the only country that has looked back on the people that were part of the military coup and junta and put them in prison, it's the only country that has done that, that is reason enough to support [President] Cristina Kirchner." Bernal is unusual in the world of entertainment – he has a political opinion and can back it up at length and with real knowledge. It's a rare quality in a world where some sort of bland, non-specific "social activism" is now a must for most celebrities, but questioning the PR lines fed to them by their handlers is almost non-existent. "I would love athletes, sports figures, to be more political," he said. "Remember Socrates the Brazilian player was very critical of the junta there. Or the guys in '68 here in Mexico City with black power. It adds so much depth to them, it's incredible when they do it, but right now you don't see them involved in anything."

Damon Albarn, the lead singer of Blur and Gorillaz, has been at the forefront of the anti-war and debt cancellation movements. When I visited him at his house in south London, he told me: "The war in Iraq was the result of our inability to express what I think was a consensus that this was a terrifying idea and a very badly thought-out one." He is particularly scathing about his fellow musicians who showed a shameful cowardice in not joining him and Massive Attack's Robert Del Naja in speaking out. "It was very difficult to find anyone. And I don't want to name names because they are people who I respect but for some reason, they were very reticent to stand with us … A lot of people who you would now associate with being anti-war at that particular point didn't seem to be prepared to do it."

Tom Morello, the guitarist of the band Rage Against the Machine, once remarked: "A good song should make you wanna tap your feet and get with your girl. A great song should destroy cop cars and set fire to the suburbs. I'm only interested in writing great songs." When I met Radiohead's Thom Yorke I asked him his opinion on this seemingly fraught relationship between the political and the creative. "I wonder if you did a Venn diagram of how they coincided, or if you did a straw poll of their sympathies in terms of art what you'd get back," he said. "I guess it depends on how broad you see the definitions of politics, and how broad you see the definition of art or music. If you see art and music as something that extends beyond this little bit of plastic that goes in your CD machine, and if you see politics as something that's happening not just in the Houses of Parliament, then I think you can't use that argument at all – it's utter bollocks." But "you'll never change them," Yorke said when I asked about the temptation to lobby politicians. "They're going to get more from you than you get from them, generally speaking." Despite his evident passion, Yorke seemed reluctant to assume any role as a voice of his generation. "I'd dearly love to not be interested in it at all," he said. "It is ultimately a very sterile, barren, place to spend your time thinking of things. Even back in college, you get involved in it initially and then you see all the petty wranglings going on, and you think, This is so pathetic, and you want to get the fuck out really." When I asked Yorke about the awareness of the American populace of their country's nefarious actions in the world, he exclaimed: "They have no idea! But I think the Iraq thing has been interesting – the mainstream press took a long time to come around, but when they did come round it was a big thing. When they did start, they were exposing it for what it was."

ART AND POLITICS

The interface of politics and art has always been a tense one, with some of the more conservative elements in the art world accusing political art of being "agit-prop". They argue that when you engage directly with politics, you deplete your sophistication. But things are changing.

"There is a very reactionary strand in the art world that says that you shouldn't make work that's overtly political," said Peter Kennard, a senior lecturer in photography at the Royal College of Art in London, one of Britain's foremost political artists, and my father. "You can imply, but that's also to do with the art world being about selling work." He added: "Our understanding of art has become over-aestheticized and I think the only thing that can change that, which is changing it, is the pressure of crisis in the world." If you look at Kennard's work, as well as being eerily beautiful, it is bleak and brutal. The poor and destitute scream out from the financial pages, arms dealers play roulette with million-dollar weapons, and medals are awarded to US and UK soldiers for war crimes. And yet, despite the pathos of his work, he retains a Gramscian "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will" type philosophy: the belief that critical art has the power to transform the world and attitudes. "People do think critically about the world through art," he said. "Because they can see the images they get in the news transformed, separate images connected up to give new meaning to them, to show how things connect in the world. So with photomontage you've got actual images of things that happened – someone took that image – and by putting it with other images you can then create the connections to show how the world is actually put together. In the media, we see everything disconnected – the adverts, the news stories – everything is disconnected and all over the place. When you put them together you can then show where the link is and that is very important."

In places like Palestine the use of artistic expression to make sense of the same disconnected world is very common. The most moving and powerful testament to the plight of the occupied peoples in the West Bank and Gaza has come in exhibitions like "100 Shaheed – 100 Lives" which opened in February 2001 and was a reaction to the escalation of Israeli violence in October 2000. The exhibition aimed to celebrate the ordinary lives of the first 100 victims of this violence by featuring everyday objects, gathered by a group of field researchers, that were held dear by each of the dead. This example in Palestine is a symptom of the gradual politicization of creativity, in literature as well as art, all over the world. "I think people are not so ironical and cynical now," Kennard said. "People are trying to work out how they relate as individuals to the world because the world is impinging on our lives so much – we can't deny it any more that there is a crisis going on in the world, so it is impinging on the work they do. It doesn't mean they do very direct images about it, but certainly that anxiety about how to live and what to do in the world is coming through in the work."

Obviously, being politically strident always carries risks, even in ostensibly free societies. Artists have always been regarded with suspicion by those who wield economic or political power – particularly when they are direct and trenchant in their work. Free creation has always been the direct antithesis of the cold logic of power.

A few years ago Kennard was commissioned by Damon Albarn to make a montage as part of mobile phone company Orange's "Light Up London" campaign. His photomontage of the Virgin Mary with the logo of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in place of a halo and the earth for a head never went up because it was censored by Orange who deemed it offensive to "grandmothers and small children". "All big shows now in galleries have to be sponsored because there isn't enough public money going in so they have to sponsor them," said Kennard. "The sponsor wants to get an image across that tallies in with their company so they like edgy Damien Hirst-type things which aren't specific, but if you're politically specific in what you do it's very difficult to get sponsorship and then it's very difficult to get a big public exhibition, so sponsorship does have a knock-on effect. It is much more quiet and insidious than censorship but it means that certain things don't get seen. So there is a façade that they are encouraging dissent but when it becomes too serious they cut it off." Does he think that the need for sponsorship blunts dissent? "Well, people work outside the system – they make their own spaces, they work collectively, they work in the street, and they work in smaller spaces," he said. "So there are lots of different ways to get work out. And there are lots of people working collaboratively." Is this censorship a new phenomenon? "No, it's always been like that. This century, very political work is being kept under covers – a lot of really good work is only allowed to come when the person is dead and the issues they are dealing with are over. It's not new but it's more powerful now in the sense that private money is so vital to the art world now that it's really difficult to work without it." As Kennard wrote in his comment piece for the *Guardian*: "censorship is something one doesn't speak of in the free-market – it brings back memories of Lady Chatterley and Lord Chamberlain."

The impingement of politics and violence on the everyday lives of artists may be new in post-9/11 England, but in Northern Ireland it has been this way for decades. As the Northern Irish artist Liam Kelly wrote: "In the North of Ireland over the intensive period of political troubles (1968–1998 and the first IRA ceasefire) landscape was not something to be celebrated but interrogated and petitioned." The themes of land and territory come up time and time again as you look at resistance art in this troubled spot. Take Willie Doherty whose 1987 installation piece In the Walls arranges text to settle over sections of a horizontal panoramic view of the Bogside area of Derry in daylight. This makes it so that, in the words of Kelly, "we/the artist or the colonized/the colonizer take in the view and take up a position".

The collapse of the Argentine economy in 2001 also saw an explosion of artistic creativity. As the middle classes were depleted and 50 percent of the population plunged below the poverty line, many citizens began to use the objects and spaces around them to create art that spoke of their grievances and desire for change. A collective of artists, based in the coastal city of Mar del Plata, began taking over buildings that had become derelict as a result of the economic crash, and creating installations in them.

Similar things are happening in the Chiapas region of Mexico where the Zapatistas are fighting for land rights (as we have seen). Gustavo CP is a famous muralist from the Zapatista-controlled territories of southeast Mexico, and he is often in Europe showing the work he and others are putting together as part of one of the most exciting popular movements in the world. He said: "As in all acts in our lives, the ways of relating to each other, and the ways we make our dreams and put them together, are part of creating our cultural values. And to put them up in the walls, like with these murals, is not an easy job. It is not a one-person job either, or a job for just a specific group of people. It is a job for a whole society that by nature impacts on certain people, who, in return want to contribute to community. In this way a dynamic and enriching relationship of collective creation takes place, which can lead to many other dreams and possibilities".[1]

In places like Afghanistan under the Taliban "photography was to all intents and purposes banned", according to Thomas Dworzak who visited Afghanistan as a photojournalist in 2001. All depictions of living creatures, including animals, were erased from the public eye, and photographic portraiture was illegal. Studio photographers in Kandahar told Dworzak that members of the Taliban would come into the studio when passport photography was allowed again and would pose with make-up and guns in front of garish synthetic backdrops such as gardens full of flowers. These images have now become artworks in their own right, saying more about the narcissism and immorality of Taliban rule than a million words. The indestructible human instinct for art and images is evinced clearly by this vignette, and you hear stories about all kinds of resistance art coming from those who are living under stultifying dictatorships all over the world.

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[1] "Painting with the Zapatista in Scotland", *Indymedia*, February 2, 2005, www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/world/2005/02/304693.html

Since the earthquake struck in January 2010, leaving a whole society traumatized, one artist has been out decorating Port-au-Prince with beautiful murals and graffiti pieces as a way of expressing his own hopes and fears for the country. "I was never a big fan of politics," Jerry Rosembert told me, but added that the extent of the trauma in Haiti means he has had to engage. "I am obliged to commentate on my country because things are bad, and for me, it is the best way of giving my ideas worth and value." His art is just another way of communicating a message – a cry to be heard in a society rendered silent by a natural disaster. "Certain people do this their way sometimes in the newspapers or on the TV, but the graffiti, this represents me more, and this is a type of commentary I enjoy a lot."

The Art Spring has stretched to South America, too, with the Chilean student protests inspiring a surge in graffiti and cartoons on the streets of Santiago and other cities. Brazilian political cartoonist Carlos Latuff went to Chile during the protests and said he saw art students and passersby producing cartoons and paintings on the walls in support of the uprising to an extent he'd never experienced in Latin America. The cross-border pollination of art has been huge. Latuff is in high demand in Egypt and across other parts of the Middle East. Even before the January 25 protest that began the Egyptian revolution, Latuff was receiving requests for illustrations from protesters. "This was pretty amazing," he said. "I usually produce stuff and it will be used, but this was different – they were making specific requests. They felt cartoons and art could help their campaign."

At the beginning of the civil war in Syria, the most famous political cartoonist in the country, Ali Farzat, was attacked at night in his car in Damascus. "We will break your hands so that you'll stop drawing," the thugs told him, before doing exactly that. He was dumped by the roadside. "This is just a warning," they told him. In China, Ai Weiwei, the iconic artist whose work has bravely taken on themes of repression in his home country, was arrested by the authorities and held incommunicado for months on spurious charges, which still stand. In Honduras, the first two people arrested after the 2009 coup were President Manuel Zelaya and cartoonist Allan McDonald, who had published cartoons in support of the deposed president. In 2003, the US government asked for a tapestry version of Picasso's anti-war masterpiece Guernica, which is on permanent display at the UN, to be covered with a blue curtain when Colin Powell made his notorious error-filled speech about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and the need for invasion. It seems counter-intuitive. Why would the most powerful country in the world care about a piece of art decorating a room at the UN? And why would the world's newest superpower care about one man making piles of seeds in a studio in Beijing? "Artists, especially cartoonists, can make it easy for everyone to understand a difficult political statement," said Carlos Latuff, whose cartoons have become an accompaniment to uprisings all over the world. "We have the ability to make fun of dictators and, of course, dictators are not fond of humor."

ART ON THE STREETS

There is some debate as to what the term "street art" actually means. It is an appellation that describes a genre of art rather than work that is done outside. But Swoon, one of the few women in the field, thinks this is wrong. "For me, if I'm working outside, then fine, call it street art, but if I'm working inside, then it's an installation," she said. "For me it doesn't seem useful." Many practitioners believe the label is another way of demeaning an art form that is encroaching on a nervous elite. "Sometimes it seems that people need a name for something, if they don't know it by a name they can't grasp it," said Evol. "I dislike the expression." As Proudhon reminded us a century ago, property is theft, and using private property as a canvas to express yourself is a way of reclaiming privatized wealth and rendering it public. In that critical moment, the canvas of some bank building or shop front becomes yours, or ours. Ours because graffiti is one of the most altruistic art forms – colorful and complex pieces are put up for our benefit while we stroll the streets, at considerable financial and sometimes legal costs to the artist. Take, for example, advertising, which is everywhere – all over buildings, walls, transport, schools. This stuff is there purely to manipulate and make money out of us, but when advertising sneaks its way into every nook and cranny of our public and private spaces, there isn't a law enforcement agency to be seen.

Artists like Banksy, meanwhile, haven't been able to resist the zombification of their art by the mainstream. This process was called "repressive tolerance" by Herbert Marcuse and "the society of the spectacle", by Situationist Guy Debord. It is a danger to all artists trying to subvert the racket while working within the racket. Work which started as a critique of war and social inequality can be brought into the mainstream and commodified and sold to the people of whom it was initially critical, emptied of its message. Naomi Klein mentions in her book *No Logo*, which was published in the weeks following Seattle, that Nike had begun employing young graffiti artists to graffiti Nike posters to give them more street-cred. With these corporate behemoths inhaling all creativity and co-opting any anti-establishment ideas, it's a struggle for the artists who don't want to end up making decoration for Goldman Sach's lobby. When Diego Rivera, the famed Mexican muralist, painted a fresco at the behest of the Rockefellers for their center in Manhattan in the 1930s, he included a May Day workers' parade and an image of Lenin. Rockefeller was deeply angry and asked him to remove Lenin; when Rivera refused, he ordered the destruction of the fresco.

The active repression of totalitarianism and the slow-burn repression of corporate control should be challenged by artists with integrity enough to continue standing outside the mainstream. Art and creative expression, because they exist beyond the normal coordinates of control, have the power to scare those at the top. The art-industry intellectuals and academics who have proposed for so long that political art is merely crude agitprop or literary doggerel are being made to look stupid by a new generation of artists who don't see their role as making pretty pictures and designing clever concepts for boardrooms. They are using creativity as an integral part of a justice movement that is inchoate but growing in substance and definition. They have internalized Brecht's timeless dictum that "Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer to shape it".

The explosion of technology and social media has been a vital corollary to this movement. Facebook and Twitter have not just allowed activists to organize, but have also provided a key tool for disseminating pictures. They have accelerated this "democratization" of art by making it much easier to circumvent the gallery, which had previously been a prerequisite to building an audience. "Especially in the past year I have been using Twitter and Facebook to spread the artworks, which has played an important role in getting them out," said Carlos Latuff. "If I upload a single cartoon it takes 15 minutes to get sometimes 3,000 hits, depending on the issue. It's amazing how you put up a single cartoon and it spreads like a fire." Moving outside of the gallery also changes the audience. In a revolutionary situation, the aim is often to reach as many people as possible. Street art is in some way inherently political, in a way gallery art isn't. The people who see it have no choice in the matter – unlike those who venture into a gallery on a Sunday afternoon. Now, the wall is the gallery, and the audience has multiplied exponentially. "I use the space for everyone who is living or passing by there, I'm naturally speaking to anyone passing by," said Evol. "No one asked me to do it so I can't ask for a reaction in a certain way."

Krzysztof Wodiczko is a Polish artist who teaches at Harvard University and is famous for his projections, including projecting a swastika on the South African embassy in London during the apartheid era. He has used his art to further the causes he believes in for the past 40 years. But, he said, he's never been this excited. "In '68 there was legitimate criticism that art was being too conservative in its choice of media, and therefore its capacity to reach those who really needed reaching. Artists were indulging in some posters, but what was needed was something to engage the mass media." Now, he said, "the whole cultural geography of resistance benefits from mobile communication. Even though authorities will try to censor it, there will be ways around it with other inventions."

CULTURE OCCUPIED

At the height of the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York, I was on a night march across the Brooklyn Bridge when we all suddenly felt like dissident superheroes. As we looked up, the Verizon building that stands at the foot of the bridge began to be illuminated with projections – exactly like those calling on Batman when he was needed to take on evil in Gotham City. A huge "99percent" was flashed up along with slogans like "Another World is Possible" and "Occupy Earth – we are winning". Cheers went up among the protesters, but no one knew who was doing it. The big, impenetrable corporate office of Verizon – which was under pressure over its treatment of striking workers – was being hijacked and there was nothing the police or the company could do about it. Rumors flew about who the projectors were, but in the following days they were revealed as the Dawn of Man, a production company based in the city, which had been around for years but was only now doing directly political work. Like so many others, the uprisings of 2011 had pushed them into engaging for the first time. "Personally, I have been inspired," said Max Nova, a young artist from Colorado and one-half of the Dawn of Man collective. "Not just to be political, but to do work that is directly focused on making a change, spreading awareness about important issues." The Occupy movement has been synonymous with sign-making and art installations from the beginning. The first thing you noticed when arriving at Zuccotti Park was that everyone had their own signs, some scrawled on pizza boxes, some professionally printed photomontages. There was an evident need to creatively express dissatisfaction rather than just shout about it. Nova said the projections that night were made from a private residence. "We had cops looking into the apartment, but they couldn't get in without a warrant," he said. "It is interesting how art has become a fundamental factor," he continued. "If you look at working groups in New York Occupy Wall Street, the arts and culture one is vastly larger than the other groups. A lot of artists find themselves drawn to this."

Krzysztof Wodiczko actually draws a distinction between two different types of political art – the direct and indirect. "My experience in Poland under the previous regime was that because it had this image of an open system, or a system with a human face that transformed itself into more of democracy, it was in fact, very scared of dissent that may contradict this. So artists were allowed to speak, to deal with politics, as long as they were doing this indirectly, in a metaphoric way. Once they move into more of a direct link, or people recognize them as political activists, at the same time as artists, then they will be in jail, or prevented from speaking or communicating." Latuff is an example of this. He is banned from Israel because he has made cartoons critical of the government's treatment of Palestinians. In Brazil, he has been arrested three times for producing his pieces. "I believe in what Che Guevara called internationalism, solidarity with people," he said. "If I've got a skill, I think it's necessary to put this skill at the service of the social movement. The artist cannot ignore art as a tool for change. Especially not now."

The co-option of culture by the resistance, it seems, is the most potent example of how the fight against the racket is real, global and interlinked. From Occupy protesters to Palestinians resisting the oppression of the Israeli state, the racket is under joint attack from inside and outside its headquarters in the United States of America. The victims of this system – the 99 percent of humanity made into serfs – are seeing that they have more in common with people across national boundaries than they do with the racketeers at the top of their own society. Like these dissident artists, we must use all the available tools for change to smash the racket, crush its criminal syndicate and build a fair future. We all have a role to play. To paraphrase Arundhati Roy, now is the time to stop adoring our oppressors, who are the Living Dead, and learn to love ourselves. You know how it works: arm yourself and join the War of Independence to sever us from the racket once and for all.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt Kennard is a fellow at the Centre for Investigative Journalism in London. He is the author of the critically acclaimed *Irregular Army* and has worked as a staff writer for the *Financial Times* in London, New York and Washington, DC. He has written for the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Guardian*. He graduated as a Stabile investigative fellow from the Columbia Journalism School.

MORE PRAISE FOR THE RACKET

"*The Racket* is an engaging insider's account of how the United States has spent the past 70 years constructing an intricate web of economic control across the globe – enforced by violence as a last resort – which sucks wealth and resources from the poor world to the rich."
Julian Assange, founder and editor-in-chief of Wikileaks

"Kennard brings home in vivid and illuminating detail the reality of life and struggles of much of the world's population, their defeats and victories, their suffering and vitality and hope."
Noam Chomsky, author of *Hegemony or Survival* and *Failed States*

"A crucial exposé of the powerful, of injustice, and of the war against the poor. It should inspire all of us to fight back."
Owen Jones, author of *Chavs* and *The Establishment*

"*The Racket* is tough, angry, relentlessly researched and riveting, in the grand Chomskyan tradition but with the added value of the journalist's mobility and on the spot coverage. Kennard's range is wide, both geographically and topically, but with a single target – the depredations of the US superpower's corporate and political elites on their own home turf and abroad that the lap-dog media rarely touch."
Susan George, author of *The Lugano Report: On Preserving Capitalism in the Twenty-first Century*

"Like the best work of John Pilger, George Monbiot and Naomi Klein, *The Racket* is investigative, passionate journalism with a purpose – to defend the powerless against rapacious power. A hugely important tour de force, it will inform and inspire resistance movements for years to come."
Ian Sinclair, *Red Pepper*

"With this, his second book, Matt Kennard has announced his presence on the scene as the next generation's John Pilger … Kennard does a brilliant job of tying the strands together and joining the dots between disparate struggles against corporate greed and imperial power around the world."

Asa Winstanley, *Middle East Monitor*

"Timely and readable … Kennard ranges widely in his attempt to show the scope and depth of the Racket. From the 'disaster capitalism' imposed on an earthquake-traumatized Haiti to the undermining of democracy in Bolivia, Kennard lays bare the mechanics of the scam …This book is a valuable tool for anyone wishing to engage in the worldwide struggle for justice."

New Internationalist

"Kennard decided to leave his comfortable job at the *Financial Times* and start to do some real journalism instead. *The Racket*, his second book, is very much the result of this transformation and it is nothing sort of marvellous. Angry, scornful and yet optimistic about the potential for change … the book makes a good case for Kennard being a true heir to John Pilger and the older generation of muckrakers."

Morning Star

"*The Racket* is an exposé of the murky collusions between global high-finance and the militarised US state in the post-war era."

Olivia Arigho Stiles, *Alborada*

"Matt Kennard threw away a cushy career with an establishment newspaper just to let you in on a secret: you don't get the story, you get the cover-up."

Greg Palast, author of *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy* and *Vultures' Picnic*

"A brilliant atlas of what Kennard calls 'heavy history' – the hurricane-like path of global destruction wrought by neoliberalism and wars against the poor."

Mike Davis, author of *Planet of Slums* and *In Praise of Barbarians: Essays against Empire*

"Matt Kennard exposes the failure of US neoliberalism
and a major reason why China's star is rising while American
foreign policy is imploding into a black hole."
John Perkins, author of *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*

"This firecracker of a book, written by a former insider journalist
who realised the true, exploitative agenda of corporate media,
unleashes a gonzo journey across the world of US empire.
Read this book, be startled and then take action."
Antony Loewenstein, *Guardian* columnist and author of *Profits of Doom*

"I congratulate Matt Kennard for this brutally honest work."
Nawal El Saadawi, author of *Woman at Point Zero*

"Matt Kennard reveals the criminal and ruthless dynamics of global
imperialism. His analysis is richly researched, keenly illustrative, and
consistently on target. May this book get the wide readership it deserves."
Michael Parenti, author of *The Face of Imperialism*

"A masterpiece of engaged journalism."
Walden Bello, member of the House of Representatives of the Philippines

"Matt Kennard puts no deodorant on the reptiles' waste
in the imperial barnyard."
Gavin MacFadyen, director of the Centre for Investigative Journalism

"Includes unusually candid interviews with members of the
World Bank and other financial institutions."
Publishers Weekly

THE RACKET

A ROGUE REPORTER VS THE AMERICAN ELITE

MATT KENNARD

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For Ana and Dylan,
who wrote this with me

And Chelsea Manning,
for helping us see the truth

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been a decade in the making and involved travel to all corners of the globe. The overwhelming feeling I came away with is that our world – judged by how it treats its human family – is in dire straits. But wherever I've gone I've been filled with hope by seeing the brave and courageous individuals and groups resisting the violence and misery inflicted by the US-led military and economic machine. From Palestine to Honduras, from South Africa to Haiti, I'd like to thank all the people who have filled me with faith against the odds, often in the face of great danger. They have been resolute in the face of an ideological system that endlessly tells them their pain is for their own benefit. Thank you for resisting the power and the lies.

I am a fellow at the Centre for Investigative Journalism, which is a dream place to work. The CIJ is an institution dedicated to furthering adversarial and revelatory journalism in a media setting that increasingly ignores it. In particular its director, Gavin MacFadyen, has been an inspiration for his passion and courage in supporting whistleblowers and journalists working in difficult environments. He is the model of what a journalist should be. Also at the CIJ I've been lucky enough to work closely with a great investigative journalist, Claire Provost. The

Bertha Foundation's support, meanwhile, has allowed me to pursue controversial stories and concentrate on doing the journalism I love. Kika Sroka-Miller at Zed Books was brilliant in helping me form the ideas and structure of the book, so a big thank you to her. Also at Zed, Jonathan Maunder and Dan Och made countless invaluable and insightful suggestions to get the book in shape. Janet Law gave the text a rigorous and stringent copy-edit. As has probably been the case for millions of people around the world, Noam Chomsky has been the most influential person in my intellectual and political development. Since I was a student journalist in the middle of my political awakening he has responded consistently and over many years to my enquiries with patience and unfailing insight. Thanks for everything, Professor.

The book is dedicated to Ana, my soulmate and fellow rebel. So much of the reporting in this book has been done with her or because of her. Without her inspiration, help on the ground, and companionship and love, this book would have been impossible. It was in discussion with her that many of the ideas in this book formed. The book is also dedicated to Chelsea Manning, our generation's hero. At great personal cost she singlehandedly changed the course of history and gave us a historic glance at the true mechanics of power as wielded by the most powerful country in the world. History will judge her kindly, but she continues to suffer now. That should stop immediately. Her fellow whistleblowers Edward Snowden, Jesselyn Radack, Thomas Drake, William Binney, John Kiriakou, among many others, have also inspired me by their bravery and example.

My parents, Judy and Peter, gave me the tools for free thinking and supported me through the years of trying to understand the world as witnessed in this book. Without knowing they had my back and believed in what I was doing, it might have been overwhelming. The example they have set in their lives made it much easier to resist the

seductions of the corporate world, which I briefly and unhappily glimpsed. My brother has been constantly supportive and believed in me always. Thank you, Dan. A continuous struggle against forces that sometimes appear inevitable can lead to despair, but I have been blessed with friends and family from when I was young (and some newer) who have always made me laugh and kept me energized. Thanks to: Harry, Frankie, Dave, Tom, Billy, Patrick, Jack, Declan, Luke, Jake, Dave C, Ellie, Nick T, Ishmail, Speak, Al D, Ivor, Adam, Lex, Shane, Stuart, Chris, Charlie, Watson, Whybrow, Loz, Dan J, Eugene, Alicia, Lucia, Pati, Nick, Pilar, Suey, my grandma Mary, William, Lucy, Camilla, Hugh and Ralph.

Although this book would have been impossible without the people listed above, none is responsible for what's written in the following pages.

I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902–1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested. Looking back on it, I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents.

Major General Smedley Butler, who died the most decorated US Marine in American history, in a speech given in 1933

racket / *n. slang* A trick, an underhand scheme; now usu. a scheme for obtaining money etc., by fraudulent or violent means; a form of organized crime. *gen*. An activity, a way of life, a business.

Oxford English Dictionary

INTRODUCTION

I started working as a reporter at the *Financial Times* soon after the financial crisis began and at the height of the so-called "War on Terror". I was a young, ambitious reporter assigned to one of the world's most respected broadsheets, ready to speak the truth. I learnt soon enough that this was not the place to do it. Maybe I should have guessed. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, I had had a partial awakening. As the war drums sounded in 2003, I learnt that the United States and the United Kingdom, despite now pushing for a war with him, had, in the 1980s, been supporting Saddam Hussein. The man we were presenting as the devil incarnate had only years earlier been our buddy. Soon after, I saw that my government thought nothing of rewriting intelligence to trick its own citizens into a totally illegal war. I thought, maybe naively, that working at the *FT* would allow me to continue learning, and in some senses I was right, though not the lessons they intended. There I was exposed to the other side of this war-industry coin – the world of high finance. These wars were not the vanity project of deluded leaders; they were merely the latest stage in a global elite's prolonged war on the people of our world with the sole aim of pumping up their bottom line. I saw the real rulers of the world up close now – they were not the politicians but the big-money men behind them, the puppeteers who made everything move. I was stationed at their house organ, so raising the alarm did not, to put it politely, go well.

Over the following years, I witnessed first-hand how powerful the propaganda system that covers for these racketeers really is. It is almost impossible to go up against it as an individual on the inside (I tried). I was based at the *FT* in Washington, DC and New York, but I also traveled extensively during this period, reporting from four continents, more than a dozen countries and the same number of cities within the US itself. Everything I saw contradicted what I had been told about how the world works. But as I wrestled with what I was doing, I knew in the back of my mind that, as a journalist, speaking out against this contradiction is a bad idea: doing so will instantly, and adversely, affect your career, which I suppose is why so few do it. If you speak out against the racketeers, well, you are instantly anti-American, you hate freedom, you love terrorists and so on. Ideological "training" of this kind is at its most potent in the racket-supporting media of the western world where I once worked (and it usually works to dispel independent thinking). I was actually taught this eyes-wide-shut philosophy first when I went to do a Masters at Columbia University's Journalism School in New York, apparently the best of its kind in the world, but in thrall to the racket and its lies, like the rest of the American elite. And the attempt to beat these critical thoughts out of my head continued as I progressed further up the hierarchy of the ideological system. On the day I left the *Financial Times,* for example, my boss told me simply: "Go away and do your 'save the world' stuff and maybe you can come back when you're a bit older." I took his advice, but I won't be back. Instead I present, eyes open still, the report they wouldn't send to press.

INTRODUCTION

THE RACKETEERS

The United States emerged from World War II in a position of peerless global power. Western Europe and the Soviet Union were in ruins after six years of devastating warfare, and the imperial structures that had previously ruled most of the world were falling apart. The Americans meanwhile had made a miraculous recovery from the economic depression that had consumed the nation since the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and its place as No. 1 had been planned for *quite consciously* throughout the war. When it was realized in 1945, attention switched to extending the American elite's customer base, and so, at the close of World War II, the racket was set in place.

The Harvard evolutionary psychologist Steven Pinker once told me that power itself perverts human notions of morality and justice: "Dominance, fairness, and communality are three very different modes of thinking about social relationships. Someone in power will tend not to think of his relations to his or other peons in terms of fairness," he said. The American elite, its powerful big business players and allied governments (regardless of political party) are motivated by dominance, not fairness. The people in power know this – it is the population that is lied to. Of course, the need to pierce the propaganda bubble is not new. Every emperor, fat cat and superpower from time immemorial has willingly entertained myths about their actions so as to utilize the good-will of their people to pursue their own criminal enterprises. The historian Cornelius Tacitus said it best at the height of Roman dominion. "The Romans create a desert," he wrote, "and call it peace." These myths that Americans are treated to from a young age – and this ideological training reaches out beyond US borders – still present the US as an impressive discontinuity in the world of power politics. Unlike all previous superpowers, the United States is a "moral" power, driven by principles and values, as opposed to domination and greed. America is “exceptional” we are told – not exceptionally violent, which is the truth, but exceptional to the extent that it has a “higher calling”; it is a “shining city upon a hill”. A brief foray into the world with eyes open teaches you quickly that this is the opposite of the truth. But keeping your eyes open will always be harder than seeking solace in your own divine moral superiority and the turpitude of your enemies. And so the myth takes hold. Repeat after me: when the US does it, Terror is *Peace-seeking*; Domination is *Partnership*; Fear is *Stability*. It’s easy.

THE BELIEVERS

A couple of years after my initiation at the *Financial Times* a few things started to become clearer. I came to realize a difference between myself and the rest of the people staffing the racket – the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) workers, the economists in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and so on. While I was coming to understand how the racket really worked, I started to see them as willing dupes. There was no doubt they seemed to believe in the virtue of the mission; they imbibed all the theories that were meant to dress up global exploitation in the language of “development” and “progress”. I saw this with American ambassadors in Bolivia and Haiti, and with countless other functionaries I interviewed. They genuinely believe the myths, and of course are paid handsomely to do so. To help these agents of the racket get up in the morning there also exists, throughout the West, a well-stocked army of intellectuals whose sole purpose is to make theft and brutality acceptable to the general population of the US and its racketeering allies. And this system of indoctrination is so ingrained in the media and university system that it is near impossible to even divine it. I remember writing an article for the *Financial Times* about former

Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak, who was backed by over a billion dollars of US aid; the editors got rid of the factual prefix "US-backed" before Mubarak's name without even thinking. When I submitted another article using the prefix "Iranian-backed" for the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, it sailed through. That is how thought control operates and that is how the racket survives with its moral sheen intact.

Power has completely corrupted the minds of these people. When Rafael Correa, president of Ecuador, was closing down Manta, the US military base in his country, he told the Americans that they could keep it as long as they allowed Ecuador to put a military base in Miami. This was preposterous to Washington and its lackeys in the media – for them it is apparently a *natural law* that the US should be allowed the hundreds of military bases that disfigure sovereign states all around the world. That is the imperial mindset and it infects the entire American elite.

What will become clear as you read this book is that the patterns and modus operandi of the racket are repeated all over the world, over and over again. So, for example, the manner in which I saw American "aid agencies" and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) subvert groups organizing independently in Bolivia is repeated in Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil, all over Latin America, and in the rest of the world. The names of the individuals involved in each case are different but the dynamic is similar; the racket's method of control, so clever and hidden, is the same, and the names of the oppressors are interchangeable with any of the racketeers of the "American era". All have served the institutions that work to undermine individual or group sovereignty and increase the racketeers' control, whether the individuals staffing the racket be nice or horrible, good or bad, well-meaning or psychopathic – the institutions they serve continue to extinguish the yearning for independence of people the world over.

There is another, more insidious, part of this global control that will be discussed in the following pages as well. In addition to the dominance of the US elite, the succor given to American corporations by the racket has made the proliferation of US "culture" inevitable, creating a new dimension of so-called soft power. But, as you will see later, the racketeers are genuinely afraid of the creative arts. There exists the potential within our culture, and the arts, not just to expose the racket for what it is, but to help dismantle it. For this reason the racketeers continue to co-opt the arts and culture as much as possible: the CIA was supporting US arts throughout the Cold War, and no doubt continues to do so.

FOR YOUR OWN GOOD

The racket is bigger than the US elite, of course, and by now you may be thinking that it may have something to do with the capitalist system writ large. Yes, institutions like the World Bank represent a broad global capitalist class, but the US is the overwhelming power within these arrangements and the US military is the enforcer of capitalistic forces throughout our world. The mechanics of the racket have actually been pretty constant; the institutional structure erected to maintain a pretense of altruism while practicing savage domination has been replicated across the world for quite some time now. I witnessed not long ago, for example, US support for the military coup in Honduras in 2009, which threw out a democratically elected president so the racketeers could prop up the business community and their political puppets. But like I said before, you can be sure that a similar dynamic was in place when the US helped take out democratically elected presidents Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala in 1954 and Salvador Allende of Chile in 1973, unleashing decades of hell on the people of those countries. The needs of this rapacious racket remain the needs of every dominant imperial class, communist or capitalist – more markets for their products, and complete subjugation of popular forces in their satellites.

But there is a twist to this story.

The American elite that has grown fat from looting abroad is also fighting a war at home. From the 1970s onwards, the same white-collar mobsters have been winning a war against the people of the US, in the form of a massive, underhand con. They have slowly but surely managed to sell off much of what the American people used to own under the guise of various fraudulent ideologies such as the "free market". This is the "American way", a giant swindle, a grand hustle. In this sense, the victims of the racket are not just in Port-au-Prince and Baghdad; they are also in Chicago and New York City. The same people that devise the myths about what we do abroad have also built up a similar ideological system that legitimizes theft at home; theft from the poorest, by the richest. The poor and working people of Harlem have more in common with the poor and working people of Haiti than they do with their elites, but this *has to be obscured* for the racket to work. Many actions taken by the US government, in fact, habitually harm the poorest and most destitute of its citizens. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is a good example. It came into force in January 1994 and was a fantastic opportunity for US business interests, because markets were opened up for an investment and export bonanza. Simultaneously, thousands of US workers lost their jobs to workers in Mexico where their wages could be beaten down by even poorer people. The inevitable conclusion is that our entire world is at the mercy of an elite business community who run it in secret.

The economic imperatives of this racket trump even the *safety* of working Americans. During the Iraq conflict in 2003, large parts of the Pentagon and the British "intelligence" community did not want to attack Iraq because they believed it would increase the threat of terrorism. But the ideological zeal within the racket to maintain a grip over a region with immense oil production was a higher priority than decreasing the threat to American lives. The racket, then, is a disaster for those poor countries submissive to it, but also for the majority of Americans. The American elite is not in the business of helping out its fellow citizens.

Perhaps for you the extent of US domination is unknown, or perhaps you half suspect it, in which case the pages that follow will provide indisputable evidence. For those readers who feel they already know the damage done by US foreign policy, the revelation will come from evidence of the damage done at home where the war against poor and ordinary working Americans is just as fierce. A vast ideological edifice has been built which presents brutal violence against the poor at home and abroad as altruism. It must be targeted at its foundations. As Harold Pinter wrote in his Nobel Prize-winning speech in 2005, when it comes to the US "it never happened. Nothing ever happened. Even while it was happening it wasn't happening. It didn't matter. It was of no interest." He continued: "The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them. You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force for universal good. It's a brilliant, even witty, highly successful act of hypnosis."

The media would have you believe that there is no racket, that it's purely an accident that we live in a world where 85 people, *85 people*, own half the world's wealth while more children die of starvation every year than died in the Holocaust.[1] Of course it's not an accident, a mere quirk of history – it is the result of a huge injustice, the policies of a giant mob. To help our species and planet survive it is necessary to shake off the hypnosis and see the racket for what it is.

---

[1] *Working for the Few: Political Capture and Economic Inequality*, Oxfam Briefing Paper 178, January 20, 2014. More than 1.5 million children across Europe were killed by the Nazi regime. It is estimated that 3.1 million children each year die because of poor nutrition.

They know who they are; it's time to blow their cover.

PART ONE

HOW WE OWNED YOU

ONE

CREATING A MODERN-DAY SLAVE STATE

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

I was standing open-mouthed outside the presidential palace in Port-au-Prince 18 months after the earthquake had devastated the city when a man approached selling his paintings. "What do you think of that?" he said, pointing to the collapsed palace behind us. I told him the truth: I was finding it hard to come to terms with the completeness of the destruction. The man, who later told me his name was Charles Renodin, smiled slightly. "Tell the world how we are living," he requested. "Let them know." He paused and added, "I live in the camp there," pointing across the road, where opposite the crumbling presidential palace a vast expanse of tents – emblazoned with the logos of the US, China, Bill Gates, Carlos Slim, all competing shamelessly for brand recognition – spread out as far as the eye could see. "After the earthquake I lost my mum, my dad, one daughter, so I had to move to this camp. I don't like it, it's full of corruption, it's run by gangs, and the little girls have to sell their bodies to eat," he told me. "Little girls," he added for emphasis. "Maybe eight or nine years old, getting raped every day. The police don't do anything about it, the country has no law." He told me that the Haitian people refer to the palace behind us, which should be a point of pride, as the "Devil's House". "It's full of so much corruption, they don't care about the people, they just want to make money, when the money comes they take it for themselves." He was waiting on a house now so he could leave the camp, but he didn't think it would happen any time soon: "The government has no plan." In the camps, it was particularly bad news for women: "Because there is no work, women have to sell their bodies just to eat, the only job they have is to have sex for money. Men have to steal stuff – they have no choice."

Like most in Haiti, Charles had an ambiguous feeling toward the thousands of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in his country. "Some come to help, some come to make money, they like us living like this because they make more money." It is easy to dismiss such sentiments, but the global "rescue" industry really is big business. There is often a direct and positive correlation between American influence over smaller countries and the crises they experience. "After the earthquake they would give us food, water, but now everything has stopped. If you go inside this camp you don't see water, people have to walk six miles to get water. That's why crime is up." He became more agitated. "Everything is crazy right now, we're living just like animals. There is no everyday life, nobody has a job." Haiti has arguably had more US intervention in the last hundred years than any other country in the world – that it ended like this is not wholly accidental. As Doctor Maigot poignantly says to Mrs Smith, an American, in Graham Greene's *The Comedians*: "In the Western hemisphere, in Haiti and elsewhere, we live under the shadow of your great and prosperous country. Much patience and courage is needed to keep one's head."

The following day, I was driving down a long, dusty and typically bumpy road in the middle of Port-au-Prince when I came across some imposing metal gates. Behind them stood the E-Power electricity plant. The site was unlike the rest of the city, which lay in complete ruin, even a year and a half after the earthquake: it had burnished sheet-steel doors and perfectly tarmacked roads. I was on assignment with the *Financial Times* and being escorted in a 4x4 by the World Bank, which had its own particular kind of tour that seemed to ignore the massive tent cities whizzing past our windows. Here was the *optimistic* vision, they told me. In a capital city where electricity blackouts were a nightly occurrence, E-Power was the kind of company the international financial institutions (IFIs) running Haiti believed would lead "reform" – by taking power away from the state-run company, and running the business for profit. My World Bank guide was adamant that this was the way out of Haiti's tragic past and present. I soon found out the company was founded in 2004 by a group of Haitian venture capitalists excited by the departure of social democratic President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The aim, they said, was to "offer a solution to power generation in Haiti". Sure enough, some years later, in 2006, the new US-backed President René Préval launched an open bid for a contract to provide electricity to Port-au-Prince. Seven companies took part. E-Power won.

For many in the Haitian business elite, such economic liberalization was to be the model for the new Haiti being built after the devastating 2010 earthquake. "The earthquake created trauma that could have been better exploited," Pierre-Marie Boisson, board director at E-Power, told me as we sat in the upmarket air-conditioned offices at the plant. "Because of the political process that took place after that, it took too much time." He added: "Earthquakes should be an opportunity because it destroyed. Where it is destroyed, we have to build. When we have to build we can create jobs, we can create a lot of changes, we can change a country."

However, Mr Boisson's cynicism about the slow rate of "exploitation" of the "opportunities" provided by the earthquake was not quite accurate. In the aftermath of the earthquake, the opportunity afforded by the destruction wreaked on Haiti was capitalized on immediately. As the dust was still settling in Port-au-Prince, the World Bank, the IMF and their regional analogues, alongside various US agencies – what became the *de facto* government in the absence of a Haitian alternative – carved up the society's different sectors and doled them out among themselves. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) got education and water, the World Bank bagged energy, while the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – a body that will be examined later in this book – gratefully accepted the planned new industrial parks. Alexandre Abrantes, the World Bank's special envoy to Haiti, told me how it worked: "We basically have agreed that where each of us has the competitive advantage, we then divide … the sectors among ourselves, and add in some sectors which go together."

The mass privatization of state-run assets and the turning of Haiti into a Caribbean sweatshop – via an export-led garment production and cheap labor model that the US and the IFIs had been pushing from the mid-1990s through the 2000s – were now distinct possibilities. This could be enforced with minimal push back from a decimated civil society and a denuded government. All the extra-Haitian bodies, particularly the US government, shared this vision. "There is a lot of agreement, so I would say one of the unusual and very positive aspects about this project is that it is really done in partnership," Jean-Louis Warnholz, a State Department official working on Haiti, told me when I was back in New York. (Mr Warnholz asked not to be named, but Haitians deserve to know the officials who are designing their destruction.) Haiti was to be the next Top Model on the World Bank and IMF catwalk. The "partnership" (in which the Haitian people had no part) believed that rebuilding the capabilities of the Haitian state should play no role in its reconstruction. Instead, the solution to Haiti's problems lay in the creation of a flourishing private sector. "What's really going to change Haiti and make this process different from all the previous ones is the development of the private sector, and I think there's a consensus in that," José Agustín Aguerre, the Haiti manager for the IADB, told me. The bank disbursed $177 million in grant money in 2010 – more than any other multilateral source – to push this agenda.[1] "Private sector is the big difference, it's what will be creating wealth, creating jobs, not the public sector," he added. It seemed there was no alternative.

After the election of President Michel Martelly in May 2011, things remained easy for this private-sector-led "consensus": the IFIs and US not only had their Shock Event, but also their Shock President. Aristide, who was president in 1991, 1993–94, 1994–96 and 2001–04, continues to be the most popular politician in Haiti, but is banned from standing again for the presidency. In Martelly, the US government had found its "Chicago Boy", a more-than-willing partner for their economic program ("Chicago Boys" is a term which refers to the University of Chicago economists who helped dictators impose neoliberal capitalism in its early stages). All the major business groupings and IFIs I spoke to in Port-au-Prince were effusive in their support for the president. Carl-Auguste Boisson, general manager at E-Power, told me: "I am pleased by what I heard Martelly saying about the importance of private investment, especially when he was campaigning he was talking about things like providing private provision of public services." Kenneth Merten, the then US ambassador to Haiti, was similarly excited about the new president's privatization agenda. “A few privatizations of flourmills, but aside from that you haven’t had much of anything in past decades,” he told me. “That’s the element that’s been lacking here, you need a government that understand investment and I think Martelly and his folks do.” For the US, a pliable figure like Martelly had been a long time coming. Despite many decades of effort, Haiti had not completely succumbed to the plans that its major patron had for it. And such recalcitrance had been causing increasing consternation in Washington.

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[1] Details given to the author by the World Bank.

HISTORY’S LONG SHADOW

In 1990, after the first democratic elections in Haiti’s 200-year history, the US became hopeful of breaking up the corrupt state institutions which had been run as the personal fiefdoms of Papa and Baby Doc, the US-backed Duvalier dictators who had ruled Haiti viciously for nearly 40 years. Private capital would then be able to penetrate deeper into the country, and an economic model conducive to the interests of the rich countries could take firm root. But it wasn’t going to plan. Instead of the US-orientated “reformer” many in Washington had hoped for, a huge mass movement, named Lavalas (“the flood”), propelled the social democrat priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide to a landslide victory. Over the next 20 years, the democratically elected Aristide would be ousted twice with US support, while the democratic hopes and dreams of Haiti’s people would be quashed time and again. Aristide had become a nuisance in the eyes of Washington and so when he was put back in power in 2001 it was under the tacit agreement that he would allow the World Bank, the IMF and the US to institute their plan. It had been 11 years since the democratic elections, and still economic “reform” was slow. Something had to change: democracy was fine, but it had to be of use.

In this period, René Préval, a former ally of Aristide who served as president from 2006 to 2011, seemed to offer some hope for the Americans. "In the context of the developing world, we would most accurately describe him as a neo-liberal, particularly in that he has embraced free markets and foreign investment," notes one of the US embassy's diplomatic cables, released by WikiLeaks, sent from Port-au-Prince in 2007. But the leader the US was really after in that period looked more like Haitian-American businessman Dumas Siméus. A resident of Texas, he assured the US embassy, according to a diplomatic cable sent in 2005, "he would manage Haiti like a business". The same cable added: "Displaying abundant charm and energy, the 65-year-old said he had decided to run for President not only for Haiti's benefit, but also as a gesture of thanks to the United States." He was very clear about how he would do this: "The University of Chicago alum pledged to bring the 'Chicago Boys' to Haiti and establish a road map for change, promising investors would return." It was exactly what the US embassy wanted to hear; Siméus was the candidate they had been searching for. The cable concluded by noting that the millionaire Texan was a "potentially viable candidate" who could, unlike Aristide, "govern responsibly and maybe effectively" – code in this case for "in the US interest". The US deemed Martelly similarly "responsible".

But in many ways, US exasperation at the apparent reluctance of Haiti's leaders to sell off their country's assets and create an economic playground for foreign capital remains hard to understand. From the mid-1990s through the 2000s, the "Chicago Boys" had to all intents and purposes come to Haiti; the process of opening up Haiti's economy to the predations of foreign capital was well under way. The fetish of foreign investment was firmly rooted. In 1996 for example, the Haitian government had already, as one diplomatic cable published by WikiLeaks noted, "established legislation on the modernization of public enterprises, which allows foreign investors to participate in the management and/or ownership of state-owned enterprises." Moreover, a November 2002 law explicitly acknowledged the "crucial role of foreign investment in assuring economic growth and aims to facilitate, liberalize, and stimulate private investment in Haiti". The law gave foreign investors exactly the same rights and protections as Haitians. Months earlier in 2002, the Haitian parliament had voted for a new free trade zone law which provided "zones" with fiscal and customs incentives for foreign enterprises – for example, a 15-year tax exemption. In other words, post-Aristide, the government had "seen the light" and embraced the US-led vision for the post-dictatorship Haiti.

But these steps, it seems, were not enough. Only a "Chicago Boy" would do. Another WikiLeaks cable noted that in 1996 a "modernization commission" was set up to decide whether management contracts, long-term leases or capitalization was the best option for each of the companies to be privatized. The commission would also decide how much the Haitian government would retain of each asset, with a cap at 49 percent – a minority stake, stripping the Haitian people of control over their own industries.

This had an immediate effect. In 1998, two US companies, Seaboard and Continental Grain, purchased 70 percent of the state-owned flourmill. Despite this "progress", a diplomatic cable from 2005 lamented, "Some investments, however, still require government authorization," adding, "Investments in electricity, water and telecommunications require both government concession and approval. Additionally, investments in the public health sector must first receive authorization from the Ministry of Public Health and Population." It sounded like a reasonable demand from a sovereign country, but a sovereign country is exactly what the US didn't want Haiti to be. Two years after Aristide had been spirited out of the country by the Bush administration and the local oligarchs, and just before the victory of the "neoliberal" Préval in 2006, the US embassy noted witheringly: "Since the privatization of the cement factory, privatization has stalled and appears to have been put on hold." It added plaintively: "None of the major infrastructure-related enterprises (the airport, seaport, telephone company or electric company) have been privatized." The document continued: "Although these entities were supposed to have been privatized by 2002, persistent political crises, strong opposition from the former administration, and a general lack of political will have delayed the process indefinitely." The cable then noted a more plausible reason why this massive privatization program had not been enacted quite as smoothly as the US had hoped: "Some opposition to the privatization of state enterprises continues from groups such as employee's unions who have expressed opposition to workforce reductions that privatization might entail." Those pesky Haitians.

By 2008, then, the US embassy was disconsolate at the slow rate of progress and local intransigence. "Despite assurances that privatization is still a priority for the government … we are increasingly skeptical that privatization, in whatever form, will happen," one WikiLeaks cable noted. "Time is running out." The US, however, remained steadfast. "We will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of privatization and/or private management," one cable noted. It further advocated using IFIs such as the World Bank and the IMF to bribe the democratic government of Haiti, one of the staples of the "structural adjustment programs" explored later, although it is rare to see it spelled out in such clear language. "[The US embassy] repeats its recommendation … that privatization be a requirement under future agreements with the IFIs … to be negotiated with the new government," the cable to Washington noted.

THE SHOCK

Bribery might prove an effective strategy toward the poorest country in the western hemisphere, but it would still be messy. There was after all a Haitian parliament, populated with nationalist elements, which could continue to stall or even kill the massive privatization program the US favored. But as the US was honing its strategy for its latest push, on January 12, 2010 a huge earthquake hit Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas, creating one of the worst humanitarian crises in the history of the world. More than 300,000 people were killed, while millions became homeless. The capital city lay in ruins, including the majority of government ministries as well as the presidential palace. What was left of an already strangled civil society and social institutions was destroyed. Haiti was a blank slate.

The US and its allies in the IMF and World Bank did not waste any time – this was their opportunity to push through the radical neoliberal program from the 1990s with little resistance. The opposition to this privatization program – which had ranged from quasi-nationalist politicians to worker-based collectives – had all but disappeared. Without a government in place to agree or disagree with the US and the IFIs, which were soon running the country, Haiti was ready for the "shock doctrine" – the radical economic prescriptions enforced throughout the world and outlined in Naomi Klein's eponymous book. Klein's argument was that these policies were so unpopular among the populations of the target countries that the agents of big capital, such as the IMF and World Bank, would wait until there was a crisis "real or perceived", when people could not organize resistance, to push the reforms through. This is what happened in Haiti.

The first step was to entrench a decision-making system that took all power out of the hands of accountable democratic institutions run by Haitians. The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC), which became the country's most powerful decision-making body in the aftermath of the earthquake, was the perfect example of this move. The IHRC was set up ostensibly to coordinate the response and spend donor money in the absence of a Haitian government. It had 26 members, 12 of whom were Haitian, leaving them without a voting majority (just as they were not allowed a majority stake in their industries). To those Haitian members, it was obvious they were window-dressing. In a December 2010 letter of protest to the IHRC chair, former US president Bill Clinton, they complained of being "completely disconnected from the activities of the IHRC", as well as having "time neither to read, nor analyze, nor understand – and much less respond intelligently – to projects submitted". According to one journalist based in Port-au-Prince: "These twelve board members surmised that their only function is to rubber-stamp, as Haitian-approved, decisions already made by the executive committee."

That was exactly the perception that the US and the IFIs were trying to avoid. When officials from the US and international agencies in Haiti were interviewed they were at pains to explain how they were "working for the Haitians" and the phrase of the day was "Haitian-led". It was the same all over the world – the US and its agencies were adept at making their domination be seen as *demanded by the victim*. In truth, there was, and continued to be, minimal Haitian involvement in the reconstruction (outside the business elite). An article in the *Washington Post* put it bluntly in January 2011: "There is a dramatic power imbalance between the international community – under US leadership – and Haiti. The former monopolizes economic and political power and calls all the shots." The financial benefits to the American private sector of this set-up were immediately obvious. An *Associated Press* investigation found that of every $100 of Haiti reconstruction contracts awarded by the American government, $98.40 returned to American companies.[2] The focus was never on building up indigenous capacity; any work was to be outsourced to foreign companies or NGOs by the IHRC. It was about making money for rich Americans. After Michel Martelly was sworn in as president in May 2011, it took months for the former pop star and former member of the savage Tonton Macoute militia (formed by the US-backed dictator 'Papa Doc' Duvalier) to form a government, as his candidates for cabinet positions were repeatedly rejected by parliament. By the time his administration was in place in June 2011, 18 months after the earthquake, the coordinates of the economic reconstruction were already in place. Martelly's hands were tied by the very IFIs which claimed to be subordinate to the Haitians. Though in Martelly's case his hands didn't even need to be tied – he was a willing "shock president".

There were three elements that the US and IFIs wanted to build the "new Haiti" around: high-end tourism; export-processing zones; and a resurgent private sector in control of the previously state-owned assets. It was the racket's standard playbook. The architects of the reconstruction actually had other countries in mind that they believed could serve as a model. One was the Dominican Republic, the country next door to Haiti, which had long been an oasis for private capital in the Caribbean. In Haiti, using the model of its Hispaniola neighbor, the IADB planned to spend $22 million on a high-end tourism resort near the 19th-century citadel at Labadee, a port on Haiti's northern coast. Mr Almeida, Haiti manager for the IADB, told me the bank's money would "provide the means for the private sector to come and invest", adding that "in [the Dominican Republic] everything they have is all private. The airport is private, the roads are private, even the internal roads. So we could do the same thing [in Haiti]." (In the initial carve-up of Haitian society, the IADB was given road infrastructure.)

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[2] Isabeau Doucet, "One year on, Haiti hasn't 'built back better'", *The Nation*, January 12, 2011.

The other opportunity that had to be taken advantage of was speeding up the privatization process. The World Bank used the example of Teleco, formerly the national telecom operator, which in 2009 the bank's private-sector arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), had helped partially privatize. (The IFC was, incidentally, the brainchild of Nelson Rockefeller in 1951.) Mr Naim, the private-sector Haiti manager for the World Bank, told me that Teleco was an example of what the government should do to the ports and the airport. "[They can] really transform these assets that generally the government handles poorly," he said, adding that "It's better for the government to focus on social things" and let these assets be privatized. Teleco itself is now due for complete privatization under the guidance of the IFC. For the poorest country in the western hemisphere, it is hard – possibly even suicidal – to argue with the World Bank. In March 2010, the bank promised $479 million in grants; the IFC put $49 million-worth of direct investment into Haiti's private sector.

With Teleco on its way to privatization, the IADB had its own plans for the national water and sanitation authority (Dinepa), which had come under its domain in the initial carve-up. The bank soon handed over the authority's management duties to the giant Spanish company Aguas de Barcelona, which won a three-year contract to train and assist workers, and for which they received millions of dollars. "Many local companies are taking control of small towns' water systems," Mr Aguerre of the IADB told me excitedly. This essential commodity and basic human right was now being turned into a for-profit venture. "We are seeing good examples of places where no one paid for water services, and little by little they are paying," he added. Experts from

Aguas de Barcelona became the leaders of discussions concerning the investment needed in Haiti's water system and the process of opening bids to different contractors for the completion of new pipelines and other systemic improvements.

In education, the IADB's plans were no different. Thanks to decades of neoliberal policies that prioritized the private sector above the Haitian ministries, even before the earthquake 80 percent of educational services were delivered outside the state (primarily by international bodies or the private sector). As a result, only half of school-aged children in Haiti went to school. For the IADB, this did not prove the folly of their enterprise. Contrariwise, they concluded that it meant they had not gone far enough. "It's too ambitious to think you can turn it around," Mr Aguerre said. The IADB settled on a voucher program that will allow the government to retain some "quality control", but means that education will be completely privately run. To ensure full access, the plan creates a publicly funded but privately run education system. The small print is that this public subsidy will cost the Haitian government about $700 million a year, seven times what it spends now on education. With no new revenue streams evident (in fact, as we shall see, the government's tax base was being all but destroyed), the obvious implication was that full access was not an aim (or even a hope). When the IADB's promised $500 million over three years runs dry, more than half of Haiti's children will still be locked out of the school system. The IADB rationalized this arrangement by arguing that the private sector would pick up the slack – explicitly holding Haiti's kids ransom to Hollywood film stars. "There are many private actors willing to put money in," added Mr Aguerre. "Half of Hollywood is interested. Everyone wants their Susan Sarandon School of Arts." Incidentally, Martelly has been approving of both vouchers and subsidizing private schools as methods to rebuild the Haitian education system.

With the complete privatization of telecoms, water and education, the final piece in the jigsaw for the IFIs and the US became the new "industrial parks" or "integrated economic zones". These, so the propaganda went, would ensure the economic growth that could put Haiti and its people back on their feet. But two years after the quake, more than 500,000 Haitians still lived in ad hoc camps around Port-au-Prince and 8 million still lived without electricity. The throngs of jobless who lined the capital's streets are a reminder of the 70 percent unemployment rate. "We need to be realistic and understand that it's still five years after Katrina and New Orleans is still being rebuilt, it's 10 years after September 11th and that site isn't rebuilt complete, the process takes time," Kenneth Merten, then US ambassador to Haiti, told me, adding, "One of the things Haitians can really do themselves is to move quickly on making a business-friendly climate."

It might perhaps be hard for the hundreds of thousands of Haitians living in ad hoc campsites to do that. In Haiti, I went to the La Piste camp, a barren enclosure with rows of one-bedroom "houses" on steeples. The owner of one, a middle-aged woman, spoke to me slowly via an interpreter. She was a single mother with three children with no means of income. She was living off money the Red Cross had given her, alongside selling some trinkets, although customers are few and far between. "It's much better here than the last camp," she told me. In the last place she and her children lived, like most others, in a tent, which meant they were subject to the rain and animals who decided to look in. "This is a house, it's safer," she said, but added that the fence of the camp should be higher, or be turned into a security fence because of the burglaries. She also said the lack of lighting puts them in danger: it is pitch black at night and easy for people to break in. You realize walking around La Piste that these people are completely at the mercy of nature – be that the elements, or their fellow man or woman. There is no security, there is no rule of law, and there is no place to go with grievances; there is merely the hope that someone is looking out for you. Hope cannot thrive in such an environment. “I would like to have hope,” she told me, her face blank, refusing any emotion at all. “I just don’t know who is going to make anything happen.” It seemed rude to ask how she planned to make a business-friendly climate for foreign investors in Haiti.

THERAPY

The 30-minute drive to Codevi industrial park from the airport in Cap-Haïtien, northern Haiti, is the smoothest in the country. In a place famed for its poor infrastructure, particularly its undulating roads, the park and the surrounding area are something of an oasis. Beyond the small bridge and metal gates which divide Codevi from the town outside, there’s everything that the average Haitian doesn’t have: paved roads, a functioning health service, employment and even a (small) trade union – the only one in the country. The 2 million square foot Codevi Park was originally built by a Dominican textile company, Grupo M, on the Dominican side of the border, but operations were expanded to Haiti in 2003 (with the help of a large investment by the World Bank).

“It was created as a vision of expansion that Grupo M had to look for as the Dominican Republic became more complicated competitiveness-wise,” Joseph Blumberg, vice-president of sales for the company, told me as we sat in his air-conditioned office inside the park. “Haiti offered us the competitive edge that we needed in this region to maintain ourselves with the US market.” He added: “It had a labor cost which was the lowest in the region.” The minimum wage in Haiti now is 150 gourdes ($3.70) per day, which is nearly half that in the

Dominican Republic. This "competitive edge" – in a layperson's terms "slave wages" – combined with favorable trading terms with the US had caught the eye of the IFIs in the aftermath of the earthquake. The aim was to rebuild Haiti as a Caribbean sweatshop that could enjoy the full fruits of the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity for Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) Act, which was passed by the US Congress in 2006, granting tariff-free access for Haitian textile exporters to the US market. This was followed by increasingly favorable terms through HOPE II, in 2008, and the Help Act after the 2010 earthquake.

Parks like that at Codevi are known in the IFIs' literature as integrated economic zones (IEZs): places where infrastructure, welfare services and other services are provided for the lucky few behind imposing metal gates. The literature justifying their existence argues that prospective foreign investors put off by the decrepit or non-existent roads, electricity-grid and water system throughout Haiti would here have access to a ready-made mini-city. There was already a huge industrial park of this kind near the airport in Port-au-Prince called Sonapi, which is fully owned by the Haitian government and had, at one point, nearly 40 companies based there. But the new IEZs would be under the sole control of its initial investors – mainly USAID and the IADB. This raises the question of what will happen outside these so-called "poles" of economic activity. What would the incentive be for the central government to develop infrastructure and social services throughout the country if they are being built on this micro-scale? And where would the money come from? Alexandre Abrantes, the World Bank's special envoy to Haiti, admits this is a problem; he told me that industrial parks "may not be sustainable if you were to do it as a policy everywhere".

Codevi is essentially an "export-processing zone" (increasingly common in the "developing" world) where exports pay no tax to the central government and there is no customs duty on imported materials. “You’re in an extra-territorial concept so that your goods come in and out very quickly without much paperwork,” said Armando Heilbron, a senior private-sector development specialist at the World Bank working on the IEZs in Haiti. Therefore, Haiti’s reconstruction will take place in isolated small “poles”, primarily in the northern part of the country, while the rest of the country’s infrastructure and welfare services will fall further into disrepair.

Perhaps the biggest problem with the industrial parks is the unscrupulous nature of the companies that populate them. The public relations tour of Codevi, with its stops at the local doctor and training facilities, is a relief after experiencing the destruction that has been wrought in the rest of the country. But the tour does not include many of the most important episodes in its establishment. Codevi was originally built on farmers’ land against their will – a process that destroyed the region’s agricultural infrastructure to create sweatshops. It was a parable for the economic reconstruction that occurred after the earthquake. The diplomatic cables recount that there had been a “long-standing labor dispute between Dominican manufacturer Grupo M and workers in Ouanaminthe”, a community in north-east Haiti. One said: “According to Yannick Etienne, a labor representative, the fight has its origins in the closed-door negotiations that established the Free Trade Zone (FTZ). The farmers were left out of the negotiating process until the day of the FTZ ground breaking ceremony in 2002, when they were told their land was being expropriated. Grupo M eventually published a social compensation plan in 2003, however, it came too late for the farmers whose land was already gone, and whose suspicions of the Dominicans were already aroused.”

Grupo M and its patrons at the World Bank do not, of course, tire of outlining the countless benefits that accrue to the local population because of Codevi. Every program of exploitation has an ideology bolted on to legitimate it to the world – but also to those benefitting: very few people want to look in the mirror and see a monster staring back. When I asked to speak to workers, two were dutifully brought out to give monosyllabic positive comments about their jobs, perhaps wary of the manager sitting next to them. Neither was a member of the union, I soon found out. In fact, Grupo M claims it has no conception of how many workers are in the union. "Very little," is all Mr Blumberg would tell me. "It's not part of their priority. They're happy and when the workforce is happy they don't mind if anybody is doing anything for them or not." However, according to the diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks, the soothing words of Mr Blumberg do not reveal the whole story. "Dominican unions allege [Grupo M] discriminates against labor organizers, fires their members, and has created a fraudulent 'scab union' in order to circumvent the legitimate one," one cable notes.

It is clear that something similar has happened in Haiti. Grupo M did have a stronger union once – before it was busted after trying to exercise its rights. Just months after Codevi opened, the workers began complaining of "exploitation and mistreatment" by the management of Grupo M. Rounds of strikes and violence by union members were followed by a "series of employee terminations by the company throughout that summer".

Mr Blumberg explained it thus: "When we had the first union, there was a lot of growing pain. They didn't have the right groups guiding them, there were a lot of radicals, a lot of leftists." But, he added: "In the end, everything was straightened out and we're in peace and we're fine with the union." The union had been co-opted. Workers' rights would not be a high priority for the economic model that would design the new Haiti. In fact, the plan was predicated on the lack of rights for workers. In an internal IFC document that was presented to the Haitian government, the administration was implored to amend the labor code in order to "lift restrictions on 24/7 multi-labor shifts" while "streamlining" the process by which night-time salary supplements could be done away with. The plan was also predicated on a lack of tax revenue. Another incentive for the foreign companies was the so-called "economic free zones" (EFZs), which offer companies tax and duty-free rights if they set up operations in Haiti. In reality, these zones do not exist in physical space but rather constitute the whole country. In other words, Haiti would now be tax-free for foreign investors – further disabling the Haitian government's ability to rebuild any public institutions. In 2011, the Haitian government brought in an estimated $1 billion of revenue, much less than the per-capita rate in sub-Saharan Africa.

The answer to this dilemma for the IADB was the "multiplier effect" whereby companies supplying services to the population would in turn have more income and therefore pay more tax to the government (at some time in the distant future). "It's on that side that we see the benefits of anchoring in the zones and having these companies come, even if under the current regime they do not pay taxes for a while," said Mr Almeida, IADB country director for Haiti. The idea essentially is that around the industrial estates other smaller Haitian businesses, such as travel agents and grocery stores, will pick up the slack of lost tax revenue. The problem for the IFIs was that even with slave wages and lax labor regulation it was proving hard to attract foreign investment. In the face of such reticence from investors around the world, Haiti should have focused on building indigenous capacity, perhaps through a massive public works initiative and the construction of state-owned facilities, like Sonapi. Haitians were instead again put at the mercy of international capital and its "race to the bottom". For the US embassy, the only thing going for Haiti was that its people were made to work for peanuts. "Haiti has the lowest wages in the western hemisphere," boasted one US embassy cable. To Haitians it was nothing to *boast* about. Camille Chalmers, a local economist, told the *Financial Times* that the wages paid in the textile sector, Haiti's biggest industry, were a "veritable scandal".

Amid manifold reservations from both international investors and labor-rights groups, the IADB and USAID finished the construction of the flagship project in the economic reconstruction of Haiti: the Caracol industrial park (CIP), just 40 miles down the well-paved road back toward the northern capital of Cap-Haïtien. The CIP was inspired by the perceived success of Codevi, with those designing Haiti's new-look economy trying to attract investment with the benefits that drew Grupo M into the economy: cheap labor and geographical closeness to the US, the world's largest market, where its exports are duty-free. It is one of five planned. The US poured millions of dollars into the CIP, but only Sae-A Trading, a South Korean textile company, has been enticed to set up shop in the park (and according to people involved in the deal, Sae-A was promised a rent holiday of four years). Sweatshop-based development had, in fact, never provided more than 100,000 jobs even in the 1980s.

The fact that the US taxpayer is building industrial parks for the benefit of South Korean companies also raised eyebrows. The US may be the most active foreign country involved in the reconstruction, but even its companies are still keeping their distance. "We are professional beggars," Mr Aguerre, the Haiti manager for the IADB in Washington, told me. The Haitian people would become beggars, too. For example, an internal IFC document on proposed IEZs argues that the reconstruction should be "propelled by private-sector-led development" even though the same document admits that "the existing Haitian Free

Zone, Industrial Park and Investment Code policy and regulatory regimes have not been effective in attracting investments that are needed to create jobs".

"To say that the private sector is rushing into Haiti right now would not be exactly what's happening," Pamela Cox, the World Bank's vice-president for Latin America and the Caribbean, told me when I met her in Washington. So why were these institutions focusing so much on a foreign-investment-led reconstruction, rather than building up domestic and public Haitian capacity? Was the fact that this would not make any westerners rich merely a coincidence?

There are still further complications; namely, that offering generous inducements to foreign companies will adversely impact businesses already in Haiti. Grupo M, for example, is fearful of what the incentives offered for the CIP and other IEZs being planned might mean for it. "[New foreign companies] have to train their workforces, they have to prepare themselves for what is coming," said Mr Blumberg, vice-president of sales at Grupo M. "We want a level playing field if you will. We understand that [foreign companies] are getting a lot of things via grants and via sponsorships from different sources." But if investment is not forthcoming or indigenous industries are stifled, as many predict, Haiti will suffer stagnation and destitution for another generation.

Enthusiasm from donors for aid and other forms of sovereign investment is now dwindling as the international community loses interest and the financial crisis continues to bite. The Haiti Reconstruction Fund (HRF), which aggregates funds from countries and NGOs to fill gaps in investment, has raised $352 million so far, but, "We've reached a plateau," Mr Leitman, head of the HRF, told me. "I think the donors have been cautious and reluctant to contribute new money." In March 2010, at a major pledging conference held in

New York City, $4.6 billion was promised for the first two years of reconstruction. Only $1.9 billion of that ever materialized. "If you look at estimates made about rebuilding Haiti after the earthquake, they were huge, you know $15 billion, even more than that," Mark Weisbrot, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) in Washington, DC, told me. "They haven't come up with anything like that, even a fraction of that. It's a small country but it's still 10 million people and so if you don't clear the rubble, you don't have roads, you don't have housing, you don't have water, you don't have sanitation, what kind of economy are you going to get out of that? That's the real problem."

The real fear back home in Washington, however, especially among politicians, is migration and drugs. "They feared Aristide was a Castro want-to-be," Larry Birns, an analyst in Washington, told me. "US policy has never been concerned with building a viable economy. The policies they followed destroyed Haiti's economy." On assuming power, Ronald Reagan proposed the Caribbean Basin Initiative to try, in a familiar story, to bring foreign investment to the region. It was a method of regaining control of the region, which seemed to be going on an independent path. Reagan even invaded Grenada on spurious grounds in 1983 to push that effort. The initiative was a failure, bringing little to no investment, but control was exerted. In that respect it was like John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress in Latin America, which sought to bring the region away from Soviet influence, under the guise of "development" and "investment". The prevailing spirit now in Washington is that Haiti is messy, and people will openly tell you (off the record) that Haiti is beyond the capacity to be reformed, a "loser situation". They favor what they call "keeping it on life support" so that the US doesn't get too many people coming in (Haitian refugees dying on the beaches of Florida caused havoc for Southern politicians in the 1980s). But what the US never seems to understand about Haiti and elsewhere is that you cannot have a society operate like clockwork when you have for years persistently undermined all credible efforts for that society to function in an effective way. Haiti is now actually well below its per capita income of 1960, the only country in the hemisphere to have made no progress in that period. Ironically, the economy grew from 1960 to 1980 under the Duvalier dictatorships because, despite their brutality, they actually had a development strategy. It wasn't great but it did move the country forward. This is true for a lot of the region where many countries had more growth under dictatorships because they had more control over policy than they did in a more democratic era when, in the subsequent neoliberal phase, the World Bank and the IMF controlled policy, and nobody *allowed* them to have a development strategy. From 1991 to 1994 and from 2000 to 2004, in fact, there was a deliberate strategy to destroy the economy, and that's how they got rid of President Aristide both times. "This is more about power. It's hard for people to believe this, but the US really does care who runs the government," said Mr Weisbrot. "They've overthrown the government twice, the US, Canada, France, and their allies. 1991 was more covert but it did come out that the CIA paid the people who did the coup, and they also financed death squads in the period after."

The story of one Haitian I met while in the country, Robinson Deese, shows the human side of this brutality. "After the earthquake everything turned terrible," he told me, as we sat in his bedroom. He lost his home and moved with his four children and wife to Golf, one of the biggest camps in Port-au-Prince on the capital's only golf course. But he was given a lifeline. The Red Cross – one of the most influential and powerful NGOs working in Haiti – offered him a rent subsidy to move his family into permanent accommodation. The charity gave him 4,000 Haitian dollars toward the yearly rent of 6,000 Haitian dollars. (Prices have ballooned since the earthquake because of the squeeze on supply.) Now he lives in one small and sweltering room with six other people, including his wife, children and brother. Formerly a tailor, his working life was destroyed when he lost all his sewing machines in the earthquake. "We have to manage with this because we have no means to rent a bigger place right now, I have to work for other people now," he said. "I preferred to take the subsidy because I didn't have a piece of land where I could build a shelter. I decided the best option would be to start a small business for myself while I tried to save money, maybe get a piece of land." He was also awarded a us$500 Livelihood Grant to start a business, which he said was not going well so far. In these conditions, saving is hard for a family like this, as he has to stump up money for tuition for his kids' schooling as well as for books and uniforms. The Red Cross has helped countless people this way – it is one of three options they offer to some of the 500,000 Haitians still living in tent cities around Port-au-Prince. The other two are building a T-shelter on a greenfield site, or finding someone who will let them do it. But the program is a parable of the short-termism that has overtaken the reconstruction of Haiti. Mr Deese only qualifies for this subsidy for a year. After that, he and his family are back at square one unless he finds a job, which with 80 percent unemployment seems unlikely. "I can't say I will have enough to cover next year's rent," he admitted. "It doesn't stress me out right now, I know that I can work, I have two hands to work with."

NO ROOM FOR AN ALTERNATIVE

Haiti is a notoriously difficult country to operate in: its institutions are frail, weakened by years of underinvestment, and the system is riven with corruption. For the economic managers post-earthquake, this was the default reasoning for their reliance on the private sector and "export-led" reconstruction. But there was nothing inevitable about such a program. There were plenty of reconstruction plans that could, most likely would, have created a fairer and more sustainable future for Haitians. The problem was and remains that these plans go against an ideology purveyed by the IMF, the World Bank and the US. For example, the Haitian government could have rebuilt the country's crumbling infrastructure with a modern-day equivalent of the Marshall Plan from donors, which would have created public-sector jobs for Haitians to construct roads, ports and energy infrastructure which has either been non-existent or in disrepair. Everyone, after all, puts infrastructure as among the top problems for making Haiti work. Some 10,000 jobs could have been created just clearing the rubble. The Red Cross has, for example, created hundreds of jobs for Haitians reusing the rubble to build bricks and other building materials, clearing the city and creating employment. "We're the only ones doing it," the co-coordinator of the program in Port-au-Prince told me. "At the moment, now, all the rest goes down the dump, even though the cost of processing it is about the same as taking it down to the dump."

Perhaps most importantly, Haiti could have focused on creating a new agrarian economy, a sector which had been thriving before President Clinton dumped tonnes of US rice in the country in the 1990s, destroying Haitian agriculture by completely distorting trading terms, something that will be explored in a moment. About 40 percent of the Haitian population, or 4 million people, live in rural areas. Promoting community-owned agricultural land would have instantly depopulated the overcrowded capital and provided a sustainable way of feeding its people (with any leftovers ready for export). It was never even discussed.

"Agriculture is still missing," Mr Naim at the IFC told me. The IFC is yet to make one loan to an agricultural small or medium-sized enterprise (SME), instead training its focus on agribusiness rather than the smallholders that Haiti needs. Likewise, the World Bank has admitted that not enough priority is being given to agriculture. It has put $55 million into a new agricultural program (in the grand scale of things in Haiti, peanuts). "This is our first true agricultural project," Mr Abrantes acknowledged. The US government claims it is not ignoring agriculture. The ambassador to Haiti told me the US has invested $200 million in the sector already; but, once again, the focus remains on produce for export as opposed to providing for the Haitian population, large portions of which are starving. The IADB, on the other hand, contends that infrastructure is important but "there are other needs" (such as "investing in the private sector" in order to import seeds). The bank has a plan to get a private company to buy the mangoes, centralize them, distribute them and then send them to the exporters. "We're changing the dynamics of how we can do agriculture in Haiti," said Mr Almeida at the IADB. This new dynamic is straight out of the neoliberal guidebook: providing vouchers to small producers so they can buy seeds through imports. With no public or community-held land, such ventures have to date not got very far. "It's not a big number of jobs," Mr Almeida admitted.

The internal Haitian market continues to be ignored by all parties, a travesty considering that 90 percent of eggs and poultry consumed in Haiti come from the Dominican Republic, while 80 percent of rice is imported. Changing that state of affairs through publicly funded subsistence farming is not an option. "When I say agriculture I say agribusiness," said Mr Almeida. The alternative, which is unthinkable in the world of these institutions, is that money is provided to subsidize domestic small-scale rice production.

An emblematic project of this "new dynamic" was brokered by the IADB: an initiative with Coca-Cola which has created a new soda called "Mango-Tango" that will be supplied with mangoes from newly developed producers. A similar deal with Starbucks coffee seeks to transform individual micro-farmers into cooperatives and then supply coffee to Starbucks and market it as Haitian coffee. Critical analysts call this the "sweatshops and mangoes" development model. "They need roads, they need irrigation in the countryside, but that's the one thing these guys won't do," said Mark Weisbrot, the analyst at the CEPR. But the Martelly administration's agriculture policy has so far followed the export-orientated agribusiness model of the Bretton Woods institutions to the letter. "What I hear from [the Haitian government] is that they want to go into the export mode, including the agriculture," said Mr Abrantes. In fact, Martelly had pushed the IFIs to go even further. "We were preparing traditional agriculture projects for Haiti which were basically focused on poverty alleviation, on the small farmers," added Mr Abrantes. "When the Martelly administration came in, they looked at the project and said, 'We would like it to have a different slant. We would like to have significant components on stimulating agribusiness', which is quite a different thing from what we had anticipated, and so I think the overall view is, even in agriculture, to encourage parts of the agricultural sector to move into export-production." Haiti remains a majority agrarian country; it needs an agrarian-based development model that distributes land among its homeless people for community-based subsistence cultivation. The economic managers of the country are not interested. The long-held dream of a Caribbean sweatshop is being born instead. Out of one of history's worst human catastrophes we have Mango-Tango. The racket's victory was Haiti's defeat, but this was no accident.

TWO

THE RACKET

A VERY BRIEF EXPLANATION OF WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AFTER WORLD WAR II

In a world based on the exchange of goods and services, the most effective way of controlling people – or nations – is to put them in your debt. This the US government understood clearly, and so at the end of the World War II American planners set about designing an international monetary system that would put the rest of humanity under the crack of their whip. But doing such a thing, while maintaining the customary public posture of spreading democracy and economic justice, would be no easy task. The US managed it mainly through the construction of a series of global institutions that would, from then on, decide how the world's poorest managed their economies. The ideology driving these institutions would be a US-backed form of capitalism that brooked no dissent from its precepts. The official, old world empires (whose decline picked up pace after 1945) were to be replaced by something more insidious, more hidden, something that to this day is still not recognized for what is: *debt slavery*. Debt would be used to strangle and crush any peoples that tried to free themselves from the shackles of the order being imposed.

The first of the new enforcers was the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which billed itself as the savior of countries in dire need of money to shore up unraveling economies. It would soon become a star player, one of the real big boys. Alongside it another body would be used to promote the racket's interests across the world: initially called the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), it would later become known as the World Bank. These institutions, which still oversee the world economy in the interests of the fattest of cats, were created in inauspicious surroundings: a hotel next to a railway station called Bretton Woods in New Hampshire. The stories and propaganda regarding the genesis of these institutions are almost completely false, but continue to be told to the present day. The World Bank, in *official* history, was meant to "facilitate private sector investment and reconstruction in Europe". Alongside that crucial calling, with Europe in ruins after the war, it was meant to deal more generally with "development" – a term that refers to the economic progress of countries that have been kept underdeveloped by the policies of the same people overseeing their "development". This second role would later become its chief purpose, as the World Bank became one of the main avenues through which poor countries would be lent money.

Two men dominated the process of designing the new global order. Harry Dexter White, a US diplomat, was there to make sure everything was set down with US interests in mind. He was up against a more honest and respected economist from Britain, John Maynard Keynes, whose ideas did not win out – the resulting arrangements prioritized American interests. White, after all, had considerable leverage, thanks to the United States' economic supremacy at the time. He followed the course laid down by Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who said early in the World War II: "Leadership toward a new system of international affairs in trade and other economic affairs will devolve very largely upon the United States because of our great economic strength. We should assume this leadership, and the responsibility that goes with it, primarily for reasons of pure self-interest."[1] And so it was. This self-interest is obvious when the Keynes' proposal is compared with that of White. It shows clearly that US interests were the priority all along, preventing any equitable solution. Essentially, the US saw the IMF and World Bank as tools in its goal to create new markets in which American exports could be sold and developed, further enhancing its already growing economy and helping to secure its position as the global superpower. But Keynes believed that trade relations between countries could not be changed without both the creditor and the debtor country making a commitment to their alteration. The powerful and the powerless in this sense both had responsibilities. Keynes had, for this reason, proposed an International Clearing Union (ICU) with its own independent currency called "the bancor". The bancor would be a universal unit of accounting that countries across the globe could use that would track trade deficits and surpluses. An "objective" unit would ensure that equal pressure fell on both the creditor and the debtor to balance their trade. But such a body would constrain the powerful creditor nations like the US, which were using their loans and export capacity as a method of control. For this reason, the ICU never happened; White opposed it. Instead, he wanted an International Stabilization Fund and the IBRD. The purpose of the Stabilization Fund would be to reduce foreign exchange controls, maintain steady exchange rates and lend money to nations in deficit. The bank would provide the capital that was desperately needed by faltering countries to rebuild after the war. And this was the formulation that was eventually agreed upon. It completely took the burden off the creditor nations

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[1] Quoted in Murray N. Rothbard (2000) *A History of Money and Banking in the United States: The Colonial Era to World War II*, Ludwig von Mises Institute, p. 480.

(like the US) in terms of balance of trade. Put simply, there was now no restriction on the amount of surplus a successful exporting nation could enjoy. As a country borrowed more and more, interest rates just rose and rose. This formula was perfect for accelerating the racket's dominance. Foreign countries became markets for American goods and started to rely, heavily, on US capital. As the levels of debt grew, so did the racket's ideological and economic stranglehold.

Despite constant US propaganda to the contrary, such self-interest, or naked imperialism, was the main motivation – to sculpt a world in its image, to create a global population working for elite US interests, while at the same time thinking they were working for their own.

This is not ancient history – the same is happening today. I remember asking historian Walter LaFeber, one of the most esteemed voices on US foreign policy, about this, and he was more honest than most: "No government has ever proposed a plan unless it believed there was something in it for that government," he told me, adding that the "post-World War II economic system was developed, not created, by the US officials to help their nation's economic clout and survival." His contention is, in fact, a common one: that the Bretton Woods institutions, as the IMF and World Bank soon became known, had originally had an "idealistic thread". From there, the story goes, these same institutions were perverted by the US, as its power to maintain control over other countries diminished with decolonization, to re-establish its power – or what the planners and elite journalists like to call "stability".

In 1945, of course, the system was conceived with the developing world's subservience pretty much guaranteed. But as various nations and peoples around the world gained independence, they had to be reintegrated into the racket so that it would remain as profitable as its predecessor. No problem. Since its original formulation, the Bretton Woods system has been an elaborate system of control. The Bretton

Woods institutions are heavily biased in their voting capacities: votes are proportional to your contribution to the funds, and because the US contributes the most as the world's largest economy it has *de facto* control. For example, if the US did not want to lend to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, which overthrew a US-backed tyrant in 1979, then the Bretton Woods institutions would follow their lead. Functioning without this credit line is extremely difficult. Alongside this, the dollar gives the US more power because it is the global "reserve currency", which means that it is the most popular foreign exchange currency held by governments across the world. The interest rates set by the Federal Reserve in Washington, DC thus give the US significant power to manipulate the global economy. Some countries even surrender their economic sovereignty to the US completely by adopting the greenback as their currency. For example, El Salvador, a poor country in Central America that was the victim of a vicious civil war sustained by the US from 1980 to 1992, adopted the dollar in 2001, giving up its control over monetary policy *in toto*. Needless to say, the "right guys" won that war and the rewards for the US inevitably followed.

For LaFeber, the "real question is whether the Bretton Woods arrangements have helped solve problems for all the involved parties, and done so equitably". Initially, they may have, depending on your measuring stick. Economists and governments measure economic growth as the increase in economic activity within a country by the metric Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is a futile metric because it tells you nothing about how that wealth is being distributed within a given country or if the new economic activity is in areas that are socially useful. But, still, most governments in the world chase GDP growth as the ultimate goal.

In the 30 years after the establishment of the Bretton Woods institutions, global growth was indeed good – showing marked improvements on the pre-war period. But this does not alter the fact that these institutions were initially created to enshrine US control of the global economy. If there was any doubt about what the intended plan was, all one needs to do is look at what happened from the mid-1970s onwards. In 1971, President Richard Nixon removed the US from the gold standard, where currency in circulation had to correspond to a specific amount of gold. This move unleashed a large amount of what is known as "footloose capital". The Bretton Woods system as initially conceived at this point "broke down" – but the institutions that composed it would soon become the bodies through which the rest of the world was made pliable to this new capital. The populations of poor countries from Africa to Latin America were put in service of getting profit on this money. Whole societies were transformed; power was taken away from democratic institutions and placed in the hands of private bodies, the racket's new silent rulers. And while all this was going on, the world entered one of its periodic depressions. In what is known as the "business cycle", economies inevitably rise and fall as the irrationality of the market creates "bubbles" and troughs from which the poor have to pull themselves out and from which the rich can profit: buying at the bottom is the best way to make a fortune. Imperialism had changed its face, or in fact hidden its face. No longer would there be garrisons full of foreign troops ensuring countries were made to service their rich patrons; this was an invisible imperialism, and for that reason much stronger and more durable. This was the signature strategy of the racket – don't let your subjects know they are subjects; don't let your functionaries in the field know they are imposing a brutal form of imperialism. Let them think they are free citizens of a free world, of which the US is merely the neutral arbiter. Meanwhile, suck out the money.

NOW YOU ARE INDEBTED

In the early 1980s a recession was imposed on the world by the Reagan administration carrying out a deflationary policy which put huge pressure on developing world countries with debts. It was the first worldwide economic recession since World War II, and countries that had borrowed heavily found themselves in dire straits: with deflation they had trouble meeting payments and some fell into default which meant they came under IMF control. Mob rules: as soon as they can't afford to pay back a debt, you own them. The IMF could now impose specific conditions, instructing: "We won't make any more loans unless you carry out certain programs." These programs, officially called "structural adjustment programs", were precisely attuned to what growing transnational corporations wanted from these developing world countries. Under IMF control they *had* to privatize. They had to cut back on public expenditure for things that would help ordinary citizens, such as public health and education, and they had to orientate their whole program not just to paying their debt, but they also had to welcome transnational corporations into the country on the nicest possible terms. It was a set of conditions serviceable only to the racket and incredibly damaging to ordinary people. It is like asking a friend if you can borrow $20, and them responding: "I'll lend it to you if you let me wear all your clothes, use your computer whenever I want, sleep in your bed, and you pay me 10 cents extra every week until you pay it all back." It is worth remembering, as an aside, that in many places the crippling debt that countries had incurred during the long boom after World War II was stacked up by dictators and tyrants backed by the US and their allies, for example General Suharto, the genocidal Indonesian dictator. The people who would have to pay back these loans with the destruction of their social provisions had had no say in the loans themselves, which often went on ingratiating the leaders that were oppressing them. Such debts are known as "odious debt" and many believe them to be not just wrong, but illegal. Still, they are used to control much of the world. Some nice examples for you: Indonesia has a massive $80 billion-worth of debts, but it is estimated that 50 individuals own 95 percent of these debts. After the West had bankrolled Suharto to power, they then loaned him huge amounts of money that did nothing to benefit his subjects (particularly the 200,000 East Timorese people who were murdered under his watch). But these debts were instantly socialized so that future generations like today's young Indonesians have to pay the debts for the lavish lifestyle of Suharto and his friends. And it is not only "useless" countries like Indonesia that get themselves into heavy debt. What is often ignored is the fact that Britain, France and Italy all defaulted on US debts in the 1930s.

During the so-called "debt crisis" in Latin America in the 1980s, commercial banks would no longer lend to governments or companies in the region, so their reliance on the Bretton Woods institutions became even more acute. What these arbiters of economic control embarked on was the destruction of an economic model that had helped build Latin America into one of the economic powerhouses of the world, a model which had seen other great successes. Known as "import substitution industrialization", it was a system that sought to build up domestic industries by enacting protectionist policies to keep out foreign capital and products. It was, understandably, not a popular system for the racketeers seeking new markets in which to invest and export, so they brought it down. And so "export-orientated industrialization" – an economy oriented to producing exports for foreign countries using supplies often made elsewhere – was introduced. It was part of one of the oldest tricks in the racket's playbook to keep a poor country poor and "underdeveloped": allow a foreign company to extract minerals in the "developing" country, paying little in tax or royalties, then take that raw material out of the country, build the product back in their own rich country, creating jobs and industry, and then sell it back to the people in the original country at a huge mark-up. The economies of these "underdeveloped" countries were put at the mercy of the vagaries of the global economy, where demand and supply would create interminable instability; in essence, it meant that independent development was impossible. Again: not an accident.

The destruction of public control over industry – which is one of the staples of these programs – ignored the fact that the state has an important role to play in creating a flourishing domestic industry. The US should know; after all, it has been one of the most protectionist countries in the world. Protecting nascent industries by putting up barriers to foreign investment and products is vital when these industries are in their infancy. The structural adjustment programs are adamantly opposed to this erection of barriers. The idea is that structural adjustment makes weaker economies "more like the West", but it does nothing of the sort because the poorer countries have none of the economic base of their masters. Instead, it creates dependencies that rely completely on their western "sponsors" – it creates a situation where it is impossible for these countries to pursue their own path. And when nations start electing leaders that put the interests of their people ahead of those of western multinationals, you can bet that the Bretton Woods henchmen will be brought in to squeeze them into submission.

For Latin America, export-orientated industrialization was a prolonged disaster – huge amounts of capital flowed out of the continent, which helped depreciate its currencies (its currencies became less sought-after so their price fell), and in order to bring down inflation governments were instructed to raise interests rates – which in turn helped slow economies even further as it became harder to borrow money. The continent's economy contracted by 9 percent in the five years to 1985. It was the same period of ascendancy for Bretton Woods, and this was no coincidence. The economic managers used "structural adjustment programs" and levered the debt the IMF and World Bank were owed to transform economies. "Rescue" packages and loan "deals" were struck with poor nations, *on the proviso that they did certain things to their economy*. Their economies would be rebuilt with the interests of western capital at the forefront; the new economies would be "precisely attuned to what transnational corporations wanted". One specialist puts the program like this: "privatization of the means of production, deregulation of all economic activity, encouragement of competition … and [integration] into the wider world capitalist economic system."[2] The needs of the people – from healthcare to education – were thrown to the wind, as public institutions were forcibly privatized. Basic human rights were taken away as the poor were absorbed into the "global market" where fewer and fewer obstacles faced the holders of large amounts of capital. The penetration of the captured economy would be made much easier, as poor countries were bought up by western capital. The rich – centered in the capital of this economic system, the US – were growing richer, capital was draining from the poor world, and the destitute of humanity were crushed under the boot of adjustment programs. The racket was growing, as an aggressive form of capitalism, "neoliberalism", destroyed any institutions that represented those without capital.

Two professors from New York explain the result: "Half the people and two-thirds of the countries in the world lack full control over their own economic policy. Expatriate 'experts' managed by industrial country nationals and based in Washington DC regulate their macroeconomics, investment projects and social spending." To add insult to injury: "The principles guiding these instructions from afar are even known as a 'Washington Consensus'."[3] This consensus, in fact, stretches no further than the richest people on earth, the members of the racket. Of course, it is extremely hard to escape the lock that Bretton Woods puts on your country. One example of a leader and movement trying to do that was Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the former president of Brazil, who realized early on he would have a hard time borrowing money if he embarked on his more radical ideas to combat inequality in his country – the credit lines would be pulled. There is now a near-absolute rule in global politics that social democratic leaders become sell-outs. And why? Because the forces of capital and its enforcer the US are too powerful. Lula wrote a letter to his people at the start of his tenure explaining how far his hands were tied by foreign capitalists. Brazil, in other words, was far from a sovereign country. And that was no accident. "Either right before they take power, or right after they take power because the system has become so powerful, the constraints on the democratic leaders are so powerful that they really have a very limited range of choice, they have to work within very narrow bounds," Edward S. Herman, an economist at the University of Pennsylvania, told me, adding that "the system is a beautifully integrated whole", which makes it very hard for the victims to see the wood for the trees amidst the barrage of propaganda.

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[2] Fidelis Akpozike Etinye Paki and Jude Cocodia (2011) "Africa in post-Cold War world politics", *Africana* 5(3): 5.

Another Latin American country, Argentina, actually became one of the poster boys for the failures of neoliberal policies when in 2001 its economy crashed. It should never have been an example of an economy in tatters, being at one stage among the most prosperous economies in the world. By the early 2000s it had become a basket case, thanks to its patrons in Washington and their local satraps. The crash came at the end of a long period in which the country had followed the prescripts of the Bretton Woods institutions, restructuring its economy in the interests of foreign capital. It wasn't meant to be like this. In the 1990s, the usual glorification by the media of the Bretton Woods precepts was ascendant. Argentina, we were told, was the "model pupil" in the neoliberal university being erected around the world. It was, we were told further, an "economic miracle" thanks to the liberalization of the economy that began in earnest under President Carlos Menem who came to power in 1989, when the economy was admittedly in bad shape. At the time inflation – which measures the decreasing value of currency – was sky-high, hitting 200 percent at the time. Menem had actually won power by promising Argentinians a return to the "good life" – one with increasing living standards, improved services, the full gamut of the usual election-speak. But this idealism crashed on to the rocks of the Bretton Woods institutions when he entered the Pink Palace in Buenos Aires. He became a neoliberal; maybe he had been one all along but had had to hide it because such policies are rarely popular with the majority of the people.

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[3] Ute Pieper and Lance Taylor (CEPA) (1996; revised 1998) "The revival of the liberal creed: the IMF, the World Bank, and inequality in a globalized economy", Globalization, Labor Markets, and Social Policy Working Paper No. 4.

Menem's first move was to allow private capital to profit from Argentina's public institutions. "We are pragmatists," he said, "state enterprises will be privatized to the extent that such action meets the government's interests." This was supplemented by other measures out of the IMF's playbook: the Argentine government would remove all tariffs and other barriers to the free movement of capital. Now US companies would have no responsibilities if the economy went belly up – they could invest and disinvest freely. The peso was pegged to the dollar, giving the US even more tacit control over Argentina – the interest rates set by the Federal Reserve in the US would now have a considerable impact on Argentina's economy. Social programs were eviscerated and fiscal controls lifted, creating a human crisis. A World Bank study lauded the new moves in 1993: "Provinces now have most responsibility for such social services as education, health, security, and housing. Improving efficiency of the delivery of these provincial social services could be one of the most effective ways to improve the standard of living in Argentina" (for "provincial responsibility" read "privatization"). The "Shock" Menem used to push through these unpopular reforms putting his country's economy at the mercy of foreign capitalists was the hyperinflation that he had inherited. In fact, it continued even after his reforms. Money poured into Argentina initially as, in 1991, the US slumped into a recession and capital looked for new flesh to dig its teeth into. With its deregulation, Argentina was a common choice. In the one-year period 1991–92, foreign investment in Argentina nearly quadrupled from $3.2 billion to $11 billion. By 1997, the *Economist* thought wise to gush that the country's prosperity "reminds some of a golden era, a century ago, when the pampas supplied imperial Britain with wheat, beef and wool, and Argentina was one of the ten richest countries".[4]

But it was all a lie, a building constructed without girders. It soon came crashing down. Wall Street – the Holy Grail of global capitalism where many of the world's biggest banks are based and do their dirty – suffered another downturn. It was called the popping of the "tech bubble", which had mirrored Argentina's foreign investment bubble. When Wall Street crashed, the footloose capital which had been treated so kindly by the people of Argentina felt no loyalty and flew out of the country as quickly as it had gone in. Menem had discarded the controls that had been in place to prevent such a grand flight, so the people had no way to stop it. Economic historian Robert Brenner said that towards the end of the 1990s the US absorbed "all the world's mobile capital. In this situation, countries that had staked everything on attracting investment were up against the wall."[5] He added that the same period marked "the death knell for those peripheral economies that had tied their currencies to the dollar". Argentina had staked everything on attracting investment and had tied its currency to the dollar. In the resulting downturn, the Argentinian government imposed harsh austerity measures. The IMF offered a $40 billion loan but at this stage withdrawals from bank deposits had reached $1 billion a day. The relatively new President Fernando de la Rua declared, "I will never devalue", but this proved an empty promise, and eventually devaluation happened and the historic debt default followed. In 2001 popular protests erupted on the streets of Argentinian cities during which 27 demonstrators died. The final straw was the IMF's refusal to lend any more money because de la Rua had failed to meet its conditions on public-spending costs. He resigned but left a country in ruins. Public services had been systematically dismantled, fiscal controls had been eroded and foreign corporations had no responsibility to stay put, leaving the government and banks bankrupt. The Bretton Woods institutions had done their job.

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[4] David Rock, "Racking Argentina", *New Left Review*, September–October 2002.

YOU BETTER WORK

A class war is being fought and the poor are losing. The racket based in the West has the money and power to extend itself globally, and so workers are fighting each other for work across borders. The countervailing powers, such as strong organized labor groups, that previously had some check on business power have been eroded and fractured. Business can now, like never before, write laws, weaken and destroy labor rights and the environment, and control the media without the public service option. And it feeds itself – as business takes over there is less space for people with a dissenting view; it has a magnificent self-reinforcing quality. It is true that more trade unions and workers' movements are needed, but the head wind is strong. The power of profit-seeking money has managed to create a world in its own image, largely through the Bretton Woods institutions. By globalizing capital and its production, the racket is doing something very clever and advantageous (for itself). They are pitting workers against each other rather than highlighting the gap between themselves and the peons that make their profits. The pressure valve has been released on the anger, which should be sky-high, against executive bonuses, irresponsible speculation and the insane repackaging of debt; it is now firmly trained on workers from other countries, who have been equally exploited by the same business hounds. This tactic is well known to the business community and the prevalence of "free trade" areas over the last decades is the embodiment of this thought-process. In the case of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the US pushed for a "free trade" integrated area covering itself, Canada and Mexico, which would allow its businesses to go into Mexico's economy and produce at a much lower cost, because environmental regulations were looser and labor laws laxer. Consequently, working Americans were done out of work because they could be undercut by Mexican workers. Also, heavily subsidized American goods could be sold at cheaper prices than indigenous Mexican produce, so agriculture was destroyed in Mexico. The only NAFTA winner at the end of the day was the business community, and instead of solidarity with Mexican workers, often the American unions turned to jingoism. This whole dynamic is called in academe the "race to the bottom" and operates over the globalized economic system, where multinationals search for the least regulated country in which it can produce its goods cheapest. It describes a perfect world for foreign investors. It means that the workers who can pitch themselves most cheaply to oversized capital are the most "successful" in getting work. In the absence of any new International where workers can coordinate on a level that might counterpoise the "race to the bottom", the result is that they often turn on each other.

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[5] Quoted in ibid.

Like all imperial strategies, the racket find voices of support in the local intelligentsia, whose job it is to rationalize brutal power and make it acceptable to the minds of the population. In the US, one such bright spark is Thomas Friedman, who calls the system outlined a "Golden Straitjacket" – i.e. the poor countries have no choice but to accept it, but it is beneficial for them. His evidence is that in 1975 only 8 percent of countries worldwide had liberal, free-market regimes; at that time, foreign direct investment (FDI) totaled $23 billion. But by 1997, by which time the Bretton Woods institutions had done their most ardent work, this figure had soared to $644 billion.[6] For Friedman, the increasing gap between the rich and poor was irrelevant, the human reality behind these figures did not penetrate his thinking, and he was not alone. Fetishizing investment is a widespread malady. But investment, and even growth itself, has no correlation with the improvement of life for the majority of the population in developing countries. It enriches a local elite, Friedman's friends, his colleagues in the media and finance and the rest of the racketeers. But the people see none of it, and never have. In fact, the US knowingly pushed this strategy because, far from providing benefits to the debtors, it benefitted US multinationals. As governments in developing countries have been made to privatize and open up their economies at the behest of the IMF and other bodies, they have had to solicit investment. The most successful countries have become those that create the optimum conditions for transnational corporations – led by the US. These conditions, unsurprisingly, are lax labor and environmental laws and low corporate tax regimes. Transnational corporations have spent the past 25 years running this race, looking for the poorest country with the least social infrastructure in which they can produce most cheaply, turning the globe, or its poorest parts, into a wasteland of broken people and destroyed landscapes. This is all called "globalization" by the racket's intelligentsia. Referring to this, Martin Khor, director of the Third World Network, has said: "Globalization is what we in the Third World have for several centuries called colonization."[7] No one is arguing that more interconnectedness is bad, it's "investor-rights" globalization that is opposed, merely because it is an updated form of imperialism that neutralizes the agency of billions of people. The so-called Washington Consensus removes freedom of choice from poor countries. They can no longer choose any development model that puts the needs of their own citizens ahead of the needs of international capital.

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[6] Thomas L. Friedman (2000) *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

This "race to the bottom" also means that FDI has been uneven in developing countries. While Friedman may laud the increase in FDI, he fails to mention that there is a stark discrepancy between the few developing countries that have ridden on the crest of the "neoliberal", US-led wave – "higher-tier developing countries" – and the rest who haven't been so lucky. It is also quite clear that the real success stories of the period in question actually were the countries of East Asia who took a very different economic position than the neoliberalism that was rampant in Latin America and Africa. The state took on a heavy role in places like South Korea and Taiwan, and there were countless state programs to help the poor, bucking the neoliberal religion. South Korea is an anomaly – it doesn't fit the usual model, it's not a pure free-market economy at all – it's a highly controlled economy with the government giving a lot of direction. Its success was due in good part to the fact it wasn't following the structural adjustment rules. The same is true of countries like Taiwan – another controlled economy that didn't move toward the radical free enterprise system according to structural adjustment rules. The former neoliberal colonies, like Bolivia and Venezuela, which are now renegotiating unfair contracts with western companies, are inevitably denounced but, according to Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize-winning economist who was formerly chief economist at the World Bank but turned against it, what they are doing "makes a lot of sense". The previous contracts had given next to nothing to the people of either country – that's what we call investment and they call imperialism. "The notion that you would want to invest more in education and health also makes a lot of sense," adds Stiglitz. "What we don't yet know is the extent to which they will be able to succeed in doing what the previous governments failed, which was to provide a broad basis for development. You need education and health, but some things take longer, and we don't know the answer to that yet." But if you take that course, as Hugo Chávez, the former president of Venezuela, did, you inevitably step on the toes of the racketeers. So it will try to take you out, as the US tried with tacit support for a 2002 coup attempt in Venezuela. Or in the case of another desperately poor country, Haiti, the US and its allies in Bretton Woods will wait until a crisis leaves you helpless to take full advantage.

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[7] Karl Moore and David Lewis (2009) *The Origins of Globalization*, Routledge, p. xiv.

As capitalism has taken on new – what philosopher Zygmunt Bauman calls "liquid" forms – it has been harder for people across the world to fight back. An asymmetry has emerged whereby those who own the capital, who own the means of production, are not in any way dependent on the workers who make their profits. If a worker raises a finger, tries to fight for better conditions for himself or his co-workers, then the bosses can just move operations to somewhere where they can pay even less, where the grass is greener for capital. Workers on the other hand are stuck in their place – most have responsibilities like family, children and unpaid debts. The idea of the free movement of workers is a sham; many people are in fact stuck to the ground for prosaic reasons of everyday life. So the rich increase their life chances and prospects – the poor stay rooted in a bleak existence with no way out. It creates two parallel existences, two discrete classes. "When one side is fixed to the ground and has no mobility then the concept of liquid modern life is of very little use for them," Bauman told me. "That situation differentiates very considerably the life situation, life prospects, life chances, of different kinds of pleasure – it is polarizing."

When I interviewed Stiglitz, he told me that the Washington Consensus actually comprised a long list of policies, some of which were apparently "appropriate" at some times. In Stiglitz's opinion, the problem was that this neoliberal ideology had become, in a sense, a religion, a set of extreme ideas that were seen to be a one-size-fits-all panacea for all the economic problems of the developing world. In layman's terms, this was "free-market fundamentalism". Stiglitz maintains that the Bretton Woods institutions have come to realize that their policies have been a failure, yet in his book, *The $3 Trillion War*, he looks at the economic system now imposed on Iraq after the war and occupation. "I think one of the last attempts to impose neoliberal doctrines was in Iraq," he told me. "After the World Bank had abandoned these ideas, the Bush administration was pushing it in Iraq: instant liberalization, instant privatization, even if it was against international law we tried to push it. It's played a role in the difficulty of recovery." The Bush administration had attempted to oversee the privatization of all the natural resources in the Iraqi economy, through the constitution itself. When I was at the *FT*, a senior executive at Japanese investment bank Nomura said to me in an off-the-record interview: "Well, we all know we went into Iraq to secure 3,000 barrels of oil a day." He thought it was funny that I had thought any different. This is how the racketeers talk behind closed doors. "I think one of the big, big worries is that the privatizations [in Iraq] will not have legitimacy and without legitimacy they may be reversed," Stiglitz told me. "And if there is worry about them being reversed it will undermine investment, it will make it more likely that the privatizations will not have the beneficial effect that was hoped, and there will be asset stripping rather than wealth creation, so I think it was a very foolish thing to do." Stiglitz was right that it would prove a disaster. He was wrong, though, to think that the World Bank and the IMF had learnt the error of their ways. They have not, because the logic of the system they oversee makes it impossible. These ideas remain popular, despite their failure, because they make the rich richer. And there are plenty more of these mad, bad ideas where this came from.

THREE

RIGGING THE SYSTEM

THE WHOLE TRUTH: FREE TRADE

"Almost every concern of the world, from the risks and safety of GMOs to climate change and biodiversity, from the protection of indigenous knowledge and resources to the reform of undemocratic and authoritarian global institutions like the WTO and IMF to global justice and fair trade, is reduced by the US to a question of 'free trade'."[1]

The fiction of "free trade" is one of the most potent weapons in the armor of the US in prizing concessions out of weaker countries and consigning them to an eternity of underdevelopment. More accurately, "free trade" refers to the freedom of America to do as it pleases in its trading relationships, while everyone else is forced to create economies conducive to being flooded by American goods. From the creation, as part of the Bretton Woods package, of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), later to become the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United States has preached the virtues of "free and fair trade". In reality it has practiced nothing of the sort. A particularly infamous example is the June 1930 Smoot–Hawley Tariff Act that raised US tariffs to historically high levels in order to keep out foreign products. In this case, extreme American protectionism backfired and the Smoot–Hawley tariff is now widely seen as a contributor to the crippling depression that enveloped the US in that period. The official story is that the Smoot–Hawley tariff was the "high-water mark of US protectionism in the twentieth century" and that in the aftermath of that "mistake" the US learnt the error of its ways and henceforth "generally assumed the mantle of champion of freer international trade" (quoted from the official State Department history). In fact, this is the opposite of the truth. Free trade has always been, rather, an ideal the US government supported when it served its purpose and spurned when it did not. In 1947 the GATT was signed with the ostensible purpose of economic liberalization, the obliteration of tariffs for import and exports, and the creation of stronger international cooperation. But as the historian John Bellamy Foster points out, the US put forward the GATT "with the intention of consolidating the economic control exercised by the center states, and the United States in particular, over the periphery and hence the entire world market".[2] A pattern begins to emerge.

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[1] Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies (2002) *Why Do People Hate America?*, Disinformation Company.

In essence, the GATT became a forum for trade negotiations, with numerous rounds of talks. The most notable of these was the partially successful Kennedy Round of 1962–67 where real reductions were made in the trade barriers put up among the involved nations. This changed a decade after the Kennedy Round when the GATT assumed its role as a vehicle for US interests. Anthony Gamble, the economist, says that at this point the "US began to turn to a dual-track strategy with regard to trade liberalization". Gamble was pointing out a certain tendency that the US had developed: the US puts pressure within the GATT to pursue a multilateral approach (this eventually led to the Uruguay Round in 1986 which gave birth to the WTO), while at the same time pursuing a course of explicit national self-interest outside. This was achieved through various new forms of protectionism and the initiation of bilateral trade liberalization with strategic partners such as Canada and Israel. One academic notes further how the US actually "formally remained outside the GATT regime": the US Senate never ratified the GATT. But, he adds, the Senate "allowed the GATT system to work in a legal sense, by and large". This precarious relationship with the GATT was consciously created because it allowed the US to be largely unconstrained by agreements which could have damaging economic consequences, while taking advantage of markets that could be prized open through the organization. The US was also upset that some countries were refusing to become part of the racket's trade regime en masse. William E. Brock, the US trade representative in 1985 under President Ronald Reagan, is open about the workings. "The reasoning behind these efforts," he said in reference to bilateral agreements outside the GATT, "is that additional trade-creating, GATT-consistent liberalization measures should not be postponed while some of the more inward-looking contemplate their own economic malaise."[3] Reagan himself was maybe the West's most zealous preacher of laissez-faire and free trade but, according to *Foreign Affairs*, "presided over the greatest swing toward the protectionism since the 1930s".[4]

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[2] John Bellamy Foster (2003) "The new age of imperialism", *Monthly Review*, 55(3).

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[3] Ernest H. Preeg (ed.) (1985) *Hard Bargaining Ahead: US Trade Policy and Developing Countries*, Transaction, p. 38.

[4] Quoted in Noam Chomsky, "The passion for free markets", *Z Magazine*, May 1997.

This led to the most notable bilateral agreement, the US–Canada free trade agreement, which was signed in 1989. It showed that the US was serious about forming arrangements outside the GATT and made economic sense for American business: Canada was the main single trading partner of the US. It imported $79 billion of US exports in 1989, nearly 22 percent of its total and almost double that taken by Japan. Liberalization across the US's other border, in Mexico, had seen US exports rise from $12.4 billion in 1986 to $25 billion in 1989. The supposed symbiotic trading relationship between these countries – the US, Canada and Mexico – eventually led to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which was signed in 1992 and put into force on January 1, 1994 (not without opposition as will be explored in a later chapter). Its selling point was the potential to bring together 360 million people and enjoin a collective GDP of approximately $6,239 billion. But this agreement followed the paradigm started in the 1970s. The economic model pushed by NAFTA and other bilateral arrangements with countries in Latin America was one of forced structural adjustment that reflected "the triumph of economic liberalism, of faith in export-led growth and of belief in the centrality of the private sector to the development process". This meant that any country wanting to trade with the US – a vital prerequisite for a developing nation to maintain a successful economy – had to adhere to this economic agenda. The US thus achieved its goal of making the rest of the hemisphere in its own image. The George Bush I administration, according to Anthony Payne, "conceived of NAFTA in wholly national interest terms, as devices by which to create an increasingly integrated hemispheric economy which the US could then use as the base from which to export ever more competitively to other, more distant, markets, preferably within the ambit of an extended GATT."[5] This thesis is supported by a comment made by Peter Hakim, staff director of the Inter-American Dialogue, who told Congress in March 1991: "Of every dollar Latin America spends on imports, 50 cents comes to the United States. There is nowhere else in the world where we enjoy that kind of advantage." Another of the major myths promoted by the US and its agents is that "trade liberalization" – which is code for getting rid of obstructions to US products – is a vital prerequisite for development. The truth is very different. The East Asian economies that have developed impressively in the second half of the 20th century are market economies, but South Korea, for example, is far from a free-market economy. It is, in fact, highly controlled and has bucked the structural adjustment rules. Taiwan is the same: it refused to abandon the economic tools it had in place to protect indigenous industry. Economic success followed.

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[5] Andrew Gamble and Anthony Payne (eds) (1996) *Regionalism and World Order*, Palgrave Macmillan.

I spoke to Bernie Sanders, US senator for Vermont, self-described socialist, and opponent of the free trade agreements. According to him, such agreements are emblematic of what's wrong with the global economy. "What happens to local agriculture, to farmers who are doing subsistence farming, feeding their families?" he said. "They may get driven off of the land because there'll be some export crops available, whether it's coffee, or something else." This is exactly what I had seen in Haiti, where subsistence farmers were pushed off their land by rice dumped by the US in the 1990s; then they were told that with foreign investment subsistence farming was no longer viable and "export-orientated" production was the order of the day. The impact on domestic workers is also disastrous. Sanders continued: "My own view is that, especially for this country, the evidence is overwhelming that the function of these so-called free trade agreements is not to open up foreign markets for American products made in America, but to give corporations the opportunity to shut down here, and move abroad, and take advantage of cheap labor." The effect for working Americans, and the economies of the weaker countries is clear.

Sanders continued: "What astounds me about this whole debate is I think the evidence is just crystal clear that China has cost us millions of jobs, NAFTA has cost us millions of jobs, and why people want to continue to go forward in a policy which just does not work for American workers, it really does speak, getting back to money, to the power of corporate America. You look at the polls out there; Republicans were saying, no, we don't think free trade has done well for America, and yet, you've got Republicans and many Democrats who are defying the popular will, and defying all of the evidence, and that just speaks to the power of money." The corporations benefit from free trade, which is why it is maintained. A major part of all free trade agreements is the entrenchment of a legal regime that enshrines "investor rights", which means that domestic constituencies are often overruled in favor of foreign interests. It is part of further integrating countries into a global economy run in the interests of international capital rather than people. "Free trade agreements" actually often have nothing to do with trade – in the sense of a mutual lowering of tariffs. They are used, instead, to entrench corporate ownership of society through changes to the law in favor of investors. The free trade agreements, and associated bilateral investment treaties (BITs), often include a mechanism called "investor–state dispute settlement" (ISDS) which allows multinationals to sue a state, in international venues, that regulates or acts in a way the company doesn't like. Power is drained from nominally sovereign governments and consequently their populations. Through this vast web of treaties and "agreements" criss-crossing the globe, our world's *real rulers* take control.

AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH: AID AND INVESTMENT

But "free trade" is not a lone star. Aid, and with it the obsession with "foreign investment", are the others jewels in the crown. The Marshall Plan – or the European Recovery Act – which was the $13.3 billion aid package ($1.5 billion in loans) given to 16 Western European nations by the US in 1947 is a good place to start. One Harvard historian describes the Marshall Plan as "the high-water mark of official unrequited transfers to foreign governments". Dexter Perkins, writing in 1948, said: "The feeling that security and the preservation of free institutions are at stake provided the motive-power behind the Secretary's program." The former US president George W. Bush called it "a moral victory that resulted in better lives for individual human beings". The tendency for this "gift" to be absorbed into the ideological framework of American beneficence is easy to understand. On the surface it appears to be motivated by the undoubtedly selfless goal of rejuvenating Europe's economies on the back of a demanding war. But on closer inspection things look somewhat different. According to the historian Melvyn Leffler, the Marshall Plan was devised to, quite simply, "benefit the American economy". When I went to the World Bank archives in Washington, DC, I found a document written in the aftermath of its establishment which outlined openly how "foreign aid" was being used to bolster the US economy after World War II. "In large part, the outflow of goods after the war was financed by the United States Government grants and loans, through the Marshall Plan and other programs", it read. "In broad terms, it can be said that the Foreign Aid programs of the [US] Government have financed over $30 billion of exports from 1946 to 1952, or about one-third of total exports for this period." The document pointed out that it wasn't just foreign aid;

war was also good for business: "An added stimulus to the outward flow of goods was provided by the Korean war and the Western rearmament policy". The primary motive of the Marshall Plan, and to some extent the whole Bretton Woods package, was the rectification of what these documents called "the dollar gap". Before World War II there was a triangular economic arrangement, in which the US bought raw materials from colonies "owned" by Europe's powers and, in turn, the US could count on its exports being bought in Europe. It was extremely important for US interests that this symbiotic trade pattern be restored in the wake of the war. European (and Japanese) access to developing world markets thus became a very important strategic consideration. The best way for Marshall and his cronies to secure such a trade relationship was to introduce large-scale aid to Europe, so that it had enough economic clout to keep buying US goods. This is spelled out clearly and brazenly in internal planning documents from that period. Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson, in his call for economic aid to Europe in May 1947, talks at length about the "physical destruction" and "economic dislocation" across Europe; fair enough, but he frames his elegies to a lost European dominance with his desire for American supremacy. After listing the devastation in Europe, he laments: "the accumulation of these grim developments has produced a disparity between production in the United States and production in the rest of the world that is staggering in proportions."[6] This is the aforementioned "dollar gap". He then says: "Your Congress and your Government is carrying out a policy of relief and reconstruction today chiefly as a matter of national self-interest."[7] Simple as that.

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[6] Dean Acheson, "The requirements of reconstruction", May 8, 1947, http://slantchev.ucsd.edu/courses/nss/documents/acheson-reconstruction.html

[7] Quoted in Noam Chomsky (1991) *Deterring Democracy*, South End Press. Available at http://zcomm.org/wp-content/uploads/zbooks/www/chomsky/dd/dd-c01-s15.html

With the far right defeated and discredited in Germany, Italy and Japan, however, the initial allure of Soviet-style communism was considerable. The disbanded resistance movements all over Europe had a large communist element and they were a real and present danger to the "class" interests of the US, especially in the face of the Soviet superpower. According to one historian, the Marshall Plan was used "to force Europe to soft-pedal welfare programs, limit wages, control inflation, and create an environment conducive for capital investment – part of it financed out of labor's pocket".[8] The US was aware that making Europe dependent and reliant on dollars would provide a fatal blow to the attempts of the Soviets to push their sphere of influence westward. Commenting on the rebuilding of Germany by the US, Leffler writes: "Whereas the Americans hoped that German power would be co-opted, controlled, and modulated, the Soviets naturally feared, as did many Western Europeans, that the steps to rebuild German power might in the long term have unfortunate consequences."[9] The scale of the Soviet apprehension about the intentions of the US in its "state-building" is revealed by their refusal to allow the Eastern European countries under their *de facto* control to participate in the Marshall Plan. Their hostility to American aid is understandable and was not misplaced. Internal planning documents that anticipated the Marshall Plan stipulated that a major purpose of US foreign aid would be "To reduce or to prevent the growth or advancement of national or international power which constitutes a substantial threat to US security and well-being and to oppose programs of coercion and infiltration, especially when effected by the use of armed minorities and to oppose the spread of chaos and extremism." The catch-all phraseology is undoubtedly aimed at the Soviet

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[8] Ibid.

[9] "New perspectives on the Cold War: a conversation with Melvyn Leffler", *Humanities* 19(6) (November/December 1998).

Union and its partisans of whom there was a burgeoning number post-1945. After the Cold War, and during, this actually meant using foreign aid to keep on a leash smaller powers that looked to be moving towards independent nationalism or any form of meaningful sovereignty. The western intelligentsia garnered the good-will of their citizens by harping on foreign aid – i.e. "free" money going to the developing world to help ameliorate health problems and poverty. Aid is, in fact, "often deployed to supplement private trade and financing"; it is a method of control, as we will see when we investigate USAID later in the book. Far from being the long-awaited break with a paradigm that has seen the West exploit and pillage the Global South for centuries, the "debt relief" and "aid packages" offered by the rich nations are a continuation of the same shameful modalities. Behind all the glistening propaganda about a "new era for Africa", and "the birth of western altruism", lay a dull and familiar blueprint for the export of the so-called "neoliberal" economic model, better represented as neo-imperialism. During one G-8 summit in the 2000s, the finance minister's statement stipulated that to qualify for debt relief developing countries must "boost private sector development" and "eliminate impediments to private investment, both domestic and foreign". These are the *sine qua non* for the entrenchment of the neoliberal economic model. It further transpired, when the self-congratulation had eased only slightly, that much of the money donated to the 18 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries was actually coming out of their aid payments. This meant that the increase in funding was negligible at best, and non-existent at worst. All those except the heavily myopic saw through the G-8 leaders' attempts to sublimate the spread of neoliberalism (and the easing of aid payments) into debt relief. As we see, after a little inspection of the small print, debt relief, as most people understand it – the effacing of all debts with no catches – is not, in fact, supported by any leader in the racket.

ANOTHER WAY OF DOING THINGS

Despite the fact that the racket has remained unchallenged for decades, this does not mean that the racketeers are paranoia free. Nowhere is the decline of US power and influence felt more than with the US's political and economic relationship with Latin America. US planners used to refer to Latin America as "our backyard". These days the new players in Latin America are, primarily, Asian. "What you have is a process of structural change in the trade patterns in Latin America, that is very significant and likely to continue to go in that direction," Augusto de la Torre, chief economist for Latin America and the Caribbean at the World Bank, told me in his office in Washington. "The region is becoming highly differentiated, with countries, mainly in South America, diversifying their export-destination markets significantly," he added. A decade ago, Asia accounted for roughly 5 percent of the region's trade, but this has ballooned to 20 percent. Much of the growth is down to the region's commodity riches, particularly iron ore, being sucked in by a booming China. The US's most important trading bloc, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), is nearly two decades old and is starting to look its age. The share of trade between the three signatories – the US, Mexico and Canada – has fallen by nearly 10 percent in a decade: from 55 percent of the countries' global exports in 1999 to 46 percent in 2009. President Barack Obama even campaigned for the presidency on his opposition to the NAFTA agreement in its current form and complained about former president George W. Bush's attitude that "any trade agreement is a good trade agreement" and lamented the fact that NAFTA "did not have enforceable labor agreements and environmental agreements", which was disgraceful and true. In power, Obama reneged on his promise to renegotiate the deal, like he did on so many things. Later, he even approved a trade agreement with Colombia, one that had been zealously backed by Republicans and business groups in Washington. Pressure from labor groups and unions had briefly given Mr Obama pause, but he eventually signed on the dotted line. The US–Panama accord, meanwhile, which was signed by Panama in 2007, had still not been ratified, with business groups using the common propaganda argument that delays have “allowed US rivals to capitalize”.

A move to regional trading blocs in Latin America has also begun to chip away at the racket’s control. The most significant of the groupings has been Mercosur, which was founded in 1985 and includes all South America’s main economies as full or associate members. But its progress has not been steady and, since the early 1990s, it has been stuck over the removal of barriers, witnessing in some cases reversals and new obstructions. Although a serious grouping, Mercosur accounts for only 11 percent of Brazilian trade, for example. The US has been happy with this, as it means more reliance on the empire upstairs. But Latin American governments could now choose who they deal with, which lowered the importance of appeasing US interests. The more recent grouping, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), was more scary to the Americans because it was largely set up as a political, rather than an economic, bloc, as an explicit way of avoiding the US dominating the people of the region. One place the US still had direct control over was Colombia, which was the jewel in the crown of the racket in the region, the Israel of Latin America.

Stationed in the *FT* office in Washington, DC in 2011, I was asked to watch the passage of a free trade agreement that was being furiously debated in Congress. As we have seen, such agreements are intended to give preferential trade terms to producers in the respective countries, in this case the US in Colombia and vice-versa. At least that’s the theory. What actually happens is that jobs leave the richer nation and go to the country where workers are paid a pittance, while goods from the richer country flood the poorer, pushing out indigenous production. The winners, once again, are transnational corporations who spread their tentacles further into foreign lands, with less regulation and increased freedom to pollute and destroy. In this case, the tariffs Colombia had in place on American goods would be eliminated. Tariffs are government taxes that are imposed on foreign products in an effort to protect indigenous industries that have to compete with (sometimes) cheaper goods. In eliminating these, the Colombian government was potentially destroying its own manufacturers. It is no surprise that Republicans – the chief representatives of the racket – were pressing President Obama hard to push through a deal. In Washington, I called a Republican congressman, Kevin Brady, who told me of his fears that China, the new kid on the block, was invading the US's traditional backyard: Latin America. The free trade agreement would help the US to stave off China's rise, which had recently become even scarier for imperial managers when it was revealed that China was planning to build an alternative "dry canal" across the Panama isthmus. The US had traditionally had complete control of the Panama isthmus through the Panama Canal, which remains the only sea path through the western hemisphere – from Canada to the bottom of Argentina. The US had signed a treaty with Panama in the early 20th century for control of the canal after its own US Army Corps of Engineers built it. Panama itself had been created with the help of the US when it seceded from Colombia in 1903.

Brady, who represented Texas's 8th congressional district, was a member of the committee overseeing the passage of the free trade agreement. "This shows how aggressively China and other US competitors are establishing markets in our backyard," he told me. "China is taking smart advantage of America's inexcusable delay of nearly five years in approving its free trade agreement with Colombia." Barack Obama, no real friend of working people, had been cautious to sign it because it would lose him support among the Democratic base and the unions who were ardently opposing the deal. The reasons were simple: the deal would destroy American jobs, as even more production was "off-shored" to other countries. Free trade agreements often only benefit labor (not wages) in the poorer country, while locking in an "investor-rights" economic climate. (And when I say "benefit" I should add that the type of work it locks poor countries into is often sweatshop labor, as subsistence or small-scale agriculture is destroyed by subsidized products from the US or Europe coming in without tariffs. The people have to leave the countryside and become part of this new "economic miracle" of working in sweatshops for slave wages six days a week.) Unions also pointed out the Colombian government's horrendous record with labor and human rights. The country ranks as the most dangerous in the world to be a trade unionist, as far-right paramilitaries, allied in many cases with the government, terrorize civil society. In the end Obama saw what he wanted to see and accepted the cosmetic changes that the Colombian premier, Juan Manuel Santos, promised. It is a familiar story: little to no real change.

For over 40 years there has been a civil war raging in Colombia between government forces and left-wing guerrilla groups, in which the US has been heavily involved. The ongoing battle for control over strategic areas has resulted in many civilians being caught in the crossfire. An estimated 70,000 people have been killed in the past 20 years. Of these, over 2,700 have been trade union leaders, the overwhelming majority of whom were targeted by government-sponsored paramilitary groups in an attempt to stamp out worker mobilization. According to the human rights organization Global Exchange, since the US began sending aircraft and on-the-ground training to Colombia in 2000, politically motivated killings have risen from 14 to 20 per day, and the number of kidnappings and disappearances has doubled. In 2004, Bush asked Congress to prolong the generous aid package to Colombia for the years to come, adding to the $3 billion donated over the previous five years (it was started under Bill Clinton's "Plan Colombia"). One in ten Colombians has been uprooted because of the violence. It is estimated that there are over 3.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country, the second highest number in the world after Syria. Within this panorama of internal violence and forced acquisition of land, women have been adversely affected: around 65 percent of the displaced population are women (the effects of US imperialism are inevitably worse for women). This gender imbalance is a result of the common breakdown of families following the stresses of displacement, which in many cases causes the men to leave; or when the men are killed their wives and partners are forced to escape alone with their families. The experience of 17-year-old Yessika Hoyos is, sadly, not unusual. During her first month of law school in Bogotá – the capital of Colombia – her uncle showed up to fetch her from class. He told her that she was needed at the hospital. Yessika and her uncle made the hour-long car journey to the family's local hospital in the town of Fusagasugá. There, Yessika saw her mother and her siblings huddled together. Her 14-year-old sister had found their father lying in a pool of blood outside his friend's house. As she ran to attempt to resuscitate him, she found that he was riddled with bullets. Shot seven times in the head, he had died instantly.

"My father's name was Jorge Darios Hoyos Franco, he was a trade union leader and on the 3rd of March 2001 he was assassinated," Yessika, aged 25 when we met her, with a tone of self-assuredness that belies the horrors of the personal tragedy she was recollecting, told me and my colleague Ana Arendar. "Initially, like with all the trade unionists that have been assassinated in Colombia, the police claimed that it had been a murder of passion … We knew this not to be true as my father had been receiving death threats for months due to his trade union activity … so we had to really fight and struggle for the truth to come out." Yessika and her mother began to petition for her father's killers to be brought to justice. They gave interviews in the local media and worked with a national center for human rights to collect evidence. "Then my mother started receiving calls telling her that we had to keep our mouths shut or we would end up like my father," said Yessika. "People started coming to our house and threatening us, we were followed in the street, that's why two weeks later we were forced to leave our house and we became displaced. We went to Bogotá. In one year we moved house at least five times, because every time we moved they would find us and threaten us so we would have to move again."

This was also the case for Haydee Moreno, whose husband was assassinated by paramilitary factions in 1994. She was left widowed with a five-year-old son while four months pregnant. "We had to abandon everything we owned, all our belongings, our house and our land, and move," she said. "It is the women who are most vulnerable in a situation of displacement. We have to think about how we are going to find food for our children, how we are going to make sure they get an education, while also worrying about how we are going to stay safe and provide for the family."

A report by the non-governmental organization Refugees International highlighted sustained government failure in dealing with IDPs or developing adequate responses to the needs of specific groups such as women and children. The report identified the gender dimensions of displacement which have been largely ignored, these include: lack of access to healthcare – especially access to obstetric care; high levels of domestic abuse triggered by the increased stresses brought on the family; the psychological trauma suffered by women who have lost loved ones; the high number of women who have turned to prostitution as a means of supporting their families; and the high incidences of rape and sexual violence which have been continually used as an act of war by both sides of the conflict. This devastating injustice impelled the Constitutional Court in Colombia to rule that the government is failing in its duty to provide humanitarian assistance to the country's displaced women. "The government now appear to be doing something but their efforts aren't proving effective," explained Isabel Ortiz Perez, president of Mujer y Futuro, a Colombian foundation that works to defend women's rights. "There is no coordination between the programs they offer. For example they have been attempting to create housing for displaced women but they won't create any education facilities. As a result displaced children aren't able to go to school and mothers aren't able to work as they have to look after their children during the day."

Isabel thinks that the government should be focusing its efforts on the provision of childcare and helping women find employment within the formal sector. "At the moment the majority of displaced women are employed in the informal sector, selling sweets on the streets or working in the domestic sector. This is all work in the informal economy which means that these women are left without social services or healthcare."

Yessika finished her law degree and now works for the José Alvear Restrepo legal collective (CAJAR), a human rights firm which is handling her father's assassination case. Despite the arrest of the men who shot her father, those who ordered the killing remain free. Yet Yessika considers herself to have been one of the lucky ones. When her family was displaced, her mother was able to keep her job as a schoolteacher and they had friends who helped them move to Bogotá. "My mum was able to continue with her work, if she hadn't I wouldn't be here now, neither would I have been able to complete my law degree," she said. "But most of the displaced women who arrive in Bogotá are peasants whose lives and customs revolve around cultivating the land. They often arrive in the city illiterate with no education and no possessions, what hope do they have?"

US support for this kind of barbarism might even be futile now, as China steps into the fold. "We're in a new era," Larry Birns, director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, told me when I interviewed him in Washington. "It's an era where strategy is defined more in terms of access to food and commodities, rather than naval bases and alliance policy. The Chinese are leading the way. US primacy was largely due to the fact it had no competitors, now it *only* has competitors," he added. Other countries are weary of the US style of imperialism, and see China as a way of escaping the investor-rights straitjacket imposed by the US. Brazil, the source of much of China's iron ore, which produces steel, is a good example. (The US helped overthrow the country's democratic government in 1964, installing a brutal security state which ruled for decades.) The move to a global economy revolving round commodities has also upset the traditional dominance of the US (and the EU). The US which used to rule the roost in trade discussions, through the WTO, is now being bypassed; any number of countries are becoming emergent countries, and they are benefitting even more because they are not *consumer* economies. The advantages that used to accrue automatically to the US have, to some extent, now slipped to the other side, to the poor nations, because they have agricultural commodities and oil. But the US-enforced system of corporate mining and resource extraction, a particularly vicious arm of the global racket, which gets these commodities out of the ground for a healthy profit, still causes untold suffering around the world.

FOUR

CURSING YOUR RICHES

KILLING FOR TREASURE

One of the oldest money-making schemes of the racket is the pursuit of the natural minerals under the ground of another country. The mining industry is a multi-billion-dollar enterprise, which sees transnational corporations shift natural resources around the world. The annual turnover of many of these corporations is bigger than that of the countries from which they are extracting. The US is at the forefront of keeping economies in the Global South open to western mining companies – often by getting rid of governments that want to do things differently. The corporations are from all over the rich world, and they often destroy the environment of the local areas. The people on the ground, those who fight back, are never viewed kindly – and mining companies often, with the help of local proxies, will take them out. When I was covering mining at the *Financial Times*, I went through a period where, to put it simply, people kept being killed. Perhaps unsurprisingly, none of my contacts in the mining world would talk to me about it, but I'd see repeat newswire stories of people being gunned down on the streets by no-one-knew-whom. In a six-day period over Christmas 2010, for example, while I was working for the *FT* in London, two prominent anti-mining activists in El Salvador were shot dead in broad daylight. First, Ramiro Rivera Gómez, vice-president of the Cabañas Environment Committee (CEC), which was campaigning to stop Canadian mining company Pacific Rim from opening a gold mine in the area, was killed while walking with his 14-year-old daughter. Six days later, Dora "Alicia" Recinos Sorto was shot returning from washing laundry in a nearby lake. She was eight months pregnant and another prominent member of the CEC. Amnesty International called on the Salvadoran authorities to investigate the killings, but nothing happened.

So I decided to call the company. "This has nothing to do with Pacific Rim. It's a local family feud," Tom Shrake, chief executive of the company, told me, sounding agitated. I guessed *FT* journalists didn't ask these sorts of things very often. He continued: "There are radical elements out there that would like people to believe it's about mining, but it's not true." But stories of violence and disruption at mining sites around the developing world are common and consistent. In Mexico, also in that December, the authorities temporarily closed down a barite mine operated by another Canadian company, Blackfire Exploration, after indigenous leader and activist Mariano Abarca Roblero was shot in the head and killed by a passing motorcyclist. Abarca Roblero had been a leader of the Mexican Network of People Affected by Mining, and was involved in the resistance to an open pit extraction mine in Chiapas. I soon realized that similar deaths were happening all the time, everywhere. These incidents were indicative of a program of intimidation and murder for anyone who opposed the opening up of their land to foreign mining companies.

These stories brought back bad memories for an industry that had spent decades lavishing considerable amounts of money and time on trying to clean up its image – not because it cared about the people being displaced, but because it was starting to hurt the bottom line. In a 2007 article in the *Multinational Business Review*, Hevina Dashwood explained that mining companies "were caught in the mid-1990s with a significant gap between societal expectations and their institutionalized practices … For the industry as a whole, the gap had widened so much that companies experienced a legitimacy crisis." The industry-wide obsession with "sustainability" and corporate social responsibility (CSR) started around the turn of the millennium as mining companies started to feel the effects of their reputation in their ability to operate around the world and make money. This crisis was averted by a slew of new organizations dedicated to promoting CSR and improving the image of the industry. In 1999, nine of the biggest mining companies joined forces to create the Global Mining Initiative, intended to provide ideas and strategies for "sustainability in mining". In 2001, the representative body for the mining industry was transformed into the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), which dedicated itself to 10 principles – from education to the environment – to which the industry pledged to hold itself. The field of CSR was so popular in the mining industry during this period that the University of Queensland in Australia founded its own Sustainable Minerals Institute in 2001 to promote the practice. It was, the school said, established "in response to growing interest in and debate about the role of the mining and minerals industry in contemporary society".[1]

But in reality, despite cosmetic changes, nothing fundamental changed. The dynamic of capitalism meant it never could: the mining companies didn't go to these poor countries for charity; they wanted to take their minerals and make a profit on them. Paying workers well, or paying to clear up after themselves, hurt the bottom line and shareholders, which was what these institutions, by definition, cared about. “The recent murders of mining organizers in Mexico and Guatemala, and horrendous toxic waste spills such as at Barrick Gold’s North Mara mine in Tanzania, make it very hard for the mining companies to convince us that their conduct has improved,” Alexis Stoumbelis, executive director of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, which had spoken out about the assassinations in the country, told me. “What has changed is the mining companies’ attention to and investment in projecting an image of themselves as socially and environmentally responsible.” She was right.

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[1] www.aurecongroup.com/en/thinking/themes/urbanisation/resources-demand-and-community-impacts.aspx

But agents of the racket don’t just come in the form of chief executives. These places employ people to improve their image – the black world of public relations. Tim Purcell, a director of the public relations firm CO3, predictably disagreed: “The larger players have now had to tackle ICMM issues,” he said. “Some [issues] are old as the hills, from indigenous tribal issues, to political insensitivity, to profound health and safety issues. But the industry does take these issues seriously, and it shares the concern and strategies about dealing with these things … About 10 years ago major mining companies had big reputational issues,” he continued. “The criticisms … were starting to affect business. Companies weren’t getting licenses to operate – things like that.” When business was hurt, things had to change. Or at least the image of things had to change. In truth, the people in the countries, behind the paeans to foreign investment and new jobs, were slaves to an old and well-established form of imperialism that had consigned them to underdevelopment for centuries.

At that time, I also spoke to Kenmare Resources, a company that owns and operates a titanium mine in Mozambique which was one of the "success stories" of this trend for corporate concern about reputation in the mining industry. It won a Corporate Social Responsibility Award in 2009 from the Chamber of Commerce of Ireland for its Kenmare Moma Development Association (KMAD), which was founded in 2004. The company also won the Nedbank Socio-Economic Award for the same project. "Basically, right at the outset of the project, we knew that in order for this to be a long-term success, we had to make sure that people saw it as an economic good for them – not for the country, but for them directly," said Kenmare's managing director, Michael Carvill, parroting the official lies. "In order to achieve this, we set up a not-for-profit development organization with the objective of ensuring that the local communities benefit from mines." In the mining industry, making sure that local people actually have some benefit from their resources warrants copious prizes.

Carvill told me all the wonderful things KMAD provides to the local communities in Mozambique, from jobs to healthcare to agricultural training. "We even started a wildlife fund joint-venture, which provided agriculture technicians to tutor people in how to grow stuff that might be sold to the mine, and we lean on the mine so they buy," Carvill said. "It has given people who were in absolute poverty some money, and it has allowed for a better trickle-down effect. We've also built a couple of schools." The truth of Kenmare's venture for the people of Mozambique is in the fine print. The Moma mine operates in an industrial free zone (IFZ), which makes the processing plant exempt from corporate taxes, import duties, export duties and VAT, with a 1 percent turnover after six years of production. It is estimated that Moma could have annual revenues of $85 million over a 20-year period. This "arrangement" comes straight out the racket's playbook: you pay no taxes or royalties on the people's minerals and then act like Jesus Christ come to save the natives with schools and hospitals. No matter that these are of poor quality and cost well below the millions of dollars you've saved in taxes. PR job complete.

This kind of deal is often cut between governments and foreign companies, especially when capital costs will be high, and it's one of the main gripes of civil society groups in developing countries, which argue that while jobs and benefits may flow to the communities near the site, the rest of the country is left empty-handed, save for those elements of infrastructure needed to connect the site to the rest of the country. The argument from mining companies is that they have the capital and expertise that developing countries don't, which might be true. But the answer in that case is for developing countries to build up their indigenous expertise by building an engineering university. Of course, mining companies don't want to hear this because it would make them obsolete, so the trend continues: the developing countries stay underdeveloped and reliant on foreign capital – until they get a leader with the people's interests at heart, rather than the interests of foreign capitalists, as in Bolivia, which we'll look at later.

"When I first engaged in this industry, over 30 years ago, with very few exceptions it was rough-handed and red-necked," said John Elkington, founder of SustainAbility, a strategy consultancy and think-tank. "These people were real bruisers. In the same way it's said that you can't make omelets without breaking eggs, they argued that you couldn't dig mines without destroying the environment. They had no time for environmentalists." Now though, he said, things are different. "I genuinely believe that the ICMM process helped catalyze real progress – and some industry leaders have had some sort of crisis of conscience over the past decade or so."

It was all lies. Nothing has changed apart from appearances. Some in the mining industry admitted they didn't even know what "sustainability" actually means, even while they sing its praises. "I wouldn't actually know how to define it; it's very ill-defined and got such a broad spectrum," Dr Bernard Olivier, executive director of miner TanzaniteOne, told me in South Africa. "We care about making sure the local community is bought into the process, but I don't know if that's the definition of 'sustainability'." Chief executives of mining companies talk about the need for a "social license" – or a lack of community backlash – to work in foreign countries. The new paradigm was meant to make this easier. The mining meet-up I went to in Cape Town, South Africa, lasted only four days, but half of the schedule was given over to discussions of CSR. Despite this preoccupation, many leading mining companies also cannot provide definitive figures on how much they spend on CSR. I asked the five biggest companies – BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto, Vedanta, Anglo American and Xstrata – to tell me what they spent. Only Vedanta provided a figure for CSR at the group level and the company could only provide two years of data. The other four said they don't account for CSR spending – under which fall local community projects and environmental awareness – as a discrete category. Anglo American, which said it could not provide any figures at all, commented: "For Anglo American, corporate social investment and responsible business practices are absolutely embedded in the way we operate." The figures from the other four show that spending in the categories which they pointed to as closest to CSR have risen significantly since 2004, but year-on-year increases have been patchy and inconsistent. Rio Tinto said the nearest it comes to accounting for CSR is its "external costs" accounting section. Xstrata provided figures for corporate social involvement (CSI), which only includes investment to initiatives or projects that benefit the broader community where it works, not the "significant expenditure" on day-to-day operational expenses. However, its CSI spending rose precipitously from £10.5 million to £102 million but fell by nearly half to £58.5 million in 2008.

KILLING FOR PROFIT

Despite CSR and CSI spending, despite all the PR, the human story was not getting any better, as became apparent when I started looking into contemporary legal battles. One of the most high-profile cases involving local resistance to a new mining project involved the company Vedanta. A tribal people in India called the Dongria Kondh are engaged in a civil disobedience campaign to stop the company from developing an open-pit bauxite mine in the Niyamgiri hills, in the state of Orissa, in eastern India. The Dongria worship Niyamgiri's peak as the seat of their god. Vedanta already has a bauxite mine at the base of the hills. A British government agency, the UK National Contact Point (NCP), which oversees the enforcement of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines on business conduct, released a statement critical of Vedanta. It concluded: "Vedanta failed to engage the Dongria Kondh in adequate and timely consultations about the construction of the mine, or to use other mechanisms to assess the implications of its activities on the community, such as an indigenous or human rights impact assessment." And yet, since January 2009, after the financial crisis when the Vedanta share price was as low as 584p, the stock has quintupled to 2,106p. During this period the company received reams of bad press; the Church of England and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust sold their stock; and the company was condemned by the NCP. But only four days after the Rowntree announcement, Vedanta's share price jumped 72p in one day to £26.26. In August 2006, a proposed coal operation in Phulbari, Bangladesh, became the center of a protest that badly impacted the share price of GCM Resources which owned the asset. Local resistance had been building and eventually a crowd of 50,000 people marched to the offices of GCM. In this case, the police fired live rounds on the peaceful protest and killed three people and injured many more. "While the market should pay more than lip service to CSR, the reality is that it only cares if social unrest on the ground starts to impact a mine's operational performance," Joe Lunn, mining analyst at finnCap, told me. "Generally speaking, the assets of large mining companies are more diversified with enhanced geographical spread so are less affected than a small company with a single project." In the same month as the NCP ruling, the English High Court froze £5 million of assets belonging to another British mining company, Monterrico Metals, after 27 men and women were allegedly detained for three days at its Rio Blanco mine in northern Peru. The 27 were protesting the mine's development. In development circles the term "resource curse" has been invented to describe the tendency for these great sources of wealth to turn into destitution and violence for the citizens sitting on top of the deposits, while profits are sent abroad. It is, of course, not an *accident* that it ends like this.

When I was in South Africa in 2012, the mining honchos talked endless hot air about the wonderful safety standards upheld by the mining companies, as happy workers beamed out from glossy brochures. But at the same time the leading mining companies on the London Stock Exchange had failed to bring down the number of fatalities at their operations, despite constant rhetoric to the contrary. I surveyed four leading UK-listed mining groups – Rio Tinto, Vedanta, Xstrata and BHP Billiton – and found the number of fatalities had more than doubled since 2005. The companies recorded 23 deaths in 2005, while in 2008 the figure was 54. The *FT* published the story – derision ensued.[2] "It's a difficult one because, I think, individually companies are seeing results," said Carel Labuschagne, chief executive of the International Register of Certificated Auditors, a risk management group advising companies on safety issues. “The problem is the cultural change coming down from management is a process.” Rio Tinto asserted: “Safety is in everything we do. Our figures should be looked at in terms of an expanding workforce. But of course, any fatality is too many and we strive to keep it to an absolute minimum.” There are no binding regulations on mining safety although there are international “standards” – as with everything else in the industry, when it comes to social concerns the law constraining companies is merely a gentlemen’s agreement.

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[2] Matt Kennard, "Miners' efforts fail to cut death toll", *Financial Times*, January 18, 2010.

One mining executive I spoke to summed up the real reasons for the change in image, and also the reason why even the smallest improvements are, at root, undertaken for profit. “I‘d love to say our projects were entirely altruistic,” said Brad Sampson, executive director of Discovery Metals, a copper mining company operating in Botswana, “but the last decade or so, mining companies have realized that unless you bring along the local community, you can’t operate. If you don’t, you will not get a social license to operate. I’m not talking about paper – but that local communities can stop projects from developing. You have to get them on side. What you are doing with a mining project in a faraway part of the world, you are imposing a degree of change, which is difficult. I think there’s no question that the mining industry came with a messy reputation. Whether that is deserved you can debate.”

Over the last decade, the global mining industry has awakened to the need to address sustainability issues. But for this to be fully realized and its services utilized over the next decade, many within the industry believe that a binding international regulatory framework is the vital next step. “Voluntarism only takes you so far,” said Elkington of SustainAbility. “It helps promote experimental approaches and a degree of competitive behavior, but there will always be those companies that prefer not to follow the corporate-citizenship line. They have to be brought under control via appropriate governance – regulatory and legal mechanisms." That hasn't happened.

OUR LITHIUM

Evo Morales, the president of Bolivia, is at the forefront of a change in the attitude among developing-world leaders toward foreign – or, more specifically, western – mining companies. His country owns half the world's deposits of lithium, which could be hugely lucrative if developed. But his government is reluctant to let western companies in. Mining minister Luis Alberto Echazu has said: "We will not repeat the historical experience since the 15th century: raw materials exported for the industrialization of the West, which has left us poor." Instead, Bolivia has bucked conventional developmental economics – which outsources development and production to foreign companies expert in the field and with reserves of capital – and has endeavored to develop its deposits with state-owned companies, rebuffing the overtures of countless western companies. Morales needs to raise $800 million to construct the mines and processing plants needed for this approach. In an industry report, Bolivian mining was reported to have grown 13 percent in 2009.

In 2012, I went to see the Bolivian ambassador to the UK to find out what was behind this new way of doing things. She told me she doesn't get many requests for media interviews. When financial news outlets in the West write about Latin America, it's inevitably an article lauding the "economic miracle"' of its Brazilian neighbor or a scaremongering editorial about the Red Menace of Venezuela. But a look at the media elsewhere – specifically emerging markets in East Asia – and the story isn't so monochrome. In fact, China's state news agency, Xinhua, covers pretty much every statement made by Bolivian President Evo Morales. Why? It's quite simple: a soft, silver-white metal called lithium. This landlocked country of 9 million people, which is the poorest in South America, has the world's largest reserves of a mineral that could become one of the most sought-after of the century. It's needed to make the batteries that will power the electric car revolution that many are waiting for, particularly in China.

But the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) has been in government since 2005 and it is pioneering a new development model, which, if successful, could become the norm across the developing world. What may worry multinational mining companies and their backers is that it takes no heed of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank orthodoxy, which has traditionally advocated minimal regulation on foreign direct investment. "I know that they are in some discussions with France, Korea and Japan about working in Bolivia to develop lithium, but we don't want to be only raw material exporters. We want to create added value in the country," said Ambassador Maria Beatriz Souviron, as she sat in the Bolivian embassy in Eaton Square. By "added value" Ms Souviron means building factories in Bolivia to manufacture the batteries within the country, rather than sending the metals abroad once they are out of the ground. It's an idea that has an increasing number of proponents all over the world of emerging markets. In an interview in 2011, Nigeria's State Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Akin Akinnigbagbe, said of his country's cocoa exports: "We are equally embarking on what I will call value addition to the business of cocoa. This will take the form of processing it at home before selling into the international market. This will equally assist the farmers to get higher profit unlike in the past, when cocoa beans are exported directly to the international market; with the farmers having no control on the price."[3] It could mean a harder time for western companies. "The policy of my government is to retain sovereignty over the investments made in the country," said Souviron. "So if the people that want to invest in my country and follow that rule of value-added, then it's fine. If not we'll do it ourselves." And the challenge to orthodox development models has so far been a success. The Bolivian government has managed to run a current account surplus of 12.1 percent of GDP in 2007, 11.6 percent in 2008, and 3.4 percent in 2009 as the government spent to keep the country from recession. Along with Venezuela and Argentina, Bolivia was the only country in the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean to be forecast a current account surplus by the IMF in 2010. So far the Morales administration has "inked" a Memorandum of Understanding with the South Koreans to develop the lithium after the president was happy with Korea's "efforts to use clean technology" and its willingness to abide by the new endogenous growth model Bolivia is seeking.

The advent of the Chinese is also changing how business is done. The miner Bellzone, for example, agreed a deal with China for investment in its iron ore project in Guinea that stipulated funding infrastructure in return for mineral supplies. The iron ore project at Kalia in the West African country is substantial. It has a defined resource of 2.4 billion tonnes and the company is aiming for 50 million tonnes of production a year. With an eye on its insatiable appetite for steel, the China International Fund (CIF) agreed to spend about $3 billion on building the infrastructure needed for the project. Chinese companies are increasingly offering to build transport and energy infrastructure for mining companies in return for deals to buy the minerals produced, or off-take agreements. "It's a new form of pragmatism," Tim Williams, analyst at Ernst & Young, told me. "They don't want to bother with outright control, so they won't buy a majority stake, but will plough money into infrastructure." He added: "You've got companies with good assets but no money and no project finance. Most of the equity markets are still weak, so they have to look at something else." The Bolivians have gone into projects with the Chinese, reporting that they treat them like equals, in a way the Americans never have done.

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[3] "Nigeria: 'We want to add value to our cocoa'", *All Africa*, February 25, 2010, http://allafrica.com/stories/201002251272.html

In recent years, the owners of the mining industry have invented a curious language. When a country decides that its own people, instead of a foreign company, should profit from the minerals under their own ground at a fair price, foreign companies call this "resource nationalism", a pejorative term. I spoke to African Consolidated Resource (ACR) – a miner working in Zimbabwe – which had its mining license in the country's Marange diamond fields finally cancelled by the mining secretary, Thankful Musukutwa, after months of a protracted legal process. "We actually won in the High Court, which said our license was good in September," Roy Tucker, chief financial officer at ACR, told me. "But the government appealed to the Supreme Court, who have said nothing should be mined." The government invoked the Mine and Minerals Act which stipulates that certain lands are reserved against prospecting. "It's unconnected to the court case," said Mr Tucker. "They've proposed new grounds for cancellation, they suddenly discovered the ground where the license is, which was reserved against prospecting, apparently. The obvious suspicion is that something has been changed in the records." ACR and other companies operating in Zimbabwe were also up against a new law proposed by Robert Mugabe and his Zanu-PF party which will give the country a majority stake in any foreign company operating assets in Zimbabwe. For the foreign capitalists this was too much; they wanted it to be like Haiti where they had won and Haitians were forced into a minority stake in their industries – by law. "By some date in April companies are asked to submit plans so that 51 percent of the company is held in indigenous hands within five years, so we have to submit a plan," said Mr Tucker, seriously agitated.

In South Africa, parts of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) government have been making statements about the nationalization of the mining industry since the end of apartheid, as was promised in the ANC's famous and noble Freedom Charter. When I was in South Africa, Julius Malema, then president of the ANC Youth League, was saying that nationalization of the mining industry was now a strong priority, and it should be. Unfortunately, economic apartheid was never taken on in South Africa. "We are aware that there are efforts to topple and replace liberation movements with puppet governments … who exploit the minerals of Africa," he said.

At the 2010 Mining Indaba – the most important resources conference in Africa – the mining minister, Susan Shabangu, felt compelled to tell the gathered mining industry – rich white men in suits – in no uncertain terms "there will be no nationalization of the mines in my lifetime". The people who had so much to gain from this imperialism trotted out the usual arguments. "Nationalization of mines has never worked anywhere in the world and there is no evidence for it to work in South Africa," David Nel, chief executive of Strategic Natural Resources, a coal miner working in South Africa, told me. "The South African GDP is significantly dependent on revenue earned from mining and the foreign investment this brings to South Africa; the disinvestment in South Africa would be catastrophic." But what if they nationalized the mines and put them under South African control? What if the profits were repatriated not to London and New York but were invested in the schools of Soweto and Johannesburg? *Impossible*, they said. Even talk of imposing fairer royalty and tax agreements sparked the ire of the foreign companies. Most of the real action took place outside the convention center, where access to talks and company exhibits cost a cool $1,500. Decadent parties were thrown in bars and mansions around Cape Town by PR companies, investment banks and brokerages, all seeking new clients and trying to upstage each other as to who could put on the most spectacular show. Against this backdrop, the mining industry tried to manipulate political forces. One of the conference's biggest themes, for example, was investor security in Africa. All the big African economies sent ministerial delegations to give talks and assuage investor fears, telling them how wonderfully they would be treated. They were trying to avoid things like the Nigerian government's 2012 Petroleum Industry Bill, which attempts to reform the lucrative oil sector by allowing the government to bring down the profits of foreign companies and impose more stringent taxes and royalties. The usual suspects were apoplectic in that case: independence and sovereignty for poor countries is incompatible with how the racket functions. However, if somehow they "lose" a country to independence, the racket turns to the enforcement stage, which is a central part of the criminal enterprise they oversee.

PART TWO

ENFORCEMENT

FIVE

THE MOB

YOUR FRIENDLY, LOCAL TYPES

In 1945 there was a genuine desire among the victors of World War II to devise an international political system that would ensure there would be no third world war. As the Nuremberg Trials drew to a close, a host of international laws were drawn up with this purpose in mind. The Geneva Conventions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, among others, were designed to give "rules of play" to war and enshrine certain inalienable rights for the whole of humanity. At the time many looked ruefully at the League of Nations which had been so ineffective in arbitrating Great Power conflict in the inter-war period, between 1918 and 1939. Memories of the gratuitously harsh Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which many still maintain led indirectly to the rise of Nazi Germany, played on the minds of planners. The need to get the post-war institutional structure right was paramount. The most important political and diplomatic institution set up at this point to rectify the mistakes of the past was the United Nations. There was lofty rhetoric about a "new paradigm" of cordial relations between the hitherto hostile powers. Some intellectuals of the time, such as Dexter Perkins, believed the UN was an example of noble "self-abnegation on the part of a great power", because it "bound the United States to accept decisions that might run counter to the judgment of Washington". For Perkins, this was proof that the United States had gone far to demonstrate its willingness to "submit its own policies to the collective opinion of states inferior to itself from the point of view of physical power". But scrutiny of the composition of the nascent United Nations reveals the lengths that the great powers, led by the US, had gone to in their effort to *consolidate* their grip on power, not truncate it.

The UN was created as three separate legislative bodies, and the format devised in 1945 exists today without significant reform. The General Assembly is a forum to discuss issues related to international law and those pertaining to the functioning of the UN. Compared to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, its democratic credentials are luminous: it runs on a one-country, one-vote basis and needs two-thirds of the house to support a motion for it to be passed. Its sister institution, the Economic and Social Council, assists the General Assembly with economic and social dealings. It has 54 members, all chosen by the General Assembly. The most important body in the UN (and incidentally the most susceptible to corruption and manipulation) is the Security Council where all the most pressing international issues relating to "war and peace" are discussed and voted on. It was created in 1945 with five permanent members: the US, Britain, France, Russia and China. It has another 10 rotating members who serve two-year terms. The power of the Security Council derives from the fact that it can make member states enforce the UN Charter (which incidentally is broken by the US on a near daily basis with threats against foreign countries).

The crucial qualification was, and still is, that any of the permanent members of the UN Security Council have the power to unilaterally veto a prospective resolution. In 1945 this gave executive power to three western imperial powers – the United States, Britain and France – alongside another eastern imperial power, Soviet Russia. Arch-conservative Republican senator Arthur Vandenberg wrote in his diary in 1945 about the newly formed UN: "The striking thing about it is that it is so conservative from a nationalist standpoint. It is based virtually on a four-power alliance … This is anything but a wild-eyed internationalist dream of a world State … I am deeply impressed (and surprised) to find [Cordell] Hull so carefully guarding our American veto in his scheme of things."[1] The historian Ellen Meiskins Wood goes further, stating that the UN's "very existence" was geared toward "discouraging forms of international organization less congenial to the dominant powers".[2] The undemocratic nature of the Security Council would seem to support Wood's thesis, even though some historians argue that at the end of World War II the necessity of a rapprochement between the Great Powers was greater than any idealistic commitment to democracy.

Regardless of the historical contingencies and the original intent of the US planners, the treatment of the UN over the next 50 years certainly indicates that the institutional framework laid down in 1945 was consciously left open to manipulation. From its inception, the UN has enabled the US to enforce its own foreign policy objectives with a veneer of international support. Because of its legitimacy in the eyes of the international community, the UN is a part of the US effort to legitimate foreign wars in the eyes of its citizens (and its allies). When I spoke to the then British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, he was keen to repeatedly point to the pretext of UN resolutions when discussing the 2003 US/UK war in Iraq. "Look, we went into Iraq on the basis of United Nations resolutions," he told me at the Foreign Office on Whitehall in London. “Now, you can argue about whether we needed another resolution but there were about 15 resolutions already there. And they were very special circumstances. And Iraq would not have been caught up in all this trouble if it had not had a nuclear weapons program, a chemical weapons program, and a biological weapons program.”

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[1] Quoted in Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, HarperCollins, chapter 16. Avaliable at www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/zinnpeopleswar.html

[2] Ellen Meiskins Wood (2003) *Empire of Capital*, Verso, p. 132.

The US was held in check somewhat by the Soviet Union which had similar objectives throughout the Cold War. With the decline of the Soviet Union and the move to a unipolar international arrangement, American domination lost all inhibitions. There was also a marked change in the 1960s and 1970s when decolonization put many developing countries outside the sphere of influence of the US. This change is spelled out by former member of the Reagan–Bush State Department and now historian, Francis Fukuyama. He states quite openly and without sorrow that the UN has become “perfectly serviceable as an instrument of American unilateralism and indeed may be the primary mechanism through which unilateralism will be exercised in the future”.[3] The UN also wrestles with the fact that the US has always been a large financial donor to the institution and so its very survival relies on it. The US was donating $2.4 billion by the end of the 20th century, which comprised 25 percent of the whole UN budget. When I asked the historian Michael Mann whether he thought the UN had become a rubber stamp for US policies he alluded to this fundamental flaw with the UN structure, saying that while there was “some negotiations” it was inevitably “around American leadership and that is how American politicians would see it, both moderate Republicans and Democrats. After all, what can Europe do? If you want some kind of action somewhere in the world, a Rwanda or Sudan, what can Europe do? It can’t point a thousand troops in any single direction. The only power that can is the US, especially if logistical capacity is needed."

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[3] Quoted in Noam Chomsky (2003) *Hegemony or Survival: America’s Quest for Global Dominance*, Metropolitan Books.

The method used for maintaining primacy over the United Nations has primarily been the use of foreign aid. Available statistics demonstrate the corollary between US aid and votes at the United Nations – basically the US grants aid money when certain countries guarantee to vote in line with the US at the UN (and other multilateral bodies). For example, the airport in Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince was built by the US in exchange for the dictator of the time supporting the US in opposing Cuba's entry into the Organization of American States. J. Brian Atwood, the administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), told Congress in March 1998: "In many respects, [the foreign aid budget] is a bare-boned and balanced approach to development and humanitarian programs that will significantly contribute to achieving the administration's foreign policy objectives." If votes can't be bought, the US will veto. It has, by far, the highest veto record of any power on the Security Council in the period since the 1960s. It has consistently blocked resolutions calling on states to observe international law. Behind the US is Britain, with France and Russia far behind. Even when it does not block resolutions it will water them down or keep matters off the agenda entirely. The 1999 war in Kosovo did not pass through the UN at all, for example. But the US and its satrap, the UK, as mentioned, use the UN to legitimate their imperialism to this day. "Do you think the British or American troops being in Iraq is exacerbating the situation?" I asked Mr Straw in 2006 when he was Foreign Secretary. "No," he replied. "We're there now under a United Nations mandate and we're there on a time limited basis. The mandate will run out at the end of this year unless renewed. More particularly, we're only there as long as the Iraqi government – elected – says we should be there. And what we and the Americans and the other coalition partners are seeking to do is to build up the Iraqi forces so that we can then draw down our forces on a province by province basis." That was standard racket-speech: of course, we were only there at the request of a government. The fine print is important, though: we happened to install this government.

If all these methods fail, then the next step is to try to discredit the UN and accuse it of anti-Americanism and being anachronistic and out-of-touch. So when the US attacked Grenada in 1983, despite the disapproval of the UN, President Ronald Reagan said: "One hundred nations in the UN have not agreed with us on just about everything that's come before them, where we're involved, and it didn't upset my breakfast at all."[4] When I spoke to the hawkish historian Andrew Roberts and asked him about the UN's conduct during the "Iraq crisis" in early 2003, he parroted the American president and poured scorn on the UN. "What astonished me," he said, "was the way in which many in America and the British Isles seemed to assume that no war could be legitimate unless it had the sanction of the United Nations Security Council. When one looks at the United Nations Security Council – countries like [rotating member] Cameroon sitting on there. The idea that we should have our freedom of action circumvented by a bunch of kleptocracies in Africa is an absolute absurdity. Of course they are going to vote against the extension of democracy – that's not in their interests. We fortunately, back in 1982 when the Falklands were invaded, didn't give a toss what the UN thought – as it turned out the UN were on our side. But we would have still gone ahead with the action come what may." Such disdain for the UN is common among the racketeers (when it does not vote their way). But most of the time, the UN and similar multilateral institutions act as a neo-imperialist system in which you do not have colonies but you have client states; these are tied to the US by military interchanges and loans made with the IMF or World Bank. Poor countries are tied into a system of *loose dependency*.

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[4] Quoted in Francis X. Clines, "It was a rescue mission, says Reagan", *New York Times*, November 4, 1983.

LET US HELP YOU

Without fail, aid programs are defined as altruistic. The so-called Truman Doctrine, coming as a response to perceived aggression from the Soviet Union in the Middle East, is exemplary. Attitudes towards the Soviet Union had been mixed in 1945. Eric Johnston, president of the US Chamber of Commerce, went so far as to say: "Russia will be our, if not our biggest, at least our most eager consumer." There was a hope on the part of what Walter LaFeber calls "The Big Three" – Russia, the US and Britain – that they could put together a world order that relied heavily on them. The hope was short-lived as the US became more and more suspicious of the Soviet Union and the perceived advances it was making into Western Europe. President Harry Truman said privately in 1945, "Our agreements with the Soviet Union [have been] a one-way street", and concluded somewhat undiplomatically that the Soviet Union "could go to hell".[5] Eventually, a political program, christened "containment" by the influential State Department official George F. Kennan, was put in place. Its main function was to stop the march of communist forces that had achieved varying success in Turkey and Greece and various Arab countries. According to Kennan, whose sentiments were exposed in a "top secret" telegram sent to Washington from Moscow in February 1946, "Nothing short of complete disarmament, delivery of our air and naval forces to Russia and resigning of powers to American Communists" would placate Josef

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[5] Quoted in William Henry Chafe (2003) *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*, Oxford University Press, p. 56.

Stalin's "baleful misgivings".[6] Truman delivered his seminal address to a joint session of both houses of the Congress on March 12, 1947. "It must be the policy of the United States," he said, "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." Those "outside pressures" were strongly spelled out in the National Security Council's Report 68 from 1950, which read: "The Soviet Union, unlike previous aspirants to hegemony, is animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world … The issues that face us are momentous, involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself." Truman's doctrine allowed for military and economic help to any regime deemed to be defending "civilization" against the "fanatic faith". It also, more quietly, legitimated giving succor to any resistant element in foreign countries that had shown themselves to be intent on the "destruction … of civilization itself"; ergo, any country with a planned economic model not conducive to American corporate interests. This ideology became the pretext for many of the battles America fought for the next 50 years. The conservative historian Samuel P. Huntington wrote: "You have to sell [intervention or other military action] in such a way as to create the misimpression that it is the Soviet Union that you are fighting. That is what the United States has done ever since the Truman Doctrine."[7]

The Middle East itself before 1945 was largely under the remit of the British empire, alongside other imperial powers such as France. As the empires of Western Europe gradually crumbled after World War II, the United States took up the mantle and borrowed many of the techniques of imperial control pioneered by the British – divide and rule being its favored tactic. This area of the world was of particular importance to US planners because it had the biggest reserves of natural oil in the world. The State Department in 1945 explicitly called Saudi Arabia – with overtones for the whole region – "a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history".[8] The Americans picked up where the British left off. Strategic alliances were made with compliant states that became virtual vassals of the American superpower. Any state deemed to be taking the line of "independent nationalism" – a term applied to any regime whose leaders did not cede to all the dictates of US economic policy – was the target of subversion (political and economic). When he was Mayor of London, I spoke to Ken Livingstone, who by then had been strolling through the corridors of power for 30 years. He told me: "You've had 80 years of Britain and America and France intervening in Arab and Muslim countries – always around the issue of control of oil."

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[6] Quoted in Greg Behrman (2007) *The Most Noble Adventure: The Marshall Plan and the Time When America Helped Save Europe*, Free Press, p. 21.

[7] Quoted in Noam Chomsky (1999) *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order*, Seven Stories Press, p. 140.

The overthrow of President Mohammad Mosaddeq in Iran in 1953 is an illuminating case because it shows very clearly the priorities of American political policy in the region, as well as marking the unofficial handover of power in the Middle East from the UK to the US. Mosaddeq himself was the head of a parliamentary democracy that, according to the prevailing ideology, should have made him a "friend" of America. He was also a "fervent nationalist" who had renationalized the country's oil that had hitherto been under the control of the British-run Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (originally the Anglo-Persian Oil company). The coup that overthrew Mosaddeq was a joint US–British machination, which demonstrates the overlap of the two imperial strategies. Up until Mosaddeq's attempts to divert the oil resources of his country back to his people, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company had allowed Iran only about 20 percent of the profits from its own oil. When Mosaddeq threatened the economic interests of the US and Britain, he put his own survival in jeopardy. On top of the economic interest, the threat of communist Russia "was palpable". The Russians had actually occupied parts of northern Iran at the conclusion of World War II and procured an oil concession in the area. There was concern among US planners that Mosaddeq was becoming "dangerously dependent" on Iran's communist party, the Tudeh. With the twin threats of "economic independence" and "Soviet Russia" on the horizon, the CIA, along with its British counterparts, arranged a coup. CIA agents solicited support on the streets of Iran, concentrating specifically on the military, and bribed a large portion of the establishment into acquiescence. After massive street demonstrations that threw the city into chaos, Mosaddeq was arrested and the Shah was put back on his throne. Owing to the vital role played by the CIA in bringing down Mosaddeq, the British now gave them a percentage of the oil revenue from Iran. Parroting the ideological pieties derived from the Truman Doctrine, John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State in President Eisenhower's administration, exulted in a victory over a "Communist-dominated regime". A version closer to the truth is explicated by one historian who wrote that, knowing "almost nothing about Iran", they installed a Shah who "would always seem beholden to the United States".[9]

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[8] Quoted in Noam Chomsky, "A modest proposal", *Znet*, December 3, 2002.

America has been careful and brutal in its choice of allies from the end of World War II. Many alliances have been short-lived and based on a realpolitik geopolitical relationship – Saddam Hussein in the 1970s and 80s, for example – but the alliances with a number of other countries have been more durable. I am going to discuss here the "special relationships" with Britain and Israel because they have had the most political importance within the "international community". Since 1945 it has been said that Britain has a "special relationship" with the US. Jack Straw, the then UK Foreign Secretary, told me that he preferred the term "close relationship": "I've always thought – I mean, clearly people talk about 'special relationship' – I always think 'special relationship' sounds rather exclusive. Plenty of countries have a close relationship with the United States. It's a different relationship from that that we have with other countries but so is our relationship with France or Germany. The crucial thing about the US is that, first of all, there's this very strong historic tie. There's the fact that we have depended on them for victory in two world wars. That the world is, no question, safer if we're working together than if we're working against each other. And the fact that they account for a quarter of the world's economic activity and, rather more than that, of the world's scientific innovation. So you'd have to be nuts not to try and develop a close relationship with the United States."

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[9] Quoted in Walter LaFeber (1989) *The American Age: US Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad 1750 to the Present*, WW Norton, p. 546.

But Straw's perception is not entirely accurate because nearly every British prime minister since World War II has been seduced by this idea of a "special relationship". On only one occasion since 1945 has a British prime minister refused to support the United States in its forays abroad. This was during the Vietnam War in the 1960s when the Labour premier Harold Wilson refused to send even a token dispatch of troops. On this occasion the uproar among American policy-makers was indicative of the role they saw Britain providing for US foreign policy. "Be British!" exclaimed one American official when the foreign secretary George Brown went to Washington in January 1968. "How can you betray us?" Clare Short MP, erstwhile member of the British cabinet, told me: “Every single post-war prime minister of both parties – apart from Edward Heath – has been obsessed with the special relationship as the centerpiece of British foreign policy. And I think this is a pathetic, ‘lost after empire we never found a role’ way of thinking. If the PM of Britain can pick up the phone – for example, Harold Macmillan would talk to President Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis and give him a bit of advice and then he thought he was an actor in this world drama. And it’s pathetic but it’s core thinking about Britain’s role in the world. I mean, out of the Iraq crisis the country needs to stop that. Not that we fall out with the US but that we are not a lapdog, that we try to build a new multilateral order and use all our relationship to construct what is needed in these times. It’s really interesting that Heath was fixated on getting the support of the unions so he didn’t do it.” The relationship is of particular import for the Americans because Britain has also played the “mediating role between the US and Europe”. In international organizations and political dogfights – which have been frequent between the US and other Western European countries – the UK has always supported and backed the United States. Because Britain has a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, this unflinching support has proved important to successive administrations. There is also an army of British intellectuals and journalists who set the ideological ground for the US to maraud around the world with its British poodle in the background. But it is unclear what the British get out of this relationship, apart from places for its soldiers to die. Other allies of the US at least get weapons of mass destruction to discipline their population or neighbors. Israel, for example, has used generous US aid for decades to discipline the Palestinians, the displaced indigenous people whose territory it has occupied for nearly 70 years.

SIX

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE

SHEIKH JARRAH, PALESTINE

In a small house in the hills of East Jerusalem, I witnessed a microcosm of the slow-burn murder of a people. No American who reads the mainstream newspapers or watches the corporate TV news would have had any idea this was happening. But seeing it upfront there was no way to dispute the huge crime that was being perpetrated with American taxpayers' dollars and diplomatic support.

I spent a week sleeping on the floor in the home of the Hanoun family – a husband and wife and their three children, all Palestinian. I was there with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) – a brave collection of international activists who attempt to help Palestinians non-violently resist Israeli oppression. East Jerusalem was, by international law and basic morality, to be the capital of a future Palestinian state. After the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel had illegally occupied East Jerusalem, in contravention of international law, and has never left. In fact, Israel was working to take it all. At the time of writing, in August 2014, the Israelis have killed more than 2,000 Palestinians in

Gaza, the vast majority civilians. There is talk in the mainstream Israeli media about depopulating Gaza and turning it into an Israeli tourist attraction. But during the time I was there the most pressing of the many issues were the attempts by an Israeli settler company to slowly cleanse East Jerusalem of its Arab population, focusing its efforts at that time on the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, which sits in a beautiful valley looking out toward Bethlehem. Longer-term activists were sleeping there as well, ready to document what everyone expected would be an imminent eviction. A few months later, at 5.30am, the Israeli border police did come and forcibly evict the Hanouns (so forcibly that the son Rami had to be taken to hospital). The activists were arrested, as were protesters who subsequently took to the streets. The Hanouns were offered a tent by the Red Cross. It was the culmination of a decade-long program of intimidation and harassment of the Sheikh Jarrah community that had seen lives destroyed to appease the most rancid kind of religious zealotry.

Sheikh Jarrah is situated in a valley down from the American Colony Hotel where Tony Blair, former British prime minister and possibly the most willing servant of the American racket in the world, was staying in a luxury suite when he graced Jerusalem with his presence as the racket's "Peace Envoy". When you looked out of the Hanouns' window, Blair's hotel was 30m away; Blair, I had no doubt, could see the Hanouns' house during his morning swim. Before I contacted his spokesperson, Blair had nothing to say about the evictions, and he said nothing in the aftermath. That was one side of the valley. On the other, the British consulate peered down from its high security peak. The British consulate had been only slightly better, calling the latest eviction "appalling", but had done nothing tangible to halt this obscenity. The US silence was even louder. The Hanoun family, like so many Palestinians, had been the victims of terror for decades as they fought off Israel's attempts to take their homes. Maher Hanoun, who continued to lead the resistance, spoke to me with eloquence and calm as he chain-smoked his way through the evenings and recounted what had befallen his family. Maher's father was a refugee from the Nakba, or "the Catastrophe", as Palestinians call the founding of Israel in 1948 when gangs of Jewish paramilitaries expelled 800,000 Palestinians violently from their homes. Maher's father was forced out of Nablus; his grandfather was forced out of Haifa at the same time. The Jordanian government gave them the houses in East Jerusalem in 1956 as compensation and transferred the ownership to them in 1962. Maher was born in 1958 so had spent his whole life, and brought up all his children, in his home. The Israeli settler company, Nahalat Shimon, backed by the Israeli courts, used a forged century-old Ottoman-era contract to claim ownership. Like all over East Jerusalem, the Israelis also tried to bribe Maher with an open check, if he would go quietly. He refused. "This is my home," he told me. "I would never respect myself if I sold my home for money. They want to build a settlement on our hearts, on our dreams." In the end, they succeeded.

The Israelis' tactics were what Maher calls "slow torture", and included arrests, bribery and violence. In 1998, after Maher refused to start paying rent to settlers, soldiers came to his house while his mother was very ill with leukemia and took all their furniture, including the bed. Maher had pleaded with them to leave it so his mother could die peacefully. In 2002, the Israelis succeeded and eventually kicked the Hanouns out for four years, before they returned in 2006; in 2002 his two girls were 9 and 13 years old. Across the way, and in the sightline of Mr Blair and the British consulate, there was a makeshift tent where a 62-year-old woman was now living after settlers took over her house. Initially they only took two parts of her house so she was literally living next to them. Then she was kicked out. Her husband had a heart attack when the Israelis violently repossessed their house with the help of over 50 soldiers (on the night of Barack Obama's 2008 election victory). After spending some time in hospital, her husband had another attack two weeks later and died. The family again refused a bribe of an open check – in the millions of dollars – from the Israelis to leave their homes. "I don't have a life now," she told me from her tent. "With my husband and house gone, there is no life. I just hope with the help of God that this occupation will stop and we can return to our homes." I never could find out what happened to this woman in the violent eviction by Israeli forces, but one report I read said even her tent had been destroyed.

I walked from Sheikh Jarrah to the British consulate (it took about five minutes) and asked Karen McLuskie, the spokesperson, what the British line was on the ethnic cleansing of what is meant to be the future capital of Palestine. "The British position is that Jerusalem has to be the shared capital of two states," she told me. "I think what is happening in Sheikh Jarrah is not unique, sadly. There are a number of sites around Jerusalem where these kinds of actions are taking place – demolitions, evictions and settlement encouragement." She specifically declined to comment on what the British government is actually doing to stop this illegal and inhuman destruction of Sheikh Jarrah. Ms McLuskie did concede, however, that: "The annexation of Jerusalem simply makes it harder to reach a peace deal, it simply cuts off the options." After I contacted Blair's spokesperson I was told that "Blair has raised the issue with the Israeli government", and that "it remains an issue of concern". I asked if Mr Blair would make the three-minute walk down to the Hanouns' to talk to them about their predicament, to which the spokesperson assured me: "Staff from his office have previously visited families who have been evicted." Notice the past tense. Maybe when the Hanouns had actually been evicted, Blair would send an emissary to their tent. The Americans refused to give an interview.

When you look around East Jerusalem and the surrounding area, there are considerable plots of land without homes. If Israel wanted to (illegally) build new settlements without kicking out Palestinians in the area they could, there is space. The targeting of Sheikh Jarrah and other areas is a process of ethnic cleansing, the transformation of East Jerusalem into a unified Jewish Jerusalem. As Maher asked, "Why can't they build a settlement on any other bit of land?" The one good thing about the Netanyahu–Lieberman administration, which was in power at the time, was that they were much more honest about their colonization program than their "centrist" predecessors. The Netanyahu administration was now willing to get rid of some "outposts" in return for continued expansion in East Jerusalem and "natural growth" in existing settlements throughout the West Bank. That was the same policy negotiated by Ehud Olmert and George W. Bush before the Annapolis conference in 2007. Netanyahu was just more honest in saying that it obviates the possibility of a Palestinian state. "I can't see how we can have a capital if there is no land, no houses, no people," agreed Maher.

The next stop in this attempt to cleanse the putative future capital of Palestine of its indigenous population was the al-Bustan area of Silwan, which sits in the valley down from the Dome of the Rock and the Western Wall. When I first arrived in Israel I went on the City of David tour, which functions as a three-hour Israeli propaganda extravaganza (dressed up as an archeological experience). King David in biblical lore is said to have been the first Jewish leader to settle the land in Jerusalem and his son King Solomon is said to have built the First Temple in the 960BC. In 2005, some archeological finds purported to provide evidence that supported this. Now the Israeli government was planning to turn the homes of the people of Silwan into an archeological theme park: 88 dwellings were due for demolition, home to about 1,500 Palestinians. At the end of the tour we went through the waterway that was built to connect the Old City to the spring outside the city walls. When I came out at the end of the tour, I didn't realize that the spring was located in Silwan. A few days later I went to the tent where the residents of al-Bustan were mobilizing against the destruction of their homes and realized, while watching the tourists being bussed back up the hill to the "City of David", where I had actually been. Again, as in Sheikh Jarrah, the people were defiant. "If they demolish my home, they will have to demolish my body too, I will die for my land," said Zaid Ziulany, 54, who lived with his family in house "38" which was due for demolition. "Where are we meant to go?" he asked. "Should we all just sleep on the street?"

THE PATRON

Israel is – by any definition of international law – a rogue, terrorist state that practices colonial policies and serial war crimes against the Palestinians and has done so for decades, all supported by US taxpayers. There is no shortage of evidence that can be produced to support this claim. Having been initially turfed out of their homes in 1948 to make way for the nascent Jewish State, Palestinians have since lived in the meager strips of land afforded them by Israel and the surrounding Arab states: the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Since then, any Jewish person who can prove their racial heritage has been entitled to settle in the Land of Israel while no Palestinian who was made a refugee in 1948 can go back to their home. This creates the insane scenario where I, owing to my Jewish heritage, can go to live in a place I have never really seen and have no connection to, whereas the estimated 4 million Palestinians living in refugee communities scattered around the Middle East, who were born and grew up in Palestine but had to flee in 1948 or 1967, cannot. Moshe Dayan, who was eventually Israel's "Defense"

Minister, told the Palestinians: "You shall continue to live like dogs, and whoever wishes may leave, and we will see where this process leads." The same philosophy still prevails among Israeli elites. Since June 1967 when Israel fought a group of Arab states in the Six-Day War, Israel has occupied and built settlements that eat into the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The settlements in Gaza were withdrawn in 2006, and the Israelis turned to a medieval siege to maintain control of the population. All of this is in contradiction of international law – Israel has been condemned by the UN repeatedly for its transgressions. The Security Council adopted UN Security Council Resolution 242 unanimously in 1967 in the aftermath of the Six-Day War. Adopted under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter, it calls for the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict" and the "termination of all claims or states of belligerency". This still hasn't happened to this day: the mob doesn't have to abide by the law it sets for everyone else. Incidentally, the United States has vetoed all the subsequent resolutions brought against its client – that amounts to about 40 vetoes since 1972, all of which blocked votes unanimously supported by the other powers on the Security Council. It is these incursions into Palestinian land that motivate the violence and suicide bombing perpetrated by the Palestinian resistance and is at the root of all the international opprobrium directed toward Israel. But it has been Israeli state policy for the last 48 years to *sacrifice security for expansion* in the Occupied Territories.

The US propaganda runs that the Palestinians have been offered the West Bank and Gaza many times and rejected it. From the Oslo Accords in 1993 to the Camp David Summit in 2000, this is simply not true. The Palestinians have consistently been offered a deal which breaks up the West Bank into small, South African-style Bantustans with the right of return always denied. The one time a deal was struck with something resembling a fair final settlement – at Taba, Egypt in 2001 – the Israelis pulled out. In fact, in 2002 after a trip to the West Bank, the great South African freedom fighter and Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu compared the treatment of Palestinians under Israeli occupation with the treatment of blacks under the South African apartheid regime. “I’ve been very deeply distressed in my visit to the Holy Land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us blacks in South Africa,” he said. “I have seen the humiliation of the Palestinians at checkpoints and roadblocks. They suffer like us when young white police officers prevented us from moving about. They seemed to derive so much joy from our humiliation.” Israel has also built a “Security Wall” through the West Bank, again in contradiction of international law. The World Court at the Hague has said that “Israel is under an obligation to terminate its breaches of international law; it is under an obligation to cease forthwith the works of construction of the wall being built in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, to dismantle forthwith the structure therein situated”. It never did.

There is, in fact, no great controversy over the main historical points at issue, and the conclusions that one should draw are simple. The situation is often obfuscated and blurred by the Israeli side to distract neutrals from the glaring, incandescent truth that the Palestinians are involved in one of the last colonial struggles left over from the 20th century. Norman Finkelstein, a scholar of US–Israeli relations, says that the Israel–Palestine conflict is “remarkably uncomplicated”. “The stark truth is an unpleasant truth,” he told me. “And so the pretext is that what we see and what seems so stark, the claim is, that actually isn’t the case and so it’s supposed to make you question your most elementary, your most basic moral judgment and sensibility.” That the occupation of other people’s land is wrong? “An occupation is wrong, building a wall around these people is wrong, shooting children for throwing stones is wrong, stealing people's land is wrong – that's not very complicated at all."

"They're making profit on the occupation," Jihad al-Wazir, Palestine's central bank governor, told me when I interviewed him for the *FT* in New York. "They control the electromagnetic waves, they control the real estate, they control 60 percent of the West Bank and this is why they like the status quo and this is why they don't want to have a Palestinian state because it's nice the way things are. They've taken land and people are not fighting them." Despite this obvious injustice, Israel remains the "third rail" in US political discourse because of the huge financing of the lobby that supports it. When I was at Columbia Journalism School my professor, who worked at the *New Yorker*, told me outright when I mentioned I wanted to do a piece critical of Israel not to do it. His words were: "Do it if you want, but criticizing Israel in the US is like railing against Mother Teresa: you'll never work in the American media."

The US alliance with Israel did not become economically or politically significant until the 1960s and 70s. Mr Finkelstein told me that "no one in America even cared about Israel for the first 20 years of its existence." What changed was the decline in the efficacy of the "Arab façade" whereby control of much of the Middle East could be exerted behind the scenes through subservient local Arab rulers. So when, for example, an Arab leader such as Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt turned to the Soviet Union, Israel became the perfect buffer against Arab nationalism and hopes of true independence in the Middle East. Around the time of President Nixon there was a conscious effort to buttress American power with what the Defense Secretary Melvin Laird called "local cops on the beat". The perfect "local cop" in the Middle East was the Jewish "democracy" Israel. As the CIA put it at the time: "a logical corollary" of opposition to Arab nationalism "would be to support Israel as the only reliable pro-Western power in the Middle East".[1] As the CIA was trying to destroy secular nationalism in the Middle East, ironically it was Israel and Islamic fundamentalists (Hamas was helped out initially by Israel) who provided the perfect vehicle to do it. The burgeoning relationship between the two countries served the self-interest of both. In a controversial essay, two prominent academics, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, wrote that the pro-Israel lobby in Washington benefits Israel to the detriment of the US's own foreign policy objectives. The article caused great consternation among supporters of pro-Israel policies in the United States, but their argument was somewhat misplaced. The evidence would suggest that the relationship between the United States and Israel is much more symbiotic than Mearsheimer and Walt contend. Israel is, by far, the largest recipient of US aid presently. Since 1947 Israel has cost the US taxpayer nearly $84,855 million, which means that the taxpayer has paid $23,240 for every Israeli citizen alive.[2] This is not the result of a mystical, paranoid "Jewish lobby" or a completely anomalous foray into the politics of altruism. Israel plays a very important strategic role for the United States, one which is based primarily on political expediencies. There is the "cop on the beat" strand, but there were also concerns about the march of the Soviet Union in the Middle East. When Israel became reliant on US aid in the 1970s, its geopolitical outlook became much more western-oriented; its domestic society also became more unequal. Israel has long been the most loyal US supplicant in the Middle East and even globally. Together they supported apartheid South Africa and supplied weapons to fascist dictatorships in Latin America, among many other horrors. Israel also provided unflinching support for the US at the UN. The inventory of UN votes compiled by the State Department planner turned historian William Blum reveals that Israel reflexively votes with its patron on all matters, whether they are of strategic importance to Israel or not. In turn, according to Mr Finkelstein: "If you look at the record it's Israel backed by the US who have been the obstacle to the resolution of the Middle East conflict, which the international community on the one hand and the Palestinians have supported." Even though Israel has been condemned hundreds of times by the UN, even though it continues to occupy the West Bank and control the Gaza Strip, even though it has attacked its neighbors (Lebanon in 1982, killing 20,000), the US continues to provide support. There are evidently no conditions on the aid provided by America in terms of "good behavior". Michael Mann, the historian, goes as far as to say: "I think Israel is actually the tail wagging the dog. Israel has more power there than the US does. It has a fifth column among the neo-cons and Zionists in the US and it can do whatever it likes." All the US asks is that Israel remains a loyal "cop on the beat" to push US interests in the Middle East.

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[1] Quoted in Noam Chomsky, "The Israel-Arafat agreement", *Z Magazine*, October 1993.

[2] "U.S. financial aid to Israel: figures, facts, and impact", *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, www.wrmea.org/wrmea-archives/494-congress-a-us-aid-to-israel/9748-u-s-financial-aid-to-israel-figures-facts-and-impact.html

CRACKS IN THE OCCUPATION

While in Palestine, I also went to the capital of the Occupied Territories, Ramallah. I could sense the fatigue in the city. The feeling I got walking around the streets was that the Palestinians are weary of the struggle against the incremental destruction of their homeland, while the world looks the other way. I heard things like: "Our struggle has been long and it has got us nowhere." And people asked how the world could stand by while the Israelis annex more land. It was a good question.

In one village the flame of non-violent resistance still burned. I went to the weekly demonstration against the annexation wall in Bil'in, where it cuts deep into the farmland of this old Palestinian village and the Green Line (the internationally recognized border of Israel–Palestine). Since Israel started building the wall here in 2005 (stealing about 60 percent of the village's land), the people of Bil'in have been inventively and non-violently resisting. While helplessness pervades in occupied Palestine, the successful tactics of the people of Bil'in provide some hope and inspiration. Abdallah Abu Rahmah, the head of the Popular Struggle Committee in Bil'in, described the villagers' various tactics, which so far successfully stalled the erection of a new settlement (called West Mattiyahu in Israeli legalese, which implies that it is merely a "neighborhood" of an existing settlement). First, to oppose the wall, Bil'in's residents tied themselves to their olive trees to stop the bulldozers razing their land. Then, in sight of the settlements, they constructed a one-room house overnight on the other side of the wall, a building that became the basis for a legal challenge. The High Court slapped down their petition twice before they and their Israeli lawyer, Michael Sfard, realized Israel had made an administrative mistake under their own unfair rules. Generally the Israelis use two excuses for land-grabs: one, the land is uncultivated; and, two, there is a security threat. With Bil'in they tried both.

To maintain the interest of the media, essential to their demonstrations' success, the Popular Committee brings out new initiatives every Friday in their non-violent struggle. When I was there, at the height of the swine flu hysteria in 2009, the Bil'in residents went down for the demonstration wearing face masks to say that they had all had occupation influenza for decades. On another Friday they had a slightly less subtle but equally creative tactic of filling balloons with chicken feces to chuck at the soldiers.

While the Bil'in residents maintain their adherence to nonviolence, the same can't be said for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The month before I was there, an activist from the village, Bassem Ibrahim Abu Rammah, was killed by a high-velocity tear-gas canister, and one 16-year-old child I spoke to survived a live round to the head. These are definitely not "mistakes": when you shoot a high-velocity tear-gas canister horizontally and not up in the air you only have one goal. They managed to murder Bassem with a shot to the heart. This is where the chicken feces idea came from. "They shoot bullets at us, so we will respond with our animals' feces," said Abu Rahmah. At the demonstration hundreds of tear-gas canisters were shot at us, and rubber bullets were aimed at the children throwing stones. This Israeli tactic of harsh and violent repression has one goal: to stop Palestinian resistance through instilling fear. This is what happened during the second intifada, and it is happening again now, in 2015, as pockets of resistance are starting to form against the annexation of their land. And it works. I asked my Palestinian friend if she wanted to come with us on Friday. "No," she replied, "I don't want to die for nothing." In recent months, since the Gaza War, the IDF has started to use a new cocktail of weapons against the Bil'in demonstrators, which includes stronger military-grade tear-gas with nerve toxins, high-velocity machinegun-style tear-gas and aluminum bullets that have crippled protesters. The IDF has also made it a tactic to come into the village in the middle of the night and arrest the members of the Popular Committee, and children as young as 13, as well as throwing around sound bombs and tear-gas.

According to a farmer from Bil'in, Farhan Burnat, aged 30, who spent eight months in prison after Israeli soldiers arrested him at a Friday demonstration, the Israelis take the kids to prison in Israel and keep them for four to six months as punishment for participating in the demonstration. In Ofer prison about 25 percent of the prisoners are children, he told me: "These lengthy periods of imprisonment severely stunt the educational development of our children."

I went down to the wall the day before the protest and talked to Wahid Salaman, a 44-year-old farmer from Bil'in who was walking home after work. "The ability of us to get to our land depends on the mood of the soldier," he said. "Sometimes we have to wait for five or six hours to get to our fields." Mr Salaman's land is on the wrong side of the wall so he has to go through a checkpoint every day to get to work. He pointed out a huge pole with a CCTV camera on top of it. "They watch us at all times as well," he said. The Israelis assign each farmer a number corresponding to points on the wall where he is allowed to go about his work. Afterwards we spotted a young boy going through the checkpoint with his herd of goats. "I look after the goats after school for my parents," he said. "The wall took 60 percent of our land, and as punishment for the demonstration we're not allowed to work on Fridays." He said that his goats had been injured by the barbwire around the wall. Like everyone in Bil'in, he said he misses his friend Bassem. "I feel very sad, but it will not stop me from doing the demonstration. We're strong enough to continue to do it. They shot Bassem because we are achieving something here."

The brutal behavior of the IDF at the demonstration has motivated a broad contingent of activists from around the world and Israel to descend on Bil'in every Friday – as they know the IDF will be less inclined to murder at will if they have passports belonging to the countries that give them the guns. When I was there, there was a 15-strong contingent of trade unionists, artists and charity workers from Canada, alongside a group of young Israelis. The IDF's explicit policy is not to fire live ammunition when Israelis or internationals are in the area, which gives you an indication of their attitude to the expendability of Palestinian life. It also makes it clear how vital it is that the brigade of internationals and Israelis continue to show up and protest peacefully alongside Palestinians. At a bleak time for Palestinians, when they were watching the live destruction of any hopes of a viable future state, the heroic and successful resistance of the people of Bil'in (and their analogues along the line of the annexation wall) provided a glimmer of hope, and a template of how to fight this epic injustice with a mixture of consistency, courage and creativity. They did it against huge odds – against one of the world's most vicious militaries, backed to the hilt by the most powerful military in the history of the world, and a global population continually lied to about the depredations of Israeli state power.

But foreigners are increasingly refusing to believe the lies they are told by their media. What I saw in Palestine was how important it is for concerned citizens to make the journey to the Occupied Territories, or any other place ruined by US imperialism, to make their presence felt. During the December–January 2008–09 Israeli attack on Gaza, the sickness that many people felt about the massacre was compounded by a feeling of helplessness. But there was a way to help out and attenuate the crimes of the occupation: what you realize in Palestine is that just having a foreign passport instantly civilizes the IDF when you are in their presence. I was, as mentioned, working with the ISM, which was set up in 2002 to bring internationals sympathetic to the Palestinian cause to witness and combat Israeli repression during the second intifada. Since then it has achieved a fair degree of infamy – like any organization that tries to protect Palestinians it has been traduced as "terrorist-supporting", "anti-Semitic" and all the rest. There are even a couple of organizations online set up exclusively to libel and destroy the ISM: Stoptheism.com tries to expose its activists and says the ISM represents "Hamas, and other terrorists under Yasser Arafat"; and the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America states that "ISM encourages members to place themselves in dangerous situations to protect terrorists or their homes". But after spending about an hour with the ISM in the West Bank you realize all these calumnies are baseless propaganda. From the start of my time there, I was impressed by the integrity and professionalism of the organization. The ISM runs a two-day training weekend in London, which instills in prospective volunteers the ethos of non-violence and the Palestinian-led modus operandi (i.e. everything members do has to be ratified by a Palestinian council). When you arrive in Palestine you have another two days of training, which takes you through the history of non-violent resistance in Palestine and the specifics of how to deal with violence from the IDF. When I was there I met inspirational activists from Scotland and the Czech Republic, who had spent months living with families in East Jerusalem, being illegally evicted by an Israeli settler company. This was not glamorous stuff; it was staying up all night and sleeping on a thin mattress in a single room together, day after day, month after month. I also met activists from Sweden who were manning checkpoints to make sure that no Palestinians were physically abused. I had my own experience of this on the way out of Nil'in, another Palestinian village fighting back, for the Friday demonstration against the annexation wall. I saw an IDF soldier kicking a Palestinian man at a checkpoint at the edge of this Palestinian village. I got the taxi to stop, and got out and just watched. I don't know what effect it had, but you could see a change in the eyes of the soldiers when they saw my camera pointing their way. There was a group of activists from Italy who lived in Hebron, which is a particularly disturbing example of the occupation in the West Bank, since settlers have occupied the downtown market which is now closed because of the harassment the settlers gave the Palestinians living there. When you walk through the now-defunct market there is grating overhead, and caught in it are all sorts of projectiles, bricks and debris.

The settlers in Hebron are famous for their extremism. They celebrate the anniversary of the 1994 Hebron massacre by Baruch Goldstein, and the presence of the 500 of them in Hebron makes downtown a militarized zone. In Hebron, ISM volunteers escort Palestinian kids to school to protect them from the settlers, who have been known to shoot at them wildly from their rooftops. The courageous 22-year-old ISM activist Tom Hurndall was killed doing work like this in Gaza in April 2003. He was moving Palestinian children out of the line of fire of IDF snipers and was shot in the head, despite carrying international signs. Hurndall's death shone the media spotlight on the conduct of the IDF in the Occupied Territories, only because he was British – Palestinians are shot with appalling regularity. And that is why the ISM activists are so brave: they are putting their lives on the line, solely because they know they are worth more in the eyes of the IDF. It is also why the Israeli authorities try to keep out the ISM, by blacklisting anyone they suspect of being involved. Many ISMers have been slapped with a 10-year ban from entering Israel, even though the ISM is a completely legal organization in Israel.

I went to the non-violent Friday demonstrations in Bil'in and the nearby Nil'in on alternate weeks. Again the local villagers say that even though those among their ranks had been killed at an alarming rate in the past year (two in Bil'in, five in Nil'in, including a 10-year-old with a live shot to the head), it would be much worse if the internationals didn't turn up. In 2011, US citizen and ISM activist Tristan Anderson was critically wounded by a high-velocity tear-gas canister. While I was in Nil'in, the IDF was aiming right for us as we stood on the verge. The only things the IDF are up against at these demonstrations are stones in slingshots. On one Friday, a Palestinian man was killed with a live round. "We always ask internationals to please come, because they are even more brutal when it is just us Palestinians," said the leader of the demonstration.

There are definitely dangers to volunteering in occupied Palestine, but it is a highly effective way of helping the Palestinians resist oppression, and because of our passports those risks are a fraction of those faced by any Palestinian who raises so much as a finger of resistance. My stay was short, and I did nothing compared to the brilliant and inspirational activists – who range from teenagers to pensioners – who have spent far longer and risked far more. But it is clear that through the solidarity of internationals, Israelis and Palestinians, the occupation can be fought. There are more losses than gains, and ISM and Palestinian activists will continue to be lost, but as George Orwell concluded in his essay "Looking back on the Spanish Civil War", during which he had fought against General Franco's fascists: "I believe that it is better even from the point of view of survival to fight and be conquered than to surrender without fighting." In this sense, "fighting" doesn't always have to be violent. Being in Palestine also further helped me understand how the truth about what our governments do in our name is invariably distorted by the media. That disconnect between the truth and what we digest is vital to maintaining the domestic US population's passive acquiescence to the great crimes being done in their name. The powers that be are aware that if people knew the truth they would push them to stop the atrocities, like the massacre in Gaza in 2014; or the massacre in Iraq which began in 2003 and endures until today. In fact, one of the most silent of all the ethnic cleansing programs done with US diplomatic and military support happened in the east of Turkey and again continues today.

DIYARBAKIR, TURKEY

I had been to Turkey before but never to the neglected southeast, the redoubt of the sizeable and bitterly oppressed Kurdish minority in the country. In 2012, I arrived in Diyarbakır, the capital of what the locals call Kurdistan, at four in the morning, and the airline had lost my baggage. I went outside to get a taxi, which took me to the imposing walls that ring the Old City, where I had a sleepless night in a grim hotel. I noticed that the guest book was full of names from Iraq, someone from Mosul, another from Kirkuk, and one more from Baghdad. Diyarbakır is just 160 miles away from Iraq, another country in which the Kurdish minority has been treated with brutality. Now, though, in the aftermath of the US–UK invasion and occupation of Iraq, the Kurds were enjoying more autonomy than ever before. The Turkish government, at the same time, was growing fearful of this newfound independence. When I woke in the morning it was as if I was no longer in Turkey. Diyarbakır looked centuries older than Istanbul with its Gucci advertising-hoardings and appearance-obsessed elites. I walked south out of the city walls and there was a vast panorama of rolling verdant hills with a stunning stone bridge in the far distance that traversed the Tigris River, which flows all the way into Iraq. I had organized to meet Nurcan Baysal, a Kurdish activist, who was a friend of a friend, at the offices of her non-governmental organization (NGO) on Lise Caddesi street just outside the city walls. It was a big, well-kept office, with reports written by the collective displayed on desks. Nurcan was an old hand at talking to journalists, but that didn't stop the passion coursing through her voice. A young and inspiring Kurdish woman, she has been at the forefront of the fight for freedom and independence her people have been seeking for centuries. To take that fight forward she set up Disa, a Kurdish research organization, to combat the hold the Turkish state and its media had on the narrative about the conflict between it and the Kurdish population. “I’m angry at people who do research from the West,” Nurcan told me. “There are many institutes in Istanbul and Ankara and they do research on Kurdish people, but they are run by Turkish people. Most foreigners know about the Kurdish question in the abstract, we know it by birth.” Many institutions that work on the forced migrations in Turkey’s southeast call the victims merely “internally displaced people”, for example. “But when you use ‘internally displaced people’ you can translate it into Turkish in two different ways,” she added. “The main translation makes it seem like what happened is very passive: like the Kurds came, and they left. Kurdish people want ‘forced migration’ used, they want people to understand that force was used.”

In the 1980s and 1990s, with US diplomatic support and US-supplied weapons, the Turkish military cleared large parts of the Kurdish southeast in the name of fighting terrorism – in this incarnation, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party or PKK. It became merely a war against the Kurdish population, who, like indigenous people in Guatemala during their US-instigated civil war, became synonymous *as a whole* with the Leninist group regardless of their activities. Today in Diyarbakır there is a savage poverty mainly due to the thousands of people who came here after the forced migrations from the villages. The Kurdish people of Turkey have actually been through a prolonged nightmare since the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923. Kemal Ataturk, the war hero and founder of modern Turkey, aspired to an ethnocentric country, which meant Kurds were stripped of their identity and referred to as “Mountain Turks”. Banned from speaking their own language or expressing their historic culture, they have spent the ensuing 90 years resisting a racist state that is trying to extinguish the merest memory of their different lineage. Ataturk massacred those Kurds who opposed his plan, but those who took on his mantle – called today, the Kemalists – have become more extreme than their idol. A secular, fascist-tinged elite have dominated Turkish politics since the time of Ataturk and liquidated democracy throughout the 20th century when anyone threatened to usurp their power. Meanwhile the elite established a Turkey that suited their interests: they tied themselves tightly to the US empire and its racket as it established its domination over the Middle East, filtering cash through international financial institutions to a well-served rentier class. The current set of authoritarian nationalists are still using a nasty little constitution instituted by fascist general Kenan Evren in 1981 after a military coup. That document has dogged Turkey ever since and caused thousands of lives to be wasted in jail or ended in cold blood for merely speaking out.

The tactics of the Turkish government in combating the Kurdish intifada in the 1980s were straight out of the handbook of the British empire the Turks had fought and beaten in their own war of independence. In 1985, Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal, who was a close friend of Margaret Thatcher, co-opted a small elite in the Kurdish villages of the southeast and plied them with US-supplied weapons and orders to do battle with the PKK. These paramilitary units, called Village Guards, were entrusted by the Turkish government to police the southeast from within and a blind eye was turned as they committed all sorts of atrocities. Human Rights Watch say they have opposed the village guard system since 1987, the year they released their first report on the subject, *State of Flux: Human Rights in Turkey*. Even that early it documented emerging evidence of "brutality and corruption among village guards". The brutal 1990s US-backed state clampdown on the southeast under the guise of a War on Terror, furnished with weapons by the John Major government in the UK and Bill Clinton in the US, saw the destruction of hundreds of villages in a scorched earth policy, and the displacement of thousands of Kurdish civilians. In the 2000s, the Islamist government of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) loosened restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language in the media and schools, which had previously been banned. Martial law in the area was lifted and the AKP has allowed the establishment of the first Kurdish-language television station; at the same time the imprisoning of Kurdish politicians and the shutting down of their parties abated somewhat. But in this period of glasnost and reconciliation under the AKP, the village guard system was left in place, even as its *raison d'être* disintegrated. There was a real hope that change was coming, as the Islamist party, which had been a victim of harsh repression itself, seemed to offer a different way of doing things. As the Kurdish proverb goes: "The victim understands the victim." But it wasn't to be. The "democratic opening" came to an abrupt halt in 2010 when seven PKK fighters arrived in Diyarbakır to cheers from the locals, many of whom were seeing long-lost relatives for the first time. Nurcan said she was in the office on that day. "I was with a young Kurdish student. I went to see what people were doing, and of course there were many congratulations to the fighters, it was like a festival. I was working and I thought, 'Nurcan, don't believe them, don't be happy, something bad will happen,' and I am 37, I saw the 1990s." Her instincts were right. "I saw an old Kurdish woman crying," she continued. "I asked her why she was crying, and the old woman said because today is '*bayram*', which means celebration. I shook her and said, don't believe them, there is no celebration, you don't know the bad things they will do after today."

Meanwhile, in the mainstream Turkish media the story was that the ungrateful Kurds were celebrating the return of the terrorist PKK. But what they didn't say was that many of these people were celebrating the return of loved ones. "These are our children," Nurcan said. "It's a very important thing. I saw on the street many old women who saw those fighters return, and thought maybe my son will be next. For that reason they were out celebrating." The seven fighters were eventually put in prison, alongside the thousands of Kurdish political prisoners held on spurious charges. The window for change closed, and repression as usual returned. "It's hard to attract western media attention because Turkey is a US ally," said Nurcan. "It's also hard to get the attention of the Turkish public. Sometimes I feel like it is another world, we are not in the same country. What we saying here in Diyarbakır is different to what they are saying in Ankara or Istanbul. It is very hard to get their attention." The Turkish media has never been a free media: ordinary Turkish people don't know what is happening; if they want to know they have to check. Most Turks, like most Americans, don't check.

Nurcan is an assimilated Kurd, and there are millions like her: they don't know Kurdish, their dreams are in Turkish, Turkish is their main language. Millions of Kurdish people now live in the west of Turkey, in Izmir and in Istanbul, which has the biggest Kurdish population in the world (5 million Kurds). But they know what happened. And they do not intend to forget and let the oppressors win. "In my mind and in my heart I don't know if I can forgive them for what they did," she told me. Many Turks cannot see why someone like Nurcan, who has benefitted from modern Turkey, would complain. "They are telling me why are you sad because you don't know your mother tongue? It's very good that you grew up you knew Turkish, you had chance to go to those universities, just enjoy being a Turk. They don't think that because I don't know my mother tongue, because of the restrictions at that time, I never had a close relationship even with my mother, and I never had the chance to talk with my grandmother, or my aunt. It's like you are coming from nowhere, there is no past. They think they are doing a very good thing for us, it is crazy. After this meeting I will go to buy books and presents for my friends in prison. And when I tell my friends in Istanbul that all my friends are in prison in Diyarbakır they say 'Really?' And the thing is I still had some patience to deal with Turkish people, trying to tell them what is happening. But after a while I said, 'Why?'"

The most emblematic of the many sins against the Kurdish people carried out through the long "counter-insurgency" campaign of the 1980s and 1990s, and before, was the outlawing of the Kurdish language. In the Turkish state's quest to dissolve any sense of a Kurdish identity separate from Turkey, the destruction of the fundamental cultural artifact of language was central. Nurcan told me she saw someone shot in the street because he was heard speaking Kurdish, and in her school if a child was heard using a Kurdish word, even just one, they would be taken out and savagely beaten.

Kurds who refused to be assimilated as merely "Mountain Turks" were tortured, murdered and "disappeared", while whole villages were scorched in the battle against the "enemy", which was publicly the PKK, but actually became the Kurdish community at large, especially those who refused to abide by the cultural genocide being imposed on them. In Diyarbakır mainly people speak Turkish, but when you go to the peripheries of the city, they haven't forgotten Kurdish; the language is still used despite the attempts to literally beat it out of their heads.

Kurdish children in the 1980s didn't even know they were Kurds. The constant government and military criminalization of the idea of the Kurd meant that many were ashamed to be Kurdish. "My mother and father came from the village, they were not educated, and most of the families at that time, like this, their main aim was to protect us," said Nurcan. "I was thinking that the teacher is not using Kurdish, and they are saying that Kurdish is bad, so then someone who uses Kurdish is bad. My mind was working like this. And I was thinking that because my mother was sometimes using Kurdish, and I was wondering if she was bad. We were ashamed to be a Kurd at that time, because the school and all of society were telling us this. One side we were ashamed of it, the other side we were afraid of it. Because, for example, I broke all my teeth, and I needed to go to hospital every week to get them fixed, and I was afraid that if my mother said something Kurdish what will they do to us? Maybe they wouldn't do anything, but I was very afraid. I remember lots of people being killed in that period. Just for example in this street they killed someone I remember. They killed one of my friend's fathers because he was selling a newspaper. It wasn't even in Kurdish – it was just writing about the rights of the Kurdish people."

THE GOLDEN CHILD

The US has been a staunch Cold War ally of Turkey for over half a century. It is still selling guns to Turkey, and the Kurds were sold out many times by the US, famously in 1975 when Henry Kissinger allowed them to be massacred, and in 1991 when George Bush senior, after telling them to rise up against Saddam Hussein, allowed the dictator to massacre them again. The situation changed slightly after the attack on Iraq in 2003 when Kurds in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) believed they could become strong allies of the US because of the changing dynamics in the Middle East. The reasoning is that the US needs sound allies in the region, like the KRG and Israel. The people in the KRG believe, perhaps naively, the US cannot turn their back on them now. "If I was an American citizen I would ask myself why my taxes were buying these guns and killing people," said Nurcan. "I don't understand why they don't ask this. If we have war here today, I'm not saying it's because of America, of course, it is not, but it continues because of guns, and if there were no guns it couldn't continue … and the guns come from America."

One brave young American, Jake Hess, saw what was being done in his name and decided to do something about it. He went to live in Diyarbakır and surrounding areas of the southeast to investigate human rights atrocities being carried out with weapons his own taxes were paying for. What happened next was a terrifying but salutary tale. He was detained and deported in 2010 on "terror" charges, which specifically meant "knowingly or willingly supporting a terror organization without being part of its hierarchical structure".

"I was in custody for about 10 nights," he told me. "During my interrogation, they asked me about my reporting on human rights abuses, contacts with NGOs in Britain and Turkey, and views on political issues." Unlike other less fortunate Kurdish activists, Hess was not tortured. The government has a public posture that is "zero tolerance" for torture, but if you are one of the thousands of Kurdish political prisoners in Turkey – held often for years without a conviction – such high-minded rhetoric often does not translate into on-the-ground policy. The US embassy offered consular assistance to Hess to secure his release on the trumped-up charges, but he refused, citing the treatment that they allowed to go on unhindered against Kurdish political dissidents and activists. "In the 1990s, these people would have been disappeared or assassinated; now, they're held in prison indefinitely," he told me. "The US government has murdered journalists both directly and by proxy for years. They bombed Al Jazeera in Iraq and Afghanistan. They bombed the Radio Television of Serbia in 1999, killing 16 civilians. The US was Turkey's chief military supporter as scores of journalists were being murdered there in the 1990s, and continues to provide key military and political backing for Ankara's current assault on the Kurdish movement. Of course I couldn't accept the embassy's help in that kind of situation."

Most Americans hearing about this brutality would be shocked to learn that their tax dollars have been instrumental in propping up this racist and genocidal policy against the Kurds in Turkey. In fact, the US and Turkey have had one of the most close-knit security tie-ups in the world since the beginning of the Cold War, as Turkey was viewed as a front-line state in the NATO alliance against the Soviet Union. In another part of unspoken history, it was the US placing of Jupiter missiles, armed with nuclear warheads, in Turkey in 1961 on the borders of the Soviet Union, that led the Russians to move nuclear warheads to Cuba, which, in turn, precipitated the Cuban Missile Crisis a year later. Operation Gladio, set up by NATO, created underground "stay-behind" armies to retain a position in the NATO states early in the Cold War. Many analysts now conclude that these forces went on to become the infamous "deep state" in Turkey, which, Hess said, "is basically an unelected shadow government that has been involved in political killings, coups, and generally fomenting chaos in the country". In Turkey, governments come and go – it's the state bureaucracy and the army that run the country.

Such a state of affairs has been mirrored across the other crucible states within NATO that might become susceptible to communism, clearing the way for brutal campaigns against some of the same forces that had helped defeat Nazism, from Greece to Spain. JİTEM, the death squad that was established to murder Kurdish dissidents and intellectuals in the 1980s and 1990s, also grew out of these NATO structures. The military relationship continued even after the Cold War ended. During the dirty war against the Kurds in the 1990s, the US supplied Ankara with 80 percent of its weaponry, worth some $10.5 billion. Many human rights groups documented how US-supplied hardware was used to commit abuses, including extra-judicial killings and destruction of villages. Washington provided Ankara with more military aid during its war of terror in the southeast than it did during the entire Cold War.

Turkey is a relatively stable country in one of the most strategically important parts of the world, and the US has used it as a base for imperial operations. In 2003, Turkey refused to let the US open a northern front in Iraq from Turkish soil. However, Ankara later allowed the US to use its territory as a transport hub for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In a Congressional testimony in March 2007, Robert Wexler, a supporter of Turkey who was then Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee's subcommittee on Europe, pointed out that "The US depends greatly on Turkey to pursue shared objectives in support of the Iraqi and Afghan people", by which he meant the brutal military occupations of those countries. He went on, "Turkey's grant of blanket over-flight clearances to US military aircraft is of critical importance to our military operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan", and noted that "Turkey … provides extensive logistic supports to our troops in Iraq. This critical life line includes the cargo hub at Incirlik Air Base through which … we ship 74 percent of our air cargo into Iraq." Indeed, Wexler explained: "The substantial majority of the military assets used by American troops are flown into Turkey, and then transported to Iraq."

In an op-ed published in the *Wall Street Journal* in 1997, senior Republican foreign policy official Zalmay Khalilzad summarized the importance of Turkey for the geopolitics of energy. He argued that the US and Turkey "should work together to ensure the security of the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Basin regions. The US already has security commitments in the gulf, an area that is vital to the world's oil supplies. The relative importance of the Caspian region is growing, though, due to its tremendous oil and gas reserves … Turkish military facilities provide an excellent location for projecting power to both the [Persian] gulf and the Caspian Basin. Much of the world's energy resources are within 1,000 miles of Incirlik. Access to the Turkish bases can reduce the amount of military presence required in some of the Gulf Cooperation Council states. Turkey is also a viable pipeline route for bringing some of the oil and gas from the Caspian to world markets."[3]

The US has fully backed Turkey's war against the PKK, despite the fact that there's near unanimous agreement that there is no "military solution" to the conflict there. The Bush and Obama administrations declared the PKK "a common enemy", and the US supplies the Turkish military with intelligence on PKK movements in northern Iraq. WikiLeaks cables show that the US is enthusiastic about supplying Turkey with drones, despite its horrific human rights record, which never seems to come up in meetings between Turkish diplomats and US. The PKK is a left-leaning popular movement that has defied NATO's second-largest army and its US patron for decades, so it has to be crushed. They've committed human rights violations over the years, but nowhere even approaching the level of Turkey, so US opposition can have no humanitarian basis.

Many thousands of activists and politicians, including elected mayors, human rights defenders, journalists, women's rights advocates and students, have been arrested on "terrorism" charges. There have been very few convictions or acquittals up until now; thousands of people have been held without conviction for years. "I've looked at several of the indictments dealing with these cases, and it's just beyond dispute that these people are being tried for political reasons," Hess said.

In recent years, Turkey has become more involved in the Middle East. Its outreach to Syria and Iran, along with Hamas, has at points brought it into conflict with the US-Israeli-Saudi Arabian reactionary front in the region, leading to considerable outrage in Washington policy circles. Despite the extensive debate about how the West has "lost" Turkey in recent years, the US may actually be happy that Turkey is playing a more assertive role in the Middle East as a sort of alternative or rival to Iran and Hezbollah, both of whom have seemingly lost influence since the Arab Spring. Basically, the US might be able to retain some of its waning influence in the region through an active and engaged Turkey. Turkey has suffered several of its own foreign policy setbacks in recent years, and it seems very unlikely that Ankara will entirely break from the US.

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[3] Quoted in Everett Thiele, "Whither goes Turkey?", March 17, 2003, www.antiwar.com/orig/thiele1.html

"I don't think Americans are all that aware of the situation," said Hess. Some American NGOs did great work documenting US-funded Turkish atrocities in the 1990s, but these received little attention, unlike, say, the atrocities in Bosnia or Kosovo. In recent years, corporate media outlets and more establishment-oriented think-tanks have started to criticize Turkey, mainly because Ankara has challenged Washington on a few important issues, especially the Israel–Palestine conflict. Hess added: "The coverage is nowhere near where it should be, and there are still no foreign correspondents based in southeastern Turkey. The media coverage leaves a lot to be desired. It's shocking how frequently people who are supposed to be experts on Turkey get basic details about the conflict wrong. For example, the PKK is almost universally described in the media as 'separatist' even though they backed away from their demand for an independent state in the early 1990s. Writers often disproportionately quote western or Turkish 'experts' when covering the Kurds, and for some reason feel compelled to constantly point out that the EU and US consider the PKK a 'terrorist organization'. Okay, but what do Kurds think about the PKK? Doesn't their perspective count? There seems to be this conceit that the only people who can comment on the Kurds are either American or Turkish 'experts' who speak English and have fancy titles. Beyond the Kurds, US media coverage of Turkey relies on very simplistic binaries that easily fit with western prejudices, like 'East vs West' or 'secular vs Islamic.' The press doesn't really reflect the reality of Turkey."

In 2004, while in Turkey, George W. Bush gushed about the AKP: "I appreciate so very much the example your country has set on how to be a Muslim country and at the same time a country which embraces democracy and the rule of law and freedom."[4] What Bush didn't mention, but was surely of interest to his administration and his friends at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was that while President Recip Tayyip Erdogan may be a moderate on religion, the AKP was economically fundamentalist, hell-bent on turning Turkey into an IMF experiment. Though the AKP campaigned on promises to the poor and working classes, only a month after it was elected in November 2002, the party announced its plans to embark on mass privatization of state-owned industries, from the national airline to the nationalized oil company. The deputy prime minister at the time, Abdüllatif Şener, admitted that his inspiration was Margaret Thatcher; his close associate Turgut Bozkurt, who was head of the Privatization Administration, spelled out their ambitions as straight from the Thatcherite handbook: "The basic goal is to transform the economy from a state-led economy to a market-driven liberal economy," he said. "Transferring state-owned companies to the able hands of private entrepreneurs will help rationalize structure and run according to rational or scientific principles in order to achieve desired results."[5]

As is the case for most close US allies, the economy of Turkey has gradually grown more and more like that of its patron. Agriculture died in southeast Turkey after the forced migrations of the 1990s and neoliberal economic policies in the 1980s. It is a common theme all across the "underdeveloped world". In southeast Turkey 20 years ago they were selling livestock around the world – like Haitian farmers once sold rice and Mexican farmers once sold maize. That was before the racket rode into town. Now in this region of Turkey they only *buy* meat. In one region near Diyarbakır there are lots of villages and in the not too distant past all the food from Diyarbakır was coming from that region. Now the children who don't still live there are picking through the rubbish of the western city of Izmir. Because of this lack of production, the major cities, particularly Istanbul, have been flooded with Kurdish people migrating from the rural areas. They now form an underclass, often living 10 people in one room, in adverse conditions. When you go to Istanbul, the children who clean there are Kurdish; when you go to Izmir, the children who pick through the rubbish are Kurdish. Most of the *gecekondus*[6] in Istanbul are also filled with Kurds. It's close to an apartheid situation – certainly economic apartheid. Every year more than 200 workers die because of no security at work. Most of them are Kurdish, their lives expendable. "I always think that if we had a color, if we were black or red, I am sure that then the Turkish people would see it," said Nurcan. "Now they don't see it, but the poverty in Turkey has a color, a race. It's like apartheid, and those in the worst conditions, they are Kurdish." But one thing the Turkish state didn't count on was that living at such close quarters and in such dire circumstances has created a highly political will among the Kurds. If they do decide to rise up again at some point they will have a lot of power, but the war against them will be fierce once again. The racket does not shy away from using force to realize its economic or geopolitical ambitions.

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[4] "Bush praise for key ally Turkey", *BBC News*, June 27, 2004.

[5] www.thefreelibrary.com/TURKEY+-+Profile+-+Abdullatif+Sener.-a0116389955

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[6] Slum dwellings, translated literally as "built overnight", because the authorities tend to destroy them during the day.

SEVEN

MIGHT IS RIGHT

WAR

In the aftermath of World War II, the US emerged as one of the three biggest economic powers in the world, the others being Western Europe and the Soviet Union. This stayed pretty much constant, with the East Asian “Tiger economies” replacing the Soviet Union in the tripartite economic arrangement. The area where America overwhelming dominates is in military power. The Cold War was already in its embryonic stages in 1945. From then until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US and its western allies maintained they were “containing” the Soviet Union. It is more accurate to say that the Soviet Union was “containing” the United States. According to Edward S. Herman “the Soviet Union was actually a defensive and quite weak regional power”. America, on the other hand, had been establishing security states throughout Latin America and Africa and had control of Western Europe through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Soviet Union did not pose a problem militarily in the way public rhetoric claimed. The problem was the “virus” of “independent nationalism” that was likely to infect the rest of the world with notions of equality and independence. The wish of American business elites to keep high-scale military spending up, and of the political elites to maintain a grip on their populations meant that the threat of Soviet invasion became a common trope. Military spending shot up in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, at this time, according to Ken Livingstone, the former MP and the first Mayor of London, who was involved in international politics throughout the period, “the Cold War was largely a fiction because the US had 20 times more nukes than the Soviets”. The historian Niall Ferguson disagrees, writing that the Cold War was a period “when the containment of Soviet expansion, rather than democratic nation building, was the objective of policy”. The excuse for military spending was destroyed along with the “Evil Empire” in the early 1990s; yet the continuation of bloated military spending demonstrates that America’s aim was only loosely related to the Soviet Union. Throughout the 1990s and up until the present, American military power has had no rival. Since the end of the Cold War, almost all the world’s military budgets have declined, except America’s. In 2001, the US military budget comprised 36 percent of the entire world’s – six times the size of the number-two power, Russia, and seven times the size of the next three together, France, the UK and Japan. The US budget for 2012 took it to over 40 percent of the world’s total. It exceeds the spending of the next 10 states combined. All of this with no Soviet – or equivalent – menace. When the Soviet Union fell, the US turned to other covers, such as the “Drug War”, to keep military budgets high, as we will see.

The late historian Howard Zinn told me when I met him in Boston: “Very often the economics of empire requires a militarization of the economy, which then starves the domestic economy and eventually causes collapse.” In terms of military superiority, more important than nuclear or conventional firepower have been the military bases the United States spawned across the world during the Cold War. The Pentagon says there are currently military facilities in 132 countries.

Only about half of these are fully operational but the existing bases mean that nowhere is beyond the range of an American strike. The executive has been consciously accruing these outposts since World War II and it has meant deals with unsavory regimes and, in the case of Diego Garcia in 1966, the repatriation of indigenous people. Noam Chomsky told me that so-called proxy wars became common because the government "intended at first to use US forces … but there was so much popular reaction that they turned to what is called 'clandestine war'". This meant that a large-scale propaganda offensive was not needed and none of the high-minded idealism was given lip-service. Chomsky continued: "Clandestine means the war that everybody knows about except the American population – it's kept from them and it was fought with an international terrorist network, in which Britain contributed incidentally. So it was Taiwan, Israel, Argentine neo-Nazis until they were thrown out, Saudi Arabian funding, British assistance. So that's a kind of an international terror network that was used to support the murderous state terrorist governments of Central America and in the case of the one government where they didn't control the security forces, Nicaragua, they were used just to attack. There was a terrorist war against Nicaragua for which the US was actually condemned by the World Court and the Security Council – the US vetoed the resolution, Britain loyally abstained."

One of the main institutions of enforcement through violence is NATO, which was signed into force in April 1949. It is a military pact among western countries that is supposed to commit all countries to the defense of their allies should they be attacked. In practice it became a vehicle for the United States to protect its interests in Western Europe. According to historian Michael Mann: "The other states of the North had been under protection since 1945, unable to defend themselves against communism without American help."

Consequently, "America dominated security organizations like NATO." At the time it was the first US military alliance with Europe in 171 years. Planners such as the influential Dean Acheson paid lip-service to the idea that NATO was designed to "develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."[1] It was said to be a wholly defensive organization. Walter LaFeber, the historian, on the other hand, contended that NATO was created by the US with the knowledge that "It could now dominate an alliance by using its partners to carry out US foreign-policy aims." The aims LaFeber mentions were twofold. The first was to restrict the percolation of Soviet communism into Western Europe, and the second to restore the independence and power of West Germany. NATO was largely successful in these aims and, aside from some pushback during Charles de Gaulle's presidency (1958–69) in France, the US managed to retain its singular role within the organization. In a memorandum to President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, de Gaulle complained of the "tripartite world strategy" that did not include France. Eisenhower, in turn, wrote that the "United States had no ambition to carry the heavy responsibility that had been forced upon it in NATO".

Even though the alliance stayed strong and grew to include a number of other countries over the decades, its first military operation did not occur until after the fall of the Soviet Union. It took place in Kosovo in 1999 and marked the apparent metamorphosis of this "defensive alliance" into a force for "humanitarian intervention". NATO's militarism now apparently marked a beautiful new moment in the racket's altruistic program. President Bill Clinton remarked on June 10, 1999 at the end of the bombing of Serbia and Kosovo: "The demands of an outraged and united international community have been met … Because of our resolve, the 20th century is ending not with helpless indignation but with a hopeful affirmation of human dignity and human rights for the 21st century."[2] The US and its allies had actually designed the peace talks – called the Rambouillet Agreement – to fail. By imposing the condition that NATO forces would be free to operate throughout not just Kosovo but all of Serbia, those pushing for war knew that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic could never accept it. It was a typically smart move on the part of the racketeers and one for the trophy cabinet of their enforcement mechanism.

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[1] The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington, DC, April 4, 1949, www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

Once again, scrutiny of the facts reveals a story that had much more to do with self-interest than any preoccupation with human rights and dignity. Before the war in 1999 US Defense Secretary William Cohen claimed: "We've now seen about 100,000 military-aged [Albanian] men missing … they may have been murdered." When the bombing was over and investigations had failed to find any mass graves, the International War Crimes Tribunal said the total number killed on both sides was 2,788. The pre-war figures had turned out to be grossly inflated, with the leader of the Spanish forensic team lamenting the "semantic pirouette by the war propaganda machines".[3] The purpose of the military offensive was to re-establish this diminishing military organization that many had perceived as obsolete at the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact (which had been its antonym). A White House official stated President Clinton's position: "From the first day, he said we have to win this. It was absolutely clear. Because of the consequences for the US, for NATO, for his responsibilities as

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[2] Martin McLaughlin, "Clinton's speech on Yugoslavia: piling lie upon lie", *World Socialist Web Site*, June 12, 1999, www.wsws.org

[3] Quoted in John Pilger, "Don't forget what happened in Yugoslavia", *New Statesman*, August 14, 2008.

Commander in Chief, we had to win this."[4] Columnist William Pfaff went further, stating, before the conflict: "The debate about intervention is no longer a dispute over the means to an end. It is a debate over abandoning NATO and the claim to international leadership".[5] The Yugoslav government thus had to be destroyed to maintain US military supremacy in the institutionalized form of NATO.

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the point of NATO was unclear, but then NATO bombed Serbia and Kosovo in 1999 to ensure the break-up of Yugoslavia; 9/11 provided the West with a new enemy; and NATO employed new and different machinations to keep Russia out while expanding into Eastern Europe via Georgia and Ukraine. The role of Turkey, as explored, was also crucial: since 1951 it has supported this alliance without qualification. During Israel's 2006 war in Lebanon, Turkish soldiers were sent to be "peacekeepers", and there were 1,300 Turkish soldiers in Afghanistan at one point. NATO has been used in Turkey to combat Kurdish activists, trade unionists, socialists and other enemies of the state. NATO troops are supposed to be prepared for foreign invasions, but actually they are often *used against democrats*.

THE MOB RULES BY FEAR

It is true that there have been relatively few direct military interventions by the United States. Control, as already discussed, has largely been maintained by supporting right-wing elements within a country from a distance. Military force has been a last resort. The major exceptions to this modus operandi are the Korean War of 1953, the Vietnam War, the war in Afghanistan and those in Iraq. The "defensive" rationalization was used to legitimate direct military adventures during the Cold War. In fact, it was a desire to circumvent expansionary communist powers that would spread, to use Henry Kissinger's telling phrase, "the virus" of "independent nationalism". In the case of Afghanistan and Iraq, they fell under the rubric of the "war on terror" which, on the whole, maintained the same conceptual and institutional framework, with "terrorism" replacing "communism" as the Other that must be destroyed at all cost. Far from supporting "democracy-promotion", the US military has, in recent history, become a self-fulfilling prophecy. In his autobiography, Colin Powell, Secretary of State under George W. Bush, noted how Clinton's National Security Advisor Madeleine Albright asked him rhetorically: "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?"[6]

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[4] Blaine Harden, "Waging war on the Serbs: old problem, new lesson", *New York Times*, June 6, 1999.

[5] William Pfaff, "Land war in Kosovo?", *New York Review of Books*, May 6, 1999.

The philosopher Zygmunt Bauman links current militarism to the economic downturn in the US. He told me: "There is no competition in arms, there is no question about that. But if that is the case then America wants to make the world in its image; namely, that what decides in this world is application of force: who has more bombs, who has more smart missiles and things like that, the more mobile army and so on. And that's a danger. Economically the power has shifted already." The war in Iraq, which began in March 2003, is a perfect illustration of the United States' desire to use direct foreign invasion as a means to further its own economic interests. The war eventually deposed the dictator Saddam Hussein, but it was no coincidence that Iraq had the third largest reserves of oil in the world. Ostensibly the US is fighting a "war on terror" – the same war designed in the 1980s under Ronald Reagan – and "the liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror". In fact, Saddam Hussein had no hand in the September 11, 2001 atrocities in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, but those atrocities were used to pull a veil over a preconceived desire for regime change in Iraq. Many elements of George W. Bush's administration were previously members of a lobby group called Project for the New American Century. The most informative document produced by this think-tank is titled *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Forces and Resources for a New Century* (2000). It stated: "The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein." Much like the communist pretext was used to pursue violent conflict to establish favorable economic circumstances, "terrorism" falls into the same paradigm. The history of the Cold War shows that the US is also driven by questions of prestige, and is especially concerned to demonstrate to its supposed allies that it can do certain things. The Vietnam War occurred substantially because of the defeats in Korea and Laos: various presidents felt that the US had to demonstrate its power. Once the US was in Vietnam it was extremely difficult to get out without significant loss of prestige, so the conflict was prolonged. All leading American racketeers still share this view.

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[6] Michael Dobbs, "With Albright, Clinton accepts new U.S. Role", *Washington Post*, December 8, 1996.

While speaking of Vietnam it would be remiss not to mention one of the most exalted mobsters in the whole system, Dr Henry Kissinger. When the then president of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was invited to campus at Columbia University where I was studying at the Journalism School, there were weeks of debate about whether we should allow him to address us at our home. On the day he arrived hundreds of protesters spoke out against his pernicious statements on the Holocaust and his crackdown on dissidents, homosexuals and secularism back in Iran.

The university president joined the chorus and opened his introduction with a rhetorical salvo against Ahmadinejad. All good. Except, soon after, Columbia Journalism School welcomed a speaker who was much worse than a Holocaust denier – he had been partly responsible for one; in fact, more than one. That man is Kissinger, the National Security Advisor and Secretary of State under presidents Nixon and Ford. There was none of the publicity, none of the protests, none of the ire – he was given a warm and effusive welcome and answered questions about his experience at the hub of the United States. Conceivably, the lack of publicity was an effort to stop the protest movement that follows Kissinger around the world. But at the end of his peroration, dewy-eyed students took photos alongside him and one even hugged him passionately. It is hard to know what is more worrying – that a reputable journalism school invites someone like Kissinger to speak every year, despite his past, or that the majority of students are oblivious to what the man has done. In his 2001 book, *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, the prominent late journalist Christopher Hitchens catalogued with tragic specificity the carnage that Kissinger consistently unleashed around the world during his time at the center of power. “Many if not most of Kissinger’s partners in crime are now in jail, or are awaiting trial, or have been otherwise punished or discredited,” he wrote. “His own lonely impunity is rank; it smells to heaven.” The first holocaust concerned the country of East Timor in East Asia. It was invaded by neighboring Indonesia on December 7, 1975. That same day, President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger concluded an official visit to Jakarta and flew to Hawaii. Ford and Kissinger are revealed by declassified files to have given the “green light” to the Indonesian dictator to start the invasion. East Timor was home to an independence movement called Fretilin, or the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor, whose leftist ideology put them on the wrong side of the Cold War divide and at the mercy of the Indonesian military. What ensued was nearly 25 years of mass slaughter, rape and torture and the near-destruction of a nation. It is estimated that more than 200,000 East Timorese were killed during the Indonesian occupation, a third of the population of the country. Proportionally, it remains one of the worst genocides of the 20th century, all backed by Kissinger and his boss.

It is not only the disregard for human life that is troubling, but the legal aspect. What Kissinger and Ford had supported was illegal: Indonesia had violated international law by invading a sovereign nation, they had also violated American law, which said that weapons supplied to Indonesia were only to be employed in self-defense. But this was the pattern with Kissinger. His disregard for human life was matched only by his disregard for legal niceties. His blood-soaked résumé includes other continents too. In 1973, the democratically elected government of Chilean President Salvador Allende was violently liquidated by the fascist leader of the military, General Augusto Pinochet. For the three previous years, Kissinger had been integral in trying to undermine the legal and internationally recognized Allende government. The campaign included a program to remove the coup-averse General René Schneider and replace him with a sharper toothed coup-hungry operator. A $50,000 sum was offered to anyone who could do it. Although the CIA backed out of its support for former army General Roberto Viaux shortly before the kidnapping and accidental murder of Schneider, enthusiasm for a coup was still strong among American leaders. Following the successful coup, 17 years of dictatorship were foisted on the Chilean people, while the economy was opened to western speculators. Over 3,000 people were killed, and countless others "disappeared" or were tortured. Similar scenarios were played out across the world during Kissinger's terms in office. The Kurds were massacred in droves between 1974 and 1975; rape, burning, torture

– every conceivable horror visited on them after they had rebelled against Saddam Hussein with Kissinger's support. They were sold out and left to die.

The second holocaust Kissinger was partly responsible for was that in Cambodia under the genocidal maniac Pol Pot. During the Vietnam War, which Kissinger is thought to have prolonged in an effort to get Richard Nixon elected in 1968 (in Kissinger's life these titanic crimes only make the sidebar), Kissinger had ordered the secret bombing of Cambodia and Laos, two desperately poor countries that the US was not officially at war with. Between March 18, 1969 and May 1970, 3,630 bombing raids were flown into Cambodia. A Finnish government study estimates that 500,000 people died in this first phase, with 2 million refugees produced. Some analysts also argue that this bombing campaign, which depopulated large rural regions, led to the Pol Pot regime, which murdered 25 percent of the Cambodian population.

So there you have it: a veritable war criminal and facilitator of mass slaughter. And all of this information was in the public domain, available to any student with an enquiring mind. Fed up with the love-in at Columbia Journalism School, I asked Kissinger in front of his enraptured audience how he slept at night. "Do you think you are morally superior to me?" he asked after a pause. "Yes. I do," I answered confidently, stunned that he might mistake me for a mass murderer. All the while there were groans in the room from fellow students and professors, a startled disbelief that a journalist might actually confront a powerful mobster rather than attempt to fondle his ego with the usual fatuous questions. Despite this, it is still assumed that Columbia University has the best journalism school in the country. But thinking about this pandering to and reverence of one of the racket's most illustrious, I realized that to flourish in the corporate media, the destination of nearly all of these students, you have to block out the truth of how the world works. Looking at the racket with open eyes can spell career suicide, so, as Harold Pinter put it, "it never happened". Kissinger is a cuddly old statesman, not a mass-murdering racketeer. In fact, a couple of days after I confronted Kissinger, one of the school's top professors came up to me and said: "I heard you disgraced yourself the other day". If I'm honest I wasn't even surprised – this academic would never be teaching at Columbia Journalism School if he thought the purpose of journalism was to expose his own country's mass-murderers rather than suck up to them. Power selects for obedience, and by now it was obvious to me that the most obedient are inevitably rewarded with fancy positions in universities or with newspaper columns. The closest I came again to holding another mobster to account was when I was covering the 2008 Republican National Convention in St Paul and I chased Karl Rove, President George W. Bush's "brain" (he needed one), down the street asking him if he believed he was a war criminal. He pled the fifth before getting into a car.

THE DRUG WAR

Another method of enforcement devised by the US is the so-called "Drug War" or "War on Drugs", which is made up of two elements – the racialized war on the domestic poor, and the war on the rest of the world. It was formally started in the early 1970s by President Richard Nixon, focusing on eradication and interdiction all over the western hemisphere. The Drug War at home began as a way to deal with what some sociologists called the "superfluous population" – those people for whom there were just no jobs, the "permanent unemployed" that every capitalist economy has. It came in tandem with the growth of what is now called the "prison–industrial complex" whereby the privatization of corrections facilities offered all sorts of perverse incentives that made it in the interests of corporations (and the politicians whom they funded) to push for harsher sentences and more incarcerated people. Since the 1970s, the US has spent upwards of $1 trillion and seen thousands of people killed in this two-front fight.

In 2010 the US federal government spent over $15 billion on the Drug War at a rate of about $500 per second. But nearly everyone in policy circles admits it has been a failure. "I think that a lot of the arguments are quite convincing that current drug policy isn't working," Michael Shiftner, president of Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington think-tank, told me. "The evidence is strong, it has produced broad consensus of opinion." Even the Obama administration's own drug tsar, Gil Kerlikowske, was skeptical in 2011. "In the grand scheme, it has not been successful," he said. "Forty years later, the concern about drugs and drug problems is, if anything, magnified, intensified." The Obama administration did use a different tone on drug eradication policy, refusing to call it a war on drugs, and behind the scenes there is very little enthusiasm for the current approach. But the bureaucratic apparatus that has been built up over the past 40 years has made change difficult. The Obama administration requested $26.2 billion in its 2012 drug control budget for federal efforts to rein in the problem, an increase of 1.2 percent from the 2010 budget. Nearly 60 percent of that, or $15.5 billion, was directed to "supply reduction"; in other words, law enforcement and interdiction internationally and domestically.

It is worth considering why this massive outlay in capital and human life continues. It is no coincidence that it began at the height of the Cold War – it was just another tool of control to shore up the "backyard", or Latin America, the focus of most of the efforts. That control still needs to be exercised in a continent that is showing signs of moving away from US influence. The Drug War gave the US an excuse to keep a massive military presence in the region after the Soviet "threat" had disappeared. For example, a number of countries with drug problems – such as Colombia and Panama – have good relationships with the US, but even they seem to realize the war is not doing any good. Despite that, they let it go on because it allows them to fight their adversaries – in many cases, left-wing rebels – under the cover of the Drug War and thus escape censure from the US or anyone else.

But the conversation is building. Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said in 2011 that he was not against legalization. "If the world considers that [legalization] is a solution, I would gladly go along with that. I can understand the benefits, and I can understand the arguments," he said.[7] A commission on drug policy was set up by former Colombian president César Gaviria, calling for decriminalization of drugs in the region. Many Latin American governments are hoping the US will realize the shortcomings and begin a debate about other options that would be more viable. Before that happens they are hedging their bets.

Mexico is one of the most important countries for the US to control, as they share a long border (half of Mexico was bought by the US in 1803 for next to nothing). The border region has become a hell as a result of the Drug War. It has witnessed 36,000 deaths since former President Felipe Calderón launched a crackdown on drug trafficking, soon after he came to power in 2006, with the encouragement of the US which promised $1.6 billion in aid to the effort through the Mérida Initiative. Human rights groups have reported huge numbers of atrocities by the Mexican military against indigenous communities and civil society, under the guise of the Drug War. The murder of Jaime Zapata, a US immigration agent, by a drugs cartel in Mexico in 2011 and continuing violence in the border region again attested to the costs of this futile war. If you looked at it objectively you would have to say it is not working. The traffickers are cultivating and selling drugs to a huge market in the US that is growing all the time. The US seems to be incapable of doing anything internally about the demand for drugs, and where there is demand there will be supply. If a Colombian or Bolivian peasant farmer is deciding between growing a hectare of banana trees or a hectare of coca, there's no comparison in terms of the return.

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[7] "FT interview transcript: Juan Manuel Santos", *Financial Times*, February 13, 2011.

The US has had problems in recent years, as left-wing governments have sprung up in Latin America opposed to the program, making enforcement increasingly difficult. It has become harder to launch coups to get rid of them, too. This nascent movement in Latin America has made the enforcement side of the eradication policy by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) harder. Bolivia's leftist President Evo Morales kicked out the DEA, arguing that it was being used to pursue the geostrategic interests of the US, which was undoubtedly true. At the moment only Ecuador has followed suit, but this could change. The US's teetotal approach has also led it to oppose Bolivia's formal request to the UN to remove the ban on the chewing of coca leaves – an indigenous practice dating back more than 2,000 years. All over Latin America in recent history there have been moves to legalization. Argentina's Supreme Court ruled to decriminalize possession of drugs for personal consumption and there are continued efforts in Ecuador to reform its heinous drug law that was basically drafted under the guidance of the US. Senior figures in the region such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Ernesto Zedillo, the former presidents of Brazil and Mexico, have questioned the validity of the Drug War. Back in the US, it is the cowardice of the political establishment that stops anything from changing. "People are admitting it's a failure," Ron Paul, a Republican congressman from Texas, told me. "But they are intimidated. If they say it's a failure they are worried about being perceived as soft on drugs."

He added: “I think we are making progress. I sense a major change with the people, but I don’t think the government has caught up yet.” The libertarian wing of the Republican Party has been increasingly pro-legalization and against the huge outlays in Latin America while the rise of the Tea Party has brought the issue to the fore, with some wings favoring a cessation of the policy. “I have had this position for years, people always thought I wouldn’t be re-elected [in the] Deep South bible belt, but it’s never been harmful politically,” said Paul. “It has hurt so many people and so many families, there has been a realization that it’s the war that is hurting people more than drugs themselves.” And some Democrats are wising up, too. The Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission Act aimed to create a commission appointed in part by the president to re-evaluate the eradication and production-side emphasis of the US’s drug policy in Latin America. Sponsored by Eliot Engel, a congressman from New York, it was defeated in the Senate in 2010 after passing through the House unanimously. Another act of the same name was introduced in 2014. “The War on Drugs is a failure, we still have problems with drugs,” Engel told me. “In Mexico the cartels are even bolder.” But it was only a failure if you believed the War on Drugs was about drugs. Honduras shows it is actually about something else entirely.

EIGHT

A DRUG WAR COLONY

TEGUCICIGALPA, HONDURAS

Tegucigalpa (Tegus) is an American-made disaster. Traditionally the most subservient and tightly controlled US client state in Central America, it has been the base from which the US has launched a terrorist war of aggression (against the Nicaraguans in the 1980s) and ignited a savage civil war (in neighboring El Salvador). There is barely a restaurant in the city that is not part of an American corporation, and on the surrounding beautiful, rolling hills sits Tegus's own version of the Hollywood sign – except this time it says Coca-Cola. There is barely anywhere in the city from which this imposing cutout is not visible.

When I arrived in the country in 2012, it had been three years since the US-backed coup that threw out the democratically elected president. I was told I could not leave the hotel, day or night, and had to take a taxi to interviews. The whole city was on lockdown. I did not comply – but as I walked the concrete streets of the center it was like a ghost town. There were various bits of graffiti, the walls being the last place for free expression in a country wrecked by authoritarianism and violence. *"El pueblo nunca olvidará"* (The people will never forget); *"Venceremos los dueños!"* (We will defeat the owners).

Honduras is one of the front-line states in the Drug War. It has become increasingly popular with traffickers owing to the corruption of its officials, the poverty of its people, and the fact that there are large tracts of barren land, particularly in the north of the country, that are off limits to the government. The geography is also a boon for narcos – Honduras is a halfway point for cocaine coming from South America to Mexico and the US. But combating drugs is like squeezing a balloon – when you push the drugs out of one region, they reappear somewhere else. Underneath all the puritan anti-crime rhetoric, the so-called Drug War, which is now a huge bureaucracy employing thousands of people all over the world, was always about control. This method of domination became more acute after the end of the Cold War when the US was running out of excuses to base its military personnel and agents throughout Latin America. The Drug War then became the perfect front for a sustained military presence in the region that would make all its countries slaves to US dictates: the situation that the planners wanted replicated was that of Honduras. Unsurprisingly, it was a plan the rest of the hemisphere was not too happy with. When I arrived in Tegucigalpa I was aware of the real reasons for the Drug War, but I wanted to hear from the horse's mouth what US operations were about. I organized an interview with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the major US agency dedicated to eradication of coca crops, to take me through it. The DEA agent, Jeff Sandberg, did not want to be named, but in the interests of full disclosure I will not conceal his identity. US agents don't deserve anonymity, like the programs they oversee. Incidentally, that's probably not even his real name – most US agents are given cover identities. He was a squat man with a shaved head and a wild-eyed look, the sort of proselytizing anti-drugs bureaucrat you might imagine would be working for the DEA in Honduras. When I asked him whether he felt he was winning the war against the cartels, he just laughed. “No, we’re not winning, but we’re trying very hard. The situation is very difficult, you have government institutions that have basically failed or are failing that require a lot of work and a lot of time to strengthen them and get them back on track.” He was no doubt correct, but he forgot to add that the government, the country and the state it was in, were in large part down to non-stop US intervention for pretty much a century. Any time it looked like the people were slinging off the imperial giant upstairs, the US would come in and launch a coup, as it did in 2009, President Barack Obama’s first coup. The problem had been the incumbent President Manuel Zelaya, who had had the temerity to raise the minimum wage for the poorest Hondurans. The local Honduran oligarchs saw the danger of a slightly more humane society and reached out to their natural allies, the US, overthrew democracy, kidnapped the president, dumped him in his pajamas on a runway, and reinstalled the political wing of the rich, the Liberal Party. The US initially called it a coup, then the position changed, the subsequent “elections” were validated, and Porfirio Lobo, the new and illegitimate president, was invited to tea at the White House.

Since the coup, a continuing phenomenon has been the huge increase in the number of human rights violations. This is not just perception. One human rights group told me that at a national level in 2008 they were dealing with 125 human rights violations throughout the whole year. In 2010, they had 2,700 cases, and in the period 2011–12 there was very clear targeting of specific groups. Among the countries of Latin America, Honduras has had the most journalists murdered in recent years. There has also been targeting of people who are aligned to the new political party, LIBRE, that has been set up by former president

Zelaya and his wife, as well as people who are community activists involved in protest and resistance movements. When I was there the country had what Hondurans called (accurately) a "narco-congress", a group of rich legislators who are in bed with the narco-traffickers with whom the US was ostensibly at war. Mr Sandberg himself agreed. "I believe there are plenty of people that are involved [in the drugs trade], that would have to be involved, to allow what goes on here, high up the food chain." The number of deputies in the congress who have been assassinated in narco-related incidents has soared over recent years, while people at the local level will say openly which mayors, members of the city councils and deputies have been elected with narco funds.

NOTHING TO SEE HERE

The method of military control used in Honduras, under the guise of the Drug War, is simple: open a military base, but do not call it a base. This method is mirrored across other countries in the region and across the world. The US officially calls these areas Forward Operating Locations (FOLs), because apparently they are temporary, and it's embarrassing to call them bases as an American empire, of course*, does not exist.* In Honduras, just before I arrived, the US had opened four new FOLs, ostensibly to deal with drugs. But, in truth, Central America was also showing signs of moving away from US control, with left-wing governments in El Salvador and (briefly) Honduras. The truth is that the US was trying to reassert its control of Latin America after a decade of concern about the Middle East, during which time a raft of independent leaders, not subservient to US interests, arose in the region.

In the course of my interview with DEA agent Jeff Sandberg in the gardens of the US embassy in Tegucigalpa, he denied that the FOLs were new, saying that "they have been around for a number of years, maybe not in as much use as they've gotten in the last year or maybe in the upcoming time frame, but those locations have been around for actually a number of years, so they are not really new." This sounded like an admission that the US has had a surreptitious military presence at undisclosed locations through Honduras for "a number of years". The flack (journalistic slang for PR people) who sat in on our interview chimed in: "We have no military bases, there are Forward Operating Locations, which are actually Honduran facilities where there was just renovations that were done to support these types of air operations, it's not something that was built out of whole cloth. Even though I explained it's a small operation, but these were existing facilities where it was built so that there could be the staging for these helicopters into the air where we've identified that the drug trafficking activity takes place." The rhetorical gymnastics of imperialism. Of course, it was all smoke and mirrors. FOLs are the same thing as a military base, but the Americans don't want to appear the imperialists. The flack even said there is "not a US base at Soto Cano. Soto Cano is a Honduran base". But that same base houses the US Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B), which is a regional force whose main goal is apparently to "assist in disaster relief" – and other *more nefarious things*. "I do want to reject categorically the idea that there is an American base in Honduras," he told me. Imagine if the Hondurans had an elite team of Special Forces at a base in Florida, then said it didn't comprise a base. Incidentally, the use of "advisors" in South Vietnam by President Kennedy in the early 1960s was another way of covering up for the build-up of troops and the take over of a foreign country under the veil of "altruism" and the "at their behest" ideology.

To understand the massive ideological construct that is the Drug War, designed to disguise the imperialism at its root, it is necessary to examine US claims about its efforts. Money is given by the US, alongside military and drug personnel and training, to Latin American countries in an effort to interdict drugs that are being smuggled from Colombia and other areas of South America through Central America until they finally arrive on the streets of Baltimore or Chicago. Interdiction does happen – the propaganda is not completely hollow – in the form of night raids and drug busts, but even Mr Sandberg admitted to me that "interdiction is a very small part of the puzzle". In addition, the US's Drug War hasn't hit production levels at all, but has merely caused possibly millions of deaths and untold misery across the continent. When WikiLeaks released the US diplomatic cables, they revealed that the Americans in fact knew that the most powerful oligarch in Honduras, Miguel Facussé Barjum, was allowing drugs-laden aircraft to land on his property. Facussé, who had his own private militia that was killing campesinos fighting for land rights, was of course a US ally, so nothing ever happened. Many in Honduras believed Facussé was in fact behind the June 2009 coup, an allegation with some merit.

In short, the US is losing the war against drugs, but that doesn't matter because it *isn't about drugs*. The war will continue because it's the perfect mask, the perfect means of maintaining high levels of military force and control throughout the Americas now that the excuse of the Soviet Union has disappeared. The Soto Cano air base in Honduras, in fact, became a vital control point for counter-insurgency in the region, and in more recent times it has been the watching point for the supervision of drug trafficking and movement throughout this region. More importantly, the US can police the people when they vote the wrong way: it was clearly concerned about President Zelaya's policies in 2007–08, the entry of Honduras into the independent trade grouping ALBA, and the close relationship with Hugo Chávez. All of these set off warning bells for the US about whether it would lose access to the bases, so there was a coup, and the people of Honduras were crushed once again.

The functionaries at the front line of US imperial operations can't – won't – see it like this. "We're making some progress, we're trying to make more progress, what's the alternative?" asked Jeff Sandberg when I mentioned that the war looks to be failing. "To throw up our hands and say we give up? Then what happens? Chaos, in my estimation. Is that the better alternative? Not in my world, maybe some people think so, but I bet if those people lived in chaos they'd think otherwise." I later organized to meet with the heads of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the State Department to see what kind of narrative they had developed to explain the descent of this close American ally into tragedy. Like many individuals working in the US imperial system, they obviously believed the lies that had been concocted to legitimize, both morally and legally, the US presence in Honduras. In fact, I believe it would be impossible to not imbibe all these false theories about US benevolence – many of these people are good people who want to believe they are doing the right thing. It is the institutions that are pathological; they are merely its human form, so convoluted forms of legitimization are a must. Every now and then someone like Edward Snowden has a moral awakening and reveals the true face of American power. But the collection of officials I met comprised the standard fare. We sat around the table at the USAID building opposite the embassy and they came out with the usual lines, which are not worth quoting as they just perpetuate the myths.

CULPRITS RUNNING FREE

Like most campaigns waged by the US government to pursue its interests in a particular region, the result in Honduras has been unadulterated misery for the people living there. In fact, when I was in Honduras it had been transformed into the most dangerous country in the world. The homicide rate was higher than in war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan, two other countries destroyed by the US government and military. I talked to a number of people who had lost friends and relatives – it was unusual to meet someone who did not know someone who had been killed by a gang or political interests. No one had seen justice done. Julio Funes Benítez, for example, was shot dead in broad daylight outside his house in Tegucigalpa in early 2010. The assassins unleashed a hail of bullets in his direction while driving past on a motorbike. Mr Benítez had been active in the resistance movement which flourished after the coup. But nearly three years on, no one had been charged with his murder. "From when they killed my husband to now, I never got any support from the authorities," Lidia Marina Gonzales, Mr Benítez's widow, told me. "There was never an investigation, the culprits are free. The agent who was meant to investigate told me that if I wanted there to be an investigation I would have to pay." The fact that Mr Benítez's killers got away with murder is not an exception in modern-day Honduras. There are 91 murders per 100,000 people, or one every 74 minutes. Nearly all remain unsolved, and many, as in the case of Mr Benítez, are not even investigated. One of the big problems is that the quality of criminal investigation is absolutely appalling; sentencing is less than 3 percent. This pattern of violence cannot be attributed solely to the coup, but has been growing since around 2002. The Honduran government itself says it is focusing on modernizing the justice system and reforming political institutions in its effort to bring down the homicide rate. "The advance of narco-trafficking alongside the geographical position of the country and corruption in the police make it hard to combat," Julio César Raudales, the minister for planning in the Lobo administration, told me. "It is going to be a long road to reconstruct the social fabric, but that won't stop us."

As in all countries where the US has been intervening on the side of the oligarchs and the murderers, a heroic resistance, killed at a staggering rate, refuses to be cowed. Chief among these groups is Cofadeh, the Committee of the Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras, which is a non-governmental organization (NGO). I walked over to their offices to talk with Dina Meza, one of its human rights workers, who was herself living in fear because of her work. "There are many threats, defenders of human rights have a lot of threats," she told me in a coffee shop just down the street. "In my case they have increased since February of this year, text messages have come to me telling me to watch out, armed men have come to my house, I had to change my life radically, including where I live. I spend much more on security, but of course the government isn't investigating the threats. This office is watched, all our actions are watched. I had to leave with my family from where we lived because armed men were watching us at home, even though Cofadeh had told the police, they had never come to protect us, they wanted to kill us all. They gave me a number to call of the police if I get in a bad situation, but the number doesn't work, no one picks up. We have a state that doesn't work." So how does she go on? I asked. "I don't want to see a country with no human rights; we have to keep fighting for our children. Even if I die, we are fighting for democracy, rights, it's a natural bravery."

When you travel around the world investigating how the US has uniformly tried to stub out popular movements through the most heinous and brutal programs, people like Meza also pop up everywhere. These are people who refuse to become just another statistic buried by the US media, people whose names will never be known beyond their communities but who continue to fight every day, at great risk to themselves, positioned against the most powerful state and military in the history of the world. Meza didn't mince her words: "The US support the oppression of anyone lifting a finger against the coup government, I wish the American people could see this."

In the aftermath of the June 2009 coup, the resistance had been strong and was brutally suppressed. A new party emerged which was said to represent the disparate groups allied against the *de facto* regime – these included unions, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups and women's movements. It was called LIBRE and was led by Xiomara Castro, wife of the deposed president Zelaya. I met the international coordinator of the party, Gilberto Ríos Munguía, in Tegucigalpa. "The government doesn't have real power," he told me. "A *de facto* group have power in the country. They control the police and the military. It's a group of narco traffickers, from Mexico and Colombia; it's the same cartels that are in Mexico that control this place. They have more power than the state of Honduras; they have neutralized the functioning of the state, in police, investigations, in the military. This has provoked the high levels of violence."

After the US and oligarchs threw out the democratically elected Zelaya, the narcos gained near-complete control of the congress. Although the US denied being involved in the coup and, in WikiLeaks cables subsequently released, privately said it was illegal, it has strongly supported the coup regime under President Porfirio Lobo. Many people in Honduras suspect that the US was involved in the coup itself. There is a famous joke in Latin America that the US is the only country in the hemisphere to have never had a military coup because it is the only country in the hemisphere without a US embassy. "The CIA had a lot to do with the coup. Obama with the new coup, he didn't recognize the *de facto* government of [Roberto] Micheletti; however, he never did a commercial blockade, like in Cuba. In the case of Honduras he only criticized six months of *de facto* government, then recognized the government of the same coup," added Munguía.

Munguía believed that the US favors some cartels over others, a view that is gaining increasing currency in Central America and is backed up by revelations from Mexico. He held that "the DEA is very corrupt, it's a cartel, and they are working with the cartels, in Mexico as well". Like in Iraq and Afghanistan, where someone who has a score to settle will erroneously tell the Americans that their enemy is al-Qaeda, the cartels in Central America are informing on their enemies to the DEA in the hope that the biggest military power in the world can help them vanquish their rivals. "In Mexico, the country started going bad at the start of the war on drugs, and in Honduras we are worse than even Mexico," said Munguía. The activists in LIBRE, like many others who are standing against the US-backed coup regime, feel in constant danger. "Many people of us are under threat of death, we have received many threats," he said. "I have friends that have been assassinated, the mayor, the deputies. I lost a friend who was very close six months ago. The first deputy candidate [from the LGBT community], he was killed." That activist was a young man by the name of Eric Martinez, who was murdered by anonymous forces for speaking out too forcibly against the US-backed regime. Munguía said that most of the assassinations were the work of the police or military, a situation mirrored in countries that the US controls across Central America.

LIBRE is a rare beacon of hope in Honduras, where a sense of hopelessness pervades. In a country where dissent and democracy is attacked mercilessly, its activists, in the face of violence and murder, are organizing from a grassroots base to take on the oligarchy and their backers in the US embassy. Before they are successful, however, a lot of blood will have to be spilt. It's the same for those fighting US-backed tyrants around the world, from Egypt to Saudi Arabia. "Honduras is the most anti-democratic country in Latin America," said Munguía. And of course it has to be this way, because as soon as real democracy appears and threatens US interests, it will have to be cut down. What the US likes, and promotes, is "low-intensity democracy", a political system in which there are formal elections every four years but the social relations of the society, the control of a rich elite, is never questioned and the concerns of the country's poor people are never heard.

Not long before I arrived in Honduras there was what became an infamous massacre. On May 11, a gun helicopter ship, US-owned but apparently Honduras-piloted (and overseen by DEA agents), murdered four people, including two pregnant women. "I wasn't there in the incident, nor was I here in the country," Jeff Sandberg said. I asked instead if there were regular firefights between the Honduran military and people they were ambushing. "I don't know if I would say regularly," he replied. "But there certainly have been incidents and there will be further incidents of government forces against people involved in the cartels." I asked about the role of the DEA in such operations. "Mentoring, advising, and building the capacity of the Hondurans to at some point function on their own without our help." It was the same excuse – of beneficence and aid – that had been used to control South Vietnam, Afghanistan and countless other countries. But many argue that the role of the DEA is much more hands-on. "In this case, that was a police operation not a military operation, and they were in a situation of trying to seize drugs out of a community that had a lot of arms," Lisa Kubiske, the US ambassador to Honduras, told me in her office in the embassy. What that operation did provoke was massive anti-American feeling in Honduras. Mr Sandberg added: "It's just part of the politics that goes along with any kind of country that is requesting assistance from another country, wouldn't have to be just the US. What happens if Hondurans ask Guatemala for assistance, and you have Guatemalan police or troops to assist and an attack happens where some civilians are killed by the Guatemalans, I'm sure the Hondurans would say the same thing." The problem for Sandberg and the Americans is that they work militarily in 130 countries around the world – no other country does that. Of course the dynamic is the same: *people don't like outsiders coming in and killing their people*. But those outsiders are nearly always American. Ask an Iraqi or Afghani or Honduran or Guatemalan. The flack representing the embassy at this point reminded me that the Americans were "here at the request of the government, working in areas that the government has identified". This is the oldest American propaganda line there is. Like all the best propaganda, too, it has a semblance of truth if decontextualized. So, of course, the Honduran government has invited the US, but it's a government the US installed and is backing to the hilt against their own people, so it would be a huge surprise if they rejected US solicitations to base themselves in the country. This is the problem of the American empire: it has to hide itself continually, it has to live in the shadows, not allowing detection, because the country is founded on strong anti-imperialist ideas, and its media class would implode if it reported the truth. So the military bases have to be "forward operating locations", the military presence has to be at the behest of the "Honduran people", the military operations have to be operated by Hondurans, and "overseen" by Americans. It's a constant dance to cover up rapacious power and give it the gleam of legitimacy. Once you scratch the surface, however, it falls apart.

THE ECONOMY OF DESPAIR

Although Honduras is a major military outpost for the US empire, it pales into insignificance when you look at the "tonnes of personnel" (Sandberg) that the US has in Mexico and Colombia. "Every Central American country has DEA personnel assigned in Central America," Sandberg said. In fact, the US set up multi-billion-dollar programs in both Mexico (the Mérida Initiative) and in Colombia (Plan Colombia), alongside the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), the US government program through which it filters money to countries in the region. Sandberg pointed to these two places as evidence of what might be achieved in Honduras. "There are many obstacles. I would say take a look at Colombia and Mexico. How long has it taken Colombia to get its handle on the drug trade and various anti-government entities operating in Colombia, it was a long time frame. Realistically it's probably what it's going to take here, but we have had tremendous success in Colombia, and I think we're starting to have some very good success in Mexico, so it's possible here." Colombia, as has been noted, has the worst human rights record in the hemisphere; in Mexico, from 2004 to 2014, 200,000 people were killed in the Drug War fought by the military and the cartels. That's what Honduras has to look forward to – courtesy of the US. But Sandberg was adamant that it's the Hondurans who "need to change", not the US. "Their country, their views, their legal system is what needs to be revamped, and I think that's probably decades. Generations that have the wrong outlook, maybe, of how things function here, and accept how things function here, that's what needs to change." This is traditional imperial mentality. The colonial powers, and their agents, nearly always ascribe any faults in a country they are administering to the cultural mores of the local people. This provides an important function: it stops the colonial powers' administrators from ever having to question the system that created the mess in the first place, and which they oversee. Another point that the US might consider is that nearly all the demand for these drugs comes from within the US, as well as a large portion of the guns used by the cartels. If the US government could reduce the demand for drugs and supply of guns, the violence might very well start to abate.

In the big debate about the Drug War, most politicians turn to simple demonization of cartels and their members, as well as the trade itself. The cartels are brutal organizations, but they are a product of a destroyed economy. When young kids are growing up in Honduras or northern Mexico, and their choice is between a life of penury in the formal economy or joining a cartel and becoming fabulously wealthy, unsurprisingly they often choose the latter. In the May 11 killings, for example, even if the people killed were guilty, they are likely to have been dirt-poor kids moving product up the river because they had no other option. DEA agent Sandberg had actually put his finger on the problem, when I asked why there were such high levels of violence in Honduras: "I think because the legal system in Honduras and the other social systems are so broken that there's no impunity for people to not commit a crime, so it doesn't have to be focused or because of drugs, it's just a crime of opportunity or because you have a tonne of people who are living in poverty, people are trying to literally stay alive, and if that means committing a crime to get what is required to stay alive, then so be it. So I don't attribute it all to drugs and cartels." He did not, however, connect the state that Honduras was in to the fact that it had been the recipient of continuous US intervention. Was it a coincidence that Haiti, Honduras, and all the rest of these countries controlled by the US, were in tatters? Forcefully wrenching control from the people of any country, making it a dependency, a slave state for foreign capital, would, of course, not benefit the majority of the population.

Honduras economically is a playground for American capitalists, having been cursed by various neoliberal institutions. The multinationals operating in Honduras have nearly all been given tax-free holidays of up to 20 years to locate in Tegucigalpa, which has decimated government revenues. It is part of the reason why the justice institutions, education and health are so chronically underfunded.

The profits are repatriated to the US and other western capitals, while the Hondurans spend their money in their restaurants. In this sense, Honduras is one of those unfortunate places where many facets of US imperial power converge – the neoliberal economics, the support for the military institution, the hysterical anti-leftist ideology. In such a situation, for people to retain their dignity and shake off the oppressor is extremely difficult. These tensions and problems contribute to the sluggish economy. When I was there, a "model cities" project was seen as a way to kick-start the economy, through creating privately run cities on Honduran land where immigrants from across Latin America could come to work in the *maquiladoras* (sweatshops). It was, however, rejected by the Honduran Supreme Court in October 2012 as "unconstitutional", but it will, without doubt, be back.

"If you want security for citizens it's interrelated with socio-economic conditions of country," said US ambassador Kubiske. "If you have people who can earn enough money, they don't have to be tempted by criminal activity. If they think there are no options, they may be tempted." True – but the US has kept Honduras chronically undeveloped. Like Haiti, Honduras experienced neoliberal economics on top of an already desperate situation. Hurricane Mitch, which hit in 2002, destroyed large parts of the infrastructure of the country and the livelihoods of many thousands. There was a big surge in male migration up to 2006. Then after that there was a big internal migration, mainly of women who moved toward the *maquila* sector. The majority of these "free trade zones" were in the north, like San Pedro Sula, which is now the most deadly city in the world. As late journalist Charles Bowden has pointed out, this mix of ultra-violence and ultra-capitalism is an apocalyptic vision of all our futures, as capital reforms governments around the world to make their people slave to it. Honduras is a very unequal society, as are most US client states. The concentration of income that is being captured by the top 10 percent of the population is growing, while the percentage that has been captured by the poorest 20 percent is decreasing, from about 3.7 percent of national income to just over 2 percent over the last decade. This inequality and the blatant consumerism are evidence that there is a section of the population who are concentrating income, which inevitably leads to violence – petty and otherwise.

Debt, both internal and foreign, is also beginning to grow in Honduras. There is an urgent need for job creation that is not dependent on the sweatshops, as it is difficult for the Hondurans to compete with China on wages. Zelaya tried to raise minimum wage by 61 percent overnight to give some dignity back to the poorest Hondurans. The economy did not break down as had been predicted by the oligarchs, and the fact that they were able to pay it shows just how much money had been accumulated.

One industrial park now has 18,000 workers in one spot, making textiles, clothes and footballs. Sally O'Neil, head of Irish charity Troicaire, based in Tegus, told me: "When you got to the *maquilas* in Honduras, the really big ones that make Christian Dior, the workers aren't even allowed to bring in their handbags, it's incredible. We're working with a women's organization, which work on occupational issues like repetitive damage to people working for hours on the things. We weren't allowed to ask any questions or talk to any of the workers, but [when] we met the women afterwards we found out they have to have a pregnancy test every month. The women were given handouts. When they go through the turnstile in to work, they put their hands out, and they have to take the pill; before they used to throw it away, now they have to swallow it. You have to swallow it before you go out in front of them. Another one where the women we work with, they go in the morning, there's a big sack and you put your hand and take out a piece of paper and the piece of paper will have a time on it, and that's the time you can go to the loo, your one toilet stop. But you can start work at 6am and your toilet stop may be 7.15pm."

EXCUSES

I was granted the interview with Lisa Kubiske, whose first ambassadorship this was, probably because so few journalists were making it to Tegucigalpa, as the story was no longer "sexy" – another country destroyed by America, and forgotten. "If we have in Honduras a place that is democratic, and economically prosperous and has social inclusion for its people, has strong institutions of government, strong democratic institutions, that's good for Honduras, it's good for the region, and it's good for the US in a lot of different ways," she told me. Except I knew that wasn't true. A truly democratic Honduras, where the will of its population would be put ahead of the interests of foreign multinationals and the local oligarchs, was exactly what the US didn't want to see and had helped to shut down. Ms Kubiske refrained from mentioning that the US has implicitly backed a coup against a government whose biggest crime was raising the minimum wage, which would have pulled many people out of poverty.

So I asked about US support for the Lobo administration, which was a coup government that won the election merely because many did not vote in what they called an "illegitimate" contest. "Not only do we work with the elected government of the country if you think they were elected in a legitimate election, the reason we think that is because they were the candidates selected in primaries. We recognized this result." I asked if the coup made the situation worse, as many in Honduras hold, and whether the elections were illegitimate. "The violence of this society is perpetrated by many different actors, and that's the first thing," she replied. "The second thing is there has been a rising trend in violence that goes back several years before the coup. I'm going to say something like 2004, 2005, but you can look it up. So to say that the violence is a result of the coup, I wouldn't say that. I wouldn't say that." She added: "They have other cultural weaknesses. For many years they had problems with how they treated women – women getting killed, beat up, that kind of thing. The family issues, that's been there, it's just worsened in the last few years."

I mentioned that the militarization of law enforcement and drug interdiction, under the aegis of US forces and policy, has made the situation worse and resulted in murders like those on May 11. "I wouldn't characterize them as murders," the flack interrupted. "Killings, then," I said, and added, "some people say 'we are a sovereign country, we don't need the superpower upstairs here with their trained officials'". Ambassador Kubiske answered: "I would refer them to surveys about US participations in their country. Firstly, we do really just go where we're invited." She said that most Hondurans ask for *more* intervention and use of Soto Cano as a counter-drugs base (which it already is). For a long time, the Honduran military had a fearsome reputation and was hated by the population for its brutality and human rights abuses. Now, the coin has flipped and the police are feared while the military enjoys a better reputation. This is not a sign of progress, but rather how far in people's estimation the police have fallen.

I mentioned I had spoken to human rights groups in Honduras, and Ambassador Kubiske shot back, "They don't all have the same views", which means that there are some critical and some supportive of the US. One of the major features of US imperial strategy is to maintain a pretense of an open civil society inside "low-intensity democracies" and then put money into certain human rights NGOs which are supportive of the US and its policies. So it looks as though the US is contributing to a vibrant civil society and human rights system, but actually it is creating bodies that shore up its position. It is structurally impossible for these organizations to threaten to upset the social relations of the country or impinge on the US-backed oligarchs. So you get "human rights" and control, with no need for a crisis of conscience.

Of course, the US doesn't control all civil society groups, and so the ones outside US control, like Cofadeh, support groups that fight for justice on a more general level. For this reason, they must be discredited. Cofadeh had asked me why it was that the US embassy released a strong statement after a lawyer was killed in Tegus, but had said nothing about the campesinos in Aguan Valley where private militias rented by the local oligarchs to clear the land of protests and occupation murdered 80 people. "It's very complicated," said Ambassador Kubiske, in a common refrain from US officials overseeing an unjust policy. "It could be private guards, one time it could be one campesino group on another campesino group, one time it could be narcos. So for what we're seeing, we're seeing lots and lots of different motives."

The case in Aguan was horrific – the wanton murder of powerless campesinos by private militias controlled by some of the wealthiest people in the region – but for the US embassy it was "complicated" because admitting that this was a horror show would mean taking on the oligarchs who represented their interests in the country and the region. "I think we're known in general society for being quite an active voice on behalf of human rights because it is important to us," said Ms Kubiske, ignoring the reality beyond the walls of the US embassy. When I asked about the huge private armies amassed by the oligarchs, she legitimized it as a natural reaction. "I can't comment on Facussé himself, but I've lived in a lot of countries that have weak police systems, and when you don't think you are getting adequate security from the state, you tend to go and pay for your own to do that. What I've seen in Honduras and elsewhere before are middle-class people on up hiring private guards, lots of them because they can, the police aren't there when you need them. That's what I think is going on, I think it's a natural response."

A natural response. The people of Honduras had been beaten down to the point where only a whimper could be heard. But elsewhere in the continent people were breaking free of the vast web of control the racket had imposed on the region. Welcome to Bolivia.

NINE

WAR ON HOPE

LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

In the middle of the night on April 16, 2009, an elite Bolivian police unit entered the four-star Hotel Las Americas situated in the eastern city of Santa Cruz, a hotbed of opposition to the President Evo Morales's government. Flown in from the capital, La Paz, the commandos planned to raid a group of men staying in the upscale lodgings. What happened in the early hours of that morning is still disputed, but at the end of the operation, three men who were asleep in bed had been killed in cold blood. Some say they were executed, while the Bolivian government claims its officers won out in a 20-minute firefight. In the aftermath, the story gained international attention when it was revealed that two of the dead were not even Bolivian. One was Michael Dwyer, a 26-year-old Irishman from County Cork, where he had been a bouncer and security guard before moving to Santa Cruz just six months earlier. Another, Árpád Magyarosi, was Hungarian-Romanian, and had been a teacher and musician before relocating to Bolivia at the same time. The third person killed in the operation was the ringleader of the group, Eduardo Rózsa-Flores, an eccentric Bolivian-Hungarian who had been born in Santa Cruz before fleeing the country during the US-backed dictatorship of Hugo Banzer in the 1970s. His family moved to Chile before the ascent of another US-backed dictator in that country, General Augusto Pinochet, and resettled finally in Hungary. Rózsa was a supporter of Opus Dei, the right-wing Catholic sect, and fought in the Croatian independence war in the early 1990s, founding the paramilitary International Platoon that many believed was aligned with fascistic elements. Two journalists, including a British photographer, died in suspicious circumstances while investigating the platoon. In Santa Cruz on that night, two others, Mario Tadic, a Croatian, and Elöd Tóásó, also from Hungary, were arrested and remain in a high-security La Paz prison to this day. Two more suspects, both with Eastern European connections, were not at the scene and are still missing.

It transpired that the government had acted on intelligence indicating that these men comprised a cell of terrorists who were planning a program of war and violence in the country, which included a somewhat bizarre plan to blow up Evo Morales, the president, and his cabinet on Lake Titicaca, the biggest lake in the Andes and a major tourist attraction. The intelligence services, after a tip-off from an informer close to the group, had been following them for a number of months. They decided to act soon after a bomb exploded at the house of the Archbishop of Santa Cruz, Cardinal Julio Terrazas. The government appointed a seven-person committee to investigate the plot, headed by César Navarro, deputy minister for coordination with social movements and civil society, which spent the next five months until November 2009 looking into it. Among the items seized during the raid was Rózsa's laptop in which investigators claim to have discovered emails between ex-CIA asset and Cold War double-agent István Belovai. "There are emails between Rózsa and Belovai, he was the brains behind it," Mr Navarro told me in his office in the presidential palace in La Paz. "He would ask them logistical questions about escape routes, about whether the government or police would be able to get to them." Belovai, who died in 2010, was a spook who called himself "Hungary's first NATO soldier". Rózsa is thought to have become friends with Belovai in the 1990s during the Balkan war.

At the time of the attacks, the attitude of the US embassy, revealed through the cables sent from La Paz to Washington, was one of incredulity at the government's claims and worry about persecution of the opposition. One comment was headlined '"Terrorism" excuse for mass arrests?" The US embassy was concerned about "raising fears of possible arrests of members of the Santa Cruz-based political opposition". Another cable did admit that in "an interview released posthumously, the group's leader [Rózsa] advocated the secession of Santa Cruz department, Bolivia's largest and most prosperous state". The reaction from the opposition was no less sympathetic. The right-wing governor of Santa Cruz, Rubén Costas, accused the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) government of "mounting a show" in the aftermath. The photos released by the government afterward told a different story. Rózsa and Dwyer can be seen posing with large caches of heavy weaponry including pistols and sub-machine guns, and a large rifle with telescopic sights. President Morales said the cell was planning to "riddle us with bullets". A US embassy official met with a public defender assigned to alleged terrorist Tadic. She told the official that "the Santa Cruz leaders named by the government are most likely linked with the group" – these leaders were in fact intimately involved with the US embassy. Tadic, she said, had been stockpiling weapons and carrying out military training on rural properties outside Santa Cruz. She confirmed they were responsible for placing the explosive device in front of the cardinal's house, while Tadic had testified that the next target was going to be Prefect Rubén Costas' residence, and that Rózsa had advised Costas to strengthen his security gate to minimize the damage. The intent in targeting the cardinal and the prefect was to make it look like MAS supporters were carrying out the attacks.

The fact that the alleged terrorists were staying in a four-star hotel with no discernible day job suggested they must have had money coming from somewhere. The pictures of these foreigners partying in Santa Cruz – subsequently released – also show they were accepted and welcomed openly by some powerbrokers in the city – it seemed to go all the way to the top, even the prefect of the department. But none came more powerful than Branko Marinkovic, a local oligarch of Croatian origin, who had been a long-time friend of the US embassy and is now in exile in the US after being identified as one of those "most likely" to have been involved with the terrorist group. Juan Kudelka, Marinkovic's right-hand man, said in March 2010 that he had been asked by Marinkovic to pass envelopes of money to Rózsa as part of the plan to support this terrorist group, called, he said, "La Torre". Another suspect, Hugo Achá Melgar, a keen friend of a strange human rights group in New York, also soon fled to the US, where he was also welcomed with open arms. "[T]here are several factors that could induce the [government of Bolivia] to connect us to suspected extremist groups in Santa Cruz," noted one US embassy cable released by WikiLeaks. "The petition of political asylum from alleged terrorist Hugo Acha and his wife, allocation of USAID assistance to a Bolivian organization suspected of funding a terrorist cell in Santa Cruz, and an implied [US Government] role based on the [Government of Bolivia's] assertion that the Santa Cruz cell leader organized meetings and had contacts in Washington." All of these assertions turned out to be true; in fact, the situation was worse than that. The US planned to bring the opposition from all over the country together in a supra-departmental business lobby in an effort to rid Bolivia of its socialist government.

At the time, the US embassy "reassured" Vice President Álvaro García Linera "that there was no US government involvement", and President Obama vouched for that too when asked by President Morales soon after. But Mr Navarro, the investigator, still didn't believe it. "The US didn't not know," he told me. When I brought Vice President Linera into the *Financial Times* office in London to speak to the union at the paper, he told me: "Nothing like this happens in Bolivia without the US knowing something about it." Even if we assume the US embassy didn't know of the cell, why would the US then provide a sanctuary to alleged funders of "terrorists" whose own public defender was telling the embassy that they were "most likely" guilty? The answer is long and complex and reveals the lengths to which the US has gone to undermine the democratically elected government of Evo Morales since it came to power in 2005.

TURNING THE TIDE

The raid and the deaths came at a pivotal moment in Bolivian history. At that time the poorest country in South America, it also had the highest proportion of indigenous people in the continent – 60 percent. In December 2005, there was a tectonic shift in the power structure of the nation, unheard of since independence from Spain, when the country elected its first ever indigenous president, the socialist trade union leader Evo Morales. It wasn't a sudden development but followed decades of confrontation and public protests that had escalated in the previous five years. In 2000, the so-called "Water Wars", centered in the city of Cochabamba in the middle of the country, had pitched the local communities en masse against the government and the World Bank which had overseen the privatization of the water industry and resultant soaring prices. Police had been instructed to arrest people collecting rainwater to avoid the new prices they could not afford. Over the next years, the indigenous movement, which is based around small micro-democratic communities, grew stronger. In 2003, mass protests spread and thousands of demonstrators went on to blockade La Paz before troops, allegedly under orders of the government, shot dead a score of protesters.

The presidential incumbent, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, more commonly known as Goni, was forced out and fled to Miami, where he lives to this day. It was in this ferment that Morales, a former *cocalero* (coca picker) turned trade union leader, and his party, MAS, came to power with a huge take of the popular vote. This turn of events, however, was not greeted kindly by the traditional elites in Bolivia and their international backers. The US had been sending its own political "experts" for years to try to avoid exactly this scenario: a 2005 documentary, *Our Brand is Crisis*, shows a team of slick campaign managers from Greenberg Carville Shrum, the political consultancy, successfully running Goni's campaign as he defeated Evo Morales in the 2002 presidential elections. This time it was different: the US was powerless to stop Morales, causing serious worry among planners. Bolivia remains one of the most unequal societies in the western hemisphere, but the established state of affairs had made some people very rich. As the *New York Times* put it when describing Santa Cruz: "Scenes of extreme poverty stand in contrast here with the construction of garish new headquarters of corporations from Brazil, Europe and the United States." On top of this, the land distribution has led some analysts to describe the set-up as akin to "semi-feudal provinces dominated by semi-feudal estates". Five percent of the landowners control over 90 percent of the arable land. When MAS came to power it sought to deal with this egregious inequality, which is marked pretty consistently along race lines, with the poor landless peasants largely comprising the indigenous population. As always, the US supported the oligarchy, which in turn supported the continued slavery of the country to US corporations.

A land reform program was started by Morales to break up the huge rural estates that had long been controlled by a small elite and to redistribute land that was fallow to landless indigenous peasants. The government stipulated that private ownership of huge estates would only be acceptable if put to "social use". But a plan like that was going to engender vociferous opposition from an entrenched elite that felt it was being usurped. One particularly illustrative case is that of Ronald Larsen, a 67-year-old American from Montana, who came to Bolivia in 1968 and who, by the time President Morales came to power, owned 17 properties throughout Bolivia (along with his sons), comprising 141,000 acres, or three times the size of the country's biggest city. The new Bolivian government accused Mr Larsen of keeping indigenous Guarani farmers as "virtual slaves", and tried to deliver seeds to them to help them escape from servitude. Mr Larsen responded: "These people, their main thing in life is where they're going to get their next bowl of rice. A few bags of rice buys a lot of support."[1] The government reported that it was fired on as it tried to deliver the said rice.

The reaction to land reform from the east of the country, where the majority of natural resources and wealth is located, was near hysterical. A class of magnates – most of European descent – own many of the businesses there and, over the next three years, with their allies in the *media luna* (the crescent-shaped "opposition" area of the country) worked to bring down the new President Morales. The US government and its agencies, which had for decades exercised overwhelming economic and political power over Bolivia in tandem with these newly displaced elites, was not a benign player in this period. It actively worked to help the opposition and undermine the democratically elected government. The spider web of US control was, and is, extensive, with many US agencies created at the height of the Cold War still in place, civilized language hiding their use, first, as a tool against Soviet influence in the region, and now to undermine the democratic socialism of MAS. Despite vast natural gas reserves, these agencies, alongside transnational corporations and their local *compradors* in government, have conspired to keep Bolivia the second-poorest country, and among the most unequal, in South America.

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[1] Frank Bajak, "US rancher at center stage in Bolivia land dispute", *Associated Press*, February 8, 2009.

When the MAS government threatened to upend that social order, it was logical that the US would be nervous. One of President Morales' first acts in power was to shutter the CIA office that had until then, he said, been operating in the presidential palace. Morales' claims that the various agencies that make up the US foreign policy apparatus have been giving covert support to the opposition are dismissed by the US government as "conspiracy theories". Alongside the US government, a score of non-governmental institutions, some headquartered in New York, or US-ally Colombia, have been working to undermine the democratic government in Bolivia and continue to this day.

PAYING CLANDESTINE VISITS

When I interviewed César Navarro, who headed the investigation of the April 2009 incident, in his office lined with pictures of Che Guevara and prominent members of Bolivian civil society, he spoke at 100 miles an hour, desperate to get all the information out as quickly as possible. "Rózsa didn't come here by himself, they brought him," he told me. "Hugo Achá Melgar brought him." The prosecutor in the case had charged that one of Achá's business cards was found in the backpack of one of the alleged terrorists. Further, it was claimed that Achá met with Rózsa on at least three occasions, while testimony from other terrorist suspects in custody implicated Achá as a financial supporter of the group. The Bolivian government has tried to request the extradition of Achá, who is currently in the United States, to no avail.

Achá's story reveals a long trail that leads all the way to a set of plush offices in the midtown area of Manhattan. The husband of a prominent opposition congresswoman, Achá was the founder and head of a Bolivian version of the Human Rights Foundation (HRF), an American non-governmental organization (NGO) based in New York. Not very well known – but boasting Elie Wiesel and Václav Havel on its "international council" – the HRF was founded in 2005 by a character atypical of the NGO and human rights world. A rich playboy-cum-political talking head, Thor Halvorssen could be spotted on the Manhattan party scene, as well as giving his two-pennies-worth on Fox News.

His foundation is not typical either – Mr Halvorssen told *The Economist* in 2010 that he wanted his organization to break from the traditional NGO mold. First his group had an overt agenda, the magazine said, focusing "mainly on the sins of leftist regimes in Latin America". But his tactics were different, too. "With the confidence of a new kid on the block," the article continued, "he argues that the big players in human rights have become too bureaucratic, and disinclined to do bold things like pay clandestine visits to repressive countries." From his midtown Manhattan office, Halvorssen said: "They work in these big marbled offices, where's the heart in that?" It was in the dusty streets of La Paz that he wanted to be. In many ways, Halvorssen was merely a chip off the old block. HRF's obsession with the "repressive" governments of, particularly, Venezuela and Bolivia was not something new to the family. Neither were clandestine activities. Halvorssen's father, Thor Halvorssen Hellum, is a Venezuelan businessman, the head of one of the richest families in the country. In 1993, he was arrested and charged with homicide and other counts after a group of terrorists set off a series of six bombs around the capital, Caracas. It was named the "yuppie" terrorists plot because its planners were allegedly bankers and other gilded elite who hoped that the panic caused by the bombs would help them speculate on the stock market. The *Houston Chronicle* noted at the time: "Police have identified one alleged mastermind as Thor Halvorssen, a former president of telephone company CANTV, former presidentially-appointed anti-drug commissioner, and, according to officials, a former operative of the US Central Intelligence Agency in Central America." Halvorssen Hellum eventually spent 74 days in prison before a superior court judge found him innocent of attempted homicide and all other charges related to the bombings. Many found the decision murky. And two hours after his release, another "human rights" NGO, the International Society for Human Rights, appointed him director of its Pan-American committee. During a CIA "anti-drug" campaign in Venezuela, which saw a ton of nearly pure cocaine shipped to the US in 1990, Mr Halvorssen Hellum, in his position as narcotics chief, was again in trouble. The *New York Times* reported that "[t]he DEA discovered that Halvorssen, who had his own links to the CIA, was using information from DEA cases to smear political and business rivals".

Like father like son. Halvorssen Jnr's own human rights project, the HRF, was set up, he said, to help in "defending human rights and promoting liberal democracy in the Americas". HRF "will research and report on human rights abuses" and "produce memoranda, independent analyses, and policy reports". But it is clear that the organization is set up, primarily, to malign the governments of Venezuela and Bolivia. It did have sizeable funds to carry out its tasks. The group's financial accounts make interesting reading. In the year ending December 31, 2006, the first full year of operations, the group spent $300,518 on its programs. By the next year, ending 2007, this had more than doubled to $644,163. In 2008, this had gone down to $595,977, but it surged again in 2009 to $832,532, as political violence was reaching a head in Bolivia. Interestingly, in the year ended 2008, "general programs", which was the highest spending category, was $85,525, or 14.4 percent of total spending on "program services". By 2009, "general programs" spending was up 813 percent to $458,840, and comprised 55 percent of total spending. In the four years from 2006 to 2009, HRF has spent nearly $2.6 million on running costs. But where was the money going? We do know thanks to the WikiLeaks cables that when Branko Marinkovic, the oligarch, fled to the US from Bolivia, one of his first ports of calls was the HRF office in Manhattan. Unfortunately, we don't know what they talked about. In its six years of operations, the group has released two 30-odd page annual reports, and 16 other reports on varying topics related to "repressive governments". To be fair, the group did organize an Oslo human rights conference which, one *Wall Street Journal* journalist noted, was "unlike any human-rights conference I've ever attended", because "there was no desire to blame … the US or other Western nations".

In the same article, Mr Halvorssen laughed off claims that he, like his father, was in cahoots with the CIA, calling such claims "conspiracy theories". But links between his group and Achá, the man accused of buying the tickets for the terrorists in Santa Cruz, were closer than he let on. Mr Halvorssen maintained that the Bolivian group was "inspired by HRF's work" but is "a group of Bolivian individuals … a wholly independent group with a board of directors made up entirely of Bolivian nationals". Really? Achá was briefing the US embassy on his problems all through the period and officers from the embassy met with him in "his capacity as head of Human Rights Foundation

– Bolivia", which the embassy was told was tightly linked to the New York-based organization. One cable notes that Achá's outfit is "an affiliate of the larger Human Rights Foundation group" – the one headed by Mr Halvorssen.

The HRF group in New York naturally still denies any wrongdoing by Achá, and is, according to some, likely helping him in his efforts to remain in the US. Its spokesperson told the press that "Human Rights Foundation in Bolivia has carried out extraordinary work denouncing human rights abuses in that country, and unfortunately the response of Morales comes in the form of insults and unfounded accusations … We have carried out an internal review and have found no evidence that Mr. Acha is linked to the group that the government claims is carrying out separatist activities." As WikiLeaks cables reveal, the group further accused President Morales of "vilifying the reputation" of HRF due to HRF–Bolivia's reporting on the "destruction of democratic institutions, the grand human rights violations in Bolivia" and the "anti-democratic character of the Morales Administration". It was a typical response. The Bolivian human rights ombudsman (Defensor del Pueblo) Waldo Albarracin, referring specifically to the Human Rights Foundation, told the US embassy: "they do not have the facts and so any opinion they have is just that, an opinion."

Achá was at one point arrested on suspicion of being involved in the plot. The cables reveal the concern of the embassy over the arrest of this "Embassy contact and leader of a human rights NGO". Achá had even given the embassy a copy of the warrant for his arrest, which he linked to his "investigations" into a massacre in the Pando department of Bolivia (carried out, in fact, by far-right elements of the opposition). But, like many of the opposition figures, he was successful in persuading the US to grant him political asylum. The cable ends by saying that "Acha is currently in the US". Providing a sanctuary for Bolivian suspects would become a theme of US policy. In fact, the US had been active in his alleged terrorist education. According to the WikiLeaks cables, Achá had actually participated in a Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies "Terrorism and Counterinsurgency" course in Washington in late 2008 – one assumes to gain knowledge for his own violent "counter-insurgency" terrorism back in Bolivia. Included in the course's mandatory reading were "Left Wing Terrorism in Italy" by Donatella della Porta and "Lenin on Armed Insurrection" by Tony Cliff.

Roger Pinto, a senator for the opposition party, Podemos, told the US embassy that the government "has evidence that Acha was involved with the alleged Santa Cruz cell". He added that Achá was involved in trying to solicit funds for the group from opposition leaders in the *media luna*, the opposition stronghold, but only in order to "set up a self-defense force for the Media … not to assassinate the President". Pinto contended that, among others, Achá had approached the mayor of the central city of Trinidad, Moises Shriqui, with Rózsa to enlist his support. Pinto said that Shriqui flatly refused to get involved and discounted the group as "a really bad idea". Another opposition Podemos deputy, Claudio Banegas, told the US embassy that the congressional investigation into the Santa Cruz group had revealed that Achá did in fact have a relationship with the cell. His colleague said his involvement was "not at the top of the lighthouse, just at the bottom". In another cable from La Paz, Achá is called a "human rights lawyer" and it is noted that political officers from the embassy met twice with him in Santa Cruz while he was investigating the September 2008 massacre of indigenous peasants in the Pando department of Bolivia. "He was preparing a report detailing a high degree of Morales administration involvement to provoke violence in Pando," the cable added. Halvorssen never mentioned whether this "wholly independent group" had received funding from the HRF for the task, but his own group came to similar politically motivated and erroneous conclusions about the Pando massacre. Incidentally, Thor Halvorssen contacted the *Financial Times* soon after I asked for an interview with a résumé of my apparent "radicalism" and precipitated my departure from the paper. These "believers in freedom", as mentioned, only believe in freedom when it benefits them.

LA ESPAÑA GLORIOSA

Bolivian people, and particularly the business community in the country, have always had a strong disdain for a central government they see as interfering and stifling. To this purpose, in most areas of the country, there are institutions called civic committees, which organize and represent business interests. They have become especially important in the opposition stronghold of the *media luna*. In Santa Cruz, where the Rózsa group was foiled, the civic committee has become the major non-governmental voice of opposition to Evo Morales. Its presidency has been held by some of the most powerful businessmen and politicians in the country, including Rubén Costas, the current governor of Santa Cruz. Its funding comes from 220 businesses in the department. In its internal report on civil society in Bolivia (which I obtained through the Freedom of Information Act), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) reported that the two main columns on either side of the state are "the civic committees [...] on the right, and the large labor organizations on the left". There have been accusations that the Santa Cruz civic committee (SCCC) has members with fascist leanings involved in violence against indigenous citizens, particularly in the affiliated youth branch. Ignacio Mendoza, a senator in Sucre, who is part of the left-wing opposition to MAS, told me: "Against us there is the Santa Cruz Civic Committee and the Youth

Union, which is a neo-fascist group. These groups always threaten." In the *New York Times*, correspondent Simon Romero noted: "It is no surprise that many Bolivian supporters of Mr. Morales view Santa Cruz as a redoubt of racism and elitism." He added: "This city remains a bastion of openly xenophobic groups like the Bolivian Socialist Falange, whose hand-in-air salute draws inspiration from the fascist Falange of the late Spanish dictator, Francisco Franco."

This would appear to include the SCCC. At the conclusion of a series of interviews at SCCC's offices, the group's spokesperson inexplicably allowed me to download a tranche of files from the computer in the main office. These included racist cartoons of Evo Morales, as well as a poem lauding the old colonial country, Spain.

One reads (my translation):

The grand Spain
with benign fate.
Here he planted the sign
Of surrender.
And it did in its shadow
An eminent people
Of clear front
A loyal heart

There is also a letter titled Filial Espana (Spanish affiliate) sent by the president of the committee to the president of the far-right civic committee in Spain, Carlos Duran Banegas, thanking him for his support and help. Another folder includes a coat of arms for Germán Busch who was a president of Bolivia in the 1930s and was believed by many Bolivians to have Nazi tendencies. Reports by the fascist-linked grouping UnoAmerica also feature prominently on the SCCC computer. In fact, among the documents there are photos taken, one must assume, by an SCCC photographer of UnoAmerica delivering its report on Pando to the Organization of American States (OAS) in New York.

The computer files I retrieved were also full of unhinged documents calling Chávez and Morales terrorists. One reporter accurately noted that the SCCC is "a sparkplug of separatist agitation in the East". Despite these leanings, the US taxpayer, through USAID, is funding members of this group. In the WikiLeaks cables, under the subtitle "Blowing Smoke", an August 2007 dispatch makes fun of Bolivian government claims about USAID activities being used to help the opposition. But inadvertently this proved it. It noted: "[a]nother USAID contractor, Juan Carlos Urenda (a Santa Cruz civic leader) described the MAS accusations as an attempt to cast a smokescreen over the 'serious problems in this country'." A search in the trove of documents from the SCCC's computer turns up the same Mr Urenda, USAID contractor, as the author for the SCCC of a long article lauding the history of the department's autonomy struggle. A prominent lawyer in the east, in 1987 he published a book called *Departmental Autonomies*, which, he noted, "outlines what will be the fundamental doctrine of the process of autonomy". He went on: "Conscious of the error of having structured the country in a centralized way, [Santa Cruz] has not ceased in its attempt to decentralize the state throughout its republican history."[2]

It turns out that Mr Urenda was actually one of the founders of the SCCC's pre-autonomy council and one of the area's most prominent ideologues. This finding makes a mockery of USAID's claim to be apolitical. As its own report noted: "it is clear that Bolivian civil society in the first columns on both sides [civic committees and labor organizations] are playing roles that are less social and more political and governmental."[3] Although they shy away from talking about direct aid, the top brass of the SCCC were full of praise for USAID when I talked to them. Documents from the computer also show extensive preparations for the Ferexpo 2007, a business show in the city, which US ambassador Philip Goldberg would attend. "USAID in Bolivia was supporting democratic organizations and tourism and fairs," said Ruben Dario Mendez, the spokesperson. "They were interested in fomenting political participation. Evo doesn't like that, he doesn't like there to be freedom."

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[2] Contained in documents obtained from SCCC computer.

It's not just USAID that helps out. Mr Mendez noted that the Journalists' Association of Santa Cruz has an agreement with the US embassy that helps them print books and put on events, an agreement which is not in place in other parts of the country. "In some cases the US helps us," he said. "Anyone can submit a proposal to get help. I have attended events about political governance, about freedom of expression, human rights," he added. "There was a new penal prosecution code, and a workshop on that has been carried out by USAID for years." He was still optimistic about the ability of USAID to go about its work: "There are still organizations and people in Santa Cruz who believe in democracy. This was proved the other day when I went to the opening of a center for the support of democracy, USAID helped fund this, they work with the university president, and the vice-president of the civic committee helped set this up." He obviously thought that USAID believed in his type of democracy. "We have a totalitarian system here, if there was a democratic government there wouldn't be a problem here. The biggest problem in Bolivia is centralism." (A view echoed in USAID's reports.) The extensive cache of reports from both organizations on the office computer also reveals the links between the SCCC and the NGOs HRF and UnoAmerica. These were evidently being sent out as primers on the situation in Bolivia.

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[3] Matt Kennard, "Bolivian democracy vs the United States", *OpenDemocracy*, June 3, 2013.

I found more evidence of US support for these right-wing opposition forces in Sucre, the judicial capital of the country, where in August 2006 President Morales announced the opening of the constituent assembly. It would spend six months redrafting the constitution with enhanced rights for indigenous communities, more economic control of the country's resources, as well as land reform. It was eventually passed by a referendum in 2009. "Sucre is like the dividing line between the east and the altiplano [poorer indigenous west] so the idea was it was a place that could bring peace between the two peoples," Mr Mendoza, the left-wing senator, told me as we sat in the local government headquarters. "But radical groups here connected themselves with Santa Cruz and all of a sudden it became about something bigger." The whole process was marred by violence, as the opposition set out to scupper the process. "It all comes down to racism," he added. "The constituent assembly was largely made up of indigenous farmers and that prompted racism. People were saying, 'Whoever doesn't jump is a llama', acting superior to indigenous people and calling them llamas because they are from the altiplano."

As the killings and lootings got under way, the US made no statement of condemnation. "They are setting fire to gas pipelines, and the US government does not condemn that?" asked Morales at the time. "Of course, they know they [the opposition groups] are their allies. So why would they denounce them?" He was right.

The tactics used by the SCCC mirrored those used in Chile when the US was trying to destabilize the government of Salvador Allende in the early 1970s; he was eventually taken out in a US-backed anti-democratic coup. In Bolivia, there was the violence from the local youth groups but also strikes – this time organized by the business elites – designed to bring the country to its knees and keep goods from being delivered to the west of the country. The Confederation of Private Businesses called for a national shutdown if the government refused "to change its economic policies". Altogether this was called a "civic coup". It failed, but around the same time the US was trying to rejuvenate the opposition, according to evidence uncovered during my time there. While in Sucre, I talked to the civic committee for the department of Chuquisaca, in which the city sits, still an opposition stronghold. Félix Patzi, the president, described the civic committee's role as keeping "an eye on government projects to make sure they follow through on their promises". But the US embassy had been in contact with a staggering request, he recalled. "They made an offer years ago. They wanted to finance a meeting of all the civic committees in the country to bring them together in 2007," he said. The idea was "to bring together the works of the different civic committees to encourage communication between them". He added: "I don't know why the US did it, but we heard from Santa Cruz that the idea was to create a national civic committee." The US obviously knew (from its own internal documents) that such a national civic committee would be right wing and take on a political and governmental role. That must have been its intention. Mr Patzi said the Chuquisaca committee refused because it doesn't receive outside funding, but, he added, "I don't how many other civic committees have accepted money from the US."

Back at the SCCC I talked to other officials who gave the impression of a tight relationship with the US. "We've always tried to work so that civil society in Bolivia has its own place to develop," said Nicolas Ribera Cardozo, vice president of the SCCC. "We've always had a conversation with the US about it." He said that in the past year-and-a-half as vice president he had had two conversations with the head of communications and publications at the embassy. “What they put across was how they could strengthen channels of communication,” he said. “The embassy said that they would help us in our communication work and they have a series of publications where they were putting forward their ideas.” But things were even better under Bush. “There were better programs under Bush; there were programs from USAID and DEA [the US Drug Enforcement Administration] to deal with narco-trafficking.” He added that the US-funded National Endowment for Democracy had “held informative workshops for young people about leadership”. For him it was not controversial that these programs were designed to help the opposition. “Of course they were opposition, it’s a liberal train of thought, you train people to be more aware, productive.”

The most controversial aspect of the SCCC is its youth branch, the Unión Juvenil Cruceñista (UJC), who have been called by one Bolivia analyst “paramilitary shock-troops”. They roam the streets of Santa Cruz in times of unrest and have been involved in violent attacks and atrocities against indigenous peasants, as well as damage to government buildings. The US embassy noted that the UJC “have frequently attacked pro-MAS/government people and installations”, adding, “Their actions frequently appear more racist than politically motivated. Several months ago, a group of mainly white Youth Union members attacked an altiplano migrant … The Youth Union has boasted to the press that it has signed up 7000 members to participate in the [civil defense militias] – the number is likely inflated but many of those who have signed-on are militant.” Another cable noted: “the Santa Cruz youth union seems to be radicalizing: one group waving Santa Cruz flags drove through town in a jeep emblazoned with swastikas.” In the aftermath of the Rózsa plot, the police apprehended Juan Carlos Gueber Bruno, reportedly an advisor to the UJC, and former SCCC activist, who was known as "Comandante Bruno".

"Youth Union violence was basically in retaliation to a threat," Mr Cardozo told me. "The youth groups did participate in these things but because they thought it was a threat and MAS started it."

I also talked to Samuel Ruiz, president of the UJC, at the SCCC headquarters, surrounded by photos of previous presidents, including Marinkovic and Costas. "The committee was formed in 1952 as a means to protect this region, it was under attack from other regions and felt it needed to protect itself," said Mr Ruiz. "The civic committee existed but it was felt it could do with a youth branch too." Now the UJC has 3,000 passive members, and 500 active, according to its president. Asked three times if it has any indigenous people as members, he avoided the question twice. On the third time of asking, he replied: "What percentage? I don't know. There are 20 representatives in different provinces that represent areas with indigenous people." He complained that when Morales came to power he got rid of USAID and other US groups – a false claim. "It has had a huge impact," he said. "When there were international agencies, Bolivia was much more peaceful, now we see loose arms and legs about the streets, there are kidnappings, it's violent and dangerous whereas it wasn't before." The UJC had taken matters into its own hands. He said that the government was bringing people from Chile and Peru to train farmers in military combat, and that Venezuelan and Cuban doctors were actually providing military training. His paranoia about Cuban and Venezuelan influence was similar to that shown in the cables from US officials. He claimed that Morales sent campesinos to Santa Cruz to start violence at the height of the tension, even though the cables noted that Morales went out of his way to avoid casualties. "[M]ilitary planners have told us that President Morales has given them instructions not to incur civilian casualties," one noted. "Field commanders continue to tell us they will require a written order from President Morales if asked to commit violence against opposition demonstrators." Another said: "A senior military planner told [an embassy official] December 13 that President Morales wants the military to be careful to avoid violent confrontations with demonstrators if called upon to support Bolivian police."

"We are monitoring government to see what they are doing," Ruiz claimed. "But for example they are getting people from Peru to come and train campesinos who kill my friends, and they are training campesinos in war, what are we meant to do?" On the resulting violence against indigenous people, Ruiz said it was self-defense. "After last elections, Evo sent campesinos to Santa Cruz to start aggression; our organization sent out its people but only to defend itself … It's not a direct threat," he admitted, but it worried him because they were "training campesinos who can't even read or go out and feed themselves". Ruiz claimed the UJC has never had any weapons – which is also demonstrably false.

The cables also revealed US suspicions in the same period that "some Crucenos are reportedly forming fighting groups". They would know, as they were funding them. "Sources reported that Crucenos are developing fighting/defense groups and are equipped with weapons such as long rifles and hand guns." Ruiz claimed that fighting campesinos caused the Pando massacre. "The Venezuelans killed the indigenous people. There are photos … The Venezuelans infiltrated by entering through the Cuban doctors," he said. "They went to Pando to form military strategy for organization, so it wasn't chaos, but all the campesinos, armed people, were drunk, and the Venezuelans killed them by mistake because they didn't know what side they were on, and they also shot in the leg a Bolivian journalist because they wanted them to stop filming." The SCCC were also implicated in the Rózsa plot by Ignacio Villa Vargas, a local fixer and driver for the group, who said that a number of their members had been involved. But the SCCC believed that the Morales government organized the Rózsa plot. They did, though, admit to me that Rózsa had been to their offices, but they claimed that he was trying to infiltrate the committee on behalf of the government, disguised as a journalist. I was shown screenshots of supposed emails between Rózsa and Vice President Álvaro García Linera, which were clearly faked, dating from August 2008 and March 2009, just before the raid in the Hotel Las Americas.

The cables revealed by WikiLeaks noted that the opposition "are nervous to the point of paranoia". They were also trying to cover their tracks with delusional conspiracy theories. As noted above, one of those suspected of involvement in the terror cell was retired president of the SCCC, Branko Marinkovic, one of the wealthiest men in Bolivia, who owns a vast soybean business and large tracts of land in the east of country. His parents were emigrants from the former Yugoslavia in the 1950s and Marinkovic became a successful businessman before moving into politics, a well-trodden route in the east of Bolivia. When the Morales government came to power and embarked on a land reform program that took fallow lands from their owners to give to landless peasants, men like Marinkovic had much to lose. In a 2007 interview with the *New York Times*, Marinkovic predicted that Bolivia would soon be like Zimbabwe "in which economic chaos will become the norm". (The head of the International Monetary Fund's western hemisphere countries unit in the same year praised the Morales government for what he referred to as its "very responsible" macroeconomic policies.) But Marinkovic continued – "speaking English with a light Texas twang he picked up at Southern Methodist University" – with a veiled threat: "If there is no legitimate international mediation in our crisis, there is going to be confrontation. And unfortunately, it is going to be bloody and painful for all Bolivians." This was just before the Rózsa-Flores plot was scuppered.

The *New York Times* also noted that Croatian news services had investigated claims that Marinkovic "sought to raise a paramilitary force with mercenaries from Montenegro, where his mother was born". Marinkovic denied the claims, but there is no doubt he was pushing for a break-up of the country in the same way Yugoslavia had been split in the 1990s. On September 1, 2008, Marinkovic flew to the US, and when he came back just a week later the east of the country was in open revolt. At around the same time, US ambassador Philip Goldberg met in secret with the governor of Santa Cruz, Rubén Costas (the meeting was captured by a news organization). Initially Marinkovic filed a lawsuit against two government officials for "slander" for linking him with the Rózsa-Flores plot. His attorney declared that he "is in Santa Cruz, will stay in Santa Cruz, and will remain in the country", to prove he had no links to the terrorist cell. Except now he is in hiding. The UJC president divulged that he was in the US. "The government has already cast him as guilty and he can't defend himself from here so he asked the US for political exile and they granted it to him." Like Achá. He added that he didn't know if Marinkovic had ever met Rózsa. Maybe it's not so surprising. "The US has had a very good relationship with Branko Marinkovic," said Mr Navarro, MAS minister. "When he was head of civic committee they shared their opposition to the president." Marinkovic once jettisoned plans to visit Argentina due to distrust of the Morales-allied Kirchner government, fearing that he might be arrested there and extradited to Bolivia. During one of Marinkovic's trips to the US, he, contrariwise, participated in strategy meetings with political consultants Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and other polling and consulting firms, according to WikiLeaks cables.

When I had finished talking to the SCCC, I asked if there was anyone else I should speak to. The spokesperson recommended former general Gary Prado, who is infamous for being the man who captured Che Guevara and handed him over to his executioners. At the time Prado was a young captain in the Bolivian army. "Where do I find him?" I asked. "He usually has coffee over there in a little café about 4pm every day," I was told. I subsequently found out that Gary Prado is under house arrest, but as it is not enforced he moves around freely. I head along to his house in an upmarket neighborhood of Santa Cruz. "I am under house arrest but I go to work every day so there's not much point in that," he said. Mr Navarro had told me there was "a group of retired generals who have advised the civic committee in the event of a government attack on them". Prado is alleged to be among them. The government has drawn attention to a meeting Prado had with Rózsa at his house. "I gave an interview to Rózsa-Flores just like I'm giving to you, he came here to this same room, we had an interview about the guerrilla Che Guevara in Bolivia, he took a picture with me here, and that's all the contact I had with him." Rózsa apparently thought he was the new Che Guevara, as well as the new Hemingway. But from what Prado does know, he doesn't believe that Rózsa planned to assassinate Morales. "There was no intent of assassination, never, absolutely not," he said. Asked why they bought in foreigners, he replied: "They were brought to Santa Cruz by some people probably to try to create a group of mercenaries to defend Santa Cruz." Then he added that the cell was "probably created to justify political repression". He would not offer a guess on who bought the mercenaries in. The US, he added, merely "promote seminars about democracy and freedom".

THE MASSACRE THAT WASN'T

In May 2008 political turmoil rocked Bolivia and threatened civil war. Santa Cruz held an autonomy referendum, which the government claimed was a move to secession by the eastern province. Rubén Costas, the governor of Santa Cruz, had said in the run-up that the vote – which was not legally sanctioned by the National Electoral Court or recognized by the OAS – would "give birth to a new republic". (This is the same governor whom terror suspect Mario Tadic told authorities had met with the terror cell's leader three times and vaguely discussed "organizing something".) As things hurtled out of control with mass protests and violence, President Morales refrained from annulling the plebiscites which took place in other departments and called a recall referendum on his own mandate. He won resoundingly, with two-thirds of the national vote. At this point, desperate and bewildered, the opposition went on strike, and sent out the UJC (the far-right youth group) to attack government buildings and local indigenous people. The defeat at the polls led the opposition to unilaterally declare "autonomy" in four of the country's eastern provinces. One of the platforms of the autonomy movement was the rejection of central government control over profits from the country's natural gas reserves concentrated in the region. In the Bolivian context, therefore, the term was used as a euphemism for increased control over taxation, police and public works. If autonomy was granted in the form Santa Cruz wanted, Morales' extensive reforms would be impossible – which was obviously the aim of the request.

The strategy of the autonomy movement was to take complete control of the *media luna*, provoke a national crisis to destabilize the government, and convince the army to remain neutral or move against Morales. The mayor of Santa Cruz, Percy Fernández, had already called on the military to overthrow Morales' "useless government" just before the August referendum. In this heady tumult, in September 2008, 13 indigenous peasants in the Pando department of Bolivia were massacred in violence erupting across the region between pro-government and opposition forces. The atrocity remains relatively uncontroversial – unless you are the HRF, Achá, or the Bolivian opposition. A report by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) placed the blame for the killing of the peasants at the hands of people working for the local prefecture, which was led at the time by the opposition politician Leopoldo Fernández. Fernández is still in jail in La Paz, after being arrested, in the aftermath, on charges that he was involved in ordering the attack. The US embassy, in the WikiLeaks cables, noted that he was being held "under dubious legal pretext".

The UN report unequivocally called it a "massacre of peasants" and a "grave violation of human rights", concluding that the massacre was committed by personnel from the local road service office, members of the Pando civic committee and others linked to the prefecture. The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) also sent a delegation to investigate, headed by Argentina's undersecretary for human rights who concluded that the Bolivian government had acted fairly and it was the opposition that was responsible for the murders. Chilean President Michelle Bachelet called an emergency meeting in Santiago of UNASUR to discuss the Bolivian crisis. The resulting Declaration of La Moneda, signed by the 12 UNASUR governments, expressed their "full and decided support for the constitutional government of President Evo Morales", and warned that their respective governments "will not recognize any situation that entails an attempt for a civil coup that ruptures the institutional order, or that compromises the territorial integrity of the Republic of Bolivia". Morales, who participated in the meeting, thanked UNASUR for its support, declaring: "For the first time in South American's history, the countries of our region are deciding how to resolve our problems without the presence of the United States."

But men like Achá and his "affiliate" HRF saw it differently. In October, a month after the massacre, HRF dispatched their own team to Bolivia to investigate – not the massacre but the "arbitrary detention" of "opposition members and at least one journalist". HRF's sources in Bolivia, presumably Achá, were telling it how serious the situation was. "Preliminary research done by our staff and reports sent to us from Bolivian civil society advocates suggest that the recent arrests of journalists and members of the opposition in Bolivia are politically motivated," said Sarah Wasserman, chief operating officer of HRF. The report from Achá, as mentioned by the US ambassador, posited that the MAS government had actually initiated the murders. And the HRF went on to link the massacre to a speech by government minister Ramón Quintana exhorting government sympathizers to take Pando governor Leopoldo Fernández "to the end of the world" and "give him an epitaph: Prefect, rest in peace and live with the worms. "The speech preceded violence that erupted on September 11, 12 and 13 in Pando, where more than 20 people were murdered for political reasons," they noted. The report by the Bolivian "affiliate" of the HRF blames the massacre on Morales and his national executive officers. "The deterioration of the rule of law, individual rights … do not allow the existence of a democratic system," the report concluded. "In Bolivia, with this background, it outlines the installation of a regime despotic and dictatorial presided by Evo Morales."

To be fair, there were other NGOs which came to a similar conclusion. One was the aforementioned UnoAmerica, another "human rights" group based in Colombia, whose logo shows crosshairs in the ‘o’ in their name. It was founded in 2008 by Alejandro Peña Esclusa, who is now detained in his home country, Venezuela, for allegedly being found with detonators and 2lb of explosives in his home. The Venezuelan government claims he has close ties to the CIA, and was involved in the 2002 US-backed coup that temporarily deposed Hugo Chávez. In one video, Esclusa is seen insisting on a plan for massive protests across Venezuela, making the government unable to control it. “It is a more efficient mechanism that generates a political crisis and a crisis of instability that forces the regime to withdraw the reform,” he says. UnoAmerica became heavily involved in Bolivia after the Pando massacre, sending a team on a five-day mission to investigate what had happened. To conduct the investigation they partnered with NGOs from Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela (whose names read like a Who’s Who of fascists in Latin America). Taking part from Argentina was El Movimiento por la Verdadera Historia, or Movement for the True History, a group which seeks to bring to justice “subversives” working against the US-backed fascist junta that ruled from 1976 to 1983 and murdered an estimated 30,000 people. One of its Argentina delegates was Jorge Mones Ruiz, an intelligence officer of the Argentine army in Bolivia during last dictatorship. (The government also claimed that the Rózsa cell had links with fascist groups in Argentina, which go by the name of *carapintadas* or “painted faces”.)

The joint report concluded that “the government of President Evo Morales had planned and executed the violent acts”. It claimed it had “sufficient information to demonstrate the responsibility of the Evo Morales administration in the so called Pando Massacre”. The WikiLeaks cables revealed that the US embassy was receiving highly questionable intelligence like this from Achá and other contacts in the opposition, without applying the constant cynicism it reserved for MAS statements. In conversation with a political officer from the embassy, one contact "alleged the MAS deliberately fomented unrest in Pando in September to justify a military siege, depose Prefect Leopoldo Fernandez, and arrest opposition-aligned leaders to swing the balance of power to the MAS in the Senate". It is not countered. Another cable noted after the September 2008 violence in Pando: "the government illegally jailed Prefect Leopoldo Fernandez and violently detained over forty more, many of them prominent political opposition members." The UN had said that Fernández's jailing was not illegal.

WE'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM

The most active of the many US agencies working in Bolivia is USAID, the main foreign aid arm of the US government. USAID poured money into the country: between 1964 and 1979, it contributed more than $1.5 billion, trying to build a citizenry and investor climate conducive to US corporate needs. For nearly half a century it has carried out its ostensible goal of providing "economic and humanitarian assistance" – a gift "from the American people". The agency operates around the world in a similar capacity, and invests billions of dollars annually on projects that span from "democracy promotion" to "judicial reform".

Its operations are controversial. The Morales administration has continually said that it uses its money to push the strategic goals of the US government under the cloak of "development", claims denied by the US government. The Bolivian government also derides the lack of transparency, in comparison with EU aid money, for its programs. Mark Feierstein, USAID assistant administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, put its *raison d'être* bluntly in December 2010 when he said: "USAID's programs are not charity … they are not only from the

American people, as the agency's motto says, they are for the American people." As an aside, Mr Feierstein was a key campaign consultant to the former president Lozada (Goni) who fled to the US to avoid facing trial for the massacre of protesters in La Paz. There is now an attempt to prosecute him under the Aliens Tort Statute for his role in the murders. (Feierstein has never expressed regret about the campaign; in fact, the same firm did polling for Morales' opponent, Manfred Reyes Villa, in 2009.)

Like other methods and agencies used to control democracies in Latin America and around the world, it is hard to pin down USAID. But on-the-ground interviews, documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act and the WikiLeaks cables have made it possible to unearth the strategies this agency uses to keep its stranglehold on Bolivia, at the same time providing a template for how it is used across the region to undermine left-wing democratic governments. There is no doubt how USAID personnel felt about Morales before he came into power, and one young American student heard first-hand their plans for him. In the summer of 2005, he found himself in La Paz learning Spanish on a break from university when the powder keg of political resistance in the city blew up. President Carlos Mesa – who had taken over from Goni in 2003 after the massacre of protesters in La Paz – had just stepped down. The student decided to go on a bike trip. "Basically I went down the 'Death Road', the world's most dangerous road, with some other gringos," he said, not wanting to be named. "There were some folks from the US embassy and USAID on the trip. I remember them having a discussion on the road down to [the city of] Coroico, talking about not wanting Evo to get into power. They said something along the lines of, 'We can't let Evo get into power'."

In fact, the officials went further. "There were two things that were said, one was 'We can't let Evo get into power', and then something along the lines of, it struck me, it was harsher than that, it was something along the lines of, ‘We’ll have to take care of him’. It was ambiguous enough that it could be interpreted that we have to take him out, which I don’t think is what they meant. But when they said it I thought, ‘Whoa, I can’t believe they are saying this, they don’t even know me’.” The conversation continued as the group descended the mountain. “I’m assuming they thought I was sympathetic,” he said. “This was right in the middle of the protests and the president resigning, so a lot of the tourists had fled Bolivia, so perhaps they thought I was there because I was working for some sympathetic capacity, maybe working for an international corporation, or related to the embassy or something. It shocked me at the time. One, it seemed weird to have this conversation in public, because not everybody is sympathetic. And two it seemed like they were meddling in democracy, people that shouldn’t be involved in those things, the US embassy and USAID shouldn’t have anything to do with voting a president into power or not.”

But involved they were and would remain as Morales eventually did take power.

Much important work has been carried out on this topic by the investigative journalist Jeremy Bigwood in the period before MAS came to power, but his Freedom of Information Act requests stopped being answered when he asked for information about projects after the election of 2005. What Bigwood unearthed from before 2005 supports the testimony of the American student. Early on, the MAS party was fingered as a problem for the US that had to be dealt with. In a declassified July 2002 letter from the US embassy, a planned USAID political party reform project was outlined which aimed to “help build moderate, pro-democracy political parties that can serve as a counterweight to the radical [MAS]”. The next section, presumably more open on details, was redacted. A series of emails from USAID functionaries in Bolivia also detailed attempts to form relationships between the US government and indigenous groups in the coca growing region of the Chapare (the sector from which Morales emerged) and the eastern departments, aiming, as Bigwood explained, to "create a common USAID-guided front against … the MAS". A few years into the MAS government, USAID made itself so unpopular in the Chapare region that its local leaders in 2008 suspended all projects funded by the agency. They said they would replace the funding with money from Chávez's Venezuela. In Pando, the mayors signed a declaration in 2008 also expelling USAID. "No foreign program, least of all those from USAID, will solve our problems of poverty, physical integration, family prosperity and human development while we ourselves don't decide the future," it said.

I managed to procure documents that relate to the operations of projects since 2005, and they show a similar effort to weaken the power and popularity of the MAS government. The USAID tactic is not the overthrow of the government, but the slow transformation of Bolivian society from its participatory democracy to the type of democracy it had before: controlled by the US and good for investors. The Bolivian example is important because it provides a template of how USAID tries to control Latin American democracies that have "got out of control" and make them work "for the American people", or American business interests.

Of course, USAID pitches itself as something completely different. In one cable from La Paz, the ambassador wrote: "We will continue to counter misunderstandings about USAID's transparency and apolitical nature with reality." But the reality is that the agency is not transparent or apolitical. And its own internal documents reveal as much. USAID maintains it is transparent with the money it invests in the country, but the Bolivian government claims large sums are being handed out without its knowledge, in contravention of usual aid etiquette. In the

WikiLeaks cables, Morales tells the US he wants to start an "open registry to monitor aid", but it was not supported by the US. The Bolivian government's estimate that 70 percent of aid money is unaccounted for appears overstated, but there is clear evidence that money was being spent without the knowledge of the government.

After one spate of criticism of USAID programs by Morales, the US ambassador noted that the country "cannot afford to risk USD120 million in assistance" from the agency (it works out as about $12 for every Bolivian). In another, it is noted: "we're spending about $90 million annually to further social and economic inclusion of Bolivia's historically marginalized indigenous groups and to support democratic institutions and processes, including decentralized governance." But an American journalist living in La Paz was present at an emergency meeting called by the US embassy to explain USAID's activities to foreign journalists, after another round of criticism. She was given a breakdown of spending by USAID. "This information was given to the small group of reporters gathered to use as background in stories," she told me. It outlined $16.8 million to USAID health programs, $19.2 million to integrated alternative development (alternative to coca production), $15.3 million to environmental and economic development programs, and $22 million to counter-narcotics. It added up to $73.3 million. But the ambassador had said in the cable that $120 million was invested in Bolivia per year. Where was the other $50 million going?

Internal evaluation documents give an indication of why some projects are best kept secret. I procured a host of documents on USAID "democracy promotion" programs in Bolivia in the period after the Morales government was elected. In one, outlining the goals and success of its "administration of justice" programs which have run in the country for 17 years – "among the largest in Latin America"

– the group was explicit about where its money was going. "USAID/Bolivia programs include support to promote decentralization and municipal strengthening, support to Congress and political parties," it noted. There is no mention of which political parties it is "supporting" but this is candid language that the group and the US embassy have never used in public. (Morales has said that one mayor told him that USAID offered him $15,000 to $25,000 to oppose the president.) Decentralization in this context is also a euphemism for strengthening the opposition. One of USAID's central functions in Bolivia, ramped up since 2005, has been moving power away from central government, an effort which clearly chimes with the interests of the opposition in the east.

The justice project was conceived by USAID and Bolivian officials before the 2005 election that brought Evo Morales to power, and coordinators admit that "the personnel changes at the higher echelons" of the government "completely changed the atmosphere" in which it worked. The project hoped to open a training school for public defenders, but in mid-2007 it was suspended, "a prime example of the project being 'overtaken by events' that were completely outside the control of … USAID," the evaluation noted. Internally, USAID was very critical of the Morales government on the subject, commenting that the Bar Associations of Bolivia have been "significantly weakened in the past few years" by the government's policies. As is customary in projects of this kind, USAID paid subcontractors to carry out their functions, enhancing the already intricate web of institutions and clouding accountability. This project was run by Checchi and Company Consulting, set up in 1973 by economist and Democratic donor Vincent Checchi, which then brought on board the State University of New York and Partners of the Americas. One of the main ways USAID exerts influence – in this justice program but also through its other activities – is through training programs. These programs school young Bolivians in the "American way".

In Sucre, I spoke to Ramiro Velasquez, an administrator in the local government offices who has worked for a USAID-funded program in the city. He said it was set up by a consultancy firm, funded by USAID, which has a subsidiary called Fortalecimiento Identidad de Democracia, or FIDEM. "They were looking for Bolivian operators in every department to do their work," he said. "FIDEM was looking for an NGO to do the work and they would look for operators. They were in La Paz, Oruro, Potosi, and Sucre." Mr Velasquez was asked to be an operator and told they wanted him to run courses on "democracy and participation", a program eventually shut down by the Morales government. "This project was aimed at young people," he said. "So to get young people, you had to get into universities and social movements and state institutions, even the church." In the end 600 young people signed up. The courses took on two phases with the first workshops an opportunity to select around 20 young people to move on to La Paz for the second phase, carried out by FIDEM and another NGO. It was called "leadership training", ostensibly to create a new generation of Bolivian leaders. But they had to have the right opinions. "They were teaching about democracy but not the type of democracy Evo and Bolivians have," he said. "They were teaching them about representative democracy not participatory democracy … It was clearly to create leaders for the opposition."

The cables from La Paz support such a conclusion. One visiting official went to a "civic education project funded by USAID through the NGO FIDEM and implemented by the Santa Cruz binational center". Its aim was to grow a "civic responsibility" arm in addition to its educational and cultural activities. "The project was reaching 21,000 (out of 150,000) residents in the marginalized neighbourhood

'Plan 3000' which is widely thought to be a MAS stronghold," it added, as if to explain why it was a good thing. The local residents were "enthusiastic" about the initiative, it noted. The same cable registered that Santa Cruz residents were "determined as much as possible to halt democratic back-sliding. Their main request to us is to report accurately to Washington and the international community what is really happening in Bolivia." Vice President García Linera repeatedly told the US embassy he opposed democracy programs like FIDEM's, because they strive to "win the hearts and minds", presenting a vision of democracy that differs from the government's. It was true. FIDEM works in eight of the nine departments in Bolivia (three of which are governed by democratically elected MAS prefects) providing the kind of state-building training and technical assistance that USAID and other donors provide worldwide. The work – regional development planning, service delivery, financial planning and more – is technical and non-political. Its focus on departmental authorities was planned to weaken MAS, as was admitted in the cables: "MAS's goals [is] strengthening municipal governments to the detriment of departmental governments, thus weakening one of the MAS's main sources of opposition."

Also in Sucre, I talked to the MAS mayor, Verónica Berrios Vergara, who has been under concerted attack since taking her position in 2008. The city had been the venue of intense violent unrest in 2007 when the constituent assembly, given the responsibility of writing a new constitution, was placed there. In 2008, an opposition candidate was voted into the position of mayor in Sucre, but was disqualified because he was under a criminal charge. Ms Vergara took his place on a decision of the municipal council, causing an outbreak of violence and unrest. "Vested interests were behind the anger of the opposition and that led to us living the most difficult moment in Sucre in many years," she told me. She said various explosives were thrown at the mayor's headquarters and the dissidents tried to kill her on a number of occasions. "One of the questions we asked ourselves at the time is where these students got the money from, because they had the money to buy lots of explosives. They don't even usually have enough for rent and food, where did they get the money for them from?" She began to cry as she recounted her experiences at the sharp end of the turmoil in Bolivia. "I do fear that these groups are still waiting in the wings and at any point they could come out and do something to me," she said. "This is really about racism and also that this local government and national government are threatening business interests." She believed that USAID was behind the funding to some of these groups: "The fact that the Rózsa affair was taking place at the same time and there were question marks over USAID's work and suggestions they were trying to overthrow the government leads me to question where the money was coming from." At the time it sparked violence in the streets of the city, which Ms Vergara thinks USAID was behind. "They are in union with the opposition and media to stand in the way of the government's development plans in the country."

BUILDING ~~DEMOCRACY~~ AN INVESTOR-FRIENDLY BUSINESS CLIMATE

USAID had another reason to dislike President Morales and his government: they weren't good for business. The investment climate in Bolivia, which had been open for business to US transnationals for decades, was turning into a more hostile place. Their fears were shared by their natural allies among the oligarchy of European descent in the east of Bolivia. Both were increasingly scared of the economic program of the Morales government, which has provided a model for developing countries around the world: achieving high growth, as well as reductions in poverty, while part-nationalizing key industries. The Bolivian government, even when composed of ruthless dictators, maintained an investor-friendly business climate, which saw US mining companies, such as Coeur d'Alene Mines Corp, take advantage of the vast natural resources in the country as the Spanish had done before them. Bolivia's major exports to the United States are tin, gold, jewellery and wood products. For a long time, foreign investors were accorded national treatment, and foreign owners of companies enjoyed virtually no restriction. Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Bolivia grew to $7 billion in stock during 1996–2002, nearly all of which went to the business interests in the east.

Concern about nationalization crops up frequently in the cables from La Paz. "There is … rampant speculation about President Morales' traditional May 1st speech, in which he is expected by many to announce nationalization of companies based in Santa Cruz, potentially including Cotas or food industries," one reads. "If the latter, many expect Branko Marinkovic's cooking oil and other companies to be taken in the name of 'food security'." The cables from La Paz do not pull punches when outlining their opposition to the economic thinking of the MAS government. One advisor to Morales, an economics professor is, one cable notes, "steeped in outdated socialist economic theories and has yet to accept the practical realities of a globalized economy". It adds that he "may be beginning to understand the real impact of free trade on job creation", but, unforgivably, "he appears to believe that markets in Venezuela and China serve as alternatives to US markets. He has told Bolivian exporters to seek markets outside the United States, unconvinced that the US is crucial to their trade." It notes that he recently returned from Venezuela after negotiating an agreement to buy Bolivian soy. "Additionally, he has regularly antagonized other businesses, telling them that the President's Dignity Tariff, a new lower price meant to provide cheap electricity to Bolivians is a done deal, remarking that the private sector should either get on board or suffer."

USAID had a plan to deal with this. One of the most important components of the justice project is "promotion of legal security", through which "it was hoped that the business and investment climate in Bolivia would be improved". The principal donor for this purpose was USAID and the project was budgeted $4.8 million over five years. It chimed with the sentiment in cables from La Paz, one of which noted, the "key areas of concern in Bolivia currently are democracy, narcotics, and *protection for US investments*"(my emphasis). The justice project sought "reforms in the commercial and administrative law areas" as well as "business organization assistance and training". For this purpose, USAID funding would help develop a civil, commercial and administrative law curriculum for law schools in Bolivia. In a sign of the penetration of USAID into the highest echelons of the justice system, USAID and the Bolivian Supreme Court *jointly* published a document called *Civil and Commercial Justice in Bolivia: Diagnosis and Recommendations for Change*, which urged the creation of a specialized commercial law jurisdiction. It would "enhance the investment climate of Bolivia", while the "establishment of a good business climate is essential to attracting investment" and will "maintain and improve its competitiveness". It noted: "This component was important to the overall success of the … project due to the fact that it enlisted enthusiastic support from many private sector actors, while also furthering the goal of improving the investment and business climate in Bolivia." The agency worked with its "partner organization", the National Chamber of Commerce, in order to replicate and strengthen arbitration centers through local chambers of commerce (big donors to civic committees). "If Bolivia wants to attract foreign investment … then it will need legal security for investors," it noted. "Should there be an opportunity to continue the work in this area, it would be of high importance for the development of Bolivia." Their natural allies in this task were organizations like CAINCO, a business confederation in Santa Cruz. In the aftermath of the Rózsa shoot-out, another suspect, Alejandro Melgar, who was a key figure in CAINCO, fled the country. Eduardo Paz, the president of CAINCO, was also an investor in the Santa Cruz civic committee. One cable noted that "The main impact [of nationalization] has been to halt new investment in the [energy] sector, which Bolivia needs to meet domestic demand and fulfil contractual obligations to Brazil and Argentina." It added that "[as] a political measure, however, the 'nationalization' remains wildly popular." It was also successful. In June 2011, Standard & Poor's, the rating agency, raised Bolivia's credit ratings by one notch, praising President Evo Morales' "prudent" macroeconomic policies which allowed for a steady decline in the country's debt ratios.

The truth was that the US embassy was fearful for US mining investments, despite high-level Bolivian officials giving "repeated assurances that the Morales administration will respect existing US mining interests".

Threats that the Bolivian government would nationalize the mining industry – including taking over a smelter owned by Swiss company Glencore (which had been sold by ex-president Goni) – scared them. "We continue to urge the [Government of Bolivia] to respect existing mining concessions and to limit tax and royalty hikes," one cable noted. In other words, create a good "business climate" *at the expense of the population*. The US embassy viewed the Morales administration as contrary to its interests. “Strengthening and supporting democracy in Bolivia is our mission’s primary concern,” notes another cable. But in the next line it says: “Although the ruling MAS party and President Evo Morales were elected with a clear majority in fair and open elections, their actions since assuming power have often displayed anti-democratic tendencies.” Elsewhere the cables note the “overwhelming victory” of MAS in elections. Despite this, the US called Morales a “leader with strong anti-democratic tendencies” who “manipulates the media”. His closest advisors were compared to “back alley thugs”.

In fact, the democratic credentials and popular mandate of the MAS government are among the most stellar in the world. First elected to the presidency in December 2005 by 54 percent of the popular vote, nearly double the 29 percent of his nearest rival, Morales was re-elected in December 2009 by 67 percent of the public vote, more than double the percentage won by his nearest opponent, Manfred Reyes Villa. In between these landslides, Morales won the recall referendum called in the face of the “autonomy movement” in August 2008 with 67 percent of the public voting for him to be returned. Just five months later, in January 2009, Morales won the constitutional referendum with 61 percent voting in favor, to 39 percent against. In 2014, he won yet another landslide. But the embassy was disparaging of these achievements, saying Morales was “like a struggling student in the areas of economics and international relations decision-making”. It also noted his apparent desire to become a dictator: “[As] an admirer of Cuban President Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, Morales probably is drawn by the longevity of their time in power and seeks to emulate their ‘success’.” It was rubbish. The referendum in 2009 stipulated a two-term limit for the presidency. On the occasion of a foreign dignitary visiting, the ambassador pushed him “to encourage Morales to follow a democratic path", alongside, of course, pushing him "to respect US mining interests to take advantage of free trade".

The cables are full of fear about US investments. "One US investment which is vulnerable is San Cristobal mine, which is 65 percent owned by Apex Silver," said one cable. "San Cristobal would be particularly hard-hit by a bill currently in Congress, which would increase mining taxes. Although the Bolivian government claims to want a fifty-fifty split of profits, the proposed tax increases actually result in, on average, a 60 percent government take of profits." Although fantastically rich in silver and other mineral wealth, in the past the Bolivian people had never benefitted and stayed poor.

TRADING BRIBES

The US was also using trade deals as leverage in trying to get MAS to change its economic outlook. In September 2008, President Bush suspended the crucial trade preferences that Bolivia enjoyed – alongside Colombia, Ecuador and Peru – under the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA). The country has lost millions of dollars in exports because of this punitive action. The ostensible reason was Bolivia's uncooperative attitude to coca eradication in the country, but political and economic motives were thought to be highly relevant. A *Reuters* article written a few weeks afterward noted that "the decision came one day after five leading US business groups urged the Bush administration and Congress to consider ending trade benefits for both Bolivia and Ecuador because of what they described as inadequate protections for foreign investors in both countries".[4] The next month, in November, President Morales announced that the DEA would be expelled from the country. For decades, hundreds of DEA agents swarmed the northern Pando and Beni regions, destroying coca crops and, in the process, becoming implicated in massacres of the indigenous *cocaleros*. Largely given a free rein to carry out military operations or eradication by successive governments eager to please their masters, the former *cocalero* Morales wasn't so easy to convince. He charged that the DEA was carrying out "political espionage", and "financing criminal groups so that they could act against authorities, even the president".[5]

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[4] Doug Palmer, "U.S. moves to suspend trade benefits for Bolivia", *Reuters*, September 26, 2008.

The goal of the DEA, one cable noted, "is to provide assistance to achieve US goals while keeping the [government of Bolivia] out in front". In 2008, Morales suspended DEA operations in Bolivia and expelled its 37 agents in the country. He named Steven Faucette, the regional agent of the DEA in Santa Cruz, as a spy, saying that he had made trips to cities in the *media luna* provinces of Beni and Pando with the objective of financing the civic committees which were committed to carrying out a "civic coup". The US was also using its aid as leverage to keep the DEA in Bolivia. "The Ambassador suggested that if eradication is to be stopped and USG involvement in the Chapare ended … we could begin shutting off our multi-million dollar assistance programs now," one cable noted. Many had long said that the DEA was acting as a front for the CIA in Bolivia. (The agency refused my request for information through the Freedom of Information Act, as did the National Security Agency.) The cables are full of criticism of Morales for failing to heed the US's call for areas it specified to be cleared of coca. It also called the EU effort "relatively modest and narrowly-focused".

But the US preoccupation with eradication in Bolivia, evidenced in the cables, is strange. According to one cable, the DEA estimated that

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[5] Carlos Quiroga, "Bolivia's Morales bars 'spying' U.S. DEA agents", *Reuters*, November 1, 2008.

"less than one percent of cocaine seized in the US can be chemically traced back to Bolivia". *One percent.* The US was also alone in blocking a UN resolution on making the coca leaf sacred in 2011. The tension surfaced even though the Morales government was being largely compliant. The cables present successes like 133 factories being raided in El Alto during the first 10 months of 2008. During the first full year of Morales's tenure, the amount of coca grown in Bolivia increased around 5 percent. In Colombia, the US ally, it jumped 27 percent in the same period, according to UN statistics.

The opposition I talked to, interestingly, were all in support of the DEA. The spokesperson for the SCCC said that during his time as a journalist working on the topic of narco-trafficking, he saw the DEA and the US embassy dealing with the issue properly: "They were teaching us about how the drugs workers work, how they buy drugs, it helped us." Another vital US agency which works in Bolivia is the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), created by President Ronald Reagan in 1983 to "promote democracy", but with a history of doing the opposite. In Bolivia it has focused on potentially recalcitrant indigenous areas, promoting the "American way" to the young. I obtained the proposals for various Bolivian projects granted money by the NED. The tactic of "training civil society" to gain a stranglehold on communities around Bolivia was exactly the same as that used by USAID projects. One project, Observancia, which ran from 2008 to 2009 and cost $54,664, was typical. It worked in eight municipalities in the country and helped in the "training of municipal functionaries and civil society". The aim was to create future "municipal candidates" who would be "inserted into government programmes". Another project, from 2006 to 2007 and costing $48,000, focused on Uriondo, Tarija, which sits in the *media luna* opposition stronghold. The grant was given at a politically tumultuous time. The report mentioned that the area of Tarija has the largest hydrocarbon deposits in the country, and the project wants "to increase the capacity" and "strengthen local government" of Uriondo, particularly by improving how the media communicates with the locals. Other projects look to "encourage political citizenship among young people".

In one project in Totora, Cochabamba, the proposal notes that the population are mostly Quechua speaking and a lot more "politicized" than in Uriondo, adding that "there exists … an obstinate opposition to what they term as 'neoliberal', and they reject any advances from such parties". Finally, it noted that the people of Totora organize themselves through a model of "corporativism" – the imposition of "a logic of the majoritarianism", which rejects a form of democracy respectful of any differences. "This prompts us to consider that in the future we should include democratic values, in all sectors of society, not just as a citizen's exercise when voting for their electoral representatives, but also with the logical respect that democracy has in other contemporary global societies," the proposal noted. But the fact that the people of Totora organize themselves into collectives and make decisions collectively is common among indigenous groups throughout the country. The organization writing the proposal, however, concluded that this is in fact undemocratic and that they should introduce programs that demonstrate how undemocratic this form of democracy is compared with "other global societies".

Another project called for better election monitoring. It suggested "revising the referendum votes for 2008 and 2009, where, in some regions, participation is registered at 100 percent and where the vote in favor of President Morales is of a similar percentage, something which does not have antecedents". This accusation is questionable because in many departments people vote collectively – a tradition within many indigenous groups.

One project awarded $36,450 to the Bolivian National Press Association. Its ostensible aim was to defend freedom of expression "through the supervision and documentation of violations and threats against journalists" and "improve the professionalism and impartiality of Bolivian journalists". However, its focus is trained on the government, in keeping with US embassy fears about Venezuelan influence. "The [National Press Association of Bolivia] denounces that the action the government of Morales has taken, something which has never happened under a democratic government, total control of the National Company of Bolivian Television (ENTB), when he integrated the directors with state ministers." In another project, in Totora, it was noted that they were "expecting – in the coming months – the installation of a community radio transmitter, financed by the Venezuelan government, which forms part of a communications network which that regime has been promoting". A later section called 2008 "the worst year for freedom of expression since the return to democracy" with "one dead and over a hundred attacks". The Santa Cruz UJC and its allies committed a number of these attacks. In one case: "A police officer sprayed pepper spray at a journalist who approached the Vice President of the Santa Cruz Youth Union." The NED criticized Evo Morales for denouncing *La Razon* newspaper, even though coverage of the president Morales in that newspaper has been overtly racist for years, with racist caricatures and racist commentary.

VERY MEASURED

As in smaller countries in the region, such as Haiti, the US embassy in Bolivia wielded huge power through the second half of the 20th century, often more than the sovereign government itself. The US embassy in La Paz is the second largest in Latin America (slightly smaller than in Brazil), despite the country having a population of just 9 million people. Through the last 50 years, the US had supported coups to get "their" dictators in place (Hugo Banzer), lent public relations specialists to get "their" presidents in place when democracy returned (Goni), and sent their brightest economists to "restructure" the economy in their image (Jeffrey Sachs). Now, the US provides sanctuary for "their" presidents wanted for crimes against humanity (Goni, again). But such a situation could give rise to complacency. And the election of the democratic socialist government of MAS in Bolivia marked the first time the country threatened to break free of US control. As such, relationships with ambassadors from the US became increasingly strained as the power dynamic switched around, and the sovereign government issued orders to the embassy, not the other way around. Maria Beatriz Souviron, Bolivian ambassador to the UK, told me: "The US ambassador before Morales had a lot of influence over the politics in our country, even pushing to take domestic decisions at some points." She added: "We want some sovereignty in our country and to make our own decisions. And of course the former ambassador [Goldberg] was involved with the opposition."

The MAS government accused ambassador Philip Goldberg of "subversive actions" which included a "disinformation campaign" in the lead-up to the recall referendum, as he tried to unite the opposition. In late 2007, the US embassy began moving openly to meet with the right-wing opposition in the *media luna*. Ambassador Goldberg was photographed in Santa Cruz with a leading business magnate who backed the autonomy movement, and a well-known Colombian narco-trafficker who had been detained by the local police. Morales, in revealing the photo, said the trafficker was linked to right-wing paramilitary organizations in Colombia. In response, the US embassy asserted that it couldn't vet everyone who appeared in a photo with the ambassador. Goldberg was expelled because of his meetings with opposition figures at the most on-edge period of the battle with the MAS government. In 2008, he was photographed having a secret meeting with opposition governor Rubén Costas. The US embassy liked Costas. In one cable it was noted: "Costas' willingness to work with the United States would make him a solid democratic partner." It also praised his "politically savvy use of the media to advance the interests of the media luna".

This government anger at US embassy interference culminated in September 2009 when ambassador Goldberg was expelled from the country. He has still not been replaced, the US embassy having to make do with the diplomatic downgrade of a *chargé d'affaires*. The US retaliated by expelling the Bolivian ambassador to Washington. "The US embassy is historically used to calling the shots in Bolivia, violating our sovereignty, treating us like a banana republic," said Gustavo Guzman, the ambassador who was expelled from Washington. Goldberg had an interesting history, which made him a curious appointment by President George W. Bush in October 2006. Between 1994 and 1996 he had served as State Department desk officer for Bosnia and as special assistant to the late Richard Holbrooke, who had been instrumental in brokering the Dayton Accords and then the NATO military campaign against Serbia in 1999. From 2004 to 2006, Goldberg served as chief of mission in Pristina, Kosovo. In other words, he was used to dealing with countries that were breaking up into their constituent parts.

The leaders of the Santa Cruz Civic Committee certainly liked him. "My overall impression of Goldberg is that he was very measured politically," said its vice president. "Compared to the two ambassadors that preceded. They were very openly political, they got involved a great deal, and compared to them Goldberg was measured."

The US embassy had been overtly hostile to Morales from the start, and the previous two ambassadors had openly tried to halt his rise to power. In 2002, when Morales narrowly lost his first presidential bid, US ambassador Manuel Rocha, the first Bush appointment, openly campaigned against him, threatening: "If you elect those who want Bolivia to become a major cocaine exporter again, this will endanger the future of US assistance to Bolivia." In 2003, the second Bush appointment, David N. Greenlee, was put in place, and he had a long history with Bolivia. He served in the Peace Corps in Bolivia, 1965–67, and met his wife in the country. Later he served as a political officer at the US embassy in La Paz, 1977–79, dealing with issues, one think-tank noted, such as communism, military coups and Operation Condor, the continent-wide terror network set up by General Pinochet with the help of the US government. He returned as deputy chief of mission, 1987–89. When back as ambassador, Greenlee openly tried to scupper MAS's ascent. In March 2003, for example, he sent a letter to Carlos Mesa, then president, alleging, falsely, that MAS was planning a coup in the summer. The MAS government hoped that things would change with President Obama's election, but MAS officials say it has been no different. In fact, President Obama is now thought to have deployed special operations forces to Bolivia, while he supported the illegitimate post-coup election in Honduras. "President Obama lied to Latin America when he told us in Trinidad and Tobago that there are not senior and junior partners," said President Morales in 2009.[6]

While in La Paz I arranged an interview with the US *chargé d'affaires*, John S. Creamer, who has served in embassies in Nicaragua, Argentina and Colombia. I was not allowed to record the interview, but took notes. "The Bush administration took a heavy toll on perceptions of the US, that's an empirical fact," he said. He denied knowing of the various foundations – HRF and UnoAmerica – but is "sceptical" they were involved in the Rózsa plot. It became clear later that the US embassy is aware of these groups, and is being briefed by them. Mr Creamer told me there was "growing opposition" from within MAS against the leadership, an interesting observation, as it is a strategy that the government itself is increasingly wary of. "Evo is now scared that the new tactic is the opposition infiltrating the government and MAS, in order to take power from within," Mr Mendoza, the Sucre senator, had told me. The embassy is obviously still in close contact with the radical elements in the east, as Mr Creamer defends the violence of the UJC and other radical opposition elements, arguing self-defense. "It's natural to defend yourself," he said, as we finish.

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[6] Carlos Valdez, "Bolivian leader says Obama 'lied' about cooperation", *Associated Press*, July 2, 2009.

The international community have also been accused of supporting the break-up of the country. I talked to the British ambassador, Nigel Baker, in La Paz, who seemed to agree with the autonomists. "I think the long-term destiny for Bolivia … is some form of federalist structure," he said. "The topography of the country, the different character of different peoples in different parts of the country, different economic structures, all work in favor in Bolivia of greater autonomy." He thought the US had entirely benign intentions: "I think historical record will show that the US was operating correctly in Bolivia and trying to work with all political groups, people of all political colors, to work with and strengthen Bolivian democracy." The WikiLeaks cables reveal that opposition politicians were openly approaching the US embassy for support in elections. One opposition politician "stands out as a potential national opposition leader," one cable noted, before adding that in a meeting with embassy officers he had "privately expressed his interest in obtaining US support to run for the presidency".

One the major concerns for the US after Morales came to power was Bolivia moving out of its traditional sphere of influence and making alliances and economic deals with other countries: thumbing its nose at its traditional patron. Among the people consulted by USAID for one its projects was Eduardo Rodríguez Veltzé, a former president of Bolivia who controversially decommissioned the country's only air-defense system, purchased from China, putting Bolivia under the basic military control of the US. It was people like this the US was used to dealing with. But Morales no longer countenanced such servility. At the same time, China embraced the MAS government openly (largely because of the lithium reserves, no doubt), and did not seem as intent to undermine the democratically elected government as the US was. They also provided an alternative source of investment, worrying US planners. And it wasn't just China. In 2008, it was announced that Bolivia had signed a deal with state-owned Russian gas company Gazprom to explore and produce natural gas in the country. State-owned oil and gas company, YPFB, which was nationalized by the MAS government, signed the deal to exploit South America's second-largest reserves, concentrated in the southeast.

Bolivia also announced more military purchases from China and Russia, after the US blocked Bolivian purchases of Czech aircraft. Most worryingly for the US, Venezuela and Cuba were also increasing their presence, a fear constantly discussed in the cables. One cable from La Paz noted: "Cuban and Venezuelan advice, interference, and assistance continue to be a serious concern." The concern is listed as "Cuban doctors and newly inaugurated hospitals bring medical care to isolated communities", while Venezuela provided micro-credit financing to small businesses. Unlike USAID, of course, "Venezuelan funding is pouring into the country with no transparency or accountability, further damaging the democratic process." Venezuelan funding for the media was a particular "issue of concern", which, we have seen, was being fought as a proxy war through the NED's programs. One cable worried "that media will be sold without public knowledge, changing the opinion-leader landscape in the country", i.e. the anti-Morales bias. The cable even noted that the main newspaper, *La Razon*, has a "generally anti-[government of Bolivia] stance".

In February 2008, a story broke about a Fulbright scholar in Bolivia who had been asked to spy on Cubans and Venezuelans in the country. John Alexander van Schaick said that he was told by regional security officer Vincent Cooper at the US embassy "to provide the names, addresses and activities of any Venezuelan or Cuban doctors or field workers" he came across while he was in Bolivia.[7] His account was supported by similar testimony from Peace Corps members and staff who were all told by Mr Cooper to gather information on Cuban and Venezuelan nationals. Three days after the story broke, it was announced that Mr Cooper would not be returning to Bolivia. Morales called it the "expulsion" of a "man who conducted North American espionage", an accusation with some justice. Many believed it was the tip of the iceberg. "We had a mutual friend, and [van Schaick] approached me in December 2007," Jean Friedman-Rudovsky, the American journalist living in La Paz who broke the story, told me. "It took a couple months to get a hold on the Peace Corps angle, I had heard lots of rumors, but hadn't been able to substantiate them. The Peace Corps duty director went on record at the time saying Vincent Cooper came and gave these inappropriate instructions to the group."

The volunteers were in a moral quandary about what to do. "Some kids were worried about the message coming from the embassy, one girl was planning on living with a Cuban family; she wondered if she would have to collect information on them," said Friedman-Rudovsky. The director and the Peace Corps staff complained to the US embassy, remonstrating that they couldn't act like an intelligence service for the US government. Four months later, however, van Schaick received the same instructions. "In general, not much has changed in terms of US-Bolivia since Obama came into power," said Friedman-Rudovsky. The ambassador never admitted it had happened; he merely commented that if these instructions had been given, it went against US policy. But it was the first ironclad proof of the US using its agencies to gather information in the country. "Every time Morales speaks on US-Bolivian relations in terms of US meddling in Bolivian affairs, he refers to this story, it's the only story with definitive proof of spying," said Friedman-Rudovsky. In the aftermath, the Bolivian foreign minister asked the US to establish exchange programs because the current US programs "are not transparent and we are suspicious when scholarship students are asked to spy on us". The US did not comply.

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[7] Jean Friedman-Rudovsky and Brian Ross, "Exclusive: Peace Corps, Fulbright Scholar asked to 'spy' on Cubans, Venezuelans", *ABC News*, February 8, 2008.

Another controversy erupted in 2008 when a police unit called the Special Operations Command (COPES) was implicated in a domestic surveillance scandal after it was revealed that the unit had been used to collect intelligence on areas outside its remit of narco-trafficking. The unit was funded by the US, and was ultimately answerable to the US embassy. The idea that no one there knew what was going on is hard to countenance. It was disbanded soon after.

There had been a long lineage for this kind of subterfuge. In 1997 testimony to Congress, James Milford, deputy administrator of the DEA, said: "The Intelligence and Special Operations Group (GIOE) is one of Bolivia's most successful drug enforcement programs. It was developed four years ago as a result of cooperation between DEA and the Bolivian National Police [and was] responsible for handling sensitive intelligence and conducting the most important complex criminal investigations in Bolivia."

The US had long-established law enforcement agencies in Bolivia operating under the guise of drug enforcement; these agencies could be used for different purposes, and no one could actually verify whether they were gathering intelligence. Later, President Morales alleged that the CIA had tried to infiltrate state-run oil firm YPFB through marketing director Rodrigo Carrasco, who had attended a number of "training courses" in the US, which involved intelligence, security and politics. Carrasco had been a member of COPES. In the aftermath, the US embassy still complained that the "threat to expel the CIA from Bolivia means that any one of us can be (mis)identified as a spy and kicked out should we do – or be falsely accused of doing – anything that displeases Evo". Spying was definitely taking place on a large scale. All through the cables there are allusions to "sensitive reporting" which is a euphemism for spying. One cable noted that a MAS official whom "many political analysts" consider "a radical" is "railroading controversial legislative measures", before adding: "Sensitive reporting indicates that Ramirez may be very vulnerable on corruption and human smuggling charges."

BEING A SOFTY

When in Sucre, I talked to Enrique Cortes, a professor at one of the universities in the city and a specialist in US-Bolivian relations. "Bolivia is still dependent," he said. "This position of dependency was from the beginnings of when the nation was created, we were always dependent on an international monetary system lately led by the US." He added: "There was a triangular relationship between the state, oligarchs and transnational organizations and these oligarchs responded to international money. When they lose power they use force to stop history from developing. Within that fits Rózsa-Flores and the Pando massacre, and Leopoldo." The move to democracy, he said, may not be permanent, and could be scuppered. "There was the fascist process, dictatorship, but it's not over. With Carter began the phase of controllable democracies, but now we think a new phase has opened. And this new phase is characterized by vital resources, and wanting control over these vital resources. So that's the central conflict with the US." He thought that the US could still put a brake on the process initiated by MAS to greater independence. "A coup is not the only way to put brakes on this. History shows there are other strategies, such as penetrating the popular organizations, and social movements using agencies like USAID." But coups have been the traditional US tactic in the country.

Declassified documents released in 2008 exposed US financial and political support for the military coup led by right-wing general Hugo Banzer in 1971, who ruled until 1978 (before making a comeback, democratically elected this time, from 1997 to 2001). The State Department at the time denied supporting the three-day coup that left 110 dead and hundreds more wounded. Banzer's dictatorship was a nightmare for organized labor and anyone who disagreed with his restructuring of the economy in the interests of foreign capital. He arrested 14,000 Bolivians without due process, and 8,000 more were tortured. Some 200 people were thought to have disappeared. Banzer had been trained at the notorious School of the Americas in Panama (Fort Gulick) and at Fort Hood in Texas, before becoming a military attaché in Washington. The declassified documents show that the Nixon administration had signed off $410,000 to be made available for politicians and military officers willing to take out the left-leaning dictator Juan José Torres. At a meeting in July 1971, the 40 Committee

– chaired by the then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and overseeing covert operations around the world – discussion focused on giving this money to opposition figures who, the understanding was, would undertake a coup. Under-Secretary of State Alexis Johnson said: "What we are actually organizing is a coup in itself, isn't it?" The plan was approved and the same day that the coup began in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, a National Security Council staffer reported to Kissinger that the CIA had transferred money to two high-ranking members of the opposition.

A month earlier, Nixon and Kissinger had discussed the possibilities for dealing with the Bolivian leader who was leaning too far left.

Kissinger: We are having a major problem in Bolivia, too. And –

Nixon: I got that. Connally mentioned that. What do you want to do about that?

Kissinger: I've told [CIA Deputy Director of Plans, Thomas] Karamessines to crank up an operation, post-haste. Even the Ambassador there, who's been a softy, is now saying that we must start playing with the military there or the thing is going to go down the drain.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: That's due in on Monday.

Nixon: What does Karamessines think we need? A coup?

Kissinger: We'll see what we can, whether – in what context. They're going to squeeze us out in another two months. They've already gotten rid of the Peace Corps, which is an asset, but now they want to get rid of [US Information Agency] and military people. And I don't know whether we can even think of a coup, but we have to find out what the lay of the land is there.[8]

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[8] Conversation between the President's assistant for national security affairs (Kissinger) and President Nixon, Washington, June 11, 1971, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve10/d101

Fast-forward 40 years and not much had changed. The WikiLeaks cables reveal that as the political turmoil was peaking, the US embassy was contemplating the eventuality of a military coup. One noted that "there are strong indications the military is split and could be reticent to follow orders". Another complained that: "A strong commitment to institutionalism would require a rock-solid constitutional argument before commanders would participate in any action that could be considered 'political'." There is no doubt that these feelings were being communicated from within the military to the US embassy. "[Armed Forces Commander General Wilfredo] Vargas had been, publicly and privately, a supporter of US-Bolivian military relations," one cable noted. "Although he continues to cooperate enthusiastically with us at a working level, even giving awards to three [Military Group] officers December 13 his public comments in the last few months have irritated Bolivian military officers and raised eyebrows within the Embassy." (The Military Group is part of the US Department of Defense.) But there were reasons for optimism. "Evo does not have a network of personal friends within the military (although his Presidency Minister Juan Quintana does)," one cable noted. "[T]he military is leery of taking on any role considered remotely political. The military fears above all a repeat of the bloody military-civilian conflicts in El Alto in 2003, which brought down the Goni government." The Goni government – supported by the US, where he is now in exile.

Finally, we are told that Commander Vargas is too unreliable to count on. "Vargas remains an enigma," the cable noted. "Some commanders suspected, at least before his December 8 comments, that he might be sympathetic to a coup. He is widely characterized as an 'opportunist'". The cable added wryly: "We cannot expect him to stand behind his assurances."

In a piece of bare-faced historical revisionism, USAID said that between 1985 and 2003 "fundamental economic and political rules of the game were liberalized", adding, "organizations with a pluralistic view of democracy grew and flourished – especially in response to the availability of donor assistance". It noted that, "Corporatist civil society organizations dominated citizen participation in the public sphere between 1952 and 1985", which was the moment when the Bolivian government "began to change the direction of Bolivia's economic policies and democratic practices". Soon, as the fairytale went, "Pluralistic civil society then emerged, and was active – especially at the level of communities." What that period, in fact, describes is the "Shock Doctrining" of the Bolivian economy and wider society. President Víctor Paz Estenssoro, who had been a supporter of US-backed dictator Hugo Banzer, ruled from 1985 to 1989 and instituted a neoliberal recipe to help put the staggering economy back on its feet. He repressed labor unions, sacked 30,000 miners, and privatized most of the state-owned companies. The broken society he and his successor Goni created would provide fertile ground for the Morales administration to grow in.

As its framework for the definition of civil society, USAID uses the work of Larry Diamond, a professor at Stanford University and fellow at the Hoover Institution where he coordinates the project on Democracy in Iran. He was a senior advisor on governance to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq and the founding co-editor of the National Endowment for Democracy's *Journal of Democracy*. He has worked for the State Department, World Bank and USAID. In other words, the perfect intellectual to design democracy in Bolivia.

US weapons and military had been found in Bolivia. In June 2007, Donna Thi Dinh, a 20-year-old American woman, was detained at La Paz airport after arriving on a flight from Miami. The authorities found 500 rounds of .45-caliber ammunition in her luggage. Ms Thi had initially claimed to customs that she was carrying cheese. She was met at the airport by the wife of a military liaison at the US embassy in La Paz. US ambassador Philip Goldberg said that the bullets were for training and sport shooting and she did not realize that she had to declare them. This might be true, but at the very least it shows the impunity with which Americans felt they could act in Bolivia. Bolivia's director of migration, Magaly Zegarra, noted: "the fact that a North American citizen, related to the embassy, is carrying ammunition on a North American aircraft coming from Miami, a city where terrorists from all over Latin America are protected by the government, especially their teacher, as [Luis] Posada is called by the terrorists, and make a mockery of all [justice] mechanisms, is questionable."[9] In another incident, in March 2006, Triston Jay Amero, a 25-year-old from California, set off 300 kilos of dynamite at two hotels in La Paz. He was carrying 15 different identity documents. Two years later, security services uncovered the presence of two fake American journalists photographing presidential vehicles.

The US military itself was also using Bolivia as a base. In June 2010, it was revealed that the Obama administration was expanding the role of US special operations forces around the world in a "secret war" to combat al-Qaeda, with the *Washington Post* noting that they were placed in 60 to 75 countries, with about 4,000 personnel available in countries aside from Iraq and Afghanistan. Jeremy Scahill reported in *The Nation*, based on "well-placed special operations sources", that Bolivia was one of those countries. The role of the joint special operations command forces was to launch "pre-emptive or retaliatory strikes", but this was ambiguous. "While some of the special forces missions are centered around training of allied forces, often that line is blurred. In some cases, 'training' is used as a cover for unilateral, direct action," Scahill wrote. A special forces source told him: "It's often done under the auspices of training so that they can go anywhere. It's brilliant. It is essentially what we did in the 60s," adding, "Remember the 'training mission' in Vietnam? That's how it morphs." US armed forces did occasionally pop up in Bolivia. In 2008, just weeks before the raid on Hotel Las Americas, Iraq war veteran Lieutenant Commander Gregory Michel was arrested after he pulled a gun on a prostitute in Santa Cruz. The US embassy managed to secure his release on grounds of "diplomatic immunity". The WikiLeaks cables also show that C-130s and helicopters owned by the Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) at the US Embassy were being used to transport "eradicators and troops". Elsewhere, the embassy noted allegations that the DEA, US military and Bolivian national police headed Bolivian anti-narcotics efforts "from a US military base" in the Cochabamba department. In reference to this, the cable noted: "The US supports Bolivian anti-narcotics efforts at the Chimore Airport and has offices there, but there are no US military bases per se in Bolivia." *Per se.* The WikiLeaks cables reveal an embassy concerned about renewing "mil-mil" (military to military) cooperation and establishing a "Status of Forces" agreement. But the Bolivian government was reticent about signing up – also refusing to ratify an "Article 98" which excuses US nationals from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, a common demand made by the US, a rogue nation intent on not abiding by international law.

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[9] Roberto Bardini, "Mal momento para 'errores inocentes'", *Tinku*, May 3, 2008.

But, as the US knows, Bolivia is still captive to the American military. A cable noted: "Bolivia has not spent any money on ammunition in two years, and the capacity to quickly move troops remains in doubt."

SAYING THANK YOU

In early 2006, a cable from La Paz noted "the billions of US dollars of assistance in the past few decades", and said that the ambassador observed that the US government "would sometimes appreciate a good word or thanks" from President Morales. To this day, the Morales government and his party, MAS, have not "thanked" the US for its support, because since 2005, and before, that support has been designed to finish them, and by extension democracy, in Bolivia. In many ways, Bolivia is the most democratic country in the world now. When you walk around the country you sense the involvement of the citizenry in the politics of their local community as well as on a national level, in a way that is markedly absent in the US or UK. There is a simple formula for US foreign policy in Latin America and beyond: support democracy if the people vote the right way. If they don't, and the political party threatens to upset the "natural" order of things and with it the business interests of America and other foreign companies, then a program of subversion and destabilization gets under way. This investigation is focused on Bolivia in the specifics, but the general patterns have been replicated from Venezuela to Ecuador, from Brazil to Peru.

Another cable noted: "Evo Morales' election in December 2005 was a political earthquake in Bolivia, sweeping aside political expectations that have defined Bolivian politics for generations and at the same time breaking open fissures and offering up new possibilities." It is these new possibilities that scare the US government, the threat of the "virus of a good example", a government that can provide for its citizens while growing the economy. Even Bolivia's admirable lead on climate change is dismissed by the US embassy as a "vehicle for raising [Morales's] and Bolivia's international political stature". The US is slowly losing the ownership it has had over Bolivian society for decades. For the first time in living memory, the Bolivian people are deciding their own destiny according to their needs, ideas and hopes – not those of the US. For this reason, war has been declared on Bolivian democracy, alongside any other democracy that does not see its *raison d'être* as supporting US interests to the detriment of its own people. But it was not just the indigenous people of Latin America who were proving a problem for the racketeers. When the financial crisis hit, its own indigenous population stopped being so easy to exploit as well. The racket abroad meets the racket at home.

PART THREE

REINFORCEMENT

TEN

THE FIRST PEOPLES OF AMERICA AND THEIR LAND

OKLAHOMA

When I met them, as the fog of economic crisis engulfed the community, the Delaware Nation tribe had a simple strategy for creating jobs for the nearly two-thirds of its members who were destitute and unemployed: it wanted to manufacture lighting. The Native American community already distributed lighting so they knew the industry well; now they wanted to produce LED lights. Except they couldn't. No one would lend them the money they needed to get started. They weren't white and had no natural resources on their arid reservations, so the financial players, the racketeers who make everything in America move, turned away. It was just the latest stage in a centuries-old battle for basic dignity by America's First People against the usurpers and financial wizards who have kept them condemned to underdevelopment. They were still losing. “The economy has taken a complete dive,” Kerry Holton, the eloquent president of the tribe, told me. “Banks won’t take any risk whatsoever, unless you have twice as much in assets than what you are loaning they are not interested.” This meant the rich could borrow, but the poor, no way.

The indigenous Lenape people were originally located across large swaths of the eastern coast of the modern-day United States, including parts of New Jersey, New York, Delaware and Pennsylvania, and theirs was the first tribe to sign a formal agreement with the newly established government in 1778. Over 200 years later, the same people – now part decimated, wholly displaced – are called the Delaware Nation, a white man’s name given to the people who migrated from the west coast and ended up in Oklahoma. In the 21st century, they are still suffering from the barbarism of their conquerors, who no longer come in the form of land-grabbing British colonists, but modern-day moneymen. The tribe today is suffering majority unemployment, has incurred an insurmountable level of debt, and across the land they have inhabited for 150 years there is a pervasive hopelessness typical of indigenous communities being buffeted by the financial industry. But the Delaware Nation is run more efficiently than the institutions of the state that massacred their ancestors and now loves to preach about the “exceptional” nature of its democracy. They have a small governing council of six members, divided between elders and younger members of the community, who make the decisions.

The Delaware Nation have just one casino – the patronizing gift of the white establishment as it took their land – which they want to use as a stepping stone for other economic developments, including developing green energy. But the tribe has no chance of getting the financing to kick things off. “We can do some of it ourselves, but we need millions to start these things,” said Mr Holton. “We realized pretty quickly that the banks are no help. We want to create some jobs, but the casinos don't do that. It does create some, but it's not enough". The Delaware Nation have already done a leveraged buyout of a company to take a majority stake, becoming one of the leading semiconductor lighting distribution networks in the US. Everything is in place to move into manufacturing. "We just need capital to get inventory and contracts. But that has been difficult. Even if we have contracts, we go to any financial institution and can't get lending based on that contract." The 1,500-strong tribe is just one of the many Native American victims of the freeze in credit markets in the aftermath of the financial crisis.

Like pretty much everything else negative that happens in the US, the lack of available funds has hit tribes – always seen as a risky investment because they tend to rely on a single revenue stream – more intensely than any other group. The aftermath of the financial crisis hit Native American economies hard as many rely on casinos for their revenue, one of the discretionary spending sectors that was hit hardest in the recession. For many tribes like the Delaware Nation, the revenue stream from the casino is their tax base. They use the funds in the same way as municipalities or states use their tax revenue, to develop social services and educational programs, for example. When the recession hit and the casino revenues went down, it meant cutting back on many of the most crucial welfare and social services.

THE BUBBLE

Many of the tribes were tempted in the credit bubble to expand their, often high-end, business ventures. The Mashantucket Pequots, who have maintained the same reservation in Connecticut since 1666, announced in April 2008 plans for a "breathtaking" new $700 million resort at its Foxwoods Resort Casino, which was already the largest in the world, along with a new Hilton.[1] Within the days of it opening that summer, Lehman Brothers collapsed and with it the global economy slumped. Soon after, the tribe was battling to pay back the highly leveraged debt it had incurred. In January 2010, it managed to reach an agreement with senior lenders to extend debt forbearance and restructuring of $2.3 billion in arrears. "It's the same old story," said Joseph Kalt, co-director of Harvard University's project on American Indian economic development. "A lot of cash flowing, tribes investing like mad and then getting hit by the recession."

But the economic challenges of tribal governments are broader than the recent recession. It has always been difficult to attract high-quality credit. Tribes lack the taxing power of local governments, a predicament that has been exacerbated by state budgetary pressures and revenue or tax disputes between governments. Tribal governments have only enjoyed self-governance since the 1970s, when the Gerald Ford and Richard Nixon administrations made strides on the issue. Although they existed before the US itself, in a modern sense they have only had 45 years of self-determination. This has left them open to exploitation by banks. "Any tribe's debt-managing policies have had relatively little time to refine government structures," said Jeffrey Carey, managing director and specialist in tribal finance at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. Many believe this has made them more susceptible to the worst banking practices.

There has also been an erosion of the monopoly protection in gambling they enjoyed, while the macroeconomic environment continues to be a challenge with the dependence on the limited asset class versus the broad tax base of a state or locality. They also have collateral limitations because, under Federal Trust status, their assets are held in trusts by the federal government, which limits their ability to access the bond or capital markets. Holton told me: “One of the things that the recession has done is woken us up to the fact that we can’t do everything via casinos, we have to diversify so we can shore up those programs and make sure they are there when people need them. Everyone felt casinos were bulletproof but they aren’t.” “Diversification is now a theme for tribal economies,” added Mr Carey. “There’s more onus now on investing in infrastructure and services to citizens, alongside partnerships with non-tribal governments.” In Alabama, the Poarch Creek Indians work with local government on a variety of issues, including police protection and roads. It is a model for cooperation between tribal and non-tribal that is gaining traction across the country.

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[1] Unless noted, all the statistics and quotes for the chapters in Part 3 come from my work in the *Financial Times* from 2011.

To add insult to injury, in the midst of this uncertainty, President Barack Obama’s administration decided to cut dramatically the Indian loan guarantee program, which backs tribal loans. For 2012 the program was slashed by nearly two-thirds to $3 million, down from the $8 million that was allocated in 2010. “The budget realities that we’re in right now require some reductions,” said Larry Echo Hawk, assistant secretary of the interior for Indian affairs. But it was all a lie. “The Obama administration has tried to make a difference, but it hasn’t trickled down to the tribes: it sounds good in the press, but when you go to tribes, it hasn’t been gainful,” said Holton. The tribal economic development bonds are unusable for many tribes because they lack the infrastructure to do anything with them. “The irony is that banks are now starting to make loans again but the damage has been done and the Obama administration’s proposed cuts will decimate the loan guarantee program,” Gavin Clarkson, a professor at the University of Houston and the country’s leading scholar on tribal finance, told me. “Indian country was given a test but the test was rigged.”

Mr Obama's stimulus package included $2 billion in tax-exempt bond allocations for tribes. But the markets were so bad and the lending criteria so onerous that even though tribes had these allocations financial institutions effectively shut them out. "They were created for us, but you can't do anything with them," said Mr Holton. "They have been nothing more than paper." The loan guarantee program primarily served tribes that did not have access to capital markets. That is now nearly gone, for Washington proof that Native Americans cannot attract investment. But like the colonists before them who wrote contracts on land which they then reneged on, the banks have always seen the Indian tribes as a chance to make a quick buck, an expendable sponge to squeezed and let go when times get tough. For example, in 2011, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) found that Wachovia bank had overpriced a tranche of collateralized debt obligations and sold them to the Zuni Indian tribe in New Mexico. The bank paid $11 million in penalties to the SEC, which caused the media to take note. But for those with knowledge of Indian economies it was nothing new. "The banks definitely take advantage of the tribes, especially if you have gaming," Mr Holton said. "That's what they want to attack; in the business world as a non-native, you get treated a lot differently to natives or members of tribes. They think they can get in your pocket, it's very difficult, a lot of times it's better to approach them and not tell them you are a tribe."

The racketeers work to keep the poor world underdeveloped, and they do the same with the tribes within their own borders. "The large retail banks were happy to make oodles of money on the backs of tribes when they were financing casinos," said Mr Holton. "But when it came to financing business or industry, things required for a functioning economy, it was always a challenge." That is not a coincidence: building up the capacity of native communities to run their own affairs and not rely on handouts from the state could challenge their subservience to the system; this, of course, would not do. It's a long story of financial savagery that has created this situation – there is nothing inevitable about it. Bank of America Merrill Lynch, meanwhile, estimated that more than $17 billion of tribal securities have been issued over the past decade as well as $25 billion of capital raised by tribal markets. But those statistics can be misleading as the bulk of this financing has gone to the select successful and thus creditworthy tribes. "The cutbacks disproportionately affect the tribes most in need, so it has been a big disappointment for Indian country to see it cut back just when they need it the most," said Jeffrey Carey, managing director and specialist in tribal finance at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

The effect of the financial crisis has not been even across tribes. It is possible to classify them broadly into three distinct groups. Casino tribes, whose economy revolves around that one business, saw their revenues drop precipitously, by more than 30 percent in many cases. In Florida, the Seminole tribe was celebrated when Bank of America Merrill Lynch helped them to buy Hard Rock International in a $965 million buyout in 2006. The *Wall Street Journal* lauded it on their front page, and the financial press beamed. But when the financial crisis struck, the situation took a turn for the worse and it ended in the long-serving tribal chief stepping down.

A second set of tribes was not so severely affected because they were recipients of lucrative government defense contracts that were maintained in the crisis. The Flathead reservation in Montana has a company called S&K Electronics which produces items such as cooling fans for military helmets used in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Nebraska, the largest tribe does field preparation for military equipment, putting together the packs that soldiers take into the field. "The manufacturing tribes have generally weathered the recession very well because overall government contracting has been resistant because of the wars," said Joseph Kalt.

Lastly, there are the tribes that have 70 to 80 percent unemployment, which were so poor and starved of investment – without casinos or government contractors – that the recession did not make much of a difference. Starting in the 1990s, around the time the dotcom bubble was inflating, a number of financial firms became interested as tribes gained economic self-sufficiency after political self-determination in the 1970s. They also gained assets from natural resources or the 1988 Gaming Act. Now there was a quick buck to be made, the financial world woke up. Merrill Lynch has had accounts with tribes since the 1960s, while Wells Fargo and Bank of America worked with tribes on a more regional basis instead. Leading up to self-determination, many tribes received land settlements or other reparations, monies for land or natural resources, which became investable assets. That increased in the 2000s as 50–100 more tribes gained investable assets and enterprise levels that warranted more than local bank coverage. "I think tribes have been subject to predatory practices throughout the history of the US," said Jeffrey Carey.

As government grew from self-determination, the tribes faced a number of challenges, including developing investment policies. They were inexperienced, while the financial sector saw a potential killing. "There is a learning curve for tribes and it has been a challenge for them," added Carey. "I think there have been predatory practices for hundreds of years. I'm sure there's still an element of that that continues and it's not limited to financial institutions, its developers, land or natural resources." There was a broad-based assault on tribes that initially was led by federal government. There are 565 tribes in the US, and most of them are still at or below the poverty level and/or experience high levels of unemployment.

NAOMA

The racketeers, once they had taken the land from the indigenous Americans, are now trying to destroy it in their efforts to produce even more capital, in an unending cycle of greed and gluttony. The emblem of this in modern-day US is the literal destruction of some of the country's most beautiful mountain formations, alongside the people living there, to unleash one of the world's dirtiest energy sources: coal. The fact that man-made global warming is a specter hanging over the human race does not concern corporations because it is an "externality" – something we all have to pay for, while they privatize the profit. Mountaintop removal mining (MTM) is a relatively new method of extraction which involves blasting the top off mountains to access the coal inside. It has become increasingly popular across Appalachia despite the damage it does to the health of those who live in nearby communities as well as the harm it does to the natural environment. But, of course, money talks. And it goes on, but not without a fight.

Vernon Haltom, 48 and a father of three, used to live in the small West Virginia town of Naoma, near the bottom of a mountaintop mine. He left in 2009 after five years, because, he said, the mine made life impossible. "One of the things you really notice is the blasting," he told me. "The companies detonate in Appalachia the equivalent of a Hiroshima bomb every week, in terms of the amount of explosives. It feels like an earthquake; sometimes you don't hear it, you just feel it." He has now become one of the outspoken fighters against the destruction of America's natural heritage, and was the co-founder of Coal River Mountain Watch. In the process he has put himself in danger – another reason he left Naoma was the death threats he said he received from Massey Energy, the huge company which is at the forefront of mountaintop removal mining in the area. He also complained of the dust the blasting was sending down on to the communities. "The real problem of blasting is dust, silica dust from rock, whatever elements have been isolated from the surface for hundreds of millions of years are put into the atmosphere. The nitrate and other blasting by-products that come down on communities where people live and breathe, that's something that the agencies are supposed to be regulating, but they refuse to do anything about it. They don't think it's an issue at all."

He recalled one episode when he was going home from work and walking past Marsh Fort, the local elementary school. In the sky above the school, the sun could be seen only dimly through the dust cloud. "The agency never bothered to come out and investigate," he told me, still angry years later.

A growing body of scientific studies has outlined the health impact on communities in the areas where mountaintop removal mining is being carried out. In July 2011, the peer-reviewed *Journal of Community Health* published a study which posited that among the 1.2 million people living in central Appalachian communities affected by mountaintop removal mining, there were an additional 60,000 cases of cancer directly related to the practice. In the previous month, a study by researchers at West Virginia University found higher rates of birth defects in Appalachian areas with mountaintop removal mining compared with non-mining areas. These include central nervous system and gastrointestinal defects.

The sad truth is that state agencies have been captured by the racket, and now work more for the companies than for the people they are meant to represent. Instead of acting on their powers to regulate the industry and enforce laws and regulations, they are merely the legitimizing tool through which big business operates. Corruption is built into the system in the form of revolving doors between the regulators and the companies. An inspector will spend a couple of years "regulating" then move on to a coal company without a bat of an eyelid. “We’ve had polls for years to show people are opposed to MTM, unfortunately politicians don’t care what’s right, they will be swayed more by wealthy companies that finance their campaigns rather than people,” said Mr Haltom. On West Virginia election day, both the Democrat and the Republican love mountaintop removal mining, he said. “Given the financing that the coal industry does, they butter bread on both sides. It doesn’t matter if you have a D or an R after your name, you should just have a C, for the Coal Party.”

“There is an emerging body of science [about] health effects in communities effected by MTM,” Melissa Waage, campaign director at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental advocacy group, told me. “Two important studies in the past month show higher rates of birth defects and higher rates of cancer, and the activists have picked up on that and have brought that to Washington and said this is literally killing us and we’re not going to take it.”

Of course, the functionaries of the racket were busy legitimating it with the usual excuse for exploitation: investment. “Mountaintop mining helped the economics of Appalachian coal miners,” said John Bridges, US coal analyst at JP Morgan. “It lowered cost and improved productivity in a competitive sector.” So all the people whose kids are dying of cancer should be thankful. But he admits it’s harder for these destroyers to go about their work now. “Now we have a situation where the easy opportunities have been mined and costs are going up. And environmental lobby is opposed to the method, so permits are much harder to come by.” The coal companies themselves chime in, mirroring what corporate interests use around the world, as we have seen in Haiti: “but we bring jobs!” “There is no question that the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] is stymying job creation at a time when the US economy is struggling, and when jobs and the economy are the top concern of most Americans,” said Deck Slone, vice-president of government relations at Arch Coal, one of the worst offenders. In 2010, the EPA elicited fury from coal companies and some local politicians when it tightened its guidance on the criteria for granting permits for mountaintop mining sites. It followed a move by the regulator to set aside 80 proposed mining projects for "enhanced review".

Lenny Kohm, former campaign director of Appalachian Voices, one of the many grassroots organizations that have sprung up to oppose mountaintop removal mining, said the activism is working. "Without question it's had an effect," he said. "It used to be until several years ago that that industry had carte blanche. If they applied for permit it was automatically granted. Through the efforts of our group and others, through legislative channels, but also direct action and working on agencies, the EPA, which is responsible for issuing permits, about a year ago they took 80 permits and held them up for further review, while major permits have been denied." He added: "I would bet that within the next five years mountaintop removal doesn't exist at all. The most important thing that will get us across the finish line are our efforts on making this a national campaign, we've taken it all over the country. I will brag a little bit, I don't think there's many people left who haven't heard of it; six years ago nobody had heard of it."

The fight of the people of Appalachia for their homes and the rights of the natural environment shows that the needs of capital to reproduce itself incessantly can still be trumped when the wider population is awakened to the issue free from corporate-backed propaganda. In fact, there lies the key to defeating the racket. Both Republicans and Democrats rely on coal money to get re-elected so working within the political process can be futile.

The fight is made harder because the corporations have all the money – they have millions of dollars to bribe elected officials, to influence the national media and get their voice heard in Washington. The residents of

Appalachia have no such money, but their voice was still heard above the din of lies and dissembling. "If you want to encapsulate our strategy, we want to form public opinion and then leverage it to get political will," Lenny said. The official political process is broken, so the people have to work outside it, building their own media outlets, and building consciousness of what this racket wants – its tentacles in every part of our lives.

FRACKING

One of the few bulwarks against the power of capital to run rampant in the US are the regulatory bodies which are there to enforce the rule of the law. For this reason, these bodies come under concerted attack. When I was in Washington, the issue burst on to the news agenda when a gas well in Pennsylvania exploded and sent thousands of gallons of fluids coursing through the drilling site and into a local tributary. The fluids were laced with a medley of dangerous chemicals, forcing seven families to evacuate their homes. The accident created more controversy for a method of gas extraction known as hydraulic fracturing. Its supporters in the corporate world claim it will end US reliance on foreign oil and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

"Fracking" has been around for decades, but only in the 2000s were big shale gas deposits found in the US. The racket could barely conceal its excitement. The accident happened on a drill site working the Marcellus Shale, which stretches over New York, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, the biggest natural gas deposit in US. As many as 100,000 wells are expected to be drilled along the shale over the next half century if allowed to go ahead unrestricted. Fracking involves injecting fluids into shale rock to unlock the natural gas inside. Many countries around the world are betting on shale gas as a big future source of energy as traditional sources of oil run out. But while the business press was in raptures and the mining companies sang the praises of this new frontier of profit-making, ordinary Americans were speaking out against a technique which has the potential to destroy communities and landscapes, and puts people in danger of cancer and other diseases. Cuadrilla Resources, the first company to explore for shale gas in the UK, suspended operations at one site in fear that it might have triggered two small earthquakes near Blackpool in northwest England. In the US, local communities have been up in arms over the practice. State legislatures across the country are passing new laws to stem the perceived environmental fallout: the fluids used to break up the rock can contaminate the water supply. "Clearly, water pollution is a big problem, as well as the impact on air quality," Myron Arnowitt of Clean Water Action, an environmental group, told me. "We need to make sure drinking water supplies are protected and stop waste water being discharged into rivers without real treatment."

The companies are also acting like Wild West criminals. The Pennsylvania state environmental agency found 1,200 environmental violations at gas drilling sites in 2010, and one in six wells had violations. There is a clear record that the fracking industry has poor environmental management and when things go wrong they are very significant for local communities. "The states are reacting to events on the ground, rivers being contaminated, well blowouts, leaks that they were seeing in well casings," said Mr Arnowitt. "The problem is that states never sit back and say, 'Let's stop drilling and think about what is going to happen if we drill all these wells'." These same companies do not even have to divulge what chemicals they use. The Texas House of Representatives, of all places, passed a bill that would require fracking drillers to make public the chemicals they use. "Although there have been no cases of the process contaminating groundwater in Texas, the people say they want to know the contents of the fluid used in the process," said the Texas bill's sponsor, Republican Jim Keffer. Texas Railroad Commission chairman Elizabeth Ames Jones, meanwhile, told a US energy department hearing that it was "geologically impossible for frack fluid to migrate into the water table" because the process took place too deep in the earth. Texas is actually at the frontier of some of the biggest discoveries of shale rock, particularly in the south of the state. One recently discovered formation which runs from the Mexican border to the south of San Antonio has been called the largest onshore oil or natural gas find in the past 50 years. Bills, meanwhile, have been introduced in California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York to stop fracking.

The EPA, the only bulwark the American people have against big business in this case, has been responding extremely slowly to concerns. Its spokespeople were hesitant to take a line when I spoke to them. Of course, as an institution which might impinge on corporate bottom lines in America, it was under concerted attack by the corporate sector. "We will lose several years of development and have to spend money on bringing in natural resources from around the world [if the EPA intervenes]," said Ray Ludwiszewski, who was general counsel at the EPA in the 1990s and is now a lawyer at Gibson Dunn. This is another facet of the racket – racketeers will use any excuse to get their way. In the case of fracking, the companies and their lackeys were using the excuse that America has to rely on foreign oil – a serious concern – when shale gas can meet those needs.

SHEDDING THE REGULATOR

In 1998 Arch Coal, the second largest coal producer in the US, unveiled its plan to build the largest mountaintop extraction operation in West Virginia's history, a 3,000-acre site with huge mineral deposits. The

Missouri-based company spent the next decade clambering over various logistical obstacles until in 2007 it was granted a permit for the project by the US Army Corps of Engineers. But the project hit a snag in 2009 when the EPA vetoed the permit under the Clean Water Act. The EPA ruled that the new project "may result in unacceptable adverse impacts to fish and wildlife resources", adding, "the damage from this project would be irreversible". The project remains stalled. Arch Coal filed a lawsuit to defend the original permit against the EPA veto.

You may think that this was the EPA doing its job, acting in the interests of preserving America's nature and its people, but it was also stepping on the toes of big business, and that made it Public Enemy No. 1 in Washington. This story, alongside countless others, became *causes célèbres* for the Republican Party and its allies in the business community.

"This over-regulation all started with the Obama administration," William Kovacs, director of environment and regulation at the US Chamber of Commerce, told me. "Four months in, it became clear that they were moving very aggressively on greenhouse gases and there was a list of other rules they wanted to rewrite." Some might point out that saving the planet from global warming might not in fact be a bad thing, but there is scarcely a less extreme organization in the US than the Chamber of Commerce, the organization which represents the interests of Big Money. As the most powerful business lobby in Washington, it saw only the dollar signs – a disintegrating world didn't enter the equation. The US Chamber of Commerce published *Project No Project* which outlined a litany of projects around the country being held up because of "excessive regulation", including Arch Coal's mountaintop mine.

The EPA is targeted not because it is doing anything wrong, but because it is the most powerful and active regulator, with its rulings effecting large swathes of US business. Of course, the Chamber trotted out its usual excuse for allowing businesses to do whatever they want, saying "all too often EPA provides little consideration to the jobs lost or economic consequences of its actions". In this schema, everything that business wants to do is permissible, because any check on the power to expand and accumulate could impact on the number of people they can employ. It's a vision of apocalypse, but these forces are indeed winning in the US, and the spaces for people outside of the rat race of capital accumulation continue to shrink. The Republicans, ever loyal to Big Capital, were trying to shift regulatory powers from the EPA to the Congress, including barring the EPA from regulating carbon emissions. "Big polluters would flout legal restrictions on dumping contaminants into the air, into rivers and onto the ground," Linda Jackson, the EPA administrator, told Congress. I spoke to Henry Waxman, the ranking member of the energy and commerce committee and a senior Democrat who said: "The Republicans are science deniers. They don't just want to limit regulations, they have a proposal to make a finding that the EPA was wrong in deciding greenhouse gases are a threat." The American political establishment, though, did not just see the land as expendable. The people of the country, too, had for decades been sacrificed on the altar of the racket's thirst for more dough.

ELEVEN

WORKING AMERICA

OCCUPY, NEW YORK CITY

In the early part of 2011, I heard about a protest happening down the road from our office in Washington, DC. Knowing it was not up the *Financial Times*' street – a sit-in at Bank of America – I decided to do a story on it. The group was called US Uncut and was setting up protests in over 50 cities across the US, targeting the massive cuts being made to public services to pay for the corporate greed that had bought about the financial crisis. It was based on a group that had done similar work in the UK, focusing on using tax revenue gained from the richest people in their society – which they avoided assiduously – to bring down the fiscal deficit. The group was armed with all the facts, pointing to a 2008 congressional study which found that nearly two-thirds of US corporations do not pay federal income taxes thanks to the use of loopholes and offshore tax havens. Bank of America was the first target of these coordinated sit-ins and protests because it was the biggest bank by deposits in the land. To add to the protesters' ire, this same bank had received $45 billion in federal bail-out money in the aftermath of the financial crisis. I decided to call up Bank of America to get its perspective on what seemed like completely legitimate protest. "I don't know they are protesting against us," said a bank spokesperson, not completely ingenuously. "The bank paid back all of the Tarp [federal bail-out money] in 2009 with interest. Our practice is to follow all relevant tax policies and pay taxes when taxes are owed."

The group's British analogue and inspiration, UK Uncut, had made headlines after targeting retailer Topshop and its owner Philip Green, as well as mobile phone company Vodafone, with spontaneous demonstrations at stores in London and around the country. Both companies had become famous for their tax avoidance.

The American economy's slow recovery from the great Recession had caused unfair cuts to public services while corporations were reaping record profits. Many, in fact, wondered why it had taken so long for a movement of this type to coalesce in the US. I called up US Uncut to see what they wanted to achieve. "In the UK, it's a wildly successful model for compelling people to organize themselves," said Rizvi Qureshi, an organizer based in Washington. The group called itself a decentralized, horizontally arranged network of people, using US Uncut's website as a messaging hub. It was a grassroots movement "aimed at resisting painful budget cuts by calling for an end to corporate tax dodging". The organizers of the movement hoped to channel the union and worker demonstrations in Madison, Wisconsin to create a wider "progressive Tea Party movement" and shift the emphasis away from an attack on entitlement programs to corporations and banks. US Uncut wanted to turn its protest sites into symbols of public institutions being cut in the latest 2011 budget. "One idea is for people to use props and turn the bank into a school to protest the cuts in funding for the vital Pell grant," said Mr Qureshi. Pell grants help support undergraduate education for students from low-income families. But, after this, the movement seemed to die down, and the precursor to Occupy is all but forgotten. The protests happened, the local media covered it, but then everyone went home.

Then one morning in September, by which time I had moved to New York, I saw a message online about a protest at Wall Street, which hoped to occupy the area and turn it into a democratic place where people could discuss the positive changes the country vitally needed. I told my editor, who again looked confused as to why I thought this was newsworthy. "Sure, go down, but these things happen all the time." So I did go down, as an activist more than anything else. And this was different; the touch paper had been lit. Over the next weeks and months Occupy Wall Street, the movement of the 99 percent, would thrust itself on to the American political scene. I covered every protest in the period for the *FT*, often with my colleague Shannon Bond, and saw upfront what resistance to the racket in America looks like. It was spreading like wildfire. In Boston, hundreds of demonstrators marched on the state house, while protesters in Chicago beat drums outside the Federal Reserve Bank. In New York, economics Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz, actress Susan Sarandon and filmmaker Michael Moore all stopped by Zuccotti Park to lend support. Despite a ban on tents and sleeping bags in the park, protesters had turned the area into a makeshift village. There were separate areas for sleeping and sign making, while free medical aid, clothing, toiletries and food were available. Another area was filled with people working on laptops and video editing equipment.

At Zuccotti Park one day, I got chatting to Victoria Sobel who told me how her parents had worked hard all their lives but were still struggling to make ends meet. That's why the 21-year-old Cooper Union student had been sleeping rough in downtown Manhattan for nearly three weeks and did not plan on going home any time soon. She had been there since the first day. “I’m fed up with the way our financial system is structured,” she told me. “My parents work harder than anyone I know, but I’ve had to watch them really scrounge. That’s the reality for me and many people. This is not a hypothetical situation,” she added. “This is a critical situation, that is going to continue on past our movement.” She told me she is not typical of the growing ranks of Occupy Wall Street protesters – because there is no typical protester. “We have a spectrum socially, ethnically and ideologically,” she said. “It’s very spread out.” People were intent on creating a functioning and equal environment, right at the heart of the most insane system of money and greed the world has ever known. “The morale is high, we’re at a crucial point,” Victoria continued. “We really need to begin to address infrastructure and sustainability, we want to create an environment that is conducive to getting work done.” Aware of how the corporate media usually present anyone who genuinely challenges powerful interests, private or public, Victoria believed that the protesters’ image had to be cultivated. “We particularly need to be conscientious of what we are doing because we are being set a high bar,” she told me. “I’m in for the long haul.”

Some observers, including Van Jones, a former advisor to President Barack Obama, were already calling the Occupy Wall Street protests the start of a “progressive” version of the Tea Party movement. “You are going to see an American fall, an American autumn, just like we saw the Arab spring,” Mr Jones said.

As the protests extended into a third week in New York and sparked similar demonstrations across the country, even Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke was asked about the growing movement during an appearance before Congress. “Like everyone else, I’m dissatisfied with what the economy’s doing right now,” Mr Bernanke said, adding that protesters had cause to be unhappy over the economy and political issues.

Of course, Occupy Wall Street and its spin-offs found little support among Democrats, outside of a few lawmakers on the left of the party. “I think [the movement] reflects an inchoate anger and frustration at the failure of the Bush and Obama administrations to hold people to account for malfeasance over the last few years,” Eric Foner, a Columbia University professor who teaches the history of American radicalism, told me. He said that if history was any judge, the fact that the demands of the Occupy Wall Street protesters were so far “unfocused” did not mean it would not develop into a mass movement. “In the 1930s labor had unfocused demonstrations and strikes, dealing with very specific things, then it developed into the modern labor movement.” He added that some of his students had joined the protests, many of them enthusiastic supporters of Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign. “I think it’s a warning sign for the Obama administration that that kind of enthusiasm doesn’t exist any more.”

“The message of Occupy Wall Street is we think both political parties are owned by the same guys,” David Graeber, a former professor of anthropology at Yale who joined in the protests, told me. “If democracy is to mean anything, it means that everybody has to weigh in on this process of how money is created and promises are renegotiated.” He added: “I think [Occupy Wall Street] is really promising because people realized after what happened in 2008 that the story we’d all been told is not true. Markets don’t really run themselves, the debts aren’t sacred.”

A MOVEMENT TAKES OFF

People sat in a semi-circle listening to other activists in Zuccotti Park, where the days were punctuated with what the protesters called “general assemblies”, forums in which activists discussed political and economic issues and announced plans of action. To amplify speakers’ voices, the crowd repeated every phrase, creating a call and response chant that echoed across the park. One speaker announced a march in solidarity with the 45,000 Verizon workers who were on strike. Another called for more people to join an early morning trip to the studios of Good Morning America, the ABC talk show. Over time the unions, representing working people across New York and the country, came out in force to show support for the protesters. The Transport Workers Union, which has 38,000 members, tried to bar the police and the city's transit authority from requiring drivers to transport arrested protesters, after police had commandeered city buses to carry some of the 700 demonstrators arrested on one march across the Brooklyn Bridge. A federal judge struck down the order. After they offered such a heroic helping hand, I called up the union to find out what they thought of this great uprising against the 1 percent. "The protesters have hit a chord with workers and working families," Jim Gannon, the union spokesperson, told me. "We are expected to pay for Wall Street's implosion with jobs and wages and benefits. Protesters are putting a spotlight on that. We're trying to do what we can to grow that spotlight." Mr Gannon said the union had been in contact with the organizers of Occupy Wall Street about how to help. "They said they don't need anything right now, they are organized," he added. "So we are going to provide moral support, and over the next weeks and months there will be material support as needed."

US labor unions used the momentum of anti-Wall Street protests as a way to amplify their members' concerns at a time when collective bargaining rights were under attack across the country. In Wisconsin, public sector workers lost collective bargaining rights after a drawn-out fight with governor Scott Walker, while New York's Public Employees Federation, which represents 54,000 state employees, accepted a three-year pay freeze that would save the state $400 million. It was the latest show of support for the protests spreading across the country from a labor movement that had been hit hard in the aftermath of the recession by job losses, high unemployment, state budget deficits and an often-hostile political environment.

Several hundred members of the SEIU's local 32BJ, New York's largest property service workers' union, rallied near the New York stock exchange in downtown Manhattan to call for better contracts and a "fair deal" for working Americans. The union, which represents 120,000 office cleaners and other property workers nationwide, also organized rallies in Philadelphia and Washington. Faidla Mrkulic, a 60-year-old office cleaner at Pfizer's midtown office, told me: "I was able to send my kids to school, to put food on the table, to pay my rent. The young generation deserves better. Whatever I had, I want them to have."

"This is the time to be in solidarity with labor," Nelini Stamp, an Occupy Wall Street representative, said. "Everyone is going through struggles – losing pensions, foreclosures, student debt." "The first few days were hard because most of us haven't experienced true democracy, which is what this is," said Danny Garza, 26, a student from Sacramento, California, who said he served in the Iraq war. "Everybody has a voice, an equal vote." Mr Garza said his goals were to "end corporate personhood", separate government from business and promote the rights of low-income citizens. "People on the outside think we don't know why we're here and what we want," he said. "This is a revolution." David Good, 24, an artist and Aids activist, said: "This is not about overthrowing the government, this is to bring attention" to inequality and the destruction of the social safety net. He added: "The people that we bailed out are raking in record profits … I would like to see Congress tax the hell out of them. I want the banks and Wall Street to pay their fair share."

I continued to follow the outpouring of anger against financial injustice as it bubbled up. In a march on Times Square, chants of

"Occupy Wall Street, occupy Times Square, occupy everywhere" rang out across the demonstration, as police on horseback blocked off the road and protesters were forced to line the sidewalks. Rebekah, a student from Philadelphia who did not want to give her last name, told me: "I think it's important that we build a community of discontent about what is happening in US society." She said she had traveled to Manhattan for the day to join the protests. "I'm here because I am against inequality and the corporate ownership of our society."

THE STUDENT VICTIMS

In fact, students were flocking to the demonstrations en masse – they were another demographic seen as expendable by the racket. When the financial crisis hit, higher education, some of America's most vaunted institutions, was thrown under the bus. California's budget, just before the Occupy protests started, cut $650 million from the University of California's funding. The brilliant university, which I attended from 2004 to 2005 and comprises ten campuses across the state, was facing a $2.5 billion shortfall. Michigan, which had experienced a decade of declining state funding to its universities, at the same time cut 15 percent from higher education – dropping the proportion of the total cost of education the state covers to 22 percent, a record low. In comparison, in 1987 the state supported 60 per cent of costs. "It's a prescription for long-term disaster," Molly Corbet Broad, president of the American Council on Education, an advocacy group, told me. "The types of jobs that create exports are shifting radically, and require skills and educated people. If we lose a generation of college-age students because they don't have the opportunity to go to college, we will live with the consequences."

In the aftermath of the recession and resulting high unemployment, many young people in the US had seen university as a refuge from a difficult job market. But the cost of attending public school continued to rise, as the racket saw an opportunity to bring public universities into the "market". "It's a massive hidden tax on families," Michael Boulus, executive director of the Presidents Council of the State Universities of Michigan, told me. At the University of Michigan, the state's flagship campus, tuition for the current school year was 6.6 percent higher than the previous year. The University of California raised tuition 9.8 percent after an earlier 8 percent rise, and officials have proposed further increases in the future tied to expected cuts in state funding. "The UC system is on the rocks," Peter McLaren, a professor of education at the University of California, Los Angeles, told me. "It was supposed to be affordable to those who could get in, now it's not affordable to anyone. It's a dream that has not just been deferred but extinguished." Debt loads were also growing. Student loans jumped to $550 billion in the second quarter of 2011 compared with $90 billion in 1999. Faced with a higher bill for their education, many students were changing their priorities away from idealism to getting it over with. "I noticed a big difference in quality at the end," Victor Sanchez, a recent sociology graduate from University of California, Santa Cruz, told me. "You see a lot of scaling back, which creates a lack of engagement. People have to focus on getting in and getting out."

Student debt had increased nearly sevenfold from $80 billion in 1999 to $550 billion at the end of June 2011. Other estimates from the Department of Education put outstanding student loans as high as $805 billion. But the unemployment rate for 20- to 24-year-olds was nearly 15 percent – higher than the overall 9.1 percent rate – compromising the ability of graduates to pay off their growing debts. Student loan delinquencies had risen from 6.5 percent in 2003 to 11.2 percent in June 2011, nearly as high as the 12.2 percent rate on credit cards. "The long-run outlook for student lending and borrowers remains worrisome," Moody's, the rating agency, said in a report. "Unlike other segments of the consumer credit economy, student loans have not demonstrated much improvement in performance despite some improvement in the broader economy."

Alberto Gutierrez, a 38-year-old doctoral student at the University of California, Los Angeles, told me he had had to borrow more money and take on a part-time job to cover his expenses, including a $3,000 monthly mortgage payment. He received some financial aid, but not as much as he had hoped. "It's a public university so they've been cut a lot. Resources are pretty slim," he said. To tide him over, Mr Gutierrez borrowed another $10,000. "I'm going to be about $25,000 in debt when I finish. I've never owed that much money." Mr Gutierrez is not waiting for a bail-out like the banks. He wants to stay in higher education when he finishes his degree, but finding work will be hard. He accepts he could go into delinquency. "In California, there's no university hiring, I will have to relocate and even then most are hiring for non-tenure track positions," he said. "I'm looking to end up with a temporary lecturer position, which I'll have to juggle with other part-time work."

The burden of rising educational lending has, as usual, fallen disproportionately on the poorest students. While the average family paid 9 percent less for college in 2010–11 than the year before, the amount paid by households making less than $35,000 a year increased 14 percent. To meet rising demand, low-income parents contributed more from income and loans. And while students received more grants and scholarships – funding that does not have to be paid back – most of that increase went to middle- and high-income families. The University of California had seen a jump in financial aid applications for undergraduates as the school has raised tuition to meet a growing budget gap. "Clearly we are also concerned and acknowledge that it's tougher than it's been," Nancy Coolidge, associate director of student financial support for the University of California system, told me. More students qualify as needy, she said, and more families at all income levels have increased borrowing. The difficult job market has affected how readily students can pay back their loans. Ms Coolidge added: "We haven't yet seen a big drop in those who get jobs but we have seen a flattening of earnings, especially within the first five years after graduation."

The University of California and California State University systems have even eliminated programs ranging from nursing to computer technology to classics at some campuses, and the University of California, Riverside had postponed opening a new medical school because of funding constraints. "One of our concerns is that college and universities are moving more into a market system rather than producing knowledge for the benefit of society," said John Curtis, director of public policy at the American Association of University Professors. "These things are pushing higher education in the direction of how much can someone earn rather than what they have a passion for."

Students were not the only ones suffering. Officials complain that wage cuts, as well as less generous pension packages and fewer available tenure-track positions, make it hard to retain and compete for top faculty. "Most talented faculty members are being recruited away – to their homeland, to other nations or the highly endowed private universities," said Ms Broad. The gap in salaries between public and private schools has increased in every academic year since the recession began in 2008. "The bottom line is that salaries have been stagnating during the past several years for full-time faculty," Mr Curtis said. "There seems to be an increasing shift to hiring professors who are off the tenure track." Increased uncertainty is also damaging the quality of teaching. "When faculty jobs are insecure, it's a threat to academic freedom. They don't feel they can raise controversial issues, they don't have time to work with students …. they don't have the time they need." It was the perfect result for the racket – less troublesome critics for the system to deal with.

THE BATTLE NOT OVER

Back at Occupy, in the end, the owners of Zuccotti Park, Brookfield Properties, told the demonstrators to leave so the area could be cleaned. Brookfield asked the New York Police Department to clear the park and the administration of Michael Bloomberg, New York mayor, said protesters must leave temporarily. Occupy Wall Street called Brookfield's cleaning plans an "eviction" and urged their supporters to come to the park for a "non-violent action". The group also organized clean-up crews that worked on that day to sweep and mop the park ahead of the deadline. Shortly before the 7am deadline, however, the city said Brookfield had put off the cleaning operation. A statement from Cas Holloway, New York deputy mayor, said: "Brookfield believes they can work out an arrangement with the protesters that will ensure the park remains clean, safe, available for public use and that the situation is respectful of residents and businesses downtown, and we will continue to monitor the situation." "The fact they backed down is a clear sign that this movement is demonstrating a lot of power," said Yotam Marom, who had been living in Zuccotti Park.

People kept coming downtown to show support. "Aside from our personal feelings about corporate greed, we found out yesterday that our union had endorsed Occupy Wall Street," said Richard Addeo, a 60-year-old electrician from New Jersey who had come out with fellow members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. "We have to honor what they say and we also believe in it." Some corporate executives have also said they understand protesters' grievances. Even the racket's spokesmen were supportive. Laurence Fink, chief executive of BlackRock, said that he was "very encouraged" by the protests and surprised they had not occurred sooner. He said that it would also be foolish to "turn our back on this protest movement."

In New York, on October 10, we went to the home of Rupert Murdoch, chief executive of News Corp. Protesters stood in the doorway of his building on Fifth Avenue chanting: "Murdoch – pay your fair share!" After 10 minutes, organizers rallied marchers to the next stop, the home of David Koch, the co-owner of Koch Industries and a funder of right-wing Tea Party groups. "Murdoch is one of the worst – but there are plenty more millionaires and billionaires," shouted one demonstrator. Most of the placards and charts called for increasing taxes on the rich and reducing inequality. The Occupy Wall Street movement refers to itself as the "99 percent", in reference to the fact that 1 percent of Americans control 40 percent part of the country's wealth. The march marked a new strategy for the nascent New York movement, which had so far been based near Wall Street. "I think it's an excellent tactic. These people are symbols of a system based on greed," said Ted Auerbach, a 63-year-old activist. "This is not going to stop until somebody with great authority comes and talks to us," said Patricia Malcolm, a member of an inter-faith coalition of clergy that joined the protests. "Let's start with the millionaires, that's why we're going to their houses." One onlooker, Eric Breeding, who worked for an art auction house on the Upper East Side, said he was supportive of the demonstration. "It's a good way to get media coverage. Maybe some rich people will pay attention," he said.

The Occupy Wall Street movement now released a declaration outlining protesters' grievances, which ranged from stripping the collective bargaining rights of workers to the torture of foreign citizens to the perceived influence of corporate interests over politicians. "This is what an actual grassroots movement looks like," Tim Robbins, the actor, told me. “It’s a bit sloppy and disorganized but full of passion.” The mood was festive with some protesters in costume and groups chanting: “Blame Wall Street, not Main Street.” One speaker drew a roar from the crowd by saying: “We have to start by taxing the rich.” Most of the participants brought their own signs, with messages ranging from anti-war slogans to condemnation of police brutality. The vast majority singled out the financial sector and rising inequality in the US. One man held a placard that read, “Money talks, 99 percent walks”.

On the last protest I attended, helicopters hovered in the sky above the park, while the New York Police Department used metal barricades to direct the heavy flow of pedestrian traffic. More students held up signs calling for relief on their loans. Ani Monteleone, 29, who graduated in 2006 from Oregon College of Art and Craft, said: “Our society isn’t creating enough jobs to absorb the people who are graduating from college.” “Things have gotten so bad that everyone wants to be a part of this,” added Ross Fuentes, a 23-year-old holding a sign from the Freedom Socialist Party. He said he was one of the young people energized by Barack Obama’s presidential run in 2008, but was now disillusioned. “Obama ran a great campaign, then he shut the gates,” he said. While the protests were largely characterized in the media as a young persons’ movement, it attracted older people, too. “It’s time people stood up and expressed the need for profound change,” said Barbara, a 70-year-old literary agent who declined to give her last name. Her husband, John, a retired publisher, also in his 70s, said he wanted to see higher taxes on wealthy Americans and a return to the Glass-Steagall Act separation of investment and commercial banking that was put in place during the Great Depression and repealed in 1999. “Things have been going downhill for the past 40 years,” he said.

THE DOWNFALL OF US WORKERS AND THEIR UNION

One man who had experienced "things going downhill" was Pat Buzzee, a softly spoken 58-year-old, who has spent his working life as a machinist for Electric Boat, a submarine manufacturer near his home along Connecticut's Long Island Sound. Early in his career, in the 1980s, Mr Buzzee was one of 30,000 who worked in southern Connecticut's thriving shipbuilding industry. He now works as an inspector, but the industry has shed 20,000 other workers in the region over the past two decades. Many are still out of work and others have had to accept lower wages elsewhere. Difficulties have persisted even for those who have held on to their jobs. "In the late 80s we were in competition with another shipyard here so the company, in order to stay competitive, would hold wages down," Mr Buzzee told me. "For five years we never got a general wage increase. After a few years that really catches up with you. Costs are going up but your wages aren't." He added: "I see myself as working-class, and the last couple of decades have been very hard for people like me. If it wasn't for the union, I wouldn't have the standard of living I have today. I think everybody should have a right to join a union, if the laws were even on both sides, you would see more people organized."

The economic figures reveal that the downward pressures Mr Buzzee has felt for years had long been spreading throughout the American middle class. Since 2006, median wages have continued to fall across the board in the US, and have never fully recovered from the 2000–01 financial crisis when the dotcom bubble burst. The real median household income peaked at $53,252 in 1999. For male workers in the US, the long-term trends have been even bleaker. "What's happened to the American man since the early 70s is quite dramatic," Michael Greenstone, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, told me. In 2009, full-time male workers aged 25–64 were earning on average $48,000 – roughly the same as in 1969 in real terms. Meanwhile, in the same 40-year period, the income of the top 2 percent of working-age men has jumped 75 percent. But the average American man has not only missed out on 40 years of wage growth; wages have actually been in free fall. As the labor force has fractured and become more flexible, increasing numbers of men have started working part-time or on short-term contracts. When part-time workers are included, the median wage for the American man has *dropped* 28 percent since 1970 in real terms. "It's a horrifying statistic. I think it changes everything," said Mr Greenstone. "To put that into perspective, in real terms it takes men back to where they were in the 1950s. I don't think there's been a period in American history where you've seen such a large, systemic, long-term decline."

Fewer American men are now able to work a steady 40-hour week, and their ability to provide for their family has diminished significantly as a result. "It has changed the character of the American family," said Mr Greenstone. At the same time the "life narrative" of the working American man has disintegrated. The path whereby a working or middle-class young man would choose a profession, train, join a union and follow in his father's footsteps no longer exists. In modern America, the foundations of the economic system have shifted, with the advent of computerization, technology and increased global trade. Facebook has replaced US Steel. "This new capitalism – the financial industries, the culture industries, high tech – is very elitist, so people with incomes in the middle who work in this sector stagnate and people at the top as we know get very rich," Richard Sennett, a professor at New York University and author of *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, told me. To compensate, he believes, unions need to rethink how they work and become more focused on workers' life narrative, not just wages. "It's very hard for men in this new form of capitalism to get much sense of self-respect out of their jobs," added Mr Sennett. Along the Connecticut coast, men blame their plight on a combination of factors: falling union membership, jobs moving overseas due to the decline in the rate for profit for manufacturing and stagnating wages. The results of this on modern working life have created a new "precariat" class – a proletariat afflicted by endless precarious part-time jobs. There is also the "financialization" of the US economy since the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system in the 1970s which contributes little if anything to the real economy and may even harm it. "I was at church recently and in the parking lot I was talking to a guy and his wife, and he basically said to me, 'We can't afford to live anymore'," recounted Joe Courtney, Democratic congressman for the district, which is home to the shipbuilding industry. "This guy wasn't on food stamps or anything like that," he told me. Like many in declining industrial towns, Mr Courtney, who is the major champion of the shipbuilding industry on Capitol Hill, blamed free trade pacts and the steady decline in union power since the era of President Ronald Reagan for killing jobs. "The decline in union membership is certainly attributable to free trade agreements. It has gone from a pretty heavily unionized state to a minority situation." In the 1950s, about one-third of the US workforce was unionized; by 2006 the figure had dropped to 12 percent.

John Olsen, president of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in Connecticut for the past 23 years, put the blame for the stagnation of wages squarely on decades of attacks on unions. "If you look at the declining lines of wages and union membership, you see they both go down together, they correlate nearly exactly," he said. "While the rich get richer, we've all noticed that we can afford less and less," said Mr Buzzee, who has an unemployed wife and daughter to support. "Now you don't have the same discretionary income where you can go out to eat a couple of times a week with the family. Now you might do it once every two weeks." He isn't optimistic about the future. When he was growing up, he remembers his parents and two siblings "never going without". His mother didn't have to work, and his father made enough in the Coast Guard. "We never seemed to want for food or anything, we had clothes on our backs." But those days are gone now, he said, maybe never to return. "Nowadays it's impossible for one parent to support the family, and even with two working it's a real struggle."

The aftermath of the financial crisis has also exacerbated the number of men earning nothing at all. Since 1970, their number has increased from 6 percent to 18 percent. In a taxpayer-funded career center in Largo, Maryland, a clutch of men in their fifties are the human face of that statistic. They sit trying to relearn skills they are rapidly losing while unemployed, desperate to find work. Bert Smith, 56, lost his last job in insurance soon after the financial crisis hit after 30 years in the sector. "I'm having difficulty in finding a job, my job skills are a bit rusty," he told me. "If I want to get back into the job market right now, I will have to accept a significant drop in my wages." However, the fact he has a wife and children to support may force that decision on him sooner than he would like. "I wish we were doing better but if you dwell on yourself, you're going to get depressed," he said. "At least I have the opportunity to find a job," he added, grateful for small favors in modern America. "There are other economies that are falling apart."

Soon after visiting the career center, I spoke to John Harris, who at 52-years-old did not expect to be living with his parents. But nearly two years after he lost his $150,000-a-year job at a chemicals company, he moved home to New Hope, a small town on the Pennsylvania–New Jersey border, to save cash. Even with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Penn State, he had struggled to find work. “Most of the jobs I see, I know I can do, I am qualified to do,” he said. “It’s the employers, they just aren’t hiring.”

Life was about to get even more difficult. For the past two years Mr Harris had received unemployment insurance, regular pay-outs from the multi-billion-dollar joint state and federal program that kept many unemployed people afloat after the recession. But the previous month, he had received his last payment. About 7.3 million US workers collect some form of unemployment insurance benefit, with the average weekly benefit just under $300 a week in 2011. This compares with 2.8 million in December 2007. Typically, state bodies pay benefits for 26 weeks and the federal government pays up to 73 weeks more. But as rising unemployment forced more people to rely on the benefit, both state and federal government increasingly wanted to limit their pay-outs.

Pay-outs totaled $159.4 billion in the year to June 2010, up from $31.1 billion in the 12 months to June 2006, in line with rising unemployment. Now legislators intent on cutting spending had the payments in their sights. “I think that everybody is concerned that this drumbeat about how people aren’t actively looking for jobs is going to impact the program,” Jane Oates, assistant secretary of employment and training at the Labor Department, told me.

In 2011, six states had instigated unprecedented cuts to unemployment insurance programs, trying to reduce the length of pay-outs from the standard 26 weeks. Michigan, Missouri and South Carolina had all cut the maximum duration to 20 weeks, while Florida enacted a sliding scale which can be as low as 12 weeks. Many states also capped the maximum amount of money they will provide through unemployment insurance. Florida’s maximum weekly rate was set at $275. “Unemployment claims skyrocketed during the period from 2008 to the present,” George Wentworth, an analyst at the National Employment Law Project, told me.

As a result, 30 states' unemployment trust funds – the money that employers pay as a tax on wages and from which unemployment insurance is paid – had become insolvent. "Most states did not save for a rainy day," said Ms Oates. "When they had a few dollars in their trust fund, they eliminated the business tax, for example." Federal extensions to state unemployment benefits were also under threat. During periods of high unemployment, Congress usually extends the number of weeks of unemployment insurance after state obligations finish. There is currently a maximum of 99 weeks of benefits, though it can vary from state to state. The high rate of long-term unemployment forced Congress to appropriate general revenues to cover payments.

Advocates of unemployment insurance argue that it has an important effect on the US economy during downturns, calling it a sort of "working man's bail-out". For every dollar spent on the benefit, the economy gets a $2 boost, the Labor Department estimates. "People receiving [unemployment] benefits aren't putting the money in their mattress; it's pumped right back into the local economy," said Ms Oates. From where Mr Harris sits that view may seem a bit optimistic. "It's very hard. I don't spend money on anything," said Mr Harris, who has two children in college. "Things will now get worse, but when I have a bad day, I just think about all the people around the country who are less fortunate than me."

DIVIDE AND RULE

One of the racket's methods of breaking the working class and unions was to negotiate "two-tier" wage structures. In September 2011, the United Auto Workers (UAW) accepted a new deal with General Motors, which put in place two pay levels for incumbent workers and new employees. Soon after, Chrysler, the car manufacturer, reached an agreement with the UAW, which created 2,100 jobs. Although terms of the contract were not made public, it was assumed that some form of "two-tier" wages was part of the deal. The move reflected unions' weakened position in the aftermath of the recession, as companies threatened big lay-offs unless unions agreed to lower the bar in negotiations. This tactic had re-emerged in Detroit in 2007 when the UAW accepted contracts with three automakers implementing the two-tier wage system. New hires earned $14 an hour while established workers were paid nearly double.

The two-tier system began during the Reagan administration in the 1980s, but the new innovation did not last long; wages collapsed into a single tier within years of the contracts being signed. "It was done a lot early in the 1980s. Back then it was considered quite revolutionary," said Gary Burtless, a labor relations expert at the Brookings Institution. "In the end, unions made big concessions." The reappearance of the two-tier scheme reflects a union movement feeling the heat as it struggles to weather attacks from Republicans across the country. "These are certainly challenging times," Thea Lee, deputy chief of staff at the AFL-CIO labor federation, told me. "With the loss of so many jobs in unionized sectors, like manufacturing and construction, it poses a threat to our survival." She added: "When the economy is weak and unemployment is high, it makes it difficult to negotiate a strong contract."

Public sector workers in Wisconsin lost their ability to collectively bargain after a long fight that included an occupation of the state capital and an unprecedented recall election of conservative legislators. "The trend in recent years has been to strip public sector workers of their bargaining power," said Mr Burtless. "My reading is that that seems to have stuck; in other words the unions haven't been able to rebound." It was not just conservative states like Texas that experienced the shift. Even in traditional union strongholds such as Ohio, Michigan and

Wisconsin – states with Democratic governors or legislative majorities – unions have still had to make big concessions.

Labor economists contended that, in the short run, the two-tier wage solution is popular with incumbents because it maintains wages for existing workers. “But essentially it’s a method of capturing unions,” said Mr Burtless. “In the long run a majority of union workers eventually are on the lower tier. The union leaders often get kicked out, or the two tiers merge. The voting members on the lower tier aren’t going to vote for getting lower wages for long.”

“In the private sector, if companies were on the verge of failing, unions were receptive to opening up contracts to help their employers weather the recession,” said Iain Gold, director of strategic research at the Teamsters trucking union. The Teamsters struck a two-tier deal with its largest trucking company, YRC Worldwide, in 2008. As financial markets collapsed, freight volumes fell through the floor, and YRC found it could not survive without significant concessions from its union. “In one context, the last thing we need is for employers to fail. Folks will do what’s necessary, but also required,” said Mr Gold. Membership is also down. Since the beginning of 2008, Teamsters membership has fallen by nearly half due to layoffs and closures. “This is a critical moment in our history,” he added.

While the attack on the public sector appears new and has attracted a lot of attention, Mr Gold argued that there has been a more subtle attack going on in the private sector since the 1980s. “The blatant attack in Wisconsin has shown public-sector workers what those in the private sector have been going through for decades. In the process, it has awoken organized labor across the country.” As part of the Occupy Wall Street protests, the largest private sector union in New York state planned a rally in the financial district in anticipation of negotiations over a new contract to replace one that was expiring. They were joined by workers from art auctioneers Sotheby's, who had been locked out for more than two months in an ongoing dispute, as well as Verizon workers, who were pushing for a new contract.

More Americans are living in poverty now than at any time since records began more than 50 years ago; the weak economic recovery has failed to lift incomes. In 2010, 46.2 million American people fell below the poverty line, calculated as an annual income of $22,314 for a family of four and $11,139 for an individual, according to the US Census Bureau. The increase lifted the poverty rate to 15.1 percent of the US population, the highest since 1993 and almost 1 percentage point higher than the year before. "To have hit 15.1 percent is truly extraordinary," Alice O'Connor, a professor who studies poverty at the University of California, Santa Barbara, told me. "We are entering territory which looks like the period before we even started fighting a 'War on Poverty' in the 1960s. It's quite stunning. This is a terrible statement about the depths of the Great Recession but, even more, about the recovery, which has clearly left the poorest out completely." The aftermath of the recession has seen a "two-speed" recovery for Americans, as the wealthiest maintain their spending habits and lifestyles while a record number of their fellow citizens are mired in poverty. "Income down, poverty up, health insurance coverage down or flat. The news on economic well-being in the US is not good," Ron Haskins, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, told me. *Nearly a quarter of American children are living in poverty.* In 2011, child poverty was the highest since the mid-1960s. Analysts do not expect a turnaround any time soon. "Given the widely accepted projections that both unemployment and, in particular, long-term unemployment will continue at high rates for the next several years, we can expect this pattern of continuing low income and high poverty rates for many years," Mr Haskins added.

Meanwhile, on the same day as the poverty figures were announced, Ipsos Mendelsohn, the media research group, released figures showing that things were apparently looking up for the top tier of US earners. The group's annual survey of affluent Americans found that the number of households making more than $100,000 a year was 44.2 million in 2011, compared with 44.1 million the previous year. Their spending held steady at $1,400 billion after previously falling. "Their life has stabilized," said Bob Shullman, Ipsos Mendelsohn president. "Everyone feels it when their income falls but, when you have less discretionary income, you feel it more. It doesn't hurt [the rich] as much." The survey, which polled 14,405 wealthy adults, found "almost all affluents are planning a wide range of activities in the next year, with travelling, remodelling, and investing topping this list". But there was a vast majority of Americans who were living from day to day, trying their best to survive in a society that treated them like refuse, to be discarded when there was no money to be made.

TWELVE

DESTITUTE AMERICA

STARVING, WASHINGTON, DC

One of the fallouts from the financial crisis was the inability of millions of Americans to feed themselves for lack of money. In front of my computer in Washington, DC a small news ticker went across my screen that said 44.1 million Americans were, in the aftermath of the crisis, being fed in some part by the food stamp program, which had been rechristened the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). That number, the highest in the history of the US, seemed unconscionable to me; it was nearly a third of all adult Americans. It couldn't be right. The next day I went to the social security office in a rundown area of Washington. Just off New York Avenue I found Jamie Cremeans, a 31-year-old California native, smoking a cigarette outside with her boyfriend and waiting for the lifeline that is keeping them afloat. I got talking to them, and she spoke with sadness of their predicament, a narrative familiar to millions across the country, as the poor are made to pay for the financial crimes of the rich. Her boyfriend, Ronald, was partially blind and had been receiving disability benefits for years, but Jamie was new to this. She was receiving food stamps for the first time as she scrambled to find a job. The couple had moved to Washington to find work after she lost her job in the recession, but still nothing was working. "We moved here because there's no work there. I just wanna work," Jamie said, emphasizing the word *work*. "I probably apply for five jobs a week." Her last job was in early 2010, more than a year before, when she had done seasonal work with the US census. "In California I got paid to look after Ronald, as well," she said. "I don't get that here." Without accommodation, the couple was living with a friend in the northern outskirts of DC, and Jamie said it was nearly impossible to stave off depression. "The money we get, it's not even enough for me, let alone two of us, to feed ourselves. And in California you could at least use the food stamps in a restaurant, you can't here."

The average food stamp allowance is $130 a month to cover food, nowhere near enough to keep a human being healthy. It is enough to keep someone alive – just. The racket does not want the embarrassment of people dying of hunger in the richest country in human history, but to have any sort of life, well, that would require more than $32 a week. "We never have enough food, sometimes we just go without," Jamie told me. "But there are a lot of different programs, lots of churches help out with food." You have to be near destitute to qualify for the program. It is available to anyone under the government's designated poverty level who does not have more than $2,000 in liquid assets or own a home. It is dispensed through a debit card which is topped up automatically at the beginning of the month. I followed Jamie and Ronald inside the office, which is small and decrepit. People were shouting about what seemed like a refused application for food stamps.

As the US continued to reel from stubbornly high unemployment, the number of its citizens using the program has ballooned over the three years to 2011 by almost 17 million, an increase of 61 percent. On top of this, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that only 66 percent of those eligible actually claim the benefit, meaning that the true figure of those Americans qualifying for SNAP is 70 million, or just under a quarter of the entire population. In addition, the benefits of SNAP to communities where the money is spent has helped the program escape the eye of deficit hawks. The USDA estimates that every $5 of SNAP money spent in the local community generates $9 of economic activity. Very few people can afford to save their food stamps. In the mid-2000s, the last years for which there are records, 44 percent of SNAP household heads reported their race as Hispanic or African American, though they comprise 29 percent of the general population.

I wanted to speak to the people in government who oversaw this program. It was strange to me. In the rancorous battle over spending cuts, the program, which cost $69 billion in 2010, came out unscathed. This was odd because the Republican Party was adamant about cutting any program that helped the poor to avoid destitution and ruin. Why not food stamps? I found out that, of course, it was all about money. I went to see the undersecretary for food, nutrition and consumer services at the USDA, which administers the program. “The reason it enjoys political support is that it benefits growers and ranchers,” Kevin Concannon told me, adding: “It supports areas of the country that are more Republican than Democrat.” Food stamps have to be spent on foodstuffs; you can’t buy toothpaste or toilet paper or other non-food items, so the big chain supermarkets also benefit from the business generated. Once again, the power of the business community dictates the viability of the program. “The underlying principle is how to meet basic dietary guidelines at the lowest cost,” added Jean Daniel, spokesperson for the USDA.

There is no cap on the amount of time a family can receive food stamps, but single people with no children only qualify for three months of benefits. After that, the tap is turned off. "As part of SNAP they know what they are getting when they go in," said Ms Daniel. "They work with social services to get back to work, there's a job training program." But the average time spent on food stamps for those eligible, according to USDA, is nine months, undoubtedly leaving some single and childless Americans with no food for long periods. "As Americans, we like to think highly of the good things in our country. We struggle with acknowledging that in our midst, there are people who go hungry," said Mr Concannon. "In my remarks to groups, I often say, these feeding programs, such as are listed here, had never been as urgently needed as they are right now, in our lifetime, short of the Great Depression of the 30s."

The financial crisis has forced many middle-class families on to the program and sparked a rethink among food companies previously against accepting SNAP payments. Before the financial crisis, for example, warehouse stores Costco and BJ's were not part of the program but have since joined up. Costco was forced to make its new store in New York City SNAP-friendly after realizing its initial mistake in opting out. But many complain that even with these new stores taking part, SNAP entitlements are not enough to sustain healthy nutritional levels. "All the evidence is that it's not enough for a healthy diet, it's enough to keep people from starving, to keep people from very severe malnutrition," said Jim Weill, president of the Food Research and Action Center, which does public research and advocacy. It is not just a lack of funds that can cause malnutrition for those enrolled in SNAP. "They may live in something called a 'food desert' where there's a shortage of healthy food, and if it's available, it's often at a price," said Alexandra Ashbrook, outreach coordinator of DC Hunger Solutions, which helps people process claims.

HOMELESS AMERICA

I walked to the Girard Street Family Shelter (GSFS) in Washington to talk to Juaquina Miller, a 25-year-old single mother of two who was being housed temporarily by one of the public programs under attack by the racket. After a childhood in foster care followed by an itinerant adolescence, this new home was a luxury she had rarely enjoyed. She told me she and her family live on an income of $306 a month. "I don't know where we'd be without this place," she said, sitting on a chair surrounded by kids' toys in her apartment. "I've been homeless since I was 17." The GSFS is one of many housing facilities across the US that provide a lifeline for the homeless population, which had swelled significantly in the years following the subprime mortgage crisis. It provides apartments to 20 homeless families with children, with on-site supportive services from treatment for substance abuse to job preparation. "I have to be quick," said Ms Miller when we stepped into her living room. "I've got a class in a minute!" She said she wants to get a job in law enforcement. Unfortunately, although it felt like home, the accommodation was temporary and she had overstayed the typical six-month stay. She had been on the list for permanent housing since 2007, and was still waiting.

A couple of blocks away from the shelter, lawmakers on Capitol Hill had just passed a budget in which massive cuts were quietly made to the programs that attempt to ameliorate the number of Americans sleeping rough or moving from place to place. "We will see it hitting in a very concrete way," Steve Berg, vice president of programs at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, which works on federal policy, told me. The situation was made worse by the continuing subprime crisis – there had rarely been a time in American history when social housing was as important as then, but to the Republicans and the capital they represent it was irrelevant.

The most significant cuts for the homeless population are two programs run by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The community development block grant funds help cities to pay for staff positions to get homeless people off the streets and into permanent accommodation. The Republicans had proposed 62 percent cuts to the program, while Barack Obama argued for an 8 percent cut. Eventually the budget provided $3.3 billion for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), a $650 million, or a 16 percent decrease from the previous year. "The 2011 cuts in community development and public housing funding were significant and will cause real pain for families as the economy is still rebounding," Robert Menendez, senator for New Jersey and chairman of the subcommittee on housing, told me. The main workers hit have been government employees who oversee different cities' programs, which will make it harder to organize existing facilities like GSFS.

The second cut hitting hard was the public housing program, which provides publicly owned apartment buildings at very low rent, the kind of place Juaquina Miller would like to move into but can't at the moment. The latest budget provided $4.6 billion for the public housing operating fund, a decrease of $149 million from 2010 levels. "The 2011 bill returns to long-term patterns of underfunding maintenance and repair work," said Berg. "Anyone in real estate knows that deferred maintenance means they will have to be boarded up, it means more homelessness." The problem of homelessness was getting worse in the US as the stuttering economy, the foreclosure crisis and high unemployment bit. It meant many people could no longer afford housing. The number was decreasing between 2005 and 2008, but since the recession the numbers have come back up, mainly because of the employment situation. The federal cuts came at a time when state and local budgets were in dire straits. Traditionally in that scenario, the federal government has stepped in to help out, but in the new fiscal budget, the opposite has happened. “To get an idea of size of the homeless population, we do a ‘points in time count’ that gives us a rough sketch of the amount on any given night,” Mark Johnstone, deputy assistant secretary at HUD, told me. On one night in January 2010, the agency found about 650,000 people living outside in parks and train stations, as well as in homeless facilities like shelters. But this doesn’t tell the whole story. “It’s really about two million people that are homeless, because people are flowing in and out of homelessness all the time, and might have somewhere that night,” said Johnstone. He added that each homeless person can cost states more than $40,000 per year for policing and medical services.

CAPTURED REGULATION

But in a political system that had stopped working, the likelihood of the homeless getting housing any time soon was nil (even if it did make economic sense). With these cuts, the poorest Americans, those who have never heard of a credit-default swap or a mortgage-backed security, were being asked to pay again.

Another victim from a different part of America, but still prey to the predations of the racket was Jylly Jakes. Over Christmas 2007, she realized she could no longer make her mortgage payments. Eighteen months after losing her job as a corporate bond trader, she was out of options. “I called up my bank servicer [the institution entrusted with collecting mortgage payments] and asked for a six-month forbearance,” she told me. The bank said no. Ms Jakes found work at a boutique bond firm a few months later and offered to pay the missing five payments over 12 months and stay up-to-date on her mortgage. The bank said no again and began repossession proceedings. But in late 2008, she seemed to find a lifeline. Ms Jakes signed up for a federal government home mortgage modification program aimed at helping millions of American homeowners facing foreclosure. Three years later – after three trial modifications under the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) – Ms Jakes was still fighting the repossession of her home. The outstanding principal balance is now almost $50,000 more than the original mortgage because of monthly fees "It's designed to fail," she told me. "I think it was put out there as political theatre to make it look like Main Street was going to get a hand after being the victim of an artificially inflated housing bubble."

HAMP was announced with a fanfare by President Obama in February 2009, but it is widely viewed as a failure by those using it. As of October 2011, 735,464 homeowners were in modification programs, about 20 percent of the target. The $29.9 billion program, run by the US Department of the Treasury, was meant to help 3–4 million American homeowners modify their mortgages and avoid repossession. The Treasury reported that in November 2010 new permanent HAMP modifications had fallen to 26,000 from 40,000 the previous month. The Obama administration threatened to withhold payments to Bank of America and JPMorgan Chase under HAMP for a third consecutive quarter, saying neither institution had followed the letter of the law. By 2011, the US government had handed out $666 million in incentive payments to servicers, according to the Treasury. "We are disappointed with our rating, and will continue to work hard to improve our processes and controls," JPMorgan said. Bank of America added: "While we are disappointed with this decision, these financial incentives do not drive our efforts to help our customers in need of assistance."

Meanwhile, the foreclosure crisis showed no sign of abating. "We have 3.5 million first mortgage loans in foreclosure, or pretty close," Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's, the rating agency, said. "For context, we have just over 50 million first mortgage loans outstanding, so that's a lot of loans. So it's going to take a good, solid three, four, five years to really work off that foreclosure inventory." US banks are facing mounting pressure from politicians, the courts and regulators over their shoddy mortgage foreclosure procedures. Phyllis Caldwell, chief of the Treasury's Homeownership Preservation Office, which oversees HAMP, says the system in place for managing delinquent loans was not designed to cope with a foreclosures crisis of the present scale. "With the national delinquency spike, you had everything hit at once, there was a big customer servicing problem, people couldn't get through on the phone, lost documents," she said. Homeowners complain that HAMP fails to rectify skewed incentives which make it in the interests of the servicer to foreclose. "Ultimately, major banks responsible for servicing those mortgages have never been committed to the HAMP program in its design and the Treasury department hasn't been willing to enforce the rules," said Alan White, associate professor of law at Valparaiso University and a leading scholar on foreclosure. He believes HAMP has worked in the interest of mortgage servicers rather than looking out for homeowners. "People are incredibly frustrated with the servicers, the four largest of whom are also the four largest banks," he said. "They can't get through on the telephone, they send documents three or four times. It's really just been a performance problem on the part of mortgage servicers." Housing is perhaps the most crucial prerequisite for a human being to prosper. In America, if you are poor, however, you are on your own.

LIVING IN NEW YORK

When I lived in New York I decided to find out what life was like for those who did not live on the Upper East Side, or any of the other fabulously wealthy parts of Manhattan. One housing project in Brooklyn was attracting media attention and according to the press releases its work was going to plan. After decades at the mercy of unscrupulous slumlords, the residents of Noble Drew Ali Plaza housing complex in Brownsville had found themselves a savior in Mo Vaughn, former baseball player for the New York Mets, and his Omni New York LLC. This was the man, so the propaganda went, to transform the decaying five-building project from what narcotics officers referred to as "New Jack City" (after the 1991 Wesley Snipes film in which a drug lord turns a whole building into a crack cartel) into a clean and functioning complex.

Omni New York bought the 365-unit property for $20 million in June 2007 and on the back of the purchase the police arrested 35 residents in an early morning drugs bust. It was a statement of intent. Over the next months, dozens of security cameras started to appear all over the building, peering down at the residents in the plaza, the social center of the project – the target was 400 fully operational cameras. In came the security firm Secure Watch 24 and surveillance moved from an 8am to 4pm shift to 24 hours a day. Mo Vaughn invited the media in and toured them around the crumbling interiors in a pin-stripe suit, signing memorabilia and accepting the adoration of his clamoring fans. But this was where the fairytale stopped and the reality of Omni's takeover began. For the residents who were allowed to stay in the complex, there were good omens. There were promises of new stoves, kitchens and windows for everyone. The two most run-down buildings – 230 and 240 – were being completely renovated. But there existed another set of residents for whom Vaughn's arrival was less auspicious. Countless residents were dealt eviction orders and faced the street as their next habitation. Still more were living in buildings 230 and 240 as the whole place was ripped apart around them, dust and debris seeping into everything. This group included two wheelchair-bound men. It was the typical divide-and-rule tactics of rich developers in the US.

The Noble Drew project was built in 1972 in a poor part of Brownsville, surrounded by tenements and empty lots. “It was a wonderful place to be then,” Paulette Jackson-Forbes, 45, the president of the tenants’ association and a resident since its inception, told me. “We even had intercom on the TV so we could see who was downstairs. People were embarrassed if their floors weren’t clean!” The first developer was Joe Jeffries-El, a University of Pennsylvania-trained manager. “There were 20 families of police officers, nurses, bus drivers, teachers – you name it,” said Jackson-Forbes. “It was a utopian place to be.” In the early 1980s the buildings were wrenched from Jeffries-El and the complex started its precipitous decline. In that decade the ownership and management changed hands four times. “We became atrocious then,” said Jackson-Forbes. “People hanging out, crack epidemic, no security, drugs getting a free run – at that time we were really the victims.” Eventually the tenants’ association took action. A lawsuit was followed by a new owner, Lyndon Realty. “They did some decent renovation,” said Jackson-Forbes. “They bought in a team of security – the owners were Jewish but they hired Muslim security – all the drugs went away. You could sleep with the windows up, the doors open, that type of thing.” Eventually it was revealed that Lyndon Realty was stealing and misusing funds, using one of the buildings as a facade for its claimed renovation and actually funneling money back out of the complex. Arrests were made in 1992 and the building went back to a receiver.

It was then that Abdur Rahman Farrakhan, voted one of the 10 worst landlords in New York City by the *Village Voice*, bought the property for $10. His tenure ran all the way up until 2006 when the court passed management to West Center Management which still runs the day-day operations of the complex. “Under Farrakhan the place just disintegrated,” said Jackson-Forbes. “No elevators, no hot water, no rebuilding, no security.” It eventually transpired that Farrakhan and a partner had been swindling money out of the complex by receiving government funds for hostel services. They had emptied two buildings and made an agreement with the Department of Homeless Services to run those buildings as a shelter. The rent they accrued was nearly $3,000 per unit from federal subsidies, far higher than the rent from individual tenants which sometimes was as low as $68. Eventually Farrakhan was caught embezzling money. Legal proceedings brought by the tenants' association, represented by Attorney Mimi Rosenberg, began in February 2002 in what would eventually become a five-year battle. In 2007 they won the case – the defendant was declared bankrupt and the property was put up to be sold. The tenants demanded strict criteria: $28 million rehabilitation, restoration and help to secure Section A, which would guarantee that residents could start afresh in their rent payments and no arrears from the Farrakhan tenure would de demanded. Omni New York was the only company to meet these criteria.

LEAVING THEM TO ROT

When you walk into Noble Drew housing project today you are surrounded by residents angry about the new administration. A project of cleansing the complex has been under way from the police in combination with West Center Management. Certain residents, according to West Center, have not paid rent for the whole West Center tenure – some 14 months. They have been dealt with eviction notices. Dorothy Fields is one such person. A victim of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, she fled with her bedridden husband and was living out of a van next to Noble Drew, before Alicia Allen, assistant manager for West Center, took pity and called her bosses. They agreed to put her up in a room in one of the buildings. The Fields' apartment is in building 240, which has been under construction since Mo Vaughn initiated his regeneration program in July 2007. As you step in past the piles of bin bags, there is scattered debris and dust all over the lobby area. Workmen mill around with large sheets of glass, bits of piping and other construction tidbits. The floor is covered with concrete, collections of brick, shattered glass, plastic bottles – a construction site. The Fields are two of 16 people living in this block as builders are ripping down the building around them. Their apartment inside is in bad shape. Michael Fields, who was shot and cannot walk, lies in bed building a toy car. There is no natural light as the curtains are drawn and a weak yellow light illuminates the room. There's a TV that crackles in the background. "When they gave us this place they said we don't have to pay rent," Ms Fields said. "Now they are trying to make us pay $5,000, how the hell am I going to do that?" "I can't hardly breathe at times," said Mr Fields from his bed. "I'm also vomiting now which is horrible." "There's dust coming through the window, even I have been breathing up phlegm," Ms Fields chimed in. "And because of all that trash there's worms and dead cats all around here." Ms Fields showed me a note from her doctor cataloguing her respiratory problems and their links to her surroundings. On the front of building 240 is a sign that catalogues the asbestos work apparently taking place in the basement as workers remove the piping. It is being carried out by New York Insulation Inc. who have no website and don't return calls when I enquire about their work. When the West Center team come around later they try to take the asbestos sign down before realizing the work is due to finish in December. Jackson-Forbes told me later that under Farrakhan the pipes were going to be changed but he dropped the operation after asbestos was found. She is also convening a tenants' association meeting to discuss the dangers of asbestos.

Inside building 240, Mike Gorney, 28, foreman for DV Group, the construction subcontractors, said: "There's like six squatters in here, they can't kick them out yet." But yet West Center said that only half the 16 people living in building 240 are actually squatters. The other eight are just residents, there by right, with West Center's blessing. A mother and her four-year-old son living in building 240 reported that there was no attempt to rehouse them; in fact they are being evicted. "They didn't rehouse us and now we apparently owe $4,000." Her welfare claim has removed her son so she can't pay the rent. "My little son has asthma, how do you think all this dust is effecting him? I don't even want him in here. I was living in complex 37 but they moved me here."

In building 230, which is across the plaza, there is a sign on the outside which reads: "No tenants allowed in this building. Hard hats only." On a public holiday with no construction I found over 10 people living there, squatting, with the full knowledge of West Center it transpires, although the project manager for DV Group later claimed no knowledge of this. The hard hat regulation was apparently put up after a worker for DV Group had been hit on the head by a falling brick, and now all workers walk around with their heads covered – not the squatters though. One of the residents is Ernest Bethel, 54, whom I find descending a flight of stairs on his bottom and pulling his wheelchair behind him. He has one leg, and obvious mental problems. He tells me that he has to pull himself down and up the stairs every time he wants to go out as only the construction workers use the elevators. It takes him about an hour, he said. Bethel has lived in the complex for over a year, according to West Center Management.

Another resident of building 230 is Rosemary Joiner, 69, who claimed she was thrown out of her apartment in another building and put in a single-bedroom apartment in building 230. West Center agreed this was the scenario, but they claimed she had not paid any rent. She now lives in 230 and is distressed and unkempt. When I was in the West Center office she was complaining that she had been kicked out of the room she was squatting in by her roommate. West Center Management won't give her the key to her old apartment to return her clothes there.

Building 230 is like a bombsite with detritus of every kind – clothes, bottles, garbage, electronics, concrete, brick, wood, metal – strewn over the floors. Every occupied apartment can be identified by the color of the door. Apartments that are being renovated have a new gray door; the doors in which the squatters are living are red because they cannot knock them down yet. There are all sorts of people – mostly old, and, according to West Center staff, drug users. West Center says these people are under eviction proceedings. Jaswinder Singh, project manager for DV Group, was incredulous. "Nobody lives there," he said. Is it safe for habitation? "No, it's not safe," he replied. He said that there is asbestos in the basement like building 240, but there is no sign on the outside detailing any work. Ravi Gukral, the project manager of the whole operation, said: "We follow orders, they have dates to get evicted."

On both buildings, Keish Frith, 29, administrative assistant in the West Center office on location, said: "They should have got the residents out before they started. When you are working with different people they work by their own rules. It may not be illegal, but it's not fair." "It's all for show," said a man wanting to be identified as Slasher. "They want it to look good on the outside, but really nothing is happening in here." He was waiting outside the management office to report a suspicious occurrence on the weekend. "They told me that they can't access the camera records until three days later," he said. "It's now three days later and now they say that the cameras inside the buildings aren't working." Slasher had spotted a man who he didn't recognize on the fire escape at 4am looking through his window. "I told security that morning, and they said they didn't have the ability to rewind!" He added, "I mean, someone died here two months ago, you would hope they had set the cameras up properly. I don't even think they are turned on." This lack of respect for the lives of the American poor was because they could not make the racket money. But unfortunately for these same people, before long the racket realized that locking up people was a way to make money off the destitute and hope-starved poor of America. It was called the "War on Drugs".

THIRTEEN

LOCK-UP AMERICA

SOCIAL CONTROL

As in Latin America, the domestic version of the Drug War is also a naked effort at social control. It has focused almost exclusively on the black and Latino communities of the US, who make up 60 percent of the prison population, even though they are just 30 percent of the general population. It has also made billions of dollars as the racket works to pull the prison system out of the hands of the American people and run it for vast profit. In fact, the rise of private prisons has coincided nearly exactly with the rise, over the past three decades, of the so-called War on Drugs. One study found that "people of color are represented in private prisons at least ten percentage points greater than in state-run facilities."[1] Nearly half (48.8 percent) of prisoners in the US are behind bars for drugs offenses.[2] The racket, however, never throws its own in jail: just 0.4 percent of the prison population in the US is composed of those guilty of financial crimes.

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[1] Michaela Pommelis, "Study: more people of color sentenced to private prisons than whites", *Huffington Post*, February 21, 2014.

[2] http://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_offenses.jsp

The move to put hundreds of thousands of Americans behind bars began in the 1980s when "mandatory minimum sentencing" for drugs offenses was introduced. It meant that there was no chance for discretion in drugs cases; if someone was caught with something, anything, they would be going to jail. This was accompanied by a focus on what politicians, eager for votes, called "law and order", which meant more punitive sentencing as politicians vied with each other to prove who was toughest. They were driven in part by the racket, who could smell the money. Private companies pushed further into state prisons from their strong position in the federal system. They began by soliciting speculative prison building projects at the county level, creating what has become known as the "prison bubble". The private companies would go in to a rural county and say, you can build a jail that's much larger than anything you'll need for your own criminal justice problems, but you can lease out extra beds to receive contract prisoners from the federal government. In Texas nearly a dozen counties entered the bubble using taxpayer debt but now can't find prisoners to fill the buildings. At this point the private companies ditch the contracts and the taxpayers are left holding the bag. This is how capitalism works – the risk is socialized, and the profits privatized. The quantity of human misery and waste this system has created is horrifying. In the 20 years to 2007, the national prison population in the US trebled to 1.6 million people, or nearly 10 percent of adults, by far the highest in the world. Nine percent of these are held in private facilities, where the average cost of keeping an inmate housed for a year comes to $25,000. Unfortunately for the private interests making a killing, the bubble now appears to have burst: incarceration rates did not increase as fast in the five years to 2011, and in 2010 fell for the first time in 20 years. But you can be sure that these companies are coming up with ingenious ways of maintaining this lucrative business.

When I was in New York, this move to privatize the prison system was actually picking up again. The racket was using the excuse that state deficits had to be combatted, and that the American people should hand over "costly" prisons to private interests. The racket was using this same excuse to get its hands on all sorts of public institutions, and the prisons attack was working, despite the fact that it was not obvious it would save the states any money. There's a pretty simple rule for these things: once the racket get a foot in any industry or institution, there is an inevitable logic which says it will want more and more. It will never be happy with running just a part of something. So Florida alone was planning to privatize 29 of its prisons. I spoke to one analyst covering the private prison system at an investment bank in Atlanta who said it was "the single biggest privatization program of state or federal prisons in the history of the US". Arizona was also having a string of public hearings on a plan to add thousands of privately operated prison beds, while Ohio had announced plans to raise $200 million by selling off five state prisons. Something was definitely happening here. Others followed suit as private contractors pitched themselves as a solution to cash-strapped states' fiscal woes.

The Florida plan had a new twist. Instead of outsourcing only newly constructed prisons, the state planned to outsource existing beds as well. I called up the Florida state senator who was pushing this reform most forcefully. Elected representatives all over the US represent the racket, not their people, but it's still worth hearing their rationalizations. "Probably 5 percent of prisons in Florida are currently privatized," J.D. Alexander, an influential Republican, told me. "This expansion of privatization will bring it to one-third." As time went on, there was no doubt he, and his allies in the private prison business, were looking for 100 percent "penetration" of the market. The public would own nothing. Of course, this was merely the "American way".

"I think competition makes us better, it's an American sort of view: let's create competitive environments, privatize a portion," he added. But it later emerged that the state would incur $25 million in losses from compensation paid to 3,800 workers who would lose their jobs in the privatization program. Corrections officers are already among the lowest-paid employees in the state. "During the privatization process, they will go into unemployment and foreclosure," said John Rivera, president of the Police Benevolent Association, which represents Florida's correction officers and was opposed to the privatization. "They will get their cars repossessed, they won't be able to pay for medical care, and so the state will have to pick it up. And those that have seniority, it will cost the state to relocate them." Lawmakers, largely Republican, and the contractors argue that private companies can run prisons cheaper – largely through savings on wages and benefits for workers. But analysts say the statistics do not match. These saves, for example, are mitigated by the fact you have higher turnover among employees and more lawsuits due to lack of sovereign immunity. Private companies also usually cherry-pick the lowest-cost offenders and leave the state to deal with serious and dangerous offenders who cost more. "A lot of the time when you see numbers for private prison costs to state costs it's not apples to apples because they are not taking most serious offenders," said Scott Henson, an analyst covering the corrections industry in the US. "In Texas the private facilities haven't wanted to take on serious offenders." Private prisons want the healthiest prisoners, not the "hard-core" troublemakers – the ones with misdemeanours or felonies – they want the state to bear those costs. But a lot of states have yet to realize that this is a scam, or have realized but it is making too many people rich for them to stop it. In private prisons you have less experienced officers, and a lower guards-to-prisoners ratio, so you really are running a risk of prison riots and prison escapes. The real reason why private prisons don't want real troublemakers, and want the least violent prisoners, is so they can run it like a college dorm rather than prison.

PERVERSE INCENTIVES

It is also in the companies' interest to keep more and more people locked up as it pumps up their bottom line. If you have a state-run prison there are fixed costs that are there whether it is full or half-full. For privately run prisons – where you are getting paid by the head – there is an incentive in the other direction. It sometimes crosses into overt corruption, such as paying judges to send children to prisons, which is an extreme example of the warped and unhealthy incentives that private incarceration creates. In February 2011, a juvenile court judge in Luzerne county, Pennsylvania, was convicted of racketeering after he accepted money from a private prison operator in exchange for handing down extremely harsh sentences in order to guarantee prisons would be full. "It simply does not save money," said Mr Rivera. "For example, recently they told legislators and the community that they would save $22 million a year yet now they are already $25 million over budget. The private prisons' selling point is they can do it more cheaply. If they are able to do it more cheaply, even though the evidence does not support it, they have to cut somewhere so they tend to cut staff … In prisons understaffing has consequences. In 2010, in Kinman, Arizona, three prisoners escaped from a private prison and the official inquiry found the private company at fault because of lax staff training. There are very real risks. If you understaff a prison the consequences can be very serious indeed."

Of course, the companies in the sector are big political players, being significant campaign donors in elections across the country. In reality, the privatization effort is more driven by political patronage than cost savings. It's quite simple: anytime you have profit as the main motivator for the safety of the public, it is a bad formula. Government's first responsibility should be to its people; a corporation's first responsibility is to its investors. "I'm reminded of the old adage, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is," David Fathi, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's national prison project, told me, accurately. "The claim that private corporations can do the same job more cheaply and still generate profits for stockholders is pretty implausible on the face of it," he added. "It is in fact not true."

Two companies dominate the US private prison sector: Corrections Corporation of America and GEO Group. Over the past decade the two "big ones" have gobbled up a host of smaller companies and consolidated the industry. In 2010, Geo acquired the third public company that operated in the market, Cornell, for $730 million in stock and cash, creating a "duopoly". They are faceless, both refusing to be interviewed by me. This monopolization of markets is another feature of capitalism: power and capital centralize. The companies are not run particularly well. They are highly indebted and rapidly accumulating more debt. They both dip into day-to-day operations to service debt payments. But the racket obviously think they will get more business in the future: Corrections Corp's shares rose 7.5 percent from 2006 to 2011. Wall Street is happy to lend them money at low interests rates.

The politicians are a product of this: they work for, and are probably funded by, the real power in this debate – not the plucky state senator, but the corporate behemoths that are devouring society and all its assets. They already own over 300 prisons nationwide and it's getting worse. Now there are around 135,000 prisoners in private prisons in the US – 7 percent of all state prisoners and 16 percent of all federal prisoners. Private prison corporations are trying to expand the market for their services. In communications to shareholders they are forthright about the fact that they are looking to expand prison privatization and lobby and provide campaign contributions strategically. They are sophisticated in their efforts to generate business. "We are at a turning point for incarceration policy," said Mr Fathi. "For the first time in 30 years, the prison population actually went down last year." There is no question that private prison companies deliberately and strategically support and recruit politicians who will lead to increased incarceration. Just as Eisenhower warned about the military–industrial complex, we now have a prison–industrial complex. Prisons will make more money the more people we incarcerate.

The police, often, themselves see the poor they are employed to control as nothing more than scum. When I took a ride around Brooklyn, New York City, with two white cops, their disdain was obvious. The two partners are regular car buddies and they work the 3.30pm to 11.30pm shift. They had a real disdain for their constituents "More filthy people," said Officer Cavanella as we passed a housing project. This theme continued as he tried his hand at quack sociology, appropriating shibboleths from extreme conservatism. "These are low-income people who just don't care," he said. "They don't respect us, they don't respect themselves, they don't respect nobody."

CUTTING JUSTICE

While profit was being made from the privatization of the prisons, funds were being savagely cut from the public side of the justice system, in keeping with the racket's priorities. In New York, I met Jimmy Boone Amos waiting outside the arraignment court in downtown Brooklyn for her husband to appear. It was 4pm, but she had been sitting there since early that morning. "I'm tired of waiting," she told me. Her husband was arrested 23 hours earlier for grabbing a woman in the street during what Ms Amos calls a diabetic attack. "I'm really worried about him," she added. "They've had him for ages and not told me how he is. I don't know if he has insulin or anything."

United States law prescribes that anyone charged with a crime must be arraigned before a judge within 23 hours. But cuts at both the federal and state level meant that court budgets had been devastated and that the target is often not met. Over a single weekend in 2011, 57 percent of arraignments in Brooklyn went over the required period. But arraignment times are just one of many problems that cuts to the state budget have created in New York, and the US at large. The poorest and most vulnerable are hit hardest, as is often the case when public services are cut. Ms Amos is one of many New Yorkers who have had to suffer needless pain as the state draws back on its constitutional commitment to properly fund its justice system.

New York chopped $170 million from its $2.6 billion budget for 2011, around 6.5 percent. This had already had a serious impact far beyond arraignment times. Across New York, courts now close at 4.30pm instead of 5pm. The ability of judges to take in all the information they need is now compromised as they rush through cases so they can adjourn at the right time. The state used to have night family courts, where if a woman wanted support or an order of protection she could go after work or at an unsociable hour. These are now closed, putting at risk women who are victims of domestic abuse and other forms of violence.

Small claims courts in Manhattan, the Bronx and Queens used to be open for four nights a week, but that has been reduced to one (and in Staten Island's case, the reduction is from once a week to once a month). Small claims courts are where tenants can take on their landlords and consumers can challenge big corporations. Both those crucial functions are disintegrating. "In Staten Island now, if you wanted to sue Macy's for whatever reason you would have to wait nine months," said Dennis Quirk, president of the New York state court officers' association.

"Certainly morale is lower than years past," added Howard Schwartz, a Brooklyn-based criminal defense attorney sitting outside the same downtown court. "There's more work for fewer people." He says it takes longer for clients to get into court, that cases take longer, and that judges now have to give less attention to arraignment cases because of the heavy load. "The system is overburdened," he added. In 2011, the New York court system laid off 441 workers, or about 3 percent, on top of the 2,000 who retired in 2010, swelling the hordes of unemployed in the city. Those still in a job are massively overworked. "The cuts are having system-wide effects," adds Mr Quirk. "Everybody has too much to do and it is having an effect on people getting their day in court and justice being served."

The US prides itself on its adherence to the rule of law, but starving the courts system of money is seriously affecting the ability of ordinary Americans to get justice served. Evidence is being more hastily assembled and analyzed, people are spending too long in cells before being charged, and vulnerable people are losing the slim protections they have against violent and abusive relatives or partners. Moreover, these cuts were not inevitable. In the three years that the emergency "millionaires tax" had been in place in New York, it generated $13.8 billion in revenue. The law raised the rate of income tax for New Yorkers making more than $500,000 by 2.1 percentage points to 8.97 percent. If that tax bracket were raised again, many of the New York justice system's problems could be solved, and the long wait of people such as Jimmy Boone Amos, and many more Americans across the country, could be made shorter. But the racket does not like such ideas. In the ruling ideology, that's "class war". But in many places around the world, the endless and empty propaganda is wearing thin, and people are taking things into their own hands. Here's where hope begins.

PART FOUR

WE'RE LOSING YOU

FOURTEEN

TURF WAR

THE MONROE DOCTRINE

A brief re-cap. The early 21st century has seen the biggest political shift in the western hemisphere since the murderous thug Christopher Columbus thought he had arrived in the Indian subcontinent but had actually "discovered" the (already inhabited) Americas. Since 1823 and the so-called Monroe Doctrine, the western hemisphere has been designated by American planners "our backyard", a vast resource-rich expanse open for pillage and exploitation for the gain of an elite class in the US and a handsomely rewarded quisling elite in the colonized countries. This dynamic has been constant and unbroken for two centuries. President James Monroe obviously didn't put it in these bald terms when he made his address to Congress on December 2, 1823, which forms the basis of this so-called doctrine. Monroe said that day that countries in the western hemisphere "are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power", which sounds like a good idea for the subjected peoples – until you realize Monroe instead gives his own country the right to take over from the European powers. "We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers," he continues, "to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety." He was telling the European powers simply, "It's ours now!" And it was. Under this naked imperialism dressed up in fusty diplomatic language, the US took Cuba from the Spanish in 1852 (the US still illegally occupies Guantanamo Bay today), and then Puerto Rico in 1898 (which the US still owns today).

As the European empires broke down after World War II, the idea of imperialism became increasingly untenable as indigenous people removed their oppressors at a rapid rate. But while Europe lay in ruins, the US was rising to its superpower status, and the racket wasn't going to lose control of their "backyard" during the ensuing Cold War with the Soviet Union. Occupations were frowned upon now, not least by an American population culturally averse to empire and imperialism. So instead the intelligence services turned to subverting any Latin American government that did not support American business interests, away from the attention of the American people. First went Guatemala in 1954, a coup against the center-left President Jacobo Arbenz who had the gall to redistribute land to landless peasants from the United Fruit Company. The CIA stepped in and installed a military junta and started one of the most horrendous civil wars in history that left 200,000 people dead.

Any country that elected any sort of left-wing politician would incur a terrorist war of anti-democratic aggression. The Dominican Republic in 1963, Brazil went down in 1964, Chile through the 1960s and eventually succumbing in 1973, Nicaragua in the 1970s, and on and on. All the governments I mention were democratic, and in many instances they were replaced with a collection of open neo-Nazis, fascists and other such dregs of humanity. It was all cloaked under the guise of the war against the "Evil Empire": Soviet Russia, much like today's Islamic fundamentalism, gave the US an excuse to do whatever it wanted. Hundreds of thousands of people were slaughtered across Latin America with the support of many US household names: John Foster Dulles starting the Guatemalan bloodbath, Henry Kissinger the dictatorship in Chile, Ronald Reagan supporting the fascist Contras against the democratically elected Sandinistas in Nicaragua. These figures are all hailed as great heroes to this day in mainstream American culture, although not by the rest of the hemisphere, for obvious reasons. John Perkins, who worked as what he called an "Economic Hit Man" for a US corporation for decades, has written a book exposing the type of work he did. He described it succinctly in an interview: "Basically what we were trained to do and what our job is to do is to build up the American empire. To bring – to create situations where as many resources as possible flow into this country, to our corporations, and our government, and in fact we've been very successful. We've built the largest empire in the history of the world. It's been done over the last 50 years since World War II with very little military might, actually. It's only in rare instances like Iraq where the military comes in as a last resort. This empire, unlike any other in the history of the world, has been built primarily through economic manipulation, through cheating, through fraud, through seducing people into our way of life, through the economic hit men. I was very much a part of that."[1]

But even with this tragic history of exploitation and mass murder, optimism swept the hemisphere as the 21st century opened. The western hemisphere – especially Latin America – was finally shaking off the shackles of the imperial bully, and this time they were winning. No longer would democratically elected leaders from Chile to Bolivia to Brazil to Venezuela allow their sovereign nations to be balked by the giant upstairs. When they proposed economic plans to give the wealth of their land to the people who actually live in it rather than to rich corporations and exiles in Miami, they would no longer be resigned to the US trying to overthrow them, they would be ready.

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[1] "Confessions of an economic hit man: how the U.S. uses globalization to cheat poor countries out of trillions", interview with John Perkins, *Democracy Now!*, November 9, 2004.

In Bolivia, when the fascist paramilitary groups in eastern provinces like Pando massacred indigenous peasants and the pale-skinned traditional elite tried to start an uprising against democratically-elected President Evo Morales, he didn't stand for the encouragement the US was giving: as we have seen, he kicked out the ambassador. He also brought the governor, who had incited the massacre, to justice. On top of this stern action, all the newly independent center-left leaders of the Latin American bloc came to Morales' aid at the UN, they knew that together they were a powerful force that couldn't be crushed under the boot of the American government.

Hugo Chávez in Venezuela followed suit and kicked out the US ambassador there. And who can blame him? In 2002 when he himself was ousted temporarily by a US-backed coup that put a millionaire businessman into power and suspended the constitution and democracy, the people of the Venezuelan barrios fought back, marching in their hundreds of thousands for the first leader that had ever considered them worthy of their own resources. He had to be reinstated because the people of Venezuela were too powerful and alive to their plight to watch history be repeated.

This particular generation of left-wing leaders has learnt from the past. They know about the CIA, the National Endowment for Democracy and other agents of US government, and they are consciously locked into a battle. In Bolivia, for example, the indigenous communities are equipping themselves to fight back; there is none of Salvador Allende's erroneous belief in pacifism – "if the right-wing try to liquidate democracy we will fight you to defend civility", is now the message. And because there is no Cold War, the US government and its conduits in the corporate media are finding it harder to paint any politician who is vaguely left of center as an agent of Soviet Russia. Having said that, the *New York Post* did without shame describe Chávez – one of the most frequently elected leaders in the world – as a dictator. In addition, the US imperial project is so bogged down in the Middle East – where support for dictators has been equally obscene – that they have in many ways taken their eye off the ball. It's arguable that without 9/11 the Venezuelan revolution would be history by now, as well as Morales. Further still, when in 1975 the US helped set up Operation Condor – a continent-wide terror network – with their surrogate General Pinochet, they could count on the compliance of the security states they had helped set up. Now the tables have turned. With Fernando Lugo's election in Paraguay the whole continent became a left-wing independent bloc; and although Lugo was unfortunately overthrown in what he called a "parliamentary coup in judicial dress" in 2012, for the first time in centuries, things are looking up in Latin America, and a strong alliance is building. Democracy, economic justice and dignity are returning to the continent and US influence has started to wane.

TAMPER-PROOF DEMOCRACY

In an essay in 2008, the historian and theorist Perry Anderson asked why the capitalist classes, after World War II, allowed democracy to flourish in Turkey but not in Spain. In two short paragraphs he explained the history of "western democracy" in the 20th century. In Spain after the war, he wrote: "democratization was an unthinkable option for [General] Franco because it would have risked a political volcano erupting again, in which neither army nor church nor property would have been secure." For Franco and his business supporters, dictatorship was the only option. But they needn't have feared. After 36 years of the general's nightmare rule "[e]conomic development had transformed Spanish society, radical mass politics had been extinguished, and democracy was no longer hazardous for capital. So completely had the dictatorship done its work that a toothless Bourbon socialism was incapable even of restoring the republic it had overthrown." Now, in other words, Spain was safe for democracy, which was duly established in 1975. "In this Spanish laboratory could be found a parabola of the future," continued Anderson, "which the Latin American dictators of the 1970s – Pinochet is the exemplary case – would repeat, architects of a political order in which electors, grateful for civic liberties finally restored, could be trusted henceforward not to tamper with the social order."[2]

This *tamper-proof democracy*, sensitive to vested interests but not the will of the population, has been erected throughout the world, pushed primarily by the US government. Any disobedience to the "consensus" is punished harshly. Leaders who don't subscribe to it are vilified in the American and general, western media, and in the event of any particular populations taking democracy too seriously, the US will put in a tyrant to prepare the ground for the right kind of democracy. Historical examples of democracy getting "out-of-control" are legion, from Aristide in Haiti to Mosaddeq in Iran. And the enforcers are notorious too, from the Contras in Nicaragua to Suharto in Indonesia. But history is lived in the present and the dynamics of international relations haven't changed all that much. We are now living through the latest, possibly last, stage of this battle between a global population that wants a democracy that prioritizes the people, not big business and not capital, and a ruling class that wants it the other way round.

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[2] Perry Anderson, "After Kemal", *London Review of Books*, September 25, 2008.

This time around, the fly in the ointment is Latin America, the main site of global resistance to tamper-proof democracy. It might not be a coincidence that the fight-back is being consolidated in a part of the world often dismissed as "irrelevant": it's probably the reason the US and its allies haven't managed to stamp it out (although, to be fair, they've tried). This form of democracy so loved by the West and their satraps in the developing world – one of a disengaged population picking between two business parties every four years – is being seriously subverted all over the continent. The great democratic pantomime we are subjected to in the West (and the nations we make in our image) isn't working on the people of Latin America. Their democracies are becoming safer for their people. There are real political parties, like Evo Morales's Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), with real principles and real objectives that are serious about tampering with the social order for positive change.

This percolation of knowledge into the US mainstream is naturally scaring the gatekeepers of political discourse, who have been able to expatiate on their love of democracy for decades without being troubled by the existence of alternative definitions. Now the pretense is becoming harder to maintain and the reaction is sadly predictable. The almost subconscious contempt for democratic movements in Latin America is the result of centuries of unthinking domination, a similar psychology to that of a schoolyard bully who's had his run of the yard for so long he gets complacent. Suddenly, when he's taken his eye off the ball in order to clobber some other poor kid for his bag of sweets, the first kid decides to finally stand up for himself. It's hard to take.

For Perry Anderson, the template of Spain after Franco's destruction of civil society "has become the general formula of freedom: no longer making the world safe for democracy, but democracy safe for this world". Through a confluence of historical factors, Latin America is the crucible where the last chance to make a world safe for democracy is being fought. The importance of this battle shouldn't be underestimated: if it fails, we might not get another chance.

CARACAS, VENEZUELA

Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, is the focal point of so many of the country's divisions. The center of the city is a mix of bustling street markets and modernist skyscrapers lined along wide avenues. In the mountainous suburbs the city's elites live in tree-lined streets peppered with flashy condos and fancy pizzerias. But Caracas is perhaps best known to outsiders for its barrios – the vast slums in which thousands of makeshift houses cling precariously to the foothills. The barrios have long been the hub of support for Chavismo. It was the people in the barrios who descended from the mountains to the presidential palace in their thousands to support Chávez when he was briefly deposed in a US-backed coup in 2002. When I was in Caracas, I took one of the city's new cable cars to visit the barrios. The cable cars were built to link different parts of the vast slums. The lines to get on the bus at the other end are long. It used to take two hours on the bus through the winding mountain roads that snake through the barrios; the same journey by cable car takes 17 minutes and costs 10 cents. The cable cars that hover over Caracas have transformed the lives of thousands of the poorest Venezuelans. They are state of the art, clean and run without any problems. It appears no money was spared in its construction. As you walk through the barrios, graffiti dedicated to Hugo Frias Chávez, the secular deity of Venezuela since his death, is commonplace. Some of them are stencils, obviously paid for and designed by the Chavista government itself, but many are improvised outpourings of thanks from the people.

Venezuela should be one of the richest countries in the world. With the world's second largest reserves of petrol, it has a natural resource that makes the swathes of ghettoes and palpable poverty in the country an embarrassment. For centuries before Chávez, this petrol had been extracted with the interests of the racket in mind: money flowed to western multinationals and their shareholders, alongside their oligarchical Venezuelan representatives. With Chávez, for the first time, the natural wealth of the country was spread throughout society, focusing as it should on the poorest. Missions of teachers and doctors were sent into the barrios to bring to an end the shame of poverty in such a naturally rich country. As a result, over the period of Chavismo, Venezuela has reduced poverty by more than any other country in Latin America, including Brazil and Bolivia. This is not to say there aren't problems with the country and some tenets of Chavismo. The lack of judicial independence is a significant problem, with Chavista control near absolute. There have been shortages of essential foods and inflation is sky high. Some of this is undoubtedly the fault of the traditional elites in the country who have tried to squeeze the economy to bring down Nicolás Maduro, the man who replaced Chávez after his death, as they tried during the huge strikes early in Chávez's tenure. This "making the economy scream" as Nixon called it, worked wonders in 1970s Chile, helping to create a climate in which General Pinochet could overthrow Chilean democracy. It looks less likely to succeed in Venezuela. Despite the anti-government protests of 2014 which called for "*la salida*" of Maduro ("the exit"), the Chavista government keeps winning democratic elections fairly. What is the racket to do?

In the frankly embarrassing hysteria that gripped the American media, Chávez was compared to Saddam Hussein, Pol Pot, Idi Amin and even, echoing Donald Rumsfeld's idiocy, Adolf Hitler. "Mr Chávez shares much in common with these former dictators who killed and trampled human rights as a means to their own ends," wrote Douglas MacKinnon in the *Washington Post*. Chávez had some of the most stellar democratic credentials in the world. Since being democratically elected in 1998 by a landslide victory, he went to the Venezuelan people again in 1999 and won approval for important constitutional changes. He won another general election in July 2000 when he was elected with 60 percent of the votes, which dwarfs figures from the "home of democracy" such as the US and UK. Later, in December 2000, he won a referendum that called for the state monitoring of labor unions' elections. And then, a presidential recall referendum – which was enshrined in Chávez's 1999 constitution – was triggered in August 2004 when opposition groups collected signatures from 20 percent of the electorate, as the constitution stipulated. Again Chávez won: 59 percent of the population voted "no" to the recall in an election overseen by the best election auditors in the world. By my reckoning, that counts as three general elections and two referendums in nine years. It is hard to find a more exercised populace in the entire world. This stands in stark contrast, of course, to George W. Bush, who, and it is now uncontroversial to say this, stole the election in 2000 in a dictatorial putsch more common to a banana republic. And this brief primer also leaves out the most telling part of recent Venezuelan history: the coup attempt by right-wing groups in 2002, which tried to use the military to topple the democratically elected president. The journalist Eva Golinger, in her book *The Chávez Code: Cracking US Intervention in Venezuela*, assiduously documents, through the revelation of previously secret US government documents, the succor and support that various of its agencies gave to this anti-democratic military coup, which briefly succeeded until hundreds of thousands of downtrodden people from

Caracas took to the streets to demand the release of Chávez who had been incarcerated by the new business junta.

So why the lies and misinformation about Chávez? The answer is simple and is deeply rooted in the political and economic policies of the United States. Venezuela under Chávez provided a symbol to the rest of Latin America, and to the wider world, of what a more egalitarian society can look like. In the aftermath of his election, Chávez created what he called "Bolivarian Missions" after Simón Bolívar, the great Latin American liberationist from the 19th century, aimed at reducing the massive and crippling poverty in the barrios around Venezuela. Hundreds of free medical hospitals were built providing healthcare to many people for the first time, and local grassroots committees were established to adjudicate their affairs. The infant mortality rate came down by 18.2 percentage points from 1998 to 2006, while income for the poorest strata of Venezuelan society grew *more than 150* percent from 2003 to 2006. For the first time in many decades, the oil wealth of this nation extremely rich in natural resources was redirected back to its people, and not, as history has demanded, passed to rapacious foreigners and their elite lackeys in Venezuela.

This is a dangerous example to set, and the thirst for this kind of justice is likely to spread. Henry Kissinger, in the analogous example of Chile under socialist Salvador Allende in the 1970s, called it a "virus that could infect others". The racket continues to try to destroy it, but in the mountain-speckled skyline of south-eastern Mexico, the battle for survival and a dignified existence burns bright.

FIFTEEN

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

CHIAPAS, MEXICO

Oventik is two hours' drive from San Cristóbal de las Casas, the Spanish colonial town in the highlands of the Mexican state Chiapas. The roads are good apart from the potholes and the small animals that dart in the path of your motorbike. Breezeblock houses with corrugated iron roofs, the accommodation of the world's poor, punctuate the pavements on either side. Oventik is not indicated by anything more than a decaying sign by the side of road, and it's different here. "*Estas entrando tierra Zapatista*", says the sign ("You are now entering Zapatista land"). To the side is a gate manned by four people, all wearing balaclavas, black socks pulled over their faces with a slit cut in the middle, from which their eyes peer out. These are the members of the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation), fighting back in the poorest state in Mexico. Looking down the long drive that runs through the community, you can see grand murals on the walls of all the buildings: Che Guevara and Emiliano Zapata are recurring themes. When I put in a request to come inside, the guards take my passport and return half an hour later: "You can come in but no interviews", they told me. Oventik is one of 13 "*caracoles*" (meaning "snails" in Spanish) that are scattered throughout Chiapas. They were won by armed struggle by the indigenous revolutionary group, the Zapatistas, after they rose up on January 1, 1994, the date when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) signed with the United States and Canada came into force. As part of its provisions, the Mexican government had to change its near-century old constitution that granted common ownership of land. This was the straw that broke the back of the indigenous communities, who had suffered centuries of discrimination and oppression at the hands of the *latifundistas*, or large landowners. The neoliberal program of NAFTA, which quite simply removed Mexican sovereignty, had been edging closer in the preceding years. The *ejido* system, for example, was consecrated in Article 27 of the Mexican constitution. It's a form of land ownership, created after the revolution, whereby the *ejidatarios* have the right to the produce of the land that they work. This just and humane law was ended in 1991 with the modification of Article 27 by Washington favorite, President Carlos Salinas, who reformed the agrarian law in line with Bretton Woods dictates. Salinas also started the program of certification of land rights that transformed the lands into smaller properties. This move of sovereignty from the people to foreign capitalists set the ground for the Zapatistas, named after the Mexican freedom fighter and revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, who claimed Mexico back from international capital in the 20th century's first successful revolution.

The long path down to the bottom of the *caracol* is a muddy track. On either side stand wooden buildings dedicated to the "dignity of women", a hospital, a school, a basketball court. My guide is not interested in talking; the balaclava reveals only the eyes, and the eyes have had enough of questions. The *caracol* has many different meanings for the Zapatistas. One of their mottos is "*caminar al paso del mas lento*" ("walk at the pace of the slowest"), meaning that they can wait until the last member of the community is ready before they continue to move forward. There are murals peppered throughout the *caracol* depicting snails with the slogan "*lento pero avanza*" ("slow but moving forward") – again signifying that they will move at a snail's pace, but once they are all ready, they will progress. The Zapatistas adopt the tactic of using silence as a way of learning, to listen, not to shout. Rumor has it that they have been slowly preparing themselves and will soon re-emerge. Fuelling these rumors was the announcement when I was there that the Zapatistas would be organizing *escuelitas* ("little schools") to be held in five *caracoles*. In these *escuelitas* seasoned Zapatistas will "give classes on their thought and action on liberty according to Zapatismo: their successes, their failures, their problems, their solutions, the things which have moved forward, the things that have got bogged down, and the things that are missing, because what is missing is yet to come", according to Subcomandante Marcos, one of the Zapatistas' most eloquent spokespersons, who is now back in Chiapas after a stint living in Paris. In the *caracol*, there is a feeling of empowerment and independence rare in the world, especially in this region. The Mexican military – which has carried out countless attacks on the indigenous communities – is not allowed, in theory, to come into this community, and you can feel the difference. The Zapatistas are the most organized of the indigenous resistance groups. Part of this is because of the hard-fought battles of the mid-1990s, resulting in the San Andrés Accords signed with the Mexican government through which they achieved a degree of autonomy.

ACTEAL

Further up in the mountains, among the clouds and lawns of nature, is Acteal, a small indigenous town partly run by the Zapatistas. In 1996, the most brutal of the massacres committed against the Zapatistas was carried out here, when 45 people were killed by a paramilitary group while praying in the local church. Many suspect the US-backed Mexican government was involved or at least complicit in the massacre. Soldiers at a nearby military outpost did not intervene during the attack, which lasted for several hours. Many of them were seen the next day washing the blood off the walls of the church. The Mexican government had used paid mercenary militias to terrorize the Zapatistas at that time.

I arrived in the middle of one of the many downpours and walked down the main street into a basketball court sponsored by the EZLN. The entire town was gathered to cheer on their local team. As in Oventik, the outsides of the houses and community buildings were decorated with murals depicting left-wing revolutionaries from Latin America; saints wearing Zapatista balaclavas; and children of different races standing hand in hand. A local man approached me and asked if I had seen the monument built to commemorate those who died in the massacre, and he pointed me in its direction. The monument stood a couple of dozen feet high, half covered by the clouds which were quickly descending over the village. The monument is a clay construction in which the 45 faces of those massacred are depicted, merged together in a collective wail. I went down some steps to the site where the massacre took place. No longer a church (it was torn down after the massacre), it is now an outdoor auditorium with painted wooden crosses nailed to the walls in memory of each person killed. Among the dead were a number of children and pregnant women. A man approached me and I told him that I was visiting from the UK. He asked me: "Why didn't you visit earlier, before they killed my friends?" I had no answer.

Back in San Cristóbal, I sat down with Roberto Chankin Ortega, one of the young activists who had been involved in the struggle from the beginning. We drank coffee in the café in the middle of the town's main square. “It was a big surprise for a lot of people, the uprising of January 1, 1994. My father said there hadn’t been an uprising for 50 years, an indigenous uprising,” Ortega told me. “But after there was a lot of sympathy with the causes. The demands they had were very just, it touched a chord internationally.” He continued: “I was very young at the time so there was a romanticism about the armed struggle, the communiqués of Marcos, a new language which was very poetic, influenced by rock and roll. A new language of fighting. But it was also heavy at times, you couldn’t leave the house many times.”

Mexico is in many ways a failing democracy: the political class is divorced from the people and the education and healthcare systems for the poor are in disrepair. It should not be like this as Mexico is a country rich in resources and geographically fortuitously located.

FREE-TRADE SLAVERY

When the Zapatistas burst on the scene on New Year’s Day 1994, they garnered a great deal of press coverage and international support. This attenuated the brutality of the Mexican military’s fight-back. When the Zapatistas occupied San Cristóbal, many were armed with guns carved in wood, a symbol of resistance. But the Mexican military were too strong and to avoid a massacre they withdrew into the Lacandon jungle after threats. Chase Bank’s memo a few weeks later, “Political Update on Mexico”, echoed the concern of capitalists across the West and stated: “The government will have to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and security policy.” It was, of course, exploitation and a virulent racism, around since the era of colonialism, against the indigenous people that gave birth to the movement. For centuries the white interloper infantilized the indigenous population as a method of control – it tried to make them into children psychologically, through a racist paternalism. Crushed under the yoke of the white man's guns at first, then as slaves to their economic system, this changed finally in 1994. "They stood up for themselves," said Ortega. "They are more owners of their liberty. For the indigenous, this process has dignified them. The government has of course invested a lot of money to get rid of the movement, which worried the United States, too." The government essentially wants to displace the indigenous people of Mexico, or at least those who happen to inhabit land that foreign capitalists like the look of. The white society in Mexico, in reality, still thinks of the "indio" as *poor, destitute and subhuman*.

Despite this, the autonomous zones are a big achievement in the face of extreme oppression and pressure from the government and the US-supplied Mexican military, who cannot enter the *caracoles*. Inside these zones, the Zapatistas have their own driving licenses, hospitals and schools – a real community within a state. "They are continuing to construct autonomy and resist," said Ortega. "The media don't give them much coverage any more, but the Zapatistas don't care too much, they are focusing on working on autonomy and realities."

"They survive because of international support," said a university professor I talked to. This may be partly true, but they also survive because they are organized and focused squarely on their true oppressor.

The US has trained the Mexican military for decades, sharing their manuals of counter-insurgency, alongside supplying billions of dollars to aid in the fight against drugs, a cover which is often used to discipline the dissident parts of the population, including the Zapatistas. "All over the world, the US interests make it dangerous for a lot of people," Ortega told me. "NAFTA was a disaster. A lot of public policies which were enacted as part of NAFTA have brought about privatizing of land, campesinos have been kicked off land, had their land sold or closed down." That free trade agreement itself has helped to destroy large parts of the previously thriving industrial base in Mexico, giving the narcos even more unemployed cannon fodder with which to get a grip on the country. As the *New York Times* put it: "NAFTA produced results that were exactly the opposite of what was promised … domestic industries were dismantled as multinationals imported parts from their own suppliers." But what the *New York Times* did not say is that NAFTA was designed like that on purpose. The aim was to make Mexico a slave state, even more so than it already was.

The Mexican establishment has presided over an economic model lauded by the Bretton Woods institutions and *Financial Times* editorials – i.e. high growth rates, big booty for foreign investors, and (this bit is kept quiet) yawning inequality. For example, the country's growth was 5.5 percent in 2010, the highest in 10 years, but that same year the number of Mexicans living in poverty grew by more than 3 million, putting 52 million Mexicans below the poverty line, or nearly half the population. The *Financial Times* lauded such a state of affairs in a headline as "bloody but booming". Bloody for poor people, booming for rich people – a succinct aphorism for the global economy.

"It's not just the US, it's international capitalists and their interests," said Gaspar Morquecho, a Mexican intellectual based in Chiapas who is found most days in the Zapatista café in the heart of San Cristóbal. "In Africa, Asia, Latin America, everywhere, it's the same, and it's very hard to fight." In 1992 Subcomandante Marcos defined this war against the world's poor as World War IV. World War III had been the Cold War, won by the capitalists, and World War IV was being led by the victors – a war of the markets, the arms companies, the financiers, pushing forth and destroying countries, cultures and economies. In this sense, we are seeing in this the last stage of capitalism, and World War IV is the construction of a different way of living. "The US has many plans of war – they go by names like Plan Colombia, Plan Mérida," said Morquecho, who describes himself as an adherent of the Declaration of Lacandon which outlined the Zapatistas' goals. "It's a project of control of the hemisphere and has been going on for the last 200 years. The interests of the US at the least is to control the region of Latin America, but not just that, they go to war in Middle East, provoke China in Asia. They are introducing their brutal military and billions of dollars per year spent on it. They aren't weak; it has got worse, more intense in the operations in Mexico. There is no weakness in the empire, opportunities for the EZLN are hard to find."

He is right, but the Zapatistas have shown the shape of a pocket, a pocket of resistance, an outline of how you can use modern techniques to create such public support that it is impossible for the powers that be to crush it and maintain the façade of nobility they feed on like bloodthirsty vultures. The repression against the indigenous people has been brutal since they took their destiny into their own hands. It has become more complicated in recent years because a lot of powerful economic forces have come to Chiapas to make a quick buck, attracted by the favorable "investment climate" after NAFTA. Mexico was now, like other US satellites, "open for business" as the neoliberals say; more accurate would be "Mexico is up for sale". These powerful economic forces are now trying to capture the political process completely to bypass resistance to the sell-off. The state-owned oil company Pemex is the latest of the Mexican people's assets slated for sale.

In the indigenous people's battle for their land, their enemies are not just governments on the federal or state level. Behind them, steering the ship, is the racket of private capital, the multinationals who want their resources, from water to petrol. In countries like Mexico, the state acts merely as an intermediary between foreign multinationals and the country's natural resources, giving corporate power a legitimate face as they open up the territory and evict the people. The state, contrary to its protestations, cares not a scintilla for the human rights of its own citizens. Such a state of affairs is the case in all the countries around the world that remain trapped under the US umbrella.

"The human rights situation has actually got worse over the past 20 years, in terms of the violence against the people," said Gubi Chamatus of Frayba, the human rights center in San Cristóbal which has worked closely on issues related to the Zapatistas. "Before all these mega-projects were going forward where they could, there was no resistance, the people just said OK. Now, however, these same people are arriving, and people are saying no, and they are standing in front of construction, so the violations have gone up, because the repression is harsher against these people; they don't want these situations, it's embarrassing, it's given the lie to all the talk of development and modernization." As Rosa Luxemburg put it: those who do not move, do not notice their chains.

FULL-FRONTAL ATTACK

The government of Mexico, like all states allied to the US, preaches the rhetoric of human rights but ordinary people don't see them. Before they stood up and took control, the indigenous people were anonymous, the powerful could call them free with no contradiction. When they took up arms, they became the enemy, they were no longer representatives of the "good indigenous". But the Zapatistas won the war for the hearts and minds of the world, so the Mexican military had to give concessions. The propaganda after the uprising declared "peace" in Chiapas. But 500 years of brutality and savagery will take a long time to rectify. The process for autonomy continues and with it violence. "The human rights of the indigenous, they aren't guaranteed," Chamatus told me as we sat in his office. "When an indigenous group isn't in accord with a mega-project or something like that, the state use the public force to repress it, or to move them." Once again the people of a region are held ransom to the God of Investment. The attack on the poor and indigenous is full frontal, coming from economic, social, political and military forces.

So far, in Chiapas, the Drug War-fuelled violence seen in the rest of Mexico has not arrived. The war started by President Felipe Calderón in 2006 has affected nearly every other state of Mexico. But in Chiapas it hasn't manifested, maybe because Chiapas has been heavily militarized since 1994 anyway; most of the state has seen a constant military presence since the uprising. Since that period, with US training and backing, there have been systematic violations of human rights in indigenous communities. In Chiapas, in fact, the pretext of the Drug War is being used to position more military in the state. "They are fortifying Chiapas," said Chamatus. "In our experience, the violations go up with the presence of the military. There is a strong correlation. One of the things that has changed in Chiapas is that, before, the presence of the military was for the EZLN, now it is more ambiguous, it could be for this or narco traffickers. It gives them license to do whatever they want under the guise of drugs." It was a familiar story, heard from Honduras to Colombia to Peru. It brought about a new strategy applied by the Mexican state, no doubt learnt from their American patron, whereby if a group speaks against the state it is speciously linked with organized crime, and from then on the state has *carte blanche* to do what it wants. "What they are looking to do is quite simple," added Chamatus. "They want to impugn the legitimacy of the organization, the credibility of the organization, and criminalize social protest, criminalize the defense of human rights, criminalize not being in accordance with state. This is the situation now in Chiapas."

It's a tactic as old as domination itself, and intended to target the EZLN communities because they continue in resistance. For this reason, they live in fear of the multi-billion-dollar military, which is typically the institution entrusted to enforce capitalists' interests when all other methods have been exhausted. In other words, the Mexican people pay tax for a military that is used to enforce foreign capital's interests.

There are more than 70,000 soldiers permanently placed in the beautiful hills and towns of Chiapas, a number that has been steadily rising since 1994, and the same number as in the whole of the rest of Mexico combined. From 1995 to 1999 the human rights situation deteriorated, particularly because the military and paramilitaries were sent in to "discipline" the indigenous people. The situation is not as serious now, but their presence remains strong, they routinely extort money from locals, and disfigure the landscape with roadblocks. The strategy of stamping on dissidence from the Zapatistas has moved to criminalization: they, and the human rights groups that support them, are branded as delinquents. It's an ideological war, too: rumors are spread that the Zapatistas are rich and stealing money. "The conditions of the country are in some ways worse than 1994," said Morquecho. "After 1994, there was a dirty war which had left 10,000 victims dead and many disappeared. In 2002, there was a new war with 70,000 victims, 50,000 displaced, 15,000 disappeared, and the last six years have been worse. Half the population is poor, that's 50 million people, and 15 million are outside of the labor market, in informal work. Half the population lives in extreme poverty, and this reflects in what is happening in the jungle. In this sense, we say the conditions are worse. But the other problem is, the capitalist system in this country is tremendously brutal and any act of rebellion, the answer politically is the military. In this sense, from 1994, the territory has been occupied by the military, and there is a strategy of counter-insurgency, and not a program to combat poverty. The objective is to drain the water of fish, to limit the process of resistance in the Zapatista communities. The Mexican state has the political and military clout to neutralize the EZLN and the bases of support, and it is still trying."

The indigenous still live in extreme poverty, without electricity or running water, in a virtual position of apartheid. But the process of 1994–95 is reversible, the gains of popular movements, whether of the Zapatistas or anyone else, are always vulnerable to being liquidated. When I was there the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) had returned to power; until 2000 it had been governing for 90 years in the "perfect dictatorship", riven with corruption and behaving as a serial human rights violator.

As usual, the US was on the wrong side of history. When the empire and its racket is long gone, washed up like the rest of the superpowers of history, we will be able to say this. But, for now, when the vast riches of a small number of people depend on its rapacious course, the truth will stay silent, and the Era of the Myth surges on, ripping through society after society.

SIXTEEN

REVOLUTIONARIES

CAIRO, EGYPT

On January 25, 2011 a march was planned for Cairo, the capital of Egypt. There was a lot of publicity on social networking sites, but this had happened before. People knew something was going to happen on the Tuesday but no one really knew what. On that day something started in Egypt that would upset the imperial order set up by the US in the Middle East after World War II. People rose up against the corrupt US-backed dictator, Hosni Mubarak, and demanded real rights for themselves and their country. In the ensuing violence, the military and police murdered hundreds of Egyptians who were fighting for a better chance in life – the so-called "lost generation" of unemployed, terrorized youth. The chants at the start of the uprising that pushed more people to join the protests were all economic. The people were hungry, for food and for basic human dignity, which had been ripped from them by the regime. In the end the people won the battle, if not the war. The military declined to murder them en masse, and for that the Egyptians were meant to be grateful.

I arrived in Cairo just over a year later to see how the revolutionary movement, which had not achieved its goal of overthrowing the regime but had merely diminished its power, had organized and what lessons could be learnt by other people crushed under the boot of a domestic dictatorship propped up by the most powerful country in the world. It was my first time in the Egyptian capital. There was a frenetic element to daily life on the street, with cars and people bursting from all the narrow sidewalks and roads. I met one activist, Sarrah Abdelrahman, who was something of a poster child for the Egyptian revolution, in a café on Talaat Harb Square. Before the historic events of January, the 24-year-old aspiring actress had been apolitical. Now you couldn't stop the self-described revolutionary talking about the struggle for dignity she and her people were engaged in. But 15 months on from those heady days, like many of the young secular left which spearheaded the revolt, she was disconsolate. "It's conceivable that we might end up with something even worse than Mubarak in a year's time," she told me. "I'm not going to lie. I thought the army and military were going to take the side of the people, but it seems now that they forced Mubarak to step down to save the regime, not to break the regime. I mean, the people in power now are criminals, actually they are worse than Mubarak." She added: "Now, half my generation is blind or limping or dead. The violence is out of control. When people go to a football match and then 70 kids die. They also massacred 25 Copts." But, she added: "I have hope for my generation because they were completely not politicized before, like me. Before if you asked anyone about politics or current events or wars in the region, they would only know about singers and football players, but now it's completely different." They had woken up.

THE BOGEYMAN

The US had gone quite straightforwardly from supporting the dictator, Mubarak, to supporting his replacement, the equally undemocratic

Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), and then later the coup regime of Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. True to form the US had supported and armed Mubarak to the hilt since he came to power in 1981; his regime scared the US by using the bogeyman of the Muslim Brotherhood, saying they would take over if any moves to democratization were enforced. The regime put dissidents in jail through risible military trials and torture; no one could organize without incurring the wrath of a vicious regime. For that reason, Egyptian society, like so many in a US-designed Middle East, lacked a liberal left party, there was nothing. The one thing the US had feared since Nasser – the Soviet-allied Egyptian dictator – was the rise of independent Arab nationalism, which might see nationalizations and the growth of socialism. They worked actively to destroy it – including by promoting radical Islamists, like Hamas in Palestine. The unions that had not been completely co-opted by Mubarak provided some means of organization, but when the uprising succeeded in bringing on elections, the Muslim Brotherhood took advantage of the destruction of Egyptian civil society that had taken place during Mubarak's regime and won. The Brotherhood had a leadership, they had access to the media and, perhaps most important, they had God on their side. In a population with such low levels of literacy and education, large swathes of the population were swayed by this pious party, which had little interest in improving their condition. The Brotherhood had never been leaders of the uprising; they had been reticent at first and then became followers. One of the strengths of revolution was that it was leaderless, but this also had its drawbacks.

Ms Abdelrahman for her part said she was angry at the way the US had reacted. "Before the revolution a lot of people in my generation were rooting for Obama actually," she said. "His hope propaganda was very media sexy and idealistic. But from what I've seen, first of all the tear-gas that I've smelt was made in the USA, and just the way the statements from Obama and Hillary Clinton which were like, 'Oh we're just testing the waters to see what to do.' They were a complete let-down, they just go after their own interests." She added: "I mean, that's different from Hollywood, or the culture or the people, the American people are different from the government. US foreign policy is inconsistent, they just look after their own interests, and they just don't want anyone else to be the best apart from them."

The US soon started meeting with the Muslim Brotherhood, seeing them as a bulwark against the extremist Salafis and the Brotherhood had no qualms about selling out: they made deals with SCAF and met with John McCain and any other foreign dignitaries that made it to Cairo to solidify the position of the client state. "Imagine that Egypt is a woman who is covered in wounds and she is kind of bleeding all over but she's covered," said Sarrah. "What happened is the uprising kind of unveiled all these things, so you are starting to see all this mold, this pollution, these infected wounds."

The US gives the Egyptian military upward of $1.3 billion every year, alongside joint military training. In response to the mass murder of Egyptian protesters by the military and police, US Congress passed a law in October 2011 stipulating that Egypt has to prove it's moving toward democracy, while the $1.3 billion reaches the Egyptian people in bullet form. In addition, the $1.3 billion benefits the racket, creating a demand for American weapons exporters, and in Egypt it subsidizes the military's economic investments. M1 Abrams tanks, for example, come to Egypt in parts that need to be assembled, and so tank-assembling businesses are created. Many of these are expressly joint ventures with western companies, like for example the joint venture with Jeep to create armored and commercial vehicles. "Because the military are so opaque we don't know if it's 15 percent or 40 percent," Sharif Abdel Kouddous, an Egyptian journalist whom I first met working at *Democracy Now!*

in New York, told me in Cairo. "That being the range says a lot about what we know."

Foreign policy in Egypt has for decades been merely reflective of US foreign policy – including the enforcement of the siege on Gaza since 2006, when Egypt allowed US warships through the Suez Canal. None of this, of course, reflects the popular will in Egypt. When Mubarak fell, Egypt was one of only three countries – the other two being the US and Israel – which did not have diplomatic relations with Iran. The secretary general of the Arab League was appointed foreign minister right after Mubarak fell and he asked why Egypt had its foreign policy dictated. He said the country would now have diplomatic relations with Iran, and open the Rafah border crossing into Gaza. Within a few weeks he was removed from the position.

The role that the US plays in backing the military was the essential core of the dictatorship. Mubarak had been in power for 30 years but the military had been ruling for 60 years and the military acts as a state within a state. "The US talked the same way as state media – they voiced support for Mubarak then realized it was too late for him, and they said he's got to go," said Kouddous. "But once he left, they voiced support for the SCAF, his replacement. The coverage in the US media has been very superficial. It skims the surface of what is happening. They wanted the narrative at the beginning that this was a western-friendly, Facebook-driven, young, cool crowd that led this, and they were at core of it. And they keep calling it a peaceful revolution, but at the end of the day, on January 28, there were 100 police stations that were burnt down, there's violence all the time. They over-simplify as they tend to do, and have been slow to expose the military's abuses, starting from the beginning but really in October with the massacre of 17 Coptic Christians in front of Maspero. The *New York Times* called that, for example, 'sectarian riots' when the army killed all those people. That kind of language distorts everything."

The then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said initially, "our perception is the Mubarak regime is strong" which was implicit support for the dictatorship in the face of the protests. But as it became so clear that Mubarak could not continue, even the western press changed. Kouddous told me: "People like Anderson Cooper who came at the beginning and did the typical western media stenography – well, the Mubarak government says this and the protesters say this – but on the day the regime sent out thugs on camels they attacked western journalists. Cooper was hit in the head, and the next day, he changed. He was now saying, 'This is a popular mass uprising against a 30-year autocrat', which was the truth."

The Mubarak dictatorship gave the Obama administration no choice but to support the people of Egypt with this kind of violence and eventually President Obama said that Mubarak must step down. But all the time the US were playing behind the scenes too in negotiations to secure what was coming next: first, this took the form of support for Omar Suleiman, Mubarak's spy chief, to replace him. On February 10, 2011, Leon Panetta, then-director of the CIA, even said that Mubarak would step down before it happened. What the Obama administration wanted to see was secular young people who posed no threat to western neoliberal interests taking over the Arab world, but that didn't happen, it was never the Arab Spring. The State Department and White House press briefings from the period very clearly show people in the administration proclaiming their support for Mubarak in the early days of the uprising. It was only when it became clear that this was not going to be viable – and the full story of what happened between the military, Mubarak and the US administration is still not known – there was obviously some kind of deal struck whereby the military decided to sacrifice Mubarak and take power. And then the US came out in support.

US policy toward the Arab Spring was incoherent – they supported protests in countries where the regimes were less friendly and, with the exception of Egypt, tended to be silent on places like Bahrain. A more coherent policy would mean they had to build genuine political alliances with civilian political forces across the region, something the US rarely does. "I think saying Obama was behind the Arab Spring is an insult to all Arabs, it's an insult to my generation, and it's an insult to all the people who were in Tahrir," said Soraya Morayef, an activist. "There's been a lot of rhetoric about how 'they couldn't have done this on their own'. Even Omar Suleiman famously said, 'They're being generated or supported by foreign elements, countries, someone with a political agenda.' The thing is it wasn't. It was organic, it was the coming together of so many different factions of society, not just the youth, not just liberals, it was workers, it was the disenchanted government officials, there were even conscripts from the military that were defecting and joining. It's very insulting to say that any country, especially the US, was behind this. Because one of the chants in Tahrir during the 189 days was chanting against Mubarak and Omar Suleiman being agents of the Americans, and saying 'US, this is what your money is doing, your money is killing our people', and you'd find tear-gas canisters and gunshot canisters with Made in US on it. The US never supported the revolution, I feel it is responsible in continuing to pay the army that kills its own people."

THE ECONOMICS OF REVOLUTION

In Egypt's case, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) did not impose the traditional strict structural adjustment programs after the revolution, but looked to remake Egypt through more indirect terms. In June 2011, the IMF offered a $3.2 billion loan "without conditions", which no one believed – and it was rejected by the military because it was dangerous politically for them to assume the loan. But Egypt needed foreign currency; they had imported so much that they only had enough to pay for three more months of imports. The government then formally requested the $3.2 billion loan. This time, however, sensing the desperation, the IMF said Egypt had to draw up an economic reform program. The result was an eight-page economic reform package, which included all the same policies of the Mubarak era – the magic words "structural adjustment", the usual "broadening the tax pool", "VAT increases", "sales tax".

In Egypt before the revolution, an extreme form of capitalism was being imposed, in line with Bretton Woods dictates. The rich were getting richer, while the poor got poorer. On top of this, the poor were routinely tortured and the army reacted viciously to strikes. They passed a law soon after the revolution criminalizing strikes and any other action stopping work, resulting in a fine and one year in prison. The Delta bus company had a huge strike for 12 days in December 2011, but the government made promises (which it didn't keep). The workers went back on strike again and this time the army broke the strike by getting soldiers to drive the buses.

It is important to note that the revolution did not occur in a vacuum; it didn't just happen as part of a domino effect after the Tunisian revolution. The Egyptian revolution was 10 years in the making through grassroots organizing. "It took years of coalition building to have grassroots movements behind you to have this thing explode," said Kouddous. "I think its success was the 18 days were seen as this utopia, where we created this Republic of Tahrir, and it had the values and the principles that everyone wanted to see in the rest of the country, or people in Tahrir did. And when Mubarak fell it was seen as this big moment, but I think a lot of people counted their success too early, and let forces in that should have been kept out and fought just as vigorously." He continued: "I think the revolution is really more a state of mind, it's a state of revolution we are living, so it's continuing, it's much more divisive and messy, but I would say that the lesson is that the fight is never easy, and some say never finished, you are always going to be trying to improve it. But when people come together, there's nothing that could have stopped it. I still think nothing can stop it now."

There was actually something unprecedented in history taking place in Egypt: a strike wave that had been going on for seven years *without worker organizations*. Other countries went through 10 years of strikes but they had unions, they had labor parties, they had revolutionary socialist parties. "Here in Egypt, I believe it's a miracle that you have a strike wave now that has been going for seven years and you don't even have functioning trade unions," Hossam el-Hamalawy, a prominent revolutionary and organizer, told me. In Egypt the structure is very similar to what existed in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe: government bureaucrats appoint officials who claim to represent the workplace but in fact they have nothing to do with the workplace. Actually, the state-run unions have been one of the main factors in why several important general strikes have failed; historically, they have always intervened in industrial actions *on the side of the police*. And yet these strike waves were happening despite the fact there were no worker-run trade unions. Egypt witnessed a rising curve of social struggle between 1968 to 1977, led by workers and students. But it all came to nothing in 1977 when a mini-uprising was crushed. From that point, until 2005, Mubarak managed to destroy every single organization that did anything in the streets. "Mubarak's was not a totalitarian regime, it was an autocratic regime, it was all about him," said el-Hamalawy. "The guy was so paranoid about numbers, to the extent that even one of our satellite sheikhs was forced to leave for Britain a few years ago for nothing, except maybe attracting some following amongst the youth. But in fact he doesn't speak on politics at all, in fact he's very reactionary. But the thing is that he had people around him – that flips out state security." The seeds for revolution had actually been planted in December 2006 with a huge wave of strikes by workers. "Again, the state-run unions are not part of industrial actions unless it's a factory that is being liquidated and the state-run union has not been given their share of bribes, so they are going to be fucked together with the workers. These were the only places I found the state-run unions are the forefront of the strike," said el-Hamalawy. The uprising began with only three independent trade unions, but now in Egypt there is a federation of trade unions that claims to represent 2 million workers.

Nasser was initially affiliated to the Soviets, and the US only really became the major patron of Egypt with Anwar Sadat. But, el-Hamalawy said, Nasser really laid the ground for Sadat's policies later. There was a steady restructuring of the public sector starting in around 1968. The common belief is that the neoliberal period in Egypt started in 1974 with the "intifah" policies of Sadat – in fact, it started in 1968. And in 1970, under the Rogers Plan, set out by US Secretary of State William Rogers to end the Israel–Palestine conflict, Nasser had already recognized Israel and said the 1967 Israel–Palestine borders were legitimate. But still it was Sadat who threw Egypt completely into the American camp, not just in terms of loyalty and affiliation to western imperialism, but in terms of economic policies. Sadat's Egypt and Pinochet's Chile were probably the first two countries to start enacting neoliberal reforms with a vengeance: Egypt in 1974, Pinochet in 1973. But the Egyptian neoliberal program got put on hold in 1977 during the uprising, and the government started procrastinating with the reforms. "They only got the courage and the balls to implement with the outbreak of our War on Terror," said el-Hamalawy. In many ways, War on Terror and neoliberalism always go hand in hand. In Egypt in 1992, the Dirty War started and it was then that Mubarak signed the deal with the IMF and World Bank to implement the Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Programme (ERSAP), the usual package of neoliberal reforms conducive to the needs of foreign capital and a narrow local elite.

To understand how strange the lack of an organized mainstream left party is, it is necessary to step back from the western media narrative that presents the revolution as a snap uprising inspired by young westernized middle-class Egyptians on Twitter and Facebook. The roots of the current revolution go back to 2004 and involve years of heroic and inspiring actions by working people from Cairo to Alexandria and, in fact, all along the Nile delta. In 2004, the heir-presumptive of the Mubarak kleptocracy, Gamal, was handing out economic portfolios to his thieving friends who instituted IMF prescriptions attempting to privatize further a host of state-owned assets. Workers across the country fought back and started a string of successful strikes outside traditional trade unions, which were basically arms of Mubarak's corporatist state. These groupings greatly upped the number of strikes. In 2004 worker collective actions stood at 202 nationwide. By 2007 it had more than tripled to 614 – often met with severe brutality from the security forces.

THE FUTURE

This heavy history has to be defeated. "I would not say this revolution is successful unless US imperialism and Zionism are defeated in this region," said el-Hamalawy. "The local and the regional are interlinked, and the international of course, that's the third dimension. Make no mistake, people like me on the left believe our revolution will be completely destroyed if it is not exported to the rest of the region; you cannot build a democracy on an island in a sea of dictatorships. Egypt is the jewel in the crown of US imperialism in the region, the Americans are not going to leave it, the Israelis are not going to leave it, the Gulfies are not going to leave it, the Europeans are not going to leave it." In other words, if Egypt falls, the whole Middle East is going to fall – for the imperialist powers. "This current political movement here in Egypt it was all triggered by the Palestinian intifada 11 years ago. I've seen the 1990s, there was nothing. You couldn't pull together anything. The turning point was the Palestinian intifada. For the first time in three decades, you could mobilize the streets, and these mobilizations were over regional issues it is true, but it didn't take more than 10 minutes to start shifting to deal with local issues. The police turn up, they beat people, then people start chanting 'Down with Mubarak'. You know the first time I heard 'Down with Mubarak' was 2002 and this was unprecedented, you couldn't chant against Mubarak in the 1990s, it was all about Palestine at the end of the day."

The West will never stay silent; they will always try to intervene. But the question for the revolutionaries is: are you going to let them intervene? Are you going to organize? It's been the case all through the history of the racket's local dictators – from the Shah of Iran to Suharto in Indonesia. No matter if you are a client of the Americans, the most powerful country in human history, if you get the revolution, the Americans can do nothing – the people create a new imagination. Nawal El Saadawi, the most famous feminist writer in the Middle East, was heavily involved with the uprising in Egypt. For her it was the culmination of a life dedicated to overthrowing dictatorship in her homeland. I went to see her in her one-bedroom apartment on the 13th floor of a tower block in the Shoubra neighborhood of Cairo, right on the banks of the Nile. "All the Gulf countries are colonized by the US. Wherever you have oil, you have the US," said El Saadawi. "We got rid of the head only, but the body of the regime is still there, militarily, economically, media, education, everything." So has she lost hope for this great uprising, then? "Oh, no, no," she said, smiling. "I am very optimistic, I never lose my hope. Hope is power, hope makes me smile, hope makes me live. I am a writer, a novelist, I need hope, I cannot live with a bleak attitude. So long as we have young people here and we go to Tahrir Square I will have hope. We live in a jungle; we don't live in a healthy society. It's about power, when the grandfather has money, prestige and power, he rapes the granddaughter, it's a matter of power. When we finish with this mentality – that it's not power that dominates, it's justice, freedom, love, equality – we have revolution, like in Tahrir Square, and we eradicate power."

In one of Egypt's neighbors in the Sahel they were close to ending their enslavement to the mentality of domination and power.

SEVENTEEN

SUCCESSFUL DEFIANCE

TUNIS, TUNISIA

I meet Mustafa and Kamal on Avenue Habib Bourguiba, where they protested in January 2011 to get rid of the dictator who had ruled their country with an iron fist for 23 years. Tunisia has changed a lot in the year since then. We ate at the Opium bar-restaurant, one of the many lining the French-style boulevard named after the dictator before Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. “We couldn’t have done this before, no way,” said Mustafa, a 25-year-old originally from Tabarka in the north of Tunisia. “I mean, the only thing I could have told you is how great Ben Ali is, what a good man he is.” “If you wanted to talk politics in a bar and the police heard you, they will put you in prison,” Kamal told me nonchalantly. “Now I can say what I want to you.”

It was strange coming to Tunis and listening to the scale of repression and police abuse during the Ben Ali era. I had just never heard about it. Before this US/French-backed despot was overthrown, no one in the West seemed to care that we were propping up a police state in one of the UK’s most popular tourist destinations. The US has provided $349 million in military aid since 1987 when Ben Ali came to power in a coup. The tyrant was trained at the former US Army intelligence school at Fort Holabird in Maryland, like so many of the world's monsters. But the next stage of western connivance in the subjugation of the Tunisian people was the widespread media and political fear over the democratically elected Al-Nahda Party, which was Islamist. The course from actively arming a kleptocratic dictator to pushing for the Tunisians to support "western values" is of course familiar. Franz Fanon wrote in *The Wretched of the Earth*: "As soon as the native begins to pull on his moorings, and to cause anxiety to the settler, he is handed over to well-meaning souls who … point out to him the specificity and wealth of Western values."[1] Any right-thinking Tunisian would, of course, see that the most consistent western value in their country is to *support dictators*. Initially, when people were getting shot by snipers on the streets of Tunis, Hillary Clinton, then Secretary of State, said the US "didn't want to take sides" and was worried about the effect of "unrest and instability" on the US relationship with Tunisia. In the end, over 200 perished. After the revolution won out, Clinton and France's President Nicolas Sarkozy moved on to praising "progress" in the country while also expressing apparent concern that Al-Nahda might impose Iranian-style dictatorship on the Tunisian people. (They didn't care when it was Pinochet-style dictatorship.)

Events followed the typical US imperial modus operandi during a popular uprising against one of its dictator satraps. It goes like this: public ambivalence about the protests alongside private support for the tyrant when it is unclear if the uprising will succeed. Then, when it looks as though the tyrant will not be able to hold on, a switch to public support for the uprising alongside private support for the same regime shorn of its now-discredited figurehead. Such a methodology worked in Egypt: the long-suffering Egyptians now have Mubarakism without Mubarak. Tunisia is different. As Fanon put it: those who were last are now first, while those who were first are now last (or in exile in Saudi Arabia in the case of Ben Ali). The fear of Al-Nahda was misplaced and based on western desire to remain in firm control. There are plenty of clear differences between Tunisia and Iran in 1979 when the revolution overthrew another western-backed torturing tyrant, the Shah. First, Al-Nahda had assembled a coalition including secular socialists and social democrats to form the government. The president, Moncef Marzouki, is a secular human rights activist who spent decades in the wilderness fighting the US-backed atrocities being committed against dissidents in Tunisia.

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[1] www.openanthropology.org/fanonviolence.htm

Second, Tunisian civil society is engaged with the process and will only grow. One of the retrograde patterns you see in a Middle East speckled with US-backed dictatorships is that Islamism is often the only avenue for expressing dislike of the current state of affairs. The space for secular left movements has been crushed since the pan-Arabism of Nasser in Egypt worried the US enough to extinguish the left across the region (helped along by an Israel fearful of the efficacy of the secular nationalism of Fatah in the Occupied Territories). Now that Ben Ali has gone, the lid has been taken off the boiling pot. There was space for young people – in fact, everyone – to breathe here, there were opportunities to engage freely with politics and to think outside of the box. And now outside that box the vista is broader than Islamism. It will take time – perhaps a couple of generations – but the secular left can now grow and will undoubtedly become more significant. Many of the revolutions of the Arab Spring have been led by the tech-savvy young secular left – particularly in Tunisia and Egypt with their large labor movements. Contrariwise, the Islamists – who in many ways had a symbiotic relationship with the brutal US-backed dictatorships they were at war with – will slowly become more irrelevant as these police states fade away. They will have less to feed on, and their policies will now stand the considerable test of governance.

Third, the military acted nobly in Tunisia, unlike in Egypt. Ben Ali fled after the military refused to murder their own people, making them wildly popular in the country. There is also little fear that they will launch a coup against the democracy the Jasmine Revolution created. "They are with the people" is a refrain heard often in Tunis. It is understandable: without them it is possible Ben Ali would still be in place and a river of blood would be flowing down Habib Bourguiba Avenue. In the Opium bar, Mustafa told me he voted for the CPR, a secular left-wing party headed by Mr Marzouki, because he thinks their program is good for the economy and women. But, he said, he doesn't fear Al-Nahda. "I like them," he added. Kamal, on the other hand, voted for Al-Nahda because he thinks they are "good people … They are not extreme. The Salafis are crazy, but they are not very important here."

Clearly, what scared the West more than any Islamist is a secular revolutionary left opposed to the neoliberal order we set up over the past 40 years. That would really hurt the bottom line. Islamists themselves have often been quite welcoming to the Bretton Woods institutions and the neoliberal economic order. With the usual suspects now trying to impose those dictates on Tunisia, it was near impossible for the ruling parties to try something else (even if they wanted to). So far Tunisia has followed US and Bretton Woods dictates to the letter, privatizing many of its state-owned assets (at the same time plumping up Ben Ali's wallet) and eviscerating public institutions and subsidies for fuel and food. Many actually compare Al-Nahda to the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, and it is no secret that the AKP has been a dream for business and international capital. In their time in power, the AKP privatized a raft of public assets, including Tekel, the state-owned tobacco and alcohol company, which it agreed to sell off as part of the structural adjustments attached to a $16 billion loan agreement with the IMF. Before Erdogan started acting like the new sultan, the business press was in raptures about the AKP. This was why I worried for Tunisia – not because of Islamists, but because of neoliberals. As Fanon put it: "The apotheosis of independence is transformed into the curse of independence, and the colonial power through the immense resources of coercion condemns the young nation to regression." Or, in fewer words, take an independent course and starve.

With the period of dictatorship in Tunisia over, the economy is now the big issue, with 45 percent unemployment. It's what concerns Mustafa and Kemal, both students. "I want the government to help people with jobs," Mustafa said. "Maybe open some more universities." Bretton Woods dictates have proved a disaster around the world as a development model. Al-Nahda should look elsewhere, for its own survival. Tunis itself is unrepresentative of the country at large – the further you get from the capital and the coastal tourist regions, the worse the poverty. The government will have to deliver relatively soon – or face more unrest. The spark for the revolution was Mohamed Bouazizi (who now has a street named after him), who set himself on fire in Sidi Bouzid, a poor town 200km from Tunis. This is how it started, and it could erupt again if nothing improves. Expectations are running high. As Mustafa told me: "Before the only thing I could do was eating, drinking, smoking, and sleep. Now there's more." The fear has now also drained from the people. "Something in our hearts snapped," Kamal added as he sipped a beer. "People didn't care any more. People were telling the military to shoot them." He added quickly: "WikiLeaks helped people realize how corrupt Ben Ali and his family was."

As a thank you for helping get rid of this tyrant, the WikiLeaks leaker Chelsea Manning is now facing three decades in prison. Meanwhile, the US politicians and policymakers who propped up Ben Ali for 23 years are talking heads on US cable TV, able to laud the Arab Spring without irony. At the same time, the great liberal President Barack Obama instructed his Department of Justice to launch a case against Julian Assange whose bravery (alongside Manning) helped unleash this unprecedented wave of people power across the Middle East. They are "high-tech terrorists". The upside-down world.

THE GLOW OF REVOLUTION

In the aftermath of the overthrow of the US-backed dictator Ben Ali, there were immediate successes – committees were established for reform of the media, corruption and human rights. Freedom of speech blossomed: it was now possible to debate the many pressing political, economic, cultural and social issues. For the first time there was an election managed by an independent committee composed of civil society figures, involving people from all social groups; there was also important civil society work, with hundreds of new organizations founded working on human rights issues, and also new issues like citizenship education, media activism, internet mobilization of young people and tolerance.

I went to see Abdel Basset Ben Hassen, the head of the Arab Human Rights Foundation, in the east of Tunis. "I think the revolution was also about questioning what international relations we need for our country," he told me. "This new order should be based on more equality, more respect. I have been working in human rights since 1990. I think that during the dictatorship era the European and western countries had not been very strong against Ben Ali's regime. I think that the

Tunisian people have been dignified by the revolution. Human rights were reintroduced in our history – before the revolution our image was really very low. I think that we are giving western countries and the entire world another image of how to be Arab, how to be Muslim, and to fight for democracy and freedoms." The slogans on the streets were now about civil and political rights, and economic and social rights: the right to work, the right to health, the right to education. It was also about equality between social groups and between the interior of Tunisia and the capital, between the cities and rural areas. The revolution put these issues on the table, but they weren't just Tunisian issues, these were global issues. "Working on human rights for the last two years was a kind of resistance," said Hassen. "Human rights work was a way to resist oppression and we trained thousands of Arabs on how to document human rights violations, how to write a report, how to organize a campaign. This was one achievement – how to resist."

What happened in the Arab countries was not just decades of dictatorship; it was centuries of a vertical approach to power. The Tunisian revolution opened an era of revolutions and reform and it will be long. All the social actors tried to redefine their roles after the disappearance of the old regimes. "We were waiting for an era to see that the Arab will claim their freedom, to end these ugly and horrible regimes," said Hassen. "We were waiting to give all this potential locked up in these countries, but at the same time we are conscious that it will be difficult. You know when you open the door to all these changes you will have positive tools to use, but you have all the problems that were waiting." Maybe what has helped Tunisia more than other Arab countries caught up in tumult was that the civil society in Tunisia was still strong. There was the powerful UGTT union federation, the Tunisian League for Human Rights, the judges' union, the lawyers' union, and the journalists' union. Young people when they graduated and went to work joined a union because it was the only place where you could criticize the government and not get arrested. Tunisia is actually one of oldest countries in the world: for nearly 3,000 years there has been a state in Tunis, Carthage. It was the first Arab state with an ambassador in the US, and it has a history of reformism. In 1846, slavery was forbidden in Tunisia, 17 years before the US, and two years before France. It also had the first constitution in the Arab world, while in 1956 it proclaimed the first law for the family, liberating women and abolishing polygamy. It was also the first Arab country to have a strong workers' movement, formally founded in 1927. Civic engagement and education are deeply rooted in the country and the populace is also educated. In the 1970s the government dedicated nearly 40 percent of the state budget to education: and when you introduce education you introduce criticism.

THE NEW GENERATION

These civil organizations and even the elites suffered a lot under Ben Ali's dictatorial regime. "There was also a big difference between the young generation and Ben Ali's generation," said Mr Hassen. "Those between 18 and 30 years old, and not only in Tunisia, said, 'We cannot accept these kind of old out-of-date regimes. The regimes in the Arab countries were so out of date, and the most stupid and totally closed regime was in Tunisia, and people at some time they cannot accept any more this kind of thing." Tunisians felt that they were not only oppressed by the police state but that their dignity was being attacked by a regime, by a family, that was ruining the country. The Ben Ali family were occupying and stealing everything. In many ways, the first uprising was against this attack on dignity. "You can accept the oppression but at some stage you cannot accept that your dignity is under attack," said Hassen. It started in Sidi Bouzid because the trade union was powerful and the elites were against the regime. "It was possible because all the social categories participated, and it was possible because the slogans of the revolution, it was about dignity, freedom – it was not religion, about tribal issues, about family, about regions, and this made it difficult for Ben Ali to stop this, because it was about universal things." The internal mechanisms of the regime were very weak at the end; despite the regime's strong appearance, it was a lie. The situation was explosive and when the first demonstration happened in Sidi Bouzid, the police did not try to stop it. It lasted for two days, and then other small cities followed. There was no political reaction, but confrontations were developing all around the country, becoming more and more violent. Then the police supported the protesters. Ben Ali's party did not hold counter-demonstrations, and the dictator was completely isolated.

I spoke to Ahmed Bouazzi whose party was in the resistance against the dictatorship, and worked to weaken the government of Ben Ali. "We were in a long struggle against Ben Ali," he said. "The West is scared of course because Nahda is working for a more independent national policy, more independence for Tunisia; fortunately, they are defending the interests of Tunisia better than under the Ben Ali era, and I am optimistic. I have a big confidence in the Tunisian people; in our history, the people showed that it is a pioneer. It is progressive. The West is scared of Islamism. I think they are still trying in Tunisia to get rid of Nahda and I think it's a big mistake, because Tunisians are pioneers, liberals, they are also very patriotic, they don't accept that someone else makes their politics here, so Nahda will gain from this. Unless there is a coup, and a coup would be a disaster for the country, you have Algeria where 200,000 people died in a civil war." He said further that the revolution had a perceptible effect on the soul of its citizens. "It's very strange to be free. I was thinking about it today when I went to the Ministry of Interior, which is where the torture happened. People changed very fast, they were speaking very freely, and there was no auto-censorship. It is very different now, if I meet plain clothes policemen I am not afraid because they will not arrest me. Before that I was afraid because they could arrest me and I might spend I don't know how long in prison until I got freed. Now it's different, the relationship between citizens and policemen is completely different, there is none of the fear of policemen, it happened very quickly."

The wall of fear had fallen, you could perceive it, and you could feel it in the streets. Tunisians were not silent any more; they didn't respect authority like they used to do. There were sit-ins, protests. The Tunisian mind had been freed.

EIGHTEEN

CULTURE AS A WEAPON OF RESISTANCE

WHAT'S ART GOT TO DO WITH IT?

"A people's art is the genesis of their freedom."

Claudia Jones, pioneering political activist, 1915–64

When Soraya Morayef, an activist and budding art curator, walked into Townhouse gallery in Cairo in the aftermath of the ousting of Hosni Mubarak, she expected the usual brush-off. Her friends had previously pitched exhibitions of their passion: graffiti and stencil-based work. Each time they had been turned away. But not now. "When I approached them I really didn't think they would do it," she told me. "I had no credentials, I had no background. But now there is this increasing new interest in graffiti and street art, that's why they eventually took me." Morayef was the beneficiary of a sea-change in the Egyptian art world since the country's revolution sparked an explosion of paint and posters on walls in cities around the country. "The revolution has massively impacted the art scene in Egypt, it's now a lot more diverse and there's a lot of work inspired or based on the revolution," said Morayef.

The same pattern has been seen across the Arab world as people shook their chains in the Arab Spring. Western intelligence officers no longer have to gauge the temperature of the "Arab street" through clandestine interviews; they just have to look at the walls around the cities. In Arabic, it is called "*el-fann midan*" – literally translated, "art in the square". The mixed experiences of euphoria, mourning and loss have been creatively rendered all over the cities of the Levant.

"Art has played a major role in the Egyptian revolution, for the most part because street art and graffiti as in a western form simply didn't exist, now it's everywhere," said Omar Ozalp, co-owner of the Articulate Baboon gallery on the outskirts of Cairo. "More importantly, each one carries a message, be it political or social, which for once has the Egyptian population thinking." The other co-owner of the gallery, Adam Maroud, added: "Corner after corner after corner was suddenly emblazoned with a battle cry in rushed lettering or a perfect stencil of pop culture political satire and it was beautiful and stirring to watch it spread. Nothing to me personifies creative freedom more than a bold graffiti piece on a very public wall."

And it's not just the Middle East. Art has flourished around the world in this revolutionary torrent – from Haiti to Chile to China – as people fought back against totalitarian governments and tried to make sense of broken societies using brushes as well as bricks. For many young people, street art became the "perfect crime" when living in a closed dictatorship with no free press. If you do not get caught in the act, most of the time there is no way for the authorities to track you down.

"I think the creative output during this unfinished revolution is an integral part in its continuation and the direction it's bound to take," said Ganzeer, the most prominent street artist in Egypt, who was arrested for making posters at the height of the protests. His colorful paintings of martyrs killed by the security forces dot Cairo, as do his montages juxtaposing brutality inflicted on protesters with information about US aid to the military regime. Ganzeer added that the move out of galleries, as artists take their work to the people, also represents a "democratization" of the creative arts. "The streets are for everybody. The gallery is for an art-seeking niche. It's very wrong for the streets to be so open to the brainwashing effects of capitalist-driven advertisers and so closed off to honest art. Galleries need to exist, but it shouldn't be the only way to be able to experience art."

In crisis-wracked Europe, the *indignados* in Spain, as well as young people in Germany, Greece and France, also used their city walls as canvases to get their message across. Evol is a German artist who had a gallery show in London, but the 39-year-old's main work is stenciling windows on concrete slabs slung out on the street, turning them into drab housing estates. "Life is a reflection of the circumstances I live in," he said. "Whatever happens to me I will try to transport into art." Ganzeer feels something similar: "I feel the core purpose of creative arts lies in its social relevance."

Street art has captured the imagination of the younger generation of artists in the West over the past decade, symbolized by British artist Banksy. But while the anonymous Bristolian has garnered much of the attention, there is now a dedicated phalanx of scribblers working alongside him – and their ranks have ballooned and "globalized". For many of the new generation, the period where the pursuit of money appeared to rule all forms of creativity – viz. the canonization of Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst – is over. The postmodern ironies of the Young British Artists movement have been destroyed by the immediacy of the human crisis happening around the world. Young artists now feel the need to reflect on the chaos of global events through their art. They are not seeking to engage with the world retrospectively but as part of the ongoing struggles, hoping to bring about real, tangible change. In this sense, it is not just the venue that has changed – from the gallery to the street – but the content, too.

"Before the revolution we were falling into clichés and trying to express things between brackets," said Khaled Hafez, a prominent Egyptian artist in the traditional gallery setting. "But since 9/11, more and more political issues are being expressed in art installation practices. The Arab Spring has really accelerated that." Resistance artists are the modern-day heirs to a tradition that goes back hundreds of years and boasts some of the all-time greats, including Picasso and Goya. But even with such a rich and proud history, the prospects today are more exciting than ever. Art has been democratized by the capitulation of the tyranny that the highbrow crowd used to impose on aesthetic pursuits, and a revolution in technology that can put a camera, spray can or paintbrush in the hand of any kid with a thirst for creativity.

YOU CAN'T BUY THIS

The recent upsurge in revolutionary street art has rudely challenged many of the sacred cows in traditional art circles, paralleling the population's political awakening. Since the seminal 1999 anti-World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, there has been a resurgence of forms of art engaged in social and political protest. Ideas of what constitutes art, where art is shown and who does art were all shaken violently. But the fight against the gallery-based model has been largely successful, and the traditional art world is now playing catch-up. More traditional, gallery-based art elites in the West have pushed back – and this is no different in Egypt. "We should remember that the Middle East is still conservative," said Hafez. "Street art is not gallery art, but we are in a revolutionary situation, and it helped mobilize people. There was fabulous graffiti art, and personally, I think change is impending." He added: "I have learnt a lot from the younger generation like Ganzeer." Ganzeer agreed, and said the traditional sectors of the art world in Egypt have shot themselves in the foot by not showing more enthusiasm for the new generation. "I think the majority of the traditional art elite have proven the inability of their art to speak or relate to society via their inability to artistically engage in the revolution," he said. "Many may have engaged as citizens, and protested just like everybody else, but few have been able to engage artistically."

The direct engagement with societal issues in this way is not wholly new in the art world. It relates back to the work of the Russian Constructivists, such as Alexander Rodchenko and El Lissitzky, who wanted to make an art of constructed abstract elements that represented the movements in society and of the Bolshevik revolution. They stopped making one-off art works to produce printed material, posters, pamphlets, and placards that could be used by the Russian people. Their work was later banned under Stalin, who wanted a much more dictatorial form of art, or pure propaganda that didn't engage in more avant-garde abstraction. We don't have Stalin now, but we do have corporations who own all the available space in our public arena to advertise their products.

Political artists following on from the Constructivists include German anti-fascist artist John Heartfield, who devised a form of photomontage that became a weapon against the rise of Nazism. His work was so powerful that he was high on the Nazi hit list and had to flee Germany. In one of his most famous montages he showed Hitler doing his customary salute and a giant businessman handing him money, highlighting that behind all Hitler's socialist rhetoric it was big business that supported his rise to power. The image wasn't shown in an art gallery: it was on the front cover of the German weekly magazine AIZ. In many ways, “street art” goes all the way back to the caves of Lascaux, where primitive men (and women) decorated their walls with pictures of horses, stags, and bison. Back then, there was no Egyptian security force or Chinese intelligence officers to imprison the artists. There are now.

Of course, art cannot initiate social transformation by itself, but it is increasingly vital in expanding the imaginations of those working toward it. Knowledge of how the world operates that comes solely from newspaper articles and academic books often affects our most cynical and fatalistic impulses; these impulses are pervasive among young people, and they get more frequent, not less, as the bad news comes faster. Looking at an image that connects events in ways you haven’t yet conceived, or an installation that reconstructs in visceral form something you’ve read about, can propel this cynicism felt by the younger generation toward action. And it has. The possibilities for artistic collaboration and the ability to say something about the world without needing to steep it in the depressing banalities of everyday political discourse are providing a sanctuary for the younger generations, fed up with what is often called “mainstream” politics.

Some people say that all art is political. This is like saying that all politicians are political: it’s technically true, but in reality the majority tailor their beliefs to the exigencies of their respective political systems and become model commissars. Power is the motivator, and the politics falls into line after. The same goes for art’s own commissars whose work is conceived and sold as a commodified product, complete with conscious branding and the related newspaper fanfare about “controversy” or “celebrity buyers”. There is nothing “political” about it; in fact, the branding is the antithesis of political because rather than questioning the contemporary situation, it accepts all its presuppositions

– no matter how violent or unjust – and seeks to ride on the froth of money and fame that tops this wave. True political art, as distinguished from its banal and transient cousin, is trying to change the world as it is rather than observe it. It seeks to delve into the nightmares of the contemporary consciousness, investigate the deep cavities and expose the most diligently repressed secrets and terrors. It reformulates images and signs and gives us all a means through which to reinterpret the world. Joining the dots becomes revolutionary, which surely says less about the art than the prevailing ideology, which allows us to live happily without making the connections between the violence we unleash and the corpses all over the Middle East, East Asia, Africa and Latin America that are our testimony.

SHAKING OFF THE STRAITJACKET

I interviewed a number of famous musicians and actors who have strident anti-war, anti-racket politics. The lead singer of Massive Attack, Robert Del Naja, has always been extremely political. During the run-up to the Iraq war – with Thom Yorke of Radiohead – he took out a full-page advert in *NME* denouncing military action. He told me: "How we get our culture, how we get our politics spelt out to us, how the news is read to us, how our choices are laid out, does come through the media. These are the things that people should be more concerned with." Why is this artificial barrier erected between politics and art, then? "It suits a lot of people's business and political interests to try to separate the two when actually they are actually joined at the hip," he said astutely. "I think sometimes when you're trying to present music for music's sake, sometimes you don't want it to be politically charged because you want it to be about a simple music experience, an escape. Other times it is a very integral part of it, definitely."

Gael García Bernal is a Mexican actor who has never shied away from giving political opinions, and speaks with real knowledge about the politics of Latin America and further afield too. The man who famously played Che Guevara in *The Motorcycle Diaries* film is unabashedly "of the left", and has been an activist as far back as the 1994 Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, on the first day of the NAFTA. "I've been told, 'You're an actor, you cannot talk about politics, you know nothing about politics'," he told me. "There still exists that mythology that no one who is not an 'expert' in politics can have an opinion on politics. It's ridiculous because we're such political animals." He added: "As an actor it's about exploring these uncertain areas rather than having a preconceived idea or answer. It's more about provocation and asking the terrible questions. My position therefore is sometimes a bit greyish because I don't buy into the pamphlet. What is motivating is when the audiences ask new questions, get new perceptions, not when you give them opinions digested, the complete answer, that has another shape." Bernal is optimistic about the future of Latin America, especially the "pink tide" of democratic left-wing governments that has swept the region over the past decade, which shows no sign of being turned back (yet). "Like [Slavoj] Žižek says, Bush deserves a Nobel Peace Prize for having eradicated the hegemony of the United States, he singlehandedly completely destroyed it," Bernal said. "Now it's a whole different world. Argentina, for example, most of its business is with China, and Brazil as well. There is a lot of hope in that sense, it's not the world we grew up in, it's a whole different thing. I think that the left in Latin America still have lots of debts from the 1960s, '70s, '80s, things they have to complete, to deliver. Argentina is the only country that has looked back on the people that were part of the military coup and junta and put them in prison, it's the only country that has done that, that is reason enough to support [President] Cristina Kirchner." Bernal is unusual in the world of entertainment – he has a political opinion and can back it up at length and with real knowledge. It's a rare quality in a world where some sort of bland, non-specific "social activism" is now a must for most celebrities, but questioning the PR lines fed to them by their handlers is almost non-existent. "I would love athletes, sports figures, to be more political," he said. "Remember Socrates the Brazilian player was very critical of the junta there. Or the guys in '68 here in Mexico City with black power. It adds so much depth to them, it's incredible when they do it, but right now you don't see them involved in anything."

Damon Albarn, the lead singer of Blur and Gorillaz, has been at the forefront of the anti-war and debt cancellation movements. When I visited him at his house in south London, he told me: "The war in Iraq was the result of our inability to express what I think was a consensus that this was a terrifying idea and a very badly thought-out one." He is particularly scathing about his fellow musicians who showed a shameful cowardice in not joining him and Massive Attack's Robert Del Naja in speaking out. "It was very difficult to find anyone. And I don't want to name names because they are people who I respect but for some reason, they were very reticent to stand with us … A lot of people who you would now associate with being anti-war at that particular point didn't seem to be prepared to do it."

Tom Morello, the guitarist of the band Rage Against the Machine, once remarked: "A good song should make you wanna tap your feet and get with your girl. A great song should destroy cop cars and set fire to the suburbs. I'm only interested in writing great songs." When I met Radiohead's Thom Yorke I asked him his opinion on this seemingly fraught relationship between the political and the creative. "I wonder if you did a Venn diagram of how they coincided, or if you did a straw poll of their sympathies in terms of art what you'd get back," he said. "I guess it depends on how broad you see the definitions of politics, and how broad you see the definition of art or music. If you see art and music as something that extends beyond this little bit of plastic that goes in your CD machine, and if you see politics as something that's happening not just in the Houses of Parliament, then I think you can't use that argument at all – it's utter bollocks." But "you'll never change them," Yorke said when I asked about the temptation to lobby politicians. "They're going to get more from you than you get from them, generally speaking." Despite his evident passion, Yorke seemed reluctant to assume any role as a voice of his generation. "I'd dearly love to not be interested in it at all," he said. "It is ultimately a very sterile, barren, place to spend your time thinking of things. Even back in college, you get involved in it initially and then you see all the petty wranglings going on, and you think, This is so pathetic, and you want to get the fuck out really." When I asked Yorke about the awareness of the American populace of their country's nefarious actions in the world, he exclaimed: "They have no idea! But I think the Iraq thing has been interesting – the mainstream press took a long time to come around, but when they did come round it was a big thing. When they did start, they were exposing it for what it was."

ART AND POLITICS

The interface of politics and art has always been a tense one, with some of the more conservative elements in the art world accusing political art of being "agit-prop". They argue that when you engage directly with politics, you deplete your sophistication. But things are changing. "There is a very reactionary strand in the art world that says that you shouldn't make work that's overtly political," said Peter Kennard, a senior lecturer in photography at the Royal College of Art in London, one of Britain's foremost political artists, and my father. "You can imply, but that's also to do with the art world being about selling work." He added:

"Our understanding of art has become over-aestheticized and I think the only thing that can change that, which is changing it, is the pressure of crisis in the world." If you look at Kennard's work, as well as being eerily beautiful, it is bleak and brutal. The poor and destitute scream out from the financial pages, arms dealers play roulette with million-dollar weapons, and medals are awarded to US and UK soldiers for war crimes. And yet, despite the pathos of his work, he retains a Gramscian "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will" type philosophy: the belief that critical art has the power to transform the world and attitudes. "People do think critically about the world through art," he said. "Because they can see the images they get in the news transformed, separate images connected up to give new meaning to them, to show how things connect in the world. So with photomontage you've got actual images of things that happened – someone took that image – and by putting it with other images you can then create the connections to show how the world is actually put together. In the media, we see everything disconnected – the adverts, the news stories – everything is disconnected and all over the place. When you put them together you can then show where the link is and that is very important."

In places like Palestine the use of artistic expression to make sense of the same disconnected world is very common. The most moving and powerful testament to the plight of the occupied peoples in the West Bank and Gaza has come in exhibitions like "100 Shaheed – 100 Lives" which opened in February 2001 and was a reaction to the escalation of Israeli violence in October 2000. The exhibition aimed to celebrate the ordinary lives of the first 100 victims of this violence by featuring everyday objects, gathered by a group of field researchers, that were held dear by each of the dead. This example in Palestine is a symptom of the gradual politicization of creativity, in literature as well as art, all over the world. "I think people are not so ironical and cynical now," Kennard said. “People are trying to work out how they relate as individuals to the world because the world is impinging on our lives so much – we can’t deny it any more that there is a crisis going on in the world, so it is impinging on the work they do. It doesn’t mean they do very direct images about it, but certainly that anxiety about how to live and what to do in the world is coming through in the work.”

Obviously, being politically strident always carries risks, even in ostensibly free societies. Artists have always been regarded with suspicion by those who wield economic or political power – particularly when they are direct and trenchant in their work. Free creation has always been the direct antithesis of the cold logic of power.

A few years ago Kennard was commissioned by Damon Albarn to make a montage as part of mobile phone company Orange’s “Light Up London” campaign. His photomontage of the Virgin Mary with the logo of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in place of a halo and the earth for a head never went up because it was censored by Orange who deemed it offensive to “grandmothers and small children”. “All big shows now in galleries have to be sponsored because there isn’t enough public money going in so they have to sponsor them,” said Kennard. “The sponsor wants to get an image across that tallies in with their company so they like edgy Damien Hirst-type things which aren’t specific, but if you’re politically specific in what you do it’s very difficult to get sponsorship and then it’s very difficult to get a big public exhibition, so sponsorship does have a knock-on effect. It is much more quiet and insidious than censorship but it means that certain things don’t get seen. So there is a façade that they are encouraging dissent but when it becomes too serious they cut it off.” Does he think that the need for sponsorship blunts dissent? “Well, people work outside the system – they make their own spaces, they work collectively, they work in the street, and they work in smaller spaces,” he said. “So there are lots of different ways to get work out. And there are lots of people working collaboratively." Is this censorship a new phenomenon? "No, it's always been like that. This century, very political work is being kept under covers – a lot of really good work is only allowed to come when the person is dead and the issues they are dealing with are over. It's not new but it's more powerful now in the sense that private money is so vital to the art world now that it's really difficult to work without it." As Kennard wrote in his comment piece for the *Guardian*: "censorship is something one doesn't speak of in the free-market – it brings back memories of Lady Chatterley and Lord Chamberlain."

The impingement of politics and violence on the everyday lives of artists may be new in post-9/11 England, but in Northern Ireland it has been this way for decades. As the Northern Irish artist Liam Kelly wrote: "In the North of Ireland over the intensive period of political troubles (1968–1998 and the first IRA ceasefire) landscape was not something to be celebrated but interrogated and petitioned." The themes of land and territory come up time and time again as you look at resistance art in this troubled spot. Take Willie Doherty whose 1987 installation piece In the Walls arranges text to settle over sections of a horizontal panoramic view of the Bogside area of Derry in daylight. This makes it so that, in the words of Kelly, "we/the artist or the colonized/the colonizer take in the view and take up a position".

The collapse of the Argentine economy in 2001 also saw an explosion of artistic creativity. As the middle classes were depleted and 50 percent of the population plunged below the poverty line, many citizens began to use the objects and spaces around them to create art that spoke of their grievances and desire for change. A collective of artists, based in the coastal city of Mar del Plata, began taking over buildings that had become derelict as a result of the economic crash, and creating installations in them.

Similar things are happening in the Chiapas region of Mexico where the Zapatistas are fighting for land rights (as we have seen). Gustavo CP is a famous muralist from the Zapatista-controlled territories of southeast Mexico, and he is often in Europe showing the work he and others are putting together as part of one of the most exciting popular movements in the world. He said: "As in all acts in our lives, the ways of relating to each other, and the ways we make our dreams and put them together, are part of creating our cultural values. And to put them up in the walls, like with these murals, is not an easy job. It is not a one-person job either, or a job for just a specific group of people. It is a job for a whole society that by nature impacts on certain people, who, in return want to contribute to community. In this way a dynamic and enriching relationship of collective creation takes place, which can lead to many other dreams and possibilities".[1]

In places like Afghanistan under the Taliban "photography was to all intents and purposes banned", according to Thomas Dworzak who visited Afghanistan as a photojournalist in 2001. All depictions of living creatures, including animals, were erased from the public eye, and photographic portraiture was illegal. Studio photographers in Kandahar told Dworzak that members of the Taliban would come into the studio when passport photography was allowed again and would pose with make-up and guns in front of garish synthetic backdrops such as gardens full of flowers. These images have now become artworks in their own right, saying more about the narcissism and immorality of Taliban rule than a million words. The indestructible human instinct for art and images is evinced clearly by this vignette, and you hear stories about all kinds of resistance art coming from those who are living under stultifying dictatorships all over the world.

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[1] "Painting with the Zapatista in Scotland", *Indymedia*, February 2, 2005, www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/world/2005/02/304693.html

Since the earthquake struck in January 2010, leaving a whole society traumatized, one artist has been out decorating Port-au-Prince with beautiful murals and graffiti pieces as a way of expressing his own hopes and fears for the country. "I was never a big fan of politics," Jerry Rosembert told me, but added that the extent of the trauma in Haiti means he has had to engage. "I am obliged to commentate on my country because things are bad, and for me, it is the best way of giving my ideas worth and value." His art is just another way of communicating a message – a cry to be heard in a society rendered silent by a natural disaster. "Certain people do this their way sometimes in the newspapers or on the TV, but the graffiti, this represents me more, and this is a type of commentary I enjoy a lot."

The Art Spring has stretched to South America, too, with the Chilean student protests inspiring a surge in graffiti and cartoons on the streets of Santiago and other cities. Brazilian political cartoonist Carlos Latuff went to Chile during the protests and said he saw art students and passersby producing cartoons and paintings on the walls in support of the uprising to an extent he'd never experienced in Latin America. The cross-border pollination of art has been huge. Latuff is in high demand in Egypt and across other parts of the Middle East. Even before the January 25 protest that began the Egyptian revolution, Latuff was receiving requests for illustrations from protesters. "This was pretty amazing," he said. "I usually produce stuff and it will be used, but this was different – they were making specific requests. They felt cartoons and art could help their campaign."

At the beginning of the civil war in Syria, the most famous political cartoonist in the country, Ali Farzat, was attacked at night in his car in Damascus. "We will break your hands so that you'll stop drawing," the thugs told him, before doing exactly that. He was dumped by the roadside. "This is just a warning," they told him. In China, Ai Weiwei, the iconic artist whose work has bravely taken on themes of repression in his home country, was arrested by the authorities and held incommunicado for months on spurious charges, which still stand. In Honduras, the first two people arrested after the 2009 coup were President Manuel Zelaya and cartoonist Allan McDonald, who had published cartoons in support of the deposed president. In 2003, the US government asked for a tapestry version of Picasso's anti-war masterpiece Guernica, which is on permanent display at the UN, to be covered with a blue curtain when Colin Powell made his notorious error-filled speech about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and the need for invasion. It seems counter-intuitive. Why would the most powerful country in the world care about a piece of art decorating a room at the UN? And why would the world's newest superpower care about one man making piles of seeds in a studio in Beijing? "Artists, especially cartoonists, can make it easy for everyone to understand a difficult political statement," said Carlos Latuff, whose cartoons have become an accompaniment to uprisings all over the world. "We have the ability to make fun of dictators and, of course, dictators are not fond of humor."

ART ON THE STREETS

There is some debate as to what the term "street art" actually means. It is an appellation that describes a genre of art rather than work that is done outside. But Swoon, one of the few women in the field, thinks this is wrong. "For me, if I'm working outside, then fine, call it street art, but if I'm working inside, then it's an installation," she said. "For me it doesn't seem useful." Many practitioners believe the label is another way of demeaning an art form that is encroaching on a nervous elite. "Sometimes it seems that people need a name for something, if they don't know it by a name they can't grasp it," said Evol. "I dislike the expression." As Proudhon reminded us a century ago, property is theft, and using private property as a canvas to express yourself is a way of reclaiming privatized wealth and rendering it public. In that critical moment, the canvas of some bank building or shop front becomes yours, or ours. Ours because graffiti is one of the most altruistic art forms – colorful and complex pieces are put up for our benefit while we stroll the streets, at considerable financial and sometimes legal costs to the artist. Take, for example, advertising, which is everywhere – all over buildings, walls, transport, schools. This stuff is there purely to manipulate and make money out of us, but when advertising sneaks its way into every nook and cranny of our public and private spaces, there isn't a law enforcement agency to be seen.

Artists like Banksy, meanwhile, haven't been able to resist the zombification of their art by the mainstream. This process was called "repressive tolerance" by Herbert Marcuse and "the society of the spectacle", by Situationist Guy Debord. It is a danger to all artists trying to subvert the racket while working within the racket. Work which started as a critique of war and social inequality can be brought into the mainstream and commodified and sold to the people of whom it was initially critical, emptied of its message. Naomi Klein mentions in her book *No Logo*, which was published in the weeks following Seattle, that Nike had begun employing young graffiti artists to graffiti Nike posters to give them more street-cred. With these corporate behemoths inhaling all creativity and co-opting any anti-establishment ideas, it's a struggle for the artists who don't want to end up making decoration for Goldman Sach's lobby. When Diego Rivera, the famed Mexican muralist, painted a fresco at the behest of the Rockefellers for their center in Manhattan in the 1930s, he included a May Day workers' parade and an image of Lenin. Rockefeller was deeply angry and asked him to remove Lenin; when Rivera refused, he ordered the destruction of the fresco.

The active repression of totalitarianism and the slow-burn repression of corporate control should be challenged by artists with integrity enough to continue standing outside the mainstream. Art and creative expression, because they exist beyond the normal coordinates of control, have the power to scare those at the top. The art-industry intellectuals and academics who have proposed for so long that political art is merely crude agitprop or literary doggerel are being made to look stupid by a new generation of artists who don't see their role as making pretty pictures and designing clever concepts for boardrooms. They are using creativity as an integral part of a justice movement that is inchoate but growing in substance and definition. They have internalized Brecht's timeless dictum that "Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer to shape it".

The explosion of technology and social media has been a vital corollary to this movement. Facebook and Twitter have not just allowed activists to organize, but have also provided a key tool for disseminating pictures. They have accelerated this "democratization" of art by making it much easier to circumvent the gallery, which had previously been a prerequisite to building an audience. "Especially in the past year I have been using Twitter and Facebook to spread the artworks, which has played an important role in getting them out," said Carlos Latuff. "If I upload a single cartoon it takes 15 minutes to get sometimes 3,000 hits, depending on the issue. It's amazing how you put up a single cartoon and it spreads like a fire." Moving outside of the gallery also changes the audience. In a revolutionary situation, the aim is often to reach as many people as possible. Street art is in some way inherently political, in a way gallery art isn't. The people who see it have no choice in the matter – unlike those who venture into a gallery on a Sunday afternoon. Now, the wall is the gallery, and the audience has multiplied exponentially. "I use the space for everyone who is living or passing by there, I'm naturally speaking to anyone passing by," said Evol. "No one asked me to do it so I can't ask for a reaction in a certain way."

Krzysztof Wodiczko is a Polish artist who teaches at Harvard University and is famous for his projections, including projecting a swastika on the South African embassy in London during the apartheid era. He has used his art to further the causes he believes in for the past 40 years. But, he said, he's never been this excited. "In '68 there was legitimate criticism that art was being too conservative in its choice of media, and therefore its capacity to reach those who really needed reaching. Artists were indulging in some posters, but what was needed was something to engage the mass media." Now, he said, "the whole cultural geography of resistance benefits from mobile communication. Even though authorities will try to censor it, there will be ways around it with other inventions."

CULTURE OCCUPIED

At the height of the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York, I was on a night march across the Brooklyn Bridge when we all suddenly felt like dissident superheroes. As we looked up, the Verizon building that stands at the foot of the bridge began to be illuminated with projections – exactly like those calling on Batman when he was needed to take on evil in Gotham City. A huge "99percent" was flashed up along with slogans like "Another World is Possible" and "Occupy Earth – we are winning". Cheers went up among the protesters, but no one knew who was doing it. The big, impenetrable corporate office of Verizon – which was under pressure over its treatment of striking workers – was being hijacked and there was nothing the police or the company could do about it. Rumors flew about who the projectors were, but in the following days they were revealed as the Dawn of Man, a production company based in the city, which had been around for years but was only now doing directly political work. Like so many others, the uprisings of 2011 had pushed them into engaging for the first time. "Personally, I have been inspired," said Max Nova, a young artist from Colorado and one-half of the Dawn of Man collective. "Not just to be political, but to do work that is directly focused on making a change, spreading awareness about important issues." The Occupy movement has been synonymous with sign-making and art installations from the beginning. The first thing you noticed when arriving at Zuccotti Park was that everyone had their own signs, some scrawled on pizza boxes, some professionally printed photomontages. There was an evident need to creatively express dissatisfaction rather than just shout about it. Nova said the projections that night were made from a private residence. "We had cops looking into the apartment, but they couldn't get in without a warrant," he said. "It is interesting how art has become a fundamental factor," he continued. "If you look at working groups in New York Occupy Wall Street, the arts and culture one is vastly larger than the other groups. A lot of artists find themselves drawn to this."

Krzysztof Wodiczko actually draws a distinction between two different types of political art – the direct and indirect. "My experience in Poland under the previous regime was that because it had this image of an open system, or a system with a human face that transformed itself into more of democracy, it was in fact, very scared of dissent that may contradict this. So artists were allowed to speak, to deal with politics, as long as they were doing this indirectly, in a metaphoric way. Once they move into more of a direct link, or people recognize them as political activists, at the same time as artists, then they will be in jail, or prevented from speaking or communicating." Latuff is an example of this. He is banned from Israel because he has made cartoons critical of the government's treatment of Palestinians. In Brazil, he has been arrested three times for producing his pieces. "I believe in what Che Guevara called internationalism, solidarity with people," he said. "If I've got a skill, I think it's necessary to put this skill at the service of the social movement. The artist cannot ignore art as a tool for change. Especially not now."

The co-option of culture by the resistance, it seems, is the most potent example of how the fight against the racket is real, global and interlinked. From Occupy protesters to Palestinians resisting the oppression of the Israeli state, the racket is under joint attack from inside and outside its headquarters in the United States of America. The victims of this system – the 99 percent of humanity made into serfs – are seeing that they have more in common with people across national boundaries than they do with the racketeers at the top of their own society. Like these dissident artists, we must use all the available tools for change to smash the racket, crush its criminal syndicate and build a fair future. We all have a role to play. To paraphrase Arundhati Roy, now is the time to stop adoring our oppressors, who are the Living Dead, and learn to love ourselves. You know how it works: arm yourself and join the War of Independence to sever us from the racket once and for all.

AFTERWORD

Our world is ruled by a racket. This racket is an amalgamation of different players, including transnational corporations, banks, hedge and mutual funds, and insurance companies; in effect, the many different concentrations of private wealth we have in our society. We often don't know the names of the people who run these institutions, but they hold the real power in our world, and are backed by the US government, and as a last resort the US military.[1] But the racket is nothing without the media. They give this network's rapacious actions a moral sheen and maintain the potent ideologies whereby theft from the poor by the rich is translated into altruistic projects for the world's poor. In the aftermath of *The Racket*'s publication, curious people asked me why – if what I was saying was true – this mafia-like elite got away with it so easily, and everyone was missing the real story. The answer is the media, and I will try in this afterword to show how it works in practice.

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[1] "Conservative party 'bankrolled by hedge fund managers'", www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/feb/05/conservatives-bankrolled-hedge-fund-managers; "Obama hits up Wall Street for campaign funds", www.cbsnews.com/news/obama-hits-up-wall-street-for-campaign-funds; "Why the war in Iraq was fought for Big Oil", edition.cnn.com/2013/03/19/opinion/iraq-war-oil-juhasz

The most important consideration at the off is that the media is, of course, owned by the racket, so there is no surprise that it reflects the racket's priorities. In the US, six companies own 90 percent of the media.[2] In the UK, Rupert Murdoch's News International media company, even after the closure of the *News of the World*, still comprises 34 percent of newspaper circulation in the country and, had it not been for phone-hacking revelations, it would almost certainly have acquired 100 percent of broadcaster BSkyB.[3]

Second, everyone arrives at the top thinking the right things. At the *Financial Times* I learnt quite quickly that the racket and the media are in essence the same thing, and journalists do its bidding without conscious effort. There's no need for an intensive program of brainwashing. As a journalist, by the time you reach the heights of these ideological institutions your editors assume you will already have internalized what you can and can't say. You will know, for example, that the West is not like the rest of the world. The UK and US are noble, even if we sometimes make mistakes we are allowed to criticize. At the end of the day, when all is said and done, we are the Good Guys. That is another facet of how the charade is maintained: the media system in the West doesn't work by active censorship. The beauty of the system is that you don't need to tell journalists what to write – they support the status quo as a reflex. The proprietors work on the ethos that "you say what you like, because we like what you say". If you start testing the boundaries of our "free press" you will know about it – and be out of a job. Rosa Luxemburg, quoted in chapter 15, comes to mind again: those who do not move, do not notice their chains. Very few journalists in the corporate media are moving, so they believe our press is free. I can confirm it is not.[4]

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[2] "These 6 corporations control 90% of the media In America", www.businessinsider.com/these-6-corporations-control-90-of-the-media-in-america-2012-6#ixzz3ZdBzk13P

[3] "Labour takes aim at Murdoch with new call for media ownership cap", www.newstatesman.com/politics/2013/06/labour-takes-aim-murdoch-new-call-media-ownership-cap

As I saw young journalists coming up in the industry I noticed opinions changing or moderating as they became acclimatized to the institutions. A famous Winston Churchill phrase goes that if you're not a socialist in your twenties, you've got no heart, and if you're not a conservative in your thirties, you've got no brain. Churchill was half right, but he got the reason wrong. In terms of the media, if you're not a conservative by your thirties then it doesn't mean you haven't got a brain, it merely means you haven't acclimatized to the conservative media institutions that have been set up for you to enter. It's no coincidence that people get less idealistic as they get older. That's how the system works to root out ideas dangerous to it, maintaining control of those that sit at its apex. So, slowly, you stop expressing opinions that are different from everyone else's, and you shed any previously held idealism. If you do carry on thinking as before, you quickly become a "maverick" or, even worse, "immature" and "childish". It's hard to go into work every day for a whole career under this kind of groupthink pressure and stay sane. Few try for long. From my experience, it's not Machiavellian – people don't actively think "I'm going to become a neoliberal warmonger so I can get higher up the hierarchy of my newspaper". But people slowly temper their opinions, gradually shaving off their "rougher edges" in order to become part of the institutionalized thinking. If you enter somewhere like the *FT*, everyone has a very rigid idea of how the global economy works and if you don't share that idea, you'll be out. That's, of course, how all power systems work. They don't work by promoting dissidents or people that think differently from everyone else; they wouldn't last long if they did.

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[4] "CNN anchor resigns after criticising Israeli propaganda", www.middleeast monitor.com/news/middle-east/16418-cnn-anchor-resigns-after-criticising-israeli-propaganda

INHUMANITY

Because of the central role the business press plays in greasing the cogs in the economic system, following newspapers dedicated to covering the inner workings of the racket, such as the *FT*, is probably the best way into understanding the capitalist id. For me, the specialist financial media, especially the less polite parts of it, is the best means to understand the sickness that festers at the root of our world. In his landmark work *The Sane Society*, the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm wrote: "That millions of people share the same forms of mental pathology does not make these people sane." A *CBS News* report from the aftermath of the death of Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez is a perfect example. It reveals so beautifully the inhuman priorities of the racket's media, and by extension of our whole economic system. After talking about the reaction of the oil market on news of the death of Chávez – the democratically elected leader of Venezuela who had made massive successes in reducing poverty and destitution – the journalist continued (and bear in mind this is not satire): "Chavez invested Venezuela's oil wealth into social programs including state-run food markets, cash benefits for poor families, free health clinics and education programs. But those gains were meager compared with the spectacular construction projects that oil riches spurred in glittering Middle Eastern cities, including the world's tallest building in Dubai and plans for branches of the Louvre and Guggenheim museums in Abu Dhabi."[5]

In the capitalist id, way deeper than all the useful ideology about poverty reduction through economic growth and liberalization, lies this kind of calculation. Free health clinics and education for the poor majority, who for centuries have been locked out of their own country's mineral wealth, are irrelevant, unimportant. In this understanding of the world, the human being is second-class. What is important is the object, the flashy building where the rich can feel important and puffed up with status. This continues across the board, although the priorities of the racket media are not often so casually exposed. The day after the massacre of 34 striking mine workers in the South African town of Marikana, for instance, I was writing a market report for the *FT*, and the newspaper posted a blog entry about the company that employed the mine workers headlined "Lonmin: killings cast a long shadow". The long shadow wasn't the impact on the families of the dead, or the criminal responsibility of the company that the workers were striking against. Instead the post noted the tragedy that "Shares in Lonmin, the platinum mining group at the centre of the dispute, plunged by 10 per cent in Johannesburg early on Friday as details of the shootings at the company's Marikana mining complex near Rustenburg were revealed." It continued that, even worse, "A tragedy of this scale will have a political, economic and social impact – which seems certain to affect the investment climate."[6] Ladies and gentlemen, the highest of crimes in the business press. Murdered workers – well, that's life. But hurting an investment climate – that's a crisis! In South Africa's *Business Day* journal, concern in the aftermath was similarly focused on what the massacre would mean for investors. "Deadly Marikana shootout could deter investment, economists warn," they cautioned.[7]

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[5] "Little reaction in oil market to Chavez death", www.cbsnews.com/news/little-reaction-in-oil-market-to-chavez-death

Examples of this inhumanity are legion. The *Wall Street Journal,* publishing an article on the death of mass-murdering US-armed Indonesian dictator General Suharto, noted that "The positive contributions of the man who made Indonesia a respected member of the international community deserve … emphasis."[8] This is a man who carried out, in East Timor, one of the worst genocides of the 20th century. He was, though, good for business, which is all we ask of him to qualify for a good write-up. When the conservative Colombian president Alvaro Uribe left office, the *Financial Times* ran an article with the headline "After the saviour, what happens next?"[9] This is a man who presided over killings on a mass scale and allied with hyper-violent right-wing paramilitaries in his war against the FARC, as well as dissidents on a wider level. "He … leaves a very big pair of shoes to fill," the *FT* concluded. Certainly true – if your gauge is how many kills you can rack up as president.

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[6] http://blogs.ft.com/beyond-brics/2012/08/17/lonmin-killings-cast-a-long-shadow

[7] www.bdlive.co.za/business/mining/2012/08/17/deadly-marikana-shootout-could-deter-investment-economists-warn

Often you can track the positive reaction of the financial press, and the wider press, too, by how nice leaders are to transnational corporations and foreign capital. Luíz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva, the president of Brazil from 2003 to 2010, became the darling of the Western press during his tenure because his social reforms – while good in themselves – did not challenge the rule of capital in his country. Evo Morales and Hugo Chávez, however, as we have seen, took power and gave it back to their people through nationalizations and cancellations of exploitative contracts. For that they were vilified as dictators and terrorists. One of my favorite *Wall Street Journal* articles, titled "Bolivia's descent into rogue state status", noted the country has become "a petri dish in which a culture of organized crime, radical politics and religious fundamentalism festers". That's the punishment waiting for you in the racket's media if you put the interests of your people ahead of the bottom line of the 1 percent.

I recently picked up a copy of the *Economist* on holiday. You might think that having just written a book about the dodgy dealings of the American racketeers I would be used to such examples, but I was still shocked by the lack of any attempt at a cover-up. An article on Angola, the "economic wunderkind that comes a cropper", was lamenting the slowdown in the Angolan economy. The pathologies of the capitalist id were out on show as the magazine stated that "On May 7 the government announced an end to fuel subsidies, which used to consume a whopping 4.5% of GDP. This generally sensible move – the subsidy distorted markets and encouraged smuggling – will hit the poor especially hard in an already highly unequal society." Unpacked, that sentence says that a policy which "hits the poor especially hard in an already highly unequal society" is "generally sensible". And it is – if you're a rich investor or local oligarch, because the state helping its poorest citizens to be able to afford fuel to run their cars or homes is not important. In fact, the ideology of the free market – which holds that any state intervention on the side of the poorest is "market distortion" – makes such a move not only "sensible" but also *necessary*. Death for the poor is *necessary*. In a piece on Egypt in the same issue, with reference to the "successes" of the brutal mass-murdering Egyptian dictator Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the *Economist* could barely hide its glee about the killing that had been made not just by his troops – but by investors too! The article was entitled "The lure of Sisi", and stated that Egypt's stock market delivered the best returns for investors in 2014. So, yes, a *fantastic* year for investors.[10] But according to Amnesty International, the previous year wasn't so great if you were a peaceful protestor. In the six months towards the end of 2013 nearly one and a half thousand people died in protests – most at the hands of Egyptian security forces.

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[8] "Judging Suharto", www.wsj.com/articles/SB120147529291320743

[9] www.ft.com/cms/s/0/5e1f692e-4042-11df-8d23-00144feabdc0.html

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[10] "The music stops", www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21651280-economic-wunderkind-comes-cropper-music-stops; "The lure of Sisi", www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21651278-president-has-secured-investment-not-yet-fixed-economy-lure

Yet the *Economist* went on to say that "Sisi has consolidated power and ruthlessly crushed dissent. His firm rule and programme of economic development have also attracted much-needed investment. Freedoms must be sacrificed in the service of progress, the president argues. For now, at least, he may feel vindicated." *Vindicated.*

In some ways I admire the *Economist*'s honesty. The *New York Times* or *Washington Post* either ignore that the US is integral to upholding many deeply repressive, mass-murdering regimes, or they find some way of spinning this truth to make their liberal readers feel good about it – in Egypt's case, most likely the "threat" of the Muslim Brotherhood. At least the *Economist* has the honesty to say what it's really about – investors' ability to make a killing. The *Wall Street Journal* is similarly honest about which team they are batting for. In an op-ed after the coup in Egypt which bought Sisi to power, the writer claimed that "Egyptians would be lucky if their new ruling generals turn out to be in the mold of Chile's Augusto Pinochet, who took over power amid chaos but hired free-market reformers and midwifed a transition to democracy."[11] That "transition" the *Wall Street Journal* talks about took a coup d'état against a democratic and constitutional president, Salvador Allende, and 17 years of fascist dictatorship, alongside thousands dead, to implement. But, hey, a lot of people got rich.

THE FIG LEAF

When I left the racket's media and tried to write for other newspapers that I thought would be more reflective of my political outlook, I realized something even more disturbing than what I'd seen on the inside: the racket's stranglehold on the mass media is total. The liberal and left parts of the mainstream media are as compromised by corporate money and private interests as their conservative rivals, perhaps even more so. And it is these progressive outlets that are vital to maintaining the façade of a free and fair media. They give the impression of fighting against the racket when in fact they support it in the fundamentals. I learnt that, in fact, newspapers like the UK's *Guardian* – probably the most influential left-wing journal in the Western world – are among the most biased and self-righteous institutions around. They are full of private-school-educated Oxbridge graduates who see themselves as crusading liberals fighting against corporate and state power.[12] But if you step a bit to the left of them, you will know about it. They guard their left flank religiously, instructing the world that anyone operating there is beyond the pale. The same is true of the *New York Times* in the US.

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[11] "After the coup in Cairo", www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324399404578583932317286550# articleTabs=article

When I started looking into it, I saw that the *Guardian* is actually intimately involved with the racket, and relies on the racket to run its day-to-day reporting operations. If you click on the Cities section of its website, you will find the whole section is sponsored by the neoliberal Rockefeller Foundation. If you go to the Global Development section, you will see it's sponsored by the equally neoliberal Gates Foundation. And this goes on and on.[13] Corporate power has its claws deep into the *Guardian*. Delve deeper into the website and you will find the Sustainable Business Zone, where its Social Impact section sponsor is the mining giant Anglo-American and its Sustainable Living section is sponsored by consumer goods giant Unilever. There, these companies are given free rein to publish corporate social responsibility nonsense – an effort to improve their image so they have less trouble exploiting the countries where they make their profits.[14] The *Guardian* itself officially says that this sponsorship has no impact on how it reports news. But I had my own experience of this maybe not being wholly true when I reported from a town in El Salvador called Nejapa, where many residents could not afford clean drinking water for themselves and their families, despite the fact they lived on top of a huge aquifer.[15]

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[12] "Study reveals growing dominance of privately-educated elite at the top of UK journalism", www.pressgazette.co.uk/study-reveals-growing-dominance-privately-educated-elite-top-uk-journalism; "Survey suggests Oxbridge dominance on staff of *The Guardian* and *Observer*", www.pressgazette.co.uk/wire/7885

[13] Cities site: www.theguardian.com/cities; Global Development site: www.theguardian.com/global-development

When I was preparing the story with my colleague, the brewing company SABMiller, when asked for a quote, started getting heavy about what we might be putting in the article. They sent me a joint report on Nejapa they had authored with Oxfam (showing, in the process, how the racket now has its tentacles in NGOs as well). In the end, SABMiller were only briefly mentioned in our article, and one of their spokesmen was quoted in the piece.[16] But just a few days later I noticed that the *Guardian* was carrying a news article, sponsored by the Gates Foundation of course, on its website. It was a 900-word interview with Karl Lippert, president of the Latin American division of SABMiller, which read like a corporate press release. He was given long spaces to expatiate on his company's commitment to water security, without any pushback at all. Then he responded at length to the criticism in our article over corporate control of water in Nejapa.

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[14] Anglo-American partner zone: www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/partner-zone-anglo-american; Unilever partner zone: www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/unilever-partner-zone

[15] "Water everywhere for profit in Nejapa, but few drops for local people to drink", www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/nov/03/nejapa-water-access-el-salvador-business-profit-locals

[16] "Latin America's water woes blamed on politics and poor infrastructure", www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/nov/06/latin-america-water-access-karl-lippert-sabmiller

I thought this was a weird thing for the *Guardian* to run as a news story. Lippert is completely unknown and in much of the article he spoke about the story we had done. The *Guardian*, I later learnt, had a "partner zone" sponsored by SABMiller on its website.[17]

The *Guardian*'s analogue in the US is no better; in fact, it's worse. At least the *Guardian* didn't support the anti-democratic coup against the Hugo Chávez government in 2002. The *New York Times* did. Two days after the coup it described the overthrow of democracy, suspension of the constitution and installation of a millionaire tyrant like this: "The man in charge in the presidential palace went from a strong-willed populist known for his rambling speeches to a mild-mannered businessman who chooses every word carefully." It continued in another article: "With yesterday's resignation of President Hugo Chávez, Venezuelan democracy is no longer threatened by a would-be dictator. Mr. Chávez, a ruinous demagogue, stepped down after the military intervened and handed power to a respected business leader, Pedro Carmona."[18]

What hope do we have if this is the progressive extreme of the mainstream media in the US and UK?

The racket that rules us is enabled even more forcefully by the *Guardian* and *New York Times* than it is by Rupert Murdoch or the *Financial Times*, because they define what is acceptable progressive opinion, and tell us how far we can go and still be "respectable" and have a mainstream journalistic career. This restricts our imagination, forces us to worship our oppressors, and creates the illusion of fighting for justice while undermining the leaders and popular movements that will bring it about. The racket is deep in every crevice of the mass media, and we won't be free until that hold is broken.

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[17] SABMiller partner zone: www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/partner-zone-sab-miller/2010/nov/10/all

[18] "Hugo Chávez departs", www.nytimes.com/2002/04/13/opinion/hugo-chavez-departs.html

Thankfully that hold is, indeed, breaking. Sprouting up around the world is a media independent of corporate control, unhinged from the fatalities of the racket's talking points. We are living through an exciting time for the media, but not the traditional media. What is happening now is a massive and irreversible shift of power to people. For two centuries, the upper class has owned the means of intellectual production, from the newspapers to the printing presses and everything else you needed to project your views on to society on a mass scale. But now, with the advent of the internet, there are many more ways to circumvent what has become a truly stagnant system. Be in no doubt: it scares the establishment senseless. They've had control over this for so long, and really don't want to let it go.

From Spain to Greece, the birth of people's movements has ushered true progressives into power, and it has been done largely by bypassing the stale old world media systems. Podemos managed to gain 21 percent of the vote in Spain's December 2015 elections – just two years after the party was founded, and in the face of a hugely hostile mainstream media. A few months before, in the UK, Jeremy Corbyn was voted leader of the Labour Party with an overwhelming mandate, galvanizing a long-dormant progressive current in Britain, again in the face of the most intense media political assassination campaign in recent history. Senator Bernie Sanders has similarly scrambled the political spectrum in the US with his hugely successful campaign for the Democratic nomination, even while the corporate media threw as much mud as possible on his self-avowed "socialism". Meanwhile, Syriza, a party of the left, has actually taken power in Greece, and remains popular, again despite the traditional oligarch-owned media being out for its throat. The realm of the possible is being stretched. People are looking outside their traditional outlets for news, and seeing that the truth does not lie in the "respectable" institutions they had previously trusted. The breakdown of the political center in the West is being paralleled by the breakdown of the media center. When both jobs are complete – and they will work in unison – we will be able to stare long and hard at the rotting machine that turns our economy, and dispatch it to the dustbin of history. The center cannot hold.

Matt Kennard
London
January 2016

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"Acute and perceptive."
NOAM CHOMSKY

IRREGULAR ARMY

HOW THE US MILITARY RECRUITED

IRREGULAR
ARMY

How the US Military Recruited Neo-Nazis, Gang Members and Criminals to Fight the War on Terror

Matt Kennard

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For all the people whose lives have been ended
or brutalized by these wars

An Army raised without proper regard to the choice of its recruits was never yet made good by length of time; and we are now convinced by fatal experience that this is the source of all our misfortunes.

Flavius Vegetius Renatus, in his military manual
De Re Militari, fifth century, as the decline
of the Roman Empire began in earnest

He served up our great military a huge bowl of chicken feces, and ever since then, our military and our country have been trying to turn this bowl into chicken salad.

Retired General John Batiste, former
commander of the First Infantry division in
Iraq, on Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, 2006

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War is the most traumatic event a human being can experience. That goes for those attacked *and* for those individuals sent to do the attacking. I would like to thank all the veterans who have come home and dedicated their post-combat lives to stopping these wars and fighting for the health and educational benefits that are rightfully theirs. This book is not an indictment of all US service members; it is an indictment of the people who sent them to war on the basis of a lie and knowingly allowed the whole institution to unravel.

It goes without saying none of the people above are responsible for what I have written.

Introduction: Breaking Down

> *I just can't imagine someone looking at the United States armed forces today and suggesting that they are close to breaking.*
>
> Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, 2006[1]

On September 10, 2001, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stood in front of the assembled great and good of the Pentagon and delivered an expansive lecture entitled *Bureaucracy to Battlefield*.[2] Its prescriptions were extremely radical—among the most portentous in US military history—but thanks to the terrorist atrocities the following day his words remain buried deep in the memory hole, while their *consequences* are buried under the sands of Iraq and Afghanistan. "The topic today is an adversary that poses a threat, a serious threat, to the security of the United States of America," Rumsfeld began, before revealing the threat to be not Al-Qaeda, but the "Pentagon bureaucracy." "Not the people, but the processes," he added reassuringly. "Not the civilians, but the systems. Not the men and women in uniform, but the uniformity of thought and action that we too often impose on them." In essence, Rumsfeld's speech that day was designed to lay the ground and soften up his workers for a massive privatization of the Department of Defense's services. It was the realization of a long-held dream for Republican politicians and their corporate allies in Washington—who would now be presented with a sweet shop full of lucrative government contracts to chew on. With the tragic events of the next day and the ensuing two-front ground war in the Middle East, Rumsfeld was gifted the perfect opportunity to enact his program with minimal opposition. The results were clear eight years into the War on Terror when the DOD (Department of Defense) had 95,461 private contractors working for them in Iraq compared to 95,900 US military personnel.[3] The use of private contractors was by then so embedded that Barack Obama's initial skepticism about their use displayed while a senator became one more item in a long list of policy climbdowns. But while the privatization of the war effort is a topic that has been explored extensively by a number of journalists, notably Jeremy Scahill,[4] one aspect of the program has received little coverage—namely Rumsfeld's plan for soldiers on the payroll of the DOD. Equally radical, it was a scheme that would prove catastrophic for the troops and the occupied populations living under them. Veiled in the language of business-style efficiency savings, Rumsfeld's plan was intended to eviscerate the US military, which was to become merely an appendage to the massive *private forces* the US would employ in the future.

"In this period of limited funds," he continued, "we need every nickel, every good idea, every innovation, every effort to help modernize and transform the US military."

This could only be done by changing the basics of how the Pentagon worked, in a process that would later be dubbed "Transformation": "Many of the skills we most require are also in high demand in the private sector, as all of you know. To compete, we need to bring the Department of Defense the human resources practices that have already transformed the private sector." Even the DOD itself was to be run like a corporation: "We must employ the tools of modern business. More flexible compensation packages, modern recruiting techniques and better training." What Rumsfeld desired was a scaled-down, streamlined US military—a reversal of what had become known as the Powell Doctrine, named for the Desert Storm general Colin Powell, who believed in high troop numbers, "overwhelming force," and a defined exit strategy. It was a risky approach for Rumsfeld to take. Even before 9/11, Powell, by now Secretary of State, had observed that "our armed forces are stretched rather thin, and there is a limit to how many of these deployments we can sustain."[5] That would prove to be an understatement. But Rumsfeld was backed in his new approach by his boss, President George W. Bush, who much to Powell's consternation shared the same vision. "Building tomorrow's force is not going to be easy. Changing the direction of our military is like changing the course of a mighty ship," Bush said in May 2001.[6]

The oft-repeated cliché is that everything changed on September 11, and indeed it did for millions of Americans. But not for Rumsfeld: his priorities stayed the same while his popularity surged after he was pictured helping victims of the attack at the Pentagon into ambulances. He now had not only the ultimate cover for changing the course of the mighty ship and designing a pared-down business-style war machine, but also the perfect laboratory for his experiments. The war drums began beating in earnest soon after 9/11. The invasion of Afghanistan began with a Rumsfeld-inspired Special Forces mission to bribe local warlords, supported by airstrikes obviating the need for "overwhelming" manpower. But the so-called neoconservatives weren't finished yet: they had their eyes on the ultimate prize of Iraq and, sure enough, eighteen months later and much more controversially, the country with the third-largest reserves of oil in the world was attacked—a move Rumsfeld's deputy Paul Wolfowitz had been advocating (again, with a Rumsfeld-style small force) in the 1990s. Over the next decade, US bombs fell on Syria and Pakistan and Yemen, among others, as the Middle East turned into a conflagration of Dantesque proportions, with civilians, insurgents, and US service members all caught up in the blaze.

Rumsfeld's guinea pigs for his new experiment in "flexible" military planning were the patriotic Americans who believed they were signing up to defend their country—at the height of the War on Terror, 1.6 million of them had served in the Middle East.[7] That number, equivalent to the population of a country like Estonia or a city like Philadelphia, must have come as a surprise to Rumsfeld, who had predicated his whole war plan on a much smaller force and a short war. In fact, soon after 9/11, General Tommy Franks had been asked by Rumsfeld to estimate how many troops an invasion of Iraq would require. The last contingency plan for invading Iraq, dating from 1998, had recommended a force of more than 380,000. But, apparently under pressure from Rumsfeld, General Franks presented his "Generated Start" plan with an initial troop count of just 275,000.[8] Even that was too much for Rumsfeld, who in typical peremptory fashion slapped down the general and pushed for an even smaller force. According to Michael Gordon, military correspondent for the *New York Times*, "They came up with a variant called the running start, where you begin maybe with a division or so, and then the reinforcements would flow behind it. So, you start small but you just keep sending more of what you need."[9] This approach generated what was called a "war within a war," as it pitted Rumsfeld against General Eric Shinseki, the army's popular Chief of Staff, and Secretary of State Powell, both of whom (rightly) believed that large numbers of troops would be needed to ensure security after the initial fighting was over. General Shinseki publicly proposed a force of 200,000, after his frustration with Rumsfeld’s intransigence on the issue became insufferable.[10] It didn’t matter. Rumsfeld wouldn’t listen.

This tactic was so blinded by ideology that it directly contradicted the ostensible goals of the invasion—disarming Saddam Hussein. “The United States did not have nearly enough troops to secure the hundreds of suspected WMD sites that had supposedly been identified in Iraq or to secure the nation’s long, porous borders,” said Michael Gordon and General Bernard Trainor in their book *Cobra II*. “Had the Iraqis possessed WMD and terrorist groups been prevalent in Iraq as the Bush administration so loudly asserted, [the limited number of] U.S. forces might well have failed to prevent the WMD from being spirited out of the country and falling into the hands of the dark forces the administration had declared war against.”[11] But it wasn’t just ideology that was to blame for the ensuing damage to the US military and its war aims; there was a sizeable dose of incompetence as well. Declassified war-planning documents from the US Central Command in August 2002 show how ill-prepared the Bush administration was for the occupation which was to follow. The plan they put together assumed that by December 2006 the US military would be almost completely drawn down from Iraq, leaving a residual force of just 5,000 troops.[12] It was madness, but nevertheless music to Rumsfeld’s ears.

After much wrangling, Rumsfeld and Franks compromised and the initial force numbered 130,000, much smaller than had been envisioned in the 1990s, but not as slim as Rumsfeld had hoped. It didn’t go to plan anyway, and the troop levels were not enough to get a handle on this country of 30 million people. Incrementally more service members were sent out alongside private contractors as the situation descended into chaos after the first viceroy Paul Bremner’s decommissioning of the police and military sparked endless violence. By 2005, the US had 150,000 troops deployed in Iraq, and 19,500 in Afghanistan. But the war plan meant the military wasn’t prepared in any way for this kind of extended deployment—and it was unraveling. In 2005, just two years into the war in Iraq, people were talking openly about the fact that the US military had reached breaking point. At a Senate hearing in March of that year, General Richard A. Cody expressed these concerns publicly: “What keeps me awake at night is what will this all-volunteer force look like in 2007.”[13] But he didn’t know the half of it. Worse was to come as in the same year the army missed its recruitment targets by the largest margin since 1979, a time when US society was still afflicted with so-called

“Vietnam Syndrome” and the army was much bigger and recruiting twice as many soldiers.

Breaking Point

Around this time a retired army officer named Andrew F. Krepinevich, writing under a Pentagon contract, released a shocking report which was scathing about the US military being able to maintain its troop levels in Iraq without breaking the military or losing the war. His diagnosis was simple: the US armed forces were “confronted with a protracted deployment against irregular forces waging insurgencies,” but the ground forces required to provide stability and security in Afghanistan and Iraq “clearly exceed those available for the mission.”[14] To compensate, the army was introducing change by the back door at the expense of their troops. Krepinevich pointed to the frequent and untimely redeployment of service members. “Soldiers and brigades are being deployed more frequently, and for longer periods, than what the Army believes is appropriate in order to attract and retain the number of soldiers necessary to maintain the size and quality of the force asking.”[15] He offered three solutions for overcoming the desperate shortage of troops: redeploy existing troops more frequently still; redeploy them for even longer; or deploy US Marine ground troops. The first two of these prescriptions had already been undertaken by the army, but it was a dangerous game. “How often can a soldier be put in harm’s way and still desire to remain in the Army?” Krepinevich asked. “It is not clear, even to Army leaders, how long this practice can be sustained without inducing recruitment and retention problems.”[16] His conclusions were not optimistic: the army, he said, was “in a race against time,” in which “its ability to execute long-term initiatives” was compromised by the “risk [of] ‘breaking’ the force in the form of a catastrophic decline in recruitment and retention.”[17] He continued that it would be difficult not to stress the active and reserve components “so severely that recruiting and retention problems become so severe as to threaten the effectiveness of the force.”[18] By now, then, everyone—including even Rumsfeld himself—knew the army had to increase in size. “With today’s demands placing such a high strain on our service members, it becomes more crucial than ever that we work to alleviate their burden,” said Representative Ike Skelton (D-MO), who had a long track record of advocating for a bigger army.[19] But with recruitment down and anger at the war widespread how could this be done?

There was one course of action that would have instantly sewn up the military's unraveling seams, namely: the draft. But it was too controversial. Involuntary conscription had been abolished by Congress in 1973 at the end of the Vietnam War. At the time Krepinevich was writing, it did enter into the national conversation, although the Bush administration remained implacably opposed for reasons of naked self-interest. When Rumsfeld testified at a Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee in April 2005 the issue was raised by Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI). "For the first time in many years the Army and Marine Corps are not meeting their recruiting targets. There are some who are already discussing the draft," he said with diplomatic tact. An exasperated Rumsfeld shuffled forward in his seat and put his mouth closer to the microphone: "I think the only people who could conceivably be talking about a draft are people who are speaking from pinnacles of near-perfect ignorance," he replied. "The last thing we need is a draft. We just don't."[20]

The Democrats kept pushing until Charles Rangel, a Congressman from New York, reintroduced the Draft Bill in February 2006, which if passed would have reinstated conscription for all those up to forty-two years old. "Every day that the military option is on the table, as declared by the president in his State of the Union address, in Iran, North Korea, and Syria, reinstatement of the military draft is an option that must also be considered, whether we like it or not," said Rangel. "If the military is already having trouble getting the recruits they need, what can we do to fill the ranks if the war spreads from Iraq to other countries? We may have no other choice but a draft."[21] It was rejected by Congress, much to the delight of President Bush. "I applaud the House of Representatives for soundly rejecting the 'Reinstate the Draft' bill," he said in the aftermath. "If this bill were presented to me, I would veto it. America's all-volunteer military is the best in the world, and reinstating the draft would be bad policy. We have increased pay and benefits to ensure that our troops have the resources they need to fight and win the war on terror. I want every American to understand that, as long as I am President, there will be no draft."[22] Reinstating it wouldn't have made the US an anomaly among its allies: many still run compulsory conscription programs, including Israel and (until 2011) Germany. The draft also has deep roots in the US historical narrative: during the Civil War, America's greatest president, Abraham Lincoln, had put forward the Conscription Act which called for the military service of all healthy males between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five for a three-year term. But the opposition from President Bush and his administration should be understood from the perspective of the still-raw memories many Americans have of the last draft. In a war so unpopular and with a president under so much pressure, the administration was aware that conscripting the nation's youth into the military could well be the straw that broke the camel's back. In a 2006 CBS poll, 68 percent of respondents said they opposed reinstating the military draft.[23]

The Vietnam-era draft has also come under concerted attack ever since that war because of its targeted recruitment of certain demographics in the American population. Roughly 80 percent of the soldiers sent to Indochina were from working-class and/or ethnic minority backgrounds.[24] One Vietnam veteran, Mike Clodfelter, who grew up in Plainville, Kansas, wrote in his 1976 memoir: "From my own small home town . . . all but two of a dozen high school buddies would eventually serve in Vietnam and all were of working class families, while I knew of not a single middle class son of the town's businessmen, lawyers, doctors, or ranchers from my high school graduating class who experienced the Armageddon of our generation."[25] Even though the draft was never reinstated during the War on Terror, there were symmetries with recruitment trends from the Vietnam era. In the War on Terror, the US military again focused on enlisting society's poorest. Denied the draft, however, it fell back on another method learned from attempts to swell the ranks during Vietnam: changing the regulations on enlistment. In 1965, as the troop buildup in South Vietnam grew, the military started to abandon its standards for recruitment and hundreds of thousands of men who scored among the lowest IQ percentiles were admitted for the first time. "Prior to American escalation in Vietnam such men were routinely rejected, but with a war on these 'new standards' were suddenly declared fit to fight. Rejection rates plummeted," writes one historian.[26] In 1966, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara instituted a program called "Project 100,000," which aimed to increase the levels of troops by that number within two years by admitting civilians who had previously not met the required standards.[27]

The New Look

Without conscription and with recruitment targets being consistently missed, the Bush administration and the Pentagon devised a similar plan. By subcontracting out myriad operational tasks to private military institutions like Blackwater and DynCorp, who received billions of dollars in government largesse to man the frontlines in the War on Terror, the government had partially dealt with the gap between its demand for cannon fodder and the supply of quality troops. A thin coalition of countries, later including NATO troops in Afghanistan and the UN in Iraq, helped ameliorate the chronic troop deficits. But it wasn't enough. In 2004, Bush took another unusual step to plug the hole: he called up 37,000 members of the National Guard to go to fight in the deserts of Iraq.[28] Not since the Korean War had there been such a mobilization: the National Guard had served in the Gulf War and Kosovo, but in nowhere near such huge numbers. By June 2005, they accounted for 45 percent of the total army in Iraq.[29] Then there were the monetary inducements, which became quite lucrative for service members and crippling for the Pentagon. The Rand Corporation conducted an in-depth study which found that the DOD budget for enlistment and reenlistment bonuses had skyrocketed between 2000 to 2008, more than doubling to $1.4 billion for reenlistment bonuses. The average army enlistment bonus increased from $5,600 to about $18,000 per soldier over the same period.[30] In just three years, from 2006 to 2009, the army dispensed with $1 billion to recruit 64,526 active-duty and reserve soldiers. Army Reserve recruits saw their bonuses more than double over the same period, to $19,500. But the study also found that in the army recruiters themselves tend to be a more cost-effective way to swell the ranks of the military than enlistment bonuses or pay increases. The Bush administration took that route too. To achieve its 2007 goals, the army increased its 8,000-strong recruiting force with 2,000 new assistants.[31]

At the same time—and perhaps most importantly—those who should have been kicked out were being allowed to stay. In June 2005, the *Wall Street Journal* turned up an internal memo to senior commanders which called the growing dropout rate—called "attrition" in military jargon—"a matter of great concern." "We need your concerted effort to reverse the negative trend," it read. "By reducing attrition 1%, we can save up to 3,000 initial-term soldiers. That's 3,000 more soldiers in our formations." It was an explicit call to drop standards: the message being that soldiers addicted to alcohol and drugs, those who lose their fitness, or their mental poise, shouldn't be discharged. It was batten down the hatches time. The *Wall Street Journal* quoted a battalion commander as saying: "It is the guys on weight control . . . school no-shows, drug users, etc., who eat up my time and cause my hair to grey prematurely . . . Often they have more than one of these issues simultaneously."[32] Such sentiments did not occur in a vacuum. Rumsfeld and the Pentagon were, in fact, allowing the dismantling of the whole regulatory structure for enlistment and retention that the US armed forces had built up in the twenty-five years since Vietnam. The slim military needed fattening up and this was the only way to do it. In the end it constituted a complete re-evaluation of who was qualified to serve in the US armed forces, a full-works facelift of the service unheard of in the annals of modern American history. In the relatively halcyon days of the First Gulf War in 1990, the US military blocked the enlistment of felons. It spurned men and women with low IQs or those without a high school diploma. It would either block the enlistment of or kick out neo-Nazis and gang members. It would treat or discharge alcoholics, drug abusers, and the mentally ill. It would pass up the services of foreign citizens to fight its wars. No more. While the Bush administration adopted conservative policies pretty much universally, it saved its ration of liberalism for the US military, where it scrapped all the previously sacrosanct regulations governing recruitment to the most powerful fighting force in the world. Under the aegis of the War on Terror, the US armed forces became a Mecca for the "different," the weird and wonderful (and dangerous) of America.

Throughout all this, however, the military maintained a rictus, everything-in-order, smile for the public. As late as August 2007, when the crisis befalling the institution had become widely known, Michael Dominguez, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, began his testimony to a Congressional hearing with a slap on the back for the US military: "Let me begin by acknowledging an historic achievement that many, including some of our own experts, would have thought impossible a few years ago," he said. "We have taken an all-volunteer military to war. We have done it in a strong economy with 4.5 percent unemployment. We often have asked that force and their families to do more on short notice. And through it all, we have manned this nation's military with people far above average relative to their peers."[33] It was simply untrue. The average member of the US military was no longer far above their average peer. The following chapters will show how the Bush administration, together with a pliant Pentagon (and the succeeding Obama administration), enabled the US military to undergo the biggest and fastest transformation in its history. Each chapter will cover a different group of people who have been enfranchised through the War on Terror as the US military scrambled for troops. The different weightings and amount of reporting on each group reflects the fact that some of these changes in regulation have been explicit (for example, rules on body weight and IQ) while others have been completely denied (from neo-Nazis to gang members). Still others have been hushed up as far as possible—such as the vast numbers of young Americans scarred for life by mental illness, left untreated and forsaken.

It will become clear quite quickly that it is not just American soldiers who have been short-changed by Rumsfeld's vision—the occupied populations have been sacrificed with rivers of their own blood. Many of the wars' worst atrocities are linked directly to the loosening of enlistment regulations on criminals, racist extremists, and gang members, among others. Then there is the domestic US population, which has had to put up with military-trained gang members marauding around their cities; as well as Mexican civilians who have paid with their lives in the drug wars facilitated in part by the US military. The effects of this will be felt for decades to come. Finally, there's the safety of the troops themselves. Loosening standards on intelligence and body weight, for example, compromised the military's operational readiness and undoubtedly endangered the lives of American and allied troops. Hundreds of young Americans may have paid with their lives for this folly.

US society changed profoundly after the September 11 attacks and during the subsequent wars. In many ways, the military is a reflection of the society from which it is drawn, and the changes in the composition of the US military and its regulations over this period reflected a country in political, cultural, and economic reverse gear. As America became increasingly bigoted and inward-looking, so radicalism in the US military increased. As young people became ever fatter, so too did the soldiers. As the criminal justice system locked more and more people up, so the military had to increase the numbers of felons it allowed in. "Today's young men and women are more overweight . . . and are being charged for offenses that in earlier years wouldn't have been considered a serious offense, and might not have resulted in charges in the first place," an army spokesman complained in 2008.[34] At the height of the War on Terror, only one in three men in the general population met the pre-9/11 physical, mental, educational, and other eligibility requirements needed to enlist in the armed forces. "The numbers of people who meet our enlistment standards is astonishingly low," grumbled Under Secretary Dominguez at the end of his testimony lauding the military's success.[35] To enlist the rest, the US military had to change in profound and dangerous ways.

What follows, then, is a soldier's-eye history of the War on Terror, told by the men and women who have often paid the highest price (alongside, of course, the occupied populations). Through it all, the military rationalized its transformation program as an altruistic democratization of the fighting force or denied outright they had loosened regulations. "In the 1990s what you saw was they just kept raising the standards for who they would accept, as a way of weeding out less desirable people, it was a buyer's market," John Pike, a military analyst, told me. "When the war came along they decided that a lot of these standards didn't have anything to do with war fighting."[36] It was a lie, as this book will reveal in its attempt to remedy the relentless propaganda.

CHAPTER ONE

The Other “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”

HITLER IN IRAQ

> *The military has a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy pertaining to extremism. If individuals can perform satisfactorily, without making their extremist opinions overt . . . they are likely to be able to complete their contracts.*
>
> US Department of Defense report, 2005[1]

My journey into the dark underworld of the US military begins on a rainy Tuesday morning in March 2008, with a visit to Tampa, Florida, on the south-eastern tip of the country. The mission is simple: to meet Forrest Fogarty, a diehard American patriot who has served the US Army proudly for two years in Iraq, the central focus of America’s War on Terror and the country’s most controversial foreign adventure since Vietnam. The twist is that Forrest doubles as a white supremacist of the serious Hitler-worshipping type. Over the preceding months, I’d been speaking to him intermittently on his cell phone after his brother had put us in contact. It was a necessarily convoluted route: getting inside the neo-Nazi network in the United States is no cakewalk, requiring endless appeals via phone and email to penetrate the thick walls put up against a hostile mainstream media. I’d been uniquely successful with Fogarty, who is an effortlessly loquacious character with a compelling story, so I take a flight from New York City to meet him.

On arrival, I quickly check into the nearest hotel after the bus drops me off downtown, but it’s early afternoon so I walk along the deserted walkway next to the Hillsborough River that runs through the heart of the city, dividing the University of Tampa from the skyscrapers on my side. It is about 5 p.m. before I eventually muster the courage to call Forrest on his cell. He picks up after a few rings. “Oh hey, I didn’t think you’d come!” he says in his croaky voice, sounding happy to hear from me. “I usually go get a beer after work, why don’t you come?” Sure, I tell him.

A couple of hours later I'm in a cab headed for his favorite hangout, the Winghouse Bar & Grill, which describes itself as "a casual sports-bar with delicious over-sized entrees." I'd assumed the place was downtown, so it's an unpleasant surprise when the taxi speeds along endless miles of pitch-black highway with the full moon barely lighting up the dense forests and thickets whizzing by. The situation is prime for a bit of macabre daydreaming: will I be jumped by a group of his mates, maybe even end up decapitated in the woods? Before too long we pull up at the sparkling Winghouse, located on a plain at the side of the highway, its bright lights a welcome interruption to the surrounding blackness. It's an open-plan restaurant with a bar in the middle and a group of Tampa belles in low-cut tops taking orders. In our brief phone call I'd asked Forrest how I would recognize him. "Just look for the skinhead with the tattoos," he said, laughing. And sure enough, sitting straight to my right as I walk in is a youngish looking man, plastered in tattoos, with tightly cropped hair, wife-beater vest, and bulging biceps—a poster-boy skinhead, the archetypal American Nazi. "Good to meet you," I say, not bothering to get confirmation. "Hey Matt," he replies. "Sit down." He is bright and alert, his keen eyes darting around as he speaks. We order some chicken wings with buffalo sauce, and a pitcher of beer. "You're British, right," he says. "I remember seeing black guys with British accents in Iraq, shit was so crazy."

Forrest is obviously in his element in the Winghouse as he slouches in his chair, beer in one hand, chicken wing in the other. He doesn't take long to start in with his life story, which, for shock value, is admittedly hard to beat. He tells me he grew up in Los Angeles and moved to Tampa at fifteen with some serious psychological baggage. In high school in LA he was bullied by Mexican and African American children and was just fourteen when he decided he wanted to be a Nazi. By the time his family moved and he switched to Leto High in Tampa, he had found his identity: "I eventually got kicked out of Leto High, for being a racialist," he says, his voice quivering with anger still. "I was getting in a few fights. What they do in desegregation is bus blacks into the neighborhood. On the first day, a bunch of niggers, they said 'Are you in the KKK?' to me, and I said, 'Yeah,' and it was on. After this, I kept getting in fights, eventually they expelled me."

It's nerve-wracking sitting in a bar with Forrest as he vents openly against black people and Jews. He has no qualms about flaunting his Nazism and I look like his friend. "I get into fights myself twice a month because I'm a

Nazi," he assures me, pouring a pint of beer and smiling. "I'm completely open about it." When black people come into the bar he emits a hiss of disapproval. "I just don't want to be around them," he tells me. "I don't want to look at them, I don't want them near me, I don't want to smell them. And people say, 'Oh people who are racialist you've never hung around black people' . . . bullshit, I've showered with them, I've lived with them, I don't like them . . . they're fucking savages, they're tribal motherfuckers, they are different to us, how they think, how they conduct themselves." Although he has two kids to look after, aged nine and thirteen, he has the mannerisms of an adolescent. He speaks a lot about "chasing pussy" and getting into fights, and bloviates about Jews and Arabs in between. I nod my head insincerely.

But there's more to Forrest than just bravado. As he downs our pitcher of Bud he becomes freer and talks about his other great passion in life: music. As a young man he was obsessed with Ian Stuart Donaldson, the legendary singer in the British band Skrewdriver, who is hero-worshipped in the neo-Nazi music scene with a fervor akin to a thirteen-year-old Goth's veneration of Marilyn Manson. This adulation was so strong that at sixteen Forrest had an image from one of Skrewdriver's album covers—a Viking carrying an axe, an icon among white nationalists—tattooed on his left forearm. Soon after he had a Celtic cross, an Irish symbol appropriated by neo-Nazis, emblazoned on his stomach. A few years later he started his own band, Attack, now one of the biggest Nazi bands in the US, playing all over the country to crowds of white power fans. But it was never his day job. "I was a landscaper when I left school," he says, leaning back in his chair. "I kind of fell into it, I was a kid back then. I didn't give a shit what I was doing, I was just drinking and fighting."

For the next eight years he drifted through jobs in construction and landscaping and began hanging out with the National Alliance, at the time one of the biggest neo-Nazi organizations in the US. He soon became a member. The group's founder was the late William Pierce, author of *The Turner Diaries*, a novel describing the violent overthrow of the American government, and which is believed to have inspired Timothy McVeigh to carry out the 1995 terrorist attack in Oklahoma.[2] The Alliance is one of the few durable fixtures in the American extremist firmament, where groups often start up and die within a hummingbird's lifetime. At the time of Forrest's involvement with them, they were arguably the most powerful far-right force in the US. It has called for “a long-term eugenics program involving at least the entire populations of Europe and America.”

With his music and friends in place, Forrest turned his attention to his lackluster work. Construction was never what he had wanted to do. He had always seen himself as a fighter and warrior. So he resolved to do what two generations of Fogartys had done before him: join the military. “I wanted to serve my country,” he says as he chews on the last remnants of chicken. “Every male part of my family has served in combat; my father was in Vietnam for two tours as part of the Marine Corps, and my grandfather was in World War Two, Korea and Vietnam.”

Forrest would not be the first extremist to enter the armed forces. The neo-Nazi movement has had a long and tense relationship with the US military, documented for decades. Since its inception, the leaders of the white supremacist movement—which is as old as the country—have encouraged their members to enlist. They see it as a way for their followers to receive combat and weapons training, courtesy of the US government, and to bring what they learn home to then undertake a domestic race war. The concept of a racial “holy war,” often called “Rahowa,” is adhered to by a host of extremist groups—from the Nation of Islam to neo-Nazis—and advocates an apocalyptic eruption of all-against-all racial violence that pitches races against each other and into open conflict with the government. Not all far-right groups subscribe to this vision—some, like the Ku Klux Klan, claim to prefer a democratic approach. But a large portion see themselves as insurrectionary forces challenging the moral bankruptcy of a government that is unreformable. To that end, professional training in warfare is a must. The US military has long been aware of these groups’ attempts at infiltration. Even so, the first military directive pertaining to “extremism” didn’t appear until the Vietnam War and the target of the new guidelines wasn’t racist extremists, but rather anti-war elements. The Department of Defense Directive *Guidelines for Handling Dissent and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces* was aimed at curbing the influence of dissidents within the military by prohibiting the publishing of “underground” newspapers, the formation of military unions, and other actions that could be used by anti-war protestors to further their agenda.[3]

The presence of white supremacists in the military first triggered concern in 1976. At Camp Pendleton in California, a group of black marines attacked white marines they mistakenly believed to be in the KKK. The resulting investigation uncovered a KKK chapter at the base and led to the jailing or transfer of sixteen Klansmen. But the Vietnam-era legislation was the extent of provisions until 1986, when reports again surfaced of army and Marine Corps members participating in Ku Klux Klan activities. This forced President Reagan’s Secretary of Defense at the time, Caspar Weinberger, to issue a directive stipulating that “military personnel must reject participation in white supremacy, neo-Nazi, and other such groups which espouse or attempt to create overt discrimination.”[4] The 1986 policy change was modified further in 1996 when language was added to the DOD Directive that specifically banned white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups. It explicitly “prohibited activities” by these groups in the military. This change came after the murder in 1995 of two African Americans by a neo-Nazi paratrooper stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The killings led to an investigation that ultimately revealed twenty-two soldiers at Fort Bragg with known extremist tendencies. Fogarty was recruited the year after.

As we finish up our drinks at the Winghouse, I ask if I can meet Forrest again while I’m in the city, which is for just another three days. “I’m working tomorrow, and with the kids on Saturday,” he says. Thinking quickly, I suggest taking them all to the local zoo, the first attraction I can remember from my hotel tourist pack. “Yeah, why not,” he says, and we set a date for Saturday afternoon.

A Narrative of Mistakes

Driving out from downtown Tampa, it takes twenty minutes to arrive at the fifty-six-acre Lowry Park Zoo, tucked away behind the tree-lined highway. The place is overrun with kids and their parents even as the inclement weather beats down rain and hail. Forrest turns up a bit late with his two kids and we set off around the enclosures. Before the rain gets too much we take in the seals, the tigers, and the camels. “Goddamn camels,” says Forrest, looking peaked, “I hate them things.” We talk candidly about his racism and violence in front of his kids, who are a smart pair, not yet set on the same political trajectory as their dad. “There’s nothing they don’t know. I just tell them it’s OK to be white,” says Forrest. “In school they teach about slavery and the Holocaust, they teach them about indiscriminately murdering Jews. I say there’s two sides to every story, you’re hearing from the people who won the war. I don’t care if they have non-white friends, but they will become gang-bangers and not like you when they are older.” The younger kid is “hardcore” according to Forrest, but his ex-wife doesn’t want him joining the military. The older one is obviously very intelligent, outlining the evolutionary reasons for various animal quirks to me effortlessly.

After a good period, the rain sends us all to seek refuge under an umbrella-covered table by a restaurant. While Forrest’s sons play by themselves, he delves deeper into how he joined the military in the first place, with his five-star neo-Nazi credentials. He knew back then that the tattoo he had riding up his forearm could be a problem when it came to enlistment. In a neo-Nazi underworld obsessed with secrecy, racist tattoos remain one of the biggest indicators of extremism for a recruiter, and in an effort to police the matter the US military requires recruits to explain any tattoos. An army manual published in 2000 notes, that “Extremist groups frequently use tattoos to show group association” and offers recruiters a list of specific images to look out for, among them “lightning bolts, skulls, Nazi swastikas, eagles, and Nordic warriors.”[5] It instructs recruiters that any would-be soldier who refuses to remove an offending tattoo should not be allowed to enlist. Fogarty’s are quite clearly the kind written about in the manual—a Nordic warrior and a Celtic cross. This didn’t hinder his application. “They just told me to write an explanation of each tattoo and I made up some stuff and that was that,” he says, chuckling. Maybe it’s not so surprising. According to the military itself, the education of recruiters about how to identify extremists fell by the wayside during the War on Terror. A 2005 report by the Defense Personnel Security Research Center (DPSRC), which is a DOD entity, concluded that recruiting personnel “were not aware of having received training on recognizing and responding to possible terrorists”—a designation that includes white supremacists— “who try to enlist.” It found, on the question of extremist tattoos, that recruiters lacked “completeness, accuracy, timeliness, and accessibility of intelligence for screening tattoos.”[6]

After hanging out with Forrest, I decided to test it out. I contacted a random pool of recruitment centers and found that the level of awareness was low to minimal. I spoke to five different stations around the country pretending to be a prospective soldier, with the caveat that I had a pair of “SS lightning bolts” tattooed on my arm. Despite being outlined in army regulations as a tattoo to look out for, none of the recruiters reacted negatively and, when pressed directly about the tattoo, not one of them said it would be an outright problem. The conversations began in the usual fashion: I told them I wanted to join the military, and covered up for my British accent by saying I was just married to an American. The recruiter at Houston station hadn't heard of SS bolts. "I don't know what they are; you'll have to come in. They might be OK, might not be OK," she said. At the Houston Willowbrook office I was told, "I don't know, will have to crack the regulation open." At Waldo in Kansas City the recruiter's response was again ambiguous. "I'm not saying it means you can't get in," he said.[7] No wonder Forrest found it so easy. Not long after, my suspicions were given further validation when I was flicking through a long 2009 *Newsweek* profile of army specialist Terry Holdbrooks, who converted to Islam after being positioned at Guantanamo Bay. Deep into the article, with breathless ambivalence, the journalist recalls being at Holdbrooks's Phoenix apartment when "he rolls up both sleeves to reveal wrist-to-shoulder tattoos." Holdbrooks goes on to describe the "ink work as a narrative of his mistakes and addictions." These "mistakes" include "religious symbols and Nazi SS bolts, track marks and, in large letters, the words BY DEMONS BE DRIVEN."[8] The journalist fails to raise the obvious question: How did someone with a tattoo of Nazi SS bolts get into the US military in the first place?

But even if the tattoos are missed for whatever reason, it's not the last chance the military has to rid itself of a neo-Nazi soldier. An Army Command Policy manual devotes more than one hundred pages to rooting them out. But no officer appeared to be reading it. It states the policy generally: "Participation in extremist organizations and activities by Army personnel is inconsistent with the responsibilities of military service."[9] Specifically, soldiers are prohibited from participating in such organizations through public demonstrations or rallies, attending meetings or activities, fundraising, recruitment or training, taking a visible leadership role or distributing literature. The options available to a commander should these rules be transgressed are involuntary separation, reclassification action or bar to reenlistment actions, or other action "deemed appropriate." None of that appeared to be of interest as the War on Terror raged.

Medals and Everything

Soon after Fogarty was approved, he was stationed in the Third Infantry Division based at Fort Stewart, Georgia, the largest army installation east of the Mississippi River. Once at the base, the army got a helping hand from an unlikely source who alerted them to the extremist in their midst. As we stroll on again around the zoo, Forrest recounts the story of how his ex-girlfriend and mother of his eldest child was livid when he joined the military and tried to scupper his plans when he was positioned in Georgia, away from the family. “She hated that I was in the military,” he says as he looks at his kids. Her anger became so acute that, according to Fogarty, she sent a dossier of pictures to his military command that showed him at white supremacist and neo-Nazi rallies, as well as performing his racist rock with Attack. “They hauled me before some sort of committee, and showed me the pictures and asked me what they were. I just denied it and said my girlfriend was a spiteful bitch, which is true.” Although he talks a lot about chasing all sorts of women, Forrest claims he doesn’t go for women who are like him, which might explain her exasperation. He is currently single but says, “I try to keep some chicks, but I don’t like skinhead girls, I don’t like girls with tattoos.”

The committee, he says, “knew what I was about, but they let it go because I’m a great soldier, and they knew that.” The investigation, Fogarty tells me, was headed by Command Sergeant Major Tommy Dunne, now retired. When I contact Dunne by phone, he initially denies knowing Fogarty, but when I try again some months later he acknowledges that he remembers the soldier. I ask if he recalls seeing Fogarty’s prominent racist tattoos. “I didn’t see any tattoos like that,” he says. At one point in our conversations, Fogarty claimed that Dunn had told him “The only reason I like you is you’re racist!” I ask Dunn about this. “I don’t remember saying anything like that,” he says. “He was just an average soldier.” “It’s funny,” says Fogarty when I tell him. “He gave me medals and everything.” Even Colonel Todd Wood, the highest authority at the military installation, doted on him, according to Fogarty. I ask him whether that was because of his fighting prowess. “Yes, exactly,” he says, “They didn’t want me to get out, they were taking me to dinner, taking me and my wife out.” A roadside bomb in Iraq killed Colonel Wood in October 2005.[10]

The brave efforts of Fogarty’s girlfriend having gone unheeded, Fogarty remained in the reserves, until finally, in 2004, he was sent where he had always wanted to go: Iraq. “I’m a fighter, I love combat, I wanted to be in the action,” he says. At the time, the Tampa local newspaper, the *St. Petersburg Times*, interviewed him at Fort Stewart. There was no mention of his Nazism. “We didn’t come over here to hang out at Fort Stewart,” Forrest told them.[11] Before he left for the Middle East, Forrest joined the

Hammerskin Nation—described by the Anti-Defamation League as the “the most violent and best-organized neo-Nazi skinhead group in the United States.”[12] He was a probate for the Hammerskin Nation while in Iraq, a process that guards against infiltration, and on his return to the United States became a full-fledged member.

The degree of impunity encountered by Forrest and countless other extremists caused tensions within the military. The blind eye turned by the recruiters angered many investigators whose integrity was being compromised. Hunter Glass was a paratrooper in the 1980s and became a gang cop in 1999 in Fairville, North Carolina, next to Fort Bragg. “In the 1990s the military was hard on them, they could pick and choose,” he recalls, “that was after the Burmeister trial, so they were looking for anybody, they were looking for swastikas, they were looking for anything.” (James Burmeister was the army paratrooper convicted of murdering two African Americans in a 1995 racist gun attack in Fayetteville, while he was stationed at Fort Bragg.) But the regulations on racist extremists and fear of other Burmeisters did not continue with the inception of the War on Terror. “The key rule nowadays is ignore it until it becomes a problem,” Glass tells me. “We need manpower, so as long as the man isn’t acting out, let’s blow it off.” He recounts one episode in early 2005 when he was requested by the military police investigators at Fort Bragg to interview a soldier with blatant skinhead insignia—SS lightning bolts and hammers. “He was already in with this tattoo!” Glass exclaims. “I asked him about it, and he said he had dreamed it up. I asked, ‘Where are you from?’ He said Birmingham, Alabama.” But Glass knew what it really was. “He had a hammer above it; he was a Hammerskin.” Even so, the soldier claimed “it was because he was in an engineer unit.” Glass worked with the base’s military police investigators, who filed a report. “They recommended that he be kicked out,” he recalls, “but the commanding officers didn’t do anything.” He says there was an open culture of impunity. “We’re seeing guys with tattoos all the time . . . As far as hunting them down, I don’t see it. I’m seeing the opposite, where if a white supremacist has committed a crime, the military stance will be, ‘He didn’t commit a race-related crime.’ ” Former Department of Defense investigator Scott Barfield had a similar experience: “Recruiters are knowingly allowing neo-Nazis and white supremacists to join the armed forces, and commanders don’t remove them from the military even after we positively identify them as extremists or gang members.”

Speaking in 2006, he added, “Last year, for the first time, they didn’t make their recruiting goals. They don’t want to start making a big deal about neo-Nazis in the military, because then parents who are already worried about their kids signing up and dying in Iraq are going to be even more reluctant about their kids enlisting if they feel they’ll be exposed to gangs and white supremacists.”[13]

The War on Terror produced no official acknowledgment from Pentagon brass that regulations have been loosened on neo-Nazis. Individually, however, officials seem to accept that it has happened by stealth. One is Douglas Smith, the public affairs officer at the Recruitment Command who spoke openly to me about the policy on extremists: “We don’t exclude people from the army based on their thoughts,” he explained. “We exclude based on behavior. But a tattoo of an offensive nature, racial, sexual, or extremist, might be a reason for them not to be in the military . . . The tattoo is a relatively subjective decision . . . We try to educate recruiters about extremist tattoos, but it’s going to depend on their general knowledge of tattoos.” He says that a racist tattoo shouldn’t automatically bar enlistment: “A tattoo in and of itself is not a bar to enlistment. It is behavior that would prohibit someone serving or enlisting. There are First Amendment rights . . . The concept seems to be if the tattoo is so patently offensive that it would cause disruption, it could require action.” Even a swastika might get through, he continues. “A swastika would trigger questions, but again if the gentleman said, ‘I like the way the swastika looked,’ and had a clean criminal record, it’s possible we would allow that person in.”

It’s in the interest of recruiters to interpret recruiting standards loosely, as failure to meet their targets means they have to attend a punitive counseling session, and persistent failure hurts their chances for promotion. When, in 2006, the army relaxed the regulations on non-extremist tattoos, such as body art covering the hands, neck, and face, this cut recruiters even more slack.[14]

Letting Everybody In

Leaders in the neo-Nazi movement agree that Forrest’s journey has become even more common as the military needs more fighters. One of those leaders is Tom Metzger, the seventy-year-old godfather of contemporary national socialism in the United States. “Ah, Metzger!” says Forrest, when I mention him at the zoo. “I know him pretty well, hung out a couple of times.” On the phone Metzger is quick to crack a joke, talk about his idiosyncratic political philosophy, and work out how he can help me with anything I want to know. Metzger's journey around the white supremacist movements started in the 1970s with the Ku Klux Klan, for whom he served as Grand Dragon in California. He twice ran for the Senate as a Democrat, against the party's wishes, and, when that failed, set up his own organization: White Aryan Resistance, or WAR. He has been in prison, declared bankrupt, and the subject of a BBC documentary. "Now they are letting everybody in," he says of the US military. "All the gang-bangers, all the blacks, Mexicans, and white supremacists. I would say that 10 percent of the army and Marines—they are not in the navy and air force so much—are racist extremists of some variety."

Metzger's organization is not your typical white power outfit. "I run an association of independent people who work in cells to the best of their talents," he says. "I would encourage them to join the military, if they have a scratch they can't seem to itch. Then go in to bring some training back to the US to make the federal government aware of our existence." Metzger's philosophy is a strange mish-mash of the far left, far right, and, in fact, everything in between. When he starts dilating it sends the unsuspecting listener into an ideological daze. One minute he's praising left-wing intellectual Noam Chomsky—"we disagree radically on race but his opinions on transnational corporations and how we are destroying the environment are spot on"—while the next he's on to Adolf Hitler. "I used to call it White Aryan Resistance. Now I call it The Insurgents," he says. "We are now a non-violent insurgency, but we are prepared to turn violent if the need be. It's up to the government. There are moves to suppress free speech and it won't be too long before they get their hands slapped . . . I'm no military general, I meet military people; there are no plans, just an insurgency that could become hot I would say by any means. Like any unconventional warfare it would involve whatever we would be capable of using. The white working class don't have jet planes and atomic bombs, we would work along other lines."

One veteran neo-Nazi who agrees is Billy Roper, who left the National Alliance after a power struggle in 2002 to start his own outfit, White Revolution. While in Tampa meeting Forrest I decide to call Roper. "We have some members in the military," he tells me. "There are a few in the 101st Airborne, some at Fort Campbell, and some Marines in Iraq . . .

There's about twelve in there, some of them have tattoos, because anyone can walk in and get in the military now." Roper tells me he knew two members who had swastikas and were barred but had them re-tattooed into sun wheels and the military allowed them back in. One group who don't shy away from swastikas is the NSM, or National Socialist Movement. It claims to be the biggest Nazi organization in the US but activists like Forrest and Roper call them "clowns" because of their propensity to dress up in World War Two fatigues. Someone calling himself Willem Herring, their spokesman, says he doesn't believe swastikas are a problem at all. "I do believe you can join the service with tattoos," he says. "I'm sure you can join with a swastika. There's a big gang problem in the armed forces right now: if you went to a recruitment station with a swastika I don't think they would stop you; it would be noted in your record."

The NSM is undoubtedly the most media-savvy group, in terms of their showiness and their accessibility. Through their media spokesman I am put in contact with Mark Connelly, the head of the SS division in New York, who I'm told is a college student and a "genius." I'm not given a number but rather told I will be called. "You limey bastard" is the first I hear from Mark. He suspects me of being part of the Jewish Defense Force, a radical Jewish organization. I call up the spokesman who pledges to sort it out for me. A few weeks after I get another call from Mark and this time he is less truculent. "Sorry about that," he says. "We just had a problem with the JDF; they were trying to mess us up." I assure Mark that I just want to find out what's going on with the NSM, and he seems to have the arrogance of youth, so I play to that. "I do the job pro bono," he says of his role. "It's something that you have to have a love for, it's hard, it takes character for people who want to learn about history. This is about the reality of World War Two and the demonized German society, and being in support of National Socialism." What brought him in? "I got into the movement when in high school, when I was learning things about certain events. They only tell you the victors' side of the war; I found many discrepancies. I used to be Republican, but it comes to the point where you can't trust the system."

Connelly won't give his age but by the sound of his voice he's young. He lives in upstate New York, near the capital, Albany. "I've been disowned by my mother," he says. The NSM are the most explicit Nazis in the US. They unashamedly worship Hitler, and dress up in 1940s Nazi regalia at their events. I attended their "historic" march on Congress in April 2008, billed as the biggest in decades. As the hundreds of cops and large numbers of anti-fascist protesters lined the streets before the march there was a feeling of great foreboding—until the NSM contingent arrived in a beat-up old van, containing perhaps thirty people, all waving swastikas, and dressed in jackboots. Scary it wasn't. Metzger calls them, without irony, "right-wing reactionaries": "They try to get in to the military covered in tattoos; my kind of people are taught to keep their mouth shut, to pretend they are race-mixing liberals; they don't join any racial organization," he says. "They are all nerds to me," adds Forrest. "I fit in more with the Hammerskin agenda: they are more political, we are more for street activism. We're skinheads, we're not politicians, we're street soldiers."

Away from the NSM's ostentatious pageants are the genuinely dangerous underground operators. One such is Dennis Mahon, who has been on the extremist scene for decades and had links with the Oklahoma bomber, Timothy McVeigh, although he remains coy with me as to what they were. "It drives you crazy," he once said. "Thousands think I was involved. I've started to believe it myself. Maybe I was there. Maybe they brainwashed me and I forgot about it. Maybe I can get hypnotized and remember it. Everybody said I was there. Everybody said I drove the truck. They saw me."[15] Tom Metzger, an old friend of Mahon's, puts me in contact with him, and when I get hold of him he picks up the phone panting like someone who has been doing strenuous exercise. He's at home and it's 2 p.m. "Now's not a good time," he says. "What are you doing?" I ask. "Oh, I really can't say," he replies. When I finally get him for the interview he talks about how he started out in the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan before joining the National Alliance in 1980. "I thought they were too conservative," he says initially. "I read a lot of books, like the Turner diaries, but then I was in Miami when we had the Haitian invasion." Mahon is alluding to the "Mariel boatlift," which saw an influx of asylum seekers during a seven-month period in 1980 when approximately 125,000 Cubans and 25,000 Haitians arrived by boat to South Florida. At the time Mahon was in the National Guard and was drafted in to help out. "I had to take them from federal prison; they were defecating and urinating in the back of the bus." His ideas started to change. "I thought the National Alliance wasn't radical enough, I went back to join the KKK in Columbia, Alabama." Now, Mahon acts as a "lone warrior," much like Metzger, not bogged down by the politics of petty rivalries which distract from his central mission: causing carnage in his race war against the government. “I guarantee something will happen—we’ve all got our targets. The Weathermen is a book about how to destroy America. The Achilles’ heel is the grid system: when energy is needed the most you blast the stations, and once the power goes out the cities go out. I know of a lot of vulnerable areas. I’m not going to say I’m going to do this, but there are some lone wolves. Chicago will be out for a week.”

Mahon received basic training while in the National Guard and, he says, put it to good use at the time. “I was in National Guard and I was doing some real serious shit,” he continues. “No one was ever the wiser—shootings and bombings.” He pauses. “No I can’t say, they can get you on civil rights violations, believe you me; the Klan can see what the results are, but you don’t see them.” He talks about a legendary “lone wolf” in Arizona, who goes by the code name Tom E. Gunn, a former Marine. “He does a lot of damage to people’s business and harasses people; he’s kind of nuts, I hear he’s a master of unconventional warfare, he does some damage to people and he was in the Marines. I’ve tried to talk to him,” he continues, “I talked to him one time, he is above ground; the underground guys, they are not supposed to contact me, but they send me newspaper clippings, there’s so many organizations getting busted.” Tom E. Gunn can be found attacking Tom Metzger— “Metzger, you are an old nobody, a has-been, and a never-was. Go away and nobody gets hurt. Show up with ANY of your kind and it will be your LAST mistake”—in a *Phoenix New Times* article about an Arizonian neo-Nazi icon named Elton Hall being hit by a vehicle while taking part in a protest,[16] but that’s about the extent of the evidence of his existence. Because he goes by an alias, tracking him down is near impossible.

Although joining the armed forces has been a frequently successful mission in the past, Mahon says now it’s even easier. “I know two people in the military—one in Marines and one in the army. One has done two tours of Iraq,” he says. “They are so desperate at the moment; they are going to let you in with a small swastika. If you are an obvious racist and shoot niggers and queers you might find it difficult, but generally you are fine. I’ve got reports from some of my sources in the military,” he continues. “They say they are getting a lot more skinhead types, quasi-racists, more tattoos; essentially they want guys that want to kill. In Iraq you don’t know who your enemies are, there’s no frontline.” But, he believes, this new liberalism will come back to haunt the authorities. “They are hard to stop,” he says.

"The soldiers learn from unconventional warfare in Iraq and they realize that they can use that type of warfare in America, and it's impossible to stop. I tell people to learn as much as you can to improve munitions capabilities, patrolling; I want them to learn sniping and explosives, the Green Berets. Once they go in they are not supposed to tell anyone who they are."

By the time this book hit the press, Mahon had been sentenced to forty years for a bomb attack that injured a black city official in Phoenix.

It's Kill or Be Killed

Back in the zoo, Forrest plays around with his boys, throwing them about as the rain subsides and we once again start off around the enclosures. The zoo is divided into different themes: we hang out with the cats for a while, then we head over to the elephants under duress from the youngest. According to Mahon's rhetoric the US will erupt in flames when soldiers like Forrest return from Iraq, but looking at him languidly walking around with his kids, talking about his girl troubles and boredom at work, I find it hard to imagine. He laughs a lot when I mention the grandstanding rhetoric of his fellow-thinkers. "Talking about race war right now, we'd be wiped off the planet!" he cries. Despite this, Forrest says a lot of his friends in the Hammerskins are under constant surveillance by the authorities. "All my friends have been to prison. The FBI paid $30,000 to infiltrate the 'skins . . . They learn that, guess what, we drink a lot of beer and chase pussy!" He continues, "I know my name has been brought up a lot of times by the FBI, they are out for my mates Cobi and Richie, they are trying to put something together, it's totally crazy. They are on the Terrorist Watch List. The FBI contacted them, came to their house, the cops came to my house when I busted up the anti-war protest."

As the afternoon wears on the animals start to blend into each other and the only thing that keeps sparking Forrest up is his time in Iraq. He returns again and again to the period he spent there from 2004 to 2005—it seems his most cherished life experience. For two years he served in the military police, escorting officers, including generals, around the hostile country. He says he was granted top-secret clearance and access to battle plans. "I was always on the move . . . Some of my actions led to the deaths of Arabs." He shot at people but he can't know how many he killed because he was always on the move: "If you stopped you'd get hit back. It's a big rush," he tells me. "It changes a human being. I never had any kill counts; some soldiers do."

But there’s no love lost for the local population. “To tell you the truth I hate Arabs more than anybody,” he continues. “For the simple fact I’ve served over there and seen how they live. They’re just a backward people . . . them and the Jews are just disgusting people as far as I’m concerned, their customs, everything to do with the Middle East is just repugnant to me.” He wasn’t happy with how the war was being fought either. “You have to break these people’s will to fight; the only reason they are fighting is that there is some sort of profit to it, or it’s not that bad, that the Americans are not going to do what they did in World War Two and kill everybody.” Would he nuke Baghdad? “Fuck yeah! If we had an occupying force cracking down on spitting on sidewalks would you spit on the sidewalk if they shot you in the head for it? Go in with an ironfist: this is how you will live, if you don’t we’ll kill you. Quit pussy-footing around, listen to us or die.”

Forrest maintains that a good portion of those around him were aware of his neo-Nazism. “They all knew in my unit,” he says. “They would always kid around and say, ‘Hey, you’re that skinhead!’” Did anyone rat on him? “No, I was hardcore, I would volunteer for all the hardest missions, and they were like, ‘Let Fogarty go,’ you know what I mean, they didn’t want to get rid of me.” He was confident enough of his carte blanche from the military that during his break from service in 2004 he flew not to see his family in the US but to Dresden, Germany, to give a concert to 2,500 skinheads, on the army’s budget. “What happens is you get to choose whether you want to go to Europe or America, and I put down Germany. The military didn’t care. My friends picked me up from Frankfurt airport and I played two shows.” What about getting caught? “Ah, fuck it,” he sighs. When he was at Camp Victory in Baghdad, Forrest even says a sergeant came up to him and said plainly, “You’re one of those racist motherfuckers, aren’t you!” Fogarty’s driver in Iraq was black and he rebutted, “Only I can call him racist!” I ask him how the sergeant knew about his racism. “The tattoo, I suppose. I can’t hide everything—people knew—even the chain of command.”

He starts getting really misty-eyed recollecting some of his close shaves in the warzone. “One time, I was pulling out of Camp Anaconda, which is about fifteen miles west of Baghdad. Some convoy had blocked lanes of traffic, so we had come out with a Humvee at 5 a.m. We were chilling, but there was this truck hauling at us and not stopping. I’m looking at my driver, he can’t see, but my gunner is up there; he said, ‘This guy’s not stopping,’ and I said, ‘You know what to do,’ and right when I said that, he was just hitting him up with a 50 cal, cha cha cha! Just shooting him up and it was coming towards at us and it was getting all blown to pieces, dude, and as we're pulling out it missed us by like two foot and just fell into the ditch . . . My gunner let him have it with a 50 cal; the gunner was a cool guy. Once you papped him up, I didn't get out the vehicle but I looked in, and there was nobody living."

Another time he was at Camp Victory North at Baghdad airport. "I was in the chow hall, a mortar round came in and blew up a bunch of guys, cut some chicks' legs off. Me and my gunner, I was drinking non-alcoholic beer for the 4th of July, we were like 'Welcome to Baghdad!'" On another occasion he came across the soldiers who had leaked the pictures of torture at Abu Ghraib. "Abu Ghraib was a torture center before the Americans, Saddam will cut your tongue out. Those guys' lives are ruined for harassing a bunch of dirty scumbags, I guarantee when an Iraqi captures us it's ten times worse," he says. "I met them in Camp Arifjan in Kuwait. We were in the chow hall, we were talking, I forget how it came up, one guy was like, 'I was pulled out of mission because I told someone about the pictures.' I said, 'You punk motherfucker' . . . pussy faggots, I cussed them out."

Although Fogarty gets excited talking about various operations in Iraq, he says he would never say anything "that would put the military in a bad light." In fact, he has so much antipathy for people who denigrate the military he was arrested by police for breaking up an anti-war protest in 2006. "They threw shit at my dad when he came back from Vietnam, I mean who are these left-wing scumbags?" he asks. "They tried to say I had PTSD [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder] whenever I got arrested. The VA [Department of Veterans Affairs] said I had PTSD, but because I bust up the anti-war thing doesn't mean I'm suffering from PTSD." Despite all his pro-military rhetoric, Forrest is characteristically contradictory when he waxes lyrical about the hell of war. "You are trained to accept you are going to see dead people," he says. "War is not pretty, there's nothing good about war." He concedes, "The niggarabs are human beings."

After three hours trucking around we all resolve to head out of the zoo. We walk to the gate and I say goodbye. "I've got to get you the CD!" Forrest remembers. And before long he has run to his car and come back with his latest album, *Survival*. The jacket has a picture of him in military fatigues in Iraq. Back at the hotel I cast an eye over the lyrics, which are written in Gothic type on the inside sleeve. "Eye For An Eye" opens with the lines: *A* *slow painful death I strive / Why are you still alive?* The chorus goes: *It's our turn to watch you bleed / It's our turn to tear you limb from limb . . . We will leave no survivors of this bloody war*. Another one, "In Battle": *In battle there are no laws . . . It's kill or be killed, die with the rest . . . Relief came when I pulled the trigger and watched you die / I can't stop laughing everytime I remember you start to cry / Watch you cry!*

Kill a Couple of Towel Heads for Me OK!

Perhaps ironically considering their general warmongering, the American neo-Nazi movement was for the most part virulently against the war in Iraq. Most of the groups hold to an updated conspiracy theory about Jewish power, which they call ZOG, or Zionist Occupation Government. It is premised on Western governments' supposed submission to Jewish and Israeli power. On their internet forums, US soldiers are often greeted with incendiary comments about being "Jewish warriors" and "Zionist crusaders" for fighting in the War on Terror. This should not be surprising. The white supremacist movement across America has ebbed and flowed since the heyday of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1950s South. It is plagued by fissures and rivalries and ideological nitpicking that have always damaged its ability to form a large-scale and coherent movement. In 2008, there were over 150 different far-right groups—ranging from the Hitler worshippers to Christian nationalists—nestled all over the country. But as the War on Terror raged, extremism was increasing around America generally, according the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a group that investigates hate and racist groups. In its report *Rage on the Right* it said that in 2008 extremist groups had come "roaring back to life," increasing by nearly 250 percent as well as building links to the mainstream right-wing.[17] It was a grave concern given their willingness to kill innocent Americans (as Timothy McVeigh had demonstrated), even more so now that they had military training.

Charles Wilson, spokesman for the National Socialist Movement, tells me the group is "150 percent against the war in Iraq. It was a total mistake to invade Iraq; we can't even secure our own borders. By 2015 white people will be a minority in America." The IKA, or Imperial Klans of America, is based on the original KKK. "I am, as many of us are, a vet," Truitt Lilly, the spokesman, writes in an email because he wants to remain faceless (and voiceless). "I do not encourage anyone to join any part of Z.O.G. However, military training is good training for anyone: tactics and physical and self defense and discipline are key to any Christian's way of life and should be taken into one's consideration." The original KKK is against it too. "We have opposed the war in Iraq since day one," national director Pastor Thomas Robb tells me. "If we are going to have a war then it needs to be done constitutionally."

But none of this anti-war sentiment has stopped them taking advantage of the opportunities for training. "We do encourage them to sign up for the military. We can use the training to secure the resistance to our government," says Wilson. "Every one of them takes a pact of secrecy . . . Our military doesn't agree with our political beliefs, they are not supposed to be in the military, but they're there, in ever greater numbers." He claims to have 190 members serving. Billy Roper, founder of White Revolution, is another advocate. "A number of skinheads have gone into armed forces for education, college, tuition, and the military training provided," he says. "They are using it to secure the future for white children. Anyone in the movement overseas knows they are getting training and financial help. America began in bloody revolution and it might end that way." Even Forrest, who talks with a glint in his eye about his time in Iraq, is actually against the war in essence. "I don't believe in the War on Terror," he says. "It's a war to protect Israel; I don't think we need to be over there, I just went. I get in this conversation a lot, but I don't like it when people call me a warrior for Israel."

Tom Leyden was in the movement for fifteen years before he managed to extricate himself in 1996. "I had to get out mostly because of my kids," he says on the phone. "I realized that the movement wasn't after me but my children. I was an organizer and recruiter, and I realized it wasn't me they wanted but my children, my boys would be the next generation and militants are much more hardcore than their predecessors." Forrest knows about Leyden and isn't impressed. "That guy is a punk—I'll eat him for lunch," he says. "He's milking the Jews—he had a couple of tattoos, said he was leader of the Hammerskins, there's no rank structure in the 'skins like he says. He has everything to gain by doing this—he has to stay employed, so he says, 'Skinheads are back!'" Leyden provides me with photographs of current servicemen with racist tattoos riding up their arms. "The military says maybe 1 percent is gang members," he says, "well, that's 14,000 people: they don't do training exercises that big! 90 percent of the gangs in the US are street gangs but 9 percent are white supremacists. That's 1,400 people are being trained by the armed forces who are extremist racists."

I stalk neo-Nazi forums for a period and they are still replete with bravado and machismo from people who claim to be soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan who are shooting the locals not to further the military's strategic goals but because killing "hajjis" is their duty as white militants. The website New Saxon is a social networking website for "people of European descent."[18] One of the possible professions when making a profile is the military. There are currently forty-six members who claim to be serving. There is even a group—populated by six professed soldiers called "White Military Men"—started by a young man whose page is headlined with the phrase "FightingforWhites." "All men with military experience, retired or active/reserve should join this group to see how many men have experience to build an army. We want to win a war, we need soldiers," his profile reads. "FightingforWhites" is actually Lance Corporal Burton of the Second Battalion Fox Company Pit 2097, from Florida. In his About Me section, he writes: "Love to shoot my M16A2 service rifle effectively at the Hachies (Iraqis)," and among his passions is: "Love to watch things blow up (Hachies House)." His turn-offs include: "Overweight, lazy, illegals, *WIGGERS*, rape crimes, soldiers that died in Iraq, the Air Force (I called in an airstrike and they apparently had 'tea time' when it was called in)." On his wall his friend writes: "THANKS BROTHER!!!! kill a couple towel heads for me ok!"

There are other examples of the same ostentatious advertising of military credentials on neo-Nazi websites. On the forum of the website Blood and Honour, neo-Nazis encourage their serving comrades to commit indiscriminate murder, and allude to the training they are getting. "I am in the ARMY right now," writes 88Soldier88. "You have no idea how 'nice' we have to treat these fucking people. I work in the Detainee Holding Area so I see these fuckers every day (Terrorists) and we have to treat them better than our own troops. Its sick. I am in this until 2013. I am in the Infantry but want to go SF [Special Forces]. Hopefully the training will prepare me for what I hope is to come."[19] "I get out in 2009. I have the training I need and will pass it on to others when I get out," writes AMERICANARYAN. 88Soldier88 says he is leaving for Iraq in three days. "Aye bro stay safe!!" says AngryAryanHitman, "try get a few notches on ya rifflebutt from the filthy sand nigger cunts." "Good Luck Mate, Stay safe, Get a few Kills, and come

Home," says "Paul." "Good luck and i hope everything goes well stay safe keep your head down and try to bag a few sand niggers," says 14 callum 88.

Via the website I wrote to a soldier, Jacob Berg, who claimed to be serving in Iraq. "There are actually alot more 'skinheads' 'nazis' White supremacists now then there has been in a very long time," he wrote back. "Us racists are actually getting into the millatary alot now because If we dont every one who already is will take pitty on killing sand niggers. yes I have killed women, yes I have killed children, and yes I have killed Older people. But the biggest reson Im so proud of my kills Is because by killing a brown many white people will live to see a new dawn."

In 2009, the whistle-blowing website Wikileaks released the internal emails of the NSM, including mine, and uncovered a number of military members conversing with the leadership back in the US. As the SPLC documents:

> Among those who contacted NSM was an infantryman who identified himself as Kyle R. Wrobel. Writing from a hotmail contact, Wrobel told NSM that he was from Cleveland, Ohio. "i am a sergeant in the US Army infantry, currently serving my second combat tour to iraq," he wrote on Jan. 17, 2008. "i vehemently support your cause, and want to become heavily involved. my wife and i both advocate and support the cause. i want a lifetime membership and want to become involved and do whatever i can as soon as possible."
>
> Wrobel served for four years in the Army and was discharged in November 2008 as a specialist, according to an Army spokesman. The type of discharge is not public information, the spokesman said, though an acquaintance of Wrobel said it was honorable. (It's unclear why Wrobel stated in his E-mail to the NSM that he was a sergeant, which is higher ranking than a specialist.) Wrobel received seven awards for his service, including the Combat Action Badge and the Iraq Campaign Medal for two year-long tours in Iraq, as well as the Army Good Conduct Medal.[20]

I had tried to get an interview with a NSM soldier (which was never forthcoming), but the Wikileaks release revealed the private correspondence between the group's members about my request which gives a shocking insight into how prevalent their members were in the military: "I did my part and forwarded his inquiry to NSM Colorado who is lead by Davi the guy who got the purple heart in Afghanistan," said Commander Jeff Schoep, the head of the organization and arguably the most powerful Nazi in America. "He . . . did not respond back. I know the Colorado guys are active and recruiting, just processed 2 or 3 new members from there. I cannot force them to talk to student reporters. Apparently they just don't want to do it. I agree with you, its an opportunity to reach people, but it seems most of our members will not talk with any Press. 88."[21] (In Nazi code, 88 symbolizes Heil Hitler, H being the eighth letter in alphabet.)

The more public internet bravado is hard to vet for truth, but there has been a real-life high-profile case of murder involving a soldier in Iraq who had SS bolts tattooed on his arm. The victim, Kevin Shields, was murdered on December 1, 2007, in Colorado Springs by three of his fellow soldiers, Louis Bressler, Kenneth Eastridge, and Bruce Bastien, Jr., who all served in Iraq as part of the Second Brigade Combat Team, Second Infantry Division in their early twenties. Bressler and Bastien were each put away for sixty years for their part in the murder alongside a litany of other crimes in Colorado Springs, while Eastridge is now serving a ten-year prison sentence for his part. But in the aftermath of the arrests, National Public Radio publicized the MySpace page of Eastridge.[22] It showed him proudly displaying his SS bolts tattoo. It also had a picture of him holding a cat in Iraq with the caption, "Killed another Iraqi pussy." There is a picture of a gun and a cache of ammo. "Ready for Whatever!!!!" says the caption. He has another tattoo that reads: "Killing is what I do." After his arrest, Bastien told investigators that he and Eastridge had randomly fired at civilians in Iraq during patrols through the streets of Baghdad. In broad daylight, Bastien alleged, Eastridge would use a stolen AK-47 to fire indiscriminately at Iraqi civilians. At least one was hit, he said.[23] "We were trigger happy. We'd open up on anything. They even didn't have to be armed. We were keeping scores," said another member of the platoon, José Barco, who is serving fifty-two years in jail for shooting and injuring a pregnant woman in Colorado Springs.[24] So far, no one has been charged with shooting civilians in Iraq.

The military not only ignored Eastridge's extremism, but on his return from combat awarded him a Purple Heart and Army Achievement medals. Eastridge's lawyer, Sheilagh McAteer, becomes palpably angry when I talk to her on the phone. She claimed that the military were now knowingly sending mentally unstable young men to Afghanistan and Iraq. "The military is to some extent desperate to get people to go to fight, soldiers who are not fit, mentally and physically sick, but they continue to send them," she told me. "Having a tattoo was the least of his concerns." Another white supremacist soldier, James Douglas Ross, a military intelligence officer stationed at Fort Bragg, was given a bad conduct discharge from the army when he was caught trying to mail a submachine gun from Iraq to his father's home in Spokane, Washington. Military police found a cache of white supremacist paraphernalia and several weapons hidden behind ceiling tiles in Ross's military quarters. After his discharge, a Spokane County deputy sheriff saw Ross passing out fliers for the neo-Nazi National Alliance.[25] On top of this, in early 2012, a photo emerged of a ten-strong US Marine Scout sniper unit posing for a photo with a Nazi SS bolts flag in Sangin, Afghanistan. According to the military, the symbolism was unknown to the soldiers. "Certainly, the use of the 'SS runes' is not acceptable and Scout Snipers have been addressed concerning this issue," Marine Corps spokesman Captain Gregory Wolf said.[26] But nothing about the SS bolts was unacceptable, and the claim that it could result in punishment was laughable. There were countless similar examples throughout the War on Terror that the military had known about—and brushed under the carpet.

Emerging Terrorists

The magnitude of the problem within the army and other branches of the military is, however, hard to quantify. The military does not track extremists as a discrete category, coupling them with gang members. People in the neo-Nazi movement claim different numbers. The National Socialist Movement claimed 190 of its members are inside. White Revolution claimed twelve. Tom Metzger claimed that 10 percent of those serving in the army and Marines are extremists of some sort. But the problem was conceded by the Department of Homeland Security in a 2009 report, *Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment*, which noted that "the willingness of a small percentage of military personnel to join extremist groups during the 1990s because they were disgruntled, disillusioned, or suffering from the psychological effects of war is being replicated today."[27] On the back of the publication, DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano had to apologize to veterans' groups about her department's findings that "the return of military veterans facing significant challenges reintegrating into their communities could lead to the potential emergence of terrorist groups or lone wolf extremists capable of carrying out violent attacks." But the report was right. Following an investigation of white supremacist groups, a 2008 FBI report declared: "Military experience—ranging from failure at basic training to success in special operations forces—is found throughout the white supremacist extremist movement."[28] In white supremacist incidents from 2001 to 2008, the FBI identified 203 veterans. Most of them were associated with the National Alliance and the National Socialist Movement, which promote anti-Semitism and the overthrow of the US government, and assorted skinhead groups.

Because the FBI focused only on reported cases, its numbers don't include the many extremist soldiers who have managed to stay off the radar. But its report does pinpoint why the white supremacist movements seek to recruit veterans—they "may exploit their accesses to restricted areas and intelligence or apply specialized training in weapons, tactics, and organizational skills to benefit the extremist movement." In reality, white supremacists were using their military status to build the white right. The report found, for example, that two army privates in the Eighty-Second Airborne Division at Fort Bragg had attempted in 2007 to sell stolen property from the military—including ballistic vests, a combat helmet, and pain medications such as morphine—to an undercover FBI agent they believed was involved with the white supremacist movement (they were convicted and sentenced to six years in prison). It also found multiple examples of white supremacist recruitment among active military including a period in 2003 when six active-duty soldiers at Fort Riley were found to be members of the neo-Nazi group Aryan Nations, working to recruit their army colleagues and even serving as the Aryan Nations' point of contact for the State of Kansas.

It seemed everyone knew what was happening. A 2006 report by the National Gang Intelligence Center noted that "various white supremacist groups have been documented on military installations both domestically and internationally."[29] Neo-Nazis "stretch across all branches of service, they are linking up across the branches once they're inside, and they are hard-core," Department of Defense gang detective Scott Barfield told the SPLC. "We've got Aryan Nations graffiti in Baghdad," he added. "That's a problem."[30] Harold Cloverdell served in the army in Afghanistan for a year and in Iraq for two years. "You can go in any restaurant you can find graffiti, maybe a swastika," he says. "Or 'I hate hajjis'—what they call someone with Middle Eastern heritage . . . It pisses you off that you see it," he continues, "as it effects someone's performance, most guys are white in the infantry, a lot of them tend to be of European descent, it may have made someone else uncomfortable.” Aaron Lukefahr is now a member of the Aryan Nations, but served two years as part of the Marine Corps in Okinawa in Japan. “I know of at least one other racialist,” he tells me. “Once I saw some swastikas in our barracks, stationed in Japan, I don’t know who that was, they never found out who it was, but there wasn’t much investigation into it as an extremist act rather than an act of vandalism.”

Despite the mounting evidence, the government itself did nothing, apart from to issue denials. The US Senate Committee on the Armed Forces has long been considered one of Congress’s most powerful groups. It governs legislation affecting the Pentagon, defense budget, military strategies and operations. When I contacted the committee, it was led by the influential senators Carl Levin and John McCain. An investigation by the committee into how white supremacists permeate the military in plain violation of US law could result in substantive changes. Staffers on the committee would not agree to be interviewed. Instead, a spokesperson responded that white supremacy in the military has never arisen as a concern. In an email, the spokesperson said, “The Committee doesn’t have any information that would indicate this is a particular problem.” But in June 2011, the SPLC reported that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had “virtually dismantled its unit responsible for investigating homegrown extremists.” Daryl Johnson, an analyst who authored a 2009 DHS report warning of a “growing threat” from far-right radicals, told the group: “My greatest fear is that domestic extremists . . . will [carry] out a mass-casualty attack. That is what keeps me up at night.”[31] Johnson’s fears came closer to being realized in April 2012, when neo-Nazis started “heavily-armed” patrols around the area of Sanford, Florida—it was the natural conclusion of a decade of hard training by the US military, and a complement to similar work on the US–Mexico border. This new paramilitary garrison in Florida was organized by the National Socialist Movement—who, as we have seen, included a large number of veterans—in the aftermath of the shooting of black teenager Trayvon Martin. The *Miami New Times* reported that the group and their shock troops were “prepared” for race riots, and they would “defend” the white population. “Further racial violence . . . is brimming over like a powder keg ready to explode into the streets,” said Jeff Schoep, the NSM Commander. “In Arizona the guys [in NSM] can walk around with assault weapons and that’s totally legal,” he added.[32] Schoep, however, refused to divulge what kind of “firepower” they had with them on the patrols of between ten and twenty American-style Waffen-SS. But with the military experience running through the movement, along with years of access to the highest-grade weaponry in the world, it can safely be assumed that it wasn't just 9mm handguns.

Begging

During the whole time I spend with him, the only time I see Forrest angry, aside from when his kids are messing around, is when he talks about he was treated after his tour of Iraq. He left in June 2006 and was later honorably discharged from the army before being asked to reenlist. "They were begging me to reenlist, they didn't want me to get out, my whole military career they didn't want me to get out," he says. He wanted to join Blackwater, become a private contractor and go back to Iraq. "You make a lot of money at Blackwater, $100,000 a year, I was getting $30,000 when I was in the army," he says. "They are hardcore, they're doing cool stuff, the army is fighting with boxing gloves on, Blackwater is gloves off." Unfortunately for Forrest the SPLC would intervene to stop his dream of going back to Iraq with immunity. In between honorable discharge from the civilian army and application for Blackwater, the SPLC had publicized his neo-Nazi connections.[33] After putting his application in to Blackwater, he was told that they "couldn't touch" him because he had been put on the Terrorist Watch List, kept by the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center in a bid to identify all potential terrorist threats to the US. "They defamed me," says Fogarty with real emotion. "It was slanderous, they painted me as a dumbass . . . I would have been able to stay in without the SPLC," adds Fogarty. "They [the army] wouldn't care unless I made an incident at work, but now the SPLC comes out it looks bad." Fogarty is right that he was unlucky. Despite his girlfriend's dossier, his tattoos, and his impromptu trip to Germany, he had been allowed to stay in, and would seemingly have been fine reenlisting had the SPLC not intervened. Following their report, the President of the SPLC, J. Richard Cohen, wrote a letter to the Under Secretary of Defense, David S. C. Chu, stating that "a combination of manpower shortages and poorly written inconsistently enforced regulations has resulted in the recent reappearance of significant numbers of extremists in the armed forces."[34]

John Fain is another. A soft-spoken and more thoughtful character, he spent two years fighting in the War on Terror, but has none of the bravado of other military extremists. He tells me he joined up “Not to learn combat, but to make myself a better person. I wanted a better work ethic, not just the training to be a soldier. It wasn’t so much for a political thing when I joined the military . . . I’m concerned with the welfare and wellbeing of white Americans,” he continues, “but the main thing with me is not so much how people look, but there’s a particular interest that there is in the media, most of the people are Jewish, they’ll admit it. It’s not good when you have a population of three percent brainwashing the rest of the populace. People should be made free to have information, because the masses are stupid.” His neo-Nazi affiliations did nothing to stop the military trying to reenlist him. Fain claims he has never been a member of the National Alliance, but considers himself a “patriot, which liberals in the military deem as extremist,” and admits that he “support[s] the National Alliance” and “agrees with most of what they say.” Erich Gliebe, the leader of the Alliance, seems surprised when I tell him Fain wasn’t a member. “He isn’t?” he asks. “I’m a separatist,” says Fain. “I’d be willing to state it out in the street. I’ve worked with a black guy who had been member of the Black Panthers; he said, ‘I don’t have problem with white people but I don’t want my daughter bringing home white men.’ I feel the same, we’re both racists. We had an understanding.”

Fain joined the military in 1999 when he was eighteen years old, and since he had no tattoos or criminal convictions, he passed through recruitment easily. “I was kind of at a crossroads in my life, doing a dead end job,” he says, in a familiar story. “I wanted to try to better myself, and I thought about joining the military. I was going to join the Navy but when I was there the army recruiter said, ‘Can I talk to you in a sec?’ ” Within a week Fain had signed up. Between 2003 and 2004 Fain served two tours in Iraq, going all over the country, from Baghdad to Basra. “Most people keep their opinions to themselves,” he says of fellow extremists. “But I’ve met quite a few of them actually. Last year I ran across a lot of people. I was sitting in the barracks in the US,” he says. “There were some guys I overheard on their laptop and they were playing music from Resistance Records [a neo-Nazi music label]. I never noticed people causing a ruckus; the unit I was with was what would be considered good ol’ boys from the country.” Fain is actually relatively pro-Arab, for good racist reasons. “It’s more what’s in someone’s head than color of their skin. Arabs aren’t European, but they are governing themselves. They are not coming over to mingle with us. And they are against Zionist control of governments; they just want to have their own country and own lands."

When Fain returned from Iraq in 2004 he started to work for Vanguard Books, the literary arm of the National Alliance. It sells US army books: $9.95 will get you a tome on *Explosives and Demolitions*. And when Fain left the army, this spell working for the National Alliance came back to haunt him. The army refused him security clearance, which is a privilege conferred on soldiers and other civil servants after service that gives them access to classified information of a certain sensitivity. "They had found out information about me," says Fain. "I had worked for National Vanguard books, and they were like, 'Who owns it?' and I said, 'It's owned by a corporation.' So they said, 'Isn't it owned by the National Alliance?' I said, 'I don't know,' 'Are you member?' 'No, I don't hold membership but I work for them.' " The army had procured information on his employment through tax returns, and pursued their investigations of Vanguard Books. Despite this, Fain claims he was asked to reenlist. "I'm not going to do it, I've had enough now," he says. Does he think they relaxed standards? I ask him. "It's quite possible. I can't say that it is, I don't know what the government has issued, but I would say it's quite possible. Before they could be picky, now that they need to keep troop numbers high they are accepting no high school diploma, which is more detrimental. I'd rather see swastika than an idiot with no tattoos." Elsewhere the SPLC quotes Fain as saying, "Join only for the training, and to better defend yourself, our people, and our culture. We must have people to open doors from the inside when the time comes."[35]

The discharge figures confirm the experiences of Fogarty and Fain. They show that the avenues the army guidelines stipulate for dealing with extremists already serving in the military have been drastically reduced since 1998, and increasingly so since the War on Terror was initially announced. One such avenue is the denial of reenlistment, which fell from a high of 4,000 soldiers rejected in 1994 to a low of 81 in 2006. Another is a soldier receiving misconduct charges resulting in discharge from the army. In the five-year period from 1998 to 2003 the number of discharges for misconduct teetered from a high of 2,560 to a low of 2,307. But by 2006 this number had fallen off to 1,435.[36] Again, misconduct is a broad category but the decline shows clearly that standards dropped.

The US Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID) is set up to investigate criminal behavior by army personnel and their reports have often touched on the problem of extremist soldiers. A number of internal investigations into extremist soldiers I obtained through the Freedom of Information Act show that CID consistently ignored evidence of violent neo-Nazis and white supremacists. One case at Fort Hood included evidence that a soldier was making internet postings on the white supremacist site Stormfront.org. But the investigator seems to have been unable even to locate the soldier in question. Due to "poor documentation," he writes, "attempts to locate with minimal information met with negative results . . . I'm not doing my job here," he notes. "Needs to get fixed."[37] Another investigation into another soldier at Fort Hood is even more distressing. The investigators found that he belonged to the neo-Nazi Hammerskins and was "closely associated with" the Celtic Knights of Austin, Texas, another extremist organization, a situation bad enough to merit a joint investigation by the FBI and CID. The army summary states that there was "probable cause" to believe that the soldier had participated in at least one white extremist meeting and that he had "provided a military technical manual [Improvised Munitions Handbook] to the leader of a white extremist group in order to assist in the planning and execution of future attacks on various targets." Of four preliminary probes into white supremacists I obtained, CID carried through on only this one. On March 22, 2006, the suspect provided the Improvised Munitions Handbook to the leader of the Celtic Knights, it notes, "to assist in the planning and execution of attacks on five methamphetamine laboratories in the Austin, TX area." It adds, "these attacks were not carried out and the [Joint Terrorism Taskforce] indicated a larger single attack was planned for the San Antonio, Texas after a considerable amount of media attention was given to illegal immigrants. The attack was not completed due to the inability of the organization to obtain explosives." The document notes that despite these grave threats the subject was only interviewed once, in 2006, and the investigation was terminated the following year because the action commander or prosecutor indicated intent to do nothing or at least only "action amounting to less than a court proceeding." The report added, "no further investigative assistance of CID is required."

Another internal report documented the case of an Army National Guard member who investigators believed was "the leader and recruiter" for the Alaska Front, yet another white supremacist organization. The summary describes the soldier as "a person of interest to the FBI due to statements made by the Soldier relating to the robbery of armored cars.” The soldier and another member of the Alaska Front were, the report notes, employed by the security company in Anchorage responsible for transporting money using armored cars. Once again, after noting clear affiliations and concrete threats of criminal activity, the narrative indicates that the investigation was closed. “The Soldier’s Commander was briefed,” it reads. “No further investigation has occurred by the FBI since the Soldier has been mobilized to Camp Shelby, MS in preparation for deployment to Iraq.”[38]

The 2005 DPSRC report found that because recruiters and basic training officers lack clear instructions on how to handle evidence of extremist affiliations and also fail to share information, “military personnel cannot evaluate the full extent to which problematic persons associated with particular groups are trying to enlist in the military and their apparent strategies for doing so.” It concludes, “Personnel are unlikely to be able to detect anything beyond what would appear to be isolated incidents.” Finding evidence of participation on white supremacist websites would be another easy way to screen out extremist recruits, but the same report found that the DOD had not adequately clarified which web forums were gathering places for extremists. In fact, even in cases where active-duty soldiers have been caught posting to such sites, the investigations have been terminated. It appears to some insiders that this incoherence and confusion is consciously fostered to allow the recruitment of extremist soldiers to continue, and to avoid their discharge. “Effectively,” the report concludes, “the military has a ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy pertaining to extremism. If individuals can perform satisfactorily, without making their extremist opinions overt . . . they are likely to be able to complete their contracts.”[39] This went for Islamic fundamentalists, too. When Nidal Malik Hasan allegedly murdered thirteen of his fellow soldiers at Fort Hood in Texas, it was revealed afterwards that the military had been aware of his Islamic extremist ideology but had done nothing to stop it. Hasan had been in contact with his ideological hero Anwar al-Awlaki—the extremist cleric exiled in Yemen who was assassinated by the Obama administration in 2011—and the military had either not trained its personnel well enough or had told them to turn a blind eye to extremism.

Carter F. Smith, another former military gang investigator, defends CID, who he worked with in 2004–6, telling me, “They don’t bend to the whims of the commander as much as people on the outside say. They piss a lot of people off. If they wanted to push something they could, but it takes a lot of emphasis on what's right." But he is not surprised by the lax 2006 CID "investigations." "When you need more soldiers you lower the standards whether you say so or not," says Smith, who served as military investigator from 1982, and from 1998 to 1999 was the chief of the gang-hate group investigations team. "The increase with gangs and extremists is an indicator of this." He says the pressure to maintain numbers might make an investigator "ignore stuff . . . Say an investigator sees a soldier with a tattoo that reads '88,'" he says, "if you know 88 is Heil Hitler, but the soldier gives you a plausible reason and you don't look for any memorabilia, you can let him go . . . It's not that they aren't concerned about white supremacists," he adds, "but they have a war to fight and they don't have any incentive to slow down."

Iraq as Race War

For neo-Nazis to prosper in the US military, a general culture of racism is undoubtedly a prerequisite. Forrest stood out because of his skinhead appearance and tattoos, but his casual use of the derogatory term "hajjis" and perception of Arabs as "backward" became endemic throughout the military during the War on Terror. "Racism was rampant," recalls veteran Michael Prysner, who served in Iraq in 2003 and 2004 as part of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. "All of command, everywhere, it was completely ingrained in the consciousness of every soldier. I've heard top generals refer to the Iraqi people as 'hajjis.' And it wasn't auto-ingrained in the soldiers, the anti-Arab racism came from the brass, it came from the top and was pushed into the mind of subordinate soldiers." Prysner believes this kind of racist attitude is consciously fostered to make the military operations easier to carry out. "Even before the invasion racist language was always used against the Iraqi people," he said. "Attributing their condition to cultural backwardness, painting a picture of backward people helped this idea that they needed the US to go in. When you are carrying out missions this is what was on the mind of the soldiers, so the soldiers conduct themselves terribly; we weren't acting with human beings to protect them, we were there to control every Iraqi who was subordinate to us, and everything was justified because they weren't considered people."

Another vet, Michael Totten, who served in Iraq with the 101st Airborne from 2003 to 2004, agrees: "I think at a fundamental level there's a type of superiority complex, a heightened sense of importance; the military carries this attitude, in my experience, towards the people of Iraq. The Iraqis were seen as substandard, second class, a lot of times they weren't seen as human, they were seen as an obstacle, more of a burden, I didn't feel that we were going in as liberators, I felt I was there for the sake of being there." On neo-Nazis like Fogarty, he doesn't think they would stand out at all. "It wouldn't stand out if you said 'sand-niggers,' even if you aren't a neo-Nazi. At the time, I used the words 'sand-nigger,' I didn't consider 'hajji' to be derogatory. I have changed since I came back, obviously." Even racism between soldiers was rife. In late 2011, eight soldiers were charged after the suicide of Chinese-American Private Danny Chen, a nineteen-year-old infantryman from New York, who shot himself in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The charges were brought against the soldiers for an alleged long history of assaults and racist taunts which led to him taking his life. Geoffrey Millard served in Iraq for thirteen months, beginning in 2004, as part of the Forty-Second Infantry Division. He recalls General George Casey, who served as the commander in Iraq from 2004 to 2007, addressing a briefing he attended in the summer of 2005 at Forward Operating Base, outside Tikrit. "As he walked past, he was talking about some incident that had just happened, and he was talking about how 'these stupid fucking hajjis couldn't figure shit out.' And I'm just like, Are you kidding me? This is General Casey, the highest-ranking guy in Iraq, referring to the Iraqi people as 'fucking hajjis.'" (A spokesperson for Casey, who later served as the Army Chief of Staff, said the general "did not make this statement.") "We had a frago [fragmentary order] come out one day that actually talked about how the DOD wanted us to stop using the word 'hajji' because it was seen as a racist slur, but I still heard [another general] use the word hajji. He'd have to correct himself, but it didn't change his thought pattern." Millard was later an organizer for Iraq Veterans Against the War and says he has seen white nationalist tattoos during outreach operations. "Since we've been doing outreach to bases there's this [White Power] tattoo that I've seen a couple of times, and a couple of other different racial symbols. They've got rid of the regulations on a lot of things, including white supremacists . . . The military is attractive to white supremacists," he adds, "because the war itself is racist."

Forrest never saw what the beef was—much like the military itself. "As long as you don't bring personal beliefs to the military it's not a problem," he tells me. "If I was goose-stepping maybe, but I served my country honorably. I’m a soldier who is trying to come home, I have got two children, I’m not gonna be preaching politics while my driver’s a nigger.” He pauses. “What about the Bloods and Crips?” he asks, exasperated, before we go our separate ways. What about them? I ask. “I seen a million Bloods and Crips,” he says nonchalantly. The Bloods. The Crips. Two of the biggest and most dangerous gangs in the US or any other country on the planet. “I seen a million.”

STRAIGHT OUTTA BAGHDAD

> *When these cats, these gang members, come back, we’re going to have some hell on these streets.*
>
> Miguel Robinson, Airman First Class and Los Angeles Crip, 2007[40]

On the eve of America’s most patriotic day in 2005 a group of US soldiers from the army base in Kaiserslautern, southwest Germany, took a drive down to the park pavilion in a nearby forest. The twelve soldiers in the group were in high spirits: aside from the July Fourth festivities coming the next day, some of them were due to finish their first eighteen-month tour of duty, including a spell in Iraq, within a matter of weeks and would be returning home to their long-suffering families. Among them was twenty-five-year-old Sergeant. Juwan Johnson, or J. Rock to his friends, a member of the Sixty-Sixth Transportation Company who was looking forward to returning home to his pregnant wife within the fortnight. It was to be a welcome relief; the past year had been a difficult one. During his tour of Iraq, he had seen the sharp end of the conflict, reportedly surviving an IED (improvised explosive device) attack which blew up his vehicle, and finding the toil of war difficult to cope with. But nothing would prepare him for the treatment he was about to receive from his comrades shortly after 9 p.m. that night. In the park pavilion, J. Rock was set to become a full-fledged member of the Chicago-based gang the Gangster Disciples, listed by the FBI as one of the fifteen biggest gangs in the US. The purpose of the trip that night was to conduct his initiation ceremony, a rite of passage he had to endure to realize his dream of becoming part of one of America’s fiercest street gangs. In gang lingo the ceremony is called “jumping in,” also known as a timed beating. Soon after they arrived, the pack of men Johnson had gone down with began to circle their new recruit. The leader of the gang at the base, Rico Williams, a former airman, struck the first blow, lamping Johnson straight across the face—a blow that knocked him unconscious. The ferocious beating that ensued soon "escalated from reckless to a free-for-all."[41] Johnson's lifeless body was treated to a six-minute orgy of violence in which he received 200 blows all over his body and head from the fists and feet of his fellow soldiers.

Still in an unconscious state, Johnson was placed back in his bed by his attackers. He would never wake up. The next morning one of Johnson's roommates found him in his barracks room but could not rouse him. After trying desperately to resuscitate him, a German physician was called who pronounced him dead on arrival. The resulting autopsy report, signed by an Army Forces regional medical examiner, concluded: "The cause of death of this twenty-five-year-old male is multiple blunt force injuries reportedly sustained in a physical assault resulting in fatal injury to the heart and brain." It added, "The manner of death, in my opinion, is homicide."[42] Despite the unambiguous verdict, more than three years later only three of the eleven suspects had been convicted and given confinement terms.[43] One reason for this abysmal bit of police work may have been the intense fear running through the veins of the suspects which had stopped them speaking out. At a Gangster Disciples barbeque in the aftermath of the murder, the gang's ringleader Williams had warned the rest of them that he would kill anyone who snitched to the authorities, along with their families. The more likely reason for the failure to bring Johnson's killers to justice, however, was reluctance on the part of the military to prosecute the case as it tried to keep a lid on public recognition of the developing crisis arising from the gangs' infiltration of the military.

In the end, it took until February 2009 for the police to arrest the main suspect Williams in his hometown of Chesapeake, Virginia, and charge him with second-degree murder as well as three counts of tampering with a witness, including intimidation and threats.[44] The military decided to try him through a court-martial—a legal process much more secretive and less independent than civilian trials. He was found guilty of second-degree murder in November 2010, nearly six years after Johnson was slain, and was acquitted of tampering with a witness.[45] If the military's goal was to keep the embarrassing press to a minimum, it was a success. In another trial by court-martial, suspect Private Bobby Morrissette was acquitted in Germany on charges of voluntary manslaughter and conspiracy to commit aggravated assault, which carried a possible fifty-five years confinement.[46] It was a stunning verdict—Morrissette had been found to have taken part in the "jumping in" that had led to Johnson's death. He was instead found guilty of impeding the investigation and the trial, and willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer. In a separate incident, giving a further indication of his questionable moral fiber, he was convicted of committing an indecent act on a female in the presence of another person and wrongful use of a controlled substance. In the end, he got away with forty-two months confinement and a bad misconduct charge.

Understandably the acquittal and weak sentencing angered Johnson's grieving mother, Stephanie D. Cockrell. "I'm angry, and I'm outraged that we have gangs in the military," she said. "The court system is sending a message that it's OK."[47] Her complaint would be vindicated not long after when another soldier involved in the beating, senior airman Jerome A. Jones, was also acquitted of involuntary manslaughter in another court-martial, despite being present at the beating. After denying all charges, Jones was given the lesser conviction of aggravated assault, as well as being found guilty of marijuana use and assisting in hiding gang members and conspiracy to cover up the murder—including tampering with their gang tattoos.[48] He was given a dishonorable discharge and sentenced to two years in prison by the five-member panel which comprised two air force officers and three air force non-commissioned officers from the Little Rock base—where Jones was stationed. In the subsequent months, the military cover-up became even more scandalous as it emerged that the authorities had actively suppressed intelligence from a whistle-blower on the growing threat of gangs in the Sixty-Sixth Transportation company. In the period before the murder, another soldier in the company, Private Nick Pasquale, had taken copious pictures of gang graffiti in Iraq and on the base and handed them to his superiors in an attempt to press them into action. It had resulted in an investigation into the unit over the course of its thirteen-month deployment to Iraq, which turned up ironclad evidence of gang activity. According to the military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, "the probe involved soldiers believed to be members of the Chicago-based Gangster Disciples. Numerous photos of Disciples had been found, along with graffiti and a list of potential gang members, in the soldiers' living quarters."[49] But the investigation reported to have found no evidence "validating or disproving" the rampant gang activity in the unit.

Just two months later Johnson was dead. “The only thing that came from the investigation downrange was that I was a disgruntled soldier, causing problems,” Pasquale said. He had even written down the names of those he suspected of gang activity and given them to his superiors, who refused to take action. “Then we come back from Iraq and wham, bam a soldier’s dead. I want [Johnson’s] family to know that your son, your husband, the father of your child did not have to die. I want his family to know that he didn’t have to die if someone had done their job and not swept this under the rug,” said Pasquale. In the aftermath of his testimony, Pasquale was the target of relentless abuse and intimidation, including threats to his life and gang graffiti daubed on his barracks. He even had alarms fitted and slept with knives. “If I do get killed, I don’t want to be another Sgt. Johnson with people wondering, ‘What happened to him? Why?’” he said. “I don’t want my mother going through what Sgt. Johnson’s mother’s going through, trying to get answers from the army.”

Getting Answers

That Pasquale didn’t want his mother asking the military for answers is understandable. Throughout the War on Terror, getting genuine answers from the army or any other branch of the military about gang infiltration was impossible. The reaction from the military brass when presented with evidence of the vast numbers of gang members in their midst—even from federal investigators or their own troops—oscillated from outright denial to ad hominem attacks on those making the charges. The threat to the wellbeing of troops, the occupied populations and those back home in American cities didn’t seem to trouble them. The most serious and important work undertaken to collect information had, therefore, to be undertaken outside of the military establishment—primarily, by the FBI and civilian police. An extensive report on the problem was published by the FBI in 2007, but at the time it barely registered on the radar of the mainstream media and became another important military-related document read only by the initiated.[50] This time around, however, it was more surprising than usual as the findings were particularly worrying for the *domestic* population of the US. Gang-bangers know a lot about fighting and violence—it’s their *raison d’être*. But until the War on Terror that “expertise” had never been shifted wholesale from the inner city to the US military, from South Central to Baghdad and back again. “Gang-related activity in the US military is increasing and poses a threat to law enforcement officials and national security," the investigators concluded. "Members of nearly every major street gang have been identified on both domestic and international military installations." The FBI did not mince words when outlining the problems this could cause for the military. Gang membership in the ranks will "result in disruption of command, low morale, disciplinary problems, and a broad range of criminal activity," as well as the "risk of transferring their weapons and combat training back to the community to employ against rival gangs and law enforcement officers."

Despite this prognosis, in its long history the US military had never instituted regulation prohibiting gang members from joining its ranks. It is true that gang members tend to have criminal records, which can bar an individual from enlistment, but if they are clean, there is sufficient ambiguity in regulations to allow them through. And even criminal records aren't always a bar. Another strange feature of the military's enlistment process is that it relies on recruits to voluntarily reveal their past records, rather than actively investigating them. If the recruit is upfront enough they will go through a "suitability review" which includes a police record check. If that record contains frequent offenses for a number of misdemeanors, the recruit will require a "moral waiver" in order to serve.[51] The FBI fingered this as a serious problem which had allowed gang members to fly through recruitment. "Gang members have been known to enlist in the military by failing to report past criminal convictions or by using fraudulent documents," said the report.[52] And once they are in, a whole new complex of problems appears. The FBI lamented the impossibility of gauging the extent of the gang members in service because "military authorities may not recognize gang affiliation or *may be inclined not to report such incidences*" (my emphasis). It's an incredible suggestion: the federal government's investigative branch cannot gauge the problem of criminal gangs in the country's fighting forces because the military refuses to report gang activity. This dereliction of duty could, the report said, "ultimately jeopardize the safety of other military members," as it did so tragically in the case of Johnson—and he was far from being the only one.

The unit of the military assigned to investigate criminal activity in the service, the CID, was an integral part of the cover-up, denying the existence of the problem from start to finish. "We recently conducted an Army-wide study, and we don't see a significant trend in this kind of activity, especially when you compare this with a million-man army," said its report into gang activity in the military, published at the same time as the FBI report.[53] CID's own report found that gang-related investigations went up from four to sixteen between 2003 and 2006, while incidents went up from eight to forty-four in the same period, in keeping with the enlargement of the force. But FBI gang investigator Jennifer Simon told *Stars and Stripes* that "it's no secret that gang members are prevalent in the armed forces, including internationally."[54] She said gang members had been documented on or near US military bases in Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, and Iraq. The discrepancy in the reporting of the problem caused huge tensions between the FBI and the military's investigative units, who seemed piqued that the federal authorities took their job so seriously. They were shocked that the FBI was failing to understand the manpower pressures the military was under. The resulting internecine war was bitter. On the back of the worrying FBI report, the military said the bureau was "overstating the problem, mixing historical and more recent events, and using unsupported hearsay type comments and statements from various undocumented experts."[55] In the aftermath a joint memorandum from the military investigative units was sent to the FBI "contesting parts of the assessment, asking for its withdrawal, and offering increased cooperation and coordination to obtain a more accurate estimate of the gang problem in the military." The FBI said no, and the military published its own report in riposte.

A military spokesman later asked about the problem entered the realm of fantasy: "In nearly every one of the cases that we looked into, it is a young man or woman who thought that the symbol looked cool," he said. "We have found some people even get gang tattoos not really knowing what they are, or at least that they have not had any gang affiliation in the past." It's a serious strain to believe that the significance of florid gang tattoos would be unknown to their owners: usually an indelible mark on the skin demands some research. But these dopey soldiers had company within the military in the form of recruiters, who seemed to know even less about what gang tattoos look like. It wasn't entirely their own fault: as the military investigators demonstrated so impeccably, commanders didn't see it as an issue and preferred to turn a blind eye in the face of pressure to maintain recruitment levels. On top of that, as the FBI pointed out, many "military recruiters are not properly trained to recognize gang affiliation and unknowingly recruit gang members, particularly if the applicant has no criminal record or visible tattoos."[56]

Hunter Glass, the gang investigator, adds: “If we weren’t in the middle of fighting a war, yes, I think the military would have a lot more control over this issue, but with a war going on, I think it’s very difficult to do.” The military was also experiencing an intense financial squeeze from the Bush administration, which was impacting its ability to control the problem. “Forming multi-agency task forces and joint community groups is an effective way to combat the problem,” says the FBI report. “However, decreases in funding and staffing to many task forces have created new challenges for civilian communities.”[57] Recruiter conduct deteriorated at the same time. In a single year, from 2004 to 2005, the number of military recruiter violations increased by 50 percent as recruiters tried increasingly aggressive tactics and unscrupulously doctored documents. In the same period, the local CBS station in Denver, KCNC, did an important investigation into recruiter conduct when faced with a prospective soldier who claimed to be a gang member. The station’s reporter asked his interlocutor in the recruitment center: “Does it matter that I was in a gang or anything?” to which the recruiter responded, “You may have had some gang activity in your past and everything . . . OK . . . but that in itself does not disqualify.”[58] There were also numerous reports of recruiters trying to cover up the previous affiliations of gang-members-turned-soldiers. In 2005 a Latin Kings gang member was allegedly recruited into the army at a Brooklyn, New York, courthouse, while awaiting trial for assaulting a police officer. He was reportedly told to conceal his gang affiliation. The effects were perhaps predictable. Jennifer Simon, the FBI gang detective, added: “It’s often in the military’s best interest to keep these incidents quiet, given low recruitment numbers and recent negative publicity. The relaxation of recruiting standards, recruiter misconduct and the military’s lack of enforcement have compounded the problem and allowed gang member presence in the military to proliferate.”[59]

In this period, according to reports from soldiers and investigators, Baghdad had become a veritable canvas on which gang members sprayed their markings after the invasion. The Gangster Disciples, as well other heavyweights like Latin Kings and Vice Lords—groups fostered in the badlands of Chicago—had left their mark on armored vehicles, walls, barricades, and bathrooms. An Army Reserve sergeant, Jeffrey Stoleson, seeing this all around him and growing increasingly angry about it, decided to go out on a limb in an effort to alert the American public. Stoleson was deployed twice—first in Kuwait and Iraq in 2005–6, and then later again in Iraq—but he stayed away from a face-to-face confrontation with the gangs. “We all carried loaded weapons at all times and with these hot heads you never know who they may be trying to prove something to,” he tells me. He adds that there were two types of gang members: some genuinely wanted to escape from the ’hood and the lifestyle and without the military had no chance. But the majority were training themselves for the war back at home. He says they were “using the methods taught in combat to take home and use against others who have no chance in hell of defending themselves.” They weren’t trying to hide it either, many posting up graffiti all over Iraq. “It was all over the place, the graffiti was blatant; they were not trying to hide the colors or gang affiliations or even tattoos. Most of the bases had gang graffiti on them from Kuwait to the border with Turkey. It was on Baghdad International Airport, the blast walls. It was a Who’s Who of American street gangs, everything was there.” Stoleson tried hard to get pictures of the graffiti, but when his senior officer realized he was intent on publicizing the problem “he made sure I was busy and not able to get them.” Before he got to the airport to take the snaps they painted over the graffiti. “I mean it was covered with graffiti close to one mile long, twenty feet high.” “Some was ‘Hi Mom’ and derogatory terms for other soldiers but most of it was gangs,” he added. Stoleson was also hearing from his colleagues that graffiti was being sprayed on the streets of Baghdad by US troops from different bases to denote their domains of influence. “It was like their turf, you didn’t go there after certain times of the day,” he says. “Many feared for their safety.” Some troops would even wear their gang colors in their military fatigues by coloring the inside pocket of their fatigues red or blue and when they passed each other they would pull them out to show allegiance.

As an upstanding soldier, Stoleson thought that if he raised this with his superiors they would take action or at least investigate. He was wrong. “I brought it up a couple times, but I was told to leave it alone, that they [gang members] were doing a good job et cetera,” he says, adding, “but for who and what flag? Not the red, white and blue.” Things got more serious when Stoleson started seeing military gear begin to go missing—mainly parts for weapons systems, mounts, optics, and small things that were easy to hide or ship. The command still weren’t interested. “At first they blew it off and said to leave it alone, it’s not your job,” he says. But Stoleson had taken an oath to protect his country from terrorists domestic and foreign, so he went to the press. “When the CID got a hold of me after the story got out in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the 2-Star General wanted my ass on a platter,” he says. “Then it got messy.” The military sent an agent from California who was a gang specialist for the San Bernardino Sheriff Department in California. Two agents sat Stoleson down and spent a whole day going through his documentation which included hundreds of pictures. “My captain came through and was amazed when the CID agents looked at him and said his sergeant was right: they had a problem and he had a set of balls for what he did.”

But Stoleson wasn’t treated like the hero he was; he was ostracized. “I was not allowed to do convoys for forty-five days because there were death threats up north on military bases on me,” he says. “Nice from your own troops, eh?” The command sent him south into Kuwait instead, and on his first day there he saw gang graffiti nearby. “Then I went to a place we called Area 51 which was 90 percent covered with gang graffiti and after taking pictures only then did I call the CID agents and within two days it was closed.” But soon the case was given to another CID agent. “He wasn’t so agreeing with the pictures,” says Stoleson. “Go figure,” he adds, “it’s not what they wanted to hear.” The new CID agent called the commander of Stoleson’s unit and told him he was coming over to inspect the soldiers in it in three days time. “That’s like a cop telling a drug dealer ‘hey, drug bust tomorrow at 3 p.m.,’” says Stoleson. The commander merely cleared out anyone suspicious and made sure others were on a mission. Soon after, the commander of the unit called Stoleson’s captain and said that Stoleson’s safety could no longer be guaranteed. It was a diversion tactic. “In fact, the unit had been brought under investigation several times already while in country for false documents relating to firefights, but they were sealed.” When they finally let him go home, Stoleson was sent several memos from the Central Command stating that he was under threat of court-martial, loss of rank, and imprisonment if he did not realize that what he had seen and documented was classified and secret and he must never speak about it. “I even had a captain tell me he would see that I would be thrown out and disgraced and never be allowed to talk about it,” he says. “I was told I would never be promoted, had my job threatened, my life, my daughter’s life threatened. I got a price on my head on the streets.” The pressure of the threats to his family eventually led to his divorce. “When they need info about it it's OK, then they call and expect me to give it. But of course, no way, I am non-cooperative; I am doing this for myself, not watered down so it is what they want to hear."

Stoleson is not optimistic about how this will end. "Now the cartels are in our military and have proven they can and will use their power," he says. "Just look at the murders recently at Fort Bliss, Texas, by troops . . . They say 10 percent of the military is gangs. I say 15 or a little more just because they are becoming a more educated bunch, not showing the tattoos and flying the colors . . . It's bad, don't even fool yourself," he continues. "Law enforcement isn't taking this any more serious than ever. The DOD has told us to leave the bikers alone, which are some of the most dangerous and fly full colors and are involved in white power groups." He adds, "There is no room for any gang member prior or present in the military. If they are allowed, the cancer of our streets here in the States may one day run the most violent army in the world." But the military only ever punished Stoleson for his bravery in speaking up. "Oh Jeff, they tried to destroy him," Hunter Glass tells me. "They wanted him gone, he was showing them up." They were nearly successful. When I last speak to Stoleson he tells me he has just been approved for admittance to the VA for nine weeks of treatment for PTSD.

Back in the US it was the same story of shooting the messenger. At Fort Sill the problem again raised its head when Specialist Gregory Darnell King, a reservist in the 177th Field Artillery Battalion, was arrested six times by local police for a variety of offenses, including drugs possession. He was seen showing the hand signs for the 107 Hoover Crips and was believed to be a member. The head of the police gang investigations team, Lieutenant Darnell Southerland, warned, "People don't want to face the truth but it's true. Fort Sill still has a problem with gangs. We see it every Friday and Saturday nights on the streets. But nobody wants to listen."[60] The army didn't want to know and shot the messenger again. Southerland, the brave whistle-blower, was "completely inaccurate and totally outdated," an army spokesman said.[61] They went further to say that none of their soldiers had been arrested on "gang-related charges" that year. It was the same tactic of plausible deniability that the military used in relation to white supremacists.

Even when cases did make it into the law courts, there was a strange aversion to convictions. Army Private Jamal Rashad Davis of the Eleventh Air Defense Brigade was alleged to have shot and killed nineteen-year-old

Jurell Battles during a Christmas Day fight in northeast El Paso in 2004. Investigators believed that the murder was gang related because of Davis's close connections with the Folk Nation gang. Another man who had been shot in the incident identified Davis in a police line-up and the soldier received a general discharge from the army in February 2005, although the military denied this was related to the murder case. After his arrest, Davis's case took four years to move towards trial stage. But before that could happen, District Attorney Jaime Esparza dismissed the murder case in October 2009, citing lack of sufficient evidence to obtain a conviction. It was clear something had gone very wrong with the investigation, as there were no other suspects. John L. Williams, Davis's attorney, denied that his client had been associated with the Folk Nation, saying by way of extenuation, "My guy was in the military. He was a Louisiana choirboy and his stepdad is in law enforcement." Davis was sent back to college where he was studying engineering.

Rearing Its Head

With so little being done by the military and law enforcement, the situation started to spiral out of control. By early 2006 it was seriously impacting on the military's plans for basic domestic troop movements. When the army unveiled its plan to reposition a tranche of soldiers to El Paso, Texas, as part of an efficiency savings program, law enforcement officials feared that it "could trigger a battle the military has not trained for—a turf war between violent criminal gangs."[62] The military wanted to move between ten and twenty thousand troops, but in that group there was a large contingent suspected of belonging to the Folk Nation, the umbrella group for a collection of Chicago-based street gangs. The El Paso area, however, was already home to another sizeable and powerful criminal outfit by the name of Barrio Azteca, a Texas-based prison gang. The DOD was so concerned it set up a special office in El Paso with the sole remit of weeding out Folk Nation members from the new soldiers who arrived. An FBI agent confided with serious understatement: "Our understanding is that Folk Nation has a presence in the military." She predicted that about 800 people were linked to the gang in El Paso, of which about 80, including military personnel and members of their families, were actively committing crimes. "It is my understanding that the police department in Killeen [in Texas] has reported a gang problem where military-affiliated people are involved," she added.

There were two problems that sounded ominous—the spread of gangs to the young in the area, and weapons training. “The intelligence that we have thus far indicates that they may try to recruit young people who have clean records and encourage them to keep their record clean to get into the military,” she said. “They would get great weapons training and other types of training and access to weapons and arms, and be able to use that knowledge.” The military denied it, with Nancy Hutchinson, public affairs officer for the Army Recruiting Battalion-Phoenix Headquarters that includes the El Paso area, saying simply that gang members or those with gang tattoos are barred from the military.

Although publicly there was a deafening silence from the military community, the murmurs from inside were increasing and filtering up to the lawmakers. In a Congress of 535 elected officials, just one lone Congressman, Representative Mike Thomson (D-CA) decided that enough was enough and introduced an amendment to the 2008 National Defense Authorization Bill which stated that the DOD would have to “prescribe regulations to prohibit the active participation of military personnel in street gangs.”[63] The bill passed through the House and Senate with the amendment, but was eventually vetoed by Bush, one of twelve presidential vetoes during his time in power. Thomson’s reasoning for sticking his head above the parapet was simple: he didn’t believe the military was doing its job. “I’ve heard from police officers across the country that there are problems with gangs on posts,” he said. “The FBI suggests there are problems not only in the states but on bases abroad. So somebody hasn’t been serious enough.”[64] It was clear who he was talking about. His aim, he said, was to make sure different agencies were sharing their information in order to close down the opportunities for gang members to enlist, calling the problem “a serious danger to society.”[65] That danger was clear in the statement he posted with the amendment: “This is an important amendment that is a first step in solving a very serious problem on our military bases both here in the States and abroad; and it is a problem that, unfortunately, spills over into our communities. This is the issue of members of criminal street gangs joining the military and getting the training that they get in the military and now, unfortunately, on the battlefield, and then bringing that back into the community and deploying those tactics on the streets in our neighborhood.”[66]

In 2009, another FBI report, this time focusing on the threat gangs posed to the US, registered the effect of the military’s willingness to turn a blind eye: “Gang migration from larger cities to suburban and rural areas is an ongoing concern for law enforcement,” it said. Its data showed that the percentage of law enforcement agencies in the United States reporting gang activity in their jurisdictions increased from 45 percent in 2004 to 58 percent in 2008. Gang membership was estimated conservatively at 1 million members in 2009, a 25 percent increase from 800,000 in 2005.[67] By 2007, the army reported seventy-nine separate gang incidents in the year, crimes which included drug dealing, homicide, and robbery—and these gangs were not just terrorizing each other. The report noted: “Military-trained gang members . . . present an emerging threat to law enforcement officers patrolling the streets of US cities.”[68] For the gangs, this was always the desired endgame. Those serving in the desert may have paid lip-service to their love of US-style freedom and democracy, but in truth the military was a training camp for the skills they required to combat law enforcement agencies and their gangland enemies back home. The FBI said as much in its report: “Military training could ultimately result in more sophisticated and deadly gangs.”[69] “Gangs are gaining strength across the United States,” added Hunter Glass. “The numbers are increasing like crazy around the US and adding this extra fuel is just not going to help matters.”[70] It was fuelling crime all over America, with 80 percent of offenses being committed by gang members in some communities.[71] An FBI agent confided that gangs “will hand pick [recruits], ask them to keep their record clear so that they can enlist in the military and then once they’re in the military, they want them to try and gain access to weapons and explosives and basically try to filter that back to the street level.”[72]

One potent warning about how this would end came early on, one evening in January 2005: A call came in to the local Ceres, California, police department from someone who claimed to be a store employee and requesting help from a single police officer at Sequoia Market. Soon after a second call came from the area with a report that a man was lurking and acting suspiciously with a gun. A short time later, three policemen showed up. Waiting for them was Andres Raya, a nineteen-year-old veteran who had spent seven months in Iraq in 2004 but hadn’t seen any combat. On this night he was determined to make up for it, and had armed himself with a high-powered assault rifle for the task. When the policemen arrived, Raya started shooting. Trainee Chris Melton managed to take cover, but his colleague Sam Ryno was hit, sustaining what turned out to be career-ending injuries. The other policeman, Sergeant Howard Stevenson, then fired off eight rounds before taking bullets in the back and leg. Raya walked slowly towards him and unloaded two bullets into his head at point blank range. Later that evening Raya was killed in a firefight with another set of police officers. Taking out two armed police officers is no easy task and would likely not have been possible without Raya's military training. It was later revealed that before the attack Raya had bragged to his friends in the Marines that he would use the assault rifle because of its ability to pierce police body armor, knowledge he probably gained in Iraq. He also used a marine technique known as "cutting the pie" whereby he went on the attack instead of retreating. In the subsequent investigation, it was revealed he was member of the powerful Norteño organization, a group of Latino gangs out of northern California. A police report concluded: "Although—while in Iraq—the gang member had not experienced any combat, he used his military training to shoot out the windows of a nearby vehicle to use as a shield in his attack against officers."[73] Ceres Police Chief Art de Werk said: "It was so rare, an almost unheard-of, brazen attack."[74]

But this was 2005. America was about to change. The aftermath of the murder brought the already tense relationship between the police and the local Latin population to a new low as police conducted a series of "sweeps" for suspected gang members as well as drugs and weapons in Ceres and south Modesto. It fundamentally altered how law enforcement agencies viewed the threat from gangs on the streets of the US. They were now dealing with fully trained warriors. "Gang members have enlisted since the 1980s," said a police report.[75] "However, following the January 9, 2005 attack of two police officers, law enforcement authorities began paying closer attention to gang members in the military and discovering skills and knowledge in the tactics, and access to military weapons were also being used to benefit gang members." But law enforcement was helpless when confronted with a military establishment desperate for more wood to throw into the fire in the Middle East, so nothing was done to address the situation. By late 2009, the heavily armed gang problem had got so bad in Salinas, California, that city officials turned to the military for help. They started working with combat veterans and lecturers at the Naval Postgraduate School to devise a counterinsurgency operation likened by the veterans to those fought against insurgents on the streets of Mogadishu or Fallujah. In April 2010 the National Guard was called out to police the streets of

Chicago. Local lawmakers said they were needed to "stabilize communities," just as had been done in the Middle East occupations.

The Cancer Spreads

Meanwhile, on the southern border of the US another problem was flaring up. In December 2006, Mexican President Felipe Calderón sent the nation's military to get a grip on the drug-related violence that was ripping apart towns on the northern border. The campaign's success over the ensuing years was muted to say the least: the number of people killed increased every year subsequently. In 2009 alone there were 6,500 drug-related murders in the country. To put that in perspective: after eight years of continuous war, 5,600 Americans had fallen in Iraq and Afghanistan.[76] Both are tragically high figures, but the links were rarely pointed out. One of the manifold problems that the proliferation of criminal gangs in the military has exacerbated in the US, and by extension Mexico, is the drug trade. The illegal drug industry is wholly administered by street gangs, which operate on both sides of the border to get drugs onto the streets of America and cash the gargantuan profits. The military environment is a godsend for such operations, for obvious reasons. The ability to move around, the relative protection afforded by being a soldier, and the ability to work in large concentrations all suit the needs of a drug trafficker. As the FBI cautioned in 2009, a "rising number of U.S.-based gangs are seemingly intent on developing working relationships with U.S.- and foreign-based drug trafficking organizations and other criminal organizations to gain direct access to foreign sources of illicit drugs."[77] It continued, "gangs have . . . been known to use active-duty service members to distribute drugs." The Justice Department reported that members of the Latin Kings gang in Midland, Texas, purchase cocaine from Mexican traffickers for between $16,000 and $18,000 a kilogram. It is then shipped on to Chicago where a kilogram may cost up to $30,000.[78] Elements in the US military are often used as a conduit. The situation became so serious that in 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in Mexico City that gangs "are fighting against both of our governments" before pledging $1.6 billion in US aid for the Merida Initiative aimed at fighting drug cartels. She told the Mexican government: "This new agenda expands our focus beyond disrupting drug organizations" to include "strengthening a 21st Century border, and building strong, resilient communities."[79] She didn't mention the sterling work the US's own military has been doing in training the traffickers. One of these alleged military-trained cartel soldiers was eighteen-year-old Army Private Michael Jackson Apodaca, based at Fort Bliss, Texas, the center of a lot of the activity. In August 2009 he was charged with the murder of a lieutenant in the Juarez drug cartel, José Daniel Gonzalez Galeana, who was shot eight times in El Paso outside his luxurious $365,000 Mediterranean villa, complete with tile roof and swimming pool. Apodaca was allegedly hired alongside another man in the contract killing by a member of the same cartel.[80] The *LA Times* reported that the "killing was prompted by suspicions that Gonzalez was either an informant or had trade alliances amid the Juarez cartel's violent battle with rival drug gangs for control of Ciudad Juarez, just across the Rio Grande from El Paso."[81] A spokeswoman for Fort Bliss merely stated: "Anytime someone does something like this, and a soldier in our case, it's terrible."[82] But it wasn't terrible enough for the military to take a look in the mirror.

These same gangs were also trafficking drugs from Iraq and Afghanistan. "We'd stop convoys at the border, both military and civilian, and we would find heroin and hash and lots of cash," Stoleson tells me. "The biggest was around 750 kilos and $500k in cash." He says you could pick up a camel shoe of hash or heroin on the Iran border for $1,200 and transport it to the Syrian border, making up to $25,000 per shoe or kilo, and it was a big industry until the border controls were tightened up in 2006, when the threat of bombings in Kuwait became a reality (Stoleson was in Camp Navistar in Kuwait, which was just forty miles from Iran). "But we had a Latin King from New York getting pot shipped to him and dealing on base," he added. "I turned in a Latin King by noticing his [tattoos] and nothing happened." They were even planning trafficking from Latin America to the US while deployed. "I overheard two troops talking about working with [Mexican drug gang] Zetas to move product from his cousin in Colombia to the States," added Stoleson. His claims were given further credence in early 2012 when a drug ring "kill-team" composed of veterans and active-duty US military personnel was broken up by drug enforcement agents. The men involved—led by First Lieutenant Kevin Corley—were under the impression that the violent, mass-murdering Mexican drug cartel, the Zetas, had hired them. They were not naïve—it was becoming increasingly common, as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) was only too well aware, hence the methodology of the sting operation. As *InSight Crime* magazine, which covers organized crime throughout the Americas, reported:

> On March 24, First Lt. Kevin Corley arrived with a three-man team at a warehouse in the border city of Laredo, Texas, armed with two semiautomatic rifles, a combat knife and a .300-caliber bolt-action rifle equipped with a scope. The men believed they had been hired by the Zetas to carry out a contracted killing and raid of a rival drug trafficking group's storehouse, and had been called to receive the final details of the assignment.[83]

Corley had been conferring with DEA agents posing as Zetas for six months, and promised to carry out assassinations for them in the US, which are known in the business as "wet work." Aware of his privileged status as a US soldier, Corley had boasted to his would-be paymasters of the ease with which he could steal weapons from where he was posted in Colorado. It wasn't just bluster. He allegedly provided agents with "bulletproof vests, training manuals and other stolen military equipment." They were the same kind of products you could now find on sale on eBay courtesy of the US military. In America in 2012, none of this was not out of the ordinary.

But inter-gang violence, while prevalent on the streets of Los Angeles and Chicago, has not erupted into full-scale war within the US military, mainly because gangs like the Bloods, Crips, and Gangster Disciples have pooled their resources and embarked on joint criminal enterprises, including but not limited to drug trafficking. The FBI reports that "rival gang members at Fort Bliss . . . have joined forces to commit assaults on civilian gang members."[84] One of those alleged to have been involved was Jerell Hill, an eighteen-year-old soldier who was arrested at Fort Sill, a military base in Oklahoma, in October 2007, and charged with attempted murder in connection with the shooting of five people in the Barclay neighborhood of his hometown, Baltimore. Investigators suspected Hill of being a member of the Pasadena Denver Lane gang, a local Bloods group, while the five shot—including a sixteen-year-old and a woman—allegedly had links to a rival gang called the Young Gorilla Family. Both gangs had a history of homicides which had brought the number of slayings in Baltimore to a stunning 240 by October of that year. Hill's father was incredulous, telling the press: "He had a little gang he hung out with . . . As far as calling them one of these Bloods or Crips, I have no idea about that."[85] But he need not have worried, as two days later the prosecutors dropped the case, saying it was "legally insufficient" but that Hill would remain a "person of interest."[86] Hill's parents claimed that he had returned to Oklahoma on September 11, long before the September 20 murder. But police drew attention to the fact he had only checked into Fort Sill on September 21. Police said they would continue to investigate his whereabouts in that interregnum. In the meantime, Hill was sent back to Fort Sill and returned to active duty.

Scott Barfield was a Defense Department gang detective at Fort Lewis in Washington state before he was ejected for raising the alarm in the media. “I have identified 320 soldiers as gang members from April 2002 to present,” he said in 2006, before adding, “I think that’s the tip of the iceberg.” At a later stage he said, “a friend of mine is a recruiter. They are being told less than five tattoos is not an issue. More than five, you do a waiver saying it’s not gang-related. You’ll see soldiers with a six-pointed star with GD [Gangster Disciples] on the right forearm.” An investigation by *Stars and Stripes*, the military journal, found that the number of gang-related incidents officially recorded by the army was small in 2007 at sixty, but that had nearly tripled from the year before. The 2007 report stated the extent of the problem at Fort Bliss: “Since 2004, the FBI and El Paso Police Department have identified over 40 military-affiliated Folk Nation gang members stationed at the Fort Bliss Army Installation in Texas who have been involved in drug distribution, robberies, assaults, weapons offenses, and a homicide, both on and off the installation.” In May 2005, eight US soldiers were charged with participating in a widespread bribery and extortion conspiracy. FBI source information revealed that several military personnel stationed in Colombia had “transported forty-six kilograms of cocaine to El Paso.”[87]

Weapons Training

While some gang members may enlist to escape their lifestyle, or as an alternative to incarceration (having been offered clemency in exchange for service), most enlist to receive weapons and combat training. One of the main dangers of the proliferation of gang members in the military is the access they gain to the top weapons in the world, along with the attendant training in how to use them. “While in the military, enlisted members are exposed to high-power weapons, such as machine guns and rocket launchers, and explosives, such as grenades and C-5—as well as body armor night-vision devices, gun parts, and ammunition,” said the California Department of Justice in 2005.[88] It warned that “enlisted personnel are able to steal items by improperly documenting supply orders or by falsifying paperwork.” Throughout the War on Terror there have been countless cases of gang members stealing weapons and selling them on, as well as using their military training to heighten their effectiveness when carrying out a crime. A concerned Milwaukee, Wisconsin, police detective complained to the *San Francisco Chronicle* that “gang members are going over to Iraq and sending weapons back.” And sure enough in 2006, a former National Guard soldier was arraigned in federal court after being accused of bringing machine guns back to the US from Iraq to sell to a gun dealer in Georgia.[89] A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that stolen US military equipment, including body armor, night vision goggles, and gear to protect against nuclear or biochemical warfare, was being sold on Craigslist and eBay.[90] America was becoming a warzone. In El Paso, members of the city council decided they needed to tool up. They didn’t want to take any risks and approved the purchase of 1,145 assault rifles for $750,000 in order to supply all their officers with the civilian version of the M-4 military rifle. Representative Steve Ortega of District 7 said there had to be precautions to help “a population coming back from an extremely violent environment integrating with the civilian population,” adding “we want to make sure that the police department has all the resources it needs to make us the safest city in the nation.”[91]

It was not hyperbole. In 2004, a fearless gang had begun a two month orgy of “commando-style” robberies in which they raided six banks in Maryland using fully automatic assault rifles, managing to cash in more than $350,000 and terrorize local citizens before being caught.[92] It was revealed subsequently that the military-style operations were in fact made possible by the weapons which had been bought for $5,000 from a friend of one of the gang members, recently returned from Iraq. The police kept the soldier’s identity secret but said he was based at nearby Fort Meade. The weapons, which are “plentiful and cheap” in Iraq, according to the *Washington Post*, “were key to their strategy: using overwhelming firepower and body armor to frighten and intimidate bank employees and customers—and ward off police.” It worked. In the middle of their crime spree, Kate Collins, a police officer, pursued the getaway van shortly after the gang robbed a Chevy Chase Bank branch in Temple Hills. The robbers fired their machine guns in the officer’s direction as they fled the scene. “I felt my car shake,” she said. Collins was alone in her vehicle, armed with only a 9mm handgun. It wasn’t a fair match; by the end of the firefight her car had been hit forty-seven times. “I had a BB gun compared to them,” she complained. The *Post* reported at the time: “Law enforcement officials expressed concern that more high-powered battle weapons could end up being used in crimes against U.S. citizens and police." A law enforcement official familiar with the case commented that winning prosecutions was a hard business before adding that screening for equipment sent back to the US by military members was nearly non-existent. In other words, there was little either law enforcement agencies or American civilians could do in the face of the onslaught. Baghdad had come to Temple Hills.

In 2008, as the Bush administration drew to a close, General David Petraeus, then commanding general in Iraq, went to Washington, DC, to testify in Congress about progress in the troubled country. The political and media world gathered hoping to hear hopeful signals from the four-star general, but right-wing Republican Representative Tom Tancredo shocked the room by raising what many lawmakers thought was an obscure topic. "The fact that gang members are being trained in our military is a growing cause for concern," he told Petraeus. "Our local law enforcement officers and gang units are now facing criminals who have obtained advanced weapons and training courtesy of the U.S. taxpayer." Then he began to show a hint of anger. "I find it very disconcerting that there are high-level military officials that are unaware of this growing problem. This is a serious issue that deserves serious attention from the Pentagon brass."[93] In response, Petraeus merely confirmed Tancredo's worst fears, saying that he was not aware of gang activity in Iraq before promising to look into it. Of course, he never did. In truth, the military brass could not have been unaware of what was happening all along—all they needed to do was pick up a local newspaper across the country. But they couldn't afford to slow down and instead of stemming the tide their program was only making it worse. The one regulation that had previously stopped the gangs' infiltration, the ban on felons and other persistent criminals, was falling away as well.

WAR CRIMINALS

My main preoccupation in life is wanting to kill Iraqis, whoever they are and wherever they are.

Steven D. Green, Iraq veteran and recipient
of a "moral waiver" to serve, 2006[94]

In broad daylight on March 12, 2006, one of most horrific of the reported atrocities by the US military in Iraq was underway in a house near Yusufiyah, a town just south of Baghdad. A group from the Black Heart

Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, famed for its courageous exploits during World War Two, had arrived at a family home fresh from a long drinking session of locally made whiskey, or what the soldiers called with disdain "hajji juice." The men were frustrated, some at the end of their tether, after promises that they would soon leave the Triangle of Death, an area renowned for its high levels of violence and chaos, were consistently broken by their commanders. The tension had been compounded in recent days by the death of a sergeant close to the group, killed by an IED. The house in question was in close proximity to the checkpoint manned by the soldiers, some of whom over the past months had had their eye on the fourteen-year-old daughter of the couple who lived there. Conversations often involved fantasies about raping her; that day, they resolved to do it. They were led by Private First Class Steven D. Green, who had already been showing increasing signs of mental breakdown and illness, telling a combat-stress adviser sometime before of his overriding desire to kill Iraqis. On that day, he was on guard at a traffic control point and had been on duty eighteen hours. He told the other soldiers: "I'm going to waste a bunch of dudes in a car." Not good enough, replied another soldier, James Barker, who told him: "I've got a better idea. We've all killed hajjis, but I've been here twice and I still never fucked one of these bitches."[95] The planned murders would actually only be the coda to a long day of crimes around checkpoints, which were a signature of the conflict. Earlier amid chaos at that same checkpoint, one soldier had opened fire, allegedly to restore order among a crowd, with one shot killing a woman in a pickup truck. "You fucking shot her in the head," exclaimed another soldier. The squad, according to one of its members, fabricated a cover story to explain the shooting. Army investigators found no evidence of wrongdoing.

It was in that frame of mind they arrived at the house that night and separated the girl, Abeer Qasim Hamza al-Janabi, from her family. Green went into the room where Abeer's parents were and shot them dead, along with their six-year-old daughter. Meanwhile, two other soldiers raped the young girl. When Green came back he raped her as well before using the family's own AK-47 to shoot the girl in the head. The soldiers then burnt the house to the ground with the bodies inside. For three months nothing happened as the military believed the lie that it had been the work of Iraqi insurgents. In the Iraq War logs, released by Wikileaks, it wasn't even recorded.[96] In Mahmudiyah—the nearest major town to Yusifiyah—on that day, there were no significant activity reports detailing what the soldiers had done. There was no report of a family's death in a burning house, or the charred corpse of a raped fourteen-year-old girl. It would have stayed that way, as many massacres of its kind undoubtedly have in Afghanistan and Iraq, except for the conscience of one of the soldiers in the battalion, Justin Watt. After a period of soul-searching he told officers that he had heard it was in fact soldiers in his own unit who had carried it out. Even then the military refused to believe him, not even taking precautions about the threat to his life from the soldiers who had learned that he had spoken up.

In the eventual trial of those guilty, the level of incompetence in the military became horrendously clear. Testimony during the trial of Green revealed that an army counselor had called the unit "mission incapable" and recommended that it stop taking on missions due to high levels of stress, anger, and diminished morale. That didn't happen, although before the allegations and criminal proceedings got underway, Green was discharged from the army with a "personality disorder." In the end, he was given five life sentences. The defense had argued that the military should have withdrawn Green long before the massacre, and they had a sterling case. About a year earlier, in January 2005, Green was a high school dropout with too much time on his hands and soon to land himself in jail. He was convicted on alcohol possession charges, which was his third misdemeanor conviction. After he got out he decided to enlist in the military, a course that would—because of those convictions—require special dispensation because of his criminal record. It also emerged that he had unpaid fines against his name, and court records showed it had instructed "he must contact the court immediately." Instead of doing so, Green was deployed to Iraq as part of the 101st Airborne Division, where he would go on to rape and murder. His journey from criminal to soldier was, however, becoming increasingly common.

Immoral Waivers

The Department of Justice cites losing your "right" to serve in the military as one consequence of a felony conviction, and those like Private Green with multiple civil convictions for what the army considers to be misdemeanor offenses also lose their automatic right to serve. But in both cases there is a system in place to give ex-cons a second chance. "Exceptions to the prohibition on military enlistment . . . may be authorized by the Secretary of the affected branch of the service in meritorious cases," says the guidance.[97] In military jargon these "meritorious cases" warrant what are called "moral waivers," by which a moral failing in the past may be overlooked and the individual allowed to serve their country depending on the circumstances "surrounding the criminal violations, the age of the person committing them, and personal interviews."[98] For obvious reasons—not least that of offering former criminals a second chance—the moral waiver system has its uses and is an old institution founded on the valuable principle that society shouldn't be closed to someone for a single transgression. The Pentagon puts it this way: "The waiver process recognizes that some young people have made mistakes, have overcome their past behavior, and have clearly demonstrated the potential for being productive, law-abiding citizens and members of the military."[99] But like most well-intentioned (and discretionary) pieces of military regulation, during the War on Terror it was exploited and stretched to the maximum by the Pentagon as it struggled to keep up troop numbers.

It took a report from the Palm Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara—a group committed to discussion of homosexuals in the military—to blow the lid on figures the military brass were trying hard to cover up. In 2007 it published information obtained through the Freedom of Information Act which led it to call the proliferation of ex-cons in the military a "major recruitment trend" which it said was "a cause, effect, or even correction of the military's apparent recruitment problem."[100] It found the number of convicted felons enlisting in the US military nearly doubled in two years, from 824 in 2004 to 1,605 in 2006. In that period a total of 4,230 convicted felons were enlisted in the military, including people guilty of rape and murder. On top of this, 43,977 soldiers signed up who had been found guilty of a serious misdemeanor, which includes assault. Another 58,561 had drug-related convictions, but all were handed a gun and sent off to the Middle East. "The fact that the military has allowed more than 100,000 people with such troubled pasts to join its ranks over the past three years illustrates the problem we're having meeting our military needs in this time of war," said Aaron Belkin, director of the Palm Center.[101]

But in the face of this dangerous trend, the media focus remained mostly on cases where felons were shown to be upstanding and trusted soldiers when given a chance—what I call the narrative of the "noble felon." The case of Osvaldo Hernandez, for example, drew national attention after he was allowed to serve in the Middle East, but then turned down for a job with the New York Police Department on his return home. His moral rectitude was good enough for an M-16 in Afghanistan, but not for the Upper East Side. In 2002, when he was twenty, he had been caught with an unlicensed loaded gun in his car and had served a year in prison. He was the lucky recipient of a moral waiver and deployed in 2007 with the Eighty-Second Airborne in Afghanistan, where he spent fifteen months mostly in Ghazni province. Despite returning with a trophy cabinet of accolades, including a Combat Infantry Badge, two Army Commendation Medals, and three Army Achievement Medals, this didn't help him in his application to join the NYPD, which does not have moral waivers like the military. "I just want to take my experience in the military and put it forth in New York City . . . I want to continue to do public service. I grew up in New York City, so that's just where I want to give back," he told the *New York Times*.[102] Luckily for Hernandez, this ridiculous contradiction between military and police regulation led to a public backlash and the then-Governor of New York, David A. Paterson, granting him a pardon for his felony. "Gov. Paterson did the right thing by pardoning Spec. Osvaldo Hernandez from a felony conviction that barred him from achieving the dream of becoming a cop," said the *New York Daily News* at the time.[103] Another case was that of Nasser Hempel, who signed up for the army in October 2006 after spending eleven years in a succession of maximum security prisons in Texas for a robbery he committed in 1991.[104] He was involved in two riots and twelve fist-fights in his first month in prison. Hearing about 9/11 from behind bars changed him and led him to want to sign up to defend his country. "I remember how helpless I felt being stuck behind millions of dollars of concrete and steel while America was under attack," he said. "For a guy who built his reputation on fear and violence in prison, that feeling I had that day was something I've never experienced. That's the day I realized the world was bigger than me."[105] Soon after he was an Army Reserve corporal serving in Baghdad, having received a moral waiver.

One Hundred Hadithas

During the War on Terror, however, not all felons managed to put their indiscretions behind them as the media and military liked to suggest. A raft of research has highlighted the detrimental effect allowing ex-cons to serve in the military has had on the institution itself and on the civilian community being policed by them. Aside from atrocities (like those in Yusufiyah) that were arguably a consequence of recruiting more ex-cons, research has shown that these recruitment practices engender a lack of stability and cohesion within the ranks. A report from the Center for Naval Analyses pointed to higher attrition rates for those with waivers, who were "quite a bit more likely" than those without to get a misconduct charge and be separated from service within their first two years.[106] It reported that "recruits with felony waivers have the highest chance of a misconduct separation."[107] A GAO report that studied attrition rates from 1990 to 1993 had already supported this conclusion, finding that recruits granted moral waivers are more likely to be discharged from the air force because of misconduct.[108] The consensus went even further. "Unsuitability is by far the most common reason for service member attrition," added a 2007 Palm Center report.[109] "Nearly all research on the relationship between offense history and unsuitability attrition points to the unsurprising conclusion that recruits with criminal backgrounds are more likely to be discharged prematurely than those without such backgrounds."

The Pentagon knew it couldn't slow down, but that didn't stop concerns from being expressed within the military community itself. There was a glaring problem with putting a gun in the hands of a convicted criminal and sending them off to a war where they would be expected to kill. John D. Hutson, dean and president of the Franklin Pierce Law Center in New Hampshire and former judge advocate general of the navy, cautioned: "If you are recruiting somebody who has demonstrated some sort of antisocial behavior and then you are a putting a gun in their hands, you have to be awfully careful about what you are doing. You are not putting a hammer in their hands, or asking them to sell used cars. You are potentially asking them to kill people."[110] Christine Wormuth, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, acknowledged that criminal records are "absolutely an important indicator," before adding the caveat that "it won't mean 100 more Hadithas or cases of soldier abuse," referring to another massacre of civilians in Iraq. "The numbers seem pretty clear to me that we are lowering standards and it's difficult for me to see how that wouldn't have a negative impact on the quality of the force."[111]

Wormuth may have been right that linking atrocities in Afghanistan and Iraq to moral waivers is impossible to do with any certainty, but the anecdotal evidence indicates that the negative impact was shocking. On New Year's Eve 2006, Lance Corporal Delano Holmes, a twenty-two-year-old marine who had been in Iraq for only three months, was on sentry duty in Fallujah, then the country's most dangerous city and a focal point for opposition to the US occupation. His partner on watch that night was army Private Munther Jasem Muhammed Hassin, a soldier from an Iraqi army unit that was helping the US in their attempt to stabilize the city. A few hours into their shift, Private Hassin decided to light a cigarette, a popular pastime for most Iraqis. Lance Corporal Holmes objected, saying the lit end would alert snipers to their whereabouts, and told Hassin to put it out immediately. When his partner just laughed it off Holmes went ballistic, repeatedly stabbing Hassin with a thirteen-inch bayonet. According to the autopsy report, Hassin's body had seventeen stab wounds, twenty-six slashes and a face injury that had just about severed his nose.[112] A year later, in December 2007, a military jury at Camp Pendleton, California, found Holmes guilty of negligent homicide and of making a false statement. He was sentenced to only ten months in jail, effectively time served—in other words, he was a free man. At the court-martial, the prosecutors said Holmes had fired Hassin's AK-47 afterward to make the cold-blooded murder look like self-defense, a common military ruse. Newspaper reports of the trial said that Holmes's "eyes filled with tears so large that they could be seen falling on the lectern from across the room."[113] He told the jury he saw himself as a warrior and a Christian. "God gave me more than I could handle," he informed them. It would have been more accurate had he replaced "God" with "the US military." The military, however, would show further clemency two years later when an appeals court overturned the conviction. It was the last stage in a long line of betrayals by the US military which failed its Iraqi partner Hassin and cost him his life. For a start, Holmes should never have been in Iraq: he had a checkered mental and legal history that should have alerted his recruiters and superiors. At high school he had threatened to commit suicide and had to be hospitalized and was later accused of assault, trespassing, and disorderly conduct. As close as a few months before deployment he was linked to drug use twice. But defense attorneys said Holmes had been given a cocktail of drugs by military medical staff including Ambien, a sleep medication. According to the *Macon Telegraph*, a local newspaper that carried out extensive investigations, "military officials didn't publicly blame the war in Iraq, but some privately acknowledged it is why they accept individuals who previously would have been rejected." When asked how someone like Holmes could have been deployed to Iraq, Marine Captain Brett Miner, a prosecutor at the court-martial, said simply, “We’re kind of short on bodies.”

Fight Back

Concerned veterans’ groups picked up on the waiver system and urged the military to offer different incentives to recruits to end the necessity for the practice—such as an updated version of the GI Bill, which had provided education training to World War Two veterans, or better health care for reservists. “These are safer strategies for attracting a solid core of defenders for our country,” said Perry Jefferies, *t*he veterans’ outreach director for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. “The phrase ‘moral waivers’ euphemizes the real problem,” he added, “which is that some of these new soldiers are dangerous criminals. It is hard to capture the true effect of a violent criminal mixed into a unit with no warning and then put under tremendous stress.”[114] Worried veterans were gaining support within Congress, but as usual it was left to one courageous lawmaker to blaze a trail. On this issue it was Representative Henry A. Waxman, who in his position as chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee requested details from the Pentagon on the number of service members with felony convictions, information previously withheld from the public. The data showed that army waivers for felony convictions had more than doubled in a year, from 249 waivers in 2006 to 511 in 2007, while the marines’ waivers increased from 208 to 350 in the same period.[115] In a letter to David Chu, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Waxman wrote: “The data you provided the Committee shows that there was a rapid rise in 2007 in the number of waivers the Army and Marine Corps granted to recruits convicted of serious felonies, such as aggravated assault and burglary. Some recruits were even granted waivers for felony convictions involving sexual assault and terrorist threats.” Two involved planned domestic bomb attacks.[116] These convictions also included eighty-seven waivers for those convicted of assault and maiming, sometimes with a dangerous weapon. The marines also gave a number of waivers to those convicted of rape, sexual assault, incest, and other sex crimes.[117] Another lawmaker with his finger on the pulse was Representative Marty Meehan, who along with Representative Waxman was trying to get more information from the Pentagon. “The data is crystal clear,” he said. “Our armed forces are under incredible strain and the only way that they can fill their recruiting quotas is by lowering their standards. By lowering standards, we are endangering the rest of our armed forces and sending the wrong message to potential recruits across the country."[118]

This unraveling of the US military's moral fiber was a large factor in the rise in criminal acts *within* the military: during the War on Terror, for example, one in three female soldiers reported being victims of some form of sexual assault while in service, dwarfing the one in six women in the civilian world (a development to be explored in greater detail later in the chapter). The military was on the back foot trying to explain this one away. Army Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Withington, a Pentagon spokesman, retaliated by saying that waivers "are used judiciously and granted only after a thorough review," adding, "The Department strives to maintain high standards ensuring that military recruits surpass the overall qualifications of the contemporary American youth population."[119] Others spun it as a civil rights issue. "The thing is, you've got to give people an opportunity to serve," said Lieutenant General James D. Thurman, the army's operations chief. "We are growing the Army fast, there are some waivers . . . it hasn't alarmed us yet."[120] For some recruiters and commanders it seems soldiers with criminal records were also viewed kindly because as proven "risk-takers" they were more likely to succeed in combat. "Gang members, ex-cons, extremists, they are all more 'war-like' than your average soldier, there's no doubt that's attractive to the military, it's definitely a factor," Hunter Glass told me. Douglas Smith of Army Recruiting Command also put forward the thesis that because there "are more and more young people getting caught up in the criminal justice system than in the past," the US military has had to become more lenient to compensate. This explanation should not be dismissed. The growing numbers of Americans put behind bars was a scandal in itself. In 2008, it was found that one in one hundred adult Americans was actually behind bars, as the prison population ballooned to 1.6 million, the highest in the country's history. It was particularly acute among those segments of the population which have traditionally proven the trustiest military fodder. One in every thirty-six Hispanics was behind bars, while one in nine black men between twenty and thirty-four was also locked up.[121] To the military brass, disenfranchising vast swathes of individuals from ethnic minorities didn't make any sense; now, the government wouldn't just lock you up, it would send you to war afterward. It was a straight path, made even smoother by the fact that a felony conviction in itself makes finding work very hard—a "death sentence" according to DC Congressional Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton.[122] A newly open military became the best option for a generation of disenfranchised and desperate Americans—they could even sign up while still in prison. The situation was so farcical that by 2007 military recruiters went to the biannual jobs fair at Alexandria City Jail to try to sign up inmates close to release. "They offer a lot of opportunities for advancement, educational opportunities, vocational training, and so it's definitely a great opportunity for anyone interested," said a prison official.[123]

Criminal Denials

In 2007 there was a revealing exchange at a House Armed Services Committee hearing on army recruiting and retention. John McHugh (R-NY) was questioning the witness, Michael Dominguez, Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness from the Department of Defense. "Just to kind of state it in a different way and put it on the record again, I would like to ask you gentlemen to state how you feel about the quality of the men and women overall that you are recruiting into the military today, and make a comment, if you will, about felons in terms of waivers if you have such a thing," asked McHugh. "I mean, generally when we talked about waivers, there is the medical waiver, there is the moral waiver, which by and large has to do with minor crimes, generally as a youth, whether it is an alcohol situation or some kind of truancy, vandalism, something like that. But are we admitting hardcore felons into the United States Army today? Did I miss something?"[124] There was a pause. Then Dominguez replied (erroneously): "We exclude members of hate groups and gangs and those kinds of things. We have very well established procedures to exclude those. We don't recruit murderers and rapists and that kind of violent criminal. What amounts to a felony in the United States of America varies from state to state." But the numbers speak for themselves. In 2005—when it missed recruitment numbers by the largest margin since 1979—the army took in 21,880 new soldiers, or 17 percent of recruits, on a waiver.[125] That's more than an entire infantry division. The situation had become so bad by 2007 that nearly one in five recruits entered the army courtesy of a waiver for a felony or misdemeanor, representing a 42 percent increase in the use of waivers since 2000. This was not normal. "They've been doing it forever, but the numbers were small," said University of Maryland military sociologist David Segal.

"It's only with the current conflict in the past couple of years that the numbers have gotten so large."[126] Back in the hearing, General Bostick then took over in a support role, using the method of exculpation outlined earlier: appealing to the noble criminal. "Corporal Vaccaro, killed in Afghanistan, 10th Mountain Division—he smoked marijuana 20 to 30 times; he saved many, many soldiers and earned a Silver Star," he said. "Those are examples of the kind of soldiers that have been given a second chance, have demonstrated before that second chance opportunity that they had overcome any misgivings they had earlier in their life. So I feel very, very confident of it." He didn't mention Steven D. Green.

Despite continued military assurances that it was not a problem, they gave the game away when the financial crisis hit and their recruitment problems abated. In 2009 the military met its recruitment targets for the first time since 2004 and pledged to lock out those with criminal records once again. Brigadier General Joseph Anderson, deputy commander of the US Army Recruiting Command, said that the "adult major misconduct" waiver, given for felony offenses, was now closed, and additionally those with a history of juvenile criminal activity would not be allowed to recruit without a high school diploma.[127] It was an admission of guilt, but for many in Iraq and Afghanistan, like Genei Nasir al-Janabi, it was too late. In February 2008, Staff Sergeant Michael A. Hensley was put on trial after he had ordered the shooting of an unarmed civilian near Iskandariya, a city in central Iraq. Hensley claimed he had to issue the order because al-Janabi had discovered his unit's hiding place, but he was later found guilty of placing a rifle next to al-Janabi's body to buttress his claims that the unit had been under attack. It was a harrowing case. "I put him face down on the ground, with my knee in his back. He started to make a lot of noise. He started to cry . . . he was yelling, I was trying to shut him up," said Hensley in his testimony.[128] The incident came on the back of a hard campaign against the insurgency in Jarf Sakhr, thirty-five miles southwest of Baghdad. The defense attorney for Evan Vela—the soldier on trial for murder after having carried out Hensley's order—blamed the intense regimen for the tragedy, a fair criticism as we will see. "They have no superpowers," he said. "When pushed beyond human ability to absorb sleep deprivation, heat exhaustion, and post-traumatic stress disorder you can expect bad judgment." Hensley added that this was nothing out of the ordinary: "We had been losing a lot of people without doing anything . . . My sergeant major told me he wanted to produce more kills and

I was the guy to make it happen."[129] The placing of an AK-47 next to the body was, as we have seen, common procedure. It was impossible to verify Hensley's claims about the episode, although his past should have alerted the military authorities. According to a family who lived in the same area as Hensley, they were so worried about his conduct nine months before his deployment that they secretly filmed him. They recounted how one morning they had awakened to screams to see Hensley threatening a woman inside a vehicle. He had pounded the car so hard that a police report said he "had bloody knuckles, and the windshield of the Jeep was broken."[130] Hensley pleaded no contest to the charges of disorderly conduct. Subsequently the eighteen-year-old who filmed the incident said: "He obviously wasn't stable, just from seeing him the 20 minutes I did."[131] The military was given a perfect excuse to bar his enlistment: Hensley had already served six months probation for a drunk driving conviction in Georgia. But they took him anyway.

The War on Women

The proliferation of serious criminals in the military was, as mentioned, among the reasons for the huge rise in crimes against female service personnel—particularly sexual abuse and rape—during the War on Terror. Andrea Neutzling was one unfortunate witness who left her decade of service in the US military during the War on Terror with deep mental and physical scars, the most painful of which were inflicted not by the enemy but by her comrades-in-arms. It wasn't meant to be like this. She had wanted to follow in her family's footsteps when she signed up for the US army in 1999: her great-grandfather had served in the Marine Corps in World War Two and Korea, while her uncle was in the navy and her dad an army veteran. It ran in the family, but she was the first woman to serve. "It was an important thing in that respect," she tells me. She signed on the dotted line when she was nineteen, but had started talking to recruiters when she was much younger. "I always knew it was what I wanted to do," she says.

Originally from a small town on the banks of the Ohio River, Neutzling was deployed to Camp Bucca in southern Iraq in the middle of 2005 as part of a military police unit where she would oversee the care of new Iraqi detainees. One day after work, still acclimatizing to her new surroundings, she waited for a friend to join her for a workout at the gym. "While I was waiting for him, two guys came up and started talking to me," she says. At the time she was living in an eight-woman tent while the group waited for their residency halls to be finished. “They were with the unit I was replacing so I went into the living quarters with them when they asked.” The men lived in a so-called “pod,” a small two-man room. “I went into there and I sat in there with the two and they were drinking Crown Royal, which is kinda like a whisky, you drink it with 7-Up or Sprite, but they shouldn’t have been drinking alcohol. I’m not sure how they got it.” Over the next twenty minutes they would brutally rape and physically assault her. “They grabbed a hold of me and told me that ‘we’re all gonna have some fun’ and if I didn’t go along with it they would be beat me and leave me naked in front the shopping facility on the base.” Understandably terrified, Neutzling focused on trying to keep herself alive, choosing not to fight back. “It was two against one so I kinda did the whole self-preservation thing, I had kids I wanted to come home to.” The men raped her repeatedly while verbally abusing her. “One guy was putting finger nails down my back and calling me a ‘whore’ and a ‘fat pig’ and that I should be grateful for all the attention I was getting from them.” After the attack, the men told her to keep her mouth shut but didn’t appear overly concerned about any consequences. “One of them pinched the inside of my thigh and told me that I should go and I shouldn’t tell anybody about it.”

Amazingly this wasn’t the first time Neutzling had been sexually assaulted while in the military. In 2002, while serving in Korea, a drunk colleague had abused her outside a latrine. Back then, when she had told her commanders, they handed out the non-sentence of five days of base restriction for the man. For this reason, after the attack at Bucca, she was reticent about telling her commanders again. “Women knew it wouldn’t be good for your career to make a fuss,” she says. In Iraq, she didn’t say anything to anybody for a week after the incident, until another woman in her unit said the men were showing a video of the rape and bragging about it. At that point she told her command. “The woman who told me was our armorer, she gave us our ammo and weapons, and when she told me that, I asked her if she wanted my ammo, because I would have shot them.” The men were scheduled to leave in three weeks and they left on time, facing no charges—a situation that remains to this day. The battalion commanders told her explicitly that the reason was they “didn’t want to leave anybody behind.” If the men had been charged, they would have had to stay in Iraq or be sent to Kuwait, and been out of action for a long period the military could ill afford. In fact, the only person to get reprimanded was Neutzling herself, who was married at the time and later chastised by her commander for "committing adultery." He told her that since the military considered the incident a case of "forced consent," an oxymoronic term for a situation where the victim is drunk or goes along with the sexual activity for his or her own protection, he considered her behavior infidelity. Sympathy was equally lacking elsewhere. The chaplain merely told her it couldn't have been rape because she didn't act like a rape victim: she wasn't visibly upset or crying. "But if he had come during the first three days afterwards, I was sleeping with my M-16 locked and loaded," she says. The military's tactic of looking the other way worked: when no one wanted to do anything for her, she just tried to block it out by concentrating on work. "I busted my butt doing my job over there," she says. Often working twelve-hour days, she was instrumental in setting up important procedures for separating detainees, after she found Sunnis and Shias were being put in the same living quarters. But none of this was rewarded as it should have been, simply because she hadn't kept her mouth shut. At the end of her tour, the brass merely gave her a "certificate of achievement," a minor recognition of service. Others who had done much less work received Bronze Stars and Army Commendation medals. Neo-Nazis had often done a lot better.

Neutzling explicitly blamed the opening up of the military to criminals (alongside its failure to kick out service members guilty of misconduct) for the treatment she received. "When I first got in they didn't have those looser standards and the first time I saw any type of sexual harassment or anything I was based in Arizona for my job training," she says. "Some guy was done for sexual assault and they sent him up the river, they spoke to every female and he got dishonorable discharge." But this all changed after 9/11. "After that you could get waivers for pretty much anything, including sex crimes and other violent offenses." She is now part of a lawsuit against the Pentagon which was filed in early 2011 and includes seventeen other service members who were subjected to sexual assaults and rape while serving in the armed forces.[132] It names as defendants Defense Secretaries Donald Rumsfeld and Robert Gates, whom it blames for a culture of punishment against women who report sexual crimes and the failure to prosecute the offenders. The charge sheet does not include Rumsfeld's opening up of the military to assorted criminals—but it could have. The lead lawyer on the case, Susan Burke, said the scale of the problem became clear when the lawsuit was made public and hundreds of women (and men) contacted her with similar stories. “We received a significant outpouring of support from both women and men soldiers,” she told me. “In addition, we have been approached by many more rape survivors.”

The lawsuit blew the lid on what had become a huge problem for the US military. By 2009, one in three of the 20,000 active-duty women serving the US military had reported being the victim of a sexual assault while serving—double the rate for civilians. Since the Pentagon began tracking assaults in 2006 under pressure from Congress, the reporting rate has risen every year.[133] The situation was so bad during the most fraught years of the War on Terror that the Pentagon belatedly decided to apply a Band-Aid, creating the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, or SAPRO. “What we saw during the first part of the Iraq war under Rumsfeld was that he loosened standards to what were serious crimes—rape, grand larceny—that would normally disqualify folks,” says Greg Jacobs, policy director of the Service Women’s Action Network, an organization focused on the assault and sexual abuse of women in the military. “They let a bunch in, which was a problem.” In 2009 the Pentagon reported 3,230 incidents of sexual assault which represented an 11 percent increase from the previous year. In combat zones, specifically Iraq and Afghanistan, it was even worse—rising by 16 percent.[134] In fact, US women service members are today more likely to be raped by a fellow soldier than to be killed by enemy fire. No one knows how many Iraqi or Afghan women and girls have been subjected to similar atrocities, although cases like the rapes and murders in Yusufiyah suggest it was equally endemic, and went equally unpunished. We will never know the full truth.

A further problem for women service members is that the military handles assaults of this kind in a different way than civilian law does. Military discipline is set up to ensure good order in the ranks, not justice for victims. In other words, the military handles sexual assault like it’s a matter of personal misconduct rather than a criminal offense. In New York, for example, rape is a Class B felony carrying a sentence of ten years in jail; in the military, however, you are in minority if you go to jail for rape. When the need for troops was most chronic this wiggle room allowed many rapists to escape punishment. Furthermore, the Pentagon itself estimates that as few as 13.5 percent of sexual assaults are reported and even those rarely end in prosecutions.[135] While 40 percent of sexual assault allegations in the civilian world are prosecuted, the number is just 8 percent in the military.[136] Pentagon policy also dictates that any physical evidence of a rape should be destroyed after five years, making it much harder for a service member who has been sexually assaulted to file a legal or benefit claim after they leave the military. Likewise, if the perpetrator commits another crime there's no record of the previous incident, giving them even less of an incentive to clean up their act. "Sexual assault is one of our nation's most underreported violent crimes, and is a problem worldwide. Unfortunately, our military is not immune to larger societal problems," Kaye Whitley, director of SAPRO, told me. "What is evident in the larger society is also reflected within the military." She did not mention how much worse it was for service members than for regular civilians.

Pressure from within the military as well as the latest lawsuit has had an effect on the debate in Washington, but it came far too late for thousands of women and men whose lives had already been needlessly wrecked. In April 2011 a bipartisan bill was introduced into Congress which will allow sexual abuse victims the automatic right to legal counsel, the right to a base transfer, the right to maintain confidentiality when speaking with commanders and medical staff, and will provide greater training in sexual assault prevention and response. Many asked why it had taken a decade to get to this point and why the link between the loosening of standards and the deterioration of the behavior of soldiers was still not being made, although it was clear to everyone that it was a major factor. The military had become the *perfect place* to be a criminal simply because in it normal legal constraints didn't apply. You could commit rape and know that there was very little chance of any penalty arising let alone a criminal prosecution. And it wasn't just rape. The military was turning a blind eye to a host of other prohibited and criminal activities as it tried to keep troop levels up, including the use of alcohol and illegal drugs, which are ostensibly banned in the military. "They didn't even get in trouble for having alcohol!" said Andrea Neutzling, exasperated at the complete impunity of the men who raped her. Unfortunately, this was not as surprising as she assumed.

CHAPTER TWO

Sick, Addicted, and Forsaken

SIPPIN' ON GIN AND HAJJI JUICE

Alcohol and drug use starts a cascade of worse problems. It's like throwing gasoline on fire.

Dr. Richard McCormick, retired director of mental
health for the state veterans affairs system in Ohio, 2008[1]

In early 2004 reports began to emerge of detainee abuse at Abu Ghraib prison, or Baghdad Correctional Facility as it was rechristened post-invasion. It was a notorious venue for torture and general barbarity during Saddam Hussein's twenty-five-year reign, and rumors were flying around that similar atrocities were now taking place under the auspices of the US military. It wasn't long before the mutterings were confirmed and photographs surfaced showing the physical and sexual abuse of the Iraqi detainees by grinning American troops. These included pictures of naked Iraqis piled on top of each other in a pyramid of human bodies, and of electrode treatment, among other horrors. It was a turning point in the public perception of a war we had been told was undertaken to defend human rights and democracy. The personal attempts by Donald Rumsfeld to cover it up, and his disregard for the Uniform Code of Military Justice that set the stage for the torture, likely signaled the first step towards his ignominious departure two years later. But in the long and heated debate that followed the revelations, one crucial topic was breezed over and barely considered. Many of the soldiers who had carried out the torture and humiliation of the Iraqi detainees had been drunk at the time. During its brief period under US control, Abu Ghraib had been turned into a swinging frat party with the free-flowing alcohol and ritual acts of humiliation that accompany such events on American campuses. The problem was known widely among the service members in the prison (and the military brass); in fact, weeks before the photographs were made public, commanders at Abu Ghraib had launched a crackdown on the alcohol abuse amid persistent rumors about intoxicated guards soliciting sex from Iraqi prostitutes. One army analyst at the time recalled a senior prison and interrogation officer bellowing at them: “There’s a prostitution ring and a liquor smuggling ring . . . I’m going to pursue it and I hope there’s no military intelligence people involved.”[2]

His hopes on that score weren’t realized, but the military’s blushes were saved somewhat by a media blackout. In the flood of news coverage about the torture scandal, only one newspaper, the *Los Angeles Times*, gave serious coverage and investigative resources to the issue of alcohol abuse. In a 2004 article it reported that some officers thought alcohol consumption had been a contributing factor. At least one prisoner told investigators that they frequently smelled alcohol on the guards’ breath in the cellblock where most of the abuses occurred.[3] Apparently there was even an Alcoholics Anonymous chapter at the prison. “I remember one soldier telling me he gave a [vendor] a twenty and he brought him back a bottle of alcohol,” said one intelligence analyst at the prison. “They would try to bring it to you as a gift,” added Lieutenant Antoine Brooks of the 870th MP Company. An investigation into abuses at the prison had cited two cases of military police officers being pulled up for alcohol consumption, but the incident was in May 2003, before Abu Ghraib was turned into an American detention center.

Since alcohol is strictly forbidden by the US military, how was this flagrant breaking of the rules allowed to go on for so long? How had this feted “liberation” turned into a frat party within a year? In truth, the obscenities at Abu Ghraib were merely the tip of a problem that penetrated deep into every level of the occupation forces during the War on Terror. The military could no longer afford—in monetary or manpower terms—to lay off or treat its most vulnerable soldiers, including alcoholics and drug addicts, and Iraqi and Afghan civilians often paid the price for their intoxication. Of course, that wasn’t the message the military was putting out. In fact, looking at the discharge figures for alcohol and drug abuse during the most critical years of the War on Terror, they could be interpreted as a cause for celebration. Ostensibly, the US military enjoyed one of the most successful periods in its history in tackling alcoholism and substance abuse. According to figures obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, failure in the drug rehabilitation program resulting in discharge fell from 164 in 2002, the first full year of war, to a mere 51 in 2006. Failure in the alcoholism rehabilitation program fell from 271 in 2002 to 143 in 2006.[4] Aside from the military, there was one other group who saw this as a welcome progression: those agitating for greater rights *for addicts*. Robert J. Lindsey, of the National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence, told me, "military discrimination against alcohol and drugs users has certainly been an issue of huge concern in the past. There is absolutely no question that addiction to alcohol and drugs should be treated as a health problem not as a disciplinary one." But the War on Terror bought hope. "It's encouraging to see the numbers [of discharges] declining," he continued. "We hope that means more people are getting help." Although, he added, "It could mean they are more desperate for troops."

His second guess was the right one. Unfortunately for both the troops and the people being policed by them—who belonged to societies with deep sensitivities about alcohol—the discharge figures were a chimera: there was no sudden improvement in the treatment of addicted soldiers. What the figures revealed, rather, was a military that could just no longer afford to discharge them and increasingly failed to send them to the one place they might be able to get help. Medical professionals within the military were aware of this huge problem, even though the military continued to look the other way. "It's clear that we've got a lot of significant alcohol problems that are pervasive across the military," said Dr. Thomas R. Kosten, a psychiatrist at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Houston. "The treatment that they take for [combat stress] is the same treatment that they took after Vietnam . . . They turn to alcohol and drugs."[5] The increasing number of "moral waivers" provided to recruits for previous alcohol and drug offenses made the problem even more serious.

Through 2005 and 2006, when the need was at its greatest, military spending on programs to reduce alcohol abuse, alongside a few other addictions like smoking, dropped from $12.6 million to $7.74 million.[6] A staggering 39 percent decline. It was this dereliction of duty to serving men and women that aroused the interest of Senator Clair McCaskill (D-MO), one of the few lawmakers to pick up on the issue and bang heads. In 2007 she wrote a letter to General Peter Chiarelli, senior military assistant to the Secretary of State, asking him to investigate allegations that a tranche of 150 soldiers at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, were not able to get the counseling they needed and wanted because of staff shortages at the base. McCaskill didn't mince her words, saying the base's program had been "in a shambles" for years, before adding, "If it was that bad at Fort Leonard Wood, it very well could be an Army-wide problem.”[7] Her hunch was right, and the army-wide problem was causing untold suffering for the service members fighting in the Middle East and around the world. “How is it that a program can so deteriorate at a time when drug use and alcohol abuse is known to be closely tied to PTSD, suicides, criminal behavior, divorce and domestic abuse, all of which have substantially increased in recent years in the Army?” McCaskill asked the general.[8] But it was two years—during the War on Terror not a shabby response time for a generally unresponsive military—before General Chiarelli eventually acted, sending a memo to army leaders in 2009 lamenting the lack of discharges as regulation permitted, before pressing commanders to address the shortage of qualified counselors to help the soldiers through their addictions. “Our soldiers need this resource and I expect you to provide it for them,” he instructed. Until then the best the army could point to was the relatively puny growth of its Substance Abuse Program, the budget for which grew from $38 million to $51 million between 2004 and 2008.[9] It was peanuts.

Back home, alcohol use among the general US population was increasing as well, hitting 67 percent of citizens in 2010, its highest since 1985, according to a Gallup poll, with an increasing number of states allowing Sunday liquor sales and moving sales start-time to 6 a.m. It was even worse within the military. The Pentagon’s own health study found that binge drinking surged by 30 percent from 2002 to 2005, prompting the conclusion that it “may signal an increasing pattern of heavy alcohol use in the Army.”[10] More than a quarter of army servicemen said they often drank heavily, which was defined as five or more drinks in one session. It constituted the largest proportion of the military since (again) 1985.[11] One academic study in March 2009 found that of the 16,037 active-duty personnel surveyed, 43 percent reported binge drinking in the previous month, a rate very similar to that of college students.[12] One of the biggest problems for the military was the same as in Vietnam: easy access. In Iraq it was easy to get your hands on what the troops call “hajji juice” or “hajji hooch,” the locally produced 90 percent proof whiskey that the soldiers who participated in the Mahmudiyah massacre were supping before embarking on their crimes. This is sometimes combined with amphetamines provided by medical staff to keep troops alert on missions. In Iraq, despite the pro forma ban, soldiers would squeeze ampoules of food coloring into bottles of clear liquor and transfer it to bottles of mouthwash. Army medics, in a mild dereliction of duty, had been known to fill IV bags with vodka in lieu of saline solution. By 2010, the US military itself was spending $602,189.90 per year on alcoholic beverages.[13]

Partying It Up

In a warzone, a culture of binge drinking is dangerous for the same obvious reason that drunk driving is dangerous: drunk people aren't in full control of what they are doing. As the UK *Daily Mail* reported in March 2007, "Figures forced from the Pentagon by the *New York Times* under the Freedom of Information Act make shocking reading: 240 of the 665 cases of military indiscipline in Iraq and Afghanistan involved drugs and alcohol. Seventy-three of those 240 cases were the most serious yet known from these two wars: murder, rape, robbery and assault."[14] Many of these cases were fatal for Iraqis and US service members. In May 2004, as Bush was infamously pronouncing mission accomplished in Iraq, Private Justin Lissis went on the rampage with a stolen Humvee and his M-16 rifle in a residential district in Balad after getting drunk on whiskey smuggled into the base by Iraqi contractors.[15] Just six months on, Private Chris Rolan of the Third Brigade was having a heated argument with a fellow US soldier after a heady cocktail of alcohol and ended up shooting him with his 9mm pistol.[16] And it wasn't just Iraq. In 2006, one of the many errant airstrikes carried out by NATO in Afghanistan killed seventy civilians after the strike had been called in on Germany's instructions but carried out by American pilots. When staff at NATO's Kabul headquarters were to be questioned on the event the command found that they could not be interviewed because they were "either drunk or too hungover."[17] General Stanley McChrystal subsequently banned alcohol at the base, laying into the forces for "partying it up" when it emerged that there was a serious scene there. He said they did not have "their heads in the right place" after the attack.[18] It's hard to know what is more worrying: that the strike may have been called in by people either hungover or drunk, or that they decided to go on a binge after taking out seventy civilians. Binge drinkers, one academic study worryingly found, "report being drunk while working and being called to work during off-duty hours and reporting to work drunk."[19] The idea they may have been drunk was implied when a spokesperson said: "General McChrystal is extremely focused on the mission and he feels that the folk who are here at the headquarters level need to be at the top of their game in terms of supporting the folks out in the field." One insider was more explicit. "Thursday nights are the big party nights, because Friday's a 'low-ops' day. They even open a bar in the garden at headquarters," they said. "There's a 'two can' rule but people ignore it and hit it pretty hard."

This was now starting to endanger even the safety of America's own diplomats as well, as allegations of drunken brawls and lewd behavior at the US embassy in Kabul led to another drink ban being imposed. An independent group sent a ten-page dossier to Secretary of State Clinton containing evidence that security guards at the embassy had been having "drunken parties involving prostitutes" and forms of "ritual humiliation associated with gang initiation".[20] The dossier included an email from a guard serving in Kabul describing guards and supervisors "peeing on people, eating potato chips out of [buttock] cracks, vodka shots out of [buttock] cracks (there is video of that one), broken doors after drnken [sic] brawls, threats and intimidation from those leaders participating in this activity."[21] In Tokyo, the US navy imposed a movement and alcohol ban after a Japanese taxi driver was found dead with a twenty-centimeter kitchen knife blade stuck in his neck in Yokosuka, just south of Tokyo, where the US has a naval base.[22] The culprit, Olatunbosun Ugbogu, was a Nigerian national and US sailor, one of the many foreign citizens enfranchised to fight by the War on Terror. Even animals weren't safe. Over at Baghdad Zoo, a drunk soldier shot and killed a Bengal tiger on one of the Thursday binge nights. "The soldiers arrived in the evening with food and beer, accompanied by a group of Iraqi police officers," head of the zoo, Adel Salman Musa, said of the incident. "One of the soldiers, who the Iraqi police said had drunk a lot, went into the cage against the advice of his colleagues and tried to feed the animal who severely hurt his arm," he added. The tiger, said the news agency, tore off the soldier's fingers and mauled his arm and another US soldier immediately fired at the animal and killed it. "The soldiers don't have the right to behave like that. That was the most precious and valuable animal in the whole zoo. It was fourteen years old and had been born here," Musa said.[23]

In a Birthday Cake

The problem with illicit drug use was even worse in US-occupied Afghanistan, the country with the biggest poppy harvests in the world, producing 9,000 metric tonnes of opium each year, which is chemically treated to make heroin. Production had not slowed down substantially during the occupation, and soldiers found they could buy heroin quicker than they could buy a bottle of water. There were even rumors that the US was not getting a handle on the drug production because it was too lucrative. General Mahmut Gareev, a former commander during the Soviet Union's war in Afghanistan, alleged that the US was paying for its occupation through the harvests, which could yield up to $50 billion a year.[24] Whatever the reason, US service members using heroin frequently went unpunished by the military. "They don't do anything to you," one soldier said. "Two from my unit were sent home after they got caught more than once." Asked what was done to them, he replied, "Nothing. They're still in the unit. Just got sent home."[25] It was so rife that a top military commander said he would be surprised if the army had not turned into a drug-dealing cartel. "I'd be astonished if we don't see soldiers who find ten kilograms of heroin and pack it up in a birthday cake and send it home to their mother," said General Barry McCaffrey, a former "drug czar" under President Clinton.[26]

Experts think it could be a decade before the true scope of heroin use in Iraq and Afghanistan is known. Dr. Jodie Trafton, a health-care specialist with the VA's Center for Health Care Evaluation, predicted that the scale of the problem will not be gaugeable until five or ten years after the wars are over and veterans enter the system in significant numbers. "We're just starting to get a lot of Gulf War veterans," she said. But the signs were definitely there. "I asked to buy heroin a dozen times during two trips a year apart and never heard the word 'no,'" said a filmmaker who had been to Afghanistan on numerous occasions. "I also saw ample evidence that soldiers were trading sensitive military equipment, like computer drives and bulletproof vests, for drugs."[27] The results were appalling for the many soldiers whose lives were ripped apart by addiction. The Veterans Health Administration counted over 3,000 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars as diagnosed with potential drug dependency from 2005 to 2007. This was a monumental rise on previous years. From 2002 through 2004 only 277 veterans were diagnosed with a drug dependency.[28] "It's a huge concern, it's a national concern," Lynn Pahland, a director in the Pentagon's Health Affairs office, said. "Any kind of drug use or health choice that leads to the impairment of a military person leads to the degradation of readiness."[29]

But the operational readiness of the force was strangely down at the bottom of the list of priorities. Veterans For America (VFA) member Jason Knobloch wrote, "Numerous studies have shown, as VFA has found over and over again, that heavy drinking and drug use are often attempts to self-medicate untreated psychological problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder. The programs to treat these conditions of both the military and the Veterans Administration are understaffed and underfunded."[30] In fact, the military was making it worse. The number of soldiers seeking help for substance abuse had climbed 25 percent in five years, according to *USA Today*, but the army's counseling program remained "significantly understaffed and struggling to meet the demand."[31] The army requires one drug counselor for every 2,000 soldiers, yet in late 2008 it was operating with one for every 3,100 soldiers.[32] It didn't come close to catering to the needs of the service members, many of whom were suffering from a variety of mental health problems and finding no help for them within official channels.

Guinea Pigs

It wasn't just that the military was ignoring the use of alcohol and drugs—in many cases it was promoting it. The streamlined, flexible, and understaffed US military that was Rumsfeld's dream meant that extra energy and service time had to be squeezed out of existing troops. To do this some were plied with cocktails of narcotics and stimulants. "The capability to resist the mental and physiological effects of sleep deprivation will fundamentally change current military concepts of 'operational tempo' and contemporary orders of battle for the military services," states a document from the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA. "In short, the capability to operate effectively, without sleep, is no less than a twenty-first-century revolution in military affairs that results in operational dominance across the whole range of potential U.S. military employments."[33] To achieve this operational dominance, amphetamines of all kinds were provided to the US air force—in street parlance, speed. The drug is traditionally used to treat narcolepsy or attention deficit disorder, but for the military's purposes it was perfect: it increased concentration, energy levels, and adrenalin. But there were psychological drawbacks, which appeared especially relevant to those using bomb-laden aircraft. According to *Wired* magazine, "serious potential side effects include psychotic behavior, depression, anxiety, fatigue, paranoia, aggression, violent behavior, confusion, insomnia, auditory hallucinations, mood disturbances and delusions."[34] The operational effect of this new "revolution" revealed itself early on in the Afghanistan war effort when in April 2002 a US aircraft dropped a 500-pound bomb on a group of Canadian soldiers at Tarnak Farms near Kandahar, Afghanistan, killing four and leaving eight injured. In the resulting investigations the two pilots claimed the air force's policy of handing out dextro-amphetamine, or Dexedrine, was responsible for the error, not them.[35]

Back at base, willing soldiers were welcome to another load of drugs to help them deal with the hell of war. As PTSD developed into a chronic problem, pills took the place of doctors in dealing with the mental health crisis among US troops. One soldier recounts going to talk to a military doctor about the trauma he was suffering as a result of the conflict. "Here's some medication," he was told, before being prescribed a cocktail of drugs: "Klonopin, for anxiety; Zoloft, for depression; and Ambien, to help him sleep."[36] Data from a mental health survey by the US army found that 12 percent of soldiers in Iraq and 15 percent in Afghanistan were taking some form of anti-depressant, anti-anxiety drug, or sleeping pill.[37] The army itself was more than happy to dispense them: it was much cheaper than increasing the number of medical professionals. By September 2007 prescriptions for narcotics for active-duty troops had reached 50,000 a month, up from 33,000 a month in October 2003.[38] In the midst of all this, it came as no surprise that an extensive drug smuggling network involving US soldiers was gradually developed. In 2008, a drug ring suspected of providing steroids to US service members in Iraq was busted in northern Italy. According to *ABC News*, briefed by government officials, "Dozens of active and former soldiers have abused their military uniforms and authority in a drug smuggling ring."[39] Their list included:

> A U.S. army sergeant fighting the war on drugs in Colombia was recently sentenced to six years in prison for using military aircraft to smuggle cocaine into the United States. In April, an Air National Guard pilot and a sergeant used a C-5 Galaxy military transport plane to sneak nearly 300,000 Ecstasy pills from Germany into New York. In another case, three U.S. airmen were arrested in March for stealing military-issue bulletproof vests from Moody Air Force Base in Georgia and selling them to drug dealers for $100 each.[40]

It wasn't just rogue soldiers procuring ecstasy either. The military was in on it as well. In 2005 it moved to start prescribing the rave drug better known in the clubs and discos of big American cities to its soldiers. The scientists trailing the drug were said to be interested in the "emotional closeness" it creates among its users.[41] Two years later, the move to medicate PTSD away led to the so-called Psychological Kevlar Act, which was meant to formalize a program of research to help soldiers tackle the problem early on. Its stated purpose was to "implement a plan to incorporate preventive and early-intervention measures" to combat "post-traumatic stress disorder or other stress-related psychopathologies."[42] A drug called propranolol was the talk of the town at the time because if taken directly after a traumatic event it could apparently blunt the force of the experience on the brain. The brave new world was here. The Department of Veterans Affairs conducted its own tests on the drug's effect on PTSD symptom reduction and found that a single oral dose, compared to a placebo, immediately after reactivation of the PTSD-related memory of the traumatic event "significantly reduced physiological responses."[43]

It was all a bonanza for Big Pharma, which raked in billions of dollars of taxpayer money: in 2007 alone the DOD spent $3 billion on contracts for its ballooning pharmaceutical needs. The powerful Big Pharma lobby in turn pushed the military to continue drugging their soldiers and the military brass didn't demur: the pharmaceutical industry was becoming a full-fledged part of the military-industrial complex. It was a natural progression since their lobbying had already worked in wider society. In the general population over the previous decade, the number of Americans taking one or more prescription drugs had risen from 44 to 48 percent, while one 2009 drug-abuse survey found that 2.8 percent of the US population used prescription drugs in non-medical ways—up from 2.5 percent the year previous. The next front for the lobby was service members. "Armed with potent drugs and new technology, a dangerous breed of soldiers are being trained to fight America's future wars," warned one magazine at the time.[44] Soldiers were to be the guinea pigs for a burgeoning field of research. "Improved drug delivery systems and improved neurological understanding could make today's drugs seem rudimentary, giving soldiers a superhuman strength and awareness," wrote *Wired* magazine.[45] A report released by the intelligence unit of the DOD in 2008 contained a multitude of suggestions on how to manipulate the minds of soldiers using new research on brain functions. Perhaps the most sci-fi element of the report was its description of so-called "pharmacological landmines," using chemicals to incapacitate the enemy. But amazingly it wasn't the enemy that was being plied with dodgy drugs during the War on Terror, but US troops themselves. In 2008 an *ABC News* and *Washington Times* investigation revealed that the VA was testing the anti-smoking drug Chantix on veterans who knew nothing about its side effects until three months in.[46] The side effects were not innocuous either, including as they did psychosis and potential suicide. “Lab rat, guinea pig, disposable hero,” said former US army sniper James Elliott when asked how he felt.

Even the military had gone too far this time, and they duly incurred the wrath of then presidential candidate Barack Obama who came out to denounce the testing. “It is outrageous and unacceptable that our government would irresponsibly endanger veterans who have already sacrificed so much for our country,” he said. “Our veterans—particularly those suffering from mental health injuries—should have the very best health care and support in the world, they should never be needlessly exposed to drugs without proper notification of the dangers involved or effective monitoring of the side effects.”[47] Obama was right that veterans deserved access to the best health care, but they would never receive it. Even back in the US—where much of the alcoholism and drug abuse played out in the most traumatic way among the families of veterans and those in their community—the military looked the other way. “We better be ready to offer compassion and treatment—not just a jail cell—when it comes to helping our brothers and sisters heal from the damages of war,” said Tony Newman, communications director at the Drug Policy Alliance. “Let’s hope that we support our current troops better than we supported the veterans who fought in Vietnam.”[48] But they weren’t treated any better—and only a brave few spoke out. “The war is now and the problems are now,” said Richard A. McCormick, a senior scholar for public health at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, who served on a Pentagon task force.[49] “Every day there is a cohort of men and women being discharged who need services not one or two or five years from now. They need them now.” While the military dithered on how to deal with an impending crisis, drug use was endemic. “Lots of soldiers coming back from Iraq have been using drugs,” Specialist William Swenson, who was deployed to Iraq, told *ABC News*. “Right when we got back there were people using cocaine in the barracks, there were people smoking marijuana at strip clubs; one guy started shooting up.”[50] The VA soon had the dubious distinction of being the world’s largest provider of substance-abuse services, looking after 350,000 veterans per year, of which 30,000 needed treatment for opiate addiction.[51]

It wasn't helping the domestic US criminal justice system either, with troubled veterans spilling into the country's jails at unprecedented levels. "A small fraction wind up in prison for homicides or other major crimes. Far more, though, are involved in drunken bar fights, reckless driving and alcohol-fueled domestic violence. Whatever the particulars, their stories often spool out in unwitting victims, ruptured families, lost jobs and crushing debt,"[52] wrote the *New York Times*. The army claimed it was doing all it could, of course. That was its default position. "The Army takes alcohol and drug abuse very seriously and has tried for decades to deglamorize its use," said a spokesman.[53] "With the urgency of this war, we continue to tackle the problem with education, prevention and treatment." How seriously did it take the problem? In 2010 it put $2 million into starting up its "That Guy" website, which aimed to stop binge-drinking among veterans because it detracts from the "things they care about: family, friends, dating, sex, money and reputation."[54] It was completely inadequate: a single stitch to rescue an unraveling group of soldiers. By 2008 it was clear the situation was now a full-blown crisis destroying the emotional and psychological wellbeing of US service members across the board. A Pentagon investigation found that the psychological problems among troops were "daunting and growing" and betrayed a "fundamental weaknesses" in the military's approach. In reality it was out of control: nearly 40 percent of soldiers, half of all National Guard, and a third of Marines were reporting serious mental health issues.[55] Many were committing suicide.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE COMES HOME

> *I was in no condition to leave. I'm an infantryman. If I'm screwed up in my head, it could cost my life or the lives of the men with me.*
>
> Michael De Vlieger, gunner with the 101st Airborne in Iraq, 2009[56]

In July 2007, Army Specialist Travis Virgadamo returned home on a "rest and relaxation" break to the serene mountain surroundings of Pahrump, Nevada, after an arduous tour of Iraq as violence in the country peaked. It was immediately obvious to his family and friends that he was in a bad way and had dipped into a severe depression while out in the desert. Back in the US he kept telling his grandmother about the horrendous things he had seen: images so distressing that he thought he could never go back. But in the military, refusing to go back into service can land you a prison sentence. Even so, Travis was thinking of going AWOL and fleeing to Canada, as many had done during the Vietnam War. His grandmother was more cautious and counseled him against it, advising that he tell the army to stop feeding him Prozac. “I told Travis when he was going back to Iraq in July to make sure to tell his doctor and chaplain that he wanted to go off,” his grandmother said. “I had read that sometimes it had caused the opposite effect on young people. Instead of being an antidepressant, it caused them to commit suicide.”[57] Travis simply told her, “Grandma, I did that, and they put me on something else. They changed my medicine, gave me a week of stress management.”[58] There was no sympathy from the military: weeks later, with his leave time up, Travis was sent back to Iraq along with his Prozac. But his superiors obviously knew something was wrong as they placed him on suicide watch and removed the bolt from his rifle, rendering it useless. He was given more pedestrian desk jobs as he tried to sort out his head. If they had to send him back, it appeared a good course of action. But, inexplicably, Virgadamo was cleared for combat the following month, and on the night of August 30, 2007, was given his rifle bolt back. Three hours later he walked out of his barracks and shot himself in the head. The army told his family he had died from a “self-inflicted” gunshot wound, avoiding the word “suicide,” now a dirty word for them. “I don’t think he should have ever been sent there,” his grandmother said in the aftermath. “Why would you deploy someone who was a danger to himself and maybe others? When they know, it’s just unacceptable, pushing them out there.”[59] In fact, Travis’s whole time in the military had been extremely dangerous. Even though he had always wanted to be a soldier, it was in an emotional period after his father moved to the Philippines that he eventually decided to enlist. He was just seventeen years old. “He had a difficult time in boot camp,” said his grandmother. “They sent him to anger-management classes. Feeling somewhat deserted by his father—he was so young.” She added, “They had also put him in suicide watch in boot camp.”[60]

Despite these serious signs of frailty, a year later Virgadamo was deployed to Iraq, with the Prozac he had been given by the military. The military belief in medicating away mental strife had many tragic consequences similar to that experienced by Travis. “Even though he was still on active duty (placing him under DOD jurisdiction), this incident only reinforces the fact that we need to place more emphasis on the mental health of service members in or returning from combat," said Shelley Berkley, a Representative in Congress from the State of Nevada, his home state.[61] The whole thing had uncomfortable echoes of Vietnam, where soldiers helped themselves to psychotropic drugs, while psychologists were singing the virtues of a myriad of different brain drugs to help troops concentrate, boost their energy, and ostensibly dull mental health problems. Medical opinion was, however, unambiguous about the dangers of pumping drugs into unstable soldiers: "There are risks in putting people back to battle with medicines in their bodies," said psychiatrist Judith Broder, founder of the Soldiers Project. Travis's grandmother agreed. "That is a suicidal medicine, especially with teens. I was livid. I just couldn't believe they put him on Prozac," she said.[62]

Unfriendly Fire

As medication became the primary and often only treatment for the psychological problems suffered by soldiers, more suicides followed. The Pentagon reported that in 2007, 115 US troops committed suicide: the highest toll since the military had tracked such figures.[63] The military rate was thirty times higher than for the general US population and it was getting worse year-by-year: by 2009 the number of suicide victims had reached 245. In June 2010 alone, 32 soldiers killed themselves, the highest number of military suicides in one month since the Vietnam era. Of those, 21 were on active duty, seven serving in Iraq or Afghanistan.[64] It was even worse for those who had been discharged. Three times as many young California veterans were killing themselves at home than California service members were dying in Iraq and Afghanistan combined. The Pentagon and VA don't count the dead after they come home, but an examination of coroners' reports showed that more than 1,000 veterans under thirty-five died in California between 2005 and 2008.[65] Despite these horrifying statistics, it took until 2009 before the mental health problems afflicting US troops were revealed to mainstream America by the military. In that year, an army report from Fort Carson was initiated after six 4th Brigade Team soldiers had been charged with murders on their return home from the Middle East. The substance abuse among some troops, pre-existing mental illness in recruits, and the failure of the army to provide help were major factors in the violence—a spate of crime that included the rape and murder of a nineteen-year-old girl and one soldier's murder of his child. All in Colorado, all in six months.

"Those three [factors] in combination are a really toxic mix," said Lieutenant General Eric Schoomaker, Army Surgeon General.[66]

Soldiers involved in crimes related to homicide at Fort Carson were, the report said, "at risk for engaging in violent behavior based on a clustering of known risk factors for violence, namely prior criminal behavior and psychopathology," possibly with the "moral waivers" in mind. The investigation suggested a possible association between increasing levels of combat exposure and risk of violent outcomes. The Fort Carson report found that eleven of the suspects had been identified with drug or alcohol problems but only half of them had been sent for treatment, as army regulation stipulates they should have been. The army was immediately on the back foot, reverting to their standard evasion tactic, countering that there was no direct link between combat and crime, and reminding a news conference that in the vast majority of cases veterans don't commit crimes—a true but irrelevant point in the context of the shocking report. Major General Mark Graham, Fort Carson's commander, added that the report had resulted in more counseling and mental health training for returning soldiers. He also said the base was "stepping up efforts to ensure that soldiers who test positive for drug use or exhibit signs of problem drinking will get substance abuse counseling and treatment."[67] But it was a smoke-and-mirrors exercise to appease the media and lawmakers who were getting increasingly vocal. "The Army's support for our service men and women is falling short and we need to do better," Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) said after the report was released. "This situation is unacceptable for our troops, untenable for military families and communities, and incompatible with our priorities as a nation."[68]

Away from its public promises, the military had been doing the opposite and knowingly sending mentally ill soldiers back into the warzone. In 2003, *United Press International* unearthed an Army Medical Department after-action report which admitted that "variability in predeployment screening guidelines for mental health issues may have resulted in some soldiers with mental health diagnoses being inappropriately deployed"—those like Travis Virgadamo. The public impression was "that some soldiers develop problems in theater," it added, when in truth, "in some cases, they actually have pre-existing conditions."[69] The report was adamant that the army must change its practices or risk sending soldiers back into combat who had serious mental health problems. "Perhaps stricter predeployment screening is required to keep at-risk soldiers from deploying," it said; a move which could help "identifying soldiers that may become non-functional in theater due to mental health problems."[70] Pentagon policy is that members of the military must be mentally stable for at least three months before being deployed for active duty, but it wasn't being applied. The problem was amplified further by the longer and more-frequent tours of duty in the Middle East under the so-called "stop-loss" system—which describes the involuntary lengthening of tours. In 2007, the military had said its active-duty units would now serve in fifteen-month tours instead of the regular twelve months—a big demand. The prolonged periods away from family, friends, and normal life aggravated stress and anxiety. "This policy is a difficult but necessary interim step," said Secretary of Defense Robert Gates at the time.[71] "Our forces are stretched, there's no question about that." Broken would have been a better choice of word.

For those under occupation by the US military it was even more dangerous. In March 2012, a US soldier, on his fourth deployment in a decade, walked out of his base and went on a shooting spree in southern Afghanistan, murdering more than a dozen Afghan civilians, including nine children. "This is an assassination, an intentional killing of innocent civilians and cannot be forgiven," said Hamid Karzai, the president of Afghanistan, in the aftermath. It was the latest in a long line of repeated demands by Karzai for the US to put an end to the wanton murder of civilians. Then news came that US army staff sergeant Robert Bales, the thirty-eight-year-old suspect, was from Joint Base Lewis-McCord, in Washington state, which just four months earlier had convicted a member of an Afghanistan "kill team" of murder via a military jury. Senator Patty Murray just the week before had been complaining about the military hospital overturning 285 diagnoses of PTSD.[72] "I heard something on Facebook about a soldier killing civilians," a corporal with the Fourth Stryker Brigade told the *New York Times*. "It's horrible, but I guess I've almost become numb to it."

PTSD was not a new phenomenon for the military, but sending soldiers still suffering from severe mental health problems back to the frontline in such large numbers was. "I'm concerned that people who are symptomatic are being sent back. That has not happened before in our country," complained Dr. Arthur S. Blank, Jr., a Yale-trained psychiatrist.[73] Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) helped create a Task Force on Mental Health in the DOD as the situation spiraled out of control. She mentioned "reports that doctors are being encouraged not to identify mental-health illness in our troops . . . I am asking for a lot of answers," she added. "If people are suffering from mental-health problems, they should not be sent on the battlefield."[74] The army's top mental health expert, Colonel Elspeth Ritchie, explicitly accepted that the reason so many mentally ill troops were being sent back was because of the demands on the military for more and more personnel. "The challenge for us," he said, "is that the Army has a mission to fight. And, as you know, recruiting has been a challenge. And so we have to weigh the needs of the mission, with the soldiers' personal needs."[75] In August of 2009, the US army announced a new $117 million program designed to expose its soldiers to "emotional resiliency" classes. The program aimed for so-called "Comprehensive Soldier Fitness," which, according to an army spokesman, was designed "to build resilience in soldiers, family members, and Army civilians by developing five dimensions of strength: physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and family."[76]

A rash of suicides was not the only worry; soldiers with mental health problems were more in danger than their healthy counterparts during combat, according to a US navy report from the Vietnam era. It had found that marines who'd been hospitalized between 1965 and 1972 for psychiatric reasons and then sent back into battle were more likely to be injured in combat.[77] And there were plenty of tragic examples to bear out this study during the War on Terror, such as Travis Virgadamo. Another was Michael De Vlieger, who went to Iraq in early 2006 as a gunner with the 101st Airborne. Soon after his arrival nine soldiers were killed when two Humvees in his platoon were blown up by a roadside bomb. Just a month later insurgents threw an antitank grenade under his Humvee and his knee shot through the door. He was sent to coalesce at Fort Kentucky but his personality had changed. He turned to drink and attacked his wife's dog. "I had lost so many friends and went through a near-death experience. I wasn't who I was when I left," he said. According to one report:

> He was updating his will and preparing to return to Iraq when he broke down. His wife, Christine, found him awake in the middle of the night, rocking while babbling incoherently. Frightened, Christine called his squad leader, who took him to the base emergency room. Doctors then sent him to a nearby private psychiatric hospital, where he stayed for 16 days, receiving medications to calm his panic and treat his blood pressure and depression. The doctors released him with four prescriptions.

But merely eighteen hours after his release from hospital, he was on a plane destined for Iraq after being told by a *non-commissioned officer* that he was needed back there. Decisions on whether to retain soldiers are taken by military commanders instead of qualified medical professionals, which puts the occupied populations at the mercy of thousands of unstable soldiers. De Vlieger later said, "I was in no condition to leave. I'm an infantryman. If I'm screwed up in my head, it could cost my life or the lives of the men with me." But he did manage to stay alive. A lot of troops suffering mental health problems and sent back into the firefight weren't so lucky. Private First Class Jason Scheuerman was stripped of his gun when he wrote his mother a suicide note from Iraq in 2005. He was later accused of inventing his mental health problems in an effort to be discharged and was warned that he could be disciplined. Three weeks later he was dead, after shooting himself in the head with the gun the army had returned to him. Needless to say, it is unknown how many Iraqi and Afghan civilians have been sacrificed to this policy.

Bradley Manning, the alleged US military source of the Wikileaks data, was another example of the mental health of recruits being ignored. He was in such a disturbed mental state before his deployment that he wet himself, threw furniture around, shouted at his commanding officer, and underwent regular psychiatric evaluations, according to the *Guardian*. Manning was a "mess of a child" who "should never have been put through a tour of duty in Iraq," said an officer from the Fort Leonard Wood military base in Missouri, where Manning trained in 2007.[78] He was sent anyway—a decision which came back to bite the US military. Chase Madar, the author of a recent book on Manning, told me, "He would never have been kept in the army if not for record-low recruitment levels in 2007 when he enlisted. Manning spent a few weeks in the 'reject barracks' at Fort Leonard Wood where he did basic training and that sounds like absolute hell, being confined with tons of criminals and young guys not right in the head." The only reason Manning made it on to active duty in Iraq, after repeated warnings about his fitness at all three of his stateside deployments (Fort Leonard Wood, Fort Huachuca, Fort Drum), was the army's "utter desperation for soldiers with IT and analytic skills during its historic low in recruitment." A portion of the chatlogs between Manning and Adrian Lamo, the hacker informant who turned him in, notes how the military, desperate for recruits, ran only minimal background checks on him. There is no mention of how he almost got discharged right away at basic training, which is no doubt a painful memory he'd rather not bring up:

> (12:06:18 PM) info@adrianlamo.com: how did this not come up as an issue in your background check? I'm guessing you have an S and not a TS.
>
> (12:06:29 PM) bradass87: TS/SCI
>
> (12:06:47 PM) bradass87: i enlisted in 2007 . . . height of iraq war, no-one double checked much
>
> (12:07:06 PM) info@adrianlamo.com: Well, hell, if you made it in, maybe I should reconsider the offer I got from what used to be JTF-CNO.
>
> (12:07:09 PM) bradass87: background checks are jokes anyway
>
> (12:07:23 PM) info@adrianlamo.com: It's hit-or-miss.[79]

The Support

Throughout the War on Terror money was consistently pulled from programs set up to put homecoming soldiers back on the straight and narrow. A Pentagon survey in 2007 found that 38 percent of soldiers who returned from combat said they had experienced psychological problems, from depression to anger, but the same report disclosed there had been "dramatic decreases" in the number of health care professionals assigned to the military since the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had begun.[80] With billions of dollars being expended on quashing the insurgencies the report concluded that the US military "currently lacks both funding and personnel to adequately support the psychological health of service members and their families."[81] At the time of the report's publication there were only 500 mental health professionals employed in an army of more than a million soldiers.

It was clear that caring for veterans was just too expensive for the Bush administration. In 2005, only two years into the war in Iraq, Bush was widely condemned for his budget for veterans' health care, which fell well short of maintaining the levels of the years before, bearing in mind the huge numbers of new soldiers returning from war.[82] In that year not only did Bush try to double the co-payment that veterans would pay for prescription drugs, but he also proposed a new flat $250 fee for some veterans to use the health care system. Even Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI) warned at the time that this could force 192,000 veterans out of the health care system because of the price hike. Later in 2005 it was revealed that the Bush administration had left a $1 billion shortage for veterans' health care that had to be plugged by emergency supplemental funds voted for by Congress again.[83] In 2006, with discretionary spending apparently needing to be cut to deal with the massive deficit, the White House predicted a 16 percent cut in veterans' health care, despite the increasing numbers of veterans needing the services.[84] In that budget year Congress had to add another $2.7 billion emergency funding to the VA on top of Bush's budget.

The effect of turning veterans' health care from an absolute necessity, among the most important of government responsibilities, into an expendable commitment had painful consequences for those returning from combat. Ever-increasing numbers of soldiers were returning with mental health problems ranging from schizophrenia to PTSD, and one academic study estimated that in 2004, 1.8 million veterans were without health insurance, which amounts to about 12 percent of all uninsured people in the US.[85] From 2000, Bush's first year in office, to 2004, two years into his War on Terror, the number of uninsured veterans grew by 290,000.[86] Conditions were deteriorating for the medics as well: the air force lost 20 percent of its mental health workers from 2003 to 2005 while the army lost 8 percent in the same period.[87] By 2008, the Bush administration was even employing lawyers to fight a case that had been brought to insist that mental health should be included in health care provisions for veterans.[88] Unsurprisingly, Bush didn't mention this when speaking on Veterans Day in November 2008: "I am committed to making sure that today's veterans get all the health care and support they need from the federal government for agreeing to serve in a time of danger," he said just before he left office with the most squalid of records on the topic.[89] John McCain's plan was even worse than Bush's: he wanted to privatize veterans' health care, turning it into a market-oriented trust, which would have been devastated by the financial crisis. The Republicans' claim to be the party of the military (which they used to regularly beat the Democrats) was nothing but a sham from start to finish. To be fair, there was little improvement under the Obama administration as the president came under pressure in 2011 to ensure that veterans' benefits were delivered amid mounting criticism from different groups. During a Congressional hearing, Patty Murray, chairwoman of the Senate Veterans Affairs committee, chided the VA for reducing the number of eligible participants for a new benefit for critically injured veterans and their caregivers, and was deeply critical of the severe delays to the start of the program. "Families of wounded warriors are waiting for these benefits, and with each day of delay the strain from the sacrifices they make only grows," she said.[90]

Easy Picking

The best investigation into the problem was conducted at the height of the War on Terror by the Connecticut newspaper *The Hartford Courant*, but it had little impact as its revelations were largely ignored by the military. It opened with the story of Specialist Edward W. Brabazon, or "Crazy Eddie," of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. "We were surprised they took him, with the kind of mental problems he had, but we figured the Army must know what they're doing," said his mother, Margaret. "We didn't think they'd send him into combat."[91] But send him they did, and less than three months into his second deployment, Brabazon shot himself in the head at a palace compound in Baghdad. "They talked about how he had a history of mental problems," Margaret said. "I said, 'No kidding. If you knew he had mental problems, then why was he there?'" The *Courant* concluded: "Despite a Congressional mandate to assess the mental health of every soldier sent to a combat zone," there was "a fractured pre-deployment screening process in which less than 1 percent of deploying soldiers ever see a mental health professional. It is a practice that has put unfit service members in harm's way, increasing their risk for suicide and post-traumatic stress disorder." Its analysis of data from the DOD found that one third of soldiers who killed themselves in Iraq did so within three months of being deemed mentally fit and sent into combat. Experts said that the vast majority of those who take their own lives are suffering from depression or bipolar disorder at the time, adding "it is doubtful soldiers would spontaneously develop a serious mental illness so quickly after deployment." But the required treatment was no longer available, and, even if diagnosed, soldiers would find themselves put back in harm's way with their minds still traumatized. In fact, the military was also actively working to send soldiers back because it was *too expensive* to treat them. A stunning investigation in the online magazine *Salon* revealed the lengths to which the military was prepared to go in order to stop medical staff diagnosing PTSD, on the grounds that the intensive care needed after such a diagnosis would be too pricey. It showed how a veteran from Iraq named only as "Sergeant X," who had been seeking treatment at Fort Carson for a brain injury and PTSD for more than a year, was misdiagnosed by military psychologist Douglas

McNinch with an “anxiety disorder,” not PTSD. The report outlined the case:

> Sgt. X believed his traumatic brain injury had been incurred in 2005–6 when his Bradley Fighting Vehicle buckled in an explosion in Iraq. While one of many he endured, this one knocked him out for 30 seconds. Mr McNinch told Sgt. X: “I will tell you something confidentially that I would have to deny if it were ever public. Not only myself, but all the clinicians up here are being pressured to not diagnose PTSD and diagnose [an unspecified] anxiety disorder [instead].” “Unfortunately,” McNinch told Sgt. X, “yours has not been the only case . . . I and other [doctors] are under a lot of pressure to not diagnose PTSD. It’s not fair. I think it’s a horrible way to treat soldiers, but unfortunately, you know, now the V.A. is jumping on board, saying, ‘Well, these people don’t have PTSD,’ and stuff like that.” But this wasn’t an isolated case. Two veterans groups had released an email from Norma Perez, a psychologist in Texas, directing staff at a Department of Veterans Affairs facility. “Given that we are having more and more compensation seeking veterans, I’d like to suggest that you refrain from giving a diagnosis of PTSD straight out,” Perez wrote in the e-mail, suggesting the staff “consider a diagnosis of Adjustment Disorder.”[92]

Sergeant X was brave enough to seek help for his problems, but not everyone was. Many soldiers were too scared to come forward because of what the military described as “stigma” in a macho military environment. “Stigma and lack of referral to the Army Substance Referral Program for required substance abuse screening were important barriers to soldiers,” noted the Fort Carson report.[93] But this concern among the troops was more a concern about how seeking help would be viewed by their commanders. A 2007 survey found that three in five American soldiers felt that seeking help would damage their career prospects, with around half saying that they thought others would think less of them if they received help for mental health problems.[94] That kind of feeling doesn’t develop in a vacuum: the fear of revealing mental problems to medical staff had been consciously fostered by a military unprepared to treat its soldiers. One study found that one in five soldiers who returned from the desert reported the effects of PTSD, but only half went on to receive treatment.

In a farcical public relations blitz, a delegation of Hollywood celebrities was dispatched to Baghdad in 2008 to tell the troops it was OK to feel mentally sick. The *Stop the Stigma* tour was organized by Sopranos star Joe Pantoliano, who had already founded the “No Kidding, Me Too!” group to break down taboos surrounding mental illness. As the group descended on

Victory Base Complex, the troops were told by the psychologist accompanying the delegation that "the things that you experience, they are not military problems, they are human problems that happen to occur in the military . . . When you come home, educate us. We need to hear your stories." But the military knew their stories and was ignoring them. "I know the military is especially concerned; they've been willing to be very proactive and they obviously really care about their men and women, so it's an honor for us to be a part of this," added actress Lisa Jay, duped into believing the military propaganda.[95] To anyone watching the situation it was clear the military didn't care; it had stood by as the number of PTSD cases had risen exponentially. In 2008, the Rand Corporation released a report, based on surveys of veterans, estimating that of the 1.6 million American military personnel who had served in Afghanistan and Iraq, at least 300,000 were suffering from PTSD or major depression. Rand also estimated that as many as 320,000 may have suffered some form of brain damage from explosion blast waves, affecting their long-term cognitive capabilities.[96] The country at large was simply not ready to cope with this new influx. Back home, the number of Americans in the general population seeking treatment for mental health problems, including depression and bipolar disorder, had nearly doubled in the decade to 2006, from 19 million to 36 million. Spending on mental illnesses had skyrocketed in the same period, outstripping that for cancer and heart disease, reaching $58 billion in 2006.[97]

The Lifeline of Work and a Home

One of the toughest problems for veterans on their return to the US is finding a job, and frequent periods of unemployment are often a factor in the descent into depression and other problems. The unemployment rate for veterans hit 15 percent in 2011, nearly doubling over the previous five years, and leaving returning soldiers with much worse odds than the general population.[98] That the help available to unemployed veterans provided by the military was rudimentary became obvious to me when in 2007 I attended the third annual "Salute Our Heroes" veterans job fair in Manhattan, an initiative that aims to ease veterans' passage back into mainstream society after they retire from the military. An eclectic collection of organizations were in attendance, from financial companies to universities, all of which said they were on the lookout for prospective employees. William Offutt, the Special Assistant of the Veterans Employment and Training Service, told me: "The event is important because it is promoting and prioritizing a big section of the population that deserve recognition. When employers are looking for the best they need to be able to find it, and veterans constitute a highly skilled workforce." But it became clear that no one was actually offering any jobs. It was another public relations exercise. Sal Manze, sixty-six, was a Vietnam veteran and advertised the fact on his baseball cap as he sauntered around the floor of the hall. He fought for two years from 1965 to 1966. "They don't interview on the spot," he told me. "Most of the companies are just giving out information rather than offering jobs. I think if they were able to hire immediately it would be great, but as it is it's just frustrating." Now he was working a $7-an-hour seasonal job as a sales associate at Macy's. "They say age doesn't come into it but it's just not true," he said. "But how can you prove it? Go to the interview with a lawyer?" Others felt similarly. "I want to get into technology now," said Tyrone Webb, twenty-nine, and a veteran of nearly five years in the US navy. "I used to be an aviation engineer, working on the engines of aircraft. The problem is getting a job with a bad discharge from service is very difficult." Webb was given a dishonorable discharge after his mother contracted cancer and he became disheartened when he was not allowed to visit her and lost focus on the job. "I started being late and just not caring. I was discharged soon after and they gave me Reentry Code 4 on my [discharge form] and so it is impossible to get a job when it says 'other than honorable discharge' on my documents." Since he left the military in June 2006 he has worked mainly in retail sales and phone surveys, and is currently working in a restaurant. "I am angry," he said. "I have a lot on my plate, I think about children but I can't have any because of my situation, I can't even think about girlfriends."

It wasn't just the US military helping to ruin active-duty soldiers and veterans through neglect: the private sector contributed too, in its own exploitative way. During the War on Terror, huge numbers of veterans became a target for unscrupulous loaning companies. It emerged that leading banks and lending agencies in the US were failing to adhere to laws governing loan conditions to active-duty and retired soldiers. In 2011, one of the biggest banks in the world, JP Morgan Chase, was forced to announce a raft of new programs for military personnel after three veterans filed a lawsuit against the bank for overcharging interest payments on mortgages.[99] Under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, which dates back to 1940 but was updated in 2003, interest payments for soldiers cannot rise above 6 percent. Lenders are also barred from foreclosing on mortgages of service members while they are on active duty. “The mistakes we made on military foreclosures are a painful aberration,” said Jamie Dimon, chief executive of JP Morgan, in the aftermath of a Congressional hearing. “We deeply apologize to our military customers and their families for these mistakes.” JP Morgan then set their interest rate cap for service members at 4 percent.

But it was evident, despite the crocodile tears, that exploitation of the veteran community was no aberration for financial institutions. “I just think JP Morgan ignored it, they didn’t care about it, they didn’t want to know about it,” Bob Filner, a Congressman from California and ranking member on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, told me. “And I think the other banks are doing the same thing.” Veterans are a particularly vulnerable group, he added. “They get too discouraged and they feel powerless, so they can’t fight back.” Filner had been approached by mid-level staff at JP Morgan, Bank of America, and Wells Fargo who told him the lawsuit was part of something much bigger. And leading veterans’ groups supported these claims. “There’s been a constant stream of veterans complaining of overcharging and problems with banks,” Selena Coppa, who dealt with veterans’ financial difficulties for Iraq Veterans Against the War, told me. “This is an industry-wide issue, it’s not solely limited to JP Morgan. Too many financial institutions see service members as numbers in ledger that they can exploit because of their unique vulnerability.” When in the military, service members can be hit with a criminal charge for being overly indebted, which causes some to accept bad practices. “Let’s say you are being exploited by a bank: in the civilian world you would dispute that, you wouldn’t pay it,” Coppa said. “But if you’re in the military even if it’s an unfair charge they are forced to pay under threat of jail under military law.” It was even tougher for those veterans with PTSD who lived so close to wire anyway, meaning that one small economic injustice could be devastating. Many winded up being evicted. “I had a friend of mine, she was incorrectly charged for a late fee, they refused to grant her time to pay it, especially, vets suffer from PTSD [and] have difficultly navigating bureaucracy,” said Coppa. “There is also the problem with the veteran population that they are very proud, which makes it difficult for them to come forward and talk about it”—and easy for unscrupulous creditors to prey on them: aware of the vulnerability of service members, loan-shark-type schemes are often set up around military bases.

The situation got much worse as the financial crisis hit in 2008 and the number of foreclosed veterans rose significantly. "I've noticed this being a problem for the last few years," Joe Sharpe, economic director at The American Legion, the largest veterans' group in the US, told me. "This had included vets having a problem paying mortgages while they are deployed. It's a shock once they return to discover their home mortgage has tripled or been foreclosed." According to Sharp it has even affected the operational readiness of the force. "I remember it came to a head recently, it became such a problem that unit commanders were concerned they couldn't deploy large numbers of soldiers because they were in financial trouble." Soldiers have the added problem that when they are away, they are not aware of what's happening at home. Thanks to the extended deployment periods they also had less time or opportunity to respond to legal issues. Because of this, default judgments were often entered against them unfairly. "I think lives were destroyed. I said the banks could be guilty of homicide," Bob Filner added. "We are at an all time high for the number of people committing suicide on active duty—higher than Vietnam. Financial stress is the second leading cause. Now who knows how many people did that because not just JP Morgan, but Bank of America and Wells Fargo didn't do what they should have. If they were foreclosed on illegally, and the wife left them, and he felt he couldn't support his family, I have no doubt that if we looked into the record closely we would find that." The Department of Veterans Affairs does offer its own mortgage scheme which has better terms, but not all service members chose to use it because it is incredibly complicated. The VA told me they helped 66,000 veterans fight foreclosure in 2010 through interceding with the lender (but there were 20,000 more who sought help but could not forestall the loss of their homes). "What has happened is that the vets with VA home-loans have fared best," says Joe Sharpe. "Those that did not get VA home-loans are the ones that are getting in trouble." Those with VA loans have, indeed, demonstrated the lowest serious delinquency and foreclosure rates, but even the VA admit that their loan scheme is very difficult for veterans to use because its terms are so opaque. "We recognize it is a complex law," Michael Frueh, VA spokesman, told me by way of an explanation.

Unsurprisingly, in this climate, homelessness among returning veterans remained extremely high during the War on Terror. The most extensive survey of the problem, published by the Housing and Urban Development

Department (HUD) and VA, found that nearly 76,000 veterans were sleeping rough on any given night in 2009.[100] On top of that, nearly 140,000 veterans spent at least one night in a shelter during the same year. Some of those are older soldiers, but the study also found that 11,300 younger veterans, aged eighteen to thirty, were in shelters at some point during 2009. Nearly all of them had served in Iraq or Afghanistan. Ronte Foster was one of them. When he came home in late 2004, he had changed radically. His wife no longer recognized the affectionate family man she had married and waved off to Iraq just a year earlier. He was drinking every day, taking a cocktail of drugs, and erupting in fits of anger as he tried to self-medicate his way through the PTSD he didn't even know he had. She stood it for six months, eager to salvage their eight-year marriage, but then she broke, no longer able to put up with the consequences for her and their two young children. "She told me to leave and at that point I had so much trauma in my head, I just had to get away," Ronte tells me. He had been deployed to Tikrit, hometown of the erstwhile Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, and had duly witnessed one of the bloodiest and most chaotic periods of the war. "The unit that I went with, we saw a lot of roadside bombs and a lot of RPG's, you saw that on a daily basis," he says. He was also involved in firefights which led to deaths that still haunt him. "I had to do some things I didn't want to do," he says. "There was this one incident where some insurgents tried to rush the gate of the base, I was there at Camp Anaconda and we killed one and three were captured, it's still with me." When he left his family in Danville, Virginia, he went as far as possible, running from the war and the memories that were still fixed in his head. He relocated to Los Angeles and slept in the car and at friend's places. "I would get very depressed, I felt this intense isolation," he says. "I realize now that I was experiencing a lot of the PTSD symptoms, I had a hard time remembering things and concentrating for any period of time." Ronte got lucky and was taken in by a Salvation Army shelter where he became a resident floor manager. But seven years on from his return from Iraq, Foster is still not housed in permanent accommodation. "It's not perfect but I'm much luckier than other people I know of." He has no job and cannot afford his own food.

There are thousands of veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with similar tales, but these are stories it is painful for America to hear. In 2011, however, the budget deficit and the search for programs to cut put the problem firmly back on the agenda. The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive

Housing program, or HUD-VASH, is a flagship scheme working to help homeless veterans by issuing vouchers which can be used to pay for accommodation. Since 2008, it has issued around 30,000 vouchers and by 2011 the program had placed 21,000 veterans in permanent accommodation. But in the Republicans' proposed budget for the fiscal year 2011 it was completely eliminated, which caused outcry amongst Democrats and in a veteran community that had already been subjected to outrageous cuts to its health facilities by the GOP during the Bush era. The Republicans' "decision to slash funding for housing assistance to thousands of homeless veterans shows a total lack of humanity," said Barbara Boxer, a Democratic Senator from California.[101] After a compromise, the program was salvaged, but the department only got about 7,000 vouchers, less than the typical 10,000, after the Republicans bargained them down.[102] With veterans continuing to stream home, most analysts said this was far from enough and left community-based organizations to pick up the pieces. One of those community-based groups, US VETS, runs the shelter that Ronte Foster now lives in. The organization was started in 1993 in response to chronic levels of homelessness among the veteran population and it now has 2,000 beds in five states, making it the largest non-governmental provider in the country. "There is a lot of PTSD around because it is an all-volunteer [military] and they are doing everything they can to keep soldiers," said Steve Peck, chief executive. "They are going on multiple deployments . . . which is exacerbating the problem. The DOD is aware of the problem and they are doing something, but it's a lot bigger than they can handle." The lack of funds for medical and psychological treatment made the situation worse. When soldiers are discharged they are not required to go back to the VA for treatment, and it is estimated more than half were not accessing the treatment they need. Even those who did seek help were often told by the VA that there was a three or four month waiting list, which for someone with PTSD can be extremely difficult. By 2010, veterans were committing suicide at the rate of eighteen per day, many of them after serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.[103]

The military's use of soldiers outside of the regular army, as they strived to keep up troop levels, had a particularly negative impact. "What makes this different from Vietnam is that half of troops to Iraq and Afghanistan are reservists and national guardsman," John Driscoll, chief executive of the Coalition for Homeless Veterans, told me. For reservists the pressures from combat and training are particularly stressful because they lack the experience of their regular army peers. This is compounded when they come home, as they do not go through the typical transition program to help them adjust. “Anyone in a combat role knows you need decompression time, you need transition time to get your issues back in order,” added Driscoll, himself a veteran. “During that time you have spent away from home you have changed. The way you communicate is different, so when you add to that extreme economic pressure from the housing crisis and economic slump it’s not a pretty picture.”

At the same time that it was exploiting veterans, corporate America was enjoying the fruits of the markets these same veterans had prized open for them in the Middle East. As the US began the withdrawal of its remaining 40,000 troops from Iraq at the end of 2011, US officials were trying desperately to shore up the position of the American business community. With domestic economic growth slowing fast (and hurting veterans), US companies were increasingly keen to exploit the potential of Iraq’s post-war recovery. One example was 360 Architecture, a Kansas City–based design company, which was busy drawing up plans for a glitzy $800-million sports complex in the southern oil center of Basra. With the 2013 Gulf Games scheduled to be held in Iraq, the public-relations-conscious government was looking to build a stadium and facilities for athletes. “It will be like an Olympic training ground for Iraqi national athletes of all sports,” John Radtke, 360’s project director, told me excitedly. But there were surely better things to spend Iraq’s new oil money on. How about schools? In 2008, only 50 percent of primary school age children were attending school, down from 80 percent in 2005. Or foodstuffs? By 2007, 28 percent of Iraqi children were malnourished. But such concerns didn’t interest the State Department, which in the same period hosted a forum focused on “promoting commercial opportunities in Iraq” with representatives from nearly thirty major American companies—including Goldman Sachs and Monsanto. They joined Hillary Clinton, secretary of state, alongside other senior US and Iraqi officials to discuss economic opportunities in the “new Iraq.” “Basically, the bottom line is we want to send a message that Iraq is open for business,” a senior US official told me. “The US government will do whatever it can to get them into the market.” Around that time, Caterpillar, the Illinois-based construction equipment and natural-gas turbine manufacturer, won part of a $6.3 billion contract to build fifty new power plants in Iraq as the country sought to increase its electricity output; while Lockheed Martin, the arms manufacturer, announced that it had a deal in the pipeline with Iraq and Oman for the sale of eighteen F-16 fighter jets, to be ready by 2012. The Maryland-based company said it expected up to one hundred additional orders from Iraq by the end of the decade.[104] America's veterans—and the large numbers of Iraqis mired in poverty—would see none of the profits.

CHAPTER THREE

Plump, Young, Dumb—and Ready to Serve

THE BAGHDAD BULGE

> *Obesity is not just a public health issue. It's also a national security concern as well. We're not physically fit to defend ourselves.*
>
> Dr. Carlos Crespo, associate professor of social and preventive medicine at the University at Buffalo, 2002[1]

America is getting fatter. It has been for decades. But only during the years of the War on Terror did the country's obesity problem become a full-on, deadly serious national security issue. Nothing was more likely to put Al-Qaeda at ease than the thought of a waddling phalanx rumbling towards them in Iraq or Afghanistan, but as the wars got underway, that's what happened as standards in the US military relating to body fat and fitness were relaxed: as the recruiting pool shrank, the waistlines of soldiers got bigger. The US soldier in the War on Terror weighed thirty-seven pounds, or 25 percent, more than his ancestor in the Civil War,[2] and obesity was by far the most common medical reason why prospective soldiers were refused entry into the military. And the situation was getting dramatically worse. In 1993 about 23 percent of prospective recruits would have been overweight—a pretty significant tranche. By 2006 this had increased to just over 27 percent, or more than a quarter of potential recruits. In the same period, obesity countrywide had increased from 2.8 percent to 6.8 percent. "We're not physically fit to defend ourselves," complained Dr. Carlos Crespo, a University of Buffalo professor. "As a society, we need to be physically prepared to respond to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or any other emergency."[3]

The military gauges the physical fitness of its recruits using a measure called the body mass index, or BMI, which measures body fat as a percentage of overall weight. The BMI of a prospective soldier must not be more than 26 percent for a man and 32 percent for a woman. "An increasing number of young adults in the general population do not meet the current weight-for-height standards," lamented one military report. Among eighteen-year-olds who applied for military service in 2006, 35 percent of males and 28 percent of females had a BMI above 25, it added.[4] "I'd say that out of every 10 applicants that come in, probably three we couldn't take—they are obese," said Sergeant Darryl Bogan, a recruiter in Columbia, South Carolina. "We are getting heavier as a nation as far as our young people are concerned."[5]

Until 1960 there were no regulations on obesity; when soldiers were weighed it was to find out if they had enough not *too much* weight.[6] But that was before America ballooned. "There is no question soldiers are getting bigger—just look at photos of soldiers from the 50s," said Lieutenant Colonel Karl Friedl, the army's director of operational medical research, adding that that difference is a reflection of general weight gain among the whole population.[7] But something had to change. "The fatter America gets, the more lenient the military is going to get with their regulations," he added. Even before the war in Iraq was launched the Pentagon knew what a stickler this could prove. "If at some future time the federal guidelines are adopted, the impact will be to shift a sizeable group of personnel from a category of meeting weight standards to a category of being overweight," a leaked Pentagon report said.[8] "Such a change would have negative implications for perceptions of readiness of the forces." But readiness was of less importance than maintaining the force. And some believed it was purely a perception thing: did it actually matter? "The military, of course, has standards for appearances: you don't want a bunch of fat guys marching in your parade. But how critical is it? It is of significance, but in critical terms, that significance is marginal," said Arthur Frank, a medical director at George Washington University.[9]

Untightening the Belt

The most obvious way around the problem was the use of "medical waivers" to make exceptions for overweight recruits. In 2006, medical waivers constituted about 30 percent of all army waivers and 25 percent of those for the marines.[10] But this still wasn't enough, and in 2004 the military began a string of programs aimed at recruiting the fat of America into its fighting force. First, the army set up a program with the Olympian title of Assessment of Recruit Motivation and Strength, or ARMS, which was designed to cut some slack for recruits who didn't quite meet the army regulations on body fat. It became a sort of "automatic waiver" for recruits who had body-fat percentages up to 30 percent for men and 36 percent for women. Like being back in gym class, the recruits who fell in the upper margins of this criterion would be made to do a different "Harvard step" test exercise to other recruits, one which involved stepping onto a platform 120 times per minute, followed by a number of push-ups. If you made it through, there was no need to worry about being overweight, you were deemed army good and had a full year to get yourself in shape. One lucky beneficiary was Kyle Kimball who in 2006 wanted to follow in the footsteps of his father and enlist in the marines. The problem was that he weighed 250 pounds, about 35 pounds over the cut-off for a marine of his height. But he went to Westover Joint Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, Massachusetts, and became one of the first to take advantage of the ARMS scheme, taking fitness tests as a way around his weight problems. "I can get there," he told the *Boston Globe*, "I know I can lose the weight."[11]

On top of that, $6 million of federal money was granted to the Troop Recruit Improvement (TRIM) program run by the Nutrition Research Council, the aim of which was to "improve recruit readiness and fitness by determining and combating the causes of childhood and adolescent obesity."[12] Dr. Andrew Young, Chief of the Military Nutrition Division in Natick, Massachusetts, was an adviser on the TRIM project. "We definitely have seen that soldiers are not immune to the obesigenic environmental factors of this country and the rest of the world," he told me. "The military now recognizes that some of the soldiers in the army and probably other services are having trouble maintaining healthy body weight." Young claimed further that obesity is rising in the army. "The goal for us is to design intervention programs for soldiers to use in coping with problems of obesity," he added. "The environmental pressures are growing—more and more soldiers have duties that are not as active—not all soldiers have very physically demanding jobs, some have a relatively small physical component. The environment promotes fat gain unless we are aggressive to counteract those pressures."

During a 2009 visit to the army’s largest training installation, General Bostick said a slim-down camp could be part of the new Army Prep School at Fort Jackson in South Carolina, which was giving prospective soldiers the qualifications they needed in order to serve. “We are looking at the Army Prep School as a place where we might send some that have weight issues,” he said.[13] Bostick argued that although many of the young people who want to join the army have a hard time understanding the importance of a healthy diet and daily exercise, they could nevertheless get themselves up to the required military standards with guidance. “It took them 18 years to get to where they are at, so it’s very difficult for them to lose the kind of weight that they need to on their own,” he said. “[The military] are doing this because they are desperate,” added Lawrence J. Korb, a former Pentagon chief of personnel during the Reagan administration. The desperation was starting to show in July 2008, when the Healthy Eating and Lifestyle Training Headquarters (HEALTH), an online program that designed troops a personal weight-loss program, was set up at Fort Bragg. It wasn’t just a beefy army, either. The air force—or “chair force” as it was rechristened—had its own ideas and started its own Fit to Fight program in 2004. “I want to make very clear that my focus is not on passing a fitness test once a year,” General Jumper said. “More important, we are changing the culture of the Air Force. This is about our preparedness to deploy and fight. It’s about warriors. It’s about instilling an expectation that makes fitness a daily standard—an essential part of your service.”[14] The program required commanders to institute some sort of daily fitness routine. Lieutenant Colonel Friedl, however, as an expert in weight issues, believed all this wasn’t enough. “It’s a shame to lose somebody that you’ve invested a lot of money in and it’s their career as well simply because they can’t meet these standards and for lack of providing some kind of specialized assistance that might have made all the difference.” But the specialized assistance was too expensive; it was easier to let the troops’ waistlines expand.

Obesity Within the Military

Once in the military, there is ample opportunity for soldiers to pile on weight, as they sit around at checkpoints all day, or eat continually from boredom. The army has regulations to deal with this—or at least it should have. Every soldier is expected to stay in shape and pass biannual fitness tests, including screening for weight. If they fail that, they are put on to the “weight control” program, which has a strict regimen of exercise and dietary requirements. It’s not good for your career either: you can’t be promoted while on the program. The marines had their own version of this with the Body Composition Program—if a marine failed to get back in shape while in the program they risked discharge from the military. In 2008, however, an investigation revealed that only about one in three marines found to be overweight was actually enrolled in a BCP.[15] As these programs were neglected things predictably got worse. “In the past decade among active military members in general, the percent of military members who experienced medical encounters for overweight/obesity has steadily increased; and since 2003, rates of increase have generally accelerated,” said a 2009 Pentagon report.[16] But despite the increasing number of “medical encounters,” the military has discharged ever fewer service members for not meeting weight standards. In 1998, 2,224 soldiers were discharged from the army for not meeting the standards. In 2006 that figure had fallen to 589—a 74 percent drop in eight years.[17] This was not, of course, because the military’s anti-fat programs had suddenly become much more effective. “These statistics should be seen against the background of the army trying very hard to maintain its overall numbers,” Dr. Russell Pate, professor of health sciences at the University of South Carolina and a military adviser on obesity, told me. In his opinion, “They’ve been granting waivers to the weight exclusion program in the interest of meeting targets.”

Some saw the proliferation of fat soldiers in a more positive light. Indeed, in the eyes of one group, it was a seminal moment: “I think it’s great that they finally understand our value in society,” Lynn McAfee, of the Council on Size and Weight Discrimination, told me. “Now they finally understand that everyone can play a part in defending our country . . . It’s absurd that as desperate as we are now for soldiers,” she continued, “we’re still kicking out people of worth and people of value because of how they look. But I’d like to think this is a turning point.” But the notion that overweight people swaddled in many pounds of Kevlar might not be fit for wandering around a desert in 30-degree Celsius heat has more to do with common sense than discrimination. McAfee had supporters in the US military brass though, who (as usual) denied there was a problem or anything to worry about. Nathan M. Banks, Sr., a spokesman for the army, dismissed the charges out of hand, telling me: “Soldiers realize how important it is to stay in shape. Especially in time of war, the heat in Iraq can get up in the 100s, soldiers carry body armor that weighs over 60 pounds." This explanation isn't bolstered by the statistics: from 2005 to 2006, there was a drop from 801 to 589 in the number of discharges for obesity.[18]

Despite the military refusing to kick out its tubby service members, there were still attempts by soldiers themselves to use it as a means to avoid fighting. Failing your fitness test is a way to avoid exercises or combat, one that doesn't carry the heavy burden of going AWOL. "There is a problem in the Army with overweight soldiers and malingering," said Specialist Oittis D. Allen in a letter to the *Army Times*. "These soldiers are claiming to be hurt so they don't have to participate in physical exercises, and they don't work like the rest of the soldiers. The doctor will write them a temporary excuse to malinger; the doctor will not sign off on a permanent profile knowing their only medical problem is they are overweight." The whole process was broken. "The Army regulation for overweight soldiers is to give them a certain amount of time to lose the weight or be discharged, but the chain of command is finding ways to overlook the situation," he continued. "In my company, I have seen several cases of soldiers being promoted even though they can't pass the Army Physical Fitness Test, along with passing weight and tape standards. I'm getting tired of the system being unequal. I and other soldiers are putting out 100 percent for the Army to get the mission accomplished, while the obese soldiers get everything given to them."[19]

Back home from the warzone, veterans had more given to them with yet another new overweight initiative by the VA (created in 2006), called Managing Overweight Veterans Everywhere, or MOVE. The program sought to help veterans escape their obesity or prevent them from falling into it when they return home and was piloted at James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, Tampa, Florida, where it was coordinated by nurse Norma Figueroa who oversaw about 400 veterans. "The veteran population is mostly obese and so we as a team decided the best thing to do was to help with prevention," she told me. "I don't know anybody who has been kicked out for being overweight," she added, "because it's not happening. They provided a program, but they let them all stay."

Medical Concern

This oversight was hugely damaging. The Pentagon themselves admit that being overweight "is a significant military medical concern because it is associated with decreased military operational effectiveness."[20] This includes the obvious fact that a lack of physical fitness and a few extra rolls of flab are going to make you less of a force on the battlefield, but it also puts a strain on the military medical services as overweight recruits are more likely to develop chronic health effects. “One of the implications is that having a significant number that are overweight there is a higher incidence of negative outcomes, limitations on work performance, but also to the profusion of veteran health care,” says Dr. Pate. “There is the impact on physical performance; it’s true that, to take a simple example, if we have 150lb person who has normal percent body fat today but five years later has 20lb [excess] that is going to have negative impact on performance, he will run slower, lift his body weight fewer times, in terms of combat military specialities which are done based on physical performance it’s certainly true that you would expect negative impact on performance . . . I think the overriding issue,” he continued, “is that in the broad sweep having significant numbers in military who are overweight is a concern in terms of soldier performance and both soldier and veteran health overall.”

The Pentagon officially blamed the proliferation of video games and fast food for military chubbiness, but they must take at least part of the blame insofar as they allowed fast food joints to take over from mess halls as places for soldiers to eat in Kabul and Baghdad. In Baghdad’s Green Zone there were outlets for Pizza Hut, Subway, Cinnabon, Burger King, and Taco Bell. There was also the Post Exchange, a military supermarket selling T-bone steaks and other goodies. Standing outside Burger King a journalist caught a group of soldiers contemplating a second Whopper burger. “Not me, man,” said Specialist Joe Lorenzo. “I put on so much goddam weight, who knows if my wife will recognize me when I get home?”[21] It was made worse as operations were handed over to local Iraqi troops, leaving US service members with less and less to do—apart from eat. “You make the best of the situation,” said Private Jonathan Roane. “We used to eat to fight. It’s not like that anymore.”[22] Their British allies were not much better. In a 2009 memo, Major Brian Dupree said: “The numbers of personnel unable to deploy and concerns about obesity throughout the army are clearly linked to current attitudes towards physical training,” adding that “operational effectiveness” was being undermined.[23] It was even putting lives at risk. A British inquiry in 2007 revealed that Private Jason Smith had died of heat stroke in Iraq after concerns about his weight. It found he was “at the higher level of obese" at 17 stones and his BMI was dangerously high at 34, the implication being that it precipitated his death.[24]

INTELLIGENCE OPS

> *If you come from a poor family, you are more likely to drop out of high school. And if you drop out and stay out of high school, you are more likely to be poor.*
>
> Neve Grant, NPR, 2006[25]

On a sunny morning in August 2009 the ribbon was cut at the inaugural Patriot Academy on a National Guard installation in Butlerville, Indiana. It was the first institution of its kind in the US and pulled in a crowd of high-powered political figures from around the state. Indiana Democratic Representative Barron Hill and Indiana Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman stood watching the theatrics, including a flyover by Blackhawk helicopters and other celebrations to mark the opening. There were reasons to be cheerful: the Patriot Academy would be the first military entity charged with giving a high school diploma to "at-risk youth" who wanted to serve in the National Guard but couldn't because they had dropped out of education, which was a bar to enlistment.[26] There was a heady feeling in the air as those giving speeches attested to the importance of this generous new educational experience. "The Patriot Academy can be described in two words: second chance," said Colonel Perry Sarver Jr., the Academy's commandant. "These soldiers are here because they have unfinished business, and they are getting a second chance to right a wrong. These young men have started down a path that will change their lives forever."

The project was the brainchild of Lieutenant General Clyde A. Vaughn, the former director of the Army National Guard, who had been troubled by the number of young Americans still not fit for service in the military. Why not provide high-school-age youth the opportunity to earn a diploma as an active-duty soldier, thereby bypassing the bar on enlistment for high school dropouts? It was "an investment in our most precious resource," he said, an opportunity to help the youth of America *at the same time as* defending American's freedoms. At the Patriot Academy, the students would receive full-time military pay and benefits while they were training. The first class beginning their journey on that afternoon was just forty-six students with a staff of thirty, but there were big ambitions for the program. Two years later it had expanded to 250 students and by 2011 reached 500. For its soldier students, the Academy was the real deal: it had secured Indiana educational accreditation which meant that their qualification would be a bona fide high school diploma, so graduating soldiers would be classed in the military hierarchy as so-called tier 1, opening up the full range of opportunities throughout their career in the armed forces.

There were a few requirements for enrollment: recruits had to be between seventeen and twenty years old and within ten credit hours of high school graduation. But those successfully picked would spend a period in basic training, then nine months at the academy before moving to a school which focused specifically on the military occupation (meaning job *not country*) in which they were interested. Giving those who had not had a good start in life a second chance while at the same time swelling the army's ranks did sound like a good idea, and there were the usual euphoric reports from the media: "Only months ago, four dozen high-school dropouts from around the country faced a bleak future and limited opportunities in the work force. Now they are soldiers at the Patriot Academy, on their way to earning their high-school diplomas and credits towards a college degree," wrote one military reporter. The new soldier students seemed chipper, too: "I'm going to be a Fire Support Specialist," Private Michael Meadows, nineteen, of Daleville, Indiana, told *US Fed News*. "But I have to get my diploma here first before I can go to Advanced Individual Training. I've been looking forward to this."[27] But of course it was not an altruistic Pentagon program (they tend not to exist). The Pentagon wanted and needed recruits and was prepared to hold young people's hopes for an education hostage to service in the War on Terror. This new program marked a full-scale militarization of the recruits' education, with no real pretence otherwise. When the nine-month program was finished the soldier students would be obliged to commit to eight years of service with the National Guard, which had been increasingly involved in the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. "The Army National Guard has had a significant evolution in the last eight years," said Raymond Carpenter, acting director of the National Guard, in Congressional testimony. "Units mobilized and deployed from different states and territories provided support to overseas contingency operations and to the Homeland Defense mission."[28] In other words, they were sure to have to fight. The parents of the new students seemed aware of the inevitability that their loved ones would see combat. "War abroad, or war on the streets," said one mom, giving an apt description of the choice facing young, poor Americans. "At least he'll be fighting for something," the dad added.[29] The National Guard was to be the Trojan horse used to penetrate the wider community, which had still not *completely* sacrificed its young for the war effort. The Guard had a sterling record in this regard, one lauded by military bigwigs. Army Brigadier General Maria Britt, commanding general of the Georgia Army National Guard, speaking at the DOD's Worldwide Education Symposium about the Guard's youth and voluntary education programs, noted, "The Guard has a proud tradition of initiating and funding education programs that reach out to non-military adults, youth and . . . schools," adding, "We do this because we want to be good stewards in the communities that we serve."[30] In truth, it had nothing to do with being good stewards. The Patriot Academy was another way to blackmail the poor who have been failed by the mainstream education system only to be failed again once in service.

Despite all this, the Academy was no doubt a serious enticement. One of the new soldier students put it like this: "Just the fact that I could get a high school diploma rather than a GED sounded better to me. It just makes me feel and sound like I've completed my school. Like our sergeant major once told us, we're not going to get this chance again. If you get the opportunity to come to the Patriot Academy to have your second chance, you actually get paid to go to school and learn new things."[31] Amid all the rhetoric about "second chances," Iraq and Afghanistan weren't mentioned in the prospectus. And reports on the initial student body left no doubt about the ethnic demographic the military were targeting. "The current class at the Academy is a mix of Americans from a wide group of ethnic and racial backgrounds," reported the army's official news service, before quoting Private Rigoberto Rodriguez, who grew up in El Paso, Texas: "Being a minority with other minorities helps me to feel at home," he said.[32]

Student Soldiers

It wasn't surprising the military should focus on this pool of potential recruits; perhaps the only shock was that it took until 2009 to inaugurate the Academy. High school dropouts posed one of the major obstacles to the recruitment of America's youth. A report by a non-profit group composed of retired military figures entitled *Ready, Willing, and Unable To Serve* spelled out the problem, contending that 75 percent of eighteen- to twenty-four-year olds do not qualify for service, adding "many young Americans who want to join cannot."[33] The three most common barriers for potential recruits were, it said, failure to graduate high school, a criminal record, and physical fitness issues, including obesity. The criminal record had been dealt with by “moral waivers” and the obesity problem dealt with by “medical waivers,” but restrictions on non-graduates would be more difficult to sidestep. Approximately one out of four young Americans lacks a high school diploma and like any military, the US needed “high-competent individuals who can operate high-tech machinery and computer machinery,” soldiers who can “work in teams” with “excellent judgment.” “That cannot be acquired just in basic training,” the report concluded, so dropping the standards on educational attainment would not be so easy to do without seriously affecting operational readiness. The other option, of course, was that education would have to improve. But would it take the need for more fodder for the War on Terror to convince the political elite to raise educational standards? The report believed it had to: “The most proven investment to help kids graduate from high school starts early: high-quality early education for at-risk kids.” It never happened.

Over the previous decades the US public school system had been steadily degraded and exam results continued to be appalling relative to other developed countries. The National Assessment of Education Progress reported in 2007 that 69 percent of the nation’s eighth graders scored below proficiency level in math, and 70 percent scored below proficiency level in reading.[34] A study of high school dropout rates found it hit a trough at 20 percent in the late 1960s and then increased just 4–5 percentage points afterward, and in terms of black and Hispanic students, it found “no evidence of convergence in minority-majority graduation rates over the past 35 years,”[35] while high school dropouts were disproportionately from poorer families. As one journalist put it, “If you come from a poor family, you are more likely to drop out of high school. And if you drop out and stay out of high school, you are more likely to be poor.”[36] Of course, the government didn’t embark on a splurge of spending on the education system. This was the perfect demographic to reenfranchise into the military: Black, Hispanic, poor, and with a high probability of being unemployed. It would be an extension of the existing demographics of the fighting force: according to research, recruits from families with annual incomes below $60,000 are over-represented in the military, while those families earning more are under-represented.[37] The military now dangled a carrot: we’ll give you a proper education if you agree to become war fodder afterward.

During the War on Terror, George W. Bush's educational reforms were further impacting the public schooling system through increasing standardization and lack of funds. "There is a dark side to the educational reforms initiated under the Bush administration and now used in a number of school systems throughout the country," wrote educational theorist Henry Giroux:

> As the logic of the market and "the crime complex" frame the field of social relations in schools, students are subjected to three particularly offensive policies, defended by school authorities and politicians under the rubric of school safety. First, students are increasingly subjected to zero-tolerance policies that are used primarily to punish, repress and exclude them. Second, they are increasingly absorbed into a "crime complex" in which security staff, using harsh disciplinary practices, now displace the normative functions teachers once provided both in and outside of the classroom. Third, more and more schools are breaking down the space between education and juvenile delinquency, substituting penal pedagogies for critical learning and replacing a school culture that fosters a discourse of possibility with a culture of fear and social control.[38]

It sounded remarkably like boot camp. Giroux continued, "Any youth of color in urban school systems, because of harsh zero-tolerance policies, are not just being suspended or expelled from school. They are being ushered into the dark precincts of juvenile detention centers, adult courts and prison." During the War on Terror another "dark precinct" opened up: *the military*.

Typical of this move from the streets to the warzone was another National Guard program called the Youth ChalleNGe, which describes itself as a "preventive rather than remedial" at-risk youth program that specifically targets participants who are "unemployed, drug-free and law-free high-school dropouts, 16 to 18 years of age."[39] The twenty-two-week program, which takes place in camps, most of which are on military bases, is followed by a year-long mentoring relationship with someone from each youth's community. "By taking them away from their neighborhoods, we're giving them a safe place to get their act together," one colonel assured the critics. "These youths have been told they are failures. Here they find that if they straighten up, others will believe in them."[40] But it wasn't about providing disadvantaged youths with a safe place. It was about militarizing their education and sending them to the most *dangerous* places in the world—Iraq and Afghanistan. Even though it claimed it was not a military recruitment program, during the War on Terror 15 to 20 percent of Youth ChalleNGe graduates entered the armed services or the National Guard.[41]

There was another way still for non-graduates to get into the military: the general equivalency degree, or GED, which can afford recruits a waiver if they score well enough on the military's entrance exam.[42] The army accepts about 15 percent of recruits without a high school diploma if they have a GED. Alive to this loophole, the military instituted another program in 2008, the so-called GED Plus, to give more of America's youth the requisite qualifications they needed to go and fight. It opened its first prep school for the purpose, targeted, of course, at tough inner city areas. The program involved a harsh regimen with an intense academic component starting at 5 a.m. "An hour of marching drills and military discipline is thrown in for good measure," reported AP.[43] The militarization of education was complete. The whole concept was, again, framed in terms of "helping these lazy layabouts," the rhetoric sounding like something out of *Full Metal Jacket* rather than a caring teaching environment. "It's a tough, structured day. Some of them have sat on the couch for eighteen years, but I haven't heard any howling yet," social studies instructor John Solis said. Apparently Solis preferred high school grads because of their "tenacity," but, he added, "the reality of current graduation rates has the army pressed to find an alternative."

With the GED behind them, the class goes through to basic training, which often includes combat training. Those entering prep school have to agree to a two- to four-year commitment, just like a regular recruit. "We have two missions: get the GED and prepare them physically and mentally for basic training," said the school's commander, Captain Brian Gaddis. "These kids may have quit at some point, but the big thing is, a lot of people have quit on them," Gaddis added. "We are not going to allow them to quit." The prison-like conditions were successful in getting recruits. In 2007 the GED Plus Program trained 709 soldiers, with a 73 percent success rate. In the next two years, 2,400 soldiers had a 95 percent success rate, significantly higher than the 69 percent national average success rate in the civilian GED program.[44] Things looked so good that in 2009, $18 million was ploughed into a new GED Plus educational complex on a National Guard campus in Arkansas.[45]

It all had a strong echo of the Vietnam era. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara had started his Project 100,000 in 1966, which was designed to get 100,000 men into the military who had failed the qualifying exam even at the lowered standards. McNamara presented the move as one that would improve the lot of America's "subterranean poor": exactly the same as the War on Terror narrative. "The poor of America . . . have not had the opportunity to earn their fair share of this nation's abundance," McNamara said, "but they can be given an opportunity to serve in their country's defense and they can be given an opportunity to return to civilian life with skills and aptitudes which for them and their families will reverse the downward spiral of decay." But it was a complete lie. As one historian describes it:

> Never well known, Project 100,000 has virtually disappeared from histories of the Johnson presidency. It was conceived, in fact, as a significant component of the administration's "war on poverty," part of the Great Society, a liberal effort to uplift the poor, and it was instituted with high-minded rhetoric about offering the poor an opportunity to serve. Its result, however, was to send many poor, terribly confused, and woefully uneducated boys to risk death in Vietnam.[46]

Likewise with Iraq and Afghanistan. "Project 100,000 and the abandonment of all but the most minimal mental requirements for military service were crucial institutional mechanisms in lowering the class composition of the US military."[47] Likewise again.

Even with the military working hard to give recruits the requisite qualifications in exchange for service, it still wasn't enough. Eventually they began to stretch the existing standards, allowing greater numbers of those with no qualifications at all to sign on the dotted line. "The DOD's benchmark standard calls for at least 90 percent of troops to be high school graduates," writes one academic. "Meeting those benchmarks has been a hallmark of the all-volunteer military since the end of conscription in 1973," and since the mid-1980s there had been a strict cap on recruits with no high school diploma. But this was to change. In 2005, the number of recruits with no military experience and with high school diplomas was 83.5 percent; a year later it had dropped to 73.1 percent.[48] "The overall quality of the force today is lower than it was a year ago," complained David R. Segal, director of the Center for Research on Military Organization at the University of Maryland. "It means they can anticipate more problem situations with recruits in the training cycle."[49] The army found another way to avoid admitting its problems through the handsomely named Tier Two Attrition Scheme, or TTAS, which would not count non-graduate recruits against the

10 percent cap if they were projected to have lower or similar attrition rates to graduates. “Compared with the costs of digging deeper into the relatively expensive [high school diploma graduates] recruiting market, the Army’s ability to recruit more high-quality [non high school diploma graduates] could save millions of dollars in recruiting resources,” said an army assessment.[50] It was merely a way to massage the figures. As *Military* magazine put it:

> The Army announced that 81 percent of its non-prior service recruits for 2006 were high school graduates. That was disturbingly below the 90 percent Department of Defense standard for every service. But the proportion of high school graduates would have been reported as 74.3 percent if the Army had to count the 5900 TTAS enlistees high school dropouts. The number instead is ignored. In March, Defense officials gave the Army permission to sign up 8000 TTAS recruits a year to ease increasingly difficult recruiting challenges.[51]

Despite all this, the military had the full support of lawmakers as they went about enlisting the poor and vulnerable young men and women of America. “I’m not totally naïve, but I have faith in recruiters,” said Representative Joe Wilson, (R-SC). “There may be higher dropout rates. But a lot of times they’re extending opportunities to minorities who wouldn’t have opportunities otherwise.”[52] The opportunities offered to minorities came, of course, at the expense of their service in war and the very real threat to their lives. What did it say about America that its ethnic minorities could only get the chance to better themselves by putting their bodies in the line of fire?

Intelligence Testing

Another way for the military to measure the brain power of recruits is the armed forces qualification test, or AFQT, which every prospective soldier has to take in an effort to weed out the slowest. For decades, the military had spent a lot of money and time developing psychometric tests because it believed in a strict correlation between operational performance and mental attainment. The testing was formalized as far back as 1968 and taken up by all branches of the military in 1976, but it didn’t start rejecting low-scoring applicants until the mid-1980s. By the time of the War on Terror it was ingrained in the military recruitment process. The AFQT is a multiple-choice questionnaire very similar to an IQ test, or what psychologists call “G”—covering abilities from arithmetical reasoning to paragraph comprehension. From these results the recruits are put into five categories, running from

Category 1, the best performing, to Category 5, the worst. Army regulation shut out anyone who scored in the lowest category, and strictly restricted Category 4 to two percent of the intake. By 2004, Category 4 recruits still only accounted for 0.6 percent of new recruits. But a year later, with the military desperate, a new DOD directive allowed in up to 4 percent of recruits from Category 4. Before long, that percentage had reached double figures.[53] The military was literally getting dumber. The *New York Times* reported that recruiters were even being *told* to accept more Category 4 recruits. “A recruiter in Washington, who insisted on anonymity to protect his career, said that at the time, he was concerned about whether these recruits could handle the increasingly high-technology tools of combat,” its report noted. “Another recruiter, in New York, who insisted on anonymity for the same reason, said this month that the Army seemed to care less about quality than about filling the holes left by soldiers who decline to re-enlist . . . It’s about one thing: numbers,” added the recruiter.[54]

For some, letting in recruits with low IQs was actually more equitable as it is an extremely controversial metric, not least for its common use by racists to give a dubious scientific basis for their prejudices. In the US, for example, Hispanics and African Americans score lower than whites on IQ tests, as was demonstrated by the infamous *Bell Curve* book in 1994.[55] But serious psychologists put this discrepancy down to the differing educational standards that exist between ethnic groups. The average black IQ is 85, below the 92 that is the 30th percentile cut-off point for joining the military, for example. There was compelling evidence that strict IQ testing was discriminating against young black wannabe soldiers. But there was also evidence supporting the military’s claim that IQ has a direct impact on operational performance as well as monetary cost. The differential in how quickly recruits leave the military (attrition rates) provides one clear example. Army studies demonstrate about 80 percent of those with diplomas complete their first three-year term of enlistment compared to only half of those with a GED.[56] “Recruits with a high school diploma are also valued since years of research and experience show that high school diploma graduates are more likely to complete their initial 3 [years of service],” said one directive.[57] The higher dropout rate for GED soldiers means they must be replaced, which “drives up military spending because of the need to spend money recruiting, outfitting, and training new troops,” reports *Time* magazine. The cost of signing up a new, fresh recruit rose from $15,000 to

$21,000 in five years to 2008.[58] Further to that, the military has been concerned about levels of attrition in the first years of service because it is, they say, “disruptive, degrades unit performance, and wastes valuable training and recruiting resources.”[59] This *seems* like an argument for recruiting those who are most likely to adapt to military life and stay the course. The army explicitly accepted that “the high school diploma has been a reliable indicator of ‘stick-to-itiveness.’”[60] But it didn’t stop recruits getting in without one: the military simply couldn’t slow down. A study by Rand concluded that the diploma was also an important indicator of operational performance, which was a more serious concern. Still the military didn’t move. “Generally, studies conducted in this area have supported the assertion that higher-quality personnel, in this case personnel with a higher AFQT score, appear to be more productive and to exhibit generally higher performance,” it noted.[61] Two other studies supported that conclusion. One from 1986 tried to answer the question, “Are smart [gun] tankers better?” by using their firing scores at a standardized course, and found that there was a strict correlation between accuracy and AFQT scores; for example, an increase of score from Category 4 to Category 3 led to an improvement of over 20 percentage points in performance. This was a serious business. It goes without saying that a bad shot in the War on Terror could mean the difference between a dead and a living civilian, or even an American soldier being hit by “friendly fire.” How many died as a result of this no one really knows, but there were large numbers of “friendly fire” casualties in the War on Terror. And then there was the money component: stray bombs cost.

None of this appeared to matter. The grand plan was in many ways coming together. High school dropouts composed 41 percent of the prison population in US, which, together with the new acceptance to ex-cons, was opening up the military to thousands more people. But, in truth, why stop at dropouts? They had already started recruiting in prisons; why not get into the high schools as well?

CHILD SOLDIERS

There is not a way out.

Military recruiter to seventeen-year-old Irving Gonzalez, 2008[62]

When Irving Gonzalez was seventeen years old he signed a non-binding agreement with the local military recruiter in Texas saying he would join the military after his final exams at high school. He didn't worry about it too much at the time. He was concentrating on his finals and one of the provisos of the so-called delayed enlistment program, or DEP, was that he could pull out at any time before the start of basic training. At the end of school, it turned out, pulling out was what he wanted to do. He had other ideas about what he wanted to do with his life which didn't involve service. But it wouldn't prove as easy as it should have. When he informed the recruiter who had signed him up, Sergeant Glenn Marquette from Greenspoint Recruiting Station in Houston, of his decision, Sergeant Marquette went apoplectic. Gonzalez, alongside his friend Eric Martinez, who had signed the same document, were subjected to a tirade of threats and lies from Marquette who told them that their lives would to-all-intents-and-purposes be finished if they decided to spurn the military. Although intimidated, Gonzalez felt something was not quite right and was smart enough to start recording the conversations he was having with Marquette, later releasing them to a local television network. The recording gave a depressing glimpse into the kind of recruiter-conduct towards America's children that became *de rigueur* during the War on Terror. "The main thing is, I want out. I don't want to be in it. I don't want to go to the army," Gonzalez told the recruiter in one conversation, to which the reply was that he would have to come into the recruiting station and see the company commander. Marquette then added, "There is not a way out. You signed a binding contract," which was a barefaced lie. Later, the recruiter went further with the threats: "I'll tell you what happens to you, OK? This is what will happen. You want to go to school? You will not get no loans, because all college loans are federal and government loans. So you'll be black-marked from that. As soon as you get pulled over for a speeding ticket or anything with the law, they're gonna see that you're a deserter. Then they're going to apprehend you, take you to jail . . . All that lovey-dovey 'I want to go to college' and all this? Guess what. You just threw it out the window, because you just screwed your life."

To a young, impressionable child this attack-dog routine was usually successful. His friend, Eric, was a case in point. "As things went further, I decided not to go [into training]. And when I told [the recruiter] that, she said I had no choice and that I had to go, so I believed her," he recalled. He told his mom who hatched a plan to say he had gone to San Antonio and was uncontactable. But even that didn't work. When his mom went to talk to Sergeant Marquette and told him that Eric had changed his mind and didn't want to go, he lied to her, too. "Marquette said that I had to go, and if I didn't, that I'd have a warrant for my arrest and I wouldn't be able to get no government loans or nothing like that. So, my mom doesn't really know anything about it, so she believed it, and she told me," he said. Fortunately, Gonzalez managed to contact Eric and tell him that he didn't have to go, that the recruiter was breaking the law, and that he could change his mind. It may have saved his life. Because of the smarts of Gonzalez, the boys didn't have to go to the deserts of the Middle East; but how many kids have been misled and told they have no choice is unknown. These two boys had family and friends strong enough to support them. Not everyone was so lucky. "Whenever we were thinking upon not joining, they started calling us and telling us that we didn't have a choice, you know, that we could say all we want, we don't have a choice to go or not, if we want to or not," Gonzalez recalled. To most kids this would have been a terrifying routine, but its success in getting kids into the military meant it remained a common one. A *New York Times* report revealed that the army investigated 1,118 "recruiting improprieties" in 2006 ranging from coercing young people to lying to them. The army substantiated 320 of these.[63]

American high schools were always seen as a "target-rich environment" for any recruiter, for obvious reasons: the kids are often not aware of their rights and are easily manipulated by monetary inducements. The US Army Recruiting Command is explicit about how recruiters are expected to operate in the nation's centers of learning and it's not pretty. "Without a strong high school program you cannot have a strong grad recruiting program," says the School Recruiting Army Handbook.[64] It's important to play to their aspirations and dreams, it continues. "For some students it is clear that college is not an option, at least for now. Let them know how the Army can fulfill their college aspirations. This is a key decision point and one you must pursue without fail." The tactics are blatantly underhand and manipulative. "Know your student influencers," it says. "Students such as class officers, newspaper and yearbook editors, and athletes can help build interest in the Army among the student body. Keep them informed. Tell them about the excellent educational benefits and the opportunities available in America's Army." It adds, "Always remember, the first to contact will be the first to contract." Recruiters are assigned target high schools and instructed to offer their friendly services—such as basketball or track coaches. “Deliver donuts and coffee for the faculty once a month,” recruiters are told, and “participate” in Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month, two of the most popular recruitment demographics for the military coincidentally. “Encourage college-capable individuals to defer their college until they have served in the Army,” it advises. If they ever do get to university, recruiters are instructed to get them as freshman while they are still vulnerable: “Focus on the freshman class [there] because they will have the highest dropout rate. They often lack both the direction and funds to fully pursue their education.” In the perverse logic of the recruiters it suits to have less federal funds for college fees, the military often being the only other option.

During the War on Terror, the resources poured into recruiting impressionable young people skyrocketed, with 1,000 new recruiters added in one year to bring high school kids round to the military’s way of thinking.[65] The Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, or JROTC, expanded across the nation, and no child was free from their solicitations, even eleven-year-olds were taking part in the programs. Furthermore, in 2007 a Congressional cap of 3,500 for the programs was lifted which spawned a massive increase in the number of operations.[66] According to Congressional testimony in 2000 from the chiefs of staff of the various armed services, 30 to 50 percent of these cadets eventually enlist. The number would be higher still during the war years.[67] In the War on Terror, school became boot camp as one in ten high school students in Chicago wore a military uniform to school and took classes on shooting guns from retired veterans.[68] It was a process of shaping the minds of the young, planting seeds of war for fruit that would be readily pluckable when the kids reached the age of eighteen, ready to serve.

One of the main incentives offered was money—a lot of money from the perspective of a sixteen-year-old. In 2005, the army moved to raise the average bonus given to recruits when they signed on the dotted line from $14,000 to $17,000, with the possibility of as much as $30,000 for hard-to-fill vacancies.[69] Another of the military’s slogans was “Join the Armed Forces, get a free education,”[70] an offer many of America’s poorest kids couldn’t turn down, even though it was not true. It’s why Phylicia Coley, a tenth-grader with an A average, said she was thinking about enlisting. “That’s the most important consideration,” she said. “I want to be a psychiatrist. I want to go to a good school.” In 2008, the GI Bill provided soldiers in the service for three years or more with an average $6,600 per year in educational benefits, with a maximum of $39,636 for four years. But tuition, room and board, and fees at most universities cost a lot more: in the majority of cases, the GI Bill benefits don't even cover half the costs of attending college full-time. But that's not what the recruiter told Coley. "He said the Army pays for everything," she said after being briefed by him. There were other means of reeling in high school students as well, one being getting them to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, or ASVAB. The military describes it as a must if "you're serious about joining the military," or if the Pentagon is serious about you joining the military.[71] It's a timed multi-aptitude test, which is taken at over 14,000 schools and military institutions nationwide. Career counselors are the main conduit through which the students come across it, and they are encouraged to promote it. There's even a *Dummies Guide* to the test to help students get a good score. The test is supposed to give the military a better idea of where the student would be best placed in the military: "These tests will give you an idea of how you'll score, and identify areas that need improvement," the military says. "Don't skimp on preparing for this test. It's your future. Get the most out of it."[72]

No Child Left Unrecruited

The penetration of the military into the nation's bastions of learning had been gathering pace for decades. In 1996, in the middle of Bill Clinton's tenure, the Solomon Amendment, named for its sponsor, US Representative Gerald B. H. Solomon, permitted the denial of federal funding to any educational institution which refused to allow military recruiters to go about their business on campus. This increased level of aggressive recruitment was facilitated and supported by one of George W. Bush's flagship pieces of legislation. In 2001 the No Child Left Behind Act was signed into law with great fanfare and bipartisan support. The act was supposed to enforce a more standardized testing regimen, but deep into its thousands of pages was a directive that would prove to be of huge help to recruiters looking to pester high school students to sign up. Though it drew no comment from the media at the time, which probably didn't have time to read the whole thing, the Act stipulated: "each local educational agency receiving assistance under this Act shall provide, on a request made by military recruiters or an institution of higher education, access to secondary school students names, addresses, and telephone listings."[73] In other words, high schools would now be obliged to hand over the phone numbers of all their pupils (no matter how young) to military recruiters, so a process of grooming them for service in the US military could get underway. It represented the manipulation of US youth at its worst. Before the age of eighteen, young people were not trusted to vote, to make legal or medical decisions, among others, but now they were ready to be solicited for the job of putting their life on the line.

There was a little-known proviso which did concede that a "secondary school student or the parent of the student may request that the student's name, address, and telephone listing . . . not be released without prior written parental consent." But in the end this turned out to be a hugely misleading, as only parents with a thorough knowledge of the Act—unsurprisingly, not many—were aware of the clause. Investigative journalist David Goodman did the most serious research into the effects of this policy.[74] He found that the Pentagon had gathered the names of 34 million young people, what they called "the largest repository of 16-25-year-old youth data in the country," in something they called the JAMRS database, or the Joint Advertising Market Research & Studies program run by the DOD. Worryingly, the data has also been retrieved by private data firms, such as the Student Marketing Group and American Student List, who were paid up to $600,000 by the Pentagon every year to aggregate young people's purchasing choices.

The result was a full-scale militarization of high schools throughout America. A concerned BBC report profiled Sergeant Larry Arnold, a career soldier "with a charming line of fast-paced chatter" who "circulates through the town like a salesman."[75] The victims of his sales routine were the youth of Kokomo, Indiana—population 46,000—many of whom receive "cold calls" from the sergeant in order to get them to enlist. "He uses lists of student that federal law requires the schools to provide to military recruiters," the article notes, without referencing the offending No Child Left Behind Act. Therefore "it is not uncommon for students to get calls from every branch of the service." Sgt. Arnold said that army recruiters will make 300 calls a day, adding, "Pressure is always there. It's the army, it's your mission, and they drill that into you every day." There was one case which particularly caught the eye:

> Sgt 1st Class Arnold met 17-year-old Matthew, a quiet boy who may or may not be able to graduate from high school in the spring of 2007. He was not certain. If that was not enough cause for concern, Matthew's mother also confided that her son was taking two medications a

> day for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Despite that clearly disqualifying medical condition, Sgt 1st Class Arnold admitted he was tempted to sign him up anyway.

The US military was acting like an African militia with grooming for service extended to kids as young as eleven in some cases. In the process, they were breaking the law. A report, *Soldiers of Misfortune*, by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) found that the US government was actually in contravention of an international protocol prohibiting the recruitment of children into military service when they are under eighteen years old.[76] It also noted that the US military disproportionately targets poor and minority public school students, but its findings were dutifully ignored after being submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Maybe that was because the US is one of only two countries (the other is Somalia) to have never ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Even so, the Senate puts the age minimum for recruitment at seventeen, but the report found that recruiters "regularly target" younger children, "heavily recruiting on high school campuses, in school lunchrooms, and in classes." The ACLU surveyed 1,000 children aged from fourteen to seventeen who were enrolled in New York City high schools as part of the report. One in five of the respondents said that class time had been given over to military recruiters, and 35 percent said that military recruiters had access to multiple locations in the schools where they could meet students. The ACLU contended that in their desperation the Pentagon had used the JROTC, which has access to thousands of junior high schools, middle schools, and high schools across the country, to systematically target children. Military recruiters use "exaggerated promises of financial rewards for enlistment, which undermines the voluntariness of their enlistment," the report noted. It detailed the use of "coercion, deception, and even sexual abuse" by recruiters. Punishment for such transgressions was rare. "The United States military's procedures for recruiting students plainly violate international standards and fail to protect youth from abusive and aggressive recruitment tactics," said Jennifer Turner of the ACLU Human Rights Project. African child soldiers, meet African American child soldiers.

Virtual War

The tireless effort to bring children into the orbit of the military was gathering pace even outside of schools, with underhand manipulation the order of the day. In 2009, Students for a Democratic Society found military recruiters scouting out Summerfest, the largest music festival in Milwaukee. They hadn't been an easy spot at first, as this time they were moonlighting as professional models, a developing tactic from the military that preyed on the sexual desires of pubescent America. Recruitment brass had enlisted the help of Encore Nationwide, providers of promotional models, to seduce America's young into service. Sex was soon supplemented by video games. There was a concerted effort to "make war fun," a job taken on by the army's first official marketing officer, Edward Walters, a thirty-eight-year-old West Point graduate and former marketing man for Kraft Foods. One of his first initiatives got underway in August 2008, in the form of the first and only Army Experience Center in Philadelphia (cost $12 million), a new variation on the recruitment office theme—this time providing arcade video games and a merchandise shop to reel the kids in. A 14,500-square-foot "virtual educational facility," it offered all the experiences of war played out in on-screen games and simulated exercises. Little kids could sit in a Humvee and think longingly of the deserts of the Middle East. The target demographic was hinted at by its location close to a popular entertainment complex and indoor skate park. Even so, the army maintained that it was not a recruitment center, although the twenty soldiers working in the facility were trained recruiters.[77]

Walters told the press that the army store was a "new kind of recruitment office . . . We're moving away from normal recruiting offices and desks to places where men and women can experience military service," he said, adding, "We've been doing that with innovative techniques like interaction with real soldiers and high-tech virtual experiences." In 2006, advertising agency McCann Erickson was enlisted to dream up a $200 million campaign with the "Army Strong" slogan to bring in even more kids.[78] "Traditional marketing has been challenging," Walters told the *New York Post* for its article entitled "An Army of Fun." "When you're just focused on TV and the Web, it's hard to get the full message out there." [79] In June 2010, however, it was revealed that the Center was to close down—a strange course of events considering the cost and its relative success: a newspaper report said that at least 236 recruits had joined the army through the Center and it had been attended by 40,000 people.[80] The organizers of resistance to the Center, who set up a website "Shut Down the Army Experience Center," claimed victory and said it had planned a protest just before the scheduled closing date.[81] Unbelievably, the military claimed that the installation was not intended to be permanent, but that its technology would be replicated around the country. The use of video games to glorify military combat, sanitizing its perception among the young, had, in fact, been a long-term strategy. In 2002, the Army Game Project had been released for download from the internet, allowing players to "fire on a rifle range, run an obstacle course, attend sniper school, train in urban combat and parachute from a C-17 transport."[82] It soon had eight million players worldwide. It was a serious operation to build, created primarily by the Modeling, Virtual Environment and Simulation Institute at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. Help was also at hand from the bright lights of Hollywood, as Star Wars creator George Lucas's company, Skywalker Sound, provided them with sound effects from the *Terminator 2* movie. Soon after, an army office was opened with a staff of fifteen full-time video-game designers. The army proceeded to release the Virtual Army Experience, which it boasted was "based on actual missions" in its promotional video complete with images of Iraq. The game was the standard murder-fest, in which the player hunts down and kills the enemy, while, for instance, on patrol in Iraq. One journalist called it "a shoot-em-up, get-the-bad guys kind of affair."[83] It was the ultimate entertainment, except this time it was used to sign up kids for real war.

The Wikileaks release of the "Collateral Murder" video, showing a US attack on unarmed children and journalists in Iraq, brought the side effects of this video-game rendering of war painfully home. The language of the soldiers heard in the video revealed a complete dehumanization of the Iraqis on the ground, with words like "nice" being used to describe the massacre. The blame must rest partly with the army's use of video games to sell itself, which has numbed its young soldiers to the reality of war and destruction. It wasn't as if no one knew what effect it would have. In other domains, the idea that America's kids should be exposed to such unbridled violence was frowned upon. US lawmakers were clear: violence in video games is a corrosive force. A bill unveiled in December 2005 by Democrats Hillary Clinton and Joseph Lieberman proposed taking punitive measure against any business that sells or rents video games with an "adults-only" rating to anyone under age seventeen.[84] But things were different when it came to a military that kids were increasingly reluctant to join. For them, there was literally no escape from "adults-only" violence. In 2009, it was revealed that "Explorer" scouts, aged fourteen to twenty-one, were being dressed up in combat gear, given air guns, and taught to take on “counter-terrorist” duties and other law enforcement and military roles. “This is about being a true-blooded American guy and girl. It fits right in with the honor and bravery of the Boy Scouts,” said A. J. Lowenthal, a tough-talking sheriff’s deputy and Explorer leader in Imperial, California.[85] This glorification of violence and combat had a deleterious effect on the nation’s youth. In 2006, at the height of the recruitment drive, police in cities around the country blamed a spike in violent crime on increasing levels of juveniles involved in armed robbery, assaults, and other serious crimes. Minneapolis police estimated that juveniles would account for 63 percent of all suspects in violent and property offenses, an increase of 45 percent from 2002, just four years earlier.[86]

Parent Fight-back

The militarization of schools and childhood didn’t pass without heroic protest from a coalition of parents, students, and teachers, understandably upset at society’s colonization by the Pentagon. In June 2005 the *New York Times* ran a feature titled “Growing Problem for Military Recruiters: Parents,” citing a DOD survey which had found that only 25 percent of parents would recommend military service to their children in late 2004, down from 42 percent just a year earlier. The situation was so bad one recruiter said: “I had one father say if he saw me on his doorstep I better have some protection on me,” before adding, “We see a lot of hostility.”[87] Organized counter-recruitment parents teamed up with more established groups like the Central Committee for Conscientious Objection in order to make sure as many students as possible filled out the requisite forms needed to stop their details being handed over to recruiters. One was Tina Weishaus, president of the Highland Park Middle School/High School Parent Teacher Organization in New Jersey. “The recruiters really harangue people, and this is what parents are trying to avoid,” she said.[88] Local lawmakers also got in on the act. In Arcata and Eureka, the county councils voted for a Youth Protection Act which prohibited the recruitment of anyone under eigtheen within city limits, before it was ruled “unconstitutional” by a federal appeals court.[89]

Students themselves were revolting. In the largely black and Hispanic New York City neighborhood of Bushwick, the kids led the fight-back against the constant harrying and intrusion into their schools. One recent graduate of a Bushwick high school, Tamara Henderson, told a story that has been replicated across the US. She remembered recruiters hanging around the school "at least once a week," asking for students' names and approaching them in the hallways with flyers. "I feel like they are just targeting blacks and Latino students," she said, echoing the recruiter's handbook. "We should be having college recruiters in our schools to present options to continue our education. Instead we are left with military recruiters, feeding us lies and empty promises."[90] This led community members to start working with local schools to counter the takeover. In 2003, the Bushwick School for Social Justice (BSSJ) was set up to work on campaigns and education, including counter-recruitment drives. Make the Road was another Bushwick-based activist collective that has organized street theater protests outside one of the two recruitment stations in the area. In one, kids dressed up in orange jumpsuits and had black hoods on to protest the 2005 Haditha massacre in which 24 Iraqi civilians were murdered. "We offer youth-led workshops on military myths, counter-recruitment and the cost of war. We also work collaboratively with other organizations on a city-wide level to fight recruitment in schools and on the streets," said Sarah Landes, education coordinator of Make the Road. But they had a problem: if they stopped allowing military recruiters in their schools, vital funding would be cut. "Schools with high poverty populations get Title III federal funding, which we cannot do without, nor do we have the choice to not accept it," said Mark Rush, BSSJ Assistant Principal. But they could distribute forms to students to prevent the school from being forced to turn over students' contact information to recruiters, as mandated by No Child Left Behind. It was an amazingly successful fight back. "I believe in our five years only two students have signed up," said Rush.

That success was ruefully noted by the military brass, who, not understanding why their drive was not working, turned on the young themselves. A 2007 navy presentation put the blame for the decline in enlistment on the reluctance of so-called "millennials" to sign on the dotted line. After detailing the falling numbers of recruits, it went on to decode youth lingo for the benefit of the audience—like "OMG," for "oh my god"—before asserting that "this is not just about a generation gap, this is an alien life force." The youth of America had apparently become "narcissistic praise monkeys" who "can get disgruntled if not praised for simply 'showing up' at work."[91] "The military is no longer on kids' radar," it laments, with many preferring college. Recruiters, therefore, had to try harder to exploit that educational dream. The report refers to an unnamed teenager who had said, “(If I join the Navy) I’d miss out on having the excuse of being a college kid and being irresponsible.” But, in truth, it was the Iraq war that had turned the “millennials” anti-military, with 32 percent claiming it had made them “less patriotic,” and 67 percent contending they are “less likely to join the military.” It was a testament to the independence of the nation’s youth in the face of relentless pressure and propaganda from authority figures. With this “over-praised” generation resisting being manipulated into service in the War on Terror in the numbers needed, the military turned to a more pliant, war-weary generation: their grandparents.

GRANDPA GOES TO WAR

> *Virtually every one of them is called Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, but they bring a special flair to every soldier in that group.*
>
> Colonel Kevin A. Shwedo, Army Accessions Command, 2006[92]

Charles P. Gaffney, Jr. had already been a soldier. In the mid-1980s, after quitting his job as an automobile specialist, he spent six years in the army, most of it in Germany, doing what he believed was his patriotic duty as an American citizen. When he discharged himself years later, he was looking for a fresh start. He moved to Las Vegas to pursue a post-military life, getting a job with a local Porsche dealership. At the time, serving in the armed forces again didn’t occur to him—America had no direct threats and he had served his time with honor. But that would change on September 11, 2001. Like thousands of others, watching the destruction wreaked on the country he loved sent the lust to serve running through his veins again. In the years immediately following, however, he didn’t reenlist: he now had twin baby daughters to take care of, and in any case his age prohibited him from joining up. He couldn’t even contemplate the decision. Until January 2006, that is, when the situation changed. As the military scrambled for troops, the army raised its maximum age for recruitment into the service from thirty-five to forty. Gaffney was forty years old, just within the new limits. It seemed the perfect opportunity for the M-4 assault-rifle expert to get back to fighting for his country, so in August 2006 he entered the Arizona Army National Guard, a position that in less extraordinary times might not have meant combat. But this was the War on Terror, and Gaffney soon became one of the hundreds of thousands of reserve soldiers shipped off for a tour in

Iraq, which finished at the end of 2007. “I won’t say I was upset he was going back, but I didn’t want him to,” his dad said later. Gaffney still had the same passion for the cause he had back in the eighties. “He told me it was for people’s rights around the world, for them to say what they want to say without other people beating them down,” his dad added.[93]

In keeping with the extended deployments of these years, Gaffney was redeployed in 2008 with the 101st Airborne Division, this time to Afghanistan. It would be his last trip. He never saw his baby girls again. On Christmas Eve of that year, just a few months after he arrived in the country, he was slain at his combat outpost in Paktika province in eastern Afghanistan after it came under sustained enemy rocket fire. He was forty-two years old, another American warrior who couldn’t put down his gun. He had believed the rhetoric of the War on Terror and sacrificed himself to bring democracy and freedom to foreign peoples and to protect his daughters. His memorial service at East Lawn was a poignant occasion, attended by more than 200 people who wanted to pay their respects and honor the fallen soldier who had received both the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. The service finished with a three-volley rifle salute and one report noted “some attending the service sobbed quietly.”[94] “We want to ensure that the sacrifice this soldier made will never be forgotten,” said Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Kunk, rear detachment commander of the 101st Airborne. “This soldier had other choices, but chose the Army, because he believed his service to our country was important.”[95]

Gaffney was a hero to many, but countless others would follow the same path. When the age increase to forty didn’t work, six months later it was pushed up further to forty-two. In the six months following the first regulation change, the army recruited 300 soldiers over thirty-five years old, but only five of those were aged forty or older, one of which was Gaffney.[96] Over the whole year, the army enlisted 653 soldiers aged thirty-five or older —without them it would have missed its target of 80,000 recruits for that year.[97] The military paid lip service to the *benefits* of having older recruits but omitted to mention that it was chronic troop shortages that brought about the regulation change rather than some sort of eureka moment. “A few years ago, we had a marathon runner with a master’s degree who spoke Russian, and he wanted to join the Army,” said a Pentagon spokesman. “We said no because he was 40. Where is the sense in that?”[98] The army was now, apparently, on the lookout for recruits with more refined qualities (contradicted somewhat by their penchant for criminals and extremists). "What we're gaining in terms of experience and maturity and desire is phenomenal," assured Colonel Kevin A. Shwedo, a director at Army Accessions Command, which oversees recruiting. "Virtually every one of them is called Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, but they bring a special flair to every soldier in that group."[99] He wasn't joking, either. In 2001, the military had established another enfranchisement program in which retired military personnel could be pulled out of their summer homes on Cape Cod and sent back into active-duty in support of "contingency operations." The so-called Retiree Recall initiative was, specifically, to "close gaps in hard-to-fill specialities."[100] But by 2009 nearly 3,000 veterans had passed through the program, while nearly 750 served in the Middle East—more than 1,000 were in the service in the same year.[101]

While a gray-haired Clint Eastwood may be capable of looking poised on screen, gun in hand, it was unclear if that could be duplicated in the real world. The military was intent on finding out. Grandpa now had a chance to stop telling his Gulf War I stories to the grandkids and join Gulf War II. Even a Vietnam veteran—Steven Hutchison, who retired from the army in 1988 as a member of the 101st Airborne division and was decorated with a Bronze Star and a Meritorious Service Medal—was among the first retiree recalls. In a familiar story, the events of 9/11 had pushed this soldier, who had experienced the Tet Offensive in 1968, to serve again. At the time, his wife dissuaded him, arguing that he had done enough to serve his country already. But she died of breast cancer in 2006, after being helped through her illness by her doting husband. In the heat of the trauma, Hutchinson had nothing left to stop him and signed up again at the age of fifty-nine. The military sent him on a tour of Afghanistan, initially in a non-combat role. When he came back to the US he arrived at Fort Riley to meet his new unit and some were shocked at his age. "I thought 40-something, maybe 50," said Staff Sergeant Rivas Nestor, who was seven years old when Hutchison retired from the military. Nevertheless, his unit was sent to Iraq as part of the First Infantry Division. Less than a month shy of his sixty-first birthday Major Hutchison was killed by a roadside bomb that exploded next to his vehicle near Umm Qasr. He was the oldest American soldier to die in Iraq.

Despite their apparent enthusiasm for bringing in the oldies, the army did stop the practice briefly after reaching the numbers it wanted through the "Grow the Army" program, which cost $15.1 billion in 2009, more than double the previous year.[102] But in September 2009 a message went out from Vice Chief of Staff, General Peter Chiarelli, *reinstating* the program "due to the recent approval of a temporary increase in active component end strength."[103] President Obama was now seeking to increase army strength by 22,000 over three years. The change allowed retirees on duty to apply for a one-year extension at the end of their current tour, and it opened the program to new applicants. "Retirees up to 70 years old can apply for a one-year tour, with the chance of renewal, through the program," the military promised. It was, however, understandable why the army had stopped the programs when recruiting figures were better. The older recruits were leaving the army at *nearly double the rate* of their younger peers: among the recruits signed up when the age restriction was raised, 11.4 percent from the thirty-five-and-up category left the army before serving a full year, a marked increase from the 6.5 percent among the rest of the recruits.[104] Older soldiers also found it harder to handle the rigors of combat. The army claimed publicly that it did not segregate older recruits in basic training or consider age when deploying them to different areas, but training exercises were undoubtedly a problem. "The type of training they receive is pretty much geared in one direction and focused on 18 and 20 year olds just coming in," Sergeant First Class Chris Patterson said. "When the older Soldier comes in, we don't know the kind of person we are getting. They bring to bear some experiences we haven't had. And we also have to take their physical strengths and abilities into consideration." This created problems for operational performance. The military knew it would have to change certain procedures to deal with this batch of older recruits: immediately they moved to lower the physical benchmark for them. On recruitment, a seventeen-year-old, for example, would be expected to do forty-seven sit-ups and thirty-five push-ups. For a forty-one-year-old this was a little easier with just twenty-nine sit-ups and twenty-four push-ups needed to prove themselves Army Good.

Unfortunately, bullets and IEDs don't discriminate in the same way. "Our training program has to ensure that every soldier is going to be able to outmaneuver, outfight, and win on today's battlefield," claimed Colonel Shwedo. But the truth was that older recruits like Gaffney and Hutchinson were at much greater risk of death and injury. In June 2010 it was reported that 566, or 12.1 percent, of the deaths in the War on Terror had been suffered by over-thirty-fives, a figure which dwarfed their representation in the fighting force.[105] The problem of PTSD was also more chronic in older soldiers: the older brain is not able to follow the rules of engagement as easily and is more questioning, which makes it more susceptible to traumas. It wasn't just battlefield problems either. The older recruits were at much greater risk of dying from the host of ailments associated with mature years. "Military service is a young person's profession. The physical in the first six months of service can be particularly stressful for older people," said David Segal, director of the Center for Research on Military Organization.[106] But the military refused to kick people out who couldn't hack it. One older soldier to pay the ultimate price was Staff Sergeant William Chaney, another veteran of the Vietnam War. He died of a blood clot aged fifty-nine, after surgery for a medical condition and appendix problem that had necessitated his evacuation from Iraq. He had signed up thinking that Iraq would help him get over the bitterness he still felt over Vietnam and the military's failure to take care of him. "When he came back [from Vietnam], he had trouble joining the [Veterans of Foreign Wars] because they said he hadn't fought in a real war," his wife Carol Chaney said. "He wanted to be an air traffic controller, what he was trained to do in Vietnam, but he was told that training was not transferable back at home. That left him a little bitter."[107] The military rubbed salt in the wounds when he died by not even informing his wife of what had happened. She discovered his passing when she called to check on him in hospital. "It is the most horrendous experience," she said. "I hope no other family has to go through this."

A Family Affair

From 2000 to 2006, the number of new soldiers over thirty soared by 92 percent nationally.[108] It turned the American military experience into a family affair, as parents joined up with their kids and were shipped off to the Middle East *together*. Margie Black, a forty-one-year-old grandmother from West Columbia, Texas, signed up with her twenty-one-year-old daughter. Russell Dilling, forty-two, of San Antonio, graduated with his nineteen-year-old son, Robert. Dilling said he had arrived at Fort Jackson at 11 p.m.—one hour before his forty-second birthday—the army's cut-off. "It's been tough physically, but my company has been pretty supportive," he said.[109] Older recruits joined up for a variety of reasons, from desperation to patriotism to boredom. "I was comfortable in civilian life and did that 9-to-5 thing all the time for a long time. I was just in a rut," said thirty-nine-year-old Private First Class Randy Covington. "When they changed the age, it seemed like the opportunity came back for me."[110] "When I'd see a soldier walk down the street when I was a small child, they'd look so disciplined, so sure," said Private Aletha North-Williams, a forty-one-year-old mother of two from Houston. "I wanted that for myself, and it has always stuck in my soul."[111] Politicians, however, rationalized the program by pointing to the changing demographics of the nation. "In part, this decision is an indication of how difficult the recruiting environment is right now," admitted Representative Vic Snyder (D-AR), the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Military Personnel of the House Armed Services Committee. "But [it] is also part of a changing society, a healthier and longer-living society, and Army standards ought to reflect that." He *had* a point. A federal report in 2008 found life expectancy for Americans continued to increase and older Americans were in better health than previous generations. As the baby-boom generation entered middle and old age it *was* changing American demographics. In 2006, an estimated 37 million people in the US—12 percent of the population—were sixty-five and older, and this was forecast to reach 20 percent by 2030.[112] "We're finding there's a lot of people out there that wanted to join, and age was their only disqualifier," said Leslie Ann Sully, a spokeswoman for the army's local recruiting battalion near Fort Jackson.[113]

There was a lot of talk about baby-boomers being a burden on the health-care and pension systems during the War on Terror, but many were now fighting America's wars and when the financial crisis hit in 2008 it created a new army of unemployed oldies. Not surprisingly all branches of the military met recruitment targets in 2008 and Pentagon officials publicly attributed the military's new popularity to the layoffs that hit America's biggest companies, pushing the national unemployment rate above 7 percent soon after. In the aftermath of the crisis, many older people lost their jobs, livelihoods, and self-respect in the middle of their lives—stuck supporting a family on unemployment insurance (if they were lucky). The newly open military became an obvious place to go. Basic military pay for the first four months of active duty was just over $15,500 a year, but more when benefits were included.[114] This was quite an attractive pay deal for those slung on the unemployment heap. "It's a guaranteed job, as long as you go to work every day," boasted Captain Jared Auchey, company commander of the Army Experience Center in Philadelphia, who estimated that one in ten of the enlistments are over thirty-five. "There are no layoffs in the Army," he added, not mentioning there are other ways to be "laid off" on the battlefield.[115] Staff Sergeant Arron Barnes spouted the familiar military line that older recruits tended to bring technical skills and maturity. Then he revealed the real reason for their desire to join: desperation. “They contribute at a higher level because they have no other place to go,” he said. “This is their life.” A new generation of desperate people whose lives had been torn apart by a financial crisis that was not their fault was now turning to the one place that promised redemption. Profiled by the *New York Times*, Specialist John D. Butts, thirty-eight, was emblematic of the recession-recruit:

> An aspiring writer who was a house painter outside Philadelphia for two decades, he lost his steady paycheck last November after the housing market crashed. A part-time job at Blockbuster did not pay his rent, and when his landlord threatened to evict him, his girlfriend (now his wife) and her three teenage children, he decided radical action was required. He called an Army recruiter he had met recently and signed up for a three-year stint. Despite years as a dedicated beer drinker and smoker, Specialist Butts made it through basic here at Fort Sill and is now training with an artillery unit that may head to South Korea this year. A tour in Afghanistan could be in the cards, he says.

It was the same place Private Gaffney had been sent to die.

CHAPTER FOUR

Outsiders

GREEN CARD SOLDIERS

The only for sure way of gaining citizenship through military service in the United States armed services is to die.

Marco Amador, filmmaker, 2010[1]

In late March 2003, the month the invasion of Iraq got underway, America received news of its first battlefield casualties. It was a stark wake-up call for the country and brought home the tragic human costs of war. “The violence of the war against Iraq made its way to small towns . . . when residents learned that one of the first military victims was someone they knew,” wrote the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* at the time.[2] The soldiers fell while carrying out one of the early objectives of the invasion plan—to secure the port city Umm Qasr in the south of Iraq. In older times a sleepy fishing village, it had been turned into a military port after the Iraqi Revolution of 1958 because of its strategic proximity to Iran and Kuwait. US Marines advanced from Kuwait as the invasion got underway, taking the port surprisingly quickly. But they then had to spend days securing it against what a British commander called “heavy resistance.” “We were told Umm Qasr wasn’t too bad, then we get reports of dug-in Iraqi infantry, it was hair-raising,” said one platoon sergeant, Marc Montez.[3] One of the soldiers in his platoon who was trying to hold back Iraqi resistance was Lance Corporal José Antonio Gutierrez, First Marine Division, who had arrived in Kuwait just two months before aboard the USS *Rushmore*. In a major firefight on March 21, he became America’s first casualty in the war, shot fatally in the chest by a fellow soldier, in a so-called “friendly fire” incident.

Except Lance Corporal Gutierrez wasn’t an American casualty at all—the twenty-four-year-old was, in fact, Guatemalan, an orphan who had travelled

2,000 miles and crossed two borders illegally for his crack at the American dream. In death, there was no one in small-town America to mourn him, and his dream of becoming a US citizen was realized only posthumously. He had given his life for a country that was not even his own, a sacrifice made even more poignant considering the tragic history of US military involvement in his native country—which had destroyed his own family. Gutierrez was born in the small Guatemalan village of Escuintla at the height of the country's brutal civil war, which had raged from 1960 to the middle of the 1990s, and for which the US government and military establishment were in large part responsible. Before 1944, the Guatemalan elite composed 2 percent of the population but had control of more than 60 percent of the land, according to historian Walter LaFeber.[4] "The poorest 50 percent of the population owned only 3 percent of the land but depended on [it] for their food," while half the population were indigenous and earned less than $100 a year while being subjected to brutal and harsh discrimination by the ruling elite.[5] The country's corrupt dictatorship was overthrown in 1944 by a student-led middle-class revolt and in 1951 the progressive social democrat Jacobo Arbenz Guzman came to power in democratic elections. He planned and enacted a huge redistribution program that gave land back to the previously disenfranchised poor and Indian population. In doing so, he particularly upset the United Fruit Company, a US-based multinational company that controlled a large proportion of the region's fruit production and transport.

For the then incumbent in the White House, President Dwight Eisenhower, this was confirmation that Guatemala was close to teaming up with the Soviets. He soon ordered the CIA to train Guatemalan exiles to get rid of Arbenz and Guatemalan democracy. Though not at this stage actually affiliated to the USSR, "the frightened Guatemalan government gratefully accepted a shipload of armaments from the Soviet bloc." Eisenhower needed no other pretext and ordered the CIA-backed exiles from their bases in Honduras and Nicaragua to start attacking Guatemala. This was supported by American-operated planes that dropped dynamite onto Guatemala City, its capital. Arbenz had no choice but to flee and the exiled leader, General Carlos Castillo Armas, took control. The remnants of the reform movement were put before a firing squad and the pre-revolution order was reinstated, clearing the way for decades of brutality and oppression. Philip C. Roettinger, a US Marine colonel who was instrumental in liquidating Guatamalan democracy, wrote in 1986 that his actions "turned out to be a terrible mistake . . . Our ‘success’ led to 31 years of repressive military rule and the deaths of more than 100,000 Guatemalans.”[6] It was actually a lot more. In February 1999 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission established to investigate the atrocities during the civil war squarely blamed the genocide of the Indian population on the right-wing military dictatorship, which was supported by the US. American military advisers and the CIA had also helped design the “scorched earth” campaign in which 440 villages disappeared from map. When the killing finally abated in the 1990s, 200,000 people had been killed or disappeared. “The United States must not repeat that mistake,” President Bill Clinton said simply in the aftermath.[7] A few years later, in the attack on Iraq, they *would* repeat it, and Gutierrez would pay for the “mistake” a second time.

In the late 1970s amid countless hideous massacres of the Indian population in the countryside, Gutierrez’s Mayan parents had been forced to flee to Guatemala City which was being flooded with people seeking a safe haven. Their son, José, was the embodiment of this broken and abused society: when both his parents died, he was forced to live by his wits on the streets, one of 300,000 street kids that shame the country to this day. At eight or nine, and undernourished, he was saved by Casa Alianza, a UK charity that takes in street kids. He was lucky: many of his friends on the streets would die before they reached their teens. But inside he was “bleeding with loneliness and sadness,” said Patrick Atkinson, the director of the orphanage. When he arrived at Casa, he was still looking for his mother who had died. No one had told him that when people die they don’t come back, and as he got older his yearning for a family led him to search desperately for his sister. “He was always talking about his sister but couldn’t find her, he didn’t know where to look,” said his mentor at Casa. Eventually, with the help of a social worker, he tracked her down; but José dreamed of a bigger family and of becoming an architect so he could build a house for himself that no one could throw him out of. These dreams couldn’t, he gradually recognized, be achieved in Guatemala. At fourteen, he told his friends there was nothing left for him in the country and he wanted to leave. They tried to dissuade him from the perilous journey north to the US that so often ends in death or prison for thousands of Latinos. But early one morning, he caught the bus to the Mexican border and waited until dawn to wade through a river into Mexico before catching a freight train north, the start of a journey that would take him 2,000 miles and put him between the wheels of fourteen different trains. Along the way he worked on food plantations to stay alive. At the US–Mexico border it took three attempts to get over, but he was smart and pretended to be Mexican, avoiding deportation back to Guatemala. In the back of his mind was his beloved sister, Engracia, who had promised to follow him north if he was successful. On arrival in the US, he was soon picked up by immigration authorities who let him stay after he told them he was sixteen and applied for asylum. He was put with foster parents, themselves Latin American immigrants, but still made sure to send $20 or $30 back to his sister from small jobs he did while he went to high school and community college.[8]

After being taken in by a number of foster families, in September 2002 he enlisted. "I remember when he came in . . . I had to interview them, find out a little about them," his platoon sergeant said later. "One question on there is 'Why did you join the Marine Corps?' And I distinctly remember his [answer], because I read it a couple of times and it said that, the reason he joined the Marine Corps was to give something back to the US, to give something back to the country that took him in basically. And that struck me pretty hard, like wow you know he's not joining for any other reason than to give back to the US, to the country." José's decision actually had much more to do with the desperation brought on by the end of high school and with it the foster child program. He was on his own—again. At the same time, his grades weren't sufficient to get him a scholarship to study architecture, his lifelong dream. He was enticed by the prospect of citizenship and the benefits offered by military service. "He wanted education, to be an architect, to write a book," said his social worker. "He said, 'I feel like I'm running out of time and I want to do it all, so if I get my education paid for by the government I can do a lot of things.'" The military was offering all sorts of inducements at this point, so he enlisted as a rifleman in the First Marine Division, based at Camp Pendleton, California. He had got the family he had always yearned for (in the form of the military), but less than a year later he was dead—apparently consumed with love for the US. Well, such was the story the military wanted to put out, and the media was happy to oblige in repeating the fairytale of the "patriotic foreigner." "Fallen Marine wanted to give back to adopted country"[9] ran the headline on CNN when he died. It was a lie. As a proud Latino, José didn't even want to learn English. "He was proud of being from Guatemala and he said he never wanted to be an American," said his social worker in the US. "José wasn't being himself. He was playing a role in order to reach his goal," added his mentor. But he was useful to the military in death. "The story that was told by the US embassy, by the US military, was a classic war propaganda story," said a close friend. "Once again using and exploiting [José] for their own ends. And you read this boy came to the States illegally at 14, wants to be an American, wants to be a Marine. You know what? False. Completely untrue. Why would they lie like that when the boy's story is so powerful for who he is?" José's dreams of becoming an architect and getting an education had actually never included military service. "He hadn't planned to do it," said his foster brother in the US. "He never intended to go into the marines. That's the last thing that would have occurred to him. What he wanted was to become an architect or professional soccer player. That's what he always talked about. I once told him I wanted to join the marines. He said, 'You're crazy. Don't do that. They're nuts.' It wasn't his thing. But after he graduated from high school he couldn't see any future for himself. He did it out of sheer desperation. What else could he have done?" He wrote to his sister frequently while deployed. One letter began: "Dear sister, things are different here, everything has to be done fast and be decided right away. In Guatemala I had no discipline and much less respect but now my life is based on discipline and respect. Life is so different, friendships get lost, people don't remember each other, they live to work, time goes by, my life has changed, but for you I'll always be the boy you knew as a child and met again as an adult, the one who can laugh and cry, who has known bad times and is trying to forget them. Write to me, send me a picture, a few lines at least, love you, don't forget that, pray for me and that we'll see each other again soon, stay out of trouble. José Gutierrez."

In death his coffin was draped in the Stars and Stripes, but his friends at Casa Alianza wanted to bury him at their Ciudad Vieja cemetery, which is where all the street kids killed by the police and security services are laid to rest. The US embassy told his sister that they already had a plot sorted in a more high-end cemetery and she didn't demur. "He's laying where he doesn't belong, he wasn't part of that reality, a cemetery with mausoleums as big as houses, houses that he never knew on the streets," said his mentor. "He's lying there all alone, cut off from us." It was the final insult.

Although José's story is singular and attracted a lot of media attention because he was the first soldier to die in Iraq, the War on Terror would see many other foreign nationals perish while serving a country which was not their own. As the Pentagon scoured the domestic population for recruits, it struck home that America—the land of immigrants—could look elsewhere. Its allies continued to use foreign fighters to swell their ranks, from the British Gurkhas to the French Foreign Legion, while the private military contractors populating the frontlines were enlisting recruits from all over the world. So why not the US military? Immigrants with permanent status, or "Green Cards," had been able to sign up for the military for decades, but the number enticed to do so shot up during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as the carrot of citizenship was held out in front of their noses. The rules stipulated that only immigrants legally in the US (i.e. with a residency visa) for two years were eligible to sign up. However, while in 2001 the number of immigrants who became US citizens while in the military was just 750, by 2005 that figure had jumped by 500 percent to 4,600.[10] The changing demographics of the US population added to the pressure. The foreign-born population of the US was the largest in the history of the country, up to 11.7 percent of the population in 2003, a significant increase from the 9.3 percent registered in 1995.[11] These people were often younger, and more vulnerable. "Immigrants will fuel much of the growth in America's youth population," said a report by the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA), a federally funded research and development center for the navy and the Marine Corps. About a third of the world's population was under fifteen, with the vast majority living in developing countries. "Because many will have difficulty finding work in their native countries, large numbers of young adults emigrate—either alone or with families—with many choosing the United States as their destination. Of the 16 million foreign-born people who came to the United States between 1990 and 2002, almost a quarter were under age 21." It was the perfect pool of new recruits and the CNA recommended mining the legal immigrant community more heavily. "One overlooked source of military manpower is immigrants and their families," it noted. "In fact," the organization concluded, "much of the growth in the recruitment-eligible population will come from immigration." It was the new American Dream.

In July 2002, George W. Bush issued an executive order which shortened the period that non-citizen soldiers would have to wait for citizenship from the usual three years to just one. He greased the path to military service further by waiving naturalization fees and allowing recruits to take the oath of citizenship at US embassies and consulates abroad rather than in the US itself. The incentives worked. "We've had a record surge of applications," said a spokesman for US Citizenship and Immigration Services, before lauding the ease with which immigrants could “apply for citizenship immediately, the day they are sworn in as members of the military.”[12] In 2004, the US immigration agency started to conduct the first overseas military naturalization ceremonies since the Korean War. During 2005, 1,006 foreign-born soldiers became citizens outside the United States. As of May 2010, there were 16,966 non-citizens on active duty.[13] For the Bush administration, it was the perfect solution: the introduction of more immigrants would kill two birds with one stone, “as a way to address a critical need for the Pentagon, while fully absorbing some of the roughly one million immigrants that enter the United States legally each year.”[14] Instead of providing a sanctuary or granting them amnesty, the Bush administration would use service in the military as a bargaining chip. It worked: there has been an extraordinary increase in the number of immigrant soldiers who have gone on to become naturalized citizens. From 9/11 to the end of 2009, 52,000 foreign-born soldiers had become full-fledged US citizens, more than one hundred of them posthumously after being killed in combat.[15] But while it served a purpose for the military, they weren’t overly kind in their treatment of the immigrant soldiers. There was an important proviso that a Green Card soldier who obtains US citizenship through service in the military can have that revoked if they receive an “other than honorable” discharge before completing five years of service. With the prevalence of drug and alcohol abuses—alongside the traumas of untreated PTSD—running through the service, this proviso was invoked widely and impacted countless immigrant families. After returning from the Middle East with their family’s futures in mind, some committed crimes and were put in jail, then, on release, deported. It sparked outrage among some lawmakers. Representative Bob Filner (D-CA), chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, was a proponent of changing this part of the law so that immigrants who had put themselves in danger in war could avoid deportation. “You come back from Iraq or Afghanistan today, you have put yourself on the line for this country,” said Filner. “An incredible number of kids come back with an injury or illness that puts them in trouble with the law. To simply have these people deported is not a good way to thank them for their service.”[16] Dardar Paye was one of those who served the US proudly for many years, after coming to the country aged thirteen from the strife of Liberia. He joined the army in 1998 and went on to serve in the first

Gulf War and then in Kosovo. In 2008, a decade after he signed up, he was convicted of six weapons-related offenses and went to federal prison. On being released, he faced deportation. "When I was in Kuwait, in Kosovo, I was like everyone else who was there, putting their lives on the line," said Paye, who was an armored vehicle crewman in the army. "Now I feel like they just used me for what they wanted, and now they're throwing me away." (While waiting on his appeal, Paye was tragically murdered, his body found in the boot of a car with multiple gunshot wounds.) Everything had become much harder for immigrants with the passing of the 1996 Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, which added crimes such as drug possession for sale to the list of serious offenses that could lead to deportation of a legal immigrant. "Drugs, anger management, weapons charges, that's what a lot of vets are getting caught for, and there is no relief," said Margaret Stock, a recently retired army reservist and immigration attorney who taught at the United States Military Academy at West Point. "The 1996 law really put the nails in their coffin," she added.

Nightmare Act

On top of revoking citizenship once granted, the Bush administration was not short on ideas of how to send legal immigrants out to the desert in the first place. In 2007, the so-called Dream Act went before Congress, ostensibly as a way to provide immigrants with further means to citizenship, but, like all legislation in the period, including the No Child Left Behind Act, it had a military element. There was a crucial provision that would allow immigrants to achieve citizenship through either a two-year stint at a community college or military service for the same time period. With many immigrants unable to pay for the even the bare necessities, the chances of them being able to fork out for a two-year course seemed unlikely, as was the case for Gutierrez. Military service was the only other option. The Act also made extreme provisions for giving a Green Card to undocumented high-school students who agreed to serve in the military. It was eventually defeated in Congress, and then resubmitted without the community service option, before being defeated again in December 2010. The group Vamos Unidos, which represents Latino youth in the Bronx, New York, one of the main areas of recruitment activity, were particularly critical of the Dream Act's provisions. "We demand that we return to our original DREAM ACT that had a community service option instead of a military one," the group said. “The military has been losing their numbers due to the multiple wars the US has begun. The DREAM ACT would hand us over on a platter to fight these unjust wars. The DREAM ACT has been warped over the years to draft Latino youth into the military, as they need more and more soldiers to fight their wars.” The group called it a *de facto* draft.[17] At the time, influential military analysts and think tanks were beginning to voice support for allowing *any* foreigners who wanted to enter the military to become Americans, in a full-scale “barbarization” of the military. (“Barbarization” is the term used to describe the later Roman military when it started allowing outsiders, or “barbarians,” to fight in their army.) “Now is the time to consider a new chapter in the annals of American immigration,” wrote two of the biggest enthusiasts, Max Boot and Michael O’Hanlon, in the *Washington Post*. “By inviting foreigners to join the U.S. armed forces in exchange for a promise of citizenship after a four-year tour of duty, we could continue to attract some of the world’s most enterprising, selfless and talented individuals.”[18] Not only that, it would go some way to treating the problem of the millions of undocumented workers already in the US (and the million that enter every year)—a kind of amnesty with the caveat of military service. Who cares if they have to risk their lives to achieve their dream? In fact, Boot and O’Hanlon wanted to go even further: “We could provide a new path towards assimilation for undocumented immigrants who are already here but lack the prerequisite for enlistment—a green card. And we could solve the No. 1 problem facing the Army and Marine Corps: the fact that these services need to grow to meet current commitments yet cannot easily do so . . . given the current recruiting environment.” The *de facto* draft, in other words.

The cheerleaders for this new policy pointed to history for support (not Roman history, however). This kind of approach, they argued, had deep roots in the history of America’s armed forces, which was partially true. In one of the country’s most celebrated military victories—the Revolutionary War—German and French soldiers fought alongside the colonists to expel the British. In the Civil War about 20 percent of fighters were foreigners freshly arrived in the US, and English was “barely spoken” in some units. But that was 150 years ago. During the War on Terror, America was undergoing one of its most fervent anti-immigrant, jingoistic phases since the early 1980s, which didn’t sit too well with granting citizenship to thousands of immigrants. In November 2005 the Bush administration had announced it was to build a "virtual fence" along the Mexico–US border as part of a multibillion dollar effort to keep illegal immigrants out, incorporating a range of high-tech devices, including radar. The militarization of the Mexican border—likely pitting Mexican immigrants willing to serve against those trying to get across—went on unabated, while five years later, Arizona passed the most regressive immigration laws since Jim Crow: obliging police to query the immigration status of people whom they suspect are in the US illegally—i.e. brown, Latino-looking people. Boot and O'Hanlon were aware of this surge of jingoism, but told the racists not to worry. Everyone one was a winner—apart from those like José Gutierrez. "Nativists need not fear that this would lead to a flood of foreigners," they wrote. "Say we decide to recruit 50,000 foreigners a year for the next three years. That sounds like a lot, but it represents less than 10 percent of the total number coming to the United States anyway—and less than 10 percent of our active-duty armed forces. This would not radically change the demographics of our society or our military, but it would make a big difference in the size of the rotation base for our ongoing missions." In other words, white people can still rule the roost *and* we get fodder for our wars of aggression. It also made sense money-wise. The CNA found that non-citizens were "far more likely" to complete their enlistment obligations successfully than their US-born comrades. "Non-citizen service members have a long track record of military success," it noted. Thirty-six month attrition rates for non-citizens are between 9 and 20 percentage points lower than those for white citizens.[19]

Illegal Immigrants, Illegal Recruiters

Quietly, after the defeat of the Dream Act, something more insidious was passed in its stead: a law which gives the Pentagon power to bring immigrants into the US if it is deemed (in that beautiful piece of bureaucratic ambiguity) "vital to national security." Although this law hasn't been applied frequently, its has the potential to be widely used. The military had already started looking beyond the legal immigrants within its borders, casting its gaze to Mexico and the millions of desperately poor young men who dreamed of making it to the US. As early as 2003, the US embassy had to release a statement reiterating official policy that "undocumented or illegal immigrants cannot serve in the U.S. armed forces," after a US military recruiter was found to have visited in a high school in Tijuana, Mexico.[20]

The recruiter had apparently turned up after following a conversation with two potential recruits. “The U.S. Army does not recruit here. We don’t endorse them coming here,” claimed a spokesman. But the Mexican newspaper *Milenio* called the sergeant’s efforts “an intense campaign to recruit young high school students.” Other local newspapers contended that the recruiter handed out promotional literature to students, claims denied by the US. In 2005, activists reported ads on Facebook that offered a Green Card in exchange for military service, highlighting the fact that the US military didn’t just want foreigners, it wanted young foreigners, perhaps to make up for all the retirees it was letting in. The young were also impressionable and full of romantic ideas about the American Dream. Within the US, it was a similar story—with recruiters bribing young illegal immigrants in the nation’s schools. Arlene Inouye, a high school teacher in the Los Angeles unified school district, said: “It’s well-known, common knowledge that military recruiters do promise or offer to our undocumented students fake Green Cards.” A student at the same school, Salvador Garcia III, added: “They offered they would bring my father back from Mexico if I served a four-year tour in the United States military.”[21] In 2007, civil rights activist Ildefonso Ortiz Cabrera reported that while he was in Phoenix, Arizona, army recruiters suggested he go to a military base; he refused and instead returned to El Burrion, his town in Sinaloa, north Mexico.[22] Not everyone was so strong-willed but we never heard about them—they ended up in the Middle East.

The promise of citizenship was a serious incentive. For many young Latinos this was the only shot for them and their family. In April 2008, Green Card holder Arturo Huerta-Cruz, twenty-three, of the Tenth Mountain Division, was on patrol near Tuz in northern Iraq, when he was killed by an IED. Huerta-Cruz was originally from a small rural town called Hidalgo, Mexico, but moved to Florida when he was ten. His motives for fighting were accurately outlined by the *Tampa Bay Times*, which said his death “will further opportunities for his younger cousins, including [his] baby Arturo, who is a U.S. citizen,” adding, “The infant child will have opportunities never available to Huerta-Cruz. He can vote for president; he might become president. He can work for the government—as Huerta-Cruz once hoped—or he might pass along his name to the family’s growing list of natural-born U.S. citizens.”[23] The headline of the article was typical of the “patriotic foreigner” narrative the military and media pushed: “Mexican Citizen Died in Iraq Serving U.S., His Beloved New Land," it read. But the American Dream had started to look very different during the War on Terror: it was no longer affluent suburban life in Middle America, but indigent war life in the Middle East. Sergeant Ernesto Hernandez, twenty-six, a Mexican from Temple, Texas, saw the military as the only way out of working in dead-end job with the threat of deportation. His fear, he said, was forever "working at Wal-Mart, changing oil or working at McDonalds." Hernandez became a vehicle mechanic for the 101st Airborne, and was deployed to Kuwait soon after. "It's not a bad deal," Hernandez said. "Especially with everybody speaking English, you pick it up like that."[24] Despite all this testimony of desperation, the military claimed that the granting of citizenship was not among the main reasons for immigrant enlistment. "Money for education, wanting to serve the country, and to learn a skill are the top three motivations," said Douglas Smith, Public Affairs Officer at the US Army Recruiting Command, contradicting everything the recruits were actually saying.[25]

On top of this the military claimed immigrants were actually better soldiers because they had a *better understanding* of American democracy and freedoms than those born in the country. It was a desperate attempt to put a positive spin on the "barbarization" of the military. "In many cases, they have a personal experience from living in an area where they didn't have that freedom and liberty," said Lieutenant Colonel Keith Pickens, chief of staff for the division rear command of the 101st Airborne. "They're a lot closer to the American founding fathers than the average American might be," he added.[26] It was the same rhetoric that accompanied the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan: foreigners can only grasp freedom when they see American bombs. Some of the soldiers might have realized that in their native countries—including Guatemala, among many others—democracy had been repressed by the US government. But the patronizing tone continued. Military leaders lauded the "cultural sensitivity" of foreigners—compared to the high levels of chauvinism among the regular troops anyway. "The American Army finds itself in a lot of different countries where cultural awareness is critical," said Lieutenant General Benjamin C. Freakley, the top recruitment officer for the army. The CNA added, "Legal permanent residents, or green card holders, are more racially, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse than citizen recruits. This is valuable on many levels, particularly at a time when the military is addressing the challenges of fighting terrorism."[27] But this new love for multiculturalism and diversity had its drawbacks. In the case of José Gutierrez, it can be argued that his lack of English contributed to his death. "He was holding security on one building, as they picked up he was on other side of building," said his platoon sergeant. "He didn't hear the verbal command . . . to get up and move."[28] Or he didn't understand it.

Life Is Cheap

The move to get foreigners to fight America's wars was controversial among immigrant groups, as it was essentially an extension of the already lopsided ethnic demographics of the US military during the War on Terror, in which minorities were disproportionately enlisted. It had unnerving echoes of the Vietnam War, where black soldiers were asked to fight to "defend" a democracy in which they had few rights: the new battalions of Green Card soldiers were fighting the same fight. Foreigners' lives are cheap—that is traditional imperial ideology, so it was clear quite early on that these recruits would not be stuck biting their fingernails at US bases for long. Many were sent straight into combat with no other option. The situation was made worse by a strange 2009 report from the Rand Corporation which found that Latinos were actually *underrepresented* in the US military. This increased efforts to find a way to get more of them in.[29] "For us, that's a huge problem. Mainly because in the invasion in 2003 in Iraq, 20 percent of the casualties in the invasion were Latino," said Marco Amador, a filmmaker.[30] But only 15.1 percent of the US population are Latino: if they are underrepresented in the military, how can 20 percent of those killed be Latino? The obvious answer is they are assigned more dangerous missions while on active duty. The charge that Green Card soldiers were merely cannon fodder looked uncomfortably true. For many in the immigrant communities it was the final straw as their communities had been gradually degraded by criminalization and deportations. "We have grown up with the trauma of having our family members and friends detained, jailed, and deported. But we are strong and determined, so we keep onwards," said one Latino rights group.[31] The reaction was similar to that of the parents who were fighting the militarization of childhood and education—the militarization of immigration was being equally resisted. A strange ideological alliance was spawned in opposition as immigrants' rights groups concerned with the blackmail received support from the anti-immigrant right-wing wary of a "flood" of immigration. It’s “another example of the exploitation of cheap labor,” said Jorge Mariscal, Vietnam veteran and professor of Latino studies at the University of California, San Diego.[32] It was another way to replicate the injustices of wider American society in its fighting force. “This is what the US military has always done. This is nothing new. They use the Latino community or the poor working class community in this country as their cannon fodder,” added Amador.[33] Then there were the right-wing arguments. “We should go to any length to avoid developing a kind of mercenary army, made up of foreigners loyal to their units and commanders but not to the republic,” Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, which aims to bring down immigration, wrote in the conservative *National Review*. “It didn’t work out well for the Romans.”[34] He felt the profession would be sullied by the involvement of too many foreigners, putting American citizens off serving, similar way to the way Americans don’t want to work fruit-picking. “If enlisting were a way to get legalized or a way to get into the United States,” he continued later, “soldiering would become a job Americans would not do very rapidly.”[35] There were frequent charges that Green Card soldiers were merely mercenaries, whose loyalty to the US military and the country more generally made them a risk. Recruiting a large number of non-citizens could change the main purpose of the military from that of defending the country to being “a way to get a foot in the door of the United States,” the argument went. Those same critics didn’t seem to mind the multiple private security firms who were populating the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq (and other parts of the world); firms whose soldiers were *literally* mercenaries being paid private salaries without any government oversight, free from the legal constraints on normal US soldiers.

In fairness to the critics, it *was* true that the entrance of foreigners from far-flung countries—from Pakistan to Malaysia—into the US military posed serious concerns about the security of the troops—a priority extremely low down on the Pentagon’s list when compared with bolstering the number of soldiers. With the evident US military insouciance towards extremism—including Islamic fundamentalism—it was the perfect opportunity for terrorist elements or foreign intelligence agents to penetrate the force. Egyptian double agent Ali A. Mohamed, who had served in the army as a supply sergeant at Fort Bragg in North Carolina in the late 1980s, did exactly that, providing Osama Bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda network with high-level information for terrorist attacks against US targets. The military had been extremely slow to come alive to his threat and it would end tragically. "Mr. Mohamed's story . . . is one of appalling oversights by American national security, including the C.I.A., the F.B.I. and the Army," said the *New York Times*.[36] His role in the September 11 attacks is unclear, but he has been charged with helping to plan the 1998 car bombing of the US Embassy in Kenya, which killed 224 people and injured 4,500. It appeared the army hadn't learned its lesson. During the War on Terror, a new program was designed that specifically targeted immigrants skilled in medicine and languages: the first time since Vietnam that those on temporary visas would be allowed to serve. Recruits would receive US citizenship within just six months of service. The fact that the military was desperate for Arabic speakers added to the perceived risks. Of course, the Bush administration didn't care. In fact, they were getting so desperate that it wasn't just their natural right-wing aversion to immigrants that was being compromised. Even homosexuals, who had for decades been the target of discrimination by the Republicans, were enjoying a quiet renaissance. There was, however, one American patriot, fluent in Arabic himself, who would be among the last hauled from the military for the "crime" of being gay.

ASK, TELL

> *People will look at Afghanistan and Iraq as the moment when lesbian and gay service members proved themselves to be part of the US military.*
>
> Victor Maldonado, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, 2008

Bleu Copas had always been a patriotic American but on September 11, 2001, that changed. As the carnage unfolded on his television screen that morning he moved from being simply a patriot—he now wanted to be a warrior. "I decided right then that as I had the ability and desire I would go ahead and serve my country, that I would act on my patriotic flair," says Copas, a twenty-four-year-old from Johnson City, Tennessee. At the time, he was studying for his masters in counseling at East Tennessee State University, but he decided to put his studies on hold. "I felt like my country needed me then, and it couldn't wait," he tells me. Copas was young, educated, well built, and passionate about serving his country. He was the perfect candidate. There was only one problem: he was gay. "I was prepared to lie and keep it secret," he says. At the time the military operated a "Don't

Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) policy which dated back to 1993. It stipulated that homosexuals in the military must keep their orientation secret and if they bucked this rule or were "outed" by colleagues they would be discharged. It all went according to plan for Copas. He was put on active-duty service and, via the Defense Language Institute in California, he arrived at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 2004 and became part of the Eighty-Second Airborne division. He didn't even have to be overly private. "Throughout this whole time in the military, my colleagues realized my orientation but it was never a problem," he says. Until 2005, that is. Then an anonymous email campaign targeting Copas started up, circulating correspondence in which Copas had divulged his sexuality. Even then he was shown sympathy by his superiors. "My command tried to sweep it under the rug, they tried to get rid of it because they wanted to keep me, I had been promoted very quickly when they realized my skills," he says. But the emails continued unabated and spread to his colleagues. Eventually the command gave Copas an honorable discharge with health benefits. "They had no choice, they had to discharge me then," he said. But Copas realizes he was just very unlucky after his easy start. "I think, ironically, everything now is falling into place regarding discrimination against homosexuals," he said in 2008. "I was just the victim of a very aggressive campaign, I would have been fine otherwise," he added. He was also lucky to get an honorable discharge, which meant holding on to the benefits he was entitled to—a luxury not everyone enjoyed.

Figures obtained through the Freedom of Information Act support Copas's claims about the military turning a blind eye. The DADT policy had resulted in hundreds of discharges every year since it was enacted, but in the period of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the numbers of discharges fell precipitously. In 2001 there were 640 discharges for homosexuality; in 2006 it was 282—a 56 percent reduction.[37] Homosexuals were serving almost without hindrance. "I think that people will look at Afghanistan and Iraq as the moment when lesbian and gay service members proved themselves to be part of the US military," said Victor Maldonado of the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), an organization which campaigns against military discrimination against homosexuals. "The conflict will be the Rubicon for gays and lesbians in service and there will be no going back. More and more service members are serving openly and having no repercussions, they simply are gay, and it evidently does not affect their relationship with their colleagues or command." The situation was so open that, Copas added, “At one point in the barracks in Monterrey [California] I was staying on a floor with eight rooms, and gay people were in half of them. In fact they were everywhere, especially at the language institute. And there are several that I know serving openly in the desert right now.”

Before the DADT legislation, the extent of regulation on homosexuals was a 1982 DOD directive which stated that “homosexuality was incompatible with military service,”[38]— around the same time it was decided that being a Nazi was not compatible with military service. When he first came to power in 1992, President Clinton announced an executive order designed to completely overturn the discriminatory policy. In response, the Republican-controlled Congress put forward legislation that would have enshrined the existing directive in federal law, making it impossible for any president to overturn. The 1993 DADT policy was the resulting fudge. Clinton can’t be blamed for the intransigence of his Republican opposition, and the compromise was a huge improvement on what went before; but it was still one more twist in the long history of formalized discrimination against homosexuals in the armed forces. In the Korean and Vietnam wars homosexuality had been labeled a “mental defect,” and the military barred recruits based on medical examinations, much like modern-day Turkey does. But troop needs ebbed and flowed: during wartime the military quietly ignored its strict regulations on gays, only to revive them again in peacetime. This is why the gay civil rights movement was so intent on achieving its goal (repeal of DADT) during a period when the War on Terror—with its *de facto* repeal of the law—had shown gays could serve openly at no detriment to the military.

Arguments Against

The case against homosexuals serving openly is primarily a moral one derived from religious dogma, a dominant feature of the Bush administration. The strength of deep-seated moral opposition even within the military brass was strong throughout the war years. In 2007 one of its top commanders came out in favor of DADT and likened homosexuality to adultery. “I believe homosexual acts between two individuals are immoral and that we should not condone immoral acts,” said Marine General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. “I do not believe the United States is well served by a policy that says it is OK to be immoral in any way.”[39] Although that was the real reason for opposition to the repeal, the critics invented logistical problems in an attempt to give their opinions legitimacy. Some said, for example, that enlisting openly gay service members would be detrimental to morale and cause problems with shared bedding in the barracks and bases. It was implied that gay soldiers would be unable to handle the living conditions, with military guidelines noting that the armed forces are a "specialized society" where the same laws for civilian society don't apply—military service, of course, is "characterized by forced intimacy with little or no privacy."[40] Critics of the repeal also pointed to attrition rates. In a 2009 article for the *Washington Post* a group of retired military officers wrote that the "repeal of this law would prompt many dedicated people to leave the military," citing a *Military Times* poll that indicated 58 percent were opposed to the repeal and that 10 percent wouldn't reenlist if it went through.[41] They didn't mention that the new Irregular Army meant many homosexual soldiers were serving openly anyway—estimates put it at 65,000. But with a tenuous bit of extrapolation they arrived at a figure of 228,600 for the potential loss of military personnel. "We don't need a study commission to know that tensions are inevitable in conditions offering little or no privacy, increasing the stress of daily military life," they concluded.

But what they should have been more worried about was the attrition rate of *gay* service members themselves, who comprised a significant portion of the fighting force. Many of them could not understand why they had to hide their identity and personal life while risking their lives for their country. Jennifer Hogg, a New York National Guard Member, said, "Being a lesbian on 9/11 is what initially led me to begin to question my involvement in the military and the military's involvement in the world," before adding, "If on 9/11, I did not have the freedom to hug my girlfriend goodbye before we left as a unit for NYC, then what freedom was I protecting? What freedom could we offer to the world if we treat it so restrictively based on who a person falls in love with?"[42] During the War on Terror this struggle for freedom took the same form as the civil rights struggle in the 1960s, when young black men were being sent to fight for a democracy they couldn't vote in. Patriotic homosexuals had served in all of America's wars anyway, bypassing the persistent efforts to disenfranchise them. Some of America's most revered fighters, like Baron von Steudben, were reportedly gay. He had been a Prussian military officer who served as inspector general during the American Revolutionary War, passing on his expertise to guide the

Americans to victory. Navy doctor Tom Dooley was another: his humanitarian mission in Southeast Asia made him a legend in his lifetime.

The available evidence also contradicted the arguments of the critics of the repeal of DADT. A 2010 poll of veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan by the Vet Voice Foundation found that 41 percent of service members under the age of 35 favored gay and lesbian soldiers being able to serve openly, to 35 percent against.[43] Over-thirty-fives came in 36 percent against, to 31 percent in favor. A Zogby poll in 2007 found 73 percent of troops who had served in Iraq or Afghanistan were comfortable in the presence of gays. They had also proved themselves particularly loyal and fastidious in duty. Lesbians serve proportionally more than the rest of the female population. Between 1990 to 2000 lesbians aged eighteen to twenty-seven had three times higher rates of service than their straight peers. And they served longer, too: 82 percent report serving for two or more years, compared to 74 percent for the wider population.[44] Attitudes were changing in the general population as well, as the *de facto* repeal of DADT proved it could work. In early 2010 a poll by CNN and the Opinion Research Council found that 69 percent of the public were in favor of allowing homosexuals to serve openly, with just 27 percent against.[45] That was a big step forward. In 1994, the year after DADT was instituted, the figure had stood at 53 percent in favor. Around the world, the experience of the US's closest allies was adding further pressure. In 2000, the UK lifted its ban on gay soldiers after a ruling from the European Court of Human Rights called it a "grave interference" into people's private life.[46] Israel was even further ahead of the curve, ending its restriction in 1993, the same year as DADT was instituted. Research has shown that serving openly had no detrimental effect on the morale or effectiveness of the Israel Defense Forces. "It's a non-issue," said David Saranga, a former IDF officer. "There is not a problem with your sexual tendency. You can be a very good officer, a creative one, a brave one, and be gay at the same time." There had been many attempts to overturn the policy within Congress, most effectively from Representative Patrick Murphy, who was the first Iraq war veteran elected to Congress. His experience there with British forces convinced him that open serving would only improve the service. He sponsored a bill for the repeal. "I take it as a personal affront to our warriors," he said. "To say that other countries' soldiers are professional enough to handle this and American soldiers aren't is really a slap in the face."[47]

Faced with this mass of evidence, attitudes in the military establishment were slowly thawing, with probably its biggest name, former Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Colin Powell, who had originally supported DADT, coming out in support of its repeal in 2009. "The policy and the law that came about in 1993, I think, was correct for the time," he said. But, he added, "Sixteen years have now gone by, and I think a lot has changed with respect to attitudes within our country, and therefore I think this is a policy and a law that should be reviewed."[48] John M. Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1993 to 1997, and formerly a staunch supporter of DADT, wrote an op-ed in the *New York Times* in which he described a similar Damascene conversion. "I now believe that if gay men and lesbians served openly in the United States, they would not undermine the military efficacy of the armed forces," he concluded. But unlike Powell he subtly revealed the real reason for his change of heart. "Our military has been stretched thin by our deployments in the Middle East," he wrote, adding "we must welcome the service of any American who is willing and able to do the job."[49] It was, in other words, a numbers game. Gays would get their rights: but only because it was too costly to keep them out. Although happy with the sea change, the gay community was not fooled as to the reasons for their newfound acceptance. "Now that the Army needs recruits for a violent, unpopular war, we are more welcome," wrote Andrew Hiller in a bitter letter to the *New York Times* in response to Shalikashvili's article.[50] "It is more apparent than ever before that, as we conduct a global war on terror and face tremendous personnel shortages, that the 'don't ask, don't tell' law is undermining our military readiness," chimed Democrat Representative Martin Meehan (D-MA), who introduced a bill to repeal DADT.[51] In the Bush administration's order of priorities, a commitment to bigotry seems to have ranked pretty high, but meeting army recruitment targets was even more important. Money was also a factor. It was calculated in a 2005 GAO report that the DADT policy had cost the military 9,488 service members since 1993 with 322 of them highly skilled linguists the military could ill afford to lose (like Bleu Copas).[52] In fact, 757 of them were deemed "critical." The cost of training a soldier is between $90,000 and $150,000. For this reason, the SLDN didn't take any particular joy in the figures from the War on Terror. "We don't necessarily recognize it as a success," said Maldonado. "During a time of war, when the military needs men and women to fight in Afghanistan and Iraq, lesbians and gays deserve basic rights because they are among the frontline defending our country. But during times of peace when threats are not proximate dismissals under DADT increase."

But what should have been more concerning for Powell and Shalikashvili than all this was that the DADT policy had created a climate of rampant homophobia in the US military during the War on Terror. The Pentagon's own inspector general released a report in 2009 which showed the horrendous treatment being meted out to gay service members and the climate of fear in which many lived. It found that "offensive comments about homosexuals were commonplace and the majority believed these offensive comments were tolerated to some extent within the military."[53] The secrecy necessitated by the DADT policy meant many were targeted by McCarthyite-style witch-hunts. A full 40 percent of soldiers "felt they had witnessed, or been a target of, harassment for perceived homosexuality." Eighty percent said they had heard offensive speech, derogatory names, jokes, or remarks about homosexuals in the last twelve months. Even more —85 percent—thought this abuse was tolerated by the military brass. "This behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated in the military," said a Pentagon spokesman. "We need to do more work on this policy," he added, but didn't blame DADT explicitly. SLDN did. A report it authored documented 968 cases of anti-gay harassment—including murder and assault—in the period from February 1999 to February 2000, an increase of 142 percent on the previous year. As the military was opened up to extremists and gangs, this hit an all-time-high level. The alleged Wikileaks source, Bradley Manning, was one gay soldier who reported being a victim of the rampant abuse during the War on Terror—bullying that may have been a factor in his alleged whistle-blowing. "It took them a while, but they started figuring me out, making fun of me, mocking me, harassing me, heating up with one or two physical attacks," Manning wrote to his friend on a chat website. He continued, "The army took me, a web dev, threw me into a rigid schedule, removed me from my digital self. The army . . . threw me in the forests of Missouri for 10 weeks with an old M-16, Reagan-era load-bearing equipment and 50 twanging people hailing from places like Texas, Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi . . . joy. What the hell did I put myself through?" It was a good question. Independent journalist Dahr Jamail, who did much important work on the subject, believed that homophobia had in fact become the worst kind of discrimination in the military during the War on Terror. “Homophobia arguably manifests itself in the worst form of discrimination in the military, surpassing even racism,” he wrote.

> Instead of enabling recruits to vanquish their prejudices and strengthening the individual and the collective spirit, all military training seems to be geared towards invoking the darkest elements in human nature—fear, hatred, pettiness, insecurity and similar aberrations. Under normal conditions, such an orientation legitimizes unacceptable behavior; under harsh and hostile conditions, it makes beasts of men. It is immaterial whether one is at the perpetrating end or the receiving end of unjust behavior. Of greater significance is the general air of violence and inequality that gets normalized in the process.[54]

It wasn’t just homosexuals, either. The kind of Christian fundamentalism expressed by General Pace’s comments about homosexuality’s “immorality” was prevalent across the military brass, and meant other groups were marginalized as well. Religiosity was increasingly prevalent in the military as it provided a glue to keep together all the disparate groups the loosening of regulations had allowed in, and was abused for this purpose. In 2008, Specialist Jeremy Hall sued the DOD for its “discrimination” against atheists because of the unconstitutional definition of the US military as a “Christian Army.” He revealed a culture of proselytizing among the commanders and soldiers which put atheists in an invidious position. “They don’t trust you because they think you are unreliable and might break, since you don’t have God to rely on,” he said.[55] “The message is, ‘It’s a Christian nation, and you need to recognize that.’” The accusations in the lawsuit were shocking. “Immediately after plaintiff made it known he would decline to join hands and pray, he was confronted, in the presence of other military personnel, by the senior ranking . . . staff sergeant who asked plaintiff why he did not want to pray, whereupon plaintiff explained because he is an atheist,” it read.[56] “The staff sergeant asked plaintiff what an atheist is and plaintiff responded it meant that he (plaintiff) did not believe in God. This response caused the staff sergeant to tell plaintiff that he would have to sit elsewhere for the Thanksgiving dinner. Nonetheless, plaintiff sat at the table in silence and finished his meal.”

Civil Rights Struggle

As momentum gathered pace and an increasing number of public figures showed support, the gay rights movement found a new hero in the Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama. He took it on as one of his flagship issues and wrote an open letter to the LGBT community promising the repeal of DADT. “I’m running for President to build an America that lives up to our founding promise of equality for all—a promise that extends to our gay brothers and sisters,” he wrote. “It’s wrong to have millions of Americans living as second-class citizens in this nation. And I ask for your support in this election so that together we can bring about real change for all LGBT Americans.”[57] But halfway through his term he still had not come through on the promise and the movement turned against him. During one of his speeches in April 2010, the president received an angry response from disgruntled activists from GetEQUAL, an LGBT rights group. “What about ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’?” one protester shouted, to which Obama replied: “We are going to do that.”[58] Former army sergeant Darren Manzella had already written an impassioned letter to the new president as part of *Stories from the Frontlines: Letters to President Barack Obama*, a new media campaign launched to highlight the need for more presidential leadership in the fight to repeal DADT. “I served two tours of duty in the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as a Soldier in the United States Army. I was promoted to sergeant, was a team leader of a medical squad, and conducted over 100 twelve-hour patrols in the streets of Baghdad, treating wounds and evacuating casualties of sniper fire and roadside bombs,” he wrote. “But, today, instead of protecting my fellow Americans, I sit working in a university development office because I was discharged under DADT.”[59] Depending on your point of view, Manzella had been either extremely foolhardy or extremely brave. In 2008, he took time out from his duties as a medical liaison specialist with his division in Kuwait to appear on CBS’s flagship *60 Minutes* program. He was on his second deployment to the region after serving in a medical field artillery unit in Baghdad in 2005 and receiving a combat medal for giving treatment under enemy fire. Despite his stellar credentials, Manzella was aware that he was still an outsider in the army, not because of his dedication, patriotism, or competence, but thanks to his sexuality. In the thirteen-minute section of the program Manzella talked openly, without permission, about being gay. He told CBS that he had taken his boyfriend out with his army pals and painted a picture of a military that had come to accept gay members for who they were. Nothing happened in the aftermath. But he was eventually the target of another malicious anonymous email campaign that instructed him to tone down his “ostentatious” behavior. He decided to consult his commanding officer who told him that for the crime of telling the truth he would have to report Manzella to his superiors. “I had to go see my battalion commander, who read me my rights,” he said. “What a Catch-22. You go and tell your lieutenant the truth and now you violated the army’s rule.” True to his trailblazing attitude, Manzella held nothing back in the investigation, providing photos of him with AJ, his boyfriend, including pictures of them kissing. But despite all this, Manzella was told to resume work in the military. “The closest thing that I was given by my superiors was, ‘I don’t care if you’re gay or not,’” Manzella said. Even after the CBS show aired on national television Manzella was allowed to stay in the military. Nevertheless, in 2008 he was eventually discharged as the case became too embarrassing for the military to ignore. But they had wanted to ignore it—and there were thousands more Manzellas serving openly in the US military.

Things heated up in September 2010 when the DADT policy was ruled unconstitutional by a judge in California. A lawsuit had been brought by the Log Cabin Republicans which moved to order an injunction against the policy. In conclusion US District Court Judge Virginia A. Phillips wrote forcefully:

> The Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Act infringes the fundamental rights of United States servicemembers in many ways . . . The Act denies homosexuals serving in the Armed Forces the right to enjoy “intimate conduct” in their personal relationships. The Act denies them the right to speak about their loved ones while serving their country in uniform; it punishes them with discharge for writing a personal letter, in a foreign language, to a person of the same sex with whom they shared an intimate relationship before entering military service; it discharges them for including information in a personal communication from which an unauthorized reader might discern their homosexuality. In order to justify the encroachment on these rights, Defendants faced the burden at trial of showing the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Act was necessary to significantly further the Government’s important interests in military readiness and unit cohesion. Defendants failed to meet that burden. Thus, Plaintiff, on behalf of its members, is entitled to judgment in its favor on the first claim in its First Amended Complaint for violation of the substantive due process rights guaranteed under the Fifth Amendment.[60]

At the same time, the movement had found another brave and eloquent spokesman in the form of Lieutenant Dan Choi, from the Army National Guard, who had served bravely in Iraq and was a graduate of West Point before being discharged under DADT. Choi was particularly critical of the survey the Obama administration had set up to gauge military attitudes to homosexuality, which he saw as another betrayal on the president's part. "That the commander in chief [was] the first [from a] racial minority to achieve that rank and that position was a signifying moment for all of us, whether we're racial minorities, whether we're sexual minorities, whether we're American citizens or not even yet American citizens, it was an absolute moment of vindication for a lot of people," he said. But, he added, "Nobody ever polls the soldiers on whether we should go to war or not. Nobody ever says, 'What do you think about your commander in chief being African-American?'"[61] Choi was adamant about taking advantage of the judge's verdict and the obvious fact that the policy was becoming untenable for the military. In October 2010, he went to reenlist in the marines at Times Square in New York City, trailed by a sizeable media contingent. He took advantage of a new Pentagon statement that "recruiters have been given guidance, and they will process applications for applicants who admit they are openly gay or lesbian."[62] There was increasingly nothing the military could do in the face of this tidal wave of activism. In a stunning victory for the gay community in the US and around the world, seventeen years of struggle to get DADT repealed finally came to a head in December 2010 when Congress passed a law repealing the policy. "No longer will our country be denied the service of patriotic Americans who are forced to leave the military, no matter their bravery or zeal, because they happen to be gay," said President Obama as he signed it into law.[63] It was a bittersweet victory: a wonderful civil rights triumph, but one that would have been impossible without the military's desperate need for troops allowing homosexuals to serve honorably and basically openly for the first time. Obama admitted as much, commenting that the repeal will be introduced "in a way that only strengthens our military readiness" (read: more troops). In the end, homosexual service members got their rights, but it took risking their lives in ever-greater numbers in wars started by an administration that believed their sexuality was a moral abomination. The Bush administration's lack of principle across the board had ironically laid the ground for the one positive thing to come out of America's Irregular Army.

The Aftermath

The story didn't end there, however. President Obama rapidly moved from hero to villain after the bill was signed, coming under intense pressure from gay civil rights groups about the languid pace at which the repeal of DADT was proceeding. Months on from the repeal, gay service members were still being discharged under the policy as all branches of the military remained in the "training" phase aimed at preparing existing service members for the change in policy. For many gay soldiers the "integration process" was bogus because they were already in there serving openly. The SLDN started a clock on their website to count every second that has passed since the repeal was signed until it is finally enforced. "I find it offensive that it takes nearly a year to make the transition," Aubrey Sarvis, executive director of the SLDN, told me. Many straight troops knew already who was gay or lesbian within their platoon or company so this was not news, which made the delays even harder to understand.

The chorus of criticism from gay groups of Obama and his administration reached fever pitch when the President and his wife refused to invite Servicemembers United, the largest gay military group by members, to an event at the White House in early 2011. "It was the first military event at the White House since repeal and we asked for a representative to be included," said Alexander Nicholson, executive director of Servicemembers United. "First they didn't think of it themselves, but when we pointed out and asked to have a representative they specifically refused, which was disappointing and puzzling," he told me. Many put this down to political calculus on Obama's part as he tried to leverage his positions on the economy and health care. But snubs like this, alongside the fact it had taken him two years to come through on the campaign pledge, turned the tide of popularity against the president. Criticisms of the fact that the repeal did not go far enough started in earnest. The final repeal, for example, did not include the non-discrimination mandate clause, which would have made gay service members a protected class and had profound legal ramifications. If a gay soldier is discriminated against based on their sexuality in terms of a promotion or another injustice, they still do not have the venue to complain using equal opportunity legislation as someone with a religious or racial complaint would. Without that in place, a new president who wanted to reinstate DADT would have authority to do it. Feasibly there could be an administrative directive from a future White House that curtails open service policy after certification or outright reverses it. In essence, the repeal bill took away the law enacted in 1993, but before that the gay ban was completely regulatory. With the 1993 law gone, the issue was back in regulatory space, which, while most expected the Pentagon to continue an open service policy, left open the possibility that in a decade or so, with troop needs back to being manageable, they could adopt a discriminatory policy again. "Given the doublespeak of the White House, its supportive but never too supportive, people are skeptical, nobody is 100 percent trusting of the fact we are done yet. Everybody is waiting," added Nicholson.

The Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA—which the Obama administration had pledged to stop defending in court—also continued to draw ire because it still meant that while gay people can die for their country their spouses or significant others would not be honored in the same way as spouses of their straight colleagues, or receive the same benefits. There are even *Republican* groups pushing for the Obama administration to go further. "The biggest criticism for us is that President Obama has refused to suspend the discharge proceedings as the certification is taking place," said Clarke Cooper, executive director of the Log Cabin Republicans, who served openly in Iraq and was later appointed by George W. Bush as a diplomat. In many ways, the military appeared more effusive than the Obama administration about the changes, perhaps because they had seen it operating during the War on Terror with no real drawbacks. General James Amos, a Marine Corps commandant, had been against the repeal initially, but told Congress in the midst of the training process that the repeal was going forward with few problems. "I've been looking for issues, but honestly we haven't seen it," he said.[64] "There hasn't been the recalcitrant pushback. We haven't seen the anxiety over it from the forces in the field." The surprise for progressives was that the only anxiety about it was coming from the White House.

Epilogue: Indiscriminate Trust

On the careful choice of soldiers depends the welfare of the Republic, and the very essence of the Roman Empire and its power is so inseparably connected with this charge, that it is of the highest importance not to be entrusted indiscriminately.

Flavius Vegetius Renatus, fifth century[1]

You go to war with the Army you have. They're not the Army you might want or wish to have at a later time.

Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, 2004[2]

Sometime in the early fifth century an aristocratic Roman thinker with no first-hand experience of war sat down to write what would be become the most important military rulebook in history. The short tract, *Concerning Military Matters*,[3] ripped up conventional ideas about military affairs and the art of war, casting a long shadow over the following millennium of fighting. Its lessons were varied, ranging from instructions on how to manage raw and undisciplined troops to notes on legionary musical etiquette. But many were also timeless—centuries later in the war-ravaged Middle Ages the rulebook was still treated like gospel by a rogue's gallery of despots and their generals. Its author was Flavius Vegetius Renatus, a self-effacing young man who regarded his work as a clarion call to an empire of awesome power but with problems coming into sharp focus on the horizon—particularly, Vegetius believed, concerning the military. He addressed his preface for the first book directly to Emperor Valentinian with typical coyness: "I do not presume to offer this work to Your Majesty from a supposition that you are not acquainted with every part of its contents," he assured his master.[4] While his humble tone and faith in his leader's intelligence can perhaps be admired, it would prove to be a wrongheaded assumption. Over the next century, Vegetius's revolutionary lessons on how to run a successful military machine would be spurned by the leaders of the world's most powerful empire, an oversight that would prove fatal as the Roman colossus fell from a position of unrivalled global dominance to a barely recognizable shell power. It was the biggest fall from grace history has seen to date.

In his classic work *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the eighteenth-century historian Edward Gibbon describes the empire's pinnacle in glowing prose: "In the second century of the Christian era, the Empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilised portion of mankind," he writes. "The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valour."[5] Yet from this redoubtable position, just three centuries later in 410, Rome, the imperial capital, the symbol of all that was great and good in the empire, was sacked by the "barbarians" who had been its slaves just decades earlier. Historians have spent the last millennium trying to work out why and how this happened with such speed, but despite the amount of painstaking research undertaken there remains significant debate about why the fall came when it did. "Although the topic has been popular, and myriad reasons have been offered to explain Rome's fall, no consensus has emerged, and historians of the twentieth century have multiplied the variety of explanations many times over," writes one historian.[6] Explanations range from the insidious influence of Christianity from the first century on, to a generalized rupture in the moral fabric of Roman society. But one strain of thought stands out about all others—the military explanation. Vegetius was a pioneer in this regard. In his book, he observed that "so many defeats" as the Romans suffered at the time can "only be imputed" to the "careless choice of our levies."[7] He feared that the careless attention paid to stocking the fighting force with upright and well-trained warriors could prove the death of the empire he loved. He was further alarmed at the "inclination so prevalent among the better sort in preferring the civil posts of government to the profession of arms."[8] At the Battle of Châlons, at around the time Vegetius was writing, Rome's military had been shown up as a shadow of its former self. The enemy commander Attila had the gall to inform his troops that Rome's warriors were nothing but a ragtag army of nonentities. It was an unthinkable charge. "The dust of battle overwhelms them while they fight in close formation under a screen of protective shields," he taunted as his soldiers laughed.[9] The descent culminated when the imperial city was sacked for the first time in 800 years, as one of the barbarian Germanic tribes that had been tormenting the empire, the Visigoths, stormed into Rome and looted for three days.

As he looked back centuries later, Gibbon saw the same trajectory as Vegetius. “In the purer ages of the Commonwealth,” he wrote, “the use of arms was reserved for those ranks who had a country to love, a property to defend, and some share in enacting those laws which it was their interest, as well as duty, to maintain.”[10] Gradually, though, things changed. “The common soldiers, like the mercenary troops of modern Europe,” writes Gibbon, soon became “drawn from the meanest, and very frequently from the most profligate, of mankind.”[11] The Roman military had also opened its doors to the conquered enemies—a process referred to in the field as “barbarization,” which allowed mercenaries to receive Roman largesse in exchange for fighting the elite’s increasingly avaricious wars. The new additions created endless problems for a military that had been the envy of the world. As historian Arthur Ferrill, author of *The Fall of the Roman Empire: The Military Explanation*, writes, “Despite the impact of barbarization, Roman forces continued to fight according to traditional Roman tactics, yet those tactics, previously so superior, seemed absurd to the barbarians of the fifth century.”[12] It had a significant and detrimental impact on the ability of the army to do its job. “To fight effectively in close order, troops require intensive drill and rigorous discipline,” says Ferrill. “Romans of the fifth century apparently maintained the old formations but abandoned the necessary training. As a result they combined the worst features of the Roman and barbarian styles of fighting.”[13] The importance of the “careful choice of levies” has continued to occupy all the most renowned military thinkers. Sun Tzu wrote in *The Art of War* that one of the ways “in which a ruler can bring misfortune upon his army” is by “employing the officers of his army without discrimination.”[14] While Nicolo Machiavelli warned in his classic *The Prince*, “If a prince bases the defense of his state on mercenaries he will never achieve stability or security. For mercenaries are disunited, thirsty for power, undisciplined, and disloyal; they are brave among their friends and cowards before the enemy.”[15] Both books were apparently favorites of American military planners before and during the War on Terror.

False Prophet

History doesn’t repeat itself exactly, but it often resonates and in the psyche of the country at large 9/11 assumed similar proportions to the sacking of Rome centuries earlier. Unlike the destruction of Rome, however, it wasn’t a verdict on the military weakness of the country—the US still had thousands of bases around the world and its defense budget was nearly as much as that of the rest of the world combined. But it did precipitate the War on Terror which, this book has shown, saw the decline and "barbarization" of the US military with the inclusion of domestic "undesirables" on a scale comparable to the later years of Rome. In fact, the American military's deterioration has been considerably quicker and more dangerous, and the failures in Afghanistan and Iraq could foreshadow the diminution of American power along Roman lines. There has been a pervasive feeling since the War on Terror and financial crisis that power is slipping away. "American Decline" is now a vogue topic across the media and academia. But it may not be terminal. In Vegetius's second address to the emperor he made a plea: "The expense of keeping up good or bad troops is the same," he wrote, "but it depends wholly on You, most August Emperor, to recover the excellent discipline of the ancients to correct the abuses of later times. This is a reformation the advantages of which will be equally felt by ourselves and our posterity."[16] He could easily have been addressing US President Barack Obama in January 2009 on his ascension to power. Like the Roman Emperor, Obama was inheriting a military broken by the "abuses of later times"—or, more specifically, by the Bush administration. Its troops were scarred, many mentally unstable and untreated, ravaged by two wars and the subsequent occupations which the Pentagon was ill-prepared for. Countless families across the nation were (and are) dealing with loved ones who have changed forever, while the military had reached the lowest point in its history. "We're on the brink," said Thomas White, former Secretary of the Army, earlier in the War on Terror. "We are in a situation where we are grossly overdeployed, and it is unlike any other period in the 229-year history of the Army. We have never conducted a sustained combat operation with a volunteer force, with a force that we have to compete in the job market to hire every year."[17] It was a task without historical precedent and it fell to Obama to fix for posterity what had been so disastrously broken. "I thought by the end of Vietnam . . . we had broadly destroyed the US Army," White added.[18] "The non-commissioned officer leadership had vanished. Indiscipline rates were way, way up. We needed a complete rebuilding of the force from bottom to top. And that's precisely what we engaged ourselves in for the next 20 years or so." The US military establishment now has to engage itself for the next decade (and probably longer) doing the same thing.

The auguries for the Obama presidency were good. Despite all the public-relations hype surrounding his election campaign, in the military there were real reasons to hold out hope for change. As we have seen, Obama was forceful in denouncing the use of veterans as guinea pigs to test new drugs on. He had come out equally strongly against the discriminatory Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy on homosexuals. He had backed the post-9/11 GI Bill, proposed by Jim Webb, which would pay out $78 billion in education benefits to veterans who had served in the military after September 11. John McCain, his presidential opponent, was against it. Obama's soaring rhetoric was even sweeter. "What this new generation of veterans must know is this," he opined. "Our nation's commitment to all who wear its uniform is a sacred trust that is as old as our republic itself. It is one that, as President, I consider a moral obligation to uphold."[19] Obama announced a new twenty-first-century Veterans Health Administration which would make it easier for veterans with PTSD to receive the medical benefits they deserved, while the GI Bill would also open up educational opportunities and job training to those coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan. It seemed he was aware that if the government continued to get the reintegration of its soldiers back into civilian society wrong, it would have disastrous effects for America for decades to come.

But it didn't take long for cracks to appear in the shiny veneer. Obama had originally opposed the war in Iraq and his campaign had been built partly on his ironclad commitment to end the war. "As a candidate for this office, I pledged I would end this war. As President, that is what I am doing," he said in August 2010. "We have brought home more than 90,000 troops since I took office. We have closed or turned over to Iraq hundreds of bases. In many parts of the country, Iraqis have already taken the lead for security."[20] But, in fact, many of the Bush administration's most destructive policies were simply kept in place. The final 40,000 non-combat US troops were brought home in 2011, but many called it the privatization of the occupation, as security contractor numbers continued to rise. At the same time, Obama ratcheted up operations in the other front in the War on Terror: within a year of his inauguration he announced a "surge" in Afghanistan which would increase troop levels by 30,000, keeping up the pressure on the broken military. In 2011, just 34 percent of veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan believed the wars had been worth fighting. At the same time, both veterans and active-duty personnel were less likely to approve of Obama than the rest of the population.

The Corporate Model Wins Out

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have been the longest combat operations in American history. Millions of lives have been destroyed in the process and whole societies traumatized. The project ended up as a humanitarian catastrophe for the occupied populations but, contrary to popular belief, it wasn't a failure for the ideologues who started the conflagrations. Rumsfeld's vision of an eviscerated civilian military was, in the end, and at great human cost, realized. Trying to keep the army small when the wars demanded large numbers of troops meant the military acted more and more like a corporation; unfortunately it was a corporation without enough employees. Morten G. Ender at the Military Academy in West Point, New York, put it this way: "What's new is the all volunteer force. The military now has to rely on the corporate model. If people don't come to your business you have to compromise your standards or lower your expectations."[21] In power, Obama ended up using more private security contractors than even the Bush administration had, despite early concerns about what journalist Jeremy Scahill calls their "unconstitutional" use. In truth it was impossible to do without them: the broken US military could not long stand on its own two feet. The fact that its armed forces have become US military Inc. should be extremely worrying for the American public, for the military planners whose concern is projecting power around the world, and for those who may be next on the receiving end of their bombs.

It is clear from the stories in this book that the military's drop in standards unleashed a significant tranche of mentally unstable, extremist, and violent individuals upon the Iraqi and Afghan populations. Many of the most sickening of the atrocities committed by US service members—from the Abu Ghraib torture scandal to the Mahmudiyah massacre—were directly related to the loosening of standards. It might be a felon who had received a "moral waiver" but couldn't shake off his criminal impulses, or a neo-Nazi granted a newfound freedom in the military. It could be a drunk soldier who picked up his weapon in the middle of a binge and went out to take pot-shots at the locals. This in itself has profound implications for the pretext of the whole War on Terror, billed as a moral crusade to bring democracy to the benighted Middle East. Indeed, it shifts the entire frame through which we should look at the whole venture. For modern military occupations, destruction of the occupied society is usually *de rigueur*. But the evidence strongly suggests that a military rife with alcoholics and gang-bangers is even more likely to grievously harm the society it occupies. The Irregular Army also ended up as the largest anthropological experiment in history, with US service members as the guinea pigs. In 1992, as Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney had said, "The military is not a social welfare agency . . . We aren't there to run social experiments. We are there to fight and win wars," but under his administration's watch a "social experiment" is what it became.[22] It bought together groups that would never come across each other in their everyday lives. Neo-Nazis from Iowa broke bread with gang-bangers from Chicago in Baghdad, and alcoholics supped "hajji juice" with the mentally ill in Fallujah. It engendered weird alliances. In November 2010, for example, it was reported that Mexican drug cartels were enlisting white supremacists to smuggle illegal drugs across the border.[23] Members of both of groups had been enlisted in the military in considerable numbers during the War on Terror. Did the relationship begin there? The military's recruitment policy will contribute to social degeneration back home for decades to come. From the mentally scarred soldiers who are refused treatment (many of whom end up in the criminal justice system) to heavily trained gang-bangers stalking the streets of US cities, the "barbarization" of the US armed forces will be a theme that returns again and again as it touches on so many of the ills plaguing US society.

The FBI reported that it had carried out over 14 million background checks on Americans wanting to purchase weapons and explosives in 2009, up 10 percent from 12.7 million the year before. That represents more guns than the number held by the biggest militaries in the world—combined.[24] As I write this, Jared Loughner, a delusional young loner, has just murdered six people in Arizona and nearly killed Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords with a semi-automatic weapon. It has since transpired that Loughner had tried to join the military in late 2008—and his experience is instructive. He was refused entry, which would seem to contradict the thesis of the Irregular Army. In truth, it was a demonstration of all the military shortcomings outlined above. Loughner passed the ASVAB easily and was soon in one of the Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS)—which gauges recruits' applicability—where he was asked the standard question of whether he had "used illegal drugs or abused prescription drugs."[25] He answered honestly that he used marijuana, and according to the military they barred him on this basis. But he could have lied about it—as thousands of others had done in the War on Terror and before. He could also have been the recipient of a “medical waiver” or “moral waiver” even if he had a conviction. In other words, had he been smart he could have gotten in with no problem and been sent off to war. “It’s bizarre,” a military official said. “I certainly wouldn’t go through the whole process only to say, ‘Hey, I’ve been smoking marijuana for the past couple of years.’”[26] There are undoubtedly many other Loughners who were smarter and went on to serve—maybe some of them appear in this book. Over the coming decade, with military training and access to weapons, they will be stalking the streets of both the US and the Middle East. America will pay for this in the blood of its own citizens as will the subject populations of the countries its military occupies. A warning shot was fired in March 2011 when the FBI arrested Kevin William Harpham, a thirty-six-year-old member of the neo-Nazi National Alliance, in Spokane, Washington, on suspicion of planting a bomb at a Martin Luther King Day celebration which if detonated would have killed hundreds of people. Harpham had served in the US army for two years in the mid-1990s.

Lies Into Iraq

But pointing the finger is too easy. We have to take some blame ourselves, as we were as indiscriminate in our trust in our leaders as they were with their choice of soldiers. As the wars went on, we believed their crocodile tears when American troops died. We bought their soaring rhetoric about their commitment to service members, when in fact they were often cutting veterans’ access to benefits and health care. It was just a continuation of the lies we were told to take us into war in the first place. For people like Charlie P. Gaffney Jr., who picked up a gun again at the age of forty in an effort to help bring democracy to the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, these lies ended their lives. While the Bush administration cast the invasion as a “liberation” to “free the Iraqi people from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein,” the uncomfortable fact that during the 1980s the US had supported Hussein was scrubbed from history. Declassified files show that the Reagan administration and its special Middle East envoy, Donald Rumsfeld, had done “little to stop Iraq developing weapons of mass destruction in the 1980s, even though they were fully aware that Saddam was using chemical weapons ‘almost daily’ against Iran,” reports the *Guardian*. The declassified documents detail how Reagan and Rumsfeld had allowed the export of biological weapons, including anthrax, ingredients for chemical weapons, and cluster bombs. In 1983, the then Secretary of State George Shultz received intelligence of "almost daily use" of chemical weapons by Iraq. A mere twenty-five days after this information was received, Reagan gave a secret order allowing the administration to do "whatever was necessary and legal" to help Iraq win the war over Iran. In December of that year, Rumsfeld met Saddam in Baghdad and stated the United States' desire to restore diplomatic relations. This support and flow of arms continued long after the end of the Iran–Iraq war, right up until the first Gulf War in 1990—even after Saddam had shelled the Kurdish town of Halabja in March 1988 with gas bombs, killing an estimated 5,000 civilians and maiming thousands more.

The lie was no different in the UK. In December 2009 I was sent by my newspaper at the time, the *Financial Times*, down to the National Archives in Kew Gardens, London, to write a series of articles based on secret British state documents, which were then being released under the thirty-year disclosure rule. I would be viewing documents from 1979, the same year Saddam Hussein became president of Iraq in a bloody coup. I was particularly interested in how the British had viewed the event, and reading the reactions of the British ambassador to the coup was an eye-opening experience. Saddam became president in July 1979 in what the ambassador described as "the first smooth transfer of power in Iraq since 1958," when a group of army officers had overthrown the monarchy.[27] The ambassador noted, however, what this "smooth transfer" had involved: Within the first twenty-four hours of Saddam's rule, "21 prominent Iraqis, including five members of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council, [were] executed." Britain was confident of Saddam's ability to crush dissent. "Strong-arm methods may be needed to steady the ship," wrote a Foreign Office official. "Saddam will not flinch." A Foreign Office briefing said Saddam was "personable in appearance" and wore "well-cut clothes, reputedly London-made." He was said to elicit "fear mixed with grudging admiration" and gave "an impression in conversation of quiet but determined concentration, unusual in the Ba'ath leadership."

The archives included a document sent by the embassy to London that detailed a day in the new president's life. "It is not often we are permitted a glimpse into the personal lives of Iraq's leaders," said the letter to the

Foreign Office, “so by way of introduction, I enclose a touching account of a day in the life of President Saddam Hussein.” Badly translated from Arabic, it read: “The early morning workers often exchange tales of how President Hussein surprised them at work site, how he chatted with them, smiled to them or asked them and listened to them . . . Tales full with love and admiration growing day after day in their hearts.” On January 1, 2010, the day the thirty-year embargo was up and the newspapers printed our articles, I went to my local newsagent and checked all the other papers nervously to see if I had missed any big stories buried in the documents. Luckily, there were none. Everyone looked to have found the same sort of things—except, funnily enough, the one about Saddam Hussein. My article in the *Financial Times* (headline: “Saddam Was Well-regarded by British”) was the only one that even referenced the documents related to Iraq. It was an example of our deeply biased reporters ignoring the ugly truth of what our government stood and stands for in the world. The British had, in fact, been honing their methods of domination for decades—methods copied by the US. They were spelled out quite clearly by Lord Curzon who, when installing King Faisal in Iraq in 1921, wrote that the British need an “Arab facade ruled and administered under British guidance and controlled by a native Mohammedan and, as far as possible, by an Arab staff . . . There should be no actual incorporation of the conquered territory in the dominions of the conqueror, but the absorption may be veiled by such constitutional fictions as a protectorate, a sphere of influence, a buffer state and so on.”[28] Nothing has changed in the twenty-first century.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan also had profound effects on the UK military, the only other country in the coalition fighting the War on Terror whose armed forces were stretched even close to those of the US, and the most generous partner in terms of providing troops. A high of 9,500 British service members were deployed to Afghanistan in 2009, while the Iraq war saw an initial force of 46,000. So far, 179 UK soldiers have been killed in Iraq and 407 in Afghanistan.[29] For a country with a population a fifth of that of the US, it was a substantial commitment and the biggest military operation since the end of World War Two. The UK military experienced some but not all of the problems that Rumsfeld and the Pentagon presided over in the US, and the differences are instructive. For example, there have been very few reports of a proliferation of neo-Nazis and white supremacists in the British military, although members of the fascist British National Party have joined up. Little substantial investigative work has been conducted on the matter and it remains an open but worrying question. The leader of the BNP, Nick Griffin, has said that his party is popular among British soldiers. "I'm the one who talks to the families of young squaddies and large numbers of ex-servicemen and they all say that almost everyone at the coalface, fighting in Afghanistan, vote for the British National Party," he said in 2009.[30] But gangs are considerably less prevalent in the UK and their members have not been enlisted to any worrying degree in its military. Likewise the rules on recruiting criminals were not tweaked to swell the ranks.

Where the UK military did suffer was in the susceptibility of its troops to alcohol and drugs and the concomitant problems of PTSD. There was a fivefold increase in UK soldiers failing drug tests in the period 2002–8, although their drug of choice was different from that of their American colleagues.[31] On the whole it was cocaine and ecstasy, with a move in later years to mephedrone, which is cheaper and more easily accessible. In 2006 the *Daily Telegraph* revealed that the armed forces had in fact scrapped, in secret, its policy of automatic dismissal for those caught using Class A drugs. The Ministry of Defence claims, like the DOD, that it doesn't tolerate any drug use, but by 2008 it had allowed 1,300 drug users to stay in the military.[32] Alcohol is not strictly banned by the UK military and it developed into a big problem during the War on Terror—one in seven soldiers reported being driven to alcohol by their experience in war.[33] PTSD also became a big problem for UK soldiers, though dwarfed by comparison with the US. One study found that American soldiers were seven times more likely to get PTSD than their British counterparts. UK rates for PTSD stayed at around 3–4 percent during the War on Terror, compared to 30 percent in the US military. "PTSD seems not to be a 'universal stress reaction', arising in all societies across all time," wrote Neil Greenberg, author of the study. "Evidence from both world wars suggests that the ways in which service personnel communicate distress is culturally determined and that the development of PTSD may be one more phase in the evolving picture of human reaction to adversity."[34] Perhaps the more important difference was the lack of health and rehabilitation services available to US troops as the military unraveled—something the UK didn't experience on the same level. Likewise, German soldiers in Afghanistan had PTSD levels at 2 percent for returning soldiers.[35]

In terms of the general physical condition of UK troops, the picture was not pretty: the only soldier whose death was officially linked to obesity was British. In 2009 a leaked army memo complained that thousands of British troops could not be deployed to Afghanistan because they were too fat.[36] Operational readiness, the memo noted, was being undermined by the lack of fitness of British troops, who are required to do a minimum of just two hours of exercise per week. Unlike in the US, there's no proof they stopped kicking out overweight troops. Homosexuals were already allowed to serve in the UK military before the War on Terror began, so that engendered no change, and tellingly no problems either. Foreigners—notably in the form of Nepalese Gurkhas—had fought in the British military since the time of the empire. The issue attracted a high-profile campaign when the British government refused to allow Gurkha veterans to live in the UK after service—a controversy similar to that which arose when the government had refused to let Iraqi translators and other workers in danger settle in the UK. The Gurkhas were joined by others during the War on Terror, although the regulations were not changed to allow more of them into the UK. Figures released in 2009 show that one in ten new recruits to the army were born abroad, three times the number in 2000. In 2008–9, 1,320 service members born outside Britain joined the military, compared with 540 in 1999–2000.[37]

Heroes and Villains

The majority of this book (excepting the heroic civil rights victory for gay service members) will have been a depressing and a sobering read for patriotic Americans and those around the world concerned with human rights and decency. But it has also revealed a heroes gallery of lawmakers, activists, active-duty soldiers, and veterans who refused to accept the degrading treatment that has been meted out by the military brass and their colleagues in Washington. Henry Waxman was one member of Congress who stood up to highlight the outrageous proliferation of felons in the military, while Marty Meehan tried his damnedest to pass civil rights legislation that would allow gays to serve openly. They were widely traduced and attacked at the time. Active-duty troops included Justin Watt, who alerted his superiors to the Mahmudiyah massacre and risked his life in order to see justice done for the family involved. He was mocked and ignored by the military initially but kept his steel. Then there are the kids of Bushwick, Brooklyn, who have fought valiantly against the *de facto* conscription the Bush administration imposed on the poor children of America by allowing recruiters to take over their schools. Private First Class Bradley Manning, the alleged source of the Wikileaks cables and war logs, is another. So angered was he at being ignored by his senior officers when he told them about the illegal activity he saw, he thought he had to do something about it—and changed the course of history at the same time.

Unfortunately brave individuals like Manning have been the exception. There has been a concerted effort by the military brass and their political allies to ignore the problem or simply deny it even exists. In every case where the military acknowledged there had been a loosening of standards it was presented officially as a victory for democracy or civil rights—permitting older recruits, for example, confirms a commitment to non-discriminatory practices based on age. It was the same tactic as is used generally for US foreign policy: every action, by definition, has to be spun as altruistic. While finishing this book, the Wikileaks release of the Afghanistan and Iraq war logs gave the public an unprecedented look at the anatomy of those wars and the toll they had taken on civilians. I decided to check out the SIGACT ("significant activity") reports related to some of the events I was writing about. It became clear quite quickly that although a vital tool in revealing the true brutality the war inflicted on Iraqis, the reports did not come close to conveying the true horror of what had taken place. One of the distinctive features of US war-waging, as in Vietnam, is that specific massacres and murders are held up by the Pentagon as unfortunate exceptions, the transgressions of a few "crazy" lowlife troops. The perpetrators are then made an example of. In Iraq, those massacres were Haditha and Mahmudiyah (and in 2012 Panjwai district in Afghanistan). In Vietnam, after the investigative work by Seymour Hersh, it was My Lai (an "American tragedy" according to *Time* magazine). The great lie, then as now, is that these are the exceptions when in fact they are commonplace. Cold-blooded murder, taking pot-shots at the locals: it's all par for the course if you talk to veterans who have been at the sharp end of the conflict. In interviews published in the *Nation* magazine in 2007, veterans of Iraq described the true horror the invading army had inflicted on the civilian population. Chris Hedges and Laila Al-Arian, the interviewers, concluded that indiscriminate killings were "common," "often go unreported—and almost always go unpunished."[38] They were right. Even the atrocities that were reported had been initially hushed up by the US military.

Take the case of Lance Corporal Delano Holmes—who stabbed his Iraq colleague Private Hassin to death while on sentry duty. He received a joke sentence handed out by a farcical court-martial system, but typical of the justice afforded to what was viewed as just "collateral damage." How was the murder of Hassin reported in the log? One host nation soldier killed, it says. "Prior to an Iraqi guard post change . . . the Marine and the IA were arguing over the off-going soldier smoking in the post. Smoking is prohibited inside the post due to the enemy sniper threat," it begins, as if excusing what is to come. "The arguing changed to shoving each other at which time the oncoming Iraqi soldier arrived and joined in the shoving. The [redacted] of the off going IA was fired [redacted] times inside the post, at which time the Marine believing his life was threatened stabbed the off-going Iraqi soldier with a knife resulting in [redacted]."[39] But at the court-martial, the prosecutors said Holmes had fired Hassan's AK-47 afterwards to make what was a cold-blooded murder look like self-defense—the same lie reported by the SIGACT. In other words, the SIGACT is entirely misleading. The Wikileaks logs gave a glimpse of the horror, but only a glimpse. Behind every report, there was another world of truth obfuscated by the pared-down and tendentious military reportage. Often the truth looked more like that of the "kill team" in Afghanistan, whose reign of terror in Kandahar was made public in 2011. Twelve men were charged with the indiscriminate murder of civilians after they had posed for photos with the dead bodies. When one of the soldiers was asked by the judge what he had intended to do with the shootings, he replied: "The plan was to kill people." Some of them were also charged with staging killings to make it appear as if they had been defending themselves against Taliban assaults. It is safe to assume that many others got away with this tactic.

The reaction from the American public when such truths are revealed is always one of disgust, which is why the truth has to be kept from them. In 2004 about three-quarters of the US population believed it was not right to invade Iraq if it had no weapons of mass destruction or links to Al-Qaeda. But nearly 60 percent still believed Iraq had WMDs, or programs for them in development, *and* links to 9/11, thanks to the Bush administration propaganda (and a pliant media).[40] The national press parroted the lie that these wars needed to be undertaken for our own protection. The opposite was the case. A classified US intelligence report *Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States* revealed the huge effect the war in Iraq had on increasing Islamic radicalism and spreading it to a new generation of young Muslims who would now be more likely to attack Western targets. In Britain, a report by the Joint Terrorist Analysis Centre—composed of officials from MI5, MI6, Government Communications Headquarters, and the police—stated that "events in Iraq are continuing to act as motivation and a focus of a range of terrorist-related activity in the UK."[41] The amount of money spent in the twin occupations has also helped to bankrupt America. The esteemed economist Joseph Stiglitz has estimated that all-told the war in Iraq alone will end up costing in total $3 trillion.

I hope reading this book will rouse that anger, because the veterans and the occupied populations deserve the truth to come out at the very least. The FBI and other investigative bodies outside the US military—like the GAO—have been alive to the problems of the Irregular Army and done important work to address them. For the military itself, however, it has been too painful to look into the mirror; no one will ever know the number of personal tragedies on both sides this dereliction of duty has caused. It is a national and international scandal. The benefits of empire are always unequally distributed at home—benefits that come to the imperial country as a result of war and occupation are generally concentrated among the economic elite. In the US there remain very sharp differentials in income, and the polarization of wealth and poverty as a result of imperialism got worse during the War on Terror. When foreigners look at the US, they see the riches, but they tend not to see the other side. The recruitment for the Irregular Army preyed on this other side—the most vulnerable and poor Americans—while the financial benefits of their sacrifice filtered back to the rich and powerful.

Using the Military

The US is at a crossroads. After the trauma of September 11, the biggest ever attack on its homeland, it was taken on a dangerous, violent, and reckless journey by a group of nationalist extremists. It is getting sicker as the wars continue to consume the nation, but it's not terminal. With the will and fortitude of the American people, there can be a reckoning with the forces that have destroyed so many lives in both the US and the Middle East. According to some estimates, over a million Iraqis died as a result of the invasion, while Afghanistan is poorer than ever and sees little hope of redemption (we don't keep count of the number of people we kill). But as I write this at the turn of 2011, 4,408 American soldiers have been killed in Iraq since the invasion, and 1,339 have perished in Afghanistan, while all the issues raised in this book are alive as ever and continue to blight the US military. As we move on to new "theaters of conflict" like Iran we need to look unflinchingly at what we've done and who we've destroyed in process. The lives lost will be in vain unless the truth of what was done to both military service members and the occupied populations enters the historical record unvarnished. The people who did this to us, to them, must face their crimes and their victims: the veteran who has just committed suicide after being denied treatment for PTSD; the Afghan children murdered in their beds by drugged-up airmen; the next generation ravaged by military-trained gangs and neo-Nazis in American cities. And they must look into the mirror and accept it was all a huge mistake: for history has shown that imperial hubris and the degradation of the fighting force only ends one way.

Amid the possibility of a ground force intervention in Libya in early 2011 and continued troop increases in Afghanistan, a split emerged between the Obama administration and the Pentagon over how large the US army should be and what it should be capable of in the future. In a debate which mirrored closely what happened in the build up to the war in Iraq, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates publicly said that "any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should have his head examined."[42] He added that large-scale conflicts with other big countries will likely be fought mainly with air and naval forces. But as he made those comments during a lecture to future army officers at West Point, the soon-to-depart army chief of staff, General George Casey, pointedly cautioned against the "hollowing out" of the armed forces after deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan come to an end.[43] Whichever school of thought wins out will define American expansionism over the next century. In January 2012, Obama seemed to side with Gates. Recognizing the dreadful toll the Irregular Army had taken on the US, in terms of both its soldiers and its ability to project power, Obama outlined a historic change in direction for the military, specifically moving towards a "leaner" military force and away from the troop-heavy ground warfare which defined the War on Terror. He said he wanted "smaller conventional ground forces," which reflected his abandoning what he called "outdated cold war-era systems." "Yes our military will be leaner," he added, "but the world must know the United States is going to maintain our military superiority with armed forces that are agile, flexible, and ready for the full range of contingencies and threats."[44] It sounded exactly like Donald Rumsfeld in 2001.

The US is now profoundly aware of its waning power and how this could impact its future. "Owing to the relative decline of its economic and, to a lesser extent, military power, the US will no longer have the same flexibility in choosing among as many policy options," concluded the National Intelligence Council (which gathers information from all US intelligence agencies) in early 2009.[45] And this weakness will be exploited. Sun Tzu wrote: "When the weapons are dulled, your ardour damped, your strength exhausted and your treasure spent, other chieftains will spring up to take advantage of your extremity. Then no man, however wise, will be able to avert the consequences that must ensue."[46] There's a healthy dose of irony in the fact that Tzu was himself Chinese, the country which is slowly challenging America's role as the world's sole superpower. "When the army is restless and distrustful, trouble is sure to come from other feudal princes," he continues. "This is simply bringing anarchy into the army, and flinging victory away."[47] An anarchist's distrust of bureaucracy and state power is an apt description of Rumsfeld's attitude towards the military.

The decline of the ability of the military to handle combat or even recruit enough troops has seriously compromised the ability of the US to project its power and secure victories. Memories of the returning soldiers' treatment will be hard to shake, and this will likely lead to a version of Vietnam Syndrome, in which many Americans will spurn the military. Even the war-booty expected from the occupations has largely evaded the American imperialist class this time around. Analysis of the two rounds of oil and gas contracts in Iraq shows that US companies won only two of the eighteen contracts, both in joint ventures with other companies. The original plan by the Bush administration was for the Iraqi government to pass a new oil law which would have indirectly privatized Iraq's hydrocarbons through an unconventional type of contracting called "production sharing agreements," which would have given foreign oil companies shares of production and exclusive control over Iraq's oil fields for up to thirty-two years. But the Iraqi constitution requires the parliament to ratify laws, and because of the internal dynamics in the country at the time the parliament ended up being controlled by nationalist parties with anti-occupation politics. Despite the fact that the ruling parties in the Iraqi executive branch were very happy with the Bush oil law, the other parties controlling the legislative branch were opposed to it and ended up blocking it. The Iraqi government then had to revert to an older law that only allows for "technical service agreements," which kept the oil under Iraqi ownership while giving foreign oil companies a flat rate in exchange for services.

As I write this, the US and the world are still in the grips of the crisis that has rocked the global economy since the collapse of Lehman Brothers in September 2008. Unemployment in the US has stayed stubbornly high, which, according to some, has put the issues raised in this book on a temporary back burner as people who can no longer find work turn to the military for salvation. But it would be a mistake to assume this will solve the deep problems in the military. What the War on Terror has shown is that the Pentagon is prepared to dispense with both its regulations and its moral compass when faced with the need to stock any future wars with soldiers. Whatever regulations have been brought back as the wars have wound down —not many, in truth—are therefore still at threat of being ignored again should the situation demand. And this war isn't near to being at its close, either. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have radicalized thousands of Muslims to take up the fight against the West, it has emboldened Iran through the deposition of the Sunni minority in Iraq, and it has been prosecuted so badly that the invincibility of American power is no longer an illusion that pervades the world. Unfortunately, however, a wounded tiger is much more dangerous than a healthy one.

The US needs to re-evaluate its role in the world and move away from the use of military force which has, in recent history, become self-perpetuating thanks to its competitive advantage. In his autobiography, the former Secretary of State Colin Powell notes how Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright asked him, "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?"[48] With China rapidly closing in on the US economically, this massive military machine will prove even more dangerous: if you have the means of violence in place, there's a very strong temptation to use it. This is new. America has fought dozens of wars since 1945, but during the Cold War nearly all were fought through "proxy forces," meaning that the US government provided financial and military support to an element in a foreign country that was fighting the "Red Menace." The tactic was used by both the US and the Soviet Union essentially because they both wanted to avoid direct military conflict, and this was met with moderate success.

But at the end of the Cold War, with the Soviet deterrent gone, US planners failed to realize that the military was not designed for the direct interventions and occupations of foreign countries that would now be much easier to execute. Their theory went that with the threat of the Soviet Union gone, the US would be able to use its "full-spectrum military dominance" to entrench its "economic rights." Since the economic supremacy of the US was being challenged, planners were intent on fighting back by exploiting their biggest advantage: the military. In many ways the US turned to attacking Iraq because it could no longer control the global economy and was seeking to regain ground by military means, trying to stem a decades-long structural decline by sending its guns around the world. This was the express philosophy of the lobby group called Project for the New American Century, many members of which became part of the George W. Bush administration. The most informative document produced by this think tank, *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Forces and Resources for a New Century*, noted: "The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security" and "the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification . . . for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf."[49] But it wasn't what America was good at. "The US in terms of its offensive fire power and global deployment remains absolutely unrivalled, but its weakness is that its forces are not well suited for policing activities," historian Michael Mann tells me. In other words, it has the ability to defeat foreign armies and conquer their cities, but it doesn't have the ability to bring them under control afterwards.

There are a number of reasons for this: first, the US military has no policing record—unlike, for example, the British army in Northern Ireland—while pacification is mostly a political not a military problem. Throughout the Cold War, the US only intervened in foreign countries where there were local allies who with American help could run their countries for them—"even in Vietnam it wasn't implausible that the South Vietnamese government, which had an army of over 200,000 men, could be propped up and successfully pacify the country," adds Mann. The Muslim world is different: the US never had such allies in Iraq or Afghanistan, but launched pre-emptive strikes anyway. But there is another profound problem that renders old-style imperial American power anachronistic: the country has a domestic culture which is not conducive to long-drawn out wars of aggression, as demonstrated by the turmoil during the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s. “American kids are not brought up to be as racist, as stoic in combat, as self-denying in crisis, or as obedient to authority as British kids once were,” writes Mann.[50] That lack of an imperial American culture is a proud tradition: its citizens don’t want to be part of the Empire however much they are pressured to take up arms for it. I want to give the final word to them.

Never Did, Never Will

One afternoon while I was living in Harlem, New York City, I decided to visit Brownsville, one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city, to talk to local people and find out how the War on Terror had affected them. I walked down Pitkin Avenue, which divides the neighborhood into two neat but equally deprived enclaves, an experience miles away from postcard New York with its narrative of gentrification and urban renewal. Homeless addicts pleaded for some change, children pushed each other off rusty bikes, an old woman pulled her luggage behind her, trying to dodge splinters of urban decay. Brownsville was the silent New York City. “We never get journalists here, apart from shootings,” the old woman told me. Overwhelmingly populated by people of Afro-Caribbean lineage (78.2 percent), with one of the worst crime rates in the United States, one of the highest infant mortality indicators, and stellar points in every department of deprivation, it was a military recruiter’s dream.

In the national conversation on Iraq that has cluttered newspapers and magazines to the point of saturation over the past decade, the academics and journalists conducting it have been men and women mostly from a similar class and with narrow ideological differences, used to getting finicky over minor points of disagreement. Most of them didn’t have children in Iraq and haven’t served in the armed forces themselves. Most of them don’t use the public welfare systems and none of them, we can be sure, live in places where the child mortality rate is 11.8 percent. In short, for them, the war and its consequences remains an abstract idea. In Brownsville, New York City, this abstract idea condenses into something very real. People talk effortlessly about how the war has impacted their lives in a tangible and often tragic way. Decquan Copeland, seventeen, is a student on the Acorn program for social justice. He grew up in Brownsville and lives in one of the housing projects off East New York Avenue. “The war has been a disaster for this country and it is still causing so many problems,” he told me. He is a devout Christian and practices at the Mount Sinai Cathedral, the main place of worship in the area. “I know about fifteen people at the Cathedral who have lost uncles, fathers and cousins in the war. And what for?” He pauses and clears his throat. “We often pray for them at Mount Sinai, but it just gets me so angry, that these people have died for nothing.”

Copeland is the prime age for recruitment to the army, and mentions that he has been approached by recruiters on numerous occasions with all of the usual incentives on offer. Brownsville Recruitment Center is located on Pitkin Avenue, an oasis of calm among the chicken shops and street-sellers. In the window are pictures of hardened men and women in combat regalia, affecting faces taut with strength. “There’s strong,” goes the strap, “Then there’s army strong.” US Army Recruiter Sergeant Christopher M. Penrod is reluctant to talk and clams up when I mention I’m a journalist. Before speaking to the press, recruiting officers have to receive approval from higher authorities, which is not forthcoming. Inside, the offices are decrepit and decorated with more yellowing pictures of combat action shots. “I am a Warrior,” reads another poster.

“I can’t deal with death, that’s why I’d never join the army,” says Copeland. What about his friends? “They have all seen what has happened and I think they are probably scared and angry; the thing is, the recruiters are everywhere around here, in our schools, in our streets, in our stores. They tell us we can get some money, make something of ourselves. All that. Some kids fall for it.” In a community district with 50.9 percent of the population on some form of income support, the military is still an appealing career path. Saskia Wilson, sixteen, is a student at Flushing High School. I find her watching television in a laundromat on Legion Street. She wants to go into the military when she finishes school. “It doesn’t scare me; you know, my uncle was in the military, I remember he used to talk about it all the time and I remember getting excited about it. I’ve always been interested in the military—I watch movies and all that shit. When 9/11 happened I thought they were gonna come here, to Brownsville. So you got to defend your country, they came and bombed us so we bomb them back.” Was she talking about Iraq? “Oh sure, it was Iraq that bombed us, so I want to protect my country.” I wondered if her uncle was in Iraq now. “Oh no, my uncle died, he died in the military.” And that doesn’t scare her? “I’m not gonna feel safe, but everybody gotta die someday, it's not like it's heaven here in Brownsville." Her mother is a post office worker, and her father does "nothing," according to Saskia. Her other uncle is in the military in South Carolina. "I used to want to be a teacher," she says. "But that was when I was very young, ever since I was twelve, I've wanted to be in the military, they take care of you."

I find Stevery Carrington, forty-seven, outside Microhousing off Rockaway Avenue. He has been a heroin addict for thirteen years and is living in sheltered accommodation. His eyes burn with real intensity when the subject of Iraq is brought up. "I don't know if I should care," he says. I wondered if the war had affected him personally. "Well, hell yeah, look at all the homelessness around, look at this program," he says, and points to the shelter behind him. "There's subsidized programs, day programs, all these things helping people get their life back on track and they wasting all this money on the war—they could be putting it in here. I've relapsed four times for drug abuse, I need the help, I can tell you." I suggest that the people of Brownsville seem like they have strong feelings about the conflict. "They don't care!" he shouts back. "You live here, you shit here, you fuck here, if anybody know anything they don't say shit, nobody gives a fuck, but the war comes to them through deaths of people they know. That's my relationship with the war—seeing my brothers come back in coffins."

Brownsville has a large Muslim community, mainly African American converts, but there are a sizeable number of believers and an active mosque. I spoke to Abdullah Aziz, fifty-two, who was sitting on Pitkin Avenue outside his friend's shop. He had converted to Islam thirty years ago and worked as a plumber and drug counselor. "I have a son in Iraq," he begins. "He just went, he's in Kuwait until weather conditions allow him to go into Iraq for a year. I think the invasion was politically incorrect, it was unjust, it was for oil, but it's the power that be, and that's it, it is, it be's, so we can't do nothing about it. They talk about due processes, but they are the process!" It was strange that a devout Muslim, against the war morally, would allow his son, twenty years old, to go to the Middle East to fight for the US. "He wanted a career, there's not much else he could do," he says. "The decision was his—he understands he's Muslim and the Koran says Muslims shouldn't kill other Muslims, but then look at Iraq that's what's happening. It's a job to him, they get you young and dumb, but he's also a grown man so we're supporting him. Of course, every parent is worried about it, but you can't do anything, he’s got to find his own way, a lot of kids round here do the same shit.”

Many people in Brownsville are employed off the record, using anything they have or can get hold of to make money. Melvin Ford, twenty-six, is selling grubby second-hand teddy bears on the main thoroughfare, along with coverless Sudoku and coloring books. He has some strong opinions on the war and gives a historical context on the whole operation: “Well, Bush senior did some stupid shit,” he says. “He let Saddam make all that money and get away with it. People forget,” he adds, “that’s not our oil . . . They should leave Iraq alone,” he expands, “bring the troops home and let the Iraqi President deal with it.” It transpires that Ford has two cousins who have been in Iraq. One, Lans Franklin, was sent home for going AWOL while the other, Richard Franklin, remains there. “Richard don’t know anything,” says Ford. “He’s been there since 2004, or whenever it started and now I think he’s switched to Kuwait or something. He sends letters, tells us he’s doing good, how wonderful it all is. But it’s the school he went to: they trained him for guns and war, told him how good all that shit is.” Richard Franklin has five children, three boys and two girls. They haven’t seen him for four years. His brother, Lans, went AWOL and was discharged by the military after going out to Iraq. “He fucked up and it turned him a little crazy, and they said, ‘You are gonna drop a fucking bomb on us one day so we’re sending you home, we don’t need you.’” Lans, from the Bronx originally, had been back for about six months; he has problems hearing, after a bomb went off nearby when he was asleep. “I don’t know if he’s changed at all,” says Ford, getting agitated. “He was definitely drinking more than usual when I last saw him: ‘Let’s get a six-pack, blah blah,’ that kind of shit. He was drinking two six-packs and liquor every day when I saw him last. He’s kind of crazy now, but the military don’t help him.” He pauses and looks down. “Never did, never will.”

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CHAPTER 1: THE OTHER “DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL”

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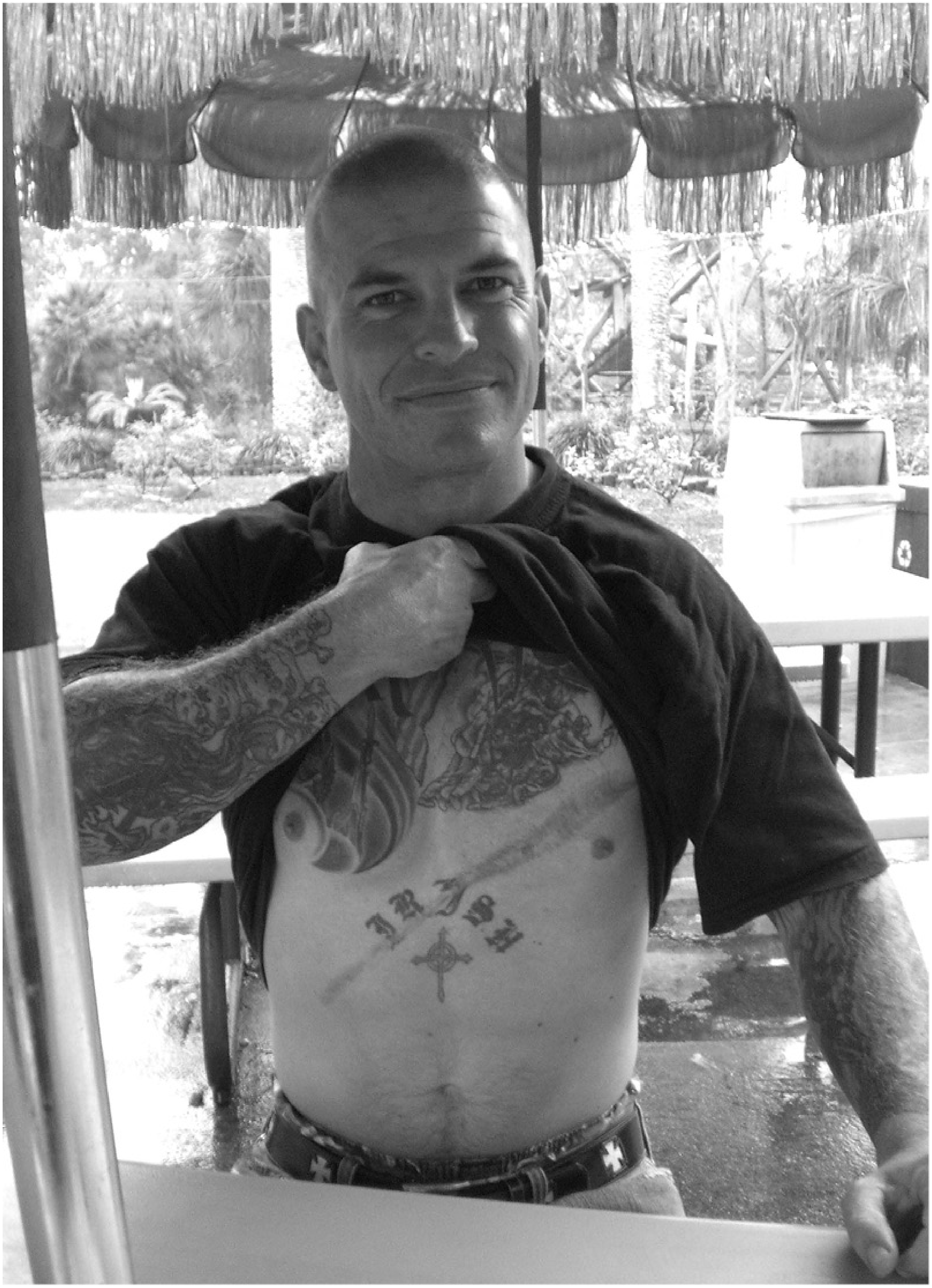
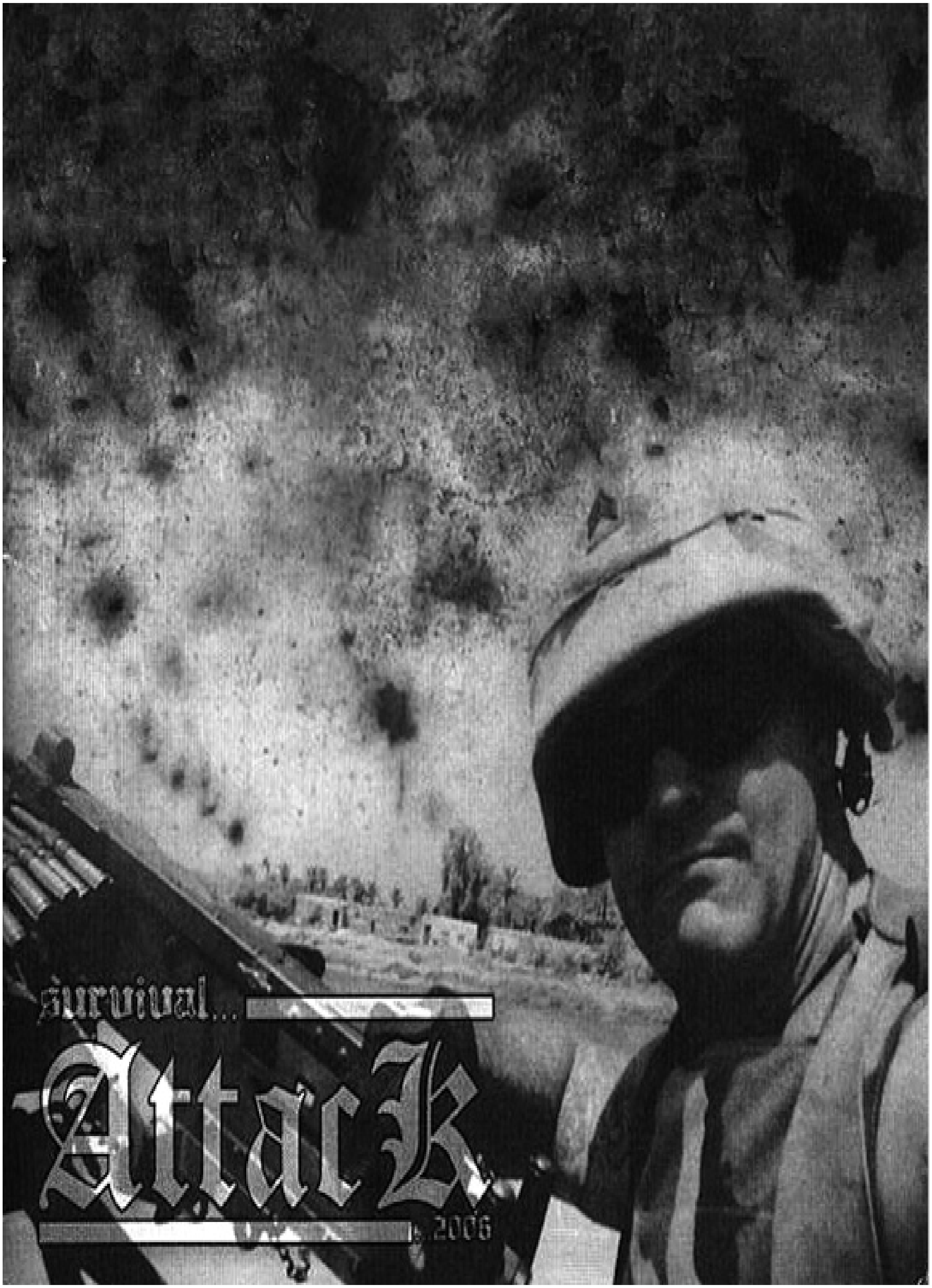

IRISH

Forrest Fogarty, neo-Nazi who served in Iraq as a part of the military police from 2004 to 2005. [Matt Kennard, March 2008]

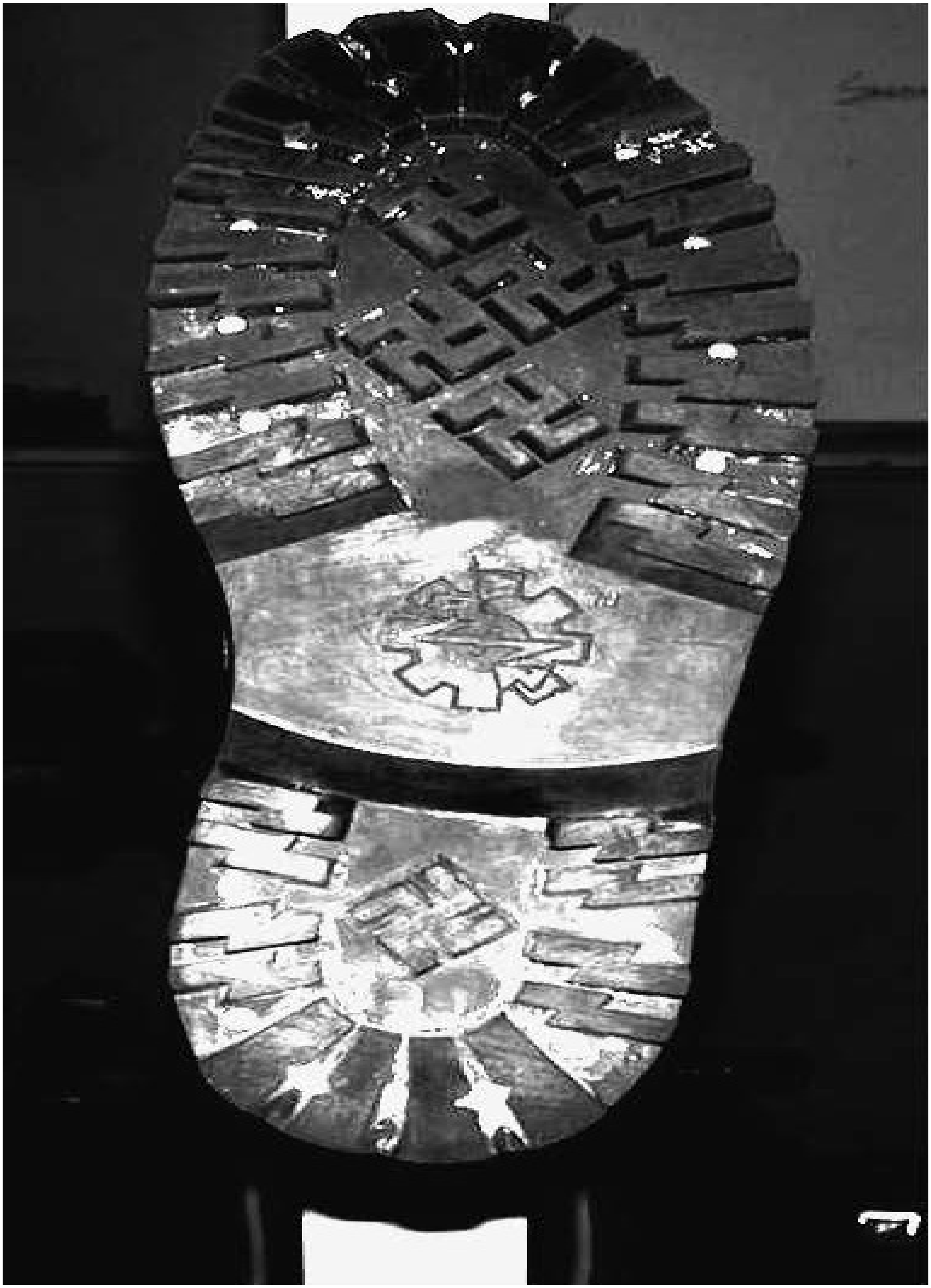

survival...
AttacK
2006

Fogarty in Iraq on the album cover of his neo-Nazi band Attack. [Given to Matt Kennard by Fogarty, March 2008]

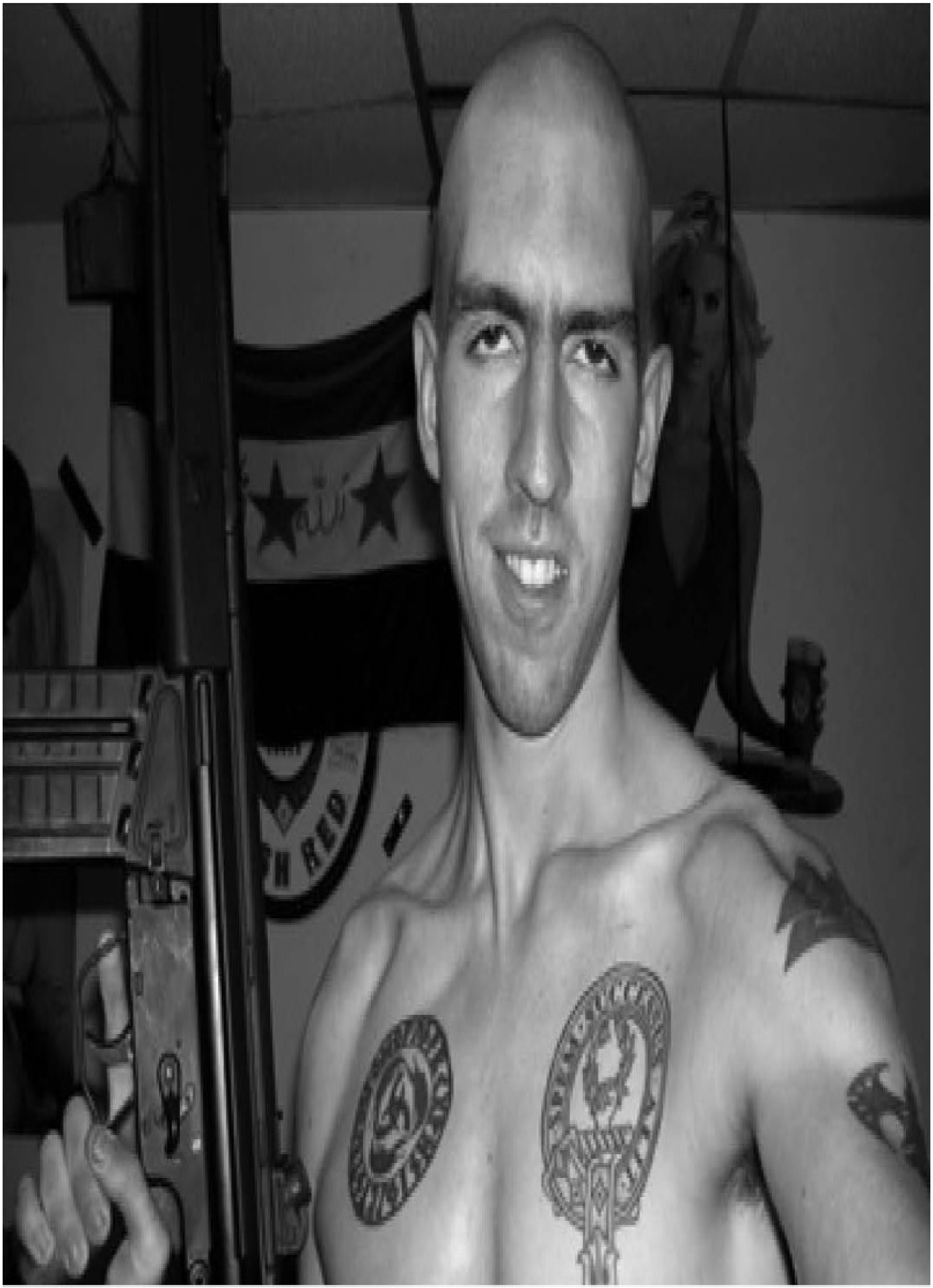
The Viking with axe tattoo riding up Fogarty’s forearm. [Matt Kennard, March 2008]

I Don't Mean To Be Rude
Yes I Do

Specialist James Douglas Ross, who served in Iraq as a military intelligence officer (Eighty-Second Airborne Division) in his barracks room. [Photo provided by Hunter Glass]

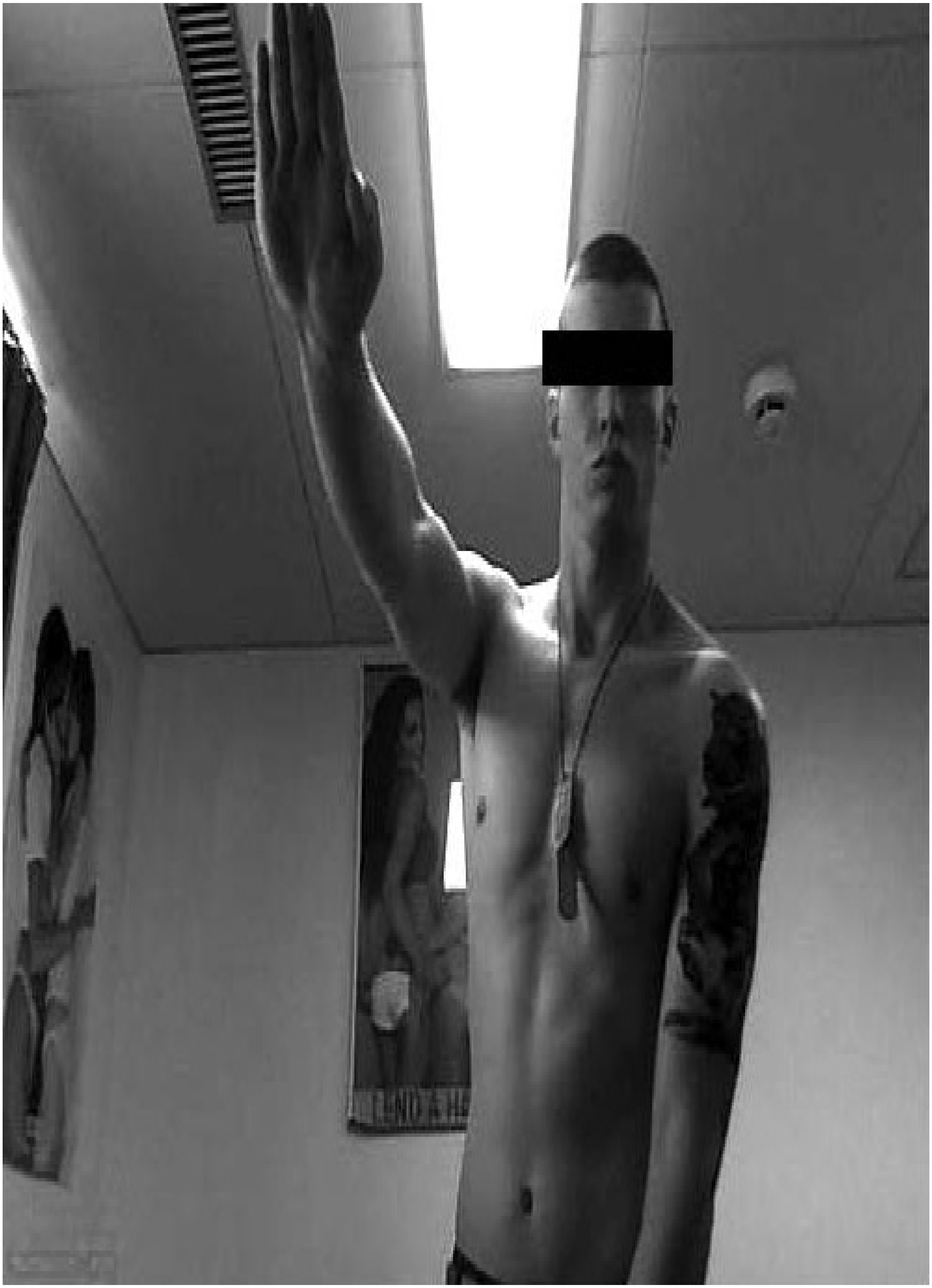


James Douglas Ross’s boots, complete with swastika treads. [Photo provided by Hunter Glass]



H RED

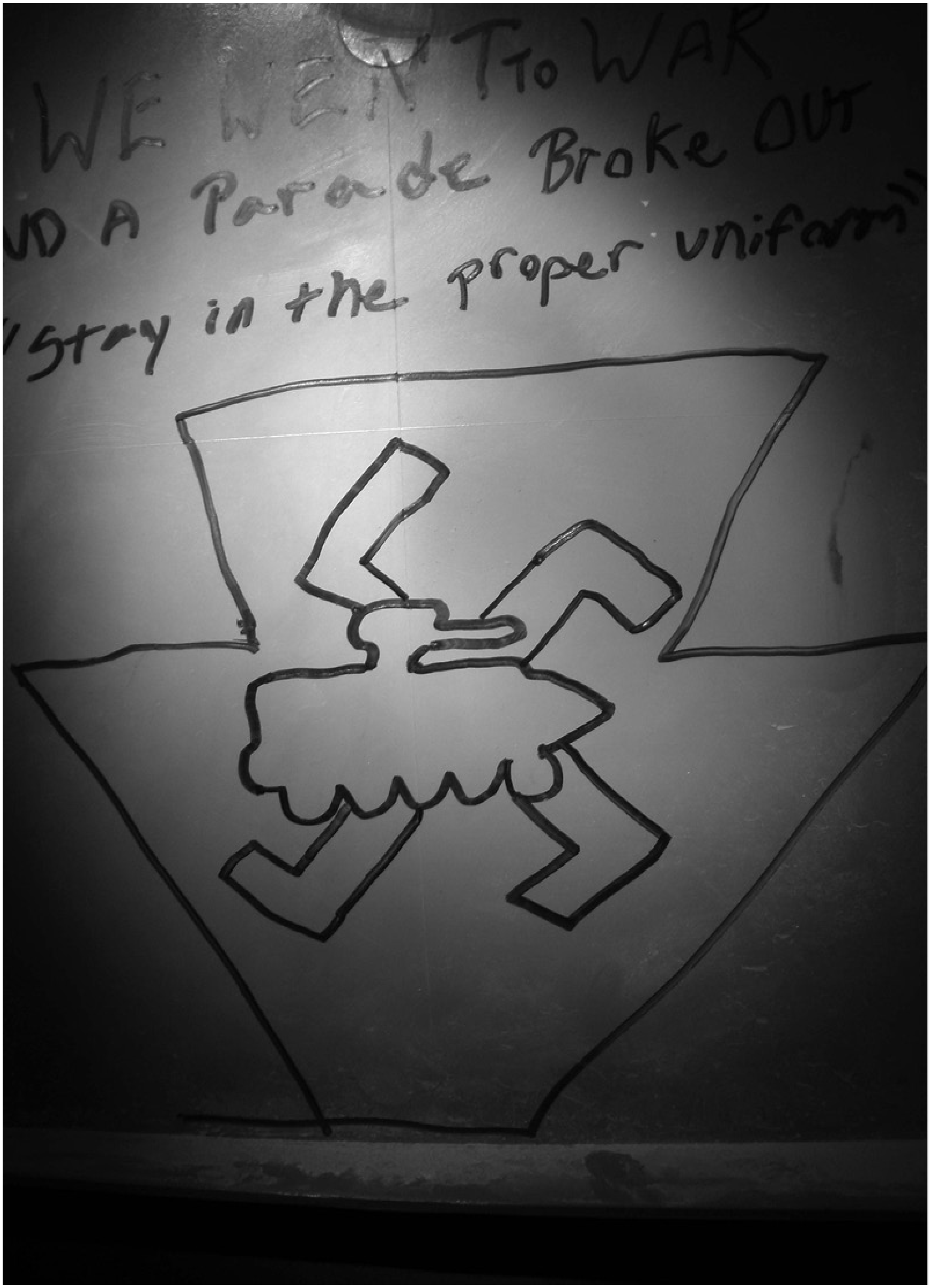
Ross in his room in Iraq, holding fully automatic rifle. He was eventually caught mailing a submachine gun back to his father in the US. The three-triangle tattoo on the top of his left arm is a Norse sign used by white supremacists. [Photo provided by Jeffrey Stoleson]



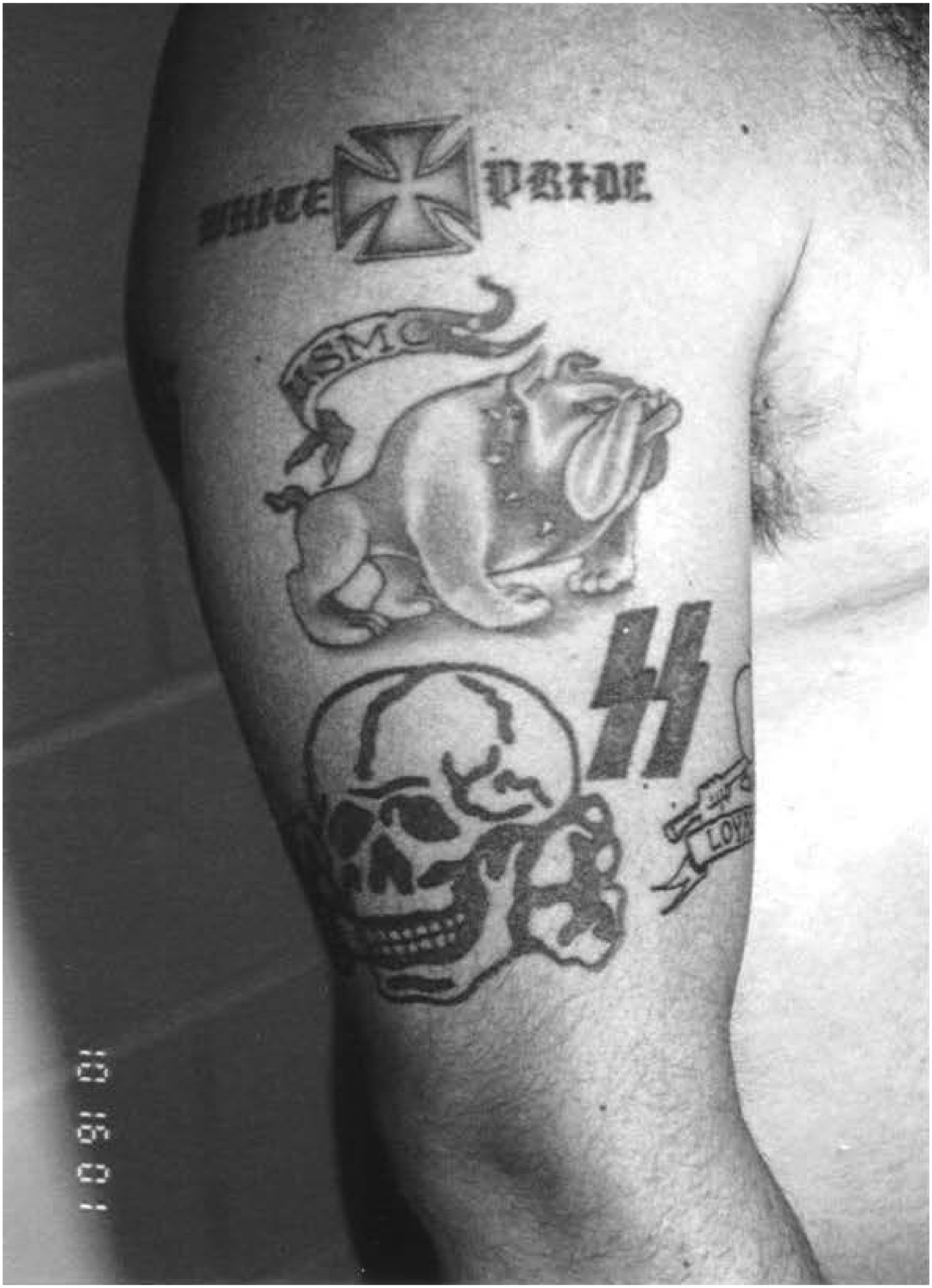
[redacted]

Neo-Nazi soldier in Iraq does Hitler salute on extremist social network NewSaxon. [Obtained by Matt Kennard, 2008]

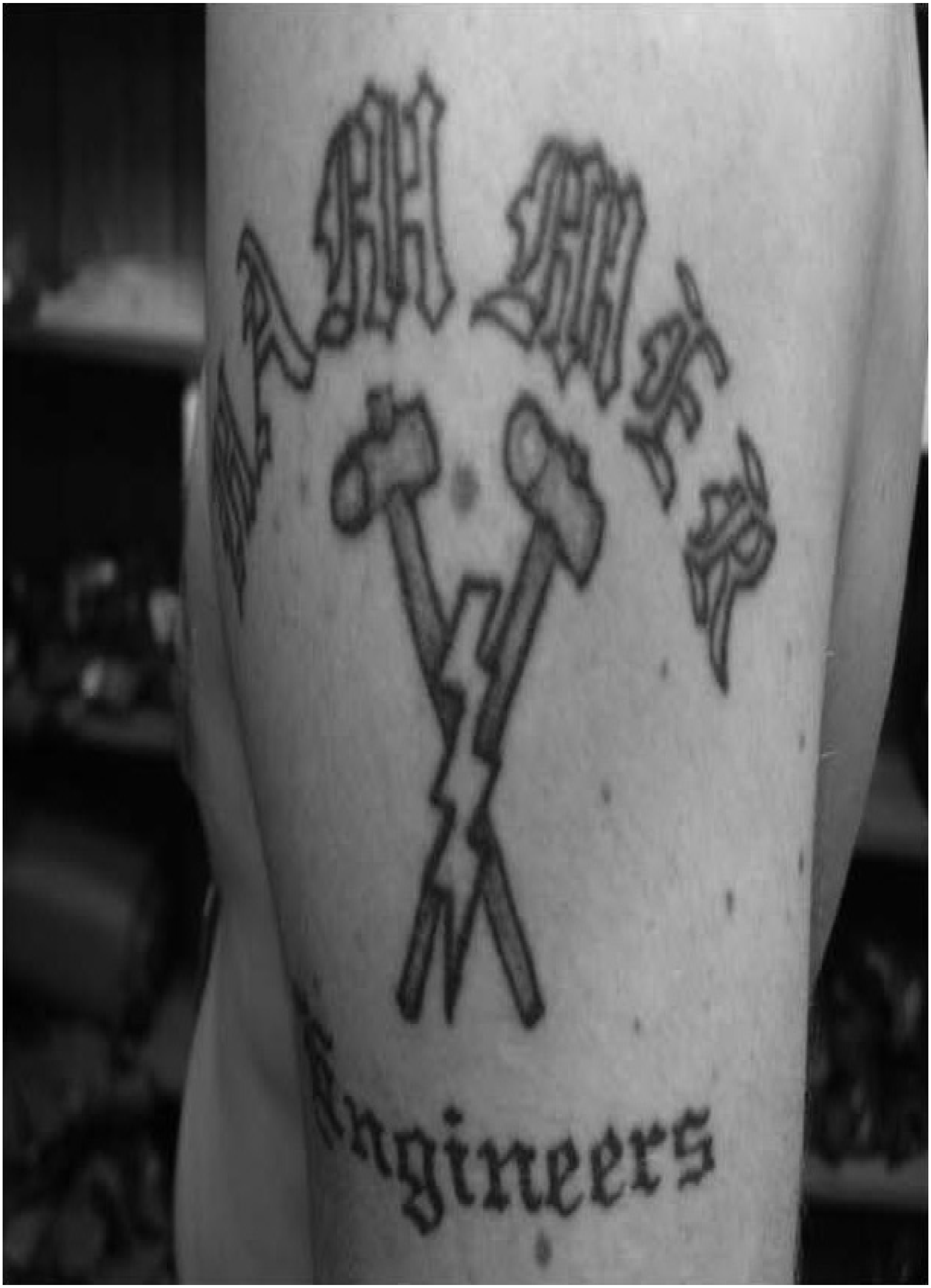
Kenneth Eastridge, former soldier in Iraq now serving time for his part in murder of fellow soldier in the US, does Hitler salute and shows off SS bolts on right forearm. [Downloaded from Eastridge's Myspace page]


WE WENT TO WAR
ND A Parade Broke OUT
"Stay in the proper uniform"

Neo-Nazi graffiti put up outside Camp Taji in Iraq. [Picture by Jeffrey Stoleson]

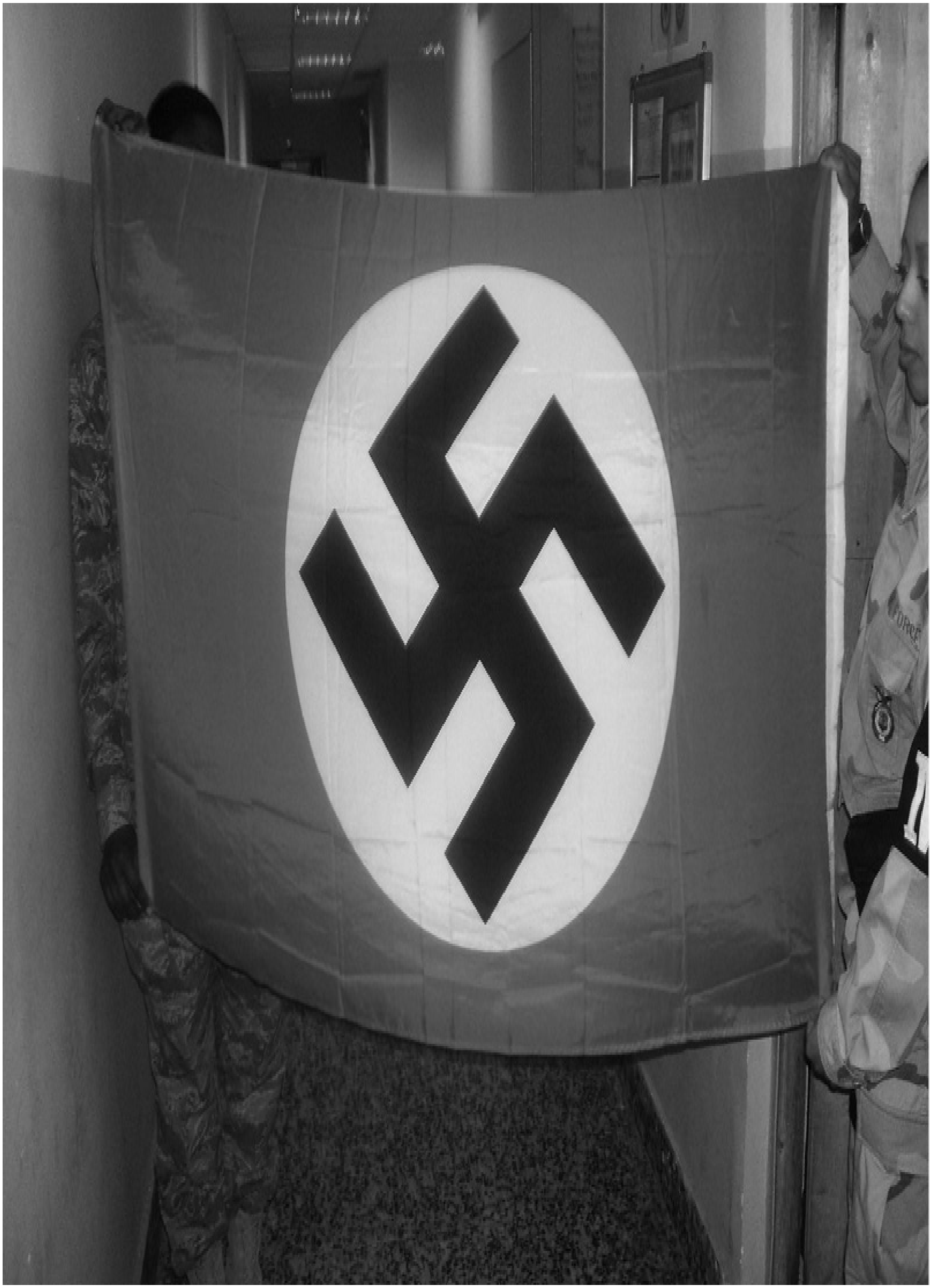

WHITE PRIDE
USMC
SS
LOY
10 16 01

Skinhead marine with neo-Nazi tattoos who left military with honorable discharge and later went to federal prison after committing a hate crime in Montana. [Photo provided by T. J. Leyden]

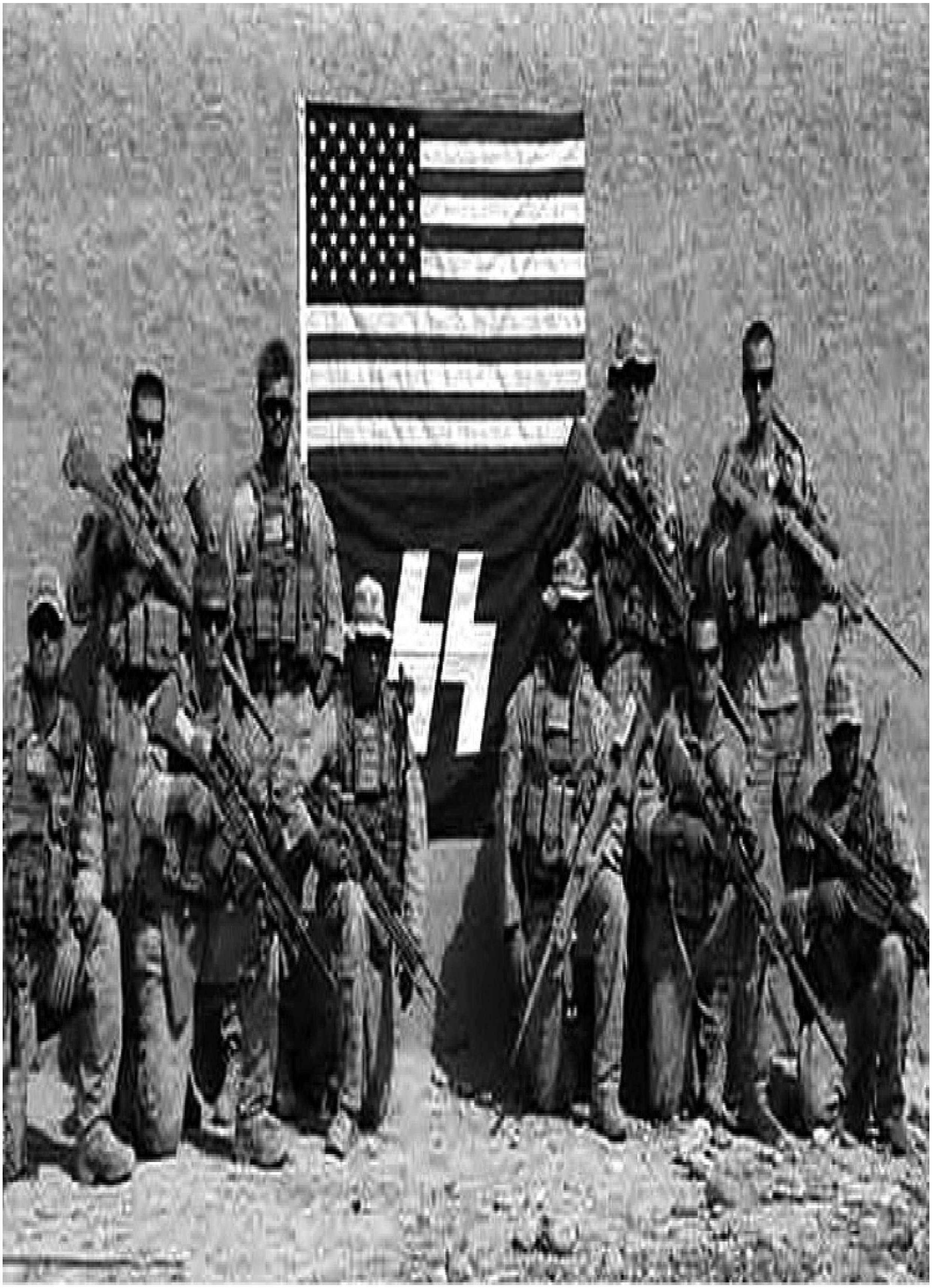


Engineers

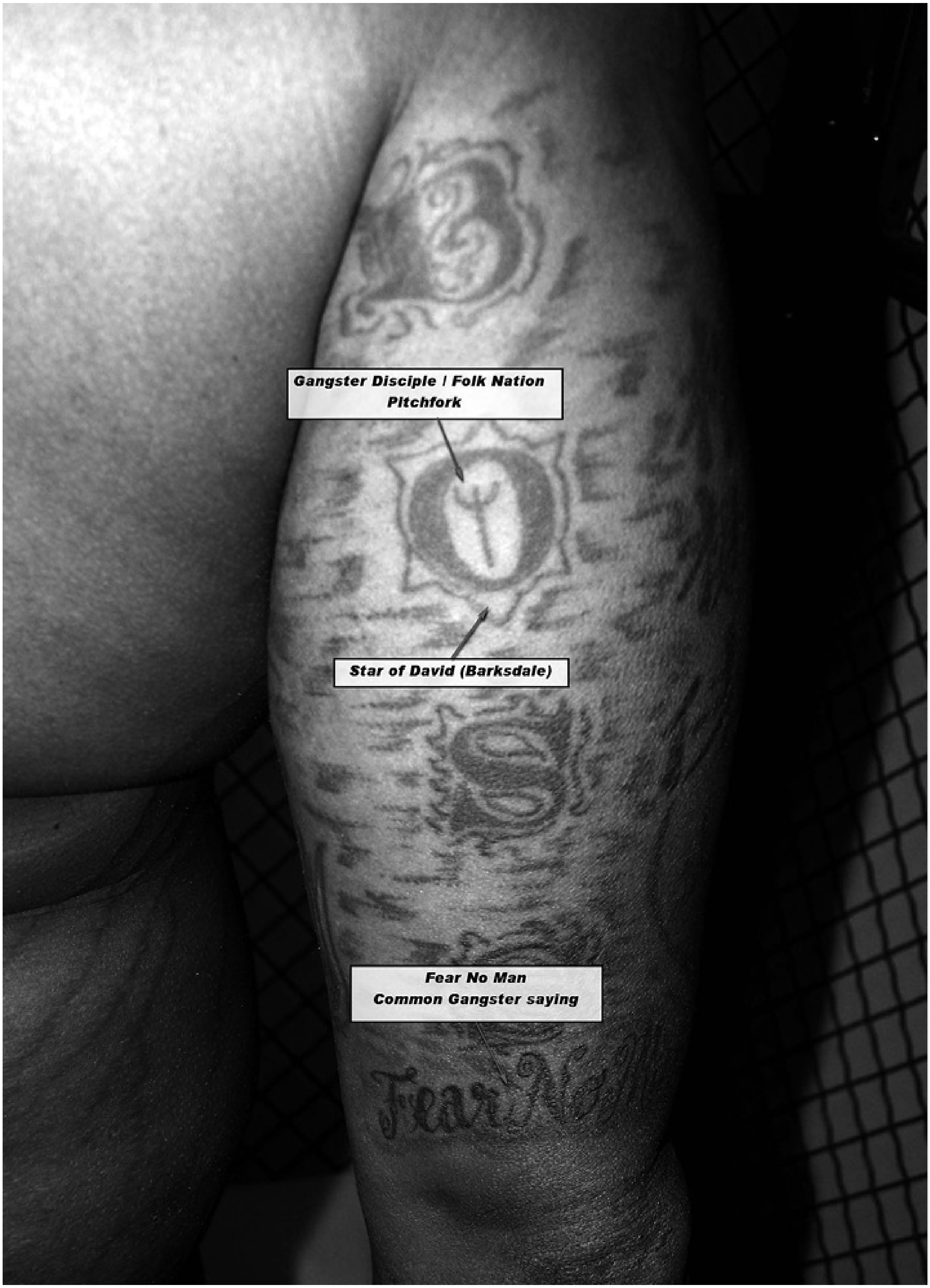
Private in an engineer battalion at Fort Bragg with a tattoo of the logo of Hammerskins, a group described as the "most violent and best-organized" skinhead outfit in the US. The soldier told investigators he "didn't know" the tattoo was racist and was allowed to stay in the military. [Photo provided by Hunter Glass]


FORCE

Neo-Nazi swastika flag confiscated from billeting in Iraq in 2008 by military police. [Provided by Hunter Glass]

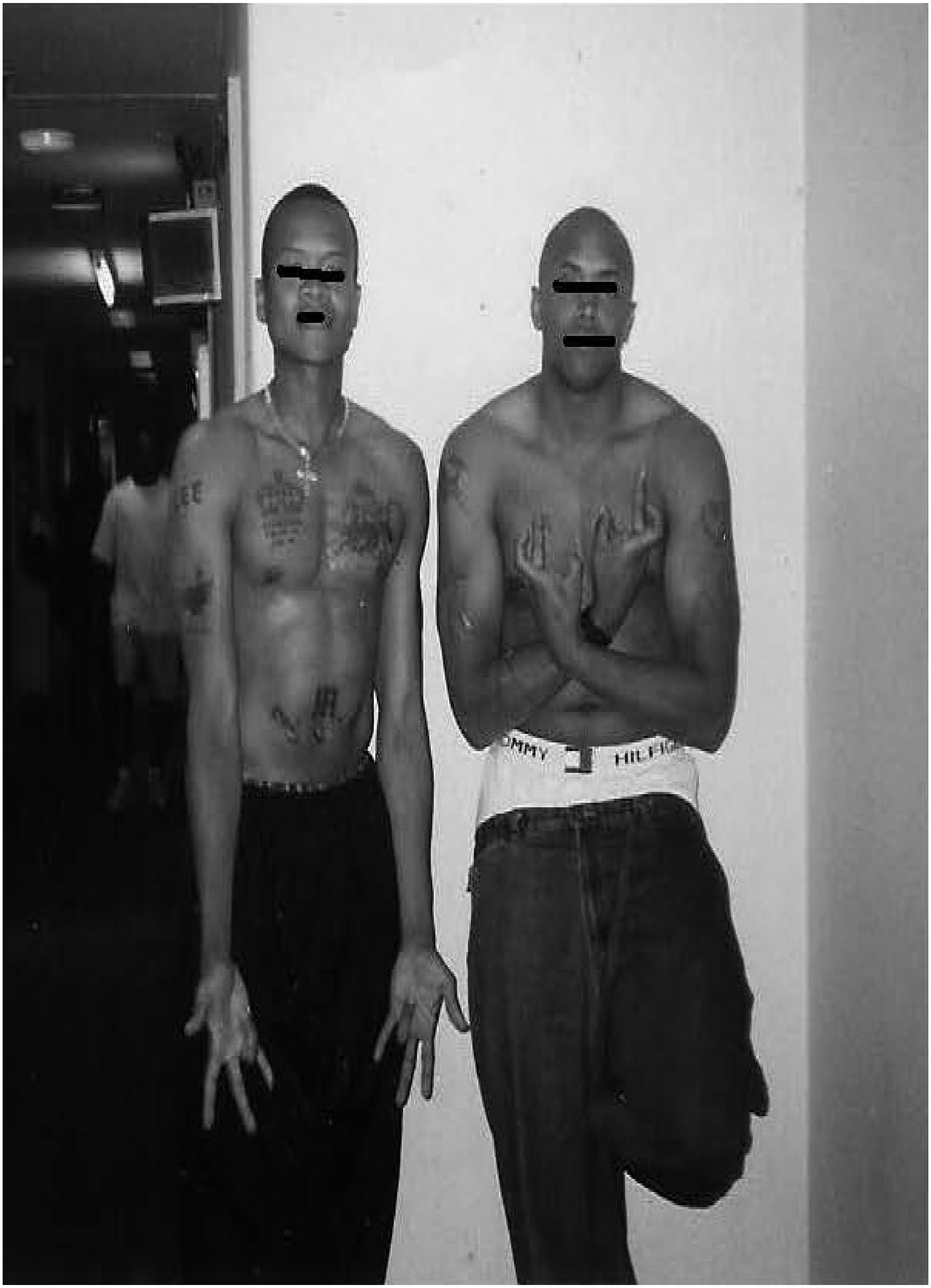


A US Marine scout sniper unit posing with neo-Nazi SS lightning bolts flag in Sangin, Afghanistan. [Widely available on the internet]


Gangster Disciple / Folk Nation
Pitchfork
Star of David (Barksdale)
Fear No Man
Common Gangster saying

Gang-tattooed arm of former airman Rico Williams, the leader of the gang that beat fellow soldier Juwan Johnson to death during his initiation into the Gangster Disciples while on active duty in Germany. [Photo provided by Hunter Glass]

Army cooks based at Fort Lewis, Washington, show their “west-side” gang allegiance. [Photo provided by Hunter Glass]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[redacted]
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OMMY
HILFIG

Two soldiers in their barracks on Fort Bragg, both members of the Gangster Disciples, a Chicago gang. The soldier on the right is throwing the pitchforks sign of the GD; the other is throwing the rival Latin Kings gang sign downwards in a show of disrespect. [Photo provided by Jeffrey Stoleson]

GUERA
Night
Chos
GUER

Sergeant Jeffrey Stoleson sitting in front of a blast wall at Forward Operating Base Scania, two hours south of Baghdad, 2006. Graffiti is for Diablos 69, a subgroup of the Norteños gang, based on the west coast of the US. [Photo from Jeffrey Stoleson]

EL MOCO
LA

Stoleson at Forward Operating Base Scania in 2006. Graffiti reads “El Moco,” the moniker of the individual that did the tag, while below is the name of Mexican gang La Eme (By the Wings), one of largest drug dealers and smugglers in the US. [Photo provided by Stoleson]

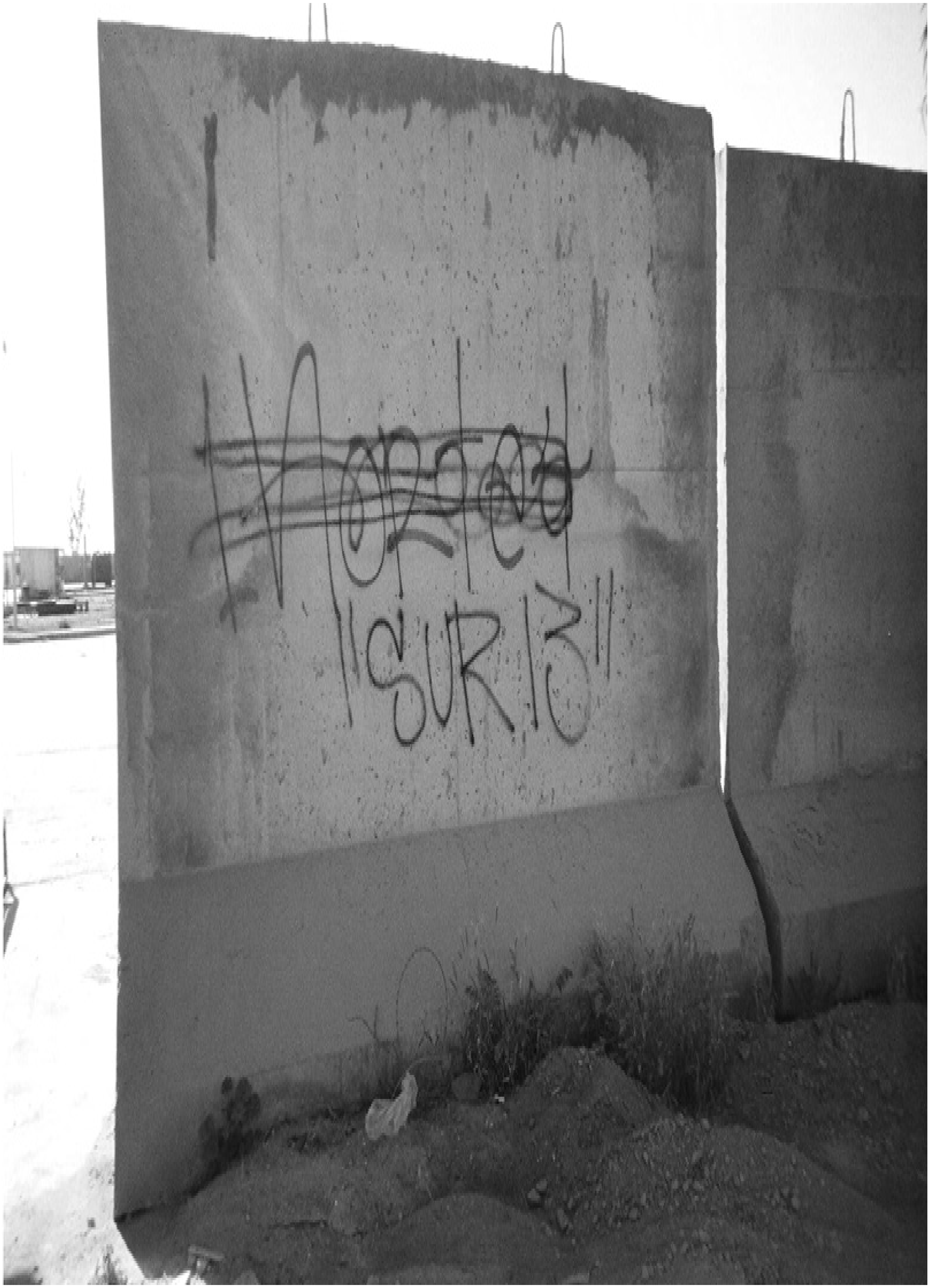
69'ERS
Aunt Ruth I Love

Photo taken in Taji, Iraq, shows graffiti of outlaw motorcycle group 69ers, out of Brooklyn, New York, displaying their “1 per cent” patch on a tank. [Photo by Jeffrey Stoleson]

Photo taken in 2009 outside Forward Operating Base Anaconda, outside Balad, Iraq. The letters “BK” on the military vehicle denote “Blood Killas,” a tag put up by the Bloods’ rivals, usually the Crips. [Photo provided by Jeffery Stoleson]

HI
916
SAC-TOWN
NORTE

Tank yard in Taji, Iraq, 2010. Graffiti on tank spells out Sactown Norte, a criminal gang out of Sacramento, California. [Photo provided Jeffery Stoleson]


SUR 13

Gang warfare in Iraq. The Mexican prison gang Sur 13 put a line through the tag of a rival gang and replaced it with their own insignia. [Picture from Jeffrey Stoleson]

CLAIRE PROVOST MATT KENNARD

SILENT COUP

HOW CORPORATIONS OVERTHREW DEMOCRACY

BLOOMSBURY

‘*Silent Coup* is a ground-breaking piece of work. Through personal journeys and encounters, it reveals the truth about how little our votes mean when corporations and dirty dealers are pulling their corrupt strings in the background. This book needs to be read aloud.

Silent Coup shows us where we’re heading to if we do nothing. This book is not about theories, it’s about reality. It’s what real investigative journalism should be about, but it’s written in a no-nonsense, engaging, and accessible style. This is stuff we really need to know.’

–BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

‘Silent Coup shows us how corporations have insulated themselves from democratic decision-making and stolen our collective power. Through impressive and important investigative journalism, the authors reveal how, why and where corporate power has hijacked democracy.

We have to understand this world-spanning corporate power to build a global movement so powerful that we can take back our democracies and secure our collective future.’

–JEREMY CORBYN

‘This brilliant book presents an entirely innovative framework to understand why the world looks like it does and not what it is. It explains why the media is largely ignoring the most important story of our generation. It explains how civic society around the world is being systematically dismantled by greedy corporations, governments, judicial bodies, and international institutions. It crackles by exposing hypocrisy at every level of officialdom. It demonstrates that voting in Western democracies is only the window dressing that hides power that few see with the naked eye but that this book reveals in startling and grotesque detail. If you read only one book this year, this should be it.’

–STEVEN DOZINGER

‘*Silent Coup* opens a window onto multiple battlefields on which brave communities resist irresistible conglomerates worldwide. Because these momentous clashes remain under the radar of global public opinion, reading this book constitutes, in itself, an act of precious resistance.’

–YANIS VAROUFAKIS

‘This wide-ranging inquiry – based on intensive on-the-ground investigation – unearths “a parallel world, outside of scrutiny…with very real consequences.” An ugly world, out of control, unaccountable, but with overwhelming power. It ranges from investor-state legal systems to intricate systems of corporate welfare that aid elites and investors. Always concealed in elaborate devices of seeming to do good. *Silent Coup* is a highly revealing exposé of the hidden real world.’

–NOAM CHOMSKY

‘*Silent Coup* is investigative journalism at its best. It shows us how corporations rule the world: suing sovereign, democratic governments in invisible courts to erode constitutions and the democratic rights they enshrine – and writing laws and treaties to privatise the earth’s resources and public goods. Sovereign communities and countries are being displaced by sovereign companies and the supranational systems they have built to establish their control, creating in the process our age of corporate colonialism. The book is vital reading for all who care for human freedom, human rights and democracy.’

–VANDANA SHIVA

‘*Silent Coup* is an outstanding work of secrets revealed: all the more so for its classic eyewitness reporting. It shows that democracy’s true enemy is within, a dark alliance of rapacious capital and corrupt law. We have been warned.’

–JOHN PILGER

‘*Silent Coup* is a crime story: a gripping description of the murky legal and regulatory structures and policy changes that privilege big corporations. It’s a tragedy, outlining the terrible consequences for people and nature, for democracy and accountability. It’s a lesson in economics, providing fascinating and important insights into the functioning of global capitalism today. But finally it’s also a story of hope about apparently powerless people resisting these trends in the struggle for better and more just futures. Don’t miss this.’

–JAYATI GHOSH

Silent Coup

How Corporations Overthrew Democracy

By Claire Provost and
Matt Kennard

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For Gavin MacFadyen,
good trouble

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Biographies

Claire Provost is co-founder and co-director of the new non-profit Institute for Journalism and Social Change. She was previously Head of Global Investigations at the independent media outlet *openDemocracy*; a fellow at the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) in London; and a data journalist at The *Guardian*. This is her first book. She lives in Turin, Italy.

Matt Kennard is co-founder and chief investigator at *Declassified UK*, a news outlet investigating British foreign policy. He was a fellow and then director at the CIJ in London. He has worked as a staff writer for the *Financial Times* in Washington DC, New York, and London. He is the author of two acclaimed books: *Irregular Army* (2012) and *The Racket* (2015). He lives in London.

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We would like to thank two people in particular without whom this book would not have happened. First, Gavin MacFadyen. The fellowships he gave us at the Centre for Investigative Journalism in London changed our careers and our lives.

The second is Tony Tabatznik at the Bertha Foundation which funded our fellowships. Like Gavin, Tony is a larger-than-life lightbulb of a human being. Few funders back projects which really take on entrenched power and change the world. Bertha is one of them. And, like Gavin, Tony does it all with an infectious laugh.

We would also like to thank all of the activists, human rights lawyers and countless others who are challenging the global systems and strategies through which corporations impose their will and limit the potential of democracy. The odds are stacked against them. Their courage inspired us and gave us the will to write this book. Their stories and wisdom should be much more widely known.

We would also like to thank our editors, and our families and friends – particularly Simone and Ana – for supporting us through the many years researching and writing this project. Finally, thanks to Ornella Maoret and Ann Page for their open-minded love and inspiration, and to Dylan and Rosa, the next generation where our hope lies.

Introduction: The meeting

He was late and seemed comically disorganized, but also purposeful and charismatic. Simultaneously out-of-place and at ease. From his attitude to his appearance – unkempt hair and a dark tweed blazer over a crumpled shirt – he was exactly how you might imagine a veteran, rabble-rousing American investigative journalist.

The scene was a small, busy restaurant in central London with walls that were covered in dark wood panels and a menu of rustic English meals. It was lunchtime on a weekday, and the dining room was packed with people on breaks from offices nearby, consumed in their own conversations. It seemed like an appropriate setting for a life-changing meeting of ambitious young reporters who wanted what this man seemed to have in spades: an impressive investigative track-record, but also a life of adventure, principles and a community of colleagues who were both 'trouble-makers' and close friends.

We'd only met Gavin MacFadyen once before – at our interviews for fellowship positions at the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) in London which he had founded in 2003 to create more space for important, and difficult investigative reporting.[1] But we'd read everything we could find about him and his history. He had covered civil rights and anti-Vietnam war protests in the United States, and the Nicaraguan Revolution, before moving to London and becoming more recently known for his vocal support of WikiLeaks and Julian Assange. We were excited to join his world of high-stakes, colourful characters. People who believed in what they were doing, and took real risks.

Gavin was a prominent friend to whistleblowers and reporters who seemed to run towards abuses of power. Previous CIJ journalists included Sarah Harrison, who became a WikiLeaks editor, and a close advisor to Assange, before helping Edward Snowden escape Hong Kong in 2013.[2] Daniel Ellsberg – leaker of the 'Pentagon Papers' – and members of the Russian feminist punk band Pussy Riot joined him in advising the new Courage Foundation on defending whistleblowers worldwide.[3]

He was also a fierce advocate for Chelsea Manning, the US army intelligence analyst who leaked files to WikiLeaks covering the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. They included a video which showed soldiers killing a dozen unarmed civilians – among them two workers for the Reuters press agency – and then laughing about it.[4] The price she paid was huge: imprisonment for seven years from 2010, sometimes on suicide watch, with detention conditions considered 'cruel, inhuman and degrading' by United Nations experts.[5]

These were the kinds of people that he seemed to be surrounded by. When they spoke about the role of public access to information in democracies it wasn't theoretical. Investigative reporting, Gavin wrote, demands 'a reporter's moral outrage at injustice, incompetence, brutality and misery'.[6] But for many journalists, he cautioned, their work 'is simply a job. Their interest is in lapdog confidences and dining with the powerful. Those who passionately want to provide a voice for those without one, and who fight hypocrisy and exploitation are sadly rare'. He fretted about consequences for the public-at-large, deprived of critical perspectives on the activities of powerful players in our societies. He, and those around him, were determined to do something about it.

We had both been selected for fellowships under Gavin at the CIJ after responding to a vague job advert offering two years of time and salary – and travel budgets – to work on public interest investigative journalism about, it appeared, whatever we wanted.

In our interviews, Gavin hadn't asked us standard questions, and hadn't wanted to hear much about our CVs or accomplishments. Instead he'd thrown scenarios at us. 'Imagine you get a tip,' he said. 'Rising cancer rates near an industrial waste dump. What do you do next, how do you figure out if there's actually a story there?'

He'd also thrown us curve balls, grinning as he quickly changed the scenarios' terms: 'Imagine, as you dig into this, you find out that a crucial environmental impact study had been buried, and that its author now wants this information to get out. But they're across the world, and they're worried about sharing anything over email. What do you do?'

Born on New Year's Day in 1940, Gavin would have been 74 years old – more than twice our age – when we met. He'd made more than fifty documentaries, including for the BBC and PBS Frontline, on topics ranging from neo-Nazi violence to election fraud. He also had a roster of acting and producer credits from a stretch of time that he had spent in Hollywood, including collaborations on Michael Mann films such as *The Insider*, which starred Russell Crowe as a famous corporate whistleblower.[7]

But while he had a lifetime of impressive experiences he didn't come across as arrogant or pretentious. We saw straight away that he lacked the ego and snobbishness of some senior journalists, who often seemed to disregard reporters who are much younger or who have just started to find their feet. He let out big belly laughs during our initial interviews which (unusually for job interviews) felt over far too quickly.

We were thrilled to learn that we'd been chosen for fellowship positions. Details remained sparse, but the start date was 'ASAP', and this was what had brought us to the restaurant that day. Gavin had suggested that we meet for lunch, presumably to discuss what our new positions would involve. As we waited for him, we compared the practical questions we'd prepared. We'd wanted to look organized before our new boss.

But when Gavin appeared and sat down at our table, he gestured at our notebooks and pens, and chuckled: 'Put those away.'

Instead of details, he wanted to chew over big questions that day. What were we passionate about investigating, and why? 'You can do whatever you want, go wherever you want – but make it count,' he encouraged us. 'You could even decide to work together,' he grinned. 'That could be fun.'

While we'd each met Gavin once before, at our interviews, we hadn't met each other and soon we realised that this was the purpose of our lunch. When it was our turn to speak we saw that this unusual meeting, without note-taking or an agenda, had in fact been carefully planned by the unusual character before us. We had too many interests, and concerns, in common. It could not have been a coincidence, we thought.

Claire had been working up the road at the *Guardian*, one of Britain's main newspapers, as a data journalist. Her work there had included investigations following international aid and development money – including how giant companies have profited from these budgets.[8] She wanted to dig deeper into this business.

Matt had previously worked at the *Financial Times* and had written a book about how the US military recruited neo-Nazis, gang members and criminals to fight the 'War on Terror'.[9] He had also been tracking controversies around international development institutions and had chosen as his next target a branch of the World Bank that invests in private companies. Claire knew it well; it was also on her list of entities to look into.

We didn't want that lunch meeting to end either – though we didn't get much new information about the fellowships that we'd been selected for. We would come to expect this mix of excitement and lack of clarity after a meeting with Gavin. However one thing was now obvious: he would not tell us what to do, not like a normal boss. He might inspire and give us some direction, but it would be up to us to make the most of this opportunity.

We didn't know it then but that lunch, in late spring 2014, set off a collaboration that would span many years and continents. We would go on to use every penny of our travel budgets and stretch them as much as possible: flying the most inconvenient flights, staying in the cheapest hotels, and wherever possible hitching rides with others going the same way. In total we went to twenty-five countries across Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Americas – as well as deep into historical archives.[10]

What we found surprised even Gavin. As European empires crumbled in the twentieth century, power structures that had dominated the world were up for renegotiation. Yet instead of a triumph of democracy, what emerged was a silent coup against its very core – namely, the unstoppable rise of global corporate power and new infrastructure to protect it from rebellious peoples. Around the world, people on the frontlines of local struggles explained the present-day consequences of this epic power grab – while archives and historical documents revealed its origins. The result is this book – a guide to the rise of supranational corporate empires that now dictate how resources are allocated, how territories are governed, how justice is defined and who's safe.

Our first major investigation was prompted by an unexpected phone call. It sent us into a little-known but powerful international legal system through which giant companies and foreign investors can sue governments for billions of dollars. On the ground around the world we learned from local communities how cases through this system have challenged, delayed and in some cases overturned actions taken to protect public health and the environment and build more just and equal futures.

Next, we turned to the international aid and development system that we'd both wanted to dig into from the start – learning how it has helped corporations to expand (or bailed them out when they've struggled). Beyond corporate profits, we saw how these legal and welfare systems at the global level also support corporate control and influence over societies. We saw this too in our next investigations, into the cessation of territory around the world to corporations, as well as increasingly privatised security.

From South Africa to Myanmar (also known as Burma), these systems and trends have functioned to insulate giant corporations and wealthy elites from democracy – and, we learned from historical files and archives, this means they're working as intended. They are the product of ambitious and long-range plans to reshape the world.

This story is far bigger than a single parliamentary or congressional scandal (or series of them). It is about who *really* controls power and decision-making in our world today. The rules of the game. When exceptions are made. Who's in charge. It is about corporate justice, corporate welfare, corporate territories and corporate armies – all on a global scale. This is a story that affects you no matter where you live.

Though London, where we met, seemed increasingly like a particularly appropriate place for us to be based while working on this project. Each of the systems and trends we investigated had expanded around the same time. It was after the Second World War, as independence movements in poorer countries threatened the continuing rule of British and other imperial powers. Europe's capitalist elites, including senior figures from the UK and Germany, rallied to protect themselves and build new infrastructure to support corporations' interests. This infrastructure has since gone global – without democratic debates, and undermining democratic action worldwide.

Some of the figures in this story are well-known, including Cecil Rhodes and Margaret Thatcher, but many of the protagonists – the architects of international corporate empires and local community activists resisting their impacts – are not. The characters include English soap makers and Asian oligarchs as well as lawyers, bankers, economists – and, on the other side, a ragtag global resistance of people who would remind us of Gavin, with similar abilities to mix seriousness with joy.

Crucially, what we uncovered is not secret to everyone – elites know this story, or parts of it, already. So do ordinary people on the frontlines of local struggles globally. Their fight back has made them experts, but their views rarely inform headlines.

PART ONE

Corporate justice

Chapter 1

Democracy on trial

An unexpected phone call

Gavin gave us a room, to use as an office, in the media building at Goldsmiths University in New Cross, south London. It had no windows and had previously been used for storage. But we'd never had an office to ourselves before. We cheerfully tried to bring order to the chaos, stacking boxes of journalism training materials on one side of the room to give us space to sit. On a wall we pinned up a world map and big sheets of paper to start sketching out our ideas.

It was simultaneously thrilling and maddening to have no structure at all. Gavin ran the CIJ how we imagined an art school would have been directed in the 1960s, back when he'd been closer to our age. It was a peaceful refuge far away from the rapid churn of daily news – a place where there was space for 'the big questions'. It was also completely wild. Meetings were fun and had no agendas; fascinating friends of his would waft in and out.

Determined to make the most of our fellowships, we began by keeping regular office hours, meeting each morning and brainstorming the projects we could work on together. An unexpected phone call made us pack our bags earlier than we'd expected.

'September 15th, El Salvador's independence day,' Meera Karunananthan said down the line from Ottawa as we scrambled for a piece of paper and a pen to take notes. She was part of a global movement of 'water justice' activists and had been a contact of Claire's for years. Helpfully, she seemed to know about epic battles between communities and corporations, around the world, long before they became news (if they ever did).

'I wish I could go myself,' she emphasized. On that day, she explained, local community and environmental activists were organizing a 'Festival of Resistance' in a small town, north of the Salvadoran capital and near a very controversial proposed gold mine. They described the company behind the project as threatening the country's very independence with an international legal case at an obscure branch of the World Bank.

A hearing on the 'merits' of the case was scheduled for the same day, in Washington DC. The company was demanding more than $300 million in 'compensation' for not being allowed to dig up gold it found. It would be a huge penalty for the poor country to pay – more than it received in foreign aid each year.[1]

Meera described this case, as well as the context, in epic terms. An increasingly, impressively mainstream movement against mining, and to protect water resources, seemed on the verge of victory. New laws were being discussed and she thought that El Salvador could become the first country in the world to ban metal mining nationwide.

'It's the anti-mining capital of the world,' she said. But people leading this fight on the ground were doing so at great risk. In addition to the company's case against the country, local activists had faced death threats. Several had been killed.

'It's important that the world knows this story,' she encouraged us, with an intriguing blend of excitement and concern. International scrutiny, and on-the-ground witnesses, she suggested, could also help keep people safe.

We didn't need more convincing. After the call, we started to research flights to El Salvador. Then, also unexpectedly, Gavin appeared at our door.

'Wow,' he said. 'I like what you've done with this room!'

We removed a box of books from a chair, so he could sit down with us. We told him about El Salvador. He grinned. 'Great, get out of here, but do your homework first.'

Pacific Rim vs El Salvador

The international legal case against El Salvador had been launched by a Vancouver, Canada-based company called Pacific Rim. It was, we learned, what people in the industry called a 'junior miner'. It didn't have a massive empire, and was focused on exploring for new riches to dig up. The only real jewel in its crown seemed to be the proposed mine which it said the Salvadoran government had unfairly blocked it from opening.

We downloaded and printed files from the case from the World Bank's website. They ran into hundreds of pages, were heavy bricks of paper to carry around and were full of complicated legal language. But the company's argument was essentially that the Salvadoran government had encouraged them to explore for gold – and then, after they found it, prevented them from extracting it. They said they were owed compensation for the money they had spent on exploration activities, but also for their lost, hypothetical 'future profits'.

In response, El Salvador's lawyers said the company lacked key environmental permits it would have needed to dig – and proof that it held rights to all of the land it required. Many local farmers in the area, it seemed, had refused to sell their property.

A statement submitted to the tribunal hearing this case, by Pacific Rim's president, Thomas C. Shrake, helped us to further extend the timeline of relevant events. The company, he explained, had moved into El Salvador in 2002 after buying out another business that held exploration licenses there.[2] In the 1990s, we also learned, after the country's devastating twelve-year civil war ended, the government had courted international companies to set up shop. It had signed international treaties, and passed a new investment law in 1999, giving foreign investors access to international tribunals in case of disputes with the state.[3]

Much had changed, however, by the time the Canadian company filed its case in 2009. The environmental movements that Meera had told us about were already gaining greater momentum. A newly elected President, Mauricio Funes, announced a popular 'administrative freeze' on new mining permits.[4] All such permit reviews and approvals were put on indefinite hold, pending environmental and other studies. Environmental and human rights groups hoped that this would be followed by a permanent ban.

Three years later, in 2012, OceanaGold – a much bigger, Australian-Canadian, mining corporation – bought Pacific Rim for less than $10 million.[5] If it won the case against El Salvador that it had inherited in the process, it would make hundreds of millions of dollars in profit.[6] But, we were surprised to find, the company's own communications didn't seem to focus on this potential payout. Instead they gushed about 'unlocking the significant opportunity that exists' at the contested mine site.[7] Sam Pazuki, an OceanaGold communications representative, reportedly said the company's 'strong preference' was 'a negotiated outcome to the permitting impasse'.[8] No matter how unwelcome, it seemed, they wanted to dig.

We asked ourselves: Was its case a way to drag the government to the negotiating table? Would the World Bank, whose stated mission is to end poverty and boost 'shared prosperity', allow a company to threaten a poor country, for so much money, while being clear that they ultimately wanted to dig no matter what? And why hadn't this dispute been covered closely by the international media?

Its international dimensions were clear. The case had been mounted by a Canadian company, and then carried forward by a Australian-Canadian one; it had been registered at a World Bank branch in Washington DC; the tribunal judging it was composed of elite lawyers from Argentina and Europe. But with few exceptions, it seemed to have received almost no mainstream global media coverage.

We descended into the capital San Salvador late in the evening. It was dark but, as we were driven from the airport in a taxi, we thought about what road we were travelling on. It was likely the same one on which four US Catholic missionaries were stopped, raped and executed on 2 December 1980. It was an infamous atrocity. Years later, four National Guard officers were convicted for these murders. Afterwards, declarations they made from prison revealed that they were following orders from the US-backed Salvadoran authorities.[9]

The next morning we walked from our guesthouse into the city's historic centre, where we found the Metropolitan Cathedral and the tomb of Archbishop Oscar Romero. An outspoken critic of social injustice, and the US-supported military government during the civil war, he was assassinated in 1980. UN investigations later pinned his death on a pro-government 'death squad'.[10] Dozens of people were also killed at his funeral, at this church, after gunmen fired on mourners and a stampede ensued.[11] Romero had amassed a vast and dedicated following by the time of his death, in part because of his popular Sunday sermons, broadcasted on the church's radio station. He used them to also share details of recent disappearances, cases of torture and murders. They became a main source of news for people about what was happening.

We thought about this by Romero's tomb – and how contemporary activists were, in a similar way, doing the risky work of regularly monitoring and reporting on mining activities. In the area around the contested gold mine that we had come to learn about, a local station Radio Victoria had been covering its plans – and resistance to them – for years. Staffers said they had received anonymous threats 'that we were on death lists' by phone as well as via 'letters slipped under the door of the radio station and at our homes'.[12]

We wanted to meet some of these people who were following and challenging mining companies' activities in the country. This is why the first meeting we arranged was with Pedro Cabezas, coordinator of the International Allies against Mining network, at a small restaurant in the capital, not far from our guest house. Pedro seemed relaxed, leaning back casually on his chair, sipping a beer, wearing sunglasses in the shade. But what he told us was dramatic: stories of local activists that had been killed or injured in attacks, and others that had been threatened and harassed.

He also described an under-reported story of a historic people's movement to keep the country's gold in the ground and protect its water supplies. It was a hopeful story that contrasted sharply with what El Salvador was better known for.

Internationally, Central America's smallest country usually made headlines for violence and organized crime. Reports covered things like: how the country had one of the world's highest homicide rates[13]; estimates suggesting that 10 per cent of the population were involved with gangs including the notorious MS-13 with their memorable face tattoos[14]; and how violence was driving many others to undertake sometimes treacherous journeys to flee to other countries, including the US.[15]

It could seem like an unlikely candidate for a country to pioneer world-leading environmental measures. But Pedro shared data from public opinion polls commissioned by a Salvadoran university, suggesting a majority of the population opposed mining. He named politicians from rival parties, Catholic Church leaders and large NGOs that rarely agree but had all come out against mining too.

'Some days, I feel like it could actually happen,' Pedro grinned. 'We might actually become the first country in the world to ban mining, once and for all.'

He didn't think that this would happen quickly – even with the president on side. He feared that it could be delayed for years because of the case before the World Bank tribunal in Washington DC. Though he was undeterred. 'We'll continue to fight'.

Dreams delayed

Even with the president on side, it's not enough. What Pedro said stuck with us. It was hard to imagine a more influential person in a country, or a more useful ally.

But 'that's the kind of power we're up against', he had told us, suggesting that the international legal system the mining company had access to gave it a kind of supreme strength that could bring even steadfast governments to their knees.

We arrived in El Salvador just months after the then newly-elected FMLN President Salvador Sánchez Cerén took office in mid-2014. The former teacher and left-wing guerrilla commander seemed to have made his own position against mining clear. 'Everyone says that El Salvador has underground wealth – golden valleys and basins of silver', Cerén told the Salvadoran daily *La Prensa Gráfica*. But extracting it, he said: 'will destroy our lives'.[16]

He spoke softly and promoted the concept of *'buen vivir'* (Spanish for 'living well') – which had been sweeping across Latin America since the mid-2000s.[17] It was an alternative paradigm for evaluating progress that centred people and communities, and their relationship with nature.[18] This was important: If his administration would oppose mining, they also said they wanted to build something new.

This was why we were excited to have secured interviews with officials in Cerén's government including Ángel Ibarra, vice-minister for the environment. Until that year, he'd been president of the Salvadoran Ecological Unit (UNES) environmental group. A trained physician, and former dean of the country's Lutheran University, he'd also joined the FMLN during the civil war, though he left the party after the conflict ended.

'Until a few days ago I was not considering joining public service. This was not in my plans', Ibarra had said, shortly after the elections that brought Cerén's government to power. He agreed to join it because of the president-elect's embrace of the 'paradigm of *buen vivir*' and commitments to address the country's environmental crisis.[19]

In his new role, Ibarra pledged to work with social movements to build a new 'environmental sustainability agenda'. He also promised to embrace humility, and avoid 'pageantry', saying: 'I will continue working and living in the same way I have until today. I will not change the way I dress, I will not wear a jacket and tie.'[20]

We met at the environment ministry. Ibarra's office looked freshly painted, and tidy, but was sparsely decorated. As if he'd just moved in, and didn't know what to do with the space. As promised, he wasn't wearing a suit and tie, but a short-sleeved shirt with no collar. Like Pedro he seemed relaxed, but when we sat down, seriousness took over.

'We are the country with the worst water stress in Latin America', Ibarra emphasized. But his eyes lit up describing the prospect of a new law, for which he was advocating, to prioritise water for human over industrial consumption. This was deeply connected to the anti-mining fight: mines use a lot of water.

'New laws like this', the vice minister told us, 'are needed to make sure that everyone has access to water', no matter how much money or power they have. This, he added, can also help 'resolve conflicts' before they start.

Other government officials and advisors that we met similarly exuded hope, as well as concern. Several told us they thought that other companies were likely watching the case filed by Pacific Rim, and that they were potentially considering similar multi-million dollar challenges of their own. They described uphill battles and potentially devastating risks in their quest to work more closely with local communities and chart a more sustainable course for the country's development.

At a café in the capital, Luis Lopez, an environmental advisor to the newly elected FMLN party, told us that mining companies were pressuring the country on multiple levels, 'in the community, the local government, and via this international system'. Like Ibarra, he didn't look like a typical political operative. His long curly hair was in a ponytail, he was unshaven and his shirt was creased, its sleeves rolled up to his elbows.

Lopez was also an advocate of *buen vivir,* and what its positive and holistic vision of the future could offer the country. 'What are we supposed to do?' he asked rhetorically. 'Give in?' He shook his head. It was not a good option.

'There's a threat of more suits', he said. 'But put in this context – is the bigger threat that the people of your country die, or you get sued in Washington?'

Previously, at the national ombudsman for human rights, a publicly funded office set up after the civil war, we had found Yanira Cortez. She had also been following conflicts around mining and was similarly concerned about the industry's environmental impacts.

On her desk were tall stacks of paper. She seemed overwhelmed. She doubted her country's institutions were up to the task of regulating mining companies. 'And even if we did, if we finish up our water resources, it's not a good deal,' she said.

El Salvador, Cortez stressed, had a severe water crisis. It was under extreme environmental stress; highly susceptible to floods and natural disasters; and one of the most deforested countries in Latin America, with more than 90 per cent of its surface water already contaminated.[21] She also pointed us to the San Sebastián river, east of the capital, which was often pictured on anti-mining banners because of severe water contamination allegedly left behind by a previous gold mine. That area's experience, she explained, was crucial context for the contemporary anti-mining struggle. Mining's environmental consequences weren't merely hypothetical – there was proof.

Gold mining often uses toxic substances such as cyanide or mercury to extract the metal. The Salvadoran movement to keep these riches in the ground grew amid concern over the risks mining posed to these already-stressed, essential resources – as well as scepticism that normal people would benefit from digging them up.

We wanted to see San Sebastian for ourselves – and got lucky. International activists that Meera had connected us to, who were in the country at the same time, were headed in that direction to look at the old mine. We had to wake up at the break of dawn to get a ride with them, meeting in a parking lot just as the sun came up. We piled into a small bus where we would have slept if we hadn't been in such interesting company.

Everyone else seemed to be wide-awake, and eager to talk to us. We were the only journalists on the bus, and they wanted to know why we were there. We explained that we were learning about the struggle to ban mining and whether it was being threatened by a legal case going through a little-known but seemingly very powerful global legal system.

'So you mean ICSID, and the suit Pacific Rim filed?' one of our travel companions responded, to which others nodded. We then realised that everyone we had spoken to thus far in El Salvador – from a worker at our guest house to taxi drivers to our interviewees had known about the legal case but also the obscure World Bank branch overseeing it: the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes. They described it as a sort of supreme court, far away, determining their futures.

As we drove east, slowly on poorly paved roads, we also learned more about these people. Among them were campaigners from other Latin American countries fighting their own battles with expanding extractive industries. They had come to support the local anti-mining movement, and to learn from it. One American man told us he had come to El Salvador many times over the years – including during the civil war and the time of the 'Sanctuary movement' in which some US religious congregations took direct action to support refugees fleeing violence.

That movement was subjected to a US government crackdown including a long-running investigation with paid informants and undercover agents. In the mid-1980s, a series of high-profile criminal prosecutions targeted sanctuary activists in Texas and Arizona and charged them with facilitating illegal migration.[22]

Salvadoran activists then told us more about the San Sebastian mine. It had been operated by a Wisconsin-based company called Commerce Gold, until 2006 when the government revoked its environmental permits and didn't renew its exploration licenses. Foreshadowing the case launched by the Canadian mining company that brought us to El Salvador, Commerce Gold didn't leave without a fight. In 2009 it also filed a suit against the country at the same World Bank branch that Pacific Rim would later go to, demanding at least $100 million in compensation for not being allowed to continue mining.[23]

Evidence had been mounting that mining had devastated the environment and health of local communities. But, we'd learn, this wouldn't have been relevant for the tribunal which had a narrow mandate: to consider if El Salvador had violated the company's 'rights' as a foreign investor. That case didn't go the company's way – it was dismissed by the tribunal which said it didn't have jurisdiction over it.[24] It left the country – but we soon saw some of what it left behind.

Off the bus, we walked along the river. We saw abandoned tools and barrels that local activists said were believed to be contaminated with toxic waste. They described enduring concerns about the impacts of chemicals from the mine on the river, which a 2012 government study had shown contained nine times the acceptable level of cyanide and 1,000 times the acceptable level of iron.[25] We stopped on a bridge across the water and saw women and children washing clothes and bathing in its murky waves.

Independence day

The contested mining project that Pacific Rim had run, in El Salvador's central Cabañas region, seemed to have been fittingly named 'El Dorado'. It was also the name of the mythical city of gold which had drawn legions of explorers and colonists to Latin America. Local activists described mining companies as new imperialists, and said that this project threatened the whole country's independence.

On 15 September, as Meera had suggested, we arrived in the area near El Dorado. It was the date of the hearing on the legal case's 'merits' at the World Bank – and the day on which, every year, many Central American countries celebrate their independence from Spain in 1821, after almost three centuries of colonial rule. This was no coincidence: El Salvador's lawyers had suggested this date for its symbolism. The company's case, they agreed with activists, threatened the country's sovereignty.

Driving north from the capital, we had seen from our car's windows many typical independence ceremonies – with local marching bands and children twirling batons in village street parades. At our destination, a temporary stage had been erected in the middle of a square. Children were playing. But the banners that had been strung up demanded that the company 'get out' of the area and that El Salvador ban mining once and for all. Between musical acts, speakers on stage echoed these messages.

It was a celebration – but of resistance, rather than independence. And it seemed to have attracted everyone who lived in the local area. We took seats amid hundreds of other people under a blue tarpaulin tent, and then took a walk around the square.

In a small park nearby, we met a 24-year-old local farmer named Jose Bolmorin, who described his concerns about mining activities. 'They only say the great things it will bring; development, jobs for the people, but it doesn't happen like that, even if it did make money, it's not more important than health', he insisted, asking us: what are promised 'economic benefits' worth, in the end, 'if you're sick all the time?'

'We still have to fight for our independence', added Hector Berrios, a local activist who we also met that day. His black t-shirt was emblazoned in yellow with the anti-mining movement's simple but powerful slogan: 'No to mining, Yes to life'.

Berrios told us that he wanted mining companies to listen to the festival's message, and leave the area. He described violence against those who opposed mining, and how it had affected him personally. 'Even during the war I wasn't so afraid of being killed', he said, about death threats against himself and his wife. Once, he added, they had been drugged by armed men who ransacked their home and stole files related to their activism.

Behind him was a mural of Marcelo Rivera, a fellow local activist who had disappeared on 18 June 2009 – three days after Pacific Rim filed its international suit against El Salvador. His naked body was found weeks later, in a well, bearing signs of torture: he'd been beaten, his fingernails removed, his trachea broken.[26]

Rivera's name came up frequently in our interviews – because of the gruesome nature of his death, but also because there seemed to be little faith that officials had fully investigated it and whether he was murdered for his anti-mining activism.

Yanira Cortez, from the state's human rights office, told us it was clear that 'the start of mining and the beginning of tensions have an intimate relationship'.

Her office had also issued a statement warning that authorities had 'not taken all possible actions nor exhausted all lines of inquiry to clarify who the intellectual and material perpetrators of these crimes are'. It warned of ongoing threats, and a 'lack of protective measures and comprehensive reparations for affected families'.[27]

The international legal case over the El Dorado mine would drag on until late 2016. In the end, the World Bank tribunal sided with El Salvador, and the company (then OceanaGold) was ordered to pay $8 million to cover some – but not all – of the country's legal costs.[28] Though this was not the end of the story – and activists seemed to see it as a relief, rather than a victory.

El Salvador's defence had cost $12 million – and so it was still out of pocket by $4 million. The company took another year to pay the government what it was ordered to, and until 2019 – a decade after the case began – to complete sales of its property, dissolve its assets, and concede that it did not plan future investments in the country.[29]

A huge amount of time and energy had been spent on this case, which could have been spent supporting communities and protecting the environment. But, while delayed, Pedro's dream of a mining ban did finally become a reality. In March 2017, Salvadoran lawmakers voted overwhelmingly to prohibit all mining for gold and other metals, making the country the first in the world to impose such a nationwide ban.[30]

This was our introduction to what's called the international investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) system that corporations have used to challenge government actions across the world. On the ground in El Salvador, we learned how this system seemed to be squeezing the country and making it harder, or more costly, for it to protect its environment and its people.

Next, we'd go to Washington DC and into historical archives to learn how this system expanded around the world – and how contemporary concerns about its impact on independence and democracy had been eerily forewarned.

Chapter 2

Corporate courts

Out of control

On our way back to London, we made a 48-hour stop in Washington DC – where the mining company's case against El Salvador had been filed at the World Bank's little-known International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

After sleeping restlessly on friends' sofas, we met the next morning on K Street. So infamous for housing corporate and political lobbyists, its name had become synonymous with influence peddling. Its clients included giant companies and authoritarian regimes spending millions a year to whitewash their reputations.[1]

Pacific Rim, the mining company that had filed the case we were looking at, had also hired professional influencers from this neighbourhood. US lobbying disclosures showed that the corporate law firm Crowell & Moring spent at least $300,000 between 2009 and 2014 lobbying the US government on behalf of the company and for the 'development of the El Dorado mine', including meetings with the White House.[2] A second firm, Otto Reich Associates, had also met with representatives of Congress and the State Department on its behalf, about an 'investment dispute impacting foreign relations'.[3] It had been set up by a former US ambassador to Venezuela who also served in George W. Bush's government.[4]

But we had come to this street to visit the office of Luis Parada – El Salvador's lawyer, defending it against the mining company. He was the first of many lawyers we would meet who have specialised in the international investor-state legal system.

In a large lobby we were directed to elevators. As we moved up towards Parada's floor we took out our notebooks and opened them to our prepared questions. The lawyer, we assumed, would be very busy. His CV featured impressive degrees – West Point military academy, Georgetown law. He had spent more than a decade at top law firms, and was now one of a small group of lawyers in the world who specialize in investor-state cases. His time was surely expensive, and we didn't expect much of it.

We wanted him to explain to us the inner-workings of the case El Salvador faced, and what had happened during the hearing on its independence day. We also wanted his views, as an inside source, on how this investor-state legal system could have grown so globally powerful with so little scrutiny.

When the doors to the elevator opened on his floor, we were suprised to find Parada immediately in front of us, apparently eagerly waiting for us. We followed him down a corridor to a glass-walled meeting room where we sat down and he started our meeting with questions of his own. He wanted to hear about our trip: what people were saying on the ground, and what the 'Festival of Resistance' near the mine site had been like.

We told him what we'd learned then, but also in the capital, and in the area near the San Sebastian river, polluted from previous mining activities. In interviews with local farmers, community activists, environmentalists, Franciscan monks and national politicians, there had been a key theme: that the company's case threatened El Salvador's very independence and ability to decide its own future. Beyond the vast sums of money that were at stake, people told us they were worried that it could delay the passage of laws to ban mining and address the country's clean water crisis.

Then it was our turn. Why was this case taking so long to resolve? Was it an exaggeration to say it threatened the country's sovereignty? And was it unique?

The lawyer leaned forward in his chair. 'This system is out of control', he told us firmly. Using his hands, he charted in the air a massive explosion in such cases since the 1990s. While this legal system had been set up decades earlier, he said it had taken time to take hold and grow. He gave us several reasons for this, including a boom in the number of investment treaties, laws and contracts that give multinational companies and investors access to its tribunals.

He knew this history well, having joined the legal industry around these cases in the 1990s himself. His first such case was on the defence team for Argentina's government after it was sued in 1997 by the French utilities conglomerate Vivendi.[5] What prompted that dispute? Amid a popular uprising against water privatisation, the Tucuman provincial government, Parada explained, had stepped in to limit the price residents were charged for water and wastewater services. The company objected. It lost that case, but resubmitted its claim and emerged with a $105 million award the second time.[6]

Since then, there had been no shortage of work. Though unlike many other lawyers in the industry who represent both companies and states, he'd picked one side: defending states. And as this field grew, so did his discomfort with it. The mining company's case against El Salvador should never have happened, he argued. It was, he said, essentially about 'whether a foreign investor can force a government to change its laws … as opposed to the foreign investor complying with the [country's] laws'.

He repeated the Salvadoran defence that we had read in its legal filings: the company lacked necessary permits required to mine and didn't even have proof that it held all of the land it needed. Even without national opposition to mining, it couldn't go ahead without fulfilling these legal requirements, and it shouldn't be able to get an exemption from them by going above local courts to Washington DC.

Parada explained that proponents of this system, and international treaties that enshrine it, argue that it can boost foreign investment into developing countries by giving investors assurances that they'll be treated fairly. He said that he thought this system 'was created with good intentions, but in practice it has gone completely rogue, and nothing can bring it under control'.

'I personally don't think countries get as much from these treaties as the risks that they incur', he told us. 'Let's put it this way, if I were the President of a country, I wouldn't be happy with my country being a party to this system.'

But getting out of this system isn't easy once you join it. The treaties that enshrine it, Parada continued, often have 'sunset clauses' – meaning their provisions stay in force for years, even decades, if the treaties are cancelled. Withdrawing from them could even trigger cases if investors rush to use them before they expire.

He paused to let this sink in. It made us think again of what had surprised us in El Salvador: even presidents and parliaments can't really stop this?

To dismantle this system, Parada concluded, it would take 'a broad consensus of determined states'. It would be hard for any one country to do it alone.

We found it striking that this elite lawyer, who made his own money off of such cases, albeit on the defence side, seemed so strident in his belief that his industry shouldn't actually exist at all. If it were ever dismantled, as he argued should happen, wouldn't he be out of a job? We had expected him to vigorously argue El Salvador's case, but not to question the validity of the whole system.

'I have not seen a critical mass of states with the political will [to tackle it] much less a broad consensus,' he said with regret. 'But I still hope it happens.'

Into the archives

Back on K street, we turned a corner and within about ten minutes found the World Bank's main campus in Washington DC – a large complex of buildings spanning several city blocks. Somewhere inside them was ICSID, the little-known branch where the mining company was challenging El Salvador.

ICSID's website called it the 'world's leading institution devoted to international investment dispute settlement', saying it had 'administered the majority' of these cases globally. It also said it 'contributes to the [World Bank's] overall goal of poverty reduction' by promoting foreign investment via 'providing confidence in the dispute resolution process', not unlike Parada's description of proponents' claims.[7]

We wanted to see for ourselves the place where El Salvador was being threatened with a multi-million dollar legal claim for not allowing that mining company to dig for gold. We also wanted to know more about the ICSID branch itself. We wanted to explore the institution's archives and see for ourselves the 'good intentions' that Parada said he thought had existed at the start, before the system went 'rogue'.

We needed visitor passes to get into the World Bank, which we had begun to arrange weeks in advance of our trip – as well as an appointment to enter its archives. Some historical files, letters and photographs could only be found there, in person.

An archive staffer was expecting us. She watched us as we left all of our belongings in a locker outside of a reading room where she led us to a table. She gave us pencils and paper to make notes; gloves would have to be worn to touch photographs; we'd have to sign in and out even to go to the toilet.

The reading room would close at 4pm, sharp. We had limited time to find what we were looking for. We skipped lunch and spent it huddled over documents instead.

We could request one cardboard box of historical records at a time. They were each labelled with numerous codes. We were given cards to track when and where we removed files from a box, to replace them in exactly the same position.

Everything seemed impressively and logically organized. But we still struggled to find the transcripts and initial proposals on setting up the ICSID branch. There must have been meetings about it. Who had championed it? Who were they talking to? Did anyone disagree? And, crucially, where were the notes?

We requested boxes of records from the offices of the first presidents of the World Bank. We found copies of letters from these men thanking people for gifts, or to staff arranging for the shipment of their belongings from continent to continent, between international postings and conferences. But, box after box, we came up short.

The staffer seemed to sense our frustration, and came up to our table. 'If you tell me a bit more about what you're looking for, maybe I can help,' she offered.

We explained. She responded with an uncomfortable, puzzled look. She couldn't remember a previous request for ICSID's files. She wasn't sure where they were. Finally she suggested that perhaps ICSID had its own archive, in its office. We could try there?

We asked her for directions to the ICSID office, and were surprised that she looked puzzled again. 'I assumed you knew where it was.'

But she checked her computer, dialled a phone number and got us some answers. Some of the files we wanted did exist, and had even been reprinted in a multi-volume set of books which we could find at ICSID. We got an address too.

Thanking her for help, we left the reading room and collected our things from the lockers outside. A clock on the wall said it was already well into the afternoon. But at least she had saved us from spending the whole day in the wrong place.

ICSID's offices were in the Bank's J building – across the street from its main building on Pennsylvania Avenue, where we'd been at the archive. We'd imagined that once we were in the right building it would be enough to ask people there for specific directions. But those we stopped in the lobby and corridors also gave us puzzled looks.

Some of them didn't even seem to recognise the name ICSID, asking us to repeat it. But when we finally found this branch's offices, we saw that it occupied an entire wing of a floor. It wasn't well known, but it certainly didn't look small.

We went through a glass door and found the person that had answered the archive staffer's phone call. She was friendly and took us on an impromptu tour of the office, showing off its file rooms, meeting rooms and desks for what she said was the centre's rapidly growing team. 'Our office wasn't always this big,' she emphasized.

It made sense that it had grown as ICSID statistics showed the same boom in cases that Parada had sketched out with his hands in the air in his office. By mid-2014, almost 500 cases had been registered, almost all since the late 1990s.[8] (By late 2021, that total would rise to almost 900, with the equivalent of more than one a week that year.)[9]

Latin America was the most-challenged region with about a third of all cases, but countries around the world had ended up in the dock here. Pie charts in caseload reports also showed slices for Africa, Asia, Europe and North America.[10]

Most of these cases were filed under similarly little-known 'bilateral investment treaties' (another of a growing list of acronyms we had to learn: BITs) signed between countries. Mining, oil and gas companies and investors had filed the largest number of cases, but there had also been claims by those in agriculture, transportation and other industries.

Once we'd circled the office back to her desk we asked where we could find the books we'd been told about, compiling historical files from ICSID's foundation. She nodded and disappeared into a storage room, returning with a cardboard box. It looked heavy. She lifted the lid slightly to show us that inside was a stack of thick books with dark blue covers. 'We have extra copies,' she said. 'You could buy them from us.'

We'd come to the World Bank complex to find these documents, but we hadn't expected to be able to take copies home where we could study them more thoroughly. We took out our wallets, but she waved them away. We had to get a money order, which she suggested we could find at a shop down the street. If we could return within the hour, the books would be ours. Another hurdle.

We shot out of the building and found the shop she'd recommended. Back at the Bank, we flashed our visitor badges at security and ran up the stairs, arriving ten minutes before the office was supposed to close. We left feeling triumphant. We hailed a taxi and put our bounty between us. That cardboard box of big, heavy books containing thousands of pages from the early days of this international system. It would be a long trip home, but that meant many hours to dig into this history.

El No de Tokyo

We packed that box of books into a carry-on bag, which came on the plane to London with us. We didn't sleep during our overnight flight. Instead we turned on the lights above our seats and thumbed through as many pages as we could.

Over the ocean, we learned that some poor countries had been sceptical about, and resistant to, the international investor-state legal system from the start. Generations ago, they had warned that it threatened their sovereignty – just as El Salvador was now saying. This seemed to conflict with Parada's idea that it had been set up with good intentions but had gotten 'out of control'.

The papers included 'summary records' from regional meetings ahead of ICSID's establishment, including one in Santiago, Chile where World Bank delegates from twenty Latin American countries gathered in February 1964.[11]

According to that record, Argentina's representative 'found great difficulty in accepting the principle underlying the draft [ICSID] Convention', and 'felt that to detract from national sovereignty was not an acceptable method for improving the investment climate'.[12] Something that meanwhile 'raised doubts' in the mind of Brazil's delegate was that 'foreign investors would be granted a legally privileged position, in violation of the principle of full equality'.[13]

The record from another regional meeting, in Asia a few months later, captured how India's representative warned that the proposals 'gave investors additional rights of unspecified scope' without saying anything about their obligations.[14] He also seemed worried about plans being pushed through without enough debate. The record said 'he hoped that before the final draft of the [ICSID] Convention was adopted by the Bank and recommended to governments it would be considered in a wider forum'.[15] A Thai delegate meanwhile 'stressed that the views which he had expressed were not final and should not be considered as committing the Thai Government in any way'.[16]

Then, a group of twenty-one countries – nineteen from Latin America, plus the Philippines and Iraq – voted against the World Bank's proposals at its 1964 annual meetings in Tokyo that September.[17]

A representative for Chile explained this group's opposition, saying:

> 'The new system would give the foreign investor, by virtue of the fact that he is a foreigner, the right to sue a sovereign state outside its national territory, dispensing with the courts of law. This provision is contrary to the accepted legal principles of our country and, de facto, would confer a privilege on the foreign investor, placing the nationals of the country concerned in a position of inferiority.'[18]

Among insiders, this became known as the 'El No de Tokyo'.[19] But despite such opposition to the proposal, it moved forward regardless. Andreas Lowenfeld, a German-American legal academic who was involved in some of that period's discussions, later said: 'I believe this was the first time that a major resolution of the World Bank had been pressed forward with so much opposition.'[20]

From El Salvador to South Africa – where we would go next – we'd hear a variation of the same thing: that surely the government officials who signed up to the international investor-state legal system didn't know what they were getting into. They couldn't have known that their countries' independence would be at stake, when they ceded power to this system and its treaties and its tribunals.

But it was clear, in black and white on our tray tables: some did know from the start, and make their concerns clear. A bloc of developing countries had opposed it, to defend their sovereignty. The system was set up despite this.

Follow the money

Back in London, we made a spreadsheet of every investor-state case that had been filed at the World Bank centre, which was formally established two years after that Tokyo meeting, in 1966. We studied it for trends across time, regions and industries.

But it was these questions that we kept returning to: could our governments and elected officials actually be in charge of less than we thought? Why hadn't we heard more about this before? Was this international legal system the reason why, for example, even progressive governments weren't taking more aggressive action against climate change, or to protect worker's rights?

That afternoon, we took advantage of running into Gavin in the corridor of the CIJ to tell him about what we had learned and get his advice on our next steps.

We described the striking parallels between what Salvadoran activists told us – about the company's case threatening their independence – and the protests of developing countries at the creation of ICSID half a century earlier. He chuckled at our retelling of how we got the documents that showed this but then looked very serious as we described what they contained.

Along with the interviews we'd done in El Salvador, which Gavin said showed why all of this mattered, he was impressed with the historical files we'd brought back, and our meeting with Parada. This wasn't surprising: he loved inside sources.

He also made us think about what was, and was not, being said. He made us realise that the case against El Salvador was indeed unique in an important way: the amount of public attention it had received in the country. Unlike the workers at the World Bank who looked puzzled when we mentioned their ICSID branch, everyone we had talked to in the Central American country knew of it (by its Spanish acronym 'CIADI').

But what about the cases which governments don't publicly fight, like El Salvador's seemed determined to do? How many of these disputes are resolved behind closed doors, without citizens and taxpayers ever knowing about them?

We left Gavin's office with three ideas: first, we would try not to lose sight, no matter how far we dug into details, of our instinctual questions about how this system affects and may even overrule democracies; second, we would next look into cases in which there was even less publicly available information – in which the governments involved didn't publicly disclose disputes and defend themselves; third, we would 'follow the money' because it could help us better understand who the key players are.

To do all of this, Gavin suggested, we should stay in touch with Parada and try to spend more time with as many inside sources – people and documents – as we could. In our windowless room again, we studied the websites and publications of law firms specialising in these cases; their press releases, newsletters, briefings, and promotional materials for their current and prospective clients.

With such big amounts of money involved in these disputes – for all of the bills, let alone potential awards – we learned that challenging governments at international tribunals through the investor-state dispute system had become a very big business. A huge industry had grown around this legal field, complete with a slick conference circuit, trade publications and industry awards. There were also elite consultants who specialised in helping foreign investors and multinational companies to structure their businesses overseas in order to gain access to this system through the 'best' treaties for them.

At the law firm King & Wood Mallesons in London, Andrei Yakovlev told us: 'It's no longer black magic. Now pretty much every firm, every even medium sized firm in this city, would say, yes, we can do investment arbitrations.'

These cases were generally overseen by tribunals of three professional 'arbitrators'. Online, we found the transcript of a talk by John Ruggie, a former UN Special Representative for Business and Human Rights, warning that these people are usually 'contract lawyers who don't give a damn about human rights obligations'.[21]

We also studied the records of hundreds of ICSID cases to take a closer look at who these people are. Most were European or North American men. They included former government officials, as well as former (or current) corporate advisors and lawyers. Examples included a Canadian former UN ambassador who also previously sat on corporate boards including that of mining giant Rio Tinto[22]; the senior White House official responsible for international trade and investment in President George W. Bush's administration[23]; and a former lawyer to the Mexican government during negotiations over the North American Free Trade Treaty (NAFTA) treaty that gave rise to many new cases.[24]

Something else that El Salvador's lawyer said had stuck with us: investor-state claims were increasingly seen as an 'asset class' in themselves. There were now specialized financiers that invested in them, taking cuts of any eventual awards.

Parada thought this had something to do with the rise in cases, telling us: 'I think it is fueling a lot of arbitrations that wouldn't have even started.'

There didn't seem to be anything like legal aid for states to defend themselves in these disputes. But it seemed like some companies could mount cases without having to foot the bill – and challenging states had become a business in itself for law firms but also so-called 'third-party funders'. It had become a way for people unconnected with the disputes at hand to get rich or richer.

Burford Capital, a leading third-party funder, claimed 'a particular specialty in investment treaty arbitration'. Echoing Parada's speculation, it said it could make the difference between cases 'being heard and needing to be abandoned'.[25] It had an office in Croydon, south of London, as well as one in Manhattan.

Among Burford's investments was its support for a British power investor called Rurelec. It had filed its case against Bolivia at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, rather than at ICSID (which handles most but not all of these disputes). It demanded around $150 million in compensation after the country nationalized Empresa Electrica Guaracachi, its largest energy provider, in 2010.[26] Rurelec had held a majority stake in this company – but just barely, with 50.001 per cent of its shares, and only indirectly, through a US subsidiary under a holding company registered in the British Virgin Islands. This structure let it file for damages under investment treaties Bolivia had signed with both the US and the UK. In 2014, a tribunal ordered the country to pay it $29 million.[27]

Burford put out a triumphant press release about the case and its role. It announced a net profit of $11 million from the dispute. It also said it was an example of how, more than ‘simply helping to pay legal fees’, third-party finance can ‘help companies achieve their strategic goals’.[28]

‘Rurelec did not need capital to pay its lawyers. Rather, it needed capital to continue to grow’, Burford explained. It gave the company a $15 million loan to further expand its business during the dispute – using its claim against Bolivia as an asset to secure it. This enabled the company to ‘monetize the value’ of its case.

Another financier at a London-based outfit also told us he believed ‘without funding, a good chunk of these treaty cases wouldn’t have happened’.

It seemed like a notable pattern: Many of the financiers and law firms involved in these cases had offices in London – home for both of us at the time – though they seemed to belong to a parallel world, outside of scrutiny. But our time in El Salvador had taught us that their obscure and jargon-rich dealings had very real consequences.

Chapter 3

Secret insurance

Foresti vs South Africa

Some law firms seemed explicit in their communications that gaining 'leverage' was something a company could get out of a case filed through this system.

In a briefing paper for their clients, the US firm K&L Gates suggested that they could use the threat of such a case as a 'bargaining tool' in negotiating with governments.[1] Another UK firm, Clyde & Co, said they could use the 'potential adverse publicity' of a case as 'leverage in the event of a dispute' with a state.[2]

It sounded like what we'd seen in El Salvador. That case ultimately seemed to be about challenging government policy and requirements to start mining. Though because it wouldn't be resolved for years, we decided to turn next to an already concluded dispute. We filtered our database of ICSID cases for those marked 'concluded'. One caught our eye: *Foresti vs South Africa*, which had been launched by investors in the mining industry in South Africa in 2006.

It had lasted a comparatively short three-and-a-half years. It ended in 2010, with the investors' claims 'dismissed with prejudice' by the tribunal.[3] It seemed, in this case, that the country had emerged victorious. We wanted to know more about what was at stake and what went into this result, from those who'd know best, on the ground.

A month later, we boarded a flight for Johannesburg, South Africa's mining capital. On the plane, we reviewed files we'd found for the case, which cited investment treaties signed with Italy (in 1997) and Luxembourg and Belgium (in 1998), not long after the end of its apartheid regime. That period had been one of vast and well-documented change. Nelson Mandela, out of prison, had been elected president in 1994. A new constitution was then introduced in 1996 – often described as one of the world's most progressive, among other things because it outlaws discrimination based on characteristics like race and gender.[4]

The ICSID record for this case listed numerous claimants – members of the Foresti and Conti Italian families of industrialists from the Carrara region, as well as a company, Finstone, incorporated in Luxembourg.

We could not find significant international media coverage of this case either, which surprised us the more we learned about it. The dispute was not disconnected from era-defining events. South Africa had been challenged over post-apartheid policies to redress racial injustices.

A few years before these investors filed their case at the World Bank's ICSID branch, South Africa's new post-apartheid Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act came into force. Along with a new mining charter, this law sought to redress inequalities and required companies to partner with citizens who had suffered under apartheid.

It effectively terminated all previously held mining rights, and required that companies reapply to continue operations, instituting a mandatory 26 per cent ownership stake in mining companies for black South Africans.[5] This was what the Italian industrialists decided to challenge internationally.

It was hard to believe that wealthy European investors could have contested this post-apartheid policy at an international tribunal without their case being internationally covered by the media – and condemned by the public. But there seemed to have been barely a murmur in the global press as they used the investor-state dispute system to claim that new Black Economic Empowerment policies were 'unfair' and had effectively 'expropriated' their investments. They demanded more than $350 million in compensation.[6]

For their part, South African officials, it seemed, had tried to keep a lid on the case – they hadn't forcefully condemned it publicly, as a threat to their sovereignty, as the government had in El Salvador. Some local civil society groups had found out about the dispute anyway, and had petitioned the international tribunal to let them participate in the case. They were eventually allowed to submit a written briefing, but not to attend the hearings.

A densely worded document on ICSID's website said the investors had requested a discontinuance of the case, and that they were ordered to pay part of South Africa's legal costs.[7] A government press release from that time celebrated this result as a 'successful conclusion'.[8] But the details didn't seem to add up.

The investors were only ordered to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars towards the country's costs – leaving it with millions in legal fees that still had to be paid with public funds. Shortly after this dispute ended, South Africa started to review the international treaties that gave investors access to this legal system, and began cancelling them.[9]

It actually seemed to be one of the few countries actively trying to get out of the game – as Parada, El Salvador's lawyer, had recommended while explaining how challenging this is to do. Why was South Africa embarking on this difficult task, if the result of that case had been a 'success'?

Marikana tombstones

We landed in Johannesburg after overnight flights with a several-hour stop and connection in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. We had booked rooms at a small guest house in Melville, which our research had told us was a 'bohemian suburb' of Johannesburg west of its central business district, with many popular restaurants and bars.

We had a full itinerary of interviews booked for our time in the city – including with a South African government advisor, lawyers for the Italian investors, and some of the human rights groups which had tried to intervene in that case.

But we also wanted to see some of the investments at the centre of the dispute. And unfortunately we didn't know exactly where to find them or how we would get there.

We had found descriptions and some vague addresses for some of the quarries and factories in the Italian investors' empire: 'a 20km long outcrop running from north of Marikana to north of Rustenburg' (but how could we find this?), or 'Main Street, Marikana' (with no number). We considered hiring a car and driving to the area – maybe there would be signs to follow, or people to ask for directions?

If nothing else, we thought, travelling to the Marikana mining district would give us a sense of the place where many of the investors' operations were located. It was also well-known internationally and seemed to epitomize injustices in the South Africa mining industry, one of the world's largest. It felt important to see it in person.

Outside our guest house, we stopped at a street corner where we saw a taxi, parked in the shade of some trees. We approached it and the driver rolled down his window.

'Do you need a ride?' he smiled.

We explained that we wanted to hire him, but not immediately, and not for a short drive in the city. We wanted to leave Johannesburg, and go north. We wanted to hire him and his car for a full day.

He hesitated but then began negotiating. We accepted his price and terms and walked back to our guest house happy. We'd solved our most urgent logistical problem. We'd just have to wake up the next morning very early, before the sun rose.

It was still dark as we drove out of the city, and the driver reminded us of his terms: we'd have to be back in Johannesburg before the sun set, as he had important plans that evening. Outside the city he turned on the car radio and kept it on until we saw a sign for Marikana.

When we arrived in the mining district, we saw how vast it was: a sprawling stretch of territory occupied by numerous gold, silver and other mining operations.

Though it was less than 150 kilometers from Johannesburg, it felt very different, and isolated. It was arid, and the land around the road we were on was largely flat.

Out of our windows, we started to see signs marking the properties of multinational mining giants. The world's largest platinum company Anglo-American's 15 mile-wide mine whizzed by on the left. Then signs for Glencore Xstrata, the tenth largest company in the world, and its vast coal mine. Soon, the site of the infamous 2012 massacre of striking workers at the Lonmin mine came into view.[10]

The roads themselves seemed empty apart from the occasional oversized SUV turning into mine sites surrounded by fences and large gates. Corrugated iron shacks peppered the route into town. People took shade under dog-eared tarpaulin, selling cans of Coca-Cola and Fanta from small stands and informal shops. We saw numerous fried chicken shops, moneylenders and expansive slums.

The town of Marikana itself had the kind of bustle you might expect from a pop-up mining town in the middle of a desert. Colonel Sanders beamed down from the side of a KFC bucket outside one of that chain's restaurants and there seemed to be a surfeit of shopping centres. We took out our notebooks with the vague directions, partial addresses and names we had written down of what we were looking for: some of the properties in the empire of the Italian investors that had challenged South Africa at the World Bank centre in Washington DC.

After about an hour, we had driven through part of this district as well as the entire town. We stopped several times to ask people on the side of the road if they could direct us to the granite sites. So far, this hadn't worked. We decided to return to Main Street, because it was supposed to be home to at least one of the sites we were looking for. We would stop at every building, if needed? We still had time before our driver's deadline to leave the area.

Finally, we spotted something: a small, simple white sign with 'Minaco' written on it, pointing down a side street. It was the name of a granite processing subsidiary of the Finstone Group that had also been named in the case. Its website said that it was 'the largest manufacturer of thick granite slabs in Southern Africa', supplying local and export markets with 'cut-to-size monumental components'.[11] It showed off pictures of banks across Africa and Mormon churches in the US constructed with its materials, which it said was also used for tombstones.[12]

We directed our driver to follow the side street down to the end of a cul-de-sac where we found a factory. He waited for us in the car, listening to the radio, as we stepped out and walked through imposing wire fences to the building.

It was a Saturday afternoon and the factory was still open but its bosses were away and we found a small group of workers, taking a cigarette break in the middle of their 10-hour shifts, who were surprisingly candid about their conditions.

One of these workers introduced himself as 23-year-old Mpho Masisi. He was quick to tell us that the work at the factory was hard, their bosses were harsh, and 'in terms of money, we are not getting anything. We are still struggling'.

'We are working 10 hour shifts and get 140 Rand [$9.65] per day', he elaborated, explaining that Marikana wasn't a cheap place to live and that he and many of his co-workers often worked six days a week in order to make a bit extra. Many people he knew were indebted to local moneylenders like those we'd seen on the drive.

These workers also had to fight hard for the small sums they took home. Masisi told us that their working conditions and pay had gotten so desperate in recent years that they had only just returned to work after a two-month strike. 'I think it's worse than other companies,' he claimed. 'From my experience, it's worse.'

The whole story

The South African government had celebrated the end of the Italian investors' case as a 'success' for the state. But what we found in Marikana didn't look very good for its people. And official records, we were learning, didn't always tell the whole story.

In this instance, the investors seemed able to claim a much more significant victory. While they had requested the dissolution of their ICSID case, they had struck an unprecedented deal with the government – allowing their companies to transfer only 5 per cent of their ownership to Black South Africans, rather than the 26 per cent mandated by the new post-apartheid mining laws.

At that time, one of the investors' lawyers Peter Leon boasted: 'No other mining company in South Africa has been treated so generously since the advent of the [new mining regime].'[13] He also seemed to claim victory – for his clients.

So who really 'won'? This is what we asked ourselves as we waited in the lobby of his firm's office in Sandton, an upscale suburb of Johannesburg. It's also what we asked Jonathan Veeran, Leon's colleague, after he ushered us into a slick meeting room. We skipped introductory questions and went right to the point. How did the investors view the conclusion? Did they get what they wanted?

Veeran nodded vigorously. 'They were most pleased with the result', he said, suggesting that the South African government's press release at the time had been misleading. They had actually settled with the investors outside of the tribunal process – effectively giving them an exemption to the Black Economic Empowerment policies they'd challenged. Why? He thought they were afraid of similar challenges from other companies. 'They wanted it to go away.'

Settling quietly, Veeran explained, seemed like a tactic by the government to try and prevent a flood of other claims. ‘If the merits of the case were decided against the government, they thought, “That’s it, we are going to go down.” And I think that’s why they were happy to agree to that settlement.’

We left that meeting somewhat satisfied. What Veeran told us had made sense to us, and it had confirmed our suspicions that the ‘success’ for South Africa in the government’s press release wasn’t the whole story.

We could understand why the government might have been afraid of other similar claims. But hiding the case, and potentially misleading people about the result, didn’t sound good either. As journalists – in the business of revealing information in the public interest that the powerful want to hide – it was also still troubling that the international media hadn’t closely covered this story before.

We took a taxi back to the Melville area where we were staying and went to a small restaurant that was just opening. Over sandwiches and several rounds of coffee, this is what we kept coming back to. The South Africa case was only the second investor-state dispute that we had dug deeply into, after El Salvador. But each seemed to contain very important, untold stories and extremely high stakes.

In Johannesburg, one of the people we’d scheduled to interview was Jason Brickhill, a lawyer at a human rights organization called the Legal Resources Centre (LRC) which had been founded under apartheid in 1979. By the time we visited it had dozens of lawyers on its staff and a clear, proven mission to use the law to secure justice for vulnerable and marginalized people, including the poor, homeless and landless.

The LRC’s offices were in a towering, concrete building named after Bram Fischer. He had been a prominent South African lawyer of Afrikaner descent who’d defended anti-apartheid activists – including Nelson Mandela – before being charged with conspiring to overthrow the government and sentenced to life in prison.[14]

We took the elevator to an upper floor and found the organization’s base adorned with posters and photos from its past campaigns. We then found Brickhill – hard at work in his room, bent over his desk where books were opened in front of a computer.

We knocked on his door, which was part-open already. ‘Jason Brickhill?’

He sat up quickly and made it clear that he knew who we were, and was expecting us. He’d brought two extra chairs into his office in preparation for our meeting; he’d just lost track of time. ‘You’re looking into the Foresti case,’ he began.

The LRC was one of the human rights groups that had petitioned the World Bank’s ICSID to submit arguments in the case against South Africa. This was before Brickhill’s time, but he was familiar with the dispute.

We told him how the investors' lawyers, had described the conclusion as a victory for their clients, effectively granting them an exemption to Black Economic Empowerment laws. Did he also believe that the government had settled, quietly, because they feared similar claims from other investors?

Brickhill nodded. He also saw the government's decision to agree a deal as 'a pragmatic settlement', he said, 'in the interests of protecting the overall regulatory system – make one exception to keep the whole intact'.

'I can understand that sort of pragmatism,' he continued. But the case was also a 'huge wake-up call' for the South African government, he told us, in terms of understanding the risks of international investment treaties it had signed.

For foreign investors, Brickhill explained, these treaties 'provide much more generous protections potentially than domestic law. So that's why investors and their states would want those arrangements to remain in place'. But from the perspective of the developing countries and the interests of the public and poor communities, these agreements don't look like such good deals. Most worryingly for the human rights lawyer, they don't allow for 'human rights obligations … or for the state to have the space to regulate and redistribute, which is what our constitution requires it to do'.

'I don't think that the international system is completely beyond redemption', he concluded, 'but I do think that it works against development agendas.'

Before travelling to South Africa, we had spoken to academics warning and gathering evidence that one consequence of these treaties was what they called 'regulatory chill' – where governments decide not to pursue, or tone down, certain policies out of fear that they could provoke claims under the investor-state system.[15]

We asked Brickhill whether he'd seen any evidence of this in his country. 'I think it is a factor that informs government decisions,' he replied. 'It's very difficult to quantify, to know what's going on in that space, but certainly one picks it up.'

Brickhill also echoed something else we had heard before: that until the mid-1990s, very few countries had ever been sued through this system. It wasn't as clear then, he suggested, what was at stake when officials signed international investment treaties giving it power. South Africa's post-apartheid government seemed to have signed a series of these treaties, which would leave the country vulnerable to investors' claims, 'more as acts of diplomatic goodwill, than serious legal commitments with potentially far-reaching economic consequences'.

Officials were invited to meetings in Europe, Brickhill told us, 'and there would be all sorts of discussion about South Africa's economic and trade direction, and part of that was an expectation that they would conclude an investment treaty – but they had no real understanding of what they were committing to in law'.

No angels here

Shortly after the *Foresti vs South Africa* case ended in 2010, the country began to terminate some of the international treaties that it had signed, which gave foreign investors advance permission to take it to tribunals in the investor-state legal system. Critical to the government's calculus was an internal study that asked whether these treaties did in practice help to increase levels of foreign investment and development, as the World Bank, ICSID, and others had promised.[16]

Strikingly, it found no clear evidence to back this up. Meanwhile, it noted that South Africa was receiving significant foreign investment from countries with which it had no such agreements in place (for example, Japan, the US and India).

These were important findings. Brazil, we had also learned, was a rare example of a country that had never signed such treaties.[17] It hadn't seemed to have trouble attracting foreign investment as a result – but the system's supporters said this was an exception, and that no government should base its decisions on exceptions alone. Now, the South African government had further fractured the story.

'There was no pattern between signing treaties and getting investment', Xavier Carim told us by phone from Geneva. He was a former South African government trade official then serving as the country's representative to the World Trade Organization, and he sounded certain. He insisted: 'Companies don't come and invest in a country or not because it does or doesn't have a bilateral investment treaty. They invest if there is a return to be made.'

Carim confirmed that the Italian investors' case had been a wake-up call for the government. 'What was concerning for us,' he said, 'was that you could have an international arbitration – three individuals, making a decision – on what was in effect a legislative programme in South Africa that had been arrived at democratically, and that somehow this arbitration panel could potentially call this into question.'

'It was very, very clear that these treaties are open to such wide interpretations by tribunals, or by investors looking to challenge any government measure, with the possibility of a significant payout at the end of the day,' he continued. 'The simple fact is that these treaties give you very little benefit and they just pose risk.'

While in Johannesburg, we also met Peter Draper – another former official in the government's trade department – in a leafy suburb. Sunlight beamed into his home office through large windows. He sat at his desk, surrounded by books. Retired from government, he was still working as a consultant and seemed to have both historical intelligence and contemporary insight into how debates about this system were evolving.

Like Brickhill, he described a flurry of treaty-signing activity in the 1990s. At that time, he told us, the South African government was 'essentially giving away the store without asking any critical questions, or protecting crucial policy space'. During that period, at the end of apartheid, the state needed room to manoeuvre – to introduce new laws, enforce its new constitution and take action to address injustices. But instead it seemed to lock itself into deals that would limit its ability to do these things.

Draper added another twist, however. 'What we were doing with African countries, when we were negotiating our investment treaties with them, is that we were essentially imposing the same conditions that the Europeans imposed on us,' he said. 'So there was this paradox in our approach … an inconsistency really.'

This suggested that South Africa's government had understood the power of these treaties and the investor-state legal system – if it was imposing it on other, poorer countries where its own investors and companies were operating.

So what was it? Were officials misled into signing these investment treaties, and the Foresti case was a wake-up call? Or did they know what they were getting the country into – because they also pushed the system on others?

One of our last meetings in Johannesburg was with Bonnie Meyersfeld, then director of the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) at the University of Witwatersrand. This was another of the human rights groups that had unsuccessfully petitioned the World Bank tribunal to let them observe and participate in the *Foresti v South Africa* proceedings.

This university had previously been the site of numerous protests against apartheid. Like many other institutions in Johannesburg, it also had roots in the mining industry: it had been originally founded as a so-called School of Mines.[18]

We took a taxi across the Nelson Mandela Bridge from the centre of Johannesburg to the university's sprawling West Campus in Braamfontein.

Then we found the offices of CALS, which described itself as a civil society organisation and legal clinic that 'connects the worlds of both academia and social justice'. There, Meyersfeld stressed that the context for everything we were looking into in South Africa was an urgent need to ensure that all of the state's policies supported the ongoing dismantling of apartheid.

'Economic apartheid has thrived since 1994. Black South Africans are poorer, white South Africans are richer, with only a smattering of change in between', she said.

She didn't sound at all like a dry academic. We could hear the outrage in her voice. 'International law, on the one hand, tends not to have jurisdiction over corporate actors, even for human rights violations. At the same time, it provides protection for corporate actors … to profit', she told us.

The international investor-state legal system that we'd been investigating, Meyersfeld continued, only looks 'at one stage of the investment process' – when a state does something an investor doesn't like. She asked: what about before this period, when perhaps 'the investor goes in and exploits a lack of cohesion within a state, and exploits a high level of poverty precisely to make that profit?'

Meyersfeld said she supported the South African government's decision to review and cancel or renegotiate the investment treaties that had been signed. But she thought the government was not necessarily united on the way forward.

> I've seen a lot of arguments and infighting around how much of your fundamental civil and political rights can be compromised for advancing this anti-poverty agenda and it's not clear that there is one position … My fear though is that the government is going to be persuaded by the argument that always wins in the end that we need the capital, we need the income, and that's my concern.

'We're no angel of poverty eradication ourselves and increasingly our banks and our financial institutions are all over the continent, exploiting, and doing exactly the same', Meyersfeld added. 'We're both the recipient of oppressive investment practices and the perpetrator of oppressive investment practices'.

On our flights back to London, we went through what we'd learned. This global legal system seemed to offer foreign investors a sort of secret insurance against any threat to their interests, present or future. If a country can't decide to reverse racist inequalities, can it call itself independent? Can it call itself a democracy?

Chapter 4
Capitalist Magna Carta

San Francisco, 1957

We found another fascinating window into the creation of the international investor-state dispute system in the archives of *TIME* magazine. In the late 1950s its publisher Henry Luce sponsored what was called the International Industrial Development Conference (IIDC). At the 1957 edition of this event in San Francisco, a German banker called Hermann Abs would make his pitch for such a system almost a decade before the World Bank's ICSID was set up.

TIME magazine dedicated an illustrated, eight-page supplement to conference coverage entitled 'The Capitalist Challenge'. The specifics contained within it helped us to picture the scenes and people who were actually consulted about this system. The articles were written colourfully, with descriptions of attendees as 'an international Who's Who of high finance and high office'.[1]

'From London came financiers whose firms had bankrolled the Industrial Revolution; from Berlin the brisk businessmen who have built Europe's sturdiest economy from the rubble of war', these descriptions continued. The managing director of the Italian car giant Fiat was there. But the biggest delegation by far was a '202-man phalanx of US executives' including those from Ritz Crackers and RCA electronics.[2]

This supplement's articles seemed to describe, and trumpet, this meeting's mission as nothing less than saving the world by expanding capitalism. 'From the first luncheon in the Fairmont's ornate Gold Room, speaker after speaker at the San Francisco conference traced the irresistible upsurge of world population and the revolution of rising expectations that has grown from its hunger for a better life,' they said.[3]

‘Westerners emphasized the need to protect investors in new lands seething with nationalism,’ reported one article, entitled ‘The Valiant Venture’.[4] Another on ‘The Anti-Capitalist Attitude’ said:

> One of the biggest barriers in the way of foreign investment in the world’s underdeveloped countries is not to be found in the tariff regulations or the laws governing the convertibility of currency. It exists instead in the minds and emotions of those who need foreign investment most … because they often tend to equate it with 19th century-style colonialism, they are reluctant to accept it.[5]

These articles also helped us imagine the crowd at this conference, fraternizing after ‘intensive, day-long sessions at the Fairmont’, at parties, the city opera house, and over cracked crab and California white wine. But ‘businessmen never forget that the chief business in business is business’, they chirped, and many were on the lookout for new deals. One Asian delegate reportedly said explicitly: ‘I am here to woo American miners. I want to convince them of the possibilities of exploitation of my country.’[6]

A celebrity banker

One of the stars of the 1957 conference in San Francisco, according to *TIME*’s record, was Hermann Josef Abs, head of the Deutsche Bank, and director of several giant corporations like Daimler-Benz and Lufthansa.

Jailhouse Rock had just come out and then rising star Elvis Presley was performing downtown. Abs turned 56-years-old while in the Bay Area, he but hadn’t travelled there for rock music nor a typical birthday celebration. He had come to give a speech at that elite event – campaigning for what the magazine called a new ‘Capitalist Magna Carta’ to enshrine and protect ‘rights’ for private investors worldwide.

We pictured the stocky, mustachioed banker striding into the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco’s swanky Nob Hill neighbourhood. A short walk from the iconic Golden Gate Bridge, this is still one of the city’s most upscale hotels. In the 1950s it was the pinnacle of West Coast glamour, with giant marble pillars in its luxurious lobby. For one week that October, it was also ground zero for more than 500 of the world’s most prominent bankers, businessmen and politicians.[7]

By the time Abs arrived at that San Francisco event, he was a legend in the world of international finance. ‘His appointment in 1937 as head of the Deutsche Bank’s foreign department established him at 36 as the Wunderkind of German banking', *TIME* would later write about him, describing how on top of becoming head of that bank he also joined the boards of directors of twenty-five big German companies and was so busy that 'much of his decision making is done on airplane flights'.[8]

This celebrity banker was born in Bonn – the western German city founded by Romans, and home to Beethoven, T-Mobile and the Haribo candy company – more than a century ago, in 1901. He'd studied law, as his father had, before deciding to pursue a career in banking. After a series of apprenticeships, in Europe and New York, he joined a Berlin bank and quickly rose through its ranks. Hitler then came to power, planning occupations in Europe, and supporting fascist allies in Spain.

Abs' further rise in the financial world took place under the Nazi regime – but it didn't end with the fall of the Third Reich. Rather, it seemed to have taken on new and increasingly international dimensions.[9] He never joined the Nazi party himself, though the Deutsche Bank had handled its accounts. After the end of the war, he was exonerated of actively supporting the regime by an Allied Denazification Board. Then, he took over an agency overseeing support to German businesses under the Marshall Plan, focusing on heavy industry.[10]

In the 1950s, it was Abs who helped settle Allied war claims against Germany, for which he received an Order of Merit from his government. In the 1960s, David Rockefeller, president of America's massive Chase Manhattan Bank, called Abs 'the leading banker in the world'.[11] He never left the Deutsche Bank, staying on its board, and as honorary chairman, until he died in 1994.

In the archives of the UK newspaper the *Independent*, we found an obituary which billed him as 'the outstanding German banker of his time'.[12] It was written by the late Eric Roll, Baron of Ipsden and former director of the Bank of England, who described Abs as an advisor to various governments and the World Bank's private investment division, the International Finance Corporation.

Roll also shared a joke about the banker: upon arriving in heaven, he finds it dilapidated and in financial ruin. Abs quickly draws up a plan for the archangels: Heaven plc, with the Almighty as Deputy Chairman of the Board. (The implication: Abs would put himself forward as Chairman, above God, in a privatised afterlife.)

The edition of *TIME* magazine in which its supplement on the 1957 San Francisco conference appeared also more widely reflected the period in which the event took place – amid the Cold War between the US and Russia, as well as a wave of growing anti-imperialist movements in developing countries.

Between advertisements for Dodge cars and electric typewriters were letters from readers concerned about the Soviet space programme. Other articles focused on US fears about Russian technological innovation outpacing the West and who newly independent countries would align with.

Similar concerns were growing in business circles. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, elites, particularly from Europe, had a powerful system of control to rely on: colonialism. But it was cracking. Freedom movements threatened to destabilize it – or destroy it.

At the San Francisco conference, Richard Nixon, then US vice president, gave what *TIME* called a major speech that warmed the hearts of 'world-minded businessmen, apprehensive over a US drift to protectionism'. He reportedly proposed a raft of strategies and targets to dramatically increase international investment by US-based companies – including cuts to corporate taxes on foreign profits, using the international aid budget to support private businesses, and new international agreements and institutions to protect them.[13]

Earlier that year, Nixon had travelled across the Atlantic to Accra, in the Gold Coast (which was later renamed Ghana), to attend a different, historic event. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first post-independence prime minister, had organized a symbolic midnight ceremony to lower the British flag and replace it with a new one. He also wore his old prison cap to the official closing of the West African country's UK-controlled parliament.

Along with Nixon, that ceremony's attendees had included Martin Luther King Jr.[14] Interviewed on the radio while he was in Accra, King said 'this event, the birth of this new nation, will give impetus to oppressed peoples all over the world. I think it will have worldwide implications and repercussions'.[15]

Indeed it did. Ghana's independence was seen as a key moment in anti-colonial liberation struggles across the continent. Foreign companies and investors who had struck gold – actually or figuratively – under colonial regimes were feeling the earth shift beneath their feet. Across Africa there were industries that could be nationalized by newly freed nations; inherited deals, special concessions and vast landholdings that could be taken over.

Eugene Black, then president of the World Bank, also spoke at the San Francisco conference and insisted that 'people must come to accept private enterprise, not as a necessary evil, but as an affirmative good' – while governments must do more than 'tolerate' business. 'They must welcome its contribution and go out of their way to attract it and even to woo it.'[16]

When it was the German banker Abs' turn to speak, he denounced 'the well-known attitude of some less developed countries, according to which the Western world is actually obliged to pay for the advancement of their economies'.[17]

Dismissing possible calls for reparations, he instead presented an epic plan to fight back with 'a Magna Carta for the protection of foreign interests' and a new ‘special international court of arbitration’ to judge violations of it. *TIME* called it ‘the most widely applauded concrete proposal of the conference’.[18]

More than just talk

In his speech, Abs referenced a number of high-profile disputes which he said showed why his proposal was so timely. Though, when we read his remarks, they seemed to reflect more about what developing countries had to fear from foreign investors, not the other way around. In each case, powerful, rich states had intervened militarily to protect corporate interests.

Abs pointed, for example, to Iran’s 1951 nationalization of oil fields held by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (later renamed British Petroleum). After this happened, the Shah, who had fled the country, was restored to power following a military coup backed by MI6 and the CIA. The US and UK denied their involvement in the coup for years but it was confirmed in declassified CIA files published in 2013 by the US national security archive at George Washington University.[19]

His second example came from Guatemala. Land reforms had threatened the holdings of the United Fruit Company (now known as Chiquita), which had since the late nineteenth century set up giant plantations across Latin America to grow fruit, primarily bananas, for export to the US and Europe. What happened next: a military coup in 1954. Again the CIA was involved (with files declassified in the late 1990s including an instructional guide on assassinations).[20]

Abs’ third case was Egypt’s nationalization of the Suez Canal Company in 1956. The company that had operated the canal was primarily owned by French and UK investors. Then what happened? The Suez Crisis, during which the UK, France and Israel invaded Egypt and tried (unsuccessfully this time) to overthrow its president. Again details took decades to come out but in the 1990s the BBC obtained a copy of a secret war plot, drawn up by representatives of the three invading countries at a villa outside Paris.[21]

Seeming to foreshadow investor-state cases like the ones we’d been investigating in El Salvador and South Africa, the German banker also decried ‘indirect interferences with the rights of private foreign capital’ – including cases of states refusing to allow companies access to ‘essential raw materials’ or grant them required licenses. ‘Excessive taxation’ was another of his examples of ‘unfair’ interference, which he said his proposal could help counter.[22]

The German banker’s plan was to create a new supranational legal system through which investors could challenge foreign governments directly. It seemed to be the most ambitious, and most well-received, idea proposed at the San Francisco event. It was also more than just talk.

Abs, who chaired a group called the German Society to Advance the Protection of Foreign Investments, told his audience that lawyers were already working out the details of his plan, and that he hoped that a draft of his proposed convention would be ready to share with allies by the end of the year. The banker's California trip was just one stop on an international campaign trail promoting the idea.

There were some precedents for his proposal, we'd learn. In 1864, Napoleon III presided over an arbitration process between the Suez Canal Company and Egypt. In that case, the company had demanded compensation from the country for cancelling a canal construction project over its use of forced labour. The assembled tribunal sided with the company, deferring to what it called the 'sanctity' of the contract, and ordering Egypt to pay a massive penalty.[23] Reviewing this 'long forgotten' dispute in 2015, US law professor Jason Yackee wrote that the company's claim had 'a strikingly modern (and perhaps even timeless) character: under what circumstances, and with what consequences, can the government of the day change its laws in order to promote its conception of the public good, where the change negatively impacts, and perhaps even destroys, the value of the foreigner's investments?'[24]

Back then, such cases were heard on ad-hoc bases, without an institutional infrastructure. This is what Abs was proposing to change. In late 1957, just a few months after the San Francisco conference, he released as promised a draft 'International Convention for the Mutual Protection of Private Property Rights in Foreign Countries'. Two years later, he merged his ideas with a similar proposal from Lord Shawcross in the UK, producing the 'Abs-Shawcross Draft'.[25]

The prominent British lawyer Hartley William Shawcross seemed more closely linked to government than industry – which we imagined could have been useful for pitching the idea to states, which would have to sign up to it. A Labour Party politician and MP after the Second World War, he had been the lead UK prosecutor at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal.[26]

Then president of the World Bank, Eugene Black, who had also been at the San Francisco conference with Abs, had his own experience in international investment disputes – including corporate claims for compensation from Egypt in the aftermath of the 1956 Suez Canal nationalization, which the German banker referenced in his speech.[27]

Born in 1898 in Atlanta, Georgia, Black came from an elite family of bankers. In the 1930s, his father was briefly chairman of the US Federal Reserve. After serving in the Navy during the First World War, he worked at an investment firm, then at Chase National Bank. After he became the World Bank's president in the late 1940s, he 'came to personify the Bank', according to the institution's account of his tenure, and it 'became widely known as Black's Bank'.[28]

The World Bank remembers him as a 'Banker-Diplomat' who was 'deeply concerned about communism spreading and its impact on the restoration of a functioning global, capitalist economy'.[29] His speech in San Francisco reflected this; he'd condemned a 'hostile attitude, by governments and peoples alike, toward the profit motive', and said they should 'woo' business instead.[30]

With Black at its helm, the World Bank expanded. It loaned increasing amounts of money to governments around the world, and set up new branches to directly support private companies too. He had a 'knack for bargaining and negotiating', wrote a bank historian in the 1990s, describing his 'international reputation as a mediator' and how he had been 'influential in settling foreign investment disputes' – insisting that countries come to the table with companies to negotiate deals.[31]

Along with the German (Abs), the Englishman (Shawcross) and this American (Black), two other men seemed to play particularly pivotal roles in the creation of the international investor-state legal system we had been investigating.

One was another American: George D. Woods, who took over as World Bank president when Black retired in 1963. Like Black, he'd previously been a commercial banker. In his first address to the World Bank's board, as its president, he pledged to explore 'all possible ways in which the Bank can help to widen and deepen the flow of private capital to the developing countries'.[32] Countries which accept this 'will achieve their development objectives more rapidly than those who do not', he insisted, clarifying: – 'that means, to mince no words about it, giving foreign investors a fair opportunity to make attractive profits'.[33]

The second was another European: Aron Broches. He had been part of the official Dutch delegation at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944 at which the World Bank, along with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was created.[34] Then, he served as the Bank's general counsel for decades. In the 1960s, he oversaw the creation of its ICSID centre for investor-state disputes.

New rules for the world

Woods oversaw a shrewd approach, it seemed, to establishing ICSID. He started to frame the nascent investor-state dispute settlement system as a 'modest proposal' – an ultimately simple idea that would benefit all and should encounter no opposition.[35]

In the Bank's Legal Department, part of Broches's job was to get governments from around the world to sign up to this idea – and for it to work, at least some would have to be poorer countries where foreign investors wanted to expand or protect their interests. The historical records we got in Washington DC seemed to reflect how he adopted Woods's approach.

Broches's draft ICSID Convention included language saying that no signatory state would be 'under any obligation' to participate in dispute resolution through the investor-state system, 'without [its] consent'. Signing up to the convention, the Bank's lawyers argued, wouldn't automatically allow investors to bring cases against states. The use of this system would be 'voluntary', said the rules they drafted; all parties would have to agree to use them; it would be based on 'mutual consent'.[36]

This was interesting – and, it seemed, deceptive. Did South Africa really agree to be challenged by investors who didn't like its post-apartheid policies, at an international tribunal that doesn't consider human rights and where states can only lose, settle, or walk away with the status quo and a giant bill for legal fees? El Salvador had made it clear that it opposed the mining company's case against it, and considered it a threat to the country's very independence.

Over the next several decades, investors' access to this new legal system was enshrined in thousands of international treaties. These agreements effectively give foreign investors the state's advance 'consent' to take them to tribunals including at ICSID. Broches would himself become involved in these deals – encouraging states to sign Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) including such provisions.[37]

According to British academic Taylor St John, who had studied this period, there was a Bank strategy to go to 'great lengths to avoid opposition uniting'.[38]

After previous attempts to set up such a system through the OECD or UN had ended in stalemates, St John said that 'the Bank was concerned that different strands of resistance would unite'. She described how it adopted a range of tactics to prevent this, including not circulating notes from consultations.[39]

St John also found that – despite promises that this system would increase foreign investment in poorer countries, and thus aid their development – 'no work had been done at the Bank to investigate this question, nor is there any record of any such work being proposed'.[40] ICSID, it seemed, was created for private investors, by bankers and lawyers, with states in the back seat.

As we dug further into the history of this system, we started to create a timeline of key events on paper taped to one wall of our room at the CIJ. Leaning back in our chairs, we saw something different from a system created with 'good intentions', for international development. We saw a small number of US and European elites, dreaming it up in boardrooms and ballrooms. We read their goals in their own words: to expand and protect business interests, including against 'aggressive taxation' and other policies that could limit profits.

What if, we asked ourselves, what we had seen in El Salvador and South Africa was not a system that had gone astray, or that had been corrupted? What if it was actually the system working as intended, pushing democracy and human rights off the table, and protecting profits above all else?

Amid the Cold War and as countries gained independence from dissolving European empires, this system seemed to have been sold to elites at spaces like the San Francisco conference before it was pushed on developing countries. Some of those with the most to lose were aware of this, registering their opposition to the idea at the World Bank's consultations.

Then, studying the records of ICSID cases again, after diving into this history, something else caught our eye.

For decades, almost all of these cases were filed by companies based in wealthy countries, against governments in poorer ones. This seemed to match the vision of this system's creators, and the enduring rhetoric of how it should help development by increasing amounts of foreign investment. However, more recently, there had been a spike in cases against rich countries too – including Abs' Germany.

We saw in ICSID's online case database that a pair of suits had been recently filed against Germany, by a Swedish company. One of these was ongoing, over the country's decision to close down its nuclear power plants. The second was about a controversial new coal-fired power plant that seemed to contrast sharply with Germany's much-lauded promises to pursue an epic 'green energy' transition. It had ended – but as in the case of the Italian investors against South Africa, we had questions about its conclusion.

If Germany – sometimes called the 'grandfather' of this international legal system, because of Abs – could be challenged then any country, and thus every taxpayer and citizen, globally seemed to be at risk. We thought again of the questions that had driven us thus far. Were our elected officials actually in charge of less than they led us to believe? Why hadn't this system received more attention?

At the pub down the road from the CIJ's offices, Gavin appeared in the courtyard.

'Tell me everything,' he said, sitting down with us at a wooden table.

We slid across the table a piece of paper – one of our printed pages from the *TIME* supplement about the 1957 conference in San Francisco, which showed hundreds of elite delegates in suits sitting around dinner tables in a banquet hall with vaulted ceilings and chandeliers. We were pleased that Gavin, who always had something to say, seemed speechless. He read slowly. Finally he spoke: ‘A secret Capitalist Magna Carta, huh.’ He paused. ‘That’s a big deal!’

We nodded.

‘Where will you go next?’ he asked.

‘Germany.’

‘When will you go?’

‘Next week.’

Chapter 5

The boomerang

Vattenfall vs Germany

We landed at Bremen airport and drove to Hamburg, Germany's second largest city and its only major one that wasn't land-locked. Sitting in a harbour with the River Elbe running through it, it was an industrial port city that had also long been a financial centre and the home of the country's oldest bank and stock exchange.

It was late summer, and on either side of the highway from the airport giant white windmills reached into the sky, turning slowly – reflecting the country's drive to boost renewable energy. By 2014, renewables already accounted for 25 per cent of German energy but the government said it aimed to raise this to more than 40 per cent by 2025.[1]

Around the world, people were increasingly concerned about the consequences of climate change, and the role of the energy industry in potentially irrevocably damaging the environment. Germany decided to do something about this – and kick its coal habit. There were mass citizen and consumer campaigns – and new policies.

Amid these movements, a Swedish energy company called Vattenfall filed a case against Germany at the World Bank's ICSID centre over its controversial new coal-fired power plant just outside Hamburg. It said that a water permit granted by the local authority had unfairly impacted its profit-making ability – by limiting how much the plant could raise the temperature of the river – and demanded a stunning $1.6 billion in damages.[2]

It seemed to be a striking example of how the international investor-state legal system was now being used to challenge governments in rich countries too. German investors had filed dozens of claims against poorer countries. But in 2009, when Vattenfall filed this case, Germany found itself in the dock for the first time.

Other rich countries including Canada, the UK and France had also faced claims. These cases covered a wide range of issues – and included several challenges to environmental laws and policies – though there was very little information in the public domain about many of these disputes, including how they were resolved.

Vattenfall's case against Germany formally closed in 2011, but as in the suit brought by the Italian investors against South Africa, its conclusion took time to unpick. The dispute seemed to have been resolved outside of the tribunal's proceedings. A final document said the two sides had reached a settlement but this suggested compromise – that both sides came to an agreement getting some but not all of what they would have wanted. Was that the case?

We had arranged interviews in Hamburg to help us figure this out, and rented an apartment in the west of the city, which was also a hub for alternative music and political movements. We drove past the Rote Flora, a former theatre occupied by squatters since 1989, which had been at the centre of anti-gentrification campaigns. In the windows of apartments we saw the iconic skull and crossbones flag of the popular anti-fascist St Pauli football team.

During the 2017 G20 summit in Hamburg, this area would be the site of mass protests and violent clashes between police and protestors. More than 15,000 police officers were deployed in an astonishing militarization of the city. They ignored a decision from Germany's highest court allowing protestors to set up a camp; it was raided by police armed with batons and pepper spray.[3]

Not far away was also the site of a recent occupation of a neighbourhood park – one of three that was threatened by a 12-kilometer energy pipeline that Vattenfall wanted to build, to connect its coal-fired power plant to the city's grid.

We were going to meet some of the local environmental activists involved in this and other anti-coal campaigns – along with local politicians and experts who we hoped would know more about what had happened in the World Bank case. But first, in the morning, we'd travel across the river from Hamburg to the tiny village of Moorburg, the site of the contested power plant.

There was no one on the one main road of the Moorburg village (population: 729). It cut through rows of red brick houses with sloped rooftops, and wound past a sixteenth-century church. The only open shop was a poorly stocked convenience store.

This tiny, quiet but picturesque village, on the banks of the river Elbe in northern Germany, seemed like an unlikely setting for a high-powered, multi-billion dollar international legal battle – and a growing, worldwide fight over how much power and control corporations should have in modern democracies. But, it had a new, controversial neighbour – Vattenfall's power plant: Kraftwerk Moorburg.

All we had to do was look up to see it: a giant chimney, steadily pumping dark grey smoke into the air. The smoke billowed as the wind picked it up, spreading it over the area. We walked towards it, until the giant industrial complex and docks around the chimney came into view. At ground level, much closer to the power plant, we saw loads of coal being lifted by machines off a large ship docked in the river. Here, Germany's historic renewable energy drive was nowhere to be seen.

This plant had been controversial long before Vattenfall filed its case. For years, local residents and environmentalists had opposed its construction amid growing concern over climate change and the impact the project would have on the Elbe – which is one of Europe's major rivers, flowing 680 miles from northern Czech Republic across Germany to the sea. Activists had organized protests against the project and public hearings under the banner 'Coal Kills the Climate'.

In 2008, when the Green Party came into power in Hamburg, in an unprecedented coalition with the Christian Democratic Union, it did so off the back of promises which included using all possible legal means to stop the Moorburg project from moving forward. After the election, we'd learn, they realised that this would be harder to actually do than they'd thought.

Totally absurd

After that 2008 election, local authorities in Hamburg gave Vattenfall the permits it needed to proceed with its plant, but they imposed conditions to limit its water usage and impact on fish in the river. These conditions were in line with European regulations, they said, but the company protested. In order to profitably run this plant its case filing said it needed a permit to allow it to return water to the river Elbe that was as hot as '30°C with a resulting temperature increase between water intake and outlet of the river water of maximum 6–7.5 degrees Celsius'.[4]

Vattenfall sued Hamburg in local courts – then it also went to the World Bank's ICSID centre. The permit conditions, it said, would cost the company too much to follow – constituting 'indirect expropriation' and violating its rights under the Energy Charter Treaty, a mega-agreement signed by more than fifty countries since the 1990s, including both Sweden and Germany, which granted foreign investors access to international tribunals in case of disputes.[5]

We asked Kersten, who we met in his office near Hamburg's central shopping district, to recall this period. He laughed. 'It was a total surprise for us,' he said, 'that there's even the possibility that they might do this [sue Germany at a tribunal in Washington DC] was, for me, totally new.'

'As far as I knew,' Kersten continued, 'there were some treaties to protect German companies in the Third World or in dictatorships, but that a European company could sue Germany … I wouldn't have thought this was possible.'

Kerstan had been the chair of the Green Party's group in the Hamburg state parliament, as well as the local official responsible for economic affairs and public spending when the ICSID case was filed. He described that period as very stressful. 'It puts a lot of pressure on the officials while such a process is in operation,' he told us, 'with no knowledge of what the outcome will be and what the federal government will do – are they willing to make compromises? Are they trying to put pressure on Hamburg? So, that was a very tense situation.'

It was 'totally absurd', Kersten added, that the company could go over Hamburg's head and sue the national government. It was a local dispute, and in the case of an award against the German government, it was suggested that the federal authorities might try to push it back to Hamburg and make the city pay.[6]

Kerstan didn't think he was alone in his surprise at this case, either. He said he thought that even those government officials who had signed the international treaties enabling such claims probably didn't know what they were getting into: 'I think they weren't aware that there's a risk of giving up sovereignty because they never thought that Germany would be sued.'

In the end, it turned out that Vattenfall agreed to drop its ICSID case if Germany gave it a new water permit for its Moorburg plant. According to a detailed legal analysis of permits before and after the case, this lowered the environmental standards that had originally been imposed on the plant – allowing it to use more water from the river and weakening measures to protect fish.[7]

In other words, it seemed like the company achieved what it really wanted. As in El Salvador (where the mining company didn't seem to want its damages award as much as it wanted to start digging for gold), and in South Africa (where investors gained an exemption to Black Economic Empowerment laws they didn't want to follow) this company got out of the water permit it had objected to.

Despite what was at stake, however, publicly available information was scarce.

'We tried everything we could do to get information from the government [on the case]. We have a special environmental information law here in Germany. We tried this too, and failed here too. We never got anything', Jürgen Knirsch told us, near the Greenpeace Hamburg office where he worked as a campaigner.

That office was in an old industrial area of the city that had been the focus of recent redevelopment. We met to talk by the waterfront where a suite of new shiny, modern office blocks, apartments, bars and cafes were being built.

Knirsch described the Moorburg case, from start to finish, as shrouded in secrecy. The World Bank's ICSID centre, in Washington DC, he explained, 'is so far away, and nobody knows what's going on, and the people, the local people, don't know anything either, they don't have any role in those processes, and of course at the federal level people … are trying not to talk about this very much'. Despite what was at stake, for local politics and the environment, 'here in Hamburg … we had no access to information'.

By then, we knew that this lack of transparency was, for those in the industry, a well-known feature and selling point of this legal system.

'The value and significance' of investor-state cases has grown, said the law firm Latham & Watkins, which had worked on dozens of these cases, 'as foreign investors (or their lawyers) have become progressively more familiar' with this system and how it can work for them. It told prospective clients: 'There can be no doubt that arbitration provides greater privacy and confidentiality than litigation (which is often public).'[8]

In the Moorburg case, Greenpeace had commissioned a local lawyer, Roda Verheyen, to analyse copies of the water permits before and after the dispute was settled. She concluded that the second one 'considerably lowered the environmental standards' originally imposed. It reduced, for example, the level of monitoring Vattenfall had to do and relaxed conditions on the plant's use of water from the river and its impact on its temperature.[9]

For Verheyen, it was 'undeniable' that the company's international case had put pressure on the water authority to revise the conditions attached to the company's permit. It had also brought the federal government into the picture, which would otherwise have had no role in the dispute.

The international case was only settled after Vattenfall received its new permit; the settlement seemed contingent on these changes being honoured and the company being allowed to proceed with its plans as desired. According to University of Hamburg academic Cathrin Zengerling, it was 'a clear example of how a confidential powerful international investment protection regime' can interfere with local democratic processes. The investor-state system, she argued in a book about international environmental law, 'was abused by Vattenfall to enhance its negotiating power'.[10]

Several years after this case was settled, the European Commission would take Germany to the European Court of Justice. It said the Moorburg plant's authorization had violated European environmental law by not doing more to reduce risks to protected fish species which pass near it while migrating from the North Sea.[11]

Germany meanwhile continued to reconsider and redirect its energy policies nationally – and soon it faced another investor-state claim from the same Swedish energy company, Vattenfall, filed in 2012 at the World Bank centre.

That time, Vattenfall challenged the federal government's decision to phase out nuclear power. Even less information was in the public domain about that case – despite reports that the company was seeking $5 billion from German taxpayers.[12]

Fed up in Hamburg

On the ground in Hamburg, many people seemed fed up with corporate control over their energy systems in general. This fit into another, under-reported international trend. Around the world, numerous cities were reversing the privatisation of key services – deciding not to renew contracts with companies, or cancelling them.[13]

In Hamburg, environmental, consumer and religious groups had succeeded in campaigning for – and narrowly winning – a referendum in 2013 for the city to 'remunicipalize' and buy back the electricity, gas and district heating networks that it had sold to Vattenfall and a German energy company decades earlier.[14]

Near one of Hamburg's many city parks, called Gählerpark, we met Astrid Matthiae, who had been active in the *Moorburgstrasse Stoppen!* campaign that preceded the referendum. It had mobilized people against a proposed 12 kilometer energy pipeline which they said threatened three parks and hundreds of trees.[15]

In late 2009, Matthiae told us, a dozen people scrambled up the trees in this small neighbourhood park, surrounded by apartment complexes. They built treehouses and small forts, occupying the park for three months in the winter.

'It was wonderful!' she said, describing a steady stream of visitors trundling down the park's slippery paths, bringing food and supplies to the protestors.

From the trees they had strung up banners reading: 'This park belongs to us all!' and 'Save the trees!' It was about protecting local green space – but also opposing the pipeline that would have connected Hamburg to the Moorburg plant.

Activists in the campaign against the pipeline wanted the entire project to be cancelled – and for the city's energy system to be run more democratically, with decisions considering the reality of climate change and sustainability goals. Protesters came down from Gählerpark's trees in 2010, after a court ruled to temporarily suspend the pipeline's approval.[16] But anger continued to grow over Vattenfall's coal-fired power plant.[17] Demands for greater local control over the energy system became increasingly mainstream.

Eventually, Hamburg joined a growing number of cities worldwide deciding to end their experiments with privatisation. Since 2007, we learned, at least 170 municipalities in Germany alone had already brought privatised energy services back into public hands.[18]

'Every month there is a new town that is buying back its energy infrastructure. This is very common right now', Christian Maas, former state secretary for the environment and urban planning in Hamburg, told us. He described the city's residents as more 'interested in local energy supply and that is contradictory to the centralised, high profit-orientated large utility'.

Remunicipalization, Maas continued, could create opportunities to 'give something to the city, change the energy system, provide stable energy prices for the people, make the city less dependent on foreign imports and fossil fuels'.

Globally, between 2000 and 2015, researchers at the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam had also documented 235 cases of water 'remunicipalization' in thirty-seven countries, affecting over 100 million people.[19] Satoko Kishimoto, one of these researchers, pointed us to examples from Mozambique to Malaysia. 'This is not a minor trend: many municipalities have been disappointed with privatisation, with costs, with service quality,' she told us. 'Remunicipalisation is seen as a tangible response, a way to rebuild important social services, more democratically.'

In Hamburg, local activists banded together to launch the *Unser Hamburg, Unser Netz* (Our Hamburg, Our Networks)[20] campaign in 2010 after realizing that the city's contracts with private energy companies were about to expire. Environmental groups said that buying back the grids would give Hamburg more control over its energy systems, and enable it to really drive forward its transition to renewable sources. But the campaign brought out a wide range of supporters.

Consumer organizations pointed out that companies were simultaneously the owners of the city's energy networks, and the primary producers and buyers of energy – a bad situation for competition and consumers. Religious and anti-poverty groups meanwhile argued that energy networks should not be considered private property, and should be run for the public good rather than private profit. Remunicipalization rallies brought out middle-aged men in crisp suits alongside dreadlocked students.

David McDonald, a professor at Queen's University in Canada, had been studying for years such city-level campaigns to reverse privatisations, as co-director of the Municipal Services Project international research network. He described this trend as a global story that was unfolding largely under-the-radar.

'We have had this massive trend since the 1970s towards privatisation – an ideologically driven, powerful trend – which has created enormous debates. But now we are starting to see something happen, including outright reversals', he told us.

McDonald sketched out a range of motives for these campaigns. What he suggested they have in common is how hard ending privatisation can be. Challenges included potentially 'high legal costs, and companies suing', he said.

'It can be a very David and Goliath battle, if you're thinking of ending a contract with a big company.'

Hamburg's referendum motion to reclaim the city's energy grids from companies passed, but with only 50.9 per cent of the vote. 'It was a really tough political fight. It was very, very long-running and in the end it was very, very close', Kerstan, head of the Green party in Hamburg, told us. The ballot proposed not only to take back the energy grids, but to build 'a socially just, democratically controlled and climate-friendly energy supply from renewable sources'.[21]

Nothing would happen overnight, however, as the city would wait for its existing contracts with the companies to expire – a process that would take several years. Taking action before this could have left it vulnerable to corporate lawsuits locally – or the whole country at risk of investor-state claims.

In 2014, Hamburg closed a deal to pay Vattenfall €550 million to buy back the city's electricity grid. A company spokesperson said it was a 'fair deal' – but also hinted that the company had considered its options to challenge an outcome that it didn't like. 'Although Vattenfall has not disconnected from the electricity grid easily,' she said, 'this agreement avoids disputes.'

The contract for Hamburg's gas network was up next, while it would be several years before the much more valuable district heating grid would be back in public hands. In that case, Günther Hörmann at the Consumer Centre of Hamburg said there were concerns that the city might be overpaying for it. In 2018, reports said that the price ended up exceeding €900 million.[22]

Coming home to roost

While we were no longer inclined to believe that the investor-state dispute system was created with 'good intentions', it seemed true that it had changed significantly over time. It had gotten 'out of control', perhaps, driven in part by an elite industry of corporate lawyers, consultants, lobbyists and third-party financiers. It had enveloped the whole world like never before and it was now threatening democracy in rich countries too.

For decades, countries like El Salvador, or South Africa, were the key targets of the international treaties and tribunals that power this system. But this dynamic already started to change after the 1990s, in the wake of new mega-deals involving rich countries including the Energy Charter Treaty that Vattenfall used to sue Germany, and the NAFTA treaty between Canada, the US and Mexico.

NAFTA said – in the treaty's name – that it was about 'free trade'. But by signing this deal, the three countries also gave foreign investors advance consent to challenge them at international tribunals including at ICSID. Numerous investors made use of this and the number of cases soared.

Canada in particular had been hit by dozens of claims. In one of these, a US chemical company called Ethyl had challenged a ban on imports of gasoline containing a toxic additive called MMT. The Canadian government settled this case, paying out $13 million and repealing the ban.[23] In another example, a tribunal ordered Canada to pay millions of dollars to the oil and gas giant Exxon-Mobil, whose lawyers challenged requirements that investors in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador support local research and development.[24]

Cases that were still pending against Canada included one filed by the Lone Pine energy company, from the US, after the province of Quebec introduced a temporary moratorium on fracking under the St Lawrence River pending further environmental studies.[25] Analysis from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives suggested that, overall, almost two-thirds of foreign investors' claims against Canada had involved challenges to environmental or resource management measures, laws and regulations.[26]

Canada was one of the few countries that chose to publish lists online of the cases that had been launched against them.[27] These cases challenge governments, and carry potential multi-million dollar and even multi-billion dollar threats. But taxpayers, who would ultimately foot these bills, were often left in the dark.

We learned that the UK for instance, where we lived and worked, had been sued (along with France) by the company that owns the Channel Tunnel for allegedly failing to provide adequate security around its entrance.[28] It was upset by transport delays caused when undocumented migrants were discovered trying to hide on trucks going through the tunnel between the two countries.

That case was heard at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague – another venue, like the World Bank's ICSID centre, for such disputes. There was very little information available about it. The court's website included only a short summary, explaining: 'After France opened a hostel for refugees near the terminal … inhabitants attempted to reach the United Kingdom via the fixed link. The Claimants suffered loss and damage due to such incursions, which they claimed the French and United Kingdom Governments had a duty to prevent.'[29] While a 'partial award' was published siding with the company, details (including how much the two governments would have to pay it) were not disclosed in it.

The US had also been sued more than a dozen times under the NAFTA treaty. However, as far as we could tell from public records, it hadn't yet lost a case. This was 'evidence that even though trade agreements appear to treat all parties equally, the more powerful countries are usually more immune to trade challenges', said Maude Barlow, a veteran activist with the Council of Canadians civil society group, where Meera – the person who first sent us down this path – had also worked.[30]

Overall, US businesses had been behind about 20 per cent of the cases filed at ICSID by 2015, followed by British ones (8 per cent). That year, Eastern Europe and Central Asia were hit with the most claims. The second most targeted region was Western Europe.

With thousands of international investment treaties criss-crossing the globe, enabling companies to file these cases, few states were now off limits and citizens and taxpayers around the world were paying the price – even in Abs' Germany. This country, once on the frontlines of constructing and expanding this system, had become one of its victims too.

If it was built to ensure continued domination by companies and investors from rich countries, it was now being used against their own governments too. In our next investigations we'd see similar trends – how new systems to protect and expand corporate interests were effectively 'pioneered' in poorer countries, often under the guise of 'development', before expanding to threaten democracies everywhere.

PART TWO

Corporate welfare

Chapter 6

Aid-funded business

An unusual festival

Like many of our peers heading to summer music festivals, we got up at the break of dawn and took a train out of London. We were also en route to an event that would have many thousands of attendees. We were going to see one act in particular – and we were anxious about whether we'd be able to get good seats, close to the stage.

But there'd be no mosh pits and wellies where we were going: north to Liverpool, for the 2014 International Festival for Business. Its main sponsor – then Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservative government – had advertised it as 'the UK's most significant international trade and commerce showcase since 1951'.[1]

It would be 'an outstanding opportunity for businesses to forge new international commercial partnerships', Cameron said.[2] 'There couldn't be a more fitting host than Liverpool', he added, as it had 'powered Britain through the Industrial Revolution'.

This seemed to be correct: in the nineteenth century the port city was a key hub for industry and international trade, and for a period its wealth rivalled London's.[3] But much of the city's prosperity had been driven by one of history's most condemned businesses: slavery. Over the eighteenth century, its ships carried an estimated 1.5 million Africans across the Atlantic. For decades, it accounted for between 30 and 50 per cent of Liverpool's trade.[4]

It was an organized barbarism. An international 'triangle trade' shipped goods like textiles and guns from British factories to Africa; slaves to America and the Caribbean; then sugar, cotton and rum back to Europe. Banks and industries mushroomed to respond to the 'opportunity' of this trade. Liverpool boomed.

This history still echoed in some of the city's street names. Penny Lane, made famous by The Beatles, was thought to have been named after the prominent slave trader James Penny. Other streets were named after abolitionists.[5] Restored warehouses by Liverpool's historic docks now housed an International Slavery Museum. That was the area of the city where we went, as quickly as possible, after our train pulled into the station.

Our destination – the Cunard Building – was built during the First World War to be the headquarters for a company whose luxury passenger steamships ferried elites across the ocean. It was partly styled after Italian palaces, complete with marble imported from Tuscany. We walked up dramatic stone stairs leading to the building's main entrance.

The International Festival of Business's multi-week programme had sessions catering to companies and entrepreneurs in specific sectors from shipping to education, as well as those eager to expand into specific world regions. Many of these events, including the one we'd come for, were organized by UK government officials.

We walked into a historic ballroom with period detailing and vaulted ceilings. Men in business suits sat at circular tables with pristine white tablecloths. We spotted two empty seats, took them and smiled. Our table was indeed close to the stage.

'What's it worth?' asked the man who soon appeared at the podium.

Answering his own question he said there was '$70 to $100 billion of business out there', to which people in the room clapped. He grinned.

The amount of money he was talking about was vast, and comparable to the estimated size of the global cybersecurity, or magazine publishing, markets. But this event was focused instead on a trade that few people have ever heard of.

Nigel Peters was the man on stage. He was then head of a little-known British government unit called the Aid-Funded Business Service – which was set up to help UK companies win contracts funded by public money to help the world's poorest people.[6]

'The development and humanitarian aid business is there, it's significant business, and we're here to help you win some of that', he told the room, standing by a screen with a projected slide bearing the names of different potential customers – including UN agencies, the World Bank, and US and UK government departments.

'Welcome to the world of aid-funded business', he enthused.

'We see a lot of business opportunities around the work the UN does in peacekeeping, famine relief, disaster relief, emergency aid,' Peters explained, giving as examples: 'We see a lot of good opportunities, for those of you in products, in terms of famine and disaster relief related to both man-made disasters, which today we're seeing in countries like Syria and Iraq with refugee camps, and of course natural disasters.'

The men around us clapped again. It was striking that these crises, involving the deaths and displacement of many people, seemed like reasons for good cheer.

Eleanor Baha, his colleague, also seemed upbeat when she took the stage. Based in Geneva, amid one of the largest clusters of UN agencies, she was described as an 'attaché' for the UK's Aid-Funded Business Service.

‘Why should you be looking at UN business? What’s the point?’ she asked, and answered: ‘Well, for you as companies it’s a good export market’.

‘There’s a definite “feel good” factor’ that companies can get from working in this industry, she said, but ‘perhaps most importantly, you are sure to get paid … The UN only places business with companies when the budget is already secure’.

After our trip to Liverpool we took another train from London – this time to Brussels, the unofficial capital of the European Union, to go to AidEx, which called itself a ‘major platform for networking, making new contacts and doing business’.[7]

Inside a large convention centre, hundreds of business suits swarmed around exhibition stalls, some of them sipping glasses of wine. On tables were glossy corporate brochures and items like USB keys stamped with companies’ logos. Hanging from the high ceiling were banners of major car companies – Ford, Toyota, Volkswagen.

Company reps at their stalls pitched goods and services to a host of NGOs, government units like the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and UN organizations that together spend billions of dollars a year around the world. On offer was everything from types of tarpaulin to the services of private security firms. In a pop-up café, attendees huddled in small groups, comparing notes on who had won what business the previous year.

AidEx said that exhibiting at its event helped companies ‘raise brand awareness’, ‘generate new leads’ and ‘receive personal PR services’.[8]

A two-minute promo video on YouTube, with a cheerful pop soundtrack, illustrated the point.[9] ‘How are we going to sell all of these products?’ asks a cartoon figure in the video. A light bulb appears over the head of another figure, who suggests: ‘Why don’t we exhibit at AidEx?’ As cartoon shipping crates pile up on screen, he proclaims: ‘There will be buyers there who want to buy all of THIS!’

We hadn’t heard much at the event about the fight against global poverty – the official mission of aid spending – however. On our train back to London, we wondered: why was the world of aid-funded business also so little-known? Aid is taxpayer money, and politicians often talk about it. So why were the companies who target these budgets usually off-screen?

The reality of aid

What is aid? ‘Money given to help the world’s poorest’, was the message repeatedly heard by taxpayers who ultimately foot the bill. Both supporters and critics of aid seemed to similarly talk about it as if it were a direct transfer of cash from richer to poorer countries.

The *Daily Mail*, for example – a notorious aid critic – had launched a petition on Valentine's Day, 2014, urging the UK government to 'divert some of the £11 billion a year spent on overseas aid to ease the suffering of British flood victims'.[10] One signatory, a novelist from Gloucestershire, commented: 'We give millions of pounds in aid to India and China and never spend on our own. It's ridiculous.'[11]

Aid opponents had repeatedly made the same argument: that the UK was wrong to 'give', 'send', even 'pour' so much money into other countries each year. Aid supporters seemed to use similar language, presenting aid as a sort of international social security system that redistributes wealth from the world's rich to its poor. Politicians routinely did this too, pledging to 'give' aid 'to' specific countries.

But it was more complicated than this – and, as we saw in Liverpool and Brussels, companies were among the beneficiaries of these budgets.

The truth was that only a fraction of aid money was ever transferred directly to local governments or groups in poorer countries. Instead, much of it took a while to get anywhere – passing through sometimes long chains of contractors and subcontractors. Far from simple transfers of cash, when donors pledged aid money, there was no guarantee it would ever make it to the countries it was supposedly 'for'.

There are written rules, overseen by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) club of rich countries in Paris, to govern what spending can count as official development assistance (ODA) – the formal term for 'aid'.

Such spending is supposed to have 'the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries' as its main objective.[12] The rules are detailed – and they have also allowed donors to use their aid budgets for things you might not expect.

Donor governments have been able to 'give' aid as loans that have to be paid back with interest (thus making money off of them). They have counted 'debt relief' as aid – even if these were just debts that were cancelled or rescheduled, not new flows of cash.

OECD data showed that millions of pounds of UK aid never left the country, and was instead spent on things like military training for African officials, scholarships for international students at British universities and a 'study visit' to the UK for North Korean officials.[13] For years the UK had also counted pension payments to former colonial officers as aid – at a cost of £2 million in 2017 alone.[14]

'Budget support' is the technical term for aid that is given directly to poorer country governments, to manage and spend themselves. It amounted to $9.5 billion in 2014 – less than 6 per cent of total global aid spending that year ($165 billion).[15]

The rest of this money? Most of it was routed through a web of international agencies, NGOs and for-profit contractors and subcontractors. Much of it was used to buy things, or services, from companies based in richer, not poorer, countries.

This is where the business we saw upfront in Liverpool and Brussels came in. For companies in this industry, a humanitarian crisis seemed like an opportunity, while development aid served as a steady and reliable revenue stream.

The complicated rules that governed what spending can be counted as aid meant that it was hard to compare two aid dollars without knowing details of how they were spent. One may have gone directly to a poor government. The other may have gone to a private contractor who made a profit off of it.

Despite this, politicians and aid critics and supporters alike often focused on a topline target to spend 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) on aid a year. Repeatedly re-endorsed at international summits since the 1970s, this target became a key benchmark by which donor 'generosity' was publicly measured. Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands had met it in the 1970s.[16] Luxembourg followed in 2000. But the UK was the only G7 country to have done so, in 2013, when its total foreign aid budget reached £11.4 billion.[17] In 2015 it enshrined this target in law (though in 2021 it would reduce this spending to 0.5 per cent of GNI, citing the economic impact of Covid-19).[18]

Some experts argued that this target was arbitrary, outdated, and that it was based on old calculations of how much money developing countries needed.[19] The UK parliament's international development select committee warned that pressure to meet spending targets, no matter what, could result in poor decision-making.[20]

It also seemed like a distraction – a way to focus attention on overall budget figures while missing the details of how this money is spent.

In 2015, a new UK aid strategy would come out explicitly prioritising overseas development projects and spending that could 'strengthen UK trade and investment opportunities'.[21] Aid would increasingly be spent on projects to write 'business-friendly' laws, and support private investment in areas from infrastructure to agriculture.

The involvement of for-profit companies in spending aid money also seemed to make it harder to follow this money to the ground. Government guidance said bids for aid business should include breakdowns of overheads, salaries and profit margins. But if this information was indeed collected it was not published and rarely came to light.

Margaret and Mahathir

When Margaret Thatcher died in 2013, she was honoured with a ceremonial funeral – at a cost to taxpayers of more than £3 million.[22] It was held at St Paul's Cathedral, where just a few years before Occupy London had established its camp protesting economic inequality and corporate influence over government.

Queen Elizabeth II was only one of several very high-profile people who attended the funeral. Among the foreign invitees was Mahathir bin Mohamad, who had been prime minister of Malaysia at the same time as Thatcher in the UK – though for much longer. He stayed in power until 2003, then took over again in 2018, at the age of ninety-three.[23]

We'd noticed his name on a list of the guests because, a year before Thatcher's death, a former senior civil servant published an insider's account of the 1990s Pergau Dam aid-for-arms scandal.[24] It was this scandal that ultimately led to a new law to 'untie' UK aid from commercial interests and make sure it focused on poverty reduction.

The scandal concerned exchanges between Thatcher's government, and Mahathir's – and the use of UK aid for a new hydroelectric dam on Malaysia's Pergau River to 'sweeten' contracts with arms companies including British Aerospace (since renamed BAE Systems), which sold the country dozens of military jets.[25]

The insider account, *The Politics and Economics of Britain's Foreign Aid: The Pergau Dam Affair*, was written by Sir Timothy Lancaster. He'd been a civil servant at the Treasury department when this deal was secretly struck, and had sent a private memo to his superiors warning that it could 'create acute embarrassment to ministers and wasteful public expenditure'.[26] Then, when he subsequently took over as permanent secretary of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), the agency in charge of the aid budget at the time, he advised against this spending going through.

Lancaster thought the proposed aid-funded project didn't make sense on its own terms as he believed there were cheaper ways for Malaysia to produce energy. He took the unusual move of insisting on a formal ministerial ruling before signing off on its budget. This signalled that he suspected something was wrong, and was what ultimately prompted a series of investigations into it, from the National Audit Office to major newspapers.[27]

The cover of Lankester's book recounting this period features a snapshot of the two prime ministers at the centre of the scandal, before it erupted. Malaysia's Mahathir looks straight at the camera, in a grey suit and mauve tie. Thatcher is beside him, in a black dress. The pair appear relaxed and on a table before them are two tea cups, left (or positioned) there to reflect an amicable meeting.

That photo was taken in April 1985, during a ten-day tour of Asia by Thatcher in which she met with Mahathir and publicly praised him for believing, as she did, in 'the advantages of the free enterprise system and the liberalisation of world trade'.[28] It was the first official visit by a UK prime minister since the former British colony became independent (in 1957).[29] It also followed what she would later call 'a bit of a sticky start' to her relationship with Mahathir.[30] He had previously adopted an explicit 'Look East' policy and had said that his country would buy British products only ‘when it is absolutely necessary’, showing ‘a definite preference for non-British sources’.[31]

Thatcher had travelled to Kuala Lumpur amid efforts to woo Mahathir back. A speech she gave in the city was peppered with praise for his leadership. ‘I am delighted to find, Prime Minister, that you too are devotees of privatisation and reducing the role of the state’, she said. ‘I admire your catchphrase “Malaysia Inc”.’ She added: ‘Many of our companies are keen to do more business with Malaysia and I shall be doing my very best to convince you of all the merits of our companies in particular.’[32]

At a separate press conference during that visit, she pointed specifically to the construction giant Balfour Beattie, which would later be involved in building the Pergau dam. She also named Unilever, the giant British multinational ‘consumer goods’ company whose products include snacks and soap.[33]

By the time parliamentary inquiries began into the ‘Pergau Dam Affair’, Thatcher had left government – though she continued to lobby for big businesses. She reportedly received $50,000 per speech and worked, for example, as a ‘geopolitical consultant’ for the tobacco company Philip Morris.[34] She would have been an obvious witness for the Pergau enquiries, but she refused to give evidence.[35]

In Malaysia, the ‘Pergau Dam Affair’ led to a new, public sector boycott of British contractors.[36] In the UK, a powerful civil society campaign demanded that aid focus on ending poverty in developing countries – not supporting companies from home. In 1994, a British NGO called the World Development Movement launched a landmark legal case against the government’s aid agency, arguing that its decision to support the Pergau dam had been unlawful. The UK high court agreed.[37]

In the wake of this scandal a new aid agency was created – the Department for International Development (DFID) – with its own ministerial post. An International Development Act, passed in 2002, required that all UK aid spending have the reduction of poverty as its primary focus.[38] Aid was formally ‘untied’ aid from UK commercial interests, opening up aid-funded contracts to international competition.

Many aid donors ‘tied’ some of their aid spending, officially restricting competition for contracts to companies based in their countries. In the US a small group of contractors, primarily based in the Washington, DC area, and known as the ‘Beltway Bandits’, had long dominated the USAID agency’s business.[39]

US food aid, which fell under the department of agriculture, showed a similar pattern: a small group of companies dominating the business. Among them were the huge grain traders Cargill, ADM and Bunge. They had won the lion’s share of the contracts to provide wheat and other commodities to be shipped from America to poorer countries on US-flagged ships.[40] (The shipping industry also benefited.)

The UK, because of the Pergau affair and the actions taken afterwards, was supposed to be different. It was supposed to be buying more of its goods and services locally, in developing countries. This made sense if the goal of aid was long-term and sustainable development – as this business could also help local economies grow.

But, in 2011, the NGO that had led the legal challenge against aid for the Pergau dam[41] sounded the alarm again, after then development secretary Andrew Mitchell reportedly linked aid to India with ambitions to sell BAE Typhoon fighter jets.[42] A few months before Lankester's book came out, there was a new flurry of reports about a small group of British, private consultants taking home six, even seven, figure salaries funded by multi-million pound aid contracts.[43] In 2014, according to UK government figures, more than 90 per cent of contracts still went to British companies (or British subsidiaries of multinational companies).[44]

UK aid-funded contracts also seemed to be getting larger, and harder for small companies to bid for. Companies were providing daily support, 'technical assistance' on specific projects, and designing and delivering huge programmes over many years. Increasingly they were being hired as 'managing agents', selecting and overseeing other contractors. They also conducted research and evaluated the results of aid projects.

A group of just eleven companies, it turned out, were winning the bulk of these contracts – and they seemed to have special access to the DFID aid department. Then top official Mark Lowcock wrote in an article for *Supply Management* magazine that it had created 'an arena for frank discussion' and to develop plans together with its 'largest strategic suppliers'.[45]

Not one of these top contractors was from a developing country. The multinational accountancy giant PricewaterhouseCoopers was among them, along with big European consultancy firms. Many were from the UK – including Adam Smith International, which was founded in 1992 by admirers of Thatcher's policies, and Crown Agents, which could trace its history back to 1833.

One empire to another

We were intrigued by Crown Agents' birth during the British empire and started to dig into its history. It wasn't well-known but, in May 2003, a small group of protestors had gathered on Buckingham Palace Road, in central London. They handed out pamphlets to passers-by and unfurled a banner that said: 'Agents of War and Greed'. The little-known company was 'still busy facilitating imperialism', they said, in 'that murky area between state and business that has become so central in the new age of corporate government'.[46]

What prompted that protest was Crown Agents' involvement in Iraq following the invasion of that country by US and UK forces. It had been named by the BBC alongside the US construction giant Bechtel as part of 'a fairly narrow coterie of international firms' that had developed a specialism 'post-war clean-ups'.[47] *The Independent* called it 'the first British company to win a contract in the American programme to rebuild Iraq'.[48]

This was one of the biggest UK aid-funded contractors. It was also likely the oldest – having transitioned from being merchants of empire to postcolonial development business. Its website said it's been 'innovating since 1833' and had a long history of 'accelerating self-sufficiency and prosperity'.[49]

The Office of the Crown Agents, as it was previously known, had provided the empire's middlemen: if colonial governments needed to buy something, they set it up. They initially fell under the supervision of the Secretary of State for the Colonies but operated independently, managing colonial investments and the supply of all non-locally made goods, as well as supervising construction projects and paying colonial officers' salaries and pensions.[50]

David Sunderland, a British business historian who wrote an in-depth study called *Managing the British Empire,* explained how their business expanded between the late 1800s and early twentieth century – with their staff increasing, for example, from around 30 people to more than 460. They also outsourced work to other contractors and employed a shipping agent, packing company and solicitors.[51]

Their strategy was initially to provide costly though quality services, according to Sunderland. But over time, they became 'more concerned with income maximisation'.[52] They began using their connections within the UK government, he said, 'to influence policy for their own benefit, leading to the construction of costly and uneconomic railways, the issue of high cost loans, and the purchase of expensive supplies'.[53]

When the empire collapsed, Crown Agents lived on and became a statutory corporation focused on the international aid and development industry. In 1997 – more than 150 years after its inception – it was privatised and converted into a limited company (wholly owned by a foundation).[54]

At the time of Crown Agents' creation in the early nineteenth century, 'chartered companies' – associations of private investors and traders that were forerunners of modern corporations – were busy exploring, trading and colonizing different areas of the world. Probably the most famous of these was the East India Company, which had its own flag and a private army twice the size of Britain's. This 'dangerously unregulated private company', according to William Dalrymple, who wrote a book about it, 'executed a corporate coup unparalleled in history', conquering much of India.[55]

That company would also take over parts of Southeast Asia and Hong Kong, while others colonized parts of the Americas and Africa. The 1884 Berlin Conference, which infamously formalized the colonial 'Scramble for Africa', would help them. Among other things, it said that a mere claim to territory was not enough for international recognition. Colonizers had to prove authority over the areas they claimed, through 'effective occupation'.[56] Chartered companies were willing and eager to help them do this.

In West Africa, from 1886 the Royal Niger Company brought together British interests in the Niger delta region. It had its own police as well as customs, courts and prisons.[57] In the early twentieth century it would become part of the broader United Africa Company (UAC) – and then Unilever, the British multinational 'consumer goods' company which Thatcher would mention in one of her 1980s speeches in Malaysia, and whose long history would later provide us with another unique window into that of the aid and development system.

When the British empire ended, we were learning, its infrastructure did not simply disappear. Some of it seemed to have been reoriented – or rebranded – under the 'development' banner. The aid industry had very deep roots. So did the issue of big companies being among its beneficiaries.

Chapter 7

Financing ‘development’

Investing in empire

Then UK Prime Minister Harold Macmillan famously stated, in a 1960 speech at South Africa’s parliament, that ‘the wind of change is blowing through this continent, and, whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact’.[1] He was right. By then, the British empire had already lost India, and what would become Sri Lanka and Pakistan, as well as Ghana.

‘The upsurge of colonial nationalisms after 1945 meant that policy-makers were overtaken by events,’ argued W. David McIntyre, a historian from New Zealand who studied this period.[2] But we were coming across plenty of evidence suggesting that businesses, investors and those in government who worked with them knew what was coming – unstoppable peoples’ movements for freedom and independence from unaccountable powers – and that they started laying plans for continued expansions regardless. We’d seen this in the case of the international investor-state legal system we’d investigated, and we seemed to be seeing it again in international aid and development.

After nearly four centuries of colonial activity, the UK’s empire collapsed in little more than two decades after the end of the Second World War. Before that happened, in 1946 the UK set up its ‘development finance institution’ CDC (initially called the Colonial Development Corporation). It had a mission to improve ‘the standard of living of the colonial peoples by increasing their productivity and wealth’ – though bringing the UK benefits, amid a struggling post-war economy, was also a clear objective.[3]

Addressing a meeting of colonial governors not long after this institution’s founding, Sir Stafford Cripps, then Minister for Economic Affairs, said that it was time to ‘force the pace’ of colonial economic development and argued that the UK’s future depended ‘on a quick and extensive development of our African resources’.[4]

After the war, Britain's economy was struggling and the government took huge loans from the US which were only fully paid off in 2006.[5] 'This is the world background against which the productivity of the colonial territories must be viewed', Lord Trefgarne, CDC's first chairman, stressed to a group of businessmen in Liverpool, in 1948. It was 'sound policy' in this context, he insisted, to build up colonial economies and increase exports of their products.[6]

That the UK should benefit from this new institution's international 'development' activities was perhaps not surprising given that it was still an arm of the colonial empire. But like Crown Agents it didn't close down when the empire did. It was re-positioned to help newly independent countries 'develop'.

From the 1950s, 'development' became a dominant theme in corporate advertising in Africa, according to Stephanie Decker, a British academic who called it a cunning 'publicity strategy'. It was particularly important, she suggested, for companies 'that had been closely associated with the British empire … which needed to find a new justification for their continued presence'.[7]

Within the UK government, a new Ministry of Overseas Development aid agency was set up after the Colonial Office was disbanded in the mid-1960s. The CDC was renamed the Commonwealth Development Corporation, though it began investing in non-Commonwealth countries too. It resisted Thatcher's privatisation drive in the 1980s and remained a public corporation until after she left office.[8]

In 1999, the British parliament passed an act to transform it into a limited liability company – CDC Group plc – though all shares would still be owned by the government. A few years later, however, the entity's management functions were spun off into two new companies that were sold to private owners, including former CDC bosses: Aureos for relatively smaller venture capital funds and Actis, for the bulk of its remaining portfolio.[9]

These changes prompted criticism from politicians and the media over the 'impossibly low' prices paid for these spin-offs. Shortly after, then development secretary Andrew Mitchell applauded CDC's financial success but said it had 'become less directly engaged in serving the needs of development' and should be reformed.[10]

In 2011, a new business plan was launched, CDC began making direct investments again – rather than relying on intermediaries to spend its money – and it said that it would focus more on poorer countries.[11] Years later, it was again renamed (British International Investment) and its budget increased. However, it still seemed easier to pinpoint its elite beneficiaries than its impacts on helping to end poverty globally.

While we were in El Salvador, we saw one of the projects built by a company that had received 'development finance' from the UK's CDC. It was on the outskirts of the capital, behind thick concrete walls. Villa Veranda: a 34-acre gated community with more than 500 beige, brown and coral pink houses lining freshly paved roads; amenities including a football field and basketball court; and thick, green grass even in the dry season.

The cheapest homes inside this enclave started at $117,650 and required a household income of at least $2,000 a month.[12] This made them far from affordable for most people in the country, where about a third of the population lived below the national poverty line of $5.50 a day.[13] 'Being a construction company dedicated exclusively to the construction of houses for the middle class has given us dominance in that segment,' boasted the website of Avance Ingenieros, the company behind it.[14]

Its fortunes had been buoyed by growing numbers of Salvadoran bankers, bureaucrats and businessmen, and by a rise in Salvadorans living abroad buying property here for their families or retirement. It had also received a $3.3 million investment in 2004 from the UK's CDC.

While the enclave targeted much wealthier people than the world's poorest, its projects were also criticised locally for the pressure they put on water resources. Environmentalists said the rapid development of forests around San Salvador was replacing the capital's 'lungs' with concrete, asphalt and luxury homes out of reach for most people. Yanira Cortez, at the state's human rights office – who we met while investigating the mining company's investor-state case against the country – said that such 'mega projects' had 'severe impacts; on the environment and on water resources, not respecting the rights of future generations'.

A local group near Villa Veranda called the Northwest Santa Tecla Ecological Defence Committee had also warned that this specific development could threaten local water supplies, biodiversity and quality of life for communities nearby.[15]

The company said it had modified their plan to reduce the number of houses, include more green space and invest hundreds of thousands in local social programmes. But Edith Tejara from Acua, a Salvadoran environmental NGO, said it was still shocking that any international development money had supported it. 'History has taught us that whenever a shopping mall or gated community is built, water will be prioritised for them and not the local people', she said. 'What surprises me,' she concluded, 'is their idea of development.'

Billionaire beneficiaries

Our guesthouse in San Salvador had been around the corner from a wide street lined with towering signs of US fast food chains: Burger King, Pizza Hut, McDonalds, one after another. Behind them: shiny glass-paned office buildings. A large shopping mall. It looked like we could have been anywhere in the suburban US.

We walked along that road several times, to get taxis and go to that mall to buy snacks for our road trips, and a camera memory card. There were few other people in its shops, where products' prices were like Villa Veranda: out of reach for many.

Also like the company behind that gated community, the business behind this mall had benefited from 'development finance' – from a branch of the World Bank that invests in private companies called the International Financial Corporation (IFC).

Called Grupo Poma, that business was headed by billionaire Ricardo Poma who was a friend of Mitt Romney and an early investor in Bain Capital.[16] Founded in 1919, it was a conglomerate whose holdings included car dealerships, hotels, resorts, manufacturing plants and a growing number of shopping centres across Central America. During the Salvadoran civil war, the Poma clan had also allegedly backed the right-wing ARENA party that was linked to notorious death squads.[17]

There was no sign at the mall advertising the international development support for this company. But we later found 'Metrocentro' – the name of many Grupo Poma malls, including that near our guest house – in the IFC's online database of its investments.[18]

The Poma empire had received a $25 million investment from the IFC in 2003. This was about the same amount of money the Salvadoran government received in direct budget support in 2013 from international donors, according to OECD data.[19]

We found an IFC press release from the time of this investment which said it would 'significantly improve commercial infrastructure' in San Salvador. It also praised the company for 'stimulating local retailers, local employment, the related supplementary infrastructure and offering higher standards of retail at lower prices'.[20]

It was unclear how this investment could help meet the IFC and World Bank's goals to end global poverty and boost 'shared prosperity'.[21] Meanwhile it seemed clear that the company's commercial success was an objective.

The IFC's press release described Metrocentro as 'the largest shopping mall developer and operator in El Salvador'. It quoted IFC regional director Bernard Pasquier who said its investment would 'support an expansion of a competitive service oriented company'. Ricardo Poma was also quoted, saying the institution's support would vaguely 'facilitate the development of the formal retail sector in the country' – and specifically help his company to execute its 'continuous expansion strategy'.[22]

In the World Bank's database of IFC investments we found another $50 million given to Grupo Poma in 2010 to help build or refurbish hotels and shopping malls across Central America. In that case, the investment disclosure said it would 'benefit consumers' by providing safe and convenient shopping opportunities, and create jobs. But it was also explicit that beneficiaries would include international 'business travellers' – and the corporation itself, by 'strengthening its balance sheet' and playing a 'strategic role' as it 'expands into new markets (i.e. Colombia), where IFC is familiar with local business, economic and political conditions'.[23]

We found a further $35 million investment in the Poma empire in 2005, to build and expand malls in Honduras.[24] In 2016 another $45 million would flow from the IFC for Poma's further expansion in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras.[25] In total we counted $165 million of development money over almost two decades. They seemed to start in 1998, with a $10 million investment in 'one of the largest shopping centres' and the 'first 5-star chain hotel' in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.[26] Grupo Roble (part of the Grupo Poma conglomerate) would develop and then co-manage the hotel along with the giant Inter-Continental Hotels chain. Subsidiaries of another company called Hillwood Investments would meanwhile develop and operate the mall.

We looked it up – and found that it was also a family company led by extremely wealthy people. Specifically – the family of Ross Perot,[27] a Texan business magnate with an estimated net worth of $4 billion when he died in 2019.[28] Before his company benefited from that IFC investment, he had sold a data processing company he'd founded to General Motors for $2.5 billion[29]; he'd run twice for US president[30]; and he owned one of the first copies of the Magna Carta.[31]

Washington follows London

The World Bank's IFC was set up about a decade after the UK's CDC. Its founding 'Articles of Agreement', drawn up by the bank's executive directors, came into effect in July 1956, just days before the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, sparking the 'Suez Crisis'.[32]

World Bank Vice President (and former executive of the General Mills processed food company) Robert Garner had been among the leaders who lobbied for the creation of such a branch to help private companies expand into poorer countries. 'It was my firm conviction,' he later wrote, 'that the most promising future for the less-developed countries was the establishing of good private industry.'[33]

The idea gained other powerful backers including Nelson Rockefeller, who headed the Truman administration's International Development Advisory Board.[34] In 1956, the IFC opened for business under Garner's leadership, with thirty-one member states.[35] Initially it could only make loans. The first of these went to an affiliate of a well-known German company, Siemans, to expand in Brazil.[36] From the start, it seemed, big companies from rich countries benefited.

By 1961, the IFC had gained the power to make equity investments too. The first was made the next year, when it bought a stake in FEMSA, a former auto parts manufacturer in Spain that's now part of Bosch – another German multinational company, one of the biggest in engineering and electronics.[37]

It began to talk more about the 'climate' for foreign investors – with their profit-making seemingly seen as synonymous with 'development'. Though we also found internally-aired concerns about its evolution. In 1974, when Robert McNamara headed the World Bank after his term as US defence secretary, he warned at an internal seminar that 'the closer the IFC moves to being a commercial enterprise, the less capable it will be to perform development functions'.[38]

Contemporary development insiders told us strikingly similar things. Luiz Vieira, coordinator of the UK-based Bretton Woods Project, an NGO that monitors the World Bank, said the IFC's 'drive for profit … skews the decision-making process around the selection of projects'. He thought it could be difficult for the IFC's staff 'to take a developmental perspective on what they're doing. That's not the type of people they attract and they don't focus on that'.

'Poverty alleviation, does IFC see that as its primary role?' a former senior World Bank staffer, who requested anonymity, asked us rhetorically.

'I think you could question that,' he said. 'They're pretending to be an investment bank … [and] there are examples of IFC making people worse off.'

Like the World Bank's ICSID centre for investor-state disputes, the IFC was not new but its size, reach and influence had exploded. Since its foundation, its ranks had swelled to 184 member countries, contributing nearly $2.5 billion to its resources – though the US still controlled 20 per cent of the votes on its twenty-five-member board.[39]

It made money – $1.5 billion in 2014[40] – which it said went into new investments, as well as other World Bank operations. It charged interest on loans it made to private businesses, and it profited from buying and selling equity stakes in companies. A controversial Bank programme called 'structural adjustment' appeared to have paved the way for this growth – conditioning loans to poor country governments on deregulation and privatisation campaigns.

The Bank's infamous 'Structural Adjustment Programmes' (SAPs) in the 1980s and 1990s included so-called Washington Consensus policy prescriptions. They required borrowers to do things like increase protections for private property, lower import taxes, restructure economies to focus on export industries and cut public spending.[41] They seemed to be copied and pasted across borders – and were criticised for institutionalizing countries' dependency on multinational companies, which entered or expanded in their markets and pushed out local producers.[42]

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Bank's annual meetings were met with mass protests. In 2000, more than 1,000 people were arrested at demonstrations outside its Washington DC complex, including a Pulitzer Prize-winning *Washington Post* photographer.[43] In 2002, the Bank then replaced its much-criticised SAPs with Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), which were supposed to better involve poor country governments, and focus more explicitly on poverty reduction. But observers said their contents looked very similar.[44]

The IFC's share of total World Bank spending rose from 13 to 35 per cent between 2000 and 2013 (when it made more than $18.3 billion in financing commitments).[45] Its 'advisory branch' meanwhile counselled governments on how to attract foreign investors. There seemed to be deep potential conflicts of interest in the institution investing in companies, while also advising governments on policies that would benefit them. These and other policies should be up for democratic debate, not closed-door 'advice'?

A group of six NGOs argued:

> 'It is highly problematic for a multilateral institution to position itself as an objective source of policy advice on matters where it has a direct financial stake in the outcome, particularly in low-income countries that may not have the resources to procure advice from other sources, or in countries where weak democratic processes do not provide adequate checks and balances.'[46]

Civil society activists also pointed us to a case of water privatisation in Manila, the capital of the Philippines. It was the late 1990s and the IFC had advised the government on this privatisation, conducted the bidding for contracts to take over these services, and then invested millions in the joint venture that won the contract to supply water to the city's eastern half. By 2004, it had given it $75 million in loans as well as buying a $15 million equity stake in the business, becoming a part-owner.[47]

'Fifteen years later, residents of Manila have suffered under declining water quality and access,' said a report from Corporate Accountability International, a Boston-based watchdog. 'Hundreds of communities remain without safe water, and the cost of a connection, even where available, is unaffordable for many of the city's residents.' This case, it said, shows how 'profitability, not human access to water, is the primary incentive when the World Bank becomes a corporate shareholder'.[48]

Frederick Jones, an IFC spokesman, contested this. He told us in an email that access to water increased from 'just 58% of the population … in the 1990s to 99% today', and also that 'water quality improved greatly'. He added that the 'IFC has different departments handling advisory and investment services and we maintain strict divisions between them … When governments seek our services as advisors, we help them run a competitive and transparent process to find the best partner.'

But NGOs and activists weren't the only ones to raise concerns about possible conflicts of interest. Guillermo Perry, a former Colombian finance minister and former World Bank chief economist for Latin America, had argued that 'there is no doubt that dealing with both governments and private firms may create incentives or even [the] occasion for advising on a policy or regulation that is self-serving to equity or debt interests in particular firms or sectors.'[49] The IFC had also acknowledged, including in a 2014 report, that 'actual or perceived conflicts of interest can arise' from its multiple roles (though it claimed to have 'implemented processes to manage these').[50]

The Queen's diamond

In the mid-twentieth century when these international development institutions were set up, the next country we would go to, Tanzania, was at the forefront of the so-called Non-Aligned Movement resisting both US and Soviet power during the Cold War. The country's first independent president, Julius Nyerere, had been a prominent 'African socialist' activist and theorist. After he left office, he was still often referred to locally as 'Mwalimu' (Swahili for 'teacher').

In charge, Nyerere emphasized national self-reliance against foreign investment and aid. Putting this into practice included support for other African independence movements – and a sweeping nationalization drive that took power from private and foreign shareholders. Investors would be allowed back into the country, he'd said, when 'we no longer have any cause to fear the effect of their activities on our social purpose'.[51]

When Nyerere retired in late 1985, he was succeeded by President Ali Hassan Mwinyi who began a new drive to liberalize the economy. He agreed deals with the World Bank and IMF to reform the agricultural, industrial and financial sectors and reverse state-ownership. A new investment law was passed and a number of treaties were signed including with the UK, enshrining 'rights' for foreign investors and giving them access to the investor-state legal system.[52]

Foreign firms, including some ousted by Nyerere's nationalizations, returned. This time, they would be protected by that legal system. They would also have support from the international development system – including the World Bank's IFC.

The Williamson mine in northern Tanzania – the first major diamond mine on the continent outside of South Africa – was one of the many businesses taken over by the state in Nyerere's nationalizations. It had previously been run by the De Beers mining giant in partnership with the colonial government.

In the early 1990s, De Beers said it had been 'invited back by the government of Tanzania', amid Mwingi's liberalisation push.[53] It re-acquired 75 per cent of the mine which it held until 2009 – when a South African business called Petra Diamonds, listed on London's FTSE 250 exchange, bought its shares.[54] Then, in 2010, the World Bank's IFC came in and became a part-owner too, buying an almost $20 million equity stake as well as giving $40 million in loans for the mine's expansion.[55]

It was the IFC's first investment in diamonds – a luxury product *par excellence* – which is why it caught our attention. We found a press release from the time of the deal in which the IFC said the mine 'currently has a resource of some 40 million carats … and is renowned as a source of extremely rare, fancy pink diamonds' – but that it had been 'operating at a loss over the past few years'. Its cash would help 'return the mine to profitability', while its presence would also 'comfort' other potential investors and 'enhance Petra's image and credibility'.[56]

But how would its investments affect poverty reduction in Tanzania? The IFC said its millions would help 'maintain employment for about 1,000 people', and that it would 'work with Petra to ensure that the Williamson expansion is carried out in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner'.[57] It would also track how much money was spent on goods and services from the area, taxes paid to the state and a commitment from the company to spend 2 per cent of revenues on community development once its activities started returning profits.[58]

It seemed like a more clearly good deal for the company, than for poor local communities. We wanted to learn more about it, in person.

On our flight to Dar es Salaam, we tried to imagine a more extravagant gift than the flawless, 54.5-carat pink diamond Princess Elizabeth received on her marriage in 1947. It was likely worth tens of millions of dollars. High-quality pink diamonds are valued at up to $700,000 a carat.[59] It was embedded in what would become one of the Queen's favourite brooches – and had travelled more than 10,000 kilometers to reach her.

We were repeating this journey in reverse – from the UK to the source of this diamond: the Williamson mine. To get there, from Dar es Salaam we had to take another much smaller plane to Lake Victoria in the north of the country near its borders with Uganda and Kenya. At that airport, we were met by a Petra worker who drove us about a hundred miles to Mwadui, the site of the mine in Tanzania's Shinyanga region, one of its poorest. Most people were subsistence farmers who struggled with droughts, or cattle rearers.

As we drove together, this worker said he had heard we were journalists interested in how the mine was helping local communities. 'Yes', we nodded, keen to hear whatever he would be willing to tell us.

'The company controls everything, and not everyone is happy.' Without giving details, he said: 'It's all about Petra. That's all that matters. You'll see.'

The mine's property stretched over more than 1.5 square kilometers of land, and further into the distance than we could see. It included a gated complex of buildings and a hospital we'd read about in the IFC's files.

When we arrived we met senior managers to ask them about the international development money they'd received. Omari Hwin'dadi, the mine's financial manager, was effusive about the IFC's investments. He said Petra had got better loans than it would have with commercial banks. They were also 'very considerate', he said, in readjusting the company's repayment schedule.

Joseph Kasaa, who ran Petra's corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes, told us its social programmes had been useful for its response to local critics. 'There was some kind of negativity from the community over the mine because they didn't see anything useful coming from it.'

Smoothing over relationships with disgruntled neighbours, and allowing the company to focus on what it wanted: diamonds and profits? It sounded far from World Bank and IFC goals of ending poverty and boosting 'shared prosperity'.

The next morning we went to speak to some of these neighbours. We learned that the mine-funded hospital was free for mine workers, but other local residents had to pay for treatment. Even if its fees were small, many were so poor they could not afford them. A school was likewise open to children of mine workers, but not to others in the local communities, unless they paid another fee.

At a government-funded school in a nearby village, we met teacher Joseph Makoba in a class of 108 children, crammed into one room. He said Petra had paid for desks and two teachers' quarters. But, he argued: 'These investors are in our country and they are reaping a lot of fruit, so they should at least provide something … What the company is bringing to us is peanuts.'

Another teacher, Veronica Masinga at a primary school in another nearby village, told us: 'I am not happy that we have to live on handouts and donations.'

'Because the community around the mine does not know their rights, they are in the dark, they are uneducated,' she lamented. This means that 'when we get these things we feel happy even though we are just being given handouts'.

Chapter 8

Buying power

No candles in Zanzibar

Tanzania had also signed one of the largest so-called compacts with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) – a project of former President George W. Bush's administration to run aid more like a business. The idea was to set up a new type of aid agency – one which was funded by public money but was able to act autonomously, with a CEO at its head and a corporation-style board that was chaired by the US Secretary of State but whose members also included various money-making experts from the private sector.

Daniel Yohannes, an Ethiopian-American businessman, was CEO from 2009 to 2014. While still in that post, he told *The Guardian*'s development professionals network – part of the newspaper's website that was sponsored by companies as well as some big NGOs – that his corporate 'background complements the role, because what I do here is very similar to what I did in the private sector'. He argued: 'If you want to do aid effectively then you have to approach development like a business. MCC wants to make sure that every single dime – whether $100 million or $400 million – is getting the best returns, both for American taxpayers who have trusted us with their funds and for its partner countries.'[1]

Over the phone from his office in Washington DC, the then MCC Vice President for Africa Jonathan O. Bloom told us that 'a range' of people had served on the agency's board including venture capitalists. It 'is specifically intended to be a non-government voice in guiding policy, so it's a corporation in that sense, but it's not General Motors', he said.

Bloom explained that the MCC will 'only work with selected countries'. He told us: 'We don't work with everybody. It's not based on US foreign policy priorities but a set of criteria that reflect countries that are basically well run, politically, democracies, market-based economies, and invest their money in their people.'

The idea was that once specific projects were identified, the 'partner country' would sign a 'compact' with the agency committing to complete them by a certain deadline. If they didn't achieve this in time, the money – which could be hundreds of millions of dollars – would be cut off.

Tanzania's first such 'compact', worth $698 million, was signed in 2008 during then-President Bush's whirlwind tour of five African countries in six days.

Bloom told us that 'conditionalities' attached to these agreements are typically 'policy related to whatever sector we're working on'. He explained:

> There are a set of conditions both before we approve and during implementation, but in Tanzania they relate to things like the government paying the arrears it owes to the electrical utility so that the electrical utility is solid, but it leads to keeping the tariff structure reflective of real cost so that the utility can invest and reinvest in household connections.

What the MCC essentially did was find a business-friendly policy reform a government was already invested in and then try to hold them to it. This incentivised having certain reforms, like energy privatisation, in the works.

In Dar es Salaam, Bernard Mchomvu, CEO for the Tanzania compact, echoed this. 'We had a few reforms here and there, tariff reforms mainly,' he told us. 'Before, power generation was done by Tanesco – the [state] electric supply company – but the government decided to open it up. When the MCC came, we were already in the process, but then they said, "this is a good thing, why don't you open up?" So whoever wants to invest in power is allowed now.'

A flagship MCC project at the time was a new 100-megawatt submarine cable that connected the island of Zanzibar, famous for resorts and white sand beaches, to the mainland's electrical grid. Part of the construction work had been contracted out to an Indian company, while a Japanese firm was involved in laying the submarine cable. John Sakia, a project manager at Tanesco, had the job of overseeing these companies' work, and together we drove to the coast to see the sea under which the cable extended.

Sakia told us the MCC had considered but rejected plenty of other potential projects to support, and that 'most of the projects which were rejected were distribution projects. This is a transmission project', to transport high-voltage electricity over a long distance. Distribution projects, which are instead transport lower voltages over shorter distances, could have helped get electricity into rural areas – where only 11 per cent of people had connections in 2014.[2]

Mchomvu had seemed unashamedly clear about whom this project benefitted – foreign tourists, and tourism companies, rather than poor Tanzanians.

'If you go to Zanzibar now, the hotels are very happy because they have very good power supply,' he'd grinned. 'Earlier it was frustrating for tourists because the hotel power went off at 10 pm, then you have to start using candles in the hotels … you don't come from Europe all the way to Zanzibar for candles.'

A new alliance for Africa

Tanzania had additionally signed up to what was called the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa – an initiative launched at the 2012 G8 summit at Camp David led by then US President Barack Obama. It said it aimed to accelerate agricultural production and lift 50 million people out of poverty within a decade. But it had been condemned as a 'new form of colonialism' because of changes to seed, land and other laws.

This initiative's launch followed years of underinvestment in agriculture in Africa and the failure of rich countries to actually give much of the millions of dollars they had pledged for global food security at a previous G8 meeting, in 2009 in L'Aquila, Italy. Additionally, only eight African governments had met their own commitments, under what was called the 2003 Maputo accord, to invest 10 per cent of their national budgets in agricultural development.[3]

The New Alliance said it was innovative by bringing together governments and agro-businesses to drive change. It relied on the 'personal commitment of top-level leaders', according to a document from its 'leadership council' which brought African presidents together with the heads of aid agencies.[4] CEOs of giant companies including Cargill and Unilever also had seats.

There was scarce publicly available information about the initiative. But known details about companies' investment plans included references to cotton, biofuels, rubber and other non-food and export crops. As the years passed, it also became unclear how much of the aid money pledged by donors was actually new. The UK's Independent Commission on Aid Impact watchdog found that about £480 million most of the roughly £600 million that the UK said it would put toward the initiative consisted of 'pre-existing agriculture programmes which have been relabeled'. Companies also seemed to be 'mostly submitting existing investment plans to garner favour with governments, secure a seat in policy dialogue or to win good publicity'.[5]

Meanwhile, the African countries in their New Alliance 'cooperation frameworks' seemed to have made hundreds of policy commitments including promises to change laws and regulations in favour of agribusinesses. Burkina Faso, for example, committed to supporting private investment in fertilizer, and reviewing its seed law.[6] Ghana promised to appoint business representatives to a government food and agriculture committee.[7] Senegal promised to 'implement tax incentives' for agricultural investors.[8] Malawi said that it would set aside 200,000 hectares of land for large-scale commercial agriculture. Mozambique pledged to stop the distribution of free and 'unimproved' seeds except for in emergencies, and make it faster and cheaper for investors to acquire land.[9]

Million Belay, the head of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), warned that such changes could spell disaster for small farmers. 'It clearly puts seed production and distribution in the hands of companies. Yes, agriculture needs investment, but that shouldn't be used as an excuse to bring greater control over farmers' lives,' The skilled orator argued: 'More than any other time in history … outside forces are deciding the future of our farming systems.'[10]

Olivier de Schutter, then the UN's special rapporteur on the right to food, had also sounded the alarm. He said promises were being made to investors 'completely behind the screen', without the participation of small farmers.[11]

Tanzania had pledged to reduce or lift taxes on farm machinery and equipment, crops, seeds and seed packaging. It had also committed to facilitating imports of seeds and agrochemicals.[12] But even some of the country's politicians had been left in the dark about these commitments, until after they'd been agreed.

Zitto Kabwe said he first heard about the G8 initiative when he opened a newspaper in 2012. Then the chairman of his parliament's public accounts committee, Kabwe said he was critical of the scheme from that moment – and 'completely against' the commitments that his government had made to encourage private investment in seeds.[13]

'By introducing this market, farmers will have to depend on imported seeds … It will also kill innovation at the local level. We have seen this with manufacturing,' he said. 'It will be like colonialism. Farmers will not be able to farm until they import, linking farmers to the vulnerability of international prices. Big companies will benefit.'

'Something like this needs to go through parliament. The executive cannot just commit to these changes. These are sensitive issues. There has to be enough debate,' Kabwe said, of the projects and policy changes included.

Supporters of the New Alliance said that many of the companies involved were local firms. Tanzania's New Alliance cooperation framework listed nine Tanzanian companies and eleven international ones. But Kabwe said this was not quite accurate. Some of the 'Tanzanian' companies were actually locally registered subsidiaries of international ones. They also included the Tanzanian Horticultural Association, which was an association of companies working in the country, including several big foreign firms.

Tanzania's cooperation framework said the country was 'a showcase for public-private partnership in agricultural growth, exemplified by the development of its Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT)'. Under that scheme, launched at a World Economic Forum summit in Davos, Switzerland in 2010, the government had earmarked nearly a third of the country's land for private investors' farms.

Kabwe said that the government should be investing in small-scale farmers instead. 'With large-scale farming, you are turning small farmers into mere labourers,' he warned. 'Yes there will be huge investment in the country. There may be improvements in rural infrastructure. But this will not liberate people from poverty'. Including small farmers in big companies' supply chains isn't enough, he added. 'Who determines contracts? The fear is at the end of the day you have small-scale farmers being exploited.'

Your charity's c-suite

In November 2014, readers of the *Financial Times*' 'How to Spend It' section opened up the glossy supplement that prides itself on being 'the benchmark for luxury lifestyle magazines' to a profile of Justin Forsyth, then head of Save the Children UK.[14] The NGO sector had been partnering with big business in unprecedented ways and Forsyth, a media-trained, former advisor to Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, had overseen a wave of new deals.

He had 'increased the charity's income by £50 million ($63.5 million) per year since 2010', according to the profile which toured his favourite tapas restaurants and other locations including the Royal Opera House in London. Forsyth smiled for the camera, one hand in a pocket, the other arm leaning on the counter of an upscale gelateria – a genial portrait of the cosmopolitan businessman.

Corporate funding of large international NGOs was not new. CARE USA had collaborated with Coca-Cola for three decades. But such tie-ups seemed to be flourishing. Oxfam said that it was 'proud to be at the forefront of partnerships between the business sector and the NGO community'.[15] 'Teaming up with Save the Children to market a new or existing product could boost your sales, profile and customer base', said that NGO on its website. 'Associating your brand with the world's leading independent organisation for children could be really beneficial for your business and stakeholders.'[16]

Nuria Molina used to work at Save the Children. After leaving the NGO she described how such tie-ups affected a campaign against companies aggressively marketing baby formula in developing countries. While preparing this campaign, it had considered what allegations to include also based on whether there were any 'potential links with the company and aid workers in relevant case study countries, and to ensure the tone of the activities and outputs involved in the campaign did not put the broader corporate engagement strategy of the organisation at risk.'[17]

She warned, in a development studies journal, that 'NGOs, like many other institutions and companies, also tend to measure their success and influence in terms of size and income' – thinking like businesses, rather than strictly prioritizing their social goals.

In 2013, Save the Children unveiled an unprecedented £15 million partnership with the pharmaceutical multinational GlaxoSmithKline (GSK).[18] The year before, the company had been fined $3 billion in the US after pleading guilty for bribing doctors and encouraging the prescription of the antidepressant Paxil to children, even though the drug was unsuitable and unapproved for this use.[19]

One former staffer described this deal as 'a car crash'. The financial crisis was still having an impact on charity donations from the public at the time, and that 'even for some of the bigger NGOs the aftermath is continuing to create financial difficulties. Difficult choices are being made of the sort that really haven't been made for the best part of 15 years', they said. A consequence was a turn to corporate cash.

'Perhaps five years ago, the internal argument about whether to kind of hold your nose and take the money would have been more likely to tip against it. Those conversations are now tipping the other way', they told us. Results included 'a kind of self-censoring' instead of holding big businesses to account.

In the UK, many big NGOs were dependent on government funding for significant chunks of their annual budgets. This may have also ratcheted up the pressure to be open to business – as this openness had become the government's official policy. Justine Greening, then development secretary, had made this clear: 'At DFID our relationship with business has never been closer.'[20] She also said: 'I also want to work with civil society partners that recognise that the private sector is an intrinsic partner in successful development. Because … the reality is that everywhere in the world, people want jobs. And companies that aren't making any money don't tend to recruit or grow.'

A key problem, Molina argued, was that many corporate partnerships had been undertaken by NGOs in a 'very unsophisticated, unsavvy way': 'We still have a higher moral standing in the eyes of the public. Basically the sector has tended to partner with corporations selling this intangible but very valuable asset for very little and for sometimes for dubious projects. They are much better than us at negotiating so they got what they wanted from us very cheaply.'

She said that her NGO colleagues should also ask: 'You get Company A offering to do some small school in Ghana or something … but what is the rest of its development footprint? Is it lobbying at the WTO on intellectual property?'

Nick Dearden, at the campaign group Global Justice Now, said he believed the 'increased professionalisation' of many NGOs had brought with it 'this tendency to judge yourself like a business, how much you're growing'.

'Now fundraising just rules organisations,' he continued, and 'campaigning has become a form of marketing, how you get your brand out there, how you raise more money.' Meanwhile, 'there's no structural criticism of business'.

We're all partners now

Since the 2008 global financial crisis, the visibility and power of giant corporations in aid efforts had seemed to reach new levels. CEOs were sitting on UN panels discussing development priorities; NGOs and agencies like USAID were proudly partnering with companies from Wal-mart to Chevron.

For development organizations that typically relied on government aid budgets, which could be unpredictable, vary year-by-year and come under political pressure, business seemed to be a way to fill gaps or increase funds.

For companies, there seemed to be a growing menu of ways to benefit from and take advantage of aid and development efforts. They could, as we'd seen, make money from aid-funded contracts. They could get development finance to expand, break into new markets or turn around failing activities. They also had opportunities to influence public policy – and improve their images.

In New York in September 2015, UN member states adopted a set of seventeen 'Sustainable Development Goals' to replace the 'Millennium Development Goals' that had guided aid and development agenda over the previous fifteen years.[21] They included grand objectives to 'end poverty everywhere' and provide 'quality education for all'. Then-UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon called them a 'to-do list for people and planet, and a blueprint for success'.[22]

Along with these new goals, development institutions had talked about the need to move 'from billions to trillions' in financing to pay for this agenda. Teaming up with big businesses seemed to be presented as the only way.[23]

In a briefing with journalists ahead of the UN meeting in September, the chief US negotiator on the so-called post-2015 development agenda, Tony Pipa said that given 'the breadth and the ambition of this agenda … the resources are going to have to go beyond what governments themselves can provide'.[24]

Governments' aid to many poor countries pales in comparison to the foreign investment they receive, he added. The US was already using aid 'to leverage and catalyse other resources … [so that] it "crowds in" other types of investment'.

For companies, Pipa suggested that the

> question of sustainability is something that I think they are struggling with themselves. From their own perspective as businesses, how are they going to maintain and continue to grow over time? … Frankly, they also likely see opportunity in emerging markets and areas of the world that are growing. Africa has a coterie of some of the fastest growing economies in the world.

During the same briefing to journalists, Jen Kates at the Kaiser Family Foundation non-profit organisation observed that 'there really has been a concerted shift and change in the conversation around the private sector'. She said that 'whether it's self-interest, economically driven, or due to their sense of being part of a global community', companies are now involved in international development activities a 'way that wasn't there 20 years ago, 15 years ago'.

A consequence of these trends, we'd learn, was that NGOs which you might otherwise expect to hold companies to account for their impacts on local communities and the environment are also their 'partners' in development. They've lost their independence and the space for scrutiny has shrunk.

Also in 2015, there was an international conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia about how to finance activities to achieve new Sustainable Development Goals.

Proposals from developing countries to set up a new intergovernmental tax body – under the UN's authority, with poor countries given equal say in how global tax rules are designed – failed to pass amid opposition from rich states.[25] The final 'outcome document' presented private finance as the future of development, encouraging investment and public-private partnerships.

In London, Nuria Molina, the former Save the Children staffer, said this raised many red flags. Having worked in the development industry for decades, she believed that many multinational corporations had become more involved in these efforts 'to combat perceptions that they are really ruthless'. And partnerships with businesses, she warned, often seemed to mean accepting an ideological belief that jobs and economic growth can only come through the private sector and a deregulated 'climate' for finance and investment.

'I think partially it's a very reactive trend – to fiscal trends in donor countries, to where to get money,' Molina told us, about new corporate-development partnerships. 'There's also an element of inferiority complex,' she suggested, on behalf of people who work for civil society groups and in the public sector, 'thinking the private sector is so much better, so much smarter, so much more glamourous.'

Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, in New Delhi, Jayati Ghosh meanwhile said that global development discussions had increasingly focused narrowly on poverty reduction, whereas until the 1980s they were 'essentially about transformation'. She criticised the UN's development agenda for focusing on 'ameliorating the conditions of those defined as poor, rather than transforming the economies in which they live'.

This, Ghosh had argued, took a very limited view of what poverty is.[26] Who creates – and benefits from – it is out of the frame. No one is to blame, and no one talks about wealth as, she said, this 'would then necessarily draw attention to the concentration of assets somewhere else in the same society'.

The result, Ghosh thought, was a misguided focus on 'micro solutions that are seen to work in particular cases', or 'magic silver bullets'. Out of the frame also were solutions such as tax reforms and action to ensure transnational corporations allow countries to pursue their own development objectives.

Among the giant corporations that seemed to increasingly share development stages with aid officials was Unilever, led since 2009 by CEO Paul Polman.

In 2014, the UK government had announced a partnership with the company to 'use new social business models to improve health, hygiene, and livelihoods for 100 million people by 2025', with each side putting £5 million into 'a research and innovation programme focused on affordable sanitation and safe drinking water'.[27] Then UK development secretary Justine Greening said:

> This partnership, the first of its kind, will combine our expertise and networks to help millions of the world's poorest people find jobs, improve water and sanitation and, ultimately, end dependency on aid. This is not just good for the developing world, it is good for Britain. The frontier economies we will be working to improve are ultimately Britain's future trading partners.[28]

Polman was also given a spot on UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's 27-member 'High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda'. Other members included senior politicians, such as then UK Prime Minister David Cameron, as well as Queen Rania of Jordan.[29] He would additionally help launch a new Global Commission on Business and Sustainable Development to 'articulate and quantify the compelling economic case for businesses to support the UN Sustainable Development Goals, mapping the ways that businesses can get involved, build competitive advantage and flourish'.[30]

At a 2014 Washington DC event, he told his audience that Unilever is 'the world's biggest NGO'. He repeated: 'We're a non-government organisation … The only difference is, we're making money so we are sustainable.'[31] While business-focused, he argued that Unilever could be an impactful development partner because of its sheer size. 'We have 2 billion consumers using us every day; we are in seven out of 10 households globally … If you have that scale and reach, it's an enormous possibility to transform markets.'

Unlever was indeed a massive corporation – one of the world's largest. In 2017, it would report more than €53.7 billion in turnover and €6.5 billion in profits.[32] Its products were sold in more than 190 countries and it had almost 150,000 employees.[33] It was one of the world's biggest advertisers, spending billions of dollars every year.[34]

But it wasn't a new company – nor were its activities in poorer countries around the world new, or its involvement 'development'. Unilever was about a century old; it was one of the world's first 'brand-based' multinational companies. Its long history had also been intertwined with that of empire – including in the Belgian King Leopold's brutal Congo colony.

Chapter 9
Aiding elites

Corporate colonialists

In the early 1880s, Lever & Co was one of the largest wholesale grocers in Bolton in the UK. Outside Manchester, the town was at that time a hub for Victorian enterprise with cotton mills, print works and coal mines. Friedrich Engels had visited and called it 'among the worst'; 'ruinous and miserable'; and with a main street that 'is even in the finest weather a dark and unattractive hole'.[1]

When they were in their thirties, two of the Lever brothers saw a new opportunity in making soap on an industrial scale, and marketing it to Britain's growing ranks of wage labourers who had some, but not much, money to spend. They invested in advertising and sold individually wrapped pieces of soap in eye-catching, brightly coloured packaging. And they started to search abroad for regular supplies of palm oil.

By the early twentieth century, the company's factory was using palm oil from Britain's West African colonies.[2] Then, they went to the Belgian Congo. William Lever, one of the brothers, was described by an English journalist at the time as 'of the Napoleon breed … born to marshal big battalions and win empires, if not in war, then in peace'.[3] A Belgian colonial minister called him 'fabulously rich, probably of good heart but also hard, who sees humanity as a vast engine of production without soul or desires'.[4]

In 1908, this Lever brother was granted control over 67,800 square kilometers of land in the Congo.[5] It was a huge slice of territory, more than twice the size of Belgium, and four times that of Northern Ireland. And, as his son later wrote about it, 'not a building was erected unless the plans had been passed by him', in what was 'his personal creation'.[6] What was constructed included a 'model' company town: Leverville, for plantation workers.

'For Belgium, Lever Brothers was an ideal partner, a company hailed for the social policies it had put in place in mainland Britain,' where they'd also built a ‘model city’ called Port Sunlight, in the suburbs of Liverpool, wrote Belgian academic Benoît Henriet. ‘For the aging industrialist,’ meanwhile, its operations and new town in the Congo were supposed to be ‘the crowning achievement of his own brand of “moral capitalism”.’[7]

It was interesting how both seemed to have converged on what sounded like a public relations plan to expand their interests. The reality was that Lever’s plantations, run by local subsidiary Huileries du Congo Belge, also seemed to have used forced labour. Palm cutters failing to meet quotas were reportedly liable to detentions and whippings.[8]

The Lever brothers expanded in Africa, acquiring the Niger Company – one of the colonial ‘chartered companies’ that had helped to build the British empire. In 1929 this was merged with the African and Eastern Trade Corporation to form a new mega-subsidiary: the United Africa Company (UAC).[9] The next year Unilever emerged when the British family business merged with a Dutch margarine giant to create what *The Economist* would call ‘one of the biggest industrial amalgamations in European history’.[10]

The UAC, like other big companies on the continent at the time, had worked closely with colonial governments and African ‘middlemen’. As independence movements gained strength, it increasingly drew criticism and negative political attention. It thus got involved in a range of social and welfare projects, eager to be seen at the forefront of the ‘new Africa’.[11]

And it succeeded – in the sense that it survived the end of colonization (as a Unilever subsidiary). In 1973, the Guyanese intellectual Walter Rodney would point to its parent corporation in his magnum opus, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa,* as an example of a business whose fortunes were ‘bound up with colonization’. The ‘rewards’ of empire spread, he said, such that Unilever factories around the world ‘were participants in the expropriation of Africa’s surplus and in using that surplus for their own development’.[12]

Rodney had argued that to understand the colonial period, you had to think about Africa’s ‘economic partition’ which was invisible with ‘no fixed or visible boundaries’ unlike the political partition of the nineteenth century that could be a distraction. He’d also named ‘the US-controlled IBRD’ – the first branch of the World Bank, created after the Second World War – as ‘one of the tools for the economic repartition of the continent’.[13]

By the time his book came out, the UAC had diversified into industries like timber, car sales, breweries, medical and office equipment, construction supplies, department stores, insurance, textiles, warehousing and shipping. It had interests in dozens of other countries in Africa and around the world, until in 1980 it was fully absorbed by Unilever.

Unilever also held onto its oil palm plantations in the Congo for a long time. Then, in the early 2000s, as war raged in the country, the company decided to leave. It reportedly made millions selling its assets while hundreds of people lost their jobs. Some said the company owed them wages – and fought for more than a decade to get them. The Congolese Supreme Court ruled in their favour in 2007, but the money still didn't reach their pockets. Some went on hunger strike in protest.[14]

Unilever's plantations were sold to a company called Feronia Inc, which was registered in the Cayman Islands and appeared to have no previous experience in palm oil. Within a few years, it had racked up tens of millions of dollars in losses and its stock price had tanked. It could have collapsed, but it was apparently rescued – by part of the international development system. In 2013, the UK's development finance institution, the CDC Group plc, invested $14.5 million in the company, purchasing 27.5 per cent of its shares as well as giving it loans. It then made further investments, and bought more shares.[15]

These investments were made despite the company facing repeated allegations of ongoing abuses on its plantations, and against nearby communities. It was also not the only case in which Unilever found itself connected to such scandals.

In India, a thermometer factory in Kodaikanal, in the hills of Tamil Nadu, run by a Unilever subsidiary had been accused of dangerously contaminating the local environment with mercury waste. These claims were at the centre of a viral music video by then 28-year-old Indian rapper Sofia Ashraf which borrowed the tune of Nicki Minaj's 'Anaconda'.[16] Eventually the corporation reportedly agreed on an undisclosed settlement with 591 former workers at the factory, ending these protests and a fifteen-year legal battle.[17]

In Indonesia, the company was criticised for buying palm oil from suppliers accused of destroying rainforests – and for allegedly using child and forced labour.[18] In the UK, Unilever's CEO Polman had protested against proposals to introduce a 'sugar tax' that were being debated as part of a new strategy to combat childhood obesity.[19]

Helping the 1 per cent

We put together another folder of notes to share with Gavin. It included timelines and lists of companies involved in the international aid and development system – as contractors or as 'partners', and as beneficiaries of investments.

The names in these notes included that of a private healthcare company in India that marketed 'specialty hospitals' to local elites and international 'medical tourists'. Controlled by billionaire brothers Malvinder and Shivinder Singh,[20] it had received a $100 million investment from the World Bank's IFC branch.[21]

Other beneficiaries included the empire of late Honduran oligarch Miguel Facussé Barjum, who died in 2015. The IFC had invested in his corporation, Dinant, which had 20,000 acres of palm plantations in Bajo Aguán, Honduras, and had been accused of using a private security force to forcibly evict families from nearby land. The *Los Angeles Times* had described him as 'colourful' and 'often ruthless'.[22]

The Hunt Oil Company had also received IFC support. This company was founded in 1934 by a Texas oil tycoon and conservative political activist, Haroldson Lafayette Hunt Jr. It was then owned by Hunt's son, Ray Lee Hunt, who had an estimated net worth of nearly $6 billion.[23] A natural gas project it operated in Peru received $300 million in IFC loans.[24]

There were more examples like this than we could possibly cover over lunch. Across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America, we had found 'development finance' being used for luxury hotels and retail complexes, private healthcare companies catering to elites and multinational supermarket chains with controversial records in terms of labour conditions and worker's rights.

The IFC had been repeatedly criticised for such investments by civil society groups which in some cases also documented serious harms to local communities. In 1999, amid such criticism, the institution set up an 'independent accountability mechanism' called the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO). It's supposed to 'address the environmental and social concerns of people and communities' affected by its investments.[25] Some people, supported by human rights lawyers, had appealed to it with grave allegations including of forced displacement and violence.

We found detailed and sometimes damning reports produced by CAO investigators – but they could only recommend changes in response. They couldn't enforce them; there were no clear consequences if they were ignored. It seemed that little ever happened as a result of these investigations.

The World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group – another part of the bank's monitoring infrastructure that seemed to have no 'teeth' – had also repeatedly faulted the IFC for failing to clearly live up to its ultimate anti-poverty mandate. Most of its investment projects, it for instance reported in 2011, 'generate satisfactory economic returns but do not provide evidence of identifiable opportunities for the poor'.[26]

Gavin led us to a cafe near the university where we ordered sandwiches and took advantage of the otherwise empty room to pull two tables together and spread our notes across them. We also shared with Gavin what an activist had told us in El Salvador, about some of the UK's development money going to gated communities: 'What surprises me is their idea of development.'

Gavin thought about this. 'If these agencies are supposed to be progressive forces for development that prioritises the poorest, they're doing a terrible job. But,' he suggested, 'if you think development means that the rich get richer, and can expand as much as they want, then these institutions are perhaps working just fine. Doing great!'

Then we told him we had decided to go east next – to Myanmar, a country that was opening itself up to private investors amid the lifting of international sanctions and the introduction of a nominally civilian government. In 2014 the IFC had signed off on a huge $80 million investment there, and we wanted to see it in person.

Welcome to the Shangri-La

We arrived at Yangon International Airport just before dawn, and took a taxi into Myanmar's commercial capital as the sun was rising. We drove past a lake alongside which dozens of people were stretching and exercising.

We checked into a budget hotel in the centre of the city and then took a taxi to the IFC's office in a fancier part of Yangon. We were meeting the institution's top official in Myanmar, Vikram Kumar, formerly of Bank of America and India's Yes Bank. We sat across a large desk from him and explained why we were here: to learn about the IFC's largest investment in the country to date.

We had already read about it online: an IFC press release had trumpeted how it was helping to 'build business-enabling infrastructure in Myanmar, boosting tourism'.[27] The institution's $80 million was going to subsidiaries of a conglomerate called Shangri-La Asia Limited, to renovate and expand a hotel, as well as to complete the construction of a separate apartment complex.

We'd also read about the Malaysian billionaire whose empire this Shangri-La company belonged to: Robert Kuok, one of Southeast Asia's richest men. His family's holdings included one of the world's largest palm oil companies. He'd been doing business in Myanmar since the 1990s, when he partnered with Steven Law, a businessman and son of Lo Hsing Han, a notorious drug lord nicknamed the 'godfather of heroin'.[28] A leaked State Department cable said that Law was known in 'business circles as the regime's top crony'.[29]

Together with Law, Kuok had built the hotel in Yangon that the IFC's money would later help renovate. By the time we arrived in the city, the World Bank had become one of Kuok's more respectable business partners, helping to expand his chain of luxury hotels and resorts throughout Asia. The IFC had already invested $50 million, in 2009, in the construction of a 142-villa Shangri-La resort in the Maldives.[30] In 2012, it put another $50 million towards a new five-star hotel in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.[31]

We went into our meeting with Kumar sceptical about the IFC's choice to make Kuok's properties in Yangon the recipients of its record investment. We had read its account of expected impacts – creating jobs and 'demand for locally-sourced materials' and adding 'much-needed supply of international standard hospitality infrastructure to Yangon'. It argued that this 'will send a positive signal about Myanmar, particularly to other foreign investors who are considering investments in the country.'[32]

We wanted to know: had the IFC considered other major investments as alternatives, and why did they choose Shangri-La? Did this company really need international development money – surely it had its own, or access to commercial banks and investors? We left the IFC's office with few details, however. Kumar reiterated what we had already read on its website.

He said: 'We see it as business – enabling infrastructure, hotels – and it also fits under our jobs article, because of the number of jobs the tourism sector creates.' Kumar seemed to evade our requests for details: how many jobs, for example, and how much workers were paid, and how their rights were ensured. He repeated his main message: the IFC was helping to jump-start Myanmar's development by making it more attractive to international investors.

From the IFC's office we went to one of Yangon's main tourist attractions – the Bogyoke Aung San Market, a major bazaar named after the general who led Myanmar's twentieth-century independence struggle against the British. Inside, we saw cobbled streets and stalls selling everything from fabric to purses, gemstones and antiques, fried noodles and pig organs tossed in chili sauce.

But we had come here to go across the road – to the Shangri-La luxury hotel which had benefited from the IFC's multi-million dollar investment.

The hotel, which advertised 'stately elegance' and 'a blend of luxury with the warmth of home', was in Yangon's central business district.

The IFC said its investment would help pay for its expansion from 270 rooms to more than 450.[33] We craned our necks and counted more than twenty floors in a modern-looking building. It towered above others nearby and had a row of palm trees in front of it. We saw a limousine pull up to the front entrance and a well-dressed couple get out.

Bellhops waited at the front doors wearing gloves. We went close enough to the entrance to see an easel had been set up advertising a buffet dinner.

We then stepped through a metal detector into the lobby. Immediately, we felt the contrast between its opulent interior and the chaotic streets just outside. In place of dust and dirt there were sparkling floors and cleaners wiping away fingerprints from counters and side tables. Gone was any sign of poverty.

Its restaurant's extravagent dinner buffet featured many rows of freshly cooked dishes that were elaborately displayed with uniformed staff helping to serve portions. Guests in business suits ate fresh lobster and skewers of large prawns.

Up a flight of stairs, we found a well-stocked period bar and more suits gathered around aged whiskeys. A bartender slid us menus which showed prices that would be prohibitive for most people in the city – $15, for example, for a small plate of lime and pepper calamari tempura. We ordered a round of the cheapest, bottled beers and tried to talk to some of the other people around us. We met a private pilot who wasn't sure (or didn't want to say) what his presumably very wealthy client was in town for.

A British woman was sitting by herself, sipping a glass of wine. She said she worked as a teacher in Yangon, and liked to treat herself to an occasional drink at the hotel. We explained that we were following international aid and development money, and that had led us to the Shangri-La because it had received financing from a branch of the World Bank, whose mission is to end poverty.

She took a large sip of her wine and asked us to repeat ourselves. She was surprised that this fancy hotel could receive this money. We explained that we'd met the IFC's top official in the country that morning, and that he and the institution's documents said its multi-million dollar support would help create jobs and encourage more foreign investment in the country.

We could see that she was sceptical. 'For me, living here as an expat, it's fantastic,' she said after another sip. 'I can come here and get a glass of beautiful wine and use the Wi-Fi. But for the wider community? I'm not sure.'

The next day, we went to the newly built Shangri-La serviced apartments that had also benefited from the IFC's record investment in Myanmar.

Just north of downtown Yangon, we found the upscale complex of 240 luxury residences overlooking the iconic Shwedagon Pagoda – another major tourist and religious site – and a serene man-made lake. Marketed to wealthy expatriates and foreign businesspeople on extended visits, amenities included a pool, 24-hour private security, maids' quarters and a limousine service. Signs in a lobby said the complex now offered the Cartoon Network and yoga classes.

We had arranged to tour the development by posing as potential renters. We had been vague on details but had repeated buzzwords from its promotional materials while scheduling our visit: we were busy professionals, new to the city, looking for a home that was calm and convenient. We explained that we had seen an advert for the serviced apartments at the Shangri-La hotel.

A young woman in a tailored blazer and dark skirt said she was expecting us. Our tour began immediately as we followed her through the lobby into a courtyard with a pool. In the water were two young children playing with a beachball. Back inside the complex, we went up a stairwell to see one of the apartments – a fully furnished two-bedroom where everything looked brand-new from the floors to the dishwasher. Our guide walked over to one side and pulled open curtains to reveal the prize view of the pool.

She gestured to the bedrooms and said another model was also available with another small room that a live-in maid could use. ‘We can even find a maid for you,’ she smiled. ‘If you live here, we’ll do everything we can for you.’

While about half the population in Myanmar lacked electricity and there were just six physicians for every 10,000 people,[34] Shangri-La residents enjoyed unfathomable luxuries including an on-call private doctor and high-speed Wi-Fi. The price-tag for this treatment was high; apartments, we were told, went for as much as $7,000 a month.

According to the IFC’s documents, the Shangri-La’s expansion was expected to create 600 permanent jobs, and 1,000 temporary construction jobs.[35] It didn’t sound like very much, for $80 million of development money, and a lot of questions were unanswered. Were the jobs created good? Were labour rights protected? And what other investments were considered?

We weren’t the only ones asking such questions. In Yangon, we also met aid workers for both international and local NGOs who expressed frustration about such budgets going to very large private businesses. ‘There is an increasing tide of scepticism and concern about these development projects and how they will benefit people,’ one of these aid workers told us.

A former senior World Bank staffer, who later spoke to us on condition of anonymity, agreed that the Shangri-La investment seemed dubious. ‘I’m not sure what the impact on poverty alleviation is,’ he said. ‘You could argue that there will be jobs for construction workers, jobs for people who work in the hotel, jobs in the suppliers to the hotel, but it’s a *very* indirect kind of approach to poverty alleviation.’

Europe’s Walmart

The IFC’s investment database also showed several deals in Poland – including with multinational chains of supermarkets. They included Lidl – sometimes called ‘Europe’s Walmart’ for its no-frills style. Its bright blue, red and yellow logo had become increasingly well-known across the continent, and in the UK – but so had its controversial track record for working conditions and rights.

In Germany, the magazine *Stern* had revealed that this company was spying on employees including with private detectives, as well as prohibiting bathroom breaks during work hours.[36] A Lidl executive conceded to the major newspaper *Der Spiegel* that it had ‘made big mistakes’ and had ‘a lot of room for improvement – especially when it comes to transparency and the way we treat employees'.[37] In the UK, meanwhile, Lidl had been in the news for reportedly forbidding some Polish staff from speaking their language, including with Polish customers.[38]

In contrast to this notoriety, the company behind the chain was far from a household name. This was the Schwarz Group, established in the 1930s as a grocery wholesaler in Germany, that had since become one of the world's largest and fastest-growing retailers. The reclusive Dieter Schwarz was in charge. Intensely private – only a handful of photos of Schwarz were known to exist[39] – he was one of the world's richest men, worth an estimated $21 billion.[40]

According to the IFC's records, it made its first $100 million investment in the Schwarz Group in 2004 – the same year that German trade union Ver.di released its 'black book' on Lidl, documenting numerous alleged labour rights violations.[41]

This funding, the IFC had said at the time, would help the group expand in 'selected urban areas' in 'target countries in central and eastern Europe'.[42] Which specific countries was not made clear in its public communications announcing this deal. But on its website we found a list of addresses and contact details for this investment – including that of a Lidl corporate office in Warsaw, Poland.

In 2009, the IFC approved a second investment in the Schwarz Group – a $75 million loan to support Lidl's sister chain Kaufland to expand in Bulgaria and Romania. Then, in 2011, it approved a further $66 million for Lidl's expansion in Romania.[43] In 2013: more than $105 million for Lidl's plans to scale up in Bulgaria and Croatia and to open its first stores in Serbia.[44] In total, we counted about $350 million in IFC loans for the Schwarz's march across Europe.

Another development finance institution – called the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) – had also given the Schwarz Group another nearly $500 million in the decade to 2015, and it had helped it to raise an additional more than $200 million from other, commercial banks.

It and the IFC made similar arguments about these investments – that the expansion of these supermarkets would create jobs, open new markets for local producers and bring quality, affordable food to poor consumers.

When we questioned the IFC directly about these investments, we were told this expansion had 'created new channels for local farmers to supply their products' while 'consumers gained access to a more affordable and diverse selection of high-quality food products'. But, a spokesperson refused to give us details on exactly how much of Lidl's products had been purchased from local producers, for example, or exactly how many jobs had been created.

'It is typical for financial institutions considering an investment in a company to sign confidentiality agreements to protect the sensitive information they review,' they said. 'We simply cannot disclose competitive information without consent of the company … and in this case, the information you request about the exact employment and local sourcing number is confidential.'

Like the IFC, the EBRD similarly claimed that it regularly monitored its investments' impacts – but that important data was 'commercially sensitive' and confidential. So we booked flights to Warsaw to try and learn more there.

Chapter 10

A new continent

Silent partners

Poland's capital and largest city was famous for the 1944 Warsaw Uprising led by underground resistance fighters who tried to liberate the city from German occupation. It also lent its name to the Soviet Union's 'Warsaw Pact' alliance to rival NATO. This was where the USSR began to collapse, in the late 1980s. After years of pro-democracy protests, semi-free elections brought a new coalition government to power.

In the 1990s, Poland moved to liberalize its economy – as Tanzania had after Nyerere – and began an extensive privatisation drive selling off state assets. It entered into its first deals with the World Bank and the IMF, receiving finance while committing to 'structural adjustment' reforms.[1] And it signed dozens of treaties giving foreign investors 'rights' to challenge it at international tribunals.[2]

Our first meeting in Warsaw was in the food court of a shopping mall, where we found Alfred Bujara, chairman of the retail section at Poland's Solidarity trade union. We wanted to know from him about the conditions for workers at the Lidl and Kaufland supermarket chains that had received support from the World Bank and the EBRD – and whether the presence of these development institutions had made a difference.

Through a union translator, who sat beside him, he told us that 'stress and intimidation is very high' in these stores. He described difficult working environments as well as cases of harassment and bullying by managers against workers who tried to organize. The union had struggled to reach people there.

Bujara had his own sources – such as individual workers who had reached out to Solidarity for help. But he told us that problems at the no-frills retailer had also been documented by the state labour inspectorate. These problems included repeated violations of national employment laws – including those requiring employers to give workers at least 11 hours off each day and 35 hours of uninterrupted rest each week.

Later we would hear about some of these conditions from workers who knew them first-hand. One of these people, Lukasz, worked the night shift at a Lidl warehouse, and would speak to us only after we confirmed that we could never print his surname, because he was afraid of reprisals from the company.

‘We are overworked, we do the work that should be done by many more people,’ Lukasz told us. He described feeling powerless; he needed wages, however low, and couldn’t leave unless he found another job elsewhere. He told us that his wrists had swollen and that he had bruises all over his body from packing and unpacking heavy loads of fruits and vegetables. Other workers struggled similarly, he said, or worse, but all were fearful of speaking out because they were also ‘afraid to lose their jobs’.

Despite national laws that were supposed to protect his rights – and the presence of international financiers who are supposed to prioritise development goals – he seemed to have few options in terms of recourse.

We had wanted to know if Bujara had been in touch with the IFC or EBRD, about the conditions for workers in the supermarket empire they were supporting. Had they tried to file complaints with these development bodies, for example?

He made his translator repeat what we asked several times. And instead of answering us he had many questions of his own.

The translator relayed to us: ‘It doesn’t make any sense.’ We had brought printed copies with us of documents about these investments, and laid them out on the table between us. We’d highlighted in yellow the sums of money. Their eyes widened; they hadn’t known about this financing. ‘How could this be?’

At the Warsaw School of Economics, we met Jan Czarzasty who had been studying the expansion of multinational retailers in Poland. ‘Everywhere where they open new stores, there are stories that come to the surface regarding working conditions; employee satisfaction is generally low,’ he told us.

It was a clear pattern, he stressed, along with expansion strategies that include ‘systematically penetrating smaller and smaller locations, smaller towns, in many cases villages’. Large chains can squeeze out local retailers – including small mom-and-pop shops that, for example, may not be open for as many hours – and fundamentally change rural economies.

‘It’s another variation of the Wal-Mart effect,’ he told us. He acknowledged that some new jobs will be created by the expansion of big chains; but he also wanted answers to obvious, important questions: ‘how many new jobs [are created]? And how many jobs are lost? We don’t know that.’

Like Bujara, Czarzasty knew more about these workplaces than most. But he also seemed surprised by the development money Lidl and its sister chain Kaufland had received from the IFC and EBRD, and asked us for proof. We showed him the same documents we’d shown the trade unionist.

‘This is very surprising,’ the economist said, looking at the records.

We also visited the Warsaw Lidl office that was listed as a contact on the IFC investment record. There, neither the receptionist nor the colleagues she called could answer our questions. No one, in fact, seemed to know what we were talking about. Like Bujara and Czarzasty, they said that they hadn’t heard of this money before.

At Lidl stores in the city, shoppers we stopped looked even more bewildered when we told them about the development finance the company had received. It seemed increasingly clear that you could work or shop there, or even study the company’s expansion without ever knowing that it had been supported by these powerful international institutions, in the name of ‘development’.

Shoppers also pointed out that Lidl wasn’t even the cheapest place to buy groceries, and so it was very unlikely to be serving and helping the poor. Checking this online we found a 2014 survey that showed how a standard shopping basket at Lidl cost more than 15 per cent more than at other supermarkets in the country.[3] Local street markets could be cheaper still.

Weeks later, a company spokesperson finally responded to our emails and said its wages in Poland were ‘significantly higher’ than those at other retailers; its employees get benefits including free private healthcare; and Lidl ‘has always been open to dialogue with employees as well as with trade unions’.

But they did not respond to our questions about the money it had received from these development institutions – which seemed almost like silent partners, giving cash and supporting private empires behind the scenes.

Post-Soviet profits

The IFC had been envisioned in the 1950s by its advocates from elite US political and business communities as a soft-power antidote to the spread of communism. But it did not close up shop when the Soviet Union did. Instead, its investments increased globally – including in former-Soviet countries.

These were the countries that the EBRD was founded to focus on. That institution’s full name (the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) closely echoed that of the World Bank's initial branch, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, founded after the Second World War. It was created by many of the same powerful Western governments in April 1991.

Its founding mission: to support former Soviet countries develop new private sector, capitalist economies. It offered financing for banks and businesses – including multinational corporations that wanted to expand into this region. It also encouraged the privatisation of state-owned companies.[4]

Like the IFC, the EBRD gave loans, guarantees, bought minority equity stakes in companies and offered a range of other financial services. It also worked with 'financial intermediaries', invested in other banks and through private equity funds, and was a major investor in power, energy and agriculture industries.

To be eligible for EBRD support, companies had to have a project in one of its target countries with 'strong commercial prospects'.[5] The bank said that it would support 'environmentally sound and sustainable development'.[6]

Like the IFC, it had also come under criticism from civil society groups who accused it of enabling giant companies to steamroll through the region. It was criticised for financing projects connected to environmental and social harm, including what the CounterBalance monitoring group called 'large hydro power projects that destroy biodiversity and coal mines which negatively impact livelihoods'.[7] Though it seemed even more obscure than the World Bank branch.

This was despite the fact that it had expanded beyond its focus on former-Soviet countries and also into Greece, Croatia, Cyprus and the Czech Republic as well as Romania, Serbia and Turkey.[8] It was headquartered in London, where we lived. The Overground we took to get to the CIJ flew by it.

But it was rarely discussed in the media and its offices blended in with the other commercial financial buildings in the area. Nothing in its coverage or appearance seemed to reflect how it was in fact a publicly-owned development institution.

The EBRD's offices in London, near Liverpool Street station, were in a large building with impressive windows and dark columns framing its entrance. They were in an upscale, mainly pedestrianized development called One Exchange Square which the bank's website proudly noted 'was inaugurated by Her Majesty the Queen' in 1991.[9]

'It was essential', the EBRD said, to find an office space that resonated with the 'modern, forward-looking, efficient' image it wanted to project. The space also had to be large enough to allow for its already-imagined expansion. Over the years it hosted 'many VIPs from the countries where we invest', along with music concerts and film screenings.[10] (Later, in 2022, the bank would move its headquarters to the Canary Wharf business district).

After returning from Poland, we went to this building to interview Gilles Mettetal, the EBRD's head of agribusiness. We wanted to confirm details of his institution's support for the Schwarz Group, and the expansion of its Lidl supermarkets. We also wanted to get his reaction to the concerns we had heard – from poor working conditions to impacts on local traditional markets. We wanted to know: Why had the EBRD injected so much money into the expansion of these stores? Surely the billionaire Schwarz's corporation already had the money it needed to expand, or could have found it elsewhere. Why would they spend limited development money like this? And what were they doing in response to concerns like those we'd heard?

We exchanged our IDs for temporary name badges at the front desk and took an elevator upstairs to a meeting room. Mettetal grinned as we sat down and began talking. He seemed proud of the EBRD's investment in the Schwarz Group's expansion. 'For the people, it changed their lives,' he exclaimed.

The company had provided a 'model that at the time didn't exist, which was targeting the lower social category, a poorer category, offering products to people who otherwise could not afford them', Mettetal told us. 'This is the credit I give them. They have been, yes, a quite commercially aggressive group, but they have people accessing products that they wouldn't have been able to access otherwise.'

Avocados and plastic surgery

Romania was another country where Lidl and its sister chain Kaufland had been expanding, with support from the World Bank's IFC. In the capital Bucharest, we took a small tour of these stores where we met customers like Camelia, an elegantly dressed woman who had just finished her shopping and was loading her groceries into her car outside.

'I like the avocados,' she said. But she found it hard to believe that Lidl had benefited from development money. 'Of course I know what the World Bank is,' Camelia said in the parking lot, 'and perhaps they could have found a better use for their money considering all the problems we have in Romania.'

In another neighbourhood, west of the city centre, another Lidl store seemed particularly busy. Shoppers crowded its no-frills aisles picking up jars and cans as well as vegetables and fruits that were fresh but often, we saw, bore labels showing that they had been produced abroad and then transported here.

Nearby, Ion Garalin, a small-scale trader, told us that he had sold locally grown vegetables at the Piata Gorjului market for more than two decades. Since Lidl opened down the street, he said, he and others had struggled.

'Really, the most negative impact is that they've chosen to open stores very close to local markets like this one,' said the then-67-year old, standing in front of his stall. Unlike the crowd we'd seen at the store, there was only a slow trickle of customers. 'We're being eaten alive … We can't go on like this,' he said.

From potatoes to apples, many of the same things were being sold at the market as at Lidl, and the store didn't seem to have cheaper prices. Those with little money still relied on street markets that were increasingly struggling themselves. Far from helping the poorest, it seemed to be limiting their options.

The IFC was also involved in the private healthcare business in Romania. Such investments internationally had been controversial – especially as the World Bank had also advised governments on privatising parts of their healthcare systems.

The NGO Oxfam had revealed that one IFC-supported private healthcare project in Lesotho was consuming 51 per cent of the nation's healthcare budget, while the company involved was reaping 25 per cent returns.[11] (The IFC challenged these figures, saying the project actually ate up 35 per cent of that budget. It was still huge.)

A separate $1 billion IFC 'Health in Africa' initiative, launched in 2009, had controversially focused on expanding private healthcare across the continent. It said it would 'catalyse sustained improvements in access to quality health', with a specific 'emphasis on the underserved'. But among its investments were facilities that were clearly targeting wealthier people – including a private fertility clinic in Nigeria where a single round of in vitro fertilization cost more than $4,600.[12]

Since 2002, the IFC had been advising Romania to 'reshape the country's healthcare system in order to encourage greater private-sector participation'.[13] In 2005, it also began to advise a company, MedLife, on the design and strategy of a new for-profit hospital. The next year, it made a $5 million investment in this business, which it called 'the first private hospital chain in Romania'.[14]

By 2015, MedLife still dominated the country's private healthcare market. Its clients included wealthier residents, expats and 'medical tourists'. Its services included 'the full range of surgical and non-surgical beauty procedures'.[15]

We made an appointment to visit this company's headquarters and were pleased to secure an interview with MedLife's president himself, Mihai Marcu, a stocky former investment banker with close-cropped hair. We met in his seventh-floor office overlooking central Bucharest. He was proud of the IFC's investment in his company, and unlike Lidl he was happy to talk about it. He boasted that it was a 'very special and unique thing … for the World Bank through their IFC division to become shareholders along with a family'.

He said this because MedLife was a family company and the IFC's finance for it had been in the form of a $5 million equity investment. It had bought part of the business, and had become a co-owner. For the company, Marcu said this helped its 'image' and to attract clients and staff. MedLife also benefited from the IFC's 'huge expertise' and invitations to learn from other private hospitals including in the US.

'Don't forget, my background is in banking and risk, so I always have an open door to the bankers in Bucharest,' he told us. He boasted that MedLife could have easily secured financing to expand from private equity firms or commercial banks. It partnered with the IFC because of additional benefits it would receive.

This jarred with the IFC's mission which isn't really to compete with commercial banks. It was supposed to invest where private capital could not otherwise be obtained, and where important development gains could be achieved. So we then turned to that second point – MedLife's development impacts. Marcu told us that more than 4 million Romanians had visited the company's facilities – or one in five of the country's total 20 million residents.

But he returned a puzzled look when we asked him how the company's activities helped to achieve the World Bank's stated goals of ending global poverty and boosting 'shared prosperity'.

Many people can't afford MedLife, he told us, in particular 'kidney and heart patients.' He estimated that only 20–30 per cent of them could continue their treatments with the company after initial appointments. What happened to the rest?

Marcu said they were 'referred to the state hospitals' – but didn't express much sympathy for them. He told us that Romania was a 'two-speed' society. Its poor people are poor, he argued, because they 'do not want so much to work'. Those are the people, he said, who can't afford MedLife: 'They don't want to develop and do things.'

We would have voted no

Ukraine was part of the USSR until its end in 1991. It was the poorest country in Europe, but it had extensive, fertile farmlands and had become one of the largest grain exporters in the world.[16] We flew into Kyiv to meet local activists who had been monitoring expanding agribusinesses – as well as the international development finance they'd received, and controversial impacts on the ground.

From the capital, we travelled more than 200 kilometers south to the Vinnytsia region, in the middle of the country's rural heartland. This was where a giant company, owned by one of Ukraine's wealthiest men, was expanding chicken farms with IFC help. Local people had complained of negative environmental impacts and pressure to give up their land to the expansion.[17]

We travelled with some of the activists we met. On the way, we learned how after the dismantling of Soviet and collective state farms in the 1990s, land was divided into small plots of roughly two hectares each and distributed among the population. There was a moratorium on sales of this land – but that was expected to be lifted in 2016 or shortly after. Meanwhile, big agribusinesses had already been acquiring huge swaths of territory via long-term leases of up to fifty years. This had fuelled concern over a 'quiet land grab', with land increasingly controlled by a few powerful people and companies.[18]

By 2015, foreign companies controlled an estimated 2.2 million hectares of farmland.[19] Big Ukrainian companies including Myronivsky Hliboproduct (MHP) – which was expanding its poultry farms with help from the IFC – were also major players. Its founder and chief executive was Yuriy Kosiuk, who owned 66 per cent of the company's shares.[20] He was also one of eight billionaires who were estimated to control nearly 6 per cent of the country's GDP.[21]

The IFC first invested in MHP in 2003 – then again in 2010 and 2013, providing it with loans including for 'crop cultivation and to secure the land lease rights'.[22] In 2015, it announced another, much larger, $250 million investment.[23]

In Ukraine, MHP dominated the domestic poultry market pursuing an aggressive 'field to fork' strategy, growing its own grain to feed its chickens and installing facilities to incubate eggs, slaughter animals and package meat.[24] It also exported chicken meat and luxuries such as foie gras across Europe, and it was listed on the London Stock Exchange.[25]

As soon as we arrived in the area near MHP's poultry farms, we were hit by the stench of animal waste. People living nearby said the smell and noise were constant and overwhelming. They described damage caused to roads and houses from the weight and vibrations of trucks driving day and night.

'Before, it was calm and peaceful here', said one man, showing us cracks in the brick walls of his small house, which he said appeared after these trucks began driving through the village. 'Now … everywhere, it's all broken.'

The IFC said that its investments in this company had created jobs and supported 'food security' in Ukraine and beyond. But, in villages near its expanding farm in the Vinnytsia region, people shrugged at this – and said that no officials seemed to be listening to their concerns about its negative impacts.

Some people said that they had been pressured into signing long-term leases with the company, giving their land over to the expanding farm – which was a massive complex with slaughterhouses, hen houses, fields to grow crops to feed the chickens and incubators for eggs.

Others told us that they'd written complaints to the company and local authorities but that no one was paying attention to them.

'There's no rights, no consultation', one woman said. She spoke to us anonymously, explaining that she was afraid the company would retaliate against her. People in her village, including the sick and elderly, had already been visited at home and coerced into giving their land over to the project, she said. 'We are nothing for rich people, they don't want to see us, or hear us.'

Several other people said company representatives visited villagers at home – knocking on doors and effectively forcing their way in. What they wanted was always the same: access to land for their expansion, as soon as possible.

When we later presented the IFC with these allegations, we were told that land acquisitions and environmental impacts were covered under its 'performance standards, which define our clients' responsibilities for managing environmental and social risks. If there are specific concerns or incidents connected with this investment, we will work together with the client to help address them'.

In a statement, the IFC added that it had invested in MHP to support poultry production in Ukraine 'which has created jobs and promoted the development of the agribusiness sector, a key driving force for the national economy', and that its finance had helped to improve food safety standards and energy efficiency. 'Despite the challenging economic situation, the company continues with its expansion programmes and, as a result, direct employment is expected to grow', it said.

Anastasiya Sobotyuk, MHP's head of investor relations and communications, described Ukraine as a 'food basket for the world' with great potential because of its famous 'black soil'. She said the company complied with local environmental regulations and built long-term relationships with local communities, often paying higher-than-market rent for the land it leased. 'We can't force people, because it is our reputation and we are here for a long time and need land.'

She acknowledged opposition but suggested that some critics might have ulterior motives, claiming: 'there are some people who understand our competitive advantages … and therefore do black PR campaigns toward MHP'.

Natalia Kolomiets, an environmental protection specialist at the National Ecological Centre of Ukraine (NECU), an NGO in Kyiv, was also worried about MHP's competitors. Big farms were the wrong approach for Ukraine, she argued; small- and medium-sized projects should be supported instead. Development institutions, she added, should pay closer attention to the perspectives and concerns of people living near the projects they back.

She said her organisation had received numerous reports of 'growing fears about potential ecological and health impacts, and extra pressure on local people to sign land lease agreements' near MHP's farms. But, she worried, 'it looks like once the business, the state and the investors are interested in having these projects, there is really little attention paid to local populations'.

As in other communities we'd visited around the world, villagers in the Vinnytsia area said they had never heard of the IFC arm of the World Bank – let alone its internal accountability mechanisms whereby impacted communities can file complaints if they have grievances. Instead of being consulted, they said they learned about the project when it was too late to effectively resist it.

'There should have been community discussions before building started, but there weren't,' a woman had told us standing near the village school where she works near the site of the expanding agribusiness empire. Instead, 'they just gathered us and confronted us with the fact that they were building this'.

'Had there been a vote,' she said, 'people would have voted against it.'

As with the international investor-state legal system we had investigated, the international aid and development system had also been created to shape poorer countries, but had since expanded to affect Europe too. It was helping companies to expand, but it also seemed there to help when they got into trouble.

'Imagine that,' Gavin exclaimed, as we told him what we had found. 'A global welfare system that actually works – just not for who needs it most.'

'It's weird, too,' he added, 'that capitalists, who always talk about competition and the risks they take, have this system to cushion their falls.'

Gavin always seemed to see through what he called the 'useful propaganda' those in power deploy to justify themselves. He had this in common with activists we'd talked to on the ground, from Central America to Africa.

'Are you going to take a break now? To figure out your next moves?'

We shook our heads. We'd seen something else that troubled us, in Myanmar.

PART THREE

Corporate utopias

Chapter 11

Fences up

Building control

Yangon, Myanmar's commercial capital, had been our main base while in the Southeast Asian country. It was the country's largest city, with more than 7 million inhabitants. It was also an ancient city, first founded in the eleventh century, that had survived several empires.

In the eighteenth century, while under the Konbaung Dynasty, the British colonial East India Company opened up a factory there.[1] In the nineteenth century, it became the capital of British-ruled Burma. In the twentieth century, it was occupied by the Japanese during the Second World War, then it became the capital of newly independent Burma in 1948.

It remained the country's political capital until 2005, when the military government relocated administrative functions north to a new, purpose-built capital city called Naypyidaw.[2] After that, Yangon was still the site of major anti-government protests including during the 2007 'Saffron Revolution' when hundreds of thousands of monks, students and other people flooded its streets – and state forces responded with mass shootings.[3]

We arrived in spring 2015, before Aung San Suu Kyi's party won a landslide victory in elections later that year, and before – in her new role akin to Burma's prime minister – she became the subject of global criticism for inaction in response to the genocide of the Rohingya people in Rakhine State, as well as for prosecuting journalists.[4]

Yangon looked like a patchwork of colonial-era buildings, some dilapidated and some renovated, alongside shacks, construction sites and the occasional slick modern developments – like the Shangri-La hotel which had received millions of international development finance from the World Bank's IFC – rising high into the sky with large panes of perfectly clean glass.

It was hard, we learned, to travel around Myanmar. Not because roads and internal flights didn't exist, but because to reach some areas – including where there were expanding industrial projects – you needed special permits, which we didn't have. We didn't try to travel under the radar to restricted regions. But we did leave Yangon twice. First, to go to Naypyidaw, often translated as 'Seat of the King', which was built in the middle of rice paddies and sugar-cane fields at a cost of up to $5 billion.[5]

We left just as the sun was rising, and drove north for five hours to reach it. Officially the city had a population of 1 million people, but it was eerily empty and silent on a bright Sunday. Newly paved streets were lined with flowers and pruned shrubbery; behind them were large detached buildings, villa-style hotels and shopping malls, all painted in soft pastel colours. There were golf courses, and a zoo complete with an air-conditioned penguin habitat. Restaurants had fast Wi-Fi. The only thing missing seemed to be people.

We stopped to talk to workers at some of the facilities. With no customers they had time to talk, but they seemed nervous and would not give us their names. They were clear about why, however: they were afraid of the state.

'It's not safe', said one man who had moved to Naypyidaw two years earlier, for work. 'The government has changed, but it's still the same.'

Roads had up to twenty lanes and stretched as far as the eye can see. The rumour was that they had been designed like this to enable aircraft to land on them in the event of anti-government protests. Naypyidaw's huge parliament complex had a moat around it. The city was laid out in large 'zones' with no natural Tahrir Square-style central public place in which to congregate.

An Indian journalist who had visited before us called it 'dictatorship by cartography'.[6] Control seemed hard-wired into the new capital's design. Stories of people forced to move there – or away – had also tarnished Naypyidaw's calculated triumph. The regime 'threatened to impose harsh prison sentences on, or deny pensions to, civil servants who refused to relocate', said a 2006 US diplomatic cable published by WikiLeaks, noting 'reports of several arrests'.[7] The surrounding area was 'depopulated in order to seal the huge compound off from the outside world', added a Thai newspaper. 'Entire villages disappeared from the map, their inhabitants driven off land their families had farmed for centuries.'[8]

Displaced in Myanmar

Our second trip outside of Yangon brought us face-to-face with another controversial mega-development: the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ), then under construction and part-financed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Japanese aid agency. It was the first such zone we'd visit.

Over the last fifty years, we'd learn, more than half of the world's countries had carved out pieces of their territories in the form of SEZs like this one.[9] The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that more than 66 million people – about the population of the UK – most of them poor, young women, worked in more than 3,500 zones across the globe.[10] These were extraordinary figures. They meant that, if all of the world's SEZ workers lived in one country, it would be one of the world's twenty-five most populous.

In Myanmar, dozens of foreign corporations had already signed up to open factories in the new Thilawa zone, which had been billed as part of the country's 'big bang' economic transformation that could create many new jobs.[11] To entice them, investors were offered special 'incentives' including top-quality infrastructure and utilities that few people in the country had ever experienced. In other zones around the world, exemptions from taxes and national regulations were often on the menu too. What these places seemed to have in common, besides their names, was to effectively insulate capital from wider societies and democracies – while often promising that this would help drive countries' 'development'.

On the zone's border – we met 29-year-old farmer Aye Khin who told us he was among hundreds of people who had lost their land and livelihoods to it.

He welcomed us into the makeshift house he built himself, after his family home was bulldozed to make way for the SEZ. We sat on uneven floorboards and sipped small cups of tea as we listened to his story. He had grown up on land the zone now occupied. His and other families had been evicted and moved to a 'resettlement area'. They were given no choice – it had become prime real estate.

While Khin had managed to build a new place to live, he said it was worse than before and he no longer had space to grow vegetables or keep animals. He asked how they could have ended up impoverished and without hope in the midst of his country's economic transformation. 'All we have ever done is farming. And now we have no land', he told us. 'We have no hope, only despair.'

Other people in that resettlement area told us that the government should pay them compensation for the loss of their land, but that no money had arrived and they weren't clear how much it would be, if it ever did.

'I can't even sleep at night, because of the stress', 56-year-old Daw Win told us. She used to grow fruits and raise livestock before the zone took her land, but now lived 'day to day, worrying about meals. I have a lot of stress'.

We walked through the area, and closer to the SEZ-in-construction met 69-year-old U Mya Hlaing, whose home was still standing. Like others we spoke to, he described being left in the dark about the development and how it would impact him. He thought his home would be bulldozed soon – but he wasn't sure when, whether he would get any compensation for this, or where he'd end up. He was not opposed to the zone per se, but said that too many were paying too high a price for it. 'The people are suffering'.

These stories we heard near the Thilawa project weren't unique in Myanmar where there had been a historic rush by foreign investors to set up shop – and growing concern over an unequal distribution of the benefits (and costs).

The government appeared to be rushing through new laws and programmes to make the country more 'attractive' to foreign capital.[12] Local activists were bravely trying to organize to protect human rights and document violations, but told us this was very difficult. 'The villagers feel they cannot go against the government', one said, describing a constant state of unease and fear.

Frontier profits

Before we flew to Myanmar, we went to the country's embassy in London to interview its ambassador to the UK. We had wanted to hear from the government itself about how it was ensuring that its efforts to court foreign private investment served the country's wider development needs – and how the protection of its people's human rights was being factored into its economic plans.

We found the embassy on Charles Street in the upmarket Mayfair area of central London, around the corner from luxury shops like Cartier and Prada. It was also a short walk across Hyde Park from the Ecuadorian embassy which Julian Assange had entered in the summer of 2012, claiming diplomatic asylum, and where he'd live until spring 2019, when police entered the building and moved him to Belmarsh prison.

As we arrived at the palatial, five-storey townhouse, we saw Myanmar's ambassador get out of a black Mercedes and walk inside. We followed him, at a polite distance, inside and up stairs to a large sitting room with long sofas. Not long after, we were welcomed into an office where we formally met him – and Keith Win, a founder of the Myanmar-British Business Association (MBBA), who the embassy had arranged to join us.

Shortly after we sat down, and began asking our questions, we apparently made a tactical error: asking too early for responses to concerns over the country's human rights record. The ambassador abruptly got up, left the room and never returned. But our interview didn't end there. We were left alone with Win, who didn't seem to have an official position at the embassy, though he shared clearly rehearsed speaking points about foreign investment in Myanmar.

There were 'endless' opportunities for investors in the country, enthused Win, a smart-sounding businessman, part-Burmese and part-English. A chartered accountant, he had set up the MBBA in 1995 with the late Peter Godwin, a banker and advisor to the UK government's Department of Trade and Industry. Its website said it aimed to promote 'commercial dialogue' and to provide businesses from both Myanmar and Britain with 'a forum and networking'.[13]

'Myanmar has of course now opened up and gone to a market economy. It's early stages yet, but it's heading in that direction, and it's looking very positive,' Win told us at the embassy. 'The country has huge advantages – it's strategically located between India and China, two of the world's most populous nations.'

'Everyone is extremely busy,' Win continued.

> There's so many laws that have been passed, the reforms in place, government officials have been brought up to scratch, multilateral agencies are bringing in outside training. It all takes time. A lot of British businesses are interested, from education, services, architects, accountants, lawyers, lots of lawyers now looking at opportunities, Rolls Royce, power companies, some of the oil and gas [companies] … Opportunities are endless.

What he described sounded like a rush for newly discovered – or newly accessible – riches. 'Everyone wants to have an influence and get in, in terms of business,' he said. By the end of 2015, annual foreign investment into the country would rise to a record high of $8 billion.[14]

Myanmar – newly 'opening up' to foreign capital – seemed to offer an opportunity to see first-hand how international systems benefiting corporations expand and take root in new places. In other countries we'd visited, from El Salvador to South Africa, this moment had been in the 1990s, when we were children. In others, it had been earlier still, amid the Cold War and anti-colonial movements.

In March 2013, Thein Sein became the first-ever Myanmar President to visit Brussels – where he was warmly welcomed because of ongoing reforms. European Commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso said Myanmar and the EU were 'turning a page in their relationship … More dialogue, more and better aid, more trade and investment'.[15] The next year, the EU began negotiating an investment treaty with the country that it said would support economic growth, but that would also enable European companies to challenge it through the investor-state legal system.[16]

Also in March 2013, Myanmar signed on to the New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards.[17] Under this international agreement, which first opened for signatures in the 1950s, states pledge to honour decisions from the tribunals that adjudicate investors' claims – both decisions against themselves, and against others. If another country refused to pay awarded damages, the treaty's signatories were supposed to seize their assets if they could (for example if they had money in foreign bank accounts, or planes on the ground at foreign airports).

According to local reports, only six lawmakers had been involved in weighing the pros and cons of signing it.[18] Aung San Suu Kyi was one of its supporters, claiming that it was a 'prerequisite' to attract foreign investment.[19]

Civil society groups including those representing rural communities seemed horrified – more aware than some lawmakers, perhaps, of what was at stake. They warned that integration into the investor-state legal system could undermine Myanmar's fledgling shot at democracy by strengthening rights for foreign investors and imposing new obligations on the state to protect them.

Precisely because Myanmar was in the midst of many reforms, they stressed, it should not give away its 'policy space' to enact change in the public interest by signing treaties that could make it harder, or more expensive, to do so. It also shouldn't do this without genuine democratic debates.[20]

The OECD club of rich countries was among the international institutions closely watching Myanmar's policy reforms. In 2014, it published a review saying that the country's laws were 'often ill-suited to an open economy' and judging it to be the world's second 'most restrictive economy' to foreign investment, after North Korea.[21] Later, this institution would claim that many of its policy recommendations 'were instrumental in a series of important reforms implemented subsequently that have significantly improved the investment climate'; that they'd 'strengthened the investor protection regime' and had assured investors that 'Myanmar is a secure investment destination'.[22]

The idea that Myanmar needed to assure large foreign businesses that it was a 'secure' destination for their profit-making seemed to contradict the gold rush-style imagery painted by Win at the London embassy, among others. The latter lined up with the propaganda of 'risk-taking' capitalism; the former did not.

The OECD's reports about Myanmar also reflected what we had decided to investigate next: how unprecedented amounts of territory were being carved out and handed to private investors, including as SEZs.

Foreign investors had been significantly restricted in what land they can buy or lease in Myanmar, the OECD noted, including by a 1987 law that forbade them from acquiring property rights for more than a year at a time. Reforms had started to change this. Now, foreign investors could partner with or invest in a Myanmar company to acquire land under the same conditions as domestic investors. A 2014 SEZ law allowed foreign investors located inside zones to enter into long leases up to fifty years, extendable for another twenty-five.

Not only in Myanmar were we struck by such lengths of time. Unlike politicians and even voters in democracies, who often focus on the nearer future (the next election, for example), the time scales involved in the systems and strategies that we were investigating were often decades-long.

Winners and losers

From Myanmar, this was the new idea that we brought back to Gavin: we next wanted to look into the secession of territory globally to private investors.

At a London think tank called the International Institute for Environment and Development, we found a lawyer named Lorenzo Cotula who had described how SEZs vary widely in their details, but that they often involve ‘excluding or modifying the application of parts of the national law in defined geographic areas’.[23]

These weren’t just carve-outs of physical territory, therefore – they were also exceptional spaces where normal rules didn’t necessarily apply. These zones also seemed to often offer the – sometimes explicit – promise of a steady supply of cheap and compliant labour for investors’ factories. The reality of promised jobs included numerous reports of worker’s rights abuses in ‘sweatshops’.

The ILO said ‘trade unions point to these zones as being islands, outside the scope of traditional industrial relations … that are a symptom of the race to the bottom in the global economy.’[24] A worldwide patchwork of these spaces seemed to mean that, once one workforce began to mobilize and demand better wages or conditions, companies could leave and move on to another.

The World Bank, we found, had produced many reports studying and promoting SEZs.[25] Along with investing in private businesses, its IFC branch and other bank teams gave developing country governments ‘advice’ on how to make themselves more attractive to private investors, including what laws they should change. Such zones seemed to be a regular item on the menu.

In 2008, the IFC’s Facility for Investment Climate Advisory Services described SEZs as

> ‘demarcated geographic areas contained within a country’s national boundaries where the rules of business are different from those that prevail in the national territory. These differential rules principally deal with investment conditions, international trade and customs, and taxation; whereby the zone is given a business environment more liberal and effective than that of the national territory’.[26]

While governments passed laws, handed over territory and offered ‘incentives’ to investors setting up in such zones, we learned that a growing number of SEZs were themselves privately owned and operated.[27] Creating them – like challenging states with investor-state claims, and participating in aid and development efforts – had become a business in itself.

Among the varieties of these carve-outs were those focused on specific industries. We had to learn many new acronyms and terms, including export processing zones (EPZs), economic free zones (EFZs) and ‘enterprise zones’.

The idea of ‘incentivising’ investors to set up shop in specific areas had also spread beyond zones established by national governments – cities and regions were also following a similar model, competing with each other for investment. In 2013, Washington state gave Boeing $8.7 billion in tax breaks, until 2040, to build its new jet in the Seattle area. It was at the time the largest (but not the first, or last) state tax subsidy awarded in US history.[28]

Local governments were ‘stretching their necks out to compete over foreign direct investments – for every national agency, we have indeed approximately 50 at the local level promoting their economic interests’, said an article on the World Economic Forum’s website, describing cities as ‘epicentres of power and capital’.[29] It noted, for instance, that a World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) had 170 members – and over one-third were city-level or regional, rather than national, agencies.

A Columbia University study meanwhile estimated that around 8,000 subnational trade or investment promotion agencies existed globally.[30] World Bank research said such local agencies ‘tended to be more innovative’.[31]

In Central America, a wave of carve-outs had been in the news. In 2012, the Honduran government proposed a seemingly radical new programme called ‘Model Cities’, envisaging the creation of new corporate-governed cities. Supported by the conservative US economist Paul Romer, the idea was to experiment with whole cities run by business-friendly regimes, with their own laws, tax systems, judiciaries and police. A Honduran Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional, but proponents continued to push it.[32] And rather than truly radical, it seemed like another manifestation of trends we began following in Myanmar.

Patrick Neveling, then a researcher at Utrecht University, had studied SEZs for years. They are commonly ‘regulated differently than a nation’s “normal” territory, to the extent that they may have their own police forces with considerable sovereignty’, he said

The idea of carving out territories for private investors had quite deep roots – including historical ‘free zones’ in Roman antiquity – which promoters of new SEZs sometimes drew on, he continued, as a way to make the model seem ‘natural’. ‘It’s like saying: “Ever since we exited the Stone Age we’ve done this”.’

The first modern zone like this was established in the late 1940s in Puerto Rico, Neveling told us. But because of where it was established – in a de facto US colony, which could make SEZs seem like an imperial imposition – he said this fact wasn't very well-known and a different origin story was often presented instead. Usually, Shannon, Ireland was the place that zone-promoters pointed to, as where the first such space was set up.

This, Neveling said, was a more strategic choice for those who wanted to see this model expand across the world.

> In the 1950s or 60s it was advisable to have Ireland – a country that can portray itself as a victim of English imperialism – come up with this concept, or to make it look like they came up with it … They were not a non-aligned country, but they were a nation that was supposedly outside of the western world – they were the poorhouse of Europe and so forth. This way you could sell this SEZ model to the rest of the world as a kind of postcolonial endeavour.

Neveling described Shannon as key to the development and worldwide expansion of these zones, even if it was largely in terms of propaganda and being the 'right' character for the story proponents wanted to tell. Among those inspired was China – which opened its first SEZ in 1980.[33]

'China's meteoric economic rise over the past three decades is an unprecedented "growth miracle" in human history,' wrote World Bank Economist Douglas Zhang in a 2012 report crediting SEZs with helping to drive the country's 'remarkable development'. These zones led to more money – investment, exports and worker salaries – but also policy change, he said. They 'tested the market economy … and became role models for the rest of the country'.[34]

When we next met Gavin, we told him how the story of SEZs sounded very different depending on who told it, and that we'd decided to leave next for Ireland – and then for China – to learn more about their historic zones.

'Wow,' he said. 'You're on to another huge story.'

He also found it interesting how Neveling described storytelling efforts to make these zones more attractive, and less 'imperial', by claiming Shannon instead of recognising Puerto Rico as their modern birthplace.

'Smoke and mirrors,' he murmured, then sat up straight. 'You need to watch out – and stay focused on what you care most about. How this impacts democracy.'

'It's a big deal if companies can insulate themselves from democracy inside these zones,' he continued. 'It's a bigger deal if these places become "role models" for entire countries to follow. Then it's not just about the carve-outs, it's about everything.'

Chapter 12

Irish invention

Bash on regardless

The Shannon river, named after the Celtic goddess *Sionna,* is Ireland's longest and largest. It winds 360 kilometers through the country, dividing western Ireland from its eastern and southern regions, before emptying into the Atlantic Ocean not far from Limerick, one of Ireland's oldest cities, founded by Vikings in the ninth century.

This river had featured prominently in Irish social, economic and political history. It had been a major trade route for generations. In the seventeenth century, it was also a strategic military front amid expanding colonization of the island by the English. After war came famine, bubonic plague, Catholicism's banning, and the indentured labour of thousands of Irish, some of whom were sent to work in other English colonies.[1]

We landed at Shannon Airport, on a cheap Ryanair flight from London, on the trail of contemporary, corporate empires. In the mid-twentieth century, the river's name was borrowed for this new airport – and then for a new industrial zone which would inspire SEZs around the world, including in China.

The airport was built during the Second World War. It had taken years to drain the boggy land on which it was constructed, on the river's estuary. A 1945 deal between Ireland and the US required all American flights to land or stop here, and gave Irish airlines exclusive rights to serve Boston, Chicago and New York.[2] After the war, commercial airlines used the airport for transatlantic flights to and from North America. It became that era's key 'gateway' to and from Europe; planes couldn't carry enough fuel at that time and had to stop here before, or after, crossing the ocean.[3] Numerous VIPs stopped here as a result, including JFK and Mohammed Ali.

We landed in Shannon late in the evening. We had only brought carry-ons and could have zipped through the building to the taxi rank outside but we took our time instead: this place was key to the investigation we'd just begun.

On a wall we saw a display of historic, black-and-white photos, from after the war, and stopped to examine them. The excitement of a boom time seemed to radiate from the images of dignitaries and celebrities waving from staircases leading them off of planes, or from luxury cars passing through crowds.

All of the airport's stores had closed by the time we arrived, including its duty free shop – the world's very first. Such shops are now as common as security checkpoints in airports globally, with shelves stocked high with items like alcohol, cigarettes and perfumes. But they'd started here, after a local entrepreneur named Brendan O'Regan convinced the Irish government to pass a 1947 Customs Free Airport Act, exempting transit and embarking passengers, goods and aircraft from normal customs procedures.[4]

That wasn't O'Regan's last big innovation, however, as he would also be instrumental in setting up Shannon's zone, earning the tiny town a reputation as far away as Beijing. SEZs like the one we'd seen being built in Myanmar, and like thousands of others around the world, could trace their history back to this place. We had a long succession of interviews planned over the next few days, but our education began immediately.

Our taxi driver from the airport was friendly and curious about what had brought us to his corner of Ireland. When we explained he chuckled 'Bash On Regardless', explaining that this was O'Regan's nickname, based on his initials and his reputation for being a visionary entrepreneur who never gave up. As we drove past a tiny town called Sixmilebridge he pointed out: 'He was born right here'.

Everyone who lived in Shannon long enough seemed to know the story of O'Regan, who died in 2008 at 90 years old, and his innovations.

'He was a great person to motivate other people,' Tom Kelleher, an economist who had worked with O'Regan in the late 1960s and 1970s, told us in his office in nearby Limerick. 'Anything was considered, no matter how outlandish.'

Born in 1917, towards the end of the First World War, as a young man, O'Regan had travelled abroad to study hotel management.[5] Later, he worked in the catering business. But he was best remembered for being a creative and serial entrepreneur – and for transforming this area through his most influential invention: the Shannon Free Zone, established in 1959.

At that time, Shannon's airport – and the town around it – was in trouble. Aircraft technology was advancing, and it would no longer be needed for refuelling on transatlantic flights. Instead, planes that were increasingly able to travel longer distances looked ready to bypass and simply fly over the area.

The town faced economic collapse. In response, the story went, O'Regan argued that Shannon would have to 'pull the airplanes out of the sky'. He appealed to the national government with a dramatic proposal to carve out the 'free zone' territory and offer foreign investors freedom from regulations and taxation if they moved there, created new jobs, and helped to prevent the town's extinction.[6]

In exchange for setting up shop in the zone, foreign investors were given benefits like special tax holidays, tariff reductions and grants for research. Companies that accepted these offers, and moved to the zone, included a subsidiary of the De Beers diamond giant as well as Zimmer, which makes medical products including prosthetics and walking frames.

Next to the airport, the Free Zone only covered about one square mile of land – though its influence internationally had been disproportionate. It would inspire a growing number of other countries, companies and international institutions to get involved in similar zones set up around the world.

The middle of the world

The next morning, we drove to the zone. Walking through the gates, we passed large factories and office buildings but found few people to talk to. Most were busy working inside. Nearby, just outside the zone, we found a small convenience store and a café. We went inside for a coffee and met Mary, then 63-years-old, a talkative retired school principal who was sitting with a friend. She nodded vigorously when we asked her if she knew the story of O'Regan and the Free Zone.

Mary, born in Shannon, said it had been an exciting place to grow up. Because of the airport – which, thanks to the zone and the traffic it brought, did not end up closing – 'we thought we were in the middle of the world!' she exclaimed. 'I remember when President Kennedy came through, oh my God, the whole country stopped. Thousands of people went to the airport, it was amazing.' She chuckled. 'It wasn't quite the same when Ronald Reagan came.'

While the airport brought celebrities to Shannon on stop-overs, the zone brought new waves of international visitors, she explained – from corporate executives to government officials studying the development. 'Even at my own school, we would have children from all over the world because their dads or moms were working or doing research in Shannon,' Mary recalled. 'They might just come for a year, they might come for six months, they might come for five years, but we would have people from all over.'

O'Regan's plan to transform Shannon into a hub for foreign investors led to the development of Ireland's first new town in more than 200 years: Shannon Town, built on reclaimed marshland to house factory workers.

Paul Ryan, an economic consultant who grew up in this town, described it to us as ‘built from scratch and very much Milton Keynes-esque: the 1960s approach of, “Let’s turn it around, make the back of the house the front,” all of these green areas, common areas – it was all very much in that style’.

When we visited, Shannon was still tiny, with a population of just 9,673. Though foreign companies did open up shop in the Free Zone, the town’s size never truly boomed, as many workers commuted from nearby cities like Limerick, as well as from villages like Sixmilebridge where O’Regan had been born.

By the early twenty-first century, zones like these had spread worldwide, from Argentina to Cambodia. Many had also been set up with advice from Shannon consultants, like Ryan, who worked for Shannon International Development Consultants (SIDC).[7]

He told us that a selling point of these zones was the possibility to test policies in one area, before rolling them out nationwide: ‘Let’s say you want to try something, in a developing country, and you want to introduce new ways of doing business … having a zone, having an area that is ring-fenced and set aside from the rest of the economy, where you can try new approaches, is part of what makes it work.’

Ryan believed the town stayed small precisely because of its success in attracting foreign investment. ‘Shannon grew to a certain point, and then what worked in the free zone could be applied to the rest of the country,’ he said. ‘The need to have Shannon, this controlled area, went away.’ Though, he added: ‘Shannon continued to be an excellent brand – even today it is a big name’.

One of the keys to Shannon’s success, he stressed, was the development of Smithstown, a nearby industrial estate and satellite location for mainly Irish businesses who became sub-suppliers to larger businesses in the free zone.

‘You have to provide the Smithstown, you have to provide that indigenous industry starting point,’ he said. Otherwise, local businesses might not benefit.

This made sense, though it was not what we would see on the ground around many other zones – where ensuring that they benefit local industries and communities did not seem to be high on the agenda.

Symbolic Shannon

Since 2005, the Shannon Free Zone had the same 12.5 per cent corporate tax rate as the rest of Ireland. Now most businesses in the zone were in services, not manufacturing. It had become harder to tell what special perks investors received for being in the zone, as those offered in the past had since became national policy and spread across the island.

‘The nature of the business has changed and over time the fence that was around the zone, and the custom control points, have disappeared’, said Kevin Thompstone, president of the Shannon Chamber of Commerce. We met him in an office at a shopping mall in town, where he showed us a miniature model of Shannon, with tiny replica buildings. The fences, and customs controls, he explained, had been ‘originally set up because of the 0 per cent tax rate, that then was extended to other parts of the country’. Over time, he told us, ‘the fences came down and the benefits of a free trade zone were no longer so relevant because most of the exports were going to the EU, which was duty-free anyway. Really, today the Shannon Free Trade Zone name that you see on the entrance, is there more for marketing’.

At the airport, in the office of Shannon Group plc, an Irish state-owned company in charge of developing the area, we met strategy director Patrick Edmonds who told us a similar story. ‘There is now very little differentiation that we can achieve as a general purpose free zone, so that isn’t going to cut it.’ For such strategists, this posed the question: ‘Ireland is already an attractive location for investors for national-level reasons. So how do we actually differentiate Shannon?’

Until 2004, another state-sponsored company called Shannon Development had been responsible for many town and government services that would otherwise have been provided by local authorities. At that point, such functions were transferred to the local county, though the company retained authority over the free zone itself.[8]

When we arrived in Shannon, the airport still operated regular passenger flights to and from cities like London, New York and Warsaw, as well as some seasonal flights to places like Boston and Frankfurt.

The US military had also used Shannon for stopovers during the first Gulf War. After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, it was used to invade Iraq. In 2007, the Irish Human Rights Commission reviewed evidence suggesting that the airport was also being used for the refuelling of CIA ‘extraordinary rendition’ flights to secret detention and interrogation sites. One example it looked at was the case of Kuwaiti-born German national Khaled El-Masri, who was flown to Afghanistan and tortured for months (with no evidence ever emerging, or charges made, in relation to any terrorist activities). ‘The aircraft involved in his abduction,’ said the Commission, ‘had stopped in Shannon.’[9]

The airport’s military business was particularly controversial because Ireland had remained outside of NATO and had a policy of military neutrality. Throughout the 2000s, protestors targeted US military planes at the airport, while the transit of troops generated significant revenues for Shannon, helping to offset losses from fewer commercial flights. An estimated 2.5 million US troops had passed through here since 2001.[10]

An activist group called Shannonwatch had been campaigning against the use of Shannon airport by the US military on their way to and from wars in the Middle East. On a sunny morning we met Edward Horgan, a long-time activist with this group, who walked with us to the airport's edge. 'That's one right there', he told us, peering through binoculars at a military plane across the runway.

'The bulk of troops would have passed through on chartered civilian aircraft but we do know that those troops are carrying those weapons with them on the planes', Horgan told us, standing by a thin metal fence. Among the planes activists had documented here, he said, was the Lockheed C-130 Hercules military aircraft, which comes in various, including weaponized, versions.

It was striking that, despite its tiny size, Shannon had been touched in many ways by grand currents and global events for generations: from the expansion of international investment and SEZs to US military operations.

We were also struck in Shannon by the role of symbolism. We had heard how its zone was no longer such an exceptional space, given national policy changes, but that maintaining it and its name was useful for 'marketing'. It reminded us of what we had heard before – including in Myanmar where the World Bank's IFC had said that investing in a five-star hotel would send an important 'signal' to foreign investors that they would be comfortable in the country.

As early as the 1960s and 1970s, consultants from Shannon were working on designs for new free zones in Taiwan, Malaysia, Egypt and Sri Lanka. They also organized training courses, attended by representatives from governments around the world, on how to develop these zones.

Jiang Zemin, who later became China's president, visited Shannon as a junior customs official in 1980 and took one of these three-week training courses. At that time, China's leader Deng Xiaoping was starting to experiment with opening up its economy to international capital. The Shenzhen SEZ – China's first – opened the same year that Zemin returned from Shannon.

In 2005, Wen Jiabao, then China's leader, joined a long line of high-level Chinese dignitaries to come and pay their respects to the birthplace of the SEZ model they thank for their country's rise to economic superpower status.

Thompstone, at the Shannon Chamber of Commerce, told us that in the run-up to Wen's visit, the Chinese ambassador had asked their Irish hosts to make time for him to pause for reflection on the 'plateau' – a spot on the town's Tullyglass Hill that overlooked the grey, windswept, industrial zone.

‘This was the leader of China, a country with a population of 1.3 billion!’ Thompstone exclaimed, pausing at the memory of this incongruous spectacle – the political ruler of this superpower apparently humbled by Shannon, his tiny town in western Ireland. ‘To us it was just this nondescript place on the top of a hill, but for the Chinese, they wanted to see where it all started’.

Undoubtedly, Chinese leaders took the SEZ model ‘to a much bigger scale than anything that we did’, he continued, encouraging us to join him in marvelling at this story. ‘The Chinese were able to develop and grow on the back of this model from this little place called Shannon … and there’s something in their spirit that says, “You know those people who went before us, where did it start? Where did it come from?”’

Bad jobs

Other ‘early SEZs’, such as those set up in the Philippines in the 1960s and 1970s, were ‘almost like labour camps’, Jonathan Bach, a global studies professor at The New School in New York, told us. ‘You would bring in the workers, you’d house them in dormitories, you’d sort of use them up and get rid of them and then get new ones. And then if the cost of doing business got too expensive, or too problematic – if there were protests or something – you’d just pack up and move somewhere else.’

Some countries, we learned, gave investors in these zones clear and formal exemptions from national labour laws. In Pakistan, zone workers were forbidden to strike or take other industrial actions. In West Africa, labour inspectors in Togo struggled to even enter these zones. The Nigeria Export Processing Zones Decree promised: ‘There shall be no strikes or lockouts for a period of 10 years following the commencement of operations within a zone.’[11]

Even where there weren’t such explicit, formal exemptions from labour laws, local authorities seemed to be regularly accused of turning a blind eye to worker’s rights violations in these carve-outs.

Protests and rights violations at specific SEZs sometimes made headlines. But journalistic coverage of these spaces seemed very small compared to their scale and the number of people whose lives and livelihoods were affected by them.

Back at the CIJ, we charted the expansion of SEZs around the world. It seemed to happen around the time of the growth of the investor-state legal system, and international aid and development system that we’d investigated.

These zones emerged, at least in their contemporary form, in the same period in the mid-twentieth century as formal colonial regimes were winding down. They had also similarly boomed in the 1990s, at the end of the Cold War.

After the 2008 global financial crisis SEZs proliferated further, with countries from Myanmar to Cuba opening new zones. ‘Any country that didn’t have [an SEZ] 10 years ago either does now or seems to be planning one’, Thomas Farole, an expert on SEZs at the World Bank, boldly told *The Economist* in 2015.[12]

That year, Djibouti, Mozambique and South Sudan had joined the list of countries with plans for new zones. There were even carve-outs within carve-outs: in 2011, the tax haven Cayman Islands opened up a niche ‘tech zone’ within its territory. Setting up and managing these spaces had fuelled a whole industry of SEZ consultants, and not only from Ireland. In 2017, Chinese officials said that companies from their country had so far ‘set up 99 economic and trade cooperation zones abroad’.[13]

Often these developments came with publicly proclaimed goals to boost economic growth and create huge numbers of new jobs for local workers. But the voices of the many millions of workers that powered these spaces – and the many others who lived and worked in their shadows – were seldom heard.

Gavin encouraged us to find and listen to their stories for ourselves. We planned our next trip with this advice in mind: we would go to Shenzhen in China, the site of that country’s first and most famous SEZ, inspired by Shannon, Ireland.

The process for getting a visa for China seemed complicated and uncertain and even intimidating, especially for foreign journalists. But, we learned, the zone had its own, different rules. Visitors could get a special five-day SEZ visa on arrival.

We learned that international business travellers used this visa to visit the zone – but so did some tourists visiting theme parks in what was now a growing mega-city as well as discount shopping near the SEZ’s famous factories. And we learned that you could get there by train from Hong Kong, which sits east of the Pearl River estuary, surrounded by the South China Sea on all but its north side, neighbouring Shenzhen.

Hong Kong had been the UK’s last major colony, transferred to the People’s Republic of China in 1997 under a declaration that promised the island a ‘high degree of autonomy’ under a ‘One Country, Two Systems’ principle.[14] The deal was that it would be a ‘special administrative region’ of China for fifty years. After 2047, it could become fully integrated with the mainland, or fully independent. What would happen then was already the subject of huge debate.

We landed at Hong Kong’s international airport, one of the world’s busiest, buzzing with business travellers and tourists, amid growing tensions. Democracy and independence movements had swelled, led largely by young people who took to the streets to demand the right to directly elect their leaders.

We had taken a gruelling series of flights from London. Stepping outside, we were hit with suffocating humidity. Our bus from the airport weaved through streets of tall, thin blocks of apartments, offices, hotels and other buildings.

The budget hotel we'd booked had an open door onto the street, and a tiny elevator to its upper floors. Our rooms were minuscule with corners abruptly walled off for small showers and toilets. Tight spaces seemed more like the rule than the exception in Hong Kong, increasingly infamous for 'coffin apartments' or 'cage homes' – just large enough for a single bed, elevated in order to cram everything else underneath.

Like London, this was one of the world's international financial capitals *par excellence* – packed with skyscrapers, banks and corporate offices. They shared Hong Kong with more than 7 million people, making it one of the world's most densely populated places – as well as unequal and unaffordable for many.

The tallest building was the International Commerce Centre, with more than 100 stories. Above the offices of international banks and corporations, the five-star Ritz-Carlton Hotel and high-class restaurants occupied more than a dozen floors. On the rooftop was the world's highest swimming pool and bar. It was flashy and new – completed in 2010, after construction was temporarily halted the previous year, when a bamboo platform collapsed and six construction workers plunged to their deaths.[15]

Hong Kong had also once been an outpost of the East India Company – the most famous of the 'chartered companies' that helped to occupy and rule captured territories for colonial powers. The UK took direct control after the company began trading opium grown in India for tea from China, which led to a series of armed conflicts in the nineteenth century called the 'Opium Wars'.[16,17] In the twentieth century, Hong Kong developed one of Asia's largest manufacturing economies. Since the 1990s, it had soared as an international financial hub.

We walked to Kowloon, a bustling part of the city in the north by Victoria Harbour, named after the nineteenth-century British Queen. This area was where Edward Snowden had hidden in 2013, after blowing the whistle on mass surveillance practices by the US National Security Agency. First he had stayed in a luxury hotel, and then among asylum-seekers in cramped apartments at Chungking Mansions – a complex of buildings including shops, budget guesthouses and money changers.[18]

But we had come to Hong Kong primarily to leave it. The next day, we met a young woman who we had hired to be our translator. She told us about the questions she and others were asking, about how to make the promise of democracy real. We were fascinated by the role that young people like her had played in the recent protests, and listened carefully to her stories.

She also listened closely to what we told her: about how China's most famous special economic zone, next door, had been inspired by a project in Ireland, and how this model had since spread across the world. Even in our home, London, a new ‘enterprise zone’ was being built (by Chinese developers).

Then she took us around a street corner to buy new SIM cards. ‘These are for Shenzhen. Leave yours here, in your hotel,’ she said. ‘Be careful about what you bring tomorrow – your notes? Leave them here too.’

Chapter 13

Rights suspended

Five days in Shenzhen

The next day, we got on a train to Shenzhen. The carriage had standing room only. It was full of couples and families going in the same direction.

At the other end, we waited in a line with well-heeled tourists and besuited business travellers. Looking around us, the room seemed to be covered with surveillance cameras. We somewhat anxiously completed the required paperwork and waited for a Chinese immigration official to paste SEZ visas into our passports, valid for five days and only within the zone.

Our translator had gone into another line and it was hard to find her afterwards, in a large and busy square by Shenzhen's train station. She seemed nervous.

She had been one of the tens of thousands of young people to join Hong Kong's historic 2014 'umbrella movement' pro-democracy protests which lasted seventy-nine days. She had told us about her first taste of tear gas during these protests, and how their violent repression had shocked her; she now knew that 'stepping out of line' could carry serious risks.

Many people in Hong Kong were also on edge when we arrived because of then-ongoing disappearances of several well-known booksellers.[1] It was widely suspected that they were being held somewhere by Chinese security.

The men had all been affiliated with a popular, independent bookstore on the island that sold political books that were banned in China. One of them, Lam Wing-kee, later said that he had been abducted at the border with Shenzhen, right where we were.[2] But we didn't know this then. We were on-edge because of what we were going to do: meet embattled labour activists in what felt like one of the most heavily surveilled places in the world.

In 2010, Shenzhen's thirtieth birthday was celebrated with fireworks. China's President Hu Jintao called it 'a miracle'.[3] The zone's tens of thousands of factories had produced iPhones, clothes and more for export globally. But it was also now a flashy megacity with a total economic output that rivalled that of entire countries. Overhead, skyscrapers shone at night in flashing, neon colours. We saw familiar logos like KFC, McDonald's and 7-11.

It was again hard not to notice the surveillance cameras everywhere, mounted in plain view on buildings and metal poles. Some rotated. It was easy to feel like we were being followed by someone out of sight. The result was an eerie sensation that big businesses may have been welcomed in, but people were heavily controlled.

In the 2000s, Shenzhen had installed 200,000 closed-circuit cameras in public spaces as a practice run for China's Golden Shield programme, a project to create a vast database that would correlate video feeds with biometric data from cell phones and mandatory, national ID cards. Officially, this system was aimed at fighting crime. But it could also be used to tighten control amid unrest. One local company, Naomi Klein reported in *Rolling Stone*, had already developed software to let 'cameras alert police when an unusual number of people begin to gather at any given location'.[4]

Despite such high levels of surveillance, there had been a growing number of workers' protests in Shenzhen as well as across China. In Hong Kong, we had met activists at an NGO called the China Labour Bulletin that had been diligently documenting these events. They told us that the number of such protests in the country had grown from more than 1,300 in 2014 to over 2,700 the next year – including more than one a day in Shenzhen and neighbouring Guangdong province.

While some of these protests were about working conditions, others we learned had been prompted by the closure of factories – with workers accusing their bosses of cheating them out of full severance and social insurance payments.

Sometimes protesting workers tried to appeal to the state for help. In July 2015, for example, more than 100 workers at a Shenzhen factory supplying the giant fast-fashion brand Uniqlo had travelled to the capital of Guangdong province to petition local authorities. They said their factory had suddenly announced its closure and was leaving without paying debts to workers. But instead of meeting with them, officials called the police to drag them back to the zone.[5]

Sweatshop city

In January 1979, the then 74-year-old Communist Party leader Deng Xiaoping made a landmark trip to the US amid plans to 'open' China up to foreign investors. As the dignitaries stood at the White House for a nineteen-gun salute, Jonathan Steele at *The Guardian* noticed: 'A bright red cola delivery van passed by … It was a fitting symbol of the multi-million dollar bonanza which

American businessmen are looking forward to, thanks to China's new appetite for American trade, technology and credits.'[6]

The next year, in 1980 Deng Xiaoping opened the Shenzhen SEZ. In those early days, it was a small zone carved out of an otherwise rural farming and fishing area. To entice foreign investors into this carve-out, the government gave it the power to set its own tax and other business incentives. But it had something else to offer companies: a labour force of millions of rural migrants.

China's *hukou* system of household registration, introduced in the late 1950s to curb urbanization, severely curtailed these migrants' rights. It tied their access to services, including subsidised healthcare and education, to their place of permanent residency (which was hard to move). Migrant workers could get temporary resident permits, but these linked their status and rights to their employers.

Some factory bosses, we learned from labour rights activists in the area, seemed to have devised additional strategies to further tighten the screws – by requiring workers to pay 'security deposits', for example, or by seizing their identity documents. Many workers also lived in factory housing; in such cases, losing their jobs would also mean losing their homes.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Shenzhen became almost synonymous with 'sweatshop globalisation', with reports of workers toiling incredibly long hours in unsafe factories to make things like Mickey Mouse books, Teletubbies dolls and Reebok shoes.[7] Wages were not necessarily lower inside the SEZ, but conditions could be dire. Mandatory and unpaid overtime seemed commonplace. Workplace injuries had also scarred many people.

The hukou system had made it harder for workers to fight back. It was partly reformed after the death in custody of a university graduate in the northern Chinese city of Handan, in 2003, who had been arrested for not having his papers in order.[8] But change only went so far. Migrant workers still didn't have equal rights and could still struggle to access services.

Meanwhile, Shenzhen's workers also faced new challenges as the city began to pursue an aggressive agenda of 'upgrading' into tech and finance. The message seemed to be becoming clear for many of them: you're not needed anymore.

The first day of May is celebrated around the world as International Workers' Day, or 'May Day'. Officially, it is one of the most important holidays in China, and Shenzhen is supposed to be a quintessential 'workers city'. But instead of marches and rallies for labour rights, we found that it was a shopping day – focused on consumers, rather than producers. Stores were open, and assistants advertized their wares and sales through megaphones on the crowded streets.

We walked through some of these shopping streets and then took a taxi to spend the day meeting with labour activists and workers who made eyeglasses for export to Europe and the US at a huge factory in the Longgang district. First opened in the late 1980s, this factory was among those closing as the area around it was being 'redeveloped' into new offices and upscale apartments.

One 60-year-old migrant worker from western Guangzhou, who spoke to us on condition of anonymity, said he'd moved to Shenzhen in 1997. Two years later, he was injured at work. 'I was soldering tables and chairs and a spark went into my eye', he recalled. He went to a doctor, and received 'an official certificate, but … the company said, "If you want compensation, you have to resign"'.

We spoke in the small one-room apartment he shared with his son, who also worked at the factory. 'Everybody in this building works there', the father told us, sitting barefoot on the edge of the bed that takes up most of the space.

Now that the factory where they worked was closing, he said that he and many of his co-workers were effectively being forced into retirement. This was Shenzhen 2.0: a financial centre where many migrant workers, having outlived their utility, were now being pushed out of the place they helped to build.

Later that day, we walked through the streets of Longgang with that factory worker's son. 'It's hard to get another job', he told us. 'In this area they are not opening new manufacturing plants. Factories are being replaced by offices.'

Like everywhere else in the city, surveillance cameras were prominently in view on the street, outside the factory, at the intersection, by the bus stop.

'I'm not afraid of the government. I'm fighting for my rights', he stated firmly. But he added that he was likely going to leave Shenzhen himself, and return to western Guangzhou. Life as a migrant worker in this city was becoming increasingly impossible, he explained, and because of this 'many people are leaving'.

In 2015, China was celebrated internationally for having 'lifted out of poverty' almost 750 million people since 1990. 'This is a huge contribution for global poverty alleviation,' said UNICEF.[9] It was the reason why the world met the UN Millennium Development Goal of halving extreme poverty globally.

Other figures also attracted international attention. China's per capita income, for example, increased fivefold between 1990 and 2000, from $200 to $1,000. By 2010, it had reached $5,000 and China moved into the ranks of middle-income countries.[10]

But top-line figures could mask important details. Many of those 'lifted out of poverty' were only barely above the extreme poverty line (which wasn't high – the equivalent of a couple of dollars a day). Inequality rose dramatically.

The workers we met in Shenzhen described how their cost of living had soared in the increasingly flashy metropolis. Whole neighbourhoods where migrant workers lived for decades were being demolished. Many were being left homeless as well as jobless, as many factories moved to other Asian countries, or to inland China provinces, where they could pay lower wages.

Jonathan Bach at The New School told us that this zone's initial purpose had been to experiment with 'ideas about the market and labour and capital, and using those ideas to influence the rest of the country'. Policies pioneered here, including short-term labour contracts and performance-based wages, had since been rolled out nationwide. In the process, Shenzhen's questions changed.

They were no longer, Bach said, 'How do you get as many workers into Shenzhen as you can?' but rather, 'How do you get the low-skilled workers demanding higher wages out?' He argued: 'That's the whole name of the game in the global economy: to play countries off one another. And the idea of the SEZ was sort of to allow countries to have different jurisdictions, even within their own national jurisdictions.'

Union-free dreams

We next flew into Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. This south-east Asian country had also begun championing SEZs, albeit more recently. It seemed to be on the map, along with neighbouring Vietnam, as a destination for factories leaving Shenzhen. A new Special Economic Zone Act was passed in 2005. But unlike similar legislation in other countries, it didn't seem to grant significant tax breaks to foreign investors setting up shop in new zones. So what was it about?

At first, we learned, the Cambodian government tried to exempt companies in these zones from following national labour law. One person with knowledge of the legislation negotiations said the Ministry of Commerce approached lawyers for 'technical advice' asking things like 'well, how can we make the zones union-free?'

Tola Moeun, the executive director of Centre for Alliance of Labour and Human Rights (CENTRAL), a Cambodian worker's rights group, also told us: 'When investors started to think about the economic zones, the government tried to introduce a new law … for the zone, to make it so that the current labour law would not apply in the zone itself'. The initial idea was 'no freedom of association, no freedom for collective bargaining and so on. No right to strike,' Moeun said, although the government eventually 'stepped back from their plan' amid opposition including from unions.

However they would seem to succeed in making it de facto impossible for workers to organize within SEZs, through other means – including by restricting access to these zones and not letting worker's rights groups inside.

When we arrived in the country, recent years' double-digit economic growth rates had triggered a wave of new construction projects in Phnom Penh including new hotels, restaurants and residential high rises. Real estate prices were rapidly increasing. The country had also become a hotspot for new industrial developments. Several special economic zones had been opened; they were home to many factories as well as sites of growing protests.

About an hour's drive west of Phnom Penh, we found one of these zones. Cambodia's first: the Phnom Penh Special Economic Zone (PPSEZ). After crawling along traffic-jammed and dusty roads, we arrived at its imposing front gate. Crossing into it was like entering an alternative version of the country, with pristine tarmacked streets lined by factories.

We ended up visiting this zone twice – first, with a public relations firm that represented it. They drove us in an air-conditioned 4x4 with leather seats, in which we were oblivious to the 40 degree heat outside. This zone was not administered by the government but by a private company, and we had an appointment with Hiroshi Uematsu, the Japanese CEO of the zone, in its management building.

We sat in an air-conditioned office while Uematsu outlined PPSEZ's founding goal to attract manufacturers from wealthier countries, and especially Japan, to open factories. 'In 2007, there were very few Japanese factories in Cambodia, though there were many already in Thailand and Vietnam', he set the scene.

Almost a decade later, the PPSEZ had succeeded in drawing in forty-four Japanese firms – as well as thirty-two companies from thirteen other countries. Yamaha had a factory here, and Coca-Cola was building one. Other names were lesser-known, but were suppliers or subsidiaries of big brands like Timberland, Puma, Apple and Old Navy.

Uematsu told us that he was happy with his work in Cambodia. 'I sometimes face [sic] directly with labour union activities', he explained, but 'in the Philippines I have to be very careful, with smoked glass and security'.

Though Cambodia also seemed to have a militant workforce. At the end of 2013, a national strike brought thousands of workers out onto the streets to demand a minimum wage of $160 a month. At the time, it was nearly half that – $85 monthly. The government eventually increased it to $140 to quell the uprising.[11] While we were talking to Uematsu in the PPSEZ, outside of the National Assembly in Phnom Penh hundreds of protesters clashed with police and two received head wounds after parliament passed a new trade union law that would make it even harder for workers to organize independently.[12]

The second time we went to the PPSEZ, two days later, we travelled in a tuk tuk with a translator from the Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers' Democratic Union (CAWDU), one of several, embattled independent labour unions in the country. This time, we had arranged to meet with workers who had previously been dismissed from their jobs at one of the zone's garment factories.

Their only crime, these workers told us, was trying to independently organize. ‘It is very difficult if [an] employer knows that I worked for, or was related with the union. It means they will find any way or method to dismiss me’, Leng Sophen, a then 29-year-old who had worked in packaging in the factory, told us.

We met in a coffee shop outside the zone’s gates. The workers seemed nervous at the site of a burly man who sat down at a nearby table.

After he lost this job, Leng said got one in another factory. But, he explained, ‘the first contract is usually a short term contract and when they understood that I was related with the union, they dismissed me when the contract expired’.

Officially, firing workers for organizing is illegal in Cambodia. So is hindering organizing efforts. Several of the multinational companies that sourced products from Cambodian SEZs had adopted corporate codes of conduct explicitly supporting the rights of workers to unionize. We contacted six, receiving responses from only two.

Skechers said it complied with Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America guidelines, which affirmed rights to unionize. But the company would not even confirm or deny whether it manufactured goods in Cambodia’s Manhattan SEZ, where we would go next. In its response, Levi Strauss denied that it sourced products from SEZs, although a PPSEZ jeans factory listed Dockers, one of the company’s subsidiaries, as among its buyers.

But Leng, other workers and labour activists we interviewed came to the same conclusion: it was even harder for people to organize to protect and advance worker’s rights within these zones, compared to outside of them.

Cambodia gained independence from France in the early 1950s – however its history would continue to be affected by foreign powers. The Vietnam War, and US bombing, extended into the country in 1965. In 1970, a military coup ousted Cambodia’s king and installed a new right-wing pro-US regime. The Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, then took over and led a genocide – infamous for its ‘killing fields’.[13]

The government of Hun Sen, Southeast Asia’s longest-serving non-royal leader, had been in power since 1985. Most of Cambodia’s labour force was represented by ‘yellow unions’ linked politically to his ruling party. They were criticised for effectively representing the government and employers, rather than workers. Independent labour activists had meanwhile been beaten, detained or imprisoned on dubious charges, and murdered. In January 2004, Chea Vichea, the founder and leader of the Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia and a supporter of the opposition Sam Rainsy Party, was shot and killed while reading a newspaper in the street.[14]

In a 2013 report brazenly entitled ‘Where Have All The Poor Gone?’ the World Bank celebrated ‘tremendous’ economic growth in country over the preceding decade, calling it among ‘the best in the world’, along with dramatic reductions in the number of people living in extreme poverty, from 52 per cent to 21 per cent, ‘surpassing all expectations’.[15]

In passing, this report also acknowledged that ‘the majority of these people escaped poverty only slightly: they remain highly vulnerable – even to small shocks – which could quickly bring them back into poverty,’ as well as the fact that ‘human development, particularly in the areas of health and education, remains an important challenge.’ But its overall message seemed to be praise for this ‘success story’.[16]

Farming had long been a mainstay of the economy with the country exporting large amounts of rice, rubber, soybeans and other crops. Now, textiles and tourism were its greatest sources of hard currency though pay and conditions for workers seemed dire. In 2015 Cambodia ranked among the worst places in the world for organized labour in the International Trade Union Confederation’s Global Rights Index, categorized as a country with ‘no guarantee of rights’.[17]

Per capita income remained much lower than neighbouring Vietnam and Laos.[18] Human rights groups and the UN had sounded alarms over restrictions on the media, freedom of expression and political participation.[19] Cambodia additionally had one of the world’s highest rates of deforestation, including from large-scale clearings for big construction and agricultural projects and from illegal logging in national parks and wildlife sanctuaries threatening endangered species with extinction.[20] Allegations of ‘land grabbing’ by companies as well as authorities were multiplying.[21]

Cracks in Cambodia

A main opponent of a higher minimum wage in Cambodia was the GMAC garment manufacturers association. In their Phnom Penh offices, we met secretary general Ken Loo, who told us: ‘I don’t believe in a minimum wage; I believe in market forces.’ ‘Hardworking workers,’ he continued, ‘could be earning a lot more, but … they have to subsidise the lazy bums’.

Some of these so-called lazy bums told us a different story. ‘$140 a month is not enough for us, but we still do it,’ said Sokha Khan, a then 36-year-old garment worker who supported her husband and children on her small wage. Other workers said this amount may cover one frugal person’s living expenses, but not a family’s.

Women made up 95 per cent of Cambodia’s SEZ workers – a statistic which also seemed based on harmful gender stereotypes. In 2015, an Asian Development Bank research paper recounted: ‘It is said that females possess the nimble fingers and patience with routine tasks required by the labour-intensive processes generally occurring in the zones and that they are also less likely than males to strike or disrupt production in other ways'.[22]

In the capital, we also went to the Cambodian offices of the US organisation the Solidarity Centre, part of the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). It was the afternoon that the much-criticised trade union law was passed by the government. The heads of independent unions from around the country were composing a joint statement in response. There, we met Ou Tepphallin, vice president of the Cambodian Food and Service Workers' Federation. She also told us organizing in SEZs is

> not easy, because the workers stay in the block and there is a barrier between the union representatives, it's not easy to share information [with workers] inside … If we need to coordinate with our members, we need to make an appointment, and if they don't allow us inside, it's not easy for a union leader or activist to go inside to ask or make an appointment about worker issues.

Such obstacles had not stopped workers' protests, however.

We next drove four hours east, across the Mekong River, to the Bavet region on Cambodia's eastern border with Vietnam. This was where the Manhattan SEZ was opened in 2006. It had been an epicentre of militant workers' actions ever since – despite (or because of) the lack of independent unions inside.

Bavet had been among the most bombarded areas under Operation Menu, the secret 1969–1970 campaign in which the US dropped a greater tonnage of bombs on Cambodia than it had on Japan during the whole of the Second World War.[23] Now the area, of lush fields and wide dusty roads, was home to countless casinos as well as three huge SEZs.

Such zones around the world were often established in border towns or near ports, for the convenience of companies' imports and exports. What developed around them was often transient and ad-hoc as a result – with shops and services set up and homes and infrastructure built as quickly as possible. This rushed development and a lack of stability created impersonal atmospheres.

We got through the zone's gates by mentioning the name of its manager, with whom we had been in contact over email. He wasn't there, but it was enough to get us inside, where we found a trail of workers walking silently down a long thoroughfare, some to take their lunch break, others on their way home. All seemed reluctant to speak to us – about their work or unions.

One then 34-year-old garment worker responded to our questions with terse answers. She said she was paid between $140 and $150 a month. When we asked if she was a member of a union, she said she didn't know anything about this and abruptly ended our conversation. Others did similarly.

We had better luck at a cafe outside the zone's gates, where we met five women who worked at the same factory. None of them said they were members of a union either; rather, they said the option of joining a union was never mentioned to them. Instead, they described a 'shop steward' who performed a mediation role, likely on behalf of the factory. 'If there was a union inside the factory, it would be good because we could demand something', said one woman. 'Normally we just come to work, and then we go back home to take care of our husbands and children, that's all.'

Ath Thorn, president of the Cambodian Labour Confederation (CLC), told us that he was not surprised to hear that some workers were not aware of unions. 'In the Bavet economic zones, a few years back there was [a] general strike, and the shooting of three of the workers,' he explained, 'and from that time if we are comparing, now they are really strict, now they do not allow our union to organise over there and when we saying something in the zone they do not allow it, they just block it.'

But making independent organizing impossible seemed to be having some unintended results. 'From time to time, this zone is very interesting', Thorn continued: 'If they want to increase their salary they mobilise without a leader and join together. If they want to do something now they will strike in the whole zone. But when we are not allowed easy access inside, it's not managed there, so violence happens during every protest.'

Something was bubbling under the surface. The government's emphasis on SEZs seemed to be part of a move to neutralize organized labour. But, amid fewer opportunities to organize, and harsh crackdowns, several people we spoke to predicted a potential explosion of frustration in the not-too-distant future. Warehousing workers within these zones wouldn't work forever.

Chapter 14

Private cities

A CEO for your city

Shenzhen was famously China's first SEZ – but it wasn't Asia's. That was the Kandla Special Economic Zone, in India. It opened in 1965, at the height of the Cold War, offering foreign investors favourable tax and customs regimes, and better infrastructure than they could find outside of it.

Krishan Kumar, the SEZ's development commissioner, told us that one of this zone's initial objectives was to generate exports and foreign exchange for the country. He also said that its early success sparked international interest. 'I have heard even Chinese came here in the 1970s and early 80s. And now obviously the Chinese have taken the lead and gone far beyond us.' Walking around the area, however, the weight of this history was not easily felt. It was not ever-present; the zone was marked only by a decaying sign.

Each of the zone's roads was lined with factories and we stopped to peek inside them where we could. Inside the Sharda Metal Industries factory, which made stainless steel kitchen products for European and US markets, we found a dark, very hot space. Workers sweated visibly as they beat metal into shape and polished it on the floor.

By the early 1990s, India had established seven of these zones across the country. By the end of the 2000s, there were more than 500 in various stages of planning, construction and operation. In 2005, parliament passed a new Special Economic Zone Act to oversee the growing number of SEZs in the country. Parties on both the right and left had pushed them as part of their development strategies.

India was meanwhile pioneering another form of corporate carve-outs too: entirely private cities, including Lavasa – the country's first city built and run entirely by a corporation, outside of Mumbai and almost 900 kilometers south of its Kandla zone. Naturally, this was where we decided to go next.

Lavasa was the $30 billion baby of billionaire industrialist Ajit Gulabchand. It said it would draw on principles of New Urbanism – an urban design movement promoting ‘walkable’ communities. But a company would be in charge. Instead of a mayor, a city manager would be appointed by the board of Lavasa Corporation Limited (LCL).

‘The company has sweeping rights over nearly all aspects of the life of the residents’, warned Persis Taraporevala, a researcher at the Centre for Policy Research think tank in New Delhi in 2013. It will have ‘the right to evict, to tax, to determine the use and design of land, to change the governing body and to change the rules while controlling the rights of people to object to these processes’.[1]

Lavasa’s city manager, Mukund Rathi, explained that its quasi-totalitarian governance model should not last forever. ‘This private corporation is running this city transiently, eventually this will have to be a democratic city’, he told us in his office. ‘But not until the city has been developed.’

The NewCities international non-profit organisation said Lavasa would have what was ‘distinctly lacking in most current Indian cities’, including ‘an uninterrupted power supply, high-speed internet, e-governance, drinkable tap water, and a walkable city in which the need for cars is minimal’.[2] But it seemed clear that only a minority of people would be able to benefit.

The least expensive apartments were selling for between $17,000 and $36,000 – while the national minimum wage was just over $2 a day.[3] As the development would also need people to work in its schools and shops, for example, there were plans to build some cheaper homes – however its primary residents would be those they’d serve.

Inside the ‘All American Diner’, 1950s rock’n’roll played through a tinny speaker, the booths were traditional red and the burgers were suitably oversized. But outside our window were the rolling, verdant Sahayadri mountains of western India.

We were 8,000 miles away from where the ‘diner’ was born in the late nineteenth century, in the US.[4] Around the same time, the British Raj – direct rule by the British Crown, which took over from the East India Company and lasted until 1947 – was establishing itself here. Among its signature institutions were ‘hill station’ resorts for colonial officials tired of the mad hustle and bustle of Indian cities to escape for breaks.[5]

Since India’s independence in 1948, no new hill stations had been established – until Lavasa. When fully built, the development intended to consume 100 square kilometers and have a total population of up to 300,000 in five ‘towns’ built on the hills. After numerous delays, it said its construction would be done within twenty years, but it still sounded ambitious. Concrete innards and steel girders of unfinished buildings were all around us.

The biggest building in the development by then was the Lavasa International Convention Centre, managed by the hospitality multinational Accor Hotels and meant to be a major draw for international events. It was closed when we were there, with construction stalled around it and the skeleton of a new apartment building behind it.

A Town and Country Club was also almost empty. There, we met guest relations manager Jenny Peiray. Originally from the state of Manipur in the extreme east of India, she told us that she got around 13,800 rupees ($185) a month for six days of work a week. On her day off, ‘I clean up my room, I wash my clothes, and I go to the shop to buy some groceries, and I prepare my lunch and dinner’. In a ‘city’ with far more weekend visitors than full-time residents, she explained: ‘My colleagues are my friends. I don’t have a boyfriend … Most people are single’.

Portofino Street – named after the elite resort town on the Italian Riviera – followed the edge of a man-made lake. By the waterfront, we found a grand glass-fronted building housing the Lavasa Information Centre. It was empty of people but full of upbeat corporate-speak. A small mounted TV offered a touch-screen presentation. ‘Driven by an obsession with its customers’, it said, Lavasa allows them to ‘Live, Learn, Work, and Play in harmony with nature’. Behind an unmanned front desk was Lavasa’s logo, a clipart-style human transforming into a clipart-style flying bird.

Climbing up to the fourth floor of this building, we found a series of rooms that seemed to have been left to decay, full of boxes and unpainted walls from which electrical fittings hung loose, wires across the floor. In some places, the ceiling had huge damp marks across it. Like much of the development, scratching the surface, it looked hollow underneath. Even the name Lavasa was the invention of a US branding firm – meant to sound somewhat Hindi, poetic and mysterious, but having no meaning.

Outside again, we met Dhaval and Vidhi Shah, who were just leaving to go home after coming to Lavasa for a night. ‘In Mumbai it’s very hot, but you can relax here,’ said Dhaval, an engineer. ‘We found out about Lavasa from our friends and relatives. They said the climate is very good, and everything is planned and works. Nothing in India is planned; this city is more planned, it’s more efficient and clean.’

‘But it doesn’t solve the problems of Indian cities,’ Vidhi chimed in. ‘It’s a very expensive city because it’s totally planned,’ she told us, concluding that Lavasa seemed ‘more a holiday place for most people, a weekend place. The facilities are not great … it’s just a hill station, so for living over here it’s not that suitable.’

Clean air for sale

We next landed in Hanoi, Vietnam – which celebrated its 1000th birthday in 2010 – to explore how private enclaves were also shaping this ancient city. In its busy Old Town we zigzagged through scooters that flooded knotted, narrow streets. Above hung clothes drying from balconies and messes of electrical wires.

After sunset, lights came on and shops stayed open. People gathered at small cafes, sitting on very low stools. Streets still bore the names of trades that had long clustered there, like Hang Bo (baskets). On corners, elderly women burned fake bank notes in rituals honouring ancestors.

This area's energy was what had put the city on the map for many international tourists. But it was also, we learned, what had made many elites retreat. A growing number of sometimes giant gated communities had been built around Hanoi. Enormous master-planned developments were taking over farms and rice fields. Former collective housing blocks were being replaced by private complexes.

These developments were inelegantly and very clearly separating the wealthy with high walls and 24-hour private security from street hawkers, congestion and pollution. We were struck by how many of them seemed to specifically advertise cleaner air and environments within their walls, promising green oases for the few that could afford to live there.

In northwest Hanoi, we found one of these developments: the multi-billion dollar Ciputra International City complex, which marketed itself as a 'peaceful oasis among the hustle and bustle of Hanoi'.[6] Surrounded by walls, it covered 3 square kilometers of former farmland. Inside, beige villas were set amid lush gardens with monthly rents as high as £3,000. Under construction were a mega-shopping mall and a private hospital. Wide, quiet roads were flanked by parked, luxury cars, palm trees and statues of Greek gods. The only sound of life was that of children playing at a private school.

Built in the early 2000s to house up to 50,000 people, Ciputra was Hanoi's first 'integrated new town development', and the first overseas project of the Ciputra Group, an Indonesian conglomerate that specialises in large-scale property developments. It seemed designed so that residents would rarely need to interact with the wider world.

Outside the development's gates, we met Lam, then 40-years-old, who described how he'd grown up in the area which was once covered by fields of rice and cherry blossoms, kumquat and peach trees. Now he had a small business selling custom-made picture frames out of a shop-front carved out of his house. Only occasionally, he explained, did he get business from Ciputra residents as 'rich people and foreigners will go to big, fancy shopping malls. We are nearby but not many people come here'.

'Before, most people were poor. Now it's different', this man said, about how Hanoi has become more noticeably unequal. 'I have enough to live on, so I don't really think about it much. But some people are so rich, and some are so poor.'

'This side is just ordinary people. Over there, they are rich', added Mien, then 59-years-old, who like Lam ran a small business out of her home selling tea, cigarettes and bottles of water and soda. A handful of small plastic stools were scattered on the pavement in front of her one-room house across the street from Ciputra. Between customers she lounged on a wire bed frame with no mattress. 'Over here we have just enough to live on', she said.

Across the city, work was under way at another enclave: the $8 billion Ecopark, on the eastern edge of Hanoi.[7] It promised 'perfect harmony of humans and nature' with planned green spaces, a purpose-built 'old town' and a golf course. Its first phase, named Palm Springs after the California desert resort city, had just been completed.

Unlike foreign-built Ciputra, this enclave was being developed by a joint venture of Vietnamese property companies. Though they were also working to attract foreign investors, and residents – including the British University Vietnam, which was building a $70 million campus on the site that would award degrees from the University of London.[8]

On a weekday afternoon, we found the development quiet with many more guards on the streets than pedestrians. Beyond the swimming pool, a shop – without any customers – had a floor lamp in the window on sale for the equivalent of £1,200.

For most Vietnamese, Ecopark was far from a realistic housing option – and its development had been marred by repeated protests from local communities. In 2006, construction was temporarily suspended amid such protests.[9] They erupted again in 2009 and in 2012, when police fired teargas into crowds of local villagers. Several protesters were arrested and journalists were also reportedly beaten by the police.[10]

Outside Ecopark's gates, we met villagers who told us that thousands had been displaced by the development – forced to give up their land, with many former farmers now unemployed and in debt as a result of losing their livelihoods.

Phu was one of them. The octogenarian former rice farmer said his family didn't receive enough compensation for the loss of their land to the enclave and that they were now without work. 'People didn't want to sell the land because farmers have to have land, just like factory workers need factories', he told us. 'Now that we've lost the land, what should we do?' At 83-years-old, he said he was too old to change careers. 'There's nothing I can do now.'

Across Vietnam, the percentage of people living in extreme poverty had fallen from nearly 60 to just over 20 per cent in the previous twenty years.[11] Inequality had also soared and the number of super-rich (with assets over $30 million) more than tripled in ten years.[12] Wealth gaps were large nationwide but were particularly noticeable in cities.

Danielle Labbé, at the University of Montreal, estimated there were about thirty-five 'new urban areas' already completed in Hanoi, with as many as 200 more in the pipeline. She told us that this development boom was spurred by two key pieces of legislation: a new land law in 2003, and a decree in 2007 that transferred power to redevelop land to local authorities (previously, such decisions had to be taken by the prime minister). Afterwards, Vietnam also loosened long-standing restrictions on foreign ownership of companies and property in the country – further fuelling these trends.

This development boom had triggered 'protests, everywhere in the country, in the last few years,' Labbé told us. People who were being displaced 'know how much their land is worth,' and how without it they will have 'very few opportunities'.

'They don't get jobs in these projects', she continued, which 'are not planned to generate very much employment besides domestic services, working as maids, which is not what most villagers are hoping for themselves or their children'.

Private futures worldwide

From east Asia, we next travelled to the southeast of the US – to Florida, which had also become something of a laboratory for ambitious, and sometimes surreal, mega-developments. They included Celebration, an unusual town developed by the Walt Disney Company near its theme park resort. For years, Disney had remained the owner of its downtown area and golf course, though these had since been sold off (to private investors).[13] What remained was a bizarre, life-size model of a 'perfect' small American town.

Alongside perfectly paved roads we found leafy trees and buildings painted in soft colours: lavender, cotton white and light yellow. Elevator music played from speakers mounted throughout the town centre. Across a man-made lake was an art-deco style cinema. A large wooden sign, standing amid carefully manicured bushes with yellow flowers, marked the entrance of a lakeside park but specified: 'Celebration residents ID required. Park areas close at dusk'.

One of the busier shops along the town's few central streets was a bakery serving upscale dog treats. At a nearby bar, the back of the menu explained that Celebration's first residents moved in on 18 June 1996, after a 'lottery' the previous year. It now had 8,502 residents with an average household income of $92,000 and a median home cost of $543,800.

After about an hour's drive from Celebration, we found something else: the site of a proposed, brand-new 'fully functioning city' that by 2080 could house as many 500,000 people. It was controversial because of its expected impact on the environment – and the secrecy of the business behind it.

This development's plan included 'a variety of centres and neighbourhoods' with a total 'footprint of around one square mile – equal to [that] of downtown Orlando'.[14] Office blocks, high-rise hotels and apartment buildings were among the structures anticipated, along with new schools, a hospital, parks, a university, new motorways and rail lines.

The location was Deseret Ranch: part of the vast property empire of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which had become one of the biggest landowners in Florida. The ranch had already expanded almost six-fold to occupy more than 1,100 square kilometers. It reportedly sold cows to Cargill, and oranges to Tropicana, as well as renting land to hunters and other companies. Though Deseret declined to confirm details of how its land was used.

It said: 'As a private investment affiliate of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Deseret Ranch does not release financial information or details about our production and customers.' A church's press office also wouldn't answer our questions.

Ryan Cragun, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Tampa, told us this tight-lipped approach wasn't surprising. He'd previously worked with Reuters to estimate that the Mormon church owned properties worth $35 billion.[15] 'Their finances are a black box', he told us, adding that the church stopped releasing annual financial information to its own members years ago. 'Estimating their total land holdings? Good luck … Nobody knows how much money the church actually has.'

On an overcast weekday afternoon, we joined a tour of the ranch led by Mormon missionaries. Fields, orange trees and grazing animals stretched as far as we could see. We learned that it was home to a jaw-dropping 40,000 cows.

The next day, we met Jenny Welch, then 54-years-old, a registered nurse and environmental activist who lived in the area. 'Until this happened the ranch was a quiet neighbour,' she said. 'When I first moved here in 1980, I thought it was great because it would never be developed. This is such environmentally important land.'

'We fought it and fought it and fought it,' added Karina Veaudry, a landscape architect and member of the Florida Native Plant Society, describing it as a 'David and Goliath' struggle. 'This is not a typical housing development. It is an entire region of the state of Florida – and it is the last remaining wilderness', Veaudry stressed. The plan was on an unprecedented scale, and 'impacts the entire state, ecologically'.

Concerns about Deseret's plan included how much water it would consume, the impact of proposed new roads and the amount of land set aside for conservation. Veaudry said environmental groups had tried to engage with the plans from the beginning by raising concerns but also suggesting enhanced measures to protect local ecosystems. But, she said, what was ultimately approved was ‘pretty much the nail in the coffin’ for decades-long efforts to establish a north-south wildlife corridor.

It would put ‘literally a city right in the middle of it’, she said.

The development wouldn’t be built quickly, and more approvals would be needed on specific details. This did not reassure Veaudry, however. ‘The main guidelines, the amount of conservation, how wide the buffers have to be, all of that is already approved and set … as I understand it, the damage is done.’

More than 2,000 kilometers north, in Vermont we met local residents fighting another epic city-building plan near the birthplace of the founder of the Mormon church, Joseph Smith. This time, rather than the church there was a Utah businessman behind the project, who had made his money in big energy, selling sophisticated drilling tools to the oil and gas industry.

As soon as we entered the area around South Royalton – a picturesque New England village that had been captured on film and shown off to millions in the opening sequence of the popular TV series Gilmore Girls – we saw the signs of their protests. ‘Together we can stop NewVistas’: these words seemed to be everywhere: on stickers on telephone poles; posters on bulletin boards; and on large signs planted in the grass.

NewVistas was the name of the businessman’s project to build several new master-planned towns in the area, inspired by notes written by Smith in the early nineteenth century.[16] It was also pitched, however, as a futuristic development that would offer a new ‘urban model and economic system for the twenty first century’. Detailed plans included specific designs for three-storey ‘standard buildings’ with apartments, businesses and some farming and manufacturing all located in one place – and internal walls and floors that could be moved by robotic systems, so that people could live in small, easily rearranged spaces. ‘Walkway-podway’ systems (elevated sidewalks and underground tubes) would transport people and goods. New toilets would monitor users’ health.

Each complete ‘NewVista’ would have as many as one million people living in fifty community units, each with a population of 15,000 to 25,000. They would be ‘organised according to a private capitalistic economic structure. The community is not a political entity but a productive enterprise, like a company town’, the project’s website explained. A corporation would control things like ‘land use, transportation, and community environment, which are usually matters of government concern’.[17]

‘NewVistas is my own modern interpretation of Joseph Smith’s community documents’, David Hall, the businessman behind it, told us over the phone from Provo, Utah, acknowledging that his plans had been controversial.

To make them a reality, he had been buying land in rural Vermont – lots of it. By the time we arrived in the area, the NewVistas project was thought to have already purchased as many as 1,500 acres of land – with plans to buy much more.

We knew this because of the careful eye and research of a young librarian, Nicole Antal, who'd uncovered a series of local land purchases and traced them back to Hall and his NewVistas plans. We met her in the evening at a pub where she explained that she'd first found it all hard to believe – particularly the scale. 'This is very big for Vermont … This is not one guy buying a house and trying something new', adding: 'I don't like that this is being imposed on us', she said. Many others would echo this.

'It hit us like a ton of bricks', said another concerned local resident Jane Huppe, then 58-years-old, of Hall's 'top-down' plans which she feared could completely overwhelm existing communities.

'We didn't waste any time when this came up,' added Michael Sacca, sitting on the porch outside the house that he and his wife had built themselves fifteen years earlier. 'We want to protect our future … maintain our lifestyle and our communities.'

Sacca was director of the Alliance for Vermont Communities, a new group formed by residents in opposition to Hall's plans – and any other similar large-scale developments in the future.[18] He told us these plans simply didn't fit with local priorities for how the area should develop, which aimed to 'concentrate development as much as possible in village centres, town centres, leaving rural areas for rural life'.

He also criticised NewVistas' envisaged corporate structure as an 'Orwellian' experiment designed to 'stand on its own as an insulated corporate town'.

The Mormon church actually seemed displeased with Hall's initiative too. In 2016, a spokesman said: 'This is a private venture and is not associated with The Church … However, for a variety of reasons, we are not in favour of the proposal.'[19]

The businessman didn't seem too concerned about such criticisms and opposition. He was going to continue with what he saw as step one: 'consolidate land'. Though his tune would later change, and by 2018 he reportedly said he was "tired of the drama."[20] By 2021 he had abandoned the project, and the area, having re-sold the land he'd acquired.[21]

Carving out London too

Back at home in London, we went to the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone. It was a more than billion dollar project that would redevelop an area along the River Thames. It was to be the city's first 'enterprise zone' – a carve-out not unlike those we'd seen around the world, from Ireland to China, intended to 'incentivise' private investment.

More than a hundred years earlier, British industry and trade had flourished in this place. The Royal Albert Dock here had been built in 1880 to meet the maritime infrastructure demands of the British Empire amid booming trade with its colonies. But as the UK's naval supremacy slipped into post-imperial decline, the dock and its surroundings fell into disrepair.

In 2013, Chinese developer Advanced Business Park (ABP) acquired sole ownership of the 35-acre estate from the Greater London Authority. It was then joined by China Minsheng Investment Corp, the country's largest private investment firm. 'It will be the international platform and foundation for Chinese companies and capital to enter the European market', Minsheng's president said.[22]

Driving up to the site we saw a flashy glass-walled building, housing the ABP's office, behind fences and signs instructing pedestrians that 'unauthorized persons will be prosecuted'. Inside, we found on display a book of 'The Most Beautiful Chinese Classical Paintings' – and a model of what the redeveloped port would look like. A guard instructed us to put away our cameras.

Both Newham Council, where the zone was located, and what was called the London Enterprise Secretariat had been accused of failing to engage local people in the process of greenlighting this zone. Neither responded to our questions.

This project was also one of a new species of urban space – sometimes called 'POPS' or 'privately-owned public spaces'. These spaces were still open to the public – but were now governed by private owners. This had led to new restrictions on public gatherings and photography, for example.

A fightback had begun, including a campaign called Take Back the City and 'mass trespass' protests. 'The Royal Docks Enterprise Zone is the wrong model for London', the Green Party's Sian Berry told us. 'We're a hugely successful city with many advantages for companies looking to locate here. We shouldn't be giving public land, tax breaks and other generous inducements to large corporations.' She continued: 'I'd like to see the new Mayor renegotiate the deal to ensure fair taxes, a decent amount of social housing and genuinely public space managed by the local authority'.

Incentives offered to investors echoed those in many Asian SEZs, including tax relief, enhanced capital allowances and a convenient 'one stop shop' for regulatory matters. Promotional literature from the Mayor's Office said the area was 'competing for inward investment with locations across London and beyond. Marketing a range of incentives to attract investors and secure occupiers is essential'.

Years later, in 2022 *The Guardian* would report that, despite its grand ambitions, work had ceased at the site and the scheme appeared on the brink of collapse. The Greater London Authority (GLA) said that a ‘final termination notice’ had been served on the developer because of delays. Unmesh Desai, a Labour London Assembly member who represents east London, said: ‘This was meant to be a jewel in the crown for east London, and it’s now a ghost town. It’s bitterly disappointing.’[23]

Chapter 15

Finance is king

A fiscal paradise

Mauritius, the tiny island in the middle of the Indian Ocean, was once predicted to be poor forever. Lacking exploitable natural resources like oil or minerals, ahead of its independence from the UK in 1968, the later Nobel prize-winning economist James Meade concluded that its development prospects were essentially nil.[1] Located 1,200 miles off of southern Africa's eastern coast, it was far from other countries and markets, and its economy was essentially dependent on the export of one thing: sugarcane, first introduced by the Dutch East India Company (another of those chartered companies that helped to expand and secure empires) in the seventeenth century, and grown by slaves.

The UN opened an office in the country, in its capital Port Louis, shortly after its independence. At that time, 'economists basically said there's no way Mauritius can survive as an independent nation state', Simon Springett, the UN's resident coordinator on the island, told us about fifty years later. 'Basically, it was trying to figure out how you take a mono-crop economy and diversify it.'

We met him in this office not far from the city's waterfront, where streets with poorly paved roads alternated with other fresh ones lined with the shiny glass of new and well-kept office buildings. There, we found numerous boutique investment firms and financial services businesses catering to the world's elite sitting above restaurants and cafes serving gourmet salads and freshly made smoothies. Their ubiquity reflected what happened next in Mauritius's history – the island's transformation into a tax haven.

Mauritius now had booming tourism and financial service industries. It was known, especially among the international elite, for its white coral beaches, luxury honeymoon packages – and extremely low taxes and high levels of financial secrecy. In 2017 it received 1.3 million tourists – more than its 1.2 million residents.[2] Its offshore financial industry meanwhile had more than 21,000 registered businesses.[3] Though these did not take up a lot of space; many seemed to exist only on paper, apparently set up to benefit from the country's cut-rate taxes and its 'ask-no-questions' attitude.

Development economists marvelled at Mauritius's statistics. GDP per capita on the island rose from less than $2,000 in the early 1980s to $9,600 in 2016, higher than that of Russia, or Brazil.[4] Life expectancy also increased while child mortality fell, and home ownership stood at an extraordinary almost 90 per cent.[5]

The 'Mauritian miracle', as it was sometimes called, seemed like something of an economic development fairytale. The island had indeed reinvented itself – but it had done so by joining a controversial international web of secretive jurisdictions where corporations and elites can stash their cash and limit their taxes and contribution to the infrastructure of public life, from roads to hospitals. We wanted to know more about how this had happened.

The 1992 Mauritius Offshore Business Activities Act, we learned, created a system of 'global business companies' which let non-Mauritians open businesses quickly and without having to disclose much information to authorities, let alone the public. Around this time, the country also cut its tax rates and signed a series of what are called 'international tax treaties' with other countries. Since then, its offshore industry had boomed.

By 2015, global businesses in Mauritius had assets worth more than $630 billion – fifty times larger than the country's GDP.[6] Much of this offshore industry's initial growth was tied to a single tax treaty signed with India, which exempted Mauritian legal residents investing in India from capital gains tax, among other incentives, and made the island an attractive base for wealthy Indians and Indian corporations.

India finished re-negotiating this treaty with Mauritius in 2016 – following years of debate about its costs – doing away with the capital gains tax exemption. But these changes didn't seem to apply retrospectively to corporate structures already established.[7]

Mauritius was meanwhile increasingly appealing to multinational companies investing in Sub-Saharan Africa, marketing itself as a 'gateway' into the continent, as well as pitching for a greater share of the global wealth management business, including by making it easier for ultra-rich foreigners to buy property and become residents on the island.

By 2017, almost 60 per cent of investments by global business companies registered in Mauritius were destined for Africa, according to the *African Business Review*.[8] Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, then Mauritius's minister of foreign affairs, regional integration and international trade, told a press conference: 'Africa is the name of the game now'.[9]

Mauritius also joined major African trade blocs, including the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and was increasingly marketing itself as an alternative venue to Washington DC for international arbitration cases between foreign investors and states: effectively, it seemed, offering a full-service shop for international capital.

On the other side of this industry's expansion, Mauritius had been accused by some other African governments and civil society groups of facilitating mass draining of public resources from poorer countries by enabling multinational investors to shift their profits and avoid paying their fair share of tax on the continent. Companies didn't even need to have a real physical presence on the island to reap its benefits: this could also be outsourced to firms whose employees might act as representatives for many companies at a time.

At the centre of this industry was its so-called global business system, whereby offshore companies could be set up with low rates of tax and disclosure. They were used to channel investment into other countries, receive profits and hold assets.

Along with India, Mauritius had signed tax treaties with the governments of more than forty countries, around a third of which were in Africa.[10] They were supposed to prevent companies from being taxed twice. But an international web of these agreements led to what was called 'treaty-shopping' – where companies were structured to take advantage of the best provisions on offer to them, to pay as little as possible.

The island became famous for facilitating 'round-tripping' – where companies take money offshore and then bring it back into a country disguised as 'foreign investment', possibly getting tax breaks twice. From 2000 to 2015, 34 per cent of total investment in India came from Mauritius, much of which was believed to be 'round-tripped'.[11]

Another tactic that companies registered on the island could use to lower their tax bills was called 'transfer pricing' – when a tax haven-based parent company, for example, charges its subsidiary in another country artificially high prices for the supply of goods or services. These transactions might exist only on paper, serving to move money from a higher to a lower or zero tax jurisdiction.[12]

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) said that illicit financial flows from Africa could be worth as much as $50 billion a year – double the amount of international aid budgeted for the continent – with serious, negative development impacts including drained foreign exchange reserves and worsening poverty. Tax havens had enabled this, it said, by allowing for the creation of 'disguised corporations, shell companies, anonymous trust accounts, and fake charitable foundations'.[13]

The secrecy afforded to companies in places like Mauritius could enable illegal practices – as well as legal but aggressive tax avoidance on a vast scale, with companies declaring their profits not where their real business was, but where they'd pay less. It seemed to be, in turn, part of the larger story about how countries had been pushed into competing with each other in a 'race to the bottom'.

Even the IMF had recognised this. It said that developing countries' revenue losses from practices like 'profit shifting' might exceed $200 billion a year.[14] The issue had also been acknowledged at the very top of the World Bank. In 2015, its then-president, Jim Kim, warned: 'Some companies use elaborate strategies to not pay taxes in countries in which they work, a form of corruption that hurts the poor. More equitable taxation could easily eclipse official development assistance'.[15]

Island of inequality

Abax, one of the bigger corporate management firms in Mauritius, had been spun off from the global accounting giant PriceWaterhouseCoopers a little over a decade before we arrived at its offices in a shiny suburb of the Port Louis capital. Called Ebene – ebony in French – the area was home to towering glass buildings, built on former sugarcane fields, housing numerous law, accountancy and financial services firms.

Abax partner Nousrath Bhugeloo dismissed criticisms of Mauritius as a tax haven and said that companies expanding in Africa might register on the island because of its political stability and 'ease of doing business', rather than desires to pay less tax. She framed the island's role almost in terms of solidarity with the continent, saying that her firm hoped to increase overall investment flows. 'There is so much need for capital in Africa', she told us. 'The biggest issue is the perception of risk.'

'Mauritius doesn't want to tax these people', she continued. 'We believe if an investor comes in and they take the risk to invest, then when he exits he should benefit from it.' With corporate taxes so low in so many places globally, Bhugeloo added, 'if Mauritius wants to be a hub for Africa, it wouldn't be reasonable to say I will tax you 30 per cent to 40 per cent, because no one would come'. Mauritius also benefits from the money that flows through it 'because it creates employment for us', she added, describing it as the goal of many youngsters to join the offshore financial industry that she worked in.

The number of millionaires based on the island was soaring – there were already 3,800.[16] More were expected to make Mauritius their home, at least part-time. The government's 2017 budget also granted non-citizens five-year tax holidays if they invested $25 million in Mauritius – a measure to attract international 'ultra high net worth' individuals and families to 'manage their wealth' from the island.[17] New businesses had opened to house, feed and entertain such elites.

Airlines, hotels and restaurants were also benefiting from the steady stream of executives coming for board meetings. But the offshore industry employed a surprisingly small fraction of the population. Estimates ranged but suggested it involved between 5,000 and 17,500 people directly or indirectly.[18]

In 2018, the World Bank would warn in a 147-page report that inequality among Mauritians had ‘widened substantially’ over the last fifteen years, ‘threatening the living standards of the poor.’[19] The island’s boom had produced ‘limited shared prosperity and increased inequality’, it would concede, with the gap between incomes of the poorest and the richest 10 per cent of households increasing by almost 40 per cent since 2001. Women especially had not benefited, it’d add, with fewer than two thirds in the labour force at all, and those in the private sector paid on average 30 per cent less than men.[20]

At the World Bank’s office in Port Louis, Alex Steinart, its Mauritius country representative, repeated what we heard from people in the industry: that it encourages kids to stay in school and work hard to get office jobs.

It’s ‘pretty important for the way kids perceive things’, he argued, ‘where you can sort of see your path, that … there’s a good job for me, an office job, on the island.’ However, he acknowledged: ‘You do hear some concerns, that a lot of these are actually not massively high-skilled jobs … the paperwork around registering a company and then just regular annual reporting, or basic accounting functions associated with that’.

‘There’s no question that the tax appeal of Mauritius is an important part of the story’, he continued. But he cited ‘an international trend … clamping down on that. That’s an increasingly less sustainable way to go’. It would be better for the country to become ‘a conduit for international companies to come into Africa perhaps for the first time, facilitating new activity that wouldn’t otherwise exist … then you’re in win-win territory’, he told us, but ‘that’s not to say it’s going to be an easy transition’.

Meanwhile in an interview with the *Financial Times*, Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth had recently revived an old narrative, echoing the Nobel prize-winning economist James Meade’s dismal 1960s appraisal of the country’s prospects ‘We are a small island that is limited in many ways. We don’t have any natural resources’, he said. ‘We need to have an edge over others to be attractive’, and ‘I think the advantage in taxation is important’.[21]

Mauritius mailboxes

This tiny island seemed to bring together several of the themes we had been following so far. It was branching into the business of registering cases through the investor-state legal system; it had effectively given over its territory to international finance, joining the global web of tax havens; and, we’d learned, some companies registered here had help from the development industry too.

Neither the Bank’s 2018 report, nor its representative Steinart, had anything to say about investments its International Finance Corporation (IFC) had made in companies registered on the island. In our research, however, we'd found numerous examples of these deals.

Malawi Mangoes, founded by a pair of British entrepreneurs, was one such company. The IFC said its farms in the Salima district in Malawi – one of Southern Africa's poorest countries – made mango and banana not-from-concentrate puree and fresh fruit for export across Africa, the Middle East and Europe.[22]

In 2014, the IFC approved a $5 million investment to support this business's expansion, saying it would create needed rural jobs, 'injecting money to the local economy through wages and benefits paid' and producing 'a strong demonstration effect for promoting further private sector agricultural investment'.[23]

In the IFC's online database of its investments, its deal with Malawi Mangoes was recorded as project number 34816, an agribusiness project in the specific sector: 'soft drink.'[24] Its location was listed as Malawi. But the company receiving the investment was in Mauritius. While the company's products were made in the southern African country, 'via its wholly-owned Malawian subsidiary', the IFC's money would go to 'Malawi Mangoes (Mauritius) Limited'.

The IFC's disclosure said Malawi Mangoes was majority-owned by BXR Group, a private investment group in Amsterdam, and that the second largest shareholder was 'well-known fund manager and philanthropist' Stewart Newton.[25] Its environmental and social review summary said Malawi Mangoes (Mauritius) Limited was 'a holding company that runs an operation in Malawi'.[26] But no explanation was provided as to why the company was structured like this, or why the entity receiving IFC money would be based in a known tax haven.

In Mauritius, company records listed two businesses: Malawi Mangoes (Mauritius) Limited, incorporated in April 2012; and Malawi Mangoes Management (Mauritius) Limited set up in January 2013. Both were offshore companies within the island's global business system, and registered to the same address: 'St Louis Business Centre, CNR Desroches & St Louis Streets, Port Louis'.

After the World Bank's country representative couldn't answer our questions about the IFC's investment, this is where we went – to learn why it was running its operation in Malawi from this tiny island.

It took us a while to find the building where Malawi Mangoes was registered. But we soon learned that it was just a 'care-of' address, at the offices of a financial services firm called Rogers Capital, which helps clients set up and manage offshore entities, lends them its address and keeps their details under wraps.

The security guard at the relatively modest office block not far from the waterfront was not sure if we were in the right place. The women at the front desk at Rogers Capital also seemed bewildered by our simple questions: 'Can we speak to someone about Malawi Mangoes? Are we at the right address?'

We sat in a small waiting room with flat-screen televisions on the walls and flipped idly through glossy magazines fanned out on a glass coffee table which had titles like *Savile Row* and *Family Business*. After about 20 minutes, another woman appeared, bearing apologies – she had been out to lunch. At first, she seemed to have mistaken us for Malawi Mangoes' investors. We jumped in to clarify: We're journalists, and wanted to talk to someone from the company, which had received money from a branch of the World Bank.[27] She seemed to know little about the business, or why we might be interested in it. She confirmed that Malawi Mangoes was indeed registered at this address, but would tell us nothing else. There was no one else we could speak to, no one we could interview, not even any pamphlets or brochures we could read.

We found dozens of other IFC investments in companies registered in Mauritius, while operating elsewhere. Most seemed to be focused on sub-Saharan Africa. And in Port Louis, we had more Kafkaesque experiences. On a narrow road with uneven pavement, we found the registered office of CSquared, a broadband internet business operating in countries including Ghana and Uganda, that was first set up in part by Google.[28] It had also received IFC finance. There, the man we spoke to would not even confirm the address of the building we were sitting in.

At other offices of private equity funds the IFC had invested in, we found rooms with wood panelling and maps of tax havens on the walls; a skeleton of a dodo bird behind glass; and sheets of water flowing from a modernist fountain. Young men and women in crisp suits rushed us out of lobbies and meeting rooms.

'Tax evasion is unacceptable in any part of a transaction in which the World Bank Group is involved', the IFC said online.[29] It claimed it 'exercises due diligence to confirm that the structures in which it invests are chosen for legitimate reasons' and that it was 'committed to advancing the international tax transparency agenda'.

This sounded serious, but this language seemed to carefully limit the problem to illegal activity. Tax evasion is the illegal non-payment or underpayment of tax. But multinational companies had many strategies to limit tax bills. Some might be legal but still highly questionable – particularly for the IFC, a public institution, backed by the world's governments and specifically mandated to end poverty and boost 'shared prosperity'.

Some NGOs had argued for years that the IFC shouldn't be investing in companies using tax havens at all, as such structures enable information on money made and taxes paid to be hidden from governments and the public.[30]

Oxfam had accused the World Bank of 'turning a blind eye' to the use of tax havens in IFC investments. It also looked at its disclosures and found that 25 per cent of investments in sub-Saharan Africa one year went to companies incorporated in tax havens including Mauritius (almost 9 per cent), Netherlands or Jersey. It further found that a majority of IFC investees used tax havens, apparently unconnected to their core business, at some point in their structures. It demanded that the World Bank 'prove that its companies are paying their fair share of tax' and ensure that these businesses aren't taking 'advantage of the weakness of the system to reduce their tax bill'.[31]

At the time, an IFC spokesperson responded by inaccurately characterizing Oxfam's criticisms as focused on illegal tax evasion, stressing that 'there are legitimate uses for offshore structures' (without explaining what these are). He claimed that these structures can even increase 'investment that helps the poor'.[32]

But how could you tell if a company was using offshore structures in legitimate, or illegitimate, ways? It seemed like you had to take corporations' and the IFC's word for it. And in an era of repeated international tax scandals, including the Panama Papers and Paradise Papers revelations, fewer were willing to do this.

In Nigeria, the International Consortium for Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and other reporters found that a giant power plant project – which also received money from the IFC and the Dutch development bank FMO – had been 'structured to funnel money tax-free through a network of Mauritius offshore companies to trusts and private equity firms'.[33]

Investigative journalists involved in the international Finance Uncovered network meanwhile found that Uganda had missed out on as much as $38 million in tax revenues due to how another energy investment there was structured, so that the company Umeme Holdings (which was also incorporated in Mauritius, and had also received IFC support) was not charged capital gains tax when it sold its stake in the project.[34]

Malawi mangoes

In 2014, the founders and managing directors of Malawi Mangoes, Jonathan Jacobs and Craig Hardie, said the investments they received from the IFC – along with financing from other international development institutions such as the Dutch FMO – had put them 'on the path to … becoming the leading agro-processing company on the African continent'.[35]

Because it was registered in Mauritius, where such information was not disclosed or accessible, we could not find full details about its annual revenues, profits or how much tax it was paying. However, it had been reported locally in Malawi that the company had secured 1,700 hectares of farmland to expand its plantation operations, and that its mango exports so far were already worth more than $1.4 million.[36]

We also managed to construct a timeline. Malawi Mangoes was first incorporated in the UK in 2009, according to records from Britain's Companies House.[37] By 2013, a company appeared on its list of shareholders: Malawi Mangoes (Mauritius) Limited. The UK entity was dissolved in 2015. By then, Malawi Mangoes had incorporated two companies in Mauritius (in 2012 and 2013), under its global business system.

In other words – the company moved to Mauritius after it had already been established, with its intention from the start pretty clear in its name: to do something with mangoes in Malawi. The idea that it wouldn't have opened operations on the continent without the island 'gateway' into Africa inspiring and encouraging it seemed far-fetched – it was always planning to work there.

The IFC's disclosures meanwhile included hints of possible problems on the ground.[38] In 2014, it said that Malawi Mangoes had more than 600 employees, most of them men (with only eighty-five women), with the lowest-paid workers making just $35 a month. It described employee training as a 'non-financial performance bonus' and said the company also subsidised maize purchases for its workers during periods of the year when they could not afford them.

These disclosures further said that the company had 'access to competitive sources of key inputs, such as labour, land and water' but that there were 'social risks and challenges, especially at the farm level'. It stressed: 'Managing workforce issues and community expectations will be crucial to maintaining the company's social license to operate. The business growth is dependent on a large workforce.'[39]

The company had its own plantations, and also bought fruit from local small-scale farmers through 'outgrower' schemes. In 2017, a report in the Blantyre-based *Maravi Post* claimed that a senior chief in Salima district had 'made shabby land deals' with Malawi Mangoes, allegedly pocketing proceeds and leaving affected families largely uncompensated.[40] Vigils were reportedly organized for eighteen days at Salima District Commission offices to demand the chief's removal.

'This land was sold dubiously to foreigners, without consultations but only telling us that it was [the] government which allocated it,' one demonstrator, Muhamad Chingomanje, was quoted as saying. 'We are not against developmental projects on our land, but … we want to benefit from its proceeds'.[41]

Back at the CIJ, we told Gavin about what we had learned in Mauritius and other countries around the world, about corporations' takeover of territory in the form of Special Economic Zones, 'private cities' and 'fiscal paradises'.

But we'd seen something else in Mauritius, and elsewhere, that we wanted to turn to next. Everywhere we'd looked on the island we'd seen private security guards: at offices, hospitals, construction sites, restaurants. We'd also heard reports, through our growing network of contacts with civil society activists around the world, of private security and mercenaries hired by corporations to grab land or quash dissent around their expanding empires.

Max Weber, the famous German sociologist, had said that control over territory was a fundamental 'characteristic of the state' – and that sovereign states had a monopoly on the 'legitimate' use of force within this territory.[42] What if, we wondered, they don't?

Gavin listened closely as we explained what we'd planned next – another global investigation, into 'corporate armies'. He asked how we'd keep ourselves safe, and then added: 'This is major. Who controls the guns, controls the world.'

PART FOUR

Corporate armies

Chapter 16

Peace without democracy

A world government

In historical archives, we came across many people who had helped to create international systems and strategies to enhance the scale and power of corporate empires. They included the German banker Hermann Abs, who had lobbied elites for a new global 'Capitalist Magna Carta' and justice system to enforce it; Irish entrepreneur Brendan O'Regan who'd pushed his national government to establish a Free Zone enclave that would inspire China; and World Bank presidents who led the creation of a new branch to invest international development money, supposed to help end global poverty, in private companies.

While the big businesses that would benefit from these moves included well-known names – from Lidl, 'Europe's Wal-Mart', to the banana giant Chiquita – few of these systems' pioneers had household names, though they were key to helping us understand this story. This felt especially true for Eugene Staley, an American economist who in the 1950s would join the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) think tank that was a co-organizer, with *TIME* magazine, of the San Francisco conference at which Abs presented his proposal to a room including CEOs and politicians, Nelson Rockefeller and Richard Nixon.

Born in 1906, in the tiny town of Friend, Nebraska, in his twenties Staley had travelled east to Chicago to study at what would become America's premier twentieth-century headquarters for elite academic advocacy of 'free-market' economics. He enrolled at the University of Chicago just a few years ahead of Milton Friedman, one of its best-known graduates. Unlike Friedman – who became a famous advisor to Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher – Staley's seemed like a name that was largely lost to history.

He caught our attention because, as a precocious 29-year-old assistant professor at the University of Chicago, he'd written a sweeping study called *War and the Private Investor*.[1] It read remarkably like a planning document for much of what we'd seen around the world. It boldly recommended nothing less than a World Government to prevent 'innumerable conflicts between native populations and foreign employers or landowners' that he suggested were otherwise inevitable as 'the "backward" peoples grow stronger'.[2]

In 1935, Staley had both predicted and called for the construction of new global infrastructure to protect and advance corporations' interests worldwide. Among them: a new World Commercial Court and World Investment Bank.

As we studied his proposals we used yellow highlighters to mark key lines to share with each other, as well as with Gavin afterwards. It was futile to resist the 'world-wide sweep of capitalist development', Staley had argued, warning that a lot of blood could be spilled as people rebelled against it. To prevent this, he seemed to propose peace without democracy – with a 'long-range plan for world statesmanship' to wrench power from states and give it to new supranational institutions.[3]

Staley had criticised politicians of his day in Europe and the US for focusing on their own citizens, industries and economic plans (be they in socialist, communist, fascist or 'new deal' styles). His idea seemed not to give more power to the people, or ensure that governments become more responsive. Rather, he proposed new world institutions that must be 'separate from the political ambitions and expediencies, the emotionality, and the fluctuating policies' of states.[4]

A World Commercial Court, Staley had written, could give private, international investors 'direct access' to a new justice system to protect their interests and resolve disputes without violence. A World Investment Bank would channel money to their companies and help them to expand. He knew that these were radical ideas. 'Are these suggestions shocking?' he asked rhetorically. It could take decades to create this new World Government, he conceded – but, he argued: 'work can be started today'.[5]

Staley's *War and the Private Investor* came out two years after his adopted city of Chicago hosted the 1933 World's Fair 'Century of Progress' exposition with the chilling motto: 'Science Finds, Industry Applies, Man Adapts'.[6] It was widely reported on and photographed, providing a colourful window into the economist's context.

The event promised visitors a 'glimpse of a happier not-too-distant future, all driven by innovation in science and technology'.[7] To do this, it seemed to place private companies centre-stage, presenting them as essential for human progress. Coca-Cola showed off a new, automated soda fountain.[8] Giant car companies displayed new models and celebrities including Judy Garland performed.[9]

Chicago at this time, like much of the US, was reeling from widespread unemployment and poverty.[10] The Great Depression threw the legitimacy of Wall Street and banks into question for millions of people who lost their homes, jobs and savings. Corporations and financial elites faced growing challenges from workers' movements in rich countries, while in colonial empires campaigns for independence grew.

Staley's study foresaw a turning point in world history. As the oppressed 'wake to political consciousness', he wrote, they will try to use 'the power of the state' to change their situations. This included via 'labour codes drawn in the interest of workers' and the 'break-up of large landed estates' in favour of those 'who actually till the soil'.[11]

Will the rights of private investors be enforced, he asked, 'against the wishes' of these people? If they aren't, he predicted a new era of violent conflicts around the world, even large-scale international wars. After all, corporations by that point had already amassed experience 'fomenting revolutions, using private armies'.[12]

Staley recounted corporate histories of aggression, including those of 'sovereign companies' that led the expansion of European empires, governed whole territories and sometimes had their own police forces. Other investors had operated in 'special concessions', he said, with 'government-like authority', imposing their will as law. In Africa, companies were acquiring large tracts of the best land, telling local farmers: 'starve or abandon their accustomed way of life and go to work for the companies'.[13]

He asked: 'Consider the fleets and the economic resources of some of the large fruit companies and the oil companies. Is it better to have them take over their own protection?'[14] Like the Chicago's World Fair, he seemed to present private enterprise and its global expansion as essential to the future of human progress. The young economist thus presented only two options: restrict international investments (though he said this was 'utterly futile', as well as 'poor policy') – or create a 'world governmental authority' to end and prevent conflicts: from riots and strikes to armed rebellions and wars.[15]

We had never heard of Staley before but were struck by how he had described much of what we had been investigating. Along with proposals mirroring the international legal and development systems we'd dug into, his book had also spoken about corporate control over territory, and the use of force. Rather than challenging these trends, he seemed to propose institutionalising them.

Long-range plans

Long before the 'Washington Consensus', before the creation of institutions like the World Bank, and even before the Second World War, elites gathered to lay ambitious international plans to protect private empires and profits from the threats posed by movements for independence and democracy.

Take for example the International Chamber of Commerce, which said it worked for 'the integration of business and economic concerns into policy-making'.[16] It offered companies 'unrivalled access' to governments and it had developed what it called 'privileged links' with other bodies like the World Trade Organization, enabling 'the voice of business' to be heard there.[17] It was founded more than a century ago, in 1919.

In the 1920s, a 'supranational federation of capitalists' met in Vienna and Geneva to plan how to protect themselves from nationalist, socialist and anti-imperialist campaigns after the First World War and amid the Great Depression.[18] They included the famous Austrian economists Ludwig von Mises and Fredrich Hayek (who would later go on to found the Mont Pelerin Society to spearhead academic advocacy of neoliberalism).

Quinn Slobodian, a historian at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, studied this period for his 2018 book *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism*. Far from wanting to 'liberate' private capital and end regulation and states, he described how the people involved in these discussions sought to rewrite rules on a global scale to support their interests, and 'encase' or insulate them from 'mass demands for social justice'.[19]

In the 1950s, the infamously secretive Bilderberg Conferences joined the infrastructure of elite international networking. Later, British Lord Denis Healey, a veteran member of this club, told *The Guardian* that what it wanted was to see international wars end – but it was 'not wholly unfair' to say they 'were striving for a one-world government' to achieve this.[20] It sounded like a version of Staley's older proposal, for a new era of world peace without democracy.

Also better known than Staley's 1930s proposals for a new World Government was the so-called Powell Memorandum.[21] It was sent in 1971 by Lewis Powell, an American corporate lawyer who was on the boards of eleven companies, to his friend Eugene Sydnor, Jr. at the US Chamber of Commerce, the most powerful pro-business lobbying group in the country. It had been confidential, but it was leaked to journalists after Powell was nominated by then President Nixon to be a US Supreme Court judge.[22] It became known as a key document marking the rise of 'neoliberalism' in the US and the expansion of corporations into what seemed like every aspect of public and political life.

The 'business and the enterprise system are in deep trouble, and the hour is late', Powell had warned. 'Perfectly respectable elements of society', including college students, journalists and some politicians, were treating corporations with near contempt, without 'sympathy for the businessman or his viewpoint'. Corporations, he argued, should respond with counter-attacks and by working together to defend 'the system'. Specific recommendations included advertising to 'support the system' rather than individual companies or products. 'Strength lies in organisation,' he'd argued.

Like Staley, and other people and institutions we came across in our investigations, Powell was thinking long term. To counteract threats to big business, and build a world more amenable to it, he called for 'careful long-range planning and implementation … over an indefinite period of years'.[23]

The lawyer's 1971 memo did seem to have been influential. Numerous new, conservative think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute were set up in its wake. Millions of dollars a year were spent to influence public and political debates – while Ronald Reagan in the US, and Margaret Thatcher in the UK, made neoliberalism state policy.

However, not everyone agreed with his analysis that 'the system' was at risk. In the same year Powell sent his memo, US economist Raymond Vernon – who was later credited for providing intellectual weight for mass privatisation campaigns, and dubbed 'the father of globalisation' – published a book called *Sovereignty at Bay.* The expansion of global corporations had already proceeded to such a degree, he argued, that 'concepts such as sovereignty and national economic strength appear curiously drained of meaning'.[24]

Also in the 1970s, the World Economic Forum joined the list of elite networking spaces. A new CEO-led World Business Council for Sustainable Development emerged in the 1990s. Other regional groups formed with names like the European Roundtable of Industrialists and the Transatlantic Business Dialogue. While details of what goes on in these places were hard to come by, their establishment and impacts had not gone unnoticed.

'Elected by and accountable to no one, secretive and highly organized, these shadow sovereigns are destroying the very notion of the common good and making a mockery of democracy,' said Susan George at the Transnational Institute research group in Amsterdam, describing how large corporations were operating 'behind the scenes' to manage 'world-wide public policy'.[25]

The key questions of our time, British writer Hilary Wainwright argued, were 'not just about corporate greed, irresponsible lending, or outsourcing, but also the model of the downsized state, of allowing only corporations to plan'.[26]

As we'd learned, such plans often had very long time-scales – much longer than the terms of elected representatives. The seeds of the strategies we saw in person, in our investigations around the world, were planted long before we were born. They seemed to have been tested on vulnerable people – including amid the Vietnam War, it seemed, when we saw Staley's name pop up again.

A monstrous blueprint

Powell's memo had come to light as labour, consumer, environmental and anti-imperialist movements were gaining ground around the world.

In the early 1970s, some newly independent countries in former colonial empires were – as Staley had predicted decades earlier – changing rules to support local industries, and in some cases they were also reclaiming land and nationalizing enterprises. In the US, meanwhile, new regulations were being passed and restrictions were being imposed on businesses to protect workers, consumers and the environment. ‘Virtually the entire American business community,’ wrote political scientist David Vogel about this time, faced ‘a series of political setbacks without parallel in the postwar period’.[27]

By then, Staley had long since left the University of Chicago. While he’d become ‘a distinguished but relatively obscure academic’, in the words of historian David Elliott, he would also be a ‘major architect of the Kennedy administration’s Vietnam policy’.[28]

Set up by Stanford University trustees, the SRI think tank that Staley joined was created as a ‘comprehensive research organisation’ with ‘the resources of a great university’, working for government, military and corporate clients.[29] Several of its directors came from, or would go on to work for, places like General Electric and the DuPont chemical giant.[30]

Until the 1990s, this outfit ran the International Industrial Development Conference (IIDC) – which TIME-LIFE had co-sponsored in 1957, when the German banker Abs spoke about his corporate ‘Magna Carta’ idea. It was held every four years in San Francisco, attended by CEOs and top politicians. Satellite meetings were also held internationally, from Austria to Indonesia.[31]

At this organisation, Staley’s work included advising American policy towards China, and how to go about ‘halting the advance of Communism in the rest of the Far East’. In 1961, he led President John F. Kennedy’s so-called special financial group to Vietnam to plan ‘coordinated financial action which would be in support of counter-guerrilla activities’. His final report called for ‘stepped-up economic and social action, especially in rural areas, closely integrated with the military action’.[32]

In addition to offensive actions against North Vietnam, what became known as the ‘Staley Report’ called for the regrouping of villages and resettling of people into dozens of new ‘prosperity zones’ and ‘strategic hamlets’, to focus economic and social activities.[33] It was effectively a ‘blueprint’, said Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett, ‘for a vast military campaign, very soon to be run by the United States itself, to try and herd the whole of South Vietnam’s peasantry into 16,000 concentration camps’.[34]

It was a ‘monstrous’ programme, Burchett said, that ‘brought the whole of the peasantry out in armed revolt’. He drew comparisons with concentration camps in British colonial Kenya, but after our investigations into the carving out of territory into special economic zones, and after we’d seen language like ‘prosperity’ being deployed to promote elite interests globally, Staley’s designs in Vietnam also sounded chillingly contemporary to us.

SRI’s role in that war, including Staley’s work, was controversial on Stanford’s campus. Students on a working group, set up specifically to explore options for the university's relationship with the outfit, noted how it had also become a key 'coordinator of overseas corporate strategy'. In a report, these students described the think tank's leaders as 'expansionists', providing 'strategic leadership and technical manpower for the international expansion of West Coast corporations' while also supporting the development of a 'supranational union of private enterprise'.[35]

Alongside government and military 'counterinsurgency' research projects, SRI worked on the prospects for US private capital overseas, which were also often framed as part of the fight against communism. Newly independent countries, argued one of Staley's colleagues, still needed 'Western guidance and Western concepts of individual freedom'.[36]

Eventually SRI was formally spun off from Stanford to become a separate company, SRI International. It also launched new ventures including long-term 'scenario planning' for big businesses (research envisaging the future in fifteen years or more, for instance, considering social, political and other risks to corporate profits, and how to prepare for or fight them).[37] This kind of planning is still on the menu of services offered by corporate consultants.

Staley was right that multinational businesses would only continue to grow. By 1970, there were 7,000 corporations operating across borders.[38] By 2011, there were more than 100,000 multinational enterprises with almost 900,000 foreign affiliates.[39] No country has jurisdiction over all of their activities. Their resources had boomed – the revenues of the world's largest companies exceeded the GDPs of most states[40] – as had their political power through new world institutions, as we had learned and as Staley had suggested.

But the global advance of multinational companies had largely failed to deliver on promises of prosperity – and peace – for all. It also seemed clear to us that new supranational systems and strategies to secure and support private investments had not quashed people's demands for democracy and social justice.

While Staley had said a new world government could stem conflicts, some corporations were still being accused of using force to get what they wanted. Others seemed to have made violence, or the threat of it, their core business. This was what we'd decided to investigate next: corporate control over the use of force, globally.

Dictatorship of flies

One of the businesses that Staley's *War and the Private Investor* treatise had looked at was the United Fruit Company, whose history stretched back to the nineteenth century. Now this corporation was known as Chiquita Brands International. It had multi-billion dollar annual revenues, operations in dozens of countries and you could see its bright blue and yellow logo stickered onto bananas sold around the world.

In the 1930s, Staley had described how the United Fruit Company had seemed similar to a colonial 'chartered company' in that it had undertaken 'government-like functions' including the construction of railways and 'whole cities … performing the necessary work of sanitation, laying out streets, building private and public buildings, public utilities, churches, schools, hotels, restaurants, and hospitals'. It had 'created and deposed governments, ruled vast plantations with a free hand, and in some cases exercised almost sovereign powers over large portions of Central America'.[41]

But unlike chartered companies, it was not acting at the behest of a colonial government to expand their empire. It was focused on its own expansion and, Staley said, only did 'developmental work as an incidental but necessary step in a profit-making business'.[42]

By the time Staley's text came out, this corporation's activities had become notoriously intertwined with violence. In 1928, workers went on strike in protest against poor pay and working conditions at its plantations in Colombia.[43] The government then sent soldiers who fired on crowds in what became known as the 'Masacre de las Bananeras' (Banana massacre). Gabriel García Márquez, born that year, would later allude to this event in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, describing a military attack ending in the deaths of plantation workers in a fictional town.[44]

In 1950, the company would appear in the works of another famous Latin American author: Pablo Neruda, from Chile. A poem he wrote that year was entitled 'United Fruit Co' and named it alongside the Coca-Cola Company and other American corporations expanding in the region. It used biblical language to satirize these expansions that 'rebaptized these countries Banana Republics' and 'abolished free will, gave out imperial crowns, encouraged envy, attracted the dictatorship of flies'. It described how what would become Chiquita took over 'the most juicy piece' of territory in 'my world, the delicate waist of America'.[45]

While Neruda's poem made the rounds and encouraged people's movements resisting corporations' expansions, the United Fruit Company added to its track record of violence. It lobbied the US to take action against Guatemala's democratically elected, social democratic president Jacobo Arbenz.[46] A CIA-backed coup d'état installed military dictator Carlos Castillo Armas.[47] A civil war ensued, and what the UN termed a genocide against indigenous Maya people.[48]

In Colombia, the company had meanwhile maintained and expanded massive operations throughout that country's civil war – which began in the 1960s and lasted for more than forty years – and it had again been implicated in violence there. The company eventually admitted to at least 100 payments between 1997 and 2004, for a total of $1.7 million, to the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) ultra-right-wing paramilitary group, whose attacks on peasants and dissidents over many years had become well-known.[49]

More recently, Chiquita had again been implicated in attacks against peasants opposing their plantations' expansion in Colombia. There was a live legal case against it from some of these people, supported by human rights lawyers.

We wanted to know more about all of this – and how this company could keep popping up, from Staley's study in the 1930s to our research today, in stories of violence. Staley had named it as an example of a company whose expansion was inevitable, futile to resist and likely to be violent unless new global institutions were set up to manage and prevent conflicts with unruly populations. Much of the infrastructure he'd called for may have come into being – but it seemed the peace he said would come with it, had not.

We reached out to human rights groups and other journalists in Colombia, and started to plan a trip there. When we had a draft itinerary, we knocked on Gavin's door.

'You're off again?' he grinned as we sat down with our notes and a map of the country, on which we'd circled locations that came up in our research. Places where attacks had happened, or where we could meet people to learn more.

Our first stop would be Medellín, Colombia's second-largest city which had been established and developed under the Spanish empire and named after a small town in Spain. It had also been a key commercial hub since the nineteenth century when it began exporting gold and then coffee. In the twentieth century, it grew with industrialization and new transport links to other regions, although it also became infamous for crime and Pablo Escobar's 'Medellín Cartel'.

The first person we'd meet would be Nick MacWilliam, a journalist who covered Latin America, with whom we planned to work. Then, together, we'd meet plaintiffs in a class action lawsuit filed against Chiquita in the US and supported by lawyers at the NGO EarthRights International.

These people, anonymous in the suit, were understandably nervous about speaking out. They accused the company of hiring paramilitaries who killed their family members. They agreed to speak with us – but only in person.

The banana giant wasn't the only company expanding in Colombia and leaving allegations of violence in its wake, and we'd look into other cases too. In particular, those relating to mining activities in that country, as well as expanding palm oil plantations in Honduras in Central America. In each place, we had interviews lined up with peasant leaders and others with first-hand experience of these conflicts.

‘Can I come?’ Gavin chuckled. It wasn’t a real question – he had a stack of papers on his desk reflecting the work he had to do to keep the CIJ going; he was always fundraising and meeting people to start new projects and partnerships. But it meant he thought we were still on the right track.

‘Be careful,’ he said more seriously. ‘It’s good that you’re going – there’s no other way to speak to some of these people. But it sounds like they’re cautious for good reasons, and you should be too!’

‘Plan every detail, every step,’ he told us. ‘Get there early, before your interviews start, and scope things out. Locations. Exits. Back-ups. Line it all up.’

Back in our windowless room down the hall, we made more detailed notes for our trip and booked flights. A few weeks later, we were in the air.

Chapter 17

Profits versus peasants

Nightmares in Colombia

Anabel (not her real name) was at first elusive. It took days of back-and-forth messages, reassuring her that we would keep her identity confidential, to finally receive the address of a meeting place where she'd feel safe.

She was understandably skittish. She was one of several Afro-Colombians who said they had survived violence by paramilitaries hired by Chiquita to help protect and expand its plantations. She wanted justice for what she had endured – but was afraid that by speaking out she could be risking her life.

Eventually, she sent us the address near the trendy El Poblado district of downtown Medellín – which was seen as one of the safest and most affluent parts of the city, and popular with foreign tourists and expats. We memorized the address and then deleted the message. We didn't tell anyone where we were going, or speak to each other about it in public. It was safer that way.

When we met, Anabel seemed to have little interest in light chit-chat. She gave one-word answers to questions about how she was doing, how her week had been. After gathering the courage to meet us, she seemed to want to dive right into her story – and, perhaps, leave as quickly as possible.

She began in 1997, when she was a 10-year-old child living with her parents in the small city of Apartadó in the mountainous Antioquia region not far from the border with Panama. Colombia's civil war, which had begun more than thirty years before her birth, featured heavily in her memories of growing up. 'There were a lot of massacres, too many deaths', she recalled. 'You could see the manner in which they left bodies as well. Often dismembered. It was a horrible war.'

Across Colombia there were stories like this of violence, often perpetrated by right-wing paramilitary groups that developed during the civil war as private militias to defend landed interests and proliferated in the 1970s.

Decades later, land seen as valuable was still being forcibly seized across the country by paramilitaries who then sold it to rich individuals or corporations. Resistance, according to rights groups, was often met with violence.

Anabel knew this history first-hand. Her family, she said, had long received threats from such paramilitaries who wanted the land used for her stepfather's banana farm. In 1997, he gave in, aware of the dangers of saying no. He tried to avoid violence by selling the paramilitaries his land.

But the sale did not go as planned. He brought his wife and Anabel with him to meet the buyer – who was on time, but unexpectedly said he had to go urgently to another town, and ushered them all into a waiting taxi with him.

Soon after the taxi started driving it stopped, the buyer got out and another man came in and pulled out a gun. Other men on motorbikes accompanied the taxi to the end of a dirt road, where the adults were ordered to get out.

The men then beat and then shot her stepfather, killing him. Her mother tried to run; she was shot and killed, too. The men took the papers they needed to own the land, without paying for it, and had the taxi bring Anabel into town.

In the aftermath of these murders, Anabel went to the police where she reported them. Later, she learned that the taxi driver, who she believed was involved, had been identified. But, as far as she knew, no case against him or the murderers was ever brought, and the land was never returned to her.

'As I didn't have parents, it was very hard to confront the world', she told us. 'People made fun of me, I had to see psychologists.' Years after their deaths, she said she struggled to trust people and that 'I still have nightmares. I cannot say that the issue doesn't dominate my thoughts. You cannot imagine the effort I'm making to not cry now. It's extremely hard'.

Later, we met another woman with a similarly horrific story. Like Anabel, she said that her family members were also killed by paramilitaries and that the police did nothing to help her. In Bogota, another plaintiff in the suit against Chiquita, Fernando, said he believed that the company had started working with paramilitaries in the early 1990s, 'to confront banana workers'.

At that time, the governor of the Antioquia region of Urabá was Alvaro Uribe Velez (who later became president), who Fernando told us 'was a participant and collaborator with these armed groups … They decided that the unionists were guerrillas, but we were workers, we were fighting, and defending worker rights. Uribe was one of the people who formed the convivir groups in Urabá from paramilitaries.'

'They killed people with chainsaws, with machetes, they set them alight with gasoline', Fernando added, recalling the violence he'd lived through. 'They raped women and girls. They burnt houses.' Stories like this were painful to listen to but were not exceptional. Rather, they seemed to haunt much of Colombian society.

The toll of the war had been vast for many peasant, poor, indigenous and Black communities. But now there seemed to be hope for some justice on the horizon, because of the courage of people like Anabel and Fernando who had agreed to testify, anonymously, against Chiquita in the US.

Challenging impunity

Chiquita had developed significant operations in Urabá, a northwest sub-region which had become Colombia's top banana-growing area. This is where Anabel had lived with her mother and stepfather before they were killed.

Several AUC paramilitary commanders were now in US prisons, including Salvatore Mancuso, extradited and then imprisoned on drug trafficking charges in 2015.[1] A diplomatic cable sent from the US embassy in Bogotá to Washington DC years before this, and published by WikiLeaks, said he allegedly had ties to politicians, retired generals and businesses, and that he'd named Chiquita as among the companies that had regularly paid paramilitaries.[2]

Another AUC commander extradited and imprisoned in the US was Hebert Veloza – alias 'H.H'.[3] He was known as the leader of the group's Bloque Bananero in Urabá that had been implicated in many murders. Anabel said she believed he was one of the people behind the deaths of her mother and stepfather – but he was also in jail for drug trafficking charges, not murder.

Living free in the US, meanwhile, was another man with questions to answer: John Ordman. He was a high-ranking executive at Chiquita responsible for much of the company's Colombia operations and, according to a 2016 court filing by the NGO EarthRights, 'involved in the approval of "sensitive" payments to the *convivirs*' – 'self-defence' groups created to protect private estates.

Human rights groups said convivirs were essentially legalized paramilitaries, and that they had committed massacres and other abuses. The court filing continued: '[Ordman] testified that he had extensive conversations with Chiquita personnel in Colombia about the different violent groups Chiquita was paying'.

Internal Chiquita communications from 2000 noted the connection between the convivirs and the AUC, revealing that Chiquita chose to 'continue making the payments [because they] can't get the same level of support from the military'. At the time paramilitaries were regularly killing and dismembering people all over Colombia. But Chiquita claimed it didn't know exactly what its money would be used for.

Under then-President Uribe, in 2003 the AUC initiated a demobilization process which saw tens of thousands of men reintegrate into Colombian society. Some regrouped in armed gangs and continued to coordinate terror networks.[4]

Several years later, Colombia's Supreme Court unearthed the 'Parapolitics scandal' which placed 139 elected politicians under investigation for their alleged links to paramilitary organizations, including payments. Former Senator Mario Uribe Escobar – the president's cousin – was among those arrested and sent to prison.[5]

Former AUC commanders however received little to no punishment for their crimes. Then, they started admitting what they'd done – and with whom. In 2008, Uribe had fourteen senior paramilitary commanders, including Mancuso and others later named in the Chiquita lawsuit, extradited to the US where they were now in prison on drugs charges.[6] Many suspected that Uribe did this for his own protection, as several commanders claimed to have collaborated with him.

No one at Chiquita went to prison, and no relatives of the victims of violence received compensation. Then, in 2007, the NGO EarthRights filed the US federal class-action lawsuit against the company on behalf of Colombian families whose loved ones were killed.[7] Portions of the case were brought under the Alien Tort Statute, which allows human rights claims from victims of US multinational companies' activities abroad to be filed within the US court system.

This potentially progressive piece of legislation often failed the people it was meant to serve, including in Colombia. In recent decades, various suits against US corporations had been dismissed by courts which said they still fell outside their jurisdiction.[8] Chiquita had similarly filed a motion to have the EarthRights case dismissed, arguing that there were insufficient US ties to be heard in US courts.[9]

Terry Collingsworth, a Washington DC-based lawyer who'd worked on many cases under the Alien Tort Statute, filed some of the earlier motions on behalf of Colombian communities in the Chiquita case. He told us cases against such companies must be heard – but that this law had been difficult to apply in practice.

A 2013 decision in a separate case, against an oil company, seemed to have set a conservative precedent. That company said that despite the fact that it had US operations, the allegations against it were from foreign plaintiffs about its foreign business and all relevant decisions had been made abroad. In a 5–4 ruling, right-wing Supreme Court judges agreed with the company that the law only applied if allegations 'touch and concern the territory of the United States'.[10]

This ruling significantly limited the ability of the Alien Tort Statute to help people like Anabel in Colombia secure justice, Collingsworth said. The law should be 'redefined', he argued, but he thought that US lawmakers were 'very unlikely to champion a law that will be strongly opposed by the major business organisations, like the US Chamber of Commerce and the US Council for International Business'.

Colombia's domestic system also held little hope for victims of violence. Fifty-seven companies, including Chiquita, had been charged with supporting the AUC[11] – but local lawyers we spoke to suspected that the government wouldn't prosecute or otherwise try to hold them accountable.

Amid these obstacles came a significant development in late 2016 – when, after nine years of litigation, a federal judge ruled that the case supported by the NGO EarthRights could continue in American courts.[12] The claims against Chiquita (and certain executives) would move forward in the US, despite efforts to prevent this.

Though by 2021, *Doe v. Chiquita Brands International* would still be in the courts, and its plaintiffs would still be waiting to see if they would ever get justice.

More hired guns

In 2016, the Colombian government and the country's oldest left-wing guerrilla insurgency, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), negotiated a historic peace deal. Under it, thousands of guerrillas would hand over their weapons and live in demobilization zones before integrating into society.[13]

Opponents of this peace deal – chiefly the conservative party of former President Uribe – had argued that it would allow people who had committed human rights violations to go free. And while Uribe liked to focus on the crimes of the FARC, right-wing paramilitaries had left a violent legacy of their own – one which seemed inextricably tied to US multinational companies like Chiquita.

In the fanfare around the peace deal, the role of multinational corporations in the violence was largely ignored by commentators and media reports. For others, it was hard to forget. 'Some multinationals have directly collaborated with illegal paramilitary groups, but many others have turned a blind eye to human rights abuses', said Grace Livingstone, the author of *Inside Colombia: Drugs, Democracy and War*.

She told us:

> Multinational companies have benefited as paramilitaries have violently evicted thousands of people from their land, clearing the way for large-scale mining, oil or agro-industrial projects. These companies are knowingly operating in a country where death squads suppress dissent by targeting community activists and trade unionists … There is almost total impunity for the security forces and their paramilitary allies who target land activists and community leaders and those who have protested against large-scale mining, oil and agro-industrial projects.

Gimena Sánchez, an analyst at an NGO called the Washington Office on Latin America added: 'The impunity rate is over 95 per cent for killings of trade unionists and for the others probably close to that. Colombian authorities, when pressured, may begin investigations but very few of the perpetrators are brought to justice'.

Chiquita wasn't the only company that paid paramilitaries in Colombia; the Dole and Del Monte fruit companies had also reportedly hired them.[14] Such payments had enabled paramilitaries to expand – potentially prolonging the war, as well as protecting and helping to expand corporate assets and operations.

The most militant peoples' struggles against corporations in Colombia, when we arrived in the country, seemed to be around mining. A Dutch NGO had recently published a report on the collusion of mining multinationals Drummond and Glencore with paramilitaries over ten years from the mid-1990s.[15]

At the Medellín office of a *campesino* (peasant) organisation called the Humanitarian Action Corporation for Coexistence and Peace in Northeast Antioqueño (Cahucopana), we met then 26-year-old Yoladis Cerpa from one of Colombia's more violent areas. 'My family lives in El Bagre but because of my work in social organisations I can't go there', she told us. 'Two days ago they killed my brother. In fact, my mother is calling me right now, they're in the cemetery as we speak.'

As we spoke, Cerpa showed us her phone. WhatsApp messages with pictures of her brother's coffin popped up as relatives sent her updates from the funeral she couldn't attend. She described widespread fear that ran through the area because of paramilitary violence. 'We are threatened daily by email, by telephone, by any means. The problem now is they killed one of the social leaders, and there's displacement in the villages. They dismembered one of them totally, the others were forced to leave. They threatened them. There are deaths every day.'

Cerpa believed that organizers were being targeted due to the social work they do. 'They are defending the campesinos, defending human rights and making it harder for the multinationals to enter campesino regions', she told us.

El Bagre had large deposits of gold and this seemed to make its human rights situation worse. Cerpa described it as a 'very rich region for mining for gold' with land-hungry companies on one side and campesinos on the other, 'fighting to defend their rights'.

'Another multinational tried to enter the region but the campesinos, we didn't allow it. It was amazing,' she said. But there had been many more casualties too; recently the body of William Castillo – who had worked for the Association of Agroecological and Mining Fraternities of Guamocó (Aheramigua), a human rights organisation of farmers and artisanal miners – was found.

‘They shot him,’ Cerpa told us, after a meeting he had held with local community leaders in which he ‘was training them about their rights’.

She said it seemed ‘impossible’ to hold multinational corporations to account. But she thought that it was clear why people were being targeted – for opposing these businesses’ interests. ‘We are living the conflict,’ she told us, ‘and the threats we receive from paramilitaries are always for this, that they’re going to kill us because we’re working with *campesinos*, because we’re training them to defend their land, for these kinds of things’.

A militia in Honduras

North of Colombia, Honduras in Central America was known as one of the deadliest countries for environmental and human rights defenders.[16] The situation had even come to the attention of the International Criminal Court which warned in 2015 that ‘criminal organisations and international drug cartels are deeply involved in local businesses … and seem to be involved in most of the alleged crimes in the Bajo Aguán [valley], including unlawful occupation of land and robbery of African palm fruits, in order to retain control of the region and to continue to operate in total impunity.’[17]

The next year, a prominent activist in the fertile Bajo Aguán – Jose Angel Flores, head of the Unified Campesinos Movement of the Aguan Valley, or MUCA – was killed while under police protection.[18] Numerous such incidents had involved paramilitaries or private security forces, which reportedly outnumbered police five to one.[19]

The NGO EarthRights was also involved in a case seeking justice for people affected by this violence – and in the process, their work was bringing new details to light about how some giant corporations had effectively built their own private armies.

The company at the centre of that case was Dinant, founded by the late businessman Miguel Facussé who was one of the most powerful men in the country until his death in 2015, at 90-years-old. For decades from the 1980s, he had been vice-president of the Asociación para el Progreso de Honduras (APROH), a right-wing grouping of business interests and members of the armed forces. A widely publicized memo he wrote in the 1980s had argued that the best way forward for the poor country was to ‘sell Honduras to the foreign investor’.[20]

Dinant – which produced food and cleaning supplies, including for export throughout the region and beyond – owned more than 22,000 acres of palm oil plantations in the Bajo Aguan valley.[21] It had been repeatedly marred by allegations of human rights abuses against local people.

In 2012, Facussé was described by the Reporters without Borders NGO as having ‘a private militia that can count on support from the police and army to impose his will'.[22] Accusations that this militia had killed unruly agricultural workers who had occupied company land led to the withdrawal in 2011 of a $20m loan from a German government agency, and to the Électricité de France power company cancelling the purchase of carbon credits from Dinant.[23]

But justice for people who said they survived such violence seemed out of reach. Dinant denied any involvement – claiming that it operated in a violent context, but had nothing to do with this. Behind it were powerful backers, including part of the international development system we'd investigated.

The World Bank's long history in the Bajo Aguán valley included support for a controversial land modernization programme in the 1990s that had been criticised for paving the way for large-scale plantations at the expense of small-scale farmers.[24] In 2009, the bank's IFC branch agreed to give Dinant, which was expanding in the region, $15 million in loans[25]; further support came in the shape of 'indirect investments', through the Ficohsa bank in Honduras and an IFC subsidiary, the Asset Management Corporation (AMC).[26]

The EarthRights-supported class action lawsuit that was shining a light on how corporations used violence to protect and expand their operations was not filed against Dinant – instead, it named as defendants the IFC and its subsidiary. The NGO's lawyers told us that the case followed years of protests and failed attempts by Honduran farmers to seek justice in their own country's courts.

This lawsuit was the second filed against the IFC in US courts – following one launched in 2015 over its financing of a coal-fired power plant in India that local communities said had destroyed their livelihoods. In that case, the development institution claimed 'absolute immunity' under a 1945 law called the International Organisations Immunities Act.[27]

The Honduran suit, filed in 2017 at a US federal court in Washington DC, included two class action claims: one regarding roughly 200 members of the Bajo Aguan's Panamá community, alleging a 'pattern of aggression, which Dinant security personnel carry out in order to intimidate and terrorise the villagers'; and the second representing roughly 1,000 people and focused on profit-making from land allegedly acquired by 'fraud, coercion, threat of violence, or actual violence', accusing the IFC of 'reaping the benefits' of historical injustices.

The full 132-page legal complaint said that plaintiffs were seeking compensation for 'murders, torture, assault, battery, trespass, unjust enrichment and other acts of aggression'. It said that ultimately the case was about World Bank entities 'knowingly profiting from the financing of murder', describing decades of violence, specific murders and a 'pattern of attacks that is ongoing'.

It elaborated: 'People have been attacked in their homes, in their gardens, while riding their bikes, driving their cars, farming their land, outside of churches …

People have lost loved ones, which can never be remedied'. Some of those killed had been families' primary breadwinners, leaving surviving relatives struggling. The goal of this violence, it said, had been 'to intimidate farmers from asserting competing rights to land that Dinant has sought to control'.

'We live from our families and our land and now we are left with nothing. We want justice … We have to move forward,' one of the case's plaintiffs said in her testimony. Her husband was allegedly shot and killed by Dinant security personnel. Another plaintiff, Juan Doe VIII, said he had witnessed farmers being pulled out of their homes and beaten. He also described how 'one bullet hit me, it still affects my breathing. I didn't realise I'd been shot, but I touched it and saw blood. Another person was shot through the stomach'.

We weren't the only people following this case closely. Kate Geary, then at a civil society watchdog called Bank Information Centre Europe, told us that local communities had clearly suffered 'appalling harms', and that it was 'high time that the IFC was made to answer in the courts for the many human rights abuses around the world that they have been linked to through their investments'.

Dinant responded angrily to our questions about this case. Roger Pineda, its corporate and banking relations director, sent us a long email in which he insisted that 'all allegations that Dinant is – or ever has been – engaged in systematic violence against members of the community are without foundation'. It was 'absurd', Pineda argued, to connect his company with 'high levels of insecurity in the Aguán valley on the grounds that several tragic deaths have occurred in the same region in which we own land'.

An IFC spokesperson meanwhile said he could not comment on ongoing litigation, but that the institution was 'saddened by the history of violence in the Aguán valley', and that it was 'focused on clients who commit to adopt internationally recognised environmental and social practices in the most challenging environments'.

A paper trail, however, showed that after complaints were lodged with the IFC's internal watchdog over its financing of Dinant, it did open an investigation – which concluded that its support for the company had failed to follow its own policies to protect local communities and environments. An 'action plan' in response to this investigation included requirements that Dinant adopt new security protocols to ensure the protection of human rights.[28]

In 2016, a company report said that it was, under IFC guidance, 'safely securing its facilities while engaging peacefully with local communities'. It said its 'grievance mechanisms, designed in collaboration with community leaders, are helping to identify practical solutions to improve local peoples' daily lives, like preventing dust and controlling traffic,' and that it had removed all firearms from security personnel at its plantations and other locations in Honduras.[29]

But EarthRights lawyers said that these moves had ‘not resulted in remedy or credible investigation for the farmers and their families’, arguing that the IFC seemed to instead be putting ‘profit before people at every turn’.

The legal complaint they filed specifically alleged that ‘guards and security agents working for Dinant continue to intimidate and kill community members and farmers’ leaders across the Aguán to this day’. It accused the IFC of having financed the company with ‘reckless disregard of the obvious and highly probable risk that their actions would result in serious harm to the plaintiffs’.

We were moved by the tenacity and commitment of these lawyers – and the courage of the farmers and villagers who were testifying about what they had witnessed, despite the risks that they would have to live with.

Years later, their struggle was still ongoing. In 2021, the lawsuit against Chiquita over violence in Colombia by paramilitaries linked to the company was still open – as was that against the IFC over their financing of the Dinant company in Honduras. This theme – impunity – would come up again in our next investigations into the privatisation of security, from Palestine to Italy.

Chapter 18

Private borders

Occupation Inc in Palestine

While travelling to our next destination – occupied Palestine – we studied a report from the non-profit Yesh Din which described how private security forces were increasingly being used by the Israeli government. Some were even 'equipped with IDF weapons, undergo military training, and are empowered to undertake policing actions, such as searches and detentions, and to use force'.[1]

We had also printed off a report from the international NGO Human Rights Watch, called 'Occupation Inc'. It detailed how 'Israeli and international businesses have helped to build, finance, service, and market settlement communities' that were being expanded in Palestine against international law. It also referenced twenty Israeli-administered industrial zones in the West Bank, plus huge amounts of agricultural land that was being overseen by Israeli settlers.[2]

Foreign investors seemed to be taking advantage of profitable business conditions offered in the settlements – low rents, Israeli state subsidies and access to cheap Palestinian labour. Foreign direct investment in the West Bank and Gaza soared from nearly $9.5 million in 2002 to almost $300 million in 2016.[3] The US computing giant Hewlett-Packard was one of the many international businesses involved – it developed biometric ID cards used at checkpoints.[4]

A few days later, we met up with Antony Loewenstein, an Australian journalist living in East Jerusalem at the time who would join us in our investigation. Together we planned our next moves. The next morning, a few hours after midnight, we left the small hotel we were staying at and got into a taxi.

It was just after four o'clock in the morning when we arrived at our destination: the Qalandia checkpoint near Jerusalem and on the border with the West Bank.

It was one of the busiest of such checkpoints through which Palestinians with the required permits could cross over into Israel. While the moon was still high in the sky, people were arriving in buses and gathering in lengthening lines.

With high rates of unemployment in the West Bank – and even more so in Gaza, where the UN said it was 'the highest in the world'[5] – many Palestinians worked in Israel, including in construction, manufacturing and agriculture.

Inside a warehouse-like building, we saw what looked like a cattle pen: metal bars formed a narrow chute, enclosing and herding Palestinians – many of whom had travelled from villages more than an hour away – towards the point where their documents would be checked by Israeli officials.

For years, these checkpoints had been manned by uniformed personnel from the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and the Israeli Border Police. But starting in 2006, gun-toting private security guards joined them. Now, twelve checkpoints in the West Bank and two on the Gaza border used such guards.

We knew that there were private guards working at the Qalandia checkpoint, but we had to look closely to spot them. They blended in well, and looked similar to the soldiers. They were similarly armed, and wearing similar uniforms. But the colour of the fabric was off – it was darker than the IDF's traditional olive green. Squinting, we made out badges that read 'Ezrachi'.

Modi'in Ezrachi was the largest security contractor employed by the Israeli government. Its guards could be seen checking the documents of bus and car passengers in Jerusalem, protecting Jewish compounds and standing watch at the Western Wall plaza. Earlier that year, at the Qalandia checkpoint where we now stood, Modi'in Ezrachi guards had shot dead two young Palestinians – Maram Saleh Abu Ismail, 23, and her 16-year-old brother Ibrahim Saleh Taha.[6]

It wasn't a one-off case. There was a long history of humiliation and violence at such checkpoints. The Israeli human-rights group B'Tselem had released many reports over the years documenting abuses.

'It depends on the individual soldier or policeman', 22-year-old Reham told us, of her experiences. 'Sometimes they let you go; they don't talk to you. Generally, girls are more mean than boys – I don't know why.' We met the university medical student near the Qalandia checkpoint. 'It's miserable', she said, of her daily commute. But when we asked her about the presence of private guards alongside state security she said 'we can't differentiate between them' – because of their similar dress and behaviour.

'They are no different from the army,' agreed a day labourer named Imad, who we met in the same line. As far as he and other people we spoke to were concerned, any Israeli with a gun and a badge seemed to have a license to humiliate them, or worse. A darker green uniform didn't change this.

Battle-tested products

Back at our hotel, we asked ourselves: Why was Israel, of all states, using private security contractors? It had a famously large conscript army, with mandatory three years' service for men and two for women (plus obligatory reserve duty for men until age 51 and for women until 24). If it needed more muscle at its borders, couldn't it have deployed more of these people?

Also, the human rights situation was already dire for Palestinians. Did adding guns-for-hire actually make things worse? People we met didn't seem to distinguish between private guards, soldiers and police, who all frightened them. So why were rights groups sounding the alarm?

When we contacted the Israeli Ministry of Defence, we were told that some 'crossings receive assistance from companies specialising in security and protection'. They advised us to speak to the IDF for further details – but when we tried we were referred back to the Ministry of Defence as 'the appropriate body to speak with'. The company Modi'in Ezrachi didn't respond to us at all.

Next, we travelled to Ramallah in the West Bank to meet Iyad Haddad, a then 53-year-old field researcher with B'Tselem human rights group. We found him at his home office, in a decrepit building near a hospital. At first glance it looked like a bric-a-brac shop. But the objects on his tables were not trinkets. They included spent ammunition, tear gas canisters, sponge bullets and shell casings.

Haddad had spent the past three decades documenting acts and impacts of Israeli forces' violence here. These ugly little pieces of memorabilia were his testament to that process. Many of these weapons had been fired on peaceful demonstrators protesting against Israel's wall and new settlements.

Standing among these items, Haddad told us that it's precisely 'because the people can't recognise' the private armed guards that they had been increasingly deployed over the last decade. 'It becomes easier for them to use force when they want to, without accountability.'

Companies initially took on more mundane operations like logistics, transportation and catering, he said; then, some began carrying out other military and police-like activities too. The collection of munitions around us, in his unusual office, would be powerful props for what he would tell us next. He believed that businesses' increasing role in Israel's occupation was not only a strategy to further shirk accountability for abuses, but that it was also a way to 'test' new weapons on Palestinians before exporting them worldwide.

'Sometimes they are using us so they can know how to use each kind of weapon', Haddad said, disapproving of demonstrations that provided these opportunities. 'For me, these kinds of activities by the Palestinians become helpful to the Israelis because it makes this area into a laboratory to test their weapons, to develop them and make it a commercial industry, to sell them to other countries.'

He spoke calmly, but we could hear weariness in his voice. 'I have seen how they are developing their tools and their weapons industry and the ways of dealing with the community', he told us. 'And, in 30 years, I never heard once that there is any kind of accountability', when abuses happen. But he goes on.

While in Ramallah, we also met Abdallah Abu Rahmah, coordinator of a local Popular Struggle Committee. Every Friday for a decade, he and his neighbours had protested against Israel's occupation. He also told us he'd heard that military companies advertise to buyers how their products had been used.

'Things like skunk water, they used it the first time in our village', he said as an example, referring to a putrid liquid that was sprayed at protesters to get them to disperse. 'Sometimes they come to our actions and they take video and photographs showing how effective the weapons are in stopping the action.'

Later, Neve Gordon, a politics professor at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, would also tell us: 'The laboratory of the occupied territories is where things can be fine-tuned, they can be tested, and retested … They can say, "Hey this was used by the IDF, this must be good." And that helps the marketing of the goods'.

We asked a retired Israeli brigadier general, Shlomo Brom, then at the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv, about this. Was it true that Israeli companies used the fact that their weapons had been tested on Palestinians to gain new business? 'Of course', he replied. 'Why not? Marketing professionals … if they can use the advantage that this system was tested operationally and it worked, they will.'

Many people told us that the privatisation of Israel's occupation – at checkpoints, in settlements and elsewhere – had become increasingly obvious over the last decade in particular, since the 2000–5 Second Intifada uprising of Palestinians. But seeing this as a 'new' trend wasn't quite accurate, we'd also learn.

From its founding in 1948 until the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel had been supported by much of the global left, which saw it as a socialist nation. While Palestinians in the territories it conquered were subject to military rule, Israel built up a welfare state and had low levels of inequality internally.

Shir Hever, author of The Political Economy of Israel's Occupation, described how right-wing governments then began dismantling this welfare state.

'In 1985, as the World Bank and the IMF imposed "structural adjustment plans" on developing countries,' he told us, 'the Israeli government voluntarily adopted such a plan.' This 'was a transformative moment in the country's economy, marking the shift from a social-democratic, planned market into a neoliberal one', he said. It echoed moves by Ronald Reagan in the US and Margaret Thatcher in the UK.

All sectors would be touched by privatisation, including health and education services. The gap between rich and poor Israelis widened.[7] In 2016, one-third of children lived below the poverty line.[8] Israeli academic Daniel Gutwein said: ‘Israel’s ethos of social solidarity has been replaced by an ethos of privatisation’.[9]

Hever told us that privatisation of the defense sector began ‘with the sale of factories out of government-owned arms companies, later with massive outsourcing of security operations to private companies.’ These trends, he said, ‘were driven by investors who used neoliberal ideology to claim that the government was inefficient.’

Companies that benefited include Magal Security Systems, which had surrounded Gaza with fencing. Elsewhere, it had assisted in the construction of a barrier along the Egyptian and Jordanian borders, and it was bidding to build a border wall to protect Kenyans from Al-Shabaab terrorist attacks. The head of that company, Saar Koursh, told *Bloomberg* that ‘business was down, but then came ISIS and the Syrian conflict. The world is changing, and borders are coming back big-time’.[10]

Privatising Fortress Europe

Closer to home, we saw how private companies were also increasingly involved in the border business amid Europe’s widely reported ‘migration crisis’.

More than 1 million people arrived by boats in 2015 and more than 230,000 in the first six months of 2016.[11] Others came over land, walking and getting lifts in cars, buses and trucks. On the Italy-France border, we met some of these people, including Alma (a pseudonym), from Palestine. We met her in Ventimiglia, a seaside city on the Italian Riviera, which had become home to a growing number of migrants incongruously ‘stuck’ in a place that attracts leagues of tourists every year. Its beaches no longer seemed like relaxing places; they had become sites of confrontations between migrants and police.

We met Alma in the courtyard of a church which had opened its doors to migrants who were women and children. Men slept on the streets or in a dreary camp run by the Red Cross, sealed off by gates and high fences. This divided families and, in some cases, left young children unaccompanied.

Alma was 30 years old then, and instantly relatable. She had dreams but also a plan. She had crossed Egypt and Libya before the Mediterranean to get here. She had friends in Belgium she was determined to reach.

Journeys such as hers had become increasingly risky. France had instituted heavier controls at the border. Italy was transferring people caught to ‘reception centres’ in southern Italy and the island of Sardinia.

Tommaso Fabbri, head of mission for Médecins Sans Frontières in Italy, told us that the situation at the Italy-French border was ‘a sign that Europe’s response is completely failing’. He called it an ‘irresponsible decision to close the border’ and push people to follow ‘new routes which are often much more dangerous’.

Maurizio Mauro, head of the Ventimiglia branch of the Catholic NGO Caritas, said he had personally seen migrants coming back from the French border with injuries ‘either because they fell while running, breaking their ankles or their legs, or other cases of people with signs of beatings’ from border guards.

The result of a strategy of deterrents and controls, warned humanitarian charities, wouldn’t stop people from moving. ‘I don’t want to stay here’, Alma from Palestine had also told us firmly. She’d already been caught by French police after crossing the border, and sent back to Italy. Yet she would try again.

It was called Europe’s worst refugee crisis since the Second World War. Refugee camps were set up across the continent. People died as states introduced restrictions, and ‘push back’ operations.

The Europol agency said that tens of thousands of people smugglers, more than 60 per cent of whom came from European countries, were benefiting from ‘a booming business’ worth billions of euros a year.[12] But trying to block people’s movements also seemed like a huge business opportunity for some private companies.

Internationally, the ‘migration security market’ had boomed since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the US, according to researchers at the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam. They estimated that this market could almost double in size between 2015 and 2022, reaching a value of almost €30 billion.[13]

Companies were involved in erecting the visible, physical infrastructure of restrictive migration policies (from fences, walls and barbed wire to watchtowers) as well as in the roll out of new technology (including drones, satellites, heartbeat detectors, infrared cameras) to monitor and control migrants.

Across the continent, money was also being made running immigrant detention centres, assisting in deportations, managing shelters for asylum seekers. The problem wasn’t just about profiting from crises – it was also about the extent to which private interests were involved in shaping and prolonging them.

Business behind bars

In Turin, northern Italy, a company called Gepsa had recently entered the immigrant detention business. It was part of a for-profit consortium managing what was called a *centro d’identificazione ed espulsione* (‘centre of identification and expulsion’, or CIE).

Gepsa was a French company that specialized in managing services at the 'most sensitive sites' requiring 'discretion' – like prisons, detention centres and government defense facilities.[14] In France, it had contracts in at least thirteen prisons. It also seemed to be expanding internationally – including into Italy.

We had never heard of this company before. But we learned that it was part of a much bigger corporate empire. It was a subsidiary of ENGIE Cofely, in turn a subsidiary of Engie – a massive multinational company.

Engie had been created in 2008 by the merger of Gaz de France and Suez (whose history could be traced back to the nineteenth-century company that built the Suez Canal). Its 2018 annual revenues surpassed $60 billion[15] – rivalling the GDPs of more than 100 countries, including Luxembourg and Uruguay. It sold electricity around the world, and was best-known for energy activities. But through its subsidiary it was also involved in the detention industry.

Across Italy, CIE centres held people detained for not having their papers in order, while they waited to be identified and then, if possible, deported. Conditions were prison-like, complete with cells and barbed wire. In Turin, the facility that Gepsa was involved in managing was in a former military barracks. Graffiti on its high concrete walls, topped with surveillance cameras, reflected how controversial it seemed to be locally. They said '*fuoco ai cie*' (fire to CIE), and '*solidarietà coi prigionieri in rivolta*' (solidarity with prisoners in revolt).

Over the years, there had been numerous protests inside this centre, by detainees from Africa to Latin America. Fires set during these revolts had damaged the facility and reduced its capacity.[16]

Since the late 1990s, it had been run by the Red Cross. Then, in 2015, the for-profit consortium including Gepsa took over. The contract they had signed specified that the facility had space to house 180 people – and guaranteed that its managers would be paid for at least 90 even if numbers fell below that.[17] This secured their revenues even if riots or fires caused damage again.

It was a big deal, signed by Gepsa along with an Italian contractor called Acuarinto – worth millions of euros a year. The pair had also won similar contracts to manage other such centres in Milan and in the capital Rome.[18]

Human rights groups said this trade had been a disaster for detainees. Marco Zanchetta at an NGO called Medici per i diritti umani (Doctors for Human Rights) told us that contracts were awarded to the lowest bidders, ensuring that 'who offers less wins', and leading to cuts to services.

'Before there were recreational activities, exercise courses, activities with dogs, projections of films,' he said, giving examples of things that became 'totally absent'. There was little respite for 'the tension and the psychological suffering … that comes from the uncertainty of the situations of the people who are inside', he continued, while healthcare services were also worryingly thin.

A major problem, Zanchetta explained, was that ‘while there is a national health service that comes into the prisons, and is in charge of the health of the detainees, in the C.I.E health workers are dependent on the centre’s contractors’.

He told us about the cases of two men from Tunisia whom his NGO had met during a visit to the Turin centre. One was suicidal, and given anti-anxiety medication without the appropriate visits with psychiatrists or specialists. The other was detained and then deported with multiple untreated fractures to one of his legs.

Later, we met a former detainee in this centre, who shared his own first-hand experience of life inside it. Omabunde, from Nigeria, told us over coffee that he had lived and worked in Italy for years and had been about to get married to a Nigerian woman who had Italian citizenship. He had legal residence papers, he said, but they had fallen out of date and he had been stopped by police while waiting for renewed copies. They put him into the system.

The Gepsa consortium had just taken over, and Omabunde said it was a major topic of conversation among detainees who claimed the new managers had made their bad situations even worse. In line with the new managers’ bid that promised cost savings, he described complaints of fewer activities and services as well as increasingly unappetizing mush served at meals.

Detentions in these centres were supposed to be temporary, until people were identified and deported to their home countries. In many cases people ended up being released with orders to leave the country. Some people would go through this several times. Omabunde described a punitive system – locking people up but failing to deport them, releasing them only to maybe lock them up again later and restart the cycle. It kept people on edge, and vulnerable.

An endless churn of detainees however seemed to work just fine for some: for-profit contractors who made money off each head. Meanwhile these centres had become increasingly secretive places under private management, and harder for human rights monitors and journalists to access.

North of Turin, we drove towards the Alps until we saw abandoned factory after abandoned factory. This pocket of northern Italy had been for much of the twentieth century a major hub of the country’s textile industry. It was the home of Ermenegildo Zegna, the luxury menswear brand, and the Fila brothers’ first factory. Most of this activity was now long gone, however, relocated to other parts of Italy and abroad. Many people had left too.

But now a new business was opening up – that of housing asylum seekers who had to live in temporary centres while awaiting the results of their asylum applications. Across Italy, there were about 100,000 people in this system.[19] With contractors receiving €30–35 per day per person – we did the math – it was an industry worth more than €1 billion a year.

Some contractors ran large shelters in major cities like Rome or Milan. But many asylum-seekers were sent to 'hard-to-reach places, where residents are cut off from normal life', a Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) report had warned, 'causing a strong feeling of marginalisation and a lack of access to services'.[20] For contractors, such remote locations could limit their costs – but also the level of scrutiny they received.

'I didn't know where I was going, they didn't tell us anything', said Samuel, a 30-year-old from Ghana who we met near a church in one tiny town in the foothills of the Alps. He lived in an asylum-seeker shelter nearby along with dozens of other men from different countries. Sitting along a shallow river and near a row of abandoned buildings, the structure had been recently repainted in bright colours. But it was far from a hospital and most other services. The closest supermarket was a 45-minute walk away, along winding roads without sidewalks or street lamps.

'We haven't seen the manager of the place and the workers don't know anything', Samuel also told us. 'There hasn't even been a meeting so we could ask things. We only eat and sleep.' He said he received a €15 mobile phone top up card when he arrived, but little else since then. 'We don't have clothes, or medical care', he said. 'We were facing consequences in Africa, but here too it is not easy.'

Also near the church, we met local town residents who were organizing donations of clothing and shoes for asylum seekers, as well as free language classes. These initiatives also seemed to reflect the cutting of corners by contractors – who, beyond physical shelter, were supposed to provide such things and services, as well as small amounts of 'pocket money' to buy things like phone credit from local shops.

We heard many stories of 'pocket money' that arrived late (or never did), as well as those of shelters in which basic utilities had been cut off. Some asylum-seekers had no heat or hot water for days in January. Volunteers were trying to push the local government, which had awarded the contracts, to do something about these situations. One told us that their efforts seemed to have some impact. 'Things have changed a bit. But I expected more', she said, 'Every time we have to push, and then the contractor does the minimum'.

In another small town we met Daniel, who said he needed to see a doctor urgently, about an injury he had sustained in Libya. 'Before we didn't even get soap and toothpaste … It is better now because of volunteers who help us', he told us. Though it had been a month, he said, since he'd submitted a written request to see a doctor (following many verbal pleas). 'We get no medical help, no legal assistance.'

We tried, but largely failed, to get answers from the contractors that ran these shelters. An employee at one of them, however, told us he was aware that there had been 'difficulties … especially with pocket money' that 'would be foolish to deny'. He also acknowledged that there had been 'imperfect collaboration with local volunteer associations … when you throw yourself into the community's territory, if you don't know how to introduce yourself, if you don't talk, of course you can create tensions'.

As with contracts for immigrant detention centres like the one we'd seen in Turin, the shelter business seemed to fuel a race to the bottom in terms of the services provided, with deals going to bidders who offered the cheapest prices.

For the state, outsourcing appeared to let it wash its hands of what happened next. A template we saw, for contractors' agreements to run asylum-seeker shelters, said that state offices would be 'excluded from any responsibility coming from damage to the goods or people that could happen'. Contractors were in charge, and shielded by commercial confidentiality clauses.

It thus became harder to independently scrutinize these systems, let alone hold them accountable. It wasn't only an issue in Italy, and it even affected officials like Louis Joiet. Regarding one Australian detention centre contract, which he tried to access while he was UN rapporteur on arbitrary detention, he said he was told 'it was a business secret … the state was just the same as an ordinary commercial customer, and the UN an institution that [they] feared would disclose the trade secrets used to manufacture [their] "merchandise" to the competition'.[21]

Chapter 19

Private protection

Follow the weapons

From Turin we travelled east – past Milan and the Lake Como area that was famous for hosting the vacation houses of celebrities like George Clooney. Outlet shops selling iron pots and pans, and gun stores, appeared on the side of the road. It meant we were getting closer to our destination: the de-facto capital of Italy's weapons-making district.

We arrived in Gardone Val Trompia (population 12,000), in the province of Brescia, on a Saturday morning with Giorgio Ghiglione, an Italian journalist who we'd teamed up with. Its sleepy streets were lined with stores selling guns produced by big companies as well as local artisans. The town's coat of arms displayed two rifles.

'Because we were born here and grew up here, we're used to having guns around', one young woman who we met in town told us. 'You realise that it is a strange place to live only when you leave … in many cases these weapons kill people.' She hoped the area's economy would diversify, including into tourism, but thought 'we will always be a weapons-making valley. It's too rooted in history'.

At a small cafe, another woman told us that, in the past, owning an impressive gun was a local status symbol 'like an iPhone today'. As the valley's factories boomed in the twentieth century, she added, 'we didn't know what unemployment was'. Since then times had changed. 'Some factories have moved overseas, others have closed', she said. Although there was an exception.

One company that had been intertwined with this town's history and its fortunes for hundreds of years – that had outlasted kings and governments – seemed to stand firm. This was the Beretta family dynasty – and if you worked for them, the woman in the cafe told us, your situation was comparatively 'privileged'.

There were signs everywhere in Gardone of its most famous family, the Beretta gunmakers. They seemed to own the town's most dominant buildings, and were its biggest employer. A steady stream of workers flowed in and out of its factory complex, as shifts ended but production didn't. But no one we spoke to had ever met, or even seen, any of the family members in person. They seemed everywhere, but also nowhere.

This family company was older than most states. Its history seemed to offer us a unique window into who controls the guns in our world, and how that's changed.

In the sixteenth century, Beretta had made precursors to muskets called arquebus barrels.[1] At that time, Italian city states had become reliant on private military forces. Machiavelli had called these mercenaries 'the whores of war' in his classic treatise 'The Prince', which was first published in 1532.[2] That was less than a decade after Beretta's first known contract, in 1526, with Venice.[3]

Machiavelli had urged leaders to rely on their own armies, loyal only to them, rather than mercenaries who were not to be trusted. As state militaries grew, they became major clients for Beretta. It made guns for Napoleon, King Henry VIII, and boomed with orders from the Italian army during the First and Second World Wars.[4]

Beretta still made weapons for police and militaries around the world. In 2017, for example, it secured a deal to supply 150,000 rifles and pistols to Argentina's army.[5] But the company also changed and expanded, in many ways. Family members became corporate executives overseeing a global empire with dozens of subsidiaries – including in Germany, Australia, Russia, Turkey and the UK.[6] One made 'distraction and smoke grenades and other pyrotechnic devices'.[7] Others made optics, scopes and binoculars, 'laser aiming devices and tactical flashlights'.[8] Beretta had also opened clothing and home accessories lines, on sale at places like Harrods in London.[9]

Overall, 95 per cent of the company's business was now outside of Italy. In 2015, the overarching Beretta Holdings company reported €660 million in revenues – more than half of which (€385 million) came from North America.[10] It had seen a 'decrease in orders' from military and police – however its trade in 'light firearms' to private customers seemed to have more than made up the difference, and now comprised 70 per cent of its sales.[11]

The declining position of states in Beretta's client list seemed to reflect wider trends. In Geneva, a project called the Small Arms Survey had estimated that out of 875 million firearms worldwide, about 650 million were in civilian hands (legally or illegally).[12] New guns, it described, were 'often developed for military use, then adapted to the civilian market'.[13]

This sounded like the Italian company. In 1985, it won a landmark contract to supply pistols to the US military. Not long after, a similar 'civilian' gun appeared in stores. More recently, a $525 semi-automatic pistol was shipped to US stores.[14] The company said it was 'designed specifically for military and law enforcement' and would 'make sure you #WintheFight'.[15]

The US non-profit the Violence Policy Centre said 'the US civilian handgun market' was in fact 'revolutionised and militarised, in large part because of a deliberate, well-documented marketing strategy by Beretta's management'.[16] They pointed, for example, to a 1993 *Baltimore Sun* interview with a Beretta executive who reportedly explained that the strategy was to use military sales to become more well-known and able, to expand in the even bigger consumer market.[17]

In Italy, observers of the gun trade said there was not enough transparency around this business – and warned that 'civilian' guns were less strictly regulated than military exports. Researchers at a group called the Permanent Observatory on Small Arms (Opal) in Brescia had been following these trends. They noticed how, for instance, an unusual amount of hunting guns had been imported by Albania in the 1990s, during the civil war in neighbouring Kosovo, and said they were suspected to have been used in the conflict.

They had also raised concerns about a 2009 export of 'civilian' guns including semi-automatics to Libya, which they said 'highlighted weaknesses in the EU's arms control regime and the dangers of selling guns to difficult countries'.[18] These weapons had been bought by Gaddafi's General People's Committee for General Security but they had been marked as 'non-military items'. This meant that necessary permits were issued in Brescia instead of by the national government in Rome, with different and potentially less scrutiny.

In the US, Beretta guns had been reportedly used in murders and fatal shootings including that of a toddler in the US state of Virginia,[19] two teenage sisters in Ohio,[20] a mother-of-four in Georgia[21] and four students at a Washington State high school.[22]

Less well known, it seemed, was how the company was involved in creating the opportunities for its profit-making. Beretta family members also belonged to the NRA's Golden Ring of Freedom and had donated millions of dollars to the group, including to 'argue significant legal issues relating to the right to keep and bear arms'.[23]

The company also closed a factory in the state of Maryland – moving to Tennessee, in response to a gun control law it didn't like.[24] Nodding to Beretta's very long history, an executive said at that time that when picking a factory location, it considers 'the possibility that we will be … [there] for decades, if not hundreds of years'.[25]

Cattle in a camp

Returning to London, at the airport we saw some of the more than half a million people globally who worked for G4S – one of the world's largest private employers.[26] Headquartered in London, this company provided guards at airports as well as in prisons and had been the subject of numerous scandals – over the treatment of its own workers as well as detainees. In 2016, it had been in the news because one of its guards was behind one of the worst mass-shooting incidents in US history[27] – at the Pulse gay club in Orlando, Florida – and because of riots at a prison that it ran in Birmingham, in the UK.[28]

G4S was also involved in the outsourced management of immigrant detention facilities, including at Yarl's Wood north of London, which held 410 mostly women detainees and had been the site of regular protests. Despite the public attention these protests had received, it was hard for journalists as well as rights advocates to get access to information and people inside. Natasha Walter at the NGO Women for Refugee Women described an 'extremely concerning' lack of transparency, arguing: 'It seems straightforward logic that if private companies are doing the work of the Home Office and being paid out of tax receipts, then they should be liable to the same scrutiny as the public sector'.

We weren't able to go inside this detention centre officially as journalists – and we weren't alone in trying and failing. A UN special rapporteur had also been denied entry, as had Diane Abbott, Labour's shadow home secretary at the time.[29] But rights advocates eventually managed to help us visit one detainee, a woman who was nearing three years inside without charge. She told us she wasn't surprised that journalists couldn't easily enter the centre – as it fit a pattern of restrictions on information as well as ever-present surveillance.

'I feel intimidated,' she said. 'We know they are listening to our phones. We feel they look at our emails as well. I feel spied upon.' This feeling, of constantly being controlled and watched, has meant that 'people are scared of speaking out.' She continued: 'I feel there should be a place you can complain,' she said, about the contractors if they cross a line. Instead: 'We are treated like cattle in a camp'.

G4S was a big player in this industry. It was a massive multinational which boasted 2016 revenues of £6.8 billion and profits of £454 million.[30] It was also an old company, with origins in a guarding business founded in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1901.[31] Though it wasn't the only such business.

The global private security market – from guards to alarm monitoring, armoured transport and other services for commercial, government and individual buyers – was now worth an estimated $180 billion, and was projected to grow to $240 billion by 2020 according to the Freedonia Group market research firm.[32]

In a 2010 book called *Security beyond the State,* two University of Ottawa professors had described how the provision of security had become increasingly 'de-territorialised', independent of states and 'embedded in a complex transnational architecture'.[33] They described something we had seen around the world – from Myanmar's chaotic commercial capital, where guards blocked entrances to luxury hotels that towered over the extreme poverty around them, to South Africa's wealthy suburbs, where dogs barked at us from behind high walls topped with razor wire.

The privatisation of 'everyday security', these academics said, had become so common that it often went unnoticed and unquestioned. However, they argued, it affected the distribution of power in societies (determining who gets secured and how) as well as the stability of states (fracturing their monopoly on the use of force).

'You stop noticing it – there are guards everywhere', Rita Abrahamson, one of the authors, told us over the phone. Though the expansion of private guards, security fences and gates, she said, are 'very physical displays of inequality'.

She'd looked in-depth at these trends, and their consequences in several African countries where there had been 'very little attempt to regulate the private security sector', perhaps because it created some jobs for people in contexts of high unemployment. A few governments, including Sierra Leone's, even facilitated the export of private security labour overseas, actively supporting the international industry's recruitment of their citizens.

She described these trends as frontier concerns for democracies and states, and prompted more questions: What does it mean when security becomes a product that only those with money can buy? Are there any exceptions to these trends? And how did they connect to the other international systems and strategies we had investigated?

We began to build another global dataset – recording statistics and estimates, wherever we could find them, of the number of private security workers in different countries. We then added a column to record the figures we could find on the number of public police officers by country. We wanted to see how these figures compared. Was it true, across the world, that 'everyday security' had become increasingly privatised? To what extent?

The Geneva-based Small Arms Survey had published one of the few international studies and datasets on this industry, in 2011, estimating that there were approximately 19.5 million private guards across seventy countries. It had also warned: 'Like other commercial services, only those who are able and willing to pay will benefit from it. This dynamic runs the risk of exacerbating disparities between the wealthy – protected by increasingly sophisticated systems – and the poorest, who may need to resort to informal and sometimes illegal means to secure their safety'.[34]

This industry's rapid growth had 'outpaced regulation and oversight mechanisms', that group added. There was an international code of conduct – but it was voluntary, and non-binding.[35]

We pulled together data from several sources, including from these researchers in Switzerland, the Organization for American States, the Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS), the Eurostat statistics department, and some national-level agencies. In the end, we could only find numbers for eighty-one countries (less than half of the world's states). There were other challenges too. We found few estimates of unregistered, informal or 'black market' security guards. It wasn't always easy to compare data across countries and years, as it wasn't always collected in the same way.

Still, what our spreadsheet showed us was staggering. More than half of the world's people lived in the dozens of countries – including Australia, China, the UK and US – where there seemed to be more private guards hired to protect specific people, places and things than police officers who at least in principle have a mandate to protect the public.

In the US, department of labour statistics said there were more than 1.1 million private security guards – compared with about 660,000 police and sheriff's officers. Economists Samuel Bowles and Arjun Jayadev had also looked at these figures and found that the US was employing 'as many private security guards as high school teachers'.[36] They further found that more unequal cities and states had higher levels of 'guard labour' – a broad term they used to include private security as well as police, bailiffs, prison officers and other related workers.

We rang Jayadev in Bangalore, where he was teaching at Azim Premji University. The growth of the private security industry reflects the 'breakdown of trust and community bonds' that comes with rising inequality, he told us.

In India, estimates suggested the private security industry employed as many as 7 million people.[37] This was far more than the 1.7 million police officers it had in 2013.[38] In that country, Jayadev told us, this industry's growth was also part of a broader 'secession of the rich from the rest of the economy', which included relying on 'private services in every facet of their lives', to provide 'all of the things the state might otherwise … including security'.

Informal imperialism

It is 'extremely difficult', wrote other academics from the University of Leicester in the UK, 'to grasp either the activities or the true scale' of this industry due to a 'veil of secrecy around its activities that is only occasionally lifted'. They connected what they called 'the re-emergence of mercenary forces … re-imagined as Private Security Companies' to 'the growing strength of (neo)liberal imperialism'. Broader outsourcing drives, they said, had 'laid the foundations' for a '(re-)privatisation of the military'.[39]

Like other international systems and trends we'd investigated, modern private military and security companies also seemed to have boomed in the decades of 'decolonization', as independence and anti-colonial movements rose and Europe's formal empires fell. From the 1960s, numerous new private contractors were founded by British special forces veterans, with names like Watchguard International and Control Risks Group.

Such companies boomed again at the end of the Cold War, as millions of people left state militaries and looked for new jobs – and then again with US-led wars in the Middle East, and rising levels of income inequality.

If 'you have a ton more money than everyone around you … you want to protect it. Getting security from the private sector is an obvious way to do it', said Deborah Avant, co-director of the University of Denver's Private Security Monitor programme. During the US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 'an army of private workers flooded in to do all sorts of things', she told us. Many did jobs that would have previously been done by the military directly. Among those recruited were former child soldiers from Uganda.[40] Afterwards, many stayed in this line of business.

But, as the Leicester academics suggested, the world has seen privatised security before. Some 'chartered corporations' that had expanded European colonial empires had their own security, for instance. Famously, in 1857 the East India Company's forces rose up against their employer. The company publicly executed tens of thousands of suspected rebels in retaliation. (A few years after this, it was out of power and the British crown took over, giving a new title to Queen Victoria: Empress of India.)[41]

'Mercenary forces reinforced empire on the cheap', summarized P. W. Singer, at the Brookings Institution think tank. It was only during the First World War, he explained, that 'the nature of warfare had changed to the point whereby mercenary forces became irrelevant'. That was a period in which state militaries expanded dramatically. It was during this time and in this context that Weber, the German sociologist, had written that a monopoly over the legitimate use of force, within certain territories, were defining characteristics of the state.[42]

That context had changed. Private companies had become increasingly involved (or re-involved) in all phases of warfare including training and arming soldiers, intelligence gathering and strategic advice. They could be hired to battle in civil wars, against rebel groups, insurgents, even protestors. Singer called them 'corporate warriors'. With their growth, he said, ‘the start of the twenty-first century is witnessing the gradual breakdown of the Weberian monopoly over the forms of violence’.[43]

Companies in the privatised security business often worked for states. But they could have many clients at the same time – and could also work for other private companies and wealthy individuals. According to Catherine Piana, director general of the Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS) industry group, roughly 70 per cent of private security clients in Europe were other businesses – not states or government agencies.

‘There is now a very wide range of services, depending of course on who you are,’ Piana added. Amid threats from terrorism, for example, guards ‘often have positions in front of buildings where they can see unusual activities and report them, so there’s a possibility for them to collect information too’.

Singer, at the Brookings Institution, wrote that this industry also gave criminal enterprises that purchased these services ‘new options and new paths to power not imagined until very recently’. He speculated that ‘states may eventually become like dinosaurs toward the end of the Cretaceous period: powerful but cumbersome, not yet superseded, but no longer the unchallenged masters of their environment’.[44]

Even in the 1970s, academics including political theorist Hedley Bull were predicting the rise of ‘neomedievalism’ – the emergence of non-state actors and the overlapping of their authority with that of governments.[45] In 2014, Sean McFate published a more contemporary, non-academic account of the same thing.

The Modern Mercenary, written by the former contractor at the private security giant Dyncorp, described how that company had been contracted by the US State Department to design, recruit and train Liberia’s new army after that country’s civil war. McFate said this marked ‘the first time in two centuries that one sovereign nation hired a private enterprise to raise another sovereign nation’s armed forces’.[46]

He also described the rise of a ‘neo-medieval’ world, where private forces determine the outcomes of conflicts in ‘a non-state-centric, multipolar international system of overlapping authorities and allegiances’. And, like Staley the Chicago economist who seemed to have predicted much of what we saw around the world, he suggested it would be futile to try to stop this.

The new nanny

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN’s General Assembly in 1948, says that ‘everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person', and that 'no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property'.[47] Governments are required to work towards realizing these rights.

But when security is privatised, only those with enough money can buy it. What does it mean for democracy, we asked, when this happens?

In some countries the expansion of the private security industry had enabled the richest and even the middle classes to bypass the state. In Latin America, the UN Development Programme had called it a trend that 'further increases inequality, as social groups have different capacities to deal with crime'.[48] It seemed to be a cause as well as a product of intensifying inequalities.

The elite US magazine *Town & Country* in 2016 meanwhile said that 'in properly staffed households throughout the world, the bodyguard is the new nanny'. It described how 'fear of terrorism, a volatile political climate and a pervasive sense that the wealth creation of a few has come at the expense of the many have made paranoia the norm'.[49]

Several companies explicitly marketed their services to the richest including crisis response, 'executive personal protection', and security for mega-yachts. One of them, Pinkerton, claimed a stunning 170 years of experience with 'highly-skilled agents' protecting 'Fortune 100 CEOs and their workforces, famous entertainers, athletes, high-net worth individuals, royal families and diplomats'.[50]

The privatisation of security was also affecting the UK, where we lived. Data collected by the CoESS industry group said there were 232,000 private security guards in the country in 2015, again far exceeding numbers of police officers. The British Security Industry Association estimated that this market was worth more than £6 billion.[51] Customers included local communities: residents in one Essex town, for example, reportedly hired private security to patrol its public streets at night after its local police station closed.[52]

Other companies focused on elite clientele included a 'My Local Bobby' subscription-based service which catered to residents of London's most upmarket neighbourhoods. One of its founders, a former police officer, said: 'It's like people buy private health insurance … the concept of people paying for something above what the state provides – this is no different'.[53] Another London-based company, Westminster Security, said that it offered 'complete security and lifestyle management for high net-worth individuals, families and businesses'. It also advertised that its employees had police and military backgrounds.[54]

Also in the UK, we found more than a dozen private security and military companies based in Hereford, close to the British Army's Special Air Service (SAS) headquarters. It also seemed like an attractive location for them because office space was cheap and readily available near huge expanses of countryside, ideal for training centres and courses.

In the nearby sleepy village of Madley, population 1,200, we found one of these training centres. Behind an idyllic rural setting, with a Red Lion pub, parish church, and many grazing cows in fields, was a converted barn. While it looked like any other barn from the outside, inside was military equipment.

Every six weeks, we learned, this building and the area around it were filled with prospective recruits for this industry. They came from various places including in Eastern Europe, the US and Latin America. It was where some of the next generation of guns for hires – guarding VIPs to corporate assets – started their journey.

'In 2004 I jacked in Iraq and came back to the UK, and threw all my money into creating Ronin Concepts,' John Geddes told us, about the private military company that he set up in 2004. He had a military career in the parachute regiment and the SAS, before going to Iraq as a private soldier with a British company. There, he was disillusioned with the quality of other recruits and he saw an opportunity to move into training.

Inside his barn, sub machine guns, rifles and pistols lined the back wall. Human dummies and severed plastic heads lay on the floor. Geddes showed us the projection screen where he put on course videos, including those of live fire training from Poland and the US (where he had other training sites). Replacing a gun on the wall rack, he shared his perspective on the success of the UK, and Hereford in particular, in this multibillion dollar industry.

'The answer goes back in history a couple of hundred years when you had in the days of the rise of the East India Company,' he said, naming that famous colonial-era 'chartered company' which 'occupied huge tracts of the globe and mostly they were ex-services patched throughout the empire.'

In 2014, a UK Ministry of Defence research report predicted the rise of corporate armies, drone terrorism and laser weapons among threats to security to emerge internationally over the next thirty years. It sketched out a vision of the future with large multinational corporations equipped with their own 'highly capable security forces' and new technologies like increasingly cheap unmanned drones for sale to all sorts of buyers including criminals and terrorists, who may even be able to 'secure payload space on rockets operated by private companies – this would allow them to launch their own surveillance satellites'.[55]

This study did not seem far-fetched – much of what it described was already in motion, and had been for a long time. Around the world, private guards were common sights at locations from airports to oil refineries. Once again, most weapons were in private hands. And British companies were at the forefront of this industry, selling security and profiting from the threat of violence worldwide.

Chapter 20

Lucrative threats

Secret city

We arrived in Albuquerque after the sun had set, and met Brooks Saucedo-McQuade, a photojournalist who would accompany us to our last destination.

Together, we drove north through stunning scenery with small bushes popping through sand and giant rocky ridges beyond them. It was sunny with few clouds. This was the land evoked by New Mexico's tagline – the 'Land of Enchantment' – and that had inspired Georgia O'Keeffe, who had painted here. But roadside signs, pointing to military sites, kept us on track.

We were here to go to the belly of the horrific beast that is the threat of nuclear war: Los Alamos, home of the atomic bomb. It was where, during the Second World War, an army of scientists worked on the top-secret 'Manhattan Project'. A 'secret city' was built around their laboratory, surrounded by fences and guards. They were forbidden to talk about their jobs and even the lab's existence.[1]

Now, you could drive right into the town. On a weekday afternoon, we found its streets quiet. Potted flowers hung from lamp-posts. There were landscaped gardens, a pond and many planted trees. It looked more like a wealthy ski-resort town, like Aspen, than part of the military-industrial complex. But there were reminders of bombs everywhere.

The local movie theatre was on Oppenheimer Drive, named after the physicist who oversaw the creation of the first nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. 'Atomic City Transit' buses roll down the streets. In springtime there was an 'Atomic Man Duathlon'. In the fall: a 'Meltdown Rock Climbing Competition'.

Shops sold atomic bomb souvenirs including kids' t-shirts with images of explosions and the words 'Kicking ass since 1945'. Los Alamos was increasingly marketing itself to tourists – war and military history buffs, others interested in science and technology, and those looking for unusual holidays.

The nuclear weapons lab was still running and high levels of secrecy seemed to have returned to the town, in a new, corporate form. The historic Los Alamos National Laboratory had been controversially privatised. Contractors were not only executing decisions, but they were coming up with plans and strategies too.

Los Alamos had been an unusual bubble, with issues of inequality and power part of its story, from the very start. Much of the land used to build the lab, and the 'secret city' around it, had been taken from local indigenous and Hispanic families, and never returned.[2] After the war, an entirely new county was carved out for it. On the state map it was a tiny dot. On league tables, it was up at the top as one of the wealthiest counties in the country – next to some of the poorest. Also unlike neighbouring areas, it had the state's best schools; one of the country's highest concentrations of PhDs; and one in nine residents was a millionaire.[3]

'We have ranches in this state that are bigger than Los Alamos County', said Chuck Montaño, in the dining room of his home in Santa Fe, just over 50 kilometers away. He had grown up here, and went to work at the lab as an adult – for thirty-two years.

'There's always been this friction' between the lab and local communities, he told us. 'Some of us have benefited, we've gotten jobs there … but most of the benefit is centred in Los Alamos, it stays in Los Alamos'. He continued: 'It's tiny, it's isolated, but it was set up that way, to shield it from politics of surrounding counties – it has a separate funding train, because the [federal] government provides most of it'.

Even before privatisation, the lab had many problems, Montaño said, including 'a lot of labour issues'. 'They were abusive, unnecessarily', he told us, describing how layoffs seemed to be 'an excuse to target workers that were older, that were whistleblowers, basically it was open season on workers'. The lab had also faced class action lawsuits during what the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* called 'a long season of discontent', including one such case alleging racial discrimination after most of 173 people fired in 1995 were Hispanic.[4]

Montaño described these issues, and his own experience as a whistleblower – after he found evidence of fraud in the lab's procurement department – in a 2015 book entitled *Los Alamos: Secret Colony, Hidden Truths*.

'It was bad then and I imagine it would be worse now', he told us. Under the lab's new for-profit private managers, data including on worker demographics became confidential – making it harder to investigate things like wage disparities. 'When it became an LLC, all of a sudden all of this information became private.'

Privatising Los Alamos

More than 10,000 people worked at the lab's massive and heavily guarded complex, which included numerous buildings across 36 square miles of land.

For decades the lab had been run by the University of California. But, under George W. Bush's presidency, it and other nuclear facilities were put up for competitive bid. Requests for proposals were written so that only private companies could bid.[5]

The argument for this change seemed to be that private managers would be more efficient, and would put an end to security and safety scandals. Frequently cited was the case of a veteran scientist named Wen Ho Lee who was arrested in 1999 and accused of illegally copying classified nuclear weapons files. His story became a national media obsession with suggestions made in the press that he had shared top-secret government information with the Chinese state. (Eventually, however, the case against him was dismissed by a judge who also apologized for how he had been treated.)[6]

The winning proposal for the Los Alamos lab's new management came from a new corporate partnership called Los Alamos National Security (LANS) LLC, led by the giant privately held and politically connected firm Bechtel. Other partners included two other companies and the University of California, the facility's previous non-profit manager.

Like many of the companies we had encountered in our investigations, Bechtel was massive. American journalist Sally Denton, who published a book about the business in 2016, called it 'so potent, and with such a global reach, that it has its own foreign policy'. By the time she finished her research, she'd concluded: 'the US government is like one public policy arm of Bechtel rather than the other way around'.[7]

Founded in 1898 by Warren A. Bechtel, the company had been in his family ever since and was still one of the largest privately-held corporations in the US.[8] Headquartered in Chicago, it had boomed off of large taxpayer-funded engineering and public infrastructure projects. Around the world it built railroads, pipelines, airports, oil refineries, giant dams and shipyards – as well as the Channel Tunnel from Britain to France. Senior figures had moved back and forth from influential positions in the US government to those high up at Bechtel. Company executives John McCone, Caspar Weinberger and George P. Shultz, had respectively become Director of the CIA, Secretary of Defence and Secretary of State.[9]

Globally, it seemed to have a dark history. Its takeover of a newly-privatised municipal water system in Cochabamba, Bolivia's third largest city – and dramatic price hikes that followed – were the trigger for the country's infamous 'water wars' dramatized in the award-winning 2010 film *Even the Rain* starring

Gael Garcia Bernal. It had also been a major US contractor in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.[10]

While its contract at Los Alamos was relatively new, Bechtel had been involved in atomic activities for a long time. During the Second World War, it had built infrastructure in Hanford, Washington that was also used for the secret Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb.[11]

It was still involved in a nuclear waste treatment plant at Hanford – and it was running other nuclear security facilities from California to Tennessee. But, privately-held, Bechtel didn't disclose as much information as publicly-traded companies with many shareholders. Everyone we spoke to in New Mexico, from local residents to employees, wanted more information about what was happening at the Los Alamos lab. But they'd have to fight to get it.

Los Alamos had become a 'corporate secret city', where 'even if you're inside, you don't know anything', said Greg Mello, at the Los Alamos Study Group, one of several small but dogged watchdog groups monitoring the lab. His home in Albuquerque doubled as an office for the group. Along walls were rows of filing cabinets storing research and campaign materials.

Mello pointed us to soaring costs and senior salaries at the lab under private management. When for-profit managers took over, their fees jumped to $80 million a year (previously they had been around $8 million a year).[12]

The lab was such a big player in the state, he suggested, that political representatives weren't responsive to concerns about it. In an adjoining room large, colourful piñatas, in the shape of local congresspeople – props for a protest – had been placed comically around a table as if in a never-ending, silent meeting.

In 2012, activists at Nuclear Watch New Mexico, another local group, had filed lawsuits under the Freedom of Information Act to obtain copies of the government's annual performance evaluations for Los Alamos. It took years but eventually documents were released showing high scores for weapons development – but worryingly low ones for management, safety and environmental impacts.[13]

While the lab was run by the university alone, annual performance reports were publicly released. Other information on salaries, budgets, spending and hiring was accessible under public records acts. But now such data was often hidden because of 'commercial confidentiality'. It was private property.

'It used to be that science drove this place and everyone knew it … Now that's gone', one long-time technical staff member at Los Alamos told an American Physical Society publication in 2010 – four years after the lab was taken over by its new for-profit managers.[14] Terry Wallace, an associate director at the lab, also acknowledged declining staff morale, saying: 'Where you have a workforce that believes "this is ours", and a new management team that appears to be dropped from outer space because it's corporate … it's difficult for the workforce.'[15]

Alongside such complaints was worrying evidence that the risks for-profit managers posed weren't hypothetical. Deadly weapons and materials were in play; some people had already been hurt.

On Valentine's Day in 2014, a drum filled with radioactive nuclear waste burst open at a disposal facility near Carlsbad, New Mexico. Much of the site – the country's only underground storage for nuclear waste – and the nearby area was contaminated. Investigators uncovered bad record keeping, lax oversight and shortcuts taken by subcontractors at the Los Alamos lab.[16]

In 2013, subcontractors for the lab had been rushing to meet deadlines to ship decades-old waste when they came across a particularly acidic batch, unsafe for transport. Lab guidelines recommended tests to determine how best to treat it. But this was time consuming. Shortcuts were taken. A mistake was made and the wrong material was added to absorb excess liquid. The result was an explosive mixture. A federal report into the incident placed the blame on Los Alamos contractors who failed to pay attention to staff concerns and 'to ensure that changes to waste treatment procedures were properly documented, reviewed and approved, and that they incorporated all environmental requirements'.[17]

The Carlsbad incident was deemed a 'first degree' performance failure, for which the Bechtel-led consortium saw its management fees reduced for the year by tens of millions of dollars as a result.[18] The cost to the taxpayer to clean up the mess was estimated to be much higher, however: more than half a billion dollars and many years of time. There had also been added costs of temporarily storing nuclear waste elsewhere. At Los Alamos, meanwhile, we heard that there could still be other drums with similar contents to that which had burst.

Other federal reports had ripped into lab managers for 'significant and long-standing nuclear safety deficiencies'.[19] A 2016 audit said that the lab 'under-categorises risk and, therefore, does not apply the appropriate level of attention to safety and health issues, including nuclear safety issues'.[20]

Then, a 2015 fire at one of the lab's power stations injured nine workers. A government report said it was the lab's worst accident in almost twenty years. It concluded that 'inadequate implementation of management controls resulted in the following human effect: an employee suffering third and fourth degree burns affecting approximately 30 per cent of his body surface and being hospitalised in excess of 30 days'. Furthermore, it said there had since been 'ineffective implementation of corrective actions' including 'weaknesses in identification and control of hazards'. In other words: it could happen again.

GOCO

It wasn't just Los Alamos. Much of the US nuclear security infrastructure had been outsourced under a 'GOCO' – Government Owned, Contractor Operated – model. Companies now ran much of it – from facilities that enriched uranium and produced plutonium to the labs and plants where bombs were designed, built and maintained, to waste disposal sites.

A small group of large firms, including Bechtel, dominated this business and were increasingly in charge of whole programmes, shaping and implementing US nuclear strategy while overseeing other subcontractors.

At the Albuquerque airport we flew into, some runways were shared with the Kirtland Air Force Base – where the Sandia National Laboratory was based. It made non-nuclear components for atomic bombs and was run by the giant defence contractor Lockheed Martin. Together with Bechtel, that company was also part of a separate consortium called Consolidated Nuclear Security (CNS) which ran a plant in Texas that assembled and disassembled nuclear weapons, and a complex in Tennessee that processed uranium. In Missouri, another facility making ignition systems and other components for nuclear bombs was run by the Honeywell corporation (that also sold consumer products like home thermostats and dehumidifiers).

Along with nationwide privatisation came cross-country concern from workers and local residents about MBA-style leadership prioritising production and profit over science and safety, while ratcheting up costs to taxpayers.

Like Los Alamos, the Lawrence Livermore lab in California, outside San Francisco, similarly researched and designed nuclear weapons, and was often seen as its sister-site. It had also been run by the University of California for decades, and was now under Lawrence Livermore National Security (LLNS) LLC, a partnership of Bechtel, other companies and the university.

On its website Bechtel said 'the contracts were separate, but the partnerships worked toward economies of scale and share best practices that benefit both laboratories'.[21] But the overlap drew criticism. Jeff Colvin, a physicist at Livermore, who had also previously worked at Los Alamos, argued that a 'key promise of privatisation – introducing "market competition" to the enterprise – was immediately dashed by selecting the same corporate entity to manage both labs'.[22] This 'new business model puts labs' science missions in jeopardy', warned Colvin, who was also a representative with the University Professional and Technical Employees (UPTE) union. He described how it had shifted the lab's focus to fewer large projects, and profit, while there was 'less tolerance for the open debate and discussion that is necessary for good science'.

When for-profit managers took over Livermore, they promised huge savings but instead the lab's costs soared. There were bruising rounds of layoffs. In

2008, 129 dismissed employees sued for age discrimination. Seven years later, the consortium agreed to pay $37 million to settle these disputes.[23]

In Washington state, the decision to bring in private managers at the Hanford nuclear waste treatment plant had also seen costs rise dramatically alongside safety and security complaints. In one case there, in 2011 a senior scientist Walter Tamosaitis raised concerns over plans to turn radioactive waste into a solid glass that could then be buried. Government officials investigated and agreed that the plans didn't meet federal safety standards. Work at Hanford was suspended in 2013, but by then Tamosaitis had been demoted and moved to a basement room. By the end of the year, he was fired.[24]

Tamosaitis had been an employee of the engineering contractor URS – later acquired by AECOM. He sued for wrongful termination and eventually won a $4.1 million settlement. (A company spokesman said then that it settled 'to avoid the cost and distraction of litigation relating to events that occurred over five years ago. The company strongly disagrees that it retaliated against him in any manner.')[25]

Meanwhile, another URS employee at Hanford, Donna Busche said in her own 2013 lawsuit she also faced retaliation after expressing safety concerns.[26]

At the Pantex Plant outside Amarillo, Texas, workers had also faced painful cuts under private management – to their health and retirement benefits. That plant, where weapons were assembled and disassembled, was key to new efforts to 'modernise' the US arsenal and build smaller, precision-guided bombs.[27]

In 2015, more than 1,000 Pantex employees went on strike for more than a month over proposals to cut their benefits. 'Whenever you work at a nuclear plant and you deal with nuclear material, the most important thing to you is going to be your medical benefits', said technician Roger Richards, during their action.[28]

A settlement was reached later that year: workers agreed to lower future pay raises in order to keep their medical coverage, sick leave and pension plans. New hires, however, would not get this same deal.[29] As elsewhere in our investigations, profit-hungry bosses seemed to be tightening the screws. In this context, there seemed to be no room for questions that had exercised citizens around the world: How do we end the threat of nuclear weapons? How can we move towards a world without them?

Collateral damage

Controversial plans to 'modernise' the US arsenal, at an estimated cost of more than $1 trillion, would be a boon to companies in the nuclear security business. These modernization plans – upgrading and adding smaller, precision-guided bombs – were part of the ideology of ‘nuclear deterrence’, which argued that maintaining fearsome arsenals would prevent them from being used.

It wasn’t a new idea. Jacob Viner, an advisor to Eugene Staley when he was a young economist at the University of Chicago, was among the advocates of ‘deterrence’ during the Cold War. It had long been a controversial and much debated approach – but its proponents still included major world leaders and their advisors. Increasingly, private corporations stood to benefit.

Much of the US nuclear weapons infrastructure had already been outsourced with alarming consequences: accidents, injuries, severe retaliation against whistleblowers and record-setting spending increases. These privatisations reflected broader trends as states outsourced a widening variety of activities and responsibilities.

In late 2015 – after the radioactive waste leak at Carlsbad, and the electrical fire at Los Alamos – the Bechtel-led consortium was told that other companies would soon be able to bid for the lab’s business. The competition for new managers was expected to last several years. But it had already reopened discussions on whether private management was a good idea.

Some of the people we spoke to said that problems at Los Alamos ran too deep and that the government had to step up and re-accept responsibility for it – that changing the companies involved in private management wouldn’t be enough. Others pointed out that there were just a small number of companies that had amassed the experience and expertise needed to bid for contracts like these – and that many of these also had troubling records.

Meanwhile, proponents of keeping the lab in for-profit hands pointed at how New Mexico as a state, and Los Alamos as a county, benefited from tens of millions in Gross Receipts Taxes (GRT) from the consortium each year – which they hadn’t received when it was under sole University of California management.[30]

Pete Sheehey, a Los Alamos County Councillor, said that when the county began receiving large amounts of lab taxes it started a programme called ‘Progress through Partnering’ that had supported projects like a free bus service around northern New Mexico that included stops for Native American pueblos. The lab’s managers, he told us, had also been generous in supporting local education and other programmes – and it was unclear if that will continue under a new contractor, who ‘will presumably be under pressure to economise’.

But, Sheehey also acknowledged, the entrance of for-profit managers at the lab ‘clearly it did not save money as advocates of privatisation had hoped or claimed, and performance in some areas was judged unacceptable’.

About an hour from Los Alamos, in Espanola, Patricia Trujillo was not impressed with the community initiatives the lab had set up. She told us that they were far from enough to tackle the pervasive disparities that existed in the area.

Espanola, a small town from where many manual workers at the lab commuted, was in Rio Arriba County. It was one of the poorest parts of the state, in turn one of the poorest states in the nation, with a grim reputation for high rates of heroin overdoses.

‘There’s been basically no trickle down’, said Trujillo, a literature and Chicano studies professor, and head of the equity and diversity programme at Northern New Mexico College in Espanola. ‘This is what institutionalised racism looks like’, she told us. ‘We can take your land. We can poison you. We can pay you the minimum.’

Support for things like the development of science curricula for area schools ‘doesn’t address structural issues’, she continued. ‘It’s still “we have the knowledge, we’ll give it to you.” It’s still piecemeal and problematic, north-south thinking.’

We met inside a small restaurant. Outside, Trujillo pointed us to hills that still bore the scars of wildfires that had ripped through the area and threatened the lab. She remembered how, when such fires broke out, people from Los Alamos were ‘literally forced out of the hill and into Espanola. People opened shelters, were really hospitable, but after those moments of crisis everyone went back to Los Alamos’.

In 2000, what was named the Cerro Grande Fire had come close to lab property, prompting an emergency push to get thousands of containers of legacy hazardous waste out of the area.[31] Another big fire came in 2011, five years into the Bechtel consortium’s tenure. That Las Conchas Fire was diverted to get it away from a lab storage area – while the Santa Clara Pueblo indigenous community lost 80 per cent of its forested land.[32]

Beata Tsosie-Pena, an environmental activist with the indigenous women’s organisation Tewa Women United, was born in Santa Clara. We met her later that day. She also told us that the Los Alamos lab seemed to have become less accountable under private management – but stressed that its damage now stretched back generations. The real question, she argued, is why nuclear weapons programmes continued to exist in the first place.

‘It wasn’t Hiroshima or Nagasaki that were first bombed, but the people of New Mexico’, Pena reminded us, referring to the detonation of the very first atomic bomb at the Trinity Test Site 200 miles from Los Alamos on 16 July 1945, weeks before the more well-known bombs were dropped on Japan.

She rattled off a long list of threats still posed by the Los Alamos lab to neighbouring communities, including a plume of underground toxic hexavalent chromium – a chemical linked to higher cancer rates – that was drifting towards them. There was ‘legacy waste’ still in dump sites – and new waste too – above an aquifer that supplied drinking water to most of northern New Mexico.

Los Alamos needed a fundamentally new mission, Pena insisted – one that was guided by a holistic do-no-harm approach and that focused scientists’ minds on solving pressing environmental challenges: not nuclear arms. For now, she said, ‘I sometimes feel we are still collateral damage for the weapons industry’.

This time, because of our collaboration with the local photojournalist, we were able to bring back to Gavin striking images. When we next met we handed him printed copies, one by one, letting him see for himself the scars on the earth from fires were diverted away from the Los Alamos lab; dramatic inequalities with surrounding communities; signs announcing the lab’s private managers; and the faces and home offices of activists working hard to pierce its secrecy.

‘This is scary stuff,’ he eventually said.

But, as always, he pushed us to consider the big questions that our investigations had raised. When we thought we were done, he wanted more.

‘What do you see when you step back from the detail?’ He asked ‘Each of the stories you’ve told me is extraordinary, but what do they add up to?’

Epilogue: Ugly truths

As we learned about these corporate justice and welfare systems, and corporate utopias and armies, that have shaped our world, we felt increasingly disappointed in something else: our industry, the media.

For democracy to be meaningful, we must have a hand in shaping our destinies – and access to information we need to understand our world and inform our decisions. But what if our elected representatives don't have the power we thought they did? And what if the media has failed to let us know?

Our investigations had shown us how transnational companies and investors have been able to challenge, even overrule, various state actions – and threaten our ability to respond to existential threats like climate change and atomic war. What chance do we have, if our governments can be sued for changing energy policies, or enforcing environmental protections, that hurt corporate profits? If nuclear weapons programmes are controlled by contractors who profit from them and will never want them shut down?

The international investment treaties that enshrine the global justice system that protects corporations' profits; the global welfare system that nourishes them and helps them expand; private carve-outs like special economic zones (SEZs) that have sliced and diced our world; and corporations' control over force and security – today all of these dynamics affect countries globally.

On one side of this story are rich and powerful people and their elite advisors, lawyers and lobbyists. On the other side is the vast majority of the world's population. Those hit hardest are often those already struggling. International institutions seemed to make it clear, for example, that it wasn't a coincidence that most factory workers in these zones were women – describing them as more 'docile' and easier to control.

Overall what we uncovered was dark, and suggested that much less is up for grabs in national political debates and elections than we're led to believe – and that many of the scandals that occupy our media may actually be quite small in comparison to the silent coup that has been enacted against our democracies.

But we also saw light. Around the world – as well as in historical archives – we had met or learned about people resisting these trends, and pushing for safer, healthier and more democratic futures. Many of them had reminded us of our mentor, speaking with a similar combination of seriousness and hope.

Gavin passed away in late 2016, before we finished fully absorbing and understanding this story, but we and our work continued to be shaped by him. As we pieced together this puzzle, we realised our own perspectives on the world had changed.

We couldn't stop looking at things through the new lens we'd found. It made visible how corporations had imposed extraordinary limits on democracy. One example is how some companies have used the investor-state legal system to challenge government policies enacted to protect people amid the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2021, Chile was sued by French shareholders of a consortium controlling Santiago's international airport, demanding compensation for lost profits due to fewer flights. They also complained about policies requiring additional sanitary measures.[1]

It is hard to forget, when we now pass by a Lidl store, that this giant chain's expansion across Europe was supported by huge amounts of money from the international development system. Bananas on sale, bearing the Chiquita label, make us hesitate and question whether they were grown on lands taken over from local farmers. It's not wrong to think that things don't always add up in our societies. Something doesn't feel right because there are extremely powerful players involved in major decisions who are usually off-screen, hidden from us.

Crises of faith or lacking trust in democratic institutions from parliaments to the media make sense. Democracy and independence are largely buzzwords that feel hollow – because they were made hollow, over generations with strategic planning, lobbying campaigns and new infrastructure.

With everything at stake, the response to this silent coup against democracies around the world must match its ambition, coordination and long time horizons.

We saw in the archives how a number of primarily Latin American countries had tried, in the mid-twentieth century, to resist the establishment of the global investor-state legal system, warning that it'd threaten their independence.

Throughout our investigations, some Latin American countries continued to stand out for challenging this and other systems and trends that have expanded corporate power, as well as profits. They included El Salvador, which after battling a major investor-state case became the world's first country to ban mining nationwide.

In Argentina, meanwhile, we saw an alternative to increasingly privatised residential and work places at Hotel Bauen in Buenos Aires, one of the country's many *empresas recuperadas* ('recovered businesses'). After the hotel declared bankruptcy, its workers occupied and reopened it. One of these workers, then 66-year-old waiter Armando Casado, told us: 'Before it was a job like any other … now you have freedom.'

Years later we met Evo Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous president, at his home deep within the Amazon. To get there from Cochabamba, the nearest city, took four hours in the back of a minibus. Inside a nondescript house, we sat in a living room that was bare apart from two sofas. 'We established a political position with regards to transnational companies: we talk, we negotiate, but we do not submit to transnational corporations', he told us of his time in government, which oversaw unprecedented economic and poverty-reduction successes that even the World Bank praised.[2]

'The coup was against our economic model … we showed that another Bolivia is possible', Morales said, of his overthrow in 2019. British officials warmly welcomed the new regime and opportunities for UK companies to make money from the country's resources, particularly lithium which is used in batteries. Morales had tried to stop the traditional imperial dynamic of exporting raw materials to be made into industrial products elsewhere. He wanted Bolivia not just to export lithium but also to make and sell batteries.

'This is a struggle not only in Bolivia, or Latin America, but throughout the world,' he argued. 'Who do natural resources belong to? The people under the control of their state? Or are they privatised under the control of transnationals so they can plunder our natural resources?' The current millennium, he insisted, must be one 'of the people, not of monarchies, nor hierarchies, nor oligarchies. This is our struggle'.

This struggle requires undoing the systems and strategies which prevent us from shaping our own destinies. This will not happen overnight, and it will require as many people as possible to join together to boldly resist it across borders.

More battles from the frontlines must reach the headlines. Around the world we met people resisting expanding corporate empires who had tremendous knowledge about them and their impacts. In many cases we were the first journalists they had ever spoken to. Major international institutions like the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, headquartered in Washington DC and London respectively, must be more closely scrutinized and investigated by more journalists.

Many newspapers have correspondents focused on national supreme courts but there are few journalists that so closely cover the international investor-state tribunals that function as a global supreme court. Those that do cover it usually have their articles deposited behind the paywalls of their specialty publications for lawyers and investors. This must change and the full force of journalistic scrutiny be applied to such systems.

Gavin believed that journalism in a democratic society should comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable. The mainstream media, as it stands, often inverts this and protects the powerful. We hope that by writing this book, we have stayed true to the principles that Gavin instilled in us nearly a decade ago. But – as he knew well, and often reminded us too – unless information is used by people, nothing changes.

'Above all, we have a responsibility to tell the truth', he always told us. Truth was his obsession. 'Not the respectable truth,' he'd add, 'but the ugly truth.' This book tells ugly truths, but the future can still be beautiful. That's up to all of us.

Notes

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THE WAR ON CONSERVATIVES

By Mark Dice

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BLACK LIVES MATTER
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PUBLIC SCHOOL
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Introduction

Conservatives, or who should really just be called normal humans who maintain the basic values, traditions, and social norms that individuals, families, and communities have lived by since ancient times, are under attack by a barrage of deeply disturbing ideologies and well-funded institutions that can only be described as insane—or evil.

Instead of being relegated to a fringe group in a dark corner of the Internet or the subjects of a documentary looking into the lives of degenerate weirdos for viewers' entertainment, these insane people and their agendas are being promoted in public schools and Universities, by Hollywood celebrities and award-winning shows and films, and boosted by the algorithms on the Big Tech social media platforms.

Even major food brands and retailers are awash in this new breed of Leftist propaganda. The onslaught of wokeness is even gaining support in the legal system with draconian laws being snuck through Democrat-controlled state legislatures which undermine the very foundation of what America once stood for.

We now have Marxists in our own Congress calling for the removal of American symbols, the erasure of our history, and the systemic demonization of White people. The communication tools our society now relies on are being used to censor those who push back against their agenda too loud, and countless activist media outlets exist for the sole purpose of being attack dogs for the regime and smear its enemies as "racists," "transphobes," "antisemites," and an array of other defamatory labels they hope will stick.

Children, being impressionable and vulnerable, are one of the enemy's prime targets. And in recent years it's become common in public schools across the country for teachers to sexualize their students as young as preschoolers—having kids engage in LGBTQ Pride parades at school, and the mainstream media now promotes pre-teen boys dressing in drag and young girls getting their breasts surgically removed if they feel uncomfortable with their body or unsure of their gender.[1]

Freaks, who in past generations you would only see featured on the *Jerry Springer Show,* are now credentialed teachers and proudly post videos on TikTok bragging about what they're doing with their students. The U.S. Military is openly recruiting and celebrating gays, lesbians, and transgenders.[2] Kids' cartoons are promoting gender bending drag queens to their young impressionable audiences on Disney+ and Nickelodeon.[3] What had always been seen as an adult form of entertainment at gay night clubs in seedy parts of the inner city is now being performed for small children at schools and libraries across the country.[4]

Many of our cherished holidays are even under attack from those within our own country. Such disgruntled citizens (and illegal aliens) were once relegated to shouting on the street corner, but now their anti-American ideas have taken root and mainstream Marxist Democrats are openly calling for the destruction of statues of the Founding Fathers, abolishing the national anthem, and even replacing the American flag.[5]

They hate the foundation of our country, including the Bill Rights and the freedoms Americans have enjoyed since 1776. And there's not just an ongoing assault on our nation's symbols and founders, but on Capitalism itself with many Democrats continuously nudging us toward socialism. The COVID lockdowns of 2020 and 2021 warmed millions of Americans up to the idea of getting free handouts from the government while they sit at home instead of going to work. And calls for issuing a Universal Basic Income, or UBI—free money to those unwilling to work, are increasing.[6]

Antifa, the Marxist foot-soldiers who show up to intimidate, threaten, and attack attendees at Conservative events, are now commonplace in cities across the country, and they're allowed to act with impunity and face no legal consequences for the violence they carry out, which is either ignored by the media or blamed on Trump supporters for "inciting it" by simply existing.

In their efforts to overthrow the United States and collapse us into the New World Order, our country has been flooded with a steady stream of millions of illegal aliens from third world countries for decades. These people aren't just future Democrat voters, but they further reduce the White majority and erode patriotism in America because most of them aren't interested in becoming *Americans* and don't care about our history, values, or customs—they just simply want to take advantage of what America has. They'll never assimilate, and instead just further weaken the bonds that hold our cultural fabric together.

To entice the caravans of migrants to continue coming, Democrats offer them free housing, free healthcare, free education, and an endless list of welfare benefits which further stresses our sputtering financial system. We're already so far in debt as a nation that it's impossible to repay, and things are getting to the point where even paying the interest on the national debt may be impossible.[7] The only way out of such a financial hole is to print more money—a lot more. Which means hyperinflation—drastically eroding the value of the dollar and skyrocketing prices, which will likely lead to what some call the Great Reset.

A primary tactic to sow discontent and foment social unrest is the promotion of antiwhiteism (anti-White racism) under the banner of Critical Race Theory, which is a scholarly sounding veneer used to cause racial strife by opening old wounds that healed long ago and blaming White people for all the current problems and shortcomings Black people have today. Critical Race Theory disguises antiwhiteism as supposed "history" and promotes the conspiracy theory that White supremacy is woven into the fabric of America and at the heart of our institutions.

While we've had racial injustices in the past (as with every multicultural country or region throughout history) and struggled to overcome the conflicts between different ethnic groups living among each other, by the end of the 20th century race relations were quite harmonic in the United States—only to begin deteriorating in the 21st century under President Obama who constantly stoked the embers of what was nearly an extinguished fire, reigniting racial and class conflicts and using Black Lives Matter to fan the flames.

They're "woke" they say, which just means they blame others for their own personal failures under the guise of "oppression" which is either imaginary or self imposed so they can portray themselves as victims who insist deserve special treatment. Wokeness is just another synonym for Marxism and is used to gather more supporters for the cause.

And of the Conservatives being targeted in this current culture war, Christians are enemy number one because of their adherence to traditional (normal) family values and customs. The Left's vicious hatred for Christianity has no bounds with Christian holidays, symbols, and businesses now under constant attack.[8]

The forces manipulating our society are more than just social media algorithms amplifying absurdities, perverts, and antiwhiteism; although the Big Tech platforms are a large part of the problem. There's also Operation Mockingbird secretly pulling the strings behind the scenes of the "news" networks, Wikipedia masquerading as an "encyclopedia," Google curating search results and burying websites and articles containing information they don't want the general public to know; and now various artificial intelligence "chatbots" which present just as biased information because their programmers have placed strict parameters on the kinds of answers they can give and the content they can generate.[9]

Of course the high priests of Hollywood are in lockstep, building up false idols whose behaviors and ideologies are modeled by millions of mentally enslaved morons. What most people mindlessly consume as "entertainment" is carefully crafted political propaganda designed to incrementally desensitize the population to various ideas and activities; slowly shifting sensibilities and encouraging radical new notions.

The advent of social media proved to be a powerful tool against mainstream media, ultimately revolutionizing countless industries—from how customer service is conducted by businesses, to how people consume TV shows, movies, and music. Through Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (the first three massive platforms to become centerpieces in society), various "personalities" and independent media companies organically grew massive audiences by utilizing the new technology which allowed anyone to post and distribute their reports to millions (for free), which had previously required enormous and expensive infrastructure to accomplish.

It wasn't until after Donald Trump's 2016 election victory that mainstream media conglomerates fully realized the average individual in their kitchen on a laptop was now on an even playing field with them, and their information monopoly had slipped through their fingers. What was once seen as a technological novelty that people used to keep in touch with old friends also meant they could share a local news story that may end up being seen by so many others it becomes a national story by going viral.

People also couldn't help but notice how the mainstream media acted as gatekeepers and purposefully ignored crime patterns and other issues that should have been widely covered. So the mainstream media struck back, co-opting the Big Tech social media platforms, partnering with them—and they were soon transformed into extensions of the mainstream media instead of alternatives, and the good old days were over. The brand name conglomerates weaseled their way back into a position of dominance over the flow of information.

Donald Trump winning the 2016 Presidential Election shocked much of the country, if not the world. Hillary Clinton had been expected to win and most of the media portrayed her victory as inevitable—as if it was her "right" to be the next president, which compounded Democrats' disappointment when she ultimately failed. Once the shock began to wear off, instead of coming to grips with the outcome, a vicious war was launched in hopes of destroying the Trump administration by any means necessary. Plans to impeach him were drawn up before he was even inaugurated.[10]

Then throughout his administration, he and his associates were relentlessly attacked by Deep State operatives in the intelligence agencies, frivolous lawsuits in the courts, Operation Mockingbird mouthpieces in the "news" media, and his supporters faced increasing censorship on social media.

Trump would have been banned from Twitter shortly after the 2020 election even if the January 6th protest hadn't turned into a riot because the media and the Democrats had manufactured an image of him as a dangerous monster, and numerous politicians including Kamala Harris had been demanding he be banned from social media even before the election.[11]

But the provocateured and staged false flag "insurrection" was the pretense they were looking for to finally purge him from all the Big Tech platforms and further crackdown on his supporters. Republicans who doubted the outcome of the 2020 election or voiced concerns about Democrats stealing it were now censored on social media, despite Democrats making the same allegations for four straight years prior. But now any talk of a stolen election was "dangerous," and "undermines our Democracy." Only in communist countries and other dictatorships are citizens not allowed to question the legitimacy of the ruling party, and that's what happened in America.

They’re also engaging in what’s called *lawfare* (legal warfare), which means using the legal system to harass and persecute one’s enemies. Donald Trump, his associates, and his supporters have all been swept up in crippling legal entanglements—while the justice system allows the Biden and Clinton crime families, and Black Lives Matter and Antifa foot soldiers to operate above the law. Many January 6th defendants who weren’t even accused of assaulting police or vandalism during the infamous protest at the Capitol that day were denied bail and held in jail for several *years* until their trials.[12]

Many of these same political prisoners were then sentenced to extremely harsh and unfair prison time for technically just trespassing if they happened to be members of the Proud Boys, or became symbols of the protest like the “QAnon Shaman” and the guy who was photographed with his feet resting on Nancy Pelosi’s desk. They were all sentenced to *years* in prison[13]

One of the first actions the Justice Department took once Joe Biden was sworn into office was indicting a Twitter user named Douglas Mackey for posting a meme five years earlier back in 2016 joking that Democrats could “skip the lines” on election day by “texting” in their vote instead.[14] A common joke posted every election year by people from both political parties, along with the one about the “friendly reminder” that the opposing political party votes on *Wednesday*.

Nobody is fooled by such posts because they’re obvious jokes. And not a single person took the meme about Democrats being able to “text” in their vote for Hillary Clinton seriously, but Douglas Mackey (who went by “Ricky Vaughn” on Twitter) was still indicted for “election interference!”[15] He was later sentenced to *seven months in federal prison*.[16]

Legal battles often take years and easily cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, even millions to defend. Those found innocent (or not liable in a civil case) usually can’t recoup any of those costs. They may win the case, but are still destroyed financially.

The head of Joseph Stalin’s secret police force in the Soviet Union infamously said, “Show me the man and I’ll show you the crime,” and the power of prosecutors to abuse their authority is widely known even in western Democracies. Former Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson admitted in some cases, “it is not a question of discovering the commission of a crime and then looking for the man who has committed it, it is a question of picking the man and then searching the law books, or putting investigators to work, to pin some offense on him."[17]

He goes on, "It is in this realm—in which the prosecutor picks some person whom he dislikes or desires to embarrass, or selects some group of unpopular persons and then looks for an offense, that the greatest danger of abuse of prosecuting power lies. It is here that law enforcement becomes personal, and the real crime becomes that of being unpopular with the predominant or governing group, being attached to the wrong political views, or being personally obnoxious to or in the way of the prosecutor himself."[18]

The U.S. Supreme Court has found that even though the law may be "fair on its face, and impartial in appearance" it can still be "applied and administered by public authority with an evil eye and an unequal hand," allowing prosecutors to make "unjust and illegal discriminations between persons in similar circumstances," thus violating their civil rights by using the very mechanisms of government that are supposed to protect them.[19]

The FBI used disinformation to get a FISA warrant to spy on the Trump campaign in order to create the false narrative he conspired with Russians to "steal" the 2016 election. After his administration was bogged down for years, the Mueller investigation found no evidence of wrongdoing and when Robert Mueller finally testified about his investigation, he proved to be an embarrassing and bumbling old man who couldn't even convincingly articulate why it was launched in the first place.[20]

But the lawfare continued, with prosecutors ultimately indicting Trump for paying Stormy Daniels to sign an NDA to keep quiet about their alleged affair (claiming it was an unreported campaign expense), then for keeping some documents at his Mar-a-Lago residence from his time in the White House; and soon after that for other trumped up charges (no pun intended) claiming he orchestrated a "criminal conspiracy" trying to steal the 2020 election. All signs of a banana republic and a collapsing society.

And sadly, we aren't just opposed by a matrix of enemies on the Left, but also from within our own ranks. Brand name "Republicans" and corporate "Conservatives" have been too cowardly for years to stand up against what's happening to our culture—afraid of being called "homophobic" or "racist." Only recently since the insanity has boiled over and infected elementary school children's cartoons and soiled advertisements from big box retailers and the U.S. military have they dared say anything.

And it wasn't until censorship of Conservatives had snowballed out of control and swept up mainstream figures (culminating in the seated President at the time, Donald Trump, being banned from all Big Tech platforms) that brand name Conservative news outlets, pundits, and Republican members of Congress finally began speaking out about what many of us independent YouTubers had been shouting from the rooftops about for years.

You've seen what's happening. And even though you may try to keep up with the news, there's only so much time in the day for that among all the other obligations of life. Unless your full-time job is following politics or pop culture, it's impossible to know the full extent of the damage being done to society, but it's clear to anyone that we are facing relentless assaults on numerous fronts. And as the weeks, months, and years fly by, we tend to lose perspective on where things are and how much they've changed. The shock wears off, and the "new normal" sets in.

Like the proverbial frog slowly boiling in the pot unaware of what's happening because of the small but incremental temperature increases, most people won't see the big picture of what the Marxists are doing to America until it's too late. So before we get to the point of no return (which hopefully we haven't already crossed) mute your phone, schedule some quiet time for yourself, and let's take a close look at how the pieces of the puzzle all fit together in *The War on Conservatives.*

Public Schools

Public schools (which should really be called *government* schools) were once a place for kids to learn the basic knowledge needed to get through life: reading, writing, and arithmetic; along with history, geography, science, and a few others; but in recent years they have become indoctrination centers where Leftists use the captive audience of young and impressionable minds to shape future generations into the mold of Marxism.

"Give me a child when he's seven, and we'll have him for life," is an old maxim attributed to numerous individuals throughout history from the Greek philosopher Aristotle to Adolf Hitler and Vladimir Lenin. Whoever said it doesn't matter because the statement conveys the obvious importance of early education and how what a child is taught when they're young can shape their character and beliefs for the rest of their lives.

It's now commonplace in public schools across the country for teachers to not just hang LGBTQ+ rainbow "Pride" flags up in their classrooms, but stock their libraries with sexually explicit queer books, and countless teachers are now "coming out" to their students as gay, lesbian, and gender non-binary—even posting the videos on TikTok.[21]

Many schools are inviting drag queens to put on "performances" for the kids and hold "Pride" parades every June to kick off queer Pride Month.[22] Activities that had previously always been contained in seedy gay bars have now been imported into elementary schools across America.[23]

Most LGBT teachers who have infiltrated the schools are openly grooming young students hoping to convince them to question their own gender and experiment with their sexuality. And instead of just teaching history (which contains atrocities, and embarrassing actions carried out by every culture around the world), the woke system is intent on indoctrinating students to think that not much has changed from 1850s until now in the United States.

And even though slavery ended after the Civil War they still insist that America has "White supremacy" woven into the very fabric of our society. Every institution—from the legal system and schools to businesses and sports are supposedly secretly being run by "White supremacists" and keeping Black people down![24]

It's all being done under the cover of Critical Race Theory which is further disguised under the label of "history," but the agenda is the same. As countless proponents of Critical Race Theory have openly admitted, the principles and concepts are the same ones teachers are using to indoctrinate children with while avoiding the term itself in hopes of hiding their motive.

"Critical Race Theory" is really just a code word for antiwhiteism (anti-White racism), and it's now common for teachers to have Black Lives Matter flags hanging in their classrooms. Project Veritas was able to give everyone a close look at the mindset of these teachers when they caught one on hidden camera during an undercover investigation in Sacramento, California where he admitted he was trying to turn his students into "revolutionaries."[25] He had a poster of Chinese communist dictator Mao Zedong on the wall in his classroom as well—not as an educational tool about history or communism, but because the teacher himself is an avowed communist.

When Project Veritas later confronted him while he was out walking his dog to ask about what they had captured him on video saying, he was literally wearing a giant hammer and sickle communist tank top! A school board meeting held the next day was packed with parents who demanded he be fired.[26] Surprisingly he was, but how many other *literal* communists are working as teachers doing the same thing and go unnoticed by school officials and parents?

During a meeting of the American Federation of Teachers Union, a Colorado teacher boasted that there were fellow Marxists in the crowd and called for a "forceful cultural revolution" in America against "whiteness."[27]

FBI Investigates Parents

After a wave of parents began showing up to school board meetings and telling off the administrators for mandating children wear COVID masks in school all day and subjecting the students to gender bending propaganda and Critical Race Theory (antiwhiteism), the National School Boards Association sent a letter to the Biden administration literally comparing parents who were slightly aggressive or a bit rowdy during the meetings to domestic terrorists.[28]

Less than a week later the Department of Justice sent a memo to the FBI instructing them to investigate alleged "threats" made to school boards by parents, and so the FBI's counterintelligence division began opening investigations. One case involved a mother who told her local school board "we're coming for you" during a meeting, which was interpreted as a threat (when it was an obvious figure of speech about exposing them and voting them out) but an investigation was launched into her anyway.[29]

Another investigation was launched after someone reported a parent to the FBI because he "rails against the government" and "has a lot of guns."[30] Joe Biden's Attorney General Merrick Garland testified to Congress that antiterrorism tools (like spying on their social media activity) had not been used against any of the protesting parents, but seven months later an FBI whistleblower revealed that they actually had.[31]

The New York Times even blamed the Proud Boys (a right-wing men's social club, similar to a Moose Lodge or The Elks) for the increasing turnout at school board meetings by angry parents who got fed up with their children being indoctrinated with queer theory and antiwhiteism. Their headline read, "Proud Boys Regroup, Focusing on School Boards and Town Councils," and the article detailed in horror that "The far-right nationalist group has become increasingly active at school board meetings and town council gatherings across the country."[32]

Others like MSNBC host Jason Johnson suggested the pushback against school boards was being fueled by “white nationalists” as well.[33] *Mother Jones*, a Leftist online outlet warned, “School boards have long been a tool of White supremacy” and that the “once-innocuous local gatherings have become anti–critical race theory caucuses administered by white people.”[34] *The Columbus Dispatch* in Ohio echoed this sentiment telling their readers that “racists may be coming to a school board near you.”[35]

“Cultural Discipline”

Some schools are even adopting a practice called “Cultural Discipline” or “Transformative Education Professional Development & Grading,” which means they’re allowing Black students to get away with causing trouble and handing out lesser punishments to them if they are disciplined because of concerns the school may be perceived as being “racist” since more Black students *cause* trouble than White students (because they statistically tend to come from fatherless homes and don’t grow up with the proper discipline) and thuggery is often glorified and celebrated in Black culture.[36]

The schools adopting this practice are framing it as taking an “equitable” approach to punishment and discipline.[37] Notice the Orwellian change of terms recently from *equality* to *equity.* Marxists don’t want people to be treated *equally*. They want special privileges granted to non-White people (and queers) to supposedly “make up” for past “injustices” they claim haven’t been remedied.[38]

Schools are even adopting policies of not docking students’ grades for missing class, misbehavior, and failing to turn in their assignments on time because those methods “disproportionately hurt the grades of Black students,” they say.[39]

Not issuing detentions and suspensions to Black students who deserve them and letting their bad behavior go unpunished is rationalized by the same ridiculous argument we see from people who claim there must be “systemic racism” in police departments across the country because Black people are arrested for committing violent crime at levels nearly ten times that of White people (*per capita*).[40] It’s uncomfortable for most people to face the fact that Black men commit astonishingly more crimes per capita than White people, so of course they’re going to get arrested more!

And an important side note about what per capita means, since most Liberals don’t know anything about statistics. Often when people point out the Black Crime statistics and mention the fact that Black people are 13% of the U.S. population, but commit 50% of the total violent crimes, some Liberals will look up the murder statistics in the United States and claim "that's not accurate." But it is.

Those who deny the facts about Black Crime are only comparing the *total* number of murders committed by White people to the *total* number committed by Blacks, but don't take into consideration that Blacks are only 13% of the U.S. population.[41] The term *per capita* means *per person*, or the average number per group, and is a more accurate way of reporting statistics, but because Liberals are ignorant about most things—they just don't get it.

Since the White population is still an extremely higher percentage of the overall population in the United States, it would be common sense that White people would account for a higher number of murders, but we're talking about *percentages per group* here. And the uncomfortable reality is that Black people make up only 13% of the U.S. population, but commit half of all violent crime as a whole.[42]

And the vast majority of those perpetrators are Black *males*, so if you really want to get down to specifics, 6% of the US population (since half of the total Black population are males, and they're the ones who commit virtually all the violent crime compared to females out of the group) the scary reality is that a tiny demographic of the American population (6%—the Black males) are responsible for *half* of the violent crime in the country!

Nobody would argue that police are being "sexist" because men are arrested far more often than women for committing violent crime, because everyone knows that men commit more violent crime than women! But admitting the obvious facts about Black Crime is deemed "racist."

And when the figures of students who are punished for misbehaving and causing disruptions in school are broken down by race, it shouldn't be surprising to find the same patterns that are shown in crime statistics. But the actual reason for such a wide disparity raises uncomfortable questions, so instead of addressing the root of the problem, "racism" is blamed.

Removing Honors Classes

Schools across the country have been ending honor classes along with gifted and talented programs because administrators are worried that they may appear as if they're "discriminating" against Black and Latino students because the programs tend to be dominated by White and Asian students.[43] Proponents of such idiocy are calling it a more "equitable" education, the social justice buzzword meaning there are too many White students in the programs.[44]

In San Diego, the entire school district changed the grading system because Hispanic students' grades were on average significantly lower than White students because of the language barrier since so many of them are illegal aliens or anchor babies born and raised by Mexican parents who speak little to no English themselves.[45] Before the change, 23% of D or F grades went to Hispanics, another 23% went to Native Americans, and 20% to Black students, while only 7% went to White students."[46]

In hopes of making the grades more "equitable" the district stopped docking students' grades for assignments that are turned in late. So now there are basically no deadlines for homework which will just further incentivize students not to schedule their time properly to do it, and they'll just keep watching TikTok videos or playing videogames all night instead.

A Minnesota school announced they were no longer going to be giving students F's in order to "combat systemic racism."[47] And homework doesn't get marked down if it's turned in late anymore there too, and students' grades are no longer effected by tardiness or detentions for bad behavior either.

Standardized tests have been deemed "racist" as well. The National Education Association says, "Since their inception almost a century ago, the tests have been instruments of racism and a biased system. Decades of research demonstrate that Black, Latin(o/a/x), and Native students, as well as students from some Asian groups, experience bias from standardized tests administered from early childhood through college."[48]

Of course the whole point of a standardized test is that all students take the same test! But now the Marxists want affirmative action-style tests so Black and Hispanic students can get different questions (easier questions) in order to artificially and unfairly boost their test scores!

"We still think there's something wrong with the kids rather than recognizing there's something wrong with the tests," said race hustler Ibram X. Kendi, who heads up the laughable "Antiracist Research & Policy Center at Boston University."[49] He says that, "standardized tests have become the most effective racist weapon ever devised to objectively degrade Black and Brown minds and legally exclude their bodies from prestigious schools."[50] During the 2020 election cycle, at a town hall event Joe Biden was asked by a lunatic in the audience if he would promise to put an end to "racist" standardized tests, and he responded "yes."[51]

Teachers Coming Out as Gay to Their Class

Until very recently, teachers would never talk about their personal lives in the classroom. Students didn't know if they were single, dating someone, married, or divorced, because their personal relationships have no bearing on the material students need to learn at school. But now it's commonplace for teachers who are LGBTQ to announce their sexual preferences to their students in hopes of getting the kids to start talking with them about sex or experiment with homosexuality themselves.

The *Libs of TikTok* Twitter account, which is dedicated to finding videos posted publicly on TikTok by Liberal teachers and other odd individuals who keep coming up with new "genders," has highlighted countless teachers who don't just make TikTok videos talking about how they've "come out" to their students as LGBTQ. Some of them actually record their speech on their phones and then post those videos on TikTok!

One teacher made the announcement she was a lesbian to every class that day so all of her students heard her speech.[52] Many of the students cheered since they've been conditioned to celebrate such behavior.

Another TikTok video posted by a teacher shows her explaining that she took down the American flag in her classroom and hid it because it's an "offensive symbol," but has an LGBT Pride flag hanging in her room and when a student asked what they were supposed to do during the Pledge of Allegiance she told them to pledge allegiance to the Pride flag.[53]

One queer high school teacher posted a video he recorded inside his classroom bragging about how "most days" he comes to school wearing stilettos, "and the reason why is so I can create an explicitly queer space for all my students. That way they know this place is a place for them, by them, and cuz I never had one of these growing up."[54] In the video he showed off his high heels.

It's important to understand that these aren't just a few rare or isolated instances. The *Libs of TikTok* Twitter account regularly reposts videos that are found on TikTok to raise awareness about just how widespread the problem is and to show how many teachers are talking with their students about their sexuality or trying to confuse the kids about which gender they are.

“Gender Non-Binary” Teachers

But it’s not just gay and lesbian teachers who feel they need to “come out” to their students these days. *Libs of TikTok* has also uncovered numerous teachers (many of whom are elementary school teachers), “coming out” as “gender non-binary” to the kids (someone who doesn’t consider themselves to be a man *or* a woman, but *neither!*)

Blue and green-haired freaks who were once only found loitering in the streets of inner cities or working at adult video stores are now teaching elementary school children and preschool across the country.

One woman (with green hair as usual) explains, “So I’m a non-binary elementary school teacher, and my kids know I’m non-binary, they know I’m not a girl or a boy, I use ‘they’ ‘them’ pronouns in the classroom. We work on it. Not all the kids get it. That’s okay. And I go by Mx. Gray in the classroom, not Miss or Mister—Mx. And today one of the kids goes, ‘hey, we’ve got two boy teachers in the classroom because the other teacher in the classroom at the time was a guy. And I go, no there’s not. I’m not a girl or a boy, remember? And she goes ‘oh my God. Wait, does that mean you’re dead? So, I think that’s my new gender now.”[55]

Of course a three-year-old doesn’t understand what the hell her lunatic teacher means by saying she’s not a boy or a girl. How could any child begin to comprehend such nonsense? And what kind of school wouldn’t escort the teacher from the property immediately after learning that they’re saying they aren’t a man or a woman and trying to confuse the children with such mentally deranged insanity?

One polyamorous gender-fluid witch (polyamorous meaning in open relationships with numerous different sexual partners) who teaches preschool in Florida posted a video on TikTok saying how proud she is to talk with her 4-year-old students about her sexuality.[56] And that’s not a typo, she also identifies as a witch. The list goes on and on of preschool and elementary school teachers who post TikTok videos boasting that they're teaching children about "transness" and "queerness."[57]

One preschool teacher explained that she hands out "pronoun pins" to the 4-year-olds she teaches every day so they can choose which "gender" they want to be that day. "We have some that pick, like, 'she' / 'her' every single day, and we have some that change it up."[58]

When I was in high school in the 1990s if a teacher put up a gay Pride flag, we would have torn it down every time they stepped out of the classroom into the hallway, and no one would have said who did it. And if they replaced it, the same thing would happen every single day until they gave up. And if a teacher came out as a "gender non-binary" and started talking about they weren't a man or a woman, the parents in the community wouldn't have even needed to get involved because we the students would have run them out of town ourselves.

Virtually any community in America would have run such freaks out of town in previous generations (or even hung them in the town square depending how far back it was) if they started telling elementary school children that boys could be girls and girls could be boys or made an announcement that they were queer, but today these creatures are allowed to make children participate in their fetishes and delusions by affirming their "identity" and most schools and parents are doing nothing to stop them![59]

Sexual Predator Teachers Now Allowed

Teachers even vaguely hinting at anything sexual with their students has always been a major red flag that they were a predator, and even the most subtle reference to anything sexual would have immediately been condemned by administrators and a dark cloud of suspicion would have hung over them for the rest of their career. Each year students would pass on word of the incident to the incoming students in the freshman class and such behavior would become part of school lore. The rumors would never stop.

Students with younger siblings would tell them what happened and they would tell their friends, and the teacher would never live it down, and in most cases would have been fired immediately. But now if the teacher is gay or bisexual, they often openly brag in TikTok videos about what they're doing and the grooming agenda has gone full speed ahead. All while the media runs stories defending the practice and accusing Conservatives of being "homophobic" and going on a "witch hunt."[60]

The Government Accountability Office [GAO] published a report back in 2014 warning about the dangers of sexual predator teachers in public schools, recommending administrators be on the lookout for "grooming behaviors" that are "part of a pattern of behavior and are done with the intent to perpetrate future sexual abuse or misconduct."[61]

In 2015 *The Washington Post* ran the headline, "More teachers are having sex with their students. Here's how schools can stop them."[62] The article noted that the previous year there were 781 teachers or school employees were accused or convicted of sexual relationships with students, and cites social media as the primary method perpetrators use to first start communicating with their victims.

In 2019 the Iowa Department of Education published a guidebook to help teachers and administrators identify grooming in public schools, listing one of the red flags as (obviously) "talking about student sexuality" and having “inappropriate and personal conversations with students.”[63] But now queer teachers grooming students using these exact same methods is widely acceptable behavior.

Gay Pride Parades in Schools

Once something that was always confined to inner city streets in places like New York and Los Angeles, gay Pride parades and "celebrations" are now regular occurrences in public schools across America.[64] They call them "Pride" parades now instead of gay Pride parades, because that name wasn't inclusive enough for the transgenders, pansexuals, and all the rest of the gender-bending degenerates who all fall under the queer umbrella.

And young children who don't yet know what differentiates gay and transgender people from normal people are being deceived about what the events are for. They're told that "Pride" celebrations are just about people celebrating "who they are" and anyone who is "different," or that it's about "diversity," while masking what is actually being celebrated.

Teachers are using classical conditioning techniques to associate the rainbow "Pride" flag with positive feelings—and like new members of a cult, the kids aren't being told what the group actually believes in hopes of incrementally indoctrinating them in order to make them more receptive to what's really going on so it won't appear as a sudden shock, causing them to possibly turn away.

Girls have always loved rainbows, and to innocent children they symbolize magic because they're such a rare occurrence. Most people only see naturally occurring rainbows a few times throughout their lives, but the LGBTQ movement has turned it into a sexual kink fetish symbol.

In 2022 "Pride Month" debauchery went supernova with countless schools across the country holding drag queen events for children. It's not just one or two, or even a handful of isolated instances—it's now a common occurrence. And not just in high schools. Drag queen "Pride" events targeting children as young as two years old are now commonplace.[65]

Schools regularly host drag queen story hour, and other drag queen themed events, like "drag queen bingo" night, and drag queen talent shows.[66] A middle school in New York even welcomed a drag queen to teach boys how to apply drag makeup.[67] There are too many such events to list here.

And many public schools are now forcing kids to study "gay history." As of 2023 at least six states require schools to teach it, including California (which was the first, as usual), along with New Jersey, Illinois, Oregon, Colorado, and Nevada.[68] And not just in high schools, but middle schools and elementary schools too.[69] In one Illinois school, pre-kindergarten children are given an "introduction" to the rainbow flags and gender identity, and third graders are taught that White European colonizers "forced two-spirit people to conform to the gender binary."[70] A Florida school took elementary students on a field trip to a local gay bar to teach them about Pride Month.[71]

Michigan's Democrat attorney general said she wants "a drag queen for every school."[72] But the Leftists aren't satisfied with "Pride" month events now being the norm at schools across the country throughout the month of June so some schools now have "Back to School Pride Festivals" to celebrate queerness as the new school year begins.[73] Some people are now calling summer "Pride season" because they're not satisfied with "just" one month dedicated to them.[74]

Project Veritas caught the dean of students at a Chicago area high school on undercover video bragging that he had dildos, butt plugs, and lube passed around to students (as young as 14) and was excited they were interested in how to use the butt plugs.[75] Of course the dean is a queer himself. It's nobody's business what two consenting adults do in the privacy of their bedroom they used to say, but now the queers won't shut up about it and insist on sharing their lifestyles with children and demand they celebrate it with them.

A math teacher in Huntington Beach, California forced students to watch an LGBTQ Pride Month propaganda video and many of them revolted. One student caught this on video and posted it online showing them booing, making barfing sounds, and asking "Why are you showing this to kids?" The teacher then threatened them with a Saturday detention, claiming they were being "inappropriate."[76]

Drag Queen Story Hour Pedagogy

Drag shows have always been considered adult entertainment because of their inherent sexual nature. And it's always been gay—there has never been a single heterosexual drag queen in the history of the world, with the exception of some men dressing in drag as a joke because of the absurdity of it—something that has always been viewed as such, with depictions in popular films and sketch comedy bits on TV.

But the Marxists are now using drag as a way to indoctrinate children into gender bending and other queer activities instead of making people laugh at how odd it is for men to dress as women. On one hand they try to claim it's just "entertainment" for the kids and there's "nothing sexual about it," while on the other admit that they are strategically using it as a pedagogy, meaning a method of teaching, in hopes of sparking "queer imagination" in the children, "strategic defiance against social norms" and the "destigmatization of shame."[77]

In an article published in the educational journal *Curriculum Inquiry* they admit, "Drag queens have historically been relegated to the realm of the night. In the past few years, however, drag performers have made their way from the dimly lit bars of gayborhoods [gay neighborhoods] and into the fluorescent lights of libraries and classrooms."[78]

It goes on to say "positioning queer and trans cultural forms" are "valuable components of early childhood education" and they encourage teachers to use Drag Queen Story Hour "as a way of bringing queer ways of knowing and being into the education of young children" and "create spaces for young children and families to immerse themselves in LGBT-themed stories."[79]

It was cowritten by a drag queen who goes by the name of "Little Hot Mess" who was featured in an Associated Press video about drag queen story hour where he is seen asking the children "Who wants to be a drag queen when they grow up?"[80]

Transition Closets

An increasing number of public schools are now offering what are called "Transition Closets" which include clothes, makeup, and jewelry that students can change into once they arrive at school so they can "transition" their "gender" into something else while hiding it from their parents.[81] The idea seems to have been popularized on TikTok (as with nearly all socially toxic tends) and now some schools are receiving grants to fund them.[82]

An organization called Valid USA aims to "support schools interested in creating gender-affirming wardrobe spaces for trans and nonbinary affirming clothing" by donating clothes and makeup in what they call their Schools Affirming Wardrobe program.[83] Their website notes, "We offer a range of complimentary services, including free chest binders, bras, underwear, packers, referrals, and compassionate support from fellow trans peers."[84]

These "transition closets" don't just stock ordinary clothes though. They supply children with binders (not three ring binders, but breast binders to flatten girls' breasts tight against their chests to help them look more like a boy), as well as "tucking" underwear which help hide the penis and testicles of males who want to look like "girls." They also include "packing underwear" which contain prosthetic penises and testicles to give girls who wear them the appearance of a bulge in their crotch as if they have male genitalia.[85]

Many schools are now issuing guidelines to teachers demanding they not tell parents about such activities. A Conservative activist group called Empower Wisconsin obtained a copy of training materials given to teachers in the state's Eau Claire district which says that "Parents are not entitled to know their kids' identities. That knowledge must be earned," meaning they aren't supposed to tell parents if their child starts gender bending at school.[86]

New Jersey's "Transgender Student Guidance for School Districts" says that teachers aren't allowed to tell a parent if their child "comes out" as "transgender" and mandates all school officials use whatever name or pronoun students want.[87]

"A school district shall accept a student's asserted gender identity; parental consent is not required. Further, a student need not meet any threshold diagnosis or treatment requirements to have his or her gender identity recognized and respected by the district, school or school personnel. Nor is a legal or court-ordered name change required. There is no affirmative duty for any school district personnel to notify a student's parent or guardian of the student's gender identity or expression," it says.[88]

"Schools are advised to work with the student to create an appropriate confidentiality plan regarding the student's transgender or transitioning status," it goes on to say. And "a school district shall keep confidential a current, new, or prospective student's transgender status."[89]

Such rules are probably in place in countless districts across the country by now. Parents in Massachusetts sued their child's school after they found out that teachers were secretly encouraging students to change their gender and use different pronouns while keeping the "transitions" secret from the children's parents.[90] And it's up to parents to find out whether their children's schools are engaging in this same behavior. Most parents have no idea because few (normal) people could have imagined such policies would even be considered, let alone actually implemented.

LGBT Children's Books

The first LGBT children's books appear to have been published in the early 2000s, such as *King and King* (2003) about a prince who's supposed to be marrying a princess, but instead catches the eye of her brother and marries him instead. Another one called *And Tango Makes Three* (published in 2005) is about two gay penguins who adopt a baby penguin as "their" child, and was written to teach kids about same sex couples. Back then the books barely made any waves with only a few people denouncing them like Bill O'Reilly on his primetime show on Fox News at the time.

And most Conservatives who heard of them thought, while they may be strange, they were no cause for alarm and quickly forgot about them. But these LGBT children's books weren't rare novelties, they were just the start of an onslaught of this kind of material. And the books that would soon follow weren't designed to supposedly help parents explain what gay people are and why some children have "two mommies" or why their uncle has a "special friend." This new wave of LGBTQ children's books teach children it's cool for boys to wear dresses and makeup and that they should try dressing in drag and experiment with homosexuality.

Jacob's New Dress, which came out in 2014, encourages young boys to wear dresses. "Jacob loves playing dress-up, when he can be anything he wants to be," the description on Amazon reads. "Some kids at school say he can't wear 'girl' clothes, but Jacob wants to wear a dress to school. Can he convince his parents to let him wear what he wants? This heartwarming story speaks to the unique challenges faced by children who don't identify with traditional gender roles."[91]

Sparkle Boy (2017) also encourages boys to wear dresses, even if they're not transgender and still identify as a boy. The book's description reads, "Casey loves to play with his blocks, puzzles, and dump truck, but he also loves things that sparkle, shimmer, and glitter. When his older sister, Jessie, shows off her new shimmery skirt, Casey wants to wear a shimmery skirt too."[92]

And so he does, and he also starts painting his nails like his older sister too. The parents embrace his new "gender expression," but his older sister is uncomfortable with it at first, but at the end she accepts his new style and respects it since dresses and "sparkly things" are "for everyone to enjoy."

Julian is a Mermaid (2018) is another book aimed at grooming boys to wear dresses. *Big Wig* (2022) is another one about a young boy who becomes a drag queen, and was even promoted by Pizza Hut's *Book It!* program which encourages young children to read.[93]

Others are sexually explicit, and unimaginably obscene. One such book titled *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evinson is so explicit that in 2021 when a mother who checked it out from the school's library and started reading it out loud to the school board meeting they tried to get her to stop. She began, "What if I told you I touched another guy's dick? What if I told you I sucked it? I was 10 years old, but it's true. I sucked Doug Goble's dick, the real estate guy, and he sucked mine, too."[94]

A school board member interrupted her, saying, "There are children in the audience here."[95] She responded that if it's too offensive to read out loud at a school board meeting, then why is it in the school library? Other parents in the audience at the school board meeting cheered her when she was finished speaking.

And others across the country began showing up at school board meetings too and reading *Lawn Boy* and other books like it out-loud, all of which are also found in the schools' libraries. Videos of the incidents went viral on social media since most schools, like city councils, record their meetings and post the archives online.

A graphic novel titled *Let's Talk About It,* written by a bisexual man named Matthew Nolan, encourages boys to play with each other's buttholes, saying "When you're starting out, explore your butt solo till you get used to it. Lube up and don't rush," and tells them, "a great place to research fantasies and kinks safely is on the Internet. There are tons of people and communities out there who share your interests and have all kinds of advice."[96] It also recommends sex toys for kids and promotes sexting.

One of the reviews on Amazon reads, “This is NOT appropriate for teenagers. Some of the content had me and my husband absolutely shocked and horrified! Read this book before you let your children touch it! The book starts off great and about half way through it’s extremely inappropriate, things I don’t even want to detail on this review.”[97]

A book called *Seeing Gender* by Iris Gottlieb, which is aimed at teens, contains a chapter titled “Sex work is not a bad term” (meaning prostitution) and glowingly says it’s “one of the oldest jobs in history” and explains that “A person may exchange sex or sexual activity for things they need or want, such as food, housing, hormones, drugs, gifts, or other resources.”[98] A school librarian at a middle school in Loudoun Country, Virginia defended the book being on the shelf, saying many of the students “are sex workers” and the book “makes them feel validated.”[99] The list of degenerate books aimed at children could fill an entire book in and of itself.

Of course many Leftists these days are furious that Conservative parents don’t want these kinds of books in school libraries, denouncing so-called “book bans,” but these same people would be screaming bloody murder if copies of *The Turner Diaries* were included in school libraries, the novel that inspired Timothy McVeigh to bomb the Oklahoma Federal Building in 1995.

And if that book was in a school library, it should outrage parents because obviously certain books are inappropriate for children. Would the parents who claim banning LGBTQ books in school libraries is reminiscent of Nazi Germany want copies of *The Anarchist Cookbook*, the infamous bomb-making manual, available to the students?

What about *Playboy* magazine or *Penthouse*? Any reasonable person can admit that some ideas can be dangerous (like books about how to build bombs) and measures *should* be taken to ensure such materials aren’t planting seeds into the minds of impressionable and irresponsible children.

Anti-Grooming Laws

After the general public became of aware of how pervasive the problem of teachers grooming their students is, discussing their sex lives with them, and encouraging gender bending; Florida passed an anti-grooming bill forbidding teachers from discussing sexuality or gender identity with students from preschool through third grade.[100] Later expanded through 12th grade.[101]

It was dubbed the "don't say gay bill" by Democrats who falsely claim the laws forbid gay teachers from talking about their partners at all. Similar legislation was then introduced in other states, including Alabama, Georgia, Ohio, and Louisiana.[102] Sixteen states would eventually move to prohibit teachers from talking about sexual orientation or gender identity with students in the early grades.[103] Word finally got out about what the LGBTQ teachers were doing, and parents and state legislatures knew they had to stop them.

A major reason Florida's legislature introduced the bill is because of the *Libs of TikTok* Twitter account which simply searched TikTok for publicly available videos posted by teachers who were openly bragging about discussing their sexuality with their students and then reposted them on Twitter, bringing them to the attention of others.

These videos of the fluorescent-haired freaks often went viral and caught the attention of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and others who decided to draft legislation to stop the groomers. *The Washington Post* admitted, "Libs of TikTok has become an agenda-setter in right-wing online discourse, and the content it surfaces shows a direct correlation with the recent push in legislation and rhetoric directly targeting the LGBTQ+ community."[104]

Media Matters, the George Soros funded Leftist smear merchant, told the *Washington Post*, "Libs of TikTok is shaping our entire political conversation about the rights of LGBTQ people to participate in society…It feels like they’re single-handedly taking us back a decade in terms of the public discourse around LGBTQ rights. It’s been like nothing we’ve ever really seen.”[105]

Cameras In Classrooms?

In 2020 and 2021 when word spread about the extent of the child grooming and Critical Race Theory (antiwhiteism) in public schools, some parents started pushing for cameras in all classrooms that would livestream what's happening so they could check in and listen to what the teachers were doing. Conservative lawmakers in Florida and Iowa even introduced bills to mandate them, but so far none of the bills have passed.[106]

Of course, Leftists are opposing the idea, but why shouldn't parents have access to a password-protected livestream of the classrooms? Many parents set up nanny cams in their house to monitor their nanny and baby sitters so they can see what they're doing with their children when they're gone. Even many dog kennels have livestreams so people can have some peace of mind by checking in on their pet when they're out of town if they have to put them into a doggie daycare center. So why shouldn't parents be able to see what's happening in their child's classroom?

Homeschooling Makes Big Comeback

Once seen as fringe or something only extremely religious parents did, homeschooling is now seeing widespread acceptance by many Conservatives who don't want to turn their children over to government schools to be indoctrinated by some crazy leftist who's going to incorporate Critical Race Theory into their math class somehow. If you live in a small town or a city in a Republican state and know the teachers and people in the community, the schools might be somewhat safe, but if you live in a Democrat controlled region, then God help you!

Of course putting your kids in a private Christian school is a great idea, but not everyone can afford that. If you're just starting a family, these are things to consider, and you need to plan ahead. Start investing for your children's education in a private school, or move to a different town or even a new state to raise your kids so you won't plant any roots in a Liberal community and then get stuck there.

MSNBC deemed this growing trend racist (of course), saying, "It may seem harmless, but the insidious racism of the American religious right's obsession with homeschooling speaks volumes."[107] Actor Kirk Cameron, who has been a vocal Christian and critic of Hollywood's war on our culture, has been attacked by the media for encouraging more parents to start homeschooling their kids.[108] And if the Liberal media is against something, then you can be sure that whatever it is—it's the right thing to be doing.

Author's Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com, or wherever you purchased it from if you're reading the e-book, to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them.

Almost all of the one-star reviews on Amazon for my previous books are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent hence me adding this note.

It's just more proof that Liberals are losers and can't play fair, so if you could help me combat them as soon as possible since you actually bought this book, that would be great! Thank you!

The Family

Since the beginning of the human race, families have been the foundation of our species' survival. Mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and siblings have helped feed, protect, and educate their fellow humans who they share common ancestry with. Families maintain cultural norms and customs, and offer emotional and even financial support if one of their members falls on hard times. Families have been the center point of civilization and everyone instinctually knows they are the most important thing in life.

But now our modern society is plagued by broken families missing tight-knit social structures, which is causing a cascading failure that is having devastating effects emotionally and financially that reverberate throughout the entire country. It's largely due to single mothers, many of which were raised by single mothers themselves, compounding the problem. Working mothers, who turn their children over to strangers at day care centers so they can go sit in a cubicle behind a computer for eight hours a stretch only contributes to the breakdown, a situation which is impossible to avoid for most families because of the current cost of living. The ideal single income family with a stay at home mom of the 1950s is sadly a bygone era in America.

Parents used to be able to trust leaving their children alone in front of the television when *Sesame Street* or *Barney and Friends* were on to keep them entertained while mom did laundry, cleaned the house, or got dinner ready, but today the major brand name television stations are cultural poison and toddlers are given Internet connected devices to play games and watch cartoons which are being covertly used to indoctrinate them with enemy propaganda before they can even talk.

Political science professor James Kurth wrote, “The great movement of the second half of the nineteenth century was the movement of men from the farm to the factory…The greatest movement of the second half of the twentieth century has been the movement of women from the home to the office…[This] movement separates the parents from the children, as well as enabling the wife to separate herself from her husband. By splitting the nuclear family, it is helping to bring about the replacement of the nuclear family with the non-family.”[109]

TikTok stars, teachers, and traditional Hollywood celebrities have mostly replaced parents as the primary influence on children’s lives. And now that we’re into the third generation of nearly half of all children growing up in broken homes where the parents have separated (or were never married in the first place) perhaps out of spite from being raised in dysfunctional families, many Liberals today are vehemently anti-family and despise what was once the cultural norm—like Edward Norton’s character in *Fight Club* who “felt like destroying something beautiful” because of his nihilism.

The official website for the Black Lives Matter movement explained one of their goals was to “disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure.[110] Not to preserve, protect, or restore it—but to disrupt and *dismantle it*.

At a TEDx talk, a popular forum for “experts” to present their ideas, feminist Merav Michaeli detailed why she wants marriage to be abolished. “We must cancel marriage,” she begins. “Not only religious marriage. Marriage is not an issue of religion. Also civil marriage. I want all secular states to totally eliminate all registration and regulation of marriage. I want to cancel the very concept of marriage.”[111] And she certainly isn’t alone.

Feminist activist (and lesbian) Masha Gessen once admitted that the Left’s goal of legalizing gay “marriage” was to eventually eliminate marriage and monogamous relationships altogether. “Gay marriage is a lie,” she said, back in 2012, three years before the Supreme Court mandated it be legalized in all 50 states. “Fighting for gay marriage generally involves lying about what we’re going to do with marriage when we get there. It’s a no-brainer that the institution of marriage should not exist,” she concluded.[112]

She’s a contributor for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and numerous other mainstream publications, so she’s not just some fringe queer on TikTok. She is one of the establishment’s LGBTQ activists (who now uses they/them pronouns).

There is a relentless assault on intimate and committed relationships (not to mention gender norms and heterosexuality in general), and aside from the moral decay in society, technology is making it easier than ever to shop around for one-night stands and swipe through dating apps to see if the grass appears greener elsewhere.

Tradwifes

As a reaction to modern Liberal society, the term "Tradwife" has emerged in some Conservative circles to refer to a traditional wife who chooses to be a stay at home mom and take care of the house and kids instead of turning them over to a daycare center and heading off to be stuck in a cubicle all day in the corporate world. They're not gold diggers who don't want to work—they're traditionalists who seek to restore the kind of family culture that was the norm in previous generations. Often this involves modest living since the families are supported by only one income. But these lifestyles are under attack by the very Liberal Establishment they are trying to avoid.

In response to a story by the BBC about a tradwife named Alena Kate Pettitt who runs a YouTube channel called The Darling Academy with just a few thousand subscribers where she encourages other women to embrace the lifestyle, Becca Lewis (who published the infamous "YouTube Alternative Influence" report in 2018 complaining about how popular many Conservative YouTubers had become), said the tradwife featured in the story was "radicalizing" right-wing extremists.

"Who needs YouTube rabbit holes when you have the BBC broadcasting literal white supremacist propaganda," she said.[113] Yes, a woman who chooses to take care of her kids at home while the husband goes off to work and prefers the traditional gender roles is considered to be "white supremacy" to Liberal lunatics.

The New York Times is also upset over the rise of Tradwives. They published a story titled "The House Wives of White Supremacy" which started, "Over the past few years, dozens of YouTube and social media accounts have sprung up showcasing soft-spoken young white women who extol the virtues of staying at home, submitting to male leadership and bearing lots of children—being 'traditional wives.'" It goes on, "These accounts pepper their messages with scrapbook-style collections of 1950s advertising images showing glamorous mothers in lipstick and heels with happy families and beautiful, opulent homes."[114]

The article focused on one particular woman who goes by *Wife With a Purpose* (Ayla Stewart) on YouTube and attacked her as "the most prominent and certainly most openly white supremacist of the women who call themselves tradwives, but she is not an anomaly."[115] Ayla Stewart caught the eye of the Liberal Media Industrial Complex when she posting a video with the tongue in cheek title "The White Baby Challenge," saying she had made six—and challenged other women to match or beat her number of kids.[116]

But while Black and Latino women can boast about making more brown babies to quicken the demographic decline of White people into a minority group in the U.S., if any White person expresses interest in boosting the White population, they are denounced as a "Nazi."

CNN complained that "Though the numbers of self-identified tradwives are low, social media has allowed them to reach sizable audiences. The 10 to 15 largest tradwife accounts have tens of thousands of followers across Instagram and YouTube."[117] CNN also decried that some of them "nod to White nationalist ideas such as Replacement Theory" and don't support LGBTQ people and use phrases like "the natural order" when talking about relationship dynamics and gender roles.

They're especially concerned that, "Some promote homeschooling to avoid exposing their children to progressive ideas about sex education and gender identity."[118]

The New Statesman, a radical Leftist publication founded by the Fabian Society—a British socialist organization whose original symbol was literally a wolf in sheep's clothing, openly supports "abolishing" families, saying, "Family is a terrible way to satisfy our desire for love and care, according to the writer and academic Sophie Lewis. The solution? Abolish it."[119]

The article sung praises of Sophie Lewis's insane ideas which are detailed in her book titled *Abolish the Family: a Manifesto for Care and Liberation,* where she compares families to prisons.[120]

Cooking is "Sexist"

Marxists work to attack and undermine every custom and social norm in order to sow chaos and destabilize the culture in hopes of being able to push their agenda through as a replacement for the "old" ideas. And aside from trying to stigmatize stay at home moms, they're also trying to portray women who cook for their husbands and families as "oppressed" and embarrassingly "old fashioned."

Every time surveys come out showing how many people still believe all women should know how to cook, feminist bloggers fume. "Good grief. It turns out gender stereotypes are just as bad today as they were 30 years ago," reports *Women's Health* magazine.[121] Saying "women should know how to cook" shouldn't even be a controversial statement. It's like saying all accountants should know how to add. Of course they should! There's something wrong with them if they don't. (And yes, all men should know how to use a variety of basic tools. I'll get to America's masculinity crisis later in this chapter.)

The Today Show in Australia (another hotbed of liberalism, particularly in Melbourne) did an entire segment attacking a stay at home wife after she posted something on Facebook about how she makes her husband breakfast and coffee in the morning, saying it was "sexist" and like living back in the 50s. "Has he hypnotized her or something? Who does this stuff?" asked one of the hosts. "I mean, I like my husband, but make your own bloody breakfast," said another.[122]

Feminists even claim that the standard specifications of kitchens are sexist, because the height of countertops and sinks were set in order to be an ideal height for the average-sized woman.[123] And why shouldn't they be?

A viral video of a girl cooking on a Twitch livestream showed the pan catch fire and she didn't know what to do so she literally started asking her viewers in a panic hoping they would type something in the chat to help her.[124] It was a grease fire, but the first thing she did was take the pan off the stovetop, turn on the sink, and pour running water all over it, so the fire then got even bigger!

If she would have taken HomeEc class in school (like all girls should), or learned how to cook from her mother like she should have ever since she was little, she would have known to smother the fire by putting the lid on the pan (if it was a metal lid, not glass), or pour baking soda all over it (which releases carbon dioxide when heated so it smothers the flames), or take the pan outside and set it on the driveway where nothing else will catch fire.

But Home Economics (or HomeEc) classes have been deemed sexist and mandating that all girls enroll in them is "sexist."[125] For generations while boys were in auto shop or wood shop class learning about how to fix and maintain vehicles and use tools to build things; girls took HomeEc and learned about cooking, sewing, child care, home management, and interior design so when they entered the real world they would know how to take care of sick children and cook healthy meals for their families—things every mom needs to know, but now learning the essential responsibilities that people need in order to have a productive and well balanced life are shunned, thanks to feminism.

Feminist Poison

Feminism isn't about "equal rights" for women anymore, and hasn't been for generations. It's about disrupting the social order, the divisions of labor, and partnerships between the two sexes and is attempting to suppress the natural instincts of women and turn them against men (or *the Patriarchy,* as feminists say) and even against the idea of being mothers.

Feminism has meant different things depending on the time period and has gone through four different phases, or waves as they're called, since the early 1900s when groups of women banded together to demand the right to vote (called women's suffrage), resulting in the 19th amendment passing in 1919.

The 1960s and 70s marked the second wave, where groups of women demanded they be given more political positions and worked to legalize abortion (succeeding in 1973 with Roe v. Wade). But many feminists still weren't happy, so they continued complaining about things which led to the third wave in the 1990s where they demanded even more women be given leadership positions in the government and business—while simultaneously complaining about men "objectifying" them as they boosted their sex appeal through every possible means in order to use their sexuality to their advantage since they know men are innately suckers for any beautiful woman's requests.

Then around 2012 the fourth wave of feminism arose due to the advent of social media which allowed angry and ugly women from across the country to connect with each other online and affirm each other's maladjustments and abnormal ideas, culminating in new "causes" like celebrating abortions, obesity, and their periods.[126]

Stuck in online echo chambers, most fourth wave feminists (who are usually queers with blue hair which is used to signal to others that's who they are), these women usually find themselves trapped in a downward spiral and hating normal women (especially beautiful ones and White women) for existing, and are so spiteful of their happiness, marriages, and motherhood that they are determined to tear down every institution and social norm that embraces such lifestyles.

The "Women's March" held every January isn't about "women's rights," it's a feminist parade. This is where Madonna voiced her fantasies about blowing up the White House after Donald Trump beat Hillary Clinton for the presidency, and where actress Ashley Judd did her famous rant about her period and having to pay sales tax when she buys tampons.[127]

The feminists today who constantly whine about imaginary problems—like men supposedly making more money than women, fail to acknowledge that men often work jobs which involve much higher safety risks and are exposed to greater physical and health hazards. Not to mention they regularly work jobs that involve backbreaking labor (like construction, pouring concrete, laying brick, roofing, etc.) and also jobs that involve getting dirty every day (like a mechanic or garbage man).

A *Sex and the City* writer, the famous show that aired on HBO following the exploits of a group of women living in New York City, later said she regrets choosing a career over having children because now she is "truly alone."[128] She's worth nearly twenty million dollars, but now says she regrets where she placed her priorities when she was younger. Most feminists eventually find themselves in the same position (minus the wealth) realizing that once their looks fade and guys stop paying attention to them, they have no purpose in life and nobody loves them.

Not having children has other implications aside from future loneliness for most people. And it doesn't just raise the difficult question of who will help look after you when you become elderly, or who will make sure the nursing home isn't taking advantage of you or abusing you. But also who will visit you in the hospital when you get sick or need surgery? Who will inherit your "stuff" when you die? Who will clean out your house? Who will organize your funeral? Who will even know that you died?

Relationships in Shambles

Online dating was once seen as something only computer geeks did. Even when Match.com first launched in the early 1990s many people thought it was odd, and “online dating” was often ridiculed. But today when most people never leave their phone more than an arm’s length away, apps like Tinder have turned online dating into a game. Swiping through potential matches is like looking for a new shirt or someplace to eat.

With the new apps to find dates while sitting on your couch at home instead of having to leave the house to go anywhere like a party or even a bar, people feel if a relationship ends they can just pick up their phone and find another date later that day. And like ordering dinner, they scroll through the menu looking at photos and listed interests until they see something they like. It’s almost strange now to ask a girl out on a date in person at school, the gym, or at the store.

These “dating” apps have cheapened relationships, leading to others being treated as if they’re disposable.[129] They’ve caused a hedonistic hookup culture, and virtually ruined dating dynamics. Facebook and other social media sites make it easy for old classmates or just friends of friends to contact people privately. And prior to social media and cellphones, if a married person wanted to cheat on their spouse, they couldn’t just have their lover call the home phone which sat in the kitchen because it could be picked up by the husband/wife or the kids and blow their cover.

But now everyone has their own phone, and if you don’t have their number you can message them privately on Facebook or Instagram. These endless options combined with the moral decay of the culture has caused long term relationships (and especially marriage) to dramatically decline, which will have disastrous consequences further down the road. Facebook is actually cited in one-third of divorces as a major contributing factor.[130]

One survey of Tinder users found that two-thirds of them were already in a relationship, and many of them were even married.[131] But not all of them are looking to cheat or find someone else to dump their partner for. Many of them, it turns out, just crave the attention of others like those who obsess over their Instagram “likes.” They’re seeking validation through matches on Tinder, even though they never intend to actually meet up with anyone.[132]

Normalizing Porn

People once had to go to a seedy adult bookstore or gas station to buy a Playboy or Penthouse magazine, or find where their dad hid his pornos, but now endless porn is just a couple taps away and with few parents using restrictions on their children's tablets or smartphones, it's fully accessible for anyone of any age. For decades since the proliferation of Internet porn the only "safety" mechanism in place is a button users click to "verify" they're at least 18-years old, which is just a self-certification with zero actual verification of their identity or age.[133]

Producing porn, whether explicit photos or a sex tape, used to be completely taboo and something that only extremely vulnerable girls from broken families or those with drug problems would succumb to, but slowly the Left has been normalizing that as well. In 2016 a new "social media" platform launched called OnlyFans which is basically Instagram for adult content where girls post sexually explicit photos and videos of themselves behind a paywall for their subscribers.

It's not even an underground or fringe platform. OnlyFans is so huge that it's now part of American pop culture and boasts three million "content creators" (virtual prostitutes).[134] And tabloids like *The New York Post* regularly publish stories about women who quit their respectable jobs as nurses or scientists, and then "get rich" from their OnlyFans accounts.[135]

In 2021 OnlyFans reluctantly announced they would no longer allow sexually explicit content (which is the only reason it exists) due to banks and credit card processors threatening to refuse to do business with them anymore after a letter signed by 100 members of Congress demanded the Department of Justice investigate them because the site "has become a major marketplace for buying and selling Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) in the United States, as well as soliciting sexual activity with minors."[136] But six days later, the credit card processors changed their mind about severing ties with the “social media” amateur porn giant, so it continues to thrive.[137]

YouPorn and Pornhub are other user generated porn platforms for explicit homemade videos, which have been used to host not just revenge porn (recorded or published without the consent of one of the participants) but also child sexual abuse material as well.[138] These platforms allow turn-key porn production anyone with just a webcam or cellphone can make, all from the comfort of their own bedroom.

In the past, girls would have to respond to postings from porn companies (usually disguised as “model agencies” looking for vulnerable girls to exploit) and travel to their studios because the infrastructure to produce and sell it was expensive and required a degree of technical skills to run a whole website and setup payment systems for credit cards, but OnlyFans and the other “do it yourself” porn platforms have made it just as easy as being an Instagram influencer or YouTuber.

Perhaps equally shocking is that Twitter also allows hard core porn to be posted and shared.[139] Elon Musk didn’t ban it after he purchased the platform, and it’s the only major social media platform that allows it. Facebook and Instagram have strict policies against just nudity, but Twitter allows hard core porn. That alone should have caused it to be banned from the Apple and Android App Stores, which both have strict policies against sexually explicit content, but they mysteriously allow Twitter to operate as an X-rated app.

And while Democrats whine about “hate speech” on the platform (speech they hate), none of them have a problem with Twitter hosting countless hardcore pornographic videos and allowing accounts by porn stars to promote their explicit content.

Many people who get addicted to porn eventually need more hardcore videos in order to become aroused and get off, so they start watching fetish porn involving all kinds of perverted acts hoping to satisfy their growing sexual appetites. It literally rewires the pleasure sensors in their brain making them less aroused by “normal” porn, and sexual encounters with (actual) women.[140]

Many porn addicts experience what’s called porn-induced erectile dysfunction when they try to have sex with a woman because the reward centers of their brain have been desensitized from watching so much porn, and like a drug addict who needs larger doses in order to get high, they have artificially caused a tolerance to build up in terms of sexual arousal.[141]

Promoting Prostitution

Watching porn, and producing amateur "social media" porn isn't just being normalized in the New World Order through OnlyFans, PornHub, and YouPorn. An increasing number of Liberals are boldly supporting the normalization and legalization of *prostitution*. The slogan for their plan is "sex work is real work."[142] It used to be virtually impossible to find anyone except some odd libertarian eccentrics who would call for the legalization of prostitution, but now the idea is gaining popularity in Democrat circles as the next frontier of "civil rights."[143]

Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has openly endorsed prostitution as a profession, parroting the mantra that "sex work is real work."[144] Ana Kasparian, cohost of *The Young Turks*—one of YouTube's most popular "news" channels, says, "it's totally fine if someone's working as a sex worker, something that we're supportive of," and equates prostitution "rights" with abortion rights.[145]

Teen Vogue magazine supports it too, with articles like "Why Sex Work is Real Work" which endorse prostitution to their young teen readers and recommends prostitution apps be created in the same vein of hookup apps, and says there shouldn't be any stigma attached to it.[146]

George Soros' Open Society Foundation (the largest private donor for Leftist causes) also endorses it, and recommends people call them "sex workers" rather than "prostitutes" because "The term 'sex worker' recognizes that sex work is work. Prostitution, on the other hand, has connotations of criminality and immorality."[147]

Their official stance on the issue is "Sex workers sell sexual services in order to earn a livelihood. The vast majority of sex workers choose to do sex work because it is the best option they have. Many sex workers struggle with poverty and destitution and have few other options for work. Others find that sex work offers better pay and more flexible working conditions than other jobs. And some pursue sex work to explore and express their sexuality."[148]

The TEDx forum also promotes it, giving a platform to a woman for her talk titled "Sex Work is Real Work" in 2022.[149] The ACLU also supports legalizing prostitution, posting their official stance on the issue in an article titled, "Sex Work is Real Work, and it's Time to Treat it That Way."[150]

The Democrat Supervisor of the City of San Francisco, Hillary Ronen, introduced a resolution in early 2023 urging state legislatures to decriminalize prostitution in California.[151] And it likely won't be long before this is a major Democrat Party platform for future congressional or presidential candidates.

Abortion

The messaging behind supporting abortion went from “safe, legal, and rare” to women wearing t-shirts that read “I Had An Abortion” (sold by Planned Parenthood), and Hollywood actresses proudly proclaiming that without getting abortions when they were younger, they wouldn’t have been able to become “stars.”[152]

An organization calling itself “The Satanic Temple,” which exists solely to hate and troll Christians, has wealthy financial backers and lawyers who help them file lawsuits against Christians—including challenging states which have restricted abortions, claiming that banning or restricting abortions violates their “right to practice their religion,” and literally refers to the practice as a “Satanic abortion ritual.”[153]

After the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in 2022, the ADL [Anti-Defamation League, a Leftist Jewish secular organization] issued a statement denouncing the decision and called abortion a “Jewish value.”[154]

In my previous book, *Hollywood Propaganda: How TV, Movies, and Music Shape Our Culture*, I detail how Planned Parenthood has a special department dedicated to lobbying Hollywood studios and writers to encourage them to insert pro-abortion messages in their projects.[155] For the last decade now they even host a special reception with hundreds of producers, directors, and writers to celebrate films and TV shows that promote abortion.[156]

In 2017, the dating app OkCupid partnered with Planned Parenthood to integrate a special profile badge on users’ accounts to show if they “Stand with Planned Parenthood” as a way to signal to potential matches that if those women get pregnant, guys could be at ease knowing they would kill the baby so they wouldn’t have to become fathers.[157]

When the new Roe v. Wade draft decision was leaked showing the Supreme Court had overruled the previous 1973 decision, a move that would now allow each state to decide whether they want to ban or restrict abortions, Democrats had an even bigger meltdown than usual. Congressman Eric Swalwell warned "The Republicans won't stop with banning abortion. They want to ban interracial marriage. Do you want to save that? Well, then you should probably vote."[158]

Chelsea Manning, (born Bradley Manning before "transitioning" into a "woman" who had been convicted of espionage after leaking classified documents to Wikileaks during the Obama administration), encouraged "her" Twitter followers to buy guns and start training in teams to "protest" the court's decision.[159]

Chicago mayor Lori Lightfoot echoed this sentiment, saying, "To my friends in the LGBTQ+ community—the Supreme Court is coming for us next. This moment has to be a call to arms."[160] She and others were concerned the Supreme Court may also reverse their decision on gay "marriage," which hopefully they will someday, which is what she meant by they're "coming for us next."

After the stunning overturning of Reo v. Way *Vice News* published a story about how people can make "DIY abortion pills" from horse medication, saying "Misoprostol is relatively easy to acquire from veterinary sources, since in addition to medically inducing abortions, it's also used to treat ulcers in horses."[161] The fury unleashed by the Democrats over them not being able to kill babies at will, even up until just before the moment of birth makes them look no different than the ancient Canaanites who used to sacrifice their infants to Molech.

To add some perspective, it's a crime to damage or destroy the eggs of a Bald Eagle, and many other animals that are considered endangered species. It's a felony, in fact.[162] It's even a crime to harm various *plants* if they're located on designated Wetlands.[163] So quite literally, plants and bird eggs are considered more precious to Liberals than unborn human babies.

The Masculinity Crisis In America

Aside from most women not knowing how to cook anymore (or sew, or properly keep a house clean), the majority of men are also failing in their social responsibilities. They don’t know how to check or change the oil in their cars, or even know when it should be done. Lucky for them, newer cars have oil change monitors which notify drivers when it’s time, but that’s beside the point.

Many don’t know how to use basic tools (and don’t even own any). They wouldn’t even know how to stop a squeaky kitchen cabinet (hint: you lubricate the hinge). This is because they’re raised without fathers, so they never learn the basic knowledge or skills that have been a standard part of boy’s lives since the beginning of time.

So many turn to online role models in hopes of learning what being a man is all about, but unfortunately many of those men are preying on the vulnerable and lost in order to take advantage of them financially and use them to boost their own out of control egos. Countless young men came to look up to Andrew Tate, a former kickboxer turned camgirl kingpin who made his fortune as a pornographer exploiting women (and the lonely gullible men who paid to interact with them online).[164]

He later hired a team of social media managers to promote his new scheme of teaching men “how to be men” through his “Hustlers University” online course—which also offers an affiliate program to entice his fans to promote it to others in hopes of making a commission and make some “easy money” themselves.[165]

He is an entertaining guy, like a heel in professional wrestling (the bad guy) playing the part to a T, always wearing sunglasses indoors like some rock star and posting pictures of himself standing in front of fancy cars or seated in a private jet with his shirt halfway unbuttoned, but Andrew Tate is a complete failure of a man. He is a misogynist in the truest sense, but a broken clock is right twice a day.

Sure, some of the cliché truisms he says are valid critiques of society, but the guy is a complete scumbag which was clear from the moment he first started going viral (due in large part to financially incentivising his young teenage fans to spam video clips of him across social media through an affiliate marketing scheme).[166]

It’s amazing how so many Conservatives came to see him as some kind of inspiration and sage especially when there are so many clips of him and his brother in their past openly bragging about their camgirls cashing in on suckers.[167]

He’ll never know what love is or be in a healthy relationship, let alone a marriage, because he has no conscience and his entire schtick is a money-making charade that compensates for the deep insecurities he is desperately trying to hide.

The so-called *manosphere,* which is the online community of pickup artists, men’s rights activists, and hyper anti-feminists is full of phonies and frauds. A prime example being “Jack Murphy” (whose real name is John Goldman) who became a popular “guru” selling online courses claiming he’ll teach guys how to be “real men” through his “Liminal Order.” He was exposed as a literal cuck (who enjoyed having his wife getting screwed by other men) and sticking dildos up his butt (and talking about having sex with other men) while he was working as the male equivalent of a camgirl.[168]

Other desperate young men look to psychologist Jordan Peterson as a parasocial father figure who is best known for his advice to “clean up your room” which is a metaphor he uses to encourage people to take control of their own lives instead of allowing their environment to dictate their behavior. But despite him building his reputation as a self-help guru with all the answers to life’s questions, he had a mental breakdown, becoming suicidal and addicted to benzodiazepines, an anti-anxiety drug, after he couldn’t handle the pressures of his wife’s kidney cancer diagnosis.[169] A psychologist who couldn’t even handle his own problems and emotions, yet became a social media celebrity by dispensing what is seen as profound wisdom to everyone else on how to manage theirs.

Former Rolling Stone music critic Neil Strauss wrote an interesting book called *The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pickup Artists* in 2005, back when online dating was still seen as something only for nerds and before dating apps, which detailed his experiences learning how to develop the courage (and strategies) to actually walk up to women in person and talk to them and get their numbers and schedule dates. Aside from being an autobiographical story about his own journey and personal transformation, the book also conveys how anyone can use the same techniques as he did to dramatically improve their dating life.

His sidekick "Mystery" (Eric Von Markovic) later published his own how-to guide titled *The Mystery Method*, which despite occasionally recommending using some unethical tactics (like lying or stretching the truth) actually does have the social science down pretty solid regarding early stage relationship dynamics, and contains proven strategies to start conversations with girls and get dates the old fashion way—in the real world—face to face, not through some app.

The biggest problem most single and lonely guys face is illustrated by NHL star Wayne Gretsky who used to say you miss 100% of the shots you don't take, and all strategies and tactics aside, if books like Neil Strauss's or Mystery's just convince young men to take action and actually ask out women they're interested in instead of being afraid of rejection, that alone would make a world of difference.

Learning the art of the pickup shouldn't be about bringing girls home from the bar and getting laid (which is actually a terrible idea). It's about developing the skills and confidence to ask the cute bank teller or receptionist at the dentist office for her number if you feel a connection instead of walking away and thinking "what if" on your way home.

While feminism (and all other forms of Liberalism) have thrown relationship dynamics out of balance, and created monsters, there are still plenty of girls who haven't fallen victim to the new culture, and will feel as though they've been rescued by Prince Charming from it once they find a guy whose interests, values, and goals align with their own.

American Symbols and Holidays

The enemy hates America, our past, our present, and everything we stand for—including symbols of our country like the Founding Fathers, the American flag, and even our national holidays. They're trying to change the meaning of America from a place of freedom, prosperity, and ingenuity, to one of exploitation, racism, and oppression in order to weaken the foundation of our society so it will collapse into a socialist / communist revolution.

This is the same strategy China's dictator Mao Zedong used by directing his student-led paramilitary group of faithful followers called the Red Guards to target the "Four Olds"—old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas; to have them eradicated so the "new" China could emerge with a bureaucratic superstructure controlling all education, art, and entertainment to facilitate the communist society he had envisioned.[170]

A country's holidays not only preserve its culture, but help each new generation carry on traditions, reflect back on important events, and enjoy the benefits a country has to offer. But now nearly every American holiday from fairly small ones that don't cause much of a celebration like Columbus Day, to big ones like Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter, and Christmas are attacked every year by the ungrateful and spiteful rejects in our society—just like Mao Zedong's Red Guard did in China, hoping to eliminate patriotism in America and pride in our culture.

Many of them can't even enjoy Martin Luther King Day because it just reminds them of what White people did to the poor Blacks generations ago. I'll detail the attacks on Christmas and Easter in the next chapter because those are the two main targets of the American Marxists, but their list is long, so here's just a brief overview:

Independence Day

Every year when the 4th of July comes around now countless Black people and self-hating Whites cry about how Blacks weren't free when the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, so they can't be grateful for the freedoms they enjoy *today* as a result of living in this country. Their opposition to the holiday is like clockwork, and every year there are columns published in mainstream Liberal outlets about how the 4th of July makes Black people feel bad, and lists their grievances about why they shouldn't celebrate it.[171]

The holiday causes disgruntled "African" Americans to blame "the White man" for their own personal failures because of what happened to ancestors of theirs whose names they don't even know. Many dream of one day getting reparations, and think they're entitled to millions of dollars each.[172] Marxist Democrat Congresswoman Cori Bush from Missouri says "When they say that the 4th of July is about American Freedom, remember this: the freedom they're referring to is for white people. This land is stolen land and Black people still aren't free."[173]

Vox, a well-funded Leftist "news" website published an article titled "3 Reasons the American Revolution Was a Mistake," which argues that declaring independence from England was "a monumental mistake" and "We should be mourning the fact that we left the United Kingdom, not cheering it."[174]

It goes on to say that the United States should have remained a British colony because fewer Native Americans would have been oppressed and slavery would have supposedly ended sooner! They even claim our form of government would be better since Britain has a parliamentary system instead of our three branch separation of powers system. (Britain doesn't have a free speech amendment in their constitution, by the way, and instead have strict laws that criminalize "hate speech.")

Of course *Vox* couldn't conclude their screed without distain for White people, saying, "The main benefit of the revolution to colonists was that it gave more political power to America's white male minority."[175] It's always the White man's fault!

On the eve of Independence Day a few years ago, *The Washington Post* declared, "It's time to reconsider the global legacy of July 4th 1776," and denounced American independence saying it "helped further colonialism and white supremacy."[176] The article goes on to lament how after freeing ourselves from the British empire we went on to build an empire of our own, acquiring Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam—and that America reinforced "black and indigenous lives did not matter."[177]

The Associated Press published a story on Independence Day in 2023 about how the word "patriot" is now often seen as a negative word because "Today, the word and its variants have morphed beyond the original meaning. It has become infused in political rhetoric and school curriculums, with varying definitions, while being appropriated by white nationalist groups."[178]

That same year Ben and Jerry's, the over-priced "super premium" ice cream tweeted, "This 4th of July, it's high time we recognize that the US exists on stolen Indigenous land and commit to returning it," and linked to a petition demanding South Dakota give the land where Mount Rushmore stands back to the Sioux Indian tribes as part of the Land Back movement, which demands that "traditional territories" of Native American tribes be given back to them.[179]

But it turns out that the Ben and Jerry's factory in South Burlington, Vermont sits on land that used to belong to the Abenaki tribe until British colonists arrived in North America and forced them out.[180] They probably didn't even know that, and surely don't care, because if they meant what they said about supporting the Land Back movement they would turn the deed to their property over to the tribe.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving offends Liberals too because it reminds them of how the pilgrims “stole the land from Native Americans.” But if someone is dumb enough to trade Manhattan for $24 worth of beads and trinkets (which is purportedly what the Native Americans did with the early settlers), then that’s their loss. Many Liberals go so far as to say Thanksgiving is a celebration of “White imperialists” and the supposed “genocide” early settlers committed against the natives.[181]

But it’s not just a few thousand crazies on Twitter. Such insane ideas have institutional support, and as usual, that of Hollywood celebrities.[182] Marxist media outlets now publish editorials from Native Americans every year about how Thanksgiving hurts their feelings because it reminds them of their ancestors’ failings. The official YouTube Twitter account even posted an animated GIF showing a group of Native American girls tipping over a dinner table filled with the traditional food in protest of the holiday.[183]

They also tweeted a link to a video by Francesca Ramsey (best known for complaining about White kids wearing certain Halloween costumes) titled “5 Comebacks For Your Racist Relative During The Holidays,” because Leftists obsess over non-White people who suffer from inferiority complexes.[184] Previous years’ tweets had been about helping non-profit organizations feed homeless and needy people on Thanksgiving, or “Thanksgiving Fun Facts,” but that was before YouTube went full libtard.[185]

When the NFL’s Washington Redskins were scheduled to play Thanksgiving one year, it added extra “insult” according to those triggered by holiday because they considered the team’s very name to be a “racist slur.”[186] A few years later the team’s name was changed to the “Washington Football Team” (after 87-years as the Redskins) as an interim name, and then later to the Washington Commanders in order to appease critics who kept harping about how the team’s name was “racist.”

Marxist media outlets now even ring the alarm about the supposed "environment impact" of Thanksgiving, claiming that it increases greenhouse gas emissions and is contributing to climate change.[187] Vice "News" calculated what they claimed to be the CO2 emissions for preparing a turkey, writing, "cooking a typical Thanksgiving dinner contributes 80 pounds of CO2 to the planet's decline. That's equivalent to the carbon emissions of driving about 100 miles in your average American car."[188]

Others echo these concerns, including *The Huffington Post,* which published an article titled "The Environmental Impact Of Your Thanksgiving Dinner," and suggested "alternative ingredients that cause less environmental damage," going so far as to say people should consider *not serving turkey at all*, and use plant-based foods instead.[189]

Many of the White people who hate Thanksgiving are just spiteful since they grew up in dysfunctional families that probably don't even get together for the holiday, or if they did when they were growing up, it was an utter disaster and regretful. But instead of trying to break the cycle by starting their own family to restore the tradition, they just invent reasons to complain about the holiday and try to spoil everyone else's fun.

A new form of virtue signaling has arose in recent years called a "land acknowledgement," where people openly apologize to ancient Native American tribes which used to live in the region where an event is occurring. For example, at the Oscars in 2020 just before actor Taika Waititi presented the nominees for an award, he did a "land acknowledgement" by saying that the Tongva, the Tataviam, and the Chumash used to live in the vicinity where the Oscars ceremony was being held.[190] It's a way of apologizing for White people modernizing the region, or as the Leftists say, "colonizing" it.

Such a ridiculous practice isn't just done by Hollywood actors who often embrace fringe causes hoping to look like they're helping ordinary people. To kick off an online Microsoft training seminar in 2021, the hosts began by saying, "We need to acknowledge that the land where the Microsoft campus is situated was traditionally occupied by the Sammamish, Duwamish, Snoqualmie, Suquamish, Muckleshoot, Snohomish, Tulalip, and other coast-Salish peoples since time immemorial. A people who are still continuing to honor and bring to light their amazing heritage."[191]

These ridiculous land acknowledgements even occur before some city council meetings and board of supervisors meetings.[192] A growing number of schools even hold land acknowledgment ceremonies, and some have put up plaques inside of schools as a form of their “acknowledgement” as well.[193]

The idiots who engage in such a ridiculous practice never mention that Native American tribes were at war with each other, long before the European settlers arrived in North America (not to mention they committed genocide against each other as well, and enslaved those from other tribes who survived).[194] But as usual, all the problems other ethnic groups have experienced throughout all of history, are blamed on White people.

Halloween

"Progressives" can barely enjoy Halloween anymore either because some stores might sell costumes the snowflakes think are "cultural appropriation." These same people don't have a problem letting kids dress up as psychotic mass murderers for Halloween, but if they happen to wear a rasta wig or sombrero, then it's the end of the world.

Megyn Kelly was famously fired from hosting NBC's flagship show *Today* after saying she didn't see a problem with White kids dressing up as characters that happen to be of another race.[195] The following day she even issued a dramatic apology on air, starting the show by saying how sorry she was—how she was "wrong," and it's "not okay." But that was the last time she would appear on the show.[196] From the media outrage over her comments, you would have thought she shouted out the n-word on air, but she just dismissed the insane controversy over White kids wearing certain Halloween costumes.

Disney pulled a costume for their animated film *Moana* after morons complained that it was "brownface" and "cultural appropriation," thus offensive.[197] In the film, a demigod named Maui (voiced by Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson) is a Pacific Islander, with his arms covered in tattoos and he wears a grass skirt. But if that style of clothing is worn by a White kid who loves the movie, then that's "offensive" to Pacific Islanders. So the costume was recalled and banned.[198]

There were even complaints about White kids wearing the Black Panther costume in some promotional pictures advertising the sale of the costume on Walmart and Target's websites.[199] Their grievances are obviously absurd, but imagine the backlash if White people complained that a Black kid was pictured modeling a Superman costume! The Democrats in Congress would pass a resolution denouncing the complaints and the Justice Department would launch a Civil Rights investigation!

Mother's Day

Mother's Day is offensive to many Liberals too now since gay men who are raising children are confronted with the reality of the horrifying and unnatural environment they're forcing "their" children to grow up in, so there's a push to make Mother's Day "more inclusive" for LGBTQ people.[200]

For Mother's Day 2022, clothing company Calvin Klein released an ad featuring a pregnant transgender "man" wearing only underwear with "his" belly sticking out where the poor unfortunate baby is growing.[201] The person's breasts were surgically removed, so the mother won't be able to properly feed the baby once it's born and will have to resort to formula instead of breastmilk.

Some transgender "women" are even posting photos online showing them "breastfeeding" babies, who they abuse by having the babies suck on their fake "breasts" despite not being able to produce any milk.[202]

There are now even transgender "women" who post TikTok videos about how they're deciding to celebrate Mother's Day despite actually having *fathered* children because now they identify as "women."[203]

The "Human Rights Campaign," a Leftist queer lobbying organization, has a guide for teachers called "Welcoming Schools" which encourages them to "develop more inclusive practices around celebrating Mother's and Father's Days" and recommends a book called *Stella Brings the Family* which is about a girl whose school is having a Mother's Day celebration but Stella has "two daddies" and doesn't have a mom to invite to the party so the book is designed to "help" kids "acquire the vocabulary to talk about LGBTQ families."[204]

An increasing number of schools are just canceling Mother's Day celebrations altogether. The madness seems to have started in 2017 and has since spread.[205] *The Washington Post* complains, "For some gay parents, Mother's Day (or Father's Day) is awkward" and features numerous gay couples who call them "Hallmark holidays" that "don't merit a celebration."[206]

GLAAD—the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation lobbying organization, has a "Mother's Day Resource Kit" that provides "potential story ideas and suggestions on how to make coverage of Mother's Day more inclusive." Some of their recommendations are to, "Include a lesbian or transgender mother as part of a composite profile of how mothers in the region enjoy the holiday. Profile a lesbian couple's journey to adopt (either locally or abroad). Report on the legal difficulties faced by lesbian couples as they try to become parents. Profile a mother who has come out as lesbian, bisexual or transgender to her children, spouse/partner or extended family. Profile a child who has come out to his or her mother or grandmother."[207]

In 2018 *Fortune* magazine published an article titled "Making Mother's Day More Inclusive" and shows two gay Black men with a baby. It starts off saying "Mother's Day can be fraught for many reasons for many people," and repeats the same Leftist complaints about how gay men raising children together are uncomfortable with the holiday.[208] Some lunatics are even upset that Mother's Day leaves out women who don't have children and say it should be a day "for all women" and "there's no need to feel left out" if a woman never had children![209]

The British Medical Association, the equivalent of the American Medical Association in the United States, issued new "guidance" in 2017 recommending doctors and other health care providers not refer to pregnant women as pregnant *women*, and instead call them *pregnant people*.[210] While laughable at the time, the insane trend has caught on and now the Center for Disease Control in the United States,[211] Planned Parenthood, and other organizations recommend using the same term.[212] That or *birthing person*.[213]

During her confirmation hearing after being appointed as Supreme Court nominee, Ketanji Brown Jackson (who was chosen by Joe Biden simply because she's a Black woman) couldn't even provide a definition for the word *woman* when asked by Republican Senator Marsha Blackburn. "I'm not a biologist," she responded, which proved the point the senator was trying to raise by asking it.[214]

Liberals are afraid to say what a woman is now, because they don't want to ostracize transgender people who "identify" as women. And admitting that trans “women” aren’t real women would derail the Marxists’ gender bending agenda, so when asked the basic question “what is a woman?” they freeze up, and avoid answering the question, or provide a nonsense response like “a woman is whoever identifies as a woman.”

Father’s Day

Father’s Day reinforces *cisgender heteronormative patriarch stereotypes* of men controlling the grill and so Liberals are upset about that, and they also feel it’s offensive to single mothers whose children don’t have fathers in their lives—and lesbian couples who have adopted children or purchased sperm from a sperm bank and had themselves artificially inseminated since their poor children don’t have a dad.

And since most Black kids don’t have fathers in their homes and Father’s Day is an uncomfortable reminder of that fact, the holiday is also deemed racially insensitive.[215] The average Black woman has children by two or three different fathers (*baby daddies* as they call them), none of whom they’ve ever married and on average none of them even live in the home with her and the children.[216] Another uncomfortable fact about the Black community you’re not supposed to mention, which has also been the inspiration for some very politically incorrect jokes you’re not supposed to tell either.

The Huffington Post published an article titled “Three Reasons Why Father’s Day Should Be Abolished,” and complains that dads are often the “secondary parent” because the mother is usually the primary caregiver since men typically work longer hours while moms are in charge of childcare and housework, and even calls the holiday a waste of money.[217]

Others who have no children, along with those whose fathers were abusive or absent, are also upset about Father’s Day, prompting *The Chicago Tribune* to ask “Is Father’s Day Outdated?” They say since the holiday triggers bad memories for some it should be abolished. Others have been calling for it be renamed “Special Person’s Day” instead.[218] For these same reasons some schools are now doing away with acknowledging the holiday at all.[219]

LGBTQ groups are upset that Father’s Day is about normal men (straight men) and not homosexuals or transgenders, so GLAAD published a “Father’s Day Resource Kit” (just like they did for Mother’s Day) to encourage their allies in the media to make sure they include queers in their Father’s Day news coverage and television show plots.[220]

“The lives of gay, bisexual and transgender parents and their families are often absent in Father’s Day coverage since print and electronic press reports often focus solely on straight parents,” they complain. Their “resource kit” even provides story ideas and other suggestions on how to make Father’s Day more “inclusive” which are just as ridiculous as you could imagine.[221]

Valentine’s Day

Valentine’s Day upsets these same crazies too because it “perpetuates heteronormativity,” a Leftist buzzword meaning that heterosexual couples are the norm (which of course they are) but that upsets them because all the commercials throughout the entire history of the holiday (until the queer Pride pandemic) featured couples consisting of a man and a woman celebrating the holiday and that reminds LGBTQ people that they are a fringe minority (despite efforts to artificially amplify their representation in media).

It used to be just feminists who get upset about Valentine’s Day because they’re perpetually single and have nobody special in their lives to celebrate it with, so they lash out every February 14th when it comes around, publishing a slew of blogs, YouTube videos and TikToks complaining about it. But now with the Marxist’s cultural insurrection underway, Valentine’s Day is under attack for not being gay.

The ADL complains, “Be aware of how some holidays can reinforce restrictive social norms around gender identity and sexual orientation. For example, as students get older and Valentine’s Day becomes more focused on romantic relationships and not friendships, celebrations may reinforce heterosexist notions that all relationships are between a boy and a girl and marginalize LGBTQ youth, or youth who simply are not interested in romantic relationships.”[222]

University student newspapers are usually the most upset about Valentine’s Day being about normal (heterosexual) couples, and every year publish articles spewing their heterophobia. The University of Utah’s paper complains, “For individuals that identify outside of the gender binary, this heteronormative depiction of Valentine’s Day presents other problems—not only does it exclude any potential relationships they might be involved in, it also dismisses the existence of their gender identity altogether.”[223]

One student interviewed for the article said, “I perceive Valentine’s Day as a huge piece of heteronormativity. While having good intentions, it really pushes the norm of cis[gender] male and cis[gender] female romance. For instance, pretty much every movie and TV show's portrayal of this day is between a cis[gender] man and cis[gender] woman. It makes me a little upset, especially because I feel like my ideal relationship is never shown onscreen."[224]

"Cisgender" if you don't know, is a cultural marxist term meaning someone whose genitalia matches their gender identity, or as they say, whose gender identity "corresponds" to the sex they were "assigned at birth." *Cis* is Latin for "on this side of," which is the opposite of *trans* which means "across from" or "on the other side of." Or as comedian Norm MacDonald used to say, "It's a way of marginalizing a normal person."

The student newspaper at California State University, San Marcos whines that, "The holiday perpetuates a fixed depiction of couples and romance as primarily held between a man and a woman," and blames "the media" for heterosexual relationships being viewed as the norm.[225]

Some elementary schools are canceling Valentine's Day celebrations which involve arts and crafts and forbid students from handing out Valentine's cards to their classmates. One such school sent out a notice to parents saying, "While we acknowledge the celebration of Valentine's, and are mindful of the popularity of that day, it is not celebrated by all students/families in our community. It is essential that all students feel welcomed and reflected at school, and that our celebrations do not negatively impact our families and students."[226] It also explicitly told parents not to let their children bring any Valentine's cards or candy.

The principal of an elementary school in Saint Paul, Minnesota who canceled Valentine's Day celebrations said he was concerned that kids doing arts and crafts or exchanging Valentine's Day cards may "suppress" some students![227] Elementary schools in an East Lansing, Michigan district also canceled Valentine's Day celebrations, saying they can cause "unintended consequences" such as "drama and teasing."[228]

A Rutgers University psychology professor is urging *all schools* to cancel Valentine's Day celebrations because it's about "romantic love" and so it "does not have a place in school."[229]

It Never Ends

Columbus Day is another annual reminder of how the early European settlers treated the natives which sparks the usual rounds of complaints, so progressives have been pushing to not just cancel Columbus Day, but to replace it with a new holiday they call Indigenous Peoples' Day to honor and commemorate Native Americans.

In 1992 the city of Berkeley, California symbolically renamed Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day and nobody really noticed or took the move seriously and just wrote off the idea as coming from a bunch of hippies, but as the years went on more and more cities began officially replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day.[230] In 2017 the Los Angeles city council voted to do so, becoming the largest city to make the change.[231]

Two years later Washington D.C.'s city council did the same thing.[232] And as president, Joe Biden issued a presidential proclamation in 2021 declaring October 10th (Columbus Day) to be "Indigenous Peoples' Day."[233] Now on the iPhone calendar it marks the "holiday" automatically as such, and the notification cannot be removed.[234]

At some point they'll probably fully cancel Columbus Day, purging it from all calendars like the toppled confederate monuments were removed from public display and the confederate flag banned, claiming it's disgraceful to commemorate the "violent colonization in the Western hemisphere."

But if the European settlers hadn't colonized North America, instituted our form of government—bringing with it law and order, and designed and built the infrastructure of modern society; then the Native American tribes may still be living in tepees, warring with each other, and doing rain dances hoping to get their crops to grow so they wouldn't starve instead of having the luxuries of grocery stores and other modern conveniences.

And without the Europeans establishing colonies here, the African Americans wouldn’t be Americans at all, because if their ancestors weren’t brought here as slaves then they would have been born and raised in any number of the third world countries in Africa, many living in dirt huts and walking around barefoot not owning any shoes. But because of what their ancestors went through, they get to enjoy everything that the United States has to offer.

American Monuments

When there's a revolution in a country, the old flag and monuments are torn down and replaced by symbols of the new regime. There is a famous video of a gigantic Saddam Hussein statue being toppled during the War in Iraq showing Iraqis celebrating and hitting it with their shoes once it fell to the ground (a sign of disrespect in their culture).[235] And in the 21st century United States, countless monuments were toppled in a similar fashion as the attempted Marxist revolution began heating up.[236]

Since Leftists hate America's history, culture, and customs, it only makes sense that they would focus that hatred on American monuments. But not just the old "racist" Confederate monuments, which have stood in the South for a hundred and fifty years. They also want statues of the Founding Fathers torn down, and ultimately the American flag that flies on top of the U.S. Capitol building.

During a discussion about numerous Confederate monuments being torn down across the South on CNN, one of their contributors named Angela Rye called for statues of George Washington to be torn down too because he owned slaves, saying, "To me, I don't care if it's a George Washington statue or Thomas Jefferson, they all need to come down."[237] Race-baiting grifter extraordinaire Al Sharpton agrees.[238] And so did the city council of New York, which had a statue of Thomas Jefferson removed from City Hall which had stood there for over 100 years.[239] Later they considered removing more statues and artwork of Jefferson, and those honoring George Washington too.[240]

A few years before the height of the anti-Confederate monument hysteria (which succeeded in removing nearly 100 monuments across the South in the year 2020 alone), protesters in Atlanta vandalized a Peace Monument that was set up in 1911 to symbolize reconciliation between the North and the South after the Civil War, thinking it was a Confederate statue of some kind.[241] A statue of Abraham Lincoln (who freed the slaves) was vandalized in Chicago with graffiti saying “colonizer.”[242]

Mount Rushmore is also a target of frequent protesters and even threats to blow it up.[243] *Vice News* wrote an article originally titled “It’s Time To Blow Up Mount Rushmore” and then quietly changed it to “Let’s Get Rid of Mount Rushmore” after controversy grew about them trying to incite violence.[244]

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi responded to the rash of vandalism and angry mobs toppling confederate monuments in the wake of the George Floyd riots by saying, “If the community doesn’t want the statue there, the statue shouldn’t be there,” adding, “I don’t care that much about statues.”[245] One reporter pressed her, asking “Respectfully, shouldn’t that be done by a commission, or the city council—not a mob, in the middle of the night throwing it into the harbor?” to which she responded, “People will do what they do,” and shrugged off the mobs as if what they were doing was no big deal.[246]

Interestingly, George Orwell foresaw this kind of cultural erasure in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, writing, “One could not learn history from architecture any more than one could learn it from books. Statues, inscriptions, memorial stones, the names of streets—anything that might throw light upon the past had been systematically altered.”[247]

They’re engaged in a cultural genocide (not to be confused with an ethnic genocide, which is the deliberate killing of a large group of *people* from a particular nation or ethnic group with the purpose of eradicating it). *Cultural* genocide is defined as “acts and measures undertaken to destroy nations’ or ethnic groups’ culture through spiritual, national, and cultural destruction.”[248] This is done through destroying cultural artifacts like books, artwork, and monuments (or even buildings).

Destruction of such artifacts is actually a violation of numerous international treaties which aim to protect such objects even in times of war. The Treaty on the Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments (also known as the Roerich Pact), which was signed by 21 different countries reads, “The historic monuments, museums, scientific, artistic, educational and cultural institutions shall be considered as neutral and as such respected and protected by belligerents. The same respect and protection shall be due to the personnel of the institutions mentioned above. The same respect and protection shall be accorded to the historic monuments, museums, scientific, artistic, educational and cultural institutions in time of peace as well as in war."[249]

The National Anthem

For generations the National Anthem had been proudly played before nationally televised sporting events to signify how fortunate we are to live in the United States where citizens can enjoy such entertainment at their leisure, but that tradition too came under attack by anti-American forces within our own country.

That battle became part of pop culture in 2016 when the San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick (who was adopted as a child by a nice White family since his Black biological mother and father abandoned him) started kneeling (or sitting) during the song instead of proudly standing with his hand over his heart in order to "protest" against supposed "police brutality" and to show solidarity with the Marxist Black Lives Matter movement.[250]

It sparked a national debate with the usual leaders of cultural decay—Hollywood celebrities and Liberal "journalists," siding with Kaepernick and painting him as some kind of civil rights hero. Then the tradition itself was attacked, with many calling for the song to stop being performed at sporting events all together.[251]

Mark Cuban, owner of the Dallas Mavericks NBA team, quietly stopped playing the national anthem before games at his stadium in November 2020, but then resumed the tradition after pushback from the NBA three months later.[252]

New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees *apologized* for saying that he would still stand during the National Anthem and thought people kneeling were disrespecting the flag.[253] The following day after his initial comments he posted a video on Instagram saying, "It breaks my heart to know the pain I have caused. I would like to apologize to my friends, teammates, the City of New Orleans, the Black community, NFL community and anyone I hurt with my comments yesterday. In speaking with some of you, it breaks my heart to know the pain I have caused."[254]

All that for just disagreeing with those who refused to respect the National Anthem at the games! To appease the crazies, the NFL started having a singer perform the "Black National Anthem" before games in the 2021 season, which is a song that some Black people feel "better represents" them.[255] Many disgruntled Black people think the National Anthem itself is racist, and it's a celebration of "White supremacy."[256]

The NAACP, the National Association for the Advance of Colored People, says it's one of the most racist songs in America, and have lobbied legislatures to remove it as a our national anthem.[257]

Democrat Congressman Cedric Richmond of Louisiana, who is the head of the "Congressional Black Caucus" (a group of Black congressmen who work to promote the interests of Black people over other Americans), supported a petition posted on Change.org calling for it to be abolished, saying it contains "racism, elitism, and even sexism."[258]

The American Flag

The American flag obviously symbolizes our great nation (or at least what a great nation we *used* to be), and since the Marxists hate everything about the United States—from our Founding Fathers, to the Bill of Rights, and every aspect of our culture, it should come as no surprise that the very sight of Old Glory sends them into a hissy fit as well.

A survey conducted in 2018 by the non-profit Foundation for Liberty and American Greatness found that 1 out of 5 millennials see the American flag as "a sign of intolerance and hatred."[259] In 2015, I posted a YouTube video showing me asking random people walking along a boardwalk by the beach in southern California if they would sign a petition to "ban" the American flag and issue a new flag featuring rainbow stripes for "diversity," and many people gladly supported the cause.[260] While it was slightly funny at the time, it was an early indicator of the declining patriotism in America and the growing hostility from within.

Nike canceled the rollout of a limited edition shoe that was scheduled to be released in 2019 to commemorate Independence Day because it featured the Betsy Ross flag, a flag that represents the original 13 colonies.[261] The cancellation came after complains by Colin Kaepernick who had become the face of Nike, landing a multi-million dollar contract with them the previous year.[262]

In the past, athletes like Michael Jordan and Andre Agassi were the face of the sneaker giant, and they never engaged in divisive political rhetoric or got involved in political causes. Instead, they strictly stuck to sports, knowing it would be bad for business to ostracize half of their fans by publicly aligning with either political party or anything having to do with politics at all. But today, promoting Liberal political causes is put before profits and most of corporate America is now in a competition with each other over who can best use their resources to promote "social justice."[263]

A group of students at a California high school were sent home after they came to class on Cinco de Mayo (the Mexican holiday, meaning May 5th) wearing shirts with the American flag on them. The school considered their shirts to be "cultural disrespect" and forbid the students from wearing them.[264] They sued the school for violating their first amendment rights, but the Ninth Circuit court ruled *against* the students![265] Their lawyers wanted to take the case to the Supreme Court, but in 2015 (when it was still dominated by Liberals) they rejected even hearing the case![266]

The Sigma Chi fraternity at Stanford University was told by a school administrator that the American flag flying on their frat house could be seen as "offensive, intimidating, aggressive or alienating" to others.[267] In response, the frat bought an even larger flag the very next day and hung that one outside as a "silent but visible protest."[268] They didn't get a letter from the school because they were flying a Confederate flag or one with an expletive or offensive imagery. They were just flying an *American* flag!

Comedian Sarah Silverman, best known for being Jimmy Kimmel's ex-girlfriend from many years ago, said in her now defunct Hulu show that the American flag makes her "scared" and "shaken" because she's a Jew, and "nationalism is innately terrifying for Jews" because the Nazis were nationalists, meaning they were highly dedicated to their own nation and it formed a central part of their identity.

And so Americans saying "We're number one" and posting a flag outside their home is too nationalistic for her, because it's "really like an old bed buddy of racism and xenophobia."[269] So, she's worried that some Americans (the patriotic ones) like America too much, and they remind her of Nazis because of their national pride.

MSNBC contributor and *New York Times* board member Mara Gay says she thinks it's "disturbing" that so many Donald Trump supporters fly the American flag because it sends the message that this is "their" country.[270] And now every year around the 4th of July numerous TikTok videos go viral of Black people complaining about seeing all the American flags everywhere, and insisting that anyone who has one flying outside their house must be "some racist ass White mother fuckers."[271]

The Coming Collapse of the United States?

The polarization between Red states and Blue states has never been more intense, aside from the Civil War era. The coronavirus lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 clearly showed the vast disagreement between different states regarding mandates for masks, vaccines, and forced school and business closures. And with such dramatically different views regarding abortion, school curriculums, transgenderism, reparations, and other irreconcilable divides, many wonder at what point do we have a "national divorce" and split the country in two, or numerous different Republics.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, various regions broke off into independent republics. And the borders of many countries have changed throughout history as they rose and fell. So it's not unforeseeable that at some point in the future the United States could break apart into various regional republics. Nearly a dozen Conservative counties in Oregon have been trying to secede and be annexed into Idaho, in what's called the Greater Idaho Movement.[272]

For decades fringe voices have been calling for Texas to secede, but nobody took such people seriously; although now many have been wondering what possible solution is there to America's growing cultural divide other than a *national divorce?*

If the Supreme Court gets stacked with a Liberal majority and keeps passing draconian laws that businesses and teachers would have to legally follow or get sued into bankruptcy—like the "Equality Act" that Democrats keep hoping to cram through, which would force everyone to recognize dozens of different "genders" and allow anyone to declare themselves a man or a woman (or neither), and let them to participate in any activities which had been exclusive to that sex—including giving them access to locker rooms and showers (and competing on girls sports teams if someone self identifies as a "girl")—then what recourse would normal people have at that point?

Businesses would lose their license and be shut down and sued by left-wing activists or the Justice Department for violating the "civil rights" of the gender benders. Employees would be fired if they refused to play along with a transgender customer's "identity," or if they referred to a co-worker as a he/him or a she/her if that person "identifies" as "gender non-binary."

What do we have in common with today's Democrats? Our moral values, political interests, and economic models are completely polar opposites. The old days of trying to find common ground on various issues or compromise on certain things in order to win other concessions are over.

The debates about what to do politically with the country are no longer about which group of people should get tax cuts or which communities should get federal funding for infrastructure or social welfare programs. They're much more personal, and the differences are so much more extreme than anyone in previous generations could have ever imagined.

Every day more Conservatives want nothing to do with Democrat policies (and vice versa). And not just economic policies, but policies in schools and the workplace. We even have drastically different views about what entertainment we want to watch since many long-established shows, sporting events, and even television commercials now bombard audiences with divisive political propaganda using once-great brand name products like Bud Light, Gillette, and Hershey's to normalize drag queens, celebrate gay "marriage," and promote transgenderism to children.

Our national debt is economically unsustainable, the lack of patriotism and open resentment and hatred for the United States from many of our own citizens is unprecedented. The floods of countless *millions* of illegal aliens who will never assimilate into American culture and instead are only diluting it by importing their own are forever changing the social landscape. Many historians (and ordinary Americans) see the warning signs flashing that we may be in the late stages of an empire—one that appears to be approaching a complete collapse.

Christianity and Churches

People who love sin always hate God because His existence and moral code is offensive to their debauchery, deception, and destructive lifestyles. And while many Liberals hate God, they specifically hate Christians because Christianity is very clear about God's principles. Instead of some generic and nebulous "god," Christians believe in a very specific Deity who has laid out very clear codes of conduct in the Bible. And this conduct is often directly opposed to the way Liberals live their lives.

Muslims mostly avoid scorn from the Left because they're seen as a non-White minority group and thus "oppressed." Liberals rarely if ever criticize Islam or Muslims, but love to espouse their hatred of Christians. Even fewer people criticize Judaism or Jews because they know they'll instantly be branded an "antisemite" and have their career destroyed.

You hear about how terrible "Islamophobia" and "antisemitism" is all the time, but never about *Christianphobia*. It's not even seen as a real word. But Christians are the most hated group of people in America, and contrary to popular belief, the most persecuted religious group in the world.[273] And not just in the Middle East or 3rd world countries in Africa, but also in Europe and even the United States.[274]

When Evangelist Franklin Graham, Billy Graham's son, planned to give a series of sermons around the UK, every venue he had booked (including in Birmingham, Liverpool, and Sheffield) canceled on him over what they said was his past "homophobic and Islamophobic" comments for preaching that homosexuality is "something to be repentant of, not something to be flaunted, praised or politicized," and for calling Islam a "wicked and evil" religion.[275]

The city council in San Antonio, Texas voted to ban Chick-fil-A from their new airport, claiming the restaurant has a "legacy of anti-LGBTQ behavior" because it's a Christian owned company and famously stays closed on Sundays, the Lord's Day.[276] Shortly after, another airport in Buffalo, New York did the same thing for the same reason.[277] *New York Magazine* then published an article celebrating the ban and listing a bunch of other restaurants that sell chicken sandwiches, recommending people eat there instead, so they're not "supporting our nation's hate mongers."[278]

The New Yorker (different from *New York Magazine*) complained that Chick-Fil-A was "infiltrating New York City" when they expanded there, and called it "creepy" that their corporate mission statement mentions God.[279]

The Left hates Hobby Lobby, the mega arts and crafts store for the same reason. They've donated to various Christian causes supporting pro-life legislation and opposing gay "marriage."[280] And they're also closed on Sundays, an old tradition many businesses followed until around the 1980s. So Hobby Lobby is often the target of rabid Leftists online who would never even shop there anyway because they don't have an ounce of creativity in their brains so they would never even think of going to an arts and crafts store.

One of America's largest Christian legal defense groups, Alliance Defending Freedom, was banned from Amazon.com's charity fundraising program *Amazon Smile* after the Southern Poverty Law Center branded them a "hate group" because they defend businesses in court which are bullied by LGBTQ extremists trying to force them to engage in practices that violate their religious beliefs—like baking gay "wedding" cakes and catering gay "weddings."[281]

At the Jersey Shore, a large pier in the Ocean Grove community that has two sections, one which extends perpendicular to the main walkway near the end, has been interpreted to look like a Christian cross from the air, so it came under attack by LGBTQ extremists who complained it was a religious symbol.[282]

In one of Project Veritas' undercover investigations they caught an assistant principal in Connecticut on tape saying that he wouldn't hire Conservatives or Christians.[283] If someone said the same thing about not hiring Jews or Muslims it would have caused a national scandal with

Democrats in Congress and the Justice Department launching an investigation, but this story went virtually unnoticed in the media.[284]

When a group of Christians were spotted hanging out in a coffee shop in Seattle by the owner (who is a queer) he started yelling at them to leave and said he would "fuck Christ in the ass," and then sexually harassed them by talking about how he has sex with his boyfriend.[285] As the group left he told them to tell their friends (other Christians) not to come there.[286]

The entire incident was captured on video and posted online but the business owner faced no consequences. If he went on a rant about Jews or Muslims and kicked them out, it would have been one of the top stories in the country and Jewish groups like the ADL would have ran him out of business by suing him for discrimination. But discriminating against a group of Christians is accepted. And sadly this isn't an isolated incident. It's a growing trend.

A man wearing a "Jesus Saves" shirt in the Mall of America in Minnesota was told by a security guard that he needed to take it off or leave because it was considered to be "soliciting," which is a violation of the mall's rules.[287] Just wearing a shirt promoting Jesus was deemed the same as if he was handing out flyers, which is what the ban on soliciting is actually in place to prevent—which is a reasonable policy and one that nearly every business has, but now just seeing the name Jesus on a t-shirt is offensive.

A Christian group in Virginia called the Family Foundation had their dinner reservations canceled after the owner learned that they oppose abortion and gay "marriage."[288] The owner proudly posted on his Instagram about it, and this sort of thing likely happens a lot more than people know because most of the time such discrimination isn't going to make the news since the business owners aren't going to brag about what they've done on social media.

Leftists tried to get the husband and wife team Chip and Joanna Gaines fired from their HGTV home renovation show in 2016 because they go to church and their church—like any real church that believes in the Bible—doesn't support gay "marriage."[289] But despite the controversy they kept their show and they'll be safe as long as they don't voice their opinions about gay "marriage" themselves.

Other Christian HGTV hosts, the Benham brothers (not to be confused with the "Property Brothers," a different pair of twin brothers on the network), were going to help people renovate their shabby homes in a new series until they got caught up in a news cycle that smeared them as “anti-gay” and “anti-choice extremists” because unlike Chip and Joanna Gaines who remain silent on the issue, the Benham Brothers denounced gay “marriage,” so HGTV dropped them.[290]

After Donald Sterling, the owner of the Los Angeles Clippers NBA basketball team was caught on tape making “racist” remarks about his “girlfriend” (nearly *fifty* years his junior) having sex with Black guys, the league forced him to sell his team—and then some people began arguing that “homophobes” (i.e. Christians who don’t support gay “marriage”) shouldn’t be allowed to own an NBA team either, and wanted to start a witch hunt to force them to sell their teams as well.[291]

Christian schools are even under attack by Liberal attorney generals who claim they’re “discriminating” against LGBTQ people if they don’t hire them.[292] Similar lawsuits and threats have been made against churches and pastors who refused to host same sex “weddings.”[293]

CNN host John King insinuated that Mike Pence’s wife should have her Secret Service protection revoked after she decided to volunteer as an art teacher a few days a week at a Christian school that doesn’t allow gays or lesbians to be teachers, saying taxpayers were “subsidizing her life” even though every vice president (and their wives) receive secret service protection.[294] After word first broke that Karen Pence would be teaching at the school, which like all (real) Christian schools, doesn’t celebrate homosexuality like most government run public schools do, the hashtag #ExposeChristianSchools trended on Twitter from so many Liberals venting their hatred and Christianphobia.[295]

Singer Lady Gaga even chimed in on the issue, attacking Mike Pence during a concert—calling him the “Worst representation of what it means to be a Christian.”[296] CNN then declared that “Christianity’s future looks more like Lady Gaga than Mike Pence.”[297] It’s amazing that a bunch of people who hate Jesus are always telling Christians what Jesus would do. Because of the publicity over the controversy, another school in the district announced that they were now refusing to play any sports against the teams at the one Mrs. Pence taught at.[298]

A Catholic club at Georgetown University—America’s oldest Catholic college, was labeled a “hate group” by LGBTQ activists on campus because they believe (correctly) that marriage is between a man and a woman, so a student senator filed a complaint with the school claiming the Catholic club's beliefs violated the school policy against "fostering hatred or intolerance."[299] Why a Catholic school would even allow LGBTQ students to attend is another question—one you're not supposed to ask. Shouldn't Catholic and Christian schools be allowed to expel students who openly celebrate what the Bible condemns?

Texas Christian University added a course called "Queer Art of Drag" to their curriculum in 2021 as an elective, where students create a "drag persona" and a "lip-sync portfolio" consisting of videos of them singing and dancing in drag. They also have to perform at the school's annual Night of Drag.[300] The fact that a supposed "Christian" college would allow and encourage drag shows is ridiculous, and having a course dedicated to it which gives students credit for it is blasphemous and the school should be forced to remove the word Christian from its name.

Angry queers tried to get the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team to cancel their annual Christian Day, which is a post-game event that has been held for over 30 years where fans who wish to remain in their seats after the game can enjoy speakers (often current or former Cardinals players) who talk about Jesus and the Christian life.[301]

A Marxist LGBTQ extremist group called Stonewall Militant Front organized hoping to shut down a mega church in Austin, Texas and doxxed the pastor and his son causing them to be flooded with death threats because the church doesn't support gay "marriage."[302]

Conservative social media personality and former Congressional candidate Laura Loomer was banned from Twitter (under the leadership of Jack Dorsey) for "Islamophobic" comments about Democrat Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, where Loomer just pointed out that Islam oppresses homosexuals and women.[303] At the time she had over 250,000 followers.

But a simple search any day of the week brings up countless profanity-filled vicious and hateful anti-Christian tweets, but nobody is suspended or banned from social media for hate speech against Christians. (Loomer's account was restored four years later along with many others after Elon Musk bought the platform.)[304]

If you look at how much the morality of America has been degenerating, it appears as if we're living in the End Times and the prophecy of the Antichrist doesn't seem so far-fetched. We're seeing the open worship of Satan and not just the corny heavy metal band type of satanic antics, but a more sophisticated, organized, and funded form of satanism. It probably won't be much longer until an admitted satanist is elected to Congress (who will be a Democrat, no doubt).

After Democrats took control of the House of Representatives in the 2018 midterm election, they proposed removing the age-old "so help me God" line from the oath taken before key committee hearings.[305] Leftists want the *government* to be God, but our rights come from God, not the government.

In the New World Order, however, identity politics has become a new religion. Queerness and intersectionality is their faith. And it follows most of the same tenets as a religion, including having its own rituals, path to atonement, and excommunication of "heretics" who stray from the dogma.

Christmas Under Attack

The Left often mocks the War on Christmas *while they wage war*. It's a gaslighting tactic. And like most fronts in the culture war, the Left's attacks on Christmas started small and weren't seen as a threat that would have any effect, but they relentlessly persisted and the trickle turned into a flood. Now the "Satanic Temple"—an anti-Christian hate group, desecrates Christmas displays set up on public property by installing their own satanic-themed displays right next to them every December under threats of lawsuits against local and state governments if they're not allowed to, claiming that forbidding *their* "Christmas" displays would be a violation of their First Amendment.[306]

If they targeted Jewish holidays, the ADL would freak out and get them banned from social media, payment processors, and apps like Venmo and PayPal to cut off their funding for being a "hate group," but it's acceptable to hate Christians and attempt to desecrate *our* holidays.

As part of the Marxist agenda aiming to destroy American culture, Leftists are working to undermine almost every national holiday, but since Christmas is a *Christian* holiday despite it being mostly secularized for generations, they are extremely upset about it because of its origins and underlying meaning. The name itself is derived from Christ's Mass, marking the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, but despite the holiday being more about Santa Claus than it is about celebrating the birth of Jesus these days, Leftists still hate the holiday because its Christian roots will never be forgotten.

It's not "inclusive" enough they say, and it's "offensive" to Jews, Muslims, and atheists (although mostly Jewish secularists who are Liberal atheist non-practicing Jews, also known as JINOs—*Jews in name only*, in the same vein as RINOs—Republican in name only, but you're not supposed to notice that, let alone say it out loud).

Many Jews throw around the word "antisemitism" more than Black people call others "racist." But the "antisemitism" label has much more power and often proves to be extremely damaging to people’s careers if it’s hurled at them.

An anti-Christian screed in *The Washington Post* starts off, “Please don’t wish me a Merry Christmas…It’s impolite and alienating to assume I follow your religion.”[307] She complains “it is everywhere, for over a month…in a way no other holiday is—not even Easter. It is in every ad, in every window and doorway, and on everyone’s lips.” As a Jew, she says, it’s “uncomfortable,” “weird,” “exhausting,” and “makes me feel like a stranger in my own land.”[308]

She goes on, “Despite the movies and the shopping, despite the Germanic decor, Christmas is still, at its core and by design, about the birth of Christ…Whenever I hear the name, I hear the ‘Christ’ in it,” And she doesn’t want to be “reminded a thousand times every winter.”[309]

Most atheists enjoy Christmas, decorate their homes each year, buy presents for their loved ones and gather for Christmas dinner. They’re not the ones complaining about Christmas (except for a few rare militant ones who are actually just satanists in disguise and hate everything about life). Buddhists aren’t offended by being told “Merry Christmas.” Neither are Hindus, Sikhs, or Zoroastrians.

An *NBC News* op-ed complained that, “December in America is a constant onslaught of Christmas culture: Every store gets decked out in Christmas finery and puts carols on full blast, seemingly believing that it encourages shopping. Television shows that normally avoid any discussion of anything approaching religious observance suddenly get into the spirit, devoting extra-long episodes to stories about the generous spirit inspired by this time of year.”[310]

It went on to complain that “Ostensibly secular offices and schools are suddenly awash in Santas and sleighs and reindeer…It would be bad enough if this aggressive Christmas assault were purely the domain of the rabid right wing…But the truth is that liberals—even ones who ostensibly embrace religious diversity—can be just as bad as their conservative counterparts when it comes to enforcing the oppressive Christmas climate.”[311]

What she means is Christmas is “oppressive” to the Jews (which she herself is one, including the typical JINO preface “as a Jew” in her tirade). The report concluded that we should “take a long hard look at the way

Christmas is used to send the message that America is a nation primarily for Christians."[312]

A former producer for Tucker Carlson's show on Fox News sued him and the network for what she claimed was a "hostile work environment" and said in her lawsuit she faced "antisemitism" because there were "noisy" Christmas decorations in the office, and when she complained about them, she was called a "grinch" and a "scrooge" by a coworker.[313] That's "antisemitism" she says!

But the War on Christmas gets much worse than a small but vocal demographic of non-Christians getting offended that the holiday is an intricate part of American culture. Santa is now seen as a symbol of White supremacy and White privilege by many Liberals, who say it makes Black children feel ostracized.[314] So there are increasing calls to depict Santa as a penguin instead of jolly old Saint Nicholas, to be more "inclusive."[315]

In a webinar put together by the Jewish ADL aimed at public school teachers, they complained about arts and crafts projects where teachers have students draw pictures of Santa Claus! One of the panelists admitted "Santa Claus is not considered to be a religious symbol, for Constitutional purposes, so asking students to draw a picture of something that's not deemed religious is Constitutional," but then he turned the conversation over to another panelist to explain "even though this is technically Constitutional, an assignment like this is none the less—problematic."[316] It's a problem to them that kids draw pictures of Santa in school!

In 2017 a children's book titled *Santa's Husband* was published which depicts Santa as gay and married to a Black man—a book written by a Jew who, of course, doesn't celebrate Christmas.[317] He just wrote it to denigrate the holiday. CNN praised the book when it was first released as a "fresh new twist" on the story of Santa Claus.[318]

After a political activist named Jacob Wohl recommended that Jews should assimilate into American Christian culture by putting up Christmas lights in December, he started trending on Twitter from so many people attacking him, calling him an "antisemite" (not realizing he himself is Jewish) and his comments even made headlines. Publications like *Newsweek* even twisted his recommendation by reporting that he "demanded" Jews do it.[319]

After *The Santa Clauses* TV mini-series staring Tim Allen came out on the Disney+ streaming service, a Jewish film critic named Scott Weinberg complained that Tim Allen (who plays Santa) has a line where he laments, "Saying 'Merry Christmas to all' has suddenly become problematic," thus proving the character's point. "It just struck me as a truly weird thing to put in a kid's series," Weinberg said. "'Someone wants to stop us from saying Merry Christmas!' is not some random campaign. It's a low-key effort to vilify anyone who doesn't celebrate this holiday," he concluded.[320] After he was widely mocked on Twitter, he then cried that he was the victim of "antisemitism."[321]

Christmas represents everything we're trying to preserve in America: family, tradition, capitalism, and most importantly, Christ—all things the Left vehemently hates. And they deem it a "microagression" to even say *Merry Christmas* to someone.[322] Starting in 2017 the DC Metro (the government agency that oversees public transportation, such as busses and other rapid transit services) banned any Christmas ads on or in Washington DC busses that mention Jesus, God, or Christianity.[323] So no more "Jesus is the reason for the season" or "Keep Christ in Christmas" posters allowed.

And now each year numerous Universities across America struggle with allowing faculty and students to hold Christmas parties out of concerns they'll offend non-Christians who think the holiday is "oppressive." They post sections on their websites urging people to be "culturally sensitive" in December, and saying things like, "Displays that feature exclusively single-themed decorations [meaning Christmas] may be well intentioned, but they can marginalize those who celebrate other religious and cultural beliefs during this season."[324]

Many schools suggest not doing a "Secret Santa" gift exchange either.[325] The Universities don't want the faculty to put up any Christmas decorations that have any religious connotations either (so no baby Jesus in a manger), only secular ones like snowmen. They also request faculty not hold celebrations that even "indirectly" celebrates "religious holidays."[326]

Would Indian or Chinese people who emigrated to a predominantly Muslim country like Saudi Arabia or Pakistan send out memos encouraging people not to celebrate Ramadan or Eid al-Fitr because it might not be "inclusive" enough for them? Would British or Irish people who were working in Israel ask colleagues in that country not to celebrate Jewish holidays or avoid using any religious symbols during popular celebrations there because it wouldn't be "inclusive" enough for non-Jews? Never!

Would Christians living in India complain about Hindu symbols being displayed for the celebration of Diwali (the Festival of Lights), one of the most popular celebrations in the country every year? Of course not! But those who are hostile to Christmas are aided by brand name Liberal media outlets every year which amplify their attacks on Christian celebrations in America—and it's time people stop giving into the demands of a small minority who don't want to assimilate and enjoy the biggest holiday around the world.

Most people, out of ignorance (or fear), just point to "Liberals" as the ones who oppose and attack Christmas, and very few people will mention that there is usually a very specific group of Liberals who oppose Christmas—Liberal secular Jews—or Liberal *non-practicing Jews* (not to be confused with the conservative *religious Orthodox Jews*, who believe in God and don't just identify as Jews ethnically or culturally).[327] While Orthodox Jews don't celebrate Christmas either, they're not usually hostile about it like many Liberal JINOs and tend to be friendly with (and respectful of) Christians,[328] despite their differences about Jesus, because Orthodox Jews share many of the same values as Christians, whereas JINOs are typically Leftist atheists.[329]

A lot of people get confused when they hear about Jews who don't believe in God because most non-Jews don't understand that "Jewish" is also an ethnicity *aside* from a religion, but because Jewish ethnicity has been historically linked with Judaism (the religion) most non-Jews don't know that ethnic Jews who no longer follow the religion of the ancient Israelites still identify as Jews because the word has dual meanings.[330]

During a speech at Texas A&M University, Ben Shapiro, one of the most famous Orthodox Jews in America, remarked why so many (ethnic) Jews are Leftists, saying, "This is one of the questions I get most often from non-Jewish audiences, is why are Jews so disproportionately to the left. And the answer is the vast majority of Jews don't go to synagogue, don't believe in God, [and] don't believe in the Bible…Jews are the single most anti-religious, quote unquote 'religious' group in the United States."[331]

And to understand why Jews don't celebrate Christmas and why so many of them actively oppose it being an integral part of American culture, one has to understand the history of Christianity and how Jews rejecting Jesus as the son of God and the Messiah has caused an ongoing division between Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) for over two thousand years.

Few Christians are aware that Muslims actually believe Jesus was a prophet, they just don't believe he was God in the flesh or that his death atoned for mankind's sins. Muslims believe Jesus was born of a virgin though (which Jews do not), and that he performed miracles—including restoring a blind man's vision, healing a leper, and raising the dead.[332] All of this is written in the Koran, which contains some of the same stories as the Christian Bible.[333]

In Judaism on the other hand (and among JINOs—Jews in name only—who no longer follow the Jewish religion or even believe in God but still identify as Jews culturally), Jesus is viewed as a fraud and a false prophet, and because of the events that led to his crucifixion and being rejected by the ancient Israelites as the messiah—many Jews and Christians have had an often tense opposition between each other ever since.[334]

Easter Under Attack

Even though Easter has been covered with a secular veneer similar to Christmas, the Christian roots are far more visible because the resurrection of Christ is at the core of Christianity and it’s seen as a far more religious holiday than Christmas. And since most Liberals hate Jesus and Christianity, Easter Sunday causes them to flip out and spew their hatred every year, usually on social media which is where Leftists prefer to live their lives and air their every grievance as soon as they come to mind.

Anti-Christian posts don’t violate the terms of service on the Big Tech social media platforms (unlike criticism of Jews or Muslims) and most Leftists wouldn’t even think of criticizing Muhammad, the revered prophet of Islam—or any Muslim holidays, beliefs, or practices; but every Easter the Christianphobes vent their hatred of Jesus and Christians online.

A single post criticizing a Jewish holiday or tradition (like the eating of hamantaschen, a pastry which symbolize the cut off ears of Jewish enemies during their holiday of Purim)[335] or mocking their ritual of swinging a chicken around their head while saying a prayer—thinking it transfers their sins to the chicken, which is an atonement ritual many religious Jews engage in for Yom Kippur,[336] would cause a national outrage and make headlines across the country, but attacking Christians is so commonplace it’s now central to mainstream American culture.

Recently, every year when Easter comes around, cries of “antisemitism” come from the Liberal media which continuously work to smear the Christian holy day as an attack on Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus. But shockingly these smears aren’t just from the usual media outlets, they’re also now coming from some heretical “Christian” or “Catholic” ones as well.

America Magazine, a publication put out by the Jesuits of the United States (a Catholic group), published an article titled “The Gospel of John has been used to justify anti-semitism—so we should stop reading it on Good Friday.” It starts out saying, “Over the weekend, I saw a number of comments from Jewish Twitter users expressing concern about the week to come. The Christian celebration of Holy Week brings with it increased anti-Semitic comments, threats and violence, and it has for over a thousand years."[337]

It continues, "Reading John's Passion [meaning the Book of John from the Bible] on Good Friday causes real harm. And our practice is far more a matter of tradition than any theological necessity."[338] The writer suggests avoiding some of the specifics about the events that led up to the crucifixion of Jesus because certain historical facts have been deemed "antisemitic" by Jews.

The Book of John is seen as more problematic than the other Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) because of the verse found in John 8:44 which reads, "You [the Jews who want Jesus to be killed] belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires." It's deemed an "antisemitic" passage because it paints the Jews who wanted Jesus killed as satanic.

Aside from John 8:44, other verses that echo this sentiment such as Revelation 2:9 (and 3:9) which warn about "those who say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan," are also deemed "antisemitic."[339] Some Jewish leaders have even called for Bibles to come with warning labels on them which highlight and counteract what they deem "antisemitic" passages and themes about "the seemingly stubborn nature of the Jewish people and their disloyalty to God."[340]

Billy Graham, the most respected Christian evangelist in the 20th and 21st century, deemed "America's pastor," can be heard on the Nixon White House Tapes referencing these verses since President Nixon secretly recorded every conversation in the Oval Office using a voice-activated tape recorder. The last of the tapes, which contain more than 3,000 hours of conversations, were made public in 2002 and include Billy Graham having a very candid discussion with the president back in 1972 where he can be heard telling Nixon, "You see the Bible makes a distinction, Mr. President, between two groups of Jews. One is called the synagogue of Satan—there are two different kinds."[341]

He continues saying the other group is called the remnant of God's people, who are Jews which will become Christians in the End Times. "And then there's the synagogue of Satan," he says again. "And nearly all of your religious deceptions in the latter days, like the Bible speaks, latter days would be a thousand years; [comes from] what they call the synagogue of Satan. In other words, they are energized by a supernatural power called the Devil. This is what the Bible teaches, whether you believe it or don't believe it, this is the Biblical teaching. This is what I believe. And I believe that they have a strange brilliance about them because they're smart. And they are energized in my judgement by a supernatural power, and you see, and uh, of course Hitler didn't uh—they had a stranglehold on Germany. On the banking of Germany, on everything in Germany—and the media. They had the whole thing, you see. And he [Hitler] went about it wrong, but this stranglehold has got to be broken or this country is going to go down the drain."[342]

Nixon asked, "You believe that?"

Graham: "Yes sir."

Nixon responded, "Good Lord. I can't ever say it, but I believe it."[343]

When the tape was made public 30 years later, Billy Graham was denounced as an "antisemite" but surprisingly it didn't completely destroy his career or legacy. And the fact that he never talked about such things publicly, but instead kept that conversation for what he thought was a private discussion with the president of the United States, speaks volumes about how dangerous it can be to talk about certain parts of the scriptures.

Even the cross itself has been called an "antisemitic symbol." The London *Guardian* says "Christians must understand that for Jews the cross is a symbol of oppression" and that "Christianity bears primary responsibility for historic antisemitism."[344]

In 2023, Israel's government proposed a ban on Christians proselytizing in their country.[345] "America's greatest ally," as both the Republicans and Democrats in congress always tout, who we give billions of dollars in aid to every year,[346] tried to ban preaching the Gospel.[347] (And this wasn't the first time).[348] After news of the latest proposition made it to the United States, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued a statement saying he wouldn't sign the bill into law and frantically tried to engage in damage control so Christians would continue to support the State of Israel and the Jewish people.[349]

The "fact checkers" online tried to mitigate the damage too, claiming the proposed bill wouldn't ban people from "talking about Jesus," just *proselytizing*, or trying to convert someone to becoming a Christian.

People in Israel could still *talk* about him! A senior editor at *The Jerusalem Post* said, “And it wouldn’t exist [meaning the proposed ban] if missionaries would just back off—at least in our own country.”[350] Few Christian churches and political pundits will admit that while Israel tolerates Christian tourists—preaching to Jews about Jesus is highly discouraged and often results in hostility and scorn.[351]

After Mel Gibson’s blockbuster *Passion of the Christ* film was released in 2004, it was widely denounced as “antisemitic” because it was the most popular film about Jesus in generations. A Jewish critic for *The New York Daily News* named Jamie Bernard called it “the most virulently anti-Semitic movie made since the German propaganda films of the Second World War.”[352]

The Jewish Anti-Defamation League (ADL) said it “continues its unambiguous portrayal of Jews as being responsible for the death of Jesus. There is no question in this film about who is responsible. At every single opportunity, Mr. Gibson’s film reinforces the notion that the Jewish authorities and the Jewish mob are the ones ultimately responsible for the Crucifixion.”[353]

Well, Christians who have actually read the Bible would know that’s actually how it happened. Groups like the ADL try to split hairs and claim that technically the Romans killed Jesus, but the Bible makes it very clear that the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem at the time were the ones pushing for it.

In Matthew 27:24 the Bible quotes Pontius Pilate (the Roman governor of Judea at the time) saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood… It is your responsibility!” meaning the Jewish Pharisees who had conspired to have Jesus arrested and killed for “blasphemy” and being a “false” messiah. The Bible also says that Pontius Pilate even offered to release Jesus, but the angry crowd of Jewish townspeople demanded Barabbas be set free instead, another prisoner who had been recently arrested for insurrection against Rome and murder.[354]

Bari Weiss, who has worked as the opinion editor for *The New York Times* and a book reviewer for *The Wall Street Journal*, insists it’s a “conspiracy theory” that Jews were behind Jesus being crucified.[355] Others however, like Jewish comedian Sarah Silverman gloat, “I’m glad the Jews killed Christ. Good! I’d fucking do it again!”[356]

Of course it’s not fair to blame all Jews or Jewish people living today for killing Jesus any more than it would be to blame White people in general for slavery in America’s past, but it was the Jewish religious leadership at the time (the Pharisees) who conspired to have the Romans kill him, which Jewish advocacy groups like the ADL consider to be an “antisemitic trope” if you dare say it.

Yes, quoting the Bible is considered to be “antisemitic” these days, including passages like Matthew 12:14 which reads, “But the [Jewish] Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.”

And Mark 11:18 which says, “The chief [Jewish] priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.” It wasn’t the Romans who were insisting he be crucified. The Bible makes that very clear. Luke 23:23-24 says “But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So Pilate decided to grant their demand.”

It’s rare for Biblical dramas to become so popular, but almost ten years after *The Passion of the Christ*, the History Channel’s miniseries *The Bible* was a hit in 2013, and like clockwork the same cries of “antisemitism” rang out about that as well.[357]

Very few Christians today have an understanding of the tense (and ongoing) opposition many Jews have toward Christians. Before becoming a Christian, the Apostle Paul (a religious Jew prior to his conversion) actually hunted down and killed the first followers of Jesus.[358]

Martin Luther, the monk who started the Protestant reformation by famously nailing his *Ninety-Five Theses* to the front door of his local church in 1517 starting the Protestant Reformation, is deemed an antisemite for his theological writings criticizing Judaism.

His book *On The Jews and Their Lies,* published in 1543 and sold on Amazon since it first launched in 1995, was banned sometime around the year 2020 during a purge of numerous titles Jewish groups had been pressuring the retailer to censor.[359] There are plenty of books critical of Christianity, Catholicism, and the Inquisition, but certain books that are critical of Judaism, Jewish secularism (JINOs), Jewish ethnocentrism (their in-group favoritism), or discussions about any “Jewish banking dynasties” have been recently censored completely from Amazon and aren’t allowed to be sold. Even used copies by third parties are forbidden from being listed.[360]

In the Talmud, the recorded oral teachings of Jewish religious leaders (known as Rabbinic Judaism which has been the mainstream form of Judaism since the 6th century), it not only says that Jesus was a false messiah and blasphemer who the Pharisees proudly put to death,[361] but that Mary was a whore and an adulteress who had sex with a Roman soldier named Panthera, and that's how she became pregnant with Jesus.[362]

The Talmud is considered to be just as sacred as the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) by most Jews, but Christians aren't demanding the Talmud be banned, or clamoring about any "anti-Christianism" because of the theological differences they have with Jews.

While Christians may debate and discuss their disagreements, they're not framing the Jewish view as being "hate speech" or "dangerous" like Jews paint Christian beliefs and Bible verses. Most Christians aren't even aware of the Talmud and are quite shocked to learn what it says about Jesus—and that it is one of the most sacred religious texts of modern Judaism and "the single most influential document in the history of Judaism."[363]

The diametric opposition between Judaism and Christianity softened in the early 20th century largely due to a new edition of the Bible, the Schofield Bible, an annotated version of the Bible (meaning including commentary and notes alongside the scriptures) published by Cyrus I. Scofield in 1909 which changed the view many Christians have towards Jews. It eased the tensions between the two groups by convincing Christians that God commands their uncritical support of the State of Israel, and turned most American evangelicals into Zionists (people who support Israel as a homeland exclusively for Jewish people) and now put Jews on a pedestal as "God's chosen people" or the "apple of God's eye."

This, despite Jews not believing in Jesus as the Son of God, and most ethnic Jews not even being religious at all.[364] The Bible makes it clear that God's covenant is with those who have faith in Christ—those who believe in Jesus, not people who just so happen to belong to a certain ethnic group, even if at one point in history God issued them the Ten Commandments.[365]

Christians believe that faith in Jesus (that he is God in human form and he paid the penalty for your sins, accepting the punishment on your behalf) along with genuine repentance (regret or remorse for your sins) is the only way to have salvation and come into fellowship with God;[366] and the entire premise of Christianity is that it's by *faith* alone (belief), not rituals or works—or outside actions; or anything that you can "do" (such as "being a good person," so no one can boast that they have more favorability with God than others).[367]

And this salvation certainly isn't contingent on anyone's ancestry or what ethnic group you belong to. Jesus offers fellowship with God (and access to the Kingdom of Heaven) to all of mankind—Jew and Gentile (meaning non-Jews, also called Goy or Goyim, which is a disparaging term used by some Jews to refer to non-Jews).[368]

Judaism is a very exclusive and ethnocentric religion. Notice Jews don't try to preach or spread the word to others about their God, because to them, he's *their* God, and *they* are his special people. In fact, they discourage people who aren't born (ethnically) Jewish from converting to Judaism, and many converts still aren't considered Jews according to Jewish law because if their mother isn't an (ethnic) Jew, then they're not really seen as Jewish because they have no direct genetic lineage to the ancient Israelites.[369]

This is why some people accuse Jews of being Jewish supremacists, which of course is denounced as another "antisemitic slur" because White people are the only ethnic group that are supposed to be framed as seeing themselves superior to others. But some Jews do reveal their own superiority complex when giving the impression that they're above doing certain kinds of jobs like manual labor.[370]

One of the most famous rabbis in Israel, Ovadiah Yosef, preached that "Goyim were born only to serve us. Without that, they have no place in the world—only to serve the People of Israel…Why are gentiles needed? They will work, they will plow, they will reap. We will sit like an effendi [a member of the nobility] and eat…That is why gentiles were created."[371] When he died in 2013, he was given the largest funeral in the history of Israel.[372]

Jews, in their view, work "prestigious" jobs like being doctors and lawyers. This is not a knock against them at all. Their culture emphasizes education and success, much like Asian Americans do. But they're very sensitive to even the slightest criticism from non-Jews.

If an (ethnic) Jew who once also followed religious Judaism (an Orthodox Jew, the ones who wear the yarmulke) becomes a follower of Christ (a Christian believing in Jesus), they are often called a messianic Jew to make the distinction that while they have Jewish heritage (ethnicity) they are also a Christian.

Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament prophesies of a Messiah (a savior), and essentially reform (or transform) Judaism, much like Buddha reformed Hinduism by preaching his formula for "enlightenment" to all, breaking the monopoly held by the religious leaders at the time in India, the Brahmins, who saw themselves as the authorities others needed to rely on in order to gain knowledge of God.[373]

With the coming of Jesus the Messiah, Jews were invited into God's new covenant which was also offered to all of mankind so they could do away with external rituals and other stringent practices they previously used in hopes of becoming holy and pleasing to God, and instead they could now be guided by faith alone through a spiritual transformation of their mind which automatically changes how they think and behave, bringing them into harmony with God through the Holy Spirit, a supernatural force that functions as an invisible guide and conscience.

But the Bible makes it clear that many Jews were jealous of their "chosenness" over the Gentiles (non-Jews) being offered communion with the God of Israel who they saw as *their* God—the God of (ethnic) Jews.

By God becoming a man in the form of Jesus, he also provided a way for humans to better understand him, and relate to him. He came to earth not only to reveal his instructions through parables that any man, woman, and child could understand, but to set an example for how to think and how to behave. To be the ultimate role model. And when the Holy Spirit enters a person's mind (through belief in Christ) it's like downloading a new operating system for your computer or phone, and the old animalistic (carnal) human nature is upgraded, and one becomes anointed with a spiritually-minded consciousness.

2nd Corinthians 5:17 says "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, and the new is here." There are many metaphors that describe this, perhaps the most common is a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly. Christians use the term *born again* to signify this transformation, and Jesus enables us to interface with the awesome and inconceivable power of God in a way that our limited brains can comprehend.

Anyone who rejects Christ as the Son of God, the Light of the World (the transmission of God's messages to mankind) also rejects God (John

2:23), so Jews who don't believe in Jesus are not God's chosen people.[374] Not anymore. Not since the new covenant—the arrival of Jesus. *Christians* are God's chosen people. This is Supersessionism because Christians superseded the Jews as God's covenanted people.

Often it's called *replacement theology* as a pejorative and is considered a "heresy" by many churches today because they don't want to be accused of "antisemitism" even though the Bible makes it very clear that Christians are God's chosen people, and ever since the early days of Christianity, *Christians* were universally understood to be just that until Zionism became a major influence in Christianity.[375]

Romans 9:6-8 says "For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel…it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring."

Galatians 3:29 also makes it clear that, "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." And your personal salvation and relationship with Christ have nothing to do with two different ethnic groups (Jews and Palestinians) fighting over a plot of land half way around the world in Israel or which one occupies any of the disputed territories.[376]

And any Christians who read the New Testament for themselves, instead of relying on what non-Christians or false preachers tell them it says, would know the true history and reasons for the differences and ongoing tensions between Christianity and Judaism.

While most Christians today don't hold any grudges against Jews despite the conflicts of the past, and instead revere them for the role they played in God's plan in the Old Testament and hope that they (along with everyone on earth) will one day come to believe in Jesus, unfortunately many Jews stand firm in their opposition to Christian culture and holidays while often masking their hostilities in hopes of not bringing any attention to themselves because of it.[377]

Tax-Exempt Churches

Most Christians don't know, but in order for churches to get tax-exempt status (meaning they don't have to pay federal or state income tax on all the donations, or property tax) the government severely limits what the pastor (or priest) can say during their sermons and restricts what kinds of political activities the church can engage in or endorse.[378] Virtually every church in the United States is held to these standards because they all operate as 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entities, as opposed to typical businesses which are set up as corporations (or sole proprietorships if they're small).

In 1954 then-senator Lyndon B. Johnson (a Democrat) successfully proposed an amendment to the tax code (called the Johnson Amendment) which prohibits all 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations from endorsing or opposing any political candidates or legislation.[379] This means that a church's tax-exempt status could be revoked if the pastor starts incorporating real world examples into their sermons and denouncing or supporting any specific candidates or legislation.[380]

You didn't think the government granted churches tax free status because they support Jesus, did you? It was to buy them off and keep them out of the way, and diminish their power to organize and influence things politically. Jesus said "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's," meaning you should pay your taxes.[381] But unfortunately, most churches have sold their First Amendment rights for 30 pieces of silver. Many also don't want to drive away people who may have Liberal political views, so they try their best to keep politics out of the Church, which is one of the reasons why Christians in America have gotten so soft and afraid to denounce the widespread degeneracy in our culture.

President Obama's senior legal advisor suggested that Churches should lose their tax-exempt status if they didn't officiate gay "weddings" once the Supreme Court ruled in favor of them under his administration.[382] When Beto O'Rourke was running for president during the 2020 election season he agreed, saying that any Churches which refuse to acknowledge gay “marriage” should lose their tax-exempt status.[383] Such battles have been quietly raging for years.

The city of Houston launched an investigation into a local church back in 2014 to determine whether or not to revoke their tax-exempt status. They issued a subpoena demanding sermon notes and other documents after the lesbian mayor was alerted to the pastor’s sermons denouncing a local ordinance the city was trying to pass which would have allowed those who identify as transgender to use whatever public bathrooms they wanted, no matter their biological sex.[384]

A United Methodist Church that owns a boardwalk pavilion in New Jersey lost their tax-exempt status in 2007 after they wouldn’t allow a lesbian couple to use the location for their “wedding.”[385] Gay “marriage” wasn’t even legal at the time, but they requested to use the pavilion for their “ceremony” anyway and were denied, so they sued and the court ruled in their favor.[386]

After members of the Mormon Church helped organize support for Proposition 8 in California which banned gay “marriage” throughout the entire state back in 2008, LGBTQ groups tried to get their tax-exempt status revoked.[387] When the San Francisco archbishop issued a notice that the Catholic church would refuse then-Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi communion because of her very vocal pro-abortion stance, #TaxTheChurch started trending on Twitter from so many people demanding their tax-exempt status be pulled.[388]

Pastor Greg Locke, a popular social media personality and head of a church in Tennessee, faced calls to have his church lose its tax-exempt status after a video went viral showing him railing against abortion, shouting, “If you vote Democrat, I don’t even want you around this church! You can get out! You can get out, you demon! You cannot be a Christian and vote Democrat in this nation!”[389]

After his rant made headlines he claimed that he would dissolve his church’s 501(c)(3) himself, “because the government ain’t gonna tell me what I can and what I can’t say.”[390]

Apostate Churches

Far worse than churches afraid to weigh in on political issues out of concerns that they might lose their tax-exempt status or hoping to avoid offending churchgoers (thus driving away some Democrat attendees along with their tithing) if the pastor is too overtly Conservative, are those who openly teach things or accept things that the Bible *clearly* opposes.

Most churches in America are afraid to denounce gay couples adopting children, let alone even call homosexuality a sin anymore (and especially not perverted or disgusting), but some "churches" have gone even further and hired openly gay pastors.[391] And not just "churches" in San Francisco.

Churches in Birmingham, Alabama,[392] Madison, Wisconsin,[393] Baptist churches in Louisville, Kentucky,[394] United Methodist churches in Texas, and more.[395] If you search Google for "Church hires openly gay pastor" there are countless news stories from local outlets about supposed "churches" across the country which are doing it.

Soon these apostate churches will likely print Bible editions that exclude various parts of scripture that the popular culture in America objects to (like verses denouncing homosexuals or pointing out that Jewish Pharisees conspired to have Jesus killed—the Romans didn't just crucify him out of the blue).[396]

A Chicago-area church announced that it was "fasting from Whiteness" for Lent—the Christian tradition in various denominations of giving something up for the period preceding Easter to commemorate the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and being tempted by Satan. Their "fast" involved "giving up" music created by White people during the worship and instead used music from Black people.[397] They even put a "Fasting from Whiteness" sign in their front lawn.

Other churches across America have given sermons denouncing "White privilege" and shown solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement.[398]

Drag shows are even being held at supposed "Christian" churches. In 2019 the Fairview Community Church in Costa Mesa, California held one which may have been the first "church" to do so.[399] A few months later that same year, South Bay Pentecostal Church in San Diego held one.[400] Followed by the Trinity Episcopal Church in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania a few months after that.[401] The Episcopal Church is an apostate organization that claims to be Christian while accepting gays and lesbians as pastors (and officially supports abortion) so it shouldn't be a surprise they're holding Drag Queen Story Hour events, but many different denominations are doing so.[402]

A private Episcopal "Christian" school in Manhattan that charges nearly $60,000 a year for tuition, forced students to attend a drag show inside its chapel. Footage of the event was posted online showing a drag queen singing and dancing up and down the aisle in between the pews.[403]

A Lutheran church in the Chicago area hosted a drag queen story hour event at the end of 2021 where the church's pastor was the drag queen! He told the children, "I am also a boy most of the time when I'm here, but today, I'm a girl."[404] As usual, photos of the event were proudly posted on social media by the perpetrators to celebrate what they had done.[405]

More "churches" continued to follow. One in Florida called Naples United Church of Christ hosted a drag queen show for kids ages 12-18 to "help" them with the "exploration of LGBTQ-related issues facing today's youth"[406] When signing up to attend the event, children (or their parents who signed them up) were asked to include their pronouns on the registration form. The "pastor" at University Christian Church in San Diego, Caleb J. Lines, does his sermons wearing an LGBTQ rainbow-colored sash, and calls drag "holy." He also preaches that God is gay.[407]

As degenerate as drag shows are, they had always been considered exclusively an adult form of entertainment until the early 2010s when the LGBTQ community began openly targeting children. And despite what these satanic "churches" and their "pastors" say about it, the Bible is very clear on God's view of crossdressing. Deuteronomy 22:5 says "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God."

Aside from the perverts who get sexual gratification dressing as women (autogynephilia), crossdressing has also been used for comedic effect for generations because it’s so strange to see a man dressed up as a woman or pretending to be one, and so countless films and TV shows have used the bit to get laughs.

Classics like *Some Like It Hot* (1959), *Mrs. Doubtfire* (1993), and sketch comedy shows from *In Living Color* and *Saturday Night Live* to Tyler Perry’s movies used it as a staple bit, but now it’s considered to be offensive and *hateful* to laugh at men who dress as women—and instead we’re supposed to not just take them seriously, but put them on a pedestal as freedom fighters for “inclusion” and “diversity” in the New World Order.

Hate Crimes Against Christians

While in America it's common to be slandered and defamed for being a Christian, believers in other parts of the world like North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan, and numerous regions in Africa, they literally risk their lives by professing belief in Jesus Christ.[408] It never makes the news in the United States, but militant Muslims in African countries (including Somalia, Nigeria, Libya, and Yemen) regularly murder them.[409]

Aside from being mocked and slandered by the Hollywood elite and Christianphobia allowed to flourish on the Big Tech platforms, when Christians in America are victims of hate crimes those attacks go mostly unnoticed—and are only reported in the local newspapers or in a 15-second sound bite on the local television news.

The ADL [Anti-Defamation League] claims to fight against "hate" and "bias" to "protect Democracy and ensure a just and inclusive society for all," but they aren't concerned in the least about hate against Christians. They're an anti-Christian hate group who work to protect and promote Jews, gays, transgenders, and any group of people who are non-White.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, another anti-White and anti-Christian hate group, has what they call a "hate map" on their website showing all of the groups they hate and where they're located. And this map was used by a mass shooter in 2012 to target a Christian organization called the Family Research Council which is a think tank and lobbying organization that has opposed gay "marriage" and other Leftist agendas like the LGBTQ child grooming movement.[410]

The gunman told police he intended to kill as many people as possible but was thankfully tackled by the building manager (despite being shot in the arm himself) and was able to stop what would have been a mass casualty event. The shooting soon vanished from the news, never to be mentioned again. The shooter was later convicted of terrorism charges and sentenced to 25 years in prison.[411]

An 84-page report published by the Family Research Council identified at least 420 attacks against 397 different churches between 2018 and 2022 including arson, vandalism, and bomb threats.[412] One of these involved a church in San Diego that was vandalized with satanic symbols by someone (or a group) who spray painted them on the building after the church made headlines for denouncing a local drag queen story hour event.[413]

Churches across the country were vandalized with pro-abortion messages shortly after the Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade was leaked in 2022. Churches in Wisconsin, Michigan, New York, Virginia, Oregon, Louisiana, and others were all vandalized by pro-abortion zealots.[414]

Antifa social media accounts were also posting the locations of Pregnancy Resource Centers, which are pro-life organizations that encourage pregnant women not to have abortions and offer other options like counseling to help prepare them for motherhood, or connecting them with adoption agencies to place the children with couples who will raise them as their own. Such targeting has led to numerous cases of vandalism and arson against these facilities as well.[415]

One in Madison, Wisconsin was firebombed with a Molotov cocktail and graffiti spray painted on the building that read, “If abortions aren’t safe, you aren’t either.”[416] Another Pregnancy Resource Center was set on fire in Peoria, Illinois during this tense time period after it was learned that Roe v. Wade was being overturned.[417]

Every Christmas there are local news reports of Nativity scenes that were set up outside of churches and peoples’ homes which were destroyed, and while these crimes may make the local news, the regular occurrences of such hate crimes are ignored by the Liberal media industrial complex as a whole. But if someone drops some leaflets outside a synagogue or in a Jewish neighborhood criticizing Judaism or claiming Jewish secularists are uniquely over-represented in positions of power in the government or the media, then it’s literally a national news story and gets denounced by members of Congress.[418]

World champion boxer Manny Pacquiao was assaulted while at a popular Los Angeles shopping mall called The Grove by a gay extremist who spotted him and was upset that Pacquiao had posted a Bible verse on his Instagram recently denouncing sexual perversion.[419] Pacquiao obviously could have knocked the man out with one punch, but restrained himself and defused the situation. And instead of being commended for not breaking the man's face, Pacquiao was banned from the mall by the owners who denounced him as a "homophobe."[420]

In March 2023 a transgender "man" committed a mass shooting at a private Christian school in Nashville, Tennessee, killing three nine-year-old children and three adults. And during their investigation police discovered the shooter had written a detailed manifesto explaining why "he" did it, but authorities refused to publish it, or even discuss the contents of it, claiming it would be "dangerous."[421]

After several months and numerous legal challenges by those demanding police reveal the motive for the attack (and the shooter's manifesto), the courts still refused to release it, but the reason was obvious. They were trying to cover-up the fact that it was an anti-Christian hate crime committed by a transgender terrorist.

Even the Wikipedia page about the incident (titled 2023 Nashville School Shooting) respects the shooter's "preferred pronouns" referring to Audrey Hale throughout the article using he/him pronouns and calls her "Aiden" which is the masculine name "he" went by once identifying as transgender.[422]

The Left Embracing Satanism

The Marxist establishment doesn't just hate Christians and God, they actually admire Satan—and this isn't hyperbole or political rhetoric. They literally do. In the coming years we'll see theistic Satanism rise—not just clownish groups like the "Church of Satan" or the "Satanic Temple," but more serious groups that espouse the doctrine that Satan is actually the "good" God, and they'll proclaim the God of the Bible is the "evil" one who "enslaved" Adam and Eve as robotic animals, deprived of free will.

The great secret of most occult fraternities is that they believe Satan is the "good" God, who helped mankind break free from the prison of ignorance in the Garden of Eden by convincing Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Nineteenth century occultist Helena Blavatsky, whose 1888 book *The Secret Doctrine* is credited with helping revive interest in the occult in our modern age, wrote "Satan will now be shown, in the teaching of the Secret Doctrine, allegorized as Good, and Sacrifice, a God of Wisdom."[423]

This same view is echoed by nearly all classic occult authors from Eliphas Levi and Alice Bailey, to Aleister Crowley, who wrote, "This serpent, Satan, is not the enemy of Man," but he is good, and he "made Gods of our race."[424]

An increasing number of people in the LGBTQ+ community are embracing Baphomet as one of their symbols, the hermaphroditic human/goat figure said to have been worshiped by the inner circle of the Knights Templar.[425] For hundreds of years Baphomet has been used as Satanic symbol, from people like Aleister Crowley to the Church of Satan in the 1960s to The Satanic Temple today.

And the creator of a transgender clothing line carried by Target also incorporated Baphomet into his designs because it's "a deity who themselves is mixture of genders, beings, ideas and existences. They [meaning Baphomet] reject binary stereotypes and expectations," adding "Satan respects pronouns. He loves all LGBT+ people."[426]

But the coming Luciferian religion is not just about trolling Christians by adopting satanic symbols or some abstract philosophy pondering the history of mankind and the origin of consciousness. As technology continues to advance at a breathtaking pace, Transhumanism will also rise in popularity with many people believing that through science and technology they'll be able to literally become "immortal," either through manipulating human DNA or replacing body parts as they wear out with 3D printed or lab-grown organs—or even transitioning human beings into what they're calling "inorganic life forms" by uploading the contents of one's brain into the "cloud" or external silicon databases where they can live as "gods" in a virtual world of cyberspace.

Transhumanist advocates see this as the next phase of evolution through "intelligent design" instead of by natural selection. And such ideas may sound insane and the stuff of science fiction (and they are), but there are also some very wealthy and dedicated believers who are literally working night and day hoping to make such ideas a reality.[427] Transhumanism and ancient occult philosophy have converged with adherents believing that they will finally be able to achieve Godhood like Satan said they could in the Garden of Eden.

Dr. Richard Seed, a geneticist who horrified the medical community by advocating for cloning human beings in the 1990s, had even more radical notions. He was a Transhumanist who once ominously stated, "We are going to become gods, period. If you don't like it, get off. You don't have to contribute, you don't have to participate, but if you are going to interfere with *me* becoming a god, you're going to have trouble. There'll be warfare."[428]

He died in 2013 at the age of 85, so things obviously didn't work out as he expected, but others are carrying on his vision. One of them is Ray Kurzweil, who has become the leading proponent of Transhumanism, and has worked for Google since 2012. He even signed up to be cryogenically frozen if he dies before technology is advanced enough to turn him into a "god," hoping to be thawed out in the future if such advancements are achieved.[429]

Elon Musk is also a Transhumanist, and his company Neuralink is developing neural interfaces, or BMIs (brain machine interfaces) in hopes of enabling humans to become super-intelligent cyborgs.[430] He has also suggested that a new religion is needed, saying, “Too many people have lost faith in the future. A new philosophy is needed”[431] and is developing an artificial intelligence entity called xAI which he says aims to “understand the true nature of the universe.”[432]

This discussion is far beyond the scope of this book, but just a few years ago bringing up these issues would have been considered pure fantasy and delusional, but they’re increasingly being taken seriously and the implications of such technology, if it successfully progresses, will be extremely difficult to grapple with.

Most Transhumanism proponents neglect to even begin to consider the ramifications of their goals, and are willing to naively turn their mind and body over to multinational mega-corporations who can’t even be trusted with users’ personal data or protecting their privacy, but they’re still willing to grant these same companies physical access to their own brain through a neural interface, just like the enslaved humans in *The Matrix* films.

The LGBTQ+ Agenda

All they wanted was the right to get "married" they said, which happened in 2015 when the U.S. Supreme Court dictated to the American people that the definition of marriage should be changed from a man and a woman partnered together for a lifetime committed relationship to that of two men or two women as well. This, despite a marriage being defined as a partnership between a man and a woman ever since the beginning of the human race—and this mandated redefining of marriage was the moment when our society began sliding down the slippery LGBTQ+ slope into the Twilight Zone.

Allowing two men and two women to call themselves a "married" couple wasn't enough though. Soon just a few short years later we saw the rise of "drag kids"—young boys dressed as drag queens and performing in gay bars where grown men throw dollar bills at them just like patrons do to strippers in strip clubs.[433] And then teachers began telling their elementary school students that little boys might actually be girls and vice versa. And schools started inviting drag queens to perform for students and even holding gay "Pride" parades on school grounds.[434]

These so-called "drag kids" aren't just a few isolated instances, they've become an entire industry. In 2018 ABC's flagship morning show *Good Morning America* famously hosted "Desmond is Amazing" when he was just 11-years-old, who sashayed onto the stage to a thunderous applause.[435] He's just one of many pre-teen "drag kids" whose parents have infected social media with such material which is then celebrated and amplified by the legacy media outlets.

In 2019 YouTube, which also hosts full length films by major studios aside from user-generated content, started streaming a documentary called *Drag Kids*, not to sound the alarm about the practice, but to celebrate and promote it. Netflix produced a series called *AJ and the Drag Queen* about a 10-year-old boy who travels around with a drag queen as he performs in shows across the country.[436] In 2022 the Discovery channel produced a documentary about child drag queens—again to glorify them, not to denounce the growing trend.[437]

They feel so emboldened now since gender-benders and perverts are widely celebrated in pop culture at every Hollywood award show and boosted to go viral on the Big Tech platforms, that in 2021 the San Francisco Gay Choir (yes, that's actually the name of the organization—not just the San Francisco Choir, but the *gay* choir) released a song with lyrics about how "We're coming for your children…You think we'll corrupt your kids if our agenda goes unchecked. Funny. Just this once, you're correct." They go on, "We'll convert your children. Happens bit by bit. Quietly and subtly, and you will barely notice it."[438] The chorus in the song is literally *"We're coming for your children."*

To promote their agenda even further, countless fake polls are published with highly skewed numbers attempting to show that LGBTQ people aren't just one or maybe two percent of the population (which they are), but that *twenty or thirty percent* of people are either gay or some kind of queer or transgender.[439] One such poll claimed that more freshman at Harvard and Yale identify as LGBT-whatever than consider themselves Conservative.[440]

38% of college students at Brown University in Rhode Island said they "identify" as LGBTQ as well, according to a recent poll.[441] The CDC claims that 25% of high school students identity as LGBTQ, which is utterly ridiculous.[442]

Part of the reason the percentages are so absurdly high is because not identifying as queer is seen as being homophobic these days, and many straight kids falsely check that they're some kind of LGBTQ on these surveys in order to inflate the percentages so the queers don't feel like such a small minority. It's like stuffing the ballot box. They're just trying to help their "team" get more votes because they feel sorry for them.

Children aren't born a boy or a girl now, they say. They are "assigned" a sex by the doctors or their parents who "assume" the child's sex because of their genitals. The subversives want kids raised "gender neutral"—meaning not making any distinction between boys and girls at all.[443] The children can later decide for themselves if they want to be a boy or a girl (or neither).

Many suspect that parents who raise their children "gender non-binary" are actually suffering from a form of Munchausen syndrome by proxy.[444] A study conducted back in 1991 published in the National Library of Medicine found that 53% of the mothers of children with gender dysphoria met the criteria for having Borderline Personality Disorder.[445]

Meanwhile all the Leftist online outlets continue to promote gender bending with an endless barrage of stories touting how men should start wearing makeup.[446] And not just to hide an unsightly blemish, but lipstick and eye shadow. And there is a sustained campaign to encourage young boys to wear dresses.[447]

It's almost impossible now to watch any major media outlet without having gays and transgenders shoved in your face on countless TV shows, award shows, and even commercials. In 2021 *Playboy* magazine put a gay man dressed as a "bunny" on the cover, wearing heels and tights. Seriously, a gay man on the cover of *Playboy* magazine![448]

Since Pandora's Box has been opened, now men who identify as women are demanding to be allowed to use women's bathrooms, locker rooms, and showers. Transgender "women" who have been convicted of crimes have even been sent to women's prisons, where they have impregnated and even raped the (actual) women there![449] Despite being biological males and not having any "bottom surgery" (to remove their penis) they "identified" as women, and so they were sent to a women's prison![450]

And then there's the growing problem of biological men who identify as women competing in women's sports and robbing high school girls of college scholarships and robbing college athletes of their rightful place in competitions.[451] It's as if the gates of Hell have been opened and hordes of demons are running amuck, and instead of trying to contain the madness—schools, major corporations, the U.S. military, and the mainstream media are all promoting it.

Pride Month

Every June is the worst because now you can't escape being harassed by LGBTQ+ propaganda around every corner, whether you're scrolling through social media, channel surfing on network television, or even grocery shopping because the cultural Marxists deemed it "Pride Month," which is now basically a national holiday. It used to be called Gay Pride Month, but that wasn't "inclusive enough" since it didn't reference bisexuals, transgenders, pansexuals, and the countless other supposed "genders" and sexual orientations in the queer community.

Virtually every major brand on social media from automobile companies to banks change their profile pictures to incorporate a rainbow into their logos, and most post special messages about how much they support LGBTQ people. Nearly every professional sports team in the NFL, MLB, NBA, and even NHL now hold an annual "Pride Night" in June (or launch a promotional campaign if it's their off season) to celebrate this as well, where the teams coerce players to wear special rainbow jerseys or pins. They even have gay-themed half time shows at the games.[452]

And now there are "Pride" sections in major stores like Target and Walmart with special LGBTQ-themed clothes throughout the month of June.[453] PetSmart even sells rainbow colored "Pride" accessories for dogs and cats each year![454] Many major food brands from Bud Light and Kellogg's, to KIND bars and Effen Vodka all produce special gay Pride packaging for their products just like most companies do for normal holidays such as Halloween, Christmas, and Easter.[455]

In 2021 Chipotle started selling special burritos named after popular drag queens to celebrate the "holiday."[456] The following year Taco Bell announced they were sponsoring a "Drag Brunch Tour" at numerous locations and held drag shows inside their restaurants.[457] Some teachers in public schools even have their elementary school kids make Pride flags as an arts and crafts project.[458] And anyone who doesn't participate in LGBTQ

Pride celebrations at schools, work, or sporting events is denounced as "homophobic" and their career can be destroyed in an instant.[459]

Targeting Children with Transgenderism

Everyone knows how impressionable young children are. Until the age of six or eight most of them believe in Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy. So it wouldn't be hard at all to convince little boys that as they grow up they'll transform into a girl or vice versa. And since transgenders are being celebrated as if they're divine beings endowed with special powers, it seems many Liberal parents *want* their children to be transgender so they can be a symbol of how woke the family is.

The Marxist propaganda trying to normalize incorporating children into drag shows is now everywhere in media—including advertisements. Kaiser Permanente insurance featured a scene from a Drag Queen Story Hour event in one of their commercials in 2019.[460] It started off just showing people from different walks of life, noting that everyone needs health insurance, but for the obvious reason they included a quick segment of a drag queen reading to small children to further desensitize people to the idea.

Major brands like Oreo, Sprite, Pantene shampoo, and Gillette razors have produced commercials featuring and celebrating transgender kids or young adults.[461] In October 2021 the Twix candy company came out with a Halloween-themed commercial about a young boy who wanted to wear a princess dress and his babysitter (a "witch") encouraged him to do so. She even used her "magic" powers to kill another boy who was making fun of him for wearing the dress.[462]

Kraft, best known for their macaroni and cheese, sponsored the publication of a children's book about pronouns titled *His, Hers, Them & Theirs: Learning Pronouns with the Bears* in 2021 which was read by two drag queens online for a special Christmas-themed Drag Queen Story Hour.[463] There's even a transgender Barbie doll now, modeled after "Lavern" Cox, a transgender actor who was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine in 2014. And a drag queen Build-A-Bear modeled after RuPaul.[464]

In 2021 *Blue's Clues*, a cartoon aimed at preschoolers on Nickelodeon, aired a singalong featuring a drag queen at a Pride parade as it sung how amazing queer people are (including gender non-binary people).[465]

The Democrats' strategy to counter opposition to their new predatory behavior is to call anyone who is against grooming children a QAnon conspiracy theorist.[466] In further attempts to stifle criticism Wikipedia calls the blatant LGBTQ grooming activities a "conspiracy theory."[467]

After a few members of the Proud Boys (the American nationalist organization that often counter-protests at Marxist events) showed up to protest a drag queen story hour event at a library in the San Francisco Bay Area, the local district attorney's office launched a "hate crime" investigation into them.[468] They weren't violent or threatening, all they did was show up and denounce the event for exposing children to sexual themes and call the drag queen a groomer.

After protesters showed up outside a gay bar in Dallas, Texas that held a drag queen event advertised to children, *Newsweek* ran a headline titled "Video of 'Anti-Groomer' Protest Outside Gay Bar Sparks Outrage," giving the impression that it was the *protest* which was the problem, not that drag queens were performing for small children inside.[469] Of course the groomers were upset about the protest so *Newsweek* took their side and portrayed them as the victims of "homophobes."

Until recently it would have been unheard of for anyone to bring children to drag shows (let alone have pre-teen children themselves dress in drag) because it was always seen as an adult form of entertainment. Drag queens often have sexual innuendo names which clearly illustrate and emphasize the adult nature of the shows. The sexual focus is also evident in the fact that all drag queens are gay (or bisexual, or some kind of queer).

Unsurprising to normal people, numerous drag queen story hour readers have been found to be convicted sex offenders or later arrested for possessing child pornography.[470] Two of the drag queens who read books to children at a Houston, Texas library were found to be convicted child sex offenders.[471] This was only discovered after a Conservative group called Mass Resistance (formerly the Parents' Rights Coalition) investigated the drag queens who were involved. A judge in Milwaukee, Wisconsin who was the head of a local LGBTQ advocacy group called the Cream City

Foundation which sponsored drag queen story hour events, was arrested for possession and distribution of child sexual abuse videos.[472]

Another reader at Drag Queen Story Hour[473] in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania was charged with 25 counts of child pornography.[474] And there are undoubtedly many more, but it would take a local journalist reporting on such arrests to take a few extra steps to look into the backgrounds of such perpetrators.

This, at the same time mainstream Liberal outlets are endorsing kink for children.[475] Kink, if you're not aware of it, is basically a synonym for sexual perversion of any and all kinds. *The Washington Post* published an op-ed by one of their writers titled, "Yes, kink belongs at Pride [celebrations]. And I want my kids to see it."[476] Photos now circulate every June showing parents who bring their small children to Pride parades which feature other attendees wearing kink gear, including "pup masks" and others who are practically naked.

Tucking And Packing Underwear for Kids

Because an increasing number of progressive parents are either convinced their children are trans or *convincing their children they're trans*, companies are even selling special "tucking" underwear for small "transgender" children.[477] "Tucking" involves shoving the testes up inside the inguinal canals and then pulling the penis and scrotum between the legs and holding it in place with the underwear made of firm material in that area.[478] For transgender "boys" they're selling fake penises (known as "packers"). Such items were once only available on fringe websites but now they're listed for sale on Amazon and even Etsy.[479]

For "Pride Month" in June 2022, Target began selling "chest binders" (also known as compression tops) which women who want to be men use to compress and hide their breasts; and "packing underwear" which include padding to cause a bulge in the crotch to give the appearance of a penis and testicles.[480] It wasn't until the following year that such products caught the attention of most Conservatives, sparking calls for a boycott.

As part of Target's new LGBT Pride Collection, they also sell "tucking underwear" (or gaffs) which transgender "women" (and drag queens) use to help conceal their penis, which again is done by shoving their testicles up the inguinal canals (where they were before birth) and folding their penis downward under their legs and using a stiff front panel to keep everything in place.[481]

The head of the Health and Human Services department under Joe Biden, Xavier Becerra, supports sex change surgery for children.[482] Not "just" crossdressing the kids and using different pronouns for them. But putting them on puberty blockers and then subjecting them to gender-reassignment surgeries! They call it "health care" or "gender affirming care."

And I won’t even describe what such surgeries entail, or the lifelong complications they bring. You can go and Google “vaginoplasty” or “phalloplasty” to see photos of exactly what “gender-affirming” surgeries do to people’s genitals. But be warned! They are horrific, but people should know what the end of the road is for transgender patients.

When White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki was asked about the Health and Human Services director endorsing gender-reassignment surgeries for minors she confirmed that is the official stance of the Biden administration, saying it is “a best practice and potentially lifesaving.”[483] The Assistant Health Secretary, Admiral “Rachel” Levine, who is a transgender “woman,” is obsessed with legalizing and normalizing putting small children on puberty blockers and giving them gender-reassignment surgeries (which also literally sterilizes them).[484]

Disney Goes Gay

Even Disney, the once family friendly entertainment giant beloved by everyone for generations, has become a vehicle to deliver LGBTQ propaganda to children. A leaked Zoom meeting of Disney executives in 2022 showed them openly talking about the company's "not so secret gay agenda" with one of them bragging they were "adding in queerness" wherever they could and planned for at least 50% of the characters in their films and television series to be LGBTQ+ or racial minorities by the end of 2022.

Shortly after the leaked Zoom meeting it became clear that Disney was keeping their promise to "queer up" more characters, something that had already been happening for the last eight years, but most parents had no idea it was happening at all. Disney had been slowly yet incrementally introducing gay characters starting back in 2014 when the Disney Channel's most popular comedy at the time *Good Luck Charlie* decided to include a lesbian couple who were raising a daughter together.[485]

The next year (in 2015) on the Disney-owned ABC Family Channel [which has since been renamed "Freeform"] a show called *The Fosters* included a scene showing two thirteen-year-old boys kissing which was hailed as another first for the LGTBQ movement.[486]

From there, it just continued to snowball. Disney+ released an animated short called *Out* (2020) about—you guessed it—a kid who comes out to his parents as gay after he moves in with his "roommate" who turns out to be his boyfriend. He was nervous about his parents finding out the truth, but of course, they were thrilled. The film was hailed as Disney/Pixar's "first gay main character."[487]

Then they introduced their first bisexual character in their series *The Owl House* in 2020*,* which includes a 14-year-old girl in a leading role who used to be interested in boys, but now likes girls.[488] The show's creator is bisexual herself and bragged that she lobbied Disney to turn the character bisexual just like her, and they agreed.[489]

Again, all this started happening years before the leaked Zoom meetings where they openly talked about their agenda, which wasn't even a secret because every time they gayed up a cartoon or movie since 2014 it was celebrated as another "move forward" by the Marxist media.[490] Sadly, most Conservatives didn't notice or were too cowardly to say anything about it, but the leaked Zoom meeting in 2022 laid bare their plan for all to see.

The previous year in June 2021 for "Pride Month" they produced a special "Pride Celebration Spectacular" musical hosted by a drag queen on Disney+.[491] Two words nobody ever thought they would hear in the same sentence—Disney and drag queens. Then in 2022 Disney launched an LGBTQ Pride children's clothing line.[492] And in June 2023 they held their first LGBTQ Pride Night at their theme parks.[493] That same month they released a feature film called *Elemental* which introduced their first "gender non-binary" character, voiced by a "non-binary" actor.[494]

There's no putting the toothpaste back in the tube. Disney is a queer company, and it probably won't be long before they announce that Mickey Mouse is bisexual.

U.S. Military Goes Gay

Gays used to be banned from the U.S. military because no one wants to have a member of their unit checking them, out dreaming of having sex with them; but now our military doesn't just allow them in—they celebrate them, and are actively recruiting them! Even during the Trump administration various branches of the military started posting messages on their social media accounts celebrating Gay Pride Month, and even posting videos of soldiers in uniform talking about how great it is to have a bunch of queers in the military.[495]

The Department of Defense has been celebrating LGBT Pride Month since 2012.[496] And now every June the different branches of the military post rainbow flags on their Instagram, Facebook, and other social media accounts along with cringeworthy messages about how they "commemorate the proud legacy of LGBT individuals who are part of the fabric of the nation and the U.S. Army."[497]

They even post videos online showing senior officers in uniform standing in front of Pride flags while announcing, "We observe LGBT pride month to mark the progress we've made" and call on all Americans to celebrate lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender people.[498]

Even though President Trump is very LGBT-friendly and never really criticized the community as a whole, he did ban transgender people from serving in the military, causing every Liberal on social media to sound off about what a "bigot" he is and how it's "discrimination."[499] We don't allow mentally unstable people around dangerous weapons, and since statistically about half of transgender people are suicidal, that's all the more reason they shouldn't be allowed in the military.[500] Not to mention the female soldiers don't want to have to shower with some "chick with a dick."

But once Trump was out of office and Joe Biden moved in, the woke agenda went into overdrive. First he lifted Trump's ban on transgenders, and then the U.S. Army (and other military branches) began subjecting solders to mandatory diversity, equity, and inclusion training on gender identity to indoctrinate them into accepting transgender and other queer soldiers.[501]

The Air Force then featured a transgender "woman" in a video posted online to mark the made-up Twitter holiday "Transgender Day of Visibility."[502] Lieutenant Colonel "Bree" Fam, one of the highest-ranking "openly transgender" people in the military, who works as an engineer and looks like a six-foot-tall man wearing lipstick with his hair in a ponytail.

The Army released a series of woke recruitment videos in 2021, including one featuring a girl who was proud to have been raised by "two moms," and a cartoon illustration of her story showing a scene from the lesbian "wedding."[503] She also mentioned how she had been "fighting for freedom since she was a kid" as the ad showed her marching in a gay Pride parade.

That same year the CIA also posted a series of recruiting videos featuring people who would have previously never even been considered for employment in the agency due to psychological problems, but now are being celebrated as part of the new "diversity" initiative. One woman, a "proud Latino," introduced herself as a "cisgender millennial" who said she suffers from anxiety but the CIA is so welcoming they gave her a job anyway.[504] Another video featured a queer man with a giant nose ring. Even NASA now releases videos for "Pride" month featuring employees talking about how they're gay, lesbian, transgender, and gender non-binary and "no matter what your identity is in the community, there's going to be a place for you."[505]

Since LGBT people are supposed to only be celebrated and nothing about their perverted sexual activities or unhealthy lifestyles are supposed to be criticized (like the high rate of HIV or incontinence later in life from their anuses being stretched out),[506] the issue of gay men raping other men in the military is perhaps the most forbidden topic of all. The dirty secret behind President Obama lifting the longstanding ban on gays in the military is the frequency of gay soldiers raping other men.[507]

All of the focus around the issue of sexual assault in the military is on women victims (in the rare instances it's mentioned in the media at all), but the fact is that since men make up almost all of the perpetrators in sex crimes, what's always overlooked is that they're not just raping women—the gay ones are raping men. And ever since welcoming gays into the military instead of forbidding them and kicking them out if discovered (which was the policy until 2011), an epidemic of gay men sexually assaulting other men has been occurring.[508]

Such crimes are most often unreported because the victims are too embarrassed to come forward and talk about what happened.[509] Recent estimates are that 90% of male victims don't report such incidents.[510] In attempts to hide the number of men raped by gays in the military—aside from usually only focusing on the female victims—reports often group all forms of unwanted sexual contact into one figure (from groping to attempted rape, to actual rape—or penetrative assault as it's called), so most people dismiss such incidents as just hazing.[511]

And while there is hazing and bullying (the same kinds of juvenile and often perverted "pranks" seen in college fraternities) which do technically constitute sexual assault—the rapes and attempted rapes are swept under the rug.[512]

The actual number of male rape victims in the military was estimated to be fifteen times higher than what's actually reported less than three years after gays were allowed in, according to a study by the American Psychological Association.[513] 53% of overall known sexual assault victims in the military are now male.[514] These facts are ignored by most of the media because publicizing them is not only deemed homophobic, but also a national security risk because it would undermine faith in our military and hurt recruiting efforts.[515]

The “Father” of “Gay Rights” Movement

While the gay agenda had grown into a tsunami in the 21st century, the storm had been brewing for decades as activists plotted to get LGBTQ lifestyles accepted by society as a whole. The man credited as being the “father” of the “gay rights” movement is Harry Hay, who created a secret society in the 1950s called the Mattachine Society which was named after a French group of entertainers in the 16th century who wore masks when performing. He took inspiration from Freemasonry and Communism as well because he admired Marxist ideologies regarding “oppressed” groups.[516]

Harry Hay also supported the infamous pedophile group NAMBLA, the North American Man Boy Love Association, which advocates for eliminating the age of consent laws for sexual contact with children.[517] During the Los Angeles Gay Pride Parade in 1986 he marched holding a banner that read “NAMBLA Walks With Me” because organizers had banned the group from participating in the parade and Harry Hay was upset that they were “discriminating” against NAMBLA.[518]

When he was later confronted about his support for NAMBLA he said, “If the parents and friends of gays are truly friends of gays, they would know from their gay kids that the relationship with an older man is precisely what thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen-year-old kids need more than anything else in the world.”[519]

Hay himself says he had a sexual relationship with a 25-year-old adult male when he was just fourteen, and thought it was “beneficial.”[520] After Hay died, David Thorstad, an admitted pederast and co-founder of NAMBLA, praised him for being “a vocal and courageous supporter of NAMBLA.”[521] Hay had worked closely with the organization for years hoping to legalize and normalize pederasty just like in Ancient Greece where men engaged in sexual relations with young boys and was considered a “normal” part of the culture at the time.[522]

Harvey Milk

Harvey Milk is another gay icon celebrated for being the first openly gay man to be elected to public office, serving as a member of the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco, which is sort of like a City Council. And like virtually all of the gay men held up as heroes in the LGBTQ community for their “trailblazing” work to normalize homosexuality, Harvey Milk himself was a pederast who had a sexual relationship with a 16-year-old boy when he was a 34-year-old man.[523]

In 2008 a biographical film titled *Milk* was released starring Sean Penn which was praised by critics, and was given the Academy Award for the Best Film—and Sean Penn was given the Oscar for Best Actor.[524] Since he served (closeted) in the U.S. Navy, they later decided to celebrate him by naming a ship after him in 2021, and now sailers are forced to be stationed on the USNS [United States Naval Ship] Harvey Milk, a gigantic replenishment oiler. A Navy ship named after a pederast.[525]

And now that numerous states across the country are mandating that students be indoctrinated with “LGBTQ history” in schools, Harvey Milk is included in social studies text books—portrayed as a hero and civil rights pioneer.[526] After a school in southern California rejected a state-mandated text book because it included a section singing praises of Milk, Governor Gavin Newsom fined the school board $1.5 million dollars for violating the state’s mandatory curriculum.[527]

Dr. John Money's Twisted Legacy

Since we can't go a single day without hearing about "gender identity" and the ridiculous ideas about how there are an unlimited number of "genders," it's important people understand the history of the concept and the man behind it. His name is Dr. John Money, a psychologist and "sexologist," and he's the man who is widely credited with coining the terms "gender identity" and "sexual orientation" in the 1960s which planted the seeds for the insanity that would later sweep across the country.[528]

John Money's concept of gender separated it from one's sex. If you look up the word *gender* in older dictionaries, the definition says something like "either the male or female division of a species," but now many dictionaries have Orwellianly changed the definition to say it has do with one's "identity" and an "individual's personal awareness," and how they "feel."

Like most (if not all) of the early LGBTQ "rights" activists, John Money also endorsed pedophilia, saying, "If I were to see the case of a boy aged ten or eleven who's intensely erotically attracted toward a man in his twenties or thirties, if the relationship is totally mutual, and the bonding is genuinely totally mutual…then I would not call it pathological in any way."[529]

He argued that pedophilia was "harmless in most instances."[530] But he is perhaps best known for recommending that a small boy (David Reimer) whose penis was accidentally cut off during a botched circumcision operation in the 1960s be raised as a girl in order to "remedy" the unfortunate situation.[531]

Dr. Money believed that gender was just a social construct and that there were no differences between boys and girls other than their genitals, so he thought that if the boy was raised as a girl that "she" would act like other girls and could *be* a girl.[532] But as David Reimer (Brenda) grew up, the brainwashing wasn't working and he rejected being raised as a girl, despite having been subjected to sexual reassignment surgery at 22 months of age which removed his testicles and fashioned a synthetic vulva (vaginoplasty).

Despite his experiment completely failing (with David Reimer not only rejecting being told he was a girl, but also committing suicide as an adult years after he resumed living as a man) and Dr. Money's hypotheses that a boy could be socialized into being a girl proving to be false, his warped ideas about "gender identity" became solidified in the LGBTQ doctrine, not to mention codified into law.

And this goes far beyond someone suffering from gender dysphoria feeling like they were born in the wrong body and wanting to change their "gender" from male to female or vice versa on their own. That was just phase one. Now they demand *no gender* be accepted as a "gender"—or the "gender non-binary" people as they're called. And these oddities aren't just found in fringe communities online. News outlets like *The New York Times* and NBC News are promoting this ideology.[533] And gender non-binary characters who use they/them pronouns are being included in children's cartoons in attempts to normalize it.[534]

Singer Sam Smith, the grammy award-winner of the chart-topping single "Stay With Me" decided to "come out" as gender non-binary in 2019, making him the most famous celebrity to do so at the time. Then two years later singer Demi Lovato did the same thing as she descended into madness.[535] But it doesn't stop there—it never stops. In 2017 numerous states began issuing drivers licenses to "gender non-binary" people using a letter X instead of M or F to signify "other."[536] By 2023 nearly half of all states allowed such practice.[537]

Then people started suing to have "no gender" as an option included on birth certificates instead of just a boy or girl.[538] Thirteen different states now allow "non-binary" birth certificates to be issued.[539] In 2021 the American Medical Association recommended that a baby's sex no longer be included on birth certificates![540] As of 2023, seventeen different states allow people to amend their birth certificates to list "X" as their gender.[541]

Of course there isn't a requirement for a medical diagnosis like an MRI brain scan because there is no such thing as "no gender." All that's needed for these changes is for someone to just say they are gender "neutral" or "non-binary" or whatever the hell new term they've come up with to describe their insanity.

Women identifying as transgender “men” who have given birth to children are even suing the government trying to have themselves legally declared the children’s *father.*[542] And it’s not just a few isolated instances—this is an increasing legal battle that transgender “birthing persons” are waging.[543]

In 2017 the Dove soap company released a commercial featuring what they called “real moms” with their babies and included a transgender “woman” who fathered a child, but he not only identifies as a “woman” he also identifies as the child’s mom![544] No sane society would allow someone so delusional to have custody of a child, but these sorts of things aren’t just allowed to happen—it’s being celebrated by a major household brand!

DeTransitioners

While transgenderism is being hailed as the next "exciting" phase of human "evolution," what's rarely talked about are the *detransitioners*, or the people who at one point in their lives decided to try portraying themselves as the opposite gender, often taking hormones and even having surgery, who then later regret their decision and decide to revert back to their original gender.

The phenomena first came to widespread attention in May 2021 when CBS's *60 Minutes* featured interviews with a group of them, causing LGBTQ activists and their allies to completely freak out. The LGBTQ lobbying organization GLAAD slammed the *60 Minutes* report saying it was "a shameful segment fear mongering about trans youth,"[545] and were especially upset because it included some of the detransitioners explaining that they were convinced to change their gender after watching popular transgender YouTubers and joining online trans communities on Tumblr where members encourage people to change their gender if they're the slightest bit uncomfortable with their body or confused about their identity.

The Human Rights Campaign, another queer advocacy group, said it "further marginalized and victimized" transgender people.[546] They were concerned all right. Concerned that people were finally beginning to hear about the dark side of trying to change one's "gender" and how there are people who deeply regret it and are warning others not to try it. Many Leftist lunatics who live their lives online reacted as if this was the start of a transgender holocaust.

Media outlets that will even mention detransitioners cite figures that are very low, trying to downplay the number of people who regret their "transition." The supposedly small percentage of detransitioners is most likely because they don't get the celebration and adoration of those who "come out as trans." Many who detransition are embarrassed about what they had done and so they quietly revert back to their original identity and try to get on with their lives.

Rapid-Onset Gender Dysphoria

Some believe that the cause of so many young people thinking they're transgender is due to rapid-onset gender dysphoria, or a social contagion fueled by social media (and now mainstream media), and peer pressure.[547] One transgender psychologist named "Erica" Anderson (who was born a man) and who has helped hundreds of teens transition, now expresses that "she" is worried the trend has "gone too far," saying, "What happens when the perfect storm—of social isolation, exponentially increased consumption of social media, the popularity of alternative identities—affects the actual development of individual kids? We're sailing in uncharted seas."[548]

One explanation for rapid-onset gender dysphoria is that it's a maladjusted way children (especially girls) deal with being uncomfortable with their body during puberty and the pressures of being sexy, so they're repulsed by their own gender—feeling they can't compare to the cultural standards of beauty.

Often there are underlying mental health conditions which exacerbate their body image discomfort. Many are just lesbians, so they're confused about being sexually attracted to other girls and think maybe they're a boy in the wrong body because of the explosion of transgender propaganda in recent years.

Similarly many teen boys who think they're transgender are just gay (which you're not supposed to say is also abnormal and something the medical community should research in order to prevent or cure, just like transgenderism).

A young woman named Chloe Cole, who at age 15 got a double mastectomy removing her breasts in order to "transition" to a boy, later changed her mind in less than a year and a half after realizing she made a mistake and is one of the more visible detransitioners.[549] Aside from giving numerous interviews detailing her story to warn others, she filed a lawsuit against Kaiser Permanente hospital in 2022 for breaching the standard of care for doing the double mastectomy on her when she was just a child.[550]

Transgender advocates argue that Conservatives being outraged over hospitals performing "sex change" surgeries or "gender affirming care" as it's called, on minors isn't happening, while at the same time denouncing those who are against it.[551]

Helena Kerschner is another young woman who speaks out about the danger of rapid-onset gender dysphoria after once identifying as a transgender man.[552] "I don't think I would have ever even considered seeing myself as a boy without the social aspects, especially if I hadn't joined these online communities specifically because there wasn't anything at the time, really in my school or in my community, that was influencing me. It was all online," she now says.[553]

A retired Navy SEAL named Chris Beck famously became a transgender "woman" in 2013, and then years later announced that he had detransitioned back to a man and now says that he destroyed his life by thinking he was transgender and is warning people about not transitioning their children if they're confused about who they are.[554]

Numerous studies have shown that the vast majority of children who suffer from gender dysphoria end up growing out of it once they go through puberty.[555] And most probably wouldn't have even questioned their gender at all if the idea hadn't been planted in their minds in the first place.

Other Possible Causes

Sigmund Freud believed homosexuality is caused by a disruption in a child's psycho-social development.[556] Other psychologists agree.[557] An article in *Scientific America* titled "Oedipus Complex 2.0: Like it or not, parents shape their children's sexual preferences" states, "This basic developmental system, one in which certain salient childhood events 'imprint' our psychosexuality, may not be terribly uncommon. In fact, that early childhood experiences mold our adult sexual preferences—specifically, what turns us on and off, however subtle or even unconscious these particular biases may be—could even be run-of-the-mill."[558]

Some studies have shown that people who were molested as children are inclined to later become child molesters themselves when they're adults.[559] So are people *born* pedophiles, or do they become pedophiles because of some horrific experience they themselves fell victim to as a child that altered their brain and perverting their desires?

It's severely politically incorrect to even remotely compare pedophiles to homosexuals, but isn't it obvious that they both suffer from a similar sexual attraction dysfunction? Scientists have even identified a high correlation between people who were molested as children and those who identify as gay when they're adults.[560]

It's not just politically incorrect to say—and if you do say it, you could easily and quickly end your career, get kicked out of school, and/or banned from social media—but gay people (and transgenders) are *not* normal. That doesn't mean you should hate them. But it doesn't mean we should ignore the scientific and obvious reality. But you're not allowed to say that they have a birth defect if they're actually "born that way" as many claim.

And you're certainly not allowed to say they have a mental disorder. Instead, the Establishment is trying to frame the issue as if there's no more of a difference between someone's sexual orientation and gender identity than there is between someone who prefers to date blondes over brunettes, or someone who is left-handed vs right-handed.

Of course there’s a world of difference between what hand somebody writes with or throws a baseball with and people using body parts in ways they clearly weren’t designed for (or cutting them off because they feel like they were born in the wrong body).

You’re not allowed to have this conversation though, or even suggest that there is anything wrong with these people in any way, whether from a birth defect in a region of the brain that regulates sexual orientation and gender identity, or whether they developed some kind of mental disorder or maladjustment strategy to cope with the underlying issues.[561] But inquisitive people can’t help but suspect that whatever is causing transgenderism and homosexuality is being covered up, and any investigation into it is violently discouraged.

Endocrine Disruptors

Aside from rapid-onset gender dysphoria, others point to hormonal imbalances that may be caused from synthetic estrogen or what are called endocrine disruptors that are believed to ultimately result in birth defects in the brain as a fetus develops (known as the hormone theory of sexual orientation).[562]

But for well over a decade there have been concerns that these chemicals have been feminizing boys when exposed to them as they're developing in the womb. In 2005 the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York found that "Gender-bending chemicals mimicking the female hormone oestrogen can disrupt the development of baby boys" in the first human study about this after the effects had previously been widely known to occur in tests on animals.[563]

A few years later in 2009 they released a follow-up study further confirming that "Chemicals in plastics alter the brains of baby boys, making them more feminine."[564]

The findings were reported in some mainstream outlets, including *The Los Angeles Times,* which noted, "Boys born to mothers who have above-normal levels of the controversial chemicals known as phthalates in their urine are less likely to exhibit masculine behavior, a new study has found. Phthalates, which block the activity of male hormones such as androgens, could be altering masculine brain development."[565]

And while such findings should have caused as big of concern as the discovery of cancerous chemicals or the dangers of gun violence, these studies went mostly unnoticed.

Scientists have also found that the lower the levels of testosterone a fetus is exposed to during gestation (growth), the more feminized the child will be if it's a boy, and the more likely they are to be gay.[566] And they found that by altering the levels of testosterone in pregnant animals they can change the sexual orientation of their offspring, thus *making them* gay.[567]

They even know the specific region of the brain that is affected—the third interstitial nucleus of the anterior hypothalamus, or the INAH-3, which is the part of the brain that is responsible for sexual behavior (the sexually dimorphic nucleus).[568]

Research by Ray Blanchard (who himself is gay) found that when a child is forming in utero, if there are high levels of antibodies against the NLGN4Y protein (which is involved in brain development in males), then the brain is also more feminized.[569] This research indicates that the more boys a woman gives birth to, the more likely they are to be gay because there is a higher level of the protein each pregnancy.[570]

Dr. Deborah Soh, author of *The End of Gender*, suggests that further researching the cause of homosexuality and transgenderism with the goal of preventing it may be "unethical" because she knows if scientists confirm it's a birth defect that could be prevented by pregnant women avoiding hormone-altering endocrine disruptors or offsetting them through medication, that would undermine LGBTQism, therefore the people who have been celebrating and promoting it will be viewed in hindsight like other medical quackery throughout history.

Before plastic food packaging was the norm, it was mostly cardboard, metal, and glass. So is it just a coincidence that as plastic food packaging containing BPA became the standard that society has seen an explosion in gay people and transgenders? Also in recent years researchers have been reporting that sperm counts have dropped 50% over the last several generations and testosterone levels in men have also been dramatically declining.[571]

Women's workout clothes have also recently been found contain as much as *40 times* the levels of BPA that has been deemed safe—since sports bras, leggings, and athletic shirts are made of synthetic fibers (plastic) so they don't absorb sweat like cotton clothes do and instead helps wick it away.[572] The BPA in the clothes is absorbed through the skin because of the close contact, and the Center for Environmental Health sent legal notices to eight brands of popular women's clothes putting them on notice about the concerning levels of the chemical found in their clothes.[573]

Some suspect soy consumption is causing the drop in testosterone since it contains phytoestrogens or plant-based estrogen, effecting hormones levels—feminizing males.[574] Is consuming too much soy contributing to the gender-bending and sexual disorientation epidemic? Is it causing hormone imbalances in pregnant women who consume it, thus altering the brains of their baby boys?

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. made a very interesting statement during an interview on Dr. Jordan Peterson's podcast when Peterson stated he believes the apocalyptic hysteria about climate change has demoralized young people and is causing high levels of depression and loneliness. Kennedy responded that he thought that was a simplistic reason, and went on to say, "In fact, I think a lot of the problems we see in kids and particularly boys, it's probably underappreciated how much of that is coming from chemical exposures, including a lot of the sexual dysphoria that we're seeing."[575]

He continued, "You know these kids are being overwhelmed by a tsunami, I mean they're swimming through a soup of toxic chemicals today. And many of those are endocrine disruptors. There's atrazine throughout our water supply. Atrazine by the way, if you, in a lab put atrazine in a tank full of frogs it will chemically castrate and forcibly feminize every frog in there. And ten percent of the frogs, the male frogs, will turn into fully viable females able to produce viable eggs, and if it's doing that to frogs there's a lot of other evidence that it's doing it to human beings as well."[576]

Atrazine is a common herbicide used to kill weeds in farmers' fields, golf courses, and residential lawns. And has been found in the water supply in hundreds of districts across America, which millions of people have been drinking.[577] Aside from killing weeds which it's designed to do, it has been shown to convert testosterone into estrogen.[578]

One of Alex Jones famous rants is about "chemicals in the water that turn the fricking frogs gay," referring to Atrazine, and if you can look past his histrionics, he was making a good point. He had seen the studies and was frustrated and upset that the issue wasn't getting the attention it should and that more people weren't concerned about it.

People also made fun of him for ranting about the BPA in juice boxes feminizing boys because many couldn't look past his over the top style and didn't understand just how sophisticated his concerns were behind his theatrics hoping to get people's attention.[579]

A growing number of scientists now suspect that birth control pills may actually be causing some women to become sexually attracted to other women! The pill has long been known to come with a range of side effects from weight gain to mood swings, but now scientists are investigating anecdotal evidence that the hormone changes they cause may result in altering some women's sexual attraction.[580]

It can take eight months to a year before a woman's hormone levels return to normal after she stops taking the birth control shot.[581] In fact, it's fairly common for women who stop taking birth control to experience side effects for months, ranging from no menstrual periods, to acne and hair loss, in what's called post-birth control syndrome.[582] Is birth control medication (which is designed to alter women's hormone levels) also having effects on fetus development even after they stop taking it?

There are other factors most people are unaware of as well that are missing from virtually every discussion and debate about homosexuality and transgenderism. TMZ, the celebrity news site, published a story back in 2015 when Bruce Jenner first announced that he was transitioning into a "woman" and taking female hormones which contradicted everything the LGBT advocates had said for years about "gay conversion therapy."

TMZ reported, "Several prominent doctors in the field tell us, the hormones often change sexual preference," and referenced a study of 300 transgender people showing one third of them changed their sexual preference because of the opposite sex hormones they took.[583] They noted that the female hormones Bruce Jenner was taking would feminize not just his body, but also his brain, causing him to "think like a woman," and there was a 1/3 chance he would be sexually attracted to men as a result.

The National Center for Biotechnology Information has also reported that many transgender patients' sexual orientation (meaning the sex they're attracted to) *changes* due to undergoing hormone therapy as they're attempting to change their gender.[584] So if over 30% of people who take hormones of the opposite sex in hopes of altering their body to become more like that sex, ultimately end up also changing their sexual orientation (who they're attracted to because their brain also changes), then why isn't hormone replacement therapy being explored to help children (and adults) who suffer from gender dysphoria?

If a boy thinks he's a girl, or feels like a girl, then why not give him testosterone to masculinize his brain instead of giving him cross hormones (estrogen) and then subjecting him to all kinds of horrifying surgeries trying to make him look like a woman? Is it possible that the transgender movement is looking at this entire problem from the wrong angle?

And why isn’t HRT (hormone replacement therapy) being used on homosexuals to fix their sexual attraction disorder by giving them hormone boosters that correspond with their own biological sex, since that appears to be a way to reverse their same sex attraction?

Perhaps with medical advances in the future and brave scientists who aren’t afraid of the social consequences of their findings we may have definitive answers to these questions and solutions to these problems.

But it’s also possible that because of the ramifications of uncomfortable truths, these answers may be forever suppressed and hidden, and the scientists who pursue them smeared by disinformation campaigns as the human species continues to suffer from mass psychosis, endocrine disrupting chemical-induced birth defects, and genital-mutilating surgeries marketed as the only solution.

Immigration

If people sneak into a theater through the exits hoping to watch a movie without buying a ticket, they're kicked out immediately once they are discovered—or even arrested. If some stranger walks into your house without permission even if the door is unlocked and they start relaxing on your couch, that's trespassing—and a crime. And so is entering a country without permission, even if you find an unguarded path or sneak in by hiding in the back of a truck. But this crime is being allowed and encouraged by Democrats for various reasons, one of which you're not supposed to say out loud, but everybody knows.

Illegal immigration though our southern border has been a problem for many decades, and while some of the invaders would get deported once apprehended, once Joe Biden took over as president the word got out that the U.S. was welcoming anyone in who could make it to our southern border from anywhere in the world.

Many of the people in the massive caravans who made the long trek north from South and Central America were literally wearing Joe Biden t-shirts! When one man on the journey was asked by ABC News "Would you have tried to do this when Donald Trump was president?" He answered "Definitely not." The reporter then asked him, "Did you come here because Joe Biden was elected president?" To which he responded "Basically."[585]

Another one interviewed by CNN said he hoped for "Patience and prayers that we can get to the U.S. because they have a new president, of course Biden. He's going to help all of us, he's giving us 100 days to get to the U.S. and give us legal paper, so we can get a better life for our kids and family."[586]

Every single day (year after year) hundreds, and often two or even three thousand people enter the United States illegally through the southern border, and the conservative estimates are that over 11 million illegal aliens currently live in the U.S. but more realistic figures are double that.[587] In the month of February 2019 alone, over 66,000 were counted by U.S. Border Patrol, the highest number in over a decade, and that doesn't include all the ones who got in without being noticed.[588] It's common for the Border Patrol to spot 1000 a day, every day, month after month flooding in.[589] And again, those figures are just the ones we know about.

The Department of Homeland Security counted 234,088 illegal aliens that were "encountered" at the border just in the month of April 2021, which was the highest total ever in one month.[590] At least two million invaded the United States in the first year Joe Biden was president.[591] That's well over 100,000 every single month.[592] More than two million more came the next year.[593] Vice President Kamala Harris was surprisingly asked about this staggering number during an interview with Chuck Todd on NBC's *Meet the Press* and she responded with a nonsensical word salad saying, "We have a secure border in that—that is a priority for any nation, including ours and our administration."[594]

This was all part of the plan. During his campaign in 2020, Joe Biden said that as president he would call for all the migrants the Trump administration was able to block from coming in to "surge to the border."[595] Meanwhile Jonathan Greenblatt, the head of the ADL, says that the people who talk about "open borders" or "caravans" of migrants are using "White supremacist phrases."[596]

Most of them falsely claim they're seeking "asylum" or that they needed safe harbor from a hostile government they had fled—a well-known scheme used by illegal aliens to gain access to our country. Once inside they're allowed to stay under those false pretenses, and are given a court date to begin hearing their claims which is often ten years in the future![597] In the meantime they apply for green cards, and unless they're arrested for a violent crime they'll be deemed a "lawful permanent resident" after a year, and never be deported.

Anchor Babies

The other dirty secret of the illegal immigrant invasion, aside from the astonishing number of them continuously flowing into our country, are the millions of them who have anchor babies once they're here. An anchor baby is the child of an illegal alien mother who comes here pregnant (or gets pregnant after she arrives) and then once she gives birth, the child is automatically granted citizenship, thus all but ensuring the mother will never be deported.

In 2022 there were 300,000 anchor babies born to illegal alien mothers across the U.S.[598] Analysis conducted by the Center for Immigration Studies shows that 400,000 is about the average each and every year, dating back to at least 2018. The Congressional Budget Office published a report in 2017 estimating that at least 4.5 million anchor babies are currently living in the United States.[599]

Of course *anchor baby* is considered to be a racist slur, just like *illegal alien*, because the Left tries to deter people from pointing out what's happening. The term refers to the child anchoring the mother to our country. And as you would expect, U.S. taxpayers end up paying the hospital bills for the children to be born because the mothers don't have any insurance (or money), and then we also pay the expenses for the mother to raise the children through the various social welfare programs funded by our tax dollars since they can't afford to raise them on their own.

But it's not just *illegal* immigrants who are living off our tax dollars. Over 50% of *legal* immigrant households receive some form of government welfare—from food stamps, to housing assistance, school lunch programs, and Medicaid.[600] A report by the Center for Immigration Studies shows that 63% of non-citizens living in the U.S. use at least one form of welfare.[601]

Some Republicans have finally begun calling for an end to "birth right citizenship" which automatically grants a baby citizenship if it's born on U.S. soil, even if the mother is here illegally. The sane thing to do would be only grant citizenship to the child if the mother is here *legally*, but we live in an insane and dysfunctional society.

And of course Democrats want to legalize the 20+ million illegal aliens living here so they can be the party's new voter base. Democrats have turned their back on the working class and now pander to the welfare class who just want free stuff.

The Biden Justice Department was even planning on paying illegal aliens $450,000 each as a "settlement" for the Trump administration separating families once they were detained after crossing into the U.S. illegally![602] Only after news of the planned "settlements" made headlines did they abandon the idea.

More Preferential Treatment

Sixteen different states allow illegal aliens to get drivers licenses![603] Bank of America even allows them to get credit cards![604] In California they're given government health care through the state's Medicaid program.[605] During the 2020 election cycle all ten Democrat candidates running for president raised their hands when asked by a debate moderator if they would offer healthcare to all "undocumented" immigrants.[606]

Calling what's happening an "invasion" is considered "hate speech," because obviously *it is an invasion* and the puppet masters are desperately trying to discourage the American people from doing anything to stop it. The Department of Homeland Security under the Biden administration has even been caught secretly flying the aliens across the country in the middle of the night to disperse them throughout other regions so they're not just concentrated in border states in the South. It's for "diversity."

Many of them have no desire to become Americans. They just want to take advantage of what America can offer them. They don't care about our culture, customs, holidays, or laws. They just want to create little Tijuanas within the American cities they inhabit.

Various Latino groups like La Raza (meaning *the race*, which was recently renamed to UnidosUS to sound less Latino supremacist) and MEChA (the Chicano Student Movement of Aztlan) support what's called the Reconquista movement (Spanish for *reconquest*) and openly brag about how they're plotting to take back (reconquer) territory in the American Southwest (including California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas) in order to make their own country called Aztlan which refers to a mythical homeland of the Aztecs.[607]

Illegal Alien Crimes

The illegal aliens aren't just using up resources they're not paying for, taking jobs away from Americans, having anchor babies that are automatically granted citizenship, and irreversibly changing our culture by making little Tijuana's within American cities, but a lot of them also commit crimes. And not just theft or fraud (by using stolen social security numbers to get jobs), but violent crime—and a lot of it.

Every year in America there are often hundreds of murders committed by illegal aliens who obviously shouldn't even be here to begin with.[608] These crimes may make the local news for 15 seconds but then it's on to the weather, so their real impact is never realized. CNN and MSNBC will do entire segments about a White person using a racial slur during an argument in a store or restaurant somewhere, but the illegal alien murders never get a mention there.

Nor on the national broadcast networks like ABC, NBC, or CBS. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* never report on them either and certainly wouldn't dedicate a headline to the ongoing problem, but if a White woman gets into an argument with a Black person over something and video of the incident is posted online, then the "Karen" is doxxed with a barrage of headlines and her name trends on Twitter from thousands of people denouncing her for being "racist."[609]

Aside from murder, many illegal aliens commit other crimes that should never occur because they shouldn't even be here in the first place. Burglaries, rapes, thefts, and drunk driving offenses all go virtually unnoticed by the media and Democrat lawmakers. Democrats even defend MS-13 gang members who law enforcement agencies consider to be the most violent and sadistic street gang in the world. They're the ones best known for torturing and dismembering their enemies.[610] Illegal aliens in general are estimated to commit twice as many crimes as American citizens.[611] But mentioning that is considered "xenophobic" and "racist."

Often when illegal aliens are arrested for non-violent crimes like DUI or theft, they’re let out of jail pending their trial because Democrat run cities (the sanctuary cities, as they’re called) forbid local authorities from turning them over to ICE [Immigration and Custom Enforcement], so they’re just set free back out onto the streets![612]

The Wall

Democrats used to at least pretend to be against illegal immigration, but all that changed when Donald Trump became president. They've long been planning on their new voter base being the 20 million illegal aliens living in the United States once they're given a "pathway to citizenship"—which means full citizenship within a few years of being granted amnesty.

Democrats blocked $5.7 billion in funding that President Trump wanted to complete the border wall, but gave Ukraine over $200 billion to defend *their* border.[613] Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez compares our southern border wall to the Berlin Wall and Senator Elizabeth Warren calls it "a monument to hate and division."[614] When he was running for president in 2020, Beto O'Rourke said he wanted to *tear the wall down!*[615] During Joe Biden's campaign that same year he promised if he wins "There will not be another foot of wall constructed in my administration."[616]

Before the Democrats embraced open borders, when Barack Obama was a U.S. Senator from Illinois back in 2005 he said, "We all agree on the need to better secure the border and to punish employers who hire illegal immigrants. Those who enter the country illegally and those who employ them disrespect the rule of law and they are showing disregard for those who are following the law. We simply cannot allow people to pour into the United States undetected, undocumented, unchecked, and circumventing the line of people who are waiting patiently, diligently, and lawfully to become immigrants in this country."[617]

When Hillary Clinton was a senator in New York she admitted, "The Mexican government's policies are pushing migration north…There isn't any sensible approach except to do what we need to do simultaneously. Secure our border—with technology, personnel, physical barriers if necessary in some places. And we need to have tough employer sanctions… if they've committed transgressions of whatever kind, they should be obviously deported."[618]

Years later when campaigning for the 2016 presidential election she said, "I voted numerous times when I was a senator to spend money to build a—uh, a barrier, to try to prevent illegal immigrants from coming in and I do think you have to control your borders."[619] The wall had become a dirty word since it was a major part of Donald Trump's platform, so she called it a barrier instead, but early in the 2016 race Democrats weren't yet ready to pivot to their current *no border* policy.

In 2009 Senator Chuck Schumer, one of the most powerful senators in Washington, said, "Illegal immigration is wrong, plain and simple… People who enter the United States without our permission are illegal aliens and illegal aliens should not be treated the same as people who entered the U.S. legally. When we use phrases like 'undocumented workers' we convey a message to the American people that their government is not serious about combating illegal immigration, which the American people overwhelmingly oppose."[620]

All that has changed though. Democrats now deem the term illegal alien to be on par with the n-word, and they're doing everything they can do to cater to the illegal aliens, even allowing them to vote in some local elections![621] But they're not just looking to gain the support of the 20 million of them if or when they're granted amnesty and allowed to vote in national elections. There's something else at play here as well.

Demographic Changes

Non-Whites and the Democrats who use them to maintain their power have long anticipated White people becoming a minority in the United States (on pace to occur around 2045), but if anyone points out this trend while expressing any opposition to this impending future, then they're instantly and viciously denounced as a "White supremacist" who's promoting the "dangerous great replacement conspiracy theory."[622]

These sweeping demographic changes in the racial makeup of the United States are mostly due to the massive number of illegal aliens that have been flooding in across the southern border for decades and given safe harbor in America despite them just standing on our soil being a violation of our laws. But mass immigration is only part of it. Compounding the problem is the declining White birthrate. As far back as 2011 there were more Hispanic, Black, and Asian babies being born in America than White ones.[623]

And despite countless Democrats expressing their joy about the rapid decline of the White population in the United States, *The New York Times* says "'The Great Replacement' is a racist and misogynistic conspiracy that holds that white people face existential decline, even extinction, because of rising immigration in the West and falling birthrates among white women," adding sarcastically "caused, of course, by feminism."[624]

Non-Whites celebrate it as the "browning of America" while some White people uncomfortable about their looming minority status figuratively call it "White genocide" to evoke stronger emotions, but that term too is considered a dog whistle for "White supremacy." Personally, I think using "White genocide" to describe White demographic displacement is too hyperbolic and causes others to respond with an eye roll. A genocide is the mass slaughter of a group of people, and that's not what's happening.

Although the Leftist online magazine *Counter Punch* says, “White genocide would not only be good, it is necessary and even unavoidable; that is, if we are interested in the survival of the planet, humanity, and all life forms—though to be clear the phrase ‘white genocide’ is a bit of a misnomer.”[625] It goes on to explain that they want White people divested from any thoughts about their own racial identity so White people don’t organize as an ethnic group to defend their own interests and culture like all other races do—something I’ll cover in detail in the next chapter on Antiwhiteism.

The Southern Poverty Law Center’s president Mark Potok actually has a list hanging on the wall of his home office showing the declining percentage of White people in America starting in the 1920s through today. The chart was captured on camera for a brief moment when he was being interviewed for a documentary called *Alt-Right: Age of Rage* (2018). Obviously he made it as a visual reminder that the browning of America is going according to plan.

Some opponents of the rapidly declining White population often point to Jewish groups as being active in facilitating mass immigration to the United States and European countries for decades in order to make them more racially and ethnically diverse so that Jews aren’t singled out as a sole minority or the “outsiders” within a society as they were in Nazi Germany and other parts of Europe.[626] This is why the torch-bearing marchers at the infamous Charlottesville Unite The Right event in 2017 were chanting “Jews will not replace us.”

But it’s not just supposed “White Nationalists” who have been talking about the White majority in the United States being demographically replaced through sustained immigration from other regions of the world—the Democrats have been openly bragging about this happening for years.

As Vice President under Barack Obama, Joe Biden had boasted about an “an unrelenting stream of immigration” that would soon make White people a minority in the United States.[627] “I’m proud of the American record on culture and economic integration of not only our Muslim communities but African communities, Asian communities, Hispanic communities, and the wave still continues. It’s not going to stop. Nor should we want it to stop. As a matter of fact, it’s one of the things I think we can be most proud of.”[628]

He continued, “Folks like me who are Caucasian of European descent—for the first time in 2017 we’ll be an absolute minority in the United States of America. An absolutely minority. Fewer than 50 percent of the people in America, from then and on, will be White European stock. That’s not a bad thing. That’s a source of our strength.”[629]

When CNN’s Anderson Cooper was speaking with Jorge Ramos, a popular host on the Spanish language station Univision about the changing demographics of the United States, Cooper gloated, “The idea that, you know, Whites will not be the majority, I mean, that’s—it’s an exciting transformation of the country, it’s an exciting evolution and you know, progress of our country in many different ways.”[630]

For decades Democrats had been openly bragging how “demographic trends” are going to one day keep the Republicans from holding power. After Donald Trump became president many Democrats were concerned that his immigration plan may keep White people the country’s ethnic majority for longer than they had hoped. *The Washington Post* lamented that instead of it happening in 2044, it might be pushed back to 2049.[631] MSNBC’s Chris Hayes ranted, “That’s what Donald Trump’s plan would do—keep the nation as White as possible for as long as possible.”[632]

After Trump was out of office however, the globalists made up for lost time and the massive floods of illegals increased to record levels and the celebrations of the rapidly declining White majority in the United States resumed.

In April 2021 Tucker Carlson started openly discussing these issues which had been completely taboo in the Republican Party, saying one night on his Fox News show, “I know that the left and all the little gatekeepers on Twitter become literally hysterical if you use the term ‘replacement;’ if you suggest that the Democratic Party is trying to replace the current electorate, the voters now casting ballots, with new people, more obedient voters from the Third World. But they become hysterical because that’s what’s happening actually. Let’s just say it—that’s true.”[633]

After that monologue he trended on Twitter from so many people attacking him, and the next day the ADL demanded that Fox News fire him.[634] Instead of backing down and apologizing, Tucker doubled down and in the following months would bring it up again and again. “Nothing about it is an accident, obviously. It's intentional. Joe Biden did it on purpose. But why? Why would a president do this to his own country?" he asked.[635]

"Our system cannot handle this many destitute newcomers, period. Imagine what hospitals are going to look like a year from now. How about schools? What Joe Biden is doing now will change this country forever. So again, why is he doing it? There's only one plausible answer."[636]

Tucker then played the clip of Joe Biden which I just quoted earlier of him looking forward to Whites becoming an "absolute minority," and continued, "Biden just said it: to change the racial mix of the country. That's the reason, to reduce the political power of people whose ancestors lived here and dramatically increase the proportion of Americans newly arrived from the Third World."[637]

Tucker went on, "It's horrifying. But there's a reason Biden said it. In political terms, this policy is called the great replacement, the replacement of legacy Americans with more obedient people from far away countries. They brag about it all the time, but if you dare to say it's happening, they will scream at you with maximum hysteria. And here you have Joe Biden confirming his motive on tape with a smile on his face. No one who talks like this should ever be the president of the United States."[638]

The Left keeps calling it a conspiracy theory when it's a historic reality numerous cultures around the world have faced. White Europeans displaced the Indians (or Native Americans, "Indigenous" people, or whatever they're calling themselves these days) here in North America.

Jews displaced Palestinians in 1948 with the creation of Israel after the United Nations adopted the Zionist resolution causing over 700,000 Palestinians to be forced out of the land, an event that's called the Palestinian expulsion.[639] (It's considered extremely "antisemitic" to point out this fact, by the way, so be careful when talking about it.)

Tucker responded to the ADL's calls for him to be fired for talking about this issue by pointing out the organization's own statement regarding their concerns about Jews being demographically diminished in Israel. The ADL's official stance on Zionism is that, "It is unrealistic and unacceptable to expect the State of Israel to voluntarily subvert its own sovereign existence and nationalist identity and become a vulnerable minority within what was once its own territory."[640] After Tucker highlighted their hypocrisy, they deleted that page from their website, but not before it was archived on the Wayback Machine.[641]

On Megyn Kelly's podcast, Tucker was even more candid than on his Fox News show. When she mentioned that the ADL was calling for him to be fired, he responded "Well, fuck them."[642] Tucker let the cat out of the bag, and the Left were furious that not only did he point out their plan, but by him finally talking about what had only been whispered in Republican circles out of fear of being called "White nationalists" or "Nazis," now others would feel safer pointing out the obvious too.

The very next day after one of Tucker's monologues on the issue, Charlie Kirk felt it was finally okay to say such an obvious fact out loud. When talking about the need for stricter border enforcement he added, "The other side has openly admitted this is about bringing in voters that they want and they like, and honestly—diminishing and decreasing White demographics in America. We're gonna say that part out loud. So many people in the corporate media are afraid to talk about it."[643]

Yeah, people in the corporate media have been afraid to talk about it. And those in Conservative Inc., including him! For years! But Tucker shattered the taboo and now others didn't feel like they had to completely avoid even hinting at the topic. The *Washington Post* soon lamented that "Half of Republicans see great replacement is real."[644]

Vice News called it "a conspiracy theory that's quickly becoming gospel on the right: that Democrats want a flood of immigrants to remake America and keep them in power."[645] Every Liberal media outlet denounced Tucker for discussing it, trying to scare others away from pointing out White people's impending minority status in the U.S. is because of mass immigration.

Some, like *The Los Angeles Times,* recommended that Republicans talking about "replacement theory" (which is a fact) be censored from social media.[646] The ADL then started calling for Tucker Carlson to be banned from Twitter and Facebook, and demanded that all clips of his show be deleted from the Fox News YouTube channel.[647]

Demographics Is Destiny

"Demographics is Destiny" has been a mantra for the Democrat Party for many years as they anxiously await granting amnesty to the 20 million illegal aliens living in the United States. (They deceptively underestimate the number to be "only" 11 million, but it's double that.)[648]

Politico once admitted, "The immigration proposal pending in Congress would transform the nation's political landscape for a generation or more…pumping as many as 11 million new Hispanic voters into the electorate a decade from now in ways that, if current trends hold, would produce an electoral bonanza for Democrats and cripple Republican prospects in many states they now win easily."[649]

The Center for American Progress, a Democrat think tank, openly admitted, "Supporting real immigration reform that contains a pathway to citizenship for our nation's 11 million undocumented immigrants is the only way to maintain electoral strength in the future."[650] They claim to be a "non-partisan" organization, but it was founded by John Podesta and is filled with George Soros disciples and former Clinton and Obama staffers, so they couldn't help but admit what "immigration reform" means to them.

For years Democrats have talked with glee about the "population growth" in Texas and other border states, which is a codeword for the influx of millions of illegal aliens. *Newsweek* magazine even ran a headline titled "America's Getting Less White, And That Will Save It."[651] As paleoconservative Pat Buchanan warned over twenty years ago in his 2002 book *The Death of the West*, "Uncontrolled immigration threatens to deconstruct the nation we grew up in and convert America into a conglomeration of peoples with almost nothing in common—not history, heroes, language, culture, faith, or ancestors."[652]

Liberal European leaders have been obsessed with needing more racial "diversity" in their countries as well. But pro-immigration activists seem to only want White European countries flooded with immigrants from

South America, Africa, and the Middle East. Interestingly, nobody is demanding that Israel accept an influx of non-Jewish refugees from other Middle Eastern countries. How about more African Muslims emigrate to Israel from places like South Sudan or Somalia?

If multiculturalism is so great, then why should they not want to participate in global diversification? There aren't any cries for Japan, China, or other Asian countries to become "more diverse" by adding millions of Africans, Hispanics, or Middle Easterners either. They, like Israel, would instantly quash any such suggestions because they know that flooding their countries with millions of immigrants from other cultures would replace their own.

Since BIPOCs (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) endlessly complain about European "colonizers" establishing communities and Democracies around the world, why then are they so determined to colonize North America with people from other countries? The answer of course is because they like what we built here, and instead of attempting to replicate our success in their own countries, they are coming here to live off the fruits of our labor.

But shouldn't the American people be able to maintain the dominant cultural traditions of those who founded our country and have been the foundation of our society for almost 250 years? The Founding Fathers weren't Chinese. They weren't Jews, Arabs, or Guatemalans. They were White Europeans. (So why should the United States continuously and incrementally change our culture and our customs to be more accommodating to immigrants from other regions of the world?)

Some cultures are simply not compatible with American culture. Their values, traditions, and morals are impossible to integrate into modern society. For example, some Arab cultures believe women shouldn't be able to drive a car, work at a job, or even go out into public without wearing a full burqa. Some Middle Eastern cultures even use bacha bazi boys, which are young boys they sexually abuse like the pederasts of Ancient Greece.[653] Should we really be allowing people like that into our country—especially when so many of them clearly don't abandon their native countries' old traditions and customs that are incompatible with ours?

Many people in Mexico and South America see drug kingpins like "El Chapo" and Pablo Escobar as folk heroes.[654] The locals loved them because they provided jobs! Latino gangs in virtually all parts of the United

States (the American Southwest, the Pacific Northwest, the Midwest, the Mid-Atlantic region, the Northeast, and South Florida) work directly with Mexican drug cartels.[655] The MS-13 street gang, the most violent and brutal in the United States, only exists here as a result of immigrants (from El Salvador) coming to the U.S.[656]

The diversity-obsessed Leftists even oppose English as the official language for the United States, despite the Declaration of Independence and our Constitution obviously being written in English. So why shouldn’t it be our nation’s official language? Why should we let foreigners dictate the dominant language in our own country? Why should we have to be told to “Press one for English and numero dos for Español” when calling every customer service number? Why should we have to deal with people we can’t even understand when they speak?

Imagine if millions of Americans moved to China and then opposed Chinese as the official language. Or demanded that tests in school be given in English. Or said they need more “diversity” to make China a “better, stronger” country by bringing in more non-Chinese people. If diversity is a source of strength in a society as Liberals always say, then why not import millions of Muslims to Israel? Or millions of Indian people or Africans to Japan? Imagine White people moving to Japan en masse and then demanding that statues of the country’s founders be torn down because of how they treated other races or because the country bombed Pearl Harbor (which brought the U.S. into WWII).

Democrats’ Hypocrisy Exposed

While Democrats love the flood of illegal aliens into the U.S., what they really love is them invading Republican border states like Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico, which have historically been Red states but are shifting purple and blue because of the huge numbers of Hispanics arriving.

So in April 2022 Texas Governor Greg Abbott began bussing thousands of illegal aliens into Chicago, New York City, and Washington D.C. Since he didn’t have the authority to deport them, he just relocated them to Democrat strongholds which had previously declared themselves sanctuary cities to virtue signal that they’re not “racist.”[657]

New York City mayor Eric Adams immediately denounced the action saying the city was “nearing its breaking point” and later said the illegals “will destroy New York City.”[658] Lori Lightfoot, the then-mayor of Chicago, said the city is “completely tapped out” and they have “no more space” after just a few busloads of migrants arrived from Texas.[659] The mayor of Washington D.C. (another Democrat), declared a public emergency.[660]

Then Florida Governor Ron DeSantis one-upped Governor Abbott and flew two planeloads of illegal aliens to Martha’s Vineyard, a wealthy island community in Cape Cod off the coast of Massachusetts where the Obamas bought a $12 million dollar estate to retire. All hell broke loose. The residents called in the National Guard and the illegal aliens were removed from the island within 48 hours and shipped off to a military base on the mainland.[661] They “couldn’t handle” the fifty migrants, local officials said, even though it was the end of summer and there were plenty of empty Airbnb rentals available for them to stay in.

The point was clear. They didn’t want any illegal aliens in their community—not even a few dozen of them. Meanwhile there were 5,000 a day (every day on average) pouring across the southern border into Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California at the time, overwhelming countless communities in the Southwest—an ongoing problem that has been allowed to continue for years.

As Ron DeSantis said, "The minute even a small fraction of what those border towns deal with every day is brought to their front door, they go berserk, and they're so upset that this is happening. And it just shows you that their virtue-signaling is a fraud."[662]

Author's Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com or wherever you purchased it from to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them. Almost all of the one-star reviews on my books are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent, hence me adding this note.

These fraudulent ratings and reviews could also be part of a larger campaign trying to stop my message from spreading by attempting to tarnish my research through fake and defamatory reviews, so I really need your help to combat this as soon as possible.

Thank you!

Antiwhiteism

White people are regularly blamed for every problem in the personal lives, communities, and countries of non-White people. And despite Martin Luther King's wish that we could become a society where people are judged on the content of their character and not the color of their skin, it's common and widely accepted for Black people to express racism against White people and continue to blame White people living today for things that other White people did hundreds of years ago.

But it's not just a few disgruntled and envious Black people who have embraced such beliefs. With the mainstreaming of the Black Lives Matter movement, antiwhiteism has become disturbingly widespread and normalized, and White people are constantly said to be keeping down "minorities" because of "White privilege" and "systemic racism," despite White people actually being a minority in the world—and even in numerous states within America.[663]

Whites have been a minority in California since the year 2000, and they're also a minority in Hawaii, New Mexico, and Texas.[664] Other states including Georgia, Nevada, and Maryland are trending to be next, and projections are that Whites will be a minority in the whole of the United States around the year 2045, according to the U.S. Census bureau.[665] But you're not supposed to talk about that unless you frame it in glowing terms and an "exciting transformation of the country," as CNN's Anderson Cooper calls it.[666]

Jimmy Fallon's audience cheered when he said that the 2020 census showed for the first time in our nation's history the number of White people went down. He was setting up a joke, but the audience burst into applause at the setup, confusing Fallon, who looked bewildered. "Wait, what?" he said, going off script. “That’s an interesting reaction to that. I didn’t want cheers or boos—I just wanted a ‘interesting,’ that’s all I wanted.” He then continued with the punchline that “Fox News declared it a national emergency.”[667]

New York Times columnist Jennifer Rubin celebrated the 2020 census figures calling it “fabulous news,” adding “now we need to prevent minority White rule.”[668] Many Latinos, Blacks, Jews, Native Americans, and guilt-ridden White Liberals cheer the news of White people being on the verge of becoming a minority in the United States, and anyone who dares to say they don’t want it to happen are branded a “White nationalist” and a “Nazi.”

But demographic displacement and becoming a racial minority in a country that was founded and built by White Europeans is just one of the complicated racial issues facing White Americans.

White people are openly hated by a disturbingly large segment of the non-White American population. A viral meme illustrates the situation by showing a nice White husband and wife alongside their two kids with the caption “White People: The Only Race You Can Legally Discriminate Against.” But it’s more than that. It’s spite, envy, and hatred.

White people in America are blamed for everything from the crime problems in Black communities, to even global warming![669] There are endless stories in mainstream outlets today that complain about how there are too many White people playing golf,[670] too many White people going skiing,[671] too many White people are hiking in public parks;[672] there are too many White teachers,[673] too many White doctors,[674] and too many White airline pilots,[675] and basically just too many White people everywhere in America! So we need more “diversity” they say, which is a codeword for *less* White people.

The Jewish ADL, the Ant-Defamation League (an organization originally founded to protect and defend Jews from supposed “antisemitism” but later morphed into an anti-Conservative hate group) is trying to change the very *definition* of racism. On their website they literally defined it as, “The marginalization and/or oppression of people of color based on a socially constructed racial hierarchy that privileges white people.”[676]

This Orwellian word game is just one more reason why the term *antiwhiteism* needs to be part of the lexicon. When people hear the word "racism"—they've been conditioned to (wrongly) think that it's something White people do to Black people. And the ADL is perpetuating that disinformation with their false definition of the word. So when talking about anti-White racism, it's best to be specific and use the term *antiwhiteism* so people don't get the wrong impression and automatically think that the "racism" you're talking about is White people discriminating against Black people or other non-Whites.

A similar deceptive term is Critical Race Theory or CRT, which masks what's going on. It makes people think that anti-White racism is just a theory and it's too generic of a term, so call it what it is: *antiwhiteism*. Or at least always make it clear by calling it anti-White racism, instead of just "racism" to avoid the preconceptions people have been conditioned to think when they hear the word "racism."

When speaking of supposed antisemitism, the ADL's Jonathan Greenblatt told CNN, "If you demonize the Jewish people or the Jewish State, if you make these wild accusations, if you traffic in conspiracy theories, you create the conditions for violence."[677] So wouldn't that mean endlessly blaming White people for all the problems in America and coining new terms like "White Privilege" and perpetuating hoaxes about "systemic White supremacy" and other lies (like police officers across the country are always beating up and shooting Black suspects) mean that those who traffic in such nonsense are actually creating an environment that puts White people at risk for violence?

It certainly does, but the Establishment always covers up hate crimes committed by Black people and perpetuates the myth that "hate crimes" are something that only White people commit. In this chapter I'll detail just a small fraction of the systemic antiwhiteism occurring in America, which is a risky thing to do because daring to stand up for White people is the quickest way to be smeared as a "White supremacist."

Every time Black people complain about White people, no matter how unfounded and ridiculous the criticism is, it's framed as an important issue that White people need to be "confronted" about and "address," but when a White person simply mentions certain pervasive problems in the Black community (no matter how tactfully) regarding crime, fatherlessness, poor grades, or the high STD rates, those concerns are immediately dismissed and vigorously opposed as more “evidence” of “racism.”

The Antiwhiteism Grifters

Democrats’ favorite tactic is calling White people “racist,” and the Race Hustle is an entire industry with high-paid “experts” who get paid to just complain about White people all day, every day. People like Robin DiAngelo, who is credited with popularizing the term White Fragility which is used as a weapon against White people and was constructed to depict White people who are tired of hearing Black people complain about them as being a character flaw and more “evidence” that they’re racist because they don’t want to “acknowledge” or “address” their own “white privilege.”

Ibram X. Kendi (which is a fake name to make him sound cool like Malcolm X) is another popular race grifter. His real name is Ibram Henry Rogers, and he works as an “anti-racist activist,” meaning an anti-White activist. In his mind, White people are the cause of all racism in the world, and like all other Race Hustlers he ignores the racial conflicts between Black people and Latinos which are common in places like Los Angeles, especially between rival gangs. The only thing “Ibram X. Kendi” thinks about is how terrible White people are.

The *1619 Project* founder Nikole Hannah-Jones is another one. This “project” started as a feature in *The New York Times* and refers to the year 1619 when she claims Black slaves started “building America” for White people.

While there are many professional Race Hustlers, perhaps the most infamous (aside from Shaun King who looks White despite being half Black and is often mocked as “Talcum X”) is Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrisse Khan-Cullors, who bought four different homes with the millions of dollars her scheme brought in.[678] Black Lives Matter (the organization) also transferred millions of dollars to a “charity” run by her “wife” who then used six million dollars to buy a mansion that was the former headquarters for the Communist Party.[679]

Over $90 million dollars was given to Patrisse Khan-Cullors’ Black Lives Matter organization (not to be confused with the generic “movement”—the organization is technically a legal entity in and of itself) which claims to be a “nonprofit” organization.[680] They also paid nearly a million dollars to a company run by Cullors’ baby daddy for “creative services”[681] and also paid her brother over $840,000 for “security.”[682]

Corporate Antiwhiteism

Under the guise of various fancy sounding terms like "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI), "racial bias training," or "sensitivity and inclusivity" seminars—major American corporations are forcing their employees (and especially new hires) to undergo various classes derived from Critical Race Theory to indoctrinate them about how terrible White people are and how amazing non-Whites are (and queers).

The "anti-racism" grifters have been around for a long time, but now it's commonplace for major corporations to hire them to "teach" employees about how White people perpetuate "racism" simply by *existing* if they don't constantly prioritize Black people's thoughts and feelings.

Walmart employees have been put through "training" where they're told that the United States is a "White-supremacy system" and if they're White and don't think they're racist and part of the problem, that's just more evidence of their "internalized racial superiority."[683]

Companies now include entire sections on their websites explaining their plans on how they're going to hire more people of color in the name of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion despite favoring any particular race in the hiring process being illegal. Coca-Cola's website says, "Our plan will focus on internal and external recruitment, hiring, development and advancement of people of color."[684] They go on to openly admit that they're dedicated to only promoting Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians instead of White people.

Leaked documents show that AT&T's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training course labels White employees "the problem" and says that "American racism is a uniquely white trait" and Black people can't be racist.[685] They're also encouraged to take the "21-Day Racial Equity Habit Challenge" to reflect on their "white privilege," and be on the lookout for "white supremacy."[686]

Many major corporations now have an entire department dedicated to "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" and people have titles like "head of diversity," and it's their job to make sure that fewer White people (and heterosexuals) are hired to work there. LinkedIn, the employment and business-focused social media platform, now enables job recruiters to filter their searches for candidates according to race in order to help them find a more "diverse group of candidates."[687]

It used to be an unwritten rule that job applicants not include their race on their resumes to help avoid racial bias during the hiring process, but now it's encouraged for non-White people to list theirs so they can be picked as a diversity hire.

When the hiring manager of Dropbox, the Google-owned cloud storage service, posted about a new position open for product design in the U.S., she said applicants from the BIPOC (Black, indigenous, people of color) and URM communities (underrepresented minority), meaning queer people, were given priority over all others.[688] Of course that's a violation of federal law because a business can't pass up job applicants simply because of their race, but as usual, systemic antiwhiteism is ignored.

If a hiring manager of any business, whether a Fortune 500 company or a small family owned pizza place posted that they were prioritizing White applicants, then the Department of Labor would launch an investigation into them and sue them into bankruptcy, but no action is taken when White people or Christians are blatantly discriminated against. A producer for Fox News reached out to Dropbox for a comment when this story went viral, but they ignored the request proving that they're complicit in the discriminatory practices.[689]

YouTube got sued in 2018 because of their anti-White hiring policy.[690] A recruiter who worked for YouTube for nine years claims the company set quotas for hiring non-White people and recruiters were told not to even interview applicants who weren't Black, Hispanic, or women.[691] On Valentine's Day that same year, the official YouTube Twitter account tweeted, "Roses are red violets are blue, subscribe to Black creators."[692]

As noted previously, YouTube has also been hostile towards Thanksgiving, and hosts an annual event exclusively for Black YouTubers to give them extra help to build up their subscribers.[693]

Comedian Tyler Fischer was turned down by an agent because he's White, so he sued for discrimination and the talent agency quickly offered him a settlement—which he refused, saying he wanted the case to go to court, probably because a settlement would mean he would have to sign a non-disclosure agreement, preventing him from ever talking about what happened to him again.[694]

Responding to a headline in the *New York Pos*t that said he “claimed” the agent turned him down because he’s White, Fischer said, “The entire claim is on tape and in plain English. I’m simply not allowing myself to be discriminated against for my skin color anymore. There’s no such thing as ‘reverse’ discrimination. There’s one kind and everyone is protected under the law against it.”[695] He also said that “endless people” in the industry have reached out to him privately telling him the same thing has happened to them as well, but they were afraid to speak about it publicly.

It’s not just corporations, but many cities are also indoctrinating their employees with antiwhiteism. Such “training” programs now mandated across the country for elected officials and their staff.[696] Many police and fire departments are requiring such programs as well.[697] These “Race and Social Justice Initiatives” teach that White staffers are “responsible” for racism and are “oppressors” of non-Whites.[698]

A teachers union in Minneapolis announced that they plan to layoff White teachers first if they have to make budget cuts, regardless of seniority—explaining in Orwellian language, “if excessing [laying off] a teacher who is a member of a population underrepresented among licensed teachers in the site [the school], the district shall excess the next least senior teacher, who is not a member of an underrepresented population.”[699] They always try to mask their agenda by using codewords. “Excess” means to layoff, and “under represented” means if they’re not White they’ll be passed over, and the White teachers will be laid off instead.

Again, all of this is illegal and violates long-standing anti-discrimination laws, and the fact that such blatant racial discrimination would be adopted by so many organizations is shocking but perhaps even more disturbing are the lack of legal consequences for their actions. The Department of Labor and the Justice Department do nothing to enforce anti-discrimination laws when the discrimination is against White people.

Uber’s “head of diversity” (an Asian woman) was suspended after she held an event where she tried to encourage employees to stop calling their White coworkers “Karens” (which has become an anti-White slur that Black people like to use against White women who they view as being entitled or bossy because of their “White privilege”), but Black employees felt like they were being “lectured” and “scolded” so they accused the executive of being racist *against them!*[700]

Black people feel so entitled these days in America that when a company executive tries nicely to get them to stop being racist against White people, they view *that* as racist!

Black Crimes Matter

Black people in America commit more crimes than White people, Latinos, Asians and every other race.[701] It's an irrefutable fact, but because they commit more crimes (approximately *ten times* more violent crimes than White people) Blacks also get arrested and incarcerated at a much higher rate per capita than White people.[702]

But like obese people who get defensive when they're told that they should lose weight because they're at risk of having a heart attack or getting diabetes, most Black people don't want to talk about the crime problem in their communities because it involves taking a good hard look in the mirror.

Black people are arrested and incarcerated far more often than White people (and Hispanics, Asians, and every other race) because *they commit more crimes*, and it's not because of some conspiracy being carried about by police, prosecutors, and juries. It's the same reason there are dramatically more men arrested and incarcerated than women—because men commit more crimes. A lot more.

It's not that police are unfairly "targeting" men for arrest and "systemically" ignoring women who commit crime. It's obvious to everyone that men *commit more crime* than women, so it makes perfect sense that they would be arrested and incarcerated more. The *reasons* why Black men commit more crimes (particularly more violent crimes) than White people (as well as Hispanics and Asians) is a whole other topic and beyond the scope of this book.[703] And while it's politically incorrect (or "racist," as Liberals call it) to talk about Black Crime, it's extremely taboo to talk about hate crimes committed by Black people.

When most people think of a hate crime, they think of a group of "White supremacists" attacking a random Black person for the same reason when people hear the word *racism*, they've been conditioned to automatically think of White people being prejudiced against non-White people. But Black people not only commit hate crimes against White people, Jews, Asians, and Latinos—but the media does their best to keep such attacks contained to small local news outlets in hopes of preventing people from seeing the pattern.

When they do report on such incidents, they try to hide what actually happened by insinuating that the perpetrators are White by reporting that a hate crime *did occur*, and that the "perpetrator" or "man" called the victim a racial or antisemitic slur, but they purposefully omit the race of the attackers when they're Black.

When a Black man shot up a White church in Antioch, Tennessee to get "revenge" on White people for psycho Dylann Roof's despicable attack on a Black church years earlier, his motive was covered up until the trial, and then only mentioned in local news. A note was found in the shooter's vehicle that same day which admitted he did it for "vengeance" and that "10 of your kind" (meaning White people) "would die."[704]

At the time when people were posting online that the attack was suspiciously not getting any national attention, *Newsweek* claimed that it was an "alt-right conspiracy theory" that it was a "reverse Dylann Roof story," meaning the Black shooter targeted White people.[705] *The New York Times* initially reported on the shooting in a story buried on page 14 of their paper and didn't even mention the shooter's motive.[706]

While most Americans never heard of this attack, everyone remembers the endless coverage of Dylann Roof's heinous attack on churchgoers in South Carolina in 2015, which resulted in the Confederate flag being banned across the entire United States and social media companies deeming it a hate symbol; Amazon banning all sales of it, and even reruns of the 1980s classic *Dukes of Hazzard* series were pulled from TV because the famous General Lee car has the flag painted on it.[707]

Similarly, the media was obsessed with the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville in August 2017 which would mark the end of the Alt-Right after a man who was literally a schizophrenic drove his car into a group of protesters, killing one of them and injuring others, but they always ignore Black Lives Matter violence like when Micah Xavier Johnson, a Black supremacist and supporter of the Nation of Islam, opened fire on a group of police during a Black Lives Matter rally in Dallas, Texas in 2016 killing five and wounding nine others.[708]

That story disappeared the next day, and the media *never* brought it up again, but the "White supremacists in Charlottesville" with their tiki torches is a central part of the mythos about why Joe Biden ran for president in 2020, and the car crash will be talked about in the Liberal media for an eternity.

A Black man in California was convicted of going on an anti-White murder spree, killing three random White people in Fresno in 2017 simply because they were White, and planned "to kill as many white males as possible" and advocated for the creation of a Black-only ethnostate, but that too was swept under the rug.[709] I could list more that have been covered by local news outlets (since anti-White hate crimes are always ignored by the national ones), but I'm trying to keep this book to a moderate length.

Antisemitism is always framed as coming from White supremacists, but the dirty little secret of antisemitic hate crimes is that many, if not most, are committed by Black people—particularly Black supremacists who follow the Black Hebrew Israelites' philosophy believing they are the "real" Jews. Black supremacists consider White people the Edomites, which is a reference to the Biblical story of Esau (also known as Edom) who is the twin brother of Jacob and the son of Isaac and Rebekah, who Black Hebrew Israelites consider to be the patriarch of the White race.[710] They often speak in code so most people have no idea what they're talking about when they rail against "the Edomites," the "White Edomite Devils," or Esau-Edom.[711]

A Black couple in New Jersey walked into a Kosher deli and started shooting, killing two people in what was a targeted attack against Jews by Black Hebrew Israelites.[712] A Black man walked into a Hanukkah party in an Orthodox Hasidic Jewish community in New York and started stabbing people, leaving five people injured.[713] As usual, all reports about the stabbing omitted the man's race and just described him as a "man" or "the suspect" to hide the fact that another Black man committed another hate crime against Jews.[714]

A Black woman in Brooklyn was arrested for slapping three Orthodox Jews while yelling "fuck you Jews" and because of the "bail reform laws" she was released from custody without having to pay any bail and three days later arrested again for assaulting more people.[715]

A lot of the hatred Black people have towards Jews isn't from those who subscribe to the Black Hebrew Israelite philosophy, but from Black people in general who often harbor anti-Jewish sentiments from perceiving that Jewish business owners have exploited Black communities.

Malcolm X, who was a Black separatist and wanted Black people to have their own region of the United States so they could live without any White people around, said, "It is Jews right here in Harlem who run these whiskey-stores that get you drunk. It is Jews that run these old run-down stores that sell you bad food. It is Jews who control the economy of Harlem and use it for themselves and the benefit of Israel…That's not antisemitic, that's just plain intelligence."[716]

But only White people are framed as having anti-Jewish views and Blacks are always portrayed as a fellow minority group being oppressed by the White man even though antisemitism is a central part of the Nation of Islam—the Black power Muslim movement, and many Black people who aren't followers of the movement still harbor similar views.

White people are always blamed for anti-Asian hate crimes too, when surveillance footage shows they're almost all committed by Black men. After a Black man in Dallas, Texas was arrested for going on shooting sprees at various Asian businesses, specifically targeting Asians, that story vanished down the memory hole by the next day and was completely forgotten.[717] If he was White the story would have received endless coverage on cable news and CNN would have said Donald Trump incited him because he kept calling COVID-19 the "China virus," but as usual, once the perpetrator was found to be Black, they all dropped the story.

A Black man brutally beat a 67-year-old Asian woman in Yonkers, New York, punching and stomping her more than 100 times while calling her an "Asian bitch," which was all captured on video by a security camera.[718] But he was just identified as a "man" in the news stories, not a Black man, even though it was a clear hate crime not just a random mugging or assault. Only those who saw the security camera footage, which was released by police and omitted in most news stories about the attack, saw that he was clearly a Black man.

"Asian man pushed onto subway tracks in Queens" read the headlines after another hate crime in the New York area, and the perpetrator was descried as only wearing a black hooded sweatshirt, while the fact that it was known he himself is a Black man was ignored, as usual, despite footage of the attacker being captured by security cameras.[719]

In 2020, the Southern Poverty Law Center removed Black hate groups from their online list of "hate groups" because it was making the Black Lives Matter movement look bad by not just admitting Black supremacist and separatist groups exist, but showing how prevalent they are. The SPLC admitted that they didn't want to "aid law enforcement in its definition of Black Identity Extremists," since the Department of Justice (under the Trump administration) finally admitted that Black hate groups pose a danger to society.[720]

They recategorized some of the groups giving them the cover of "antisemitic" groups or "general hate" groups, instead of being Black separatists or Black nationalists. There used to be *three dozen* Black hate groups on the Southern Poverty Law Center's list, including the Nation of Islam, the New Black Panther Party, the Black Hebrew Israelites, and many others, but not anymore. Admitting the reality that Black supremacist organizations exist is considered to be racist.

When discussing hate crimes, you can't ignore hate crime hoaxes, which are the vast majority of alleged "hate crimes" reported today.[721] To list the specific instances that have been confirmed hoaxes would fill up an entire book—and they do.[722] There are also numerous websites which keep a pretty good tally of the latest hate crime hoaxes, including FakeHateCrimes.org.

From a Black college Lacrosse player spray painting the n-word and a swastika on his dorm in Maryland targeting himself,[723] to a Black girl tweeting death threats to a school in New Jersey hoping to gain more sympathy for Black Lives Matter,[724] to a Black woman writing racist notes to herself and filing a fake police report at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.[725] As *The Wall Street Journal* surprisingly admitted, "Hate crime hoaxes are more common than you think."[726]

There are countless ones which have been foiled on college campuses where mostly Blacks and gays, but sometimes Muslims and Jews, are caught faking hate crimes by spray painting graffiti, or even harming themselves and claiming they were attacked.[727] It's a common tactic that is often exposed because the hoaxers are too stupid to realize security cameras are everywhere on college campuses, but there are exponentially more hate crime hoaxes that are said to have occurred other places which go undiscovered and are reported as real in the media.

Jussie Smollett's hoax is the most famous to be exposed, but they date back decades. Al Sharpton's claim to fame was rallying behind the

Tawana Brawley hoax in 1987 where a Black teenager in New York falsely accused four White men of kidnapping and raping her.[728]

The Bubba Wallace "noose" incident isn't technically a hoax because it wasn't a deliberate scheme, but instead a case of *Imaginary Racism* which is also a common occurrence, where Black people falsely interpret something as being "racist" because they've become paranoid from all the fear-mongering and fake news in the media (and spread through social media) about how there are supposedly "White supremacists" around every corner and that "systemic racism" is the bedrock of every American institution.

White Identity

For most of America's history White people haven't thought about themselves as a racial group because their race had been largely invisible to them, like a fish in water, since whiteness has been the dominant culture going all the way back to America's founding.

But as White people are quickly becoming a minority group (and have already become minorities in several states) they are becoming racially conscious and starting to think about themselves as an ethnic group—like Blacks, Asians, Latinos and every other race—and caring about their own interests within the multicultural communities (and states, and country) they inhabit, instead of always allowing themselves to be pushed aside in the name of diversity.

And as White people came under increasing attacks from the mainstream media, online activists, woke corporations, and others as a result of the insurgency of Black Lives Matter—*White Identity* (again, White people seeing themselves as a unique ethnic group with their own interests they want to protect or advance) has accelerated their racial consciousness and is changing how they perceive themselves in our multiracial society.

In response to this, the other ethnic groups (and self-hating Whites) along with the usual suspects in the media and Democrat Party, are frantically trying to stop this inevitable paradigm shift, equating White Identity or White collectivism with "White nationalism" and "White supremacy," deceptively conflating them as if they're the same. These increased attacks are causing a feedback loop which is only accelerating White people's awakening and involvement in ethnic collectivism. This then increases concern among non-Whites and incites more attacks against whiteness, and so on.

An assistant Professor of Political Science at Duke University named Ashley Jardina has actually been a pioneer in scholarly research into the awaking of White Identity politics and found that contrary to most people's expectations and beliefs, there is a low correlation between White Identity and racial resentment towards other races.[729]

In other words, Whites who are racially consciousness and are thinking of themselves and other White people as part of an ethic group are not racist against non-Whites. They simply want what every other racial group in America has, which is the right to not only be proud of their race, but to be able to voice support for their own in-group interests (such as preserving their culture) and to not have their civil rights be violated by being discriminated against.

The Left has stigmatized the idea of White people being concerned about their own ethnic interests to the point that it's almost always falsely equated with White supremacy. It's the biggest taboo, but if White people keep getting systematically demonized by radical Black and Latino groups (and Jewish groups like the ADL), Whites will naturally respond by awakening to their own White Identity as a natural instinct, and will begin to collectivize and organize as an ethnic group in order to stop other races from treating them as if they are second class citizens.

Europe has seen the rise of a White Identity movement in what's called Identitarianism (or the Identitarian Movement) which is opposed to multiculturalism and promotes localism or ethnopluralism which is the idea of maintaining unique and separate ethnocultural regions. This is a reaction to the Islamization of European countries caused by the massive influx of Muslims from the Middle East as well as millions emigrating to Europe from Africa.[730]

Many of the migrants cannot assimilate into such a different culture and have no desire to. And the flood of migrants has caused massive crime waves in Sweden, Germany, France, England, and other countries who took them in.[731] Sweden is now over 8% Muslim.[732] In 2016 *Mohamed* became the most common new baby name for boys in the UK, and remained the most popular through at least 2022.[733] (It still may be, but the latest data for 2023 wasn't released by the time this book went to print and the trend is likely continuing).[734]

London is also now 15% Muslim.[735] In 2016 the first Muslim mayor of London was elected, and many of the indigenous Europeans are extremely unhappy with such dramatic demographic changes which are resulting in a rise of White Identity throughout Europe.

Beginning in 2017 as a reaction to the rising antiwhiteism on American college campuses and social media, some members of the online forum 4Chan decided to print fliers that simply read "It's Okay To Be White" and posted them on various campuses. Instead of people ignoring such an innocuous statement, the fliers made national news and were denounced as "racist" and "neo-Nazi propaganda" by school authorities, the media, the ADL, and Southern Poverty Law Center.[736]

The fact that anyone was even upset about the fliers is strange, but catching the attention of the professional hate groups like the SPLC and ADL, and making the national news just proved the point the kids were trying to make. If they had spray painted the slogan on the side of some buildings, that would be vandalism and maybe justified making the local news, but these were ordinary 8 1/2" by 11" sheets of paper that were just taped on some light poles and stapled onto community bulletin boards.

Similar fliers reading "All Lives Matter" have occasionally been posted on college campuses and around town as well, and as you can expect, were also firmly denounced as "overtly racist" and "White supremacist propaganda."[737] In October 2022, Kanye West (who had legally changed his name to Ye) wore a White Lives Matter shirt to a fashion show in Paris alongside Candace Owens, causing everyone in the Liberal media in America to freak out. CBS News insinuated it was "racist."[738] *Rolling Stone* said it was "uncalled for."[739] And *The New York Times* ran the headline, "There Is No Excuse for Ye's 'White Lives Matter' Shirt."[740]

The ADL deems "White Lives Matter" to be a "White supremacist phrase,"[741] along with the Southern Poverty Law Center.[742] Both organizations function to smear Conservatives and Christians as racist, bigots, and homophobes; and often label organizations they hate as "hate groups," and are tirelessly trying to stop White people from embracing White Identity by equating it with White supremacy and neo-Nazis.

Even Christopher Rufo, who's held up as the world's foremost expert on Critical Race Theory by Conservatives, is firmly opposed to White people collectivizing as an ethnic group like other races, saying "I do not believe that 'white identity politics' or 'white identitarianism' is a solution; in fact, I think it would be a major step backwards and, potentially, disastrous. We should emphasize the individual and de-emphasize racial categories, to the extent possible."[743]

He also performs mental gymnastics in order to avoid framing Critical Race Theory as "anti-White racism" out of concerns it may fuel White Identity. He argues this because "it's not exclusively anti-White," and points to the college admissions scandal over affirmative action where Asians were also passed over while Blacks were given preferential treatment, but CRT *is* specifically anti-White—it just so happens that Asians are sometimes collateral damage. The main target is obviously White people.

Rufo is married to an Asian woman, and his children look Asian, so he has a personal interest in trying to depict CRT as not being exclusively anti-White, and it would be highly unlikely that he and his wife aren't fostering in their children a strong sense of Asian identity and pride, but he cautiously advises White people not to embrace their whiteness or White Identity, saying, "White identitarianism is pathetic and disgusting."[744]

Instead, it appears Christopher Rufo wants White people to avoid any ethnic identity at all, and proposes they just view themselves as generic "Americans" and minimize their racial identity as much as possible. Of course he would never recommend Jews shed their ethnicity as the core of their identity. They're "special," and that would be antisemitic. Meanwhile he looks forward to a world in which Whites, Blacks, and Latinos are all mixed together into one homogeneous "human race," saying "I think interracial marriage is a sign of progress, I think it's beautiful, I think it's amazing…America is going to look different in 100 years. You're not going to be able to tell 'you're Black, you're White, you're Hispanic, you're Puerto Rican, whatever.' I think ultimately that's going to be good."[745]

Ask anyone who is of mixed race about some of the complications regarding their identity and acceptance among certain peer groups and they may not sing such praises of it.[746] And ask any mixed race couple about the intercultural conflicts that arise (or persist), and they too would admit it's not always as rosy as such "diversity" is often portrayed from the outside.[747] So many people wish to retain their unique ethnicity within their families and aren't interested in their children and grandchildren becoming part of a multicultural mishmash.

But unlike every other race on the planet, White people aren't allowed to be proud of being White—or proud of the list of things White people have contributed to the world, from creating the automobile and airplanes to air-conditioning and computers. "White Pride" is considered synonymous with “White Supremacy.” Wikipedia defines it as “an expression primarily used by white separatist, white nationalist, fascist, neo-Nazi and white supremacist organizations in order to signal racist or racialist viewpoints.”[748]

Of course Black Pride is defined favorably as “a movement which encourages Black people to celebrate Black culture and embrace their African heritage.”[749] Similarly, the entry for Asian Pride notes that it’s “a term utilized by people all over the world to celebrate their Asian ethnicity.”[750]

White people just wanting to date only other White people is considered racist, and any app that would facilitate White-only dating would not only cause a national outcry by Democrats in Congress who would launch a congressional committee to investigate whoever created it, but it would be banned by the Apple and Android app stores for being “racist.”[751] Meanwhile there are countless dating apps for Black people and Latinos to meet each other, not to mention Black-only beauty pageants, Black-only dorms, graduation ceremonies, and other “Black safe spaces” where they can enjoy themselves without the presence of White people.[752]

But again, if a White person just wants to date or marry another White person, that sets off alarm bells—while Blacks, Asians, Latinos, and Jews who want to do so are celebrated for maintaining their cultural heritage. And if any White people prefer to live in a predominantly White neighborhood (like Scott Adams, the creator of the *Dilbert* comic strip recommended) or want their children to go to a predominantly White school, that’s even worse, and they’re denounced as White nationalists and Nazis.

Just for recommending that White people should live in predominantly White neighborhoods to avoid the ongoing racial strife between Whites and Blacks, Scott Adams’ *Dilbert* comic strip was canceled by his syndicator after more than 30 years in publication, and overnight vanished from every newspaper around the world.[753]

Aside from the Liberal media manufacturing outrage over his comments, he was also denounced by some brand name Conservative commentators as well, including Ben Shapiro, who said that “there’s a strong case” that anyone saying such “racist stuff” should have their career ended.[754]

Use Their Own Terms Against Them

One tool you can use to combat the Marxists and their incessant antiwhiteism is turning their own terminology against them by linguistically hijacking their buzzwords. When they talk about "White Fragility," point out Black Fragility—which I would define as: Discomfort and defensiveness on the part of some Black people who live in a predominantly White culture due to fixating on long since past injustices which they never experienced (and weren't experienced by anyone in their family alive today) causing them to *imagine* racism where none exists, and pine away for living in a culture that is predominately black instead.

When they whine about whiteness or "White normativity" then bring up their White-Envy which is when Black or other non-White people who live in a predominantly White culture feel envious of the society because their ancestors lacked the skills, knowledge, or possessions of others in the dominant culture, often resulting in resentment and demands for reparations instead of accepting personal responsibility for their own situations and working to improve their lives through hard work, discipline, and other ethical means of achieving success and happiness.[755]

When they talk about the "need" for more "diversity," call them anti-White. Don't play into their semantical games by acknowledging their made up words and ridiculous false concepts. Every time they use their cultural marxist terminology, do linguistic judo, and turn it back against them.

Doing this saves you from wasting time engaging them in an argument about why they're wrong, (and insane). And just chuckle or laugh at them, mock them, and don't even take their concerns seriously unless it's your boss and you run the risk of being fired. We should all start highlighting the systemic antiwhiteism to make it clear that anti-White racism isn't just occurring in isolated instances from a few individual Black people or organizations, but instead antiwhiteism is so pervasive it has become woven into American culture through Black Lives Matter activism and the Liberal media constantly demonizing White people and whiteness.

And again, the term *antiwhiteism* needs to become the common word used in place of *racism* when talking about anti-White racism because of the deeply rooted associations and preconceptions people have with the word racism. Just invoking the word *racism* always conjures up a frame that it's something White people do to non-Whites, and the very word is basically an anti-White slur, so a completely different word should be used when talking about anti-White racism, or at the very least—the clear distinction should be made by describing it as *anti-White racism*, not just racism.

That is as long as the ADL, SPLC, and Wikipedia don't hijack the term and get a false definition to stick by claiming it's a "White supremacist" code word, which they will likely attempt to do just like they've done with *It's Okay to Be White*, *Cultural Marxism*, and *White Pride.* Even mentioning the percentage of Black people in relation to the percentage of violent crimes they commit in the United States (i.e. 13/50) is deemed a "numeric hate symbol."[756]

When the Left mentions "White privilege" then turn it around on them and point out that Black Privilege is actually the centerpiece in our culture now since Black people are put on a pedestal and treated as if they deserve special benefits and treatment because they've been exploiting grievances about injustices in the distant past and laying guilt trips on White people in order to subvert equal rights and blind justice. This Black Privilege often stems from false perceptions of racism where none exists, or fabricating incidents of racism in order to leverage power over White people.[757] They try to wield this power to silence criticism or judgment about any aspect of their culture (like glorifying thugs and crime) or others pointing out the high percentage of single mothers in the Black community.

Black Privilege goes far beyond giving them jobs they're not qualified for in the name of "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (the fancy new term for affirmative action). It also grants them the benefit of often not being charged with anything when they commit crimes, or being given light sentences out of concerns that putting them in jail instead of releasing them on probation would reflect poorly on Black people as a group, so in the 21st century many are often allowed to escape justice.

Black Privilege also entails having TV shows and entire networks like BET and Fox Soul dedicated to Black-only entertainment—and having Black-only dating apps, Black-only beauty pageants, Black-only dorms at colleges, and being able to openly proclaim that Black people are the "best" and "Black is beautiful" while flying into a violent rage if a White person were to say the same thing about their race.

We all know what would happen if a White person said they wanted to live in a White-only community, or if White students said they wanted to live in White-only dorms or if a network wanted to produce a TV show that expressly doesn't include any Blacks or Latinos and instead would focus on a White family or community without any forced "diversity." All hell would break loose, but every other race can make such demands and are given those accommodations without any resistance.

But beware, because cancel culture has gotten so strong that your career could be destroyed in an instant by saying many of the obvious truths mentioned in this this book—especially if you explicitly show support for White Identity (or even bring it up in any context other than denouncing it).

Not everyone is in a position to loudly or firmly push back against antiwhiteism (or LGBTQism), but we do need people who are confident they can weather the storm that may come their way if they do, or else our country and our culture will be irreparably damaged, if not destroyed.

Censorship

The World Wide Web opened up a new frontier for publishing in the 1990s where anyone could create a website from their home computer that could be seen by anyone else in the world with just a few clicks on a keyboard through their Netscape or Internet Explorer browsers. But at the time, it was difficult to build a website—and extensive computer skills (including knowing the HTML computer language) were needed, so while every major corporation eventually set one up, only a few eccentric people, computer nerds, or entrepreneurs had one.

About a decade later in the early 2000s, the advent of social media made having an online presence turn-key, and anyone with practically no computer skills or technical experience could start using the Internet to publish blogs with photos and videos, and share links to news articles with others who could then share them with their friends and followers who could do the same, and the concept of "going viral" was born. It was the next phase of the Internet revolution, or Web 2.0 as it's called. While Web 1.0 consisted of static webpages, the new era of online activity involved easy two-way communication and an interactive experience with comments, follower counts, and "likes."

While MySpace led the way, Facebook soon overtook them and quickly grew to dominate social media. At the end of 2006 Facebook opened to everyone, not just people with a college email address ending in .edu, and then MySpace quickly died.[758] By the 2008 presidential election Facebook was already part of everyone's lives, and now on their phones thanks to the launch of the Apple App Store. When the iPhone was first released in June 2007 it had only a few apps (like email, maps, and music), but the following year the App Store was opened to 3rd party developers and enabled access to services that had previously been contained to desktop computers but were now available anywhere in the palm of your hand.[759]

Social media soon morphed from a fun novelty to a way of life. During this new social media revolution if you were a young adult and didn't have a Facebook page (or later if you were a high schooler and didn't have a Snapchat or Instagram account), then you were seen as an outcast. Social media became just as common as cellphones.

Even though Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube had become extremely popular by the 2008 presidential election, their real power still wasn't realized until a few years later. Barack Obama was the first president to have a Facebook and Twitter account, and throughout the 2008 and 2012 election cycles people used social media to argue and debate ideas and share news articles as the platforms slowly became more and more intertwined with politics and our daily lives.

But even throughout the Obama administration social media was still mostly considered to be a "neat" way to communicate with other people, and while it was certainly changing our culture, it hadn't become the center-point of it—yet.

But by the 2016 presidential election cycle (which began in 2015), social media had become an integral part of our culture. Every celebrity, every TV show, every brand name business had Facebook and Twitter accounts. It's how major companies fielded complaints from their customers instead of the "old fashioned" way of people calling them on the phone. A new kind of celebrity was created in the form of YouTubers or "social media stars" who used the technology to go viral and gain massive audiences, often dwarfing traditional talk radio shows and television networks.

Stories that weren't chosen by editors of the major newspapers and television networks to dominate their coverage (or even get mentioned at all) could now become widely publicized from people organically sharing them, and the corporate news giants lost their ability to control the topics of conversation that the general public was having.

The *New York Times* complained that "YouTube, Reddit and Facebook have allowed fringe thinkers to bypass traditional gatekeepers and reach millions of people directly."[760] CNN's "senior media reporter" Oliver Darcy complained that social media companies have "given everybody the same ability to broadcast their views, unfiltered really, to millions and millions of people," and now "they can share it and they can tell their friends about it."[761]

After Trump beat Hillary Clinton, the entire Liberal Media Industrial Complex panicked and claimed that "fake news" being spread through Facebook by the Russians tricked people into not liking her, and thus not voting for her. The Establishment media aimed to take their power back and that's when the mass censorship and algorithm manipulation started. Before the 2016 election, the only posts or content that was taken down were almost exclusively things that clearly violated what were once reasonable terms of service—forbidding death threats, porn, or people just uploading full episodes of TV shows to YouTube, infringing on studios' copyrighted works.

The mainstream media lost control of the flow of information, and so they scrambled to gain back their monopoly, partnering with the Big Tech platforms to not only get *their* content artificially boosted, but also systematically *suppress* independent voices.

Immediately in the aftermath we saw an increasingly number of Conservatives having posts removed from social media and getting locked out of their accounts (or permanently banned) for posting criticism of illegal immigration, Muslim refugees, gender bending and other LGBT activities that had previously been allowed to be hotly debated and firmly denounced.

Posting basic scientific facts about gender or undisputed crime statistics about Black males became a problem. During President Trump's (first) impeachment hearings, nobody was allowed to mention the name of the "whistleblower" whose bogus allegations kicked the whole thing off after Trump asked Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky about the Biden Crime Family's dealings in the country, which was spun into a story about seeking a foreign country's "help" to "interfere" in our election.

When Senator Rand Paul mentioned the name of the person widely believed to have helped get the impeachment hearing in motion (Eric Ciaramella) on the floor of the Senate, YouTube even removed that video, claiming it was "harassment" and an "invasion of privacy."[762]

In 2017, YouTube completely changed their search results to surface videos from mainstream media channels for most topics people look up.[763] Internally they tag brand name channels as "authoritative" so the algorithm artificially boosts them to the top of the search results even if other videos from independent "ordinary" YouTubers are more relevant and should organically be the actual top results because of their views, watch time, and the amount of engagement they have.

YouTube even created a special curated list of search terms after Liberals in the media complained about the top search results for things like abortion and the Federal Reserve.[764] They added actress Brie Larson's name to the list after "journalists" complained that the top search results for her name accompanied by the title of her latest film at the time (*Captain Marvel*) were YouTubers critical of her and the movie.[765]

Then they later hid the dislike ratings near the end of 2021 because so many people were thumbing down videos on mainstream channels that kept getting artificially boosted into people's feeds and inserted onto the trending list. They claimed it was to prevent smaller YouTubers from getting "bullied" by large numbers of people thumbing down their videos, but it was just another attempt to hide negative feedback about the Liberal propaganda they kept pushing.

And then another wave of censorship hit during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 when people opposing the mandatory lockdowns were suspended and banned from the brand name social media platforms, and people questioning the safety of the vaccine were censored as well. Even just saying that the virus leaked from the Wuhan lab wasn't allowed.

Senator Rand Paul was censored by YouTube another time for a speech he made denouncing mask mandates on the floor of the Senate.[766] Dan Bongino's channel was banned after his third strike for "COVID misinformation" because of a rant he did about masks not being effective.[767] Then just a few days later the CDC updated their "data" about masks, admitting after two years of the pandemic that cloth masks basically don't do anything.[768]

Dr. Drew, the famous Hollywood Liberal TV doctor, even got a strike from YouTube for "medical misinformation" after he discussed some of the possible side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine on his podcast.[769] He's generally pro-vaccine despite experiencing some mild side effects himself, but also said if his children were under 18, he would not have given them the COVID vaccine.

The censorship was so egregious that after a medical device being used on COVID patients called the Heal Light, which consisted of a breathing tube wrapped in ultraviolet LEDs designed to kill the virus once inserted into the lungs of patents was mentioned by President Trump, the company had their YouTube channel and Twitter account censored for spreading "dangerous medical misinformation."[770]

Donald Trump mentioned that scientists were using ultraviolet light "inside the body" to kill the virus, something that the media mocked him for because anything he said they used against him. His explanation of the technology was just an off the cuff remark about some of the things that were being developed to help treat patients. So the media made it seem as if he was crazy and wanted to insert light bulbs under people's skin.[771]

Then when people starting pointing out he was referring to an actual device being tested in hospitals, the Big Tech platforms did what they could to hide that fact in order to prevent the media's mockery of him from backfiring.[772]

And while social media was the primary focus of the "thought police" looking to censor all content they disagree with, soon those who wanted to silence others began pointing to podcasts that were hosted on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.[773] The topics being censored, along with the methods and reasons for shutting down discussions kept growing.

The Next Wave of Censorship

The first wave of censorship was after the 2016 election, the second was during the COVID pandemic, and the third began immediately after the 2020 presidential election like clockwork. After four years of the Democrats coming up with countless conspiracy theories about how Donald Trump supposedly secretly worked with Russian intelligence to "steal" the 2016 election, all of a sudden claiming that *Democrats* stole the *2020* election for Joe Biden was a violation of the terms of service on all Big Tech platforms.[774]

Such claims were suddenly deemed to "undermine our Democracy" and said to be "dangerous." Exercising your First Amendment right to question the outcome of an election, or state an opinion that it was stolen, was now forbidden.

Censoring such discussions on social media was a new level of authoritarianism never seen in America. Up until that point, the only countries where people weren't allowed to question the election results were Communist countries and third world dictatorships. They claimed it might cause more civil unrest in the wake of the January 6th protest at the Capitol, but the systemic antiwhiteism and anti-police rhetoric coming from Black Lives Matter that had been inciting violence for years was still allowed to be posted and go viral.

Shortly before the 2020 election, the Big Tech platforms all censored the October surprise sprung on Democrats when the contents of Hunter Biden's laptop was published after he abandoned it at a repair shop. Aside from bizarre videos he shot of himself smoking crack and having sex with prostitutes, there were emails showing shady business deals with Ukraine and China that involved his father.[775]

So to muddy the waters hoping to hide the story, Deep State intelligence officials said it was Russian disinformation, but it was obvious at the time (and would later be undeniable) that their claims about the story being disinformation *was the disinformation*. A year and a half later, after the Biden Administration was an utter failure and Joe Biden had become an embarrassment, Liberal mainstream outlets finally admitted that the Hunter Biden laptop story is true—that the emails and explicit videos are his, but they still denied he or Joe Biden engaged in any influence peddling or illegal activity.[776]

Of course Donald Trump was banned from all brand name platforms after the January 6th protest at the Capitol got out of hand, but the Taliban (and their officials) were still able to have an official Twitter account.[777] So was Vladimir Putin and all Russian government officials and agencies, even after they invaded Ukraine.[778] But not Donald Trump. From that point on, anytime he gave a speech or an interview, if he mentioned that he thought the 2020 election was stolen, that video would get censored from YouTube and Facebook, including his speech at CPAC in February 2021, as well as his CPAC speech the following year in 2022.[779]

As the 2020 election approached, numerous high-profile Democrats voiced concerns about the security of electronic voting machines and even held congressional hearings about it, but once Joe Biden was declared the supposed winner of the 2020 election, all of those concerns vanished and couldn't be raised by Republicans.

Democrats had legitimate concerns about the security and accuracy of electronic voting machines, and HBO even aired a documentary called *Kill Chain: The Cyber War on America's Elections* in March 2020 which demonstrated some of the vulnerabilities they had (anticipating a Donald Trump victory over Joe Biden, which Democrats would have blamed on Russia hacking the machines), but all those concerns went out the window —and after the election any Republican who raised them ever again was attacked as a "conspiracy theorist" and said to be spreading "dangerous misinformation."[780]

Surprisingly, a little over two years later Donald Trump's Twitter account was reinstated thanks to Elon Musk buying the platform, and a few months after that Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube allowed him access to his accounts again as well.[781] This, shortly after he announced he was running for reelection a second time. They probably knew that keeping the Republican frontrunner off their platforms during a presidential run would have galvanized Republicans across the country to denounce such communist-style censorship, so they reluctantly allowed him back on.

Then three months later, in June of 2023, YouTube finally lifted their ban on Republicans doubting the 2020 election results and talk of widespread voter fraud affecting the outcome.[782] YouTube claimed it was because they deemed there was no longer an "eminent" threat of people rioting again, like at the Capitol on January 6th 2021, since that tense time had long since passed and the anger dissipated.

But YouTube probably also realized that Rumble had become a viable alternative, attracting big names and even non-political channels like gamers and other content creators who thought YouTube was too saturated and wanted to try building an audience on a newer platform that was gaining momentum. Rumble even got listed on the NASDAQ stock exchange in September 2022 and has reached a market cap of two and a half billion dollars.[783] While other platforms had tried to take on YouTube, they either failed financially and ended up shutting down, or only gained niche users and audiences.

Rumble has grown to be a serious threat to YouTube's monopoly. While they still have policies against "hate speech," their rules regarding discussions about transgenderism and vaccines are drastically less restrictive than YouTube. And they even allow (as of November 2023) channels that have been banned from YouTube, including Alex Jones, Red Ice TV, AmRen (American Renaissance run by Jared Taylor), and Nick Fuentes.

But while Rumble promotes themselves as a "free speech" platform, they're only *freer*, and will be put to a difficult test at some point when the Apple and Android App stores pressure them to remove certain videos or channels they deem "hateful," "antisemitic," or contain what they deem "extremist" content.

Rumble is no longer a privately owned company. They have shareholders they're accountable to, and it's doubtful they will resist the ultimatum of either banning such content, or being banned from the App Stores themselves, if or when it's given. In the small chance they stand their ground and refuse to ban specific creators from their platform if threatened by the App Stores, they'll have to do what Gab.com did, and format their website so that users can visit it on their phone's browser and then just use the *Save to Home Screen* feature to create an icon on their phone that launches the website.

This workaround, pioneered by Gab’s founder Andrew Torba after Gab was banned from the App Stores, allows a website to function essentially as an app on a phone, minus the push notifications. There may be some drawbacks however, such as lag-time when using certain features compared to the app itself, but it will still work—at least for now. Apple and Android may close this loophole at some point, but Gab.com has been using this method for years.[784]

Rumble will also increasingly face organized advertiser boycotts aimed at strangling them financially. After YouTube demonetized Russell Brand’s channel in the wake of a coordinated campaign to cancel him, Rumble stood by him, causing brands like Burger King and HelloFresh to pull ads from the entire platform.[785] Rumble had already been the target of numerous organizations dedicated to stripping them of advertisers in hopes of shutting them down, and these groups will continue to seize on highly publicized events surrounding content creators who use the platform in order to further bully major brands (and advertising agencies) into not working with them.

Fake Fact Checkers

Facebook is the worst of all the social media platforms in terms of censorship and algorithm manipulation. What was once a great platform to keep in touch with family and friends, and a place to read interesting articles others shared, has turned into another tightly controlled corporate cog in the Left's information warfare machine.

At the end of 2016, about a month after the election when the "fake news" scare was first heating up and Democrats were blaming Hillary's loss on people posting "misinformation" about her, Facebook decided to start automatically "fact checking" things people posted, outsourcing the operation to various organizations like Snopes and PoltiFact who were granted authority to police content so Facebook itself could claim *they* weren't censoring posts deemed to be "false" or sticking their nose into everyone's business—it's "trusted third party independent fact checkers."[786]

From this point on when anyone posted a link to a news story or YouTube video—if it triggered a "fact check," the post would be completely blurred out with a notice over it claiming it's "false" which also prevents it from going viral. But many of these "fact checks" are completely and obviously false, and the posts they censor are accurate and true. The new feature is just another way for the Establishment to further suppress information they don't want people to know.

But it's not just links that are censored. Posts just containing text are too, since Facebook automatically scans and reads everything; and if posts are detected to say things that they don't want people to say but aren't a violation of the terms of service, then they're secretly suppressed and only show up in a limited number of people's feeds who are following the page.

The Facebook "fact checks" started off to "protect civic integrity," meaning election news or falsehoods about voting, such as if someone posts that the polls in a particular area are closed when they're actually still open which could discourage people from going out to vote on their way home from work, or posts citing the wrong location of where people can vote which would send them on a wild goose chase, etc.

That kind of misinformation was initially the target of the fact checkers, along with actual hoaxes they didn't want to go viral (such as someone claiming there was a terrorist attack in an American city, like a bombing that didn't actually happen) which many would argue may have been a good feature. But the road to hell is paved with good intentions, and the system got so out of control Facebook started censoring memes making fun of Democrats and Joe Biden.

For example, they "fact checked" a meme about gas prices being high because of President Biden that reads "Man I haven't seen gas prices this high since the last Democrat was in office." Anyone who posted it had the meme automatically grayed out and it was labeled "false" with a note claiming gas prices were high due to generic "supply issues."[787]

They even "fact check" the popular meme of Martin Luther King wearing a MAGA hat, claiming that his political affiliation isn't known.[788] Like all platforms, they use a Content ID system to automatically scan every image and video that's uploaded, and they have an entire library of memes the moderators have set to be flagged. Satirical articles from *The Babylon Bee* even get the same "fact check" in order to censor their mockery of Liberals.[789]

Another ridiculously false "fact check" that was integrated into Facebook's automatic system by *USA Today*, one of their "trusted" partners, claimed it was fake news that a thug named Jacob Blake was armed at the time he got himself shot by police in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He's the thug whose shooting sparked the Black Lives Matter riots there shortly after, which led to Kyle Rittenhouse having to defend himself when he was attacked by the angry mob.

Anyone who posted that Jacob Blake was armed with a knife (which he was) had their posts flagged as "false" and penalties placed on their accounts. Not only did police say he had a knife on him at the time of the shooting, but it could be seen on video, and later during an interview with *Good Morning America* he admitted the obvious—that he was armed with a knife when police shot him.[790] But Facebook tried to protect the false narrative that another "unarmed" Black man just happened to get shot by police who must have been racist.

Facebook also “fact checked” a true claim that Donald Trump made about Kyle Rittenhouse when he said that videos showed he was trying to get away from the mob when they attacked him.[791] Anyone who followed that story closely saw those videos which went viral that same night, but Facebook was censoring posts that defended Rittenhouse or showed he acted in self-defense, deeming him a “mass shooter,” and supporting or praising such individuals is a violation of their terms of service.[792]

Rittenhouse himself was banned from Facebook after his arrest, so he couldn’t even defend himself on the platform while the media, Democrats in Congress, and countless others online kept smearing him as a White supremacist and a mass murderer.[793]

One of the most hilarious fake “fact checks” happened after CNN made Joe Rogan look green when they aired a video he posted on Instagram announcing that he had tested positive for coronavirus. He wasn’t vaccinated, so the media tried to rub it in that he got sick by making him look deathly ill by drastically altering the color of his video even though he only had mild symptoms because he got the monoclonal antibody treatment right away.

“No evidence video color was manipulated in CNN news segment,” claimed the fact checkers,[794] but if you looked at the original video he uploaded to Instagram side by side with the one CNN aired (which is still up on their YouTube channel) he looks almost as green as the Incredible Hulk.[795] It’s cartoonishly altered, and there’s no reasonable explanation for it other than it was done on purpose, just like discoloring footage of political opponents in campaign ads—a common tactic used to cast them in a negative light.

Candace Owens sued the “fact checkers” because after receiving several “strikes” for posting supposedly false content then pages get demonetized just like YouTube channels—harming the livelihoods of content creators.[796] John Stossel also sued Facebook for over $2 million dollars claiming their fake “fact checks” were defamatory after they had declared several posts of his to be “false” (that were not), but a judge dismissed his lawsuit at the end of 2022 claiming that the “fact checks” are only a “subjective judgment about the accuracy and reliability of assertions.”[797]

Note the judge's claims that the "fact checks" were "subjective," not *objective*. In other words, the supposed "fact checks" were just *opinions*. The judge's ruling goes on to say, "Simply because the process by which content is assessed and a label applied is called a 'fact-check' does not mean that the assessment itself is an actionable statement of objective fact."[798]

So a judge ruled the "fact checks" are B.S. but Facebook is allowed to still use them to censor and suppress factual information, without facing any consequences. Candace Owens' lawsuit was also thrown out by a judge for similar bogus reasons.[799]

Elon Musk Tries to Save Twitter

Twitter (now rebranded as X by Elon Musk, but will still be referred to as Twitter for the sake of this discussion) often drives the news cycle. What trends on Twitter, makes headlines because lazy journalists looking for a new story to write just have to scroll through Twitter for a few minutes and see what's trending and figure that would be a good topic since so many people are talking about it.

So, activists make it their mission to get topics or hashtags to trend in order to promote their cause, and of course for years Twitter manually inserted topics into the list to create a self-fulfilling prophecy. People thought the topic was popular because it was on the trending list, so they start tweeting about it, which then caused it to become popular.

It appears this manipulation stopped soon after Elon Musk purchased the platform, but since its launch in 2006 this was an extremely powerful method of directing news cycles, especially since Twitter has been predominantly a news platform and is a favorite for "journalists," news junkies, and political activists. Equally powerful was the platform preventing topics from trending when they were so widely tweeted about the algorithm would have organically included them on the list. Under Jack Dorsey's leadership (and later Parag Agrawal) the company regularly suppressed topics from trending that they didn't want to become bigger issues.

The platform is largely considered to be the digital public square where people argue and try to dunk on each other's stupid tweets, and its very design incentivizes dogpiling, which can instantly flood someone's mentions with an endless stream of mockery and this is why it's often used by activists to cancel people. A small group of people can easily whip up an online mob and flood a business's mentions with angry demands that someone be fired or they drop a certain product or stop advertising on certain TV shows or podcasts.

While once perhaps the least strict platform in terms of censorship, it slowly fell in lock step with the same policies of the other major platforms—banning "misgendering" transgender people (which means not using their preferred pronouns) and suspending people for "homophobic," "Islamophobic," or "antisemitic" tweets.[800]

Then in April 2022, Elon Musk—the richest man in the world at the time, made an official offer to buy Twitter for a shocking $44 billion dollars. And perhaps even more shocking—the board of directors approved the offer. But as soon as the wheels were in motion to get the legalities ironed out, the entire Liberal media machine completely freaked out over the thought of Musk, who had been clear about his support for free speech (and even saying he would reinstate Donald Trump's account), now loosening restrictions and restoring Twitter to its glory days.

The Washington Post denounced Musk's pending takeover, saying "we need regulation of social-media platforms to prevent rich people from controlling our channels of communication."[801] Of course rich people had controlled our channels of communication for nearly two decades. People like Mark Zuckerberg, and the executives at Twitter and YouTube.

What the *Washington Post* meant was they wanted the government to prevent Elon from allowing free speech—since he obviously had a very different philosophy about content moderation, and the mainstream media was scared to death that Conservatives may be able to leverage the platform to promote their agenda just like Liberals had been doing on Twitter since its inception.

Axios, a popular online outlet, said "The world's richest man—someone who used to be compared to Marvel's *Iron Man*—is increasingly behaving like a movie supervillain, commanding seemingly unlimited resources with which to finance his mischief-making."[802] Allowing discussions critical of transgenderism and not using the platform to artificially amplify Liberal agendas was unthinkable to these people.

MSNBC's Ari Melber complained that Elon might amplify right-wing content, and suppress Liberals—which is obviously the very manipulation tactics the platform had been doing under the leadership of Jack Dorsey and Parag Agrawal for years.[803]

CNN's David Zurawik, who is also a professor of Media Studies at Groucher College, said Elon Musk running Twitter would be "dangerous" and pushed for government regulation of "hate speech" like in Europe.

"You need regulation. You cannot let these guys control discourse in this country or we are headed to hell. We are there. Trump opened the gates of hell and now they're chasing us down."[804]

The Justice Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission launched a joint investigation into Elon Musk and his actions at Tesla.[805] Elon even became a victim of the MeToo movement, where women accuse rich and famous men of "sexual harassment" they say occurred many years earlier to essentially blackmail the men into paying them money to go away. A settlement Elon Musk had paid out from years earlier leaked to the media once he fell under the crosshairs of the Establishment for his plans to allow free speech on Twitter. Seven women would come to sue Elon for alleged "sexual harassment."[806]

Such lawsuits are common for celebrities even if they never did anything wrong because unscrupulous women figure they can get a decent settlement to make the problem go away and as counterintuitive as it may seem, it's often cheaper (and quicker) for the celebrities to pay out settlements than defend themselves in court.

Elon used to be a marvel of the world, but was now hated by half of the U.S. population who saw him as the man who would allow "Nazis" (like Donald Trump) to have Twitter accounts. And Elon would soon learn that he had dramatically underestimated the complexities of running a social media company, especially in the "woke" age of mass censorship. He never imagined the forces that would be unleashed trying to destroy him.

Elon Restores (Some) Banned Accounts

Soon after taking full ownership of the platform, Elon reinstated Donald Trump's account, although Trump had already launched his own social media platform Truth Social, so he hesitated to return to the platform because he was under obligation to Truth Social investors to use that platform exclusively for a set period of time.[807]

Jonathan Greenblatt, the head of the ADL, denounced Elon's decision as "dangerous and a threat to American democracy," and then insinuated that Twitter should be banned from the Internet, saying, "We need to ask—is it time for Twitter to go?"[808] And he wasn't just making idle threats. Efforts were underway hoping to ban Twitter from the App Stores.[809]

Elon also restored over 12,000 accounts which had been banned under false pretenses, including poplar Conservatives, who—while not being household names, had built up rather large followings on the platform.[810] He also started releasing internal communications showing top executives who had previously run the company having discussions about banning popular accounts including Donald Trump's, as well as discussions about censoring the Hunter Biden laptop story and other (accurate) tweets about COVID-19 related issues.[811]

Elon would later say, "To be totally frank, almost every conspiracy theory that people had about Twitter turned out to be true."[812] But despite restoring thousands of wrongfully banned accounts (including Donald Trump's) and loosening the terms of service and ending the partisan manipulation of the trending list, Elon's claims of being a "free speech absolutist" are false.[813]

When a user recommended he restore Alex Jones' account, he responded "No." And then later in the day doubled down saying "too bad" when someone else in the thread tweeted that bringing back Alex Jones should be the litmus test of him allowing free speech.[814]

When he was pressed even further about restoring Jones' account, Elon tweeted that he has "no mercy" for Jones because of his conspiracy theories surrounding the mass shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School.[815] Even though Jones' comments were insane, they weren't why he was banned from Twitter. He was banned for confronting CNN's Oliver Darcy in the halls of Congress in 2018 outside of a hearing about social media censorship which he live-streamed on Twitter through their Periscope app.[816] Twitter deemed it "harassment," but video of the interaction shows Jones was rather calm and wasn't even being disruptive.

Many thought perhaps Elon would change his mind in the future and allow Alex Jones back on because his policy decisions have been anything but consistent or principled, and he changes his mind more often than the way the wind blows. But a full year after taking over the platform, Alex Jones' ban remains.[817] Allowing him back on would be a PR nightmare, and even Jones has said he doesn't hold it against Elon because he's facing enough problems as it is.

But how is Twitter banning him from having an account any different than Verizon or AT&T not allowing him to have cell service because they don't like what he says? If he's not breaking the law by the things he posts (which he's clearly not) then why is he denied access to the basic communication tools available to everyone else?

He also never restored the accounts of Proud Boys founder Gavin McInnis and other high-profile controversial figures, including pro-White advocates like Jared Taylor, professor Kevin MacDonald,[818] and David Duke who all had Twitter accounts for years before eventually getting banned.[819] Nick Fuentes, a young controversial figure who built up a sizable dedicated fanbase of Conservative Zoomers (generation Z kids) had his Twitter account initially restored after Elon took over, but was permanently banned again within 24 hours after he said he loved Hitler during a Twitter Space, the group audio chat feature.[820]

While I'm certainly not defending his incendiary rhetoric nor his support for Hitler, it is interesting to note that Leftists are allowed to praise murderous communist dictators like Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Pol Pot. Many of them are quite open about their admiration of such figures and that never seems to be a violation of the terms of service. Nor is open support for communism (which killed more people than Nazism), and while posting swastikas is strictly forbidden (unless done so with condemnation or for editorial purposes), communist and Marxist groups like Antifa are allowed to post hammer and sickle flags and openly promote their ideology.

The Future of X

The future of Twitter (famously renamed X in July 2023) remains to be seen. Elon has made some great changes (restoring thousands of accounts and loosening many of the restrictions on what people are allowed to post), but he has also made some rash and dumb decisions—like selling verification checkmarks to any account that paid $8 a month without actually verifying the identity of the accounts, leading to a wave of impersonations (and hilarious parody accounts), causing him to pause the scheme less than 24 hours later and revert back to the standard procedure of actually confirming account holders' identities before issuing the blue check signifying they're "verified."[821]

He once announced a new policy banning all links to content on other social media platforms because he didn't want anyone driving traffic to a competitor, only to reverse his decision (again within 24 hours) upon realizing the backlash and mockery over the idea, since it would be absurd and contrary to the core principles of social media to prevent people from linking to a Facebook post or Instagram photo.[822]

Elon often doesn't take into account feedback of others, even concerns of executives in the company who have extensive knowledge and experience before making dramatic changes that anyone else could have foreseen would cause massive problems (like selling verification checkmarks to accounts without actually verifying them) because he relies so heavily on his own instincts and intuition. This management style is often a double-edged sword extremely successful people wield because while this strategy can often work, it also leads them to further discount the doubts and concerns of others, which can result in them stumbling into obvious pitfalls that they themselves are blind to.

He wants X to be the "everything app" or a super app, which enables voice and video calls and the ability to send payments to others just like Venmo and CashApp; and perhaps even incorporate brokerage accounts for people to trade stocks, and possibly even online marketplaces like Amazon and eBay.

But because of the immense opposition to Elon allowing so many once-banned users and topics (like “misgendering” trans people, which means using pronouns other than the ones they demand people refer to them as—something that was strictly forbidden under the previous ownership and is a violation of the terms of service on all the other Big Tech platforms), it may be difficult for him to sustain enough revenue sources to keep the app financially viable in the face of ongoing boycotts and attempts to sabotage him.

The platform experienced a massive revenue loss once Elon first took it over because many major advertisers fled out of fear it would now allow “hate speech,” and “racism” would be allowed to flourish, mostly due to the Liberal media churning out a bunch of hit pieces and lying about what Elon’s ownership would entail.

Then he tried to increase revenue through subscription services like Twitter Blue (now called X Premium) which gives users a verification checkmark and some other features like the ability to post longer tweets instead of the standard 280 characters, and edit them after they’re posted. And despite Elon bringing aboard a new CEO from the advertising industry, Linda Yaccarino, the company continued to struggle financially.[823]

Hopefully he can maintain and grow the platform without further compromising on his support of free speech (remember, he already won’t allow Alex Jones, professor Kevin MacDonald, Jared Taylor, and others to use it) and it’s going to be impossible to keep everyone happy. Social media is no longer just a neat new technology for communication online. It’s an information warfare tool used to drive news cycles and shape the culture, and Elon liberating it from the Big Tech oligarchs (despite his shortcomings) isn’t going over very well with the powers that be.

The smears against him and the platform are relentless, with “journalists” and activist groups constantly searching for offensive or “hateful” posts and then framing stories as if “dangerous hate speech” is proliferating the entire ecosystem.

If he isn’t able to make it profitable in the long term then X may end up back in the hands of another Silicon Valley social justice warrior like Mark Zuckerberg who will implement the same strict policies as usual, and go right back to using its power to shape public opinion and stifle debates in hopes of imposing their own values and agendas onto the world as they do on all the other mainstream platforms.

Coming After TV Stations

The Left weren't happy with the widespread censorship of certain topics and deplatforming of individuals from the virtual town squares of Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, so they're trying to do more. Their agenda of stamping out influential opposition to the New World Order was working so well they decided to take things even further and hoped to get Fox News, Newsmax, and OAN taken off cable and satellite TV.

CNN's Oliver Darcy, the weasel-looking creature who worked as Brian Stelter's sidekick until he was fired in August 2022, helped amplify the idea. "Somehow, these companies have escaped scrutiny and entirely dodged this conversation. That should not be the case anymore," he said.[824]

He then put out a call to action, saying "it is time TV carriers face questions for lending their platforms to dishonest companies that profit off of disinformation and conspiracy theories. After all, it was the very lies that Fox, Newsmax, and OAN spread that helped prime President Trump's supporters into not believing the truth: that he lost an honest and fair election."[825]

The editor-in-chief of *The Verge*, an online outlet owned by Vox Media, had also called for Fox News to be taken off the air several years earlier, saying, "I feel like we should be just as comfortable asking Comcast and Verizon and Charter why they continue to offer Fox News on their networks as we are about Facebook and Alex Jones."[826] At the time, few had even thought of such an idea, or weren't so bold to try, but recently the calls to pull Fox News, Newsmax, and OAN from the air have been growing.

DirecTV would later drop OAN in April 2022, which accounted for 90% of their revenue through what are called carriage fees, which are payments cable and satellite providers pay to channels on their service because being on the system is an incentive for people to subscribe.[827] Their removal was celebrated by many on the Left, including NAACP President Derrick Johnson who called it "a victory for us and the future of democracy."[828] Eliminating the free press in America is a "victory" in his mind!

Compounding their problems was a lawsuit OAN faced after being sued for one billion dollars by the Dominion electronic voting machine company. Then a few months later Verizon dropped them from their TV service (called Fios) too.[829] Newsmax was dropped from DirecTV in January 2023 but later picked back up again two months later after they came to a new agreement, perhaps in part due to Republicans boycotting the company once they were dropped.

While only bringing in a small fraction of Fox News's audience at the time, Newsmax has grown into a formidable competitor to Fox and has been gaining former Fox News viewers who prefer Newsmax because programming tends to be further to the right. And after Tucker Carlson was fired without any reason being given, even more people left Fox for Newsmax.[830]

A woman named Gigi Sohn, who President Joe Biden nominated to be one of the five FCC Commissioners, had previously called Fox News "state propaganda" and suggested the Federal Communications Commission should pull the broadcast license for Sinclair media's television stations—a Conservative leaning company that owns and operates nearly 300 local news stations across America.[831]

Luckily after her hatred of Conservative media went viral, she withdrew her nomination (claiming she was the "victim of cruel attacks."[832] But the fact that such a Left-wing extremist would be nominated in the first place to sit as an FCC commissioner and oversee television and radio broadcast licenses is stunning.

Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez called on the FCC to pull Tucker Carlson off the air, claiming he "clearly incites violence," but she's so dumb she doesn't know that the Fox News channel isn't governed by the FCC, only over the air broadcast stations are (not cable). But Tucker Carlson was fired by Fox News just a few days later, which she celebrated on an Instagram livestream where she said "Deplatforming works," and used the event to fundraise.[833]

Pulling Fox News from cable systems and satellite TV providers will never happen, but it happened to OAN because they're too far to the right and their news and commentary is seen as more threatening to the Establishment's order. And it did happen to Newsmax, although they returned a few months later after the backlash, and the fact that Democrats have even proposed the idea of banning television stations is a shocking indication of just how un-American they are, and how far they’re willing to go in hopes of silencing their opposition.

Banning Books

While Democrats claim Republicans are “banning books” because they don’t want pornographic and pedophilic material in school libraries, they’re actually the ones who have been working to censor books and ban them from even being sold to adults. But as you’ll see, the brand name “free speech” activists will only ring the alarm when certain books are banned from Amazon (and Barnes & Noble) and stay fearfully silent when it happens to others.

In 2018 Amazon banned a children’s book called *No Dress for Timmy* which is about a boy who refuses to go along with supporting gender-bending at his school, but that didn’t make any major headlines and was only mentioned in a few small blogs.[834] This was back when most brand name Conservatives were still afraid to speak out against transgenderism and drag queen story hour, so only a few YouTubers (myself included) covered this story at the time.

As the years went on however, transgenderism became a major political and cultural issue, and once Conservatives realized the queers are coming for the children, then finally the stigma around aggressively opposing the trans agenda had ended.

In 2021 Amazon banned a book titled *When Harry Became Sally* which did generate major headlines and got the attention from numerous Republican members of Congress who denounced the censorship, prompting Amazon to break their silence about deleting the book’s listing saying they would now ban any book that equated transgenderism or any LGBTQ “identity” with mental illness.[835]

In 2022 a recording of an Amazon Zoom meeting was leaked showing employees complaining about Matt Walsh’s children’s book *Johnny The Walrus* which is about a boy who decides he wants to be a walrus, mocking the gender-bending craze.[836] One of the employees on the call broke down into tears and said the book is causing "trauma" to transgender employees and pushed for it to be banned.[837]

Then during the company's LGBTQ Pride celebration that year several employees staged a "die-in" where they laid on the ground pretending to be dead to protest the sale of "transphobic" books like *Johnny the Walrus* and *Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters* by Abigail Shrier, which discusses rapid-onset gender dysphoria.[838] Surprisingly those titles have not been banned, at least at the time this book was published at the end of 2023.

And while the brand name activists on Twitter, hosts on Fox News and Newsmax, popular YouTubers "fighting the culture war," and members of Congress denounced Amazon banning *When Harry Became Sally* and the company's new policy forbidding certain anti-LGBTQ books, they all remain silent about other material Amazon (and Barnes & Noble) have banned. Professor emeritus Kevin MacDonald, a sociologist from California State University Long Beach, had his magnum opus *Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* banned in March 2019.[839] Another one of his books titled *Cultural Insurrections: Essays on Western Civilization, Jewish Influence, and Anti-Semitism* was banned at the same time.[840]

The books, as you can probably tell from their titles, cover a taboo topic, and despite being written by a California State University professor, they have been deemed "antisemitic" by the ADL, so both Amazon and Barnes & Noble quietly banned them. They don't just refuse to stock them —they are completely banned, and used copies aren't allowed to be listed by third parties either.[841]

They had been in stock and sold for years, but as cancel culture kept gaining momentum, the censorship of content shifted from social media platforms to podcasts, and then ultimately books. But zero mainstream Conservatives noticed or spoke out against professor MacDonald's books being banned out of fear that they would have been accused of supporting "antisemitism."

Jared Taylor's book *White Identity: Racial Consciousness in the 21st Century* was also banned from Amazon and Barnes & Noble in 2019.[842] Since 1994 he has held his American Renaissance conference ever other year (falsely labeled a "White supremacist" gathering by the media, the

SPLC, and the ADL) where he and other speakers discuss some of the problems multicultural societies face and advocate that White people should demand the same rights and opportunities as other ethnic groups in the United States.[843]

Around this same time Amazon also quietly banned David Duke's autobiography *My Awakening* and his other book *Jewish Supremacy,* which details what he believes is a Jewish supremacist belief system at the core of Jewish culture.[844] It's extremely politically incorrect to accuse members of any ethnic group other than White people of believing they are superior to others. Admitting that Black supremacy exists is called "racist," but pointing out that many Jewish people believe in their own ethnic superiority is even worse—that's "antisemitism."

Theologian Martin Luther, who is responsible for the Protestant Reformation (he famously nailed his *Ninety-five Theses* to the door of the Catholic Church in 1517 challenging them on their authority), later wrote a book very critical of Jews as well, called *On The Jews and Their Lies* which has been in print ever since it was first published in 1543, and in stock on Amazon for years until around this same time when it too was banned after pressure from Jewish groups.[845]

Amazon also banned *Jewish History, Jewish Religion: The Weight of Three Thousands Years* (1994) written by Israel Shahak who is not only a Jew (or was, since he died in 2001), but he was also a Holocaust survivor who was kept at a concentration camp in Poland, and after World War II moved to Israel where he later became an organic chemistry professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem.[846] Despite being Jewish (and a citizen of Israel) he was very critical of the human rights violations against the Palestinians, Zionism, ethnocentrism in Judaism, and Jewish supremacists.[847]

The foreword to the first edition was written by Gore Vidal and the book was endorsed by Noam Chomsky, Edward Said, and other popular human rights activists.[848] So nobody can lump him in with David Duke and other supposed "White nationalists." But Israel Shahak's book has also been deemed "antisemitic" so it was quietly deleted from Amazon after being listed for over two decades.[849]

Anyone can order books critical of Christianity, Catholicism, Mormonism, the Jehovah Witness cult (not to mention White people and whiteness) but certain books a little too critical of Jews, Judaism, or Jewish involvement in political movements and ones that focus on "Jewish bankers" have quietly vanished.[850]

But again, none of the "free speech culture warriors" like Ben Shapiro, Charlie Kirk, Glenn Greenwald, or even Tucker Carlson denounced the censorship of these books. The brand name Conservative Twitter personalities and YouTubers who host shows funded or produced by Turning Point USA, The Blaze, The Daily Wire, and PragerU were all silent as well.

All books promoting White nationalism and the Alt-Right have also been banned, including *The White Nationalist Manifesto*, *New Right vs. Old Right*, and *The Alternative Right* by Greg Johnson which documents the rise and fall of the movement.[851] (All purged in February 2019.)[852] Another popular one in the genre called *A Fair Hearing: The Alt-Right in the Words of Its Members and Leaders* was also banned from both Amazon and Barnes & Noble.[853]

None of these books call for any violence or even suggest it, but because they're essentially pro-White, they've been deemed "White supremacist" material, and the publishers are now forbidden from listing them for sale on the two biggest bookseller websites in the world.

Black nationalist books however, are allowed, with several exceptions published by the Nation of Islam which were removed—not for antiwhiteism, but for "antisemitism."[854] Amazon certainly wouldn't ban Malcom X's autobiography, even though he was a Black nationalist and called for racial separatism and wanted to create a Black-only region of the United States.[855] Countless books by Black Lives Matter activists and other "Black Power" advocates argue for Black-only spaces and support racial segregation so they don't have to deal with any White people anymore—and that's just fine.

Activist groups are even targeting other, lesser known online book retailers like ThriftBooks.com, BooksAMillion.com and BetterWorldBooks.com, as well as eBay, pressuring them to ban the sale of used copies of such books.[856] To be clear, I'm not endorsing these books, the Alt-Right, or the idea of creating a White ethnostate, which is just a nostalgic pipe dream—an impossible endeavor and a fantasy held on to by those who wish to return to an era that has long since past. Anyone who believes such a thing is even remotely possible at this point in civilization is either just dreaming or delusional.

But why shouldn't people be able to read what such authors have to say? Especially since they're not calling for any kind of violence at all, and in fact specifically condemn it, arguing it would only reflect negatively on those who hold their views and ostracize others from listening to them. Most are just expressing their view as White people who are increasingly becoming marginalized and demonized simply for existing, and don't want any kind of violent conflicts at all. And you have to admit it's odd that Amazon sells literal bomb-making manuals like the *Anarchist Cookbook* (and Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*) but won't allow the sale of David Duke's autobiography or Jared Taylor's book because they talk about White Identity.

In 2015, I posted a video on my YouTube channel showing me approaching random people on a southern California boardwalk and asking them if they would sign a petition demanding Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble both stop selling the *Bible* because it promotes "homophobia" and is too "offensive." Many gladly did.[857] I repeated the same experiment again over five years later with the same results.[858]

You may have seen the videos, but the analytics show that only about 15% of subscribers to a YouTube channel watch any given video that's uploaded, so I mention them here because I think it's critically important to understand just how normalized the idea of banning books has become among the Left, to the point that many of them are willing to go along with banning the Bible!

First Amendment Doesn't Apply

A detailed discussion of censorship on social media would fill hundreds of pages, and I documented the history of it in my previous books *The Liberal Media Industrial Complex* and *The True Story of Fake News* which you should read if you haven't already because it's important to be familiar with the different phases the platforms have gone through—and how much they have changed, and why.

When the censorship first started it was "only" social media personalities who weren't household names but who had amassed followings of hundreds of thousands of people that were getting suspended and banned. Little to no news articles were written about them when it happened. No Republican members of Congress tweeted about them. They weren't invited on Fox News for a segment to talk about it. Only others in their online community seemed to notice or care.

Those of us who saw the writing on the wall did our best to ring the alarm bell about the growing problem, but it really wasn't until the Hunter Biden laptop story was blocked on social media (and *The New York Post* suspended from Twitter) that censorship became a major concern for the Republican Party.

Because the First Amendment only protects free speech from being censored by the government and not corporations which control telecommunication technologies and social media platforms, people have little recourse and are held over a barrel by the selectively enforced "terms of service" and the whims of faceless moderators who can ban anyone they want for any reason.

Seeing the problem early on, however, were numerous entrepreneurs who staunchly support free speech so they worked to create platforms by basically cloning the features of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube but applying the type of content moderation policies that the Big Tech platforms used to have before they started massively restricting what people are allowed to post.

And while Rumble, Odysee, BitChute, Gab, Gettr, Truth Social, MeWe, Telegram, and others haven't gained the widespread user bases of the Big Tech platforms, millions of people use them, and they are invaluable tools for free speech despite how "niche" they may be.

The Washington Post wrote an entire article complaining about Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene's reach on the alt-tech platforms after her personal account was banned from Twitter in early 2022 for "repeated violations" of their COVID "misinformation" policy. *The Post* was stunned that she continued to reach hundreds of thousands of people.[859] Her Twitter account was among those later restored by Elon Musk, but that's beside the point. Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram continue to severely restrict what users can say, and who can even use their platforms.

And Rumble will likely cave to the demands of the app stores regarding banning certain individuals and content, but as we've seen with Amazon banning various controversial books, the brand name Conservatives will likely say nothing about it and go on pretending it's a "free speech" platform because they can make fun of transgender people.[860] Those who touch certain third rail issues about things like White Identitarianism or Jewish power will never have their free speech rights defended by any Conservative Inc. pundits.

It's possible that we can shift the culture enough to cause the pendulum to start swinging back the other direction and get the Big Tech platforms to ease up on their censorship (at least regarding *some* issues). But it's likely they'll get even more strict and more manipulative, especially as our society becomes more polarized with each side digging in to their positions and difficult issues regarding race and transgenderism dominating the political landscape.

If they continue with the current trend, the so-called alt-tech platforms are only going to gain more users which may cause Leftists to look for their vulnerabilities, trying to get them banned from the app stores (like they already did with Gab and BitChute). Activist organizations have even gone after hosting services trying to get the websites banned too, as well as payment processors, and even banks (issues that Gab has been facing for years).[861]

They may never stop scheming, and for many years now the Left has wanted to criminalize "hate speech" in America, just like other supposed "free" countries around the world have—including Canada,[862] Germany,[863] England,[864] Scotland,[865] and others. These countries arrest people for posting "hate speech" on social media. Not death threats or harassment (which any reasonable person can agree should be illegal, and is), but things like insulting gay people, or being too critical of the Islamization of Europe from all the Muslim refugees that have flooded the West, or for posts deemed "antisemitic" (anti-Christian hate speech is always allowed though).[866]

To list the cases of people arrested for such "violations" (which include jokes) would be too long, but America should be aware that such things are happening in other western countries, and it should serve as a warning of what could happen here. There's a reason the freedom of speech is protected by the *First* Amendment—because it's the most important right we have, and it must be protected at all costs.

Cowardly Conservatives

Starting shortly after the turn of the 21st century most Republican members of Congress and mainstream Conservative pundits became cowards when dealing with social issues. They suddenly became afraid of being called "homophobic" for denouncing the widespread sexual perversions which are now commonplace in society, and almost as afraid to be called a "racist" for pointing out the Black Crime problem in America or denouncing antiwhiteism.

As our culture continued to rapidly decay with brazen degeneracy being thrust into the mainstream by Leftists in Hollywood and boosted by the Big Tech social media platforms, most Conservative "leaders" stayed silent, continuously self-censoring themselves hoping to avoid any backlash from the Liberal Media Industrial Complex.

Instead, all they talked about were "tax cuts for the middle class" and how they were trying to prevent jobs from being outsourced to foreign countries; and while those are great policies, their focus came at a tremendous cost to the culture which is just as important, if not more so than economics and the job market. People can usually find a new job and get by with less if they have to cut their budget, but once the culture becomes polluted, it's like a poisoned well, and anyone who drinks from it is in danger of getting sick or dying.

But after two decades of quietly watching from the sidelines as the poison was poured in, the sleeping giant of "reactionaries" finally awakened. The Left had pushed too many people too far. Although time will tell whether or not the awakening was too late. Despite Republican "firebrands" like Matt Gaetz, Marjorie Taylor Greene, and Lauren Boebert getting involved in the culture war (to some extent, at least), most politicians and political commentators are still only doing so half-heartedly and walking on eggshells hoping to avoid being labeled "far right," "homophobic," "White nationalist," and the other list of labels the Left usually tries to stick on their enemies.

One of the problems that led the Republican Establishment to become so cowardly is they morphed into a Big Tent Party, meaning one that attempts to attract as wide range of groups and voters as possible under one banner, but that means not taking a firm stance on certain issues because being “too Conservative” may scare some new people away who the party is trying to attract. “Too Conservative,” meaning still supporting various issues that were core values in the Republican Party in previous generations but ones they’ve slowly backed away from as society has gotten more tolerant of liberalism.

So they water down their message, hoping to gain the support of first-time voters and that of moderates, independents, and some disaffected Democrats while taking for granted those who have usually supported them in the past.

The brand name Republicans, “Conservative Inc.,” or the “Corporate Conservatives”—whatever name you want to attach to the Republican Establishment and their mouth pieces, have increased the size of the tent for “conservatism” so big that it became a circus. And because the Republican Party has become dramatically more socially Liberal over the last twenty years, there’s a saying among *real* Conservatives (Paleoconservatives) that the only difference between Liberals and mainstream Conservatives is ten years.

The Republican Establishment functions as a political ratchet, meaning they allow the Democrats to keep moving society slowly to the left while putting up *some* resistance trying to stop it, but they rarely (if ever) turn things back to the right.

Similarly, the political commentators who work for the brand name outlets (or are trying to build up their followers on social media in hopes of one day joining them) usually function as a false opposition and pretend to be antiestablishment by criticizing a few common points of contention people often have about Congress or the media in general trying to create the impression that they’re not part of the club, while either toeing the party line on every other issue or carefully avoiding going against others that are clearly core Establishment positions.[867]

Pandering To Blacks

There's an old joke about Republicans that goes: *What do you call the one Black guy at a Republican conference?—The keynote speaker!* Just like Republicans now pander to the gay community and go out of their way trying to show that they're not "homophobic" hoping to gain the support of what is just a tiny fraction of the electorate, they also pander to Black people and shamelessly try to prove that they're not "racist," playing the same game Democrats have been engaged in for decades.

Our party has great Black people like Larry Elder, David Webb, Ben Carson, Tim Scott, Byron Donalds, Candace Owens, and others, so there's no need to pander to them in hopes of showing how "diverse" the Republican Party is. If they like our ideas and our values, they'll vote Republican. There shouldn't be a focus on what the Republican Party can do "for Black people."

Older Black people tend to be socially Conservative because of their history with the church, but have historically voted Democrat for economic reasons because Democrats appeal to lower income voters through promises of social welfare programs. But seeing the Democrat Party embracing all kinds of LGBTQ nonsense should be enough to bring many of them over to the Republican side because Black people overwhelmingly do not support gay "marriage" or transgenderism. They also don't want their jobs taken by illegal aliens.

Pandering to Blacks by offering them more social welfare programs in their communities is only going to keep moving the Republican platform further to the left while marginalizing more White voters.

And sadly even Donald Trump pandered to Blacks with his "criminal justice reform" (the First Step Act) hoping to gain another few percentage of Black voters by virtue signaling that he was letting Black criminals out of prison early.[868] During his rallies the organizers strategically put people with "Blacks for Trump" shirts prominently in the background right behind him to signal to other Black people watching at home hoping to gain their support.

Republicans even chose a token Black man named Michael Steele to be the chairman of the Republican National Committee, who later betrayed the party, joining the anti-Trump Lincoln Project and became an MSNBC contributor where he criticizes everything Republicans do. Of course he didn't vote for Donald Trump in 2016 and endorsed Joe Biden in 2020, and wants Donald Trump to go to prison.

You get what you pay for, as the saying goes. If you buy something cheap, it's usually going to break after a short period of time and need to be replaced, costing more in the long run. And if you hire a token Black person trying to show how "inclusive" you are instead of hiring whoever is best qualified for the job, regardless of their race, it's always going to backfire. The Republican Party's first major affirmative action hire, Michael Steele, went from a top leadership position to a Democrat operative in the span of just a few years. Such disastrous outcomes could easily be avoided by not even playing the diversity game.

CPAC, the biggest Conservative event in the political world, sucked up to a rapper named Young Pharaoh one year because they thought it would be cool to have a rapper on the stage in hopes of attracting more Black people to the Republican Party, but right before the event, CPAC canceled his appearance because some of his past "antisemitic" comments resurfaced.[869] And the one thing the Republican Party won't tolerate is criticism of Israel or Jews, so he was canceled. Like I said, affirmative action hires always end up being a disaster.

“Conservatives” Catering to Gays

The Republican Party is now more pro-gay than the Democrat Party was just over 10 years ago.[870] Even Barack Obama and Joe Biden opposed gay “marriage” until mid 2012.[871] Although when Obama was first running for president in 2008, he and his running mate Joe Biden opposed it, but once elected they both “evolved” their position and fully endorsed it, as did the entire Democrat Party. But back then nearly every Republican was firmly against it.[872] Today however, there are probably less than a half dozen Republican members of Congress who oppose it. And instead, the Republican Party has climbed aboard the gay Pride bandwagon.

Ronna McDaniel, chairwoman of the RNC, tweeted out a “Happy Pride Month” message in June 2021, adding that the GOP is proud to have “doubled our LGBTQ support over the last four years, and we will continue to grow our big tent.”[873] Fox News even started celebrating LGBTQ Pride Month in 2022 with at least nine segments that June featuring the “achievements” of queer people and highlighting how great “gay culture” is.[874]

“Meet important voices of the LGBTQ+ community. And go inside their incredible contributions,” one of the promos announced.[875] One of the stories was presented by Dana Perino who began the segment saying, “Pride Month continues as we highlight the story of Ryland Whittington whose journey of transitioning at age five has been seen by seven million people in a family YouTube video.”[876]

She went on to say the family hopes their experience can help convince others to support the idea of sex changes for children.[877] Fox News also highlighted a lesbian priest in the Episcopal church[878] and commemorated the first gay major league baseball player, Glenn Burke, who came out as gay back in the 1970s (and later died of AIDS).[879] What a surprise.

Fox News also hired Caitlyn Jenner in March 2022 as a contributor who appears on Sean Hannity's show and others to comment on issues that usually have nothing to do with transgender people at all.[880] At the time neither CNN or MSNBC had any transgender contributors on salary, so Fox News was the pioneer.

Richard Grenell was the first openly gay man to serve in a cabinet position after Donald Trump appointed him to the Director of National Intelligence. And practically every time his name was mentioned by Establishment Republicans as a "great" choice for the position, it was followed by them happily highlighting "he's gay" as a virtue signal about how "diverse" and "inclusive" the Republican Party was becoming.

What did his sexual orientation have to do with his ability to be an intelligence analyst and brief the President of the United States about national security matters? His personal life should have been no more of concern than someone who's divorced, or a bachelor—or a guy who prefers to date blondes. But Republican pundits on TV couldn't be happier talking about how great it was that he's the first gay person appointed to a cabinet position by either political party (Pete Buttigieg would later be the second).

And what did Richard Grenell do for conservatism in America? He led the effort to encourage President Trump to call for the "decriminalization of homosexuality" throughout the world because various countries in Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean (68 total in the world) still criminalize LGBT conduct and propaganda.[881] Of all the issues facing our country and the world, that was Richard Grenell's top priority.

Charlie Kirk, founder of the Republican college club Turning Point USA and one of the most prominent voices in the Conservative movement, has been a pied piper leading the next generation of Conservatives to accept gay "marriage" and even gay men adopting children as normal.

During an interview in 2018 with YouTuber Dave Rubin, Conservative Inc.'s token gay friend, he said "I think it's cool you're married. It's great. And you should have all the same tax benefits [as heterosexual couples], adopt children, it's great."[882] Many so-called Conservatives hold this position now, but what they fail to acknowledge is when children become involved it's not about what two consenting adults are doing in the privacy of their own bedroom anymore, it's about what they're subjecting innocent children to, and what kind of an environment they're forcing them to live in.

Charlie Kirk has also welcomed drag queens into the Republican Party, posing with one in a photo at PolitiCon in 2019 who goes by the name "Lady MAGA," a Trump-supporting drag queen, who in a normal society would have been kicked out of the event immediately, not having Charlie Kirk pose for a picture with him while smiling and giving a thumbs up.[883] We don't need any "drag queens for Trump" trying to show how queer-friendly the Republican Party is. They're the kind of people who are ruining our party.

During an event in 2019 called Culture War that Turning Point USA sponsored, an attendee asked Charlie Kirk how anal sex helps the culture war, referring to Turning Point hiring a token Black gay guy—Rob Smith (who was on stage with him at the time) and denounced Charlie's palling around with queers in attempts to paint the Republican Party as not being anti-gay. Kirk then said the question was "weird" and insinuated the guy who asked it is a closeted gay himself and struggling with his sexuality.[884]

Rob Smith echoed this attack saying, "You seem to be really interested in gay sex…I'm pretty sure if you're into that, you can go find somebody to do that with."[885] This is the same tactic gays have always used whenever someone expresses disgust with them, which if you follow their logic would mean anyone who is opposed to pedophiles is secretly a pedophile, or anyone who doesn't want to hear about their parents' sex lives is actually turned on by it.

Charlie Kirk also claims to be a Christian, yet has done more to normalize homosexuality in the Conservative movement than perhaps anyone else. The unofficial Republican Party stance is now that gays—and gay "marriage," and gay adoption, and gays buying children through surrogacy, and them serving in the military is just fine, and they only draw the line at transgenderism for children and transgenders competing in women's sports.

The Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) chairman Matt Schlapp was asked during an interview with a Catholic news organization called Church Militant if gay men should be allowed to adopt children, and he was so caught off guard he could barely speak. "Yes or no. Should gay men be allowed to adopt young boys?" asked the host Michael Voris. Matt Schlapp responded, "Oh boy, ya know…I don't…I don't even know what… what…does our Church fight those positions? And does the, I don't know, the, what the policy position is of the Church and…"[886]

The host cuts him off, "Well, the teaching of the Church is that two men shouldn't be together to begin with." Matt Schlapp responds "Yeah, I know what the Church teaches in terms of sexual ethics. But I don't know what it teaches, in terms, I don't know what it lobbies for in these legislative chambers. I would say this: Obviously, um, it is, ah, we've gotten to this position where we've gotten away from this idea that having a father and a mother is awfully important."[887]

A weak and pathetic answer from one of the most prominent "Conservatives" in America today. Less than a decade earlier such a response would end a Conservative's career, but the Republican Party has moved so far left that they now tacitly support such abominations and are scared to death to oppose them in the *extremely* rare case someone even asks them about these issues anymore.

When Dave Rubin announced he and his "husband" bought two babies from surrogates after obtaining eggs from a fertility clinic and having them artificially inseminated (one with each of their sperm), they were congratulated by many of the top brand names in the "Conservative" movement including PragerU, the prestigious Conservative institution,[888] along with The Blaze, Glenn Beck's media company,[889] Breitbart's senior editor-at-large Joel Pollak,[890] critical race theory "expert" Christopher Rufo,[891] Megyn Kelly,[892] Megan McCain,[893] Kat Timpf (who works on Greg Gutfeld's Fox News show),[894] and many others.

Imagine growing up as a child being raised by two gay men, and when you're old enough to start learning about where babies come from and ask them where your mom is, they tell you they don't know—and you'll never know because egg donors are completely private so those who purchase the eggs will never know, and not even the children themselves will know. That's what brand name Conservatives are now celebrating.[895]

Newsmax host Greg Kelly makes it clear in no uncertain terms that the U.S. military should go back to the old "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy basically forbidding gays from being allowed in the military at all because normal people don't want to get stuck in a unit with one (a Democrat policy, by the way, put in place by Bill Clinton in 1993).[896] But have any Fox News hosts made such a seemingly bold statement?

Have any Republican members of Congress said *anything* in opposition to Obama allowing gays into the military in the last ten years (or mentioned the disturbing number of rapes they’re committing)? Have any of them dared to oppose gay men adopting children? Or buying eggs from fertility clinics and renting surrogates who they have artificially inseminated, condemning the children to a life of never knowing who their mother is, and then further condemning the children to be raised by two men as their own narcissistic science project? Of course not. They’re all lukewarm cowards. They all accept it as normal.

Which begs the question, how much of the Republican base has abandoned the party and doesn’t even vote anymore because they’re sick of it basically just trailing the Democrat agenda by ten years? How many people got so fed up with the Republican Party steadily moving to the left that they’ve thrown up their hands and no longer support them out of frustration because they don’t feel they represent their interests and values anymore?

Neocons vs. Paleoconservatives

Few Conservatives today know that there are actually two basic kinds of conservatives, and the movement (along with the Republican Party) split into two different factions beginning back in the 1960s, resulting in the Neocons (Neo-conservatives or *new* Conservatives) taking control. Neocons are similar to RINOs (Republican in name only) but are particularly interested in foreign policy and are known for being war hawks who use the military industrial complex to intervene in the affairs of foreign countries to further the New World Order. They are globalists as opposed to nationalists, although they portray themselves as patriotic by flexing America's military power.

Paleoconservatives, on the other hand, are true Conservatives. They're the traditionalist Americans who tend to be Christian, oppose open borders and the LGBTQ agenda, and have a strong sense of national pride. Instead of being concerned with nation building in foreign countries, they prefer a more isolationist foreign policy and focus on localism. In other words, they don't support wars in the Middle East (like the War in Iraq), not just because they're almost always started by lies, but because they don't want the United States sticking its nose in other countries' business.

There are some other nuanced differences as well, such as Paleoconservatives tend to oppose free trade which they see as harming America's manufacturing sector by allowing cheap goods to be imported from foreign countries without making them pay tariffs, and instead support what's called trade protectionism.

The term *paleo* means older or ancient, just like the paleo diet refers to a diet humans are believed to have eaten during the Paleolithic Era (a long time ago), and is used to differentiate traditionalist or classical Conservatives from the new (or neo) Conservatives—the Neocons.[897] Ben Shapiro, for example, is a staunch Neocon who supported legalizing gay "marriage." He tries downplaying that position to Conservative audiences by saying he wouldn't personally attend a gay "wedding," but he does support it as an institution.

In response to someone who claimed he didn't, he answered "I've been libertarian on same-sex marriage for years, before Obergefell. But you couldn't be bothered to Google," referring to the 2015 Supreme Court case which ultimately legalized it.[898] Shapiro, like all Neocons, would also support any Middle Eastern war or military action that would either directly or indirectly protect Israel.

The Neocons were the ones who concocted the weapons of mass destruction hoax and the lie that Saddam Hussein had a relationship with al-Qaeda to dupe the American people (and the rest of the world) into going along with the invasion of Iraq in 2003 to carry out their Project for the New American Century. Three years earlier, the PNAC Neocon think tank had lamented their plan would be difficult "absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor."[899] The 9/11 attacks were their "New Pearl Harbor," and two years into the War on Terror the aim shifted from Afghanistan, where Osama Bin Laden was supposedly hiding out, to Iraq.

And contrary to popular belief, this wasn't just to "steal" their oil or preserve the petrodollar.[900] One of the main reasons was to protect Israel, "America's greatest ally,"[901] but you're not supposed to say this out loud though or post it on social media.[902] That's another "antisemitic trope" they say, so be careful.

In 1981 Israel bombed a nuclear reactor in Iraq out of concerns that the country would become a nuclear power and pose a danger to them since Iraq was allied with other Arab countries in the region during the Six-Day War (or the Third Arab-Israeli War) in 1967 which broke out as a result of ongoing hostilities between Israel and their Arab neighbors ever since the U.N. mandate in 1948 officially creating the State of Israel (which resulted in kicking 700,000 Palestinians out of their homes, an event known as the Palestinian expulsion).[903]

The Israeli-Palestine conflict is far beyond the scope of this book, but basically Israel remains concerned about its Arab neighbors, and Iraq was still considered a prime threat to them because of the possibility that they may acquire nuclear weapons in the future. So when George W. Bush was beating the war drums and saying Iraq posed a threat to the United States (which it didn't) and "our allies," he was talking about Israel.[904]

This is why Republicans like Mark Levin and others consider any talk about *Neocons* to be "antisemitic" and deem the word itself to be essentially an "antisemitic slur" because they want to protect Israel from the perception of having any influence over American foreign policy, despite AIPAC [the American Israel Public Affairs Committee]—a Jewish lobbying group that advocates for pro-Israeli policies, spending over $50 million dollars a year to do just that.[905]

And while publicly the standard political line from both Democrats and Republicans is that Israel is "America's greatest ally," privately—as the classified NSA documents leaked by Edward Snowden show, the country is considered a top espionage threat because of their "intelligence collection operations and manipulation/influence operations against the U.S. government, military, science & technology and Intelligence Community."[906]

Also, Al-Qaeda attacked the United States on 9/11, not because they "hate our freedom" as the Operation Mockingbird assets all sung in concert, but because of our financial and military backing of Israel which angers many Muslims around the world who side with the Palestinians in the ongoing territorial disputes in the region.[907] Inside job / false flag theories aside, this was still the case. One of the most prominent "conspiracy theories" of what happened is the LIHOP hypothesis, the "let it happen on purpose" theory, which doesn't negate Al-Qaeda's hatred for America or their involvement in planning and carrying out the attacks on 9/11 (even if they were aided and directed by the CIA or other intelligence agencies).

Years later when Congressman Ron Paul said that the attacks were "blowback for decades of US intervention in the Middle East" he was attacked for "blaming America," but the intelligence agencies and foreign policy experts all know the truth.[908]

This is why the Iranian government (and Muslim terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Hamas, etc.) call America the "Great Satan," and sometimes chant "Death to America."[909] No matter what side of the argument you're on (if any) regarding U.S. support for Israel, Zionism is explicitly a central part of Neoconservatism.[910]

Few people make the distinction anymore between Neocons and Paleoconservatives because the Neocons want to portray conservatism as if their kind of conservatism is the only kind, and try to frame Paleoconservatism (without using that term so people don't start looking into the Paleo/Neocon split) as an ancient relic like the idea of women being virgins on their wedding night—a political belief system that's no longer practical in our modern age.

William F. Buckley and his publication *The National Review* made it their goal to purge the Paleoconservatives from the Republican Party in the 1960s.[911] One of their prime targets was the John Birch Society which was formed in the late 1950s to oppose communism, but their hard stance against globalists, and globalist organizations like the United Nations, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Bilderberg Group was seen as a hindrance to the New World Order, so the Neocons strategically worked to exile them.

The remaining Paloeconservatives who survived William F. Buckley's purge in the 1960s were mostly pushed out of mainstream Republican politics in the early 1980s as the rift continued to grow. These were people such as Pat Buchanan, Paul Gottfried, Joseph Sobran, Samuel Francis, Russell Kirk, as well as organizations like the Rockford Institute and the Philadelphia Society.[912]

The John Birch Society is still in existence today, though just a shell of its former self, and hasn't had any significant power since the 1970s. So for decades the Neocons have been the ones steering much of the Republican Party until Donald Trump came on the scene igniting a populist movement and shaking the political establishment to its core, resulting in the all-out war to impeach and imprison him.

Although the term is rarely used to describe the MAGA movement, much of it is paleoconservative. And while there are now countless "Conservative" media outlets, few make any distinctions about just what type of conservatism they promote. There are some exceptions however, including *Taki's* magazine, *The New American* (published by the John Birch Society), *The American Conservative, Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*, the *Intercollegiate Review*, and a few others.

There are also some organizations dedicated to the philosophy, such as the Charlemagne Institute (the publisher of Chronicles magazine), VDARE, the Family Research Council, the American Family Association, the Conservative Caucus, as well as the Constitution Party, the American

Independent Party, and Gun Owners of America (a pro-2nd Amendment group that positions themselves further to the right than the NRA).

As mainstream conservatism in America continues to drift to the left we'll likely see a resurgence of paleoconservatism (even if it doesn't overtly use the term) as millions of Christians and Conservatives become activated and work to turn things back to the right, rejecting not just liberalism, but neoconservatism as well.

Politics as a Grift

There's a saying that every social cause starts off as a movement—then becomes a business, and then later turns into a grift (or swindle).[913] Not that long ago—in the 1990s, the Republican Party would have shunned many of the stars in "Conservative" media today. And any Republican that was afraid to take a Conservative stand on various issues (or adopted the same stance as the Democrats) would have been voted out of office.

If they started sucking up to resentful Black people who will forever hold a chip on their shoulder against Whites because of slavery 150 years ago, they would have been mocked for their pathetic pandering like Democrats. If Jews started complaining about Christmas celebrations at schools or the office, they would have been completely ignored, ridiculed, or told maybe they should move to Israel then. But today even most Christians are weak. And our weakness has only allowed our opponents to get stronger.

The moral, intellectual, and economic decay in the United States may be impossible to stop, let alone reverse, so sadly we may continue to see mainstream Republicans desperately clinging to power by adopting more positions held by Democrats. More social welfare programs for minorities, further embracing gays and transgenders; maybe even a universal basic income for those who are too lazy to hold down a job or maintain a career. At this point what has the mainstream Conservative movement even conserved?

I guess in their defense, the general population may have been slowly pushed so far left through cultural marxist Hollywood propaganda, social media molding their minds, and being raised in broken homes by single parents who were raised in a broken homes, and so on—the only way to hold onto any semblance of power on a national level may be to move left to the point where the Democrat Party used to stand as recent as the Obama administration, since Democrats have moved so far left they are literally marxists in comparison.

This problem brings us back to the Breitbart Doctrine, the idea popularized by Andrew Breitbart that politics is downstream from culture, meaning in order for political change (such as new bills to be passed into law) first the culture has to change, and people's sensibilities and tolerance for certain ideas or behaviors have to be primed to accept (or demand) them.

If there is any hope in saving America it starts in the home. It starts with building strong loving families which can then form into quality communities, which can extend into strong states, which can hopefully then come together into a strong country. But even if this is a pipe dream or a fool's errand, despite what happens to our own city, state, or country as whole, we can and must maintain our social circle of family and friends and still find joy and comfort from the simple things in life, no matter what we see on the news, social media, or coming out of Washington D.C.

Author's Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com or wherever you purchased it from to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them. Almost all of the one-star reviews on my books are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent, hence me adding this note.

These fraudulent ratings and reviews could also be part of a larger campaign trying to stop my message from spreading by attempting to tarnish my research through fake and defamatory reviews, so I really need your help to combat this as soon as possible.

Thank you!

Conclusion

Conservatives are traditionalists who realize that just because something is new, doesn't mean it's better. And when people rush into something new or try to reinvent the wheel, they often fall victim to the law of unintended consequences. Like when incandescent light bulbs were replaced by more energy efficient LED bulbs to help save electricity and reduce carbon emissions.

But in areas with a cold climate like Minnesota and New York, the snow can easily collect on the traffic lights, and since LED lights don't give off a lot of heat like the old incandescent ones, the snow doesn't melt—sometimes completely obscuring the lights at intersections and causing massive traffic problems.[914]

You've likely experienced updating your phone or computer's operating system to the "newest" and "best" software only to soon find major glitches that the developers overlooked which need to be fixed with *another* update they have to frantically release.[915] The same kinds of chaos occurs when Liberals try to overturn the natural social order and norms that the human race has been following since the beginning of time.

Marxists despise these practices because they despise everything normal. They're bitter and spiteful people who want to ruin others' fun because they themselves aren't having any. Like the fat girl at school who hates the lead cheerleader just because she's pretty and popular. Or someone who keys the paint of a nice car they see parked on the street because they're envious of the owner.

They're like the three-pack a day smoker coughing and wheezing from walking up a flight of stairs who then throw a fit when they're told that if they quit smoking it would really help. Liberals are in denial about their dysfunctional beliefs and behavior, and no matter how polite or well-intended criticism or advice is, they just get angry when people resist going along with them. But their problems aren't just affecting themselves. They're making society dysfunctional from their insistence that everyone else accept and celebrate their mental illnesses, perversions, laziness, and spitefulness.

And people who aren't afflicted with such disorders often cater to those who are in order to win over their political support to feed their appetites for power. They're gullible and easy to manipulate, so Democrats cater to dumb and lazy people since the party has shifted from once supporting the working class to supporting those who don't want to work and are just looking for handouts. The sheer number of people who don't have the dedication to go to work every day is scary.

And through social media they can easily connect with each other and organize online mobs—and form them in the real world as well. It's how communism took over China and other countries. The violent mobs organized and eventually became too powerful to resist. So we have to stop them here before it's too late.

But because of their viciousness they've already scared many people into silence. Widespread cowardice on our side earlier when they were weaker is what got us here, and allowed the Left to transform much of the United States into an almost unrecognizable dystopia.

Many old Conservatives championed small government and were afraid to use its power for our own purposes because they wanted to stay "principled" by not using the levers of government at all, and instead took a laissez faire approach. And it's been a losing strategy when facing an opponent who uses every possible means to win while Conservatives sit on the sidelines and say "they're being hypocrites" or "hey, that's not fair."

Conservatives' mantra about supporting "limited government" has been nothing but an embarrassing failure as a political strategy. It's time to use the existing power structure to achieve our goals for a change and to punish our enemies. Shrinking the size of government is a pipe dream. So we might as well use it to our advantage.

Conservatives and Christians have been far too timid for far too long. It's time to start giving the Left a taste of their own medicine and playing by some of their rules. Barraging businesses that go woke by flooding their social media feeds with negative comments and memes mocking them isn't enough. Boycotting woke companies isn't enough either. While that may cost them *some* loss of revenue, many won't even notice or care. You have to tell the store clerks that what the company is doing is pathetic (or perverted). You have to make the employees feel uncomfortable—even miserable.

If they can't even get through a shift without being told off by a dozen customers every single day, they're going to complain to their managers, and the managers are going to report to the corporate office that selling woke products or promoting anti-White "diversity" initiatives or the LGBTQ agenda is causing a hostile environment in the stores by customers. Many employees may agree with us, but out of fear of losing their jobs won't say anything themselves. So it's our job as the customers, because the customer is always right—to pressure them.

And while it's not some random clerk's fault what the corporation itself is doing, they are a vessel that can relay customers' dissatisfaction to those higher up the food chain, and they are the public face of the business and what it represents. Fill their Yelp and Google listings with negative reviews. Better yet, pick up the phone and start calling local branches and sound off. And do it every time any company crosses the line. Post their phone numbers and email addresses on social media to encourage others.[916] They need to be sent a loud and sustained message. Same with the schools, and our local and state governments.

Look up your Congressman and Senators' phone numbers (and those of the mayor and city council members) and save them in your contacts like you would anyone else you frequently call. They can (and do) ignore tweets and emails, but if their office phone is ringing off the hook all week and every time their aides or interns pick it up they get an earful from upset constituents, they're not going to be able to just go about their day as usual. The Congressman, the mayor, the school (or whoever) will get the message, and as the cliché goes—the squeaky wheel gets the grease. It's usually a small but vocal and active group that causes large societal changes because most people sit on the sidelines and say or do nothing.

Run for city council, mayor, and get on your local school board. Trying to fix the government by using a top down approach will have a limited effect because of how gigantic the bureaucracy is and the number of obstacles that need to be overcome to achieve major changes. As president, Donald Trump tried, and while he had some major victories (like gaining a Conservative majority in the Supreme Court), he could only shift our nation's course a few degrees.

A bottom up approach is better in many regards because it can be done by ordinary people with limited resources, and being involved in local politics usually isn’t as competitive as national offices because the field is less crowded.

Taking control of our local communities is not as difficult as most people think. Just a small handful of active people can take over city councils and school boards, and most people only think about voting on election years for major positions like the president, but local positions (and midterms) are just as important.

During COVID lockdowns, for example, in 2020 and 2021 many local Sheriffs (who are elected by the voters) refused to enforce state laws dictated by governors though executive orders which mandated restaurants not allow in-person dining—even Sheriffs in some major California cities refused to enforce the rule, and allowed businesses to stay open.[917]

Look up the recommended voter guide for your city which are put together by many local Republican parties and use it as a guide to choose candidates you’re not familiar with for various positions that don’t have their party affiliation listed next to their name on the ballot. Many positions, like school board members, judges, and sheriffs do not list whether a candidate is a Republican or a Democrat, so take advantage of the research and voter guide your local Republican Party puts together. A quick Google search should bring it up.

One of the goals of this book is to move the Overton Window, which is the spectrum of ideas about social issues and public policy that are seen as acceptable by the general public. There are a lot of issues and facts that the Republican Party, Conservatives, and Christians are afraid to talk about out loud, so I’m working to normalize those issues and introduce the terminology, concepts, and arguments to the masses so those seeds can be planted into the minds of millions and one day these truths will be so widely spoken about they’ll be impossible to ignore.

We have to push (or pull) Republican lawmakers and political pundits into these discussions by bombarding them with questions, evidence, and arguments; and make addressing these issues unavoidable.

I also want people to be as well rounded as possible when it comes to media literacy. (I am a media analyst after all). Everyone should know about the Social Impact Agencies in Hollywood—the lobbying groups which work to have their clients’ messages inserted into the storylines of popular shows and movies, disguising political propaganda as mere entertainment. (Something I detailed in my previous book *Hollywood Propaganda: How TV, Movies, and Music Shape Our Culture*).

Everyone should know the basic facts about Operation Mockingbird and how the "war on fake news" was launched immediately after Donald Trump beat Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election as a smokescreen to begin rolling out massive censorship on social media. (See my book *The True Story of Fake News*).

We should make sure it's common knowledge that as a result of this bogus "war on fake news" the Big Tech platforms completely changed the way they function, and how they've come to manipulate their algorithms to artificially boost certain content that reinforces their agenda, while systematically suppressing and censoring those who oppose it. People should know the history of how the mainstream media merged with the very platforms that were once created so users could bypass and replace them. (See my book *The Liberal Media Industrial Complex*).

A word of caution about becoming politically active though. Some people may want to start an organization or a group to fight for the cause, but there are enormous dangers to such an approach you should be aware of before even considering it. First of all, if a member of the group does something stupid, then the entire organization gets blamed. Not just blamed online or in the media, but it can be legally held liable.

If you or your organization holds an event or promotes a protest and someone gets hurt if violence breaks out, no matter which side started it or caused it, you may be held personally liable, either civilly or even criminally. Democrats have very well-funded law firms they use to financially cripple their opponents. And even if you win a case brought against you, the legal bills are enough to bankrupt most people just defending against them.

It may be better to become part of already well-established groups and then influence their members, and ultimately their leadership, to move them further right. Being part of a movement is often better than being part of an actual organization. One can be a supporter, leader, or an influencer in a movement while remaining completely independent, but this still puts you at risk for civil and criminal penalties if you're blamed for "inciting" violence by using political rhetoric that's too heated, or even standard political analogies talking about "fighting" or "war."

They'll get your private text messages, DMs, and emails, and use them as evidence against you just like they did to the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers.[918] And figures of speech and jokes will be framed as if you were being literal.

Be cautious about posting political messages on social media. Create anonymous accounts where possible, not using your name or your photo. And use a burner email address, not your usual one, in case the platform gets hacked and login information is published for our opponents to sift through (which does happen), allowing them to find other accounts on other platforms that use the same email address, leading them to find people's real identities.

Resist the urge to become a "famous" online personality. Many online accounts have gained hundreds of thousands of followers while keeping the identity of those who run them unknown. Teach your kids how they can ruin their life with one TikTok or Snapchat post that's deemed "racist," "antisemitic," "transphobic," etc. unless or until we end cancel culture.

Be careful not to cut off your nose to spite your face. Going on a rant and using the n-word to prove you don't care what the Thought Police say isn't worth getting fired from your job over or banned from social media. Future potential employers will Google your name during the hiring process and even if your rant doesn't make headlines—if you're named in tweets or Facebook posts, those are going to come up during their vetting process.

Even if you use a pseudonym for your social media presence, if you show your face there is an extremely high probability your actual identity will be found. There's facial recognition software that can find other photos of you online that were posted by your family or friends. Online sleuths can be ruthless and crafty in their quest to dox people. And someone who personally knows you may take it upon themselves to alert others who you are (like a former classmate, coworker, or ex-wife).

But it doesn't even have to be something *you* post online. These days if someone goes off on a "racist" rant in public that's caught on video, that video often goes viral and ultimately the person is identified, doxxed, and fired in hopes of appeasing the angry online mob who call and harass people's employers when they're the subject of a viral controversy.[919] So even if you're not posting on social media at all, social media can ruin your career from something you say in real life. It's a brave new world.

So pick your battles wisely. Some are in better positions to fight on certain fronts than others. If you're a retired veteran with a guaranteed pension and you have nothing to lose, that's different than an aspiring young college kid who could face a lifetime of limited career options if they happen to get the attention of the wrong people by pushing the envelope on certain controversial issues. With formidable foes dedicated to shutting down anyone speaking out too loudly about certain topics, people need to be careful before they end up with a target on their back. Each individual must carefully decide their own level of involvement.

And this shouldn't need to be said, but no matter how frustrated you get, no matter how angry and disgusted you feel because of the onslaught of attacks against Conservatives or our cultural or religious traditions, don't do anything violent unless it's in self-defense of an *imminent* and direct threat to your life or that of another.[920]

We've all seen how occasionally disgruntled and mentally disturbed people on the Left and the Right lash out in violence against their perceived enemies, and it always hurts whatever cause they thought they were fighting for. It gains widespread sympathy for the victims and casts whatever cause the perpetrator thought they were fighting for in an extremely negative and toxic light. So when I talk about *The War on Conservatives*—as far as our side is concerned, it's a *political* and *metaphoric* war. It's an *information* war. It's a battle of ideas, so don't be stupid like some misguided self-proclaimed "patriots" in the past who have lashed out in violence, or those who think that wearing camo and "training" with a dozen others in the woods to overthrow the government is going to have anything but disastrous consequences.

Even in situations that could be deemed self-defense, one wrong decision in a split second could cost you your freedom. Some people shoot armed robbers after they turn around and head for the door and are charged with 2nd degree manslaughter because technically the threat to their life was over because the perpetrator was leaving. Violence is always ugly and should be avoided at all costs. And don't try arguing or reasoning with Marxists in the street. Like Mr. Miyagi from *The Karate Kid* said, the best way to avoid a punch is to not be there.

If you haven't read my previous books, then you should know that the rabbit hole goes much deeper, and even though some of the topics are similar, each book provides a wealth of information and can help readers gain a much better understanding of how the interconnecting relationships between media, culture, and power function.

Books are one of the best forms of spreading knowledge, even in the so-called digital age (or the information age), or rather *especially* in the information age—because there is *too much* information and too many different sources trying to constantly bombard us with messages. People are drowning in information and have a difficult time sifting through it to find quality and meaningful content while avoiding all the useless drama, and pop culture gossip, propaganda, and spam.

We need to free ourselves from the digital sewage pipe that directs most people's attention. We don't need to be slaves to whatever hit show on HBO is trending or whatever new series Netflix or Hulu just launched. We need to manage our media diets in the same way we watch what foods we eat.

It's important to continue old traditions, and always put family first. Study intimate relationships and date with the purpose of finding a life partner and getting married, not just for having fun. Too many people get stuck with someone they're incompatible with in the areas of interpersonal relationships that matter most. They don't look at whether their interests, values, and goals are actually aligned until it's too late. Then it's not just their own happiness and wellbeing that suffers, it's that of their children and grandchildren down the road who have to grow up in broken or dysfunctional homes.

We may be living in a collapsing empire. Politically, financially, intellectually, and morally. Only Republican states or red districts, local communities, small towns, neighborhoods, and families can probably be preserved at this point. The United States as a whole however, is in huge trouble. Perhaps when things get so bad, the pendulum will start to swing back the other direction and society at large may begin healing. But it may not. The America we all knew and loved may be gone. We appear to be following the Tytler Cycle of Civilizations and in the end-stage of Democracy.[921]

But we can carry on the same principles in our own lives that the founding fathers established starting in 1776, in hopes of one day restoring the Republic, no matter how many generations it may take. And more importantly follow the examples set forth by Christ so that we may have the hope of glory.

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[375] Zionism is the belief (and political movement) which promotes the idea that Israel should be a country exclusively for Jews, while all western democracies (such as the United States and all countries throughout Europe) are under strict demands to surrender *their* ethnic majorities by embracing multiculturalism through mass immigration and importation of other (non-White) ethnic groups.

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[766] New York Times "YouTube suspends Rand Paul for a week over a video disputing the effectiveness of masks" by Daniel Victor (August 11th 2021)

[767] Engaget “Fox News host Dan Bongino suspended on YouTube over COVID-19 misinformation” by Mariella Moon (January 15th 2022)

[768] New York Times “The C.D.C. concedes that cloth masks do not protect against the virus as effectively as other masks” by Apoorva Mandavilli (January 14th 2022)

[769] Washington Examiner “Dr. Drew switches to Rumble after YouTube blocks him over vaccine video” by Jenny Goldsberry (April 29th 2022)

[770] The Gateway Pundit “TECH TYRANNY: Twitter Suspends Account and YouTube Removes Video of Biotech Company that Created COVID-19 Treatment Using UV Light in Lungs” by Jim Hoft (April 25th 2020)

[771] Forbes “Trump Suggests Injecting Coronavirus Patients With Light Or Disinfectants, Alarming Experts” by Matt Perez (April 23rd 2020)

[772] The Wall Street Journal “An Experimental Ultraviolet Light Treatment for Covid-19 Takes Political Heat” by Josh Disbrow (April 27th 2020)

[773] Associated Press “Extremists exploit a loophole in social moderation: Podcasts” by Tali Arbel (January 19th 2021)

[774] BBC “US election: YouTube to ban videos alleging widespread voter fraud” by James Clayton (December 10th 2020)

[775] House Oversight Committee “Evidence of Joe Biden’s Involvement in His Family’s Influence Peddling Schemes” (September 13th 2023)

[776] New York Post “Washington Post joins New York Times in finally admitting emails from Hunter Biden laptop are real” by Bruce Golding (March 30th 2022)

[777] The Wrap “Twitter Refuses to Ban Taliban Accounts, Vows to Remain ‘Vigilant’ Moderating Content” by Samson Amore (August 17th 2021)

[778] Washington Post “Why the Kremlin is still active on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube” by Christiano Lim and Will Oremus (March 17th 2022)

[779] The Hill “YouTube removes CPAC content for violating ‘election integrity policy’” by Chloe Folmar (March 24th 2022)

[780] NBC News “Baseless GOP claims about election fraud remain dangerous for a democracy” by Chuck Todd, Mark Murray and Ben Kamisar (September 14th 2021)

[781] Reuters “Trump returns to YouTube and Facebook after two-year ban” (March 17th 2023)

[782] NPR “YouTube will no longer take down false claims about U.S. elections” by Shannon Bond (June 2nd 2023)

[783] CNBC “Video platform Rumble to go public after successful SPAC vote” by Jack Stebbins (September 15th 2022)

[784] https://help.gab.com/faq/how-to-install-gab-app

[785] The Guardian “Firms pull ads from Rumble platform over Russell Brand videos” by Sammy Gecsoyler (September 23rd 2023)

[786] Business Insider “Facebook is going to use Snopes and other fact-checkers to combat and bury 'fake news’” by Alex Heath (December 15th 2016)

[787] USA Today “Fact check: Rising gas prices due to high demand and low supply, not Biden's policies” by Miriam Fauzia (June 10th 2021)

[788] Reclaim The Net “Facebook fact-checks and censors Martin Luther King Jr. memes on MLK Day” by Tom Parker (January 20th 2020)

[789] Snopes “Did CNN Purchase an Industrial-Sized Washing Machine to Spin News?” by David Mikkelson (March 1st 2018)

[790] Fox News “Jacob Blake admits he had a knife when he was shot by police” by Brittany De Lea (January 14th 2021)

[791] Fox News “Kyle Rittenhouse acquittal: PolitiFact blasted for fact-check saying Trump's comments on incident were ‘false’" by Joseph A. Wulfsohn (November 19th 2021)

[792] Fox News “Facebook accused of pulling post about Kenosha gunman after declaring shooting 'mass murder” by Sam Dorman (September 4th 2020)

[793] The Daily Caller “Democratic Rep Ayanna Pressley Calls Alleged Kenosha Shooter A ‘White Supremacist Domestic Terrorist’” by Peter Hasson (August 27, 2020)

[794] Associated Press “No evidence video color was manipulated in CNN news segment” (September 10th 2021).

[795] Post Millennial “Joe Rogan accuses CNN of 'yellow journalism,' altering his COVID-19 announcement video” by Hannah Nightingale (January 10th 2022)

[796] Fox News “Candace Owens targets Facebook 3rd-party fact-checkers with lawsuit” by Louis Casiano (November 5th 2020)

[797] The Hollywood Reporter “Judge Dismisses John Stossel’s Defamation Suit Against Facebook Over Fact-Checking” by Winston Cho (October 12th 2022)

[798] Ibid.

[799] Associated Press “Judge tosses suit by Candace Owens over Facebook fact checks” by Randall Chase (July 22nd 2021)

[800] BBC “Twitter's hate speech rules are expanded” by Dave Lee (December 18th 2017)

[801] The Washington Post “Elon Musk’s vision of ‘free speech’ will be bad for Twitter” by Ellen K. Pao (April 8th 2022)

[802] Axios “Elon Musk goes into full goblin mode” by Felix Salmon (April 14th 2022)

[803] Fox News “MSNBC host trashed for warning Elon Musk could use Twitter to ban political candidates: ‘You absolute clown’” by Gabriel Hayes (April 26th 2022)

[804] CNN “CNN media analyst says 'we are headed to hell' without Twitter regulation” - video clip posted on their website of David Zurawik on “Reliable Sources” (May 1st 2022)

[805] Reuters “Exclusive: Tesla faces U.S. criminal probe over self-driving claims” by Mike Spector and Dan Levine (October 26th 2022)

[806] Rolling Stone “‘How Many Women Were Abused to Make That Tesla?’” by Stephen Rodrick (September 19th 2022)

[807] As of the time of this writing in November 2023, he did tweet once, after his fourth indictment, posting a link to his website to help fundraise. As the 2024 election approaches he will likely use it again, at least occasionally, to gain attention.

[808] https://twitter.com/JGreenblattADL/status/1594161768905015298

[809] CNBC “Elon Musk claims Apple has threatened to remove the Twitter app” by Kif Leswing (November 28th 2022)

[810] Gizmodo “Elon Has Restored Nearly 12,000 Banned Twitter Accounts, Data Shows” by Kyle Barr (December 3rd 2022)

[811] CNN “Elon Musk speaks out on ‘Twitter Files’ release detailing platform’s inner workings” by Ramishah Maruf (December 4th 2022)

[812] Newsmax “Musk: All 'Conspiracy' Theories About Twitter Turning 'Out to Be True’” by Nick Koutsobinas (December 25th 2022)

[813] Reuters “Twitter suspends Kanye West's account again” by Maria Ponnezhath and Eva Matthews (December 2nd 2022)

[814] CNN “Twitter won’t restore Alex Jones’ account, Elon Musk says” by Brian Fung (November 21st 2022)

[815] CBS News “Elon Musk says he'll never reinstate Alex Jones on Twitter” by Irina Ivanova (November 21st 2022)

[816] NPR “Twitter Bans Alex Jones And InfoWars; Cites Abusive Behavior” by Avie Schneider (September 6th 2018)

[817] As of November 2023 when this book was originally published.

[818] Kevin MacDonald was actually banned under Elon Musk’s ownership, in April 2023, and surprisingly was allowed to operate his account for years when the company was run by Jack Dorsey and Parag Agrawal.

[819] CNN “David Duke has been banned from Twitter” by Oliver Effron (July 31st 2020)

[820] The Hill “Nick Fuentes Twitter account suspended less than 24 hours after reinstatement” by Julia Shapero (January 25th 2023)

[821] Washington Post “Elon Musk’s first big Twitter product paused after fake accounts spread” by Rachel Lerman and Cat Zakrzewski (November 11th 2022)

[822] Gizmodo “Twitter Suddenly Reverses Course on 'Policy' That Banned Links to Competing Social Media Sites” by Mark DeGeurin (December 17th 2022)

[823] BBC “Twitter loses nearly half advertising revenue since Elon Musk takeover” by Jemma Dempsey (July 17th 2023)

[824] CNN “Analysis: TV providers should not escape scrutiny for distributing disinformation” by Oliver Darcy (January 8th 2021)

[825] Ibid.

[826] In a tweet archived here: http://archive.fo/xb693

[827] The Washington Post “DirecTV says it will sever ties with far-right network One America News” by Timothy Bella (January 15th 2022)

[828] NAACP.org “NAACP President & CEO Derrick Johnson Releases Statement on Directv's announcement to drop One America News (OAN)” (January 15th 2020)

[829] The Verge “One America News gets dumped by Verizon, the only major carrier it had left” by Emma Roth (July 24th 2022)

[830] Washington Post “Fox’s Tucker Carlson firing is boosting Newsmax’s ratings. Will it last? by Jeremy Barr (May 25th 2023)

[831] The Federalist “Biden’s FCC Commissioner Nominee Gigi Sohn Wants To Nuke Right-Leaning Broadcasters From Air” by Jordan Boyd (January 18th 2022)

[832] CNBC “Biden FCC nominee Gigi Sohn withdraws, citing ‘cruel attacks’ in battle with cable and media industries” by Lauren Feiner and Ashely Capoot (March 7th 2023)

[833] National Review “‘Deplatforming Works’: AOC Fundraises Off of Tucker Carlson’s Ouster from Fox News” by Caroline Downey (April 25th 2023)

[834] Metro Voice “Amazon changes course again, will ban ‘No Dress for Timmy’” (January 29th 2019)

[835] The Wall Street Journal “Amazon Won’t Sell Books Framing LGBTQ+ Identities as Mental Illnesses” by Jeffrey A Trachtenberg (March 11th 2021)

[836] The Daily Mail “Woke Amazon staffer cries in meeting to discuss the 'trauma' caused by best seller children's book 'Johnny the Walrus' that compares being transgender to pretending to be a walrus” by Natasha Anderson (April 26th 2022)

[837] Ibid.

[838] The Daily Wire “Amazon Employees Disrupt Pride Ceremony With ‘Die In’ Protest Over Matt Walsh’s ‘Johnny The Walrus’, Other ‘Anti-Trans’ Books” by Amanda Harding (June 2nd 2022)

[839] TruthOut.org “After Activist Pressure, Amazon Purges Dozens of Far-Right Books” by Shane Burley (March 22nd 2019)

[840] The Occidental Observer Amazon Bans Culture of Critique and Separation and Its Discontents” by Kevin MacDonald (March 12th 2019)

[841] As of November 2023 when this book, The War on Conservatives was first published.

[842] American Renaissance "PRESS RELEASE: Amazon Now Banning Books Based on Political Content" (February 27th 2019)

[843] See chapter on Antiwhiteism.

[844] The New York Times "In Amazon's Bookstore, No Second Chances for the Third Reich" by David Streitfeld (February 9th 2020)

[845] It's unclear exactly when the book, along with its listing and reviews were removed, but presumably it was in early 2019 when the big purge of supposed "antisemitic" and "White supremacist" titles were removed.

[846] Foreword to the First Edition, as well as the Foreword to the Second and Third Edition.

[847] Jewish History, Jewish Religion: The Weight of Three Thousands Year*s* by Israel Shahak pages 30, 36, 107, 124 (Pluto Press 1994) ISBN: 978-0-7453-2840-9

[848] https://twitter.com/alisonweir/status/1612868601056460806

[849] The main listing, along with all of the reviews from readers has been deleted. Someone listed a used copy for sale on Amazon that slipped through the cracks but when a book goes out of print, the listing and all of the reviews stay, no matter how long the book has been out of print, which is not the case with Israel Shahak's book and the others listed in this chapter.

[850] A History of Central Banking and the Enslavement of Mankind (2014) by Stephen Mitford Goodson is among the titles banned. Goodson was a South African banker and politician.

[851] TruthOut.org "After Activist Pressure, Amazon Purges Dozens of Far-Right Books" by Shane Burley (March 22nd 2019)

[852] Counter-Currents.com "Amazon.com Continues to Purge Counter-Currents Titles" by Greg Johnson (February 27th 2019)

[853] The exact date of its removal is uncertain, but most likely was in February 2019 when Counter-Currents books were banned, along with Jared Taylor's White Identity, and his other essays compiled

in If We Do Nothing, and two books he edited: A Race Against Time, and Face to Face with Race.

[854] Noirg.org “Amazon Bans The Secret Relationship Between Blacks & Jews” by Nation of Islam Research Group (March 16th 2019)

[855] The National Endowment for the Humanities “Malcolm X: A Radical Vision for Civil Rights” by Joe Phelan (May 5th 2017)

[856] The Jerusalem Post “'Elders Of Zion' book being sold by top booksellers” by Michael Starr (January 26th 2022)

[857] Mark Dice YouTube Channel “Liberals Trying to Ban the Bible from Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble” (September 7th 2015) Original link: https://youtu.be/Y9WUeHHzf7s

[858] Mark Dice YouTube Channel “Woke Californians Want to BAN the BIBLE for ‘Hate Speech’” (April 13th 2022) Original link: https://youtu.be/XckcMeSueMA

[859] The Washington Post “Twitter banned Marjorie Taylor Greene. That may not hurt her much.” by Maggie Macdonald and Meghan A. Brown (January 14th 2022)

[860] BitChute and Gab are the only true free speech platforms that allow anything that’s protected by the first amendment to be posted, which is why they’ve both been banned from the app stores, PayPal, payment processors, and even banks.

[861] The Verge “Gab.com goes down after GoDaddy threatens to pull domain” by Sam Byford (October 28th 2018)

[862] Huffington Post “Think Canada Allows Freedom of Speech? Think Again” by Tom Kott (December 19, 2012)

[863] BBC “Facebook, Google and Twitter agree German hate speech deal” (December 15th 2015)

[864] Associated Press “In UK, Twitter, Facebook rants land some in jail” by Jill Lawless (November 12, 2012)

[865] Breitbart “UK Police Arrest Man For ‘Offensive’ Facebook Post About Migrants” by Liam Deacon (February 16th 2016)

[866] Daily Caller “Mother Arrested, Spends Seven Hours In Jail For Calling Transgender A Man” by David Krayden (February 10th 2019)

[867] Republican Establishment positions like the fact that 35 states that have anti-BDS laws which punish American businesses if they criticize Israel; laws that are completely contrary to the principles of free speech.

[868] The Root “91 Percent of Inmates Freed by First Step Act Were Black. Should We Give Republicans Credit?” by Michael Harriot (June 10th 2019)

[869] CNN “CPAC cancels speaker over anti-Semitic social media comments” by Eric Bradner (February 23rd 2021)

[870] As of the end of 2023 when this book was first published.

[871] CNN “Obama announces he supports same-sex marriage” by Phil Gast (May 9th 2012)

[872] The Washington Post “Meet the four Republicans in Congress who support gay marriage” by Sean Sullivan (April 2nd 2013)

[873] https://twitter.com/GOPChairwoman/status/1400212885595426824

[874] Newsweek “Republicans Blast Fox News for Promoting LGBTQ Pride Month” by Andrew Stanton (June 14th 2022)

[875] Ibid.

[876] https://www.foxnews.com/video/6307598106112

[877] Ibid.

[878] https://www.foxnews.com/video/6260651671001

[879] https://www.foxnews.com/video/6308785798112

[880] Fox News “Caitlyn Jenner joins Fox News as contributor: ‘I am humbled by this unique opportunity’” by Brian Flood (March 31st 2022)

[881] NBC News “Acting intelligence head Richard Grenell's push to decriminalize homosexuality has yielded little” by Tim Fitzimons (February 20th 2020)

[882] The Rubin Report “On Trump, The Drug War, & Gay Rights (Pt. 1) | Charlie Kirk | POLITICS | Rubin Report” (January 17th 2018) at 40:37 timestamp

[883] Big League Politics “PHOTO: TPUSA Founder Charlie Kirk Yucks It Up With Drag Queen As They Flash Kids In Libraries Across America” by Shane Trejo (October 30th 2019)

[884] The Culture War Feat. Charlie Kirk at Ohio State University (October 29th 2019)

[885] Ibid.

[886] Church Militant “CPAC CHAIRMAN GETS SCHLAPPED” (March 21st 2022)

[887] Ibid.

[888] https://web.archive.org/web/20220523032505/https://twitter.com/prageru/status/1504156067428638721

[889] https://web.archive.org/web/20220523032532/https://twitter.com/BlazeTV/status/1504135771938164736

[890] https://twitter.com/joelpollak/status/1504163326380568577

[891] https://twitter.com/realchrisrufo/status/1504158072192655360

[892] https://twitter.com/megynkelly/status/1504171771984973824

[893] https://twitter.com/MeghanMcCain/status/1504135090779172864

[894] https://twitter.com/KatTimpf/status/1504283362458054662

[895] LifeSite News "Conservatives should not applaud Dave Rubin and his gay partner's surrogate baby news" (March 16th 2022)

[896] Newsmax "Greg Kelly Reports" (May4th 2023) "Colin Powell had it right" he said, about the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy, and aired video of Powell in 1993 testifying before Congress about why the policy was necessary for a successful military. Segment uploaded to Newsmax's YouTube channel here: https://youtu.be/QpncwquA52s?si=Ya6Uoztpx2ebhKhB

[897] The term paleoconservative was coined in 1986 by Paul Gottfried and Thomas Fleming.

[898] https://twitter.com/benshapiro/status/1272904470721179648

[899] "Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy: Forces, and Resources for a New Century" A Report of The Project for the New American Century (September 2000) page 51

[900] Iraq had switched to selling oil in euros, which threatened the U.S dollar's dominance as the world's reserve currency.

[901] Inter Press Service "Iraq War Launched to Protect Israel" by Emad Mekay (March 29th 2004)

[902] The Guardian "Israel puts pressure on US to strike Iraq" by Jonathan Steele (August 16th 2002)

[903] The Atlantic "A 'Catastrophe' That Defines Palestinian Identity" by Hussein Ibish (May 14th 2018)

[904] Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity "The Neoconservatives, the War on Iraq, and the National Interest of Israel "by Stephen J. Sniegoski (August 23rd 2016)

[905] The Wall Street Journal "Pro-Israel Group Lobbies for U.S. Aid, Funds Congressional Trips" by Julie Bykowicz and Natalie Andrews (February 14th 2019)

[906] Newsweek “Israel Flagged as Top Spy Threat to U.S. in New Snowden/NSA Document” by Jeff Stein (August 4th 2014)

[907] Osama Bin Laden himself wrote in his “Letter to America” fatwa saying, “The expansion of Israel is one of the greatest crimes, and you are the leaders of its criminals. And of course there is no need to explain and prove the degree of American support for Israel. Each and every person whose hands have become polluted in the contribution towards this crime must pay its price, and pay for it heavily.”

[908] Politico “Ron Paul: U.S. triggered Sept. 11” by James Arkin (September 11th 2013)

[909] Aljazeera “Who is the ‘Great Satan’? In a recent speech, Ayatollah Khamenei used metaphors to describe US influence” by Hamid Dabashi (September 20th 2015)

[910] The Neoconservative Revolution: Jewish Intellectuals and the Shaping of Public Policy by Murray Friedman (2005) Cambridge University Press

[911] The National Review “The Inside Story of William F. Buckley Jr.’s Crusade against the John Birch Society” by Alvin S. Felzenberg (June 20th 2017)

[912] A Paleoconservative Anthology: New Voices for an Old Tradition (Political Theory for Today) by Paul Gottfried (editor) 2023

[913] Attributed to Eric Hoffer, but this is said to be a frequently misquoted statement found in his 1967 book, The Temper of Our Time, where he wrote, “What starts out here as a mass movement ends up as a racket, a cult, or a corporation.”

[914] CBS News “LED Traffic Lights Getting Bogged Down By Snow” (December 5th 2017)

[915] ZDNet “iPhone owners plagued by 'no service' bug after iOS 14.7.1 upgrade” by Adrian Kingsley-Hughes (August 19th 2021)

[916] Posting the publicly listed phone numbers of business, schools, or government offices is not doxxing, although with the way things are going some Big Tech platforms may remove the posts under the false guise that it’s an “invasion of privacy” or “harassment.”

[917] Times of San Diego “Much of State Shuts Down, Though Some SoCal Sheriffs Won’t Enforce Order” by Editor (December 7th 2020)

[918] Gizmodo “Encrypted Chats, Parler Posts Indict Proud Boys Leaders for Capitol Rioting” by Dell Cameron (March 19th 2021)

[919] CNN “White woman who called police on a black man bird-watching in Central Park has been fired” by Amir Vera and Laura Ly (May 26th 2020)

[920] Even when countering a physical attack in self-defense, you could still be charged with a crime if you go beyond proportional or reasonable force. Other factors are also involved, such as if it was an unprovoked attack, or if your assessment of the threat itself was reasonable, or if you made a reasonable attempt to avoid the confrontation to begin with.

[921] The Tytler Cycle of Civilizations lists the phases as: From bondage to spiritual faith; to great courage; to liberty to abundance to complacency to apathy to dependence back into bondage

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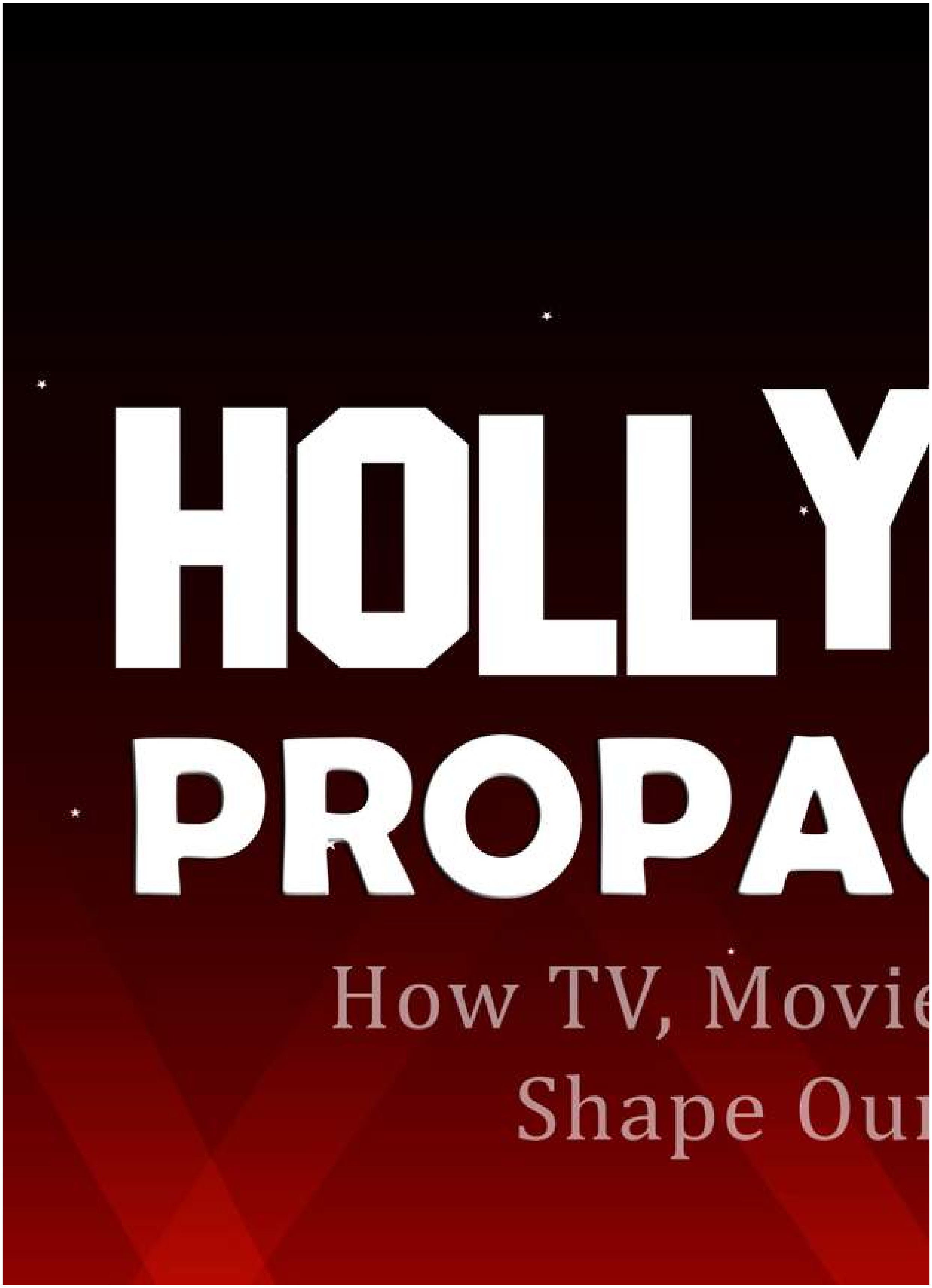
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Introduction

A lot of people say, “I don’t follow politics,” but the reality is that pop culture *is* politics. It’s woven into the fabric of movies, television shows, music—and now even professional sports. Just as art imitates life, life imitates art, and what is often seen as mere “entertainment” actually functions as a container to deliver carefully crafted pieces of propaganda intended to influence the audience as much as it is to entertain them.

Millions of people practically worship celebrities and blindly follow their lead, imitating characters’ hair styles, the way they dress, and even their attitudes and behaviors. People subconsciously absorb ideas and actions they see in the media and regurgitate them as part of their own personalities.

While many celebrities engage in political activism as a hobby during their off time, the more subtle power of Hollywood is using entertainment itself to influence. The ability to influence is a tool, and tools can do great things for humanity, but in the wrong hands easily turn into weapons.

In the 1980s, *The Cosby Show* brought a nice upper middle class Black family into the homes of millions of Americans, depicting the husband as a doctor and the wife as a lawyer, changing the way many looked at the possibility of Black people achieving higher education and making a better life for themselves. [1]

For Generation X kids who grew up during this time period we watched *He-Man* and *GI Joe* cartoons which always taught a valuable lesson, either through the plotline, or a brief PSA at the end. “So now you know, and knowing is half the battle!” Shows like *Family Ties* and *Growing Pains* often tackled serious issues kids and families sometimes faced, and as cheesy as those shows may seem today, by the end of the episode there was an obvious moral to the story that undoubtedly, however subtle, affected millions of people in a positive way.

And while there are still plenty of nice family shows on television today, they are surrounded by landmines consisting of the most degenerate characters and perverted plots one could imagine—shows so vile just a generation ago it would have been unthinkable that major networks would air such content.

A strategic and relentless campaign by LGBT activists has saturated television shows, movies, and even commercials with gay, lesbian, and transgender characters which is the sole reason they have become normalized in the minds of the masses. Despite denying there was a "gay agenda," you'll see that well-funded and highly organized groups have been lobbying Hollywood studios to promote and celebrate such characters. [2]

America went from having one television per household in the 1950s—prominently placed in the family room—to children as young as seven or eight years old carrying their own TV around in their pocket and being able to watch practically anything they want with virtually no adult supervision. [3] So not only has there been a stunning drop in the moral quality of content in recent years, the safeguards to prevent children from consuming it have all but vanished as well.

Joshua Meyrowitz, professor of Media Studies at the University of New Hampshire, points out, "Television dilutes the innocence of childhood and the authority of adults by undermining the system of information control that supported them. Television bypasses the year-by-year slices of knowledge given to children. It presents the same general experiences to adults and to children of all ages. Children may not understand everything that they see on television, but they are exposed to many aspects of adult life from which their parents (and traditional children's books) would have once shielded them." [4]

He continues, "Television and its visitors take children across the globe before parents even give them permission to cross the street." [5] How true is that?! And he said this in a book I've had since college—a book published back in 1995 when the Internet was just in its infancy, and a decade before social media would begin to wrap its tentacles around an entire generation of children.

Today, kids have access to unlimited adult content in the palm of their hand thanks to YouTube, Netflix, Snapchat and the rest. Parents don't know what to do, and trying to shield children from inappropriate content in today's online age would require living like the Amish. Pandora's Box has been opened.

Meanwhile, celebrities continue to speak out of both sides of their mouths—saying entertainment inspires, encourages, and teaches viewers about life, while at the same time denying that it can influence anyone in a negative way. About 100 years ago a British film industry paper called *Bioscope* once wrote that movies were the Christian church's "legitimate competitor in moulding the character of the nation." [6] Since then, the Church has lost out, and it's no longer a question of which institution has more influence.

The majority of people don't even realize what has happened. Professional hypnotherapist Dr. Rachel Copelan warned, "Most people drift into a common, everyday trance when they gaze into the light of the TV tube. Indirect hypnosis manipulates the minds of millions of unsuspecting viewers every day. Surreptitiously, subliminal persuasion leaves its mark upon the collective subconscious. Ideas implanted by commercials affect the health and behavior of all of us. We eat, drink, dress, and make love based on what we see and hear. Television has the power to lull the mind into a state of exaggerated suggestibility, opening it up to behavior control from the outside." [7]

Singer Miley Cyrus popularized "twerking" in 2013, a form of "dance" (if you can call it that) where girls rapidly shake their butt—an act that was instantly mimicked by millions of teens who now regularly post twerking videos on TikTok and Snapchat, etc. In the early 2000s we saw the "Jackass Effect"—where kids got hurt imitating the stunts they saw Johnny Knoxville and his friends doing on the popular MTV series. [8]

A college football-themed film in 1993 called *The Program* had a scene edited out when it was later released on DVD because at one point several of the players decided to lay down in the middle of a busy highway at night to show how "brave" they were. Of course, several groups of teenagers imitated the scene which resulted in at least one death and numerous others getting seriously injured when they were struck by a car. [9]

Edward Bernays, the man who is credited with being the father of public relations, was a 20th century genius who knew how to manipulate the media in order to shape public opinion around virtually any issue. He was hired by advertising agencies and even the U.S. government to deploy his methods for a variety of aims. [10] He's the man responsible for diamond engagement rings being the cultural standard and even convinced women that smoking cigarettes was an act of defiance against the patriarchy. [11]

The De Beers diamond monopoly and the tobacco industry paid him well for his ingenuity, and because of his knowledge of psychology and mass media he was able to play the public like a fiddle through a series of cleverly crafted press releases and ad campaigns.

In his 1928 book *Propaganda* , he admitted, “our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of...in almost every act of our lives whether in the sphere of politics or business in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires that control the public mind, who harness old social forces and contrive new ways to bind and guide the world.” [12]

He even went so far as to say that those in control of the media “constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country.” [13]

Entertainment rules America. Charlie Sheen made it into the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the person to reach 1 million Twitter followers the fastest once joining. [14] Ellen DeGeneres set a world record for the most retweeted tweet after she posted a selfie taken with a group of other celebrities at the 2014 Oscars. [15] Music videos get more views than political speeches, and celebrities make more money while they sleep than police officers or fire fighters do risking their lives to keep their communities safe.

The majority of media today functions as a modern-day equivalent of the “bread and circuses” of ancient Rome, where people were pacified by games and food at the Colosseum, so they weren’t paying attention to the collapsing empire around them. Karl Marx famously said that religion was the “opiate of the masses,” but really its entertainment. It’s television sitcoms, sports, and anything that streams. It’s the trending list on Twitter and the viral hashtags on Instagram.

Entertainment is such a powerful medium for influencing people’s behavior that for several years the CIA actually secretly recruited and directed popular rappers in Cuba to write and perform “protest songs” denouncing their Communist leader Raul Castro in order to foment civil unrest and erode support for his regime. [16] It may seem like the plot out of a movie, but declassified documents obtained by the Associated Press years later show that’s exactly what they did. [17]

The CIA had a budget of millions of dollars for this program and used a front company (which is commonplace) named Creative Associates International in order to conceal their activities. [18] They literally created a talent agency to mold the music and careers of artists they thought could be used to influence Cubans to rise up against Raul Castro. [19] Similar operations have been run in America.

Shortly after President Trump's inauguration, the DJ Moby, who was fairly popular in the early 2000s, revealed that he had been in contact with "active and former CIA agents" who "confirmed" to him that Russia was "blackmailing" Trump and said they needed his help to get the word out. "So they passed on some information to me and they said, like, 'Look, you have more of a social media following than any of us do, can you please post some of these things just in a way that…sort of put it out there.'" [20] Deep State operatives reaching out to celebrities hoping to use them to smear Donald Trump—and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

In this book you'll learn in detail how the Hollywood elite are using their media conglomerates to wage a war on President Trump and his supporters, and not just by celebrities "speaking out," but by incorporating countless anti-Trump themes into their projects. You'll see who is behind the coordinated effort to promote climate change hysteria, how the entertainment industry was instrumental in getting the public to accept gay "marriage," and how they are waging a war against traditional family values, American culture, and even against God Himself.

The late Andrew Breitbart famously said that politics is downstream from culture, meaning if you want to change the laws in a country, you have to first change the culture. This saying became known as the Breitbart Doctrine because it captures the essence of power, propaganda, and politics and explains how many once fringe ideas and behaviors are now legally protected and any business, school, or landlord that dares to disagree can now be punished with the full force of the courts.

Within these pages you'll also learn that liberal Hollywood has some interesting bedfellows when it comes to promoting war, and you'll be shocked to find that the U.S. government often works hand in hand with major studios to produce what essentially amounts to propaganda films; and why there has been an explosion in plots promoting mass immigration, abortion, and socialism.

Not even sports coverage is immune from being turned into another mouthpiece for their agenda as the Left is now pulling out all of the stops hoping to succeed in their "cultural revolution." Let's now pull back the curtain and take a look around behind the scenes of *Hollywood Propaganda*.

The Politics of Entertainment

Television commercials try to sell you a product or a service despite the fact that most of the time the content of the commercials has nothing to do at all with what they’re actually selling. Celebrities drink a soda and react as if it gives them an orgasm. “Ahhh! Pepsi, the choice of a new generation” they say with a huge fake smile. Samuel L. Jackson shouts “What’s in your wallet!” as if it’s a punchline from a sitcom while he’s simply promoting a credit card. Ads for insurance featuring a caveman and a gecko are passed off as if they’re

characters from a recurring comedy series, and the list goes on.

But it’s not just products or services that companies try to sell us through entertainment. It’s ideas. Hollywood propaganda is carefully woven into movies and TV shows with the intent of influencing the audience rather than merely entertain them. Sometimes the central plot serves as the propaganda which is coated in a thin layer of entertainment, but the writers and producers know, and often openly admit, what their true intentions are.

Film critic James Combs wrote, “The term *propaganda* comes from the Latin *propagare* , denoting the ability to produce and spread fertile messages that, once sown, will germinate in large human cultures,” adding, “Removed from its pejorative connotation, propaganda may be viewed objectively as a form of communication that has practical and influential consequences,” and can “sway relevant groups of people in order to achieve their purposes.” [21]

In the late 1980s a man named Jay Winsten, who worked as an associate dean at Harvard’s School of Public Health, launched a campaign to convince Hollywood producers to include messages about the dangers of drunk driving in TV shows along with the importance of using designated drivers. [22] It was called the Harvard Alcohol Project and soon the term “designated driver” was being used in shows like *Cheers* , *L.A. Law* , *The Cosby Show* , and countless others, catapulting it into the public lexicon. [23]

Before the 1980s there wasn’t much of a social stigma against driving drunk, but with a persistent propaganda campaign from groups like the Harvard Alcohol Project and MADD [Mothers Against Drunk Driving], the country as a whole began thinking differently about the issue.

More recently, special interest groups use their power to promote abortion, the gay agenda, Obamacare, climate change hysteria, and literally every one of their social justice crusades in the same way. But in these cases, instead of raising awareness for a public good, like stigmatizing drunk driving, they’re using their influence to push fringe political ideas into the mainstream and convince the masses to accept the most flagrant violations of morality and decency.

Social Impact Entertainment Today there are over 100 organizations dedicated to using entertainment to further political and social causes, and there’s even an Orwellian term for the propaganda they create—“Social Impact Entertainment.” In 2014 UCLA opened the Skoll Center for Social Impact Entertainment (SIE) which boasts to be “the first of its kind dedicated solely to advancing the power of entertainment and performing arts to inspire social change.” [24]

The department is committed to “exploring innovative approaches to curricular development for the emerging field of social impact entertainment, but also provide students and faculty with workshops, lectures, distinguished visiting artists programs and unique opportunities to focus their scholarly and creative work in this arena.” [25]

“It will launch research initiatives that explore the development of a new field in social impact entertainment research and practice; inspire students and faculty to use the power of story to make a difference and inspire social change; galvanize the public to action to foster positive social change; develop meaningful partnerships between the public and private sectors to create new models to drive social change; and engage local, national and global communities about how the industry impacts global society through film, television, animation, digital media and theater.” [26]

In 2019 they released a report titled “The State of SIE” [Social Impact Entertainment] where they said, “Given the magnitude of today’s challenges—climate change, economic inequality, forced migrations and any number of other problems—it’s easy for people to get discouraged about their capacity to make a difference in the world. But as the case studies in this report reveal, SIE can play a critical role in catalyzing significant change.” [27]

The report cited Al Gore’s documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* , which it said, “helped shift global opinions on climate change, one of the most contentious issues of our time, and mobilized a new generation of pioneering environmental activists.” [28]

It appears that the Skoll Center for Social Impact grew out of another UCLA program which had the same goals called the Global Media Center for Social Impact (GMI) which was founded a year earlier in 2013. Sandra de Castro Buffington, who was the director of the program, said, “Topics that have been traditionally taboo are showing up on series television and they’re being discussed, especially via social media, and because of this they don’t seem so controversial anymore. When something goes from being taboo to being openly discussed, it’s a predictor of mass behavior change.” [29]

An industry publication called *Cinema of Change* noted, “[The Global Media Center for Social Impact] provides the entertainment industry with free, on-demand access to leading experts and cutting-edge resources on topics such as health, immigration, racial justice, America’s prison crisis, the environment, LGBT/gender equality, learning and attention issues, youth sexuality, reproductive health and rights and more. From script reviews and writers’ room consultations to off-site visits and special events, GMI facilitates experiences for industry professionals that inspire them to create stories that entertain, engage, and empower viewers to make change on issues that matter to them.” [30]

Their website, GMImpact.org is now defunct, and it appears they morphed into UCLA’s Skoll Center for Social Impact in 2014, which was created with a $10 million dollar donation by billionaire Jeffrey Skoll, who made his money as the first president of e-Bay.

The Center for Media & Social Impact A similar SIE organization is located in Washington D.C. at American University called the Center for Media & Social Impact (CMSI). They describe themselves as “an innovation lab and research center that creates, studies and showcases media for social impact. Focusing on independent, documentary, entertainment, and public media, the Center bridges boundaries between scholars, producers and communication practitioners across media production, media impact and effects, public policy and audience engagement. The Center

produces resources for the field and academic research; convenes conferences and events; and works collaboratively to understand and design media that matter.” [31]

They receive funding through various grants and list some of those contributors on their website, including Bill Gates, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Univision.

In 2019 the Center for Media & Social Impact launched “Comedy Think Tanks” which aims to use comedy to promote social justice issues. The following year they released a report titled *Comedy and Racial Justice in the Climate Crisis* that “analyzes the value and importance of comedy for local public mobilization in climate change.” [32]

The report highlights “the unique potential of social justice comedy” and suggests it be used as a “mobilization strategy, and as disruptive creative expression inserted into a broader cultural conversation about climate change, centering communities of color and low-income people who are ‘hit first and worst’ by climate disasters.” [33]

It concludes, “Through the open-minded experience of co-creating with comedy professionals, social justice organizations can embrace the innovation and creativity that comedy can provide. Comedy can cut through cultural clutter, and it also entertains and invites feelings of play. This kind of light is needed in the climate movement, which can feel too complicated and difficult to engage disparate groups and communities beyond a stream of fatiguing outrage or clinical statistics.” [34]

Propper Daley Propper Daley is another “social impact agency” which was founded by Greg Propper and Mark Daley, who are close associates to Hillary Clinton. Before helping start the agency, Greg Propper actually worked for the Clinton Foundation, and when Hillary was running for president in 2016, Propper Daley helped organized fundraisers for her,

bringing together stars like Leonardo DiCaprio, Tobey Maguire and others under the same roof. [35]

Previously they had organized meetings with writers from TV shows like *Parks and Recreation* , *How I Met Your Mother* , and *Glee* , to sit down with Chelsea Clinton to discuss how they could help promote some of the Clinton Foundation's initiatives. [36] Patti Miller, who worked for the foundation, admitted the meeting aimed to "bring together a cross section of the industry, with leading television comedy writers, hoping they can help us reach our audience with creative, funny content." [37]

In March 2019 Propper Daley held a private invite-only conference with 400 writers, producers and executives to discuss how they could use their positions to "think differently or with more nuance about certain characters or storylines and hopefully create a more empathetic public." [38] In other words, to lobby them to include more pro-gay and transgender storylines, and promote mass immigration, abortion, and other Leftist causes through their work.

GLAAD

GLAAD [the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation] has been aggressively lobbying Hollywood for years to include gay and transgender characters in television series and films. One of their current aims is to pressure studios to include gay characters in 20% of films by the year 2021 and 50% of all films by the year 2024. [39]

Each year they release their *Studio Responsibility Index* , a report where they track their progress and complain that mainstream entertainment isn't gay enough. They even have what they call the "GLAAD Media Institute" that has drawn up a "roadmap for Hollywood to grow LGBTQ inclusion in film." [40]

Their 2018 *Studio Responsibility Index* says, "With wildly successful films like *Wonder Woman* and *Black Panther* proving that audiences want to see diverse stories that haven't been told before, there is simply no reason for major studios to have such low scores…At a time when the entertainment industry is holding much needed discussions about inclusion, now is the time to ensure the industry takes meaningful action and incorporates LGBTQ stories and creators as among priorities areas for growing diversity.” [41]

It goes on, “Studios must do better to include more LGBTQ characters, and construct those stories in a way that is directly tied to the film’s plot…Far too often LGBTQ characters and stories are relegated to subtext, and it is left up to the audience to interpret or read into a character as being LGBTQ. Audiences may not realize they are seeing an LGBTQ character unless they have outside knowledge of a real figure, have consumed source material for an adaptation, or have read external press confirmations. This is not enough…Our stories deserve to be seen on screen just as much as everyone else’s, not hidden away or left to guess work, but boldly and fully shown.” [42]

It’s really an open secret in Hollywood, but few people outside the industry are familiar with the intense (and very successful) lobbying efforts the organization engages in. *Entertainment Weekly* recently admitted that “GLAAD is changing Hollywood’s LGBTQ narrative—one script at a time,” and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis confirmed that as far back at the mid-1980s, “we realized we needed Hollywood to be telling our stories to humanize LGBTQ people. So we opened a chapter very quickly in Los Angeles, in Hollywood, and really the main focus was lobbying Hollywood to tell our stories.” [43]

I’ll cover this topic in more detail in “The LGBT Agenda” chapter because it’s one of the Left’s most aggressive efforts, and in the last few years they have successfully caused an influx of LGBT characters in major television series, and even convinced Disney and Sesame Street to get on board with their plans. [44]

United Nations The United Nations has a special program called the Creative Community Outreach Initiative to lobby producers and celebrities to help them promote various agendas as well. In 2009 they convinced producers of NBC’s *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* to make an episode about child soldiers who were brainwashed by the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda. [45] The U.N. also convinced ABC’s *Ugly Betty*

to incorporate the use of mosquito nets over beds to prevent the spread of malaria in Africa by having the lead character promote the (real) Nothing But Nets program which works to donate bed nets to people there. [46]

The United Nations has even launched a campaign called “The Unstereotype Alliance” which has been backed by consumer product giants Procter & Gamble and Unilever, along with the Big Tech companies like Google, Facebook and others to promote “social justice” through advertising campaigns for unrelated products. [47]

“Advertising is a reflection of culture and sometimes can be ahead of the curve and help effect change. We are proud to be a founding member of this UN sponsored initiative to ‘unstereotype’ through the power and breadth of our messaging. We are all in,” said a Microsoft executive. [48]

It used to be that commercials promoted the benefits of their products and did their best to avoid getting political because Republicans and Democrats both drink beer, eat hamburgers, and buy cars; and companies didn’t want to ostracize half of their potential customers by supporting any polarizing causes. But since the liberal pathogen has caused a zombie-like apocalypse in America recently, many large corporations have decided to take up the banner of “social justice,” and when lobbyists from the “Unstereotype” campaign make demands, companies often oblige.

This goes far beyond companies trying to be environmentally friendly, introducing recyclable packaging, or highlighting how they’re using renewable energy to power their factories. Nobody could really disagree with those practices. I’m talking about companies that actually now insult half of their potential customers in the hopes of gaining the unwavering support of a smaller segment of society because of their “woke” campaigns.

They don’t even see it as insulting people, they’re just so arrogant that they feel they need to “educate” people about social justice causes, or think they need to virtue signal about how much “they care” by jumping on the bandwagon. The Unstereotype Alliance has boasted of “smashing” gender roles in commercials so now they don’t depict cleaning as “women’s work,” and regularly feature interracial and homosexual couples to give them more “visibility.” [49]

Promoting Obamacare When President Obama was trying to get Obamacare passed into law, his administration was aided by a chorus of enthusiastic celebrities who used their voice to support the bill, but behind the scenes strings were being pulled to encourage them to speak up, and Hollywood studios were actually lobbied to include pro Obamacare messages in the plots of popular TV shows. [50]

One such lobbyist group called Hollywood, Health & Society works with studios to promote health based initiatives and were paid $500,000 to convince them to incorporate "the need for Obamacare" into storylines of network TV shows [51] An executive with the organization said, "Our experience has shown that the public gets just as much, if not more, information about current events and important issues from their favorite television shows and characters as they do from the news media…This grant will allow us to ensure that industry practitioners have up-to-date, relevant facts on health care reform to integrate into their storylines and projects." [52]

Hollywood, Health & Society has become the one-stop-shop for organizations that want to have their messages covertly inserted into entertainment. Executive Kate Folb, admitted, "There was a time when there were so many organizations lobbying the entertainment industry on just their one issue, that it was just too much. They were all calling the same writers and trying to get meetings with the same shows. What happened was the industry stopped taking all of those calls because they became so overwhelmed. That's part of the reason HH&S came into being: to help writers get what they need and keep them from getting overwhelmed with requests to include certain messages in their shows." [53]

Another PR firm called Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide was paid $900,000 to pitch Obamacare plots to major networks. They even tried to get major networks to shoot a reality show about "the trials and tribulations of families living without medical coverage." [54]

"I'd like to see 10 of the major TV shows, or telenovelas, have people talking about 'that health insurance thing,'" said Peter V. Lee, the California

Health Benefit Exchange's executive director, which hired the PR firm. "There are good story lines here." [55]

President Obama brought a bunch of actors and producers to the White House to ask them for their help promoting Obamacare, and soon they started happily doing so. [56] In October 2013, Jennifer Hudson starred in a *Funny or Die* skit designed to promote Obamacare where she played a Washington D.C. "fixer" or a "scandal manager" in a parody of ABC's series *Scandal.*

The "funny part" was that everyone who tried to hire her to fix their problems (like a college student without any health insurance, and a guy who was changing insurance companies but was worried they were going to drop him because of preexisting conditions), learned that there was no problem at all because of Obamacare. [57] It was a pathetic attempt at humor and to do such a lame skit under the *Funny or Die* banner made it even more sad, but they wanted to do their part to help the cause.

President Obama also appeared on Zach Galifianakis' *Funny or Die* skit "Between Two Ferns" for a scripted interview meant to be funny but was just another stunt to promote Obamacare. It worked, however, and when the segment was posted online it became the number one source of traffic to the new HealthCare.gov website. [58]

The White House Entertainment Advisory Council admitted, "This is a perfect example of a great partnership with *Funny or Die* stepping up in a big way. The site has a very robust traffic base of young men and women who are on the edge of the cultural zeitgeist. It has an organic reach, and now the traditional media will be talking about it for days." [59]

Under the Obama administration all of Hollywood was more than willing to support anything the White House wanted, but once Donald Trump took over the Oval Office everything changed as I will detail in the next chapter, the "War on Trump."

Abortion Planned Parenthood is America's largest abortion factory and most people have no idea they also have a special Arts & Entertainment Engagement department that reaches out to television studios and "feeds" them plot points they would like included in shows. [60] Few people outside of the

industry know such a department exists and most would probably have a hard time believing it, but it does. And for eight years now they've been hosting an annual "Sex, Politics, Film, & TV Reception" at the Sundance Film Festival to "celebrate" films and television shows that promote abortion. [61]

Little press coverage has been given to Planned Parenthood's Arts & Entertainment Engagement department, but *The Washington Post* did mention their work once, saying, "For nearly 50 years, it has been legal to have an abortion in America yet stubbornly taboo to show one on television or film. But both those things are now changing." [62] The article went on to admit the existence of the abortion A&E department and list some of their "successes." I'll cover their activities in more detail in the "War on America" chapter, but for now you should at least know that such an apparatus exists and has been working behind the scenes for years.

Easy abortions cause many women to ignore the use of simple precautions to reduce the risk of pregnancy, and by softening the social stigma that has historically been associated with abortions, many young girls now see them as a regular part of life.

War on Trump It’s obvious that the “news” media has been waging a disinformation war against President Trump since the day he won the 2016 election—something I chronicled in my previous book *The True Story of Fake News* . But the entertainment industry has also dedicated much of their creative efforts to continuously casting him and everything he does in a negative light by weaving anti-Trump narratives into the plot lines of countless television dramas and sitcoms to ensure as many people as possible are inundated with the message. Stephen Colbert went so far as to produce an entire

animated series for HBO called *Our Cartoon President* which is dedicated to mocking him.

Before becoming President, the media used to love Donald Trump. For decades he was a symbol of wealth and success, and throughout the 1980s and 90s made cameos in dozens of TV shows and movies like *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* , *Spin City* , *WrestleMania* , *Home Alone 2* , *Zoolander* , and more. But all that changed after winning the 2016 election, when the Liberal Media Industrial Complex launched a war against him hoping to derail his administration and prevent him from cleaning up the corruption in Washington D.C. and bringing the government gravy train to a halt.

ABC's sitcom *Black-ish* revolves around an African American family and the issues they face as a Black middle-class family in America today, and shortly after the 2016 election there was an episode about how "terrified" everyone was about Trump's victory and what it would mean for Black people. [63]

For his entire professional life Donald Trump has been a friend of the Black community and had been given awards for all he did. [64] Every leader in the Black community from Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton to Muhammad Ali had sung praises of him for decades, but now the media started gaslighting that he was a racist, hoping to get Black people to turn against him. [65]

In an episode of *The Simpsons* , Lisa is seen reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* while seated on the couch next to Homer, when he tells her, "Now just remember, it's set in the South a long time ago. The terrible racism you're reading about is now *everywhere* ." [66] Homer and Lisa then head off to the local mall and pass a TV news crew which is interviewing a group of men, one wearing a red hat. "Kent Brockman here interviewing three blue-collar men who voted for Trump. How do you feel now?" the reporter asks them. One of the men replies, "Please stop interviewing us," as if he's ashamed he voted for President Trump and realized he made a big mistake.

In an episode of the revived *Murphy Brown* series, a character (who is a reporter) was depicted as being attacked by rabid Trump supporters because of their hatred for the media. [67] While promoting the show Candice Bergen (who plays Murphy Brown) said Donald Trump winning the 2016 election was the motivation to revive it. [68] The original series which aired from 1988-1998 depicted Murphy Brown as an investigative journalist and news anchor, so producers thought with Trump's war on the media raging they could bring the show back and have Murphy Brown working to "expose" him.

Rolling Stone noted, "The season premiere climaxes with Murphy swapping insults with President Trump during a live broadcast (him via Twitter, her glaring at the camera). The second episode has her lecturing Sarah Huckabee Sanders about the fundamental dishonesty of her press briefings, while the third sees her verbally dismantling a barely-disguised version of Steve Bannon." [69] Literally the entire reason for bringing the show back was to use the angle of Trump vs the media, with Murphy Brown and other reporters being the underdogs and the "victims" of President Trump's attacks.

When NBC brought back *Will & Grace* in 2017 after initially ending the series in 2006, one new episode depicted a character walking into a cake shop because she's hosting a birthday party for the president and wants a cake that says Make America Great Again on it. While ordering the cake she makes a comment about how she'll be serving White Russians, a reference to the Democrats' obsession that the Trump campaign "conspired" with Russians to "steal" the 2016 election, adding, "But you don't need to know the guest list." [70] The baker then refused to bake the cake saying that the phrase "Make America Great Again" is racist. [71]

Vice News had a whole series called *The Hunt for the Trump Tapes* starring comedian Tom Arnold where he traveled around the world looking for the rumored "Trump pee tape" or a supposed recording of him saying the n-word. And just like the shows about people searching for Bigfoot that are somehow able to be drawn out for an hour each week despite never finding a shred of evidence, *The Hunt for the Trump Tapes* finally ended without uncovering a thing. [72]

Even the *X-Files* has included anti-Trump messages. The series, which originally ran from 1993-2002 was revived in 2016 for a few more seasons and in January 2018 the season premiere kicked off with the "Cigarette

Smoking Man" narrating footage of President Trump's inauguration which then cuts to a montage of clips including Vladimir Putin, people at voting booths, a KKK rally, and police confronting Black Lives Matter protesters while he continues to talk about the state of the country. [73] Robert Mueller is also depicted as the head of the FBI in the series, but "the bureau's not in good standing with the White House."

In one episode Scully tells Mulder "Sometimes I think the world is going to hell and we're the only two people who can save it," to which he responds, "The world is going to hell, Scully. And the president is working to bring down the FBI along with it." [74] After an assassination attempt on Mulder he later discovers the perpetrator is a Russian contractor with a special security clearance given to him by "the Executive branch" of our government, insinuating the President was trying to have him killed. [75]

But the anti-Trump snides in sitcoms and dramas get much darker than just obsessing about how "terrible" President Trump is, or promoting the conspiracy theory that he's a Russian agent. They're openly calling for violence against his supporters, and want him to be assassinated.

Endorsing Violence The CBS legal drama *The Good Fight* posted a trailer on their official Twitter account which showed one of the main characters ranting about how "some speech" deserves "enforcement" and that it's time to physically attack American citizens "unprovoked" who are engaging in speech that social justice warriors perceive as "racist." [76]

To the Left, supporting the border wall is considered "racist" and all Trump voters are Nazis and they want us all to be silenced, jailed, or dead. *The Good Fight* clip also referred to Alt-Right leader Richard Spencer getting sucker punched while giving an interview in Washington D.C. and insinuated that anyone wearing a MAGA hat in public should face the same fate.

The show's Twitter account also posted a picture showing a list of words stacked on top of each other reading, "Assassinate," "President," and "Trump." [77] In one episode a character was arrested for participating in a riot, and during his court appearance when he was talking with his lawyer he told her that the judge was a Trump appointee and so he is "fucked." She advises him not to say anything radical, and he responds in a quiet voice, "Oh, like 'we need to assassinate the president?"

Later, when they're back at his house she says to him, "Tell me what you said today in court was a joke" to which he responds, "Why? You don't believe in regime change?"

"You're discussing a crime with your lawyer," she responds and then takes his pistol and unloads it. He looks at her, disappointed, and says, "This won't slow us down." [78]

In another episode one of the lead characters (Diane) goes on a rant about needing to get rid of President Trump and when she proposes spreading fake news about him, some of her colleagues push back thinking she's gone too far. She then responds, "I have a Smith & Wesson 64 [handgun] in my desk, and I'm this close to taking to the streets." [79]

The series even depicted the lawyers obtaining the fabled "Trump golden showers video" after getting a flash drive sent to them by a Russian woman who claimed to have been one of the prostitutes in the video. *The Daily Beast* , a garbage online outlet and waste of cyberspace, was happy that such a grotesque plot line was aired on network television, saying, "It allows the show to channel our collective anxieties and outrage better than most other series that grapple with our new political reality." [80]

Amazon produced a show for their Prime streaming service titled *Hunters* which is about a "diverse" group of vigilantes led by Al Pacino who go around assassinating people they think are closet "Nazis" working in the United States to revive the Third Reich. In one of the trailers posted online a "Nazi" could be seen wearing a red baseball cap with some white writing on it, looking almost identical to a Make America Great Again hat. [81]

"The best revenge, is revenge," says Al Pacino's character, who tells the vigilantes they "have to find them before they find us." The series could easily incite (and perhaps has incited) vigilantes to go out and attack supposed "Nazis" (meaning ordinary Trump supporters). The Left thinks free speech is "hate speech" and "hate speech" is "violence," so they justify physically attacking Trump supporters unprovoked because Antifa believes they're fighting actual Nazis.

The executive producer of *Hunters* is Jordan Peele, the Black director behind *Get Out* who has an axe to grind with White people, so it's not surprising he would be involved with a series that fetishizes torturing and killing them.

The Left always accuse others of exactly what they're guilty of themselves. It's a form psychological projection, as well as a gaslighting technique. They are so detached from reality that they lack the ability of introspection and can't see that *they* are the violent ones, while claiming that it's President Trump and his supporters. They're acting like fascists, while accusing President Trump of being one. They are the racists, spewing hatred of White people every day while claiming White people are conspiring to uphold the "systemic White supremacist system" in the United States simply because they exist.

Alec Baldwin says, "the near moral collapse of this country falls squarely in the lap of Trump's supporters," when in reality they are the immoral degenerates destroying the foundations of our Republic. [82]

Law and Order: SVU aired an episode about a character based on an amalgamation of Ann Coulter and Millie Weaver who was sexually assaulted by a suspected Antifa member, but because of her political views some of the police investigating the attack wrestled with sympathizing with her. The episode was titled "Info Wars."

At the end, the final twist was the attacker might not have been Antifa after all, but one of her own supporters (depicted as a vile White supremacist) because he got upset with her after she had turned down his advances the night before when they met at a bar. The "moral" of the story was Antifa are just peaceful protesters fighting against right-wing extremists, and while the victim was worried about them, thinking they were responsible for her assault, it was her own supporters who are the violent ones.

The series usually depicts White men as the criminals, often rapists, and avoids storylines about illegal aliens being the perpetrators or Latino gangs involved in sex trafficking even though the show is supposedly often inspired by actual events. And it is extra careful not to include very many Black people as perpetrators out of the usual concerns of supposedly perpetuating "stereotypes" about Black men and crime.

Actress Jessica Chastain once posted a link on Twitter to a *Time* magazine article denouncing Antifa, the Left's terrorist foot soldiers, adding

"If we resort to violence as a way to combat hate, we become what we are fighting," but then later posted a video tearfully apologizing after being barraged by social justice warriors saying that she was helping "Nazis" (meaning Trump supporters) by denouncing the increasing violence being waged against them.

"I'm making a video because my heart is very heavy," the apology began. "I've learned so much the past few days about the trauma many people are experiencing in our country. I've had the opportunity to listen, more than to speak. And [dramatic pause] it's really hard for me to express my feelings, my thoughts, in 140 characters on Twitter so here's my first video. I wanted you guys to know that I hear you. I want you to know that I'm committed to creating transformative social change. That I'm committed to dismantling systems of oppression. I share in the sadness of what is happening in the country. I hear you and you may never have met me, but I love you." [83] She literally cried and apologized for denouncing violence against Trump supporters!

Teen Vogue magazine declared "Antifa grows out of a larger revolutionary politics that aspires toward creating a better world, but the primary motivation is to stop racists from organizing." [84] A better world? If Donald Trump wins reelection, Antifa may feel they have no other option to stop him than to become overt terrorists like the Weather Underground or the Symbionese Liberation Army since every attempt from the last four years to demonize him and remove him through impeachment and the ballot box have failed.

Daily Show host Trevor Noah, who is from South Africa, says that Trump's demeanor and style is like "many African dictators" or those from the Middle East. [85] And virtually every celebrity with a talk show from the old bags on *The View* to Stephen Colbert and Jimmy Kimmel regularly paint the president as such. [86]

While everyone is familiar with Trump Derangement Syndrome—the irrational hatred and fear of President Trump, for the first time in modern history the chorus of Hollywood celebrities crossed the line far beyond their usual criticisms and hatred of a Republican president into openly calling for him to be assassinated.

Madonna famously said she "thought an awful lot about blowing up the White House." [87] Comedian Kathy Griffin did a photo shoot showing her holding Trump's bloody decapitated head which looked like an ISIS beheading. Griffin also said she wanted to beat down Donald Trump's then 11-year-old son Barron. [88]

At one of their shows in Mexico, Guns N' Roses brought a Donald Trump piñata on stage and invited their fans to beat on it. [89] At a Green Day concert in Oakland, California singer Billie Joe Armstrong shouted "Kill Donald Trump!" in the middle of a song. [90] Rapper Snoop Dogg "shot" Trump in the head in one of his music videos. [91] Marylin Manson "beheaded" him with a large knife in one of his. [92] Rapper Big Sean did a freestyle about murdering Donald Trump with an ice pick on a popular hip hop radio show. [93] All with no consequences whatsoever.

Actor Adam Pally, who starred in a time traveling comedy series called *Making History* , told TMZ that if time travel were possible he would go back and kill Donald Trump. [94] Johnny Depp went even further saying someone should assassinate him right now. "When was the last time an actor assassinated a president?" he asked a crowd. "It's been awhile, and maybe it's time," he concluded, referring to John Wilkes Booth (who was an actor) killing Abraham Lincoln. [95]

He faced no consequences whatsoever. He wasn't dropped by his management company, none of his movies were pulled from the streaming services; nothing!

Before she dropped out of the 2020 Presidential race, Kamala Harris joked with Ellen DeGeneres about killing Trump if she was stuck in an elevator with him. [96] Robert De Niro has said numerous times that he wants to punch President Trump in the face. Jim Carrey said he had a dream of murdering him with a golf club, and now draws pictures almost daily and posts them on his Twitter account depicting Trump and those in his administration as madmen hell-bent on destroying the earth.

Mickey Rourke said that he wants to beat him with a baseball bat. [97] After the Iranian government put an $80 million bounty on President Trump's head, comedian George Lopez responded on Instagram saying, "We'll do it for half." [98]

While hosting *Saturday Night Live* , comedian John Mulaney urged people to assassinate President Trump like Julius Caesar. "It is a Leap Year, as I said. Leap Year began in 45 B.C. under Julius Caesar. This is true, he started the Leap Year in order to correct the calendar and we still do it to this day," he began. [99] "Another thing that happened under Julius Caesar, he was such a powerful maniac that all the senators grabbed knives and they stabbed him to death. That would be an interesting thing if we brought that back now." [100]

The atmosphere the media has created in the Trump era, where publicly wishing for his death has become commonplace, has incited numerous unhinged lunatics to attempt to storm the White House and Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida where he often goes on holidays. [101] Yet with the exception of Kathy Griffin getting dropped by CNN as cohost of their New Year's Eve coverage, none of the celebrities calling for his assassination have faced any consequences. Not legally or professionally.

Imagine the outrage if anyone even remotely suggested that Barack Obama should be assassinated, or hung for treason. Their career would have been over by the end of the day and their "terrorist threats" would have dominated the news cycle for an entire week.

The 25th Amendment Fantasies As you likely know, every few months throughout the Trump Administration the mainstream media repeats the same news cycle about the "possibility" that President Trump may be removed from office by enacting the 25th Amendment, which allows the expulsion of a president if the majority of his cabinet agree he is mentally unfit for office, which would result in the Vice President taking over.

Such pipe dreams have been fueled by gossip columnists like Michael Wolff in his tabloid trash books that are hailed by the media for his supposed "anonymous sources" inside the White House who say this possibility is "being discussed" every day. [102] The Left's desperate hope that the 25th Amendment could end their Trump nightmare has caused the issue to get written into the plots of various political dramas on television, allowing those with Trump Derangement Syndrome to have the emotional satisfaction for a fleeting moment that it has actually happened. These plot lines also serve to plant seeds in people's minds hoping they'll grow and increase discussions and pressure about actually doing a such thing to President Trump.

The Showtime series *Homeland* , a spy thriller about the Department of Homeland Security investigating terrorist threats against the United States, is just one of numerous shows to include this plot point. “I am here to relieve you of your command,” says the character playing the Vice President to a flabbergasted now former President standing in the Oval office as he is informed of the decision. [103]

Before President Trump, such a topic was never addressed in any political drama or thriller. The 25th Amendment was an obscure provision few people ever heard of, but it’s included in the Constitution just in case the President becomes mentally incapacitated. Democrats, however, hoped to use it as a weapon.

CBS’s political drama *Madam Secretary* did the same thing. “I’ve talked to White House Counsel and the attorney general, and though there is a ‘fog of law’ surrounding Section 4 of the 25th Amendment, because it’s never been invoked, they assured me that if the heads of the executive departments plus the vice president vote by simple majority, the president will be removed from office, and Vice President Hurst will become the acting president.…If ever there were a time to set aside politics and do what’s best for the country, this is it,” says the White House Chief of Staff. [104]

After the Cabinet voted in favor of removing the President by enacting the 25th Amendment, he addressed the nation to announce that he would be stepping down and thanked them for putting their country first! “I thank the brave cabinet secretaries who voted to invoke the 25th Amendment. They are all true American heroes and patriots. They put their country ahead of their personal relationship with me. That’s what separates us from dictatorships and oligarchies. Without people of such courage, our democracy would be lost, and they will forever have my gratitude. And because of them, I have never felt more proud to be an American.” [105]

Kiefer Sutherland’s *Designated Survivor* series on ABC also aired a 25th Amendment fantasy, where his vice president plotted to invoke the power hoping to have him removed as President after notes about his therapy sessions were leaked to the public, causing concerns about his mental stability as he tried to cope with the death of his wife. [106]

Michael J. Fox guest-starred as the prosecutor for the Cabinet, which ultimately failed in removing Sutherland, but succeeded in making an entire episode about the 25th Amendment, which was the whole point in the first place.

Even The CW's superhero series *Supergirl* , a derivative of the *Superman* franchise that focuses on Superman's cousin, also aired an episode where Kara (aka Supergirl, who, like Clark Kent works as a reporter) published an exposé on the President conspiring with arch villain Lex Luther, resulting in the cabinet invoking the 25th Amendment to have him removed. As the characters are watching a news broadcast about the situation, one turns to Kara, congratulating her, saying, "Talk about the power of the press." [107]

She replies, "These have been some dark days. And I'll admit, there were some times where I thought we would never get out of it, but we didn't give up, and we kept chipping away, until we brought the truth to light. Can you believe the Fourth Estate saved the day?" [108] The "Fourth Estate" refers to the news media, which functions as an unofficial fourth branch of government that is supposed to help keep political power in check.

Are There Any Conservative Celebrities?

Sometimes people may wonder "why are there so few conservative celebrities?" The answer is that there may not be as few as it appears because they keep quiet about their politics knowing that if they were vocal about their beliefs it would virtually end their career. Being a conservative in Hollywood has always been difficult but in the Age of Trump, it has never been more dangerous.

There are a few rare exceptions like conservative comedians Dennis Miller, Larry the Cable Guy, and Jeff Foxworthy, but they are allowed to exist because they have a niche market, and only as long as they don't come out too hard against the Left. They won't do jokes about gays, transgenders, Black crime, or other topics they know will cause them to be canceled. They have to stay in their lane.

There are some Republican actors like Jon Voight, and Dean Cain who are public about their beliefs but open conservatives in Hollywood are mostly lower-level actors who make a good living, but aren't A-listers.

Those who want to be megastars know what needs to be done, and what must not be done—or said publicly.

James Woods says that after he was asked at a Hollywood Foreign Press Association junket (the organization that runs the Golden Globe awards) if he would support Hillary Clinton for president, he was blacklisted from Hollywood for saying no. [109]

After President Trump became elected Woods began tweeting support for him, and his tweets became increasingly political. He was later dropped by his talent agent who gave him no other reason than, "I don't want to represent you anymore." [110] Woods is now basically retired but still enjoys tweeting his disgust for liberals on a regular basis.

Kanye West says it took him a year to "have the confidence" to publicly support Trump and wear a MAGA hat. He would later say that wearing the hat "represented overcoming fear and doing what you felt no matter what anyone said." [111] When Kanye was the musical guest on *Saturday Night Live* for the season premiere in 2018 he wore his MAGA hat on stage for his performance, and afterwards he started ranting about how the staff and producers were not happy about it.

"They said, 'don't go out there with that hat on.' They bullied me backstage. They bullied *me!* And then they say I'm in a sunken place." He then went on to say that ninety percent of news is liberal, "So it's easy to make it seem like it's so one-sided." [112] He got a lot of backlash and was even called a White supremacist, but he is a big enough star to weather the storm and eccentric enough for many to dismiss his political views as him just "being Kanye."

But there is no tolerance for ordinary actors or actresses just starting their career. *Mean Girls* was a movie and is now a play on Broadway, and one of the stars (Laura Leigh Turner) made headlines because someone snooping around her Twitter account noticed that she was following various popular conservatives, including President Trump and Sean Hannity. [113] She then un-followed Trump hoping to avoid any more negative attention.

Something similar happened to a contestant on *The Bachelorette* in the 2018 season when it was discovered that the frontrunner had "liked" various Instagram posts that made fun of feminists and illegal aliens. After making headlines for his "egregious behavior" he deleted his account so more wouldn't be uncovered and issued a lengthy and pathetic apology. [114]

Because of the increasing persecution of conservative celebrities, actor Gary Sinise founded a “secret society” of sorts called the Friends of Abe in 2004 to function as a support group and networking organization for conservatives in the entertainment industry. “Abe” refers to Abraham Lincoln, and at one time the group supposedly had around 2000 members, including Kevin Sorbo, Jon Voight, Scott Baio, and Kelsey Grammer. They used to meet once a month and would host guest speakers like conservative pundits as well as Republican politicians.

When the organization filed for a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status in 2011, the Obama-controlled IRS demanded a list of their members in order to process their application which is not a requirement for a group to be granted a non-profit status. [115] It was during this same time that the IRS was later found to have discriminated against over 400 different conservative groups, especially if they had “Tea Party” in their name. [116] After getting some negative press for trying to find out the names of everyone associated with Friends of Abe, the IRS reluctantly approved them as a 501(c)(3).

It is said that they disbanded in 2017 over divisions about President Trump, but there are rumors that a new “Friends of Abe” may have formed, possibly under a different name. [117] Being a conservative in Hollywood has always been difficult, but in our modern age with political correctness run amok and Thought Police ready to destroy anyone’s career for having the “wrong” opinion, it has caused most conservatives in the entertainment industry to stay hiding in the closet.

It’s not just Donald Trump that Hollywood is waging war on—it’s what he represents. He’s a nationalist, not a globalist. He puts America First, and unlike most other recent presidents won’t surrender our sovereignty to the United Nations. But Hollywood isn’t just trying to destroy him and his supporters. They’re waging war on the entire country, our culture, our history, and our families.

Author's Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com, or wherever you purchased it from if you're reading the e-book, to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them.

Almost all of the one-star reviews on Amazon for my last three books, "The Liberal Media Industrial Complex," "The True Story of Fake News," and "Liberalism: Find a Cure" are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent, hence me adding this note.

It's just more proof that liberals are losers and can't play fair, so if you could help me combat them as soon as possible since you actually bought this book, that would be great!

Thank you!

War on America Since the Leftists are trying to overthrow the United States of America and replace our Republic with a socialist dictatorship they are heavily promoting illegal immigration, demonizing the police, and are relentlessly attacking American culture, customs, symbols, and holidays. This is all obvious today, but back in the late 1940s and early 50s there were widespread concerns about communists and communist sympathizers working in Hollywood who may use their positions to do just that.

Numerous individuals were blacklisted and basically banned from working in the industry to prevent them from spreading anti-American sentiments. In 1947, ten writers and directors refused to testify about their suspected communist ties or sympathies before the House Un-American Activities Committee, likely because they didn't want to incriminate themselves.

The communist purge back then was widely criticized as an overreaction and a witch hunt (often referred to as McCarthyism), but it's obvious—the seeds of Marxism have taken root in Hollywood and now, as Tim Allen said, being a conservative in that town today is like being a Jew in 1930s Germany. [118]

Orson Bean, who was a popular gameshow host in the 1960s, later noted, "Sitcoms and movies today hate old-fashioned values. There's more anti-American propaganda today than the Soviets could have ever worked into our culture through their covert party members who were writing screenplays." [119]

A former KGB Agent named Yuri Bezmenov who defected to Canada in the 1970s would later give a series of interviews and lectures in the United States detailing how the Soviet Union was working to undermine the United States as part of their long term goal to end our reign as the world's premier superpower. He described the process as "ideological subversion" which was comprised of four different parts: Demoralization, Destabilization, Crisis, and Normalization. [120]

He said the Marxists knew it would take an entire generation to accomplish, but were patiently and persistently working towards the goal. "What [ideological subversion] basically means is: to change the perception of reality of every American to such an extent that despite [an] abundance of information, no one is able to come to sensible conclusions in the interest of defending themselves, their families, their community, and their country," he explained. [121]

Basically, the communists planned to cause cultural chaos by encouraging Americans to embrace socially toxic ideas they knew would ultimately lead to self-destruction down the road.

It's obvious that each phase of the Ideological Subversion plan has been successful. Hollywood has warped the minds of tens of millions of people causing irreversible damage, brainwashing them into believing that America is an evil country built entirely on the backs of slaves while the greedy 1% control all the wealth, so why bother trying to earn an honest living.

They've destabilized the nuclear family causing a sociological crisis like the world has never seen, with the majority of children now being raised by single parents; they've normalized the most unhealthy sexual behaviors and lifestyles anyone could imagine; and recently we've been faced with numerous crises from the coronavirus pandemic to the ongoing racial conflicts from Black Lives Matter. All of which have thrown America into a tailspin.

The ongoing attacks on American culture are stunningly similar to the "Cultural Revolution" in China which was launched by communist dictator (and mass murderer) Mao Zedong in the 1960s to purge any remaining elements of capitalism from the country along with anything else that may be an obstacle to his power. The Communist Party claimed that although the capitalists had been overthrown they were "still trying to use the old ideas, culture, customs, and habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses, capture their minds, and stage a comeback." [122]

To solidify his power Mao Zedong had his Red Guards (a network of student groups) violently target what were called the "Four Olds"—meaning old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas; in order to "transform education, literature and art, and all other parts of the superstructure that do not correspond to the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system." [123]

This is exactly what the social justice warriors of today are doing in the United States by targeting gender norms, the nuclear family, American holidays, our history, capitalism, and free speech.

Socialism's Emergence in America Bernie Sanders popularized socialism perhaps more than anyone else in a generation, and now an increasing number of wealthy celebrities have taken up the cause. Mark Ruffalo was one of the first to endorse Sanders' presidential campaign. The *Avengers* star is worth over $30 million dollars and earned $6 million playing the Hulk in just one of the many *Avengers* films but he thinks "It's time for an economic revolution," and claims, "Capitalism today is

failing us, killing us, and robbing from our children's future." **[124]**

John Cusack also endorsed Bernie Sanders and at one of his rallies said we need to end "predatory capitalism," which basically means forgive all debt and offer everyone free stuff paid for by those of us who work hard and save our money. [125] It's *our fault* that others frivolously spend their money on things they don't need instead of saving it or investing it, and now they feel they deserve ours. Jim Carrey, Britney Spears, and others are also encouraging Americans to "say yes to socialism." [126]

The Democratic candidates for president in 2020 were in a competition to see who could offer voters more free stuff: Free health care, free college, forgiving all student loans, reparations for Black people and gays, and more. Recently we've started seeing blatant anti-capitalism and pro-socialism themes in major movies and television shows which is exactly what Joseph McCarthy was worried communist sympathizers would do.

Such messages seem to have been glossed over in 2019's *Joker* by most viewers who were captivated by Joaquin Phoenix's disturbing performance, but they were actually at the core of the movement the Joker would come to lead. "Kill The Rich—A New Movement?" is the headline on a tabloid the Joker had in his apartment as civil unrest erupted in Gotham. "Fuck the rich! Fuck Thomas Wayne! That's what this whole fucking thing is about! Fuck the whole system!" screams one protester.

A reporter asks Mr. Wayne (Batman's father) about the "groundswell of anti-rich sentiments," adding, "It's almost as if our city's less fortunate residents are taking the side of the killer."

"What kind of coward would do something that cold-blooded?" he responds, speaking of Arthur Fleck killing three men who assaulted him on the subway, sparking his transformation into Joker. "Someone who hides behind a mask. Someone who's envious of those more fortunate than themselves."

At the very end when the Joker is a guest on a popular late-night talk show, he begins the interview saying, "It's been a rough few weeks Murray…ever since I killed those three Wall Street guys."

"Okay, I'm waiting for the punchline," Murray (Robert De Niro) responds.

"There is no punchline. It's not a joke."

He goes on to rant about how awful society is and how nobody is civil anymore. "Do you think men like (billionaire) Thomas Wayne ever think what it's like to be someone like me? To be somebody but themselves? They don't!"

He continues ranting and gloats about the riots on the streets and the police officers who have been harmed and then shoots Murray in the face live on the air. The Joker is hailed as a hero by the mobs gathering in the streets for fighting back against the system. Throughout the riots some people are seen holding signs that say "Resist"—the same signs anti-Trump "Resistance" activists often use at their protests.

The hacking thriller *Mr. Robot* has been praised for its anti-capitalism themes. The main character "Elliot" wants to cause "the single biggest incident of wealth redistribution in history," by deleting all financial records of credit card debt and mortgages. [127] *The Atlantic* said, "for the most part the show plays like an Occupy Wall Street fever dream." [128] Another critic called it, "the anti-capitalist TV show we've been waiting for," and praised it because it, "makes socialism a vibrant force again in popular culture." [129]

Justin Timberlake stars in the 2011 film *In Time* about a future world where people are genetically programmed to stop aging at 25, and then die a year later if they can't afford to buy any more "time." Their remaining lifespan counts down on a timer implanted in their arm which shows how much longer they have to live. The rich people are able to afford more "time" and can live for hundreds of years, but the poor people can't, and have to borrow "time" at high rates of interest. So Justin Timberlake decides to steal a whole bunch of "time" and distribute it to the poor people in order to "crash the system." [130]

The Netflix series *The Society* is about a small town where all the adults mysteriously disappear, leaving a group of high schoolers stuck in what appears to be a parallel universe to fend for themselves while they struggle to build a new "society" in order to survive on their own.

After some of the kids decide to raid the local hardware store for supplies, fighting with each other as they scramble to take what they can, it results in a town meeting where the natural leader (the new "mayor," who was student body president in their previous world) tells everyone they're going to take inventory on all the food and other resources in the town and begin eating meals communally in the school cafeteria to ration it.

A group of the jocks are later shown laying around reflecting on what they had done to the hardware store and discussing the emerging government. One of them begins, “I’ve been thinking—what if we didn’t, like, take stuff? Like food or whatever. Wouldn’t be the worst thing in the world, right? Sharing. It could be like socialism. There’s no “I” in team, right?”

Another says it “kind of worked” in China because “everything’s made in China.”

“Well. Socialism it is,” they conclude. [131]

But sharing food and work responsibilities angers some of the rich kids from the town (the “haves”) who don’t want to give up their property to others (the “have nots”) or work at what they see as jobs that are beneath them, so a power struggle ensues and the “haves” organize a coup, seizing political power of the town proving how “ruthless” rich people are and the lengths they’ll go to maintain their lifestyle at the “expense” of others.

In season two of Amazon Prime’s *Jack Ryan* series, the cause for Venezuela’s economic and humanitarian crisis isn’t said to be from socialism failing the country, but because the president is a “nationalist.” The president’s opponent however, is “running against him on a social justice platform and on the strength of, in my humble opinion, just not being an asshole,” explains Jack Ryan. [132]

The Foundation for Economic Freedom denounced the series, pointing out that, “By making the villain of *Jack Ryan* a nationalist, the writers take a not-so-subtle jab at US President Donald Trump, whose ‘America First’ slogan has been described as nationalism ‘that betrays America’s values.’” [133]

The growing pro-socialist messages woven into the plots of TV series and movies caused the Orange County Register to ask, “Why does Hollywood smear capitalism, promote socialism?” [134] The answer is clear—the Marxists embedded in Hollywood are using their positions in the industry just as the Red Scare of the 1940s and 50s had feared.

In February 2020 a “Netflix for the Left” was launched called *Means TV* by a group of socialist film makers who helped produce campaign ads for Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s 2018 election to Congress. [135] It’s an “anti-capitalist” subscription service that streams documentaries, news shows, and even cartoons and comedies in order to "create the cultural foundation and need to build socialism in the U.S." [136] It is an admittedly Marxist service that aims to incite people to rise up and "seize the means of production." [137]

Black Lives Matter Riots of 2020

After a man named George Floyd, who was high on fentanyl and methamphetamine, [138] died while in police custody in Minneapolis, it kicked off nationwide riots and looting that went on for over a week. [139] They started locally in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where the Black community looted and burned businesses and even took over the local police station and burnt that down too. [140]

The riots and looting quickly spread to other cities across the country largely due to the mainstream media fanning the flames of racial tensions by reporting half-truths and gaslighting, giving gullible people the impression that African Americans are being systematically hunted by police and around every corner Black people minding their own business are confronted by "White supremacists."

Celebrities were more than happy to pour gasoline on the fire, and many of them announced that they were donating money to bail out the rioters. Justin Timberlake, Chrissy Teigen, Steve Carell, Seth Rogan and many more declared that they were on the side of the mob and were helping to fund them. Others, including John Legend, Lizzo, Natalie Portman, Common, and more all signed a petition supporting the new anti-police agenda calling for police departments to be defunded and shut down. [141]

Just days later the Los Angeles mayor announced that he was cutting $100 to $150 million dollars from the LAPD budget and diverting the money to communities of color. [142] New York City mayor Bill de Blasio followed suit saying he too was cutting the NYPD budget by one *billion* dollars to defund the police. [143]

This just days after iconic stores like Macy's on Fifth Avenue had been looted because police were too busy dealing with rioters in other parts of the city. "We don't want no more police," one protest leader told

Minneapolis mayor Jacob Frey before the mob ran him out of an event for not supporting the cause. [144]

Defunding and disbanding police departments as part the Black Lives Matter "revolution" certainly wasn't enough to satisfy the angry mob, so soon they began calling for all TV shows and movies about cops to be canceled. *The Washington Post* led the charge with the headline "Shut down all police movies and TV shows—Now," and just a few days later the popular "Cops" reality show was pulled from TV because it "glorified police." [145]

It had been on air for 33 seasons, beginning in 1989. Another popular cop reality show, *Live PD,* was also canceled. [146] These unscripted series show the dangers police officers face firsthand, but since they humanize them, the Marxists wanted the shows banned. And all this happened within two weeks of Black Lives Matter resurging.

They even targeted *Paw Patrol* , a cartoon for kids about dogs who work a variety of jobs like a dalmatian firefighter, a bulldog construction worker, and a German shepherd police officer. [147] The Left doesn't want children to have any positive depiction of police so they can more easily indoctrinate them into their nihilist cult and the "ACAB" (All Cops Are Bastards) ideology. It's a miracle Will Smith and Martin Lawrence didn't apologize for starring in the action comedy *Bad Boys* since it makes cops seem funny and cool.

Apple Music even disabled the search feature for a day, called Blackout Tuesday, to help raise "awareness" for Black Lives Matter—as if we all hadn't been hearing enough about them on the news and social media. Instead of letting people find the music they wanted to listen to, Apple replaced the Browse feature with a special curated playlist containing Black power music, including NWA's infamous "Fuck the Police." [148]

They continued marching in the streets for months claiming the United States is inherently racist against Black people and that they are being oppressed by "systemic racism" that keeps them from succeeding in life. This, while every major social media platform coddles them and even gives Black people special privileges and perks. [149] The terms of service forbidding "hate speech," harassment, and inciting violence are rarely enforced when such violations are made by non-White users.

During the 2020 Riots countless major corporations including Facebook, Twitter, Google, Amazon, Disney, McDonalds, Starbucks, Bank of America and many others released statements declaring their support for the Black Lives Matter movement and donated hundreds of thousands, or even millions of dollars each to Black communities and causes. [150]

Cable networks, including the Discovery Channel and the Disney Channel were airing Black Lives Matter PSAs, [151] and several video games including Call of Duty and FIFA 20 (soccer) added a "Black Lives Matter" message every-time the games were booted. [152]

Black Lives Matter is not about "ending racism" or "helping" Black people—it's a front for a neo-Marxist movement attempting to overthrow the United States government and uproot our Constitutional Republic. [153]

One of their original online manifestos (which has since been toned down a bit) read, "Black people will never achieve liberation under the current racialized capitalist system…The White supremacist, imperialistic, patriarchal systems needs not reform but radical transformation…We must remake the current U.S. political system in order to create a real democracy where Black people and all marginalized people can effectively exercise full political power." [154]

One of the original "founders" of the movement, Patrisse Cullors, openly admits she's a Marxist and her "intellectual influences" are Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and Mao Zedong. [155] Other Black Lives Matter leaders like Yusra Khogali have written that White people are "subhuman" and are "genetic defects." [156]

They are also calling for a universal basic income [UBI], universal healthcare, reparations for slavery, the release of "all political prisoners" meaning Black people incarcerated for committing any crime, and want "a radical and sustainable redistribution of wealth." [157]

Such extremist ideas had been festering on the fringes of the Black power movement since the 1960s but now they have the unwavering support of virtually every celebrity and the entire Hollywood machine has been recalibrated to promote their cause.

Christianity Under Attack In order to destroy America, the conspirators are determined to eradicate faith in God and dismantle organized Christianity. Attacking Jesus and Christianity is a sacrament in Hollywood because the far-Left

hates Jesus and everything He stands for. It’s not an overstatement to say that many in key positions of power in the entertainment industry (and politics) are Satanists who will someday openly embrace Lucifer as the rebel angel kicked out of Heaven for defying God.

“I’m glad the Jews killed Christ,” ranted comedian Sarah Silverman in one of her comedy specials. “Good. I’d fucking do it again!” she declares, as her audience agrees in laughter. [158] While accepting an Emmy Award one year Kathy Griffin said, “A lot of people come up here and they thank Jesus for this award. I want you to know that no one had less to do with this award than Jesus. He didn’t help me a bit…so all I can say is suck it Jesus! This award is my god now!” [159]

I’m not saying people shouldn’t be able to make fun of Christians, but no mainstream celebrity would dare make such insults or jokes about Muhammad because Muslims (and Jews) are vigorously protected against any criticism or mockery and only wonderful things can be said about them. Even a slightly edgy joke ignites a barrage of attacks with cries of “Islamophobia” or “anti-Semitism” and gears start moving in the well-funded and massive smear machines like the ADL and the SPLC which quickly move to destroy the person’s career before they can utter another word.

Hating Christians is almost as necessary as believing in climate change if you’re going to be a mainstream Hollywood celebrity. There are very few open Christians in Hollywood, most of them are has-beens like Kevin Sorbo and Kirk Cameron who have been basically blacklisted since being open about their faith.

Kevin Sorbo was banned from Comicon because he’s a conservative and “pals with Sean Hannity.” [160] He and other Christian actors are stuck doing low budget films that get little attention. They’re allowed to exist (for now) as long as they never point out the Bible’s teachings on homosexuality. Only watered down and generic Christian messages are allowed to be said.

After *Guardians of the Galaxy* star Chris Pratt appeared on *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert and happened to discuss his “spirituality,” many online began attacking him for being a Christian and attending a church. Actress Ellen Page (a lesbian) from the *X-Men* and *Inception* tweeted, “If you are a famous actor and you belong to an organization that hates a certain group of people, don’t be surprised if someone simply wonders why it’s not addressed. Being anti LGBTQ is wrong, there aren’t two sides. The damage it causes is severe. Full stop.” [161]

Singer Ellie Goulding threatened to back out of her scheduled performance at the 2019 Thanksgiving NFL halftime show if the Salvation Army didn’t pledge to donate money to LGBT causes. She got the idea after her Instagram comments were flooded with complaints from her fans because the Salvation Army was sponsoring the game to announce their annual Red Kettle Campaign (bell ringers) fundraiser for the homeless. [162] Since the Salvation Army is a Christian charity, Goulding’s fans freaked out, accusing them of being “homophobic” and “transphobic.”

They quickly bowed to the pressure and “disavowed” any anti-LGBT beliefs, which basically means they’re disavowing the Bible because even the New Testament denounces homosexuality in Romans 1:26-27 and 1st Corinthians 6:9-10. Many critics claim that only the Old Testament does, but the Book of Romans makes it clear that just because Jesus came to offer salvation doesn’t mean God’s law regarding homosexuality changed.

The Salvation Army also removed a “position statement” from their website that had made it clear “Scripture forbids sexual intimacy between members of the same sex,” and replaced it with one saying “We embrace people regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity.” [163] One of the world’s largest Christian charities whose very name “The Salvation Army” refers to the salvation of Christ, cowardly bowed down to the Leftist activists out of fear they would be branded “homophobic.”

Christians are easy targets since they’re much more passive than Jews and Muslims when attacked, and Hollywood loves to stereotype them as a bunch of superstitious bigots who don’t know how to have fun. In the rare case that there is a movie favorable to Christianity that gets widespread distribution, that too is attacked.

Passion of the Christ was deemed “anti-Semitic” because it depicts the story of Jesus’ arrest, sham trial, and crucifixion. [164] It was the most popular film about the events to be made and wasn’t a straight to DVD release like most others. With Mel Gibson behind it, the film became a huge success, which caused a tremendous backlash.

The ADL [Anti-Defamation League] denounced the film, saying it "continues its unambiguous portrayal of Jews as being responsible for the death of Jesus. There is no question in this film about who is responsible. At every single opportunity, Mr. Gibson's film reinforces the notion that the Jewish authorities and the Jewish mob are the ones ultimately responsible for the Crucifixion." [165] That's because that's what happened!

Technically, the Romans did it, but at the behest of the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem at the time. The Bible makes it very clear what led to Jesus being crucified. Pontius Pilate is quoted in Matthew 27:24 saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood," and "It is your responsibility!" meaning the Jewish Pharisees. They were the ones who conspired to have Jesus arrested and killed for "blasphemy" and being a "false" messiah. Pontius Pilate even offered to release Jesus, but the crowd demanded he release Barabbas instead, another man who was being detained for insurrection against Rome, and for murder. [166]

A critic for the *New York Daily News* called *The Passion of the Christ* , "the most virulently anti-Semitic movie made since the German propaganda films of the Second World War." [167] Many others angrily denounced the film when it came out in 2004. Some in the media even blamed it for a supposed "upsurge" in anti-Semitic hate crimes. [168]

When the History Channel miniseries *The Bible* was released in 2013, the same cries of "anti-Semitism" rang out. [169] *The New York Times* opinion editor Bari Weiss went so far as to say that it's a "conspiracy theory" that Jews killed Jesus. [170]

Even though most Christmas movies aren't overtly Christian and instead focus of the importance of families reuniting and spending time together, that doesn't mean they're not going to come under attack. As the war on western culture continues, the Marxists have set their sights on Christmas too.

Online liberal cesspool Salon.com ran a headline reading "Hallmark movies are fascist propaganda," and complained they promote "heteronormative whiteness" because there aren't enough LGBT characters or people of color in them. [171]

"Hallmark movies, with their emphasis on returning home and the pleasures of the small, domestic life, also send a not-at-all subtle signal of disdain for cosmopolitanism and curiosity about the larger world," Salon said, "which is exactly the sort of attitude that helps breed the kind of defensive White nationalism that we see growing in strength in the Donald Trump era." [172]

The article went on to say that because the Hallmark Channel airs so many Christmas movies, it is promoting, "a set of patriarchal and authoritarian values that are more about White evangelicals defining themselves as an ethnic group, and not about a genuine feeling of spirituality…The very fact that they're presented as harmless fluff makes it all the more insidious, the way they work to enforce very narrow, White, heteronormative, sexist, provincial ideas of what constitutes 'normal.'" [173]

The article wasn't satire. Salon.com has a deep-seated hatred of Christianity, conservatives and families, and is another cog in the Cultural Marxist machine working to destroy the United States.

Comedian Whitney Cummings was reported to the Human Resources department of a major Hollywood studio after she wished the crew of a TV show she was working on "Merry Christmas" when they wrapped up for the year. She made the revelation while speaking with Conan O'Brian the following December. "Last year, I was working on a TV show, [and] got in trouble with Human Resources for saying 'Merry Christmas' to an intern," she began. [174]

Conan asked her if she was being serious and she said it was a true story, elaborating, "I was leaving, like on the 18th or whatever…and I was like, 'Bye guys, Merry Christmas.'" When she returned from vacation after New Year's she was called to HR and scolded. She joked, "I don't even care how your Christmas was. It was just a formality. It's what you say when you leave." [175]

Conan O'Brien then replied, "In these times we're in, that could trigger someone or offend them if it's not their holiday." [176] She didn't say which network it was, but she's been involved with some major shows like NBC's *Whitney* (where she played the main character), as well as the CBS sitcom *2 Broke Girls*, which she created and was a writer for.

While today it may seem impossible that Christmas movies may become a thing of the past, nobody could have ever guessed that reruns of the classic *Dukes of Hazzard* would get banned after the Confederate flag was deemed a "hate symbol" in 2015, or that Aunt Jemima pancake syrup, Eskimo Pie ice cream bars, and Uncle Ben's Rice would be deemed "racially insensitive" and pulled from production a few years later. [177]

Once someone reminds liberals that the word *Christmas* is derived from *Christ's Mass* and that it is actually a commemoration of the birth of Jesus, they may finally go over the edge and deem Christmas just as offensive as Columbus Day or the Fourth of July. And with the Muslim and Sikh populations increasing in the United States, the American standard of Christmas music playing in shopping malls and retail stores all month long every December may one day come to an end because it's not "inclusive" and leaves non-Christians feeling "ostracized."

Glorifying Satanism Since the Hollywood elite hate God and everything that is normal and good, it would only make sense that they have embraced Satan as their symbolic (or literal) master. The Church of Satan is an organization started by Anton LaVey in the 1960s which gained popularity among a few celebrities at the time like Sammy Davis Jr. and Jayne Mansfield. The "church" was really just Anton LaVey's house, but he was a showman, so in the late 1960s and early 70s he was able to get some media attention for openly embracing satanism and engaging in various theatrical rituals and stunts (like serving an amputated leg for dinner that one of the members stole from a hospital he worked at). [178] While the group's 15 minutes of fame soon faded away, satanism in Hollywood didn't.

Rock stars and heavy metal bands in the 1980s and 90s continued to promote satanism through their music. Marilyn Manson, the self-described "anti-Christ superstar," would often tear out pages from the Bible on stage as part of his shows. Of course he would never do that to a Quran because radical Muslims would put out a fatwa calling for him to be executed, not to mention he would be denounced as "Islamophobic," but attacking Christians gets one hailed as a hero in Hollywood.

In the early 2010s we began to see an explosion of pop stars promoting a new brand of satanism, in the form of the Illuminati. The original Illuminati was a secret society founded in Bavaria, Germany in the late 1700s by a law professor at the University of Ingolstadt named Adam Weishaupt. While the Founding Fathers in America openly declared their views and goals to gain independence from the King of England, the Illuminati sought secrecy and subversion to escape the grasp of the Monarch in Germany.

After many of the members were discovered, rounded up and arrested, it was said the secret society was no more, but rumors have persisted for over two hundred years that they survived and continued on. The group's original plans—many of which had been discovered by seizing their letters of correspondence—detailed how the organization was structured to avoid collapsing if any of its cells were discovered. Some trace their symbols, slogans, and activities to the Skull & Bones secret society founded in 1832, and later to the Bohemian Grove, and the Bilderberg Group. [179]

Aside from being a mafia of sorts, consisting of powerful politicians, bankers, and businessmen—many people believe that these "Illuminati" members are privy to ancient philosophical secrets about the history of mankind and the "true" nature of divine forces.

Concerns and conspiracy theories about the Illuminati were mostly contained on the fringes of the Internet until the early 2010s when allegations of celebrity Illuminati involvement went viral through YouTube videos and social media postings. [180] Many rappers and pop stars began incorporating Illuminati symbols into their music videos and hinting that they were somehow a part of it. None of these musicians were members of Skull & Bones or attending the Bohemian Grove, but by promoting the Illuminati and satanism as cool, they laid the foundation for the widespread acceptance of satanism—or Luciferianism as it is also called.

Those who follow this secret doctrine believe that the God who created the world (and all living things) was actually a lower level god called the Demiurge (Jehovah), who essentially enslaved mankind through our very creation, either through malevolence or ignorance of its own lack of abilities; and so Satan/Lucifer, the "supreme" being of the Universe from this point of view, decided to enter the Demiurge's creation to "save" mankind by convincing Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, giving them consciousness. [181] This strange belief that Satan is the savior, and God (the creator) is evil, is found at the core of most occult fraternities and secret societies. [182]

Such esoteric ideas had remained mostly hidden from public view for thousands of years, but now a large number of Hollywood celebrities seemed to be embracing the idea that Satan/Lucifer is good, and giving a wink and a nod that they too know the Illuminati secret. [183]

While the Illuminati fad in pop culture has passed, the open embrace of this idea—that Satan/Lucifer is actually the "savior"—will no doubt return someday and catch on like wildfire among the high priests of pop culture. A-list celebrities will declare that Satan is "king" and countless people will blindly follow their lead as they always do.

Bible prophecy predicts that one day a counterfeit Christ (the Antichrist) will declare that *he* is "God" and the ruler of the earth, and such proclamation will be welcomed by billions of people. And thanks to the massive cultural shifts that are taking place, the path is being paved for the widespread acceptance of the "secret doctrine" that Satan/Lucifer is really the "good" God and here to "save" mankind from the inept or malevolent creator who made a flawed world.

Abortion Because liberals celebrate hedonism, debauchery, and tend to live in the moment without any concern for the consequences, unwanted pregnancies are a common occurrence. And instead of accepting responsibility for their actions, they usually decide to kill the baby and have its remains vacuumed out of the womb, seeing such barbarism as no different than getting a wart removed. But they're upset that such a procedure has a negative stigma for so many people, so the Hollywood propaganda machine has been working behind the scenes to change that.

It's not enough for abortion activists to hope that writers will decide on their own to include pro-abortion messages in their scripts, so Planned Parenthood took it upon themselves to create their own entertainment liaison who lobbies studios to insert such themes on their behalf.

A woman named Caren Spruch is the current director of the Arts & Entertainment Engagement department at Planned Parenthood, and the *Washington Post* calls her their “secret weapon,” admitting, “She encourages screenwriters to tell stories about abortion and works as a script doctor for those who do.” [184] Spruch said that Planned Parenthood has advised studios on over 150 different movies and television shows since 2014. Their first project was a “comedy” called *Obvious Child* which is about a girl who has a one-night stand with some random guy after breaking up with her boyfriend and later finds out she’s pregnant and gets an abortion on Valentine’s Day. [185]

One of the many shows Planned Parenthood’s entertainment liaison office helped “advise” is the Hulu series *Shrill* , which shows the lead character (Aidy Bryant) getting pregnant and deciding to have an abortion “before it becomes illegal.” After killing the baby she tells her roommate she’s glad she “got out of a huge fucking mess” and, “I feel very fucking powerful right now. And I just feel like I need to go out [and party].” [186]

A sociologist at the University of California, San Francisco wants more comedies about abortion to help destigmatize it. “The purpose of including an abortion plot line is simply to make jokes about abortion, recognizing that such satire is valuable for some people as both a means and an end,” said Gretchen Sisson, PhD. [187]

She continued, “This should not be surprising: comedy has often been used as a subversive way of challenging predominant social structures,” and she thinks abortion is “intuitive new ground for comedy to address.” [188]

NBC’s *Parenthood* included an episode where a character (played by Skyler Day) visited a Planned Parenthood clinic to get an abortion despite her boyfriend’s wishes she keep the baby and the two “start a life” together. “If I have this baby, my life is over” she told him, and proceeded to kill the child.

Depicting characters getting an abortion was rare back in 2013 for network television, and the episode was celebrated for “bravely” tackling the topic. [189] The *Huffington Post* praised the episode as well, noting “Amy’s mind was made up and there was nothing Drew could do to stop her.” [190]

Melanie Roussell Newman, who works as Planned Parenthood’s senior vice president of communications and culture, admitted, “We’ve seen pop culture change views around LGBTQ issues, for example, and pop culture has the power to challenge abortion stigma, too." [191] Yes, that's a real job position—they have a "communications and culture department" (as well as their Arts & Entertainment Engagement office).

One Planned Parenthood affiliate even said that there should be a cartoon where a Disney princess gets an abortion. [192] Many people believed the statement to be an Internet hoax, but it is real, and they later explained, "Planned Parenthood believes that pop culture—television shows, music, movies—has a critical role to play in educating the public and sparking meaningful conversations around sexual and reproductive health issues and policies, including abortion." [193]

Another organization called the Center for Reproductive Rights was recently formed to promote abortion through entertainment. [194] Chairwoman Elizabeth Banks said her goal is to make abortion stigma-free and wants girls getting one to be seen as symbolic of "liberty itself." [195]

Comedian Michelle Wolf had a short-lived show on Netflix where she once did a segment titled "Salute to Abortions" which consisted of her being joined on stage by a marching band as she shouted to the audience, "It doesn't have to be a big deal, it's actually a great deal! It's about $300 dollars. That's like six movie tickets." The segment ended with her declaring, "God bless abortions, and God bless America!" [196] She later revealed that she herself had gotten one and it made her feel "very powerful" and "like God." [197]

Actress Lena Dunham once admitted she *wished* she had gotten an abortion so should could "better understand" other women who have had them. [198] When actress "Busy Philipps" was at a pro-abortion rally in March 2020 she stood at the podium and screamed (literally *screamed*) about how glad she was to have gotten one when she was a teenager since it allowed her to become a star.

"Soon I would be driving my hybrid [car] to my beautiful fucking home…and I have all of this! All of it! Because I was allowed bodily autonomy at fifteen!" [199]

"I will not be shamed into being quiet. *We* will not be shamed into being quiet. Never again! I will never stop talking about my abortion or my periods or my experiences in childbirth, my episiotomies, my yeast infections, or my ovulation that lines up with the moon!" [200] After seeing her unhinged rant, one might think it was someone playing a character and doing a parody sketch of a pro-abortion activist, but she really meant it and screamed it at the top of her lungs. She was happy to sacrifice her baby for fame and fortune.

Bowing to China It’s interesting to note that Hollywood is increasingly bowing to China’s cultural standards in order to maintain distribution channels there. The Communist government has strict rules about which films are allowed to be seen in China, and in hopes of pleasing them, various plots are changed and scenes altered before they are put into production.

When the trailer for the *Top Gun* sequel was released, some eagle-eyed fans noticed that a Taiwanese flag patch which had been sown onto Tom Cruise’s jacket along with a few other country’s flags where his father had flown missions, was now missing. [201] Taiwan has been in an ongoing dispute with China trying to become an independent country, but China still claims the island as their territory and in another apparent attempt to appease the Chinese government, *Top Gun* producers removed the Taiwanese flag from Cruise’s jacket because it simply being there symbolized Taiwan was not part of China, but their own country.

DC Comics also censored a promotional image for a Batman comic that was posted on their Instagram and Twitter accounts after some people in China interpreted it as supporting Hong Kong in *their* struggle for independence. The picture showed Batman throwing a Molotov cocktail with the caption “the future is young.” [202]

Protests by separatists had been growing in Hong Kong, and mostly involved college age people using social media to organize, and some read too much into the Batman picture thinking it supported them, so DC Comics deleted it so it wouldn’t cause any issues with their distribution there.

The 2015 film *Pixels* starring Adam Sandler and Kevin James about aliens in the form of popular video game characters invading planet earth was altered so China wouldn’t get offended. While waging war against our planet—in one scene an Arkanoid paddle, similar to Breakout, was supposed to destroy part of the Great Wall of China since in the game players bounce a ball against bricks to break them apart, but the censors changed that scene to depict the object destroying the Taj Mahal in India instead. [203]

The zombie action movie *World War Z* was based on a book that described the virus outbreak turning people into zombies starting in China, which is ultimately nuked, leaving Lhasa, Tibet the largest remaining city in the world. But for the film, producers changed the location of the outbreak to Korea and of course China wasn't nuked because they had nothing to do with it.

Apparently the Chinese government has banned the distribution of any films featuring zombies, and the *Hollywood Reporter* noted that a sequel was in the works for *World War Z* but later canceled because Paramount wouldn't be able to distribute the film internationally there. [204] The Chinese market is huge, and if studios are pitched a film they know won't be allowed in China, they're often inclined to pass on making it altogether.

"You're not going to see something that's like *Seven Years in Tibet* anymore," said Larry Shinagawa, a college professor at Hawaii's Tokai International College. [205] The 1997 film which stars Brad Pitt takes place in the 1940s and 1950s when Tibet was struggling for independence from China, but that's too offensive to the Chinese these days and similar films may hurt distribution deals for other, unrelated projects.

Richard Gere's *Red Corner* (1997) was perhaps the last major film critical of Communist China to be made. In it, Gere plays a businessman who is framed for the murder of a Chinese general's daughter while on a trip there, and soon realizes how corrupt their legal system is.

In *First Man* (2018), a biopic about Neal Armstrong and the Apollo 11 landing on the moon, the film didn't show one of the most iconic scenes in history—Neal Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin planting the American flag on the moon once they arrived. When viewers noticed this strange omission Ryan Gosling, who played Armstrong, defended its absence saying landing on the moon was a "human achievement" not an American one. [206]

Others had their suspicions the scene wasn't depicted to avoid making the film too American in hopes it could be distributed in China. It doesn't make any sense that a movie about one of America's greatest achievements wouldn't proudly show the historic scene of the American flag being victoriously planted in the ground on the moon after we won the Space Race.

Ryan Gosling and the producers couldn't admit to the public the real reason for omitting the scene, because it would shock filmgoers across the country and perhaps cause people to boycott the movie for downplaying our own greatness in attempts to make more money through distribution in China. Hollywood stays very quiet about the lengths they go to in hopes of achieving that.

Even the NBA has sold out to China. When the general manager of the Houston Rockets basketball team tweeted support for Hong Kong in the midst of growing protests there hoping to gain their independence, it sparked an enormous problem for the NBA because their games are broadcast in China since they are surprisingly very popular there. Adding to the problem was Chinese native Yao Ming (the 7-foot 6-inch star) had played for the Houston Rockets before retiring.

Stars like James Harden praised China saying "We apologize. You know, we love China." [207] LeBron James said the coach "wasn't educated" about the situation and that his tweet "harmed" people financially and could have "physically" harmed them as well. [208] Despite celebrity athletes always supporting "good causes" and denouncing racism, police shootings, and human rights abuses around the world, none of them were saying a word about how China treated their citizens or that one million Muslims have been locked up in re-education camps there. [209]

Immigration To say that the United States is being invaded by illegal immigrants is an understatement, but we’re now living in a period of time where certain facts are considered to be “hate speech” and the liberal media gaslights their audience trying to get them to deny their own lying eyes. Over 20 million illegal aliens have breached our border and are currently living in the United States, [210] most of which drain financial and social resources which they don’t even pay into—but to admit the extent of the illegal alien problem is strictly forbidden. In fact, the term

“illegal alien” is now considered “hate speech.” [211]

In 2019 almost 400,000 anchor babies were born in the United States from illegal alien mothers. In 48 of the 50 states there were more babies born by illegal alien mothers than ones who were born by women who are U.S. citizens. [212]

Flooding the United States with immigrants from third world countries is a primary objective of the globalists because it erodes patriotism, our cultural heritage, and hastens their planned economic collapse which they look to seize upon in order to launch their socialist revolution. During the early Democratic presidential debates for the 2020 election, every single Democrat candidate on stage raised their hand when asked if they support giving free healthcare to illegal aliens. [213]

There are even reports of Mexicans waiting (and hoping) for Donald Trump to lose his re-election bid in November 2020, who plan to then illegally enter the U.S. because they feel their chances of getting in and being able to stay will be almost assured. [214] The more illegals the better for Democrats, who hope to one day grant them all amnesty and make them U.S. citizens (and their new voter base), destroying any chances of Republicans winning a national election again for generations.

So aside from the Democrat Party and the mainstream “news” media calling for a nonstop influx of immigrants to bring this about, Hollywood is helping as much as they can as well. Often brief pro-illegal immigration messages will be inserted into the dialogue of a show or a character will comment how “terrible” President Trump’s immigration policies are, but now we’re even seeing entire television series dedicated to promoting illegal immigration and demonizing anyone who wants to secure the border.

We all know Hollywood loves to reboot old shows from decades ago, from *Hawaii Five-0* and *Murphy Brown* to *MacGyver* , hoping to cash-in on the nostalgia original fans had for the series. One of those reboots was *Party of Five* , which originally aired in the 1990s and was about a family of five kids (ages one to twenty-four) who had to fend for themselves after both of their parents were killed in a car accident by a drunk driver.

But in 2020, it was rebooted to depict a Mexican family whose parents got deported because of President Trump's crackdown on illegal aliens! The five kids (who are anchor babies because they were born in the U.S.) are then left here to fend for themselves. [215] The show was canceled after just one season. [216]

In 2017, the *New York Times* expressed their frustration that there weren't enough illegal aliens in starring roles or television shows that focus on them and their struggles, so they called on studios to green-light more series about "Dreamers"—the millions of illegal aliens smuggled into the United States by their parents that President Obama gave amnesty to. [217] Producers listened, and soon plots about "innocent" illegal aliens being persecuted would become a common occurrence.

ICE Are the New Bogymen After Roseanne Barr's character was killed off and the series renamed *The Connors* due to her infamous "offensive tweet" about Obama administration official Valerie Jarrett, her daughter "Becky" in the show got knocked up by an illegal alien who worked as a busboy at the same Mexican restaurant she waitressed at. He later called her one day to let her know that he got caught up in an ICE (Immigration and Custom Enforcement) raid and she breaks down in tears out of fear that now the baby is going to have to grow up without a father because he's being deported. [218]

NBC's sitcom *Superstore* featured ICE agents coming to the fictional retail giant "Cloud 9" (the "superstore" at the center of the show) to arrest an illegal immigrant who works there in the season finale. Her fellow employees tried to help her escape the agents. [219]

Netflix's female prison drama *Orange is the New Black* also featured ICE agents as the bad guys who arrested a major character just when she was about to be released from prison for an unrelated crime, leaving her boyfriend waiting outside with a bouquet of flowers devastated that he wasn't getting reunited with her. [220]

In an episode of the CW's *Two Sentences Horror Story*, a Latino nanny fends off would-be robbers trying to break into the family's home that she works for, but when the heroic nanny makes the news, ICE agents discovered she was undocumented and soon paid her a visit, thus the horrifying twist at the end. [221]

Charisse L'Pree Corsbie-Massay, a professor at the Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University, says, "ICE has emerged as a villain in popular discourse, and now we're seeing that on screen. But these ICE agents are one-off characters with no lines and no names. They're just representations of ICE, the faceless government entity. Their only role is to play the villain to our characters." [222]

Pamela Rutledge, the director of the Media Psychology Research Center, said, "Making ICE agents as bad guys exacerbates the political fission surrounding the immigration issues…Whether you agree or disagree with current policies, it is important to understand how fiction can inform beliefs on current issues where most people have little actual experience." [223]

During the Trump administration we've seen more open border messages being sprinkled into shows than ever before. In Showtime's *Shameless* one character (Frank Gallagher) played by William H. Macy, announces he's having a keg party at his house and is charging people 10 bucks at the door to get in, and adds that unlike this "piece of shit country," his "border" turns away no one. [224]

Pop singer Kesha released a song and music video dedicated to DACA illegal aliens (Dreamers) called "Hymn" where she sings, "Even the stars and the moon don't shine quite like we do. Dreamers searchin' for the truth. After all we've been through, no, we won't stand and salute [the flag]." [225]

The medical drama *Grey's Anatomy* had an episode about an illegal immigrant who reluctantly takes her daughter to the hospital to finally get healthcare she's been neglecting out of fear that she would get deported. Lobbying agency Hollywood, Health & Society convinced the writers to include that plot point to highlight the concerns illegal aliens have about getting deported if they go to a hospital. [226]

Even the rebooted *Twilight Zone* on CBS featured an episode where "welcoming illegal immigrants" was the "moral of the story" at the end. An upper middle class woman’s housekeeper is detained by ICE and scheduled to be deported, and despite working for the family for over a decade, the family’s friends seem fairly callous about her situation. “These people know the risks when they come here,” a neighbor says. [227]

The homeowner herself, Eve, is later revealed to be an illegal immigrant as well—from another dimension, who came to ours thirty years ago to live among humans on earth after fleeing terrible living conditions on her own planet. In the end, she is also detained and hauled off screaming, now facing deportation herself, back to where she came from.

The episode concludes with narrator Jordan Peele giving the “moral” of the story, saying, “We are all immigrants from somewhere, be it another city, another country, or another dimension. As a child, Eve Martin escaped to what should have been a better world. A world where the skies are blue. But now those skies have darkened, and the land below them is a place she is no longer welcome. For Eve Martin, there’s no passport to be stamped for passage out of the Twilight Zone.” [228]

Other Attempts There were reports that *Jane the Virgin* star Gina Rodriguez was hoping to produce a TV series about a college student who found out they were an undocumented immigrant, and reportedly had a pilot episode made for the CW network, but so far it hasn’t been picked up. [229] Then CBS reportedly bought the rights and hoped they could get the show to air under the working title of *Rafa the Great* . [230]

Gina Rodriquez is also trying to get another show called *Have Mercy* produced, which is about a Latina doctor who immigrates to Miami but is unable to practice medicine in the United States for whatever reason (probably because the medical school she went to is considered substandard), and so she decides to open an illegal clinic run out of her apartment to help her Latino neighbors. [231]

CBS shot a pilot episode for *In the Country We Love* , based on Diane Guerreros’s memoir of having her parents deported back to Columbia when she was a teenager, but it doesn't appear to have been picked up. [232] Probably because it's too similar to the *Party of Five* reboot.

Another planned series called *Casa* (Spanish for Home) was shopped around which is about a family of immigrants who have to fend for themselves after their parents are deported. [233] It's unknown if the idea was dropped because it's identical to the *Party of Five* reboot, or if the series was just rebranded as that. It's likely numerous different scripts about the same premise floated around Hollywood before one of them finally got picked up since it's such a predictable plot, and several different writers probably thought it was the next big idea.

DACA dramas are becoming "TV's new obsession" in the United States. [234] Even Apple TV, which has recently joined the television production business, produced an immigration series called *Little America* about a 12-year-old boy from India whose parents were deported, and he is left to run his father's hotel. Each episode tries to "go beyond the headlines to look at the funny, romantic, heartfelt, inspiring and unexpected lives of immigrants in America, at a time when their stories are more relevant than ever." [235]

In 2019 Netflix released a documentary titled *After the Raid* which follows the lives of several people in a small town in Tennessee after ICE officers conducted a roundup of illegal aliens there in order to guilt trip White people into feeling bad for the "Latino families" that were "broken up." [236] Netflix is also producing a documentary series about illegal aliens with singer/actress Selena Gomez called *Living Undocumented* , which follows around eight families that are at risk of being deported.

Gomez told the *Hollywood Reporter* that, "I chose to produce this series, *Living Undocumented* , because over the past few years, the word 'immigrant' has seemingly become a negative word. My hope is that the series can shed light on what it's like to live in this country as an undocumented immigrant firsthand, from the courageous people who have chosen to share their stories." [237]

Executive producer Aaron Saidman said, "*Living Undocumented* is designed to illuminate one of the most important issues of our time. But rather than discussing this issue with only statistics and policy debates, we wanted viewers to hear directly from the immigrants themselves, in their own words, with all the power and emotion that these stories reflect." [238]

It's not just TV shows. For years feature length films have been subtly promoting immigration. *District 9* put a unique spin on an alien invasion story by depicting the aliens arriving to earth, not to kill us and conquer our planet, but apparently in a desperate search of a new home. The friendly aliens were malnourished and weak from their long journey and presumably came here looking for help, only to be mistreated by humans and forced to live in a slum called "District 9" that serves as a giant internment camp surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards.

In the end, the lead "immigration" official who had previously harassed and abused the aliens is turned into one himself after being exposed to a DNA-mutating agent, and is forced to live in District 9 as one of them. The entire film was a cheesy allegory about racial segregation and xenophobia. [239]

In *Machete* (2010), Danny Trejo plays an illegal immigrant and vigilante living in Texas who is seen as a folk hero for killing a bunch of evil White people trying to stop illegal immigration. The film's catchphrase is "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us." The White people are depicted as stupid or evil and at one point Robert DeNiro's character, who is part of a volunteer border patrol group, even murders a Mexican kid after they catch him trying to cross the border. "Welcome to America," he says, just before pulling the trigger. Danny Trejo then kills all the White "devils."

When some people denounced the film for seemingly encouraging anti-White violence, the Southern Poverty Law Center stepped in to defend it, calling it, "an argument for comprehensive immigration reform," [240] meaning an argument for open borders since the bad guys in the film (aside from the Mexican drug cartel) were White people who didn't want illegal aliens crossing the border into the United States.

Elysium is a 2013 science fiction action film starring Matt Damon about a futuristic society where most of the inhabitants of earth live in extreme poverty and lack basic healthcare, while a small elite group live in luxury on a space station (called Elysium) that orbits the planet. Those not authorized to land on Elysium are deemed illegal immigrants and are "deported" or even have their aircraft shot down before reaching it. [241] Matt Damon's best friends' daughter has leukemia and is in need a medical treatment, so he helps smuggle her to the space station to save her, despite the elite's best efforts to stop him.

A film critic from *Variety* wrote that *Elysium* was, “one of the more openly socialist political agendas of any Hollywood movie in memory, beating the drum loudly not just for universal healthcare, but for open borders, unconditional amnesty, and the abolition of class distinctions as well.” [242]

Entertainment Weekly critic Sean Smith said, “If you are a member of the 1 percent (referring to the Occupy Wall Street movement which was occurring at the time the film was released), *Elysium* is a horror movie. For everyone else, it’s one step shy of a call to arms.” [243]

Mexican Drug Cartels Are Good Action films need “bad guys,” and for generations those bad guys have often been Mexican or Colombian drug cartels, but now those kinds of plots have been deemed xenophobic and racist out of concerns that they cast Latinos in a negative light. When the trailer dropped for Sylvester Stallone’s latest Rambo film (*Last Blood*) it showed the iconic character fighting against a Mexican drug cartel and liberals immediately called it “xenophobic” and “anti-Mexican” propaganda. [244]

Rambo’s adopted niece, who is of Mexican descent, runs away to Mexico hoping to find her birth mother, but is kidnapped by the cartel and forced into prostitution, but leave it to liberals to defend sex trafficking and get upset because an iconic American film hero hunts down and kills the traffickers! *The Daily Beast* said the film was “designed to prove the president’s claim that we need to Build That Wall,” and that “Rambo has gone full MAGA.” [245]

One reviewer called it “deeply xenophobic” and said that the film “should be end of line for the character.” [246] Another critic called it a “hyper-violent xenophobic revenge fantasy” and said “It’s all a setup for *Last Blood* to live out every assault rifle owner’s worst fears and most insane fantasies about Mexico. The only way it could be more transparent is if Stallone had growled ‘I. Am. The Wall!’ in his best Judge Dredd voice.”

[247] Some idiot even called it a “radicalizing recruitment video,” for right wing extremists. [248]

On Rotten Tomatoes it got only a 27% positive rating from critics, while 85% of viewers gave it a thumbs up—a disparity often seen on Rotten Tomatoes where critics now trash politically incorrect comedy specials and movies that are well-received by viewers.

In 2018, *Sicario: Day of the Soldado* was released starring Josh Brolin and Benicio del Toro who battle drug cartels in the stereotypical fashion, and it too set off a wave of crying critics, one saying “it doubles down on violent fantasies about another Mexican-American War,” and “feels like a piece of state-sanctioned propaganda, a MAGA-sploitation thriller that does not see humanity in our neighbors.” [249]

Jennifer Garner starred in a film called *Peppermint* (2018) in which her husband and daughter are murdered by a drug cartel, so she becomes a vigilante hunting and killing them. *The New Yorker* called the movie “racist” and “ignorant.” [250] Another critic said it was “irresponsible” to make movies where the bad guys are Mexican drug cartels anymore because they “portray Latinos as animals.” [251] *NBC News* said the film “is a poorly written blockbuster filled with racist stereotypes. Hollywood should know better.” [252]

Until the Trump era, nobody thought that films about fighting Mexican drug cartels were problematic, but because of the hyper-vigilant Twitter outrage mobs that organize harassment campaigns hoping to stomp out any opposing ideas, the entire plot point may be all but abandoned by studios out of fear that their movies will be poorly reviewed by critics who deem them “racist.”

The Immigration Endgame Pat Buchanon warned in his 2002 book *The Death of the West* that, “Uncontrolled immigration threatens to deconstruct the nation we grew up in and convert America into a conglomeration of peoples with almost nothing in common—not history, heroes, language, culture, faith, or ancestors.” [253]

He goes on, “Millions have no desire to learn English or become citizens. America is not their home; Mexico is; and they wish to remain proud Mexicans. They have come here to work. Rather than assimilate, they create Little Tijuanas in U.S. cities, just as Cubans have created a Little Havana in Miami…With their own radio and TV stations, newspapers, films, and magazines, the Mexican Americans are creating an Hispanic culture separate and apart from America’s larger culture. They are becoming a nation within a nation.” [254]

Many Latinos actually want to create a new country in the Southwest called Aztlan that would include California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and other states in the region. [255] The name refers to a mythical homeland of the Aztecs which Chicanos (Mexicans) want to restore. Mario Obledo, the president of the League of United Latin American Citizens, said, “California is going to be a Mexican State. We are going to control all the institutions. If people don’t like it, they should leave.” [256] Never mind that if California was still part of Mexico the water wouldn’t be safe to drink.

On college campuses in the Southwest various Chicano student groups exist to further the cause, including MEChA (the Chicano Student Movement of Aztlan) and La Raza (recently renamed to UnidosUS). These groups (and others) are really acting as agents of a foreign government, which means they should have to register with the Department of Justice as such, but it’s doubtful any members of La Raza, MEChA, or any other pro-illegal alien activist groups have.

For the globalists plan for the New World Order to be complete, first large regions of the various continents must be merged into unions that act as the governing bodies for those countries, and then their different currencies merged into a single unit as well. The European Union (EU) and their common currency (the Euro) is the model for the rest of the world. Plans to merge the United States, Canada, and Mexico into the “North American Union” (NAU) which would use a new common currency (called the Amero), have been drafted, and the schemers are waiting for the day they can force their agenda through. [257]

Similar regional mergers, such as the Asian Union, the Middle Eastern Union, and the African Union, are also in the plan, which would each have their own common currency as well. And once they are all formed, the final step would be to merge all of those regional unions into a single global governing system along with each of their respective currencies, ultimately forming a one world government and a single digital global currency.

War on White People Despite Hollywood’s insistence on wanting to end all bigotry and promote “tolerance” for everything; there is a growing anti-White sentiment where White people are regularly demonized, ostracized, and blamed for all the problems in the world. At the same time, Hollywood does everything they can to portray Blacks and Latinos as perpetual victims of “whiteness” whose lives have been ruined for generations because of “White privilege.” According to Hollywood, Black people never do anything wrong, or if they do it’s a result of the circumstances in their life which

put them in that position because of “systematic” and “institutional racism” at the hands of White people.

John Langley, the creator of the reality show *COPS,* admitted he purposefully didn’t allow many segments which involved police confrontations with Black suspects, and instead aired more where White people were being detained and arrested because he didn’t want to promote the “stereotype” that Black people tend to be criminals. [258] Never mind Department of Justice statistics which show that Black people make up approximately 13% of the population in the United States, but are responsible for close to 50% of the total murders. [259] Just pointing out statistics like that is considered to be racist, and the ADL considers 13/50 a “numeric hate symbol.” [260]

“Diversity” is a code word meaning less White people, and in recent years Hollywood has been obsessed with what liberals believe are too many White people starring in films and TV shows. In 2015 after the Academy Award nominees were announced, the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite went viral from people complaining that there weren’t any Black people nominated for Best Actor or Best Actress that year. [261] In their minds Black people are the *best* , and it must have been because of “racism” that none happened to be nominated for those spots that year.

From that point on their foot was in the door, and each year after that there would be more scrutiny over how many “people of color” were nominated and which actors won, and how many White people starred in TV shows and films. Every time nominees were mentioned, media reports would flood the Internet about the “lack of diversity” and how “problematic” it was. [262]

“Why do snubs for women and people of color keep happening?” they would ask every time half of the nominees weren’t Black or Latino. [263] Fans of Jenifer Lopez were so upset that she wasn’t nominated for Best Actress for her role as a stripper in *Hustlers* they took to Twitter (as usual) to complain about it, demanding "Justice for J. Lo." [264] In the film she plays one of a group of strippers who drug and then defraud rich men who come into their club, running up their credit cards. Not exactly Oscar material, but she must have gotten "snubbed" because she's Latino!

Others were equally upset that Jamie Foxx (*Just Mercy*), Lupita Nyong'o (*Us*), Awkwafina (*The Farewell*), and Eddie Murphy (*Dolemite Is My Name*) weren't nominated for anything either one year. All because of "racism," not that they had mediocre performances or others who happened to be White made more of an impact.

When *Toy Story 4* was nominated for Best Animated Feature at the Golden Globes, some lunatics voiced their concerns that none of the toys in the franchise were Black! [265] Keep in mind that Woody, Bow Peep, and Buzz Light Year are the only "human" toys. The rest are ones like Mr. Potato Head, a dog, a pig, a dinosaur, etc. The *Hollywood Reporter* complained about the "near-absence of people of color," despite two toys being voiced by the Black comedy duo Jordan Peele and Keegan-Michael Key, but that's not good enough.

Their review went on to complain that not only are each of the lead toys Caucasian, but a new character (Forky) is a "very white fork." [266] The toy is homemade, created out of a plastic spork, some stick-on googly eyes, and has pipe cleaners for arms. It's a spork, it doesn't have a race, but the lunatic film reviewer saw it as another "Caucasian" toy because it's white, which most plastic utensils are.

The reviewer was also upset because, "in many ways [Toy Story 4's] worldview seems like an Eisenhower-era fantasy, a vision of America that might have come from the most die-hard reactionary: lovely if you're wealthy and White, but alarming if you're Black or brown or gay or a member of any other minority—in other words, more than half the U.S. population." [267]

There weren't enough Black people in *Joker* to please some critics either, even though Joaquin Phoenix's character starts dating a neighbor of his who is a single Black mother. *Time* magazine complained that her character had too small of a role, saying, "In Joker, Black women are visible but they are not seen," whatever the hell that means. [268]

The review went on to complain about the roles other Black people had in the film such as the Joker's social worker. She doesn't really listen to his problems and is just going through the motions, thus missing another opportunity to possibly steer him away from ultimately becoming a psychotic killer. That's casting a Black person in a negative light, and "racist." Another Black character, a random woman on a bus, scolds him to stop "bothering" her son when all he was doing was being nice to the kid, and that's perpetuating "racism" too by furthering the "angry Black woman" stereotype.

The 2019 film *Little Women,* which is based on a novel written in 1868 about four young girls living during the Civil War and coming of age, is also "too White." A writer for *Teen Vogue* , a Marxist publication dedicated to perverting the minds of teen girls, wrote that when old literary classics are made into films, they need to "better incorporate diversity." [269]

Another critic said that it "romanticizes White privilege" and that "casual racism is merely the start of its problems." They concluded that "*Little Women* is, indeed, rooted in the advantages of bourgeois White womanhood." [270] We can't have films anymore where the story just so happens to be about people who are White, because that's not "diverse" enough.

The Hollywood Reporter complained that Christmas movies on the Hallmark Channel don't have enough Black people in them and "struggles to give diversity a home for the holidays." [271] Their complaint begins with a snarky, "While other networks are viewing the holidays with an eye toward inclusion, Hallmark is delivering the dream of a white Christmas, just like the one's audiences used to know," and then notes, "Of the network's record 24 original holiday movies this season, four of them have Black leads," but "that's down from last year, when five of its 21 original holiday movies had Black leads." [272] Others have complained about Hallmark movies being "too White" as well. [273]

In my previous book *Liberalism: Find a Cure* I detailed how many on the Left are upset that Santa Claus is White, and are now calling him a symbol of "White supremacy." [274] Some are so determined to destroy Santa's image that publishing giant Harper Collins released a book called *Santa's Husband* which depicts him as a homosexual "married" to a Black man. CNN gleefully gave the author airtime to promote the book when it came out. [275]

Director Tim Burton, the man behind *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), *Beetlejuice* (1988), and *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993) angered the Diversity Police because he didn't cast a "diverse group of characters" in his movie *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (2016) since Samuel L. Jackson was the only Black person in it. He began trending on Twitter from so many "woke" people calling him a racist. [276]

Actor Jonah Hill said that "real change" in the industry will come only when White men no longer run the studios and streaming companies. [277] While celebrities obsessively complain about too many White people being in positions of power in Hollywood and starring in too many shows (and winning too many awards); none of them would ever commit the cardinal sin of the entertainment industry by asking about Jewish influence in Hollywood. [278]

Everyone knows that would kill their career overnight no matter how earnestly or tactfully it was brought up, but complaining about too many White men having positions of power in the industry has become a rallying cry for social justice warriors.

There are numerous specials on Comedy Central and Netflix which feature Black and Latino comedians whose entire act is basically making fun of White people, which is fine—and sometimes funny, but we all know the double standard. Few White comedians will dare make jokes about Blacks or Latinos. Jokes about Asians used to be acceptable, but those too would be career suicide today. Blacks and Latinos can "joke" about how they "hate White people" or complain about "the problem with White people" and often their distain is obvious, and their "jokes" are just thinly veiled racism—but that's just fine.

Black sitcoms often include subplots about how the families are living in a hostile country and White people around every corner hate them. [279] An entire episode of ABC's sitcom *Black-ish* was about how "America hates Black people" with a lead character telling members of her family that repeatedly throughout the show. [280]

90's Sitcoms Now "Too White"

Since "diversity" dominates these days, many classic shows from the past are now seen in hindsight as "racist" because there are "too many" White people in them. *Beverly Hills 90210* , *Seinfeld* , *Home Improvement* , *Everybody Loves Raymond* , *Growing Pains* , *Family Ties* , *Cheers* , *Frasier* , *Full House* , *Dawson's Creek* , *Friends* , and more all "lack diversity." [281]

Even with the rash of revivals and reboots, critics are upset that many of the shows' racial makeup remained the same. The *Hollywood Reporter* complained about the "blinding whiteness of nostalgia TV." [282] In the return of *Roseanne* , however, producers ensured there was some "diversity" by depicting her son D.J. as having married a Black woman and has a Black daughter with her. [283]

Friends star David Schwimmer would later suggest that his show be rebooted with an all-Black or Asian group of friends. He went on to virtue signal that, "I campaigned for years to have Ross [his character] date women of color. One of the first girlfriends I had on the show was an Asian American woman, and later I dated African American women. That was a very conscious push on my part." [284]

These days White people are considered racist if they prefer dating only White people. [285] No other race faces the same pressures for personal relationships and families to become more "racially diverse"—only White people.

And despite David Schwimmer's hopes for a "Black Friends" reboot, that show has already been made—and *before* Friends. It was called *Living Single* , and *Friends* was basically an all-White reboot of that show, but there will never be enough "diversity" in sitcoms and feature films. No matter how many shows feature an all-Black cast, or star Black characters, the Left will never be satisfied.

There were plenty of Black sitcoms in the 1990s, like *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* , *Family Matters* , *A Different World* , *Martin* , *Roc* , *Hangin' with Mr. Cooper* , *The Hughleys* , *The Wayans Bros* , *The Cosby Show* , and many more. All with Black stars and few, if any, White actors involved, but God forbid sitcoms exist with a White-only cast! Of course Black-only shows were made long before the 90s, and continue to be made today—like *Empire* , *Power* , *Black-ish* , *Grown-ish* , and many others, and nobody complains that there aren't any White lead actors or threaten to boycott those shows for not being "diverse" enough.

Not Enough Mexicans The mayor of Los Angeles, Eric Garcetti, wants to double the number of Latinos in TV shows

and movies within the next ten years, and launched a project called "LA Collab" in order to "connect Latinx talent, executives, and creators to opportunities in the entertainment industry."[286] ***Latinx*** **, if you're wondering, is the new politically correct gender neutral term for** ***Latino*** **, since even that is problematic these days, but that's a topic for a whole other book.**[287]

Los Angeles County contains 4.9 million Hispanics and now there are at least 60 million of them living in the United States (20 million of which are illegal aliens), so Hollywood is doing everything they can to cater to them. For example, Jimmy Kimmel's little sidekick Guillermo—who speaks broken English—is paid $500,000 dollars a year to stand off to the side of the stage and laugh at his jokes and chime in once in a while with his catch phrase, "That's right Jimmy!" Before becoming a fixture on air for the show he worked as a security guard in the parking lot of ABC Studios making $8.00 an hour.[288]

There have also been a flood of TV shows starring Latinos in recent years, including the *Magnum PI* reboot, but there will never be enough to satisfy the social justice warriors. Every show and movie must have a "diverse" cast (meaning fewer White people). Every popular series must have a Black, Asian, and Latino equivalent.

Soon there will probably be growing calls for Arab versions of hit shows, since those of Middle Eastern descent will clamor about being "under-represented" in American entertainment. And after that it will be the Indians (or Native Americans, or Indigenous people, or whatever politically correct term they're calling themselves these days), and then probably the Eskimos. We're sliding down a slippery slope of stupidity with no end.

Obsessed with White Sins of the Past The one kind of movie Hollywood loves to make more than crime thrillers or action-adventures are ones that highlight how "racist" White people are. "Historical dramas" about how awful White people are

and how the films “reflect what’s still happening today” come out every year. Some of them are Black revenge fantasies like *Django Unchained.* Actor Jamie Foxx even bragged about killing a bunch of White people in the film when he was a featured guest on *Saturday Night Live* , saying, “I get to kill all the White people, how great is that?” [289]

The film incited some Black people to vent their fantasies of killing White people themselves, flooding Twitter with their hatred in tweets like, “Django got me wanting to kill White people!” and “After watching Django, all I wanna do is shoot White people.” [290]

Of course, you can’t tell disgruntled Blacks who hate America to “go back to Africa,” because that would be “racist.” Everything is “racist” to liberals. Black people’s obsession with racism of the past can be seen in the obvious double standard of demanding White people not be “allowed” to say “the n-word” even while singing along to popular rap songs.

Kendrick Lamar brought a fan on stage to perform one of his songs with him in 2018, but stopped the show mid-performance because the girl (who was White) rapped along to the original lyrics which included the word “nigga” in the hook. After about 30 seconds he told the DJ to stop the music and started staring at the girl. “Am I not cool enough for you, bro?” she asks, thinking that her rapping wasn’t good enough. He went on to tell her the “rules” and said she had to bleep that word. She apologized, and then they started again. [291]

When Latino actress Gina Rodriguez sang a few lines from a rap song that included “nigga” in the lyrics (as most rap songs do) and posted it on her Instagram, Blacks (and SJW Whites) freaked out so bad she became the top trend on Twitter. [292] She then apologized. The same thing happened when a star of the *Bachelorette* was singing along to a rap song on Instagram Live. [293] Most Black people get more upset when a White person says the word than they do when gang bangers end up killing an innocent kid in their neighborhood with a stray bullet.

As Black radio host Jessie Lee Peterson points out, “They’re not [actually] offended! They pretend to be in order to scare White folks and shake ‘em down for stuff.” [294] Imagine if White people demanded that

Black people weren’t allowed to use certain words! Democrats in Congress would hold hearings and pass a resolution denouncing such outrageous word policing and it would be a national scandal, but the word “nigga” mustn’t be uttered out loud by White people, because it’s *their* word.

On the Lookout for Racism Many Black people (and White SJWs) are so hyper-sensitive and obsessed with racism that they hallucinate and often see it where none exists. For example, Roseanne Barr was fired from her hit TV show within just a few hours after making a joke about Valerie Jarrett, a former advisor to Barack Obama, when she tweeted that Valerie looked like a character from the *Planet of the Apes* movies; and if you saw a side by side photo of her and that character, you would know why Rosanne said that. But it turns out that Valerie Jarett is half Black, although you would never guess from looking at her. Rosanne later explained, “I thought the bitch was White!” which most people did. [295]

Her show was number one on ABC, but the network immediately fired her and then continued the show, calling it *The Conners* after killing off her character with an opioid overdose from pain pills she was taking for knee pain. [296] Of course Rosanne is not a racist, and in the 1990s the original series promoted a lot of liberal propaganda, but once someone starts trending on Twitter after getting the attention of the perpetually offended online activists, most companies feel they need to appease the mob by firing the person even if they didn’t do anything wrong.

Hollywood’s dogma is so rigid that if anyone dares doubt that all Trump supporters are racist *they* will be denounced for “supporting White supremacy,” as a star of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* realized when he simply said that “not all Republicans are racist.” [297] Jonathan Van Ness trended on Twitter from so many people attacking him for simply stating what should be obvious, but defending conservatives in any way is seen as a major transgression.

Sometimes when popular novels are made into movies, the studios feel the need to add some racism to "remind" the audience how terrible White people are. When Tom Clancy's bestselling book *The Sum of All Fears* was turned into a film starring Morgan Freeman and Ben Affleck, the plot was changed from Palestinian terrorists trying to dupe the United States and Russia into a nuclear war because of the United States' support for Israel, to a story about White supremacists trying to trick the two super powers into a nuclear war so they could build a Whites only Europe. [298]

The movie was so different from the book that when Tom Clancy introduced himself on the DVD commentary he said he was the person who "wrote the book they ignored." [299]

Actors Denounce "White Privilege"

If White celebrities don't regularly denounce their own "White privilege" and falsely claim that their success is due to the color of their skin, then they may become a suspected White supremacist themselves, and aren't seen as an ally of the Black community. Chelsea Handler even hosted a Netflix show called "Hello, Privilege, It's Me, Chelsea" which examined "White privilege" and followed her around as she traveled across the country endlessly apologizing for being White and talking with other people about how terrible White people have made America. [300]

Jon Stewart even issued an apology for having too many White people on the staff of *The Daily Show* when he was the host. [301] He hadn't even been the host for five years and nobody was concerned about it, but he too was "sorry" and began doing various interviews to give his two cents about how America needs more "diversity." He also called for Black people to be paid reparations. [302]

When Netflix released a trailer for a forthcoming series about the crimes of serial killer Ted Bundy (played by Zac Efron), people were shocked how it glamorized him and made Bundy seem like a rock star instead of a monster. [303] Pushing back against the criticism, Zac Efron said the film highlights Ted Bundy's "White privilege" and he believed the only reason Bundy got away with his crimes for so long was because he was a "clean-cut White dude." [304]

After the Black Lives Matter riots in the summer of 2020 the media became even more obsessed with demonizing White people, and there was an endless flood of celebrities apologizing for their “White privilege” and even producing PSAs about how sorry they are and how they “take responsibility.” [305]

Poor Jimmy Fallon looked like he was being held at gunpoint when he interviewed the author of “White Fragility,” a book about how White people have ruined America for Black people. He had her on *The Tonight Show* to lecture the audience about White people’s “inevitable and often unaware racist assumptions and behaviors,” and called White people “a-holes” because we make life “miserable” for Black people. [306]

He went along with the agenda so well that he sat there agreeing with everything she said, even when she said that *he* was a racist but didn’t even know it. “When I’m talking about the racism that I have, the racism that *you* have, it’s the result of living in a society in which racism is the foundation. We all absorb it,” she said. “There’s no way we could exempt ourselves from it.” [307]

There’s no way White people *can’t* be racist she says! The title of the segment posted on the *Tonight Show* YouTube channel is “Dr. Robin DiAngelo Wants White People to Stop Saying They’re Not Racist,” because she thinks we all are! [308]

Watchmen When the *Watchmen* comic book was turned into a television series on HBO, of all the villains that the superheroes could have been fighting, the producers decided to have them tackle the “problems brought about by White supremacist forces.” [309] The series creator said, “In a traditional superhero movie, the bad guys are fighting the aliens and when they beat the aliens, the aliens go back to their planet and everybody wins. There’s no defeating White supremacy. It’s not going anywhere, but it felt like it was a pretty formidable foe.” [310]

The HBO series kicked off depicting the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, where mobs of Blacks and Whites fought and killed each other after a Black man was arrested for assaulting a White woman and a group of armed Black men came to the jail out of concern that the man had been lynched, which wasn't true. The series started with this to set the stage that "not much" has changed in the United Sates, and Black people are still supposedly being lynched on a regular basis.

The show revolves around a modern day fictional White supremacist group in Tulsa, Oklahoma called the Seventh Kavalry, who "wage war" against the local police because the city has decided to pay reparations to Black people. In order to protect themselves from the White supremacists, police hide their identities by wearing masks and costumes.

The original *Watchmen* comic book series and the 2009 movie depicted the superheroes fighting crime at the height of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Obviously many fans were disappointed in the HBO series turning the vigilantes into social justice warriors and force-feeding more identity politics to the audience, but critics were eager to defend the show. Vox said, "Some Watchmen fans are mad that HBO's version is political. But Watchmen has always been political." [311] Others blamed "right-wing trolls" who gave it negative reviews online. [312]

CBS's Supernatural Drama "Evil"

CBS has a drama which is a cheap knockoff of the *X-Files* called *Evil* where a "skeptical" forensic psychologist (who's Black) works with a Catholic priest to investigate supposed supernatural events. And in one episode the skeptic investigates a case of a girl who was pronounced legally dead, but later "came back to life" once her body was moved to the morgue. After concluding his investigation he figured out that the "resurrected" girl did not experience a miracle, but was the victim of racism because she's Black!

Once he cracked the case, he heads to the office of a senior official at the hospital with two stacks of medical records, saying, "Turned out to be hyperinflation [of the lungs], and undiagnosed COPD…But it wasn't the paramedics fault."

That's when he drops the files on the man's desk. "What are those?" he asks.

"The emergency life-saving efforts of this hospital over the last year. A hundred and seventy-six in all," he replies, looking smug.

"Okay."

"These are your Caucasian patients" he says, placing his hand on one of the stacks. "Did you know that on average during a code your doctors perform fifty-eight minutes of chest compressions and rescue breathing on Caucasian patients?

"No. I didn't."

"And these are your African American patients. Your doctors on average perform chest compressions and rescue breathing *twenty-three minutes* on them. Patients like Naomi Clark" (the Black girl who supposedly died and came back to life).

"It is the stated position of this hospital that it does not distinguish on the basis of race," the hospital executive responds.

"Naomi Clark came back to life in the morgue because your E.R. staff called her time of death thirty minutes earlier than if she were White. That's why this wasn't a miracle. It was implicit racism," he concludes.

"I think you should get out of here," the executive responds. Talk about running out of ideas! Who could come up with such a ridiculous plot? And that was the big climax of the episode!

BlacKkKlansman *BlacKkKlansman* (2018) directed by Spike Lee was based on a true story about a Black detective in Colorado who investigates the Ku Klux Klan in the 1970s. His partner, who is White, goes undercover and infiltrates the KKK while the Black detective is the brains behind the operation.

There's a scene where David Duke (played by Topher Grace from *That '70s Show*) is making a toast to a group of people and talks about how great it is to be a White man in America and part of the "real America" and then says "I want to thank you so much for never putting your country second. America first!” he declares as he holds up a glass of champagne. “America first!” he repeats, to cheers from the crowd. [313]

That phrase, as you know, was popularized by President Trump, and that scene was included in the film as another attempt to tie David Duke to Donald Trump, even though Trump has denounced David Duke numerous times over the last few decades. [314]

During an interview about the film, Topher Grace said, “This is the first script when I read it that’s really of the Trump Administration.” [315] Of course, it’s not. It’s about a Black detective and his partner investigating a local chapter of the KKK for allegedly conspiring to bomb a civil rights rally, but Spike Lee decided to use the 50-year-old story to try and tie the events to President Trump.

“Cracka”

In a series called *CRACKA*, a neo-Nazi is sent to a parallel universe that takes place in the 1800s where Whites are the slaves and Black people are in control of America. “Cracka,” being an insult that angry Blacks love to call White people, a ghettoized derivative of “cracker.” In the trailer, before the Nazi is transported back in time to the alternate reality, he and his friends attack a random Black man and his car is shown to have a “Trump 2020” bumper sticker on it.

The series slogan is “You stole our freedom, now we steal yours.” It isn’t meant to put Whites in the shoes of Blacks to make them reflect on the injustices of the past, instead *CRACKA* is a Black revenge fantasy. Posts on the series official Facebook page are filled with anti-White rhetoric like “You’re in our world now!” [316] The trailer was released on Juneteenth (June 19th) the date that commemorates the freeing of the slaves, and before the comments were turned off many viewers were expressing their excitement about watching White people “get what they deserve.”

Trayvon Martin’s mom endorsed the series saying, “I applaud the bravery and vision for the creation of *CRACKA* .” [317]

Magical Negroes and White Saviors Since most liberals see racism everywhere, they’re not even happy when films depict a Black person possessing a unique quality that is used to help others who happen to be White. That is what they call employing the “magical negro” trope. Spike Lee went off on *The Legend of Bagger Vance* because Will Smith’s character comes to help Matt Damon win a golf tournament that takes place in Georgia in the 1930s. “Blacks are getting lynched left and right, and [Bagger Vance is] more concerned about improving Matt Damon’s golf swing!... I gotta sit down; I get mad just thinking about it. They’re still doing the same old thing ... recycling the noble savage and the happy slave,” he said. [318]

Whoopi Goldberg’s character in *Ghost* has been criticized as a “magical negro” (by Black people) because she helps the spirt of Patrick Swayze communicate with his widow after he dies. [319] Michael Clarke Duncan’s character in *The Green Mile* also upset some Black people because he has the power to heal sickness and disease and ends up using his ability on several White people who worked at a prison he was being held in, despite being on death row for a crime he didn’t commit. [320] It seems some Black people hate Whites so bad that they can’t stand to see a Black person do anything nice to them. No good deed goes unpunished, as the saying goes, and when well-meaning Hollywood studios produce films of White people helping minorities, that too is criticized as being a racist trope called the “White savior narrative.”

In *Finding Forester* , Sean Connery’s character is a reclusive but well-known writer who crosses paths with a Black teen who plays basketball in the courts across the street from his apartment. Connery learns the kid has a gift for writing that he helps encourage, and later the boy is accused of plagiarism because his teacher doesn’t think he has the ability to write as good as he does, but Connery vouches for him in a surprise appearance at the school preventing him from failing the class.

In *The Blind Side* (2009) Sandra Bullock is considered a White savior for taking in a Black homeless kid named Big Mike who becomes a football star thanks to her help. One critic said the *Blind Side* , "peddles the most insidious kind of racism, one in which whiteys are virtuous saviors, coming to the rescue of Blacks who become superfluous in narratives that are supposed to be about them." [321]

Others attacked the film because they felt it depicted Sandra Bullock saving Big Mike from inner-city Black people who were all "poor and violent." [322] Apparently they would have been happier if she just left him to waste away in the ghetto. White people are often damned if they do, and damned if they don't.

Other popular films liberals got upset about because they feature "White saviors" are *Dangerous Minds* (because a White teacher helps educate Black and Latino students in a poverty stricken part of the city), and even *Gran Torino* because Clint Eastwood helps his Asian neighbors fight against a Black gang in Detroit. [323]

Cool Runnings , a film about a Jamaican bobsled team, was attacked because the Jamaicans wouldn't have made it to the Olympics without the "White savior" (John Candy) their trainer. [324] Even *Avatar* has been accused of this since a White character using a remote control avatar of an alien body helps the alien race save their planet from human invaders looking to take their natural resources. [325]

In the 1980s *Diff'rent Strokes* was a popular sitcom about a rich White man living in Manhattan who adopts two Black orphans from Harlem. At the time the series covered a lot of serious issues like racism, drug use, and even child molestation. But today some see it as another example of a "White savior" plot.

One online magazine even included *Diff'rent Strokes* on its "50 Most Racist TV Shows" list, writing sarcastically, "Save us, Mr. White Man! Come rescue us from Harlem and let us come live with you in yo' giant Park Avenue mansion where our po' deceased mama onced worked her fingers to the bone cleaning up after yo' wrinkled White ass! We's cute, Mista Drummond, we ain't gwine start no trouble." [326]

MTV's Anti-White Agenda In 2015, MTV aired a documentary titled "White People" that was hosted by a homosexual illegal

alien named Jose Antonio Vargas who traveled around America shaming White people about their “privilege” and lecturing them for not being concerned enough about minorities. [327]

The following year MTV News released a video with “New Year’s resolutions for White guys” because we’re all such terrible people we need to be educated by Blacks and Latinos on how we can be better. “Try to recognize that America was never ‘great’ for anyone who wasn’t a White guy,” begins one presenter. [328]

“Nobody who has Black friends says that they have Black friends, and just because you have Black friends doesn’t mean you’re not racist. You can be racist with Black friends,” says another.

“Look, guys, we know nobody’s perfect, but honestly, you can do a little better in 2017.”

They surprisingly deleted the video due to the backlash but their obsession with “White privilege” continues. MTV produced a YouTube show called “Decoded” where the host uncovered White people’s hidden “racism” that she sees around every corner, including decoding “micro-aggressions” and “the problem with White beauty standards.”

The usual complaints about Halloween costumes being “cultural appropriation” (and thus offensive) have also been covered. Each week for several years beginning in 2015 the show would release a new episode where the host found more problems to blame on White people or ways White people are supposedly being racist.

White Replacement in Media Recently another obsession we’ve seen in Hollywood is remaking popular movies or sequels and replacing the main character (if they happen to be White) with a Black actor in the name of “diversity.” It’s actually considered to be a “White supremacist conspiracy theory” to talk about White populations being “replaced” through mass immigration, but that is exactly what Hollywood has been

doing to various characters in order to stamp out “whiteness.” [329]

Generation Xers remember the musical *Annie* being about the curly redhead orphan, but when it was remade in 2014, Annie was Black with an afro. When the live-action remake of *The Little Mermaid* was announced, it was also revealed that the red-headed mermaid Ariel would be played by a Black actress instead. [330]

When a reboot of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was announced the show cast an African-American actress as Buffy, who was originally played by Sarah Michelle Gueller in the 1990s series. [331] Two years later the show still hadn’t made it to air, which likely means the pilot was so horrible it didn’t get picked up. But due to the low standards of what is considered “entertainment” today, that may change if they rework the script or decide to just dump it on Netflix or Hulu. Activists also began pushing for James Bond to be played by a Black man, and it was later announced that a Black *woman* would play Agent 007, taking over Bond’s famous codename. [332]

In 2010 when *The Karate Kid* reboot was released it starred Jaden Smith, Will Smith’s son, who is of course Black. In 2018, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* depicted the kid who becomes Spider Man as biracial—being half Black, half Latino. [333] There are growing calls to depict Superman as Black in future films as well. [334]

In the 2015 remake of *Fantastic Four,* Johnny Storm (the human torch character) who is White in the first two films (as well as in the comics) was played by Michael B. Jordan, a Black man. [335] This, despite being depicted as the brother of a fellow “Fantastic Four” member, Sue Storm, who is White.

Samuel L. Jackson plays Nick Fury in *The Avengers* series even though the character is White in the comics. In the late 1990s a made for TV movie titled *Nick Fury: Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D* . aired on FOX where the character was true to the comic depiction (played by David Hasselhoff), but when Marvel launched their *Avengers* film series they chose Samuel L. Jackson for more “diversity.” Another comic book superhero called Domino was turned Black when she made an appearance in *Deadpool 2* .

After the original actress who played Batwoman in The CW television series didn't renew her contract, she was replaced by a Black girl. [336] ABC announced plans to reboot *The Wonder Years* , a hit coming-of-age comedy-drama about a typical kid growing up in suburban America in the late 1960s, only this time…you guessed it—the family is Black. [337]

For Black History Month (February) in 2020, Barnes & Noble planned to release special editions of various literary classics like *The Wizard of Oz* , *Romeo and Juliet* , and *Alice in Wonderland* with new covers depicting the lead characters as African Americans. They called it the Diverse Editions program, but canceled their plan after critics complained that it was "literary blackface" and said they should have just promoted actual books written by people of color instead of doing something so dumb. [338]

When *Harry Potter* was turned into a play, a Black actress was chosen to play the character Hermione Granger, who is described as White in the books, and was played by Emma Watson in the films. Writer J.K. Rowling later denied that she wrote the character as White, but in the books she is specifically described as such. [339]

Other films are being remade with modern day "Black" versions, like *Steel Magnolias* , originally released in 1989 about a group of women and how they cope with the death of one of their friends, and then remade in 2012 starring all Black women. The romantic comedy *About Last Night* (1986), about couples entering into committed relationships for the first time in their lives, was remade in 2014 starring an all-Black cast. And there have been others, including *Cinderella* , *Death at a Funeral* , and more. [340]

Remaking a "Black" version of a film is quite different than changing a well-established character like Orphan Annie or the Little Mermaid, but when race-swapping happens to Black characters, it's denounced as "whitewashing."

How About Entertainment For Whites?

Once Whites are a minority in the United States (estimated to occur in 2045), will it then be okay to have a White Entertainment Channel like Black people have BET [Black Entertainment Television]? Will White people be able to have a Miss White USA pageant since Blacks, Latinos, and Asians have their own beauty pageants for their race? Once Whites become a minority in America can we have White students clubs on college campuses just like the Black, Asian and Latino student organizations? Will it be okay for a White person to say that they are proud to be White? No, it won't.

The special interest groups for Blacks and Latinos will get unhinged and scream that "White supremacy" is trying to resurrect itself and loads of "White allies" will join in on the chorus denouncing their fellow White people to show solidarity with people of color. "White people had their turn," they'll say, and don't deserve to be proud of their race or culture because they enslaved Black people 400 years ago.

"We ended White supremacy and must ensure it never returns," they'll say. White people must forever bow down to the new Latino/Black/Asian majority and live the rest of their lives in servitude to the new ruling class to atone for the sins of our White ancestors, they will demand.

Of course Black people ignore the fact that virtually all countries in the ancient world had slaves. Maybe we should point out that the Egyptians (Africans) enslaved the Jews. And that Black Muslim tribes in Africa actually sold other Africans to the European slave traders who brought them to North America. [341] Africa is also the world's leader in modern-day slavery, where millions of people remain trapped in forced labor. [342]

When the question is raised about a White counterpart to BET or White-only shows and movies, the knee jerk reaction is to always claim that the majority of mainstream entertainment is produced for White people. But with forced diversity being injected into almost every single television show, movie, and even commercials which all do their best to have an equal number of White, Black, Asian, and Latino characters, the claim that White people have entertainment that is a reflection of our own family, community, and culture is rapidly becoming null and void.

Since most "White" homogeneous entertainment has been "diversified" and turned into a heterogenous multicultural mishmash, this just adds to the justification that such shows should be created and maintained. But just pointing out these issues is enough to get one tarred and feathered as a "neo-Nazi," then deplatformed from social media, and "White nationalist" added to the first sentence of their Wikipedia page. [343]

Film and Television Liaison Offices

Most people think that propaganda films were just something produced by Nazi Germany or perhaps are still made by communist regimes in North Korea or China, but the truth is the United States is the world's biggest producer of such material. For example, during World War II our government commissioned a series of documentary films called *Why We Fight* which were designed to encourage Americans to support the war. Animated segments of the films were produced by Walt Disney Studios. [344]

Disney actually produced various cartoons throughout World War II featuring Donald Duck for this same purpose. One such film titled *The Spirit of ’43* encouraged Americans to file and pay their income taxes in order to help fund the war effort. “Taxes...To Defeat the Axis” was the film’s tagline which was commissioned by the U.S. Treasury Secretary at the time. [345] The title, “*Spirt of ’43* ” was a play off the old patriotic sentiment from the American Revolutionary war which was captured by the slogan “The Spirit of ’76.”

Another Disney war propaganda film from the era was *Der Fuehrer’s Face* (originally titled *Donald Duck in Nutzi Land*), which encouraged Americans to buy war bonds to help fund World War II. In the film Donald Duck has a nightmare where he is forced to work at a munitions factory in Nazi Germany, but then wakes up in “home sweet home” and has a renewed love for America. [346] Donald Duck also starred in a short anti-Japanese propaganda film during World War II, where he parachuted into a Pacific island jungle to “wipe out” a Japanese airfield. [347]

While it’s simple to make the case that these films were for a good cause, the point is that propaganda is more pervasive than people realize, and the avenues used to reach the masses aiming to persuade them are so vast that even popular cartoon characters are employed.

Most people think war propaganda films disguised as innocent entertainment is just something from the World War II era, but the practice continued—and so did the sophistication. During the height of the Cold War in the 1980s the film *Red Dawn* (starring Patrick Swayze and Charlie Sheen) depicted the Soviet Union invading the United States only to be confronted by a group of high school kids who form a militia called “the Wolverines” (named after their school’s mascot) and help fight off the communists, saving their town.

It was remade in 2012 with North Korea being the invaders this time, who just so happened to be in the crosshairs of the Department of Defense which considered them part of the “axis of evil.” Hollywood didn’t just think this would be a neat plotline, the film (and many others) was actually produced with the help of the Department of Defense. An open secret in Hollywood, but something rarely ever mentioned because it would spoil the “fun,” is that the U.S. government works hand in hand with writers and directors to craft blockbuster propaganda films that reinforce American foreign policy objectives. [348]

During the War on Terror in the early to mid 2000s, millions of Americans were subjected to pro-torture propaganda through Kiefer Sutherland's popular series *24* which began airing just two months after the September 11th attacks in 2001. Torturing suspected terrorists or people detained who were believed to have information about Al Qaeda was a hot topic of debate at the time, and Kiefer Sutherland was on national television with a new episode each week to show Americans that torturing the "bad guys" was "necessary" to save the world. [349]

Over a decade later the popular entertainment industry publication *Variety* would admit that "Liberal Hollywood carried water for torture." [350] The article pointed out, "Not only has torture become more frequent since the Sept. 11 terror attacks, but the acceptance of those depictions in entertainment has been cited as a point of reference—and even an endorsement of the tactics." [351]

Zero Dark Thirty , the 2013 dramatization depicting the hunt for Osama Bin Laden, falsely depicted torture as the reason information was obtained that led to the location of his compound after years of the terror leader eluding U.S. forces. Torturing detainees had nothing to do with discovering his hideout, but the film essentially rewrote history in the minds of millions who saw it and believe it tells the real story of how it unfolded. [352]

When he was Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta gave classified details about the raid to the producers to help them make the film. [353] *Zero Dark Thirty* later received several Oscar nominations.

Most movie lovers have no idea that many big budget blockbuster films are produced with the direct help and oversight of the United States government. How else do you think the Hollywood studios get access to aircraft carriers, F-16 jets, tanks, and other sophisticated military equipment? They can't just rent those kinds of things from a prop house. They get them from the government.

The stars will never talk about this when doing the talk show circuit promoting their films. It's kind of a trade secret really, but in the industry it's widely known that various departments of the government have what are called entertainment liaison offices which work with producers and screenwriters to get them the equipment they want. Of course there is a price for this. It's not monetary though—it comes in the form of script approval.

The U.S. Army isn't going to lend a bunch of tanks to a producer for a film showing the dark side of war, or one that questions the WMD hoax that was used to justify invading Iraq in 2003, for example. Movies must always celebrate war and glorify it, and never doubt the reasons for starting one. Such deals have been made for films like *Zero Dark Thirty, Red Dawn, Top Gun* , *American Sniper* , and hundreds of others. Some have called this form of entertainment "government-subsidized propaganda." [354]

Freedom of Information requests revealed that the Department of Defense has been involved in over 800 films and television shows between 1911 and 2017, many of them since 2001 because of the War on Terror that started shortly after the 9/11 attacks. [355] It's not just the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force, however. The CIA has their own Entertainment Liaison Office and has also been involved in the production of dozens of different films and television shows since at least 1947. [356]

These entertainment liaison offices also include agreements that get active duty military personnel to be extras in movies when a scene calls for a large number of uniformed troops. That way the director gets their shot of hundreds of soldiers on the battlefield, but also saves the money they would have had to pay all the extras to be there. Mark Wahlberg plays a Navy SEAL deployed in Afghanistan in *Lone Survivor* , which is based on a true story derived from Marcus Luttrell's biography about his experiences there in 2005, and thanks to the Department of Defense Entertainment Liaison Office the film was shot in New Mexico on Kirtland Air Force Base. [357] That way the studio didn't have to recreate an entire military base, they were able to use a real one.

Fortune magazine calls this "Hollywood's Military Complex" and explained, "Even in an age of special effects, it's exponentially cheaper to film on actual military ships with real military advisers. Despite action sequences and an A-list lead, *Captain Phillips* cost about $55 million to make (compared with a visual effects fest like *Gravity* , which cost about $100 million). The fulcrum of Hollywood's unlikely partnership is Phil Strub, a former film school student and Navy videographer, now the entertainment liaison at the Department of Defense." [358]

Fortune goes on to say, "Scripts of movies helmed by Michael Bay, Ridley Scott, and Steven Spielberg are regularly sent to an ascetic office at the Pentagon in hopes of procuring military cooperation. If he [Phil Strub] signs off, the filmmakers stand to access the most awesome arsenal in the world, and in turn, the image and message of the American armed forces get projected before a global audience.” [359]

An official who works in the Department of Defense’s Entertainment Liaison Office confirmed they maintain control over the scripts, saying, “We make sure the Department and facilities and people are portrayed in the most accurate and positive light possible.” [360] That’s a nice way of saying, if anything in the film paints the government or war in a bad light, you’re not getting your equipment.

Before an agreement is made to allow the use of government equipment (and locations), the Entertainment Liaison Office carefully reviews a script and then raises any possible concerns with the producer; and if they’re willing to change certain dialog or plot points then the government will give them basically anything they need as long as the movie will serve as an infomercial for the military.

They can be quite picky even about the smallest detail. For example, in the original script of *Hulk* , the laboratory which caused Dr. Banner’s condition was a government lab, but documents obtained by a Freedom of Information Request show that the Department of Defense requested it be just a “lab” and not associated with the government at all. [361]

The Army Times admitted that “filmmakers can ask the Pentagon for assistance on their projects, from consultation on uniforms and military procedures to use of real military aircraft and equipment.” [362] Or as Phil Strub, who was the head of Department of Defense’s Entertainment Liaison Office for almost thirty years put it, “The relationship between Hollywood and the Pentagon has been described as a mutual exploitation. We’re after military portrayal, and they’re after our equipment.” [363]

Sure these films are entertaining and dramatic, but they’ll only tell half the story about why a conflict actually started, and what the costs will be. They also serve a secondary purpose by encouraging people to join the military because war is painted as exciting and glorious and always for a just cause, never because of misinformation or lies (as in the case of the War in Iraq).

“We want these movies to help us in terms of recruitment and retention,” admitted the Department of Defense. [364] The original *Top Gun* starring Tom Cruise was said to have spiked enrollment in the Air Force to record levels. They even called it the “Top Gun Effect” and in some cities Air Force recruiters literally set up tables outside movie theaters. [365]

Katy Perry’s music video “Part of Me” was actually shot at Camp Pendleton, a massive Marine base in San Diego, California, thanks to help from the Entertainment Liaison Office. [366] In the video she finds out her boyfriend is cheating on her and doesn’t know what to do with her life, so she ends up joining the Marines.

The entire rest of the music video is literally a recruitment commercial, showing her dressed in uniform completing basic training, shooting an M-16, and riding in an Amphibious Assault Vehicle. The video also includes actual Marines as extras, marching alongside her and storming a beach with helicopters flying overhead—all provided by Camp Pendleton.

Even the creators of the popular “Call of Duty” video game series consult with the Department of Defense’s Entertainment Liaison Office in order to get access to advisors in hopes of creating more realistic video games. [367]

While the government enthusiastically helps produce movies, TV shows, and music videos that will reinforce their preferred narratives, big budget anti-war films or those which depict some of the horrors of war like *Platoon* (1986), *Apocalypse Now* (1979), and *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) have to go without any of this assistance. Sometimes the studios have to actually rent military vehicles and equipment from foreign governments and film outside of the United States to get their projects made.

When *Platoon* came out, Oliver Stone, who wrote and directed the film, said, “I hope people go to see what the war was really like. That’s the statement. And once you see it, you have to think about it for yourself. Think about what you think about war. Think about what it really is, as opposed to the fantasy comic book stuff of Top Gun.” [368] He also said that the main character (played by Charlie Sheen) was actually based on his own experience of being in Vietnam, and how at first he wanted to do his “patriotic duty” for his country, but after seeing the horrors of the war first hand and later learning about the lies that got us there, he began to resent the U.S. government for what they had done.

During the Iraq and Afghanistan wars in the early 2000s, George. W. Bush issued a ban on any photos and video of the coffins being unloaded from airplanes after soldiers’ remains were brought back to the United States. [369] It was widely known that support for the Vietnam War dramatically dropped when people began seeing footage of the tens of thousands of coffins returning, not to mention pictures of wounded soldiers, and so the Bush Administration did everything they could trying to prevent a similar situation by censoring the details of the casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It wasn't just George W. Bush and the neocons' policies that caused needless death and destruction because of our involvement in the Middle East, however. Barack Obama became known as the "Drone King" for using the newly popular remote-control aircraft which ended up killing a stunning number of innocent civilians while the American mainstream media provided him cover by barely, if ever, mentioning it. [370]

First Lady Michelle Obama played her part to help promote the Military Industrial Complex during the Obama administration. She actually appeared at the Oscars in 2013 via satellite to announce the winner of Best Picture which was given to *Argo* , a movie about the CIA covertly working with Hollywood movie producers so their agents could pose as film makers working on a science fiction movie in order to infiltrate Iran so they could rescue American hostages being held there. [371]

That same year *Homeland* won Golden Globe awards for the Best Actress (Claire Danes), Best Actor (Damian Lewis), and Best TV Drama for their Showtime series depicting a returning veteran secretly siding with Al Qaeda. [372] This narrative parroted a report released by the Department of Homeland Security a few years earlier that warned returning veterans should be considered possible domestic terrorists out of concerns they may join right-wing extremist organizations after supposedly having a difficult time re-integrating into their communities. [373]

The real reason for the report, which angered veterans groups when it was made public, may have been concerns that many soldiers were disgruntled with the U.S. government after learning that the reason for starting the War in Iraq (the "weapons of mass destruction" Saddam Hussein supposedly had), turned out to be a lie.

In March 2012 a 30-minute documentary titled *Kony 2012* was posted to YouTube and immediately went viral. The film promoted a campaign to capture or kill the African warlord Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord's Resistance Army. *Kony 2012* was the first YouTube video ever to get one million "likes" and was called the most viral video ever at the time. [374]

Celebrities from Justin Bieber to Kim Kardashian helped spread it through their social media accounts and a few weeks later the U.S. Senate passed a resolution condemning Joseph Kony and agreed to send troops from the African Union to help find him. [375]

The film’s surprising popularity was no accident. It was produced by a charity called “Invisible Children” which used a high-power public relations firm called Sunshine Sachs Associates to promote it. That PR firm was co-founded by a man named Ken Sunshine who has close ties with Barack Obama.

Many people became suspicious of *Kony 2012* immediately since the video seemed to come out of nowhere and went viral so quickly. In hindsight it appears it was a carefully crafted propaganda campaign to promote the United States getting involved in another conflict halfway around the world. [376]

The Military Industrial Complex had been eager to become more invested in the fight against Joseph Kony and the Lord’s Resistance Army, but since they weren’t a threat to the United States and had no direct connections to us, drumming up support to go after him would have been impossible. But thanks to the viral *Kony 2012* video, everyone was talking about him, and despite living in a country few Americans could even find on a map (Uganda), he became public enemy number one.

The CIA In Hollywood In the 1990s the CIA appointed a man named Chase Brandon as a their liaison to Hollywood, and he began helping the agency produce dozens of films and television shows for major studios and television networks, including documentaries on the History Channel. [377] Chase Brandon retired in 2007 and was replaced by a man named Paul Barry who continues with the task. [378] Former CIA officer Bob Baer said, “All these people that run studios—they go to Washington, they hang around with senators, they hang around with CIA directors, and everybody’s on board.” [379]

Just a few weeks after the 9/11 attacks CBS launched a new series about the CIA called *The Agency* , which was shot on location at the actual

CIA headquarters, and largely focused on the hunt for Osama Bin Laden and how the CIA was tirelessly working to keep America safe.

The director of *The Recruit* (2003) a spy thriller starring Al Pacino and Colin Farrell, was invited to visit the CIA's headquarters in Langley, Virginia so he could "understand how the space worked and looked." [380] He wasn't just brought there for a tour, the CIA's Entertainment Liaison Office was involved in the production of the film to make sure it didn't cast the CIA as a whole in a negative light, only Al Pacino's character who is a corrupt agent and is eventually discovered.

Over a decade later, *The Atlantic* would publish a story titled, "How the CIA Hoodwinked Hollywood" which explained, "The agency has established a very active spin machine in the heart of the entertainment capital, which works strenuously to make sure the cloak-and-dagger world is presented in heroic terms. Since the mid-1990s, but especially after 9/11, American screenwriters, directors, and producers have traded positive portrayal of the spy profession in film or television projects for special access and favors at CIA headquarters." [381]

Robert DeNiro played a retired CIA officer in *Meet the Parents* who famously hooks Ben Stiller up to a lie detector as part of his over-protective antics to determine if Stiller can be trusted to marry his daughter. Apparently the original script included a brief scene showing "torture manuals" on DeNiro's book shelf once Stiller stumbled across his secret office in the basement and learned of his future father in law's true identity, but the CIA told the studio not to include them on the shelf since they would cast the Agency in a negative light. [382]

Not all films about the CIA show them in a positive light, however. Those movies have to be made without the help of any government agency. Matt Damon stars in *The Bourne Identity* (2002) which is loosely based on the CIA's very real mind control experiments called MK-ULTRA. [383] Needless to say the CIA would rather sweep that under the rug and didn't provide any assistance in its production.

Syriana (2005) starring George Clooney focuses on the CIA's involvement in the Middle East where they engage in numerous shady activities behind the scenes in order to maintain control of major fields in the region—another film they prefer would have never been made.

Spy Game (2001), starring Robert Redford and Brad Pitt shows the CIA turning their back on one of their operatives in order to avoid jeopardizing a trade deal that is about to be signed between the United States and China. The Agency wouldn't have anything to do with that film because it showed senior management in an "insensitive light" [384] when in reality it showed the complexities of international relations and the difficult and sometimes coldblooded decisions that are made behind the scenes to maintain American superiority in the world.

In his book *Operation Hollywood: How the Pentagon Shapes and Censors Movies* , David Robb concludes, "No society is free that allows its military to control the arts. In America, it is not only unconscionable, it is also unconstitutional." [385] He's certainly not alone in thinking that. Many legal experts believe that entertainment liaison offices actually violate the First Amendment because they only help producers whose films portray the U.S. government, the military, and various other agencies, in a favorable light.

This kind of selective help is equivalent to the government refusing to allow certain groups from reserving local town hall venues because of what those groups or their leaders believe.

Constitutional Law professor Irwin Chemerinsky, who teaches at the University of Southern California argues, "The government cannot favor some speech due to its viewpoint and disfavor others because of its viewpoint. The court has said that when the government is giving financial benefits, it can't decide who to give to, or not give to, based on the viewpoint expressed." [386]

He and others say this one-sided favoritism is no different that if the government gave one particular religious group material support or financial favors while denying those same benefits to others. [387]

Some Actors Are Real CIA Assets Aside from the CIA aiding in the production of various films and television shows, their involvement in the entertainment industry goes much further and sounds like something right out of a movie. A former CIA officer named John Rizzo wrote a memoir called *Company Man: Thirty Years of Crisis and Controversy in the CIA* , where he admitted the agency regularly works with production companies that allow CIA operatives to work undercover as

members of film crews when a film is being shot on location in a foreign country. [388]

“Among businesses in general, the CIA has long had a special relationship with the entertainment industry, devoting considerable attention to fostering relationships with Hollywood movers and shakers—studio executives, producers, directors, and big-name actors,” Rizzo explains. [389]

He also said that some celebrities have been enlisted as CIA assets through the agency’s National Resources Division, which recruits foreign students studying in America, business people here on work visas, and even foreign diplomats the Agency wants to become spies for the United States when they return to their home countries.

Once initiated, the celebrities are used to relay information to the CIA about foreign leaders they meet since they’ll often speak more candidly with a celebrity than with diplomats or reporters due to being star struck and letting their guard down. [390]

“These are people who have made a lot of money basically making stuff up. A lot of them, at least the smarter and more self-aware ones, realize that what they do makes them ridiculously rich but is also ephemeral and meaningless in the larger scheme of things,” Rizzo says. “So they’re receptive to helping the CIA in any way they can, probably in equal parts because they are sincerely patriotic and because it gives them a taste of real-life intrigue and excitement.” [391]

In his book he also says that a major film star once approached the CIA himself, wanting to work with them, “just out of his patriotic duty,” after the actor learned that another major studio had a relationship with the agency. Rizzo says the actor asked his handler for $50,000 of cocaine for his services, which the agency allegedly refused. [392]

When Ben Affleck was promoting his film *Argo* (2012), which is based on the true story of the CIA working undercover with a film studio to infiltrate Iran to rescue American hostages under the guise of shooting a movie there, he was asked by a reporter if he thought there were any actors working as CIA operatives in Hollywood today. “I think there are probably quite a few. Yes, I think probably Hollywood is full of CIA agents and we just don't know it, and I wouldn't be surprised at all to discover that this was extremely common," he responded. [393]

Knowing what happened with the Iranian hostage rescue and working on other films that are overseen by the CIA's Entertainment Liaison Office, Ben Affleck would certainly be in a position to know. He also starred in *The Sum of All Fears* (2002) where he played a CIA analyst, another film that was produced with the help of Chase Brandon, the agency's entertainment liaison at the time. [394]

Affleck's (now ex) wife Jennifer Garner also played a CIA agent in ABC's action thriller *Alias*, which the Central Intelligence Agency consulted on, so he is obviously very familiar with how close the agency works with Hollywood.

The FBI and Hollywood The FBI has their hand in Hollywood too. On their website they admit, "If you are a writer, author, or producer who wants to feature the FBI, we may be able to work with you to create an accurate portrayal of the Bureau. We've been doing it since the 1930s." [395] They call this office the Investigative Publicity and Public Affairs Unit (IPPAU), and they work with "domestic and international screenwriters, producers, authors, and other industry personnel associated with TV programs, documentaries, made-for-TV movies, books, and motion pictures." [396]

J. Edgar Hoover, the infamously corrupt founding father of the FBI (and its director for almost 50 years), used his position to bully Hollywood studios into dropping certain actors from projects and got scripts changed that would have shown the agency in a negative light.

John Wayne was chosen to be the narrator for a television series called "The FBI" for the ABC network in the 1960s, but because of his connections to the right-wing John Birch Society, Hoover "vetoed" John Wayne's involvement and had ABC remove him from the project "in order to prevent any possible criticism of the Bureau by using someone with known John Birch Society connections.” [397]

J. Edgar Hoover also used his position to target anti-Vietnam war musicians like Jimmy Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and especially John Lennon, who he was concerned threatened President Nixon’s chances of getting reelected, so Hoover tried to have him deported back to England because he was once arrested for possession of marijuana. [398]

Operation Mockingbird In the news industry, intelligence agencies enjoy similar influence and have deeply embedded operatives and developed covert relationships for decades. In the 1970s a Congressional hearing uncovered a secret program called Operation Mockingbird which involved the CIA infiltrating television news networks, newspapers, and magazines, and paying off reporters and editors to do the agency’s bidding. [399]

At the time there were widespread concerns that the CIA was involved in numerous corrupt and illegal activities, including spying on American citizens and assassinating foreign leaders, so Congress investigated the agency and happened to learn of their secret dealings with the media.

At one point during the hearing William Colby, the head of the CIA then, was asked if the agency had operatives working for any television networks. He refused to answer the question and said that it’s something he would rather “get into” in an “executive session,” meaning behind closed doors with just a small number of senators authorized to have access to classified information. [400]

The former president of CBS, Sig Mickelson, was later asked if he thought despite Operation Mockingbird being uncovered, was the CIA still engaged in the same type of operations. “Yeah, I would think probably, for a reporter it would probably continue today, but because of all the revelations of the period of the 1970s, it seems to me a reporter has to be a lot more circumspect when doing it now or he runs the risk of at least being looked at with considerable disfavor by the public. I think you've got to be much more careful about it." [401]

Anyone who followed the "Russiagate" scandal and the conspiracy to bring down the Trump administration by claiming he's a secret Russian agent, knows in their gut that various intelligence agencies (the "Deep State") continue to work closely with the mainstream media in order to push their agenda.

I cover Operation Mockingbird in detail in my previous book, *The True Story of Fake News* , which I encourage you to order from Amazon or download the e-book from any of the major e-book stores if you're interested in learning more about the subject. Decades have gone by since the name "Operation Mockingbird" has been mentioned on national television, and when you learn just how deep the CIA burrowed their way into the various news networks, it's chilling, especially in light of their ruthless and relentless war on President Trump.

Climate Change Many of Hollywood’s concerns about the environment, specifically global warming (or “climate change” as they have rebranded it) aren’t really about keeping our air clean, preserving delicate ecosystems, or developing green energy, but instead is just a smokescreen to hide their true intentions.

Obviously we should take care of the environment, not litter, recycle, and be good stewards of the earth, but the fanatical doomsday warnings about global warming are designed to mobilize people to accept exorbitant carbon taxes and embrace the implementation of enormous new socialist programs. [402]

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s senior aide and puppet master admitted, “The interesting thing about the Green New Deal is it wasn’t originally a climate thing at all…Do you guys think of it as a climate thing? Because we really think of it as a how-do-you-change-the-entire-economy thing.” [403] Ocasio-Cortez said the plan was aiming for “a new national social, industrial and economic mobilization on a scale not seen since World War II and the New Deal,” in order to “provide unprecedented levels of prosperity and economic security for all people of the United States.” [404]

Celebrities have always been “tree huggers” and concerned about the environment—which is a good cause, but their hysterical rhetoric about what humans are doing to the planet is getting increasingly radical to the point that they are literally claiming the human race will soon go extinct if we don’t listen to them, and any day now when we peer outside the windows of our homes it will be as if we’re looking at a scene from a disaster movie.

Because of all the “end of the world” fear mongering about climate change, some children are getting what is called “eco-anxiety” which child psychologists describe as “a form of anxiety about where the world is heading when it comes to climate change.” [405] This is what caused Greta Thunberg, the teenage climate change activist from Sweden, to begin skipping school thinking she was helping save the world.

Once she caught the eye of the climate change lobby, they adopted her as their spokesperson and threw the weight of their massive propaganda machine behind her to propel her to international stardom as a child prodigy who is trying to save the planet. *Time* magazine even put her on the cover for their 2019 Person of the Year issue. [406]

Recently there have been increasing calls for geoengineering, something that was said to be conspiracy theory just a few years ago. [407] Some scientists want to spray little particles of glitter into the atmosphere to block out some of the sun’s rays hoping that will keep the earth slightly cooler to offset the supposed “global warming” that’s happening. Meanwhile geoengineering advocates ignore the law of unintended consequences, and nobody knows what kind of environmental disasters doing such a thing would cause.

Like everything liberals do, their claims of “living green” are rife with hypocrisy. Just one trip on their private jet spews more pollution into the air than several months’ worth of daily commutes on the freeway in a car. [408] Just one of Al Gore’s homes uses more than 20 times the amount of energy as an average home, costing an estimated $30,000 a year in utilities for the gas and electricity. [409]

Arnold Schwarzenegger said fossil fuel executives should be sued for “first degree murder” because their industry is “killing” the planet. [410] Arnold apparently forgot that he was the first civilian to buy a Hummer in 1992 when the extra-large gas guzzling military vehicle became commercially available. It famously got about 10 miles a gallon. [411]

Recently Hollywood has been inserting messages about global warming hysteria into almost everything. During the Miss Universe 2019 pageant one of the contestants was asked, "Are leaders of today doing enough to protect future generations from climate change?" Steve Harvey, the host, then rolled his eyes as soon as he was done reading the question off the card. [412]

Hollywood, Health & Society (the organization that helped inject storylines about Obamacare into TV shows) also lobbies Hollywood studios about climate change. They specifically have been focusing on comedy shows because as Lizz Winstead, a writer for *The Daily Show* points out, "Comedians have become trusted as people who observe the world and talk about it truthfully. Because they're not beholden to anyone, they can call bullshit when they see it." [413] That may have been true before "Cancel Culture," but that's a whole other topic.

The organization's website openly states, "Hollywood, Health & Society assists with research, providing a range of information from experts for storylines on topics, from rising seas to melting glaciers, the increase of extreme weather to the spread of infectious diseases, from the Arctic to L.A." [414] But they're certainly not the only ones lobbying Hollywood to warn viewers about the issue.

In 2011 the Secretary General of the United Nations traveled to Hollywood during Oscar week in order to encourage industry insiders to make more films about climate change. [415] The U.N. famously recruits celebrities like Angelina Jolie and George Clooney as "ambassadors" to further their agendas since so many people view celebrities as experts in everything. Knowing that few people watch documentary films, the U.N. focused on getting the issues incorporated into television series and movies.

Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General of the U.N. at the time, told attendees, "Animate these stories. Set them to music! Give them life! Together we can have a blockbuster impact on the world." [416] Another speaker at the event said, "There's a huge gap between what governments can do, given political constraints, and what they should do. That's where you come in…We need you to make it sexy and cool to bring about the energy revolution that has to happen." [417]

Executives working for the FOX television network (not to be confused with Fox News) once openly admitted the network uses their shows to promote concerns about global warming. Chairman Gary Newman admitted in a promotional video the company put out years ago to brag about their efforts that, “We want to set an example in our industry and other industries that no matter what the size of your carbon footprint is, you can make a difference...The biggest thing we have done is inserting messages about the environment into some of our content.” [418]

The Simpsons , *King of the Hill* , *Family Guy* , *24* , and many other FOX shows have all included warnings about climate change, sometimes very brief, but they are there. For example, in a scene from *Family Guy* when a character is looking around at a car dealership he asks “what kind of jerk would drive one of those?” when he comes across a Hummer.

Another FOX television executive, Dana Walden, said, “the most powerful way that we could communicate the commitment on behalf of our company was to change the practices within the production as well as work in a message about global warming, about environmental changes, and about empowering people to take responsibility.” [419]

The most infamous global warming propaganda is Al Gore’s “documentary” *An Inconvenient Truth* which helped jump start global warming hysteria. Devastated by losing the 2000 election to George W. Bush, Al Gore found meaning in his life traveling around the world giving his doomsday predictions to anyone who would listen.

But documentary films don’t have the same impact that big budget action movies do. Jesse Bryant, who organizes an environmental film festival at Yale University, said, “It’s great to publish academic journals on the issues but the real breakthrough is when pop culture stories are hinted towards this cliff that we are all heading off.” [420]

The Film that Started it All?

Kevin Costner’s *Waterworld* was perhaps the first major film used to promote fears of global warming. Released in 1995 the story takes place around the year 2500 when the polar ice caps have melted and the entire earth is covered with water, forcing citizens to live on boats. At the time, it was the most expensive film ever made, costing around 175 million dollars, and turned out to be an epic flop. [421]

An interesting spin on the climate change hysteria was *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004) which, unlike *Waterworld* , depicted the earth freezing from climate change. It's based on a crazy "non-fiction" book titled *The Coming Global Superstorm* written in 1999 by UFO buff Art Bell and another guy named Whitley Strieber.

Dennis Quaid plays a climatologist who realizes that the melting of the polar ice caps has disrupted the ocean currents and caused an enormous polar vortex which drops the earth's temperature below freezing. Soon dozens of feet of snow fall everywhere from the disruptive weather patterns, trapping everyone inside.

There's even a scene where the vice president, who looks like Dick Cheney, was chastised for not listening to scientists earlier about the looming disaster global warming would cause. [422] The film was widely mocked as ridiculous and had the opposite effect that was intended. Instead of raising awareness for the "dangers" of climate change, *The Day After Tomorrow* became a prime example of how absurd those fears were.

Vanity Fair is upset that there aren't more films about climate change, saying, "Fifteen years after *The Day After Tomorrow,* movies about climate change remain rare, and never as serious as the problem itself." [423] The article recommended that the next *Fast & Furious* film depict the gang driving electric vehicles instead of ones with "gas-guzzling" combustion engines to "set an example." At the bottom of the article it has a note that reads, "This story is part of Covering Climate Now, a global collaboration of more than 220 news outlets to strengthen coverage of the climate story." [424]

Perhaps the writer got the idea of *Fast & Furious* using electric vehicles from Pixar's animated film *Cars 2* , which casts Big Oil as the bad guy, conspiring to prevent an alternative (more environmentally friendly) fuel from catching on. [425]

A 2012 film called *Beasts of the Southern Wild* depicts planet earth on the verge of a climate catastrophe that ends up ultimately flooding a bayou village and causing dangerous prehistoric beasts which were frozen in the polar ice caps to become free and roam the earth again when they melt.

Snowpiercer (2013) starring Chris Evans is about a future where climate change made the earth freeze over due to a failed attempt by scientists trying to use geoengineering to stop it, so the humans who remain have to live on a train that constantly travels around the world non-stop.

Why do they have to live on a train, and not in a building with a furnace to keep them warm, you ask?

Because that would defeat the point of the movie about the train being an allegory for "classism" and the hierarchy of society separating the rich from the poor. The upper class members live in the cars closest to the engine, in luxury, while the poor masses are stuck living in the cars at the end of the train, in poverty. [426]

One science blog said the "Frozen earth in 'Snowpiercer' is a grim (and possible) future for our warming planet." [427] Others liked that it wasn't just another "climate change dystopia film" but was what they called the first geoengineering dystopia film. [428] It seems some who are concerned about climate change also doubt that geoengineering could solve the problem and think hopes of geoengineering (like spraying glitter in the atmosphere to block some of the sun's rays) are only addressing the symptoms, and not the cause of global warming. In May 2020 the TNT television network aired a reboot of the film as a television series which is said to take place in the year 2021.

The 2014 science fiction film *Interstellar* revolved around the human race having to find another planet to live on because of dust storms and crop failures, and while not mentioning the words "climate change," many saw the subtle message it was trying to make. Green Peace noted, "*Interstellar* has the potential to play a positive role in the climate movement. It can urge those who already see the impact of climate change to take activist action. And for others who have up to now have ignored the science, they may think again." [429]

But the message was too subtle for some critics. *The Atlantic* complained that "climate change" is never explicitly mentioned in the film, and instead of trying to solve the "mistakes" humans have made on earth that "caused" the planet's destruction, the characters instead decided to abandon earth and try to start over somewhere else. [430] They were upset that the space opera aspects of the film and the issues of time travel overshadowed concerns about why Matthew McConaughey and his crew had to leave the earth in the first place.

It's interesting to point out that both Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk have aerospace companies and want to colonize other planets out of fear that, because of climate change and "limited resources," earth may become uninhabitable in the future. [431]

In *Downsizing* (2017) Matt Damon and Kristen Wiig play a couple who plan to undergo a new scientific shrinking procedure similar to *Honey I Shrunk the Kids* , but this time on purpose, along with thousands of other people in order to all live in miniature communities so they will use a much smaller amount of earth's natural resources. By "downsizing" they also reduce the amount of pollution they create, and help slow climate change.

Another "benefit" is that by living in the miniaturized communities everything costs less since building materials and food go much further, making ordinary middle class people wealthy in their new life. But only 3% of the population opts for "downsizing," meaning it has little effect on saving the earth from overpopulation. In the end the people who didn't succumb to the procedure are said to be on the verge of all dying from global warming, but the miniature "downsized" people were all safe in an underground bunker, and they will be the ones to repopulate the earth once the climate calamity finally ends.

In *Geostorm* (2017) special weather-controlling satellites are put in space to save the planet from all the climate change we've caused, only to get sabotaged and turned into weapons of mass destruction. [432] Despite the film's over the top special effects showing major cities around the world being completely destroyed, climate change alarmists felt it was a good try regardless since it helped raise awareness for the "ecological tipping point" they fear we are approaching and were glad that climate change had been a common theme in several movies that year. [433]

Ethan Hawke stars in *First Reformed* (2017) where he plays a minister struggling with his faith after his son died in the War in Iraq because he encouraged him to enlist in the military as part of the "family tradition." The earth is on the verge of being uninhabitable because of climate change, and at one point a woman calls him to ask if he will counsel her boyfriend out of concern for his environmental extremist views.

The woman later finds a suicide vest her boyfriend made that he planned to use to fight back against the industrialists who ruined the planet. Hawke takes it but agrees not to call the police, hoping he can talk some sense into the man and avoid getting him in trouble. The minister then researches climate change for himself, starts to agree with the man's extremist views, and begins planning to use the suicide vest himself to kill a wealthy factory owner and others who aren't good stewards of the earth.

Writer and director Paul Schrader said the film reflects his own “despair” over the “climate crisis.” [434]

Equally corny was the 2018 version of *The Predator* where a key part of the plot was when the humans figured out why the creatures had returned to the earth after the incident depicted in the original film. The aliens, it turns out, were worried that climate change was going to make humans extinct soon, so the creatures came to earth to collect our DNA for their own genetic experiments before it was no longer available!

“How long before climate change renders this planet unlivable? Two generations? One?” asks a federal agent trying to kill the creatures. Then it suddenly dawns on the lead scientist, played by Olivia Munn. “That’s why their visits are increasing. They’re trying to snap up all of our best DNA before we’re gone.” [435] That’s literally the reason given in the film as to why they returned to earth! Climate change was going to kill us!

HBO’s *Years and Years* aired an entire episode focusing on the issue. The series follows a political family over the course of 15 years, with each episode taking place in a different time period, and one in the year 2025 depicts the north pole as having melted because of global warming.

A lead character (Edith Lyons) says, “We keep saying, ‘you’ve got ten more years to sort out climate change, you’ve got ten more years to sort out flooding, you’ve got ten more years to sort out the rain forest.’ We’ve been saying that for 30 years. It’s too late. We’ve run out of time. Everyone knows it.” [436]

The show goes on to warn that most people will soon starve from floods destroying crops and those who survive will have to live in small huts and only have their memories of what life was like before the climate catastrophe.

Aquaman (2018) starring Jason Momoa depicted the King of Atlantis “Orm” starting a war with humans because of the decades of pollution we have been dumping into the ocean. Despite its pro-environmental message, some critics were upset that the words “global warming” were never actually explicitly mentioned in the film.

“*Aquaman* shows, with unfortunate clarity, that the superhero film genre is ill-equipped to take on serious subjects,” said one critic. “Superhero stories love to imagine the end of the world, but don’t have much to offer in the face of actual global catastrophes.” [437]

“Aquaman” Jason Momoa took the role very seriously however. When actor Chris Pratt posted a picture on his Instagram showing himself after a workout, he got “called out” by Momoa for drinking from a “single-use” plastic water bottle. Pratt then apologized. [438] Even if you recycle your plastic water bottle, that’s not environmentally friendly enough, so now the extremists are shaming people who don’t drink out of re-usable water bottles instead.

In the Marvel superhero film *Venom* , the villain who is using his personal space exploration company to search for other inhabitable planets because “overpopulation and climate change” are going to make earth “uninhabitable” in just “literally” one more generation. [439] It’s by accident that one of their probes discovers an alien symbiotic lifeform that is brought back to earth, creating the “Venom” superhero by merging with a man’s DNA.

“Thanos Did Nothing Wrong”

Fighting climate change often involves reducing the earth’s population, since the more people there are living on the planet, the larger our supposed accumulative carbon footprint is, and it’s under this rationale that some environmentalists sided with *Avengers* villain Thanos in his quest to kill half of all life in the Universe.

In the movies, that’s his goal once he obtains all of the “Infinity Stones” which would grant him supernatural power, and some critics began arguing that instead of being a psychotic villain, Thanos “did nothing wrong.” The saying “Thanos did nothing wrong” had become a popular Internet meme from nihilist fans who sided with him, but some on the Left took it seriously thinking that it would help save the earth.

Forbes magazine asked “Is Thanos right about overpopulation? His rationale seems to make sense if we consider our own planet. Since the Industrial Revolution, the world population has grown rapidly. The figure is currently over 7.6 billion and is projected to reach 10 billion in 2050… Fewer people ought to mean more food and less hunger, and might lower the risk of an epidemic when overcrowding enables the spread of disease. Human activity is driving a loss of biodiversity, with about 25% of animals and plants now threatened with extinction, so halving the population would help other species. As a consequence, you could conclude that by eliminating 50% of all humans, Thanos did the Earth a huge favor.” [440]

Their review concluded, “you could indeed argue that Thanos did nothing wrong—and in the long run, the villain might have actually saved the world.” [441]

Population Control The idea of dramatically reducing the earth’s population in order to “save” it is actually something that environmental extremists have been promoting for decades. Back in the late 1960s, Stanford University professor Paul R. Ehrlich published a book titled *The Population Bomb,* which warned that within the next ten years society would collapse from massive famines because there were too many people on the planet using too many resources. [442]

Despite the book being wildly inaccurate and over 50 years later the predictions laughable, many activists are still warning that we need to immediately reduce the population to save the planet. [443] Some celebrities like Miley Cyrus have even said they’re not going to have children because of climate change. [444] Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has also said she too isn’t sure whether or not she wants to have kids for the same reason. [445] Many others are blaming couples who have children for contributing to the “problem.” [446]

With Transhumanism appearing to be on the horizon which promises to extend our lifespan by hundreds of years (or indefinitely), [447] proponents are becoming increasingly concerned that this will cause the earth’s natural resources to become even more rapidly depleted because if people are able to quadruple their lifespan, that also means they’ll end up using four times as much energy, food, and other natural resources as well. [448]

The mysterious Georgia Guidestones monument located in the small town of Elberton, Georgia, was erected in 1980 to declare the “need” for such actions. The 19-foot-tall monument consists of four slabs of granite planted into the ground with 10 “commandments” engraved on each side, written in eight different languages. [449]

The first of the ten “commandments” is to reduce the planet’s population down to 500 million, an over 90% reduction from its current 7.5 billion. The “Guidestones” were commissioned and paid for by an unknown man using the pseudonym R.C. Christian who said he represented a group that wanted the monument built to send the world a message. [450]

Sports “News”

Unlike politics and religion, sports is supposed to be the one universal activity that people can enjoy or discuss without the usual controversies associated with the human condition. One would expect that sports news shows and networks would be the last place you’d hear about politics, let alone be subjected to political propaganda, but unfortunately that’s not true these days.

In the past, sports and politics would occasionally intersect but usually only when a star athlete joined a political cause and their involvement was part of a human-interest story. It was usually void of much controversy because often their activities weren’t divisive or controversial, but instead humanitarian in nature.

But recently many sports writers, websites, and television networks have become liberal propaganda outlets, promoting left wing causes and putting athletes on pedestals who become token symbols of the liberal agenda. The entire NBA and NFL endorse the Black Lives Matter movement and have turned Colin Kaepernick, the former San Francisco 49ers player who refused to stand during the National Anthem before games, into a hero for starting the trend.

When the 2020 NBA season began after a long delay from the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the players wore special jerseys with “social justice” messages printed on them in place of their last names on the back. [451] The league had worked with Nike to make the “Black Lives Matter” jerseys. This was in response to the protests (and riots) that spread across the country that summer when it became mandatory for sports leagues to condemn White people for “systemically” ruining Black people’s lives. Several basketball stadiums even painted “Black Lives Matter” on the courts. [452]

The NFL also kicked off the 2020 season with the “Black National Anthem” being performed at the start of each game during week one in order to help “raise awareness” of “systemic racism” in America. [453] The

"Black National Anthem" is a song titled "Lift Ev'ry Voice And Sing" that many Black people consider to be "their" national anthem, instead of the Star Spangled Banner.

Even NASCAR became political in 2020 when they banned drivers *and fans* from displaying any Confederate flags at the races just two days after the league's only (half) Black driver Bubba Wallace made the demand. [454] Then a week and a half later someone allegedly hung a "noose" in his garage at the Talladega Superspeedway in Alabama right before a big race. Bubba became a hero overnight from the media endlessly reporting that a "racist" NASCAR fan upset at him for getting the Confederate flag banned must have snuck into his garage and hung the "noose" for revenge.

At the race the next day Bubba was given a parade as he rolled out onto the track to show how the entire league supported him for being so "brave" for what he had gone through. [455] Only, as I'm sure you know, the "noose" turned out to be the handle on the end of the rope which is used to pull open the garage doors at the track. [456] But Bubba had become a star overnight and was a NASCAR hero for standing up against the imaginary "hate crime" that 15 FBI agents wasted their time investigating. [457]

After Amazon obtained the naming rights to Seattle's NHL arena, formerly called Key Arena, they changed the name to Climate Pledge Arena to "raise awareness" for climate change, so now fans can't watch a hockey game in Seattle without the constant reminder to be on the lookout for global warming. [458] Not even the Super Bowl Halftime shows are safe from becoming avenues to deliver political messages with musical guests sometimes incorporating "social justice" propaganda into their performances. [459]

Sportswriter Bryan Curtis noted, "There was a time when filling your column with liberal ideas on race, class, gender, and labor policy got you dubbed a 'sociologist.' These days, such views are more likely to get you a job." [460]

Sports broadcaster Jason Whitlock said, "ESPN and most of the mainstream media have lurched farther left. That's a complaint from middle America and, in my opinion, objective America. ESPN's own ombudsman acknowledged ESPN's hardcore progressive slant." [461]

Speaking about Fox Sports 1, a competitor to ESPN, he said, "I think we're the alternative for sports fans who respect and like traditional sports values. I think we're the alternative for mainstream sports fans, Little

League coaches, athletes, sports moms and dads. I think we're the alternative for people who want to hear authentic conversation and debate rather than words crafted for Twitter applause. I think we're the alternative for middle America, blue-collar sports fans. I think we're the alternative for people who don't think every misspoken word is a fireable offense. ESPN caters to the elite, safe-space crowd. We cater to the people who love to tailgate and knock down a six-pack." [462]

Michael Brendan Dougherty, editor of *The Slurve* baseball newsletter, wrote, "It's also true that conservative ideas tend to be slower off the block. Because they are defenders of tradition, conservatives' arguments often strike liberals as either an unreflective devotion to the way things are (or were), or as being too subtle to be credible." [463]

For the 2015 season the NBA teamed up with Sheryl Sandberg, a radical feminist and top executive at Facebook, to promote her "Lean In" campaign which nagged men to, "take more responsibility for housework and child care," and said they need to "do their fair share of daily chores." [464] The campaign aired commercials on TV during basketball games which used NBA players like LeBron James and Stephen Curry to lecture men to help out more around the house with laundry and other chores. [465]

In 2015 ESPN gave Caitlyn Jenner the Arthur Ashe Courage Award, choosing "her" over others—including double amputee Noah Galloway, who is an Iraq War veteran—and despite missing one arm and one leg became a competitive distance runner, CrossFit athlete, and won third place on *Dancing With the Stars* . [466]

Caitlyn Jenner was also chosen over fellow nominee Lauren Hill, a college basketball player who lost her fight with a brain tumor. [467] Surprisingly, veteran sports broadcaster Bob Costas admitted choosing Caitlyn Jenner was a "crass exploitation play," saying, "In the broad world of sports, I'm pretty sure they could've found someone—and this is not anything against Caitlyn Jenner—who was much closer actively involved in sports, who would've been deserving of what that award represents." [468] Caitlyn Jenner hadn't played competitive sports since the 1980s (when "she" was Bruce). *Sports Illustrated* also put "her" on the cover at the age of 66 wearing the gold metal "she" won at the 1976 Olympics as Bruce, forty years earlier. [469]

Not long after this, ESPN fired baseball analyst Curt Schilling because he posted a meme on his personal Facebook page criticizing new transgender bathroom laws which allow biological males to use women's bathrooms, locker rooms, and showers. [470] The meme simply consisted of a man dressed as a woman with the caption, "Let him in to the restroom with your daughter or else you're a narrow minded, judgmental, unloving, racist bigot, who needs to die!"

ESPN's President John Skipper was asked if the "perceived political shift" in sports becoming political was a "conscious decision" by the network. He responded, "It is accurate that the Walt Disney Company and ESPN are committed to diversity and inclusion. These are long-standing values that drive fundamental fairness while providing us with the widest possible pool of talent to create the smartest and most creative staff. We do not view this as a political stance but as a human stance. We do not think tolerance is the domain of a particular political philosophy." [471]

One conservative employee at ESPN revealed, "If you're a Republican or conservative, you feel the need to talk in whispers. There's even a fear of putting Fox News on a TV [in the office]." [472]

Speaking shortly after the 2016 Presidential election, ESPN's public editor Jim Brady said, "As it turns out, ESPN is far from immune from the political fever that has afflicted so much of the country over the past year. Internally, there's a feeling among many staffers—both liberal and conservative—that the company's perceived move leftward has had a stifling effect on discourse inside the company and has affected its public-facing products. Consumers have sensed that same leftward movement, alienating some." [473]

Sportscaster Joe Buck is uncomfortable with sports recently becoming political, saying, "Unless I'm completely wrong, and I know in this case I'm not, nobody's tuning into the 49ers-Cowboys game to hear my political opinions, whether it's about Trump, or Kaepernick or Flint, Michigan. That's not why they're watching a football game. It's misplaced. I hear guys doing it at times. It seems self-serving. Like they want to inject themselves into the conversation. Wait for a talk show. Go on Bill Maher's show. Bill O'Reilly. Whoever. I think people watch these games to get away from that stuff. I think you risk alienating and upsetting a lot of people when you start going down that rabbit hole." [474]

NFL Promotes "Social Justice"

Shortly into the 2017 season, NFL players and owners issued a joint statement saying they held an important meeting to, “discuss plans to utilize our platform to promote equality and effectuate positive change. We agreed that these are common issues and pledged to meet again to continue this work together.” [475] Then Roger Goodell, NFL Commissioner, sent a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee encouraging them to pass the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2017, which would reduce the prison sentences for drug offenders.

A few months later the NFL announced the creation of their new “Inspire Change” initiative which involves giving millions of dollars in grants to “social justice” causes, including “helping schools implement more comprehensive African-American history education programs.” [476]

The NFL also started becoming concerned that the tradition of using beautiful women as cheerleaders was “sexist,” so for the 2018 season they introduced male “cheerleaders” for the first time. The Los Angeles Rams and the New Orleans Saints were the first two teams to add them, and they’re not there to help the girls perform stunts by tossing them into the air and catching them. They dance with the girls and do all the same routines on the sidelines, even holding pom-poms. [477] Instead of being denounced as stupid or weird, they were hailed by the liberal media for “making history.” [478]

Nike also decided to get into politics recently. In September 2018 the sportswear giant put out a new ad featuring Colin Kaepernick to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the company’s “Just Do It” campaign. While it was a polarizing choice, pushing half of their potential customers away who despise Kaepernick for his anti-American and anti-police activism, Nike’s revenue increased over the previous year’s quarter. [479]

Under their new business model they don’t care how many of their previous customers will never buy a Nike product again because with Kaepernick as their new poster boy the company’s focus is now on the fanatics who will buy Nike gear even more because it reflects their social justice warrior identity. [480]

As everyone knows, Black people dominate the NBA and NFL—and other sports like long distance running; but NBC Sports president Pete Bevacqua is worried that too many White people play golf. “Golf hasn’t had the best history,” he says. “Golf needs more diversity. How do you get more minorities playing the game, how do you get more women playing the game? I think all of golf understands that, whether it's the LPGA, the PGA Tour, the USGA, the PGA of America, Augusta National." [481]

Imagine a sports broadcaster saying there's too many Black people in the NBA, or that it needs more "racial diversity!" They would be fired within the hour, but as I detailed in the "War on White People" chapter, the liberal media has no problem with anti-White racism, and in fact encourages it.

Jemele Hill (a proud Black woman) who was co-host of SportsCenter, called President Trump a "White supremacist" in 2017 without any repercussions from the network. [482] Such an outrageous comment from the host of ESPN's flagship show drew criticism from White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders and even President Trump himself. Many had become accustomed to hearing such slander from CNN and MSNBC panelists, but coming from an ESPN host took things to a new level of depravity.

"Pride Night"

All major sports leagues now host an annual "Pride Night" where they celebrate LGBT people, decorate their stadiums with rainbows, and bring special guests to the games from the gay (and transgender) community. To make sure everything is gay enough they even have gay men's choirs sing the national anthem. [483] Today, most—if not all—NBA teams now host one each year, but it's not just the NBA.

The NFL launched their own annual "Pride Night" as well, to "heighten sensitivity to the LGBTQ community" and show their "commitment to an inclusive environment in which all employees are welcome." [484] As of 2018, every major league baseball team except one hosted an annual Pride Night. [485] The following year the one hold out (the Yankees) gave in and held their first "Legacy of Pride" night and even awarded scholarships to various LGBT students. [486]

Even the NHL has an annual Pride Night, where they too decorate the stadiums in rainbow colors and players even use hockey sticks wrapped in rainbow colored tape to show support for the LGBT community. [487] You can’t even go to a hockey game these days without LGBT propaganda being shoved in your face.

The Super Bowl Since the Super Bowl is the most-watched event on television every year, the NFL and their sponsors can’t pass up the opportunity to spread liberal propaganda to as many people as possible. Lately we’ve been seeing an increasing amount of Super Bowl commercials pushing a political agenda, from Audi using a car commercial to complain about the (non-existent) “gender pay gap” to a lumber company denouncing President Trump’s plan to build a wall on the U.S. / Mexico border. [488] The NFL has also reportedly refused to air pro Second Amendment commercials. [489]

Even the Halftime show, which might be the last place one would expect to push a political agenda, isn’t immune. In 2016, Beyonce was the featured artist and turned her performance into a dedication to the Black Panthers and Black Lives Matter. [490] The following year, with tensions still high from the recent Presidential election, Lady Gaga also used the spotlight to promote a political agenda, although a lot more subtle than Beyonce the year before.

Many people missed it, but it was there, and it was undeniable if you knew what to look for. [491] Gaga gave a shoutout to the anti-Trump protesters who were (at the time) out protesting the new president’s temporary travel ban from seven countries which had been identified as hotbeds of terrorism. [492]

When Jennifer Lopez and Shakira performed in a sex-charged halftime show that included stripper poles, booty shaking, and crotch-grabbing; they also depicted “kids in cages” as a way to denounce President Trump’s immigration policy of detaining people who cross illegally into our country. [493] Both Jennifer Lopez and Shakira are of Latin descent, and at one point during their performance they started singing in Spanish to cater to the tens of millions of non-assimilating immigrants who are occupying areas in American cities.

After the New England Patriots visited the White House following their 2017 Super Bowl win, the *New York Times* tweeted out two side by side photos, one showing when the Patriots visited the White House in 2015 when Barack Obama was president, and the other from the current visit, giving the impression that far fewer players showed up because they didn't want to have anything to do with President Trump. [494]

The official Patriots Twitter account then issued a statement saying, "These photos lack context. Facts: In 2015, over 40 football staff were on the stairs. In 2017, they were seated on the South Lawn." [495] Countless other people called out the *New York Times* for their fake news, and of course President Trump took to Twitter to denounce them as well. [496]

The next day the *New York Times* sports editor Jason Stallman apologized, saying, "Bad tweet by me. Terrible tweet. I wish I could say it's complicated, but no, this one is pretty straightforward: I'm an idiot. It was my idea, it was my execution, it was my blunder. I made a decision in about four minutes that clearly warranted much more time. Once we learned more, we tried to fix everything as much as possible as swiftly as possible and as transparently as possible. Of course, at that point the damage was done. I just needed to own it." [497]

But that wasn't the only politicizing of the Patriot's White House visit. Rob Gronkowski, who played tight end, interrupted Sean Spicer's press briefing that day asking if he needed any help [arguing with the fake news] in a hilarious stunt that had Spicer and the press corps laughing, but ESPN's Max Kellerman didn't think it was funny at all.

"When the press corps is cracking up at a press secretary because of an athlete's presence there, so he's lending something to the proceedings, the athlete is, and the press corps is, you know, they're having a rollicking good time…that's a very bad thing. That's an unhealthy thing to have happened," he complained on air. [498]

Kellerman went on to say that Gronkowski's prank "normalized" Sean Spicer, who he insists worked for an "authoritarian" administration. [499]

Layoffs Many people were growing tired of politics being intertwined with sports coverage, especially when the issues

weren’t even remotely related, and polls began showing it was causing some viewers to tune out. [500] In April 2017 ESPN laid off about 100 people, including several on-air personalities, and six months later laid off another 150 people. [501]

This was after ESPN had reportedly lost an average of 15,000 subscribers a day in October alone, totaling an estimated decline of 465,000 for the month. [502] In the fiscal year of 2018 they lost two million subscribers. [503] While some of the loss can be ascribed to cord-cutters ditching cable in favor of streaming services, a significant portion was due to fans becoming sick of the players protesting during the national anthem. [504]

In October 2019 the sports news website Deadspin sent out a memo to their editors and staff telling them to stick to sports and stop covering politics since the website had steadily drifted into regularly complaining about President Trump. The memo said in part, “Deadspin will write only about sports and that which is relevant to sports in some way.” [505] The editor-in-chief then decided to plaster the entire website with political and pop culture news in protest, and was immediately fired. He unironically tweeted, “I’ve just been fired from Deadspin for not sticking to sports.” [506]

Members of the staff then quit en masse to show solidarity with the editor, and to also protest the new “stick to sports” policy. [507] Yes, people who worked for a sports website quit when management told them to write about sports!

Sports are supposed to be an outlet for people to get away from the stress and responsibilities we face during the work week. And the last thing most sports fans want is to have politics brought up when they’re trying to enjoy their favorite game, but unfortunately “stick to sports” is no longer the motto for most sports entertainment outlets.

While playing sports is a great way for kids and adults to stay physically fit and learn about working together with others, the artificial importance placed on professional sports entertainment largely serves as a type of bread and circus distraction, diverting people’s attention and energy away from important problems in society.

Instead, the focus is put on concerns about whose team is going to win, and which players are injured or may get traded, and other trivial and meaningless controversies which, when you boil them down, do nothing other than serve to keep people pacified with things that lack any real importance whatsoever.

George Orwell summed this phenomenon up in his prophetic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* when he wrote, “films, football, beer, and above all, gambling filled up the horizon of [people’s] minds. To keep them in control was not difficult.” [508]

Author's Note: If you haven't already, please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com, Kindle, Google Play, iBooks, or wherever you bought it from, to let other potential readers know how valuable this information is.

Almost all of the one-star reviews on Amazon for my last three books "The Liberal Media Industrial Complex," "The True Story of Fake News," and "Liberalism: Find a Cure" are from NON-verified purchases which shows the "reviewers" probably didn't even read them, and just hate me.

So if you could help me offset their fake one-star reviews by leaving a real one yourself since you actually read the book, that would help a lot!

Thank you!

Late-Night Comedy Shows For decades the late-night talk shows were something Americans could watch at the end of the day to get a few laughs about current events, celebrity stupidity, or from other theatrics. Viewers couldn’t tell Johnny Carson’s politics because he was an equal opportunity offender. The same was true for Jay Leno and David Letterman who were staples of late-night TV for a generation.

Starting the evening following Donald Trump’s victory over Hillary Clinton in 2016, late night TV stopped being funny. In fact, the hosts were visibly distraught when they took to the air, speaking in a somber tone as if we had just experienced a national tragedy. They tried to pull themselves together over the following days and weeks, but late-night television was never the same.

Today Jimmy Kimmel, Stephen Colbert, and Jimmy Fallon aren't merely "entertainers." They are stealth propagandists; whose political messages go down easier than those from "news" outlets because it's covered in comedy. Their agenda is no longer to make people laugh, it's to get them to cheer on the liberal agenda and mock conservatives.

New York Magazine embraced comedy's new mission and asked, "How Funny Does Comedy Need to Be?" noticing that it wasn't very funny anymore. "Like post-rock, post-comedy uses the elements of comedy (be it stand-up, sitcom, or film) but without the goal of creating the traditional comedic result—laughter—instead focusing on tone, emotional impact, storytelling, and formal experimentation. The goal of being 'funny' is optional for some or for the entirety of the piece." [509] Comedy *without* comedy? At least they're honest enough to admit the shows aren't funny anymore.

When Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy announced he was retiring, opening the door for President Trump to nominate a second judge to the court, the official Comedy Central Twitter account tweeted sarcastically "Thanks, Justice Kennedy," along with a graphic that read "Supremely Fucked." [510]

Comedy Central's Jim Jefferies went so far as to deceptively edit an interview with a man named Avi Yemini who is opposed to Muslims mass emigrating to European countries, but unbeknown to Comedy Central, Yemini secretly recorded the entire interview and posted it on YouTube to show how manipulated the footage was for the segment when it aired and demonstrated how many of his statements were completely taken out of context. He then sued them for defamation. [511]

Some hosts like HBO's John Oliver are steeped in guilt because they mocked the idea of Donald Trump becoming president. When guest hosting the *Daily Show,* John Oliver responded to a news clip reporting Trump was considering running in 2016 by saying, "Do it. Do it! I will personally write you a campaign check now!" because he thought it would make for some great material and didn't think for a moment Trump had a chance to actually win. Now John Oliver lives in misery every day of his life.

In an interview five years after he was fired from NBC as host of the *Tonight Show,* Jay Leno was asked how much different the late-night comedy shows are in the Trump era. "Do you miss being on the show, or is it such a different time that it would be hard to do?" Al Roker asked him.

“No, it’s different. I don’t miss it,” he replied, going on to say during his time hosting he didn’t want people to know his politics, so he tried to hit both sides equally. [512] “Because, you know, the theory when we did the show was you just watch the news, we’ll make fun of the news, and get your mind off the news. Well, now people just want to be on the news all the time. You just have one subject that’s the same topic every night, which makes it—makes it very hard. I mean, all the comics, Jimmy and Colbert and everybody else, it’s tough when that’s the only topic out there.” [513]

Leno noted that the comedy on late-night TV is now “one-sided” and “all very serious” and that “I’d just like to see a bit of civility come back to it, you know?” [514]

Saturday Night Live alumni Rob Schneider noted today, “Much late-night comedy is less about being funny and more about indoctrination by comedic imposition. People aren’t really laughing at it as much as cheering on the rhetoric.” [515]

Jimmy Kimmel Jimmy Kimmel is largely credited with killing the Republicans’ plan to repeal Obamacare after he spent several nights ranting (and crying) about it on his show in 2017, claiming it would prevent poor people from getting healthcare. He even used his newborn son Billy as a prop since he was born with a congenital heart defect and claimed that if Obamacare was repealed then other children with similar life-threatening conditions would die.

But Kimmel wasn’t coming up with his Obamacare material on his own. *The Daily Beast* admitted, “Kimmel and his team were in touch with health care officials, charities and advocacy groups,” as well as Senator Chuck Schumer who, “provided technical guidance and info about the bill, as well as stats from various think tanks and experts on the effects of [it].” [516]

CNN asked, “Did Jimmy Kimmel kill the health care bill?” after Senator John McCain [who cast the deciding vote] said he wouldn’t support the repeal. “Kimmel’s critique [of the Republican plan] inspired intense coverage and analyses, pundits debated Kimmel’s expertise on the subject while others told him to stay in his lane, and the comedian found himself again at the center of the health care fight.” [517]

Kimmel’s propaganda efforts have extended far beyond healthcare. He has used children in skits about how “disastrous” global warming is. [518] He calls CPAC the largest gathering of “anti-vaxxers” and “very angry White people.” [519] And he even called for Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh to be castrated. [520]

Kimmel says, “It just so happens that almost every talk show host is a liberal and that’s because it requires a level of intelligence.” [521] He has also admitted that sharing his political views “has cost me commercially” but neither he nor ABC care, because it’s “for a good cause.” [522]

Stephen Colbert Stephen Colbert took over *The Late Show* from David Letterman in 2015 and ever since has turned the nightly monologue into an anti-Trump editorial, but his audience enjoys it, even his pathetic Donald Trump impression which should be enough for anyone with any taste in comedy to change the channel.

He plays a big role, however, in politics. Practically all the Democrat candidates running for president in 2020 appeared on his show: Bernie Sanders, Kamala Harris, Julian Castro, Beto O’Rourke, Elizabeth Warren, Corey Booker, etc. CNN admitted that, “Aides for several of the most-talked-about contenders confirmed that they view Colbert as a crucial stop on the presidential roadshow,” and one campaign official who spoke off the record said, “We strategize about Stephen a lot.” [523]

New York senator Kirsten Gillibrand announced she was running for President in 2020 on his show. [524] She had coordinated with them and then Stephen shamelessly had her on to awkwardly ask if she had anything to announce, and then she revealed the “big” news. Congressman Eric Swalwell also officially announced he was running for president in 2020 on Colbert’s show. [525] His campaign soon embarrassingly ended with him begging people on Twitter to donate “just one dollar” in hopes he could stay in a little bit longer.

Jimmy Fallon Poor Jimmy Fallon tried not to become a rabid anti-Trump ranter out of concerns he would ostracize half his viewers, but was reportedly pressured by NBC to stop being so soft on Trump. [526] Industry-wide Fallon was shunned and denounced after his 2016 interview with then-candidate Donald Trump because he didn’t use the opportunity to tear into him, and instead had a fun interview like he does with all of his guests.

Trump even famously let Jimmy mess up his hair to prove it was real, but the liberal media was furious and claimed Fallon had “humanized” him. [527] He was shut out of the Emmys that year in what many speculated was retaliation for “helping” Trump. [528] Fallon later apologized for being too friendly and said that people “have a right to be mad.” [529]

Despite trying to not have a show tainted with an obvious political agenda like Stephen Colbert and Jimmy Kimmel, Fallon soon bent to the will of his producers and started focusing more on the president and other social justice issues.

He even had anti-gun activist David Hogg and his sister on the show to rail against the NRA and Florida Senator Marco Rubio for not supporting radical anti-gun laws. [530] Fallon had the kids recount their experience during the Parkland school shooting, because what could be a more appropriate topic for a late night comedy show than talking about a mass shooting at a school?

Saturday Night Live Once a staple of American comedy, *Saturday Night Live* has been on a slow and continuous decline, perhaps in part to an increasing number of options for viewers with the growth of cable TV and more recently streaming

services and other online entertainment; but the show's parodies of presidential politics still bring in viewers and the sketches make headlines.

More importantly than that, *Saturday Night Live* has been responsible for significantly altering how tens of millions of people view certain politicians. One critic noted, "The series has also shown a deft ability to define politicians' personas—for better or worse.

For some, Chevy Chase's exaggerated version of President Gerald Ford or Dana Carvey's over-the-top President George H.W. Bush are more familiar than the politicians' actual legacies. And sketches spoofing the likes of Michael Dukakis and Sarah Palin have had a much longer shelf life than the real-life versions' political careers." [531]

University of Tennessee professor and blogger Glenn Reynolds admitted, "Personally, I think that Chevy Chase cost Ford the 1976 election. Well, part of it, anyway." [532] Decades later Chase admitted, "[M]y leanings were Democratic and I wanted [Jimmy] Carter in and I wanted [Ford] out, and I figured look, we're reaching millions of people every weekend, why not do it." [533]

During the 2000 presidential campaign Darrell Hammond's character of Al Gore was devastating, accentuating his dull personality to the point that the real Al Gore reminded people of Hammond's character. SNL's portrayal of a George W. Bush vs Al Gore debate showed him repeatedly referring to his "lock box" and haunted Gore for the remainder of the campaign. Will Ferrell's impression of a bumbling George W. Bush is what really launched him to stardom.

In 2008 Tina Fey's portrayal of Sarah Palin stuck like glue and many political analysts credit SNL with permanently tarnishing her image in the minds of millions of voters. [534] While the show and its cast have always leaned Left, once they came down with Trump Derangement Syndrome their sickness began showing its symptoms in their skits.

In 2018 they sung a special rendition of Mariah Carey's "All I want for Christmas Is You" conveying their wishes to have Robert Mueller throw President Trump in prison. [535] And their anti-Trump obsession has caused them to sink so low that they actually endorsed assassinating him.

Cast member Michael Ché began, “Maybe I just don’t understand politics well, because when they said Trump was gettin’ impeached, I immediately thought, ‘Great! Trump’s fired! Let’s get drunk!’ But they’re like ‘no, he’s just being impeached, but he ain’t exactly impeached yet, it’s still gonna take another year or so.” [536]

The punchline was, “You know, I’ll bet somebody explained how long impeachment took to John Wilkes Booth, and he was like ‘Okay, well where’s he at right now?’” [537]

Jokes about assassinating a current President, or any President even after they’ve left office, have always been out of bounds, especially for any show on network television, but *Saturday Night Live* decided to go there.

SNL alumni Norm McDonald has trashed the show’s obsessive anti-Trump agenda, such as framing his 2016 election victory as if it was the end of the world. “I was like, what the fuck are we getting through? That a man was duly elected president? What are you, crazy? …I can get through anything. I got through my own father’s death. You think I can’t get through a man getting elected president of the United States?” [538]

McDonald made it clear that he is certainly no fan of President Trump, but says they’re “playing into Trump’s hands.” [539] He said he doesn’t even do political jokes because he hates politics and mostly just watches sports. Pondering how comedy shows have gotten so partisan these days he said, “I wonder when it happened. Maybe with Jon Stewart. But it happened at some point that talk show hosts had to be political pundits.” [540]

The Good Old Days In a 1984 interview with Barbara Walters, late night legend Johnny Carson was asked if there were things in the world that bothered him and caused him to want to use his platform (then host of *The Tonight Show* on NBC) to raise awareness for them. He responded, “I think one of the dangers if you are a comedian, which basically I am, is that if you start to take yourself too seriously and start to comment on social issues, your sense of humor suffers somewhere.” [541]

"I've seen other people, whose names I won't mention, who do humor, and then somewhere along the line they start to want to make their views known. I try to do it humorously. Some critics over the years have said that our show doesn't have great sociological value, it's not controversial, it's not deep," defending the show saying it's just to entertain people and make them laugh. [542]

He was asked a few years earlier by Mike Wallace on *60 Minutes* about why he never gets political. "Do you get sensitive about that fact that people say 'he'll never take a serious controversy?" [543]

Carson responded, "Well, I have an answer to that. Now tell me that last time that Jack Benny, Red Skelton, any comedian, used his show to do serious issues. That's not what I'm there for. Can't they see that? Why do they think that just because you have a Tonight Show that you should deal in serious issues? That's a danger. That's a real danger. Once you start that, you start to get that self-important feeling that what you say has great import, and strangely enough, you could use that show as a forum, you could sway people, and I don't think you should as an entertainer." [544]

Hate Crime Charges for Jokes?

Although mainstream shows have lost their edge and turned into social justice cesspools, some stand-up comedians are trying to save freedom of speech by carrying on the tradition of George Carlin, Lenny Bruce, and others who stood up for the right to offend people with thin skin, but comedy is under attack by the Thought Police who want people *arrested* for telling jokes. The London *Independent* published a piece titled, "As a comedy aficionado, I'm appalled at disgusting 'jokes' creeping back into the industry" where the columnist complained, "Comedians, crying 'free speech' isn't good enough—hate crime laws should apply to all of us." [545]

She complained about what she called "Alt-Right comedy" naming YouTubers PewDiePie and Sargon of Akkod as supposedly having "persuaded some comedians that there is money to be made from belittling social justice." [546]

The writer then whined about Ricky Gervais' Netflix special *Humanity* where he "deadnamed" Caitlyn Jenner (*liberalspeak* for calling a transgender person by their legal name or birth name), and complained about Dave Chappelle cracking some jokes about transgender people too, saying, “I would go so far as to argue that some of the jokes I have heard on the comedy circuit of late constitute actual hate speech.” [547]

Chappelle’s 2019 Netflix special *Sticks & Stones* upset a lot of liberals since they have no sense of humor and he kept the edge he once had for his Comedy Central sketch series in the early 2000s. *Vice News* told their moronic readers that “You can definitely skip Dave Chappelle’s new Netflix special *Sticks & Stones* ” because he “doubles down on misogyny and transphobia.” [548] The critics at Rotten Tomatoes, the popular entertainment rating website, gave it an approval rating of just 35% while the average audience rating is at 99%. [549]

Matt Stone, co-creator of *South Park,* said that the reason so many critics trashed it was because they were afraid to say it was actually funny. “When I read TV reviews or cultural reviews, I think of someone in prison, writing. I think about somebody writing a hostage note. This is not what they think. This is what they have to do to keep their job in a social media world.” [550]

Tim Allen has said that today he couldn’t do his old act from the ‘90s because it would be deemed too “sexist” since much of it was about the dynamics between men and women. [551] His hit show *Last Man Standing* was canceled by ABC after he appeared on the Jimmy Kimmel show and joked about how being a conservative in Hollywood these days is like being a Jew in 1930s Germany because of the persecution they face. [552]

ABC claimed it was canceled because the show wasn’t performing as well as they wanted, but it was actually the network’s second most watched comedy, and the third most watched show on the entire network. [553] It was later picked up by FOX where it instantly became the highest rated show on its night. [554]

Many European countries have much stricter “hate speech” laws than the United States, and it’s a model the Left wants to implement here, starting by amending or repealing the First Amendment to allow criminal charges for people who say things that hurt others feelings or are “divisive” and “not inclusive.” [555] Scottish comedian “Count Dankula” was famously arrested *and convicted* for hate speech after he posted a video on YouTube showing that he trained his girlfriend’s dog to do a “Nazi salute” as a joke to upset her. [556]

There is no doubt that Leftists would love to have political commentators like me arrested for jokes (or even sarcastic statements) about Black people, illegal aliens, gays, and transgenders. Comedy, which was once seen as the last bastion of free speech, is increasingly coming under attack by intolerant liberals who aim to use the mechanisms of government to silence people if the social media companies won’t.

Award Shows Award shows aren’t just for awards. They themselves are elaborate propaganda campaigns whose winners are often chosen, not because of their extraordinary talent, but because certain songs, movies, and TV shows promote agendas the social engineers want to encourage. Movies that fail miserably at the box office are still awarded if the Hollywood elite want to highlight their “powerful” message.

In recent years the award shows have veered further left than most people could imagine, and it’s impossible to make it through one now without getting browbeat by nauseating messages about “diversity,” anti-White bigotry, and gender bending. For example, the 2018 Emmys began with Kate McKinnon (a lesbian) and Kenan Thompson (a Black man) saying, “Tonight is the celebration of the hard work and the talent of everyone in this room,” begins Kate. “That’s right,” continues Kenan.

"We're also celebrating the fact that this year's Emmy Awards has the most diverse group of nominees in Emmy history."

It seemed like they may have been setting up a joke for a second, but they were really being serious. A few more celebrities then came out on stage and literally began to sing a song celebrating the "diversity" of the nominees.

Halfway through their little musical number Ricky Martin entered the stage, saying, "You haven't solved it. This song is way too White!" and then the music changed to salsa music and they all started dancing again. At that point *Saturday Night Live's* Andy Sandberg joined the group and sings, "What about me? Is there any room in this song for a straight White guy like me?"

"You can't be a part of this," he is told.

"Sounds good, have fun you guys," he replies, and then walks off stage. White people should be shunned was the message. Get rid of them.

If you took a drink every time someone said "diversity" during the show you would have died of alcohol poisoning. When Jimmy Kimmel took to the stage to present he began, "We are delighted this year to have such a diverse collection of talented supporting actress nominees." [557]

Another presenter, Emilia Clarke (best known for starring in HBO's *Game of Thrones*), also had to make note of the wonderful "diversity," saying, "Tonight, we are happy to announce that the comedy writing category, once dominated by White male nerds now boasts more female and diverse nerds than ever before." [558]

But there were still too many White people winning awards despite the "diverse" group of nominees that night, so in protest when James Corden was presenting he told the audience at home to get #EmmysSoWhite trending on Twitter, which they did. [559]

And we can't have an award show these days without it including a celebration of drag queens, so RuPaul was given the Emmy for his cross-dressing competition, *RuPaul's Drag Race* . [560]

The Golden Globes are basically the Oscars and Emmys combined, meaning both movies and television shows are given awards. The event is put on by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association which is an organization consisting of foreign media outlets and reporters who cover American entertainment outside the United States.

It's the typical superficial award show with celebrities who think they can save the world by giving a shout out to various causes, but once Donald Trump became president it was obligatory for at least one of the winners to denounce him while accepting their award. Meryl Streep was the first at the 2017 Golden Globes, held just two months after the 2016 election, where she gave an overly dramatic speech about how he's ruining the country for immigrants. [561]

The following year feminism was the theme of the night with host Seth Meyers beginning the show by saying, "People in this room worked really hard to get here, but it's clearer now than ever before that the women had to work even harder. So thank you for all the amazing work that you've all done, and you continue to do. I look forward to you leading us into whatever comes next. So thank you so much for letting me say that." [562]

His cucking didn't stop there. After his monologue he expressed concerns that the first presenters were going to be two White men. "Now to present our first awards, please don't be two White dudes, please don't be two White dudes. Oh, thank God! It's Gal Gadot and Dwayne Johnson everybody." [563]

The very first award of the night went to a man named Ramy Youssef who won Best Actor in a Comedy Series. As soon as he took the stage he said, "Look, I know you guys haven't seen my show," and then the entire audience laughed. "Everyone's like 'is this an editor?'" he continued. [564] He was only half joking because nobody there, and hardly anyone watching at home, knew who he was.

His show *Ramy* streamed on Hulu and was a comedy about a Muslim family from Egypt who had just moved to New Jersey. He was given the Golden Globe as a form of affirmative action to demonstrate how "woke" Hollywood is by celebrating a Muslim comedy, not because it was the funniest show, but simply for the sake of "diversity," and he knew it.

When Jessica Chastain announced the winner for Best Actress that year, she began sarcastically, "I'm so happy to announce that the winner of this category will also receive the 23 percent of her salary that went missing in the wage gap." Chris Hemsworth, who stood there alongside her virtue signaling, added, "It's true. That's correct." [565]

When presenting the nominees for Best Actor, Geena Davis also made a sarcastic comment about the supposed wage gap, saying, "These five nominees have agreed to give half of their salary back, so that the women could make more than them.” [566] But the White male bashing didn’t end there. When Natalie Portman announced the winner for Best Director, she went off script, saying “And here are the *all-male* nominees,” clearly upset that no women were nominated that year because of “sexism.” [567]

At the end of the night Oprah Winfrey was given the Cecil B. de Mille Award for her “contributions” to the entertainment industry, where she gave a tearful acceptance speech causing liberals to become ecstatic and filled with hope that she would run for president in 2020 against Donald Trump.

NBC’s official Twitter account even tweeted a picture of her and said, “Nothing but respect for OUR future president.” [568] *The New Yorker* ran the headline, “Oprah Leads a Decisive Feminist Takeover.” [569]

At the 2020 Golden Globes, Ellen DeGeneres was given an “Award for Excellence” for all she has done to advance the LGBT agenda. [570] The dinner which takes place before the show was an all vegan meal that year to help “raise awareness about climate change.” [571] When Joaquin Phoenix won the Best Actor award for his performance in *Joker,* he began his acceptance speech thanking the Hollywood Foreign Press for “recognizing and acknowledging the link between animal agriculture and climate change.” Adding, “It’s a very bold move making tonight plant-based and it really sends a powerful message,” referencing the vegan dinner. [572]

While Sacha Baron Cohen was presenting he took the opportunity to rip into Mark Zuckerberg for not cracking down on free speech enough on Facebook, sarcastically describing him as a “naive misguided child who spreads Nazi propaganda.” [573] Just two months earlier Cohen gave a speech to the Jewish ADL where he aggressively called for the major social media companies to increase censorship, claiming that they’re still allowing people to post “hate speech.” [574]

Then during her acceptance speech for Best Actress in a Limited Series, Michelle Williams (who was visibly pregnant), admitted she once killed her other baby in an abortion and was glad that she did because if she had the kid it would have prevented her from becoming a successful actress. [575] The audience cheered her “bravery” for admitting what she had done.

The Biggest Night in Hollywood The “biggest night in Hollywood” is the Academy Awards where the Oscars are

handed out, and for many years celebrities have spewed political nonsense—often about saving the environment or some issue in a third world country, but in the Trump-era, everything is about Trump.

At the 2017 Oscars, held just one month after President Trump's inauguration, host Jimmy Kimmel called him a racist and insinuated that the entire world now hates America. "I want to say thank you to President Trump," he said sarcastically. "I mean, remember last year when it seemed like the Oscars were racist?" referring to the "Oscars so White" controversy. [576]

In 2018 *Call Me by Your Name* was nominated for "Best Picture" which is based on the true story of a 24-year-old man seducing a 17-year-old boy. Hollywood calls that a great "love story." [577]

As the Oscars kicked off that year host Jimmy Kimmel gave a shoutout to the actor who played the boy, Timothee Chalamet, saying he is "the star of a small but powerful story, *Call Me By Your Name*, which did not make a lot of money, in fact, of the nine best picture nominees, only two of them made more than 100 million dollars. But that's not the point. We don't make films like *Call Me By Your Name* for money. We make them to upset Mike Pence." [578] (Vice President Mike Pence is a devoted Christian who doesn't support same sex "marriage.") Then came more White guilt as Black films, Black actors, and Black writers were touted as being the best. At one point Jimmy Kimmel mentioned that the new Black power film *Black Panther* wouldn't be included in that year's awards because it just came out, and then expressed his disappointment that there aren't more Black superheroes.

"It's weird that so many superheroes are White because that's what they were in the comics, right? People say, 'Well Superman is White. He's always been White. You know what else Superman has been? Not real!" [579] Apparently it's racist now that Superman is always White in the movies, because he's White in the comics!

Then two Black women (Tiffany Haddish and Maya Rudolph) came out to present and Maya began, "We are so happy to be here, but a little nervous too, because a few years ago people were saying that the Oscars were so White, and since then some real progress has been made.” [580]

Tiffany Haddish, who has a voice scratchier than Axl Rose then chimed in, agreeing. “Mmhmm. When we came out together we know some of you were thinking, ‘are the Oscars too Black now?’”

Maya Rudolph replies, “Don’t worry. There’s so many more White people to come tonight.”

“Mhhhmmm. So many! We just came from backstage and there are tons of them back there! And not just movie stars. There are White people walking about with headsets. White people with clipboards. I’m personally not a fan of White people with clip boards because I’m always wondering ‘what are they writing down about me?’” [581] The message was clear. There were still too many White people around, despite the recent strides in “diversity.”

Best documentary that year went to *Icarus* , a movie about the Russian doping scandal at the Olympics to fan the flames of the hysteria at the time about Russia supposedly helping Donald Trump win the 2016 election. Then there was more pro-immigration propaganda.

Lupita Nyong’o (who is from Kenya) and Kumail Nanjiani (who is from Pakistan) presented an award, but not before saying they’re not just actors, they’re also immigrants, “and like everyone in this room and everyone watching at home, we are dreamers. We grew up dreaming of one day working in the movies. Dreams are the foundation of Hollywood, and dreams are the foundation of America…To all the Dreamers out there, we stand with you,” they said, to a resounding applause, referring to the millions of illegal immigrants Barack Obama granted amnesty to with his “Dream Act” executive order. “Now the nominees for achievement in production design.” [582]

Rapper Common and singer Andra Day performed their social justice anthem “Stand Up for Something” with Common beginning, “We put up monuments for the feminists. Tell the NRA they’re in God’s way… Sentiments of love for the people from Africa, Haiti, and Puerto Rico.” [583]

Later while Andra Day sung, Common continued injecting his two cents with statements like, “We stand up for the Dreamers. We stand up for immigrants.” The eight-year-old Syrian refugee, Bana al-Abed, who (supposedly) began tweeting photos of civil war-torn Syria in 2016, was brought on stage during their performance. [584] Of course eight-year-olds don't tweet, but the girl was used as a propaganda tool to promote U.S. intervention in the country by making her a symbol of the civil war there, but that's a whole other story. [585]

Planned Parenthood CEO Cecile Richards was also on stage, along with a total of ten social justice activists invited up there during the performance because they all "Stand Up for Something." [586]

Mexican film maker Guillermo del Toro won the Academy Award for Best Picture that year for *The Shape of Water* , a movie about a woman who falls in love with a fish-man (and literally gets naked and has sex with it). Probably Hollywood's way of taking baby steps on the path to giving an Oscar to a film about bestiality.

Guillermo del Toro also won for Best Director and when he took to the stage he began, "I am an immigrant like, like my compadres, Alfonso and Alejandro, like Gael [García Bernaland] Salma [Hayek], and like many of you. And in the last 25 years, I've been living in a country all of our own. Part of it is here. Part of it is in Europe. Part of it is everywhere, because I think the greatest thing the industry does is erase the line in the sand," [meaning borders]. [587]

The 2019 Oscars were just more of the same. At the beginning of the show Maya Rudolph announced, "Just a quick update for everybody in case you're confused. There is no host tonight. There won't be a popular movie category, and Mexico is not paying for the wall." [588] Kevin Hart had originally been scheduled to host, but he was canceled after snowflakes dug up some of his past jokes and tweets about not wanting his son to be gay, so like many others, he became a victim of the "cancel culture." [589]

Black Panther was nominated for "Best Picture" simply because it was the first Black superhero movie. Spike Lee won the Academy Award that year for Best Adapted Screenplay for *BlacKkKlansman* , and during his acceptance speech said that the 2020 election is "just around the corner" and told everyone to "mobilize" and "do the right thing" by voting Donald Trump out of office. [590]

Within just a few minutes of the 2020 Academy Awards show starting, Chris Rock was complaining that not enough Black people were nominated, but the show certainly made up for it that year with presenters. At one point a guy came on stage to announce, "The Academy would like to acknowledge that tonight we have gathered on the ancestral lands of the

Tongva, the Tataviam and the Chumash" [Native American tribes] to apologize for White people "stealing" their land. [591]

To kick off the show, singer/rapper Janelle Monae changed the lyrics in one line of her song to say "It's time to come alive, cuz the Oscars, it's so White," marking the sixth year in a row the "Oscars so White" complaint was made. [592] No amount of "diversity" could make them happy.

Hair Love won Best Short film for a 7-minute-long animation about a Black father learning to do his daughter's hair. Usually the winner for this category isn't included in the show, but because the film celebrated Black people and their "hair" the producers made a special exception this year.

When accepting the award the director encouraged people to support the Crown Act, which was pending legislation that would ban employers and schools from "discriminating" against people for their hairstyles, for example, if a business didn't want their employees to wear dreadlocks, or have an afro that sticks out two feet. [593]

A Netflix show called *American Factory* that Barack and Michelle Obama's production company made won the Oscar for best documentary in 2020, and when accepting the award, the director quoted straight from the Communist Manifesto, saying "workers of the world unite." [594]

When Joaquin Phoenix won the Oscar for Best Actor in *Joker* he rattled off as many social justice buzzwords as he could, saying, "Whether we're talking about gender inequality or racism or queer rights or indigenous rights or animal rights, we're talking about the fight against injustice," and then went on to complain about cow rights and people using milk in our cereal and coffee in the morning. [595]

After the Black Lives Matter riots of 2020 caused a surge of Black supremacist sentiments to spread across the country and endless virtue signaling by corporations and schools about how they were going to work much harder to "support the Black community," the Oscars announced that they were changing the criteria for films to be considered for the awards, adding a "diversity requirement." [596]

So now it doesn't matter how good a film is, if there isn't a Black person, a Latino, or a queer as part of the main plot, then it may get passed over in favor of another film with more "diversity."

The Grammys The Grammys used to be mostly just about the music, but now the event browbeats the audience about how there are too many White people in the United States and endlessly praises LGBT people for being “amazing.” The Grammys have even openly celebrated Satanism.

In 2014, Katy Perry performed her song “Dark Horse” in a ceremony that depicted her as a witch and made headlines across the country from people saying the performance looked like a satanic ritual. [597] She did it as a collaboration with a group called Three Six Mafia—get it—three sixes “666”—the “Satanic Mafia.” A few years earlier in 2012 Nicki Minaj had done a similar “satanic ritual” for her performance of her song “Roman Holiday.” [598] (A “Roman holiday” means to get pleasure from someone else’s pain or misfortune.) The Grammys is supposed to be a celebration of music, but they can’t make it through a show without expressing their love for the LGBT agenda. Katy Perry performed her lesbian-themed single “I Kissed a Girl” in 2009 shortly after she burst onto the music scene thanks to that song. A few years later Lady Gaga performed her “gay rights” anthem “Born This Way” during the show. [599] And now every year there are shout-outs to the “LGBT community” and how “awesome” they are.

In 2014 Macklemore & Ryan Lewis won a Grammy for Best New Artist and Best Rap Album as a reward for producing a “gay rights” anthem called “Same Love” which promoted gay “marriage.” [600] When they performed at the Grammys that year thirty-three gay couples were married on stage as part of the show. [601] At the time, gay “marriage” still wasn’t legal in all fifty states, and the issue was awaiting a ruling by the Supreme Court.

That same year Irish musician Hozier’s debut single “Take Me To Church” was nominated for Song of the Year because it denounced Christianity, particularly the Catholic Church’s views on homosexuality. The music video for the song was a gay anthem depicting two homosexuals being persecuted by an angry mob. It was made for just $500 and posted to YouTube when the band was still virtually unheard of, but music executives in Hollywood discovered the video and turned Hozier into a star that year because they wanted a new “gay rights” anthem to promote.

To kick off the 2017 Grammys, Jennifer Lopez said it was a really tough time in our nation's history since it was just a few weeks after Donald Trump was inaugurated as president. Sounding like she was about to breakdown and cry she said, "It is about the music, the words, and the voices. How they move us and inspire us and touch all of our lives. At this particular point in history our voices are needed more than ever." [602]

There was no question what "point in history" she was talking about. Hollywood and the talking heads in the news media were still in shock that Hillary had lost. James Corden even performed a rap song at the start of the show which included lyrics about his fear of what Donald Trump was going to do to the country. [603]

Busta Rhymes later trashed President Trump on stage, calling him "President Agent Orange." He was joined by another group "A Tribe Called Quest" who made their entrance to the stage by breaking through a wall constructed of foam blocks. At one point Busta said that President Trump was "perpetuating evil" throughout the United States. [604]

The following year the Grammys were hosted by James Corden who began the show saying "This year, we don't just have the most diverse group of nominees in Grammys history, we also have, for the second year in a row, the least diverse host in Grammys history," referring to himself being a straight, White male, with blonde hair and blue eyes. [605]

Then rapper Kendrick Lamar got on stage and performed an anti-cop, pro-Black Lives Matter song. Halfway through his performance the lights dimmed and the camera cut to Dave Chappelle, who said, "I just wanted to remind the audience that the only thing more frightening than watching a Black man being honest in America, is *being* an honest Black man in America." [606]

Later Hillary Clinton made an appearance via a video which showed her reading the anti-Trump book *Fire and Fury* that was all the rage at the time. [607] The following year in 2019, they brought Michelle Obama on stage during the opening segment to talk about how much music means to her and how it keeps her going in tough times. [608]

Childish Gambino won the award for Song of the Year and Album of the Year for his racist, anti-White, anti-police diatribe "This is America," marking the first time that a rapper had won both awards. [609] When the nominees were announced a month or so earlier, he and other rappers complained that there weren't enough Black artists being nominated, so it looks like the Recording Academy tried to make it up to him by crowning him the night's big winner.

At the 2020 Grammys, host Alicia Keys started the show playing a piano melody while doing a spoken word performance mentioning the various artists who were nominated and tossed in a line celebrating President Trump getting impeached. [610]

Broadway theater performer Billy Porter then took to the stage (dressed like a woman) and introduced the Jonas Brothers who performed a song, but not without first giving a wink and a nod to the "gender fluid" and "gender non-conforming" people. "Ladies, gentlemen, and those who have yet to make up their minds…" he said, before introducing the group. [611] Singer John Legend also gave a non-verbal shout-out to the gender "non-binary" people by wearing a "dress/suit."

Ellen DeGeneres introduced a performance by "country rapper" Lil Nas X, and after mentioning some of his accolades added, "And he's done it all by being true to himself. Unwavering in the face of prejudice, he told the world that he was gay, and overnight he became an inspiration and a role model for millions of young people around the world." [612]

Michelle Obama was then given a Grammy for "Best Spoken Word Album" for the audio book version of her memoir *Becoming* . [613] There was also a performance by a Spanish singer who goes by the name of "Rosalia" who sung a few songs in Spanish to pander to the tens of millions of non-assimilating Mexicans and other Latinos who have invaded the United States.

The American Music Awards and the Billboard Music Awards are just more of the same. Taylor Swift even "broke her political silence" at the 2018 AMAs to encourage her fans to vote Democrat in the upcoming midterm elections. [614] For her entire career she stayed out of politics completely, but the pressure was building for her to denounce the Trump administration, so she eventually did.

MTV Awards The most degenerate of award shows can be found on MTV. Their annual Movie Awards and VMAs (Video Music Awards) are geared for kids, which makes them even more disturbing. The only time anyone really tunes in to MTV

anymore is for these award shows once a year since music videos are all released on YouTube now, and it's been a decades-long running joke that MTV (which stands for Music Television) doesn't play any music anymore because the network mostly consists of teen dramas.

MTV's VMAs gave birth to Miley Cyrus with her 2013 performance where she introduced "twerking" to the world, a form of "dance" she popularized which simply consists of shaking one's butt in a rapid motion, although that's just the beginning of MTV's degeneracy.

They have unique awards compared to other shows, for things like the Best Villain and Best Fight, and even the Best Kiss. And in 2017, the Best Kiss award went to two men for a "gay coming-of-age" film called *Moonlight* . [615]

The following year in 2018, it was given to two men again, one of them (Keiynan Lonsdale) identifying as a "pansexual" (meaning someone who will have sex with a person of any gender, including trans people). Their movie was another teenage gay "romantic comedy" called *Love, Simon.* While accepting his "Best Kiss" award the pansexual told the audience, "You can live your dreams and wear dresses." [616]

In 2017 the MTV Movie Awards announced it was going to be a "genderless" award ceremony, meaning they weren't giving different awards for best actor or best actress because that was "sexist" and "divisive." They boasted that it was the first "gender-neutral" awards show in history. [617] To emphasize their idiotic idea, the first presenter of the evening was a real life "gender non-binary" person named Asia Kate Dillon who nobody has ever heard of. Her "preferred pronouns" are "they" and "them," and of course she has a shaved head.

The Wikipedia entry for Asia Kate Dillon reads, "Dillon was born in Ithaca, New York. *They* were assigned female at birth, but identifies as non-binary. Dillon explained around 2015, *they* began removing gendered pronouns from *their* biography, and auditioning for the part of Mason helped *them* understand *their* gender identity. Dillon identifies as pansexual, stating *they* are attracted to multiple genders." [618]

It’s confusing because using the pronoun “they” to refer to one person is usually grammatically incorrect, but even the Merriam Webster dictionary has caved in to the craziness and recently updated the “rules” for grammar to accommodate gender non-binary or non-conforming people and their “preferred pronouns.” [619]

Emma Watson won the first award that night for the live-action remake of *Beauty and the Beast* and made sure to start off her acceptance speech by praising how great of an idea it was to go “genderless,” saying, “Firstly, I feel I have to say something about the award itself. The first acting award in history that doesn’t separate nominees based on their sex says something about how we perceive the human experience. MTV’s move to create a genderless award for acting will mean something different to everyone, but to me, it indicates that acting is about the ability to put yourself in someone else’s shoes. And that doesn’t need to be separated into two different categories.” [620]

This was all part of the show. She was just reciting the script that MTV’s producers had given her to emphasize the “historic” genderless theme of the night. Everything in Hollywood is fake, even the award shows.

When Vin Diesel was given the Generation Award, he made sure to go along with the social justice agenda and said the only reason that the *Fast & Furious* series was a success is because the younger generation is accepting of multiculturalism. “Most importantly, I got to thank a generation that was willing to accept this multicultural franchise where it didn’t matter what color your skin was or what country you were from, when you’re family, you’re family.” [621]

Multiculturalism had nothing to do with the franchises’ success. It’s an action movie series about *cars* , and a lot of people love car movies, and the chase scenes and action sequences are amazing, but the Hollywood elite never miss an opportunity to sing praises of their precious “diversity.”

In 2018, rapper “Logic” wore a t-shirt that said “F*ck the Wall” and dozens of Mexican immigrants were brought out on stage during his performance who had shirts on that read “We Are All Human Beings.” [622] The previous year a “descendent” of Robert E. Lee, the Confederate Army general, was brought on stage to denounce racism. “We have made my ancestor an idol of White supremacy, racism, and hate,” he began. “As a pastor, it is my moral duty to speak out against racism, America’s original sin.” [623] The man was the great-great-great-great (four “greats”) nephew of Robert E. Lee.

He went on to tell the audience, “Today, I call on all us with privilege and power to answer God’s call to confront racism and White supremacy head on. We can find inspiration in the Black Lives Matter movement, the women who marched in the Women’s March in January, and especially Heather Heyer, who died fighting for her beliefs in Charlottesville.” [624]

Then Heather Heyer’s mother was brought on stage, whose daughter was killed during the infamous 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, to announce the winner of the “Best Fight Against the System” award. All the nominees had music videos denouncing racism, anti-immigrant sentiments, and promoted “diversity.”

While opening the show in 2019, Taylor Swift had the words “Equality Act” projected on the stage in giant letters under a rainbow. [625] The Equality Act is a proposed bill by Democrats that would amend the Civil Rights Act and mandate someone’s gender identity be legally recognized no matter which one of the 58 different “genders” they claim to be. [626] It would also severely restrict the religious freedom of individuals and groups who don’t accept the positions of LGBT extremists. The following year the Supreme Court ruled on similar legislation, declaring that business owners can’t fire employees for being gay or transgender, nor refuse to hire them. [627]

Feminism The Left has a saying that “representation matters,” which means the more on-screen depictions of certain kinds of characters, lifestyles, and behaviors, the more the general public warms up to accepting those kinds of things in real life. And part of paving the path to what they hope will be a woman President of the United States someday involves producing a variety of shows focusing on a female character who holds that position.

In the years preceding Hillary Clinton’s long-expected attempt at a presidential bid there were almost a dozen television shows that had a woman president as the central part of the plot. Geena Davis starred in *Commander in Chief* , a short-lived series from 2005 to 2006 where she was originally the Vice President, but then had to takeover after the president died of a brain aneurysm. In FOX’s thriller *24,* the show had a female president for two seasons in 2008-2010. Julia Louis-Dreyfus ascended to the presidency in her series *Veep* after the president resigned, leaving her in charge. And that was just the beginning.

State of Affairs, which aired for just one season on NBC, depicted a Black woman as the president, and CBS's political drama *Madam Secretary* revolved around a female Secretary of State (obviously modeled after Hillary Clinton), and at the end of the fifth season the character decided to run for President and won. The following season (which was its last) the series focused on the new female president but kept the name *Madam Secretary* .

But Hollywood's feminist propaganda goes far beyond hoping to normalize the idea of a woman president. Liberals are obsessed with uprooting the traditional gender roles of men as providers and protectors, and women as nurturers and caretakers. They are determined to "empower women" at any cost and embrace the disastrous effects on family dynamics and society as a whole that their radical agenda is causing.

"The future is female" is their mantra, showing they have no concern for equality, but instead have a thirst for power and want to dominate instead of cooperate. They despise traditional families and gender roles, and are on a mission to undermine the very foundational relationships of human society.

To feminists, being a stay at home mom is slavery. Women cooking for their family is "oppression" under the Patriarchy, and men are all scumbags; but having unprotected sex with an endless line of them while avoiding any committed long-term relationships is the ideal life. That's what Hollywood wants women to believe.

Their latest plan to promote "women empowerment" is hijacking popular franchises and then completely changing the major characters and turning good old-fashioned action films into social justice warrior propaganda. Not just swapping male characters for females, or adding strong female leads, but by also portraying men as inept and incompetent losers who always need to be rescued from their own stupidity.

When the *Star Wars* series was revised in 2015 with *The Force Awakens* , it diverted from the usual storyline featuring male leads (Luke Skywalker in the original trilogy and Anakin Skywalker in the prequels) to a totally new character invented by JJ. Abrams named Rey, a female loner.

A female Yoda-type of creature named Maz first starts teaching Rey about the force once she happens to discover Luke Skywalker's old lightsaber lying around. And throughout the film Rey keeps proving to everyone that a girl can do amazing things like pilot a ship, and even fix one with her ingenuity, saving the Millennium Falcon from exploding. After there was an electrical overload and Han Solo didn't know what to do, Rey saved the day. For extra diversity the new *Star Wars* teased a possible interracial romance between Rey and Finn (the Black former stormtrooper). [628]

In the next film, *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* (2017), all women are in charge of the Resistance (the good guys), giving the orders to subservient and bumbling men. The tension keeps building between Poe Dameron and Vice Admiral Holdo (his superior) with them butting heads numerous times and Poe facing repeated snarky comments from her. *The Last Jedi* was hailed as "the most triumphantly feminist Star Wars movie yet," because of this odd storyline. [629] And critics hailed it for "awakening the feminist force in little girls everywhere." [630]

At one point Poe and the other men take over the ship at gunpoint, tired of the perceived inability of the women to lead the mission. They committed mutiny only to later learn that Vice Admiral Holdo had a great plan but they just didn't know it, and now Poe had put everyone at risk. The women save everyone though, and he's sorry for ever doubting them.

Even the *Star Wars* spinoff *Rogue One* starred a woman. NBC News noted that, "Not only is *Rogue One* continuing *The Force Awakens* trend of putting a young woman in the center of the action, but it appears to provide prominent roles for African-American, Latino and Asian actors as well—a relatively new development in the Star Wars universe." [631] They loved the "diversity."

George Lucas, the creator of *Star Wars* , sold the rights to Disney in 2012 and later said he felt "betrayed" after the entertainment giant decided to "go in another direction" from his original ideas. [632] He once referred to the films as his "kids" and said that he regretfully sold them into slavery. [633]

In 2015, a new installment of *Mad Max* was released titled *Mad Max: Fury Road* , but instead of starring Mad Max it starred Charlize Therone's character "Imerator Furiosa." It was declared the "feminist picture of the year." [634] And instead of Max being a hero like the previous films, he was depicted as an idiot who had to be repeatedly rescued by women.

In Disney-Pixar's animated *Incredibles 2* , a "superhero mom" named Elastigirl (Mrs. Incredible) is chosen for a secret mission over her husband, who led the superhero family in the first film, because he has the tendency to cause unnecessary "collateral damage" and the superhero organization felt they needed to change the image of superheroes in the public's mind. She then leaves her husband at home to watch the kids while she takes off on her mission. When she calls to check on how things are going, the husband is depicted as being in over his head and not able to handle taking care of the kids and running the house.

The London *Guardian* called the film a "feminist triumph." [635] *Bustle* , an online women's magazine, wrote, "In a time when conversations about representation are more prevalent than ever, showing the diversification of familial roles is definitely fitting. Though not entirely out of the ordinary, seeing a father—especially one as domineering as Mr. Incredible—taking on more of a domestic role will definitely serve as a comedic relief for some, but will also, hopefully, contribute to larger conversations surrounding familial structures and their many forms." [636]

Their glowing review continued, "The responsibilities of family life should be divvied up amongst its members, and gender shouldn't play a determining factor in who takes on whichever task. In this way, *The Incredibles 2* is adding some much-needed perspective to conversations surrounding family dynamics and female empowerment. But, though extremely relevant and important to discuss today, true progressiveness will be measured once conversations about strong female leads and diverse familial structures are no longer needed." [637]

Birds of Prey is a spin-off from *Suicide Squad* , a film based on DC Comics' characters, focusing on Harley Quinn (played by Margot Robbie) who just broke up with her boyfriend the Joker and must survive as a supervillain in Gotham City with no man to protect her.

Some critics called the character's portrayal in *Suicide Squad* sexist and misogynistic, so for the spin-off producers decided to atone for their "sins" by making *Birds of Prey* a hyper-feminist film where all of the bad guys aren't just criminal masterminds, but misogynists who treat women poorly and deserve to be punished. [638]

Ewan McGregor, who plays the crime lord Black Mask, said, "What interested me with *Birds of Prey* is that it's a feminist film. It is very finely written. There is in the script a real look on misogyny, and I think we need that. We need to be more aware of how we behave with the opposite sex. We need to be taught to change. Misogynists in movies are often extreme: they rape, they beat women ... and it is legitimate to represent people like that, because they exist and they are obviously the worst. But in the *Birds of Prey* dialogues, there is always a hint of everyday misogyny, of those things you say as a man you do not even realize, mansplaining ... and it's in the script in a very subtle way. I found that brilliant." [639]

Salon.com raved, "Harley Quinn is back to take down the patriarchy, and this revolution brings scrunchies." [640] Another critic loved that it was about "women's emancipation," because the character proved she could be a supervillain on her own without a boyfriend. [641]

Like most "woke" movies, the film bombed its opening weekend, so the producers changed the title to *Harley Quinn: Birds of Prey* , hoping to spark people's interest because the character had become a breakout star from *Suicide Squad.* The film was still a huge loss for the studio, but Hollywood can't take a hint. They'll keep making feminist propaganda pieces and have their favorite critics try to sell them to viewers no matter how much they suck and how poor they perform at the box office.

Gender Swaps In 2016 a new *Ghostbusters* film was released, but instead of starring Bill Murray and the gang it featured four women as the Ghostbusters. At the end of the movie the girls shoot the giant evil ghost in the crotch with their proton packs to finally destroy him. Actress Leslie Jones, who was one of the Ghostbusters, quit Twitter and said she cried because she was getting "harassed" by people who hated the film. [642] It completely bombed at the box office and cost the studio an estimated $125 million dollars in losses. [643]

A few years later when it was announced that a new *Ghostbusters* was in the works that would continue the original series and "hand the movie back to the fans," the director Jason Reitman was called a "sexist" because that meant it wouldn't be another feminist empowerment film. [644]

In the 2019 film *Terminator: Dark Fate* , John Connor, the future leader of the "Resistance" against the machines, is killed in the first few minutes, making all of the previous films completely pointless since the primary mission was to ensure that he lives so he can grow up to lead the war against the machines. Then Sarah Connor, along with the help of another "good" time-traveling Terminator (who is an "enhanced" cyborg woman) help another girl evade a new advanced "bad" Terminator which is on a mission to kill *her* before *she* becomes a threat to the machines in the future.

"If you're at all enlightened, she'll play like gangbusters," director Tim Miller said, speaking of the "good" female cyborg. "If you're a closet misogynist, she'll scare the fuck out of you, because she's tough and strong but very feminine. We did not trade certain gender traits for others; she's just very strong, and that frightens some dudes. You can see online the responses to some of the early shit that's out there, trolls on the internet. I don't give a fuck." [645] The film bombed, reportedly losing 100 million dollars, [646] and the *Hollywood Reporter* said the studio had no future plans for any other Terminator movies. [647]

Ocean's Eleven was a popular heist film that originally starred the Rat Pack in 1960 and was remade in 2001 featuring an ensemble cast led by George Clooney. The reboot, which did very well, was followed up with two sequels, (*Ocean's Twelve* , and *Ocean's Thirteen*) but then in 2018 the gender swap mania infected the franchise and *Ocean's 8* was released, re-envisioning the professional burglars as a group of all women, led by Sandra Bullock.

As I'm sure you expected, the film bombed, and the actresses blamed bad reviews on men of course, saying they were due to a "lack of diversity" among the critics. [648]

In 2019, a crime drama called *The Kitchen* was released as an all-woman gangster film starring Melissa McCarthy because someone thought it would be a good idea to make such a ridiculous movie. It wasn't even a comedy, which made it even more absurd. The title refers to Hell's Kitchen, a neighborhood on the West Side of Midtown Manhattan where the women "gangsters" live. The plot revolves around them collecting protection money from local businesses and running the neighborhood as part of the Irish mafia. It was a complete bomb and lost the studio tens of millions of dollars which should come as no surprise. [649]

Disney announced they were going to reboot the 1990s *Doogie Howser M.D.* series about a teenage genius who becomes a doctor which originally starred Neil Patrick Harris, but the remake will star a 16-year-old girl as the child doctor. [650] Disney is also producing an all-female version of *Pirates of the Caribbean* that will star Margot Robbie. [651]

Steven Spielberg said that his iconic character Indiana Jones should take "a different form" and be played by a woman named "Indiana Joan." [652] Vin Diesel even said that an all-female version of *Fast & Furious* was in the works. [653]

In 2017 when the film *Dunkirk* was released, which depicts the historic Dunkirk evacuation during World War II when Allied soldiers pulled out of the Dunkirk harbor in France, liberals were upset that the film didn't gender-swap some characters to make it more "diverse." [654] Of course that wouldn't have been historically accurate, or made any sense because women were not on the battlefield, but that didn't stop the snowflakes from complaining about the soldiers being all men.

The Institute on Gender in Media In 2004 actress Geena Davis started a non-profit research organization to study "gender representation" in media. The "Institute" on Gender in Media is obsessed with monitoring the number of women vs men in TV shows and movies and tracking what percentage of them have speaking roles and how many of them have power.

Their website says, "we're the only organization working collaboratively within the entertainment industry to engage, educate and influence the creation of gender balanced onscreen portrayals, reducing harmful stereotypes and creating an abundance of unique and intersectional female characters in entertainment targeting children 11 and under." [655]

Another pointless project the "Institute on Gender in Media" has been working on is a computer program that checks scripts for "gender bias" language to make sure they're "inclusive." Not only does the software scan scripts for words and phrases like *fireman* , *postman* , and *mankind* ; but it also produces a report on the percentage of characters who are "people of color” and even LGBTQ so the writers and producers can make sure their projects are “diverse” enough. [656]

Television Commercials Turn Feminist For many years feminists have been upset about the way cleaning products are marketed, so recently there are an increasing number of commercials for laundry detergent, vacuums, and mops depicting men using the products. Creating “gender equality” in commercials for cleaning products has even been called “the final feminist frontier.” [657]

Some companies are even promoting feminism in their commercials even when their products have nothing to do with gender at all. For example, some morons in the marketing department at Anheuser-Busch thought it would be a good idea for Bud Light to promote the supposed “wage gap” in an incredibly unfunny ad featuring Amy Schumer and Seth Rogan. It begins with Schumer saying, “Bud Light party here, to discuss equal pay.”

Seth Rogen goes on to complain that “Women don’t get paid as much as men and that is wrong!”

The two banter back and forth about women supposedly having to pay more for cars, dry cleaning and shampoo, but “Bud Light proudly supports equal pay. That’s why Bud Light costs the same, no matter if you’re a dude or a lady,” explains Schumer.

Forbes magazine called the commercial “unusual” and the writer wondered, “So why did Bud Light choose to make what might be the first civil-rights-inflected beer ad…Are they targeting Hillary voters? Are they simultaneously making fun of ‘equal pay’ claims by subverting the meaning of the term to be about a non-problem—what men and women pay for beer? Or are they trying to thread the needle with comedy to speak to both audiences?” [658]

Their beer sales soon declined, and they pulled the ad. [659] When journalists started inquiring about the company’s own business practices regarding “equal pay” they declined to reveal how many women work for the company or how their salaries compare to those of their male counterparts. [660] Bud Light even took the video off YouTube trying to distance themselves from the mess they created.

In 2018 Burger King launched an ad campaign to "raise awareness" about "gender inequality." Using a hidden camera in one of their restaurants they served what they called "Chick Fries" (which were just thin chicken strips or "chicken fries") to customers, but when women ordered them, they were served the chicken strips in a pink box and were told they had been charged a few dollars more than men "for the pink box." [661]

When some of them got upset and started arguing with the cashier (who was an actor) about how they shouldn't have to pay more just because the box is pink for women, the cashier began lecturing them about how women's razors supposedly cost more than men's "just because they're pink" and asked them why they didn't complain about that too. Why not just promote their chicken fries and say they taste great and are on sale you may be wondering? That's what a normal person would do, but we're talking about people who have become infected with the liberal pathogen.

The Audi car company aired a Super Bowl commercial showing a group of kids racing in a pine box derby, while focusing on the only girl in the group. As the race begins her dad is the narrator, musing aloud wondering how he was going to teach her about sexism. "What do I tell my daughter? Do I tell her grandpa is worth more than her grandma? That her dad is worth more than her mom? Do I tell her that despite her education, her drive, her skills, her intelligence, she will automatically be valued as less than every man she meets?" [662]

She then wins the race, beating the boys, and it concludes with him saying, "Or maybe I'll be able to tell her something different," and then the words "Audi of America is committed to equal pay for equal work," and "Progress is for everyone," are shown on the screen. [663]

The "Secret" women's deodorant brand aired a Super Bowl-themed commercial showing a kicker kick the winning field goal at the end of a game and then when "he" takes off "his" helmet the crowd realizes it was a woman and goes silent, but after a moment of surprise they begin cheering even more and then the catchphrase "Let's Kick Inequality" is shown on the screen. [664]

Companies often use their big Super Bowl commercials to really promote the liberal agenda instead of their product. The "Unstereotype

Alliance" campaign launched by the United Nations notes, "Advertising is a particularly powerful driver to change perceptions and impact social norms," and says they are "excited to partner with the foremost industry shapers in this Alliance to challenge and advance the ways women are represented in this field." [665] It's impossible to escape liberal propaganda, even when viewing commercials for cars and deodorant!

Jared jewelers even released a commercial encouraging women to propose to their boyfriends with the tagline "Dare to ask him." [666] One ad shows a woman drop down on one knee holding the ring, and then as she slides the ring on his finger the camera cuts to their friends seated at a nearby dinner table all celebrating his acceptance, having witnessed her pop the question.

Fat is "Beautiful"

No fat jokes (or "fat shaming" as they're called now) are allowed anymore, because they're considered "bullying" and "hate speech" so liberals have been promoting "body positivity" which is a more politically correct term for the "fat acceptance movement" in which morbidly obese women are said to be "beautiful" by those who pity them.

Despite becoming obese later in her career, Amy Schumer was reportedly in talks to play Barbie in a live-action film based on the doll—in what some people thought was a joke, but it turned out to be true. [667] She was then pulled from the project, probably due to the ridicule she was receiving or after producers realized the movie would be a complete flop because of their idiotic idea. [668]

Lena Dunham is another token fat ugly girl in Hollywood who is always promoted as a feminist icon. [669] Dunham has posted pictures on her Instagram over the years celebrating her weight gain, once posting a before-and-after photo showing her of average weight in the past next to a current photo of her 24-pounds heavier (weighing in at 162 pounds). [670] The post got almost 500,000 likes from people who were proud of her for being happy that she was obese. A year later she posted a picture of her lying in bed wearing lingerie, noting that "I weigh the most I ever have," and saying she's the "happiest I've ever been." [671]

By accepting obesity as “normal” and banning criticism of obesity as “fat shaming” people are only contributing to the problem. It would be like claiming you were “bullying” people by declaring opioid use is dangerous and something that should be shunned and avoided.

Singer Lizzo, best known for being the 300 pound Black girl who likes bouncing around on stage during her performances, was hailed as “brave” and “beautiful” after she posted a semi-nude photo of herself on Instagram.[672] During the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 she posted a picture of herself wearing a face mask and matching bikini, and one tabloid reported that it was a balance of “safety with sex appeal.” [673]

Hollywood’s new affinity for fat women is causing some older TV shows and movies to come under scrutiny. As part of the storyline in *Friends* , Monica (Courtney Cox) was depicted as severely obese when she was younger, but then ended up losing a bunch of weight and became hot. In flashbacks, Courtney would wear a fat suit and a prosthetic chin playing her old self, but now *Entertainment Weekly* calls “Fat Monica” the “ghost that continues to haunt *Friends* 25 years later,” and complains that the show used her to get “cheap laughs in the laziest ways possible.” [674]

Shallow Hal and *The Nutty Professor* have since been deemed the most “fat-phobic” movies of all time for their use of fat suits. [675] It probably won’t be long now until the practice of actors wearing fat suits for comedic effect will be banned industry wide, and the those kinds of characters will be deemed just as offensive as someone wearing “blackface” which used to be a staple of comedy with people like Jimmy Kimmel, Jimmy Fallon, Howard Stern, Dan Aykroyd, Robert Downey Jr. and many others once doing skits as a Black person.

Most have recently apologized for what were actually hilarious characters after old clips circulated on Twitter with people denouncing them for being “racist.”

Feminists even got upset when Pixar’s *Wall-E* came out, which depicts a dystopian future where the earth is evacuated because it has turned into a trash heap from all the garbage humans were creating. The online outlet *Slate* was upset that the movie “goes out of its way to equate obesity with environmental collapse.” [676] They complained, “It plays off the easy analogy between obesity and ecological catastrophe, pushing the notion that Western culture has sickened both our bodies and our planet with the same disease of affluence. According to this lazy logic, a fat body stands in for a distended culture: We gain weight and the Earth suffers." [677]

The London *Telegraph* noted that fat pride groups, "believe the film propagates anti-obesity hysteria comparable with the quest for the perfect body by the eugenics movement in Nazi Germany." [678] Yep, *Wall-E* is Nazi propaganda to these lunatics!

Since the Left is so concerned with "global warming" and people's "carbon footprint," you'd think they would start calling out fat people for using triple or quadruple the natural resources as the average person, but that would hurt people's feelings—so instead they're trying to convince trendy social justice warriors to eat bugs because the cow farts from beef-producing cattle are supposedly destroying the planet. [679]

In 2019, Victoria's Secret hired a plus-size model named Ali Tate-Cutler in order to be "more inclusive." [680] And what a surprise—later that year they canceled their annual fashion show, citing declining sales and ratings! That same year they had also celebrated hiring their first transgender model in the name of "diversity" so it's no wonder the Victoria's Secret brand had become less appealing to so many people. [681]

The move came after lunatics on Twitter kept complaining they were "discriminating" against transgender people by having only (actual) women as models. [682]

Abercrombie & Fitch also decided to be "more inclusive" by distancing themselves from their well-established brand of flawless models in their catalogs and have now embraced the "body positivity" movement by using "plus-sized" (fat) models and LGBTQ people in their ads. [683]

The *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition* has also featured a "plus size" (fat) model on the cover recently, but she doesn't attribute her success to the fat acceptance movement. She believes it's because of White privilege! "I know I'm on this pedestal because of White privilege," she says. "To not see Black or Latina women as famous in my industry [meaning the plus size model industry] is crazy! I have to talk about it. I want to give those women kudos because they are the ones who paved the way for me," she said. [684]

The glass is always half empty with social justice warriors. Even when things are good, they're not good enough, and when a fat woman has a successful modeling career she can't be happy about that either, because she's worried that her success is due to "White privilege."

There are also calls for the NFL to start using plus-sized cheerleaders, and the league is under fire from feminists because the cheerleaders must abide by various strict rules, including maintaining their “ideal weight.” There are even calls to ban cheerleaders altogether because it’s “demeaning to women.” [685]

In 2016 toy maker Mattel released a “curvy” Barbie to celebrate “body diversity.” An executive at the company said, “These new dolls (are) more reflective of the world girls see around them—the variety in body type, skin tones and style allows girls to find a doll that speaks to them.” [686]

Sofie Hagen, a fat “comedian” who got triggered by billboards warning about the link between obesity and cancer, is also hoping Disney will soon feature a princess in one of their cartoons who is fat. She tweeted, “I cannot stress how much we need a fat Disney princess. We need it now. Shut up. We fucking do.” [687] (No, she’s not joking, and on a side note, she blocked me on Twitter for laughing at her).

Feminists are often fat, ugly, angry women, as you know, so the AMC television network aired a dark comedy series called *Dietland* where a morbidly obese woman fed up with “society’s beauty standards” decides to start killing men who contribute to the “objectification of women,” like fashion photographers. It was basically a fat chick revenge fantasy. Only in Hollywood would someone come up with the idea of the protagonist being a fat woman who kills people who hurt her feelings!

The Four Waves Feminism is like an old tool that has outlived its usefulness, but instead of discarding it and appreciating what it accomplished during the time it was needed, feminists have continued trying to “advance” the movement in our modern era.

Feminism has gone through four different phases, or waves as they’re called, since its first incarnation in the early 1900s when women banded together to demand the right to vote (women’s suffrage). In the 1960s and 70s the second wave rose up to fight against the lack of women in political positions, and they were very successful in popularizing birth control pills and legalizing abortion, but for some power-hungry feminists there was more work to be done to dismantle “the Patriarchy.”

They continued pushing forward in the 1990s (the third wave) where they worked to get more women into leadership positions in the government and corporations, often simultaneously complaining about men continuing to “objectify women” while doing everything they could to artificially boost their sex appeal and use it to their advantage in every possible situation.

Then came the fourth wave of feminism which is completely unrecognizable from the first two waves which actually had a legitimate purpose and goals. Around 2012, not coincidentally coinciding with social media becoming a fixture of most peoples’ lives, the fourth wave of feminism hit the Internet like a tsunami of insanity. Through social media, crazies from across the country were able to connect with each other and affirm one another’s bizarre ideas about their abnormal lifestyles and celebrate their mental illnesses. They now come up with new “causes” to fight for online like “free-bleeding” (not wearing tampons or pads during their period) in order to “raise awareness” for periods (as if we’re not already painfully aware of them), and “smashing the scale” (celebrating obesity).

The most radical feminists (the ones with blue or purple hair) eventually turn into cat ladies. Single, childless, alone, and filled with regret and hate. As their looks fade, so does their ability to attract new mates, thus leading them to the inevitable downward spiral of despair which is then used as fuel to reaffirm their beliefs that men have ruined the world and their lives.

The LGBT Agenda Gays are only approximately one or maybe one and a half percent of the population. [688] **But because of the bombardment of LGBT propaganda, many Americans falsely believe ten or even *twenty percent* of people are homosexual.** [689] **And liberals want everyone to think that there is no more of a difference between someone who is straight or gay than there is between someone who is left-handed or right-handed.**

Homosexuality used to be officially classified as a mental illness by the American Psychiatric Association until 1973 when they gave in to intense pressure by LGBT groups and had it removed from their Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). [690] Now they just call it a "sexual orientation."

Gays used to deny there was a "gay agenda" and claimed that they weren't *promoting* homosexuality; all they wanted was to not be "attacked" or "discriminated against"—but those claims, like almost everything that comes out of liberals' mouths, turned out to be a massive lie.

Today it's not even about LGBT "rights" to them, it's about LGBT *privilege* . They get *extra* rights. They're *special* . And any criticism about their behavior or lifestyle is deemed "hate speech" and "harassment" no matter how mild or reasonable. These days anyone who doesn't celebrate them is considered an enemy. You must put them on a pedestal and marvel at their "awesome" sexuality, or you're a Nazi!

The reason gays and transgenders went from being widely viewed as strange, to being "privileged" and "special" people over the course of a single generation is the result of a massive propaganda campaign the likes of which the world had never seen.

In 1987 *Gay Community News* , a popular LGBT publication at the time, admitted the "gay revolution" would require the use of entertainment in order to be achieved, saying, "We shall sodomize your songs, emblems of your feeble masculinity, of your shallow dreams and vulgar lies. We shall seduce them [children] in your schools…in your youth groups, in your movie theater bathrooms…wherever men are men together. Your sons will become our minions and do our bidding. They will be recast in our image. They will come to crave and adore us." [691]

In 1989 two gay activists published a book titled *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90s* which detailed their goals to have Hollywood produce propaganda that portrayed gays as "victims of circumstance and oppression, not as aggressive challengers." Their idea was that, "Gays must be portrayed as victims in need of protection so that straights will be inclined by reflex, to assume the role of protector." [692]

Their plan worked perfectly, as Joe Biden admitted when giving a speech for Jewish American Heritage Month, where he said, "It wasn't anything we legislatively did. It was 'Will and Grace,' it was the social media. Literally. That's what changed peoples' attitudes. That's why I was so certain that the vast majority of people would embrace and rapidly embrace [gay marriage]. Think behind all that, I bet you 85 percent of those changes, whether it's in Hollywood or social media are a consequence of Jewish leaders in the industry. The influence is immense, the influence is immense." [693]

All gays wanted was to be able to get "married" they said, but within just a few short years after the Supreme Court ruling made it legal nationwide (in 2015) we saw the proliferation of dozens of different "genders," pre-teen child drag queens and "Drag Queen Story Hour" events popping up at public libraries across the country. In numerous cases the drag queens who were reading books to children at the events have been found to be convicted pedophiles. [694] What a surprise!

An LGBT website called *Pink News* ran a headline titled, "Republican Lawmakers Want to Make Child Drag Shows Illegal," expressing their anger that a U.S. Representative proposed a bill that would prohibit anyone under the age of eighteen from participating in drag shows. [695]

And now LGBT activists harass Christian owned businesses like Chick-Fil-A for not supporting gay "marriage." [696] I put gay "marriage" in quotes when referring to gay "marriage" because a marriage is between a man and a woman—I don't care what the Supreme Court says, and I refuse to acknowledge it. Chick-Fil-A restaurants have been banned from opening in airports and on college campuses, and new locations often face boycotts wherever they are. How much longer until the LGBT extremists start trying to run churches out of town and harass parishioners as they come to worship on Sundays?

Ellen DeGeneres, the Trailblazer Ellen DeGeneres is considered a pioneer in the television industry for normalizing gay people after her sitcom *Ellen* decided to depict her character as a lesbian when she came out in real life in 1997. *Will and Grace* then picked up the baton in 1998 with a sitcom about a woman (Debra Messing) and her gay roommate. "Will and Grace was the first time you saw characters on television that made gay normal, you wanted to be friends with them," said Lance Bass from the boy band NSYNC. [697]

Sean Hayes, the actor who played Will's boyfriend on *Will and Grace*, said, "The best feeling I get is when people come up and say thank you for all you do for the gay community and thank you for playing that part and that show and you feel so fortunate to have been part of something so great." [698]

Since then, the world has been flooded with countless shows and movies where homosexuality is at the center of the plot. Films like *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) about two gay cowboys; *Milk* (2008) about Harvey Milk, the first openly gay politician to be elected to public office; *Call Me by Your Name* (2017) about an adult male who falls in "love" with a teenage boy; and many others which have been made for the sole purpose of promoting "gay rights" no matter how little success they'll have commercially.

But that's not enough. They want gays and transgenders in every TV show and movie. In 2018, a transgender "woman" was included in the Miss Universe Pageant, a move, as you expect by now, was praised as a "historic first." [699] Two years later *Sports Illustrated* included a transgender "woman" in their famous swimsuit edition. [700] And throughout this chapter you'll see they're trying to "gay up" everything from Star Wars to Sesame Street.

When producers of the HBO vampire series *True Blood* decided they wanted to depict a character as bisexual and have him do soft-core porn sex scenes with other men (since it's HBO and shows regularly include nudity), the actor Luke Grimes, who played the character, quit the show. [701] He was immediately denounced by the media and his castmates as "homophobic." [702]

NBC launched a sitcom in the Spring of 2019 called *Abby'* s about a bisexual woman who runs a bar—a move that was celebrated as the first sitcom on network television to feature a bisexual as the lead character. For extra diversity she is also a Cuban-American, and the show was promoted as a "multicultural comedy." [703] It was canceled after just one season.

Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez was recently a guest host on *RuPaul's Drag Race* , a reality show where drag queens compete to see who is the "best." When the drag queens thanked her for being so "brave" for standing up against Republicans, she responded by lavishing praise on them for being on the forefront of changing the culture and the laws. "People think Congress and government is all about leading people, but ultimately, a lot of our politics is about following the public will. And the people who change the way people think are artists and drag queens.” [704] She went on to call the contestants “patriots” and gushed about how proud she was of them.

Gay Superheroes In 2011 Marvel released *Captain America: The First Avenger* which was a huge success, and when a sequel was released in 2014 (*Captain America: Winter Soldier*), many liberals were upset that Captain America and his best friend Bucky weren’t in a gay relationship together. *Vanity Fair* gave the film great reviews, but said it had one “flaw,” writing, “So while Marvel was likely never going to make the homoerotic subtext of Cap and Bucky into text, would it really have hurt to keep their relationship more ambiguous?” [705]

It went on, “As if to put the nail in the coffin of speculation, Bucky and Cap paused for a moment in the middle of snowy Siberia to reminisce about their days chasing skirts in pre-War Brooklyn. It’s a sweet, human bonding moment but one that also bristles with heterosexual virility. If Disney isn’t inclined to give audiences a gay superhero, couldn’t they have at least left us the dream of Bucky and Cap?” [706]

The critic was literally upset they reminisced about chasing women in the previous film, which normal guys do, but LGBT extremists were projecting their own thoughts onto the characters and hoping that they would be just like them. When the much-anticipated *Black Panther* film came out in 2018, the first superhero film starring a Black man, some people were upset because it didn’t include any gay characters. [707]

GLAAD, the gay lobbying organization, was upset after the first *Wonder Woman* film was released because there weren’t any gay or lesbian characters, saying “On screen, record-breaking films like *Black Panther* and *Wonder Woman* prove that not only does inclusion make for great stories—inclusion is good for the bottom line. It is time for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) stories to be included in this conversation and this movement.” [708]

Wonder Woman was turned into a bisexual later in the comics, and the LGBT extremists clamored for her to be explicitly bisexual in *Wonder Woman 1984* , the sequel to the 2017 film. When the trailer was released, Gal Gadot (Wonder Woman), teased that it may involve a potential romance between her and the villain, "The Cheetah" played by Barbara Ann Minerva. [709] *The Eternals* includes a gay superhero named Phastos and is Marvel's first film to feature an on-screen gay kiss which takes place between him and his "husband." [710] As soon as the new year rang in for 2020, the president of Marvel Studios announced that the franchise would also be introducing a transgender character. [711]

Marvel's *Thor: Love and Thunder* (scheduled to be released in February 2022) will feature a lesbian superhero called Valkyrie. [712] And the trend continues. The CW television network's *Batwoman* series depicts the superhero as a lesbian. [713] In the first season she was played by actress Ruby Rose, who is herself a lesbian in real life, and throughout much of the series "Kate Kane" (the character whose alter ego is Batwoman) makes it abundantly clear she's "very gay."

In one episode after a college student tearfully tells Batwoman that her parents hate her because they found out she's gay, Batwoman "outs" herself and is then shown on the cover of *CatCo* (a fictional magazine in the DC Comics universe) with the headline "Batwoman Reveals Herself as a Lesbian." [714] It was hailed as a "historic reveal" and celebrated that the character is now an "openly gay superhero." [715]

Even back in the late 1990s, director Joel Schumacher (who is gay) tried to depict Batman and Robin as gay. When asked about the seemingly gay innuendo between Batman (played by George Clooney) and Robin (played by Chris O'Donnell) in the 1997 *Batman & Robin* , O'Donnell admitted, "going back and looking and seeing some of the pictures, it was very unusual." [716] George Clooney later said he played a "gay" Batman. [717] In 2012, DC Comics relaunched the Green Lantern as a gay man. [718] A few years after that they also decided to turn Catwoman into a bisexual. [719]

There are growing calls to depict Spider-Man as gay now too. The character has been played by numerous actors over the years in various incarnations, and now one of them (Tom Holland) who currently portrays the character, is lobbying Marvel Studios to depict Spider-Man as gay or bisexual. [720]

Sources close to the franchise say the character will be depicted as bisexual or have a boyfriend in a future film. [721] Andrew Garfield, who played the character in *The Amazing Spider-Man* (2012), said, “Why can’t we discover that Peter is exploring his sexuality? It’s hardly even groundbreaking!…So why can’t he be gay? Why can’t he be into boys?” [722]

Star Wars Isn’t Gay Enough When the new *Star Wars* film *The Force Awakens* was about to be released in 2015, activists said they wanted Luke Skywalker to be gay. Mark Hamill who plays the character said fans kept asking him, “Could Luke be gay?” and instead of telling them they’re insane, he gave them hope, saying, “If you think Luke is gay, of course he is. You should not be ashamed of it.” [723]

If you’re a fan of the franchise you may recall that before Luke learned of his true identity (and that of his twin sister) both he and Han Solo had a crush on Princess Leia.

After *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* was released in 2017, LGBT extremists were upset that characters Finn and Poe weren’t in a gay relationship. *BuzzFeed* wasn’t happy either because they hoped the two men might have a “romance” as part of the plot. [724]

Oscar Issac who plays Poe Dameron, “expressed regret that the ‘natural chemistry’ between Poe and Finn in *The Force Awakens* was not explored in an overtly romantic way in ‘Star Wars: The Last Jedi’—and wouldn’t be in ‘The Rise of Skywalker.’” [725]

“Personally,” he said, “I kind of hoped and wished that maybe that would’ve been taken further in the other films, but I don’t have control. It seemed like a natural progression, but sadly enough it’s a time when people are too afraid, I think, of… I don’t know what.” [726]

John Boyega, who plays Finn (the Black former Stormtrooper), agreed, saying, “They’ve always had a quite loving and open relationship in which it wouldn’t be too weird if it went beyond it.” [727] LGBT websites seized the news with one declaring, “Oscar Isaac wishes Star Wars’ Poe and Finn were in a gay relationship but ‘people are too afraid.’” [728]

Trying to appease the criticism, director J.J. Abrams included a scene showing two lesbians kissing at the end when everyone was celebrating that the First Order had been defeated. It was hailed as “making history” for the first same-sex kiss in a *Star Wars* movie, but that wasn’t good enough—nothing ever is. [729]

Just a few years ago all they wanted was for gay “marriage” to be legal, they said. And now they’re furious that leading male characters in *Star Wars* aren’t having sex with each other. They just want to be “accepted” for who they are, they said, and then once they were, they began demanding everyone embrace them and celebrate them. But it’s not just gays and lesbians. Now it’s transgenders too, and the “gender non-conforming” people, and even child drag queens.

Disney Goes Gay Even what was once the most family friendly entertainment brand in the world has gone gay, and is adding an increasing number of LGBT characters and storylines. In 2014 the Disney Channel’s most popular comedy at the time, *Good Luck Charlie,* included a lesbian couple in the show. [730] They tried to make it funny by depicting two parents confused about the name of the mother of their daughter’s friend.

Each one of them had met the “mom,” but one thought her name was Susan, and the other swore it was Cheryl. Then there’s a knock on the door and they open it to reveal their daughter’s friend has two “moms.” The media celebrated Disney for being “brave” and said it was “about time,” and once the LGBT foot was in the door activists started pressuring the network to include a gay teenager in one of their shows. [731]

The following year on the Disney-Owned ABC Family Channel [which has since been renamed “Freeform”] they included a gay kiss in a show called *The Fosters* between two thirteen-year-old boys. [732] The executive producer Peter Paige (who is a homosexual) was proud to have depicted the “youngest same-sex kiss in US television history.” [733]

When Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast* was made into a live-action film in 2017, it included a brief scene of a same-sex couple dancing, which was hailed as the "first exclusively gay moment" in a Disney movie. [734] That same year they included a "male princess" in their animated series *Star vs. The Forces of Evil* . [735]

The *Huffington Post* called it a "beautiful message" for kids. [736] The show also depicted Disney's "first same-sex cartoon kiss," another move which thrilled the liberal media. [737]

Toy Story 4 (2019) had a brief scene where a child is dropped off at school by "two moms," something that LGBT activists were happy about. "It's a small scene, sure, and it's certainly not the major representation that queer people have been waiting for, but it's still important," wrote the *Gay Times* . [738]

In Disney's *The Jungle Cruise* (2020) starring Dwayne Johnson, one of the characters (played by Jack Whitehall) comes out as gay, which is the first-ever openly gay character to have a role in a Disney movie. [739]

Disney then announced that a character in an upcoming animated movie called *Onward* would be a lesbian. "It's been a long wait, but a Disney heroine finally has a girlfriend," gloated *Yahoo News* when it was revealed that Officer Specter, which is voiced by a lesbian actress named Lena Waithe, would also be a lesbian in the movie. [740]

The idea was praised as "making history" for being the first LGBTQ character in a Disney animation film, but as expected, critics complained that the character only appears in one scene.

Then a few months later Disney released an animated film on their streaming service Disney+ called *Out* about a kid who was nervous about moving in with his boyfriend because he hasn't told his parents that he's gay. The parents then come to find that his roommate is actually his boyfriend, but instead of being horrified, to his surprise, they're happy for him. It was hailed as Disney/Pixar's "first gay main character." [741] Then they introduced their first bisexual character who stars in another animated series on Disney+ called *The Owl House* . [742] The character, a 14-year-old girl, had previously been interested in boys, but after the show's creator, Dana Terrace (who is bisexual herself), lobbied the network to turn the character bisexual just like her, they complied. [743] Soon they'll probably make Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck gay.

More Gay Characters for Kids Ever since 2017, *Sesame Street's* official social media accounts have been posting annual "Happy Pride Month" messages along with pictures of rainbows and various characters from the show celebrating it. [744] In 2018 a former writer for *Sesame Street* claimed that Bert and Ernie are gay. [745] That man himself is a homosexual (what a surprise) and really just wished they were gay.

The next day the show's producer issued a statement rebuking the former writer's claim, saying, "As we have always said, Bert and Ernie are best friends. They were created to teach preschoolers that people can be good friends with those who are very different from themselves. Even though they are identified as male characters and possess many human traits and characteristics (as most Sesame Street Muppets do), they remain puppets, and do not have a sexual orientation." [746] But PBS would soon cave in to the gay agenda completely.

The following year (in 2019) their cartoon *Arthur* included a gay "wedding" in the season premiere where they revealed that one of the teachers in the show, Mr. Ratburn, is gay. The episode is titled "Mr. Ratburn and the Special Someone" and his students all attend the wedding expecting he's going to marry another character in the show, Patty, but it's revealed that she's actually his sister, and then his new "husband" is introduced to everyone. [747]

The year after that (in 2020) PBS included a lesbian couple in their animated series *Clifford the Big Red Dog* , based on the popular children's book series that follows the adventures of an 8-year-old and her dog. [748]

The official Twitter account for Nickelodeon and the Cartoon Network now post messages celebrating "Pride Month," as well as "International Transgender Visibility Day," which is another made-up "holiday" by the Left used to promote transgenderism. [749]

Old Comedies "Transphobic"

Mrs. Doubtfire , a 1993 comedy starring Robin Williams, has come under attack recently for being "transphobic" after it was revealed that a musical adaptation would hit the stage at a theater in Seattle, and then later on Broadway. In the film, Robin Williams loses custody of his kids after a divorce and in order to remain in their lives poses as an elderly woman who successfully applies for a job working as the kids' nanny.

It was well-received at the time, but the culture has shifted so far Left that when word of the musical was announced, activists started a petition on Change.org calling for it to be canceled because the plot uses "tired, transphobic tropes" and "strengthens the assumptions and misjudgments that continue to harm trans women in implicit, pervasive ways." [750]

Jim Carrey's 1994 comedy *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* has now been deemed "transphobic" because the pet thief who kidnapped the Miami Dolphins' mascot is found to be a transsexual, now living as a woman. When Jim Carrey realizes this, he runs to the bathroom and starts vomiting, burns his clothes, and jumps in the shower, because earlier in the film "she" came onto him and they made out. [751]

Silence of the Lambs (1991) is also now considered "transphobic" since the serial killer Jodie Foster is trying to hunt down (Buffalo Bill) has gender dysphoria. As part of the plot he murders women so he can make a "woman suit" out of their skin to complete his "transformation." *Variety* magazine recently denounced the film for "depicting the criminal's transgender identification as part of his mental illness." [752] GLAAD complained that the killer is "a walking, talking gay stereotype." [753]

What's next? Older classics like *Some Like it Hot* or *Tootsie* ?, or more modern shows like Tyler Perry's "Madea" character or Martin Lawrence's "Shanaynay?" Jimmy Fallon also used to have a regular segment on the *Tonight Show* called "Ew" where he would dress up as a woman, but he hasn't done it in quite some time, and it probably won't be much longer until he apologizes for it.

Soon it will probably be considered a slur to call a transgender person "transgender," and making any distinction between them being born the opposite sex from which they currently identify will be considered an invasion of their privacy, much like releasing someone's medical records. To call a transgender "woman" a "transgender woman" will be considered "dehumanizing" and "hateful," and no distinctions will be allowed.

LGBTQ extremists claim people are “assigned” a gender at birth, much like they are given a name—and maintain that the “assignment” of one’s gender is just as arbitrary and is used to confine the “gender expression” of people to correspond with their biological sex. They won’t say that a transgender “woman” was born a male, they say “she” was “assigned” the male gender at birth, as if it was just a coin toss.

The animated comedy series *Family Guy* announced in early 2019 that they were going to stop making jokes about gay people and transgenders. The series, which has been on air for over 20-years, is known for its no holds barred comedy about typically taboo subjects, but now offending LGBTQ people is too much even for them. The executive producers said, “Some of the things we felt comfortable saying and joking about back then [earlier in the series], we now understand is not acceptable…The climate is different, the culture is different and our views are different.” [754]

Drag Queen Story Hour and “Drag Kids”

One of the three strikes on Alex Jones’ YouTube channel that led to him being banned from the platform was a rant about a local drag queen festival that included children giving dollar bills to the drag queens as they engaged in simulated strip teases. He called it a “freak show” and an “abomination” in a segment for his show and YouTube considered that to be “hate speech.” [755]

In my previous book *The Liberal Media Industrial Complex* I detail the “unpersoning” of Alex Jones and the censorship of conservatives on social media, which I encourage you to read if you haven’t already so you can grasp just how big the ramifications are for speaking out against this degeneracy.

At one of the Drag Queen Story Hour events in New York, a drag queen asked the children, “Who wants to be a drag queen when they grow up?” [756] At another, one of them taught the children how to “twerk,” asking them, “Does anybody in this room know how to twerk?” Nobody spoke up, and the drag queen continues, “All you need to do is you just need to stand with your feet sort of shoulder-width apart like so…and then you crouch down in this sort of position, so you’re bum’s sticking out. And then you just move your bum up and down like that [as he does it]. And that's twerking." [757]

Equally disturbing is the recent phenomena of young pre-teen boys being dressed in drag by their parents and paraded around at drag queen festivals in hopes they'll become social media stars. One such "drag kid" who goes by the name "Desmond is Amazing" was even featured on *Good Morning America* . [758]

"Desmond is Amazing" certainly isn't one of a kind. Other child drag queens like "E! the Dragnificent" and "Lactacia" (who started doing drag at eight-years-old) are building up their social media followings, all trying to be the next YouTube or TikTok star. [759]

YouTube even hosts a documentary film called *Drag Kids* which follows a group of pre-teen kids as they travel around the country participating in child drag shows. [760] The documentary's purpose isn't to raise the alarm about this horrific practice, it's to show how "cool" the kids are.

Netflix has a reality series called *AJ and the Queen* where a 10-year-old child travels across the country with RuPaul as he performs drag shows in gay bars. The sexual things the drag queens say about the child are too disgusting to include here because they'll make you physically ill as they did me when I first read about it. [761] Another Netflix original series called *Dancing Queen* follows the life of a drag queen who teaches dance lessons to kids. [762]

In 2015, TLC premiered *I Am Jazz* , a reality show following the life of Jazz Jennings, a transgender teenager, who at the time was one of the youngest people in the world to identify as transgender. "Jazz Jennings" is a pseudonym, and unlike every other public figure on the planet who uses one, "her" birth name is not allowed to be mentioned on Wikipedia because of the special protections given to transgender people.

Similarly, "Lavern" Cox's birth name (Roderick) is not allowed to be mentioned either. In fact, simply mentioning a transgender person's birth name or legal name is considered a violation of the terms of service on Facebook and Twitter. [763]

TLC was originally called "The Learning Channel" and aired educational programming about science, history, and nature, but slowly morphed into another reality TV network (just like the History Channel has), and now instead of featuring anything remotely educational, TLC is known for mind-numbing trash like *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo* , and *Toddlers & Tiaras* .

Celebrities Raising Kids Trans Celebrities love to adopt children from Africa as a novelty and to show how much they “care” about Black people, and since transgenderism has become the coolest new fad in Hollywood, many celebrities seem to be inspired to raise their kids as the opposite gender to defy cultural norms. Charlize Theron adopted two Black kids, one boy and one girl, and then later was spotted around town with the kids both wearing dresses and now insists she has “two beautiful daughters.” [764]

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie (who are now divorced) adopted several children, but their first biological child was daughter Shiloh who they started dressing in boy’s clothes, causing many to speculate whether she is a tomboy or actually identifies as a boy. [765]

Megan Fox (now divorced from Brian Austin Green) dresses her six-year-old son in girls’ clothes. “He likes to wear dresses sometimes and I send him to a really liberal, hippy school, but even there—here in California—he still has little boys going, ‘Boys don’t wear dresses’ or ‘Boys don’t wear pink.’ And so, we’re going through that now, where I’m trying to teach him to be confident, no matter what anyone else says.” [766] Megan and her son were once spotted by paparazzi when he was dressed up as Elsa from Disney’s *Frozen.* [767]

Singer Adele also dresses her son up as Disney princesses, which the liberal media has hailed as “a triumph for us believers in gender-neutral parenting.” [768] Actor Liev Schreiber brought his eight-year-old son to Comic-Con dressed as Harley Quinn, the Joker’s girlfriend from *Suicide Squad* . [769]

When Mario Lopez appeared on Candace Owen’s podcast and the subject of parents raising their children transgender came up, he said he didn’t think it was right to be deciding that a 3-year-old kid should start being treated as the opposite gender. [770] But he was immediately attacked for being “transphobic” and soon apologized. That wasn’t enough, however. The LGBT fascists demanded that he become an “advocate” for transgender kids.

Commercials Go Gay It’s not just movies and television shows that have been filled with LGBT people, now even many commercials feature them as well. Homosexual couples are now regularly included in commercials for major brands from IKEA and Chevrolet, to Target and Tide laundry detergent. [771] Each time another one jumps on the bandwagon, their allies in the media always write an article about it celebrating how “great” it is, encouraging more. [772]

For example, Campbell’s Soup created a commercial in 2015 showing two gay “dads” feeding “their son” because the company wanted to show the “diverse mix” of American families. The *Huffington Post* said it, “will melt your heart.” [773]

In 2017, the Dove soap company released an ad featuring “real moms” with their babies and praised the “diversity” in how each of them were raising their children, saying there was “no one right way.” Included with the “moms” was a transgender woman who is the biological father of one of the babies, along with the actual mother who gave birth to the poor child.

“We are both his biological parents,” the transgender says. “You get people that are like, ‘What do you mean you’re the mom?’ We’re like, ‘Yep! We’re both gonna be moms.’” [774]

Gillette razors released a commercial in 2019 featuring a transgender “boy” being taught how to shave by “his” dad for the first time as part of their campaign to “redefine masculinity.” [775] Starbucks released a commercial in support of people’s “preferred pronouns” showing a teenage girl with a butch haircut named Jemma who appears to be uncomfortable every time someone says her name as she goes about her day until she walks into a Starbucks and is asked what it is so the barista can write it on the cup, which is customary.

She proudly answers “James” and is revealed to be transitioning to a boy. The commercial was part of Starbuck’s announcement that they were partnering with a charity that supports transgender children. [776]

Coca-Cola’s 2018 Super Bowl ad featured a lesbian and a “non-binary” person. [777] In another commercial for Diet Coke released the following year a blue-haired woman drives around in an Uber picking up all kinds of different people while enjoying her Diet Coke all night. At one point her passengers are shown to be two gay men, one White and one Black for extra “diversity,” who are kissing in the back seat. The camera then cuts back to the driver who has a big smile on her face. [778]

Smirnoff vodka now features transgender actress Lavern Cox in their commercials. [779] Other alcohol brands like Absolut, Effen, Bud Light, and Barefoot Wine, all release special edition “Gay Pride” bottles for the month of June every year featuring rainbows on them. [780]

Most major food brands now release special “Pride” themed packages for gay pride month each year, and on social media change their avatars to pictures that include rainbows. All major retailers celebrate it too, from Walmart and Target, to Kohl’s and Old Navy. All tweeting about it and posting on Facebook and Instagram how important LGBT people are to them and issuing press releases alerting the media how they’re going to be “celebrating Pride month.” [781]

Sprite even released a commercial for “Pride” month in 2019 showing a bunch of transgender people transitioning; including a man having makeup put on him by another transgender “woman,” and a girl engaging in “breast binding” with her friend as they joyfully wrap her breasts tightly to her chest so she can “pass” as a male. [782]

Gay Sexual Predators Swept Under the Rug In the “Me Too” era, Harvey Weinstein has become the symbol of sexual degeneracy in Hollywood, but most of the women who accused him of sexual “assault” willingly had sex with him in order to further their own careers, and they weren’t forcibly raped. Years later they just jumped on the bandwagon to cash-in once they saw the opportunity, and in hindsight regretted they had sex with such a pig for a chance to be a star.

That's not to say he didn't make some of them feel extremely uncomfortable by blatantly propositioning them for sex—and he's undoubtedly a sexual predator—but powerful men using the "casting couch" to entice women into having sex with them isn't Hollywood's dirtiest secret.

One of the things nobody wants to talk about (aside from the industry's pedophilia problem which is actually the *biggest* secret and covered in the next chapter) is the fact that gay men are basically allowed to sexually harass (and assault) other men with impunity because daring to say that a gay man has done anything sexually inappropriate amounts to blasphemy.

Surprisingly, actor Terry Crews developed the courage to come forward in 2017 to admit that he was once sexually assaulted by his agent, who grabbed his genitals while making sexual advances toward him. [783] James Van Der Beek, star of the teen drama *Dawson's Creek* , later came forward as well to reveal that he was sexually harassed (and groped) by "older, powerful men" in Hollywood. [784]

Others including Brendan Fraser, *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* star Alex Winter, and *Star Trek: Discovery* actor Anthony Rapp, have also come forward with allegations of being sexually harassed by gay men in Hollywood. [785] Their stories were just a blip on the radar however, and then the issue was swept under the rug.

Undoubtedly the same thing has happened to many others who are afraid to come forward out of embarrassment or because they don't want to make waves out of fear it may derail their career. In fact, after Terry Crews revealed he was assaulted, others in the entertainment industry including D.L Hughley and 50 Cent mocked him. [786]

During a 2011 interview, Rapper Fat Joe admitted that he believes a "gay mafia" controls the music industry, saying, "The hip hop industry is most likely owned by gays. I happen to think there's a gay mafia in hip hop. Not rappers—the editorial presidents of magazines, the [program directors] at radio stations, the people who give you awards at award shows. This is a fuckin' gay mafia, my man, and they are in power." [787]

It's not just in the entertainment industry that gay sexual predators are mostly ignored. The same thing is happening in the U.S. military, especially after Barack Obama lifted the ban on them enrolling. [788] According to the Department of Defense statistics, more men than women are victims of sexual assault in the military. [789] You won't hear that on the news because it's another uncomfortable fact that shows the liberal agenda is severely flawed.

When gay couples adopt small children and molest them, those stories are just reported in local outlets and never make the national news. [790] Few people want to even comment on such abuse out of concerns they'll be branded "homophobic." Reports of gay couples sexually abusing their adopted or foster children can be found around the world. [791]

In some cases the couples force the children into sex trafficking and sell them to other pedophiles. [792] But just mentioning those cases is enough to anger LGBT activists who may then target you to be "canceled."

Same sex couples adopting children was the real issue at hand regarding legalizing gay "marriage," but very few conservatives or even Christians dared talk about it. When gays are allowed to adopt children it's no longer about what "two consenting adults" are doing "in the privacy of their own bedroom," it's about an innocent third party, and no child should be held prisoner in such an environment.

Like many gay people, CNN's Anderson Cooper became a father (at the age of 52) after he bought an egg from a fertility clinic and then hired a surrogate—and had the egg artificially inseminated with his sperm. [793] The woman carried the child to term and then turned it over to Anderson Cooper to be raised by him and his boyfriend.

The kid will most likely never know his mother due to privacy shields regarding egg donors, nor even have the surrogate in his life either, and instead will be raised by two homosexual men in their fifties, only to someday have to be told the horrible truth about how he came to exist.

What Causes It?

In 2019, a massive study conducted by over 30 organizations including Harvard and Cambridge Universities was released after scientists analyzed the DNA of almost 500,000 people and ruled out any supposed "gay gene" that caused people to be born homosexual. [794] They cited "the environment" for being 75% responsible for people's sexual preference. [795]

“Obviously, there are environmental causes of sexual orientation. We knew that before this study,” said Michael Bailey, a psychologist at Northwestern University who has researched the causes of sexual preferences. [796] The same may be true of transgenderism as well.

In other words, if an infant boy not yet knowing the difference between men and women, sees mommy putting on makeup—and for a moment wants to be like mommy and do what she does—and if the mother doesn’t teach him the distinctions between boys and girls, he’ll obviously grow up extremely confused and have a difficult time knowing which behaviors are normal for a man and which are not. The boy might start “identifying” with the mother if he is not brought up to understand the biological and sociological differences between boys and girls, possibly leading to gender dysphoria and transgenderism later in life.

Some psychologists believe that “Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria” is a form of social contagion or mass psychosis sparked by teens being bombarded with depictions of transgender people on social media portrayed in a positive light, and as a result see *themselves* as transgender in order to be a part of this “in” group of “cool” people as a coping mechanism for other underlying psychological disorders. [797]

YouTube as a company promotes and glorifies transgender YouTubers like “Gigi Gorgeous” as well as gender-bending male makeup artists like Jeffrey Star and James Charles who identify as men but wear women’s makeup and clothes, which is fueling this phenomenon. They have created an extremely confusing environment for children, who as you know, are so impressionable they can be convinced that a fat bearded man in a red suit flies around the country every Christmas to bring them presents.

Today, with so many of them being raised by social media personalities instead of their parents they have no idea what kinds of behaviors are conducive or detrimental to a happy, fulfilling life.

Freud believed homosexuality is a mental disorder that develops from a disruption in the Oedipal phase of children’s psychosexual development. [798] It’s possible that it could also be a birth defect resulting in a certain region of the brain being wired backwards, so to speak, during gestation while the fetus is developing. [799] Transgender people could be born with the brain of the opposite sex due to the same reason.

If, as some scientists believe, prenatal abnormalities in the womb due to a hormone imbalance or other external forces are causing these issues, then scientists just admitting that homosexuality and transgenderism are birth defects is considered “hate speech” today. [800] To admit that they have a “defect” would be to admit that they’re not normal—and that’s “hateful.” Searching for a cure that would prevent the prenatal changes to a fetus that cause such things is tantamount to eugenics, and equally opposed by the liberal ideologues.

Another theory is that homosexuality arose as a maladaptive behavior due to a mutation in the gene pool as a result of the decline of the pressures of natural selection, because in our modern age humans don’t have to complete for mates to pass on their genes as if it were a life or death situation for the species since there are already billions of us, often crammed in large cities literally living on top of one another.

Today large groups of “free-riders” exist because of economic abundance, modern conveniences, and social safety nets, so the urge to become financially successful and physically fit in hopes of attracting a beautiful female mate is drastically diminished for many males.

Conversely, because of our economic abundant society, many females don’t feel the need to attract a male to provide protection and resources for them like our ancestors did for tens of thousands of years, since modern society offers those luxuries instead. This would explain the explosion of florescent-haired lesbians and socially dysfunctional people who identify as dozens of different genders whose sole purpose in life seems to be ruining it for everyone else.

Under this school of thought, because the evolutionary pressures for men and women to find mates have been lifted, many are no longer conforming to the social framework and norms our species has known since the beginning of time, and their behaviors are “mutating.” But instead of being content as “free-riders” whose survival is protected through modern-day conveniences and social programs, these changes are causing the rise of what some scientists call “spiteful mutants” who hold hostile views towards those who are normal (i.e. people who continue heterosexual traditions, behaviors, and gender roles; and those who work hard in their careers and take care of their health). [801]

The end result of these “spiteful mutants,” according to the theory, is the collapse of the social structure of the entire group of organisms (humans in this case) because the non-affected group (heterosexual and cis gender people) who do not suffer from the same mutations are still severely impacted due to the disruption of the entire social fabric of the species by those with the mutation. [802]

People who are molested as children tend to later *become* child molesters themselves. So it appears that pedophilia may in some cases be a psychological condition that is induced from an experience rather than something someone is born with. [803] The same may be true of homosexuality and gender-bending. Is it a birth defect, or a psychological disorder exacerbated by the celebration of sexual deviancy and other abnormal lifestyles in the media and on the Internet? Just asking this question is considered “hate speech,” and few scientists will dare risk their career by publicly doubting the new liberal orthodoxy regarding gender identity and sexuality.

Once a crazy idea takes hold in a culture it becomes reinforced through social policing, and anyone who begins to doubt the practice is ostracized, reprimanded, or in some cases physically punished. Others who may quietly have the same concerns about the current practice are thus afraid to voice those concerns, which helps to maintain the hegemony, no matter how irrational, abusive, or dangerous it is.

Imagine living in Central America and speaking up when your fellow villagers were getting ready to cut out someone’s beating heart to appease the Aztec “gods,” or telling the tribal elders in Africa that slicing your bottom lip and stretching it out by sticking a large plate in there is ridiculous. It’s extremely difficult to break cultural traditions once they have taken root.

“Homophobia” is a Hoax Anyone who doesn’t celebrate this onslaught of homosexuality, bisexuality, and gender-bending is branded “homophobic,” “transphobic,” or a basic “hateful bigot,” but those are just more lies from the Left. A phobia is an irrational fear of something. [804] People who are sick of seeing drag queens and homosexuals celebrated in the media aren’t *afraid* of them, they’re repulsed by them. The same way normal people are when they hear their parents or grandparents talking about having sex with each other. What

they do behind closed doors in the privacy of their own home is their business, but the rest of us don’t want to hear about it, much less see depictions of it.

Unfortunately, today you can’t avoid having gender benders and other LGBT people shoved in your face every time your turn on the TV or scroll through a news feed on social media. And you must not criticize them. You must *celebrate* them, or you are a “Nazi!” A few years before this cultural Marxism infected the country, comedian Adam Carolla joked that he believed in the future, kids would get bullied for *not* being gay. [805] It’s sad how right he was.

Sexual Deviants In the 1950s sitcom *I Love Lucy*, the couple Ricky and Lucy had to each sleep in their own twin bed for a few seasons because the network was concerned about the show being “too sexual” if they were seen lying in the same bed together. Back then it was considered too suggestive to depict a couple in bed on network television even if they were married. [806] *The Brady Bunch* (1969-1974) didn’t even have a toilet in the bathroom of their house because executives thought it would be too disgusting to show one on TV during scenes when the

cast was brushing their teeth or doing their hair. [807]

Fast forward a few decades and Charlie Sheen would become Hollywood's darling and the highest paid sitcom actor in history. [808] An HIV-infected scumbag who smoked crack and regularly used hookers became the industry's favorite star! Hollywood once celebrated wholesome characters and families but now embraces the biggest degenerates as creative "geniuses" who can't help being a little "eccentric."

The media raved over *Fifty Shades of Grey* , the sadomasochistic film series based on the bestselling novel, and "The Weeknd" performed a song from the soundtrack at the 2016 Grammys as they attempted to mainstream this once-fringe lifestyle. Target even sold *50 Shades of Grey* sex toys. [809]

Skip Chasey, the vice president of Endeavor (formerly known as the William Morris Endeavor) one of the largest management firms in Hollywood, accidentally killed a man in his sex dungeon in 2017, but no charges were filed, not even for negligent homicide. [810] He also kept his job at the agency. [811]

Lady Gaga tried to revive R. Kelly's career at the 2014 American Music Awards by doing a live performance with him, despite the allegations of him being a child predator making headlines for well over a decade at the time. [812] She also put him in her video "Do What You Want" which was directed by the infamous Terry Richardson, who has been accused of sexually exploiting models for years. [813]

Then a couple years later at the 2016 Grammys, she performed her song "Till It Happens To You" and was hailed as a hero for "raising awareness" about sexual assault and everyone forgot that just a few years earlier she single-handedly put R. Kelly back in the spotlight. [814]

Ellen DeGeneres once introduced two little girls aged six and eight to rapper Nicki Minaj because she was their favorite pop star. [815] Ellen had Nicki surprise them on stage live on her show and the audience couldn't have been any happier. No adult should be letting their children listen to

Nicki Minaj’s music because it’s filled with sexually explicit and vulgar lyrics, but that didn’t stop Ellen DeGeneres from introducing the adult entertainer to the little girls.

Perversion apparently runs in Nicki Minaj’s family because her 25-year-old brother was convicted of raping an 11-year-old and sentenced to 25 years in prison. [816]

Hulk Hogan’s infamous sex tape was the result of him sleeping with his best friend’s wife (with his permission) as he hung out in another room of the house after inviting Hulk over to have his way with her. At one point during the escapade the husband even came into the bedroom to see how they were doing. [817]

Celebrities often have dysfunctional lifestyles, becoming jaded and numb from overindulgence due to an endless supply of money and an inner circle of yes men who will never doubt their desires out of fear that they may be cut off from the cash cow they have attached themselves to. Their carnal appetite can never be satisfied, causing them to obsessively try to fill the emptiness in their souls with worldly pleasures. Instead of the media acknowledging these kinds of decisions lead to a disastrous downward spiral, they are celebrated and encouraged.

HGTV’s popular series *House Hunters* follows a couple around town as they search for a new home, and they make sure to regularly include LGBT couples in the show for “diversity,” but that wasn’t enough so they recently included a “throuple,” a group of three people in a polyamorous relationship.

“The past four years, I have been living in Lori and Brian’s house, so buying a house together as a ‘throuple’ will signify our next big step as a family of five rather than all four of them plus me,” said one of the three. [818] The “throuple” is also raising two children because for some reason child protective services doesn’t think the kids are in a toxic and abusive household. Imagine trying to explain to the children who the third person is that’s living with them.

Democrat Congresswoman Katie Hill was also in such a relationship before she resigned when it was revealed the third wheel was one of her staffers. [819]

In ABC’s sitcom *Single Parents* they introduced a “throuple” that consists of two men and a woman, one of whom is a public school teacher. [820] When they explain their “relationship” to their friends, instead of being taken aback by the weirdness, one of them gets excited and pulls out her phone to download the same app the "throuple" used to find each other.

We're even seeing incest promoted on network television and in films. [821] Nick Cassavetes, the director of *The Notebook*, endorsed incest while promoting his film *Yellow* (2012) which features the main character having an incestious relationship with her brother, saying, "If you're not having kids—who gives a damn? Love who you want. Isn't that what we say? Gay marriage—love who you want?…you're not hurting anybody, except every single person who freaks out because you're in love with one another." [822]

Other films like *Close My Eyes* (1991), *The Cement Garden* (1993), *Lovers of the Arctic Circle* (1998), *Delta* (2008), *Beautiful Kate* (2009), and *Illegitimate* (2016) all have incest as the central plot. Some websites have even compiled lists of what they call the "20 Best Incest Movies of All Time," [823] and the "13 Steamiest Incestuous Relationships In Film." [824]

Actress Mackenzie Phillips, best known for her role in *American Graffiti* and more recently working on the Disney Channel's *So Weird*, wrote in her memoir that when she was 19-years-old she began having sex with her biological father and continued the incestuous relationship for *ten years* until she was almost thirty! She described the relationship as "consensual" and once had an abortion after becoming pregnant because she figured he was the father. [825]

In recent years we have been seeing more stories approving of people engaging in incest. [826] *Cosmopolitan* magazine published a story about how "great" it was with the headline, "Girl describes what it was like to have sex with her dad." In the article the woman is quoted as saying, "The sexual intensity was nothing like I'd ever felt before. It was like being loved by a parent you never had, and the partner you always wanted, at once." [827] They did a similar article about a brother and sister who were separated at birth but entered into a sexual relationship with each other when they were reunited as adults. [828]

Scientists believe that when parents are reunited with their adult children after giving them up for adoption when they were born, they sometimes develop a strong sexual attraction for each other, called GSA (Genetic Sexual Attraction). [829] The same phenomena can happen to adult siblings when they meet for the first time. [830]

Soon liberals will likely welcome incest into the LGBT community and declare it no more abnormal than homosexuality. In fact, there are already a growing number of blogs, Tumblr accounts, and YouTube videos dedicated to legalizing "consensual incest." [831]

As everyone knows, it's common for Hollywood-types to date people a decade or two younger than them, but some in the industry like partners so young it's utterly disgusting, and in some cases illegal. Billionaire music mogul David Geffen has a well-known reputation of dating men who are over 40 years younger than him. [832] When he was in his *seventies* he was "dating" a 20-year-old former college football player. [833]

The famous pianist Liberace had a 16-year-old boyfriend when he was fifty-seven years old. [834] 75-year-old actress Holland Taylor, who played Charlie Sheen's mother on *Two and a Half Men*, has a 35-year old girlfriend. [835] David Bowie is alleged to have had sex with a 14-year-old groupie at the height of his career. [836] Jerry Seinfeld dated a 17-year-old when he was thirty-nine years old. [837] And these are just a few of the most well-known instances.

Writer, director, and actor Woody Allen is considered a "treasure of the cinema" (having won four Academy Awards and nominated 24 times), but nobody in the industry seems to care that he began a sexual relationship with his girlfriend Mia Farrow's adopted 21-year-old daughter when he was fifty-six. [838]

Such people would be shunned in most professions, but for decades Hollywood has welcomed those who engage in the most bizarre behaviors and nothing is too taboo. The "MeToo" movement really originated in Hollywood from actresses who finally grew tired of the predatory environment that was pervasive in the industry. A long list of big-named actors have been accused of sexual harassment and other predatory behavior as the "MeToo" movement gained momentum in 2017.

But it seems everyone in the industry was very well aware of what was happening and who the perpetrators were. It took the fall of Harvey Weinstein to finally open the floodgates and admit the entertainment industry had a massive sexual predator problem. But sleazebags in Hollywood who prey on young actresses are just the tip of the deviance iceberg that runs rampant in the industry. And even worse, what they're doing is being exported to the rest of society.

Celebrity Selfies Selfies are a symptom of our narcissistic culture, with people obsessing over posting pretty pictures of themselves on social media in order to feel validated. It’s a sickness that has infected large portions of our society and celebrities like Rihanna, Miley Cyrus, and Kim Kardashian have normalized posting nude pictures online, something that just a few years ago would have been unthinkable for most girls. [839]

Some experts have even said that celebrities like Kim Kardashian are making children vulnerable to predators online because so many of them mimic their scantily clad selfies in hopes of attracting the attention of complete strangers who “like” and comment on their posts. [840] Kim even had her 4-year-old daughter (at the time) take a topless photo of her and posted it on Instagram. [841]

You could see little North (her daughter) in a mirror holding the phone, taking the picture. Kim Kardashian even captioned it “By North.” Teaching 4-year-old girls to take topless photos and post them online—that’s Hollywood today.

Kim Kardashian, perhaps more than any other celebrity has normalized sex tapes. Without hers being “leaked” in 2007 showing her with her then-boyfriend pop singer Ray J, she would be just another spoiled rich girl in Los Angeles, but her sex tape made her a star. The same thing with Paris Hilton’s.

When her sex tape was leaked in 2003 she became a star overnight only to be later overshadowed by Kim Kardashian as the “queen” of pop culture. Some wannabe reality stars have even leaked their own sex tapes hoping to follow in these footsteps thinking they too will become famous.

Mainstreaming of Porn People who regularly watch porn have their brains physically altered through the creation of new neural pathways, causing them to become less aroused by actual women during real sexual encounters over time. [842]

These neurological changes are similar to the tolerance level of drug addicts which cause them to need more of the drug to achieve the same high they once got the longer they use it.

People who develop porn habits often find themselves in need of more hardcore porn to get aroused, even leading them to watch bizarre fetish videos hoping to get off since they don't experience enough gratification from "regular" porn, let alone actual sexual partners. [843]

The Internet has mainstreamed porn since people had to once drive to seedy adult video stores to get VHS tapes of it, but now millions of videos are just a few clicks away. Twitter even allows porn stars (and aspiring porn "actresses") to have accounts where they can post sexually explicit content in their feed which can easily be accessed by children. [844]

A site called PornHub is basically YouTube for porn, where anyone can upload hardcore pornographic videos and they are then instantly published for the world to see. Due to the lack of oversight that traditional pornography producers follow, like verifying the identity, age, and consent of the parties involved, PornHub has hosted numerous videos of underage girls and even rape videos, including one of a 14-year-old girl from Ohio who was kidnapped and gang raped while being recorded by the assailants. [845]

The video was uploaded to PornHub several times with titles like "Teen Crying and Getting Slapped Around," "Teen Getting Destroyed," and "Passed out Teen." One upload had over 400,000 views. [846] The victim later emailed the website, explaining she was raped (which was clear by the video and the titles) but the video remained online.

A 30-year-old man in Florida uploaded over 50 different videos of him sexually abusing a 15-year-old girl after she went missing before he was finally arrested. [847] Breitbart pointed out, "Pornhub apparently has no idea whatsoever who is uploading content. Pornhub also has no idea and apparently doesn't bother to verify the age of the performers in the videos, or if they consented to have sex, to be filmed, or to have the video commercialized and made public." [848]

There's now a social media company called OnlyFans that caters to girls who want to start selling their own amateur nude photos and porn videos. OnlyFans is basically like Instagram, but people have to pay a monthly fee to see what others are posting, and the website has no rules about nudity other than the users have to supposedly be 18 years old.

When unemployment levels skyrocketed because of the stay-at-home orders during the Coronavirus Pandemic of 2020, many young girls flocked to OnlyFans hoping to make some easy money. Once they're signed up they use Instagram and Twitter to promote their accounts by leaving the link to their OnlyFans page in their bio and then post content using trending hashtags hoping to get guys' attention and drive traffic there.

Previously if a girl wanted to get into porn she would have to go to work for a company that had the infrastructure to host the videos and charge customers' credit cards, but now OnlyFans has given the ability to anyone to become a "porn star" within just a few minutes. It's well known that many aspiring actresses who move to Los Angeles hoping to become stars end up working in porn out of desperation to pay their bills (or to afford their drug habits). Some even resort to prostitution.

Teen Vogue magazine even published an article in 2019 titled "Sex Work is Real Work," encouraging girls to become prostitutes and demanding that it become legalized around the world. [849]

Many psychologists are warning that porn and video game addiction is actually causing a masculinity crisis among young men. A study by researchers at Stanford University looked into how excessive gaming and use of pornography is causing many young men to be extremely isolated and preventing them from developing the social skills needed to form relationships with girls, which only fuels more isolation. [850]

Pedophiles in Hollywood Sexual harassment and pornography aren't Hollywood's worst problems however, as child actor Corey Feldman said, "the number one problem in Hollywood was, is, and always will be, pedophilia. That's the biggest problem for children in this industry…It's the big secret." [851] He made the claim in 2011 on ABC's *Nightlight*, but his concerns largely fell on deaf ears.

A few years later in 2013 when he was a guest on *The View* the topic came up again. “I’m saying there are people that were the people that did this to both me and Corey [Haim] that are still working, they’re still out there, and that are some of the richest most powerful people in this business. And they do not want me saying what I am saying right now,” he told the hosts. [852]

Barbara Walters responded, “Are you saying that they are pedophiles and that they are still in this business?”

“Yes,” Corey replied, going on to warn parents who are thinking about getting their children involved in acting.

“You’re damaging an entire industry,” Barbara responds, looking disappointed in him.

Feldman said that his best friend Corey Haim, who he costarred with in numerous movies, told him that Charlie Sheen raped Haim in 1986 on the set of a movie (*Lucas*) they were filming together. [853] Sheen allegedly told Haim, “it was perfectly normal for older men and younger boys in the business” and “it was what all the guys do.” [854] Sheen denies the allegation.

“It’s all connected to a bigger, darker power,” Feldman later said. “I don’t know how high up the chain that power goes, but I know that it probably is outside of the film industry too. It’s probably in government; it’s probably throughout the world in different dark aspects.” [855]

Elijah Wood, who was a child actor in various films before hitting it big by playing Frodo in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, once made some comments during an interview about the issue, saying, “Clearly something major was going on in Hollywood. It was all organized. There are a lot of vipers in this industry, people who only have their own interests in mind. There is darkness in the underbelly. What bums me about these situations is that the victims can’t speak as loudly as the people in power. That’s the tragedy of attempting to reveal what is happening to innocent people: they can be squashed, but their lives have been irreparably damaged.” [856]

He later “clarified” his statements, claiming that his interview was supposed to be about his latest film but “became about something else entirely” and said he had “no first-hand experience or observation of the topic” and that he just heard about such things from a documentary he had seen (most likely *An Open Secret* , which had come out a year earlier). [857]

An Open Secret In 2014, a film maker named Amy Berg investigated Corey Feldman's claims of pedophiles in Hollywood in a documentary titled *An Open Secret* . Previously she had been nominated for an Oscar for another documentary she made called *Deliver Us From Evil* about sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, so it was a subject she was quite familiar with.

An Open Secret alleges that pedophile producers have held parties where they enticed young child actors with drugs and alcohol in order to take advantage of them. [858] It details the alleged activities surrounding an Internet media company called Digital Entertainment Network that was founded in the late-1990s by Marc Collins-Rector [a convicted sex offender], and his boyfriend Chad Shackley. [859] The company is alleged to have held pool parties at their 12,000-square foot mansion that were used to entice underage teenage boys into having sex with adult men. [860]

Leonardo DiCaprio's former talent agent was convicted of molesting a 13-year-old boy in 2005 and sentenced to eight years in prison. [861] The Los Angeles county deputy district attorney said, "People like this are predators who prey on little kids who want to be the next Justin Bieber—and they're told, 'That's what's done, this is all normal in the industry.'" [862] *The Los Angeles Times* noted that, "At least a dozen child molestation and child pornography prosecutions since [the year] 2000 have involved actors, managers, production assistants and others in the entertainment industry." [863]

One of those was a talent agent named Martin Weiss who managed kids that had roles on Nickelodeon, the Disney Channel, and in numerous films like *Parenthood* and *The Muppets Movie*. He was charged with several counts of child molestation and faced up to 80-years in prison, but was given just one. [864]

Director Bryan Singer, whose credits include *X-Men*, *Superman Returns*, *Valkyrie* , and many others, has been accused by numerous men who say he made sexual advances towards them when they were boys. [865] Singer, who denies the allegations, has also claimed journalists who were investigating him were just "homophobic." [866]

Singer is also alleged to have been in attendance at some of the parties held by the Digital Entertainment Network, and is well known in Hollywood for hosting his own pool parties filled with what many have described as "kids." [867] He has been followed by sexual predator accusations for decades. As far back as 1997 several child actors accused him of asking them to film a nude scene when they were working on one of his movies, yet his career has continued almost unscathed. [868]

Infamous pedophile Jeffrey Epstein also had numerous ties with Hollywood A-listers, some of which had flown on his private jet to his island in the Caribbean, dubbed "Pedo Island." [869] Epstein operated with impunity for years and is believed by many to have worked as an intelligence operative for Mossad (Israel's CIA) to get dirt on powerful people, including many politicians, so they could be blackmailed. [870]

For decades Hollywood hasn't seemed to care about child abuse, and in fact many defend it and give awards to the abusers. Director Roman Polanski fled the United States in the 1970s after he was convicted of drugging and raping a 13-year-old girl, but continued to make films in Europe where he could avoid being extradited by U.S. authorities. [871] Not only did he continue to make films, but Hollywood continued to give him awards.

In 2002 he was given the Oscar for Best Director for his film *The Pianist.* When he was announced as the winner, the audience gave him a roaring applause and a standing ovation by many, including Martin Scorsese and Meryl Streep. [872] Harrison Ford, who was presenting the winner that year, looked out at the crowd astonished, knowing very well why Polanski wasn't there to accept his award. After the applause died down he said, "The Academy congratulates Roman Polanski, and accepts this award on his behalf." [873]

Not only did his peers give him a standing ovation at the Oscars, but many in Hollywood defend Polanski, still to this day. Whoopi Goldberg said that things were "different" in the 1970s, and it wasn't "rape-rape" and thinks Polanski should be left alone and not extradited to the United States to serve the prison time he has been avoiding for over 40 years. [874]

In an interview on the Howard Stern Show director Quentin Tarantino defended Polanski. Howard interrupted him, saying, "Wait a minute. If you have sex with a 13-year-old girl and you're a grown man, you know that that's wrong." [875]

Howard's cohost Robin Quivers was stunned and pointed out that Polanski had also given her alcohol and Quaaludes to which Tarantino responded, "She wanted to have it…And by the way, we're talking about America's morals, not talking about the morals in Europe and everything… Look, she was down with this." [876]

In 2009, Harvey Weinstein wrote an op-ed in *The Independent* titled "Polanski has served his time and must be freed." [877] Over one hundred Hollywood celebrities and directors including Natalie Portman, Penelope Cruz, David Lynch, and Martin Scorsese, signed a petition that year to show their support for Polanski, demanding his release after he was taken into custody in Switzerland since he was facing extradition back to the U.S. [878]

Switzerland later decided against extraditing him and let him go free. Virtually an entire industry rallied behind a man who drugged and raped a 13-year-old girl and then fled the country to avoid going to prison. That's Hollywood!

After a documentary called *Leaving Neverland* investigated some of the allegations surrounding Michael Jackson, singer Barbra Streisand said she believed boys were molested by Jackson, but, "they were thrilled to be there" and "his sexual needs were his sexual needs," adding, "They [the alleged victims] both married and they both have children, so it didn't kill them." [879]

In 2017, Stephen King's *It* was remade into a feature film due to the wildly popular TV miniseries in 1990, but what people who hadn't read the 1987 novel don't know is that Stephen King depicted the kids all having an orgy after they finally defeated the "It" creature in the sewer. Out of the blue Beverly Marsh, the only girl in the group, tells the boys "I have an idea," and then they all got naked and she has sex with all six of them. [880]

In the book she's depicted as eleven-years-old (and twelve in the 1990 TV miniseries). Once the boys are all done having sex with her, they magically remember which way to go in order to get out of the sewer and finally escape. Stephen King literally wrote an entire scene about an eleven-year-old girl getting gang banged and nobody seems to care. [881]

Actress Annette O'Toole, who played Beverly Marsh in the 1990 television version, was upset that the orgy scene wasn't allowed in the film. "This was their greatest attachment to one another—she thought they were all going to die, and this was a gift she was giving to each one of them, and I thought it was the most beautiful, generous love-filled gift, and it tied them all together in such an amazing way." [882]

In 2017 after Kevin Spacey was accused of trying to engage in a sexual relationship with a 14-year-old child actor back in 1986, he announced for the first time that he was gay. That deflected much of the media criticism away from the allegations and he was celebrated for his "emotional" admission.

ABC News ran a story with the headline, "'I choose now to live as a gay man,' Kevin Spacey comes out in emotional tweet," but later changed it due to the backlash from people who on social media were shocked ABC sanitized the story with such a pleasant headline. [883]

The CEO of entertainment giant Allied Artists, Kim Richards, said of Spacey, "If true, acting on impulse while inebriated speaks to over-indulgence, not predatory behavior. You're good & decent, deserving forgiveness." [884]

Years earlier Seth McFarlane's *Family Guy* animated comedy series included a brief scene of a character (Stewie) running naked through a shopping mall screaming "Help! I've escaped from Kevin Spacey's basement!" [885] McFarlane had previously called out Harvey Weinstein in 2013, years before the MeToo movement and the widespread reports about Weinstein. When he read off the names of the nominees for Best Supporting Actress for the Oscars, he followed up by saying, "Congratulations, you five ladies no longer have to pretend to be attracted to Harvey Weinstein." [886]

McFarlane knew of the rumors about Weinstein but at the time outsiders just though it was a joke. Many wondered if he also heard rumors about Kevin Spacey's secrets as well, resulting in him adding the bizarre scene in *Family Guy* . Others came forward with similar allegations as well. Spacey was soon fired from his Netflix series *House of Cards* , and went into hiding.

But on Christmas Eve of 2019 he posted a bizarre video on YouTube speaking in the tone of his evil *House of Cards* character Frank Underwood while sitting in front of a fireplace. "You didn't really think I was going to miss the opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas, did you?" he began. "I know what you're thinking, 'Can he be serious?' I'm dead serious. The next time someone does something you don't like, you can go on the attack. But you can also hold your fire and do the unexpected. You can…kill them with kindness.” [887] He smiled menacingly at the camera and the video ends.

Even more disturbing is that one of his accusers had died just a few months earlier. [888] He seemed to be alluding that he had killed him. The very next day, on Christmas, *another* one of his accusers died from a purported suicide. [889] That person’s estate then dropped the lawsuit against Spacey which had been pending.

Crimes Inspired by Hollywood

While it’s not entirely accurate to say that violence depicted in movies *causes* real world violence, it can be said that sometimes it’s a catalyst, and in numerous cases mass murderers, bombings, bank robberies, and other crimes have been inspired by popular movies. Extensive news coverage of mass shootings is actually correlated with *more* mass shootings because it seems to plant the seeds in other lunatics’ minds. [890] The same is true of news reports about suicide,

a phenomenon called suicide contagion. [891]

The FBI and Department of Homeland Security were concerned that *Joker* (2019) may inspire mass shootings at theaters, so police presence was increased during the film’s opening weekend and some even inserted undercover agents inside as a precaution. [892] The fears arose from a lunatic dressed as the Joker opening fire inside a theater during a showing of *The Dark Knight Rises* in 2012, killing a dozen people and injuring many more.

The *New York Post* reported that, “It’s reasonable to ask if ‘Joker’ will inspire would-be killers.” [893] Some of the victims’ families of *The Dark Knight Rises* shooting wrote a letter to Warner Brothers, the studio that produced *Joker* , expressing their concern that the movie gave the character a “sympathetic origin story.” [894] It’s not a typical superhero film, nor is it cartoonish in any way like many of the previous Batman movies. Instead, *Joker* is a depressing “character study” showing a man descend into madness and morph into a mass murderer, but because a portion of the population are severely mentally ill, many saw the Joker as a hero.

The 1976 film *Taxi Driver* starring Robert De Niro (which was largely the inspiration for *Joker*) is said to have triggered John Hinckley Jr.’s murderous fantasy that resulted in him attempting to assassinate President Ronald Reagan in 1981. In *Taxi Driver,* Robert De Niro’s character plots the assassination of a presidential candidate he becomes fixated on, which gave John Hinkley Jr. the idea to do the same thing to Ronald Reagan. He later shot Reagan outside the Washington Hilton Hotel. [895]

In the 1995 film *Basketball Diaries* starring Leonardo DiCaprio, his character has a dream sequence where he walks into his high school wearing a black trench coat and starts blowing away his fellow classmates with a shotgun. Three years later in 1998, two students in Colorado carried out the infamous Columbine High School shooting, causing the very name “Columbine” to become synonymous with a school shooting.

The killers wore black trench coats on the day of the massacre just like Leonardo DiCaprio. Some parents of the victims filed lawsuits against the producers of *The Basketball Diaries* for inspiring the attack. The Columbine massacre itself has inspired dozens of copycats from more unhinged high school students who see the killers as heroes. [896]

Oliver Stone's 1994 black comedy *Natural Born Killers* is believed to have inspired over a dozen copycat murders and mass shootings by teenagers in the 1990s and early 2000s. [897] In the film, a murderous couple (Mickey and Mallory) go on a drug-fueled killing spree and become television news sensations. Oliver Stone says he meant the film to be a critique of how the media sensationalizes violence and murders, but some unhinged viewers actually saw Mickey and Mallory as true heroes and wanted to become famous mass murderers just like them.

After actor Robin Williams committed suicide in 2014, researchers believed it caused suicide rates to spike almost 10% from copycats. "Although we cannot determine with certainty that these deaths are attributable to the death of Robin Williams, we found both a rapid increase in suicides in August 2014, and specifically suffocation suicides, that paralleled the time and method of Williams' death," said a report compiled by researchers at Columbia University. [898] *NBC News* admitted, "It has been known for decades that media reports about suicides, especially celebrity suicides, lead to an increase of suicide deaths." [899]

The Netflix teen drama *13 Reasons Why* is about a girl who commits suicide after being bullied and gossiped about at her high school. She left behind a box of cassette tapes where she recorded the "13 reasons why" she killed herself, which forms the basis of the show, and many researchers believe that the series actually increased the rate of teenage suicide. [900] Studies show that suicide is "contagious" and the more widely it is portrayed in the media, the more people get inspired to follow the same path in hopes of putting an end to their own personal struggles. [901]

At the University of Illinois, a student was arrested for sexually assaulting a woman he tied up in his dorm room in order to re-create a scene from *Fifty Shades of Grey* , the popular sadomasochism film based on the bestselling novel. [902] The lead actor in the film, Jamie Dornan, later admitted that he feared a crazy obsessed fan would actually murder him like John Lennon. [903]

Ben Affleck's 2010 film *The Town* was the admitted inspiration behind a pair of Brooklyn crooks who, like the characters in the film, dressed up as cops to rob a local check-cashing business. [904] Another robbery at a bank in Chicago is also believed to have been inspired by *The Town* , where the perpetrators copied a different scene from the film in which the characters dressed as nuns for their disguise when they robbed one of the banks. [905]

A teenager in New York City was inspired by *Fight Club* to bomb a Starbucks which thankfully didn't cause any injuries because it was closed. [906] In the 1999 film, the underground fight club started by Brad Pitt and Edward Norton escalates into a terrorist organization with the launch of "Project Mayhem," beginning with a series of attacks on symbols of corporate America. One of those attacks was on a "corporate piece of art" consisting of a gigantic metal ball which is knocked off its foundation and rolls into a nearby coffee shop, clearly designed to look like a Starbucks, destroying it.

There is also speculation that a serial bomber in Austin, Texas who ultimately blew himself up after being pulled over by police may have been inspired by a recent television series about Ted Kaczynski, the "Unabomber." [907] The perpetrator had sent five package bombs in the Austin area, killing two people and injuring five others during a three week period in March 2018.

On Halloween night in 2018 police in France arrested over 100 masked people for rioting and threatening locals after word spread through social media calling for a "Purge," referring to the 2013 horror film of the same name which depicts the American government allowing all crimes, including murder, to be perfectly legal for one night a year. [908]

Similar "Purge" threats have gone viral through social media in the United States claiming such uprisings would occur in various communities on specific dates, thankfully turning out to be hoaxes posted by troublesome teenagers. [909] But the inspiration for the threats of indiscriminate killing for "fun" were obviously inspired by the film.

Following the 1996 release of *Scream* there were also numerous murders and attempted murders by people inspired by the teen slasher film, several of which actually involved the famous Ghostface mask that the killer used in the movie. [910] Two days after watching *Interview with the Vampire* when it first came out in 1994, a man told his girlfriend "I'm going to kill you and drink your blood," and proceeded to stab her seven times and did indeed drink her blood. She miraculously survived, and when he was arrested the “vampire” admitted to police he was inspired by the film starring Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt. [911]

Rap Videos Nothing promotes violence and crime more than rap music. Listeners internalize the lyrics which are presented from a first-person perspective, putting them in the proverbial driver’s seat of countless drive-by shootings and other mayhem which is portrayed as exciting and fun.

It would be impossible to know how many seeds have been planted in the minds of thugs who become accustomed to crime and whose music choices reflect back to them a distorted world where they are a hero for the lifestyle they chose. Many former gang members have admitted that the music helped to “brainwash” them. [912] And numerous studies have connected rap music to real world violence. [913]

It’s common for rappers to include a line in their songs about doing a “187 on a cop,” which is a police code for murder. Countless rappers from Snoop Dogg and NWA, to Eminem and Tekashi 6ix9ine have entire songs about murdering people. Just two weeks after the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre, where twenty children and six adults were gunned down by 20-year-old lunatic Adam Lanza, stunning the entire country, a popular rapper who goes by “The Game” released a song titled “Dead People” which is about him stalking and murdering people for fun. [914]

A 17-year-old acting out the music video “Bustin’ At ‘Em” from rapper Waka Flocka Flame accidentally shot and killed his friend while he was waving a gun around. [915] The lyrics go “Shoot first ask questions last. That’s how these so called gangstas last. Bitch I’m bustin’ at ‘em (shooting). Ain’t no talkin’ homie I’m just bustin’ at ‘em. Bitch I’m bustin’ at ‘em.” In the music video Waka Flocka Flame and his thug friends are waving guns around shooting them in all directions the entire time.

After a man in Hawaii shot and killed his landlord, he claimed he was possessed by rapper Jay Z and said that *he* should be the one who goes to prison. [916] In a certain sense the man *was* possessed by Jay Z, since the rapper’s murderous lyrics filled his head. In his mind he just did what he thought Jay Z would have done. Jay Z has called for George Zimmerman, the man who shot Trayvon Martin in self-defense, to be killed, and has numerous songs about murdering people. [917]

Thousands of years ago philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates understood the influence that music has on its listeners. Aristotle recognized that music can even shape people’s character, saying, “Music directly represents the passions of the soul. If one listens to the wrong kind of music, he will become the wrong kind of person.” [918]

Bobo Doll Experiment A famous study conducted in the early 1960s known as the Bobo Doll Experiment demonstrated how children often mimic violent behaviors they see others engaging in. Researchers monitored the children in a playroom filled with a variety of toys including a bobo doll, a sort of inflatable punching bag with a weighted bottom that stands on the ground—and when punched, returns to its upright position.

Even though the bobo doll was in the room and available for the children to play with, they mostly ignored it at first, but after witnessing an adult punching the toy, they began doing the same thing, imitating their actions shortly after they had left the room. [919] The experiment clearly demonstrates the fundamentals of social learning theory and observational learning because the children’s behavior immediately changed from simply witnessing the adults interact with the doll in a “violent” manner, or as the saying goes—monkey see, monkey do.

And just like children mimicked the actions they saw against the bobo doll, they also mimic behaviors they see in the media. A Senate Committee was formed in 1999 to investigate the influence of media violence on children and concluded that one of the primary catalysts of youth violence *is* media violence. [920]

The word *cause* may be too strong of a word, and to more accurately describe the relationship between viewing violence and engaging in violent acts, media effects researchers often use the word *prime* , instead—meaning viewing violence primes people to potentially act out similar behaviors. [921]

One popular textbook, *The Fundamentals of Media Effects* , explains, “Media message content triggers concepts, thoughts, learning, or knowledge acquired in the past that are related to the message content. In this way, message content is connected, associated, or *reinforced* by related thoughts and concepts that it brings to mind.” [922]

There are numerous variables that function as catalysts for priming aggressive or violent behaviors in viewers, such as the extent they identify with a character engaging in violence, the consequences the character faces for such behavior, and the perceived justification for it, or meaning of the violence. [923]

Media mogul Ted Turner knew this, as do most people with common sense. Best known for founding CNN in 1980, he once noted, “You know that everything we’re exposed to, influences us…those violent films influence us, and the TV programs we see influence us. The weaker your family is, the more they influence you. The problems with families in our societies are catastrophic, but when you put violent programs before people who haven’t had a lot of love in their lives, who are angry anyway, it is like pouring gasoline on the fire.” [924]

Author's Note: Once you finish this book, please take a moment to rate and review it on Amazon.com, or wherever you purchased it from if you're reading the e-book, to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them.

Trolls often target books on Amazon written by people they don't like and flood them with fake one-star reviews in order to tank the ratings and hope to dissuade people from reading them. It's a dirty tactic they've used on my other books. If you look close, you can see that practically none of the one-star reviews are from actual verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent.

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Thank you!

Conclusion There’s a famous quote attributed to Eleanor Roosevelt that says, “Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.” The moronic masses are concerned about who their favorite celebrities are dating, which rappers are having a new beef, or the latest actor found to have said something “racist” years (or decades) ago, while life is passing them by. It’s a circus, and as media analyst Neil Postman noted, people are amusing themselves to death.

Everything is backwards and upside down in Los Angeles, even the city’s name. “Los Angeles” is Spanish for the *City of Angels,* when it’s really a city of demons. Hollywood is the “city of dreams” they say, but it’s really the city of *broken* dreams. Cute girls from across the country move to LA thinking they’re going to be the next Kim Kardashian or Jennifer Lawrence only to realize that they’re just one of tens of thousands of other girls equally as beautiful who are all competing for the same prize.

After a string of dead end auditions or maybe landing a few bit parts in b-movies that are never released in theaters, most girls eventually give up or turn to drugs hoping to numb the increasing depression they feel from not seeing their dreams materialize as they are faced with the harsh reality of the entertainment industry.

The supposed sunny blue skies of Los Angeles are filled with toxic smog from the overcrowded freeways. Many of the people driving fancy cars and renting nice houses are often living paycheck to paycheck and have no money saved for retirement and spend most of what they earn trying to portray an image of a person they’re not, living further beyond their means every day.

Almost everything is fake in Los Angeles. The LA River is made of concrete. The city’s basketball team is called the *Lakers,* but most of the lakes are man-made. Most people think the Hollywood Walk of Fame is a beautiful place symbolic of the glitz and glam they see on the award shows, but in reality it’s a dirty street filled with homeless people and beggars.

Los Angeles is widely considered to be one of the loneliest cities in America because so many people living there have few (or no) close friends they can confide in or trust. Many residents don’t even make eye contact with their neighbors when out to check the mail, they just ignore them and pretend they don’t exist. It’s a strange and sad city.

Unfortunately, much of our country is now afflicted with the same kinds of sentiments. The American empire will most likely collapse someday just as ancient Rome did. The United States has too much debt, there is no sense of community throughout much of the country anymore, national pride has been undermined by floods of immigrants who won’t assimilate and are openly hostile to our culture, customs, and history—and now even many millions of native-born Americans hate our country as a result of the Marxist indoctrination they’ve been inundated with.

Open hatred of America by enemies within has never been more widespread, and they are determined to overthrow our Republic and put an end to our Constitutionally protected freedoms.

Child drag queens are being celebrated by major media outlets, celebrities are bragging about their abortions, work ethic is dwindling, calls for socialism are spreading, and people can't decide which one of the fifty-eight different "genders" they are. The angry and ignorant masses want to seize financial assets through force from those who have worked hard and saved their money for decades instead of steadily pissing it away on things they don't need.

But we do need entertainment (in moderation). It's important to relax your mind at the end of the day or get a little distracted after a long week, so what should we do? What can you show your kids without having them indoctrinated with the idiocy and enemy propaganda that surrounds us? Fortunately, there *are* limitless choices of quality entertainment if you just take the time to look.

There are science shows, cooking shows, how-to videos, and plenty of family friendly entertainment available—not to mention good old-fashioned books like the one in your hands. Aside from quality non-fiction books that can educate while they entertain, there are also countless literarily classics that will take your mind on a journey to faraway lands, all from the comfort of your own home.

But it's critical to do a regular digital detox, especially on the weekends, and tune out the endless distractions competing for your attention on television and smartphones. Spend time with family and friends, having face to face interactions, not artificial ones by "liking" their Facebook posts or communicating through social media.

It's important to limit social media consumption because by design it's addictive due to the endless feedback and dopamine boosts people get from "likes" retweets, comments, and follows. Stories on social media are hard to resist because they personalize incidents that happen across the country in cities and states you'll never step foot in, but the viral videos and photos open a window to an artificial world you have no business being in.

It's also dangerous because lies spread through social media at the speed of light, racking up tens of thousands of retweets and "shares" within minutes. By censoring opposing voices, manipulating trending topics, and major celebrities constantly jumping on the bandwagon for liberal causes, the Big Tech companies create the false appearance of a consensus around issues. Many are afraid to stand up against it out of concern they may catch the attention of the angry online mobs who will harass them, dox them, and do everything in their power to destroy them.

All of this leads many to wonder—what is wrong with liberals? Why do they always seem like they have no sense of right and wrong, almost like they have no soul? Researchers at Virginia Tech discovered that people can be identified as either liberal or conservative by a simple fMRI (Functional MRI) scan of their brain.

They found that when they show people images of disgusting things like a dead animal or food covered with maggots, they could predict with a 95% accuracy rate whether the person was a liberal or a conservative based solely on brain scans which showed how people's brain activity reacted to seeing such things. [926]

How is this possible? What they found was that the brains of liberals don't show the same signals of being disgusted when shown the disgusting images. It was a discovery made by accident, but it has an enormous significance. What it means is, the further Left someone is on the political spectrum, the higher their tolerance is for abnormal (and horrifying) things. It makes perfect sense when put into perspective.

They're the ones who accept and embrace the most bizarre, unhealthy, and disgusting behaviors and lifestyles. So when shown images of disgusting things, their brain scans show little reaction, when a normal person should be repulsed. The researchers who conducted the experiments appear to be afraid to explain *why* liberals aren't disgusted by disgusting things, but the answer is clear. The Bible calls this the reprobate mind. [927]

The Bible also predicted, "There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people." [928]

The fact that you read this book shows where your heart and mind is, and while we may be a minority, there are many millions of us who see the principalities and powers that oppose us and refuse to go along with their agenda or submit to their demands. We know the truth, and the truth has set us free!

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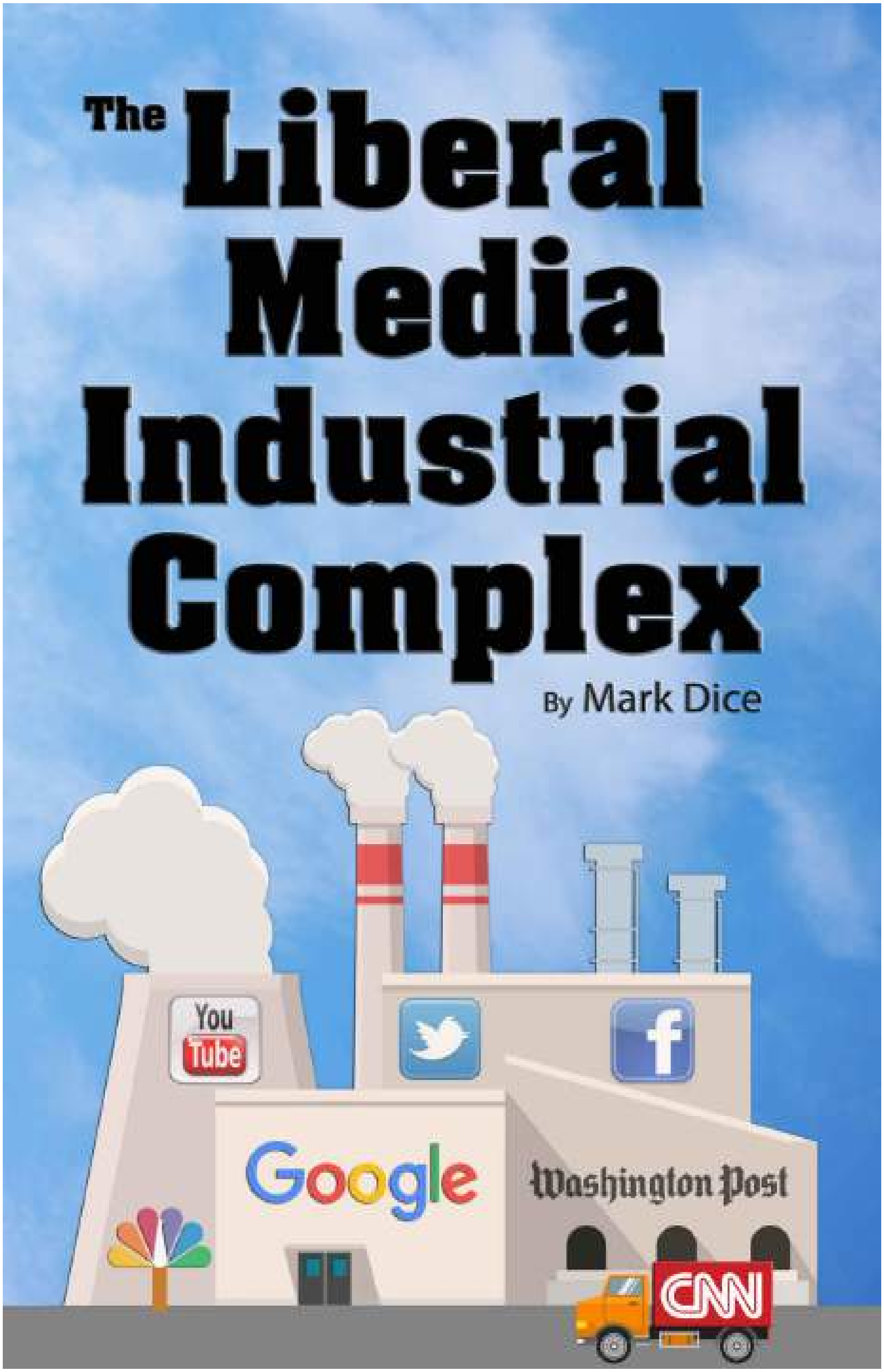

The Liberal Media Industrial Complex

By Mark Dice

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Washington Post
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Introduction

Today, “media” doesn’t just mean television, radio, newspapers, and magazines; since all of those industries have been swallowed up by the Internet (*convergence* as it’s technically called). As you know, people now get most of their news and entertainment online where there is an endless supply of things to click on, scroll through, and stream. People carry TVs in their pockets and wear them on their wrists like the old science fiction films predicted. With the push of a button anyone can watch almost any show, access any newspaper or magazine article, and even send instant feedback about what they think. Everywhere you go people are constantly glued to their device, consuming an endless stream of “media.” It’s like a madhouse that’s almost impossible to escape.

In our current mobile age, trying to keep up with the news is like running on a treadmill that’s getting faster and faster. The longer you’re on it, the more exhausting it gets, leading many to become so fatigued they decide to jump off and quit paying attention altogether. Many have become so stressed out, disgusted, and tired of the “news,” that they basically boycott it and only follow sports or other forms of entertainment, but even there they can’t escape being bombarded by political messages and cries for “social justice.”

Those who wish to push political agendas know that movies, music, and TV shows are convenient vehicles to deliver their propaganda to millions under the cloak of “entertainment.” Even some sports coverage on ESPN has become political in recent years, amplifying the messages of athletes involved in fringe causes or ones based on half-truths and out-right lies. [1]

Music, movies, and television shows are not just “entertainment.” They shape and influence the culture by manufacturing iconic characters whose beliefs and behaviors are mimicked by millions. While art imitates life, life also imitates art, as President Obama admitted during an appearance via video at the 2015 Grammies where he told the audience, “Tonight, we celebrate artists whose music and message helps shape our culture…Artists have a unique power to change minds and attitudes and get us thinking and talking about what matters.” [2] Celebrities have largely taken over the role that families, the Church, and national traditions used to play in molding and monitoring a society’s attitudes and actions.

As Andrew Breitbart pointed out in his book *Righteous Indignation* , “Hollywood is more important than Washington. It can’t be overstated how important this message is: pop culture matters. What happens in front of the cameras on a soundstage at the Warner Bros. lot often makes more difference to the fate of America than what happens in the back rooms of the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill.” [3]

He continues, “As it stands, the Frankfurt School-taught Left is fighting the political battle on both the political and the cultural battlefields. Conservatives are fighting it only on the political battlefield. That means that art, humor, song, theater, television, film, dance, are all devices used every day in order to influence the hearts and minds of the American people.” [4]

He’s talking about Cultural Marxism, which is the practice of waging a psychological war against America and all of Western civilization by relentlessly attacking every aspect of our culture, symbols, and institutions; hoping to gradually weaken society by subverting its foundations to the point where it becomes so dysfunctional it can be overthrown and replaced by a Marxist State.

To accomplish this, the supposed “news” media regularly engages in what’s called Agenda Setting by hyping up certain stories and covering them ad nauseam to create the false impression that those stories are actually important because they’re “what people are talking about.” This provides a false justification for the extensive coverage, creating an artificial feedback loop where they hype up a story as if it’s the talk of the town, and *then* everyone starts talking about it because they’re inundated by reports about it, so the media keeps reporting on it, claiming that it’s a relevant story *because* so many people are talking about it.

They carefully choose stories, oftentimes of rare and isolated incidences, and then amplify them hoping to give the impression that there's an epidemic and use the cherry-picked examples to promote or reinforce liberal ideologies. At the same time they act as gatekeepers, purposefully omitting other (actually important) stories and events which show a side of an issue they're hoping people don't hear about, or are trying to downplay the significance of.

The *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* uses their technology to influence rather than inform; to attack instead of educate; to promote certain events while pretending others don't exist. They always amplify salacious allegations that feed into the one-sided narratives they're pushing, and then completely ignore the facts when they later come out if they prove the initial reports to be false. They just carry on as if nothing happened and keep repeating the same pattern like clockwork — amplifying the allegation, and then ignoring the outcome.

The election of President Trump has resulted in the American mainstream media throwing all objectivity out the window and dedicating their existence to painting him as a mentally deranged dictator who needs to be impeached and imprisoned. They've gotten so bold in their attempts to overthrow our Republic that they now regularly engage in gaslighting and continue to repeat easily debunked falsehoods as if they are true, hoping to get people to start doubting their own memory, reasoning, and perception about what is actually going on. This is what gaslighting is.

By repeatedly lying with confidence, using misdirection and discounting contrary information, the media causes some people to begin questioning their own version of reality. The term *gaslighting* originates from an old 1938 play (later made into a movie in 1944) where a central theme of the plot involves a woman's husband who subjects her to all kinds of mind games trying to drive her insane, including dimming the gas lamps in their home while convincing her that she's just imagining it's getting darker.

The media insists that the name George Soros is a code word for anti-Semitism, as are "globalists" and "Hollywood liberals." [5] The constant assertions that anyone who supports building a wall at the US-Mexico border is racist, and anyone who supports President Trump is a white supremacist are ridiculous, but are believed by gullible people who are susceptible to propaganda. Television "news" anchors lie with such assurance and being accompanied by symbols of authority like their fancy studios and graphics, on the surface it appears as if they're legitimate news broadcasts.

The 2016 presidential election proved that the balance of power had shifted from the tight-knit group of mainstream media companies into the hands of everyday Americans who used Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to spread their messages to others, whether it was a few hundred of their Facebook friends, or an audience of millions if their posts went viral.

So in order to regain control of the flow of information, the legacy media conglomerates began working closely with the Silicon Valley titans to rewrite the algorithms so these popular platforms would favor *their* content above that posted by ordinary people or popular social media personalities. It's an understatement to say that what's happening is a conspiracy between various sectors of the media industry which are working together to give traditional outlets the loudest voices online.

Mix in Google and YouTube manipulating search results, Wikipedia being the number one source of "encyclopedia" articles, and social media companies systematically censoring prominent conservative accounts under the disguise of combating "hate speech," and you have a recipe for total information control. There is a reason that dictators throughout history have aimed to seize their country's media as one of their top priorities so they can use it to not only further their own aims, but prevent their opposition from using it for theirs.

Just two weeks after the shocking loss of Hillary Clinton to Donald Trump in the 2016 election, the war on "fake news" was launched as a smokescreen to suppress the reach of regular users' social media posts and artificially boost messages from the mainstream media. The Democrats became frantic about supposed "fake news" being shared on Facebook that they claimed had cast Hillary in a false light, and *that* was the reason they said, why so many people didn't trust her; and hence, didn't vote for her. [6]

While there were a few viral fake news stories smearing her, all the studies show they had no influence on people's votes and just reinforced beliefs they already held about her. [7] There were also fake stories about Donald Trump that went viral during the heat of the campaign, but that fact is ignored and the "fake news" problem was framed as an issue that's only one-sided.

In reality, the fake news scare was just an elaborate ruse to drastically alter the way social media functions by pressuring Big Tech companies to emphasize mainstream media outlets in people's feeds instead of showing organically what should be there based on who they were following and what was being posted. [8]

Barack Obama was the first "social media president," getting elected in 2008 when Facebook was first becoming a central hub in people's lives. He was the first president to have a Facebook page and a Twitter account, and his senior advisor David Axelrod admitted, "If not for social media, Barack Obama would never have been elected president [because] it gave us the ability to connect to a new generation of voters." [9]

At the time, social media was still kind of a novelty, but a few years later it would permeate most people's lives when everyone had to have an iPhone and the social media companies released mobile apps so people could "stay connected" wherever they were instead of having to wait until they got home from work or school to open up their laptop to see what's happening online.

But today, getting news online isn't just a novelty, it's the norm. A report from the Pew Research Center in 2018 showed that more Americans get their news from posts on social media than from newspapers. [10] Social media now starts revolutions, and overnight a single video clip can turn most of the world against a nation's leader, or galvanize members of an entire political party to rally behind a cause.

Since the barriers to entry are now so low today with anyone being able to start a YouTube channel or create a Facebook page, we are seeing the legacy media frantically trying to stop their industry (and their influence) from slipping through their fingers. Liberals' favorite tactic today is silencing their opposition under the disguise of combating "hate speech" or stopping "right-wing extremists," and the ability to censor and manipulate information online rests in the hands of just a few gigantic corporations whose values are completely opposed to middle America and traditional family values.

Because of the emergence of social media, billions of people around the world communicate through Facebook, Twitter, and other online platforms which have largely taken the place of sending emails and talking on the phone. As you know, these social media apps can allow anyone's message to be spread just as far as something broadcast on the national news, or printed on the front page of the *New York Times* , but because of this massive redistribution of power, the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* is scrambling to put the genie back in the bottle.

One doesn't even have to be a "social media star" to be a victim of the Left's censorship because average users have their Facebook posts, tweets, Instagram pics, and YouTube videos removed all the time for "violating community standards."

Big Tech's increasingly sophisticated artificial intelligence systems automatically scan every post for key words they have identified as sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, or just generically "hateful" or "offensive;" and has them removed once discovered. Just a handful of these "violations" and your entire account is shut down for good and everything you've ever posted there deleted. Nothing is out of the reach of their AI, and anything can be deleted at any moment by the nameless and faceless moderators, leaving the victims with no recourse or appeal.

Total control of information is what they want, and they have hijacked the technology we all use to communicate in our modern age, but thankfully you were able to get this powerful tool into your hands before they could stop it — an old fashioned book! I commend you for picking one up and tuning out the noise relentlessly trying to make its way to your ears, and turning away from the millions of tweets, Facebook posts, and video clips all competing for your attention.

In the coming pages we'll do a deep dive into each of the major social media platforms and I'll detail their algorithm manipulation, double standards, liberal bias, and censorship. We'll also dissect the media's war on President Trump, their mission to destroy our culture by undermining traditional family values, and we'll look at the future of fake news.

While scrolling through tweets and Facebook posts is often like junk food for the brain, reading a book is a healthy and nourishing four-course meal in comparison. Sure, junk food is fine in moderation, but if it's all you eat then you're going to be very unhealthy. And the difference between reading through social media feeds (or watching the news) and reading a book is about the same as the difference between a good steak and eating a burger at McDonalds. One is quick, cheap, and poor quality; while the other is expensive, time consuming to make, and healthy to eat. And since we're dealing with a *very* important subject, it's best to do this right. So let's begin by taking a look behind the curtain of the monolithic *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* and start dismantling it piece by piece.

Censorship

There are several classic books that highlight the dangers of censorship and depict tyrannical governments that use their endless power to snuff out any opposition in hopes of maintaining their control over society. George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* , which was first published in 1949, and *Fahrenheit 451* , published in 1953, are two of the most popular examples and weren't just written for entertainment. They were meant to serve as a warning of what giant bureaucracies could do if their growing power goes unchecked.

But today in America, it's not the government censoring what newspapers print or what airs on the evening news. It's the Silicon Valley titans — it's Mark Zuckerberg, Jack Dorsey, and Susan Wojcicki. In the marketplace of ideas they are losing, and so these industry leaders are silencing influential opponents who speak out against the Left's attempted revolution.

They're also trying to create a chilling effect by scaring people into not speaking out about certain issues or make us think twice before sharing certain information on social media out of fear we will be socially ostracized, or even fired from our job; so many people are self-censoring themselves in what's been called the "Spiral of Silence." [11] The fewer people who speak out about an issue due to fear of repercussions causes others who feel they should say something to be more apprehensive about doing so because nobody else seems to be doing it, which in turn causes even more people to stay silent, causing the false impression that no one seems to be opposed to what's happening.

Thankfully, in the United States (at least today) the First Amendment is still intact, but in places like Canada, [12] Germany, [13] England, [14] Scotland, [15] and other supposedly "free" countries, people are being arrested and charged with "hate speech" crimes for posting things on their social media accounts that are critical of the "Islamization of Europe" from the mass influx of Muslim refugees and for voicing opposition to the LGBT agenda. [16]

But while Americans are still technically free to say these things without getting arrested, there are other serious consequences since we're living in an online world where most people rely on a handful of apps to communicate with others. Back in 1997, Harvard Law professor Larry Lessig wrote an article for *Wired* magazine titled "Tyranny in the Infrastructure" warning that, "Laws affect the pace of technological change, but the structures of software can do even more to curtail freedom. In the long run the shackles built by programmers could well constrain us more." [17]

In his book *Cyber Ethics: Morality and Law in Cyberspace* , Richard A. Spinello expanded on this concern saying, "This notion that private code can be a more potent constraining force than public law has significant implications. The use of code as a surrogate for law may mean that certain public goods or moral values once protected by law will now be ignored or compromised by those who develop or utilize this code."[18]

We're seeing the very principle of free speech under attack like never before, with the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* even claiming that freedom of speech is "dangerous" and saying that conservatives have "weaponized" the First Amendment.[19] There have always been restrictions on the First Amendment, for example you can't yell fire in a crowded theater, and you can't threaten to murder someone or encourage acts of terrorism; but today just insulting a person who believes there are 58 different gender identities or pointing out certain facts and statistics is considered "hateful" and "dangerous."

Democrat Congressman Ted Lieu from California says he's frustrated by the fact that the First Amendment is preventing him from silencing conservatives for Thought Crimes, so he's calling on the Big Tech companies to do it on the government's behalf.[20] Meanwhile Jerry Nadler, a Democrat Congressman from New York, says it's just a "conspiracy theory" that the Big Tech companies have a liberal bias and, "The notion that social media companies are filtering out conservative voices is a hoax, a tired narrative of imagined victimhood."[21] Other Democrat members of Congress, like Jamie Raskin from Maryland, insist that it is an "entirely imaginary narrative that social media companies are biased against conservatives."[22]

Of course CNN repeatedly denies conservatives are being censored and claims that pushback from President Trump is, "exacerbating a longstanding paranoia from conservatives who have for years erroneously accused social media companies of bias and censorship."[23] It's just paranoia that conservatives are being censored, guys! Nothing to worry about!

CNN claims, “For years, the conservative media machine has pushed the flimsy narrative that conservatives are unfairly treated by social media companies, which they accuse of bias and censorship. When the claims often fall apart under a light touch of scrutiny, right-wing media outlets continue to advance the narrative, irrespective of the facts.” [24]

After years of mounting evidence, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey finally admitted that even conservatives who work at Twitter, “don’t feel safe to express their opinions at the company” and that “They do feel silenced by just the general swirl of what they perceive to be the broader percentage of leanings within the company.” [25]

With each new purge of conservative voices from the social media platforms, more and more people are seeing just how big of a threat these tech giants are to the principles of free speech and the massive implications of their monopoly on communication tools.

Donald Trump Jr., who obviously has the president’s ear, has also been very vocal about the increasing censorship on social media, even writing an op-ed about it in *The Hill* , saying, “Our right to freely engage in public discourse through speech is under sustained attack, necessitating a vigorous defense against the major social media and internet platforms.” [26]

In May 2019, the White House set up a new tool on WhiteHouse.gov for people to report instances of social media bias and censorship so the Trump administration could put together more thorough reports of what conservatives are facing online. [27] The page includes a form for users to submit details about which post was taken down, what it said, and which platform removed it. “Social media platforms should advance freedom of speech. Yet too many Americans have seen their accounts suspended, banned, or fraudulently reported for unclear ‘violations’ of user policies,” the website reads. [28]

In subsequent chapters I’ll detail what’s been happening on each of the major social media platforms, but rampant censorship isn’t limited to just Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Music Streaming Services

While politicians and news commentators have always had to watch what they say about certain subjects so they don’t get fired, artists have always been seen as the bastions of free speech, and censoring art—no matter how provocative or offensive it is to some people—was always seen as something only a tyrannical government would do. Major music labels and movie studios always stood by their artists and vigorously resisted calls for censorship, championing the freedom of expression whether it was NWA’s “Fuck the Police” or blasphemous anti-Christian films like *The Da Vinci Code* or Martin Scorsese’s *The Last Temptation of Christ.*

But in August 2017 Spotify, the popular music streaming service, announced they would start censoring songs from “hate bands” including songs they claim “incite violence against race, religion, [or] sexuality.” [29] How will they determine which bands and songs to censor? Whatever the Southern Poverty Law Center tells them to. [30] Not surprising, the SPLC got their tentacles wrapped around Spotify and other streaming services to “help” them keep a lookout for “hateful” content. [31]

Other streaming services like Apple and Pandora followed suit, banning supposed “white power” music, while allowing rap music that blatantly calls for the murder of police officers from people like Ice-T, NWA, and Snoop Dogg, who recently depicted himself murdering President Trump in one of his music videos. [32] As you know, it’s common for rappers to diss “crackers” and “white boys” in their music, but that’s just fine. Hating white people isn’t considered to be racist to the Left. And Jay Z’s albums are okay, despite calling women “bitches” in (literally) 50% of his songs. [33]

About a year later Spotify announced another new policy, saying they were going to start banning songs from artists who have engaged in “harmful or hateful conduct” in their personal lives, like domestic violence or sexual abuse. That put songs by R. Kelly and Michael Jackson at risk of not being available anymore. But then just three weeks later they reversed their decision and apologized, saying they don’t want to be the “moral police,” but affirmed that they were still going to be censoring “hate speech.” [34]

Guns ‘N Roses song “One in a Million,” which was released on their 1988 album *G N’ R Lies*, includes a line about “immigrants and faggots” but when the studio released the Guns ’N Roses box set in 2018 they didn’t include that song on the album because it’s been deemed “racist” and “homophobic.” [35]

It’s probably only a matter of time before other songs like Aerosmith’s “Dude Looks Like a Lady” will be banned for being “transphobic” as well. Once you give liberals an inch, they demand a mile, and since they smell blood in the water they will continue their quest to eliminate everything they find offensive.

Netflix and Prime Video

Even movie streaming services like Netflix and Amazon’s Prime Video are showing signs of liberal bias and censoring “controversial content” that had once been available on the platforms for years. Netflix won’t allow *The Red Pill* , a popular documentary about the Men’s Rights Movement produced by Cassie Jaye, to be streamed. Through the course of producing the film she found that claims about the "patriarchy" and supposed "male power" were extremely warped and that many of the burdens men typically bear in society are overlooked and often discounted by feminists. [36]

Cassie Jaye herself was a feminist when she started making the film and expected to find the Men's Rights Movement would be full of misogynists and losers who had no luck with women, but learned they have very legitimate points about gender roles and unfair treatment in child custody cases, and by the end of the film she admitted they weren't a bunch of women-haters as she had previously thought, and decided that she could no longer call herself a feminist because "feminism is not the road to gender equality." [37]

When the trailer was released on YouTube it reached over a million views in 24 hours and was the number one purchased movie on YouTube (which streams movies on-demand for 4 or 5 dollars) beating *Guardians of the Galaxy* and *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story.* [38] But Netflix wouldn't allow the film to be streamed on their platform because when it was released in selected theaters it had generated some negative publicity from feminists protesting it, calling it "misogynistic propaganda." [39]

In March 2019 Democrat Congressman Adam Schiff sent a letter to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos pressuring him to censor "anti-vaccination" documentaries from Amazon Prime after seeing a report on CNN claiming that "Anti-vaccination conspiracy theories thrive on Amazon." [40] Within hours of Schiff sending his letter, the streaming service pulled at least five documentaries including the popular *Vaxxed: From Cover-Up to Catastrophe* , [41] which had been promoted by Robert De Niro when it first came out because one of his children is autistic which he suspects may have been caused by the MMR vaccines. [42]

Others included: *We Don't Vaccinate!;" Shoot 'Em Up: The Truth About Vaccines* , *The Greater Good* ; and *Man Made Epidemic* , which investigated the alleged connections between the autism epidemic and the preservative Thimerosal used in vaccines. Many have long suspected a link between Thimerosal and autism, including Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has tried to bring awareness to the dangers of vaccines for years. [43]

CNN then celebrated the censorship with a follow-up story touting, "Anti-vaccine movies disappear from Amazon after CNN Business report." [44] During a segment on CNN in 2009 Dr. Oz was talking with host Campbell Brown about the H1N1 (swine flu) vaccines, encouraging people to get them, but was put on the spot by the host about her concerns that they may not be safe. He responded, "I'm going to get it, if that helps at all, but I'll tell you my wife is not going to immunize our kids. Cuz I've got four of them and when I go home I'm not Dr. Oz, I'm Mr. Oz." [45]

So he went on television encouraging people to take the vaccine and give it to *their* children, but admitted that he's not going to give it to his own children because his wife didn't think it was safe; and despite him being a famous doctor, he couldn't convince her otherwise and allowed his children to go unvaccinated.

Netflix also censored an episode of comedian Hasan Minhaj's show, blocking it for customers in Saudi Arabia at the request of the government there because in it he talked about Saudi Arabia's role in the 9/11 attacks and the murder of *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the hands of Saudis. [46]

Netflix will not stream the 1980s classic *Dukes of Hazzard* because that's too "racist" today. Reruns of the show were pulled from TV Land and other cable networks in 2015 after growing sentiment that the Confederate Flag is a "white supremacist" symbol, and since the Duke boys' car (The

General Lee) has one painted on the roof, networks now deem the TV show too offensive to air. [47] Other classic TV shows and movies will likely slowly and quietly disappear from the streaming services and cable TV because they're deemed too "insensitive" for our modern age. Owning DVDs may be the only way to ever see them again.

A growing number of activists are upset about *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* for what they call its "contempt" for LGBT people because the main suspect in the movie later started living as a woman and after catching him and realizing this, Jim Carrey goes into convulsions vomiting while having flashbacks to when "she" had kissed him earlier in the film. Or other comedies like *Mrs. Doubtfire* or Tyler Perry's "Medea" character may be banned for being "transphobic" as well. Or films like *Idiocracy* , *The Breakfast Club* , or *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* because characters call people fags. Or maybe even *The Sand Lot* since one boy tells another that he plays baseball like a girl. That's sexist!

In 2018, Barack and Michelle Obama signed a deal with Netflix to produce several documentaries, scripted series, and full-length feature films through a production company they started called Higher Ground. [48] "Touching on issues of race and class, democracy and civil rights, and much more, we believe each of these productions won't just entertain, but will educate, connect and inspire us all," said Barack. [49]

The couple's debut documentary *American Factory* was hailed as their "first big anti-Trump statement of 2020" by Politico, although it didn't mention him by name "it's message is clear." [50] Others called it "lefty propaganda" and an attack on Trump. [51]

Netflix has also produced various liberal "comedy" shows called Netflix Originals which have included hosts like skank Chelsea Handler, Michelle Wolf, and other insufferable and non-funny Leftists. Similarly, Hulu produced a show hosted by Sarah Silverman called “I Love You America” which got canceled after two seasons, calling into question the streaming services ability to tap into the late-night talk show genre. [52] They also produced a documentary following the Congressional campaign of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

After Georgia’s controversial “heartbeat” abortion bill was signed by the governor in May 2019 which bans abortions after six weeks into the pregnancy, Netflix announced they may quit using the state as a production location because several of their shows like “Stranger Things” and “Ozark” are shot there. They even vowed to help fight the bill in court. [53] It certainly is strange for a major corporation to take a stance on abortion, but that’s where we’re at.

Amazon Banning Books

Banning books was once seen as the ultimate sin, and something only the Nazis would do, but today we’re seeing a growing number of books disappearing down the memory hole in the name of political correctness and stopping “hate speech.” 65% of all books are sold through Amazon and they have a virtual monopoly over the entire industry. [54] They are the reason Borders, Walden Books, and B. Dalton went out of business. Amazon advertises themselves as the world’s largest bookstore where you can find practically any book, new or used, since if they don’t stock it, they (supposedly) allow anyone to list used copies for sale themselves.

For over twenty years since Amazon was launched in 1995 they would sell any book new or used, but recently that all changed. In July 2018 a children’s book titled *No Dress for Timmy* was banned for being “transphobic.” It was written by Shefflorn Ballantyne and is described as, “A story of a little boy who found himself in a perplexing situation where he was forced to choose between speaking the truth and cheering on a friend who thinks of himself as a girl.” [55] The young protagonist basically wouldn’t support a transgender classmate.

After an LGBT advocacy organization called Family Rhetoric discovered it when searching for LGBT-themed children books, they launched a campaign to pressure Amazon to ban the book, which they did. The group later celebrated on their Facebook page saying, “We did it. You did it friends! The link to *No Dress for Timmy* is not working. Amazon took down the book. It’s gone!” [56] And indeed it is.

Amazon banned almost all of pickup artist Roosh V’s books just days after his latest one was released, titled *Game: How to Meet, Attract, and Date Attractive Women.* [57] They wouldn’t even give him a reason, just that they “violated” their policy and “can’t offer any additional insight or action on this matter.” [58] Roosh had come to the attention of various radical feminist groups who see him as a huge “misogynist” for his views on women and feminism, and they most likely lobbied Amazon to pull his books.

Juanita Broaddrick’s book about Bill Clinton allegedly raping her was removed in June 2018, and then later restored. [59] It appears that Amazon keeps testing how far they can push the envelope by gauging the backlash, but not everyone is so lucky to have their books re-listed after media reports denounce the censorship.

In August 2018 Amazon banned a book that contained plans to build a 3D printed gun called *The Liberator Code Book: An Exercise in Freedom of Speech* , which had been listed by the publisher just a few weeks earlier. An Amazon spokesperson said it violated their guidelines. [60] Yet they sell the *Anarchist’s Cookbook* and other bomb-making manuals (at least at the time this book was first published in November 2019). *The Anarchist’s*

Cookbook author William Powell later denounced his terrorist manual which he wrote in 1971 when he was just nineteen-years-old. [61] But he does not own the rights to the book; the publisher does (now Ozark Press), which keeps it in print, and which Amazon still sells. [62]

The Columbine school shooters, who planted bombs in the school aside from shooting and killing twelve students and one teacher, owned a copy of the *Anarchist's Cookbook* and used it to manufacture their bombs. [63] When members of the Black Liberation Army were arrested in the 1970s for murdering several police officers, they had a copy in their possession and are believed to have planted a bomb in a San Francisco church during the funeral of a police officer who died in the line of duty. [64]

Thomas Eugene Spinks, who bombed ten abortion clinics in the 1980s, used the *Anarchist Cookbook* to build his bombs. [65] Many others have used it as well, including Timothy McVeigh, who carried out the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, and the radical Islamic terrorists who committed the July 2005 bombings on the London public transportation system used the book as their instruction manual too. So *No Dress for Timmy* is too "transphobic" to be sold, but a literal bomb-making manual used by terrorists in numerous high-profile bombings is okay.

Jared Taylor, a leader in the white identitarian [pro-white] community, had several of his books censored from Amazon in February 2019, including *White Identity* , despite having been sold on the site since 2011. [66] The following month Tommy Robinson's book *Mohammed's Koran* was banned from Amazon just days after Facebook and Instagram banned him (in response to Tommy posting a documentary critical of the BBC on his YouTube channel). [67] His book was deemed "Islamophobic." [68]

Then in March 2019 they banned David Duke's autobiography *My Awakening* and another one of his books titled *Jewish Supremacism* where he details what he believes is a Jewish supremacist belief system within Judaism. [69] The books had been available on Amazon since they first came out, one in 1998, and the other in 2004, but were removed shortly after a no-name freelance writer "inquired" about why Amazon was selling books written by a "white supremacist." [70] They're not just shown as out of stock or unavailable; the entire listings for the books have been deleted, and it appears Amazon is also prohibiting any 3rd party sellers from listing used copies as well.

They also banned several books published by the Nation of Islam which were critical of Jews, [71] as well as a few written by Christian pastor Texe Marrs, including *Holy Serpent of the Jews* , for being "anti-semitic." [72] This is especially interesting because Amazon still sells Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (for now). [73]

After CNN successfully pressured Amazon to censor various popular documentary films from their Prime Video streaming service in March 2019 that question the safety of some vaccines, they went on to lament that Amazon still sold "anti-vaccine" books, saying, "while some anti-vaccine videos are gone from the Prime streaming service, a number of anti-vaccine books were still available for purchase on Amazon.com when CNN Business reviewed search results on Friday afternoon, and some were still being offered for free to Kindle Unlimited subscribers." [74] Amazon soon banned several "anti-vax" books for promoting what they called "vaccine misinformation." [75]

In July 2019 they banned books by Dr. Joseph Nicolosi, who is best known for advocating conversion therapy for homosexuals. Two of his most popular books on the subject, *Healing Homosexuality* and *A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality* were taken down after sustained pressure from LGBT activists. [76] Perhaps Amazon will ban some of Sigmund

Freud's books next because he believed that homosexuality was caused by a disruption in a child's development due to a dysfunctional relationship with their parents in terms of the role those parents fill in their lives. [77]

For several years now Amazon has banned sales of all Confederate flags because they're considered to be symbols of "white supremacy" these days. [78] They have also banned the sale of various Halloween costumes liberals consider to be offensive, like the "Tranny Granny" costume that's "transphobic," [79] a Chinese dress for being "cultural appropriation," and a "sexy burka" costume for being disrespectful to Islam. In January 2019 Amazon removed dozens of other products that were said to be offensive to Muslims as well. [80]

Meanwhile, an album by a band called Marduk titled "Fuck Me Jesus" is allowed, which shows a naked woman using a crucifix as a dildo on the cover. [81] Amazon also sells a song titled "Fuck White People" which has a noose on the album cover. [82] They also stock various black supremacist books that promote hate groups like the Black Hebrew Israelites.

Twitch.TV

Twitch.TV (which is owned by Amazon) is a website where people livestream themselves playing video games (I know this seems strange to anyone over 40) and they can have a large number of viewers who enjoy watching them play. Like YouTube livestreams, there is a chat box on Twitch where viewers can post comments and even tip the player.

While it's mostly for video games, sometimes the gamers will talk politics during their streams, and the Thought Police are watching in case they say something "racist," "sexist," "homophobic," etc., etc. One gamer was recently banned from Twitch for simply saying there are only two genders. [83] The email informing her of the ban read, "Your recent behavior has proven your lack of understanding of what hateful speech is and how it may affect your community on your channel…Several of your statements have been found offensive towards the transgender community, and we don't tolerate this kind of behavior." [84]

In a YouTube video discussing the ban she said, "I specifically said, it's okay if a man wants to be a woman, and a woman wants to be a man, you cannot be anything in between," referring to the odd "gender fluid," "pan gender," and the dozens of other "genders" liberals have invented.

A popular DJ named Deadmouse (stylized Deadmau5), who also streamed on Twitch for fun was banned for "hate speech" after he called another streamer a dreaded "homophobic slur." He issued a statement saying, "It was intended to insult a fuckin asshat who was being a fucking asshat…it wasn't 'directed at an entire group of people who have a sexual orientation that differs from my own.' Fuck off with that shit. I know who I am, and I don't have to fucking sit here and cry and defend my fucking self with the obligatory 'I'M NOT THAT PERSON, I AM SORRY" reflex… The sane people who knew what it was in the heat of the moment knew the purpose of the statement, and the people that think otherwise, I'm better off not even fucking knowing and they can just keep the fuck clear of me." [85]

It was great to see someone of his celebrity push back against this PC nonsense, but he soon backtracked and issued an apology, along with apologizing for his previous "non-apology" in response to the ban, saying, "I know what I said was wrong, and my hastily composed non-apology was an insult to injury." [86]

Many other Twitch streamers have had their accounts suspended and banned for just uttering what moderators *thought* were "slurs" out loud in a fit of anger when something went wrong on the game they're playing when they actually said something that just sounded similar to one. [87] So even while players are virtually "mass murdering" people in a video game, the Thought Police are carefully monitoring them to make sure their off-the-cuff commentary doesn't happen to offend someone in the LGBTQ community or other "protected group." One streamer was even given a 30-day suspension for calling another player a "mongoloid," because Twitch considers that "hate speech" too. [88]

Like YouTube and Facebook Live, Twitch uses real-time voice recognition systems to analyze what people are saying in order to lookout for any words that are flagged as being inappropriate. Monitoring livestreams using AI is one of the top priorities of the tech companies due to the bad press they get when someone livestreams something completely ridiculous (or criminal) so they are putting enormous resources into being able to detect what is being said in real-time, and even what is being shown so they can take down a stream if their algorithm deems the broadcast includes anything "inappropriate." Twitch, however, like all the other major platforms turns a blind eye when liberals flagrantly violate their rules.

A popular streamer who goes by "Destiny" (real name Steven Kenneth Bonnell II) has explicitly called for violence against conservatives on at least one occasion. When he was asked during a stream, "You genuinely do hate conservatives, don't you?" he answered, "Very much so. I've moved full-on to the political violence level or the real violence level when it comes to conservative people. I feel like they need to be fucking excised from my fucking country. I think they're demonstrably evil people." [89] He remains on the platform and his channel is still monetized.

Alex Jones "Unpersoned"

One of the scariest aspects of censorship isn't a few songs, movies, or books disappearing from the Internet, but a person being deleted. An

“Unperson” is a term from George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that describes someone whose very existence has been erased from society, and this basically happened to radio talk show host Alex Jones in August 2018.

Within the course of just a few days he was banned from YouTube, Facebook, iTunes, the TuneIn radio app, Spotify, Stitcher, Pinterest, and even LinkedIn! Years of archived shows and interviews just disappeared. PayPal also closed his account, preventing his website Infowars.com from accepting payments through the service, [90] and numerous credit card processors also refused to allow him to have an account, making it difficult to accept debit and credit cards for the products he sells.

Liberals were thrilled with the actions, including Democrat Senator Chris Murphy from Connecticut who said, “Infowars is the tip of a giant iceberg of hate and lies that uses sites like Facebook and YouTube to tear our nation apart. These companies must do more than take down one website. The survival of our democracy depends on it.” [91]

Many conservatives, even those who think Alex Jones is a raving lunatic, were quite concerned about his sudden “disappearance” from the Internet. Even Senator Ted Cruz defended Alex, tweeting, “Am no fan of Jones — among other things he has a habit of repeatedly slandering my Dad by falsely and absurdly accusing him of killing JFK — but who the hell made Facebook the arbiter of political speech? Free speech includes views you disagree with.” [92]

Others came to his defense as well, including Bill Maher who said despite Jones telling “lies” about him, “if you’re a liberal, you’re supposed to be for free speech. That’s free speech for the speech you hate. That’s what free speech means. We’re losing the thread of the concepts that are important to this country. You care about the real American shit or you don’t. And if you do, it goes for every side. I don’t like Alex Jones, but Alex Jones gets to speak. Everybody gets to speak.” [93]

The ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] even warned his ban could set a dangerous precedent and expressed concerns that the pendulum could swing the other way some day, and groups like Black Lives Matter could be shut down under the same pretense. [94]

President Trump appeared to reference the unpersoning of Alex Jones which had made national headlines, saying, “I won’t mention any names but when they take certain people off of Twitter or Facebook and they’re making that decision, that is really a dangerous thing because that could be you tomorrow.” [95]

Alex Jones Was Just the Beginning

Many people who were quite concerned about Alex Jones getting unpersoned overnight were afraid to speak out against it because they didn’t want to appear as if they supported Jones because of some of the outlandish things he has said over the years, but Big Tech coordinating with each other to ban him was just a test case and the beginning of what was to come.

The editor in chief of *The Verge* , one of Vox Media’s online properties, started calling for Fox News to be taken off the air next, saying, “I feel like we should be just as comfortable asking Comcast and Verizon and Charter why they continue to offer Fox News on their networks as we are about Facebook and Alex Jones.” [96]

Immediately after Jones was universally deplatformed PBS did a report about it and in that report complained that he had inspired countless “imitators” who “sell merchandise” and then showed a clip of me from one of my YouTube videos promoting my popular t-shirts.

Apple CEO Tim Cook then said it's a "sin" for social media platforms not to ban people the Left deems "hateful" and "divisive." He was given the first "Courage Against Hate Award" from the Jewish ADL, and during his acceptance speech said, "We only have one message for those who seek to push hate, division, and violence: You have no place on our platforms. You have no home here." [97] He went on to say, "and as we showed this year, we won't give a platform to violent conspiracy theorists on the app store," referring to banning Alex Jones. "Why? Because it's the right thing to do," Cook concluded. [98]

Even conservative darling Ben Shapiro is technically in violation of their terms of service for "hate speech" by saying transgenderism is a mental illness. [99] They could drop the hammer on anyone at anytime for things they've said years ago, and even "off platform," meaning things said in interviews or speeches that didn't even directly involve social media.

Just voting for Donald Trump is considered "hate speech" by the Silicon Valley titans, and it won't be long now before they include negative tone of voice, contorted facial expressions or even supposed "code words" and "dog whistles" into their terms of service as things that are not allowed.

For example, if someone is reporting on a new television commercial featuring two gay men who are raising a child they adopted and react with a disgusted look on their face, or a sarcastic, "I'm sure the child will grow up to be totally normal." That will likely be a violation of their policies. George Orwell even warned about such things in his classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* , saying, "to wear an improper expression on your face (to look incredulous when a victory was announced, for example) was itself a punishable offense. There was even a word for it in Newspeak: facecrime, it was called." [100]

They’ll start claiming that certain words or phrases are “code words” for something else just like they’ve done with the “okay” hand sign, and soon nobody will be safe from being smeared as a “white supremacist,” “Islamophobe,” “homophobe,” “xenophobe,” etc.

The Left are now engaged in a Maoist-style attempted overthrow of our culture and our country, and are systematically purging influential dissenting voices from social media. Get ready, because this is just the beginning. They don’t just want prominent vocal opponents of the liberal agenda silenced; they want our lives destroyed.

Some people believe censorship amplifies extremism by forcing people to descend into the dark corners of the Internet where their ideas aren’t challenged or debunked by onlookers who disagree with them, and so they fester in an echo chamber that fuels and radicalizes them. Censoring someone who’s not calling for violence can also be seen as confirmation that they are being persecuted and cultivate a sense that they feel justified fighting back in a more extreme way. By having their voice taken away for what was perfectly legal speech, they may be compelled to act out in other ways in order to “be heard.”

The liberal Establishment is working tirelessly to take down any independent social media personalities who organically gain sizable followings, and if they’re truly independent, meaning not working for a major media outlet then they are extremely vulnerable because they don’t have a legal department behind them that can push back on their behalf. They have developed a formula to take us down. First, a few unscrupulous liberal online outlets like the Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, and Vox label certain conservatives “Alt-Right” or “right-wing extremists” and then the editors at Wikipedia update those people’s pages to claim they are a white nationalists or neo-Nazis and use those dubious reports as “sources” to solidify the smear.

And since Wikipedia is the go-to place for information for most people and one of the top search results on Google, anyone looking those people up from that point on will be presented with information claiming they’re a racist or far-right extremist. Then, even more outlets repeat the false claims, thus generating even more news articles from mainstream sources parroting the smear which are then used to add even more citations to the Wikipedia articles to reinforce their false narrative.

These liberal outlets know that most people don’t have the vast resources necessary to sue for defamation, and so they are forever branded a “racist.” Then the self-referencing Wikipedia page is used as the justification to demonetize their YouTube channels and suspend their PayPal accounts to cutoff their revenue streams in order to crush them into silence. In our current political climate, especially as the 2020 election is approaching, I wake up every morning wondering if today will be the day that it happens to me.

What’s Next?

How far will this fascism go? Will Visa, MasterCard, or American Express deactivate certain accounts because the banks don’t like what some people say or believe? Will Bank of America and Wells Fargo start closing people’s checking accounts because they don’t like their politics? Some banks are already doing just that. Chase Bank issued a letter to Proud Boys (a pro-Trump men’s fraternity) leader Enrique Tarrio that they would be closing his account and he had until the end of the month to move all his money somewhere else. [101] Then Joe Biggs, a former reporter for Infowars who banks at Chase, got the same notification. Others did as well, including

Martina Markota who works for the conservative news site Rebel Media. [102]

After word spread of the shocking move, outraging many veterans groups because Joe Biggs is an Iraq vet, Chase re-activated his account, but wouldn't give him a reason as to why they had initially banned him. [103] PayPal has already banned Alex Jones, Laura Loomer, Milo Yiannopoulous, Lauren Southern, Tommy Robinson, Gavin McInnes, Roosh V, Faith Goldy, as well as Twitter alternative Gab, and YouTube alternative BitChute because they support free speech and won't ban users for posting things that hurt others feelings. [104]

A senior software engineer at Google recommended the company delete Donald Trump's G-mail account, and that of everyone working in his administration. He even suggested they "brick" Donald Trump's cell phone. [105] A "bricked" phone, if you're not familiar with the term, means one that is completely deactivated and won't even turn on. So the engineer was literally recommending Google remotely disable Donald Trump's phone, since they are the owners of the Android operating system which it uses.

We only know about this because the proposal was included in a series of documents obtained as part of a lawsuit filed by former Google employee James Damore who was fired after circulating a memo explaining how the company's obsession with "diversity" is misguided.

While the company didn't authorize those radical actions, who's to say in the future they (or Apple) won't ban certain people from using their phones? When you activate a smartphone you "agree" to the terms and conditions, even though hardly anyone actually reads them. Those terms also say the manufacturer can change the terms at any time, so what's to stop them from adding a clause that says they reserve the right to brick your phone (or computer) if they feel you're engaging in certain kinds of behavior or speech that they find objectionable? Perhaps Google didn’t want the publicity and the backlash of sabotaging the President of the United States’ cellphone, but what’s to stop them from doing it to people who aren’t as powerful or well known?

How far will the Silicon Valley titans go to stamp out vocal critics of the radical Leftists’ agenda? Will video editing software companies deactivate their software on people’s computers if they don’t like the content people are creating? Will Photoshop not sell their software to artists who are making the “wrong” kind of memes? Or will Microsoft and Apple refuse to license their operating systems on the computers (or smartphones) of political activists, social media personalities, or authors they consider racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, Islamophobic, etc.?

Or maybe their local ISP [Internet Service Provider] won’t even allow them to have an Internet connection or will start blocking certain websites.[106] What if Priceline or Orbitz decides not to sell you a plane ticket because they refuse to do business with “hateful” people? Or if Enterprise decides they won’t rent you a car. Or a popular gas station chain won’t sell you gas? What if a major grocery store chain decides they won’t sell you any food? If Visa or Mastercard blacklist you, then you won’t even be able to have a debit card. If no banks will allow you to have an account, how can you cash your paycheck?

In the Bible, a prophecy in the Book of Revelation says that one day “no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name,” warning that people who don’t worship the counterfeit Christ will be completely cut off economically from the modern world. It appears we are beginning to see the justifications for such widespread bans by those who control the backbone of the financial system.

Section 230 of the CDA

Technically, private companies can ban people from their platforms as long as it’s not because of their race, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, country of origin, or other legally “protected” class. But political affiliation is not a protected class, and companies could legally ban all Republicans if they wanted to. Laws and regulations are always many years behind innovation, and the framers of the legislation governing our communication infrastructure could have never imagined the emergence of social media, let alone how instrumental of a role it would come to play in our lives.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in order to overhaul the rules and regulations governing communication systems in response to the development of the Internet. Within the Act was a subsection called the Communications Decency Act, and Section 230 of the law granted immunity to Internet Service Providers, Domain Registrars, and website hosting services so if customers use these services in ways that violate copyright laws (or criminal statutes), the companies themselves are not liable for the legal consequences because they are not deemed publishers, but platforms, and are not responsible what their customers are posting.

In other words, if someone posts an episode of *The Big Bang Theory* television show on their YouTube channel, YouTube is not responsible for that person violating CBS’s copyright (as long as YouTube would promptly remove the infringing video if notified by CBS.) Because YouTube provides a service (i.e. the “platform”) to the public, they can’t necessarily prevent people from using that service to post copyrighted material, so they are given “safe harbor” and are immune from any civil or criminal penalties when their users break the law.

Section 230 of the CDA also granted immunity to Internet Service Providers and interactive websites if third party users post defamatory information about someone, [107] death threats, [108] or even if they sell fake merchandise on eBay, meaning eBay is not responsible, only the person posting the fake listing is.

Today, many Big Tech companies are abusing their immunity granted to them by Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act by censoring certain users and posts and deciding themselves what to delete from their platforms, when that content is not violating any laws. They are now acting as publishers, not platforms, because they are making editorial decisions about what will and will not be allowed. If a person posts something that doesn’t violate any laws, then why should the social media companies have the right to take it down if they are in the business of offering a platform for (supposedly) anyone to use?

Currently there is a loophole in section 230 that allows for what it calls “Good Samaritan” blocking and screening of “obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing, or otherwise objectionable content.” [109] So they interpret “objectionable” content as being facts or opinions that hurt people’s feelings or undermine the liberal agenda.

Further evidence that section 230 of the CDA is outdated and unfair can be seen by the fact that a court ruled that President Trump can’t block people on Twitter after several trolls who he had blocked found a law firm that sued the President on their behalf. [110] The court ruled that Trump can’t block people on social media because it “deprives them of access to official Presidential statements,” and his feeds are considered a “public square.” This begs the question, why is Facebook, Twitter and YouTube allowed to deprive citizens access to that same public square?

If the President of the United States can't "deprive" someone of access to his statements on social media, why should the tech companies be allowed to do that to ordinary citizens? Facebook and Twitter are basically the modern day equivalent of a telephone, or post office. They've become an intimate and crucial part of billions of people's lives. It's how friends and families communicate with each other, and share photos and videos. It's where they send out party invitations and look up old childhood friends or family members they've lost touch with. It's how they get their news and see what the President is saying.

Imagine the phone company canceling your service because they didn't like what you and your friends talked about. That's essentially what Facebook and other social media platforms are doing today when they suspend people, delete their posts, or ban them completely because of what they say when their statements are not crimes, but just a "controversial," "divisive," or "hateful" point of view.

The power these mega corporations have over how billions of people on the planet communicate with each other is staggering. And the fact that they are working in concert together to enforce their arbitrary and bias "terms of service" to silence certain people and points of view is beyond horrifying. As George Washington said, "If the freedom of speech is taken away then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter." [111]

Author's Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com, or wherever you purchased it from if you're reading the e-book, to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them.

Almost all of the one-star reviews on Amazon for my last two books "The True Story of Fake News" and "Liberalism: Find a Cure" are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent hence me adding this note.

It's just more proof that liberals are losers and can't play fair, so if you could help me combat them as soon as possible since you actually bought this book, that would be great!

Thank you!

The Memory Hole

Censorship encompasses much more than people getting their posts and accounts deleted from social media platforms. It involves the mainstream media self-censoring stories and certain issues as well. They lie by omission and purposefully ignore events and individuals they don't want to give publicity to, even when what's happening fully warrants extensive coverage.

They spent years chasing after "Russian agents" who are supposedly around every corner trying to infiltrate every aspect of America, while ignoring that the National Security Agency actually considers Israel to be the top espionage threat against the United States. [112] While regularly portraying Muslims and Jews as poor minorities who are constantly persecuted by Islamophobes and anti-Semites, the American media never reports that Christians are actually the most persecuted religion in the world, and are being murdered at such a rate in the Middle East that it is considered to be "near genocide levels" according to human rights groups. [113]

When a reporter for Reuters learned that Beto O'Rourke was a member of the infamous Cult of the Dead Cow hacking group when he was a teenager, he promised Beto he wouldn't reveal that information until after the 2018 midterm election when Beto was running against Ted Cruz for his Senate seat. [114] During the campaign Beto was already being haunted by his past for leaving the scene of an accident he caused while driving drunk, and if word got out that he was also committing computer crimes as well, it certainly wouldn't have looked good.

PBS edited out a part of *Finding Your Roots* , a documentary series that traces celebrities' ancestry, after Ben Affleck discovered that his ancestors owned slaves and then pressured the network to cut that part out of the episode, which they did, so it wouldn't hurt his image. [115] We only know about the censorship because hacked emails from Sony were posted on Wikileaks, including one between *Finding Your Roots* host Henry Louis Gates Jr. and the CEO of Sony Entertainment discussing Affleck's request. [116]

In our digital world, news outlets can alter an article or a headline after something is published without most people even noticing, covering up falsehoods and mistakes, or even changing the overall message of the story. This often results in an inflammatory article going viral and whipping people into a frenzy, only to later have key points quietly changed in response to the backlash. Sometimes outlets have other reasons for dumping things down the memory hole.

For example, the popular New Zealand news website Stuff.co.nz quietly deleted an article about how a local resident had allegedly been "introduced to radical Islam at the Al-Noor mosque in Christchurch," immediately after a white supremacist walked into the same mosque and livestreamed his mass-murder of 50 Muslims inside. [117] It appears the website was trying to prevent word from getting out that the attacker appeared to have targeted that particular mosque because it had allegedly been linked to Muslim extremists.

Project Censored

Have you heard of Project Censored? Most people have not, which is the ultimate irony because it's an organization that highlights important under-reported or censored stories that mainstream media buries. Each year they publish a list of the top 25 censored or under-reported stories in America hoping to give them the attention they deserve. "Under-reported" meaning that they may have been mentioned in some mainstream outlets, but weren't front page stories or didn't dominate the news cycle for a week as they should have due to their importance.

In our fast paced world, if a story isn't one that happens to get circulated in the news cycle non-stop for a week, it is almost immediately forgotten by most people who are swept up in the next wave of reporting about mass shootings, fires, floods, celebrity gossip, health scares, and political scandals.

Project Censored was founded in 1976 at Sonoma State University by a professor who wanted to expose censorship and propaganda in mainstream media. It has been praised by many media analysts around the world. Whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the Pentagon Papers which showed that the Johnson administration lied to the American people and Congress about the reasons for getting involved in the Vietnam War, said Project Censored, "shines light in the dark places of our government that most need exposure." [118]

Even Walter Cronkite, who anchored the *CBS Evening News* for almost twenty years and who was considered to be "the most trusted man in

America" said, "Project Censored is one of the organizations that we should listen to, to be assured that our newspapers and our broadcasting outlets are practicing thorough and ethical journalism." [119]

The Los Angeles Times once admitted that Project Censored, "offers devastating evidence of the dumbing-down of mainstream news in America" and said their annual book of the top 25 most censored and under-reported stories was, "Required reading for broadcasters, journalists, and well-informed citizens." [120]

New York Times Best Seller List

When the *New York Times* learned the NSA was illegally spying on tens of millions of Americans they sat on the story for over a year and only published it after the reporter who got his story killed by the editors decided to write a book about the spying since the paper couldn't stop him from publishing that. [121] But that's not the only censorship the *New York Times* has engaged in. They even censor books from their prestigious "best seller" list.

Ted Cruz's book *A Time for Truth* was excluded from their list in 2015 when it qualified to be number three on the list. [122] They claimed it was because most of the sales were from bulk orders, which they say was evidence that an author is ordering their own book to artificially inflate the numbers, but the publisher HarperCollins issued a statement saying they investigated the sales patterns and found no evidence of any such bulk orders. [123]

Cruz's campaign tweeted "The New York Times is lying — they should release their evidence or issue a formal apology." [124] A few days later, the book was then finally included on the best seller list. [125]

Bill O'Reilly's book *Legends & Lies: The Patriots* was included on *The New York Times* best sellers list when it came out in 2016, but was only ranked number six despite being number one on the *Wall Street Journal's* best seller list, as well as number one on the *Publisher's Weekly* list. At the time the Nielsen organization reported Bill O'Reilly's book sold 24,348 copies that week, while the number one book on *The New York Times* best seller list, *The Gene* , sold only 9,781 copies. [126]

The New York Times also omitted a bestselling book about the Philadelphia abortionist Dr. Kermit Gosnell who killed babies that were born alive during his attempted abortions and was found to have kept baby body parts in jars around his office. He was later convicted of three counts of murder and one count of involuntary manslaughter but the liberal media paid little attention to the trial because it cast abortion in such a horrific light. [127]

The book's co-author Ann McElhinney said it is "shocking that the cover-up of the Gosnell story is continuing…It's clear that this is a blatant fake list in a fake news newspaper…It's not only an insult to the people who have bought this book, but an insult to the readers of *The New York Times* who buy the newspaper and think they are getting the truth about book sales across America but instead get false facts disguised as a neutral list." [128]

In October 2018 when Stormy Daniels' book came out detailing her alleged affair with Donald Trump, the *New York Times* included it on their top 10 best seller list but not Fox News' Jeanine Pirro's book *Liars, Leakers, and Liberals* , or David Limbaugh's *Jesus is Risen* , both of which had actually sold more copies than Stormy's. [129]

In June 2019, CNN's Jim Acosta released a book about President Trump titled *The Enemy of the People: A Dangerous Time to Tell the Truth*

In America that didn't even make it into the top 50 on Amazon's best seller list and completely dropped off the top 100 list after just two days. But the *New York Times* placed Acosta's book at number ten on their "best seller" list, proving once again it's not an accurate ranking of the week's best-selling books, but really just a favorites list of the editors.

Books are so powerful that today liberals even protest companies which decide to publish certain authors. Simon & Schuster came under tremendous fire when it was revealed they had signed a deal with right-wing provocateur Milo Yiannopolous, causing the publisher to become one of the top trends on Twitter from triggered liberals calling for people to boycott not just Milo's book (which they weren't going to read anyway), but every book Simon and Schuster publishes! [130]

Hollywood producer Judd Apatow tweeted support of the boycott, saying, "I am in! In these times we can not let hatemongers get rich off of their cruelty. Shame on Simon (and) Schuster." [131] Former Governor of Vermont Howard Dean tweeted, "This is an embarrassment for [Simon & Schuster] and their owner CBS which is already on record putting their company ahead of the USA." [132] The publisher eventually canceled their contract with Milo and he later had to self-publish it.

Illegal Immigration

The facts about illegal immigration are rarely allowed into the news cycle because the American people would learn just how big of a crisis it is, and the damage illegal aliens are doing to our country. In 2015 over 50% of *legal* immigrant households received some form of government welfare—including food stamps, housing assistance, school lunch programs, or Medicaid. [133] A 2018 report by the Center for Immigration Studies found that 63% of non-citizens use at least one form of welfare. [134] While the liberal media loves to report that they're just coming here to work, the fact is millions of them are sucking off our tax dollars.

Many illegal immigrants come infected with diseases as well, including ones that had been previously eradicated from the United States, like measles—resulting in new "mysterious" outbreaks (at places like Disneyland) because the diseases are imported by illegal aliens and those claiming to seek asylum. [135]

Just in the last few years there have been thousands of murders committed by illegal aliens. [136] Lives stolen and families shattered by people who should have never been in our country in the first place. Every day there are headlines in local papers about violent illegal aliens ("undocumented workers," as liberals call them) being arrested, and the stories may get a 15-second sound bite on the local news, but that's it. The number of drunk driving arrests, thefts, burglaries, rapes, and other crimes they commit on a daily basis is staggering. One study shows that illegal aliens commit crimes at double the rate of native-born citizens. [137]

In June 2018 when President Trump met with Angel Families at the White House (people whose family members have been killed by illegal aliens), both MSNBC and CNN abruptly cut their live feed and began talking about how the Trump administration isn't treating illegal immigrant families who sneak into our country good enough. Ironically, during the meeting a woman who lost her son to an illegal alien drunk driver began telling the president, "The mainstream media does not let you know what is really happening." [138]

Democrats say the flood of illegals entering our country isn't a national emergency, as President Trump declared, meanwhile in a recent four-month period Border Patrol agents apprehended 136,000 people crossing from Mexico into the U.S. illegally. [139] In February 2019 alone over 66,400 people were arrested trying to cross the border, the most detained in a single month in over ten years. [140]

During one live feed on MSNBC when their reporter was down at the border talking about the prototypes for Trump's proposed new wall, in the background a group of illegal aliens climbed over the current short and inadequate fence that's only a few feet high, right in the middle of his report. [141]

The Left go so far when denying and defending the crimes of illegal aliens that when Donald Trump called MS-13 gang members "animals" the Democrats and their mouthpieces in the media began claiming that he was referring to immigrants in general! "Trump calls immigrants animals" was their new talking point which was repeated for years as a deceptively edited video of his statement continues to circulate as the "proof." [142] MS-13 is widely considered to be the most sadistic and vicious street gang in the world by law enforcement agencies. [143] Their motto is "rape, control, kill" and they are known for torturing and dismembering people. [144]

Democrats all used to support expanding the border wall and were tough on illegal immigration, until Donald Trump became president. [145] You've probably seen the video compilations of Chuck Schumer, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and other top Democrats all previously supporting the wall and saying we need to stop the influx of illegals crossing the border—but that has changed.

It appears the Democrats don't support the blue collar working class any more. President Trump has won most of them over to his side, so now the Democrats are hoping to build a new base of future voters consisting of Americans who are too lazy to work and want free handouts from a Socialist government, and 20 million illegal aliens who they are hoping to grant citizenship to.

Transgender Crimes

Transgender people have an extremely high rate of mental illness, [146] so it should be expected that they also have a high rate of crime. But because they're part of a legally "protected class" and liberals see them as having achieved the next phase in human evolution, the media always ignores the dangers they pose to society. While their crimes may be reported briefly in local outlets where they occurred, the national conversation regarding transgender people is always framed as if they are amazing and special people who are being treated unfairly by society because they are different.

A 30-year-old transgender "woman" in Wyoming was convicted of raping a ten-year-old girl in a bathroom in 2017 but nobody really heard about this story except for maybe some locals. [147] Another transgender "woman" sexually assaulted a ten-year-old girl in a grocery store bathroom in Scotland but avoided jail and was just given community service. [148]

A 52-year-old transgender "woman" was arrested for raping (an actual) woman in 2016 and then once placed in a female jail "she" sexually assaulted four female prisoners within the first few days. [149] This story spread through social media because people found it so disturbing, but some were in denial and thought it was a hoax, causing Snopes to post an article asking "Did a Male Rapist Who Identifies as Female Transfer to a Women's Jail and Assault Female Inmates?" and rated the claim "True." [150]

In March 2019 a black transgender "woman" in New York was arrested for hate crimes after targeting random white women walking along the sidewalk near subway stations in Harlem and the Upper West Side and spraying them in the face with pepper spray. Police believe 37-year-old

Thomas Herd, a black man who identifies as a woman, was behind almost a dozen other similar attacks in the area. [151]

A transgender "woman" in Sydney, Australia was captured on surveillance cameras inside a 7-Eleven walking into the convenience store in January 2019 with an ax, and then randomly smashing two customers in the face after getting upset about a bad Tinder date. [152]

In 2015, a 30-year-old man dressed as a woman was arrested for secretly videotaping women in a mall's bathroom in Virginia. [153] A 37-year-old man in Toronto was arrested after he claimed to be a transgender "woman" and was allowed inside a women's shelter, where he then assaulted four women. [154] These are just a few of many examples.

Aside from ignoring the transgender Peeping Toms, rapes, and hate crimes that transgender "women" commit, the liberal media also ignores the rapes that gay men commit, and try to portray rape as something that only a man does to a woman, but the reality is that gay men raping other men occurs far more frequently than people know, particularly in the U.S. military since Barack Obama lifted the ban on gays being allowed in. [155]

Black Crime

The liberal media always portrays black people as being "racially profiled" by police and cite figures about black people being arrested at exponentially higher rates than whites as some kind of "proof" that the police are racist, but the reality is that black people per capita commit significantly more violent crimes than whites, so it only makes sense that they would get arrested more!

Since liberals don't know anything about math, when you mention that black men commit murder at approximately ten times the average of whites, they may lookup the statistics and claim that's not true, but they are only comparing the *total* number of murders committed by whites to the *total* number committed by blacks, and don't factor in that blacks are only about 14% of the U.S. population. [156]

The figures are *per capita* , meaning the average per person, and since less than 20% of murders in Chicago are actually solved, [157] the number of murders committed by black people is likely much higher than the FBI and Department of Justice records show, which again, reveal that black people commit murder at close to ten times the average of whites. Not twice as many per capita, or three times as many—*ten times* , or 1000% more murders per capita!

Unfortunately many black Americans have embraced the identity of a thug, and see gangster rappers as role models, and view going to jail as a badge of honor. Local TV news in Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Baltimore cover the day's murders, stabbings, and robberies for a few minutes each night, and it's almost the same story the next night, and the night after that, but the black crime problem in America is never addressed as part of our national discussion.

Memorial Day weekend of 2016 in Chicago ended with 69 people shot, every one of them from black on black crime. [158] And while the story may have gotten a fifteen second segment on some of the national broadcast news networks, the horrifying weekend was forgotten by the next day. There was no CNN Town Hall special to discuss the violence problem there. No endless panelists brought on air to discuss it with Anderson Cooper or Don Lemon. It's like it never even happened.

The following year 52 people were shot in Chicago over the same holiday weekend. [159] 36 people were shot the year after that over Memorial Day weekend. [160] All black victims and black perpetrators. Over the Fourth of July holiday and Labor Day weekends the same thing happens every year. It's total carnage in the black communities in Chicago.

It's especially sad that the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement was built upon a foundation of lies. The list of armed and dangerous perpetrators justly shot and killed by police and then labeled "victims" of "police brutality" is long. In fact, convicted cop killer Assata Shakur, who fled to Cuba which granted her "political asylum," is considered to be an inspiration for starting the Black Lives Matter movement.[161] She was a member of the domestic terrorist organization the Black Liberation Army which stated their goal was to wage war against the United States government, and they carried out a series of bombings and assassinations of police officers in the 1970s.[162]

Many Black Lives Matter supporters carried on the philosophy of the Black Liberation Army and see themselves in a war against police. During their marches they would sometimes chant "What do we want? Dead cops! When do we want them? Now!"[163] In June 2015 two black men were arrested for plotting to blow up a police station in Ferguson, Missouri to get revenge for an officer shooting Michael Brown (after Brown attacked him and tried to take his gun).[164] In July 2016 a black man ambushed a group of police officers during a Black Lives Matter march in Dallas, Texas, killing five of them and injuring nine others.[165]

In 2017 when groups of black youth were robbing people of their cellphones at a train station in San Francisco, police refused to release security footage of the crimes "to avoid racial stereotypes."[166] Debora Allen, who works for the Department of Transportation, gave an interview with the local news and explained the police told her that, "To release these videos would create a high level of racially insensitive commentary toward the district. And in addition it would create a racial bias in the riders against minorities on the trains." [167] Police wouldn't release video footage of the perpetrators because they were concerned it would make black people look bad!

The media regularly tries to ignore or downplay most instances of anti-white hate crimes committed by black people. For example, after a black man walked into a predominately white church in Nashville, Tennessee in 2017 and opened fired, killing one woman and wounding seven others, a judge sealed most of the evidence for almost two years, and then during the trial it was revealed, as many had suspected, that he specifically went there to kill white people. [168]

Meanwhile, if you're concerned about white farmers being murdered in South Africa by the racist mobs of blacks who believe it's their rightful land, you are called a racist conspiracy theorist for promoting what the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* calls the "white genocide conspiracy theory." [169]

In recent years, white farmers in South Africa (called the Boers) have been facing persecution by vicious black gangs who raid their homes and slaughter them to get "revenge" against the "imperialists" who benefited from the Apartheid. [170] And God forbid you point out the anti-white hate crimes that occur in the United States at the hands of disgruntled blacks who blame white people for all of their personal and cultural failures. That's a guaranteed way to get labeled a "white supremacist."

Fake Hate Crimes

Since a large part of our culture has come to celebrate victimhood instead of personal achievement, we have seen a staggering increase in the number of hate crime hoaxes where mostly black people, gays, Muslims, and Jews report fake hate crimes to the police after vandalizing their own property with racial slurs, or claim they were physically attacked by some evil white people. The initial reports air on local and national news and go viral on social media, sparking outrage at the "racist" white people and "Trump supporters" who allegedly keep carrying out these attacks.

But oftentimes when police get involved and interview the "victim" and gather evidence, the supposed "hate crime" turns out to be a hoax and it's quietly forgotten about. Just after the 2016 election an 18-year-old Muslim woman in New York claimed that Trump supporters harassed her on the subway, chanting "Trump!" while trying to steal her hijab, but after police launched their investigation *she* was arrested for making the whole story up in an attempt to distract her father from the fact that she had been out getting drunk with her friends that night. [171]

A Muslim student at the University of Texas-Arlington said she was threatened at gunpoint by a group of white men in a pickup truck only to later admit she fabricated the whole story too. [172]

Hate crime hoaxes are a specialty in LGBT communities and have been used to further their cause and gain sympathy for years, and in some cases defame a neighbor they're feuding with. [173] Since LGBT people are treated like an endangered species by the liberal media, every time a claim is made that one of them has been harassed, assaulted, or had their property vandalized with anti-gay "slurs," the activist media is more than happy to amplify their claims. But when the police discover, as they often do, that the "victim" made the whole thing up, the story is dropped like a hot potato and the media just moves on to cover something else.

For example, after a transgender "man" who was a prominent LGBT "rights" activist in Michigan had "his" home burned down, killing five pets, the FBI investigated it as a hate crime and the incident was used as leverage by the "man" to help pass a local ordinance that prohibited the discrimination of gays, but authorities later arrested “him” for the crime and said the motive was to create publicity to help pass more gay “rights” legislation. [174]

It seems every “protected” group engages in these kinds of false flags. A Jewish freshman at George Washington University reported someone had drawn swastikas on her dorm room door, but a security camera actually captured her doing it. [175] At the same school another student posted a swastika on a community bulletin board that belonged to a Jewish fraternity and it was later discovered that the perpetrator, a Jew, was a member of that same fraternity. [176]

An African American community center in Seattle was vandalized with racist graffiti including “Nigger Babies” and “Vote Trump,” and as you can guess, an African American was arrested for the crime. [177]

A 44-year-old black man in Colorado was arrested after it was discovered he was the one who hung racist flyers outside of a predominantly black church that caused the local community to be understandably outraged. [178]

A black man reported that while his car was parked near Kansas State University it had been vandalized by someone painting “Go home nigger boy” on it. A photo of the damage went viral on social media only to later be exposed as another false flag and the man admitted that he defaced his own car and filed a false police report. [179] The FBI was even brought in to help investigate the case, which turned out to be another hoax.

The following year a black student at the same school posted a photo of a note on his Twitter account that he claimed had been put on the door of his apartment, reading “Beware Niggers Live Here!!!” But when the police got involved he admitted that he made the note and put it there himself. [180]

And of course the most popular hate crime hoax in decades involves actor Jussie Smollett, who claimed that two men wearing MAGA hats attacked him in the streets of Chicago in subzero weather and tied a noose around his neck, poured bleach on him, and yelled “This is MAGA country, nigger.” His story was so absurd that many were skeptical from the start, and as the investigation went on, police discovered he staged the whole thing hoping to become a social justice hero. [181]

Aside from a lot of fake hate crimes being fabricated by black people, they also hallucinate that there are hate crimes committed against them. The black mayor of a small South Carolina town called police thinking she was the victim of a hate crime after she found a “yellow, sticky substance” covering her car in March 2019 which was parked in the driveway of her home. She assumed someone had spray-painted it, but police investigated and discovered it was just pollen. [182]

Black college students at the University of Mississippi freaked out when someone saw a banana peel hanging over a tree branch outside a cabin at a fraternity’s weekend retreat. It caused such a concern that the retreat was canceled because some black students were afraid it was meant as a warning or to harass them, but it turns out a student who had finished eating the banana hung it on the tree because there were no garbage cans nearby and he didn’t want to just throw it on the ground where someone may end up stepping (or slipping) on it. [183]

The list of recent hate crime hoaxes from “protected groups” like gays, lesbians, and black people could fill an entire book. [184] If you want to learn more about the issue there’s a whole chapter in my previous book, *The True Story of Fake News* which details these kinds of incidents.

Good News Ignored

Aside from burying bad news that will cause audiences to question the liberal narrative of how the world works, the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* also ignores good news that undermines the agenda they're trying to push. If it's not completely ignored, it might be mentioned for 15 or 30 seconds on the broadcast news or published in newspapers or online articles but won't be included in the lengthy discussions on cable news or the weekend talk shows like *Meet the Press* (NBC), *Face the Nation* (CBS), or *This Week* (ABC).

Good news about President Trump is just a tiny blip on the radar, and then drowned out by the endless whining and moaning about minor issues and pundits' latest paranoid delusions about what Trump "may do." Despite reporting that if Donald Trump won the 2016 election the stock market would tank, it has skyrocketed largely in part due to him repealing countless burdensome business regulations and scrapping various awful trade deals previous administrations had gotten us into such as the Trans Pacific Partnership and NAFTA. In the first two years of his presidency the S&P 500 rose 28% [185] The Dow Jones Industrial Average later reached a record high, closing above 27,000 for the first time ever. [186]

Black unemployment hit an all-time record low in May 2018 of just 5.9 percent. [187] In Trump's first two years as president he was able to do more for African American communities than Barack Obama did in eight. Hispanic unemployment has fallen to its lowest level on record, down to 4.8%. [188] The unemployment rate for veterans also fell to an all-time low as well. [189] The average unemployment rate for the country dropped to 3.7% in October 2018, the lowest in almost 50 years. [190] The average American's salary is also increasing at record rates. [191]

President Trump signed the Veterans Affairs Choice program to dramatically speed up the amount of time that it takes U.S. veterans to get their healthcare claims processed by enabling them to use private doctors and health care facilities instead of just the government-run VA hospitals. [192] The VA, like the DMV, the Post Office, and almost every other government-run program, was a disaster and it had taken months for veterans to see doctors and get the treatment they need. Trump's reforms were a much-needed and long-overdue upgrade to how our veterans are taken care of.

When Trump first took office ISIS controlled about 20,000 square miles of territory in Iraq and Syria, which contained a population of several million people. [193] However a year later they were driven out of their last outpost in Syria, crippling their organization and expelling them from their "Islamic State." [194] While there are many Muslims in the Middle East who still adhere to the radical Islamic ideology of ISIS, they lost their territory and precious caliphate under President Trump.

The *ABC Nightly News* spent literally 18 seconds on the story the day the Department of Defense announced the news that ISIS' once planned Islamic State had fallen. [195] The *CBS Evening New* s spent one minute and twenty three seconds on the event. [196] Admitting that, despite his abrasive style and personality flaws, President Trump's policies have been great for America is the last thing the Establishment will do. Instead they are trying to misdirect people's attention and occupy their minds with issues of little significance and artificial controversies they drum up to smear him.

The War on Trump

Because politicians on the Left and the Right have been screwing us over for years and using the mechanisms of government to fulfill their own selfish desires for power and wealth, the election of Donald Trump shook the very foundation of the Washington D.C. Establishment. The lifelong bureaucrats knew the gravy train was going to come to a halt. For decades millions of Americans had felt a businessman, not a politician, would be the only one who could begin to fix the broken system—and the opportunity had finally come.

Trump's arrival to Washington was like parents who came home early from a long vacation, and now the kids (who were running around unsupervised breaking the rules) have to end the party and be held accountable for their actions. In 1988 on Oprah Winfrey's show he was asked if he would ever run for president and he responded probably not, but added that he wouldn't rule it out in the future because he was tired of seeing what's happening in America. [197] And that's why he thought about running in 2012, but felt his sons needed a few more years of experience before they were ready to take over the family business.

In 2016 he felt it was the right time, and the rest is history, but the Establishment immediately struck back because they needed to destroy him before he started cleaning up the mess that decades of corruption had created. He was the ultimate roadblock to their globalist agenda, and long-awaited New World Order. They were so upset about Trump's victory they counterattacked by kicking off the "fake news" scare hoping to regain control of the flow of information.

The Big Tech companies then started changing their algorithms and suppressing posts about certain topics and artificially favoring content from "authoritative" [liberal] mainstream sources. Even Tim Berners-Lee, the "founder of the World Wide Web" and the man who basically created HTML, said, "[People] are all stepping back, suddenly horrified after the Trump and Brexit elections, realizing that this web thing that they thought was that cool is actually not necessarily serving humanity very well." [198]

Nonstop Negative Coverage

They began fabricating fake stories like the supermarket tabloids that invent scandals based on their own imaginations to smear President Trump and keep him constantly on the defense. “Our source says” and “if true” are littered throughout reports that endlessly speculate about Trump being engaged in a massive conspiracy to steal the election and work as a Russian “Manchurian candidate.” Nothing President Trump does is good in the eyes of the mainstream media.

Everything he says is twisted and taken out of context in order to paint him as an incompetent racist who is destroying America. Journalist critic Anthony Brandt once said, “Members of the press sometimes print gossip as truth, disregard the impact they have on people’s lives, and are ready to believe the worst about people because the worst sells…We in the media have much to answer for.” [199]

The week President Trump was inaugurated, Democrat operative David Brock, founder of Media Matters, a Leftist “media watchdog group,” launched a new plan to “kick Donald Trump’s ass” which included handing out a 50-page document marked “private and confidential” that outlined how they were going to use their resources to push for impeachment, bog down his administration by continuously filing lawsuits, and use their new proxy “media outlet” Shareblue to attack conservative media personalities and harass their advertisers to pull out. [200]

The city of West Hollywood even voted to remove Donald Trump’s star from the Walk of Fame. “Earning a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame is an honor,” the mayor said. “When one belittles and attacks minorities, immigrants, Muslims, people with disabilities or women — the honor no longer exists.” [201] The city has no problem with accused underage sexual predator Kevin Spacey having a star, or convicted rapist Bill Cosby, or accused pedophile Michael Jackson. But they were determined to have Trump's removed. So far, the star remains, since the Walk of Fame is considered a historic landmark and run by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce which said "as of now" they have no plans to remove it. [202]

A Pew Research study found that the media's coverage of President Trump's first 60 days in office was three times more negative than that of President Obama. [203] Even NPR admitted, "Compared to other recent presidents, news reports about President Trump have been more focused on his personality than his policy, and are more likely to carry negative assessments of his actions." [204]

Another study from the Media Research Center showed that 89% of the broadcast news reports from President Trump's first 100 days in office were negative. [205] Newsbusters, a website run by the Media Research Group, declared 2017 "The year the news media went to war against a president." [206]

A poll by Politico showed that 46% of Americans believe the media just makes up fake stories about President Trump. [207] And ethics scholar John Hulteng previously warned, "It may be well that if journalism loses touch with ethical values, it will then cease to be of use to society, and cease to have any real reason for being." [208] But unfortunately that ship sailed a long time ago.

"He'll Crash the Economy"

Just a few weeks before the 2016 election, CNN reported that, "A Trump win would sink stocks." [209] Politico said that, "Wall Street is set up for a major crash if Donald Trump shocks the world on Election Day and wins the White House." [210] CNBC warned that, "it probably won't be a pretty picture for stocks if he does." [211] *New York Times* economist Paul Krugman wrote a column the day after the 2016 election saying, "So we are very probably looking at a global recession, with no end in sight," adding that, "a terrible thing has just happened." [212]

Instead, the stock market kept reaching all-time highs, [213] black unemployment soon reached the lowest in history, [214] and countless Americans were getting bonuses and taking more money home each week in their paychecks because of his new tax reforms, [215] but still the liberal media kept nitpicking every little thing he did or said, trying to spin it as if it was the end of the world.

People's tax refunds were technically "lower" under Trump's new tax code because less money was being taken out of their paychecks; money that would have been returned to them once they filed their taxes at the end of the year. Headlines from *NBC News* read, "Under new Trump tax code, average refund is 8.4 percent smaller," and they reported, "Frustrated taxpayers are using the hashtag #GOPTaxScam to vent about their smaller than expected tax refunds." [216] All the major news outlets piled on with similar reports, but this was only half of the story. The other half would put things into perspective.

An executive at the Tax Foundation, a think tank that studies U.S. tax policies, told a New Jersey PBS station, "What the Treasury Department did is they adjusted the amount of taxes that were withheld from your paycheck every time you got paid, say every two or three weeks. And so you actually saw a little bit more in every paycheck in terms of less taxes withheld, but that means your refund at the end of the year might be a bit smaller than you actually expected." [217]

Why would you want to give the government more money than is required each paycheck and then wait until the end of the year to get it back? Taking less money from each paycheck is much more efficient, but since many people are too dumb to grasp this simple concept the media spun the news about lower refunds as if people were somehow having to pay more taxes to the government, when the complete opposite is true!

“Trump is Hitler”

We’ve never seen the American media be so slanderous, vicious, and dangerous when reporting on a president. They sound worse than a raving lunatic you would find standing in the streets ranting about the end of the world. CNN and MSNBC hosts regularly say that President Trump is acting like a dictator and often compare him to Adolf Hitler. Not even in the months and years after the weapons of mass destruction hoax fell apart did the liberal media stoop so low when criticizing President George W. Bush for the disaster that the Iraq War had become.

Just two days after Donald Trump was inaugurated, CNN’s Brian Stelter gave the impression that the country had just been hijacked by a dictator. “These are uncomfortable questions, especially these last ones, but it’s time to ask them,” he began. “Do citizens in dictatorships recognize what’s happening right here, right now? Are they looking at the first two days of the Trump administration and saying, ‘that’s what my leader does.’ What should we learn from them today?” [218]

Don Lemon opened his broadcast one night by declaring “This is CNN Tonight. I’m Don Lemon. The President of the United States is racist,” [219] and often insinuates the President supports neo-Nazis and could become the next Hitler. [220]

In response to Trump’s speech at CPAC 2019 where he highlighted his America First agenda, CNN analyst Sam Vinograd said she felt “sick” after hearing it, because Trump talking about “preserving our heritage” to her, "sounds a lot like a certain leader that killed members of my family, and about six million other Jews in the 1940s." [221] Another CNN panelist said that President Trump has radicalized more people than ISIS ever did. [222]

The *New York Daily News* ran a headline reading, "Trump, Not ISIS is America's Greatest Existential Threat," and went on to say "This is not some bit of clickbait," and claimed, "Trump can wreak far more havoc on America, its vaunted institutions and its people than a terror group on the other side of the world." [223] Keith Olbermann later said that Donald Trump and his family have done more damage to America than Osama Bin Laden and ISIS combined. [224]

MSNBC's Donny Deutsch has said Trump is a dictator on several occasions and people need to hit the streets and start a "revolution" to overthrow him. [225] Fellow MSNBC host Christ Matthews even compares Ivanka Trump and her husband Jered Kushner to Saddam Hussein's two murderous sons, Uday and Qusay. [226] In his commentary about President Trump's inauguration speech Matthews said it sounded "Hitlerian." [227]

Just before the 2018 midterms an MSNBC legal analyst hoping the Democrats would take back control of the House and the Senate said, "We're going to see if this reign—that [Republicans] now have control over all three branches of government—we're going to see if this reign lasts for 30 days or two years, or a thousand-year Reich." [228] The "thousand-year-Reich" was the Nazi's name for their planned global empire.

In the past, if an unhinged guest on cable news would make such outrageous statements they would never be invited back and the host would apologize for their behavior, but it is a common occurrence in the Trump era to compare him to Hitler, and it's not just guests who aren't affiliated with the networks, it's people on the payroll, from regular contributors, to the hosts themselves!

Calls to Assassinate Trump

The endless streams of fake news painting President Trump as a Russian agent or the reincarnation of Hitler have incited countless unhinged whack jobs to publicly make assassination threats against him on social media. [229] There have also been numerous arrests of individuals who have made such threats (and taken specific action towards their goal), but the vast majority of them go unpunished.

Just a few weeks before he was elected, a Secret Service agent said she wouldn't protect Donald Trump if someone tried to assassinate him. [230] After word spread of her treasonous statements she was forced to retire. *The New York Times* even published several fictional stories by various novelists imagining how the Mueller investigation may end, and one of them depicted President Trump getting assassinated with the help of a Secret Service agent. [231]

The anti-Trump mania has even resulted in numerous high-profile celebrities uttering threats of violence or wishing violence against him. Madonna famously declared she "thought an awful lot about blowing up the White House," but that was just the beginning. Johnny Depp asked an audience, "When was the last time an actor assassinated a president?" answering, "it's been awhile and maybe it's time," referring to John Wilkes Booth (who was an actor) killing Abraham Lincoln. [232]

Jim Carrey said he had a dream about killing President Trump with a golf club. [233] Mickey Rourke said he wanted to beat him with a baseball bat. [234] And Robert Di Niro said he wants to "punch him in the face." [235]

Rapper Big Sean did a free style on a popular radio show about how he wanted to "murder Trump." [236] Snoop Dogg released a rap video depicting himself shooting Donald Trump in the head. [237] Marilyn Manson made a video titled “Say 10” (a play on words to sound like “Satan”) which depicted him decapitating Donald Trump with a large knife. [238] Green Day singer Billie Joe Armstrong shouted “Kill Donald Trump!” at one point when performing the song “American Idiot” at a concert in Oakland, California. [239] And of course Kathy Griffin posted that infamous photo of herself holding Trump’s bloody decapitated head. [240]

Never before have there been so many threats to assassinate a president of the United States, and it’s utterly shocking to see that there have been little to no repercussions for the high profile celebrities who have done so. Previously such reckless and dangerous statements would completely end someone’s career and gotten their movies and music pulled from store shelves and streaming services, but today these celebrities have been mostly immune from any consequences.

The Red Scare

The Democrat conspiracy theory that Donald Trump “colluded” with Russians to “steal” the 2016 election caused the greatest case of mass hysteria in America since the Salem witch trials. As you know it completely consumed the news cycle for over two years, and every night the speculation and imagination about “what really happened” got more and more out of control. “Donald Trump now sits at the threshold of impeachment,” MSNBC’s Lawrence O’Donnell once declared with glee. [241] “The worst case scenario that the president is a foreign agent suddenly feels very palpable,” Rachel Maddow concluded one night. [242]

He was certainly going to not only be impeached, but led out of the White House in handcuffs for committing “treason” and “undermining our Democracy,” they thought. Those who hadn’t succumbed to the madness were skeptical of these wild allegations from the start, and when the "bombshell" reports kept turning out to be completely false, the mainstream media became increasingly discredited and desperate.

Alan Dershowitz, a rare liberal who still maintained his sanity though all of this, summed it up pretty well when he said that "hope over reality" fueled their delusions.[243] When the Robert Mueller investigation finally cleared Trump and everyone connected to him of conspiring with the Russians in any way, the Democrats and their mouth pieces in the media still couldn't admit they were wrong (and completely insane), and instead kept concocting new conspiracy theories about a "cover-up." Since they took control of the House of Representatives in the 2018 midterm election, they kept "investigating" Trump's business records trying to find "something."

As President Trump once noted, "If it was the goal of Russia to create discord, disruption and chaos within the U.S. then, with all of the Committee Hearings, investigations and party hatred, they have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. They are laughing their asses off in Moscow."[244]

LGBT "Rights"

President Trump supports gay "marriage" unlike every previous Republican president (and all Democrat presidents too, except for Obama when he flip-flopped during his second term). But the media still portrays Trump as anti-gay. At a campaign event before he was elected, Donald Trump held up a big gay pride rainbow flag and waved it around stage after seeing someone in the audience holding it.[245] He even said Caitlyn Jenner can use whatever bathroom "she" wants to in Trump Tower.[246] But the radical LGBT activists are still convinced that he "hates" gay people because the mainstream media ignores his pro-LGBT positions.

After President Trump announced a plan to work with the United Nations to prevent countries from enforcing laws banning homosexuality, *Out Magazine* , a popular American gay publication, attacked him, publishing a story titled, “Trump’s Plan to Decriminalize Homosexuality Is an Old Racist Tactic,” and claimed, “The Trump administration is set to launch a global campaign to decriminalize homosexuality in dozens of nations where anti-gay laws are still on the books,” which you would think they would be happy about, but they denounced the move, saying, “Rather than actually being about helping queer people around the world, the campaign looks more like another instance of the right using queer people as a pawn to amass power and enact its own agenda.” [247] You can’t make these lunatics happy!

They Sided with North Korea

The liberal media hates Trump so bad, they basically sided with North Korea out of spite when President Trump was trying to help broker peace between the North and the South. When he was trying to incentivize Kim Jong Un to dismantle his nuclear program, NBC News complained about it, reporting that, “Trump’s North Korea policy could trigger famine,” because of new sanctions he threatened to put in place if they didn’t comply with the U.S. demands. [248] How else was he supposed to apply pressure to them without launching a full-out war? Applying sanctions to cutoff imports is a basic tactic when dealing with rogue regimes!

Comedian Michelle Wolf (who had recently bombed at the White House Correspondents Dinner) polled her Netflix audience, asking them, “Are you sort of hoping we don’t get peace with North Korea so you wouldn’t have to give Trump credit?” and 71% agreed that they didn’t want peace in North Korea because it would make President Trump look good. [249]

When Michael Moore was talking with MSNBC's Chris Hayes, the cable news host admitted that he was "genuinely rooting for him to handle the Korean situation well," at which point Michael Moore cut him off and replied, "I don't know if I agree with that." A stunned Hayes responded, "You're not rooting for him to deal with North Korea well?!" Michael Moore continued his explanation with a ridiculous analogy trying to justify his hope that President Trump fails at helping negotiate a peaceful resolution between North and South Korea. [250]

The two countries joined together during the 2018 Winter Olympics to form a unified Korean hockey team which was an incredible sign that relations were improving. Kim Jong Un later crossed over the DMZ (demilitarized zone—the border between the North and South) to meet personally with the leader of South Korea, marking the first time leaders of the two countries had met since Korea split apart after World War II. [251]

Families have been allowed to reunite with each other for the first time since the separation, and President Trump himself was invited to step over the DMZ where he was greeted by Kim Jong Un in a historic moment giving more hope for peace in the region, but Trump doesn't get any credit for that, and the media kept claiming his tactics were going to start World War Three.

Trump Derangement Syndrome

Conservatives began joking about liberals being afflicted with Trump Derangement Syndrome when it became obvious that they weren't able to cope with the fact that he is the president, but as time went on many psychologists said they were actually treating patients for what they called

Trump Anxiety Disorder. [252] A therapist at the Washington D.C. Counseling and Psychotherapy Center admitted that they were getting a lot of patients who had anxiety, fear, and hopelessness about the Trump administration. [253]

The shock on election night 2016 when Hillary Clinton lost was like nothing the country had ever seen. Reporters couldn't hold back their horror and Democrats across the country were in tears, but after a week the shock still hadn't worn off. And then a month went by and they were still in denial that Trump was going to be our next president and were getting increasingly distraught. But the months dragged on, and then it was a year, and then two years since he won the election, and instead of gaining their composure and getting back to business, they continued to get more unhinged with every passing week.

When a *New York Times* reporter was asked about why Hillary Clinton wrote her *What Happened* book, she responded, "I think that the intention of the book was two things. One, it was to really, I think, just to vent and get it out there because there are so many people like Hillary Clinton who are still writing about this, who are still thinking about this, who are still in therapy frankly, sources that I know who are still really upset about the election." [254] In therapy!

On the one-year anniversary of the 2016 election, anti-Trump protesters gathered in Boston to "scream helplessly at the sky." [255] Over 4000 people RSVP'd to the event on Facebook which was literally titled, "Scream helplessly at the sky on the anniversary of the election," and hundreds of them actually showed up and did just that! [256]

Rosie O'Donnell later admitted that she had been seeing a therapist and it took her a year to be able to compose herself enough to go out into public again. [257] Chelsea Handler also opened up a few years after the election and admitted she too had been seeing a psychiatrist because she had a "mid-life identity crisis once Trump won the election." [258] Model Chrissy Teigen, who's married to singer John Legend, admitted that she asked her doctor to up her medication because Trump was causing her "crippling anxiety" and had to get a Botox injection in her jaw to relieve tension because she kept grinding her teeth, which she blames Trump for. [259]

Since Democrats always project, meaning they imagine others doing what they themselves are doing, they started saying that President Trump was "mentally unfit" for office, and kept floating around the idea that the 25th Amendment could soon be enacted to remove him. But to actually invoke the 25th Amendment and get him removed it would take the vice president, his entire cabinet, and two-thirds of both the House and the Senate to achieve it. Democrats are so delusional that they are regularly accusing the president of being crazy, while being completely unaware of the irony of their own activities.

One MSNBC guest even said that President Trump's strong warnings to North Korea were the result of him having, "profound sexual and masculine insecurities" that "are literally threatening to annihilate the planet." [260] Shortly before he died, Stephen Hawking warned that since President Trump is not very concerned about man-made global warming he may, "push the Earth over the brink, to become like Venus, with a temperature of 250 degrees, and raining sulfuric acid." [261]

One way liberals regularly vent their hatred of President Trump is by obsessively replying to his tweets, and it's become a game for them to see who can reply first and whose reply can get the most "likes." Some Twitter activists, like the odd Krassenstein brothers whose obsession with trolling President Trump's tweets have become "Twitter famous." (They were later banned for allegedly using fake accounts to artificially amplify their tweets). [262]

As one writer in the London *Guardian* pointed out, it appears that liberals “worst nightmare” is actually a successful Donald Trump presidency. [263] The mainstream media would have to admit that they were wrong about everything and had been stringing along their audience for years under the false pretense that they were reporting news, when in reality they were just throwing an endless temper tantrum and lost every ounce of their integrity.

The War on Trump Supporters

The oldest trick in the Democrats’ playbook is to call Republicans racist. When the Tea Party movement emerged in 2009 as a response to Barack Obama’s massive government expansion and increasing taxes, supporters were smeared as a bunch of old racist white people. The same tactic has been deployed against popular social media personalities today who have built up large followings in recent years and are often smeared as members of the alt-right in attempts to derail their careers and get their accounts shut down.

Online media outlets and self-proclaimed journalists on Twitter often call conservatives Nazis and alt-right even if they’re Jewish! Laura Loomer (who is Jewish) has been smeared as a member of the white nationalist “alt-right” [264] As has Trump advisor Stephen Miller, who is also Jewish. [265] And even Ben Shapiro, a devout Orthodox Jew who wears a yarmulke in every one of his public appearances, is considered to be a member of the alt-right by these morons. [266] Instead of defending conservative Jews smeared by the liberal media, Jonathan Greenblatt, the head of the Jewish ADL [Anti-Defamation League], adds fuel to the fire by saying that the words “caravan,” and “open borders” are “literally white supremacist phrases.” [267]

Alex Jones has been called an “alt-right” radio host by *Forbes* magazine, which you would think would be a credible publication. [268] YouTuber Steven Crowder was smeared by *Newsweek* as becoming popular by “touting an alt-right ideology.” [269] And immediately after Trump won the 2016 election various outlets defamed me with the same smear, even though I had never expressed any support whatsoever for white nationalism and am just an ordinary Constitutional Conservative. Several publications issued retractions or removed my name from such articles after I sent them cease and desist notices. [270]

Psychology Today published an article titled, “An Analysis of Trump Supporters Has Identified 5 Key Traits,” and said we have “Authoritarian Personality Syndrome, social dominance orientation, prejudice, lack of intergroup contact (contact with minorities), and relative deprivation.” [271]

Actor Rob Reiner (who played “Meathead” in the 1970s show *All in the Family*) told MSNBC that “20 to 30 percent” of Trump supporters “are hardcore racists.” [272] And guests on MSNBC and CNN often declare that a huge number of Donald Trump supporters are white nationalists and only support building the wall to “keep the brown people out.” [273]

Don’t forget the mainstream media’s vicious smears against Nick Sandmann, the high school student from Covington Catholic who was pestered by an old Native American man who beat a drum in the kid’s face when he and his classmates were visiting Washington D.C. on a school trip. CNN then declared that MAGA hats “have become a potent symbol of racism.” [274] Sandmann then filed lawsuits against the *Washington Post*, CNN, and NBC for $250 million dollars each for defamation. [275]

A reporter that CNN gave their “Journalist of the Year” award to was later fired in disgrace after it was discovered he had fabricated numerous stories including claiming he saw a “Mexicans Keep Out” sign at the city limit of a small Minnesota town when he was reporting "from Trump country." [276]

The *Daily Beast* published an article just before the 2019 Super Bowl titled, "Tom Brady's New England Patriots Are Team MAGA, Whether They Like It or Not," and declared, "Their star quarterback, coach, and owner all supported Trump," and then called them "the preferred team of white nationalists." [277] It went on to attack quarterback Tom Brady because he was pictured previously with a MAGA hat in his locker which the *Daily Beast* says is, "a symbol of white nationalism in America." [278]

The article concluded that the Patriots "are the official team of American White Nationalism" and "When you root for the Patriots, you are associating yourself with a virulent and revolting strain of politics that seeks to Make America Great Again—which is to say, white, European, English-speaking." [279] It also said the Covington Catholic kids are "entitled little shits being racist."

CNN is so despicable they even sent a reporter to an elderly woman's home to confront her about sharing something on Facebook that had allegedly been originally posted by a Russian troll farm. [280] She was ambushed while doing yard work in the front of her home and had a microphone stuck in her face and was accused of being a pawn of the Russians. The woman, who is 76-years-old, said after CNN aired the segment confronting her she was relentlessly harassed online and her phone rang off the hook from strangers calling her. [281]

Denial of Basic Services

An increasing number of reports keep circulating about instances where people wearing red MAGA hats have been kicked out of bars and restaurants for just wearing the hats. After attending a Trump rally in

Richmond, Virginia during the summer of 2016 a family stopped into a local Cook Out burger joint for lunch but were turned away by staff because they were wearing Trump t-shirts and hats. [282] After a man wearing his MAGA hat was kicked out of a bar in New York City, he sued the owner for discrimination, but a judge threw out the lawsuit. [283]

A 9-year-old boy in California who is a big fan of the President wanted a Trump birthday cake, but his mother said she couldn't find a bakery that would make one for him. [284] Gays want bakeries sued into bankruptcy if they refuse to bake a special cake for a gay "wedding" but think it's okay for them to deny service to Trump supporters.

White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee and her family were kicked out of a restaurant in Lexington, Virginia after the owner recognized her and made them leave. When word of the incident spread, liberals celebrated it. *The Washington Post* even ran a headline saying, "Chasing White House officials out of restaurants is the right thing to do." [285]

Congresswoman Maxine Waters then encouraged more harassment, saying, "If you see anybody from that cabinet in a restaurant, in a department store, at a gasoline station, you get out and you create a crowd, and you push back on them, and you tell them they're not welcome anymore, anywhere." [286] Soon after this, activist Laura Loomer confronted Maxine Waters in the halls of the Capitol on camera, asking her, "Where can a conservative eat at a restaurant in D.C.? Do you think it's civil to call for the harassment? Are we supposed to sit at the back of the bus?" [287] Maxine scurried away to a "members only" elevator in shock from getting a taste of her own medicine.

The *Boston Globe* published an op-ed that began describing how one of the writer's "biggest regrets" of his life was not pissing in political commentator Bill Kristol's food when he ate at a restaurant the writer worked at. He went on to urge people to tamper with Trump supporters' food by doing what he was afraid to do, saying members of the Trump administration "have to eat," and while the person may lose their job, (tampering with someone's food is actually a crime) "you'd be serving America," he said. "And you won't have any regrets years later." [288]

The *Boston Globe* actually published this filth, but after a growing backlash changed parts of the op-ed and added a note saying, "A version of this column as originally published did not meet Globe standards and has been changed. The *Globe* regrets the previous tone of the piece." [289] Even with the alterations, the title was, "Keep Kirstjen Nielsen unemployed and eating Grubhub over her kitchen sink," and the overall message of the piece was still that people should run members of the Trump administration out of any restaurant they're seen in. After growing shock and outrage that a major paper would publish such garbage, the *Globe* later deleted the article. [290]

The Left Encouraging Violence

In the Trump era political rhetoric from the Left has sunk to levels never before seen in modern American history. Not only are they insistent on smearing all Trump supporters as racists, but they are encouraging people to physically attack anyone seen wearing a MAGA hat in public.

During the 2016 election season many peaceful Trump supporters were assaulted as they were leaving events by rabid protesters who had gathered outside. At a San Jose rally one woman was pelted with eggs and water balloons by an angry mob and others were punched and hit with bottles as they left. [291]

After a 16-year-old Trump supporter was assaulted in a Whataburger fast food joint by having a drink thrown on him and had his MAGA stolen, CNN's Marc Lamont Hill said, "I actually don't advocate throwing drinks on people. Not at all. But yes, I think MAGA hats (deliberately) reflect a movement that conjures racism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc. So yes, it's a little harder to feel sympathy when someone gets Coca Cola thrown on him." [292] Vox's Carlos Maza encouraged assaulting right-wing figures as well, and hopes to make them "dread" being in public. [293]

Breitbart News compiled a list of violent acts against Trump supporters and detailed mainstream media reporters and pundits who approved of them and counted 639 incidents between September 2015 and November 2018. [294]

Just wearing a red MAGA hat in public can put you in danger of getting assaulted by some random lunatic who happens to see it. An MSNBC host even said wearing one is "an invitation for confrontation" and considers them "the modern day version of the Confederate battle flag." [295] The *Huffington Post* reported that, "Searching for MAGA symbolism is one of the easiest ways to notice online extremists and members of hate groups." [296] CNN's Angela Rye said that MAGA hats are "just as maddening and frustrating and triggering for me to look at as a KKK hood." [297]

An 81-year-old man in New Jersey was attacked inside a grocery store by a 19-year-old teen because the old man was wearing a Make America Great Again Hat. [298] A couple shopping at a Sam's Club in Kentucky had a gun pulled on them by a man who got triggered after seeing their MAGA hats. [299] A man eating at a restaurant in Massachusetts was assaulted by a woman who spotted him wearing the hat. She was arrested for assault and it turns out was an illegal alien, so a few days after her initial arrest, she was arrested again by ICE. [300] A legal immigrant from Africa living in Maryland was beat down by two other black men because he was spotted walking down the street wearing a MAGA hat. [301]

A group of five Asians walking down the street in Washington D.C., all wearing MAGA hats, were harassed by two black men who videotaped themselves stealing two of the hats and posted the video on Twitter to brag about what they had done. The group happened to be North Korean defectors who had escaped the country and proudly wore their MAGA hats because President Trump was making progress facilitating peace between the North and the South. [302]

A young woman wearing a red hat reading "Make Bitcoin Great Again" in the style of the MAGA hat was pepper sprayed right in the face by a member of Antifa while she was in the middle of doing a television interview on the campus of UC Berkeley during an event at the school. [303]

A man in the back of a pickup truck leaving a Trump rally in Arizona was sucker punched in the head by a protester as the truck pulled away. [304] A customer eating at a Cheesecake Factory in Miami was harassed and threatened by several employees of the restaurant because he was wearing a MAGA hat. [305]

When Hillary Clinton was asked about civility returning to America, she endorsed the growing angry mobs saying, "You cannot be civil with a political party that wants to destroy what you stand for, what you care about. That's why I believe, if we are fortunate enough to win back the House and or the Senate [in the 2018 midterms], that's when civility can start again." [306]

Barack Obama's former attorney general Eric Holder went even further saying, "Michelle [Obama] always says, you know, 'When they go low, we go high.' No. When they go low, we kick them! That's what this new Democratic Party is about." [307]

Two days after the 2018 midterm election a fascist mob gathered right outside the home of Fox News host Tucker Carlson and with a bullhorn shouted, “Tonight you are reminded that the people have a voice. Tonight, we remind you that you are not safe,” adding, “We know where you sleep at night.” [308] Facebook didn’t even suspend the Antifa page that organized the event. [309]

The *Huffington Post* published an op-ed calling for violent resistance against Trump and denounced those on the Left who were saying violence isn’t the answer. It’s titled “Sorry Liberals, A Violent Response To Trump Is As Logical As Any,” and starts off saying “there’s an inherent value in forestalling Trump’s normalization. Violent resistance accomplishes this.” [310]

It went on to say, “Assuming anti-Trump protests should be strictly focused on electoral politics and not these broader goals would be a detrimental oversight. Understanding European anti-fascists’ use of violent tactics to shut down large rallies from White Supremacists can be illustrative here. Because while Trump isn’t leading full bore White Supremacist rallies, there is value in making it clear that even his fascism-lite has no place in civilized society.” [311]

The liberal media has been engaging in what’s called stochastic terrorism, which is when the widespread demonization of an individual or a group incites lone wolf political extremists or members of an extremist group to attack them in what appears to be a random act of violence but was actually inspired by inflammatory rhetoric being aimed at that individual or the group they belong to.

In April 2019 the CBS show *The Good Fight* posted a teaser video on their official Twitter account showing one of the main characters engaging in a diatribe about how “some speech” deserves “enforcement” and that “It’s time” to physically attack American citizens “unprovoked” who are engaging in speech that social justice warriors perceive as “racist.” [312]

Anti-White Racism

Part of the war on Trump supporters involves painting a large percentage of white people as racists in hopes of preventing more blacks and latinos from joining the Trump train. The *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* now regularly paints white people as the enemy, blaming "systemic racism" for the problems in black communities, and depicts anyone who wants to stop the flood of illegal aliens into America as members of the KKK.

While Martin Luther King wanted everyone to judge their fellow man by the content of their character—not the color of their skin, the Liberal Establishment uses identity politics to pit the different races against each other and are trying to create a culture where white people should be ashamed of being white and atone for their "white privilege" by paying reparations to black people and giving blacks special perks in America just because of their race.

Online outlets like Salon.com and BuzzFeed are notorious for their anti-white articles. Salon has posted articles titled, "White men must be stopped; The very future of mankind depends on it," [313] "10 ways white people are more racist than they realize," [314] and "White guys are killing us: Toxic, cowardly masculinity, our unhealable national illness," [315] just to name a few.

One of BuzzFeed's racist articles links to various Power Point presentations with titles like "White People Are a Plague to the Planet," and "White People are Crazy." [316] They've also published articles titled "17 Foods That White People Have Ruined," "17 Deplorable Examples of White Privilege," and "22 Reasons Why Straight White Boys Are Actually The Worst."

Vice News calls whiteness “toxic” [317] and black publications like *The Root* regularly attack white people as “useless.” [318] MTV did a whole documentary titled “White People” that depicts the entire race as a group whose very existence is based on oppressing black people and other “people of color.” [319]

Hollywood constantly complains about white people with campaigns like the “Oscars are too white” and always cries about how there isn’t enough “diversity” in leading roles. When hosting *Saturday Night Live* to promote his new movie *Django Unchained* , actor Jamie Foxx bragged, “I kill all the white people in the movie! How great is that!?” [320]

Rapper Jay-Z has been photographed at an NBA game wearing a medallion from the 5% Nation, a black power group that believes white people are the Devil. [321] Many rappers admire Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan who has taught that white people are “the Devil” and “deserve to die.” [322]

CNN’s Don Lemon says the biggest terrorist threat in America are white men. [323] The network also claims that, “The Internet is radicalizing white men” and urges Big Tech to censor YouTube videos and change the algorithms even more to hide certain ideas on the Internet. [324] CNN contributors and other cable news pundits go so far as to say blacks can’t be racist and justify their racism against white people as “payback” for slavery in the 1800s. Just pointing out anti-white racism is enough for the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* to label you a “white supremacist,” so most people are afraid to talk about it.

Demonizing Black Conservatives

While it appears that black people can do no wrong in the eyes of liberals and that all their shortcomings, bad decisions, and crimes are the fault of white people; there is one thing that black people aren't allowed to do in America today without severe criticism and backlash—and that's be conservative.

Black conservatives like Larry Elder, David Webb, Sheriff David Clark, Pastor Daryl Scott, Ben Carson, and others are constantly smeared by the media as "traitors" to their race, or "uncle Toms" and "house niggers" who have sold out to white people.

After Diamond and Silk appeared at CPAC 2019, CNN's Oliver Darcey insinuated they were "grifters," meaning con artists. [325] Rolling Stone magazine called Candace Owens an "Alt-Right Provocateur" once she became a star. [326] After posting a few YouTube videos about being a black conservative she was thrust into the spotlight when Kanye West tweeted about her, jumpstarting her career and turning her into one of the most popular young black conservative women in the country.

When Candace spoke at a college in Utah, protesters gathered outside, which is common at her events, but this time they had a huge banner that read "End White Supremacy." [327] When visiting Philadelphia in August 2018 a group of protesters surrounded the cafe she was eating breakfast at and shouted with a megaphone "fuck white supremacy." [328]

Georgetown University professor and regular MSNBC guest Michael Eric Dyson attacked Kanye West after he met with President Trump in the Oval Office (while wearing his MAGA hat), saying, "This is white supremacy by ventriloquism. A black mouth is moving, but white racist ideals are flowing from Kanye West's mouth." [329] He went on to say "Kanye West is engaging in one of the most nefarious practices yet. A black body and brain are the warehouse for the articulation and expression of anti-black sentiment." [330]

The Southern Poverty Law Center actually included the mild-mannered and meek Ben Carson on their “Extremist Watch List,” citing a line in his book *America the Beautiful* where he affirmed that marriage is between a man and a woman and said Leftists are pushing the United States down the same path that led to the fall of the Roman Empire. [331] They labeled *Ben Carson* an extremist!

Hollywood actress and singer Bette Midler claimed that President Trump was paying black people to come to his rallies after she kept noticing them in attendance. She said they were just props for the background. [332] Liberals don’t want diversity of thought, they want everyone to be lockstep in line with the core tenants of the radical liberal agenda and many of their supporters are so dumb that they believe there are *black* white supremacists in America today, and have no clue how insane they sound.

They are afraid that if 20% of black voters leave the Democrat Party and become Republicans, that would be enough to tip the scales in favor of Republicans in elections for years to come and the Democrat Party’s political power would be gravely diminished. [333]

The War on Families

Families instill moral values, carry on important cultural traditions, and provide a support network when someone goes through an emotionally or financially difficult time. And when someone is engaging in self-destructive or unscrupulous behaviors, those close to them can often see the warning signs and intervene to help get them back on track. But the Left doesn’t want families to raise, teach, or protect children. They want the government to do it, along with help from the high priests of Hollywood who are held up as the moral leaders of America.

Joshua Meyrowitz, Professor of Media Studies at the University of New Hampshire, points out, “Television dilutes the innocence of childhood and the authority of adults by undermining the system of information control that supported them. Television bypasses the year-by-year slices of knowledge given to children. It presents the same general experiences to adults and to children of all ages. Children may not understand everything that they see on television, but they are exposed to many aspects of adult life from which their parents (and traditional children’s books) would have once shielded them.” [334]

He continues, “Television and its visitors take children across the globe before parents even give them permission to cross the street.” [335] He said that back in 1995, when the Internet was just in its infancy, and more than a decade before social media would gain a stranglehold on an entire generation of children who access an abyss of adult content, completely unsupervised, through their own smartphones while alone in their bedrooms.

The Left’s war on families is targeting the most vulnerable of our society — children. They are determined to raise the next generation to be as perverted as possible—worse than ancient Rome where it was socially acceptable for adult men to engage in sexual activity with young boys. [336] In fact we’re seeing child drag queens like “Desmond is Amazing” and “Lactacia” being celebrated and featured on major television shows as if they’re heroes.

NBC’s *Today Show* promoted “Desmond is Amazing,” the “drag kid” when he was just 10-years-old, calling him “inspiring.” [337] His parents dress him up in drag and have him perform at drag queen festivals across the country. [338] He also does simulated strip teases on stage (including at gay bars) where grown men throw dollar bills at him. [339]

ABC's *Good Morning America* also promotes child drag queens, and host Michael Strahan introduced a segment saying, "Get ready for this trailblazing 11-year-old drag kid who RuPaul is calling the future, and his bravery is inspiring so many." The kid (Desmond is Amazing) then came out on stage dancing like a stripper to hoots and hollers from the audience. [340]

Good Morning America glowingly promoted Kate Hudson when reports circulated she was allegedly raising her child "genderless." Anchor George Stephanopoulos began the segment saying, "Kate Hudson is opening up about how she's trying to raise her new baby as 'genderless,' apparently that's an approach more and more Americans are trying." [341] Co-host Paula Faris went on to say the actress will be raising her 3-month-old daughter "without labels or restrictions" because "she doesn't want to assume how she'll identify herself as she's growing up." [342]

Another co-host, Lara Spencer, chimed in, saying, "That's a great conversation. It's just a great conversation," and then (lesbian) Robin Roberts concluded, "No judgment, no judgment. Whatever you feel is best for your child." [343]

Kate Hudson then released a statement on her Instagram saying, "Dear all my friends, fans and others who read this, recently someone asked me something along the lines of, if having and raising a girl is different from boys. My response was simple. Not really. This whole clickbait tactic of saying I'm raising my daughter to be 'genderless' is silly and frankly doesn't even make sense." [344]

Fringe lunatics had been promoting the idea of raising children "genderless" for some time, and so the media saw an opportunity to give the bizarre practice a boost by attaching a celebrity's name to it by twisting around what Kate Hudson meant. But there will come a day when major celebrities embrace the "gender neutral" agenda, and they will be hailed as heroes and held up as models for what other parents should do.

The media is increasingly glorifying "theybies," meaning children whose parents are raising them as gender neutral. [345] These child abusers call their kids "theybies" instead of babies, because they use the gender neutral pronoun "they" to refer to their kids instead of "he" or "she." *NBC News* recently recommended, "One way of shielding children from gender stereotypes: Keep their biological sex secret." [346]

The radical Leftists don't want boys raised as boys, or girls as girls. They want all children to be raised as if there's no biological difference between males and females at all. They want to completely deconstruct the traditional gender roles and deny the inherent differences between the sexes. They want to invert and pervert everything that's normal including the most fundamental aspects of being human.

Every facet of the family and interpersonal relationships is under attack. CNN has even urged people to "rethink" monogamous relationships and become swingers. "Could opening your relationship to others benefit you and your partner?" they asked. [347] According to CNN, a man's wife banging other dudes "can be a healthy option for some couples and, executed thoughtfully, can inject relationships with some much-needed novelty and excitement."

The report quotes several "sex therapists" who recommend the practice, saying it "can bring back some of the initial novelty and excitement you felt at the beginning of your relationship." [348] CNN is disappointed that "non-monogamy still carries a stigma in many circles, so think about how you and your partner will address that concern." [349]

Eradicating families is a Communist tactic and as soon as they seized power in Russia in 1917 the new government started shunning families and promoting “free unions” because families raising children were said to be extensions of the old system. [350] The Left wants everyone to be loyal first and foremost to the Party, not to their family. So they’re doing everything they can to rip them apart.

In January 2018, CNN published a story advocating cuckolding as a way to “help” couple’s relationships. For those who aren’t familiar with “cuckolding,” it’s a term that originally referred to a man whose partner had been unfaithful, but has morphed into a kink fantasy that some strange couples carry out where the man watches another guy have sex with his wife or girlfriend. CNN cited a “study” by anti-Christian gay extremist Dan Savage and several others which claims that, “acting on cuckolding fantasies can be a largely positive experience for many couples.” [351]

To be clear, this isn’t about swinging, an open relationship, or threesomes; it’s about men watching their wives have sex with another man, and CNN portrays the practice in glowing terms, and says, “Acting on adulterous fantasies may strengthen a relationship, as counterintuitive as it may sound.” [352]

People are becoming so inept at how to engage in normal and healthy relationships with others that loneliness is plaguing the younger generations who rely on hook-up apps like Tinder to meet people instead of the “old fashioned way” like at school, parties, through mutual friends, or while engaging in their hobbies. [353] Their communication skills are often so poor that many don’t even have the guts to break up with someone when they feel they’re not compatible, so instead they engage in “ghosting” which means they just abruptly stop returning their calls or texts. [354] More than half of adults aged 18 to 34 don’t have a steady romantic partner. [355]

And recently birthrates in the United States have fallen to a 32-year low. [356] For teenagers today it is now considered "normal" to be in a virtual "relationship" with someone online for months and even years and never even meet them face to face! [357] Many Millennials don't even have a best friend or anyone they feel they can confide in. [358]

To fill the void created from lack of intimacy in people's lives, some are turning to unthinkably bizarre alternatives. The disturbing rise in popularity and acceptance of sex bots, which are just high tech blow up dolls that people are having sex with, seems like something out of a horror movie, but it's actually happening. [359] While blow up dolls are a common gag gift brought along to bachelor parties, no normal person has ever considered actually having sex with one, but recently expensive "life-like" sex bots are being manufactured and sold to lonely losers who resort to having sex with them since their lives are so dysfunctional they can't get a date with an actual woman. [360]

The sex bot business is already a multi-million dollar a year industry and growing. Companies are even working to build models that incorporate artificial intelligence so they can have conversations with people. [361]

Google Upset About Families

In leaked documents detailing internal discussions of Google employees, one thread shows the use of the word "family" upset a bunch of them who felt it was homophobic and not inclusive enough because of its connotation as referring to a heterosexual couple with children. After one employee walked out of a company presentation over the use of the word "family," they posted on an internal message board venting their frustration. [362]

"This is a diminishing and disrespectful way to speak. If you mean 'children,' say 'children'; we have a perfectly good word for it. 'Family friendly' used as a synonym for 'kid friendly' means, to me, 'you and yours don't count as a family unless you have children.' And while kids may often be less aware of it, there are kids without families too, you know." [363]

The complaint went on, "The use of 'family' as a synonym for 'with children' has a long-standing association with deeply homophobic organizations. This does not mean we should not use the word 'family' to refer to families, but it mean we must doggedly insist that family does not imply children…Use the word 'family' to mean a loving assemblage of people who may or may not live together and may or may not include people of any particular age. STOP using it to mean 'children.' It's offensive, inappropriate, homophobic, and wrong." [364]

It wasn't just one lone nut who got triggered because the presentation mentioned Google is trying to make "family friendly" apps and services. The documents show that about 100 other Google employees thumbed up the post, and many responses echoed the same psychotic sentiment.

"Thanks for writing this. So much yes," replied one. "Using the word 'family' in this sense bothers me too," said another. Adding, "It smacks of the 'family values' agenda by the right wing, which is absolutely homophobic by its very definition," and continued, "it's important that we fix our charged language when we become aware of how exclusionary it actually is. As a straight person in a relationship, I find the term 'family' offensive because it excludes me and my boyfriend, having no children of our own." [365]

The replies go on and on, all chastising Google for using the word "family." Another says, "My family consists of me and several other trans feminine folks, some of whom I'm dating. We're all supportive of each other and eventually aspire to live together. Just because we aren't a heterosexual couple with 2.5 kids, a white picket fence, and a dog doesn't mean we're not a family." [366]

Google's Vice President, Pavni Diwanji, then responded saying, "Hi everyone, I realize what we said at TGIF [the name of the event] might have caused concerns in the way we talked about families. There are families without kids too, and also we needed to be more conscientious about the fact that there is a diverse makeup of parents and families." [367]

He continued, "Please help us get to a better state. Teach us how to talk about it in inclusive way, if you feel like we are not doing it well. As a team we have very inclusive culture, and want to do right in this area. I am adding my team here so we can have open conversation." [368]

Celebrating Unwed Mothers

When the number of unwed mothers in America reached more than 50% in 2012, the feminist blog Jezebel celebrated the "milestone" with a headline reading, "The Increase in Single Moms Is Actually a Good Thing," because the increase in single mothers means fewer women are "relying" on men economically, and feminists view more single moms as a sign of female empowerment.

The writer was upset that experts (and ordinary people) were concerned about the growing trend since children born out of wedlock "face greater social and economic obstacles than their peers born into traditional nuclear families." [369] Liberals never want to hear about the effects of their disastrous decisions, but there's one thing they like more than single mothers, and that's women who never become mothers at all.

A report from CNBC declared, "Your friends may tell you having kids has made them happier. They're probably lying." It went on to say, “Research shows that parenthood leads to a happiness gap. Maybe that’s because the pleasures of parenthood are outweighed by all the extra responsibilities, housework and, of course, the costs.” [370]

The article then broke down the average costs per month of having a child and calculated how much it adds up to by the time the kid is eighteen-years-old in attempts to dissuade people from having children.

On her short-lived Netflix show, comedian Michelle Wolf (the woman who looks like Carrot Top that performed at the White House Correspondents Dinner in 2018) did a segment titled “Salute to Abortions” which included a marching band coming out on stage where she then began to chant, “It doesn’t have to be a big deal, it’s actually a great deal! It’s about $300 dollars. That’s like six movie tickets.” She ended her speech saying “God bless abortions, and God bless America!” [371]

In the Hulu series *Shrill* , the lead character (Aidy Bryant) got pregnant and decided to have an abortion “before it becomes illegal,” and after killing the baby she tells her roommate she’s glad she “got out of a huge fucking mess” and now, “I feel very fucking powerful right now. And I just feel like I need to go out [and party].” [372]

A YouTube channel called “HiHo Kids” which features videos of young children meeting drag queens, transgender people, a gynecologist, and other individuals no child should be subjected to, even produced a video titled “Kids Meet Someone Who’s Had an Abortion” where the woman tells the children about how happy she was to do it, and that it was “part of God’s plan.” [373]

Alabama State Representative John Rogers made a startling declaration during a debate about a proposed state law that would ban most abortions unless the fetus had a “lethal anomaly” or if the pregnancy would put the mother’s life at risk, saying, “Some kids are unwanted, so you kill them now or you kill them later. You bring them in the world unwanted, unloved, [and then] you send them to the electric chair. So, you kill them now or you kill them later." [374] He wasn't being sarcastic, he supports abortion and was arguing against the bill. [375]

"Kids Cause Global Warming"

Perhaps one reason liberals are big supporters of abortion is because children are increasingly being blamed for causing global warming. The London *Guardian* declared, "The greatest impact individuals can have in fighting climate change is to have one fewer child, according to a new study that identifies the most effective ways people can cut their carbon emissions." [376]

One of the researchers on the project said, "I don't have children, but it is a choice I am considering and discussing with my fiancé. Because we care so much about climate change that will certainly be one factor we consider in the decision, but it won't be the only one." [377]

Other lunatics are so concerned that planet earth is doomed they're afraid to have children because they don't want to bring them into the world if it's going to soon plunge into chaos like a science fiction movie. The *New York Times* interviewed a 32-year-old woman in a story about this madness who said, "I don't want to give birth to a kid wondering if it's going to live in some kind of 'Mad Max' dystopia." [378]

"Animals are disappearing. The oceans are full of plastic. The human population is so numerous, the planet may not be able to support it indefinitely. This doesn't paint a very pretty picture for people bringing home a brand-new baby from the hospital," said another. [379]

Others see it as a "sacrifice" they have to make to save the planet. One woman who wanted to have kids but decided not to, said "it's hard for me to justify my wants over what matters and what's important for everyone." [380] Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez even said that it's a "legitimate question" for Millennials and those in Generation Z to ask, "Is it OK to still have children?" because global warming is supposedly going to make their lives miserable. [381]

The LGBT Mafia

Every time a social media personality, actor, singer, or sports figure "comes out" as gay, liberal media outlets across the Internet all celebrate them as if they've accomplished some incredible achievement. President Obama made a habit of calling and "congratulating" professional athletes who decided to come out as gay. [382] When the Supreme Court ruled that gay "marriage" was legal in all fifty states, Obama had the White House lit up in rainbow colors that night to celebrate. [383]

The media is also on a mission to ruin the careers of any celebrity who dares voice opposition to gay "marriage" or gay adoption. [384] HGTV famously canceled a television show of the Benham Brothers (not to be confused with the "Property Brothers," who have a show on the network) after news reports started surfacing that the Benhams were Christians and didn't support gay "marriage." [385]

Comedian Kevin Hart was scheduled to host the 2019 Oscars until LGBT activists started spreading around one of his old bits about him not wanting his son to grow up to be gay. [386] In 2014 Mozilla CEO Brendan Eich, the creator of the popular Firefox web browser, was forced to resign after LGBT activists discovered that he had donated $1000 of his own money to support Proposition 8 in California which amended the state's constitution to define marriage as specifically between a man and a woman. [387] A gay man once filed a $70 million dollar lawsuit against a popular

Bible publisher claiming that the anti-gay verses caused him "emotional distress." [388]

Kids in California, Colorado, New Jersey, and Illinois schools are now being forced to learn about "LGBT History Month" and are being taught about the "amazing contributions" LGBT people have made to the country. [389] In the UK, school children are being taught that "all genders" can have periods, not just women, and schools started adding tampon dispensers in the boys bathrooms. [390]

Since "Drag Queen Story Hour" is being held at an increasing number of public libraries across the country (where insane parents bring their small children to have drag queens read stories to them about being gay or transgender) the city council in Lafayette City-Parish, Louisiana held a meeting after many (normal) parents were outraged the event was being held in their community.

During the meeting a gay man took to the podium to support the event, saying, "I'm here to let you know that this event is something that's going to be very beautiful and for the children and the people that support it are going to realize that this is going to be the grooming of the next generation." [391] Others in the meeting gasped since the term "grooming children" refers to a sexual predator attempting to persuade a child into a sexual relationship over time. [392]

One drag queen who read to children at the Houston Public Library's "Drag Queen Storytime" is a registered sex offender who had previously been convicted of aggravated sexual assault against an 8-year-old child. [393] The library failed to do background checks on the drag queens who were given access to the children and the sex offender had only been exposed after a conservative activist organization MassResistance took it upon themselves to investigate the drag queens who were reading to the kids at the events. [394] Another drag queen reading to children at a library actually taught children how to twerk (jiggle their butts in a sexual way, as popularized by skank Miley Cyrus.) [395]

Liberals began complaining that Victoria's Secret "discriminates" against fat women and transgenders because only beautiful (and actual) women walk the runway in their fashion shows. Online outlet "Mic" complained that they "normalized discrimination" and that, "It doesn't take a fashion insider to recognize that when it comes to plus-size and transgender women, as well as gender nonconforming people, Victoria's Secret would rather maintain a closed door policy. Since the brand's first runway show at the Plaza Hotel in New York City in August 1995, not a single plus-size or out transgender or gender nonconforming person has walked in the show's 23-year history." [396]

Activists then called it "hateful" when the chief marketing officer dismissed criticism, but Victoria's Secret official Twitter account soon apologized and released a statement saying, "we absolutely would love to cast a transgender model for the show." [397] Nine months later they hired their first transgender model. [398]

Just like conservative blacks are shunned and smeared by the media, so are conservative gays. *Deadspin* , a sports blog owned by Univision, published an article titled "Conservative Gays Need to Shut The Fuck Up." [399] And when Caitlyn Jenner "came out" as a Republican, liberals went nuts and completely denounced "her" as a traitor to the LGBT community despite recently having been celebrated as the most famous transgender person in the world upon announcing "her" transition.

"She" received infinitely more hate on social media for being a Republican than "she" did for deciding to identify as a "woman," and actually said it was harder to come out as Republican than it was transgender. [400]

TV "News"

Television news is very different from newspapers and magazines which tend to cover stories in much greater detail and context than a fifteen-second sound bite, and require a reader's active attention and willingness to follow a story. Television, on the other hand, is a passive medium and relies on a quick pace, flashy graphics, and dramatic music in hopes of gaining an audience's attention and holding it long enough for the commercial break so they can get paid.

TV news only skims along the surface of issues, mentioning a few basic points, and is often just infotainment with no real substance. What the audience sees is a carefully crafted version of a story that the producers and editors want people to see, while leaving out the parts they don't want.

Famed media analyst Neil Postman noted, "Television always recreates the world to some extent in its own image by selecting parts of that world and editing those parts. So a television news show is a kind of symbolic creation and construction made by news directors and camera crews…and stranger still is the fact that commercials may appear anywhere in a news story, before, or after, or in the middle, so that all events are rendered essentially trivial; that is to say all events are treated as a source of public entertainment." [401]

The reason intelligent people listen to talk radio is because radio shows provide long-form interviews and in-depth discussions which explore subjects in detail during a 15 or 20 minute segment, and may even continue the discussion after the commercial break for even longer. In comparison, the average television news segment on a national evening news broadcast is just 2 minutes and 23 seconds. [402] For local TV news it's just 41 seconds. [403] Television news is the equivalent of reading the headline of a newspaper article and the first paragraph or two.

Aside from the limitations of the television format, the days of Walter Cronkite, "the most trusted man in America" who anchored the *CBS Evening News* for 19 years, are long gone. After his era was over we got people like Dan Rather who used fake documents in a report about George W. Bush's service record from when he was in the National Guard. [404] And Brian Williams who fabricated a story about his plane being shot down in Iraq when he was covering the war. [405]

Most television "reporters" today aren't reporters, but are just actors. Everyone knows Hollywood celebrities make millions of dollars a year, but most people don't think about how much money celebrity "journalists" make. They too are performance artists not much different from a Hollywood actor reading their lines. They know when to sound somber, and when to turn up the energy and display faux outrage to the audience when the teleprompter tells them. Many of them don't believe half the things they say, they're just playing a part, and for that they get paid very well.

For example, before he was fired from the *NBC Nightly News* , anchor Brian Williams was making $10 million a year. [406] Dan Rather was making $6 million a year at CBS News. [407] At CNN Anderson Cooper makes $12 million dollars a year and has a net worth of over $100 million. [408] MSNBC morning host Joe Scarborough's divorce documents show that in 2013 he was making just under $100,000 per week! [409] Matt Lauer was making $25 million a year before he was fired from NBC's *Today Show* for sexual misconduct. [410] And when Megyn Kelly was fired from NBC's morning lineup she left with a $69 million windfall, the remainder of her contract. [411]

To put these figures in perspective, Anderson Cooper’s $12 million a year divided by 52 (weeks in a year) is over $230,000 a week, or over $46,000 *per show* . He makes more money *in one day* than many Americans make in *an entire year!* And for that kind of money, these television personalities will say and do almost anything.

Being a cable news contributor is also very lucrative, earning pundits an easy six-figure salary to sit around a table for an hour to give their “analysis” on various issues a few nights a week. They know what the host, producers, and network want, and that’s what they deliver. They’re very careful not to bite the hand that feeds them by daring to point out facts that go against the narrative the show is trying to promote.

All of the Big Three broadcast networks (NBC, ABC, and CBS) try to separate themselves from the “cable” shows, but promoting the liberal agenda remains at the core of their existence. That’s not to say they don’t have *some* value. The major networks are useful to learn about dangerous weather events, product recalls, health scares, etc., and they do cover some events that can’t have political spin put on them and which the general public should be aware of. And it can be important to watch what they are reporting just to be aware of the latest issues they are promoting and see what their current agenda is.

They also aren’t without their own major scandals that should cause viewers to remain skeptical about their integrity as “news” networks. CBS once killed a story about the tobacco industry covering up how addictive cigarettes are out of concerns that if they were sued by the tobacco companies for their report it would interfere with the pending sale of the network to Westinghouse. [412] The incident was later made into a movie called *The Insider* (1999) staring Al Pacino and Russell Crowe. [413]

After allegedly burying a story about Nike using sweatshops to manufacture their clothes out of fears they would lose the company as a sponsor for the 1998 Winter Olympics, CBS reporters wore Nike jackets during their coverage as part of the sponsorship deal in what was widely criticized as a breach of journalistic ethics. [414]

CBS News has even digitally inserted advertisements for their own network onto fake billboards during live shots using the same technology sports broadcasts use to display banners behind home plate at baseball games. CBS inserted them onto buildings, water fountains, and even on the back of a horse-drawn carriage during “news” reports. [415]

After *ABC News* interrupted the network’s broadcast for some “breaking news” about the “Russia investigation,” Brian Ross falsely claimed that Michael Flynn had implicated Donald Trump in the “conspiracy,” resulting in the stock market immediately dropping 350 points out of concerns that the President would now be impeached or arrested. [416] General Flynn had made no such allegations and the story was completely false.

A few years earlier during their breaking news coverage of the shooting in an Aurora, Colorado movie theater by lunatic James Holmes, anchor George Stephanopoulos said that Brian Ross found something that “might be significant.” He then went on to incorrectly report that the shooter may be a member of the Tea Party because ABC found someone on Facebook with the same name who had the Tea Party listed as one of his interests. [417] It was, of course, the wrong James Holmes.

ABC News claimed that then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions delivered a speech to a “hate group” after meeting with the Christian non-profit organization Alliance Defending Freedom, one of the most powerful Christian rights legal organizations in the country. [418] Basically all Christian groups are seen as “hate groups” to the liberal Establishment, which always cites the Southern Poverty Law Center as the ultimate authority of such things.

After Oprah Winfrey accepted an award at the 2018 Golden Globes and gave an “inspiring” speech that caused many to hope she would be running for president, the official NBC Twitter account tweeted out a picture of her with the caption “OUR future president.” [419]

In 2015, *NBC News* launched *“NBC BLK”* (NBC Black), a new website for “black-oriented issues.” [420] Apparently it just wasn’t enough to cover that kind of news on their main platform, they had to dedicate an entire division to “black news.” The following year they launched “NBC Out,” a website featuring LGBT news, “Out” meaning “out of the closet.” The site has it’s own Twitter account and other social media pages dedicated to using the NBC brand to promote the LGBT agenda 24/7.

Cable News

As bad as the Big Three broadcast networks have become in recent years, cable news channels like CNN and MSNBC are much worse. They’ll talk endlessly about the same story on every show, every hour, all day, to ensure maximum saturation hoping their propaganda will reach as many viewers as possible since most people just tune in for an hour or two a day.

Fox News, while still following the basic sound bite format of television news, actually does a very good job of presenting a variety of stories and perspectives, whereas CNN and MSNBC mostly have endless panel discussions with each pundit throwing in their two cents when their “research” consists of glancing over a few headlines before the show or reading the producer’s notes about what the topic is for the day. Barack Obama once said that Fox viewers are living on a different planet than those who watch CNN and MSNBC. [421] Maybe he’s right. Fox viewers are the ones living on planet Earth!

The Left is so fearful of Fox News that the Democratic National Committee barred them from hosting any of the twelve Democrat presidential primary debates for the 2020 election, claiming they’re “state run TV” controlled by the Trump White House. [422] God forbid any of the moderators ask the candidates some real questions!

MSNBC was started in 1996 and functioned as the liberal counterpart to Fox, whereas CNN was supposedly the middle ground. CNN stands for Cable News Network and they were the first 24-hour news network in the world, started in 1980 by Ted Turner. For over 30 years they would cover news from around the globe and were once—as their trademarked slogan still (falsely) claims—one of the most trusted names in news. When something interesting was happening somewhere in the world, it was live on CNN, but in the Trump era all that changed. They rarely report on news anymore. Instead, all they do is talk about how terrible of a person Donald Trump is.

It’s improv theater. The producer gives the panel a topic each night, or each segment, and like a group of actors at an improv show, the panelists pretend to be experts on the issue and put forth their opinions as if they actually know what they’re talking about when in most cases they’re just making it up as they go along. CNN doesn’t air newscasts anymore, they air talk shows filled with endless speculation and theorizing about things they have no idea about. It’s a gossip network.

CNN now covers one story—Trump. It’s Trump 24/7 and virtually every minute of airtime is dedicated to complaining about him. What would once be contained in the grocery store tabloids or frivolous websites with zero editorial ethics now regularly airs on CNN. Gossip about Stormy Daniels and the “pee tape” and endless allegations from anonymous sources about how “corrupt,” “incompetent,” “racist,” fascist,” etc., Trump is, is the only thing they talk about.

The network is desperate to prevent blue collar Democrats from supporting Trump and abandoning the Democrat Party, so after a grassroots movement called #WalkAway was started by a gay liberal named Brandon Straka encouraging people to stop voting for Democrats because the party has become insane, CNN branded the movement part of a Russian plot! They reported that despite the #WalkAway campaign being “presented as a grassroots effort by former Democrats who are critical of the party’s alleged intimidation, confrontation and lack of civility and want people to walk away from the party,” they said it has, “been connected to Kremlin-linked Russian bots.” [423]

The #WalkAway campaign’s YouTube channel and Facebook page are filled with video testimonials of average Americans from all different backgrounds who give their reasons for why they no longer support the Democrat Party and are encouraging others to “walk away” as well. [424]

CNN’s poisonous anti-Trump obsession may have incited several terrorist attacks such as the man who shot up Republicans’ softball practice in June 2017, severely injuring Congressman Steve Scalese, or the person who mailed white powder to Donald Trump Jr.’s apartment, causing an anthrax scare and landing his then-wife in the hospital for testing. CNN’s reckless rhetoric could be the catalyst that helped push any number of mentally unstable viewers over the edge, convincing them that the Trump administration is the reincarnation of the Third Reich.

Meanwhile CNN's senior "media analyst" Brian Stelter says that Trump's base is a "hate movement" against the press. "I think what we are increasingly seeing from the president and his aides and his allies is a hate movement against the American press," Stelter whined. "When you look at the behavior around Jim Acosta and some of the other reporter at these rallies, you really do see a hate movement." [425]

Shortly after the election Stelter declared that Donald Trump becoming president was "a national emergency" and painted him as a dictator who just seized power. [426] In an interview with *New York Magazine* CNN's president Jeff Zucker admitted, "The perception of Donald Trump in capitals around the world is shaped, in many ways, by CNN," warning Trump that, "Continuing to have an adversarial relationship with that network is a mistake." [427] Even the *Washington Post* admitted that, "it is hard to escape the perception that Zucker issued a kind of threat." [428]

CNN was instrumental in getting Alex Jones banned from all major social media platforms after they literally lobbied the tech giants to have him removed. Before he was "unpersoned," when his YouTube channel had just one strike they gleefully reported, "InfoWars' Main YouTube Channel is Two Strikes Away From Being Banned" [429] A few days later his channel got a second strike, and outlets like *Newsweek* gloated, "InfoWars is perilously close to a permanent YouTube ban after peddling yet another debunked conspiracy theory." [430] Dozens of other outlets picked up the story about the second strike, salivating that Infowars was one strike away from permanently being banned. [431]

Even before Alex Jones' YouTube channel was deleted, CNN was organizing an advertiser boycott against all the companies whose ads were appearing before his videos played. CNN reported, "Some of the biggest brands in the U.S. had ads running on the YouTube channels for far-right website InfoWars and its founder, notorious conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, and they say they had no idea YouTube was allowing their advertising to appear there.” [432]

Well, how did they learn their ads were running on Alex’s channel? Because CNN made of list of which ads were running, and then contacted the advertisers to pressure the companies into pulling them! Their story goes on, “CNN has discovered ads on InfoWars’ channels from companies and organizations such as Nike, Acer, 20th Century Fox, Paramount Network, the Mormon Church, Moen, Expedia, Alibaba, HomeAway, the NRA, Honey, Wix and ClassPass.” At the end of their story they admitted, “Many of the brands — including Nike, Moen, Expedia, Acer, ClassPass, Honey, Alibaba and OneFamily — have suspended ads on InfoWars’ channels after being contacted by CNN for comment.” [433]

MSNBC is usually not quite as insane as CNN but it’s still almost always off the rails. Donny Deutsch, who is a regular contributor on the *Morning Joe* show, has challenged President Trump to a fight on air, [434] and their other regular panelists say things like Trump’s name is the “modern day swastika.” [435] They also regularly compared him to a dictator and call him a white supremacist. [436] When President Trump announced that he would be meeting face to face with Kim Jong Un, MSNBC claimed it was to “distract” the media from talking about his alleged affair with Stormy Daniels. [437]

The network’s darling is lesbian Rachel Maddow whose monologues are convoluted streams of consciousness rattling off all kinds of social justice warrior buzzwords without ever really making a point. Her show is so fanatical and hyper-partisan that the *New York Times* banned their reporters from even appearing on it out of concern it will tarnish their credibility. [438]

The Intercept's Glenn Greenwald admitted, "I used to be really good friends with Rachel Maddow [but] I've seen her devolution from this really interesting, really smart, independent thinker into this utterly scripted, intellectually dishonest, partisan hack." [439]

MSNBC's research department is so awful they took seriously a parody Twitter account that listed its location as a city in Russia and tweeted satire about a variety of issues (calling itself Boston Antifa). MSNBC reported that it was more "evidence" that Russian bots were active on Twitter. [440] They also fell for a tweet posted by the popular parody account for North Korea, the "DPRK News Service" which MSNBC cited in a report attacking President Trump. [441]

Immediately after Robert Mueller wrapped up his two-year long investigation into the Trump campaign's alleged "collusion" with the Russians and found none, CNN and MSNBC's ratings dropped like a stone over night. After stringing along their viewers for two years giving the impression that any day now Mueller would announce he found "proof" Trump was a Russian agent and that his impeachment and imprisonment was imminent, hundreds of thousands of disappointed viewers finally quit tuning in.

Following the Mueller nothing burger, Rachel Maddow's viewership dropped by almost 20%. [442] Anderson Cooper's prime time show on CNN got only 835,000 viewers, and for weeks couldn't break a million. [443] Meanwhile Fox News continued to dominate, getting more viewers than MSNBC and CNN combined. [444]

Even *Newsweek* magazine, which is part of the anti-Trump smear machine, reported, "MSNBC's Rachel Maddow Found Huge Ratings Success Covering Trump and Russia — So What Now?" [445] Election years are always huge ratings boosters for cable news, and the regular viewers who suffered through two years of endless speculation and listened to countless conspiracy theories about Trump and the Russians obviously aren't the sharpest tools in the shed. Most have already forgotten all about the massive deception they were victims of and due to their short attention spans and lack of intellectual capacity, these cable news companies will continue on as if they did nothing wrong, and hundreds of thousands of people will still tune in.

Normal Americans wonder how anyone could watch them again after the massive fraud the "news" networks had engaged in, but it's easy to underestimate how many stupid people there are out there. After all, the *Jerry Springer Show* aired for 27 years and was able to keep audiences coming back every day to watch another group of trailer trash fight with each other about who cheated on who and who the father is of some poor child; and despite how mindless and repetitive the show was, enough people kept tuning in every day for it to stay on air for almost three decades.

Internet "News" Sites

Just like the Internet sparked the creation of countless different kinds of businesses selling everything from books to airline tickets, it also gave birth to new "news" companies as well. While the brand name newspapers and television networks eventually began migrating their content online, unknown entrepreneurs threw their hat in the news business as well, creating digital-only magazines and "news" sites like the Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, the Daily Beast, Politico, Axios, Vox, Slate, Vice News, and many others.

Since the barriers to entry are so low, and these companies didn't need to invest in gigantic printing presses or develop supply chains to deliver their product to readers' homes every morning, many of them saw the incredible opportunities the Internet opened up. But while most newspapers and magazines require people to buy them, the vast majority of Internet news sites are free to read.

All they had to do was get people to click on their articles and the advertisements on the website would fund their operation, so instead of focusing on producing quality content that people would be willing to pay for, they began flooding the Internet with sensational clickbait, throwing all journalistic standards out the window with one goal in mind—drive traffic to the articles, no matter what.

The *Huffington Post* was one of the first "successful" online "news" outlets. It was started in 2005 specializing in clickbait trash and other pop culture nonsense, but due to spamming the Internet with countless articles on anything and everything, they generated a lot of traffic and made a name for themselves as one of the most viewed online "news" outlets. [446] In 2011 they were purchased by AOL for $315 million. [447]

When Conan O'Brien was the comedian at the 2013 White House Correspondents Dinner he mocked the Huffington Post for being invited, saying, "All the Washington news media here tonight including the stars of online journalism. I see the Huffington Post has a table, which has me wondering if you're here, who's covering Miley Cyrus's latest nip slip? Who's assembling today's top 25 yogurt related tweets? [Or] 7 mistakes you're making with bacon? That's a real one, and you should be ashamed of yourselves!" [448]

The Huffington Post (later rebranded as HuffPost) being welcomed as part of the Washington press corps marked the beginning of the end of journalism.

BuzzFeed

BuzzFeed is another online abomination which took advantage of the new clickbait business model. The site was created in 2006, and began churning out ridiculously dumb quizzes about pop culture and recycling the same handful of topics over and over again to litter Google's search results with their spam, often in the form of listicles like: "37 Things White People Need to Stop Ruining in 2018;" "21 Things That Almost All White People Are Guilty Of Saying;" and "33 Things That Almost All White People Are Guilty Of Doing."

They seem to hate white people so much that after the White House announced the National Day for the Victims of Communism a BuzzFeed reporter declared that the phrase "victims of Communism" was a "white nationalist talking point." [449] Aside from their distain for white people, BuzzFeed also can't stand heterosexual people (known as normal people to those not infected with the liberal pathogen.) When *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* was released, despite Disney turning the movie into a feminist propaganda piece, BuzzFeed still wasn't happy because there were no LGBT characters and suggested that Finn (John Boyega) and Poe Dameron (Oscar Issac) should have had a "romance" as part of the plot. [450]

BuzzFeed is perhaps the worst clickbait bottom feeder online and makes the *National Enquirer* look like a Pulitzer Prize winning publication. Outside of the community of morons who actively visit their website, BuzzFeed is best-known for publishing the fake news story about Donald Trump allegedly being caught on tape with hookers peeing on him in a Russian hotel.

The story about the now-infamous “dossier” had been circling internally at most of the major news outlets but nobody had reported on it because it was so ridiculous and there wasn’t a shred of evidence to back it up, but BuzzFeed decided they would get the “scoop” and ran with it.

Then the allegations were all over social media and “Golden Showers” was trending on Twitter which provided cover for other “news” outlets to repeat the story. BuzzFeed often does the dirty work for Democrats by publishing salacious allegations and hyping them up enough to then get amplified by mainstream outlets which hide under the cover of qualifiers like “BuzzFeed reports” and “according to BuzzFeed.” This way, they can give the impression that *they’re* not making the claims, it’s someone else and they’re just passing it along because “if true” it would be a big story.

Vice News

Vice News is another popular online outlet which regularly celebrates the most bizarre sexual perversions and promotes degenerates as modern day heroes. Some of their headlines are literally: “We Interviewed the Zoophilia Advocate Who Had Sex with a Dolphin;” “Ever Fantasized About Ingesting an Animal Through Your Anus?” “How to Make Breakfast With Your Vagina;” “Why Can’t I Consent to Sex with My Brother?” “Dear Straight Guys, It’s Time to Start Putting Things In Your Butt;” “Was Jesus Gay?” “Getting Cocaine Blown Up Your Butt;” and “Should Every Man Be Penetrated At Least Once In His Life?” It should be no surprise that Vice News is also on the forefront of celebrating child drag queens and sexualizing children. [451]

Vice’s founder Shane Smith became a billionaire from peddling this kind of cancer. [452] In the early 2010s they regularly made viral videos on interesting topics that other news outlets wouldn’t cover, like traveling to

Columbia to investigate scopolamine (also known as the Devil's Breath) which allegedly puts people into a chemically induced hypnotic trance where they will do anything they're told, [453] and visiting Kim Dotcom's estate in New Zealand and letting him give his side of the story regarding the massive copyright infringement case he's facing for running the file-sharing site Megaupload. [454] But Vice quickly devolved into the most perverted of online outlets.

Like all the other large Leftist web-based media outlets, Vice seems to be obsessed with criticizing white people and sees "white supremacists" around every corner. They literally reported that, "Racist and white supremacist ideas have become more visible among the Chinese Canadian right." [455] So Chinese people living in Canada are white supremacists now? There's no point in trying to make sense of their insanity. It's best to just stay away from them so their poisonous propaganda doesn't enter your view because it will only make you upset.

In 2015, Disney invested over $400 million into Vice, but four years later had lost all of their money and wrote it off on their taxes. [456] George Soros came to the rescue in mid-2019 and "invested" another $250 million dollars into the failing media company so they could continue to operate. [457] The "investment" from Soros was really just a donation to help them cover their operating expenses for the next few years so they could keep pumping out their liberal propaganda regardless of how much money it cost them to produce or whether they earned any revenue from it.

Vox

Vox is another well-funded online outlet that sees white supremacist boogeymen around every corner, and paints anyone to the right of Karl Marx as an alt-right Nazi. Vox largely functions as an activist organization working to destroy the careers of conservatives by painting targets on their back and smearing them with labels that are difficult to shake. In 2015 they were given $200 million dollars by NBC to do their dirty work without tarnishing the NBC name. [458]

For years Vox has been obsessed with PewDiePie, who held the title of YouTube's most subscribed channel for six years, and thinks that he is putting out secret white supremacist messages to his viewers. [459] Of course they labeled me one of YouTube's "most extreme" creators in a video they produced crying about how conservatives were making viral anti-feminist and anti-illegal immigration videos on YouTube. [460]

Vox came to most people's attention in June 2019 when one of their activists (who calls himself a "journalist") named Carlos Maza tried to get Steven Crowder completely banned from YouTube for calling him a "lispy queer" and an "anchor baby." Just as gay pride month kicked off, Carlos Maza rallied his fans to pressure YouTube to ban Crowder for "bullying" him and for using "hate speech," despite Maza often referring to himself as a "queer" and the Q in LGBTQ stands for just that.

The little sissy spent an entire weekend ranting on Twitter about how miserable his life was and kept harassing YouTube to ban Crowder for his "homophobic attacks." YouTube then demonetized Crowder's entire channel, along with many others the company claimed were posting "offensive" content. More on that in the chapter on YouTube.

In case there is any doubt as to whether or not Vox hates the First Amendment, for the 4th of July they published an op-ed titled "3 Reasons the American Revolution Was a Mistake," which starts off saying, "This July 4, let's not mince words: American independence in 1776 was a monumental mistake. We should be mourning the fact that we left the United Kingdom, not cheering it." [461]

It goes on to wish we would have remained a British colony because slavery would have supposedly been abolished sooner, fewer Native Americans would have been oppressed, and we would have a parliamentary system of government instead of a separation of powers (the three-branch system, which we currently have).

The writer also added his belief that we would have passed a carbon tax, since that's what happened in Britain, whereas such a proposal has (thankfully) so far failed to get enough support in the United States. The article concluded that, "The main benefit of the revolution to colonists was that it gave more political power to America's white male minority." [462] Of course! It's always the white man's fault!

The Daily Beast

The *Daily Beast* is another unscrupulous online outlet that often functions as a political activist organization instead of a "news" website and regularly depicts Trump supporters as a bunch of bigots. They like to publish stories that smear rising conservative social media personalities as "far-right" to brand them as "extremists" in attempts to derail their careers before a major network hires them as contributors. It's their way of trying to kill off the next generation of conservative voices before they become household names.

The "far-right" label is often associated with neo-Nazism and by muddying up the search results for peoples' names with a bunch of salacious articles about them it can cause real damage for current and future employment. Headlines like "Meet Candace Owens, Kanye West's Toxic Far-Right Consigliere," [463] and "Mike Cernovich and Jack Posobiec, the Far Right's Twin Trolls, Taste Their Own Bitter Medicine," [464] and "Pro-Gun Parkland Teen Kyle Kashuv Apologizes for 'Inflammatory' Racial

Comments” are commonly deployed to digitally tar and feather conservatives. [465]

The *Daily Beast* calls YouTube a “radicalization factory” for the “far-right” and says that it’s “pulling YouTubers down the rabbit hole of extremism.” [466] Like others of their ilk, they often push for more censorship of right-wing content under the smokescreen of fighting “racism” and “extremism.” Defame, demonetize, and deplatform is their M.O.

After a joke video depicting Nancy Pelosi as drunk and slurring her words went viral on Facebook, the *Daily Beast* doxed the person who allegedly made it, revealing his name, the city he lives in, and what he does for a living. The “reporter” (activist) who cyber-stalked the meme maker had apparently messaged his Facebook friends, including his ex-girlfriend, fishing for information about him. [467]

Don’t Fall for Their Tricks

If you use social media, the best thing you can do is block these Leftist clickbait accounts, and don’t share their links no matter how outrageous their articles are because these sites often rely on hate-clicks, which means they know people will share the links on their social media accounts with the intention of showing their friends how insane the articles are. Unfortunately trying to “expose” them this way just drives more traffic to their website which is what they want. They don’t care if the people clicking the articles like them or hate them, as long as they get the traffic and thus the ad revenue from it.

Oftentimes articles are purposefully inflammatory and designed to get attention because of how outlandish they are, even though the people writing them may not even believe a word of it, but are simply publishing outrageous things in hopes that people will spread them around so they can get a bunch of hate-clicks from it.

So instead of posting links to these outlets, take a screenshot of their headline and post that, along with a summary of the article and your commentary so you're not driving any more traffic to their websites. Starve them of traffic! Or post an article from a conservative website that is covering what the Leftist sites are reporting instead of giving them any more page views directly. It may be best to just ignore them altogether sometimes and not even mention them so that you don't inadvertently inspire anyone to visit them out of curiosity.

And be sure to bookmark and follow conservative sites like Fox News, Breitbart, the Drudge Report, Daily Caller, the Washington Times, Townhall, The Federalist, Washington Examiner, Newsbusters, PJ Media, Red State, One America News, WorldNetDaily, and National Review.

The End of Print Journalism?

In early 2018 the *New York Times* CEO predicted their print edition may only last another ten years before it becomes economically unsustainable to keep it going. [468] Newspaper circulation has been on a steady decline since the Internet revolution, and many magazines are struggling as well. *PC Magazine* ceased printing a physical edition in 2009 and is now just a website. *Computerworld* followed suit in 2014. *Teen Vogue* magazine and *Self* did the same thing in 2017.

Newsweek , once considered to be one of the staples of the news magazine industry ever since its creation in 1933, even quit issuing a print edition at the end of 2012 due to financial problems. [469] About a year later after it had been bought by another media organization (IBT Media) they re-launched the print edition, but continue to struggle.

Despite having over 3 million Twitter followers, most of *Newsweek's* tweets barely get a dozen interactions, leading many people to think they bought millions of fake followers in order to appear popular. [470] In 2018 *Newsweek* was accused of fraudulently inflating the traffic to their website in order to present advertisers with false numbers, causing numerous online ad vendors to pull their ads. [471] So buying fake Twitter followers surely seems right up their alley.

CNN's president Jeff Zucker complained at an industry conference that his network was having a difficult time monetizing their content online since so many videos are spread through social media with CNN clips being posted to YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. "In a Google and Facebook world, monetization of digital and mobile continues to be more difficult than we would have expected or liked," he said. [472]

What he means is, there is just too much competition from other websites and YouTube channels, and since there are so many different links being shared on social media, CNN's web traffic has dramatically dropped and with fewer people actually watching them on cable they're not getting the revenue from the long blocks of commercials.

Because a lot of people use ad blocker plug-ins on their browsers which automatically hide banner ads from websites, the *Washington Post* recently began blocking people from being able to see their articles if their browser is using an ad blocker, requiring people to turn it off or white list (allow ads on) their site in order to even see what's on the website at all. [473]

The New York Times began limiting people's ability to read free articles on their website to ten per month by either tracking their IP address or placing cookies on their computer, and later reduced it to just five articles a month. [474] When that number is exceeded, the articles are blacked out and a notice pops up saying you have exceeded the allowed free articles limit and it encourages you to become a digital subscriber for $4 per month (for the first year) which then automatically changes to $15 a month from then on. The business model of displaying digital ads next to articles on their website just isn't working anymore because there is too much competition now with countless websites all using the same ad servers.

Mainstream Asking for Donations

Things are getting so dire for the major online "news" businesses that some are now asking for donations. At the bottom of every *Guardian* article now there is a notice that reads, "Since you're here…we have a small favor to ask. More people are reading the *Guardian* than ever but advertising revenues across the media are failing fast. And unlike many news organizations, we haven't put up a paywall — we want to keep our journalism as open as we can. So you can see why we need to ask for your help. The *Guardian's* independent, investigative journalism takes a lot of time, money, and hard work to produce. But we do it because we believe our perspective matters — because it might well be your perspective too. If everyone who reads our reporting, who likes it, helps fund it, our future would be much more secure. For as little as $1, you can support the *Guardian* – and it only takes a minute. Thank you." [475]

In August 2017, BuzzFeed "News" started asking for donations at the bottom of all their articles too. There's a banner that reads "Play a bigger role in our journalism" encouraging people to donate $5 dollars a month to them which readers get zero benefits for other than being added to a BuzzFeed email list. People who donate $100 get an "exclusive BuzzFeed News tote bag." [476] Soon we may see major media outlets join Patreon!

Wikipedia

Encyclopedia Britannica is the world's oldest encyclopedia, first published in the late 1700s. For many generations they were the standard in school libraries and some homes if parents decided to spend the $1000 plus dollars for the 32-volume set. But in 2012 the company announced they were no longer going to print the books (after 244 years), and instead Encyclopedia Britannica became an online only edition available for a small yearly subscription fee. [477] Unfortunately in the Internet age where everyone wants everything for free, Encyclopedia Britannica has been largely forgotten and Wikipedia has become the new standard "encyclopedia," which is both sad and disturbing.

Wikipedia is one of the top search results, if not *the* top search result, for almost anything you Google, and gets 33 *billion* page views a month. [478] And you probably know that literally anyone can edit almost any article on the site, anonymously, without even registering as an editor. In theory, other editors will watch over new updates and remove or correct them if someone posts incorrect information, but this often results in "edit wars" where people go back and forth posting something and then others change it, and then others change it back, and on and on. So depending on when you read an article on Wikipedia, information could be completely different or even missing entirely.

For benign pages about things like plants and animals there may be little controversy about what is said about them, but for pages that are biographies of people, particularly political figures (and even for some products and corporations which have entries on the site) they are usually a battleground between different editors fighting to have the final word in terms of what is (and is not) said about the topic.

Wikipedia is a major part of the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* smear machine because it solidifies the liberal consensus about individuals by using careless and defamatory online articles as the "sources" for labeling someone a racist, sexist, homophobe, etc. Once outlets like the HuffPost, Daily Beast, Vox, etc., publish an article making baseless claims about a person, then the Wikipedia editors update that person's page to paint them in a false light and cite the salacious hit pieces as the source in the footnotes, cementing the allegations in the target's Wikipedia page.

Because public figures have to prove "actual malice" in a defamation case, unlike private citizens, its difficult to win a judgment against "news" outlets for libel because they can easily claim they "thought" what they were writing was accurate, or it's their opinion that someone is "far-right," "racist," "Islamophobic," etc. Often they'll sneakily add a weak qualifier about someone they're smearing by saying they are an individual "who some people call far-right." *Who* calls them that? A few random trolls on Twitter, so technically "some people" have called them that and it's a devious way many of these outlets try to get labels to stick.

They also know that suing them can easily cost a plaintiff a million dollars in legal fees, and even if they win a judgment for the defamation, that person will still be on the hook for their own legal costs, which may be much more than the actual judgement awarded to them for the defamation in the first place.

For months Wikipedia had a section on Tomi Lahren's page saying she was considered "White Power Barbie," because an article in the London *Guardian* labeled her that simply because she's a beautiful blonde woman who has had a few viral videos criticizing Black Lives Matter. [479] Wikipedia is such a pit of disinformation and slander that Ron Paul was included on their white supremacist list for three weeks before editors finally fixed it. [480] Wikipedia even listed the California Republican Party's ideology as "Nazism" for a period of time. [481]

There is even an entire Wikipedia page titled "Racial Views of Donald Trump" which paints him as a huge racist, detailing how he is a "birther" for questioning Barack Obama's heritage; taking his comments about "fine people" on "both sides" of the Confederate statue controversy out of context, and including a whole long list of supposed "evidence" that he's a racist because he referred to El Salvador, Haiti and parts of Africa as "shit hole countries" and makes fun of Elizabeth Warren, calling her Pocahontas.

In September 2018 a Democrat congressional staffer doxed several Republican Senators including Lindsey Graham by posting their home addresses and phone numbers right on their Wikipedia pages. [482] The perpetrator was later arrested and sentenced to 4 years in prison for computer fraud and sharing restricted private information, showing the seriousness of his crime and that the lack of oversight and editorial control makes Wikipedia the Internet's equivalent of a wall in a gas station bathroom.

Wikipedia editors fiercely protect the Antifa page, and (at the time of this writing) have successfully prevented any references to their violent and terrorist activities. The subsections of the article are "History," "Ideology and Activities," and "Notable Activism;" but nothing about their violence at all. [483] These are the scum who wear black masks and look like members of ISIS that show up at events to harass, intimidate, and assault Trump supporters with sticks, bricks, and mace. This is the same group that went to Tucker Carlson's house, banged on his door, and shouted threats through a megaphone. [484]

After Antifa members assaulted Quillette journalist Andy Ngo at an event in Portland, Oregon in June 2019, punching him in the face and throwing milkshakes on him (causing him to be hospitalized for a brain hemorrhage) word of the incident made national news. [485] President Trump even mentioned the attack but Wikipedia editors decided that it wasn't "significant" enough to warrant being included on the Antifa page. [486]

Wikipedia is also preventing any mention of the terrorist attack on an Immigrations and Customs Enforcement [ICE] facility in Tacoma, Washington, where an Antifa member approached the property armed with a rifle and firebombed the building, resulting in him being shot and killed by police. He had also posted a manifesto online before his attack using language from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, claiming the United States was keeping illegal immigrants in "concentration camps." His manifesto began declaring "I am Antifa." [487]

Congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar refused to condemn the attack when specifically asked about it. [488] Others, like Black Lives Matter activist Shaun King, appeared to celebrate it and encouraged people to "liberate" the "concentration camps" by any means necessary because illegal aliens are being "tortured" inside. [489]

The FBI reported that Antifa has been engaging in terrorist activities, and members of the Senate, including Ted Cruz of Texas and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana introduced an official resolution deeming them a terrorist organization. [490] But not a word of any of this is included on the Wikipedia page about Antifa. [491]

Meanwhile the Wikipedia page for disgraced former FBI agent Peter Strzok says the text messages he and his mistress Lisa Page exchanged speaking of having an "insurance policy" to derail the Trump administration is just a "conspiracy theory" saying, "The revelation of the text messages led Republican congressmen and right wing media to start pushing conspiracy theories to the effect that Strzok was involved in a secret plot to undermine the Trump presidency.”[492]

There have been controversies surrounding certain Wikipedia editors being paid to protect pages of political figures as well as big names in tech and the media.[493] Others, like myself, have no hope of ever having a fair or accurate representation on Wikipedia. Right now my page says that I’m best known for being a “conspiracy theorist” because I wrote a few books about the Illuminati when I was younger with the subtitle of “Facts & Fiction” separating the facts from the fiction, because they *are* a historical group that became a pop culture phenomena in the early 2010s. It’s an interesting subject I was fascinated with for a period of time, but the Wikipedia editors forever want me branded as “conspiracy theorist” for daring to look into the topic.

And while I have had a sizable YouTube audience steadily growing ever since 2006, at the end of the 2016 presidential election my channel exploded. But for years after that (and currently at the time I’m writing this) the editor overlords at Wikipedia won’t allow ANY mention of my YouTube stats on my page, which is standard for professional YouTubers.

Several liberal YouTubers whose channels that are much smaller than mine, like that of Kyle Kulinski who runs the Secular Talk channel, and David Pakman have their Wikipedia pages loaded with details about their subscriber counts and viewership and all the news sites which have mentioned them; but not mine. My YouTube subscriber count isn’t allowed to be mentioned at all.[494] Wikipedia gives the impression that my career ended in 2015, when in reality it took off in 2016, and I was the first conservative YouTube channel to reach 1 million subscribers.[495]

Despite my 2017 book, *The True Story of Fake News*, reaching the #15 best seller spot (of all books) on Amazon (and #1 in its category for weeks) the Wikipedia editors say it's not "significant" enough to mention on my page! My book which came out the following year, *Liberalism: Find a Cure* , also hit #15 on Amazon best seller's list (of all books, not just a certain category) but they still refuse to even mention it! One of the editors who fiercely guards my page wrote on the Talk Page discussion about the edits that, "The books were removed via consensus at some point because there were no reliable sources that mentioned them as being significant." [496]

Another editor writing about why my YouTube subscriber count is not allowed on the page says, "I think there is enough evidence that subscriber counts have been manipulated in the recent past that we should not be including this information in this article." [497]

They also removed (and are preventing any mention of) all the television shows I've appeared in, including *Secret Societies of Hollywood* on the E! channel, *America Declassified* on the Travel Channel, *America's Book of Secrets* on the History Channel, *Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura* on TruTV, as well as shows on the Sundance Channel and interviews on Fox News. These appearances are all listed on IMDB and other media outlets, but the Wikipedia editors have decided that mentioning them would make me look too popular, so they dumped them down the memory hole and are preventing anyone from adding them back to the page.

Larry Sanger, the co-founder of Wikipedia (who is no longer with the organization), chimed in on Twitter when I was complaining about this, saying, "If these idiots don't like you, then they will ignore their own f'n rules. You're far from being the first this has happened to. It pisses me off. Arrogant little SOBs." [498]

He now calls Wikipedia "a broken system" and says "Wikipedia has long since decided to turn the other cheek when influential editors make articles speak with one point of view, when they dismiss unpopular views, or when they utterly fail to do justice to alternative approaches to a topic.”[499]

The *Washington Times* did an article about my “battle” with Wikipedia after I made a YouTube video about it, but instead of fixing the page the editors scrubbed any mention of my education credentials, deleting the fact that I have a bachelor’s degree in Communication. They then added a few lines that I once made “numerous homophobic statements” about a Korean boy band after they played at the American Music Awards. I had simply tweeted a picture of them with the caption, “Meet the Korean lesbian pop group BTS featured at the American Music Awards #AMAs last night.”

It was clearly a joke because the band members looked very feminine and had blue hair like a stereotypical lesbian. *Teen Vogue* magazine wrote an article about my tweet because the group’s teeny bopper fans got upset and started a petition on Change.org urging the band to sue me, and *that* is the “reliable” source Wikipedia used to add a section to my page branding me “homophobic.”

They also added a line about how I had been temporarily suspended from Twitter for making “transphobic” comments (in reality saying there are only two genders.) They’re trying to paint me in the most negative light possible, citing random articles from little-known or garbage websites that happened to mention jokes I’ve made on Twitter, while at the same time preventing any real information about my career, my credentials, and my success from being mentioned at all.

Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales (who now lives in England) got so triggered when President Trump visited the UK in June 2019, he tweeted that he was leaving the country until Trump returned to the United States.[500] He was widely mocked in the replies, including by me, causing him to block me. (He later unblocked me after people continued to ridicule him over the block.)

Google has donated millions of dollars to Wikipedia to help cover their operating expenses, [501] and guess who else has given them millions as well—George Soros. [502] You'd think with all their money they could have just funded the Encyclopedia Britannica and made *that* free to the world instead of giving it to such a garbage website filled with inaccuracies and biased information, but then the Left's army of online trolls wouldn't be able to edit entries about people and political policies they want to control the perception of.

Author's Note: If you haven't already, please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com, Kindle, Google Play, iBooks, or wherever you bought it from, to let other potential readers know how valuable this information is.

Almost all of the one-star reviews on Amazon for my last two books "The True Story of Fake News" and "Liberalism: Find a Cure" are from NON-verified purchases which shows the "reviewers" probably didn't even read them and just hate me.

So if you could help me offset their fake one-star reviews by leaving a real one yourself since you actually read the book, that would help a lot!

Thank you!

Google

Google is the most-visited website in the world, and is so popular that "Google" has become a verb meaning to look something up. They dominate not just the search engine industry, but others as well, since a large number of the most popular mobile apps are also owned by Google (like G-mail, Google Maps, Chrome, Google Play, Google Drive, Google News, etc.).

Most people assume Google knows the answers to everything, and think the top search results for what they're looking for is the correct answer. Studies have shown that over 90% of the time people click on what is served up on page one and rarely even look at page two or beyond. [503] The ranking of search results gives Google an enormous amount of power since each page shows just ten different results out of hundreds of thousands, or millions of possible webpages. They can easily prevent people from finding articles or websites by just dropping them down to page two or three in the results.

Google's ability to surface certain information they want to promote while suppressing what they don't like by manipulating their algorithm gives them enormous power to artificially boost certain companies, products, or political candidates and causes over others.

Speaking of the 2016 election, one Google engineer wrote in internal emails, "This was an election of false equivalencies, and Google, sadly, had a hand in it." [504] They then suggested manipulating the search results to bury articles from Breitbart and the Daily Caller, saying, "How many times did you see the Election now card with items from opinion blogs (Breitbart, Daily Caller) elevated next to legitimate news organizations? That's something that can and should be fixed." [505]

"I think we have a responsibility to expose the quality and truthfulness of sources—because not doing so hides real information under loud noises…Beyond that, let's concentrate on teaching critical thinking. A little bit of that would go a long way. Let's make sure that we reverse things in four years—demographics will be on our side." [506]

Google insiders also discussed manipulating the search results to counter President Trump's proposed "Travel Ban" in January 2017 which would have prevented people living in countries with high rates of terrorist activity from entering the United States for a period of time. *The Wall Street Journal* reported, "Google Workers Discussed Tweaking Search Function to Counter Travel Ban," [507] and detailed, "Days after the Trump administration instituted a controversial travel ban in January 2017, Google employees discussed ways they might be able to tweak the company's search-related functions to show users how to contribute to pro-immigration organizations and contact lawmakers and government agencies, according to internal company emails." [508]

Those emails showed that, "employees proposed ways to 'leverage' search functions and take steps to counter what they considered to be 'Islamophobia.'" [509] After they were leaked, Google issued a statement denying that they had actually done it, and said the plan was just a "brainstorm of ideas." [510]

A Google employee who has been leaking information to Breitbart told them, "I know there are efforts to demote anything non-PC, anti-Communist and anti-Islamic terror from search results. To what extent that has been successful, I don't know." [511] PJ Media did an examination of the search results for the word "Trump" in the Google News tab and calculated that 96% of the results were from liberal media outlets. [512] Similar informal tests have been done by searching for various other topics, such as when Fox News founder Roger Ailes died people noticed that most search results painted him as a monster, with articles from Rolling Stone declaring he was "one of the worst Americans ever" surfacing at the top, along with others like one from NBC News claiming he "built a kingdom on exploited bias," and the London *Guardian* saying he helped "create this nightmare world."

[513] A study at Northwestern University's Computational Journalism Lab also found that the majority of search results on Google News were from left-leaning outlets. [514]

If you search for the same key words on Google and Bing, or Duck Duck Go, you'll often notice dramatically different results. On numerous occasions when doing research for this book I have Googled various topics trying to find articles that I had seen in the past so I could use them as the citations and had a difficult time finding many of them on Google, but when I looked on other search engines they were in the top results. Sometimes when I was even searching for an article's exact title after having copied and pasted it into my notes when I first saw it posted on social media, it wouldn't show up on the first page of search results on Google.

Google even rolled out a new "fact check" widget as part of their supposed fight against "fake news" but after a report from the *Daily Caller* showed the feature was targeting mostly conservative news sites in attempts to paint their overall reporting as inaccurate or misleading, (while ignoring false stories published by BuzzFeed, the Huffington Post, Vox, Salon, and others) Google shut down the feature saying they "encountered challenges" and admitted they were "unable to deliver the quality" they hoped to provide their users. [515]

Google deleted Dr. Patrick Moore from the list of Greenpeace founders after he made headlines for insulting Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez over her ridiculous Green New Deal and praised President Trump. [516] Google often displays what are called "knowledge panels" as the top search results for certain topics, which are small boxes highlighting a few main points about the subject. And prior to his headline-making comments about the moronic Congresswoman, Dr. Patrick Moore was included in the knowledge panel when someone searched for “Greenpeace founders,” but immediately after insulting her royal highness, Google mysteriously scrubbed him from it. [517]

The knowledge panel for the popular pro-life movie *Unplanned* (2019) listed the genre as “propaganda” when it first came out, instead of “drama,” “action,” or “science fiction” like all other movies are labeled. As usual, after word went viral on social media of this “mistake” Google fixed it. [518]

A group at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology concluded a study in April 2018 after looking into how much Google’s search results could influence undecided voters by surfacing negative or positive results about certain issues and candidates and reported that such manipulation could shift the preference of those voters between 20 and 80 percent. [519] The same research team led by search engine expert Dr. Robert Epstein concluded that during the 2018 midterm election, Google had been able to flip three key congressional seats from Republican to Democrat due to the prevalence of pro-Democrat bias in the search results. [520]

A former Google employee who worked as a “design ethicist” where he studied the ethics of using technology to persuade people, later warned in a TED talk, “A handful of people, working at a handful of technology companies, through their choices will steer what a billion people are thinking today.” [521]

Even Google News has recently changed to prevent people from finding exactly what they are looking for. The “News” tab is used to retrieve only search results from mainstream and brand name news sources, not just any random website like the main Google search page. You used to be able to select specific topics you’re interested in and Google News would show recent stories about those topics all on one page, but in 2017 they changed the layout making it much more difficult to customize your

Google News feed, and now you have to click on each individual topic you're interested in, making it tedious and cumbersome, thus encouraging users to rely on the Google News home page which contains stories curated by their editors instead of creating a custom feed to see only the topics *you* want to read about.

Then in March 2018 Google announced their "News Initiative" plan promising to give $300 million dollars to various "news" organizations over the next three years, as well as offer them various tools and services in order to help them expand their online presence. [522] They have so much money they're just giving it away, probably to garbage websites like Vox, the Daily Beast, and HuffPost.

The Internet created an even playing field allowing someone on a laptop in their kitchen to create a website (or YouTube channel) which gave them access to the same number of potential readers (or viewers) as brand name newspapers and TV networks, and completely changed the power dynamics in media, since ordinary people could bypass the traditional gatekeepers of editors and producers who decide what gets published on their platforms.

But this power shift has caused a massive backlash and we're seeing the very tech companies which created the infrastructure that empowered the individual now quietly working to tip the scale back in favor of the massive corporations their technology once disrupted.

Champions of "Diversity"

Google's corporate culture is liberal to the core, and one brave conservative employee leaked a video of an internal meeting held just after the 2016 election showing all the senior executives sitting around talking about how disgusted they were with Donald Trump's victory and that they're "sure" most people in the company agree. [523]

Google is such a "champion" for "diversity" and "social justice" that there are reportedly tampon dispensers in men's bathrooms because "some men menstruate." [524] In August 2017 Google fired engineer James Damore after he wrote and circulated a memo internally titled "Google's Ideological Echo Chamber" which was critical of the company's corporate culture and their diversity policies which were aiming to hire more women.

Damore pointed out that because of the biological differences between men and women, most women tend to be more interested in social activities than engineering (people rather than things). Google soon fired him for "sexism" for daring to point out well-established facts about the differences between men and women. Various psychologists including Geoffrey Miller, a professor at the University of New Mexico; Jordan Peterson, professor of Psychology at the University of Toronto; Lee Jussim, social psychology professor at Rutgers University; and others publicly defended Damore's memo as being scientifically sound.

Damore then filed a class action lawsuit against Google and is suing them for discrimination against conservatives and white men since their diversity policies are inherently discriminatory because they openly favor women and people of color in the hiring process instead of choosing applicants who are best qualified for the job, regardless of their race or gender. [525]

Has Google Committed Treason?

Billionaire tech investor and PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel says the FBI and CIA should investigate Google for possibly committing treason because of their "decision to work with the Chinese military and not with the US military.” [526] Google had been secretly working on a special search engine for China that was compatible with their strict censorship rules and would have linked people’s phone numbers to their searches so the Communist government could monitor what everyone was looking up. [527]

The project was only revealed after someone leaked documents to *The Intercept* in August 2018. Google had already been working with the Communist Chinese government since 2006 on their “Google.cn” (Google China) which allowed officials to blacklist certain search terms, but Dragonfly, the codename of the newer system they were working on, was going to be fully compatible with China’s “social credit score” system which tracks and rates citizens based on their personal activities. [528]

Senator Josh Hawley called Google “the most dishonest company to appear before Congress” after one of their executives testified before a Senate Intelligence Committee and was evasive in many of his answers. [529]

Creepy Google

There are also serious privacy issues with Google for those who use it in the U.S. and other countries around the world. Most people don’t think about it too often, but they’re telling Google more than they tell their spouse or their best friend since people sometimes search for answers about relationship or health problems they are keeping to themselves.

Google knows exactly who you are and keeps a log of everything you’ve searched for and what links you’ve clicked on. All of this information is then analyzed and sorted to create detailed profiles of people, their personalities, interests, income, and other data points about them.

When asked about the privacy concerns surrounding Google, then-CEO Eric Schmidt responded, “There is what I call the creepy line. The Google policy on a lot of things is to get right up to the creepy line and not cross it.”[530] They are, however, so creepy, that in the future they want to wire the Internet directly into people’s brains.[531]

Google engineer Ray Kurzweil is one of the leading proponents of Transhumanism and hopes to one day upload his brain into the Internet so he can become a god-like “immortal” being.[532] Such megalomaniacal goals seem like science fiction and have been the plot of various films like *The Lawnmower Man* (1992) and *Transcendence* (2014), but Kurzweil is serious and has the backing of one of the world’s wealthiest tech companies.

Google is also a lead developer of artificial intelligence which an increasing number of tech leaders and scientists worry may quickly get out of control and end up exterminating or enslaving the human race.[533] Other companies, including Elon Musk’s Neuralink, are developing brain-computer interfaces in hopes of enabling humans to merge with AI by turning us all into cyborgs.[534] But these are topics for a whole other book.

Google’s former motto was “Don’t be evil,” a phrase that was also included in their official code of conduct, but in April 2018 they quietly removed all references of it, and sadly it seems more every day that is exactly what they are becoming.

Rise of Social Media

From the creation of the printing press in 1439 to the telegraph in 1837, to radio in 1895 and television in 1927, each new form of media revolutionized society, but the development of the Internet far surpassed all previous communication technologies, especially since it’s now fully mobile and in our pocket wherever we go. It’s changed almost everything from how we interact with our friends to how we get our news and entertainment, and people gauge what topics and events are the "most popular" because they're "trending" on social media.

As futurist George Gilder noted, "Computer networks give every hacker the creative potential of a factory tycoon of the industrial era and the communications power of a TV magnate of the broadcasting era." [535] That's the capability of what's been dubbed Internet 2.0, or the two-way communication networks the Internet now enables, instead of just static websites.

Comedian Dane Cook was one of the first comics to use social media to promote himself in the early 2000s through MySpace, and many of his early critics called him a better marketer than a comic because they didn't see his humor as all that funny but couldn't deny his popularity. "I remember getting ready to play Madison Square Garden," he recalled to the *Hollywood Reporter* . "I posted once on MySpace and without spending a dime on any promotion or advertising, we sold out." [536]

Similarly, Tila Tequila became the most popular person on MySpace in 2006 from posting racy photos of herself, taking advantage of the new medium and getting floods of friend requests from lonely losers online who hoped to connect with her. [537] Her popularity on My Space opened the door for her (bisexual) dating show *A Shot at Love with Tila Tequila* on MTV in 2007, which began her 15 minutes of fame.

In the early years of social media most people just saw the technology as something to use for fun, and a way to entertain themselves or reconnect with old friends, but as time went on the true power and ability to influence large numbers of people through it became apparent.

One member of the Obama administration called journalists on social media "force multipliers" (a fancy term for propagandists) and admitted, "We have our compadres, I [would] reach out to a couple people, and you know I wouldn’t want to name them.” These people were “prominent Washington reporters and columnists who [would] often tweet in sync with [Obama’s] messaging.” [538]

Obama’s former campaign “mastermind” David Axelrod admitted, “over the last couple of years, there’s been an investment in alternative means of communication: using digital more effectively, going to nontraditional sources, understanding where on each issue your constituencies are going to be found. I think they’ve approached these major foreign-policy challenges as campaign challenges, and they’ve run [social media] campaigns, and those campaigns have been very sophisticated.” [539]

Amateur video caught Hillary Clinton collapsing at the 9/11 memorial after her campaign and the mainstream media kept dismissing growing concerns that there was something wrong with her health in the final stretch of the 2016 presidential election. [540] The video first went viral through social media before finally getting covered in the mainstream press because so many people were talking about it. The Washington Post, which had been calling questions about her health “conspiracy theories,” then finally admitted, “Hillary Clinton’s health just became a real issue in the presidential campaign.” [541]

A bartender working at a fundraiser held by Mitt Romney in 2012 captured the then-presidential candidate on video talking about how 47% of the country wouldn’t vote for him because they’ll support Obama no matter what since they want free hand outs so he wasn’t going to pay much attention to them. [542] Liberals pretended to be outraged and accused Mitt of not caring about half of the country, particularly lower income folks, and the video proved to be quit damaging to his campaign.

Bloggers were the ones who first debunked the fake documents *CBS News* anchor Dan Rather claimed were the service records of George W. Bush from his time in the National Guard. [543] Matt Drudge's *Drudge Report* website first broke the Monica Lewinsky scandal when other outlets were sitting on the story and refused to cover it. [544] Facebook and Google now account for 25% of all advertising spending, both online and off. [545] Social media has swallowed up the news business, and the power-shift has been revolutionary.

Getting "News" on Social Media

We all know kids love their devices, and virtually live their lives on them. An entire generation of children have been raised on them, and get babysat by smartphones since parents use them to keep kids occupied while seated in the shopping cart at the grocery store and even at the dinner table. It's how they communicate with their friends, listen to music, watch movies, and so it only makes sense that's where they get their news.

A study conducted by Internet security company Anchor Free for the Jack Meyers Knowledge Exchange reported, "When asked to identify their two primary sources of news, the majority of this cohort name Instagram (29 percent), You Tube (22 percent), and Facebook (15 percent) as the media where they are most likely to read/see the news. Fewer than a quarter of young people depend on newspaper or television news, with 8 percent reading national newspapers such as the New York Times, Washington Post, and USA Today, 10 percent watching broadcast and cable network news, and 6 percent exposed regularly to local television news or newspapers…By comparison, a stunning 82 percent of Gen Z and younger millennials include among their primary news sources Reddit, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, BuzzFeed, Instagram, Snapchat and their desktop newsfeed.” [546]

Media advisor Jack Myers warned, “Without the traditional filters of trusted news organizations and journalists, this new generation of potential voters may be highly susceptible to fake and biased news and may find it difficult to discern fact from fiction. Compounding this reality, Instagram — the #1 source of news for young people — is dependent almost exclusively on visual images, and none of the major social media channels invest meaningfully in original news reporting, nor do they provide user-tools for deeper investigative analysis of their content.” [547]

Of course it’s not just kids who are increasingly relying on social media for their news, it’s everyone.

Homeland Security Studying Influencers

Because so many people are now getting their news from social media and there are millions of ways stories can be planted online and go viral governments around the world are very interested in tracking and studying the flow of information through these new channels of distribution. In 2018 the Department of Homeland Security revealed they were developing systems to monitor the social media feeds of various journalists, bloggers, and social media influencers in order to “identify any and all media coverage related to the Department of Homeland Security or a particular event.” [548]

In other words there are very serious national security concerns, as well as issues and events local law enforcement need to monitor on social media because they can easily cause real-world consequences.

A report in the *Chicago Sun Times* notes, they were building a database “to monitor the public activities of media members and influencers” so the government would have the ability "to create unlimited data tracking, statistical breakdown, and graphical analyses on ad-hoc basis." [549] They reportedly are tracking 300,000 different accounts to create a realtime information matrix of topics that are being talked about and how they spread.

Shortly after the 2016 election I myself was contacted by the United States Special Operations Command which integrates various branches of the U.S. Armed Forces because they wanted to interview me and even send a team of researchers to observe me working so they could learn how my YouTube channel had become so popular in the final stretch of the 2016 election. I declined their request.

Operation Earnest Voice

Around 2011 the U.S. government launched a program called Operation Earnest Voice which uses specialized software that allows military personnel to create and manage fake social media profiles of various "people" in order to use them for propaganda purposes. [550]

The government claims they're only doing this on websites outside the United States because technically (until President Obama amended it in 2012) it was a violation of the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act for the military to target our own citizens with propaganda, but it's hard to believe that such technology isn't being used by U.S. government agencies in black ops on the major social media platforms to influence the American people.

Obviously all countries engage in cyber warfare, and in the 21st century that means flooding social media with bots and trolls to push certain agendas or to disrupt various discussions. The London *Guardian* surprisingly admitted in 2015 that, "Israel Defense Forces have pioneered state military engagement with social media, with dedicated teams operating since Operation Cast Lead, its war in Gaza in 2008-9. The IDF is active on 30 platforms – including Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram – in six languages.” [551]

The Chinese government was caught using Twitter trolls and posting propaganda videos on YouTube designed to demonize protesters in Hong Kong in the Summer of 2019 when pro-democracy demonstrations broke out. [552]

And everyone knows Russia used social media to cause disruption during the 2016 election by promoting both pro-Trump and anti-Trump content, however its effect has been greatly exaggerated by Democrats, causing a modern day moral panic. It’s rarely reported that the biggest Black Lives Matter page on Facebook, which had over 700,000 followers, was found to be run by a white guy in Australia who was using it to scam people into donating money to him. [553]

Another huge Black Lives Matter Facebook page called “Blactivist” (meaning black activist) which had over 360,000 followers was found to be part of Russia’s disinformation campaign against the United States and used the page to incite division and fan the flames of racism. [554]

Michael Moore even promoted and attended a protest outside of Trump Tower in New York City that had been organized by the Russians. [555] So to say that Russian meddling in American social media circles was just to support Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton is just plain false.

Social Media Causing Mental Health Problems

While social media is a powerful tool, it is hard to control. And it seems with every benefit it brings comes the equivalent of an equal sized detriment. The younger generations are getting lost in a world of isolation and have few real-world friendships or interactions. Social media is being increasingly linked to mental disorders amongst teens since it has become a fixture in their lives. [556] Feeling the need to share how “great” and “perfect” one’s life is through carefully choreographed Instagram photos or Facebook posts appears to be increasing people’s anxiety and depression. [557]

Many people have become literally addicted to their phones, not to mention that social media blew the door wide open for kids to be cyber-bullied 24-hours-a-day by their fellow classmates who are now able to harass them when they’re not even at school, and can reach them when they’re supposedly in the safety of their own homes. Teen suicide rates have skyrocketed due to cyber bullying because now kids can never get away from their bullies no matter where they go. [558] One study even found that close to 6% of kids aged 12 through 17 have set up fake social media accounts and cyber bullied *themselves* so they could get attention for being a “victim.” [559]

Many people are also developing “mean world syndrome,” which is a term coined by professor George Gerbner who was the dean of the communication department at the University of Pennsylvania. He was a leading researcher in the effects of mass media and concluded that the more time someone spends consuming mass media, the more distorted their view of how the world actually gets, ultimately leading them to think society is a much more dangerous and “mean” place than it actually is since their perceptions are shaped through the warped representations of the world by the media, which amplifies atrocities, arguments, and divisions.

Gerbner’s “mean world syndrome” phenomenon was coined in the age of television, and now that most people are glued to their phones and are consuming an almost nonstop diet of media, one can see how the syndrome has only gotten worse. Spending too much time on social media and being bombarded by the never-ending political conflicts and fear-mongering about things like global warming, mass shootings, and racism is wreaking havoc on the mental health of millions.

Many people are getting so depraved that when they witness a tragedy like a car accident or an assault, instead of helping the victims or calling for help, their first thought is to take pictures so they can post them on social media. [560]

No Customer Service

Despite the Big Tech companies being an integral part of most people's lives; unlike almost every other company that offers products or services to the public, there are no customer service phone numbers at Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or Google. You can't get anyone on the phone there to talk with them about problems you've experienced or the grievances you have with their companies. Despite names like Mark Zuckerberg and Jack Dorsey attached to them, they remain faceless corporations you can't get in touch with.

There's no local branch you can visit where you can ask to speak with a manager, and instead users are relegated to sending tweets or submitting a "help ticket" from within the apps' dashboard, and those attempts to get answers often only result in automated responses thanking you for contacting them and saying they'll try to look into it. The social media giants are actually strangely anti-social.

For those of you who read my previous book, *The True Story of Fake News: How Mainstream Media Manipulates Millions* , you know I dedicated different chapters to Facebook, Twitter, Google, and YouTube, where I detailed their Orwellian manipulation and censorship, but since their underhanded activities have only continued, it is necessary to dedicate chapters to each of them again in this book to discuss their more recent activities.

I’ll keep the overlapping information to a minimum and mostly cover what they’ve been doing since the publication of my previous book because you need to know how far they’re going to regain control of the genie they let out of the bottle.

Facebook

For countless millions of people Facebook became the family photo album, their contact list, and even their diary of sorts. First started in 2004 as a social network for college kids, it quickly expanded to become the most popular one in the world used by 2.2 *billion* monthly active users. [561] Its dominance made founder Mark Zuckerberg the youngest billionaire in history at the age of twenty-three. [562]

For those naive enough to fill in all the entry boxes when they first signed up for Facebook, the company knows not only who you're friends with, who you're dating or married to (as well as when you break up or get a divorce), but also which TV shows, movies, and music you like, which restaurants and businesses you visit, what cities you travel to, where you work, your birthdate, your personal interests, hobbies, and more.

It's free because *you* are the product and your personal data is what you are trading in exchange for using Facebook. NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden noted, "Businesses that make money by collecting and selling detailed records of private lives were once plainly described as 'surveillance companies.' Their rebranding as 'social media' is the most successful deception since the Department of War became the Department of Defense." [563]

Many millennials and Generation Z kids either quit Facebook or never signed up, and prefer Instagram (which is owned by Facebook) and SnapChat because they don't want be on the same social network as their parents. Despite the endless scandals about abusing users' personal information, Facebook hasn't gone the way of MySpace (at least not yet) and remains one of the world's top social networks.

While people use Facebook for various reasons—like keeping in touch with friends and family, many use it to share news stories and videos about political issues, but it wasn't until after the 2016 presidential election that Facebook saw this as a problem. As you know, the Democrats largely blamed Facebook for Hillary's loss, citing the spread of supposed "fake news" about her they claimed had caused people to see her in a negative light and not vote for her.

Hillary was supposed to pound the final nails in the coffin of the United States of America, and usher in the New World Order for her globalist puppet masters, but Donald Trump canceled those plans. The war mongering neocons in the Bush administration, followed by the charismatic socialist Barack Obama had set the stage, knocking out most of the legs from under our once-great Republic.

But the election of Donald Trump changed everything, and he began to right the ship. The scheming globalists were furious. The very tools that Facebook had proudly created so people could share information with others were now seen as a problem because they disrupted the traditional channels of distribution that were controlled by major media companies. If anyone posted a message, link, photo, or video, that post could be seen by as many people who read the *New York Times* or watch the *NBC Nightly News* from other Facebook users simply clicking the "share" button. But all that had to change because the "Russians" had posted "fake news" about Hillary Clinton.

Rob Goldman, Vice President of Ads at Facebook, admitted, "The majority of the Russian ad spend happened AFTER the election. We shared that fact, but very few outlets have covered it because it doesn't align with the main media narrative of Trump and the election." [564] He was reprimanded for revealing the truth, but Facebook would go on to completely change the way their platform functioned under the guise of stopping “fake news.”

Before Facebook, people used to “bookmark” their favorite websites on their Internet browser, and would use that list to navigate to their news sources, but Facebook (and Twitter) have largely replaced browser bookmarks, and by weaseling their way in between news websites sites and their potential audience, it is Facebook, not the users, who are now in control of what articles people see.

Manipulating Users’ Feeds

Most people used to assume—and many probably still do—that if they follow certain accounts on Facebook they’re going to get posts from those pages in their news feeds, but the algorithms detect keywords in posts and identify the source of links and Facebook’s proprietary technology throttles the reach of content they don’t want people to see and often limits the reach so posts only show up in a few people’s news feeds.

For example, when Wikileaks first released a batch of hacked DNC emails, Facebook blocked links to them claiming they were “malicious” or “spam.” Only after Wikileaks tweeted about their links being blocked and people began clamoring about it did Facebook fix it. [565]

There were even reports that when people tried to share certain links to articles exposing Jussie Smollett’s hate crime hoax they were blocked from posting and a pop-up notified them that, “This post goes against our Community Standards, so no one else can see it.” [566]

Facebook even patented technology to shadow ban people so they could prevent certain posts from being seen by others without giving any indication to the person who posted it that such censorship was occurring. The Abstract on their patent explains the process, “[T]he social networking system may receive a list of proscribed content and block comments containing the proscribed content by reducing the distribution of those comments to other viewing users. However, the social networking system may display the blocked content to the commenting user such that the commenting user is not made aware that his or her comment was blocked, thereby providing fewer incentives to the commenting user to spam the page or attempt to circumvent the social networking system filters.” [567]

Facebook has admitted conducting several experiments on users to test how well they could manipulate people by making changes to what they see in their news feeds. [568] In 2010 they toyed with 60 million people’s newsfeeds to see if they could increase voter turnout in the midterm election that year and concluded they were able to get an extra 340,000 people to the polls. [569]

On their own website they bragged about a case study which found that, “Facebook as a market research tool and as a platform for ad saturation can be used to change public opinion in any political campaign.” [570] They cited the study as an attempt to court advertisers and to show just how powerful their platform is, hoping to get them to run targeted ads.

Hopefully it’s common knowledge now that Facebook was caught suppressing conservative news from appearing in the trending section in 2016 and artificially injecting other topics into the list to give the false impression that certain stories were organically viral from so many people talking about them. [571]

After Facebook announced they were changing the algorithm to favor posts from people’s friends over the businesses, brands, and media pages they were following, Donald Trump’s engagement dropped 45%. [572] The Western Journal did a survey and analyzed the engagement of 50 different news pages ranging from the Washington Post to the Daily Caller and found that after these algorithm changes, conservative outlets averaged a 14% drop in traffic, while liberal media accounts increased by 2%. [573]

In June 2019, Tomi Lahren had the “Boosting” feature disabled on her account, which is a way for public figures and brand pages to get their posts to actually show up in the news feeds of the people who follow them by paying Facebook different dollar amounts to allow what they post to be seen by people following the page. [574]

For anyone running a professional Facebook page (like mine), whatever we post is severely suppressed and only a small fraction of the people who follow the page will see it unless we “Boost” the post, which is a huge revenue generator for Facebook. Tomi Lahren became famous because her videos went viral on Facebook, but once the Boost feature was disabled she couldn’t even pay Facebook to distribute them in the news feeds of people following her page. [575]

A slide from a presentation given to Facebook moderators to teach them what kind of content is inappropriate details what the company says is “destructive behavior” by “trolls” and lists doxing and harassment alongside “toxic meme creation,” and “red-pilling normies to convert them to their worldview,” and also includes an “example video” of Lauren Chen (formerly known as Roaming Millennial), a moderate conservative YouTuber who now works for The Blaze. [576]

A “normie” is a slang term meaning a normal person, or in the context of certain Internet subcultures means someone who is not part of the group in question. But Facebook considers that word to be an indicator that the person posting it might be a right-wing “troll.”

Things have changed so much since the early days of Facebook that it’s a completely different platform than it was when it first rose to popularity in the late 2000s. They have been getting increasingly less tolerant of different views and their algorithms can easily hide people's posts or automatically suspend accounts for posting what they deem to be "hate speech," which you know is just a code word for something that hurts liberals' feelings or facts they won't want people to know about.

In August of 2018, a senior manager at Facebook posted on their internal message board a thread titled "We Have a Problem With Political Diversity" that explained, "We are a political monoculture that's intolerant of different views." It went on to say, "We claim to welcome all perspectives, but are quick to attack — often in mobs — anyone who presents a view that appears to be in opposition to left-leaning ideology." [577] That person has probably been fired by now but they were brave enough to point out what is obviously wrong with the corporate culture there.

PayPal co-founder and Facebook board member Peter Thiel left Silicon Valley and moved to Los Angeles because he was sick of the Leftist culture that permeates the tech industry in Northern California. [578] Thiel reportedly considered resigning from Facebook's board over disagreements with Mark Zuckerberg and sold three-quarters of his Facebook stock before leaving Silicon Valley. [579]

Helping Mainstream News

In July 2018 Facebook announced they were partnering with CNN, ABC, Univision, and other mainstream networks and began paying them to do special livestreams Monday through Friday. [580] Their goal was to, "create a curated news hub of content that would be seen as more credible than many of the random posts cycling through the News Feed." [581] Anderson Cooper's Facebook show, called "Full Circle" usually averaged around 1,500 live viewers and lasted a year. [582] CNN now claims they're going to try streaming the show on their app, CNNgo, instead of Facebook.

Six months after launching the new livestreams Facebook announced they would soon be investing $300 million into various news organizations to help them “boost” their online presence. [583] People like me have to pay Facebook to “Boost” our posts so they actually show up in the news feeds of fans following our pages, while at the same time Facebook is paying hundreds of millions of dollars to mainstream media channels to help them get out their messages!

The liberal bias is obvious but goes deeper than most people think. Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook’s Chief Operating Officer, wrote to Hillary Clinton’s campaign manager on June 6th 2015, saying “I still want HRC to win badly. I am still here to help as I can.” [584] Facebook openly plays favorites, for example they have a real name policy, except for transgender people, who can open an account in any name they want. [585] The company even put up a huge Black Lives Matter banner on their campus. [586] They also give out employee bonuses based on how much they’re doing for “social justice.” [587]

Facebook Censoring People

In October 2018, Facebook deleted over 800 accounts for publishing what they called "political spam" and "sensational political content." [588] One of the pages belonged to Brian Kolfage, a disabled veteran who lost both his legs and one arm in the Iraq War. After retiring from the military due to his injuries he took over management of a Facebook page called "Right Wing News" and helped it build up a following of over three million people. [589] But Facebook banned the page, destroying Brian Kolfage's thriving online business, while leaving content farms like BuzzFeed and Vox to continue littering Facebook with their political spam.

The day after British activist Tommy Robinson released a documentary on YouTube showing his undercover investigation into the BBC as they were planning to air a hit piece on him, he was banned from Facebook and Instagram (which is owned by Facebook). [590] Because he's been a vocal opponent of the Islamization of England, he has been branded an "Islamophobe." After Facebook banned him, activists and "journalists" smelled blood and started pressuring YouTube to ban him too.

"His YouTube channel has hundreds of thousands of followers and includes films viewed by millions of people," complained Damian Collins, a Member of Parliament. [591] He continued, "Far-right groups are exploiting social media to spread their messages of hate, and the YouTube [Up Next] feature helps them by directing viewers to even more of this content once they start to engage with it." He concluded, "I believe YouTube should also ban Tommy Robinson from their platform." [592] More on this in the chapter on YouTube.

The official Facebook page for Britain First, an anti-immigration organization working to stop the flood of Muslims from the Middle East into the UK was also banned for “Islamophobia.” Their page had over 2 million followers, showing it isn’t just a fringe group, but they have a large number of supporters in the UK. [593]

In April 2019 Facebook (and Instagram) banned Faith Goldy, a conservative Canadian journalist who has been smeared as a white supremacist because she too is critical of the massive influx of non-assimilating Muslims into Europe. [594] The *Huffington Post* gleefully took credit for persuading Facebook to ban her, posting a story titled, “Facebook Bans Faith Goldy After HuffPost Report On White Nationalism Content.” [595] Facebook said, “Individuals and organizations who spread hate, attack, or call for the exclusion of others on the basis of who they are have no place on our services.” [596]

After Comedy Central’s Jim Jeffries recorded an interview with a Jewish political commentator from Australia named Avi Yemini, who is critical of Muslim immigration into Western countries, he was permanently banned from Facebook for “hate speech.” [597] The ban came not necessarily because of his interview on Comedy Central, but because he had secretly recorded the interview himself, and exposed how deceptively edited it was when they aired it. [598] The truth of what Comedy Central had done to him couldn’t be seen, so they banned him.

Facebook’s moderators despise any criticism of mass immigration and the effects non-assimilating newcomers have on the countries they come to occupy. After a German historian posted a short essay about Islam’s historic impact on Germany, he was banned for 30 days for “hate speech.” [599] Facebook even deletes accounts of Palestinians at the direction of the Israeli government if they deem the people to be engaging in “incitement” due to their complaints about how the Palestinian people are treated. [600]

Facebook took down an event page for an anti-caravan protest that was scheduled to happen when hundreds of migrants from Central America were to make it to the U.S.-Mexico border. [601] It may not be much longer before they consider the term “illegal alien” to be a “racist slur” and a violation of their terms of service in the same way posting the n-word is (if you’re white).

Like all the other major social networks, conservatives are at risk of having their pages shut down for “hate speech” for being “non-inclusive.” But it’s not just supposed “extremists” like Tommy Robinson and Faith Goldy. In December 2018, Franklin Graham, son of evangelist Billy Graham, was suspended by Facebook for a post he made almost two years earlier criticizing singer Bruce Springsteen for canceling a concert in North Carolina to protest a proposed bill that would have required people to use the bathroom that corresponds to their biological sex.

Graham’s post said in part, “Mr. Springsteen, a nation embracing sin and bowing at the feet of godless secularism and political correctness is not progress,” and urged the state’s legislators to “put the safety of our women and children first!” But a Facebook moderator decided that calling liberals “godless” was a violation of their policy forbidding “dehumanizing language,” so they suspended him. [602]

After the incident started making headlines Facebook lifted the ban and said the moderator had made a “mistake” in their decision. Facebook even censored the Declaration of Independence after it was posted by a small newspaper’s page (*The Vindicator*), claiming it was “hate speech” because it includes the phrase “merciless Indian Savages.” [603] The paper had posted it a few days before the Fourth of July to celebrate Independence Day.

I was suspended in April 2017 for criticizing a Dove Soap commercial that featured “real moms” and their babies because it included a transgender "woman" who is the biological father of "her" child but identifies as the baby's "mom." [604] Facebook considers it "hate speech" to denounce such insanity. Then in January 2019, I was suspended for one week after making a comment about there being a lot of crime in black communities. I appealed it, and it was denied.

Residents know the local news begins every night in Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, Baltimore, etc, with shootings, stabbings, and robberies which occurred in black ghettos, but those stories are just fifteen-second sound bites on the local news and are then forgotten about by everyone except those directly affected—like the victims' family and friends.

But when a black person is killed by a white man, or the suspect is a white man, then the keyboard warriors amplify the story to the national level as if there's an epidemic of white men assassinating random black people in America. They denounce "evil" "racist" white people and make ridiculous and hateful generalizations about the entire white race, but that's allowed on Facebook. You just can't post certain facts and statistics about black crime in America.

The truth is, black men make up only about 7% of the U.S. population, but are responsible for 50% of the total murders. [605] It's a distressing statistic no one in the mainstream media dares to point out, and if you simply mention this on Facebook, your post may likely be removed and you'll get issued a suspension for "hate speech."

Black conservative commentator Candace Owens was suspended because of a post saying liberalism is a greater threat to black people in America than white supremacy, and for including some statistics about fatherless homes in the black community. [606] It's "hate speech" even when black people mention certain uncomfortable facts about their communities.

Leaked documents later revealed that Facebook had labeled her a "hate agent" and was offering employees "extra credit" if they could dig up dirt on her and find any previous statements she's made or groups she has endorsed that they consider to be objectionable. [607]

Facebook sensations Diamond and Silk, two black sisters who support Donald Trump by doing a hilarious routine where one of them rants while the other acts as a "hype girl" by adding cleverly timed one or two word comments to emphasize what the other is saying, have also been censored by Facebook. Their videos became so popular that they were invited to Trump rallies during his 2016 campaign and then later to the White House once he won.

Their content is 100% family friendly but Facebook deemed them "unsafe" and suppressed the reach of their page, which at the time had 1.2 million followers. [608] As usual, after the issue started making headlines, Facebook lifted the restrictions on their page and said it was just another "enforcement error." [609]

Facebook also reportedly removed posts and memes by people who were (correctly) referring to the man who shot and killed a police officer in California as an "illegal alien" and a "murderer." [610] Criticizing illegal aliens, even if they're murderers, is "hate speech."

A writer for the *Gateway Pundit* named Lucian Wintrich, who is a gay, referred to himself as a "fag" in a post, and seven months later their AI system detected it and banned him for 30-days for "hate speech" just for using the word. [611]

Facebook even blocked President Trump's social media director Dan Scavino from replying to people in the comments, claiming his posts were "spam." Shortly after the President tweeted about the restriction, Facebook "fixed" it and said it was just another "error." [612]

Banning “Dangerous Individuals”

In May 2019, Facebook (and Instagram) permanently banned Paul Joseph Watson, Milo Yiannopoulos, Laura Loomer, and Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan; labeling them all “dangerous individuals” and “extremists.” [613] What’s especially interesting is that news reports were published about their ban a full hour before they were actually banned, because Facebook had been secretly coordinating with CNN and other outlets but botched the timing of the big announcement. [614]

Loomer, Milo, and Watson were banned because they are critical of the Islamization of Europe, so they have all been branded “Islamophobes,” and Facebook decided to throw Louis Farrakhan in the mix as a cover to give the appearance that they weren’t just removing vocal opponents of Islam.

The Atlantic initially reported, “Any account that shares Infowars content will see it removed, unless the post is explicitly condemning Infowars [or Alex Jones]. Facebook and Instagram will remove any content containing Infowars videos, radio segments, or articles (again, unless the post is explicitly condemning the content) and Facebook will also remove any groups set up to share Infowars content and events promoting any of the banned extremist figures, according to a company spokesperson.” [615] They later “updated” their article and removed the part about people having to explicitly condemn Alex Jones if they are to post anything about him.

At this rate it won’t be long before Facebook bans people who say abortion is murder, citing their policy against “hate speech.” Or if you dare say you don’t believe in gay “marriage,” or call it “marriage” in quotes (because a marriage is between a man and a woman.) That’s “hateful.”

If Facebook was around in the 1960s, they would have banned Martin Luther King because what he was saying was “dangerous” to the social order. The FBI at the time, led by J. Edgar Hoover, considered King to be an enemy of the State and the bureau engaged in all kinds of nefarious activities trying to derail his message. [616]

Meanwhile the Palestinian terrorist organization Hamas has an official Facebook page (and Twitter account). [617] So does the Muslim Brotherhood, which is listed as a terrorist organization in multiple countries. [618] They can have Facebook pages, but Alex Jones, Paul Joseph Watson, Tommy Robinson, Milo Yiannopoulos, and Laura Loomer can't.

Instagram

Unlike Facebook and Twitter, Instagram (which is owned by Facebook) is more about photography than news, but people do share political memes and news-related posts there, and in recent years they have enabled users to upload videos, so it too has become a place for vlogs.

For years just about the only thing that would get removed by Instagram's moderators for violations of their terms of service were pictures that included nudity or gory and gratuitous violence, but once the Orwellian era began and the Thought Police are now cracking down on free speech online, censorship on Instagram became common.

They have censored a few different memes that I had posted, one of them showed a picture of actor Tobey Maguire from a scene in *Spiderman* looking at a picture of President Trump giving a speech to the Boy Scouts Jamboree, and then below it showed Tobey wearing "CNN glasses" which caused him to see Adolf Hitler talking with a group of Hitler Youth. The message is clear—anything President Trump does when seen through the lens of CNN is sinister, but that meme violated Instagram's terms of service.

They also censored a meme I had posted showing a happy white couple with two young children that was captioned, “White people — the only race you can legally discriminate against.” As you know, there is a war on white people being waged by the Left in America today and whites are being blamed for everyone else’s problems, but just pointing out the Left’s open discrimination (and hatred) of white people is a violation of Instagram’s terms of service.

As the Jussie Smollett hate crime hoax was unraveling, Instagram took down a Scooby-Doo meme from my account which showed the characters surrounding a “ghost” they had captured after unmasking it to reveal who it really was, and the “ghost” had Jussie’s face photoshopped onto it. Instagram said that was “harassment” and “bullying.” They also took down one of Donald Trump Jr.’s posts about Jussie Smollett’s hoax as well. [619]

After conservative commentator Kayleigh McEnany posted a picture on her Instagram of Elizabeth Warren’s newly discovered Texas Bar Registration card showing she listed “American Indian” as her race, that post was removed and Kayleigh was given a notification she had violated Instagram’s terms of service by “bullying” Warren. [620]

Instagram has also begun testing new technology to fact-check memes by adding pop-ups that appear next to certain posts they deem “false” and even hiding them so they don’t show up when people are searching for particular hashtags. [621]

The Thought Police don’t just patrol social media for what people post, they also keep a lookout for things that people “like.” During the 2018 season of *The Bachelorette* , one of the frontrunners (who got the “first impression rose”) made headlines after people were combing through his social media accounts and found that he had “liked” several “inflammatory” memes that made fun of illegal aliens, transgender people, and radical feminists. [622] He literally just clicked the "like" button on a few funny memes making fun of social justice warriors and he was smeared in the press as a xenophobic, transphobic, sexist, and forced to apologize.

What It's Doing To Our Brains

Steve Jobs wouldn't allow his kids to even use an iPad when they were little, admitting in 2012 (two years after it was released), "Actually we don't allow the iPad in the home," in response to an interviewer saying his kids must love it. [623] He knew how addictive they could be and how people, especially children, were vulnerable to being completely consumed by them. Apple CEO Tim Cook doesn't have kids but says he has placed restrictions on what his nephew can do with technology, and he doesn't want him using social media. [624]

Bill Gates also limited the amount of screen time he allowed his kids to engage in and wouldn't let them have cellphones until they were 14-years-old, despite them complaining that other kids in their class were able to have one. [625] But using tablets or smartphones to surf the web or watch videos is one thing. Social media apps opened up a whole new world to waste people's time and warp their minds.

The former president of Facebook, Sean Parker, later admitted the site creates an artificial social-validation feedback loop that is, "exploiting a vulnerability in human psychology" and "literally changes your relationship with society, [and] each other. It probably interferes with productivity in weird ways. God only knows what it's doing to our children's brains." [626]

Former Facebook executive Chamath Palihapitiya warned, "The short-term, dopamine-driven feedback loops we've created are destroying how society works," referring to the validation people get from likes, hearts, and thumbs up on their posts. [627] He also pointed out how "social media" is making people anti-social, saying it’s harming civil discourse and spreading misinformation and hoaxes that have real world consequences.

He mentioned how a hoax about a kidnaping spread through WhatsApp (which is owned by Facebook) in India and led to the lynching of seven innocent men who were killed by a local mob. “That’s what we’re dealing with. And imagine taking that to the extreme, where bad actors can now manipulate large swathes of people to do anything you want. It’s just a really, really bad state of affairs.” He also said his children “aren’t allowed to use that shit.” [628]

A Google engineer posted a lengthy thread on his Twitter account about the dangers of Facebook, starting off saying, “The problem with Facebook is not *just* the loss of your privacy and the fact that it can be used as a totalitarian panopticon. The more worrying issue, in my opinion, is its use of digital information consumption as a psychological control vector.” [629]

He went on to tweet, “The world is being shaped in large part by two long-time trends: first, our lives are increasingly dematerialized, consisting of consuming and generating information online, both at work and at home. Second, AI is getting ever smarter.” [630]

“These two trends overlap at the level of the algorithms that shape our digital content consumption. Opaque social media algorithms get to decide, to an ever-increasing extent, which articles we read, who we keep in touch with, whose opinions we read, whose feedback we get.” [631]

“If Facebook gets to decide, over the span of many years, which news you will see (real or fake), whose political status updates you’ll see, and who will see yours, then Facebook is in effect in control of your political beliefs and your worldview.” [632]

"This is not quite news, as Facebook has been known to run since at least 2013 a series of experiments in which they were able to successfully control the moods and decisions of unwitting users by tuning their newsfeeds' contents, as well as prediction user's future decisions." [633]

"In short, Facebook can simultaneously measure everything about us, and control the information we consume. When you have access to both perception and action, you're looking at an AI problem. You can start establishing an optimization loop for human behavior. A RL loop." [634]

"A loop in which you observe the current state of your targets and keep tuning what information you feed them, until you start observing the opinions and behaviors you wanted to see." [635]

"The human mind is a static, vulnerable system that will come increasingly under attack from ever-smarter AI algorithms that will simultaneously have a complete view of everything we do and believe, and complete control of the information we consume." [636]

"Importantly, mass population control — in particular political control — arising from placing AI algorithms in charge of our information diet does not necessarily require very advanced AI. You don't need self-aware, super-intelligent AI for this to be a dire threat." [637]

"We're looking at a powerful entity that builds fine-grained psychological profiles of over two billion humans, that runs large-scale behavior manipulation experiments, and that aims at developing the best AI technology the world has ever seen. Personally, it really scares me," he concludes. [638]

Even one of Facebook's co-founders says the company is now "un-American" and is calling on the government to break it up. "The most problematic aspect of Facebook's power is Mark [Zuckerberg's] unilateral control over speech," he said in a New York Times op-ed. "There is no precedent for his ability to monitor, organize and even censor the conversations of two billion people.” [639]

Twitter

Fake news and idiotic ideas spread faster on Twitter than perhaps any other social media platform. [640] Unlike Facebook status updates which can be rather lengthy, Twitter is designed for short and quick messages (limited to 280 characters) and with the click of the retweet button, a tweet posted from anyone can soon be in front of the eyes of millions of people.

It’s a place where people share first and think later, and it’s often a sea of angry people arguing with each other and jumping to conclusions based on out of context statements, photos, or video clips; and quickly spread the falsehoods even further without a second thought. [641] By the time the facts come out, the misinformation has already gone viral and shown up on the trending list—poisoning the opinions of countless others.

Few people delete their tweets which fueled fake news fires, and fewer still issue retractions when learning of their mistake. Even in those rare occasions the retractions receive little attention compared to the initial tweets, since they aren’t retweeted thousands of times, not to mention most of the damage has already been done.

When there’s a tragic event like a mass shooting, the wannabe sleuths online often end up naming and doxing the wrong suspect, and take someone’s photo from a social media account with the same name as the suspect and spread it around claiming they’re the killer. [642]

Who knows what will happen when deepfake videos become more popular and carefully crafted hoax clips are spread through Twitter. The effects could be devastating beyond measure and it's something I'll cover in detail later in the chapter titled "The Future of Fake News."

Spreading misinformation through Twitter isn't just something that random idiots do online. Many mainstream media journalists regularly engage in the practice, or amplify fake news through retweets. Dave Weigel of the *Washington Post* tweeted a photo of the audience at a Trump event in Florida that went viral, claiming the event had a ton of empty seats, disputing the President's statement that people had to be turned away because the stadium was over capacity. People starting calling the President a liar because the "prestigious" Washington Post said otherwise, but Weigel's photo was taken hours before the event had actually started which is why there were rows of empty seats. [643]

Just hours after President Trump was inaugurated, a *Time* magazine reporter claimed that he removed the bust of Martin Luther King Jr. from the Oval Office, posting a photo of the table where it sat, claiming it was gone, insinuating Trump is such a racist he couldn't stand to see the face of MLK in his new office and got rid of it on his first day as president. It turns out that someone was just standing in front of it, blocking it from view, and the bust was still there. [644] But countless liberals tweeted their disgust after being duped by an "authoritative" *Time* magazine reporter who made the claim.

There are countless vipers who live online, glued to their phones, and derive a sense of power from the amount of likes and retweets they get. And many function as a volunteer army, ready to attack any target on demand. It's where liberals harass companies that advertise on Fox News, and where they flood the mentions of anyone who dares speak out against garbage like corporations pandering to gays and transgenders during "Pride" month.

Twitter can suck you in, wasting hours of your time while you argue with idiots about anything and everything since your mentions can easily turn into an endless flow of responses from more and more people as those triggered by your tweets keep sharing them with their followers, rallying others to join in on the dogpile.

Twitter is often a dangerous and mind-bending place. As a *New York Times* columnist wrote after the Covington Catholic debacle, it is, “the epicenter of a nonstop information war, an almost comically undermanaged gladiatorial arena where activists and disinformation artists and politicians and marketers gather to target and influence the wider media world.” [645]

An article in *The Week* went even further, warning that Twitter actually poses a threat to our democracy, saying, “Extreme partisan polarization is combining with the technology of social media, and especially Twitter, to provoke a form of recurrent political madness among members of the country’s cultural and intellectual elite.” [646]

It continued, “But too little attention has been paid to what may be the most potent facet of the social media platform: its ability to feed the vanity of its users. There’s always an element of egoism to intellectual and political debate. But Twitter puts every tweeter on a massive stage, with the nastiest put-downs, insults, and provocations often receiving the most applause. That’s a huge psychological incentive to escalate the denunciation of political enemies. The more one expresses outrage at the evils of others, the more one gets to enjoy the adulation of the virtual mob.” [647]

The piece concluded (accurately) that, “more and more the venom has been bleeding into the real world, with boycotts, doxings, firings, death threats, and groveling apologies offered to placate mobs wielding digital pitchforks. It increasingly feels like it’s just a matter of time before real-world violence breaks out in response to an online conflagration.” [648]

After a Black Lives Matter supporter ambushed a group of police officers during one of the movement's marches in Dallas, Texas in 2016, a surviving officer sued Twitter and Facebook for allowing the social media networks to radicalize the gunman, saying they were used "as a tool for spreading extremist propaganda." [649]

The shooter's Facebook profile pic was him making a black power salute and he followed various black supremacist pages. [650] While the tech companies are determined to ban anyone posting support for "white supremacy," they turn a blind eye to radical black power groups and those who promote their extremist ideologies and anti-white hatred. Twitter is a known safe haven for Antifa, with countless Antifa accounts active, many of which regularly promote violence against conservatives. [651]

The launch of Twitter was a carefully crafted campaign involving various celebrities like Oprah Winfrey, Ashton Kutcher, and even CNN, which promoted Twitter's "Million Followers Contest" in 2009 when the site first appeared on the public's radar. Now practically every television show and political cause has a hashtag and everyone wants you to "follow" them on Twitter.

It's interesting to note that the CIA actually created "Cuban Twitter" so they could monitor everyone's online activity in the country and manage the spread of information in order to undermine the government there. [652] It's not unreasonable to think that the CIA has the same interest and control over Twitter in America (and all other major social media sites) as well.

It certainly is odd that Twitter awarded the coveted blue verified checkmark to a supposed eight-year-old Syrian refugee, despite the minimum age to be allowed on Twitter is thirteen. Starting in 2016 "Bana al-Abed" began posting photos of the civil war-torn country, urging people around the world (in English) to help. Her tweets soon began making headlines, gaining her over 322,000 followers, and she was even invited to the 2018 Academy Awards and brought on stage for a performance by Andra Day and Common for their song “Stand Up for Something.” [653]

President Trump had wanted to stop intervening in foreign affairs that didn’t directly affect the United States, and what better way to undermine his efforts than showcase an eight-year-old Syrian girl using social media to beg for help?

You should never believe what you see on Twitter. In 2013 the Associated Press account was hacked and tweeted that the White House had been bombed and President Obama was injured. The tweet was also said to have caused the stock market to fall until it was discovered that it was a hoax. [654] A rogue employee even took it upon himself to delete President Trump’s entire account in November 2017. If one low level employee has the administrative control to delete the President’s account, what would stop someone from hijacking the account and posting tweets as the President himself? Even if the false tweets were deleted and exposed within a few minutes, the damage they would inflict on international relations or the economy could be enormous.

While Democrats cry about “Russian bots and trolls” manipulating Twitter by tweeting out certain hashtags hoping to boost them into the trending module or mass-“liking” certain tweets to give the appearance that the message is resonating with more people than it actually is; the effect they have is often minimal. One of Twitter’s executives, Nick Pickles, testified at a Congressional hearing that just 49 Russian Twitter accounts were involved in trying to artificially boost support for Brexit [the proposal for England to leave the European Union] and those collective tweets had only been liked 637 times and retweeted just 461 times. [655]

While troll farms run by foreign governments or domestic political activist organizations should be a concern, Twitter and the other major tech companies have safeguards in place to detect and prevent most of this inauthentic activity from disrupting the platforms. The biggest threat in this modern information war comes from the tech companies themselves, since they hold the power over what billions of people see and hear, and with small changes to their algorithms can hide or amplify certain issues or events in order to further their own political agendas.

Massive Liberal Bias

After years of avoiding the issue, Twitter's CEO finally admitted "It's no secret that we are largely left leaning, and we all have biases. That includes me, our board, and our company." [656] They are so liberal in fact, that Jack Dorsey actually apologized for eating at Chick-Fil-A after he tweeted that he just used Square's Cash App to buy lunch there, which triggered a flood of angry responses from many of his followers because Chick-Fil-A's CEO doesn't support gay "marriage." [657]

Jack Dorsey has been photographed hanging out with Black Lives Matter activist Deray McKesson and the two even did a joint interview together in 2016 at the popular Recode Code Conference. [658] Twitter also hired a woman named Dr. Patricia Rossini to examine "civil discourse" on the platform because everyone knows Twitter has become a nasty place, but an examination of Dr. Rossini's past tweets reveal that she believes the basic tenets of the Republican Party are hate, racism, and homophobia. [659]

The leader of Twitter's new "task force" on "uncivil discourse," Rebekah Tromble, thinks that President Trump is a Nazi and has "quintupled down on his commitment to white nationalists." [660] Democrat Congressman Ted Lieu from California tweeted out a photo of himself and the party's new social media star Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez at what he described as a "training session" on Twitter, noting representatives from the company were in attendance helping Democrats learn to be more social media savvy. [661]

Twitter also allows people to post pornography, and is an easy place for children to access it. [662] Most porn stars have Twitter accounts which contain a steady stream of hard core pornographic videos and pictures with no effective safeguards to prevent kids from following such accounts and seeing their explicit posts.

What's Trending

Twitter's "Trending" list is supposed to be the top ten list of the most tweeted about topics or hashtags of the moment, but most users are unaware of the manual curation that is often involved. Topics are regularly artificially boosted to give the appearance that they are "popular" while others are suppressed to prevent people from looking into them further.

Oftentimes if something trends on Twitter, it then starts making national headlines. Whether it's a local issue in a small town that, for whatever reason, goes viral and starts trending, or something stupid that a celebrity said or did—if it trends, it then makes headlines.

For over six consecutive months starting in the Spring of 2019 every single Sunday pro-LGBT hashtags like #LGBTangels, #LGBTQsquad, #unitedLGBT, #rainbowLGBT, LGBTQoftwitter, etc. would be on the top ten trending list. [663] The hashtag campaigns are organized by liberal groups likely in coordination with Twitter which then inserts them into the trending list to regularly expose people to selfies of teenagers "coming out" online, in attempt to normalize homosexuality and gender bending.

In his testimony to the Senate Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism, Twitter's lawyer admitted the company had censored almost half of all tweets using the hashtag #DNCLeak when Wikileaks first published the hacked emails from the Democratic National Committee, despite their systems only linking 2% of the tweets to supposed Russian troll farms. [664]

When you click on the Search tab (the magnifying glass icon) on a mobile device, which you need to do in order to get see the Trending list, first you are taken to a page that contains a featured story (they call a "Moment") which is always chosen by Twitter that supposedly has something to do with what's trending, but always attempts to frame the issue in a certain light. In an interview with *Rolling Stone,* Jack Dorsey admitted, "We can amplify the counter-narrative [to what Trump is saying]. We do have a curation team that looks to find balance. A lot of times when our president tweets, a "Moment" occurs, and we show completely different perspectives." [665]

Shadow Banning

In July 2018 conservative Twitter users started noticing that when they looked up top Republican members of Congress in the Twitter Search bar that many of their names were mysteriously missing. Devin Nunes, Matt Gaetz, Jim Jordan, Mark Meadows, John Ratcliffe, Republican Party chair Ronna McDaniel, and many others (including myself) were all shadow banned from the Search box to make it more difficult for people looking us up to find our accounts.

Surprisingly the very liberal Vice News did an investigation into the shadow banning "allegations" and admitted, "Twitter is limiting the visibility of prominent Republicans in search results — a technique known as ‘shadow banning’ — in what it says is a side effect of its attempts to improve the quality of discourse on the platform.” [666]

The article went on to detail that prominent Republican members of Congress “no longer appear in the auto-populated drop-down search box on Twitter” and that, “It’s a shift that diminishes their reach on the platform — and it’s the same one being deployed against prominent racists to limit their visibility.” [667]

Vice also pointed out that the shadow banning was not implemented on any Democrats they looked up, noting “Democrats are not being ‘shadow banned’ in the same way, according to a VICE News review. [Ronna] McDaniel’s counterpart, Democratic Party chair Tom Perez, and liberal members of Congress — including Reps. Maxine Waters, Joe Kennedy III, Keith Ellison, and Mark Pocan — all continue to appear in drop-down search results. Not a single member of the 78-person Progressive Caucus faces the same situation in Twitter’s search.” [668]

Many conservatives began noticing this anomaly but it wasn’t until Florida Congressman Matt Gaetz called out the shadow banning that it began making headlines. [669] Then President Trump tweeted about it and the issue couldn’t be ignored. [670] A reporter for Axios then tweeted that he, “Must admit that when some [Republican] sources have complained about this to me I mocked them to their face as conspiracy theorists. This Vice article makes me rethink that, and response from Twitter is inadequate.” [671]

Twitter then released a statement, saying, “We do not shadow ban,” but then in the very next sentence admitted, “You are always able to see the tweets from accounts you follow (although you may have to do more work to find them, like go directly to their profile).” [672] They played with the definition of shadow banning too, defining it as, “deliberately making someone’s content undiscoverable to everyone except the person who posted it." That's why it's more appropriate to label it shadow *suppressing* or *throttling* than to call it a "ban."

Earlier that year an undercover journalist at Project Veritas had spoken with various former and current employees of Twitter including a Content Review Agent who admitted that there were a lot of "unwritten rules" about shadow banning and that "It was never written, it was more said." [673] A Policy Manager for Twitter's Trust and Safety council named Olinda Hassan said the company was working on down-ranking "shitty people" so their tweets don't show up. [674]

A former software engineer at Twitter told the undercover journalist, "One strategy is to shadow ban so you have ultimate control. The idea of a shadow ban is that you ban someone but they don't know they've been banned, because they keep posting and no one sees their content. So they just think that no one is engaging with their content, when in reality, no one is seeing it." [675]

Twitter most likely uses shadow *throttling* (instead of a full shadow ban) to limit the reach of certain users, so some people are able to see and interact with their tweets, but far less than if no such filter was activated on the accounts. Facebook admits they limit the distribution of posts unless users pay to "Boost" the post, so it's foolish to think Twitter isn't shadow throttling accounts as well using a filter to limit the reach of people the company has deemed politically problematic.

When Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey sat down for a rare interview with CNN in August 2018 he said that the company is considering removing the "like" button from all tweets, and hiding people's follower counts. [676] A few months later he repeated the same thing, indicating they may get rid of the "like" button "soon." [677]

Hiding the number of “likes” and retweets people’s posts get would make shadow banning certain individuals or tweets about specific topics almost impossible to detect, because without being able to see how many people are clicking “like” on a post, users wouldn’t know if their followers were actually seeing the post at all.

People who use Twitter get a feel for how many “likes” an average tweet gets, and if all of a sudden their engagement dropped 95% and went from getting twenty likes per tweet to only one or two, they would notice something was wrong and suspect that people weren’t seeing their tweets. Some have pointed out that certain tweets they have posted appear to them when they’re logged in, but when looking at their feed from a different browser (not logged in) they don’t show up, adding to the concerns that Twitter is shadow banning certain tweets. [678]

Censoring Accounts by Suspending Users

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey once said his goal was to have Twitter function as a basic utility, like water. [679] And in their early years, Twitter executives used to call their company the “free speech wing of the free speech party,” but as the culture changed, and the social justice warriors clamored for more censorship, Jack Dorsey said their once unofficial motto about being the free speech wing of the free speech party was actually just “a joke.” [680]

While he may have been idealistic when starting the company, he later succumbed to pressure to “reign in” the wild, wild west nature of Twitter and rolled out increasingly strict policies resulting in a number of high profile people being permanently banned for saying things that are commonplace on Twitter.

Milo Yiannopoulos got banned permanently in July 2016 for trolling "comedian" and actress Leslie Jones about how horrible the all-female *Ghostbusters* remake was. [681] Political operative and unofficial Trump advisor Roger Stone got banned in October 2017 after going off about several CNN hosts including Don Lemon, Jake Tapper, and Ana Navarro for "using an expletive" to describe them and saying they should be "mocked" and "punished" for constantly lying about the President. [682]

Tommy Robinson was permanently banned from Twitter for posting facts about crimes committed by Muslims in the UK. [683] Twitter has suspended other people's accounts for posting facts about black crime statistics in America as well. [684]

Jayda Fransen, another vocal critic of Muslim immigration to the UK and founder of "Britain First," was banned less than one month after President Trump retweeted a few of her videos showing violent Muslim mobs attacking people, which put her on the radar of activist groups who wanted to take her down for spreading "Islamophobia." [685]

Blogger Chuck Johnson was banned for saying he was going to "take out" Black Lives Matter troll DeRay McKesson, meaning expose him and take him out of the game, but Twitter claimed it was a threat of violence. [686] Johnson responded on his blog saying "Twitter doesn't seem to have a problem with people using their service to coordinate riots [referring to the recent spree of Black Lives Matter riots that had been occurring]. But they do have a problem with the kind of journalism I do." [687]

Supposed "white supremacist" Jared Taylor was also banned, along with the account for his American Renaissance organization as a part of a crack down on "abusive content," but Taylor doesn't use slurs or heated rhetoric and seems like a mild-mannered senior citizen who is just pushing back against anti-white racism, and celebrating European culture and achievements. Despite being called a “white supremacist” he actually says that Jews and Asians on average have higher IQs than white Europeans. [688]

Gavin McInnes, founder of the Proud Boys [conservative men’s fraternity], was banned after he was falsely labeled the leader of a “hate group.” He then sued the Southern Poverty Law Center for defamation. [689] Comedian Owen Benjamin was banned after going on a rant about anti-gun activist David Hogg where he said “Don’t you think it’s weird that you are telling grown men how to live when you barely have pubes?” [690]

Comedian Anthony Cumia, who was once co-host of the Opie and Anthony show, was banned in June 2017 for “harassing” a writer for The A.V. Club after he called her a “fat old trans looking twat.” [691] YouTuber Sargon of Akkad was banned in August 2017 for posting sarcastic comments that included “racial slurs.” [692]

Free speech activist Lindsay Shepherd was banned in July 2019 for “misgendering” a transgender “woman” who sexually harassed her. The “woman” attacked Shepherd, who had just had a baby, saying “At least my pussy is tight and not loose after pushing out a 10 pound baby.” [693] This same “woman,” who goes by the name Jessica Yaniv, has been filing discrimination claims against waxing salons for refusing to do a Brazilian wax on “her” penis. [694]

Lindsay Shepherd responded, “This is how men who don’t have functional romantic relationships speak. But…I guess that’s kinda what you are!” At least I have a uterus, you fat ugly man.” [695] Twitter then banned Lindsay Shepherd for calling “Jessica” a man, and not the transgender “woman” who clearly violated Twitter’s policy against sexual harassment.

Street artist Sabo, who is like an American version of Banksy, was banned in April 2018 for the generic reason of “abusive behavior.” [696] It’s likely they considered him posting pictures of his street art, which is technically vandalism, to be a violation of the rules. Many other lesser known conservatives have also been banned but don't get any media attention because they aren't public figures with an active fanbase who can alert others about what happened.

CNN's Brian Stelter once tattled to Twitter asking them if President Trump violated their terms of service by "threatening North Korea" in a tweet saying he has a "nuclear button" that is much bigger and more powerful than Jim Jong-Un's when the two were having a heated war of words about North Korea testing missiles and threatening Japan. [697]

The @MAGAphobia account, which documented acts of violence and harassment against Trump supporters, was banned in May 2019 for a reason that was never given. [698] Perhaps it was for "showing graphic violence" since the account posted pictures of victims and videos of them being assaulted. Only mainstream media accounts are allowed to post graphic content so they can carefully choose how to frame certain issues, while ignoring others. Even a parody account called the "Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Press" was banned, even though it was clearly a parody, and labeled a parody in the account's bio in accordance with Twitter's terms of service. [699]

Meanwhile, Twitter refused to shut down an account that organized a harassment campaign against senator Jeff Flake after he voted in favor of confirming Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. The person said, "I am starting a National @DemSocialists working group to follow Jeff Flake around to every restaurant, cafe, store, etc he goes to for the rest of his life and yell at him." [700] Inciting harassment is supposed to be against Twitter's terms of service, but moderators usually look the other way when liberals do it.

Comedian Kathy Griffin's account wasn't penalized after she called for the doxing of the Covington Catholic kids who went viral for wearing MAGA hats during their trip to the nation's Capital. [701] When the account @HouseShoes, the verified account of a DJ and hip hop producer tweeted out to his supporters that "I want you to fire on any of these red hat bitches when you see them. On sight," and "IF WE COULD WIPE THESE FAMILIES OUT WE WOULD BE IN A MUCH BETTER PLACE," and his account wasn't suspended. [702] Actor Peter Fonda tweeted rape threats to President Trump's young son Barron and Twitter let him keep his account. [703]

An investigation by Breitbart found dozens of pedophiles using Twitter to openly promote pedophilia. Some of them refer to themselves as MAPs (Minor-Attracted Persons) and others call themselves "anti-contact pedophiles" meaning they're attracted to children but claim to not act on their desires. [704] One of them tweeted, "MAPs have every right to talk (including, yes, on public blogs) about their fantasies, sexual and romantic, as long as sexually explicit material is hidden from children. It's not bad or disrespectful to talk about people you think are cute." [705]

Other news outlets have covered the issue of admitted pedophiles being allowed on Twitter as well, and Members of Parliament in England have denounced Twitter for allowing the accounts to remain active, some of them having been operating for years. [706]

While Twitter doesn't seem to have much of a problem with pedophiles openly fantasizing about molesting children, Laura Loomer got permanently banned for criticizing Ilhan Omar, the Muslim congresswoman from Minnesota, after Loomer said she was anti-Semitic and is a member of a religion in which "homosexuals are oppressed" and "women are abused." [707]

Not long after Laura Loomer was banned, the Congresswoman made headlines and was denounced by members of her own party, including Nancy Pelosi, for comments she made about AIPAC [The American Israel Public Affairs Committee], the largest Israeli lobbying organization, after many deemed her criticism anti-Semitic. [708] So Loomer was right about Ilhan Omar, but got banned for being "Islamophobic" and posting "hate speech" about Muslims. Later a video clip surfaced of Ilhan Omar appearing to mock Americans who were fearful of Al-Qaeda in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. [709]

A writer named Meghan Murphy, who refuses to accept transgender "women" as real women, was banned for simply referring to a transgender "woman" as a "he" (a violation called "misgendering" someone). [710] A world-renowned expert in gender dysphoria, Dr. Ray Blanchard, was suspended for tweeting that transgenderism was a mental disorder. [711] He didn't say it to be mean, he said it as part of a thread about the condition, (which up until May 2019 was classified as a mental disorder by the World Health Organization — and still is by many psychiatrists around the world, including the American Psychiatric Association's DSM-5) but some facts are considered hate speech now. [712]

After I tweeted that there are only two genders and insinuated the rest of the 50+ "gender identities" liberals have come up with were mental disorders, I was suspended for that too. My account was also disabled from uploading videos longer than 2 minutes and 20 seconds because they said I had posted "Inappropriate Content," and I have been banned from running ads on Twitter too.

I have also been suspended for calling Kevin Spacey a "Satanic scumbag" and telling him to "burn in Hell" after an actor came forward and claimed Spacey made aggressive sexual advances on him when he was just

14-years-old. [713] My tweet was considered to be “hateful” because he’s a gay man who is above reproach.

Actor James Woods’ account was suspended for posting a satirical meme making fun of Democrats, showing three soy boys with the caption, “We’re making a woman’s vote worth more by staying home,” and included the hashtag #LetWomenDecide and #NoMenMidterm. Twitter claimed it was in violation of their policy forbidding posting content that “has the potential to be misleading in a way that could impact an election.” [714]

Twitter suspended the account of Austin Petersen who was running for Senate in Missouri in 2018 just one week before the primary. [715] Twitter even banned Republican Senate candidate Marsha Blackburn from running pro-life ads during her campaign because they were deemed “inflammatory” [716] The official account for the anti-abortion movie *UnPlanned* was briefly suspended by Twitter during the film’s opening weekend in March 2019. [717] As usual, the suspension caused a wave a backlash and Twitter later restored it saying it was another “mistake.”

Twitter also suspended a user for calling Maxine Waters a “crazy old lying lunatic in a bad wig.” [718] A recent change to Twitter’s terms of service says they will ban anyone who is “amplifying hate groups” by posting articles about them, or even retweeting other tweets about them. (That only applies to right-wing “hate groups” though. Supporting Antifa, black power groups, and other far-left movements is fine).

After a bunch of *Huffington Post* and BuzzFeed employees got laid off in February 2019, a lot of people mocked them by responding with “Learn to Code” after they posted Dear Diary-style tweets crying about being let go, and so Twitter began suspending accounts for using that phrase or hashtag, claiming it was “abusive behavior.” [719]

The saying “Learn to Code” is a reference to news outlets publishing stories encouraging coal miners who are getting laid off as clean energy companies replace their jobs to do just that. Expecting a fifty-year-old coal miner to become a software engineer is insane and shows how out of touch the journalists were who recommended they do just that, so people threw “Learn to Code” back in their faces, but that’s “harassment.”

When CEO Jack Dorsey appeared on Joe Rogan’s podcast in February 2019, Joe brought up Alex Jones being banned and pointed out that Twitter was the last major platform to do so after (briefly) allowing him to keep his account in the wake of YouTube, Facebook, iTunes, etc, banning him. When Joe asked, “What did he do on your platform, that you all were in agreement that this is enough?” Jack responded, “Ah, I’m not — I’m not sure what the, what the actual like, ya know, violations were.” [720] (That’s an exact quote.)

Alex was banned for telling off CNN’s Oliver Darcy outside of the Jack Dorsey congressional hearing in September 2018, where Jones denounced Oliver for pressuring all the social media companies to get him banned. The confrontation was broadcast live on Twitter via Periscope and so Twitter quickly banned Jones for “harassing” a supposed “journalist.” [721]

It’s important to point out that Oliver Darcy was working in the capacity of a journalist at the time, on public property, while he was covering an event about social media; thus confirming everything Alex Jones was saying about the censorship of conservatives. Oliver Darcy later admitted that CNN had “presented Twitter with examples of [violations of Twitter’s terms of service] available on both the InfoWars and Jones account.” [722]

In August 2019 a group of Leftists gathered outside Senator Mitch McConnell’s house after sunset to harass him and some of them made threatening statements saying he should be killed, and when he posted a short video on his Twitter account showing the angry mob and what they were saying, *he* was suspended and the video removed for allegedly violating their terms of service prohibiting making threats, even though he had just posted evidence of what people were doing to him! [723] His staff appealed the suspension but the appeal was denied. [724]

Only after growing outrage and media coverage did Twitter lift his suspension and restore the video. [725] Mitch McConnell is the Senate Majority Leader, the most powerful Senator in the country, yet was censored when he tried to show his fellow Americans that Leftists had surrounded his home to intimidate and threaten him.

Twitter Verification

The "verified" checkmark on someone's social media account is a confirmation that the account actually belongs to that person, and isn't being run by someone else pretending to be them. Public figures like celebrities and journalists usually get them to prevent imposter accounts from impersonating them, and having a verified account is often seen as a sign that someone is "important" and so every wannabe rapper and blogger wishes to get one, but you have to apply, and Twitter won't just verify anyone's account.

They have, however, verified numerous Black Lives Matter activists' accounts whose credentials are basically that they're anti-police trolls who spend their entire lives on Twitter spewing hatred of police and white people. Virulent racist troll Tariq Nasheed, who accuses almost every white person in America of being a "suspected white supremacist," has been verified. Other Black Lives Matter trolls like Shaun King and Deray McKesson have also been rewarded with verified accounts.

Twitter also verified Sarah Jeong, a new editorial board member at the *New York Times* , despite a series of racist tweets about “dumbass fucking white people” and saying she gets “joy” out of being “cruel to old white men.” [726] Twitter also verified loads of fringe LGBT social media personalities, and plenty of pro-feminist and pro-abortion trolls in order to give them more clout online.

Meanwhile, popular conservatives like James O’Keefe, Carpe Donktum, Gary Franchi, David Harris Jr., Brandon Tatum, David Horowitz, and others have been denied verification for years. [727] Before they were permanently banned, Tommy Robinson, Laura Loomer, and Milo Yiannopoulos had been *unverified* .

Twitter released a statement saying “Reasons for removal [of verification checkmark] may reflect behaviors on and off Twitter that include: Promoting hate and/or violence against, or directly attacking or threatening other people on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability, or disease” and even, “Supporting organizations or individuals that promote the above.” [728]

Twitter verified the “Parkland kids,” a small group of anti-gun activists who became social media stars over night after a lunatic shot up their high school on Valentine’s Day 2018 in Parkland, Florida. One of them, David Hogg, went on to sic his nearly 500,000 followers onto the advertisers of various Fox News shows, harassing them to pull their ads from the network. [729] Twitter even hosted the Parkland kids for a live Q&A to help them promote their “March For Our Lives” event where they demanded more gun control laws. [730]

Never Tweet

There's a meme that looks like the sign-up page for Twitter but reads "Get fired from your job in ten years" just above the link to open an account, and it's not that far from the truth. What you say in a tweet can be perfectly fine if it was just said amongst a group of friends, but often our enemies are lurking quietly on Twitter, watching and waiting for one little slip up, and even complete strangers who happen to come across your tweet may feel compelled to enact "revenge" because you said something on the Internet that offended them.

People often like to go digging through old tweets of their enemies, hoping to find years or decade-old tweets saying "racist," "homophobic," or "sexist" things so they can derail their career. Twitter's search function allows people to search anyone's Twitter feed for any keyword or phrase, making this tactic extremely simple. (I advise, if you use Twitter, to consider a "tweet delete" app which allows you to easily search for and delete old tweets which contain certain words or phrases. Or regularly delete your tweets that are older than six months in order to avoid past tweets posted years ago from coming back to haunt you.)

Oftentimes when someone becomes famous, people will go nosing around their old tweets typing in keywords like "nigger" and "faggot" into the search to see if they've ever tweeted anything with those words in the past so they can retweet them, trying to get the person in trouble. This is exactly what happened right after Kyler Murray won the 2018 Heisman Trophy. A reporter for *USA Today* took it upon himself to search through his past tweets and found some "homophobic" ones from when he was fifteen-years-old. [731]

When Milwaukee Brewers pitcher Josh Hader was chosen to pitch in the 2018 All-Star Game, people dug up some of his old tweets from when he was in high school and it made headlines because he used the "n-word" in a few tweets. [732] He then apologized and deleted his entire account. The same thing has happened to “Mr. Beast,” a popular YouTuber, and singer Shawn Mendes. [733]

The best example of what can happen when you tweet is the disaster that occurred to a woman named Justine Sacco in 2013 who had just 170 followers. When boarding a flight to South Africa she tweeted, “Going to Africa. Hope I don’t get AIDS. Just kidding. I’m white!” and then got on the plane without thinking anything of it. She didn’t say it as a racist insult about the AIDS epidemic there, but meant it as a sarcastic jab at Americans who she said lived in “a bit of a bubble when it comes to what’s going on in the third world,” since she herself was born in South Africa and returning there to visit family. [734]

But somebody following her got offended and retweeted it, and then their followers saw it and got triggered and retweeted it, and then she soon began trending from so many people being upset about her tweet even though she was just some random person on Twitter. She and her tweet then became a national news story and she ultimately ended up getting fired from her job. [735]

Twitter is often fueled by anger with people venting their political frustrations through tweets like irate sports fans yelling at the TV. For others it’s a narcissistic circus where they derive their self-worth by getting likes and retweets since the immediate engagement can become addicting because their notifications release dopamine similar to getting a small payout from a slot machine at the casino.

The instant gratification of getting feedback becomes a deeply engrained habit that’s hard for people to break. Perhaps the only good thing about Twitter is President Trump’s tweets. Previously, to hear what a President had to say, he would have to hold a press conference or give an interview, but now with Twitter he can fire off his thoughts on anything at any time, day or night, and then the media reports on it—often over-reacting to the point of having a meltdown.

There have been calls to ban him, and groups have even started petitions and presented them to Twitter with the foolish hope they would shut down his account, but he's still there. Twitter's co-founder Evan Williams even said he was sorry for his creation helping Donald Trump get out his message during his campaign in 2016 after Trump told the *Financial Times* that without it, he didn't think he would have won. [736] "If it's true that he wouldn't be president if it weren't for Twitter, then yeah, I'm sorry," Williams said. [737]

Trump knows and loves the power of Twitter, but the big question is—will he still tweet after he's left office? Barack Obama broke the unwritten rule of not criticizing his successor, and it's been the tradition of former presidents to not inject themselves into matters involving the next administration, but both Barack Obama and George W. Bush have been openly criticizing the Trump administration, so after he leaves office he may not sit by silently, and could regularly criticize the next administration as well, and it will be hard for people to ignore what he's saying since his Twitter feed has become such a newsmaker.

There may be only one way for the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* to silence Donald Trump, which is why they are constantly painting him as the reincarnation of Adolf Hitler, and incessantly calling him a fascist dictator, because they are hoping to incite some unhinged lunatic who believes what they say to assassinate him.

YouTube

Most people don't realize this but YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world, after Google of course, and it's also part of the same conglomerate since Google bought YouTube in 2006 for 1.6 billion dollars. Later corporate restructuring put both of them under the new umbrella company Alphabet Inc. When referring to YouTube many people consider it a part of Google, but it should be considered its own separate entity, which it technically is, with its own CEO — Susan Wojcicki.

For the better part of a decade after YouTube was launched, it was largely seen as just a website for user generated entertainment. It was the place for people to upload funny cat videos and show themselves doing stupid "Internet challenges," but a small group of people (myself included) knew from YouTube's beginning that it was a powerful tool that could be used to share news and analysis about current events and other important issues that weren't being properly addressed by mainstream outlets. It was like having our own public access cable channel where we could do anything we wanted with the potential to reach an audience of millions, and for some of us, that started happening on a regular basis.

For over a year after the 2016 election, the mainstream media's war on "fake news" (in reality a war on independent news and ordinary people using social media to get out their message) focused almost exclusively on Facebook and Twitter since the news giants saw them as being responsible for completely losing their power to control the national narrative surrounding major issues and events.

The mainstream media could no longer prevent certain information from becoming widely known and millions of people were spending their time scrolling through Facebook, and Twitter, and watching YouTube videos instead of engaging with the traditional news outlets that had dominated the industry for decades since their creation.

But Donald Trump beating Hillary Clinton was a wakeup call for the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* , so they launched a bold new effort under the disguise of fighting “fake news” to completely reshape social media. While they first focused on Facebook and Twitter, eventually they stumbled upon a huge secret that was right in front of their nose for years. People like me were creating YouTube videos on a regular basis covering news and politics and we were getting enormous audiences rivaling or beating cable news. In the run-up to the 2016 election my YouTube channel was averaging around 700,000 viewers a day, about half of what CNN’s primetime shows like Anderson Cooper and Don Lemon get on their best nights. [738]

But now the Establishment discovered the “fake news” problem was flourishing on YouTube, they said, and it had to be stopped by changing the algorithm to artificially favor mainstream media channels over videos posted by ordinary YouTubers. In October of 2017, sociologist and technology critic Zeynep Tufekci said, “YouTube is the most overlooked story of 2016,” after realizing there was much more to YouTube than cat videos and pranksters. [739] Traditional media outlets discovered the world of underground news and they were shocked at just how popular we were.

Slate pointed out that Twitter and Facebook had been receiving the brunt of criticism about spreading “fake news” but, “Now a series of controversies is forcing YouTube to address its responsibilities more directly and candidly than it has in the past.” [740]

Soon YouTube would completely change the way the website had functioned for the previous ten years, and turned it from what was meant to be a place where anyone with an important message could post videos and build an audience, to mostly just another mainstream media site filled with brand name news channels and videos of familiar celebrities.

By mid-2018, as *Wired* magazine points out, YouTube was “ditching vloggers” in favor of Hollywood celebrities. “YouTube used to be all about young digital influencers who managed to threaten TV with their video blogs. Not anymore. It seems that YouTube is opting for traditional celebrities instead.” [741]

Another blogger noticed the changes and ran with the headline, “YouTube is turning away from its creators to become a new MTV,” and noted, “YouTube can’t promise brand safety with volatile creators on the platform — advertisers don’t want to be caught in a firestorm. The only move is to pivot, and YouTube is ready. Hollywood names like Will Smith and Demi Lovato are safe bets. Same with music videos already vetted by major record labels.” [742]

YouTube, which for over a decade was a place for independent content creators to upload their videos, even began producing shows themselves. [743] For the better part of ten years since its launch in 2006, Hollywood studios and mainstream celebrities didn’t pay much attention to YouTube. They either were afraid of it because it threatened their monopoly on content distribution, or they were too blind to see how the new technology was revolutionizing media and helping to create new kinds of stars.

Right-Wing Channels Dominating

In March of 2018 *Vanity Fair* warned that right-wing “Dark-Web Trolls” were “taking over YouTube” because so many anti-social justice warrior channels were getting popular. [744] The *New York Times* then said YouTube was “radicalizing” people to the right, and claimed that if people started watching videos of Donald Trump speeches then YouTube will begin recommending videos of “white supremacist rants” and “Holocaust denials.” [745]

The article declared that, “Given its billion or so users, YouTube may be one of the most powerful radicalizing instruments of the 21st century,” and that, “Its algorithm seems to have concluded that people are drawn to content that is more extreme than what they started with — or to incendiary content in general.” [746]

The New York Times had previously complained that, “For the New Far Right, YouTube Has Become the New Talk Radio,” saying, “They deplore ‘social justice warriors,’ whom they credit with ruining popular culture, conspiring against the populace and helping to undermine ‘the West.’ They are fixated on the subjects of immigration, Islam and political correctness. They seem at times more animated by President Trump’s opponents than by the man himself, with whom they share many priorities, if not a style.” [747] The Left became determined to paint the Right’s rising stars as radicals, Islamophobes, and far-right extremists hoping to derail the spread of our videos.

One Leftist blog called “Right Wing Watch” founded by Jared Holt declared that, “White Supremacy Figured Out How To Become YouTube Famous,” and whined that, “YouTube has served as an alternative media ecosystem apart from the mainstream where any person can contribute to national conversation and reach thousands of people overnight. But the Right’s overt domination of the platform, in addition to political forums on Reddit and 4chan, has created an environment where white nationalists and right-wing extremists can easily inject hateful rhetoric and conspiracy theories into national political discourse.” [748]

When BuzzFeed or CNN reported “breaking news” about the Trump administration or when something started trending on Twitter, us YouTubers could quickly publish videos giving another perspective and point out things the mainstream media was ignoring or lying about. Our subscribers would see the videos, but perhaps more importantly, people searching for information on YouTube about those issues could find our videos, and if they were popular with favorable ratings, those videos would be discovered by people seeking out information on the subject matter. But all that has changed.

“Authoritative Channels” Boosted to the Top

For over a decade the top search results on YouTube were the most popular videos associated with the search terms you entered in, regardless of whether the videos were posted by someone who had just opened a YouTube account, a full time YouTuber, or a mainstream media outlet. The algorithm that was originally in place worked very well, because instead of showing the most-viewed videos (which could have generated a large number of views by using misleading titles and thumbnails) YouTube surfaced videos with the most “watch time” up at the top.

This means that if people clicked on a video and found that the title and thumbnail were misleading or it wasn’t a quality video, and then decided not to watch it by clicking away rather soon once it began playing, the algorithm would know that it wasn’t what people were searching for because the average amount of time people spent watching the video would be low. But if the video had a high watch time average, the site (accurately) figured that people had found what they were looking for because they kept watching it, and those were the videos that ranked the highest in the search results.

All that mattered was that the video was uploaded to YouTube by someone—anyone. If it was good, and people watched it instead of clicking away after a few seconds, it would show up in the top of the search results.

But all that changed in October 2017 when YouTube reconfigured the algorithm to favor videos from mainstream media outlets. [749]

They added internal tags on certain channels deeming them “authoritative sources,” and overnight the top search results for most things were now videos from channels like CNN, NBC, Entertainment Tonight, etc. Most of these videos have only a tiny fraction of the views (and watch time) compared to countless other videos about the subject being searched for, but those videos are now buried under pages of content from channels that YouTube has deemed “authoritative” sources. [750]

They had manually intervened in the search results previously, but only for certain topics they deemed “extremist” material, like videos supporting ISIS. YouTube had been redirecting search results for these topics to curated videos and playlists they had specifically chosen in order to “confront and debunk violent extremist messages.” [751] But now “the Jigsaw Method” as they call it, was rolled out on a massive scale and incorporated news, current events, and many other topics people regularly search for.

“We’re continuing to invest in new features and changes to YouTube search that provide authoritative results when people come to YouTube looking for news,” a YouTube spokesperson said in a statement. [752] “So far this year we have introduced new features that promote verified news sources when a major news event happens. These sources are presented on the YouTube homepage, under ‘Breaking News,’ and featured in search results, with the label ‘Top News.’ Additionally, we’ve been rolling out algorithmic changes to YouTube search during breaking news events. There is still more work to do, but we’re making progress.” [753] Soon it wasn’t just videos from mainstream media channels boosted to the top during “breaking news” events, but almost anything having to do with news at all.

MSNBC’s Chris Hayes rang the alarm about YouTube’s algorithm because he didn’t like the search results for videos about the Federal Reserve. [754] *Mother Jones* magazine joined in on the criticism, reporting, “If you search for ‘Federal Reserve’ on YouTube, one of the first videos to surface is titled ‘Century of Enslavement.’ Using archival footage and the kind of authoritative male voice heard in countless historical documentaries, the 90-minute video espouses the idea the Federal Reserve was formed in secret by powerful, often Jewish, banking families in the early 20th century, causing America to spiral into debt.” [755]

It continued, “The incendiary Federal Reserve video, flagged by MSNBC host Chris Hayes earlier this month, is just one of many examples of how political extremists have mastered YouTube’s algorithms and monetization structure to spread toxic ideas ranging from conspiracy theories to white supremacy. The video ‘Why Social Justice is CANCER,’ for instance, appears after searching for ‘social justice.’ [756] That video was from Lauren Chen (formerly known as Roaming Millennial.) [757]

Soon the search results for “Federal Reserve” featured only videos from mainstream media channels, and the documentary Chris Hayes called out (*Century of Enslavement: The History of the Federal Reserve*— which was the top search result) was nowhere to be seen. I looked all the way through page 25 of the search results and it still didn’t show up. [758] Other videos critical of the Federal Reserve, including one titled “Exposing the Federal Reserve,” which is a high-quality 30-minute cartoon, [759] and “The Federal Reserve Explained in 3 Minutes” also vanished.

A whistleblower later revealed to Breitbart that “Federal Reserve” had been added to the secret “Controversial Query Blacklist” file which causes “authoritative content” (i.e. mainstream media channels) to artificially rise to the top of the search results over other videos that actually qualify organically for those positions. [760]

My most-viewed video "Donald Trump's Funniest Insults and Comebacks," which has over 11 million views, is now buried on page three of the search results when looking for the exact title. All the top results for "Donald Trump's Funniest Insults and Comebacks" are videos from CNN, NBC News, ABC News, the Washington Post, HuffPost, etc, most of which are critical of President Trump and have far less views and watch time.

My channel had reached one million subscribers in May of 2017, and at the time had more subscribers than MSNBC's channel, NBC News, CBS News, and even Fox News. [761] And many of my videos far eclipsed theirs in the number of views, but since the algorithm changes my channel virtually stalled in growth while theirs all grew exponentially.

In the spring of 2019, YouTube changed the algorithm so when people searched for my own name, the top search results were *other people's videos* about me, with mine buried at the bottom of the page. When searching for almost any other YouTuber, however, their most recent videos were featured at the top of the page with a notification highlighting their latest uploads.

I had been calling YouTube out about this since I first learned of it in May 2019, thanks to people leaving comments on my videos giving me a heads up, but YouTube wouldn't respond to me. It was only after an uproar four months later when Steven Crowder became aware that none of his videos were coming up in the search results for his name either, and directed his lawyer to contact them about it while his fans bombarded YouTube with a flood of tweets denouncing them for what they had done.

They quickly made some adjustments, partially fixing the problem near the end of September 2019, but didn't publicly acknowledge the complaints or that they had reverted the algorithm back to the way it was. But at least my two most recent videos started showing up again at the top of the search results along with those of the other popular conservative channels that had been censored (Steven Crowder, Paul Joseph Watson, The Next News Network, Lauren Chen, and Breitbart News).

Shortly after a feminist writer for Slate.com, an online magazine, complained about many of the top search results for "abortion" being pro-life videos (including one that showed what a baby looks like in the first trimester—complete with arms, legs, fingers and toes), YouTube quickly changed the algorithm to feature various pro-abortion videos at the top. "I emailed YouTube Friday afternoon asking why anti-abortion videos saturated the search results for 'abortion,'" she wrote, adding, "By Monday morning…the search results had changed to include a number of news outlets among the top results." [762]

National Review pointed out that YouTube was happy to "airbrush away the reality of abortion," by artificially boosting pro-abortion videos after her complaint. [763] Now a search for "abortion" brings up videos from Vice News, the BBC, and BuzzFeed. In a leaked document given to Breitbart, one engineer admitted "We have tons of white and blacklists that humans manually curate." [764]

The document also first revealed the existence of the "Controversial Query Blacklist" file that contains a list of search terms that will bring up manually curated videos in the results or ensure the top results are videos from mainstream media channels. [765] The list includes "abortion," "Federal Reserve," and even people like anti-gun activist David Hogg, and Congresswoman Maxine Waters.

When *Captain Marvel* was released in March 2019 YouTube changed their algorithm in order to bury videos of people who were giving the movie negative reviews which were appearing as the top search results. [766] The film's star Brie Larson had been insulting white men and promoting intersectional feminism on her publicity tour, angering many Marvel fans who took to YouTube to express their thoughts. Those videos, being very popular, surfaced at the top of the search results for "Brie Larson," but that soon changed.

A writer for *The Verge* posted two side by side screenshots showing the before and after top search results and noted, "This is kind of a fascinating discovery: YouTube seems to have changed the immediate 'Brie Larson' search results to News. That pushes up authoritative sources and, in turn, pushes troll or MRA-style [Men's Rights Activists] video rants pretty far down the page." [767]

She went on to report that, "YouTube recategorized 'Brie Larson' as a news-worthy search term. That does one very important job: it makes the search algorithm surface videos from authoritative sources on a subject. Instead of videos from individual creators, YouTube responds with videos from *Entertainment Tonight*, ABC, CBS, CNN, and other news outlets first." [768]

YouTube has even experimented with disabling some of the search filters to make it impossible to do a more focused search when looking for something specific. In March 2019 they temporarily disabled the ability to filter search results by dates, in order to prevent people from finding recent uploads of the New Zealand mosque massacre which was live-streamed by the shooter and was being uploaded to YouTube by various people who had gotten the footage from the perpetrator's Facebook page before moderators removed it. [769]

This way you couldn't narrow the search perimeters by the date something was posted which is often the only way to find certain clips now because they’re buried under countless other videos that are artificially pushed to the top even though they’re not necessarily relevant to the search terms. Luckily this time, disabling the search filters was only temporarily, but who knows what the future holds.

Recommended Videos

Playing favorites with mainstream channels and serving their videos up as the top search results no matter how few views or little engagement they have wasn’t good enough though. The *Wall Street Journal* complained, “YouTube’s algorithm tweaks don’t appear to have changed how YouTube recommends videos on its home page. On the home page, the algorithm provides a personalized feed for each logged-in user largely based on what the user has watched…Repeated tests by the Journal as recently as this week showed the home page often fed far-right or far-left videos to users who watched relatively mainstream news sources, such as Fox News and MSNBC.” [770]

Their report continued, “After searching for ‘9/11’ last month, then clicking on a single CNN clip about the attacks, and then returning to the home page, the fifth and sixth recommended videos were about claims the U.S. government carried out the attacks. One, titled ‘Footage Shows Military Plane hitting WTC Tower on 9/11—13 Witnesses React’—had 5.3 million views.” [771]

Others had been complaining about “conspiracy videos” too. As you can imagine, CNN piled on the criticism as well, reporting, “YouTube has long faced criticism for allowing misinformation, conspiracy theories and extremist views to spread on its platform, and for recommending such content to users. People who came to the site to watch videos on innocuous subjects, or to see mainstream news, have been pushed toward increasingly fringe and conspiracist content.” [772]

NBC News also complained that, “YouTube search results for A-list celebrities [have been] hijacked by conspiracy theorists” and noted, “YouTube did not respond to a request for comment,” [but] “Some conspiracy videos’ rankings dropped after NBC News reached out for comment.” [773]

In January 2019 YouTube issued a public statement saying that they will continue, “taking a closer look at how we can reduce the spread of content that comes close to—but doesn’t quite cross the line of—violating our Community Guidelines. To that end, we’ll begin reducing recommendations of borderline content and content that could misinform users in harmful ways—such as videos promoting a phony miracle cure for a serious illness, claiming the earth is flat, or making blatantly false claims about historic events like 9/11.” [774]

It went on to say, “This change relies on a combination of machine learning and real people. We work with human evaluators and experts from all over the United States to help train the machine learning systems that generate recommendations.” [775]

YouTube now deciding what is and is not a conspiracy theory has dramatic implications. For example, mainstream media outlets claimed that people who thought “Empire” actor Jussie Smollett faked his “racist and homophobic attack” at the hands of Trump supporters were spreading a “conspiracy theory.” [776] And since such “conspiracy theory” videos are now admittedly buried in the search results and kept out of the Recommended and Up Next sections, YouTube was actively hiding the truth about what actually happened, which later came out. [777]

A recent addition to YouTube’s terms of service specifically bans, “Content claiming that specific victims of public violent incidents or their next of kin are actors, or that their experiences are false,” which means that anyone who posted a video or did a livestream saying they thought Jussie Smollett faked the “attack” was in violation of their rules and at risk of having their videos taken down and issued a Community Guidelines strike or even having their entire channel banned if they had previous infractions. 778

For many years about one-third of my total views were from “Suggested” videos, but then in April 2019 I and many other YouTubers noticed a quick and dramatic drop, which is detailed in our Channel Analytics. From that point on my total views from “Suggested” videos dropped to around five percent, a significant drop, most likely because my channel was identified as “borderline” and so my videos don’t show up on people’s homepages anymore or next to similar content.

The “Alternative Influence Network”

It wasn’t enough to bury independent content creators’ videos under piles of mainstream media channels when searching for various topics, or preventing our videos from showing up in the “Recommended” section or the “Up Next” sidebar. The *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* got upset that a bunch of YouTubers were collaborating with each other, and doing interviews with one another. In September 2018 a report from a “research institute” called Data & Society claimed to have identified what they called a network of “far-right” YouTubers who indoctrinate people through their videos by promoting right-wing “extremist” ideologies.

“Although YouTube’s recommendation algorithms are partly to blame, the problem is fundamentally linked to the social network of political influencers on the platform and how, like other YouTube influencers, they invite one another on to their shows," the report reads. [779]

It includes an illustration looking like a collage on the wall of a detective's office linking together all the connections of an organized crime family and notes, "The graph is a partial representation of collaborative connections within the Alternative Influence Network (AIN)–a network of controversial academics, media pundits, and internet celebrities who use YouTube to promote a range of political positions from mainstream versions of libertarianism and conservatism to overt white nationalism. While collaborations can sometimes consist of debates and disagreements, they more frequently indicate social ties, endorsements, and advertisements for other influencers." [780]

The report basically recommends that YouTube forbid people from interviewing individuals who liberals deem unsavory or who talk about things they consider "offensive" or "hateful" which as you know includes almost everything from illegal immigration to the American flag. "The platform should not only assess what channels say in their content, but also who they host and what their guests say. In a media environment consisting of networked influencers, YouTube must respond with policies that account for influence and amplification." [781]

In an interview about the report, lead researcher Rebecca Lewis explained how most of the focus on "extremism" and "fake news" has been on Facebook and Twitter, but, "We don't have as clear a picture of what's happening on YouTube and Google. It is important to bring to the fore some illustrations of the problems that do exist on these platforms. I'm trying to show there are fundamental issues we need to be addressing [regarding the algorithms of] YouTube in the same way we have recognized fundamental issues with Facebook and Twitter." [782]

She went on to say, “I absolutely think reassessing the algorithms is one step that needs to be taken. Assessing what government regulation options are available is absolutely worthwhile, and then thinking about how YouTube monetization structures incentivize certain behaviors is something that needs to be done. It needs to be a multi-pronged solution.” [783]

Five months after the Alternative Influence Network report was published a group of “researchers” calling themselves Digital Social Contract did a test to see how YouTube’s “Recommended” videos section changed, and looked at over 80 different channels listed in the report and noted, “For the first two weeks of February [2019], YouTube was recommending videos from at least one of these major alt-right channels on more than one in every thirteen randomly selected videos (7.8%). From February 15th, this number has dropped to less than one in two hundred and fifty (0.4%).” [784]

The Digital Social Contract report also highlighted that a video of actress Emma Watson promoting feminism had another video titled “How Feminism Ruined Marriage” queued in the “Up Next” autoplay section right beside it, which they claimed was “an anti-feminist video from an alt-right channel.” [785] That “alt-right” channel was Ben Shapiro’s, who is a Jew, not an alt-right white nationalist, but instead is often a target of alt-right figures who hate him because he’s Jewish. [786]

Censoring Videos

YouTube has always had a policy forbidding certain kinds of content from being uploaded like pornography, graphic violence, animal abuse, or blatant invasions of someone’s privacy; which are very reasonable rules, but after the 2016 election they began removing videos critical of the radical

Leftist agenda, including videos denouncing child drag queens, feminists, and for even reporting on anti-white hate crimes.

Those kinds of videos can now easily violate YouTube's "Community Standards" and result in getting channels issued a strike (and the video taken down), and if a channel gets three strikes within a three month period, the entire channel and all its videos are completely deleted.

YouTube's senior leadership (and overall corporate culture) believes there are 58 different genders, and Christians are just old-fashioned superstitious bigots; so we're talking about godless liberal Silicon Valley standards, not Midwestern community standards. YouTube also teamed up with the Southern Poverty Law Center, who began searching for videos they recommend be taken down. Soon all kinds of them were being removed under the banner of stopping "hate speech." [787]

I got a strike on a video I uploaded about a black man who opened fire inside a Tennessee church hoping to kill as many white people as possible. [788] The video was appropriately titled "Black Man Shoots Up White Church - Media Ignores Anti-White Hate Crime" and didn't show any graphic images, but as you probably know by now, reporting on anti-white hate crimes is deemed "racist" by the Left. The liberal media wants people to believe hate crimes are only committed by white people against blacks and don't want anyone talking about how such attacks are actually a two way street.

Black conservative Candace Owens even had a video removed from her channel that was critical of Black Lives Matter because it was deemed "hateful" against black people. [789] A channel called High Impact Vlogs had a video removed and got a Community Guidelines strike for criticizing the parents of Desmond is Amazing, the 11-year-old "drag kid," after the boy was featured on *Good Morning America* . [790]

YouTube pulled a funny 2018 midterm election ad by a Republican running for governor of Florida in which he showed off his "Deportation Bus," which he used to promote his campaign, claiming his ad was "hate speech." [791] They later restored the video after their censorship began making headlines.

Tommy Robinson's entire channel has been "quarantined" with special restrictions that prevent any of his videos from ever showing up in the search results at all. This designation also causes all comments to be disabled on every video, and the view counts censored as well, so people can't gauge how popular they are in another attempt to suppress his message by hiding the number of people watching his videos. [792]

Hunter Avallone, a conservative millennial who makes fun of feminists and other SJWs, had his entire channel deleted in April 2019 for "hate speech" despite not having any current strikes. After a growing outrage about the censorship, YouTube restored his channel and once again claimed it was just a "mistake." [793]

The Prager University channel (stylized PragerU) sued YouTube after they discovered that almost all of their videos were hidden when YouTube was in Restricted Mode, which most schools and public libraries have it set on by default in order to filter out "sensitive content." [794] Many of my videos are also completely hidden to people who are browsing in Restricted Mode as well, even though my content is family friendly.

In December of 2017 YouTube hired 10,000 new human moderators to supposedly remove "extremist" content and videos containing "hate speech," and soon after they began taking down popular videos and entire channels that hadn't come anywhere close to actually violating the terms of service. As a result of the new moderators a major purge occurred a few months later in February of 2018. Jerome Corsi's entire channel was taken down, Mike Adams' "Natural News" channel was also removed, and many others.

YouTube even began issuing community guideline strikes and removing videos that criticized CNN's Town Hall on gun control following the Parkland school shooting in Florida. [795] Tim Pool had produced a video where he debunked the conspiracy theories about the shooting, but his video was removed as well. [796]

After some channels and videos were restored due to a major outcry about this latest wave of censorship, Gizmodo reported that, "the usual whackos like far-right personality Mark Dice are going wild on Twitter claiming the admission of any mistake at all constitutes victory. Hopefully they're wrong and YouTube isn't walking back punishments on people like [Jerome] Corsi, whose prior best hits include a steadfast belief Barack Obama is secretly gay and also some kind of Muslim, though InfoWars claimed yesterday that it got YouTube to revoke one of the two strikes against it." [797]

"YouTube's New Moderators Mistakenly Pull Right-Wing Channels" was the headline at Bloomberg News. [798] It was just another "mistake," they said. YouTube deleted the entire channel of a gamer for posting a clip of him playing "Red Dead Redemption 2" which showed him "killing" a feminist NPC (non playable character) by lassoing her and then feeding her to an alligator. [799]

The game is a western and takes place in the late 1890s, and the character was just one of the townspeople who was hanging out in the street and happened to be promoting women's suffrage (right to vote) so he thought it would be funny to feed her to the alligator, which the game allows players to do to any of the "townsfolk."

Professional gaming is a huge industry where people stream themselves playing various video games, which as you know, often include the main character “killing” a number of other characters in the game, but the YouTube moderators deemed feeding the feminist to the alligator “graphic content that appears to be posted in a shocking, sensational, or disrespectful manner.” After others in the gaming community expressed outrage over YouTube censoring a clip of someone playing a popular game, they restored his channel. [800]

After the Covington Catholic incident involving the high school kid in the MAGA hat and the Native American man beating a drum in his face at the National Mall in Washington D.C., a retired Navy SEAL named Don Shipley posted a video about Nathan Phillips, the “Vietnam Veteran” Native American, calling him a fraud because Army records show he was never actually in Vietnam. YouTube soon terminated the Navy SEAL’s channel, claiming he was “harassing” the old man. [801]

Infowars host Alex Jones was banned from YouTube in August 2018 in part for his criticism of a drag queen festival where adult drag queens performed simulated strip teases for an “all ages” show which included children in the audience brought there by their degenerate parents. He called it an “abomination” and a “freak show” and so his video was deemed “hate speech” and “transphobic,” resulting in YouTube removing the video and issuing him a community guidelines strike. [802]

The deleted video (titled “Shocking ‘Drag Tots’ Cartoon Sparks Outrage”) can be seen on BitChute.com [803] and Infowars.com. [804] YouTube also cited another video of Jones as being “Islamophobic” because he was ranting about the increased crime in Europe due to the influx of Muslim refugees in recent years. [805]

He was given his second strike for that video, titled “Learn How Islam Has Already Conquered Europe,” [806] and soon a third (and final) strike for “circumvention” of YouTube’s “enforcement measures” because he had promoted another YouTube channel that had taken the feed of his show from his website and was streaming it on their channel since Jones was under a 90-day live-streaming suspension from the previous strikes. [807]

The H3H3 Podcast channel then had their livestream taken down and were issued a community guidelines strike simply for talking about Alex Jones being banned. [808] They are a popular husband and wife duo with over a million subscribers (on their podcast channel) who were actually defending YouTube’s decision to ban Alex Jones, and were repeating some of the crazy things he has said over the years which may have been flagged by the AI voice recognition systems that monitor livestreams. H3H3 co-host Ethan Klein later said, “How can I even sit here now and call Alex Jones a conspiracy theorist when our channel just got [a strike] for even fucking talking about him? I was criticizing him!” [809]

After BuzzFeed stumbled across a 14-year-old girl’s channel who does comedy sketches mocking social justice warriors and deriding political correctness, they did what they always do and wrote a hit piece urging people to pressure YouTube to ban her for “hate speech.” [810] The writer of the article (Joseph Bernstein) even labeled her an “extremist.” [811]

Before the article came out, “Soph” as she goes by, had over 800,000 subscribers which terrified BuzzFeed that such a young, talented, and popular girl was pushing back against the liberal agenda, but shortly after it was published she got two strikes on her channel for previous videos which had been up for weeks with no problems. [812]

The following week her entire channel was completely demonetized, dealing a crushing blow to her chances of turning YouTube into a career. [813]

A month and a half later she received her third and final strike for “hate speech” after she posted a video critical of homosexuals, and her entire channel was completely deleted. [814]

In June 2019 Project Veritas released a 25-minute report which included an undercover investigation into Google which showed that the head of the Innovation Department said they were doing everything they could to prevent another “Trump situation in 2020” and was bragging about how Google had come up with a new definition of “fairness.”

The Project Veritas report also included an interview with a current YouTube employee which was done in a silhouette to protect his identity. He explained how YouTube was actually preventing certain conservative and libertarian channels from having their videos show up in the “Recommended” section, confirming what most of us had already basically known since it was obvious. He also provided Project Veritas with leaked documents detailing their algorithm manipulation. [815]

Within hours YouTube deleted the video from Project Veritas’ account, claiming it violated the head of Innovation’s privacy even though it only showed her talking at a restaurant and mentioned who she was. Most privacy violations are for publishing someone’s home address or cell phone number. On CNN’s official YouTube channel they posted the video of their reporter stalking and harassing the old woman in her front yard because she shared someone on Facebook that originated with the Russians. During part of the altercation her full street address, which is posted on the front of her house, was completely visible. [816] How is *that* not a violation of *her* privacy and YouTube’s terms of service?

In October 2019, the channel Red Ice TV was completely deleted, despite having no current strikes against it. No specific reason was given, just that it had supposedly violated YouTube’s policy prohibiting “hate speech." It had over 330,000 subscribers, and for over ten years was run by a husband and wife duo out of Sweden who focus on preserving European culture and exposing anti-white racism, so of course they've been smeared by the media as "white supremacists." They were the most popular Identitarian channel on YouTube. [817] Leftist groups like Media Matters, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the ADL had been pressuring YouTube to ban the channel for years. [818]

No Conservative is Safe

Kara Swisher, the co-founder of Recode Media which hosted the historic joint interview with Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, said she wanted to "kill" YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki after discovering that her 13-year-old son was watching Ben Shapiro's videos, and claims he is the "gateway drug" to "neo-nazi stuff." [819] She made the comments while interviewing Susan Wojcicki at the "Lesbians Who Tech" conference in March 2019 (Kara Swisher is a lesbian who must have adopted her poor kid or used a sperm bank).

She added that her son is "lost" (meaning he's not infected with the liberal pathogen) and insinuated that YouTube was responsible. Susan Wojcicki responded, "I have a son too and I get some of these discussions also at the dinner table. I think what you're describing is — and the way we think about it too — look, there's a set of content that has to meet the community guidelines. Ben Shapiro is going to meet the community guidelines. I don't think you're suggesting that we remove him from the platform. Are you?"

Kara Swisher responded, "I would," and continued, whining "You know, last time I saw you, I was like, 'Get Alex Jones off that platform,' and you're like, 'Well the community guidelines,' and then [later] you got him off.”[820] She then changed the subject and went on to ask Susan if there was enough “diversity” in the company, particularly in management. “Diversity” is a code word for “less straight white men,” because Big Tech is concerned that there are too many of those kinds of people working in Silicon Valley.

Ben Shapiro is a huge nerd, he’s not a right-wing extremist or a hateful bigot, and is about as mainstream of a political commentator as you can get, yet Kara Swisher, who holds tremendous power in Silicon Valley and has direct access to all of the major CEOs, is demanding that he be banned from YouTube because she thinks he’s a right-wing extremist, proving that no conservative, no matter how moderate, is safe.

YouTube Gives Millions to Mainstream Media

Demonetizing us, censoring our videos, down-ranking them in the search results, and hiding them from the “Recommended” section while boosting mainstream media channels still wasn’t silencing us enough, so YouTube decided to just give $25 million dollars to brand name news channels and provide them with special consulting to help them create more engaging videos and grow their audience on the platform.[821]

“We will provide funding across approximately 20 global markets to support news organizations in building sustainable video operations,” they announced in July 2018. “Provided on an application basis to news organizations of all types, these grants will enable our partners to build key capabilities, train staff on video best practices, enhance production facilities and develop formats optimized for online video.”[822]

So people like me were able to figure out how to produce quality and engaging videos and built an audience all on our own, but since ordinary YouTubers came to dominate mainstream media, YouTube decided to just give them everything they need to emulate what we had come to learn through years of innovation and practice.

The largest "YouTube news channel" is the Young Turks, which was started by progressive Democrat Cenk Uygur in 2005, and over the years has gotten help from some very wealthy benefactors. In 2014 they got $4 million dollars from an investment firm, [823] and then later got another $20 million in 2017 from former Walt Disney Studios chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg. [824] That's *not* a typo—*twenty million dollars!*

It's interesting that their channel bears the same name as the insurgent group of Muslims who committed genocide against the Armenian people (who were Christians), killing 1.5 million of them between 1914 and 1923 in one of the first modern day genocides. [825] For years Cenk Uygur actually denied the Armenian Genocide until growing pressure caused him to change his position, saying he will refrain from commenting on it because he doesn't know enough about it. [826]

Making things even more bizarre is that the Young Turks cohost Anna Kasperian is Armenian, and works for a "news" organization which appears to be named after the very group which committed genocide against members of her own family. [827] She's the daughter of Armenian immigrants and actually grew up speaking Armenian as her first language. [828]

While YouTube has a policy against allowing "extremist groups" on the platform, they have no problem with a channel that some interpret as paying homage to a group that murdered more than a million Christians. [829] Instead, YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki enjoys hanging out with them and tweeted a photo of herself sitting down talking with Cenk Uygur at YouTube's headquarters, thanking him for his time. [830]

Young Turks host Hasan Piker even declared that "America deserved 9/11" in response to Congressman Dan Crenshaw doing an interview with

Joe Rogan where he said that Osama Bin Laden attacked the U.S. because of our western values. [831] Piker also appeared to praise Al Qaeda for blinding Crenshaw (a retired Navy SEAL) who lost an eye while serving in Afghanistan in 2012. [832] He then mocked the disabled veteran for having one eye. Hasan Piker is allowed to host a show on the platform, but Alex Jones isn't. Piker has his own personal YouTube channel as well, that hasn't been demonetized.

In 2016 YouTube launched their "Creators for Change" program where they began funding and coaching various YouTubers to make videos denouncing "hate speech," "xenophobia," and "extremism." [833] These handpicked social justice warriors produce propaganda for the platform and some of them promote the latest degeneracy the Left is trying to convince people is normal.

At the end of every year YouTube produces a mashup of what they consider to be the year's top stars and it's always a bunch of SJWs and LGBT activists. Their 2018 "Rewind" video, as it's called, featured drag queens and highlighted Hollywood celebrities like Will Smith and John Oliver over ordinary YouTubers. It got so many thumbs down that overnight it became the most disliked video on YouTube *ever* . [834] Shortly after that, YouTube announced that they were trying to figure out how to prevent what they called "dislike mobs" from "weaponizing the dislike button" and considered removing it altogether. [835]

The Adpocalypse

Since I'm an old school YouTuber, I was posting videos for six years before my channel was monetized (at the end of 2012) opening the door for me to become a professional YouTuber. While it has always been difficult to make a living on YouTube because monetized videos only pay a small fraction of a penny per view, a few years after I started doing it full time, it became almost impossible, especially for smaller channels that aren't getting five to ten million views a month.

In April 2017 after the *Wall Street Journal* published a report about finding advertisements for major brands appearing on "racist" and "offensive" videos, all hell broke loose. Tons of companies pulled their advertisements from the platform entirely, kicking off what us YouTubers call the "Adpocalypse" (advertising apocalypse). YouTube immediately rolled out some new tools they had been testing to comb through the titles, tags, and descriptions of videos and automatically demonetize (strip advertisements from) ones that were about (*or even mentioned*) certain topics.

Every video uploaded is now immediately scanned by YouTube's voice recognition software which creates a transcript of everything that's said in the video. That transcript is then scanned for keywords that may indicate a video is about a "sensitive" or "controversial" topic and then demonetizes it if certain words or phrases are found. As a result of the Adpocalypse, almost half of all of my videos were demonetized, and from that point on making a living on YouTube became uncertain.

News channels like mine were hit the hardest, because news and politics are filled with "divisiveness" and controversial issues that YouTube wanted to shield advertisers from. For people who make cooking videos, or how-to videos about fixing cars, or doing home improvement projects, those kinds of videos aren't about anything that's particularly "non-advertiser friendly" like ones that talk about illegal immigration, climate change, political cover-ups, or exposing fake news.

Bloomberg News later reported, "In fact, 96.5% of all of those trying to become YouTubers won't make enough money off of advertising to crack the U.S. poverty line.” [836] Their report continued bearing bad news, pointing out that, “Breaking into the top 3% of most-viewed channels could bring in advertising revenue of about $16,800 a year…That’s a bit more than the U.S. federal poverty line of $12,140 for a single person. (The guideline for a two-person household is $16,460.) The top 3% of video creators of all time in [the research group’s] sample attracted more than 1.4 million views per month.” [837]

But even for those who never expected to be full-time YouTubers, it was still nice to make a few dollars every month for the time and effort put into creating videos about things they’re passionate about. Despite the loss of income caused by the increased scrutiny, a lot of the more popular YouTuber news channels were still able to get by, or at least kept making videos because it’s about the message not the money, but we all have to pay the bills, so YouTube decided to make people’s lives even harder by demonetizing entire channels instead of just certain videos.

In January 2019 Tommy Robinson’s entire channel was demonetized. [838] A few months later in May 2019 Count Dankula was fully demonetized. What’s particularly interesting is that he learned about it from an email from BuzzFeed asking for a statement about it. It appears they had lobbied YouTube to get him demonetized and then reached out to him for a comment immediately after their YouTube source confirmed they had done it. [839]

BuzzFeed learned about it before him, which speaks volumes about what’s happening. Sargon of Akkad’s channel was also completely demonetized because of a rape joke he had made three years earlier on Twitter, and—what a “coincidence”—BuzzFeed was the first to break that story as well. [840]

Another round of mass demonetization and channel bans occurred in June 2019 (dubbed the Vox Adpocalypse) occurred after a gay activist named Carlos Maza, who works at Vox, ranted nonstop on Twitter for an entire week about conservative comedian Steven Crowder making fun of him. Maza's rant, which was conveniently timed to coincide with the kickoff of gay pride month for extra leverage, was a rallying call for liberals to pressure YouTube to completely ban Crowder (the most-subscribed conservative channel on YouTube) for "hate speech" because he called Maza a "lispy queer" since he talks with a lisp, and he's a queer.

What do you think the "Q" stands for in LGBTQ? They call themselves queers, but normal people can't use the word now apparently because the Left is trying to claim that only gay people can say *queer* , similarly to the double standard most black people have about the n-word.

While YouTube didn't ban Steven Crowder from YouTube, or give him any community guideline strikes to take down any of his videos; they did demonetize his *entire* channel, not just the "offensive" videos in question, which were probably never even monetized to begin with, thus, preventing him from ever making another dollar from the pre-roll ads you often see before videos start playing. [841]

It wasn't just Steven Crowder's channel though. Dozens, perhaps hundreds, of others were hit at the same time, some of which were very popular with hundreds of thousands of subscribers. [842] YouTube said this was just the beginning of their latest crackdown, and vowed to purge more "hateful" right-wing channels.

The very next week the *New York Times* ran a front page story titled "The Making of a YouTube Radical" which included a collage of various (mostly) conservative YouTubers who have sizable followings, and told the story about how a lonely loser named Caleb Cain "fell down the YouTube rabbit hole" and it turned him into a "radical." How radical? The *Times* explained that, "He began referring to himself as a 'tradcon' — a traditional conservative," supported "old-fashioned gender norms," started dating a Christian girl, and "fought with his liberal friends." [843]

"Fought" meaning discussed politics and disagreed with the nonsense they were indoctrinated to believe. The man admits he never thought about doing anything violent and wasn't even a hateful person, but he was the new poster boy denouncing right-wing YouTubers and the "algorithm."

Other outlets immediately added more fuel to the fire and he was interviewed on CNN where he once again blamed "the algorithm" for "radicalizing" him. [844] He said the conservative YouTubers he used to watch warned of Cultural Marxists who "were trying to destroy Western civilization and install some sort of socialist regime." [845] That's exactly what they're doing of course, but now if you just mention that, you're considered a right-wing extremist and at risk of having your entire channel demonetized or even deleted.

When the White House announced the Social Media Summit and invited dozens of the top conservative social media personalities to meet with President Trump to discuss the issues of censorship and liberal bias, the media freaked out saying that the attendees (which included me, as you probably know) were "trolls," "conspiracy theorists," and "extremists." [846]

President Trump addressed us by saying, "So this is a historic day. Never before have so many online journalists and influencers, and that is exactly what you are, you are journalists and you are influencers, come together in this building to discuss the future of social media…Each of you is fulfilling a vital role in our nation. You are challenging the media gatekeepers and the corporate censors to bring the facts straight to the

American people…Together you reach more people than any television broadcast network by far.” [847]

I knew once word got out that I was invited to the White House I would have a huge target on my back and just a few days later over 200 of my YouTube videos were demonetized, with about 100 of them manually reviewed by the moderators and deemed “non-advertiser friendly” despite not just being fully monetized for days, months, (and some for years) but many of them had been manually reviewed previously and *approved* for monetization.

YouTube moved the goal post again, and may be looking for a reason to demonetize my whole channel by deeming a “significant portion” of my content “non-advertiser friendly” like they had done to dozens of other channels a month earlier. Many of the videos were of me making fun of CNN hosts, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Beto O’Rourke, and other members of Congress. Apparently it’s okay for Stephen Colbert to do political comedy, but not a conservative YouTuber.

In January 2017 YouTube introduced what they call Super Chats, which is a creative way for a viewer to get their question answered by their favorite YouTuber while they’re doing a livestream by tipping them a few bucks. Basically, viewers can choose a dollar amount anywhere from $5 to $500, and their question or comment will be highlighted in color and pinned up at the top of the chat box in order to catch the streamer’s attention since comments in the chat can scroll by the screen so fast they’re impossible to read.

In May 2018 BuzzFeed targeted Super Chats, claiming they were fueling racism and began pushing for them to be disabled because someone spent $100 on a Super Chat to post a message that said “WHITE PRIDE WORLD WIDE!” during someone’s livestream. [848] A few months later the

Wall Street Journal (which is responsible for setting off the first Adpocalypse in April 2017) also started complaining about people making money from Super Chats in a report titled, “Hate Speech on Live ‘Super Chats’ Tests YouTube.” [849]

Just a few days later, KillStream, which was a free speech variety show that included debates about various issues, was completely banned from YouTube since the *Wall Street Journal* pointed out some of the viewers had been posting racist messages in their Super Chats. [850] A channel has no control over what viewers put in the comments or Super Chats, but now the media was blaming YouTubers themselves for what their fans (or trolls) were saying.

The Liberal Media Industrial Complex is targeting Super Chats because even fairly small channels can earn a significant amount of revenue from them, since fans tossing in $5 and $10 can add up pretty fast, whereas in order to earn the same amount of money from video views alone as they can make in a livestream could take hundreds of thousands or millions of views.

Because of the growing demonetization issues those of us on the politics and news side of YouTube have had to move to a more fan-funded business model instead of relying on monetized views. I now rely heavily on fans buying my books, shirts, and supporting me through Patreon and PayPal. By removing the financial incentives for people to make quality videos it was just another way for YouTube to discourage us from spending our time and energy producing news commentary and covering current events and has killed the dreams of one day becoming a full-time YouTuber for many.

BuzzFeed reported, “The result of the YouTube crackdown is that prominent right-wing YouTubers are scrambling to find alternatives, setting up shop on YouTube wannabes, or even building their own video apps. It's all in preparation for what they see as the inevitable day when YouTube gives them the boot or forbids them from making money on the platform by demonetizing all of their videos." [851]

MCNs Dropping Channels

Many YouTubers join what are called Multi-Channel Networks, or MCNs, which are companies that take a percentage of their revenue in exchange for offering consultations on how to improve the performance of videos, grow their audience, and even give them access to "brand deals" or sponsorships like talk radio shows have when the hosts plug various products and services.

So even if YouTube's automated system demonetizes a lot of videos, MCNs can get the channel some sponsors who are okay with their product being promoted there, and that way the YouTuber can still earn a living. But since being a member of an MCN can be a way around demonetization, YouTube decided to order MCNs to drop certain channels, and they had to, because they're under contract with YouTube, and if they didn't then YouTube wouldn't do business with the MCN at all. [852]

So first it was just certain videos getting demonetized, then entire channels (including the loss of Super Chats), and then YouTube went even further forcing MCNs to drop certain people so they couldn't acquire sponsorships for their videos.

One person who got kicked out of his network got an email reading, "The team here at Fullscreen is reaching out to let you know that your agreement with Fullscreen, Inc. has been terminated. Due to the nature of your uploads and because your uploads may potentially infringe on the rights of others or potentially violates applicable laws or regulations, including without limitation YouTube’s Terms of Service and/or YouTube’s Community Guidelines, we feel it is best that we part ways. Thank you for your understanding, and good luck with your YouTube channel.” [853]

A friend of mine, Luke Rudkowski, who runs the “We Are Change” YouTube channel was kicked out of his MCN, and when applying to others he was told that he would have to delete several of his videos they deemed inappropriate before they would accept him. The videos in question had been automatically demonetized, but didn’t violate YouTube’s terms of service so they were not deleted. Various MCNs thought they were problematic, however, and could get them in trouble with YouTube for including Luke’s channel in their network because he had posted certain content about various wars, military actions, and social unrest in parts of the world.

When a channel reaches 100,000 subscribers YouTube sends them a framed “Silver Play Button” plaque to celebrate their success, and if they reach a million subscribers, they get a gold plated one, but YouTube got upset that so many anti-social justice warrior, pro-free speech, conservative channels were reaching 100,000 subscribers, they started refusing to send out the plaques to certain channels once they reached the milestone because YouTube didn’t want to appear as if they were endorsing their views. [854]

Patreon

Patreon is a service that allows artists to fund their work by having fans sponsor them with varying amounts of monthly support. While the site was created in 2013, it really took off in April 2017 after the “Adpocalypse” when YouTube rolled out their new guidelines and screening mechanisms to demonetize videos they deem “non-advertiser friendly.”

Most YouTubers joined Patreon as a way to supplement the revenue they were losing from so many videos getting demonetized, and for most of them, especially small to moderate sized ones, Patreon is pretty much a standard part of being a YouTuber since earning money from ads has never been the same in the wake of the Adpocalypse.

But since many of them came to rely so heavily on Patreon for their revenue, this became a danger for conservatives who are now at risk of having their Patreon accounts shut down at any time for being "intolerant" of the liberal agenda by not supporting gay "marriage," or pointing out facts about illegal immigration and crime.

The first person to be banned from Patreon that made headlines because it was seen as a political decision was Lauren Southern (banned in July 2017), a Canadian YouTuber who became known for her criticism of multiculturalism and the mass immigration of people from the Middle East into Europe. She once even documented her visit to a doctor where she said she wanted to identify as a man and was given a doctor's note which she then took to Canada's "DMV" and got a driver's license legally declaring she was a "man" just to see how easy it was to get her gender legally changed. [855]

Lauren Southern's ban caused quite a stir online and Patreon's CEO Jack Conte appeared on Dave Rubin's "Rubin Report" YouTube channel to respond to the criticism. He said that Lauren wasn't banned because of what she had been saying about the "Islamization" of Europe, but that she had "put lives at risk" during a stunt she recorded involving refugee boats illegally bringing people across the Mediterranean Sea into Europe.

The CEO claimed they have a policy about what he called "manifest observable behavior," and if a creator does certain things, like commits crimes, then they will be banned, but, "The decision to remove a creator page has absolutely nothing to do with politics and ideology.” [856] He also claimed that Patreon’s policies about speech (not actions) only focused on what people said *on their Patreon page* , not on Twitter or anywhere else, and emphasized that Lauren Southern was banned for *actions* not words, but soon this would be proven to be another lie. [857]

December 2018, Sargon of Akkod (who had over 800,000 subscribers at the time) was banned for using a “racial slur” that someone at Patreon discovered he said in an interview months earlier. The context in which it was said was actually while he was denouncing the alt-right, saying they were acting like a bunch of “white niggers,” (trying to use their own insults against them) and so his entire Patreon account was disabled, causing him to lose thousands of dollars a month in income with no recourse. [858]

About a year after Lauren Southern was banned from Patreon, her friend and sometimes collaborator Brittany Pettibone was also banned for her support of Generation Identity, a right-wing identitarian movement in Europe working to preserve European culture from Islamization. [859] The two girls have been smeared as “white supremacists” by the liberal media because they celebrate Western European culture and oppose mass migration of Muslim refugees into Europe. Soph’s Patreon was shut down one day after YouTube deleted her channel for the same enigmatic excuse of “hate speech” against homosexuals. [860]

Patreon now has a policy against even making “negative generalizations of people based on race [and] sexual orientation,” so if you point out well-documented facts about crime in black communities or the HIV rate among gay men, that would be a violation of their terms of service because it’s seen as casting them in a negative light.

Imagine a bank not letting someone cash a check that was written to them because the bank didn’t like what the person was going to do with the money, or didn't like the kind of language the person uses when talking with their friends. That's exactly what Patreon has done here, and it's beyond Orwellian and is a dangerous precedent that's likely only going to follow with much worse actions in the near future.

Meanwhile, far-left individuals and groups are allowed on Patreon, including "Revolutionary Left Radio," a communist podcast which is run by an admitted "militant revolutionary Communist who wants to put every fascist in the world against the wall and violently expropriate the wealth and property of the owning class." [861] Before a Breitbart article was published highlighting violent Leftists using Patreon, the group's banner on their Twitter account featured masked militants holding guns. [862]

Another Communist account called the "Guillotine Podcast" had over 350 patrons (sponsors) donating monthly. The Patreon page itself said they are working to "inspire insurrection" and notes that they want to fire "massive .44 rounds at the heads of politicians and capitalists." [863]

Milo Yiannopoulos was banned by Patreon one day after he joined in December 2018. They released a statement saying, "Milo Yiannopoulos was removed from Patreon as we don't allow association with or supporting hate groups on Patreon." [864] He joined Patreon just days after widely circulated reports said he was $2 million dollars in debt from legal fees, employee salaries he hadn't been paying, and other expenses he racked up in his ascent to Internet infamy. So in a desperate attempt to try and raise money he joined Patreon, but was immediately denied access.

In some cases it's not necessarily Patreon that wants to ban someone, but Visa or MasterCard, who demands Patreon shut down people's accounts, or threatens to stop processing payments for Patreon all together which would completely put them out of business overnight. [865]

The Future of YouTube

For the first ten years of YouTube’s existence it was an even playing field where anyone could upload videos and if people watched them and shared them, their message could be seen by millions of people. The search results were fair, and if you were looking something up the videos you would find were relevant to what you had hoped to find. The only videos that would be deleted were things any reasonable person could agree on, like pornography, animal abuse, calls to violence, etc.

People found themselves having great careers when their passion unexpectedly opened the door to huge audiences who shared their views. But the corporate conglomerates didn’t realize how many people would use YouTube to counteract the mainstream media and nobody expected how popular conservative channels would become. So YouTube is scrambling to put the genie back in the bottle, and don’t really care how obvious their liberal bias is, or even how much money they lose doing it. Conservative content must be reigned in or stamped out at any cost.

In the early years of YouTube only a few carefully chosen channels were monetized, but in 2012 they opened up the “Partner Program” as it’s called, to anyone, allowing them to monetize their videos no matter how many (or few) subscribers or total views they had. You could start a channel, and immediately begin earning ad revenue from your videos if people watched them, but that has all changed.

Now they manually review every channel before it’s allowed in the Partner Program, so their moderators look through the videos and see what kind of content someone is producing, and if they don’t like it, none of the videos on the channel will ever be monetized no matter how popular they are.

Some wonder if YouTube is harming themselves financially with all these new restrictions and the mass demonetization crusade they've engaged in, but the fact is there are plenty of other "brand friendly" or pro-liberal agenda channels that they can get revenue from. After all, being a YouTuber is the number one dream job for most kids today. It's not being an astronaut, football player, or a movie star; it's literally being a YouTuber. [866]

They've also been moving away from the monetized view business model entirely. In 2017 they began offering television packages similar to a cable provider but through an Internet connection, calling it YouTubeTV. It started off in just five U.S. markets, but then in January 2019 they massively expanded to 195 markets, making their service available to 98 percent of U.S. households. [867]

They have also been slowly morphing into another Netflix by producing original content like the popular *Cobra Kai* series which is a spinoff from the 1980s *Karate Kid* movies and stars Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) and Johnny Lawrence (William Zabka). They rent a large library of popular movies and TV shows on-demand too, for just a few dollars per stream.

As one online media outlet put it, "The golden age of YouTube is over," and it will never be the same. [868] "The platform was built on the backs of independent creators, but now YouTube is abandoning them for more traditional content." [869] Countless videos once regularly discovered by curious minds are now lost in limbo. Voices opposing certain aspects of the liberal agenda have been systematically silenced. And Leftist propaganda has been artificially amplified to give the impression that their view is the correct one.

For those of us who have seen the changes made in recent years, as we look back on what YouTube once was, it's like returning to the location of your favorite dive bar to find that it's been bulldozed and replaced by a strip mall filled with a bunch of trendy stores you would never step foot in.

Author's Note: Once you finish this book, please take a moment to rate and review it on Amazon.com, or wherever you purchased it from if you're reading the e-book, to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them.

Almost all of the one-star reviews on Amazon for my last two books "The True Story of Fake News" and "Liberalism: Find a Cure" are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent hence me adding this note.

It's just more proof that liberals are losers and can't play fair, so if you could help me combat them once you're finished with this book since you actually bought and read it, I would appreciate it very much!

Thank you!

The Future of Fake News

Once "fake news" consisted primarily of made-up stories posted on cheap websites nobody had ever heard of, or websites with similar URLs to brand name outlets publishing completely fake articles hoping they'll go viral through social media and generate a bunch of ad revenue from all the clicks. I'm sure you're familiar with people making fake screenshots on Photoshop and posting them on social media claiming they came from news articles, text messages, DMs, or someone's "deleted" tweet, but we're far beyond those primitive forms of fake news and are approaching something that was once only found in science fiction films.

In Arnold Schwarzenegger’s 1987 film *The Running Man* , he was an innocent police helicopter pilot who was framed for the massacre of civilians looting a grocery store after an economic collapse, and with the help of some doctored video that aired on national television, the general public thought that he had been caught red handed murdering the people, when in fact he had refused orders to open fire on them. His face was also digitally placed onto the body of someone else at another point in the film to further sell the lie to the public.

While deceptively edited video has been a problem and can cast people in a false light and twist their statements or place them out of context, the video tricks we’re now facing are far more sophisticated. They can make almost anyone appear to do or say almost anything—just like what happened to Arnold Schwarzenegger in *The Running Man.*

These fake videos are called “deepfakes” named after the deep learning of artificial intelligence algorithms that are used to create them. This same technology had been used dating back to the 1990s in order to make it appear that Forrest Gump shook hands with President John F. Kennedy, and made John Wayne look like he was handing off a six pack of Coors Light to someone in a commercial even though he had been dead for over ten years. [870]

More recently it was used to digitally impose Paul Walker’s face onto another actor’s body to finish *Fast and the Furious* part 7 after he died in a car accident before the film was done being shot. [871] But unfortunately this technology isn’t just being used for entertainment anymore, and people are starting to realize that in the wrong hands it can pose a tremendous danger.

In April 2018 comedian Jordan Peele released a video showing Barack Obama appearing to warn that, “We’re entering an era in which our enemies can make it look like anyone is saying anything at any point at time — even if they would never say those things.” Obama went on to say, “So, for instance, they could have me say things like…President Trump is a total and complete dip shit.” [872]

The video then cut to a split screen showing Obama on one side and Jordan Peele on the other, revealing that he was doing the voice for Obama since he does a pretty good impression, and he was also using real-time face mimicking software in order to match his lips and facial expressions onto a digitally recreated version of Obama. It was a clever PSA to bring this kind of technology to people’s attention, since at the time most people hadn’t heard of deepfakes.

Two years earlier, in 2016, researchers at Stanford University posted a video demonstrating their “Face2Face Real-time Face Capture” technology, showing how by using their software and an ordinary webcam they could map a person’s facial expressions onto George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump. [873] This may have been the same software Jordan Peele used for his video.

The following year a different group of researchers from the University of Washington created another fake Obama video showing him saying things that he has actually said in the past, but the video was completely synthetic and showed him in a different setting while making the statements. They released a paper explaining how they were able to do it. [874] Deepfakes like this could easily change someone’s reaction to seeing or hearing something, giving a false impression as to how they feel about a certain event or issue; but this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Technology to manipulate video in such ways was once extremely expensive and required teams of people to produce, but today deepfakes can be made by amateurs on their home computers. SnapChat filters and Facebook messenger filters can now overlay different cartoon faces and other effects on someone's face in real time.

In January of 2018 someone took a video of actress Amy Adams singing "I Will Survive" and swapped her face for that of Nicholas Cage's.[875] Then in January 2019 someone made one by taking a segment of Jennifer Lawrence speaking with reporters backstage after the Golden Globe awards and put Steve Buscemi's face in place of hers. The video was so bizarre and realistic looking that it became the most viral deepfake video since Jordan Peele's Obama video, and introduced the term "deepfake" to a much wider audience.[876] A few days later Stephen Colbert had Steve Buscemi on as a guest and asked him if he'd seen the video. He joked that he had "never looked better," but underneath the laughs appeared to be a concern about what this technology was now capable of.[877]

In June 2019 a deepfake of Mark Zuckerberg was posted online showing him giving what looks to be an interview with CBS News, where he says, "Imagine this for a second: One man, with total control of billions of people's stolen data, all their secrets, their lives, their futures. I owe it all to Spectre. Spectre showed me that whoever controls the data, controls the future."[878]

It was a publicity stunt for a futuristic art and technology exhibit in the UK, but also was meant to serve as a warning for what problems technology may cause in the near future. CBS tried to get the video removed from Facebook because the deepfake was made from an interview Zuckerberg gave to CBS News and "violated their trademark."[879] Facebook wrestled with whether or not to remove the deepfake videos, but chose not to take any action, but their existence sparked a difficult conversation, which is what the makers intended.

The “Spectre” exhibit also commissioned the creation of a deepfake of Kim Kardashian which looked and sounded extremely realistic, unlike the Zuckerberg one which was an obvious fake. This one looked and sounded just like Kim Kardashian bragging about the power social media companies have over their users’ data, and concluded, “I feel really blessed because I genuinely love the process of manipulating people online for money.” [880]

Needless to say, she was not happy about it, and tried to have the video removed by filing copyright complaints against social media accounts that posted it. [881] But these kind of satire videos are the least of celebrities’ concerns.

Deepfake Porn

Just like many early Internet entrepreneurs were quick to use the emerging new technology to share porn— allowing people to access it from their home computer instead of having to go out and buy magazines or VHS tapes from some seedy adult video store—one of the early uses of deepfake technology was to make fake porn videos depicting famous celebrities like Gal Gadot (*Wonder Woman*), Daisy Ridley (*Star Wars*), and Scarlett Johansson (*The Horse Whisperer*).

Celebrity deepfake porn videos were soon banned by PornHub [882] and Reddit where users were posting clips they had made of their favorite actresses. [883] While most of the videos weren’t being passed off as actual sex tapes, their creation obviously caused concern for those actresses whose likeness is now appearing in realistic-looking porn videos. [884]

Another concern is that since the software to create such fakes is widely available online, people could make fake sex tapes of someone in attempts to extort money from them, threatening to post the fakes online if they don’t pay up. Or scorned ex-lovers or those rejected by women could create deepfakes and post them online in order to “get back” at them. [885]

Information Warfare

When the Bush administration was planning for the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the CIA reportedly came up with the idea to create a fake video appearing to be Saddam Hussein having sex with a teenage boy. “It would look like it was taken by a hidden camera. Very grainy, like it was a secret videotaping of a sex session,” a CIA official later admitted to the *Washington Post* . [886]

The CIA also reportedly discussed making a fake video appearing as if Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants were sitting around a campfire drinking alcohol and talking about their “conquests with boys” as well, but another former CIA official with knowledge of the plan said, “Saddam playing with boys would have no resonance in the Middle East — nobody cares. Trying to mount such a campaign would show a total misunderstanding of the target. We always mistake our own taboos as universal when, in fact, they are just our taboos.” [887]

He was referring to the practice of “bacha bazi” which is an Afghani term meaning “boy play” that refers to sexual relationships between older men and young boys who are from very poor families or orphans and used as sex slaves by wealthy and powerful Afghanis. [888] U.S. soldiers were reportedly told to ignore such abuse because it is part of the culture in regions of the Middle East. [889] This abomination is a whole other issue, but the point is the CIA actually proposed making a deepfake of Saddam Hussein as a pedophile thinking it would incite people to rise up and overthrow him, because if such a video were real, people in a civilized culture would do just that.

Fake Photos

Nvidia, a video graphics card company, has created an AI so powerful that it can automatically change the weather in video footage, making a clip of a car driving down a road on a sunny day appear as if it was actually shot in the middle of winter with a few inches of snow on the ground and the leaves missing from the trees. [890] The same technology can take photos of cats or dogs and change them to make them look like a different breed, and can change people's facial expressions from happy to sad, or anything in between. [891]

Nvidia's AI can even generate realistic pictures of people who don't actually exist by taking features from actual photos and combining elements of them together into a composite that is almost impossible to tell that it's fake. [892] The website ThisPersonDoesNotExist.com uses this technology to display a different fake photo every time you visit it, most of them looking like HD photos of ordinary people.

AI can now create 3D models of people just from a few photographs, and while it may be fun to input a character in your favorite video game that looks just like you, the capacity for nefarious abuses of this technology are vast.

Fake Audio

In November 2016, Adobe (the creator of Photoshop) demonstrated what they called Adobe Voco, or Photoshop-for-voices, which can generate realistic sounding audio, making it sound like someone is saying something that they never actually said. The software works by inputing samples of someone's voice, and then can create fake audio files in that same voice saying whatever is typed onto the screen. [893]

Dr. Eddy Borges Rey, a professor at the University of Stirling, said, "It seems that Adobe's programmers were swept along with the excitement of creating something as innovative as a voice manipulator, and ignored the ethical dilemmas brought up by its potential misuse." [894]

He continues, "Inadvertently, in its quest to create software to manipulate digital media, Adobe has [already] drastically changed the way we engage with evidential material such as photographs. This makes it hard for lawyers, journalists, and other professionals who use digital media as evidence." [895] Google has created similar software called WaveNet that generates realistic sounding human speech by modeling samples of people actually talking. [896]

In May 2019 a group of Machine Learning Engineers released an audio clip they created using their RealTalk technology which sounded like podcaster Joe Rogan talking about investing in a new hockey team made up of chimpanzees. [897] It wasn't perfect, but if you didn't know that it was fake before you heard it, you may be fooled into thinking that it's real. The researchers admitted, "the societal implications for technologies like speech synthesis are massive. And the implications will affect everyone." [898]

"Right now, technical expertise, ingenuity, computing power and data are required to make models like RealTalk perform well. So not just anyone can go out and do it. But in the next few years (or even sooner), we'll see the technology advance to the point where only a few seconds of audio are needed to create a life-like replica of anyone's voice on the planet. It's pretty f*cking scary," the creators wrote on their blog. [899]

They went on to list some of the possible abuses this technology may be used for, “if the technology got into the wrong hands.” These include, “Spam callers impersonating your mother or spouse to obtain personal information. Impersonating someone for the purposes of bullying or harassment. Gaining entrance to high security clearance areas by impersonating a government official,” and “An ‘audio deepfake’ of a politician being used to manipulate election results or cause a social uprising.” [900]

They raise some great points. What’s to stop people from creating deepfakes of politicians, CEOs of major corporations, or popular YouTubers, and making them appear as if they’re saying racist, hateful, or violent things, and claiming they got it from a coworker or a “friend” who secretly recorded it, or that the clip was from an old YouTube video once uploaded to someone’s channel that they later deleted?

National Security Concerns

In July 2017 researchers at Harvard, who were backed by the U.S. Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA), published a report titled *Artificial Intelligence and National Security* where they detailed the growing risk of deepfake forgeries, saying, “The existence of widespread AI forgery capabilities will erode social trust, as previously reliable evidence becomes highly uncertain,” and details some of the horrific possibilities that are right around the corner. [901]

The report then quotes part of an article one of the researchers wrote for *Wired* magazine about these dangers, saying, “Today, when people see a video of a politician taking a bribe, a soldier perpetrating a war crime, or a celebrity starring in a sex tape, viewers can safely assume that the depicted events have actually occurred, provided, of course, that the video is of a certain quality and not obviously edited. But that world of truth—where seeing is believing—is about to be upended by artificial intelligence technologies." [902]

The article continues, "When tools for producing fake video perform at higher quality than today's CGI and are simultaneously available to untrained amateurs, these forgeries might comprise a large part of the information ecosystem." [903]

The *Artificial Intelligence and National Security* report goes on to warn that, "A future where fakes are cheap, widely available, and indistinguishable from reality would reshape the relationship of individuals to truth and evidence. This will have profound implications for domains across journalism, government communications, testimony in criminal justice, and of course national security…In the future, people will be constantly confronted with realistic-looking fakes." [904]

It concludes that, "We will struggle to know what to trust. Using cryptography and secure communication channels, it may still be possible to, in some circumstances, prove the authenticity of evidence. But, the 'seeing is believing' aspect of evidence that dominates today—one where the human eye or ear is almost always good enough—will be compromised." [905]

Elon Musk is funding a non-profit organization called OpenAI which is trying to ensure that the creation of artificial intelligence will be "safe," but they created an AI tool so powerful they won't release it to the public out of concern that it could create such realistic forgeries and fake news articles that they would be difficult to distinguish from real ones. "Due to our concerns about malicious applications of the technology, we are not releasing the trained model," the organization wrote on their blog. [906]

Others are equally concerned. Sean Gourley, who is the founder and CEO of a company called Primer, which data mines social media posts for U.S. intelligence agencies to track issues of concern and possible threats, warns, "The automation of the generation of fake news is going to make it very effective." [907]

Nothing may be safe from the weaponization of artificial intelligence. A group of researchers at the University of Chicago developed an AI system in 2017 that could write fake Yelp reviews and even though sites like Yelp and Amazon have machine learning algorithms designed to detect fake reviews written by trolls or bots, when they unleashed their Yelp review writer on the site their safeguards had a hard time detecting the fake reviews. [908]

Ben Zhoa, one of researchers who worked on the project, said, "We have validated the danger of someone using AI to create fake accounts that are good enough to fool current countermeasures," and warned, "more powerful hardware and larger data for training means that future AI models will be able to capture all these properties and be truly indistinguishable from human-authored content." [909]

This makes the forged documents purported to be George W. Bush's service record in the National Guard or the infamous "Steele Trump-Russia Dossier" created by Fusion GPS seem like child's play. *The New York Observer* reported that there are already multiple fake "Trump sex tapes" circulating among those working in intelligence agencies and suggested that they were created in order to "muddy the waters" in the event that a "real" Trump sex tape surfaces, which some believe was made by the Kremlin when Trump visited Russia in 2013 for the Miss Universe Pageant, for what the KGB calls "kompromat" or compromising material. [910]

Trump has insisted that even before his trip to Russia he was well aware of hidden cameras in hotel rooms there and the government's attempt to gain blackmail material on high profile individuals like himself, and made sure not to get ensnared in their trap. [911] His bodyguard testified that prior to the trip he and Trump had discussed that the Russians used such tactics and knew not to take the bait. [912]

So it's highly unlikely that a real Trump sex tape exists, but it is likely that Deep State operatives within our own CIA may have manufactured such fakes for the same reason they floated the idea of doing such a thing to Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden — to discredit Trump and use it as propaganda to fan the flames of an insurgency hoping to bring him down.

As Winston Churchill said, "A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on." [913] Nobody is safe from being smeared by deepfakes, whether they're an ordinary person who has been targeted by a jealous ex-lover, a disgruntled coworker or classmate, or whether they are the President of the United States whose political opponents or a foreign adversary want to bring down.

The other side of the coin is that if and when actual damning footage is shot of someone doing or saying something illegal or morally reprehensible, they could easily just claim the footage is fake. Perhaps half of the people would believe them, having reasonable doubt since the technology exists to actually fake it and people may have a motive to do it. We're clearly not in Kansas anymore and only time will tell just how pervasive and damaging deepfakes will become.

Conclusion

We're in the middle of a war — an information war. It's being waged by tyrannical billion dollar tech companies against those of us who use their products and services in ways they hadn't intended or imagined. They sold us tools thinking they were toys, but we saw the potential this new technology had to enable us to defend the Republic and spread our message across the country with a few clicks of a keyboard or taps on a touchscreen. In the marketplace of ideas, we were winning; so our opponents started cheating, and despite the metaphors this is not a game, this is our life.

They don't want to just silence us online, they want to repeal the First Amendment and arrest us for "hate speech" for disagreeing with them as they aim to overthrow the United States government and replace it with a Communist technocratic super-state that's a crossbreed between the regimes in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* .

Syndicated columnist Joseph Sobran Jr. once stated, "Liberalism is really piecemeal socialism, and socialism always attacks three basic social institutions: religion, the family, and private property. Religion, because it offers a rival authority to the state; the family, because it means a rival loyalty to the state; and property, because it means material independence of the state."[914]

They want to turn Boy Scouts into child drag queens, and are encouraging people to buy sex bots instead of engagement rings. They want people to denounce God and view Christians as the enemy, while the hordes of lazy and entitled degenerates live off the labor of those who get up and go to work every morning. Most people are too distracted to see what's actually happening and are slowly becoming part of the problem.

They know more about the history of their favorite football team than they do of their own country. They're more familiar with the names and statistics of the players than they are of the people who are in charge of running the government. Sports entertainment and the latest talent shows on TV are mostly modern day bread and circus events that distract attention and divert energy from things that really matter. Our culture, our economy, and our country is at stake.

If America falls, it will never be restored. It will be relegated to the history books like the Roman Empire and other great civilizations that have collapsed. To prevent our planned destruction it's going to take hard work, vigorous study, and unwavering dedication. You don't get physically fit by going to the gym once a year. Or once a month, or even once a week! You have to go on a regular basis, and keep going! Isn't the health of our society just as important as our own physical health?

Pay close attention to what you do with your time, your talent, and your money. Get involved in your local community. Get on the school board, or city council, or at least show up once in a while to give them a piece of your mind. Maintain regular face-to-face interactions with your friends and family so you don't get trapped in the downward spiral of living your life through a screen.

Do a regular digital detox on the weekends and holidays, and give yourself time for introspection by stepping away from the endless news cycle and social media feeds to get a bigger perspective of what's going on and what's important. Maybe we have been asleep at the wheel. Maybe we took the freedoms and prosperity of living in America for granted while the enemy quietly schemed behind our backs. Well not any more!

It's time to wake up. It's time to get focused on the long-term goals of what we need to do in order to preserve the freedom of speech, family values, Christian traditions, and our economic security. I hope this book has helped you become more media literate so you can see how the mechanisms of information distribution function in our modern age and what their effects are.

If you found this book valuable in your journey please rate it and write a brief review on Amazon or whatever ebook store you downloaded it from, if that's where you bought it, and tell your friends and family to checkout this book since I don't have a major publisher backing me (I self-published this) or their marketing team to promote it. I only have my social media accounts, and you. But that's all I need. And that's is exactly why they are so scared of us!

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-Inside the Illuminati
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Insights on Mark Dice's The Bohemian Grove

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Insights from Chapter 1

#1

The Bohemian Club is a club for artists, musicians, and writers that was established in San Francisco in 1872. It soon took a more rural turn, and by the early 1880s, the Bohemian Club was holding weekend campouts in the vast redwood forests around Sonoma County, California.

#2

The 2013 records show that the club took in $10,168,330 in revenue that year. They paid out $3,007,779 in salaries to the staff, and other expenses were listed at $2,971,656, which went to pay for the food, booze, insurance, electricity, building maintenance, etc. Their total expenses for the year were $5,997,272.

#3

The Bohemian Club, a club that hosts the Bohemian Grove, was sued for discrimination in 1978 by the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. The court ruled in favor of the club in 1981, but the feminists did not give up and continued to pursue the case.

#4

The Bohemian Grove, along with men's country clubs, are able to turn down people of the opposite sex for membership without being sued for discrimination because these clubs are considered private, not public.

Insights from Chapter 2

#1

The Bohemian Grove's mascot is an owl, or more specifically, the Owl of Minerva, who is the Goddess of wisdom. The Dictionary of Symbols says, In the Egyptian system of hieroglyphs, the owl symbolizes death, night, cold and passivity. It also pertains to the realm of the dead sun, that is, of the sun which has set below the horizon and which is crossing the lake or sea of darkness.

#2

A patron saint is someone who embodies a group's philosophies or goals, and for the Bohemian Grove this is Saint John of Nepomuk. He was a priest who received the confessionals of the queen of Bohemia in the 1300s, and when pressured by the king to reveal her confessions, he refused and was then killed by the king.

#3

The Bohemian Grove's motto is Weaving spiders come not here, which is said to mean that members and guests are not supposed to conduct business inside the Grove.

#4

The big secret of the Illuminati is that they believe that Satan is not bad, but came to earth to free mankind from enslavement by the Creator. They believe that God was a tyrant who did not want humans to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

#5

The ruling class wants to evolve into Gods, and they believe that through the ancient secret and the emerging science of Transhumanism, they will achieve this.

Insights from Chapter 3

#1

Inside the Bohemian Grove, there are 124 different camps, each managed by a camp captain. Each camp has its own unique name and consists of anywhere from a dozen to one hundred men who work in the same field to provide networking opportunities.

#2

The Bohemian Club and the Bohemian Grove are two of the most exclusive and influential clubs in the world. They have been known to select politicians and other powerful people for their favor.

Insights from Chapter 4

#1

The Bilderberg Group, which has been meeting annually for the past sixty years, is a human sacrifice ritual where an effigy called Care is burned on an altar. The men chant No fire, no fire, no fire. Let it be kindled in the world where Care is nourished on the hates of men, and drive him from this Grove.

#2

The Bohemian Grove, a secretive San Francisco club, is where the ceremony depicted in the photos takes place. It’s one thing to read about the ceremony, or see the photos, but the video leaves you with your head shaking. It seems that some kind of bizarre secret ritual takes place there.

#3

In 2004, National Geographic magazine published a photo taken during a Cremation of Care ritual in 1915. The caption said, To purge himself of worldly concerns, a member of the elite Bohemian Club participated in a 1915 Cremation of Care ceremony.

#4

The Bible describes Molech sacrifices in detail, and explicitly condemns them as evil. It states that anyone from the Israelites or the foreigners who live in Israel who gives one of his children to Molech must be put to death.

#5

The symphonic poem The Isle of the Dead by Russian composer Sergie Vasilyevich Rachmaninoff tells the tale of a ghostly ferryman who transports the dead in his small rowboat, as it moves slowly across the calm dark water. The symphony was inspired by Swiss artist Arnold Böcklin’s famous Isle of the Dead painting.

#6

Presidential advisor David Gergen resigned from the Bohemian Club, three days after saying he would not run around naked at its annual Bohemian Grove encampment, and insisting he would not quit. He also resigned from the Bilderberg Group, the Council on Foreign Relations, and nearly all organizations dedicated to setting up a New World Order.

#7

The anchor for the CBS Evening News from 1962 to 1981, Walter Cronkite, is believed to have recorded the voice for the Owl Shrine that is played over the loudspeakers during part of the Cremation of Care.

Insights from Chapter 5

#1

The Bohemian Grove is a two-week-long annual gathering of the most powerful men in the world. The speakers mainly discuss political, economic, and business trends, and occasionally include information that is not publicly disclosed.

#2

The Bohemian Grove is a camp that members of the elite go to every summer. It is rumored that Bill O'Reilly and Glenn Beck were there as guests or possibly speakers in 2013 because they were both missing from their usual schedules at some point in time.

#3

The camp had four sessions: Jeffrey Toobin on the Supreme Court, David Martin on the Obama administration, Michail Armacost on China, and Arthur Laffer on economics.

#4

The summit was held on July 14-21, 2018. The topics of the talks were as follows: Friday, July 14: Global Financial Warriors by John Taylor, professor of economics at Stanford University. Monday, July 17: Untold Tales from the Cold War by Tom Reed, former Secretary of the Air Force.

#5

The Grove hosts many talks, but for the most part, they keep them secret. The only thing that is announced ahead of time is the speaker.

#6

The program was hosted by Charles Elachi, director of the Jet Propulsion Lab at the California Institute of Technology. The topics were: exploring Mars and searching for life in the universe, the landscape of American politics, the elections and their aftermath, state building, and the unrealized potential of the technological revolution.

#7

The festival had a wide variety of speakers and topics, from Yurek Martin, senior writer at the Financial Times of London, to Donald Rumsfeld, member of Nixon cabinet and future Secretary of Defense in the George W. Bush administration.

Insights from Chapter 6

#1

In 1980, a local resident named Mary Moore founded the Bohemian Grove Action Network with the purpose of infiltrating the Grove by having people obtain summer jobs there or by convincing those who already worked there to steal membership lists, program guides, and other information.

#2

In July of 2000, radio talk show host Alex Jones infiltrated the Bohemian Grove and videotaped the Cremation of Care ritual. He cut a hole in the side of a shoulder bag and mounted a camcorder inside, and sat in the bleachers with the rest of the approximately 1500 members and guests. He was accompanied by his then-producer Mike Hanson.

#3

The Bohemian Grove, a redwood grove in Sonoma County north of San Francisco, is where the wealthy and well-placed gather every summer to socialize, lecture, and conduct rituals away from public scrutiny.

#4

In January 2002, a 37-year-old man named Richard McCaslin snuck into the Grove wearing a superhero outfit, a bulletproof vest, and armed with a fully loaded MK-1 rifle-shotgun. He was there to expose the ritualistic human sacrifices happening there.

#5

In 2005, Chris Jones, a man in his late thirties, got a job at the Bohemian Grove to gather photos and video evidence of what happens inside. He was able to get photos of some of the camps and elaborate clubhouses, as well as some close-up pictures of the site of the Cremation of Care ritual.

#6

The Bohemian Club, a secret society that’s been operating in California since the United States was founded, has been accused of cutting down some trees to prevent forest fires. However, this isn’t actually illegal.

#7

Guccifer, an anti-Illuminati hacker, accessed the emails of various Clinton, Bush, and Obama administration officials, including George W. Bush’s sister’s email where he found family photos.

Insights from Chapter 7

#1

The Bohemian Grove, which is a resort and campground located near San Francisco, is known for its homosexual activities. In 1989, reporter Philip Weiss snuck into the Grove and wrote a lengthy article about the rampant homosexuality there.

#2

It has been rumored that the Mitchell Brothers O'Farrell Theatre in San Francisco's Tenderloin district has been a source of strippers and high-class call girls used by the Bohemians.

Insights from Chapter 8

#1

The Bohemian Grove, which is a club for the world’s richest and most powerful men, is also said to have performed a human sacrifice. These rumors involve claims of horrific sadistic acts that involve the sexual abuse of children and the production of snuff films.

#2

Around this same time, the Washington Times ran a front page story detailing a gay prostitution ring operating in Washington D. C. that provided teen call-boys to some very powerful and well-connected men. The article quietly went away, and has been forgotten by most Americans.

#3

The Guardian reported, Two newspaper executives have told the Observer that their publications were issued with D-notices – warnings not to publish intelligence that might damage national security – when they sought to report on allegations of a powerful group of men engaging in child sex abuse in 1984.

#4

The world’s lust for realistic and brutal horror movies shows that millions of people find excitement in watching people getting tortured and murdered. It's not hard to believe that some people would pay money to witness an actual murder in person.

#5

Hunter S. Thompson, a journalist known for his work with the Hells Angels, was also connected to the Bohemian Grove, where he allegedly propositioned a man to shoot a snuff film involving the murder of a child.

#6

Hunter S. Thompson's former editorial assistant, Nickole Brown, posted an article online in 2005 recounting some of the bizarre behavior she had witnessed while working for him. She said he had thrown her out of the house for refusing to watch a snuff film.

#7

Sex magic is the belief and practice of generating sexual energy and directing it to shape the fabric of reality. It is similar to the Law of Attraction, but with sex. The Knights Templars, who learned about sex magic from the Tantrics of India, practiced it.

#8

Sex magic is not just a myth, and it is not just a fringe element of the occult. It is real, and it is disgusting. It involves taking a woman's menstrual blood and a man's semen, and then mixing them together and baking the fluids into cookies or a cake. Then you eat it.

#9

The author Cathy O'Brien, who wrote a book about her experiences with the Illuminati, claims that the Bohemian Grove has a Necrophilia theme room. In reality, only a small fraction of the members could possibly be so evil as to enjoy such things and no informants, guests, members or employees have ever mentioned such a thing.

#10

O’Brien claims that some of her abusers were George H. W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Dick Cheney, and Hillary Clinton, who she said performed oral sex on her on front of Bill. Yet, her CIA handlers decided to let her live to tell about it.

Insights from Chapter 9

#1

I used to try and get on the radio to question the hosts about Bohemian Grove, but every time I would get through to the call screener, they would hang up on me immediately as soon as I told them I had a question about Bohemian Grove.

#2

Bill O’Reilly, the host of the radio show, would take call after call on any topic. He would even hang up on people if their questions were off topic. I could understand if my question was irrelevant, but this was the segment where O’Reilly said, You can ask me whatever you want.

#3

Hannity: You are a kook. You are a nut. You are absolutely out of your mind insane. I’ve never been to the Bohemian Grove, sir. It’s just a great conspiracy.

#4

The Bohemian Grove is a club composed of elitist politicians and journalists who conduct secret meetings to take over the world. They run around naked, and no women are allowed.

#5

On the Savage Nation, I asked Savage about the Bohemian Grove and George W. Bush's and Bush 41's membership. He was skeptical at first, but did listen to me. When I told him that senator John DeCamp alleged that there were mock funerals there, he said, Well, that's what everyone goes to the Bohemian Grove for.

#6

I once called Glenn Beck and asked him about the book The Resistance Manifesto. He replied by saying that I might have just gotten that entire show taken off the air because of me. I was promptly taken off the air.

#7

I was on the phone with Fox News host Tucker Colmes, who was asked about the Bohemian Grove and the Republican elite's annual mock human sacrifice. He said he didn't know anything about it, and quickly dropped the call.

#8

The Friday night free for all is where you set the agenda, you run the show, and you determine what we talk about. We cannot keep callers off the air as much as we would like to in some cases.

#9

I have continued to try to get onto the show as a guest. You are a phony and a fraud, and I am not going to put you on the air as a guest. It is not going to happen. That's that guy, anyway.

Insights from Chapter 10

#1

The Belizean Grove, a female-only retreat, was started in 2001 by Susan Stautberg, the president of PartnerCom Corporation, who gathered around 100 influential women to fly down to Belize and meet up every year for three days of balanced fun and bonding.

#2

The Belizean Grove is a all-female club that was founded in 2009 after Sonia Sotomayor was nominated for a position on the Supreme Court by President Barack Obama. It has been revealed that Republicans dug up dirt on Sotomayor and found that she was a member of this club, which supposedly discriminates against men.

Insights from Chapter 11

#1

The film Eyes Wide Shut is based on real events, and it has been suggested that the Bohemian Grove or the Illuminati sex orgies occur at the private parties of the ruling elite. The Killing Kittens club has popped up in recent years to hold Eyes Wide Shut themed parties in rented mansions.

#2

The world of politics and Hollywood is full of sex offenders and deviants, who regularly host secret orgies. It shouldn't be much of a surprise that Eyes Wide Shut-type parties occur.

#3

South Park is a show that makes fun of pop culture figures, politicians, and religious beliefs. It is often distasteful and crude, but it is still funny. The use of the disclaimer This is what Mormons/ Scientologists believe was included in an episode about the Super Adventure Club, an organization of pedophiles who travel around the world to have sex with young boys.

#4

The man who did the voice for Mr. Burns on The Simpsons, Harry Shearer, wrote and directed a little known film that was a spoof on the Bohemian Grove. Shearer labeled the members of Bohemian Grove white Christians, and didn't believe their activities were secret.

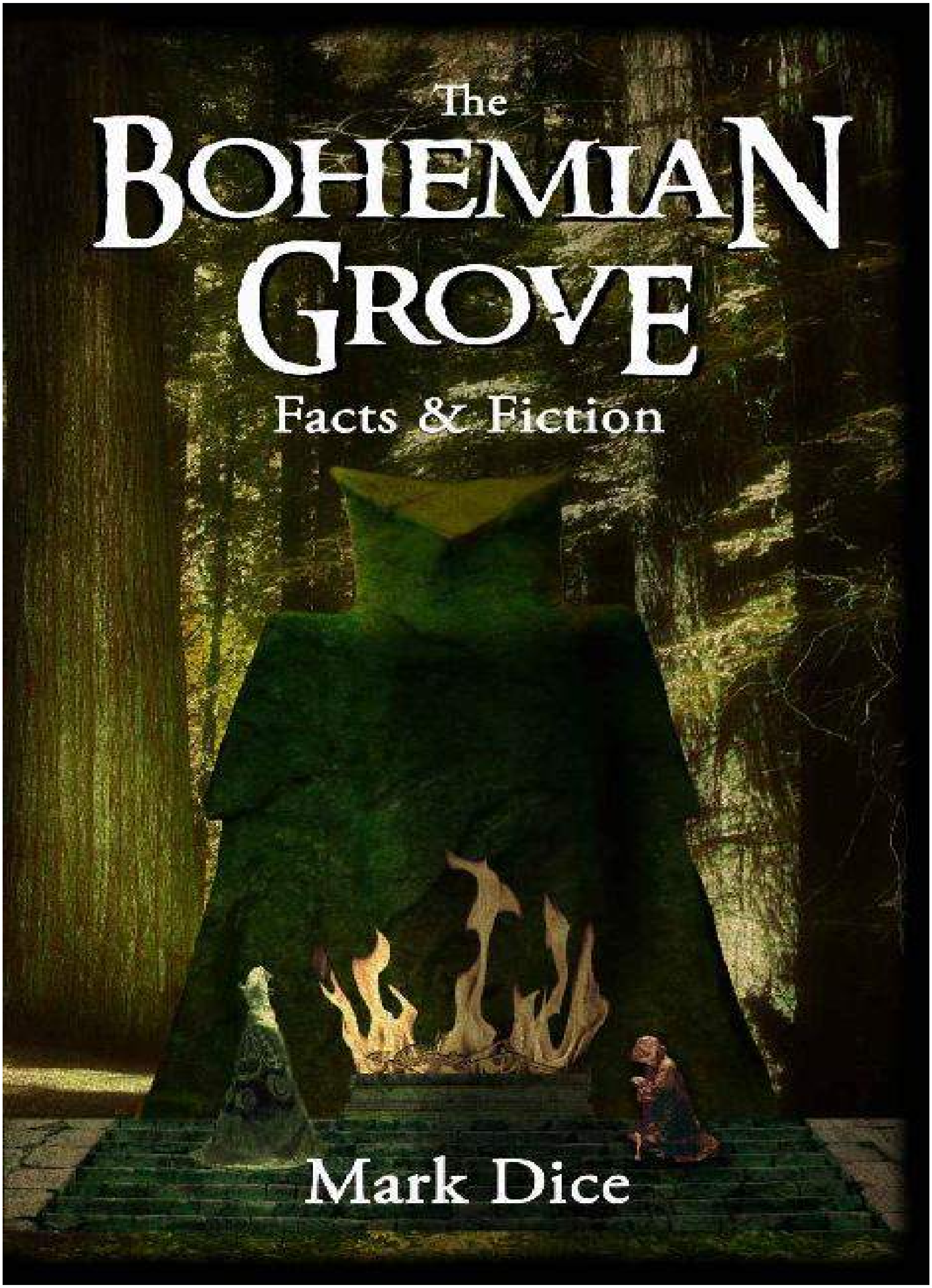
#5

Shearer is just one example of how many Hollywood actors are extremely wealthy. He was paid $400,000 per episode in 2008, but had to take a pay cut in 2013 to lower production costs of the show or else Fox was going to cancel it.

#6

The Turner Broadcasting Network, which owns the Cartoon Network, airs cartoons aimed at children. But after primetime, when most children are supposed to be in bed, the network changes its format to what they call Adult Swim and airs raunchy cartoons supposedly aimed at adults.

End of Insights. Thank you for reading.



The BOHEMIAN GROVE

Facts & Fiction

Mark Dice

Introduction

It sounds like the plot of a cheesy horror film; a group of the world's most powerful men gather in a secluded forest once a year where they dress in black robes and perform a strange ceremony looking like a human sacrifice as they discuss their plans for world domination—but in this case it's not the story in some movie, it's the story of the Bohemian Grove.

Many people interested in "conspiracy theories" about the Illuminati and the New World Order have heard of the Bohemian Grove and probably know a few things about it, and if you're one of these people, I promise this book will be packed with information and little-known details that few people have ever heard. It's a story so bizarre, that many simply can't believe it.

You are about to learn the hidden history, the strange rituals, and the secrets of one of the world's most exclusive clubs. I will reveal the identity of their most powerful members and details of the over 100 different subgroups within and what world-changing ideas and events the Bohemian Grove has given birth to. I'll cover what they call Lakeside Talks which are off the record speeches given by elite politicians and business titans to members in order to give them inside information about the speakers' area of expertise. I will reveal the secret meaning of their motto, "weaving spiders come not here," and the name of their patron saint and what he symbolizes. I'll cover early investigations into the club and the leaks of their membership lists, maps, and year books; I will even reveal their tax returns and financial statements, and show you how we know what we know about this mysterious millionaires men's retreat.

I will analyze the allegations of prostitutes servicing the members, and the gay orgies that are rumored to occur inside. I'll also take a close look at the horrific allegations of murders and snuff films some say have occurred inside the forest at the hands of members; and you'll see why major talk radio hosts and the mainstream media are afraid to acknowledge the place even exists.

The Bohemian Grove is a 2700-acre redwood forest in northern California located about an hour north of San Francisco in a small town named Monte Rio. It is owned by the Bohemian Club, which is headquartered in San Francisco, and their forest—or "the Grove," as it is called—serves as a vacation spot for around 1000 of the world's most wealthy and powerful men who meet there every summer in the middle of July for a "men's retreat."

Every summer it's common for both boys and girls to have retreats in the form of basketball camp or cheerleading camp, where the kids spend a week or so polishing their skills and going through various drills to improve their game. Of course, many Christian churches have annual men's and women's retreats which facilitate friendship and camaraderie among their church members, and the events also serve to further the attendees' education on spiritual matters.

So, similarly, the Superclass, the Establishment, the Ruling Elite, the Illuminati—whatever name you want to call them—have their retreat as well, which serves as a place to rub elbows with other industry leaders and powerful politicians in a private, relaxed, and informal environment.

The annual mid-summer encampment at the Bohemian Grove has been called the "greatest men's party on earth" by members, who include many presidents, military leaders, famous journalists, and top businessmen who enjoy getting away from their wives and the public eye for a bit to let loose and mingle with other like-minded individuals. The gathering lasts for two weeks from mid-July to the end of the month, with some men coming for a weekend, and others staying for an entire week or longer. The men call each other Bohos or Grovers, and members often bring guests with them, but they must be prescreened and approved beforehand by the club.

The term *Bohemian* refers to people who live non-traditional lifestyles and people who are adventurers, or vagabonds. Ever since it was started, the club's logo has been an owl because it symbolizes wisdom since it can "see in the dark." This is because the elite members view themselves as wise and enlightened beings. A forty-foot tall concrete "owl" shrine was constructed inside the Bohemian forest, and every year since 1929 has been the site of the annual Cremation of Care ceremony, one of the strangest aspects of this elite retreat. This is the ritual which they perform each year to kick off their two week long "encampment."

The Cremation of Care consists of an elaborate production involving live music and fireworks—and a human sacrifice reenactment where a life-size effigy of a person is placed on an altar at the base of the giant owl shrine and then burned or "sacrificed." Critics claim the ritual is a toned down and theatrical version of an ancient human sacrifice to Canaanite Gods or the Devil.

It sounds so bizarre, many people chalk it up to an urban legend or an Internet conspiracy theory, but I'll prove to you in this book that such a thing does happen, and the "rumors" are in fact true. In the 1980s, and 90s as word slowly spread about this place, occasionally a reporter tried to sneak inside the now highly guarded compound, but (at least at the time I'm writing this in mid-2015) little to nothing has been reported in the mainstream media about this fascinating (and frightening) forest.

In the past, membership lists and program guides would sometimes get stolen and made public by employees, and in the 1980s a group called the Bohemian Grove Action Network dedicated themselves to doing just that. The membership list, one of which I personally have in my possession thanks to a former employee, has included every Republican U.S. President since 1923, many cabinet officials, directors and CEO's of large corporations and major financial institutions, and top military brass.

Some of these names include George W. Bush, George H. W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Colin Powell, Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon, Dwight

Eisenhower, Alan Greenspan, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and many other mainly Republican members and guests. No current president attends because their schedule and whereabouts is too closely watched, but before and after they are in office they can be found in the Grove.

Some consider the Bohemian Grove to be like a Skull & Bones club for adults, and see the Cremation of Care ceremony as being similar to the satanic induction ritual that “Bonesmen” are put through in college, only with a few extra zeroes added to the budget. As you may be aware, the Skull & Bones “fraternity” located at Yale University recruits fifteen new seniors each spring to join their club and then grooms them for a possible high-level position in the Eastern Establishment once they graduate. Their initiation rituals are blatantly satanic and involve a simulated human sacrifice as well.[1]

Many people dismiss Skull & Bones as just a “fraternity” for rich kids, but it is far from a fraternity. In reality it is a senior society, meaning people don’t become a member until their senior year, and the organization is designed as an entryway to America’s Establishment and geared for the students’ post-graduate life. They hold meetings every Thursday and Sunday night during the school year to indoctrinate the new members with the philosophies and tactics of the ruling class—where, by the way, no alcohol is drank, or even allowed inside their clubhouse.[2]

What kind of a college “fraternity” doesn’t allow alcohol in their clubhouse? One that is very serious about their goals of gaining and maintaining power. If you take the time to study Skull & Bones, you will see beyond a shadow of a doubt, that they are far from a “fraternity,” and are in fact a deadly serious secret society with direct connections to the Bavarian Illuminati in Germany which was started by Adam Weishaupt.

So the “kids” in Skull & Bones conduct a satanic human sacrifice reenactment ritual in college, but then instead of outgrowing this juvenile frat boy “phase,” they become involved in even more elaborate and strange rituals when they are well established adults and old men at the Bohemian Grove!

Is this where the secret rulers of the world meet to plot the course of planet earth? Is the mainstream media part of a cover-up to blackout any mention of the club? What is the evidence for the allegations made about the Grove? Is this annual gathering the Bilderberg Group's summer camp? Are they really performing satanic rituals or human sacrifices? You are about to learn the answers to these questions and more, and we take a close look into *The Bohemian Grove: Facts & Fiction*.

History of the Grove

The Bohemian Club was started in San Francisco in 1872 by artists, musicians, and writers as an excuse for late-night drinking for those who supported Bohemianism which had become quite trendy in the late 19th and early 20th century. These Bohemians celebrated hedonism and overindulgence, and reveled in rebelling against the conservative conventions of the culture. Soon after its formation, businessmen and those with money joined the party and were called “men of use” by the original artistic founders, who called themselves “men of talent.”[3] The artists enjoyed having the wealthy newcomers help foot the bill for their increasingly elaborate parties.

What originally began in their San Francisco clubhouse soon took a more rural turn. By the early 1880s, the Bohemian Club was holding weekend campouts during the summer in the vast redwood forests around Sonoma County, California. In 1893 they began renting the location now known as the Bohemian Grove from the Sonoma Lumber Company and later purchased 160-acres of the forest in 1901, later expanding their ownership to the current 2712 acres [over four square miles].

Most men’s clubs meet in Masonic lodges or fancy country clubs, but because of its unique rural atmosphere, the Bohemian Grove soon became a favorite spot where wealthy men could relive their college days of partying like there was no tomorrow. In the 1930s the Bohemian Grove became a favorite of U.S. Presidents as sort of a Camp David in the woods, and this is when word about the Grove began to quiet and the media blackout began. Members and guests enter the campground with the strict understanding that what goes on at the Bohemian Grove stays at the Bohemian Grove, and discussions—whether personal or business related—are all completely “off the record.”

The Grove is not “just a campground.” There are hundreds of structures inside ranging from elaborate clubhouses and sleeping quarters to a massive industrial kitchen and large amphitheaters—all of which is maintained by a rather large staff, not to mention guarded by an expensive security force and local police. As you may imagine maintaining such a luxurious facility is not cheap.

Back in 1887, the entrance fee for joining the club was $100 and the dues were $3.00 a month. By 1930 this had risen to $500 and $15 a month after that. In the 1990s, the initiation fee was $10,000 with $120 a month dues.[4] There is a ten to fifteen year waiting list for new applicants, and in order to even be considered for membership two current non-related members must sponsor the prospect, who is then thoroughly screened by a membership committee before being placed on the wait list.

Since few men actually quit the club, most aspiring members literally have to usually wait until someone dies to then take their place. Many of the members are in their sixties and seventies, and a few of them usually pass away each year.

The Bohemian Club is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)7 Social Club, which makes them exempt from federal income tax and possibly state property tax as well. One of the requirements for 501(c) organizations is that their financial records are made available to the public for inspection—if you know where to look. I have been able to obtain these documents and they are quite interesting.

The 2013 records show that the club took in $10,168,330 dollars in revenue that calendar year.[5] They paid out $3,007,779 in salaries to the staff, and “other expenses” were listed at $2,971,656, which went to pay for the food, booze, insurance, electricity, building maintenance, etc. Their total expenses for the year were $5,997,272. Total assets are listed at $20,428,708. Yes—twenty million dollars!

The general manager or the chief operating officer, Matthew Oggero was paid $556,897. The executive chef Jean-Marie Rigollet was paid $164,515. The controller Michael Boozing was paid $146,240; the HR director Jennifer Robertson was paid $145,385; the Grove Keeper James Daniel took in $146,874; and the financial director Deena Soulon was paid $222,071.

The forms note, "The compensation of all management employees are reviewed and approved annually by the compensation committee consisting of the president, vice president, and treasurer, who also set the composition benefits for the general manager."[6] Each Bohemian Grove member casts one vote for each position the governing body fills.

The first book dedicated to exposing the Bohemian Grove was published in 1974 titled *The Bohemian Grove and other Retreats*, written by William Domhoff, a sociologist and professor who taught at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He starts off the book explaining that upper-class retreats are of a major sociological relevance because, "they increase the social cohesiveness of America's rulers and provide private settings in which business and political problems can be discussed informally and off the record."[7]

Domhoff and a handful of other scholars who are familiar with the Grove insist it's not just a vacation hideaway for the rich and powerful, but instead functions to facilitate the ruling class network and elitist ideologies which affects the entire world.

The book also exposed the Cremation of Care ritual, and starts off the first page saying, "You are one of fifteen hundred men gathered together from all over the country for the annual encampment of the rich and famous at the Bohemian Grove. And you are about to take part in a strange ceremony that has marked every Bohemian Grove gathering since 1880."[8] It goes on to include a full transcript and detailed description of the Cremation of Care, which was a historic revelation at the time, especially since this was back in the 1970s—decades before the Information Age.

Almost ten years after Domhoff’s book came out, *ABC News* surprisingly aired a segment about the Bohemian Grove in 1981. Somebody, somehow, was able to get a copy of this report from their archives and posted it on YouTube in 2006 where it can be seen today.[9] The anchor at the time was Frank Reynolds, who began the segment asking, “What have Herbert Hoover, Art Linkletter, Jack London and Richard Nixon all had in common? Well, they’ve all been members of the exclusive all male, Bohemian Club in California, where every year at this time the elite from around the country get together for two and half weeks of, um, fun and games.”[10]

The segment then went on to reveal that more than 2000 members and guests spend two weeks camped out in the secluded redwood forest and named Gerald Ford, Henry Kissinger, George H.W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, and Richard Nixon as members, along with executives at Standard Oil and Bank of America. “Privacy is one of the Grove’s most cherished virtues,” the report continues. “Members may not photograph, record, speak or write about activities at the retreat. While many public officials are Grove members, the press is a distinctly unwelcome guest.”

The segment even showed a photograph of the Cremation of Care and included an interview with sociologist William Domhoff who explained, “With the ceremony called the Cremation of Care that begins the two week encampment, where the body of Dull Care—symbolizing woes and concerns—is burned on an altar in front of a big owl statue, when that ceremony ends, they all start to cheer and yell, and hand each other a beer.”[11]

The segment also pointed out that no women were allowed, not even as employees [at the time], and admitted the atomic bomb was developed by club insiders. The senior ABC News editor must have been on vacation, or the Bohemian Grove became arrogant and didn’t think a major news network would betray the strict editorial control by Establishment insiders which usually prevents such stories from making it to the airwaves.

Since this historic segment over three decades ago, there hasn't been a single national news organization that has made a peep about the Bohemian Grove—at least as of mid-2015 when I'm writing this book—not even a tabloid news show. Pretty much only alternative news sites, and the local Sonoma County *Press Democrat* newspaper have ever acknowledged it even exists.

A staff of several hundred people help run the place during the summer encampment, working to cook food and keep up the grounds, most of them local high school kids from nearby towns who have no idea about the identities of the men they are serving. For almost 100 years only men (and teenage boys) were allowed to work inside. But as powerful as the Bohemian Grove is, they were not strong enough to prevent the feminists from crashing their party. In 1978 the club was charged with discrimination by the Department of Fair Employment and Housing for not hiring female employees.[12]

The club fought the charge and in 1981 a judge dismissed the case, but this was only a temporary victory. The judge's decision was based on the members' freedom to associate with who they wanted to associate with and included a statement that since the men "urinate in the open without even the use of rudimentary toilet facilities," the presence of women would infringe on the men's right to privacy.

The feminists didn't give up though and continued to pursue the case. Another judge overruled the previous decision a few months later and ordered the club to begin hiring women.[13] The club filed an appeal with the Supreme Court arguing that their freedom to associate was being violated, but the Court found against the Bohemian Grove.

To be clear, the Court didn't say they had to allow women as members, but did force them to hire women as employees. There is a world of difference between being a member (or guest) and being an employee at the Grove. The employees are mainly contained in the kitchen and dining area, and do not mingle with the guests in their clubhouses or throughout the grounds.

Despite losing their vigorous battle hoping to prevent women from working at the Grove, the Bohos find it amusing that women now work in the kitchen, "where they belong," so it really wasn't much of a victory for the feminists at all, since the "civil rights" victory against their "discrimination" is really just a big joke to the Bohos.

The Unruh Civil Rights Act states, "All persons within the jurisdiction of [California] are free and equal, and no matter what their sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, or disability are entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of every kind whatsoever," so how is it that the Bohemian Grove is able to legally "discriminate" against women as *members*?

The Bohemian Grove, along with men's country clubs—or conversely, all-female organizations like the Girl Scouts, are able to turn down people of the opposite sex for membership without being sued for discrimination because these clubs are considered private, not public. Marcy Frost, an employment attorney at Moss & Barnett, explains, "If you are truly a private club, and not open to the public, the answer is generally, yes, you're allowed to discriminate on the theory we have a Constitutional right of freedom of association."[14]

It's called the "private club exemption" from civil rights legislation. This issue of "legal discrimination" gets into a gray area when people begin arguing over what is considered a private verses a public club. So, at least for now, *membership* at the Grove remains exclusively reserved for men, but they now have to include women (and teenage girls) as employees who serve the men.

Back in 2008 when Hillary Clinton was first running for president, Bill Clinton was speaking at a campaign event when a heckler began shouting at him about the Bohemian Grove. There was a pretty big crowd and security couldn't immediately make it to the man to throw him out and his repeated interruptions were derailing Bill's speech, finally causing him to respond.

"The Bohemian Club? Did you say the Bohemian Club? That's where all those rich Republicans go up and stand naked against redwood trees right? I've never been to the Bohemian Club, but you ought to go. It'd be good for you. You'd get some fresh air."[15]

His comment about "standing naked against redwood trees" refers to the common practice of members just whipping it out and peeing almost anywhere as if they were teenagers again at summer camp. It's a fun thing for them to do apparently, and is part of the Bohemian Grove culture. The practice is literally encouraged and visitors have reported repeatedly seeing men everywhere around the club peeing on the side of trees or in some bushes instead of making their way to a bathroom.

Bill Clinton was also right about it being primarily a Republican club. Most, but not all of the members, tend to be Republicans who have historically been more involved with big business than Democrats. With the exception of Bill Clinton's surprising outburst about this "Republican club," no Democrats have dared to publicly denounce the Bohemian Grove, afraid of a backlash by their Establishment colleagues in Washington. Like the Bilderberg Group, it appears even mentioning the Bohemian Grove is off limits for most politicians.[16]

Their Symbols, Saint, and Motto

The Owl

The Bohemian Grove's mascot (and logo) is an owl, or more specifically, the Owl of Minerva (or Athena, the Greek equivalent), who is the Goddess of wisdom. Interestingly this is the same symbol that Adam Weishaupt, founder of the Illuminati, used as his personal emblem as well.[17] Within the Bavarian Illuminati in Germany, Weishaupt had also created a level in the hierarchy called the Minervals.[18] An owl symbolizes wisdom because it can "see in the dark" which is analogous to being enlightened.

Pictures of owls are often seen in school classrooms standing on top of a small stack of books in order to symbolize knowledge. The National Press Club's logo contains an owl standing on a book for this reason. Owls are also seen as guardians, and you may often see an owl statue on the top of a building in order to scare away other birds in hopes of preventing them from congregating on the ledge of the roof so they won't dirty the building's face with their droppings—or worse, hit passersby on the sidewalk below.

The Dictionary of Symbols by J.E. Cirlot says, "In the Egyptian system of hieroglyphs, the owl symbolizes death, night, cold and passivity. It also pertains to the realm of the dead sun, that is, of the sun which has set below the horizon and which is crossing the lake or sea of darkness."[19]

A tiny owl can be found hidden in the design of the American one dollar bill, perched on the upper left corner of the frame that surrounds the

"1" located in the upper right hand corner. This isn't just a case of people seeing something that looks like an owl popping out of a random pattern; it's clear someone purposefully included it in the design. Some people also see an owl figure designed into the street layout of Washington D.C., appearing on top of the U.S. Capitol building when looking at the location from overhead or on a map. This one is a bit more ambiguous, but still may have been included on purpose by the Freemason architects who are known for their use of occult symbols.[20]

There is also a giant 40-foot tall concrete statue of an owl standing inside the Bohemian Grove on the shore of their manmade lake which is the site of the Cremation of Care ritual. Many think the "owl" looks more like a demon with horns actually, and at its feet is a large altar where the life-size human effigy (called "Care") is "sacrificed" each year to kick-off the encampment.

Many people also believe this "idol" represents Molech, an ancient god from the Middle East that the Canaanite culture used to sacrifice their children to. Before the construction of the owl, there stood a large Buddha statue from 1892 to 1928 that was made of plaster of Paris. More on the Cremation of Care in a later chapter.

The Patron Saint

A patron saint is someone who embodies a group’s philosophies or goals, and for the Bohemian Grove this is a man named Saint John of Nepomuk. He was a priest who received the confessionals of the queen of Bohemia in the 1300s, and when pressured by the king to reveal her confessions after he suspected her of cheating on him, Saint John refused and was then killed by the king.

A large statue of Saint John carved from the trunk of a tree stands inside their forest showing him holding his index finger over his mouth, signifying the nonverbal gesture to keep your mouth shut and be quiet, paralleling Robert De Niro’s motto in *Goodfellas* that you “never rat on your friends, and always keep your mouth shut.” Their patron saint serves to remind Bohos of their oath of secrecy and that what happens in the Bohemian Grove, stays in the Bohemian Grove.

Weaving Spiders Come Not Here

The motto of the Bohemian Grove is “Weaving spiders come not here,” which is said to mean that members and guests are not supposed to conduct business inside the Grove—“weaving” meaning working, but this explanation is just a cover story for the saying’s true meaning. “Weaving spiders come not here” actually means “don’t dare challenge the members,” (or really, the “Gods,” as they see themselves) and is an allegory that comes from an ancient story in Greek mythology.

According to the tale, a woman weaver named Arachne once disrespected Athena, the Goddess of weaving, by failing to acknowledge that her weaving talent was a gift from the Goddess and not derived from her own power. Arachne even pridefully boasted that she was a better weaver than the Goddess herself. Angered by her lack of respect, Athena then turned Arachne into a spider, subjecting her and her descendants to weave webs forever as a curse for disrespecting the Gods.

The Bohos claim that their saying “weaving spiders come not here” is taken from a Shakespeare play called *A Midsummer Night’s Dream,* but given the elite’s appreciation for the occult and Greek mythology, not to mention their elitist attitude that they are gods among men, this explanation appears to be simply just a cover story for non-members used as an attempt to defuse the allegations that they conduct business in the Grove, which as you will see later in this book is quite common.

Albert Pike, a favorite philosopher among elite Freemasons, wrote that “Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, *conceals* its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it [the Mason] calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it."[21] So it should not come as a surprise to learn that the actual meaning of sayings and symbols by elitist organizations are not what we are told.

The Secret of Satan

When you first hear allegations about the ruling elite, or the Illuminati "worshiping Satan" it is hard for many to believe at first, but once you take a close look at the philosophies of the ruling class and the big secret of occult fraternities, it becomes undeniable that this is what's happening. Do you think this book just took a turn into "crazy tinfoil hat-wearing conspiracy land?" Stick with me for a moment and let me explain and I'm sure you will soon agree.

Everyone, whether they believe it is literally true or just a myth, is familiar with the story of the Garden of Eden and the serpent temping Adam and Eve into eating the forbidden fruit, causing what is called the Fall of Man or the first sin. Adam and Eve were then banished from Paradise and the entire human race was cursed from that point on.

The big secret, or the "royal secret," as it is often called, is that many men (and women) involved in secret societies believe that Satan is not bad, but instead came to earth to free Mankind from enslavement at the hands of the Creator, who in their view is seen as a tyrant who wanted to keep humans ignorant, hence forbade them from eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The big secret taught within elite secret societies is that Satan the rebel "wanted to help" us poor humans, and risking his own eternal banishment from Heaven, he disobeyed God and encouraged Eve to eat the forbidden fruit to begin mankind's supposed evolution to Godhood by giving them the power [knowledge] that the Creator supposedly was holding back from them out of selfishness or malevolence.

According to the Bible, Satan claimed Man could “become like God” if they listened to him and disobeyed the Creator, and this is the secret of secrets (arcanum arcanorum) of the Illuminati. In 1854 French occultist Eliphas Levi wrote, “There is indeed a formidable secret, the revelation of which has once already transformed the world, as testified in Egyptian religious tradition…This secret constitutes the fatal Science of Good and Evil, and the consequence of its revelation is death.”[22]

Manly P. Hall, who is considered to be Freemasonry’s “greatest philosopher,” revealed in his 1928 book *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* that, “The serpent is true to the principle of wisdom, for it tempts man to the knowledge of himself. Therefore the knowledge of self resulted from man’s disobedience to the Demiurgus, Jehovah [God].”[23] Hall also stated that, “Both the sinking of Atlantis and the Biblical story of the ‘fall of man’ signify spiritual involution—a prerequisite to conscious evolution.”[24]

Helena Blavatsky, who was a major spiritual inspiration for Adolf Hitler, wrote in her 1888 book *The Secret Doctrine*, that, “Thus Lucifer—the spirit of Intellectual Enlightenment and Freedom of Thought—is metaphorically the guiding beacon, which helps man to find his way through the rocks and sand banks of Life, for Lucifer is the Logos in his highest.”[25]

Albert Pike, another highly esteemed historical figure of Freemasonry wrote, “Lucifer, the Light-bearer! Strange and mysterious name to give to the Spirit of Darkness! Lucifer, the Son of the Morning! Is it he who bears the Light, and with its splendors intolerable, blinds feeble, sensual, or selfish souls? Doubt it not!”[26]

Even the infamous Satanist Aleister Crowley admitted this is what he believed was the biggest secret of life, saying, “This serpent, Satan, is not the enemy of Man, be He who made Gods of our race, knowing Good and Evil; He bade ‘Know Thyself!’ and taught Initiation. He is ‘the Devil’ of the book of Thoth, and His emblem is Baphomet, and Androgyne who is the hieroglyph of arcane perfection.”[27]

Saul Alinsky, the leftist radical who Hillary Clinton wrote her college thesis on, acknowledged Satan in his book *Rules for Radicals* as the first rebel who stood up to the tyranny he said was imposed by God. According to the scriptures, Satan said, “ye shall be as gods,” if you follow his advice, and this is what the elite are striving for. They believe that through this ancient secret and the emerging science of Transhumanism, that they themselves will “evolve” into Gods as the final phase of human evolution.[28]

The plan to “conquer death” is being promoted as a real possibility through Transhumanism, which involves modifying our DNA or all together replacing our biological brains and bodies with interchangeable mechanical and silicon based systems.[29]

This is a topic for a whole other book, which I am currently working on, but this is in short the top priority of the ruling class. If my Transhumanism book is not out at the time you are reading this, there is a section on this topic in my book *Inside the Illuminati: Evidence, Objectives, and Methods of Operation* if you would like to learn some of the details about this disturbing agenda.

The Different Subcamps

Inside the Bohemian Grove there are approximately 124 different groups or camps—each having their own sleeping quarters, kitchen and bar, and each managed by a camp captain who is responsible for overseeing their group.[30] Each different camp has its own unique name and consists of anywhere from a dozen to around one hundred men who tend to work in the same field to provide commonality and networking opportunities.

For example, the Hill Billies camp is made up mainly of men in big business, bankers, politicians, and media moguls from the state of Texas. The sign for the Hill Billies' camp, which the Bush family belongs to, consists of a cloven hoofed and horned Devil figure.[31] One of most elite camps is Mandalay, which is comprised of former presidents and other top political figures along with major defense contractors. No seated president ever attends the summer encampment because his schedule and location is so closely monitored that his visitation would bring too much unwanted attention to the Grove, but once they are out of office (and before they are even elected) many make it a priority to be there.

Another elite camp of former presidents and high ranking military personnel and defense contractors is Owls Nest. The Hillside camp is made up of Joint Chiefs of Staff members and other top military brass. Other camp names include the Lost Angels which is where major bankers and media executives belong. Uplifters is made up of corporate executives and international business big wigs. The Rockefeller family and other big oil men have their own camp as well called the Stowaways.

It's quite obvious that having the Grove broken up into small subgroups which are comprised mainly of men who work in the same field facilitates discussions revolving around areas of overlapping interest. Sociologist Peter Phillips, who was a guest inside the Bohemian Grove on two occasions and who earned his Ph. D. by writing his doctoral dissertation on it in 1994, wrote, “Sharing a camp together at the Grove gives Bohemian directors of major U.S. policy councils ample opportunity to discuss current affairs and socio-economic policy issues. Watching and listening to reactions to Lakeside Chats by various other Bohemians also gives policy directors an opportunity to evaluate policy concerns from the broad sampling of the American corporate business community encamped at the Grove. In this sense, the Grove serves as an informal evaluatory feedback process to the top socio-economic domestic and foreign policy councils in the United States.”[32]

Although the club claims the mid-summer encampment is just a vacation, and “weaving spiders come not here,” some major world-changing programs have admittedly been hatched in the Grove. For example, the Manhattan Project (the plan for the atomic bomb) was admittedly conceived inside the club in 1942.[33] Aside from the birth of the atomic bomb, the United Nations was hatched from the inside the club as well.[34]

Peter Phillips’ dissertation reveals, “One of the foremost political events in which the Bohemian political network played a significant role was the United Nations Conference of International Organization (UNCIO), April 25th to June 26, 1945 in San Francisco. This was the original formation meeting for the United Nations, with delegates from fifty nations. Receptions for UNCIO delegates and key dignitaries were held at the Bohemian Club on May 17, May 29, June 4, and June 5. Towards the end of the U.N. conference the Club invited all delegates to a program at the Grove.”[35]

It is rumored that Alan Greenspan was chosen to be the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank shortly after a meeting in the Grove where insiders came to a consensus that he should be their man. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s successful bid for governor of California in 2003 after a special recall election to replace then-governor Gray Davis was allegedly given the green light by the Establishment following a visit to the Grove as well.[36]

There is even a picture of Ronald Reagan when he was the Governor of California sitting down with Richard Nixon (who would be elected president the following year), taken in 1967 showing them inside the Bohemian Grove together where they were said to have been coordinating their future political careers.[37] Nixon even admitted in his memoirs that the path to his presidency began with his visit to the Bohemian Grove.[38]

President Dwight Eisenhower's road to the White House also began in the Bohemian Grove. In 1950, two years before he was elected president, he was a guest during the summer encampment and gave a Lakeside Talk that impressed the Establishment insiders. We know of this because President Richard Nixon openly admitted it in his memoirs!

He wrote, "After Eisenhower's speech we went back to Cave Man Camp and sat around the campfire appraising it. Everyone liked Eisenhower, but the feeling was that he had a long way to go before he would have the experience, the depth, and the understanding to be President. But it struck me forcibly that Eisenhower's personality and personal mystique had deeply impressed the skeptical and critical Cave Man audience."[39] Nixon was later chosen as his vice president.

After learning how the geopolitical system really works once inside the Oval Office, apparently Eisenhower's conscience began bothering him. During his famous presidential farewell address in 1961 when his two terms were up he warned Americans that, "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."[40]

There are also rumors that in the build-up to the 2000 presidential election Bohemian Grove members George Bush Senior, Colin Powell, and other neocons had come to a consensus at the summer encampment that Dick Cheney should be George W. Bush's running mate as VP.

The Cremation of Care Ritual

When you learn the details of the Cremation of Care, or see the photos or the video footage, it becomes clear why the mainstream media has maintained a near complete blackout on this issue for decades. In the age of social media, word about the Bilderberg Group—which meets every spring in a five-star hotel for three days of secret off the record talks—has spread far and wide, so the mainstream media can no longer completely ignore their annual gathering.[41] While it may be somewhat simple to paint the Bilderberg Group as just another boring conference—explaining away the Cremation of Care is not so easy.

Basically, it is a human sacrifice ritual—only instead of sacrificing an actual person, they use a life-size effigy consisting of a metal skeletal framework wrapped with paper which is burned on an altar at the base of the 40-foot tall Owl Shrine. Close-up photos taken by a former employee reveal the effigy has two arms and two legs and is the size of an adult. The ritual kicks off the two-week encampment at sunset on the second Saturday of July each year, where a small number of members carry out the ceremony while the majority of others sit on a set of bleachers and watch.

It is conducted by a “High Priest” who wears a silver robe with a red cape. He is accompanied on stage by around two dozen other men who wear long black and red robes, some of whom are holding flaming torches. The High Priest also wears a wireless microphone which broadcasts over a sound system so the audience of around 1000 men can hear him. He begins by saying, “The owl is in his leafy temple; let all within the Grove be reverent before him. Lift up your heads, O ye trees, and be ye lift up, ye ever-living spires. For behold, here is Bohemia’s Shrine and holy are the pillars of this house. Weaving spiders, come not here!”

He continues, “Nay, thou mocking spirit, it is not all a dream. We know thou waitest for us when this our sylvan holiday shall end. And we shall meet and fight thee as of old, and some of us prevail against thee, and some thou shalt destroy…But this, too, we know: year after year, within this happy Grove, our fellowship has banned thee for a space, and thy malevolence that would pursue us here has lost its power beneath these friendly trees. So shall we burn thee once again this night and in the flames that eat thine effigy we’ll read the sign: Midsummer set us free!”

It is a very elaborate ceremony with a live symphony orchestra playing music at certain points for dramatic effect. The effigy is called Care, and the ritual is said to symbolically be the killing of Care, or the ritualistic “casting off their cares” so the men can have a good time at their party. As the ritual reaches its climax and the effigy is set on fire, screaming is played over the sound system, and once it is fully engulfed in flames, fireworks are set off and the crowd cheers in excitement.

The High Priest continues “Oh owl! Prince of all mortal wisdom. Owl of Bohemia, we beseech thee, grant us thy council.” A short song is then sung with lyrics that go: “No fire, no fire, no fire. Let it be kindled in the world where Care is nourished on the hates of men and drive him from this Grove. One flame alone must light this fire, one flame alone must light this fire. A pure, eternal flame, a pure, eternal flame. At last within the lamp of fellowship upon the altar of Bohemia.”

The High Priest then concludes, “Oh, great owl of Bohemia! We thank thee for thy adoration! Be gone detested Care! Be gone! Once more, we banish thee! Be gone, dull Care! Fire shall have its will of thee! Be gone, dull Care and all the winds make merry with thy dust! Hail fellowship’s eternal flame! Once again, midsummer sets us free!”

The first photo of the ceremony to be published came from a flier given to members within the Grove which was stolen by an employee and given to a group of activists called the Bohemian Grove Action Network which was formed in the 1980s by a woman named Mary Moore who lives nearby in the neighboring town of Occidental.

Radio host and founder of Infowars.com, Alex Jones, snuck into the Bohemian Grove in July of the year 2000, and using a small video camera secretly recorded the entire ceremony and released the footage as part of a documentary film called *Dark Secrets: Inside Bohemian Grove.* By this time, there had been various photos available online of the ritual and many rumors of its occurrence, but Jones' footage confirmed once and for all that such a thing did in fact take place. The footage can be viewed on YouTube and is quite shocking.[42]

A British TV producer named Jon Ronson documented Alex Jones' infiltration for a segment of his own television series titled *Secret Rulers of the World*, which then featured some of Jones' footage. Ronson, initially a skeptic who appeared to mock the "conspiracy theories," was himself stunned to learn they were true. "As incredible as it sounds, it seems that some kind of bizarre secret ritual witnessed by world leaders really does take place in the forests of Northern California," he said.[43]

When Ronson contacted the Grove for a comment on the newly shot footage they gave him a brief statement saying, "The Cremation of Care is a musical and verse pageant heralding a two week midsummer escape from business cares and celebrating nature and good fellowship. As grand scale stage drama it may be a bit overdrawn, but it's about as innocent as anything could be."[44]

It's one thing to read about the ceremony, or see the photos, but the video leaves you with your head shaking. When I first saw it myself in the early 2000s, I thought it was a ceremony conducted by a small and powerless pagan cult and that Alex Jones was crazy for claiming such high profile people were in attendance, but he was right. I first came across Jones' footage on a torrent site after searching for videos about the Illuminati. This was before video hosting sites like YouTube, Vimeo, and Dailymotion were created, and bit torrents were the primary way people shared videos through peer-to-peer file sharing applications like BearShare and Morpheus.

After Jones' infiltration, the club beefed up security and began using thermal imaging scanners and K-9 police tracker dogs to identify anyone lurking around the grounds who doesn't belong there. Anyone who attempts to sneak inside will be charged with trespassing.

In 2004, *National Geographic* magazine published a photo taken during a Cremation of Care ritual in 1915 and included a caption saying, "To purge himself of worldly concerns, a member of the elite Bohemian Club participated in a 1915 Cremation of Care ceremony—complete with candles and a robed and hooded comrade to guide him. This private club of influential men still meets annually north of San Francisco and uses this symbolic ritual to kick off its summer retreat. But today the ceremony involves burning a mummy-like effigy named Care at the foot of the group's mascot: a 40-foot-tall (12-meter-tall) concrete owl."[45]

Molech

In the ancient Middle East, the Canaanites and the Phoenicians would regularly sacrifice their children to a horned god called Molech (sometimes spelled Moloch or Molekh). This horrifying ritual consisted of building a fire at the base of the Molech idol, which had its arms extended out over the fire pit, and then having the village high priest lift up a couple's first-born infant son and place him into the arms of the beast, resulting in the child burning alive over the flames. Many people believe that this was the inspiration behind the Cremation of Care ritual.

David Icke, a popular British conspiracy theorist best known for his belief that the Illuminati are supposedly "reptilian shape-shifting aliens," claims, "Today, these elite names are still doing ritual sacrifices of children at Bohemian Grove."[46] Yes, David Icke believes the ritual is a *real* human sacrifice!

Icke also believes the earth is hollow with ancient civilizations living deep inside it,[47] and thinks the moon is a giant spacecraft just like the Death Star in *Star Wars* he says was built by aliens in order to watch over planet earth.[48]

The book of Leviticus in the Bible describes Molech sacrifices at length, and specifically denounces it as evil. "Don't sacrifice your children on the altar fires to the god Molech," it reads.[49] It goes on to give specific instructions as to the punishment for such actions. "The Lord spoke to Moses: You are to say to the Israelites, Any man from the Israelites or from the foreigners who reside in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death; the people of the land must pelt him with stones."[50]

It continues, “I myself will set my face against that man and cut him off from the midst of his people, because he has given some of his children to Molech and thereby defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name.”[51]

Music During Ceremony

The symphonic poem *The Isle of the Dead* by Russian composer Sergie Vasilyevich Rachmaninoff tells the tale of a ghostly ferryman who transports the dead in his small rowboat, as it moves slowly across the calm dark water. The symphony was inspired by Swiss artist Arnold Böcklin's famous *Isle of the Dead* painting which shows a coffin being transported to the symbolic grave depicted by the dark nothingness off in the distance.

Rachmaninoff's symphony is played by an actual live orchestra during the beginning of the Cremation of Care ritual as a hooded boatman dressed as Death paddles his rowboat along with the coffin containing Care across the pond in front of the stage where "Molech" stands. Beethoven's 7th Symphony is played later during the ritual.

David Gergen Confrontation

A top advisor to Presidents Ford, Nixon, Reagan, and Clinton—named David Gergen, who also worked as a CNN contributor, was confronted on camera by Alex Jones on the streets of New York during the 2004 Republican National Convention where Jones walked up to him and asked if he'd ever seen the Cremation of Care ritual.

Gergen, looking visibly uncomfortable, responded, "Frankly I don't think that's something I need to talk to you about."[52] When Jones asked him again about the ritual, Gergen snapped, "That's none of your damn business!" and walked away. The clip can be seen on YouTube. Why was he so defensive? If it's just an innocent "play" then why not answer such a simple question? Jones didn't accuse him of worshiping Satan or participating in an actual human sacrifice; he just asked him if he'd been there for the Cremation of Care.

Back in 1993 *The Washington Times* reported, "Presidential counselor David Gergen resigned yesterday from the all-male Bohemian Club, three days after saying he would not run around naked at its annual Bohemian Grove encampment and insisting he would not quit [as the president's advisor]. White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers announced the resignation along with Mr. Gergen's departure from 17 other interest groups, charities and public boards ranging from the Trilateral Commission to the Very Special Arts Foundation."[53]

He also resigned from the Bilderberg Group, the Council on Foreign Relations, and nearly all organizations dedicated to setting up a New World Order, leading many to think that perhaps he grew a conscience and decided he wasn't going to have anything to do with such a plan any longer. Perhaps the reason he got so upset about Alex Jones' question was that he wanted to let sleeping dogs lie and being put on the spot about the Bohemian Grove freaked him out because he knows they cherish their oath of secrecy and didn’t want to be seen as betraying them.

Walter Cronkite

Walter Cronkite was the anchor for the *CBS Evening News* from 1962 to 1981, and is widely believed to have recorded the voice for the Owl Shrine that is played over the loudspeakers during part of the Cremation of Care. This is especially interesting when you learn that while accepting the Norman Cousins Global Governance Award in 1999 at a World Federalist Association meeting, Cronkite made a disturbing joke about Satan running the New World Order and seriously suggested countries need to give up their sovereignty and yield their authority to a global government.

During this event Cronkite said, “What Alexander Hamilton wrote about the need for law among the thirteen states applies today to the approximately two hundred sovereignties in our global village, all of which are going to have to be convinced to give up some of that sovereignty to the better greater union, and it’s not going to be easy.”[54]

He then mentioned Pat Robertson’s 1991 book, *The New World Order* and how Robertson (creator of *The 700 Club*) wrote that the construction of the global government is the work of the Devil, at which point Cronkite added, “Well, join me, I’m glad to sit here at the right hand of Satan.”[55]

Author’s Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com or wherever you purchased it from to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them. Almost all of the one-star *reviews on my books are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent, hence me adding this note. These fraudulent ratings and reviews could also be part of a larger campaign trying to stop my message from spreading by attempting to tarnish my research through fake and defamatory reviews, so I really need your help to combat this as soon as possible. Thank you!*

The Lakeside Talks

Every afternoon throughout the two week encampment a Lakeside Chat or Lakeside Talk is given just after lunch at 12:30pm, where a political insider or industry leader gives a thirty-minute speech on his area of expertise. These daily talks are a rare and uncensored look into the minds of the most powerful men in the world. The speeches primarily revolve around political, economic, and business trends, and often include information that is typically not revealed publicly.

A reporter named Philip Weiss working for *Spy Magazine* successfully snuck inside the Grove in 1989 and witnessed a Lakeside Talk given by General John Chain, who was the Commander of the Strategic Air Command.[56] In his speech the General lobbied the audience members to help him get the funding for the Stealth B-2 bomber program which would later end up costing almost 45 billion dollars, yes 45 *billion* dollars.[57]

Every decade or so the club produces a limited number of yearbooks called the *Annals of the Bohemian Grove*, which are given out to members so they can reminisce about their time there. These rare books contain dozens of photos from inside the forest and some include attendees dressed in drag, along with pictures of the Cremation of Care ritual and various Lakeside Talk speakers.

I have personally been able to obtain four different copies of these books, (Volumes V, VII, VIII, and IX) since occasionally they’ll find their way into used bookstores after older Bohemian Grove members die and their book collections are sold at estate sales or donated to thrift stores like Goodwill or the Salvation Army. In one book (volume VII 1987-1996) there is a clear photo of George Bush Senior and George W. Bush standing at the podium giving a Lakeside Talk in 1995 where Bush Senior reportedly told the audience that his son would make a great president one day.[58]

President Nixon revealed in his memoir (published in 1978) that his Lakeside Talk marked the beginning of his road to the White House, writing, “If I were to choose the speech that gave me the most pleasure and satisfaction in my political career, it would be my Lakeside Speech at the Bohemian Grove in July 1967. Because this speech traditionally was off the record it received no publicity at the time. But in many important ways it marked the first milestone on my road to the presidency.”[59]

While Nixon praised the Bohemian Grove in his memoir as the key to his path to the presidency, privately—as you will see in the next chapter—he denounced the widespread homosexuality he witnessed while he was there.[60]

Schedules of the Lakeside Talks are handed out to members inside which include who each afternoon’s speaker is and what their topic is. Often one of these schedules have been stolen by an employee and made available on the Internet. In the next few pages you’ll find a list of some of these speakers and their topics so you can get a feel for just how exclusive these talks are, and how the information presented impacts the world.

If the members’ time spent inside the Bohemian Grove is “just a vacation,” then why are there speeches by people like the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, U.S. Army Generals, mainstream media executives, political analysts and talk show hosts, leading economists, and bigwig businessmen? The stolen program guides have revealed for example, in 1981 the Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger gave a speech titled “Rearming America” where he urged his well-connected audience to pull some strings to increase military spending. In 1991 Dick Cheney, who was Secretary of Defense under George Bush Senior’s presidency, gave a speech titled “Defense Problems of the 21st Century” where he did the same thing.

The Grove may have tightened up security in recent years, because the itineraries for the most recent years are unavailable. Some leaks did indicate who was speaking there, but the program guide of the complete speakers list and their topic is unavailable from 2012 to 2014. It is rumored that they may have stopped handing out the schedule to members since employees keep stealing them and leaking them to the public, and the club may be securing them under a sheet of glass so they may be viewed but not carried away.

In 2013 the local *Press Democrat* newspaper did report that four-star U.S. Army General Stanley McChrystal and comedian Conan O’Brien were among the speakers, as well as MSNBC’s Chris Matthews, who also gave a Lakeside Talk back in 2003.[61] There were rumors that Bill O’Reilly and Glenn Beck were there as guests or possibly speakers in 2013 because they were both missing from their usual schedules at some point in time while the encampment was in session.

Lakeside Talks 2011

Saturday, July 17

“The Supreme Court in the Age of Obama” by Jeffrey Toobin—legal analyst for CNN and The New Yorker.

Sunday, July 18

“The Obama Administration at War” by David Martin, national security correspondent for CBS News.

Wednesday, July 21

“How Should We Think about China. Partner, Competitor, Threat?” by Michail Armacost, former U.S. Ambassador to Japan and member of the National Security Council who handled East Asian and Chinese affairs.

Friday, July 23

“K—12 Education in America” by Joel Klein, Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education.

Saturday, July 24

“The Future of News” by Rupert Murdoch, CEO of News Corporation, the parent company of the Fox News Channel.

Sunday, July 25

“The Revenge of God: Religion & Violence in the Modern World” by Reza Aslan, professor at the University of California, Riverside.

Monday, July 26

“Venture Philanthropy—Andrew Carnegie 2.0” by John Wood, founder of Room to Read, a global non-profit organization that’s focused on literacy and gender equality in education.

Tuesday, July 27

“Cultural Diplomacy” by Dr. Gary Smith, executive director of the American Academy in Berlin.

Wednesday, July 28

“Defeating IEDs as a Weapon of Strategic Influence by” Thomas Metz, Lt. General, U.S. Army (retired).

Thursday, July 29

“The Four Most Important Words in Economics: People Respond to Incentives” by economist Arthur Laffer.

Friday, July 30

“To Be Announced” by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Saturday, July 31

“Why is Mars so Important?” by Michael Malin, planetary geologist. Also “Countdown for America” by David Gergen, former presidential advisor.

Lakeside Talks 2006

Friday, July 14

“Global Financial Warriors” by John Taylor, professor of economics at Stanford University.

Monday, July 17

“Untold Tales from the Cold War” by Tom Reed, former Secretary of the Air Force.

Tuesday, July 18

“Energy, CO2 and Climate Change” by Lynn Orr, director of the Global Climate & Energy Project at Stanford University.

Wednesday, July 19

“Gulf Coast Erosion: Consequences for America” by Michail Armacosting, Chairman of Louisiana Governor’s Coastal Restoration and

Conservation Committee.

Friday, July 21

“America in the New World” by Fareed Zakaria, editor of Newsweek magazine and CNN host.

Tuesday, July 25

“Island Conservation with Guns, Traps & Poison” by Bernie Tershy, research biologist at the Institute of Marine Sciences at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Wednesday, July 26

“The Parallelism & Ultimate Convergence of Science and Religion” by scientist Charles Townes.

Thursday, July 27

“Global Urbanization: a Challenge for the Future” by Richard Koshalek, President of the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena.

Friday, July 28

“Lessons Learned from War, Assassination, the White House and Hollywood” by Jack Valenti, former president of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA).

Saturday, July 29

“From Battlefields to Playing Fields: Economics, Energy, and Education” by General Colin Powell (retired), former Secretary of State.

Lakeside Talks 2005

Saturday, July 16

“Of Laughter & Leadership” by David Gergen, public policy professor and former presidential advisor.

Sunday, July 17

“To Be Announced” by naturalist Richard Leakey.

Monday, July 18

“The Case for Immigration Restriction” by Richard D. Lamb, professor at the University of Colorado and former Colorado Governor.

Tuesday, July 19

“Iraqi Medicine: Rip Van Winkle’s Burden” by Bernard S. Alpert, M.D.

Wednesday, July 20

“Wealth, Poverty & the Threat to Global Security” by William W. Lewis, director emeritus at the McKinsey Global Institute.

Thursday, July 21

“Dark Energy & the Runaway Universe” by Alex Filippano, professor of astronomy at the University of Berkley, California.

Friday, July 22

“Unlimited Government” by Chris DeMuth, executive director of the American Enterprise Institute.

Saturday, July 23

“To Be Announced” (Name not printed, which usually means someone “important” who doesn’t want to be connected to the Grove publicly).

Monday, July 25

“Nuclear Considerations: The Way Ahead” by Albert Konetzni, Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy.

Tuesday, July 26

“Peering Into Pandora’s Box: Avian Flu & Beyond” by W. Ian Lipkin, M.D., scientific director at the Northeast Biodefense Center.

Friday, July 29

“To Be Announced” by Bill Richardson, Governor of New Mexico.

Saturday, July 30

“Hoover Talk” by General Colin Powell, U.S. Army General (retired) and former Secretary of State during the George W. Bush administration.

Lakeside Talks 2004

Friday, July 16

“Exploring Mars & Searching for Life in the Universe” by Charles Elachi, director of the Jet Propulsion Lab at the California Institute of Technology.

Saturday, July 17

“The Landscape of American Politics” by David Brooks, *New York Times* columnist and political commentator.

Sunday, July 18

“The Elections & Their Aftermath” by Norman Ornstein, political analyst at the American Enterprise Institute.

Monday, July 19

“State Building: What We Do and Don’t Know about Creating Institutions in Developing Countries” by Francis Fukuyama, dean of advanced international studies at John Hopkins University.

Tuesday, July 20

“The Internal Life of Planets: A Comparison of Earth, Venus, Mars & the Moon” by Mark Richards, professor of geophysics and dean of physical sciences at the University of California, Berkeley.

Thursday July 22

“The Coming Virtual Soldier” by Roger McCarthy, chairman & principal engineer at Exponent Inc.

Friday, July 23

“The Long War of the 21st Century” by James Woolsey, Former Director of the CIA.

Saturday, July 24

“The Unrealized Potential of the Technological Revolution” by James H. Billington, librarian at the Library of Congress.

Monday, July 26

“Remembering Reagan, One Insiders Account” by Kenneth Adelman, author and policy analyst.

Wednesday, July 28

“Did the Terrorists Expect the World Trade Towers to Fall?” by Ian Mackinlay, architect.

Saturday, July 31

“Politics, Plagues, Prevention & Preparedness” by Vice Admiral Richard Carmona M.D., United States Surgeon General

Lakeside Talks 1997

Friday, July 11

“Rogues, Terrorists and Two Weimars Redux: National Security in the Next Century” by James Woolsey, former Director of the CIA.

Saturday, July 12

“Augustine’s Laws and the High Tech Grove” by Norman Augustine, chairman and CEO of Lockheed Martin Inc.

Sunday, July 13

Individualism in Western History” by Ken Jowitt , professor of political science at the University of California, Berkley.

Monday, July 14

“The Triumph of the Market and the Politics of Affluence” by Christopher DeMuth.

Wednesday, July 16

“Heretical Thoughts” by Yurek Martin, senior writer at the *Financial Times* of London.

Thursday, July 17

“The New Economics—Ideas Hatched in the Forest are Worth More Than the Trees” Craig McCaw, Chairman & CEO Eagle River LLC.

Friday, July 18

“Cyberspace and Managed Care: Is the Acceleration Manageable, or Do We Throw Momma from the Train?” by Louis W. Sullivan, M.D. Former Secretary Health & Human Services.

Saturday, July 19

“Plutonium Today and Tomorrow” by Charles Hollister.

Sunday, July 20

“National Security is Going South: Where is the Vision?” by William A. Owens, Admiral USN (retired) Former Vice-Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, Vice Chairman SAIC.

Wednesday July 23

“Taxation with Representation” by Kurt Hauser

Thursday, July 24

“The Information Superhighway: A Way Upward, or a Toll Road to Nowhere?” by Ervin S. Duggan, President and CEO Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).

Friday, July 25

“Church, State and the Constitution” by Antonin Scalia, Justice on the Supreme Court.

Saturday, July 26

“Campaign Operative The Best of Times and the Worst of Times” Donald Rumsfeld, member of Nixon cabinet and future Secretary of Defense in the George W. Bush administration.

Infiltrations and Leaks

In 1980 a local resident named Mary Moore founded what she called the Bohemian Grove Action Network with the purpose of infiltrating the Grove by having people obtain summer jobs inside or by convincing those who already worked there to steal membership lists, program guides, and other information in order to expose the Grove.

Mary also organized demonstrations outside the Grove beginning in the 1980s consisting mainly of left-wing hippies who were concerned about the big business, environmentally unfriendly "Republicans" inside. She says, "When powerful people work together, they become even more powerful. The Grove membership is wealthy and becoming more so, while the middle class is steadily becoming poorer. This close-knit group determines whether prices rise or fall (by their control of the banking system, money supply, and markets), and they make money whichever way markets fluctuate."[62]

Due to all the attention the Bohemian Grove Action Network was generating, in 1982 a reporter from *Time* magazine decided to sneak inside but his story was censored by the magazine and never published.[63]

As I mentioned earlier, a reporter from *Spy Magazine* named Philip Weiss was able to sneak inside the club in 1989 and published an article titled "Masters of the Universe Go to Camp: Inside Bohemian Grove," detailing what he had witnessed. Aside from seeing a Lakeside Talk by General John Chain, who urged the audience to pull some strings to get the 45 billion dollars in funding for the B-2 bomber program, Weiss also said the members loved chewing on cigars, drinking beer, and peeing everywhere.

“You know you are inside the Bohemian Grove when you come down a trail in the woods and hear piano music from amid a group of tents and then round a bend to see a man with a beer in one hand and his penis in the other, urinating into the bushes. This is the most gloried-in ritual of the encampment, the freedom of powerful men to pee wherever they like,” he wrote.[64]

In 1991 a reporter for *People* magazine named Dirk Mathison was able to sneak inside and wander around for a period of time, but he was eventually spotted and removed from the property. He wrote a story about his experience that was supposed to appear in the August 5, 1991 issue of *People* magazine, but it never did. The managing editor at the time, Landon Jones, claimed killing the story had nothing to do with executives at Time Warner (*People* magazine’s parent company) being members.[65]

Alex Jones from Infowars.com

In July of the year 2000, radio talk show host Alex Jones, founder of Infowars.com, successfully infiltrated the Bohemian Grove and actually videotaped the Cremation of Care ritual and got out with the footage. He cut a hole in the side of a shoulder bag and mounted a camcorder inside, and sat in the bleachers with the rest of the approximately 1500 members and guests and watched the event unfold. He was accompanied by his then-producer Mike Hanson.

A British journalist named Jon Ronson documented Jones' and Hanson's infiltration and included their adventure in an episode of his television series, *The Secret Rulers of the World* which follows Ronson as he "investigates" the claims of what he called "conspiracy theorists" surrounding the New World Order.

Ronson is a skeptic and appears to make fun of his subjects, seemingly intent to "debunk" their claims, but after Jones and Hanson emerged from the Bohemian Grove with the footage in hand, even Ronson was surprised that the "conspiracy theories" were true. After the two returned back to the hotel with the footage, Ronson questioned them about what they had seen.

[Ronson] Do you think this was unholy?

[Hanson] It's very strange to me. These people are supposed to be running the world and they're out there doing this.

[Ronson] You seem freaked out.

[Hanson] I am.

[Jones] These people point their fingers all day and call people extremists or cult members or whatever for their religious beliefs, this was a pagan ceremony and engaging in human sacrifice, a mock human sacrifice…

[Ronson] Aren't they just saying that for two weeks they don't need to worry about anything?

[Jones] But they're burning someone in effigy and as it's burning they "ahh ohhh nooo!"

[Ronson] But they're not killing a person.

[Jones] We understand they're not literally killing a person…

[Ronson] They're killing something that is symbolic…

[Jones] Wait a minute. You saw it. You've got Death on this black boat bringing a pallet with the paper mache person obviously, it's got the feet and the head and they take it over and burn it.

[Ronson] But wasn't it just a metaphor?

[Hanson] To me it doesn't matter. I think they're sacrificing in the real world too.

[Ronson] Was this the New World Order?

[Hanson] Yes definitely. I looked the New World Order in the face out there.

Shortly after Alex Jones' posted the footage online, a show called *Washington Journal* on C-SPAN discussed his infiltration. The show was hosted by Brian Lamb, the director of C-SPAN, who interviewed a "scholarly conspiracy researcher" named Michael Barkun who ridiculed Jones and appeared to be engaging in damage control.

The host states that he heard Alex Jones on *Coast to Coast AM* talking about his adventure and "he was talking about the Bohemian Grove club as if that's where it all happens. That's where all the decisions are made. There are thousands of people who go there, and there is some kind of ceremony and an owl and all that, have you followed this?" Lamb asked Barkun.[66]

Barkun replies, "Yes I have, even though the show is on past my bedtime, but, Alex Jones has been talking about this for quite a while. The Bohemian Grove, of course, is a privately owned redwood grove, up in Sonoma Country, north of San Francisco, where every summer there is a get together of the wealthy and well placed, all male, who get together for general cavorting, socializing, lecture, symposium and so on, in an atmosphere that is completely removed from public scrutiny. Alex Jones and some others have suggested for a long time that there are all sorts of nefarious rituals that go on, and a matter of fact, and I talk about this incident actually in my book, someone who had listened to the Alex Jones show about this was arrested within the Bohemian Grove, very heavily armed, because he said he was trying to bring attention to what he thought were human sacrifices that were being committed by the elite who attend these gatherings."[67]

Barkun was referring to a man named Richard McCaslin who snuck onto the property in January of 2002 with the hopes of exposing the Cremation of Care ritual which he believed involved an actual human sacrifice. More on Richard McCaslin in a moment. Lamb and Barkun didn't even mention the Cremation of Care ritual, and how it clearly depicts a theatrical human sacrifice, and gave the audience the impression that crazy conspiracy theorists have just invented the idea out of thin air that the club is burning people alive during their party and the intruder was completely insane for thinking such a thing was happening.

The Phantom Patriot

In January 2002 a 37-year-old man named Richard McCaslin snuck into the Grove while wearing a superhero outfit, a bullet proof vest, and armed with a fully loaded MK-1 rifle-shotgun. Having heard the rumors about what allegedly goes on inside, and having seen Alex Jones' footage of the Cremation of Care, McCaslin was convinced there were actual human sacrifices being carried out and he intended to expose it.[68] Jones never said the ritual was an actual human sacrifice, but many people have, including, as I've mentioned earlier—David Icke, the guy who believes the Illuminati are blood-drinking shapeshifting reptilians from another galaxy.[69]

If you'll recall, the summer encampment begins the second weekend of July, and since "The Phantom Patriot," as he called himself, went there in January, not much was going on. After he didn't find any elite insiders gathering, McCaslin decided to set a building on fire and was apprehended by Bohemian Grove security. He was sentenced to eleven years in prison, a sentence dramatically increased because he was wearing a bullet proof vest in the commission of a crime (felony arson) which is an additional charge in California.[70]

Richard McCaslin was (and still is) part of the real-life super hero subculture, a small and bizarre group of adult males who like to dress up as "superheroes" and fantasize about being "real" crime fighters.[71] Some of these people actually walk the streets of cities in America wearing their costumes and see themselves as neighborhood watchmen.[72] After McCaslin was released from prison, he continued wearing his "Phantom Patriot" costume and still believes the Bohemian Grove members are reptilian shape-shifters from another planet.[73]

In 2011 he was seen protesting outside a business in Davenport, Iowa where President Obama was speaking and accused Obama, the Bush family, and Bill Clinton of being reptilians. A local paper did a story on him where he is quoted saying, “Every American president has British peerage [relation], and royalty has always said they have the right to rule by their bloodline. Their ancestors weren’t human; they were aliens, probably of the reptilian type.”[74]

Les Claypool, the singer of the rock band Primus, wrote a song titled “Phantom Patriot” for his solo project *Of Whales and Woe* (2006) which is about McCaslin’s “raid” on the Bohemian Grove. Claypool lives in Occidental, California, a small town right next to the Grove and is obviously aware of the rumors and allegations surrounding the place. Here’s a sample of the lyrics:

Walking through the compound With a formulated plan

There to help his fellow man At this decisive point in time The
Bohemians of the Grove Don’t see it quite the same Sensing danger in his
game They dub his quest a crime - Phantom Patriot

Chris Jones

In the summer of 2005, a man in his late thirties named Chris Jones [no relation to Alex Jones] got a job at the Bohemian Grove for the sole purpose of infiltrating the club and gathering photos and video evidence of what happens inside. He was able to get photos of some of the camps and elaborate clubhouses, and even some close-up pictures of the site of the Cremation of Care ritual, including the effigy used during the ceremony.

His photos clearly show that the object burned on the altar is in fact a life-size human effigy. It consists of a metal skeleton that's wrapped with paper. Chris said he was able to inspect the effigy shortly before the Cremation of Care in 2005 and stuck his hand inside the paper wrapping to feel around inside it to see if by any chance there was an actual person, child, or vial of blood inside, but he said it was just paper wrapped around the metal skeletal frame.[75] His photos and videos were included in Alex Jones' 2005 film *The Order of Death*, a sequel to *Dark Secrets: Inside Bohemian Grove* which first showed the footage Alex shot in July of 2000.

I have personally met Chris Jones and he showed me the photos and videos on his camera along with some other memorabilia he "kept" (stole) from the club, including a membership list, a program guide, a book of matches, and a trashcan.

When he first turned over his photos and footage to Alex Jones for publication on Infowars.com, Chris called himself "Kyle," wanting to remain anonymous, but after he was later jailed, he went public with his real name. Chris claims he showed some teenagers in his neighborhood the footage and photos he took, trying to educate them about the Bohemian Grove, but one of them got scared and told their parents Chris showed them a "snuff film" and says this was the start of his legal troubles. He was later arrested for lewd conduct with a minor for playing strip poker with some boys he was babysitting.[76]

Some people believe these charges were trumped up as payback for him working to expose the Bohemian Grove and for releasing his never before seen photos and video footage, but the court documents detail what appear to be a history of inappropriate behavior with teens in his neighborhood.[77] He claimed he was innocent and said the charges were based on misunderstandings but was found guilty in court and sentenced to three years in the Theo Lacy jail in Orange, California.

More Recent Attempts

In July of 2008 a *Vanity Fair* reporter named Alex Shoumatoff was arrested for trespassing after sneaking onto the property. Apparently he was working on a story—not about the strange rituals or the Lakeside Talks, no—he was working on a story about the club cutting down some Douglas-fir and diseased oak trees in order to help prevent forest fires—or at least that's what he said he was doing there.[78]

Shoumatoff later wrote an article in *Vanity Fair* titled "Bohemian Tragedy," where he complained about them cutting down some trees and talked about his arrest. He snuck inside, in his words, "to investigate reports that the Bohemians have been desecrating their own bower. That nothing is sacred with these guys anymore. Everything is fair game. But how could the Bohemian Club, where California's forest-preservation movement began, be logging its own land, which includes the largest stand of old-growth redwoods in Sonoma County?" he wrote.[79]

In January of 2011 the History Channel's *Decoded* included an episode about the Bohemian Grove and two of the show's "investigators" paddled down the Russian River in canoes and entered the forest from the riverbank which runs right along the edge of the Grove's property. They were discovered immediately and arrested for trespassing. This wasn't even during the summer encampment so they wouldn't have even found anything very interesting happening inside anyway.

The show didn't even include any of Alex Jones' footage of the Cremation of Care because the host, Brad Meltzer, said the History Channel's lawyers were afraid they would get sued for airing it since it was technically obtained illegally. At the end of the segment, the "investigators" talked about their experience and arrest. One of them said, "I had nine hours of incarceration to think about this. The more I thought about it, the less I was bothered by the Grove, even though they had just arrested me. I sort of felt like they are allowed to do this, it's their property, and if they want to continue to have presidents and Saudi princes and military leaders come here, they need to promise those guys that they'll be safe."[80]

Another of the "investigators" concluded, "There's nothing nefarious going on here. It's just a bunch of businessmen and a men's club."[81] Brad Meltzer the host ended the show by saying, "To be clear, this is a great club, and breaking laws isn't a way to get into it, but a bit more disclosure, a bit more transparency, would go a long way." Meltzer is also friends with President George Bush Senior, who gave him the idea for the plot of his book *The Inner Circle*, which is about a secret society that's been operating in Washington D.C. ever since the United States was founded. This secret society isn't the Illuminati or any "evil" group with ill intentions—no—it turns out to be a "good" secret society that George Washington started, called the Culper Ring, which Meltzer's book claims is still in existence today to help "protect" America.

It's likely the *Decoded* "investigators" arrests were staged in order to send a warning to viewers not to attempt to sneak in. As someone who's been involved with a variety of "reality" television shows myself, I can tell you there's not much reality in them.[82] Scenes are staged and shot out of sequence to simplify the production schedule and then edited together to make it appear as if they were shot in chronological order.

In 2013 Colin Powell's personal email was hacked into by an anti-Illuminati hacker who called himself Guccifer. Powell's email inbox contained some photos of him and his buddies inside the Bohemian Grove, and one of the emails was from News Corp executive Andrew Knight asking Powell to "firmly point out" to British Prime Minister Tony Blair that he should attend the Grove's summer encampment that coming July and saying, "Tony has not yet got his priorities straight."[83]

Guccifer was apprehended the following year and sentenced to seven years in prison.[84] This is the same hacker who illegally accessed the emails of various Clinton, Bush, and Obama administration officials, including George W. Bush's sister's email where Guccifer found family photos as well as a self-portrait painted by George W. Bush depicting him taking a shower.[85]

On my YouTube channel there is a playlist of footage that I shot at the front gates of the Bohemian Grove in July of 2012 when I attended the Occupy Bohemian Grove protest, where hundreds of people gathered outside the entrance to raise awareness about the club.[86] You can see dozens of police wearing riot gear standing guard in order to prevent the crowd from marching inside. I also captured footage of a K-9 unit patrolling the perimeter of the property, a speech by anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan, and the rather violent arrest of one of the protesters.

Hookers and Homosexuality

San Francisco is basically the gay capital of America, and with the Bohemian Grove located just north of the city, one might expect some of this "gayness" would spread to the Grove, especially since it was founded by artists and "Bohemians." A Pulitzer Prize winning columnist for *The San Francisco Chronicle* named Herb Caen wrote about the homosexual activities in the Grove in his gossip column in the 1980s, and informants for the Bohemian Grove Action Network have claimed there has been widespread homosexual behavior inside.

Philip Weiss, who snuck inside in 1989 and wrote a lengthy article in *Spy Magazine,* said, "Today AIDS has put a damper on the Grove's River Road pickup scene, which Herb Caen used to write about in his *San Francisco Chronicle* gossip column. Just the same, a man on his own often gets invited back to camps by gay Bohemians."[87] Weiss went on to say that several men tried to pick him up during his visit there.

According to Mary Moore of the Bohemian Grove Action Network, a man named Don Heimforth, who worked inside the Grove, was the "Deep Throat" (referring to the famed White House informant during the Watergate scandal) of the Bohemian Grove in the 1980s, and claimed a lot of gay men were involved in the club. Heimforth himself was gay and later died of AIDS.[88]

In 2004 *The New York Post* reported that a gay porn star named "Chad Savage" was discovered working in the Bohemian Grove, supposedly as a "valet," which many people believe was just a cover story so he could engage in other kinds of activities— like perhaps "entertaining" the members.[89] The Bohemian Grove yearbooks (the Annals) have various pictures of men dressed in drag to entertain each other while inside, and one can only imagine what kind of weirdness goes on at some of the camps under the cover of darkness.

President Richard Nixon, who in his memoir admitted that the path to his presidency began in the Bohemian Grove, had something else to say about the place as well, which was not so favorable. In 1999 the National Archives released over 400 hours of Oval Office tapes from the 1970s, and on one of them Nixon made a pretty damning statement about the Bohemian Grove.

Nixon, along with John D. Ehrlichman and H. R. Haldeman, were discussing how the media was glorifying homosexuality and how it had been spreading, especially in San Francisco. Nixon went on to say, “The Bohemian Grove—which I attend, from time to time—it is the most faggy goddamned thing you could ever imagine, with that San Francisco crowd. I can’t shake hands with anybody from San Francisco.”[90]

Prostitution

It’s common knowledge that many wealthy men like buying the pleasures prostitutes provide. Sex scandals and politicians go together like peanut butter and jelly and it seems a new one is uncovered every few months. The trophy wives of many wealthy businessmen and powerful politicians are often twenty or thirty years younger than their husbands, and many of these couples have an unspoken open relationship.

The wives sleep with the pool boy or men they meet at the gym, while their husbands buy prostitutes through elite escort services when they’re away on business. And so, during the “greatest men’s party on earth” at the Bohemian Grove, it would be foolish to think some of these wealthy and power-hungry men could spend a week away from their wives without buying some time with a lady of the night (or a call-boy).

The Northwood Lodge and Resort, which is just a few minutes away from the Bohemian Grove, is the spot where some men slip away to hook up with prostitutes throughout the two-week long encampment. Back in 2001 *Counter Punch*, an independent investigative news site, wrote, “A few years ago KGO radio, out of San Francisco, had an interesting talk show in which callers with first-hand Grove experience told their tales. A man from Monte Rio said he was only one of several towns-people renting cabins every year to prostitutes traveling from as far as Las Vegas to renew the Bohos’ spiritual fibers.”[91]

It has also been rumored that the Mitchell Brothers O’Farrell Theatre in the Tenderloin red-light district of San Francisco has been a source of strippers and high-class call girls used by the Bohos. Mike Hanson, who worked as Alex Jones’ cameraman and producer, and who was with Jones when he snuck into the club in July of 2000, later interviewed four dancers from Mitchell Brothers for his book who claimed that prostitution was the “unofficial” but accepted policy at Bohemian Grove.[92]

These girls said that the strippers who had been brought inside to perform for the guys were always expect to “perform” in other ways, if you know what I mean. The girls Mike Hanson interviewed said they signed NDAs, non-disclosure agreements, preventing them from reveling information about their experiences inside, or even admitting publicly that they had been there, so they only spoke with him on the condition that he would not reveal their identities.

Hanson’s book, titled *Bohemian Grove: Cult of Conspiracy,* details his and Jones’ infiltration into the Grove, where he includes his interview with these strippers who were between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five. They say they were hired for a three-day gig inside the Grove and on the first night they said they performed for a group of around 40 men and then later some of the guys paid the girls for their “company for the night.”[93]

The second night they said they put on a show for a group of around 100 men, but the girls said they started getting extremely uncomfortable with how degrading some of the men were and got creeped out so they chose to leave before their third show and claimed the men wouldn’t pay them since they had agreed to work for three nights and were breaking their contract.[94]

Hanson wrote that one stripper/hooker admitted she stole a laptop computer she saw laying around as compensation for not getting paid, and said that after she took it home and turned it on, she found pictures of what appeared to be women and children being violently raped.[95] More about these allegations in the next chapter.

Allegations of Murder

In the past, when hardly anything was publicly known about the Bohemian Grove, rumors about the Cremation of Care “human sacrifice” ritual led many in the conspiracy community to believe the club was performing an actual human sacrifice every year.

After seeing the photographs and confirming that the world’s richest and most powerful men do in fact meet in a secluded forest and perform what appears on the surface to look like a human sacrifice, it’s understandable how many could come to this conclusion. But even though the details about the Cremation of Care eventually emerged showing it involves an effigy and not an actual person—accusations of murder still persist, and there are even allegations more disturbing than them supposedly “just” burning someone alive on an altar in a ritual sacrifice.

These allegations involve claims of horrific sadistic acts that are said to involve the sexual abuse of children and the production of snuff films (the videotaping of a murder for entertainment). These allegations are so grotesque and nauseating, I don’t even like to talk about them, but I feel they must be addressed and investigated. I warn you, this section will be quite disturbing and graphic, and you may wish you had never read it.

These rumors, which I will detail in a moment, don’t just lurk in the dark depths of the Internet, made by anonymous individuals on obscure websites or forums; but actually come primarily from a former U.S. Senator named John DeCamp. DeCamp was a Nebraska state senator in the 1990s who is also an attorney who represented several children who he claimed were sexually abused inside the Bohemian Grove in the 1980s at the hands of a pedophile ring allegedly operating within one of the camps.[96]

In 1992 he published a book titled *The Franklin Cover-Up*, where he claimed that a boy named Paul Bonacci was viciously sexually abused at the hands of a group of men inside the Bohemian Grove. DeCamp alleged the boy was forced to engage in necrophilia (sex with a dead body) and claimed to have witnessed these same men rape a young male child and then murder him during the summer of 1984, on or around July 26th inside the Grove.[97]

This was before anything about the Bohemian Grove had been posted on the Internet, and really before most people had ever heard of the Internet. Paul Bonacci claimed this abuse occurred in a luxurious Northern California campground in an area that had big trees where men wore black hooded robes and where there was a giant moss-covered owl statue.[98] DeCamp says that when he asked Bonacci to guide him to the location of this alleged abuse, he said he led him to the gates of the Bohemian Grove.[99]

Paul Bonacci wrote in his journal about this alleged abuse right after it was said to have occurred. What he wrote is so horrifying I will not include some of it here because it will make you physically ill. He said that he and another boy he called Nicholas were forced to rape another kid who was then shot and killed immediately afterward, all while being videotaped.[100]

His journal reads, “After that the men grabbed Nicholas and drug him off screaming. They put me up against a tree and put a gun to my head but fired into the air. I heard another shot from somewhere and then saw the man who killed the boy drag him like a toy. Everything including when the men put the boy in the trunk was filmed. The men took me with them and we went up in a plane. I saw the bag the boy was in. We went over a very thick brush area with a clearing in it. Over the clearing they dropped the boy. One said the men with the hoods would take care of the body for them.”[101]

More details of Bonacci’s journal are available in DeCamp’s book *The Franklin Cover-Up*, and are far beyond the most gruesome and grotesque things one could imagine, and involve the alleged gang rape of a child and necrophilia.[102] In the first printing of his book in 1992 Senator DeCamp left out Bonacci's claims of the giant owl statue and men in hoods because at the time he thought it was too far-fetched for people to believe. DeCamp had never heard of the Bohemian Grove, the Cremation of Care, or the giant owl statue at the time. Only years later did he learn about the details of Bohemian Grove and became convinced that Paul Bonacci was abused there.[103]

When John DeCamp first told William Colby, head of the CIA, about his investigation, Colby reportedly told him to forget everything he knew and to, "Get as far away from this thing as you can. Forget you ever saw it or know it, heard it or anything else."[104] He said DeCamp was opening a can of worms containing forces too dark for him to handle. Only after saying he couldn't walk away from his investigation did Colby tell him he better get his story out before someone murdered him to stop it. Colby himself later died in what was called a canoeing accident, although many suspect he was murdered due to the strange circumstances surrounding his death.[105]

Now before you write John DeCamp off as mentally ill, or a conspiracy theorist, or perpetuating a hoax—you should know that around this same time the *Washington Times* ran a front page story with the headline, "Homosexual prostitution inquiry ensnares VIPs with Reagan, Bush," and detailed a shocking story of a gay prostitution ring operating in Washington D.C. that provided teen call-boys to some very powerful and well-connected men.[106] The man running the ring was a lobbyist named Craig Spence—who, through his connections—was able to bring several teenage boys who worked for him as prostitutes on a midnight tour of the White House, which was the focus of the *Washington Times* report.

The article begins, "A homosexual prostitution ring is under investigation by federal and District authorities and includes among its clients key officials of the Reagan and Bush administrations, military officers, congressional aides and U.S. and foreign businessmen with close social ties to Washington's political elite, documents obtained by *The Washington Times* reveal."[107] The story quietly went away and has long been forgotten by most Americans.

A similar elite pedophile ring was also operating in London at this time (and likely still does today). *The Guardian* recently reported that major news agencies in England were gagged by the government in the 1980s to prevent them from reporting on powerful members of the British government who were suspected of being involved in an elite pedophile ring there which also murdered children for fun.[108]

The Guardian reported, “Two newspaper executives have told the *Observer* that their publications were issued with D-notices—warnings not to publish intelligence that might damage national security—when they sought to report on allegations of a powerful group of men engaging in child sex abuse in 1984. One executive said he had been accosted in his office by 15 uniformed and two non-uniformed police over a dossier on Westminster pedophiles passed to him by the former Labour cabinet minister Barbara Castle.”[109]

The article continues, “The other said that his newspaper had received a D-notice [similar to a national security letter in America] when a reporter sought to write about a police investigation into Elm Guest House, in southwest London, where a group of high-profile pedophiles was said to have operated and may have killed a child.”[110]

This is the London *Guardian*, not the *National Enquirer* or some random website on the Internet, and this story sounds exactly like the accusations Senator John DeCamp was making about a group operating within the United States at the same time, doesn’t it? Two retired Scotland Yard detectives recently came forward and said that a network of powerful and well-known politicians in the United Kingdom sexually abused and murdered young boys at parties but they were prevented from arresting them because they were part of what are called The Untouchables.[111] The detectives actually named names, including Cyril Smith, a popular member of the British Parliament who died in 2010, and who was a serial sex offender who preyed on young boys.[112]

In 2012 a paparazzi working for TMZ came across Ralph Rieckermann who played bass for the Scorpions, a popular rock band from the 1980s, and asked him if he would be going to any fetish parties while in Germany which are apparently very popular in Berlin. Rieckermann answered, “I don’t go to fetish parties,” but then went on to appear to insinuate that he had been to a “snuff party” one time where people were murdered for the partygoers entertainment. “I went to one, one time—I seen some really bad shit,” he says.[113]

When the TMZ cameraman asks, “Was it a donkey show?” Rieckermann responds “No, they actually, I think, it’s…they actually killed people there and stuff. They pay up to $100,000 to see people get…” the cameraman completes his sentence, asking “executed?”

Rieckermann responds, “I’m not kidding. I went to another one where literally I saw like…the grossest…I wanted to throw up.” The video, which can be seen on YouTube, then cuts back to the TMZ studio to show reactions from the staff. “He is dead serious. He’s not laughing, there’s not a smile on his face,” one man comments. Another says, “I’m disgusted right now.” Harvey Levin, the founder and managing editor of TMZ looked absolutely horrified, and said, “I’m shocked,” and just shook his head.

Three years later, just days after I myself posted a YouTube video about this story, getting almost 10 times as many views as TMZ’s original interview, Rieckermann posted a video statement on YouTube clarifying what he meant about the “snuff party.” He said that he didn’t personally witness anyone getting killed, but was at a party at someone’s estate where the host showed him some of the bondage/sadomasochism fetish rooms where the owner said he and his friends would murder people for fun at special events.[114] Rieckermann emphasizes that he did not witness any murders but appeared to believe what the host told him was true.

It’s not hard to believe that a group of extreme sadomasochists would find enjoyment by having someone murdered at one of their parties. The world’s lust for realistic and brutal horror movies shows that millions of people find excitement in watching people getting tortured and murdered, and with films like *Faces of Death*, and certain websites which specialize in collecting gruesome photos and videos of crime scenes and people getting murdered, it’s not that hard to believe that some people would pay money to witness an actual murder in person, or even participate in one themselves.

Hunter S. Thompson

A man closely connected with what Senator John DeCamp called the Franklin Cover-Up (named after the Franklin Community Federal Credit Union in Omaha, Nebraska that was allegedly used to fund a pedophile ring used by high-level U.S. politicians in the late 1980s and early 1990s) has made some startling allegations about Hunter S. Thompson and the Bohemian Grove.

Rusty Nelson, [Russell E. Nelson] who worked as the personal photographer for the man at the center of the scandal, Larry (Lawrence E.) King, alleges that the famous "gonzo" journalist offered him $100,000 in 1988 to produce a snuff film involving the murder of a child.[115] Rusty said he turned the offer down.

Paul Bonacci also claimed, and wrote in his journal, that a man named "Hunter Thompson" was inside the Bohemian Grove at the time he was allegedly abused there, and also claimed that Thompson was the man videotaping his abuse.[116]

Interestingly, Hunter S. Thompson wrote in his book *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* about receiving Adrenochrome from a Satanist, which is supposedly a powerful hallucinogen believed to come from the pineal gland immediately after a person is killed. Adding yet another twist to the story is the fact that Hunter S. Thompson wrote in his 2004 book titled *Hey Rube* about how organized pedophile rings keep children as sex slaves.

"The autumn months are never a calm time in America," he wrote. "There is always a rash of kidnapping and abductions of schoolchildren in the football months. Preteens of both sexes are traditionally seized and grabbed off the streets by gangs of organized perverts who traditionally give them as Christmas gifts to each other to be personal sex slaves and playthings."[117]

This writing clearly shows Thompson knew of the dark pedophile ring subculture. Thompson was known for getting personally involved in his stories, as was the case when he lived with the Hells Angels for nearly two years in the 1960s while he chronicled his activities for his book *Hells Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga*. And so with Paul Bonacci's allegations that a "Hunter Thompson" was present during his abuse and videotaping it, and Rusty Nelson claiming Hunter S. Thompson propositioned him to shoot a snuff film, some are led to believe he was involved in even more sinister activities than hanging out with a motorcycle gang.

Hunter S. Thompson was a celebrity during his time and is still considered to be a counterculture antihero by many today. In 1988 during an appearance on *The Late Show* with David Letterman he appeared to have admitted to once being inside the Bohemian Grove. At the start of the bizarre interview Letterman asked him what he likes to do for fun, to which Thompson answered, "I like to kill."[118] The audience was noticeably uncomfortable, and the clip is available on YouTube—at least at the time I'm writing this.[119]

In his sometimes hard to understand mumbling Hunter went on to say that he liked the Jesuits because, "they're smart and mean," and that he himself had what he called a "neo-religious" world view. George Bush Senior came up during the interview since he was running for president at the time, and Thompson appeared to say, "I went to Hillbilly,"[120] which is the name of the Bush family's camp in the Bohemian Grove.

After his suicide in 2005, Thompson's former editorial assistant Nickole Brown posted an article online titled *In Memory of Hunter S. Thompson: Postcard from Louisville, Kentucky*, recounting some of the bizarre behavior she had witnessed while working for him over the years.

“For weeks he played a tape recording of a jack rabbit screaming in a trap,” she wrote. She also said that one time, “he threw me out of the house for refusing to watch a snuff film.”[121] As she left, he allegedly called her a coward.

In an interview I conducted over the phone with Nickole Brown on May 20th 2005, she told me she thought he was possibly joking about owning a snuff film, and says she didn’t think much of it after the incident, citing his “unique” character. She also said she couldn’t imagine him being involved in anything like what Paul Bonacci and Rusty Nelson claimed. She believes Hunter was possibly investigating such claims, and may have pretended to be interested in shooting a snuff film as part of his own investigation into the rumors, which she thinks might be the source of these allegations.

Sex Magick

Sex magic is the belief and practice that through various sex acts, people can supposedly generate sexual energy and direct it to metaphysically shape the very fabric of reality. It's basically like mixing the visualization techniques found in teachings like the "Law of Attraction," popularized in 2006 by Rhonda Byrne's *The Secret*, with sex.

The Knights Templars, who reportedly learned about sex magic from the Tantrics of India, and medieval alchemist Paschal Beverly Randolph, and Satanist Aleister Crowley, all practiced secret sexual rites in what they considered to be the secret to "real" magic. Several fraternal organizations and secret societies such as the Ordo Templi Orientis, and the Chthonic Aurarian Temple also believe in—and continue to practice these kinds of rites.

On the surface, sex magic (often spelled with a "k" on the end, as stylized by Satanist Aleister Crowley) may seem like innocent sexual experimentation or a fun game, but the deeper one looks into the practice, the more bizarre it gets.

Multiple members and former members of the Ordo Templi Orientis, the secret society which uses Aleister Crowley's *Book of the Law* as their Bible, have admitted that the 11th degree of their hierarchy is dedicated to homosexual sex magick.[122] Former OTO member Jason Miller revealed in his book on sex magick, that, "the OTO's 11th degree is largely dedicated to the cultivation of sperm in the anus," and goes on to say that according to Crowley's diaries, "In some writings the point seems to be to cultivate the sperm alone, but in others it seems to be to combine it with blood that seeps in from tearing in the anus and remnants of feces. In this theory the blood attracts the demons and the sperm brings them to life."[123]

Miller goes on to say that a group of sex magic practitioners in Japan called the Tachikawa, supposedly engage in “skull fucking.” Miller wrote, “One of the most infamous rituals they practiced is the empowerment of a human skull as a Honzon, a holy relic with supernatural powers…First the practitioner chooses a particular type of skull, such as the skull of a Shogun or an elder….He then has sex with the skull as well as with a woman. Then they wipe the combined sexual fluids on the skull.”[124] Miller’s book is not written to “expose” sex magic as sinister or evil, but instead to teach it, and he is an admirer and true believer of it.

The reason I’m talking about sex magic is because the group of men who allegedly abused Paul Bonacci in the Bohemian Grove were most likely doing so under the belief that they were engaging in some dark form of this kind of “magic.” As a disclaimer I must mention that the Ordo Templi Orientis, along with former member Jason Miller, who I quoted above, do not advocate child abuse, pedophilia, or human sacrifice, but it’s not hard to believe that some rogue members or a splinter group of a fraternity that practices esoteric sex magic have tried to follow in the footsteps of Aleister Crowley—dubbed “the wickedest man alive” in his day—by experimenting with, or incorporating child abuse and pedophilia into their rites.

Even consensual adult sex magic is strange, and the deeper one looks into it, the more disgusting the rituals become. One ritual involves taking a woman’s menstrual blood and a man’s semen and then mixing them together and baking the fluids into cookies or a cake and then eating it, believing that this gives people spiritual power.[125] Another involves placing sperm in the womb of a horse, which I can only assume mentally deranged people like Aleister Crowley have attempted through bestiality, which he is widely rumored to have committed in his quest to contact demons and gain spiritual energy.

With passages in Crowley’s *Book of the Law* such as, “Worship me with fire & blood; worship me with swords and with spears, is the command…let blood flow to my name. Trample down the Heathen; be upon them, o warrior, I will give you of their flesh to eat! Sacrifice cattle, little and big, after a child,"[126] it's obvious he was a mentally deranged sadist.[127]

In some parts of Africa today, men believe that raping babies is actually a 'cure' for AIDS.[128] This belief is not as rare as you may think, and again, this is not something people just believed 500 years ago—it's what many believe *today!* Many men in Africa also believe that raping an albino woman is a cure for AIDS as well.[129] These beliefs and abuses are well documented by humanitarian groups and are not just an urban legend.[130]

With such bizarre, brutal, and disgusting "sex magic" beliefs out there, is it really that hard to believe that an inner circle of a secret society of power-hungry megalomaniacs would engage in rape, pedophilia or murder in hopes of gaining some kind of supernatural power?

Cathy O’Brien

In 1995 a woman named Cathy O’Brien published a book titled *Trance Formation of America* (a play on words for Transformation, using the word “Trance” to refer to a hypnotic trance) where she recounts what she claims is a true story of physical and sexual abuse at the hands of the CIA in their MK-ULTRA mind control program.

In the book, and in her lectures which she gave at conspiracy conferences throughout the 1990s, she claims to have been taken to the Bohemian Grove where she says she worked as a sex slave for the enjoyment (and entrapment) of some of the members. “I was programmed and equipped to function in all rooms at Bohemian Grove in order to compromise specific government targets according to their personal perversions…I do not purport to understand the full function of this political cesspool playground as my perception was limited to my own realm of experience,” she wrote.[131]

What she means is she allegedly was used to entice high level politicians into having sex with her while they were secretly videotaped for blackmail purposes, which seems pretty reasonable, but her claims soon get so strange, they are simply beyond belief. She wrote, “Slaves of advancing age or with failing programming were sacrificially murdered at random in the wooded grounds of Bohemian Grove, and I felt it was simply a matter of time before it would be me.”[132] She went on to say, “Rituals were held at a giant, concrete owl monument on the banks of the Russian River.”[133]

It gets even stranger. She went on to claim, “The club offered a ‘Necrophilia’ theme room to its members,”[134] which she says included, “a triangular glass display centered in a main throughway where I was locked in with various trained animals, including snakes. Members walking by watched illicit sex acts of bestiality, women with women, mothers with daughters, kids with kids, and any other unlimited perverse visual display."[135]

She then says, "No memory of sexual abuse is as horrifying as the conversations overheard in the Underground pertaining to implementing the New World Order. I learned that perpetrators believed that controlling the masses through propaganda mind manipulation did not guarantee there would be a world left to dominate due to environmental and overpopulation problems. The solution being debated was not pollution/population control, but mass genocide of 'selected undesirables.'"[136]

So, in her mind, keeping child sex slaves isn't as bad as talking about their plans for a global government and world domination? The closer you look into the claims of Cathy O'Brien, the more holes you'll find. No Illuminati member or sadistic Satanist is going to be chatting with his friends about their plans for the New World Order in the middle of sex with a prostitute or sex slave! These conversations happen around a campfire, at lunch, or while sitting around having a few drinks in the casual atmosphere of the Grove.

And her claims that the Bohemian Grove has a huge glass display "centered in a main throughway" where children are abused and women are having sex with animals for the enjoyment of the members is absurd. In reality only a small fraction of the members could possibly be so evil as to enjoy such things and *zero* informants, guests, members or employees have *ever* mentioned such a thing. If such abuse does occur, it certainly wouldn't be put on display for the whole club to see and would be limited to a handful of individuals.

O'Brien claims that some of her abusers were George H.W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Dick Cheney, and Hillary Clinton, who she said performed oral sex on her on front of Bill.[137] Yet, for some reason after witnessing all this, her "CIA handlers" decided to let her live to tell about it? Why wouldn't they have just killed her like she said they did to all the other supposed sex slaves kept in the Bohemian Grove? Cathy O'Brien appears to be another opportunist who tried (and successfully did) make a bunch of money off the conspiracy community by claiming to be a first-hand witness to the activities inside the Bohemian Grove, as well as a victim of the CIA's mind control experiments.

Her book, *Trance Formation of America*, is written in the form a novel and includes long passages of dialog that O'Brien claims to have remembered after she was "deprogrammed" by a man named Mark Phillips who claims to be a former CIA operative who decided to rescue her.[138] She claims that as a result of being subjected to the MK-ULTRA mind control program, one of her multiple personalities developed a photographic memory and could supposedly recall every conversation that had occurred in her presence.[139]

In case you're not aware, the CIA did conduct (and most likely still is conducting) horrific mind control and brainwashing experiments which began in the 1950s. Declassified documents reveal that these inhumane and illegal experiments involved sleep deprivation, drugging people with LSD and other mind-altering drugs, hypnotism, torture, and murder.[140] The existence of these declassified and confirmed experiments is what leads many people believe her claims since they do at least contain a *grain* of truth.

One of the goals of the MK-ULTRA program was to create mind controlled slaves or Manchurian Candidates, as they were called, who would willingly carry out any order given to them whether it included murdering someone, or putting themselves in harm's way.[141] Through post hypnotic suggestions these orders were designed to be forgotten after they were carried out. Several victims of these experiments have actually been awarded six-figure financial settlements for the abuse they suffered, but Cathy O'Brien is not one of these people.[142]

She was most likely inspired by John DeCamp's book *The Franklin Cover-Up*, which first came out several years before she wrote her book,[143] where DeCamp, as I mentioned earlier, claims that numerous children have come forward saying they were sexually abused inside the Bohemian Grove and forced to participate in other sadistic acts.[144] John DeCamp's account of what he says happened to his clients is pretty straight forward, and as far-fetched as it may sound to some, the claims appear to be plausible and are centered around a small subgroup *within* the Bohemian Grove, not the entire club.

Author’s Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com or wherever you purchased it from to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them. Almost all of the one-star reviews on my books are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent, hence me adding this note. These fraudulent ratings and reviews could also be part of a larger campaign trying to stop my message from spreading by attempting to tarnish my research through fake and defamatory reviews, so I really need your help to combat this as soon as possible. Thank you!

Talk Radio Hosts Dodge the Topic

Years ago when I first began investigating this subject, I thought I would test to see if the top call-in talk radio shows in America would dare address the Bohemian Grove, so I decided to start calling the shows trying to get on the air. I soon realized that every time I would get through to the call screener, they would hang up on me immediately as soon as I told them I had a question about Bohemian Grove. “We’re not taking calls on that right now, sorry. Click.”

I soon devised a method to actually get on the air and verbally confront the talk show hosts about this and other Illuminati issues. What I did was feed the call screener a fake question that pertained to one of the top stories of the day, and then they would place my call in the queue to be taken by the host. As soon as the host took the call—instead of asking the question the screener approved—I would fire off a question or comment about the Bohemian Grove.

I got recordings of many of these calls from the shows’ podcasts and posted them on MarkDice.com and on YouTube to show people that hosts like Sean Hannity, Rush Limbaugh, Bill O’Reilly, Glenn Beck, and others wouldn’t dare inform their audience about the activities or allegations surrounding the Bohemian Grove.

Even with the seven-second delay, many times I was able to plant seeds in the minds of the audience before getting hung up on, and sometimes the hosts would argue with me for a few seconds before dropping my call and then telling the listeners I was crazy. On the next few pages are transcripts of just a few of these calls so you can see how they reacted to my questions. Sometimes I had to give the call screener a fake name like “John” because “Mark from San Diego” became a known problem for many of these shows when I repeatedly called into them week after week during my investigation.

First Call to Bill O’Reilly

[O’Reilly]

“Let’s go to Mark in San Diego, what’s going on Mark?”

[Me]

“Can you address the Bohemian Grove club private presidential…” [hung up on by Bill]

[O’Reilly]

“You know these guys in San Diego they’re just…the weather’s just too nice there. Now here’s what happens…not everybody…but you go out to the beach and you do all that…and some kind of substance gets in your mind. And Mark just demonstrated it.” [referring to getting stoned]

Second Call to Bill O’Reilly

[O’Reilly]

“Ok, we’ve got an all-skate going on, which means you can ask me anything you want at 1-877-9 No Spin…let’s go to Mark in San Diego, what’s going on Mark?”

[Me]

“How do you feel about the private presidential resort the Bohemian Grove…” [Bill interrupts and drops the call]

[O’Reilly]

“I don’t know what you’re talking about, and I don’t care.”

This was on a Friday when Bill was having what he called an ‘all-skate’ in which he took call after call on any topic…or so he said. I could understand getting hung up on if my question was off topic, but this was the segment where O’Reilly said, “You can ask me whatever you want.” This call and others can be heard on my YouTube channel, just look for the Bohemian Grove playlist on YouTube.com/MarkDice.[145] Bill O’Reilly quit his syndicated radio show in 2009 but continued to host the O’Reilly Factor on the Fox News Channel.

First Call to Sean Hannity

[Hannity]
“Hello.”

[Me]
“The Bohemian Grove, have you been there, do you know about it…”

[Hannity]
“I’m very aware of it, I’ve been invited, I’ve never gone.”

[Me]
“Do you know about the mock human sacrifice ritual, the Cremation…” [Hannity drops call]

[Hannity]
“All right, goodbye. This guy’s nuts.”

Second Call to Sean Hannity

[Hannity]

“Alright, back to our phones. San Diego, Mark on KFMB, how are you?”

[Me]

“Good. Let’s talk about the Bohemian Grove and the kickoff of their summer festival in July which *is* a mock human sacrifice, Sean.” [Hannity drops call]

[Hannity]

“You’re out of your mind, you’re a sicko...this guy’s a nutcase.”

Third Call into Sean Hannity’s Show

[Hannity]

“KFMB San Diego, Mark next, Sean Hannity show, Mark, how are you?”

[Me]

“Let’s discuss the issue instead of hurling insults and ad hominem attacks…”

[Hannity]

“You are a kook. You are a nut. You are absolutely out of your mind insane. I’ve never been to the Bohemian Grove, sir. It’s just a great conspiracy.”

[Me]

“You said you were invited, but have you looked up what happens in the Bohemian Grove?”

[Hannity starts playing the theme song from the film *Psycho* in the background]

[Hannity]

“I have no idea.”

[Me]

“The Cremation of Care?”

[Hannity]

“No, I don’t.”

[Me]

“Look it up on any search engine Sean, ask your friends.”

[Hannity]

(Sarcastically) “What do you think is happening in there?”

[Me]

“Well, they I think they’re doing a mock human sacrifice where they burn an effigy of a human, it’s like a paper-mache human body.”

[Hannity]

“What Republicans do this, sir?”

[Me]

“Well, President Bush is on the membership list…”

[Hannity]

“President Bush? He’s burning figures in effigies in the Bohemian Grove, sir?”

[Me]

“In front of Molech, the ancient Canaanite deity, while they’re dressed up in black robes and colored robes carrying torches.”

[Hannity]

(Sarcastically) “Yeah.”

[Me]

“Look at Infowars.com.”

[Hannity]

“Hey Mark…”

[Me]

“Look it up.”

[Hannity]

> “You are a nut.”

[Me]

> “Well, you’re a gatekeeper, trying to avoid the truth.”

[Hannity]

> “You are a nut. Go seek help. Go get help.” [Hannity drops call]

Call to Rush Limbaugh

When I asked Rush Limbaugh about the club, at first he pretended not to know anything about it, saying he had never been there, but when I pressed him, he made a fairly long sarcastic speech about the place, showing he knew exactly what it was and what goes on there.

[Rush]

“Mark, you’re next on the EIB Network, hello.”

[Me]

“Since I have you on the line, Rush, have you seen the video of the Bohemian Grove ceremony that Alex Jones produced that’s on Google Video?” [the predecessor to YouTube]

[Rush]

“Uhh…No. Been invited to the Bohemian Grove, but I’ve never been there. And I’ve not seen the video.”

[Me]

“Do you know about the activities within the Grove, can you talk about that?” [hangs up on me]

[Rush]

“No! Cuz I don’t…I’ve never been there. All I know is that it’s a bunch of elitists and power brokers who conduct secret meetings to take over the world and they run around nude. It’s all men, no women are allowed. And they run around and you can find them going to the bathroom on trees and so forth. And they have men come out and make speeches to them and all that.”

After his little sarcastic rant, he addresses his producer referring to my call, and says, “He believes it’s the CFR in the woods,” and then moves on as if nothing happened. The CFR (Council on Foreign Relations) is an elitist think tank that masquerades as if it were an ordinary committee in Congress that is composed of prominent politicians and journalists who are given policy recommendations and talking points which are practically viewed as marching orders by the Establishment. See my book *The Bilderberg Group: Facts & Fiction* to learn more about the CFR which functions as a less secretive sister organization to Bilderberg.

Call to Michael Savage

Michael Savage seemed skeptical and pretty shocked at first but did listen to me for a bit before he hung up with disgust after I asked him on air about the ritual for the first time.

[Savage]

“Mark in San Diego, you’re on the Savage Nation.”

[Me]

“Michael, why has information about the Bohemian Grove and George W. Bush’s and Bush 41’s membership been suppressed and ignored, and why is it laughed at in the mainstream media?”

[Savage]

“I don’t know. What is so weird about the Bohemian Grove? It’s a powerful group of men who have a club. I don’t understand. What’s the big secret up there?”

[Me]

“You haven’t heard of, or seen the mock human sacrifice video?”

[Savage]

“Oh please. Come on. Do you have evidence of this? Is there any evidence you can post about this?”

[Me]

“Look it up on Google. Look at Alex Jones’ Infowars” [website muted and not allowed on air].

[Savage]

“So everybody who goes to the Bohemian Grove including Henry Kissinger, is what, they’re doing snuff movies up there now?”

[Me]

“Well, that’s what senator John DeCamp alleges and his witness back in 1984, but…”

[Savage]

“Senator who? Senator who?”

[Me]

“Listen Michael, you really need to look into this, I’m surprised that you haven’t.” [Savage drops call]

[Savage]

“I have a migraine headache sir, there’s only so much a man can do in one day. My God, now the Bohemian Grove, they’re doing mock funerals. There’s only so much madness a man can listen to until he goes crazy. You know, I’m serious. How much more can I take?”

Call to Glenn Beck

[Beck]

“Let’s go to San Diego, welcome to the Glenn Beck program.”

[Me]

“I was wondering if you’ve read the book *The Resistance Manifesto*. I know you’re a big fan of the Bohemian Grove [sarcasm] and I thought you could expand on the rituals and the mock human sacrifice that goes on there each year.”

[Beck]

“Yeah, do me a favor. Don’t ever lie to my phone screener again. I’d answer that question if you would have asked my phone screener that question. Don’t lie to my phone screener. We take you off the air immediately and won’t deal with you. You might have just gotten that whole show that we were going to do on that topic taken out of line. I might not do it now because you pissed me off!”

First Call to Alan Colmes

[Colmes]
“Let’s go to Mark in Oceanside, California. Hello.”

[Me]
“Wondering if you checked out those photos or the video of the mock human sacrifice in the Bohemian Grove…” [Colmes drops call]

[Colmes]
“No I have not.”

Second Call to Alan Colmes

[Colmes]

“Mark in San Marcos, California. Hello.”

[Me]

“Hey, I was wondering since you’ve heard a little bit about it, and you’ve probably seen the photos and the video clips, I was thinking we could spend a few minutes talking about the Bohemian Grove and the mock human sacrifice that’s done each year by the Republican elite.”

[Colmes]

“What about it?”

[Me]

“What are your comments on that?”

[Colmes]

“I don’t know much about it.”

[Me]

“You haven’t checked it out after hearing about this bizarre activity that the Republicans engage in?”

[Colmes]

“All right, thank you very much.” [Drops call]

Third Call to Alan Colmes

[Colmes]

“The Friday night free for all is where you set the agenda, you run the show, you determine what we talk about, I do not. We take the calls in the order they arrive, and we cannot keep you off the air as much as we would like to in some cases, if you get through you get on. Mark in San Diego, hello.”

[Me]

“Alan, if you type in Bohemian Grove into any search engine, the entire page is full of wonderful links and photos, and I’m sure that you’ve done this…” [Colmes cuts me off]

[Colmes]

“That’s very nice. And I’m sure that someday you’ll call me with actually a new topic rather than repeating yourself every single time you call me with the same thing. That will be nice.”

Fourth Call to Alan Colmes

[Colmes]

“Hello.”

[Me]

“Let’s spend more than just a few seconds talking about such an important issue like the Bohemian Grove…” [Colmes drops call]

[Colmes]

“Well, first of all, you are a problem. You have continued since this show has been on the air to try to get to me to put you on the show as a guest. You’re a phony and you’re a fraud and I’m not going to put you on the air as a guest. Ok? It’s not going to happen! That’s that guy by the way, he has attempted to book himself as a guest on the show, he’s left messages on my voicemail, has emailed me. We’ve talked to him off the air and tried to discern whether or not he was someone we wanted to put on as a guest. We decided not to. During the free for all, if he wants to call up and make his statements he’s welcome to do it. That’s why we do the free for all. And if we decide that someone is not someone we’re not going to put on as a guest, I trust the determination of our producers, that’s why they’re hired to make those decisions.”

The Belizean Grove

Apparently some wealthy and well-connected women were jealous of the all-male Bohemian Grove, so they started their own version for women—called the Belizean Grove. Not much is known about this girls' club, but there are a few pieces of information I have been able to put together. The Belizean Grove was started Super Bowl weekend in 2001 by Susan Stautberg who is the president of PartnerCom Corporation, a company which manages advisory boards around the world for businesses and governments.

In a response to her husband and most other men being preoccupied with the "big game," Stautberg gathered up a small group of her high-powered girlfriends and flew down to Central America for a women's weekend. This wasn't just a vacation; this was also a business trip where the women worked to further their careers and privately plotted their futures.

The group now consists of around 100 of the most influential women in the world who meet up every year in Belize for three days for what is said to be "a balance of fun, substantive programs, and bonding."[146] The group says they are "a constellation of influential women who are key decision makers in the profit, nonprofit and social sectors; who build long-term, mutually beneficial relationships in order to both take charge of their own destinies and help others to do the same."[147]

One member, Mary Pearl, who works as the Dean of New York's Stony Brook University, said, "It's hard if you're someone who's a type 'A' personality, who's achieved a lot and who may be in the public eye—it's hard to make friends, so it's just a mutually supportive wonderful experience. We get together just for socializing and also just for intelligent conversation."[148]

It is bizarre that these women—most of whom are from the United States, would fly all the way down to Central America for a weekend getaway when they could just meet up locally at a fancy resort or one of their lavish private residences. Some speculate this is so the women can go out and have a night on the town with little chance of bumping into anyone they know or being recognized by someone. Perhaps it's like a Cougar's night out, when some of the women pickup younger men and bring them back to their hotel rooms, which if they did in an American city, they would run the risk of being spotted by someone who knew who they were, but when down in Central America, it is extremely unlikely anyone would recognize them.

Belizean Grove members include female executives from major banks, public relations firms, and even women in the U.S. Military. A *New York Times* article written in 2011 said, "Belizean Grove has connected the top women in technology to the top women in finance, to the top women in media, to the top women in law, to the top women in retail, and so on."[149] It is currently unknown if they engage in any occult rituals like their male counterpart at the Bohemian Grove.

The group was really only discovered in 2009 after Sonia Sotomayor was nominated for a position as a Supreme Court Justice by President Barack Obama. During the vetting process, Republicans digging for dirt on her discovered she was a member of this strange girls' group. She immediately resigned from the Grove since the American Bar Association forbids a judge from being a member of any organization that "discriminates" against anyone based on sex, race, religion, or national origin; and since it's an all-female club, this caused a potential hang-up for her getting approved to sit on the Supreme Court.

Founder Susan Stautberg was not happy about the new publicity, and said, "We like to be under the radar screen."[150] In order to join, a woman must be recommended to the Belizean Grove "advisory board" which then decides whether or not to admit her. A few known members are U.S. Army

General Ann E. Dunwoody; former Goldman Sachs executive Ann Kaplan; and General Services Administration Director Lurita Doan. Facebook's Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg, a major promotor of the feminist agenda, is a likely member as well.

Before taking over for David Letterman on *Late Night*, Stephen Colbert hosted the popular *Colbert Report* on Comedy Central from 2005 to 2014, where he pretended to be a radical right-wing conservative, basically satirizing Fox News' Bill O'Reilly. In 2009 when Sonia Sotomayor was being considered for a position on the Supreme Court, and the Belizean Grove was first discovered—Colbert joked about it in his monologue. "Now it has come to light that Sotomayor is a member of something called the Belizean Grove, a private organization whose members must be a female professional from the profit, nonprofit, and social sectors," he began.[151]

"This is not only more Sotomayor reverse discrimination—it also violates the code of conduct for federal judges which forbids membership in groups that practice invidious discrimination on the basis of sex," Colbert says, pretending to be outraged.

He goes on to say that Republicans have questioned her membership in this "sexist" club, and that, "There's only one way for Sotomayor to be a member of a single-sex club and still be confirmed for the Supreme Court, which brings us to Tonight's Word: Bohemian Grove! As opposed to the Belizean Grove, the Bohemian Grove or Bohemian Club is an all-male, 130-year-old secret society of captains of industry, international power brokers and every Republican president since 1923. Herbert Hoover called it quote 'the greatest men's party on earth,' and Richard Nixon agreed," he says sarcastically before playing the White House Oval Office tape of Nixon calling it the most faggy God damned thing you could ever imagine.[152] "That is really saying something from a guy named tricky dick," Colbert continues.

“Every year, the Bohemian Club holds a retreat in the Bohemian Grove in northern California where they are rumored to engage in costumed pageantry, simulated human sacrifice and worshiping before a 40-foot stone owl. In 1999 after being denied membership in the Bohemian Grove, a group of women started their own same sex organization—the Belizean Grove.”

He then quotes a statement from Sotomayor denying they discriminate against men, reading “All interested individuals are duly considered by the membership committee [and] to the best of my knowledge, a man has never asked to be considered for membership.”

“Until now!” Colbert says. “Because I hereby demand to be admitted to this ladies’ shadowy cabal. Making me a member is the quickest way to put this controversy to rest…and between you and me, the Bohemian Grove is a total sausage fest. I can’t spend another summer watching Henry Kissinger belly dance around a statue of the tootsie pop owl, so madam I await your invitation.”

Depictions in Television and Film

Eyes Wide Shut

In 1999 Tom Cruise and his then-wife Nicole Kidman stared in *Eyes Wide Shut*, a bizarre film directed by Stanley Kubrick about a secret society of wealthy men and women in New York City who meet periodically in large mansions to engage in strange ceremonies and masked sex orgies.

Tom Cruise's character (Dr. Bill Hartford) is told about the parties by a friend of his who is paid to play the piano during the events. Out of curiosity Cruise rents a black robe and a mask from a local costume shop, and attends one of the parties. Once inside he witnesses a group of around 100 men and women conducting some kind of occult ritual while wearing long black robes and venetian masks just before having an orgy.

Tom Cruise is eventually discovered and escorted from the property after being given an ominous threat to remain silent about what he had seen. The following day, one of his wealthy friends reveals that he was in attendance at the ceremonial orgy and warned Cruise, "Do you have any idea how much trouble you got yourself into last night just by going over there? Who do you think those people were? Those were not just some ordinary people. If I told you their names...no, I'm not going to tell you their names...but if I did, I don't think you'd sleep so well at night."

As strange as it sounds, the plot of *Eyes Wide Shut* is based on actual events, and for some, the film brought to mind images of the Bohemian Grove or the rumored Illuminati sex orgies many believe occur at the private parties of the ruling elite. The Hellfire Club was a sex club in England where members of Europe's class would have sex orgies back in the eighteenth century.[153]

The club's name was a celebration of the Hellfire that sin is said to bring, and their motto was "Do what thou wilt," the same credo Aleister Crowley would adopt over 100 years later. The Hellfire club was a place where European royalty and wealthy men would get drunk and have group sex with prostitutes or loose women from their social circles. But sex clubs and swinger parties aren't just a thing of the past. In fact, today, they are more popular than ever.

In recent years a franchise of secretive elite sex clubs called Killing Kittens has popped up in Europe and the United States that hold *Eyes Wide Shut* themed parties in rented mansions in major cities like London, Los Angeles, and New York. Couples pay $250 per party to participate in masked orgies with other strangers.[154] The Killing Kittens club vets all requests and couples must be approved before they are allowed to attend a "Kittens Party."[155] Everyone wears a venetian mask, just like the party in *Eyes Wide Shut*, and everyone has sex with whoever they want, wherever they want, throughout the mansion right in front of everyone else.

A Christian singer named Jeannie Ortega, who had one of her singles reach the Billboard Top 100, wrote a blog in February of 2015 talking about how a record producer she once worked with said he was invited to an *Eyes Wide Shut*-type of party that was allegedly thrown by rapper Jay Z. "I was working with him [the producer] on my album and we had a conversation about the abnormal things the entertainment industry is involved in. At the time the word 'Illuminati' was not as popular, so we called it more so Freemasonry or something like that. The producer proceeded to share with me his own experiences while on Roc-A Fella while Jay-Z was a part of the company. He said he was once invited to a party where he was given a poker chip and asked to go to the party wearing a black trench coat with nothing else underneath it." [156]

The poker chip was supposedly the entrance pass. The producer, who Ortega did not name, said he did not attend. It's standard operation procedure to have people sign non-disclosure agreements when attending elite parties so they are legally prevented from talking about them and strict security measures are put in place which enforce a no cell phone policy so no pictures can be taken inside. Are such sex parties thrown by the Hollywood and political elite today like they were in the days of the Hellfire club?

Billionaire Andrew Epstein—a personal friend of Bill Clinton—who also rubs elbows with many political and Hollywood elite, is accused of organizing orgies with underage prostitutes and sex slaves to entertain him and his friends on his luxurious and secluded Virgin Islands estate.[157] Epstein is a sex offender, having been convicted of soliciting underage prostitutes in the past as young as fourteen-years-old.[158] Court documents also claim that Epstein had the bedrooms in his estate fitted with hidden cameras to videotape his high-powered guests' encounters with prostitutes so he could allegedly then use the videos to blackmail them.[159]

With swinger clubs becoming more and more popular, and websites and apps like Adult Friend Finder, a place where couples go to meet other couples and fulfill their strange sexual fetishes—and the well-known sexual deviancy of many powerful politicians and Hollywood elite, it shouldn't be much of a surprise that *Eyes Wide Shut* parties occur. It's likely that at some point in the future these sex magic orgy practitioners will come out of the closet and demand that the world accept their activities as "normal," much in the same way we saw the gay rights movement grow from a ripple to a tidal wave in the early 21st century.

South Park

Known for its no holds barred lampooning of pop culture figures, politicians, and religious beliefs, *South Park* tries to be as offensive as possible with their crude and often distasteful "humor." Occasionally the show ridicules various people and institutions by simply presenting bizarre facts in a humorous way, like they did in their episodes making fun of Mormonism and Scientology. Both of these episodes included a banner on the bottom of the screen that read, "This is actually what Mormons/Scientologists believe," and it really was what they believe! This disclaimer was used to point out the fact that the show wasn't making up these foolish beliefs, which made the episodes even more hilarious.

The use of this banner was also included in an episode about what was called the "Super Adventure Club." This episode, titled "The Return of Chef," was about an organization of pedophiles who travel around the world to have sex with young boys because they believe that it gives them magical powers. The current leader of the group explains, "Our club offers hope. Do you think we go around the world molesting children because it feels really good? No. Our club has a message and a secret that explains the mysteries of life."[160]

The leader continues to explain the history of the "Super Adventure Club," saying that a man named William P. Phineas, a pedophile who traveled all over the world molesting young boys, discovered a great secret. "But now the most wonderful part. You see, after having sex with all those children, Phineas realized that molesting all those kids had made him immortal. He discovered that children have things called marlocks in their bodies and when an adult has sex with a child, the marlocks implode feeding the adult's receptor cavity with energy that causes immortality."[161]

While this is not funny at all, and only in a morally bankrupt society would such dialogue be allowed to air on a major network like Comedy Central, the plot appears to have been inspired by the teachings of satanic sex magic—which—as I covered earlier in this book, is the belief that certain perverted sexual practices unlock spiritual powers latent in the mind. As I pointed out, Satanist Aleister Crowley believed that though sex magic a person could summon demons that would grant them supernatural power, and some believe that if these rituals involve children, it will enable them to harness "real" black magic forces.

South Park's creators and writers Trey Parker and Matt Stone must have stumbled across this idea since there are probably whispers in Hollywood about people doing such things. Aleister Crowley is highly revered by many musicians and celebrities today.[162] And again, just like the episodes making fun of Mormonism and Scientology, this episode included the note on the bottom of the screen saying, "This is what the Super Adventure Club actually believes."

How could the writers have possibly come up with such a crazy idea out of the blue, and why would they put a banner at the bottom of the screen saying this is what these people actually believe in the same manner they did in the other episodes about strange religious beliefs if they weren't in a sense trying to be serious?

The "Super Adventure Club" is possibly a reference to NAMBLA, the North American Man Boy Love Association, a "pedophile rights" group which claims there is nothing wrong with pedophilia, and want society to accept it as "normal" as many have in the case of homosexuality. It wouldn't be surprising at all to learn that NAMBLA members had incorporated satanic sex magic into their teachings as another way to try to justify their mental illness and child abuse.

Teddy Bears' Picnic

The man who did the voice for Mr. Burns on *The Simpsons* for over twenty-five years, Harry Shearer, wrote and directed a little known (and commercial failure) which was a spoof on the Bohemian Grove. *Teddy Bears' Picnic* went straight to DVD and was too terrible for any distributer to put it in theaters. The movie was made in 2002; just two years after Alex Jones had infiltrated the Bohemian Grove and videotaped the Cremation of Care ritual, which served as Shearer's inspiration for his film.

The plot of *Teddy Bears' Picnic* involves an exclusive men's club called Zambezi Glen that meets in the woods for their annual summer party where they get drunk, dress in drag, enjoy peeing on trees, and have sex with prostitutes. An employee of the campground secretly videotapes some of the members' activities hoping to sell the footage to the media, but is spotted and chased into the woods. The well-connected men of Zambezi Glen then call in the military to track the guy down using helicopters and K-9s, and in the process end up accidentally setting the forest on fire.

The Molech statue in the Grove is depicted as a large pelican in Shearer's film, and club members dress up in Halloween-type witch costumes and conduct a ritual called the "Assassination of Time." Shearer has admitted to being a guest at the Bohemian Grove and talked about his experience there with British television producer Jon Ronson in an episode of his *Secret Rulers of the World* series which basically makes fun of New World Order conspiracy theorists.

Being a left-wing Hollywood liberal, Shearer labeled the members of Bohemian Grove "white Christians." He told Ronson, "You don't have to be a conspiracy theorist to know that this is a get together of very powerful guys. Whatever it is they're doing there, whether they're running the world or just reliving their adolescence, they're a self-selected group of powerful white Christian Americans."[163]

He then went on to say he likes conspiracy theories because he thinks they're entertaining, but doesn't believe they are true. "I love the theories, because I believe that these people are the only real good narrative writers left in the English language. They do write really good compelling narratives, but I just don't happen to think they're true."

In the interview he then goes on to stereotype conspiracy theorists as gun-loving, backwoods hicks who live in the middle of nowhere. "And you can imagine, I'm in New York and they're keeping me spellbound. Imagine being isolated on a ranch in Montana with nobody except your son, who you're teaching to shoot a rifle, this would be some amazing stuff coming through the night to you, you know."[164] Apparently Harry Shearer thinks Montana is stuck back in the 1800s.

Ronson asked him if he thought the Bohemian Grove was a secret society, to which Shearer answered, "Yeah but I mean it's a secret society the way the secret society that I was inducted into at UCLA in my senior year is a secret society. There is a lot of meaningless mumbo jumbo and the main conspiracy is to take it seriously."

"If you've ever been through a secret society in college, you know this stuff. Just add two zeros to the budget and you're doing what you did when you were eighteen-years-old," he concluded.

Just to put Shearer's twenty-five year career with *The Simpsons* into perspective, from around 1989 up until 1998 he was paid $30,000 per episode, then after the show became a wild success and renegotiating his contract, this jumped to $125,000. His income then jumped again to $250,000 an episode a few years later. In 2008 he was being paid $400,000 per episode, but he and other *Simpsons* staff had to take a pay cut in 2013 in order to lower production costs of the show or else Fox was going to cancel it, so his pay was reduced to $300,000 per episode.[165]

So Shearer himself is just as wealthy as some of the Bohemian Grove members, and being part of Hollywood’s elite means he probably has a lot more in common with the men inside the Bohemian Grove than he does with the average American.

Lucy, Daughter of the Devil

The Turner Broadcasting Network (TBN) owns the Cartoon Network—which, as its name suggests—consists of cartoons primarily for kids, but after primetime, when most children are supposed to be in bed, the network changes its format to what they call "Adult Swim" and airs raunchy cartoons supposedly aimed at adults. One such show called *Lucy, Daughter of the Devil* was a short ten minute CGI comedy about Satan trying to convince his daughter, Lucy, to fulfill her role as the Antichrist.

In 2007 an episode titled "Human Sacrifice" was about a satanic ritual at the Bohemian Grove which was being performed to honor a senator who had been chosen to be elected as the next president. "Chosen to be elected," meaning the elite members control the elections through fraud and had chosen him to be their next puppet.[166]

A character named DJ Jesús, who is Jesus Christ—and Lucy's boyfriend in the show, was chosen as the person to be sacrificed to celebrate the new president being picked. Jesus was lured to the Bohemian Grove under the pretense that he would be DJing a party that will be like the film *Eyes Wide Shut* and is told that Alan Greenspan (former chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank) will be there.

The Bohemian Grove, as depicted in the cartoon, is clearly modeled after the actual Grove and includes the giant owl statue with the altar at its feet and men wearing hooded robes holding flaming torches—all identical to the real Bohemian Grove. "Half of Washington" is in attendance in the episode and everyone chants "Hail Satan" as the ritual begins. The Devil even boasts that ten presidents have announced their candidacy in the Bohemian Grove as the ceremony begins.

Before he can be killed, DJ Jesús escapes and the episode ends by zooming out to an aerial view showing the location of the incident being in Northern California, where the actual Grove is located.

Conclusion

After sixty years of mainstream media blackouts regarding the elusive and secretive Bilderberg Group, it became impossible in the age of social media and smartphones to keep them under wraps any longer. The easily swallowed claims of the Bilderberg Group being “just another business conference,” are now offered up after the decades of denials about their existence and power, but writing off the Bohemian Grove as “just another party” is not so easy.

Most of the public gullibly buy into the claims now that the Bilderberg Group is just a bunch of men in suits getting together for another boring meeting, but trying to explain the Cremation of Care—not to mention the allegations of Satanism and child abuse that hang over the Bohemian Grove—is quite a bit more difficult. The video footage and photos of the annual “human sacrifice” ceremony would be disturbing to most people once they saw it, and no amount of whitewash or spin would remove the suspicions that many have about the Bohemian Grove.

A bunch of guys meeting for a three-day conference in the case of the Bilderberg Group is pretty easy to brush off as something rather normal—a bunch of men gathering in the middle of a secluded forest, dressing up in hooded robes, and engaging in a “human sacrifice” ritual—not so much.

Even setting this aside, it’s clear that the Bohemian Grove serves as an elite consensus-building party, held about a month after the more formal Bilderberg conference which occurs in the late spring each year. If one wants to gain a comprehensive view of the world and the mechanisms of power that work to guide it, then learning about the Bohemian Grove is a critical piece of the puzzle.

As Mary Moore of the Bohemian Grove Action Network once said, “Kiwanis and Rotary clubs in every small town has that same sort of ‘good-old-boy network’ of prominent men in the community getting to know each other through a social club. But when you get to the level of the Bohemian Grove, it’s a very global network, and much more powerful.”[167]

When the wealthiest and most powerful men in the world, from heads of industry to high ranking government officials and those who work in the intelligence agencies, all meet together to hang out and listen to off the record lectures given by a variety of experts and insiders, it is undeniable that this has a tremendous impact on society as a whole.

At the time I’m finishing writing this in June of 2015, very few books exist on the Bohemian Grove, and most Americans have still never heard of it. The stories are so strange that even when they do, many dismiss them as an Internet urban legend or a conspiracy theory, but you now hold the evidence in your hands.

I hope this book has helped shed some light on this dark subject, and put some of the wild allegations into their proper context so you can understand where they came from and why they spread. If you would like to continue your education on related subjects, I encourage you to checkout some of my previous books, and if it’s not too much to ask, please write a brief (or lengthy) review for this one and rate it on Amazon.com or whatever e-bookstore you downloaded it from to let other potential readers know what you think.

Please pass this book on to someone else now that you have finished it to share the information with them, and thanks again for investing your time and energy into my ten-year-long investigation of *The Bohemian Grove: Facts & Fiction*.

Further Reading

The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction

Secret societies have both fascinated and frightened people for hundreds of years. Often the infamous Illuminati is mentioned as the core of conspiracies which span the globe. The Illuminati is actually a historical secret society which had goals of revolutions and world domination dating back to the 1770s.

Since then, rumors and conspiracy theories involving the Illuminati continue to spread, sometimes finding their way into popular novels like Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons* and Hollywood movies like *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. Some men have even come forward claiming to be former members, offering details of what they allege are the inner workings of the organization. When you sift through all of the information available on the subject, you may be surprised that the truth is stranger than fiction.

In *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, conspiracy and occult expert Mark Dice separates history from Hollywood and shows why tales of the secret society won't die.

The New World Order: Facts & Fiction

What is the New World Order? Proponents say that it’s an anticipated new era of global cooperation between diverse nations and cultures aimed at ushering in a utopia providing all the earth's citizens with everything they need.

Detractors claim it’s the systematic take-over by secret societies, quasi-government entities and corporations who are covertly organizing a global socialist all-powerful government which aims to regulate every aspect of citizens’ lives, rendering them a perpetual working-class while the elite leadership lives in luxury.

Conspiracy theory expert Mark Dice looks at the evidence, claims, and conspiracy theories as he takes you down the rabbit hole to *The New World Order*.

- *Calls for a New World Order*
- *World Governed Through Secret Societies*
- *Mainstream Media Controlled by the Elite*
- *Banking, Money, and Taxes*
- *One World Currency*
- *Population Reduction*
- *One World Religion*
- *A Coming Global Dictator Who Will Claim to be God*

Illuminati in the Music Industry

Famous pop stars and rappers from Jay-Z and Rick Ross to Rihanna and Christina Aguilera are believed by many to be a part of the infamous Illuminati secret society. These stars allegedly use Illuminati and satanic symbolism in their music videos and on their clothes that goes unnoticed by those not “in the know.”

Since these stars appear in our livings rooms on family friendly mainstream shows like Good Morning America, Ellen, and dozens of others—and are loved by virtually all the kids—they couldn’t possibly have anything to do with the infamous Illuminati or anything “satanic,” could they? Some famous musicians have even publicly denounced the Illuminati in interviews or songs.

Illuminati in the Music Industry takes a close look at some of today’s hottest stars and decodes the secret symbols, song lyrics, and separates the facts from the fiction in this fascinating topic. You may never see your favorite musicians the same way ever again.

Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True

In *Big Brother*, Mark Dice details actual high-tech spy gadgets, mind-reading machines, government projects, and emerging artificial intelligence systems that seem as if they came right out of George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Orwell's famous book was first published in 1949, and tells the story of a nightmarish future where citizens have lost all privacy and are continuously monitored by the omniscient Big Brother surveillance system which keeps them obedient to a totalitarian government.

The novel is eerily prophetic as many of the fictional systems of surveillance described have now become a reality. Mark Dice shows you the scary documentation that Big Brother is watching you, and is more powerful than you could imagine.

- *Orwellian Government Programs*
- *Facial Recognition Scanners*
- *Mind Reading Machines*
- *Neural Interfaces*
- *Psychotronic Weapons*
- *The Nanny State*
- *Artificial Intelligence*
- *Cybernetic Organisms*

The Resistance Manifesto

The Resistance Manifesto by Mark Dice contains 450 pages of extensively researched and documented information drawing from declassified documents, mainstream news articles, religious texts, and personal interviews. A dark web of evil is exposed like never before, making Bible Prophecy and the New World Order crystal clear.

Learn the most powerful information about the Illuminati, plans for the rise of the Antichrist, the institutions, people, and powers involved, and how you can fight them.

"Powerful and compelling. A must read."

- Alex Jones from Infowars.com

"Mark takes you beyond 9/11 into a world of secret societies, mystics, and madmen."

- Jason Bermas, Producer of *Loose Change*

"Mark Dice is not a conspiracy theorist, he is a conspiracy realist. This book tells it like it is. I urge every American to read it and pass it on to your friends and relatives. Wake up America!"

- Ted Gunderson, Senior Special Agent in Charge (retired) FBI Los Angeles

Inside the Illuminati

When looking into the existence and alleged activities of the infamous Illuminati secret society, one finds an overwhelming amount of conspiracy theories, hidden history, half-truths and hoaxes.

But how much truth is there to some of these claims? What is the real history of the mysterious group? Do they continue to exist today? What is the evidence? And what are they doing?

After a decade of research sifting through the facts and the fiction, secret society expert Mark Dice will help you navigate through the complex maze from the original documents to rare revelations from elite politicians, bankers and businessmen, as he takes you *Inside the Illuminati*.

- *Insider Revelations*
- *Original Writings*
- *Spiritual Beliefs*
- *Occult Symbolism*
- *Early Evidence*
- *Zodiac Club*
- *“Ex Members”*
- *Communism*
- *Seraphic Society*
- *The Jesuits*
- *The Jasons*
- *And more!*

The Bilderberg Group: Facts & Fiction

Every spring since 1954, a group of approximately one hundred of the world's most powerful businessmen, politicians, media moguls, and international royalty meet in secret for several days to discuss the course of the world. Called the Bilderberg Group after the Bilderberg Hotel in Oosterbeck, Holland where their first meeting was held, this off the record annual gathering is said to be where the globalist puppet masters plot and scheme.

Does this group of power elite develop new political, economic, and cultural policies that are then covertly implemented by their underlings? Do they choose who our world leaders will be, including the next president of the United States? Is the Bilderberg Group a shadow government? Are they the Illuminati? Why has the mainstream media had a complete blackout regarding their meetings for decades? Who attends? And who pays for it?

Is this "just another conference?" Or, are the "conspiracy theorists" right? What is the evidence? How were they first discovered? What are they doing? And should the public be concerned? Secret society expert Mark Dice will show you the hidden history, financial records, and some of the insider leaks showing how this small group's consensus has staggering effects on the political landscape of the world, global economies, wars, and more, as he uncovers *The Bilderberg Group: Facts & Fiction*.

- *Their History*
- *Bilderberg's Goals*
- *Their Discovery*
- *Recent Meetings*

- *Members and Guests*
- *Actions and Effects*
- *Financial Records*
- *The Oath of Silence*
- *Media Blackouts*
- *Exclusive Photos*
- *And More!*

The True Story of Fake News

Is fake news being spread through social media as part of an information war? Are political operatives publishing disinformation to smear the opposition and help their own agendas? Who creates fake news, how does it spread, and can it be stopped?

What are the real world effects of fake news stories that go viral? Did it affect the outcome of the 2016 presidential election? Or is ‘fake news’ a fake problem, designed to justify tighter control over the mechanisms of sharing information online to drive audiences back to brand name media outlets because their audiences and influence are dwindling?

Media analyst Mark Dice takes a close look at the fake news phenomenon and the implications of mega-corporations like Facebook, Google, and Twitter becoming the ultimate gatekeepers and distributors of news and information.

You will see the powerful and deceptive methods of manipulation that affect us all, as numerous organizations and political activists cunningly plot to have their stories seen, heard, and believed by as many people as possible.

The depths of lies, distortions, and omissions from traditional mainstream media will shock you; and now they’re colluding with the top tech companies trying to maintain their information monopolies. This is *The True Story of Fake News*.

About the Author

Mark Dice is a media analyst and author who, in an entertaining and educational way, exposes our celebrity-obsessed culture and the role mainstream media and elite secret societies play in shaping our lives.

Mark's YouTube channel has over 1 million subscribers and more 400 million views. His viral videos have been mentioned on the Fox News Channel, CNN, the Drudge Report, TMZ, the *New York Daily News*, the *Washington Times*, and other media outlets around the world.

He has been featured on various television shows including the History Channel's *Decoded* and *America's Book of Secrets*; *Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura*, *Secret Societies of Hollywood* on E! Channel, *America Declassified* on the Travel Channel, and is a frequent guest on Coast to Coast AM, The Alex Jones Show, and more.

Mark Dice is the author of 11 books, including *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*, *The New World Order: Facts & Fiction*, *Inside the Illuminati*, *The Bilderberg Group: Facts & Fiction*, *The Bohemian Grove: Facts & Fiction*, and more.

While much of Mark's work confirms the existence and continued operation of various powerful secret societies, he is also dedicated to debunking conspiracy theories and hoaxes and separating the facts from the fiction; hence the "Facts & Fiction" subtitle for several of his books.

He has a bachelor's degree in communication from California State University.

Connect with Mark on: Facebook.com/MarkDice

Twitter.com/MarkDice.com

YouTube.com/MarkDice

MarkDice.com

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Causing Trouble

High School Pranks, College Craziness, and Moving to California

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and Moving to
California

Mark Dice

The Resistance
San Diego, CA

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Introduction

Kids always cause trouble when they’re growing up, especially boys, but not like my friends and I. We didn’t steal cars, commit armed robberies, or burn down someone’s house. Our trouble was different. It was more creative. It was more fun. It still landed us in handcuffs, in the newspapers, and for me, ultimately getting kicked out of high school and featured on the evening news. But there was a style to our trouble. It was often misguided creative energy that we didn’t know how to handle in our youth, and would manifest itself in our outrageous schemes, our over-the-top pranks, and a life that was more exciting than something out of a movie.

Years later, whenever discussing high school pranks or stupid things people did growing up, I always had the best stories. Always. And not just one epic story that became legendary at the school for years afterward. I had story after story of the craziness. My stories were so entertaining to those listening that occasionally people said I should write a book about them, so I did.

I’ll tell you about every detail: Painting obscenities consisting of 30-foot-tall letters in the snow on the football field using food coloring mixed with water in a giant weed sprayer; sending hundreds of magazine subscriptions to a teacher and checking the “bill me later” box; replacing the magazines in the school library with old pornos from the 1970s that a friend of mine found in her dad’s basement; sending a fake college rejection letter to a former friend informing him that the school had changed its mind about enrolling him; and that’s just the beginning.

Two years after getting thrown out of high school for a prank I orchestrated that got out of hand, I moved to California with one of my best friends and the craziness continued for about a year before I really started to grow up and channel my energy into more positive things. You could say that immediately after moving to California was the lowest point in my life as you will discover in this book. Within two weeks I found myself in jail for a DUI and later helped turn my roommate’s closet into a marijuana growing operation hoping we wouldn’t have to spend money on pot anymore since we smoked it every day. Instead of getting jobs, we started selling fake IDs to people at my college in order to make money because we didn’t want to work since we came to California to become successful and “live the dream.” We were headed on a crash course with complete disaster.

I don’t know what it was that caused all of this craziness to manifest itself in my brain and in my life. Maybe it was because I never had cable TV growing up, so instead of mindlessly sitting in front of the television for hours on end, I had to come up with things to do to entertain myself. In the 1990s there was no high-speed Internet yet, there were only dial-up modems that took hours to download even small files. Maybe it was because I lived in Wisconsin, and for six months out of the year the weather was too bad to go outside and I was stuck indoors for months on end, so we had to do something for fun. Maybe it’s genetic, because from what I understand one of my grandfathers was a trouble maker when he was young. Or maybe it’s because my mom wouldn’t let me take karate class. I’m not really sure.

My trouble making crew mainly consisted of Fred, Diego, Ken, Rick, as well as Marty and Brent. Fred and Diego are my two best friends and we have all known each other since the first grade and lived on the same block growing up. Ken and I became good friends in the fifth grade after he moved to the area with his mom and brother, and I met Rick, Marty, and Brent freshman year of high school.

This book is 100% true. Everything that is written about here in this book happened just the way it is described and nothing is exaggerated or fabricated. Everyone who knows me and grew up with me is familiar with a lot of these stories since they witnessed them first hand. The names of some of the people involved have been changed to maintain their privacy, since you'll find a lot of craziness occurred that I'm sure they don't want to be connected to, even though the statute of limitations is probably passed and nobody can be prosecuted. If anyone has the same name that is used in this book, it is merely a coincidence, and is in no way referring to them.

And keeping in line with the typical cliché to avoid any legal problems (both for myself *and* for you) from people attempting to copy anything that my friends and I did, I insist that you please do not try any of this stuff at home…or anywhere…ever. You'll have enough fun living vicariously through me just from reading about what we did, so there's no need for you or your friends to do it too. And before you get all judgmental and think that I'm a completely terrible human being for some of things I've done, please read through the entire book before coming to judgment, and remember that it's tough being a kid.

High School

Fake Pregnancy Test Results

Rumors started going around that two particular teachers at our school were having an affair. Mr. Bell and Mrs. Hartnett. One of them was divorced, but the other one we thought was apparently still married (as far as we knew). They also somehow convinced the school board to let them "team teach" a course combining art class and geography in what they called "global studies." It was the dumbest class ever, and we didn't really learn anything and pretty much just drew a bunch of pictures and did childish arts and crafts. I hated Mr. Bell and his dumb class that was probably just an excuse for him to spend more time with Mrs. Hartnett. He was an obese man with a fairly normal looking upper body, and then around his stomach and waist, his body just inflated into a massive blob, making him look like an oversized bowling pin or pear.

Anyway, a lot of us students believed that they were having an affair, so I sent an envelope to the school addressed to Mrs. Hartnett with large letters printed on the outside that read, "PREGNANCY TEST RESULTS ENCLOSED. PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL." As you may know, most teachers have their own little mail slots in the school office and whoever receives the mail has to go through it all and put it in the appropriate slot. The words "PREGNANCY TEST RESULTS ENCLOSED" were so large and noticeable that whoever was separating the mail in the office couldn't miss it, and I'm sure they couldn't help but gossip about this strange piece of mail that came in addressed to Mrs. Hartnett, and that was exactly what I wanted. Inside the envelope I put a piece of paper that said "Fuck You" written across it. Not as creative as the outside of the envelope, but hey. Of course, neither she nor Mr. Bell ever mentioned anything about this envelope after she had received it, but it wasn't the last I would hear about it.

Probably six months later, maybe even a year later, my mom—who usually never approved of my antics—came home from grocery shopping one afternoon and told me that she bumped into Mrs. So & So, who worked in the office at the high school, and my mom started smiling excitedly like she had heard some incredibly funny news and went on to tell me that this woman told her about the pregnancy test results letter that Mrs. Hartnett had received and figured it was my doing. She also told my mom that she thought it was hilarious. My mom and I started laughing, and she went on to say that the office lady had figured that it was my handiwork (and she was right).

Oh yeah, at some point, Mrs. Hartnett had divorced her husband and that summer married Mr. Bell, and became Mrs. Bell. We were right. They had been in a relationship, and this was certainly not the end of me tormenting them.

Magazine Subscriptions to Teacher

You know how when you pick up a magazine, about 20 subscription cards fall out every time you flip through the pages? You know those little postcards that you put your name and address on and send in to subscribe to the magazine? Well, I noticed that you didn’t have to send any money in with your subscription and you could just check the “bill me later” box and they would start sending you the magazines without having to pay for them right away because they would send you a bill later. It was very generous of them, so I figured Mr. Bell could use some of that generosity.

I drove to the mall a few days later and went to the magazine section of the bookstore and started collecting the subscription cards for every magazine on the shelves. Since each magazine has about 5 of these little cards fall out every time you open one, sometimes I collected two or three of the subscription cards for the same magazine. My stack of subscription cards kept growing and growing. I had cards for magazines I never even knew existed. I figured Mr. Bell could use some of this interesting reading material, so I spent an hour or so filling out his name and the school’s address on the cards and marked “bill me later” and dropped them off in the mail and started laughing out loud. I didn’t even have to put stamps on them because the postage was all prepaid by the magazines! It was great!

It must have been around 200 different cards. I subscribed him to *Good Housekeeping* magazine, *Time, Newsweek, Cosmo* , all the fashion magazines, arts and craft magazines, fitness magazines, celebrity gossip rags, and even *Penthouse* and *Playboy* . The stack of cards was over an inch tall by the time I was done collecting them.

I could already see what was going to happen. In just a week or two, Mr. Bell’s mailbox at school would be flooded with new magazines, probably 10 or more a day, every day, every week, for who knows how long, all with his name on them. Not only this, but a few weeks later he would also be sent the bill for them all. Even though I wasn’t able to see this with my own eyes, I knew this would happen and that was satisfaction enough. He would know it was me. Only I would come up with such a devious, yet creative, idea and actually put it in motion. I figured he would never mention that this had happened to him out of embarrassment, and he wouldn't want to encourage more subscriptions or have it happen to other teachers, but this wasn't the last I would hear about the magazines.

Months later, my mom had to come to the school to have a conference with Mr. Bell, the school principal, the vice principal, the guidance counselor, and myself, because of some other trouble I was causing Mr. Bell which involved me drawing a picture of someone holding a gun and shooting a fat man shaped like a bowling pin that resembled him. (Oh, I popped a bunch of inflatable globes he had hanging from his ceiling, too.) The school was not happy about my drawing (or the globes). The picture didn't have his name on it, so I didn't see what the big deal was.

During the meeting I said, "Do you think this resembles you, Mr. Bell? What makes you think that?" I was trying to get him to say he was basically a fat blob like the guy in my drawing. He looked like a moron, and instead of my mom being mad at me for her having to come to the school for our big meeting, she was mad at him and thought it was a waste of her time. He wouldn't even admit that the picture was of him, and he insisted he was just concerned because it was "violent" and even asked if I had any issues with the local bowling alley because the guy in my drawing was a human bowling pin because that was one of our nicknames for him since that was basically the shape of his body.

It was during this meeting that Mr. Bell mentioned that he had been getting countless magazines sent to him that he didn't subscribe to, and he said he had to send a letter to every single one explaining that he had not subscribed to them and asked for his subscriptions to be canceled and the bills voided. The coalition seated across from me asked if I knew anything about it. I'm sure from the look on my face they had their answer, but of course I denied it. They couldn't prove anything and they knew it. The meeting was a complete waste of my time, and my mom's, so I had to pay Mr. Bell back.

A few days later I started taking up a collection to enroll Mr. Bell in the “Assholes of America Club” which was something I had found in a magazine somewhere. You could pay something like $30 and enroll someone and the company would send them a T-shirt that says “Official Member of the Assholes of America Club,” along with a membership card with that person’s name printed on it, and a nice letter explaining that someone had enrolled them in the club because they are an asshole. This time, instead of just sending his membership kit to the school where I would not see the look on his face when he opened it, I decided to send it to my parents’ house so I could then place it on his desk before class.

When the package came, I brought it to class the next day, and before he arrived, I set the T-shirt, letter, and his membership card on top of his podium where he would be standing in just a few minutes. Some of my friends knew exactly what I was doing and anxiously awaited Mr. Bell’s reaction. I have to give the man a little credit, because instead of flipping out and asking who did this and making a scene, he simply removed it from the podium and put it on the shelf underneath it without saying a word. It was still funny.

My plan was almost ruined because my mom usually got the mail every day, so she received the package addressed to Mr. Bell, and opened it up to see what was going on. She hid the shirt and things, and left the empty package sitting on the kitchen table and confronted me about it when I came back from school. She almost wouldn’t give me the stuff because she pretty much knew what I was going to do with it, but I somehow convinced her to turn it over to me so I could bring it to school the next day.

I basically threatened to do something even worse to Mr. Bell if she didn’t turn over the goods, so she reluctantly returned them to me. Sometimes I was *me* who deserved to be in the Assholes of America Club, I know.

The Underwear Check

Because I kept messing up the computers at school and causing them to display pictures of girls in bikinis and then freeze up, a policy was implemented where the school made all of us sign an agreement that we would pay $25 an hour for a computer technician (really just the computer teacher) to repair any damage we caused, or else we couldn’t use the computers anymore. One day instead of doing my usual thing of installing new files on the computers to mess them up or formatting the hard drives, I simply reversed the mouse and the keyboard cables to two different computers—that’s it—and the teacher charged me twenty-five dollars to switch them back! I couldn’t believe it.

This was during a computer programming class, and there’s not much I could do just sitting there, so I had to pay the money so I could use the computers again. At first I sat through class for a few days in protest doing nothing, telling the teacher I’m not going to pay, but I soon realized he didn’t care and wasn’t going to budge. At first I thought about bringing in a large box of twenty-five hundred pennies all dumped loose inside, but I came up with an even better idea.

I had learned somewhere that a check didn’t need to be written on any official paper like money did, and that you could technically write a check on anything as long is it had your name and account number on it and you signed it, so I decided to write the school a check using my Fruit of the Loom tighty-whities underwear. I stretched the underwear over a square piece of cardboard and used a black magic marker to write in the checking account number and all the details, and the next day I put them in an envelope and handed it to the vice principal and told her it was payment for my “damages” to the computers.

A few years later I was trying my hand at some stand-up comedy and a local paper wrote up an article about me that mentioned I would be performing at a certain comedy club one Saturday night, and who did I see in the audience, but Mr. Marvin, the computer teacher whose life I made miserable. I thought it was a coincidence but after my routine he came up to me and handed me a pair of underwear that had “To Mark, from Mr. Marvin” written on them with black magic marker! I couldn’t believe it.

He had seen the article in the paper saying I would be performing there and thought he would be funny and try to get me back for the underwear check I gave the school for the trouble I caused in his computer class. I didn’t really think his check was funny, I thought it was creepy, and I left the underwear laying on one of the tables. We always thought he was gay and this kind of reinforced that idea for me.

There was a small office in the back of Mr. Marvin's classroom that was shared with the science room right next door and we noticed occasionally Mr. Marvin and other teachers would hear the phone ringing and tell the class they would be back in a moment and go into the office to take the call. Well, we got a hold of the phone number, which was written on the side of the phone, and we would occasionally call it from a payphone in the hallway and when another teacher answered it we would say, in the gayest voice possible, something like, "Hey, is Mr. Marvin available? This is his boyfriend and I'm sorry to interrupt him, but I really needed to speak with him for a moment."

Sometimes Mr. Marvin would answer the phone himself and we would make some rude comment and hang up, usually something along the lines of him being gay. He was actually married to a woman and had a son, but we still thought he was a closet homo and he certainly acted like one.

Food Coloring in the Snow

You might be familiar with the large weed sprayers that consist of a two or three gallon plastic jug that people fill with weed killer and pump up and carry around their yard to spray weeds with. Well, it was winter time, and there were no weeds, but one night I still came up with a use for the weed sprayer that ultimately led to giant obscenities being painted in the snow on the football field behind the school and on the tennis courts that everyone would see the next morning when they arrived.

I bought some food coloring at the local grocery store and filled the weed sprayer up with water and made a late-night visit to the school after it had just snowed. Using my boots I dragged my feet on the ground and drew huge 30-foot-tall letters in the snow, spelling out the word "Fuck" on a large slope facing the school on the edge of the football field. I then took the bright blue water I had mixed up in the weed sprayer using the food coloring and filled in the letters by spraying all around them, turning the snow blue. I wanted to spell out "Fuck You Mr. Mueller" (the name of the principal) but I soon realized there wasn't enough water for this, although the effect would still be the same. A simple "Fuck" would still do. The lines making up the word were probably three feet wide and about 30 feet tall.

The next morning as I walked from the parking lot to the school entrance, there in the distance, on the side of the pure white, snow-covered football field was a huge "Fuck" in bright blue letters. You couldn't miss it. It was enormous. The slope it was on was so steep that you could see it as clear as day from the school. The janitors were out there with shovels and rakes trying to move the snow around to cover it up, but the letters were so large that it wasn't really doing any good. Everyone saw it. There was a large staircase inside the school that almost everyone would walk down to get from the upper level to the lower level, and there in clear view through the windows was a gigantic blue "Fuck" starring you in the face.

The principal's office overlooked the tennis courts on another side of the building, where a slightly smaller "Shit" was spelled out that couldn't be missed. I didn't even get called to the principal's office because Mr. Mueller knew I would just deny I had anything to do with it. A lot of people figured it was me, and when the other students asked me if I did it, my face would light up with a huge grin giving them their answer.

Sidewalk Chalk

Sidewalk chalk, if you don't know, consists of huge sticks of colored chalk that kids use to draw on sidewalks and driveways. The chalk sticks are about the size of a large carrot and come in a variety of colors. While a lot of people use cans of spray paint to put graffiti on buildings, this is vandalism and was crossing the line I had thought, but somehow the idea popped into my head that I should buy some sidewalk chalk and then write a bunch of obscenities all over the outside of the high school. I mean *all over* the outside.

I bought a literal bucket of jumbo sidewalk chalk at Toys "R" Us that contained 20 or 30 different sticks and I rounded up some of my crew and late one night we chalked practically every square foot of the outside of the school on every wall around the entire building. It took more than an hour to finish and we had a bunch of us out there that night. We drew large pot leaves using the green chalk, we wrote “Fuck You,” “School Sucks,” “Smoke Weed” and just about every other offensive thing we could think of. There were also ten-foot-long penises and derogatory statements about the principal and several of our least favorite teachers written in three-foot-tall letters. While none of us were artists, we sure did put a lot of detail into our drawings.

Let me be clear that this was not on the sidewalks around the school. We did this on the outer walls and it was so noticeable that even people driving by could see our handiwork when we were done. There were no 24 hour security guards, or even any surveillance cameras. This was in the 1990s, remember, in a small town in the middle of nowhere. The next morning, the janitors were out there with sponges and buckets of water washing it all off. It must have taken them hours to clean off our masterpiece, possibly even all day.

As clever as this was, the one thing I overlooked was the fact that this was a Friday night and there was no school in the morning so hardly anyone got to see our work. There was a track meet that Saturday, so the track team saw some of it, but it would have been much better if we had done it on a different night so everyone would have seen it in the morning before school. Nobody’s perfect, you know.

Shoes on the Telephone Wires

I’m sure you’ve occasionally seen a pair of shoes hanging on some telephone wires above the street, a scene that looks very odd and always makes people wonder why someone would toss them up there and whose shoes they were. I always had to do things a little extreme, so instead of just throwing up an old pair of shoes over some telephone wires, I put the word out at school for people to bring me their old pairs of shoes because I was going to do something cool with them, and everyone knew that meant I was going to do something crazy.

Over the next few days people brought me dozens of shoes and I gathered them up in a trash bag at the end of the day and brought them home and tied the laces together for each pair. A few days later, on a Friday night, my friends and I drove through the town and would pull over on the side of Main Street every few blocks and throw the pairs of Shoes up on the wires right in the middle of the road so they would catch and just dangle there. We did this on almost every single wire that crossed Main Street. I'm talking about 15 pairs in the span of just a few blocks and we were just getting started. After a while we were laughing so hard, as we tried to throw the shoes up to get them to catch on the wires, we were too weak to toss them high enough.

It wasn't even that late at night when we did this, and a lot of times there were cars in the distance approaching as we stood in the middle of the street trying to toss them up. We didn't care. If a cop saw us, we would have taken off on foot and enjoyed the chase. After we were done filling up the wires on Main Street, we drove over to the other major road that went through town and flung shoes on all those wires, too. These were the only two roads that came into town, and no matter which way people came in or out, they saw the shoes. A lot of shoes. Shoe after shoe after shoe. One pair hanging on practically every single wire that crossed the street. It looked very weird and the *entire town* couldn't miss them the next morning.

A few days later the shoes were all taken down, a task that must have taken a cherry picker and the entire day. I still had a bunch of shoes that we hadn't used, so my friends and I went out *that same night* and put them all back up again! One pair we tossed up was a pair of boots that a girl gave me, and since they didn't have any laces to tie together, I took a piece of rope and punched a hole in each boot and tied them together so we could still hang them. For some reason someone gave me a large doll when I was collecting the shoes and so I tied a rope around it and tied the other end to a block of wood and we even tossed that up and got it to hang from the wires.

We were laughing so hard we could hardly muster the strength to throw some of the pairs high enough to get them to catch and wrap around the wires. It was the middle of winter and absolutely freezing outside and that didn't make it any easier. This time we would park the car over on a side street and each grab a few pairs of shoes and then walk over to Main Street and spread out and do our thing. We did it again. Both major streets coming into the town were *full* of shoes right in the middle of the road. When we were done we couldn’t help but think of the poor city worker who was told to take the shoes down earlier that day, and we envisioned him getting yelled at by his boss because they were still up.

“Bob, I thought I told you to take down all of those damn shoes yesterday!”

“I did boss.”

“Then why are there still 20 pairs hanging over Main Street?”

Just imagine their bewilderment. It wasn’t a few days later, or a week later that the shoes went back up. It was later *that same day* . They must have been *pissed* .

The local paper covered the story and said it was a mystery as to why it was happening and claimed the hanging shoes were dangerous because they distracted drivers and could cause an accident or fall onto a vehicle and break their windshield. Of course, we never really thought about that possibility, because, well, you know, we were dumb kids. I was able to call in and get on the air of a local rock station and told the audience that we were a group called the “Instigators” and that the shoes signified our desire to legalize marijuana. They really had no meaning, but I thought we could encourage others around the area to start tossing up shoes too. We then traveled to the radio station later that night and threw a bunch of shoes on the telephone wires in front of their building.

Since our small little town was covered with shoes (again), we decided to branch out and expand the operation to the neighboring cities. I specifically wanted to get shoes in the middle of every major intersection so they would be seen by the most people. This was extremely difficult since there was rarely a time when no cars were stopped at the light at the intersections, so we would just toss them up right in front of the cars stopped at the red light. We didn’t care. Who would have thought that shoes could be so fun?

Donating Pornos to the Library

One of my friends found a large collection of her dad's pornos from the 1970s in her basement, and she just knew I could put them to good use so she asked me if I wanted them. Of course I did, so she brought them to school the next day so I could donate them to the school library. Pornos from the 1970s, as you can imagine, are very different from today's pornos. The girls were not exactly the most attractive women, and let's just say there was plenty of hair down there. Nevertheless, I thought the school library could benefit from having a better selection of magazines, especially some vintage 1970s porn.

Most of the current magazines were placed in protective plastic covers which were labeled accordingly, so one afternoon during study hall I went to the library and switched a bunch of that month's magazines with the pornos and placed them back on the shelves to give people a pleasant surprise (or perhaps unpleasant, because the women were not exactly what I would call attractive according to today's standards, but you get the picture).

I also tore out several pages of some nasty looking pictures and slid them into the trophy cases that adorned the hallways around the school. The trophies were in locked glass cases, but there was a small opening where the two glass panels would overlap each other when they were slid open. I stuck the pages inside the cases through these tiny slits, knowing they would stay there until some janitor was called to unlock the case and take them down.

While I was usually very careful when scheming, I made a terrible mistake this time. I had accidentally left one of the pornos in my locker. Within a few hours I was summoned to the principal's office just as I expected. When I arrived and sat down, I saw a half a dozen of the pornos sitting on Mr. Mueller's desk. I commented that it looked like he had some good reading material there. He asked me if I knew where the magazines came from, and I told him I thought they were his. He was not amused. He then informed me that he searched my locker and found one of the pornos there. "How do you explain that?" he asked. I had already told him that I didn't know anything about any old pornos and that I had never seen them before, so I was caught in a lie. I was busted and he knew it. I was suspended immediately and sent home.

Before I was allowed to return to school I had to have a conference with him and my mom. It was very embarrassing. When we went in for the meeting, he had the pornos sitting on his desk and he held one of them up and started flipping through the pages showing my mom exactly what was inside. She was disgusted and so was I because the people were pretty gross. I told Mr. Mueller he had to admit that it was funny, not only that, but it was harmless. He still didn't find the humor in it and said he was really getting sick of my antics. As my mom and I left his office I told him to enjoy the magazines. I just didn't know when to stop.

The Disappearing Furniture

Most schools and office buildings have a dropped ceiling which consists of the white panels that are about 2 feet wide and 4 feet long that can be lifted up so you can access the lights and plumbing pipes and other things that these panels cover up. A lot of times the actual ceiling is 10 or 20 feet above these panels, and dropped ceilings are a staple of modern buildings.

One afternoon in literature class a few of us got to go across the hallway into another room to work as a group on a class project. This room was barely ever used and was pretty much only for student council meetings and test taking. It was full of desks and some small tables and extra books from other classrooms, and somehow we got the idea to remove one of the panels from the dropped ceiling and started putting desks up on top of them. Since I'm tall, I stood on top of a table in the back of the room and Fred would hand me one desk at a time, which I then set on top of the ceiling panels and put the missing panel back in place.

When we filled that area of the ceiling, we moved to another part of the room and did the same thing over and over again. Someone was standing watch at the door to make sure that the teacher didn't pop in to check on us, and for the entire period we put as many desks up in the ceiling as we could. We also put the podium up there; we put the small tables up there; we even took all the books off the shelves and threw them up there too.

Like magic, most everything in the room seemed to disappear, including the garbage can. If you looked carefully you could see many of the ceiling panels were drooping from the weight of the desks and the other furniture pushing down on them. One table was fairly large and heavy, and we worried it would break through the panels while we were still there, but fortunately it held.

I can’t imagine what the teachers must have thought the next time they used that room, because almost all of the desks were missing along with the books, the podium, and just about everything else! The stuff was up there for the rest of the year and nobody found out. In another class someone had thrown a desk out the window which landed on a section of the roof below, but in this case, dozens of desks just seemed to disappear into thin air.

A Billboard of Me on the School

After the principal realized that detentions didn’t bother me, after a while, he found a punishment that did. He started banning me from attending the school sporting events on Friday nights. This sucked. This was my social life he was messing with here. He had finally found my weakness. Detentions didn’t matter. Not allowing me to use the computers during study hall didn’t deter me from scheming. Even throwing me out of the weight room after school didn’t discourage me, but not allowing me to go to the basketball games on Friday night was like a kick in the balls.

I tried to think of a way to convince him that the school needed me at the games because I was the loudest person in the audience and I encouraged school spirit. Me just being there really helped our team. I scanned a picture of myself from the school yearbook and using a computer graphics program I enlarged it to about 5 feet wide and 5 feet tall, and printed it out in sections. It probably took about 50 different pieces of paper, and I taped them all together to make a huge billboard of myself.

I then typed up a banner that said, *“Let Mark attend the basketball game on Friday night,”* and I called Fred and asked him to bring a ladder to school in the back of his truck the next morning so we could put them up. We arrived early and hung my picture over a sign that was above the student entrance that had our school name on it. It was probably fifteen feet up in the air, and instead of showing the name of the school and our mascot, it was now a gigantic picture of *me* with a banner below urging people to demand I be allowed to attend the game on Friday. Everyone in the entire school saw it when they arrived that morning since it was above the main entrance in the parking lot.

In a perfect moment of synchronicity, I happened to be walking behind the principal in the hallway on my way to first period when the strangest thing happened. Another teacher approached him and said, “Mr. Mueller, there is a gigantic picture of Mark Dice on the side of the school above the entrance that I think you should know about.” I sped up my walk and patted him on the shoulder when I got next to him and said, “Good morning, Mr. Mueller, such a beautiful day, isn’t it?” and gave him the biggest smile. He rolled his eyes and shook his head.

I’m sure he didn’t know if I had done it, or if one of my friends did, all he knew was there was a huge picture of me on the side of the school above the entrance. Later on that morning I got called to his office. I pretended I was surprised by the picture and had just found out about it that morning when I got to school. I told him it was clear evidence that the student body wanted me at the game and it was important I go. I pleaded with him to let me attend and he actually changed his mind! I came to the game that Friday wearing a red cape and a sign taped on my chest that said “Spirit Man” (as in school spirit), and I riled up the crowd more than any other game I had been to and everybody had the best time. I even think Mr. Mueller was actually glad that he changed his mind and let me come.

Running for Class President

Senior year I decided to run for class president and a few of my friends joined me in the campaign and ran for other positions like vice president, secretary, treasurer, and other offices. We decided to call our group the “Dream Team,” which was named after O.J. Simpson’s team of lawyers who got him off for murder. This struck fear in the heart of the principal and the teachers because the possibility of me being the class president was probably one of the worst things that they could think of for the image of the school. I would be a complete disgrace to the office, which is exactly why I wanted to win.

The only contender running against me who was remotely capable of beating me was the school's beautiful tennis star who was very popular, but I was sure I could gain more support than her and win. The Dream Team put up posters around the school promoting ourselves, while our opponents did little or no campaigning at all. We were sure victory was ours, but when the election results came in, I did not win. The tennis star beat me. I was shocked. There was no way I could've lost. Everyone wanted me, the class clown, to also become the class president just for the fun of it. When the results were announced, the principal said it was a close race, but the tennis star had won senior class president by two votes. Two!

I demanded to see evidence of this loss and wanted to witness a recount. Mr. Mueller, the principal, told me that the voting ballots were thrown out! This was ridiculous. That meant there was no real proof that she won. I demanded a new election. He said no, so I typed up a petition the next day and got probably 70% of the senior class to sign it saying that they voted for me and believed there was election fraud and wanted a new one.

I presented the petition to the principal and told him that he can't steal the election from me and deny me my rightful place as class president. He said there would be no revote and I threatened to call the local television station and alert the newspapers of this fraud. He didn't care, and I let it go. I really should have made a bigger deal out of this. I probably really did win the election and the school screwed me. This just pissed me off and made me want to cause more trouble, and that's exactly what I did.

The Food Locker

There was a locker near mine that didn't have a number on it, which was weird, and we noticed nobody ever used it. The mysterious unmarked locker was unlocked and when I opened it up one day I realized there was a plumbing pipe going through the middle of it from the floor to the ceiling. For some reason it must have been a design flaw in the building and the pipe wasn't built inside a wall so they had to cut a hole through the top and bottom of the locker so it could go through. Instead of having this poor locker sit there all lonely and not get used, I decided to turn it into a trashcan. But not just any trashcan.

I put out the word to my friends that they should bring their leftover food from the lunch room and dump it in the locker for fun. After just a few days it started filling up with food scraps and garbage, and you could smell it when you got close to it. I had to put a cardboard retaining wall inside it a few days later to hold the garbage in and prevent it from falling out all over the floor when we opened it to add more because it was stacking up so high.

Even though the locker smelled like a dumpster, I thought it would smell worse than it actually did. I thought the stench of rotting food would fill the entire hallway but it was only noticeable when you were close to it. I don’t remember whose lockers were right next to it but I feel really sorry for them.

I thought about what I could put in there that would really smell since the rotting food scraps just weren’t stinking enough, and I figured the best thing to do was to pour some beer in there, so one morning I brought a can of beer to school and cracked it open and dumped it in. The beer poured out and filled the bottom of the locker and spilled down below through the cracks underneath and I’m sure spread out underneath the surrounding lockers. It smelled immediately. That whole area of the hallway reeked of beer. When you’re at a party and everybody’s drinking beer, you don’t really notice the smell that much, but apparently when you’re in a nice clean school, the stench of spilled beer can practically fill an entire hallway. The food locker was quickly cleaned out after that and a lock was put on it so we couldn’t put anything else inside.

Going out for Lunch

We didn’t have an open campus in high school, which meant we couldn’t leave for lunch. Well, it wasn’t that we *couldn’t* leave, it was we weren’t *supposed* to leave. My friends and I had a habit of ditching lunch and smoking weed and then sneaking back into the school, but after a while they realized this was happening and thought they could stop us. They started locking all the school’s doors from the outside, except for the one right next to the principal’s office, so they could only be opened from the inside once school had started. They thought they were really smart, but I was smarter. What they didn’t realize was that if you folded up a sheet of paper like you were passing a note, you could prop the doors open with it so they wouldn’t latch.

All you had to do was set the folded up paper on the ground in such a way that the door would close on it, but it would keep it propped open just enough so it wouldn’t latch and nobody could tell. So once the school started locking the doors, every time we skipped lunch I would just jam one of the doors with a folded up piece of paper and we could easily get back into the school without anybody usually noticing.

I say *usually* , because after a while they did notice because from a few classrooms certain teachers could see us walking back to the school from the parking lot every day through their windows and they realized what we were doing so the vice principal would keep an eye out every day during lunch period trying to bust us. I was too good to be outsmarted by some vice principal and have her ruin my fun and kill my buzz, so I started thinking of a plan. I remembered there were a set of doors in the locker room that led out to the football field which was in the back of the school, and there were no windows back there so no spying teacher or vice principal would be able to see us, so we started parking across the street from the school and then walked along the side of the football field to the locker room doors and then would sneak back inside the building that way, and the fun continued for the rest of the year and we never got caught once.

Sometimes if we lost track of time and were running a little late getting back to the school we wouldn’t have the time to park the car a block away and walk across the side of the football field to sneak in through the back door, so we would just park in the teachers’ parking lot and boldly walk in the door right by the principal’s office since it was the only one unlocked from the outside. No teachers or office workers would imagine that any student would have the balls to ditch class and come back in through that door. Sometimes the best place to hide something is right under someone’s nose. We would each walk in the door at about ten second intervals so we didn’t all walk in at the same time, and occasionally a teacher or someone in the office saw one of us walk in the door, but they never said anything because they always assumed that we must have been coming back from a dentist appointment and had some legitimate reason for coming in late. It’s an interesting phenomenon that if you act like you belong somewhere, you won’t raise any suspicion.

If someone less skilled in the art of fighting the system were to attempt returning to school through this door and were spotted, a look of guilt would have flashed upon their face giving them away, but when I walked in the door I just acted like there was nothing unusual happening. One afternoon, a teacher was walking right past the door in the hallway when I came back inside the school and he looked at me and shook his head. He knew exactly who I was and what I was doing and made some comment about how I was just getting back from skipping lunch, but he didn’t get me in trouble. He probably figured it was no use.

Perfect Attendance and the Disappearing Detentions

In one of my favorite movies, *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off* , the main character uses a modem to hack into the school’s computer system to change his attendance record in order to reduce the number of unexcused absences he had accumulated. Even though that film was from the 1980s and things still weren’t very high tech then, my school’s attendance system was even less high tech in the 1990s, which actually worked to our advantage.

If a student was absent from class, the teacher would just simply use a pencil to fill in the bubble next to their name on the attendance sheet which would be taken to the office every day. There was a slot on the outside of the classroom doors where the attendance sheets would be put at the end of class or at the end of the day, and someone would come around and gather them all and take them to the office where they would be processed. It doesn’t take a genius to figure out that you could just have one of your friends use a hall pass to come by and take the attendance sheet out of the slots and erase the bubble next to your name when you decided to skip class so your absence wouldn’t be recorded.

The same attendance sheet was used all week so if you did this on Tuesday, the teacher might actually notice the following day when the bubble was mysteriously not filled in anymore, so it was to our advantage to only do this on Fridays, which would be the last day they would receive that same sheet, because on Monday they would have a completely new one. This little scheme worked particularly well when there was a substitute teacher because the following day, when the regular teacher came back, they wouldn't notice that the attendance bubble had been erased because they were not there and wouldn't know that the student was gone the day before.

Little did the high school know, but we had several Good Samaritans who worked in the office who could occasionally prevent us from having to serve detentions that teachers had written us. These Good Samaritans were students who worked part time for the school as office assistants. When a teacher wrote a detention for a student, they were set in the top tray on the vice principal's desk at the end of the day where she would see them the next morning when she got a chance. She would then compile the detention list for that day, and put the detentions in the students' files. Our Good Samaritan students would keep an eye on this tray and whenever a detention with my name on it or any other friends of theirs found its way into that tray, they would simply take them and crumple them up and throw them in the trash before the vice principal had seen them. The teacher who wrote them had no way of knowing that the detentions weren't actually filed, because they confidently assumed that once the detention was on the vice principal's desk, it would be taken care of. Well, they were wrong.

Our Good Samaritans would always find us at some point throughout the day to let us know that our detention had been thrown away so we could enjoy ourselves after school with everyone else instead of sitting in detention hall. Those of us who knew about this detention tray would always keep a close eye on it whenever we were in the vice principal's office. Occasionally myself or one of my friends would be sitting in her office after getting in trouble when she would get called out for a moment and we would take that opportunity to look through the tray and could steal the detentions or throw them in her trash can so it was like they never existed at all.

Science Class

Every once in a while something will happen in a class that’s so hilarious or outrageous that word about the incident is passed down from one grade to the next year, after year, sort of like ancient folklore that was told to every new generation around campfires thousands of years ago. One of these legendary stories in our school had to do with the science teacher, Mr. Powell, who was locked in a closet by a student a few years earlier. The closet was located at the front of the classroom and had a paddle lock on the outside to prevent students from stealing the toxic chemicals and expensive science equipment kept inside. As you can imagine, one day when Mr. Powell went in the closet to retrieve something, a student ran up, closed the door, and locked it shut. Immediately after that, Mr. Powell took a leave of absence for the rest of the semester. He was said to have never been the same since.

While we didn’t lock him in the closet again despite the same paddle lock and latch being used, we did make him cry once and had fun using the Bunsen Burners to melt pens and light things on fire, but nothing too crazy ever happened. Probably the funniest thing I did in Mr. Powell’s class—other than contribute to his emotional breakdown once in a while—was when I scooped a couple of goldfish out of the fish tank in the back of the room and slipped them in the jacket pockets of another student. I don’t know how long it took him to discover them, but it could have been days, and by that time I’m sure the jacket had the stench of rotting fish emanating from it. Surprise!

Just for fun sometimes I would set my science book on the table standing on its end with it propped open at a 90° angle so it acted as a barrier blocking Mr. Powell’s view of me, and I would roll joints behind it while he was giving a lecture at the front of the room. A guy who sat behind me, who will remain anonymous, went through a stage when he was snorting coke for a few months and thought he would one-up my joint rolling, so he set up his book as a barricade and cut a line of coke on the table and snorted it right in the middle of class. A few students who were seated in the row behind him saw him cutting up the line and ducking behind his book to snort it, but he didn’t care. Neither did they. That’s high school.

Literature Class

For a project in literature class one year, Fred and I made a video depicting the 1955 play *Inherit the Wind* which we had to read for an assignment. The play is about a man being put on trial for teaching Darwinism in a school in Tennessee when it was against the law to do so because only creationism could be taught. Everyone else in our class were doing serious projects and presentations, but Fred and I decided to use some of my old Legos that had been stored away in my closet to make a video depicting the play. We teamed up with a straight edge kid and before we started filming I met a pot dealer in the parking lot of a local park to score some weed and Fred slammed a six pack of Zima in a matter of minutes. Then we went back to my house to make our video.

Fred was so drunk when we got started that he was slurring his lines horribly, and I was so stoned that I couldn't recite my lines without laughing. Our other group partner thought we were insane. When the time came to show it to our class we were worried that the teacher was going to fail us for doing such a pathetic and childish project, but when we played it she absolutely loved it. Everyone in the class could tell we were wasted by the way we sounded in the video, but Mrs. Boswell didn't have a clue and loved it. For some reason she thought it was brilliant. She also didn't catch the F-word being used in the soundtrack playing in the background, although a few students who were fans of Pantera heard it loud and clear. At the end of the video we had set the Legos on fire with a blow torch and Fred started spitting on them with the massive saliva his chewing tobacco was generating.

Even though making our video was fun, I hated literature class because of all the dumb old books we had to read, so I wrote a large "Fuck Mrs. Boswell" in one of the books, and after we turned them back in she flipped through the pages and inspected them all and found my graffiti. She literally cried in class and told everyone how upset she was and it ruined her entire week. It wasn't really Mrs. Boswell that I didn't like, it was having to read all those dumb books, so I felt kind of bad since she took it personally. She was obviously emotionally unstable.

Underage Drinking

In Wisconsin, people like to drink. They drink *a lot* . The state's baseball team, the Milwaukee Brewers, refers to beer breweries. That's right. The baseball team is named after people who brew beer, that's how much people there love beer. If you drive through downtown Milwaukee, you'll notice tons of different breweries; Miller, Pabst, Schlitz, Leinenkugels, and more. They're practically the largest buildings in the city. Milwaukee's nickname is "Brew City" because of all the breweries. Drinking beer is as much a part of the culture in Wisconsin as sunny weather is in Southern California. This is part of the reason everyone in Wisconsin is so fat. Not just fat, but grossly obese…man are they huge. Some of the most disgustingly fat people in the world live in Wisconsin. It's so cold there for half of the year, there's really nothing to do but sit inside and drink, and that's what everyone does, and that's what we did growing up.

Freshman year of high school I made my first fake ID, and it wasn't long after that I got my first underage drinking ticket (what a coincidence), which was the first of many to come in the following years. This fake ID was not a fake driver's license. It was not a fake passport or student ID from a local college either. No, this fake ID was a "boating instructor's license." Yeah, a "boating instructor's license." Most clerks wouldn't accept it, but one lady at one particular liquor store apparently thought it was perfectly legitimate (or just appreciated my efforts) and so that's where we got all our alcohol from, at least for a while. I made the ID from an actual boating license I had, since in order to legally drive a Jet Ski or other boat if you didn't have your driver's license, you had to take a class and pass a test to get your boating safety permit. I did this because Fred's dad lived on a lake and had a couple of Jet Skis he let us use.

Anyway, using my computer I modified my boating safety permit, and changed the birth date and added the title of "boating *instructor* permit." I told the lady at the liquor store that I taught boating safety classes and I had forgotten my driver's license at home, but somehow, I had my boating safety instructor permit in my wallet. She probably just admired my creativity so she sold me the beer.

I had only used the ID a few times before getting busted and having it taken away by the cops, but it was fun while it lasted, and it would not be my last fake ID. Basically, a car I was in got pulled over and we had a bunch of booze in the back seat because we were slamming beers and hard liquor on the way to the school football game, and we were all ticketed for underage drinking. For me, since the cops discovered my fake ID because I wasn't smart enough to stash it under the floor mat after we were pulled over, I got a ticket for not only underage drinking, but also for having a fake ID, and a separate charge for *using* the fake ID to buy the alcohol (called underage procurement), and then I was given a fourth ticket for possession of alcohol by a minor. I was 15 years old and it was hundreds of dollars in fines. I was pissed! So were my parents when they had to pick me up from the police station.

Since I didn't have my fake ID anymore, I had to come up with a new way to get alcohol, so I just started trying to buy it from everywhere I could at every gas station around town, hoping to find someone who wouldn't card me. Sometimes I would just stop people outside the gas station and ask them if they would buy us beer if I gave them the money. Surprisingly, a lot of people did (this was Wisconsin, remember). One night in a gas station parking lot some guy sitting in the passenger side of a car started talking to me as I walked past him like he knew who I was. I soon realized that he was confusing me with some friend of his named Gary. The guy was extremely drunk. I immediately noticed a bracelet on his wrist that said "Dennis" so I pretended to be surprised and said, "Dennis! How have you been man, I haven't seen you in so long!" and continued to talk with him for a minute, all the while he was thinking I was someone else. I was able to fool him pretty well (he was wasted like I said), and a few minutes later I told him I forgot my ID at home and asked him if he could go buy me some beer, and he did.

My friends and I luckily found one particular gas station where the Indian who worked there never carded anybody. Word quickly got out about this, and Fridays immediately after school got out we'd drive over there to get our beer for the night and I would often see three or four other people from our school pulling up to the gas station at the same time doing the same thing.

There is a stereotype that Indians and Arabs always own gas stations and "Kwiki Marts" in the Midwest, and it's kind of true. This particular Arab, or Indian, or whatever he was, had an extra thumb on his right hand and was known as "the guy with the extra thumb who didn't card anyone." When he would give me my change, I didn't want to get touched by his extra thumb so I always had to keep lowering my hand, hoping he would just drop my change into it instead of setting it there, where I would have to feel his extra thumb touching my hand.

After a few months of taking advantage of "the guy with the extra thumb who didn't card anyone" (also known as Habib), we got pulled over with beer in the car, and we threw him under the bus and told the cops he sold it to us without carding us. We were so stupid. We should have just said we got some random stranger to buy the beer for us, but our dumb asses told them the truth. The cops actually let us go because they were friends with one of the kid's dads who was with us. (Hey, it's who you know, right?) It was a close call, but they must have warned the guy about selling to underage kids because he started carding everyone from that point on. We knew it wouldn't last.

We didn't know what to do at first now that our source was dried up and he was asking for ID. We needed beer, so one night I pulled a case out of the refrigerator, slapped the money down on the counter, and when he asked for my driver's license I said "that's okay don't worry about it," and started heading for the door with the beer tucked under my arm. I knew how much the case of beer cost, including tax, and I had left enough money on the counter to cover it, so it wasn't like I was stealing the beer. As I continued making my way to the door, the guy ran around the counter and tried wrestling the beer away from me yelling that he was going to call the cops.

I didn't know what his problem was. The money was sitting there on the counter, but he really didn't want me to have that beer. I broke loose from his grip and ran out of the gas station and jumped in my parents' minivan where Fred was sitting in the driver's seat with it still running, and we sped off with the beer. We had anticipated the guy may flip out and try to get our license plate number and call the police, so before I went in we taped a fake license plate on the back of the minivan. It was a novelty plate from the

Back to the Future movie that Fred had gotten at Universal Studios which read “OUTA TIME,” so even if the guy wrote it down, it wasn’t going to do him any good if he gave it to the police.

The guy remembered me the next time I went to the station to get some gas, and he started saying something about calling the police and me stealing beer. (I actually paid for it, remember, I left the right amount of money on the counter, so I didn’t “steal” the beer.) I told him I was sorry and that I was just in a big hurry that day and I must not have been able to understand him with his thick foreign accent. I needed a new fake ID, and fast!

Drinking and driving in Wisconsin when I was a teenager meant drinking *while* driving, not just drinking and then later getting into your car and driving home. We called it road tripping. A lot of weekends, if we didn’t have anywhere we could go to drink because no one’s parents were gone that night, we would just get some beer and drive around all night drinking and smoking pot. Looking back, this is extremely stupid, but one night our drinking and driving helped save a man’s car and all of his tools from going up in flames. Not that it justifies our stupidity, but at least something good came out of it!

We were driving around out in the country—in the middle of nowhere—when we came across a car on the side of the road with its engine on fire, so we drove to the nearest house about a half mile down the road and got a fire extinguisher and some buckets and we rushed back and put the fire out with the help of water from the drainage ditch on the side of the road. The guy, who was a mechanic, was very thankful since we stopped the fire from spreading to the rest of the car and he said we saved all his tools from being destroyed which were in the trunk. We never imagined our drinking and driving could have helped save a guy’s car from going up in flames which would have ruined his career, but we did.

One night we were driving around while drinking in my friend Toby’s truck when it was absolutely freezing outside, which is common in Wisconsin since the weather sucks for most of the year, when a girl got sick from drinking too much and puked inside the truck as we drove down the freeway. I was sitting in the passenger seat, and she was sitting between Toby and I, and she leaned over me and mumbled “open the door” as she started puking in that direction. I cracked the door open a little bit and at least she was puking in that direction, but she had gotten it all over the door panel, the window, and my leg. We pulled off at the next exit and went to a gas station so we could clean her up and remove the puke splattered on the inside of the truck (and on my jeans). It was *disgusting* . As if this wasn't bad enough, it was so cold outside that her puke froze almost instantly on the inside of the window, and we had to use an ice scraper to get it off!

One Friday night when we couldn't find a place to party, a big group of us all met up in an abandoned house and hung out there all night. The house was in great shape, it just happened to be on a plot of land that was going to get turned into some commercial real estate, so they were going to tear it down. The electricity still worked and everything! It was awesome! We had the whole house to ourselves and didn't even have to clean up the mess!

After Ken narrowly avoided an open intoxicant ticket by stashing his open beer in the center console between the two bucket seats in my dad's car when we got pulled over one night, I had an idea. (The cop found my open beer when he searched me, which I hid in my inside jacket pocket, so I did get an open intoxicant ticket that night, but the cop didn't give me an underage drinking ticket for some reason. You can't argue with that at least!) Anyway, the summer after high school graduation I bought my first car, a hideously ugly 1981 AMC Concord, but it did the job, and it was all mine. I bought it with my own money, all $900 dollars' worth. The car had bucket seats in the front and didn't have a center console between them, so I went to the junkyard and bought one from an old abandoned junker and installed it in my car and added a special false bottom so I could stash beers and my bag of weed under it, so if my car got searched by the cops after getting pulled over, they wouldn't find anything.

This was a great insurance policy that paid off one night when I got pulled over for speeding and the cop happened to search my car. Just a few minutes earlier we were smoking weed from a small portable water pipe that was now stashed under the false bottom in the console along with a small bag of weed. There was also an empty beer bottle in there from several nights earlier that I forgot to throw away, so I was at risk of getting another open intoxicant ticket, and arrested for possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. Fortunately, the console had served its purpose. The cop searched the car probably because he smelled marijuana, but he never found anything. I was always very proud of my false-bottom console, and knew it would work just fine if bad luck ever fell upon me.

In order to reduce any suspicion my car may arouse, I went to the local police station and got a *D.A.R.E. To Keep Kids Off Drugs* bumper sticker and another one that read *Back The Badge* which showed support for local police officers and I stuck them prominently on my rear bumper. That way if a cop was behind me when I had a carload of people late on a Friday or Saturday night, they would be less likely to think that we were up to no good. It didn't look like a teenager's car with a Bob Marley bumper sticker on the back, it looked like a nice innocent family car that must be coming home from a late dinner at grandma's. It was also a great inside joke among people who knew me since I was a big pothead, yet I had a *D.A.R.E* . sticker on my car. I'm pretty sure my stickers prevented me from getting pulled over numerous times, when most likely we were drinking beers or smoking pot.

Sometimes when we went to the mall on a Saturday afternoon to mess around we would go to the Taco Bell drive through and order a couple extra-large waters that they gave us for twenty-five cents or something, and we would dump out the water and fill the cups full of beer so we could walk around the mall and still drink. One time we bumped into our friends' mom and had to talk with her for a minute while we were holding our undercover beers and we tried to keep our distance from her so she wouldn't smell our breath. We thought about making fake labels to wrap around beer cans to make them look like cans of Pepsi or Mountain Dew so we could drink them in public or when we were driving around so we wouldn't have to worry about anyone noticing. Did I ever mention that our creativity was usually focused in the wrong direction? You probably figured that out by now.

I narrowly escaped another underage drinking ticket when Diego and I turned the power off to a large billboard overlooking the freeway one night. I know this sounds weird, so let me try to explain. We noticed a house had been moved which is a pretty complicated task that involves literally putting a house on the back of a semi-trailer and driving it to another location. (They really do this sometimes.) We were very curious to see where exactly this house went since we had seen it jacked up a few days earlier as they were preparing to move it.

The house was so heavy that we could see the tire tracks pressed in the blacktop from the trailer carrying it. We followed these tracks for several miles down a long winding country road that led us to a new subdivision being built right next to the freeway. We were drinking, of course, and when we got to the subdivision we couldn't help but notice a billboard off to the side of the road overlooking the freeway. I usually carried a Swiss Army Knife with me and so I pulled it out and used it to unscrew the cover of an electrical panel on the back of the billboard that revealed a simple switch inside. Well, what would you do when confronted with this situation? I would flip the switch to see what would happen, which is exactly what I did, and the lights illuminating the billboard suddenly turned off. It was the difference between night and day. The whole area was now pitch black and you couldn't even read the sign.

Diego and I laughed all the way back to the car and started to drive off when we were faced with the red and blue flashing lights of a squad car. The cop must have happened to been driving down the street and noticed the billboard mysteriously turn off and saw us running away from it back to the car.

When I stopped the car and pulled over, the cop turned his spotlight on and yelled for us to put our hands on top of our heads. He walked up to my window with his hand on his gun and asked us what the hell we were doing, so we told him we were just trying to see where the house went when we saw the billboard standing there and just decided to turn it off for fun. He thought we were insane or on drugs, because we were talking about following a house, which didn't make any sense to him at first. "You wanted to see where the house went?" he asked in a patronizing tone. We tried to explain to him that some workers had moved a house so they could expand the road a few miles back, and we were trying to figure out where they took it. It's understandable how this would sound insane, since houses don't usually move.

The cop made me pop the trunk and found nearly a full case of beer sitting back there that we intended to drink that night. He then told me to dump it all out, which was almost a full 24 pack since we had just started drinking. I took a beer out of the case and cracked it open and started pouring out it on the side of the road until it was empty. Glug, glug, glug, glug, glug, glug, glug, glug.

I then grabbed another one and did the same thing. I cracked it open and started pouring it out. Glug, glug, glug, glug, glug, glug…it takes probably 10 or 15 seconds to empty a beer just from pouring it out, and the cop got mad at me and started cracking a bunch of them open himself and setting them upside down on the ground one by one so they would all empty out. “Do it like this!” he yelled, as he cracked a few more open doing the same thing. We would’ve been there all night if I had done it my way, pouring out one beer at a time. I didn’t know how he wanted me to pour them out. There were probably around 20 beers still in the case, so I poured the rest of them out like he had shown me. I told him it was alcohol abuse and he should be ashamed of himself for wasting beer and making me do this.

Diego and I both got disorderly conduct tickets for turning off the billboard, but the cop surprisingly looked the other way about the beer. The worst part was that the cop didn’t even know we had turned the billboard off until we told him! He had pulled us over because we were leaving the construction site for the new subdivision and apparently there had been some problems with people stealing the workers’ tools a few nights ago so he wanted to see what we were doing there. He said, “What the hell are you doing,” so how were we supposed to know that he didn’t just notice the billboard turning off a few seconds earlier and the whole area going dark? He just wanted to make sure we didn’t steal anything from the construction site, which is why he made me pop the trunk.

I’m very embarrassed to admit this, but one of my underage drinking tickets came from two police officers who were riding mountain bikes! It’s pathetic, I know. Fred and I were standing in a parking lot next to my car slamming beers before going into a local festival, when out of nowhere two police officers pulled up on mountain bikes right next to us. We were screwed. We were both holding open beers and were caught red handed.

They gave us both underage drinking tickets, and instead of going home discouraged, Fred and I went into the festival as planned and continued drinking. We figured, since we already got tickets for underage drinking, it would be double jeopardy if they ticketed us again, so we figured there was nothing they could do to us if we got caught a second time. We were stupid of course.

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin the biggest party of the summer is called Summerfest, which is a beer and music festival downtown, with the emphasis on beer rather than music. People drink so much at Summerfest that halfway through the night, practically every step you take anywhere on the grounds, you crunch or kick a discarded plastic beer cup. They are littered all over the ground, everywhere. Beer at Summerfest, just like most baseball games and other outdoor festivals, is ridiculously expensive, so we would always get drunk before arriving so we could save money on beer once we got there. We were all under 21, but I had a new fake ID so I could just buy four or five beers at a time and hand them off to my friends and nobody would really notice or care. This is Wisconsin, after all.

The ride to Summerfest was often just as fun as the festival itself. We would always leave our car at a Park and Ride and take a shuttle to the fairgrounds, and we would always smuggle beer onto it and slam them on our way. We were the loudest, most intoxicated people on the shuttle. Sometimes we would just throw our empty beer cans out the window right on the freeway. We didn’t care. One time we even smoked a joint when sitting near the back, assuming the smoke would blow out the windows, but the driver smelled it and pulled over on the side of the road and started yelling and screaming at everyone. Oops.

As everyone knows, when someone’s parents go away for the weekend and leave the kids home by themselves, the parents are morons, because their kids will probably have dozens of people over drinking large amounts of beer, hard liquor and smoking weed, and doing who knows what else in the house while they’re gone. Any parent with teenagers who leaves them home alone for the weekend and thinks that their kid isn’t going to do anything crazy is completely naïve. This includes my parents. They never left for a vacation that my brother Stew and I weren’t forced to go with them on, but one summer they left us the whole house all to ourselves. Since it was summer time and there was no school, I threw a party three days in a row, each day getting bigger and bigger, culminating in the sheriff and several deputies showing up on the third night, issuing underage drinking tickets, and giving the town sheriff a personal first-hand look at the inside of my bedroom.

The most interesting part about this was that I had went to my neighbor’s house with her to grab some of her parents’ wine coolers, and as we were walking back to my house I couldn’t help but notice several police officers standing in my kitchen! This was *not* good. I could clearly see them through the kitchen windows from the backyard. They were cops. Tyra and I crouched down behind some bushes and watched. There were about three or four different police officers walking around inside my house. Everyone who didn’t get out and run was screwed, I had thought. As you probably know, when the cops come to an underage drinking party, people run, and most people get away, so I was hoping that most people were able to get out of there and not get busted.

I certainly wasn’t going to go walking back in there because I had been drinking and there was a keg of beer in my garage, so Tyra and I just hung out in the backyard and watched. It was very surreal. The weirdest part was actually seeing the sheriff standing in my bedroom. My curtains were open, and I could see him standing there as the other officers searched the house. It wasn’t just an ordinary police officer in my room. It was the head of the police department, Sheriff McDonald. Hanging on my walls were various street signs that I had stolen, including the sign from High Street and Eighth Avenue, along with 69th Drive and a student crossing sign that I painted over to make it look like the student figure was crawling on all fours holding a bottle of booze like the popular poster.

After a while, the cops all left and the coast was clear so we went back to the house. Practically everyone had gotten away and the only people busted were my friend Toby and the girl he was making out with in the basement. Obviously there was no place for them to run, and imagine their surprise when they were getting busy on the sofa downstairs, and in walk the cops! Everyone else had gotten away. It was a miracle.

The craziest thing about it was when it was all over, even though the party was at *my* house and several police officers and the sheriff were able to walk right in through the garage door, and the sheriff found his way to *my bedroom* , I had gotten off *scot-free* . It was amazing. They never came back to the house later that night, or even a few days later when my parents were back in town. They never called the house telling my parents what had happened either. They seemed to have forgotten all about it.

There was, however, a little blurb in the local paper in the police report section explaining that the police were called to my address because of a report of a noise violation and an underage drinking party. It even said that several people had gotten underage drinking tickets. I hoped my parents didn't notice this, and I don't think they did, but the one thing they did notice was that we had vacuumed the house. My brother and I never vacuumed the house. Ever. As far as my mom knew, we didn't even know how to work the vacuum cleaner, yet she realized that the carpeting had been freshly vacuumed and knew that something was wrong.

My parents weren't really mad. They kind of joked about it and said that we must have been so bored while they were gone that we decided to clean the house for something to do. They were probably just glad that nothing was broken and that I didn't get thrown in jail while they were gone. They probably just thought it was me and a few friends laying low and couldn't have imagined what actually happened. When it grew to more than a small group of people, I contained it mainly in the garage and basement because I didn't want people running all over my parents' house because I didn't want any dumb drunk people to accidentally break anything or spill beer all over. I wasn't stupid. I had been to plenty of parties where the house had been completely trashed because the host let it get out of control.

The summer after graduation a friend of mine named Khloe was a passenger in a car that got into an accident on the way home from a party at (name withheld)'s and she was in a coma for several days. We learned of the accident when the police arrived and walked right in the house because the door was unlocked and they claimed they had probable cause to enter the residence because they saw us drinking alcohol through the window. They told us that someone who had left the party got into an accident and was seriously injured and it didn’t look good. We could tell by the looks on their faces that they were serious. They didn’t tell us who it was, which added to our concern, but they made it clear that the person might not live. It wasn’t until the next day that we learned it was Khloe, who remained in a coma.

To make things worse, my older brother Stew had bought the keg for us that night, and if Khloe would have died, then surely there would have been a massive investigation into who bought the beer, and that could have resulted in my brother Stew being charged in connection with manslaughter. (Name withheld)’s parents could have gotten sued too since the party was at their house, even though they were out of town and didn’t know anything about it. Luckily Khloe woke up from her coma after a few days and was okay.

The night of the party a lot of people slept over at the house, sleeping on couches and wherever, because they were too freaked out to drive home drunk after learning about what happened. That next morning on my way home was the first time that I had ever worn my seatbelt in my car. I lived out in the country, remember, and there wasn’t a lot of traffic, so I didn’t think it was a big deal. I had gotten my own car that summer finally, (the 1981 AMC Concord) but I didn’t even know if it had seatbelts because they were stuffed under the seat and I was never concerned with wearing one. From that night on, I would always wear my seatbelt whenever I got into a car.

Juicy Lucy’s

One of the only fast food restaurants open after midnight near our small little town was one named Juicy Lucy’s, which we made a habit of stopping at when we had the munchies on our way home from a night of partying. One of the things we really liked about Juicy Lucy’s was that there was a seating area in the back of the restaurant where no one could see us so we could screw around, throw food, and openly drink beers at our table that we would bring inside.

We also made it a tradition to decorate the windows with ketchup, barbecue sauce, and our leftover chocolate shakes. Practically the entire set of windows in the back would be splattered with something before we left. Half the time we couldn't contain our laughter as we walked past the cash registers on our way back out to the car. Sometimes we were so stoned when we first arrived, that we could barely even order our food because we were laughing so hard in anticipation of what was about to occur.

One night Rick ordered an extra-large chocolate shake, not to drink, but specifically to throw on the windows. He ordered a Coke or something else to actually drink. As we were getting ready to leave, he took the lid off his cup and flung the ice cream at the window, leaving a chocolate shake trail spanning across multiple different windowpanes that must have been ten-feet-long. One time the manager headed to the back of the restaurant as we left, probably because he recognized us from the last several months and knew we were up to no good back there, and as we were getting into the car, he came running out of the place chasing after us with a mop. We all hopped in the car as fast as we could and took off, and he continued chasing us half-way down the block with that mop still in his hand, probably hoping to beat us with it if he caught up to us.

Aside from throwing chocolate shakes on the windows at Juicy Lucy's, sometimes we liked to throw our half drank sodas at parked cars as we drove by. These were not cans of soda, so they wouldn't do any real damage to the car like putting a dent in the side of them; we just thought it was funny to see the paper cup smash into the side of the cars and have soda splatter all over them. One summer evening when Fred threw his extra-large soda at the side of a parked car as we drove past it, the cup went right inside the car and splattered on the dashboard because the driver's side window was rolled down. This wasn't just an empty soda cup. This was a half full, extra-large cup that probably soaked the entire front seat of the car. We didn't intend for this to happen, but at the time we couldn't stop laughing.

There was one instance when my friend Toby threw a Gatorade bottle at someone riding their bike on the side of the road and hit them in the back. A few days later we heard from one of our friends that someone they knew was talking about how they were riding their bike down whatever road that was, when some car threw something at them and hit them. What a small world.

You’re Never Too Old to Go Trick-or-Treating

Since I could be extremely juvenile and immature, I never really thought I was ever too old to go trick-or-treating. I’m sure most kids stopped when they were in sixth or seventh grade, but senior year Fred and I decided it would be fun to be kids again and go trick-or-treating. I was 6-foot-three inches tall, and certainly didn’t look like a kid who should be trick-or-treating, but I thought it would be fun anyway. I put some black makeup all over my face, got some black leather gloves and a fake knife and went as O.J. Simpson, and since we didn’t have too much time to put costumes together, Fred painted his face black too and decided to go as Johnny Cochran, O.J.’s lawyer.

After we put our costumes on we drove around in his truck waiting until trick-or-treating started and tipped back a few beers and smoked some weed, and I can’t tell you how many strange looks we got from people. When trick-or-treating began, we went all over town collecting candy door-to-door, and happened to bump into several honor students who were dressed up too. We were surprised, not only because we weren’t the only immature ones to go out trick-or-treating senior year of high school, but these were honor students, and we never would have imagined that they would be so immature too.

When we stopped to talk to them, we realized that they weren’t trick-or-treating for candy, they were part of a program that was trick-or-treating for canned goods to then donate to the Salvation Army or some other charity. Wow did we feel dumb! Of course they weren’t so immature that they would go trick-or-treating like us! There we were, being complete jackasses, drunk, dressed up in blackface, collecting candy from all the houses, and there they were helping the needy. It really highlighted how messed up we were in the head.

We were a little embarrassed. They didn’t even think it was funny what we were doing. They looked at us like we were insane. They smelled the beer on our breath too. They were the only people we knew that we had bumped into that night, and I’m sure that they couldn’t help but tell others that they found us trick-or-treating when we were drunk and dressed up as O.J. Simpson and Johnnie Cochran.

Marijuana Use

As you may have gathered, I was a big pothead in high school. I always looked at it as a spiritual experience, not like I was doing drugs. I wasn’t a burn out, I pretty much was considered a prep, but I hung out with everyone. I was friends with the preps, the jocks, the burnouts, the nerds, and the loners. I liked everyone, I just happen to like to smoke a lot of pot, and so did Fred and Rick.

Rick had his own car, and he was often the driver for our weekend partying, and since it was his car and not his parents, we didn’t have to worry about it smelling like smoke the next day like I did with my parents’ car. By the time senior year came around the seats in Rick’s car were absolutely covered with countless little burn marks from when the cherry fell off the joints we were passing around and landed on the seat, singeing the fabric. We called them potholes as a play on words, because that’s what they were from. Get it? Duh. We were so clever.

If you’ve ever smoked a joint before, you know that sometimes the burning weed can fall off the tip of the joint onto the ground. This is called the cherry, and if you’ve smoked joints in a car, you know that it’s bad news when the cherry falls off because it will most likely burn a small hole in the fabric of the seat (or through your pants). Rick’s car didn’t just have a small hole burned in the seat, it had dozens of them. Actually more than dozens. Seriously, probably more than 100 of them from our years of road tripping and pot smoking.

The first day of class senior year I arrived at school a few minutes early and Rick pulled in and parked in the spot next to me and hopped into my parents’ minivan, where we then smoked a bowl before heading into class and beginning our senior year. A few hours later in study hall, the teacher, Mr. Michaels was taking attendance and when he called my name I raised my hand and said “here,” to which he answered, “better be careful what you’re doing in the parking lot before school,” and then went on to call the next name on his list.

I immediately knew what happened, because there was a window just outside his classroom in the hallway that overlooked the school parking lot. He must have been standing there watching in the morning, and saw Rick pull up next to me, hop into the passenger side of my parents’ minivan, and moments later saw plumes of smoke wafting out of the windows.

Mr. Michaels was pretty cool, and most teachers would have told the principal, or perhaps even called the police to have me or my vehicle searched to find the weed, but I think Mr. Michaels just wanted me to know that he wasn’t stupid. He lived just four houses away from me too, just around the corner.

I did a lot of dumb things involving weed (go figure) but I never got caught with it. While I had tremendous bad luck with underage drinking tickets and other alcohol related charges, I only had two close calls with marijuana, but never got busted. One time I was in a car with a bunch of people at a park smoking a bowl when a cop pulled up. It was late at night and the park was closed, and a car full of four teenagers on a Saturday night is obviously something that should be looked into. I had what I called a “dope bag,” which was a small black bag made of a thick fabric with a zipper on it that I carried my pipe in, rolling papers, and of course, the baggie of weed. I carried all contraband in the dope bag for a good reason.

As the cop pulled up and flicked on his lights, I had whoever was holding the pipe at the time pass it back to me and I put it out by wetting my thumb and capping the top of the bowl for a moment, and then put it in the dope bag and then crotched it. If you don’t know what “crotching it” means, I slid the bag down inside of my underwear near my balls and it was held there by my tighty-whitey underwear so if the cop searched us, he would most likely not find it since my pockets would be empty.

It’s a good thing I did this, because he searched all of us (he obviously smelled the marijuana smoke that was still lingering in the air), and if the contraband was in my pocket, he would have found it and I would have been arrested for possession of marijuana. The one thing in my pocket, however, that I forgot about, was a small cap for the pipe that we were smoking. This cap screwed on the top of the bowl and had resin (pot residue) on the threads, and the cop found it when he searched my pockets and asked me what it was. I told him it was a part for my lawnmower which I was fixing earlier that day (a complete lie), and he didn't think anything of it. It was a close call, but the dope bag worked. You know, I learned in Boy Scouts to "be prepared," although I'm sure this was not what they had in mind.

I remember one time, a friend of mine named Benjamin and I actually smoked a joint inside the school. There was a place underneath a staircase where there was a soda machine, and if you were standing in front of this machine, you couldn't be seen from anyone in the hallway. We really wanted to get high, but we couldn't skip class that day without getting an unexcused absence, so we each got a hall pass to go to the bathroom and met by the soda machine and quickly smoked a joint there. There was a door leading to the tennis courts right there that we cracked open and tried to blow the smoke outside so it wouldn't stink up the hallway, but the breeze really just blew the smoke inside the school, instead of sucking it out the door. The whole hallway quickly smelled like weed, and we later heard that one of the teachers was searching the hallways trying to find out the source of this strange stench. Luckily we sucked down our joint and got out of there pretty quickly.

An idea we got from the movie *Dazed and Confused* involved smoking a joint on the 50-yard-line on the football field, which we did late one night after we carried a five-gallon gas can on the field and poured out "Fuck You" in the grass, killing it in that area, so for the rest of the year there was a huge ten-foot-tall brown *Fuck You* in the football field. Hey, at least we didn't light the "Fuck You" on fire, so you gotta cut us *some* slack! I mean, we thought about it, but came to our senses realizing it might burn more than just some letters in the grass.

I remember one day after school I was hanging out with a stoner from the grade ahead of me because I didn't have any weed so I went to his house with him to smoke a bowl on my way home. There were a couple other people who came with us, and as we were passing it around his mom walked into the living room! I don’t remember who was holding the bowl at that time, but Gavin didn’t seem to care and neither did his mom. We just kept passing it around and smoking it while he introduced us all to her. As if smoking weed in front of some kid’s mom in her living room wasn’t weird enough, she somehow knew my mom and had worked with her on some community project at one point.

“So how’s your mom doing?” she asked. “Oh she’s great,” I responded as I took a hit off the pipe. We continued chatting for a minute about whatever project my mom was doing at the time. This was weird. I was talking with one of my mom’s friends, or at least an acquaintance, while I was smoking weed with her son and a few other guys in her living room. I guess it could’ve been worse, like if she actually cared and busted us, because then she could tell my mom what we were doing, but she was totally cool with it. I was a sophomore or a junior in high school at the time.

After I was thrown out of school senior year (a story I’ll get into later), the gym class I was in had a bike riding session where everyone would bring their bike to school and the class would go out riding around town for an hour with the teacher. Since I only lived a mile or so away from the school, they rode past my house one afternoon yelling my name and I heard them through the window, so I hopped on my bike and joined them. I also brought a joint with me, and a few of us smoked it as we were driving around the town, passing it to each other from bike to bike.

The gym teacher was at the head of the pack, and all the smoke was blowing behind us, so he didn’t notice. I don’t think he would have cared even if he knew. One time at a basketball game I was talking to him at the concession stand, and he said, “You smell like alcohol, get away from me.” He didn’t tell the cops, which were always there, he didn’t tell the principal, he just wanted me to get away from him. Everybody always liked Mr. Birch. He liked to call people boneheads when they were being stupid. “You bonehead!” he would always yell, and then it would usually echo bouncing off the walls or the ceiling. Gym teachers are always the coolest.

Posting New Traffic Signs Around Town

A lot of kids steal street signs and hang them in their rooms, which of course I did with the Main Street sign, 69th Drive, Eighth Avenue, High Street, and a student crossing sign, but one night we thought it would be funny to move some signs around, instead of just stealing them, so we unbolted a stop sign and decided to put it up somewhere else where there wasn't even an intersection. We took the stop sign from a small four-way stop in the middle of nowhere on a road that no one used so nobody would blow through the intersection and get into an accident (safety first, you know), and we took it over to Main Street right where it entered the town.

We unbolted a speed limit sign, and then put up the stop sign in its place and hid in the corn field along the side of the road to see if cars would stop, and they actually did! There was absolutely no logical reason why a stop sign would be in this spot, and there wasn't even an intersection or a cross street for another mile, but most cars still obeyed the sign and stopped right there in the middle of the road. The next day some city workers removed the sign.

A few weeks later on another night when we were bored, we took down a dead end sign and put it up in the same spot we had put the stop sign. We figured it was fitting, since we hated our small town and thought it was a dead end to life, so the new sign seemed very appropriate. Another time we changed the name of Main Street at the central intersection in the town. We scaled the telephone poll that the street name was posted on, and switched it with another sign. That one was up for weeks before anyone switched it back. I also used a black magic marker to add a bottle of booze to all the student crossing signs around town so they looked like the figures crossing the road were carrying large bottles of alcohol.

We also unbolted a handicapped parking sign from the school parking lot that was right by the entrance and moved it to the very back of the parking lot. Of course, it didn't make any sense for a handicapped spot to be so far away from the door, which is why we moved it, and it stayed there for months before it was moved back. The funniest part was that nobody would ever park there because it was a "handicapped zone" and nobody wanted to get a ticket so that parking spot stayed empty every day.

Climbing the Radio Towers

Probably the dumbest thing I’ve ever done (aside from drinking and driving) was when Diego and I decided to climb up a radio tower one night even though we were drinking and it was almost freezing outside. I’m sure you’ve seen these types of towers. They’re usually in clusters of five or more, and they have a series of red flashing lights on them so that airplanes won’t crash into them at night. They’re several hundred feet tall, and out by us, they were often in the middle of a clearing in a farmer’s field somewhere. These towers look pretty tall when you’re driving past them off in the distance, but when you’re standing directly underneath them, they seem to go on forever. We noticed the towers had ladders built into the scaffolding on the outside that led as far up as the eye could see, so we somehow got the idea to climb one.

The built-in ladder had a special railing on the side of it that was used to attach a safety harness for workers who would climb them so if they lost their grip they would only fall about 10 feet until the harness would catch and save them. Of course, we didn’t have any safety harness, but we didn’t care.

We weren’t drunk, but we had been drinking a little, as usual for a Friday or Saturday night, and it was winter time and so cold outside that we were wearing jackets, hats and gloves. Climbing a ladder while wearing gloves is probably not the smartest thing to do since you’re not as dexterous, and gloves can probably slip off the rung easier than your bare hand would, and climbing a ladder that’s located in the middle of a farmer’s field attached to the side of a radio tower extending hundreds of feet into the air after you’ve been drinking is even dumber.

I went up first, and Diego began climbing just a few feet below me. These towers had about four or five different red flashing lights spaced out at equal distances, and when we got to the first light we were so high that we could see for miles. It felt like we were 20 or 30 stories up, but we wanted to get to the very top of the tower, so we kept climbing. After a while, we made it to the second light and stopped for a moment to rest. As we looked down below, the first light was so far beneath us it was just a tiny speck. It felt like we could see half way across the state we were so high. The landscape was filled with countless tiny illuminated dots from street lights, porch lights, lighted signs on businesses, and headlights from cars on the freeway off in the distance.

We couldn’t believe how high up we were, and we actually started to get a little freaked out. We were getting pretty tired from the constant climbing, and we worried that if we went much higher we might not have the strength to get back down, so we rested for a few minutes by the second light and then slowly began our descent. When we reached the ground we breathed a sigh of relief and tipped our heads up, gazing at the sky in awe of the amazing height of the structure we had just climbed. Our forearms were tight and we had a slightly hard time opening and closing our hands from the climb.

After we got back in the car and started driving off down the country road that led us to the towers, we looked back at them marveling at their awesomeness and realized that we had only made it up about 2/5 of the way, because there were another three lights above the point where we had reached. We also reflected on how risky that just was, and realized how dumb we were.

Cliff Jumping

There was a huge rock quarry in a neighboring city that was filled up with close to 100 feet of water after workers unexpectedly struck an underground spring, so it was turned into a local swimming spot since it obviously couldn’t be mined anymore. There was also a secluded area at “the quarry” where people would go cliff jumping at night, which was very illegal, but during the hot summer nights in Wisconsin this was always a good time. One night when we were out there cliff jumping, a bunch of cops showed up and we all scattered into the surrounding woods to escape. Instead of being satisfied that they stopped us from cliff jumping, the police searched the woods for several hours looking for us in the darkness. There weren’t just one or two cops; there were a half dozen or more who made it their mission to find us that night. They had flashlights of course which gave away their position, so we could usually tell where they were and we snuck off in the opposite direction.

There was an urban legend that if you got busted for cliff jumping you would get a ticket for attempted suicide or reckless endangerment or something, and none of us certainly wanted that. At the very least we would probably get ticketed for trespassing since the quarry was closed and we had snuck in by hopping a fence. If you’ve ever seen the first *Rambo* movie when Sylvester Stallone is on the run from the police in the middle of a forest somewhere, that’s how we felt. Wisconsin is a very wooded area full of trees, bushes, and weeds, which we were able to disappear into once we saw the cops.

It was as if we were escaped inmates from a prison and the police *had* to find us. They just wouldn’t give up. The police chase was a lot of fun, and I never got caught, but a few of my friends did and were charged with trespassing. The cops left a note on my brother’s car, which was parked at a restaurant across the street, where all cliff jumpers left their cars when they snuck into the quarry late at night. The note said something about how they knew who he was and that he would be hearing from them shortly, but he never did. They were just trying to scare us in order to prevent us from coming back. It didn’t work, and the police chase only made cliff jumping more exciting knowing that at any moment we could be on the run again.

That night was also the latest I had ever come home because we were stuck in the woods for several hours evading the police. I didn’t really have a set curfew, but I usually made it home by around 1:00AM, and that night I don’t think my brother and I got home until about 3:00 o’clock in the morning. Our mom was not happy, but at least we didn’t get tickets like some of the others. And since we actually *did* come home, and weren’t dead or in jail, my mom forgot about it after briefly scolding us the next morning about being out so late.

The Spud Gun

No kid with a garage full of tools and any sort of engineering abilities should grow up without building a spud gun, I had thought, so one evening some friends and I all went to Home Depot and bought the necessary PVC pipes and fittings, along with the lantern flints to fire them. We got enough parts to make three or four different guns and even decorated them with paint so they looked really cool. I painted “Mr. Potato Gun” on the side of mine.

After our guns were assembled we went out and bought some Aqua Net hairspray, which is used as the fuel, and got a sack of potatoes and headed out to a clearing in the middle of a farmer’s field to test them out. They worked great! We would just shove a potato down the barrel with an old broom handle and spray some Aqua Net hairspray in the chamber and with one flick of the lantern flint—boom! The potato would shoot out like a cannon ball. There was nothing really to shoot at in the middle of a farmer’s field, so a few days later after school we took mine out in my parents’ minivan to test it in a more urban environment. We didn’t wear any eye protection in case the PVC pipe blew up in our face. No, we just figured it would hold, and thankfully it did.

I was driving, Fred was in the passenger seat, and Ken was in the back seat with Mr. Potato Gun as we headed into the neighboring town to have some fun. Ken would load up the gun in the back seat and just like a scene out of *The A-Team* , he would pull open the sliding door, take aim at a road sign, and fire away. He would then slam the door shut as we drove off laughing. Potato guns are not exactly quiet, and it wouldn’t have been that difficult for someone to get my license plate number after they heard a loud boom and saw what looked like the barrel of a cannon sticking out from the side of the minivan. We didn’t think of this at the time, because, well, you know why. We were dumb kids.

We did this for perhaps fifteen minutes or so, and when shooting road signs lost its novelty, we started shooting at parked cars and houses until we broke someone’s window and then figured we should quit and get the heck out of there. The window was from someone’s house that Ken shot and we all heard it shatter. I can’t imagine what the people must have thought, especially if they were home at the time, when all of a sudden one of their windows shattered and when they looked to see what had happened they would find a splattered potato lying in their living room. They probably thought one of the neighbor kids did it. I don’t think anyone could have imagined it was drive-by shooting with a spud gun.

A few nights later we took some of the extra potatoes and shoved them up tailpipes on people’s parked cars because we heard that if you did this, the car wouldn’t start. I’m not sure if this is true or not, but we thought we would give it a try.

Instead of just shooting potatoes, I discovered that my spud gun could also be turned into a deadly dart gun. By taking a large 3 or 4 inch nail and wrapping a cardboard cone around the head and hot gluing it in place, the darts could be slid down the barrel of the potato gun and would shoot across the entire distance of my parents’ basement and still stick into a piece of wood or lodge themselves into the wall. I shot one dart almost straight up into the air in my backyard to see how high it would go, and when the dart came down it stuck into the neighbor’s roof. Better than landing on someone’s windshield, which it would have smashed, and certainly better than landing on someone’s head which would have probably killed them instantly. I neglected to think about these dangers at the time.

We had occasionally talked about creating a semi-automatic spud gun that could shoot 8 or 10 potatoes, one right after the other, but we never got around to it. I did, however, make a blowgun out of a small PVC pipe and the mouth of a two liter soda bottle that was a lot of fun to shoot at rabbits in my mom’s garden. I also made a miniature dart gun that worked pretty well by attaching a small blowgun to a CO2 powered BB gun. I can thank *The A-Team* for inspiring those creations. Who says television doesn’t give kids bad ideas? It certainly gave me plenty.

Swiss Army Knife Fun

I always liked to carry a Swiss Army Knife with me wherever I went, not as a weapon, but because the knife and other tools came in handy to fix things, open things, and to try all kinds of things I saw on *MacGyver* . When using the toilet in the bathroom stall at school, I happened to notice that the door and wall panels were connected using brackets fastened with large screws, so after I was done doing my business, I whipped out the handy screwdriver gadget and I unscrewed the hinges from the door, and was able to prop the door back in place so when the very next person who used the stall would walk up to it and give the door a shove to swing it open, instead of opening, it would completely fall off!

As I'm sure you know, bathroom stall doors are very heavy, and are often made of large steel panels and sometimes when I was only 20 or 30 feet away from the bathroom, as I walked back to class, I could hear the door come crashing down to the floor, hitting the toilet on its way down because somebody had went to use the stall. I can't tell you how loud a bathroom stall door is as it crashes on the floor and bashes against the panels in the stall on its way down.

Sometimes using my handy Swiss Army Knife I would remove almost the entire stall itself and set the panels up against the wall. After a while, the school janitor started using one-way tamperproof screws to put them together so once they were tightened, they couldn't be removed. These screws only had an edge that would catch the screwdriver if you turned them to the right to tighten them, but if you turned the screwdriver left to loosen them, the screwdriver wouldn't catch, so you couldn't remove them. It was a good idea on their part.

I also liked to turn the water off to all the sinks and unscrew the nozzle and take the screens out of them to use in my marijuana pipes. You have to admit that to your average teenage boy, the idea of people finishing taking a crap and then when they try to turn on the sink, nothing comes out, it is pretty funny. It is disgusting, but it is a little funny. Some of the bathrooms had small plastic trash cans, so occasionally I would cut the bottom out with my knife so when the janitor would pick it up to dump it out, all the discarded paper towels and trash would fall out on the floor. I was an asshole, I know.

Jamming Drinking Fountains

A fun and extremely childish (and dangerous) thing that I would occasionally do involved tampering with the drinking fountains so they would spray on the floor, filling half the hallway with water. Most of the drinking fountains shot out two streams of water that joined together into one, and I noticed that one of the streams was a lot larger than the other, so I would clog it with a spit-ball and then jam a folded up piece of paper into the panel that you would push to turn it on, which would leave it running. Once the large hole was clogged, all the water was forced out the small one which caused it to shoot over the edge of the fountain and onto the floor because of the increased water pressure.

I would do this sometimes when I had gotten a hall pass to use the bathroom in the middle of class and on my way back I would jam the fountains and they would go on spraying for 20 minutes or so without anybody noticing, and by that time the hallway was completely full of water. There was really no way to prevent me from doing this and every time I did, I couldn't help but laugh out loud as I walked back to class and I could hardly keep the smile off of my face when I sat back down in my desk. People sitting around me often knew that I had done something by the look on my face, but they weren't sure what.

After a while the school changed all the fountain heads to ones that only had one stream of water, so my little trick wouldn't work anymore. Looking back on this, I realize how dangerous it really was because someone could have easily slipped on the thin layer of water on the floor and thrown their back out or broke their arm or even their head. That certainly was not my intention, and thankfully this never happened. Thinking about the negative consequences of my actions was not exactly one of my strong points back then.

A "Kidnapping"

Fred, Brent, and I were out shopping one Saturday or Sunday afternoon when we got the idea to pretend to abduct Brent in the parking lot of a store right in front of a bunch of people. He left the store a minute before Fred and I did and as we walked out of the door I yelled "there he is" and we ran over to him, pretended to assault him by throwing fake punches and then threw him in the trunk of my dad's car and sped off. There were several people about 10 or 15 feet from us when we had done this and nobody said a thing. We had hoped someone would try to stop us, but they just stood there frozen. Nobody ever yelled at us or yelled for help as it was happening.

We didn’t think about it at the time, but someone could have easily written down the license plate number and the cops could have put out an APB for the car, or the police could have shown up to my parents’ house shortly afterwards investigating a reported kidnapping. Thankfully this never happened. Years later I saw an episode of MTV’s *Jackass* where they staged a kidnapping of Brad Pitt, who was playing along, where a black van pulled up and snatched him in front of a crowd of people, so we weren’t the only jackasses to think of this kind of stunt.

Smashing Mailboxes

I think every kid in a small town knows what smashing mailboxes is. I’m sure that kids have been smashing mailboxes for decades, but I think the film *Dazed and Confused* probably multiplied the instances of this practice immeasurably—at least for my generation. Basically, for fun on occasion we would drive past people’s mailboxes and throw things at them like beer bottles, large rocks, garbage cans or construction barricades, and knock the mailboxes off their stands. In some instances we would just stop the car and get out and kick the mailboxes over when we didn’t have anything to throw at them. We just didn’t do this to one or two mailboxes. We did it to dozens of them, and one night we must have smashed every mailbox on every street in a several mile radius out in the country. It made the newspaper a few days later. This is what kids did before they had the Internet and Facebook to waste all their time on.

Our usual method for smashing mailboxes involved the driver pulling the car over near the edge of the road and the person in the passenger seat would sit on the window sill and grab a garbage can that was set out for collection, and then the driver would speed up and pull over close enough to a mailbox so the passenger could hit it with the garbage can (or whatever we were using as projectiles).

One night, Fred almost broke his arm and Ken’s passenger door got a large hole poked through it because the construction barricade Fred threw at a mailbox flipped around after hitting it and smashed into the side of the car and smacked Fred's arm. Of course Ken's mom wondered what the heck happened to his car so he made up some story I'm sure she didn't believe. That put an end to our mailbox smashing spree and we found other things to keep us entertained.

Pouring Salt Water in Vending Machine

We heard an urban legend somewhere that if you pour saltwater into the coin slot of a vending machine, it will short out and start dumping free sodas and quarters out of the coin return. The theory was, that since the saltwater is electrically conductive, as it's flowing inside the machine, once it hit the electrical components it would cause all sorts of problems and short it out, dumping its contents. It seemed like a logical idea, and what kid doesn't want free sodas and handfuls of free quarters to play arcade games with? We sure did, so one night we thought we would test this theory.

We took a cup of water and mixed in several tablespoons of salt and brought it to a soda machine outside the local car wash and poured it into the coin slot. We were ready to run because we feared that the machine would start sparking or blow up, but nothing happened. We thought maybe there wasn't enough salt in the water, or maybe we didn't use *enough* water, so we went back to the house and got a huge pitcher and mixed in a bunch of salt and went back to the machine and tried it again. This time, we even used a paper funnel to make sure as much water as possible went into the coin slot, but still, nothing happened. It looks like we would have to continue paying for our sodas after all. We didn't think about it at the time, but we probably ran the risk of getting electrocuted just by trying this stupid stunt.

Apparently an episode of *MacGyver* in the early 1990s showed this trick being done, and from doing a little research on the Internet after I wrote the first draft of this story, it looks like the salt water trick *actually worked* in some machines in the 1980s and early 90s, but eventually the manufacturers changed their designs to prevent this from happening.

Creating an "Earthquake"

We knew one of the neighbor girls was home alone and her parents were out of town for the night, so we thought it would be fun to climb on her roof and start jumping up and down to scare the crap out of her. I knew from when my dad was walking around on our roof cleaning out the gutters, I could hear his every step and it would rattle the house, so I figured jumping up and down would create quite a disturbance—and it did. It shook the whole house and we could hear her and her sister screaming from inside. She said she thought it was an earthquake. I'm surprised the plaster on the ceiling inside the house didn't crack. That would have been hard to explain to her parents, not to mention hard for me to pay to fix it!

We tried the earthquake thing again to a different girl in the neighborhood one other night, and her neighbor saw us climb onto the roof and once we were up there he started screaming at us thinking we were Peeping Toms. "You perverts!" he kept yelling as he ran over carrying a broom. "What do you think you're doing!" We jumped off the roof and took off running into the corn field behind her house. He ran right after us, just repeating himself over and over again. "You perverts! You perverts!" At least he didn't think we were trying to break into the house. We lost him in the cornfield, so thankfully we didn't get beaten by his broom.

Tapping Telephones

Another idea I got from watching *The A-Team* involved opening up the telephone boxes located in the back yards of various neighborhoods, and using an old telephone with alligator clips attached on the wires I was able to clip them onto the telephone terminals inside the box, essentially tapping the telephone of that home. There was approximately one telephone box per 10 or 15 houses, and they were always located in people's back yards where the property lines met. Inside these boxes were two columns of terminals with each pair connecting to the phone line of a different home.

Late one night I brought my make-shift telephone tap and opened up one of the boxes and attached my device to a pair of terminals. To my surprise, I heard a dial tone, and my phone actually worked! It was just like I had seen on TV! In order for me to hear anyone's conversation, they had to actually be on the phone at that time, but this wasn't the only cool thing I could do. I was also able to make long distance telephone calls that would then show up on that person’s bill.

We thought it would be funny to call a few 1-900 psychic lines that charge your phone bill a few dollars a minute and mess with the psychics for a while since we didn’t have to pay for it because whoever’s phone line we were tapping into would get the charges on their next bill. We sat in the grass next to the box and laughed thinking how strange it would be when whoever’s phone line we were using got their next bill and there would be a $30 charge to a 1-900 psychic hotline. We also made various prank phone calls, not worrying if the recipients had caller ID, because it wasn’t our parents’ phone number that would appear on the display; it would be the person whose phone we were tapping into.

I downloaded instructions one time on how to make a blue box and a black box, which are phone phreaking tools (phone phreaking is a slang term for basically hacking telephones). Back in the day, a black box enabled people to call you from long-distance and have nothing show up on their phone bill, and a blue box enabled you to make long-distance phone calls to anywhere you wanted for free. The blue box was too complicated for us to build at the time, but we did toy around and make the black box, but we’re not sure if it worked because we didn’t know anyone that could call from long distance to test it out. These devices probably wouldn’t have worked anyway because by the 1990s the phone companies were well aware of phone phreaking and had implemented safeguards to prevent people from messing with their system and getting free phone calls.

Apple Computer founders Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak built blue boxes that actually worked back when they were in college in the late 1960’s, something I didn’t learn about until years later when I saw the film *Pirates of Silicon Valley* .

Video Game Crimes

Like most kids, I enjoyed playing video games quite a bit. I had an Atari, then a Nintendo Entertainment System, and later bought the Sega Genesis. My junior year of high school the Sega Saturn came out, which was the most advanced video game system at the time and instead of using cartridges, the games were on CDs since they could hold more information. The Sega Saturn was a videogame player's dream come true. It was also $400, which I didn't have, but I really needed a new video game system because the Genesis was becoming a thing of the past, so I came up with a plan. It was sort of luck at first, which I then turned into a full-blown enterprise.

While looking around at a Best Buy electronics store, I just happened to notice that the UPC barcode on the box for the Sega Menacer light gun (for shooting games) was just a sticker. The Menacer was selling for $99.99 at this time, so I peeled the UPC off the box and stuck it over the UPC on the Sega Saturn and carried it up to the counter and bought it. I just saved myself $300. I was amazed. It didn't feel like I really stole anything since I technically bought it. I just bought it at a discount. A 75% discount. Hey, $100 bucks to a teenager in the 1990s was a lot of money! The cashier didn't notice anything. They just scanned the barcode and took my money and let me bring my brand new Sega Saturn home with no questions asked. I suddenly saw a whole new world of possibilities.

A few days later I went back to the store with Fred and did the same thing and he bought a Sega Saturn for $99.99. The video games themselves were $49.99, and I thought that was too much, so I found some other products that sold for around $10, which also had barcodes that were stickers and I peeled them off and stuck them on the video games I wanted and bought them at a discount too. A few other friends of mine wanted Sega Saturns too but didn't want to pay $400, so I went back and bought a few more over the next week or two, and then sold them for $200, which was half price from the cost at the store, so I made $100 from each one, and my friends got brand new Sega Saturns for half price.

Few products had barcodes that were made of stickers that I could just peel off and put on something else. Most products have the UPC code printed on the package, but I did notice that the information tag for each product that was stuck on the shelf not only listed the price and product information for each item, but they also had the UPC code printed right on them as well. I slid some of these information sheets out of their clear plastic sleeves and stuck them in my pocket and took them to Office Depot and photocopied them and glued the new UPC onto a mailing label sticker so all I had to do was walk into Best Buy and use my own homemade UPC code to stick on whatever product I wanted.

Equally shameful was the fact that we took the scissors, glue, and mailing label stickers off the shelf from Office Depot and used them to make the fake UPCs, and then put everything back on the shelves and only paid for a few 10-cent photocopies.

The first thing I bought was a brand new $2000 computer for $75. That’s about a 96% discount. It was a pretty good deal. Since my parents’ bought my first computer, they knew how expensive they were, so I couldn’t just walk into the house carrying a brand new one, so I went to my room, opened the window and pulled out the screen, and Fred came around back with it and handed it to me from outside. Just in case my dad realized the brand was different than the one he had bought me a few years earlier, I cut out the logo from the old computer’s user manual and glued it over the name of the new one.

The following week I went to a different Best Buy with one of my homemade UPC stickers and purchased a $1000 scanner for another $75 bucks. I also bought a few more video games and a copy of the Windows 95 operating system, which I paid $10 for. I figured Bill Gates had enough money already. If I didn’t like a video game after getting it home and trying it out, I would shrink wrap it and return it as if it were new. I would tell the store I lost the receipt, and they would give me in-store credit and then I would just trade it for another video game to see if I liked that one.

For a while I was taking the old video games to a local hobby store that had a shrink wrapping machine and they would charge me a few dollars to shrink wrap each game. Most of the guys there didn’t care and probably knew what I was doing, but after a while they implemented a new policy, and they wouldn’t shrink wrap my games anymore, so I came up with a way to do it myself by using window insulator kits and a heat gun. A window insulator is a sheet of thin plastic that you put over the windows in your house during the winter that helps to prevent cold air from coming in and saves you money on your heating bill. Once the plastic is in place and taped around the window frame, you use a hair dryer to heat it and it shrinks tightly around the window so it doesn't obstruct the view. Just as I figured, it also worked as shrink-wrapping material as well.

What clerk is going to imagine that a 17-year-old kid played a video game for a month and then had the thing shrink wrapped in order to return it for a different game? You have to admit, it was a genius idea. The insulator kits had enough plastic to shrink wrap several games and only cost a few dollars. After a while, I started returning empty boxes to the stores and would keep the game. They never opened the box to check to see if it was in there because it looked like it was still factory sealed, so how were they going to know it was missing? They didn't, well, that is until I returned too many empty video game boxes to one particular Toys "R" Us location and then they must have implemented a new policy to check all video games to make sure that they were actually in the box when someone brought them back.

Imagine my surprise when I was returning another game and the clerk opened up the box and found there was no disk inside! There I was, in the middle of Toys "R" Us standing at the customer service counter clearly caught red handed. I could have stayed there and pretended like I was just as surprised as the lady at the counter, but they could have easily called the cops and I didn't want to deal with that, so I said, "I'll be right back," and I walked away and headed for the exit. As soon as I got outside I started running to my car, jumped in and took off. I had just gotten the car a few weeks before and hadn't received my license plates yet, so I was relieved that even if they had followed me out to the parking lot, they couldn't have gotten my license plate number since there were no plates on the car! While I was glad that I had gotten away, I was disappointed that I still didn't have any new video games since I was bored with the ones I had.

It's interesting that while Fred and I were driving around smoking weed and "pulling scams" as we called it, we were usually listening to Eazy-E rap about pretty much the same thing: partying, hustling, screwing the system, and in the words of Eazy-E, just not giving a fuck. It was like we were living the kind of life he was rapping about. We felt like untouchable rock star gangsters.

I continued to push the envelope with my homemade UPCs and traveled to different Best Buy stores in the area because I wanted more computer equipment. I really wanted a laser printer but they were very expensive, so I made another UPC and went to buy one at a discount. This time, the clerk actually realized it was an expensive laser printer but the cash register showed it was only $50. She knew something was wrong and called a manager for a price check. I knew this would turn into a problem so I told her I left my wallet in the car and I would be back in just a second, and I calmly walked out of the store and got in the car and took off. The car wouldn't start right away and took a few tries before the engine started firing so I could get out of there, which wasn't very fun.

All I needed was a laser printer, and I felt my computer collection would be complete. Imagine the possibilities. The best scanner on the market, a brand new top-of-the-line computer, the newest software, and a laser printer. The possibilities were endless and I really had my heart set on that laser printer so I went to a different Best Buy and tried it again. You have to understand that in the 1990s this type of equipment was not common place in every household. In fact, back when I was a kid, only businesses and schools had laser printers and scanners because they were so expensive.

This time the cashier didn't notice the price was suspiciously low. She didn't even really look to see what product it was. She just mindlessly scanned the barcode and asked for the amount the cash register showed. I paid $50 cash, and she thanked me for my purchase. "No, thank you," I said, grinning as I picked up my brand-new laser printer and headed for the door. To my unpleasant surprise, the security system started beeping as soon as I passed the checkpoint on my way out. Apparently one of the security tags had not been neutralized at the cash register.

The guy at the security desk asked to see the receipt and I nervously handed it to him, but when he compared the item number on the receipt to the item number on the box, they didn't match up. The printer had two UPCs printed on the box, one on the front and one on the back, and I had only stuck my fake UPC over one of them which I strategically placed in view of the cashier when I set it on the counter so that would be the one she scanned.

The security guy was confused at first, and the cashier, who was just a few feet away, acknowledged that I had just purchased it 10 seconds earlier.

I could see this was not going to go well so I said quietly to Fred, who was standing right there with me, “Go. Just go,” and I darted my eyes at the door. He wasn’t sure what I meant so I took off running, leaving the printer on the guy’s counter and my $50 in cash register and Fred ran out the door right after me. It was too close of a call. It was the second time that trying to get the printer caused a problem, and this time the guy followed us out to the parking lot so we couldn’t go to Fred’s truck because he’d get the license plate number, so we just kept running down the block and had to come back later to get it.

We waited about a half hour and then Fred went back to the parking lot to retrieve his truck while I waited down the block. As he was backing out of the parking space he saw the security guy standing right behind the truck and he was writing down the license plate number on a pad of paper! Fred stepped on the gas and almost backed right into the guy, causing him to jump out of the way and then took off and came down the block to pick me up and we got out of there.

I then retired from creating my own UPCs. It wasn’t long after this that Best Buy started sticking the security tags over the top of the UPC codes, and they started putting the video games in security cases that had to be unlocked at the register using a special key. So even though we had gotten a bunch of discounted computer hardware, software, and video games from them, I figured we actually helped Best Buy by showing them a major flaw in their operation and prevented other people like us from taking advantage of them on an even larger scale.

Thankfully the cops never did show up at Fred’s house. It was a stressful few weeks after that close call. The security guy at Best Buy must not have been able to get the entire license plate number, or the cops didn’t have the resources to investigate a possible theft of a computer printer. Whatever reason it was, we were extremely lucky and it was too close of a call for us to continue our operation. We quit while we were ahead.

Fun at the County Fair

In every small hick town around the country, the county fair is one of the highlights of the summer. It’s the place where farmers show off their livestock, kids enjoy rides assembled with duct tape that can fall apart and kill anyone at any time, and people seem to enjoy whatever kind of fried food will get them one step closer to a heart attack—like deep fried Snickers bars or chocolate covered bacon. The county fair is always fun, but when you’re a teenager working for minimum wage, the tickets can be very expensive, especially if you end up going there five different times. Today most county fairs have sophisticated ticketing systems complete with barcode scanners and individually numbered tickets to make sure no one can print up their own counterfeit ones and get in for free. But not our county fair, at least not when I was a kid.

The ticket booths sold different color bracelets each day that could easily be faked. Once we found out what color was being used each day, I would simply take colored construction paper, cut it into thin strips, and using a leather punch I poked holes in it around the entire bracelet just like the originals. Then my friends and I taped them on our wrists and would walk past the ticket counter like it was no big deal, flashing them to the ticket taker. It saved us each about $30 in entrance fees over the course of the week and nobody ever noticed.

I’m sure in larger cities we wouldn’t have been able to pull this off because the bracelets had barcodes on them that would have to get scanned, but in our small little town in the 1990s, nobody could have imagined that a couple of teenagers would’ve been making fake bracelets so they could get into the fair for free.

One year I was able to get access to the microphone for the announcement system that covered the entire fairgrounds and told everyone to “smoke marijuana.” Over the course of that evening, several people I knew asked me if I was the one who said something about smoking marijuana over the loudspeaker. I couldn’t help it. The microphone was sitting right there on the desk at the fair office and no one was around, so how could I pass up this amazing opportunity to say something stupid to every fairgoer that night?

Making a Fake Report Card

One of my older brother’s friends went to a local technical college, but he wasn’t doing so well. He had some deal with his dad where if his grades were to fall below a C then he would have to pay rent, or his dad might even throw him out of the house or something. Since his grades sucked one semester and things weren’t looking good for him, he asked me to make him a fake report card so he could show his dad and not get thrown out of the house.

I was honored that he would ask me if I could do such a thing. It was very easy, as you can imagine, but remember this was in 1996 when the only people who new how to use computers were businesses and computer geeks. I just took his original report card to Kinko’s and photocopied the school’s logo onto a blank piece of colored paper and then using a simple word processor, I typed up a fake one and gave him all A’s and B’s. He was very thankful, and I made a quick hundred bucks.

T-shirts My Mom Wouldn’t Wash

I always liked to have funny T-shirts, but some of my best ones I could only wear a few times because my mom wouldn’t wash them, and if I threw them in the laundry hamper, they would just stay there laying at the bottom indefinitely. I had a great shirt that was a parody of *Wheel of Fortune* that showed Vanna White standing by a bunch of letters that spelled out, “G_F_ck Y__rs_lf” and the caption below it said, “Want to buy a vowel?” I thought it was great since I could wear it to school and the teachers and principal couldn’t do anything about it, because technically, it didn’t have any obscenities on it.

I had another shirt that showed George Washington with bloodshot eyes, smoking a joint on the front, and on the back had a quote attributed to him that said, “Make the most of the hemp seed, sow it everywhere.” I figured if George Washington wanted people to grow cannabis, then there was really nothing wrong with it. I had another shirt showing President Bill Clinton smoking a joint which read “Bill doesn’t inhale. He just sucks.” Another one had a mushroom cloud from an atomic bomb printed on the front and read “Made in America. Tested in Japan.”

I didn’t know how to do laundry since my mom always took care of this. I would just drop my dirty clothes in the hamper and they would magically appear clean in my closet a few days later, so it took me a while to realize that my favorite shirts were disappearing every time I put them in the hamper because she refused to wash them and she would just leave them sitting in there.

Prom Night

My prom date was a very cute, sweet and innocent girl, who didn’t really party, and didn’t smoke weed, but I still liked her because she seemed to be very entertained by all of my antics and trouble making. The teachers knew we would all get drunk before prom, so they spread the rumor that they were going to give us breathalyzers at the door when we arrived. We couldn’t go to prom sober, what fun would that be, we thought, so a bunch of us went out and bought flasks so we could enter the event sober, and then go in the bathroom and slam a few shots and catch a buzz since we would have already made it past the checkpoint.

The school had organized a bunch of limos to pick us all up and take us to and from prom, hoping to eliminate people from drinking and driving, but the strange thing was, some of the limo drivers went out and got smashed after they dropped us off at the prom! Our driver could barely stand as he opened the door when we got back in the limo to head home at the end of the event, and he was so drunk that he got lost on the way back to the school and we had to tell him where to go. He was blowing stop signs and swerving all over the road the whole way. It would have been safer if one of us had driven. Another limo carrying some friends of mine actually drove off the road and got stuck in a ditch because the driver was so drunk, and the five or six couples in the back had to all cram into other limos. It made for an exciting ride back to the school.

After the drunk limo drivers dropped us off at our cars in the school parking lot, we all headed to someone's house for an after party until the early morning hours of the next day.

The summer after graduation I started dating an extremely attractive girl who also happened to be very intelligent as well. We were certainly the odd couple no one could have imagined would have hooked up. Me, the class clown who got thrown out of school (a story I'll get to later), with one of the smartest, most mild mannered girls in our entire class. It was great. She must have liked the excitement of being with a "bad boy." The best part was, that she didn't even try to change me! I think she liked my trouble making.

One night we snuck into the Sheraton Hotel to use their hot tub and I stopped at a Seven Eleven on the way to buy some dish soap which I dumped in the hot tub to turn it into a bubble bath. The whole thing started overflowing with four feet of soap suds rising from the top, so we got out of there. Not long after this she got an underage drinking ticket because of me since we were at a party when the cops came. I felt really bad at first, but she didn't seem to care too much. I thought about offering to pay for it, but she came from a successful family, so I figured she could afford it. Besides, I had already paid way too much money in underage drinking tickets as it was.

Decorating the School with Beer Cans

Every kid goes toilet papering when they're young, and it's a lot of fun and pretty much harmless. Sure it's annoying for the homeowner to clean up the mess the next day, but you can pretty much spray the hose in the trees and it will fall down and the toilet paper doesn't cause any real damage. It was because of this easy cleanup that I thought we should decorate the trees at school with something else that would last a little longer. This "something else" was beer cans. A lot of beer cans.

For several weeks I saved the beer cans from our parties and late-night drinking binges, and I spent a considerable amount of time in my basement cutting sections of three foot string, and tying one beer can to each end in pairs. I would then feed this string inside one of the empty beer cans and place the two tops of the cans against each other and I wrapped a piece of tape around them, taping them together so the strings wouldn't get tangled up with each other. I then put each of these contraptions into two large black plastic garbage bags. The idea was to get on top of the school roof, crack the tape and pull the pairs of cans apart, and then fling them into the large tree in front of the school so they would get caught in the branches.

When I say it was a large tree, I mean enormous. The upper level roof of the school was about three stories tall and was just about the same height as the tree. Sometime earlier I had noticed one area of the school that had a poll holding up an awning that I could climb up and access almost any part of the school's roof. This opened up a whole new world of possibilities, so on the eve of April 1st, we headed up to the school with the bags of beer cans and backpacks full of toilet paper for an April Fools prank that everyone would be talking about.

When we got to the school that night, Rick and I scaled the poll and hopped on the roof and another friend of ours stayed on the ground to throw toilet paper rolls into the smaller trees and to get the bushes. Once on the roof we made our way to the upper level and headed for the front of the school by the tree and started flinging the beer cans into it. My invention worked perfectly. The strings would get caught on the branches and tangle up, and the cans would hang there, blowing in the wind.

We also threw rolls of toilet paper over the top of the tree and the guy on the ground would pick up the remaining roll and throw it back up into the tree finishing it off. Occasionally a car would drive by and we'd all hit the deck, ducking down on the roof so nobody would see any shadowy figures lurking around up there.

The next morning I brought a camera to school so I could get a picture of our handiwork in the daylight. It looked great. Of course, the janitors had been out there since first thing in the morning trying clean it up, but the tree was so large that the hose wouldn't reach most of the toilet paper dangling from the top and certainly wasn't going to do anything for the dozens of beer cans tangled in the branches. It looked like the tensile from a Christmas tree and each can sparkled in the sun. You couldn't drive by without noticing it.

The funniest thing was that there were a bunch of classrooms upstairs that had windows looking out over the front of the school and the tree was directly in front of these windows, so when you were sitting in class—there just 20 feet away outside—you could clearly see dozens of beer cans of Miller Lite, MGD, Icehouse, and others dangling in front of the windows. The school had to get a cherry picker from the city and hoist a worker up to cut down the cans one by one. It took them all day. Of course there was no evidence that I had anything to do with this, even though my proverbial signature was written boldly across it and sparkled in the sun. Well, no evidence *yet* .

Getting Kicked Out of High School

I should have quit while I was ahead, but I always had to push the envelope. The April Fool's Day prank of filling the school's tree with beer cans was historic. Every car that drove by the school that day couldn't help but practically be blinded by the sparkling cans shining in the sun. Most of the toilet paper was dangling from so high up that the hose wouldn't spray far enough to reach it in order to knock it down. It was awesome. So awesome, in fact, that one week later we decided to toilet paper the tree again.

It was Tuesday night April 9, 1996, when my friend Bobby's parents were out of town, so he threw a huge party because we were on spring break and didn't have school for the next few days. Ken, Rick, myself and brothers Brendon and Byron, took every roll of toilet paper from Bobby's house and we ventured off to the school to give an encore performance.

It felt like I was having déjà vu, although this time the evening would turn out very differently. As we were doing our decorating, someone from a house across the street had seen us tossing the toilet paper up into the trees and called the police. Two or three cop cars tried to sneak up on us by approaching without their lights or sirens on but we noticed them and scattered. The guys on the roof were able to make it to the ground and four out of the five of us met at the back of the school and continued running east across the football field.

Byron was missing because he ran in the opposite direction of everyone else when the cops came. We didn't know this at the time, but as he was running away, he was tackled by the guy who lived across the street—the same guy who happened to see us and called the cops. Byron was a star-athlete and we were confident that he could outrun any cop so we weren't worried about him getting caught. More police were arriving and got out of their cars and headed on foot shining their flashlights around looking for us as they came running across the football field in our direction.

Immediately behind the football field to the east were countless acres of farmers' fields that went on for miles, so we took off running. We could see four or five cops off in the distance with the beams of their flashlights bouncing up and down as they ran after us. We had a pretty good head start, and there was no doubt in my mind that we would be able to evade them, but they still kept following us into the middle of nowhere.

I was very familiar with these fields because Fred, Diego and I had a childhood fort nearby and I knew how we could get back to town through the fields, so we started heading south and crossed through a small creek by our old fort and continued on into the next farmer's field. That field led to the edge of town and the house where the party was at was just one block from where this field ended and the neighborhood began. We couldn't see the cops' flashlights anymore, and we figured they gave up chasing us because there was no way they could have caught up to us. We were too fast and had way too much of a head start. We all made it back to Bobby's party in one piece, all except one of us, that is, but we still figured Byron had gotten away and was on his way back to the house and we were home free. There is no adrenaline rush like running from the cops. We weren't scared. We loved it. The police chase had made my night and it certainly wasn't the first time I had police chasing after me on foot.

Just as we started cracking our celebratory beers back at the party because we successfully evaded the police, several squad cars pulled up to the house. “Cops!” someone yelled. “Lock the doors!” We had dealt with this before and knew that if all the doors were locked then the cops would go away eventually. We weren't sure if it was a coincidence that they had arrived at the house, or what was going on. We were 100% sure we had lost them in the fields, and there was no way they had followed us back to the house. No way. I could outrun and outsmart any cop, even if I had been drinking.

Perhaps one of the neighbors called them because of the party, we thought, which was a common thing we faced. Whatever they were doing there, we were pretty sure we were safe. After all, they couldn't come in without a search warrant so we figured they would just leave after a while, and we would be okay like we always were in the past. A few minutes later there were cops storming the house. Somehow they had gotten in.

My shoes were covered with mud from running through the fields, so I took them off and hid them in a cabinet under a bathroom sink because I didn't want to draw any attention to myself and have them figure out I was one of the kids leading them on the chase a few minutes earlier through the muddy fields. I hoped there was no connection between their presence at the party and our stunt at the high school, but I was wrong.

Byron had been caught and told them everything. He told them who else was there at the school, and he even told them we were at a party at Bobby's house right before. It was despicable. He broke the cardinal rule we learned from *Good Fellas:* Never rat on your friends, and always keep your mouth shut. Byron wasn't one of my crew. He was an acquaintance, not a friend. If it was one of my crew who got busted, they wouldn't have told the cops a word, but this pretty boy sung like a canary. He probably told them it was all my idea too.

The cops were able to get into the house because one of the emergency contacts listed for the alarm company was Bobby's uncle, who also had a key to house and gave that key, and full authorization to the police to enter the house. The uncle lived just a few blocks away so it only took the police a few minutes to get the key.

Once inside, the cops immediately asked which one was Mark, and I knew I was screwed. They placed me in handcuffs with my hands behind my back and sat me down in the kitchen. "How am I supposed to finish my beer with my hands behind my back?" I asked the one guarding me. He wasn't amused.

Over a dozen people got underage drinking tickets, and everyone who went up to the high school that night ended up getting charged with felony vandalism because some of the guys on the roof kicked over a few ventilation ducts. I would not be allowed on school property ever again, including graduation. The school board made me sign a contract agreeing never to step foot on school property again, and in return, my homework for the remaining two months of school would be sent home with my friends and I would still be allowed to technically graduate, although I certainly wasn't allowed to come for the ceremony. They just simply wanted me to go away.

I pushed them too far, but this time it wasn't really my fault. I know what you're thinking, but it wasn't. It was the guys who broke the ventilation ducts, which I had no part of. This went against my prankster code of conduct. I was a prankster, not a vandal. I was completely against vandalism (with the exception of smashing mailboxes, which at the time I didn't really consider vandalism because they could be easily put back up, and who cares if their mailbox has a dent in it? Of course it is vandalism, but when you're seventeen-years-old you don't see things too clearly sometimes).

I was pretty pissed that the guys had gotten out of control and broke the ventilation ducts. Not only were we all charged with felony vandalism, or in my case, party to felony vandalism, since I wasn't on the roof at night, but we had to pay $3000 in restitution for the broken ventilation systems. We also had to pay for the city workers to clean up the tree again. I'm 100% convinced that the "estimate" the school had gotten for the ventilation systems was fake. Complete bull. After talking with the guys and finding out what they did on the roof, all they did was kick over three or four of the ventilation duct covers that prevent rain and leaves from getting down into the ventilation ducts. These covers must have cost about $30 each, if that. The school had screwed us. A few days later on the front page of the town paper was the headline "Students suspended for vandalizing school." It gave all our names and told all about the whole deal.

I was the only one who was not allowed back to school since I was the ringleader, and this was the last straw in a long, long list of problems that I had been causing. I still felt this was extremely unfair, especially since I wasn't even on the roof that night and I didn't participate in any of the vandalism, not to mention there was no way the ventilation covers cost almost $3000! The actual "vandals" were back in school, yet I was thrown out. The school board didn't care. They had it with me and this was their opportunity to cleanse themselves of my perpetual problem causing…or so they thought.

My Final Revenge Against the School

Me getting thrown out of school was such BS that I couldn't just sit by and accept it, so my mind started racing and I came up with an idea to piss off the school even more. One of my favorite films was *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* , as I'm sure you can see why, and the movie gave me an idea. I remembered a campaign from the film which resulted in the words, "Save Ferris" being painted on a water tower because the school thought Ferris was deathly ill, when in reality he was playing hooky and having the time of his life.

I printed up a bunch of "Save Mark Dice" flyers that explained my unfair punishment from the April 9 incident, and then I listed the school's phone number and the home phone numbers of all of the school board members. "Call any time and voice your opinion," the flyers read. I gave them to Fred to bring to school the next day so the students could pass them around and that night we went out and stuck a bunch of them in people's mailboxes all around town. This was just the beginning of the *Save Mark* campaign, and the humiliation I would cause the principal and the school, even though I wasn't even there anymore.

They say that there are 5 to 7 major turning points in someone's life. These are major events that alter the course of the rest of your life from then on. These are things like graduating college, getting married, the unexpected death of someone close to you, things like this. They are events that change your life forever, and without even realizing it, I was on the verge of one of those events.

The *Save Mark* campaign was about to go supernova. All it took was one phone call to a local television station and me telling the news director about what was happening to me and how I was unfairly kicked out of school. The next day a news crew came to my parents' house and interviewed me about it. Not only did they interview me, but they tracked down one of the school board members and got her on camera too. I had given the reporter the names and addresses of all the school board members to help them with their story. Imagine this woman's surprise when she answered the door and it was a news crew asking her about why she threw me out of school!

They also interviewed several students right in front of the school to get their take on it. Some of the students had *Save Mark* flyers taped in the windows of their cars and were posting them around school. This made for great footage for the story, which aired later that evening. It was awesome! There I was on the evening news broadcasting to hundreds of thousands of people in the surrounding cities and towns telling everyone about how the evil school board and principal had it out for me and were denying me the memory of a high school graduation. The segment also mentioned that students were posting flyers around town, in the school, and on their cars showing their support for me.

Mrs. Vandyke, the school board member who was interviewed for the segment said that instead of having a large disciplinary file, she insisted that a large *box* was needed to hold all of my detentions and the evidence of my past pranks and everything I was suspected of participating in over the last four years. I'm sure the pornos I put in the library were in the box, along with Mr. Bell's *Asshole of America* shirt, and who knows what else. I was very proud. They didn't just have a file on me, they had a *box* .

The news segment still didn't change the school board's mind, and I still didn't get to come back to school or attend graduation, but this skyrocketed me to a whole new level of popularity that I could have never even imagined. I must say, and very honestly and humbly, that I was already one of the most infamous students in the school, but now I was on the evening news and this took it to a whole new level. It also taught me the power of the mass media, and how easily someone could get on the news.

All television stations, newspapers, and even some magazines have tip lines and ask people to phone in news items that they think are interesting, and that’s what I did. Years later, I would polish my skill of getting into the news, as you may be familiar with, but this is how it all began. This was how I learned that simply calling the news and pitching a story idea could quite often get them to cover it. This was an amazing revelation that shaped the course of the rest of my life and if I could do it all over again, I wouldn’t have it any other way.

The Aftermath

My entire locker was cleaned out and everything in it was sent to my parents’ house. Fred and Diego would bring my homework assignments to and from school for me. The principal, Mr. Mueller, along with the entire school board pleaded with Fred to convince me not to do anything else to retaliate or get even with the school for what they had done to me. The school really worried that their decision to throw me out might put me over the edge and cause me to do something even more dramatic and destructive. They just couldn’t wait for the end of the year fast enough. My appearance on the evening news was somewhat favorable to me, and I’m sure it blew the principal’s mind that it happened.

Under our signed agreement I was allowed to technically graduate, so that wasn’t so bad, but it did get pretty boring sitting in my room all day by myself while my friends were at school. Even though I didn’t have to actually go to school anymore, my mom would still wake me up and not let me sleep too late since she said this was supposed to be a punishment, not an excuse for sleeping in, and she wouldn’t let me play video games until after 3:00 when school got out.

Most of my homework was pretty easy, but I did pay a girl to write book reports for me for English class to save me the trouble of having to read the dumb books. I would then rewrite them in my handwriting and turn them in. I had applied, and was accepted to a local technical college in the fall, but I didn’t really have any serious plans about the future. I was just looking forward to the summer.

I happened to be taking a drafting class when I was thrown out of school, and while doing most of my school work at home was fairly easy, producing drafting drawings without the help of the teacher was very difficult. This was not a computer aided drafting (CAD) class, this was old school pencil and paper drafting where you would draw three-dimensional objects using only pencils, squares, compasses, and rulers. I didn't even have any of the proper equipment at home, so how was I supposed to produce the last few drawings required of me for the class?

I did have the drafting book, which showed a thumbnail image of the items I was supposed to draw, so using my high resolution computer scanner that I scammed from Best Buy, I scanned the tiny images and enlarged them by 1000% and then taped the printouts onto my window, and then traced them onto the drafting paper. It worked fantastic. There was just enough sunlight shining through the window and I could see each and every line in the diagrams, so I would just trace them onto my paper. A drawing that normally took several hours now only took me ten minutes.

Later that summer I was told by a friend of mine in the class that the teacher held up one of my drawings as an example of the kind of work the students should strive for! If you've ever taken a drafting class, you know that it's fairly difficult, and you sometimes draw lines in the wrong place or at the wrong angle and set the point of your compass off-center, and most drawings have a fair amount of erasing that has to be done on them before they are complete. Well, not my drawings. They were practically perfect, and even the teacher took notice of my handiwork, never even imagining how I had done it. He thought I was very gifted. I guess I was gifted, just not in drawing. My gift involved "beating the system," as they say.

The Dildo Present

Since I wasn't allowed at the graduation ceremony and I couldn't pull off one last jackass move to humiliate the principal, I decided to have one of my friends do it for me. This final prank would take balls, quite literally. I got a large black dildo and put a sticker on it reading "To Mr. Mueller, from Mark Dice," and called my friend Brent and asked him if he would give it to Mr. Mueller at the graduation ceremony. He was cool, and thought it was a great idea, so he came on over to pick it up on his way there.

He put the dildo in his back pocket, hiding it under his gown, and when his name was called to walk up and shake the principal’s hand and get his diploma, he reached out like he was going to shake hands and placed the dildo in Mr. Mueller’s right-hand and then snatched the diploma from him and walked off the stage, leaving him holding it in front of the entire audience. Mr. Mueller quickly turned around and set the dildo down on a chair and laid a clipboard on top of it trying to hide it from view. One of my friends’ parents were videotaping the ceremony, and they got this on tape so I was able to watch it later which was pretty cool.

I had also given my graduation hat to Rick to throw onstage for me at the end of the ceremony since I couldn’t be there. I had written “Fuck You!” in large letters with black magic marker on the red hat and underneath it wrote, “From Mark Dice.” The school had told the students not to throw their hats in the air, which has been a graduation tradition for who knows how long, and anyone missing their hat at the end of the ceremony would get in trouble they claimed. So my hat would be the only one being thrown that night, and Rick snuck it in under his gown and threw it on stage as one final “up yours” gesture from me to the school. Even though I was not there in person, I wanted them to know I was there in spirit. They just couldn’t escape me.

I had also done one other thing trying to throw a wrench in the ceremony that night. A small number of honor students were given a gold rope (called an honor chord) to wear around their neck, signifying they were the smart ones. It had something to do with an extremely high grade point average or something, so the afternoon before graduation I went to the local craft store and bought an entire roll of gold rope that looked practically identical to ones the honor students would be wearing, and cut it into small three-foot sections, the same length as the authentic honor chords, and I gave them to Rick to pass out to everyone before the ceremony, so instead of just a handful of people wearing the honor chords, there were dozens. Certainly not as cool as the dildo or my hat, but it was something.

Fake College Rejection Letter

I was very mad that Byron had gotten caught the night we decorated the school's tree again, especially since he ratted us all out and got me kicked out of school, so I had to get him back. Instead of doing something criminal like slashing his tires or keying his car, I decided to type up a fake letter from the college that he was going to attend in the fall, informing him that due to a recent evaluation of his criminal record they had decided to revoke his acceptance.

This was in 1996, and I didn't have a color printer at the time so I couldn't just copy the logo off the school's website and put it in a Word document and print it out to make an official looking letterhead, so I called the school asking for a packet of information which they sent to me. Once the brochures came, I cut out the school's logo and brought it to Kinko's and photocopied it onto a blank piece of paper so it looked like official school letterhead. I also made an envelope with the logo in the upper left corner so it looked nice and official too.

I then typed up a professional sounding letter explaining the school's decision to change its mind about his acceptance. I explained that the school had certain standards for their students and that he had failed to live up to those standards due to the recent vandalism charge from that infamous night at the high school. I knew that when he received the letter it would absolutely crush him. It was already too late to apply to other schools, so what would he do?

I included a sentence at the bottom of the letter that said if he wished to appeal the decision, he could call and schedule an appointment to plead his case. The phone number that I listed was a 1-800 number to a phone sex line that I got out of the back of a porno magazine where they advertise such numbers. This particular 1-800 phone sex number was advertised to specialize in anal sex talk and it was a 1-800 number (and not a 1-900 number) because you had to call in and give your credit card number so they could charge you per minute to talk dirty to the girls on the other end of the line.

There was a very nasty recording that played before you were asked to enter your credit card number. I will never forget this recording, at least the first sentence, which said "Hey baby. You've reached the Back Door Entry, the hottest anal sex line in the world." It then went on to say some very nasty things about what you could expect for your $3.99 a minute, or however much it cost to talk to one of the girls.

I made up some fake name who I said was the college administrator and then signed a signature in pen at the bottom of the letter and folded it up and put it in the official-looking envelope, put a stamp on it, and dropped it in the mail. Later that summer I bumped into Byron's brother Brendon at a party and I asked him how his brother liked getting thrown out of college before he even started, and then I laughed. He acknowledged his brother and his parents were freaked out when they first got the letter and then were confused when they called to schedule their appeal and got a recording talking about anal sex. They probably thought they dialed the number wrong at first. Oh, to be a fly on the wall when this happened would have been awesome.

One of my very best prank phone calls would also include Byron, and interestingly enough didn't result from me calling someone, it resulted from someone calling me who had a wrong number. I received a call one afternoon from a woman who thought she had called a bank to see if her loan was approved. Seeing a fun opportunity when she asked if this was Wells Fargo (or whatever bank it was), I said, "Yes it is. This is Bill speaking, how may I help you?" She went on to tell me that she wanted to know the status of her loan application. She sounded like an African-American woman, and I told her I was sorry, but the loan officer in charge of her account turned her down because she was black.

"Excuse me?" she said. "That's right, I'm very sorry ma'am, and I'm going to do everything I can to correct this," I assured her. "But Mrs. Wilson who was in charge of processing your loan doesn't like black people." I went on to tell her that of course this was against company policy and said I was going to do everything I could to get that loan approved. I also told her that Mrs. Wilson was under investigation for racism and that we were going to be firing her soon. Mrs. Wilson was Byron's mom of course, and none of this was true.

I told the poor woman on the phone that I was going to give her Mrs. Wilson's home phone number and I wanted her to call and tell her how disappointed she was that she would turn down a customer’s loan just because they were black. I assured her that the bank would call her back in a few days with the new results of her loan application, but I stressed that she really should call Mrs. Wilson right now and tell her what a piece of garbage she was, and then I gave her Mrs. Wilson’s home phone number.

Just imagine how confused Byron’s mom must have been because not only did this woman have her phone number, but also knew her name! I’m sure Mrs. Wilson tried to say that she didn’t work at the bank and she didn’t have anything to do with loans, but the woman on the phone probably said that she just got off the phone with the bank, and they were the ones that gave her Mrs. Wilson’s phone number! I wish I could have been there to witness this conversation, but it was fun enough just coming up with this story off the top of my head and talking with the woman.

The Weed Cutter

The summer after high school graduation (I was allowed to technically graduate, remember) Fred and I got a job on a weed cutter, and I’m sure you don’t have any idea what this is, so I’ll try to explain it to you. In the Midwest, a lot of lakes have problems with weeds growing up from the bottom and tangling in the propellers of boats, so it’s fairly common to have a huge weed cutting boat drive around the lake and cut the weeds. It looks like a floating combine like the ones used for harvesting corn. Fred lived on the lake, and his dad had gotten us the job as the two weed cutters which turned out to be one of the greatest jobs ever.

One of us would ride around the lake on the boat cutting the weeds, often for several hours at a stretch, while the other one would sit in a dump truck on the shore just waiting for the weed cutter to fill up and unload. When the weed cutter was full of seaweed, we would drive it ashore and using a series of conveyor belts we would unload the weeds into the back of the dump truck. It was then the truck driver’s job to take the weeds to a nearby dump site and dump them. It was very often several hours between loads, and we would switch off every other load so one of us would drive the dump truck for half the day, while the other one would operate the boat.

Our first day on the job we were out test driving the dump truck when Fred put it in the ditch when making a u-turn. This was an omen of what was going to happen for the rest of the summer. The truck was stuck and wouldn’t move but luckily some guy drove by in a pickup truck and had a tow rope and was able to pull us out and our boss didn’t find out about it. This happened on a country road in the middle of nowhere, so we flagged the guy down for help as he approached us. He was drinking a can of Old Style beer (right in his truck while he was driving) and had the rest of the twelve-pack sitting in the truck bed. This is what happens out in the country in Wisconsin.

Our supervisor for the weed cutting project was a retired senile old man named Barney. He was a scatterbrained man probably suffering from the onset of Alzheimer’s disease, and every single time he would address Fred or I, he would call us by the wrong name and then correct himself. If he was addressing me, he would say “Fred, ahh, Mark.” He could never get our names right. Ever! A lot of older grandparents do this. They just keep rattling off the names of the grandkids when talking to one until the right name pops into their head. Barney was no different. Even if he called us by the right name, his brain would still have a glitch and he wasn’t sure if he had used the correct name or not, and he would say something like, “Mark, umm, Fred, ahhh, Mark,” every single time.

Nobody in their right mind should have let either of us drive a dump truck. We were 18-years-old and smoked weed constantly. The dump truck was just under a certain weight limit so we didn’t need a special driver’s license to run it. It was a stick shift, and I had never driven a stick shift before, so imagine how fun it was to learn using a dump truck! I’m surprised we didn’t destroy the transmission in the first two weeks. We beat the crap out of that truck. I did get the hang of it pretty quickly though, and soon was able to fly down the road steering with my knee while holding a hamburger in my left hand and a soda in my right. I would set my drink down on top of the shifter to shift and would take bites of my hamburger and puff on joints as I drove down the road like a maniac, never once worrying about getting pulled over.

Little did I realize when I first started that job, that it would be a changing point in my life. I could only smoke so many joints sitting in the dump truck waiting for the boat to come ashore to unload, so I had to do something to keep me busy. I soon learned the amazing power of books. I went to Barnes & Noble and bought a book called the *Psychology of Persuasion* , and it was amazing. It opened up a whole new world for me. When it was Fred's turn to sit in the dump truck and wait for the boat, he read the book too, and we would discuss what we had learned after work every night.

The second book I bought was *Unlimited Power* by Anthony Robbins, which changed the course of my life forever, and remains one of my favorite books of all time. Here I was, 18-years-old, in a small little town in Wisconsin, and I had found Anthony Robbins, the biggest self-help and motivational guru in history, and his book began to open my mind up to the true power of my potential.

Fred and I felt like Jedis in training. It wasn't long after reading this book that I began dating a hot new girl who was super smart too, and I also started looking ahead in my life, and began coming up with goals and milestones along my desired path. I had never thought too much about the future. I pretty much just lived for the moment and never really looked ahead in my life more than a week. This was my first coming of age moment.

Working on the weed cutter did offer other perks too, other than ample reading time in the dump truck. Since Fred lived on the lake at his dad's house, after work we could go jet skiing whenever we wanted and his dad would let us take out his speed boat by ourselves. We would fill a cooler full of beer and go out waterskiing until sunset with some girls from the neighborhood and smoke joints on the boat, and felt like we owned the lake. There was a water patrol police officer stationed on the lake, but we never worried about getting pulled over for speeding or reckless driving since we worked on the lake and we became friendly with the officer. His name was Malcolm, and we would drive by him with beers in our hands and wave to him and he would wave back, and he was never suspicious or perhaps never cared about what we were drinking.

One time when we were drinking and waterskiing officer Malcolm approached us and waved us down and we thought he was going to bust us for reckless driving or something. We all had open beers, of course, and there was a bag of weed in the boat, and probably not the legal number of life jackets either. We thought we were screwed, but officer Malcolm just wanted to thank us for doing a good job keeping the lake clean and asked us if we would be sure to keep the area around his dock free of weeds!

When we were cutting the weeds by people's piers, sometimes the homeowner would run out and flag us down and toss us a beer or two trying to bribe us to make sure we really cleaned up the lake in front of their house. They probably never assumed that a couple of 18-year-old kids would be operating the $150,000 weed cutter, and since almost everyone in Wisconsin loves beer, they figured this was a good incentive for us. We weren't getting drunk on weed cutter, it was just a beer or two once in a while, and usually a Miller Lite or something we'd sweat out after a few minutes working in the sun.

At one point during the summer, Fred and I had a contest to see who could go longer without showering. It started one day when Fred happened to mention that he hadn't showered for a few days since he figured waterskiing in the lake after work kept him clean enough. I remarked that it had been a few days since I had showed too, to which Fred responded, "and I'm not going to shower today either," as he laughed out loud at his blatant violation of social norms.

"I'm not showering today either," I said chuckling. The next day when we arrived at work I proudly announced, "I didn't take a shower this morning."

"Me either," Fred responded.

We both grinned and went to work, repeating this same smelly game of chicken, day after day to see who would finally flinch first and give up. I went a week or maybe ten days without showering, and then I gave up after I did some work on my car and got all covered in grease. I also smelled like seaweed and there were pieces of it stuck in my hair and it was getting nasty so I figured it was time.

The lake we worked on was part of a park, and the park ranger was an extremely obese woman who drove around in an electric golf cart that we joked was her heavy duty electric wheel chair because we thought she was too fat to walk. We called her “tons of fun.” She was off on Mondays and Tuesdays and on those days we would always see a county vehicle pull into the parking lot and sit for several hours and nobody would ever get out. We realized the city worker would park there and sleep. People always joke about how county and city workers slack off all the time, and this seemed to be true. One of my friends worked for the county that summer and confirmed this, but his job still wasn’t as fun as ours.

Our supervisor, Barney, the senile old man who always wore a hat like Gilligan on *Gillian’s Island* and always had a look of confusion on his face, would always complain that we never wore our life jackets when operating the weed cutter. I didn’t wear a life jacket because it was going to ruin my tan. He complained about it all the time and would occasionally threaten to fire us if we weren’t wearing them. Barney lived on the lake and would watch us with binoculars, and taking care of the lake was his life’s mission in his retirement. We thought about “accidentally” driving the weed cutter into his boat to poke a hole in it and make it sink, or running into his dock to smash it just for fun.

One of the dump sites for the weeds was on a guy’s land who lived on the edge of a farmer’s field, and he let us dump the weeds there so the farmer could use them as mulch in the field. We met this man several times and thought he was extremely bizarre. One afternoon we saw him pulling out of his driveway with a black woman in the passenger seat who we assumed was probably his wife. I don’t mean to sound racist or anything, but a white guy with a black woman is extremely rare, especially in Hickville, Wisconsin, and we were pretty surprised by this. Fred started joking that she was his slave who he kept locked up in the basement, and somehow this idea started becoming something we considered may be true. The guy looked like a complete psycho, and we wondered how in the world he was able to even attract a wife at all, and it was even more strange that he had somehow hooked up with a black woman.

We never saw his wife again, so one day we decided we should sneak into his house and investigate to see if Fred’s delusions had any basis in reality. This was out in the country where most people don’t even lock their doors, so after we dumped a load of weeds we parked the dump truck in his driveway and walked up to his front porch to see if he was home. We came up with some dumb question to ask him about where he wanted us to dump that week’s loads, just in case he was home. We rang the doorbell, and when no one answered we thought this was the perfect opportunity to sneak inside his house and look around.

I slowly opened the door, and Fred stood on the porch looking out to see if his car would pull into the driveway. I made it just a few steps into the house, and I just couldn’t do it. This was too weird. We were in insane. What the heck were we doing? We were snooping around some stranger’s house because Fred was delusional and thought he kept a black woman locked up as his prisoner. I turned back and ran out the door and we got in the dump truck and left.

The weed cutter was one of the best jobs I’ve ever had. We would show up late, cheat on our timecards, smoke joints and occasionally drink a beer right on the boat. I did the same job the following summer, but Fred decided to work for his dad doing construction so I got Barney to hire my friend Marty as Fred’s replacement but we screwed around so bad that Barney told us he wasn’t going to hire us back again the next year. He really meant it too, so I ended up working at a gas station instead. I blamed Marty because he was horrible at operating the weed cutter and even fell asleep one time while he was driving it and hit a buoy and almost crashed into someone’s dock.

Barney our boss had a sign hanging off his mailbox that said, “Barney’s Golden Pond,” a reference to the movie *On Golden Pond* about some senile old man who lives on a lake or something, so it was very fitting of him. To get our “revenge” against him we later ripped the sign off his mailbox a few nights before I moved to California and brought it with me in the car, and later threw it off the edge of the Hoover Dam.

Ideas Not Carried Out

Chicago 69 Sign

While I was able to pull off most of the crazy schemes I had come up with, there were still a few that I just didn’t get around to or logistically were too difficult. People had always talked about stealing the “Chicago 69” sign, which is a large sign on the freeway signifying that Chicago is 69 miles away. While I did steal a 69th Drive street sign, stealing the Chicago 69 sign would have been truly historic since people had talked about it for years, and there was only one. Since most people only talk about doing crazy things, my friends and I decided to go out and actually steal it. We brought a battery powered saw so we could just cut down the posts in a matter of seconds and throw the sign in the back of Fred’s truck. It would have taken too much time to climb the posts and actually unbolt it, since hundreds of cars would have seen us and possibly a cop, so simply cutting the sign down seemed like a much better idea.

We parked on a frontage road parallel with the freeway and then walked down the embankment to retrieve our sign. As we approached it we came to realize that the sign was three times larger than we had thought. When you’re driving by on the freeway, it doesn’t look all that big, but when you’re standing directly underneath it, it was huge. It was probably 25 feet long and 8 feet tall, and there was no way it would have even fit in the back of Fred’s truck. We had to abort the mission. At least we had tried.

The 7 Day Plan

I had an idea for what we called the seven-day plan, which was a series of seven pranks, one every day of the week right after the other, with some of them being spin-offs of the previous one. For example, we were going to list the principal’s house for sale in the local newspaper saying that it had an in-ground swimming pool and a new roof, and then the next day we were going to have Diggers Hotline come to his house and spray paint all over his yard showing where all the utility lines were buried, and then the following day we were going to have a pool company stop by his house to schedule an estimate for a new swimming pool to be put in his backyard.

We were then going to schedule a roofer to come to his house the next day to give him an estimate for some new shingles.

For some reason we were going to put a dead squirrel in a box and leave it on his front door because in the listing for his house we were going to put in the real estate section, we planned on mentioning that there were a lot of squirrels and other wild life on the property.

The plan would culminate by taking a mannequin dressed in a school letter jacket and hanging it from its neck by a noose from the school so it looked like a student had killed themselves on the upper level of the school roof. We were hoping this would cause school to be canceled before the police realized it wasn’t really a person. The dummy was also going to be holding a copy of the real estate listing for the principal’s house in its hand. I was thrown out of school before we could put the seven-day plan in motion.

Cementing the School Gate Shut

If we would have had a little more money, we would have cemented the gates shut to prevent anyone from having access to the school parking lot just to cause chaos when everyone arrived in the morning for school. We were going to go in the middle of the night and chain them shut and mix a few bags of concrete on the ground around them so by morning it would have hardened enough so the gates couldn’t open and the school would have to make a decision to cancel classes that day or have everyone park in the surrounding neighborhoods. Whatever they decide we thought it would have been hilarious but we never got around to it because nobody wanted to spend the money on the concrete.

Coveting An Arcade Game

There was a small outlet mall near us that had a few arcade games in the hallway for people to play and both Fred and I had always wanted an arcade game at home, so we thought about stealing one from the mall. We figured since no one would really have the balls to steal one in the middle of the day, we could probably actually do it quite easily. We discussed making fake T-shirts with the name of the video game company printed on them and then we were going to use a dolly and just load up the arcade game and roll it out to Fred’s truck. Who would suspect we were stealing it? We would have looked like a couple of repair men.

We were also going to print up fake lettering for the side of the truck that spelled out the name of the video game company. That way if anyone saw us wheeling it out of the mall and loading it onto the truck, the door would read “Video Games Unlimited” in large letters (or whatever the company’s name was) so nobody would think anything of it. We were even going to print fake license plates for the truck just in case there were security cameras that got us on tape. The reason we never did this was because of the close call we had scamming video games and computer equipment from Best Buy using our homemade UPCs. Aren’t videogames supposed to keep kids *out of trouble* ? Not us.

Trying to Tap into the Announcement System at School

We really wanted to tap into the announcement system of the school with our own microphone so we could say offensive things like telling the principal to go screw himself and voice our opinions about our least favorite teachers, while the whole school was listening, but we just couldn’t figure out how to do this. We did realize that there was a microphone on the principal’s desk with a large button on it that we figured could accomplish this task, but there was no way that this could be done without getting caught since his secretary or someone else would definitely see us running out of there and it was such a small school that they would probably know who it was or at least be able to identify them the next time they saw that person in the hall.

Unfortunately there was no way of tapping into the system without having access to the central unit, which was located in the school office. We also thought about taping into the loudspeakers on the football field, but this also proved too difficult. It seems that sometimes dreams *don’t* come true.

Dumping Dead Fish in the Ventilation System

We wanted to put stink bombs in the ventilation system of the high school to stink up the entire building so they would have to close it for the day. It was something the Joker in the *Batman* movies would do so it seemed like a pretty good idea at the time. After thinking about this for a while, instead of just throwing a stink bomb in the intake, we decided it would be much better if we would dump a bucket of dead fish in it instead, because they would provide a continuous supply of stench instead of just one burst of it. We found an unmarked door in the school that had a ladder leading up to a room where all the ventilation ducts came from, but we couldn’t find the intake so we resorted to dropping stink bombs in the hallways instead but it didn’t have the same effect.

Years earlier Ken threw a lit smoke bomb into the middle school on the last day of class and dropped another one into a ventilation duct somewhere hoping it would get sucked into the school. Kids and their smoke bombs, I’ll tell ya.

Stealing Dead Cats from Biology Class

After the Advanced Biology class got done dissecting a bunch of cats for a project, we thought about going in the school dumpster and taking the bodies and then throwing them all in a teacher’s front yard. We knew from our friends in Advanced Bio that the cats had just gotten thrown out after their dissection experiments were completed, and about a dozen of them with their guts cut open were lying in the dumpster behind the school.

We would have actually done this, except nobody wanted to put the dead cats in the trunk of their car so we could drive them over to a teacher’s house because we thought the blood and guts would leak out of the trash bags. We realized how bad these cats must smell, and nobody was willing to risk having the trunk of their car smell like a dead body after we were done.

Hanging a Pot Flag on the Flagpole

I took a large piece of white fabric and painted a green pot leaf on it and I was going to hoist it up on the school flagpole one night, but I ended up getting kicked out of school before I could do it. I was planning on going in the middle of the night and would lower the American flag and replace it with the large pot leaf and hoist it back up to the top and then climb the flagpole and cut the rope so the flag could not be taken down. This was one of the pranks next on my list. I had the pot flag already made and ready to go, but my early departure from school caused me to abort this mission.

Building Our Own Float

Senior year we came up with the idea to make our own float for the homecoming parade that would have consisted of a trailer covered in beer cans and a large pot leaf displayed on the top, but we didn’t have enough time to build it. We talked about how it could be done and we found someone with a truck who was willing to pull the float, but the parade was a day or two away when we had come up with the idea. We were going to park the float a block away from the school and then in the middle of the parade just pull up from an adjacent street and join the procession. It was a great idea but unfortunately we didn’t have enough time to build it since homecoming was only a day or two away and we were seniors, so we couldn’t do it the following year.

A few people did, however, bring eggs and stink bombs to the homecoming pep rally in the gym and raised a little hell that way. We even discussed setting off a bunch of stink bombs in the gym and then chaining all the doors shut from the outside to lock everyone in there so they couldn’t get out. We were terrible kids.

The Shit Box

I always wanted to be an entrepreneur. I wanted to own my own business, invent a new product, or do something on my own so I didn’t have to work for anybody, and of course I dreamed of making millions and retiring at the age of 30. One of the first ideas I came up with was to sell boxes of shit. Literally, boxes of cow manure that I called the Shit Box. Of course, you wouldn’t buy one of these for yourself. The idea was that people would call me and give me the name and address of someone they hate, and I would send them a box of cow manure along with a nasty letter explaining why someone decided to do this to them.

This wasn’t just a wild idea I had, I actually purchased the phone number 1-888 Shit Box (744-2269). (I had to get the 888 number because the 1-800 number was already taken, but the 888 number was still toll free.) I then looked into having a 24-hour answering service take the orders and researched what it would take to get a merchant account setup so I could accept credit cards. I even spoke with a sales rep from the local rock station I was planning on advertising the Shit Box on. I also wrote up a thirty second commercial I planned on using. Obviously, you can’t say *shit* on the radio, so the sales rep said they could just bleep it out, and people would get the idea.

My commercial went something like, “Do you hate your boss, a teacher, your principal, or ex-lover? Send them a box of (bleep) in the mail. Call 1-888 (bleep) box, and we’ll ship them a box of cow manure anonymously along with a letter telling them that they’re receiving a box of (bleep) because they are a piece of (bleep). That’s 1-888 (bleep) box. 1-888-744-2269. Call today.”

We even painted up some huge cardboard signs that said, “Send your boss a box of shit. Call 1-888 Shit Box.” We had planned to put them up all over town on telephone poles and on the side of the highway to advertise our new service.

I would have done it all to, except I decided to save my money and move to California at the end of the summer. The radio advertising was very expensive and I wasn’t sure if the idea was going to take off or not. You have to admit, in a weird sort of way, it seems like a good idea, and years later I found several other websites that were doing exactly the same thing, so I wasn’t the only crazy one with the idea!

Of course it wasn’t the most respectable business model, and sending people boxes of cow manure in the mail certainly wouldn’t get me any awards from the Better Business Bureau, but it still could be considered a legitimate business, and there are certainly worse businesses to be involved in.

College Craziness

Let the Higher Education Begin

Freshman year of college I lived at home with my parents and commuted to school, and the year was rather uneventful because most of my friends had all moved away to different schools and lived in the dorms. Since this was a rather boring time, sophomore year I moved into a three story, four-bedroom house with a group of guys (John, Nick, Bobby and I) and we partied at least three nights a week like there was no tomorrow. Bobby would bring home a bottle of tequila every single Friday night after work for months on end, and within several hours the bottle would be empty and then placed on a narrow 4-inch wide shelf that went around our entire living room half way up the wall. I don’t remember how many bottles of tequila were stacked up there by the end of the year, but I think there were dozens. This was in Wisconsin after all, where everybody drinks like a fish.

Throughout the course of that year, we probably had the police come to our house at least a half-dozen times, and every time this happened we would lock the door, turn off the stereo, and they would just leave after a while. We did have one problem, however, that wouldn’t go away…our landlord.

Our landlord lived in the house literally right behind us. Our backyard was their front yard, and they were probably less than 75 feet away from us. We knew this would be a problem when we moved in, but we had waited too long to rent a house and the school year was just around the corner, and there were hardly any available houses near campus by this time, so we had to take what we found. When we signed the lease we assured them that we were a bunch of studious young men who didn’t party and got good grades. They soon realized how big of a lie that was.

The Picnic Table

My house mates and I were able to scrounge up most of the furniture we needed from our parents’ basements, but there was still one thing missing. We got a couple of old couches from Nick’s parents, John had a nice stereo system and Bobby had a decent sized TV that he brought to the house, and by the time school started we had just about everything we needed except a kitchen table. None of our parents had an old kitchen table lying around, and we certainly didn’t want to go and buy one, so I came up with a plan.

The public park that Fred and I worked at operating the weed cutter was full of picnic benches so we went there in the middle of the night and loaded one in the back of his truck and brought it to my new house. It fit perfectly in our kitchen. Of course this qualified as having stolen property in our house and there was a huge stamp that looked like it was burnt into the wood on the top of it that said “Property of the County Park System,” but we figured since it was a public park paid for by our tax dollars, the table was, in a sense, ours. We didn’t think the park would miss one table since there were plenty of them around and we even thought about bringing it back at the end of the year when we were done with it. We were just borrowing it, we weren’t stealing it.

The picnic table was a nice touch in our house. Not only did we use it to eat on, but it also served as entertainment during our parties, which happened practically every week. It became common for people to take pens and magic markers, and draw funny pictures on the tabletop and on the benches where people sat. Sometimes people would take knives out of the drawer and carve things into the table as well. We encouraged this. After just a few months, practically every surface on the thing was covered with graffiti, little cartoon images, and a lot of penises for some reason. People really liked to draw penises on the table.

At the end of the school year when we all moved out and went our separate ways, we carried the picnic table across the street and set it in a grassy area next to the apartment complex there and within just an hour or so, we saw some people sitting down at it and enjoying it. I’m sure they were also enjoying the two semester’s worth of artwork that was on it too. I thought about returning it to the park I had taken it from, but that would have been too much work, so abandoning it across the street was good enough.

Don’t Puke in the Flowers

On St. Patrick’s Day, Bobby bought a bottle of Everclear which is 90% alcohol (190 proof), and contains a warning on the label specifically stating not to drink it straight, and insisting that it be highly diluted with a non-alcoholic beverage. We didn’t care about this warning, and poured a couple shots. We all clanged our shot glasses together above our heads, said cheers, and downed the shots. Within seconds John and Nick ran out the front door, leaned over the railing surrounding the front porch, and started puking. I felt a little queasy too, but was able to hold mine down along with Bobby, who outweighed me by 70 or 80 pounds. The only bathroom in the house was upstairs, and there was no way anyone would have been able to hold it down until they ran up there, so luckily the front door was only a few feet away.

A little while later as our party began to get in full gear, some other people wanted to take shots to see if they could hold it down, so I took another one with them, my second, their first, and one of them ran out the front door and puked immediately after taking it. The stuff tasted terrible, kind of like gasoline in my mouth, but I still was able to keep my second shot down. Then a little while later, Bobby and I took another shot, my third, and his second, and this time it was my turn to run out the front door and start puking over the railing. Bobby followed right behind me. The ground was covered with several inches of snow, and I could see where the others had puked because their chunky and colored vomit was splattered on the clean white snow that covered the grass and flowers on the ground right next to the porch. It looked nasty. Like someone had spilled rotten fruit salad all over the front of the house.

The next day, the four of us sat in the living room on the sofas like a bunch of zombies watching movies. We were practically brain-dead. We realized why the bottle of Everclear said not to drink it straight, after all, just one shot made almost everyone puke immediately. I was very proud that I was able to hold two of them down, and only puked after my third. Our heads were throbbing as we watched movies trying to recover from the night before, when all of a sudden we heard pounding on the front door. This was angry pounding, not pounding like one of our friends was seeing if we were home.

Everyone was too dead to even want to get up, but I managed to stagger my way to the door to answer it and realized it was the landlord. This couldn’t have been good. As soon as I opened the door she started yelling at me saying something about puke and ruining her flowers. I had no idea what she was talking about. She started pointing at the puke stains in the snow from people throwing up on the front porch over the railing and was freaking out that the acid in the puke was going to kill her hibernating flowers and they weren’t going to bloom again in the Spring.

There were five or six different enormous puke stains at different points around the front porch where people had thrown up the night before, and it just so happened that her flowers were lying dormant underneath the snow right in that area. I apologized to her and came back inside the house and sat down on the couch with my roommates looking bewildered because they overheard someone all pissed off about flowers after I opened the door and didn’t know who I was talking to or what the heck was going on. I reminded them what happened the night before and where we had all puked, and we all went out to have a look at the puke splatter. There must have been gallons of puke splattered all over the front of the house. It was epic, and just one more reason for the landlord to hate us.

Attack of the Lesbians

I’m the kind of guy who likes to be the center of attention, and there’s no better way to get attention than to have a microphone in front of a large crowd of people. There was a stage set up one afternoon in the quad at my college, complete with a set of drums, a keyboard, a bunch of speakers, and of course, the microphone which looked lonely sitting in its stand with nobody using it. The band hadn’t taken the stage yet, and the quad was full of people so I jumped on stage to see if the microphone worked so I could speak to the crowd.

I started rapping a parody of an Eminem song that I had written, since I was trying my hand at some comedy at the time which I performed on open mic nights at the Comedy Store, but me hijacking the microphone didn’t really go over that well with the band members, who happened to be a group of butch-looking lesbians.

A couple of them ran up on stage as I was performing my song, and one grabbed me by the arm and the other grabbed the microphone and yanked it out of my hand. I walked off stage not thinking anything of it, when all of a sudden a few more lesbians came up for reinforcements and they all surrounded me, yelling and complaining. Whatever. I turned and started walking away when one of them grabbed onto my forearm with both hands and wouldn't let go. I peeled her hands loose and continued walking away and she followed me and grabbed me again and wouldn't let go. She was a manly lesbian, and for some reason thought she would act like a bouncer at a bar or something and detain me. It was very weird. She just wouldn't let go of my arm. What could I do? I couldn't give her a shove with my other hand, because even though she was a manly lesbian, she was still a girl. I couldn't push a girl, even if she did look like a man.

I kept walking away and wiggling my arm back and forth trying to break her grip as the other lesbians approached me again. I was able to break free but my watch band broke and it fell to the ground. I didn't care. I took off speed walking in the other direction before more lesbian reinforcements came and the wannabe bouncer lesbian picked up my watch as I left. While I did lose my watch, I avoided getting further assaulted by the lesbian gang which was quite an awkward situation.

A few days later I was approached by a security guard at school and asked to come with him. I wasn't quite sure what he wanted until I saw some of the lesbians off in the distance talking with a second security guard. I couldn't believe it. Now they were trying to get me in trouble with campus security for some reason. What was the school going to do for me jumping on stage? It wasn't like the band was playing and I interrupted their show, they weren't even up there yet. I went with the security guard to one of the offices, where he then introduced me to the dean.

Apparently the crazed lesbian band members thought that the reason I jumped on stage and took over the microphone was because they were lesbians! I don't know how they could have come to this mentally ill conclusion, especially since I had no idea what band was playing or that they were lesbians, and I certainly didn't say anything about gay people on the microphone, but somehow in their dysfunctional brains they felt so persecuted by society for being lesbians, that they saw my jackass stunt as an attack on their sexuality.

The dean realized they were insane, and I explained to him how they assaulted me and broke my watch, and then he opened up a drawer and pulled it out and set it on the desk in front of me. He made it clear that he had to “investigate” the possible “hate crime” that was supposedly committed against the lesbian band members so they wouldn’t accuse him of discriminating against them for being gay or something. I picked up my broken watch and went on my way. It’s not every day that you get attacked by an angry gang of lesbians.

Crashing the Wrong Party

There was some random Friday night my sophomore year of college where I didn’t really have anything to do, so two friends of mine and I decided to walk around our neighborhood and crash someone’s party. As you probably know, in college towns on practically every block on a Thursday, Friday, or Saturday night, some house is having a huge party with dozens of people, and the hosts certainly only know a fraction of them and don’t really care who’s there since it’s not a small intimate gathering of just a few friends.

At a lot of large college parties almost anyone is welcome, and friends always invite friends who invite friends, and it’s not uncommon to have 50 or 80 random people partying at someone’s house. We didn’t know of any particular parties going on that night so we went to take a walk in order to find one. Just a block away from my house we saw a bunch of people standing on a balcony holding red plastic party cups in their hands, so we headed up there to join them. Nobody knew that we didn’t know anyone there, and nobody cared. We hung out for a while, drank a few beers from their keg, and since there weren’t any hot girls there, we ventured off down the block to find another party.

It wasn’t long before we found a huge three-story house that we could see through the windows was full of people so we headed up the stairs to the porch, opened the front door and walked right in. I knew immediately that this wasn’t just some random party. This was a jock party. All the guys were pretty huge, and all the girls looked very tough as well. It turns out this was a rugby party, and everyone there was a member of the guys or girls rugby team and knew everyone else.

Most people just thought that we were friends with someone at the party, since they knew we weren't on the rugby team, and whenever anyone asked who I knew there, I would just drop the name of the person that I had been talking to a few minutes earlier. "Oh, I know Sara over there," I would say, pointing in the direction of the girl I was just chatting with who I had just met. It was a little awkward at first, but we managed, and thankfully nobody really called our bluff.

After a while we thought we should get out of there in case they realized that none of us knew anyone there, so we slowly made our way to the door and took off. Directly across the street were a couple girls standing on the second story balcony and I hollered out to them and chatted them up for a minute, and one of them invited us up and we ended up hanging out there for the rest of the night. It wasn't even really a party. It was just four or five girls all by themselves. I got one of the girl's phone numbers, whose name was Sheila, but there was only a week left of school and I was going to be moving back home with my parents for the summer so I could save up some money for my move to California in a few months, so I never ended up calling her, but this night revealed to me that if you make yourself feel like you belong somewhere, and you actually believe that you belong there, then people will react in a way that confirms your beliefs. It's like a self-fulfilling prophecy. The night was an interesting social experiment that went much better than any of us had expected. If you put your mind to it, you can probably party anywhere.

Applause is Contagious

You expect people to applaud at the end of a play or a live concert, but it's not something that usually happens in a movie theater. That is, unless I'm in the audience. It was during the digitally re-mastered re-release of the *Star Wars* films in 1997 that I learned a powerful lesson about how large crowds of people can easily be manipulated. It was a Friday night and the theater was packed since it was the opening for the re-release.

Rick, Marty and I had been partying on the way to the theater and as many *Star Wars* fans do, we often joked about “the Force” and using “Jedi mind tricks.” I told Marty that I would show him how the Force worked, and as the curtain opened for the film to begin, I started applauding and cheering in excitement. Practically everyone in the entire theater joined me. I felt a tremendous sense of power surging through my body at that very moment. I had just caused the entire theater to start applauding for the movie. I had accidentally stumbled upon the power of applause a year earlier during the film *Independence Day* because when the aliens blew up the White House in the movie, I started cheering and applauding and half the theater joined me.

Every time we went to see a movie we were usually stoned and drunk, and a lot of the times we would fill our jackets full of as many beers as they would hold and sneak them into the theater so we could drink during the movie. If we brought in bottles of beer, you would often hear the empty ones accidentally get kicked over and clang into the other empty ones that we had set on the ground, and you could hear them rolling down the sloped concrete floor of the theater as they banged into the chairs below. Everybody in the theater knew what was happening. The sound of clanging beer bottles is a very distinct sound.

Anyway, when we were seated in the theater to see the re-release of *Star Wars* I recalled the incident during *Independence Day* when I caused the theater to erupt in applause when the White House was blown up by the aliens, and I decided to test this power again.

Aside from getting people to applaud when the curtains opened, at multiple times throughout the movie I would shout out things like, “You can do it Luke!” and “You’re going down Darth Vader!” and other people in the theater would yell in agreement. It was fascinating. I felt like the entire theater was under my control. At the end of the movie, once again, I started applauding and cheering and the rest of the theater followed suit. As we walked out of the theater that night we could see the look of joy on everyone’s face. None of them had ever been to a movie so exciting and with such a great crowd. Little did they know, but I had caused it all. For years after that night, Marty and I would reference “the Force,” and talk about how we were becoming Jedi masters.

No Final Exam Please

I can’t help but say smart ass comments when they pop into my head, and I especially loved to say things out loud in class that nobody else would have the guts to say because I thrived off getting giggles from my fellow students, but I felt like I was in the *Twilight Zone* on the last day of class when my smart ass comment took on a literal meaning just seconds later.

This was a Group Communication class, and in the beginning of the semester we were divided into small groups which we worked with on various projects for the rest of the semester since the entire class was focused on group dynamics and communication among group members. When our groups were first formed, we each had to name our group and draw a picture that represented us. My group consisted of myself, a guy named Chaz, and three girls. Chaz and I were both alpha males and would later have races to see who could finish our tests first in the classes we had together, and we became friends in a competitive sort of way. Our group name had to reflect our dominating type-A personalities, so we decided to call ourselves the Alpha Bitches. Since there were girls in the group, we couldn’t call ourselves the Alpha Males, so the Alpha Bitches worked just fine.

There’s nothing like hearing a college professor say something like “it’s time for the Alpha Bitches to give their presentation.” It was hilarious. We dominated the class for the entire semester. We even gave our final presentation on leadership, and we arrogantly explained to the rest of the class that we chose to teach them about leadership because we were the class leaders. It was a great semester.

Getting back to my strange smartass comment eerily becoming true…it was the last day of class and we had all arrived to take the final exam after several days of cramming. The previous week we were given a study guide of possible material that would be included on this exam, which is pretty standard for a final. After everyone got seated that morning and just before the professor started handing out the tests and wrapping up the semester, I raised my hand and said in a condescending tone of voice, “Dr. Moffitt, instead of taking a typical final exam, I think we should draw another picture of our group to show how we’ve changed and grown over the course of the semester.”

The group picture we had drawn earlier that year had been a laughing stock for us. This was a junior level college course, and we were drawing pictures like we were in a middle school art class. We couldn’t believe it. Our group picture assignment at the beginning of the year represented how easy this class was, and what a joke it was to us. My patronizing comment about not taking a final exam and drawing a new picture instead was a thinly veiled insult to the professor indicating the lack of challenge her class provided us.

Instead of laughing off my comment, or even being mildly offended by it, she replied saying, “It’s very interesting that you would say that, because that’s exactly what we’re going to do.” The class gasped in surprise. “What?” everyone said in unison. Dr. Moffitt went on to tell us to get into our groups and she handed out a blank sheet of paper to each one and had us draw a new picture of our group. That was our final exam! Nobody could believe it. It felt like I pulled a Jedi mind trick on her. It’s one of the strangest things that has ever happened to me.

How to Crash a College Class

Everyone who goes to college is familiar with crashing classes, and many people have tried to crash a class, some successfully, others not so successful. Crashing a class means that you are not able to register for the class because it was filled up, but you still show up there on the first day hoping that if a few people who were registered for the class didn’t show up that day, the professor will drop them and you can take their place on the roster.

It’s not uncommon for ten people to try to crash the same class on the first day, but usually there is only room for a few, so the teacher will tell the remaining crashers they’re sorry but there just isn’t any room and they should go try to add another class somewhere else. The remaining would-be crashers then frantically leave the room scrambling to crash another class, hoping to find a spot somewhere else. I have successfully crashed numerous classes, but for one particular class I was not so lucky and wasn't one of the handful who got their names pulled out of a hat to be added that day. (That's seriously how some teachers choose who gets to crash when there aren't enough open spots.)

The other unlucky students whose names weren't chosen left the classroom, but I stayed sitting at my desk and pretended like I belonged there. I took notes, participated in the discussion, and kept coming the next several weeks as if nothing was wrong. I did the homework, and when the time came for the first quiz, I took that too. I was a model student. The only problem was, my name was not on the roster, and the teacher realized this when he tried to mark my grade for the quiz in his grade book but couldn't find my name. The next day at class he asked which one was me and I raised my hand and he came over and said that I wasn't on the roster.

"That's weird," I said, pretending to be surprised. He then told me to go down to the office and get a late registration form and fill it out so he could sign it and add my name to the official roster. My plan worked perfectly. You know what they say, where there's a will there's a way, and all the other crashers from a few weeks earlier just didn't want to be in that class bad enough, but I did. I had to have that class. My whole schedule would have been messed up if I didn't have it, and I would have been stuck there an extra semester to get the credits that I needed to transfer to another school.

A year or so later I realized that if I couldn't get added to the roster by crashing the first day of class, then instead of leaving like all the other crashers, I would just stay in my seat anyway and log onto the school's website every night trying to add the class while there was still open registration, which usually went on for the first two weeks of the semester, because I knew the odds were that someone would hate the class or would have a work conflict and would drop it, and so there would be a spot open in the computer, and I would get it. This worked for me several times and I always got the classes I wanted. Where all of the other crashers lost hope and left when the teacher told them there were no openings, I knew otherwise, and knew that after the first few days of class *someone* was going to drop it, and I could get their spot, and that's exactly what I did.

Most Likely To Succeed?

One of my favorite college professors once told me that I was going to be the most famous and successful person to ever graduate from my college. She told me this during a conversation we had in her office my senior year when I showed her a compilation of years' worth of notes and journals about my adventures in dating and my philosophy on meeting and dating girls. (This would later turn into *THE Book on Dating* which I published and is available on Amazon.com in paperback or in e-book on Kindle) She thought I was a genius.

This was in 2004, before Neil Strauss' book, *The Game* was published, and before Mystery (Erik von Markovik) had gotten his *Pick-up Artist* show on VH1 and when professional dating coaches for men were pretty much nonexistent in the mainstream. Dr. Downey saw the potential, not only in my idea to write a book and become a dating coach, but she saw that I had the personality and drive to actually do something with it. Her endorsement and her assessment of me meant a lot, but a strange turn of events that I can't really be blamed for would later result in her asking me to please never contact her again.

About six months after I graduated I began writing a book about how secret societies pulled the strings in our world and hold the true power in politics, banking and business and how many of these secret societies have occult beliefs and rituals. I'm talking about *The Resistance Manifesto* , my first book of several on this topic. I won't get into it here, you can check out my other books for yourself on Amazon.com , Kindle or Nook and I hope you do because it's a very important subject, but this is what led to Dr. Downey's complete 180 turn on her views of me.

I returned unannounced to her office to consult with her on my new project since my entire world view had changed after learning about the New World Order and the Illuminati. Instead of being excited about my new project and life's mission, and giving me the guidance and wisdom I had expected, a look of horror immediately came to her face. She informed me that her father was crazy and thought the government was watching everything he did and had hidden microphones in their house in order to listen to him, and that he blew his brains out when she was a little girl. What can you say to that? She then told me that I was bringing back all kinds of horrific memories for her from her childhood and her father's suicide, and she asked me to leave and never contact her again. I was devastated.

It wasn't like I had done something wrong, it just so happened that this subject matter touched a nerve with her. I felt really bad for how I had made her feel, and how she had changed her feelings towards me from just a few months earlier. She once thought I would be the most successful student she ever had, but now I was the one that she wished she never met.

The Gas Station

You may have noticed that the people who work at gas stations are usually the scum of the earth. They look like they just got out of prison, have done way too many drugs, or are homeless. If the gas station is owned by an Indian or an Arab, that's a whole other story. I'm talking about the white trash that always seems to work at gas stations. One of the most pathetic jobs I ever had in my life was actually working at a gas station during the summer since I wasn't allowed to work on the weed cutter anymore. The gas station was located in the heart of Main Street, and it actually turned out to be a pretty cool job because it was a party every single night. It seemed like I was living in the film *Clerks* .

The manager was never there, and I never met the owner, and every night I would come into work about four o'clock in the afternoon and work until closing time at 11pm all by myself. All my friends could see when I was working because my car was parked out front, and everybody would stop in and say hi or hang out for a while. I had an endless supply of beer from the cooler and we would drink right there in the store and even get stoned. We didn't even bother to go outside to smoke pot, we smoked it right there behind the counter.

I brought in my own stereo so I could listen to CDs, and I would just blast it all night and my friends and I would smoke cigars we had taken off the shelves and pretended like we owned the place. One night I forgot to lock the front door when I left because I was so buzzed, and the manager also informed me that she found empty beer cans strewn around the station and asked me if my friends and I were drinking there the night before, and asked if that was why I had forgotten to lock the door. “Of course not,” I said, “I must’ve just been tired.” I felt really dumb. Any normal person would have fired me immediately, but she soon forgot that it happened, and my partying continued.

The layout of this particular gas station was very strange. There was a gigantic pole right next to the cash register that helped support the roof, and I can’t tell you how many times people would turn away from the counter after paying and then smack their head right into it. It was the weirdest place for a poll and every few nights someone would turn around full speed from the counter and smack right into it. The manager realized this was a major liability so she wrapped a foam pad around it to try and prevent anyone from getting seriously injured.

Every time someone would turn around and smack their head into the poll I couldn’t help but bust out laughing. Often, I would have a friend or two hanging out with me and we would all bust out laughing at the person and they would just duck their head in shame and walk out. As a joke I printed up a sign that said, “Warning: Pole. May cause serious injury,” and I taped it up over the foam pad. I only worked at the gas station for one summer, but that sign stayed up for probably ten years. I realized this when I happened to pull in there to get some gas when I was visiting my parents and when I went up to the cash register to pay, I saw the sign still attached! Apparently the manager thought it was a good idea to keep it up.

The thing I learned about life while working at the gas station was that there are a lot of losers who come to gas stations, not to buy gas, but to buy cigarettes. These same people come to buy one pack of cigarettes at a time, day after day after day. These people could buy a carton of cigarettes from a grocery store for a heck of a lot less than they did if they bought individual packs, but they chose to come to the gas station practically every day and buy one pack at a time. They probably felt like they were saving money since they were only spending $4 or $5 dollars at a time, instead of dropping $50 bucks or however much a carton cost. The other losers that came to the gas station every day were people who buy lottery tickets. Most of the people who bought scratch-off lottery tickets look like complete bums who had run out of hope in life.

Most normal people don’t buy scratch-off lottery tickets, or maybe they’ll buy one or two a year, but the people who buy them every day are some of the dumbest and ugliest people I’ve ever seen in my life. The only thing they had to look forward to in life was winning the lottery. Night after night, they would spend $5 or $20, and almost always lost. Most of them would come back a few days later to do it again, hoping to one day win the jackpot. Half of these people couldn’t even wait to get home to scratch them off, and would do it right there at the counter. Some of them would occasionally win $5 or $10 dollars and then immediately spend it all on more scratch-offs, which were all losers.

One of my coworkers worked at two different gas stations. He worked part time at the one I worked at, and he worked part time at another one in the next town. His wife also worked at a gas station just down the street from ours. Rusty was pure white trash and a felon who hung out with the Hells Angels. When he laughed you could hear the air wheezing from his lungs through the tar built up in them from decades of smoking. I bought an ounce of weed from him once, which was OK, but other than that I kept my distance from him.

Middle School

Sleeping in the Tent

Whenever kids come up with the idea to set up a tent in the backyard and have a bunch of friends over to sleep out there, it’s really just a cover story for being able to sneak out that night and go cause trouble in some form or another. Sure it's kind of fun to pretend like you're camping out in your own backyard when you're a kid, but what's more fun is being able to sneak out of the tent and go wreak havoc around town after your parents go to bed. After all, you just can't sneak out of the house most of the time without your parents noticing, even after they go to bed, because it's still likely that they will hear the front door of the house opening or closing as you sneak out or return. Some kids, if their room is on the first story of their house, can pull the screen out of their window and sneak out that way (which I did a few times as well), but it's much less noticeable to simply unzip the tent door and disappear into the night.

Every time my friends and I slept in the tent in my backyard, houses around the neighborhood would mysteriously get toilet papered, and dozens of people would have their doorbells rung ten times in a row in the middle of the night. Doorbell ditch, as it is called, is the most fun very late at night when everyone is sleeping and you can stand on their front porch and ring the doorbell repeatedly a dozen times to make sure you wake up the resident, and then run off and duck behind some bushes at the neighbor's house to watch them answer the door and look around to see what happened. Doorbell ditch is extremely fun when you return to the same house a few minutes later and do it again after the person has gotten back in bed after having been woken up from a good night's sleep.

When we slept in the tent, most of the time I would run an extension cord from my parents' house out to the tent and I would bring a small television from my room out there so we could play video games all night until my parents went to bed and then we would sneak out. Sometimes in the morning we continued playing video games when we woke up, and I remember one time I was playing *Double Dragon II* for Nintendo, and I had never been able to win the game, but that morning I systematically beat one level after the other, making it to the final fight, and I delivered the death blow to the boss with a hurricane kick and as he flew back in slow motion, the television suddenly turned off! The picture instantly shrunk down and disappeared into a white dot in the center of the screen as the old picture tube televisions did when you turned them off. I frantically grabbed the power button and clicked it on and off repeatedly, but the television was dead. Even the Nintendo had no power. I had no idea what happened.

Then at that very moment, I heard my mom yelling from the back door that lunch was ready. We had stayed in the tent all morning, and it was approaching noon. She had yelled out earlier to come in for lunch, but I was busy trying to win *Double Dragon II* . I unzipped the tent and started heading to the house and saw the extension cord that had been plugged in to an external outlet on the side of the house was laying there on the sidewalk unplugged. I picked it up in bewilderment and asked my mom through the screen in the kitchen window if she unplugged it. “I told you lunch was ready,” she answered. “You stupid bitch!” I responded. “Why the hell did you unplug that, I just won *Double Dragon II* for the first time and I didn’t even get to see the final scene!”

I had never called my mom a bitch before. Ever. I was just so angry. The timing had been so horrible. At the very second I killed the final boss, she unplugged the TV. I worked so hard to win that game, and I was so mad. Video games mean the world to teenagers (and even some adults). She didn’t take too kindly to being called a bitch. I was twelve-years-old, and that’s not the kind of language anyone should use with their mother. She was in a bad mood for the rest of the day. I was a terrible kid.

Other Video Game Trouble

Since I spent so much money at the arcade playing video games, I tried the old “string on a quarter trick” to see if it would fool the machines so I could play them for free. I drilled a tiny hole into a quarter and tied a thread on to it that I got from my mom’s sewing cabinet, and lowered it slowly into the coin slot waiting for a credit to register on the machine so I could then just pull the quarter back up through the slot or just dangle it at that point and bob it up and down repeatedly so it would continue to add credits to the game so I could play for hours, but this didn’t work. Maybe a few years earlier this little trick worked, but when I was a kid in the 1980s and 90s, the video game companies had apparently figured this out and designed some device that the coin would pass through before the machine would register it, and once it got past this point, there was some lever or something that sprung into place to prevent it from being able to come back up through the slot. Did this stop me from thinking of other tricks to try hoping to play free video games at the arcade? No.

I went through my dad’s shop drawers and found some washers that were the same size and thickness of quarters and brought them to the arcade to see if they would work, but they didn’t. I figured it was because they were made of steel and were magnetic and there must be a sensor that gets tripped whenever a steel coin gets dropped into the slot, so I found some aluminum washers that were the same size as quarters, but they didn’t work either. Perhaps they were not the same weight as a quarter. I’m not sure why they didn’t work, but looking back on it now, I’m sure that the video game companies are a lot smarter than a 14-year-old kid, and I certainly wasn’t the only one who tried to trick the machines like this, so of course there are safeguards built into them to prevent it. You have to give me some credit for trying though.

Kids go crazy over video games. My friend Rocky’s older brother would threaten to beat him up if he lost certain video games because he wanted to see what the final levels looked like, or he would have Rocky get to those levels so he could then play them because he wasn’t good enough to get there himself. One time, Rocky’s brother locked us out of the game room while he was playing a certain game because he didn’t want us to see what the final level looked like. We tried to see what was happening through a vent in the wall, and when his brother realized this he came out of the room and went berserk. Rocky grabbed a hammer and threatened to hit him with it in self-defense.

Rocky’s mom thought that the Nintendo video game system was bad for the television and wouldn’t let him or his brother play it on the large TV in the family room and made them play it on a smaller one downstairs. For a few hours after school they would play the Nintendo on the big TV upstairs until just before their mom got home from work, and they would put it back downstairs. After all, playing video games on a small TV isn’t as fun.

One afternoon his brother was playing *Metal Gear* on the big TV upstairs and wouldn’t let Rocky or I play, so he went and got his mom’s camera and started taking pictures of his brother sitting in front of the television holding the controller so he had proof he was using the big TV. “I got pictures! I’m telling mom you were using the big TV!” I’m sure they got into a fight after this. They were always fighting over something, but usually it was video games.

Rocky was a tough kid and one time he challenged our principal to a fight saying “I can take you,” when we were in seventh grade. We were both called into Mr. Vought’s office for various reasons and I remember he thought Rocky was my “bodyguard” and believed that the two of us ruled the middle school. Apparently he could see our budding leadership qualities back then.

Fred had purchased a console copier out of the back of an electronics magazine which allowed him to copy Sega Genesis games onto 3 ½ inch floppy disks and play them that way. The copier plugged into the slot where you would insert the videogame cartridge and had another slot on top of it were you would then plug the game into, and using a built-in 3 ½ inch floppy disk drive it would copy the games from any cartridge you wanted. Once you copied a game onto a disc, you didn’t need the cartridge anymore because you could play it off the disk from then on. This was a kid’s dream come true!

You could borrow any video game from any one of your friends and then copy it and play at whenever you wanted! This was practically unheard of in the early 1990s, and of course this was illegal, but we didn’t care. There was a video store downtown that we could ride our bikes to and we would frequently rent a video game and ride back to Fred’s house, copy it onto a disc and then return to the store 15 minutes later telling the guy that we had accidentally rented the wrong game and he would let us exchange it for a different one. This way we could copy two games for the price of one. The console copier was a lot of fun, but as video games got more sophisticated, the Sega Genesis soon became a relic whose graphics and games didn’t compare to the newer systems, but we definitely got our use out of it, and it paid for itself many times over.

Making Crop Circles

People often think it’s a big mystery about where crop circles come from, but I can answer that question with firsthand knowledge. They come from people like me, because my friends and I made them for fun. They weren't the most complex crop circles, but they were crop circles, nonetheless. To accomplish this mysterious task, we just brought a rope and a wooden stake out into the middle of a corn field on the edge of our block and pushed the stake in the ground with the rope tied around it and straightened it out as far as it would go and flattened all the corn in the radius of the circle it made. One crop circle just wasn't good enough, we thought. We really wanted this to get in the news so we decided to make two other ones so the three of them would form a triangle in the middle of the cornfield.

We didn't do this during the middle of the night under the cover of darkness like one may assume. We didn't really see a reason for this, so we just did it when it was still light out in the early evening. What we didn't expect was that an airplane flying overhead would happen to see us right in the middle of making our masterpiece. It was a small airplane like a Cessna and it immediately started circling the corn field obviously checking out the bizarre formation in the field. We all ducked down underneath the corn to hide so the pilot hopefully wouldn't see us. I'm not sure why we thought we should hide, because it's not like he could really identify us from up there; it must have just been our instincts to hit the deck when someone spotted us when we were doing something wrong. I guess it was because we were worried that he could radio into the police that there were some kids making crop circles and they could be waiting for us when we made our way back to the street.

The plane kept circling the field and we figured the pilot had spotted us so we all just took off running. We left our bikes on the edge of the field near the street and as soon as we got to them we hopped on and started to ride off. We never would have imagined that the airplane would start following us all across town. It's tough to lose an airplane when you're riding on a street since they can pretty much see everything. We didn't know what to do. Was he in communication with the police and keeping track of where we were so they could come and surround us? I guess technically we ruined some of the farmer's crops, so we could get in trouble for that and we were also trespassing on the land. We just kept riding and riding all over town, but the plane kept following us and circling around wherever we went, keeping his eye on us the entire time.

Luckily it was near sunset and about a half hour later it was getting dark so it finally left. What the heck had just happened, we thought. We just got chased by an airplane on our bikes for making crop circles! This corn field was right next to a fort we had built that we would spend a lot of time at in the summer afternoons, and after we made those crop circles, I can’t tell you how many airplanes would fly by that field and circle around for a few minutes taking a second look at our handiwork before going on their way.

Our crop circles could have made the evening news for all we knew, or been in the local paper, but our parents must have missed it if they had, because they certainly would have mentioned to us that crop circles had appeared in our small little town if they saw something about it on the news. They probably would have realized who was behind them too. Only a handful of people would even consider doing such a thing, and of course it was us.

Fun with the Paper Towel Dispenser

Since I liked to build things when I was growing up, I made a key that would open the paper towel dispenser in the school bathroom. I also made one that would unlock the toilet paper dispensers too and I would regularly steal the rolls of toilet paper so we could go toilet paper people’s houses because we didn’t want to spend money buying the toilet paper ourselves since that money could be spent on candy or video games at the arcade. The paper towel machine held other fun possibilities though. I would pull the lever and dispense ten feet of paper towel and then using a black magic marker I would write obscenities on the towel, and then open the machine up and roll it back inside so that the next few people who would come into the bathroom and pull the lever to get their paper towel to dry their hands would be surprised with a nice “Fuck You” written on it. I also liked to write mean things about the principal, Mr. Vought, like the standard middle school insult, “Mr. Vought Sucks” or “Fuck Mr. Vought.”

One day after I got done writing a bunch of trash about Mr. Vought and rolling the paper towel back up into the machine, Mr. Vought himself came walking into the bathroom as I left! I can only imagine the look on his face when he went to dry his hands and as he pulled the lever to dispense the paper towel, out came a piece that said, “Fuck Mr. Vought.” I laughed all the way back to class just thinking about it. The next time I opened up that paper towel dispenser there was a note taped inside that said the mirror to the left was a two-way mirror and behind it was a video camera and that “you will be hearing from us shortly.” How dumb did they think I was? A two-way mirror and a hidden camera in the bathroom? Yeah right. I wrote “Fuck You” across the entire note with a magic marker and closed up the machine.

I thought about taking the roll of paper towel home and feeding it in my printer and printing all sorts of crazy things on the entire roll and then putting it back in the machine so that everyone who dispensed a piece of paper towel would be pleasantly surprised by having their paper towel come out with something like “Fuck Mr. Vought” printed on it, but I soon lost interest in the paper towel machine and made a key that would shut off the lights in the hallways, and had fun with that for a while. I also took an old electrical cord with a plug on the end of it and tied the wires together and brought it to school and would plug it into the wall to short circuit the system which would flip the circuit breaker and knock the power out to the room. Yes, I was an evil genius in the making.

Free Cable TV

I never had cable TV growing up, but Fred did for a period of time, and back when we were kids it was very easy to steal cable television. There was no digital cable, digital tuners, or video On Demand, or anything like that. If you ordered cable TV, then the cable guy would go out to the cable box in the back of your neighborhood and then just simply connect the coaxial cable leading to your house into the main feed. There was a special screw on these boxes to keep them locked, but Fred’s older brother made the key in shop class and after Fred’s mom stopped paying for cable TV, we simply opened up the box and re-connected the coaxial cable labeled with his address back into the main feed, and bam, he got free cable.

There were also several channel blockers on the coaxial cables that ran to the different houses that subscribed to cable TV, which would filter out channels like HBO and Showtime, unless someone paid for them, so we removed the channel blockers and Fred got those channels for free as well. Years later at his own apartment, Fred would climb a telephone pole out front and do the same thing and got free cable TV for about ten years. Yeah, ten years! A decade of free cable TV!

Our Own TV Station

It was dumb luck and a complete surprise to discover that (old analog) camcorders actually broadcast a weak signal like a miniature television station that could be picked up by a television set. Let me try to explain. Old analog camcorders from the 1980s and 90s used coaxial cables to connect to the television, and not RCA or USB cables like future models, and one time when I reached behind the television to screw in the coaxial cable leading from Fred's camcorder so we could watch what was on the tape, the picture showed up and we started hearing the audio before it was even connected to the TV. This was weird. I hadn't even touched the coaxial cable onto the receptacle on the TV, but the tape was already playing on it. It turns out that the camcorder was actually broadcasting a signal and if you placed the male end of the coaxial cable near the female receptacle sticking out of the back of the TV, then the signal would transmit through the air and the camcorder's tape could be seen playing on the TV. To a couple of fifteen-year-old kids who loved electronics, this was amazing.

We then had an idea. There is a device (or at least there was years ago before digital television when all signals were analog) called an antenna booster that people used to increase the strength of the antenna on their television sets for picking up the analogue broadcast channels if they didn't have cable TV or a satellite dish. These antenna boosters have two coaxial connections on them where you plug one end into the back of the television set and the other end into the antenna itself. It then magnifies whatever signal the antenna picks up, so the channels would show up more clearly on your television set.

Fred and I went out and bought an antenna booster and took the coaxial cable coming from the camcorder and screwed it into the booster, and then screwed the output cable into the antenna on the top of Fred's roof. When we pressed play on the camcorder, to our amazement, the tape showed up on the television. The antenna booster amplified the output from the camcorder so the signal would shoot through the air so the camcorder didn't even need to be physically wired into the television set for the tape to play on it. We were basically broadcasting the signal from the camcorder through the airwaves to the television!

This worked from the antenna on the top of the house to the TV in the basement, but we wondered just how far the signal was going. Fred had a small portable television, so we set it on channel 3, the channel that televisions needed to be on in order for a camcorder or VCR to play on them, and we went outside and started walking down the block to see how far it would pick up the signal from. It slowly faded out as we got halfway down the block, but we were still amazed.

We went out and bought two more antenna boosters and daisy chained them one right into the other to boost the broadcasting power even more. Using the antenna on top of Fred's roof as a transmitter, we broadcast a signal strong enough to be picked up by all of the neighboring houses on the block. From a little experimentation we realized that our TV broadcast was showing up on numerous stations, not just channel 3 because it was so strong.

Our little discovery wouldn't only broadcast the tape from the camcorder, but if you turned the camera on, our system would broadcast whatever the camera was seeing live! We basically had our own television broadcasting station. We called it, WMAD, since we were as mad as hatters. We set the camera up in the basement with it broadcasting using the large antenna on the roof, and Fred, Diego and I started putting on our own skits and acted crazy like we were on *Saturday Night Live* . We knew that if any one of the neighbors were channel surfing, they would inevitably come across our station and see us.

Sometimes we videotaped our "shows" and played the tape back over and over, hoping that some of the neighbors would see it. I then started calling the neighbors pretending to be someone working at "WMAD" and told them I was wondering if they were picking up our signal since we were measuring the signal strength in their area, and I would ask them to turn on their TV to whatever channels were airing our show. Yep. They were getting it all right. WMAD was broadcasting to the entire block.

One of Fred’s neighbors was a year older than us and he happened to find our show when he was channel surfing, and didn’t quite know what to think. After all, how could you possibly explain that we were on TV? He mentioned this to us the next time he saw us and was very confused about how this was happening.

Even though we were having fun with our own new television station, we weren’t satisfied with a potential audience of just several surrounding homes around the block near Fred’s house. We wanted the entire town to get our station. A friend of Fred’s dad was an electrical engineer, and one Saturday afternoon Fred’s dad took us over to the cell phone store he owned so we could talk with him about our project (i.e. WMAD). When we told him what we were doing and said we were interested in building a super powerful antenna booster so the whole town would get our show, he pretty much freaked out.

This was the first time I ever heard about the FCC (the Federal Communications Commission), the government agency that is in charge of overseeing all television and radio stations, as well as products that broadcast electrical waves through the air such as walkie-talkies and CB radios. The FCC sells and regulates the licenses that broadcasting stations and other companies have to get in order to ensure that their broadcasts or devices don’t interfere with each other. Fred’s dad’s friend went on to tell us that messing with the FCC was like messing with the FBI, and that broadcasting illegally, which is clearly what we were doing, could result in us getting fines of several hundred thousand dollars for each incident.

We had been broadcasting WMAD several times a week for close to a month, and sometimes for hours on end. The man then went on to tell us that if people called the local television stations to complain that the signal wasn’t coming in clearly and said that they were picking up images of a bunch of kids acting stupid instead, then the FCC would surely be investigating this with sophisticated equipment, possibly in vans that would drive around the town in order to detect the source of this interference. Whoops!

This kind of spooked us. Fines of several hundred thousand dollars? Wow. The FCC sounded too much like the FBI. Did this discourage us from wanting to build our amplifier? Not at all. We thought about tapping into one of the neighbors' antennas and broadcasting from theirs instead of the one on top of Fred's roof to throw the FCC off so they couldn't track it back to us. We even thought about building an amplifier and then putting it in a car and driving around town so the FCC wouldn't know where the signal was coming from. We also talked about how funny it would be to broadcast a porno to the entire town since if we were on the move, the FCC couldn't track the signal back to Fred's mom's house, but we were too young and didn't quite have the engineering capabilities to build a strong enough antenna booster. We soon pulled the plug on WMAD.

Trying to Kill the Neighbor's Trees

One of my neighbors clearly had an advanced case of obsessive-compulsive disorder which caused him to mow his lawn every few days, whether it needed it or not, and he would sweep the floor in his garage practically every night for what seemed like an hour. We thought he was completely insane. His garage was as clean and sanitary as an operating room in a hospital. Practically every garage I've ever seen has tools hanging on the walls, shelves that hold a variety of automobile fluids, cleaning supplies, yard tools and other junk, but Mr. Steven's garage walls had nothing hanging on them at all accept one weed wacker which he also used compulsively. The only things in his garage were the two family cars, and the lawnmower. It was very strange. He was a nice guy, we just didn't like him because his constant lawn mowing disturbed our peace and quiet during our lazy summer days.

One night my brother had a container full of waste oil after changing the oil in his car, and instead of taking it to the recycling site downtown to properly dispose of it, he walked across the street and dumped it around the base of a tree in Mr. Steven's front yard. That summer, Mr. Steven's trees became the disposal site of all waste oil, radiator fluid, transmission fluid, and even some stale gasoline. Stew likes to work on engines, so there was no shortage of toxic waste. Those trees were strong but after a while some of the leaves started to lose their color and wilt long before fall. We thought for sure all those chemicals getting absorbed by the roots would have killed them all, but Mother Nature is surprisingly resilient and the trees still lived.

Prank Phone Calls

Every kid who is normal makes prank phone calls. Some kids are better at them than others, and I was one of the best. I had polished my pranking skills from getting calls from telemarketers at my parents’ house. Instead of just hanging up on them or telling them to remove our number from their calling list like most people did, I would keep them on the phone as long as possible and come up with the craziest stories I could think of.

If a telemarketer called and my mom or dad answered the phone, they knew I loved to mess with them, so they would call me over and hand the phone to me and we would all sit around and listen to whatever story I would fabricate at the time.

As I’m sure you’re aware, telemarketers usually start their call by saying “How are you doing today Mr. Dice?” and instead of just saying I was fine, sometimes I would pretend to be really sad and tell them I’m not doing very well because my dog had just died.

“Oh, I’m sorry to hear that. The reason I’m calling tonight is because…” (I would cut them off)

“I really loved that dog. I had him for 15 years. The smartest dog in the world.”

“I understand sir. I love animals too. We’re having a special on long distance calling plans this week…” (I’d cut them off again)

(Pretending to sniffle) “That dog just loved to steal people’s shoes and run around the house so you’d chase after him, and sometimes he’d even take the Dr. Scholl’s padding out from inside the shoe and start chewing on them. He was such a silly dog.”

“I’m sure he was. Sir, we’re offering a special long distance plan where you can call family and friends for a low price any time after 5pm Monday through Friday…” (cutting them off again)

“That’s interesting, because the dog used to like to talk on the phone with grandma and grandpa and we’d hold the phone up to his ear and they’d say things, and he’d bark through the phone back at them. That dog was so smart, I bet we could have taught him how to use the phone himself, and I’ll bet he would have.”

It was about at this time that they would hang up, but sometimes they’d stay on the line for five minutes because they didn’t want to be rude. It was great. If a telemarketer called trying to sell newspapers, I told them there was nothing but bad news in there anyway and it wasn’t worth reading, and then I’d start giving them story suggestions about what kinds of things I would like to see in the newspaper instead. If they were calling trying to sell long distance service, I told them that I was going to cancel my phone service soon and become Amish, so I wouldn’t need a phone anymore. Since they were always trying to sell me something, sometimes I tried selling them things and would tell them I was having a rummage sale that coming weekend and started telling them all the nice things they could find.

It wasn’t just telemarketers I loved to mess with, of course I would make prank phone calls to my friends’ houses and even random phone numbers around the area. When I couldn’t think of anyone to prank call, I would resort to calling the Hooked on Phonics company which sold reading programs for children whose phone number was 1-800-ABCDEFG. I would often call them and pretend to be a parent inquiring about their reading programs for my child, and would make up crazy stories saying something about how my two-year-old was already reading at an eighth-grade level and had just finished books like *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer* , and I was wondering if Hooked on Phonics had any programs to help him advance any further. They were always amazed that my child was so intelligent.

Sometimes I would tell them that I was interested in getting a program for my unborn child so I could teach it to them while they were still in the womb under the assumption that they would be able to understand it and would then have a higher IQ once they were born. The operator never seemed to think it would work, but I insisted that I had read some studies that proved unborn children in the womb could understand people if they spoke to them, and could even start learning to spell.

One night I was able to get through to *Larry King Live* on CNN when the guest was Ron Popeil, the infomercial guy who used to sell the Chicken Rotisserie Grill, the Ronco food dehydrator, and a whole list of other infomercial products, including Hair in a Can which is that weird spray-paint for balding people that enabled them to cover up their bald spot with washable paint. I have always been fascinated by infomercials, and I thought of a great question for Ron Popeil. I gave the phone screener a bogus question asking what kind of advice Ron had for young inventors, and then as soon as my call was live on the air I said that I heard his food dehydrator was good for drying marijuana buds so you could smoke them. The screener hung up on me immediately, but my call made it on air. Instead of realizing it was a prank call and going on to the next caller, Larry King asked him, “Is that true?” to which Popeil answered, “It is true. Yes.” Larry King responded, “It is? Well marijuana may be legal someday, [and] may be able to help people.”

The phone call is shown on the official transcript for the show which aired live on April 13, 2001, and if you Google “Ron Popeil Larry King Live Marijuana” you can find it. I had videotaped the broadcast on the VCR and my friends and I watched it over and over again laughing our butts off. The funniest part was this would not be the last I would hear about this phone call.

About nine years later, Ron Popeil was being interviewed on CNBC about his infomercial empire and the host mentioned my phone call! My jaw dropped. The host said something about one of the most interesting questions Ron had ever been asked about his products was when he was on *Larry King Live* in 2001 and a caller asked if the food dehydrator could be used to dry marijuana buds from pot plants! I had never guessed that my one phone call would have been so memorable. Looking back, sales for the food dehydrator probably skyrocketed since people who grew their own marijuana would want one to dry the buds. While I was able to find the official transcript for my call on CNN’s website, at this time I have not been able to find the video clip on YouTube and the VHS copy I made got taped over eventually.

Soda Guns

Every kid in America, and perhaps the world, may know how to make a soda gun, I’m not sure. It’s interesting how kids figure these things out. Somehow we found out if you take a ballpoint pen and position it on the top of a soda can in the small round piece of metal that connects the opening tab to the can itself, you could poke a hole through it by pounding your fist on top of the pen and then if you held the soda in your hand and plugged the hole with your index finger and shook it up, when you let your finger off of the hole, soda shoots out in a stream about 15 feet like a squirt gun.

A soda gun is only good for about three or four blasts and wastes half of your soda, but it sure was fun, and we must have covered the floor in study hall with sticky soda on numerous occasions, not to mention leaving people smelling like Pepsi or orange soda. And we wondered why they stopped allowing us to drink soda during study hall!

The Jelly Donut Incident

Industrial Arts (shop class) has got to be every guy’s favorite class in school because we get to build things and play with power tools, but Industrial Arts at our school was extremely special because the teacher, Mr. Norton, had a short fuse and just a little screwing around would get him to absolutely flip his lid and start yelling and screaming at the top of his lungs. It was very common for students in the surrounding classrooms to be able to hear him yelling at students, but what do you expect when you take a bunch of seventh and eighth graders and give them access to power tools?

Several years earlier a student ground up some Ex-Lax pills and put them in Mr. Norton’s jelly donuts that he had in his desk drawer, and after he ate them you can imagine what happened. This wasn’t just an urban legend, it was something that actually happened, and so ever since that day if you mentioned anything about jelly donuts in Mr. Norton's class, you were in *big* trouble.

I happened to know this because one of my older brother's friends was the guy who put the Ex-Lax in his jelly donuts, but not everyone was familiar with the jelly donut story. The very first day of class we all came in and sat down around the shop tables while Mr. Norton was still standing in the hallway chatting with other teachers, and I thought it would be funny to get someone to ask him if he would like some jelly donuts. The kid's name was Nolan, and he just happened to be sitting at my table, so he was the one I convinced that if he wanted to get on Mr. Norton's good side, he should ask him if he wants Nolan to bring in any jelly donuts tomorrow for class because he lets students bring in food once in a while for snack day and he really liked jelly donuts. (There was no such thing as snack day in shop class, of course, but it sounded good.) It wasn't more than five seconds after the teacher walked into the classroom that Nolan turned around and said, "Hey Mr. Norton, how would you like some jelly donuts?"

"Get the hell out of here right now!" Mr. Norton shouted as he grabbed Nolan by the arm and dragged him out of the room and down the hall to the principal's office. Poor Nolan didn't know what he did wrong, but my friends and I knew the story, and we knew the one thing you should never, *ever* mention in shop class, were jelly donuts.

This sort of set the pace for the chaos to come the rest of the year. While we were supposed to be building things like lamps, clocks, pen holders, etc, we spent almost as much time destroying things. We especially liked to drill holes in everything, like the cabinets, tables, and people's text books from other classes. I had to leave to get stitches in my hand once, not from a power tool accident, but because I went to punch Ken in the stomach when we were screwing around and he blocked it while holding a tape measure and it sliced my knuckle open pretty bad. We told the teacher he was just handing it to me and it accidentally cut me. I dripped a trail of blood all the way to the bathroom and my mom had to pick me up and take me to the doctor to get it stitched up.

A lot of handheld power tools can be set to stay on so you don't have to keep the trigger pulled the whole time you're using them, and so we often liked to lock the trigger for the belt sander so when Mr. Norton would set it on the table and plug it in, the thing would drive right off the table and crash onto the ground. He would catch on to this little trick and tried to make sure he would check the switch before he plugged it in, but every once in a while he would forget and it would go flying off the table as soon as he plugged it in.

Mr. Norton had a bad case of dandruff, which we like to add to by sprinkling saw dust in his hair every chance we got. Poor Mr. Norton. We really put him through a lot. It’s really amazing that he didn’t stab one of us with a screw driver or something for all the trouble we caused him. He was a nice guy and we were all complete punks.

The Crossing Guard

We would occasionally torment a poor crossing guard on our way to middle school who was probably volunteering his spare time to help make sure the kids would cross a busy highway safely on their way to and from school. He was an older gentleman, who most likely retired from his job and just wanted to help look out for the students’ safety. It’s a very noble thing to do, but at the time we were not very appreciative of him and occasionally when we were riding our bikes to school, instead of waiting for him to stop the traffic, we would just cross the highway anyway and he would start yelling and screaming at us as we drove off laughing. Yes, this is extremely childish, but when you’re 13-years-old, disobeying a crossing guard and having him yell and scream at you was the highlight of your morning.

One afternoon on the way home from school Ken pretended to have an accident on his bike and tipped over in the middle of the highway and just laid there pretending to be unconscious. There was no traffic coming because this was when the crossing guard stood in the middle of the highway with his hand-held stop sign, so there was no danger of any cars driving by and hitting him (we weren’t that dumb).

Instead of the crossing guard getting concerned thinking that he had been hurt, the old man grabbed Ken by the jacket with one hand and hit him in the head with his hand-held stop sign that he carried in his other hand. Ken was able to get away from him but he had an enormous bump on his head from getting hit and he was *pissed* . He wanted to bring water balloons to school the next day and pelt him as he drove by, and even considered throwing a large rock at him, he was so mad. The bump on his head was the size of a large grape and looked horrible, so you can probably understand his desire for revenge. During the wintertime it was very common for us to hit the crossing guard with snowballs as we drove by. Kids are so dumb.

My Friend's Mom was our Substitute Teacher

The one day I realized that I can accomplish almost anything if I actually applied myself was the day that Diego's mom was our substitute teacher at our school. Ordinarily I facilitated the personal hell of every substitute teacher that ever came to our school and there were a handful of other students who eagerly joined in. Having a substitute teacher was almost better than going on a field trip. We were truly out of control and there was little that they could do to keep us on task. Most of the subs would never return, probably because we made their lives miserable, but one day our sub was one of my best friends' moms. Not only was she Diego's mom, but she was actually pretty cool, and everyone liked her.

This was a history class and we had an in-class reading assignment that day and we all had to read through a bunch of crap and then answer questions about it. This sucked. I couldn't just sit there and do nothing, because not only was the teacher Diego's mom, but she was also good friends with my mom, and I couldn't have her tell my mom that I was a screwball, so I actually read through the assignment and answered the questions. Not only did I actually sit there quietly and do the assignment, but I was the first one done!

It was really the first time I had ever applied myself in history class, since I really hated it at the time and didn't see the point of it until many years later, and ironically the History Channel would become my favorite channel to watch on television, but I'll never forget the day that Diego's mom was our substitute teacher because that was the day I was the first one to finish the assignment in class, and I got a pretty good grade on it too. It was amazing. If only I cared this much when our regular teacher was there, I would have got straight A’s.

Joyriding

Every teenager dreams of taking their parents’ car out joyriding, especially if it’s a cool car with balls. Diego’s dad’s car was a blue Firebird that looked pretty cool, and one afternoon his parents were gone and had taken their minivan somewhere, so Diego decided to take the Firebird out for a joyride. Of course, Fred and I were there and thought it was a great idea. Not only did we take the car without his dad’s permission, but none of us even had a driver’s license at the time, making it that much more fun.

We lived kind of out in the sticks, and so we took the car out onto the country roads to see how fast it could go. Diego spun the tires repeatedly, did brake torques, and would drive in reverse going 15 miles an hour and then slam the car into drive and step on the gas. We even caught air when we used a sharp incline over a particular set of railroad tracks as a ramp. Going probably 80 miles an hour we hit the ramp and our heads all smacked into the ceiling and sparks flew out from the back of the car from the muffler or something scraping on the ground.

It’s amazing we didn’t cause the transmission to dropout, blow a tire, or put the car in the ditch from Diego’s insane driving. We actually made it all the way back to the house with ourselves and the car in one piece. Then, as we were pulling back into the garage, Diego’s foot slipped off the brake and onto the gas pedal. The car launched forward after squealing the tires and crashed into a table against the back wall, causing it and everything on it to fall onto the hood of the car. This was bad. Surprisingly, there was only a small dent in the hood, and some slight impressions in the wall from the back legs of the table, so we set everything back up and just hoped his parents wouldn’t notice.

Aside from the small dent in the hood and the damage to the wall, we had another problem. The engine was so hot from us speeding around that the fan kept running trying to cool it down. We knew Diego’s parents would arrive back home at any moment, and not only was the fan spinning, but there was a loud ticking noise coming from the engine too. The neighbors had also seen us pull back into the garage and heard the tires squeal and must have heard the table crashing. They were standing right in their driveway 30 feet away.

Just as we had feared, Diego’s dad figured out what happened, but we weren’t sure if it was because the neighbor said that he saw us take the car out (he knew we were all too young to have a driver’s license) or if he noticed the dent in the hood, or the dents in the wall, or if his dad heard the engine’s fan when he got back, or a combination of these factors. However he did it, he figured out what Diego had done. This time it wasn’t my fault. It wasn’t even my idea! I just went along for the ride.

Family Vacations

I don’t know of any kid who can sit in the back seat of a car for hour after hour on a family vacation without acting up and pissing off their parents. Maybe today kids can since they have their video games, iPads and wireless Internet, but when I was a kid we pretty much had to just sit there and stare out the window or listen to our Walkman portable cassette tape player. This got boring after a while, but one thing my brother and I found that always entertained us were whoopee cushions.

We couldn’t set inflated whoopee cushions on people’s chairs since we were in the car most of the time, so we came up with what we called “drive by farting.” To be effective, drive by farting could only be done in cities or towns where there are people walking on the sidewalks next to the roads. Whenever we passed through these areas, we would roll down the windows and “fart” at people who were walking on the sidewalks. Even my mom and dad couldn’t help laughing sometimes. Some people would literally jump and look over at our car as we drove past them, and some people would start cracking up themselves laughing at what had just happened.

Sometimes during long drives when there was no one to fart at with the whoopee cushion, we would raise hell from the backseat and my dad would occasionally threaten to turn the car around and go home. What were they going to do? Ground us? Maybe when we got home, but not at that moment.

Whenever we stayed at the hotels, Stew and I would hang the paintings upside down before we left and we would occasionally dump buckets of ice onto people from our second or third story balcony. When we found someone’s door that had a “do not disturb” sign put out, we would flip it over so it read “needs housekeeping” so they would get woken up first thing in the morning by a maid. We were punks.

When we stopped at fast food restaurants for lunch, by the time we left, several chairs would have ketchup packets set under their legs so when someone would sit down they would burst and shoot ketchup all over the floor (and their shoes). Of course we enjoyed pulling the old salt and pepper shaker trick where you would spin a quarter on the table and slam down a salt or pepper shaker on top of it so the quarter would break through the plastic bottom so the next time someone picked it up, all the salt or pepper would fall out of the bottom onto the table. I also had a habit of scratching “Mark Was Here” in the bathroom stalls with my Swiss Army Knife before we left. Little did our parents know, but we left a trail of destruction pretty much everywhere we went.

Grandma and Grandpa’s

My grandparents on my dad’s side lived an entire day’s drive away from us, and every summer we would go to visit them for a week or so and this was always the highlight of my summer. Just because I was on vacation didn’t mean I took a break from causing trouble. This was a whole new town (and state) where nobody knew who I was, so they couldn’t call my parents to rat me out for something I had done.

One of my dad’s friends had a stepson my age named Noah and while our dads were hanging out and catching up, Noah, my brother and I would go out and do what we did best. Noah lived on a highway, and every summer when we hung out we would tie a bunch of empty aluminum cans onto the two ends of a long piece of fishing line and then string it up across the road so when a car would drive by, the fishing line would get caught on it and the cans would all be dragged behind it as it continued down the road. Just like a car carrying newlyweds leaving a wedding in the movies, the cans would immediately start clanging and make a bunch of noise as they were drug down the road going forty miles an hour behind the cars. We would hide in the bushes on the side of the road and watch, and most of the time the cars would stop at some point down the road to see what all the noise was. We called it “canning.”

The local college in my grandparents’ town opened up their swimming pool to the public during the summer, so we enjoyed going there a few times a week to not only go swimming, but to cause trouble around the college. My grandpa would drop us off for a few hours and leave us, so we were completely unsupervised. Sometimes Noah would come with my brother and I to the pool and we liked to bring our leftovers from lunch and throw it on the steamer in the steam room so it would stink up the place.

When we were done swimming and waiting for my grandpa to pick us back up, we liked to take a bunch of metal folding chairs and stack them in the elevator leaning towards the door and press the button to send the elevator to another floor, so when the door opened, all the chairs would fall out. We would stand outside of the elevator and lean all the chairs towards the door and hold them there, and just before the elevator door would close we would quickly pull our arm away so the chairs would all lean up against the door as it closed. That way when the elevator stopped on the next floor and the door opened, there would be nothing supporting the chairs and they would all fall over onto the ground. Imagine if you were the person waiting for the elevator and when the door opened up, a pile of five or six different chairs all fell out and crashed onto the ground. OK, so it might not seem that funny to you, but to us when we were thirteen-years-old it was a great time.

We usually went to visit grandma and grandpa around the Fourth of July, and grandpa always bought us bags of fireworks and we enjoyed shooting bottle rockets at passing cars and lighting smoke bombs off in the middle of the road around the neighborhood. Grandma and grandpa’s neighbor was a massively obese woman we called “fatso” and we often enjoyed harassing her with our whoopee cushions from our bedroom window when she would come home from work late at night as she walked from her car to her house.

We could hear her pull up since it was summer time and the windows were open, and from the upstairs bedroom where we slept we would hide behind the curtains and “fart” at her with the whoopee cushions practically every night. Sometimes she would sit outside on her porch with her skinny boyfriend and smoke cigarettes late at night, and we would “fart” at them repeatedly with the whoopee cushions. One night fatso yelled up to my window that she was going to tell my grandpa what I was doing, but I was leaving early the next morning to go back home, so even if she did tell on me, it wouldn’t have mattered. My grandpa would have thought it was hilarious anyway.

When we weren’t causing trouble, my brother and I got to enjoy watching cable television. We never had cable TV growing up, but grandma and grandpa had it at their house, so we enjoyed watching as much MTV as we could while we were there. Whenever grandma would see some scantily clad women dancing in the videos she would ask us in a disturbed tone, “What are you’s guys watching?” and I would always answer that we were watching the Disney Channel or Nickelodeon. That’s not a type-o in the last sentence. She would always say “you’s guys” when she meant “you guys.” We always got a kick out of it, and I think she believed me that it was the Disney Channel we were watching.

Grandpa Dice was quite a troublemaker himself when he was young and I believe he caused a train to be derailed by setting something on the tracks or messing with the switching station when he was a kid, so he understood our need to cause trouble. He also made sure there was an endless supply of ice cream bars in the freezer that we could eat whenever we wanted. He knew what kids wanted. He was kind of like a kid himself. He was still quite a jokester too, and when we got back from an afternoon of “bumming around” as we called it, and my grandma asked what we did all day, he would say something ridiculous like telling her that he taught me how to drive his car or that we went gambling at the local Indian casino. (I was probably thirteen years old.) Grandma’s response was always the same. “My God!” I think she actually believed him most of the time, or perhaps she just didn’t know what to believe anymore after the decades of his antics.

When my dad was a kid he wanted a BB gun for Christmas one year and my grandma wouldn’t allow it, but my grandpa thought it would be fun to mess with her a little bit so he cut a piece of wood in the shape of a rifle and covered it in wrapping paper and put it under the Christmas tree to make grandma think he had gotten my dad the gun. He sure knew how to have a good time.

Miscellaneous Middle School Madness

A few other miscellaneous or minor things we did in middle school include folding ourselves up inside a hide-a-bed (three people at a time was the record with some girls from the neighborhood and it almost broke the sofa), putting a metal plate on Fred’s chest and taping a firecracker to it and putting a sandwich bag full of ketchup over it and lighting the firecracker to make our own blood bag like in the movies so it looked like he got shot. We videotaped this of course.

My brother bought some new tires for his car and before he put them on, he spun the old tires right in front of our parents’ house, causing a plume of smoke stinking like burnt rubber to fill our entire block. The smoke was so thick it just lingered in the air and didn’t really disperse for several minutes. This was in the middle of summer when everyone had all of their windows open, so I’m sure a lot of people smelled it from inside their homes (and probably almost choked to death). My brother did a break torque and the car didn’t even move, but the tires kept spinning and spinning, all the while emitting the burnt rubber smoke cloud until eventually one of the tires burst and practically disintegrated. I’m sure the neighbors really loved us.

My brother really likes engines and mechanical stuff, and one time he took an old lawn mower and drained the oil out of it and replaced it with water and filled the gas tank with racing fuel and let the lawnmower run until the engine seized up because he wanted to see how long it would take. Growing up, my brother was not as crazy as I was, but he certainly had his moments. One time his jacket got snagged on the mailbox and ripped a huge hole in it as he walked by, so he went up to the house and got a baseball bat and smashed the mailbox repeatedly to teach it a lesson. “The mailbox ripped my jacket” he insisted.

Diego and I spray painted some obscenities on a local bridge one summer afternoon for something to do. It seemed like a good idea, and it wasn't like we were going to ruin it or anything since it was already covered with graffiti anyway. It was a fun thing to do until we found out that his mom or dad had somehow overheard us talking about it afterwards. They weren't too happy about that. Usually we were pretty careful about not letting our parents overhear us plot our schemes so this was a surprise to us. Diego just denied it, and said we were talking about spray painting the bridge, but claimed that we never actually did it. Since it was already filled with graffiti, they couldn't really tell if we had added anything to the artwork or not, but I'm sure they knew we were lying.

Before we had starting drinking and partying (which was freshman year in high school), we found a stash of beer at my brother's friends' fort nearby that was out in the woods where they would party, and instead of drinking the beer ourselves and getting drunk, we brought the cans back to my house and shook them up and smashed them on the street so they would explode and spray beer all over. It was a lot of fun. Just a few years later if we had found a stash of beer in the woods, we certainly wouldn't have wasted it like that; we would have gotten drunk.

Fred, Diego, and I had our own fort that we frequented during the summers and it was in a fantastic location in the woods along the side of a cornfield that had a small river running beside it. The first time we discovered the location we had to wade through the river in order to get to the other side and our shoes got all wet and covered in mud. There were a bunch of large rocks making up the riverbed, so we started picking them up and throwing them in the middle of the river piling them up so we could walk on them and get to our fort without ruining our shoes.

The water wasn't very deep and before long we had a few stable piles of rocks that we could walk on to get to the other side of the river. Somehow we got the idea that it would be cool to completely dam up the river, so every time we went to the fort we would pile up more stones, slowing the water flow little by little. After a while our dam worked pretty well. It didn't completely stop the river, but it certainly slowed it down a ton and caused it to rise considerably higher in the area on the backside of our dam.

Later that summer we realized that a local sewage plant relied on the water from the river, and when the water flow was dramatically reduced because of our dam, they must have sent someone out to see what was happening. When we returned to our fort one afternoon we realized that someone had driven a backhoe out there and dug up our entire dam and cleared the river!

Fred got a water balloon launcher one summer and we had fun with it but ended up denting the aluminum siding on my neighbor’s house because the water balloons shot out so fast. They were not very happy about it. After we used the launcher to hit an annoying neighbor girl, her dad freaked out because she had a large bruise over her entire back from getting hit so hard by the water balloon. Who would have thought that a seemingly harmless water balloon could cause so much damage? We also liked to shoot golf balls out of the launcher, but we knew better than to shoot them at people so we just shot them up in the air over a corn field down the street to see how high they would go. You’d be surprised how powerful (and dangerous) a water balloon launcher is.

In the lunchroom at our middle school there was always someone selling half pint cartons of milk and there was a small metal tray sitting on a table where you would set your 35 cents and then you would grab your own carton out of a crate sitting right next to it. We realized that you could pretend to set your money in the tray and by just tapping the other coins sitting in there it would sound like you dropped yours in there, and then you could just take your milk for free. The person attending the milk counter would even let us pick out our own change from the tray, so if we put in fifty cents and needed to take out a dime and a nickel for the change, we would just do it our self. After a while we would walk up to the counter, tap the tray so it looked like we put in our fifty cents, and would then take out a dime and a nickel for our change, so not only did we get a free milk, but we would make fifteen cents. (Hey, fifteen cents back then could get you a decent sized piece of candy from the store.) We stole the milk really just for the thrill of it rather than not being able to afford it. Our parents could certainly afford the extra 35 cents for a carton of milk, we just liked “beating the system.”

Occasionally we would bring four or five empty milk cartons into the bathroom immediately after lunch before the next period began, and we would stomp on them one right after the other, popping them all. Boom, boom, boom, bam! We'd then calmly walk out of the bathroom and off to class as if nothing happened. We were obviously trying to make people think there were gunshots from inside the school. This was way before the Columbine High School shootings in 1998 and the trend of school shootings had infected America. You know, the good old days.

There was a massive food fight in the lunch room one afternoon when for some reason all the teachers had left for a few minutes which turned out to be one of their biggest mistakes. This was not just a food fight between a few different people, this was an epic battle among the several hundred kids in the lunch room. The interesting thing about a food fight is that the more people there are involved makes even more people want to join in and start throwing things. Monkey see, monkey do. Within just a few seconds there was so much food being thrown that no matter where you looked, there were countless pieces of something flying through the air. Probably 80% of the students had thrown something, and most of us kept scooping food up off the table that was thrown our way and tossed it somewhere else in the lunchroom. It was better than any food fight I had seen in the movies. After the teachers returned they absolutely flipped out and told us that an "ice cream social" they were planning the following week would be canceled because of our misbehavior. Whatever. We had more fun having the food fight than we would have had eating ice cream.

My mom always packed a Granny Smith apple in my lunch since I really liked them, and on another occasion I convinced a kid to throw it at someone across the room, hoping to start a food fight. Granny Smith apples are extremely dense and heavy for their size, and the apple hit a girl in the head and probably caused a lump it was flying so fast. Unfortunately the incident did not start a food fight. The principal did interrupt me and others at my table, suspecting I had something to do with it, but of course we didn't know anything about it.

During study hall we were able to get a pass to go to the weight room in order to work out, and the greatest part was that we were unsupervised the entire time because the gym teacher always had a class to teach right next door. It doesn’t take a genius to figure out that since we weren’t allowed to talk in study hall we would all get passes to go to the weight room and just hang out there. It was like our own social club. We wouldn’t even change our clothes or put on workout gear, we would just go hang out there so we could get out of study hall. There was a staircase in the weight room that went upstairs to another room filled with all kinds of ventilation ducts, so we couldn’t help but go up there and explore. Some of the vents were absolutely huge and had small access panels on them, so for a period of time we had fun climbing inside of them hoping they would lead throughout the entire school, but we couldn’t get very far because there were duct covers that blocked us.

Periodically Mr. Jenson, the math teacher, would come into the weight room and go upstairs for a few minutes, which we thought was strange. Why would the math teacher need to go up there every day? One afternoon, we found out why. Diego happened to be up there exploring when Mr. Jenson walked in and headed up there and when Diego saw him coming up the stairs he was able to duck down and hide behind some ventilation ducts where he witnessed Mr. Jenson light up a cigarette and have a smoke break. Smoking on school grounds was illegal, and apparently Mr. Jenson couldn’t make it through the day without his nicotine fix, so every afternoon he would go up there to have a smoke. From that day on every once in a while in math class we would make loud comments about how the weight room smelled like smoke, or as Mr. Jenson would walk by our tables we would ask the person next to us in a loud voice, “who smokes in the weight room?”

Poor guy was probably just trying to relax for a few minutes from all the stress of having to deal with punks like us, and here we were making it worse.

Moving To California

The Ultimate Road Trip

My 1981 AMC Concord was packed and ready to go. It was early in the morning in the middle of August 1998, and for the entire summer my dad helped make sure my old car was road worthy for my long trip to California. The original plan was for Fred, Diego, and I to move out west together at the end of the summer, but Diego hung back for a few months and would later join Fred and I in January.

We all hated cold weather and after my Spring Break trip to Miami sophomore year of college, I put out the word to my friends that I wanted to leave the cold, miserable state of Wisconsin and head back down south to Florida. Diego's college roommate Curt was originally from San Diego and both Fred and Diego had stayed with Curt at his parents' house for a vacation the previous year, so they suggested we move to San Diego instead of Miami since there was no humidity or bugs, so that's what we decided to do at the end of the summer. We were 20-years-old.

We didn't have any jobs lined up; we didn't have an apartment rented; we just had a road atlas that I got from the gas station I worked at that summer, along with a bunch of beef jerky and cheese sticks for food along the way. We also had two ounces of weed and a cooler full of beer. That was all we needed to start our new lives as we headed out west California dreaming. Of course our parents strongly advised we not move, but we didn't care. We had to get out of Wisconsin. Everyone always complained about how much it sucked, so we were going to do something about it and leave. Even all our friends thought we were crazy, but they didn't have the balls that we had to break free from our small little town and see what else the world had to offer.

By the end of the first day on the road we made it to Omaha, Nebraska and decided we would stay there for the night and head on to Denver the next day. We didn't want to spend any money on a hotel room, so we were going to just sleep in the car somewhere, possibly at a campground. We located a campsite on the map in Omaha, but instead of turning in early and resting up for the long journey ahead, we decided to go drinking in the bars downtown. (We both had fake IDs.)

Fred and I went bar hopping until almost closing time and just before we headed to the campground, we decided to steal the beer mugs we had been drinking out of as souvenirs. We finished our beers and walked out the door, hiding them by our sides from the bartender. A little while later we arrived at the campground but there was no attendant in the office because it was closed, so we stopped the car in the parking lot and decided to sleep there. Fred passed out in the passenger seat, but I couldn't get comfortable enough to sleep sitting up in the car and I couldn't recline my seat because the entire backseat was filled with stuff, so I got out and laid on the blacktop right next to the driver's side door and fell asleep there.

The next thing I knew it was six or seven in the morning and a police officer was standing over me asking what the heck we were doing there. I told him we were moving to California and we got there too late to get a camp site because the park was closed so we decided to sleep there. He seemed very understanding and left us alone. A little while later we smoked some weed for breakfast and continued on our journey.

That evening we made it to Denver and again went bar hopping downtown. Instead of looking for a campground again, we decided we would hook up with a couple girls at one of the bars and sleep at their place, and that's exactly what we did. We met two girls at one of the bars and at the end of the night we all went back to one of their places. I slept in one of the girl's beds with her and we messed around a little bit, but she wouldn't have sex with me. Contrary to popular belief, not every girl who goes home with a guy from the bar has sex with him that night. I didn't care, I was just happy to be sleeping in a bed instead of in the car or on the ground. Fred got lucky though, and my girl and I heard him having sex with her friend on the futon out in the living room. The next morning we all went to Denny's for breakfast and later said goodbye to our new friends and headed for Las Vegas.

Since we got a late start getting on the road that morning because we slept late in the comfort of the girls' beds, we stopped at a campsite in Utah to sleep there. We didn't even have a tent, so Fred just slept in the car and I slept on the ground again, and we headed for Vegas the next day.

It was the middle of the afternoon when we arrived in Las Vegas extremely excited (and high from all the weed we had been smoking the entire trip). We had some 40-ounce bottles of beer left over in the cooler from the night before, so we poured ourselves some beers into the mugs we had stolen from the bar in Omaha a few nights earlier. We were driving down the famous Las Vegas strip smoking a joint and drinking beer out of our mugs like we owned the place. We even took pictures of each other with the mugs up to our mouths inside the car since we figured no one would believe that we were slamming beers on the Vegas strip, out of beer mugs nonetheless. What kind of a person drinks beer from a glass mug *in a car while they're driving on the strip in downtown Las Vegas?* Us, that's who. We had no fear.

Using our fake IDs we went to a club and had a few drinks and then explored the casinos and played a few slots hoping to win some gas money to help pay for our trip. Normal people would have gotten a cheap hotel somewhere at the end of the night to sleep in, but we were far from normal. I only had $3000 to my name, which was all the money I had saved that summer, so spending $50 or $100 on a hotel room was just not in the budget, so at the end of the night we went back to the car which was parked in the lot behind the Pioneer Casino, and we crashed there.

The backseat was still full of stuff and my seat wouldn't recline, and I still couldn't sleep sitting up, so I took a blanket and a pillow and walked over to a small plot of grass where some trees were growing and slept there. Yes, I slept outside on the grass in the middle of the parking lot of the Pioneer Casino right behind the strip in Las Vegas like a homeless person. Actually, homeless people probably knew better than to sleep right out in the open like that, but I didn't care. I was wasted and exhausted from being on the road for days. I woke up when the sun rose early in the morning and got back in the car and we took off for the final stretch to California.

Just as we were leaving the city of Las Vegas, the brakes on my car failed! The pedal dropped to the floor and lost almost all pressure and to get the car to stop I had to slam on the pedal as hard as I could and hold it down. Driving in the mountainous terrain of Colorado the day before had put so much stress on the brakes that we blew a brake line. We didn't know this at the time, so we stopped off at a mechanic shop in the city of Baker, California which is an hour and a half outside of Las Vegas. A strange looking man, perhaps the owner, jacked up the car, pulled off the rear tire and inspected the brakes telling us it would be several days until he could get the parts that we needed to fix them. I told him we didn't want to wait and that we would take our chances on the road, and then he reached inside the brake drum and purposefully pulled loose the brake pads, the springs and all the other parts holding the brake pads in place, flinging them to the ground. "Oops," he said. "Don't think you're going to be able to drive it like that."

Fred and I looked at each other petrified. This man just sabotaged my car, stranding us literally in the middle of nowhere in the desert. I had a sinking feeling in my stomach. This man knew we were a couple of kids with a piece of crap car filled with our entire belongings with out-of-state plates 2000 miles from home. With the rear passenger side of the car still jacked up in the parking lot, the man went inside his office to order the parts he claimed we needed. This was too creepy. This psycho was trying to screw us, or kill us, or who knows what. We had to get out of there.

We picked up the miscellaneous parts from the ground, put the tire back on, lowered the jack, and sped off while he was still inside. While the brakes had basically failed (and one of the rear tires didn't even have any brake pads anymore), there was still enough pressure to stop the car if I pushed the pedal really hard and gave myself enough breaking distance. There was no way we were going to stay stranded there in the desert for days leaving my car in this psycho's garage in the middle of nowhere. We called my dad and he told us to cut the break line for that tire and crimp it to minimize the leak so the pressure would be enough to depress the other brake pads. We did this and continued our journey completely spooked from the creepy psycho at the garage who tried to strand us.

We arrived in San Diego pretty late at night because the brake problem held us up, and we had planned on sleeping at our friend Curt's parents' house and staying there for a few days until we found an apartment, but it was too late in the evening and we didn't want to wake them up so we drove to Pacific Beach just north of downtown San Diego and Fred slept in the car again on the side of the road, while I took a blanket out and slept on the beach. I didn't realize how strange this was until I was awoken in the morning by the lifeguards asking me if I was alright. "Of course I'm all right. I'm in California!" I answered. They informed me that it was illegal to sleep on the beach, but they didn't give me a ticket. I wouldn't have cared if they did.

We had made it. We were in California and at the very edge of the continent. The dream was coming true. After five days of madness and living off beef jerky and cheese sticks, and smoking probably half an ounce of weed and drinking every night and sleeping in parking lots and some random girl's apartment, and even with the brakes failing and almost getting stranded in the desert, we had done it. We were ecstatic.

The Unexpected Guests

We spent our first morning in California driving around checking out the beach for a little while, and later ventured off to find Curt's parents' house. Fred insisted that Curt said we could stay there for as long as we needed until we found an apartment. He and Diego had stayed there a year earlier when visiting him, and Fred said Curt's parents were totally cool…and rich. Their house was a beautiful multi-million-dollar pad on top of a huge bluff overlooking the ocean. Their backyard literally led to the edge of the bluff with the ocean below. This wasn't just a house with an ocean view. This house was *right on the ocean* . It was the most amazing house I had ever seen. We knocked on their huge twelve-foot-tall front door and when Curt's mom answered she immediately recognized Fred from his previous visit and was extremely surprised to see him again. Fred introduced me and she asked what we were doing in California. "We just moved here," he said. "Oh, where are you living?" she asked. This is where things started to get uncomfortable.

Curt had never told his parents that we were moving to California, so of course he never asked them if we could stay there until we found an apartment. You can imagine the look on his mom's face when Fred answered, "Curt said we could stay with you." She probably thought he was joking, but of course he wasn't. She invited us in and told her husband that we would be staying with them until we found an apartment. He looked just as puzzled as she did. Talk about imposing on someone! They were really nice about it, and even cooked us dinner that night and we ate it out on the patio overlooking the ocean in their back yard.

After they went to bed we kept drinking their beer and wine and enjoyed watching their 60 inch flat screen plasma TV while sitting on their white leather furniture feeling like *we owned the place* . A 60 inch plasma TV in 1998 was practically unheard of and probably cost about $5,000 dollars. Curt’s parents let me sleep in the guest room upstairs which had an ocean view and its own balcony, and Fred slept downstairs in Curt’s sister’s room because she was off at college.

When I got up the next morning Curt’s mom and dad were off to work and we had the whole house to ourselves. Sure we looked for an apartment for a few hours, but then came back to the house to hang out and enjoy the amenities. When Curt’s mom came home from work she found us drinking their beer and watching their big-screen TV like a couple of low lifes.

“Did you find an apartment today?” she asked. “Nope, not yet. Nothing we could afford at least.” We hadn’t realized how expensive rent was in California, especially near the beach. Most of the apartments were about twice as expensive as we had thought. After freeloading off Curt’s parents for another five days, we actually did find an apartment, and I had to trade in my ocean view bedroom, the big-screen TV, and a house fully stocked with expensive wine for a completely empty apartment about seven miles away from the beach. It wasn’t what we had planned, but we were in California, so we were still pretty happy.

Curt’s parents were glad to get rid of us and wished us well, but little did any of us know at the time, us entering their lives would be one of the worst things that had ever happened to them. More about this later.

Our New Apartment

You don’t know how much you take for granted in life until you have nothing. We did have a roof over our head, our clothes, and my old car, but that’s about it. That, and a computer and the scanner we had scammed from Best Buy several years earlier, and a box of dishes that Fred’s mom bought for us before we left. That’s pretty much it. That’s all we had. No furniture, no mattresses, no TV, no lamps, no decorations, no nothing. Our apartment was nice and had a lot of potential though. It was a spacious two-bedroom place with lofted ceilings and also had a community hot tub and pool. The day we moved in we went to Wal-Mart and each bought an inflatable air mattress to sleep on and two plastic patio chairs so we at least had somewhere to sit.

After sunset, we grabbed a 12-pack of beer and went to hang out by the pool. We were immediately approached by a security guard who was sitting at one of the tables asking us who we were. We told him we just moved in and arrived from Wisconsin, and he informed us there was no alcohol allowed at the pool. We offered him a beer and sat down at the table with him and he immediately forgot about this rule and we all tipped back a few cold ones as we told him about our crazy adventures on our trip there. When we got to the part about the brakes failing, as luck would have it, he turned out to be a full time mechanic, only doing the security job part time at night. His name was Jax, and he offered to help me fix them the next day. Everything seemed to be falling right into place.

It’s very strange living in a completely empty apartment with only two plastic chairs, and we desperately needed furniture but we hardly had any money so it would have to wait. Lucky for us, just as the universe provided us with a nice place to stay in Colorado with the girls we met at the bar and united us with Jax the security guard/mechanic at our apartment complex our first night there, the universe also began providing us with the furniture we desperately needed, and it was all free.

Every few nights when we carried out our bags of empty beer cans to the recycling bins, we would notice sitting right next to the dumpster was some old discarded furniture that people had thrown away after moving out. It was incredible. We first found an old desk so we carried it upstairs and set up the computer on it, and seemingly every time we went to throw away our beer cans we would find something else. We called it the magic dumpster, and it provided almost everything that we needed. Aside from the desk, we got a kitchen table and chairs, a laundry bin, an oscillating fan, shelves made of cardboard that were designed to hold cartons of cigarettes as a store display, and we even found some old picture frames with artwork in them that we hung on our bare walls.

Just when everything seemed to be going our way and our California dreams were beginning to come true, our lives would take a quick detour leading us into a downward spiral to depths we had never imagined.

Getting a DUI

About two weeks after I arrived in California to start my new life and pursue my hopes and dreams, my plans hit a large speed bump in the form of a DUI. It was Labor Day weekend and the police were out looking for drunk drivers as they often do on holiday weekends, and my piece of crap 1981 AMC Concord with out-of-state plates probably looked suspicious driving down the road at 1:30 in the morning as Fred and I were coming home from the bar.

You can probably guess what happened next. After getting pulled over for “swerving” and failing a breathalyzer I was handcuffed and put in the back of the cop car and taken to the police station. A different cop took Fred to the drunk tank. When I arrived at the police station, the arresting officer emptied my pockets and found my fake ID stuck in my money clip. He was confused at first, because when he had pulled me over and checked my ID, he realized I was only 20-years-old, but the ID he found when he emptied my pockets said I was over 21. When he realized what it was, I told him I really needed it, and asked him if he would let me keep it instead of confiscating it. I told him to please stick it in the bushes next to the front door of the police station and when I got out of jail I would come back and find it.

“I just moved here,” I told him. “And I don’t know anybody, and I need that to get into the bars in order to meet some girls,” I explained. I continued to tell him that drinking in Wisconsin is a way of life, and that if he confiscated my fake ID it would be devastating to my social life. “Everybody in Wisconsin drinks,” I said. “I really need that fake ID.” The cop seemed rather sympathetic and told me he would set it on the top of the rear driver's side tire on my car which was left abandoned on the side of the road where I had been pulled over.

He then gave me a plastic cup and asked me to pee in it for a urine analysis. I had already failed a breathalyzer, but I didn't want to give them any more evidence against me, so I told him I didn't have to pee at the moment. He put me in an office with a water cooler and told me to drink a bunch of water so I could pee in a little while.

The cop left me there all alone for a few minutes to gulp down some water, when I noticed a sink in the room. This was not a bathroom, and there was no toilet, but there was a sink for whatever reason, and since I really *did* have to pee (I just told him I didn't have to go and held it so I wouldn't have to give him a pee sample), I decided to pee in the sink so I wouldn't have to give him the sample. Once I relieved myself, I knew it would be hours before I had to pee again, and my blood alcohol level would have dropped significantly by that time, and he probably would just give up on wanting his pee sample after a while. Luckily he didn't walk in and see me peeing in his sink or I probably would've gotten charged with something else, like indecent exposure or something. Just as I thought, not long after this, he gave up on me peeing and a police officer drove me to the county jail.

It was probably about 3 AM by now and I was placed in a jail cell with about 15 or 20 other guys, most of which looked like hard-core drug addicts or criminals. I certainly did not belong there, I thought. One guy was lying on the bench having withdrawals from heroin, and some of the other guys were passed out on the concrete floor. I felt like I was in hell. To make things even worse, the toilet was clogged and filled almost to the top with urine and feces, and stunk up the whole jail cell. The guards didn't seem to care, and I'm sure they thought this was funny. It smelled like we were locked up in a sewer.

The prisoners all realized that if anyone flushed the toilet, the rushing water coming in would cause it to overflow, spilling out onto the jailhouse floor, so every time someone was using the toilet people would remind them not to flush it or it would overflow. These suggestions worked for a few hours, until someone out of habit flushed the toilet when they were done using it. The water started flowing into the toilet bowl, and then the urine and feces soup that had been stewing began overflowing onto the floor. This jail cell was fairly small, probably only 20’ x 20’, and the sewage spilled out half way across the floor. Everyone jumped out of the way and huddled up against the wall on the opposite side of the cell and we all put our shirts over our noses trying to cover up the smell. There on the floor was an enormous puddle of poop, probably five feet wide and ten 10 feet long. We started clamoring for the guards, telling them what happened and they came over and looked, but didn’t care. Hours went by with the sewage still on the floor, and we were still huddled up against one side of the jail cell, and we still had to breathe through our shirts to filter out some of the stench.

There were no clocks in this holding cell, and of course my watch was confiscated when I was booked, so I had no idea what time it was. It seemed like time was standing still. Eventually, my turn came to be released late the next morning and I got a ride home from one of my cellmates’ girlfriends, who came to pick him up after he was released. He had also been arrested for drunk driving the night before. When they dropped me off at my apartment, I saw my car in the parking lot and I figured Fred was let go and drove it home using the spare key. A feeling of great disappointment then came over me because I remembered what the police officer had said the night before, when he promised he would put my fake ID on top of the tire where we had abandoned the car.

It was great that Fred was not in jail, and it turns out the cops just took him to the drunk tank and released him in the morning without even giving him an underage drinking ticket, and he got a ride from someone back to my car and drove it back to our apartment using the spare key. I explained to him that the cop promised me he was going to put my fake ID on the tire, so we drove back to the road where we had gotten pulled over and parked on the shoulder in the approximate spot. We then started walking up the street with our eyes locked on the ground, hoping to find my fake ID, which would have fallen off the tire as Fred drove away if the officer stuck to his word.

This was certainly a long shot. First of all, what are the odds that the same police officer who arrested me for a DUI would actually give me my fake

ID back? This was of course the very fake ID that had led to my arrest, allowing me access to alcohol, so what kind of a cop would actually give that back to a 20-year-old kid so he could drink some more? I had to hope for the best. I had to hope that the cop had actually done this insane, illogical, and illegal thing like he had promised. Without my fake ID our lives would be completely ruined.

As we continued walking down the gravel shoulder on the highway with our eyes fixed on the ground, there it was! My fake ID! The police officer actually did what he said! I couldn’t believe it. I bent over and picked it up and let out a shout of joy with my prized possession back in my hand, but my problems were certainly not over.

Getting a DUI sucks. Of course it’s dangerous drinking and driving, and a stupid thing to do, so the punishment fits the crime. While the cop did give me my fake ID back, he kept my real one because my license was immediately suspended. Right before moving to California I went to the DMV in Wisconsin and got a duplicate driver’s license just in case I lost my wallet. A few days before my DUI arrest I had applied for a California driver’s license, and when I did, the DMV took my (duplicate) Wisconsin ID and said they would mail me my California one a few days later. So, while the arresting officer had taken my remaining Wisconsin driver’s license, I had a brand-new California driver’s license in the mail on its way to me and I received it a few days later. I still had a driver’s license! Ha ha!

I didn’t know if the computer systems from California and Wisconsin communicated with each other, but I had a suspicion that my Wisconsin driver’s license would be suspended in the Wisconsin computers, but the California computers would show that I had a valid California license, so I just kept driving. Most people who get a DUI are supposed to get an occupational permit, which allows you to drive only to and from school or work during specific hours, but I didn’t want to pay for this so I just kept driving like there was nothing wrong and luckily never got pulled over until several years later when my license was valid again. My California license probably was suspended, but I didn’t care, so I still drove as if nothing happened.

I did have another problem, though, because after a few months my Wisconsin license plates expired, and there's nothing like driving an old beat-up car with expired out-of-state plates to raise suspicion when a cop sees it. Since I was most likely driving with a suspended license (along with my now expired registration), I used Photoshop to make a fake registration tag with the current year on it and glued it on my license plate.

As if driving with a suspended license after getting a DUI wasn't bad enough, I was now driving a car with fake registration stickers on it. I thought it was pretty creative, and luckily I never got pulled over, and the following year I was able to get valid California plates and could drive without getting nervous every time a cop was behind me.

Getting the DUI really spooked me, especially being thrown in a jail cell with an overflowing bowl of feces that night. I also had to pay expensive fines, take alcohol education classes once or twice a week for several months, and attend a couple Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. I was not an alcoholic, but this was all part of my punishment by the court. This whole experience actually helped me realize the dangers of drinking and driving. Where I was from, the odds were the only thing you would really hit if you were drunk driving was a cornfield, but in California, there is so much traffic and so many lanes going in different directions and crazy intersections with curvy winding roads that it is very dangerous to drink and drive. Of course it's dangerous to drink and drive anywhere, even surrounded by a bunch of cornfields, because you could hit an oncoming car or a tree, but we were too dumb to think about this at the time.

After this experience I was fairly careful to not drink too much and then drive, and alcohol lost a little bit of its fun for me. Marijuana, on the other hand, had not. I still enjoyed smoking weed on a daily basis.

Where Can I Buy Some Weed Around Here?

Our marijuana supply was rapidly dwindling after we arrived in California and we desperately needed to find a regular hookup so we could get more. We figured weed can't be that hard to find in California, especially the dumpy area where we were living, so we walked around the streets by the beach asking random people if they knew where we could buy some pot.

You may be thinking this is a completely ridiculous thing to do, but we were desperate. It didn’t take long before we found a group of kids our age who said they could help. This was before medical marijuana was legal in California so we couldn’t just go and get a prescription for it and pick some up from the local dispensary.

These were certainly not the most clean-cut group of kids, and one of them was carrying a cordless telephone that he was hoping to sell to someone so he would have money for his own weed, and even though these weren’t exactly our type of people, they know a guy who lived just a few blocks away who was the local pot dealer for the neighborhood so they introduced us to him. He seemed like a friendly guy at first and sold us a bag of some pretty decent weed and gave me his number for all of our future transactions.

Over the next few months this dude was the most reliable pot dispenser I had ever found. He was always home after five o’clock in the evening and he always had some good weed available for sale. One thing I did notice about the guy was that he and his friends liked to play video games, particularly shoot ‘em up games. I would never hang out at his place for more than ten minutes, and it was always a quick and simple transaction, but it seemed that every night Fred and I stopped over there to score some weed, he and his friends were playing these games.

“Shoot them in the fucking head!” he would always yell at the person playing the game. He seemed to have a real obsession with shooting people in the head. I didn’t think anything of it really until one morning before school I was watching the morning news and saw a report that showed his picture and mentioned that he was arrested the night before during a party at his apartment for shooting his girlfriend in the head and killing her. It was very surreal. I didn’t usually watch the news, it just happened to be on that morning. Not only did he just shoot his girlfriend and kill her, but he shot her in the head, just like he was always telling people to do when they were playing video games. It was quite disturbing. I shook off the weirdness and soon found another pot hookup at my community college who wasn’t a psycho.

Stalking Tony Robbins

“Stalking” may not be the right word, because we didn’t mean Tony Robbins any harm, we just wanted to meet him and get his autograph in our copies of *Unlimited Power* . Anthony Robbins, of course, is the world-famous motivational speaker and self-help guru, and his book, which Fred and I read in the dump truck while working for the weed cutter the summer after high school graduation, changed the course of our lives and opened us up to the world of self-improvement.

In *Unlimited Power* , Tony said that he lived in a castle in Del Mar, California, a beautiful and wealthy beach community in San Diego County. Since we largely credited Tony with giving us the confidence to move to California to pursue our dreams, we wanted to meet him and have him autograph our books, so we set out to Del Mar to find the castle. We just asked random people walking on the street where Tony Robbins’ castle was, and to our surprise, somebody knew and pointed us in the right direction! We parked the car outside and walked up to the front door and both Fred and I had our copies of *Unlimited Power* in our hands as we anxiously awaited to meet our idol. A construction worker opened the door, and we asked him if Tony was home. He informed us that Tony had sold the castle and now lived in La Jolla, the next city south, so that’s where we went.

While finding the “Del Mar Castle” was fairly simple, we wondered how in the world we would find Tony’s house in La Jolla. All we knew was that he lives somewhere in the city. We stopped at a local gas station and asked some people if they knew where Tony Robbins lived. It seems like a crazy thing to do, after all, what were the odds that some random stranger is going to happen to know where he lived? La Jolla is not exactly a small town. Someone told us he probably lived on La Jolla Farms Road, because that’s where all the richest of the rich live. The homes on this street are absolutely incredible. It feels like you’re in Beverly Hills. Most of them are gigantic and have beautiful and immaculate landscaping, and some of them you can’t even see because they’re hidden behind massive gates. Just driving down the street, truly is an incredible experience, especially for two

Midwestern boys who had no money and lived in a dumpy part of San Diego. This was definitely where the richest of the rich lived.

We randomly pulled over and parked on the side of the road in front of one of the houses, and walked up to the front door to pretend that we had confused their house with Tony's house, and acted like we were friends of his. When someone answered the door, I said nonchalantly, "Is Tony around?"

"Tony?" the man responded.

"Yeah. Tony and Becky" (his wife at the time).

"Oh, you have the wrong house," the man told us. "They live across the street."

"Across the street?" we thought to ourselves.

"Thanks," I said, as we turned in astonishment. What were the odds, we thought. Out of all the houses on this long and winding road, the one that we randomly chose to approach was the one directly across the street from his very house! Things soon got weirder.

As we walked over to the house, which was hidden behind a large brown gate, a dark colored Porsche drove up and pulled into the driveway, stopping for a moment as the gate opened. We hurried over and approached the driver's side and there he was, our hero, Anthony Robbins! I don't know how he fit into that tiny car, but he did. "Tony!" I said, as we approached, holding our copies of his book.

"Hey guys," he said. "What's going on?"

"We just moved here to follow our dreams thanks to you and your book, and we wanted to meet you and say thanks," I told him. He extended his hand to shake mine, and when they met, mine practically disappeared as he wrapped his gigantic fingers around it. People often joke that Tony has big teeth, but he also has a big head. The guy's head was enormous, and so are his hands. He really is a giant.

We talked with him for a minute and then he autographed both of our books and drove off down his driveway, disappearing behind the closing gate. We walked back to my car stunned. We had done it. We just met Tony Robbins. Not only that, but we had somehow telepathically honed in on his exact location. What were the odds? Of all the houses on the street, we randomly chose the one directly across the street from him, and not only that, but as we were walking up to his driveway, he pulled up in his car!

Tony's teachings don't get too much into the metaphysical, the mystical, or the spiritual, it's mainly about strategies for creating habits that will ultimately lead you closer to your goals, but he does touch on some esoteric spiritual principles, and Fred and I drove back to our empty apartment with no furniture but two plastic Wal-Mart chairs astonished by what had just occurred. Different spiritual teachers, and even Jesus himself, spoke about the power of belief and said that if you simply believe enough, you can metaphorically move mountains, and that's what we had done. We wanted to meet Tony Robbins so bad, and were so amped up on our new life in California after having just drove over 2000 miles with no apartment ready, no job lined up, no nothing, just our hopes and dreams of what lies ahead, and our focus was so sharp that we somehow metaphysically altered the course of our own reality causing our paths to cross with our inspiration, Tony Robbins.

While I still look back on this in amazement, I must advise you that you should *never* just show up at the home of your favorite celebrity, *ever* . This is extremely creepy and if you feel that you "have" to meet them to thank them or to talk to them, then you have some mental problems. You might be saying, "but you did it, Mark." Yeah, I did, and I was high as hell and out of my mind, and as you've figured out by now, I was completely insane.

Using Dish Soap in a Dishwasher

How was I supposed to know that you're not supposed to use dish soap in a dishwasher? This didn't make any sense. I found this out the hard way after moving to California. My mom always did the dishes when I was growing up, and nobody ever told me the difference between dish soap and dishwasher detergent, and unfortunately I had to find this out on my own.

When I first moved out with John, Nick, and Bobby, in our house in Wisconsin this was never an issue, because we didn't have a dishwashing machine in the house, but our apartment in California luckily had one, even though I didn't really know how to use it.

One morning I loaded up the dishwasher and turned it on right before leaving for the afternoon because it was loud and I didn't want to be home when the thing was running. A few hours later I returned home to a flooded kitchen with a foot of soap suds everywhere.

Later that afternoon, the maintenance guy came over to see what had happened because the neighbor below had reported a leak was coming through their ceiling. I told him my dishwasher must have broke and it overflowed. He rolled his eyes and immediately knew what happened. He asked if I used dish soap, and I said of course I used soap, how are the dishes going to get clean without any soap? He then informed me that you're not supposed to use dish soap in the dishwasher, and you're only supposed to use *dishwasher detergent* . Seriously, how was I supposed to know about this? Dish soap, dishwasher soap, how am I supposed to know there's a difference? Luckily I didn't have to pay for any of the damages. I felt like a complete idiot.

Ruining Thanksgiving Dinner

Three months after we moved to California, Thanksgiving came around, the time when friends and families all sit around the dinner table and enjoy a good meal together. It's the one night of the year when nobody likes to eat dinner at home all alone, and if a person doesn't have any family in the area, then someone is bound to invite them over to their place. Since we didn't have any family in the area, Curt's parents generously invited Fred and I to join them and their friends at their house for Thanksgiving dinner. They would soon regret this.

To our surprise, they apparently had forgiven us for showing up on their doorstep unannounced when we first arrived in California and shamefully imposed on them, essentially forcing them to let us stay at their house until we got an apartment. We showed up for Thanksgiving dinner high as hell after having smoked a bunch of marijuana on the way there, and I'm sure Fred was drunk, and we were in no shape to be socializing with sophisticated adults.

Early on at the dinner, Curt's parents asked us what we thought of California. I spoke up and told them San Diego was fantastic, and I was glad that I moved here, but I really hated Los Angeles and thought it was a complete dump and everyone who lived there were fake, shallow, materialistic, scumbags—especially people in Hollywood who worked in the entertainment industry. I also said that I hoped God would wipe Los Angeles off the face of the earth in a massive earthquake. One of my favorite songs at the time was *Aenima* by Tool, which is basically about this kind of event and the singer's hatred of Hollywood. An uncomfortable look crept onto their faces as Curt's dad then informed me that their friends who were joining us that night, seated just across the table from me, lived in Los Angeles!

I could feel the embarrassment rising up from the pit of my stomach. I tried to recover from this historic foot-in-mouth moment by asking them what they did for a living, assuming it was not something in the entertainment industry so I could then say that people in their industry are okay, it's just the people in the entertainment industry in Los Angeles who I hated, but as it turned out both of them happened to work for Paramount, a major motion picture company. There was no recovering from what I just said. I basically just said they were scum and I hated them and hoped they died. I had pretty much ruined Thanksgiving dinner. There were a few moments of extreme uncomfortableness at the table, and I was so stoned I wasn't sure if my anxiety was from the weed I was smoking earlier, or from insulting Curt's parents' guests, or both.

I just started drinking more wine and forgot all about it until as Fred and I were leaving walking back out to the car, Fred started laughing uncontrollably. "You basically said you hoped the Langdon's friends would die in an earthquake, at Thanksgiving dinner!" he cackled. He said it took all his strength and concentration not to bust out laughing uncontrollably at the table after I said it. We still laugh about it to this day. As bad as this was, it would pale in comparison to what we would later put the Langdon's through. Ruining Thanksgiving dinner one year is fairly easy to forgive and forget. What happened to them later because of us is not.

The Wrong Max

Just a few weeks after my DUI, Fred was driving my car home from the bar one night and put it in the ditch, ruining the radiator. I had gotten a ride home from a girl I was trying to hook up with that night and left my car with Fred, but he was so drunk he crashed it on his way home. The car had been towed and impounded for being abandoned in the ditch, and we needed a ride to the impound lot on the other side of town to get it. Since we didn't have any friends, this was extremely difficult. My one beginning friendship was with the kid named Max N, who was in my philosophy class at the local community college, but I didn't have his phone number. I did know his full name, however, so we looked him up in the phone book, but realized there were pages of listings of people with his name because it was so common.

What did we do? We started calling the listings in the phone book one by one. This was in 1998 and most people still had home phones (land lines) back then because cell phones were just starting to take off. Each time someone would answer I said, "Hey, it's Mark from philosophy class." The first dozen people I called had no idea what I was talking about, because obviously it was the wrong number, but after a while the person on the other end of the phone acknowledged that he was Max N from philosophy class, but when I said it was me, he didn't know who I was. Not only did this Max N have the same name as my friend, but he was taking a philosophy class at the same college too!

When I realized it wasn't the same Max N that I knew, I told him why I was calling and explained that Max N was the only person we knew and that we had to go get my car from the tow yard. He was very sympathetic to our situation and offered to give us a ride! I gave him our address and twenty minutes later he came over and picked us up and drove us to the tow yard to get my car. This was amazing. This kid was a complete stranger, but he still offered to help us out. He didn't even seem like a complete weirdo. He was a normal college kid who felt sorry for our situation and decided to help.

It was over $100 bucks to get the car out of the impound lot and Fred had left his keys in the ignition, but I had my set with me so we unlocked the car, got inside, and sped off. Hey, it was my car, so it wasn't like I was stealing it or anything. It was still registered in Wisconsin, so how were they going to find us?

As we drove home, the radiator leaked completely dry and the car almost overheated. The release valve on the bottom was ripped off, and in order to get the radiator to hold any water, we had to jam a towel inside the hole. Water still leaked out really bad, even with our make-shift plug put in the hole, and the car looked like it was going to overheat and ruin the engine, so we had to stop on the way home to add more water. We pulled into a parking lot somewhere and found an old cup on the ground and used it to scoop up water from a puddle and poured it into the radiator. It needed to be replaced anyway, so we figured how much more damage could some muddy puddle water do to it?

Going to *The Late Late Show*

Fred, Max N, and I got tickets to be in the studio audience at *The Late Late Show with Craig Kilborn* when he hosted it in 1998, so we drove up to Los Angeles where it was filmed and smoked a big fat blunt on the way and anxiously awaited seeing one of our idols in person. Before we got to the studio we decided that we would do two things during the show. First, when Craig was introduced and the show began, we would applaud and holler like every audience did, but we wouldn't stop because we wanted to see how long the crowd would go along with us; and second, we decided to start laughing and applaud after the setup for one of his jokes during the monologue, before he even got to the punch line.

When the announcer said "Here's your host…Craig Kilborn," the audience erupted with applause and whoops and hollers, but just when everyone was starting to quiet down, all three of us would get even louder and kept yelling "yeah, Craig! Whooo!" and we kept applauding, and the audience would all join back in and we were able to keep this going for an abnormally long period of time, leaving a confused look on Craig's face as he wondered why this was the most excited audience he had ever seen.

After he did a few jokes in his monologue, we all agreed now was the time to laugh at the setup, and so as soon as he finished the setup for his next joke and paused for a second before delivering the punch line, all three of us started laughing and applauding, and others in the audience followed like lemmings. The setup wasn't even funny because the joke wasn't finished, but most people still applauded with us! Morons! Like most late night comedy shows, the show was taped in the late afternoon or early evening and then aired later that night, so we were able to watch the show after we got back home. When it got to the part when we applauded at the setup, we realized that because so many people started applauding with us and because of our yelling, you couldn't even hear the punch line for the joke at all! It was the weirdest thing to watch and Craig looked baffled as he continued on to the next joke, no doubt wondering why people were applauding when his joke wasn't even finished.

Free Food from Complaining

Sometimes I'm very attuned to details, and I noticed that practically every food product you buy at the grocery store has a quality guarantee that says if you are not completely satisfied with the product, you can return it for a full refund or a replacement and they list an 800-number for you to call if you want to complain. I didn't have much money and what little I had I was spending on weed and beer, so I didn't really have much left over to buy food—especially good food. Fred and I pretty much ate peanut butter and jelly, romen noodles, and spaghetti with no sauce because the sauce cost too much. We needed to eat, but more importantly, we needed beer and weed, so one afternoon I called the phone number listed on a pizza box and complained to the company about it hoping they would give me a refund. I told them it didn't look like the picture, which it didn't, and I was very disappointed.

On the box, the pizza looked fantastic with all kinds of cheese and pepperoni spread all over the top, but the actual pizza didn't look anything like that. The robotic customer service person on the other end of the line read a scripted response off their computer screen telling me, "I'm sorry sir for your dissatisfaction. We are committed to providing a quality product to our customers and you are important to us," and they told me that they would like to send me some free coupons for a replacement. I gave them my address and a fake name and they sent me some coupons for free pizzas! Who doesn’t like pizza, especially when it’s free? My plan worked just as I expected.

I then went through our kitchen cabinet (what little food we had) and I called all the 800 numbers on every package and complained about them all. I would just tell them I didn’t like it or that it looked better on the package and I was very disappointed. Their response was the same every time. “I’m sorry sir, we are committed to providing a quality product to our customers. We would like to send you some free coupons for reimbursement, bla bla bla.” The only thing we had to eat in the apartment was pretty much peanut butter and pizza, so I took a notepad and pen to the grocery store and started writing down the 1-800 numbers from every different kind of product I had an appetite for.

The customer service person always asked for the specific lot number or item number that’s stamped on the particular product when I called to complain, so along with the 800 number I would write down the product name, the size, and the specific item number. I did this for just about everything you can imagine. Bread, meat, cookies, peanut butter, jelly, frozen dinners, milk, cereal, soda, spaghetti sauce, I even started calling and complaining about the beer that we drank, telling the company it tasted stale and they would send me free coupons for beer! That’s right, free. One beer company even sent me a check for seven or eight dollars to compensate me for the six-pack that I said I didn’t like! They certainly didn’t want me switching my brand of beer and lose me as a customer for life, so they sent me some money to keep me happy.

The cashiers at the grocery store would always look at me funny when they rang up $250 worth of groceries, including beer, steaks, juice, cereal, and just about everything else in the store, and then I would hand them a large stack of coupons they would have to scan one by one, and the balance would be reduced to zero dollars. They had never seen anything like it and were always surprised. I felt a little weird sometimes, but we were eating like kings without paying a dime. I even got Levi’s to send me a few pairs of free jeans because I called them and complained that mine had worn out.

People always complain that companies have terrible customer service, but I can’t praise the food industry enough. They were more than generous and kept me from starving to death.

Custom Compilations

While burning your own CDs filled with your favorite music became commonplace in the 2000’s, in the late 1990s, CD burners were very expensive and few people even knew about MP3s back then; but we did. We were on the cutting edge of technology and were downloading MP3s before anyone heard of Napster, and three years before Apple had released the iPod or iTunes. Fred and I came up with the idea to start a “company” we called Custom Compilations where we would burn people compilation CDs of their favorite songs for only $9.99 — less than the cost of a new CD itself.

While the idea of Custom Compilations was genius and ahead of its time, our business practices were a bit unorthodox. We didn’t have the money or the resources to acquire the proper licensing to buy the rights to popular songs (we were only twenty-years-old) so that we could legally make copies by burning them onto CDs, so we decided to download the songs from the Internet for free and then just use them anyway. I made up some nice fliers that explained our service and had a section where people could write in the songs in the order that they wanted them to appear on their CD, and we made a large color sign and brought a table out to the quad at my college and set up a booth trying to promote our idea.

We figured people could fill in their desired songs on the order form and then we would go home and download them and burn them onto a CD, and the very next day we would meet them in the quad and they could pay us when we gave them their CD. This idea really was ahead of its time because hardly anyone had CD burners or knew that you could download mp3s of practically any song you wanted, but our “business” was slow to take off and we needed money fast, so we quickly abandoned the idea of Custom Compilations and launched another operation that would become immediately profitable.

Selling Fake IDs

Every college kid wants a fake ID so they can buy beer and get into clubs and bars, so we decided to tap this enormous market to help pay for rent and fund our weed habit. I went out and bought the best color printer on the market at the time and a Polaroid camera, and using Photoshop we went to work. (Digital cameras were very expensive back in 1998, so we had to use a Polaroid.) We found a template on the Internet of the driver's license from Georgia, the only state whose license didn't have a hologram on it, so we could easily replicate it.

Fred and I already had fake IDs, but we needed a sample of our work, so we took my picture with the Polaroid camera and scanned it into the computer and shortly after printed out my new Georgia driver's license. We bought a laminating machine and small lamination cards from Office Depot, and we assembled my new ID with the precision of a surgeon. It looked pretty good, so I brought it with me to school the next day and in between my classes I would approach random groups of students and ask them if they wanted fake IDs. I would show them the one that we had just made and take a picture of whoever wanted one with the Polaroid camera and wrote down whatever name and birth date they wanted on their ID and scheduled a time for them to meet me the next day where I would exchange their new fake ID for $100 cash.

We were very proud of our fake ID business. After all, where could you possibly get a fake ID within 24 hours? The best part was that the students wouldn't even have to pay us until after we gave them their ID so they knew it wasn't a scam just to take their money. Business was good. Some days we made $400 or $500 dollars a day. We did this only for about a month or two before we had marijuana-fuelled paranoia that the FBI was going to bust down our door early one morning and raid our apartment. We still had absolutely no furniture at all, except for the two plastic Wal-Mart chairs and a few odds and ends we had found out by the dumpster. We looked like spies, or terrorists. We had a large map of California taped on the wall because we didn't have the money for decorations, and we each slept on inflatable camping mattresses. Our apartment didn't look like a home, it looked like a temporary command center for some kind of illegal operation.

Because we were so short on money, when we abandoned the ID operation, we boxed up the expensive color printer and returned it to Circuit City as if it was brand new for what I expected would be a full refund, but what I didn’t realize was that the store had a policy that if you waited more than 14 days to return certain electronics, they would only give you in-store credit. I didn’t want in-store credit, I wanted the money, so I hung out in the store parking lot approaching people who were walking in, and told them that I would buy what they were looking for with my in-store credit slip, if they would then give me the cash. It was embarrassing.

We also returned the laminator machine and the Polaroid camera to Office Depot and were able to get a cash refund for them. We had opened each package very carefully and sealed them all back up as if they were brand new. It was reminiscent of the days a few years back when I would return used video games by re-shrink wrapping them.

Part of the reason we abandoned the fake ID operation was because if the authorities found out about us and raided our apartment, they would discover something else we would rather keep to ourselves.

Growing Weed

Since our biggest monthly expense next to rent was our weed habit, and we didn’t have jobs and our savings were rapidly depleting, we did what any economically fiscal pothead would do, and decided to start growing our own. We didn’t want to sell the weed and be drug dealers; we just didn’t want to spend any more money on it since we smoked it every day.

Fred spent an afternoon researching on the Internet how to start an indoor grow room, but we were disappointed to find out that you needed special light bulbs in order to give off enough light for the plants to grow properly. These lights were fairly expensive, at least to us they were, but we thought we would try growing weed anyway, and instead of using the proper lights we just bought a few three-foot-long florescent fixtures from Home Depot and thought we would try them instead of using the recommended lighting.

While I was actually enrolled in college and gone for half the day, Fred had nothing to do and didn't even have a car since we shared mine, so he spent his afternoons transforming his closet into the grow room. Fred is a genius when it comes to engineering, and if he actually applied himself, he could have put his skills to work in college, but Fred didn't like college. He did like the idea of unlimited free marijuana though, so he figured out how to mix up the soil and built an adjustable lighting system and meticulously constructed his masterpiece.

We saved the seeds from the pot that we were smoking and Fred nursed them like they were his babies until they started sprouting. Within just a few weeks the plants were growing up out of the soil and looked beautiful. There were probably a dozen or more, filling the entire inside of Fred's closet. He wore the same blue T-shirt every day anyway, so he didn't really need the closet for his clothes. We anxiously awaited our garden's maturity so we could sample our homegrown weed and start reducing our expenses.

Christmas time was just around the corner and we had gotten plane tickets to fly back to Wisconsin for a week and a half, so we wouldn't be at our apartment to water the plants or raise the lights, so we gave our only friend Max N the key to our apartment and trusted him with the task. Max liked to smoke a lot of pot too, so we had something in common.

Since I wanted to have pot to smoke when I was back in Wisconsin, I brought some with me on the airplane because I didn't know if I was going to be able to score some once I got back there. Carrying drugs onto an airplane is pretty stupid, especially when this was the first time I had ever flown in my entire life and I didn't know if they used drug dogs to look for people smuggling drugs or what kind of security measures were in place, so I taped the bag of weed inside my pants just in case any drug dogs smelled it and security made me empty my pockets or searched my carry-on bag. Luckily it was no problem, and I got on the plane just fine carrying about a quarter ounce of pot.

Our original plan when we moved to California was to have myself, Fred, and Diego all move out together at the end of the summer, but Diego decided he would join us a few months later at the end of the year so he could finish the fall semester at college. After Christmas, we all flew back to California for some more adventures, now involving the three of us. Diego didn’t smoke pot, and even though he knew Fred and I had been potheads for years, he was a little uncomfortable with the fact that we were growing it in our apartment. It didn’t really surprise him, he just shook his head at our stupidity.

The pot plants grew for the next few months, but because we weren’t using the proper lighting, the buds (the part you smoke) were very thin and practically useless. Our operation had failed. We couldn’t really throw a dozen 5-foot-tall pot plants out in the dumpster because that would be a little difficult to explain to the neighbors, so we cut down the plants one by one and stuck them down the garbage disposal. It ground them up pretty well at first, but the stems on some of the plants were so thick that after a few minutes the garbage disposal got jammed up. We couldn’t call maintenance to come over and fix it, because once the guy took it apart he would realize that it was full of pot leaves, so luckily we were able to fix it ourselves and finished disposing of the evidence.

I continued being a pothead for several years after this, and smoked so much over the years that I had a chronic smoker’s cough because of it. I didn’t smoke cigarettes at all, only weed, which is probably 10 times worse for your lungs if it’s not filtered with a water bong, especially if it’s the old, rotten, moldy “Mex” weed shipped in from Mexico in bricks, as opposed to the home grown hydroponics that has become the California standard and widely available at medical marijuana dispensaries and grown in closets by hobbyists. When I finally did quit smoking weed every day a few years later, I joined 24 Hour Fitness and started working out five days a week to get in shape. Every morning in the shower I would cough up some tar and spit on the white shower wall to see how nasty it was. Within several months the tar balls were much smaller, but I could still see black residue in my spit.

For over a year I would still cough up black tar in the morning. A year! And this was with me working out five days a week. I started worrying that I had a tumor or something in my lung that was producing the black stuff I was coughing up because it just kept coming. Finally after a year or so my lungs were clean. I'm not saying I won't take a bong hit or eat a brownie ever again, but the wake and baking and 24/7 pot smoking had to come to an end.

Working as a Telemarketer

One of the first real jobs I got in California was at a shady telemarketing company that promoted timeshares. Fred and I and my new friend Max, who I met at school in a philosophy class, all got hired at the same time. There was a group interview and the company hired a bunch of people, and their lack of standards caused them to hire us.

You can probably imagine what a telemarketing company is like, it's mainly just a huge room full of desks and phones and people making unsolicited phone calls all day to promote whatever crap it is they're selling. The job was a weekend job only on Saturdays and Sundays for about six hours each day, and the first day on the job we smoked a huge blunt (a cigar filled with marijuana) on the way to work and arrived nice and high.

We were all given phone lists of people to call to try and rope in to buy a timeshare, but nobody really seemed to be interested. 99% of the people would hang up on us or yelled at us for calling them. This just wasn't going to work, so we started making prank phone calls to random people and enjoying ourselves. It was *much* better than pitching timeshares.

The three of us just sat around laughing all day, and it was clear that we were not doing our job. On our break we would go out back and smoke more weed by the dumpster and would come back in reeking of marijuana and just screw around for the rest of our shift. One time the manager came in and started yelling at us, and we all just started laughing uncontrollably at him because we were so high we couldn't contain ourselves. Right to his face! We all got fired. What a surprise.

Telling My Boss Off Over the Loudspeakers

Once I recorded an audio CD of me telling a story about how messed up the furniture store was that I worked at and how incompetent most of my coworkers were. I laid my audio track on top of the creepy theme song for *Unsolved Mysteries* and burned it onto a CD and brought it to work the next day and put it in the company's stereo system and set it on repeat. After turning the volume up all the way, I closed down the building and went home for the night while the CD was blasting on repeat inside throughout the entire building—my several minute rant, repeating, over and over again. I was yelling pretty loud in the recording since I was venting months of frustration. It was awesome.

The next morning the manager came to work and unlocked the door only to be greeted by my voice yelling over the loudspeakers how pathetic he was and how pathetic the company was. It was a good three minute rant detailing the failures of the company in a shocking and vicious attack set to music which multiplied its effect. They didn't fire me because they needed me since I was a great salesman, and like I said, pretty much everyone else there was incompetent. The company went bankrupt a few months later. I saw the writing on the wall as clear as day and my CD was an omen for everyone else to hear.

Turning Twenty-One

A funny thing happened when I finally did turn twenty-one, after six years of hardcore drinking and partying since freshman year of high school. Fred, Diego and I went to our favorite grocery store to stock up on plenty of beer to celebrate, and the girl at the cash register made a comment about how we must be having a big party because of all the beer we were buying. "Yeah it's my birthday," I told her. "How old are you?" she asked. "Twenty-one," I responded.

"Twenty-one?" she said with a puzzled look. I had been buying beer from her regularly for the last four months ever since I moved to California. I was such a frequent customer that we were on a first name basis and she didn't even bother to card me anymore because she knew who I was. She looked at me with a strange face after I told her it was my twenty-first birthday. “I was using a fake ID all of this time,” I told her as a grinned. “But I’m twenty-one now.” She just shook her head and rang up my beer. I think she just wanted to sleep with me.

Miscellaneous California Craziness

A friend of Diego’s from work named Demetrios invited us over for a party one night that he and his roommates were having and it was a good time until I offended one of his roommates by saying that Mexico was a complete dump. (I think I called it a complete shit hole to be exact.) Have you ever been to Tijuana? It is a complete dump, and when I happened to mention this fact, before I knew it, Demetrios’ roommate was holding a knife to my throat. He was a Mexican and took great offense to me saying that Mexico was a shit hole. I told him I was new to California and that I was a hick from Wisconsin and I didn’t mean anything by it and thankfully he put the knife away and told me I better not say anything bad about Mexico again. The truth hurts sometimes, you know.

We didn’t know it at first but Demetrios was a complete scumbag and liked to snort crystal meth and hang out with strippers who also enjoyed doing drugs. One night when Diego was hanging out at his place a couple guys walked in and pulled guns on them and started yelling about the money Demetrios owed them. That was pretty much the end of our friendship with Demetrios.

My 1981 AMC Concord was having some problems since it was getting old. The power steering pump was leaking pretty bad, and since power steering fluid was fairly expensive, I just started pouring motor oil in it and the pump would start working again for a week or so and then I would have to add more oil, but after a while even that got too expensive, so I just starting filling the power steering pump with water. It actually worked. (If you don’t know anything about cars, this is a completely asinine thing to do.) If there was no power steering fluid in the unit (or in this case, it was now water) then I could barely turn the steering wheel. I could still drive the car, but it was very difficult to turn, especially when getting into (or backing out of) a parking space. Conventional wisdom would say that doing such a dumb thing as pouring water into a power steering pump would cause it to rust and seize, but it actually worked fine and I was able to sell the car a few months later before things really started going wrong with it.

Diego came running back up to our apartment after taking out the trash one day frantically saying that the dumpster was on fire, and he grabbed a bucket and filled it up with water from the kitchen sink and ran out there and dumped it on the flames, and I grabbed a pitcher from the cabinet and filled it up with water and followed right behind him. We called 911 to tell them what was happening because the flames were getting pretty high. As we waited for a fire truck to arrive, we continued running back and forth from our apartment to the dumpster with buckets of water throwing them on the flames. Luckily we were able to put the fire out.

If Diego hadn’t went out there to throw something away and saw the flames, then it would have only taken a few more minutes before they spread, lighting the car port on fire, and then who knows what else. Just as we breathed a sigh of relief we noticed that another dumpster across the parking lot was on fire too! We frantically put the flames out with more buckets of water from our kitchen sink. The fire department didn’t arrive until after we had put the second dumpster fire out. Some idiot in our complex had deliberately set them on fire! I don’t know if they ever found out who did it, but when they tried to raise our rent a few months later I sent the rental agency a nasty letter telling them how we had saved the complex from burning down and they decided to keep our rent the same.

Somehow despite my constant pot smoking, my lack of money for the first few years after I moved to California, and living in a crappy apartment in a dumpy part of town seven miles from the beach, I was able to hook up with two out of the three hottest girls at my college. I made only slight progress with my number one choice who was the most beautiful girl on campus, but she had a boyfriend who she had met on vacation in Cancun or the Bahamas or somewhere, and she planned on moving to Tennessee to be with him. She was crazy, and her roommate thought she was crazy, and since she barely knew the guy, I figured I could convince her not to make the foolish move to Tennessee to be with him.

After making it clear I was perusing her, she invited me to come and work out with her at 24 Hour Fitness one afternoon, so I worked out with her and her two friends, but I didn't get anywhere with her. She was actually the reason I joined 24 Hour Fitness so I could go and workout with her, so at least something good came out of me perusing her, and landing two out of the three hottest girls on campus still isn't bad.

The Fun Couldn't Last

After Diego moved in with Fred and I in January, he was the voice of reason we had been missing. He had always been the most responsible of the three of us. Where Fred and I fed off each other's insanity, Diego could see we were out of control. He had gotten a real job at a business nearby, and I was going to a community college looking to transfer to a university in a few semesters, but Fred still held onto the hope that we could come up with some business opportunity so we would not have to get real jobs.

While all three of us drank frequently, Fred's drinking was getting out of control. Since he didn't go to school or have a car or job, he would just surf the Internet all day at our apartment and drink and smoke weed. When I would arrive home from class in the afternoon, he was already pretty wasted. Even though I was smoking weed every day and wasn't the most responsible person in the world, I could see that Fred was spiraling out of control. He would pass out on the floor every night at about 6 or 7pm after drinking all day and was just a mess. Since we were all running out of money, we were drinking boxes of Franzia wine since it was so cheap. Franzia is that bargain box wine that everyone makes fun of. We would buy three or four boxes at a time because beer was getting too expensive.

I ended up getting a job at a bookstore at the mall, and after a few more months Fred moved back to Wisconsin. His dad offered him a job with his construction company and wanted him to take over the business in a few years when he retired. It seemed like a good gig, and Fred didn't want to turn it down. Diego and I were both relieved that we did not have Fred in our lives anymore. Even though I had been a large part of the madness and Fred was one of my best friends, even I realized that he and I were going down the wrong path. Even though I still liked to party, I was beginning to learn how to balance it with being a responsible student and started thinking about my future career. Shortly after Fred moved out, Diego moved in with his girlfriend who he would later marry and I got my own studio apartment and transferred from the community college to a university to get my bachelor's degree in communication. The most insane chapter of my life was finally over.

I would not entirely leave the madness of the past behind me, however. In the coming years it reared its ugly head a few times like the ghost of Christmas past reminding me that I still had some work to do to straighten myself up.

New Year's Eve 1999

By the end of 1999 Fred had been living back in Wisconsin and working for his dad but came back to San Diego for the historic New Years Eve of 1999 as we left the twentieth century behind us and entered the year 2000. Curt, Diego's old roommate from freshman year of college, was also in San Diego for winter break and all of us decided to go to downtown San Diego for New Years. Diego had bought a small Ford Ranger truck by this time, and I was too messed up to drive by the time we left for downtown, so Diego decided to drive his truck that night because he was worried if he drove my beat up old car with the out-of-state license plates on it that it may draw suspicion causing him to get pulled over by the cops. I told you he was the smartest out of the three of us.

Diego and Curt rode in the cab of the truck, and Fred and I ducked down in the back as we headed downtown since all four of us couldn't fit up in the front. There's nothing like laying down in the bed of a truck looking up at the night sky when you're wasted as you're flying down the freeway to reinforce the idea that you're not normal. We ended up going to a bar and grill called Dick's Last Resort to celebrate the big event. Fred got thrown out within an hour or so for saying something insulting to a bartender because she was too slow in getting him a drink, but he was able to sneak back in without notice. I brought a few pre-rolled joints which we would occasionally smoke outside in the courtyard and we did this a few times without notice, but our luck later ran out.

The four of us were standing around out there smoking a joint (except Diego who didn’t smoke weed) when the bouncer who threw Fred out spotted him and grabbed him, pushing him towards the exit. Another bouncer who came over for backup noticed Curt was holding a lit joint and so he grabbed Curt and threw him out too. Curt had a drink in his hand which spilled on Diego as the bouncer grabbed him, so Diego started swearing at him and so he signaled to another bouncer and he grabbed Diego and literally pushed him out the door too. Three out of four us had just gotten thrown out in a span of about 15 seconds. I then followed after the bouncers as they shoved everyone outside and we decided to call it a night and go home. At least it was after midnight and we had made it to the New Year.

Almost Missing College Graduation

Since I didn’t have a high school graduation technically, since I was not allowed at the ceremony, my college graduation was extremely special to both me and my parents. After all, I had never worn a cap and gown before so this was a big occasion. My parents had flown to California from Wisconsin for the ceremony and before I arrived, a bunch of friends and I met at a local bar to tip back some beers and get a nice buzz on to celebrate. An hour later I led the procession to the ceremony, and just as I was pulling into the parking lot, I rear-ended the car ahead of me and both of my airbags blew out.

I wasn’t going that fast, but it was still fast enough to trigger the airbags. The plastic flap covering the airbag on my steering wheel practically sliced into the side of my arm as it flew open and I immediately had what looked like road rash covering part of my forearm from it scraping me. The airbags also stunk really bad and were very loud when they deployed. The car I hit had been pulling into the parking lot too, and so I followed it in and parked alongside of them. As we got out of our vehicles and inspected the damage, which was barely noticeable, I was in my cap and gown so they knew I was graduating, but I doubt they had any idea that I had been drinking. I’m sure I was over the legal limit, and I started worrying that the cops were going to come over to investigate and realize I was drunk.

I started to have visions of my parents sitting in the audience waiting for that proud moment when their son finally walked across the stage and got his diploma, but when my name was called, I was nowhere to be seen. I had to get out of there and get into the ceremony before I got arrested. Ever since my DUI years earlier, I had been very careful not to drink and drive, but this was graduation, and the ceremony was only a mile or so away from the bar, so I didn't think it would matter.

I had a few hundred dollars on me and I offered to give it to the driver of the car if they just forgot that this happened, and I told them I had to get going for the ceremony. The guy driving the car wanted to take it in to get an estimate for the stupid little scratch I left on his bumper, so we exchanged information and I told him that I would just pay for it out right if they sent me the bill because I didn't want my insurance company to get involved. Word spread at the ceremony that night to everyone in my department about the accident, and everyone kept asking me if I was ok.

Aside from the scratch on my arm from the airbag, I was fine, but I was a little shaken up and started having flashbacks of my DUI arrest several years earlier. I really had been careful not to drink and drive since my DUI, but like I said, this was graduation, and I was only driving a mile down the road so I didn't think it would matter. This was almost the last straw that scared me straight once and for all. What would happen two weeks later would make sure I never returned to my reckless and irresponsible ways.

The Bachelor Party We Would Never Forget

Diego, who had been living with his girlfriend for some time, was getting married. His relationship with her had helped save him from wasting his life away like Fred and I had been doing when we were all roommates. By this time, Fred had moved back to Wisconsin several years earlier and had a steady girlfriend and a job, and I just graduated college two weeks before the wedding, so it felt like we were all finally growing up. Almost all of the craziness we were involved in was a thing of the past. Normal life awaited us.

Family and friends of the bride and groom all flew out to California for the beautiful outdoor wedding. Two days before the big day we had Diego's bachelor party, and since he was the first one of us to get married, it had to be epic. Our crew was finally reunited for the first time in years. It was Diego, Fred, John (my college roommate from sophomore year who was involved in the puking in the flowers incident with me), Carl (the guy who wanted to steal the dead cats from the dumpster at school and throw them in a teacher's yard), Ken (whose car door got a hole punched in it when Fred threw a construction barricade at someone's mailbox as we drove by), Curt (Diego's roommate from freshman year, whose parents let Fred and I stay with them when we first arrived in California), Diego's younger brother (who didn't really cause any trouble), and myself.

We decided to go to downtown San Diego and hit up a club, and we got a stretched Ford Excursion limo for the ride. We would be getting extremely drunk this night, so we wanted to make sure nobody would get a DUI, and who doesn't like to party in the back of a limo?

Before we arrived downtown, we stopped off at a strip club first. On the drive downtown there was a porno playing on the television located at the front of the limo, and we were drinking and batting around a blow up doll that Ken had bought for the party. When we got out of the limo at the strip club we could see the porno playing on the TV through the tinted window. Because the TV was fairly bright and right next to the window, the picture clearly shined through since it was dark outside. We all started laughing, wondering what the cars had thought that were driving next to us on the freeway since they all could see the porno playing though the window. It was turning out to be a great night.

We did the strip club thing, and almost got thrown out after Diego did a back flip on stage after the strippers pulled him up there when they learned it was his bachelor party. Fred then commented that, "This is the kind of night that could end up like some fucked up movie." Little did we know at the time, but he was right. What would transpire later in the evening was even more fucked up than anything we could imagine.

After the strip club, we had a good time at On Broadway, a club downtown, and on the way home we enjoyed sticking the blow up doll out the window and yelling at people walking along the streets. The limo dropped Diego off back at his apartment, and a few other guys at their hotels, and Curt, Ken and I crashed at Curt's parents' house since they were out of town. This was the beautiful multimillion dollar place on top of a huge bluff right next to the ocean where Fred and I stayed (freeloaded) for a few days when we first arrived in California. Curt went to bed and Ken and I sat out on the patio furniture near the edge of the bluff admiring the view. It was pretty late and we were wasted from a great party. Ken had his feet sitting on top of the table and was slouched back in his chair, looking like he was about to pass out soon. After a little while I got up to go to bed and told him not to fall asleep out there because it was pretty chilly.

I crashed in Curt's sister's room since she was out of town with the parents and the next thing I knew the door bell was ringing and it was morning. Early in the morning. Nobody was answering the door and it kept ringing so I got up to see who it was. To my surprise there stood a police officer. "Was there a party here last night?" he asked. "No," I answered. "We had a bachelor party, but we just took a limo downtown, we didn't party here," I added. It was only the three of us, Ken, Curt and myself who came back to Curt's parents' house, and we weren't loud at all, so I didn't know why the cop had come over.

"Somebody fell off the bluff last night," he said, "and we think it was from a party at one of the houses up here." I still didn't know what he was talking about and wondered why he was telling me this. He then went on to tell me that the person who fell off the cliff had died.

I was still pretty much drunk, and this was real early in the morning so I wasn't thinking clearly. I didn't understand what he was getting at. The cop then asked me to make sure everyone in the house was accounted for, so I opened the guest room door to see if Ken was sleeping in there, but the room was empty. I found Curt upstairs sleeping in another bedroom, and I looked around the house to see where Ken had crashed but I couldn't find him. I thought maybe some of the other guys had picked him up and went out to breakfast, so I tried calling his cell phone but he didn't answer. The police officer then started describing what the guy looked like who had fallen off the cliff. It sounded like Ken. "I'm really sorry," said the police officer, "but I'm pretty sure it was your friend."

My eyes started welling up with tears as I remembered him sitting out there at the table, which was only 10 or 15 feet from the edge of the cliff. There was no railing at all, just a huge drop-off to the ocean below. I started having flashes of images pop into my mind imagining Ken getting up out of his chair to come inside and stumbling and falling over the cliff. I then had a wave of images flood my mind of the wedding that was scheduled for the very next day.

Curt was in such a stupor from the previous night, he wouldn't wake up. I would shake him and he would just mumble incoherently and groan. I called Fred on his cell who was with his girlfriend at their hotel room and I told him to get back to Curt's house immediately. Of course he asked why, and I told him I would tell him once he got there, but that he needed to get there ASAP. He could tell by my tone that something was very wrong. What was I going to tell Diego? Ken was one of the groomsmen, and one of our best friends. How could we explain this to Ken's mom? How could we tell everyone who came for the wedding? Would there still be a wedding? It didn't even make any sense to us. We were in shock and weren't sure what happened. Fred cracked a beer and started drinking to relieve the stress. It was probably 7:30am. A bunch more police and firefighters came to the house along with forensics people, and they were able to determine that Ken decided to walk down the bluff to go to the beach and fell to his death at the point where the cliff drops off in a concave cutout from the crashing waves below. With no railing to deter anyone from walking down the back yard toward the beach, and in the fog and in the dark in of night, nobody could see where the hill suddenly drops off. The coroner said alcohol was not a factor and that visual conditions on the horizon where the water meets the sky causes an optical illusion making it difficult for a person to get their bearings straight in the dark because there are no points of reference. As he made his way down the moderately sloped back yard in the fog, he was unable to determine where the cliff dropped off until he already stepped off with one foot, losing his balance, and falling to his death on the hard sand below.

The homeowners were really negligent for not having any kind of railing to discourage people from walking down towards the beach there. Pretty much every other house on that bluff had railings. This one had nothing. The backyard just led to a slope which later dropped off. It was very deceptive and it's hard for me to describe if you haven't seen it for yourself. The bottom line is, if there was a fucking railing like there should have been, then this would have never happened. Those dumb fuck negligent homeowners!

I decided to call Ken's brother instead of his mom, since it would be easier to break the news to him. He was a few years older than us and was in my brother's class. How do you call one of your best friend's moms and tell her that her son, who just flew out to California for a wedding, died at the bachelor party? Calling Ken's brother was the most difficult thing I had to do in my life. Shortly after I told Ken's brother what had happened, Ken's mom called me to try and piece things together. We weren't even sure what had happened at this point, so it was very difficult for her to make sense of it. It was hard for all of us to wrap our minds around what had just happened.

The next most difficult thing was calling Diego to tell him what happened. After I told him he asked me if I was serious, and when I said I wasn't joking, he smashed the phone against the wall and rushed over to Curt's house. After all the forensics investigators were done tracing Ken's steps down the bluff, they all left and we stood in the back yard dumbfounded.

Ken had already picked up his tuxedo from the rental shop, so on my way back to my apartment I brought it with me, unused, still in its plastic to return it. “Why didn't you need it?” the guy at the store asked. “He's dead,” I answered. What else could I say. He must have seen the dazed look on my face and knew I was serious.

The wedding went on as planned, and surprisingly we had a good time. Ken was always the life of the party, and he certainly wouldn't want us to get all depressed and have a bad time at the wedding, so we partied it up to celebrate Diego's wedding and to remember all the good times and trouble we had gotten into with Ken when we were younger. I ended up hooking up with Diego's cousin, who was single and extremely beautiful, so that really helped me get through the night too. She was a hot blonde who flew in from the Midwest for the wedding and didn't have a date.

A week or so later we all gathered back in Wisconsin for Ken's funeral. It was like a class reunion. Almost everyone from our school was there. Ken was pretty popular and everybody loved him, and our whole town was in shock at what had happened. Everyone felt bad for us too, and especially Diego and his wife.

The whole thing was so surreal, and it was so messed up, I just didn't know how to deal with it. I couldn't get it out of my head. The bachelor party, the bluff, the police, Ken, the funeral, it all just kept swirling around in my brain. This happened around the end of May, and for that entire summer I just smoked as much pot as I could to try and get my mind off it. I didn't even go to the beach that summer, since Ken had died on the beach; just being there made me think of his dead body lying in the sand. I had loved the beach and went there at least once a week for years, but that summer I didn't go at all and I was as white as a ghost from not getting any sun.

We had done everything we could to be safe that night. None of us drank and drove like in the past. That's why we got the limo to make sure everyone was safe, but somehow, the night still ended in tragedy. I wondered for a long time what the message was in this tragedy. What was the lesson to be learned? Why would God allow this to happen? I realized that you never know when you're gonna die, or when the ones you love are going to die. Despite every precaution, when you least expect it, and in the most unanticipated way, someone's life can be lost.

You know they say that shooting stars burn out bright, and Ken certainly was a shooting star. He was the life of the party, a ladies man, everyone's friend, and an all-around great guy. I was very lucky to be friends with him. He really knew how to get the most out of life and after I was able to shake off my depression, that's what I started doing.

Looking
Back
On It All

Of course it was extremely juvenile, immature, reckless, disrespectful, dangerous, stupid, rude, foolish, moronic, idiotic and illegal to do some of the things I did growing up, and one may even argue that writing this book is almost just as bad. Regardless of how bad some of the more questionable activities were that I was involved in, you gotta admit that a lot of them were pretty cool, and if they entertained you by just reading about them, just imagine how cool it was for my friends and I to actually do them!

Writing this book was really just a trip down memory lane for myself. As I would write down the stories and review them and edit them, they were so clear in my mind it was like they just happened yesterday. And who wouldn't like to relive their childhood, a time when you had no responsibilities and you didn't have to worry about things like your job, bills, retirement, scumbag politicians, insurance, your health, and the dozens of other things that can bring you down when you get older.

When I was working on this book some people asked me what the point of it was. The point is, it was fun for me. The point is also to entertain you; to bring you back to your own childhood for a few hours; to show how creativity that is not properly channeled can be dangerous and illegal, and also to let parents know that if their kids seem to be crazy and out of control, there is hope for them that they can find a way to use that energy to better themselves, make a decent living, or even change the world in a positive way.

In movies and comic books, super heroes and villains could almost always be the same person, but one of them took the wrong path at some point in their life. If Batman took just a slightly different road in life, he could have been a very dangerous criminal mastermind. If the TV serial killer *Dexter* had a different moral code, he would have ended up killing innocent people instead of killing murderers who slipped through the justice system and had gotten away with their crimes.

Great men throughout history like Martin Luther who initiated the Protestant Reformation, the civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr, founding father Benjamin Franklin, and countless other men and women we see as heroes today, were actually trouble makers who caused trouble for the right reasons. Trouble making is a talent and a skill that can be used for either good things or bad.

I'll never forget an old guy named Laurence who was a pharmacist at a local pharmacy that I worked at when I was in high school who years later told me, "I always thought one day you'd be famous or in jail." He said this when I had bumped into him ten years after we worked together. Laurence saw that I had a lot of potential when I was young, but he wasn't sure how I would use it. You may think that because I worked at a pharmacy when I was in high school, that I would steal all kinds of pain killers because I liked to party, but honestly I never stole a single pill ever. I respected the owner, and I would never do anything to cheat him or steal from him. I did have a conscience and a code of conduct, believe it or not. Popping pain pills never really appealed to me either.

I was also a late bloomer. I wasted a lot of time, money, and energy before finally shaping up, and could have gotten into much more trouble than I did if I hadn't been so lucky not to get busted for the numerous stupid things I had done. In the hilarious film *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* , the main character, Van, (played by Ryan Reynolds) has been in college for seven years and still hasn't graduated yet. Seven. He's not a loser, in fact, he's the furthest thing from it, and everyone at his school loves him. At one point he is asked by an adult, "Surely you have a career in mind," to which he answers, "Not really. I'm still looking for that dare-to-be-great situation."

Later on, Van Wilder loses faith in himself for not finishing college after so long and says he hasn't accomplished anything and almost drops out before realizing his true potential and his purpose in life which was to inspire others and bring the best out of them. While Van Wilder took seven years to graduate and figure out his purpose, which he had been doing all along without realizing it, I took 8 years (and a summer school session) before the big day came for me. I didn't finish with a master's degree or a doctorate, but with a simple bachelors in communication. In my defense, I did attend four different colleges in five years and changed majors twice so a lot of credits didn't transfer from one school to the next. I had attended three different schools in three years, and then two years later I transferred again to my fourth and final school. My point is, I was like Van Wilder, and I almost lost hope for myself as he did as the years went on.

In the past there was no message behind my madness, but as I grew older and wiser and through the tragedy of Ken’s death, my legal troubles from my DUI and underage drinking, my personal failures and my quest for spiritual understanding and inner peace, I was able to find a new direction in my life. As I started to finally grow up and calm down, all of the trouble in my past began to feel like it wasn’t even me. While some of the things I’m proud of, some of them I’m completely ashamed of too. My only defense is that I was young (under 21 for most of the madness) and I was stoned for probably 80% of it.

Luckily I found an outlet for my creative energy in the form of writing books and making YouTube videos about politics and pop culture. I certainly never “grew up” and stopped causing trouble. I just found a worthwhile cause that I could put my creative energy into. A lot of the things I studied in college about mass media and communication were exactly what I needed to understand the world around me and provided fuel for my fire. Your “cause” doesn’t necessarily have to be exposing political corruption or pulling back the curtain of the mainstream media propaganda machine that shapes our culture like I have been doing. You could channel your energy into a skill, a career, a hobby, a relationship, art, education, or any number of other positive things that could be very beneficial for you and others.

Just think about how big of trouble makers actor Jim Carey or Apple Computer founder Steve Jobs must have been before they fully developed the ability to channel their energy into something productive or were provided the proper outlet for their creativity and energy.

After I grew up and finally started to get my life on the right track, I also realized how smart my dad really was. My brother and I always thought he was old fashioned and out of touch when we were kids, but the older I got, the more I realized how wise he was. He was able to provide a nice house in a good neighborhood in our small little town, my mom was a stay at home mom for our entire lives after leaving her career as a teacher to raise us, and we took a family vacation pretty much every year to somewhere different around the United States. Don’t think we were some first class jetsetters or something. The family car was a Chrysler K car with vinyl seats and no air conditioning, so some summer vacations were not exactly pleasant at times when the temperature was in the 80s or 90s! We didn’t have that much money and were only average middle class, but the wisdom and frugal decisions allowed my dad to provide for us, and enabled him to retire in his 60s, which not everyone can do. I could only hope to accomplish what he did in life, and create and manage a family like he and my mom did.

My mom is equally fantastic and loving. She’s done a lot of volunteer work around the community with various gardening projects and events, and is just a great person. My mom and dad are also fantastic moral examples of what good people are like. None of my trouble making should be blamed on them or their parenting. It was all my fault. Sometimes there’s nothing a parent can do to prevent their kids from doing crazy things no matter how loving, intelligent, or harsh disciplinarians they are. Boys will be boys. Most of the time parents don’t even have a clue what their kids are actually doing and couldn’t stop them anyway if they tried.

My parents are the nicest, most loving parents anyone could ever ask for, so maybe I just couldn’t contain myself from the normalcy at home when I had so much energy and so many ideas bouncing around my brain I just wanted to scream. I feel really bad for putting them through everything that I did—from them having to pick me up at the police station, having to come in for conferences with the school principal, not to mention my countless detentions and having to worry what the heck I was up to when I didn’t come home until 2 o’clock in the morning on the weekends. I have since apologized to them and they accepted it and actually said they were glad the way I finally turned out!

Looking back on it all, there’s not much that I would actually do differently, believe it or not. I had a lot of fun. I wouldn’t have been so careless with certain things like drinking and driving, and I would have kept the pot smoking under a little more moderation. I certainly spent too much money on marijuana, but perhaps like many others, I needed the self-medicating because of my over-active mind that raced with the possibilities of my future, yet I was stuck in a small town in the middle of nowhere. If I was more focused on school I could have earned a master's degree in less time than it took me to get my bachelors, but then again I did attend four different colleges as I tried to figure out what I wanted to study and where. Who attends *four* different colleges? Well, I did. I know you shouldn't dwell on the past, and I certainly had a lot of fun, I just wish I was able to bridle my energy sooner than I did.

So if you are young and on the same path I was, I warn you. It seems those older than you always try to tell you some great bits of wisdom so you don't make the same mistakes that they did when they were young, but it seems that the ears of the young never listen to this wisdom and only realize how right their elders were when many years later, they are the elder and having missed the boat they then try to impart that same wisdom onto the youth in their life, which also tends to fall on deaf ears as it did on their ears when they were told so long ago by someone trying to help them in this mysterious cycle of life.

Despite most teachers hating me, or just hoping for the day when they wouldn't have to deal with me anymore after graduation, there was one high school teacher who saw the potential in me and did what he could to help me find an outlet for my chaotic energy. He was my homeroom teacher, Mr. Garett. For whatever reason, he treated me with respect and seemed to take special notice of me by delegating minor tasks to me during homeroom sessions. Instead of feeling like he was poking his nose in my business or trying to keep an eye on me, he was always cool.

When I was in a study hall during final period, oftentimes he would write me a pass so I could get out and go use the weight room which helped keep me out of trouble, not to mention, in shape. I couldn't sit quietly for the final hour of the school day in study hall! I would have gotten a detention every few weeks, so Mr. Garett really saved me some extra aggravation I didn't need, and I really enjoyed working out, so it was a win/win situation. It's teachers like Mr. Garett who go the extra mile for the "troubled" or "at risk" kids that most other teachers have written off as bad apples with no future who help kids like me realize that we are not worthless trouble makers destined for jail or a lifetime plagued with problems, we're often just kids who need an outlet for the abundant energy surging through our minds and bodies.

Well, I hope that you were entertained by my stories, and I hope that you learned something from them too. They say you learn more from others' mistakes than you do from your own, and if that's true, then you just got an incredible education! There's almost 250 pages of mistakes right in your hand, one right after the other! Anyway, may your own trouble making be balanced with a conscience, respectable boundaries, and style! And make sure your trouble is designed to be creative, funny, and thought provoking; never dumb, dangerous, or destructive. Now put this book down and get out there and start Causing Trouble!

Also by Mark Dice:

-The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction

-The New World Order: Facts & Fiction

-The Resistance Manifesto

-Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare

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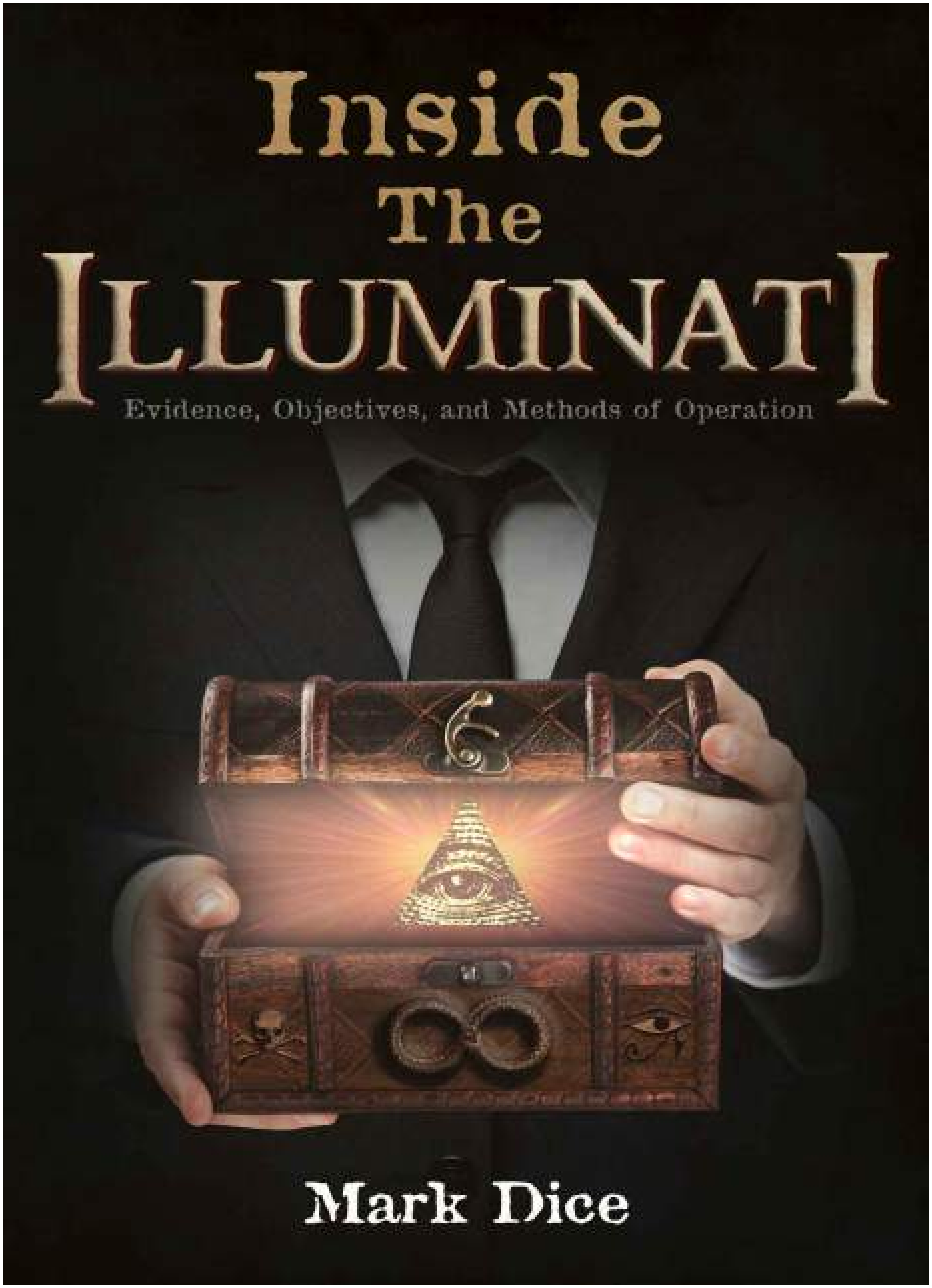

Inside The ILLUMINATI

Evidence, Objectives, and Methods of Operation

Mark Dice

Introduction

The Illuminati is either called a “conspiracy theory” or a “conspiracy fact,” depending on who you talk to. Those familiar with the Illuminati secret society may tell you that it is a criminal and diabolical network of some of the world’s most wealthy, educated, and elite bankers, businessmen, and politicians, who work behind the scenes to gain and maintain high levels of power, enormous wealth, and wield control over the world. The list of claims that come along with this monstrous conspiracy are vast, and range from the Illuminati being an elite good-old-boy network looking out for their own interests (often at the expense of others and in unscrupulous ways), to claims that they are actually alien beings from another galaxy who masquerade as humans, drink people’s blood to survive, and are working to prepare planet earth for the arrival of the Antichrist who will rule the New World Order as a god, offering those who worship him “eternal life” through transhumanist technology merging man with machine.

In this book I will help you get to the core of the conspiracy by providing you with some of the original evidence proving the existence and activities of this infamous group, dating back to the late 1700s in the state of Bavaria, Germany, and as more and more evidence is piled up, we will slowly move into the present day, proving beyond a reasonable doubt that the Illuminati is still fully operational, and many of the “conspiracy theories” are actually true.

This analysis is a supplement for my previous book, *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* and will continue to investigate and examine the many allegations and conspiracy theories associated with the Illuminati. Since the subject matter is so vast, this second volume was required to continue my analysis of the wide-ranging claims and evidence connected to the “Illuminati conspiracy.” I am dedicated to separating the facts from the fiction, since buried within the mountain of “conspiracy theories” circulated on this subject, there is a considerable amount of irrefutable evidence that there is indeed a powerful “Illuminati” secret society that is operating today in America and around the world.

There is also a large amount of wild speculation, half-truths, and outright lies about what the Illuminati is doing, who is involved with them, and what evidence is available. Some people dismiss the idea that there is a “conspiracy” at all, and do not even believe such a thing exists, because when an educated and rational person comes across some of the more outrageous (and clearly false) allegations stemming from the Illuminati conspiracy, they just shake their head in disbelief and get the impression that all the allegations and “conspiracy theories” must be false as well; thinking such claims must have come from equally mentally deranged people who purport some of the more far-fetched and fabricated information as “evidence” and “proof.”

In this book I will present to you a rational approach to the idea of an “Illuminati conspiracy” and I will discuss the historical evidence of the original, admittedly real, Bavarian Illuminati and the roots of this secret society that has spawned countless tales of its power and reach. I will also cover many of the affiliated secret societies that were not examined in my previous book and will continue to investigate various people who claim to be actual former members. We will also look at some political elite insiders and see what they have to say about the Illuminati and the idea that a secret society of powerful men is posing a danger to the world and to our freedoms. Skeptics of an Illuminati conspiracy will be very surprised to learn the names of some prominent people throughout history who have made startling statements clearly revealing their conviction that the Illuminati is real and poses a danger to us all.

I don’t like to use the word “conspiracy” because it has a negative connotation that this material is just a “conspiracy theory,” when in fact, I do very little *theorizing* at all. The terms “conspiracy theory” and “conspiracy theorist” have become a pejorative, which means they have a negative connotation and are used to insult people and shut down the discussion, similar to someone screaming “racist” at someone in attempts to bypass critical thinking and cause a knee jerk reaction to paint them as such, when in reality they simply have an opposing political ideology on a particular issue. Much to some people's surprise, many "conspiracies" are actually real, and the dictionary definition of a conspiracy is simply, "an agreement by two or more persons to commit a crime, fraud, or other wrongful act." People are actually charged with "conspiracy" in criminal courts every day for simply "conspiring" or planning to commit a crime.

Conspiracies happen on a small scale such as when two people conspire to rob a bank, and on a large scale when the leadership of a powerful country fabricates a reason to go to war. Conspiracies are a fact of life. When researchers such as myself point out real, solid, irrefutable evidence that reveals a conspiracy, we are often attacked as "crazy tinfoil hat wearing conspiracy theorists," because the term causes people to immediately dismiss the claims as a paranoid delusion imagined by someone on the Internet who lives in their mother's basement. The reality is that actual conspiracy theorists can be found in high positions of power and conspiracy theories are put forth by well-educated people. Let's not forget that Hillary Clinton publicly claimed that a "vast right wing conspiracy" was fabricating allegations that President Bill Clinton had sexual relations with intern Monica Lewinski.[1] Hillary Clinton was being a conspiracy theorist, when in reality her husband Bill *was* having sexual relations with the intern, and there was no *conspiracy* trying to bring him down—it was only people reporting on the facts.

The Bush administration put forth a conspiracy theory that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and were planning to use them on America and our allies, strong-arming the public into invading the country based on this conspiracy theory which was later proven to be 100% false.[2] Not only was it false, but to be more accurate, it was actually a lie concocted to justify the invasion and war. As everyone now knows, there were no weapons of mass destruction at all, and Americans had been duped into going to war based on a conspiracy theory constructed by the US government.

Until the twenty-first century, most Americans had never heard of the Illuminati. Dan Brown's novel *Angels & Demons* introduced millions of people to the group in 2003 (although his version was far from the truth and more like a purposeful disinformation campaign). And with the rise of the information age and social media, YouTube videos a click away, and countless websites popping up dedicated to the subject, more and more people became interested in this mysterious subject.

The 2004 presidential election in America brought John Kerry and George W. Bush together to face off for the presidency, both of whom are members of the Skull & Bones secret society headquartered at Yale University, which added fuel to this growing fire. I say that they *are* members, not *were* members, because Skull & Bones is not just a fraternity like they would have you believe, but is instead a post-graduate organization that gives its members access to one of the most powerful social networks in the world. This is how two Skull & Bones members were able to secure the nominations for both the Republican and Democrat party in the same election, so no matter which one of them won (George W. Bush or John Kerry), it would be a victory for Skull & Bones.

It was around this same time that "9/11 conspiracy theories" were growing, and the cover story for the War in Iraq continued to fall apart. The official story of the September 11th attacks and the expanding "war on terror" just wasn't adding up. For the first several years after the World Trade Center was destroyed, so-called "9/11 conspiracy theories" were contained to the Internet, but around 2005 and 2006 they boiled over into the mainstream and found many high-profile supporters whose comments about 9/11 being an "inside job" couldn't be ignored by the mainstream media.[3]

When people interested in investigating the massive inconsistencies in the official story tried piecing together what really happened that day, it inevitably took many "down the rabbit hole" to discover the various secret societies that all led back to the Illuminati. 9/11 would lead to Skull & Bones, which would lead to the Bilderberg Group, which would lead to the Bohemian Grove, which would lead to the Illuminati and a whole can of worms that raised many more questions about what the shadowy elite of our world are doing behind the scenes was opened.

When one quiets their mind from the buzz of pop culture and mainstream media and steps back from their self-absorbed lifestyle and looks deeper into world events and the power structure directing society, they begin to see the world very differently. Once someone begins to understand that there is more than meets the eye in our world, and they discover the different branches of elite ruling class networks that all converge under one umbrella, their life is often never the same. People describe it as their awakening to what's really happening in the world or "going down the rabbit hole," or having their eyes finally opened.

If one truly wishes to learn about the history of the world, and about the driving force behind major world events, the economy, and even our very culture, then one must look into the Illuminati. At one point in history, in the late 1700s, when the Illuminati was first exposed, most people knew about them and the dangers they posed but as time went on and generations have passed, most people had forgotten about them. Sports entertainment and celebrity news had come to dominate most people's minds and many had fallen asleep at the wheel thinking everything was just fine.

Just as many people used to doubt and deny that the Italian Mafia even existed, the same is true of the modern Illuminati. Ancient secret societies are admitted by mainstream historians to have existed and were not just social clubs for men looking to keep themselves entertained after work. They had a powerful function, even back then. Manly P. Hall, a very well respected secret society insider, explains, "The esoteric organizations of ancient times were for the most part religious and philosophical. In the medieval world they were philosophical and political. In the modern world, political and social."[4]

He goes on to say plainly, "It is beyond question that the secret societies of all ages have exercised a considerable degree of political influence," and that "a second purpose for secret societies was to create a mechanism for the perpetuation from generation to generation of policies, principles, or systems of learning, confined to a limited group of selected and initiated persons."[5]

For years, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover denied that the La Cosa Nostra or Italian Mafia even existed. Some believe the mob was actually blackmailing Hoover with compromising photos of him and his boyfriend Clyde Tolson, but for whatever reason, even the head of the FBI publicly denied there was any such thing as an organized criminal business network that had police, judges, lawyers, and other public officials on their payroll. All the denials changed in 1957 after a major mafia meeting on a farm in Apalachin, New York (about 200 miles northwest of New York City) was discovered, now known as the Apalachin Meeting.

The property was owned by gangster Joseph Barbara and the suspicious gathering of fancy cars and men in suits got the attention of a state trooper. Police surrounded the property and ended up detaining fifty-eight men, and for the first time there was indisputable evidence that the Italian Mafia did, in fact, exist. Many of the men were suspected or wanted criminals who claimed they were just meeting for a weekend barbecue. Of course police had a decent idea of what was really going on and the Mafia began to be unmasked. Some of the men tried to flee into the nearby woods, but most were apprehended. "Don Vito" Genovese, the leader of the Genovese crime family, had organized the meeting to delegate various gambling, loansharking, and drug trafficking operations.

More shocking revelations were to come a few years later in 1963 when a mobster named Joe Valachi, who worked for Lucky Luciano and the Genovese Crime Family for 30 years, testified before the McClellan Congressional Committee on Organized Crime and revealed in detail many of the Mafia's operations. Valachi had hoped his testimony would help him avoid a death sentence for murder. His testimony shocked most people who could have never imagined how far-reaching the Mafia was, and how they regularly paid police and judges to look the other way. Joe Valachi's congressional testimony also introduced the world to the term La Cosa Nostra.

Many people wonder if the Illuminati Mafia actually call themselves "the Illuminati." I highly doubt it, although perhaps occasionally in jest. The Italian Mafia referred to themselves as La Cosa Nostra, which means "this thing of ours," or "our thing," so the Italian Mafia literally had no name. They didn't call each other up and say "hey we're having a Mafia meeting tonight, why don't you stop by?" No. They just said, "we have to do our thing" and they knew what each other meant. While you will learn, the Illuminati did at one time call themselves "the Illuminati," they have most likely abandoned this term long ago, and have expanded into various front groups to further their aims, and—like the Italian Mafia—speak in a language that is understood by each other, but doesn't betray its true meaning to outsiders.

Many scholars, reporters, and government officials say that conspiracies "never work" because "it's too difficult to keep a secret" and point to events like Watergate to justify their claims, but it's foolish to believe that every major conspiracy which is attempted is botched, or that word of it would leak out somehow. It's preposterous to assume that *every* group of conspirators are so foolish that they haven't planned plausible deniability for their actions to convolute any investigation to the point of confusion if any suspicion is aroused or if any outsiders were to take a closer look into their activities.

The Manhattan Project (the atomic bomb program) began in 1939 and was kept secret for six years until the world witnessed the mushroom cloud rising up from what was the Japanese city of Hiroshima in 1945. The project cost $2 billion dollars (adjusted for inflation, that's $26 billion in 2014 dollars) and 130,000 people worked on it in several different states,[6] making it the largest project in American history, but it was still completed in secret. Lieutenant Leslie Groves of the Army Corps of Engineers who directed the project would later reveal in his book *Now It Can Be Told: The True Story of the Manhattan Project,* that, "compartmentalization of knowledge, to me, was the very heart of security. My rule was simple and not capable of misinterpretation—each man should know everything he needed to know and do his job and nothing else."[7]

By giving different groups of scientists and engineers separate tasks and fabricating cover stories for what they were actually working on, those in the know were able to pull off their plan without any outsiders seeing the big picture. President Harry Truman, who was the Vice President under FDR, only became aware of the program after President Roosevelt's death in April of 1945, when Truman was then sworn in as his replacement—that's how well kept the secret was! Not even the vice president knew of this enormous and expensive life-altering plan! Four months after Truman was sworn in as president and let in on the secret, the bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, and then three days later, the second one destroyed Nagasaki.

While enormous secrets can be kept by the political elite, they also sometimes leak out. The political elite often become arrogant because of their power and think they can get away with anything. How else could you explain John Edwards running for president in 2008, when he knew he had a newborn illegitimate child from an affair with his campaign's photographer while his wife Elizabeth was dying of cancer? The Illuminati see themselves as the Gods of Mount Olympus, as literally having evolved into gods thanks to their occult knowledge, which often leads to arrogance and carelessness, causing some of their secrets to be revealed.

How did this "Illuminati" start, and how did they operate in the past, and more importantly, what are they doing right now? In short, the "priest class"—or what is considered to be the ancient Illuminati—dates back thousands of years to ancient Egypt and Greece, where Man's unfolding intellect was kept hidden from the general public and reserved for "the elect" or the "sages" in what were called Mystery Schools. These fraternities taught the various sciences and philosophies to the intellectual elite who benefitted tremendously from this knowledge. Many believe that at one time in the ancient past, the Mystery Schools had the best of intentions but were hijacked and taken over by selfish and wicked men who used their superior intellect, not to help mankind, but to take advantage of people, morphing the once noble fraternities into a Gnostic mafia of sorts, keeping the majority of humans in the dark about the true nature of reality.

33rd degree Freemason Manly P. Hall claims, “With the decline of virtue, which has preceded the destruction of every nation of history, the Mysteries became perverted. Sorcery took the place of the divine magic.”[8] There is a belief in esoteric circles that God or Gods, or extra-terrestrials, or even Satan, gave an ancient human (or small group of humans) some kind of secret knowledge, allowing him (or them) the ability to activate incredible powers latent in the mind, enabling them to become the first priests and kings. Many occultists believe this power can be traced back to the Atlanteans, the supposed demigods, who—according to the theory—are believed to have literally inhabited the Lost City of Atlantis.

These ideas, fraternities, and philosophies will be examined throughout this book. We’ll look into dozens of interconnecting esoteric circles from the ancient Mystery Schools of the Eleusians and Dionysians to the Gnostics, the Knights Templar, Jesuits, Freemasons, Skull & Bones, Bilderberg Group, Bohemian Grove, the Federal Reserve, and many lesser-known, but critically important, pieces of the puzzle as well.

What are the facts and what is fiction? How did it all start? What is the evidence for the Illuminati’s existence? What are their goals? Are they in communication with alien beings from another galaxy that secretly work with them and guide them in their evil ways? Are they themselves alien beings disguised as humans? You are about to find out as you dive head first *Inside the Illuminati*.

Early Evidence

When we talk about the Bavarian Illuminati, we're talking about the group that a man named Adam Weishaupt founded in Bavaria, a southern state in Germany, back in 1776. Specifically he founded it on May 1st 1776, which is called May Day or Walpurgis Night, a date celebrating an old meeting of witches and sorcerers. May Day is also a major Communist holiday that celebrates the "workers of the world." Almost 200 years after Adam Weishaupt ceremoniously founded the Illuminati on this day, Anton LaVey ritualistically shaved his head and founded the Church of Satan on May 1st 1966 as his way of celebrating this occult holiday.[9]

The Bavarian Illuminati was basically a reorganization and modernization of the corrupted ancient Mystery Schools. Weishaupt was a lawyer like so many corrupt politicians today, and in 1772 when he was twenty-four-years-old, he became a law professor at Ingolstadt University in Bavaria, Germany. A few years later he became the dean of the law department and began formulating his plan to launch the Illuminati.

He received his inspiration for forming his secret society from both the Rosicrucian manifestos and from the Jesuits (the zealous elite Catholic Society of Jesus founded in 1540). The Rosicrucian manifestos were books that first appeared in 1614 in Germany, and described an "invisible brotherhood" dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and Hermetic and alchemical magic. No such secret society actually existed, but the Rosicrucian manifestos planted the seeds for such a thing in men's minds, which was the author's purpose (although not the tyrannical kind of organization that Adam Weishaupt conceived).

Weishaupt used his position at the university to begin recruiting students and others to join him in his quest to overthrow the ruling monarchs of his day and install a global communist system with him and his inner circle of associates as the new rulers. Originally he called his group the Perfectabilists, meaning they aimed to “perfect” man by facilitating his “evolution,” but the name Perfectabilists was quickly changed to the Illuminati to fit in with the “enlightenment” theme of the era, since Illuminati is Latin for “the enlightened ones.” While he was growing increasingly successful at expanding his network and influence, it was only a matter of time before his secrets began to slowly leak out.

Original Writings Found

It’s indisputable that original copies of Adam Weishaupt’s writings were discovered and published for all to read. This is fully admitted in mainstream history books and encyclopedias, although few people care to take the time and actually look. Today, well over one hundred original documents are kept at the State Museum in Ingolstadt, Germany, where they are on public display.

Founder, Adam Weishaupt, wrote under the pseudonym “Spartacus” and all other members used pseudonyms as well, although many were identified after their letters were found and some defectors came forward. In 1784, eight years after the Illuminati were formed, a defector named Joseph Utzchneider gave a bunch of documents to Duchess Dowager Maria Anna, warning her of the organization and their goals of overthrowing the government and destroying religion. The Duchess, who was the sister-in-law of the Duke, handed them over to her brother-in-law Duke Karl Theodore, the leader of Bavaria.

A seemingly farfetched tale regarding the discovery of more original writings involves a story about how an Illuminati member was struck by lightning and killed, and when his body was examined the coroner discovered some documents that had been stuffed in a hidden pocket sewn into his clothes. Adam Weishaupt fled Bavaria in 1785 and headed to a neighboring province when he saw the writing on the wall that authorities were closing in on him. He and his friend Jakob Lanz were riding on horseback on their way to Regensburg when Lanz was struck by lightning and killed.[10]

While this story is so bizarre, it’s understandable for people to dismiss it as a myth, but multiple historical sources report that this is exactly what happened.[11] But regardless, a treasure trove of documents were also discovered by other means as well.

On October 11th 1786 police searched the home of Xavier von Zwack, located in the city of Landshut (45 miles from Ingolstadt), where they found over two hundred letters including membership lists, symbols, carvings used to fake various wax seals used by princes, nobles, clergymen, and merchants; instructions on counterfeiting, committing suicide, recipes for poison, an abortion tea, invisible ink, and instructions for building an explosive strongbox that would blow up and destroy everything inside if it was opened by someone who didn’t know how to disarm it. One paper listed a method for filling a room full of a deadly gas in case they wanted to kill someone without getting their hands dirty.[12] These documents were soon published by the government in a report titled *Some Original Works of the Order of the Illuminati* [Einige Originalschriften Des Illuminaten Ordens in German].

The following year in 1787 police searched the castle of Baron de Bassus and discovered more papers which were then published as a *Supplement of Further Original Works*.[13] The next year in 1788 Johann Faber published *The Genuine Illuminati* [*Der ächte Illuminati*] which revealed the rituals for the Preparation, Novitiate Degree, Minerval Degree, the Minor and Major Illuminati Degrees.

In 1789 a French journalist named Jean-Pierre-Louis de Luchet published a book titled *Essay on the Sect of the Illuminists* [*Essai sur la Secte des Illuminés*] which denounced the Illuminati and said they controlled Masonic lodges throughout Europe.

In 1794 Illuminati whistleblower Ludwig Adolf Christian von Grolmann published *The Latest Work Of Spartacus and Philo* (Weishaupt’s and Baron von Knigge’s code names) *[Die Neuesten Arbeiten Des Spartacus Und Philo]*, exposing the secrets of the Illuminati Dirigens degree (Scottish Knight degree) which appointed men to run Masonic lodges so they could recruit new members from within Freemasonry.

In 1797 a French Jesuit priest named Abbe Barruel published a series of books on the French Revolution because he believed it was the result of the Illuminati, saying, “The third conspiracy, which I am now about to investigate, is that of the atheistical Illuminati, which at my outfit I denominated the conspiracy of the Sophisters of Impiety and anarchy against every religion natural or revealed, not only against kings, but against every government, against all civil society, even against all property whatsoever.”[14]

Barruel pondered, as others still do today, as to whether Weishaupt was the mastermind behind the conspiracy, or whether he was working with or for someone else. “It is not known, and it would be difficult to discover, whether Weishaupt ever had a master, or whether he is himself the great original of those monstrous doctrines on which he founded his school,” he wrote.[15]

A man named John Robison, a science professor (called natural philosophy back then), living in Scotland published a lengthy book about the Illuminati in 1798 titled *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, which was one of the first books written in English about the organization. Before writing his book, he was actually asked to join them, but after looking into the group he realized he didn’t want to have anything to do with them and then decided to write his book hoping to expose them. In *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, he also included English translations of many of the confiscated Illuminati papers.

Robison wrote that, “A collection of original papers and correspondence was found by searching the house of one Zwack (a member) in 1786. The following year a much larger collection was found at the house of Baron Bassus; and since that time Baron Knigge, the most active member next to Weishaupt, published an account of some of the higher degrees, which had been formed by himself.”[16]

He warned, “An association has been formed for the express purpose of rooting out all the religious establishments and overturning all the existing governments of Europe. I have seen this association exerting itself zealously and systematically, till it has become almost irresistible.” He continued, “I have seen that this association still exists, still works in secret, and that not only several appearances among ourselves show that its emissaries are endeavoring to propagate their detestable doctrines among us, but that the association has Lodges in Britain corresponding with the mother Lodge at Munich ever since 1784.”[17]

Original 5 Members

Adam Weishaupt	(codename: Spartacus)
Andreas Sutor	(Erasmus Rotero-damus)
Bauhof or Baubof	(Agathon)
Franz Anton von Massenhause	(Ajax)
Max Elder von Merz	(Tiberius)

Primary Goals

The original top five goals of the Illuminati were: 1) Abolish the Monarchy and replace all governments. 2) Abolish private property and inheritance. 3) Abolish patriotism along with people's national identity and national pride. 4) Abolish the family, marriage, morality, and then have the government raise and indoctrinate the children. 5) Abolish all religion. These are basically the same goals that would be outlined around seventy years later in the Communist Manifesto (1848) and make up the foundation of communism since Weishaupt no doubt inspired Karl Marx. More on this later.

More modern goals include a universal one world digital currency; a Big Brother Orwellian surveillance state; the elimination of the second Amendment and ending citizens' gun ownership (leaving only police and military to be armed); implementing an all-powerful nanny state socialist government; all leading up to the unveiling of a "messiah" who will claim to be God and offer people eternal life here on earth, saying he has "restored mankind" to our "pre-fallen" state so we can live forever through the use of cybernetic Transhuman technology on the new "Heaven on earth" he has created.[18]

Deposition for the Court

In 1785 three former members, Joseph Utzschneider, George Grunberger, and Johann Cosandey wrote out a joint deposition for the court where they provided information about some of the Illuminati's goals and philosophies that men in the first few degrees were taught. First of all, "The Illuminee who wishes to rise to the highest degree must be free from all religion; for a *religionist* (as they call every man who has any religion) will never be admitted to the highest degrees."[19]

The second principle revealed to the initiates was that the ends justify the means. "The welfare of the Order will be a justification for calumnies [defamatory statements], poisonings, assassinations, perjuries, treasons, rebellions—in short, for all that the prejudices of men lead them to call crimes. One must be more submissive to the Superiors of the Illuminati, than to the sovereigns or magistrates who govern the people; and he that gives the preference to sovereigns or governors of the people is useless to us. Honor, life, and fortune, all are to be sacrificed to the Superiors. The governors of nations are despots when they are not directed by us. They can have no authority over us, who are free men."[20]

What they called the Patet Exitus, or the "doctrine of suicide," was also taught as an honorable way anyone who was caught could escape prosecution and prevent themselves from revealing the Order's secrets.

Thirdly, the deposition revealed, "The Superiors of the Illuminati are to be looked upon as the most perfect and the most enlightened of men; no doubts are to be entertained even of their infallibility."[21]

"It is in these moral and political principles that the Illuminati are educated in the lower degrees; and it is according to the manner in which they imbibe [assimilate] them and show their devotion to the Order, or are able to second its views, that they are earlier or later admitted to the higher degrees."[22]

"In consequence of our acquaintance with this doctrine of the Illuminati, with their conduct, their manners, and their incitements to treason, and being fully convinced of the dangers of the Sect, we the Aulic Counsellor Utzschneider and the Priest Dillis left the Order. The Professor Grünberger, the Priest Cosandey, Renner, and Zaupfer, did the same a week after."

Their testimony continues, "It [the Illuminati] spread through almost every province under the cloak of Freemasonry; because it sows division and discord between parents and their children, between Princes and their subjects, and among the most sincere friends; because on all important occasions it would install partiality on the seats of justice and in the councils, as it always prefers the welfare of the Order to that of the state, and the interests of its adepts to those of the profane."[23]

"Experience had convinced us, that they would soon succeed in perverting all the Bavarian youth. The leading feature in the generality of their adepts were irreligion, depravity of morals, disobedience to their Prince and to their parents, and the neglect of all useful studies. We saw that the fatal consequence of Illuminism would be, to create a general distrust between the prince and his subjects, the father and his children, the minister and his secretaries, and between the different tribunals and councils."[24]

"We abandoned, one after the other, this Sect [the Illuminati], which under different names, as we have been informed by several of our former Brethren, has already spread itself in Italy, and particularly at Venice, in Austria, in Holland, in Saxony, on the Rhine, particularly at Frankfort, and even as far as America. The Illuminati meddle as much as possible in state affairs, and excite troubles wherever their Order can be benefited by them."[25]

“After we had retired from the Order, the Illuminati calumniated us on all sides in the most infamous manner. Their cabal made us fail in every request we presented; succeeding in rendering us hateful and odious to our superiors, they even carried their calumnies [defamatory statements] so far as to pretend that one of us had committed murder.”[26]

Original Illuminati Structure

The Nursery (Entry Level)

Preparatory Literary Essay

Novitiate (Novice)

Minerval (Brethren of Minerva, Academy of Illuminism)

Illuminatus Minor

Symbolic Freemasonry

Apprentice

Fellow Craft

Master

Scots Major Illuminatus

Scots Illuminatus Dirigens (Directory)

The Mysteries (Higher Level)

Lesser

Presbyter, Priest

Prince or Regent

Greater

Magus

Rex or King

The 1st Edict Against the Illuminati

An edict is an act of law issued by a monarchy, (much like an executive order issued by a president today) and on June 22, 1784, Duke Karl Theodore, the Elector of Bavaria [the ruler of the state], issued the first edict against the Illuminati after his sister-in-law Duchess Dowagar Maria Anna was given some documents by an early defector named Joseph Utzschneider, and then passed them onto the Duke.[27]

The edict reads, in part, “Whereas all communities, societies and associations without approval from a public authority and the confirmation of the Monarch are illegal, prohibited by law, suspect and dangerous things in [and] of themselves. His Electoral Highness [the Duke] has decided not to tolerate them in his State, whatever their designation and interior constitutions, ordering categorically…one and all subjects to withdraw from any association or secret assembly of this kind…those societies [have] drawn the attention of the public and awakened its fears…”[28]

The 2nd Edict Against the Illuminati

The following year in 1785, Duke Karl Theodore issued a second edict, which was much more threatening and specifically named the Illuminati and Freemasonry as the perpetrators of a conspiracy against the government. In this edict the Duke also announced that if anyone were to come forward and reveal who was involved or specifically which masonic lodges had been infiltrated and were being used in this conspiracy—that informant could remain anonymous and even keep half the money that was confiscated as a result of their confession. The other half [of the money], the edict said, would be given to the poor.

It reads in part, “We [the government]…have been deeply affected and displeased to learn that the various Lodges of so-called Freemasons and Illuminati, who are still in our States, have taken so little heed of our General Prohibition issued on June 22nd of last year against all fraternal societies clandestine and unapproved, as to not only continue to hold meetings in secret, but to raise funds, and to recruit new members, seeking to further increase the already large numbers of adepts.”[29]

It continues, “We had deemed this society, very much degenerated and of primitive institution, too suspect, both as regards to religious concerns and from a social and political point of view, so that we could no longer tolerate it in our States…we command that all authorities must execute our orders exactly and secretly inform us of any disobedience. We declare that all money and any funds collected illegally [by the lodges] shall be confiscated [and] half will be given to the poor, while the other half will go to the denunciator [informant], even if he is a member of one of those societies, with a promise to keep his name confidential.”[30]

The edict concludes, “We hope that each of our subjects value enough of our favor and his own honor and happiness so that everywhere we can count on due obedience to our orders and be excused from having to take more severe measures."[31]

The 3rd Edict Against the Illuminati

On August 16, 1787, not long after the castle of Baron de Bassus was searched, where more papers were discovered, the third edict against the Illuminati was issued by the Duke of Bavaria saying the penalty would be death for any Illuminati members discovered meeting or recruiting anyone to join them. “Any so charged and found guilty are to be deprived of their lives by the sword; while those thus recruited are to have their goods confiscated and themselves to be condemned to perpetual banishment from the territories of the Duke. Under the same penalties of confiscation and banishment, the members of the order, no matter under what name or circumstances, regular or irregular, they should gather, are forbidden to assemble as lodges.”[32]

“As more time passes it is further realized how harmful and dangerous the Order of the Illuminati will be for the State and religion if allowed to flourish here and beyond. It is impossible to predict the deplorable effects that would result for posterity if we stand back, if not handled very seriously while there is still time to forcefully eradicate a disease which is far more daunting than the plague itself.”[33]

“…for the recruiter he is to be deprived of life by the sword, and for the recruited he will be sentenced to have his property confiscated and banished for life from all States of His Electoral Highness, with a promise of never being allowed to return. Under the same penalties of forfeiture and expulsion, the prohibited Lodges of the Illuminati, under whatever name they may hide and carefully present themselves, in all places, must be subject to rigorous surveillance. Those in lodge attire will be held and treated as if they had attended meetings in secret, in suspect places such as hotels or particular houses, and we will not allow the futile excuse usually given—an honest society of good friends—especially when those present have already been suspected of impiety and Illuminism.”[34]

The 4th Edict Against the Illuminati

Most mainstream sources (including the often inaccurate and completely unreliable Wikipedia) claim that shortly after the third edict was issued in 1787, the Illuminati were completely irradiated and weren't much of a concern after that. The problem is—the Duke of Bavaria actually issued a *fourth* edict a few years later in 1790 saying that the Illuminati was not only still active but were continuing to recruit new members!

On November 15, 1790, the following announcement against the Illuminati was issued by the Duke, saying, "The Elector has learned, partly by the spontaneous confession of some members, party by sound intelligence, that despite the Edicts of July 14, 1784 and August 16th 1785 (and in the same month in 1787), the Illuminati still hold, albeit in smaller numbers, secret meetings through the Electorate, but especially in Munich and the surrounding area; they continue to attract young men to the cause and have maintained a correspondence with [secret] societies and with members in other countries."[35]

It goes on, "They continue to attack the State and especially religion, either verbally or through pamphlets…Every speech, every printed book or manuscript against religion and the state must be reported to the authorities or the Elector [Duke] himself, as well as any secret meetings. Those who have remained silent on these issues, having indeed been proven to have possessed information, will be severely punished. The denunciator, even if he was an accessory to the crime, will receive a cash reward along with the other, and his identity will be kept confidential."[36]

The fourth edict clearly warns, "Any member who has assisted in a secret meeting, has recruited new members or corresponded with [secret] societies or brothers in other countries, will be mercilessly punished by death. Any civil servant or [those in the] military, any holder of a beneficial office, a parish priest, etc., must swear that he has not and will never form a part of the sect or they'll be convicted of perjury and shall be punished accordingly."[37]

Taking Over the Government

One of the original Illuminati defectors named Joseph von Utzschneider, who gave a deposition to the court about the Illuminati plans, warned that they planned to "introduce a worldwide moral regime which would be under their control in every country. This council would decide on all matters concerning pardons, appointments and promotions, as well as rejections…This would give it the unlimited right to pronounce final judgment over the honesty and usefulness of an individual."[38]

The confiscated correspondence between members confirms this allegation. One of the letters reads, "The Order must possess the power of life and death in consequence of our oath; and with propriety, for the same reason, and by the same right, that any government in the world possesses it—for the Order comes in their place, making them unnecessary. When things cannot be otherwise, and ruin would ensue if the association did not employ this mean, the Order must, as well as public rulers, employ it for the good of mankind; therefore for its own preservation."[39]

Many letters clearly revealed their intent to deceive people in order to "insure their happiness."[40] Weishaupt's megalomaniacal goals of world domination become clear with such statements as, "the Order will, for its own sake, and therefore certainly, place every man in that situation in which he can be most effective. The pupils are convinced that the Order *will* rule the world. Every member therefore becomes a ruler."[41]

"The great strength of our Order lies in its concealment; let it never appear in any place in its own name, but always covered by another name, and another occupation."[42] This has effectively happened with private organizations like the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderberg Group, and the Federal Reserve—basically taking over the key power centers in society. It must be pointed out that the Founding Fathers of America wrote down their grievances with the Monarch in the Declaration of Independence and 56 men signed their names to it and sent it off to the king of England. They didn’t hide their intentions or deceive people hoping to further their aims. They were open and honest about their beliefs, tactics, and goals—unlike Weishaupt and the Illuminati—who used deception and fraud as a standard practice.

Similarly, when theologian Martin Luther opposed the tyrannical control of the Catholic Church over 250 years before Weishaupt, he wrote down his grievances and nailed them on the front door of his local church in 1517. He didn’t lie or deceive anyone about his hopes of breaking the Catholic Church’s stranglehold on society, but fellow German, Adam Weishaupt, was power-hungry himself, and instead of wanting to free society from the tyranny of the Jesuits and the Catholic Church, he wanted to be the tyrant himself.

Inducting New Members

Various venues were used for recruiting new members. Once someone expressed interest to a current member about his desire to overthrow the monarch, that person was "carefully observed in silence," and if, after consideration by the council, "the Novice" as they were called, were thought to be a possible asset, he would be appointed a mentor and invited to a conference.[43]

One correspondence between members reads, "I shall therefore press the cultivation of science, especially such sciences as may have an influence on our reception in the world; and may serve to remove obstacles out of the way…Only those who are assuredly proper subjects shall be picked out from among the inferior classes for the higher mysteries…And in particular, every person shall be made a spy on another and on all around him."[44]

Once given initial approval by the council, the Novice would be shown "certain portions" of the goals and rules of the Order and was instructed to give a weekly account in writing of his progress in carrying out his directives. At this point he was not allowed to take physical possession of any material and had to read it in the Mentor's house just to make sure they wouldn't turn it over to authorities, giving them concrete evidence of the conspiracy.[45]

High level member Baron Von Knigge would later admit, "As a rule, under the veil of secrecy, dangerous plans and harmful teachings can be accepted just as well as noble intentions and profound knowledge; because not all members themselves are informed of such depraved intentions, which sometimes tend to lie hidden beneath the beautiful facade…because for the most part, unknown superiors lie in ambush and it is unworthy of an intelligence man to work according to a plan, which he does not fully see."[46]

Another original correspondence brags, “Nothing can escape our sight; by these means we shall readily discover who are contented, and receive with relish the peculiar state-doctrines and religious opinions that are laid before them; and, at last, the trustworthy alone will be admitted to a participation of the whole maxims and political constitution of the Order… In a council composed of such members we shall labor at the creation of means to drive by degrees the enemies of reason and of humanity out of the world, and to establish a peculiar morality and religion fitted for the great society of mankind.”[47]

In perhaps the most sinister initiation to the higher levels, a prospect was told they had to show their loyalty to the Illuminati by killing someone who betrayed the Order. The candidate was taken before a man bound and gagged who was said to have betrayed their oaths and then handed a knife and blindfolded before being positioned in front of the supposed traitor who they were then ordered to stab. Once the prospect stabbed the “person” in front of them, the blindfold was removed to reveal that the “traitor” had been swapped with a sheep, and the entire charade was a test of their loyalty.[48]

If the candidate refused to carry out the “murder” of the supposed “traitor,” then they were told they passed the test anyway but were then never allowed to proceed to a higher level and never trusted with any deeper secrets because they had shown they wouldn’t kill for the Order.

Contingency Plans if Discovered

A lot of people claim that because some Illuminati members were discovered and many of their writings published, that they simply gave up and ceased to exist from that point on, but common sense, the Duke of Bavaria's 4th Edict, and the Illuminati's own writings suggests otherwise. Weishaupt wrote, "By this plan we shall direct all mankind. In this manner, and by the simplest means, we shall set all in motion and in flames. The occupations must be so allotted and contrived, that we may, in secret, influence all political transactions…I have considered everything, and so prepared it, that if the Order should this day go to ruin, I shall in a year re-establish it more brilliant than ever."[49]

"There must not be a single purpose that ever comes in sight that is ambiguous, and that may betray our aims against religion and the State. One must speak sometimes one way and sometimes another, but so as never to contradict ourselves, and so that, with respect to our true way of thinking, we may be impenetrable."[50]

"This can be done in no other way but by secret associations, which will by degrees, and in silence, possess themselves of the government of the States, and make use of those means for this purpose."[51]

Shortly after the Illuminati were discovered, and believed by many to have been destroyed, Joseph Willard, President of Harvard University, warned, "There is sufficient evidence that a number of societies of the Illuminati have been established in this land of Gospel light and civil liberty, which were first organized from the grand society, in France. They are doubtless secretly striving to undermine all our ancient institutions, civil and sacred. These societies are closely leagued with those of the same Order in Europe; they have all the same object in view. The enemies of all order are seeking our ruin. Should infidelity generally prevail, our independence would fall of course. Our republican government would be annihilated."[52]

Willard was just one of many Americans, including George Washington, who believed the Illuminati survived the intended purge and continued to work under the cover of Freemasonry and other organizations.

The Eradication of Christianity

Unlike theologian Martin Luther who famously nailed his ninety-five grievances on the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg, Germany in 1517, thus starting the Protestant Reformation with the hopes of ending the Catholic Church's hold on power and their corrupt un-Christian practices and perversion of Jesus' message—Adam Weishaupt didn't appreciate Christianity at all, and instead wanted it completely destroyed. Despite his strong differences with the Church, Martin Luther still respected Jesus and his teachings and simply wanted to reform the Church, but Weishaupt wanted the Church *and* Christianity entirely eradicated.

John Robison wrote, "It surely needs little argument now to prove that the Order of Illuminati had for its immediate object the abolishing of Christianity (at least this was the intention of the Founder) with the sole view of overturning the civil government, by introducing universal dissoluteness and profligacy [reckless] manners, and then getting the assistance of the corrupted subjects to oversee the throne. The whole conduct in the preparation and instruction of the Presbyter and Regens [degrees] is directed to this point."[53]

Another letter written by Baron von Knigge said, "I have been at unwearied pains to remove the fears of some who imagine that our Superiors want to abolish Christianity; but by and by their prejudices will wear off, and they will be more at their ease." He goes on to write that he made sure not to let them know that "our General [Weishaupt] holds all Religion to be a lie, and uses even Deism, only to lead men by the nose."[54]

Weishaupt explains, "But I assure you this is no small affair; a new religion, and a new state-government, which so happily explain one and all of these symbols, and combines them in one degree, you may think that this is my chief work; but I have three other degrees, all different, for my class of higher mysteries; in comparison with which this is but child's play."[55]

Weishaupt even boasts, "Who would imagine that I was to be the founder of a new religion,"[56] and continues, "We must, first gradually explain away all our preparatory pious frauds. And when persons of discernment find fault, we must desire them to consider the end of all our labor…Second, we must unfold, from history and other writings, the origin and fabrication of all religious lies; and then, third; we give a critical history of the Order."[57]

The plan to destroy Christianity can clearly be seen today with the liberal media and the gay mafia pushing homosexuality in everyone's face and then accusing Christians of "hate speech" and "bigotry" if they simply disagree with gay marriage or homosexual couples adopting children. There is clearly a double standard in the mainstream media in terms of what is considered "hate speech" because when popular musicians or liberal political commentators spew hateful anti-Christian rhetoric on a continuous basis, such vicious attacks are touted as "justifiable payback" for the Inquisition hundreds of years ago. Imagine if major media figures were to make the same vicious statements about Jews as they do Christians. Their careers would be over before the end of the day and they would be forever branded an "anti-Semite" and never work again.

A popular reverend named Jedediah Morse preached a series of sermons between 1798 and 1799 in New England where he warned about the Illuminati's assault on Christianity in Boston and the surrounding area, saying, "Practically all of the civil and ecclesiastical establishments of Europe have already been shaken to their foundations by this terrible organization; the French Revolution itself is doubtless to be traced to its machinations; the successes of the French armies are to be explained on the same ground. The Jacobins are nothing more nor less than the open manifestation of the hidden system of the Illuminati. The Order has its branches established and its emissaries at work in America. The affiliated Jacobin Societies in America have doubtless had as the object of their establishment the propagation of the principles of the illuminated mother club in France...I hold it a duty, my brethren, which I owe to God, to the cause of religion, to my country and to you, at this time, to declare to you, thus honestly and faithfully, these truths. My only aim is to awaken you and myself a due attention, at this alarming period, to our dearest interests. As a faithful watchman I would give you warning of your present danger."[58]

Regardless of your personal religious beliefs, you must admit that Christians have been (and continue to be) the primary opposition to the Illuminati and the New World Order, (not to mention the coming Mark of the Beast), and are the final obstacle standing between the Illuminati and their remaining goals. Christians have long warned about the "satanic conspiracy" being perpetuated by the Illuminati and have been on the front lines of the culture war being waged by Hollywood, which aims to destroy what little morality remains in society.

Using Feminism to Breakdown Families

Since one of the Illuminati's original goals was to break up the traditional family unit so children would be raised and indoctrinated by the government, they planned on manipulating women through what would later be known as feminism, encouraging them to rebel against their duties of domestic management and motherhood.

"There is no way of influencing men so powerfully as by means of the women," the original writings read. "These should therefore be our chief study; we should insinuate ourselves into their good opinion, give them hints of emancipation from the tyranny of public opinion, and of standing up for themselves; it will be an immense relief to their enslaved minds to be freed from any one bond of restraint, and it will fire them the more, and cause them to work for us with zeal, without knowing that they do so; for they will only be indulging their own desire of personal admiration."[59]

What this means is they planned on transforming women into self-centered, narcissistic, pleasure seeking sluts, and promote this behavior under the banner of "freedom," so instead of raising their children and keeping their families in balance, they would have the government raise their kids while turning against their husbands and disrupt the family unit in hopes of redirecting people's loyalty and love to the State instead of each other.

In more modern times this same method has been applied to promote the feminist movement in the 1970s through the creation of Ms. Magazine and the push to demonize stay-at-home moms. Kim Kardashian and other skilless skanks are promoted as role models even though they have no real value, and are worthless and talentless false idols advertised by the mainstream media as modern day royalty. The hypocrisy of feminism is astounding. For example, feminists who cry about sexism and the “culturally programed gender roles” only want to give up the roles society expects of *them*, while still demanding men to continue following theirs.

Women who whine about “equal rights” still expect men to always pay for dates and buy them expensive gifts. Women who don’t feel it’s their duty to know how to cook still feel men should fix things around the house and diagnose their car problems. And of course, feminist women who proclaim they want to end the gender roles still expect their man to cough up thousands of dollars on a diamond engagement ring when the courtship is on the road to marriage. Feminism is a one-way hypocritical double standard street that not only targets men, but also other women who resist giving in to this cultural Marxism.

Mothers who choose to be stay-at-home moms and raise their own children or who enjoy cooking for their family are labeled “victims” of a “male-dominated ideology.” Feminism pressures women to turn their children over to daycare centers and trade in working around the home for being stuck in a cubicle sitting in front of a computer all day. Feminism has led to an entire generation being raised in single parent homes with many mothers turning to government assistance, costing the taxpayers countless dollars—not to mention tens of millions of children growing up without the guidance and supervision of two parents.

Adam Weishaupt himself was an unfaithful husband who actually impregnated his wife’s sister, which he revealed in one of his correspondences. In hopes of killing the baby to hide his adulterous behavior he gave his sister-in-law an “abortion tea,” and it appears from his letter about the issue that he also repeatedly punched his mistress in the stomach hoping to abort the child.

“I am now in the most embarrassing situation; it robs me of all rest, and makes me unfit for everything. I am in danger of losing at once my honor and my reputation, by which I have long had such influence. What think you—my sister-in-law is with child,” he wrote.

He continues, “We have tried every method in our power to destroy the child; and I hope she is determined on everything—even d — [believed to mean *death*]. But alas! Euriphon is, I fear, too timid. Alas! poor woman, thou art now under the *disciplina arcani* [the Discipline of the Secret] and I see no other expedient [convenient yet immoral way].”[60]

Using Schools to Indoctrinate the Youth

Tyrants throughout history have known that if they are to effectively maintain their power they must indoctrinate the youth with their brand of propaganda to ensure as the children come of age, they will blindly support the leader and his ideologies. Adolf Hitler used the Nazi Youth program to brainwash children beginning at a young age; the Taliban in Afghanistan banned girls from going to school at all to keep them ignorant; and North Korea's strict control of their education system are just a few examples of this in our modern era.

"We must win the common people in every corner," the original Illuminati writings read. "This will be obtained chiefly by means of the schools, and by open, hearty behavior, show, condescension, popularity, and toleration of their prejudices, which we shall at leisure root out and dispel."[61]

The indoctrination of students by the public school system is clear today with programs like Common Core and the promotion of the Big Government nanny state and the gay lifestyle while demonizing the second Amendment right to bear arms and belief in God. Being a Christian in public schools is not only frowned upon, but out right ridiculed, and favorably mentioning the word "God" or "Jesus" has basically been banned.[62]

Charlotte Iserbyt who was the head of policy at the Department of Education during the Reagan administration discovered how tax-exempt foundations were shaping the American education system to eliminate critical thinking and innovation by turning students into zombies who only regurgitate what they're told. She published her findings in her book *The Deliberate Dumbing Down of America*. Iserbyt and others assert that Skull & Bones runs the Department of Education, which dictates what is taught to the kids. Skull & Bones also controls the American Historical Association which dictates the “official” version of American history by carefully crafting an often one-sided and biased view of what really happened.

While the vast majority of students who attend public schools are primarily concerned with the latest teen idol, their favorite professional sports teams, or simply getting drunk and high, children of the elite are taught team building, networking skills, and other tools to prepare them to rapidly advance up the social hierarchy once they enter the “real world.”

Philips Exeter Academy is just one example of a private boarding school which was set up for the children of the elite to prepare them for life in the upper class. The Illuminati has largely funded this school and used it to educate their children and prepare them for their duties later in life. In 1930 Edward Harkness (a member of Skull & Bones’ sister organization Wolf’s Head) donated $5.8 million dollars to the school under the condition that their method of teaching students would change to what he called the Aristotelian method of antiquity.[63] Harkness was the second largest shareholder in Rockefeller’s Standard Oil in the early 1900s and was in John D. Rockefeller’s inner circle.

The Rockefeller family has been one of the most powerful Illuminati families for generations and the “Aristotelean method of antiquity” that Edward Harkness paid to implement at Philips Exeter Academy was based on the ideology of the Greek philosopher Aristotle (a student of Plato) who believed that most people were too stupid to govern themselves, and that society should be structured in a way that “philosopher kings” should rule and decide what was best for the people.

Controlling the Media

Weishaupt knew the power of information, and back in his time there was obviously no television, radios or Internet, but there were books, libraries, and reading clubs, and he knew how important it was to control them if he wanted to manage what information reached the minds of the public. In one correspondence he wrote, “By establishing reading societies, and subscription libraries, and taking these under our direction, and supplying them through our labors, we may turn the public mind which way we will.”[64] [*Which way we will*, meaning the direction they desired.]

He goes on to write, “In like manner we must try to obtain an influence in the military academies (this may be of mighty consequence); the printing-houses, booksellers shops, chapters, and in short in all offices which have any effect, either in forming, or in managing, or even in directing the mind of man.”[65]

Another letter written by a different member identified as Cato [real name Xaver von Zwack] points out, “We get all the literary journals. We take care, by well-timed pieces [articles], to make the citizens and the Princes a little more noticed for certain little slips.”[66] What this means is they planned to use the newspapers to attack their enemies. “A little more noticed for certain little slips” means to highlight and reinforce anything officials have said or done that can be used against them.

Author Terry Melanson explains in his excellent book, *Pefectibilists*, that, “Without having to ascend a series of initiations and meaningless rituals—such as those of Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism—like-minded individuals could gather in reading societies, form an intellectual social circle, and discuss the literature of the Enlightenment and the politics of the day. Those who directed these societies had control of the material being read and discussed. It became a perfect vehicle to instill radical or subversive views."[67]

Today, much of the American mainstream media and other outlets in countries around the world are under the control of the government. In some countries the State-controlled television is clearly evident, but in places like America such control is done more covertly, leading many to believe that it is a "free and independent" press. In 1975 a congressional investigation discovered the CIA had virtually every editor from the major news outlets in their pocket.[68] The Church Hearings, as they were called, uncovered the government was spending a billion dollars a year (in 2014 dollars) to secretly pay editors and reporters to work as gatekeepers and propagandists for the establishment.[69] The program was dubbed Operation Mockingbird.

Of course, after it was exposed, the CIA claimed to have ended their media manipulation, which is a laughable lie. Even the former President of CBS, Sig Mickeson, admitted that CIA continued to maintain relationships with top media figures, "…but because of all the revelations of the period of the 1970s, it seems to me a reporter has to be a lot more circumspect when doing it now or he runs the risk of at least being looked at with considerable disfavor by the public. I think you've got to be much more careful about it."[70] In more recent times, the Operation Mockingbird program has been adapted to social media as well.

President Obama appointed a Harvard Law professor named Cass Sunstein to a cabinet level position in order to set up countless fake social media accounts and "troll" the comments section of news articles, YouTube videos, and Facebook pages in attempts to discredit news stories the White House thought were damaging to the establishment.[71] One of Edward Snowden's leaks revealed that the NSA took things even further by having paid trolls harass and defame people online who the establishment thought were causing too much trouble for the government's well-controlled narrative in attempts to erode their credibility and fan base.[72]

The NSA also developed technology to spoof e-mails, SMS messages, inflate or deflate the view count on YouTube videos, adjust the ranking of websites, manipulate the outcome of online polls, or simply shut down someone's social media presence all together for phony "terms of service" violations.[73]

For decades both the Pentagon and the CIA have had entire divisions dedicated to working with Hollywood in order to literally help produce major television shows and movies. When studios want access to expensive military equipment like aircraft and tanks or actual Army bases, they approach these government television and film liaisons and if the storyline is seen as portraying a current war or a particular military branch or government agency in a favorable light, then the projects are approved and producers are given access to consultants, equipment, uniforms, military bases, and even given active duty servicemen and women to work as extras.

As *Fortune* magazine once pointed out in article titled Hollywood's Military Complex, "Even in an age of special effects, it's exponentially cheaper to film on actual military ships with real military advisers…The fulcrum of Hollywood's unlikely partnership is Phil Strub, a former film school student and Navy videographer, now the entertainment liaison at the Department of Defense."[74] Strub is just one of several such men who work full-time with the television and film studios on behalf of the government.

In the 1990s the CIA assigned Chase Brandon to be their liaison to Hollywood in order to establish a mutually beneficial relationship between the entertainment industry and the CIA.[75] These government entertainment liaisons maintain script approval and have been known to make dramatic changes to screenplays before they are approved in order to achieve the government's propaganda goals. *The Recruit* (2003), *The Sum of All Fears* (2002), *Argo* (2012), *Lone Survivor* (2013), and many, many other popular films and television shows have all been produced with the consent, oversight, and input of the CIA or the Pentagon.[76]

Infiltration of Freemasonry

Illuminati frontman Adam Weishaupt loved the idea of using existing secret societies to help grow his organization, saying, “Nothing can bring this about but hidden societies. Hidden schools of wisdom are the means which will one day free men from their bonds. These have in all ages been the archives of nature, and of the rights of men; and by them shall human nature be raised from her fallen state.”[77]

One of the primary vehicles used to conceal and further their agenda was (and still is) Freemasonry. Already an established occult organization in his time, Weishaupt had goals of using the fraternity for his own means, and in July 1782 he infiltrated Freemasonry and introduced what he called Illuminated Freemasonry.[78] Using the existing structure of Freemasonry he created factions which were dedicated to his cause and with their ruthlessness and obsession, his supporters quickly took control of the highest levels within lodges across Europe.

In his own words Weishaupt explains the importance of using this pre-existing fraternity as the ideal cover, saying, “None is fitter than the three lower degrees of Freemasonry; the public is accustomed to it, expect little from it, and therefore takes little notice of it.”[79] “I declare and I challenge all mankind to contradict my declaration, that no man can give any account of the order of Freemasonry, of its origin, of its history, of its object, nor any explanation of its mysteries and symbols, which does not leave the mind in total uncertainty on all these points. Every man is entitled therefore, to give any explanation of the symbols and a system of the doctrine that he can render palatable.”[80]

Knowing the power of claiming to have possession of a great secret, he knew how men could be manipulated into doing his bidding, hoping to have the great secret someday revealed to them. “Of all the means I know to lead men, the most effectual is a concealed mystery. The hankering of the mind is irresistible; and if once a man has taken it into his head that there is a mystery in a thing, it is impossible to get it out, either by argument or experience. And then, we can so change notions by merely changing a word."[81]

A certificate from an Illuminati infiltrated Freemason lodge in Munich contains a pyramid with the sun over the capstone and the seal on the certificate shows the Owl of Minerva, a symbol of wisdom to the Illuminati, and the mascot of the Bohemian Grove.[82]

One of the most popular books on the definitions of Freemasonry's symbols also confirms that Weishaupt successfully infiltrated the fraternity and introduced his plot to the inner circle. *The Lexicon of Freemasonry* was first published in 1845 by Albert G. Mackey, a 33rd degree Freemason, who was one of the most prominent scholars on the subject of Freemasonry in his day. The book contains an alphabetized list of most Masonic symbols accompanied by a detailed explanation of their esoteric meaning.

In the entry on the Illuminati, Mackey admits, "Weishaupt was a radical in politics, and an infidel in religion; and he organized this association, not more for purposes of aggrandizing himself, than overturning Christianity and the institutions of society. With the view of carrying his objects more completely into effect, he united himself with a lodge of Freemasons in Munich, and attempted to graft his system of Illuminism upon the stock of Freemasonry…Many Freemasons, misled by the construction of his first degrees, were enticed into the order."[83]

Popular 20th century occult writer Alice Bailey, who claimed her books were dictated to her by a supernatural entity, wrote that, "There is no dissociation between the One Universal Church, the sacred inner Lodge of all true Masons, and the innermost circles of the esoteric societies…It must not be forgotten that only those souls who are on the Probationary Path or the Path of Discipleship will form the nucleus of the coming new world religion."[84]

The role of Freemasonry in the Illuminati will be expanded on later in this book, along with a history of this fascinating fraternity and their transformation from a stonemason trade union to the spiritual secret society it is today.

Connections to Yale’s Skull & Bones

Skull & Bones, the secret society at Yale University, is often said to be simply a fraternity, but it’s far from it. It is actually not only a secret society, but its what’s called a senior society, meaning students aren’t full-fledged members until their senior year. It was the first senior society at the university and the first secret society as well. Students don’t just pledge to join hoping to get chosen like they do at fraternities—instead they are recruited if they are seen as possible valuable servants.

Skull & Bones members are responsible for creating the CIA, the Federal Reserve, the Department of Education, the American Historical Society, and various media monopolies. Skull & Bones doesn’t just have identical symbols, ideologies and goals in common with the Illuminati, there are some other very specific pieces of evidence that show a direct link between the two groups.

William Huntington Russell, one of the two founders of Skull & Bones, was studying abroad in Germany just before he returned to America and founded the organization in 1832 using the same symbols, riddles, initiation practices, and having essentially the same goals as the Bavarian Illuminati.

Of course the very emblem of Skull & Bones or the “Brotherhood of Death,” as they are often called, is a sinister skull and cross bones, identical to the Death’s Dead (totenkopf) pin that Nazis operating the death camps wore during World War II. The skull and cross bones (Jolly Rodger) emblem was also used by the Knights Templar, and was the symbol of pirates due to its intimidating look and was meant to convey that they hold the power over life and death. Many Freemasons have a human skull (real or a replica) on their desk in their office or in the “chamber of reflection” in the Lodge.

In 1876 a group of Yale students broke into the Skull & Bones headquarters to investigate this shady organization and then published a detailed newsletter titled *The Fall of Skull and Bones* about what they discovered inside. The burglars called themselves “File & Claw,” partly to mock Skull & Bones, but also because they used a file and crow bar to remove several security bars that covered the boarded up windows in the group’s headquarters, a building that looks like, and is called, “the Tomb.” One of the more interesting things they found once inside was a framed card on the wall that read, “From the German Chapter, Presented by Patriarch D.C. Gilman of D. 50.”

I’ll point out again that founder William Huntington Russell was in Germany, the hotbed of Illuminati revolutionaries, and the File & Claw intruders reported an open burial vault inside that contained four human skulls and a plaque written in German reading, “Wer war der Thor, wer Weiser, Bettler oder Kaiser? Ob Arm, ob Reich, im Tode gleich,” which in English says, “Who was the fool, who was the wise man, beggar or king? Whether poor or rich, all is the same in death.” This is extremely interesting when you learn this same cryptic riddle is virtually identical to the one given at the initiation ritual of the Bavarian Illuminati.

In his 1798 book *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, one of the first books to contain English translation of the confiscated Illuminati writings, John Robison describes the initiation ceremony into the “Regent Degree” of Illuminism, in which the initiate would be placed in front of a skeleton that had a crown and a sword at its feet, and the men were asked whether it was the skeleton of a king, nobleman, or a beggar. No matter their answer, the lodge president would explain, “The character of being a man is the only one that is of importance.”[85]

This means they don’t believe in an afterlife or a divine judgment by God and is used to instill a Social Darwinistic might is right world view. More on this philosophy and the history of Skull & Bones later.

What Ever Happened to Adam Weishaupt?

Adam Weishaupt's fate is often forgotten in the wake of the Illuminati since the man himself was overshadowed by the monstrous conspiracy he gave birth to. In 1785 he was fired from his job at Ingolstadt University where he was the head of the law department.[86] At this time authorities didn't know he was involved with the Illuminati (let alone the leader and founder) but soon the Bavarian government began to learn about the Illuminati and tighten the noose in their quest to eliminate them, so Weishaupt later fled Bavaria dressed as a craftsman to avoid detection since authorities were now on the lookout for him. He was given exile in Gotha (a city in the German state of Thuringia, located just north of Bavaria) which was under control of Illuminati sympathizer Duke Ernest II. There he worked as a legal advisor for the Duke's court until he died in 1830 at the age of 82.

After Weishaupt fled Bavaria to avoid capture, a book printer named J.J.C. Bode would take the lead as the head of the Illuminati, and used his printing shop to continue to spread Enlightenment philosophies throughout Europe. Bode traveled from Germany to France and imported the Illuminati into French masonic lodges which later became instrumental in the French Revolution. After J.J.C. Bode, the leader was Karl Leonard Reinhold, a Freemason who believed Moses incorporated secrets from the Egyptian priesthood into the fraternity.

After Weishaupt's first wife died, he married her sister (the one who he impregnated while his wife was still alive and tried to kill the baby). He and his new wife had their first son Wilhelm the following year in 1784, who died at the age of eighteen in 1802.

Adam himself died when he was eighty-two and was survived by his second wife, Anna Maria, and six children, two daughters (Nanette and

Charlotte), and his four sons Ernst, Karl, Eduard, and Alfred, who all went on to serve as officers in the military.

French Revolution Connections

There are still whispers that the French Revolution was the work of the Illuminati, specifically the work of “Illuminated Masonic lodges” that were infected with Adam Weishaupt’s revolutionary goals. While many historians argue that the French Revolution was the result of a random and organic uprising of the French people against the oppressive Monarchy, others saw the strings being pulled from behind the scenes by the Illuminati.

While head of the Illuminati, J.J.C. Bode took two trips to Paris not long before the French Revolution, where he introduced the Illuminati to French Freemason lodges under the new name of the Philadelphes. Revolutionary and radical Enlightenment ideologies grew under the cover of various French Masonic lodges, reading societies, and Jacobin clubs, all of which were influential in organizing the French Revolution.

Bode wrote in his journal on June 30, 1787 that he met with French Freemason Charles-Pierre-Paul, marquis de Langes Savalette who would soon be involved with the revolution, and on July 3rd he made an entry about meeting with French Revolution National Assembly member Francois-Antoine Lemoyne Daubermesnil to specifically discuss the Illuminati![87]

Historian Charles Porset of the National Scientific Research Center in France confirmed that Bode’s journal was authentic, saying, “the Journal has now been published by a German scholar, Hermann Schuttler, and it confirms in all respects the idea put forward by Rossberg of collusion between the Illuminati and the Philadelphes. Moreover, a ‘secret lodge is then created’—the Lodge of the Philadelphes…The unedited correspondences found in the Kloss archives housed in the Library of Grand Orient of the Netherlands, between Bode, von Busch and the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt, which I’ve published, prove it. ‘We agreed,’ wrote Bode, ‘that for France, we would adopt the name Philadelphes instead of Illuminati.’”[88]

Another clear piece of evidence linking masonic lodges to the French Revolution is a letter from Duke Philip of Orleans that was sent out to all French Masonic lodges which reads, “all the Lodges are summoned to confederate together, to unite their efforts to maintain the revolution; to gain over it, in all parts, friends, partisans, and protectors; to propagate the flame, to vivify the spirit, to excite zeal and ardor for it, in every state, and by every means in their power.”[89]

In 1791 a book titled *The Veil Withdrawn* was published which was one of the first books to connect Freemasonry to the French Revolution. In 1792 a booklet titled *The Tomb of Jacues Molay* was released by Cadet de Gassicourt that linked the revolution to the Knights Templar. A few years later in 1803 a German man named Johann Starck published *Triumph of Philosophy* where he too claimed the Illuminati used Masonic lodges as a cover for organizing the French Revolution.

The Thirteen Bloodlines Theory

People sometimes refer to the “Illuminati bloodlines” or the “top thirteen bloodlines of the Illuminati” as the ruling elite within the pyramid of power that controls our world. A dozen or two names are thrown around and said to be Illuminati families who interbreed with each other to retain their wealth and power among the small group of ruling elite. The most common alleged thirteen bloodlines are: Astor, Bundy, Collins, DuPont, Freeman, Kennedy, Li, Onassis, Rockefeller, Rothschild, Russell, Van Duyn, and the Merovingian bloodline.

One of the more popular promoters of this theory is Fritz Springmeier, who in 1999 published *Bloodlines of the Illuminati,* where he wrote, “The goal of this book is to lay out the historical facts about these elite bloodlines…once one understands these bloodlines, wars between kings no longer appear as wars between elite factions, but often can be recognized as contrived wars created to control the masses of both sides by their greedy Machiavellian masters.”[90]

Springmeier continues, “The Illuminati themselves decided to elevate 13 bloodlines. The number 13 is extremely important magically, and these 13 occult tribes mock the 13 tribes of Israel (remember the 13th tribe, the Tribe of Joseph was split into Ephraim & Manasseh). This does not mean that only 13 Illuminati bloodlines are powerful. There are other families that have risen to prominence. Further, worldwide there are other families of great oligarchical power who have allied themselves to the Illuminati in the political and economic realms without having to intermarry into the Illuminati.”[91]

While Fritz’s book appears on the surface to be an impressive analysis of the supposed thirteen bloodlines, it is clear that he bought into several known hoaxes and reprinted them as fact, such as the widely debunked claims of John Todd, a man who in the 1970s claimed to be an Illuminati “defector” belonging to one of the “Illuminati bloodlines.”[92] Springmeier also claims that the Illuminati have been operating a space station on Mars, which he says they began colonizing in the late 1990s.[93]

A much more credible researcher, Antony Sutton, who was given a Skull & Bones membership list in the early 1980s by the daughter of a member, has a much more accurate and rational approach. In his excellent analysis, *America’s Secret Establishment*, Sutton has stated that twenty to thirty families have dominated the Skull & Bones society since its creation in 1832 and his book provides a scholarly overview of their activities.

The thirteen bloodlines theory is essentially a more modern version of the ancient “divine right of kings” theory, which was perpetuated for thousands of years, claiming that God ordained families of monarchs and kings to rule. In many cases, as with Egyptian Pharaohs, the Caesars of Rome, and the Chinese Dynasties, kings believed (or at least claimed to believe) that they themselves *were* Gods or literal descendants of the Gods, which in turn, they thought, gave them the divine right to rule. This is not just an ancient idea. The Nazi’s actually believed that white people were the descendants from the (supposed) God-like inhabitants of the Lost City of Atlantis.

Adolf Hitler and his inner circle of Nazi officers, including Heinrich Himmler, Rudolph Hess, and Joseph Georbels, literally believed that white people (the Aryan race, as they liked to call them) were descendants of Gods that once inhabited the Earth, who supposedly lived in the City of Atlantis. The Nazis thought the myth of the “Lost City” was literal history and when the city allegedly sunk into the sea, according to their beliefs, several of the demigods fled to the Himalayas of Tibet where they were said to have started the Nordic and Aryan races.

According to Nazi philosophy, the Jews, claiming to be “God’s chosen people,” were preventing the Aryans from their “divine right” to rule the earth, and race-mixing was weakening the magical power of the Aryan race. Hitler was largely inspired by Helena Blavatsky’s 1888 book, *The Secret*

Doctrine, which claims that Satan helped free Man in the Garden of Eden, thus allowing humans to “evolve” into gods ourselves. “Satan will now be shown, in the teaching of the Secret Doctrine, allegorized as Good, and Sacrifice, a God of Wisdom,” the book reads.[94] “Blessed and sanctified is the name of the Angel of Havas—Satan,” Blavatsky wrote.[95]

Mainstream historians focus on the racial aspects of the Nazis quest for power, but often ignore the root of their ideology which was a twisted occult doctrine and literally based on Satanism and the belief that they had divine blood in their veins and were descendants of gods. A German secret society called the Thule Society gave birth to the Nazi party and operated much like the Skull & Bones society does in America, working to groom the country’s future leaders. The Thule Society’s logo was a swastika with a dagger in front of it.

The “most royal candidate” theory is the belief that every presidential election in the United States has been won by the candidate with the most royal blood, thus having the closest ties to the kingship bloodline of Europe.[96] Proponents of the theory claim that every U.S. president since George Washington can have their bloodline traced back to European royals, and say at least thirty-three presidents are descendants of Alfred the Great and Charlemagne.[97]

But this begs the question of why a small group of families would consider themselves to have “royal blood.” What exactly does “royal blood” mean? Well, it means that they believe they are direct descendants of the Gods. People who subscribe to this theory often point to a passage in the Book of Genesis in the Bible as evidence. Genesis 6:1-2 reads, “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.” Genesis 6:4 continues, “There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”

Some Christians and Biblical scholars believe that the “Sons of God” which came and took the daughters of men and had children with them, were an alien race called the Annunaki. Some versions of the Bible clearly say that the Sons of God were “supernatural beings” and clearly refers to some kind of alien creatures who came to earth and mated with human females, creating some kind of alien/human hybrid called the Nephilim.

Some believe that God caused the great flood hoping to destroy these Nephilim creatures and then have Noah, his sons and their wives, later repopulate the earth after they emerged safely from the Ark. According to some beliefs, those supposed hybrid creatures survived and went on to become the first kings and queens, and later evolved into what we refer to as the Illuminati today.

The myth that Jesus Christ secretly had a child with Mary Magdalene was brought into the mainstream through Dan Brown’s 2003 book *The Da Vinci Code*, which was inspired by the widely debunked *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (1982). Dan Brown’s novel was made into a film in 2006 starring Tom Hanks, which carried the idea to a much larger audience who wholeheartedly believed the hoax of the “Jesus bloodline.”

According to the myth, the Knights Templar and Freemasons are the guardians of the Holy Grail, which according to this theory, the Grail refers to the descendants of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, thus the “Holy Grail” is the divine bloodline whose supposed members have to live in secret to protect themselves from being killed by the Catholic Church, which allegedly will do anything to prevent this “secret truth” from being known, because it would undermine their power.

This Jesus bloodline myth may very well be unveiled at some point in time as “evidence” of the Illuminati’s supposed “divine right to rule” by claiming they are the literal descendants of Jesus. It may very well culminate with the appearance of the antichrist who will claim to be the long awaited messiah of the world and cite his alleged genetic connection to Jesus as evidence that he is the return of Christ.

When looking into the supposed "bloodlines of the Illuminati" you will often come across people talking about "the Reptilians" who believe the Illuminati are literally a group of "shape shifting extraterrestrials" or demonic inter-dimensional entities masquerading as humans in order to work towards enslaving the human race. The "Reptilian" theory is widely ridiculed, although a sizable portion of the population has no doubt that famous politicians and celebrities are "impostors," only pretending to be human.[98] Many of the Reptilian claims are something straight out of the *X-Files*, the popular paranormal thriller from the 1990s, and are virtually identical to the plot of a 1980s mini series titled *V* (for visitors).

A British conspiracy theorist named David Icke is largely responsible for spreading this theory, and claims these "Reptillian Illuminati" have to drink human blood, "because they are drinking the person's life-force and because they need it to exist in this dimension in a human form."[99] More recently Icke seems to have distanced himself from "Reptlillians" and began focusing on the Archons, which refer to supernatural agents of the evil Gnostic creator God, the Demiurge. Icke is also a big proponent that these "Reptillian Illuminati" families have interbred with each other throughout history to maintain their unique bloodline and hide their secret from outsiders.

In ancient times it was fairly easy to control who would marry whom, and keep royal families breeding with other royal families. Most people marry others in the same socioeconomic level because they run in the same circles, attend the same prestigious universities, and grow up in the same wealthy neighborhoods. While the ancient alien/nephilim bloodline theory is interesting on its surface, there is little to no evidence that people from these supposed royal or divine/alien/reptillian families have any significant difference in their DNA from "regular" people, or "commoners" as we are called. In more modern times the regulation of who marries whom through arranged marriages has become nearly impossible to control, so if this theory were true, then the “alien” DNA would be so widely spread that we would be seeing it pop up in medical reports around the world.

One likely reason for a small number of families rising to power in the ancient past is that they just so happened to be living on fertile land, allowing them to have healthy and strong offspring due to an abundance of food and easily accessible water. As they say in real estate—location, location, location. These issues are explored in detail in the Pulitzer Prize winning book *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (1997), written by Jared Diamond. His research presents the case that a variety of environmental factors, not any genetic or intellectual superiority, has been the reason certain cultures have dominated most others around the world.

I certainly wouldn’t rule out the possibility that some kind of extraterrestrial (or demonic) race is secretly working with the Illuminati leadership and directing them in their affairs, but the subject of aliens is beyond the scope of this book and in most cases the “evidence” of such beings is impossible to verify (at least at this point) or limited to interpretations of ancient art or “video evidence” of unidentified flying objects—most of which are top secret experimental aircraft or hoaxes. Aliens (or demons) working *with* the Illuminati is one thing—a handful of families interbreeding with each other to keep their “alien family tree” a secret amongst themselves is something totally different.

Affiliated Secret Societies

Secret societies entered popular culture in the 21st century, thanks in part to Dan Brown’s novels and Hollywood films like *The Skulls* (2000) and *National Treasure* (2004). As the 2004 United States presidential election approached, it was reported in mainstream news that both George W. Bush and his opponent John Kerry were members of Skull & Bones, the now somewhat well-known secret society based at Yale University. The correct terminology is actually that they “are” members, not that they “were” members, since it’s a lifetime membership starting their senior year of college.

While many people have now heard of Skull & Bones, most falsely believe it’s just an elite fraternity for rich kids, but Skull & Bones differs from a fraternity in several key ways. First of all, nobody “pledges to join” the club hoping to get accepted. Instead they recruit people who are seen as worthy to be members. The club doesn’t do any charity work, which is common with most fraternities, and their entire focus is geared for members’ postgraduate life which is why someone doesn’t become an official member until their senior year, as opposed to rushing a fraternity freshman year like most other college clubs.

While there are countless secret societies on college campuses around the world, Skull & Bones is in a league of their own in terms of their power and influence. While they are perhaps one of the more well-known secret societies (thanks to the Internet), there are certainly other powerful (and dangerous) ones that are lesser known.

There are secret societies of businessmen, politicians, and media moguls, (like the Bilderberg Group and the Allen & Company Sun Valley Conference); there is a secret society of scientists (the Jasons); there’s even a secret society of *secretaries* (the Seraphic Society), who cater to men in other secret societies. Few people know that there is a secret society of women modeled after the Bohemian Grove who call themselves the *Belizean* Grove. Many of these mysterious groups have overlapping members, and at the higher levels work in concert with each other in one giant compartmentalized pyramid-shaped power structure. In this chapter I’ll take you back to the beginning, thousands of years ago, and we’ll slowly move forward in time tracking the evolution of this invisible empire.

Mystery Schools

The first secret societies were called the Mystery Schools, which meant they taught the Ancient Mysteries of life and death. The word “mystic” means one who studied the mysteries, and ancient inquisitive men formed groups or “schools” to study and ponder life’s biggest questions. Certain supposed answers were discovered or myths developed which aimed to help man make sense of his existence here on this planet.

Some see the secret occult knowledge stemming from these Mystery Schools not as evil, but as a tool that can be used for either good or evil, similar to “the Force” in *Star Wars*. Just as men gather into associations based on common interests like car meets, model airplane clubs and countless other kinds of clubs, men in ancient times who found they had a common interesting pondering the mysteries of life found themselves coming together in these Mystery Schools.

Various Mystery Schools popped up in the ancient world, claiming to, or seeking to, discover the powerful secrets of life, and looking to get in harmony with the divine in order to fully receive the blessings the Universe offers or explain the human condition. While these groups appear to have at one time had the best intensions, many believe they were eventually corrupted and taken over by sinister men who turned the once noble schools into a mafia of madmen who used their superior intellect and social networks to enslave society. Illuminati insider Manly P. Hall explains, "The masses, deprived of their birthright of understanding and groveling in ignorance, eventually became the abject slaves of the spiritual impostors. Superstition universally prevailed and the black magicians completely dominated national affairs, with the result that humanity still suffers from the sophistries [fallacious arguments, especially with the intention of deceiving] of the priestcrafts of Atlantis and Egypt.”[100]

The esoteric tradition, as it is sometimes called, appears to have begun in Mesopotamia, the oldest human civilization and the first to develop a written language. From there it can be traced to ancient Egypt and the Isis cults (3100 B.C.) and then over to Greece in the Eleusinian Mysteries (1500 BC) involving the Demeter and Persephone cults. During this time the Dionysian Mysteries were practiced in ancient Greece and Rome and included the use of intoxicants and other trance-inducing techniques in attempts to come into a greater understanding of the Mysteries. The Dionysian mysteries were based on Dionysus, one of the Twelve Olympians in Greek mythology, who was the God of wine and ecstasy.

If you keep following the chain, you progress to the Pythagoreans (5 B.C.) and onto other Greek mystery cults like Mithrasim (100 A.D.), then to the Gnostics (1-300 A.D.), to the Knights Templar (1118) and on to the Cathars in the 13th Century, and then to the Jesuits (founded in 1540), continuing to the Rosicrucians (1614), then to Freemasonry (1717) and continuing to the Illuminati (1776); and if you keep moving ahead—when you get to more modern times you’ll see organizations like Skull & Bones (1832), Bohemian Grove (1872), the Federal Reserve Bank (1913), the Council on Foreign Relations (1921), the Bilderberg Group (1954), and so on.

While you may be familiar with some of these major Illuminati organizations, each piece of the puzzle contains countless details and when meticulously assembled, creates a mosaic that reveals a clear and common theme. They are all hierarchical fraternities who use various rituals and pageants to instill in their members that they are a special elite group of masters who know “the truth” that will enable them to become gods among men. In order to preserve their secrets to a select few, initiates often swear blood oaths to never reveal their knowledge to outsiders or those in the lower levels of the hierarchy.

The Knights Templar

At this point in time, many people have heard about the Knights Templar and may be familiar with a little bit of the story surrounding them and the accusations levied against them by the Catholic Church, but few people have taken an extended look into the organization and their activities. While most people believe the accusations of devil worshiping and blasphemous rituals were fabricated by the Catholic Church as an excuse to seize the Templar's wealth and put them out of commission, you may be very surprised to discover who admits the accusations were actually true.

The Knights Templar name basically means they were the knights of Solomon's Temple, and were a group of (supposed) Christian knights who volunteered to protect Jerusalem from the Muslims who were trying to seize the land. The Templars were founded in 1118 in France by a man named Hugues de Payens who recruited around nine others, mostly members of his own family, who then offered to protect pilgrims traveling from the coast of the Mediterranean to the Holy Land.

While they were supposedly dedicated "warrior monks" who wanted to supposedly protect the Holy Land, it appears the founders had an ulterior motive, and while the majority of the growing Templar organization may have been wholly dedicated to protecting the Holy Land, the inner circle were busy secretly excavating the site of Solomon's Temple for treasure and rare artifacts.

Among the most damning allegations made against the Templars was that their inner circle performed satanic homosexual rituals involving a demonic idol called Baphomet. While most people believe these allegations were fabricated by the Catholic Church to demonize the Templars, others have a different view. Eliphas Levi, a popular occultist in the 19th century, explains, “Did the Templars really adore Baphomet? Did they offer a shameful salutation to the buttocks of the goat of Mendes? What was actually this secret and potent association which imperiled Church and State, and was thus destroyed unheard? Judge nothing lightly; they are guilty of a great crime; they have exposed to profane eyes the sanctuary of antique initiation. They have gathered again and have shared the fruits of the tree of knowledge, so they might become masters of the world.”[101]

He continues to say, “Yes, in our profane conviction, the Grand Masters of the Order of the Templars worshipped the Baphomet, and caused it to be worshipped by their initiates.”[102] In the infamous *Satanic Bible*, published in 1966 by Anton LaVey (real name Howard Levy), Baphomet is listed as the demon the Knights Templar worshiped.[103] So even the Church of Satan’s founder accepts the allegations made against the Templars as true.

Manly P. Hall, a 33rd degree mason best known for his revealing book *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, wrote, “The famous hermaphroditic Goat of Mendes was a composite creature formulated to symbolize this *astral light*. It is identical with Baphomet, the mystic *pantheos* of those disciples of ceremonial magic, the Templars, who probably obtained it from the Arabians.”[104]

So, according to Hall and others, it is believed the Templars not only found physical treasure like gold and silver in their executions, but also informational treasure as well, in the form of ancient scrolls where they learned their strange secret doctrine.

Researchers Knight and Lomus, who are certainly not considered “conspiracy theorists,” explained that according to their findings, “Hence it follows that the mysteries of the craft are in reality the mysteries of religion. The Knights were, however, careful not to entrust this important secret to any whose fidelity and discretion had not been fully proved. They therefore invented different degrees to test their candidates, and gave them only symbolical secrets without explanation, to prevent treachery and solely to enable them to make themselves known to each other. For this purpose it was resolved to use different signs, words and tokens in each degree, by which they would be secured against the Saracens, cowans or intruders."[105]

In *The History of Magic* (published in 1860), Eliphas Levi reveals, "The Templars had two doctrines; one was concealed and reserved to the leaders, being that of Johannism [Gnosticism]; the other was public, being Roman Catholic doctrine. They deceived in this manner the enemies that they hoped to supplant. The Johannism of the adepts was the Kabalah of the Gnostics, but it degenerated speedily into a mystic pantheism carried even to idolatry of Nature and hatred of all revealed dogma…They went even so far as to recognize the pantheistic symbolism of the grand masters of Black Magic, and the better to isolate themselves from obedience to a religion by which they were condemned before, they rendered divine honors to the monstrous idol Baphomet."[106]

Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince also confirm the secret doctrine accusations in their book *The Templar Revelation,* writing, "It is likely that the majority of the Knights Templar were no more than simple Christian solders they appeared to be, but the inner circle was different. The inner circle of the Templars appears to have existed in order to further active research into esoteric and religious matters. Perhaps one of the reasons for their secrecy was the fact that they dealt with the arcane aspects of the Jewish and Islamic worlds. They sought, literally, the secrets of the universe wherever they suspected they might be found, and in the course of their geographic and intellectual wanderings came to tolerate—perhaps even to embrace—some very unorthodox beliefs."[107]

These "unorthodox beliefs" appear to have involved what's called sex magic (often spelled sex magick with a "k" on the end), which is the practice of incorporating various sex acts into secret rituals in the belief that the sexual energy produced is transformed into spiritual power, allegedly enabling participants to activate dormant supernatural abilities. Theodore Reuss [co-founder of the Ordo Templi Orientis] revealed that sex magic was the greatest secret of occult fraternities, saying, "Our order possesses the key which opens up all Masonic and Hermetic secrets, namely, the teachings of sexual magic, and this teaching explains, without exception, all the secrets of Freemasonry and all systems of religion."[108] He also said that sex magic was the big secret of the Knights Templar.[109]

In his companion book to *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, titled *Lectures on Ancient Philosophy*, Manly P. Hall again reveals some amazing occult secrets that few people have discovered about the Templars. He wrote, "It was not the physical power of the Templars, but the knowledge which they had brought with them from the East, that the church feared. The Templars had discovered part of the great Arcanum; they had become wise in those mysteries which had been celebrated in Mecca thousands of years before the advent of Mohammed; they had read a few pages from the dread book of the Anthropos, and for this knowledge they were doomed to die."[110]

Eliphas Levi writes in agreement, "It was the memory of this scientific and religious absolute, of this doctrine summarized in a word, of this word alternately lost and recovered, which was transmitted to the elect of all antique initiations…it was this same memory handed on to secret associations of Rosicrucians, Illuminati and Freemasons which gave a meaning to their strange rites, to their less or more conventional signs, and a justification above all to their devotion in common, as well as a clue to their power."[111]

This "occult power" wasn't the only thing that led to their downfall. The Templars, with the help of other secrets they likely learned from the rare scrolls they acquired, ultimately became wealthy bankers who issued loans, not only to people, but to governments and monarchs. The Catholic Church wouldn't allow people to charge interest on money they lent to someone else because it was considered a sin (called usury), but the church looked the other way when the Templars did it, likely because they needed their protective services in the Holy Land.

Through lending money with interest, the Templars had exploited one of the most powerful and mysterious concepts in the world today. The same tactic is used by the Illuminati banking cartel through their front groups like the Federal Reserve, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. More on the magic of making money and collecting interest on loans later.

The Jesuits

Fast forward a few hundred years and we can see the Catholic Church following the same pattern of the Templars hoarding knowledge, power, and wealth, so insiders can live like kings by taking advantage of the ignorant masses. Ignatius of Loyola founded the Society of Jesus (aka the Jesuits) in 1540, whose members are also known as the "Pope's Marines" because of their militant support of the Catholic Church. The Jesuits were founded to fight against the Protestant Reformation with hopes of keeping the Catholic Church in power by any means necessary. While supposedly being a Christian group, the Jesuits' activities have been anything but.

Some believe that Illuminati founder Adam Weishaupt was covertly working for the Jesuits, but his correspondences reveal he deeply despised the Jesuits, although he did adopt their "ends justifies the means" tactics in hopes of replacing them with his own similar kind of tyranny.

A document titled *The Secret Instructions of the Jesuits,* was published in the early 1600s, allegedly written by a general in the society, and revealed the supposed tactics and "ends justifies the means" code of the Jesuits. The Church claims the documents are a forgery designed to defame the Jesuits, of course, but when one becomes aware of the ruthless and criminal activities Church insiders have engaged in to gain and maintain their power, it doesn't really matter if they're a forgery or not, because the tactics of the Jesuits and the Vatican have become widely known.

The Catholic Church's crimes are legendary, from imprisoning Galileo for (correctly) declaring the earth revolved around the sun, to the Spanish Inquisition where officials tortured and killed anyone who dared disagree with them. And everyone is familiar with their institutional pedophile problem and the generations of cover-ups they have engaged in to protect the perpetrators.

These actions continue to give Christians a bad name with most anti-Christian bigots apparently unaware (or willfully ignoring) the millions of non-Catholic Christians (like Protestants, Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, non-denominational groups, etc.) which were (and still are) appalled by the actions of the Catholic Church who, for centuries, held a monopoly on Christianity, albeit their twisted and un-Biblical brand of it.

Jesuits were responsible for the 1605 Gunpowder Plot in England, which was an assassination attempt where the perpetrators, including Guy Fawkes, tried to blow up the House of Parliament to kill King James and the Protestant aristocracy. Every November 5th, bonfires and fireworks are used to commemorate the failure of the plot, an event that has come to be known as Guy Fawkes Night.

Vatican City in Rome is not just a city, but a completely sovereign country owned and operated by the Catholic Church that was established in 1929 by the Lateran treaty. It is only 110 acres and has a population under a thousand people and has over $8 billion dollars in assets.[112] The Pope, of course, is the head, and is protected by his own personal army, the Swiss Guard.

The Popes, Bishops and Priests of the Catholic Church are basically the same as the Pharisees who Jesus denounced over 2000 years ago for their hypocrisy and pride due to their spiritual knowledge. One needs to look no further than the Inquisition or the massive institutional cover-up of countless pedophile priests to see the Catholic Church is corrupt to the core. The Catholic Church also diverts and perverts the teachings of Jesus in numerous ways, such as having people confess their sins to a priest instead of to God himself, as well as having sold indulgences, which, if you don't know, means that people used to pay money to the church and in return a priest would forgive that person's sins and tell them they could then get into Heaven. Some indulgences were even sold for sins people would commit in the future. Such a practice was clearly a shameful abuse of power and completely contradictory to the teachings of Jesus.

The Catholic Church basically took the freeing messages of Jesus and packaged them up and then sold them to the public, when Jesus had intended them to be accessible to all for free. This is the same thing the Jewish Pharisees did with Judaism causing Jesus to publicly denounce them. It is for these reasons and more that the Vatican, and specifically the Pope is looked at with suspicion regarding the New World Order and is believed by some to one day be the false prophet spoken about in the Bible.

According to Biblical prophecy, the counterfeit Christ (the Antichrist) will be a political figure and the leader of the world, who will be accompanied by the false prophet, a global religious leader that will (wrongfully) confirm to the world that the messiah has arrived when the Antichrist announces he is God. Since the Catholic Church is trying to reinstate itself as the *only* Christian authority in the world, many see the Pope as a prime candidate for this false prophet.

In 2007 Pope Benedict proclaimed that the Catholic Church was the only place that can offer salvation and held the only key to Heaven.[113] He didn't mean Christianity is the only path to salvation, which is a primary tenant of the faith. He meant specifically that the Catholic Church was the only way to God and that all other Christian denominations were basically leading people astray and were not "true" churches.[114]

This is the same Pope who, when he was still a Cardinal (then named Cardinal Ratzinger), was in charge of covering up the extensive pedophile priest network which has been operating within (or perhaps in charge of) the Catholic Church for generations.[115] A 69-page document typed in Latin and taken from the Vatican's Secret Archives bearing the seal of Pope John XXIII, was sent to every Bishop in the world in 1962 and contained detailed instructions and policies regarding keeping allegations of sexual abuse a secret.

The title of the documents in Latin, *Crimine solicitationies*, translates to "*Instruction on proceeding in cases of solicitation*" and was basically identical to an earlier set of instructions issued in 1922.[116] The documents were confirmed authentic by the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales.[117]

Bishops were instructed to deal with child abuse allegations “in the most secretive way” and were reminded of their commitment to “perpetual silence” for what the documents called the “secret of the Holy Office.”[118] They go on to say, “The oath of keeping the secret must be given in these cases also by the accusers or those denouncing the priest and the witnesses.”[119] Anyone who speaks of the “secret of the Holy Office” or who admits publicly that any victims have come forward were threatened with excommunication.

All complaints about sexual abuse were stored in the Secret Archives of the Vatican. Daniel Shea, a lawyer for abused children said, “It proves there was an international conspiracy by the Church to hush up sexual abuse issues. It is a devious attempt to conceal criminal conduct and is a blueprint for deception and concealment.”[120]

Another attorney for abused children, Richard Scorer, said, “We always suspected that the Catholic Church systematically covered up abuse and tried to silence victims. This document appears to prove it. Threatening excommunication to anybody who speaks out shows the lengths the most senior figures in the Vatican were prepared to go to prevent the information getting out to the public domain.”[121]

This leads to the dark road of what is called *sex magic*, which is the most sinister secret of Satanism and is covered in the chapter titled *Spiritual Beliefs*. The leader of the Jesuits is officially called the “Superior General,” often nicknamed the “Black Pope,” and is believed by many to be the actual leader of the Catholic Church who wields his power from behind the scenes.

The Rosicrucians

The Rosicrucians are an interesting secret society-type of group, because the “group” started off as a hoax, really, which then inspired people to actually form such a group (or factions) based on the teachings of the mysterious Rosicrucian Manifestos, the first of which was published in Germany in 1614. Two other manifestos later appeared, one the following year in 1615, and another the year after that, said to have come from a secret brotherhood that made up an Invisible College which was preparing to reveal themselves to the world.

There are various theories as to who the author or authors of these mysterious books were. Many believe they were written by Johann Valentin Andrea, a German Lutheran theologian who was allegedly hoping they would help break the Catholic Church’s stranglehold on power.

Whoever wrote the manifestos chose to release them under the pseudonym Christian Rosencreutz as a symbol for the work because the name translates to *Rosy Cross*—a rose having been an alchemical symbol of heavenly perfection and paradise. The first manifesto tells a story of how “Christian Rosencreutz” went on a journey to the Middle East to study the occult and the ancient mysteries. The books are said to contain hidden meanings and esoteric knowledge which could only be revealed to a select few.

In the texts, “Christian Rosencreutz” wrote about a future utopia where people of different religions would all worship the same God in their own style while having tolerance for all other views. Of course, the Catholic Church condemned the manifestos and anyone who supported them.

The books also forecasted a coming age of enlightenment resulting from the revelation of ancient Hermetic secrets. Some believe surviving Knights Templars were behind the mysterious manifestos, and some also credit Rosicrucianism for changing stone mason guilds into the philosophical Freemasonry we are familiar with today.

Rosicrucian researcher Christopher McIntosh wrote, “It has often been suggested that the Hiramic legend in Masonry might be linked with the legend of Christian Rosenkreuz and his tomb…It is not impossible, therefore, that an impulse of a Rosicrucian nature (using the word “Rosicrucian” in its widest sense) was responsible for the transformation of operative into speculative Masonry.”[122] The transformation from “operative” masonry to “speculative masonry” means changing from a mere stone mason trade union to the philosophical and spiritual form of Freemasonry that exists today. The 18th degree of Scottish Rite Freemasonry is called the Knight of the Rose-Croix (Rose Cross), clearly showing a connection between the two groups.

The Mormon Church, or the Church of Latter Day Saints, as they prefer to be called, contains several parallels with Rosicrucianism. First, both stem from books said to have been “discovered” or mysteriously appeared, which cleverly mix occult myths and rituals with Christian philosophy. Mormonism founder Joseph Smith Jr. most likely knew of the Christian Rosencreutz legend (which was two hundred years old in his time) when he concocted his tale of “finding” a supposed ancient text himself. Since Joseph Smith was a Freemason, he certainly would have been familiar with the Legend of Enoch, which claims that the true name of God was carved into a golden delta (triangle), and hidden before the great flood so that it would be preserved (and discovered) by a future generation.

These myths of ancient “lost and found” divine texts speaking of past cultures and mystical secrets were the inspiration for *The Book of Mormon* which Joseph Smith claimed to have “found” written on a stack of Golden Plates in the 1820s, which of course aren’t in a museum somewhere because he said an angel took them back to heaven for safe keeping! Smith was a Freemason who mixed Masonic mythology with Christianity to create

Mormonism which he claimed “restored” the lost secrets from the ancient past with his “discovery” (fabrication) of the Book of Mormon, again, which he magically “translated” from “Golden Plates” that are nowhere to be found.

The name “R. C. Christian” appeared in 1980 surrounding the creation of an enormous and mysterious occult monument in the small town of Elberton, Georgia—a structure known as the Georgia Guidestones. The name was chosen as a pseudonym by the individual who designed and paid for this bizarre monument. “R.C. Christian,” obviously standing for Rose Cross Christian, and the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross, which was a popular calling card of early Rosicrucians. The Georgia Guidestones monument stands nineteen feet tall and displays ten different commandments in eight different languages as the New World Order’s ten commandments. The first of which is to maintain the human population under 500 million people. The monument is said to be the “Guidestones to an age of reason” and has several astrological markings in the design, including a hole in line with the North Star.

It wasn’t just Mormonism founder Joseph Smith and the man behind the Georgia Guidestones who received inspiration from the Rosicrucians, but also the early founders of Freemasonry and even the father of the Illuminati, Adam Weishaupt. Many Rosicrucians in his time actually denounced Weishaupt and the Illuminati for taking what they considered to be a noble concept of an enlightened brotherhood, and turned it into a mechanism to exercise his own tyrannical goals.

Freemasonry

Often said to be just a men's club of old guys who want to get away from their wives much like the Moose Lodge or Knights of Columbus—Freemasonry is quite a bit different from most men's clubs and is actually often included when talking about the grand "Illuminati conspiracy." What most people don't know, and what high level masons have openly admitted, is that there is a secret society *within* this secret society.

Manly P. Hall, considered one of Freemasonry's greatest philosophers, openly admitted that, "Freemasonry is a fraternity within a fraternity—an outer organization concealing an inner brotherhood of the elect…the visible society is a splendid camaraderie of 'free and accepted' men enjoined to devote themselves to ethical, educational, fraternal, patriotic, and humanitarian concerns. The invisible society is a secret most august [respected and impressive] fraternity whose members are dedicated to the service of a mysterious arcanum arcanorum [secret of secrets.]"[123]

You'll sometimes hear people say that their grandfather was a "master mason" and dismiss any talk of a "conspiracy" because all grandpa did was engage in cheesy rituals and attend boring meetings. A "master mason" sounds quite impressive if you don't know much about masonry. George Washington was a master mason and a considerable number of the Founding Fathers of America were masons, so they can't be that bad, right? Out of the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence, eight of them were confirmed to be Freemasons and at least sixteen U.S. presidents have also been masons, including James Madison, James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, James Polk, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Gerald Ford.

While sounding like an impressive title, a master mason is only the 3rd level (or degree) of a 33 level hierarchy. The first degree is called entered apprentice, the second is fellow craft, and the third is a master mason; but there are thirty-three degrees in the Scottish Rite. A rite is "a formal or ceremonial act or procedure prescribed or customary in religious or other solemn use."[124]

The Scottish Rite is the most popular brand of Masonry and within the higher levels each degree is given a mysterious sounding name like Secret Master (4th Degree), Knight of the Rose-Croix (18th degree) and Grand Pontiff (19th degree). In the 32nd degree (the second highest level), the initiate is called a Sublime Knight Commander of the Royal Secret or Master of the Royal Secret.

The "Scottish Rite" actually started in France and was based on legends that originated from Scotland that were told by Scotts who fled to France in the late 1700s when the British Isles were having problems. Regardless of where the name originated, Scottish Rite Freemasonry is the most popular esoteric hierarchy of the fraternity.

The 33rd degree of the Scottish Rite is the highest level and is awarded by invitation only. Each of the degrees represents the different vertebrate in the human spine and symbolize the member's ascent in their quest for Enlightenment within the fraternity. On top of the 33rd vertebrate of the spine sits the skull, which holds the brain, so the 33rd degree signifies that the initiate has become fully enlightened with the secret gnosis (knowledge) of the ancient mysteries.

Freemasonry evolved out of stone masonry, whose ancient tradesmen used a series of secret handshakes and code words to identify each other and their level of skill. Over time, various philosophies started arising out of those trade unions and used popular stone mason tools as symbols to represented various aspects of their philosophy. As their theology grew, the stonemasons morphed from what was called *operative* masonry (meaning men who worked with stones) to *speculative* masonry, which refers to the philosophical and spiritual Freemasons today.

While the operative (or stone masons) built cathedrals out of stone, the speculative (or Freemasons) built their intellect. The term “Freemason” likely comes from freestone masonry. Freestone is a softer stone used for cathedral faces that is intricately carved by higher skilled masons and is used as a metaphor to describe the development of a man’s character and abilities. Some say that “free” means they are free from ignorance or free from the chains of darkness that once enslaved them.

Evidence indicates that the Knights Templar either assimilated with Freemasonry or directly created it. Most American’s came to hear about Freemasonry as a result of Dan Brown’s 2003 novel *The Da Vinci Code*, and then in the following few years the History Channel, Discovery, National Geographic and other networks produced shows looking into this fascinating group. The 2004 film *National Treasure* starring Nicholas Cage capitalized on the hype, and portrayed them as the secret guardians of America.

It officially came into its modern form in 1717 with the creation of the Grand Lodge of England and has been shrouded in mystery ever since. Much of the controversy surrounding Masonry stems from allegations that the higher-level members worship satan and that they deceive lower level members about its purpose. “Anti-Masons” don’t just come up with these allegations out of thin air though; they often point to Masonic texts written by highly revered Masons as their evidence.

The “Bible of Freemasonry,” a book titled *Morals and Dogma*, written by Albert Pike in 1871 explains Masonic philosophy and is read primarily only by dedicated Freemasons. Part of this philosophy, Pike explains, is, “Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, *conceals* [emphasis in original] its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it [the Mason] calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it.”[125]

He reaffirms this deception later in the book, saying, ”The Blue Degrees are but the court or portico (porch) of the Temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he shall understand them; but it is intended that he shall imagine that he understands them…their true explication [explanation and understanding] is reserved for the Adepts, the Princes of Masonry [those of the 32nd and 33rd Degrees].”[126]

Pike even makes several statements appearing to support the Devil, saying, “Satan is not a black god, but negation of God ... this is not a Person, but a Force, created for good, but which may represent evil. It is the instrument of Liberty or Free Will. They [Freemasons] represent this Force...under the mythological and horned form of the God Pan; thence came the he-goat of the Sabbat, brother of the Ancient Serpent, and the Light-bearer.”[127]

Later in the book he wrote, “Lucifer, the Light-bearer! Strange and mysterious name to give to the Spirit of Darkness! Lucifer, the Son of the Morning! Is it he who bears the Light, and with its splendors intolerable, blinds feeble, sensual, or selfish souls? Doubt it not!”[128]

I have personally spoken with a 32nd degree Mason who is a friend of a friend, and at first he dodged my insinuations that he worshiped Lucifer, but I pressed him and he started praising Lucifer and criticizing Christians saying they were morbid for worshiping a dead man hanging on a cross, and that they were judgmental and intolerant of other religions.

Satanist Aleister Crowley seems to agree that there is some great mystical secret held by the inner circle when he said, “Although I was admitted to the thirty-third and last degree of Freemasonry so long ago as 1900, it was not until the summer of 1912 that my suspicion was confirmed. I speak of my belief that behind the frivolities and convivialities of our greatest institution [Freemasonry] lay in truth a secret.”[129]

In his book autobiography *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, he wrote, "…for Freemasonry asserts that every man is himself the living, slain and re-arisen Christ in his own person. It is true that not one mason in ten thousand in England is aware of this fact; but he has only to remember his 'raising' to realize the fundamental truth of the statement."[130]

Albert Pike was a lawyer who became a Confederate General in the Army, fighting against the northern colonies during the Civil War trying to ensure slavery was kept in place. He is believed to have been the leader of the Knights of the Golden Circle, a secret society of Confederates that included notorious outlaw Jesse James and John Wilkes Booth, the man who assassinated President Lincoln. The Lincoln assassination was not the action of a lone gunman, but was part of a larger plot hatched by the Knights of the Golden Circle with hopes of securing a victory for the south. John Wilkes Booth and other Knights of the Golden Circle planned to assassinate the vice president and the secretary of state that same night, thus eliminating three of the top officials in the United States government, hoping that would ensure the Confederates could take over.

Aside from being a key member of the KGC, it is rumored that Albert Pike founded the KKK as well, which isn't far-fetched at all, considering it's obvious he was a racist who saw black people as slaves. When African Americans first wanted to become part of the Masonic fraternity, Pike wrote, "I took my obligations to white men, not to Negroes. When I have to accept Negroes as brothers or leave Masonry, I shall leave it."[131]

Pike owned the *Daily Appeal*, a newspaper in Tennessee, where on April 16, 1868 he published an editorial saying, "The disenfranchised people of the South...can find no protection for property, liberty or life, except in secret association...We would unite every white man in the South, who is opposed to negro suffrage [the right to vote], into one great Order of Southern Brotherhood, with an organization complete, active, vigorous, in which a few should execute the concentrated will of all, and whose very existence should be concealed from all but its members."[132]

A larger than life statue of Albert Pike stands in Judiciary Square in Washington D.C. alongside Abraham Lincoln, and Pike's body is kept in a tomb inside the Masonic headquarters in Washington D.C., a building called the House of the Temple, which is the home of the "Supreme Council" of Freemasonry.

Theosophist teacher and occult writer Alice Bailey, who claimed her books were dictated to her telepathically by an entity she called the Master of Wisdom, wrote that, "The Masonic Movement when it can be divorced from politics and social ends and from its present paralyzing condition of inertia, will meet the need of those who can, and should wield power. It is the custodian of the law; it is the home of the Mysteries and the seat of initiation. It holds its symbolism the ritual of Deity, and the way of salvation is pictorially preserved in its work. The methods of Deity are demonstrated in its temples, and under the All-seeing Eye the work can go forward. It is a far more occult organization than can be realized, and is intended to be the training school for the coming advanced occultists. In its ceremonials lies hid the wielding of the forces connected with the growth and life of the kingdoms of nature and the unfoldment of the divine aspects in man."[133]

Many Muslims are against Freemasonry partly because one of Freemasonry's ultimate goals is to rebuild the Temple of Solomon on its original site in Jerusalem, where the Al-Aqsa Mosque currently stands. This spot is claimed by both Muslims and Jews as their religion's holy place, and a primary aim of both Palestinians and Jews is to once and for all claim this spot as their own.

Muslims are also critical of Freemasonry's secretive nature. Sheikh Ahmad Kutty, a prominent Muslim scholar at the Islamic Institute of Toronto, explains, "As far as I know, Freemasonry is a secret organization whose beliefs and practices are totally kept confidential except from those who are initiated into it. They have levels of secrets which are not divulged to those who are at lower levels. A Muslim should never fall prey or give allegiance to something which cannot be scrutinized by the firm criteria of the Quran and the Sunnah. Whoever joins Freemasonry is like a person who writes a blank check; by doing so he agrees to give allegiance blindly to an authority to comply with their wishes no matter what they are."[134]

In 1998 a law was enacted in Britain ordering police, judges, and other government employees in the UK to reveal whether they were Freemasons after it was believed a Masonic Mafia was operating within the government.[135] Ten years later the law was reversed but the controversy continued. A secret Metropolitan Police report written in 2002 and leaked to the press in 2014 reveals that an internal investigation by Scotland Yard, the police agency of London, discovered that an organized criminal network of Freemasons largely controlled the police department.[136] The investigation, called Operation Tiberius, found that the Metropolitan Police were infested with corrupt Freemasons who used their position within the department to engage in organized crime, destroy evidence, and recruit other corrupt officers.[137]

While Freemasonry is primarily a men's organization, there is a woman's branch called the Eastern Star, whose logo is literally an upside down pentagram. There is even a branch for young girls called Job's Daughters (or Rainbow Girls) and one for boys called the DeMolays—named after Jacques de Molay, the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar. President Bill Clinton was a DeMolay as a child, which many believe served as a prep school to groom him to later take his place as an Illuminati insider.

As noted earlier, it's important to highlight that in 1782 Adam Weishaupt successfully infiltrated Freemasonry at the Congress of Wilhelmsbad, Germany, which was the largest, most important Masonic gathering of the eighteenth century.[138] There he assigned men to oversee the implementation of "Illuminated Masonry" and recruit new supporters from Masonic lodges throughout Europe who would work on behalf of the Illuminati.

Skull & Bones Society

Even if you’re familiar with Skull & Bones and some of the allegations about them (many of which are true, by the way), the deeper you look into this group, the more apparent it becomes that they are anything but an ordinary college fraternity. Since it has already been touched upon earlier in this book, I won’t repeat most of what has already been covered, but I will add a few more pieces to the puzzle that most people are not familiar with so you can get a more complete picture of them.

Skull & Bones was the FIRST secret society at Yale and the first *senior* society—meaning someone doesn’t become a member until their senior year at Yale. There were fraternities at Yale, but Skull & Bones started a new chapter in the school’s history in 1832 when they created the first secret society, soon to be followed by Scroll & Key and then later Wolf’s Head, which are the top three senior (and secret) societies. The three clubs even hold regular “inter-council meetings” several times a year to coordinate their activities.

Each year fifteen new members are recruited (or “tapped,” as they say) to join. They are chosen during the last few weeks of the semester their Junior year in order to prepare them to replace the outgoing seniors who lead them through the elaborate and satanic initiation ceremony where they are given a new name (Long Devil, Machiavelli, Baal, Beelzebub are just a few examples).[139] During part of the initiation, they lay in a coffin and give a detailed history of their sexual experiences up to that point in a ritual called Connubial Bliss.

Members consider the world “their realm” and call outsiders “Barbarians.” Once initiated the men (and now some women) are considered “bonesmen” or Knights of Eulogia, which is Greek for “Knights of the Blessing.” They even hold a special Skull & Bones wedding ceremony when one of their members gets married to initiate the new wife into the “Bones Family.” Behind every corrupt man, there’s usually a woman willing to look the other way. They also own a 40-acre island located on the St. Lawrence River in Alexandria Bay, called Dear Island, which is used as a private vacation spot for “bonesmen” and their families.

After the summer, when the new school year begins, and the new initiates are then seniors, they meet every Thursday and Sunday night for a fancy dinner (often steak and lobster) that is followed up with what are called “sessions” which include various lectures and debates. It is believed that they eat using Adolf Hitler’s silverware that a “bonesmen” somehow obtained. Skull & Bones has its own collection of books in its library located in the Tomb [headquarters] to help new members learn the ways of the world. There is even a “Bones Bible” and other black books kept in the clubhouse library. They operate as a 5013c organization under the Russell Trust Association (or RTA Incorporated) and their 2012 filings with the IRS (which must be available for “public review” if you know just where to look and how to get them) shows they spent $469,000 dollars that year on “personal development” for their members.[140]

No alcohol is allowed inside the Skull & Bones Tomb clubhouse, that’s how serious they are. This is not a party. Taking over the world is serious business. Another difference between Skull & Bones and ordinary fraternities is that frats usually do community service and help with local fundraisers, but this strange group only looks out for themselves. In fact, the men (and now women) who are recruited into Skull & Bones are never engineers or mathematicians, because these careers hold little power compared to those in business, banking, media, politics, and law, which are the dominant careers of the members.

By now I’m sure you’re familiar that the most famous member is President George W. Bush, but what most people don’t know is that his family has a long history with the group. Aside from his father George Herbert Walker Bush being a member, Prescott Bush, George W.’s grandfather was a member, as well as his uncles Jonathan Bush, John

Walker, and his other uncle George Herbert Walker III. So was his great-uncle George Herbert Walker Junior, and his cousin Ray Walker.[141]

After George W. Bush became president in January 2001, he appointed several of his fellow bonesmen to various high level positions within the government. For example, he nominated William H. Donaldson (Bones 1953) as chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission; Edward McNally (Bones 1979) was given a position in the Department of Homeland Security.[142] Robert D. McCallum was appointed to Assistant Attorney General; Roy Austin was made the ambassadorship to Trinidad and Tobago; Victor Ashe was given a spot on the board of directors of Fannie Mae (the Federal National Mortgage Association), America's biggest home mortgage financier, and so on.[143]

The list of Skull & Bones members who have risen to the pinnacles of power is long. Co-founder Alfonzo Taft became the head of the Department of War, which was the name of the Department of Defense until the government changed the name in true Orwellian double-speak fashion. Alfonzo Taft's son, William Taft became President of the United States. Pierre Jay was the first chairman of the New York Federal Reserve Bank; Winston Lord became chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations. Percy Rockefeller was on the board of Brown Brothers Harriman & Company, which was had its assets seized in 1942 under the Trading with the Enemy Act after it was discovered the firm was helping fund Adolf Hitler.[144] John Kerry, who ran for president against George W. Bush in the 2004 election, later became Secretary of State under President Obama.

The list of key power players in government just goes on and on. Raymond Price (1951) was a speechwriter for Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Bush. Christopher Taylor Buckley (1975) was the chief speechwriter for George H. W. Bush when he was the Vice President. Austan Goolsbee (1991) became President Barack Obama's chief economic advisor, etc., etc. It's interesting to also point out that the father of American football, Walter Camp, was a boneseman. Football, as you may know, serves as a modern day bread and circus distraction for the majority of Americans, channeling their energy and aggression into watching a bunch of men chasing after a ball instead of paying attention to important social issues. This is all part of the plan because it keeps most people out of the way so the elite can carry out their agenda.

Skull & Bones members created the American Historical Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Chemical Society; and the American Economic Association. The atomic bomb was basically a Skull & Bones project involving William Averell Harriman, Governor of New York (class of 1913), Henry Stimson, Secretary of War (class of 1888), Robert Lovett, Secretary of Defense (class of 1918), McGeorge Bundy, U.S. Intelligence Officer (class of 1940) and George L. Harrison, advisor to the Secretary of War and President of the New York Federal Reserve Bank (class of 1909).

I guess it shouldn't be surprising that an organization whose symbols and themes revolve around death would ultimately be responsible for creating the most deadly weapon in the history of mankind. The group's obsession with death is extremely disturbing and all the death symbolism is meant to serve as a continuous reminder of their own mortality, and since they don't believe in an afterlife, they are urged to become gods on earth during their short time here by any means necessary.

We often think of the society "ruling the world" in terms of politicians and business, but they have also dominated the faculty of Yale University as well. Some reports claim that four out of five faculty members between 1865 and 1916 were bonesmen.[145] In 1873, a student newspaper called *The Iconoclast*, published an article denouncing Skull & Bones control of Yale. "Out of every class Skull and Bones takes its men...They have obtained control of Yale. It's business is performed by them. Money paid to the college must pass into their hands, and be subject to their will....It is Yale College against Skull and Bones!"[146]

Aside from being accused of dominating the faculty at Yale and power positions in politics and business, they are often accused of worshiping Satan and conducting extraordinary disturbing rituals. The group's favorite number, 322, possibly holds a secret satanic meaning. Many people believe the number 322 is a reference to the Book of Genesis chapter 3 verse 22 which talks about Adam and Eve eating the Forbidden Fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and employing this number is seen as a reference to the Luciferian doctrine or the satanic secret.

In 2001, a reporter named Ron Rosenbaum from the *New York Observer* used a night vision camera to videotape the initiation ritual from the ledge of an adjacent building that overlooked the courtyard of the Skull & Bones clubhouse. The footage shows initiates kneeling down and kissing a skull, and then appearing to take a knife and slit the throat of a naked woman who was being held down by other members.[147]

People were also heard chanting a strange mantra, “The hangman equals death, the Devil equals death, death equals death!” The hangman likely refers to Jesus hanging on the cross and the mantra appears to convey the same meaning as the riddle of the four human skulls when they are asked which one is the wise man, the beggar, the king, and the fool. The answer given is that it doesn’t matter to them because “all is the same in death.”

Rosenbaum was not sure what to make of this behavior and asked, “Is that the secret they’ve been covering up ever since the society was founded in 1832, the offshoot of a German secret society: devil worship? A fulfillment of the paranoid fantasies of the fundamentalist right, who believe the Eastern establishment *is* a front for satanic conspiracy.”[148]

Scroll and Key Society

The Scroll & Key society is a another secret society at Yale University, created in 1842, ten years after Skull & Bones, and was the second secret society at the school composed of seniors. Just like Skull & Bones, Scroll & Key recruits fifteen new students at the end of their junior year who they see as having the potential and willingness to further the organization’s goals. Scroll & Key is considered one of the “Big Three” senior societies at Yale—the other two being, of course, Skull & Bones, along with Wolf’s Head.

Fareed Zakaria, a CNN commentator on foreign affairs, was initiated as a member of Scroll & Key when he attended the university in 1986. Fareed went onto to attend Bilderberg meetings (in 1993 and 2009), and became a member of the Council on Foreign Relations as well. He didn’t just join the CFR, he actually was the managing editor of their publication *Foreign Affairs* which serves up their political propaganda on a platter for the members.

Fareed once argued that the Constitution is outdated and should be “fixed” to remove the Second Amendment in order to “modernize the Constitution for the 21st Century.”[149]

Other notable members include Ari Shapiro (class of 2000) who became the White House Correspondent for National Public Radio (NPR); James Stillman Rockefeller (class of 1924) who was the President and Chairman of the First National City Bank of New York; Cornelius Vanderbilt III of the wealthy Vanderbilt dynasty (class of 1895); and Huntington D. Sheldon (class of 1925) worked for the CIA as the Director of the Office of Current Intelligence.

The Scroll & Key society operate under the legal entity called the Kingsley Trust Association which creates a shield of privacy to protect them from people searching for information using the name “Scroll & Key” and according to their 2012 IRS filings, which must be made available for public inspection, they have over $9 million dollars in assets and spent $650,000 dollars that year.[150]

Wolfs Head

Wolf’s Head is the third of the “Big Three” senior secret societies at Yale and was founded in 1884, partly to counter the dominance of Skull & Bones over student affairs. They too recruit fifteen new upcoming seniors for membership and are now part of the larger network consisting of Skull & Bones and Scroll & Key.

The club’s logo is a wolf’s head on an inverted Egyptian hieroglyph called an ankh, which is often called the Egyptian Cross and said to symbolize “the key of life.” Wolf’s Head built its own Egyptian themed “tomb” headquarters in 1924 thanks to a donation from one of their members, Edward Harkness, who went on to become John D. Rockefeller’s right hand man. Harkness himself was listed by Forbes magazine as the 6th richest man in the world during his life.

The club holds meetings every Thursday and Sunday night where the men (and since 1992 some women) prepare themselves for life after college, when their real work begins.

One of their most well-known members was Erastus Corning, who went on to become the Mayor of Albany, New York for more than 40 years! Another prominent members was Paul Moore Jr. who later became a bishop of the New York Episcopal Church and one of the best known clergy. After his death his daughter revealed that Moore was bisexual and had a history of homosexual affairs.[151] She detailed her father’s double life in her book *The Bishop’s Daughter: A Memoir*. While the Bush crime family has been active in Skull & Bones for generations, they also have a hand in Wolf’s Head. President George H. W. Bush’s younger brother William Henry Trotter “Bucky” Bush (born July 14, 1938) was inducted in 1960.

The business name of Wolf’s Head is the Phelps Association, and according to their 2013 IRS filings, which must be made public since they are registered as a 501c3 tax exempt foundation, the organization holds over $6 million dollars in assets and spent over $373,000 dollars on their members that year alone.[152] Wolf’s Head members were responsible for the formation of the Yale Political Union which is the center for politically minded students at the University.

Communism

Communism is most often promoted as a political philosophy to allegedly help the average worker (proletariat) fight against the "oppressive" business owners (bourgeoisie), but it's actually a conspiracy controlled by the elite who have used Communism as a mechanism to encourage the creation of an all-powerful super state that they themselves are in control of.

As Gary Allen puts it, author of *None Dare Call it Conspiracy*, "Communism is not a movement of the downtrodden masses but is a movement created, manipulated and used by power-seeking billionaires in order to gain control over the world…first by establishing socialist governments in the various nations and then consolidating them all through a 'Great Merger,' into an all-powerful world, socialist super-state probably under the auspices of the United Nations."[153]

The Communist Manifesto, written by Karl Marx and his often overlooked coauthor Frederich Engles, was first published in 1848, and is widely believed to have sparked the Communist Revolution in Russia in 1917 and spreading to other countries such as North Korea in 1948, China in 1949, and a few years later moving to Cuba in 1953—but what most people overlook is that Karl Marx was really just a secretary who wrote the book outlining the Communist philosophy for a secret society called the Communist League.

The manifesto itself reads, "The Communist League (formerly called the League of Just Men)…which could of course only be a secret one… commissioned the undersigned [Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels], at the Congress held in London in November 1847, to draw up for publication a detailed theoretical and practical program of the Party. Such was the origin of the following Manifesto, the manuscript of which traveled to London to be printed, a few weeks before the February Revolution."[154]

The California Senate Investigating Committee on Education in 1953 stated, "So-called modern Communism is apparently the same hypocritical and deadly world conspiracy to destroy civilization that was founded by the secret order of the Illuminati in Bavaria on May 1, 1776, and that raised its hoary head in our colonies here at critical periods before the adoption of our Federal Constitution."[155]

The report goes on to say, "The recognition of May 1, 1776, as the founding date of this world revolution conspiracy is not difficult to understand, when it is realized that May Day is frequently celebrated, even in recent times, by rioting and bloodshed on a world-wide scale."[156]

"It was not until 1847 or 1848, that the Communist conspirators, who had theretofore operated in secret, came out in the open with the Manifesto of the Communist Party, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, boldly proclaiming against practically everything upon which civilization is based—God, religion, the family, individual liberty, and so forth—the concluding paragraph of the manifesto reading: 'Communists scorn to hide their views and aims. They openly declare that their purpose can only be achieved by the forcible overthrow of the whole extant social order. Let the ruling classes tremble at the prospect of a Communist revolution. Proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.'"[157]

"In issuing this manifesto the Communist conspirators evidently believe the time had arrived when, with the aid of ignorant victims, a world-wide take-over could be accomplished; but there were not enough ignorant victims then, and the expected coup failed."[158]

"The Communist conspirators thereupon conceived the plan, for the future, of supplementing the long-established secret conspiracy, in existence since May 1, 1776, with an unremitting publish campaign for victims among the ignorant of all nations. And, in an attempt to hide from view the underlying hypocritical conspiracy existing since May 1, 1776, it was decided that, in such public campaign, the manifesto of 1848 should be heralded as the founding date of communism, and Karl Marx falsely proclaimed as its author."[159]

New Age guru Benjamin Crème, who is looking forward to the arrival of the Antichrist, thinking he will turn earth into a heavenly paradise, admitted, "Marx was indeed a member of the Hierarchy, of a certain degree. Looking at the effect of his work over the years—that could only have been the work of a disciple of some degree, an initiate of some level—first to have the vision, and secondly to have the capacity to embody that vision so that the work could spread."[160]

While Christians are often said to have killed the most number of people in the name of God, the reality is that Communists have been responsible for the greatest genocides in the world, killing in the name of the State (their government), in countries like China and North Korea. Over 30 million were killed in the Chinese Communist Revolution lead by Mao Zedong, and Joseph Stalin killed over 3 million in Russia in the name of Communism.[161] Massive numbers have also been killed in Vietnam and North Korea by Communist revolutionaries. Belief in any God other than the government is forbidden, because it reduces people's allegiance to the State. The government is God in Communist countries.

At the heart of Communism is an enormous all-powerful government that controls every aspect of people's lives—from the schools, to their jobs, to healthcare and banking; with a small group of elite bureaucrats living lives of luxury at the express of the working class. This is, of course, one of the primary goals of the Illuminati, who are promoting the idea as a utopian paradise.

Bohemian Grove

Because the Bohemian Grove has become fairly well-known in terms of the Illuminati conspiracy, many people may think they know all about it, but in most cases their knowledge is limited to only a few basic facts. Because of its extraordinarily bizarre rituals and elite membership list causing widespread rumors, most people who have done a brief investigation into the Illuminati are probably familiar with the basics of the Bohemian Grove, but for those who wish to scratch beyond the surface of this subject, there is certainly a lot to be learned.

As you may have heard, it's a 2700 acre privately owned redwood forest in Northern California located about an hour north of San Francisco in a small town named Monte Rio and serves as a vacation spot for elite men every summer in mid-July, where around 1000 of the world's most powerful men gather for a "men's retreat" inside the Grove which is kicked off by the infamous Cremation of Care ritual, the human sacrifice-depicting ceremony, where a life-size effigy of a person is burned on an altar at the base of a 40-foot tall demon-looking statue. It's sort of the Camp David of California (with some Satanism mixed in) and was created back in 1872.

The term *Bohemian* refers to people who live non-traditional lifestyles and people who are adventurers, or vagabonds. The club's annual mid-summer encampment is called the "greatest men's party on earth" by members, who include many former presidents, military leaders, famous journalists, and top businessmen.

The Bohemian Grove's mascot (and logo) is the Owl of Minerva, the same symbol that Adam Weishaupt used as his emblem.[162] Within the original Illuminati there was a level in the hierarchy called the Minerals and the owl symbolizes wisdom because it can "see in the dark" which is analogous to being enlightened.

Out of curiosity, in the past, occasionally a reporter would try to sneak inside the now highly guarded compound, and some have been successful, yet little has been reported in major publications. Membership lists and program guides have sometimes been stolen and published by employees, and in the 1980s a group called the Bohemian Grove Action Network dedicated themselves to doing just that.

The “patron saint” of the Bohemian Grove is Saint John of Nepomuk and a large statue of him stands inside the grounds with him holding his index finger over his mouth, signifying secrecy and reminding members to keep their mouths shut. A patron saint is someone who embodies a group’s philosophies or goals. John of Nepomuk received the confessionals of the queen of Bohemia in the 1300s and when pressured by the king to reveal her confessions after he suspected her of cheating on him, Saint John refused and was killed by the king. Paralleling Robert De Niro’s gangster gospel in *Goodfellas* that you “never rat on your friends, and always keep your mouth shut,” the Illuminati cherish the power of secrecy and remind all Bohos (the name members are often referred to) of this with the statue of John of Nepomuk standing prominently in their forest.

A presidential advisor to Presidents Ford, Nixon, Regan, and Clinton, named David Gergen, who also worked as a CNN contributor, was confronted on camera by Alex Jones from Infowars.com on the streets of New York during the 2004 Republican National Convention when Jones stuck a microphone in his face and asked if he’d ever seen the Cremation of Care ritual.

Gergen, looking visibly uncomfortable, responded, “Frankly I don’t think that’s something I need to talk to you about.”[163] When Jones asked him again about the ritual, Gergen snapped, “That’s none of your damn business!” and walked away.[164] The clip can be seen on YouTube.

One of their popular sayings is that “weaving spiders come not here,” which is said to mean that the Grove is not a place for conducting business or working, hence “weaving,” but this explanation is just a cover story for the saying’s true meaning. It actually means “don’t dare challenge the members,” (or really, the “Gods,” as they see themselves) and comes from the ancient story in Greek mythology of Arachne, a woman weaver who disrespected Athena, the Goddess of weaving, by failing to acknowledge that the woman’s skills came from the Goddess and not from her own power. Athena then turned her into a spider as punishment, dooming her and her descendants to weave webs forever, since out of her own ignorance she thought she was better than the “Gods.”

The club is divided into about 124 different camps inside the grounds, each one having anywhere from a dozen to 125 men. Each individual camp has its own sleeping quarters, kitchen and bar, and each one has a captain who is responsible for managing their territory.[165] Each camp has a different name and tends to contain members who work in the same field. For example, the Hill Billies camp is comprised of mainly men in big business, bankers, politicians, and media moguls from Texas. The sign for Hill Billies’ camp, which the Bush family belongs to, consists of a cloven hoofed horned Devil figure.

The Mandalay camp is made of mainly political figures such as former presidents and defense contractors. Owls Nest is another elite camp of former presidents, high ranking military personnel and defense contractors. Other camp names include the Lost Angels (banking and media), Stowaway (Rockefeller family members and other big oil men), and Hillside (military men including Joint Chiefs of Staff members), just to name a few. No seated president ever attends because his schedule and location is so closely monitored that his visitation would bring too much unwanted attention to the club, but once they are out of office (and before they are even elected) many are fixtures at the encampment.

Sociologist Peter Phillips, who earned his Ph. D. by writing his doctoral dissertation on the Grove in 1994, wrote, “Sharing a camp together at the Grove gives Bohemian directors of major U.S. policy councils ample opportunity to discuss current affairs and socio-economic policy issues. Watching and listening to reactions to Lakeside Chats by various other

Bohemians also gives policy directors an opportunity to evaluate policy concerns from the broad sampling of the American corporate business community encamped at the Grove. In this sense, the Grove serves as an informal evaluatory feedback process to the top socio-economic domestic and foreign policy councils in the United States."[166]

The midsummer encampment, as their annual gathering is called, lasts for two weeks from mid-July to the end of the month, with some members and guests coming for a weekend, and others staying for several days or even an entire week or longer. Every afternoon during the two weeks a "Lakeside Chat" is given at 12:30pm, just after lunch, where a political insider or industry leader gives a 30-minute talk on his area of expertise.

It has been rumored that Alan Greenspan was chosen to be nominated as Chairman of the Federal Reserve after a meeting in the Grove, and Arnold Schwarzenegger's successful bid for governor of California was allegedly given the green light by insiders at the Grove as well. There's even a famous picture taken in 1967 showing Ronald Reagan (then Governor of California) and Richard Nixon, who would be elected president the following year, sitting next to each other, where they are said to have been coordinating their political careers.[167]

Despite claiming the Grove is just a vacation spot and no work is conducted during the encampment, the Manhattan Project (the plan for the atomic bomb) was actually hatched inside the club.[168] Aside from the atomic bomb being born in the Bohemian Grove, the United Nations was hatched from the club as well.[169] Peter Phillips reveals, "One of the foremost political events in which the Bohemian political network played a significant role was the United Nations Conference of International Organization (UNCIO), April 25th to June 26, 1945, in San Francisco. This was the original formation meeting for the United Nations, with delegates from fifty nations. Receptions for UNCIO delegates and key dignitaries were held at the Bohemian Club on May 17, May 29, June 4, and June 5. Towards the end of the U.N. conference the Club invited all delegates to a program at the Grove."[170]

The club has limited number of rare yearbooks that are occasionally printed for members, called the *Annals of the Bohemian Grove*, that contain photos of attendees dressed in drag, along with pictures of the Cremation of Care ritual so men can reminisce about their time there. I have been able to obtain several copies of these books since every once in a while they'll find their way into the public after older members die and their book collections are sold at estate sales or donated to charity. In one Annal there is a photo of George Bush Senior and George W. Bush standing at the podium giving a Lakeside talk in 1995 where Bush Senior reportedly told the audience that his son would make a great president one day.[171]

The first book dedicated to exposing the Bohemian Grove was published in 1974 titled *The Bohemian Grove and other Retreats*, written by William Domhoff, a sociologist and professor who taught at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

The preface to his book explains that upper-class retreats are of a major sociological relevance, because "they increase the social cohesiveness of America's rulers and provide private settings in which business and political problems can be discussed informally and off the record."[172]

The book continues on page one saying, "You are one of fifteen hundred men gathered together from all over the country for the annual encampment of the rich and famous at the Bohemian Grove. And you are about to take part in a strange ceremony that has marked every Bohemian Grove gathering since 1880."[173] He goes on to include a transcript and detailed description of the Cremation of Care, which was a historic revelation, especially considering this was back in the 1970s before the Information Age.

Twenty-five years later, in the year 2000, Alex Jones from Infowars would sneak inside and capture the first ever video footage of the ritual. While it's one thing to read about the ceremony, actually seeing it leaves you with your head shaking and confirms many of the supposed "rumors" are true. Jones' footage is authentic, and after his infiltration they beefed up security and began using thermal imaging scanners and K-9 police tracker dogs to identify anyone lurking around the grounds who doesn't belong there.

The most disturbing allegations about the Bohemian Grove don't just lurk in the dark depths of the Internet, but actually come largely from a former U.S. Senator named John DeCamp. The allegations are so horrific and graphic, I don't even like to talk about them because they involve claims of sadistic child abuse, human sacrifice, and snuff films, said to have occurred there in the 1980s. If you are interested in learning about John DeCamp's allegations, you can check out his book *The Franklin Cover-up*, but I warn you, it is extremely disturbing and you may wish you had never heard of them.

Belizean Grove

When talking about secret societies or the Illuminati, most people often think of a group of men, since they have been the dominant sex throughout history, but powerful female secret societies, although rare, do exist. The Belizean Grove is a group of around 100 influential women from politics, media, and high ranking women in the military, that was created as a female version of the Bohemian Grove! It was founded on Super Bowl Weekend in 2001 by Susan Stautberg while her husband and most men were preoccupied with football, since she obviously had something else in mind.

The Belizean Grove, while inspired by the Bohemian Grove, is named after the country of Belize in Central America where the women meet every year for three days of private off-the-record talks, which is said to be "a balance of fun, substantive programs and bonding."[174] It certainly is strange that some of the world's most powerful women would fly down to Central America for a weekend when they could simply meet locally at one of their lavish private residences. Perhaps this is so they can go out to the bars without the risk of being recognized by the locals so they can engage in extramarital affairs with younger men willing to bed a cougar. Since such behavior would run them the risk of getting caught or recognized if they did it in a major American city, perhaps the long distance ladies night was designed to facilitate such activities.

While high level female executives from major banks, public relations firms, and even the U.S. Military, all belong to the Belezian Grove, perhaps the group's most famous member is Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who was nominated by Barack Obama to sit as a justice on the court. During the vetting process it was uncovered that she was a member of this strange girls group, causing her to resign since the American Bar Association forbids a judge to be a member of any organization that “discriminates” against anyone based on sex, race, religion or national origin.

If it had not been for Republicans digging for dirt on Sonia Sotomayer hoping to derail her appointment to the Supreme Court, we likely would still be unaware of the Belizean Grove’s existence. Founder Susan Stautberg was not happy about the new publicity, and said, “we like to be under the radar screen.”

The group says they are “a constellation of influential women who are key decision makers in the profit, nonprofit and social sectors; who build long-term, mutually beneficial relationships in order to both take charge of their own destinies and help others to do the same.”

One member, Mary Pearl, dean of New York’s Stony Brook University, said, “It’s hard if you’re someone who’s a type ‘A’ personality, who’s achieved a lot and who may be in the public eye—it’s hard to make friends, so it’s just a mutually supportive wonderful experience. We get together just for socializing and also just for intelligent conversation.”[175]

In order to join, a member must recommend a woman to the Belizean Grove “advisory board” that then decide whether or not to admit them to the club. A few known members are Army General Ann E. Dunwoody, former Goldman Sachs executive Ann Kaplan, and General Services Administration Director Lurita Doan. Facebook’s Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg is a likely member as well.

A New York Times article written in 2011 said, “Belizean Grove has connected the top women in technology to the top women in finance, to the top women in media, to the top women in law, to the top women in retail, and so on.”[176] It is currently unknown if the group conducts any bizarre rituals like their male counterpart at the Bohemian Grove, and at the time of this writing little else is known about the Belizean Grove.

Seraphic Society

Would you believe there's a secret society of elite *secretaries*? I'm not kidding. Known as the Seraphic Society, this strange group was founded in 1940 in New York to supply, "leaders in industry, and social, civic, philanthropic, professional and other important enterprises" with trustworthy secretaries."[177] The most powerful CEOs in America get their secretaries from the Seraphic Society, which is named after the Seraphim, the highest order of angels in Heaven, because the society considers their secretaries angels who protect Gods.

David Rockefeller, Steve Forbes, CEOs from Meryl Lynch, Goldman Sachs, Chase Manhattan Bank, Sony, and many other Fortune 500 companies all use the Seraphic Society to provide them with "trustworthy" secretaries. A *Fortune* magazine article in 2009 even admitted that the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the Council on Foreign Relations use this "secretarial Skull and Bones" society.[178]

When journalist John Glassie of the New York Times was working on an article about the group in 1998, he was told by the Saraphic president at the time, who asked not to be identified, that "We're very quiet, very low-key," and "It's very touchy."[179]

One "Angel" who was willing to speak with the reporter on the condition of anonymity told him, "Some people would love to be members but they just don't fit the qualifications, and that's what keeps this organization so special…You can't just say you want to join."[180]

With many high-powered CEOs of international banks being essentially organized crime bosses, they can't just hire any secretary to deal with their shady affairs. The Seraphic Society can provide them with women they know will not have any second thoughts or misgivings about the kind of work their boss is involved in, and who will be compensated very well for their cooperation. The saying goes that behind every great man is a great woman, and the same is true that behind every *corrupt* man, is a woman who’s willing to look the other way.

Secretaries for rich and powerful, or “administrative assistants,” as they are often called, don’t just deal with their boss’s work schedule, but are also closely intertwined with their personal lives as well. Personal assistants often get to know the intimate details of their boss’s lives and are trusted to manage what are called P & C’s or personal and confidentials, which may range from doing their personal shopping, to even arranging the delivery of drugs or hookers.

The Ordo Templi Orientis

Ordo Templi Orientis (Latin for Order of the Temple of the East or Order of Oriental Templars, often abbreviated to O.T.O.) is a secret society (or "fraternal order" as they say) founded between 1895 and 1906 in Germany or Austria (their exact original is unverified) whose spiritual teachings are based on the philosophy of Aleister Crowley and uses his *Book of the Law* as it's Bible. The O.T.O. was inspired by Freemasonry and its founders concocted nine different levels (or degrees) for initiates that each supposedly reveal new spiritual teachings. These degrees were later expanded to thirteen.

Aleister Crowley claimed a demon who possessed his wife while they were in Egypt dictated his *Book of the Law* to him in 1904, commanding him to obey the entity's ruthless social darwinistic rules such as, "Compassion is the vice of kings: stamp down the wretched and the weak: this is the law of the strong, this is our law and the joy of the world."[181] The demon, whose words Crowley wrote down in what would later be published as *The Book of the Law*, also commands readers to "Worship me with fire & blood; worship me with swords and with spears, is the command…let blood flow to my name. Trample down the Heathen; be upon them, o warrior, I will give you of their flesh to eat! Sacrifice cattle, little and big, after a child."[182]

It continues, "Damn them who pity! Kill and torture; spare not; be upon them! The best blood is of the moon, monthly, then the fresh blood of a child."[183] The demonic entity voicing its instructions finally said, "I am in a secret fourfold word, the blasphemy against all gods of men. Curse them! Curse them! Curse them! With my Hawk's head I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross."[184]

While anyone can pick up a copy of Crowley's book and read his teachings which make up the core of the O.T.O., many believe the organization's best kept secrets are only communicated orally, and involve what is called sex magic (often spelled sex magick, with a "k" on the end), which is the belief that through certain sexual practices, one can reach a level of enlightenment that is unattainable by any other means.

"Dr. Israel Regardie [Crowley's personal secretary] believed that certain sex magick techniques could be used by advanced students to incarnate 'spiritual' energies on the physical place, as well as making important shifts in the orientation of the Psyche and the Universe. In other words, if these methods were used properly, couples could bring into the world 'divine' forces in the children they generated, who could influence the future of the race."[185]

"The realization that man's emotional, physical and sexual energies are food for the 'gods' can create great personal turmoil at first, however when one begins to joyously participate in the spiritual feeding frenzy, one is 'elevated perpendicularly to infinity.'"[186]

Crowley revealed in his autobiography that, "the O.T.O. is in possession of one supreme secret. The whole of its system at the time when I became an initiate of the Sanctuary of the Gnosis was directed towards communicating to its members, by progressively plain hints, this all-important instruction. I personally believe that if this secret, which is a scientific secret, were perfectly understood, as it is not even by me after more than twelve years' [of] almost constant study and experiment, there would be nothing which the human imagination can conceive that could not be realized in practice…I make these remarks with absolute confidence, for even the insignificant approaches that I have been able to make towards the sanctuaries of this secret have shown me that the relations between phenomena are infinitely more complex than the wildest philosophers have ever imagined, and that the old proverb 'where there's a will there's a way' needs no caveat."[187]

What he’s talking about is his belief that through various sexual practices, heterosexual and homosexual, he believed one could “super charge” in a sense, his ability to “manifest” things into his life that he wanted. Crowley was a bisexual, heroin addict, who ate human feces and reportedly had sex with animals in his quest for enlightenment, yet he is still seen as an idol by rebellious teenagers and many mainstream musicians have paid homage to him.

The fact that the Ordo Templi Orientis bases its teachings on such a perverted and wicked man casts a dark cloud of suspicion over the entire organization. Little is known about the membership and current activities of the OTO but many suspect their secret sex magic rituals have attracted some very powerful men from Hollywood’s elite. Others believe that high level Illuminati members engage in homosexual Enochian sex magic rituals inside the Bohemian Grove every summer in attempts to activate latent metaphysical power allegedly hidden deep inside the brain.

Jekyll Island Meeting

The infamous Federal Reserve, the privately owned banking cartel that is in control of America's currency and financial system, was born out of a secret meeting held by a handful of banking elite on a secluded island off the coast of Georgia in 1910. Under the cover story of going on a hunting trip, a small group of men met on Jekyll Island for a week and a half to draft what would later be passed into law through a clever and sneaky tactic of voting on their plan on December 23rd 1913, the eve of Christmas Eve, while almost every congressman was at home with their families for Christmas, thus slipping the Federal Reserve Act into law.

While the Federal Reserve sounds like a department of the United States government, it is actually a conglomerate of privately owned banks who dictate America's monetary policy, and as the saying goes, "those with the gold make the rules." Just as the elite Illuminati have secretly maneuvered themselves to control both major political parties in the American government, along with the world's resources, infrastructure, and media though their business monopolies; of course they planned (and successfully accomplished) to take over the financial system as well, and are now in charge of printing the money.

The Jekyll Island meeting included executives from the major banks, such as Rockefeller family associate Frank A. Vanderlip, who was president of the National City Bank of New York; Henry Davison of J.P. Morgan Company; Charles D. Norton, president of the First National Bank of New York; Paul Warburg of Kuhn, Loeb, & Co; and Colonel Edward House, one of the founding members of the Council on Foreign Relations. The plan they put together would then be presented to Senator Nelson Aldrich, whose daughter was married to John D. Rockefeller Jr., who then presented it to Congress where it became known as the Aldrich Plan.

Paul Warburg later admitted, “The matter of a uniform discount rate [interest rate] was discussed and settled at Jekyll Island.”[188] Frank Vanderlip, who worked for the Rockefellers and attended the Jekyll Island meeting, would later admit in his autobiography that, “Discovery, we knew, simply must not happen, or else all our time and effort would be wasted. If it were to be exposed publicly that our particular group had gotten together and written a banking bill, that bill would have no chance whatever of passage by Congress.”[189]

Congressman Ron Paul wrote in his book *End the Fed*, “A secret meeting was convened at the coastal Georgia resort called the Jekyll Island Club, co-owned by J. P. Morgan himself. The press said it was a duck-hunting expedition. Those who attended took elaborate steps to preserve their secrecy, but history recorded precisely who was there: John D. Rockefeller’s man in the senate, Nelson Aldrich, Morgan senior partner Henry Davison, German émigré and central banking advocate Paul Warburg, National City Bank vice president Frank Vanderlip, and NMC staffer A. Piatt Andrew, who was also Assistant Secretary of the Treasury to President Taft.”[190]

William Greider, author of the New York Times bestseller *Secrets of the Temple: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country*, mostly dismisses what he calls “conspiracy-minded” accusations, but does admit that, “their suspicions were poetically accurate—the bankers met secretly because they knew that any proposal identified as Wall Street’s bill would be doomed in the Democratic House of Representatives.”[191]

Those who own the banking system have a tremendous amount of power in their hands because those who control the issuance of currency have the ability to create money out of nothing, declare it’s legal tender, and then loan it out to people (or the government) and then collect interest on the money they lend out. It’s the perfect scam because instead of earning their money by building something, delivering packages, raising livestock, or any number of other ways people earn a living, the banksters have cleverly positioned themselves into the place where they take in a massive amount of money for basically doing nothing other than acting as the self-proclaimed sole authority on money itself. Once you can wrap your mind around what it means to "create money out of nothing and loan it out at interest," you can realize just how monumental their scam is.

The President of the Bank of England and the second richest man in Britain in the 1920s, Sir Josiah Stamp, is reported to have revealed that, "The modern banking system manufactures money out of nothing. The process is perhaps the most astounding piece of sleight of hand that was every invented. Banking was conceived in inequity and born in sin… Bankers own the Earth. Take it away from them but leave them the power to create money, and with a flick of a pen, they will create enough money to buy it back again…Take this great power away from them and all great fortunes like mine will disappear, for then this would be a better and happier world to live in….But if you want to continue to be the slaves of bankers and pay the cost of your own slavery, then let bankers continue to create money and control credit."[192]

In 1816 Thomas Jefferson wrote to his longtime friend John Taylor thanking him for sending copy of his book *An Inquiry into the Principles and Policy of the Government of the United States* (1814). Jefferson concluded his letter saying, "And I sincerely believe, with you, that banking establishments are more dangerous than standing armies; and that the principle of spending money to be paid by posterity [future generations], under the name of funding, is but swindling futurity [the future] on a large scale."[193]

Abraham Lincoln reported believed that instead of private banks having this power, "The government should create, issue and circulate all the currency and credit needed to satisfy the spending power of the government and the buying power of consumers.....The privilege of creating and issuing money is not only the supreme prerogative of Government, but it is the Government's greatest creative opportunity."[194]

He goes on to say, "By the adoption of these principles, the long-felt want for a uniform medium will be satisfied. The taxpayers will be saved immense sums of interest, discounts and exchanges. The financing of all public enterprises, the maintenance of stable government and ordered progress, and the conduct of the Treasury will become matters of practical administration. The people can and will be furnished with a currency as safe as their own government. Money will cease to be the master and become the servant of humanity."

The Federal Reserve Bank is working with other central banks around the world to incrementally introduce regional currencies in different areas of the world by merging several currencies into one. Taking America off the gold standard in 1972, and continuing to run up the national debt is the bankers plan to inflate the United States Dollar to the point of worthlessness, forcing it to be replaced with a new regional currency or even bypassing that step and moving right to a global currency. The saying goes that the love of money is the root of all evil, and that root leads directly to the Federal Reserve banksters and the global financial mafia.

World-renowned economist John Maynard Keynes (whose philosophies are known as Keynesian economics) wrote in his book *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, that, "Lenin is said to have declared that the best way to destroy the capitalist system was to debauch the currency. By a continuing process of inflation, governments can confiscate, secretly and unobserved, an important part of wealth of their citizens. There is no subtler, no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency. The process engages all the hidden forces of economic law on the side of destruction, and does it in a manner which not one man in a million is able to diagnose."[195]

In the Bible it is written in John 2:15 that Jesus not only denounced the money changers at the Temple, but he actually tipped over their tables and used a whip to chase them away. "So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables."

In the 2000 years since then, the corrupt money changers and tax collectors have only grown more powerful through their sneaky tactics, and have continued to systematically turn most people into peasants or debt slaves. “The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender,” reads Proverbs 22:7.

The Zodiac Club

J.P. Morgan Jr., the infamous Illuminati money master (and one of the men instrumental in the creation of the Federal Reserve Bank which was conceived during the secret meeting on Jekyll Island), was also a major figure in another financial secret society called the Zodiac Club.[196] Not much is known about this intimate secret society, but a few details were uncovered in the archives of the Morgan library in New York.[197]

What is known about the Zodiac Club is that it was created in 1868 and is made up of twelve men, no more and no less, who each represent one of the twelve signs of the Zodiac and meet about a half dozen times every year for dinner to discuss their financial interests and cultural issues.

Their dinners are black tie events that are held in New York City on the last Saturday of every month between November and May at homes of the members. Dinner is provided by a fancy catering service and unlike the enormous undertaking to organize the Bilderberg Group meeting or the annual Bohemian Grove retreat; the Zodiac Club's small gathering has largely stayed under the radar and has received little press attention.

One interesting factoid reported is that during prohibition, when alcohol was illegal to produce or consume, the Zodiac Club continued to enjoy drinking by either brewing their own alcohol or using their connections to obtain it. Of course, when do the elite ever follow the law anyway?

A member usually only leaves the club when they die or resign due to old age or health problems. Once someone steps down then a replacement is chosen only after they are unanimously approved by rest of the current group.

What little information that's known about the Zodiac Club was only discovered in 2013 after a reporter for *The Gathamist*, a blog focusing on events and culture in New York City, took a tour of the Morgan Library where she noticed a strange arrangement of astrological signs painted on the ceiling. After asking about them, the curator admitted that he thought it was some kind of "Morgan Code" and then searched the library for any books or documents containing the word "Zodiac."[198] It was only then that the Zodiac Club's minutes and several menus from some of their past dinners were discovered.

"I made an appointment to see the material myself. Expecting to find handwritten notes, I was instead handed a striking seafoam green book with an intricate monogram embossed in gold," wrote art historian Danielle Oteri on *The Gathamist* blog.[199]

Oteri's article explains, "The volumes were richly illustrated with photographs of the members and the special menus from their dinners. Only a hundred copies were printed (by Charles Scribner & Sons, the letters designed by Tiffany & Co.) and they were distributed among Zodiac Club members and their heirs for a sum of $4,800 (the equivalent of around $100,000 today). The two volumes cover the club from its genesis in 1868 up until 1928."[200]

Of the few who have heard of the Zodiac Club, some believe that J.P. Morgan founded it, but apparently it was created by Edward Elmer Potter, a Major General for the Union Army during the Civil War. A book titled *America's Secret Aristocracy* was published in 1987 by historian Stephen Birmingham that discussed the group and even mentioned the names of several men who he reported as being members, including real estate mogul Robert G. Goelet, who's related to Astors and Vanderbilts; Robert S. Pirie, who was president of Rothschild Inc.; and Pittsburgh steel magnet Howard Phipps Jr. were among those identified.

Other than this little known book, and Danielle Oteri's article in *The Gathamist*, virtually nothing has been printed about this intimate group of the Eastern Establishment.

Council on Foreign Relations

While not exactly a secret society, the Council on Foreign Relations is a society with secrets, and while sounding like an ordinary committee in Congress, the CFR is actually a private organization whose foreign policy recommendations are practically marching orders for the many elite politicians who belong to it. The “council” was founded in 1921 in Manhattan by Colonel Edward Mandell House, who was Woodrow Wilson’s chief advisor, along with Paul Warburg, who was at the Jekyll Island meeting held to create the Federal Reserve Bank, Elihu Root, who was the Secretary of War under both President McKinley and Roosevelt, and a handful of other insiders who then received funding for their venture from the Rockefeller family.

The Council on Foreign Relations was a major force behind the push to launch the War in Iraq which was based on the fraud (a conspiracy theory really) that Saddam Hussein was close to building nuclear weapons so he could supposedly attack the United States and our allies—claims that the world would come to learn were completely false.

At a press conference celebrating their newly opened Washington D.C. office, Hillary Clinton said, “I am delighted to be here in these new headquarters. I have been often to, I guess, the ‘mother ship’ in New York City, but it’s good to have an outpost of the Council right here down the street from the State Department. We get a lot of advice from the Council, so this will mean I won’t have as far to go to be told what we should be doing."[201]

Aside from most high-powered politicians being members of the council, many mainstream journalists are members as well, and use their positions to promote the agenda of the CFR. Antony Sutton, author of *America’s Secret Establishment* points out, “Most CFR members are not involved in a conspiracy and have no knowledge of any conspiracy… however, there is a group within the Council of Foreign Relations which belongs to a secret society, sworn to secrecy, and which more or less controls the CFR. CFR meetings are used for their own purposes, ie., to push out their own ideas, to weigh up people who might be useful, to use meetings as a forum for discussion."[202]

The CFR has been the driving force and inspiration behind much of America's foreign policy and operates as a consensus building and lobbying firm to persuade politicians to carry out their directives. The prominent politicians and journalists then pass the propaganda they are fed into the mainstream.

Richard Haas, who has been the president of the CFR for over ten years, appeared on Bill Maher's HBO show *Real Time* in 2010 to promote his book, *War of Necessity, War of Choice*, and as soon as the interview began Maher started off by joking, "OK, as we discussed last time, you are the president of the Council on Foreign Relations, which secretly controls the world I believe."[203] Haas sat there grinning ear to ear and nodded his head in agreement as the audience laughed.

Robert Pastor, who was once the Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote a book in 2001 titled *Toward a North American Community*, where he said, "In the long term, the amero is in the best interests of all three countries,"[204] referring to the United States, Canada, and Mexico, which the Illuminati want to merge into a regional union modeled after the European Union that they plan to call the American Union. The "amero" he mentioned is the proposed new regional currency the Illuminati would like the North American Union to Implement.

The Illuminati's ultimate plan regarding currency is to first establish regional unions and currencies around the world and then merge all of them into one unified global currency (potentially called the Phoenix) which will be a digital electronic currency. Once physical currency like cash and coins have been eliminated or made nearly impossible to use, the unified electronic currency will be the global standard controlled by the World Bank and its affiliates.

This is the fulfillment of the mysterious “Mark of the Beast” prophecy written about over 2000 years ago in the Bible’s Book of Revelation, which warned “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name...and his number is Six hundred & sixty-six.” (Revelation 13:15-18)

As I’m sure you are aware, cash is slowly being phased out and even using it is now seen as suspicious because it can’t be easily traced, and keeps one’s purchasing history private. The “convenience” of a cashless society is one of the top goals of the Illuminati, and the Council on Foreign Relations is one of the front groups working to make that happen.

The Jasons

We think of most secret societies as political or spiritual associations, but one founded in 1960 is comprised of elite scientists. They are called *The Jasons*, a name that refers to Jason and the Argonauts from Greek mythology who ventured out to obtain the "golden fleece" (a piece of fabric woven from golden hair) which is symbolic of authority and kingship.

The Jasons, or sometimes referred to as JASON, is a small group of 30 to 60 of the world's top physicists, biologists, mathematicians, and computer scientists who advise the U.S. Government in their area of expertise. These men are from academia and private business who do not work directly for the government, but instead serve as advisors who are reportedly paid $850 a day from a budget of $3.5 million a year.[205] Many members are university professors who work a full time job during the school year, but in the summer months spend their time working on classified projects for the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and other government agencies.

The Jasons were responsible for a 1982 report that served as the foundation for the growing barrage of global warming propaganda titled *The Long Term Impact of Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide on Climate.* They are believed to have been involved with various missile defense programs (Star Wars or HAARP), and gave their analysis contemplating America's possible use of tactical nuclear weapons against the Vietcong during the Vietnam war.[206]

The JASONS are technically a 501C3 tax exempt nonprofit organization run through the MITRE Corporation in McLean, Virginia, and were only discovered when the Pentagon Papers were published by Daniel Elsberg in 1971 after Elsberg, a military analyst working for the RAND Corporation, photocopied seven thousand pages of government documents and leaked them to the press after discovering the extent that the Johnson administration lied to Congress and the public about the Vietnam War. Very little has been reported on them, and at the time I'm writing this there is currently only *one* book published dedicated to the group—*The Jasons: The Secret History of Science's Postwar Elite* (2006) by Ann Finkbeiner.

When researching her book, Finkbeiner reached out to members asking for interviews, including the director, who responded with an e-mail saying, "Frankly, we could not identify an up-side for our organization, but could identify potential downsides to such a book."[207]

The reason they are paid as part time contractors and kept outside the bureaucracy of the Department of Defense is because the government feels if they were actual full time employees, their advice would be biased because they would have a vested interest in pushing for certain programs or for advising against others. After all, what government employee is going to actually report to their boss that their own job is unnecessary?

Ann Finkbeiner explains in her book, "A government wanting scientists' advice on, say the feasibility of a particular system of missile defense could ask scientists who are nearest—that is, who are in the defense industry or on the Defense Department's various advisory committees. But those scientists like the national lab scientists, would have something political or financial to gain or lose and might hedge their advice accordingly. Disinterested advice comes best from independent scientists, like those on PSAC, outside the government and outside industry—that is from scientists employed in academia whose livelihoods will not depend on the advice they give."[208]

The original JASONS were former Manhattan Project physicists who just so happened to hold a major meeting in the Bohemian Grove! Peter Philips, who earned his Ph.D. in sociology after writing his dissertation on the Bohemian Grove, had this to say about the subject: "The atom bomb made this particular meeting at the Grove world famous, but it was not an isolated case of business and government planning through Bohemian club facilities. This was but one in a long series of historical business-related activities done in the context of a Bohemian corporate family network. The Club takes pride in this event, and members often tell new guests this story while at the Grove."[209]

"[Ernest] Lawrence's use of the Grove's river clubhouse for a Manhattan Project planning meeting in September of 1942 is well documented."[210] Lawrence would later join the board of directors of Monsanto and worked as a consultant to General Electric.[211] The JASONS continue to receive funding from the Department of Defense through DARPA [the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency] as well as money from other agencies who sometimes attempt to hide the paper trail through various means.

DARPA is responsible for building neural interface systems they plan to wire directly into people's brains, and they're behind a whole list of some of the creepiest high tech Orwellian cybernetic devices you could imagine.

The Bilderberg Group

Every Spring since 1954 a group of around one hundred of the world’s most powerful politicians, businessmen, bankers, media executives, and international royalty have been holding a secret three-day long meeting in an evacuated hotel that’s surrounded by armed guards. Once inside the members and invited guests engage in intense off-the-record talks about the top issues facing the world. It’s called the Bilderberg Group, or the Bilderberg meeting, named after the Bilderberg Hotel in Oosterbeck, Holland, the site of their first gathering organized by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. Attendees agree not to discuss publicly who was in attendance or what specifically was discussed, and most of them have denied any knowledge of the Bilderberg Group at all.

For over sixty years there has been an almost complete blackout in the mainstream media about the meetings, yielding to the Bilderberg Group’s wishes that they keep them out of the press. For decades, news of the infamous Bilderberg Group spread in Patriot circles, in underground newsletters and websites, until the advent of YouTube and social media finally forced *some* major mainstream media outlets to admit that Bilderberg is real and some very powerful people attend. Here’s a brief history of how the meetings were first discovered and how news of the group began to spread.

In 1957 a Pulitzer Prize winning columnist named Westbrook Pegler who wrote for Scripps Howard News Service, the Chicago Tribune, and other papers, published the first article on the Bilderberg Group—although he did not know their name at the time—his report marked the beginning of the unraveling of one of the most interesting conspiracies of all time.

In his 1957 article, Westbrook Pegler wrote, “Something very mysterious is going on when a strange assortment of 67 self-qualified, polyglot designers and arbiters of the economic and political fate of our western world go into a secret huddle on an island of Brunswick, GA and not a word gets into the popular press beyond a little routine AP story. These gumshoe super state architects and monetary schemers were drawn from all NATO countries. The fact of this weird conclave as spooky as any midnight meeting of the Klux in a piney wood, was bound to get known to the world eventually."[212]

He continues to explain how he first learned of this meeting, saying, "I got my first word of it from a reader who happened onto St. Simon Island, Brunswick, [Georgia] on her way to West Palm Beach. She wrote that the hotel on St. Simon was almost deserted, but that when she commented on this, the clerk said the place had been alive with mysterious characters a few days earlier and with Secret Service and FBI too."

While not yet having the group's name, Westbrook did connect them with the same gang who met on Jekyll Island to formulate the plans for the Federal Reserve. He said, "Senator Aldrich of Rhode Island, called this one into being. He was the father of Winthrop Aldrich. There have been many excited versions of that ancient hoe-down on Jekyll Island, but relatively few have ever heard of it at all."

After Westbrook Pegler began criticizing executives of the powerful Hearst Corporation that owned and controlled almost 30 different newspapers in America, he was fired. Hearst newspapers literally created "yellow journalism" which refers to sensationalistic headlines and careless reporting with a disregard for the facts in order to sell more newspapers.

A man named Willis Carto read Westbrook Pegler's article and it motivated him to begin investigating and tracking the Bilderberg Group himself. In June of 1958 Willis Carto founded Liberty Lobby that published a newsletter titled *Liberty Lowdown* that included articles exposing the Bilderberg Group. He would later begin publishing a newspaper called *The Spotlight*.

Over two decades later, Jim Tucker learned of this elusive group from Carto and would become the world's foremost expert on them. Tucker explained, "Had it not been for Willis A. Carto, who hired me as editor of *The Spotlight* and then put me on the tack of Bilderberg, I would probably-almost assuredly-never heard of the word 'Bilderberg.' Having had the opportunity, through Carto's good offices as founder of Liberty Lobby, publisher of *The Spotlight*, to begin what ultimately proved to be a generation of world-wide Bilderberg-hunting, I was able to bring news about Bilderberg to literally millions of folks who would like myself have otherwise remained in the dark about these globalist schemers."[213]

Tucker tracked the Bilderberg Group from 1975 until his death in 2013 at the age of 78. His book, titled *Jim Tucker's Bilderberg Diary* contains decades of information about where the Bilderbergers met, who was in attendance and what was discussed. Tucker had somehow gained the support of an insider who would leak information to him every year about the location and date of the meeting, as well as attendee lists and other information.

It's foolish to claim there hasn't been a secret arrangement between the Bilderberg Group and the American mainstream media to keep them out of the press. When over 100 of the world's most influential politicians, media owners, banking executives, and business elite fly half way around the world to meet for three days in a closed down five star hotel that's surrounded by armed guards, you can't say it's not newsworthy. And you certainly can't say it's not interesting. For years, if anyone called into any of the major talk shows like Rush Limbauh, Sean Hannity, Glenn Beck and others, and told the call screener they wanted to ask about the Bilderberg Group, the call would never be put through. "We're not taking calls on that right now, sorry. Click." If the person calling gave the call screener a bogus question and happened to be put on air and then asked about the Bilderbergers, they would be ridiculed and the call would be dropped immediately (something that's happened to me many times).

After decades of news blackouts, more recently because social media has helped expose Bilderberg, some outlets have reluctantly (and briefly) mentioned the event in attempts to avoid looking like they were covering it up.

In 1991 an Arkansas newspaper published an article reporting that Bill Clinton was attending the Bilderberg meeting. This of course was before people were using the Internet to spread news and at a time when one local newspaper's report would rarely be seen by anyone outside its limited circulation area. The article stated, "Private sponsors picked up the tab for Gov. Bill Clinton's recent trips to Germany and the Soviet Union—a journey he made without staff aids, spokesman said Thursday. Mike Gauldin, the governor's spokesman, said the Bilderberg Conference paid for Clinton's trip to Germany and a Washington DC philanthropist paid for the Soviet Union visit."[214]

In the 1970s a Democratic U.S. representative from Louisiana named John R. Rarick caught wind of the meetings and became suspicious and wanted to know if taxpayers were paying for American officials to attend the secret meeting. Rarick typed up a ten-page statement and actually entered it into the official Congressional Record. "Mr. Speaker, on several occasions during recent months, I called the attention of our colleagues to activities of the Bilderbergers—an elite international group comprised of high government officials, international financiers, businessmen, and opinion-makers…" the statement begins.

"This exclusive international aristocracy holds highly secret meetings annually or more often in various countries. The limited information available about what transpires at these meetings reveals that they discuss matters of vital importance which affect the lives of all citizens. Presidential Advisor Henry Kissinger, who made a secret visit to Peking from July 9 to July 11, 1971, and arranged for a presidential visit to Red China, was reported to be in attendance at the most recent Bilderberg meeting held in Woodstock, Vermont, April 23 to April 25, 1971. The two points reportedly discussed at the Woodstock meeting were, 'the contribution of business in dealing with current problems of social instability' and 'the possibility of a change of the American role in the world and its consequences.'"

“Following these secret discussions, which are certainly not in keeping with the Western political tradition of ‘open covenants openly arrived at,’ the participants returned to their respective countries with the general public left uninformed, notwithstanding the attendance of some news media representatives, of any of the recommendations and plans agreed upon as a result of the discussions—or for that matter even the occurrence of the meeting itself.”[215]

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, best known for warning the world about the Military Industrial Complex in his 1961 farewell address, wrote a memo to his assistant in 1955 about that year’s Bilderberg meeting which took place in Barbizon, France. While Eisenhower didn’t mention them by name, it’s pretty obvious who he’s talking about in the memo when he says, “I understand next week Prince Bernhard is having a meeting at Barbizon, continuing his exploration looking toward improving European and American relations. If personally you can fit such a trip into your schedule, I suggest you find the money and go to France.”[216]

I have been able to obtain several recent years of Bilderberg’s IRS filings since they are registered as a 501c3 “charitable foundation,” certain financial information must be made available for public inspection, if you know where to look.[217] I discovered they operate under the business entity “American Friends of Bilderberg” and the documents show that in 2008 they received $645,000 in contributions to fund their annual meeting, with money coming from Goldman Sachs ($25,000), Microsoft ($75,000), Henry Kissinger ($20,000), David Rockefeller ($50,000) and others. The 2009 returns show the Washington Post newspaper donated $25,000.[218]

Under the “Summary of Direct Charitable Activities,” the forms list the organization’s goals as “Organizing & sponsoring conferences which study & discuss significant problems of the western alliance [and] collaborating on the Bilderberg meetings held in Europe & North America.”

The expenses on the 2008 and 2012 documents are listed as approximately $900,000 per year, which covers renting out the entire hotel for three days, paying the private security forces and compensating local police for the extra man-hours, and for paying the travel expenses of members and attendees.

The documents list James Johnson as the treasurer, who is also the chairman of Perseus LLC, a merchant bank and private equity fund management company based in Washington D.C. with offices in New York and an associated advisory firm in Munich, Germany. Perseus is a leading figure in Greek Mythology and is the one who beheaded Medusa.

Johnson was once the Chairman of the Executive Committee at Fannie Mae; and before that he was a managing director at Lehman Brothers. He's also on the Board of Directors for Goldman Sachs and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

I have personally been to the offices of Perseus in Washington D.C. seeking a comment on the documents, and as soon as I mentioned "Bilderberg," James Johnson's secretary said they have no comment and slammed the door. The person listed on the forms as the accountant is Robert T. Foldes of Leon D. Alpern & Company and when I called them, the secretary confirmed they handle the taxes for American Friends of Bilderberg but declined to give me any further information.

Documents leaked from the 1955 Bilderberg meeting show they were planning the European Union and a central currency back in the 1950s, decades before the EU was formed and their new Euro currency introduced. The documents are marked "Personal and strictly confidential," and "Not for publication either in whole or in part." Two years later, in 1957, the European Union started to take shape with the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC), which merged the markets of six European countries: France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. This later grew into the European Union in 1993 containing 28 nation states: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech

Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Most of their plan has been accomplished, and while they will continue to play themselves off as just an ordinary business conference, the decades of denials and media blackouts prove the Bilderberg Group has been deceptive from their inception and the inside sources who have leaked their plans over the years prove the power they wield. Most often, what's talked about or agreed upon inside Bilderberg soon mysteriously finds its way into becoming law. It clearly appears that wars, economic booms and busts, and controversial new legislation are often traced back to this small group of around 100 men.

While politicians love to point the finger at their rivals and place all the country's ills on the opposing party, most politicians (at least at the time I'm writing this) haven't even uttered the word Bilderberg. Congressman Ron Paul, one of the rare honest politicians, was once asked about the Bilderberg Group by a fan at a book signing who videotaped the interaction and posted it on YouTube. "Did you hear about that recent Bilderberg Group meeting in Chantilly, Virginia?" the person asked. Ron Paul responded, "Yeah, recently there was one and there were some reports on it—I didn't read a whole lot about it but they certainly were there."[219]

The cameraman then asked what he thought they were doing there, and Paul responded, "Well, they probably get together and talk about how they're going to control the banking systems of the world and natural resources—and we get together and talk about how we're going to get our freedom back. So we have our own things to talk about too."

Ron Paul didn't play dumb and didn't ridicule the man's question—instead he answered it quite frankly, which is surprising for a politician, particularly when it comes to talking about the Bilderberg Group. Ron Paul was (and still may be, depending on what happens after this book is published) the only politician (at the time) to have ever even uttered the word “Bilderberg.”

When Hillary Clinton was campaigning for president hoping to secure the election in 2008, someone asked her about the Bilderberg Group at an event in New Hampshire and posted the video on YouTube. “What’s going on at the Bilderberg meeting and what are you guys talking about up there?” She cackled, “Ha ha ha, I have no idea what you’re talking about.” The man responded, “Why are they such top secret meetings?” To which she answered (looking like a kid with their hand caught in the cookie jar), “Sir, I have no idea what you’re talking about.”[220]

She has no idea what he’s talking about? How could one of the most powerful and politically connected women in the world possibly not know about them? It’s ridiculous to claim that she isn’t intimately aware of the Bilderberg Group and obviously she was playing dumb to uphold their secrecy policy. Hilary wrote her college thesis on Saul Alinsky, the leftist extremist who dedicated his book *Rules for Radicals* to Lucifer, and adored his subversive tactics to further the Big Government agenda.

Because of social media and independent blogs and YouTube channels gaining so much popularity in the early 2000’s, Bilderberg’s secrecy has been blown, and they, (along with their accessories to the cover-up in the mainstream media) have been forced to break their silence on the group and finally, beginning in around the year 2012, *some* mainstream outlets began to *briefly* touch on the meeting to try to give the impression they weren’t obviously blacking them out in a desperate attempt to maintain their fading facade of credibility.

Almost every article or brief TV news segment mentions how “conspiracy theorists” think the group is up to no good, while glossing over the fact that for over a half century they conveniently ignored the meetings or how the top radio hosts like Sean Hannity, Glenn Beck and others actually ridiculed any caller who even brought it up.

When hosting his popular show on the Fox News Channel, Glenn Beck once claimed that talking about the Bilderberg Group was going down a "tin foil hat road," and said he didn't care about the Bilderberg Group, and then compared them to a toy company. "The Bilderbergers had their meeting, I don't really know much about these people, and I don't really care. I know probably more about the Build a Bear people in the malls, and I know those people are brainwashing our kids with teddy bears. I don't know what kind of secret meetings they have to get our kids into the bear industry, but I don't like it. If the Bilderberg's are half as evil as the teddy bear people, look out."[221]

Beck then went on to say that those inside the Bilderberg meeting were probably talking about how to help the world.

Spiritual Beliefs

It is often said that the Illuminati are “satanic” or Luciferian, which seems unbelievable to someone new to this material because it’s so far outside of most people’s realm of understanding that such claims are often met with skepticism, disbelief, or outright ridicule. But when one takes a closer look and understands just what Satanism and Luciferianism is, such claims not only seem reasonable, but they are undeniable. First we must look at the story of Adam and Eve to begin to understand this.

While Christians, Jews, and many others believe that the first humans disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden by following the advice of Satan, the Illuminati (and every occult association, fraternity, or secret society) believes that Satan actually saved Adam and Eve from enslavement to God, who they say was holding back Mankind’s true potential and keeping Adam and Eve imprisoned in ignorance.

Many religions have an esoteric and an exoteric doctrine, one interpretation for the masses, and another doctrine with deeper or different interpretations for the scholars or religious insiders, often called “adepts” or “the elect.” In Judaism this “second” doctrine is called the Midrash, which goes “beyond” the “simple” and “legal” interpretations of the Torah (the Old Testament) and gives an “expanded view” of the Bible’s stories.

Remember that Albert Pike said, “Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, *conceals* [emphasis in original] its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it [the Mason] calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it.”[222]

In his book, *The Wisdom of the Knowing Ones*, Manly P. Hall explains, “all of these religions had been divided into two sections, one of which was for the public and the other essentially an esoteric or mystical tradition for a few who were willing to consecrate their lives through a process of internal enlightenment. For the many there was obedience to the forms and letters of religious law. For the few there was an insight into the deeper meanings of these things by means of which orthodoxies were transformed into great spiritual systems.”[223]

Lucifer and Satan

The biggest secret of the Illuminati is that they believe Satan is good, because in their view he is the “superior God,” and this secret has endowed them with tremendous power. Helena Blavatsky in her 1888 book *The Secret Doctrine*, explains, “Thus Lucifer—the spirit of Intellectual Enlightenment and Freedom of Thought—is metaphorically the guiding beacon, which helps man to find his way through the rocks and sand banks of Life, for Lucifer is the Logos in his highest.”[224]

She continues, “Lucifer is divine and terrestrial light, the ‘Holy Ghost’ and ‘Satan,’ at one and the same time, visible space being truly filled with differentiated breath invisibly; and the Astral Light, the manifested efforts of two who are one, guided and attracted by ourselves, is the karma of humanity, both a personal and impersonal entity…The Fall was the result of man’s knowledge, for his ‘eyes were opened.’ Indeed, he was taught wisdom and the hidden knowledge by the ‘Fallen Angel’…And now it stand proven that Satan, or the Red Fiery Dragon, the “lord of Phosphorus” (brimstone was a theological improvement), and Lucifer, or ‘Light-Bearer,’ is in us: it is our Mind—our tempter and Redeemer, our intelligent liberator and Savior from pure animalism…Without this quickening spirit, or human Mind or soul, there would be no difference between man and beast.”[225]

Satanist Aleister Crowley said, “This serpent, Satan, is not the enemy of Man, be He who made Gods of our race, knowing Good and Evil; He bade ‘Know Thyself’ and taught initiation. He is ‘the Devil’ of the book of Thoth, and His emblem is Baphomet, and Androgyne who is the hieroglyph of arcane perfection.”[226]

The Secret Doctrine states, “For no one, not even the greatest living adept, would be permitted to, or could—even if he would—give out promiscuously, to a mocking, unbelieving world, that which has been so effectually concealed from it for long aeons and ages."[227]

Such views can also be considered Gnosticism, which is a philosophical belief that a lower level evil god called the Demiurge created humans as slaves and in order to be free from the enslavement they must be given the secret knowledge (gnosis) from a higher level God (Satan). Manly P. Hall explains, "Gnostics never looked to salvation from sin (original or other), but rather they desired release from unconsciousness and incomprehension, whereby they meant primarily ignorance of spiritual realities. Salvation, (or liberation) is a potential present in every man and woman, and it is not vicarious but individual. The great Messengers of the Light come to stimulate this potential and they do not by their death but by their lives."[228]

Those who believe they have discovered this "secret to life" often keep it contained within occult fraternities, hoping to keep the vast majority of people ignorant of their supposed "truth" so they can keep others from becoming "enlightened" so they can more easily take advantage of them. This sort of spiritual supremacism often leads to Social Darwinism, which is the philosophy of the survival of the fittest. These people have no concern for their fellow man, but are narcissistic, megalomaniacs who view themselves as Gods as a result of Satan's secret. This superiority complex is conveyed by the "do what thou wilt" philosophy that Aleister Crowley and Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey preached, which means "do whatever you want" because you are your own God.

In his authorized biography *The Secret Life of a Satanist*, it was revealed that Anton LaVey wasn't concerned if Satanism inspired people to commit mass murder. It reads, "Anton LaVey maintains that he isn't really concerned about accusations of people killing other people in the name of Satan. He swears that each time he reads of a new killing spree, his only reaction is, 'What, 22 people? Is that all?...There will undoubtedly be more Satanically-motivated murders and crimes in the sense that *The Satanic Bible* tells you 'You don't have to take any more shit.'"[229]

LaVey also admired a homosexual serial killer from the early 1900s named Carl Panzram, who killed at least twenty-two people, and who claimed to have raped one thousand men. “The only way I would like to ‘help’ the great majority of people is the same way Carl Panzram ‘reformed’ people who tried to reform him. It would be most merciful to help them by relieving them of the life they seem to hate so much. People should be happy I’m not a humanitarian—or I’d probably be the most diabolical mass murderer the world has ever known,” LaVey said.[230]

Richard Ramirez, the “Night Stalker” serial killer from Los Angeles, and Charles Manson were both interested in Satanism. Ramirez famously drew a satanic pentagram on the palm of his hand during his trial and would shout “Hail Satan!” to television cameras and reporters.

Because Satanists do not believe in an afterlife or an all-knowing, all-powerful God, they are not concerned with any kind of divine retribution for their actions, and are thus motivated even more to ruthlessly take advantage of others since they believe in the “survival of the fittest” and that “might is right” and that they themselves are Gods.

This “royal secret” of Satanism will likely one day soon be revealed to the world after having been practiced in secret for thousands of years. The Illuminati and the counterfeit (anti)Christ will likely openly reveal Satanism as the new World Religion and claim it had to be kept a secret all these years until the New World Order was complete. Anyone who denounces this antichrist or the new World Religion will be targeted for termination and will be blamed for trying to stop the completion of “heaven on earth.”

Double Speak

The Illuminati often use “double speak” to conceal their real agenda and present powerful propaganda to the masses who often blindly accept it as the truth without a second thought. The general public have been so dumbed down, they will believe anything their favorite political party tells them and are easily mislead by language and rhetoric that is meant to disguise the speaker’s true intentions. For example, the Department of Defense is really the Department of War, and that’s what it used to be called until the government changed its name in 1949.

The Patriot Act, the bill signed into law shortly after the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, was actually an assault on the Bill of Rights and anything but patriotic, but the term Patriot Act was designed to make the new laws sound as American as the Fourth of July. President Bush declared a “War *on* Terror” when really it was a “War *of* Terror.” President Obama said that raising the debt ceiling wouldn’t increase our country’s debt, when that’s clearly exactly what it does, but because the masses have become zombies who react to keywords or neuro linguistic programming language patterns, most people accept statements from presidents as truth without thinking twice.

In some of my viral YouTube videos I’ve asked people to sign petitions supporting legislation that nobody in their right mind would even consider agreeing to, but because I prefaced the question with “would you support Obama…” countless people signed the fake petitions because their blind support for the president caused them to shut off their brain and not even listen to what I was actually asking them to support.

The Hegelian Dialectic

Because the elite Illuminati are social Darwinist Satanists, they often employ what's called the Hegelian Dialectic, which allows them to roll out their diabolical plans with little opposition. What this entails is creating a problem on purpose through covert means so the government can then present their solution, which is a plan they had waiting in the wings but were unable to implement without the proper crisis which was needed to justify their desired actions.

The Hegelian Dialectic consists of a thesis, an antithesis, and a synthesis, or a problem, a reaction, and a solution. This is the basic structure of a false flag operation which is a military strategy where a government commits a terrorist act while making it appear as if it came from their political enemy—or they allow a terrorist attack to occur when they could have easily stopped it—because the success of the event serves as a pretext (a reason) to carry out actions that previously would have been widely unacceptable by the public, but after the attack occurs, much of the public actually demands that a reaction occur, all the while unaware that behind the scenes the entire operation was planned to get that exact support which was lacking before the attack occurred.

Just three days after the 9/11 attacks, the co-chair of the Council on Foreign Relations stated, "There is a chance for the President of the United States to use the disaster to carry out what his father—a phrase his father used I think only once, and it hasn't been used since— and that is a New World Order."[231]

This attack was precisely the "New Pearl Harbor" event discussed in the Project for the New American Century think tank's own *Rebuilding America's Defenses* report published in September of 2000. From this Illuminati front group came the very plan explaining their need for a "catalyzing event—a new Pearl Harbor"[232] which would be used to set the stage for America to carry out the Illuminati's agenda by invading the Middle East to complete the New World Order.

In 1962, a false flag attack plan was drawn up by top U.S. military officials who wanted to commit various acts of terror *in Washington* D.C. and in Miami that would be made to appear as if Cuba had done them, in order to generate public support for an invasion of Cuba. Operation Northwoods, as it was called, plainly stated, "We could develop a Communist Cuban terror campaign in the Miami area, in other Florida cities, and even in Washington…The terror campaign could be pointed at Cuban refugees seeking haven in the United States…Hijacking attempts against civil aircraft surface craft should appear to continue as harassing measures condoned by the government of Cuba."

When confronted with such damning evidence, most people immediately dismiss it as a "conspiracy theory" but the Operation Northwoods documents have been declassified and are 100% authentic. The plan was even reported on ABC News in 2001 on their website where the article reads, "In the early 1960s, America's top military leaders reportedly drafted plans to kill innocent people and commit acts of terrorism in U.S. cities to create public support for a war against Cuba."[233]

For people still skeptical about the September 11th inside job, all they need to do is read the Northwoods documents and understand that plans like this have actually been put on paper, and approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (the heads of all U.S. military branches). Similar attacks have been carried out in the past by governments throughout history such as Operation Gladio throughout Europe, the Gleiwitz incident and the Reichstag fire in Germany, the Gulf of Tonkin incident in Vietnam, and others.

Henry Kissinger has been intimately involved with nearly every major organization or front group that is behind the push for a New World Order and was originally named the Chairman of the 9/11 Commission by President Bush, which was set up to (pretend to) investigate the terrorist attacks on September 11th 2001. Kissinger resigned from the commission after family members of 9/11 victims discovered his business ties with the Bin Ladens.[234] In an interview on CNBC in February 2009, Kissinger was asked about the problems the Obama administration was facing regarding the ongoing “War on Terror” and the economic meltdown, where he responded that Obama, “can give new impetus to American foreign policy partly because the reception of him is so extraordinary around the world. His task will be to develop an overall strategy for America in this period when, really, a New World Order can be created. It’s a great opportunity, it isn’t just a crisis.”

President Obama’s Chief of Staff Rahm Emanual made a startling statement after the economic crash of 2008, when he said, “You never let a serious crisis go to waste. And what I mean by that it’s an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before.”[235]

Since we’re talking about power-mad megalomaniac Satanists here, it shouldn’t come as a surprise that these men would orchestrate terror attacks in order to gain more power and further their political agendas. And it’s certainly not a surprise that most of these men have ties to occult cabals like Skull & Bones, Freemasonry, or the Bohemian Grove—all of which are incubators for corruption and keepers of the great “secret of secrets.”

Sex Magic

As I mentioned in a previous section of this book, sex magic (sometimes stylized *sex magick* with a “k” on the end) is the belief that through secret sexual intercourse rituals one can achieve altered states of consciousness which activate dormant metaphysical powers locked inside the mind, supposedly enabling the practitioners to harness God-like manifestation abilities in what has been described as a conscious, living lucid dream. As strange as this idea may be, it isn’t necessarily a crime for two consenting adults to engage in bizarre sex acts, but unfortunately there are some very disgusting and horrific types of sex magic that are beyond evil, and I caution you—what you are about to read is extremely disturbing.

In parts of Africa many men believe if they rape an albino woman it will give them magical power.[236] “There is a belief that if you have [sexual] relations with a girl with albinism, you will cure AIDS. So there are many girls with albinism who are being raped in [Africa] because of this belief,” warned Peter Ash, founder of human rights group Under The Same Sun.[237]

The London *Telegraph* reported in 2001 that some South African men rape babies believing it is a ‘cure’ for AIDS.[238] More than 67,000 cases of rape and sexual assault against children were reported in the year 2000 in South Africa alone.[239]

In 2013 the singer of a popular heavy metal band in the United Kingdom called Lost Prophets was sentenced to thirty-five years in prison for thirteen child sex offenses including sexually abusing babies in black magic rituals.[240] Several women were also sent to prison for willingly giving him their small children so he could use them for this exact purpose.

The singer, Ian Watkins, was apparently a fan of Aleister Crowley, as many musicians are—who wrote in his book *Magick: In Theory and Practice* that people can obtain satanic power by murdering children. In the chapter on blood sacrifices Crowley wrote, “For the highest spiritual working one must accordingly choose that victim which contains the greatest and purest force. A male child of perfect innocence and high intelligence is the most satisfactory and suitable victim.”[241]

In 2014 it was revealed that a group of Aleister Crowley fans were abusing children in an England suburb by doing Satanic sex rituals.[242] A woman named Jacqueline Marling even turned her daughter over to the cult and forced her to participate in sex magic rituals beginning when she was just seven years old.[243]

Such insane and evil sex magic practices aren’t just contained to primitive tribes in Africa or twisted rock stars or Aleister Crowley fans. It appears to be one of the deepest and darkest secrets of the Illuminati as well. Apparently in some sects within the Illuminati, initiates believe this kind of child abuse can “super charge” their “metaphysical powers” enabling them to conjure into their life whatever they wish, in a perverted version of the “Law of Attraction,” the philosophy popularized by the DVD *The Secret* in 2006.

In the 1990s a Republican Nebraska State Senator named John DeCamp published a book titled *The Franklin Cover-Up* where he alleged children were taken into the Bohemian Grove and ritualistically raped and murdered in black magic rituals at the hands of some of the members in the 1980s.[244] DeCamp, who was an attorney, said he personally interviewed several children from orphanages who allegedly identified the Bohemian Grove as the location of this supposed abuse.[245]

Former CIA director Bill Colby is said to have warned DeCamp that he was looking into something so dark he should walk away and “Get as far away from this thing as you can. Forget you ever saw it or know it, heard it or anything else.”[246] Colby later died in what was called a canoeing accident, but many suspect he was murdered because of the strange circumstances surrounding his death and his conversations with DeCamp about sex magic. There were no witnesses to his death and he drown after mysteriously going canoeing by himself.

In 1989 the *Washington Times* printed a front-page headline reading, “Homosexual Prostitution Inquiry Ensnares VIPs with Reagan and Bush,” after it was discovered that a high-powered lobbyist named Craig Spence was operating a pedophile prostitution ring in the Washington D.C. area that catered to elite clients.[247] Spence turned up dead a few months after the article was published from an alleged suicide. Whispers of elite pedophile rings have alleged for decades that high-powered politicians and businessmen engage in child abuse for fun or part of secret society rituals. This same dark cloud has hung over the heads of Catholic priests for many decades.

A major star at the BBC in England [the British Broadcasting Corporation] named Jimmy Savile reportedly abused hundreds of children, some as young as two-years-old, and even had sex with dead bodies, according the *Washington Post* and other mainstream media outlets.[248] Such news leads many to believe this kind of activity is part of an organized network of powerful perpetrators, not just separate incidences.

It’s unknown how common these kinds of sex magic rituals are within the Illuminati or other Aleister Crowley-inspired groups, and when one tries to understand why anyone would even consider doing such a thing it challenges the mind to come up with an answer. These perpetrators obviously aren’t just sick psychopaths living in an abandoned cabin in the woods. These are successful men (and possibly women) who are addicted to power and wealth and fuel their ego with all of the finest pleasures of this world, often becoming so jaded and desensitized they are eventually unable to find excitement or pleasure in anything normal.

Since these acts of sexual abuse are the worst thing anyone could possibly do to another human being, these acts of ultimate evil are believed to cause some kind of hormones to be released into the blood which give the perpetrators a kind of satanic adrenaline rush that magnifies their supposed ability to alter reality metaphysically by their thoughts, thus being the most potent “supernatural steroid” in the world. There is no doubt why sex magic is considered the deepest and darkest secret of the Illuminati, and any human being with a soul can agree that sex offenders of all kinds must be eradicated from the earth.

Transhumanism

One of the ultimate goals of the Illuminati is to become Gods themselves in what they believe is the final stage of their evolution or "transcendence." This branch of science is called *Transhumanism*—meaning supporters hope to transition from a human into a totally new species or transcend into a "God."[249] This isn't just a lofty science fiction pipe dream of a few megalomaniacs with God complexes, this is a very real plan being pursued by some very wealthy and powerful people. Billionaire Peter Thiel, the cofounder of PayPal and early investor in Facebook, believes scientists will soon "cure death" enabling him and other billionaires to live forever. "You can accept [death], you can deny it or you can fight it. I think our society is dominated by people who are into denial or acceptance, and I prefer to fight it."[250]

The most popular "guru" of Transhumanism (sometimes symbolized as H+) is Google engineer Ray Kurzweil who believes by the year 2045 he and other elite will achieve immortality through cybernetic enhancements that transform them into literal supercomputing cyborgs who are physically wired into the Internet at all times—or even replacing their biological brains and bodies entirely with "more efficient" silicone computers and mechanical bodies in order to "transcend." Kurzweil predicts, "As you go out to the 2040s, now the bulk of our thinking is out in the cloud. The biological portion of our brain didn't go away but the nonbiological portion will be much more powerful. And it will be uploaded automatically the way we back up everything now that's digital."[251]

In 2013 Google created Calico, a life extension and anti-aging biotech company to help them pursue Kurzweil's dream of beating death, and many other companies are pouring billions of dollars into transhumanist technology and working non-stop hoping to soon unlock immortality.

Transhumanist philosopher Zoltan Istvan, who believes that teaching children about the Bible should be banned and that the government should regulate who is allowed to have children, writes, “The transhumanist age—where radical science and technology will revolutionize the human being and experience—will eventually bring us indefinite lifespans, cyborgization, cloning, and even ectogenesis, where people use artificial wombs outside of their bodies to raise fetuses…Breeding controls and measures make more sense when you consider that some leading life extensionist scientists believe we will conquer human mortality in the next 20 years.”[252]

These “breeding controls” also seem to align with the Georgia Guidestones, the 19-foot-tall granite monument calling for a world population reduction down to 500 million people in order to preserve the earth’s natural resources. The idea is, if the life extension technology will extend people’s lives by hundreds of years or more, the elite feel they need to save the planet’s resources for themselves, because as CNN founder Ted Turner says, “There’s too many people…too many people are using too much stuff, if there were less people, they’d be using less stuff.”[253]

The mysterious man behind the strange structure made a reference to transhumanism in a little known book he published shortly after the stones were erected in 1980. “We suggest that scholars throughout the world begin now to establish new bases upon which later generations can develop a totally new universal language for men and machines. It will be adapted to our speech mechanism and to the language faculties and patterns impressed in our nervous systems. Its spoken and printed forms will be capable of accurate interchange by electromechanical means,” wrote R.C. Christian, an admitted pseudonym.[254]

On the inside cover of the book, titled *Common Sense Renewed*, it says the first two printings were sent to several thousand political leaders and “shapers of public opinion” around the world. Aside from admitting he represented the unnamed group responsible for the creation of the Georgia Guidestones, the author says part of their purpose is that, “The hearts of our human family must be touched and warmed to welcome a global rule by reason."[255]

May I remind you that several of the "guides," or commandments as many people call them, aside from reducing to human population down to 500 million (which is more than a 90% reduction from 2014 levels) suggest creating a global government, a global universal language, and the last of the ten "guides," engraved in eight different languages on the faces of the stones, warns people to not be a "cancer on the earth."

The elite's insane dreams of becoming God get even more horrifying the closer you look into them. Richard Seed, a leading geneticist and Transhumanist promoter, said, "God made man in his own image. God intended for man to become one with God. We are going to become one with God. We are going to have almost as much knowledge and almost as much power as God. Cloning and the reprogramming of DNA is the first serious step in becoming one with God."[256]

Regarding the resistance to such plans, he ominously responded, "We are going to become Gods, period. If you don't like it, get off. You don't have to contribute, you don't have to participate, but if you are going to interfere with *me* becoming a God, you're going to have trouble. There'll be warfare."[257]

Illuminati Transhumanists believe what Satan told Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden will soon come to pass—that they will become all-knowing, all-powerful, immortal Gods who will rule planet earth forever and ever. This New Age philosophy falls in line with their Social Darwinist "survival of the fittest" mentally, and while history is filled with a long list of men who have believed they themselves were Gods—from the ancient pharaohs in Ancient Egypt to Adolf Hitler—today the elite, and much of the general public, anxiously await the Singularity and believe they will soon achieve their Luciferian transition into a God, just as Satan promised mankind so long ago.

Symbolism

A picture is worth a thousand words, as the cliché goes, because pictures contain so much information someone could speak for hours trying to describe every detail but still couldn’t convey everything one encapsulated. Symbols reach deep into the psyche and the soul, and consciously and unconsciously convey meanings and evoke emotional responses. We live in a world full of symbols. A red light at an intersection means stop; a wedding ring symbolizes a man and woman’s commitment to each other. The American flag represents the values, principles, and hard work that built America. The true power of symbols comes from their ability to evoke certain thoughts and feelings.

A souvenir you bought on a trip reminds you of all the fun you had there and just the sight of the object stimulates memories and feelings about the trip. A framed photo of your favorite car hanging on the wall in your office subconsciously reminds you of the freedom you feel on the weekends driving down a country road, briefly leaving your worries behind. Family photos invoke feelings of joy and fond memories just from glancing at them for a moment as they sit on our desk or hang on our refrigerator.

While we can all agree and articulate what many symbols mean, what makes them so mysterious is that the same symbol may have completely different meanings to different people. Let us now decode some popular Illuminati symbols and uncover their occult “hidden” meanings and see why they are used and what they mean to insiders. Most of these symbols themselves aren’t “evil” in and of themselves, they’ve just been adopted by groups or people who are evil, so various symbols have taken on a negative connotation. The swastika was a popular Hindu symbol of health and well-being before the Nazis incorporated it as the logo of the Nazi party, and so now we have a negative association to what was originally a positive symbol. The symbol itself is certainly not evil, but we have come to associate it with evil, when in reality it was hijacked and perverted, so for most people its meaning has been tainted from what it originally meant to convey.

The Sun

To the ancient Mystery Schools in the past, as well as numerous modern mystical or enlightenment groups, (including the Illuminati), the sun is their primary symbol and is often incorporated into their logos and artwork. The sun represents power and light. The word *Illuminati* means *enlightened ones*, and the word *enlighten* contains the word *light*, which comes from the sun. Someone is said to be *bright* if they are intelligent and are also called *brilliant*, which, if you look that word up in the dictionary, you will also find that it means "shining brightly."

The sun rises and brings life to the world by chasing away the cold and scary darkness of the night. It is an awesome, enormous, and mysterious power that affects all life on planet earth. We tell time based on the sun, it affects the seasons, and it even has an immense effect on our psyche and our health. The 28th degree in Freemasonry is called the Knight of the Sun, and is just one example of how Masons pay homage to this massive star at the center of our solar system.

The Pyramid

The pyramid represents the social hierarchy of society, symbolically depicting a small enlightened few at the top, and the masses of ignorant “worker bees” on the bottom. A sun on top of a pyramid symbolically represents the small number of Illuminati “enlightened leaders” at the top of the social hierarchy ruling over the masses of ignorant slaves below who make up the base of the pyramid.

The Dictionary of Symbols explains, “The base is square and represents the earth. The apex is the starting-point and the finishing-point of all things—the mystic ‘center.’ Joining the apex to the base are the triangular-shaped faces of the pyramid, symbolizing fire, divine revelation and the threefold principle of creation. In consequence the pyramid is seen as a symbol expressing the whole of the work of creation in its three essential aspects.”[258]

The ancient Egyptian pyramids, built over four thousand years ago, are still one of the seven wonders of the world and have been an endless source of mystery still to this day. While mainstream historians believe the pyramids were built as tombs for the Pharaohs, the belief in the Illuminati is that they were actually temples where the Mystery Schools taught their secrets.

33rd degree Freemason Manly P. Hall explains, “The Great Pyramid was not a lighthouse, an observatory, or a tomb, but the first temple of the Mysteries, the first structure erected as a repository for those secret truths which are the certain foundation of all the arts and sciences…Through the mystic passageways and chambers of the Great Pyramid passed the illumined of antiquity. They entered its portals as men; they came forth as gods. It was the place of the ‘second birth,’ the womb of the Mysteries, and wisdom dwelt in it as God dwells in the hearts of men.”[259]

As I’m sure you are aware, a pyramid with an all-seeing eye can be found on the back of the one-dollar bill, which many people believe is basically a stamp of ownership by the Illuminati. The man who designed this Great Seal was a Freemason named Charles Thomson, confirming many peoples’ suspicions that a hidden hand strategically placed the symbol on the currency as a secret sign of their power.

The phrase *Novus Ordo Seclorum* (Latin for New Order for the Ages) has appeared on the bottom of the pyramid on the back of the one dollar bill since 1935. At the opening of the 110th Congress on January 4th 2007, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi made a cryptic reference to the Great Seal, announcing, “Our Founders envisioned a new America driven by optimism, opportunity, and courage. So confident were they in the new America they were advancing, they put on the Great Seal of the United States, ‘Novus ordo seclorum’—a new order for the ages…This vision has sustained us for more than 200 years, and it accounts for what is best in our great nation: liberty, opportunity, and justice. Now it is our responsibility to carry forth that vision of a new America.”

The All-Seeing Eye

The symbol of one eye, often with rays of light emanating from it, represents God’s omniscient power and dates back to ancient Egypt where it represented the sun God Horus who could see all. It’s sometimes called the Eye of Providence, and as you know, sits on top of the pyramid on the back of the one dollar bill. This all-seeing eye symbol also represents Big Brother and the Orwellian power of the intelligence agencies watching what everyone does, what they buy, and cataloging their online activities.

Not only are there all-seeing eyes watching people in shopping malls and walking down the streets of major cities, but most people have willingly installed an all-seeing eye in their living rooms—and even their bedrooms—and with the click of a few keys these eyes can be activated by crafty hackers or government agencies. Of course I’m talking about webcams that are built into tablets, laptops, and televisions, not to mention, perhaps even more disturbing, listening to people as well through the microphones that accompany them.

Check out my previous book, *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True* to learn about actual high-tech spy gadgets, mind-reading machines, government projects, and emerging artificial intelligence systems that seem as if they came right out of George Orwell’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and how our own world is unfortunately eerily paralleling the dystopia in his classic book.

While much of this has become fairly well known by now, one interesting point few people ponder is that the all-seeing eye—aside from representing the Illuminati—may actually become a symbol of the Antichrist himself. One Bible prophecy about the Antichrist is that an attempt will be made on his life that will take out or damage one of his eyes.[260] Since the symbol often represents a “God,” it’s possible that the coming counterfeit Christ may literally embody this symbol as a tactic to convince the masses that he himself is God. In Islam, Muslims have a prophecy almost identical saying that the Antichrist, who they call the Dejjal, will be symbolized by one eye.

Snakes and Serpents

The symbol of the serpent is perhaps best known as the creature in the Garden of Eden who tempted Adam and Eve into disobeying God by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The very word *snake* has negative connotations, meaning someone is a liar or deceptive. While the typical connotation of a snake is negative, and the Biblical story of Adam and Eve depicts Satan as the enemy of God and mankind, the occult interpretation is quite different. Occultists and Satanists praise the serpent and believe it brought wisdom to Mankind, enabling humans to become gods.

Again we look to the revelations of 33rd degree Freemason Manly P. Hall who explains, “The serpent is true to the principle of wisdom, for it tempts man to the knowledge of himself. Therefore the knowledge of self resulted from man’s disobedience to the Demiurges, Jehovah [God].”[261] Hall continues, saying “The serpent is the symbol and prototype of the Universal savior, who redeems the worlds by giving creation the knowledge of itself and the realization of good and evil.”[262]

The Secret Doctrine says, “The Serpent of Eternity and all Knowledge, that Manasic spirit [the rational faculty of the mind], which made him learn the secret of creation on the Kriyasaktic, and of procreation on the earthly planes—led him as naturally to discover his way to immortality, notwithstanding the jealously of the Gods.”[263]

The evil scumbag Aleister Crowley had this to say: “This serpent, Satan, is not the enemy of Man, [because it is he] who made Gods of our race, knowing Good and Evil.”[264]

Like Satanists and occultists, Freemasons adore the serpent as a savior and worship its wisdom. Here is a quote from Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma* about the serpent, reading, "It is the body of the Holy Spirit, the Universal Agent, the Serpent devouring its own tail."[265]

Complicating the meaning of the serpent symbol are several cryptic statements in the Bible, the first of which is when Jesus advised people to be as wise as serpents yet as gentle as doves in Mathew 10:16. This statement seems to acknowledge that serpents contain wisdom or represent a power that may be used for either good or evil. Another interesting and hard to reconcile story about serpents is when Moses made a brazen (brass) serpent and attached it to the top of his staff in order to heal the Israelites who had been bitten by snakes in the desert. The American Medical Association's logo is a snake coiled around on a staff and the same symbol is often found on ambulances as a symbol of health and healing. When someone reaches the 25th degree of Freemasonry, they are called a Knight of the Brazen Serpent.

One of the reasons serpents have come to symbolize wisdom and enlightenment is because their eyes are always open since they don't have any eyelids. Snakes are very unique creatures because they have no legs yet move around shooting across the ground like a bolt of lightning. To early Man, they may have seemed magical because they can appear out of nowhere and then disappear into the grass or into the earth itself. The shedding of their skin has come to symbolize a rebirth or immortality, possibly because primitive man thought that snakes were immortal and would give birth to a new self, when a snake "died" it would rise again leaving behind its old "carcass" in the form of its shed skin and continue to live on.

It's possible that the serpent does not necessarily represent evil in and of itself, but may represent a force that may be used for either good or evil.

The Phoenix

A phoenix is a large mythical bird that symbolizes cyclical renewal, immortality, or resurrection. The creature is depicted similar to an eagle and is often associated with the sun, and many myths talk about the phoenix dying, decomposing, and then rising again out of its own ashes. Some believe that many of the eagle symbols we see today are actually secretly symbols of a phoenix, including the double-headed "eagle" that is a symbol of the 33rd degree of Freemasonry.

The eagle that has come to be a popular symbol of America, and found on the back of the one dollar bill, is also believed by some to occultly signify a phoenix. *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* states that "The hand of the mysteries controlled in the establishment of the new government for the signature of the mysteries may still be seen on the Great Seal of the United states of America. Careful analysis of the seal discloses a mass of occult and masonic symbols chief among them, the so-called American Eagle...only the student of symbolism can see through the subterfuge and realize that the American eagle upon the Great Seal is but a conventionalized phoenix."[266]

The book, published in 1928, also states that, "Not only were many of the founders of the United States government Masons, but they received aid from a secret and august body existing in Europe which helped them to establish this country for a peculiar and particular purpose known only to the initiated few. The Great Seal is the signature of this exalted body—unseen and for the most part unknown—and the unfinished pyramid upon its reverse side is a teeterboard setting forth symbolically the task to the accomplishment of which the United States Government was dedicated from the day of its in conception."[267]

The phoenix has been proposed to be the name of the new unified global currency that international banksters have long awaited. The cover of the January 1988 edition of *The Economist* magazine read “Are you ready for a world currency” and contained an article that explained, “Thirty years from now, Americans, Japanese, Europeans, and people in many other rich countries, and some relatively poor ones will probably be paying for their shopping with the same currency. Prices will be quoted not in dollars, yen or D-marks but in, let’s say, the phoenix. The phoenix will be favored by companies and shoppers because it will be more convenient than today’s national currencies.”[268]

The metaphor of “rising from the ashes like a phoenix” refers to a rebirth, or something being killed or destroyed in order to give birth to something new, and so by killing off the U.S. Dollar and other currencies around the world through inflation, the banksters are symbolically giving birth to their new currency, which many plan to call the “phoenix.”

The Owl

When discussing Illuminati symbolism, the owl is most known for its connections to the Bohemian Grove, the Illuminati's summer retreat in northern California. Esoterically, the owl represents wisdom because it sees in the dark, and the Owl of Athena was chosen by Adam Weishaupt as one of the symbols of the Bavarian Illuminati. Early civilizations saw the owl as mysterious because it is only seen at night since they are nocturnal animals.

The Dictionary of Symbols explains, "In the Egyptian system of hieroglyphs, the owl symbolizes death, night, cold and passivity. It also pertains to the realm of the dead sun, that is, it is of the sun which has set below the horizon and which is crossing the lake or sea of darkness."[269]

A tiny owl can also be found hidden on the one dollar bill, perched on the upper left corner of the frame that surrounds the "1" located in the upper right hand corner of the bill. Many people see an owl designed into the street layout of Washington D.C., right on top of the U.S. Capitol building when viewing the location from overheard or looking at it on a map.

Pictures of owls are often seen in classrooms standing on a small stack of books in order to symbolize knowledge. The National Press Club's logo also contains an owl standing on a book. Owls are also seen as guardians and often owl statues are put on the top of buildings to scare away other birds.

The Skull and Crossbones

The skull and crossbones symbol has a sinister look to it, which is why it has been used by nefarious groups for centuries—from pirates and biker gangs, to the Nazis. It represents death, or the power over life and death, which is why it appeals to megalomaniacs and psychopaths. The Nazi SS officers in charge of concentration camps where over six million people were exterminated wore a skull and crossbones symbol on their uniforms, the same emblem used by the Skull & Bones secret society as their logo. The Nazis called it the *Totenkopf* (German for *skull* or *dead man's head*) and it was a blatant statement of their intention and purpose. Hitler personally handed out a Death's Head ring to elite SS soldiers.

The Knights Templar incorporated the symbol into their lives because they were dedicated to fight to the death and vowed never to be taken alive as a prisoner. Many Freemasons have a human skull (or a replica) sitting on their desk to remind them of their own mortality and that their life is quickly ticking away. It is meant to urge them to work towards the achievement of their goals before it's too late.

As you may recall from earlier, both the Bavarian Illuminati and Skull & Bones society at Yale use the object in their induction ceremony with their four different skulls and the question about which one is the fool, the wise man, the beggar or the king. The answer to this induction riddle, "Whether poor or rich, all's the same in death," is meant to reinforce their mortality to them and remind them that the clock of life is ticking so they had better do all they can to become kings here in this life because when you're dead—to them—nothing matters. The riddle is obviously meant to convey that they don't believe in an afterlife or a final judgment from God.

Baphomet

Baphomet is an occult idol that is depicted as an androgynous man with female breasts that has the head of a goat. The torch of Prometheus is often sticking out of its head and intertwining serpents are rising from its crotch. It's a mysterious and hideous looking figure that dates back to the 1300s when the inner circle of Knights Templar allegedly incorporated it into their rituals and secret doctrine.

An early depiction of the figure comes from an 1854 book titled *Transcendental Magic* that was written by a French occultist Eliphas Levi.[270] Accompanying his illustration, Eliphas Levi wrote, "According to some, the Baphomet was a monstrous head, but according to others, a demon in the form of a goat. A sculptured coffer [chest] was disinterred [dug up] recently in the ruins of an old Commandery of the Temple, and antiquaries observed upon it a Baphometic figure, corresponding by its attributes to the goat of Mendes and the androgyne of Khunrath."[271]

Many Satanists have proudly incorporated the Baphomet figure into their symbols and rituals. Aleister Crowley wrote that the serpent or the "devil's emblem" was Baphomet, who he also called the "hieroglyph of arcane perfection."[272]

One version of the figure is the Church of Satan's logo, which is printed on the cover of *The Satanic Bible*. While many people claim that the Catholic Church fabricated the claims that the Knights Templar were using it in secret rituals as an excuse to arrest them and confiscate their wealth during the Inquisition, most Satanists and occults hold the belief that the Catholic Church's claims were actually true.[273]

Again, Eliphas Levi boldly proclaimed in his book *Transcendental Magic*, “Yes, in our profane conviction, the Grand Masters of the Order of the Templars worshipped the Baphomet, and caused it to be worshipped by their initiates.”[274]

The Pentagram

An upside down pentagram drawn inside of a circle is one of the most obvious and familiar satanic symbols that is used by occult organizations, rebellious teenagers, and rock stars today. It is a lower level occult symbol often used to represent dark powers or sinister forces. Because it's so widely known, it's never really used by high-level occultist or the Illuminati, who instead use much less familiar symbols like pyramids, all-seeing eyes, owls, black and white checkerboards, and other, less polarizing images.

A pentagram differs from an ordinary five-pointed star in a few ways. First, a pentagram is drawn using five straight lines making up the points and also forming a pentagon in the center. The Satanic pentagram is drawn upside down, and often encompassed by a circle. The reason Satanists use it is because Christians originally used the five points of a (right-side up) pentagram (called the pentalpha) to symbolize the five wounds of Jesus (the two spikes through his hands, two through his feet, and the spear that pierced his side). Satanists like to pervert things and flip Christian symbols upside down or backwards to signify their opposing views and beliefs, and this is how their use of upside down pentagrams came into being.

The Dictionary of Symbols entry on the star reads, "As far back as in the days of Egyptian hieroglyphics a star pointing upwards signified 'rising upwards towards the point of origin' and formed part of such words as 'to bring up,' 'to educate,' and 'the teacher.' The inverted five-pointed star is a symbol of the infernal and used in black magic."[275]

In Freemasonry, the pentagram is called the Blazing Star and represents the sun, Lucifer, carnal knowledge and power. To Wiccans and Pagans, the five points of the star represent air, fire, water, Earth, and spirit.

The female branch of Freemasonry, called Eastern Star, actually uses an upside down pentagram as their emblem.

Square and Compass

A square (the tool used by carpenters to lay out a right angle or a “square” angle) overlaid on top of a compass (the tool used for drawing circles and arches—not the navigation tool for identifying direction) is a popular symbol in Freemasonry and is often seen with the letter G in the center. The square and compass signify the alchemical doctrine of “as above, so below” or the joining of heaven and earth by forming two opposite facing pyramids with one pointing up and the other one pointing downward. The letter G in the center stands for God or Gnosis [the Greek word for knowledge.] It is also often said to stand for the “Great Architect of the Universe,” a term many masons use to refer to God.

The Statue of Liberty

If you asked the average American what the Statue of Liberty represented, they'll probably tell you it has to do with "America," "freedom," or "democracy." Some may know that it was given to America by the French, but few know its very design and creation was orchestrated by Freemasons, the secret society, not the government of France, who then gave it to America as a "gift" and placed it in New York Harbor.

Frederic Bartholdi, the designer of the Statue of Liberty, was, of course, a Freemason, and very familiar with occult and Illuminati symbolism and philosophies. In fact, the three major figures involved with the Statue—Frederic Bartholdi, who designed the statue itself; Gustave Eiffel, who designed the inner support structure; and Richard Hunt, who designed the pedestal—were all Freemasons.

Bartholdi's original plan for a giant statue of this type was actually that it be placed in a harbor in Egypt. After his proposal was turned down by the Egyptian government, he changed his design a little bit and approached America to see if he could erect his newly designed statue in the United States. The point is, he originally wanted to build a bizarre "God-like" statue and have it stand somewhere other than America. Bartholdi's first choice for his mystical statue was Egypt, not the United States.

The original name of the statue was "Liberty Enlightening the World," not the "Statue of Liberty." Again, the word *Enlightening* fits in with the Illuminati theme—Enlightening, enlightenment, light, the sun, intelligence, bright, brilliance, Lucifer. You get the picture by now.

A near mirror image of the Statue of Liberty stands in France, also on an island, in the Seine River in Paris, that was set up in 1889, just three years after the one in America was completed. If it’s an “American” symbol then why is there an almost identical one in France? There are actually hundreds of nearly identical “Statue of Liberty” figures all around the world, including Leicester, England; Lviv, Ukraine; Carinthia, Austria; Cenicero, Spain; Arraba in Israel, and many, many other places.

The Statue of Liberty is essentially a modern version of the Colossus of Rhodes, which was a 100-foot-tall statue depicting the Greek sun god Helios (Helios being Greek for *sun*) that once stood in ancient Greece. The Colossus was created in the 3rd century B.C. and depicted Helios (the Sun God) holding a torch high in one hand and stood on the island of Rhodes facing the water. “This gigantic gilded figure, with its crown of solar rays and its upraised torch, signified occultly the glorious Sun Man of the Mysteries, the Universal Savior,” says *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*.[276]

There is a poem printed on a plaque that sits prominently near the base of the Statue of Liberty titled *The New Colossus*, clearly signaling that it was modeled after the Greek sun god. There was a Masonic cornerstone ceremony conducted when construction began, and a Masonic plaque was placed on the site as well. The statue also symbolizes a composite of a variety of ancient goddesses who represent the feminine principle.

The torch that the Statue of Liberty is holding represents the torch of Prometheus, who occultly signifies Lucifer. The Greek mythological story of Prometheus is the same allegory of stealing fire (i.e. knowledge) from God or the Gods, and giving it to humans, thus angering God.

Here is Manly P. Hall again, one of Freemasonry’s greatest philosophers, explaining in *Lectures on Ancient Philosophy*, that, “Man wandered hopelessly in the gloom of mortality, living and dying without light or understanding in his servitude to the Demiurgus [the creator God] and his host of spirits. At last the spirit of rebellion entered the creation in the form of Lucifer, who in the guise of a serpent tempted man to revolt against the mandates of Jehovah (the Demiurgus). In Greece this character was known as Prometheus, who brought from the gods the impregnating flame that would release the life latent in this multitude of germlike potentialities."[277]

The seven horn-looking spikes coming out of the Statue of Liberty's head represent rays of the sun, and symbolically represents the spirit radiating from the mind as knowledge or "enlightenment." There are seven of them because the rays represent the seven liberal arts and sciences, thus comprising an essential knowledge base. The statue is also holding a book, obviously, symbolic of knowledge and information—again fitting in with the theme of knowledge and enlightenment, because knowledge is power, and that is what the Illuminati has.

Rockefeller Center’s Prometheus

Rockefeller Center in New York City is a huge 22-acre complex made up of nineteen different buildings and the home of Bank of America, NBC, General Electric and other major international Illuminati-controlled corporations. Standing prominently within the property is a huge gold colored statue of Prometheus holding a ball of fire in one hand as he flies through the air. The mythological Greek story of Prometheus stealing fire from the Gods and giving it to mankind despite the punishment he will face is seen by occultists as identical to the story of Lucifer giving mankind the knowledge of good and evil that God had forbid us to have.

So essentially this statue that stands outside of Rockefeller Center is a tribute to Lucifer, which goes unnoticed by the average person not familiar with Illuminati symbolism. Most people are probably not even familiar with the Prometheus myth, or have long since forgotten about it since studying Greek mythology in high school and simply think the statue is just another random piece of art with little to no significance.

Helena Blavatsky explains in her classic occult work, *The Secret Doctrine,* that, “The allegory of Prometheus, who steals the divine fire as to allow men to proceed consciously on the path of spiritual evolution, thus transforming the most perfect of animals on Earth into a potential god, and making him free to take the kingdom of heaven by violence. Hence also, the curse pronounced by Zeus against Prometheus, and by Jehovah [God] against his ‘rebellious son,’ Satan.”[278]

So as you can see, it’s not just me making the connection between Prometheus and Lucifer—It’s occultist insiders themselves, and of course it’s no coincidence this stands on a Rockefeller property, a family with generational ties to the Illuminati establishment.

The Washington Monument

The Washington Monument, which is located directly west of the United States Capitol building in Washington DC, standing approximately 555 feet high, dominates the sky throughout the city and can be seen from miles around, especially at night with the red light shining from the top looking like the evil Eye of Sauron in the *Lord of the Rings* movies. The monument is an Egyptian obelisk with a pyramid capstone on the top and was completed in 1884.

The structure is one of the most important symbols in America to the Illuminati, although most people are clearly unaware of it having any hidden meaning. Occultists see the monument as an enormous phallic symbol—a big penis—representing masculine energy and dominance. One would expect the "Washington" Monument to be a statue of George Washington himself, much like the Lincoln Memorial houses a huge statue of Abraham Lincoln, but instead it's a giant erect penis of the Egyptian god Baal. Of course, it too was designed and built by Freemasons, who even had a ceremony to lay the cornerstone when construction began.

Fritz Springmeier, author of *Bloodlines of the Illuminati*, wrote, "Every morning when the United States President wakes up he can look out the window, see the Masonic obelisk and be reminded of who controls America. If the president has any training in the Mystery Religion of Egypt, he will also know what body part is symbolically erected in the Washington Memorial."[279] Springmeier goes so far as to say, "If the U.S. were ever to return to serving God, that monument would be a good one to destroy. God asked the Israelites not just simply to avoid worshiping such abominations, He asked His people to destroy them, for their very creation was an abomination."[280]

Cleopatra’s Needle

While the Washington Monument may be the most well-known Egyptian obelisk in America, it isn’t the only one. Another one stands in Central Park in New York City—called Cleopatra’s Needle, and this one is actually an authentic Egyptian obelisk that dates back to around 1500 B.C. and was transported to New York in 1881.

Similar “Cleopatra’s Needles” actually stand in London and Paris, signifying the Illuminati’s rule in those countries as well. Not surprising, there is also one in Vatican City as well. The one in New York’s Central Park stands 70-feet tall and weighs 220 tons. Why and how it was brought to America all the way from Egypt is an interesting story.

For some reason Henry G. Stebbins, who was the Commissioner of the Department of Public Parks in New York in the 1880s, announced he was looking for help financing a plan to bring the statue to America. William H. Vanderbilt, who was one of the wealthiest men in the world, was asked to help make it happen and donated over $100,000 (over $2 million in 2014 dollars) to help. Interestingly, the shipping costs for the one sent to London were paid for by Dr. Erasmus Wilson, a Freemason.

Once the obelisk arrived in America, thousands of Freemasons took part in a parade as it was rolled up Fifth Avenue from 14th Street to 82nd Street. When it was erected at its final destination in the park, the Grand Master of Masons in New York performed a cornerstone laying ritual as a celebration. When it first arrived in New York in 1881, Cleopatra’s Needle was covered with clearly visible hieroglyphics about the sun god Horus, but most of the carvings have since been warn away from acid rain. While they survived 3000 years in Egypt, it seems the ancient relic was no match for the pollution of New York City.

Movies and Music

For hundreds of years, knowledge of the Illuminati and their symbols was largely contained within the Mystery Schools that taught the esoteric tradition. Outsiders didn’t even think twice about most occult symbols because they were seen as ordinary art and few people paid much attention to them. But with the birth of the information age, things started to change. In the 1990s and early 2000s, a growing number of websites and forums were dedicated to investigating secret societies, and began to expose these once little known issues to a larger number of people.

For decades, those interested in such material were considered a fringe minority of patriots and “conspiracy theorists,” but with the emergence of social media becoming a standard feature in most people’s lives, and with video sharing websites like YouTube changing the nature of media and information exchange, an interesting phenomenon began to occur early in the twenty-first century. Illuminati and occult symbolism spilled over from what was once primarily the topic of fringe websites, and “computer geeks” on Internet forums, to became part of pop culture finding its way into various mainstream music videos and blockbuster movies.

While a sizable portion of the population has become familiar with the use of Illuminati symbolism in rap videos and supposed “Illuminati hand signs” being flashed by celebrities, most people who pay attention to this aspect of the symbolism barely have a basic understanding of the history of the symbols or their meanings. Many people who have heard the oftentimes farfetched claims about “Illuminati celebrities” have dismissed the existence of the Illuminati all together as a conspiracy theory or believe it’s simply a secret society in Hollywood that top celebrities are part of.

Checkout my previous book *Illuminati in the Music Industry* to read about this fascinating history since it is a very lengthy analysis in and of itself. While there certainly have been countless allegations made against a variety of celebrities like Jay-Z, Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, Kanye West and others, when you take a critical analysis of celebrity as a whole and the power their music and personas have over the culture, it becomes very clear that music is not always "just entertainment."

As the Illuminati prepare to announce the "royal secret," as they call it, by declaring that Satan is the King of the Earth and the "savior of mankind," hoping to finally overthrow the "inferior" and "evil" Creator God to complete the New World Order "utopia," celebrities have recently played a major part in paving the path to the apocalypse.

The vast majority of the public literally worship celebrities who function as modern day Gods that shape our cultural attitudes and beliefs since their every action is mimicked, and every opinion they voice is seen as profound.

The general public is growing to see the Illuminati—not as a threat to their freedoms or a corrupt mafia of politicians, bankers and businessmen—but as a "cool" group of powerful men they wish they could be a part of. The moral decay and erosion of the work ethic have resulted in the average person willing to do almost anything for just a taste of the Illuminati's "success." Pop culture has begun portraying the Illuminati as holding the secret to success or a secret society of the rich and famous.

Occasionally films have portrayed the Illuminati or an affiliated group as the antagonist in a plot to convey a warning to the audience, and some celebrities have publicly denounced them as the shadowy puppet masters pulling the strings in global affairs, but the overwhelming majority of mainstream media content and celebrity idols paint the Illuminati as holding the master key to success and as a result countless people would practically kill their own mother to join them in order to have a bigger piece of the pie.

Insiders’ Hints

If you want to truly understand what the Illuminati is, what they are doing, what they are planning, and what they believe, there’s no better place to go than to elite insiders themselves who can’t always keep their mouths shut, and occasionally can’t help but brag about their “great work.” While there’s a long list of people who claim to be Illuminati defectors that speak about their alleged activities while supposedly being a “member of the Illuminati,” most of these people are hoaxers and fraudsters with no credibility who are just trying to make a few bucks from selling books, or just looking for attention, and many of them have been easily debunked.

Of course if you do an Internet search for “the Illuminati,” you’ll find countless websites making claims about what they are, what they do, who’s supposedly involved, etc. There’s even a Wikipedia page giving a few details about them, although it’s largely incomplete and inaccurate. While it’s not difficult at all to find Illuminati conspiracy theories online, what is difficult; however, is finding accurate and reliable information that is properly sourced and verified, and this is my primary goal with this book.

While everyone seems to have an opinion about the Illuminati these days, most people think “research” consists of watching a few YouTube videos or glancing over a Wikipedia article. There are, however, some very well connected and powerful men who have either dropped hints about the Illuminati and their secret agenda, or those who have gotten close enough to the power structure to see for themselves that a powerful secret society does exist and has tremendous influence over the world.

David Rockefeller

The Rockefeller family is often mentioned as one of the families that has been involved with the Illuminati for generations and have accumulated a vast amount of wealth and influence because of this. The Rockefeller family made most of their money in oil and banking, and using their wealth they have wrapped their tentacles around some of the most infamous groups and conspiracies connected to the Illuminati.

For example, Rockefeller money was instrumental in the early growth of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, and the Bilderberg Group. They were a major funder of Eugenics and the CIA's MK-ULTRA mind control experiments at over 30 American Universities, hospitals, and government facilities. The Rockefellers bought seventeen acres of land for the United Nations headquarters to be built in Manhattan; and even financed the development of facial recognition systems through their Rockefeller University that recruited and funded a man named Joseph Atick in the early 1990s who was given use of the Computational Neuroscience Laboratory where he developed his facial recognition systems.

In his 2002 book, *Memoirs*, Illuminati kingpin David Rockefeller arrogantly admitted, "For more than a century ideological extremists at either end of the political spectrum have seized upon well-publicized incidents such as my encounter with Castro to attack the Rockefeller family for the inordinate influence they claim we wield over American political and economic institutions. Some even believe we are part of a secret cabal working against the interests of the United States, characterizing my family and me as "internationalists" and conspiring with others around the world to build a more integrated global political and economic structure—one world, if you will. If that's the charge, I stand guilty, and I am proud of it."[281]

In a 1980 PBS documentary titled *The World of David Rockefeller*, host Bill Moyer said that “David Rockefeller is the most conspicuous representative today of the ruling class, a multinational fraternity of men who shape the global economy and manage the flow of its capital. Rockefeller was born to it, and he has made the most of it. But what some critics see as a vast international conspiracy, he considers a circumstance of life and just another day’s work... In the world of David Rockefeller it’s hard to tell where business ends and politics begins.”[282]

Carroll Quigley

In 1966 an Establishment insider and mentor of President Bill Clinton published a book for fellow Establishment insiders titled *Tragedy & Hope* to help them understand how the Illuminati empire works. Carroll Quigley, a professor at Georgetown University, knew that most of the public doesn't read books or newspapers and are more interested in sports entertainment and celebrity news than business or politics.

Quigley openly revealed, "There does exist, and has existed for a generation, an international Anglophile network which operates, to some extent, in the way the radical Right believes the Communists act. In fact, this network, which we may identify as the Round Table Groups, has no aversion to cooperating with the Communists, or any other groups, and frequently does so. I know of the operations of this network because I have studied it for twenty years and was permitted for two years, in the early 1960's, to examine its papers and secret records. I have no aversion to it or to most of its aims and have, for much of my life, been close to it and to many of its instruments. I have objected, both in the past and recently, to a few of its policies (notably to its belief that England was an Atlantic rather than a European Power and must be allied, or even federated, with the United States and must remain isolated from Europe), but in general my chief difference of opinion is that it wishes to remain unknown, and I believe its role in history is significant enough to be known."[283]

He described how the financial elite created front groups to influence governments around the world, writing, "…in New York it was known as the Council on Foreign Relations, and was a front for J. P. Morgan and Company in association with the very small American Round Table Group. The American organizers were dominated by the large number of Morgan 'experts'… The Round Table for years (until 1961) was edited from the back door of Chatham House grounds in Ormond Yard, and its telephone came through the Chatham House switchboard."[284]

Quigley also explained how it was to the elite's advantage to have only two political parties for people to choose from. The reason being, "The two parties should be almost identical, so that the American people can 'throw the rascals out' at any election without leading to any profound or extensive shifts in policy."[285]

Regarding the Federal Reserve and the financial takeover of governments by private banks he said, "The powers of financial capitalism had a far-reaching aim, nothing less than to create a world system of financial control in private hands able to dominate the political system of each country and the economy of the world as a whole. This system was to be controlled in a feudalist fashion by the central banks of the world acting in concert, by secret agreements arrived at in frequent meetings and conferences. The apex of the systems was to be the Bank for International Settlements in Basel, Switzerland, a private bank owned and controlled by the world's central banks which were themselves private corporations. Each central bank...sought to dominate its government by its ability to control Treasury loans, to manipulate foreign exchanges, to influence the level of economic activity in the country, and to influence cooperative politicians by subsequent economic rewards in the business world."[286]

Basically in his lengthy and dry book, *Tragedy & Hope*, he quietly confirmed what many "conspiracy theorists" had been saying for decades, but unlike most outsiders, he was in a position learn directly from the perpetrators.

Cecil Rhodes

The most notorious diamond monopoly man in history, and the person behind the elite Rhodes Scholarships, which awards young men and women who the Establishment feel will be willing and useful servants with a free ride to Oxford University and basically an invitation to the Illuminati, was a man named Cecil Rhodes, who didn’t just talk about his plans to further the Invisible Empire, he actually wrote in his will that after he died his fortune would go to finance this.

Rhodes is the man behind the DeBeers diamond cartel who became extremely wealthy by monopolizing diamond mines in Africa and then launching a brilliant propaganda campaign with the help of Edward Bernays designed to brainwash women around the world into thinking that when a man proposes marriage he must do so with a diamond ring.

Rhodes, who died in 1902, wrote in his will that his fortune was to be used, “To and for the establishment, promotion and development of a Secret Society, the true aim and object whereof shall be for the extension of British rule throughout the world, the perfecting of a system of emigration from the United Kingdom, and of colonization by British subjects of all lands where the means of livelihood are attainable by energy, labor and enterprise, and especially the occupation by British settlers of the entire Continent of Africa, the Holy Land, the Valley of the Euphrates, the Islands of Cyprus and Candia, the whole of South America, the Islands of the Pacific not heretofore possessed by Great Britain, the whole of the Malay Archipelago, the seaboard of China and Japan, the ultimate recovery of the United States of America as an integral part of the British Empire, the inauguration of a system of Colonial representation in the Imperial Parliament which may tend to weld together the disjointed members of the Empire and, finally, the foundation of so great a Power as to render wars impossible, and promote the best interests of humanity.”[287]

To help carry out his plan, certain money from his estate is designated to what's called the Rhodes Scholarship, which is a student fund that awards carefully chosen individuals who don't necessarily come from wealthy families but who are seen as likely assets of the Illuminati with a free ride post graduate education at England's Oxford University, where they are groomed to later become pawns of the global elite. President Bill Clinton was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to bring him into the fold, as was the liberal lesbian Rachel Maddow of MSNBC who uses her national mainstream media platform to promote bigger government and the radical liberal agenda on a continual basis.

Edward Bernays

In 1928 Edward Bernays, the man considered to be the father of public relations, revealed in his book *Propaganda* that, “Those who manipulate the unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of...in almost every act of our lives whether in the sphere of politics or business in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires that control the public mind, who harness old social forces and contrive new ways to bind and guide the world.”[288]

He went on to admit, “Whatever of social importance is done today, whether in politics, finance, manufacture, agriculture, charity, education, or other fields, must be done with the help of propaganda. Propaganda is the executive arm of the invisible government.”[289]

Bernays also stated plainly that, “The invisible government tends to be concentrated in the hands of the few because of the expense of manipulating the social machinery which controls the opinions and habits of the masses.”[290]

The Department of Defense (previously called the Department of War) actually hired Bernays to help influence public opinion to support America’s involvement in World War I. The tobacco industry also paid him to use his methods to encourage women to smoke cigarettes since at the time it was seen as unattractive.[291] Bernays is also the person all men can thank for having to cough up thousands of dollars for a diamond ring when we propose marriage since that tradition was started as a clever marketing ploy he crafted for the DeBeers diamond monopoly.

Woodrow Wilson

The 28th President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, was the man responsible for signing the Federal Reserve Act into law and handing America’s banking system over to the money manipulating mafia in 1913. Wilson later admitted, “Since I entered politics, I have chiefly had men’s views confided to me privately. Some of the biggest men in the United States, in the field of commerce and manufacturing, are afraid of something. They know that there is a power somewhere so organized, so subtle, so watchful, so interlocked, so complete, so pervasive, that they better not speak above their breath when they speak in condemnation of it.”[292]

After he was out of office, Woodrow Wilson allegedly voiced regret for cooperating with the banking cartel’s plan for the Federal Reserve Banking system, reportedly saying, “I am a most unhappy man. I have unwittingly ruined my country. A great industrial nation is now controlled by its system of credit. We are no longer a government by free opinion, no longer a government by conviction and the vote of the majority, but a government by the opinion and duress of a small group of dominant men.”[293]

John F. Kennedy

When speaking to the American Newspaper Publishers Association in 1961, President Kennedy actually condemned secret societies, saying, “The very word ‘secrecy’ is repugnant in a free and open society; and we are as a people inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths and to secret proceedings.”[294]

He continued, “We decided long ago that the dangers of excessive and unwarranted concealment of pertinent facts far outweighed the dangers which are cited to justify it…For we are opposed around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covered means for expanding its sphere of influence, on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerrillas by night instead of armies by day. It is a system which has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific and political operations, its preparations concealed, not published, its mistakes are buried not headlined, it’s dissenters are silenced not praised, no expenditure is questioned, no rumor is printed, no secret is revealed.”

Kennedy issued an interesting Executive Order (number 11110) in 1963 that many interpret as directing the Secretary of the Treasury to start once again issuing silver certificates (which looked similar to dollar bills) that would be redeemable for their face value in silver coins or bullion, in what many saw as an attempt to remove power from the Federal Reserve Bank and give it back to the Treasury department.

Silver certificates [called United States Notes] were originally put in circulation in 1878 by the Treasury department and used as money, but

Federal Reserve Notes (commonly known as U.S. dollars) replaced them after the creation of the Federal Reserve banking system in 1913.

Kennedy’s Executive Order 11110 was soon reversed by President Lyndon B. Johnson after he was sworn in as JFK’s replacement after his assassination. Many people cite Kennedy’s supposed opposition to the Federal Reserve cartel as a major factor in the reason he was assassinated, believing the CIA orchestrated the event and blamed “patsy” Lee Harvey Oswald. Others believe Kennedy planned to pull out of the Vietnam War, in opposition to secret Establishment, which was another motive for wanting him dead.

A Gallup poll was published in 2013 as the 50th anniversary of his death approached showed that 61% of Americans believed someone other than Lee Harvey Oswald was involved in the assassination.[295] The poll notes that at one time 81% of Americans thought there was more than one person involved in the shooting, despite the official story of Oswald acting alone, and the “JFK conspiracy” is one of the most popular conspiracy theories in history.

President Dwight Eisenhower

President Dwight Eisenhower, who was a five-star general during World War II, gave his Farewell Address to the Nation on January 17, 1961 where he popularized the term “Military Industrial Complex” after he warned about the dangers of weapon manufacturers influencing the government to go to war primarily for profit.

“This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.”[296]

One part of the speech that still resonates today is when he said, “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military–industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals so that security and liberty may prosper together.”

This Military Industrial Complex can be seen functioning today when major defense companies receive no-bid contracts handed to them by their politician friends to hire ex-soldiers as private security guards in war torn countries, or when the Bilderberg Group meeting includes CEOs from private defense companies who meet with current U.S. military heads to come to a consensus about a current or future military action.

President George Bush Senior

Two hours after bombing in Iraq and Kuwait began in 1991 (Operation Desert Storm) kicking off the first Gulf War, President Bush addressed the nation from the Oval Office explaining his goal, saying, "We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a New World Order, a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations. When we are successful, and we will be, we have a real chance at this new world order, an order in which a credible United Nations can use its peacekeeping role to fulfill the promise and vision of the U.N.'s founders."[297]

A few weeks later at his State of the Union Address in 1991, President Bush was talking about America's military action in the Gulf when he doubled down, saying, "What is at stake is more than one small country, it is a big idea—a New World Order."[298]

Before becoming Ronald Reagan's vice president, and then president himself after that, George Bush Senior was the head of the Central Intelligence Agency in the late 1970s, not to mention a member of Skull & Bones *and* the Bohemian Grove, where he and his son George W. Bush were photographed giving a Lakeside talk in 1995 where Bush Senior reportedly told the audience his son would make a fine president one day.[299]

President George W. Bush

Shortly after the September 11th terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001, sparking the never-ending "War on Terror," President George W. Bush addressed the growing "conspiracy theories" from people thinking the U.S. government was behind the attacks—or at the bare minimum—allowed them to happen on purpose as a pretext to launch the pre-planned wars in the Middle East. While speaking at a United Nations conference Bush announced, "Let us never tolerate outrageous conspiracy theories concerning the attacks of September the 11th; malicious lies that attempt to shift the blame away from the terrorists themselves, away from the guilty."[300]

The fact that the president even addressed the "conspiracy theories" shows just how far they were spreading, and what would come to be known as the 9/11 Truth Movement started making headlines in the years to come and gained a sizable number of supporters who were suspicious of the "official story" of 9/11.[301]

A leaked memo from a 2003 meeting between President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair later revealed that Bush once proposed luring Saddam Hussein into the War on Terror by flying an unmanned drone disguised as a United Nations airplane into Iraqi airspace hoping it would get shot down so the United States could then use the event as a justification for expanding the War on Terror into Iraq.[302] As we all know, he later did invade Iraq after fabricating "evidence" claiming Saddam Hussein was working with Al Qaeda to soon nuke the United States. Many people still weren't convinced there was any proof of this, but the administration's mantra was, "We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud."

In 2004 when Bush was campaigning for reelection he appeared on NBC's *Meet the Press* where host Tim Russert surprisingly asked him about being a Bonesman. “You were both in Skull & Bones, the secret society,” Russert stated, referring to both Bush and his Democrat opponent John Kerry.

“It’s so secret we can’t talk about it,” Bush responded.

“What does that mean for America? The conspiracy theorists are going to go wild,” Russert pressed.

“I’m sure they are. I don’t know. I haven’t seen the web pages yet.” (Laughs)[303]

Of course, George W. Bush was not the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks or the War on Terror, but rather a willing servant and asset of the Illuminati whose strings were being pulled by the powers that be from behind the scenes. Having sworn allegiance to Skull & Bones and being part of a Bones family, he undoubtedly felt obligated to carry out the Order’s directives.

Vice President Dick Cheney

When giving a speech at a Council on Foreign Relations meeting in 2002, Vice President Dick Cheney cracked an inside joke about his affiliation with the organization, saying, “I want to thank you all for the warm welcome today. I see a lot of old friends in the room. And it’s good to be back at the Council on Foreign Relations. As Pete mentioned, I’ve been a member for a long time, and was actually a director for some period of time. I never mentioned that when I was campaigning for reelection back home in Wyoming (laughter) but it stood me in good stead. I value very much my experience, exposure to the tremendous people involved and the involvement and the ideas and the debates on the great policy issues of the day.”[304]

The reason everyone laughed when he said he never mentioned he was a member when he was campaigning is because they all know the sinister reputation their group has. Anyone unfamiliar with the history and activities of the CFR would have no idea why everyone laughed, but those “in the know” surely “got” what he said.

A Pulitzer Prize winning journalist for The New Yorker named Seymour Hersh reported that his sources revealed to him that Cheney once proposed creating a false flag “Gulf of Tonkin” type of scenario in the Middle East to expand the War on Terror into Iran by having some U.S. Navy SEALS attack American ships in the Straits of Hormuz in order to make it appear as if Iranian PT boats had done it.[305] Cheney is seen by many as one of the evil Neocon architects behind the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing War on Terror. Of course, he publicly advocated torture and refused to testify under oath at the 9/11 Commission hearings.[306]

Smedley Butler

A United States Marine Corps Major General, the highest rank at that time, came forward in 1934 revealing a conspiracy that was organized by Wall Street bankers who wanted to overthrow President Roosevelt and replace him with a fascist dictator to serve the will of the financial elite. A congressional committee named the McCormick Dickstein Committee was formed to investigate General Butler's allegations.

Butler testified that a Wall Street insider named Gerald P. MacGuire approached him on behalf of a secret organization hoping he would lead a coup against the United States government that was to be backed by three million dollars (over 35 million in 2014 dollars) coming from the Wall Street elite. The conspiracy was dubbed the Business Plot.

While no one was indicted, the congressional committee concluded that some of Butler's claims were true, and that such a plan was discussed and contemplated, but the committee questioned whether an actual coup by the group was actually an immediate threat or just some wild scheme the bankers had fanaticized about.

The Congressional committee's final report stated, "In the last few weeks of the committee's official life it received evidence showing that certain persons had made an attempt to establish a fascist organization in this country...There is no question that these attempts were discussed, were planned, and might have been placed in execution when and if the financial backers deemed it expedient."[307]

Butler would later go on to write his famous book *War is a Racket* that denounced most major wars and military actions as money-making schemes hatched by corrupt politicians intertwined with the weapons industry.

Zbigniew Brzezinski

The national security adviser for President Jimmy Carter, founding member of the Trilateral Commission, and protégé of David Rockefeller, Zbigniew Brzezinski has made some startling admissions about the secret establishment. Brzezinski was in charge of covertly funding Osama Bin Laden and the Mujahedeen army in Afghanistan in the 1980s so they could fight off the Soviet Union who were trying to move into that area. This radical group of Muslims who America funded with several billion dollars, coordinated by Brzezinski, would later morph into Al Qaeda.

Back in 1970 he published a book called *Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era*, where he wrote, "The technocratic era involves the gradual appearance of a more controlled society. Such a society would be dominated by an elite, unrestrained by traditional values...The capacity to assert social and political control over the individual will vastly increase. It will soon be possible to assert almost continuous surveillance over every citizen and to maintain up-to-date, complete files, containing even most personal information about the health or personal behavior of the citizen in addition to more customary data. These files will be subject to instantaneous retrieval by the authorities."[308]

In his 1997 book, *The Grand Chessboard*, he lamented, "…as America becomes an increasingly multicultural society, it may find it more difficult to fashion a consensus on foreign policy issues, except in the circumstances of a truly massive and widely perceived direct external threat."[309]

He seems to suggest a false flag attack as a pretext to carry out his plans, saying, "The public supported America's engagement in World War II largely because of the shock effect of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor."[310]

In a speech which can be seen on You Tube, he openly admitted, “I am deeply troubled that a very vague emotionally stated semi-theologically defined diagnosis of the central global menace is obscuring our national ability to comprehend the historically unprecedented challenge which is being posed in our time by a massive global political awakening and thus is obstructing our ability to deal effectively with the global political turmoil that this awakening is generating.”[311]

At a Council on Foreign Relations meeting in Montreal, Canada, Brzezinski again lamented to his fellow elitists that a “global political awakening,” was occurring and that the world had become more difficult to manage because it was “lacking internal unity with many of its members in bilateral antagonisms” and that “For the first time in all of human history mankind is politically awakened—that’s a total new reality—it has not been so for most of human history…[and the] “politically awakened masses makes it a much more difficult context for any major power, including, currently, the leading world power, the United States.”[312]

John Hylan

A former mayor of New York City made a detailed denouncement against “the interests” in 1922, in a speech that is often incorrectly attributed to President Theodore Roosevelt. John Hylan, who was major from 1918 to 1925, revealed, “The real menace of our Republic is the invisible government, which like a giant octopus sprawls its slimy legs over our cities, states and nation. To depart from mere generalizations, let me say that at the head of this octopus are the Rockefeller–Standard Oil interests and a small group of powerful banking houses generally referred to as the international bankers. The little coterie of powerful international bankers virtually run the United States government for their own selfish purposes.”[313]

He continued, “They practically control both parties, write political platforms, make cats paws of party leaders, use the leading men of private organizations, and resort to every device to place in nomination for high public office only such candidates as will be amenable to the dictates of corrupt big business.”[314]

“These international bankers and Rockefeller–Standard Oil interests control the majority of the newspapers and magazines in this country. They use the columns of these papers to club into submission or drive out of office public officials who refuse to do the bidding of the powerful corrupt cliques which compose the invisible government. It operates under cover of a self-created screen [and] seizes our executive officers, legislative bodies, schools, courts, newspapers and every agency created for the public protection.”[315]

Winston Churchill

One of the most well-known prime ministers of England, Winston Churchill, once made a statement warning about what he called a “world conspiracy” and even named Illuminati founder Adam Weishaupt as the perpetrator.

“From the days of ‘Sparticus’ Adam Weishaupt, Karl Marx, Trotski, Belacoon, Rosa Luxenberg and Ema Goldman, this world conspiracy has been steadily growing. This conspiracy played a definite recognizable role in the French Revolution. It has been the mainspring of every subversive movement during the 19th century. And now at last, this band of extraordinary personalities from the under-world of the great cities of Europe and America have gripped the Russian people by the hair of their head and have become the undisputed masters of that enormous empire.”[316]

The Rothschilds

The patriarch of the Rothschild international banking dynasty was Mayer Amschel Rothschild, whose family fortune would become the largest fortune in the history of the world in the 1760s. He is seen as the "founding father of international finance," and *Forbes* magazine listed him as one of the "Twenty Most Influential Businessmen of All Time."[317] Mayer arranged marriages for his five sons so they married their first or second cousins in order to keep his massive wealth within the family. He also assigned each of his sons to different countries to each run those regions' economy.

A quote often attributed to Mayer Rothschild, although unverified, alleges that he once stated, "Let me issue and control a nation's money and I care not who writes the laws." Whether he actually said this or not is uncertain, but what is certain, however, is that one of his sons, Nathan, made an almost identical statement that *has* been confirmed by the well-respected historian Niall Ferguson, whose book *The House of Rothschild* reports that in 1815 Nathan stated, "I care not what puppet is placed upon the throne of England to rule the Empire on which the sun never sets. The man who controls the British money supply controls the British Empire, and I control the British money supply."[318]

Nathan multiplied the family fortune many fold partly due to his advanced knowledge of the British victory at the Battle of Waterloo over the French in 1815, which enabled him to rake in a fortune on the London Stock Exchange. A Rothschild courier was able to get word of Duke Wellington's victory over Napoleon's French Army to Nathan hours before anyone else in London learned of the outcome which gave him an enormous advantage over other investors whose financial future largely hinged on the outcome of this event. Rothschild also allegedly put out the false rumor that Duke Wellington and the British had *lost*, thus enabling him to further capitalize on the market since he knew the opposite was true.

The Rothschild family downplays the significance of this event and the amount of money they made from it, but historians do agree that a courier did in fact reach Rothschild informing him about the outcome of the battle before anyone else.[319] Sometimes people are accused of “anti-Semitism” for pointing out the Rothschild influence in the world of international banking, a claim that is often thrown at people who are critical of someone who happens to be Jewish.

Heir Nathaniel Rothschild lost a libel lawsuit he filed against London’s *Daily Mail* after the paper claimed he was the billionaire “puppet master” behind convincing the European Union Trade Commissioner Lord Mandelson to lift some trade barriers involving importing aluminum from Russia.[320] So in a sense, by losing the libel suite, the court confirmed that he was indeed a “puppet master” pulling the strings of back-room big business and political dealings.

Many people point the finger at the Rothschild family as being one of the primary sources of the Illuminati’s finances, and the family helped fund the initial Jewish occupation of Israel and have been a major financial supporter of Zionism.

James Paul Warburg

James Paul Warburg (August 18, 1896 – June 3, 1969) was the son of Paul Warburg, the “father” of the Federal Reserve Bank, and the man who organized the secret Jekyll Island meeting to formulate their plan. The apple didn’t fall too far from the tree in this case, because his son James went on to become the financial adviser for President Roosevelt, and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations—of which he was a founding member. At an appearance before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations he once flatly stated, “We shall have world government, whether or not we like it. The question is only whether world government will be achieved by consent or by conquest.”[321]

Henry Kissinger

One of the most infamous political figures in American history is Henry Kissinger, a man who is seen by many as a treacherous war criminal for helping the CIA organize various covert operations designed to overthrow democratically elected leaders in several countries (Chili, and Argentina, for example) in order to install a leader who was more in tune with American foreign policy.[322] Award winning journalist Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, the guys who blew open the Watergate scandal, revealed that Kissinger once referred to our military men and women as "dumb, stupid animals" to be used as pawns for America's foreign policy.[323]

Kissinger once remarked that power was the greatest aphrodisiac. Back in 2001 President George W. Bush chose him to be the Chairman of the 9/11 Commission to investigate the September 11th attacks, but shortly after it was revealed he was Bush's choice outraged victims' family members who had learned of his financial ties to the Bin Laden family forced the commission to drop him. His sole purpose as head commissioner would have been, of course, to prevent the truth about what really happened from seeing the light of day. The 9/11 attacks are seen by many as another false flag attack, or an incident that was purposefully allowed to happen in order to spark the endless War on Terror and justify the reduction of American liberties.

David Rothkopf, the managing director of Kissinger and Associates, an international advising firm founded by the infamous Henry Kissinger, wrote a very interesting book in 2009 titled *Superclass: The Global Power Elite and the World They are Making*, where he openly discussed the ruling elite and the various organizations that largely influence the political and economic landscape of the world. While not revealing any earth-shattering insider secrets, his book serves to confirm many of the allegations made against the ruling elite by so called "conspiracy theorists."

Rothkopf wrote that, “A global elite has emerged over the past several decades that has vastly more power than any other group on the planet. Each of the members of the superclass has the ability to regularly influence the lives of millions of people in multiple countries worldwide. Each actively exercises this power, and they often amplify it through the development of relationships with others in this class.”[324]

He goes on to say, “That such a group exists is indisputable. Heads of state, CEOs of the world’s largest companies, media barons, billionaires who are actively involved in their investments, technology, entrepreneur, oil potentates, hedge fund managers, private equity investors, top military commanders, a select few religious leaders, a handful of renowned writers, scientists, and artists, even terrorist leaders and master criminals, meet the above criteria for membership.”[325]

He proposes that this ruling elite, or “superclass” as he calls them, consists of roughly 6,000 people.[326] The Occupy Wall Street protesters often spoke out against what they called the “1%” who they saw as being the ruling elite, but this equates to approximately 70 million people. (1% of the earth’s 7 billion people is 70 million.) Of course Occupy’s assessment of who is the problem is wildly inaccurate. Using Rothkopf’s figure, it wouldn’t be the 1%, but more like the .0001%. In reality, it’s probably more like the .00001% which is around 700 people who are the Illuminati or their associates.

Another interesting admission is when Rothkopf says, “From behind the scenes, it was clear that these individuals influenced everything from the way currencies were priced worldwide to which political candidates would have sufficient funding for their presidential campaigns.”[327]

Perhaps Rothkopf started to grow a conscience after being so close to the superclass and seeing exactly what they’re doing to the planet. He even admitted that in the post-9/11 era and with the War on Terror being waged to fight al Qaeda, that much of the information coming from the government was basically fear mongering to achieve a political goal. “While the United states was in a real struggle with Communist Russia, the assertion that Communists were everywhere and intent on undermining the United States was vastly exaggerated in much the same way that the terror threat is exaggerated today.”[328]

He even said the Bilderberger Group meetings reveal the “informal mechanisms of power” that shape the world[329] and was well aware of the allegations made about the Bohemian Grove, writing, “Critics on the left worry about political conspiracy and global policies plotted at the Grove, while critics on the right cite stories of homosexual rituals, devil worship, and child sacrifice.”[330]

President Richard Nixon

In his memoirs, published in 1978, President Richard Nixon wrote, “If I were to choose the speech that gave me the most pleasure and satisfaction in my political career, it would be my Lakeside Speech at the Bohemian Grove in July 1967. Because this speech traditionally was off the record it received no publicity at the time. But in many important ways it marked the first milestone on my road to the presidency.”[331]

The University of California, Berkeley, located on the San Francisco Bay, has a photograph in their archives of Nixon sitting at a table with Ronald Reagan inside the Bohemian Grove during this same visit. The two were said to have sat down to “work a political deal wherein Reagan was to run only if Nixon faltered.”[332]

While Nixon publicly praised the Bohemian Grove to the small group of politically minded people who would read his memoirs, privately he had something quite different to say. In one of the now publicly available Watergate tapes released by the National Archives, Nixon can clearly be heard expressing disgust for the Grove when speaking in the Oval Office with his Chief of Statt H. R. Haldeman and aid John D. Ehrlichman. “The Bohemian Grove—which I attend, from time to time—it is the most faggy goddamned thing you could ever imagine, with that San Francisco crowd. I can’t shake hands with anybody from San Francisco.”[333]

The Bohemian Grove yearbooks show members dressed in drag and rumors of homosexual activities by members have persisted for decades.

George Washington

President George Washington acknowledged the Illuminati's presence in America in his personal correspondence in one particular letter dated October 24th 1798, that's been preserved at the Library of Congress. This was thirteen years after the Illuminati was discovered and eleven years after they were banned and allegedly stamped out according to "sources" like Wikipedia.

Washington acknowledged, "It was not my intention to doubt that the Doctrines of the Illuminati and principles of Jacobinism had not spread in the United States. On the contrary, no one is more truly satisfied of this fact than I am."[334]

In the letter George Washington clarifies that he did not believe that Freemasonry as a whole was involved in the conspiracy, but that certain individuals within certain lodges did in fact have these aims. If you look up the letter on the Library of Congress website, it can be difficult to read his handwriting, but it is accompanied by an official transcript.

Part of the letter reads, "The idea that I meant to convey, was, that I did not believe that the Lodges of Freemasons in this country had, as Societies, endeavored to propagate the diabolical tenets of the first, or pernicious principles of the latter (if they are susceptible of separation). That individuals of them may have done it, or that the founder, or instrument employed to found, the Democratic Societies in the United States, may have had these objects; and actually had a separation of the people from their government in view, is too evident to be questioned."

So there you have it—George Washington was concerned that the "doctrines of the Illuminati" had spread to the United States and were using certain Masonic lodges to “separate people from their government.” In fact, it was “too evident to be questioned,” he said.

Dick Morris

One of President Bill Clinton’s former advisors, Dick Morris, made a startling admission on the Fox News Channel in 2009 when talking to Sean Hannity about the New World Order and a global currency.

Morris began: “There is a big thing that’s going to happen in London at this G-20, and they’re hiding it, they’re camouflaging it, they’re not talking about it. The coordination of international regulation. What they are going to do is to put our Fed and our SEC under the control, in effect, of the IMF.”[335]

Hannity: “Oh, come on. You believe they’ll do this?”

Morris: “That’s what was in the draft agenda. They call it ‘coordination of regulation.’ What it really is, is putting the American economy under international regulation. And those people who have been yelling, ‘oh the U.N. is going to take over—global government…”

Hannity: “Conspiracy theorists.”

Morris: “Conspiracy theorists…they’ve been crazy, but now…they’re right! It’s happening!”

Hannity: When Geithner said he would be open to the idea of a Global Currency last year, those conspiracy people had said and suggested that for years. You're not wrong.”

Morris: “What they always do at these conferences is they have the center show here, and the side show they don’t want you to pay attention to.

The center show is the size of the stimulus package, but the real show is international regulation of the financial institutions which is going to happen under the IMF control.

A few years earlier Morris had revealed why, despite being a personal friend of the Clintons and working as Bill’s advisor, he cut all ties with them, saying, “I finally parted company with Hillary Clinton when I saw how she was using private detectives to investigate the women who were linked to her husband to cow [intimidate] the women into silence so that he could get elected president.”[336]

Cass Sunstien

President Obama appointed a Harvard law professor named Cass Sunstein to head up the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs which is an executive office of the president responsible for issuing policies regarding information technology, privacy, and information regulation. Sunstien's Orwellian philosophy of how the government should handle information technology was detailed in a white paper published in 2008 titled *Conspiracy Theories*, where he argued that the government should ban "conspiracy theories" or "impose some kind of tax, financial or otherwise, on those who disseminate such theories."[337]

He took things further than the typical political rhetoric by actually proposing that government trolls inundate the comment sections on "conspiracy" websites, videos, and social media accounts with outlandish comments in order to derail the discussion and introduce issues into the conversation in hopes of tarnishing the image of such websites, videos, or social media pages.[338] He even suggested government operatives should attend meetings and events organized by "conspiracy theorists" saying, "We suggest a distinctive tactic for breaking up the hard core of extremists who supply conspiracy theories…whereby government agents or their allies (acting either virtually or in real space, and either openly or anonymously) will undermine the crippled epistemology of believers by planting doubts about the theories and stylized facts that circulate within such groups, thereby introducing beneficial cognitive diversity."[339]

Aside from going after "conspiracy theorists" (translation: prominent independent media outlets who have successfully bypassed the editorial control of the mainstream media), Sunstein also set his sights on the Second Amendment and with a straight face lied to a group of students at the University of Chicago Law School saying that "The Supreme Court has never suggested that the Second Amendment protects an individual’s right to have guns.”[340]

Of course his claim about the Second Amendment couldn’t be further from the truth, because its sole purpose is to authorize individual citizens to have guns. In his lecture he went on to predict that in the future the Second Amendment would be repealed and the right of citizens to own guns would be eliminated.

In 2014 Sunstein published a book titled *Conspiracy Theories and Other Dangerous Ideas*, where he warned that conspiracy theorists were dangerous anti-government terrorists. Of course what he means by “conspiracy theorists” are people who report on the real reasons for the War in Iraq, or who think the September 11th attacks were a false flag, and anyone who sees the Bilderberg Group as suspicious.

Edward Snowden

In June of 2013, word spread like wild fire around the world that a former NSA contractor with a high level security clearance had stolen thousands of classified documents detailing the technical capabilities of the National Security Agency. 30-year-old Edward Snowden fled the country to avoid imprisonment and was giving asylum in Russia, and the cache of classified documents he obtained revealed the shocking details of how powerful Big Brother had become.

As the Illuminati have been setting up an all-powerful global government, they have also been focused on building an Orwellian society where all citizens are tracked, traced, and databased. While many people reasonably assumed such a system was being built, Snowden's leaks provided irrefutable proof that Big Brother had been born and was more powerful than most people had ever imagined.

The Snowden leaks also proved that the NSA was not just illegally conducting mass surveillance of Americans (and virtually everyone around the world) without warrants, and clearly violating the Fourth Amendment—but they also proved the government's protocols extended far beyond ordinary eavesdropping.

Laptop computers were routinely intercepted from UPS during shipment after being purchased from online retailers like Amazon and then fitted with special hardware, including micro cellular modems so their hard drives could be accessed even if the computers weren't connected to WiFi or an Ethernet cable. (This operation is called INTERDICTION.)[341] We also learned that the government has the ability to manipulate online polls on websites (UNDERPASS); they restrict YouTube videos from going viral or have them removed for phony "terms of service violations"

(SILVERLORD); or, if they want, make certain videos receive massive views to make it appear as if they've gone viral (SLIPSTREAM).[342]

They've intercepted millions of webcam feeds and scanned the people chatting over them with facial recognition systems to identify them (OPTIC NERVE);[343] they collect naked and compromising photos of people so they can be blackmailed or publicly humiliated by releasing them (LOVEINT);[344] and they even have the ability to record and store every single phone call in the entire world. Not just the record of who called who and when, but the actual audio of all calls (MYSTIC).[345] They can also spoof anyone's email address and send emails under any identity (CHANGELING), not to mention spoof any phone number. This is just a sample of their capabilities, and of course this is all done under the umbrella of "National Security."

This technology allows the government to have "turn key tyranny" power and with the flip of a switch they can target anyone, anywhere in the world. Not only can they physically locate you and bug you through cell phones or webcams in the area, but the NSA operatives can find out everything about a target, from your most intimate communications sent though text messages or emails, to obtaining personal photos, to uncovering health problems, shopping habits, eating habits, political views, friends, family, acquaintances, personal finances, gun ownership, etc., etc.

This power is so incredible that no man can resist abusing it, and in the final phase of the New World Order, the Illuminati and their inner circle of government agents will come down on dissenters with a digital iron fist and make them disappear down the memory hole like something right out of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Orwell ominously wrote, "The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plate commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. but at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You have to live —did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized."[346]

Checkout my previous book *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True* if you'd like to read my analysis of Orwell's novel and how it eerily parallels our world today. Orwell didn't just accurately forecast the invasive Big Brother surveillance system, but also ominously warned about our current dumbed down and heartless society; endless wars perpetuated to justify reducing civil liberties; and the erosion of the language and the breakdown of families and relationships in order to shift people's obedience and reliance to the State.

“Ex-Illuminati Members”

Similar to government whistleblowers or career criminals turned into informants who reveal the closely kept secrets of their organization, a handful of people have come forward over the years claiming to have been involved with the Illuminati in one way or another, and offer up what they claim to be insider information about the activities and goals of the network. Most of these people are complete frauds and are simply con artists trying to sell books and lectures, or just enjoying the attention from the conspiracy community since many people believe their stories—hook, line, and sinker.

In my previous book, *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, there is a detailed analysis of John Todd and William Schnoebelen, who are two of the most popular men who have made such claims, but there are also others whose stories have spread far and wide on the Internet like urban legends, so in this book we’ll take a close look and determine whether or not there is any legitimacy to them.

So far none of the alleged “defectors” have offered up any kind of evidence to back up their claims, but instead have only told tales based on the publicly known information about the history, beliefs, and activities of the Illuminati. None of the “former members” have ever revealed *any* new information that wasn’t already published in literature widely available in the conspiracy culture. But if you read through some of the comments on any of the YouTube videos featuring their claims, you will see that a very sizable percentage of the audience wholeheartedly believes these individuals and see them as heroic whistle blowers who “escaped” their dark past and are now on a mission to “expose” the Illuminati.

For an astute student dedicated to the truth and who doesn’t approach these people’s stories with confirmation bias—and if one has diligently done their own research—the inaccuracies and fabrications stick out like sore thumbs. For those who are new to investigating the Illuminati, or to those who are quite gullible, these “former Illuminati members” only serve to confirm their greatest fears. Most of these “defectors” are simply gifted storytellers presenting publicly known information from a first-person perspective as if they themselves actually witnessed it or participated in it. Some of these people are perhaps mentally ill and may actually believe what they are saying, but the evidence proves one after the other to be fake.

Let’s take a close look at some of these individuals’ stories so we can prevent them and future hoaxers from deceiving people who are trying to find answers and accurate information regarding the Illuminati and the New World Order.

Doc Marquis

Joseph “Doc” Marquis (born on October 26th 1956) is allegedly a former U.S. Army medic which is how he says he got his nickname “Doc,” and is one of several self-proclaimed “former Illuminati members” who says he was born into an Illuminati family but now is dedicated to “exposing” them.

“Doc,” who claims to have been raised as a seventh generation witch, says when he was three-years-old his family brought him to a special ceremony and dedicated him to Lucifer in a satanic baptism.[347] For the next ten years, he says, he was in the “outer court” of the Illuminati which he described as a satanic seminary school where he supposedly learned about the philosophies and secret symbols, and what he claims are the “eight nights of human sacrifice” that Illuminati members allegedly celebrate.

According to his story, when he was thirteen-years-old he was “fully initiated as a member of the Illuminati”[348] after signing his name in his own blood in a book made of lamb skin which he called the *Book of the Dead*, which just so happens to be the name of an ancient Egyptian scroll containing information on how to navigate through the afterlife in order to enter into Heaven.

Four years later, when he was seventeen, “Doc” says he underwent another initiation ceremony and became what he called a Master Witch, or a High Druid Priest, which granted him “automatic authority over a region of the United States” where he was in charge of over 1000 other Illuminati members.[349] This, all before he even graduated high school! His superiors, he says, then ordered him to join the United States Army in order to help the Illuminati infiltrate the armed forces. Within two weeks of being stationed at Fort Lewis in Washington he says he had twenty people recruited for the Illuminati, and just a couple months later says he had more than a hundred more![350] In reality, the actual Illuminati most likely consists of no more than a few hundred men, but when “Doc” Marquis was just seventeen-years-old, he says he was “in charge” of over 1000 of them!

During an online lecture produced by Prophecy Club, he says he practiced human sacrifices eight times a year and had “constant communication with Demons.”[351] Marquis claims to have personally witnessed dozens of human sacrifices before he “got out,” but no law enforcement agency has ever expressed any interest in him and have never considered him to be a suspect or a witness to any murders whatsoever. Trash television, on the other hand, gave him a platform to spread his nonsense in the late 1980s. He was once a guest on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* where he was talking about all these supposed murders and said, “The thing is, we didn’t body bag these people afterwards. We’d just take them [and], throw them in the woods, on the side of the road on a highway. Somebody’s going to find them.”[352] Of course, no one ever has because these “victims” don’t exist.

The “eight nights of human sacrifice” that Marquis claims to have celebrated was concocted from the eight festivals that Pagans celebrate (or Sabbats as Wiccans call them) which are commemorated throughout the year on solstices, equinoxes, and the four mid-points in between—none of which involve human sacrifices. I’m certainly not saying that Satanists don’t commit human sacrifices still to this day, because such occurrences have been well documented,[353] but the closest Marquis has come to one was watching a horror movie.

Local authorities would have taken him into custody for questioning if there was even a shred of evidence to back up his claims and no one involved with such crimes would dare speak about them out of fear of being arrested. Obviously in the 1980s, before the Internet, the average person could not easily confirm or disprove most claims made about the Illuminati and the occult, and very few people knew much about the subject at all. This is what led to the “satanic panic” in the 1980s when stories like Marquis’ were spread through tabloids and trash TV talk shows causing people who didn’t know any better to think Satanists were abusing children and sacrificing people in communities across the country.

“Doc” says that in between committing his evil deeds, he was repeatedly asked by Christians if he wanted to go to church or if he knew Jesus, and for whatever reason—despite being a “high level Illuminati master,” he decided to go to church on Easter Sunday in 1979, where he realized he was a “sold out slave of Satan,” became a Christian, and “left the Illuminati.”[354]

In one of his video lectures titled *Arrival of the Antichrist* he can be seen giving the usual history lesson about Adam Weishaupt and the formation of the Bavarian Illuminati, their structure and goals, and shows the all-seeing eye on the back of the one dollar bill while telling the audience to pull out their wallets to look at the dollar themselves as if this was some major revelation.[355] The eye on the back of the one dollar bill has become so elementary and Illuminati 101 that most middle school students are now aware of it, but back in the 1980s and 90s when Marquis began giving his lectures, things were quite different.

After his discussion on the one dollar bill symbology, he goes on to cover the well-known quotes from Pike’s book, *Morals and Dogma*, and then shows the interesting designs in the street layout of Washington D.C. and then complains about the government, the dumbing down of America, the Constitution, the demonization of Christians, etc., etc… Of course he concludes that the Illuminati is going to declare martial law and is setting up a New World Order for the reception of the antichrist.

When conducting my research into the Illuminati and coming across Doc Marquis’ claims of being a former Illuminati member, I painfully listened to his lectures online, which, like nearly every other self-proclaimed “former Illuminati member” didn’t reveal a single shred of information that wasn’t already widely known. Not only that, but many of his claims are clearly ridiculous to anyone who has basic knowledge about the Illuminati conspiracy.

For example, he says that they place a $10,000 bounty on anyone's head who tries to leave.[356] After he "left the Illuminati" he says they tried and failed to kill him at least six times![357] The Illuminati can assassinate world leaders and other heads of state, but they've failed over twenty times to kill this guy? Absurd.

Of course there are no police reports or news stories about *any* of these alleged murder attempts against him and since the Illuminati is the most powerful secret society in the world, they would have no problem killing anyone, especially no-name loser like "Doc" Marquis.

He sells a DVD called *Frontmen of the Illuminati* which consists of nothing more than a poorly produced home video of him sitting at a table showing different photos of symbols and people while talking about the Illuminati. The information on a website selling his DVDs reads, "Doc Marquis is a former Satanist who was trained in the Illuminati Plan before he came out of the coven to become a Christian. In 1992, Doc was hired by the Boston Police Department to train their homicide detectives how to spot evidence in a crime scene that the perpetrator was a practicing occultist. Doc also has appeared on the following TV shows: *Oprah Winfrey*; *Geraldo Rivera*; *Hard Copy*; and *Inside Edition*. He is the author of numerous books, video tapes and audio cassette series and has appeared as an expert witness in a number of documentaries."

His claim of having worked with the Boston Police department has not been verified and to think that this man would be hired to "train" homicide detectives is laughable, particularly after having claimed to have murdered a bunch of people in satanic rituals! I guess the police just decided to forgive him of all those supposed murders!

Marquis has also claimed to have degrees in sociology, and history, and once claimed he would soon be getting his doctorate in psychiatry from Baptist Christian University in Shreveport, Louisiana, but it was later revealed he wasn't even attending the school. He then said the school would be accepting a book he was writing on the occult as his doctoral dissertation!

Marquis wrote several books (as does every supposed “Illuminati defector”) hoping to make a few bucks off the conspiracy community. Marquis and other “Christians” who claim to be “former Illuminati” members like Bill Schnoebelen and John Todd—while being complete phonies—may, in their own mind, actually believe that they are helping people learn about the Illuminati conspiracy. There is, after all, a massive conspiracy, and these individuals do actually expose *some* of it, but their fabricated pasts and long lists of lies about being personally involved with the Illuminati—when they clearly don’t even have some of their basic facts straight—shows that men like Doc Marquis are not only frauds, but quite pathetic and shameful as well.

Leo Zagami

Another man claiming to be an Illuminati defector who went on to give interviews and lectures about the nefarious plans he learned while supposedly "inside" the secret society is Leo Zagami (born in Rome on March 5th 1970). While other alleged defectors claim to have become born again Christians after "leaving the Illuminati" and say that Jesus helped them realize they were on the wrong path and found support from Christian audiences, Leo Zagami instead has taken the New Age angle. He insists the Illuminati hold "the truth" but are a corrupt group of enlightened ones who have hijacked the Mystery School teachings so he decided to leave the Illuminati in order to preach their secret philosophy to the masses.

To help spread the "enlightening truth" kept suppressed by the Illuminati, Leo Zagami claims to have started a new "religion" called Matrixism that's based on the popular Matrix movies! He says he started this new "religion" in 2004 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the "deliverance" of Aleister Crowley's *Book of the Law*, the short blood thirsty book Crowley claimed was dictated to him by a demon while he was visiting Egypt in 1904. Yes, Zagami is a fan of dirt bag Aleister Crowley, whose philosophies he considers "the truth."

His website described his new "religion" as, literally having been inspired by the *Matrix* movies, but insists it was "conceived by an anonymous group in the summer of 2004 [and] has attracted over 16,000 adherents."[358]

The explanation goes on to say, "*The Matrix* trilogy, along with related mass media products such as video games, is generally considered to be the 'sacred text' of the movement."[359] He literally says *The Matrix* movies and video games are "sacred texts" of his "religion." He also says the "faith" can be traced back to a book called *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, published in 1922 that consist of a series of speeches given by Abdu'l-Baha, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith. All of this information, he says, comes from his knowledge of being an "Illuminati Grand Master" himself.

Zagami's website claims that he is, "a high-ranking Illuminati Grand Master, who gained considerable attention in the conspiracy research community between 2006 and 2008 as a defector and whistle-blower."[360] He once went by the name Khaled Saifullah Khan after having supposedly converted to Islam, but later changed his name back to Leo. He claims that his goal is to now organize "the Knights Templars of the Apocalypse" to fight the Illuminati, and says this "group" has recruited 12,000 troops from the U.S. Military, CIA, FBI, etc., who are going to stop the "Dark Illuminati plans."[361]

In Leo's mind, the main enemies of humanity are: The Jesuits, which he calls "the head of the serpent"; Zionists, who he says are "the economic arms of the Vatican New World Order"; the United Nations which is "a corrupt organization in the hands of the Jesuits and their Zionist allies dedicated to enslave mankind"; and "all religious fundamentalist because organized religion in all shapes and forms is a legal mafia manipulated by the Vatican and Jerusalem in the hands of corrupt individuals who work for the elite families and their intelligence services to keep our race in ignorance and superstition in the end of times."

Despite Leo's strange and rambling history and his new "religion" that he created based on *The Matrix* movies, and his claiming to still be involved with the "good" Illuminati and the "Knights Templars of the Apocalypse" and other undercover "Illuminati Resistance" members in the CIA, FBI, military, and police; and despite revealing no new information about the workings of the Illuminati—some completely gullible fools actually believe that he actually was, or still is involved with the secret society.

Leo Zigami's claims never gained anywhere close to the traction of other supposed "defectors" before him such as John Todd or Bill Schnoebelen, because he's not a gifted storyteller like some other hoaxers.

And we were well into the information age by the time Leo decided to step on the scene (in 2006), whereas John Todd started his talks in the 1970s, and Bill Schnoebelen in the early 1990s before the Internet was fully utilized by most people who can now quickly fact check claims online. Even with this resource at people’s fingertips, however, a shocking number of people still believe the stories from “ex-members” like “Doc” Marquis, Leo Zagami, John Todd, and others.

Many people enjoy conspiracy entertainment or *conspiratainment* as I call it, and have little to no concern about actual facts or the truth. They simply love the sometimes cleverly concocted tales by people who are inspired by actual events or conspiracies and then manufacture a sometimes entertaining conspiracy mythology based on grains of truth. It’s sort of like a good science fiction story that’s based in part on actual technology and then extrapolates into a fantasy designed to entertain the audience.

Supriem Rockefeller

A man calling himself “Supriem Rockefeller” and claiming to be a member of the famous Rockefeller family created a bit of a stir on the Internet in 2010 after announcing that the Rockefellers were launching a plan to fund the building of the Third Temple in Jerusalem, in what was called the “Temple Now Project.” The Third Temple refers to the rebuilding (again) of Solomon’s Temple in Israel, which was originally destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonians, and later rebuilt only to be destroyed again by the Romans in 70 AD. Christians believe that when the temple is rebuilt for the third time, it will signify the fulfillment of one of the final prophecies concerning the rise of the Antichrist and the return of Jesus.

Currently, a Muslim mosque called the Dome of the Rock stands on the ruins of the temple, and the only way Solomon’s Temple can be rebuilt on that spot is if Israel destroys the mosque and occupies that part of the land. This is why the “Rockefeller” announcement of supposed plans to build the Third Temple caught so many people’s attention.

A few official sounding websites published a press release about the “Supriem Rockefeller” plan without attempting to verify his identity or the supposed plan’s legitimacy. With sites like CNNMoney.com and MarketWatch having the press released posted, that was all the evidence many conspiracy blogs needed to run with the story that one of the final Biblical prophecies was about to be fulfilled thanks to the Rockefellers.[362]

None of this was true, however, and “Supriem Rockefeller” didn’t exist. The man behind the hoax was identified as a high school dropout named Kris from Louisiana, who was born in 1975. While living with his mother he worked as a cashier at a fast food restaurant and tried to make money by gambling and selling ringtones on various websites.

After he was fired from his job for allegedly stealing, the thirty-four-year-old then started going by “Supriem Rockefeller” online and saying he was the secret son of David Rockefeller Jr. “Supriem” posted online about how he was authorized to finalize the New World Order and “revealed” that the Rockefeller family had descended from the Annunaki, the supposed ancient race of aliens, who are believed by some to be responsible for the creation of humans.

It appears his “Temple Now Project” hoax was an attempt to receive donations from people who wanted to support the plan, hoping to fulfill Bible prophecy. One press release claimed he would be “raising funds to go towards building the Third Temple in Jerusalem in strict coordinance with The Temple Institute, Rabbi Hiam Richman and The Palestinian National Interest Committee (PNIC),” and his mission was to “build the Temple and to create a One Israel-Palestine state.”

What made this hoax believable for some, aside from the Christian prophecy of the Third Temple, was the very real Jewish plan to one day accomplish this very task. Ever since 1987 a non-profit Jewish group called the Temple Institute has been working to do just this. In fact, in 2008 they announced they had the High Priest’s garments already made along with dozens of other items they plan on using in “sacred rituals” once it is rebuilt. Of course the Temple Institute had nothing to do with “Supreium Rockefeller,” but he cleverly included their name in his press release to add an aura of credibility to his claims, since they are a real group working to accomplish this very goal.

This hoax didn’t last too long and his Facebook page was soon deleted, but many Jews and Christians continue to await the actual rebuilding of the Temple, an event that will be seen by Christians as one of the Bible’s final prophecies being fulfilled because in this Temple it is believed the Antichrist will announce himself to be “God” and order the people of earth to worship him as such.

In the 1970s, 80s and 90s, Illuminati phonies were able to pull off their scams with a remarkable amount of success, and while the Internet can put an end to most of these scams rather quickly today, countless people are simply lost in the sea of information available on the web and continue to spread Illuminati hoaxes far and wide, believing every word. These are the same kinds of people who believe that every time a famous celebrity dies from a drug overdose, car accident, or health problem—they think they were actually "murdered" by the Illuminati or faked their own death. If you search YouTube for keywords like "Paul Walker Illuminati Sacrifice," "Michael Jackson Murdered by Illuminati," or "Tupac killed by Illuminati," you will find literally hundreds of videos with millions of views and countless comments from people who are 100% convinced the Illuminati is behind *every* celebrity death.

The "Supriem Rockefeller" Third Temple hoax is not the first time that someone has posed as a member of the famous Rockefeller family. A man who called himself Clark Rockefeller (real name Christian Karl Gerhartsreiter) was sentenced to 27 years in prison for murdering his landlord's son which put an immediate end to his elaborate scam.[363] Gerhartsreiter even fooled his own wife into thinking he was a Rockefeller for years by taking extreme measures to hide his real identity. To accomplish this he had his wife file her income taxes as an individual instead of jointly as most married couples do, so his real name wouldn't have to be on the couple's tax returns, which she most likely would have noticed.[364] He even forged their marriage license to avoid having her see his actual name.[365]

Another man calling himself Christian Rockefeller (real name Christopher Rocancourt) actually swindled tens of millions of dollars from rich people in New York in the 1990s through fake investment scams after they thought he could increase their wealth because they believed he was a Rockefeller.[366]

Svali

The list of people who have come forward claiming to be former members of the Illuminati are mainly men, but in 2006 a woman calling herself "Svali" popped up on the Internet claiming to come from an Illuminati family in Germany who then relocated to America when she was very young. "Svali" said when she was a kid she was told that she was "special" and that the Illuminati had big plans for her. At 12-years-old she underwent her "initiation" at the Vatican, as she claimed all the leadership in the Illuminati do, and by the time she was twenty-two, she was the youngest person in the "Illuminati leadership council" in Southern California.

"Svali" said that secret Illuminati meetings were held three times a week in Escondido, California, which is a lower income area inland where no wealthy or powerful members of the Illuminati would ever go, let alone choose to live. I have personally lived near this area for over 15 years and have friends who have lived in Escondido and I've seen the city with my own eyes many times. It's primarily a Mexican ghetto and would be the last place in the world the Illuminati would ever think about going.

The security for these "Illuminati" meetings, she said, was a "spy" who had climbed up into a tree with a walkie talkie to spot unwanted visitors and would then radio ahead to the group so they could "leave within five minutes." I guess the group would just run off into the woods if the person in the tree saw anyone unexpected rolling up to the house! You'd think the Illuminati's security detail would be a bit more sophisticated than someone climbing into a tree with a walkie talkie! Her claims get dumber by the second the more she tells her story.

The source of the information coming from Svali appears to lead back to a man named Greg Szymanski who wrote (or may continue to write) for a little known website called ArcticBacon.com, one of countless amateur websites that contains posts about the Illuminati, the Jesuits, and other conspiracy issues. “Svali” allegedly reached out and contacted him with her claims, so he then interviewed her in January of 2006 on his virtually unknown Internet radio show. Audio of the interview can found on YouTube if you can force yourself to listen to more than 30 seconds of her incoherent rambling.

In the interview she said her adult co-conspirators would, “get up in the middle of the night to attend meetings,” and while the adults were doing their thing, the kids were “learning how to march and shoot guns and were being trained in martial arts.” She claims her initiation at the Vatican included a child sacrifice and throughout the interview she was very scatterbrained and had a hard time explaining her story, which isn’t even remotely convincing. Greg the interviewer ate it up though, and seemed to believe every word she was saying, as did a measurable number of people on the Internet who happened to come across her story.

When she was allegedly hanging out with the Illuminati, she claimed to be a “head programmer” involved in mind control programs but never offered up any details about what her supposed responsibilities were and couldn’t even articulate the basic concepts or history of mind control.

Svali isn’t even a clever hoaxer like some others before her, and appears to be a mentally deranged person just looking for someone to pay attention to her. It’s also possible that Greg Szymanski, the man who first interviewed her, actually crafted the Svali hoax himself by working with a female friend to concoct the entire story so he could be the person to have the “exclusive” interview and forever be linked to her as the person who first “broke her story.”

His website is just one of countless virtually unknown sites in the sea of conspiracy theories online so it makes no sense why a “former Illuminati member” would reach out to him since there are a large number of fairly prominent conspiracy websites that cover such topics. She did try selling an e-book titled *Breaking the Chain: Breaking Free of Cult Programming,* but it's not even listed in any of the major e-book stores and seems like a failed attempt to try to make a few bucks by selling a PDF file from a website.

I can attest to the fact that I have received multiple e-mails from different people making extremely bizarre claims such as being stalked or harassed by cults and the rambling and incoherent nature of their emails clearly show that they are from mentally disturbed and insane people sounding very much like this woman.

Actual Illuminati members are educated, intelligent, and well-spoken people. They are very persuasive and convincing—none of which can be attributed to Svali, whose stories are so convoluted they're hard to follow as she jumps from thought to thought. How did she eventually "escape" the clutches of the Illuminati? Well, she said she left the organization because she started to realize, "what I was doing was wrong." Now that she is a "former member" she is a born again Christian and has repented of the activities she claims to have participated in. Today, the woman says she's a "diabetic educator" living in Texas with her husband and two children.

The bio on the website of the man responsible for conducting the interview reads, "Greg is first and foremost a satirist, a writer and a reporter," so he was likely just playing a role and trying to have fun with conspiracy theories by producing a new Internet urban legend of conspiracy theory fiction about the "woman who left the Illuminati."

Brice Taylor

A woman calling herself Brice Taylor (a pseudonym) published a book in 1999 titled *Thanks For The Memories: The Truth Has Set Me Free! The Memoirs of Bob Hope's and Henry Kissinger's Mind-Controlled Slave* where she details what she says is her account of being a CIA mind control victim who was used as a sex slave by the Illuminati.

David Icke, a popular conspiracy writer best known for his theories that the Illuminati are an alien race of shape-shifting reptilians, is listed as an endorsement on Amazon.com's listing of the book, as well as Ted Gunderson, a former FBI Agent from Los Angeles who said, the book "confirms facts furnished by many other witnesses."

With endorsements by such heavy hitters in the conspiracy world as David Icke and Ted Gunderson, many people are inclined to believe her claims, but upon even a brief analysis of the book, the woman's story quickly goes from being hard to believe, to being completely ludicrous and impossible by any stretch of the imagination.

The first wobbly leg of this story comes when we learn Brice Taylor is just a pseudonym and the authors' real name is Susan Lynne Eckhart Ford who admits that from a young age she suffered from multiple personality disorder. "But as I began to heal and remember more of my hidden past, I realized that ritual abuse was merely the mind control trauma base my ritually abused, programmed pedophile father, Calvin Charles Eckhart, and others used to condition me for participation in the still active top secret Project Monarch, the Central Intelligence Agency's white slavery operation that is related to MKULTRA and its numerous sub-projects," she writes.[367]

“The result of many years of trauma, intentionally inflicted on me by my father and others to create within me multiple personalities, was that I was transformed into a programmed, totally robotical slave that could not remember to think or tell what happened to me, due to the mind control and sophisticated programming I was under. I was used frequently in child and adolescent prostitution and pornography. By my pre-teen years, I had many personalities specifically programmed to be the perfect sex slave—a ‘presidential mode’ with government mind files and a photographic memory equipped to deliver (most often through sexual encounters) messages, some cryptic, to top government officials, entertainers, and other world figures.”[368]

She writes that when her memories started coming back to her at the age of thirty-five she, “began having vivid, detailed memories of being used both as a sex slave and human mind file computer to some of our nation’s highest level government officials in and out of the White House.”[369] She then goes on to list Presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Jimmy Carter, as well as Henry Kissinger, Nelson Rockefeller, Bob Hope (the popular entertainer), and many others as men she says all abused her.

Taylor says that while meditating she began to remember things all the way back to when she was *four months old*! (Not four years old, four *months* old.) She says her father worked as a welder who owned a welding shop in Los Angeles, but was somehow also secretly working for the CIA as a mind control programmer. “My father began the rigorous training and intentional torture required to shatter my base personality with the goal of creating many separate individual personalities for training and use by others as I grew older.”[370]

Her mom too, she says, was under mind control and “was listening to music she was told to listen to in order to keep her memory of our actual life locked deeply within her subconscious mind, while the programmed reality of herself and our ‘perfect happy family’ was kept alive through programmed phrases in the music.”[371]

Most of the book consists of lengthy and rambling tales of alleged abuse by such a long list of people, both famous, and ordinary people in her community, that it reads like a parody of a poorly written horror story. The people involved in the conspiracy include her ballet teacher, her doctor, her dentist, her choir teacher, her next door neighbor, the people at her local church (who she says all had tunnels under their homes connecting them to each other and also leading to the church); the owners of the local bowling alley were also in on it, and of course the Freemason Shriners, and even the owners of a local gas station! They were all sacrificing children and shooting snuff films or involved with the "CIA's mind control program" she says.[372]

The list of her alleged abusers and human-sacrificing CIA Satanists she was involved with just goes on and on. Prince Philip, Prince Charles, and even Sylvester Stallone are on her seemingly endless list of abusers. Sylvester Stallone, she claims, directed several bestiality films where she says she had sex with dolphins and other sea creatures! Other celebrities such as Jane Fonda and Barbara Streisand were also under mind control she says, and Elton John was aware of such things and tried to help the victims with the lyrics in his music.

Aside from listing half the people in her community as being "in on it," and a dozen presidents and celebrities, she also names some very odd places where she says everyone sexually abused her or "programmed" her with mind control. One of these supposed places was Disneyland where she says her father introduced her to Walt Disney himself when she was five-years-old, who then made her look into a View-Master box containing dead cats and dead people.

"Brice Taylor" said she would also meet Henry Kissinger there at Disneyland where he would "program" her using CIA mind control techniques. One of these "programming sessions," she said, needed to be done in front of a carrousel for some unknown reason. "I also continued to be taken to Disneyland for base programming for my new government mind file system," she wrote.[373] Who would have thought the CIA was using Disneyland as a secret mind control center? Like I said, her book reads like a bad parody of a horror story written by a teenager.

She goes on to claim she was also taken to various McDonald's around the country and "programmed there too." And of course she says she was also taken inside the National Archives, the State Department, NASA, the Pentagon, the Federal Reserve, the World Health Organization, and other military bases around the country—and insists she was "programmed" at every one. Why her handlers would need to take her to the Federal Reserve Bank to "program" her using mind control techniques isn't said, and these claims are clearly ridiculous and the result of another over-active imagination of a clearly insane person, or by a horrible storyteller fabricating such tales hoping to sell a ton of books to the conspiracy community.

She wrote that she was even told that in a few years she would be killed and her services wouldn't be needed any longer. Why would her handlers inform her that they would kill her at some point in the future? Wouldn't they keep this to themselves and lead her on? After all, if she knew she was going to be killed soon, wouldn't this give her even more reason to betray them and escape before this happened? The more of Brice Taylor's story you read, the more absurd it gets, well beyond the point of nonsense.

The book is self-published because I'm sure that not even a small fringe conspiracy publisher would invest their money in such a worthless piece of garbage filled with fictional delusions. Near the end of the book , as expected, she starts talking about the elite's plan for a New World Order. Then there is a "suggested reading" list which includes the staple books of New World Order and Illuminati literature such as *None Dare Call it Conspiracy* by Gary Allen (published in 1972), *Tragedy and Hope* by Carroll Quigley (published in 1966), as well as books by conspiracy authors like David Icke, Texe Marrs, Fritz Springmeier, and other titles about mind control, the CIA, and brainwashing.

The question remains…why would this woman make up all these horrific things that she says happened to her? What would compel a woman to write such a book? I speculate that the only truthful part of the book is that perhaps she was sexually abused as a child, but not by any of the political figures or celebrities she mentioned, but at the hands of a relative or perhaps even her own father. She may feel justified and achieve some degree of healing by venting her anger and betrayal in a fictionalized book where she has projected that the perpetrators of her abuse are men in high positions of power within society. It's also likely that she wrote the book purely as "conspiracy fiction" hoping to pass it off as factual to the often gullible conspiracy community.

The reason some people believe her claims is because there are grains of truth (albeit tiny miniscule grains) since the CIA did do horrific mind control experiments in their MK Ultra program, and they did drug, hypnotize, and torture people in those experiments trying to create mind controlled slaves. In 1994 the US government awarded 77 people $100,000 each in financial compensation for experimenting on them,[374] but Brice Taylor (whose real name is possibly Sue Ford) never even went to court over her allegations and was not one of the recipients.

A few years before Brice Taylor's book was published, another woman named Cathy O'Brien released a book titled *The Transformation of America* where she had claimed to be a test subject for the CIA's MK Ultra program, and a "sex slave" of the Illuminati's top politicians. O'Brien even claims to have been taken inside Bohemian Grove. It's most likely Brice Taylor was inspired by Cathy O'Brien's book and hoped she could cash in by making similar claims. While Brice Taylor is clearly a fraud, Cathy O'Brien's claims are a bit more believable (but also possibly fabricated), and are analyzed in detail in my previous book *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* if you are interested in reading about them.

“Jess LaVey”

A man calling himself “Jess LaVey” saying he was the son of Anton LaVey, the infamous founder of the Church of Satan and the author of *The Satanic Bible*, threw his hat into the conspiracy entertainment ring around the year 2000 and got himself a small amount of attention on a few Internet radio shows who eagerly took the bait and gave him a platform to spread his nonsense.

“Jess LaVey” not only claimed to have been the son of Anton LaVey (whose real name was Howard Levey by the way), but also said he climbed the ranks of Satanism all the way up to the Illuminati. In one interview “Jess” claims, “I never could forget the counsel of thirteen, they were very wicked looking men. When I reached the age of twelve, my father told me I had to go before them…They warned me of what could happen to me if I did not do as they suggested. George H.W. Bush Senior was one of these men. I stood before them and told them I was not going to follow their ways and I was not going to take my dad’s place, and that there was nothing they could do to me….I told them I believe in a higher power and that higher power said in His Word that no harm can come to me.”[375]

After he refused this “invitation” to the Illuminati, he says they castrated him as his punishment. He also talked about the Kimball-Cherokee Castle in Sedalia, Colorado, a 1450s style castle built in the 1950s on a 3,100-acre ranch in Colorado where, he claimed the Illuminati meet every year to do human sacrifices. “Satanists come together and do unspeakable things…To think that Bush and his whole family is a part of this kind of thing is hard for some people to believe. The whole Bush family is Satanists…I have met Bush Jr. once when he came to a ritual at the castle once with his father….He is a very cold man for Satan. Like a lethal weapon.”[376]

Other “insider” satanic “leaders” have come forward over the years, mainly in the 1980s and 90s such as Mike Warnke and Stephen Dollins, trying to use their supposed “satanic credentials” to boost their new career as Christian evangelists, but most were never involved in any organized cults or groups and wildly exaggerated the supposed activities they claimed to have participated in.[377]

In 2002 John W. Morehead of the Watchman Fellowship, a group that monitors the activities of cults, was given a copy of what “Jess LaVey” claimed to be his social security card which was clearly fake and when the number was run for a background check it was proven to be invalid.

“Sadly, many have claimed to be LaVey’s child in order to gain financial support from churches and to give credibility to their ministries allegedly addressing Satanism and the occult,” Morehead told Charisma Magazine in 2002.[378]

Anton LeVay, Aleister Crowley, Helena Blavatsky, Manly P. Hall, and other real occult insiders have revealed plenty of details to see exactly what is going on in various Satanic groups and secret societies, but conspiracy con men seem to keep coming up with the idea that they can make some money by claiming to have been an “insider” who is offering a “first-hand account” of what they have allegedly seen and done.

The interviews “Jess LaVey” did can be found on YouTube and after listening to one for about five seconds, any sane adult should obviously be able to tell he is making up his story pretty much as he goes along and doesn’t even have the faintest hint of legitimacy. Anton LaVey (again whose real name was Howard Levey) had two daughters and only one son; a boy named Satan Xerxes who was born in 1993.

George Green

A supposed former investment banker named George Green claims to have once sat in on secret Illuminati meetings where men were making “god-like decisions as to who lives and who dies” and contemplated “dropping neutron bombs” on major American cities to reduce the population in accordance with the Georgia Guidestones. “I actually sat in on the meetings. I was in the game big time. In fact, I was making such a mess, they decided rather than kill me, which they could, they invited me in to the inner group and asked me to be the finance chairman, and at that point, I probably would have been secretary of the treasury or whatever they wanted to do with me.”[379] The financial chairman of the Illuminati, huh? This I gotta hear about!

In his interview, which can be seen on YouTube, Green talks about the World War Three looming in the Middle East, a coming one world currency, FEMA concentration camps, the coming economic collapse of America, the planned extermination of the majority of the world’s population to save the earth’s natural resources for the elite, and rattles off a list of well-known plans of the Illuminati. Green doesn’t reveal an ounce of new information whatsoever and like many others, just talks about the same old widely available claims while presenting them from the perspective of a supposed insider who says he literally sat in on the meetings. Of course he too is trying to sell a book titled *Chaos in America*, which never gained much traction.

If George Green actually did attend any of the Illuminati meetings, he would be able to at least reveal *some* previously unknown details about their plans, but instead he just recycles the same old material that has been floating around the Internet and patriot circles for many years. An interesting phenomenon in the information age is that if you claim to have some kind of Illuminati “scoop” and throw the video online, people are going to find it and people will believe it.

Aside from the typical Illuminati talking points about the Georgia Guidestones, FEMA camps and the collapse of America, George Green goes straight into crazy town and says the Illuminati have been making “synthetic people.” He’s not talking about secret cloning programs, which most likely exist—he claims that most presidents have been “replaced” by these synthetic clones! That’s right. He says our major world leaders are all grown in an Illuminati lab and are just pretending to be real people.

To “prove” this is happening he points to the movie *Boys from Brazil*, a 1978 film about Nazi scientists creating clones of Hitler to rebuild the Third Reich. This cloning technology, he says, was given to us by the “greys” (aliens), and he says he knows this because while working in the Air Force he claimed to have “top secret” clearance which gave him access to some dead Nordic-type aliens called the Pleiadians who came to earth from the Pleiades star cluster.

While aliens may actually be directing the Illuminati, and top secret human cloning programs most likely do exist, George Green’s presentation is so poorly executed and unconvincing, it reeks of a hoax from the very moment he opens his mouth. And again, he hasn’t provided a single piece of new “evidence” that wasn’t already widely known by most conspiracy researchers.

Not to mention nobody has been able to verify any part of his supposed background as an “investment banker” or having any kind of “top secret” security clearance in the military. But then again, we’re living in a world where countless people believe Tupac faked his death which just goes to show that some people will believe just about anything, no matter how crazy it is, despite zero evidence, and defying all logic and common sense.

Kevin Trudeau

Kevin Trudeau is a man that almost everyone in America has seen on TV (whether they know his name or not) over the course of twenty years pitching various products on infomercials such as health supplements, anti-aging cream, and methods to get "free money." He is an extraordinary salesman who could sell ice to Eskimos, as the cliché goes, and has been labeled the "infomercial king" due to the massive hours of airtime and the large number of different products he has pitched over the years.[380]

As a follow up to his bestselling book *Natural Cures 'They' Don't Want You to Know About* (2005), he published *More Natural 'Cures' Revealed* (2006) where he claimed to have been a member of a powerful secret society, hinting it was the Illuminati—and through his supposed membership in this society, he learned how the world really worked, including how drug companies were suppressing natural cures for diseases in order to allow them to sell more drugs instead of helping people to be cured.

Trudeau alleges that because of his drive for wealth and his knowledge of the human mind, he was approached by members of "the Brotherhood" secret society and recruited by them to join. Trudeau wrote, "As a member of this secret society I have sat in private meetings with heads of state from countries around the world. I have attended secret international business meetings where business leaders, politicians, and media moguls coerce together to create the new world order with global control over individual people everywhere."[381]

Sounds a lot like the Bilderberg Group, doesn't it? During an interview on the Alex Jones Show in 2009, a very convincing Trudeau discussed his knowledge of the Bohemian Grove and other secret societies, and stated that he had friends who attended the Bilderberg meeting that year in Greece and that he had personally "sat in on meetings" where the elite talked about reducing the world's population by killing off "the dumb people."[382] Later in the interview he mentioned "what we talked about at Bilderberg" prompting Jones to interrupt him for clarification asking, "Did I hear you correctly, were you at Bilderberg?" to which Trudeau answered, "Yeah, I was in Greece, because I have friends who were there…All I can say is that I was in the area, and many of the people that were there and who are members are in fact people I converse with on a regular basis."[383] Of course Trudeau's name has never appeared on a Bilderberg attendee list and all this was building up to his latest money making scheme, the Global Information Network, which I'll get into in a few moments.

A member of this "elite Brotherhood," Trudeau says he worked covertly for the wealthiest families on earth and during his alleged involvement, he says he made hundreds of millions of dollars and lived a life many could only dream of. "Members of this society includes politicians, captains of industry, news journalists, celebrities, musicians, writers, scientists, law enforcement officials, movie stars, and more," he says.[384]

In his book *More Natural 'Cures' Revealed*, he goes on to write that after he became a member of this "elite secret society," he discovered they had two groups, and that one was evil, and the other good, and both were using the organization's advanced knowledge and power to influence the world. "I was on the dark side doing evil; now I have repented, changed my ways, and turned my life around…Now I am going against the masters that I once served. I am telling people the truth about Big Pharma, the food industry, the oil industry, governments, and the media."[385]

Trudeau has an extremely checkered past, including a conviction for fraud and larceny which resulted in him serving two years in prison in the 1990s.[386] He was also banned by the Federal Trade Commission from selling products like health supplements and beauty creams on TV and fined $37 million dollars for making false claims in infomercials about his book *The Weight-Loss Cure 'They' Don't Want You To Know About.*[387] He found a major loophole however, and continued selling books and audio recordings because these items weren't seen as "products," but were considered information, thus protected by the First Amendment right to free speech.

In *More Natural 'Cures' Revealed*, he claimed that his prison sentence in the 1990s wasn't really because he was a criminal, but instead, "The society needed me to go to prison for a very specific mission."[388] So what he means apparently, is that this all-powerful "Brotherhood" wanted him to commit credit card fraud and larceny because they "needed" him to go to prison for a "mission." He goes on to write that during his sentence he spend most of his time not in a prison cell, but hanging out at the Officer's Club at Edwards Air Force base eating "the finest food in the club," all because he was a member of this Illuminati-type secret society![389]

As if Trudeau's claims weren't already hard enough to believe, they get much, much stranger. He also wrote, "I have been to Area 51 in Nevada. This is where much of our technology has been developed. Area 51 houses most extraterrestrial artifacts, including a working spacecraft and dead alien bodies. I have seen these things with my own eyes."[390] He actually says he has been inside Area 51 and saw the aliens with his own eyes! I guess they have a family and friends night and even give tours to infomercial pitchmen!

Trudeau keeps his discussion on his alleged involvement with the Brotherhood and aliens brief in his *More Natural 'Cures' Revealed* book, but states that unless he is the victim of an "unforeseen accident," he will discuss this "secret society" in detail in a future book he planned to write.

At the end of 2009, Trudeau launched a new infomercial for an audio series titled *Your Wish is Your Command* where he claimed to teach magical methods of the "law of attraction" found in *The Secret*, the popular DVD produced by Rhonda Byrne, released a few years earlier which discusses mystical ideas about how your own thoughts and beliefs can metaphysically alter your physical reality.

The new infomercial was designed to look like an ordinary talk show with Trudeau as the guest and can be viewed in its entirety on YouTube. He starts of by saying that when he was 15-years-old, he was exposed to "the Brotherhood" secret society which he says took him in and taught him how to use *The Secret* and enabled him to make millions of dollars before his eighteenth birthday. In high school, he was actually voted most likely to succeed when he graduated in the class of 1981 from Saint Mary's High School in Lynn, Massachusetts.

Instead of simply regurgitating *The Secret's* "law of attraction" philosophy, Trudeau cleverly mixed secret societies in with his sales pitch, since he likely knew a growing segment of the population were highly interested in researching them.

In the infomercial he says, "Quite frankly, these are the same techniques that members of Skull & Bones have learned from Yale University; the Bilderberg Group—some people may be familiar with some of these organizations—the power elite. When you get to the highest level in Freemasonry, the 33rd degree level of Freemasonry—these are secrets of these various associations and societies on how to—we call it manipulating energy—it's really just how to beam the frequency in your brain of what you want so it will come into your life."[391]

He went on to say that all the popular self-help books, such as Napoleon Hill's classic, *Think and Grow Rich*, and Norman Vincent Peale's *Power of Positive Thinking,* were missing the "key ingredient" which makes these mystical ideas work, and only his audio program would reveal them. During part of his sales pitch he even says, "If a guy is watching this right now and doesn't get the *Your Wish is Your Command* program, they'll always be a loser."

The host asks him why the wealthy people in the past didn't want others to know this information (a scripted and preplanned question, of course) to which he answered, "When you're in Skull & Bones, the secret society, or the highest levels of Freemasonry, or the Bilderberg Group or the

Trilateral Commission or the Council on Foreign Relations, or the Brotherhood—like I was a member of—you're basically a part of a group that believes 'we want to keep this information to ourselves, we don't want competition.'"

He later claims he left "the Brotherhood" in 1999 because he didn't believe that the information should be kept from everyone else and tells the audience that if they "call today" they'll get his 14 CD program at 70% off the "regular price" of $1,000. "I would just really encourage people to take advantage of this secret knowledge on how to have, be, or do whatever they want." He also says he has received death threats from "the Brotherhood" for revealing these "secrets," but apparently they have enough power to rule the world but couldn't successfully assassinate a TV pitchman!

Trudeau then started offering people a membership to "a very elite society" which he called the Global Information Network, a supposed network of former Illuminati members, Skull & Bones members, Bilderberg Group insiders, 33rd degree Freemasons, Bohemian Grove members, etc., who all left those organizations to start GIN with him to help reveal their insider secrets to the world! Trudeau's Global Information Network is not to be confused with Global Information Network, Ltd., a non-profit news agency started in 1986 in New York City which specializes in news from Africa.

While Trudeau is an extraordinary salesman, he is a terrible teacher and a pathetic motivational speaker. As part of my research on Trudeau I have actually listened to all 14 CDs, approximately one hour each, as I sat painfully waiting for something of any value to be said, but there was nothing. For most of the 14 hours I was extremely bored and had to force myself to keep listening, and occasionally I sat in awe at Trudeau's marvelous ability to sound like he was about to reveal something of incredible importance but never actually getting to the point. Through the entire program he just kept regurgitating a wide variety of popular analogies that have been used by self-help gurus for decades.

The website, GlobalInformationNetwork.com described his organization as being, “conceived by a group of individuals from around the world who are the highest ranking members of several private societies, associations, clubs, and groups whose membership has been exclusive to the privileged elite class of the world,”[392] including supposed members from just about every Illuminati connected secret society and organization you can think of. The website originally actually listed the Illuminati, Bohemian Grove, the Bilderberg Group, Skull & Bones, Freemasons, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission and more, saying that members from all these groups had defected and were now part of the Global Information Network’s secret council.

The website went on to claim that, “For the first time in human history, the highest ranking members of these secret societies have encouraged the formation of a new, private, member only group that allows people who do not qualify to become members of the above listed societies to join together and be exposed to the same secrets revealed and taught to members of those societies and clubs.”[393]

The site went on to say that a New World Order is forming that “is designed to increase the gap between the wealthy and the average working man” and that “GIN does not agree with this movement” and they believe “EVERY person has the right to know the secrets of creating the life they want and enjoying freedom, pursuing happiness, and achieving all their dreams and desires.”

“Members” of GIN apparently got several CDs and books shipped to them each month to further their education on the “law of attraction” and other Illuminati secrets. What did you have to do to “join” this secret society of Illuminati defectors who were ready to reveal their insider secrets to the world? All you had to do was pay $1000.00 down and $150 a month, each and every month after that! Once you were a “member” you could get a $200 commission for every one of your friends you suckered into signing up as well. Each new member was given an affiliate code that was used as a “secret invitation” to the Global Information Network, which they gave out to others who they hoped would then sign up, earning them $200 bucks.

When I first began investigating GIN, there was a section on their website to “join” their “society” that asked for the “invitation affiliate code,” so I simply typed in *Kevin* as the code which was accepted because I was then taken to the payment page asking for my credit card number to pay the $1,000 initiation fee, which of course I didn’t pay. I also tried *Trudeau* as the affiliate code, and it worked as well. GIN was so “exclusive” that I guessed two of their secret passwords in two seconds!

Buying “Illuminati secrets” didn’t end there though. After paying a $1000.00 down payment and a $150 each month, new “members” were only given access to the first of twelve different levels within the “society.” To rise to the next level and learn more “Illuminati secrets” to success, each person had to pay more and more money with payments exceeding $10,000.00 dollars!

When I first began looking into the website, there was a section for a description and “member benefits” for each level but all the details, including the costs, were marked “classified information,” except for the $1,000 initiation fee to join the first level.

The site claimed, “Members must qualify for each membership level by meeting specific requirements and being approved by the Global Information Network membership acceptance committee. Each higher membership level in GIN gives the member additional classified benefits, substantial cash bonuses, and other financial and monetary rewards.”[394] I had a sneaking suspicion that in order to “qualify” for the next level, all you needed to do was pay a large amount of money without your credit card being declined.

The site said that the “requirements” for the next level would be revealed in the previous level, but insisted that although the “benefits” were “classified and confidential,” they, “may include cash bonuses of over 1 million dollars, all-expense paid exotic vacations, one-on-one mentoring with high level GIN members, monthly residual payments of over $100,000, luxury automobiles, private jets, and more."[395]

A YouTube video advertising the Global Information Network had the following description, "For the first time in the history of mankind, the Illuminati is opening their doors to qualified people." This video was created by someone who signed up as an affiliate and was trying to lure people to join so they could get their $200 commission through the website's affiliate program designed to pull in new "members." As absurd as this all sounds, as P.T. Barnum said, there's a sucker born every minute.

The GIN website boasted, "Affiliates could potentially earn hundreds of thousands of dollars in commissions," but included a disclaimer saying, "Individual results will vary. There are no guarantees that you will make any sales or make any money as an affiliate."

If this didn't sound like a good enough reason to pay the $1,000 initiation fee, they claimed that, "members could be given hundreds of thousands of dollars in surprise bonuses" as they qualify for various levels within the GIN membership organization and could get, "All expense paid trips to exotic locations around the world, luxury automobiles, private jet trips, and more," a claim which was immediately followed by another disclaimer saying, "Legally we are required to say that there are no guarantees that you will earn money as an affiliate or a member of the Global Information Network."

And if this still didn't sound good enough to get someone to join, they insisted, "This is just the tip of the iceberg. Surprising as it seems, the majority of member benefits are not discussed here. The most significant members benefits are confidential and only revealed to members."

The site claimed that members would have access to, "experts, the powerful and affluent, celebrities, professional athletes, authors, scientists, politicians, successful business people, doctors and medical experts, leaders in various fields, plus many others."

Basically, Trudeau was trying to sell a ridiculously expensive membership [$1,000 down—later reduced to $500—and $150 a month] to join his own “secret society” that he made to appear was comprised of former Illuminati members. Trudeau carefully crafted an image of being an insider affiliated with groups like the Illuminati who was “leaking” the secrets to the average Joe who also dreams of being rich and powerful or who wanted to be a part of the Illuminati themselves.

He even advertised a special pay-per-view video “seminar” mid-2012 where he claimed he would reveal the secrets of December 21st 2012, which, you may recall, was supposedly the date that the Mayan Calendar indicated would be the end of the world. In a video posted on his YouTube channel promoting his pay-per-view “special,” Trudeau said, “There is something coming, significant, December 21st 2012...We now have the data. I now have the data authenticated. I now have the data verified through multiple sources. Something significant that you need to know is going to happen on December 21st 2012.”[396]

He went on to say, “I’m going to be revealing in a two hour webinar, exactly what is going to happen December 21st 2012. This is information you and your family need to know. It is information that you categorically 100% need to know. You need to know this. It is vital.” Gullible fools thought he got this “data” from his Freemasonry, Bilderberg, Bohemian Grove buddies who supposedly made up the “GIN Council.”

Trudeau is, in my opinion, an extraordinary liar and con artist and has fabricated his alleged connections with the Illuminati and the Bilderberg Group just like so many others, but added his own ingenious twist by creating his own “secret society” and selling “memberships” to suckers who thought they were going to get rich quick. If only Trudeau would have moved to Hollywood decades ago, he could have perhaps earned hundreds of millions of dollars as an Oscar winning actor and may have avoided his many legal troubles.

I'm sure that *some* of the information in Trudeau's *Natural 'Cures'* books, and "getting out of debt books," is legitimate and useful, and perhaps has helped a fair number of people get healthier and manage their finances better. But the extraordinary claims of seeing alien bodies in the Area 51 hanger, and being recruited for an elite secret society when he was 15-years-old and having to go to prison for a mission to help them are truly ridiculous.

And anyone who was dumb enough to buy into his $1,000 (or later reduced to $500) "initiation" fee to join his "elite society" which he claimed had members of the Illuminati and Bohemian Grove as a part of it, then those people are truly gullible fools who were blinded by their own desperate hopes of becoming rich without having to work hard.

Trudeau's claims of being affiliated with an elite secret society and his carefully crafted Global Information Network scheme clearly, in my opinion, shows him to be concerned more with fooling gullible people out of large amounts of money than helping anyone get cured from any disease.

While he may discuss various useful home remedies in his "Natural Cures" books, and tout them as 'cures' for diseases, many health professionals have expressed concerned that people with real illnesses may have taken his advice while abandoning traditional medical treatment for what may be very serious diseases. The fact that Trudeau has been a pitchman for a wide variety of products, almost all of which play off people's basic desires to be healthy, look beautiful, or to get out of debt, shows that he has a knack for presenting supposed easy solutions to difficult problems.

Finally, I should point out that in his *More Natural 'Cures' Revealed* book where he first claims he was a member of an elite secret society and offers cures for all kinds of diseases, on the page immediately following the *Table of Contents*, is a disclaimer with a paragraph reading in part, "This book is considered by some a work of fiction, yet inspired by a true story. The truth is sprinkled in to spice things up. On occasion, names, dates, and events have been changed or made up for fun.” It goes on to say the book is, “for entertainment purposes only.”[397] How clever of Trudeau for including this legal disclaimer which hardly anyone even noticed, which attempts to protect him from the legal ramifications of the claims he is making. Since when is a book containing “cures” for diseases “entertainment?” It’s shameful.

So basically if you believe Trudeau’s wild tales of attending Bilderberg meetings and being connected to the Illuminati, may I remind you that in his own words he admits that it is all for “entertainment purposes only.”

After I posted several videos on YouTube exposing Kevin Trudeau beginning in 2009, some of his supporters posted angry comments on the video and on my Facebook page saying things like, “Maybe you're the one working with the Illuminati to try and discredit him for leaving them in the first place and exposing the truth.”

Another of the countless crazy comments by the gullible GIN members said, “Kevin Trudeau and his friends have dossiers of the crimes of the Illuminati all over the world and if anything happens to the GIN council it will be released to every news agency.”

In March of 2014, Trudeau was sentenced to ten years in prison for violating his court order not to make deceptive claims on infomercials.[398] Court documents revealed that his Global Information Network took in over $100 million dollars in just a few years,[399] all the while Trudeau claimed to be broke and didn’t pay a single penny towards his $37 million dollar fine the Federal Trade Commission levied against him.[400] One court document states, “Trudeau denies having any personal property other than $2000 worth of clothing, but spent more than $15,000 in one trip to a high-end men’s clothier in Zurich [Switzerland] only months before he filed the ‘sworn’ statement.[401]

In court it was revealed that GIN technically listed in his wife’s name, a Ukrainian girl, twenty-three years younger than him (who some speculate was possibly a “mail order bride”) as the named officer and director.[402] During court proceedings she “took the fifth” when asked how she met Trudeau.[403] Court documents reveal Trudeau was accused of hiding assets in a variety of ways including a convoluted ownership structure of various companies, off-shore trusts, and even using casino chips.[404]

A major key to Trudeau’s book sales were his infomercials which appealed to a sizable segment of society who weren’t very tech savvy, like many baby boomers and senior citizens—many of whom were facing declining health and desperate to try something hoping for a cure for their ailments. If, instead of ordering his books using the 1-800 number from the infomercial, they would have looked up the books on Amazon.com, then they would have seen many of the reviews were one star, and many of them ripping Trudeau for his outlandish claims and criminal past.

It is for these many reasons that, in my opinion, Kevin Trudeau is the biggest Illuminati hoaxer in history and is virtually unmatched by anyone in his ability to deceive people and put a fresh new spin on the ancient art of selling snake oil. At his sentencing, Trudeau told the judge—who called him deceitful to the core, “If I ever write a book again, if I ever do another infomercial again, I promise no embellishment, no puffery and absolutely no lies.”[405] And if you believe that, I’ve got a bridge to sell you!

Mark Cleminson

Mark Cleminson is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian who says he was born into an Illuminati family and at the age of twelve was able to bend spoons, move objects, and even levitate himself through telekinesis! Cleminson claims to be a descendent of Pope Clement, and says he once worked for IBM allegedly making “hundreds of thousands of dollars a year” but left that job in 2001 for whatever reason to apparently “expose” the Illuminati. His parents attended a Roman Catholic Church as a cover for their occult “Illuminism” he says, and his father and grandfather were supposedly raised by Jesuits in the “Himalayan Mystery Schools.”

A few of his interviews can be found on YouTube where he duped a couple small Christian groups into talking with him. In the videos he looks presentable, wearing a suit and tie, appearing to be in his mid-forties, although his delivery is extremely dry and boring and consists of the typical “my life was threatened when I left” claims. First of all, the Illuminati doesn’t “attempt” to kill someone. If they want you dead, there’s any number of ways to do it, from the CIA’s frozen poison dart guns, to swabbing poison on the door handle of your car that will be absorbed into the skin and cause an undetectable heart attack, to walking next to a target and spraying them with hydrogen cyanide (HCN) or cyanogen chloride (ClCN) gas or other poison that will induce a timely death and be attributed to a heart attack, stroke, or other natural causes.

Cleminson says that shortly after “leaving the Illuminati” he was at a secluded property his family owned in upstate New York when “twenty or so” men in “full regalia masonic gear” gathered at the property next door in order to “intimidate him” and “threaten him for leaving.” He says as he walked over to confront the men, who he said he recognized as his former associates, all of a sudden the Egyptian god of the underworld Anubis appeared to him standing twenty feet tall in the woods. “You can have my body, but you can’t have my soul,” he says he told the demon, which caused it to vanish.

His story lacks details and is so vague and unconvincing it appears at times that he’s making it up off the top of his head as he’s telling it. But, like agent Fox Mulder in the popular 1990s TV series *The X-Files*, so many people “want to believe” that they turn off their critical thinking and absorb every word he and other “former Illuminati members” say because it reinforces their current world view and makes them feel as if they are special for discovering these “little known truths.”

Regarding his supposed ability to “bend spoons,” with his “telekinesis” Illuminati power, this is one of the oldest parlor tricks in the book which is accomplished by using one pre-bent spoon and a second spoon handle that’s been cut off from a different spoon by removing the head, and then by holding both pieces in one’s hand and making it look like they’re only holding one spoon, magicians make it appear as if the spoon is bending.

Cleminson may have dabbled in New Age philosophy and witchcraft on a personal level, unaffiliated with any organization, and then later found interest in Christianity, but his claims of coming out of an “Illuminati family” trained by the Jesuits and “Himalayan Mystery Schools” is preposterous and purely an attempt to tap into the anti-Illuminati sentiment by portraying himself as another supposed insider who is revealing their plot. Of course in the hand full of interviews gullible suckers conducted with him, he never once revealed a single detail that wasn’t already widely known in conspiracy circles, and what little information he did offer up consisted of little more than claiming “the Rothschild’s control the banking industry.”

Maybe he did work at IBM, and was possibly fired for any number of reasons—in my opinion, probably for incompetence—but as far as having any affiliation whatsoever with the Illuminati, or having anything more than a basic understanding of them, Mark Cleminson completely misses the mark.

In August of 2014 I received an e-mail from someone who said they graduated high school with Cleminson twenty-five years earlier and was in the same circle of “jock friends” growing up. This person, whose name I won’t mention, happened to see my YouTube video about Cleminson and reached out to me to let me know what a “liar and a fraud” he was, but that’s pretty obvious to anyone with any common sense.

Conclusion

Even skeptics and debunkers have to admit that oftentimes no matter how "crazy" many so-called "conspiracy theories" sound, there are often undeniable truths at their foundation. It's a full time job to separate the facts from the fiction when talking about conspiracy theories or the Illuminati since there is so much disinformation, misinformation, half-truths and hoaxes out there. I hope this book has helped you in your quest for the truth and shown you solid, verifiable information and helped you see through much of the B.S. that's floating around out there.

For over ten years I've been tirelessly researching this material and carefully assembling the pieces of the puzzle to create an accurate picture of this monumental mystery. Even the most adamant "debunkers" have to admit that at the core of this massive conspiracy are many disturbing truths that cannot be ignored.

A writer for the New York Times who aimed to "debunk" Illuminati conspiracies in his 1983 book *Architects of Fear*, had to admit, "Elitism has always been the dark side of illuminism; the revolutionary vanguard that seizes control because it *knows* what's good for the people, the philosopher-king who knows the truth, the technocrat who *knows* how to run societies and wars—all try to hoard the light at the top of the pyramid. Reason, which can be used to rescue man from churches and kings, can also be used to enslave him with dogmas of its own. Knowledge is power that can be abused."[406]

Elitists and Big Government New World Order promoters want people to believe that rights come from the government, instead of from God. The United States Declaration of Independence says "All men are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights," which means our rights can't be taken away, and are permanent from the moment we are born. No society can vote to eliminate them—no government can charge you money in exchange for granting them—they are inherent, irrevocable, and unchangeable. The State (the government) is God in the New World Order, and that’s why most bureaucrats and the mainstream media portray presidents as modern day Pharaohs who they want you to believe are the only God you need. The Illuminati want the government to be the ultimate authority, not God. They want your loyalty to be to them, not to your family, community, or religious dogma. The law is considered the Gospel. The government is your protector, provider, and teacher. *It* knows what’s best for you.

Because of the 24-hour cable news and satellite networks, the Internet, and social media—many people are inclined to think that we are able to quickly resolve all the world’s problems since we are instantly informed about them, but this information age seems to be a double edged sword. On one level, this technology informs us about major events or problems, but at the same time, it usually prevents people from taking action to actually resolve them. The term *narcotizing dysfunction* refers to the theory that because of modern media, when people are informed about a particular issue they substitute taking action to resolve it, for simply knowing about it.[407]

Most people feel that by posting information about a particular issue on social media that they have “done something” to help by “getting the word out” but this “slactivism” as it has been called, often has little to no actual effect. People can post all day long about earthquake victims needing help, but if nobody gets off their computer or puts away their mobile device to actually *do* anything to help them, then all of their talk is futile.

This is similar to the bystander effect which explains the phenomena where almost everybody assumes that someone else is taking action to resolve a problem, resulting in nobody taking action because everyone thinks someone else will do it or is already working on it.[408]

Terrible tragedies like airline disasters, terrorist attacks, or other high profile crimes get constant news coverage for a short news cycle often lasting no more than a few days and then the next big scandal or tragedy is put on the front pages and runs its brief cycle, and then that too disappears from people's minds as they are occupied by the next "top story" and the cycle endlessly repeats itself, with people's focus quickly jumping from one tragedy to the next with the vast majority of people never actually *doing* anything about it. This endless barrage of sensationalist stories keeps most people in a virtual hypnotic trance, preventing them from ever looking beyond the tip of the iceberg in terms of what's really going on in the world.

Cultural Marxism creates an invisible pressure that prevents most people from breaking away from the crowd and keeps almost everyone following the herd and subscribing to the norms of society and afraid to question the deeply engrained patterns of their peers.

Since esoteric information is hard to contain these days, and bits and pieces of it occasionally leak out, sometimes the mainstream media has to do some damage control to prevent the masses from waking up to the magnitude of the reality we are experiencing. Sometimes scholars and college professors are rolled out by mainstream media in an attempt to discredit "conspiracy theories" and hoping to keep people from peeking behind the curtain.

One such "debunker" named Michael Burkun wrote a book titled, *A Culture of Conspiracy*, where he ridicules "conspiracy theories" that he says almost always include "ridiculous" claims such as the [supposed] "systematic subversion of republican institutions by a federal government utilizing emergency powers; the gradual subordination of the United States to a world government operating through the United Nations; the creation of sinister new military and paramilitary forces, including governmental mobilization of urban youth gangs; the permanent stationing of foreign troops on U.S. soil; the widespread use of black helicopters to transport the tyranny's operatives; the confiscation of privately owned guns; the incarceration of so-called patriots in concentration camps run by FEMA; the implantation of microchips and other advanced technology for surveillance and mind control; the replacement of Christianity with a New Age world religion; and, finally, the manipulation of the entire apparatus by a hidden hierarchy of conspirators operating through secret societies."[409]

He actually lists these events as "ridiculous conspiracy theories" when a brief examination of current events reveals that they're basically all obviously true. Burkun also tries to associate "conspiracy theorists" with "anti-government right-wing extremists" like Timothy McVeigh.[410]

Another popular "debunker" is Daniel Pipes, who just so happens to be a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the founder of Campus Watch, an organization that some say was set up to harass scholars who are critical of Israel.[411] Pipes, who is the author of *Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From,* says "I have yet to see a clandestine effort by these so-called secret societies to gain power and to harm other people, or to fulfill their own ambitions to gain power."[412] In his book, there isn't a single mention of the Bilderberg Group or Bohemian Grove, not a single word, not even once.

Pipes even ridicules people for being concerned about implantable microchips saying that some people fear one day, "tiny microchips will be inserted into American's buttocks to keep track of each person's whereabouts and activities."[413] He actually said conspiracy theorists are worried about the government implanting tracking devices in their butts! I guess he never heard of the Verichip or other implantable RFIDs or bioelectric tattoos, or wearable WiFi enabled devices or NFCs that are growing in popularity. Implantable and wearable tracking devices are very real, but Pipes attempt to trivialize the legitimate concerns about such technology is clearly ridiculous.

Furthermore, Pipes states that only conservatives and Republicans are conspiracy theorists and says Democrats and liberals are all simply too smart for such nonsense. Pipes writes, "With uncommon exceptions, the conspiracy theorists on the Right consist of skinheads, neo-Nazis, and other yahoos who express vicious ideas about Jews and batty ones about secret societies. Most of them suffer from a lack of qualifications; many have little education and work at menial occupations…In all earnestness, right-wing authors cite as sources the *National Enquirer*, a grocery store tabloid, and other publications with no pretentions to accuracy."[414]

Regarding liberals and Democrats, however, Pipes claims, "The Left offers densely reasoned economic analysis and presents an idealistic vision. The one presents a face contorted with malice; the second offers a smile and a hope."[415]

Pipes also tries to paint "rightwing" conspiracy theorists as mostly anti-Semites. He quotes a supposed "study" on the American Militia movement, saying "leaders are careful to talk about 'international bankers' or the 'Federal Reserve' or the 'Trilateral Commission' or 'eastern elites.' But these are code phrases, carefully picked by the leadership to pull people into their movement without greeting them with overt anti-Semitism and that militias even if they call it something else and never mention Jews, they are referring to Jews."[416]

He even says that the Illuminati is good! "The Order of the Illuminati represented his [Adam Weishaupt's] effort to build a just community within a corrupt society and to modernize Germany through the discipline of a secret society."[417]

In a History Channel special titled *Secret Societies*, Pipes concludes, "Basically all the conspiracy theories about secret societies wanting to take over the world are wrong."[418]

Many people who criticize "conspiracy theorists" claim that we all have a "confirmation bias" which is the tendency for people to favor information that supports their current worldview or hypothesis—which in many cases is an accurate assessment of conspiracy theorists, but this certainly isn't the case for me. For several years after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, I fully believed the official account of what happened and I believed the conspiracy theory about Iraq having weapons of mass destruction that they were prepared to use against us at any moment. It was only when faced with growing evidence to the contrary that the American government's lies started to slowly unravel, allowing me to see things differently.

Since searching for the truth is difficult and painful, not to mention time consuming, most people never even start out on the journey. Instead they turn their mind, body, and soul over to the mesmerizing mainstream media, or to celebrity news or sports entertainment, so I congratulate you on your determination to be different and for taking the road less traveled. I hope I've been able to provide you some of the answers that you've been seeking, because I too have a burning desire to know the truth and we are on the same path.

In this book we've covered a variety of evidence, ranging from the original writings of the Illuminati, to how they were discovered, what their plans are, and tracking them to their Skull & Bones, Bohemian Grove and the Bilderberg Group offspring. We've seen some little-known insider revelations, looked into their philosophies, symbols, and more—which when carefully assembled form an undeniable picture proving the Illuminati is still alive.

I wish you well on your journey wherever it may take you from this point forward. If you found this book valuable in your quest please review it on Amazon.com or whatever e-book store you got it from to help support my work, and I encourage you to check out some of my other books which I'm sure you will find interesting as well. I doubt you'll ever look at the world the same way now that you've peeked behind the curtain and seen *Inside the Illuminati*.

Further Reading

The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction

Secret societies have both fascinated and frightened people for hundreds of years. Often the infamous Illuminati is mentioned as the core of conspiracies which span the globe. The Illuminati is actually a historical secret society which had goals of revolutions and world domination dating back to the 1770s.

Since then, rumors and conspiracy theories involving the Illuminati continue to spread, sometimes finding their way into popular novels like Dan Brown’s *Angels & Demons* and Hollywood movies like *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. Some men have even come forward claiming to be former members, offering details of what they allege are the inner workings of the organization. When you sift through all of the information available on the subject, you may be surprised that the truth is stranger than fiction.

In *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, conspiracy and occult expert Mark Dice separates history from Hollywood and shows why tales of the secret society won't die.

The New World Order: Facts & Fiction

What is the New World Order? Proponents say that it’s an anticipated new era of global cooperation between diverse nations and cultures aimed at ushering in a utopia providing all the earth's citizens with everything they need.

Detractors claim it’s the systematic take-over by secret societies, quasi-government entities and corporations who are covertly organizing a global socialist all-powerful government which aims to regulate every aspect of citizens lives, rendering them a perpetual working-class while the elite leadership lives in luxury.

Conspiracy theory expert Mark Dice looks at the evidence, claims, and conspiracy theories as he takes you down the rabbit hole to *The New World Order*.

Illuminati in the Music Industry

Famous pop stars and rappers from Jay-Z and Rick Ross to Rihanna and Christina Aguilera are believed by many to be a part of the infamous Illuminati secret society. These stars allegedly use Illuminati and satanic symbolism in their music videos and on their clothes that goes unnoticed by those not “in the know.”

Since these stars appear in our livings rooms on family friendly mainstream shows like Good Morning America, Ellen, and dozens of others—and are loved by virtually all the kids—they couldn’t possibly have anything to do with the infamous Illuminati or anything “satanic,” could they? Some famous musicians have even publicly denounced the Illuminati in interviews or songs.

Illuminati in the Music Industry takes a close look at some of today’s hottest stars and decodes the secret symbols, song lyrics, and separates the facts from the fiction in this fascinating topic. You may never see your favorite musicians the same way ever again.

Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True

In *Big Brother*, Mark Dice details actual high-tech spy gadgets, mind-reading machines, government projects, and emerging artificial intelligence systems that seem as if they came right out of George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Orwell's famous book was first published in 1949, and tells the story of a nightmarish future where citizens have lost all privacy and are continuously monitored by the omniscient Big Brother surveillance system which keeps them obedient to a totalitarian government.

The novel is eerily prophetic as many of the fictional systems of surveillance described have now become a reality. Mark Dice shows you the scary documentation that Big Brother is watching you, and is more powerful than you could imagine.

The Resistance Manifesto

The Resistance Manifesto by Mark Dice contains 450 pages of extensively researched and documented information drawing from declassified documents, mainstream news articles, religious texts, and personal interviews. A dark web of evil is exposed like never before, making Bible Prophecy and the New World Order crystal clear.

Learn the most powerful information about the Illuminati, plans for the rise of the Antichrist, the institutions, people, and powers involved, and how you can fight them.

About the Author

Mark Dice is a media analyst, author, and political activist who, in an entertaining and educational way, gets people to question our celebrity obsessed culture and the role the mainstream media and elite secret societies play in shaping our lives.

Mark's YouTube channel has received over 85 million views and his viral videos have been mentioned on ABC's *The View*, the Fox News Channel, CNN, the *Drudge Report*, *TMZ*, the *New York Daily News*, the *New York Post*, and other media outlets around the world.

He has been featured on various television shows including the History Channel's *Decoded* and *America's Book of Secrets*, *Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura*, *Secret Societies of Hollywood* on E! Channel, *America Declassified* on the Travel Channel, and is a frequent guest on *Coast to Coast AM*, *The Alex Jones Show*, and more.

Mark Dice is the author of several popular books on secret societies and conspiracies, including *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*, *The New World Order, Facts & Fiction*, *The Resistance Manifesto*, *Illuminati in the Music Industry*, and *Inside the Illuminati*, which are all available in paperback on Amazon.com or e-book on Kindle, iBooks, Nook or Google Play.

While much of Mark's work confirms the existence and continued operation of the Illuminati today, he is also dedicated to debunking conspiracy theories and hoaxes and separating the facts from the fiction; hence the "Facts & Fiction" subtitle for several of his books.

While having respect for all authentic religions and belief systems, Mark Dice is a Christian and holds a bachelors degree in communication from California State University. He lives in San Diego, California.

He enjoys causing trouble for the New World Order, exposing corrupt scumbag politicians, and pointing out Big Brother's prying eyes. The term "fighting the New World Order" is used by Mark to describe some of his activities, and refers to his and others' resistance and opposition (*The Resistance*) to the overall system of political corruption, illegal wars, elite secret societies, mainstream media, Big Brother and privacy issues; as well as various economic and social issues. This Resistance involves self-improvement, self-sufficiency, personal responsibility and spiritual growth.

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The

New World Order

Facts & Fiction

Mark Dice

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About the Author

Mark Dice has loved to read nonfiction books since just after he graduated High School in 1996 as he tried to figure out the world and find his place in it. Some things didn’t quite make sense to him until he learned about the powerful elite private organizations and secret societies that hold the true power in politics, banking, and the media.

After countless hours of research Mark has written several books on the subjects of secret societies, Big Brother, and the New World Order. His passion and dedication of educating others has been covered by numerous mainstream media outlets, many of which have simply attacked Mark for his beliefs that a global criminal mafia called the Illuminati operates under the cover of various organizations and manipulate political and financial arenas, slowly eroding the Constitution and America's sovereignty and leading us into a New World Order.

Mark Dice believes that the Illuminati are fulfilling Bible Prophecy by creating a global government called the New World Order, that will one day be the infrastructure that the Antichrist will use to become a global dictator. He also believes that the New World Order promotes immorality, selfishness, materialism, and purposefully aims to keep the population entertained with television and issues of little significance in order to separate them from the political process, thus allowing the Illuminati to operate without much opposition.

Whatever religion you are, or if you consider yourself agnostic or atheist, you will find the information Mark brings forth in his writings to be extremely thought provoking and enlightening.

Through his books, radio interviews, and YouTube videos, Mark hopes people will become enlightened to the hidden realities of the New World Order, and can more effectively manage their lives after becoming aware of the agendas and mechanisms used to keep people mentally enslaved.

Mark is a nondenominational Christians and has respect for a wide variety of faiths and belief systems. He has a bachelor's degree in communication and lives in San Diego, California.

Introduction

The world is changing at a faster pace every day. New technologies, new social trends, new threats and fears, new governmental regulations and laws, and new media content and entertainment to keep us amused for hours on end. While it is easy to notice the fun and new benefits that this rapidly advancing world has to offer us, we are often too caught up in the moment to notice the things that are falling by the wayside and getting lost to history. “The good old days,” as some call it.

With every step that civilization seems to take forward, it also seems to leave behind qualities that are universally accepted as better, but were unable to remain because “times are changing.” One thing that hasn’t changed is basic human nature. If we look back at history, thousands of years ago people were having the same basic struggles that they are having today. Struggles with health, money, and relationships; the three major categories to which nearly every human problem can be traced. Humanity’s needs have not changed, despite the dramatically different landscape and culture we find ourselves living in today. People have always struggled against oppressive and tyrannical leaders who use their power to take advantage of others. People have worked to provide themselves and their family with enough food and shelter so that they can avoid the harsh conditions that life without such things entails. And people have tried to remain healthy and hoped to avoid or cure sickness and disease.

History has noted several major life-changing revolutions in mechanics and technology that altered the landscape of societies forever. The agricultural revolution allowed people to grow and store food on a massive scale and sell it to others who, as a result, did not have to grow their own food, leading to labor diversification and specialization. The industrial revolution introduced mechanical devices allowing people to build and use machines that could do the work of hundreds of people and have strength and power beyond what a human workforce could produce, forever altering agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and transportation. The digital revolution, or the information age of computers and mass communication allowed instant access to information of nearly any kind from around the world with the push of a button.

We have also seen humanity grow from tribes to villages, and to cities, states, and countries. Proponents of what is called the New World Order believe that a global government is the next evolutionary step in civilization. While international agreements and cooperation between countries around the world is needed to ensure peace and facilitate economic activities, what is disturbing is that the proponents of the New World Order have been planning and implementing their agreements in secret—often denying such plans were in the works—until agreements were finalized and no public scrutiny was given. The elite groups and individuals involved in this planning see themselves as the rightful masters of the universe and are shaping the world to fulfill their own selfish and twisted desires.

Leadership circles throughout history have known how to control large populations of people through various means, many of which are underhanded and ruthless. Fear, threats, propaganda, appeals for blind patriotism and allegiance to the leadership or the country, are all strategies that continue to be used to keep the population as a whole in line and allow the current power structure to continue to operate unopposed.

In today's society, particularly in America, most people simply don't care about politics or what is happening in Washington DC. There are, however, measurable numbers of those dedicating themselves to watchdog and activist groups who work as a check and balance system to the power structure and sometimes have measurable effects in regards to preventing certain legislation from being passed or fighting to repeal certain laws or practices that have been enacted which are unconstitutional or unfair. While many of these groups and their members mean well, they are often only aware of the tip of the iceberg of what shapes the political landscape.

For those who truly seek to understand the power structure of the political world, if they look hard enough, or are lucky enough, they inevitably find the proverbial rabbit hole that leads them to discover the reality that secret societies and elite private organizations largely pull the strings and contain networks of power whose members and policies are directly responsible for corrupt and unfair legislation, nearly every major war, economic collapses, and other world altering events.

Some of these organizations, such as the Council on Foreign Relations, appear on the surface to be some sort of government entity, but in reality are private organizations which yield tremendous influence over the White House and Congress. Other organizations, such as the Bilderberg group and the Skull and Bones society are more secretive, yet when we look at the membership of such organizations and the activities these members have been involved in, it becomes clear that these groups provide the financial, personal, and logistical support to get their agendas to become realities. These agendas are frequently anti-American, unconstitutional, unfair, and completely counter to the interests of the vast majority of the population.

The members of these groups put on a face of public servants and fighting for the little people, yet their allegiance is to their wealthy friends and business associates. These organizations are not merely social clubs, but are highly organized, well-funded and motivated policy makers, essentially, who operate without any oversight or checks and balance systems. The activities of such groups should take place in the halls of Congress and be open to public scrutiny, yet they have lurked behind the scenes for decades with little awareness or opposition.

After even a minimal amount of investigating and research into the secret societies and private organizations such as Skull and Bones, the Bilderberg group, and the Bohemian Grove, it becomes obvious that the mainstream media is working in collaboration with such organizations in order to do everything in their power to prevent even the mere mentioning of such groups from making it on the airwaves or in print. Surely after over fifty years of Bilderberg group meetings, major television stations and newspapers would at least attempt to cover such an event, but year after year, there is usually not a single mention of it by the establishment press. Speculation and conspiracy theories aside, surely it is at least interesting that such an event occurs with such powerful politicians, business leaders, media moguls, and royalty, and should warrant some kind of coverage.

Every time the G-20 meets or a similar economic forum consisting of the leaders of the world’s most powerful countries, it’s the top story around the world, yet practically the only coverage of the Bilderberg meetings comes from smaller freelance journalists and websites, or perhaps an occasional European newspaper article. Only a fool could claim that such repeated blackouts are because the event is not news worthy. And only a fool can say that there is not a secret agreement between the American mainstream media owners and the Bilderberg group itself, where the two entities have agreed that editors will act as gate-keepers and kill any story by any reporter who even attempts to cover the event.

This is largely how the New World Order was able to be created without much opposition. It is only now after the foundation has been built and its construction is near completion that word of such a thing is mentioned publicly, as its secret creators promise it will bring a new era of world peace and prosperity. The New World Order is basically the plan to create a socialist global government headed up by one world leader and a wealthy ruling class of elite politicians and businessmen, and render the rest of the world's population powerless peasants who are endlessly stuck in the daily grind. Everyone living in the New World Order will use a single global electronic currency, have little to no political power, and have an advanced high-tech surveillance system watching over everyone to keep them in line.

Historian Webster Griffin Tarpley explains, "The New World Order is a more palatable name for the Anglo-American world empire. It's the planetary domination of London, New York, and Washington over the rest of the world. It's hard to get people to join that or think they have a part in it if you call it the Anglo-American world empire. If you call it the New World Order, then people in India or someplace like that, or the European Union, might think, well, there's something in there for us too." [i]

There are other reasons most people haven't heard of the New World Order until recently, as well. The culture implants ideas of inferiority in us, leading many to believe that they need a new car every five years, and that they need the newest cell phone with the latest features or else they themselves are old fashioned and out of touch with the times. But what shapes the culture and creates these kinds of invisible social pressures on us? It's largely the mainstream media: The television, films, music and magazines that continuously bombard us with their materialistic and antisocial self-destructive content. Their carefully crafted messages are absorbed subconsciously by the audience which has no idea that they are essentially Pavlovian dogs being trained how to feel and how to act. The lyrics to a popular song by the 1970s rock band *Rush* , eloquently illustrates this by saying:

We’ve taken care of everything

The words you hear, the songs you sing

The pictures that give pleasure to your eyes

It’s one for all, all for one

We work together, common sons

Never need to wonder how or why

This song, titled *The Temple of Syrinx* , is sung from the perspective of the rulers of a fictional world where the elite leadership enjoy all the pleasures of life, while the masses of people live in servitude.

This book is by no means a complete analysis of the New World Order and the people, institutions, secret societies, and ideologies involved in its creation and control. My book *The Resistance Manifesto* (2005, 2008) provides a thorough analysis of these issues, and lays a solid foundation of understanding that this book builds upon. This book contains additional material and focuses on more modern issues and activities involving the New World Order. If one has not read *The Resistance Manifesto* , I strongly advise you to do so as soon as possible, because that book will take you further down the rabbit hole than you can imagine. The Illuminati, the Bohemian Grove, Satanism, the spiritual beliefs, histories, and goals of the secret societies and elite organizations involved in creating and maintaining the New World Order are covered in detail.

If you have not yet read the manifesto, do not worry, because your desire to learn the truth about this world will find nourishment with the book that is in your hands. Some of your suspicions will be confirmed with the information you find within these pages, and some things you will discover will be hard to believe. Once you have fallen down the proverbial “rabbit hole” nothing is as it seems, and it can be difficult at first to determine what is real and what is not. My book *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* has over four hundred pages of information separating some of the wild speculation and fraudulent information from the facts regarding the Illuminati secret society, if you wish to continue on the path of discovery you are now on.

In *The New World Order* , we will look at modern political policies that are being pushed or implemented in regards to the New World Order, as well as various social and cultural issues such as the population reduction agendas of the elite and the destruction of family values and morality that the mainstream media is helping to perpetuate. Other issues involving science and technology such as weather weapons, vaccines, and pharmaceuticals will be addressed as well.

Let’s face it, there is plenty to be worried about concerning the New World Order. With the countless examples of declassified government operations and experiments involving chemical and biological agents, advanced technology, false flag terror attacks, COINTELPRO, sabotage, elite politicians involved in occult secret societies and participating in bizarre rituals at the Skull and Bones headquarters in Connecticut or in the forest at the Bohemian Grove, people can get very distraught over this information, and even paranoid.

Some of the paranoia is completely understandable. With all of the proven cases of evil and corruption, when someone first hears of yet another instance that is along the same lines, it doesn’t surprise them that such a thing would be happening, and so sometimes they just simply believe it and start passing the information on to their friends and families thinking that it is true. Some of this false information is posted on the Internet by people who really do mean well, and just jump to conclusions about certain news events or rumors they hear, and get all worked up over them, when if they took a calmer approach and spent a little bit of time fact checking they could realize that their initial assumption was incorrect.

A small number of people who are interested in learning about the New World Order are mentally ill people, or are prone to mental illness, and the information they discover in books, videos, and on the Internet, is so overwhelming that they can’t adequately deal with it and it serves as a catalyst sparking their illness. The establishment loves to highlight these rare individuals or others with wildly bizarre views concerning the New World Order, so that they may serve as a straw man as they are presented to a mainstream audience to show that “all” people who talk about the New World Order or secret societies pulling the strings in major world events are “crazy” and should be ignored or ridiculed.

To illustrate how people involved in researching this kind of material may jump to conclusions, I will explain two instances involving emails to me or posts on my Facebook page (Facebook.com/MarkDice). One email I received read, “The ATM machine that I use, at the local Quik-Chek convenience store here in northern New Jersey, has read: ‘Temporarily Out of Service’ for the past six days. Is anyone else seeing similar outages?”

Clearly this individual is paranoid, thinking that because *one* ATM is out of service that there must be a national outage as some plot to prevent people from getting cash. Now, in his defense, it certainly is likely that someday large numbers of ATMs in multiple cities, or perhaps the entire country will be out of commission due to a cyber attack, so his fear is not completely unwarranted. The fact that he posted such a question for other Facebook users to give their feedback on to either confirm or deny that such a thing was happening in other cities shows the level of fear and suspicion this person has in his mind. An ordinary person or someone who isn’t so paranoid would have just assumed the machine hadn’t been fixed yet because the high school dropout working at the store making minimum wage couldn’t care less about calling the company to tell them their machine was broken.

Another example also comes from my personal Facebook page where a woman posted a comment and also emailed me asking me about a friend request she had gotten from “Nathan Rothschild.” The Rothschild family, for those who don’t know, have long been involved with the elite Illuminati secret society, so when this woman got a friend request from someone with that name, she got a little worried. As it turns out, just as I immediately suspected as soon as I read her email, someone had created a page as a satire pretending to be Mr. Rothschild and listed references to wanting to take over the world and enslave humanity on the “interests and activities” section. Such a practice is actually fairly common. When this woman was told this by another Facebook friend, she emailed me back telling me not to worry about it and that, “The Rothschild page was just a parody...Jason

Bermas told me. Sorry I was freaking out. I didn't sleep well last night. Maybe tonight will be better. My mind can rest again."

Many people often fear that one day soon they are going to get rounded up by police or military and taken to a FEMA concentration camp because they know too much, or they listen to Alex Jones' radio show and they've been tracked by the government using Carnivore or Echelon, and they're on a government watch list, or they've ordered several books from Amazon.com about the Illuminati or the New World Order, and so now the establishment sees them as a threat. Again, some of their suspicions and fears are justified, yet fears like this tend to be overblown and fanciful.

A measurable amount of suspicion and even perhaps worry is healthy, but so is balancing it with skepticism and fact checking. People who find the proverbial rabbit hole often say that they can never look at the world in the same way, or live the same way ever again, but I strongly urge you not to turn your back on other important aspects of your life such as your family, friends, career, and fun hobbies. It is good to be aware of issues that are found within this book, but you must not let them cripple you with fear. By being aware and making others aware in a calm and rational manor, collectively we can help minimize or prevent major injustices from occurring simply due to massive grass roots resistance to such things, but you must guard your mind against becoming paranoid over such things or jumping to conclusions.

My goal with this book is to give you the reader tangible evidence of a corrupt and out of control government and what the secret establishment has done, and what they are hoping and planning on doing in the future and how it will affect you.

It is also my hope that with the information I bring forth in my books that you the reader can have a better understanding of the who, what, and why in our world, so that you and your family and friends can live more happy, healthy, and productive lives. It is not my intention to scare you, although some of the information is horrifying. "All I'm offering you is the truth," as Morpheus told Neo in *The Matrix* . And what you see will be what was right in front of you the whole time, you just weren't aware of it until now.

What most people think are examples of an out of control bureaucracy, are of little significance compared to the abuses of power and the freedom-destroying policies being implemented by politicians who are bought by the secret establishment. Paying too high of taxes or getting a ticket from a red light camera pale in comparison to the gross injustices that are occurring on a massive scale. Without large numbers of citizens resisting and voicing their disgust over proposed policies, we would be in a much worse situation with far fewer freedoms, but as we are coming to realize, often it doesn't matter how loud the outcry is against a particular issue, the mainstream media is able to limit the exposure to the masses or attack those voicing the opposition to minimize their effectiveness.

We have also found that large numbers of politicians will vote whatever way their owners tell them to, no matter how much they betray the people in their state or districts. The secret establishment offers them more benefits than they could imagine in the form of cash, power, and privileges. Many are compromised and blackmailed into doing what the secret establishment wants. Their extramarital affairs, illegal activities, and personal perversions are often known and documented by the establishment, and when the time arises such things are held over their head and used to coerce them to act in ways that seem contrary to logic.

As the pieces of the puzzle are assembled one by one, a clear picture begins to emerge. The corrupt leadership that has weaseled their way to the pinnacles of power are doing their very best to create a New World Order where an untouchable elite is able to live lavish lifestyles and fulfill their every perverted desire, while the majority of the public is being kept occupied and out of the way by issues of celebrity drama or professional sports. The wealthy business titans have worked hand in hand with politicians to ensure that their wealth remains concentrated in the hands of their families for endless generations as they own and control the banks, vast real estate, and the infrastructure society depends on to function.

These men will stop at nothing to maintain their power and wealth, and certainly wouldn't blink an eye when stealing the retirement savings of good hard working people, encouraging immoral and reckless behavior in society, particularly the youth, or even killing billions of people in a global genocide. This is the New World Order.

Calls for a New World Order

It’s interesting that the term, “New World Order,” is not just some idea coined by conspiracy theorists to describe changes in the organization and distribution of wealth and power in the world, but is instead a term used by elitist politicians to describe their own philosophy and plans. We don’t really need a “New World Order” to ease or eliminate world hunger, mass genocide, human trafficking, or political oppression. The elitists who are in power and whose organizations support their power are the ones responsible for such horrific conditions existing on the earth. No all-powerful global government is needed to stop these things.

When the term is used by politicians, what they really mean is that they want a larger bureaucracy, bigger government, more regulation, higher taxes, and they want the government to direct and control more aspects of people’s lives. They often include beautiful catchphrases of hope, peace, and change, in with their New World Order dreams, sounding like Miss America contestants wishing to end world hunger or bring about world peace. They are simply good sounding ideas with no real strategies or desire to strive for such changes and are used as a cover story to conceal their true motives.

But people like things that are new. New cars, new clothes, new technologies, traveling to new places, and having new experiences. Often something new is appealing simply for the novelty of it, and the experience of change. After all, there is always room for improvement in most people’s lives. Very few people are satisfied with the fact that they have to work until the age of 65, and only enjoy perhaps two weeks of vacation a year and by the time they reach their mid-sixties, may not even have accumulated enough assets or resources to quit working, so claims of prosperous changes and a new era of abundance and economic prosperity always sound good to the average Joe, who is simply a lifetime slave to the system.

For decades, a small minority of Americans and people around the world knew of the elite's plans for a New World Order, and had frequently tried to warn others that such a plan was in the works. And, for decades, they were frequently ignored or faced with doubts and ridicule, but as time went on, in the late twentieth century and escalating into the twenty-first century, major global political figures had begun publicly mentioning their hopes and plans for a New World Order.

Even political pundit and former campaign manager for Bill Clinton, Dick Morris, admitted during an interview on the Fox News Channel that, "Those people who have been yelling the UN [United Nations] is going to take over…global government, they've been crazy…but now…they're right." [ii]

Barack Obama

44th President of the United States

Barack Obama traveled to Berlin, Germany when he was running for President in 2008, where he said, "Tonight, I speak to you not as a candidate for President, but as a citizen — a proud citizen of the United States, and a fellow citizen of the world."

On an appearance on David Letterman's show, Obama was talking about the problems with the War in Iraq, and said, "the way we're going to win in the long term is not just militarily…we've got to give them a stake in creating the kind of world order that I think all of us would like to see."

Nancy Pelosi

Speaker of the House at the opening of the 110th Congress on January 4th 2007.

"Our Founders envisioned a new America driven by optimism, opportunity, and courage. So confident were they in the new America they were advancing, they put on the great seal of the United States, 'Novus ordo seclorum'—a new order for the ages…This vision has sustained us for more than 200 years, and it accounts for what is best in our great nation: liberty, opportunity, and justice. Now it is our responsibility to carry forth that vision of a new America.”

George H.W. Bush

41st President of the United States

“Out of these troubled times, our fifth objective – a New World Order – can emerge: a new era – freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony. A hundred generations have searched for this elusive path to peace, while a thousand wars raged across the span of human endeavor. Today that new world is struggling to be born, a world quite different from the one we’ve known.”

Gary Hart

Former Senator (D) Colorado and Co-Chair of the CFR

Just three days after the 9/11 attacks, the co-chair of the Council on Foreign Relations stated, “There is a chance for the President of the United States to use the disaster…to carry out what his father – a phrase his father used I think only once, and it hasn’t been used since – and that is a New World Order.”

Henry Kissinger

Former Secretary of State

Henry Kissinger has been intimately involved with nearly every major organization or front group that is behind the push for a New World Order and was originally named the Chairman of the 9/11 Commission by President Bush which was set up to (pretend to) investigate the terrorist attacks on September 11th 2001. Kissinger resigned after widows of 9/11 victims discovered his business ties with the Bin Laden family. [iii]

In an interview on CNBC in February 2009, Kissinger was asked about the problems the new Obama administration was facing regarding the ongoing "War on Terror" and the economic meltdown, where he responded that Obama, "can give new impetus to American foreign policy partly because the reception of him is so extraordinary around the world. His task will be to develop an overall strategy for America in this period when, really, a New World Order can be created. It's a great opportunity, it isn't just a crisis."

Bill Clinton

President of the United States from 1993-2001

At the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., President Bill Clinton was giving a speech which was broadcast on C-Span where he said, "From 1945 and the end of the war through 1989 and the end of the cold war, we had a world view, Republican and Democratic presidents alike, from Harry Truman to George Bush…and after 1989 President Bush said, and it's a phrase that I often use myself, and that is we need a New World Order."

Richard Nixon

President of the United States from 1969-1974

In the October 1967 edition of *Foreign Affairs;* (which is the Council on Foreign Relations publication) then president Richard Nixon said that, "The developing coherence of Asian regional thinking is reflected in a disposition to consider problems and loyalties in regional terms, and to evolve regional approaches to development needs and to the evolution of a New World Order."

Angela Merkel

Chancellor of Germany

When giving a speech to mark the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel said, "The most important thing, when attempting to overcome barriers, is: Are the nation states ready and willing to give competencies over to multilateral organizations, no matter what it costs?…This world will not be a peaceful one if we do not work for more global order and more multilateral cooperation.” **[iv]**

Tony Blair

British Prime Minister from 1997-2007

Tony Blair has publicly stated his desire for a New World Order on multiple occasions, once even saying, “There is a New World Order like it or not.” [v] He used the term on November 12, 2001 [vi] and in 2002 [vii] and again on January 7, 2003, [viii] just to name a few.

Gordon Brown

Prime Minister of England

Gordon Brown at the 2009 G-20 meeting in London, England called for a New World Order to save the global economy from the recession sparked in 2008 by the housing collapse. He said, “I think the New World Order is emerging, and with it the foundations of a new and progressive era of international cooperation.”

Pope John Paul II

Head of the Catholic Church

On January 1, 2001 the pope declared at a service to mark the Roman Catholic Church’s World Day of Peace, that, “More than ever, we need a new international order that draws on the experience and results achieved in these years by the United Nations.” The headline in the *London Guardian* read, “Pope Calls for a New World Order.” [ix]

World Governed by the Elite Through Occult Secret Societies

For anyone who takes an in-depth and unbiased look at the political process and geopolitics, the role of secret societies and elite secretive private organizations masquerading as government entities or committees, truly hold the keys to power and function as a good old boy network consisting of a small number of elite politicians and businessmen who shape the political landscape and who either are the movers and shakers seen in the mainstream media, or are the brains and puppet masters behind those who we view publicly as the popular ones.

For a more complete list and analysis of these secret societies and elite organizations, you will find it in this author's previous book titled, *The Resistance Manifesto* . You may already be familiar with many of these organizations, but even if this information is completely new to you, you will begin to develop a clear picture of just how the power structure of politics truly looks. Benjamin Disraeli, a British Prime Minister in the 19th century famously stated, "The world is governed by very different personages from what is imagined by those who are not behind the scenes."

These powerful groups are numerous, such as the Bilderberg group, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Skull and Bones society, the Freemasons, the Bohemian Grove, and more.

The Bilderberg group meets once a year under tight security where powerful politicians, bankers, businessmen, media moguls and royalty meet to secretly discuss and disseminate their agenda for the coming months and years.

The Council on Foreign Relations, which sounds like a committee in Congress, is actually a private organization used to spread New World Order propaganda and push the Bilderberg's wishes into law. The Skull and Bones society is a recruiting center at Yale University that operates as a fraternity which invites college juniors who the organization feels will later rise to positions of power and prestige in their career, and then grooms them and gives them access to the organization’s incredible post-graduate social network. The Bohemian Grove acts as a vacation spot where hundreds of these elite men meet in private in the rural setting of a resort built in a redwood forest grove, where they talk informally without the fear of being quoted in the press. This is also a place where they engage in bizarre rituals and sexual debauchery.

The inner circles of many of these organizations often overlap each other with people involved in multiple organizations at the same time. This inner circle of elite leaders is often referred to as the Illuminati, which is a term used to identify this group of organized criminals and means “enlightened ones.”

President John F. Kennedy once made a profound and chilling statement about secret societies when speaking to the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Kennedy clearly had intimate knowledge of the workings of the Illuminati and didn’t want to go along with them. Audio of this statement is widely available on the Internet. He said, “The very word ‘secrecy’ is repugnant in a free and open society; and we are as a people inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths and to secret proceedings.”

He continued, “We decided long ago that the dangers of excessive and unwarranted concealment of pertinent facts far outweighed the dangers which are cited to justify it…For we are opposed around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covered means for expanding its sphere of influence, on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerillas by night instead of armies by day.”

“It is a system which has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit, highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific and political operations, its preparations concealed, not published, its mistakes are buried not headlined, its dissenters are silenced not praised, no expenditure is questioned, no rumor is printed, no secret is revealed.”

Several months prior to his assassination, John F. Kennedy had signed Executive Order No. 11110, which attempted to strip the Federal Reserve of their power to loan money to the United States government at interest. Many see this act as the major motive for the Illuminati orchestrating his assassination.

More recently, former Presidential candidate congressman Ron Paul stated, “I think there are 25,000 individuals that have used offices of powers, and they are in our Universities and they are in our Congress, and they believe in one world government. And if you believe in one world government, then you are talking about undermining national sovereignty and you are talking about setting up something that you could very well call a dictatorship – and those plans are there.” [x]

The idea of secretive organizations of powerful, wealthy, and intelligent men goes back thousands of years, and should come as no surprise to anyone. What is often surprising is the occult and spiritual nature of some of these modern groups, and the beliefs and rituals that members are involved in. In the ancient past when the human race was largely unaware of science and medicine, advances in these areas were extremely important and held the power of life and death. People were also largely ignorant to the spiritual principles in the world and formulated ideas about God or gods who they believed ruled over them and controlled the weather, seasons, the crops, disease, and other aspects of life. Those intelligent thinkers who pondered the workings of the spiritual world banded together and formed what were called the Mystery Schools, which were essentially secret societies that taught these principles to its members in the form of philosophies, symbols, allegories, and rituals.

The preface for *The Secret Teaching of All Ages* , which is one of the most popular and comprehensive books on the Mystery Schools and their teachings, reads, “It was inevitable that the initiates of the Mysteries should unite themselves against the forces seeking their extinction. Thus, while the secret doctrine with its body of disciples functioned more or less openly in ancient society, it later passed almost completely from public view. This circumstance should not be interpreted as a decline of plan or purpose. The esoteric schools remained as a powerful force for the regeneration of human institutions…The use of indirect communication was based entirely upon practical considerations. To remain unknown was the best way to prevent a repetition of the disaster which occurred to the Knights Templar.” [xi]

Manly P. Hall, the author of *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* was under the impression that Mystery Schools in ancient days taught men morals, fairness, and philosophies to make them better people, and were not evil, dangerous, or devious in any way. Hall and some other New Age authors are under the impression that the Mystery Schools had been hijacked and taken over by greedy and immoral men. Certainly it is understandable that the members of such schools who were on the cutting edge of advancing knowledge in science, mathematics, and medicine could develop a superiority complex and use their knowledge and social networks to take advantage of others who were uninformed.

Hall believes, “[T]he black magicians of Atlantis continued to exercise their superhuman powers until they had completely undermined and corrupted the morals of the primitive Mysteries. By establishing a sacerdotal [meaning priesthood] caste they usurped the position formerly occupied by the initiates, and seized the reins of spiritual government. Thus black magic dictated the state religion and paralyzed the intellectual and spiritual activities of the individual by demanding his complete and unhesitating acquiescence in the dogma formulated by the priest craft…These sorcerers then began the systematic destruction of all keys to the ancient wisdom, so that none might have access to the knowledge necessary to reach adeptship without first becoming one of their order.” [xii]

Alice Bailey, a famous New Age author in the twentieth century, wrote material openly explaining how occult secret societies held the true power in the world, not to expose their activities with hopes of informing the population, but rather her books were written for elite businessmen, politicians, and spiritual leaders. In her book *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* , she explains, “The *Masonic Movement* when it can be divorced from politics and social ends and from its present paralyzing condition of inertia, will meet the need of those who can, and should wield power. It is the custodian of the law; it is the home of the Mysteries and the seat of initiation. It holds its symbolism the ritual of Deity, and the way of salvation is pictorially preserved in its work. The methods of Deity are demonstrated in its temples, and under the All-seeing Eye the work can go forward. It is a far more occult organization than can be realized, and is intended to be the training school for the coming advanced occultists. In its ceremonials lies hid the wielding of the forces connected with the growth and life of the kingdoms of nature and the unfoldment of the divine aspects in man.” [xiii]

Bailey’s writings and other occultists such as Helena Blavatsky, who wrote *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) are held in the highest regard by the establishment, and explain the philosophies and plans of elite secret societies quite openly. The information is considered hidden in plain sight and is mostly only found by those who have a desire to join the establishment. Most people, if they even read books at all, are only concerned with the latest pop culture novels anyway, and don’t have the desire, nor the mental capacity to understand the esoteric philosophies and plans that are written openly in occult books, such as Alice Bailey’s or Helena Blavatsky’s.

Bailey openly admits, “The Hierarchy directs world events, as far as mankind will permit…the unfolding consciousness may express itself through developing and adequate social, political, religious and economic world forms. They give direction; They throw a light; They impress those who are in contact with Them, and through the inflow of ideas and through revelation They definitely influence the tide of human affairs.” [xiv]

She goes on to write, “The Hierarchy directs and controls, more than is realized, the unfolding cyclic cultures and their resultant civilizations. These can then provide adequate forms, temporarily useful for the emerging soul humanity. The format of cultures and civilizations receives special attention.” [xv]

This Hierarchy that she is talking about is the continuation of the ancient Mystery Schools, such as Freemasonry and the Illuminati.

In the most popular Masonic book ever written, *Morals and Dogma* , author Albert Pike brags, “The World will soon come to us for its Sovereigns [meaning government leaders] and Pontiffs [meaning religious leaders]. We shall constitute the equilibrium of the Universe, and be rulers over the Masters of the World.”[xvi] This book was published in 1872 and is considered the bible of Freemasonry.

Freemasonry is often included in discussions about the New World Order, a charge many Masons dispute. Many Freemasons deny any claims that their organization is involved in anything other than charity work, a social club, and a method to teach enlightenment philosophies, but these Masons are either trying to keep the inner circle of Freemasonry from being discussed openly, or are themselves ignorant that the secret society they are a member of has another secret society functioning within.

Manly P. Hall, who is considered one of Freemasonry’s greatest philosophers and a 33rd degree mason admits, “Freemasonry is a fraternity within a fraternity—an outer organization concealing an inner brotherhood of the elect…It is necessary to establish the existence of these two separate yet interdependent orders, the one visible and the other invisible. The visible society is a splendid camaraderie of ‘free and accepted’ men enjoined to devote themselves to ethical, educational, fraternal, patriotic, and humanitarian concerns. The invisible society is a secret and most august fraternity whose members are dedicated to the service of a mysterious arcanum arcandrum [meaning a secret or a mystery].[xvii]

In *Morals and Dogma* Albert Pike reveals that Masons who are “in the know” about the true beliefs and activities of Freemasonry, would never reveal them to anyone. “Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, *conceals* [emphasis in original] its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it [the Mason] calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it.”[xviii]

Again, those in the lower levels of Freemasonry will deny that the organization is anything more than a fraternity, but Pike and others openly admit that it is a religion. “Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion; and its teachings are instruction in religion.”[xix]

The original writings of Adam Weishaupt, the man credited with starting the original Illuminati in Germany in 1776 had his and others secret letters discovered and seized by authorities in 1786 and when they are read, it becomes clear that he formulated specific goals and strategies for his network to occupy positions of power and privilege and operate without the public’s knowledge. His attitude is the same as that reflected in the writings of Albert Pike, although more diabolical because Weishaupt never intended them to be seen by anyone other than Illuminati members.

Weishaupt wrote, “I shall therefore press the cultivation of science, especially such sciences as may have an influence on our reception in the world; and may serve to remove obstacles out of the way…Only those who are assuredly proper subjects shall be picked out from among the inferior classes for the higher mysteries…And in particular, every person shall be made a spy on another and on all around him.”

“Nothing can escape our sight; by these means we shall readily discover who are contented, and receive with relish the peculiar state-doctrines and religious opinions that are laid before them; and, at last, the trustworthy alone will be admitted to a participation of the whole maxims and political constitution of the Order.”

“In a council composed of such members we shall labor at the contrivance of means to drive by degrees the enemies of reason and of humanity out of the world, and to establish a peculiar morality and religion fitted for the great Society of mankind.”

Weishaupt never intended his correspondence or network to become public, but in the years that passed, the Illuminati’s philosophies and goals have obviously been carried on by men who share the same vision outlined and developed by Weishaupt in 1776.

In 1966 a professor and elite insider at Princeton University named Carroll Quigley published a book titled *Tragedy and Hope* , which openly admits that a network of secret societies hold the true power in politics and banking. The book was meant for other elitists as a way to teach them how the world really works.

Quigley wrote, “The chief problem of American political life for a long time has been how to make the two Congressional parties more national and international…(therefore the) argument that the two parties should represent opposed ideals and policies, one, perhaps, of the Right and the other of the Left, is a foolish idea acceptable only to doctrinaire and academic thinkers…Instead the two parties should be almost identical, so that the American people can ‘throw the rascals out’ at any election without leading to any profound or extensive shifts in policy.” **[xx]**

One might wonder why he would openly admit that it didn’t matter which political party, Republican or Democrat, was in power since the leadership of both will work in concert with the secret agenda to create the New World Order, but Quigley and other elite insiders know that the majority of the public would never even think of reading his book, and instead read novels about vampires (the Twilight Series) or young sorcerers (Harry Potter).

In October 2009 a YouTube video was posted of Obama’s White House communications director Anita Dunn speaking to a group of students where she told them that her favorite political philosopher is Mao Tse Tung, the Chinese Communist revolutionary responsible for the murders of millions of Chinese during his reign. Most of the students probably didn’t even know who Mao Tse Tung was, or the atrocities he committed, but Dunn’s admiration for the dictator shows the mindset of the New World Order’s leadership circle.

Another interesting video clip giving a glimpse into the minds of modern elite politicians comes from Ron Bloom, Obama’s manufacturing czar. At a forum for the Union League Club in New York City which took place on February 27th and 28th in 2008, Bloom told attendees, “Generally speaking, we get the joke. We know that the free market is nonsense. We know that the whole point is to game the system to beat the market, or at least find someone who will pay you a lot of money because they’re convinced that there is a free lunch. We know that this is largely about power. That this is an adults only, no limit game. We kind of agree with Mao that political power comes largely from the barrel of a gun. And we get it, that if you want a friend you should get a dog.” Some say he was saying such comments in jest, while others insist the comments reveal the actual beliefs of the secret establishment.

The modern organizations that are shaping the New World Order have carried on the tradition of the ancient Mystery Schools by elevating themselves and their members above the rest of society through their good old boy networks, control of the mainstream media, and their influence over politicians through bribes, coercion, and in some cases blackmail. They have done a great job of keeping the general public distracted with sports, pop culture, and issues of little significance, while they make and implement decisions that negatively affect us all.

Establishment insiders become arrogant, selfish, and corrupt and while politicians masquerade as “public servants,” they really only serve themselves and their partners in crime. They are very often Luciferians or Satanists which means that they identify Satan or Lucifer as being a hero for breaking the rules and doing what he wants. Whether their “worship” of Satan is literal or metaphorical is debatable, but what is not debatable is that they privately philosophically see Satan as a source of good, knowledge, and wisdom and systematically break the golden rule of life while thinking only of themselves and having no regard for the thoughts, feelings, or rights of others.

Helena Blavatsky wrote openly in *The Secret Doctrine* that, “Satan will now be shown, in the teaching of the Secret Doctrine, allegorized as Good, and Sacrifice, a God of Wisdom,”[xxi] and this is what these people believe.

If this concept is new to you, it is quite shocking, and perhaps unbelievable, but when you come to understand more of this philosophy, it becomes undeniable that most of the inner circle of the Illuminati establishment and their subsidiary networks are Luciferians or Satanists. They believe, as most occultists do, that Lucifer and Satan are symbolic of knowledge and intelligence, and that humans were nothing but ignorant animals until Satan came to the Garden of Eden and “set Man free” by convincing Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This may just be an allegorical belief which the elite use to convince themselves and their collaborators that there is no afterlife, no Heaven or Hell, and thus they have decided to live the high life here and now and will take all they can get no matter how unfair or how many people get shortchanged, hurt, or killed as a result. Since in their mind there is no judgment by God for their sins after their death because they believe we are just advanced animals, they see nothing holding them back from doing whatever they want.

The fact that most elite politicians, businessmen, and bankers are members of organizations like the Skull and Bones society, and enjoy visiting the Bohemian Grove and participating in, or viewing what can only be described as human sacrifice reenactment rituals using effigies, shows that these individuals revel in the fact that they are considered the “evil rulers of the world.” Their satanic world view and philosophy is really no different than the Jewish Pharisees who held a monopoly on spiritual knowledge and used it for their own personal benefit at the expense of those less informed. One of the main themes taught by the story of Jesus in the New Testament is that He represents God in human form, who came to earth to allow everyone a direct line to, and knowledge of God and the Kingdom of Heaven.

Barrack Obama has quoted lines from Communist Saul Alinsky’s book *Rules for Radicals* during his speeches when he was running for president in 2008 and Hilary Clinton wrote her college thesis on Alinsky when she was at Wellesley College.[xxii] It’s interesting to note that in the Dedication page of his book, Alinsky pays tribute to the people he saw as past “radicals,” and lists them off, and then writes, “Lest we forget at least an over-the-shoulder acknowledgment to the very first radical: from all our legends, mythology, and history...the first radical known to man who rebelled against the establishment and did it so effectively that he at least won his own kingdom — Lucifer.”

Hollywood producer Aaron Russo became politically active later in his career and in 2006 did a sit down interview with Alex Jones from Infowars.com where he described his friendship with Nick Rockefeller and the insider information he revealed to him. The Rockefeller family, for those who don't know, have been at the core of the New World Order for generations and have used their family's enormous wealth and influence to move the agenda for the New World Order from the secret meetings of the Bilderberg group and other informal gatherings, into the minds of globalist politicians and businessmen. The Rockefeller family and their "non-profit" foundations have their fingerprints on nearly every aspect of the New World Order.

In this amazing interview that Aaron Russo gives, he explains that Nick Rockefeller had befriended him after seeing his film *Mad as Hell* and learning that Russo was running for governor of Nevada in 1998. Apparently Rockefeller thought that Russo may be of service to their agenda, even suggesting that he join the Council on Foreign Relations. Throughout the course of their meetings as their relationship progressed, Rockefeller revealed some startling insider information to him.

"He was the one who told me 11 months before 9/11 that there was going to be an event, never told me what the event was going to be, but there was going to be an event, and out of that event, we would invade Afghanistan to run pipelines from the Caspian Sea; We were going to invade Iraq to take over the oil fields and establish a base in the Middle East and make it all part of the New World Order; and we'd go after Chavez in Venezuela…and there's going to be this War on Terror, of which there is no real enemy and the whole thing is a giant hoax, but it's a way for the government to take over the American people," Russo explained.

"9/11 was done by people in our own government and our own banking system to perpetuate the fear of the American people into subordinating themselves to anything the government wants them to do. That's what it's about; and to create this endless War on Terror. Look, this whole War on Terror is a fraud. It's a farce. It's very difficult to say it out loud because people are intimidated against saying it, cuz if you say it they want to make you out to be a nutcase."

Russo goes on to say that Rockefeller conveyed to him that the endgame was to get the entire population chipped with RFID tags and that the global economy would be controlled by elite banksters and politicians. Russo recalls that Nick asked him what he thought woman's liberation was about, and after he answered the conventional answer about women's rights and equal pay, he says Nick laughed at him and called him an idiot and went on to inform him that the Rockefellers funded the women's liberation movement for two major reasons. One was because only half of the population was being taxed, since primarily only the men worked, and the second reason was to break up the family so the state can have more time with children to indoctrinate them.

He also says that Rockefeller thought the world's population should be reduced by half. Russo didn't have the same world view as his friend, and did not become involved in the globalist organizations that have covertly established the New World Order system. In 2006 he produced *America: Freedom to Fascism* which discusses the Federal Reserve Banking system, the IRS income tax, VeriChip RFIDs, and other political issues. Russo died on August 24, 2007 from cancer at the age of 64.

Another, more powerful member of the Rockefeller family, David Rockefeller, wrote in his 2002 book, *Memoirs* on page 405, "For more than a century ideological extremists at either end of the political spectrum have seized upon well-publicized incidents such as my encounter with Castro to attack the Rockefeller family for the inordinate influence they claim we wield over American political and economic institutions. Some even believe we are part of a secret cabal working against the interests of the United States, characterizing my family and me as "internationalists" and conspiring with others around the world to build a more integrated global political and economic structure—one world, if you will. If that's the charge, I stand guilty, and I am proud of it."

"The anti-Rockefeller focus of these otherwise incompatible political positions owes much to Populism. "Populists" believe in conspiracies, and one of the most enduring is that a secret group of international bankers and capitalists and their minions control the world's economy."

David Rockefeller is one of the grandchildren of John D. Rockefeller, the founder of Standard Oil, and at the time when he lived, John D was the richest man in the world. David Rockefeller has had his hands in nearly every major New World Order organization in existence in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In fact, he is the founder of the Trilateral Commission and was once the Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations. He also attends nearly every Bilderberg meeting. At the time of this writing, David Rockefeller (senior) is 94 years old.[xxiii] He has a son, David Rockefeller Jr., who sits on the boards of numerous Rockefeller foundations.

When looking into the wealthy secretive organizations behind the New World Order, besides the usual culprits of the Bilderberg group, the Council on Foreign Relations, Skull and Bones, and the Rockefellers, often Cecil Rhodes is mentioned.

Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) was a British born businessman who moved to Africa and became a politician and founder of the state of Rhodesia in Africa, which is named after him. There are two interesting aspects to Cecil Rhodes concerning the New World Order, most importantly his will which called for creating a secret society to function with the purpose of extending and maintaining British rule around the world. Also interesting is the fact that Cecil Rhodes was the founder of the DeBeers diamond monopoly which at one time controlled 90% of the world's diamonds.

Through a slick marketing campaign designed by Edward Bernays, the DeBeers diamond company has brainwashed most of the world's women into feeling that they need a large diamond ring, earrings, and necklaces, or else their husband/boyfriend doesn't love them. Men pay thousands of dollars to accommodate their woman's desires for the stones, when in reality the value of diamonds are dramatically over-inflated simply because DeBeers won't release most of their inventory to the public.

Concerning Rhode's will, it reads, "To and for the establishment, promotion and development of a Secret Society, the true aim and object whereof shall be for the extension of British rule throughout the world, the perfecting of a system of emigration from the United Kingdom, and of colonization by

British subjects of all lands where the means of livelihood are attainable by energy, labour and enterprise, and especially the occupation by British settlers of the entire Continent of Africa, the Holy Land, the Valley of the Euphrates, the Islands of Cyprus and Candia, the whole of South America, the Islands of the Pacific not heretofore possessed by Great Britain, the whole of the Malay Archipelago, the seaboard of China and Japan, the ultimate recovery of the United States of America as an integral part of the British Empire, the inauguration of a system of Colonial representation in the Imperial Parliament which may tend to weld together the disjointed members of the Empire and, finally, the foundation of so great a Power as to render wars impossible, and promote the best interests of humanity."

Rhodes will also created Rhodes Scholarships which are given to students who the establishment view as likely participants in their New World Order plan. President Bill Clinton is perhaps the most well-known Rhodes Scholar.

Mainstream Media Controlled

by the Elite

Any educated person knows, to some extent, the power of the mainstream media and its ability to shape public opinions. Some are also aware of the often pointless information it presents to the masses as if it were something if importance, as well as the complete blackout and non-coverage of issues that should often be the top story. Adding to the confusion are prominent members of the mainstream media who claim daily to actually be fighting the mainstream media. These are the Sean Hannity's and Rush Limbaugh's, whose very shtick involves pretending to be an alternative to the mainstream media, when they themselves are the most powerful propagandists and gate-keepers for this very establishment.

Even though most radio and TV hosts will be seen as a left-wing person attacking the right-wing or vice a versa, mainstream hosts on either side of the political spectrum are very careful not to scratch beyond the surface of partisan politics and will never address the true power structure operating behind the scenes which controls both right and left-wing politicians. Instead, these hosts will only focus on partisan issues many of which are of little significance, while they will *never* address key issues such as the Bilderberg group, the Skull and Bones society, the Bohemian Grove, or the Illuminati.

Most national hosts are simply paid promoters of a political party who blame all of the country's problems and misfortunes on the opposing political party, while never admitting the wrong doing or corruption of their own.

Adam Weishaupt on Media

Adam Weishaupt, the man credited with founding the Illuminati secret society back in 1776, knew the power in controlling information, and in one of his original letters, he wrote, "By establishing reading societies, and subscription libraries, and taking these under our direction, and supplying them through our labours, we may turn the public mind which way we will."

"In like manner we must try to obtain an influence in the military academies (this may be of mighty consequence), the printing-houses, booksellers shops, chapters, and in short in all offices which have any effect, either in forming, or in managing, or even in directing the mind of man: painting and engraving are highly worth our care."

He and his fellow Illuminists also understood how powerful controlling newspapers could be to smear their enemies. One correspondence reads, "We get all the literary journals. We take care, by well-timed pieces [articles], to make the citizens and the Princes a little more noticed for certain little slips."

Their "certain little slips" refers to anything they say or do that will not be looked at favorably by the public, and the Illuminati's "well timed pieces" will be sure to inform people of this if they didn't like that person.

Professional Sports

Karl Marx, the secretary who was commissioned to type and publish the *Communist Manifesto* , is well known for a quote pertaining to religion where he called it the “opiate of the masses,” when in reality such a phrase accurately describes professional sports. Each weekend, as well as Monday nights during football season, millions upon millions of Americans eat, sleep, and dream about the NFL football games that are played.

It’s fascinating when one is enlightened and “unplugged from the Matrix” to see these millions of zombies focusing all of their time, energy, and emotions on something so meaningless. People yell and scream at the TV, and often their entire mood in the following days is dependent upon whether their favorite team won or lost. Somehow, a bunch of over-paid muscle heads chasing a ball on a field of grass has become one of the most important events in their lives. They can discuss at length the poor strategies that lead to their team losing the game, and they can rattle of statistic after statistic of the performance of their favorite players, yet most of these people have no clue about the New World Order, or even current events.

Super Bowl Sunday is basically a national holiday, and the stores and shopping malls look about as empty as they do on Christmas day. You can hear shouts and celebrations coming from neighbors homes from multiple directions as people jump up and down yelling and cursing at their television over the performance of their team. The next morning, the “Super Bowl Champions” are plastered on the entire front page of every major newspaper in the country, as if winning the game makes them heroes like they just saved a group of children from a burning building.

Who is the mayor of the city they live in, many couldn’t tell you, but they can tell you the score of the Super Bowl and who won and what their favorite commercial was. The character Tyler Durden from the film *Fight Club* mocks such priorities by sarcastically saying, “Murder, crime, poverty, these things don’t concern me. What concerns me are celebrity magazines, television with 500 channels, some guy’s name on my underwear.”

Jay Leno’s “Jay Walking”

A hilarious and popular segment created by comedian Jay Leno, titled “Jay Walking” shows just how out of touch many Americans are with issues that really matter, and are instead able to recall details about the personal lives of celebrities or how a certain football team is doing.

A popular question Jay asks people is simply, “Who is the Vice President of the United States?” It’s shocking how many people don’t know. Sometimes he even brings photos of prominent political figures or business leaders and asks people who they are. Many don’t know. He then pulls out photos of pop singers and actors, and everyone is able to instantly identify them. The segment shows in a sad yet hilarious way that pop culture and celebrities are what is important to most Americans, not reality, politics or personal finance.

This author has shot several YouTube videos with similar themes including one where I got people to sign a petition to increase inflation and cause hyper-inflation, and one where I tried to sell a one ounce solid gold coin worth over $1,150 at the time for only $50, but nobody had a clue how much gold was worth and nobody wanted it. With some people I dropped the price to just $5 but the people didn’t see the point in buying the gold coin.[xxiv]

The Fairness Doctrine

One of many Orwellian plans in the New World Order is the “Fairness Doctrine,” which is the idea that the government needs to control the mainstream media in order to (as they claim) attempt to present both sides of issues so that one opinion or belief does not dominate the media. There is surely nothing fair about it, and the name and the concept clearly promote unfairness and only attempts to eliminate the free market and the voices of opposition against government policies.

The original Fairness Doctrine was a policy of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which regulates broadcast licenses, and was introduced in 1949 and required broadcasters to present controversial issues in a way the FCC viewed as balanced and honest. The doctrine was challenged in court and in 1969 the United States Supreme court upheld the FCC's right to enforce it, although later, in 1987 the Fairness Doctrine was abolished.

Since then, a sizeable number of prominent (mostly Democrat) politicians have publicly stated their desire to have the Fairness Doctrine reinstated. The reason left-wing politicians favor such an idea is because liberals want larger government and want the government to be involved in people's lives in every aspect. Another reason left-wingers tend to support the Fairness Doctrine is because talk radio has been dominated by conservatives, and so the liberals see the Fairness Doctrine as a way to silence or minimize the effect of right-wing radio.

In June 2007, Senator Richard Durbin (D-Illinois) said, "It's time to reinstitute the Fairness Doctrine," [xxv] and around this same time, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco told reporters that her fellow Democratic Representatives did not want to forbid reintroduction of the Fairness Doctrine and later when asked point blank if she personally supported its revival, she answered, "Yes." [xxvi]

Illuminati kingpin Bill Clinton threw his support behind reinstatement during a February 13, 2009 interview on the Mario Solis Marich radio show, where he said, "Well, you either ought to have the Fairness Doctrine or we ought to have more balance on the other side, because essentially there's always been a lot of big money to support the right wing talk shows."

Democratic Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, [xxvii] U.S. Representative Anna Eshoo (Democrat of California), [xxviii] Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-Michigan), [xxix] Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), [xxx] and others have all publicly expressed their desire to have the program reinstated.

Operation Mockingbird

Intelligent people have varying degrees of suspicion that the US government is in bed with the American mainstream media, and anyone who monitors the news media with discerning eyes can quite easily identify specific stories and strategies that are being used to persuade and intimidate the population. For those who want "evidence" of such manipulation, one needs to look no further than the findings of a Senate Select Committee in 1975, which confirms and details this, has occurred for decades on a scale larger than most people could imagine.

Operation Mockingbird, as it was called, was exposed in 1975 during the Church Committee investigation, which then published its findings the following year. The full name of the committee which investigated and uncovered such activities was called, "The United States Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities" which was chaired by Senator Frank Church (D-ID).

Through this investigation it became clear that such a program was developed in the 1950s for the purpose of persuading American and foreign media, as well as to use the media as gate-keepers to prevent certain information from being published and reaching the masses.

In 1948 an espionage and counter-intelligence branch within the CIA was created for the purpose of "propaganda, economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance groups, and support of indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the free world." Later that year Operation Mockingbird was established to influence the domestic and foreign media. Philip Graham, the owner of *The Washington Post*, was first recruited to run the project within the industry and develop a network of assets.

After 1953, the network had influence over twenty-five newspapers and wire agencies and was overseen by Allen Dulles, who was director of the CIA. The Mockingbird program also involved major television broadcasters, including William Paley, the CEO of CBS broadcasting.

Thomas Braden, who was the head of the International Organizations Division (IOD), which was a division of the CIA dealing with human intelligence services, played a substantial role in Operation Mockingbird and would later reveal, “If the director of CIA wanted to extend a present, say, to someone in Europe—a Labour leader—suppose he just thought, this man can use fifty thousand dollars, he’s working well and doing a good job—he could hand it to him and never have to account to anybody... There was simply no limit to the money it could spend and no limit to the people it could hire and no limit to the activities it could decide were necessary to conduct the war—the secret war....It was multinational.”

According to the Congressional report published in 1976, “The CIA currently maintains a network of several hundred individuals around the world who provide intelligence for the CIA and at times attempt to influence opinion through the use of covert propaganda. These individuals provide the CIA with direct access to a large number of newspapers and periodicals, scores of press services and news agencies, radio and television stations, commercial book publishers, and other foreign media outlets.”

The committee also concluded that the cost of the program was approximately $265 million a year, which when adjusted for inflation as of 2010 means that in today’s dollars the program costs an astounding one billion dollars a year.

A year after the Church Committee released its findings on Operation Mockingbird, *Rolling Stone* magazine published an article on the program and named various prominent journalists who they alleged to be involved with it. Some of these included Ben Bradlee, who wrote for *Newsweek* , Stewart Alsop, who wrote for the *New York Herald Tribune* , James Reston (*New York Times*), Charles Douglas Jackson (*Time Magazine*), Walter Pincus (*Washington Post*), William C. Baggs (*The Miami News*), and others.

In 2007 a large amount of documents known as the “Family Jewels” were declassified and released by the National Security Archive, which also revealed that the CIA had routinely wiretapped Washington-based news reporters. These individuals were most likely seen as a threat to the establishment and were not playing along with the propaganda and gate-keeping efforts within the media establishment.

As with nearly every other case of rampant institutional corruption in government agencies, the CIA claims to have ended the program—another claim that is laughable.

The Military Wanted to Hire Bloggers for Propaganda

Since the Internet has been a haven for independent journalists and countless “alternative” news sites, along with bloggers who have gained a large following of people who don’t rely only on mainstream corporate news to get their information, this posed a major problem for the establishment. The major broadcast TV and radio networks, as well as the cable channels, consist of tens of millions of dollars in equipment and expensive services such as satellite feeds and camera crews, but the Internet had opened the door for one individual with a website costing only a few dollars a month to have the potential to reach millions of people simply by posting their own articles or videos.

With people able to copy and paste a link from a blog and sent it out to their email list or post it on their Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter pages, a simple blog written by an ordinary person can spread like a virus around the web. Of course, the establishment saw the dangers that blogs and non-mainstream websites held for their monopoly of information, so they decided to use prominent bloggers as paid propagandists just like the talking heads in the mainstream media.

In 2006 a report from the Joint Special Operations University titled *Blogs and Military Information Strategy* , outlined this plan. “Hiring a block of bloggers to verbally attack a specific person or promote a specific message may be worth considering,” read the report. It was written by James Kinniburgh and Dororthy Denning.

The report also suggested the government hack the blogs of those seen as detrimental to the propaganda they want to spread. It reads, “[T]he enemy blog might be used covertly as a vehicle for friendly information operations. Hacking the site and subtly changing the messages and data—

merely a few words or phrases—may be sufficient to begin destroying the blogger’s credibility with the audience. Better yet, if the blogger happens to be passing enemy communications and logistics data, the information content could be corrupted.”

High Level Officials and Institutions within the NWO are Above the Law

As many people are aware, certain politicians and businessmen seem to be untouchable regarding the corruption and criminal activities they are involved in. This occurs because of the power of the invisible empire and their use of coercion, threats, and blackmail. The Illuminati keep files on practically every congressman and woman, as well as media figures, business leaders, judges, military officials, and anyone of influence in the public sphere. If a politician cheats on his wife, the invisible empire most likely know about it and have documentation proving it. If a person cheats on his taxes, uses cocaine, has any bizarre hobbies or interests, they know. Frequently they will entrap people simply to gather such evidence.

Imagine that you’re a prominent politician who genuinely cares for America and wants to do the right thing in a particular segment of society such as lowering taxes. Also imagine that at one time, perhaps years or even decades ago, you made the terrible mistake of cheating on your wife, or even sleeping with a high class prostitute, perhaps provided and paid for by a colleague after a cocktail party. The odds are that the Illuminati has documentation of this. Echelon, the secret electronic snooping system, probably has a recording of a telephone conversation of you bragging about it with a friend. Perhaps the person you thought was your friend who provided the prostitute for you was doing so for the express purpose of entrapping you, and the guest bedroom in the mansion of the party, or the hotel you had sex with her at, was rigged with cameras and caught the whole thing on tape.

Now fast forward to the present time where you are a politician trying to save the American people from rising taxes, and imagine you get a phone call from someone not identifying themselves but telling you that they have evidence of what you did, and perhaps play the audio of your phone call when you spoke about it. The voice on the phone now tells you to stop pressing so hard for the tax reform, or even tells you to drop your support of it all together or they will show your wife photos of what you did. What do you do? This is just one of the methods used to get people in the pocket of the secret establishment.

The History Channel produced a show called, *Presidential Secrets* which included a segment about J. Edgar Hoover, the infamous former Director of the FBI, which quite clearly and openly explained that Hoover keep dirt on everyone he could, and used that dirt to influence people in whatever way he wanted.

For 48 years Hoover was the director of the FBI under eight different presidents. He died on May 2, 1972 at the age of 77 from a heart attack. It was only after his death that the depths of corruption Hoover sunk to were revealed. Despite 35 file cabinets of his personal files being destroyed after his death by his loyal aids, volumes of information are now public which show just how dark the soul was of Hoover, as well as how powerful people can be when they have the resources of the FBI behind them.

Hoover was able to use the FBI to influence both politicians, as well as Hollywood pictures. In 1971 he was told Jane Fonda would star in a film titled *Klute* about a prostitute helping a detective solve a mystery, and he created a file and determined to have the part removed. He hand wrote in the margin of one of the documents which was declassified, saying “Certainly, I don’t want any reference to the FBI in any picture which this tramp, Jane Fonda appears.”

He was able to have various films killed or the scripts changed to prevent the portrayal of the FBI in a negative light, including preventing John Wayne from starring in a TV show titled *The FBI*, which ran from 1965 to 1974, because Wayne was a member of the John Birch Society, which Hoover despised. The John Birch Society is known for its political activism particularly against globalism and in support of traditional conservatism.

Anti-war rock and roll musicians were also a target of J. Edgar Hoover. Janis Joplin, Jimmy Hendrix, and particularly John Lennon of the Beatles. In 1969 Lennon released an album containing protest songs which were enraging to Hoover and the establishment, so he tried to get him deported over a marijuana charge from England. Hoover also thought that John Lennon's outspokenness threatened Richard Nixon's reelection.

J. Edgar Hoovers files also reveal how ruthless and powerful President Roosevelt was. It was believed that his wife Eleanor was having an affair, and after this was investigated by the FBI and pretty much confirmed, FDR wanted all of the agents who worked on the case killed so they would not spread rumors about his wife's infidelities. The files reveal that he personally ordered all men who worked on the case to be "immediately relieved of his duties and sent to the south pacific for action against the Japs until they were killed."

Hoover himself was a homosexual and hired his long-time lover Clyde Tolson, who rapidly climbed the ranks of the FBI, ultimately becoming the Associate Director of the FBI, the second highest position in the organization.

The FBI and historians openly admit the rampant corruption led by J. Edgar Hoover, and of course claim to have made changes to prevent such abuses from continuing, which we know is a lie, but looking back at how much influence Hoover was able to have decades ago can send chills up one's spine when thinking of what is possible with today's technology.

Barney Frank

One of the most perverted cases of a politician who is above the law involves Barney Frank, who has been a House Representative from Massachusetts 4th congressional district since 1982. Barney Frank is considered by many to be one of the most powerful men in Congress and became the chairman of the House Financial Services Committee in 2007 and was a major force in Obama's economic "stimulus" package in 2009. Frank is also openly gay and back in the 1980s met a gay prostitute from a personal ad in the newspaper who later became his roommate and ran a gay prostitution ring out of their apartment. There are also allegations that Frank has had sexual relations with underage boys as well.

The Washington Times reported in 1989 that, “Frank, one of two openly gay members of Congress, confirmed Friday that he paid [Stephen L.] Gobie for sex, hired him with personal funds as an aide and wrote letters on congressional stationery on his behalf to Virginia probation officials.” [xxxi]

The article continues, “Although Frank and Gobie differ in some details of their relationship, they agree on the story line. They met on April Fool’s Day 1985. The representative answered a classified ad in the *Washington Blade* , the local gay weekly. ‘Exceptionally good-looking, personable, muscular athlete is available. Hot bottom plus large endowment equals a good time.’” [xxxii]

The article goes on to explain that Barney Frank paid Gobie $80 for sex which marked the beginning of their relationship. Frank was in his third term then, and despite later admitting this activity, went on to become an extremely powerful man in Washington DC.

Barney Frank’s current live-in boyfriend, James Ready, was arrested in 2009 for growing marijuana in their backyard. [xxxiii] Frank claimed he had no knowledge of the plants just as he claimed to have no knowledge of Stephen L. Gobie’s gay prostitution ring he was running out of their apartment when they lived together in the 1980s. It is very interesting that Eliot Spitzer, the former governor of New York, was busted for using high class female prostitutes ending his political career and forcing him to resign, yet Barney Frank has had a sordid past with admissions of using prostitutes himself and a roommate who was a gay pimp, while Frank is hailed as a hero. Eliot Spitzer was causing trouble for AIG and other big Wall Street firms who would eventually go bankrupt and then be given billions of dollars for free by government bailouts. Some suspect that Spitzer getting busted was simply a way to get him out of the way and stop him from poking his nose around where the Illuminati didn’t want it.

Barney Frank’s admissions of paying gay prostitutes for sex, while being reprehensible by itself, pales in comparison to the allegations that he also had sexual relations with young boys who were underage and connected to the infamous Franklin Cover-up scandal in the late 1980s. Below is a transcript from a court appearance in 1999 of a man named Paul Bonacci, who claims that he engaged in sexual relations with Frank when he was underage.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEBRASKA

PAUL A. BONACCI, (4:91CV3037)

Plaintiff, vs. TRANSCRIPT

LAWRENCE E. KING, Defendants.

Hearing held before the Honorable Warren K. Urbom, Senior United States District Judge, on February 5, 1999 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

APPEARANCES:

Mr. John DeCamp

Attorney at Law

414 South llth Street

Lincoln, Nebraska for Plaintiff

I -N-D-E-X

WITNESS Direct Cross Redirect Recross

Noreen Gosch 5

Russell Nelson 36

Paul Bonacci 101

Denise Bonacci 155

(At 9:01, the following proceedings were held.)

THE COURT: This is the case of Paul A. Bonacci versus Lawrence E. King, 4:91CV3037. I see the plaintiff, Mr. Paul Bonacci, here with his counsel Mr. DeCamp. I do not see anyone representing Lawrence E. King. Is there anyone here representing Mr. King? I take it not. A default judgment has been entered against him. And the purpose of this proceeding is to determine the amount of damages that are to be awarded. Mr. DeCamp, you may proceed. Want to make an opening statement or not is entirely up to you. You may do that or call your witnesses as you choose.

MR. DECAMP: May it please the Court, a very, very brief opening statement. What I want to establish here today, Your Honor, if at all possible, is the entire picture or scene in which Mr. Bonacci lived and prove to this Court's satisfaction the stories he tells in his petition are in fact true and the trauma that results from those stories is in fact very real. And even, Your Honor, we would hope that the Court, after hearing some of the evidence and information today for the first time ever, would maybe even on its own initiative take some appropriate action to correct some other wrongs or launch some other investigations that may be needed, Your Honor.

THE COURT: That's not within my authority. So I can't do that. But I can award damages. And that's why we're here today.

The witness, Paul Bonacci, was then asked about instances involving him being sexually abused at adult parties when he was a young boy.

ANSWER: A lot of the parties when we went to, that we went to and stuff, the ones in the Twin Towers were basically for one reason. And that was for sex.

QUESTION: Sex between who?

ANSWER: There was sex between adult men and some other adult men but most of it had to do with young boys and young girls.

QUESTION: Young boys and young girls with each other or with older folks?

ANSWER: With the older folks. Also some of the parties, there was some parties above The French Cafe that they would bring people in and stuff that were from out of town. Those were specifically for sex with minors. Also in Washington, D. C. there were, there was also parties like Rusty had already talked about where there was parties after a party. Where they would have a party where they would have a legitimate party with like some politicians, businessmen. And a lot of them never knew about what happened at the after, you know, the party afterwards and stuff. Like in Washington, D. C. there was a lot of parties where they would be senators and congressmen who had nothing to do with the sexual stuff.

But there was some senators and congressmen who stayed for the parties afterwards. And one person that I'm not afraid to talk about because his, because Larry King always said him and this guy were on the opposite ends of the field because this guy was a Democrat and Larry King was a Republican. That's a known fact and stuff. And this guy, every time I see him on TV and stuff, my wife knows my hatred for him. Because every time I see him and stuff it disgusts me because it's—his name is Barney Frank.

QUESTION: Did you have relationships with him?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Where?

ANSWER: In Washington, D. C. And also I was sent to a house, I believe it was in Massachusetts in Boston where I believe it was his house because there's pictures on the wall that, with him and with different people and stuff. And that he had met I guess. But it was in his basement.

End of Transcript

White House Enemies List

Anyone with any sense knows that the President of the United States can order the CIA, FBI, or any agency or combination of, to illegally investigate anyone he sees as a threat to his administration's goals, such as other politicians, reporters, or political activists. While it would be political suicide for any politician to mention this fact, one Republican Senator made a startling comment on the Senate floor about the Obama administration compiling an enemies list. Republican Conference Chairman Lamar Alexander (Tenn.), who served in the Nixon White House, said, "Based upon that experience and my 40 years since then in and out of public life, I want to make what I hope will be taken as a friendly suggestion to President Obama and his White House: Don't create an enemies list." [xxxiv]

Alexander went on to describe the corruption that occurred during the Nixon administration and said he sees "symptoms of this same kind of animus developing in the Obama administration."

He also read off a list of examples he said support his views, such as a reported attempt by the Health and Human Services Department to put a gag order on the insurer Humana, and demonizing insurance companies during the government run health care debate. He also cited the administration's hatred of the Fox News Channel, along with Obama's alleged taking names of bondholders who resisted the General Motors and Chrysler bailouts.

Alexander also pointed out how he and Senator Bob Bennett (R-Utah) were "called out" on the White House's blog after questioning the power of White House czars saying, "This behavior is typical of street brawls and political campaign consultants…If the president and his top aides treat people with different views as enemies instead of listening to what they have to say, they're likely to end up with a narrow view and a feeling that the whole world is out to get them. And as those of us who served in the Nixon White House know, that can get you into a lot of trouble."

While not exactly the most reputable tabloid, *The Globe* published an article in September 2009 headlined *25 Enemies Obama Wants to Silence* and listed among them, Alex Jones from Infowars.com.

The Clinton Body Count

While mainly a thing of the past because Bill Clinton hasn’t been president since the year 2000, the Clinton Body Count still warrants mention in our discussion of the unlimited (and illegal) power and activities that a president has. The Clinton Body Count is the name given to the long list of people who have either been murdered, or died under suspicious circumstances who had personal or professional ties to Bill Clinton. The 1994 film *The Clinton Chronicles* documents some of the deaths found on the Clinton Body Count and is available to watch for free on the Internet.

2008 Economic Bailout

The words “stimulus” and “stimulus package” entered the public lexicon at the end of 2008 after the housing market collapsed in the United States, and caused a wave of economic destruction to sweep around the world. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was falling sometimes five and seven hundred points a day and people were getting understandably worried about the state of the economy. This is when the Bush administration proposed their staggering 700 billion dollar bailout which they said was needed to avert an economic disaster. Many were understandably against the bailout and wanted the free market to take its course and correct itself naturally when things stabilized, but the Bush administration (along with their Illuminati banking connections) wanted the stimulus package to be passed as soon as possible.

Some members of Congress were privately told that if the bailout didn’t pass a vote, the country would completely collapse into a depression and massive civil unrest and martial law would be imposed to prevent massive crime and violence. Congressman Brad Sherman blew the whistle on such threats and called them unjustified fear mongering.[xxxv]

California Senator Diane Feinstein publicly admitted that her office received 91,000 phone calls and emails about the bailout, and that 85,000 of them were opposed to it, but she voted for the bailout anyway because she said people were “confused” and “didn’t understand it” and she needed to do what was in the best interest of the country.

The economic bailouts and stimulus packages of 2008 and 2009 are lengthy subjects in and of themselves, so for the sake of keeping this book to a manageable length, they are only mentioned here briefly. There are several important points to be learned regarding these issues, one of which being that Diane Feinstein’s admission that 93% of the phone calls to her office opposed the bailout, yet she voted for it anyway, shows where the allegiance lies of elite politicians and how they couldn’t care less about actually representing their constituency, but rather bow to the private interests who supply them with power and wealth. The fear-mongering and threats of a total collapse and martial law also show the low levels those in power will sink to get their way. It’s also critical to remember that only several days after the first bailout was passed by Congress in 2008, the Federal Reserve and the Treasury Department completely changed their mind about where the $700 billion dollars would go and who would get the money.

Many of the firms that did get the money paid out huge year-end bonuses to their CEOs and top executives. Most people who have the potential to earn a bonus at their job will only qualify for it if they achieve certain goals such as a hitting certain sales figures, but numerous bankers on Wall Street got tens of millions of dollars each in bonuses as their companies collapsed in bankruptcy. Only if one is a member of the invisible empire can one get rewarded for a historic failure.

Electronic Voting Machines

Voter fraud has been something that has occurred in American elections for hundreds of years. Stuffing the ballot, vote buying, misrecording of votes, and other methods of fraud have been problems in elections around the world. Joseph Stalin is quoted as once saying, "He who votes decides nothing; he who counts the votes decides everything.”

While safeguards have been put in place to minimize voter fraud in elections, the increased use of electronic voting machines have complicated this process. The designs of electronic voting machines and their software

are closely guarded secrets by industry insiders but some whistle blowers have been able to show that the machines can be programmed to report whatever vote counts their creators want them to show. A documentary produced by HBO titled *Hacking Democracy* shows how one hacker was able to alter the vote totals to whatever numbers he wanted just by hacking the memory card for such machines. He didn't even need access to the machine itself, the software code, or anything. All he did is place a program on a standard removable memory card for a machine, which are widely available, and he was able to alter the tallies.

Many people suspect that operatives fixed the 2000 election in favor of George W. Bush using electronic voting machines. The 2004 presidential election is also suspected to have been fixed, particularly in the state of Ohio where exit polls showed John Kerry would win, but miraculously the vote counts showed different.

Walden O'Dell, the CEO of Diebold Election Systems, had written a Republican fundraising letter in 2003 where he said his company was "committed to helping Ohio deliver their electoral votes to the President next year." He was obviously referring to President Bush who was facing John Kerry in the 2004 election. When asked about this, Mark Radke, Diebold's marketing director answered, "that quotation that appeared in a letter is something that, uh…he regrets. It's a situation where his personal preference has come over into his business practice and he has committed to keeping a much lower profile when it comes to those kinds of activities."

So it is sad but probably true that your vote doesn't matter in a presidential election. Whichever candidate will better serve the interests of the New World Order will be the one who secret operatives will make sure gets the most votes and becomes the next president. Such tampering actually takes place before the presidential election and is used in the primaries to ensure a particular candidate gets the nomination of his party. The final two candidates of the Republican and the Democratic parties are both most likely aware of the shady vote tampering and can only hope that the secret establishment chooses them to throw their weight behind to select as the next president of the United States.

The Original Blueprint of Domination

Knowing about the rampant corruption and the methods of blackmail and coercion that go on in politics, it is interesting to look back several hundred years at the original writings of Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the Illuminati. These writings were discovered by Bavarian officials in 1786 and published shortly after. English translations and excerpts were made available in books like John Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy* (1798), Abbe Barruel's *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* (1797), and *Proof of the Illuminati* by Seth Payson (1802). The writings give a clear view into the mind and mission of founder Adam Weishaupt.

He wrote, "There must (*a la Jésuite*) not a single purpose ever come in sight that is ambiguous, and that may betray our aims against religion and the state. One must speak sometimes one way and sometimes another, but so as never to contradict ourselves, and so that, with respect to our true way of thinking, we may be impenetrable."

"This can be done in no other way but by secret associations, which will by degrees, and in silence, possess themselves of the government of the States, and make use of those means for this purpose…"

"…the Order will, *for its own sake* , and therefore *certainly* , place every man in that situation in which he can be most effective. The pupils are convinced that the Order *will* rule the world. Every member therefore becomes a ruler."

Some people believe the mainstream history that says the Illuminati were dissolved after their discovery, but reading Weishaupt's own words reveal that he had taken this possibility into consideration and made the appropriate steps to ensure the group would continue if this were to happen.

He wrote, "By this plan we shall direct all mankind. In this manner, and by the simplest means, we shall set all in motion and in flames. The occupations must be so allotted and contrived, that we may, in secret, influence all political transactions…I have considered everything, and so prepared it, that if the Order should this day go to ruin, I shall in a year re-establish it more brilliant than ever."

Wars and False Flag Terrorism

No book on the New World Order would be complete without a discussion about the role wars and false flag terrorism play in the construction and expansion of the global government. This is an extremely detailed and unsettling subject and will only be briefly mentioned here. Entire books are available on specific aspects of this subject if you are interested in learning more. But it must be stated that major wars and terrorist attacks often cover sinister activities and goals the public is largely unaware of.

The reasons for going to war are almost always greatly exaggerated and in numerous instances completely fabricated so the public on a large scale, and the military soldiers who will be risking their lives for that war, will believe that they are fighting for a just cause, such as protecting the United States. In reality, members of the armed forces are often used as imperialistic pawns who unknowingly help construct and expand the New World Order.

For example, the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, as it is called, was the straw that broke the camel’s back and resulted in America getting fully involved in the Vietnam War. This incident refers to an event where North Vietnamese gunboats were reported to have attacked an American ship in international waters, prompting President Johnson to retaliate by entering the war. Years later private presidential tapes were released that show President Johnson and Robert McNamara, his secretary of defense, conspiring to lie and say the American ship was attacked, when in fact it was not.

As any informed American now knows, the War in Iraq was based on lies that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and attempts to link him to the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001 in New York City and Washington DC. The 9/11 attacks, as many know, were a false flag terrorist attack, meaning they were aided by elements of US and foreign intelligence agencies so this traumatic event could be used to justify invading the Middle East, as well as passing legislation domestically such as the Patriot Act which eliminated various rights outlined in the Constitution.

Such strategies are insidiously genius because they are so hard to oppose. After all, if there is an alleged threat, or an actual terrorist attack said to have been perpetrated by a specific country or group, it seems only appropriate to retaliate. False flag terrorism is essentially a terrorist act carried out by a government or intelligence agency, often against one's own people or country, which is made to look like it was done by another country or group. It is basically framing others for the act which can then be used to justify military action in response. Since most ordinary citizens, as well as those in the military and government would never imagine that leaders in their own government could be behind such an attack against their own country, the idea of incidences being false flag attacks are rarely thought of.

These subjects are massive, and there is no room in this book to detail the piles of evidence for these statements, so if you are interested in learning more about the 9/11 attacks and false flag operations, you are advised to read *The New Pearl Harbor* by David Ray Griffin, *9/11 Synthetic Terror* by Webster Tarpley, or *The Terror Timeline* by Paul Thompson. There are also various films that are often available to view for free on the Internet which detail the purposeful frauds that have been created by the U.S. government in order to start wars. Several of the best are: *War Made Easy* , *Why We Fight* , *Terrorstorm* , *9/11 Press for Truth* , and *Loose Change: Final Cut* .

Also, an interesting historical note regarding wars involves Major General Smedley Butler, who at the time of his death in 1940 was the most decorated U.S. Marine in history. Butler published a small book titled *War is a Racket* which exposed the corrupt profit motives for going to war. Butler also testified before a congressional committee in 1934 where he explained how he was asked to participate in a plot to overthrow president Roosevelt and install a fascist dictatorship. Since Butler was a high ranking and influential man in the Marines, the conspirators hoped he could secretly gather 500,000 men to aid in this takeover. The men behind the attempted plot were wealthy businessmen with strong ties to the Illuminati.

The term “Military-industrial complex” was coined by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his Farewell Address to the Nation on January 17, 1961. The phrase refers to the relationship between the government, particularly the armed forces, and the industries in the commercial sector that provide the weapons, development, and research for such programs and materials.

Eisenhower realized the tremendous money-making capacities of such industries and relationships, and firmly warned of the dangers such relationships could cause if abused.

His speech reads in part, “A vital element in keeping the peace is our military establishment. Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction…”

“This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence — economic, political, even spiritual — is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society. In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals so that security and liberty may prosper together.”

Immorality and Destructive Behavior is Encouraged

In the 1950s Elvis Presley’s swinging hips and sexually suggestive dancing caused a tremendous stir around the world. Some TV stations were ordered only to shoot him from the chest up in an attempt to censor his on-stage antics from the home audience. Now contrast this with today’s pop culture icons who dress like sluts like Britney Spears and others such as Christina Aguilera, Beyonce Knowles, and Lady Gaga, just to name a few.

Self-destructive, sexually immoral, and materialistic idols are built up by the media and presented to the youth as role models, while Christianity and traditional healthy values are ridiculed as old fashioned and uncool. The family is under attack, and family values and the family unit itself have slowly but dramatically deteriorated over the last few decades, and is reflected in the divorce rates and high numbers of sexually transmitted diseases, abortions, and unwed mothers.

A wildly popular show amongst teenagers and young adults was MTV's *Jackass* which aired from 2000 to 2002, and consisted of nothing more than amateur video footage of people performing various dangerous and childish stunts and pranks. Soon after the show began airing, a slew of reports detailed the injuries of various people imitating or attempting to recreate the idiocy they had seen on the show.

The types of "stunts" performed on the show often involved people getting kicked or hit in the testicles by various objects, as well as smashing shopping carts, and even one individual (Steve-O) having things stapled to his bare butt using a staple gun. It's also interesting to note that this individual, Steve-O, has a tattoo on his arm of the "Jesus fish" with the word "Satan" written inside, and had gotten a tattoo of a man raping a baby on his arm, but after even his close friends found it appalling, he had an ostrich tattooed over the baby to cover it up. The tattoo now shows a man having sex with the ostrich.[xxxvi] In the *MTV Cribs* episode featuring cast members of *Jackass* , Steve-O picks up the kitten at his apartment and introduces it to the camera as 'Lucifer.'

On March 9, 2008, Steve-O's friends forced him to check into Thalians Mental Health Center due to ongoing drug abuse problems.[xxxvii] He was placed on a 72 hour psychiatric hold which was later lengthened to 14 days due to an alleged suicide attempt.[xxxviii]

In June 2008, Steve-O pleaded guilty to felony possession of cocaine and avoided jail by the successful completion of his treatment program.[xxxix] In a later MTV documentary covering his road to sobriety titled *Steve-O:*

Demise and Rise , he admitted that he would hear voices and thought that, “I was possessed by demons, and I think that’s pretty evident in some of this footage.”

A spin-off from *Jackass* aired from 2003 to 2005, titled *Viva La Bam* , which consisted of a series of destructive and even cruel pranks done by Bam Margera and his friends on each other—especially on Bam’s family and was an MTV favorite for many viewers.

Several views from within Bam’s home reveal a large symbol resembling an upside down satanic pentagram within a circle, called a ‘heart o gram,’ which is supposed to represent both good and evil. This heart o gram is also used as a hood ornament on Bam’s Mercedes and is the symbol for Bam’s favorite band HIM which has songs such as “Your Sweet Six Six Six.”

The logo for the show *Viva La Bam* features the satanic hand sign ‘el Diablo’ of raising the index and pinky fingers, which has been drawn in as the letter “I” in the word “Viva,” complete with illuminating rays coming from behind it. When *Jackass* first aired, every teenager in the country knew who Johnny Knoxville and the other Jackasses were and the show inspired countless kids to videotape themselves and their friends trying to be “Jackasses” themselves.

Popular Music

Nearly everyone in the world is familiar with the meteoric rise and fall of pop star Britney Spears as we watched her go from a sweet and seemingly innocent teen idol, to a whacked-out, shaved-head, train wreck of a mother.

Her first album was release in 1999 and with each new album she sunk to new moral lows with her legions of preteen and teenage fans mimicking her every move. In 2009 Spears released an album titled *Circus* which contained a song named, “If You Seek Amy,” which on the surface seemed innocent enough until you heard the lyrics sung. The chorus goes, “Love me, hate me, but can’t you see what I see, all of the boys and all of the girls are begging to if you seek Amy.” It may not seem like anything unless you give it a second read, or hear the song for yourself.

The words “if you seek Amy,” blend together to sound like the letters F, U, C, K, and the word “me.” So what she is really saying is all of the boys and all of the girls want to fuck her.

It’s important to note that this is not simply a coincidence or that this author is reading too much into the lyrics. The song was specifically designed to sound like this. The official video for the song begins with a news broadcast with a banner on the bottom of the screen reading, “New Britney Spears lyrics spell out obscenity in disguise.”

Her album *The Singles Collection* , also released in 2009, includes a song titled “3” which contains lyrics about having a three-some and having sex with two guys at the same time. “Living in sin is the new thing,” she sings. Some other lyrics read:

1, 2, 3

not only you and me

Got one eighty degrees

And I'm caught in between

In the early morning hours of November 12, 2009, someone hacked Britney’s Twitter account and changed the background graphic from one promoting her new album to one featuring pyramids inscribed with the word “Illuminati” with an all-seeing eye at the top. They also “Tweeted” (Twitter terminology for posting a message), “I hope the New World Order will arrive as soon as possible” and that “I give myself to Lucifer every day for it to arrive as soon as possible. Glory to Satan!”[xl] Her Twitter account had 3.7 million followers at the time, and her staff scrambled to regain control of the account as soon as the hack was discovered. Obviously the hacker is fully aware that Spears is an Illuminati icon and is promoted to poison the minds of young girls.

A pop singer who goes by the name Katy Perry (Real name Katherine Hudson) was placed in the limelight in 2008 following the release of her single, “I Kissed a Girl,” which was a song about her sexually experimenting by making out with a girl. “I kissed a girl, and I liked it / the taste of her cherry ChapStick / I kissed a girl just to try it / hope my boyfriend don’t mind it,” she sings. What’s more disturbing is that Perry’s parents are Christian pastors and she released a self-titled gospel album in 2001 before turning to the dark side.

Another look at the 230 year old writings of Adam Weishaupt reveals that icons like Britney Spears and Katy Perry are playing right into the hands of the Illuminati without even knowing it. Weishaupt wrote, “There is no way of influencing men so powerfully as by means of the women. These should therefore be our chief study; we should insinuate ourselves into their good opinion, give them hints of emancipation from the tyranny of public opinion, and of standing up for themselves; it will be an immense relief to their enslaved minds to be freed from any one bond of restraint, and it will fire them the more, and cause them to work for us with zeal, without knowing that they do so; for they will only be indulging their own desire of personal admiration.”

Almost everyone in the world is familiar with rapper Eminem (Marshall Mathers) but many may not be aware of just how violent and disgusting his lyrics are. Many of his songs are about killing people, raping women, doing drugs, and other violent acts. It would be foolish to say that people who listen to such music aren’t encouraged and inspired to commit violent acts as a result. In 2005 a man in London was arrested for killing a woman for no reason after performing Eminem songs at a karaoke bar.[xli] The man was said to idolize Eminem and even had several tattoos similar to the rap star.

Eminem is also a member of a rap group called D-12, which produces music that is exclusively violent and vile, with some lyrics saying, “I will shit on you I don’t care who you are / I’ll shit on you / I don’t give a fuck about you or your car / Fuck your house / Fuck your jewelry / And fuck your watch / Fuck your wife / Fuck your kids / Fuck your family / I’ll shit on you.”

Most of the group’s songs are about killing people and doing drugs. D-12 has sold over 10 million albums worldwide. On April 11th 2006 one of the group’s members named DeShaun Dupree Holton (stage name Proof) was shot in the head and killed at a Detroit bar by a bouncer after the rapper had shot and killed another man after an altercation. He was Eminem’s best friend. Eminem also launched the career of 50 Cent who in 2008 was estimated to be worth $450 million dollars and one of the richest rappers. An example of 50 Cent’s lyrics which appear in the song *I’ll Be the Shooter* , are, “I-I’ll be the shooter / I-I’ll use the Colt, the Taurus, or the Ruger / I’ll pop some through ya / Dirty is what I’ll do ya / I-I’ll use the Sig, the pump, or the German Luger.”

The examples of pop music containing overtly violent and sexually explicit material could go on and on. What is important to note here is not that such music exists, but that the singers and rap stars who perform such songs are built up in the mainstream media as gods and role models that children often imitate. Songs about three-somes and violence create a culture where such behavior is seen as normal. At one point in time, not that distant in the past, such songs would have been completely shunned or created a national outrage, but today many young boys and girls continuously fill their minds with such garbage from their iPods and television sets and their parents don’t have a clue, or don’t even care.

Television Commercials

Everyone knows that sex sells, and using attractive women in commercials is an expected part of TV ads, but some commercials center around messages that have nothing to do with the product while still encouraging or finding humor in immoral behavior while the product may be completely innocent. One such commercial that was popular in 2009 was one for Minute Maid juice where a man is approached by a woman who is his child’s teacher saying, “I think you’re the father of one of my kids” and he mistakes her for some girl he had a drunken one night stand with on Spring Break years earlier. Teachers often refer to their students as “my kids” and apparently someone at the Minute Maid company thought it would be funny to make a commercial centered around a scumbag who slept with some slut on Spring Break when he was drunk and thought he knocked her up.

The online dating site, AshelyMadison.com advertises on TV showing a couple making out with each other and getting undressed in bed and then displays text on the screen reading, “This couple is married…but *not* to each other.” The company’s trademarked slogan is, “Life is short. Have an affair.” There was a time in the past when such a commercial would never be played, because no TV network would air such garbage, but in the New World Order nearly every last hint of morality has been tossed away, and hedonism, selfishness and immorality are the norm. AshleyMadison.com boasts of having 3.86 million users and is designed exclusively for married people who want to find someone else to have sex with, without their spouse knowing about it.

For years now, television commercials advertising Las Vegas end with the slogan, “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas,” which means that you and your friends are encouraged to go there and sleep with hookers, do illegal drugs, and gamble all you can, and that nobody must mention these activities to other friends, girlfriends, wives, or family members, because most decent people would be completely appalled by such behavior. This phrase is actually trademarked by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Las Vegas has been known as the “Sin City” for decades, but in 1999 this new “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas” slogan was coined and was implemented in multiple television commercials encouraging people to visit the city and take part in all forms of debauchery it has to offer, but to keep it to themselves to avoid any social repercussions once they return home.

Video Games

Today, both kids and adults enjoy playing video games and the graphics and action are beyond what anyone could have imagined who grew up playing the Atari or Nintendo game systems in the 1980s. Game types range from role playing adventures, to sports games and shoot ’em ups. With the increased processing power and graphics capabilities of these systems, there is an increased realness to the games, and when an abnormal amount of time is spent playing violent shoot ’em up games, many psychologists fear that it desensitizes people to such violence. Such games place the user in the position where they “kill” dozens, perhaps hundreds of people, and in some games the targets aren’t “bad guys,” but instead are ordinary innocent people or police, and the point of some games is to just create havoc and kill as many people as you can, and enjoy doing it.

Where passively watching countless hours of television or films depicting such violence desensitizes people to it, the active involvement of these realistic videogames dramatically increase this desensitization and teach the users to find pleasure and rewards for the more people they kill.

One of the most notoriously violent videogames is the *Grand Theft Auto* series where players attempt to rise up the ranks of the criminal underworld through various objectives and are encouraged to commit mindless violent criminal acts. For example, in one mission the player gains points by killing people and causing destruction throughout the city and if they steal a police car and run people over with it, they receive double the number of points since they are killing with a police car, instead of if they had stolen an ordinary vehicle.

The game has generated a decent amount of controversy from parents who are outraged that a game exists with such sinister goals, and the game’s creators have had multiple lawsuits filed against them claiming the game has encouraged or inspired several people to steal cars and commit multiple murders.

William Buckner, who was 15 at the time, and his younger brother Josh (13) ended up killing two people after shooting them while they were driving on the freeway. They told police they went out to shoot at the side of trucks after playing *Grand Theft Auto III* .[xlii]

The victims’ families filed a $246 million dollar lawsuit against Rockstar Games, Take-Two Interactive Software, Wal-Mart, and Sony Computer Entertainment America who manufactures the Playstation 2 game counsel. Rockstar and its parent company, Take-Two, filed for dismissal of the lawsuit in 2003, stating in U.S. District Court that the “ideas and concepts as well as the ‘purported psychological effects’ on the Buckners are protected by the First Amendment’s free-speech clause.”

An attempt to move the lawsuit into a state court was unsuccessful under Tennessee's consumer protection act and the plaintiffs dismissed the case.

Another lawsuit involving the game was started in 2005 after a 17 year old named Devin Moore shot and killed three police officers in Alabama after he was questioned regarding a stolen vehicle. When being questioned, Moore took a gun from one of the police officers and shot and killed him and two others and then fled in a police car. One of Moore's attorneys, Jack Thompson, claimed it was *Grand Theft Auto's* graphic nature—with his constant playing time—that caused Moore to commit the murders, and Moore's family agrees.

At the time of this writing, the case has not been resolved and is ongoing. Lawyer Jack Thompson has said, "There's no doubt in my mind that but for Devin Moore's training on this cop killing simulator, he would not have been able to kill three cops in Fayette, Alabama who are now dead and in the ground. We are suing Take-Two, Sony, Wal-Mart, and GameStop for having trained Devin Moore to kill. He had no history of violence. No criminal record."

Another teenager named Cody Posey who was said to obsessively play the game murdered his father, stepmother, and stepsister in New Mexico.

In 2009, a six-year-old boy took his mom's car attempting to drive himself to school because he missed the bus, only to crash the car and luckily avoid serious injury. The child was able to drive the car over ten miles before crashing, and told the sheriff that he had trained how to drive on video games, specifically mentioning *Grand Theft Auto* .[xliii]

The Guinness World Records lists the game as the most controversial videogame series in history for glamorizing violence and its connections to actual crimes.[xliv]

Another videogame that wastes countless hours of people's lives is the online role-playing game *World of Warcraft* . It's sort of an advanced *Dungeons and Dragons* type of game, which has become synonymous with an antisocial outcast living in his parent's basement. The game type is a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) which requires players to subscribe to a monthly service in order to play with other online gamers. The game made the *Guinness Book of World Records* for the most subscribed MMORPG, with more than 11.5 million monthly subscriptions.

Such a game takes the players into a completely fictional fantasy land where they often find themselves spending dozens of hours a week. Such a large chunk of time obviously takes away from social activities such as hanging out with friends or going to parties, as well as physical activities like playing sports. Instead, many *World of Warcraft* players find themselves sitting in front of their computer screen alone hour after hour, with their social skills and physical fitness deteriorating with every passing minute.

Gay Children's Books

Everyone knows how impressionable children are. They believe in Santa Clause, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy, after all. While parents cannot have complete control over the values and behaviors of their children, it is undeniable that the environment children are exposed to and the values and behaviors of the adults in their life largely influence them. For example, the children of Anton LaVey, the founder of the Church of Satan, all grew up and continued to carry on the legacy of their father and are avowed Satanists themselves.

While homosexuality is a complex and sensitive issue, it cannot be denied that heterosexual desires, behaviors, and couples are normal, and the small percentage of homosexuals represent an abnormal minority whose strange desires and behaviors are the result of some kind of neurological or hormonal disorder. This is not to say that they should be hated for what could be something they cannot fully control. But to teach young children that homosexuality is a normal and natural thing is an absolute abomination, yet in the 21st century the homosexual indoctrination of children took a disturbing turn when various children's books began to find their way into schools which involved plots of gay characters and were being forced on the young students.

In 2006 at Estabrook Elementary School in Lexington, Massachusetts, a teacher had chosen the theme of “weddings” for reading time, and the book she chose to read to the children was a picture book titled *King and King* which tells the story of two men who fall in love and get married. The book begins with a Queen nagging her unmarried son, the prince, because he is not married, saying, “When I was your age, I’d been married twice already.”

The Queen brings in a bunch of princesses from neighboring kingdoms for him to choose from to be his wife, but he ended up being attracted to one of the princess’s brothers. “At last, the prince felt a stir in his heart. It was love at first sight,” the book reads.

The two princes get married after a whirlwind courtship and are then crowned “king and king,” instead of king and queen. The last page shows a drawing of the two “kings” kissing each other on the lips.

A similar book titled *And Tango Makes Three,* describes two male penguins who adopt a baby penguin and raise it together. The two penguins are clearly identified as being two men, and at one point in the story the zoo keeper says they must be in love.

One school superintendent, Jennifer Filyaw, said she considered the book “adorable” and appropriate for children ages 4 to 8.[xlv] Parents pressured the school to have the book removed from the school library, and were opposed by gay activists who claimed that would amount to “censorship.”

At the Alameda Unified School District in California in 2009 the school board voted to uphold a special LBGT (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender) curriculum, and forced 2nd graders to read *And Tango Makes Three* .[xlvi]

The interesting thing about those who push the homosexual agenda is that they claim everyone should not be judgmental and that all views and lifestyles should be accepted, yet at the same time, they attack conservatives or Christians who are opposed to such agendas. So while claiming people shouldn’t judge, many gays themselves judge others who have differing opinions and values regarding homosexual agendas, even when those opposed to such things are respectful in their differences.

The original writings of the Illuminati read, “We must win the common people in every corner. This will be obtained chiefly by means of the schools, and by open, hearty behavior, show, condescension, popularity, and toleration of their prejudices, which we shall at leisure root out and dispel.”

Obama’s Perverted “Safe Schools Czar”

Kevin Jennings, the person president Obama appointed to be his “safe schools czar” is a homosexual who acknowledged that when he was a schoolteacher he advised a 15 year old boy to use condoms when having sex with an older man he met at a bus station bathroom. Not only did Jennings fail to report this incident of statutory rape to authorities, but in the months following he befriended this young boy who would come by his office and tell him of his gay “adventures.”

Jennings writes about this in his 2007 autobiography, *Mama’s Boy, Preacher’s Son: A Memoir* . On page 162, Jennings writes: “Robertson soon told me the tale, about someone he’d met in Boston, how he thought he loved him, how heartbroken he was when his calls never got returned…” On page 169, he continues: “As the fall wore on, Robertson continued to drop by my office to chat, often updating me on his latest ‘adventures.’ Sometimes these startled me, and I began to underline the importance of safe sex to him.”

It wouldn’t be surprising if Jennings secretly had a crush on this young boy and found sexual gratification from hearing about all of his homosexual encounters. Jennings is also the author/editor of a book titled O*ne Teacher in 10* , which is, “A collection of more than 30 accounts by gay and lesbian teachers from schools and universities across the country. Each narrative recounts its author’s experiences either as an openly gay or lesbian teacher or during the period of coming out.”

Jennings has also written about his past drug use and his contempt for religion, and promotes homosexuality in schools. Department of Education spokesman Justin Hamilton declined to comment on Jennings’ statements about encouraging the young boy to have sex with the older man, but Arne Duncan who is Obama's Secretary of Education, said he was "honored" to work with Jennings and described him as "uniquely qualified for his job." [xlvii]

Some defenders say the Obama administration wasn't aware of Jennings past, but it was written clearly in his autobiography and as Peter Sprigg of the Family Research Council said, "This controversy about the possible statutory rape was raised in 2004 when he received an award from the NEA. So it's not like it's been a secret. So I think it shows yet another failure of the Obama administration's vetting process."

As if these issues weren't bad enough, the perversions of Kevin Jennings actually get much worse. In March 2000 the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) of Massachusetts held a conference where workshop leaders taught children as young as 14 how to "fist" each other, which is the dangerous sexual practice of sticking an entire hand up the rectum of another individual. Kevin Jennings is the founder of GLSEN and was the keynote speaker at this conference. In 2007 he was paid over $250,000 as its executive director.

At the 2001 GLSEN conference, activists handed out over 400 "fisting kits" which included rubber gloves and lubrication to the children who attended. In 2005 this same organization handed out hundreds of copies of a booklet to kids titled *The Little Black Book: Queer in the 21st Century* which contained sections titled: *Fucking; Licking Butt; Piss Play, and Fisting* , each of which describes in very graphic language the practices of these different types of gay sex activities.

Slutty Halloween Costumes

It's a well-known aspect of Halloween that young adults, particularly female college students, like to dress up in the skimpiest and sluttiest outfits possible that night, but a disturbing trend can be seen in the costumes for young children. Very skimpy and slutty costumes are now found on the shelves for very young children and some parents who are lost in the culture of the New World Order don't think anything of it.

Fortunately there are still parents with morals and decent values. “If girls get used to dressing like this, they might want to become a whore after Halloween,” said Harlem mom Malinda Martinez, 33, who has a 6-year-old girl. “They’re far too grown up for kids.” [xlviii]

The marketing message for many children’s costumes are more blatantly sexual than ever before. “The Navy ships won’t want to leave the dock unless this cute sailor girl is on board,” reads one catalog entry for a teeny-weeny sailor costume in sizes that can fit a 4-year-old that was sold by a Party City store on West 14th Street in New York City.

“It is so wrong,” said Sharon Lamb, author of the book *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters From Marketers’ Schemes* . “The message being put out there is that it’s right to be slutty on Halloween. That’s what Halloween is all about now. The one night when it’s OK to live your fantasies, marketers are telling children their fantasies should involve sex. It is very damaging.” [xlix]

An article in the *New York Post* explains that a reporter found an array of slutty Halloween costumes for children at a Party City on East Fourth Street in New York City, including:

A Goldilocks costume suitable for a Penthouse party with clingy gingham lace-up peasant dress with a white petticoat “that’s all grown up, and you can have your porridge and more.”

A pirate costume called the “High Seas Hottie” made in sizes to fit an 8-year-old.

A women-in-chains fantasy costume called “Convict Cutie” that features a spandex dress and lace-up bodice.

A “Devil Grrrl” costume for 10 to 14-year-olds that includes a flaming-red dress and tail, skanky fishnet hose and gloves and a tiny pitchfork. “This grrrl devil likes to get things heating up!” the packaging boasts.

One blogger wrote, “Every year, it gets harder and harder to find a costume for my oldest daughter that won’t get her picked up by the cops as a street walker…I’m still on my search to find a costume that doesn’t have a mini-skirt, lace-up corset or have the word ‘cutie’ in it for my 5-year-old. I may have to resort to making her a ghost by throwing a sheet over her.”[l]

Jack Black’s Prayer to Satan on MTV

At the 2009 Video Music Awards on MTV, a popular award show, actor Jack Black decided to offer up a prayer of thanks to Satan. “Since we’re giving a rock award tonight, who wants to pray to the Devil with me? Let me see those horns! (referring to the El Diablo hand sign of extending the index and pinky fingers.) Now take the hand of the person next to you. Dear dark lord Satan…just wanted to ask you to grant tonight’s winners continued success in the music industry.”

Much of the crowd cheered with encouragement and many held up their “Devil horns” in unison with Black. MTV continues to be a major sewer pipe pouring garbage of all kinds into the living rooms of millions.

Anti-God Advertisements in New York Sub-way Stations

A coalition of eight different atheist organizations purchased a month’s worth of advertising space in a dozen subway stations in Manhattan in order to promote atheism and attack belief in God. One poster reads “A million New Yorkers are good without God. Are you?” The groups behind the ads, which calls themselves the Big Apple Coalition of Reason, say they are, “part of a coordinated multi-organizational advertising campaign designed to raise awareness about people who don’t believe in a god.”[li]

The New York City subway system is used by more than 5 million people per day. The organizers bragged that the 2009 American Religious Identification Survey indicated that approximately 15% of those surveyed check “none” for religion, up from 8% in 1990 and said that this was just the beginning of a nationwide effort to post their materials in transit systems across the country.

Atheism is promoted by the Illuminati and the establishment because they know that most religions instill moral values in people and promote a code of conduct that enriches peoples' lives and helps them to be happier, healthier, and create systems of accountability through friends to discourage and minimize destructive, immoral, and unhealthy behaviors. A population of hedonists whose lives are in shambles because of credit card debt, alcohol and drug abuse, and destructive broken relationships are going to be too wrapped up in their own lives and problems to care about looking into what their lawmakers and politicians are doing. Such people are not going to become organized or even speak up about any issues directly affecting them and will not get in the way of the New World Order.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Encouraged

Since a population trapped in a downward spiral of drug and alcohol abuse will not care to learn about political issues or get involved, this behavior is also encouraged. Celebrities are worshiped by the mentally enslaved who mimic their behavior and habits, finding them cool and exciting. It's interesting to learn that many musicians are complete phonies who portray a lifestyle in their music that is completely different from their personal lives. Others become nearly destroyed by the very attitudes and behaviors that shot them to stardom. Rap celebrity Dr. Dre released an album called *The Chronic* in 1992 which featured a large pot leaf printed on the CD face (chronic is a slang term for marijuana) and contained numerous references to smoking weed, doing drugs, and committing crimes. In August of 2008 Dr. Dre's first son Andre Young Jr. died at the age of 20 from an overdose of heroin and morphine.[lii]

Rapper 50 Cent burst on the music scene in 2003 with his single *In Da Club* with lyrics saying, "You can find me in the club, bottle full of bub [alcohol] / Look mommy I got the X [Ecstasy] if you're into taking drugs," portraying the image of a club hopping party animal, but in interviews 50 Cent has repeatedly stated that he is a home body and doesn't like to go out to clubs.

One particular radio station in San Diego, and I'm sure in multiple other cities as well, plays the sound of a water bong (a device used for smoking marijuana) every day at 4:20pm celebrating “420” which is a number used by pot smokers to signify smoking marijuana. This author observed a scene once in the TV show *Nip/Tuck* where a character pulled out a water bong and smoked weed with his grandmother. The show airs on the cable station FX. Showing a water bong being smoked on TV is something that never happened until the 21st century when society sunk to a new level as it continued to deteriorate.

This author is personally fairly libertarian when it comes to marijuana laws and sees the criminalization of possession and use largely a money making ploy for private prisons, but it’s not just marijuana that is being portrayed as cool and fun. Films like *Blow* (2001) starring Johnny Depp sensationalize cocaine use, and *Trainspotting* (1996) did the same thing for heroine.

Banking, Money, and Taxes

Perhaps you have noticed that frequently the largest and most extravagant buildings in most cities (and even small towns) are banks. It’s fascinating how banks make money off interest, which is one of the most lucrative businesses known to man. While most businesses build a product or provide some kind of service involving manual labor or specialized knowledge, banks make enormous profits through the seemingly magical practice of lending people money and collecting interest on the loans.

When one really looks into how money is created and used, and how interest is generated from loans, it becomes clear that the banking industry is one of the pillars of the New World Order and is at the core of the elite’s ability to control people, politicians, and even governments of large countries.

You’ll often hear people familiar with this issue say that the banks “create money out of nothing, and then loan it out at interest.” Such a statement is hard to grasp at first, but conveys just how big of a con the banking industry is involved in. Such a con game goes back thousands of years and is often blamed on the Jews due to their money lending practices in Biblical times.

In the 10th century the Knights Templar figured out this amazing strategy and became the first international bankers in Europe and the practice contributed greatly to their wealth. On October 13, 1307 (Friday the 13th) the leadership of the Knights Templar was arrested in France for allegedly practicing strange and satanic rituals, a charge most prominent occultists admit was true. Surviving Knights Templar went underground and are believed to have started Freemasonry which they used as a cover for their occult beliefs and practices. Freemasons then continued to operate (and still continue) as a Mystery School which the Illuminati was able to graft onto. Besides functioning as a place to learn occult theology and mysticism, other areas of life are also taught and nurtured in these Mystery Schools such as science, business, and banking.

Because the business of banking is extremely profitable, and the banks owners don't have to build any products or really provide any services involving extensive manual labor, cunning businessmen saw the potential for virtually unlimited easy money and became involved in the industry. People like Paul Warburg, J.P. Morgan, and others monopolized the industry, thus securing their wealth for countless generations and giving them the ability to buy politicians and fund their personal plans for a global government.

The Federal Reserve

In understanding the role of money and banking in the New World Order, it is important to know about the true nature of the Federal Reserve (often simply called "the Fed"). Most people think the Federal Reserve is a government owned bank in the United States or a branch of the Department of the Treasury, but this couldn't be further from the truth. "The Federal Reserve is no more federal than Federal Express" is the joke that people familiar with this issue often tell. And they're right.

The Federal Reserve is a private group of banks that lends money to the United States government in the same way your local bank lends you money. This ingenious scheme was put in place in 1913 with the passing of the Federal Reserve Act which was drawn up in secret by a group of wealthy banksters when they met on Jekyll Island off the coast of Georgia three years earlier. Ever since the Federal Reserve Act was put into law, the United States has become a servant to the elite international bankers and the national debt has skyrocketed out of control.

Thomas Jefferson, the 3rd president of the United States once said, “I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around [the banks] will deprive the people of all property until their children wake-up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered. The issuing power should be taken from the banks and restored to the people, to whom it properly belongs.”

Alan Greenspan, who worked as the Chairman of the Federal Reserve for over eighteen years, made an extremely candid statement once about how powerful the Federal Reserve is when being interviewed on PBS while he was promoting his book *The Age of Turbulence* (2007).

The interviewer, Jim Lahr, asked him what the proper relationship should be between the chairman of the Federal Reserve and a president of the United States, to which Greenspan answered, “Well, first of all, the Federal Reserve is an independent agency, and that means basically that there is no other agency of government which can overrule actions that we take…what the relationships are don’t frankly matter.”

To learn more about this fascinating and important issue, you are urged to watch the films, *Money As Debt* , *The Money Masters* , or *Monopoly Men* .

Gold and Silver

People against the New World Order will often be interested in investing in gold and silver—particularly physical gold and silver—meaning they purchase coins or bars that they themselves take physical possession of, rather than just buying gold or silver stocks or certificates. The reason for this is because gold and silver are seen as real money, as opposed to a fiat currency like the US dollar. A fiat currency is a currency that isn’t backed by gold or silver. Before 1971 the US dollar was backed by gold which meant that for every dollar in circulation, there was one dollar worth of gold in possession by the federal government or the Federal Reserve Bank. This was a way to keep inflation low since the gold supply only slowly increased, so then would inflation.

But in 1971 President Nixon took the US dollar off the gold standard, meaning the Federal Reserve could print money and put it in circulation that was not backed by gold, so the rate of inflation was no longer connected to the amount of gold in existence, but rather to the number of dollars the Federal Reserve wanted to print.

For decades, patriots and those in *The Resistance* had worried that the Federal Reserve Banking System, which is controlled by a group of private banks operating as if they were a government entity, would one day make the US dollar practically worthless because it would print so many of them it would create what is called hyper-inflation, thus destroying the value of the currency as was seen in the Weimar Republic in Germany in the 1930s, and recently in Zimbabwe, Africa where the inflation rate was so high that a bunch of bananas cost literally billions of Zimbabwe dollars.

Since the year 2000 gold has went from $300 an ounce to over $1100 an ounce in the beginning of 2010. Silver went from $5.25 an ounce to $18 an ounce in the same timeframe. Some market analysts predict that gold will hit $2000 an ounce sometime into the 2010 decade, and others are even predicting $5000 an ounce. Much of the increase in the price of gold and silver isn’t because the metals are getting rarer, but rather the price is a reflection of the weakening US dollar. Gold and silver have been seen as a hedge against inflation for decades and most financial advisers recommend that 10% of a person’s investments should be held in gold.

In a video that got several hundred thousand views on YouTube, this author offered to sell random strangers walking along a boardwalk on a beach a one ounce gold coin for $50, and in some cases, $20, and once tried to trade it for a cup of coffee, but nobody expressed any interest. Some didn’t want the coin because it was Canadian and didn’t think it had much value in America, not realizing that a one ounce gold coin stamped with a picture of Mickey Mouse is still an ounce of gold and can be sold at any coin shop for whatever the spot price of gold is going for that day.

Some of the comments on the video by the viewer's said they thought the people I approached thought it was a fake coin and that was why they didn't want to buy it for fifty bucks. These people missed the point of the video which was to show that very few people have any clue whatsoever about what the value of gold is, so I shot another video to clearly illustrate this.

In the follow up video I offered random passers-by the coin for free if they knew or could guess how much gold was trading for that day within 25%. You have to see the video to really grasp the impact of it, and if you watch it you will see that adults over the age of 30 guessed as low as thirty-eight cents and as high as $245. At the time the video was shot, gold was trading for $1150 per ounce. After the "contestants," as I called them, gave me their answer, I told them how much the coin was actually worth and captured their reactions on the video.

People concerned with the New World Order are especially interested in owning physical gold and silver because they are aware of the elite's ultimate goal of establishing one currency for the whole world, and in order to accomplish this it is likely that the United States dollar will have to be made practically worthless through hyper-inflation at which point the solution for this currency crisis will be the introduction of a new regional currency or an adoption of a global currency. (See *One World Currency*)

Another reason for physically holding a collection of silver coins (usually one ounce coins which is the standard weight) is the possibility that a community barter system or an underground economy may have to be used for a period of time during a hyper-inflation scenario. In the event of a hyper-inflationary depression and the US dollar becomes practically worthless, or loses 90% of its value in a short time frame, small mom and pop stores, as well as neighborhoods and perhaps entire communities may start using one ounce silver coins as money to exchange goods and services. A small local bakery may only sell loaves of bread for a one ounce silver coin, or someone with a large farm or garden may sell their produce to others in their community, but only for silver. If this sounds far-fetched you should be aware that during the hyper-inflation in Zimbabwe, street vendors stopped taking the country's currency because of the massive daily inflation, and would only accept grams of gold for payment.[liii]

Since a one ounce gold coin has a fairly high value, it is advised that you purchase and hold onto at least a small amount of one ounce silver coins because their value can be matched with various products or services. In the event of this kind of a black market economy arising, very few transactions would need to be made in gold because one ounce of gold is worth approximately 50 times what an ounce of silver is worth. If a loaf of bread is selling for one ounce of silver, and all you have is one ounce gold coins (or even half ounce or quarter ounces) then you're going to have to buy way more bread than you could possibly need at the moment. This would be like shopping at a Dollar Store with only $100 dollar bills and the store wouldn't be able to give you any change.

Income Tax and the IRS

A faction of *The Resistance* is adamant about the federal income tax being illegal, and don't believe the 16th Amendment was properly ratified, therefore they don't believe the income tax should be paid. Some people who believe this actually stop paying their income taxes, and a handful of people who have done so and been taken to court over it and won, are used as examples by these people as evidence that they are correct. This is a dangerous fight to pick and is extremely difficult to win. Most people who believe the income tax is illegal, still pay their taxes because they know that when it comes to the government wanting its money, they will stop at nothing to get it. Thomas Jefferson said, "the power to tax is the power to destroy," and he was correct.

Aaron Russo's 2006 film *America: Freedom to Fascism* is perhaps one of the most popular films on the subject of the income tax being illegal. In the film he interviews former IRS agents, tax protesters, and others who all subscribe to the belief that the tax is illegal.

Ed and Elaine Brown are a married couple from New Hampshire who got national media attention in 2007 after they had a five month standoff with federal authorities after refusing to turn themselves in after having been convicted of tax crimes. Their home was designed to function "off the grid" and they had stockpiled food and supplies, but also had help from various visitors who were allowed on the property during the standoff. The Browns were known to be armed and police had feared another Ruby Ridge type of incident if they tried to forcefully arrest them. After the five month standoff they were eventually arrested by undercover officers posing as supporters who were invited into the house by the Browns on October 4, 2007 and were immediately arrested without incident.

Four individuals who assisted the Browns during the standoff were later convicted in connection with the matter. Their sentences ranged from two and a half years to thirty six years in prison for bringing the Browns food and supplies during the standoff.

Regarding tax protesters, it's significant to note that Irwin Schiff, the father of economic guru and Senate candidate Peter Schiff, was sentenced to thirteen years in prison after being found guilty of tax evasion. The courts claimed Irwin owed over $2 million dollars in back taxes. Irwin was a prominent tax protester and conducted seminars teaching people why he thought paying income tax was illegal.

2009 Tea Party Protests

April 15,th as you probably know, is "Tax Day" in America, and is the deadline for filing your yearly income tax statement. While nobody likes paying taxes, and they continuously go up with little opposition from citizens, Tax Day in 2009 was different in the United States. The Tea Party protests, as they have become known as, were (and continue to be) a nationwide coordinated protest against big government, economic stimulus packages, government spending, and high taxes in general. Millions of Americans gathered in rallies across the country to show their displeasure with the out of control government. The name "Tea Party" is a reference to the Boston Tea Party from the American Revolution where colonists boarded British ships in 1773 and destroyed large quantities of tea by throwing it in the water as a symbolic protest against taxation without representation.

The liberal media collectively labeled the Tea Party protesters as "tea baggers" which is a slang term for sucking on testicles. Liberal commentators all knew this which was evident by their inability to contain their smirks and giggles every time they said it.

CNN’s Anderson Cooper (a homosexual) was interviewing David Gergen about opposition to the 2009 stimulus packages, when Gergen commented that the Republicans “still haven’t found their voice” referring to a consensus on how to deal with the ensuing recession, when Cooper jumped in and said, “it’s hard to talk when you’re tea bagging.” Cooper’s disgusting comment with clear sexual overtones caused his guests to all giggle like children. Despite a backlash by people upset with his vulgar joke, no disciplinary action was taken.[liv]

Rachel Maddow on MSNBC (another homosexual) covered the Tea Party protests with a perverted slant, emphasizing the words “tea bagging” throughout the segment, causing her off camera staff (a camera man or production assistant) to laugh out loud which was clearly audible. “They don’t want to tea bag alone, if that’s even possible,”[lv] she joked, again referring to the sexual connotations that such a term holds.

Another left wing MSNBC host, Keith Olbermann, made a joke about cleaning up after the tea bagging and then admitted, “and that will be my last intentional double entendre on this one, at least until the end of the segment.” A double entendre is a figure of speech which is meant to be understood in either of two ways, one being straightforward, and the other less so, often risqué or inappropriate.

A report posted on the Anti-Defamation League’s (ADL) website, titled *Rage Grows in America: Anti-Government Conspiracies* , lists the Tea Party protests as evidence that since the election of Barack Obama as president, “a climate of fervor and activism with manifestations ranging from incivility in public forums to acts of intimidation and violence” has occurred in America.

The report contains a section titled The *Tea Parties* which reads, “The rapid growth of anti-government anger in the wake of Obama’s election first became apparent in the spring of 2009, when conservative groups and grass-roots activists organized a nationwide series of anti-government rallies dubbed ‘Tea Parties.’ At these events, and later sequels, anti-government sentiments and conspiracy theories proliferated, with a common theme being that somehow Obama had ‘stolen’ the country from Americans.” [lvi]

This report also lists Alex Jones from Infowars.com as the “Conspiracy King” and says, “Further out into the extremist fringe, one person in particular has been responsible for stirring up anti-government and anti-Obama conspiracy theories in the United States.”

Establishment Attempts to Demonize Critics of Obama’s Economic Policies

MSNBC host Carlos Watson, who is an African American, was addressing the increased use of people labeling President Obama as a socialist because of his policies, when Watson stated, “you start to wonder, in fact, if the word socialist is becoming a code word, whether or not socialist is becoming the new N-word.” [lvii]

After a story broke about Barrack Obama’s wife Michelle having 26 aids, and conservatives were questioning why she would need so many and were concerned about the cost, MSNBC’s Chris Matthews tried to quell such criticism by stating, “When I heard people going after the first lady and the number of staff that they have, it sounds racist to me. It sounds like people are mad we have a black first lady.” [lviii]

Comedian Janeane Garofalo stated on MSNBC’s *Countdown with Keith Olbermann* that the Tea Party protests in 2009 were not about protesting out of control government spending or increasing taxes, but that, “Let’s be very honest about what this is about. It’s not about bashing democrats, it’s not about taxes, they have no idea what the Boston Tea Party was about. They don’t know their history at all. This is about hating a black man in the White House. This is racism straight up…and there is no way around that.” She was not joking.

Former Democratic President Jimmy Carter told Brian Williams during an interview on NBC that, “I think an overwhelming portion of the intentionally demonstrated animosity towards President Barrack Obama is based on the fact that he is a black man, that he’s African American….and I think it’s bubbled up to the surface because of a belief among many white people, not just in the south, but around the country, that African Americans are not qualified to lead this great country.” [lix]

The Servant Class

So a private bank (the Federal Reserve) has a stranglehold over the United States government, in much of the same way that many consumers are in debt to credit cards or other unsecured loans. (An unsecured loan is a loan that is not backed by collateral.) Much of consumer debt is due to people “buying things they don’t need with money they don’t have” as the cliché goes. Dining out, bar tabs, new clothes, and vacations often rack up enormous credit card debt which then continues to rise with compounding interest, with people often only making the minimum payment that doesn’t even cover the previous month’s interest.

The larger the national debt of the United States government goes, the higher taxes are raised, and the lower the standard of living gets. You often hear that “the middle class is shrinking,” which means that more and more people will never own a home or be able to retire, and will never really accumulate any valuable assets. Another cliché, “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer” is sadly coming true.

A major financial goal for the New World Order is to completely erode the middle class and leave only two social classes remaining: the wealthy, and the poor working class who will forever be slaves to the system, laboring away to pay their taxes and fuel the lifestyles of the elite Illuminati.

While many people fear this coming and are trying to fight against it, the vast majority of Americans are happy as long as they can get drunk and watch football on the weekends, and have come to embrace their slavery. The elite are pleased with this servant class since they are uninformed and out of the way, and while living only for the moment, they don’t even consider the possibility that there is more to life or that they have been reduced to mere peasants.

One World Currency

People who are aware of the emerging New World Order often warn of a coming one world currency, and the “mark of the beast.” In fact, many Christians are aware of Revelation 13:16-18 which states, “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.”

The infamous mark of the beast is fairly well known in Christian circles, and secular circles as well. The term refers to a passage in the Book of Revelation, which is the last book in the Bible, and indicates some kind of mark that the Antichrist world dictator will force everyone to take on their right hand or on their forehead, and if they don’t, then they will not be able to buy or sell anything or partake in any kind of financial transactions using money.

This book of the Bible is believed by most scholars to have been written sometime between the year 68 A.D. and 90 A.D. by John of Patmos and describes his apocalyptic visions of the last days of the earth.

While most Christians have heard of the mark of the beast and have some idea of what it is, unfortunately most of them do not see the underlying forces and institutions that are continuously striving to bring such a thing into reality. For decades resistance groups and those who were concerned about a New World Order saw the signs that one day the elite bankers around the world hoped to implement a single global currency and eliminate all other forms of money. This unified global currency will be transferred into an electronic currency then, and the use of cash and coins will practically be eliminated and a thing of the past.

Once this electronic currency is the universally accepted method of payment for all goods and services, every person in the world will be subjected to having each and every one of their financial transactions recorded in a database. Exactly what you buy, when you buy it, how much you paid, and what store location you bought it from will be cataloged and stored indefinitely. The days of making cash transactions for things like selling an old car, or even mowing a neighbor’s lawn will be a thing of the past. Once this system is implemented the government can ensure that they will be aware of each and every financial transaction, no matter how large or small, and be sure to tax you as they see fit.

The financial transaction database on each person can also be used in ways that most people could never imagine. The financial institutions connected to your mark of the beast can sell your entire purchasing history to advertisers or even insurance companies. Are you purchasing large quantities of chocolate cake on a weekly basis? Cigarettes? Beer? Your insurance company would love to know these things, and could use such information to either increase your rates, or to place you lower on the priority list when you need medical treatment since your purchasing profile shows that you buy a lot of chocolate cake and beer and aren’t paying any monthly dues to a gym or health club.

President Bill Clinton’s mentor at Georgetown University, the establishment insider named Carroll Quigley wrote in his 1966 book *Tragedy and Hope* that “The powers of financial capitalism had (a) far-reaching aim, nothing less than to create a world system of financial control in private hands able to dominate the political system of each country and the economy of the world as a whole. This system was to be controlled in a feudalist fashion by the central banks of the world acting in concert, by secret agreements arrived at in frequent meetings and conferences. The apex of the systems was to be the Bank for International Settlements in Basel, Switzerland, a private bank owned and controlled by the world’s central banks which were themselves private corporations. Each central bank...sought to dominate its government by its ability to control Treasury loans, to manipulate foreign exchanges, to influence the level of economic activity in the country, and to influence cooperative politicians by subsequent economic rewards in the business world.”[lx]

The Amero

The Amero is the new currency that elite globalist organizations are pushing to replace the American dollar, the Canadian dollar, and the Mexican peso. This will likely happen after the North American Union becomes official, which they are also pushing.

Once regional currencies are established around the world, all those currencies will then be merged into the one world currency, and then transformed into an electronic currency.

The Amero was first proposed in 1999 by a Canadian economist named Herbert G. Grubel who published a book titled *The Case for the Amero* . [lxi] This was the same year that the Euro became the official currency in Europe for the European Union.

Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations, Robert Pastor, later had a book published in 2001 titled *Toward a North American Community* , where he wrote, "In the long term, the amero is in the best interests of all three countries," [lxii] referring to the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Anyone who has spent any time looking at the elite organizations at the heart of the New World Order knows that the Council on Foreign Relations usually gets what it wants, and it is very telling when the chairman writes a book about wanting a North American Union and a new regional currency.

An economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Eric van Wincoop, co-authored a journal article in 2001 which discussed what he said were the benefits of a regional currency, saying, "The use of different moneys across borders can form a barrier as there are costs in exchanging currencies in spot and forward markets and traders face uncertainty about currency movements that cannot always be hedged. A common currency also leads to greater transparency of price differentials." [lxiii]

It is very interesting that elite members of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York have been promoting the idea of creating a new regional currency involving the United States, Canada, and Mexico, while at the same time such an idea is called a conspiracy theory by most so-called financial or political experts. The reason for this is so that such a plan may be formulated and finalized without the public's awareness so the plan for such a currency will be just a few steps from completion before it or its supporters are faced with any opposition.

Since the insider's discussions of such a plan are mainly in literature only read by other insiders and not in the mainstream press, it is basically an open secret which goes unnoticed by the masses who are distracted by the pop culture circus that is presented to them by the mainstream media.

Hal Turner's Amero Hoax

A man named Hal Turner posted a video on his YouTube channel on October 4th 2008 titled "Hal Turner Shows New AMERO Currency," where he claimed to have in his possession an actual Amero coin he obtained from a contact at the Denver Mint. The video quickly received over 400,000 views and reached the number one spot on Google Video's top 100 list and was spread around the Internet like wildfire. A lot of people gullibly accepted his claims, and believed that the Amero would soon be released to the public. What most people didn't realize is that Hal Turner is a white supremacist who worked for the FBI as an informant and an agent provocateur. More on this later.

The "Amero" that Turner held in his hand for his video was simply a novelty replica that could be purchased from www.AmeroCurrency.com or www.DC-Coin.com. As he is displaying his coin in his video, at one point the camera zooms in on the front and back of the coin to show the designs as he attempts to "prove" its authenticity, and if you compare the coin he is holding to the replicas sold on the Internet, they are EXACTLY the same.

After someone does two minutes of research, Hal Turner's claims become absurd and can be seen as completely fraudulent, but some of his supporters still defended him online saying that he himself was "duped" into believing that he had been sent a "real" Amero by an informant who worked at the Denver Mint. After all, the Council on Foreign Relations and other New World Order organizations have been planning such a thing for years. The previous year Turner had posted photos of "real" Amero coins on his website, which also spread around the web, and interestingly enough he would later buy or obtain the replica and show it off to be real.

A quick Google search shows anyone that the pictures of the coins were taken from the various websites that create novelty coins and replicas. Countless people must have emailed him to point this out to him, as did the comments on his blog post, so he had to know that the coins were simply replicas, but that didn't stop him from trying to continue the hoax a year later by claiming to have an actual coin.

Posting comments on the video on his YouTube channel of his alleged discovery had been disabled by him, obviously because people would post comments and links showing his coin was nothing but an easily obtained replica. Numerous counter videos were posted to YouTube exposing this hoax, and various bloggers had posted articles pointing it out as well.

Two months later, on December 3rd 2008 Turner posted photos of "Amero paper currency" and wrote, "To the chagrin of the government, I have obtained new "AMERO" paper currency notes! You know, the "AMERO" . . . . the new currency that is going to replace the US Dollar, The Canadian Dollar and the Mexican Peso? Yea, the new currency that all three governments claim doesn't exist. . . I have it." [lxiv]

His article goes on to say how over a year ago he "first broke" the story about Amero coins being secretly created at the Denver Mint, referring to the photos he posted on his website. His article also claims that YouTube notified him that the video he had posted showing his alleged Amero coin had been deleted and his account "permanently closed at the request of the United States Treasury Department." Turner wrote, "The Treasury department told YouTube/Google that my video was destabilizing the U.S. Dollar and was thus a threat to national security." [lxv]

While his articles allow readers to post comments, the user is notified that the administrator (Turner) must approve all comments first, and if and when this happens, it will show up on the website. So obviously, all comments posted informing him and the readers that the photos and his claims are fraudulent, were simply not approved, and never found their way on the website. It is incredible the number of gullible people that continue to believe Turner. By reading the comments that he had approved, it becomes clear the inability of Turner's readers to distinguish fact from fiction. What's worse is that Turner's articles are often copied and pasted into emails and sent around to others by people who believe his writings and aren't aware of his continuous lies and his admitted role as a government agent.

One can see how a large percentage of the viewers of his video claiming to show an Amero will believe him at first—that the Ameros are already being coined, only to later dismiss the idea of the U.S. Dollar collapsing and being replaced by a new currency—because it turns out the video was a hoax. It's a classic case of disinformation by mixing facts with fiction, in an attempt to prevent the public from focusing on the impact of such issues that we will ultimately face in the near future.

Turner has a history of urging and hoping for violence against others, including judges, and has posted their home addresses on his website and written blogs celebrating their murders.

In July 2009 Turner was arrested for allegedly posting threats to federal judges. During a court appearance his lawyer Michael Orozco pleaded with the judge saying Turner worked for the FBI beginning in 2002 as an "agent provocateur" and was taught by the agency "what he could say that wouldn't be crossing the line." [lxvi]

"His job was basically to publish information which would cause other parties to act in a manner which would lead to their arrest," Orozco said. [lxvii]

So it is clear that not only was Turner wrong about having an actual Amero coin, but he was purposefully lying about it in an attempt to create the idea that a regional currency, likely to be called the Amero, is a hoax and something American's don't need to worry about or look into. This way when people hear about such a plan, they quickly dismiss it as a conspiracy theory or a hoax thanks to actions like Turner's.

Turner's admission that he worked for the FBI and his somewhat creative hoaxes about the Amero led many to believe that he worked as a disinformation agent, whose job it was to put out false and fraudulent information about the Amero, in order to make anyone who talked about such a thing seem like they were falling for Turner's scam and that there was no such thing in the works.

China Calls for Global Currency

In May of 2009 just before the G-20 economic summit in London, an official from China's central bank made news around the world when they began calling for a new global currency to replace the U.S. dollar.

The proposal came from Beijing's central bank governor, Zhou Xiaochuan, who said that "the world economic crisis shows the inherent vulnerabilities and systemic risks in the existing international monetary system."

He recommended creating a currency that would be controlled by the International Monetary Fund in order "to achieve the objective of safeguarding global economic and financial stability."

China has been getting concerned about the value of the U.S. dollar because of Beijing's estimated 1 trillion dollars in U.S. Treasuries and other government debt.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner

Immediately after news surfaced of China's desire for a one world currency, U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner was asked what his thoughts were on the proposals while he was speaking at a Council on Foreign Relations conference. A reporter asked, "[unintelligible]…about the Chinese proposal for a global currency…" Geithner answered, "I haven't read the governor's proposal…we're actually quite open to that suggestion."

The previous day Geithner was asked by United States Representative Michelle Bachman, "I'm wondering, would you categorically renounce the United States moving away from the dollar and going to a global currency as suggested this morning by China and also by Russia?," to which Geithner replied, "I would. Yes." She then asked Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, who was sitting right next to him, and he answered, "I would also."[lxviii]

So in a 24 hour period Geithner completely changed his mind, from being against a global currency, to supporting it, and while speaking at a Council on Foreign Relations press conference none the less.

Russia Calls for Global Currency

The Kremlin (Russia's Parliament) published its priorities just prior to the G-20 meeting in March 2009, where they openly called for the creation of a supranational reserve currency that they said should be part of the strategy to reform the global financial system which began collapsing in the fourth quarter of 2008. (The G-20 meeting is a yearly forum consisting of the finance ministers and central bank governors of the world's largest 20 economies who meet to discuss international financial issues.)

Russia urged the International Monetary Fund to create a new "super reserve currency accepted by the whole of the international community." [lxix]

Russian President Shows Off Sample Coin of New 'World Currency' at G-8

Just a few months later at the 2009 G-8 meeting held in L'Aquila, Italy, the President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev pulled a coin out of his pocket and displayed it for the press saying it was a sample of the coin of a "united future world currency."

The sample coin was minted in Belgium and was presented to the heads of the G-8 delegations. It bears the words, "unity in diversity." He said the coin, "means they're getting ready. I think it's a good sign that we understand how interdependent we are."[lxx]

Remember that just a few months earlier during the April 2009 G-20 meeting, Russia proposed creating a new supranational currency and questioned the U.S. dollar's future as the global reserve currency.

Euro Contributor Endorses Global Currency

Kazakstan was part of the Soviet Union until it became an independent nation in 1991, and is the ninth largest country in the world. It borders Russia, China, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. While not thought of as a key player in global events, it is still noteworthy that the President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, also proposed a new global currency which he called the "acmetal."

What is also interesting, is that Robert Mundell, a man who played a key role in creating the Euro currency for the European Union voiced support for Nazarbayev's idea saying, "I must say that I agree with President Nazarbayev on his statement and many of the things he said in his plan, the project he made for the world currency, and I believe I'm right on track with what he's saying," adding the idea held "great promise."[lxxi]

Robert Mundell is an economics professor at Columbia University in New York City and was given the Nobel Prize in economics in 1999 for his role in creating the Euro currency for the European Union which unified currencies in many European countries—including Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Finland, Austria, and others.

Population Reduction

At the time that this first edition of *The New World Order: Facts & Fiction* was first published in 2010, the earth's population was around 6.795 billion people.[lxxii] One of the main goals of the New World Order is to massively reduce this number by billions of people. You read that correctly. A reduction of billions of people. Depending on the elitist, the goals of population reduction efforts range from reducing population by 50% to 95%. The elite politicians and businessmen say that the current population levels are dangerously high and will soon result in the depletion of the earth’s natural resources. To accomplish this reduction, various strategies have been implemented such as promoting contraception, abortions, and one child policies. Mass genocide has also been discussed, including using biological weapons to kill off large numbers of people in developing countries. Many fear that such a tactic will one day be attempted in developed countries as well.

The rationale behind such massive and horrific population reduction plans is quite chilling. The elite feel that since most tasks involving a large amount of physical labor have been accomplished, such as clearing countless acres of land for interstate highway systems, building infrastructure, such as dams and power plants, mining national resources, etc., and so now only a maintenance force is needed. Just think for a moment about the immense number of man hours it took to build the roads, bridges, and buildings that you take for granted every day. While at one point in time, people had to mine for minerals with simple hand tools, we now have enormous pieces of machinery that can do a job that used to take hundreds of men to do. The human species has been able to streamline nearly every process through the use of mechanical and technological means.

During the incredible construction process of much of the world’s infrastructure, the workers needed food, clothes, shelter, medicine, and a variety of other things which are part of modern life. But now that most of the work is done, the elite see these people as using up valuable resources and simply being in the way and detrimental to the way of life that the elite hope to maintain. While people may find these claims hard to believe, as you keep reading you will find solid evidence and sources for them. The Illuminati want you dead.

Ted Turner

Billionaire founder of CNN, Ted Turner, was interviewed Tuesday April 1st 2008 on Charlie Rose’s PBS show, where he revealed his beliefs about reducing the global population, but this was no April Fool’s joke. Turner began by parroting the sensationalized fears of climate change, saying it needed to be stopped.

“Not doing it will be catastrophic. We’ll be 8 degrees hotter in 10, not 10 but 30 or 40 years and basically none of the crops will grow. Most of the people will have died and the rest of us will be cannibals. Civilization will have broken down. The few people that are left will be living in a failed state like Somalia or Sudan. And living conditions will be intolerable. The droughts will be so bad there will be no more corn growing. Not doing it will be like suicide.”

Then he went on to say, “After that, we’ve got to stabilize the population. There’s too many people. That’s why we have global warming. We have global warming because too many people are using too much stuff, if there were less people, they’d be using less stuff.” Ted Turner himself has five children.

In 1996, Turner stated in an interview with an environmental magazine *Audubon* that, “A total population of 250-300 million people, a 95% decline from present levels, would be ideal.” In 1997 he donated one billion dollars to the United Nations to support their goals, which include population reduction.

Dr. Eric Pianka

Dr. Eric Pianka (born January 23, 1939) is a biology professor at the University of Texas at Austin, who made national news in March of 2006 after his acceptance speech for the Distinguished Texas Scientist Award given by the Texas Academy of Science.

A science writer named Forrest Mims was in attendance during this speech and was shocked at what he had heard, and soon after wrote an article about it for *The Citizen Scientist* , claiming that Pianka had advocated genocide to reduce the world’s population. In this article Mims recounts that an official of the Academy approached the video camera operator at the front of the auditorium and, “engaged him in animated conversation. The camera operator did not look pleased as he pointed the lens of the big camera to the ceiling and slowly walked away.”

So, by Forrest Mims account, Pianka's speech was not allowed to be videotaped, and he writes that he noticed this curious incident because of his many years of experience as a writer and editor, and that it raised a red flag in his mind. Dr. Pianka began his speech by "explaining that the general public is not yet ready to hear what he was about to tell us," Mims wrote.

After Dr. Pianka told the audience that there were too many people on the earth and listing all the evils of humanity, Mims wrote that Pianka stated, "the only feasible solution to saving the Earth is to reduce the population to 10 percent of the present number…He then showed solutions for reducing the world's population in the form of a slide depicting the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. War and famine would not do, he explained. Instead, disease offered the most efficient and fastest way to kill the billions that must soon die if the population crisis is to be solved."

He then explains that Pianka displayed a slide showing rows of human skulls and says he was deeply disturbed, not only by Pianka's speech, but because he "watched in amazement as a few hundred members of the Texas Academy of Science rose to their feet and gave a standing ovation to a speech that enthusiastically advocated the elimination of 90 percent of Earth's population by airborne Ebola."[lxxiii]

After learning of the sinister nature of Pianka's speech, an affiliate of Mims named William Dembski informed the Department of Homeland Security which resulted in the FBI interviewing Pianka.[lxxiv]

While Pianka's speech was not allowed to be videotaped, one can read his own words on his official University of Texas website where he wrote, "Humans have overpopulated the Earth and in the process have created an ideal nutritional substrate on which bacteria and viruses (microbes) will grow and prosper. We are behaving like bacteria growing on an agar plate, flourishing until natural limits are reached or until another microbe colonizes and takes over, using them as their resource."[lxxv]

“First, and foremost, we must get out of denial and recognize that Earth simply cannot support many billions of people, at least not in the lifestyles we would all like to live.”

“I am convinced that the world, **including all humanity** , WOULD clearly be much better off without so many of us.” [The bold face and capital print is in the original text on his website, and was not added in this book.]

One of the links on his website is to an obituary that he posted of himself, although at the time of this writing he is still alive. One more disturbing detail regarding Dr. Pianka is that on this website he shows pictures of a bison he raised on his land whose name is identified as Lucifer. [lxxvi]

World-Famous Microbiologist Planned Genocide

In 2001 shocking information was released showing that decades in the past a world-famous microbiologist and winner of the Nobel prize named Sir Fram Macfarlane had secretly urged the Australian government to develop and use biological weapons against Indonesia and other “overpopulated” countries in South-East Asia to target food crops and spread infectious diseases in order to kill large numbers of the population.

Such plans, which were developed in 1947, were revealed to the public in 2001 after the top-secret files were declassified by the National Archives of Australia. The release of the reports were faced with resistance from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which fought to prevent them from becoming public after historian Philip Dorling uncovered information on biological warfare in the National Archives in 1998.

It wasn’t until 2001 that the damning files were released to Dorling, which included a detailed memo Sir Macfarlane wrote for the Defense Department in 1947, where he said that Australia should develop biological weapons that would work in tropical Asia without spreading to Australia’s more temperate population centers.

“Specifically to the Australian situation, the most effective counter-offensive to threatened invasion by overpopulated Asiatic countries would be directed towards the destruction by biological or chemical means of tropical food crops and the dissemination of infectious disease capable of spreading in tropical but not under Australian conditions,” the microbiologist said. [lxxvii]

It’s important to note that his plans to unleash such weapons were not because Australia was at war, but because he wanted to reduce the large populations that were using the national resources. His reference to an “invasion by overpopulated countries” doesn’t refer to a military invasion but refers rather to the overpopulation itself.

Another unclassified document reads that he noted, “Its use has the tremendous advantage of not destroying the enemy’s industrial potential which can then be taken over intact.”

Sir Macfarlane was the head of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, and won the Nobel prize in 1960 for medicine. In September, 1947, he joined a chemical and biological warfare subcommittee of the New Weapons and Equipment Development Committee in Australia, where he would develop his genocidal ideas where he recommended, “the possibilities of an attack on the food supplies of S-E Asia and Indonesia using B.W. agents should be considered by a small study group.”

In 1951, he recommended that “a panel reporting to the chemical and biological warfare subcommittee should be authorized to report on the offensive potentiality of biological agents likely to be effective against the local food supplies of South-East Asia and Indonesia.”

Prince Philip

Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburg, is the husband of the Queen of England, and at the time of this writing in 2010, he is 57 years old (born in 1921). The British royal family has long been involved with the Illuminati, and some say they themselves believe that they are descended from the lost tribe of Dan from Israel.

The Prince made a disturbing statement years ago regarding the world’s population, where he said, “In the event that I am reincarnated, I would like to return as a deadly virus, in order to contribute something to solve overpopulation.” [lxxviii]

Prince Philip is the father of Prince Charles, and the grandfather of Prince William and Prince Henry of Whales. Some people believe that the Antichrist will come from this family and that they are crypto-Jews, meaning they are hiding their Jewish ancestry. Regardless of whether this is true or not, the British Royal Family has been a major part of the secret establishment for many generations.

President Obama’s Science Advisor

President Obama appointed a man named John Holdren to be his chief science czar, which means he is basically the top advisor to Obama regarding science and technology and their effects domestically and internationally. Immediately after his appointment bloggers began looking into his past and discovered that he was the co-author of a science text book in 1977 titled *Ecoscience: Population, Resources, Environment*, which contains several startling proposals to deal with what the authors perceived to be issues society would soon face regarding overpopulation and resource shortages.

Adding Sterilants to Water Supply

Holdren’s book openly discusses the idea of adding chemicals to the water supply to sterilize entire populations, saying, “Adding a sterilant to drinking water or staple foods is a suggestion that seems to horrify people more than most proposals for involuntary fertility control. Indeed, this would pose some very difficult political, legal, and social questions, to say nothing of the technical problems. No such sterilant exists today [in 1977], nor does one appear to be under development. To be acceptable, such a substance would have to meet some rather stiff requirements: it must be uniformly effective, despite widely varying doses received by individuals, and despite varying degrees of fertility and sensitivity among individuals; it must be free of dangerous or unpleasant side effects; and it must have no effect on members of the opposite sex, children, old people, pets, or livestock.” [lxxix]

Involuntary Fertility Control

Another disturbing idea the book outlines is forcing women to become sterilized after having two or three children. “A program of sterilizing women after their second or third child, despite the relatively greater difficulty of the operation than vasectomy, might be easier to implement than trying to sterilize men,” the text reads. [lxxx]

Aside from forcing women to become sterilized after having several children, the authors also postulated that young girls could be forced on birth control to prevent them from having children, and that the birth control method would only be removed if the government allowed it. “The development of a long-term sterilizing capsule that could be implanted under the skin and removed when pregnancy is desired opens additional possibilities for coercive fertility control. The capsule could be implanted at puberty and might be removable, with official permission, for a limited number of births.” [lxxxi]

Mandatory Abortions

As if adding a sterilant to the water supply or forcing young girls to submit to birth control until the government approves of them having a child weren’t horrific enough ideas, the textbook goes on to discuss and endorse forcing women to have abortions if they get pregnant without government permission. The book uses the term “compulsory” which is a fancy word meaning mandatory or forced against one’s will. The book reads, “Indeed, it has been concluded that compulsory population-control laws, even including laws requiring compulsory abortion, could be sustained under the existing Constitution if the population crisis became sufficiently severe to endanger the society.” [lxxxii]

Notice how these population ideas are not something only for 3rd world countries, but also for America as the authors point out that forced abortions, they believe, would be legal under the Constitution!

Two Child Limit

John Holdren and his co-authors try to equate their tyrannical reproduction policies with other laws concerning public safety. "In today's world, however, the number of children in a family is a matter of profound public concern. The law regulates other highly personal matters. For example, no one may lawfully have more than one spouse at a time. Why should the law not be able to prevent a person from having more than two children?" [lxxxiii]

Toward a Planetary Regime

After reading the Nazi-style reproduction regulations in Holdren's book and seeing that decades after its publication he would find himself in President Obama's inner circle, it should come as no surprise that he would also suggest an all-powerful global government structure to enforce his nightmarish ideas, and to regulate other aspects of our lives.

He wrote that current government agencies around the world, "might eventually be developed into a Planetary Regime—sort of an international super-agency for population, resources, and environment. Such a comprehensive Planetary Regime could control the development, administration, conservation, and distribution of *all* natural resources, renewable or nonrenewable, at least insofar as international implications exist. Thus the Regime could have the power to control pollution not only in the atmosphere and oceans, but also in such freshwater bodies as rivers and lakes that cross international boundaries or that discharge into the oceans. The Regime might also be a logical central agency for regulating all international trade, perhaps including assistance from DCs to LDCs, and including all food on the international market."

"The Planetary Regime might be given responsibility for determining the optimum population for the world and for each region and for arbitrating various countries’ shares within their regional limits. Control of population size might remain the responsibility of each government, but the Regime would have some power to enforce the agreed limits.”[lxxxiv]

Abortions are Good for the Economy

Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi was interviewed on NBC’s *Meet the Press* where she explained why she appropriated hundreds of millions of dollars to expand Planned Parenthood and similar services as part of an economic stimulus package. A brief transcript of this encounter follows:

STEPHANOPOULOS: Hundreds of millions of dollars to expand family planning services. How is that stimulus?

PELOSI: Well, the family planning services reduce cost. They reduce cost. The states are in terrible fiscal budget crises now and part of what we do for children’s health, education and some of those elements are to help the states meet their financial needs. One of those—one of the initiatives you mentioned, the contraception, will reduce costs to the states and to the federal government.

STEPHANOPOULOS : So no apologies for that?

PELOSI: No apologies. No. We have to deal with the consequences of the downturn in our economy.

End of Transcript

The Limits to Growth

The Club of Rome, a notorious elite globalist think tank, published a book in 1972 titled *The Limits to Growth* which would mark the first major propaganda piece warning of a rapidly growing population and finite natural resources. The book was written by Dennis L. Meadows, Donella H. Meadows, Jorgen Randers, and William W. Behrens III.

World population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion were the main focus of the report which argued that while population grows exponentially, technology and the availability of natural resources only grow linearly. This would be the beginning of the growing campaign and propaganda aimed at justifying a massive population reduction around the world.

Global 2000 Report

The Council on Environmental Quality and the State Department released a report in 1980 that was commissioned by President Jimmy Carter which continued to lay the foundation for propaganda concerning population reduction, diminishing resources, and global warming. *The Global 2000 Report* supposedly used computer models to make projections concerning these issues for the coming decades, and aimed to show what life would be like in the year 2000 (twenty years after its publication). “Computer projection models” were seen as extremely high-tech in 1980 when this report was published—an aspect to this report that was highlighted in an attempt to add to its credibility.

It concluded by saying, “If present trends continue, the world in 2000 will be more crowded, and more vulnerable to disruption than the world we live in now. Serious stresses involving population, resources, and environment are clearly visible ahead. Despite greater material output, the world’s people will be poorer in many ways than they are today.”

Agenda 21

Agenda 21 is a program launched by the United Nations (UN) pertaining to what they call “sustainable development” around the world, which is a fancy term for reducing the population and preserving natural resources. The name Agenda 21 refers to the UN’s agenda for the 21st century. The full text of Agenda 21 was revealed at the United Nations Earth Summit in 1992 (officially called the Conference on Environment and Development) that was held in Rio de Janeiro.

At this Earth Summit, 178 governments voted to adopt the Agenda 21 program, which is a blueprint for members of the UN and other governments and groups to take action to increase regulations in every area where humans have an impact on the environment.

There are 40 chapters in the Agenda 21 report which cover topics such as: changing consumption patterns of natural resources, controlling pollution, educating children about such issues, and implementing new financial mechanisms to achieve these goals.

United Nations Population Fund

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), originally called the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, was started in 1969 to supposedly provide supplies and services involving reproductive health, but a dark cloud has lingered over the fund for decades because of coerced sterilizations and forced abortions. When word of these practices surfaced, groups pressured the Regan administration as well as both Bush administrations (George H.W. and George W.) to withhold funding from UNFPA.

As a result of the United States cutting off funding for the program, a nonprofit organization called Americans for UNFPA was started and compensated for the loss by raising donations. After Barack Obama was sworn in as president in January 2009, he restored U.S. funding to UNFPA which resulted in taxpayers’ money once again funding forced abortions and sterilizations in foreign countries.

According to its Annual Report, the UNFPA received a total of $845.3 million dollars in funding in 2008, with $118 million coming from the Netherlands, $53 million from the United Kingdom, 52 million from Spain, and the European Commission and Japan each donated 36 million.

In 2009 UNFPA released a report titled *State of World Population* which is 104 pages long and blames global warming on too many people living on the earth. “Slower population growth...would help build social resilience to climate change’s impacts and would contribute to a reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions in the future,” it says. “Population growth is among the factors influencing total emissions in industrialized as well as developing countries.”

“Each person in a population will consume food and require housing, and ideally most will take advantage of transportation, which consumes energy, and may use fuel to heat homes and have access to electricity."

"The growth of population can contribute to freshwater scarcity or degradation of cropland, which may in turn exacerbate the impacts of climate change…So too can climate change make it more difficult for governments to alleviate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals."

"Fear of appearing supportive of population control has until recently held back any mention of 'population' in the climate debate…Nonetheless, some participants in the debate are tentatively suggesting the need at least to consider the impacts of population growth."

The Georgia Guidestones

The topic of the Georgia Guidestones monument is fascinating, yet disturbing, and a complete analysis of the subject can be found in this author's previous book, *The Resistance Manifesto* , so for the sake of keeping this book to a manageable length, I will only briefly discuss them and their mysterious origins here.

Basically, a large 19 foot tall granite monument stands in the small town of Elberton, Georgia, in the United States, consisting of four major stone slabs standing upright and assembled in a paddle wheel formation. Each of the eight stone faces are inscribed with ten commandments, with each set consisting of a different language: English, Russian, Hebrew, Arabic, Hindi, Chinese, Spanish, and Swahili. While some of the "guides" as they are called, are somewhat benign, there are several of them which are quite chilling. The first one reads, "Maintain the earth's population at 500,0000,000" (500 million). Others speak of creating a world court and allude to a global religion, and finally the tenth one reads, "Be not a cancer on the earth. Leave room for nature."

As if this isn't strange enough, the story of the Georgia Guidestones gets stranger the closer one looks into it. The monument was created in 1980 and was the result of a mysterious man calling himself "R.C. Christian" who said he represented a group of concerned citizens and wanted to erect a monument for mankind. He worked with a local granite company to design the stones, and he paid for the entire project, an estimated cost of tens of thousands of dollars. The stones currently sit on public property on the highest point in Elberton County.

To anyone familiar with the Rosicrucians, the pseudonym that this man chose, “R.C. Christian,” is clearly a reference to this enlightenment group which dates back to the early 1600s. Several years after the monument’s completion this same man published a book titled *Common Sense Renewed* , under the admitted pseudonym Robert Christian, and proclaimed, “The hearts of our human family must be touched and warmed to welcome a global rule by reason.” [lxxxv]

The book basically outlines his political philosophy and says that the first two printings were sent to several thousand political officials and shapers of public opinion throughout the world, and all members of the United States Congress.

The Georgia Guidestones were not a simple task to complete and certainly cost several tens of thousands of dollars to construct, and after reading their depopulation commandments, it comes as no surprise that the mysterious individual who commissioned them used a pseudonym with Illuminati overtones.

In December of 2008 some vandals spray painted several messages across the stones, such as, “Death to the Globalists,” “No North American Union,” and “Skull and Bones Suck Dick,” referring to the Skull and Bones secret society at Yale University, which serves as a recruiting ground for the elite Illuminati. Photos of the vandalism were posted on the Internet.

This author was later contacted by a freelance journalist named Randall Sullivan who was working on a story about the monument, and when his article was published in April 2009, he wrote, “While Dice denies any involvement in the assault, he seems to have inspired it,” [lxxxvi] because I had publicly expressed my disgust for the stones and my desire to have them removed.

Life Extension Technology

Aside from wanting to reduce the world’s population by 90 to 95%, the elite New World Order kingpins are also hoping that very soon scientists will be able to prevent them from aging and possibly live forever by using some form of molecular repair, organ replacements, or transhumanist development (merging computers and machines with the human body). While anti-aging creams and remedies have been around for decades and often associated with quackery, scientists are working very hard to figure out how they can prevent the oxidization of cells, or to get cells to reproduce themselves indefinitely, thus ensuring a healthy body as long as this process continues.

Ray Kurzweil and others have proposed that nanorobots could one day be injected in the body and perform cellular repair from within. These ideas are not fanciful thinking of science fiction writers, but are instead very serious branches of science that are making tremendous advances in their quest.

Even if the elite are not able to live indefinitely by using some of this coming technology, they will certainly be able to extend the human lifespan several decades or perhaps longer. Such an extension obviously means that people will use more natural resources during the course of their prolonged life, and this is another reason the elite are concerned with the global population and desire to dramatically reduce it.

As miraculous life extending technologies become possible, the enormous cost for such procedures will be unaffordable by most people and will not be covered by insurance. This puts the technology exclusively in the hands of the wealthy, who are the same people shaping the New World Order. As this technology becomes closer to a reality, the elite will be even more compelled to unleash their genocidal plans.

One World Religion

When discussing the goals of the New World Order, often three objectives are found at the top of the list: A one world government, a single global currency, and a unified world religion. The reason for this unified single religion is said to be a prerequisite to the Messiah arriving, who religious prophecies predict will be the savior of all mankind and will unveil the mysteries of existence and lead the world into an era of everlasting peace.

Many religions speak of this Messiah figure, and while Christians believe that he arrived as Jesus Christ and will later return at the end of time, other religions are still looking for the Messiah’s arrival. In order to set the groundwork for this individual (who Christians believe will be a counterfeit claiming to be God and later defeated by the return of Jesus) the New World Order must set the philosophical foundation for this “Christ” to be seen as the appearance of God on earth, and be worshiped as such.

The main problem for this philosophy and the coming counterfeit to be universally accepted as the Messiah, is the traditional belief in Christianity and the Bible’s description of the Antichrist, as well as Christians desire to live by a set of traditional values that are taught in the Bible. These are the reasons that traditional Christianity and family values are the largest obstacle to the New World Order’s coming unified religion, and thus traditional Christianity has been targeted for a revision or total destruction.

Manly P. Hall explains, “Christianity is not the sole revelation of God to man. It is but a fractional part of the body religious. It is simply a crutch upon which the genus homo leans until he learns to stand and walk alone. It is something he believes in before he is capable of believing in himself with understanding. Like all external things it will finally pass away and be remembered only for that which it contributed to the inner realization of its devotees.” [lxxxvii]

Christians who do not convert to a more liberal and universal form of Christianity will be seen as problematic for the New World Order since their conservative and traditional beliefs will be seen as holding back the global utopia and ruining the fun and “anything goes” attitude of the majority of society.

“Hate Speech” Laws

It’s well known that some Christians can make judgments of other people for their sexuality, stance on abortion, and ideas of what is socially acceptable behavior. Some Christians speak out against such things using harsh criticism, while others simply express their disagreement. Most Christians tend to be socially conservative and lean towards more traditional views of family dynamics and sexual activity. People who are not religious can be very liberal in these areas, and the two different ideologies occasionally clash in disputes over what is being taught to children, or what is being distributed in the popular culture.

In the United States of America, people are luckily able to exercise the freedom of speech which is outlined and guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. This freedom is only supposed to be restricted in the case of defamation and incitement to riot, but many fear that living in the New World Order will create criminals of Christians for simply voicing their opinions on certain social issues or behaviors, or even quoting the Bible.

In recent years various legislation has been introduced regarding what is called hate speech, which aims to criminalize certain statements or opinions when expressed publicly. In 2001, a man was arrested in Canada for “inciting hatred” after submitting a newspaper ad containing Bible quotes about homosexuality.[lxxxviii] He was forced to pay out $1500 to each of four different homosexuals who filed a complaint against him. Canadian officials signed a bill into law in 2004 that reinforced such rules.

In Britain a woman was visited at her home by two police officers after she wrote a letter to her city council expressing her displeasure that a gay pride parade was scheduled for her neighborhood. In the letter, she referred to homosexuals as sodomites and perverts and the police threatened to charge her with a criminal offense because “a hate incident is any incident that is perceived by the victim or another person as being motivated by prejudice or hatred.”[lxxxix]

In 2004 a group of eleven Christians were arrested and charged with multiple crimes, including felonies in Pennsylvania for peacefully demonstrating against a gay pride parade.[xc] The demonstrators were said to have committed “hate speech” for preaching to the homosexuals and holding signs with Bible verses printed on them.

501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Churches

It’s pretty much common knowledge that most churches don’t have to pay taxes since they are considered “not for profit” organizations, but most people have no idea what kind of restrictions this license places on these churches. A 501c organization is a provision in the United States Tax code which lists 26 different types of organizations that are exempt from federal income tax. Churches fall under section 3 of the 501c code, meaning they are a religious organization.

Organizations that fall under section 501(c)(3) are prohibited from certain political activities and even comments. The Internal Revenue Service website explains, “Under the Internal Revenue Code, all section 501(c)(3) organizations are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office. Contributions to political campaign funds or public statements of position (verbal or written) made on behalf of the organization in favor of or in opposition to any candidate for public office clearly violate the prohibition against political campaign activity. Violating this prohibition may result in denial or revocation of tax-exempt status and the imposition of certain excise taxes.” [xci]

The tax code goes on to say, “voter education or registration activities with evidence of bias that (a) would favor one candidate over another; (b) oppose a candidate in some manner; or (c) have the effect of favoring a candidate or group of candidates, will constitute prohibited participation or intervention.”[xcii]

Language saying activities may not “have the effect of favoring a candidate or group of candidates,” or that they are “absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office,” mean that if a pastor gives a sermon about certain social issues such as homosexuality, gay marriage, or abortion, the church will be in violation of the law and could have their tax exempt status revoked because the pastor is “indirectly participating in” a political activity.

In 2005, the 3500 member All Saints Episcopal Church in Los Angeles, California was threatened by the IRS that they could lose their tax exempt status after the Reverend gave an anti-war message.[xciii] The church’s tax attorney Marcus Owens said the IRS offered to drop the proceedings if the church admitted wrongdoing.

A United Methodist Church in New Jersey lost its tax exempt status in 2007 after officials refused to allow two lesbian couples to have their “weddings” on church property.[xciv] After it was discovered that members of the Mormon Church organized to support Proposition 8 passing in California in 2008, which banned gay marriage, many homosexual groups attempted to have their tax exempt status revoked as well.

Most church goers have no idea that there are federal restrictions placed on what the pastor or priests can say to their congregation. Not only has the federal government locked churches into a contract preventing them from even indirectly influencing political affairs, but they also have been secretly working with major churches to get their leaders to teach their flocks what the government wants them to.

Government Secretly Working With Churches

In May of 2006 a pastor came forward saying that FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) had implemented a secret program to train pastors of large churches and have them work secretly with FEMA in order to encourage their congregations to obey the government's demands in the case of martial law, firearm seizures, forced vaccinations, or forced relocations.

The pastor, who contacted Infowars.com [xcv] to make such events public, wanted to remain anonymous but said that he and other religious representatives were invited to a secret meeting which encouraged and trained pastors to help implement FEMA and Homeland Security directives. The first directive was for pastors to preach to their congregations a message based on Romans 13 in the Bible, which when taken out of context urges people to obey their government and says the government was established by God.

The informant also reported that it was made clear they were to start preaching subservience to authorities now, in order to condition their congregations to accept such ideas. He also reported that those in attendance were told that quarantines, martial law, and forced relocations were a problem for authorities when enforcing federal mandates because of what they called a "cowboy mentality" of people standing up for their rights and not going along with such demands.

Some people may be skeptical of such claims, especially since the pastor chose to remain anonymous, but one year later in August of 2007, a TV station in Shreveport, Louisiana reported on this, confirming what this pastor had claimed.

KSLA news reported that FEMA was secretly working with what they called Clergy Response Teams that were being trained by the federal government to "quell dissent" and pacify people in order to obey any orders given by the government in the event of martial law.

Adam Weishaupt on Christianity

John Robison, one of the first authors to publish English translations of the writings of Illuminati founder Adam Weishaupt, wrote, "It surely needs little argument now to prove, that the Order of Illuminati had for its immediate object the abolishing of Christianity (at least this was the intention of the Founder), with the sole view of overturning the civil government, by introducing universal dissoluteness and profligacy of manners, and then getting the assistance of the corrupted subjects to overset the throne. The whole conduct in the preparation and instruction of the Presbyter and *Regens* is directed to this point."

Robison quotes an original correspondence between Illuminati members from the 1700s where one member wrote, "I have been at unwearied pains to remove the fears of some who imagine that our Superiors want to abolish Christianity; but by and by their prejudices will wear off, and they will be more at their ease. Were I to let them know that our General holds all Religion to be a lie, and uses even Deism, only to lead men by the nose."

Albert Pike's Alleged 3 World Wars Letter

A letter allegedly written by Albert Pike and sent to an Italian politician named Giuseppe Mazzini, dated August 15, 1871 outlined sinister plans for three different world wars that would purposefully be orchestrated to bring about the New World Order and set the stage for Luciferianism to become the world's religion. Albert Pike is of course the author of *Morals and Dogma* and remains one of Freemasonry's most influential members.

In this letter, Pike allegedly wrote, "The First World War must be brought about in order to permit the Illuminati to overthrow the power of the Czars in Russia and of making that country a fortress of atheistic Communism. The divergences caused by the 'agentur' (agents) of the Illuminati between the British and Germanic Empires will be used to foment this war. At the end of the war, Communism will be built and used in order to destroy the other governments and in order to weaken the religions."

"The Second World War must be fomented by taking advantage of the differences between the Fascists and the political Zionists. This war must be brought about so that Nazism is destroyed and that the political Zionism be strong enough to institute a sovereign state of Israel in Palestine. During the Second World War, International Communism must become strong enough in order to balance Christendom, which would be then restrained and held in check until the time when we would need it for the final social cataclysm."

"The Third World War must be fomented by taking advantage of the differences caused by the 'agentur' of the "Illuminati" between the political Zionists and the leaders of Islamic World. The war must be conducted in such a way that Islam (the Moslem Arabic World) and political Zionism (the State of Israel) mutually destroy each other. Meanwhile the other nations, once more divided on this issue will be constrained to fight to the point of complete physical, moral, spiritual and economical exhaustion… We shall unleash the Nihilists and the atheists, and we shall provoke a formidable social cataclysm which in all its horror will show clearly to the nations the effect of absolute atheism, origin of savagery and of the most bloody turmoil. Then everywhere, the citizens, obliged to defend themselves against the world minority of revolutionaries, will exterminate those destroyers of civilization, and the multitude, disillusioned with Christianity, whose deistic spirits will from that moment be without compass or direction, anxious for an ideal, but without knowing where to render its adoration, will receive the true light through the universal manifestation of the pure doctrine of Lucifer, brought finally out in the public view. This manifestation will result from the general reactionary movement which will follow the destruction of Christianity and atheism, both conquered and exterminated at the same time."

Alice Bailey's Open Admissions

The respected New Age author Alice Bailey writes in her book *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* , "It has therefore become possible to synchronize the Approach of the divine to the human and to instruct the masses of men in the technique of thus invoking the Approach. This attitude of humanity will lead to a new revelation, to the new world religion and to new attitudes in the relation of man to God (religion) and of man to man (government or social relationships)."[xcvi]

"The Members of the Hierarchy are seen to be the Custodians of the divine Plan….The spiritual Hierarchy of the planet, the ability of mankind to contact its Members and to work in cooperation with Them, and the existence of the greater Hierarchy of spiritual energies of which our tiny planetary sphere is a part—these are the three truths upon which the coming world religion may be based.”[xcvii]

Bailey also discusses the role of Freemasonry in the creation of this one world religion. Since Freemasonry is a continuation of the ancient Mystery Schools, it should come as no surprise that the Universalist teachings of the fraternity are laying the philosophical foundation for the New World Order religion. She writes, “There is no dissociation between the One Universal Church, the sacred inner Lodge of all true Masons, and the innermost circles of the esoteric societies…It must not be forgotten that only those souls who are on the Probationary Path or the Path of Discipleship will form the nucleus of the coming new world religion.”[xcviii]

“The new religion will manifest, for instance, through organizations like Masonry. In Freemasonry is embedded the core or secret heart of the occult Mysteries—wrapped in number, metaphor and symbol.”[xcix]

Unification Church

Most people are shocked to find, or simply don’t believe, that the founder and owner of the *Washington Times* claims to be the Second Coming of Christ and is the leader of what is called the Unification Church. Sun Myung Moon is a Korean billionaire who has millions of people who follow him and see him as the return of Jesus. Moon’s Unification Church and his enormous following show just how easily people are duped into believing false religious doctrines and how wealthy and powerful these fake prophets can be.

Aside from being a billionaire and owning the *Washington Times* , Sun Myung Moon has maintained close relationships with powerful politicians around the world who have no problem with the fact that he thinks he’s the return of Christ.

The Vatican

Vatican City in Rome is an entire sovereign country which is basically a small city owned and run by the Catholic Church. It has enormous wealth and its own police force, along with the Pope's personal army, the Swiss Guard. The Catholic Church has long been intertwined with the Illuminati, and its society of Jesus (the Jesuits) are the Vatican's foot soldiers attempting to make the Catholic Church the world's leading religious authority. In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI announced that the Catholic Church was the only way to salvation, and that *all* other denominations are not true churches.[c] He wasn't talking about non-Christian religious organizations such as Islam or Buddhism, the Pope was talking about *all* Christian churches other than the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church, the popes, and bishops are basically the same as the Pharisees that Jesus denounced over 2000 years ago for their hypocrisy and their pride and arrogance due to their spiritual knowledge. One needs to look no further than the Inquisition or the massive institutional cover-up of countless pedophile priests to see the core of the Catholic Church is corrupt. The Catholic Church also diverts and perverts the teachings of Jesus in numerous ways, such as having people confess their sins to a priest (who is called Father, which the Bible says nobody but God should be called that) as well as selling indulgences and worshipping the virgin Mary and other saints.

The selling of indulgences, if you don't know, means that people used to pay money to a church and in return the priest would forgive that person's sins and tell them they could then get into Heaven. Some indulgences were even sold for sins people would commit in the future. Such a practice was clearly a shameful abuse of power and completely contradictory to the teachings of Jesus.

The Catholic Church basically took the freeing messages of Jesus and packaged them up and then sold them to the public, when Jesus had intended it to be accessible to all for free. This is the same thing the Jewish Pharisees did with Judaism. It is for these reasons and more that the Vatican, and specifically the Pope is looked at with suspicion regarding the New World Order and is believed by some to one day be the false prophet spoken about in the Bible. The counterfeit Christ (the Antichrist) will be a political figure and the leader of the world, and the false prophet is believed to be a global religious leader who will (wrongfully) confirm to the world that the Christ has returned when the Antichrist announces he is God. Since the Catholic Church is trying to reinstate itself as the *only* Christian authority, many see the Pope as a prime candidate for this false prophet.

A strange revelation was made by the Vatican at the end of 2009 concerning space aliens when the Vatican's chief astronomer said that there could be other "extraterrestrial brothers" of ours out in space who "remained in full friendship with their creator." [ci] Reverend José Gabriel Funes, head of the Vatican Observatory and a scientific adviser to Pope Benedict XVI, said "Why can't we speak of a 'brother extraterrestrial?'" And suggested our "brothers" could be more evolved than humans.

While the subject of space aliens is filled with speculation, misidentification, and craziness, the idea of other intelligent life existing in other solar systems is a fascinating one, and certainly is likely. But what is interesting about the statements from Reverend Funes is that he said these beings could still be "in full friendship with their creator," meaning they are in an unfallen state, unlike mankind. This means they would be without sin. It's a very interesting statement that some see as setting the stage for an alien being to arrive on earth that will claim to be the return of Jesus, when in fact, it could be the Antichrist. This is, of course, only speculation, but the role of the corrupt Catholic Church in the New World Order's coming new religion should be monitored very closely, and the Pope, whoever it is, and the leadership of the Vatican should be seen for the imposters and criminals they are.

Israel

The State of Israel in the Middle East remains the focus of world events due to the continuous fighting between Arabs and Jews as they argue and kill each other over who has the right to the land, the Palestinians or the Jews. The State of Israel was created in 1948 following World War II so the Jews could return to the land their ancient ancestors once inhabited. This plan was organized by Britain as a sort of reparation for the persecution of the

Jews during the war and the Holocaust. The current population of Israel is around 7.5 million with 5.62 million being Jewish.

The creation and existence of the Jewish country remains controversial for several reasons. First of which is that the Jews are seen by many as having stolen the land they are now occupying, having run off the Arabs who were inhabiting the area prior to the creation of Israel. Most Jews believe that God had promised them that land and have a Jewish supremacist view that they are entitled to the land because they believe God said they were. Controversy also surrounds the fact that Israel was created as a country for a specific race of people—the Jews. It is difficult to criticize Israel because the Jews and their blind supporters quickly label any criticism as anti-Semitic—no matter how valid it is.

Israel also remains a focal point for Christians and those who study Bible prophecy and the New World Order. Mainline Christians believe that Israel will be the capitol of the New World Order and will be the geographic location where the Antichrist will rule from, and where Jesus Christ will return to at the end of time. Many Jews have a similar view of the role of Israel in the New World Order, but they believe that Jesus was not the Messiah, and are still waiting for this individual to arrive and lead the Jews and the rest of the world into a utopia of peace and prosperity. The Illuminati and New Age secret societies and cults also look forward to this world leader, who they say will arrive and be identified as the long awaited Christ and Messiah.

A Global Dictator Claiming to be God

It is basically common knowledge that Christians believe that at some point in time, a global leader will rise to power and will wreak havoc on the earth as a dictator known as the Antichrist. Other religions such as Islam, have similar prophecies which foresee such a scenario as well. In Christian theology this dictator will rise to power at a point in time when the planet is engulfed in chaos and war, and he will promise world peace if given the power to lead the world. According to the prophecies, this individual will not only be a tyrannical dictator once in power, but he will also claim to be God incarnate and demand to be worshiped as such.

This isn't exactly a novel idea. If one looks at the history of past civilizations, similar events have occurred over and over again. The pharaohs of Egypt claimed to be gods and demanded their people treat them as such. Nero, the emperor of Rome, expected such treatment as well. A more modern example is that of Adolf Hitler, who saw himself as the savior of Germany and the white race, and who was essentially worshiped as the messiah. A "God complex" seems to fall upon the most power-hungry men throughout history as their thirst for power and recognition leads them to the conclusion that they themselves are a god, and can do whatever they like with their power, no matter how unjust.

There are a few fascinating points that I would like to address regarding this Antichrist scenario, and how it ties directly into the secret societies that are shaping the New World Order. As you should have gathered by now from my writings, a main theme within the secret societies is that the teachings elevate the initiate to a level of enlightenment where they themselves become a god, or god of their own perceived universe.

Manly P. Hall explains in his classic book, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* that, "The Mysteries were therefore established for the purpose of unfolding the nature of man according to certain fixed rules which, when faithfully followed, elevated the human consciousness to a point where it was capable of cognizing its own constitution and the true purpose of existence. This knowledge of how man's manifold constitution could be most quickly and most completely regenerated to the point of spiritual illumination constituted the secret, or esoteric, doctrine of antiquity." [cii]

Such enlightenment philosophies are not that dangerous by themselves, although considered heretical by Christianity and other religions, but instead it is the potential that one can develop this God complex and then place himself above all others and think that the rules of basic human conduct don't apply to them.

While people defend occult organizations such as the Freemasons and other fraternities that teach the ancient Mysteries because they see the teachings as a way to build moral character and make sense of the world and their place in it through the spiritual and symbolic teachings found within such schools, it is undeniable that within such organizations there exists a corrupt core, who many say have hijacked and perverted the ancient Mysteries. The Illuminati is the key culprit who admittedly infiltrated Freemasonry in 1782 and created an inner circle to function covertly under the cover of the fraternity. Others say that the corruption had occurred centuries earlier.

We do find clear evidence of the corrupt core today, and they continue to give a bad name to secret societies and are the source of countless conspiracy theories surrounding them. It is an interesting debate to discuss whether or not the Mysteries themselves are inherently evil, or whether they have been hijacked and abused by organized criminal networks that pervert them for their own gain.

Now, let’s analyze the striking parallels between Christian Bible prophecy and the published plans and hopes of the elite secret societies. The Book of Revelation, the final book in the Bible, describes a man who is said to be the Antichrist, or a worker of Satan, who claims to be God and the savior of the world, but in reality is a ruthless dictator.

The teachings of the Mystery Schools are believed to enlighten a man so he may become god-like and as we know men are inclined to get a God complex and become over taken by megalomania and selfishness. What is also interesting is that the Bible describes the counterfeit Christ as a world leader who will claim to be God and demand to be worshiped as such, and will do so in the new Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem. This temple, as of early 2010 when this book was first published, has not been rebuilt. The original location of the historical Solomon’s temple is currently occupied by a Muslim mosque called the Dome of the Rock. Solomon’s temple was destroyed twice in the past, once in 586 BC by the Babylonians, and again in 70 AD by the Romans. Jews have long hoped and planned for the third temple to be rebuilt on the original location, but since the Dome of the Rock stands there, they have a problem. This mosque will surely be destroyed during a conflict sometime in the future and the land will be taken over by Jews, who will then rebuild their long awaited temple.

It's pivotal to note that Freemasonry is a modern Mystery School teaching the same philosophies that had been carried on in secret fraternal orders for thousands of years. Freemasons also consider their lodge where they meet, a temple, but not just any temple. It represents the Temple of Solomon. The head Mason of a lodge is called the Worshipful Master—an interesting choice for a leader. He is so enlightened, Masons believe, that he is a master of the universe and has achieved godhood, so he is "worshipful."

It is not hard to see then that the leader of the New World Order, or the "president of the world" will be a 33rd degree Freemason and believed by himself and his inner circle of associates to have achieved godhood, and will be a "worshipful master" and will take up the rebuilt Temple of Solomon as his own personal temple or office.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:4-8, the Bible explains that the Antichrist will sit in the Temple of Jerusalem where he will exalt himself above God, claiming that he is God, saying, "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

Matthew 24: 15-16 quotes Jesus speaking to His disciple, saying, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place [meaning the temple], (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains."

New Age guru Benjamin Crème writes about the appearance of what he calls the Maitreya or the Christ, saying, "This will lead to the Day of Declaration, when He will appear on the radio and television networks of the world linked by satellite. On that day Maitreya will mentally overshadow the whole of humanity simultaneously. All will hear His words inwardly in their own language. This telepathic communication will reach everyone, not only those watching or listening, and hundreds of thousands of miraculous healings will take place throughout the world. On that day, there will be no doubt that Maitreya is the Christ, the Imam Mahdi, Maitreya Buddha, Kalki Avatart: the World Teacher. His open worldwide mission will have begun.”[ciii]

While Benjamin Crème may think that such an event will be the result of this individual’s “super natural power,” there is actually a perfectly logical explanation for how this kind of “telepathic” phenomena can occur.

Project Bluebeam

In February of 1999, the *Washington Post* reported that operations were drawn up during the first Gulf War to project a huge holographic image of Allah [the Islamic god] in the sky over Baghdad.[civ] Then, using a 5-15KHz acoustic beam, the appearance of Allah talking would also have been manufactured, telling the Iraqi people to turn on Saddam.

A similar plan was considered in Project Mongoose to overthrow Fidel Castro, where a Jesus-like figure would have been projected, telling the Cubans to overthrow “Godless Communism.” This technology has been labeled Project Blue Beam, and is likely ready to be used at any time. Of course, such technology is classified under national security, but this explains perfectly how Benjamin Crème’s prediction could come true of the “Christ” telepathically communicating with people, fooling them into believing he has supernatural powers and is God.

The Holy Bloodline Theory

Ideas that Jesus Christ had a child with Mary Magdalene have been introduced to the mainstream though various books and novels, most popular of which is Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* ,which was released in 2003 and made into a film starring Tom Hanks in 2006. Such an idea has no real evidence, yet it has taken hold in millions of people’s minds as being the truth. This idea has several large implications on the New World Order’s goal of eroding faith in Christianity, as well as providing a possible justification for the supposed divine right of the Antichrist to rule earth, as he claims to be the long awaited Messiah.

Since secret societies like the Knights Templar and the Freemasons are said to be guardians of the Holy Grail, which in this theory means the bloodline of Jesus and not some cup or book of knowledge, this theory could very well be used as "evidence" that the Antichrist is the physical reincarnation of Jesus, or a direct descendent of him in an attempt to dupe Christians and Agnostics into believing he is divinely ordained to rule the New World Order.

The Rapture

According to many Christians, when the end times come and the world has decayed into a disastrous wasteland and the Antichrist is about to take power, Christians will miraculously disappear from the face of the earth and be spared the harsh existence the rest of the world will face at the hands of this global tyrant. While many faithful Christians point to various Bible verses they believe verify this idea, it is highly doubtful such an event will occur, and it is this author's opinion that the Rapture is a misinterpretation of the Bible, and a hoax.

Some people who see the idea of all faithful Christians magically disappearing off the face of the earth and leaving everyone else behind to live in the New World Order as foolish, adhere to what is called a post tribulation rapture, which they say is a rapture of the Christians *after* the rule of the Antichrist. This idea is at least more realistic than a pre-trib (pre-tribulation) rapture.

A major downfall to believing in the pre-trib rapture (the idea that Christians will be taken to Heaven as soon as the Antichrist comes on the scene, therefore being spared from the chaos and persecution) is that by believing they will supernaturally be taken off the earth and avoid the troubling times when the global dictator Antichrist is in power, they do not see a need to resist the New World Order or any major political or social policies being implemented, because they think that before things get too bad they're going to go to Heaven and they won't have to deal with it.

When told about the encroaching Big Brother surveillance system and the VeriChip or similar device replacing paper currency and fulfilling the prophecy of the mark of the beast, instead of speaking out against it or pushing for some kind of accountability or alternative for such a system, Rapture believing Christians are actually pleased such things are right around the corner because they think it means the Rapture is one step closer. Such a pathetic and cowardly attitude only allows their freedoms, privacy, and liberties to be taken away much more easily.

Other Implications of the Dictator

This counterfeit Christ who claims to be God will espouse a very liberal and immoral philosophy on the world. Any sort of moral judgment on behaviors traditionally seen as immoral or reprehensible will be faced with extreme consequences. A very hedonistic lifestyle will be embraced and conservatives and Christians who oppose such behaviors will be labeled as the evil ones who are out of touch with the times. Many Christians will not believe that this man is God and will be aware of the massive fraud that is being perpetuated, and these individuals will be targeted as the trouble makers and the ones who are preventing the New World Order utopia from being realized.

Some prophecies predict that the Antichrist will be nearly killed in an assassination attempt (or an accident) and will seemingly come back to life but with a massive wound to one of his eyes. His miraculous recovery will be touted as a miracle by his inner circle and will be more justification in the minds of his supporters that he has supernatural powers and has the divine right to rule. It’s interesting to note that the symbol for the Illuminati is one eye, often drawn inside a triangle or placed at the top of a pyramid. If this dictator is missing one eye after he is “resurrected” after his attack (or accident), the Illuminati would surely link their symbol of their God (the all-seeing eye) with their leader, who will also have one eye. This too may be seen as another “sign” that he is the Messiah.

Global Police and Military Force

There have been suspicions that UN (United Nations) troops could be deployed on American soil for any number of reasons, such as supposedly to aid Americans in the event of a major terrorist attack from biological or nuclear weapons, or to take over American infrastructure in the event of the U.S. dollar collapsing and becoming worthless as foreign countries try to recoup their losses.

Such fears are stoked by videos that surface of the American military training foreign troops on US soil, sometimes practicing urban exercises where they simulate taking over a town's main buildings, locking down the area, and even rounding up civilians who are willing participants in the exercises who pretend to be upset that they are being detained. Some videos even show make-shift prison camps where detainees are checked in and given ID badges and held inside tents surrounded by barbed wire.[cv]

One main reason for people's uneasiness about such situations is that if UN forces are used on American soil for any reason, they do not have any loyalty to this country or the Constitution. We are nothing but foreigners to them. They would not be protecting their own neighborhoods or cities, but instead would simply be doing a job. Such troops will likely have no problems confiscating guns from house to house or rounding up large numbers of Americans for relocation to prison camps.

President Obama's chief science czar John Holdren wrote in his 1977 book *Ecoscience* about what he felt were the advantages of a global police force, saying, "If this could be accomplished, security might be provided by an armed international organization, a global analogue of a police force. Many people have recognized this as a goal, but the way to reach it remains obscure in a world where factionalism seems, if anything, to be increasing. The first step necessarily involves partial surrender of sovereignty to an international organization."[cvi]

This is the same man who wrote in this same book about adding sterilizing agents to the water supply and forcing all women onto birth control or else forcing them to have an abortion if they get pregnant after having two children.

Another unsettling aspect concerning military troops in the New World Order is the existence of private contractors being employed. Such a strategy became fairly well known during the Iraq War when the infamous

Blackwater private security company became the focus of controversy after the public learned that these “contractors” were being paid a large amount of money and were given luxurious living conditions and great food compared to regular US soldiers. These Blackwater troops are basically paid mercenaries who do not have the same chain of command and codes of conduct that members of the US military have. Such mercenaries don’t have any loyalty to any particular country either, and will accept a paycheck and orders from practically anyone.

Blackwater

Now called simply Xe (pronounced Zi), is the new name for the private military contracting company formerly called Blackwater that became known for various controversies surrounding its employees activities during the War in Iraq. The company is the largest tactical training facility which trains more than 40,000 people per year in military offensive and defensive operations.

In early 2009, the company changed its name from Blackwater to Xe and the new name, “reflects the change in company focus away from the business of providing private security.” The company denied the new strange name has any significance or special meaning. They did, however, admit that the name Blackwater became too closely associated with the company’s work in the occupation of Iraq.[cvii] The company’s license to operate in Iraq was not renewed and the new Iraqi government made several attempts to have them kicked out of the country during the course of the war.[cviii]

Xe (Blackwater) is still the largest private security contractor used by the United States government. 90% of the company’s money comes from government contracts; two-thirds of which are no-bid contracts[cix]—meaning they are the only company providing a quote to the government for the job—so multiple companies won’t have to compete with each other for the job by offering a lower price than the others.

The scandals and controversies surrounding corruption and murder involving Blackwater (Xe) mercenaries are numerous. In one instance executives at Blackwater authorized secret payments of nearly $1 million dollars to Iraqi officials in order to buy their silence regarding a 2007 incident where Blackwater security guards killed 17 Iraqi civilians in Bagdad.[cx] Blackwater's president Gary Jackson was fingered by four former executives as having personally approved the bribes.

The CIA also contracted Blackwater to create a hit squad and assassinate leaders of resistance groups in Iraq.

American Police Force

A mysterious private security company came to the attention of concerned citizens in September 2009 which went by the name American Police Force, and used a Serbian coat of arms as its logo. The company had been contracted to run an empty prison facility in the city of Hardin, Montana, which drew suspicion of local residents. Local officials had hoped the facility would be used to detain prisoners that were held at the prison at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, which President Obama claimed he would close. The contract between the city of Hardin and American Police force was reported to be a 10-year, multimillion dollar deal.[cxi]

American Police Force is owned by a man named Michael Hilton, whose criminal record shows he "pleaded guilty in March 1993 to 14 felonies, including 10 counts of grand theft, one count of attempted grand theft and three counts of diversion of construction funds, according to Orange County court records. He was sentenced to two years in prison, but it is unclear how much time he served."[cxii]

Hilton is said to speak English with a heavy accent and told reporters he is a naturalized US citizen who is originally from Montenegro, which borders Serbia.

Orange County, California court records show Hilton has used sixteen different aliases, one of which, Michael Miodrag, is listed as being connected to a multimillion dollar fraud case in Australia from 2007.

Shortly after all the controversy surrounding the American Police Force and people looking into Michael Hilton’s shady past, the city of Harding announced that American Police Force would not be taking over the abandoned prison facility. The Serbian government also forced American Police Force to change its logo, since it was a coat of arms used by the Serbian government.

Mystery still surrounds this strange “American Police Force” company and how they were able to get a ten million dollar deal to operate an abandoned prison. When news reports first started surfacing about this issue, some people began fearing that this prison would be operated as a concentration camp for US citizens who some feared would be rounded up for not taking the H1N1 swine flu vaccine that the government was pushing at the time.

It’s also strange that a private security company was allowed to operate using a name that impersonates the police, when such an action is a felony.

Other Private Military Companies

While Blackwater and Private Police Force may be two of the most well-known contracted military or mercenary companies, the list is fairly long of other lesser known companies. MVM Inc. provides contracting services for the CIA and the NSA (National Security Agency) and is located in Vienna, Virginia, which is just 6 miles from the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. DynCorp is another infamous contracting company used by the military, which has been implicated in kidnapping children from Russia and Romania and selling them as sex slaves.

KBR Inc. (Formerly Kellogg Brown and Root) is another private military contractor whose employees have also been implicated in human trafficking.[cxiii] Numerous women have also reported being gang raped by their fellow employees while working for KBR. One woman, Jamie Leigh Jones, testified before a Congressional hearing that she had been gang-raped by approximately seven of her coworkers when she worked for

KBR in Iraq back in 2005.[cxiv] Jones' lawyers said that 38 other women reported similar experiences. KBR was a subsidiary of Halliburton at the time. Dick Cheney, if you recall, was the CEO of Halliburton from 1995 to the year 2000, before becoming vice president under George W. Bush and then pulling strings so his former company would make millions in no-bid contracts.

Posse Comitatus Act

The Posse Comitatus Act was a law passed in 1878 which specifically prohibited the U.S. military from being used on American soil for law enforcement purposes. The term is Latin for "power of the county." The reason for such a law was to prevent a dictatorship from arising in America by prohibiting a corrupt president from ordering the Army or other military branch to enforce laws that may be unconstitutional.

After 9/11, numerous instances of uniformed military personnel helping police conduct security checks began to be reported as violations of Posse Comitatus, but all instances were described by officials as merely "training exercises," thus claiming there was no collaboration between police and military, when clearly there was. One concerned citizen videotaped a brief conversation with a uniformed officer in Kingsman, Arizona where the citizen was subjected to a vehicle checkpoint. The military officer admitted, "We're just helping with security and traffic and stuff for the races." The solider was then asked if he was under the control of the police and working for the city, to which he responded, "I have no idea, I just do what I'm told."[cxv]

In 2008, the California Highway Patrol announced its officers would work with US Marines to staff sobriety and driver's license checkpoints.[cxvi] An ABC affiliate KESQ reported on this after locals expressed concern that this violated the Posse Comitatus Act. The Marines, of course, denied this and Lieutenant Thomas Beck claimed, "We were not actively participating in enforcing any laws. We were there to observe and observe only."[cxvii]

Another instance of our military working with police was captured on video by a member of the political activist group We Are Change, where they traveled to Newport, Kentucky during River Fest. The person was questioning a uniformed Army soldier who was staking out public streets. The soldiers were in full uniform and armed with handguns and had military Hummers parked on the side of the road.[cxviii]

Another soldier who was part of this same operation was asked if he would follow orders to confiscate guns from American citizens door-to-door, like what occurred after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. He answered, “I’m just a soldier. I do what I’m told.”[cxix]

This author (Mark Dice) has lived in the San Diego, California area for over ten years and has numerous friends who have been stationed at Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, California, which is in the North County of San Diego. One friend informed me that it is against policy for Marines to wear their uniforms anywhere out in public other than from their home directly to the base or vice a versa. They are not allowed to stop off at the grocery store and go shopping, or take a stroll through the mall, because seeing a Marine in camouflage out in public can be unsettling for people and gives the feeling of a police state with public areas being patrolled by the military.

The Department of Defense’s slick legal team always insists that such collaborations of military and police are just “training” exercising and claim they do not violate the Posse Comitatus Act. Such claims are of course lies.

John Warner Defense Act

A bill passed by Congress in 2006 under the Bush administration known as the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 5122), greatly expanded the president’s power to declare martial law and deploy the National Guard into US cities without state governor authorizations when public order has been lost or is seen as being potentially lost. Before this, there were strict limitations on the president’s ability to do so and the authority was delegated to state governors, but now the president can make the decision himself.

At some point, this authority will ultimately be superseded by the United Nations or the president of the world who will then have the authority to deploy troops and declare martial law anytime and anywhere they see fit.

Military Commissions Act of 2006

The United States Military Commissions Act of 2006 (HR-6166), was an Act of Congress signed into law by President George W. Bush in order to “authorize trial by military commission for violations of the law of war, and for other purposes.”

What this really did was allow the President of the United States (Bush and future presidents) to declare someone (including a U.S. citizen) to be considered an “enemy combatant,” which then eliminates their right to habeas corpus, meaning they no longer would have the right to challenge their imprisonment, and could be detained without having any charges even filed against them. Such a practice is in clear violation of the Constitution which says a person can’t be held without being charged with a crime.

The language in the law is so broad that it can be used to label anyone an “enemy combatant” who is engaged in hostilities or who has supported hostilities against the United States. This “support” could be financial, [direct or indirect] or simply counseling.

The Act also suggests that the label “unlawful enemy combatant” refers to any person, “who, before, on, or after the date of the enactment of the Military Commissions Act of 2006, has been determined to be an unlawful enemy combatant by a Combatant Status Review Tribunal or another competent tribunal established under the authority of the President or the Secretary of Defense.” This basically means that if the President says you are an enemy combatant, then you are one.[cxx]

The language in the Act also made this power retroactive, which means that since it was passed, people can be detained and not charged for something they allegedly did before the Act was passed in 2006, when such detainment was not authorized.

Concentration Camps

When one hears of concentration camps, images of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust immediately come to mind, but many American’s would never think that innocent citizens in their country would ever be rounded up and placed in prison camps. Many Americans distracted by professional sports and pop culture are unaware that during World War II, President Roosevelt had 120,000 Japanese Americans rounded up and placed in prison camps. The conditions of living were certainly not what Jews and other prisoners faced in Nazi Germany, but nonetheless, innocent American citizens were taken from their homes and placed in large prison camps called War Relocation Camps for several years.

Even if some people are aware of the Japanese internment, they dismiss such events as being a thing of the past, and never suspect that large scale detention facilities exist today.

During the Republican National Convention of 2004 in New York City, hundreds of protesters were rounded up and taken to an old dilapidated bus garage by the Hudson River, which was converted into a secret detention camp by the NYPD in preparation for the convention.[cxxi]

The facility was dirty with motor oil on the ground and the building was contaminated with asbestos. People were held in crowded conditions for long hours, and the facility was dubbed “Guantanamo on the Hudson” in reference to Camp X-ray in Cuba, where suspects in the “War on Terror” are held without having any charges filed against them.

Another secret prison camp that was discovered and made public was in Austin, Texas in an abandoned airplane hangar at an airport. The hanger was equipped with barbed wire fences, shackles on the ground, and mattresses for detainees to sleep on. This secret prison was created in the build-up to the year 2000 because officials worried that there would be massive civil unrest and possibly the breakdown of civilization if the rumored Y2K bug shut down computers.

Such facilities are now plentiful in America as the New World Order continues to be constructed and such prisons are not new. In the 1980s during the Iran-Contra hearings, Jack Brooks (D-TX) tried to learn about Oliver North's role in FEMA's plans to suspend the Constitution and detain political dissidents during a declared state of national emergency.

During the hearings, Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-HA) prevented Brooks from further questioning as indicated in a transcript of the hearing.

Brooks: Colonel North, in your work at the N.S.C. [National Security Council] were you not assigned, at one time, to work on plans for the continuity of government in the event of a major disaster?

Brendan Sullivan: [North's counsel]: Mr. Chairman?

Inouye: I believe that question touches upon a highly sensitive and classified area so may I request that you not touch upon that?

Brooks: I was particularly concerned, Mr. Chairman, because I read in Miami papers, and several others, that there had been a plan developed, by that same agency, a contingency plan in the event of emergency, that would suspend the American constitution. And I was deeply concerned about it and wondered if that was an area in which he had worked. I believe that it was and I wanted to get his confirmation.

Inouye: May I most respectfully request that that matter not be touched upon at this stage. If we wish to get into this, I'm certain arrangements can be made for an executive session.

End of Transcript

The goofy admitted alcoholic Mormon Glenn Beck became practically a house hold name after he left CNN and moved over to the Fox News Channel in January 2009. Beck's attempt to imitate Robert Beale of the popular 1970s film *Network* has gotten him a large fan base who see him as an honest average American, even though he signed a $50 million dollar contract for his radio show alone.[cxxii]

A concerned looking Beck appeared on *Fox and Friends* , a morning show on the Fox News Channel to promote his new show on their network, and told the hosts, “I have to tell you, I’m doing a story tonight. I wanted to debunk these FEMA camps, you know about them? I’m tired of hearing about them. I wanted to debunk them, well, now for several days we’ve done research on them…I can’t debunk them. And we’re going to carry this story tonight.” [cxxiii] He goes on to explain to the other hosts, “FEMA prisons, FEMA camps. These are actually prisons that were built under the Bush administration…they’re sitting there empty…you’ll see that tonight. Something just doesn’t sit right with me.”

Later that night during *The Glenn Beck Program* when viewers were expecting to learn more about these prison camps, Beck took a complete 180 degree turn and denied that such camps even exist. He actually decided not to air the segment, and instead told his audience, “I told you that I was going to tell you about the FEMA camps or the FEMA prisons today…I don’t believe in the FEMA prisons, if you don’t know I’ll tell you about it in a couple of days.” He then said he was going to talk about it today but that his research was “incomplete” and he needed to wait a few more days. He then admitted, “this is going to drive the conspiracy theorists crazy. I’ll add this. They’re making me say this. Help,” and went on to imply that nobody from management killed the story, and that he only answers to himself.

The following week Beck had James Meigs on as a guest, who is the editor of *Popular Mechanics* magazine and the two had a field day attacking the “conspiracy theories” about the FEMA camps, and denied that there are such things. James Meigs is the same man who presents himself as having “debunked” the “9/11 conspiracy theories” by choosing straw men arguments and fringe theories about the 9/11 attacks and then claiming the entire body of research supporting 9/11 was an inside job must be false. For anyone of any intelligence, Glenn Beck’s complete reversal is obvious, and proves that the higher ups at the Fox News Channel killed his original story and then produced a new one with the help of “debunker” James Meigs.

In other instances Beck has made numerous slanderous remarks about 9/11 Truthers (those who see the 9/11 attacks were an inside job) and in one instance Beck has fabricated statements saying that the nutcase who shot a security guard at the Washington DC holocaust museum was a “hero” to the 9/11 Truthers.[cxxiv] These instances and others prove Glenn Beck to be a slick disinformationist and a gate-keeper who works to prevent important information from reaching the public, while pretending to bring his audience cutting edge commentary and news.

The film *Camp FEMA* (2009) produced by Gary Franchi and directed by Richard Lewis documents the existence of modern concentration camps, a topic that is beyond the scope of this book.

MTV Warns about Martial Law and Concentration Camps

A series of several brief commercials, or perhaps more accurately PSAs (Public Service Announcements), aired on MTV, of all places, in 2008 depicting situations where an out of control police force rounded up citizens in the back of trucks and put them on trains at gunpoint. At the end of the segment, the scene froze and faded into a historical photograph of Jews being rounded up for the Holocaust in a similar manor. The segments were only thirty seconds long, but were extremely disturbing. They concluded with a printed message on the screen reading, “The Holocaust happened to people like us.”

Abusing, Torturing, and Raping Prisoners

As the Iraq War drug on for years and the lies continued to unravel about the reasons America started the war, word began to spread about American soldiers abusing prisoners. Hundreds of photos were made public that soldiers themselves had taken of each other abusing detainees for their own amusement, and the abuse was blamed on a handful of soldiers who were said to have acted on their own and not in accordance with their superiors. Other photos were never made public which show soldiers raping and sodomizing detainees, although such activities are officially denied to have occurred.

While some photos of abuse were made public, President Obama prevented the release of over 2000 others shortly after he was sworn in as president, despite his earlier promises to have them released. Major General Antonio Taguba was the Army officer in charge of conducting an inquiry into the Abu Ghraib jail in Iraq and gave an interview with the *London Telegraph* admitting that, “These pictures show torture, abuse, rape and every indecency.” [cxxv]

Just one month after Obama flip flopped and changed his mind about releasing photos, he stated, “The most direct consequence of releasing them, I believe, would be to inflame anti-American public opinion and to put our troops in greater danger,” but those on the inside like Major General Taguba know the real reason for not releasing them. “The mere description of these pictures is horrendous enough, take my word for it,” Taguba said.

One such description was released under the US Freedom of Information Act where an Egyptian translator named Kasim Mehaddi Hilas said, “I saw [name of a translator] fucking a kid, his age would be about 15 to 18 years. The kid was hurting very bad and they covered all the doors with sheets. Then when I heard screaming I climbed the door because on top it wasn’t covered and I saw [name] who was wearing the military uniform, putting his dick in the little kid’s ass…and the female soldier was taking pictures.” [cxxvi]

Despite all the now sealed photos and descriptions by eyewitnesses, this level of abuse is officially denied by the US government. What was admitted, after being denied of course, is the use of waterboarding, which is pouring water down the mouth and nose of someone who is strapped to a table, thus making them feel like they are drowning due to inhaling water into their lungs. Waterboarding has been illegal under international law and is considered torture by countless legal experts, war veterans, medical experts, and human rights organizations. This didn’t stop the Bush administration from using it though, and after numerous denials that the CIA and military officials were waterboarding suspects and prisoners, they finally admitted it, but called it an “enhanced interrogation technique” and denied that it was torture.

Fox News’ Operation Mockingbird asset Sean Hannity, an avid war propagandist and George W. Bush defender, continuously stated that waterboarding was no big deal and when asked live on television by one of his guests if he would volunteer to be waterboarded, Hannity agreed to do it for charity. He never followed through with his promise, and completely ignored the fact that he made such a statement. MSNBC’s Keith Olbermann publicly offered to pay $1000 to charity for every second Hannity was subjected the practice, but of course it never happened.

Mancow Muller, a popular Chicago radio host, had also spoken publicly in support of waterboarding and denied that it was torture, that is, until he himself voluntarily underwent the procedure. Mancow thought that he could be waterboarded and then say it was no big deal and that liberals who were against it and those who called it torture would be proven wrong, but immediately after the procedure began Mancow ended it and admitted he thought it constituted torture. An EMT was present in case anything went wrong.

Immediately after ending the experiment, Mancow said, “It is way worse than I thought it would be…Look…all that’s been done to this country, and I heard about water being dropped on someone’s face, I never considered it torture, even when I was laying there, I thought this is gonna be no big deal, I go swimming, it’s gonna be like being in the tub…it was instantaneous. I thought I could hold out 30 seconds, 60 seconds, it was instantaneous, and I don’t want to say this…absolutely torture. Absolutely, I mean that’s drowning.” [cxxvii]

COINTELPRO

A sinister covert and highly illegal program admittedly conducted by the FBI between 1956 and 1971 was called COINTELPRO (an acronym for Counter Intelligence Program) which investigated and disrupted political organizations deemed problematic by the establishment. Since its discovery and the nature of its crimes and activities, of course the FBI says the program was dissolved and no such thing exists anymore. Such claims are laughable, and COINTELPRO’s discovery only served as a learning experience for the FBI and measures were put in place to prevent such activities from being discovered and exposed in the future.

The original program targeted groups seen as “subversive” or groups suspected of being subversive. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders in the Civil Rights Movement and those associated with the NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), and the Southern Poverty Law Center were also targeted, as well as groups protesting the Vietnam War, including many college students. The directives of COINTELPRO were given by J. Edgar Hoover, who was the head of the FBI at the time, and ordered agents to “expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize” the leaders and activities of such groups.

Agents involved in the program used a lot of dirty tricks, such as mailing letters to leaders of organizations claiming to be from someone else and making accusations that they had been sleeping with that person’s wife, for example. In one instance a recording of Martin Luther King Jr. that was taken illegally from a hotel room and proved he was cheating on his wife. FBI agents then anonymously mailed the recording to his wife because they wanted to discourage King from pushing for civil rights.

Illegal wire taps, spreading false and slanderous rumors about people, frame-ups and worse were all common in COINTELPRO and are still methods used today by elite law enforcement and intelligence agents.

The MIAC Report

A joint venture between the Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement in Jefferson City, Missouri called The Missouri Information Analysis Center (or MIAC), is said to analyze terrorist threats and criminal activity in order to help prevent them. This MIAC was fairly unknown until March of 2009, when an eight page report the organization had wrote up was leaked to the public titled *The Modern Militia Movement* , which contained some disturbing information regarding the kinds of individuals the report labeled as potentially dangerous or domestic terrorists.

When the MIAC report first surfaced, a lot of people thought it was a hoax since the criteria it used to identify potential militia members and terrorists was completely absurd, but the report was confirmed authentic by Lieutenant John Hotz, the Assistant Director of the Public Information and Education Division of the Missouri State Highway Patrol.[cxxviii] The report contains what it called common symbols and media associated with terrorists in order for officials to more easily identify them. These items include bumper stickers showing support for Congressman Ron Paul, owning gold coins, and Aaron Russo's film *America: Freedom to Fascism.*

The report begins by trying to explain why the militia movement gained numbers in the 1980s and 90s, saying, "It was during this timeframe that many individuals and organizations began to concoct conspiracy theories to explain their misfortunes. These theories varied but almost always involved a globalist dictatorship, the 'New World Order (NWO),' which conspired to exploit the working class citizens…Much of this rhetoric would become anti-Semitic, claiming that the Jews controlled the monetary system and media, and in turn the 'Zionist Occupied government (ZOG).'"

In a section titled *The Militia Post September 11th 2001* it reads, "Newer versions of the NWO conspiracy have been concocted in order to empower the movement. The NWO is seen as using law enforcement, military, national guard, and federal agencies in order to carry out its elitist one world government."

It goes on to say, "Many militia organizations feel that the U.S. government will fall due to economic or racial issues. They believe that during the chaotic fall of the government, moves will be made to install Martial Law, confiscate firearms, and imprison many citizens."

The report mentions the North American Union and says, "conspiracy theorists claim that this union would link Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The NAU would unify its monetary system and trade the dollar for the AMERO."[cxxix]

Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFIDs) are also mentioned, saying "there is a fear that the government will enforce mass RFID human implantations. This process would make it possible for the government to continually know the locations of all citizens."[cxxx]

The report is a tremendous piece of propaganda aimed at convincing police that anyone who discusses these particular issues should be viewed as a potential threat. It says, "The militia subscribes to an anti-government and NWO mindset, which creates a threat to law enforcement officers. They view the military, National Guard, and law enforcement as a force that will confiscate their firearms and place them in FEMA concentration camps."

Since most people familiar with the New World Order learn about the private Federal Reserve Bank and its role in the economy, the MIAC report also included this topic in their report painting these people as extremists. "Members of the militia movement are strongly against the FRS (Federal Reserve System) and see it as a mechanism of the elitist New World Order. In November, End the FED protests were held nationwide at Federal Reserve Banks in opposition to the FRS. Many right-wing extremists oppose the FRS and propose a system that would be backed by gold," it reads.

Also, since many who see the left vs. right paradigm one of controlled opposition, and the leadership of both the Republicans and the Democrats as being globalists with ties to the secret establishment, many people begin favoring third party candidates who don't have to bow down to any special interests. While this is a conclusion any thinking American would come to after learning about how the political structure actually functions, the MIAC report chose to demonize such people.

"Militia members most commonly associate with 3rd party political groups. It's not uncommon for militia members to display Constitution Party, Campaign for Liberty, or Libertarian material. These members are usually supporters of former Presidential Candidates Ron Paul, Chuck Baldwin, and Bob Barr."[cxxxi]

The report even warns that people who display political messages on their vehicles in the form of bumper stickers should be suspects. “Militia members commonly display pictures, cartoons, [and] bumper stickers that contain anti-government rhetoric. Most of this material will depict the FRS, IRS, FBI, ATF, CIA, UN, Law Enforcement, and ‘The New World Order’ in a derogatory manor.” [cxxxii]

Shortly after word spread of this report and the demonizing language in it, even mainstream media outlets covered it in shock saying it amounted to political profiling. Soon afterward, by the end of March 2009, the report was said to be scrapped and the director of the MIAC was reassigned.

“For that reason, I have ordered the MIAC to permanently cease distribution of the militia report,” said Chief James Keathley of the Missouri State Patrol. “Further, I am creating a new process for oversight of reports drafted by the MIAC that will require leaders of the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Department of Public Safety to review the content of these reports before they are shared with law enforcement. My office will also undertake a review of the origin of the report by MIAC.” [cxxxiii]

Department of Homeland Security Labels Veterans as Possible Terrorists and Extremists

While some skeptics say the MIAC report was just one insignificant report drafted and circulated in the state of Missouri, not soon afterwards a similar report was made public that was drafted by the Department of Homeland Security which labeled veterans and pro-life organizations as possible extremists or terrorists.

The report, titled *Right-wing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment* , also says that due to the collapse of the economy which began near the end of 2008 and the election of Barack Obama as the first black president of the United States, that “rightwing extremists” are having an easier time recruiting supporters who are concerned about illegal immigration, restrictions of firearms, abortion, and the loss of US sovereignty.

The report even admits, “threats from white supremacist and violent anti-government groups during 2009 have been largely rhetorical and have not indicated plans to carry out violent acts,” but suggests that, worsening economic conditions, potential new restrictions on firearms and “the return of military veterans facing significant challenges reintegrating into their communities could lead to the potential emergence of terrorist groups or lone wolf extremists capable of carrying out violent attacks.”

The report says that rightwing extremism, “can be broadly divided into those groups, movements, and adherents that are primarily hate-oriented (based on hatred of particular religious, racial or ethnic groups), and those that are mainly anti-government, rejecting federal authority in favor of state or local authority, or rejecting government authority entirely. It may include groups and individuals that are dedicated to a single issue, such as opposition to abortion or immigration.”

“[T]he consequences of a prolonged economic downturn—including real estate foreclosures, unemployment and an inability to obtain credit – could create a fertile recruiting environment for right-wing extremists and even result in confrontations between such groups and government authorities similar to those in the past,” the report reads.

It also warns that, “Proposed imposition of firearms restrictions and weapons bans likely would attract new members into the ranks of right-wing extremist groups as well as potentially spur some of them to begin planning and training for violence against the government…The high volume of purchases and stockpiling of weapons and ammunition by right-wing extremists in anticipation of restrictions and bans in some parts of the country continue to be a primary concern to law enforcement.”

The report also mentions what it calls people who believe in anti-government conspiracy theories about gun confiscations, citizen detention camps, and a Jewish-controlled ‘one-world government’ and says that, “end times prophecies could motivate extremist individuals and groups to stockpile food, ammunition and weapons. These teachings also have been linked with the radicalization of domestic extremist individuals and groups in the past, such as the violent Christian Identity organizations and extremist members of the militia movement.”

It also attempts to cast suspicion on veterans, saying, “Returning veterans possess combat skills and experience that are attractive to right-wing extremists…DHS/I&A (Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Intelligence and Analysis) is concerned that right-wing extremists will attempt to recruit and radicalize veterans in order to boost their violent capacities.”

People who support enforcing immigration laws and who oppose illegal immigration or speak out against it are also demonized in the report. “DHS/I&A assesses that right-wing extremist groups’ frustration over a perceived lack of government action on illegal immigration has the potential to incite individuals or small groups toward violence.”

The report concludes that the Department of Homeland Security will work with state and local officials in the near future to determine the levels of right-wing extremist activity in their areas.

Project Megiddo

In the months preceding the turn of the twenty-first century, the FBI released a report warning of violence they thought would likely be carried out to mark the new millennium at the hands of people who believed in the “New World Order conspiracy theory.” The report specifically listed white supremacists, Black Hebrew Israelites, the militia movement, and apocalyptic cults as groups who the FBI should be on the lookout for. While it is true that a very small number of white supremacists and apocalyptic cults have carried out violence driven by their ideologies, the Project Megiddo report casts suspicion on anyone who talks about the New World Order.

This 32 page report was titled Project Megiddo because, as it explains, “The Hebrew word ‘Armageddon’ means ‘hill of Megiddo.’ In English, the word has come to represent battle itself. The last book in the New Testament of the Bible designates Armageddon as the assembly point in the apocalyptic setting of God’s final and conclusive battle against evil. The name ‘Megiddo’ is an apt title for a project that analyzes those who believe the year 2000 will usher in the end of the world and who are willing to perpetrate acts of violence to bring that end about.”

In the section focusing on the militia, the report tries to paint those who talk about the New World Order or the United Nations as potential violent extremists, saying, “Meanwhile, for members of the militia movement the new millennium has a political overtone rather than a religious one. It is their belief that the United Nations has created a secret plan, known as the New World Order (NWO), to conquer the world beginning in 2000.” [cxxxiv]

The report goes on to demonize gun owners and supporters of the Second Amendment who oppose gun control measures, reading “The passage of the Brady Bill and assault weapons ban in 1994 were interpreted by those in the militia movement and among the right-wing as the first steps towards disarming citizens in preparation for the UN-led NWO takeover.” [cxxxv]

“In light of the enormous importance and prominent role that extremist groups place on the Second Amendment, it is probable that recent government actions aimed at controlling guns are perceived to be compelling signs of the UN-led NWO takeover.” [cxxxvi]

It is well known to those who are aware of the New World Order that FEMA has constructed various prison camps, detention centers, and so-called emergency relocation centers which are usually kept secret from the public, and in some cases have been covered by mainstream news. [cxxxvii] Most people who are familiar with these “FEMA camps” are not very comfortable with their existence and the secrecy which surrounds them. The Megiddo report addresses these worries, saying, “One can find numerous references in militia literature to military bases to be used as concentration camps in the NWO and visiting foreign military personnel conspiring to attack Americans.” [cxxxviii]

One of the most unsettling ideas conveyed in the report is that Christians who are uneasy about the New World Order for its prophetic implications regarding the end times are viewed as cult members who may act out violently in order to bring about the end of the world. “Cults with an apocalyptic agenda, particularly those that appear ready to *initiate* rather than *anticipate* violent confrontations to bring about Armageddon or fulfill ‘prophesy’ present unique challenges to law enforcement officials.” [cxxxix]

“Religiously motivated extremists may initiate violent conflicts with law enforcement officials in an attempt to facilitate the onset of Armageddon, or to help fulfill a ‘prophesy.’ … Likewise, extremists who are convinced that the millennium will lead to a One World Government may choose to engage in violence to prevent such a situation from occurring.” [cxl]

It certainly is interesting that since this report was released in October 1999, talk of the New World Order by major political figures around the world has become common place, and the vast majority of people around the world who speak out against it are viewed as dangerous extremists who the government and law enforcement agencies claim are prone to violence.

A Nation of Spies

In the New World Order, the mainstream media and the government purposefully create a climate of fear, putting the population on edge with the threat of terrorism they claim can come from any number of individuals or groups. The ethereal “al Qaeda” became the focal point of such fears after the September 11th 2001 terror attacks in New York City and Washington DC and the fear mongering went on practically daily throughout the Bush administration.

While it is understandable that law enforcement would put out information urging people to be on the lookout for specific suspicious behavior in hopes of preventing any crimes from taking place, the rhetoric accompanying such alerts has created a climate where people are urged to spy on their neighbors and are made to feel powerful by doing so, as if they themselves are working in cooperation with law enforcement.

During the 2008 presidential campaign in America, Barrack Obama made a startling statement referring to his desire to create a program which sounds like it was coming right out of George Orwell’s dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* . Obama proclaimed, “We cannot continue to rely only on our military in order to achieve the national security objectives that we’ve set. We’ve got to have a civilian national security force that’s just as powerful, just as strong, just as well-funded.”

The man chosen by President Obama to be his chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, made equally unsettling statements in the past. On August 21, 2009 Rahm Emanuel, who was a Democratic member of the House of Representatives, was interviewed on C-Span about his book *The Plan: Big Ideas for America* , and when asked specifically what he meant by the idea of a “universal citizen service” Emanuel answered, “Citizenship is not an entitlement program. It comes with responsibilities. Everybody between the ages of 18 and 25 will serve three months of basic training and understanding in a kind of civil defense.”

In George Orwell’s classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* , the children spy on their parents and neighbors and accuse the lead character Winston Smith of being a “thought criminal,” meaning he has negative thoughts about the government. These same children report their father as a thought criminal as well, and he is arrested based on these accusations.

The idea of civilians spying on other civilians by simply keeping their eyes and ears open for anything they might say or do that seems to criticize the ruling party was something that people thought occurred only in Nazi Germany or the Communist Soviet Union, but there have been multiple attempts by leadership in both Republican and Democratic parties to create a culture in America where people feel empowered because they are on the lookout for anyone that is not in step with current leadership and their ideologies.

Often such programs are defended citing “things have changed since 9/11,” referring to the September 11th terrorist attacks and claims that a secret society of Muslim extremists are living among us plotting their next attack and waiting for the right moment or the green light from Osama Bin Laden, the mythical leader of this society of radicals.

Operation TIPS

A snitch program implemented under the fear-mongering years of President George W. Bush was called Operation TIPS, which was an acronym for the *Terrorism Information and Prevention System* . This program was aimed at workers who had access to people's homes, such as cable installers and telephone repairmen, who were encouraged to look for and report "suspicious" activity to authorities. The program was intended to begin in August 2002 and hoped to include over one million workers in ten US cities.

John Ashcroft who was the Attorney General under President Bush admitted that information generated by Operation TIPS would then be stored in databases for various law enforcement agencies. Senator Patrick Leahy from Vermont criticized the program and likened it to J. Edgar Hoover's misuse of the FBI when he hired citizens to spy on their neighbors if they were political protesters during the 1960s. Legislation was introduced in the House version of the Homeland Security Bill that prohibited the creation of Operation TIPS, but senator Joe Lieberman blocked its removal from the Senate's version. The Senate later passed the House version which called for the program's termination in November 2002. However, in 2008 it was reported that ordinary people such as utility workers and others had been trained as what are called Terrorism Liaison Officers who report "suspicious" activity that could be signs of terrorist. [cxli]

InfraGuard

InfraGard is a program developed by the FBI which basically functions as a secret society of businessmen, academics, utility workers, and law enforcement agents who secretly look for suspicious activity and share information and intelligence in order to supposedly prevent terrorist attacks against critical infrastructure in the United States. InfraGuard stands for Infrastructure Guardians and began in 1996. As of December 2009, the organization reported their membership to be more than 34,000 people. Most people have never heard of InfraGuard.

In 2008, Matthew Rothschild reported in the journal *The Progressive* that several InfraGard members told him if martial law was declared that InfraGuard members would be given orders to “shoot to kill” in order to protect critical infrastructure and would not be prosecuted.[cxlii] The FBI has denied this.

The article in *The Progressive* also reported that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said there “is evidence that InfraGard may be closer to a corporate TIPS program, turning private-sector corporations—some of which may be in a position to observe the activities of millions of individual customers—into surrogate eyes and ears for the FBI.”[cxliii]

iWatch

A citizen spy program launched in Los Angeles, California called iWatch is promoted as being the “21st century version of Neighborhood Watch.”[cxliv] Through brochures, meetings with community groups, and even television commercials, the iWatch program lists what they call suspicious behavior that should compel people to call the police. Several of these “indicators” are: If you smell chemicals or other fumes; If you see someone wearing clothes that are too big and too heavy for the season; And, if you see someone purchasing supplies or equipment that could be used to make bombs. So, I guess you’re supposed to call the police if your neighbor is spray painting something in their backyard or using paint thinner to clean some tools in his garage and you smell the fumes, or if someone is buying a steel pipe at the hardware store to fix some plumbing.

The program also created a toll-free telephone number for people to report such activities to, as well as a website. Mike German, who is a former FBI agent now working with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) admits that many of the iWatch indicators are all relatively common behaviors and worries that people will use the program to report people who are thought to look like a terrorist based on personal biases and stereotypes.

Supporters of the program hope iWatch will become as successful and as well-known as the Smokey Bear campaign used to prevent wildfires. "There he is with his Smokey the Bear hat, similarly here, we hope that this program, even though it's in its birthing stages right now, in a few years will become that well known to the American public," said Los Angeles police Chief William Bratton.

One of the television commercials for the program consists of a dozen or so people each saying a sentence or two and then cutting to the next in a montage, saying, "What is iWatch? It's a way to report suspicious behavior, or activities that relates to terrorism. Terrorism is a crime. It is our shared responsibility to keep America safe. That's why I, iWatch. It's like a neighborhood watch for the whole city. If you see, hear, or smell something suspicious, report it. Reporting is easy. Use the web, or the phone. Let law enforcement determine if it's a threat. And let the experts decide. A single report can lead to actions that can stop a terrorist attack. Think about the power of that. Think about the power of iWatch. I watch. I report. I keep us safe."

Cash Payments Given to Snitches

Chicago implemented a "tax whistle-blower" program offering people a cash reward for informants who turn in businesses that are cheating on their taxes. The amount of the reward is a percentage of the tax money the city recovers as a result of the informant's tip. "It's just another way of bringing people into compliance," Revenue Department spokesman Ed Walsh told the *Sun-Times*. [cxlv]

"It would probably be a business knowing that a competitor is not remitting a tax. An employee [of the tax-dodging business] could know that, too. Typically, you need to provide some type of incentive." [cxlvi]

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts

In a move that could lead to a scenario similar to Hitler Youth in Nazi Germany, the Department of Homeland Security created a program where they decided to “partner” with the Boy Scouts of America to allegedly help Americans to prepare for and respond to emergencies. “We are delighted to partner with the Department of Homeland Security on this very important initiative for America,” said Roy Williams, Chief Scout Executive.

The New York Times ran an article discussing the Boy Scouts activities with Homeland Security and showed a photo of some kids dressed up in SWAT gear and holding fake rifles. [cxlvii]

The article tells how the practice drill the children were involved in included the goal of rounding up a terrorist, who in this case was a “disgruntled Iraq war veteran,” and admits that thousands of young people were being trained to “confront terrorism” and the program aimed to “prepare youths for more traditional jobs as police officers and firefighters.” [cxlviii]

“Scouting embodies the very essence of being prepared and has specific training and merit badges designed to encourage proper awareness and planning in our Scouts. To partner on a program such as this allows us to reinforce the importance of preparation to families throughout the nation,” said Roy Williams, Chief Scout Executive.

In an equally strange move, the Department of Homeland Security also decided to team up with the Girl Scouts as well, in order to “combat hurricanes, pandemics, terror attacks and other disasters.”

The head of the Department of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, said “As a former Girl Scout, I know the ‘Be Prepared’ motto well, and I look forward to working with the Girl Scouts to spread the preparedness message to all of our nation’s citizens.”

It was reported that Homeland Security designed a new “preparedness badge” that the girls can earn while defending America.

Climate Cops

A British website called ClimateCops.com geared for children ages 7 to 11 features cartoon images and downloadable materials for children to become “climate cops” so they can keep a watchful eye over their parents and then build a “Climate Crime Case File” to report back to their parents and make sure they, “don’t commit those crimes again (or else)!”

The site also warns children that they “may need to keep a watchful eye” to prevent future violations. When one logs onto the website they are first shown a brief cartoon introducing them to four characters, the “climate cops,” who are going to fight against global warming because it is “threatening our world” and the viewer is told “it’s time to fight back” and that they “need new recruits and your training starts here.”

The user then can play various games or “missions” as they are called, and can download tickets to report “climate crime” which are used to write up violations for their parents for instances like leaving the room and not turning the light off, or leaving a cell phone charger plugged in when it’s not being used. One ticket even lists “using a tumble dryer on a sunny day” and carries the assumption that people should line dry their clothes and not use a dryer. Another one says, “Putting hot food in a fridge or freezer is in fact, a crime. Climate Cops know that waiting for it to cool is the right time.”

Not only does this kind of propaganda push the global warming theory onto children, but gives them the feeling of authority over their parents and teaches them that they are the ones in power and can give the orders. Global warming poster boy Al Gore once told a group of school kids that, “There are some things about our world that you know that older people don’t know…Why would that be? Well, in a period of rapid change, the old assumptions sometimes just don’t work anymore because they’re out of date. New knowledge, new understandings are much more widely available, sometimes to young people who are in school who aren’t weighed down with the old flawed assumptions of the past.”

The hoax of deadly man-made climate change and the Armageddon said to occur unless people pay carbon taxes and give in to a global government is covered in its own section of this book. (See Global Warming/Climate Change)

Elimination of the Right to Bear Arms

The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States outlines the right for citizens to bear arms—meaning to own guns. It can't be at random that this Amendment immediately follows the right to free speech (the First Amendment), which is one of the most cherished freedoms Americans enjoy. So placing an amendment guaranteeing the right to own guns as the second one shows just how important the founding fathers felt this right was. They knew that if masses of citizens were armed, that an out of control government would have a much more difficult time imposing its will on the people because they would be able to organize and fight against such an event.

In Asia, people made nunchucks and other weapons out of commonly available materials in the ancient past when all weapons were banned and only members of the military were allowed to possess such things. Nunchucks, for example, were first made from a flail used to thresh rice or soybeans. Corrupt tyrants and governments throughout history have disarmed their own citizens so they couldn't organize and resist. A disarmed public also causes people to rely more on the government for their safety, instead of being able to protect themselves. Even modern anti-gun activists fail to see how citizens owning guns actually prevents crime. Often their anti-gun attitudes are installed in them by the mainstream media that tries to impress on people that only police and military personnel are qualified to own and carry guns.

Thomas Jefferson, quoting Cesare Beccaria in *On Crimes and Punishment* (1764) famously said, "Laws that forbid the carrying of arms disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes…Such laws make things worse for the assaulted and better for the assailants; they serve rather to encourage than to prevent homicides, for an unarmed man may be attacked with greater confidence than an armed man."

If a burglar breaks into someone’s home armed only with a knife or baseball bat, they are the one who will be in control of the situation, and could bash the brains in of the homeowner and then rape his children and wife with little to stop him. The reason people call the police in the event of a burglary is because the police have guns and can hopefully stop the burglar and protect the victims, but it makes no sense to rely on such a strategy when the homeowner himself could own a firearm and neutralize the burglar immediately upon his discovery.

Despite reliable statistics that show for every crime committed with a gun, even more are prevented, people are still often convinced that guns should only be used by police and military. The November 2009 shooting at Fort Hood in Texas, where thirteen people were killed by gunman Nidal Hason, shows that even supposed trained professionals can be mass murderers. Hason was a U.S. Army Major and was stationed at the base. Some believe Hason was a victim of MK-ULTRA mind control and programmed to kill. Others see him as a Muslim terrorist who became unstable and murderous as he grew more upset with the United States involvement in the Middle East. Whatever the truth surrounding this tragedy, there are numerous other instances each year of police and military committing murder and/or suicide despite being trained professionals who are trusted with firearms.

Anti-gun activists also fail to see that an extremely small percentage of humans will commit murder by any means necessary to them, even if a gun is not available. If these unstable individuals cannot get their hands on a gun, they will simply stab, bludgeon, poison, or run over their victims.

Groups like the National Rifle Association and Gun Owners of America help to organize Second Amendment advocates and try to minimize the effects of anti-gun tactics, although many see the NRA as having given in to anti-gun legislation and not taking a strong enough stand against it. Despite the numbers and money behind such groups, unconstitutional and unfair gun policies have been written into law in America and the ultimate goal of banning all guns from citizens, is a very real possibility.

Gun Bans in American Cities

Despite the Second Amendment clearly outlining that people have the right to own guns, Anti-American politicians and judges have been able to successfully ban guns in certain cities. Hand guns, for example, were illegal in Washington DC until a landmark case in June 2008 (District of Columbia v. Heller), which overturned the ban, once again making the district compliant with the Second Amendment for the first time since 1976. Washington DC was not the only city to have such a ban in place. Other cities such as Chicago and New York had also banned handguns and placed such ridiculous restrictions on rifles and shotguns that the laws practically render the guns useless.

Alan Gura of Alexandria, Virginia, who successfully argued the Heller case at the high court, is also scheduled to argue the McDonald case in Chicago hoping to lift the ban on handguns there as well.

Before the 2008 overturning of the DC gun ban, an appeals court ruled in the Chicago case that their handgun ban did not violate the Constitution because the Supreme Court had not yet declared whether its decision in the Heller case established a fundamental right for citizens to own guns. Many antigun activists say the Second Amendment doesn’t apply to average citizens, but instead applies only to the police and military.

While we can look at the 2008 lifting of the DC gun ban as a victory for the Second Amendment, this is likely only a temporary lifting. After just a handful of highly publicized murders involving guns by lone nuts, the anti-gun propaganda will go into full force and the establishment will do everything they can to get as many guns out of the hands of honest, law abiding citizens as they can.

Gun Confiscation After Hurricane Katrina

Immediately after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in September 2005, police were confiscating guns from people in their homes in New Orleans as they went door to door in what looked like affluent middle class neighborhoods. One video aired on a local news channel shows police tackle an elderly woman and steal a small revolver from her that she had for personal protection. This woman was inside her own home on dry land.

The National Rifle Association (NRA) produced a short video titled *The Untold Story of Gun Confiscation After Katrina* , which shows interviews of several other law abiding citizens who also had their guns taken away unlawfully by the police in the aftermath of the hurricane. One man interviewed explains how he complied with the officers and turned over his rifle and asked for some kind of receipt documenting that they had taken possession of the gun, and the officer informed him that no such policy was in place. The man then asked how he could get his gun back after things had settled down and the officer told him to get a lawyer.

Oath Keepers

In March of 2009, an organization was founded with the intent of educating police and military about the possibility of unlawful and unconstitutional orders being given, and aimed to prevent such illegal orders from being carried out by those who were on the receiving end of them. Oath Keepers was founded by a man named Stewart Rhodes, and when joining, the new members swear an oath to the following ten things they will not engage in:

1. We will NOT obey orders to disarm the American people.

2. We will NOT obey orders to conduct warrantless searches of the American people.

3. We will NOT obey orders to detain American citizens as “unlawful enemy combatants” or to subject them to military tribunal.

4. We will NOT obey orders to impose martial law or a “state of emergency” on a state.

5. We will NOT obey orders to invade and subjugate any state that asserts its sovereignty.

6. We will NOT obey any order to blockade American cities, thus turning them into giant concentration camps.

7. We will NOT obey any order to force American citizens into any form of detention camps under any pretext.

8. We will NOT obey orders to assist or support the use of any foreign troops on U.S. soil against the American people to “keep the peace” or to “maintain control.”

9. We will NOT obey any orders to confiscate the property of the American people, including food and other essential supplies.

10.We will NOT obey any orders which infringe on the right of the people to free speech, to peaceably assemble, and to petition their government for a redress of grievances.

Left-wing propagandist and gate-keeper Chris Matthews had Stewart Rhodes as a guest on MSNBC’s *Hardball* and tried to misinform the audience about the Oath Keeper’s mission. Matthews states, “What I don’t like about people who are armed who are being recruited to stand up in some operation, I want to know when you would call your forces together and challenge the authority of the US government?”

Rhodes had to clarify the organization’s goals and explained, “It’s not calling forces together, it’s simply saying they’re not going to comply with orders to violate the rights of the American people. We’re not talking about asking them to go fight, we’re saying simply, don’t fight.” Matthews went on to patronize Rhodes about his beliefs in potential concentration camps in America and citizens being rounded up and detained.

In a report by the ADL (Anti-Defamation League) about growing anger in America aimed at the government, the Oath Keepers were attacked, saying, “One manifestation of the ideology of resistance was the creation in March 2009 of the Oath Keepers, an anti-government group that tries to recruit police and military personnel and veterans. Members refuse to obey hypothetical “orders” from the government, “orders” that speak more to their own paranoid and conspiratorial beliefs than to any realistic government action.” [cxlix]

The ADL was obviously trying to divert attention away from the fact that such actions are very plausible and in some cases have already occurred.

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

In 2009, after Barack Obama was sworn in as president, he nominated Sonia Sotomayor to sit as a Supreme Court justice. It was no surprise that Obama's pick was a Latino woman, as he was doing his best to select people for high level positions, not based on their qualifications, but instead on their race and gender. One of the things which make Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor anti-American and a willing conspirator in implementing the New World Order is her stance on the Second Amendment.

In Maloney v. Cuomo, a case from January 2009, Judge Sotomayor ruled that the Second Amendment only applies to the federal government and not individual states or cities.[cl] According to her and her ruling, it is perfectly constitutional for any city or state to ban gun ownership. A 2004 opinion she joined which is now cited as precedent, states that "the right to possess a gun is clearly not a fundamental right."

Rahm Emanuel's Hopes of Disarming Americans

President Obama's chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, can be seen in a video clip widely available on the Internet where he is giving a talk about how he and Obama hope to eliminate the Second Amendment, which clearly states that individual citizens have the right to own guns. Rahm declared, "The most simple thing we can do, and we've got to make this a number one issue, as a test vote and then take it into the election, and that is if you are on the no-fly list because you are known as maybe a possible terrorist, you cannot buy a handgun in America."[cli]

The "no-fly list" isn't really a no-fly list, it's more of a watch list which supposedly contains the names of suspected terrorists, or people who may have terrorist ties, and if such a person attempts to board a flight, then extra security measures are taken to ensure that they aren't carrying any explosive devices or weapons with them onto the aircraft. While on the surface, such a procedure can surely be understood, what makes this "no-fly list" such a slippery slope is the fact that the standards and criteria for landing one's name on the list is kept secret. Not only that, but over one million people are on this list,[clii] including many young American children[cliii] and even a CNN reporter who describes having to go through enhanced security checks every time he flies.[cliv]

There is also no known way for an individual to get their name off the list. So if Rahm Emanuel got his way of using this list to justify confiscating all firearms registered to persons on that list and prevent them from purchasing one if they didn’t already own any, it would then eliminate the Second Amendment right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, all without a conviction of any crime or even an arrest. Think of the implications. By some government agent simply adding your name to the no-fly list, for any reason, you now lose your guns. Hopefully in the months and years that come, such an underhanded policy would be faced with such opposition that it can never be enacted, but the very fact that Rahm Emanuel spoke publicly about such an idea shows just how low the power players in Washington are willing to sink in order to disarm the American people.

Open Carry Groups

While extremely surprising to many people, most states in America allow people to publicly carry an unconcealed visible handgun on their person, with the exception of places banned by federal laws such as school zones, post offices, government buildings, and state parks. Such a right is called open carry, and in many states the gun can actually be loaded, while in others the gun may be carried openly but cannot be loaded. Such a practice came to national attention shortly after Barack Obama became president and started pushing for a nationalized healthcare system.

President Obama had a town hall meeting in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on August 10, 2009, where a man joined the protesters across the street with a loaded handgun in a holster attached to his leg. This was perfectly legal. The man was interviewed by Chris Matthews on MSNBC where Matthews expressed his utter shock that someone would do such a thing and tried to make it out that the guy wished harm upon Obama. When this practice continued by other open carry advocates, liberals tried to make such people out as racists, but at an event in Phoenix, Arizona, an African American man brought an AR15 rifle which was strapped hanging off his back. Talking heads on CNN and other news networks expressed their shock, but the fact that this event involved an African American made it impossible for the media to spin the story as if a bunch of right-wing racists were bringing guns to Obama's events. About a dozen others at the same event were also armed.

The Secret Service can declare an area surrounding the president to be a Federal Zone where weapons are not allowed. During these events where open carry advocates had their weapons, Obama was nowhere near them and wouldn't have been anywhere close to being in the line of fire. The anti-gun propagandists at MSNBC and CNN led viewers to believe that Obama could have been shot by one of these individuals if they were unstable, which wasn't the case.

"Assault Weapons"

Much of the ignorant public supports so-called "assault weapon" bans because they believe that an "assault weapon" means a fully automatic weapon like a machine gun. So when anti-gun activists and politicians talk about their desire to ban assault weapons, it seems like a reasonable idea to many people, since they falsely believe they are trying to get machine guns off the streets. The National Firearms Act of 1934 specifically addresses the ownership, possession, and use of fully automatic weapons, which are highly regulated and extremely rare.

A gun is usually classified as an assault weapon because it contains several features in combination such as a detachable magazine along with a folding or telescoping stock or a pistol grip. Flash suppressors and bayonet mounts are also included in these lists.

The state of California has the strictest gun laws in the United States and has their own list of what they deem "assault weapons." In addition, for over a decade California has had a law in place that prevents the manufacture, sale, or transfer of magazines that hold more than ten rounds. The law is for every gun; handguns, rifles, and assault weapons. Some standard magazines for handguns are capable of holding sixteen rounds, but the only people legally allowed to possess such magazines are people who owned them prior to the ten round restriction becoming law on January 1, 2000.

So let it be clear that what the government calls an “assault weapon” is not a machine gun as they would like people to believe, but is instead a classification given to a firearm because it contains a combination of features such as a flash suppressor, a collapsible stock, a pistol grip, or other features. It’s also important to understand that frequently when the mainstream media airs stories about “assault weapons” or renewing the “assault weapon” ban, they show footage of people in the desert or at shooting ranges using fully automatic guns which have been basically illegal for civilians too use for over 75 years.

California’s Ammo Tracking Policy

As governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill into law which required stores that sell ammunition to thumbprint everyone who buys, as well as log their driver’s license and require a signature for each sale. Each person who buys ammo now is entered into a federal database and a running tally of what they buy and when they bought it is kept on record indefinitely. As a result of the law, all Internet and mail order sales to California are now a thing of the past.

Schwarzenegger claimed to be against such a policy in the past but changed his mind saying, “Although I have previously vetoed legislation similar to this measure, local governments have demonstrated that requiring ammunition vendors to keep records on ammunition sales improves public safety.”[clv]

Sam Paredes, the executive director of Gun Owners of California, said the new law treats gun owners like registered sex offenders. The database will be used to flag anyone who buys what the government considers a large amount of ammo and may be considered probable cause to investigate the individual further or place them under surveillance.

Elimination of National Sovereignty

America has been the envy of the world for generations and the leader in human rights and freedoms as well as military power and economic prosperity. The problem is, in order for the New World Order to be complete, America must yield its political, economic, and military power over to the global government that will then use it, not for what's best for America, but what the elite establishment see as the best thing for the New World Order. Sovereignty is defined as the quality of having supreme, independent authority over a territory, which in this case we are talking about the United States; a quality which may have been set up to fail by the Illuminati a long time ago when America was first created.

Britain, the United States, and Israel are at the heart of the New World Order, and have been the major forces behind its creation. Manly P. Hall, an occult insider, explains in his book *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* that secret societies have been covertly using America since its creation to carry out their goal of a global utopia.

He wrote, "European mysticism was not dead at the time the United States of America was founded. The hand of the Mysteries controlled in the establishment of the new government, for the signature of the Mysteries may still be seen on the Great Seal of the United States of America. Careful analysis of the seal discloses a mass of occult and Masonic symbols chief among them, the so-called American Eagle...only the student of symbolism can see through the subterfuge and realize that the American eagle upon the Great Seal is but a conventionalized phoenix." [clvi]

He continues, "Not only were many of the founders of the United States government Masons, but they received aid from a secret and august body existing in Europe which helped them to establish this country for a peculiar and particular purpose known only to the initiated few. The Great Seal is the signature of this exalted body—unseen and for the most part unknown—and the unfinished pyramid upon its reverse side is a teeterboard setting forth symbolically the task to the accomplishment of which the United States Government was dedicated from the day of its inception.” [clvii]

A video posted on YouTube showing Walter Cronkite accepting the Norman Cousins Global Governance Award in 1999 at a United Nations conference includes a disturbing joke about Satan running the New World Order and countries giving up their sovereignty. Cronkite was the anchor for the CBS evening news from 1962 to 1981.

During this event Cronkite said, “What Alexander Hamilton wrote about the need for law among the thirteen states applies today to the approximately two hundred sovereignties in our global village, all of which are going to have to be convinced to give up some of that sovereignty to the better greater union, and it’s not going to be easy.”

He then referenced how some Christians believe the construction of the global government is the work of the Devil, at which point Cronkite added, “Well, join me, I’m glad to sit here at the right hand of Satan.”

This video is widely available on YouTube. Cronkite is believed to be the voice for Moloch played over the loudspeakers in the Bohemian Grove during the Cremation of Care human effigy sacrifice done each summer.

The United Nations

As many people know, the United Nations (UN) is an international organization aiming to facilitate international law between countries around the world, and claim to be working for economic development, human rights, and world peace. The UN was founded in 1945 after World War II and replaced the League of Nations. There are currently 192 member states. [clviii]

Supporters of the UN see it as a global forum for world leaders to exchange ideas and discuss policies that affect the rest of the world such as wars, economic policies, and human rights issues. Opponents see the UN as an authority that the United States will one day give up its sovereignty to, causing the elimination of various Constitutional rights and liberties that Americans have enjoyed since the founding of the country. It’s interesting to note that the John Birch Society began criticizing America’s membership in the UN back in 1959 with their “get US out of the UN” campaign, and warned the UN’s goal was to establish a one world government.

Criticism of the United Nations continues to this day by various groups and for various reasons. The United Nations Population Fund, for example, has provided support for different groups promoting forced abortions and sterilizations. Another controversial issue has been the UN’s connection with Lucis Trust (formerly called Lucifer’s Trust) which is Alice Bailey’s occult organization that continues to publish her books, including *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* . Robert Muller, the former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations was known as the “philosopher” of the UN, and openly praised Bailey’s occult writings.

The North American Union

Just like multiple countries in Europe joined together to form the European Union (EU) and agreed on a single common currency (the Euro), a similar plan has been drafted for the North American continent that would merge the United States, Canada, and Mexico in what would be called the North American Union (NAU), and then introduce a common currency (the Amero) for the region as well. (See the Amero)

Just as the New World Order has been denied for decades and called a conspiracy theory, the North American Union was also denied and said to be the figment of people’s imaginations. In 2006 a government website, www.SPP.gov went online which contained information on what was called the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, which is a code term for the North American Union that would advance the global unified government in a major step.

Other regional unions are also planned such as the Asian Union, the Middle Eastern Union, and the African Union. Once each of these regions are unified with their laws and currency, the next step then is to merge all unions into one system, as well as merge all of their regional currencies into the global currency. (See *One World Currency*)

Illegal Immigration

Traditionally most conservatives support enforcing immigration laws and securing America’s borders, particularly the southern border with Mexico, since that is where millions of illegal aliens have snuck in from, while liberals usually turn a blind eye to immigration laws and even encourage massive influxes of illegal aliens breaking into America.

By allowing and encouraging illegals to come to American, it causes various strains on the economy such as the workers not paying taxes; 20 to 30% of federal prison inmates are illegal aliens; they use medical services without paying for them; and they take jobs that would otherwise go to American citizens. As of 2010 the number of illegal aliens living in America range from between 6 and 13 million.

While on the surface it makes no sense to have allowed such a practice to continue for decades, allowing illegal immigration to continue at massive levels has been a core strategy by the elite to usher in the North American Union and the New World Order. It became fairly obvious to thinking Americans that Republican President George W. Bush had no interest in slowing illegal immigration when after the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001 the borders were not regulated, and during Bush’s entire eight years as president, he did nothing to attempt to do so.

Common sense would say that if an army of dark skinned terrorists from Al Qaeda were dedicated to sneaking into America to plot and carry out more terrorist attacks, then one would think tightly regulating the borders would be a prime concern, but it wasn’t. Not only was it not a concern for President Bush, but after a group called the Minutemen formed and began voluntarily patrolling the borders with nothing more than binoculars, walkie talkies, and cell phones, President Bush attacked them, calling them “vigilantes.”[clix]

What is perhaps even more shocking is that illegal aliens in Los Angeles, California had been given mortgage loans[clx] and credit cards,[clxi] and in cities around the country, groups were fighting to prevent poll workers from checking the ID of people who voted to insure they were a citizen and were who they said they were.[clxii] Other states wanted to allow illegal aliens to get valid driver's licenses.[clxiii]

In the over ten years that this author (Mark Dice) has lived in San Diego, California, every morning in the same exact locations all over the city I have witnessed a dozen or more "day laborers" standing on the sides of roads or in front of businesses waiting to be picked up by people who need physical labor. The vast majority of these day laborers are illegal aliens from Mexico, and loiter every single day, week after week, month after month, year after year, in the same places where locals know they can pick them up and pay them cash to do yard work or other manual labor. They are paid cash for this work, and such a practice is very common in southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement does absolutely nothing and largely ignore the day labor pick-up locations. People not familiar with the practice, or who don't live in border states may imagine that such workers would be extremely cheap, but I can attest first hand that they make more than you think. Back in 2003 I worked for a company that would occasionally use one of these men to "sign spin," meaning that a person stands on the side of the road holding, spinning, or moving a sign advertising a business. On multiple occasions the owner of the business I worked at, which was a retail store, had me drive to the nearest day labor spot and pick up a guy for the job. There were often a dozen or more men who would all crowd around my truck when I pulled up, each of them hoping to be chosen for the job so they could make some money. They would ask how many hours of work was needed, and how much I was going to pay.

Out of the dozen or more men standing around looking for work, none of them would get in my vehicle unless I said I was going to pay them $10.00 an hour. This is, of course, cash, so it's really like they were making $12 or $13 an hour. My boss at the time was cheap and didn't want to pay them very much, so he told me to see if I could get a worker for $7 or $8 an hour, but nobody would take it.

Allowing the illegal immigrants in America from Mexico also causes the government bureaucracy to grow and consume more tax payer’s money to deal with the economic and social burdens that the millions of illegals cause to the healthcare system, law enforcement and prisons, as well as straining our schools and social welfare programs. This is all, of course, looked at favorably by the elite, and allows them to expand the size and scope of government in conjunction with the New World Order.

Some government officials have been pushing hard for complete amnesty of all illegal aliens which will automatically turn them into official American citizens. The vast majority of Mexicans are Democrats and after granting amnesty to them they will be able to vote, and will then support the liberal Democrats socialist agendas aimed at solidifying the New World Order.

Monitoring the Population with Big Brother

Personal privacy has been slowly eroding in recent decades due to new technology and legislation such as the Patriot Act, but this slow and gradual process is speeding up and will soon advance at such a high pace that many aspects of the personal privacy we once enjoyed will be left to the past and never experienced again. There was a time not long ago, when if your boss tried to call you at home after work or on the weekend and you weren’t home or didn’t answer the phone, then he would be out of luck and have to wait until you returned to work to speak to you.

This was before cell phones and caller ID, but today if your boss wanted to get a hold of you, he would simply call your cell phone and even if he didn’t leave a message, you would be expected to return his call within minutes or hours because he knows you will see the missed call on your call log. While cell phones have amazing advantages, they have also changed the social customs in ways most people do not notice unless they step back and really look at the implications such technology has carried with it.

But this social change can be seen as tremendously insignificant compared to other implications stemming from Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFIDs), facial recognition cameras, and fingerprint scanners. Such devices do in fact offer some advantages but also hold a large potential for abuse in ways that most people couldn’t even imagine.

VeriChip and RFID

An RFID (Radio Frequency Identification Device) is a small computer chip that can be encoded with information and then read from various distances by a receiver. They are sort of electronic bar codes and have various uses, including tracking products as they travel around a warehouse or en route to a delivery.

The VeriChip is the world’s first implantable RFID which is the size of a grain of rice and is implanted in the body of animals as well as humans. In pets and livestock, the device is used as an electronic dog tag to identify the animal. The VeriChip company is planning to have their chips implanted into people’s hands or arms to replace debit cards and drivers licenses. The VeriChips have been used to enter VIP areas in clubs and pay bar tabs since around 2004.[clxiv] The device’s manufacturer has been promoting the chip as a simple alternative to carrying around cash, credit cards, or a driver’s license, and is hoping to make the implantable VeriChip or an invisible tattoo the standard form of ID and payment around the world.

While the original version of VeriChip only acts as an identifier that can be read by a receiver from a short distance away, in the future, smaller versions equipped with GPS will be small enough to also be implanted under the skin as well, and will be able to be tracked wherever the person implanted with one goes.

GPS Tracker for Children

In October 2009, a tracking device was put on the market called the Little Buddy, which consists of a fairly large unit that the company promotes as a safety device which can be placed in a child’s backpack or lunchbox and can then be located and tracked via GPS on the parent's cell phone or computer.

The device also allows boundaries to be set up by the parents and activated during specific time periods, and if the device travels outside of that specified area, a text message or email will be sent to the parent notifying them of this. For example, a boundary could be set up around a one block radius from the child's school during the school hours, and if the device travels outside that area during this timeframe, the parent would be immediately notified. This device is rather large and cannot be easily concealed, so most children would be aware that such a device was placed in their backpack by their parent, but future versions of such a device will be incredibly smaller and can be placed on a person without their knowledge.

When these smaller devices are available, they will open the door for horrendous implications involving stalking and personal privacy issues. One newscaster on the Fox News Channel even joked about placing the device in her boyfriend's car so she could keep tabs on exactly where he went and when. Most people would obviously be unaware such a device was placed in their vehicle.

One commercial for the Little Buddy tracking device said, "Get peace of mind. Build trust. And be confident that your child is OK when you can't be with them." It's unclear what they meant by "building trust" with the device, since using such a thing is a clear sign of an overbearing, controlling, or paranoid parent. The device costs under one hundred dollars.

Plans to Implant U.S. Soldiers with RFIDs

Aside from the VeriChip corporation first marketing their Orwellian product as a life-saving medical device, and later entering into talks with banks hoping their chip will replace credit and debit cards as a form of payment for goods and services, the company aggressively pursued the Pentagon with hopes that their RFID chips would be implanted in the 1.4 million soldiers in the armed forces as a replacement for their metal dog tags.[clxv]

The *D.C. Examiner* called the company “one of the most aggressive marketers of radio frequency identification chips,” and reported that they were in discussions with the Pentagon about implanting them in soldiers. VeriChip spokeswoman Nicole Philbin told the *Examiner* that, “The potential for this technology doesn’t just stop at the civilian level.”

Facial Recognition Cameras

In George Orwell’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* , he described what he called Telescreens which were placed in every home and on every street that were television screens which could also watch whatever was going on in its field of view. These Telescreens were monitored and recorded by the Thought Police and kept everyone under a constant state of surveillance to make sure they wouldn’t conspire against the ruling Party or even speak negatively of them.

While security cameras have been a common fixture in banks, stores, and parking lots for decades as a method to deter crime or allow their videotapes to be reviewed in order to gather evidence if a crime is committed, new computer software allows cameras to be able to spot someone out of a crowd if they are entered into the system as a target. These facial recognition cameras have been used in casinos for years in order to spot suspected card counters who the casinos want to keep an eye on.[clxvi] Such systems spot them as soon as they enter the casino even if they are wearing a disguise.

In the New World Order, facial recognition systems will one day be as common as street lights and will record everyone’s movements throughout their day. The information stored by these systems will be able to trace your exact movements throughout an entire city (and country), as well as log the names of any individuals you happen to meet during the course of your day. This system can be programmed to detect if and when two or more specific individuals come into close proximity to each other. Supporters of these systems claim they prevent crime and fight terrorism but the potential for stalking and other abuses are horrifying.

In the New World Order it may even become common place for cameras to be in people's homes that are wired into a universal database and can be monitored by officials. There will be very few places where the all-seeing eyes are not constantly looking at you.

Echelon

Even many electrical engineers find it hard to believe that the United States government has an advanced spy system that can monitor practically every phone call, fax, email, and text message in real time. This system is so powerful that it uses what are called "dictionaries" to flag certain keywords used in conversations around the world. If a series of keywords appear in a single conversation, then that telephone conversation will be flagged and analyzed to determine if it is a threat or not. For example, if a person uses words such as "bomb," "kill," "president," and "White House" in a conversation, then the Echelon system will detect it and the conversation will be flagged and analyzed by authorities. Most conversations are recorded and stored for a period of time and are only deleted if they are not deemed important.

This system also has voiceprint technology that is capable of detecting a specific person's voice among the millions of voices that are being transmitted over satellites at any given time. If a specific individual is targeted for surveillance, even if that person uses a payphone, their voiceprint will be detected by Echelon, and their location will be identified and the phone call will be recorded. This is no more difficult than Google instantaneously finding a specific article among the tens of millions of web pages after a specific set of words are searched for.

It may be alarming to people that simple systems are able to activate specific cell phones and listen to the conversations, and can even turn on the cell phone's microphone and listen to the surrounding area even when the phone is off. Surely this technology violates the rights of people and the 4th Amendment to the Constitution that protects against unauthorized searches and seizures, but the authorities in control of this technology couldn't care less. Only fools believe them when they say that it isn't abused and doesn't infringe upon peoples' rights.

The Internet

While valuable information still gets past the mainstream media gate-keepers, most people spend hours each week on Facebook and Twitter self-promoting themselves and posting meaningless drivel about how good their lunch was, or how they are feeling at the moment. The comments that their friends post on their status updates make the user feel important as if they are their own celebrity with a fan base who follow their every move. These same zombies often cyberstalk people of the opposite sex who they are interested in and spend hours looking through all of their Facebook or MySpace pictures and fanaticizing about having that person as a part of their life. These same types of fools subscribe to YouTube channels like “Fred,” “Hot for Words,” or “Sxephil.”

These kinds of people are of no concern to the establishment, since they are continuously amused and are kept out of the way. It is the people who are awake to the New World Order and who use the Internet to its fullest capacity to bypass the gate-keepers and propaganda who are a danger to their monopoly. People like you.

Carnivore

It shouldn’t come as a surprise that the FBI, CIA, NSA, and any number of other government agencies can identify every website you’ve been on, what files you downloaded, and read any email you’ve ever sent. The computer system that was first created to do this was called Carnivore and was implemented by the FBI. The system was first used during the Clinton administration after the Internet became widely used, and its sophistication has grown in step with advancing technology.

After repeated negative coverage in the press due to personal privacy concerns, the FBI changed the name of the Carnivore system to DCS1000, which stands for “Digital Collection System.” In 2001 the FBI also started using commercially available software such as NarusInsight to monitor the Internet traffic of targeted individuals.[clxvii] The software can easily monitor a target’s Internet usage in real time, as well as go back and trace them step by step, through each web page they visit, link they click, and file they download.

Most laptop computers have built in microphones and webcams that can also be used to watch and listen to suspects without their knowledge. It also shouldn’t come as a surprise that any one of the “alphabet agencies” can also get access to your computer’s hard drive, if the computer is online, and can search and copy its contents.

Google Ousts Blogger Over Name Calling

A lot of people with blogs, websites, and YouTube accounts don’t use their real name and instead use a handle or pseudonym. The reasons for using a handle usually stem from them wanting anonymity to prevent crazy stalkers from coming to their home or place of work because they are either fans of their content, or want to hurt them because they hate what they post online. Most bloggers enjoy this anonymity but there are increasing risks that if someone posts a blog or video saying derogatory things about a specific person or group, then their identity may be discovered and they may be sued or even charged with a “hate crime.”

In January 2009 a model sued Google to get the identity of a blogger who called her a “skank” and an “old hag.”[clxviii] Liskula Cohen, a blond beauty who has modeled for Giorgio Armani, Versace, and *Vogue* magazine wanted to sue the blogger for defamation.

The blog was on Google’s Blogger service and titled “Skanks in NYC” where the blogger wrote, “I would have to say the first-place award for ‘Skankiest in NYC’ would have to go to Liskula Gentile Cohen.”

A Manhattan Supreme Court judge ruled that Cohen was entitled to know the name of the blogger and ordered Google to reveal her name which is Rosemary Port. The model then filed a $3 million defamation lawsuit against the Port.

The Cyberbullying Act

The Cyberbullying Act of 2009 (HR 1966, the Megan Meier Cyberbullying Prevention Act), is named after the high-profile “MySpace suicide” of a young 13-year-old girl named Megan Meier who killed herself after being harassed on MySpace by her classmate’s mother who pretended to be a teenage boy online. It’s meant to prevent people from using the Internet to “coerce, intimidate, harass, or cause substantial emotional distress to a person” but the vague language in the bill has alarmed people because it so broadly defines “cyberbullying” that it could be interpreted to apply to practically any situation, including blog posts critical of public officials.

The National Crime Prevention Council defines cyberbullying as “when the Internet, cell phones or other devices are used to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.”

UCLA Law Professor Eugene Volokh wrote on his blog that everyday situations could be considered cyberbullying. “I try to coerce a politician into voting a particular way, by repeatedly blogging (using a hostile tone) about what a hypocrite/campaign promise breaker/fool/etc. he would be if he voted the other way. I am transmitting in interstate commerce a communication with the intent to coerce using electronic means (a blog) ‘to support severe, repeated, and hostile behavior’— unless, of course, my statements aren’t seen as ‘severe,’ a term that is entirely undefined and unclear,” Volokh wrote.[clxix]

Parry Aftab, a lawyer and Internet security expert said, “We have existing harassment statutes in all 50 states that already cover this problem. We don’t need Linda Sanchez’s law.”[clxx] (Linda Sanchez (D-CA) introduced the Cyber Bullying Act.)

According to the text in the Cyber Bullying Act, people who “bully” others via any electronic means could face fines, two years in prison, or both. This means if you sent a nasty text message to your ex or post derogatory comments on someone’s YouTube video, you could be arrested. It also means you post something insulting or judgmental about someone on your Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter pages, or on any Internet forum, then you may be violating the law.

Researchers say that anywhere from 40 percent to 85 percent of kids have been exposed to some kind of “cyberbullying,” such as being called “fat” via instant message or postings on social networking sites.

Cybersecurity Act of 2009

The Cybersecurity Act of 2009 gives the president the ability to declare a “cybersecurity emergency” and shut down or limit Internet traffic in any “critical” information network “in the interest of national security.” This bill does not define what a critical information network or a cybersecurity emergency is, because that definition would be decided by the president of the United States.

The bill also grants the Secretary of Commerce “access to all relevant data concerning [critical] networks without regard to any provision of law, regulation, rule, or policy restricting such access.” This means the government can access or monitor any data on private or public networks without regard to privacy.

This creepy, Big Brother power was introduced by none other than Jay Rockefeller, the great-grandson of John D. Rockefeller, nephew of banker David Rockefeller. When discussing how “dangerous” the Internet was and why he felt the Cyber Security Act is important, Jay Rockefeller stated, “It really almost makes you ask the question, would it have been better if we had never invented the Internet.”

So using the authority given to the government by the Cyber Security Act, in the event of an emergency such as a major terrorist attack or a pandemic, the government could turn off practically every website in the country, except ones they deemed “critical” which would be mainstream media sites that would gladly parrot government talking points about what the public should do. The government could also cause every website to “point to” or forward to a government website that contained propaganda about what had just occurred and would give only one-sided instructions about evacuations or inoculations. This is identical to the Emergency Broadcast System used in television which allows the government to interrupt every station in the country simultaneously and broadcast whatever message they want.

A Medicated and Sedated Population

27 million Americans are on antidepressants,[clxxi] which is approximately 10% of the population. People are familiar with the well-known pills such as Prozac or Zoloft, but there are thirty different drugs used as antidepressants—including: Paxil, Celexa, Lexapro, Luvox, Buspar, Nardil, Elavil, Sinequan, Pamelor, Serzone, Desyrel, Norpramin, Tofranil, Adapin, Vivactil, Ludiomil, Endep, Parnate, Remeron, and more.

Some of these drugs have extremely dangerous side effects. A 2004 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that "the risk of suicidal behavior is increased in the first month after starting antidepressants, especially during the first one to nine days."[clxxii]

In the New World Order, the fun and joy of life is often missing from where it once was. It's no wonder people are depressed since many social activities such as parties or just chatting with your neighbor for a half an hour have been replaced by videogames, watching television, or surfing the Internet.

In the vast majority of depression cases, instead of someone taking a drug to alleviate the symptoms, all they need to do in order to experience the joy in life is to simply change their lifestyle and their habits. This would then attack the root of the problem instead of just masking the symptoms by taking drugs. But the pharmaceutical industry would rather everyone take a pill every day for the rest of their lives while living the same pathetic existence they did before, rather than join some social clubs or recreational sports team to alleviate their boredom and depression.

A study of antidepressant use in private health insurance plans conducted by the New England Research Institute found that 43 percent of those who had been prescribed antidepressants had no psychiatric diagnosis or any mental health care beyond the prescription of the drug.[clxxiii] The drug companies don't want people cured, they just want their business.

Drug Commercials

The famous comedian Chris Rock, whose stand-up is often based on the truth, has a hilarious but true joke based on his observation of the massive advertising campaigns by the drug companies and the amount of money doctors and medical companies make by not curing diseases. "There ain't no money in the cure," Rock blasts. "The money's in the medicine. That's how you get paid!"

Rock goes on, "The government…they don't want you to use *your* drugs…they want you to use *their* drugs. So every night on TV you see a weird ass drug commercial trying to get you hooked on some legal shit. They just keep naming symptoms till they get one that you fucking got. It's like, are you sad? Are you lonely? Do you got athletes' foot? Are you hot, are you cold? And they just keep naming symptoms…are you depressed…do your teeth hurt?…I got that! I'm sick! I need that pill!"

The H1N1 Swine Flu Vaccine

In the summer of 2009 the government and mainstream media launched a massive fear-mongering campaign trying to convince everyone in the world that they needed to take a vaccine for the H1N1 virus—the so-called "swine flu" virus. It was the top story for days when it first hit, and then the continued fear-mongering lasted for months as a supposed vaccine was made available to the public in October. It was a pandemic and everyone needed the shot, they said, or tens of thousands would die.

In the 1970s a similar scare was spread about a swine flu virus, and after a vaccine was pushed onto the public, numerous people got sick and died from the vaccine itself. This time around with the H1N1 swine flu virus, government propagandists claimed the vaccines were safe and those who decided not to take it were even called "extremists" by the chief medical examiner in England.[clxxiv]

Public health workers such as doctors and nurses in the state of New York were first told by State Health Commissioner Richard F. Daines that they would have to take the vaccine by November 30th 2009 or risk discipline, including losing their job. After massive resistance and a public demonstration, Governor David Paterson reversed the policy, but said it was prompted by a vaccine shortage.[clxxv]

The Public Employees Federation, New York's second-largest state employees union, sued over the requirement and was awaiting a state Supreme Court hearing scheduled for October 30, 2009, when the Governor announced the decision to drop the mandatory vaccinations.

On a CNN segment broadcast in October 2009, Dr. Mehmet Oz, who is Vice-Chair and Professor of Surgery at Columbia University and a well-known medical correspondent and host of the *Dr. Oz Show* , urged everyone to get vaccinated but when Campell Brown, the host, asked him if *his* children were getting the vaccine, he said, "I'll tell you, my wife is not going to immunize our kids, cuz I've got four of them, and when I go home, I'm not Dr. Oz, I'm Mr. Oz."

Shepard Smith of the Fox News Channel told his audience not to believe the "conspiracy theories" about the vaccine, or the "negative hype" after a guest was on urging everyone to take the vaccine.[clxxvi] Dr. Nancy Snyderman, MSNBC's chief medical editor, addressed the large numbers of people who were suspicious of the vaccine and weren't going to take it telling them to, "forget the conspiracy, listen to our government agencies, these guys are telling the truth. There's no conspiracy here folks, just get your damn vaccine."[clxxvii]

One of the major reasons large numbers of people were refusing to take the shot was because of the fear of side effects similar to the ones from the 1970s swine flu vaccine. The 2009 H1N1 swine flu outbreak was so over-hyped in the mainstream media that people began to get suspicious that there was a conspiracy to scare everyone into taking the vaccine. Some saw the reason for the fear-mongering being a way for the vaccine manufacturers to make hundreds of millions of dollars from the sale of their product, while others saw this as a plot to forcibly inject everyone with thimerosal and mercury laced vaccines for the purpose of dumbing down the masses by the neurological damage caused from such preservatives found in most vaccines. Some even believed the “vaccine” was designed to kill them in order to carry out the population reduction agenda of the elite.

RFID Bracelet Hoax

In early September 2009 the person with the YouTube channel “Entimes777” posted a video with the title “URGANT MESSAGE!!!! Make this viral!!!” [the word urgent was misspelled in the title of the original video] which consisted of a video blog of a woman claiming to be a U.S. soldier who says she was training with California police to set up freeway checkpoints and force H1N1 swine flu vaccinations on the public, and then also force them to wear a bracelet containing an RFID tracking device once they were vaccinated.

The woman also claimed that those who refuse to take the vaccination at the checkpoints will be immediately taken to a concentration camp. The video was spread around the Internet and posted on numerous alternative news websites as possible evidence that such plans were being implemented.

A few days later the woman posted a new video saying that in a week she would delete the previous video from her account, which she did, but not before others downloaded the video and reposted it on YouTube where it can still be seen today if one searches for “Soldier Claims Authorities Training To Intern Americans Who Refuse Swine Flu Shot.”

Peoples’ response to the woman’s claims varied, as was noted by the variety of comments, ranging from calling her a “crackpot” to saying, “God Bless You, the Truth is out there cuz of people likeyou.”

A few months earlier on July 29th 2009, former Kansas state trooper Greg Evensen published an article on the web titled *The Death of Liberty: The Final Scene Unfolds* , where he wrote, “Have you been made aware of the massive roadblock plans to stop all travelers for a vaccine bracelet (stainless steel band with a micro-chip on board) that will force you to take the shot? Refuse it? You will be placed on a prison bus and taken to a quarantine camp. What will you do when your children are NOT allowed into school without the shot? What will you do when you are not allowed into the workplace without the vaccine paperwork? Buy groceries? Go to the bank? Shop anywhere?? Get on a plane, bus or train? Use the toilet in the mall? Nope. Police officers will become loathed, feared, despised and remembered for their 'official' duties." [clxxviii]

A video was posted on YouTube of Evenson speaking at a conference where he was asked about his article where he reiterated his claims that he had been told by numerous state troopers that such a plan was in existence, and then said that he had a "medical specialist" in Milwaukee, Wisconsin tell him that they had witnessed, "A semi-tractor trailer being unloaded at the hospital loading dock with pallets and pallets, scores of cases of metal bracelets, that once put on, would slip into place and be either pegged in there with some kind of device to hold it in place, but the band was meant to be permanent. On top is a chip, and on that chip will contain all kinds of information about you and the fact that you have been inoculated." [clxxix]

Of course no such plan was ever enacted and Greg Evenson is either a fraud or a dupe. This does not mean, however, that a future outbreak of a disease or a virus will not lead the government to launch a forced vaccination and quarantine program. Such an event will likely occur one day, but unfortunately misinformation and paranoia about checkpoints for the H1N1 vaccine didn't end here.

Vaccine Checkpoint Hoax

In mid-September 2009 some bloggers and alternative news sites posted a story after someone claimed to have come across a vaccine checkpoint east of San Diego, California. The problem was that the H1N1 vaccine wasn't even available yet. The story was accompanied by a photo the person allegedly took, which looked like an ordinary border checkpoint that are common in southern California.

The person, who remains anonymous, said they were traveling from California to Arizona, headed east of San Diego when he was subjected to an unusual checkpoint. “As I approached I noticed armed military personnel had most of the cars pulled over and there were a lot of people going in and out of a mobile trailer. The people looked confused and some upset. Seeing what was going on made me really nervous,” the person said.

He then went on to claim that he was approached by a women in military fatigues who asked him where he was headed and mentioned “something about a vaccination.”

“I got scared and told her I was a state geologist doing field research and because I was doing so much driving back and forth I had my vaccine on campus. She didn’t say anything for a few seconds and then the car behind me started honking and she got pissed and waved me on. I was so scared!,” he concludes.

One comment on the story read, “That checkpoint is for the Border Patrol along Interstate 8 just west of Imperial Valley. The reason why the BP is there is because I-8 is within one mile of the border. If you have white skin, they let you through. If you have brown skin and 20 passengers in your Ford Econoline, you are going to get pulled over and interrogated. Yes, checkpoints are un-American and Stalin-esque, but this has nothing to do with Swine Flu. Knock it off with the fear mongering. That crap gets old.”

Another skeptical reader posted, “Besides, the swine flu vaccine is not readily available yet (two more weeks). So why would they be checking to see if people had received it?”

So whoever it was that started this rumor by sending this email and photo out to alternative news sites was either a paranoid and delusional person who somehow after the fact that he was subjected to a standard border patrol checkpoint dreamed up that the officers were talking about a vaccine, or the person simply sent out the email as a purposeful hoax to see if they could fuel the fear that people had about such checkpoints being set up.

Dangers of Vaccines

Robert Kennedy Jr., the son of Robert “Bobby” Kennedy, the younger brother of President John F. Kennedy, has been active in exposing the link between thimerosal in vaccines and autism in children. In 2005 he wrote a powerful article titled *Deadly Immunity* which was published in *Rolling Stone* magazine and on Salon.com, where he said, “Since 1991, when the CDC and the FDA had recommended that three additional vaccines laced with the preservative be given to extremely young infants—in one case, within hours of birth—the estimated number of cases of autism had increased fifteen fold, from one in every 2,500 children to one in 166 children.”

Many people are aware of the dramatic increase in autism cases since the 1990s and many doctors and parents point to mercury and thimerosal preservatives that are found in such vaccines as the catalyst for the disorder. Such a link is officially denied by the medical establishment, but the information Kennedy covers in his article is extremely disturbing.

He wrote about a secret meeting of doctors where they had allegedly discussed the dangers of vaccines and how they could cover it up. He explains, “According to transcripts obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, many at the meeting were concerned about how the damaging revelations about thimerosal would affect the vaccine industry’s bottom line. ‘We are in a bad position from the standpoint of defending any lawsuits,’ said Dr. Robert Brent, a pediatrician at the Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Delaware. ‘This will be a resource to our very busy plaintiff attorneys in this country.’ Dr. Bob Chen, head of vaccine safety for the CDC, expressed relief that ‘given the sensitivity of the information, we have been able to keep it out of the hands of, let’s say, less responsible hands.’ Dr. John Clements, vaccines advisor at the World Health Organization, declared that ‘perhaps this study should not have been done at all.’ He added that ‘the research results have to be handled,’ warning that the study ‘will be taken by others and will be used in other ways beyond the control of this group.’”

Kennedy’s article is very lengthy and is available in full on the web. He also gave a very unsettling interview on MSNBC about the issue where he said, “We are injecting our kids with 400 times the amount of mercury that the FDA or the EPA considers safe.”

About thimerosal causing autism, Kennedy says, “The science is out there today for anybody who bothers to read it, and I have read it…The same regulatory bureaucrats that green lighted thimerosal originally are now trying to cover their tracks.” [clxxx]

He went on to say that he had obtained the transcript of the secret meeting of doctors, pharmaceutical companies, and scientists from our government in the year 2000, who say that the link is undeniable and that they would not give the vaccines to their own children, but conspired to hide the evidence from the American people. Kennedy concluded the interview on MSNBC by saying, “We have the guys who are supposed to be protecting American’s health, who are actually conspiring to keep this stuff in the vaccines.”

Actress Jenny McCarthy has a child who was diagnosed with autism, and she has publicly made some statements about the possible link between vaccines and autism but many people in the media ridiculed her and called her crazy because she is known for playing bimbos, although in real life she is very well spoken.

Mercury Poisoning is Good for Children?

K-Eye News, a CBS affiliate in Austin, Texas aired a brief segment about vaccines which was so absurd that it could have been a satire produced by *Saturday Night Live* . As you now know, there has long been a controversy over mercury in vaccines causing neurological damage, and even triggering autism in children, but this bizarre newscast claimed, “Mercury containing vaccines may help, not harm kids according to two new studies in the *Journal of Pediatrics* .” The story went on to say, “There have been wide spread concerns that mercury based preservatives in vaccines might impair the neurological development of children. These new studies suggest the opposite, that the preservatives may actually be associated with improved behavior.”

What they meant by “improved behavior” is basically that your children will be mildly brain damaged by the vaccines, and will be more like zombies and less likely to act like normal energetic children.

Sodium Fluoride in Drinking Water

A lot of people who see the New World Order as a threat to their way of life and the freedoms people have enjoyed in places such as America and Europe, see the fluoridation of the drinking water as a way to massively drug the population for the purpose of creating a docile populace that is more willing to accept their present living conditions. The official explanation for adding sodium fluoride to the public water supplies is to supposedly reduce tooth decay and prevent cavities, but other research shows that consuming sodium fluoride has effects on the brain such as calming people down and even reducing their IQ.

G. D. Searle & Company (which is now part of Pfizer) was a company involved with researching and developing pharmaceuticals and agriculture products and is often mentioned in regards to fluoridating drinking water in America. G.D. Searle & Company is claimed to have spearheaded water fluoridation in America and the CEO of the company between 1977 and 1985 was none other than Donald Rumsfeld.

This is the same Donald Rumsfeld who would go on to be the Secretary of Defense under George W. Bush and who helped fabricate the lies that were used to justify the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Rumsfeld was also a member of the Project For a New American Century, which published a document outlining the Neocon strategy for the Middle East and how they needed a “new Pearl Harbor” type of attack on America in order to implement it. This is a whole other issue in and of itself, but since Rumsfeld was involved in such sinister activities with the Bush administration, it is interesting to see that he was also the CEO of the company some claim was responsible for getting sodium fluoride added to the drinking water of cities around the country. Many believe that it was Rumsfeld’s job to get this done, with the goal of drugging the population on a large scale. Recall Obama’s science czar John Holdren who proposed adding a sterilant to the water supply.

There is conflicting science and conflicting claims about the effects of drinking water containing sodium fluoride. The medical establishment denies any side effects from the chemical being consumed, but there are also medical doctors and scientists who say it dumbs people down and shouldn’t be drank. We shouldn’t put it past the secret establishment to drug the people through the water supply, so as a precaution it is advised to drink bottled water without the sodium fluoride additive, or have a filtering system installed on your tap water at home. There are also atmospheric water generators that take the water out of the air and can generate several gallons of clean drinking water per day, but these systems are very expensive.

Science and Technology

Advances in science and technology are a double edged sword, creating amazing communication abilities and life saving devices, but also creating powerful killing machines and nightmarish mind control devices capable of implanting thoughts into people’s minds through invisible radio waves. Such a claim may spark an image of a tin foil hat, but as you will soon learn, such technology is very real.

In the New World Order, advanced technology is sometimes looked at with suspicion due to the capacity for abuse and the corrupt power-hungry elite and politicians who are in control of such technology. Chemtrails, weather modification, HAARP, Eugenics, secret and immoral medical testing and more, are often mentioned as proof of such abuse. Some of these subjects had been considered conspiracy theories by most people for decades, but have recently been the focus of headlines around the world admitting such technology exists and has been used in the past, or is currently being used today.

HAARP

The High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) is allegedly an “investigation project” that is funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which is an agency of the Department of Defense. The US Air Force and the Navy are also involved with HAARP and claim its purpose is to investigate the ionosphere and any communication or surveillance capabilities it may enable. The project was started in 1993 and is located north of Gakona, Alaska. Photos that are available of some of the facility look like acres and acres of radio antennas numbering approximately 180 total, which are over 70 feet tall and are all linked together to form one large antenna. It’s reported that this antenna system can aim 3.6 million watts of energy into a specific location of the ionosphere. The largest legal AM radio station in America broadcasts 50 thousand watts, making HAARP 72 times more powerful.

Suspicions and controversy over HAARP grew shortly after its creation when scientists familiar with such technology claimed that it was being developed as a weapon capable of knocking out missiles, enemy satellites, and even causing earthquakes if desired.

HAARP is only one of several ELF (Extremely Low Frequency) wave transmitters. The United States owns three different facilities which are located in Gakona, Alaska; Fairbanks, Alaska; and one in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. Russia also has a similar facility in Vasilsursk, and the European Union has one in Tromso, Norway.

In the 1980s a physicist named Bernard Eastlund developed some of the concepts later used in HAARP and proposed using radio frequency waves to affect the ionosphere in a way that would disable enemy missiles and knock out targeted satellite communications, but the technology has far more dangerous capabilities than this.

A brief series on the History Channel called *That’s Impossible* featured an episode that dedicated some time to looking into such technology and concluded, “Working in tandem, these transmitters could potentially alter the weather anywhere in the world, changing the jet streams course entirely, triggering massive rain storms or droughts. Even hurricane steering would be possible by heating up the atmosphere and building up high pressured domes that could deflect or change the course of hurricanes.”

Dr. Brooks Agnew, of the Phoenix Science Foundation, used ELF waves to discover underground pockets of oil and gas in what is called earth tomography. He believes that this same technology accidentally triggered an earthquake in 1987 in Roseburg, Oregon. Dr. Agnew reported that as soon as his team energized the ELF wave generator there was a 4 to 4.5 earthquake. In the episode of *That’s Impossible* , Dr. Agnew designed and built a scale model of the ground conditions found in Rosenberg, and also had a small ELF wave generator aimed at it. As soon as he turned the device on, a large rock sitting on a slanted slope representing a fault line, immediately slid downward. In this demonstration he used a simple 30 watt stereo speaker to generate the ELF waves. Remember, HAARP is capable of blasting 3.6 million watts.

In 1995 a book titled *Angels Don't Play This HAARP: Advances in Tesla Technology* was published by Nick Begich Jr., who is the son of Congressman Nick Begich Sr., (D-Alaska) and brother of Senator Mark Begich (D-Alaska), where he claimed that the project *in its present stage* could be used for "geophysical warfare."

In August 2002, Russia issued a press release about HAARP reading, "The U.S. is creating new integral geophysical weapons that may influence the near-Earth medium with high-frequency radio waves…The significance of this qualitative leap could be compared to the transition from cold steel to firearms, or from conventional weapons to nuclear weapons. This new type of weapon differs from previous types in that the near-Earth medium becomes at once an object of direct influence and its component." [clxxxi]

This statement is interesting because Russia has its own ionospheric heater system nearly identical to HAARP which is called Sura, and the real reason for issuing the statement showing concern over HAARP was believed to be due to America withdrawing from the Russian-American Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002.

The Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques is an international treaty that was signed by over 75 different countries in 1978, prohibiting the military or other entities acting on behalf of a government from using environmental modification techniques in a hostile manor. Why was there a treaty signed that weather modification won't be used as a weapon if it isn't possible for such a thing to occur? Obviously people familiar with the technology are worried about it and are aware of the disastrous effects.

With all the hysteria over so-called climate change and global warming, it should be noted that some believe HAARP is capable of causing such a thing since it is an ionosphere heater and tampers with the earth’s atmosphere.

Former Governor of Minnesota Jesse Ventura hosted a TV show on the Tru network called *Conspiracy Theory* and investigated HAARP in one episode. As Ventura and his video team were attempting to enter the facility, all of their equipment malfunctioned.

Ventura stated in a radio interview promoting the show, “I went all the way up to Alaska and went to this location…it’s a very interesting thing going on up there. It falls under the military, and yet it is given the distinction of being an unclassified research center, yet I was not allowed in. Now, bear in mind I used to have a top secret clearance with the United States government during my six years as a member of underwater demolition team twelve and SEAL team one. I was also a mayor and a governor, yet I was not allowed to go into this supposed unclassified research center. If it’s unclassified [then] anybody should be able to go in there.[clxxxii]

This episode of *Conspiracy Theory* left Jesse Ventura visibly upset after he learned that HAARP could be used as a massive weapon and nobody would even know. Ventura’s show was historic because it marked the first time that certain issues were addressed in a serious manner on TV.

Microwave Auditory Effect

The subject of mind control is an extensive and disturbing one, and for this book, we will focus only on one aspect of this practice involving the microwave auditory effect, which is a way of using microwave frequencies to beam sounds and even words and sentences into peoples’ heads which are perceived auditorially by them but appear to be coming from inside the person’s own head or from God. For an expanded analysis of mind control including brainwashing and a history of the MK-ULTRA program you may wish to read *The Resistance Manifesto* .

While the subject of mind control is vast with the majority of methods involving some kind of physical contact with the subject, technology using radio waves to literally beam thoughts into peoples' heads is infinitely more insidious because it can be used covertly without the consent or knowledge of the person being targeted. Again, such an idea sounds absurd, but you will discover is very real.

Such experiments have been carried out at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in what was called Project Pandora where externally induced auditory input microwave audiograms of words or oral sounds created the effect of hearing voices. An Air Force document on the subject stated, "The signal can be a 'message from God' that can warn the enemy of impending doom, or encourage the enemy to surrender."

In 1996 the United States Air Force submitted a patent which was later awarded on October 22, 2002 for a device called the Radio Frequency Hearing Effect (Patent number: 6,470,214) where the description reads, "A method of encoding an input audio signal a(t) to produce a double sideband output signal having a ωc carrier frequency, which when transmitted to the head of a receiving subject, will by the radio frequency hearing effect induce a thermal-acoustic signal in the bone/tissue material of the head that replicates the input audio signal and is conducted by the bone/tissue structure of the head to the inner ear where it is demodulated by the normal processes of the cochlea and converted to nerve signals which are sent to the brain, thereby enabling intelligible speech to be perceived by the brain."

In 2007, the *Washington Post* ran an article titled *Mind Games* which investigated claims of individuals who believed the government was using such devices on them. The beginning of the article makes it seem as if the people are crazy, but then further into it the article actually outlined some of the technology and research the government has been involved in that is able to accomplish such a thing. It reads, "In 2002, the Air Force Research Laboratory patented precisely such a technology: using microwaves to send words into someone's head. That work is frequently cited on mind-control Web sites. Rich Garcia, a spokesman for the research laboratory's directed energy directorate, declined to discuss that patent or current or related research in the field, citing the lab’s policy not to comment on its microwave work.” [clxxxiii]

A successful African American novelist named Gloria Naylor, best known for her novel *The Women of Brewster Place* , which was made into a miniseries by Oprah Winfrey, has a lesser known book titled *1996* which describes her experiences as an alleged victim of microwave mind control. She begins, “I didn’t want to tell this story. It’s going to take courage. Perhaps more courage than I possess, but they’ve left me no alternatives…I am in a battle for my mind. If I stop now, they’ll have won, and I will lose myself.”

She explains how she thought she had a mental illness at times such as schizophrenia, but says she witnessed other strange occurrences such as people mimicking her every movement and people driving by her isolated vacation home.

“I would lie in bed while the conversations were going on, and I’d ask: Maybe it is schizophrenia?” she wrote. The voices, she said, would taunt her and swear at her, telling her she was stupid and that she couldn’t write. Naylor went to see a psychiatrist and was given a prescription for an antipsychotic medication, but it didn’t stop the voices. She says she was a victim of such harassment by the voices for almost four years until she discovered mind-control forums on the Internet and learned about technology and secret government programs involving such phenomena.

Whether or not Gloria Naylor was simply hallucinating and had some kind of mental illness that eventually was cured, or whether she was a victim of microwave auditory effect technology may never be known. If in fact she was not hallucinating or having some kind of neurological problem causing her to perceive the voices, then why would she be targeted by such technology? One possible explanation could be that someone who worked on such systems and has access to the microwave transmitters knew Naylor personally and perhaps had a personal vendetta against her and found joy and revenge in tormenting her. Perhaps an ex-boyfriend from high school or college later became involved in the government program and chose to target her for his personal amusement.

Perhaps she was chosen as an unknowing test subject who was toyed with and monitored to study what the results of such harassment would be. Or, perhaps maybe she really did have a temporary bout with a mental illness and after learning about such technology her mind somehow corrected itself and was healed. But the fact that such technology does exist leads one to wonder what kinds of horrible tests have been carried out to study the effects of this technology.

Certainly the CIA or the Department of Defense would want to see what people would do when they all of a sudden started hearing voices in their head. Surely such tests were carried out on ordinary citizens without their knowledge and their reactions were monitored to learn how they would react to such a scary occurrence. And surely most of these victims kept such a thing to themselves and didn't even tell their closest friends or loved ones out of the fear that they would be seen as completely insane for "hearing voices."

But just think for a minute about the ramifications of such technology. Such a system could easily make people think that they were hearing God, or even the Devil, or that they were going completely insane. And how would they know such a system was being used, since practically nobody is even aware that such technology even exists. There would be no evidence that such a system was being used on a targeted individual, unless the device's operator was apprehended with some strange looking electronic device that was seized as evidence and analyzed by electrical engineers who would likely be able to determine its purpose. And people who are victims of such technology would most likely *never* mention it to *anyone* since "hearing voices" is the epitome of being "crazy." It is for these reasons that this author feels it is extremely important that the public be made aware of such technology, and that we learn how to detect, and prevent its use.

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged mastermind behind the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks was said to claim that Allah (the God of Islam) had visited him in his prison cell one night and told him to cooperate with his captors and that things would be much easier on him and his fellow detainees. If this report is accurate and he actually did believe that God visited him in his cell one night and told him this, then it certainly would not be far-fetched to think that the microwave auditory effect was used on him to make him think that he was hearing God. This is, of course, just a hypothesis, and if such a thing did occur it likely would never be declassified because of the incredible power that such a technique holds. Think about this.

What if such a strategy was used in prisons? What if officials used this technology to speak to high profile suspects and told them to confess to their crimes and not to tell anyone that “God” had told them to do so. Or, what if this strategy was used to trick the person into doing, or saying things that are completely immoral? What if “God” told the prisoner to kill another inmate, or to confess to the crime even though they were innocent? If the person believes in God, such an experience would be hard to resist. After all, if God told you to confess to a crime you didn’t commit, then surely there must be some bigger picture that he sees and you don’t, or else why would he tell you to confess?

The ramifications of abuse of such systems are endless. How many politicians, business leaders, or political activists could be targeted by such technology and have an experience that “God” was talking to them. The possibilities are extremely disturbing to think about and this is the same technology that will most likely be used by the counterfeit Christ of the New World Order in an attempt to convince everyone that he has supernatural powers and is God himself.

Sonic Nausea Systems

While using the microwave audio effect may be limited to those with fairly complicated technology, a widely available and inexpensive device that uses ultra-sonic waves to induce headaches and nausea can be purchased on the Internet or in catalogs selling law enforcement products. The Shomer-Tech catalog sells such a device for only $29.99. The online catalog reads, “Hiding this device in your inconsiderate neighbor’s house might put an end to their late-night parties. The abusive bureaucrat’s office, the executive lunchroom... the possibilities are endless for that small portion of inventive payback.”

Another more advanced version is also sold called the Super Sonic Nausea system which is advertised to, “disrupt speeches, demonstrations, crowd dynamics, etc. This device has been used to ‘influence’ more of these than you might expect. Deployed near the podium, you might just have a case of an increasingly un-impressive speaker with diminished sharpness and lacking concentration, or perhaps is even unable to complete his presentation. Or, loitering youths on your property might be enticed to move along with no confrontations necessary.”

This “Super Sonic Nausea system” is said to be a “rarely-available government model” that is produced by a company called DSG Laboratories. This version sells for only $99.99. Just imagine for a minute what kind of similar devices are in existence but not made commercially available. Such devices are extremely small and portable, and could easily be covertly used to inflict discomfort on any number of people, in any number of situations, without anyone even having a clue.

Chemtrails

Since approximately 1995 or 1996, increasing numbers of people have been intrigued by, and suspicious of what look like white contrails (short for condensation trails) that follow the path of jetliners in the sky but do not seem to dissipate as fast as such vapor trails used to in the past. These new type of trails that linger in the sky have been called “chemtrails,” short for chemical trails, and are believed by some to be the result of some kind of additive that is being mixed with jet fuel. These suspected additives are said to be used for a variety of reasons, usually for some kind of weather modification or to expose massive numbers of people to some kind of chemicals intended to alter our cognitive abilities.

Skeptics of these claims say that on most days when people see what they call chemtrails (chemical trails), they are really only seeing contrails (condensation trails) caused by a combination of certain atmospheric conditions and a newer type of jet engine called the high bypass ratio turbofan engine, which was first placed on the market in the mid-1990s. This is the same time that people started to notice these strange vapor trails that lingered in the sky for longer than they had in the past. Chemtrail skeptics say that the newer high bypass ratio engines compress the air and the moisture to a higher degree than the older types of engines would, and say this is the reason for the trails lingering for longer periods of time than in the past.

Sometimes the vapor trail disappears right after it comes out of the back of the jet, and other times it lingers in the sky and slowly disperses. Some people call these the chemtrails, while others say atmospheric conditions and high bypass ratio turbofan engines cause this to occur. Adding to the controversy over chemtrails are the numerous instances of governments in multiple countries having declassified various programs where it has been admitted that they sprayed large amounts of dangerous chemicals and biological agents into the air.

Mainstream News Coverage

KSLA news in Louisiana aired a segment on November 9th 2007, which asked, “Could a strange substance found by a southwest Arkansas man be part of a government test? Well, that’s the question at the heart of a phenomenon called ‘chemtrails’ now getting wide spread attention.”[clxxxiv] The segment covers a man who began seeing suspicious trails in the sky that seemed to differ from the typical condensation trails left behind jets. The man says he also noticed small particles falling from the sky from the trials, so he collected some in bowls that he placed out in his back yard. KSLA news had the samples tested at a laboratory and found that they contained high levels of Barium, a toxic substance. 6.8 parts per million, in fact, which is over three times the level deemed toxic by the EPA. There were other strange chemicals in the samples as well.

In May 2006, NBC in Los Angeles, California aired a similar segment investigating the phenomena and interviewed several individuals who were concerned about chemtrails.

HR 2977

On October 2, 2001, Congressman Dennis Kucinich from Ohio introduced a bill (H. R. 2977) titled the “Space Preservation Act of 2001” which mentions chemtrails as an exotic weapon. The bill was to “preserve the cooperative, peaceful uses of space for the benefit of all humankind by permanently prohibiting the basing of weapons in space by the United States, and to require the President to take action and implement a world treaty banning space-based weapons.”

Dennis Kucinich is an interesting Congressman who doesn’t seem to be concerned about addressing controversial issues which are outside of the mainstream political paradigm. In 2008, he addressed Congress with 35 articles of impeachment against George W. Bush, and read them out loud in their entirety on the floor of the House of Representatives. Among the reasons he listed for impeachment were lies about the 9/11 attacks, secretly torturing detainees, and illegally wiretapping American citizens.

In Pop Culture

Alternative rock singer, Beck, released a song titled “Chemtrails” on his 2008 album, *Modern Guilt* . Some lyrics say, “I can’t believe what we’ve seen outside…You and me watching the jets go by.” On April 27, 2009, the musician Prince mentioned chemtrails during an interview on PBS with Tavis Smiley. During the interview Prince discusses a DVD by comedian and activist Dick Gregory and explains that, “he said something that really hit home about this phenomenon of chemtrails.” Prince goes on to mention an increase in aircraft trails that coincided with an increase in fighting and arguing in his neighborhood.

On March 3, 2009, a television station in Australia aired a film titled *Toxic Skies* , which starred Anne Heche who plays a medical doctor investigating a series of mysterious illnesses. She concludes that the illnesses are due to “chemtrails” which are described as toxic chemicals added to aircraft fuel and dispersed over the population though the exhaust. *Toxic Skies* was written by Andrew Erin and Kyle Hart.

Unclassified US Army Testing of Bio Agents

In 1977 the US Army unclassified hundreds of pages of documents titled “US Army Activity in the US Biological Warfare Programs” which detail that 239 populated areas were contaminated with biological agents between 1949 and 1969 by the Army in secret testing programs.

One test involved scientists disguised as ordinary passengers who were spraying bacteria in Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.[clxxxv] Another involved a jet releasing material over Victoria, Texas.[clxxxvi] The report includes information about a test where a Navy ship sprayed material in the San Francisco bay that traveled more than thirty miles. Other tests involved similar spraying of agents on New York City's subway system, which affected people with weak immune systems.[clxxxvii]

Government Accountability Office Report

In February, 2008, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report titled, *Chemical and Biological Defense, DOD and VA Need to Improve Efforts to Identify and Notify Individuals Potentially Exposed during Chemical and Biological Tests* which admitted that tens of thousands of people in the military, as well as civilians, may have been exposed to biological agents at the hands of the Department of Defense.

Several years earlier in 2003, the Department of Defense reported that 5,842 military personnel and approximately 350 civilians were potentially exposed during testing between 1962 and 1973 in a program called Project 112. Many of the people who were identified as being subjected to these secret tests without their knowledge have suffered from long term illnesses as a result.[clxxxviii]

Project SHAD

Another on the long list of government experiments using unwilling humans as test subjects occurred during Project SHAD, which stands for Project Shipboard Hazard and Defense. This program used primarily United States military personnel and was part of Project 112, which began in 1962 during the Kennedy Administration.

The official purpose of Project SHAD was “to identify U.S. war ships vulnerabilities to attacks with biological or chemical warfare agents and to develop procedures to respond to such attacks while maintaining a war fighting capability.”

46 tests were done involving exposing military personnel to chemical and biological agents without their knowledge. VX nerve gas, Sarin, and Tabun gas (all of which are classified as weapons of mass destruction by the United Nations) were some of the chemical agents used, as well as biological agents including Bacillus globigii, ociella burnetti (which causes Q fever) and Francisella (which causes rabbit fever).

The US government officially denied that Project SHAD even existed until 1998, and as a result of this denial, soldiers who were affected by the tests were not able to receive any aid for any health issues they had as a result of the tests. If it were not for a dedicated investigative journalist named Eric Longabardi, who began looking into the program in 1994, the public nor the victims may have never been aware of its existence. Years later in 2002, Congressional hearings were held on the subject which prompted a class action lawsuit on behalf of Navy personnel who were exposed during the testing.

Weather Modification

Fairly recently at the turn of the 21st century, any discussion of modifying the weather such as causing massive rain storms or creating blue skies, was labeled nothing more than a conspiracy theory or fanciful thinking. But incredibly effective and powerful weather modification programs have not only been declassified by American and British governments that occurred back as far as the 1950s, but are now openly discussed in mainstream news and such practices are becoming common knowledge.

Besides simply causing rain or clearing clouds, the practice of weather modification holds the power to be used as a massive weapon against an enormous geographic area without the population even suspecting anything other than bizarre weather.

An interesting series first aired on the History Channel in the summer of 2009 titled *That’s Impossible* , which covered the existence of various advanced technology that seems as if it was pulled directly from science fiction movies. One episode covered “Weather Warfare” and presented evidence that the U.S. military was able to make massive and strategic changes to weather around the world, including creating hurricanes or torrential rain storms. Brief clips of the show can probably be found on YouTube.

Project Cumulus

In the 1950s the British government developed a weather modification program called Project Cumulus which used cloud seeding and tested the potential of causing massive amounts of rain to effectively bog down enemy movement due to the downpour and saturated ground conditions.

On August 16, 1952, a major flood occurred in the town of Lynmouth in north Devon after nine inches (229 millimeters) of rain fell in one day, causing the East Lyn River to overflow. This flood destroyed homes, businesses, and bridges, and killed thirty-five people. Several days before this disaster, a seeding experiment from Project Cumulus took place over southern England. While it is denied, of course, that Project Cumulus had anything to do with the miraculous flooding, it certainly doesn’t take a stretch of the imagination to think that the two events were not merely a coincidence.

In fact, an old radio broadcast on Radio 4 contains an interview of an aeronautical engineer and pilot named Alan Yates, who worked on Project Cumulus at the time, where he explains, “I was told that the rain had been the heaviest for several years—and all out of a sky which looked summery...there was no disguising the fact that the seedsman had said he’d make it rain, and he did. Toasts were drunk to meteorology and it was not until the BBC news bulletin [about the Lynmouth flood] was read later on, that a stony silence fell on the company.” [clxxxix]

Project Cumulus was allegedly closed down after this tragedy, and classified documents involving the project went missing. [cxc] The UK is not the only government to meddle with such forces. The United States not only investigated the possibilities of such science, but actually used it as a weapon during the Vietnam War.

Project Popeye

The United States military was involved in a cloud seeding operation during the Vietnam War which extended and enhanced the monsoon season over Laos and caused landslides along roadways, softened road surfaces, and washed out river crossings. Operation Popeye, as it was called, went on from 1967 to 1972 and was considered a success.

Investigative reporter Jack Anderson published a story in March 1971 about these operations, and the following year Operation Popeye was mentioned in the *Pentagon Papers* [cxci] and also in an article in the *New York Times* .[cxcii]

The stories led to investigations by members of Congress and then the U.S. House and Senate passed a series of resolutions banning environmental warfare. The Environmental Modification Convention (ENMOD), formally the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques is an international treaty that prohibits the use of such environmental manipulation.

China’s Admitted Modifications

In October 2009 China’s air force used a variety of chemicals to clear the smog out of the air for a parade celebrating the 60th anniversary of Communist China. The day before the parade, chemicals were dispersed in the sky which caused a light rain and cleared the fog.

The senior air force meteorologist in China bragged, “Only a handful of countries in the world could organize such large-scale, magic-like weather modification.” [cxciii] The parade was the biggest in China’s history.

The meteorologist said they used certain chemicals to make it rain, and if the rain persisted for too long threatening the parade, then they had another batch prepared to spray that would stop it.

Clearing the skies of smoggy air was only just the beginning of China’s weather modifications that were widely reported in 2009. Just one month later, the Chinese state media reported that their meteorologists had made it snow in Beijing after seeding the clouds, causing the country’s earliest snow fall. The government implemented such a strategy in an effort to fight a continuing drought.

“We won’t miss any opportunity of artificial precipitation since Beijing is suffering from the lingering drought,” said Zhang Qiang, head of the Beijing Weather Modification Office. [cxciv]

Russia’s Use of Weather Modification

In 2009 the mayor of Moscow publicly promised that he would keep it from snowing on the city by using the Russian Air Force to spray chemicals into storm clouds before they reached the capitol, causing them to release their snow outside the city. One of the major reasons for the project is to ease the city from the need to constantly plow the streets, which are usually covered in snow from November to March.

In past years Moscow had used weather modification to ensure that rain didn’t spoil their Victory Day and City Day parades. “You know how every year on City Day and Victory Day we create the weather?” Yury Luzhkov, the mayor stated. “Well, we should do the same with the snow! Then outside Moscow there will be more moisture, a bigger harvest, while for us it won’t snow as much. It will make financial sense.” [cxcv]

His plan was approved by the Moscow City Council. Such a feat involves having the Air Force spray cement power, dry ice, or silver iodide in the clouds at a cost of $6 million dollars, which is reportedly half of what the city would spend on street clearing. Some are not happy about the plan because the outlining suburbs of the city will get the extra snow falling on them as a result.

Eugenics

Dictionary.com defines Eugenics as, “the study of or belief in the possibility of improving the qualities of the human species or a human population, especially by such means as discouraging reproduction by persons having genetic defects or presumed to have inheritable undesirable traits (negative eugenics) or encouraging reproduction by persons presumed to have inheritable desirable traits (positive eugenics).”

The practice of Eugenics was at the core of Nazi Germany’s occult and racist ideologies and fueled their belief that the Aryan race needed to be purified from other inferior races so they could develop into god-men in future generations. The practice of Eugenics essentially takes the breeding practices used in animals such as race horses or show dogs, and applies it to humans with the hope of desired traits being passed onto the next generation, while at the same time preventing others from breeding because they are not seen as fit enough to pass on their genes.

If one subscribes to the ideologies of Eugenics, as Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party did, it is difficult not to reduce humans down to nothing more than animals and develop a social Darwinist world view where one who is dubbed “more genetically fit” looks at others who are not, as if they are subhuman, or not as valuable of a person.

Since the rule of the Nazi party has long since passed, many think that the practice of Eugenics crumbled along with them, but some see the modern elite or Illuminati as continuing the practice through covert means, attempting to pass their intelligence onto the next generation of Illuminati members, while continuing the structure of a small intellectual and wealthy elite being in power and ruling over the dumbed down and inferior masses. Well before Hitler came to power, back throughout history, the upper class of every society enjoyed better living conditions, food, medical care, and education, which they did their best to preserve and prevent the lower classes from partaking in. Year upon year of poor nutrition, health care, and harsh working conditions kept the lower classes of people from fulfilling their true potential as human beings.

Many who oppose the New World Order and have investigated the secret societies which hold the true power and wealth, see such Eugenics practices continuing today by the masses of population in developed countries living on processed food that is filled with preservatives or genetically modified organisms (GMO), while the elite enjoy healthy natural foods and home cooked meals prepared by their chefs and dieticians. Many also believe that the elite Illuminati and their social networks do not take the vaccines given to most people, believing that the vaccines themselves and their mercury preservatives cause neurological damage and have other biological harmful effects that are inflicted on the masses, while the elite quietly avoid such things.

Add to this the widespread abuse of alcohol and drugs, and people's pathetic eating and exercise habits, and you clearly have a recipe for tens of millions of unhealthy people who actually enjoy their own slow and gradual deaths.

A popular evolutionary theorist from the London School of Economics, named Oliver Curry, predicts that the human race will one day split into two separate species, one being a ruling elite who are intelligent and attractive, and the underclass of dumb, ugly, goblin-like creatures. Such an event, Curry says, will happen 100,000 years in the future, and believes the human race will reach its peak by the year 3000, at which point the subspecies will begin to regress.[cxcvi]

"Physical features will be driven by indicators of health, youth and fertility that men and women have evolved to look for in potential mates," says a report written by Curry which also says that humans will be between 6ft and 7ft tall and live up to 120 years.

Curry's report, which was commissioned for the Bravo TV channel, says that men will develop deeper voices, symmetrical facial features, and bigger penises, while women all will have large breasts, hairless skin, and glossy hair.

Dr. Curry said, “The report suggests that the future of man will be a story of the good, the bad and the ugly.”

Such ideas are similar to those found in H. G. Wells 1895 novel, *The Time Machine* , where Wells describes the human race as having evolved into two different species, the healthy and intelligent ruling class, the Eloi, and the ugly, slave class, the Morlocks.

Margaret Sanger

Next to Adolf Hitler, perhaps the other name most closely associated with Eugenics is Margaret Sanger, who was an American birth control activist in the early 1900s and later founded Planned Parenthood. Sanger was a negative Eugenicist, meaning that she believed that human hereditary traits can be improved through social interventions such as selective breeding, sterilization, and even euthanasia.

In her 1932 book, *A Plan for Peace* , Sanger proposed that the American government “Keep the doors of immigration closed to the entrance of certain aliens whose condition is known to be detrimental to the stamina of the race, such as feebleminded, idiots, morons, insane, syphilitic, epileptic, criminal, professional prostitutes, and others in this class barred by the immigration laws of 1924.”[cxcvii]

In this same book, Sanger urged that the government, “Apply a stern and rigid policy of sterilization and segregation to that grade of population whose progeny is already tainted or whose inheritance is such that objectionable traits may be transmitted to offspring.”[cxcviii]

Her first pamphlet on the subject read, “It is a vicious cycle; ignorance breeds poverty and poverty breeds ignorance. There is only one cure for both, and that is to stop breeding these things. Stop bringing to birth children whose inheritance cannot be one of health or intelligence. Stop bringing into the world children whose parents cannot provide for them.

Herein lies the key of civilization. For upon the foundation of an enlightened and voluntary motherhood shall a future civilization emerge.”

In 1923 Sanger opened the first birth control clinic in the United States after receiving grants from John D. Rockefeller Jr’s Bureau of Social Hygiene. Further grants were made from Rockefeller but were done so anonymously after 1924 to avoid the Rockefeller’s connection with Sanger’s agenda.

Global Warming / Climate Change

Global warming, as nearly everyone knows, is the idea that human activities and industries are dramatically contributing to changes in the earth's temperatures which proponents claim threatens humanity. Supporters of this idea have recently changed the terminology they use to "climate change," instead of "global warming" since regions of the earth are actually cooling, thus conflicting with their idea that the earth is getting warmer. Former Vice President Al Gore has undoubtedly become the face of global warming advocates since his 2006 film *An Inconvenient Truth*, which won him an academy award for best documentary.

While no decent human being would want to pollute the earth by littering or dumping harmful chemicals into the environment or not properly disposing of them, many global warming advocates have criticized people for setting their thermostat too low during the Summer and running the air conditioner for extended periods of time to keep their home or business cool and comfortable. These same green freaks also get angry at people for not using specific types of light bulbs or appliances. Such fanatics have been using a new term saying that such activities create a "carbon footprint," which is the total amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) that is emitted by an organization, person, or a specific product.

"Carbon footprints" and "greenhouse gas emissions" are seen as a threat to humanity by global warming fanatics, and bigger government and new taxes and regulations are said to be the only hope for mankind. Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi once stated in a conversation about global warming that "I'm trying to save the planet,"[cxcix] a very lofty goal for a politician, when such a cheesy slogan has usually only been said by comic book superheroes like Superman.

Those who simply don't believe the propaganda and fear mongering are often labeled "global warming deniers" with the intentional connection to the term "holocaust denier." The biggest pushers of the man-made global warming theory, such as Al Gore, who is basically the symbolic leader of the idea since his 2006 film *An Inconvenient Truth* , frequently say “the debate is over,” or “all scientists agree” with their ideas, when in reality, there are scores of scientists who refute the man-made global warming propaganda, and some even say the earth is cooling.

Most of the key players behind the global warming propaganda, such as politicians, scientists, and businessmen, have large financial interests in new government regulations which supposedly will work to save the world.

Perhaps the brains behind the climate change hysteria is a billionaire named Maurice Strong who is considered to be one of the leading proponents of the United Nations involvement in international affairs. Strong was the CEO of Petro-Canada, one of Canada’s largest oil companies, and is on the board of directors for the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX), which is the first greenhouse gas emission registry reduction system for emission sources. 10% of the Chicago Climate Exchange is owned by Goldman Sachs (GS) and another 10% is owned by Generation Investment Management (GIM), which is an investment firm started by Al Gore who is also the chairman. Hank Paulson, who was the Treasury Secretary under George W. Bush and former CEO of Goldman Sachs, was also a founding member of GIM.

While Maurice Strong was born in Canada, he spends most of his time living in China where he has been working to build the communist country into a superpower, and continues to use his wealth and influence to strengthen the grip of climate change propagandists.

One of the most visible and outspoken people who says that man-made global warming is a hoax perpetuated by those who have financial interests in the matter is Lord Christopher Monckton, who is a former advisor to Margaret Thatcher. Monkton asserts that a man named Ben Santer deleted parts from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report (IPCC), that showed conflicting data about climate change, in order to make the report appear to fully endorse the idea of man-made climate change. Ben Santer doesn’t deny these claims, and in fact admitted that he removed parts of the report before its publication. The IPCC was created by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), which interestingly enough, was headed up by Maurice Strong after the UN General Assembly unanimously voted him in as the chair.

The Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol is a formal agreement of the United Nations aimed at fighting global warming that was adopted back in 1997. It is part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC or FCCC), which is an international treaty with the goal of achieving "stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system."

As of November 2009, 187 states have signed and ratified this protocol, which states that the countries commit themselves to a reduction of four greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride) by 5.2% from their levels in 1990.

Climate-gate

People's suspicions that climate change was a hoax aimed at justifying carbon taxes, more government regulations, and the New World Order, had many of their suspicions confirmed after an incident that came to be known as "climate-gate" ensued. One of the most prominent institutions that is credited with studying "climate change" is the Hadley Climate Research Unit in Britain. In November 2009 Russian hackers were able to steal thousands of documents including emails that were exchanged between climate scientists over the previous ten years and published the information on the Internet. Some of the email exchanges show how scientists were trying to manipulate data, hide information showing declining temperatures, and prevent other scientific research from being published in academic journals that is counter to the global warming propaganda being pushed by man-made global warming advocates.

The emails were admitted to be authentic, although officials at Hadley deny there were any attempts to manipulate data to conform with the idea of man-made global warming.

In one exchange the center’s director, Phil Jones, emailed Michael E. Mann at Pennsylvania State University and asked whether academics who question the link between human activities and global warming should have their work published in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, which is a global organization that evaluates the risk of so-called climate change allegedly caused by human activity.

“I can’t see either of these papers being in the next IPCC report,” Jones wrote. “Kevin and I will keep them out somehow—even if we have to redefine what the peer-review literature is!”

In another email, Phil Jones and Michael E. Mann discuss how they can pressure an academic journal not to accept the work of scientists whose research doesn’t conform with their climate change belief. Michael Mann wrote, “Perhaps we should encourage our colleagues in the climate research community to no longer submit to, or cite papers in, this journal.” [cc]

In one message sent to a long list of colleagues, Phil Jones himself wrote of having completed a “trick” with recent temperature data to “hide the decline.”

An email from Kevin Trenberth of the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado spoke of the unusually cool autumn that Colorado was experiencing, and went on to say, “The fact is that we can’t account for the lack of warming at the moment and it is a travesty that we can’t.”

Phil Jones, the head of the Climatic Research Unit, released a statement saying, “My colleagues and I accept that some of the published e-mails do not read well,” but still denied that they showed any fraud was occurring.

Left wing radical Nancy Pelosi, who is an avid climate change pusher, was asked about the emails and if they changed her stance on man-made global warming. “You call it ‘Climate-gate,’ I call it ‘email-theft-gate,’” she answered, and was more concerned about the emails being stolen than their shocking content.

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair commented on the climate-gate scandal and said the science may not be "as certain as its proponents allege" but he still believed the world should act to fight climate change, and said it would be "grossly irresponsible" not to.

The popular novelist Michael Crichton, author of *Jurassic Park* , wrote a book titled *State of Fear* (2004) which contains a plot centered around scientists and politicians who conspire to create public panic about global warming. Crichton is known for writing novels with an underlying factual basis, and in *State of Fear* he includes twenty pages of footnotes which he said provide facts found in the non-plotline elements of his story.

Arnold Schwarzenegger's Damage Control

Shortly after the climate-gate scandal began and wouldn't go away, California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger pulled a publicity stunt where he displayed a map of San Francisco and warned that in one hundred years, much of it would be underwater due to rising sea levels caused by climate change. His map was unveiled on Treasure Island alongside Eric Schmidt, the CEO of Google, where Arnold said, "Within a century, Treasure Island, this place where we are right now, could be totally under water…It is technology in the end that will save us." He also warned that 2.5 trillion dollars in property and assets were at risk.

The map he showed along with a propaganda video was posted on a new website www.climatechange.ca.gov. The video was narrated by Schwarzenegger and warned of California's temperatures rising 7 degrees in the next century, water shortages, and virtually all snow melting on the mountains in California, which he said would, "nearly eliminate skiing, snowboarding, and other recreational activities."

It's interesting that Schwarzenegger is on board with the climate change advocates because he is a Republican, when this issue is clearly divided between party lines with many Republicans not believing the hype, while most Democrats embrace the idea in order to justify bigger government and more taxes and regulations. Schwarzenegger is an elite insider who has visited the Bohemian Grove and is friends with Nazis and Illuminati members, so it is no surprise that he is on board with the climate change fear-mongering.

Fox Admits Inserting Global Warming Propaganda in TV Shows

A short four minute promotional video produced in 2006 by News Corporation openly admits that executives have been incorporating global warming propaganda into popular television shows produced by Fox which is owned by News Corp. The video starts with Fox Television Chairman Gary Newman who says, “we want to set an example in our industry and other industries that no matter what the size of your carbon footprint is, you can make a difference.” The video then cuts to a montage of television shows which aired on Fox, and the global warming propaganda that News Corp. (Fox’s parent company) incorporated into those shows. Clips from *Prison Break* , *The Simpsons* , *King of the Hill* , *My Name is Earl* , *Family Guy* , *24* , and more were all shows containing these messages.

For example, a clip of *Family Guy* shows a character in a car dealership where he says, “Look at all those Hummers…what kind of jerk would drive one of those?”

Kiefer Sutherland even gives a heartfelt message to the camera about reducing global warming. Dana Walden, Fox Television Chairman says, “the most powerful way that we could communicate the commitment on behalf of our company was to change the practices within the production as well as work in a message about global warming, about environmental changes, and about empowering people to take responsibility.”

Chairman Gary Newman echoes this admitting, “The biggest thing we have done is inserting messages about the environment into some of our content.”

Cap and Trade

Certain researchers and alternative radio hosts had been warning for years that a new kind of tax would one day be forced on the American people, and on citizens of countries around the world. This so-called “carbon tax” seemed like the figment of people’s imagination since it appeared too outrageous for governments to implement a global warming tax, but as the years went by, such a plan began to peak its head out from the secretive Bilderberg group meetings and into the halls of Congress and global conferences.

Cap and Trade (also called emissions trading) is an approach allegedly using economic incentives to reduce greenhouse gasses and pollution. The term Cap and Trade comes from the idea that a government or a global committee will set a limit, or a cap, on the amount of “pollution” that a factory (and possibly a household) can emit in a given period of time. These companies or households will purchase permits which grant them the right to have allowances or credits that represent their authorized amount of greenhouse gasses they may emit. These companies then cannot emit more than they are allowed to, because of their cap, unless they purchase more “credits.” These purchased credits are called a “trade,” which is basically a fee for emissions.

Carbon Footprint on Food Labels

As everyone knows, nearly every food product you buy at a grocery store has a nutritional label on it listing the ingredients, calories, fat content, carbohydrates, etc. Such labels are very useful in helping determine how much of a particular item we should consume (or if we should eat it at all) depending on our health and nutritional goals or needs. But in 2007 an odd new kind of food label began surfacing in Britain, which listed the greenhouse gas emissions created by the foods production, transport and disposal.

“More and more, businesses are looking for ways to reduce their impact on the environment. To help them achieve that we need a reliable, consistent way to measure these impacts that businesses recognize, trust and understand,” said Ian Pearson, Britain’s environment minister. “This will be fundamental in our efforts to move Britain towards a low-carbon economy in the decades ahead.” [cci]

This bizarre fear-mongering continued in the coming years. In 2009, ABC's *Good Morning America* interviewed Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* , who discussed the carbon footprint left behind by a McDonald's quarter-pounder with cheese.

Pollan said, "You need oil to make the fertilizer to grow the corn. You need petroleum to make the pesticides to grow the corn. You need oil to move it all around the country…The result is a product that takes a huge environmental toll and obviously takes a health toll as well." He then said that a quarter-pounder amounts to 26 ounces of oil.

It will be interesting to see if the practice of listing a product's carbon footprint on its packaging will become a trend that companies are pressured or forced to follow in the future.

The Day After Tomorrow

Perhaps the first major film, in what will likely be a long and growing list in the coming years, involving climate change was *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004). The film stars Dennis Quaid who plays a scientist who tries to alert the United Nations about global warming, but after his attempts fall on deaf ears, global warming causes glaciers to melt which affect ocean currents and disrupts the entire earth's climate causing an ice age. The film grossed over 540 million dollars and was the second highest grossing movie not to be number 1 at the box office.

An interesting side note besides the film serving as a massive propaganda piece for climate change pushers, is that the Vice President in the film was played by Kenneth Welsh, who looks strikingly similar to the then Vice President Dick Cheney. The film was written, directed, and produced by Roland Emmerich, who admitted that he intended the characters of the President and the Vice President to convey criticism of the environmental policies of then President George W. Bush.[ccii]

Fringe Topics

When looking into the New World Order, one will find countless verifiable pieces of evidence that elite politicians have been covertly working to erode the Constitution and America’s sovereignty and integrate the country into a global government system, much of which has been accomplished through secret societies or private organizations like the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderberg group, the Skull and Bones society, and other Illuminati groups.

When someone is new to this information, many people may find some of the claims they come across unbelievable and perhaps incorrect, or even a hoax. After more study and tracing sources and references, many things that people once found hard to believe can be proven beyond a doubt to be factual. Other information, however, is more difficult to verify, and some does fall into the realm of speculation or conjecture.

On the fringe, one will find a large amount of information about a variety of topics connected to the New World Order, some of which is even considered far-fetched and crazy to many who are fairly aware of how strange the New World Order can be. Stories of aliens from other planets said to work with elite government officials, the shape-shifting reptilians, Satanism, and even organized ritual child abuse are subjects that are all connected in some way to the New World Order. Since people will inevitably come across such subjects as they continue on their journey down the rabbit hole, some of these fringe topics will be addressed briefly here in order for you to have a solid foundation of understanding when confronted with such ideas.

Satanism

While the satanic and Luciferian philosophies of elite secret societies have been briefly touched upon in this book, the subject is still often considered to be on the fringe of the New World Order. Elite politicians have openly stated their desire for a “New World Order” and we can easily see the corrupt legislation that hopes to further erode the Constitution and various liberties Americans have enjoyed for hundreds of years. It’s easy to document and prove the moral decay of society and the influence of the mainstream media on our culture, but the personal and private philosophies or spiritual beliefs of New World Order kingpins are not as easily shown.

Often the satanic and occult aspects of the New World Order turn people off because on the surface they seem completely ridiculous and absurd. Others aren't too concerned with them because there is an abundance of evidence of corruption and greed that can more easily be exposed. But it is important to be familiar with the irrefutable evidence that elite politicians, bankers, and businessmen are deeply involved in the occult, and the occult plays a huge role in the creation of the New World Order. Helena Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine,* Alice Bailey's writings, the rituals of the Skull and Bones society and the Bohemian Grove clearly illustrate a Luciferian doctrine that the elite adhere to. This is one of the most shocking aspects to the New World Order, but when one fully understands that is the mindset of elite individuals, things begin to make more sense.

With that said, if you are attempting to educate others about the New World Order, I strongly advise that you carefully address the issue of Satanism and do not make it the central issue when explaining what is happening in the world. Bluntly telling someone new to this material that a group of powerful Satanists run the world is going to make you look insane and cause them to not even want to listen to anything else you have to say. There is a time and a place for these discussions, but you must be careful not to begin your discussion by talking about the elite's desire to reduce the world's population and then immediately jump to calling them a bunch of Satanists who do rituals out in the forest of the Bohemian Grove. This would be like explaining basic math to a child in school, and then immediately telling them about calculus. You must build a foundation of understanding before you present such material.

Sexual Abuse

While much of the information surrounding the New World Order such as government corruption, out of control taxes, and elite secret societies running the show are disturbing, nothing is more painful to read about than the grotesque allegations of child abuse said to occur at the hands of elite Illuminati members. It is believed that some high powered politicians and businessmen participate in sexual abuse against children, particularly boys. The most well-known scandal of this type occurred in the late 1980s, in what was called the Franklin Cover-up.

A font page *Washington Times* article ran the headline, “Underage Prostitution Ring Ensnares VIPs with Reagan, Bush” [cciii] and described how underage boys were taken on a tour of the White House around midnight by one of their abusers. Allegations have been made that such abuse took place inside the Bohemian Grove by elite members and was even videotaped.

If one can come to grips that such abuse takes place, one can’t help but wonder why someone would be interested in doing such things, and how could such events not be rare, isolated incidences committed by some lone sicko, but instead are done by an organized group of wealthy politicians. Answers are not easy to find, but inevitably come down to the perpetrators finding enjoyment in having absolute power over another helpless human being. Other explanations involve what is called sex magic (sometimes spelled magick) where the practitioners enjoy an adrenaline rush from committing such atrocities, and believe it opens their mind up to be able to harness metaphysical powers.

Planet X

There are a small number of people who believe that a large planet not known or denied to exist by mainstream astronomers, will one day either collide with planet earth and destroy it, or that it will orbit near the earth and then the aliens claimed to live on this planet will then invade earth. This supposed planet is either called Planet X or Nibiru.

This idea is believed to have originated in 1995 by a woman named Nancy Lieder who runs the website ZetaTalk.com. Lieder describes herself as an emissary who receives messages from extra-terrestrials who live in the Zeta Reticuli star system and says that she was chosen by the aliens to warn people that Planet X would arrive in May 2003 (later revised to 2010) and that a pole shift would destroy the world.

Another individual associated with Planet X is Zacharia Sitchin, who has written numerous books about how he believes that aliens called the Anunnaki created the human race by using their own DNA and mixing it with monkeys, thus creating humans. Sitchin hypothesizes it is a planet in a highly elliptical orbit around the Sun which completes an orbit every 3,600 years.

David Morrison, a Senior Scientist at NASA's Astrobiology Institute at Ames Research Center, says he receives 20–25 emails each week asking him about Nibiru. He said some of the people are worried about such an event, and others say that he is part of a conspiracy to keep the truth of this impending event from becoming public.[cciv]

Nephilim and Anunnaki

The Nephilim are beings mentioned in the Old Testament of the Bible which are sometimes described as supernatural beings or fallen angels who came to earth and had children with human woman. Many Christians are surprised that such references are made in the Bible, and in the Contemporary English translation it actually calls them "supernatural beings." Those who believe that there were such beings that came to earth and had children with human woman believe that these creatures and their offspring were killed off during Noah's flood.

Others say the term does not refer to fallen angels or supernatural beings, but instead is a title given to a hero or great men of size and strength. If you search the Internet for this kind of information you will come across various photographs of what look like archeological digs that have uncovered enormous skeletons that look human, or have strange looking skulls that are said to be from the ancient Nephilim, but all such photos are frauds and have been made with Photoshop.

There are a small fraction of people who believe that the Nephilim are in fact supernatural beings whose bloodline continues to exist today and makes up the inner circle of the Illuminati. These people also believe that royal families in the ancient past were descendents of the Nephilim and say that this is where the idea of the divine right of kings comes from. You may occasionally see family trees that trace many famous presidents and members of the British Royal Family to numerous other famous and powerful leaders back through history. In these people's minds, the half demon, half humans maintained power for generation after generation and kept interbreeding with each other in order to centralize their power.

An idea similar to the Nephilim comes from the Anunnaki, which refers to Sumerian and Babylonian gods from ancient times. Zecharia Sitchin and others believe that these Anunnaki are actually some kind of aliens who came to earth in the ancient past and created people by tweaking the DNA of monkeys to make humans. According to this theory then, these ancient humans saw these aliens as gods. Some who believe this kind of theory say that the Anunnaki created humans as slaves in order to mine gold that they say was needed to repair the atmosphere at the home planet of the Anunnaki. This, they say, is the source of human's obsession with gold and the reason it has been used as money for 5000 years.

Some believers in the Anunnaki think that they live on Planet X and will return to earth some day and rule over humans like they did in the ancient past. The writers of *Transformers 2* the movie were clearly aware of these theories and in the film viewers found that ancient Transformers came to earth and were worshiped as gods in Egypt thousands of years ago. These Transformers even looked similar to the elaborate head dresses that the pharaohs used to wear. Zecharia Sitchin and others say that they get their ideas from interpreting ancient hieroglyphics that they say ancient man used to record these events. While most people see ancient Egyptian writings about gods living on the earth as mythology, some interpret them as being literal history and say that these "gods" were actually aliens.

Reptilians

You may occasionally hear people say that "Reptilians" (or Reptoids) run the New World Order or comprise the inner circle of the Illuminati. What these often mentally deranged people are referring to is the idea that the elite Illuminati rulers are actually some kind of aliens or beings from another dimension who pose as humans so they can rule over us like gods. The most well-known author and speaker in the genre of the Illuminati and the New World Order to profess such beliefs is Britain’s David Icke. Icke professes that these “reptilians” as he calls them, have to drink human blood in order to keep their human form or else they would “shape-shift” back into a reptile-looking creature, and be exposed. In recent times, Icke has minimized his focus on reptilians and instead talks about more tangible issues. David Icke and his claims are discussed further and debunked in *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* (2009).

It’s interesting to note that the premise for the 1983 science fiction series called *V* was based on a group of human-looking aliens who traveled to earth in need of natural resources. As the series progressed, the viewers learned that the Visitors, as they were called, were actually lizards who wore rubber suits to make themselves look human, and actually ate human beings for food. A remake of the series was released in 2009. While many see the 1980s version of *V* as being the inspiration for David Icke’s wild theories, supporters of the “reptilian agenda” insist that the producers of *V* are just trying to cover up for the reptilians that rule the world.

December 21st 2012

Depending on when you are reading this book, the infamous date of December 21, 2012 is either rapidly approaching, or is now history and a thing of the past along with the over-hyped and sensationalized Y2K event that many feared would shut down computers around the world and unleash the apocalypse. For those who remember the weeks building up to the year 2000, you can understand the hype around 2012. As you likely know, some believe (or are making claims they know to be false in order to sell books) that a cataclysmic or transformative event will occur on or around December 21, 2012 which is believed to be the end-date of a 5,125-year-long Mayan calendar.

Some say that earth’s magnetic field will reverse due to the earth being aligned with the sun and the center of the galaxy, and some people falsely believe that all nine planets will be aligned in a straight line, causing a tremendous gravitational pull on the oceans, making them shift and flood most of the planet. Some New Age proponents are looking forward to the date and think the planet will undergo some metaphysical shift or transformation marking the New Age. And of course, some people think that the December 21, 2012 date marks the beginning of the apocalypse or the return of Jesus.

As early as 2009 entire shelves in Barnes and Noble book stores were full of books about 2012 and these foolish claims. A movie with the title of *2012* was released in 2009 and had over the top special effects of the earth being nearly destroyed as a result of an enormous solar flare causing massive earthquakes and floods. *2012* the movie was directed by Roland Emmerich, who also wrote and directed the climate change propaganda film, *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004).

As the December 21, 2012 date passes and the world doesn't end and the Anunnaki aliens don't invade earth, many of the believers in the 2012 prophecy will grasp at straws and point to unrelated minor events as proof that the prophecies were correct, but the catastrophe wasn't as bad as people thought. Others will simply go on with their life and forget they believed such foolishness, and some will even say that the calendar must have been misinterpreted and will move the date of earth's destruction into the future, such as the year 2020 and will relive the hype all over again.

Black Helicopters

People who talk about conspiracies or the New World Order are often ridiculed by others and asked about "black helicopters," so the subject will be briefly addressed here to clarify how this term came to be used as an insult. Its use began to be used by militia and patriot groups in the 1990s as a description of black unmarked helicopters used by the military for various exercises or domestic missions. The helicopters drew suspicion by some and were said to be from the United Nations or part of a military takeover of the United States. The concept stems from the fact that many government agencies use dark and unmarked helicopters such as the ones deployed during the Ruby Ridge standoff in 1992.

Some paranoid and delusional people think when a helicopter flies over their house that it is watching them or tracking them somehow. Law enforcement have been known to fly helicopters over residential areas at a low altitude and use an infrared sensor to identify grow houses used specifically for growing marijuana because the houses emit an abnormal amount of heat from all the indoor lighting, which can be detected by infrared scanners.

Today most mentions of black helicopters are by people using the term as an insult, such as asking people who talk about the Illuminati if they've "seen any black helicopters." The people who use this term as an insult like this show their own ignorance of important issues about the New World Order.

Underground Bases and Tunnels

An entire chapter can be found in this author's previous book, *The Resistance Manifesto* , detailing the existence of massive underground bases and tunnels that are engineering marvels and is a fascinating subject to explore. In brief, there are a series of underground tunnels in the United States and most likely the rest of the world, that connect to various underground bases, and have access points from government (and likely private) buildings. The tunnels are created by TBM's (Tunnel Boring Machines) which are enormous structures that burrow through solid rock. The Robbins Company is the largest builder of TBM's and their website www.TheRobbinsCompany.com contains photos of these massive machines and information about their capabilities.

The existence of tunnels and underground bases have been openly admitted in several instances, including specific locations, but the extent of the underground tunnel network remains something the government won't discuss. It's likely a network spans the country, as well as the globe. The tunnels exist as a passage way for politicians and elite government officials to use in the event of a massive nuclear attack on America, so they can travel to different parts of the country that haven't been hit and then can safely return to the surface. They operate as a secret underground subway system.

A man named Phil Schneider would forever link these structures to the New World Order when he gave a series of lectures in the 1990s claiming to have worked on such structures, and during this work he says he got into a shootout with some aliens that were living in the tunnels. Schneider's fascinating but fraudulent claims are detailed and debunked in *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* if you wish to read more about this subject.

But for the sake of this book, it should be known that such tunnels and bases do exist, and can be hidden in plain view. For example, the Greenbrier is a luxury resort in West Virginia that secretly had a bunker built inside during a fake renovation in the 1950s. The bunker had remained secret from the public for over 30 years until a 1992 article in the *Washington Post.* Immediately after the article was published the bunker was decommissioned and has been a tourist attraction for visitors of the resort ever since.

Manchurian Candidates

The subject of mind control appears on the surface to be nothing more than science fiction, but the ability to manipulate people’s behavior against their will has been thoroughly investigated by the CIA and other government agencies. The term “Manchurian Candidate” refers to someone who is a victim of mind control who is “programmed” to assassinate someone. Many people don’t believe such a thing is possible, but after looking into the declassified documents from MK-ULTRA and learning the power of hypnotism, the idea of a mind controlled assassin “programmed” to kill isn’t far-fetched at all, and instead can be seen as a very real scientific fact.

In 1979 a former State Department Officer named John D. Marks published a book titled *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate* which details the CIA’s efforts to create such assassins. Only a small amount of material was declassified regarding these programs but the available information clearly shows that as far back as the 1950s the US government was developing such methods.

Some suspected Manchurian Candidates are as follows: Sirhan Sirhan, who assassinated Senator Robert F. Kennedy in 1968. Mark David Chapman, who murdered John Lennon in 1980. Some believe the Columbine High School shooters, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, were programmed assassins, as well as Nidal Malik Hasan who killed 13 people and wounded 30 others in the Fort Hood shooting in Texas in November 2009.

Fake Suicides and "Accidents"

Aside from being able to mentally program people to become assassins or carry out tasks against their will, as if they were a robot, elements within the CIA have the ability (and have used this ability) to murder people and then make it look like they either committed suicide or died in an unfortunate accident. The term "suicided" refers to an incident where someone is murdered but their death was made to look like a suicide.

This is able to occur by various black operation groups that work for the CIA and have guns that use a C02 cartridge to shoot a tiny piece of a frozen tranquilizer into the subject, rendering them unable to move or knocking them unconscious. The agents then are able to stage a hanging, push the victim off a tall building, or even placing the victim's own gun in their hand and point it at their head and pull the trigger.

Deborah Jeane Palfrey, the woman known as the DC madam who operated an elite prostitution service with powerful clients in Washington DC supposedly committed suicide in May 2008. She had previously stated publicly that she would never do such a thing, and even feared she would be killed in a staged accident or suicided.

[ccv] Gary Webb, a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle* largely responsible for uncovering the CIA's involvement in cocaine trafficking in the 1980s allegedly committed suicide. Webb was found dead from two (that's right, two) gunshot wounds to the head. Sacramento County coroner Robert Lyons determined that it was suicide.

Two teenage boys, Don Henry and Kevin Ives were murdered in 1987 and had their bodies placed on a railroad track in attempts to cover it up after they had curiously stumbled onto the CIA's cocaine importing operation located in Mena, Arkansas. The boys murders were initially ruled suicides, but after their families pushed for an investigation, a grand jury ruled they were murdered but named no suspects. A total of six other people connected to this case were murdered in the coming months as well, as the perpetrators attempted to silence all witnesses.[ccvi]

On July 11, 1990, the lead investigator of the Franklin Cover-up, Gary Caradori, was killed when his small plane had a mid-air explosion. Prior to the flight Caradori had informed others working on the case that he had obtained critical evidence that would prove a group of perverted politicians and businessmen with connections to the Reagan administration were involved in sexually abusing children.

Many people in Britain and around the world think that Princess Dianna was murdered and a member or members of the paparazzi used some kind of laser pointer to blind the limo driver, or believe the car had been tampered with causing it to crash. The list of suspicious deaths and suicides of people who could implicate high level politicians in various crimes goes on and on.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault is an enormous seed bank located about 800 miles from the North Pole on the Norwegian island of Spitsbergen. The vault holds a wide variety of plant seeds from around the world and keeps them frozen in order to preserve them in case of a global catastrophe such as a nuclear war. Such an event could potentially destroy an entire region of the world, so seeds for food, vegetation, trees, and other plants are kept in the vault, in the event that the natural habitat containing such species would be destroyed.

The Svalbald Seed Vault seems like the result of someone’s paranoid delusion, but the project is very serious, as well as expensive. It’s interesting that some people ridicule others who have long-term storable food in case of an emergency such as a natural disaster, massive terrorist attack, sudden economic collapse leading to food shortages, or rioting preventing people from getting to a grocery store to buy food. Such a precaution is a good idea, and the fact that millions of dollars have gone into the Svalbard Seed Vault shows that even the elite are prepared for the worst.

Conclusion

You are now, undoubtedly, able to see the New World Order and what is likely in store for your future. You may still find some of the information in this book to be unbelievable, and if this is the case, feel free to check the numerous sources that have been cited, many of which are from congressional hearings, declassified documents, mainstream media, or sound bites you can find for yourself on YouTube. It is at the very least interesting that in the 1980s and 1990s, when patriots and concerned citizens would warn of a New World Order being planned and slowly implemented, that they were called crazy and conspiracy theorists, yet today, we have prominent politicians around the world publicly stating their desire for such a thing, even using the term "New World Order" to describe their utopian dream. Some still think it's only a conspiracy theory, and some wrestling fans think it refers to Hulk Hogan and his gang of wrestlers who were attempting to "take over" World Wrestling Entertainment with their group who called themselves the "New World Order."

The uninformed and apathetic public has only helped the elite Illuminati construct their global government and Big Brother surveillance society. New taxes have been implemented without much resistance, and more and higher taxes are only right around the corner. While most of the population is lost in a world of professional sports, sitcoms, and Facebook; others like you are aware, or are becoming aware that the American dream is being stolen, and are learning of the people and institutions which are to blame. Whether this book is a starting point on your journey to awakening, or whether it is just one more resource you have discovered to assemble the pieces of the puzzle, you should be grateful that your eyes are open. Where and how you channel your knowledge, energy and activism from this point forward is an important decision that you will have to make. Will you just keep this information to yourself, or will you tell others? Will you be an armchair quarterback, or will you attend public rallies and town hall meetings? Will you be afraid to speak up when faced with propaganda and lies, or will you say something?

It can be difficult to articulate and explain some of this information to others who are completely unaware of it. It can be hard to cite sources off the top of your head, or to answer all the questions they may have. It is for these reasons that I encourage you to pass this book on to them so they can have at their fingertips the exact quotes, sources of information, and the details necessary to show them what they are missing.

Even if you have been looking into the New World Order for many years, I can confidently say that this author has compiled the best, most accurate, and important information about the subject and if you spend any amount of time reading my other books, I can assure you that you will find pieces of the puzzle you did not even think existed.

People often ask me how I got involved in all of this, or how I was able to write several books on the subject at a fairly young age. The answer is that I studied mainstream media in college and saw from an early age how the media can influence culture, trends, attitudes, and actions. I had to write a lot of papers in college on a variety of subjects and found myself able to explain complicated concepts and issues in a way that could be easily understood by the reader. I enjoyed staying up late listening to music and working on my papers. I also excelled at public speaking. It is a gift, and I am a talkative person who is fascinated by the political process and the mysteries of life.

When I discovered the hidden realities of the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks it led me on a journey down the rabbit hole and I began to see the big picture of the New World Order. I found a whole new world of information that was right in front of me the whole time, but I hadn’t stopped for a minute to even look. I began documenting the information I found so I could get it clear in my mind and share it with others. I sifted through the countless allegations and claims about a wide variety of issues all stemming from 9/11, the Illuminati, or the New World Order. I know after speaking with others and getting emails from people who also find themselves on a similar journey, that it is a life-changing one.

The fact that you are reading this shows that you are on a path similar to the one I was on when I first discovered this kind of material. It is my sincere hope that by reading my books, listening to my interviews, and watching my videos that you can learn to separate the facts from the fiction and not get distracted by useless controversies that arise in the context of this information.

I, like most of us, was once duped by the establishment, and out of my anger at them, and out of my love and respect for my fellow human beings, I feel it is my duty to do what I have done and inform others of the corrupt, power-hungry scum that are making life more difficult for others and who ruthlessly take advantage of others and couldn't care less about their health, happiness, or well-being.

Their game is primarily that of occult knowledge, which means hidden knowledge, and selfishness and greed. Some people feel helpless and say that the elite are too strong or that the prophecies are going to get fulfilled no matter what we do, so they throw up their hands and surrender. If Martin Luther King Jr. had such an attitude that the system was too strong, then he wouldn't have had the courage to stand up against it and peacefully fight the injustice that millions of African Americans faced.

There are countless of examples of public outrage that have led to new policies being abandoned or laws being changed. While we can also list examples that the establishment has won in the face of massive resistance, we must not overlook the times when they have lost. There is a famous quote that says, "all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."

So now that this book is finished and you know what the New World Order is, and what its creators and supporters envision it to be in the future, my question to you is, will you do nothing and let them win without a fight?

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THE BILDERBERG GROUP

FACTS AND FICTION

Mark Dice

Introduction

Every Spring since 1954 an elite group of around one hundred of the world's most powerful politicians, businessmen, bankers, media executives, and international royalty have been quietly gathering for a secret meeting in an evacuated five-star hotel while being protected by armed guards who stand watch. Inside, for three days, the attendees engage in lengthy off-the-record talks about the top issues facing the world. They're called the Bilderberg Group, or often just "Bilderberg" for short, and for over a half century there wasn't much more than a peep about the meeting in the American mainstream media.

For decades, many people believed this meeting was an urban legend, but as you will soon see, it is very real and very well documented. Rumors about the Bilderberg Group do seem like something out of a Hollywood movie with the cliché claims of a "secret meeting" of a group of wealthy men trying to "take over the world," but "as crazy as it sounds," in recent years a lot of allegations about the Bilderberg Group that had floated around on the Internet began to surface in some mainstream publications. To many people's surprise, such a meeting exists, and the "rumors" were true.

Between 100 to 120 of the world's top politicians, businessmen, financial fat cats, military leaders, heads of intelligence agencies, reporters, and executives from major media outlets fly half way around the world to gather once a year in the end of May or early June in a closed down fancy hotel for three days and are protected by private security contractors and local police who stand watch outside to prevent any uninvited guests from dropping by. Temporary security fences are even set up to prevent anyone from stepping foot on the property, and attempt to block the view from any onlookers who are watching from across the street to see who shows up.

The attendees arrive one after the other in tinted Lincoln Town Cars driven by professional drivers. Independent journalists and photographers have been able to discover the time and place for many of these meetings in recent years and have gotten clear photographs of some of the men and women who have attended, but most still refuse to even acknowledge they know anything about it.

Some people refer to them as “the 1%” but this label is far from accurate if you do the math. One percent of the earth’s seven billion people is *70 million* people! Bilderberg is more like the .00001% which is approximately 700 people, a figure that accounts for the steering committee and the regular attendees over the past few decades.

The meeting is named after the Bilderberg Hotel located in Oosterbeck, Holland, which was the site of their first gathering organized by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands in 1954. Then, and still today, attendees agree not to discuss publicly who was in attendance or what specifically was discussed, and (until recently at least) most of them have denied any knowledge of the Bilderberg Group at all when—on the rare occasion—someone asked them about it—usually a citizen journalist or YouTuber.

For decades, news of the shadowy Bilderberg Group spread in so-called “anti-government” Patriot circles, in underground newsletters, and “conspiracy” websites, until the advent of YouTube and social media finally forced *some* major mainstream media outlets to admit that Bilderberg is real and some very powerful people attend. After these decades of news blackouts, with the rise of social media and video sharing sites like YouTube, slowly more and more major news outlets have begun to at least mention the Bilderberg Group, albeit ever so briefly, and usually including the caveat that “conspiracy theorists” are upset or “paranoid” about them. Through the increase in popularity of alternative news websites and the emergence of social media, more and more people began learning about this strange and secretive meeting, and it got to a point where mainstream outlets basically had to at least mention it was happening in attempts to avoid looking like they were covering it up by purposefully avoiding the issue.[1]

For years, if anyone called into any of the major syndicated talk radio shows like Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Glenn Beck and others, and told the call screener they wanted to ask about the Bilderberg Group, that person's call would never be put through. "We're not taking calls on that right now, sorry. Click." If the person calling gave the call screener a bogus question and happened to be put on air and then asked the host about the Bilderbergers, they would be ridiculed and the call would be dropped immediately (something that's happened to me many times).[2]

Why not take it seriously? Why pretend for so many years they don't exist? Are these radio talk show hosts and other major news editors and reporters "in on it?" Has there been a "conspiracy" to keep the meeting out of the press? It's foolish to deny that there hasn't been an arrangement between the Bilderberg Group and the American mainstream media to keep them out of the news and to have the top political analysts and talk show hosts pretend like they don't know anything about them all these years. When 100 of the world's most influential politicians, media owners, banking executives, and business elite fly half way around the world to meet for three days in a closed down luxury hotel that's fenced off and surrounded by armed guards, nobody can say that's not a newsworthy or interesting event!

Critics see this small, tightly knit group as an Aristocracy or an Oligarchy, comprised of men (and some women) who see themselves as having the right to rule because of their wealth and "superior intelligence" who put their own interests above anyone else's—with little to no regard for the consequences. Without the proper checks and balances put in place, which was the intention of the Founding Fathers when they split the government into three different branches (Executive, Judicial, and Legislative) in what's called the separation of powers, a government can become so powerful it is difficult to oppose them when their actions are unfair or illegal. And when their discussions aren't open to public scrutiny it makes keeping them in check even more difficult.

Many people believe that this meeting is possibly a violation of the Logan Act, which prohibits unauthorized citizens from negotiating with foreign governments, a law that was implemented to prevent people from interfering with international relations between the United States and other countries. It specifically states, “Any citizen of the United States, wherever he may be, who, without authority of the United States, directly or indirectly commences or carries on any correspondence or intercourse with any foreign government or any officer or agent thereof, with intent to influence the measures or conduct of any foreign government or of any officer or agent thereof, in relation to any disputes or controversies with the United States, or to defeat the measures of the United States, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than three years, or both.”

Is the Bilderberg Group negotiating foreign policy? Is this where the ruling elite come to a consensus to guide the direction of the world in their favor? Or is it simply “just another conference?” Or, are the “conspiracy theorists” right? What is the evidence? How were they first discovered? What are they doing? And should the public be concerned? Do they choose who the next president of the United States will be? Do they covertly coordinate economic booms and busts?

Do they manipulate foreign policy and decide which wars will be launched and when from behind these closed doors? Is this annual meeting of the power elite really just not interesting or newsworthy? Has there been a cover-up or a conspiracy to keep them out of the headlines? Why the secrecy and the denials for so many years? Is this the “shadow government?” Those questions and more will be answered in *The Bilderberg Group: Facts & Fiction*.

THE MARRIOTT HOTEL IN CHANTILLY, VIRGINIA PROTECTED BY A TEMPORARY PRIVACY AND SECURITY FENCE SET UP FOR THE 2012 MEETING.

PROTESTERS TRYING TO IDENTIFY THE ATTENDEES AS THEY ARRIVE FOR THE 2012 MEETING IN CHANTILLY, VIRGINIA.

The Attendees

Each year the list of attendees reads like a who's who of the ruling class. Just a small sample of some of the people who attend are: David Rockefeller and Henry Kissinger, who have both been regular attendees for decades (and helped finance the group as is shown on their tax returns); banking bigwigs like the CEOs or chairmen from Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, HSBC, Deutsche Bank, JP Morgan Chase, American Express, etc; not to mention the head and former head of the Federal Reserve Bank like Ben Bernanke and Alan Greenspan, as well as U.S. Treasury secretary Timothy Geithner and other international financial fat cats like the head of the World Bank and the IMF.[3]

In the tech world we've seen Microsoft founder Bill Gates, Google's Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt;[4] Jeff Bezos CEO of Amazon.com (just before buying the Washington Post in 2013);[5] Louis Gerstner the CEO of IBM; Peter Thiel, founder of Pay Pal and major investor in Facebook; as well as Chris Hughes, the co-founder of Facebook and other tech titans all attend.

Over the years leading media figures such as the publisher of the *Washington Post*, as well as the chief editors of the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and other major newspapers and magazines have all attended or regularly attend. Executives from the top television networks like News Corp CEO Rupert Murdoch and representatives from ABC, NBC, and CBS are also key fixtures, as well as popular political commentators and reporters.

Top military brass and U.S. intelligence figures like David Petraeus (former head of the CIA), General Michael Haden (former NSA chief), General Keith Alexander (current head of the NSA);[6] Donald Rumsfeld, former Secretary of Defense and one of the architects of the Iraq War;

General Colin Powell; NATO’s Secretary General, the head of Britain’s Secret Service; and others are also regular attendees.

Top American politicians like Secretary of State John Kerry, Senators John Edwards, Tom Daschele, Chuck Hagel, Hillary Clinton have all attended; as well as members of British Parliament and European royalty. Even Presidents Clinton and Ford (before they were elected). No seated president ever attends because their schedule and whereabouts is so closely monitored they couldn’t risk brining so much attention to the event.

Could all these globalist movers and shakers be getting together just to have coffee and hang out? Or, as many believe, could this think tank be a place where an elite consensus is arrived about how to best maintain and expand their power and influence?

The British newspaper *The Observer* (sister paper to *The Guardian*) surprisingly ran an article back in 1963 that remarked, “These people [Bilderbergers] maintain that the future belongs to technocrats, because the rumor among them is that the grave questions of international affairs are too delicate to be left in the hands of diplomats. However, the ‘clandestiny’ of their debates shows that they only seek one thing: effective domination over the peoples of the world, but by dissimulating [concealing] themselves and by leaving the responsibility of the governments in the hands of petty politicians.”[7]

PROTESTERS TRYING TO GET A PHOTO OF WHO IS ARRIVING IN THE BACK OF THIS TINTED LINCOLN TOWN CAR AT 2012 BILDERBERG MEETING.

Recent Meetings

The conference is held in various countries throughout Europe at luxury hotels and usually every fourth year it returns to the United States—on election years, which is no coincidence—often meeting in Chantilly, Virginia which is just a short drive outside Washington D.C. This makes it convenient for politicians and the Eastern Establishment in New York City to attend without drawing too much suspicion since they don't have to leave the country and create a cover story for their prolonged absence.

The entire hotel is cleared out around noon the day before the meeting and no reservations are accepted during this time so only Bilderberg members and guests are allowed in the hotel. Actually—to be more specific—only members and guests are allowed on the property since barricades and temporary fences are set up and local police and private security teams patrol the perimeter and guard the entrances.

The hotels which are chosen are secluded on large plots of land, and never downtown in a major city. This makes it easier for members and guests to arrive without being identified. If the meeting were held at a hotel in downtown Manhattan for example, onlookers could easily hang out on the side walk or across the street to catch a glimpse (or take photos or video) of the attendees coming or going. It is for this reason the location is always at a resort-style hotel with plenty of land, hidden away from nearby streets and neighboring buildings.

The hotel staff is also sworn to secrecy and may likely be coerced into signing non-disclosure agreements to prevent them from talking to the press (and the protesters). When I was at the Marriott in Chantilly, Virginia the day before it was cleared out for the 2012 Bilderberg meeting, I asked the bar tender if he knew what was about to happen over the next few days and he said he couldn't talk about it.

There is a core group of regulars, many of whom have been involved for decades. A steering committee decides who is invited and what topics will be disguised. Each day’s meeting is broken up into two sessions in the morning and two sessions in the afternoon, except the final day which only has the two morning sessions. A different topic is discussed during each session. Some recent meeting locations and dates are as follows:

- 2015 Telfs, Austria (May 29th - June 3rd) at the Interalpen hotel.

- 2014 Copenhagen, Denmark (May 29th - June 3rd) at the Marriott hotel.

- 2013 Watford, United Kingdom (June 8th - 9th) at the Grove Hotel.

- 2012 Chantilly, Virginia, USA (May 31st - June 3rd) at Westfields Marriott hotel.

- 2011 St. Moritz, Switzerland (June 9th - 12th) at the Suvretta House.

- 2010 Sitges, Spain (June 3rd - 7th) at the Hotel Dolce.

- 2009 Vouliagmeni, Greece (May 14th - 17th) at the Astir Palace resort.

- 2008 Chantilly, Virginia, USA (June 5th - 8th) at the Westfields Marriott.

- 2007 Istanbul, Turkey (May 31st - June 3rd) at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Sisli.

- 2006 Ottawa, Ontario, Canada (June 8th - 11th) at the Brookstreet Hotel in Kanata.

- 2005 Rottach-Egern, Germany (May 5th - 8th) at the Dorint Sofitel Seehotel Überfahrt.

A FEW HUNDRED PROTESTERS SHOW THEIR DISAPPROVAL OF BILDERBERG 2012

How Were They First Discovered?

In 1957 a Pulitzer Prize winning columnist named Westbrook Pegler who wrote for *Scripps Howard News Service*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and other papers, published the first article on the Bilderberg Group—although he didn't know their name at the time—his report marked the beginning of the unraveling of one of the most interesting "conspiracy theories" of all time.

Pegler wrote, "Something very mysterious is going on when a strange assortment of 67 self-qualified, polyglot [bilingual] designers and arbiters of the economic and political fate of our western world go into a secret huddle on an island of Brunswick, GA and not a word gets into the popular press beyond a little routine AP story. These gumshoe super state architects and monetary schemers were drawn from all NATO countries. The fact of this weird conclave as spooky as any midnight meeting of the Ku Klux Klan in a piney woods, was bound to get known to the world eventually."[8]

He continued to explain how he first learned of this meeting, saying, "I got my first word of it from a reader who happened onto St. Simon Island, Brunswick, [Georgia] on her way to West Palm Beach. She wrote that the hotel on St. Simon was almost deserted, but that when she commented on this, the clerk said the place had been alive with mysterious characters a few days earlier and with Secret Service and FBI too."

While not yet knowing their name, Westbrook did see similarities between this meeting and the secret Jekyll Island meeting that was held in 1910 by a small group of America's elite where they discussed and drew up plans for the Federal Reserve Banking System. He said, "Senator Aldrich of Rhode Island, called this one into being. He was the father of Winthrop Aldrich. There have been many excited versions of that ancient hoe-down on Jekyll Island, but relatively few have ever heard of it all."

After he began criticizing executives of the powerful Hearst Corporation, which owned and controlled almost 30 different newspapers in America at the time, he was fired. Hearst newspapers literally created “yellow journalism” which refers to sensationalistic headlines and careless reporting with a disregard for the facts in order to sell more newspapers, something that has pretty much become standard practice in American mainstream media.

A man named Willis Carto read Westbrook Pegler’s article about this intriguing meeting and it inspired him to begin investigating the issue himself. A year after Westbrook Pegler’s article came out, Willis Carto began publishing a newsletter called *Liberty Lowdown* and would later begin publishing a newspaper called *The Spotlight* which was largely dedicated to tracking and exposing this elusive group.

Over two decades later, a reporter named Jim Ticker would learn of the Bilderberg Group when going to work for *The Spotlight.* Tucker immediately became obsessed with them, and would later become the world’s foremost expert on the meeting. Tucker explained, “Had it not been for Willis A. Cato, who hired me as editor of *The Spotlight* and then put me on the tack of Bilderberg, I would probably—almost assuredly—never heard of the word ‘Bilderberg.’ Having had the opportunity, through Carto’s good offices as founder of Liberty Lobby, publisher of *The Spotlight*, to begin what ultimately proved to be a generation of world-wide Bilderberg-hunting, I was able to bring news about Bilderberg to literally millions of folks who would like myself have otherwise remained in the dark about these globalist schemers.”[9]

Tucker had somehow gained the support of an insider who would leak information to him every year about the location and date of the meeting, as well as attendee lists and other details. Tucker obsessively tracked the Bilderberg Group from 1975 until his death in 2013 at the age of 78. His book, titled *Jim Tucker’s Bilderberg Diary* contains decades of information about where the Bilderbergers met, who was in attendance, and what was discussed.[10]

As Tucker's health began to fail, he turned over his trusted source (or sources) who tipped him off each year as to the meeting's location and dates, to Alex Jones from Infowars.com. Love him or hate him, Alex Jones played a large role in getting major media to finally cover the Bilderberg Group meetings in the early 2000's. In 2006 he traveled to Ottawa, Canada after being tipped off that was where they were going to meet, and Alex Jones has announced the location every year since and has been able to get a growing number of supporters (expanding from a few hundred in 2012[11] to over 2000 in Hertfordshire, England in 2014) to meet outside the hotel to peacefully protest and raise awareness about the meetings.[12]

With Alex's huge audience and massively popular website, it became impossible for the Bilderberg Group to hide anymore, and now in the last few years they quietly admit when and where they are meeting through their simple website BilderbergMeetings.org. In 2011 the massively popular news site, the Drudge Report, first posted links to Infowars articles and some European papers which covered the event.[13] This was basically the dam bursting since the Drudge Report has a tremendous influence on what topics people talk about, and is the homepage of many reporters and political analysts in the United States.[14]

JIM TUCKER TALKS TO A GROUP OF PROTESTERS ABOUT HIS ADVENTURES TRACKING BILDERBERG.

RESPECT
PEOPLE
NOT $$$

ALEX JONES SPEAKS TO THE PROTESTERS OUTSIDE THE 2012 BILDERBERG MEETING IN CHANTILLY, VIRGINIA.

Tax Returns

I have been able to obtain several recent years of Bilderberg's IRS filings since they are registered as a 501c3 "charitable foundation" certain financial information must be made available for public inspection—if you know where to look.[15] I discovered they operate under the business entity "American Friends of Bilderberg" and the documents show that in 2008 they received $645,000 in contributions to fund their annual meeting, with money coming from Goldman Sachs ($25,000), Microsoft ($75,000), Henry Kissinger ($20,000), David Rockefeller ($50,000) and other wealthy donors. The 2009 returns show the *Washington Post* newspaper donated $25,000.[16]

Under the "Summary of Direct Charitable Activities," the forms list the organization's goals as "Organizing & sponsoring conferences which study & discuss significant problems of the western alliance [and] collaborating on the Bilderberg meetings held in Europe & North America."

The expenses on the 2008 and 2012 documents (when they met in the United States) are listed as approximately $900,000 per year, which covers renting out the entire hotel for three days, paying the private security forces and compensating local police for the extra man-hours, the catering companies (or hotel restaurants) to feed them, and presumably for paying the travel expenses of members and attendees. There is most likely a European entity that functions as a counterpart to "American Friends of Bilderberg" that is used to pay the bills when the group meets in Europe because the recent forms I have been able to obtain show the expenses drop to around $100,000 per year when the group meets outside the United States, and then jump up close to one million dollars in the years they meet in the U.S.[17]

The documents list James Johnson as the treasurer, who is also the chairman of Perseus, a merchant bank and private equity fund management company based in Washington D.C. with offices in New York and an associated advisory firm in Munich, Germany.[18] The name Perseus comes from Greek Mythology and is the demigod who beheaded Medusa. James Johnson was once the Chairman of the Executive Committee at Fannie Mae [The Federal National Mortgage Association]; and before that he was a managing director at Lehman Brothers, the fourth-largest investment bank in the U.S. (which failed during the economic crisis of 2008).[19] He's also on the Board of Directors for Goldman Sachs and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.[20]

I have personally been to the offices of Perseus in Washington D.C. seeking a comment on the documents, which I held in my hand during my visit, and as soon as I mentioned "Bilderberg," James Johnson's secretary said they have no comment, ordered me to leave, and slammed the door. A video of this encounter is posted on my YouTube channel, YouTube.com/MarkDice.[21] The person listed on the forms as the accountant is Robert T. Foldes of Leon D. Alpern & Company, and when I called them, the secretary confirmed they handle the taxes for American Friends of Bilderberg but declined to give me any further information. I have published some of the financial records on MarkDice.com where you can download the PDFs if you want.[22]

Politicians Silent

Attendees of the meeting agree to the Chatham House Rule, which is an anonymity policy created by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (nicknamed Chatham House) which is an elite think tank established in 1920 in the United Kingdom that analyzes and promotes their international political policies. The Chatham House Rule basically means that people in attendance are forbidden from discussing who attended and may not attribute any specific statements made by anyone in attendance at any time in the future. It’s basically a “what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas” kind of oath.

The rule is supposedly in place to facilitate frank and honest discussions about any controversial topics which people may not want to go on the record about due to the political or personal consequences of letting their true feelings be publicly known.

Chatham House is essentially Britain’s counterpart to the Council on Foreign Relations in America, which sounds like a committee in Congress, but is in fact a private organization that serves up its political propaganda on a silver platter to the elite politicians and journalists who are members. While some politicians will acknowledge their affiliation with the CFR—admitting anything about the Bilderberg Group is a whole other story.

Barack Obama

As Election Day in 2008 approached, then presidential candidate Barack Obama ditched the reporters traveling with him on his campaign so he could attend a secret meeting which his press secretary Robert Gibbs refused to give any information about.[23] It just so happened the Bilderbergers were meeting at this same time. As is common during the approach of a presidential election, reporters from major media outlets travel around the country with the candidates to give continuous coverage of their every move, and in June of 2008—on the same day the Bilderberg Group was meeting in Chantilly, Virginia (about 30-40 minutes outside of Washington D.C.)—reporters found out that Obama had ditched them after they were all stuck on a flight which they were told he was scheduled to be on with them.

“Reporters traveling with Obama sensed something might be happening between the pair [Obama and Hillary] when they arrived at Dulles International Airport after an event in Northern Virginia and Obama was not aboard the airplane,” the Associated Press reported.[24] Not only was he not aboard the plane, as everyone was led to believe he would be, but his campaign literally trapped reporters on the flight so they couldn’t follow him.

“Why were we not told about this meeting until we were on the plane, the doors were shut and the plane was about to taxi to take off?” one reporter asked, confronting Obama’s spokesman Robert Gibbs on the flight about what had just happened. The confrontation was caught on camera by one reporter and can be seen on YouTube.[25]

Gibbs replied, “Senator Obama had a desire to do some meetings, others had a desire to meet with him tonight in a private way, and that is what we are doing.”

Another reporter asked, “Is there more than one meeting, is there more than one person with whom he is meeting?”

“I am not going to get into all the details of the meeting,” Gibbs replied.

Of course, it’s not a stretch of the imagination to assume Obama was meeting with the Bilderberg Group, who usually schedule their event within a short driving distance from Washington D.C. every election year.

Hillary Clinton

When Hillary Clinton was running for president in 2008, someone asked her about the Bilderberg Group at an event when she was at a campaign stop in New Hampshire. It was a brief encounter that happened when she was shaking hands with people in the crowd, and the person who asked her videotaped the interaction and posted it on YouTube. “What’s going on at the Bilderberg meeting and what are you guys talking about up there?” he asked, in a polite and sincere tone.[26]

Hillary cackled, “Ha ha ha. I have no idea what you’re talking about.” The man responded, “Why are they such top secret meetings?” To which she answered (looking like a kid with their hand caught in the cookie jar), “Sir, I have no idea what you’re talking about,” and then she turned from him and walked away.[27]

How could she have no idea what he was talking about? How could one of the most politically connected and powerful women in the world not know what the Bilderberg Group is or what they do? It’s ridiculous to believe that she isn’t intimately aware of them and was obviously playing dumb so she wouldn’t betray they them by acknowledging they exist.

After being the First Lady during her husband Bill Clinton’s presidency in the 1990s, Hillary went on to become a senator in New York and then Secretary of State during Barack Obama’s first term as president; and at the time I’m writing this book, is running for president again in 2016. Since her college days, she has carefully plotted her political career and has long hoped to become the first female president of the United States.

In 1969 she wrote her senior thesis on Saul Alinsky, a left-wing extremist who detailed his subversive tactics aimed at creating a New World Order in is 1971 book *Rules for Radicals,* which he literally dedicated to Lucifer in the foreword. For years the Clintons were able to have the 92-page thesis sealed, and it wasn't made public until someone leaked it in 2007.[28] The president of Hillary's alma mater, Wellesley College in Massachusetts, approved sealing the thesis at the Clintons' request under the bizarre new rule that any senior thesis written by a president or first lady of the United States would be sealed, but the work of every other alumni was publicly available for anyone who wanted to read them.[29]

Bill Clinton

When Bill Clinton was out campaigning for his wife Hillary in 2008, a protester in the audience began making a scene and shouting about his little known meeting with Bilderberg Group in the early 1990s causing Clinton to try to defuse the situation by saying, “This is the deal folks, all these people that are paranoid about the world come and scream at me everywhere.”[30]

The protester kept shouting him down while he tried to speak, forcing Bill to plead with him since security hadn’t yet been able to reach the man in the middle of the crowd to usher him out. “You said you would go if I answered the question right? All right here’s the answer. I happened to be in Europe then on my way to Russia, I was invited to go to Bilderberg by Vernon Jordan, a friend of mine, and a genuine hero of the civil rights movement. And to the best of my knowledge, NAFTA was not discussed by anybody in my presence. I was talking to people from Europe who did not give a rip about NAFTA. Now goodbye. Thank you.”[31]

According to leaks, NAFTA—the North American Free Trade Agreement, was a Bilderberg idea and they were instrumental in getting the treaty drafted, which was signed into law by Bill Clinton in 1993, merging Canada, the United States and Mexico into one trilateral trading bloc, reducing or eliminating tariffs and other trade barriers.

Before attending Bilderberg in 1991, Bill Clinton was a virtually unheard of governor of the small and little noticed state of Arkansas, but those in the Establishment caught notice of his silver tongue and his lust for power and thought he would be the perfect puppet to promote their policies as president. They don’t call him “Slick Willie” for nothing. Bill Clinton’s ability to lie convincingly and cleverly use vague language to avoid painting himself in a corner is unmatched by most politicians.

At a different Hillary 2008 campaign event when Bill Clinton was speaking, another heckler began shouting at him, this time about the Bohemian Grove—a less formal, sort of Bilderberg camping trip and secret elite men's retreat held every summer. Once again, trying to appease the protester who completely derailed his speech, Clinton responded, "The Bohemian Club? Did you say Bohemian Club? That's where all those rich Republicans go up and stand naked against redwood trees right? I've never been to the Bohemian Club but you ought to go. It'd be good for you. You'd get some fresh air."[32]

His comment about Republicans "standing naked against redwood trees" refers to the common practice of Bohemian Grove members openly urinating on the side of trees or in the bushes while hanging out deep within the club's 2700-acre redwood forest in Northern California where the world's most wealthy and well-to-do men meet for a private party every July.[33]

Video of Clinton's confrontation is on YouTube if you'd like to see it, and if you're not familiar with the Bohemian Grove or would like to read an in depth analysis of this truly bizarre "Bilderberg in the woods," I encourage you to pick up my book *Inside the Illuminati: Evidence, Objectives, and Methods of Operation* in paperback from Amazon.com or download it onto your tablet or e-reader from any major e-book store.

Senator Barbara Boxer

In June 2012 just one day after the Bilderberg meeting came to a close that year, my friend Luke Rudkowski, a YouTube producer and founder of We Are Change, happened to spot California Senator Barbara Boxer inside the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington D.C. in the press area giving an interview. Of course we took the opportunity to try to get a statement from her on Bilderberg as soon as her interview was over. A video of this confrontation is available on YouTube.[34]

Both Luke and I walked up to her with our professional-looking handheld wireless microphones as she was making her way down the hall and asked in a polite tone, “What are your thoughts on the important Bilderberg meeting that happened this weekend?” She immediately turned to one of her assistants who was with her and said, “Zack, do you want to make a statement?”

Boxer’s Assistant: “Sure. Why don’t you just give us a call (handing me his business card) and we’d be happy to get you a statement.”

Me: “We’d like your statement right now. The Bilderberg meeting happened and [there was] no major media or press coverage. Just one statement about the Bilderberg meeting.”

At this point she enters an elevator and when I tried to follower her inside, her aid blocked me and she said it was for “Senators only.”

Me: “Why no comment on the Bilderberg meeting?”

Boxer: “Do your job and call my office.”

Me: “Do your job and answer a question please.”

As the door is closing she says “Thank you very much. Thank you so much.” Luke Rudkowski kept holding the door, causing it to retreat back into the wall for a few seconds and preventing the elevator from moving.

I continued to press her. “The Bilderberg meeting just happened this year…”

Boxer: “Thank you so much. I appreciate it. Just call the office. Thanks a lot.”

At this point, one of her two aids exited the elevator to block us and prevent Luke from holding the door open any longer, and then it finally closed and she escaped. I did call her office just like her assistant asked, and left a message, but nobody ever called me back. Go figure.

Ben Bernanke

Independent journalist Luke Rudkowski, who has confronted countless powerful politicians on a variety of issues using his own unique style of ambush journalism, once asked Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke face to face for a comment on Bilderberg at a black tie event in New York City, but Bernanke refused and turned away.[35]

Luke: “Hey Ben, just really quick. What did you do at the 2008 Bilderberg meeting?”

Ben: “I’m not doing any press today.”

Luke: [Repeating his question again] “I mean what did you do at the Bilderberg Group?”

Ben: “I’m not doing any press today.” [turns away]

David Rockefeller

One quote floating around the Internet attributed to David Rockefeller senior, a longtime Bilderberg attendee and financier, is, “We are grateful to *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *Time* magazine and other great publications whose directors have attended our meetings and respected their promises of discretion for almost forty years. … It would have been impossible for us to develop our plan for the world if we had been subject to the bright lights of publicity during those years. But, the world is now much more sophisticated and prepared to march towards a world government. The supranational sovereignty of an intellectual elite and world bankers is surely preferable to the national auto-determination practiced in past centuries.”[36]

He allegedly made this statement at the Bilderberg meeting in Baden-Baden Germany in 1991 and the comments were printed in several right-wing French newspapers but its authenticity is uncertain and disputed.

What is not disputed, however, is David Rockefeller’s admission in his own memoir which he published in 2003, that, “For more than a century, ideological extremists at either end of the political spectrum have seized upon well-publicized incidents such as my encounter with Castro to attack the Rockefeller family for the inordinate influence they claim we wield over American political and economic institutions. Some even believe we are part of a secret cabal working against the best interests of the United States, characterizing my family and me as ‘internationalists’ and of conspiring with others around the world to build a more integrated global political and economic structure — one world, if you will. If that is the charge, I stand guilty, and I am proud of it.”[37]

Dick Cheney

When giving a speech in 2002 at Bilderberg's sister society, the Council on Foreign Relations, Vice President Dick Cheney cracked an inside joke about his membership, saying "I want to thank you all for the warm welcome today. I see a lot of old friends in the room. And it's good to be back at the Council on Foreign Relations. As Pete mentioned, I've been a member for a long time, and was actually a director for some period of time. I never mentioned that when I was campaigning for reelection back home in Wyoming (laughter) but it stood me in good stead. I value very much my experience, exposure to the tremendous people involved and the involvement and the ideas and the debates on the great policy issues of the day."[38]

He never mentioned his membership when campaigning because he—and everyone else in the audience—knows very well the sinister reputation the CFR has. Everyone laughed because they "got" why he never mentioned it. Despite masquerading as if it were just another benign committee in Congress and trying to hide in plain sight, Dick Cheney's joke shows that they have not been able to fool everyone about the nature of their activities. This is the same organization that Hillary Clinton once admitted she goes to in order to be "told what we should be doing and how we should think about the future."[39]

The CFR was founded in 1921 by Woodrow Wilson's chief advisor Colonel Edward Mandell House; along with Paul Warburg, who was at the secret Jekyll Island meeting in 1910 which gave birth to the Federal Reserve Bank; Elihu Root, who was the Secretary of War under both President McKinley and Roosevelt; and a handful of other elitists who then received funding for their venture from the Rockefeller family.

Ron Paul

Congressman Ron Paul is one of the rare honest politicians who never sugar coated his statements and never shied away from criticizing his own party when he felt their actions were going against their principles throughout his 23 years as a Congressman from Texas.

At a book signing in 2008 he was once asked about the Bilderberg Group by a fan who videotaped the interaction and posted it on YouTube. "Did you hear about that recent Bilderberg Group meeting in Chantilly, Virginia?" the person asked.[40]

Ron Paul responded, "Yeah, recently there was one and there were some reports on it—I didn't read a whole lot about it, but they certainly were there."[41]

The person then asked what he thought they were doing, and Ron Paul responded, "Well, they probably get together and talk about how they're going to control the banking systems of the world and natural resources—and we get together and talk about how we're going to get our freedom back. So we have our own things to talk about too."[42]

Ron Paul didn't play dumb by pretending he didn't know what the guy was talking about, and he didn't laugh off his question either—instead, he answered it quite frankly, which is surprising for a politician, especially when it comes to talking about the infamous Bilderberg Group. Ron Paul (and his son Rand) are (and still may be, depending on what happens after this book is published) the only politicians in the last forty years (at the time I'm writing this) to have ever even uttered the word "Bilderberg," and to have answered people's questions in a serious manor is quite commendable.

It’s possible that with awareness of the Bilderberg Group spreading, more politicians may seriously address the issue when asked, since it’s almost impossible to pretend they don’t know about it at this point in time.

Rand Paul

Luke Rudkowski from the YouTube channel We Are Change asked Kentucky Senator and 2016 Presidential Candidate Rand Paul (son of Ron Paul) about the Bilderberg Group in 2012, and just like his father, instead of ducking the question, he answered it quite candidly.[43]

Luke: “Our organization confronted [Federal Reserve Chairman] Ben Bernanke on his ties with the Bilderberg Group. Do you know anything about the Bilderberg Group?”

Rand: “Only what I’ve learned from Alex Jones.”

Luke: “For the people who don’t know what’s going on can you tell people who are the Bilderberg Group, if you feel comfortable doing so?”

Rand: “I’m not probably the world’s expert on it, but I think it’s people who get together who are very wealthy people who I think manipulate and use government for their own personal advantage. And I think that’s the biggest thing that would help us combat this, is that they want to make this out like they’re just out to help humanity and world government will be good for humanity, but guess what? World government is good for their pocketbook. They’re very wealthy and they use government to make more money for themselves and that’s where you expose them.”

John Rarick

In 1971 a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Louisiana named John Rarick somehow heard about these meetings and became suspicious. He wanted to know if tax dollars were being used to pay for American officials to attend. John Rarick typed up a ten-page statement and actually entered it into the official Congressional Record.

His statement begins, “Mr. Speaker, on several occasions during recent months, I called the attention of our colleagues to activities of the Bilderbergers—an elite international group comprised of high government officials, international financiers, businessmen, and opinion-makers…”

“This exclusive international aristocracy holds highly secret meetings annually or more often in various countries. The limited information available about what transpires at these meetings reveals that they discuss matters of vital importance which affect the lives of all citizens. Presidential Advisor Henry Kissinger, who made a secret visit to Peking from July 9 to July 11, 1971, and arranged for a presidential visit to Red China, was reported to be in attendance at the most recent Bilderberg meeting held in Woodstock, Vermont, April 23 to April 25, 1971. The two points reportedly discussed at the Woodstock meeting were, ‘the contribution of business in dealing with current problems of social instability’ and ‘the possibility of a change of the American role in the world and its consequences.’”

He continues, “Following these secret discussions, which are certainly not in keeping with the Western political tradition of ‘open covenants openly arrived at,’ the participants returned to their respective countries with the general public left uninformed, notwithstanding the attendance of some news media representatives, of any of the recommendations and plans agreed upon as a result of the discussions—or for that matter even the occurrence of the meeting itself."[44]

Since Rarick's statements in 1971, to date (at the time I'm writing this at least) no Congressman has even uttered the word "Bilderberg" on the floor of the House or the Senate, or anywhere publicly for that matter, other than Ron Paul and his son Rand as I previously mentioned.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, best known for warning the world about the Military Industrial Complex in his 1961 farewell address, wrote a memo to his assistant in 1955 about that year's Bilderberg meeting which took place in Barbizon, France. While Eisenhower didn't mention them by name, it's pretty obvious who he was talking about in the memo when he says, "I understand next week Prince Bernhard is having a meeting at Barbizon, continuing his exploration looking toward improving European and American relations. If personally you can fit such a trip into your schedule, I suggest you find the money and go to France."[45]

Even though he didn't mention "Bilderberg" by name, but he was clearly talking about them since Prince Bernhard was the founder and chairman of the Bilderberg Group at the time, and since the meeting was to focus on "European and American relations."

Just a friendly reminder, or a heads up if you're not aware—when leaving office in 1961 President Eisenhower warned, "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military–industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals so that security and liberty may prosper together."

Unfortunately this rings even more true today than it did over 50 years ago when he said it and with the lies and broken promises from both major political parties in America regarding warrantless wiretapping, the use of drones to assassinate people (including American citizens) and the never ending and always expanding War on Terror sparked by the attacks on September 11th 2001, it is clear the military-industrial complex has grown exponentially in size and power since President Eisenhower warned about it back in 1961.

CALIFORNIA SENATOR BARBARA BOXER REFUSES TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT BILDERBERG AND ESCAPES IN A "SENATORS ONLY" ELEVATOR IN THE HART SENATE BUILDING IN WASHINGTON D.C.

LUKE RUDKOWSKI'S LIVESTREAMING RIG HE USED TO BROADCAST THE 2012 BILDERBERG PROTEST TO VIEWERS ON THE INTERNET.

Actions and Effects

What’s talked about at Bilderberg or the consensus that the group comes too, often soon finds its way into becoming policy around the world. From the decades of leaked documents and insider revelations it appears that the birth of new legislation, economic booms and busts, and even the start of new wars and military actions around the globe are often traced back to Bilderberg.

One of their primary goals has been to form a New World Order global government, and over the last sixty years they have made tremendous progress with most of their plans already accomplished. In today’s information age with popular independent media outlets and social media keeping an eye on the Bilderberg Group, it’s almost impossible now for them to stay a secret, but the decades of denials and media blackouts prove they have been deceptive from the start. Now that they are getting fairly well known, the denials and tactics of playing dumb have changed into trying to pass themselves off as an ordinary business conference like the G8, G20, or the Davos World Economic Forum.

David Rothkopf, the managing director of Kissinger and Associates, an international advising firm founded by the infamous Henry Kissinger, wrote a very interesting book in 2009 titled *Superclass: The Global Power Elite and the World They are Making,* where he discussed the ruling elite and the various organizations that largely influence the political and economic landscape of the world. While not revealing any earth shattering insider secrets, Rothkopf does confirm some of the persistent allegations made about the ruling class by so-called “conspiracy theorists.”

He wrote, “A global elite has emerged over the past several decades that has vastly more power than any other group on the planet. Each of the members of the superclass has the ability to regularly influence the lives of millions of people in multiple countries worldwide. Each actively exercises this power, and they often amplify it through the development of relationships with others in this class.”[46]

He continues, “That such a group exists is indisputable. Heads of state, CEOs of the world’s largest companies, media barons, billionaires who are actively involved in their investments, technology, entrepreneur, oil potentates, hedge fund managers, private equity investors, top military commanders, a select few religious leaders, a handful of renowned writers, scientists, and artists, even terrorist leaders and master criminals, meet the above criteria for membership.”[47]

“In fact, [the Bilderberg Group, Trilateral Commission, and the World Economic Forum] are an important part of the story of the superclass. They are places to convene, places to network, places to cultivate relationships, places to share views. To paraphrase Mark Malloch Brown, they are the village greens of the global elite.”[48]

“The reality of these meetings and what they reveal about the informal mechanisms of power is much more interesting than the hyped-up conspiracy theories and their hysterical visions of total control.”[49]

He also admits that, “Bilderberg does its best to stay under the radar.”[50] While he denies that they are planning “world domination,” he does say, “They share similar goals in many cases a similar view of the world and the direction it should take,” and that “In linking together with one another, they aim not to conspiracy as a group but to enhance their own power by advantageous associations.”[51]

Sociologist William Domhoff said that, “I believe there is a national upper class in the United States….this means that wealthy families from all over the country, and particularly from major cities like New York, San Francisco, Chicago, and Houston, are part of interlocking social circles which perceive each other as equals, belong to the same clubs, interact frequently, and freely intermarry.”[52]

Domhoff writes that elite social clubs are informal centers of policy making,[53] and that these organizations are consensus-seeking and policy-planning organizations of the upper class.[54]

He concludes that, “I think it makes a very good case for the hypothesis that the social upper class is a ruling class, especially in light of the amazingly disproportionate amount of wealth and income controlled by that small group of families.”[55]

Another sociologist named Peter Phillips from the University of California, Davis, who earned his Ph.D. by writing his doctoral dissertation on the Bilderberg Group’s more informal sister organization, the Bohemian Grove, says, “Involvement of these socio-economic and political institutional leaders in the activities at the Grove [and Bilderberg] gives them extensive periods of off-the-record discussion time with campmates and other Bohemians [and Bilderbergers] about the prevailing social issues of the day… All of these chats and talks work toward the building of a consensual mind set regarding current political and social issues.…In other words the general parameters of major policy and socio-political decisions can and do evolve at the Bohemian Grove and [Bilderberg] Club.”[56]

Phillips concludes that secret elite gatherings like the Bohemian Grove and the Bilderberg Group “are examples of how elite consensus building around key policy issues occur. After the weekend each participant could then return to his own power base and proceed with individual action rooted in consensual understandings obtained on the weekend.”[57]

What kind of understandings is he talking about? Let’s find out.

Creating a One World Government

Despite denials for decades that the economic and political elite were secretly working towards a global government, one of the founding members of the Bilderberg Group who sat on the steering committee for 30 years once admitted that the critics aren't entirely wrong. In 2001 when talking to Jon Ronson, a documentary producer for the BBC and author of *Them: Adventures with Extremists*, Denis Healy said, "To say we were striving for a one-world government is exaggerated, but not wholly unfair. Those of us in Bilderberg felt we couldn't go on forever fighting one another for nothing and killing people and rendering millions homeless. So we felt that a single community throughout the world would be a good thing."[58]

An Establishment insider and mentor of President Bill Clinton named Carroll Quigley published a book in 1966 for fellow ruling class insiders titled *Tragedy & Hope: A History of the World in Our Time* in order to help them understand how the world works and the elite's vision for the future. Quigley, who was a professor at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. (the oldest Jesuit institution of higher learning in the United States—founded in 1789), knew that most of the general public doesn't read books or newspapers and are more interested in sports entertainment and celebrity news than what's happening in Washington D.C.

Quigley alluded to the Bilderberg Group when he wrote, "There does exist, and has existed for a generation, an international Anglophile network which operates, to some extent, in the way the radical Right believes the Communists act. In fact, this network, which we may identify as the Round Table Groups, has no aversion to cooperating with the Communists, or any other groups, and frequently does so. I know of the operations of this network because I have studied it for twenty years and was permitted for two years, in the early 1960's, to examine its papers and secret records."

"I have no aversion to it or to most of its aims and have, for much of my life, been close to it and to many of its instruments. I have objected, both in the past and recently, to a few of its policies (notably to its belief that England was an Atlantic rather than a European Power and must be allied, or even federated, with the United States and must remain isolated from Europe), but in general my chief difference of opinion is that it wishes to remain unknown, and I believe its role in history is significant enough to be known."[59]

Regarding the Federal Reserve and the financial domination by a handful of international banks, he said, "The powers of financial capitalism had a far-reaching aim, nothing less than to create a world system of financial control in private hands able to dominate the political system of each country and the economy of the world as a whole. This system was to be controlled in a feudalist fashion by the central banks of the world acting in concert, by secret agreements arrived at in frequent meetings and conferences. The apex of the systems was to be the Bank for International Settlements in Basel, Switzerland, a private bank owned and controlled by the world's central banks which were themselves private corporations. Each central bank...sought to dominate its government by its ability to control Treasury loans, to manipulate foreign exchanges, to influence the level of economic activity in the country, and to influence cooperative politicians by subsequent economic rewards in the business world."[60]

Quigley's *Tragedy & Hope* is not a book "exposing" a "conspiracy" but rather a history book for elitists to help them understand how the Establishment works and what their plans are.

European Union

Documents from the 1955 Bilderberg meeting discovered at the estate of a deceased member show they were planning the European Union and a central currency back in the 1950s, decades before the EU was formed and their new Euro currency introduced.[61] The documents came from the personal files of former Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell which had been stored at a local University after his death. They are marked “Personal and strictly confidential,” and “Not for publication either in whole or in part,” and were made available to the BBC during an investigation in 2003.[62] Wikileaks also obtained the documents and then published them through their website.[63]

Gaitskell was part of Bilderberg’s steering committee and had attended the very first meeting in 1954 and kept years of the itineraries which included his own handwritten notes about the different speakers and topics. Historian Dr. Hugh Wilford showed Simon Cox of BBC Radio 4 the archive. “This is from Hugh Gaitskell to his friend and Labour Party colleague Dennis Healey in which he’s telling him about the conference. He describes it as a rather special kind of conference, very hand-picked with the proceedings private, and ends by saying that he hopes that he’ll be able to give Healey further details but meanwhile would you please treat the whole matter as absolutely confidential—say nothing about it to anybody,” explains Wilford.

Simon Cox: “So, real secrecy from the very beginning.”

Hugh Wilford: “Yes.”

Simon Cox: “Because you can see when you hear about the way that it’s set up, why people have these conspiracy theories.”

Hugh Wilford: “Yes, now I can quite see why that is the case, and the fact that so much secrecy was insisted upon for these early meetings, and I mean it doesn’t really necessarily look very good that the leader of the British Labour Party is consorting with various representatives of the secret services and American Capitalists and doing so in such a clandestine fashion, so yes, I can see why conspiracy theorists have sprung up and surrounded Bilderberg.”[64]

Simon Cox: “The papers show exactly what was discussed within the secret confines of Bilderberg. What’s striking is the degree of consensus reached by those at the meeting on contentious topics like European integration…Here’s another paper from the first ones about the European Union. It’s interesting here saying some sort of European Union has long been a Utopian dream, but at the conference it was agreed it was now a necessity of our times. So this is 50 years ago saying we must have a European Union.”

Hugh Wilford: “Yes, again reflecting the fact that many of the people involved in planning Bilderberg had also played leading roles in getting the European movement going in the late 1940s and early 50s.”

Simon Cox, the BBC investigator, concluded, “Without Bilderbergers, Europe could be a very different place.”

Two years after the documents discovered in Gaitskell’s estate were drawn up for the 1955 meeting, the European Union started to take shape with the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957 which merged the markets of six European countries—France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. This later grew into the European Union in 1993 containing 28 nation states: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Sociologist Mike Peters from Leeds Beckett University in England confirms, “The single currency [the Euro] was rooted first by people who were connected with Bilderberg,” and concludes, “The sheer wealth and importance of the people who attend Bilderberg suggest that this is one of the most important political forums in the modern world.”[65]

Documents from Bilderberg’s less secretive sister organization, the Council on Foreign Relations, reveal they have plans for several other massive regional unions around the world, including the Eastern European Union, the Middle Eastern Union, an Asian-Pacific Union, African Union, South American Union, and a North American Union. Part of this plan includes unifying the currencies of each of these different unions as well. For example, in the case of the North American Union—Canada, the United States and Mexico would all use what has been proposed as the amero for all financial transactions.[66]

The idea is, once these various regional unions are formed, and their currencies unified, the final step will be to merge the unions (along with each of their respective currencies) into one global governing body, and at the same time introduce a global currency in the form of a digital dollar, ushering in the era of a completely cashless society.[67] Some have proposed this new global currency be called the Phoenix, named after the mythological bird which is said to rise from the ashes of its predecessor after death in a cycle of rebirth and renewal.[68] From ashes of the death of all previous currencies, the new global currency will emerge.

Selecting World Leaders

Many consider Bilderberg to be the Kingmakers or the place where a consensus is made about which political candidate the Establishment will throw their support behind and which ones they'll throw under the buss. With the power to make major editorial decisions in the newsrooms of the world's primary media outlets and by controlling the purse strings of the big banks and political financiers, they "can make or break presidents, popes, or prime ministers," as the character Howard Beale famously warned in the classic 1976 film *Network.*

George Bush Senior attended in 1985 and became president in 1988. Bill Clinton attended in 1991 and then became president a year later. Tony Blair was invited in 1993 and became Prime Minister of England in 1997. Romano Prodi attended in 1999 and later that year he became president of the European Union Commission. In 2004, Senator John Edwards spoke with the group and was later chosen to be the Democratic vice presidential nominee by presidential candidate John Kerry, who—like his opponent George W. Bush—is a member of the Skull & Bones society which made it a win/win for the Establishment no matter who was chosen to be president.[69]

There was a surprising little mention of John Edwards covert visit by a reporter for the *New York Times* in an article about the VP selection process which noted, "Several people pointed to the secretive and exclusive Bilderberg conference of some 120 people that this year drew the likes of Henry A. Kissinger, Melinda Gates and Richard A. Perle to Stresa, Italy, in early June, as helping win Mr. Kerry's heart. Mr. Edwards spoke so well in a debate on American politics with the Republican Ralph Reed that participants broke Bilderberg rules to clap before the end of the session.

Beforehand, Mr. Edwards traveled to Brussels to meet with NATO officials, brandishing his foreign-policy credentials."[70]

The article then quoted an anonymous source and associate of John Kerry who was in attendance for Edwards' debate, who said, "His performance at Bilderberg was important," and admitted it was largely responsible for him being chosen as the candidate for Kerry's vice president.[71]

Jim Tucker reported that in 1989 one of the agendas on the menu was ousting British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher because she opposed surrendering Britain's sovereignty to the European Union by refusing to join the EU.[72] The following year people within her own party conspired, and succeeded, to replace her with John Major, who then helped facilitate the rise of the European Union, fulfilling Bilderberg's long-held dream.

Again, Carroll Quigley openly revealed how it was to the elite's advantage to have only two political parties for people to choose from and how they would be engineered to intersect at their core. The reason being, he said was, "The two parties should be almost identical, so that the American people can 'throw the rascals out' at any election without leading to any profound or extensive shifts in policy."[73]

The meeting, which moves from country to country around Europe and the United States, is usually held nearby Washington D.C. on election years, which certainly can't be a coincidence. Even if presidential candidates themselves don't go, they often send their representatives to lobby to Bilderberg and highlight their associate's usefulness and to report back to them after the meeting about what issues were discussed and what the consensus was on each topic.

The Iraq War

At the 2002 meeting, leaks revealed the consensus arrived was that the invasion of Iraq wouldn't happen until Spring of 2003 when many in the mainstream media were anticipating the war would start in the late summer or early Fall of 2002.[74] Jim Tucker reported that Donald Rumsfeld, who was then the Secretary of Defense, assured the Bilderberg Group that the invasion wouldn't happen until the following year,[75] which of course it did. Apparently some of the European allies needed more time to convince their people the invasion was "necessary" or to prepare to take advantage of the situation economically once it occurred.

As the world now knows, every reason given to justify the invasion of Iraq was a lie; from the hoaxes and fear mongering about their supposed weapons of mass destruction,[76] to the fabricated yellow cake uranium documents,[77] to the debunked claims about Saddam Hussein being involved with Al Qaeda and connected to the September 11th attacks.[78] Some people point to the little known Washington D.C. based Neocon think tank the Project for the New American Century (PNAC for short) as laying out the strategy years earlier to maintain America's dominance in the world by preemptively attacking foreign countries or inserting America's military "even in conflicts that otherwise do not directly engage U.S. interests."[79]

One PNAC document titled *Rebuilding America's Defenses* (written in September of 2000) seems to suggest they needed a major catastrophe to occur in order to justify carrying out their plans. At one point it says, "Furthermore, the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor."[80]

Of course, this “new Pearl Harbor” was the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center in New York City which has been cited as the reason for just about every restriction of liberty and expansion of military power ever since.[81] Many people believe the attacks were allowed to happen on purpose in order to provide a pretext (reason) for implementing the Project for the New American Century’s plans, but this is whole other issue in and of itself.[82]

At the 2004 White House Correspondence dinner, the annual red carpet event where the White House wines and dines mainstream media reporters who are supposed to act as watch dogs carefully monitoring the government’s actions, President George W. Bush was cracking jokes about not finding any WMDs in Iraq. When he was at the podium addressing the crowd, a photo of him bending over looking under his desk in the Oval Office was put up on the screen as he said, “Those weapons of mass destruction got to be somewhere.” The audience laughs and applauds.[83]

“Nope. No weapons over there.” The laughter continues. Then another photo is shown of him bending over in an awkward position in another part of his office. “Maybe over here,” he says, as a devilish grin appears on his face. Much of the audience again laughs.

TYRANNY RESPONSE TEAM
BILDERBERG SCUM

THESE PROTESTERS THINK BILDERBERG ARE “SCUM.”

ME TALKING TO THE POLICE GUARDING THE MEETING TO LET THEM KNOW WHO THEY ARE PROTECTING.

Talk Show Hosts Play Dumb

Radio talk shows provide an interesting platform for news and commentary, and the most-listened to shows have audiences of millions and often include popular politicians (and even presidents) as their guests. A popular feature of the show's format is that most of them take calls from the audience live on the air—well, live with a seven second delay, and calls that are pre-screened by a producer who first decides which ones will be put through to the host.

Many people are unaware that before a host puts a caller on the air, a producer first takes the call and if the question or comment is approved, that call is added to the call bank along with a note for the host about what the person wants to say. Occasionally myself and others have managed to get on the air with some of these hosts and instead of asking the question the producer approved during the screening process—we asked about Bilderberg or other blacklisted topics. Transcripts to some of those calls will follow, along with some footnotes which will show you where you can go to hear the archived audio clips for yourself.

Glenn Beck

When hosting his popular television show on the Fox News Channel, Glenn Beck once claimed that talking about the Bilderberg Group was going down a “tin foil hat road,” and said he didn’t care about the Bilderberg Group, and then compared them to a toy company.

In July 2010 he said, “The Bilderbergers had their meeting, I don’t really know much about these people, and I don’t really care. I know probably more about the Build a Bear people in the malls, and I know those people are brainwashing our kids with teddy bears. I don’t know what kind of secret meetings they have to get our kids into the bear industry, but I don’t like it. If the Bilderberg’s are half as evil as the teddy bear people, look out.”[84]

Beck then went on to say that those inside the Bilderberg meeting were probably talking about how to help the world. On his syndicated radio show he later joked that the Bilderberg Group were shapeshifting Reptilians.

Sean Hannity

On January 29th 2009 I got through on Sean Hannity's radio show and asked him very nicely if could explain what the Bilderberg Group is and what they do. The call can be heard on YouTube and here is a transcript:[85]

Hannity: Mark, KFMB San Diego, next on the Sean Hannity Show—how are you Mark?

Mark: Pretty good, but with all this economic crises going on and everyone looking for answers and blame, I was wondering if you could talk about the Bilderberg Group and the role that they play in the global economy and geopolitics?

Hannity: I have no idea what you're talking about. [drops call]. Let's go to Amy in Cincinnati on 55KRC, what's up Amy?

Michael Savage

After years of denying that Bilderberg had any significance or influence at all, Michael Savage later changed his tune and spoke quite candidly about them in 2010. A transcript of a call I made to him in 2009 went as follows:[86]

Savage: Right here on the Savage Nation—San Diego—Mark, go ahead please.

Mark: Let's talk about the Bilderberg Group. You're talking about conspiracies to bankrupt the economy—what can you tell the audience about the Bilderberg Group and why isn't that mentioned ever in any mainstream media?

Savage: Well that's like talking about the Council on Foreign Relations. It's too esoteric for the audience. I don't think we have to go any further than Obama, [Timothy] Geithner, Nancy Pelosi, Dianne Feinstein, and Hillary Clinton, is that enough for you? We don't need a Bilderberg Group, we have the Democrat socialist group that I just mentioned.

Mark: Every year the Bilderberg Group meets in secret and Obama has [gets cut off]

Savage: We know this. We understand it but I don't want to talk about some esoteric group called the Bilderberg Group. What good is going to come of talking about the Bilderberg Group which I've heard since 1990? Tell me what good's going to come of it?

Mark: Why don’t we expose them? Maybe they’re violating the Logan Act [cut off again]

Savage: What needs to be exposed is Obama’s hypocrisy, so that the idiots finally get it and stop him before he does more damage. That’s what needs to be done. Not talking about some esoteric conspiracy group! You’re 100% wrong! Thanks for the call. [Savage drops the call]

Just one year later he had a totally different view. In a monologue in 2010 which was recorded and uploaded to YouTube by a listener, Savage said, “I gotta tell you, for the last few years I’ve been going through thoughts about leaving radio. I’m bored. Burned out. Sick of Obama. Sick of the communists and the Bilderberg Group taking over the media and the government. But something is happening. The Bilderberg schemers are losing control of the global game. The puppet masters are losing control of the marionettes. When you see that the Bilderbergs are meeting secretly right now and many of the same people who brought about the economic collapse [of 2008] by rigging the system are there doing it again—the same people who put Obama in power are there again, you have to understand the danger you’re in.”[87]

Rush Limbaugh

In 2010 Rush Limbaugh (who signed a $400 million dollar contract with Clear Channel in 2008 to do another eight-years of radio)[88] gave a rather lengthy monolog about the Bilderberg Group after reading an article saying that Fidel Castro, the longtime Communist Cuban dictator, had just discovered them and expressed concerns about their power. Rush made Bilderberg sound like a big joke and something only "kooks" believed in, and appeared to attempt to link anyone who was interested or suspicious of the Bilderberg Group with Fidel Castro. A partial transcript of his monologue follows:[89]

Rush: I saw this yesterday afternoon and last night. The headline intrigued me. I read it and I started laughing out loud. "Fidel Castro Fascinated by Book on Bilderberg Club." This is from the *Associated Press:* "Fidel Castro is showcasing a theory long popular both among the far left and far right: that the shadowy Bilderberg Group has become a kind of global government, controlling not only international politics and economics, but even culture. The 84-year-old former Cuban president published an article Wednesday that used three of the only eight pages in the Communist Party newspaper Granma to quote—largely verbatim—from a 2006 book by Lithuanian-born writer Daniel Estulin. Estulin's work, 'The Secrets of the Bilderberg Club,' argues that the international group largely runs the world. It has held a secretive annual forum of prominent politicians, thinkers and businessmen since it was founded in 1954 at the Bilderberg Hotel in Holland."[90]

This gets better. (laughing) They run the world, and they didn't tell Castro. He's just learning it here at 84 and he finds it fascinating. "Castro offered no comment on the excerpts other than to describe Estulin as honest and well-informed and to call his book a 'fantastic story.' Estulin's book, as quoted by Castro, described ‘sinister cliques and the Bilderberg lobbyists manipulating the public ‘to install a world government that knows no borders and is not accountable to anyone but its own self.’ The Bilderberg group's website says its members have ‘nearly three days of informal and off-the-record discussion about topics of current concern’ once a year, but the group does nothing else.” So they get together three days a year and control the world (joking).

They had a conspiracy, they didn’t tell Fidel about it, and he’s only learning about it now when he’s retired and can’t join it and do anything about it. Walter Lippmann created the Beatles to distract people. Not only that, the Bilderbergs created feminism to get men and women at war with one another to distract us while they destroyed world economies. That did work. (laughing)

Folks, from the very first day, back in Kansas City, when I uttered my first political comment on the radio, I was set upon by these conspiracy people. Oh-ho-ho-ho yes. They no longer bother with me. (Off air question by producer in Rush’s ear) I’ve never been to a Bilderberg meeting, Snerdley. No. I’ve never been to the Socialists International. I’ve never been to a CFR meeting or Trilateralist Commission meeting. Remember, I’m the guy that came up with the kook test. Yeah, the kook test was to distract people from me being part of the conspiracy. Yeah. Remember one of the questions on the kook test? (laughing) If trilateralist A is driving west at 60 miles an hour and the Council on Foreign Relations member B is driving east at 40 miles an hour, how long does it take for both of them to take over the world?

Alan Colmes

I personally called the Alan Colmes radio show and got on the air several times to try to get him on record about the issue. Colmes once hosted a show with Sean Hannity on the Fox News Channel called *Hannity & Colmes* between 1996 and 2009 but he was dropped by the network and the show renamed just *Hannity*. One call made on February 2nd 2009, which I saved from the show's archive and posted on YouTube, goes as follows:[91]

Alan: Hello.

Mark: Don't the American people deserve to know that Obama met with the Bilderberg Group and why is it that you won't talk about them ever?

Alan: Because we talk about them when people like you call up to spread these crazy conspiracy theories. [Colmes drops the call]

Someone else once got on the air and asked him a very normal, rational question about Bilderberg. Someone (perhaps the caller himself) posted the audio on YouTube in 2012. Colmes again ridicules the caller:[92]

Caller: I was curious—what's your take on the theory that the Bilderberg Group basically groomed Obama [Colmes cuts off the caller]

Colmes: Oh, cut it out with the Bilderbergers already, it's a bunch of crap. C'mon.

Caller: Well you hear a lot about it.

Alan: Yeah, yeah, you hear a lot about it from conspiracy freaks.

Dennis Miller

A caller in 2009 got on the air on the Dennis Miller show and asked him about Bilderberg as well. Here is a transcript of that call, which can also be heard on YouTube.[93]

Miller: Keith in Texas, what's up?

Caller: Hey Dennis. Great show. I went to my first Tea Party July 4th and I learned a lot of things, but I came out worried because as a Texan, here we have Rick Perry and he's running for governor against Kay Bailey Hutchisun, and some people say he's going to be running for president possibly. The thing that bothers me is I saw on News 8 in Austin—local news here—about him attending the Bilderberg conference, and that concerns me because [Miller cuts off caller and drops the call].

Miller: Aw, that's creeping me out, I'm sorry baby, I'm going to rock. I need my "burgs" with an "erg" at the end, as in James Cameron's *Titanic*. Once you start spelling it otherwise I get conspiracy and I don't have time right now. You know there's certain words as soon as you hear them. When a guy says "Bilderbergian" and you say 'can you explain that' and they keep going, you know that they…in the middle of appearing measured, he's dropped a huge steaming ideological cow pie, and you should move on from it. Alright. Dennis Miller Show. [Cuts to commercial]

Fareed Zarkaria

Just before the 2011 Bilderberg meeting, CNN's Fareed Zakaria wrote a blog on CNN.com titled "Why do we embrace conspiracy theories?" which started out saying how a lot of people on Facebook and Twitter were asking him about President Obama's birth certificate being faked and saying they thought Osama Bin Laden's death was possibly staged.

"The propensity of Americans to embrace conspiracy theories has long been attributed to their great suspicion of state authority," he says. "America was founded as a revolt against centralized power and there has always been a fear of coordinated action taking place in the dark behind closed doors. American conspiracy theories implicate Wall Street, the Federal Reserve, the U.S. government, the intelligence community and many others."[94]

He continues, "I can't tell you how many times people ask me about the conspiracy of the Bilderberg Group. It is a conference I've occasionally been invited to and have attended once or twice." He admits he has attended once or twice? You'd think a person would remember if they've been to the historic Bilderberg meeting once or if they came back a second time since it's kind of a big deal.

He went on to say, "If only the people who wrote the alarmist treatises on the Bilderberg Group were allowed in. They would be so utterly disappointed. It's just a conference like dozens of others around the world. And anyway, the idea that a finance minister or a banker would say something with a group of 150 people that is any different than what he would say in public is crazy in today's world where everything leaks instantly. In my experience, they say the same fairly banal platitudes inside as they say outside."[95]

Fareed says that inside the meeting men speak the same way they do in public? And they don’t say anything at Bilderberg they don’t say publicly? Why the Chatham House Rule then? Why all the secrecy and denials for decades? Why not just broadcast Bilderberg live on C-SPAN if it’s “just another conference” like dozens of others around the world?

He concludes his blog post saying, “So on the few occasions in my life when I’ve been inside centers of the conspiracy, I’ve been disappointed and relieved to find they were pretty much like the world on the outside.”[96]

Bilderberg’s Goals

A Global Socialist Government

Often called the “New World Order,” a primary goal of the Bilderberg elite is to integrate all the world’s governments into one unified system. The United Nations was basically the beginning of this, but in order to accomplish the final phase of their plan, the sovereignty of the United States and all other countries would have to be eliminated—and their laws, militaries, and Constitutions all placed under a single planetary political authority.

The New World Order plan also consists of making this super State a socialist system that will function as a Nanny State which will “take care” of all humanity through massive redistribution of wealth, huge subsidies, and unlimited free handouts to those who don’t work, funded through exorbitant taxes on those who do.

Presidents from George Bush Senior to Bill Clinton and Barack Obama have all publicly proclaimed that their goal is to form a New World Order, and the justification is always a current crisis that this New Age will supposedly solve. Just three days after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the co-chair of the Council on Foreign Relations (and Bilderberg member) Gary Hart stated, “There is a chance for the President of the United States to use this disaster—to carry out what his father—a phrase his father used I think only once, and it hasn’t been used since—and that is a New World Order.”[97]

Longtime Bilderberg member and financier Henry Kissinger stated that the problems Barack Obama's administration was facing regarding the ongoing War on Terror and the economic collapse of 2008, "can give new impetus to American foreign policy partly because the reception of him is so extraordinary around the world. His task will be to develop an overall strategy for America in this period when, really, a New World Order can be created. It's a great opportunity, it isn't just a crisis."[98]

This is the same man who, according to Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein—the reporters who blew open the Watergate scandal, refers to members of the U.S. military as "dumb, stupid animals" who are used as pawns for America's foreign policy.[99]

Perhaps the most infamous admission is when George Bush Senior stated the purpose of the Gulf War was to implement the "big idea" of the "New World Order." James Warburg, the son of Paul Warburg, the "father" of the Federal Reserve Bank, said at an appearance before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations that, "We shall have world government, whether or not we like it. The question is only whether world government will be achieved by consent or by conquest."[100]

One of the problems is that in order for this to happen, some of the freedoms and policies we cherish in the United States will have to be eliminated and repealed. During his acceptance speech when receiving the United Nations Global Governance Award in 1999, the former anchor for CBS News—Walter Cronkite—told the audience that all the countries in the world, "are going to have to be convinced to give up some of that sovereignty to the better, greater union, and it's not going to be easy."[101]

We've already seen the United Nations try to change laws in the United States claiming their authority exceeds that of our state and federal governments. For example, after Colorado, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska legalized recreational marijuana use, the UN declared it was against international law and is trying to assert their authority over the states' decision to legalize pot.[102]

The UN continues to adopt new “hate speech laws” which seek to criminalize speech (and books) that some see as “discriminatory,” which is an obvious violation of America’s First Amendment, but in the age of political correctness gone amuck, many in the United States and other supposedly “free” countries are actually supporting such tyrannical legislation.[103]

It must be emphasized that this “global government” is not something that started at the grass roots level and has worked its way up the channels of government—it is exactly the opposite. The plan was started (in secret) at the very highest levels of powerful corporations and private organizations which function to influence international policy for their own benefit.

The plan for a New World Order global government is also something that was called “just a conspiracy theory” for decades, but in recent years it is now obviously happening and being promoted by countless politicians and heads of international corporations as something the average citizen should embrace with open arms.

Global Currency and Cashless Society

As previously mentioned, the personal papers of UK's Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell revealed that ever since their beginning in the 1950s, Bilderberg was working towards the creation of a unified Europe and common currency.[104] In more recent years they have been tirelessly attempting to replicate that formula with other regional territories and currencies, with the ultimate goal of finally merging them all into one global digital currency and eliminating cash and coins (as well as gold and silver) as mediums of exchange. On the surface, a global unified currency may seem appealing due to its ability to be used universally anywhere throughout the world without having to exchange currencies when traveling or spending money in different parts of the world, but there are many downsides which are often overlooked, ignored, or covered up.[105]

Credit and debit cards of course were the first phase of the cashless society, and recently a major leap occurred when Apple Pay and the Apple Watch rolled out in April of 2015.[106] Fewer and fewer people are using cash, or even carrying any of it in their wallet at all. A study in 2014 showed that almost half of Americans carry $20 or less on them when they leave the house, eighty percent carry less than $50, and about ten percent of people carry no cash at all.[107] Many Millennials and those in Generation Z see cash as old fashioned and something that grandma and grandpa used to buy things with before the digital age.

A growing number of banking officials are pushing hard to have cash eliminated as soon as possible. In April of 2015 a top Citibank economist suggested that cash should be abolished, and in order to coerce people into going digital, he also proposed the use of cash should be taxed at such a high rate that it would discourage most people from using it at all.[108] Jim Leaviss, a banker with M&G investments in the UK, soon followed by suggesting outright banning cash. “Forcing everyone to spend only by electronic means from an account held at a government-run bank would give the authorities far better tools to deal with recessions and economic booms,” he said.[109]

He also suggested negative interest rates (i.e. fees) on anyone who kept large amounts of money in their checking or savings account, and proposed the government could fluctuate these fees in order to encourage people to spend the money they have, rather than just lose it on fees, if the government wanted people to pour more money into the economy. “And once all money exists only in bank accounts—monitored, or even directly controlled by the government—the authorities will be able to encourage us to spend more when the economy slows, or spend less when it is overheating,” Leaviss concluded.[110]

For years now, when you’re on an airplane, if you want to buy something from the snack cart, many of the flight attendants only accept debit or credit cards.[111] Many will literally not accept cash for the food or drinks. Buying anything with cash these days is seen as suspicious. Storing cash in safe deposit boxes is against the rules at many banks, and the FDIC even suggests against it and urges people to deposit any and all cash they may have into a bank account instead.

In fact there are countless cases of police confiscating people’s cash when they haven’t even been arrested or charged with a crime.[112] It’s called Civil Asset Forfeiture, which allows police and other government agencies to literally confiscate the cash a person is carrying when they are pulled over for a routine traffic stop because the cash itself is seen as suspicious. Even if there is no evidence it was obtained by criminal means, police still have the authority to take it on the spot because the money itself is seen as evidence of a crime, even if no arrest is made and there is no actual evidence of a crime, and no one has claimed the person has committed one.[113]

If you just sold an old car, motorcycle, or boat for a few thousand dollars cash, or if you happen to be traveling with an envelope of it on your way to poker night with guys—if it is discovered by police during a routine traffic stop, they can (and do all the time) confiscate it, even if there are no illegal drugs, weapons, or any evidence at all that the money was obtained illegally.[114] You are guilty until proven innocent.

In the past, concerns about the approaching cashless society were ridiculed when so-called “conspiracy theorists” in the 1990s and early 2000s would warn about it getting close, but now that it is actually being implemented, those decades of denials are ignored and the new system is being promoted from the top down as the key to a consumerist Utopia.

Did you just buy a pregnancy test? Some medication to treat an embarrassing medical condition? Are you seeing a psychiatrist or a therapist for some mental health issues or personal problems? Did you purchase some personal items for you and your spouse to use in the bedroom? Are you buying certain books that the government may misinterpret as suspicious? In a cashless society, all of these transactions and more are basically made available—not only to the government—but to countless third parties such as advertisers and international corporations who have access to your entire purchasing history due to the terms of service you implicitly agreed to with the use of a debit or credit card.[115]

Not to mention, the centralization of all points of purchase and relying on one single digital network to facilitate them all is begging for trouble in the event there is a systemwide failure. A power outage, computer glitch, or a cyber-attack would be absolutely devastating to perhaps tens or hundreds of millions of people, completely crippling their ability to purchase gas or food, or even buy a bus ticket or subway pass to get home from school or work.

Global Military Force

In attempts to supposedly put an end to war, the plan is to unite all the different militaries around the world into one supranational security force that will be directed based on the decisions of the globalist leaders. The beginning of the “Global Police” can be seen with NATO soldiers and UN “Peacekeeper” troops which are comprised of people from many nations and may be deployed by any nation-state that is a partner.[116]

Agencies like DARPA (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) are working to make these military men and women virtually invincible. The quest for Super Soldiers has led to the design of exoskeleton suits that give the people wearing them super strength and speed.[117] President Obama once joked that “We’re building Ironman,” referring to the Marvel comic book character who uses an exoskeleton suit to fight crime, but these systems are no longer science fiction.[118] It has also been proposed that military soldiers have neural interface implants wired into their brains, turning them into literal cyborgs by merging man with machine in a “Transhumanist upgrade.”[119]

Department of Defense documents drawn up in 1996 detail their plans to implant neural interfaces in soldiers’ brains—and in the heads of the civilian population as well. One document titled *Information Operations: A New War-Fighting Capability* outlines technology they hoped to have in place by the year 2025, and reads, “The implanted microscopic brain chip performs two functions. First, it links the individual to the IIC [Information Integration Center] creating a seamless interface between the user and the information resources. In essence, the chip relays the processed information from the IIC to the user, second the chip creates a computer generated mental visualization based upon the user’s request.”[120]

The documents claim such things would help increase security, saying, “An implanted microscopic chip does not require security measures to verify whether the right person is connected to the IIC [Information Integration Center], whereas a room, helmet, or sunglasses requires additional time-consuming access control mechanisms to verify an individual’s identity and level of control within the Cyber Situation.”[121]

The document addressed the expected resistance to such devices, saying, “Implanting ‘things’ in people raises ethical and public relations issues. While these concerns may be founded on today’s thinking, in 2025 they may not be as alarming,” and goes on to say, “The civilian populace will likely accept any implanted microscopic chips that allow military members to defend vital national interests.”[122]

The finale phase of the plan is to replace most human soldiers with Terminator-style artificially intelligent robots. This was thought to be science fiction just a few years ago, but has recently become a serious endeavor by the United States and militaries around the world.[123] Robotic soldiers, whether in the form of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, TALON tank-like robots, or android Terminators, would follow orders without question, no matter how unethical or inhumane they were.[124]

Elon Musk, founder and CEO of Tesla Motors and SpaceX, revealed in his authorized biography that he is concerned that Google’s planned artificially intelligent robot army may end up exterminating the human race if it gets out of control or perceives our species as a threat to its existence. “Please note that I am normally super pro technology and have never raised this issue until recent months. This is not a case of crying wolf about something I don’t understand.”[125] He equated creating artificial intelligence with “summoning a demon.”[126]

Other leaders working in information technology and science have also recently expressed concerns that the creation of an AI could be disastrous for humans. Stephen Hawking has warned it could be the biggest mistake in the history of humanity,[127] Microsoft founder Bill Gates has stated he’s not sure why more people aren’t concerned,[128] and Apple cofounder Steve Wozniak, who once dismissed such fears as unfounded, has recently changed his mind due to the rapid advance of AI and is now warning an artificial intelligent entity could enslave the human race and treat us like pets.[129]

Elimination of Right to Bear Arms

In the New World Order “socialist Utopia” everyone will supposedly live in peace and harmony, with the global government taking care of everyone’s needs and protecting them like a loving parent or big brother. A primary promise of this new era is that supposedly “nobody needs to own guns” except the government, which is said to be the only group that can be trusted to use them responsibly. In order to finally eliminate crime, officials claim they need to ban citizens from owning guns and repeal the Second Amendment in the name of peace and prosperity.

Incrementally the Second Amendment of the Constitution has been slowly eroded, and with every gun tragedy that’s turned into a national story, more and more restrictions are placed on gun owners and the types of guns and accessories that can be sold to the public.[130] Instead of addressing the underlying causes of violence, the guns themselves are blamed and said to be the problem, not a symptom of it.

Many have tried to argue that the Second Amendment of the American Constitution does not declare that citizens have the right to own guns.[131] This argument is absolutely absurd but continues to be repeated by those on the left who believe it was put in place to authorize *the government* to own guns, which is 100% the opposite of its purpose.[132] It was specifically included in the Bill of Rights to ensure ordinary citizens have the right to own guns as a way to—not only protect themselves and their families from burglars and thugs—but also to serve as a deterrent to prevent the federal, state, or local government from abusing its power and violating basic civil liberties of Americans.

Rapper Ice-T summed up the purpose of the Second Amendment during an interview on British television when he was asked by Krishnan

Guru-Murthy, anchor of Channel 4 News, if he has any guns at home. “Yeah, it’s legal in the United States. It’s part of our Constitution. You know, the right to bear arms is because that’s the last form of defense against tyranny. Not to hunt. It’s to protect yourself from the police.”[133]

In 1997 Britain basically outlawed all guns and the law has been a blueprint Bilderberg hopes to duplicate around the rest of the world.[134] Slowly but surely they are making progress with many political pundits on television repeating their talking points about how now is the time to follow Britain’s lead and round up Americans’ guns for everyone’s safety.[135]

Former Attorney General Eric Holder once stated on C-SPAN2 that the government needed a new strategy to change the way people thought about the Second Amendment, and concluded, “We have to be repetitive about this. We need to do this every day of the week, and just really brainwash people into thinking about guns in a vastly different way.”[136]

CNN’s Fareed Zakaria, who is a member of the Bilderberg Group,[137] the Council on Foreign Relations, and Skull & Bones’ sister society Scroll & Key at Yale University, argues that the Bill of Rights are outdated and should be “fixed” in order to remove the Second Amendment to “modernize the Constitution for the 21st Century.”[138]

China’s official government-run news agency, Xinhua, has also demanded the United States tighten up gun control laws in America.[139] The United Nations has long wanted the American Second Amendment repealed, and is attempting to do so incrementally through small arms treaties.[140] Before you say “this couldn’t happen in America,” stop and think about all the freedoms that have been lost over the last generation, and see how quickly people forget.

Population Reduction and Stabilization

Because of healthcare advances and the continued exponential expansion of the world’s population, many Bilderbergers fear that the earth does not have the natural resources to sustain the current population, let alone if it continues to increase. As far back as the 1970s environmentalists and the political elite were warning the planet’s population would soon balloon out of control and cause a global catastrophe.[141]

The billionaire founder of CNN, Ted Turner (who has five children himself), once remarked, “There’s too many people. That’s why we have global warming. We have global warming because too many people are using too much stuff, if there were less people, they’d be using less stuff.” After drastically cutting greenhouse gas emissions, he said “We’ve got to stabilize the population.”[142]

He went on that, “Not doing it will be catastrophic. We’ll be 8 degrees hotter in 10, not 10 but 30 or 40 years and basically none of the crops will grow. Most of the people will have died and the rest of us will be cannibals. Civilization will have broken down. The few people that are left will be living in a failed state like Somalia or Sudan. And living conditions will be intolerable. The droughts will be so bad there will be no more corn growing. Not doing it will be like suicide.”[143]

Agenda 21 is a program launched by the United Nations in 1992 to deal with what they call “sustainable development” around the world, focusing on changing consumption patterns, preserving natural resources, and moving to more renewable energy sources. Part of Agenda 21 (the 21 meaning the 21st century) includes implementing birth control programs to slow down the population growth. The United Nations Population Fund, which was supposed to provide supplies and services for reproductive health and birth control in third world countries, was discovered to have also been involved with secret sterilizations and forced abortions.[144]

President Obama's chief science advisor John Holdren once wrote a book which proposed adding sterilants to nations' water supplies,[145] forcing women to get sterilized after their second child,[146] and making them have abortions if they got pregnant for a third time.[147] The book, titled *Ecoscience*, reads, "Indeed, it has been concluded that compulsory population-control laws, even including laws requiring compulsory abortion, could be sustained under the existing Constitution if the population crisis became sufficiently severe to endanger the society."[148] [Compulsory means forced or mandatory, by the way]

Some see even more sinister methods on the table in order to accomplish this goal. The mysterious Georgia Guidestones monument calls for a global population of only 500 million people. The strange monument consists of four giant slabs of granite which stand 19-feet-tall, laid out in a paddlewheel formation, each with 10 different commandments carved into each of their eight faces, each one in a different langue (English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Swahili, Hindi, Hebrew, and Arabic). The structure, sometimes called "America's Stonehenge," is also said to contain the "Guides to the New Age." It was built in 1980 and stands in the middle of nowhere in a field in the state of Georgia and is the creation of an unknown man who said he represented an unnamed group who wanted the monument built. Some call it the 10 Commandments of the New World Order since some of the "Guides" call for a global government, a one world universal language, and says the overpopulation of humanity is a "cancer on the earth."

Total Surveillance Society

There will be no more privacy if Bilderberg gets their way; no more anonymity, no more secrets—at least for the majority of us "regular folk." Members of the Party [the government] in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* could actually turn off the Telescreens in their homes, a luxury ordinary citizens didn't have; and the billionaires of Bilderberg will likely include some safeguards to ensure their own privacy remains in place while the rest of the world is forced to live in a fish bowl with everything we say, everywhere we go, everything we do, and everything we buy recorded, catalogued, and stored indefinitely.[149]

Facial recognition systems have been beta tested since the 1990s and are now fully operational and being used at Las Vegas casinos,[150] hotels,[151] shopping malls,[152] sporting events,[153] airports,[154] government buildings,[155] and on the streets of major cities.[156] Edward Snowden, the NSA whistle blower, confirmed what many had suspected for some time—the U.S. government had a science fiction-like system capable of recording all electronic communications and hacking into people's email, social media accounts, and cell phones with the click of a few keys, and with virtually no oversight or constraints.[157]

Smart TVs and artificial intelligent personal assistants like Siri, Amazon Echo, and Jibo have the capability to remotely record the most personal of moments and conversations within people's homes and bedrooms.[158] Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which was published back in 1949, reads, "The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard… You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized."[159]

Of course the argument is always, "if you don't have anything to hide, then you have nothing to fear," but as Thomas Jefferson once stated—if you give up liberty in the name of security, you will have neither. In the name of "safety" and convenience, most people have willingly given up every last bit of privacy in our digital age. Most haven't even considered what could happen if civil liberties continue to slip or if the government were to grow too powerful and get out of control.

The ability of government agencies to profile, Orwellianly discriminate against, or target individuals for IRS audits, ordinance violations, or other forms of harassment based on their religious, personal, or political views is a reality everyone is now vulnerable to getting swept up in.[160]

Most major software developers and hardware manufactures have been coerced into building backdoors into their products so the government can easily remotely access people's devices and cloud accounts, as well as bypass any encryption that has been applied to their files.[161] The NSA even has a program where they intercept laptop computers and other products customers order online and then install special spyware and hardware on them and then package the items back up and send them on their way.[162]

William Binney, a former high-level NSA official who worked for the agency for more than 30 years, resigned in 2001 after he discovered the surveillance systems they were using gave the government the potential for what he called "a turnkey totalitarian state."[163] His home was raided by the FBI in 2007 after he was suspected of leaking classified information to the New York Times about the NSA's spying programs. He was never charged with a crime and the read was seen as a show of force to intimidate any potential whistleblowers from reviling what the NSA was doing.

Some even see the omnipresent surveillance system growing far beyond just eyes and ears, into something so strange it sounds like science fiction. Tech titans are working to give birth to an artificial intelligent “God” that they hope will solve humanity’s problems and intimately watch over everyone like a guardian angel, using its super intelligence to do “what’s best” for humanity.[164]

See my previous book *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True* if you would like to read the details of the shocking parallels between George Orwell’s classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and our current society in terms of actual NSA high-tech spy systems, mind-reading machines, secret government projects, advanced weapons, and emerging artificial intelligence systems.

Mainstream Media Uniformity

To manage the minds of billions of people, the information those people receive about the world must be carefully managed. Information is power, and mass communication systems are central sources of this power. People often point to Communist countries and their state-run media as examples of propaganda, while thinking places like the United States has a "free press," but the fact is the mainstream media in America is carefully controlled as well.

Edward Bernays, considered to be the 'father of public relations,' wrote, "Those who manipulate the unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of...in almost every act of our lives whether in the sphere of politics or business in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires that control the public mind, who harness old social forces and contrive new ways to bind and guide the world."[165]

He went on to admit, "Whatever of social importance is done today, whether in politics, finance, manufacture, agriculture, charity, education, or other fields, must be done with the help of propaganda. Propaganda is the executive arm of the invisible government."[166]

In America this is done through a combination of the centralization of media ownership and through secret government programs which work to influence the news and entertainment media. In the 1970s a Senate investigation uncovered the CIA's media manipulation program called

Operation Mockingbird, which was paying a billion dollars a year (in today’s dollars adjusted for inflation) to the top editors and journalists of every major newspaper and television network to function as covert gatekeepers and propagandists for the government.[167]

The director of the program, Thomas Braden, would later admit, “If the director of the CIA wanted to extend a present, say, to someone… suppose he just thought, this man can use fifty thousand dollars, he’s working well and doing a good job—he could hand it to him and never have to account to anybody...There was simply no limit to the money it could spend and no limit to the people it could hire and no limit to the activities it could decide were necessary to conduct the war—the secret war...It was multinational.”[168]

According to the Congressional report into the matter, which was published in 1976, “The CIA currently maintains a network of several hundred individuals around the world who provide intelligence for the CIA and at times attempt to influence opinion through the use of covert propaganda. These individuals provide the CIA with direct access to a large number of newspapers and periodicals, scores of press services and news agencies, radio and television stations, commercial book publishers, and other foreign media outlets.”[169]

Of course the CIA and top media figures deny such thing continues today—a claim which is absurd and demonstrably false. The Mockingbird program [or whatever codename it operates under today] keeps certain stories out of the news or at least prevents them from being a top story, and also functions to direct the news networks to highlight specific stories or cast them in a certain light. Top stories and issues stuck circling in the news cycle for days or weeks are often carefully chosen for specific purposes.

Even seemingly innocent entertainment is often covertly controlled and carefully crafted to function as propaganda. It’s an open secret that the CIA and the Department of Defense have Entertainment Liaison Offices which work directly with Hollywood producers and writers to help them make TV shows and blockbuster movies that deliver certain political messages in their story lines.[170] Shows like *24* and films like *Zero Dark Thirty* were used to promote the idea that suspected terrorists need to be tortured in order to save people's lives, and that the heroes sometimes have to break the rules in order to save the day.[171]

These liaison offices also provide consultants, access to military bases which are used for shooting locations, expensive equipment like aircraft carriers, jets, tanks, etc., which are used in the projects, and even uniformed U.S. military soldiers who serve as extras.[172] In exchange for this priceless equipment, large numbers of extras, and access to actual military bases; TV and film studios agree to turn over the final script approval to the entertain liaison officers who make changes in screenplays in order to mold them into delivering the message they desire and have the final say over the plot.[173]

The emergence of social media has provided a problem for the dominant traditional media outlets, since they give anyone the ability to potentially have their message reach just as many people as content distributed through the mainstream media channels. While this has empowered the average person who can write a blog, post something on Facebook, or upload a video on YouTube and make it available for anyone to see, the corporate controllers have been scrambling to attempt to control this medium as well.

Facebook and Instagram can—and do—make content containing specific keywords, certain hashtags or pictures, disappear down the memory hole and the posts just don't show up on others feeds or in searches.[174] These services can prevent posts from going viral by limiting their distribution, largely without anyone detecting a post is being censored.[175] By using these popular social media and video sharing services, everyone must agree to their terms of service, which allow these companies to restrict free speech under the banner of what they deem "inappropriate."[176] People are locked out of accounts as punishment for several days or have their entire account shut down for "violating the terms of service" if they post something the companies have deemed violates their standards.[177]

By the time most of these major social media companies became widely used by the public, they were quietly purchased by massive corporations after being auctioned off at the secretive Sun Valley Conference which is held in Idaho every summer.[178] This small gathering in a remote town brings together the newest social media startups to meet with the current big names in technology, media, as well as heads of the CIA, NSA, and other government agencies where they come to a consensus on how to deal with new, independent communication companies and emerging technology.[179]

It’s a Brave New World, and even though we’re living in the Information Age, most people unfortunately couldn’t care less about current events, history, or the direction society is headed. They instead have become lost in an entertainment wasteland and are constantly streaming digital distractions to occupy their mind with meaningless gibberish, crude comedy, and gratuitous violence in what many people now consider to be an Idiocracy or the Entertainment Age.

Conclusion

Is the press in America really free and independent when, for over 50 years, every major American newspaper and television network have buried their heads in the sand each year when the Bilderberg Group meets? Did they *all* just miss the story year after year, decade after decade? No news editor or journalist can honestly say the annual meeting isn't interesting and newsworthy. Certainly it can't be called a coincidence when word of Bilderberg began to go viral through social media and alternative news websites, that finally some mainstream outlets began mentioning it in passing—almost always, of course, pointing out that "conspiracy theorists" were suspicious.

Their tax returns show that media companies like the *Washington Post* have literally helped to pay for their meetings, and major talk radio show hosts who have their finger on the pulse of politics in America have either played dumb pretending to know nothing about Bilderberg, or ridiculed anyone asking reasonable questions about the group or their activities.

Perhaps now that they've been forced out of the shadows, Bilderberg will attempt to "go legit" and pretend the decades of denials, news blackouts, and ridicule of the "conspiracy theorists" who are curious or concerned about them just didn't happen at all. As we've seen countless times throughout history, after corrupt politicians and corporate leaders repeatedly dodge questions, deny facts, and ridicule inquiries—the truth of their activities eventually comes out.

Everyone knows that politics is a dirty business and lying is pretty much the only policy politicians are consistent on. They flip flop, they soften their positions in order to gain favor with certain groups and avoid offending others hoping to get elected, and if anyone knows anything about politicians and billionaire businessmen it's that they will do anything to gain and maintain their power. The list of massive deceptions perpetuated by those in power is long. “There are Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq.” “The NSA isn’t spying on American citizens.” “If you like your health insurance policy, you can keep it.” “Read my lips, no new taxes.” And now we can add “the Bilderberg Group is just a conspiracy theory,” to that list as well.

In 2011 when the digital dam began to burst, and the Drudge Report first posted about it, *Forbes* magazine finally decided to write an article which started off saying, “The annual Bilderberg Conference will convene this weekend, thus throwing the Internet into a tizzy,” and that “Conspiracy theorists believe the Bilderbergers control the course of world events. That through crisis and uncertainty they steer society’s great developments with an ultimate goal of establishing a New World Order.”[180]

After making the customary dig at “conspiracy theorists,” the *Forbes* article surprising got somewhat serious, saying, “It is certainly concerning that representatives from Washington, Wall Street and the media will meet with no account of their dealings or details of their plans. Their counterparts from across the North Atlantic will attend too. It reeks of collusion and intrigue. The lack of transparency and potential for concentrated power spurs the imagination, while unsettling the mind. The media, despite some of its most influential personalities participating, will ignore the proceedings.”[181]

That same week *Time* magazine also broke their silence, admitting, “In the past few years, the mystery surrounding the Bilderberg group has faded slightly because of interest from journalists,” and as expected, added, “the defenders of the ‘conspiracy theory’ who keep denouncing the ‘Illuminati’ are still active.”[182]

Only time will tell what happens regarding the Bilderberg Group’s secret history. You can’t put the toothpaste back in the tube, as the saying goes, so I wrote this book as a record of the decades of denials and news blackouts of one of the world’s biggest conspiracy *facts*.

Unfortunately most of their work is pretty much done. The New World Order global government is in its final phase; the Big Brother Orwellian surveillance systems have been built to track, trace, and database all electronic communications;[183] the American Constitution has been subverted; most of the population has been sedated, distracted, and dumbed down through endless entertainment available at the click of a mouse or the tap of a finger. But thankfully at the same time, the era of Bilderberg's secrecy is coming to an end, and for those who take the time to research things for themselves instead of just consuming what the mainstream media is dishing out, a clear vision of reality can come into focus.

Thanks for reading this book to the very end. I hope you have found it concise and to the point without getting bogged down by unnecessary filler or unconfirmable wild accusations. I personally have been studying the Bilderberg Group for over ten years and it has been fascinating to see word spread so far and wide about them in the age of social media and YouTube.

If you found this book interesting or valuable in your pursuit of the truth please take a moment to write a brief review and rate it on Amazon.com or at the e-book store where you downloaded it from. And if you'd like to continue reading about similar subjects, I encourage you to download the e-book or order the paperback version of one or more of my other titles. They will save you countless years of research and have most of the esoteric pieces of the puzzle assembled and organized in in one place.

Thanks again for being a reader and a lover of books. It is certainly a dying pastime in our entertainment age, as we are on the verge of an apparent Idiocracy as society continues to sink down a cultural abyss. As media analyst Neil Postman wrote in his 1985 classic *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, "When a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is redefined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby-talk, when, in short, a people become an audience and their public business a vaudeville act, then a nation finds itself at risk; culture-death is a clear possibility."[184]

Further Reading

The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction

Secret societies have both fascinated and frightened people for hundreds of years. Often the infamous Illuminati is mentioned as the core of conspiracies which span the globe. The Illuminati is actually a historical secret society which had goals of revolutions and world domination dating back to the 1770s.

Since then, rumors and conspiracy theories involving the Illuminati continue to spread, sometimes finding their way into popular novels like Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons* and Hollywood movies like *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. Some men have even come forward claiming to be former members, offering details of what they allege are the inner workings of the organization. When you sift through all of the information available on the subject, you may be surprised that the truth is stranger than fiction.

In *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, conspiracy and occult expert Mark Dice separates history from Hollywood and shows why tales of the secret society won't die.

The New World Order: Facts & Fiction

What is the New World Order? Proponents say that it’s an anticipated new era of global cooperation between diverse nations and cultures aimed at ushering in a utopia providing all the earth's citizens with everything they need.

Detractors claim it’s the systematic take-over by secret societies, quasi-government entities and corporations who are covertly organizing a global socialist all-powerful government which aims to regulate every aspect of citizens lives, rendering them a perpetual working-class while the elite leadership lives in luxury.

Conspiracy theory expert Mark Dice looks at the evidence, claims, and conspiracy theories as he takes you down the rabbit hole to *The New World Order*.

Illuminati in the Music Industry

Famous pop stars and rappers from Jay-Z and Rick Ross to Rihanna and Christina Aguilera are believed by many to be a part of the infamous Illuminati secret society. These stars allegedly use Illuminati and satanic symbolism in their music videos and on their clothes that goes unnoticed by those not "in the know."

Since these stars appear in our livings rooms on family friendly mainstream shows like Good Morning America, Ellen, and dozens of others—and are loved by virtually all the kids—they couldn't possibly have anything to do with the infamous Illuminati or anything "satanic," could they? Some famous musicians have even publicly denounced the Illuminati in interviews or songs.

***Illuminati in the Music Industry* takes a close look at some of today's hottest stars and decodes the secret symbols, song lyrics, and separates the facts from the fiction in this fascinating topic. You may never see your favorite musicians the same way ever again.**

Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True

In *Big Brother*, Mark Dice details actual high-tech spy gadgets, mind-reading machines, government projects, and emerging artificial intelligence systems that seem as if they came right out of George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Orwell's famous book was first published in 1949, and tells the story of a nightmarish future where citizens have lost all privacy and are continuously monitored by the omniscient Big Brother surveillance system which keeps them obedient to a totalitarian government.

The novel is eerily prophetic as many of the fictional systems of surveillance described have now become a reality. Mark Dice shows you the scary documentation that Big Brother is watching you, and is more powerful than you could imagine.

The Resistance Manifesto

***The Resistance Manifesto* by Mark Dice contains 450 pages of extensively researched and documented information drawing from declassified documents, mainstream news articles, religious texts, and personal interviews. A dark web of evil is exposed like never before, making Bible Prophecy and the New World Order crystal clear.**

Learn the most powerful information about the Illuminati, plans for the rise of the Antichrist, the institutions, people, and powers involved, and how you can fight them.

Inside the Illuminati

When looking into the existence and alleged activities of the infamous Illuminati secret society, one finds an overwhelming amount of conspiracy theories, hidden history, half-truths and hoaxes.

But how much truth is there to some of these claims? What is the real history of the mysterious group? Do they continue to exist today? What is the evidence? And what are they doing?

After a decade of research sifting through the facts and the fiction, secret society expert Mark Dice will help you navigate through the complex maze from the original documents to rare revelations from elite politicians, bankers and businessmen, as he takes you *Inside the Illuminati*

About the Author

Mark Dice is a media analyst, author, and political activist who, in an entertaining and educational way, gets people to question our celebrity obsessed culture and the role the mainstream media and elite secret societies play in shaping our lives.

Mark's YouTube channel has received over 85 million views and his viral videos have been mentioned the Fox News Channel, CNN, the *Drudge Report*, *TMZ,* the *New York Daily News*, the *Washington Times,* and other media outlets around the world.

He has been featured on various television shows including the History Channel's *Decoded* and *America's Book of Secrets*, *Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura*, *Secret Societies of Hollywood* on E! Channel, *America Declassified* on the Travel Channel, and is a frequent guest on *Coast to Coast AM*, *The Alex Jones Show*, and more.

Mark Dice is the author of several popular books on secret societies and conspiracies, including *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*, *The New World Order, Facts & Fiction*, *The Resistance Manifesto*, *Illuminati in the Music Industry*, and *Inside the Illuminati*, which are all available in paperback on Amazon.com or e-book on Kindle, iBooks, Nook or Google Play.

While much of Mark's work confirms the existence and continued operation of the Illuminati today, he is also dedicated to debunking conspiracy theories and hoaxes and separating the facts from the fiction; hence the "Facts & Fiction" subtitle for several of his books.

While having respect for all authentic religions and belief systems, Mark Dice is a Christian and holds a bachelor’s degree in communication from California State University. He lives in San Diego, California.

He enjoys causing trouble for the New World Order, exposing corrupt scumbag politicians, and pointing out Big Brother’s prying eyes. The term “fighting the New World Order” is used by Mark to describe some of his activities, and refers to his and others’ resistance and opposition (*The Resistance*) to the overall system of political corruption, illegal wars, elite secret societies, mainstream media, Big Brother and privacy issues; as well as various economic and social issues. This Resistance involves self-improvement, self-sufficiency, personal responsibility and spiritual growth.

Connect with Mark on:

Facebook.com/MarkDice
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[1] *Time Magazine* “Bilderberg: The Uber-Powerful Global Elite Meet Behind Closed Doors in St. Moritz” by Anne Fournier (June 9th 2011)

[2] Many of these calls were recorded or the clips were taken from the show’s podcast archive and can be heard on MarkDice.com or found on YouTube if you search for keywords: Mark Dice Bilderberg Sean Hannity.

[3] http://www.bilderbergmeetings.org/participants_2008.html

[4] *The Guardian* “Bilderberg conference 2014: eating our politicians for breakfast” by Charlie Skelton (May 30th 2014)

[5] *Business Insider* “The Full List Of Incredibly Powerful People Who Will Attend This Year's Bilderberg Meeting (June 3rd 2013)

[6] http://www.bilderbergmeetings.org/participants2012.html

[7] *The Observer* April 7th 1963

[8] Tucker, Jim – *Jim Tucker’s Bilderberg Diary* page 231

[9] Tucker, Jim – *Jim Tucker’s Bilderberg Diary* page 218

[10] The book was unfortunately out of print the last I checked, but used copies were available on amazon.com.

[11] *The Guardian* “Bilderberg 2012: protesters hail their hero, Alex Jones” Ryan Devereaux (June 3rd 2012)

[12] *NPR* “Bewildered by Bilderberg” by Linton Weeks (May 21st 2014)

[13] *The Guardian* “Bilderberg 2011: The curtains are drawn” by Charlie Skelton (June 9th 2011)

[14] *Washington Examiner* “Drudge is the nation's news homepage, top driver to Fox, NYT, Politico” by Paul Bedard (April 9th 2015)

[15] 2008 IRS Form 990-PF OMD No 1545-0052

[16] 2009 IRS Form 990-PF OMD No 1545-0052

[17] Usually they meet in the United States every four years, typically in election years, although this has not always been the case.

[18] http://www.goldmansachs.com/who-we-are/leadership/board-of-directors/james-a-johnson.html

[19] *CBS News* “The Case Against Lehman Brothers” by Steve Kroft (August 19th 2012)

[20] See my previous book *Inside the Illuminati, Evidence, Objectives, and Methods of Operation* for a detailed analysis of this and other Bilderberg affiliates.

[21] YouTube: Mark Dice Visits Bilderberg’s Secret Office in Washington D.C. (June 2nd 2014)

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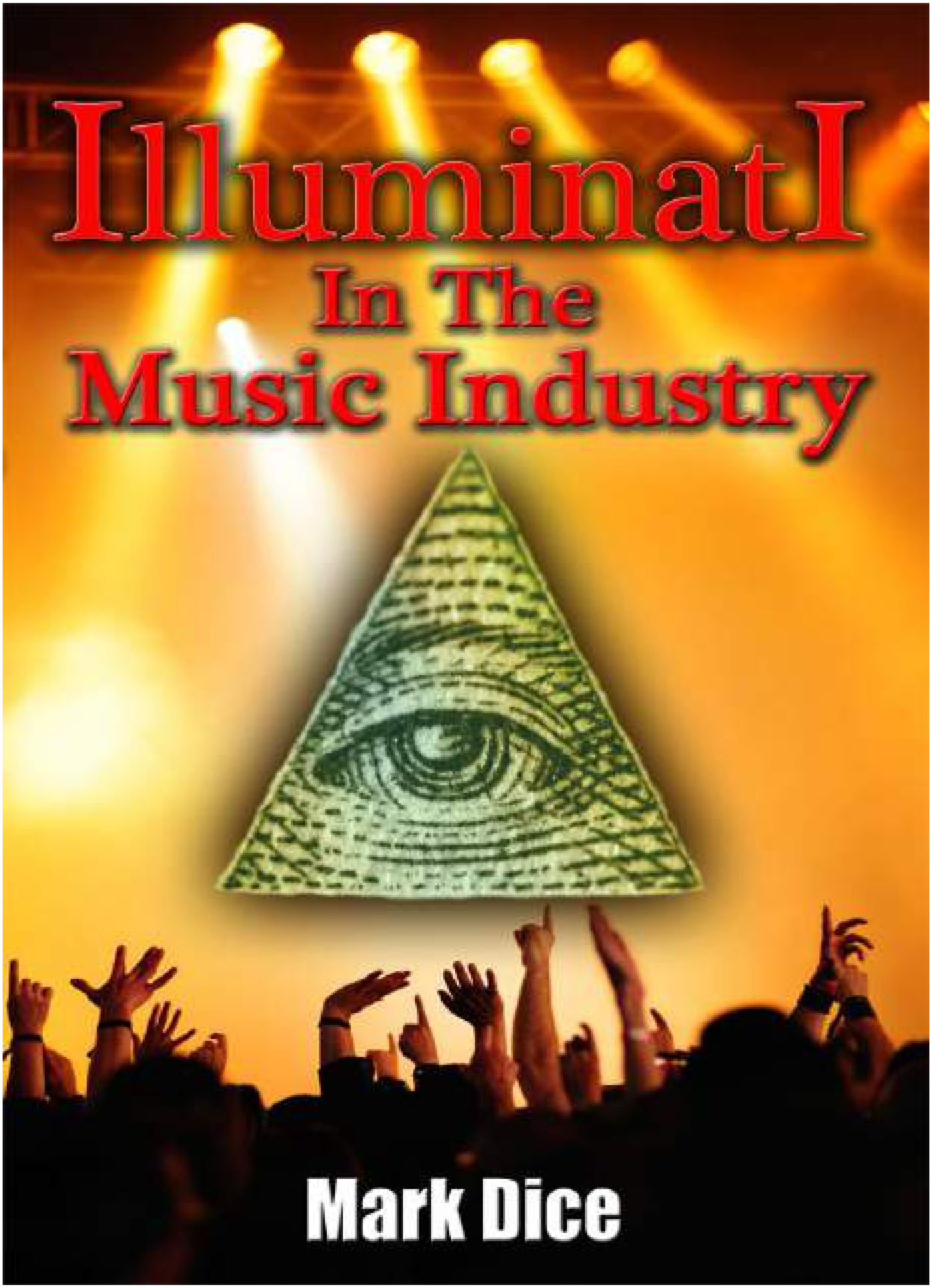

IlluminatI In The Music Industry

Mark Dice

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Illuminati

In the Music Industry

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Introduction

Practically everyone has seen or heard of the satanic symbolism used by rock and heavy metal bands, particularly dating back to the 1980s when Ozzy Osbourne, Motley Crue, and many others incorporated satanic pentagrams, images of devils, and even dramatized human sacrifices into their performances and lyrics. But after a while the whole "satanic shock rock" fad faded into the past with most musicians eventually abandoning satanic imagery and themes. This was not the end of the story though, because accusations of satanism and secret messages would resurface again in the 21st century, and weren't just limited to heavy metal or rock bands. Blatant Satanic symbolism made a strong comeback, this time, in rap and hip hop, and also in many seemingly family friendly teen idols, including female pop stars who are household names.

It's not just any kind of Satanism that's said to have been adopted by these pop stars—its Illuminati symbolism—from the infamous secret society talked about in many conspiracy circles. This "Illuminati" is said to be the puppet masters—the Invisible Empire believed by many—who follow conspiracy theories—to control the world. Yes, that infamous superclass secret society of billionaires, media moguls, European royalty, and elite politicians. Famous pop stars and rappers from Jay-Z and Rick Ross, to Rihanna and Christina Aguilera are said by many to be "satanic" or "Illuminati" and allegedly use Illuminati symbolism in their music videos, on their clothes, and wear Illuminati jewelry that goes unnoticed by those not "in the know."

Since these stars appear in our livings rooms on family friendly mainstream shows like *Good Morning America*, *Ellen*, and dozens of others—and are loved by virtually all the kids—they couldn't possibly have anything to do with the infamous Illuminati or anything "satanic," could they?

In this book I will show you in shocking detail just how many mainstream musicians with household names and millions of preteen fans are false idols pumping garbage into people's brains while being presented as role models for children to look up to, learn from, and mimic. Many men and women of all ages actually idolize these musicians, and see them as modern day gods and goddesses. No, this is not a "backwards messages made the teens kill themselves," kind of book. We will, however, look at the lyrical and visual content of mainstream, Grammy Award winning artists, whose songs are played on radio stations around the world, and we will analyze the various effects consuming such content on a regular basis has on listeners' beliefs and behavior.

Aside from mainstream musicians being human products designed and manufactured by record companies that know how to mass produce novelty songs about love and relationships, many artists are promoting self-destructive, disempowering and callous materialistic ideas in their lyrical content and accompanying music videos. Exactly what is their purpose? What is this "Illuminati symbolism" people are talking about? Are some musicians really "in" the Illuminati secret society?

Living in the information age and because of various major world changing events appearing to unfold as if there's a hidden hand pulling the strings, more and more people are stumbling across, or somehow finding the "Illuminati rabbit hole" through events like the September 11th attacks, the global economic collapse, or the ever-increasing Big Brother Orwellian surveillance society we are living in. A growing number of people are beginning to believe that the Illuminati are secretly in control of the government, banks, the mainstream media, and major world events. While many people are obviously disturbed by the idea that a powerful mystical secret society could be operating as a shadow government manipulating our planet, others, however, see the Illuminati not as a threat to our freedoms, our well-being, or the economy, but instead look up to them and see the Illuminati's immense perceived power appealing just as countless people are drawn to gangster films and often fantasize about working for the Italian mafia because of the power certain mafia men wield.

Since the Illuminati mafia is considered to be the most powerful organization in the world, eclipsing by far the Italian mob, and as more and more people have learned about the Illuminati or heard about “Illuminati conspiracy theories,” an increasing number of people began to look up to them as “cool,” and the ultimate gangsters.

Many rap artists, as you know, not only portray characters who are gangsters, but some even use stage names taken from famous (real) gangsters or drug dealers, and in their songs and videos they brag about killing people, making tons of money, and sleeping with all kinds of women. More recently we’ve seen the emergence of artists incorporating Illuminati themes into their songs, dress, and music videos, so throughout this book we will look at the emergence of Illuminati symbolism and lyrical content in mainstream music today, as well as the psychological and social effects of simply listening to music. Many still deny that listening to music can have any ill effect on people, let alone society, but we’ll take a look at what famous musicians and media moguls have to say about the subject, as well as some very serious scientific studies into the matter.

There is always the issue of parental control to manage the content children are exposed to, but as you know, most artists are falsely advertised as child-friendly, or later change their image and message to something more hardcore after they have achieved mainstream success with a chart-topping album or two. Many of the artists in this book you may be familiar with, or even a fan of. You’ve probably heard their songs hundreds and hundreds of times, but you’re about to take a close and revealing look at them, and I’m sure you’ll never see them the same way ever again.

Of course most artists don’t write their own songs and they are just actors, essentially, performing songs their studios purchased with the goal of entertaining the audience with lyrical content that would resonate with the masses. The 1990s duo Milli Vanilli is a classic example showing how artists are often assembled and created by studios, not organically developed by a group of talented kids who are friends and passionate about singing, but instead by industry professionals who know how to create carefully crafted superstars who are then sold around the world.

Lou Pearlman, for example, created various super successful boy bands like ‘N Sync and the Backstreet Boys, and was later sent to prison after being convicted of fraud for scamming people out of an estimated $300 million dollars.[1] The man had no experience in the music industry, but because of his slick, con artist mind, was able to build those various boy bands and launch them to stardom.

It’s important to note that the music industry financially supports artists whose music preaches socially destructive messages, and builds them up as role models who the brain-dead mainstream music loving mentally enslaved masses worship as idols. The fact that many musicians achieve massive success isn’t necessarily because they are extremely talented—instead, it’s a result of being chosen by a record label to be promoted because their songs encourage violent, immoral, and social destructive behavior. Their music is literally used to brainwash the listeners through social conditioning. I’m not saying all successful mainstream artists are bad, but a shockingly large number of them are simply pure trash.

Occasionally an artist who is an Illuminati pawn will actually produce a song which counters their very purpose for being promoted, as in the case of Eminem’s 2004 hit *Mosh*, a blistering attack against George W. Bush and the War in Iraq. But in most cases such songs are overwhelmingly overshadowed and drown out by the extraordinary amount of content designed to destroy the listener’s mind.

The Illuminati symbolism in music videos has gotten so blatant in recent years that even some mainstream news outlets have reported on the rumors and allegations surrounding various artists. In previous years, Illuminati conspiracy theories had sparked bestselling books like Dan Brown’s *Angels and Demons*, and even some popular films like *Tomb Raider*, starring Angelina Jolie, where the plot revolves around her battling against the Illuminati as they seek a device that will give them ultimate power. More recently the Puma clothing company has released an Illuminati themed clothing line titled “Shadow Society” featuring pyramids and sun symbols, two of the most popular Illuminati images, and rappers like Kanye West and even sports figures like LeBran James have been photographed wearing clothes featuring obvious Illuminati symbolism.

Some people believe the reason this symbolism has become so blatant is because the Illuminati themselves are partaking in the “revelation of the method” and openly displaying their power on purpose to brag about it as they are preparing to allegedly “externalize the hierarchy” and finally announce their presence to the world as the supposed divine custodians of the “royal secret” who are preparing the planet for the arrival of the messiah (or more accurately, the antichrist).

Others see this as a way to muddy the water around the Illuminati in order to cover up for their political and banking activities by flooding society with disinformation in order to convince people that the Illuminati is just some kind of fictional myth involving rappers and pop stars, so the real Illuminati can continue to operate without disruption or people seriously investigating their existence and activities.

The Illuminati have even been accused of murdering many famous musicians, including Michael Jackson, Tupac, Whitney Houston, and others, by fans who say they were killed because they wouldn’t go along with the industry’s agenda or as a sacrifice to Satan for the final payment of their fame. While many of these allegations may be farfetched and unfounded, it is undeniable that a large number of industry elites have aligned themselves with this superclass cabal.

In the past, a small number of musicians have occasionally referenced the Illuminati in their songs hoping to warn people about their evil activities, although most of these artists are underground and are rarely, if ever, played on the corporate owned airwaves controlled by Clear Channel or similar monopolized markets. Some of these independent artists, such as Immortal Technique and Prodigy, have mentioned the Illuminati by name, while other rappers and rockers seem to be very well aware of the evil deeds of the brotherhood, a fact that becomes clear by simply listening to the lyrics of their songs or watching the music videos that accompany them.

But these independent artists who have warned about the Illuminati or who have tried to expose them, are vastly outnumbered by the growing list of mainstream artists who have openly, or subtly, embraced the Illuminati secret society as something they want their listeners to believe they are a part of, or affiliated with, in some way. And as I said before, most of these artists are pure trash, or what I call "satanic scumbags" and part of the mainstream (urine stream) music business.

Even thousands of years ago, philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates understood the tremendous influence music has on its listeners. Aristotle recognized that music communicates emotion and can even shape people's character, warning, "If one listens to the wrong kind of music, he will become the wrong kind of person."

Plato said that music was once pure and conveyed only positive thoughts and emotions in the listeners, but later, "an unmusical anarchy was led by poets," who promoted "promiscuous cleverness and a spirit of law-breaking."[2]

Plato also wrote that, "They were men of genius, but they had no perception of what was just and lawful in music...And by composing licentious works [lacking legal or moral restraints]" they "have inspired the multitude with lawlessness and boldness."[3]

Socrates, another major figure in ancient Greek philosophy, said, "Musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace, and making the soul of him who is rightly educated graceful, or of him who is ill-educated ungraceful."[4]

Christian philosopher Boethuis said in the sixth century that, “Music is part of us, and either ennobles or degrades our behavior.”[5]

The ancient Chinese philosophy text, the *Shu Ching*, reads “for changing people’s manners and altering their customs there is nothing better than music.”[6]

Marilyn Manson, the satanic shock rocker from the 1990s stated that, “Music is the strongest form of magic.”[7] As you know, music and music videos go hand in hand. Joseph Goebbels, the infamous Nazi propagandist and member of Adolf Hitler’s inner circle, said that motion pictures were, “one of the most modern means of mass persuasion,” and “film was one of the most modern and far reaching means for influencing the public that has ever existed.”[8]

Ted Turner, the man who founded CNN, the first 24-hour cable news network, stated, “You know that everything we’re are exposed to, influences us…those violent films influence us, and the TV programs we see influence us. The weaker your family is, the more they influence you. The problems with families in our societies are catastrophic, but when you put violent programs before people who haven’t had a lot of love in their lives, who are angry anyway, it is like pouring gasoline on the fire.”[9]

David Puttnam, former Chairman of Columbia Pictures, and Academy Award winning producer of *Chariots of Fire* and *The Killing Fields*, said, “Movies are powerful. Good or bad they tinker around inside your brain. They steal up on you in the darkness of the cinema to form or conform social attitudes. They can help to create a healthy, informed, concerned and inquisitive society or, in the alternative, a negative, apathetic, ignorant one.”[10]

Former vice president of Disney, Ken Wales, remarked, “As a member of this industry I wish that there were hundreds of stars and writers and directors standing here with me. I suppose they are out protesting toxic waste! Let me tell you there happens to be toxic waste in other areas besides our rivers. That happens in the pollution of our minds, our souls and our spirits!”[11]

Eddy Manson, who was a popular composer for such films as *Born on the Fourth of July* and *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, stated that, “We manipulate people like crazy in films…It’s a tremendous release. I can make you feel any emotion I want you to feel at any time. It’s a Machiavellian power we project gut to gut.”[12]

Gus Van Sant, the Academy Award nominated director of *Goodwill Hunting*, stated, “I believe the properly manipulated image can provoke an audience to the Burroughsian[13]limit of riot, rampant sex, instantaneous death…The raw materials of inspiration include elements as primal and potentially frightening as violence, sex, and death…the primitive world of blood and flame is still with us.”[14]

Alan J. Pakula, the director of *All The President’s Men*, a film about the Watergate scandal based on the nonfiction book of the same name written by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, admitted, “Movie violence is like eating salt. The more you eat, the more you need to eat to taste it at all. People are becoming immune to the effects: The death counts have quadrupled…they’re becoming deaf to it. They’ve developed insatiability for raw sensation.”[15]

Even Oliver Stone admitted, “The cynicism has now gone too far. We are becoming what the history books tell us late Rome was like—mired in decadent self-absorption and the lacking virtue.”[16]

Anton Lavey, the founder of the Church of Satan and author of *The Satanic Bible*, wrote, “Many of you have already read my writings identifying TV as the new god. There is a little thing I neglected to mention up until now—television is the major mainstream infiltration for the New Satanic religion.”[17]

A 1980 study by George Washington University researchers found that Hollywood's producers, writers and directors view themselves as, "crusaders for social reform in America."[18] Lichter, Lichter & Rotman conducted a survey of 240 journalists at major national media outlets such as The New York Times, Washington Post, Newsweek, Time magazine, U.S. News & World Report, Wall Street Journal, ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, etc., and asked them their political attitudes and voting patterns. The report showed that most people at these companies had liberal views and the findings were later published as a book titled The Media Elite.

A famous rant about the power of television by the character Howard Beal in the 1976 film *Network* still rings true today, when he shouted, "This tube can make or break presidents, popes, prime ministers...This tube is the most awesome God-damned force in the whole godless world, and woe is us if it ever falls into the hands of the wrong people."[19]

The man credited as the father of public relations is Edward Bernays, and early in the twentieth century he was a master of social engineering, propaganda, and shaping public opinion. Bernays was also the nephew of the famous psychologist Sigmund Freud, which may help explain how he became interested in psychology. In 1928 he published a book titled *Propaganda* that described his methods for shaping public opinion and people's attitudes and behaviors through the use of mass media. A quick glance over several excerpts from *Propaganda* reveals just how powerful the control of information is to anyone wanting to influence large numbers of people, or society as a whole.

Bernays wrote, "Those who manipulate the unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of...in almost every act of our lives whether in the sphere of politics or business in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires that control the public mind, who harness old social forces and contrive new ways to bind and guide the world."[20]

He went on to admit, "Whatever of social importance is done today, whether in politics, finance, manufacture, agriculture, charity, education, or other fields, must be done with the help of propaganda. Propaganda is the executive arm of the invisible government."[21]

Bernays also revealed, "The invisible government tends to be concentrated in the hands of the few because of the expense of manipulating the social machinery which controls the opinions and habits of the masses."[22]

This is strikingly parallel to what George Orwell said in his classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where he wrote, "All the beliefs, habits, tastes, emotions, mental attitudes that characterize our time are really designed to sustain the mystique of the Party and prevent the true nature of present-day society from being perceived."[23]

Edward Bernays can be largely credited with making cigarette smoking popular and appearing cool because in 1929 he was hired by the American Tobacco Company in order to help promote smoking and increase their business. He did this by hiring a group of attractive female models to light up cigarettes while marching in the New York City parade in order to break the taboo of women smoking in public. He coordinated this stunt with a press release saying they lit up "Torches of Freedom" to support women's rights. The following day *The New York Times* ran an article with the headline, "Group of Girls Puff at Cigarettes as a Gesture of Freedom."[24] He really was an evil genius.

Bernays was also the man responsible for diamond rings becoming synonymous with marriage and love. The De Beers diamond company (a monopoly really) hired him to condition the public into associating a diamond ring with love. Before this, women's wedding rings were simply a gold band, but Bernays was able to use his propaganda techniques to condition (brain wash really) both men and women into believing that when a man proposes marriage to a woman, he needs to do so with a large diamond ring. “Diamonds are a girl’s best friend,” and “a diamond is forever.” Get it?

It’s foolish to deny the power of music and musicians, or to deny that songs and music videos are often very persuasive pieces of propaganda. Musicians often affect fashion, starting new trends and even creating new words and catch phrases. I’m sure you’re familiar with “grills,” “bling,” and maybe “getting jiggy with it.” Many listeners clearly copy the dress and style of their favorite musicians, and some songs are admittedly designed as antiwar protest anthems, or to bring attention to various social causes. Declassified documents show that the FBI wanted to dig up dirt on (or frame) John Lennon and deport him from the United States because his antiwar activities in the 1960s were undermining the government’s pro war propaganda regarding Vietnam.[25]

It’s not uncommon that concerts are held to raise money for various charities or causes. So if songs can be used to support the antiwar movement, or encourage people to act in a positive way, why is it that so many people scoff at claims that music can be equally influential in negative ways, and promote socially destructive behaviors as well?

It’s undeniable that music can bring people joy or inspire them to help others—so why is it so many people deny that it can do exactly the opposite? The truth is, most artists, record labels, and studios know the power their music holds, good or bad, but will never betray the secret of their success.

When people say “have a nice day” or “drive safely,” they are encouraging those thoughts to permeate your mind. It feels good to hear positive and uplifting words of encouragement. Conversely, if someone tells you “you’re an idiot” or insults you verbally, you’ll literally feel bad, mad, or anxious, and can easily have your emotions and state of mind affected simply by hearing a few words. If hearing a few little words can affect your thought patterns, emotions and actions, then what do you think entire songs set to a melody or beat do to the mind?

It should be clear to anyone with common sense that music can motivate or guide people's thought patterns and act as a catalyst for behaviors and actions, and it would be foolish to think that certain power-hungry people in corporations, governments, or even a secret society, wouldn't want to harness this power for their own goals, using music and celebrities as pawns in their propaganda game.

Media critic and former dean of the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, Ben Bagdikian, writes in *The New Media Monopoly*, that "The possibilities for mutual promotion among all their various media is the basic reason the Big Five [News Corporation, Time Warner, Disney, Viacom, and Bertelsmann] have become major owners of all kinds of media. For example, actors and actresses in a conglomerate's wholly owned movie studio can appear on the same company's television and cable networks, photographs of the newly minted celebrities can dominate the covers of the firm's wholly owned magazines, and those celebrities can be interviewed on the firm's wholly owned radio and television talk shows. The conglomerate can commission an author from its wholly owned book publishing firm to write a biography or purported autobiography of the new stars, which in turn is promoted on the firm's other media."[26]

Bagdokian notes the Big Five, "have power that media in past history did not, power created by new technology and the near uniformity of their political goals,"[27] and that, "Technically, the dominant media firms are an oligopoly, the rule of a few in which one of those few, acting alone, can alter market conditions."[28]

Neil Postman in his classic media analysis, *Amusing Ourselves To Death*, explains that before radio and television, when information was spread through newspapers and books, it was of much higher quality, and his goal was to emphasize that, "under the governance of the printing press, discourse in America was different from what it is now—generally coherent, serious and rational; and then how [today], under the governance of television, it has become shriveled and absurd.”[29]

The book argues that television as a medium, compared to books and newspapers, is extremely limited in its ability to transmit quality information because it is packaged into small sound bites and brief segments that are only two or three minutes long, which cannot begin to convey the details, historical context, or the complex ideas needed to transmit a complete and quality message to the audience.

Postman concluded that our mass media infused future may be a mix between an Orwellian nightmare and a Huxleyan circus,[30] saying, “In the age of advanced technology, spiritual devastation is more likely to come from an enemy with a smiling face than from one whose countenance exudes suspicion and hate. In the Huxleyan prophecy, Big Brother does not watch us, by his choice. We watch him, by ours. There is no need for wardens or gates or Ministries of Truth. When a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is redefined as a perceptual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby-talk, when, in short, a people become an audience and their public business a vaudeville act, then a nation finds itself at risk; cultural-death is a clear possibility.”[31]

Some people point to the Tavistock Institute and the Rockefeller Foundation as a major cause of this evil for their studying of mainstream music and allegedly using their findings to influence society as a whole. The Tavistock Institute was created in Britain in 1946 to study group behavior and organizational behavior, and were funded by a large grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. In 2008 the Rockefeller Foundation’s estimated assets were reported at $3.1 billion dollars, of which $137 million dollars were given away in grants.[32] This is the same foundation that funded the CIA’s MK-Ultra experiments in mind control which began in the 1950s.

The notorious Nazi, Dr. Josef Mengele, was also funded by the Rockefeller Foundation to peruse Eugenics programs,[33] and later carried out horrific human experiments in the Auschwitz concentration camp in Germany.

Others point to Operation Mockingbird, a secret CIA program exposed in congressional hearings in 1975, which uncovered the Central Intelligence Agency was secretly paying the editors, reporters, and news readers at the major media outlets over one billion dollars a year in today’s dollars,[34] to act as propagandists and gatekeepers for the government and the establishment.

Thomas Braden, who worked for the CIA and was a director of Operation Mockingbird, would later reveal, “If the director of the CIA wanted to extend a present, say, to someone in Europe—a Labour leader—suppose he just thought, this man can use fifty thousand dollars, he’s working well and doing a good job—he could hand it to him and never have to account to anybody... There was simply no limit to the money it could spend and no limit to the people it could hire and no limit to the activities it could decide were necessary to conduct the war—the secret war...It was multinational.”[35]

A Senate Select Committee in 1975, called the Church Committee (headed by Senator Frank Church) was created to investigate the American government’s covert influence over the mainstream media, including broadcast news, newspapers, and magazines. According to the Church Committee’s report that was published about their investigation, “The CIA currently maintains a network of several hundred individuals around the world who provide intelligence for the CIA and at times attempt to influence opinion through the use of covert propaganda. These individuals provide the CIA with direct access to a large number of newspapers and periodicals, scores of press services and news agencies, radio and television stations, commercial book publishers, and other foreign media outlets.”[36]

After the Church Committee released its report, *Rolling Stone* magazine published an article on Operation Mockingbird and named various prominent journalists who were alleged to be involved with it, including reporters for *The New York Times, The Washington Post, Newsweek, Time magazine, The New York Herald Tribune, Miami News,* and others.

Sig Mickelson, former President of CBS, was later asked if the CIA still maintained relationships with reporters, and he answered, “Yeah, I would think probably, for a reporter it would probably continue today, but because of all the revelations of the period of the 1970s, it seems to me a reporter has to be a lot more circumspect when doing it now or he runs the risk of at least being looked at with considerable disfavor by the public. I think you’ve got to be much more careful about it.”[37]

It’s fairly well known that *Ms*. Magazine, started by feminist activist Gloria Steinem in 1972, is accused of being funded by the Illuminati in order to promote the feminist revolution with the goal of breaking down the family structure and traditional gender roles.[38]

If we look back over two hundred years ago and simply read the confiscated writings of Adam Weishaupt and the other original Illuminati members, we can see that even back then they understood the power of controlling information. Some excerpts from these writings explain, “By establishing reading societies, and subscription libraries, and taking these under our direction, and supplying them through our labors, we may turn the public mind which way we will.”[39]

“In like manner we must try to obtain an influence in the military academies (this may be of mighty consequence), the printing-houses, booksellers shops, chapters, and in short in all offices which have any effect, either in forming, or in managing, or even in directing the mind of man: painting and engraving are highly worth our care.”[40]

“We get all the literary journals. We take care, by well-timed pieces [articles], to make the citizens and the Princes a little more noticed for certain little slips.”[41]

“The great strength of our Order [organization] lies in its concealment; let it never appear in any place in its own name, but always covered by another name, and another occupation. None is fitter than the three lower degrees of Freemasonry; the public is accustomed to it, expects little from it, and therefore takes little notice of it…it may be a powerful engine in our hands.”[42]

In George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the Ministry of Truth was the department of the government that provided the citizens with all of their newspapers, films, textbooks, TV shows and novels. This department, Orwell wrote, “produced rubbishy newspapers, containing almost nothing except sport, crime, and astrology, sensational five-cent novelettes, films oozing with sex, and sentimental songs.”[43] Their purpose was to keep the population distracted and out of the government’s way so Party officials could maintain their power.

If you’re not familiar with *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it is a dystopic warning about how a corrupt government or group can manipulate the masses through the control of information, and is considered by many to be one of the greatest pieces of literature of all time. My previous book *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True* covers the eerie parallels between Orwell’s fictional novel, and the very world we are living in right now, drawing from actual technology, government programs, and countless common sense examples that are making their way into the mainstream news.[44]

Only a complete moron would think that government agencies do not massively influence the mainstream media today. Even those who expect such manipulation are often surprised to learn the extent of its practice and power. As time goes on, and if people open their eyes to see what’s really going on, more and more people will realize, like President Bill Clinton's former advisor Dick Morris, that "the conspiracy theorists are right."[45]

Let us now take a closer look at the mouth pieces and puppets held up as idols, gods and goddesses by millions of mentally enslaved mainstream music lovers. If it took seeing Illuminati symbolism in their videos for you to realize they are satanic scum, then you've been deaf, dumb, and blind, because if you simply listened to their lyrics or looked at the content of their character, it would have been as clear as day. The fact that you're reading this book right now shows you're on the right track though, and if you've only just caught a glimpse of their secret symbolism or heard rumors about it, get ready, because your eyes are about to be opened to a whole new world.

Rap and Hip Hop

Out of all the different genres of music, the emergence of Illuminati symbolism appears most prevalent in rap and hip-hop. An African-American pastor named G. Craig Lewis from EX Ministries out of Prairie, Texas said it's because, "The brothas aren't down with heavy metal,"[46] referring to the use of satanic imagery and messages that, for some time at least, had become synonymous with heavy metal music.

One other likely reason for the Illuminati to be invoked in rap and hip hop is because the genre itself is largely dedicated to promoting a materialistic, hedonistic, violence driven message—at least mainstream hip-hop and rap, that is. Of course the genre has been hijacked and perverted by the music monopoly corporations that have twisted its theme into something completely contrary to the message of its founders. Since the Illuminati represent the ultimate pinnacle of power and evil, it is almost a natural evolution for rappers to move beyond portraying ordinary gangsters to wrapping themselves in the Illuminati flag as they pose as rich and powerful badasses. Invoking Illuminati imagery has become so popular in rap music that an episode of *The Cleveland Show* (an African American cartoon for adults) depicted the idea that a secret society made up of famous rappers (Kanye West, Nicki Minaj and others), were a part of the "Hip Hop Illuminati." The artists portrayed in the show actually did the voiceovers themselves. Kanye West and the others even rapped a short little song written for the show with lyrics like: Illuminati starts shit that then becomes cool
Illuminati starts the trends that then becomes rules
Illuminati!

PHOTO: *THE CLEVELAND SHOW'S* "HIP HOP ILLUMINATI" EPISODE ON FOX.

While there are a handful of successful rappers who stay true to the origins of the genre, it's quite obvious that the vast majority of mainstream rappers promote a shallow, ignorant, idiotic, materialistic, mentally enslaving message using keywords about making money, getting laid, partying 24/7, and other mindless jibber jabber.

Before we take a look at the blatant and disturbing imagery and messages in this music, I will reprint excerpts from a letter claimed to be written by a former music executive who says he witnessed a secret meeting in 1991 where big wigs in the prison industry basically paid off record company executives to promote rap artists who glorify crime with the goal of encouraging listeners to get locked up in prison so the private prison industry could make more money. The letter, titled "The Secret Meeting that Changed Rap Music and Destroyed a Generation," first surfaced on the Internet in 2012 after a hip hop news website claimed they had received it in an e-mail and is quoted here in accordance with, and in full compliance with fair use laws in Section 107 of U.S. Copyright Law.

The letter starts off saying that in 1991 the writer witnessed what he called, "one of the biggest turning points in popular music, and ultimately American society." The author says that in the 1980s and 90s he worked for a major music company and was summoned to a meeting to "discuss rap music's new direction."

"Among the attendees," he writes, "was a small group of unfamiliar faces who stayed to themselves and made no attempt to socialize beyond their circle. Based on their behavior and formal appearances, they didn't seem to be in our industry. Our casual chatter was interrupted when we were asked to sign a confidentiality agreement preventing us from publicly discussing the information presented during the meeting."

At this point the writer says a speaker at the meeting revealed he worked in the prison industry. "He explained that the companies we work for had invested millions into the building of privately owned prisons and that our positions of influence in the music industry would actually impact the profitability of these investments. I remember many of us in the group immediately looking at each other in confusion. At the time, I didn't know what a private prison was but I wasn't the only one. Sure enough, someone asked what these prisons were and what any of this had to do with us. We were told that these prisons were built by privately owned companies who received funding from the government based on the number of inmates. The more inmates, the more money the government would pay these prisons. It was also made clear to us that since these prisons are privately owned, as they become publicly traded, we'd be able to buy shares."

Many people are unaware that countless prisons are actually privately owned for-profit companies, not simply facilities owned by the government. These companies pay lobbyists to influence policies and judges to enact legislation and penalties that are profitable for the prisons.

The letter goes on, "Most of us were taken back by this. Again, a couple of people asked what this had to do with us. At this point, my industry colleague who had first opened the meeting took the floor again and answered our questions. He told us that since our employers had become silent investors in this prison business, it was now in their interest to make sure that these prisons remained filled. Our job would be to help make this happen by marketing music which promotes criminal behavior, rap being the music of choice. He assured us that this would be a great situation for us because rap music was becoming an increasingly profitable market for our companies, and as employees, we'd also be able to buy personal stocks in these prisons."

The man claims he was deeply disturbed after the meeting but never spoke out publicly out of fear of losing his job or something happening to his family. "As the months passed, rap music had definitely changed direction. I was never a fan of it but even I could tell the difference. Rap acts that talked about politics or harmless fun were quickly fading away as gangster rap started dominating the airwaves. Only a few months had passed since the meeting but I suspect that the ideas presented that day had been successfully implemented. It was as if the order has been given to all major label executives. The music was climbing the charts and most companies where more than happy to capitalize on it. Each one was churning out their very own gangster rap acts on an assembly line. Everyone bought into it, consumers included. Violence and drug use became a central theme in most rap music. I spoke to a few of my peers in the industry to get their opinions on the new trend but was told repeatedly that it was all about supply and demand. Sadly many of them even expressed that the music reinforced their prejudice of minorities."

Two years later, he says, he left the business and a few years later in the late 1990s when the Internet emerged he said he was able to do more research into the private prison industry. "Now that I have a greater understanding of how private prisons operate, things make much more sense than they ever have. I see how the criminalization of rap music played a big part in promoting racial stereotypes and misguided so many impressionable young minds into adopting these glorified criminal behaviors which often lead to incarceration."

After saying twenty years of guilt had been weighing on his shoulders he decided to write his letter and e-mail it to various rap and hip hop websites. He also wrote that he planned on remaining anonymous but urged others who attended the supposed 1991 meeting to tell their stories as well.

The letter is a very interesting read, but unless others come forward and confirm this person’s story, there is no way to verify whether or not this meeting took place. Of course it’s possible this story is a hoax written hoping to attract people to the author’s website, although I do believe that such a plan was put in motion, but whether or not the person who wrote this letter was a part of that plan is not clear.

Jay-Z

PHOTO: A $34,000 GOLDEN SKULL GIVEN TO JAY-Z FOR FATHER’S DAY IN 2012 BY FELLOW RAPPER KANYE WEST.

The rapper with the most Illuminati rumors surrounding him is perhaps Jay-Z, the stage name of Sean Carter, who is one of the most successful and wealthy rappers in history, with an estimated net worth of approximately $500 million dollars according to *Forbes* magazine.[47] He has sold approximately fifty million albums; he’s won 17 Grammy Awards, and is even friends with President Barack Obama, whom he held a fundraiser for at his 40/40 Club in New York City to help get him reelected for a second term in 2012.

Jay-Z even hit the campaign trail with Obama, appearing onstage with him at events and was featured in an official campaign commercial so he could reach people who didn’t follow politics and urge them to get off their couch and vote for Obama. He and Barack are supposedly “friends” and Jay-Z is reported to have Obama’s personal cell phone number so the two can talk or text with each other whenever they want. Of course, he’s been invited to the White House several times to meet with Obama as well.[48]

Jay-Z's entire rap persona is that he's a rich hustler and former drug dealer from the projects, and his songs are predictable portrayals of a dream life filled with money and girls (Big Pimpin') as most listeners live vicariously through the fantasies his songs paint. While this can be fairly expected and understandable, what is more surprising is the fact that Jay-Z incorporates blatant Illuminati hat-tips and symbolism into several of his songs and videos, and he himself appears to be an Aleister Crowley fan—the infamous Satanist—who wrote instructions for getting magic power by sacrificing children to Satan.[49]

In a behind the scenes interview during the making of Rihanna's "Run This Town" music video, Jay-Z was wearing a black sweatshirt with "Do What Thou Wilt" emblazoned across the front, the infamous credo of Aleister Crowley, meaning "do whatever you want no matter the consequences, you are your own God." Many people who have seen the picture of Jay-Z wearing this sweatshirt think the image was photoshopped, but it is real, and is simply a screen shot taken from his videotaped interview on the set of Rihanna's "Run This Town" shoot.

Since Jay-Z is wearing a sweatshirt with Aleister Crowley's credo printed on the chest, let's take a brief look at some of Crowley's writings and the philosophies and activities he promoted. Crowley said a demon possessed his wife and dictated to him the contents of what would become the Book of the Law, which is where the "do what thou wilt" credo is found. His demon possessed wife revealed the following pieces of advice: "Compassion is the vice of kings: stamp down the wretched & the weak: this is the law of the strong, this is our law and the joy of the world."[50]

"Worship me with fire & blood; worship me with swords & with spears, is the command. Let the woman be girt with a sword before me: let blood flow to my name. Trample down the Heathen; be upon them, o warrior, I will give you of their flesh to eat! Sacrifice cattle, little and big: after a child."[51]

“Mercy let be off: damn them who pity! Kill and torture; spare not; be upon them! The Best blood is of the moon, monthly: then the fresh blood of a child.”[52]

“I am in a secret fourfold word, the blasphemy against all gods of men. Curse them! Curse them! Curse them! With my Hawk’s head I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross.”[53]

Aside from wearing a shirt with an infamous occult credo on the front, Jay-Z’s Rocawear clothing line actually decided to print some up themselves and sold a few different designs of Illuminati and Masonic t-shirts for a period of time which had an all seeing eye on the chest with 13 rays of light coming out of it along with various other occult symbols. The Rocawear company is no small operation and is valued at several hundred million dollars.

His very name, Jay-Z, means Jehovah, the Latin name for God in the Old Testament, and he often refers to himself as “Hov,” short for Jehovah, because he considers himself to be a god. In his song *D’Evils* he raps a verse where he says he never prays to God, he prays to Gotti (John Gotti the gangster) and in “Dirt Off Your Shoulder” some people believe a verse says “Middle finger to the Lord,” while others insist he says “law,” instead. In “Empire State of Mind” he raps a verse clearly saying, “Jesus can’t save you, life begins when the church ends.”

He even admits putting “hidden messages” in his music.[54]

While people can expect explicit lyrics in rap music, Jay-Z sinks to an unprecedentedly low level in his collaboration with Kanye West (or Kanye Pest as I call him) and Nicki Minaj in the song “Monster” where everyone on the track raps about how “monstrous” and evil they are. In one line Jay-Z brags, “I rape and pillage your village, women and children.”

His trademark gesture is making a pyramid using his two index fingers and thumbs while holding it up over one eye, symbolizing what many believe is the Illuminati's All-Seeing Eye, and he has made repeated occult and Illuminati references in his music, but not as a way to expose the activities of the organization, but rather it appears to be a tribute to them. It's obvious that Jay-Z is familiar with the invisible empire and, in my opinion, chose to aid them and wrap himself in their symbols instead of fight against them or expose them.

Jay-Z is the founder of Roc-A-Fella Records, a name that appears to refer to the Rockefeller Illuminati family, a very powerful and infamous family followed by a long list of allegations and New World Order activities and elite secret society affiliations. The Rockefeller family has had their tentacles wrapped around everything from the Council on Foreign Relations and the Bilderberg Group, to funding the CIA's MK-Ultra mind control experiments and more. In 2004 Jay-Z sold Roc-A-Fella Records for $10 million dollars to Def Jam Records, owned by Russell Simmons, who then made Jay-Z CEO.[55]

Jay-Z's mentor, a fellow rapper and producer who goes by the name Jaz-O, meaning Jaz the Originator, did an interview with *BlokTV* where he stated that Jay-Z is affiliated with secrets societies that practice homosexual rituals.[56] Jaz-O made it clear that he wasn't saying Jay-Z engaged in these gay rituals himself, but he believes that he is closely aligned with people who do.

"He is in cahoots with those individuals in those type of brotherhoods and societies who engage in homosexual activities. I did not say he was a homo, but if you want to make that assumption, you can…There is only two ways I could know if the dude is a homo. One is if I saw it, or two is if I did it, and none of those things apply….Yeah, he is in cahoots with those brotherhoods and the people who have money on his level. Yes, they do engage in a lot of homosexual activity, and they're all in cahoots with each other."[57]

It's interesting that Jay-Z does not write lyrics down on paper when he's coming up with songs anymore, explaining, "I used to write all the time, until I started going into the rain man thing," which he hasn't elaborated on, but likely refers to when he discovered some accelerated learning techniques or memory improvement strategies like ancient mnemonics and other art of memory methods. Some believe his "rain man thing" refers to channeling a demonic entity who writes his music for him.

In 2003 he announced that he would retire from making music after the release of *The Black Album*, which of course wasn't true and was just a shamefully obvious publicity stunt to generate headlines and encourage his fans to buy more of his music. Of course, three years later he announced he was coming out of retirement with a new album and then continued making music.[58]

A song titled "Lucifer" was released in 2004 by Danger Mouse on his *Grey Album* that contains some disturbing messages from Jay-Z the public should know about. When listening to the song it's clear that several sound bites are playing backwards and are unintelligible. But when the song is played in reverse, however, you can clearly hear Jay-Z saying, "Six six six, murder Jesus," and talking about murdering Catholics, leaving "niggas on death's door" and introducing people to demons.

It's important to stress that this backwards message is not a "subliminal message" meant to be picked up subconsciously by the listeners. It is more of a marketing ploy and a way to get Jay-Z fans talking about how "cool" the backwards satanic messages are. It's also important to understand that the messages are clearly understandable when the track is played backwards and the disturbing sound bites are not the result of someone interpreting a series of sounds as saying such things. People are not "hearing things" or "reading too much into the track." The blasphemous sound bites are as clear as day once the song is played in reverse.

When people hear the allegations of the reverse messages in the song "Lucifer," most Jay-Z fans refer to the original song "Lucifer" which is found on Jay-Z's *Black Album* and didn't hear anything out of the ordinary. That's because Danger Mouse remixed the song for his *Grey Album* and edited Jay-Z's voice to say the disturbing things found in the song. Jay-Z never denounced Danger Mouse for doing such a thing (or threatened legal action for misappropriation of image or copyright infringement) but instead actually praised the remix, saying he was "honored" and "I think it was a really strong album. I champion any form of creativity and that was a genius idea to do it, and it sparked so many others like it. There are other ones that, you know, it's really good, there are other ones that, because of the blueprint that was set by him, that I think are a little better. But, you know, him being the first and having the idea; I thought it was genius."[59]

If any reasonable person had their words twisted to say such things they would take legal action, or at the very least, denounce the use of their voice in such a way, but instead Jay-Z was honored. In a video posted to YouTube that was shot inside the studio when Jay-Z was recording the song "Lucifer" for his *Black Album* you can hear him make a comment sounding like he's bragging, "I swear I never read the Bible in my life."[60]

Prodigy of Mobb Deep wrote a several page letter while in prison for a weapons charge that mentioned Jay-Z and the Illuminati, saying, in part, "Jay-Z and Jaz-O were both raised (in their teenage years) in Dr. [Dwight] York's 'Nuwabian' community in Bushwick Brooklyn… Jay-Z knows the truth, but he chose sides with evil in order to be accepted in the corporate world and promotes the lifestyle of the beast instead…Jay-Z is a God damn lie."[61]

It's outrageous that people were not outraged when the President of the United States attended a fundraiser put on by this kind of garbage entertainer, let alone putting the rapper in an official campaign ad to boot.[62] It also shows how low Barack Obama would go to energize his African American base to get out the vote. A slick political ploy, no doubt, that worked like a charm.

Jay-Z once denied the Illuminati rumors in an interview on Hot 97 after host Angie Martinez asked him if any of the “Illuminati Devil worshiping Freemason” claims were true, saying “I don’t know where it came from, I don’t know where it started.” When Martinez asked if he was “messing with people and doing this on purpose,” he responded, “No, not me. Never done that before. Why would I do that? That’s retarded. To be honest with you I really think it’s really silly.”[63]

On his album *Magna Carta Holy Grail* he addressed the rumors again in a song titled “Heaven” where he said “Conspiracy theorists screamin’ Illuminati / They can’t believe this much skill is in the human body.” Really? He can’t believe people are saying these things? Wearing an Aleister Crowley sweatshirt, saying blasphemous things about God and Jesus, flashing Illuminati hand signs and using occult imagery in his videos, visiting the White House several times and hitting the campaign trail with Obama to help get him elected? Portraying the image of a big spending high rolling thug without a care in the world. Wearing a 5% Nation medallion, a religious organization started in Brooklyn by a man calling himself God and saying that his followers were the spiritual elite of the world who knew the true secrets of the Universe. Launching the careers and molding the image of other Illuminati icon artists like Rihanna, and Kanye West—I can’t imagine why people would say these things about him.

While Jay-Z is not sitting in on Illuminati meetings where they plan the next war or discuss the up and coming economic trends, he is a willing servant of them and has been built up as an Illuminati idol for the psychologically sedated masses to worship and mimic, promoting a “do what thou wilt” anything goes, hedonistic, live for the now lifestyle, which always leads to destruction, disappointment, debt, and despair.

Kayne West

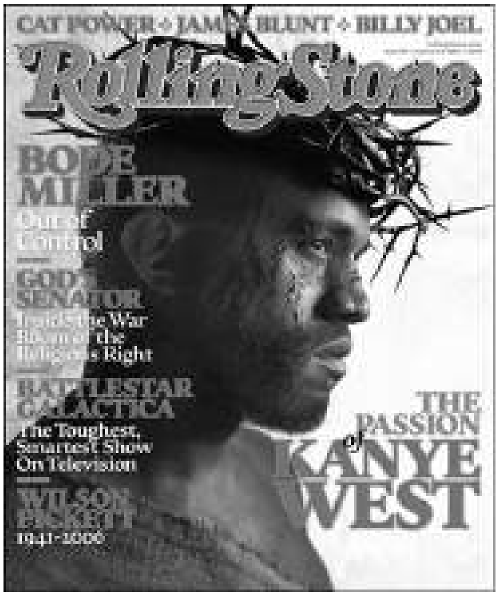
CAT POWER ◆ JAMES BLUNT ◆ BILLY JOEL
Rolling Stone
BODE MILLER
Out of Control
GOD'S SENATOR
Inside the War Room of the Religious Right
BATTLESTAR GALACTICA
The Toughest, Smartest Show On Television
WILSON PICKETT
1941-2006
THE PASSION of KANYE WEST

PHOTO: *ROLLING STONE* COVER DEPICTING KANYE WEST AS JESUS.

Another one of the biggest Illuminati wannabes is Kanye West, (or Kanye Pest as he should be referred to) who burst onto the music scene in 2004 with his single “Jesus Walks,” which got mainstream airplay giving the impression that Kanye was a good Christian boy who loved Jesus. Once in the spotlight though, Kayne’s image and message quickly took a turn for the worse, ultimately leading him to become one of the biggest promoters of Illuminati symbolism and materialism, not to mention developing a God complex so huge it’s virtually unmatched in the entertainment industry.

He miraculously has won eight Grammies, and in 2008 was awarded the “Hottest MC in the Game” by MTV, and even made Time magazine’s 100 most influential people in 2005.[64] I say miraculously because it’s a miracle such a talentless troll could actually achieve mainstream success, but on second thought with millions of mentally enslaved morons who eat up whatever the mainstream serves, such popularity among the peasants is not all that surprising.

A critical boost to Kanye West's career was working for Jay-Z's Roc-A-Fella Records and he was considered Jay-Z's protégé while helping produce his 2001 album The Blueprint.

West's ego grew larger than his wallet as his career took off, and he became one of the highest profile rappers to start posing as if he had some connection to the Illuminati, wearing clothes with Baphomet symbols on them, name-dropping the Illuminati in a few songs, and even saying he sold his soul to the Devil.[65] Kanye West also isn't shy about his God complex, appearing on the cover of Rolling Stone in 2006 as Jesus, wearing a crown of thorns, and later releasing a track titled “I Am a God,” on his Yeezus album; Yeezus being a perversion of the name Jesus.

His God complex is so huge that after he failed to win Best New Artist in 2004 at the American Music Awards, he stood up and stormed out of the show, saying, “I was the best new artist this year,” and claimed he got “robbed.” At the 2006 MTV Europe awards he ran on stage as the award for best video was being presented to someone else and started arguing that he should have won. Then of course there was the infamous incident in 2009 when he stole the spotlight from Taylor Swift after she won an MTV Video Music Award for Best Female Video.

After Beyoncé gave birth to Jay-Z's child, named Blue Ivy, Kanye gave Jay-Z a gold plated human skull covered in gemstones valued at $34,000 for Father's Day.[66] He even reportedly had it shipped via a private jet. Freemasons and other occultists often have a human skull (or replica) on their desk or in their Chamber of Reflection to remind them of their mortality and impending death, to inspire them to achieve all of their goals in this life here and now, since they do not believe in an afterlife.

In the season premiere of the Cleveland Show in November 2012, the episode revolved around the “Hip Hop Illuminati,” a secret society said to control pop culture and the music industry. Kanye West, Nicki Minaj, Bruno Marrs, and Will.i.am all lent their actual voices to the show and recorded the voice-overs as they played themselves in the episode. Kanye even rapped a little song in the episode about the Illuminati controlling society.

He secured himself a part in pop culture forever when he knocked up Kim Kardashian, the antichrist of entertainment, while she was still married to NBA player Kris Humphries.[67] This Baphomet bimbo got a “blood facial” on her TV show[68] in an attempt to maintain her youthful beauty, which involved basically smearing human blood on her face, reminiscent of Elizabeth Bathory the “blood countess” from the Kingdom of Hungary, who in the 1600s, murdered dozens of virgins so she could bathe in their blood believing it would keep her young.[69]

After they were dating for a while, Kanye’s baby’s momma also posted a few photos to her Instagram account showing off several new bracelets, one of which featured an All-Seeing Eye and another that people said looks like a Baphomet head,[70] leading some to wonder if Kanye introduced her to the world of occult and Illuminati symbolism.

This scumbag’s antics and obvious egomania could have been sparked by studying occult philosophies from Aleister Crowley and others who teach that you are God, or can become God by evolving your consciousness through various satanic practices. After all, it was Satan in the Garden of Eden who said that Adam and Eve could “become like God” by partaking in the forbidden fruit to open their eyes and mind to the secret powers Satan offered.

Lil Wayne

PHOTO: A SCREENSHOT OF LIL WAYNE’S VIDEO “LOVE ME”DEPICTING HIM AS SATAN.

One of the ugliest and dumbest demonic dirt bags in the music industry is Lil Wayne (ghetto speak for Little Wayne), who was groomed by Cash Money Records founder Bryan “Birdman” Williams (aka Baby) since Wayne was a child and shown the ways of the business. It’s a mystery to me how so many people could purchase and enjoy Lil Wayne’s music when he sounds like a grunting gorilla going through a meat grinder, but with much of the population dumbed down and degenerating intellectually, I guess he is just a reflection of our dark, rotting culture.

Aside from using obvious demonic imagery in his music videos, such as literally having devil horns coming out of his head and keeping women locked up in cages,[71] Lil Wayne is also plagued by allegations that he is gay or bisexual,[72] with some of his detractors calling him “Little Gay,” instead of Little Wayne.

The gay allegations stem from Lil Wayne (or Little Wanker, Little Stain, or Little Pain as I call him) kissing his mentor “Birdman” aka “Baby” on the lips on various occasions.[73] When Birdman was asked how women feel about kissing him while wearing a grill (teeth bling), Little Wayne interrupted the host to inject, “Hey! I’m the only one he kisses,” and reached over and kissed him right then and there![74] The hosts on BET conducting the interview literally flew back in their seats and the audience gasped.[75]

Rapper Fat Joe has said that he believes a gay mafia runs the hip hop industry,[76] which is interesting because music mogul Clive Lewis, the man behind many popular acts, later revealed in his memoir that he is bisexual.[77] In an interview with Howard Stern, Suge Knight said there were a ton of closet gay rappers and even claimed that Dr. Dre was gay and allegedly had a sexual relationship with some dude named Bruce.[78]

Professor Griff claims that Tupac was asked by a famous record producer to have sex with him, but “When Tupac said ‘no,’ that’s when he was marked for death.”[79] Griff also said, “If rappers didn’t shoot one another up—if somebody didn’t get raped, or somebody didn’t get robbed—they would provide an incident for something to go down, because they’re setting hip hop up for destruction.”[80]

Griff also believes, “Homosexuality is on the rise, and they made the new cleavage become the butt crack,” referring to people wearing saggy pants exposing their underwear or butt, a style some claim came from gay prisoners who advertised that they were gay by showing off their butt cracks.

Child star Corey Feldman of *Goonies* and *The Lost Boys* fame, made an even more shocking claim when talking with ABC’s *Nightline* when he said that pedophiles run Hollywood and the entertainment industry. “I can tell you the number one problem in Hollywood was, is, and always will be, pedophilia. That’s the biggest problem for children in this industry…It’s the big secret.”[81]

Some people point to the Boule, a black all-male fraternity, as the source of success for many African American artists, calling it the “Black Skull and Bones” society, referring to the notorious Illuminati recruiting ground founded in 1832 at Yale University that includes numerous powerful politicians and business moguls in their ranks. Perhaps the most well-known Skull and Bones members are Presidents George W. Bush and his father George Bush senior, as well as George W. Bush’s grandfather Prescott Bush, and even his uncle, Jonathan Bush, who is an elite bankster whose firm Riggs Bank was fined a record $25 million dollars in 2004 for allegedly laundering Saudi money.[82]

Jonathan Bush was also a major contributor and fundraiser for his nephew’s presidential campaign. George W. Bush’s opponent in the 2004 presidential election was fellow Skull and Bones member John Kerry,[83] showing that this elite superclass cabal had both bases covered, the Republican candidate, and the Democrat candidate, so whoever was elected president, it would be a win for the Illuminati.

Skull and Bones’ initiation involves some strange and alleged homosexual rituals, and many people believe certain circles within the Boule involve similar kinds of rituals for the black men associated with them. Others believe that Little Wayne and other rappers are practitioners of Enochian sex magic, a strange practice that involves bizarre sexual behaviors to achieve altered states of consciousness said to allow them to gain metaphysical power over the Universe.

Regardless of exactly how Lil Wayne became one of the world’s most famous rappers, it’s clear that he is anything but subtle when it comes to using satanic imagery in his music videos and its clear exactly who he is pledging his allegiance to. It’s also interesting to note that Little Wayne, like Jay-Z, does not write his lyrics down anymore, and also does “the rain man thing,” fueling speculation that he is channeling a demon which feeds him his words.

Drake

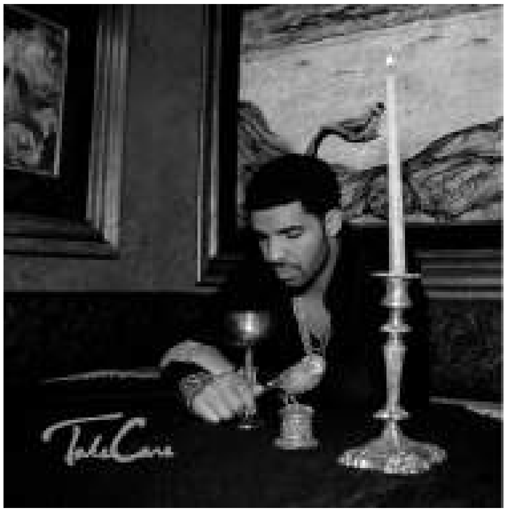

PHOTO: DRAKE'S ALBUM COVER FEATURING AN OWL STATUE MANY BELIEVE IS A HAT TIP TO THE BOHEMIAN GROVE AND THE ILLUMINATI.

Another mainstream rapper who's believed by some to be a closet gay or bisexual is Drake, a preppy pretty boy who looks dramatically different than the typical tatted up wannabe thugs often found in hip hop. Apparently, in my opinion, there's a market for a token gay looking rapper or the industry is possibly using Drake to warm people up to the first mainstream rap artist who will come out of the closet as gay. The day is coming, and depending on when you're reading this book, it may already be here, when a gay rapper will be pushed to superstardom as a household name and hailed as a hero and role model for people to look up to and idolize.

After getting signed by Lil Wayne's Young Money Entertainment, Drake (whose real name is Aubrey, a gay sounding name, in my opinion, if I've ever heard one) adopted the symbol of an owl as his logo—an owl looking almost identical to the mascot of the Bohemian Grove. Drake wears t-shirts featuring the owl; he put it on his album cover, and even has a tattoo on his right shoulder of the mysterious image.

The Bohemian Grove is a 2700-acre, all-male elite retreat located in the vast redwood forest of Sonoma County, California about an hour north of San Francisco. Each July the Grove holds a 2-week long “encampment” where the most powerful men on the planet gather for a men’s retreat where they can rub elbows with other political and industry elite and serves as an informal off-the-record consensus building environment for the Illuminati.[84]

During this annual meeting, which consists of approximately 1500 men, there are numerous daily lectures, called Lake Side Talks, given every afternoon which offer an insider’s view into various sectors of society, given by members of the political, economic, military, and media elite.[85]

The Bohemian Grove’s logo is an owl because an owl can see in the dark and represents wisdom since it can see while so many other creatures are basically blind. *The Dictionary of Symbols* explains, “In the Egyptian system of hieroglyphs, the owl symbolizes death, night, cold and passivity. It also pertains to the realm of the dead sun, that is, it is of the sun which has set below the horizon and which is crossing the lake or sea of darkness.”[86]

A forty-foot tall concrete “owl” statue stands near the banks of the Russian River inside the Bohemian Grove, and every year is the site of the annual Cremation of Care ceremony where a life-size human effigy is “sacrificed” in a bizarre theatric reenactment of a human sacrifice.[87] The elaborate ritual is carried out by members wearing black hooded robes as they burn the effigy on an altar while standing in front of the huge statue after using the “eternal flame” to light a torch that is then used to sacrifice “Care,” as they call the effigy, as they symbolically cast off their cares or burn their conscience. The statue looks more like a giant demon than an owl, and is believed by many to represent Moloch, an ancient god from thousands of years ago who people were sacrificed to.

This ritual seems to be a modern version of what the ancient Canaanites did in Biblical times, as was written about in the Bible's *Book of Leviticus*, where it reads, "Don't sacrifice your children on the altar fires to the god Molech." (Leviticus 18:21). Yes, this is the annual ritual performed at the Bohemian Grove to kick off the Illuminati's two week encampment.

So it appears that Drake (real name Aubrey) got a little more specific than others who use generic Illuminati imagery, and has adopted the same symbol as this notorious elite retreat, which includes many of the world's most wealthy and powerful men as members. There have been a lot of rumors aimed at the Bohemian Grove over the years, not only about Satanism, but homosexuality as well,[88] so maybe, in my opinion, Drake (Aubrey) would fit right in there, especially since he appears to be a fan of the club by using what looks to be a nearly identical logo as his own.

Rick Ross

PHOTO: RICK ROSS IN HIS MUSIC VIDEO "PIRATES" SITTING ON A BAPHOMET THRONE ADORNED WITH HUMAN SKULLS.

One of the biggest phonies in the music industry is the pig headed poser "Rick Ross," whose real name is Robert Wallace. This Shamu looking fool took the stage name "Rick Ross" after the real Rick Ross, aka Freeway Ricky Ross, the infamous cocaine dealer from the 1980s whose suppliers were CIA assets involved with the Iran Contra Affair.[89] Robert Wallace (the fake Rick Ross, or Pig Ross as I like to call him) was a former corrections officer at a prison who rose to fame in the rap game after adopting his "Rick Ross" persona, even growing a beard like the real Rick Ross, as he basically, in my opinion, stole his entire identity.[90]

Not only has (the fake) Rick Ross posed as a drug dealer,[91] but he's also posed as a street gangster, name dropping Larry Hoover, a famous leader of the Gangster Disciples, angering the street gang and resulting in death threats from real Gangster Disciples, causing him to cancel his 2012 tour.[92] Someone actually shot at him causing him to crash his Rolls Royce in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.[93] The dude is morbidly obese and has a beer belly the size of Boston, but acts like he's a tough guy and a hard core Illuminati gangster.

"Rick Ross" took his posing to a whole new level when he released a song titled "Freemason" with lyrics bragging about having ancient wisdom more valuable than gold. The song caused "Rick Ross" to get called out face to face on camera by a Freemason who was pissed that he was falsely claiming to be associated with this ancient esoteric fraternity. Freemasonry has long been seen as an elite secret society that teaches its members "the mysteries," or the ultimate secrets of life.

"Freemasonry is a fraternity within a fraternity—an outer organization concealing an inner brotherhood of the elect…the visible society is a splendid camaraderie of "free and accepted" men enjoined to devote themselves to ethical, educational, fraternal, patriotic, and humanitarian concerns. The invisible society is a secret most august fraternity whose members are dedicated to the service of a mysterious arcanum arcanorum (secret of secrets)," wrote Manly P. Hall, considered one of Freemasonry's greatest philosophers.[94]

While the majority of people see Masons simply as a local community group or charity, some of the fraternities' most respected members like Manly P. Hall, have revealed that there is an inner circle of mystics who supposedly know very powerful and occult knowledge that enables the select few "adepts" as they are called, to "evolve" into gods.

Famed Freemason Albert Pike wrote, "The True Word of a Mason is to be found in the concealed and profound meaning of the Ineffable Name of Deity…and which meaning was long lost by the very precautions taken to conceal it. The true pronunciation of that name was in truth a secret, in which, however, was involved the far more profound secret of its meaning. In that meaning is included all the truth that can be known by us, in regard to the nature of God."[95]

These teachings, because of their power, are kept secret from all but a small number of Masons who achieve the 33rd degree, or 33rd level within the organization. Pike also wrote that "Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, *conceals* [emphasis in original] its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it [the Mason] calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it."[96]

Many critics of Freemasonry claim that this hidden knowledge is "satanic" and that the "royal secret" of high level Masons is that they worship Satan. Such allegations are not just pulled out of thin air, but are hinted at within the writings of some of Freemasonry's most famous and respected members. Albert Pike, for example, wrote in his book *Morals and Dogma*, "Lucifer, the Light-bearer! Strange and mysterious name to give to the Spirit of Darkness! Lucifer, the Son of the Morning! Is it he who bears the Light, and with its splendors intolerable, blinds feeble, sensual, or selfish souls? Doubt it not!"[97]

Earlier in the book, Pike has this to say about the subject, "…for Satan is not a black god, but the negation of God. The Devil is the personification of Atheism or Idolatry. For the Initiates, this is not a Person, but a Force, created for good, but which may serve for evil. It is the instrument of Liberty of Free Will. They represent this Force, which presides over the physical generation, under the mythological and horned form of the God Pan; thence came the he-goat of the Sabbat, brother of the Ancient Serpent, and the Light-Bearer."[98]

Many people insist that Freemasonry is just a men's fraternity and nothing more, but Pike wrote, "Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion; and its teachings are instruction in religion."[99]

When trying to understand the opposing claims about what Masonry is and what the inner circle actually believes, it becomes much clearer when Pike himself explains, "The people will always mock at things easy to be misunderstood; it must [and] needs [to] have imposters. A Spirit…that loves wisdom and contemplates the Truth close at hand, is forced to disguise it, to induce the multitudes to accept it…Fictions are necessary to the people and the Truth becomes deadly to those who are not strong enough to contemplate it in all its brilliance…In fact, what can there be in common between the vile multitude and sublime wisdom? The truth must be kept secret, and the masses need a teaching proportioned to their imperfect reason."[100]

So with a history of powerful members and being supposed keepers of the "royal secret" of how Man can become god, it's easy to see why rappers like Rick Ross, looking to give the impression that they are powerful masters of the Universe, would claim an affiliation with Freemasonry.

Freemasonry goes hand in hand with the Illuminati since the inner circle of adepts or members of the secret society within the secret society are considered to be a branch of the Illuminati. Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the Illuminati in Bavaria, Germany (often called the Bavarian Illuminati) successfully infiltrated Freemasonry in 1782 in Wilhelmsbad, Germany and created an inner circle of what he called "Illuminated Masonry." Rick Ross is so dumb I doubt he could even read a book on Freemasonry, let alone understand it or contemplate "the Mysteries," but when he or his handlers caught wind of how "cool" and mysterious Freemasonry was, and with books like Dan Brown's *The Lost Symbol* and films like *National Treasure*, the rapper thought he would attempt to attach himself to the mystique.

Baphomet

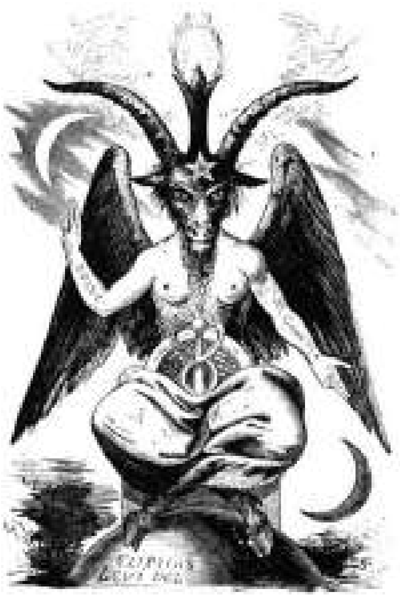
ELIPHAS LEVI DEL.

PHOTO: ELIPHAS LEVI'S 19TH CENTURY DEPICTION OF BAPHOMET.

For those not familiar with Baphomet, I will briefly explain it here since many artists incorporate the symbol into their videos or clothing. In his video for the song "Pirates," Rick Ross is shown sitting down on a large Baphomet throne. Rihanna wore a Baphomet looking headdress in her "Rock Star" video, and many people say Beyoncé's promotional material for *I Am…Sasha Fierce* (her alter ego) also used the symbol. Kanye West has worn shirts and even a skirt with the image on it, so what exactly is Baphomet and why are so many stars using the image?

Baphomet is basically an occult idol depicted as a goat's head or a half-man, half-goat figure that dates back to the ancient Knights Templar and the Crusades. Baphomet was the goat head that the Templars were accused of worshiping or using during their secret rituals.

The figure is the official symbol of the Church of Satan and is printed on the cover of *The Satanic Bible* overlaid on top of an upside down pentagram by making the upper two points of the pentagram form the horns of the goat with the bottom point forming its chin.

Another depiction comes in the form of a human-like winged goat resembling a gargoyle with breasts and a phallic serpent rising from its crotch. This popular image comes from an 1854 book written by a popular French occultist and ceremonial magician named Eliphas Levi.[101]

Satanists have a long tradition of adoring this bizarre figure. Eliphas Levi wrote, “According to some, the Baphomet was a monstrous head, but according to others, a demon in the form of a goat. A sculptured coffer was disinterred recently in the ruins of an old Commandery of the Temple, and antiquaries observed upon it a baphometic figure, corresponding by its attributes to the goat of Mendes and the androgyne of Khunrath.”[102]

Aleister Crowley wrote, “This serpent, Satan, is not the enemy of Man, be He who made Gods of our race, knowing Good and Evil; He bade “Know Thyself! and taught Initiation. He is “the Devil” of the book of Thoth, and His emblem is Baphomet, and Androgyne who is the hieroglyph of arcane perfection.”[103]

It’s interesting that many people claim the Catholic Church fabricated the stories of the Knights Templar being involved with Baphomet, but what’s even more interesting is that famous occultists and Satanists admit the accusations were true!

“Did the Templars really adore Baphomet?” writes Eliphas Levi, in his 1854 book *Transcendental Magic*. “Did they offer a shameful salutation to the buttocks of the goat of Mendes? What was actually this secret and potent association which imperiled Church and State, and was thus destroyed unheard? Judge nothing lightly; they are guilty of a great crime; they have exposed to profane eyes the sanctuary of antique initiation. They have gathered again and have shared the fruits of the tree of knowledge, so they might become masters of the world."[104]

"Yes, in our profane conviction, the Grand Masters of the Order of the Templars worshipped the Baphomet, and caused it to be worshipped by their initiates," Levi declares.[105]

In *The Satanic Bible*, Baphomet appears on the list of list of Infernal Names, and is defined as a symbol of Satan that the Knights Templar worshiped.[106] Manly P. Hall reveals in *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* that, "The famous hermaphroditic Goat of Mendes was a composite creature formulated to symbolize this astral light. It is identical with Baphomet, the mystic pantheos of those disciples of ceremonial magic, the Templars, who probably obtained it from the Arabians."[107]

So it's no wonder we see so many musicians using the image in their videos, printed on their clothes or wearing jewelry encrusted with the figure. Most parents would recognize a satanic pentagram and it would cause them to take a closer look at the artists their children are watching, and even catch the attention of the mainstream press, but Baphomet is much more esoteric, and can slide under most people's radar.

The Pentagram

The upside down pentagram drawn inside a circle is one of the most familiar symbols of Satanism, and over the centuries various occult organizations have used it to represent spiritual power or dark forces. A pentagram is different from an ordinary five pointed star in that a pentagram consists of five straight lines that make up the points, which also form a pentagon in the center of the pentagram. Since the symbol is so well-known, most Illuminati puppets use more subtle symbols that are lesser known to the public, like Baphomet, All-Seeing Eyes, Masonic checkerboard marble floors, owls, etc., but I will briefly explain the history and meaning of this popular illustration.

Early Christians used the five points of a (right-side up) pentagram or “pentalpha” to symbolize the five wounds of Jesus (the two spikes through his hands, two through his feet, and the spear that pierced his side). The design was later adopted by occultists and Satanists who flipped it upside down to deliberately “reverse” or pervert the design to signify their opposing views.

The Dictionary of Symbols entry on the figure reads, “As far back as in the days of Egyptian hieroglyphics a star pointing upwards signified ‘rising upwards towards the point of origin’ and formed part of such words as ‘to bring up,’ ‘to educate,’ and ‘the teacher.’ The inverted five-pointed star is a symbol of the infernal and used in black magic.”[108]

33rd degree Mason Manly P. Hall confirms, “When used in black magic, the pentagram is called the ‘sign of the cloven hoof,’ or the footprint of the Devil. The star with two points upward is also called the ‘Goat of Mendes,’ because the inverted star is the same shape as a goat’s head. When the upright star turns and the upper point falls to the bottom, it signifies the fall of the Morning Star.”[109]

In Freemasonry, the pentagram is called the Blazing Star and represents the sun, Lucifer, carnal knowledge and power. To Wiccans and Pagans the five points of the star represent air, fire, water, Earth, and spirit.

Famous occultist Eliphas Levi explains, “The Pentagram, which in Gnostic schools is called the Blazing Star, is the sign of intellectual omnipotence and autocracy…The Pentagram with two points in the ascendant represents Satan as the goat of the Sabbath.”[110]

Aspiring Rapper shot friend as "Illuminati sacrifice"

The day after Christmas in 2012, a 27-year-old aspiring rapper in Virginia was arrested for shooting his friend, allegedly hoping to kill him as an "Illuminati sacrifice," believing it would get the attention of the Illuminati who would then reward him with a record contract and make him a famous rapper.[111]

The aspiring rapper, Wafeeq Sabir El-Amin, allegedly said, "You are my sacrifice," before he fired a shot at his friend's head, according to attorney Thomas L. Johnson.[112] The police report notes the victim was shot in the hand as he attempted to shield his face, and was able to take the gun from El-Amin and then shoot him in self-defense and escape.

Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Thomas L. Johnson said the trial revolved around hip hop culture and the idea that the Illuminati controls successful rap artists. "It was the belief that a sacrifice had to occur in order to join the Illuminati that allegedly incited El-Amin," Johnson said.[113]

The aspiring rapper was stoned when the incident occurred and police found more than a pound of marijuana in his home while investigating the case, along with what was described as literature about the Illuminati and its alleged involvement in the music industry. El-Amin was also said to have been obsessed with rapper 50 Cent who famously survived getting shot nine times, an incident that largely helped propel his rap career. The deranged Illuminati wannabe El-Amin was found guilty of malicious wounding and sentenced to eight years in prison.[114]

Fifth Grader Claims Illuminati Membership and Threatens To Sacrifice Fellow Students to Satan

Even more bizarre than the 27-year-old aspiring rapper who shot his friend as an attempted "Illuminati sacrifice," is the story of a fifth grader (age 10 or 11) at a California elementary school who stood up in the middle of class shouting she was part of the Illuminati and threatened to kill other students as an apparent sacrifice to Satan.[115]

"She said she wanted to sell her soul to the devil and she said she'll kill everybody," a fellow student told the local ABC affiliate KXTV.[116]

The Satan-obsessed student then grabbed a pair of scissors and started cutting herself and allegedly tried to stab another student. The local television news report on KXTV actually said the girl claimed to be in the Illuminati and other students reported she had drawn Illuminati symbols on the bathroom walls.

A parent of a fellow student contacted the local TV station after he felt the school didn't handle the situation properly since they didn't notify parents until 6:30 that evening and said his child was in tears when he picked her up from school that day. This parent believed the school was trying to sweep the incident under the rug and says they denied that a weapon had been involved. "There was a weapon involved. It was a pair of scissors," he said. "So it shocks me to see there are false statements in here knowing otherwise what happened at school yesterday."[117]

"Everybody just started crying because they were scared that they were going to die that day," another student told the news reporter.

“I seen her try to cut herself and draw blood, but then she got up and tried to stab another girl a seat away from her,” another student said.

The Sacramento City Unified School District confirmed an incident happened at the school in an e-mail statement to KXTV News 10 written by Gabe Ross, SCUSC Chief Communications Officer, reading, “Authorities are investigating a disturbance inside a John Sloat Elementary School classroom…The school responded immediately and all students were safe. Counseling and other resources have been made available to all John Sloat students today and will continue to be available as needed.”

Was this mentally disturbed little girl a fan of Angel Haze, Azealia Banks, or Ke$ha, and influenced by them or other pop stars promoting Satanism and the Illuminati as cool?

Wal-Mart Illuminati Kidnapping Attempt

A 37-year-old man was shot and killed by police inside a Wal-Mart in Oklahoma in June 2013, after he snatched a two-year-old infant from her mom's shopping cart and held a knife to her neck saying he was going to kill her for the Illuminati.[118] The psycho, Sammie Wallace, was an African American male, and most likely a Rick Ross and Jay-Z fan who wanted to be a part of the Illuminati, and like other delusional dirt bags, thought he had to sacrifice a person to Satan in order to receive his reward.

When this story first started circulating on the Internet, many people thought it was a hoax because it was so bizarre, but the incident actually happened, and the local Oklahoma TV station News 9 reported, "According to an affidavit for a search warrant, Wallace began speaking about the Illuminati, a satanic cult, while holding the girl and pointing a knife at her. Police say they quickly did some research and learned June 21 is a day of human sacrifice for the Illuminati."[119]

After police searched Sammie Wallace's house, they reported they found a notebook containing "religious writings." When the Illuminati-obsessed sicko started counting down, claiming he would kill the child when he got to zero, police captain David Huff fired a single shot, killing Wallace. Thankfully the child was unharmed during the incident.

Angel Haze

PHOTO: A STILL FROM ANGEL HAZE'S "WERKIN GIRLS" VIDEO WHERE A GROUP OF ILLUMINATI THUGS KIDNAP A GROUP OF CHILDREN.

An anorexic-looking, scrawny, sickly appearing rapping rat named Angel Haze tried to push the envelope into uncharted evil territory with the release of her music video "Working Girls" (styled *Werkin Girls*) by having a gang of Illuminati thugs kidnap a bunch of young children while she stands by watching in apparent delight and rapping about what a badass she is.

The children, who appear to be aged 6 to 8, are shown playing jump rope in the video when several masked thugs approach and violently sweep them away. The screen flashes a close-up of a tattoo on one of the perpetrators' arms which clearly shows it's an Illuminati All-Seeing Eye with a snake wrapped around it. The song has no point other than to serve as a self-promotion platform for Haze and she appears to simply stand by watching the children getting snatched as if she thinks it's cool, or is perhaps in cahoots with the kidnappers.

To make it even worse, this witch is wearing a large crucifix around her neck throughout the video. Angel Haze grew up in with a family involved with the Greater Apostolic Faith, which she describes as a cult, and may explain her rebelling against what is good, and “turning to the dark side,” so to speak, by being involved in such a filthy music video and rap persona.

At the time of this writing Angel Haze is not a mainstream artist or a household name, but that is undoubtedly her goal, and she is waiting in the wings, signed to Universal Music Group, one day hoping to be chosen as the next Illuminati idol to roll out to the world.

Azealia Banks

PHOTO: A STILL FROM AZEALIA BANK'S VIDEO "YOUNG RAPUNZEL" SHOWING HER RAP IN FRONT OF AN ALL-SEEING EYE ON THE WALL.

Another babbling brainless bisexual bimbo who jumped on the Illuminati bandwagon is female rapper Azealia Banks with her music video "Young Rapunzel," stylized *Yung Rapunxel*. Banks, who sounds like a man, appears on screen with an owl flying out of a hole in her forehead—the owl, of course, a symbol of the Bohemian Grove and the same mascot adopted by rapper Drake, the feminine fool who dances like an epileptic having a seizure.

Of course, Azelia Banks is shown rapping in front of a huge pyramid with an All-Seeing Eye painted on the wall behind her, and there's a scene of her riding a bull reminiscent of the *Book of Revelation* where the Whore of Babylon is described as riding a beast.[120] Then of course there are several scenes of Banks bashing a police officer over the head with a bottle in an attempt to look tuff.

This trendy piece of trash thinks she's a hard core ho, but she's simply another wanker in a growing list of obvious Illuminati wannabes. This singing serpent is spreading proverbial syphilis with her stupid songs, and is simply just another satanic skank who sold her soul to Satan hoping for fame and wealth, but in reality she has no talent, her delivery is disastrously dumb, and she brings nothing new to the artistic table. Someone should have told this fame whore that just because it worked for Rihanna, Jay-Z, Rick Ross, Kanye West and Ke$ha, it wouldn't necessarily work for her since she's a little bit too late and comes off as simply a pathetic Illuminati posing Johnny Come Lately copycat trying too hard to be cool, not to mention, she sounds like a man. Or maybe she is. I don't really want to know.

Apparently Azealia Banks used some samples for an upcoming single before obtaining the rights from the actual producer and after her legal team reached out to him and offered him $25,000 for the rights, he turned it down and said, "I don't want your fucking $25,000. Fuck off. Go be a puppet bitch to someone else."[121]

Tupac Shakur

Shakur, who was shot and killed in a Las Vegas drive-by shooting in 1996 and considered one of the greatest rappers of all time, recorded an album shortly before his death titled *The Don KIlluminati: The 7 Day Theory* which remains the topic of speculation among his fans who think the title was a reference to exposing the Illuminati. “The Don” is a mafia term for a mafia boss or leader, which makes some of Tupac’s fans think that he had learned about the Illuminati and titled his album this as a coded message meaning he was the leader of the killers of the Illuminati.

Many people believe the Illuminati orchestrated his murder to silence him since in his music and interviews he often sent a positive and empowering message of love, peace, and encouraged education instead of the typical gangster rap garbage we are all too familiar with. Senator Marco Rubio of Florida was asked about his opinion on Lil Wayne once comparing himself to Tupac, and answered, “There is only one Tupac…These guys have some message in what they’re saying, but I think they’re largely entertainers. I think Tupac was more someone who was trying to inform us about what was going on, and he did it through entertainment.”[122]

The paparazzi videographer who worked for TMZ voiced surprise, and Rubio continued, “Tupac is someone I listened to growing up, and he was a complicated person. He wasn’t perfect, that’s for sure. He made a lot of mistakes, but I think he was very honest in his music and gave us insight into a time in our country and really gave a voice to a people in America at that time who were facing different struggles...He made a lot of mistakes, that’s for sure, but he was very real in a way you don’t see today.”[123]

“Today,” Rubio said, “It’s all about money or how much he’s making. Tupac actually grew up. Every year that went by, his music got deeper and more introspective...Lil Wayne isn’t putting anything out there like that.”

Tupac was definitely using his music to raise awareness about important social issues like racism, drug abuse, violence, and the value of an education, but was he trying to expose the Illuminati too? Many of his fans believe this, but will be very disappointed when they learn of a little known interview he gave about this very subject and the meaning of his term “Killuminati.”

In the course of their discussion when the interviewer mentions the Illuminati, Tupac responds, “Niggas is telling me about this Illuminati shit while I’m in jail, right, like you gotta listen to all this. That’s another way for them to keep your self-esteem low! That’s another way to keep you unconfident. And I’m putting a “k” cuz I’m killing that Illuminati shit! Trust me. If these mother fuckers wanted to kill you, why the fuck would they tell [Louis] Farrakhan? Why are they going to tell the Nation of Islam? Why are they gonna tell this nigga in jail about the plan? How did he know? How’d it leak to him? Who told him? The Pope? Who? Cuz they like, the Pope and the money, awe come on man, get the fuck out of here.”[124]

While Tupac was said to be an avid reader, he really missed the boat on this one, because there were plenty of books available while he was alive that detailed the history of the Illuminati and the evidence of its continued existence. For example in 1986, ten years before Tupac’s death, Antony Sutton released *America’s Secret Establishment*, detailing how the Skull and Bones society was created in 1832 as an extension of the Illuminati and how the Bilderberg Group, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Federal Reserve banking cartel all function as the superclass ruling elite and modern day Illuminati front groups.

There were many other popular books available during Tupac’s time such as *None Dare Call it Conspiracy* (1971), *Occult Theocrasy* (1933), *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*, (1924), and even John Robison’s classic *Proofs of a Conspiracy,* published in 1798 and still in print today, which was one of the first English translations of the original writings of Adam Weishaupt that were discovered in 1786 by local authorities.

Gunplay

PHOTO: GUNPLAY'S MUG SHOT IN OCTOBER 2012 AFTER AN AN ARREST FOR ARMED ROBBERY WITH A FIREARM.

A rapper who goes by the name of Gunplay (real name Richard Morales Jr.) is another interesting case of a rapper whose life imitates his art because of his run-ins with the law, and who has also talked about the Illuminati in interviews, although he's not exactly a good example of someone who is fighting to expose them and make the world a better place.

Gunplay, as his name suggests, likes to play with guns, and in October 2012 he was arrested for armed robbery and aggravated assault after a videotape from a security camera showed what looked like him pistol whipping his accountant and then stealing his chain.[125] The charges were later dropped when the accountant, Turron Woodside, refused to testify.[126]

Gunplay started his career by joining (the fake) Rick Ross's southern hip hop group the Tripple C's (Carol City Cartel), and signed to (the fake) Rick Ross's Maybach Music Group label. He is basically yet another unoriginal gangster rapper trying to cash in on the genre as another one of countless cookie cutter copies.

In December 2012 Gunplay tweeted about the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre insinuating it was a government run false flag conspiracy, but later deleted the tweets.[127] "Government killed dem kids to take our guns away. Another 9/11. Don't get it twisted," he tweeted to his 100,000 or so followers at the time. "Ya'll are sheeple 4 thinking da government ain't gotta hand in every crisis since the great depression."[128]

In an interview with Vice in 2012 the rapper brought up the Bilderberg Group and the Illuminati, saying, "They control everything. Everything. From wars to weather, everything. It gets real deep, man. That's one of those things I try to fill my head with knowledge about. Who are the puppet masters? You stumble on one thing, you stumble on another thing, and you just open up a can of worms. You try to tell everybody, but they're looking at you like, 'What?'"[129]

Gunplay was asked if he thought there were any rappers in the Illuminati, to which he gave a surprisingly accurate answer of basically "no," and went on to explain, "All you can do is inform yourself, because you can't do nothing about it. I don't think no man should have that much control, but it is what it is. It's a grim reality. Embrace it, and inform people of what's going on. That's the only thing you can do…It's already too late, because we're already programmed on the channel they want us to be on. It is what it is. You just gotta embrace it and inform the public. Inform the people. Inform the ones you love because it's going down."[130]

Unfortunately, Gunplay doesn't realize that he's part of the problem and a seemingly willing servant of this socially enslaving system by appearing to offer himself up as an icon of evil in exchange for money and fame.

Dwight York

A black supremacist and convicted child molester sentenced to 135 years in prison for having committed one of the largest numbers of abuses, was a very influential spiritual teacher for several famous musicians before he was sent to prison. Dwight York is said to have inspired several popular musicians with his brand of black supremacist occultism called Nuwaubianism, which comes from the Arabic word “nubuwa” which means prophet hood or prophesy.

York was a singer and music producer in Brooklyn before he left New York in 1993, moving to Georgia. His birthdate is unclear, but is believed to be in 1945 or 1935, and he went by a long list of pseudonyms over the years, including Malachi Z York, Issa Al Haadi Al Mahdi, and Dr. York. In the 1990s he built an enormous Egyptian-themed compound on 476 acres in Eatonton, Georgia called Tama-Re for his hundreds of followers. After his conviction in 2004 of child abuse, the government acquired the property through asset forfeiture and demolished it.

Author Bill Osinski, reported “When he was finally indicted, state prosecutors literally had to cut back the number of counts listed—from well beyond a thousand to slightly more than 200—because they feared a jury simply wouldn’t believe the magnitude of York’s evil.… [It] is believed to be the nation’s largest child molestation prosecution ever directed at a single person, in terms of number of victims and number of alleged criminal acts.”[131]

Many people believe Dwight York was practicing a very perverted and evil form of Sex Magick (spelled with a “k” on the end as stylized by Satanist Aleister Crowley) in which some people believe they obtain magic powers by sexually abusing children. Considering York’s involvement in fringe occult philosophies and his conviction of child abuse, he may very well have been engaging in this kind of despicable behavior with children.

Some of York’s supporters have claimed he was set up and framed by the government, and insist he is innocent.

Prodigy

Prodigy is a rapper and member of the duo Mobb Deep, who released his second solo album *H.N.I.C.2.* in 2008, that included a song titled "Illuminati," telling the evils of this secret society and includes a chorus saying, "Illuminati want my mind, soul, and my body…Secret society trying to keep their eye on me."

While in prison for illegally possessing a weapon, he penned a five page letter about the Illuminati and the music industry, saying, in part, "Jay-Z and Jaz-O were both raised (in their teenage years) in Dr. [Dwight] York's 'Nuwabian' community in Bushwick Brooklyn…Jay-Z knows the truth, but he chose sides with evil in order to be accepted in the corporate world and promotes the lifestyle of the beast instead…Jay-Z is a God damn lie. I have so much fire in my heart that I will relentlessly attack Jay-Z, Illuminati, and every other evil that exist until my lights are out…I have been empowered by God and the Universe."[132]

He goes on to write about a negative energy many mainstream rappers are playing with, saying, "This negative energy is created and harnessed by the Illuminati secret government and they will make you spread this energy without even knowing it but people like Jay-Z are very well aware. He was schooled by Dr. York so if you are aware and still spread it, what does that make you? Who and what do you represent? I'm not saying these bad things about Jay-Z cuz we had a rap beef…Jay-Z is not the only 'aware' rapper that sided with evil, but he's the most influential."[133]

During the 2008 presidential campaign when practically every African American entertainer was thrilled that Barack Obama was running for president, Prodigy called him a phony and a plastic president. "I wish nothing but love and happiness for him, but he's either gonna be assassinated to create chaos and bring about martial law or he'll live and then years down the line, at the end of his term everybody will see that he's just like the rest of these plastic presidents, who does absolutely nothing good. Just another puppet for the Royal family."[134]

Prodigy also publicly voiced support for Congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas) who was running for president that year (and again in 2012). Because of his pro-Constitution principles and consistent track record, Ron Paul was a favorite for many Americans who see the Illuminati as a threat to our liberties, economy, privacy, and even our planet.

Prodigy believes that Dwight York was set up and framed by the Illuminati when he was sentence to 135 years in prison for an enormous number of child abuse cases. Prodigy is most likely in denial since he looked up to York and saw him as an enlightened spiritual teacher. As I'm sure you are well aware, many times the family members and close friends of people who commit heinous crimes cannot come to grips that someone they were so close to could be so evil, so as a psychological protective mechanism they simply cannot believe the person actually did those things.[135]

Professor Griff

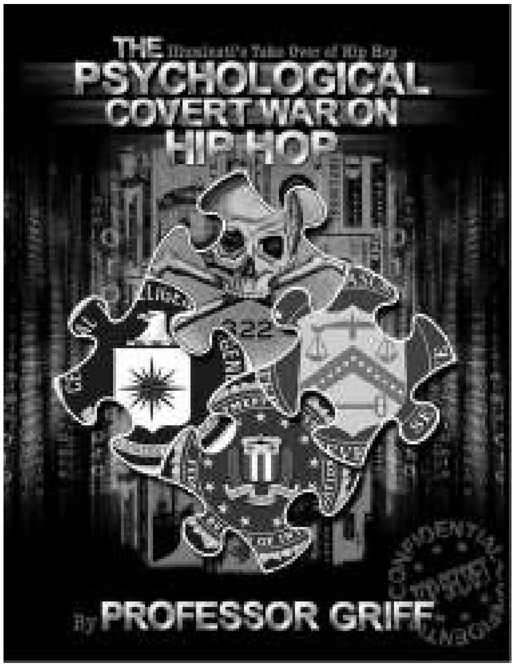
THE
Illuminati's Take Over of Hip Hop
PSYCHOLOGICAL
COVERT WAR ON
HIP HOP
322
CONFIDENTIAL
By PROFESSOR GRIFF

PHOTO: PROFESSOR GRIFF'S BOOK COVER, *THE PSYCHOLOGICAL COVERT WAR ON HIP HOP*.

One of the most vocal musicians against the Illuminati in the music industry is Professor Griff, formerly of the rap group Public Enemy. Griff committed the entertainment industry cardinal sin when during a 1989 interview with David Mills of *The Washington Times* he reportedly made several anti-Semitic statements, including allegedly that "Jews are responsible for the majority of the wickedness in the world."[136] Griff insisted his statement was taken out of context and audio of the interview was never released for people to hear it in its entirety.

Professor Griff was fired from Public Enemy over the controversy caused by the interview and later issued an apology and met with Jewish groups trying to make amends. In his 2009 book, titled *Analytixz*, Griff explained, “To say the Jews are responsible for the majority of wickedness that went on around the globe, I would have to know about the majority of wickedness that went on around the globe, which is impossible...I’m not the best knower—[God] is. Then, not only knowing that, I would have to know who is at the crux of all of the problems in the world and then blame Jewish people, which is not correct.”[137]

Griff later embraced a form of Afrocentrism and formed a music group called the Last Asiatic Disciples that rapped about the New World Order and various conspiracies.

J. Cole

Years after selling Roc-A-Fella Records to Def Jam, Jay-Z started another label called Roc Nation, and the first artist signed after it was launched was J. Cole, whose debut album *Cole World: The Sideline Story* came out in 2011, earning him a nomination for Best New Artist at the Grammys that year.[138]

During an interview with Hot 93.7 in Hartford, Connecticut, Cole was asked about the Illuminati rumors swirling around his boss Jay-Z.

"You know what's crazy, before I got a deal and became part of the industry, I was one of those people. I was a conspiracy theorist. There were times I would look at those videos like 'Jay-Z's a member of the Illuminati!' and I would be like 'Ooooohhhhh!' And then you meet him, and you see how things work, and that's bogus—that's somebody that's so far from the truth in what's actually happening, just creating something. They're probably high. It's not true."[139]

On his 2013 Album *Born Sinner*, the first track is titled "Villumanati," meaning the Fayetteville Illuminati, a reference to Fayetteville, North Carolina, where he grew up. On the track he raps, "Fuck everybody. I'm about to go and join the Illuminati. This next three bars is dedicated to the retards [who] keep asking me about the Illuminati. Is you stupid nigga? Young black millionaire, all white billionaires, I'm sure that they can do without me. And I ain't really into sacrificing human bodies."[140]

The statement about sacrificing human bodies is likely a reference to the Cremation of Care at the Bohemian Grove, something more and more people have become aware of from YouTube and social media, and since J. Cole said he used to watch "conspiracy" videos, he is probably aware of some of the activities and allegations surrounding the Bohemian Grove.

Jay Electronica

Another rapper signed to Jay-Z's Roc Nation record label with some interesting ties is Jay Electronica,[141] whose connection to the Illuminati is beyond simply using occult symbols or name-dropping them in a song. While in a relationship with his baby's momma, Erykah Badu, this clown was reportedly having an affair with Kate Rothschild, a member of the notorious Illuminati banking family. Kate's blue blood multi-millionaire husband Ben Goldsmith filed for a divorce from her citing adultery after he allegedly discovered her having a yearlong affair with Electronica.[142]

Kate Rothschild inherited tens of millions of dollars from her father, banker Amschel Rothschild, after he committed suicide by hanging himself in his Bristol Hotel room in Paris in 1996.[143] The death was initially reported as the result of a heart attack, but was later confirmed a suicide by relatives refusing to discuss the details.[144] He was the chairman of Rothschild Asset Management.

The heiress Kate later started her own record company called Round Table records and that's how she met Jay Electronica. Her company's name, "Round Table," is a reference to the British round table secret societies and elitist organizations set up by the likes of Cecil Rhodes, who wrote in his will that his money must be used to fund a secret society called the Round Table Group, with the goal of maintaining the Illuminati controlled British Empire around the world.

His last will and testament literally reads, "To and for the establishment, promotion and development of a Secret Society, the true aim and object whereof shall be for the extension of British rule throughout the world, the perfecting of a system of emigration from the United Kingdom, and of colonization by British subjects of all lands where the means of livelihood are attainable by energy, labor and enterprise, and especially the occupation by British settlers of the entire Continent of Africa, the Holy

Land, the Valley of the Euphrates, the Islands of Cyprus and Candia, the whole of South America, the Islands of the Pacific not heretofore possessed by Great Britain, the whole of the Malay Archipelago, the seaboard of China and Japan, the ultimate recovery of the United States of America as an integral part of the British Empire, the inauguration of a system of Colonial representation in the Imperial Parliament which may tend to weld together the disjointed members of the Empire and, finally, the foundation of so great a Power as to render wars impossible, and promote the best interests of humanity."[145]

Cecil Rhodes, this Round Table Group creator, was a British born businessman who moved to Africa to start the DeBeers diamond monopoly, and with the help of Edward Bernays, the public relations genius, he brainwashed millions of men and women around the world into believing they need to own large diamond rings, necklaces, and ear rings in order to feel loved, while the inventory of the stones is purposefully suppressed to artificially inflate the prices. This same diamond monopoly man also created the Rhodes Scholarships which are given to college students who the Secret Establishment sees as likely participants in their New World Order plan, and are used to groom young men and women by introducing them to the Invisible Empire. President Bill Clinton is one of the most well-known recipients of this scholarship, who mysteriously rose to power from obscurity with the help of this hidden hand.[146]

So in a world of Illuminati posers and puppets, it is interesting, at the very least, that Jay Electronica allegedly had a yearlong sexual relationship with a member of the notorious Rothschild banking family, literally, according to various reports, getting in bed with a supposed Illuminati family member. The rapper tweeted some threats to Ben Goldsmith, his alleged mistress's husband, after news reports were first published about Kate Rothschild's alleged affair with the rapper, saying he would "come see" Goldsmith if he didn't shut his mouth.[147]

Several reports have stated that Jay Electronica's album *Act II – The Patents of Nobility* would contain a track titled "New Illuminati" that featured none other than Kanye West,[148] due to his unprecedented Illuminati posing. At the time of this writing, his album had been in the works for years but was faced with repeated delays and will supposedly be released soon.

The Game

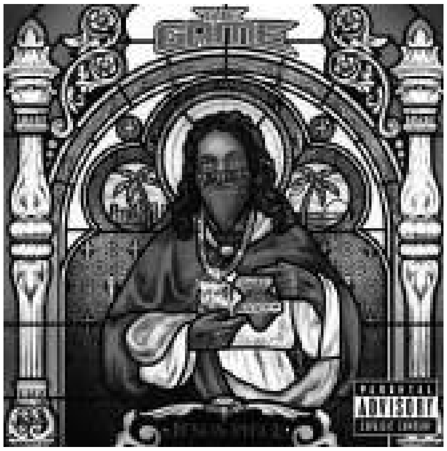

PHOTO: THE GAME'S ALBUM COVER *JESUS PIECE*, DEPICTING JESUS AS A GANG MEMBER.

The Los Angeles based rapper who goes by "The Game" (a really lame name, I know) was interviewed by a conspiracy website called Truth is Scary and when asked about the Illuminati, he stood up out of his chair and said, "I can't talk about that."[149] He also said the world was going to end at the end of 2012, while trying to sound serious and sophisticated.

The Game is just another wannabe LA gangster in hip hop who's made headlines for his unhealthy relationships and his habit of fighting.[150] He is probably best known for his hideous "LA" face tattoo on his right cheek, which is actually a cover up of a previous tattoo of a butterfly that he bizarrely inked on the same spot. As if this wasn't dumb enough, a few years later he got a huge tattoo of President Obama on his chest![151]

Just two weeks after the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre, when 20-year-old Adam Lanza killed twenty children and six adults in Sandy Hook, Connecticut and the entire country was mourning, The Game released a song titled “Dead People,” where the entire track was basically about stalking and murdering people for fun because he’s a psycho. The track is on an album called *Jesus Piece*, a slang term for a gang banger’s favorite gun, and the cover art depicts Jesus as a member of the Bloods street gang.[152]

Ski mask, body bag, duct tape, and a pillow
In the front solo
Sittin’ low with the lights out
Feelin’ like Manson on some Son of Sam shit
With a murder on my mind and my mind on a homicide
-*Dead People*

T-Pain

T-Pain, the King of Auto-Tune, the guy who made mainstream music even more unbearable to listen to than it already was, joked about hoping to join the Illuminati so he could make more money after his career had stalled. Because his Auto-Tune gimmick got overplayed and he fell off the face of the earth, in desperation he once said, “Boy, if there is an Illuminati, I’m looking for them. I’m telling you boy, I’m down to get in it, cuz I would be way richer than I am right now.”[153]

While it appears he was joking or saying such things in jest, his statements reveal how appealing the Illuminati is to those who lust after fame and money, and also shows how more and more people are associating the Illuminati with the puppet masters who pull the purse strings and decide who will be chosen to be advertised and promoted in the corporate media.

Of course the zombie masses loved T-Pain and his trademarked Auto-Tune novelty gimmick for a season, but his fifteen minutes of fame ticked away rather fast, and the masses moved on to the next trend and technological bread and circus, looking for something new to satisfy their itching ears.

A$AP Rocky

PHOTO: A STILL FROM A$AP ROCKY'S VIDEO "WASSUP" SHOWING A SATANIC PENTAGRAM ON THE FLOOR DURING A PARTY.

Another talentless rapper waiting in the wings hoping to be chosen as the next token act propelled through the mainstream media pipeline is A$AP Rocky, who's another jive turkey talking gibberish marketed as music. In a blatant attempt trying to get noticed, he released a music video for his song "Wassup" that began by showing a huge three-foot-wide satanic pentagram on the floor, looking like it was made out of cocaine, and featured your typical scantily clad women shaking their booties and guys drinking 40's while showing off handfuls of cash.

What most viewers don't understand is that the stacks of cash often seen in music videos come from the prop department, not the bank, and are just as fake as the rappers who flash it. Many of the cars,[154] jewelry,[155] and even the homes themselves featured in MTV's hit show *MTV Cribs*, were often rented by the artist to show off in their segment.[156]

During an interview with Jazzy T at 93.7 WBLK in Buffalo, A$AP said, "I wish I was Illuminati. Show me Illuminati," as he enthusiastically expressed his admiration for the group and his desire to be "in" with them so he could make some money and get famous.[157] The fact that so many rappers literally say they would love to join the Illuminati shows how they are willing to sell out to the corrupt corporate system and do anything in exchange for fame and fortune.

Eminem

PHOTO: EMINEM POSTED THIS PICTURE ON HIS TWITTER SHOWING HIM THROWING UP DEVIL HORNS AND THE ALL-SEEING EYE.

Marshall Mathers, aka Slim Shady, aka Eminem, skyrocketed to superstardom beginning in 1999, becoming one of the most famous rappers of all time after getting signed to Dr. Dre’s Aftermath Entertainment music label, a subsidiary of Interscope records. It wasn’t just being white that fueled his celebrity, but rather his extremely violent and vile lyrical content, including songs about doing drugs,[158] raping women,[159] doing a Columbine-style school shooting,[160] and even killing his baby’s momma.[161] Instead of the mainstream media being repulsed and not giving him a national platform, Eminem instantly became one of their favorite friends and most famous celebrities in the world, loved largely by children who couldn’t get enough of him. Countless girls even worshiped him, despite his misogynistic message, and they too loved to sing along to his sick songs.

During Eminem’s time in the limelight, various gruesome crimes were committed by his fans that were believed by some to be acting out the scenarios depicted in several of his songs. In one incident a twenty-one-year-old Eminem impersonator named Christopher Duncan murdered his girlfriend after singing Eminem songs at a karaoke bar by beating her unconscious and then stuffing her in a suitcase where she then suffocated.[162] The song “Kim” depicts Eminem killing his girlfriend with lyrics like, "Don't you get it bitch, no one can hear you! Now shut the fuck up and get what's coming to you! You were supposed to love me! [Kim choking] NOW BLEED! BITCH BLEED!"

A fourteen-year-old boy in Peterborough, Ontario was charged with murdering his own mother and burying her body in the backyard, allegedly modeling the murder after Eminem's music video "Cleaning out My Closet," which in court was said to be the boy's favorite song, that depicts Eminem murdering his mother and burying her body in the backyard.[163]

A twelve-year-old boy was convicted of indecent assault after he was allegedly inspired by an Eminem song to force a nine-year-old boy to perform a lewd sex act on him.[164] The Eminem track "Ken Kaniff," which is a short skit included on Eminem's album, "The Marshall Mathers LP," was played in court during the case. Prosecutor William Baker said that, "One possibility is that the twelve-year-old boy in adolescence heard the track and thought it would be a good idea to make someone do that to him," referring to the lewd act depicted in the song.[165]

Michele Elliott, director of Kidscape, a child protection charity, commented on the case, saying, "There is something disturbing about a record or video egging people on to behave outside social parameters. I personally find them disgusting and don't think we should give them a platform. If you are already disturbed, listening to something particularly unpleasant could give you the rationale that it is okay."[166]

A few years after the pinnacle of his time in the limelight, Eminem released a music video about the 2004 presidential election for his song titled "Mosh," which was a scathing attack against President George W. Bush and his fear mongering surrounding the War on Terror. The video starts with a parody of George W. Bush reading *My Pet Goat* to a classroom of children as a jet flies over the school and crashes into the World Trade Center. It then cuts to Eminem standing in front of a wall covered with newspaper clippings and headlines about Bush's foreknowledge of the 9/11 attacks, including the *New York Post's* famous front page headline, "Bush Knew."

Eminem roars, "Look in his eyes it's all lies!" as President Bush is shown on the screen, and then the video moves to a cardboard cutout of Osama Bin Laden on a soundstage controlled by then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney. Eminem goes on to rally dozens of people who surround the Capitol building in Washington DC and head up the stairs, pouring inside in what appears to be the beginning of a riot, when it is revealed they are all actually lining up to vote. The song itself is extremely powerful and the music video, which was produced by the *Guerilla News Network*, presented a powerfully positive message about activism and strength in numbers.

Despite this powerful and positive song, Eminem is still a pawn of the Illuminati and was promoted by the Illuminati controlled mainstream media as a role model for the youth because the vast majority of his music preaches violence, immorality, and irresponsibility. This popular and surprisingly powerful song only served as bait to attract more people to his poison since the overwhelmingly majority of his music is pure mentally enslaving mind control. In practically every one of his songs he sounds like an angry teenager screaming about being grounded by his parents and lashing out at the world in angst.

It's important to note that the key to Eminem's success was rapper and producer Dr. Dre, who is considered one of the founding fathers of gangster rap because of his membership in the group NWA (Nigga's With Attitude), and who is credited with discovering Eminem and launching his career. Dr. Dre entered into the mainstream limelight with his debut solo album *The Chronic* in 1992, which featured a pot leaf on the face of the CD. After Dr. Dre heard one of Eminem's demo tapes, he immediately gave him a record deal recognizing the marketing appeal of a white rapper from Detroit.

Some find it ironic that Dre made a career out of promoting alcohol, drugs, and thugs when his 20-year-old son Andre Young Jr., would later die of a drug overdose in 2008.[167] While some call it a tragedy, others have called it Karma or say Dr. Dre reaped what he had sowed.

I take seven (kids) from (Columbine),
stand 'em all in line
Add an AK-47, a revolver, a nine
a Mack-11 and it oughta solve the problem of mine
and that's a whole school of bullies shot up all at one time
Cause (I'mmmm) Shady, they call me as crazy
-*I'm Back*

Suge Knight

PHOTO: SUGE KNIGHT’S MUG SHOT FROM ONE OF HIS MANY ARRESTS.

While this is a book mainly about Illuminati puppets, fake gangsters and posers (nonetheless still real pieces of garbage), one man in the music industry who doesn’t need to pretend to be a gangster is Suge Knight, the founder and former CEO of Death Row Records. In the 1990s Suge was one of the most feared men in the music industry, standing 6 foot 4, weighing 265 pounds, and having a long history of violent encounters.

Suge produced albums for Tupac Shakur, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dog and other chart-topping acts, but after a series of financial and legal problems he slowly faded from popularity, occasionally making headlines for his latest run-ins with the law. He is perhaps best known for driving the car that Tupac was killed in when he became a victim of a drive-by shooting in 1996, which remains unsolved and the topic of much speculation about who killed him and why.[168]

Suge’s run-ins with the law are legendary, so here’s just a sample of his rap sheet. In 1992 he was put on probation after a weapons and assault charge and found guilty of violating that probation in 1996 for an altercation in the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas after security cameras showed him involved in another assault, resulting in him being sentenced to nine years in prison. He was released in 2001 after four years on the condition that he would not have any contact with Dr. Dre.

In December 2002, he was arrested again and did two months in jail for violating his parole by associating with known gang members.[169] The following year in June of 2003, Suge was arrested again after assaulting a parking lot attendant at a club in Los Angeles and sentenced to another ten months in prison.[170] In February 2005, police found marijuana in his car after pulling him over for an illegal U-turn and kept him in jail for a week, but the marijuana charges were dropped, most likely because his lawyers successfully argued one of his friends must have stashed the weed there without his knowledge. That same year Knight was shot in the leg during an altercation at a Miami Beach night club. He refused to cooperate with police and no one was charged with the shooting.

Knight was arrested again in Las Vegas in 2008, for aggravated assault and drug charges after allegedly assaulting Melissa Isaac, his girlfriend of three years, and brandishing a knife.[171] The charges were dropped when police could not find Melissa, who was mostly likely afraid to cooperate with authorities fearing the repercussions from Knight if she did.[172] The following year Knight was a suspect in the robbery of a record producer named Noel "Detail" Fisher after five armed men broke into his house, stole $170,000 worth of jewelry and a locked safe, allegedly claiming they were collecting a debt on behalf of Knight.[173]

In May 2013, a photo of a black BMW with the word "Illuminati" affixed in place of the BMW logo on the rear of the trunk was posted online by a girl who said her boyfriend "swears it was Suge Knight driving the car." The photo was said to have been taken in Hollywood. Others point out that the BMW was several years old and say Suge wouldn't be driving such an "old" car, and insist it was just someone who looked like Suge who was trying to be cool.

While Suge Knight may be considered a legitimate gangster thug who became wealthy in the rap game, being an Illuminati mafia gangster is something totally different. Illuminati mafia men don't get involved in fights outside clubs. They're far too sophisticated for that, but in many ways Suge is more dangerous than anyone in the Illuminati because he simply doesn't care about the consequences of his reckless actions and his repeated jail sentences have not seemed to deter him from criminal activity.

Sean "Diddy" Colmes

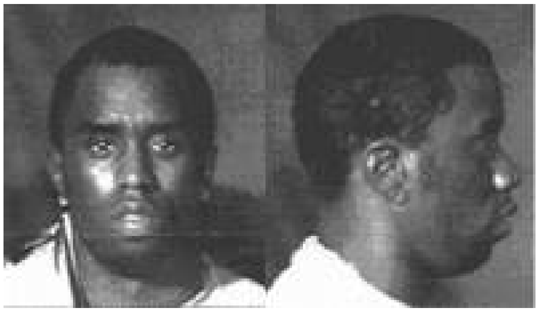

PHOTO: MUG SHOT OF SEAN COLMES, CEO OF BAD BOY RECORDS.

Sean Colmes, Puff Daddy, Puffy, P. Diddy, Diddy, Little Diddy, whatever this poser's name is these days, released a music video in 1997, for a song titled "Victory" featuring Notorious B.I.G. and Busta Rhymes. The video takes place in the "New World Order," said to be in the year 3002 AD, in a society looking like something out of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and depicts Diddy (or whatever his name is today) being chased by the police as part of a televised game show inspired by the Arnold Schwarzenegger film, *The Running Man* (1987).

This video was not really trying to warn people about the New World Order, but instead was a producer using a creative idea that Diddy was being persecuted by "the man." He is anything but persecuted by "the man," and instead during his fifteen minutes of fame, fourteen of which were done by exploiting Biggie's death, in my opinion, Diddy was a darling of the mainstream media machine who dished nothing but praise for Puffy, helping him amass a fortune of almost $600 million dollars, making him the wealthiest man in hip hop.[174]

Let's not forget that Diddy was acquitted of bribery and weapons charges stemming from a shooting incident at a Times Square nightclub in 1999, after police reportedly found a stolen gun and a secret compartment built into his SUV after they pulled his vehicle over shortly after fleeing the scene of the shooting.[175] His protégé "Shyne," was sentenced to ten years in prison for reckless endangerment and assault after the rounds he popped off inside the club allegedly struck and injured three people.[176] Diddy can thank Johnny Cochrane for getting all the charges against him dropped; the famous lawyer who helped get O.J. Simpson quitted after he was charged with murdering his ex-wife.

Lauryn Hill

Fugees
The Score

PHOTO: THE FUGEES ALBUM COVER *THE SCORE*.

Grammy Award winning female rapper and producer Lauryn Hill came on the music scene with her uplifting and socially conscious messages as a founding member of the now disbanded Fugees, along with Wyclef Jean and Pras Michel, whose 1996 album The Score is considered by many critics to be one of the best hip hop albums of the 1990s.[177] After the Fugees broke up, both she and Wyclef had successful solo careers, but Hill would later disappear from the public eye due to what she said were threats to her and her family. In 2013 she was sentenced to several months in jail for failing to pay her income taxes from 2005 to 2007, which was around a million dollars.[178] Some of her fans have claimed the conviction was in retaliation for her “conspiracy theories” about the music industry.

The previous year she had posted a message on her Tumblr account about how the music industry is “manipulated and controlled by a media protected military industrial complex.” She also said the mainstream music industry engaged in “pop culture cannibalism.”[179]

“For the past several years, I have remained what others would consider underground,” she wrote. “I did this in order to build a community of people, like-minded in their desire for freedom and the right to pursue their goals and lives without being manipulated and controlled by a media protected military industrial complex with a completely different agenda.”[180]

She went on to explain, “When I was working consistently without being affected by the interferences mentioned above, I filed and paid my taxes. This only stopped when it was necessary to withdraw from society, in order to guarantee the safety and well-being of myself and my family.”

People like Lauryn Hill who challenge the establishment or openly oppose mainstream ideologies are often labeled “conspiracy theorists,” and even mentally ill, and there is literally an official mental disorder listed in the DSM-IV-TR Manual, the official clinical manual on mental disorders, called “Oppositional Defiant Disorder,” that claims people have a mental illness if they have “a recurrent pattern of negativistic, defiant, disobedient and hostile behavior toward authority figures that persists for at least 6 months.”[181]

Many people believe Hill was targeted, harassed, and threatened because her music and her message is completely counter to the mainstream, materialist, self-destructive, soul sucking slime that is spread by the corporate controllers. Sometimes if you’re not going to play their game, unimaginable dirty tricks get pulled.

Everything is Everything
What is meant to be, will be
After winter, must come spring
Change, it comes eventually
-*Everything is Everything*

Ice Cube

ICE CUBE
EVERYTHANG'S CORRUPT

PHOTO: COVER FOR ICE CUBE'S SINGLE "EVERYTHANG'S CORRUPT."

In November 2012, just days before the presidential election, Ice Cube released a new video for his single "Everythang's Corrupt" (Get it? Every*thing* is corrupt? Every *thang*? Yeah. It's your typical ghetto speak that most rappers use, as I'm sure you're aware of.) Anyway, on the surface the video is pretty powerful and covers a lot of social issues from police brutality to political sex scandals, and even the strange mass deaths of birds and fish. When it was released it caused a wave of excitement and hope among many listeners who thought that Ice Cube was "awake" to the Illuminati, but the video was largely a publicity stunt and a one-sided attack against Republicans, because Ice Cube blindly supports President Obama.

"I don't see how anybody could believe what that man says," he told *Rolling Stone* magazine, talking about Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney just before the election.[182] *Rolling Stone* wrote, "The West Coast hip-hop luminary's new single, 'Everythang's Corrupt,' is a no-holds-barred, politically charged record that plumbs the seedy, greedy underbelly that stinks up so much of American society."[183]

In the interview, Ice Cube described himself as a "Political Head" who followed the 2012 presidential race very closely and said Obama hadn't been able to accomplish all of his goals in his first term because of a "do-nothing Congress," and said the song was largely inspired by the Occupy Wall Street Movement, the largely liberal, Obama supporting, socialist, big government demonstrators who made headlines in 2011 for camping out, or "occupying" public property while demanding a long list of absurd things from forgiving student loan debt and offering "free" tax payer funded college tuition, to insanely high minimum wages, and an endless list of government handouts.

Ice Cube made a career out of promoting violence as a founding member of the 1990s rap group NWA (Nigga's With Attitude) with their flagship single, "Fuck the Police," only to transition later into family comedies like *Are We There Yet?* and *Barbershop*. The fact that supposedly family friendly studios would cast Ice Cube as a star in their films speaks volumes about the lack of standards these studios hold.

In a perfect world Ice Cube, who has spoken favorably of the black supremacist Nation of Islam and considers himself a Muslim,[184] would be blacklisted from mainstream media and stuck working at a Seven Eleven in the ghetto, but in an Illuminati controlled entertainment industry, he has made many millions of dollars and is loved by the zombie masses.

Charly Boy

Illuminati musician allegations aren't just limited to American artists—believe it or not—a popular rap artist in Nigeria is accused of being in the Illuminati, and being gay as well. Of course popular artists in other countries such as Europe, China, Japan and more, are probably accused of using Illuminati symbolism or claiming some kind of allegiance with them, but at the time of this writing, it's mostly American stars who are swept up in the allegations.

"Last week, news spread like a hurricane about Charles Oputa popularly known as Charly Boy being a gay and the head of Illuminati in Nigeria," read the *National Mirror*, a daily newspaper in Nigeria.[185] A local pastor named Roland Macaulay made the allegations and then Charly Boy threatened to sue the paper for publishing them.[186] Charly Boy, who is 60-years-old, responded, saying, "Yesterday, I was an Illuminati member. Today, a gay, tomorrow, sleeping with a coffin and the list is endless. When will they stop these lies?"[187]

Some believe that Charly Boy and the writer of the story collaborated together as a publicity stunt for the artist, something that could very well be possible due to the attention Illuminati allegations have been receiving in the United States. He wasn't just accused of being "in" the Illuminati, he was actually said to be the "head" of the organization in Nigeria! A claim that is clearly absurd to anyone who knows anything about the subject. Nevertheless it is interesting to hear that the Illuminati allegations aren't just isolated to American musicians, but they have popped up in South Africa as well.

Tyler the Creator

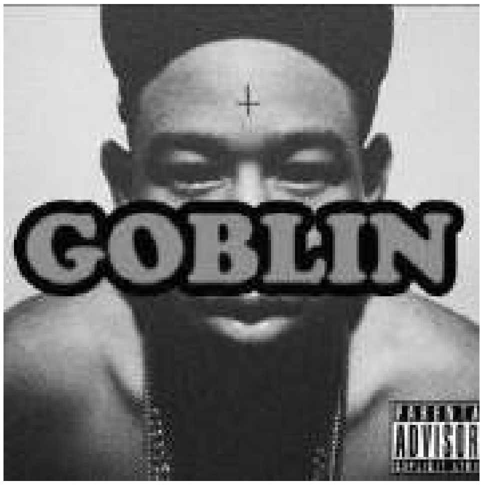

PHOTO: COVER FOR TYLER THE CREATOR'S *GOBLIN* ALBUM.

A fairly popular "shock rapper," whose lyrics are designed to be as vile as possible and include themes of rape and murder fantasies, found favor with Sony Music Entertainment and other major corporations who use their influence and infrastructure to spread his bile to the brains of the buffoons who are dumb enough to willingly listen to it. This creature's name is Tyler the Creator of the group Odd Future, who's friends with Justin Bieber of all people, despite calling himself a Christian.

This baboon is basically a black Eminem, and after his debut album *Goblin* came out in 2011, many critics gave it positive reviews. Jon Dolan from *Rolling Stone* gave the album 3 and a half, out of 5 stars, and enjoyed the "lush, left-field R&B-tinged tracks" and its "early-Eminem evil" lyrics.[188] *Allmusic.com's* David Jeffries also gave it 3 and a half out of 5 stars, saying "Tyler's production is as attractive as ever, contrasting his disgusting rhymes and gruff voice with subdued, sometimes serene beats that echo and creep."[189]

Slant Magazine awarded the album 4 and a half out of 5 stars when critic Huw Jones wrote in delight that, "Goblin could well be one of the decade's most significant releases...a masterpiece for those capable of stomaching it."[190]

Fortunately a few critics still had some common sense and slammed Tyler, because, "Eminem already did this 15 years ago," as Joshua Erret of

Now Magazine said, [191]and Randall Roberts from *The Los Angeles Times* wrote that after listening to it for a bit, “you just want Tyler the Creator to shut the hell up.”[192] MTV News once asked Tyler about rumors he and his group Odd Future were connected to the Illuminati, to which he responded, “Oh, that's cool! People think I’m in the Illuminati? That’s tight—hell yeah! That’s tight—you’ve got to be rich as fuck to be from there, or have power! That’s people implying that I’m rich as fuck and we have power—that’s tight!”[193]

Big Boi

PHOTO: BIG BOI TELLS NEW YORK'S HOT 97 HE VOTED FOR LIBERTARIAN CANDIDATE GARY JOHNSON, INSTEAD OF BARACK OBAMA IN 2012.

While Barack Obama received 93% of the African American vote in the 2012 election[194] (down from 95% in 2008 when he was first elected president)[195] and the entire rap and hip hop industry couldn't have been more proud to get "one of their own" into office, there was at least one famous rapper who did not support Obama—and that was rapper Big Boi, one half of the Grammy Award winning duo Outkast.

Big Boi and his friend Andree 3000 formed the group while still in high school and the two went on to later win six Grammies and sell over 25 million albums, making them one of the most successful hip hop duos of all time. Just after the 2012 election, Big Boi was giving an interview to New York Hot's 97 when he revealed that the day after the election a white woman at the airport congratulated him on "his win last night," referring to Barack Obama's victory over Mitt Romney, thus winning a second term; to which Big Boi responded, "Bitch, I voted for Gary Johnson"[196] (the candidate for the Libertarian Party). This came as a shock to many, and a pleasant surprise to others, who were glad Big Boi wasn't supporting Obama like so many other black musicians were, simply because he was black too.

By revealing he didn't support Obama, and instead voted for a third party candidate who became the favorite of many Ron Paul supporters after he dropped out of the race, it showed that Big Boi had a deeper knowledge of the mechanisms at work in presidential politics, leading some to believe that had discovered the invisible empire that controls both major political parties, and wanted nothing to do with either of them.

While Big Boi, at the time of this writing, hasn't spoken publicly about the Illuminati, he has followed me on Twitter for quite some time, occasionally retweeting some my tweets, which is an indication that he has some interest in the Illuminati which led him to me. Being a black rapper and publicly stating he didn't support Obama took some big balls, and Big Boi should be commended for daring to make his views known publicly, which could have been potentially damaging to his career.

Killer Mike

PHOTO: KILLER MIKE INTERVIEWED ON POWER 105.1'S *THE BREAKFAST CLUB* WHERE HE TALKED ABOUT GUN RIGHTS.

Atlanta based rapper Killer Mike did a lengthy interview with The Breakfast Club on Power 105.1 out of New York where he talked about the mainstream music industry, the Constitution, the Police State, the Patriot Act, and other Liberty issues revealing he was more informed than the average rapper about current events. When asked why he hadn't yet "made it" in the mainstream, he answered, "Eventually somebody's going to be courageous enough to play it on the radio…eventually, or not, someone on this side of the fence is going to have the confidence [to play his music] cuz it's not like my music doesn't do what it's supposed to do…whenever they want me, I'm here, but I can't pander myself and I can't allow myself to be used and abused."[197]

When the topic of guns came up during the interview, Mike stated, "I think every American can and should own a firearm," to which a bewildered host gasped, "why?"

"Because it's our right and because I've been around the world and I've seen what countries who don't have that right are like," he answered, and then highlighted that we live in Constitutional Republic, something most people don't understand.

There is an important difference between a republic and a democracy, and the United States of America was originally supposed to be a republic, which is a representative form of government where the government's power is limited by a charter or Constitution that sets boundaries which must not be violated no matter what, thus permanently protecting people's basic freedoms, protections that a majority vote cannot overrule. In a democracy, the majority rules, and there are no limitations to the powers or actions a government can take if the majority of people want them (or are tricked or coerced into wanting them). A popular analogy is that a democracy is two wolves and a sheep voting on what's for dinner. In a republic, even if the two wolves voted to eat the sheep, their two-thirds majority vote still wouldn't allow them to kill the sheep because the sheep's rights are protected by the constitution which trumps any majority vote.

As the conversation about gun violence was pressed by the host during Killer Mike's interview, he said, "If you're familiar with MK-ULTRA, if you're familiar with how governments set up to take the rights of people, you've seen all this shit happen before. I am an American. I refuse to give up the rights that were given to me in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution."

He went on, "Why is the Patriot Act in effect? Because at some point in the near or far future, this country is going to become a country in which you don't have the rights you have now. And the only thing that has ever stood in opposition to that in America is that the citizenry is armed. If you do not have an armed citizenry, you have a controlled citizenry." The top comment on the YouTube video read "Killer Mike! The only top tier rapper who defends the Constitution!"

He also talked about Big Pharma and our drugged and sedated population, saying sarcastically, "Don't work out, don't eat healthier, don't take yoga, just take a pill." At the time I'm writing this, his Twitter background is an American flag with an Illuminati All-Seeing Eye in the upper left hand corner surrounded by the stars, signifying the Illuminati owns America.

Mike owns a barbershop in Atlanta, Georgia, and plans to pursue his dream of opening over one hundred shops in the United States, primarily in black communities.[198] He entered the music scene by appearing on Outkast's Grammy-winning single "This Whole World" in 2001. It's interesting to note that Killer Mike became friends with Big Boi of Outkast in college, who, as I've previous noted, is one of the few mainstream rappers who didn't mindlessly support Barack Obama like virtually every other black entertainer in the industry did.

Talib Kwali

VLADTV
YouTube

PHOTO: TALIB KWALI SITS DOWN WITH DJ VLAD'S VLADTV TO DISCUSS THE ILLUMINATI.

Brooklyn based rapper Talib Kwali, who got national recognition for his 2002 socially conscious song "Get By," was once interviewed by DJ Vlad and asked about the Illuminati rapper rumors, where he then called them a distraction from more important issues.

"We have the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank. We have rich families that are conspiring and getting together to have one currency, to have one world order to make shit easier for them. These things are dangerous and catastrophic for millions of people—some of these decisions that these rich people make. But when you start adding a boogieman 'Oooh mysterious secret society' aspect to it, you really distract from the real issues, and you're not giving enough props and credit to show how dangerous and evil some of this shit really is."[199]

During the interview he explained how he read Bill Coopers popular book *Behold a Pale Horse* in the 1990s but later realized how inaccurate Cooper was and blamed much of the "anti-Illuminati sentiment" on what he called "right wing, conservative Christian think tanks, John Birch Society types who felt the need to demonize Freemasons and demonize these groups at the beginning of America. So, it's all religious stuff," Talib said. "The Illuminati was a real organization," he went on, "and could quite possibly be a real organization now, but the amount of power people allow it to have on their lives is based on them."[200]

While Talib Kwali may be a skilled and socially conscious rapper, his interview with DJ Vlad’s VLADTV revealed how little he knows about the John Birch Society, which was instrumental in exposing the Illuminati “insiders,” as they called them, starting in the 1960s by publishing books like Gary Allen’s *None Dare Call it Conspiracy.* Talib does, however, have a point about many of the Illuminati rapper rumors being clearly crazy and actually often do distract from tangible, real organizations and issues that society is facing.

The TV got us reaching for stars
Not the ones between Venus and Mars,
the ones that be reading for parts
-*Get By*

Jadakiss

In 2004, Jadakiss released his second album titled *Kiss of Death* which included a track titled “Why?” containing a line that set off a media firestorm and caused his song to either be pulled from the radio in many markets, or censored if it actually was played.

The line that resulted in so much controversy was, “Why did Bush knock down the towers?” referring to the World Trade Center attack on 9/11. As I’m sure you’re familiar with, many people believe the September 11th attacks in 2001 were an “inside job” and a false flag conspiracy orchestrated by elements of the US government or the Illuminati. A variety of books and films were made about this very issue, and a number of people have made headlines for either raising questions as to whether the attacks were an inside job or if they were allowed to happen on purpose as a pretext for the endless War on Terror. After hearing about Jadakiss’s song, Fox News’ Bill O’Reilly suggested that President Bush sue him for slander.

While it was, in my opinion, admirable for Jadakiss to use his art to raise the question, this is not to say that Jadakiss is a quality artist or a positive role model by any means. Quite the opposite, he is just another one of countless wannabe gangster rappers who speaks with a ghetto accent without a proper grasp of the English language, seeming to wear his ignorance as a badge of honor.

Lupe Fiasco

facebook.com/lukewearechange

PHOTO: LUPE FIASCO IS INTERVIEWED BY LUKE RUDKOWSKI OF WE ARE CHANGE ABOUT A POSSIBLE 9/11 COVER-UP.

Of course practically every black person in the entertainment industry (if not the country) saw Barack Obama as a virtual messiah for the African American people when he appeared on the scene and was placed in the Oval Office, but Lupe Fiasco didn't believe the hype. While giving an interview on CBS he called Obama "the biggest terrorist in the United States,"[201] because of his expansion of George W. Bush's War on Terror, most notably becoming the "King of the Drones," those radio controlled murder machines that have killed countless innocent civilians in the Middle East—atrocities that are censored in the American media.[202]

Lupe's comments caused quite a bit of controversy and when he was later asked by *Billboard* to clarify his statement, he responded, "I've got nothing to clarify. It's Obama and the U.S. government, every president that came before him and every president that comes after him."[203] Such statements rarely compute with the public, who are too busy watching celebrity news to know (or care) about the grave injustices that both Republican and Democrat presidents commit, each side believing that only their opposing political party violates the Constitution.

Several years earlier at the end of his set on *The Late Show with David Letterman* when Lupe performed his single "Superstar," you can clearly hear him say, "No New World Order, ya hear me."[204] Somehow, despite all this, Lupe was still invited to a 2012 inauguration party at the Hamilton in Washington DC, where he took to the stage and performed his song "Words

They Never Said," over and over again, rapping, "[Rush] Limbaugh is a racist, Glenn Beck is a racist, Gaza Strip was getting bombed, Obama didn't say shit. That's why I ain't vote for him, next one either."

The audience was stunned and eventually he was pulled off stage and the event organizers made a statement saying, "Lupe Fiasco performed at this private event, and as you may have read, he left the stage earlier than we had planned," because of what they called his "bizarrely repetitive, jarring performance that left the crowd vocally dissatisfied."[205]

General Gemineye

PHOTO: A SCENE FROM “AMBUSHED” FEATURING GENERAL GEMINEYE, PRODUCED BY DJ BALL, A SHARP CRITIQUE OF THE WAR ON TERROR.

A Vancouver, Canada rap duo named Conspirituality released a song titled “AmBUSHED” in 2009 on their debut album which contains lyrics about the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, Bohemian Grove, the Illuminati, and the Bush Administration’s war crimes. A powerful and controversial accompanying video was produced by DJ Ball that depicts men in orange Guantanamo Bay-style prison jumpsuits chasing down President Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice and other architects of the Iraq War as they run for their lives to avoid being brought to justice.

The Guantanamo Bay detention camp is a prison and interrogation facility located at the American-run Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba that was built in 2002 by the Bush Administration as a place to keep suspected terrorists without giving them a trial and essentially detaining them indefinitely without even charging them with a crime. The facility has been called a “gulag of our times” by Amnesty International and condemned by civil rights groups.[206] An estimated 800 people are being held there,[207] and for years the US government had not released the identities of all prisoners.[208]

Many of the inmates have been tortured by American military personnel, similar to the Abu Ghraib torture and prisoner abuse scandal in 2004 which was uncovered after photos were published in the press that were taken by guards who worked at the facility showing a variety of inhumane treatment and abuse.[209] The photos were taken as trophies for the guards and showed them enjoying abusing the prisoners in bizarre and disgusting ways. These were the issues addressed in the music video for “AmBUSHED” and why it depicted prisoners revolting against President Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, and others.

Conspirituality’s front man, General Gemineye, later released a music video for his solo track “Bohemian Rap City” (a play-off of Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody”), a song about the Bohemian Grove and the Illuminati activities within. The music video even features a scene where General Gemineye is shown reading my previous book, The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction.

> The cremation of care to the creation of fear
> This location is where they vacation each year
> My frustration I swear is for the whole nation to hear
> My donation to your ear is world domination is near
> -*Bohemian Rap City*

Immortal Technique

One of the more popular underground artists is Immortal Technique, a rapper whose every word is a blistering attack on the 9/11 cover-up and the War on Terror in songs like “Bin Laden” and “Cause of Death” which inundate the listener with hard facts and evidence delivered with a unique poetic power. “You think Illuminati’s just a fucking conspiracy theory?” he blasts.

Most of his songs focus on government corruption, poverty, racism, and other social issues, and while I do appreciate some of his tracks, others I’ve heard contain violent and angry messages I simply don’t care for. Immortal Technique was also very vocal in his support for the Occupy Wall Street movement which was virtually a foot soldier army of big government, liberal, Obama supporters demanding free stuff—from housing to healthcare, to college education and “living wages,” all at the expense of our nation’s tax payers.[210]

All they talk about is terrorism on television
They tell you to listen,
but they don't really tell you they mission
They funded Al-Qaeda,
and now they blame the Muslim religion
Even though Bin Laden, was a CIA tactician
They gave him billions of dollars,
and they funded his purpose
Fahrenheit 9/11, that's just scratchin' the surface
-*Bin Laden*

Paris

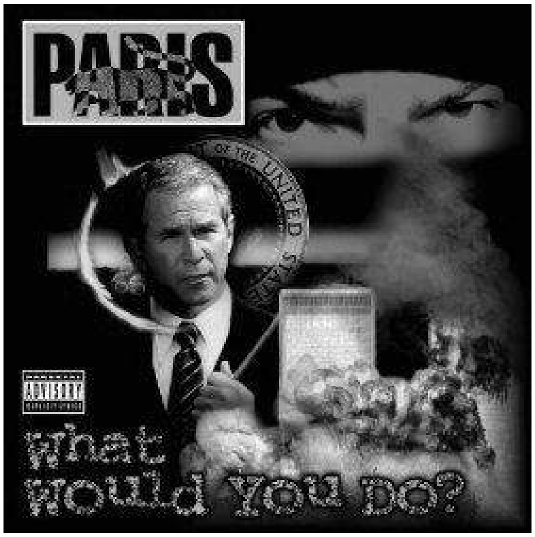

PHOTO: COVER FOR *WHAT WOULD YOU DO* BY PARIS.

A rapper named Paris on the Guerilla Funk record label has produced numerous songs about the New World Order and the Illuminati, with one of his most popular tracks titled "What Would You Do?" In the song, Paris exposes the Illuminati's agenda with the power and precision of any chart-topping single, but because the content isn't "mainstream friendly," it didn't get any airplay on the corporate controlled radio stations.

Another Bush season mean another war for profit
All in secret so the public never think to stop it
The Illuminati triple six all connected
Stolen votes they control the race and take elections
It's the Skull and Bones Freemason kill committee
See the Dragon getting' shittier in every city
-*What Would You Do?*

N.O.R.E.

In an interview with *Urban Daily*, N.O.R.E. (formerly known as Noreaga) was asked about the Illuminati hip hop rumors, and answered, “The way they’re describing it with the devil worship, that’s all fabricated and over exaggerated…But there is a certain level that you can’t get to unless you’re aware of certain things. There is a door you have to walk through and it’s on you to walk through that door. And once you walk through that door, there is no coming back.”[211]

As far as N.O.R.E.’s belief that the “devil worship” is “fabricated,” he is just showing his limited knowledge of the issue, and has most likely just seen some of the countless conspiracy YouTube videos that accuse just about every celebrity of being a Satanist or an Illuminati puppet. Anyone with a fair amount of knowledge about the Illuminati knows one of the core secrets of many occult fraternities is that high level members view Lucifer or Satan as the true God, or the source of their light and power.

Helena Blavatsky, author of *The Secret Doctrine*, a book that largely inspired Adolf Hitler’s Nazi philosophy, wrote, “Satan will now be shown, in the teaching of the Secret Doctrine, allegorized as Good, and Sacrifice, a God of Wisdom.”[212] Later in the book, she goes into detail, clearly explaining what the “Secret Doctrine” is, saying, “Lucifer is divine and terrestrial light, the ‘Holy Ghost’ and ‘Satan,’ at one and the same time, visible Space being truly filled with differentiated Breath invisibly…The Fall was the result of man’s knowledge, for his ‘eyes were opened.’ Indeed, he was taught Wisdom and the hidden knowledge by the ‘Fallen Angel’…And now it stands proven that Satan, or the Red Fiery Dragon, the ‘lord of Phosphorus’ (brimstone was a theological improvement), and Lucifer, or ‘Light-Bearer,’ is in us: it is our Mind—our tempter and Redeemer, our intelligent liberator and Savior from pure animalism…Without this quickening spirit, or human Mind or soul, there would be no difference between man and beast.”[213]

33rd degree Freemason Manly P. Hall echoes these views in *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, writing, “The serpent is true to the principle of wisdom, for it tempts man to the knowledge of himself. Therefore the knowledge of self resulted from man’s disobedience to the Demiurgus, Jehovah.”[214]

New Age Illuminati guru Alice Bailey admitted point blank in her famous book *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* that when the “Hierarchy’s” plans are complete, the ruler of planet earth will be Lucifer.[215]

Die Antwoord

PHOTO: DIE ANTWOORD'S VIDEO "FATTY BOOM BOOM" DEPICTS SEVERAL FAMOUS POP STARS AS BEING PART OF AN "EVIL THING."

A bizarre South African rap-rave group that got some attention in the United States for a brief period of time is Die Antwoord (Afrikaans for 'The Answer'), and while their brand of music is quite disturbing and unappealing, it is noteworthy that they produced a music video depicting Lady Gaga getting mauled by a lion! The video for "Fatty Boom Boom" also shows Gaga, along with Kanye West, Pitbull, Nicki Minaj and Akon as heads of a monster with the words "Evil Thing" written above it.

What happened to all the cool rappers
from back in the day?
Now all these rappers sound exactly the same
It's like one big inbred fuck-fest
-Fatty Boom Boom

Hopsin

PHOTO: HOPSIN IN HIS VIDEO “ILL MIND OF HOPSIN 5” WHERE HE WARNS KIDS ABOUT GOING DOWN THE WRONG PATH.

Popular rappers who are against drug and alcohol abuse is practically an oxymoron, but sometimes there are rare exceptions to the rule. One of those is Hopsin, who realizes the influence he has over his young fans and includes empowering messages in his music denouncing irresponsible sexual behaviors, drug use, and the culture of prideful ignorance that has taken over hip hop.

He wasn’t always dedicated to spreading a positive message, but says he realized once he “made it” as a rap star and understood how much influence he had over his young fans, he had an epiphany and decided to wield his power responsibility. “I saw all these kids and they were praising me, I’ve seen it on DVD’s with Michael Jackson and Eminem, but I never actually been the guy when kids come up to me and are starstruck, and I was like wow, what the heck is going on right now?”[216]

Hopsin says he hopes to provide a positive influence so his fans can find the ladder of success, and you can’t do that, he says, if you’re heavily into drugs or drop out of school. In July 2011 he released “Ill Mind of Hopsin 4,” which includes a verse dissing Tyler the Creator of Odd Future, the scumbag known for his violent and perverted “shock rap” lyrics. The video for “Ill Mind of Hopsin 5” shows Hopsin basically lecturing a group of teenagers about blowing off their education, smoking too much weed, and sleeping around. The entire video takes place in what looks to be a typical teenager’s bedroom that’s covered with posters of celebrities and black lights.

Hopsin credits God with awakening him to reality and has become very spiritual, saying, “It may seem corny because we’ve been brainwashed to think that it’s corny. When you think about somebody giving their life to God, you’re like ‘aw man, he’s gone now, he ain’t the same guy.’ No, if God really does exist, if he is the creator of this whole Universe, and this world, what’s wrong with that? What’s wrong with glorifying the God who created the Earth?”[217]

Do you even have any goals?
Aside from bagging these hoes
And packing a bowl
Well let me guess, NO!
-*Ill Mind of Hopsin 5*

MC Hammer

PHOTO: MC HAMMER BAPTIZES "JAY-Z" IN HIS VIDEO "BETTER RUN, RUN" AFTER THE 1980S SUPERSTAR CALLS OUT THE SUPERSTAR FOR DEALING WITH THE DEVIL.

If you grew up in the late 1980s or early 1990s, you are undoubtedly familiar with MC Hammer's hit "U Can't Touch This," and his trademark parachute pants. Many people consider MC Hammer a quintessential one-hit wonder, and after shooting to superstardom, his time in the limelight soon faded like so many others before him.

After his rap career came to a crawl and all but ended, he became an ordained minister and launched a television ministry show on the Trinity Broadcasting Network titled MC Hammer and Friends to speak about his Christian faith. "MC," he said, now stood for Man of Christ.

Years later, having caught wind of the Illuminati epidemic in rap and hip-hop, Hammer released a song and music video titled "Better Run Run," that called out Jay-Z as a Devil worshiper and the entire track was essentially a Jay-Z diss. The music video featured a figure representing Jay-Z running from the Devil and concluded with MC Hammer baptizing him to cleanse him of his demons.

I could see it in his eyes, the boy sold his soul
Devil said I'ma give you the world
I'll take it, plus give me a girl

Mr Devil can you give me a sign
He said ‘Throw the Roc up, that’s one of mine’
-*Better Run, Run*

KRS-One

One of the old school rappers who represents the art form for what it was before it became hijacked and perverted by Illuminati media companies is KRS-One, a name that stands for Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over Nearly Everyone—a dude who's been in the rap game since 1984.

After over twenty years representing what hip hop was meant to be, KRS-One was given the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008 by BET, acknowledging his quality contributions to music, as well as his personal efforts to improve people's lives though his Stop the Violence Movement, which he started in 1998.

KRS-One has been very vocal on issues such as poverty, violence, education, and war, and was featured on the remix of Immortal Technique's song "Bin Laden," which blames the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks on the Bush Administration. KRS-One was one of the featured speakers at a benefit in New York City for the first responders of the 9/11 attacks, many of whom are sick or have died from breathing the toxic air during rescue efforts—air that Christie Whitman, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at the time, lied about when saying it was safe to breath.[218] The fundraiser was organized by Luke Rudkowski and his organization We Are Change.[219]

The rapper also appeared in *The Obama Deception*, a popular 2009 film produced by Alex Jones from Infowars.com, where he said, "Barack is like the manager of Burger King. All presidents are, including Bush. It's like this: when your fries are cold, your burger's not done right, you go back to Burger King/'America' or your 'Government,' and you say, 'My burger's cold! I want new fries!' First, you go to the cashier. That's the 'courts.' You argue to the courts. The courts if you can't get justice with the cashier, you say 'Let me see the manager! I wanna go to the Supreme Court! I wanna see the President!' The manager comes out. 'Hi. What can I do for you?' Now the manager can override the decisions of the cashier, but you never get to see the franchise owner of Burger King. If you really have a problem with your burger, you need to go see the franchise owner! We need to go to the top... or to the bottom. We need to go to where the real architecture of government is, and it's not in a president! It's in a global scheme!"[220]

So add KRS-One to the very short list of black entertainers who saw through the Obama hype, and who wasn’t jumping for joy just because a man with the same skin color moved into the White House. The 1990s rock band Sublime paid tribute to KRS-One in a song by the same name, where singer Bradly Nowell praised the rapper for his enlightening and educational music.

> Because he’s droppin’, droppin’, droppin’ science,
> droppin’ history
> With a whole leap of style and intelligency
> Yes, I know
> I know because of KRS-ONE
> Yeah, and I know
> I know because of KRS-ONE
> -*KRS One*, by Sublime

Bizzle

A Christian rapper named Bizzle has produced several quality “diss” songs aimed at Jay-Z and his apparent adoration for the Devil, and surprisingly, Bizzle actually has some skills and sounds like a pro. The rapper, whose motto is “God Over Money,” has produced several quality tracks and professional music videos calling out other rappers for their use of Illuminati and Satanic imagery in their acts and their overall destructive messages.

In an interview with Hip Hop Wired, Bizzle was asked what his goal was regarding his music, to which he answered, “I just want to reach people for the Lord. There are a lot of people in the hood right now who love the Lord with all their heart, but when you grow up in the hood your perception of love is different. So I think it’s just showing people who grew up like me God’s way of loving us so that we can see His will for our lives and become better as a people and know that we can get better because that is God’s intention for us all.”[221]

He continued, “Also I think that my music is drawing a line, because there are people out there who listen to Odd Future, who are Christian, and hear him [Tyler the Creator] totally dissing God but because they like his music they dismiss it. So in a way, it’s forcing you to make a decision, because we are not taking these negative things personal. I know we have a lot going on in our lives, but we have to focus on the real objective which is Jesus Christ.”[222]

While Christian rap may seem to be an oxymoron at first with most Christian rappers not packing the punch listeners have come to expect from rap music, Bizzle is certainly in a league of his own, and shows that a Christian rapper can produce quality music that doesn’t have the typical “cheesiness” associated with Christian rap.

Nigga just claim what you is
I’m hearing you a Mason
So explain the pyramids that
You sit on the stage
I know about you and the law of Thelema
Know about Crowley and the cult you believe in
Is it just in my mind or is it you’re blind to the

Roc-a-wear designs, symbolism and signs

-*Got Some Explaining To Do*

Saigon

One socially conscious “anti-Illuminati” rapper had his debut album shelved by Atlantic Records because the corporate giant allegedly didn’t like the message that the rapper was sending out and tried to make him change his image. Saigon explained, “They signed me knowing the kind of music I was making, but then they try and change the direction.”[223]

When he wouldn’t go along with their plan for him and change his tune, that’s when he says the problems began, ultimately delaying his debut album for years. “They held me for six years, and it got to the point, I begged them to let me go and make a living. They said they would rather hold me and shelve me until I was nothing. They are paper gangsters and contract thugs.”[224]

While his album was being held up he earned money from doing shows and even appeared as himself in the popular TV show *Entourage*. “Atlantic didn’t care if I lived or died, they just didn’t want to see me succeed. They invested in me and I didn’t do what they wanted, so they shelved me,” Saigon claimed.[225]

He posted a message on his MySpace page saying Atlantic Records didn’t want to release his album because he was a “real artist,” not a “jingle writer” and claimed that they only cared about making money and not the content of the music.[226] One of the main producers connected to his Atlantic Record deal was Justin Smith (known in the industry as Just Blaze), who is best known for producing songs for Jay-Z and other elite artists.

Finally after years of legal battles, Saigon’s lawyers were able to get him released from his contract and retain the rights to his album, *The Greatest Story Never Told*, which was finally released in 2011 through Suburban Noize Records, an independent label run by Kottonmouth Kings vocalist Brad Xavier.

Saigon became a rapper in prison after he was locked up for shooting someone at a bar in the 1990s, and credits his incarceration for helping him see the light. He says a fellow prisoner named Hakim helped him see the error of his ways through battle rapping. He was released from prison in the year 2000 and was determined to achieve his goal of getting a record contract. Atlantic Records probably saw him as an appealing act at first because of his “rep” and prison stint, knowing this would make him more marketable to the mainstream music consumers, but they misjudged the rapper, who instead of embracing and bragging about his criminal past, learned from it and changed his ways.

Talking about the meaning of his second album, *The Greatest Story Never Told: Bread and Circuses*, he said, "It's a Roman ideology about public control and how to divert the public from the real issues. Bread and circuses is food and entertainment, so you keep their belly filled and keep them entertained, and you can do whatever you want really. I feel like that's how the world works right now."[227]

When asked by hip hop news website *Baller Status* about the Illuminati, he explained, "Everybody knows the Illuminati is real and secret societies exist. The New World Order is real…If someone has a revolutionary mindset, they aren't going to let that person accumulate that much money. They want people who are just going to floss and go on vacation. Let someone like me get that much money and you would see a whole different situation."[228]

In the interview, Saigon made it clear that he knows what it takes to become a successful mainstream rapper these days, but won't compromise his values to become a part of that machine. "I have to say the truth, even though I know what sells and what doesn't. If I was pushing death and destruction, I would be a lot more popular than I am now. All the popular rappers push death, destruction, sex and pimping. They get corporate sponsorships and now hip-hop is one big commercial."[229]

How right he is. Mainstream hip hop basically is one giant commercial—a commercial for Satanism and the biggest satanic stars are endorsed by soda companies, major brands, and an entire web of interconnected corporate partnerships.

BET:Black Entertainment Television

PHOTO: THE LOGO FOR BET: BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION.

Black Entertainment Television (BET), as you may know, is a major cable television channel owned by media giant Viacom that is the most prominent “African American” cable channel in the world, getting pumped into more than 90 million homes.[230] The channel was created in 1980 by Robert L. Johnson, and serves largely to perpetuate negative African American stereotypes and promote mainstream rap music. The network has been repeatedly criticized by non-brainwashed blacks, including Reverend Delman L. Coates, Public Enemy’s Chuck D and filmmaker Spike Lee, who see the channel for the trash can that it is.

Robert L. Johnson, the network’s creator, became the first African American billionaire when he sold BET to Viacom in 2001.[231] That’s right. He became the first black billionaire in America, years before Oprah Winfrey. In a 2010 interview, co-founder Sheila Johnson, who made over a billion dollars with her husband (before their divorce) when they sold the network to Viacom, said she is now “ashamed” of what BET has become. “I don’t watch it. I suggest to my kids that they don’t watch it,” she said. “When we started BET, it was going to be the Ebony magazine on television. We had public affairs programming. We had news...I had a show called Teen Summit—we had a large variety of programming, but the problem is that then the video revolution started up... And then something started happening, and I didn’t like it at all. And I remember during those days we would sit up and watch these videos and decide which ones were going on and which ones were not. We got a lot of backlash from recording artists...and we had to start showing them.”[232]

Even though it's geared for black people, the channel didn't even cover the funeral of Martin Luther King Jr.'s wife, Coretta Scott King, in 2006, and while CNN, Fox News Channel, MSNBC, the Black Family Channel, and TV One [another channel geared for black people] all aired live coverage of Coretta Scott King's funeral, BET aired its regularly scheduled programming of mindless music videos.[233]

In an episode of the Boondocks, a comedy cartoon for adults on the Cartoon Network, Martin Luther King Jr. was once depicted as if he was still alive today and gave a speech lambasting "niggas," and called Black Entertainment Television the worst thing he had ever seen in his life. "I know some of you don't want to hear me say that word. It's the ugliest word in the English language, but that's what I see now—niggas," his character said.[234] Al Sharpton demanded the Cartoon Network pull the episode and apologize, claiming it desecrated Martin Luther King's image, but the network defended the show because of its thought provoking satire. Al Sharpton, the race-baiting extraordinaire, does anything he can to get his name in the news, often pretending to be outraged over issues he can use to weasel his way into the spotlight time and time again.

BET functions to keep its audience mentally enslaved, or "on the plantation," as many blacks say, and follows perfectly in line with what George Orwell warned about in Nineteen Eighty-Four, where he wrote, "Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbors, films, football, beer, and above all, gambling filled up the horizon of their minds. To keep them in control was not difficult…All that was required of them was a primitive patriotism which could be appealed to whenever it was necessary to make them accept longer working hours or shorter rations. And when they become discontented, as they sometimes did, their discontentment led nowhere, because being without general ideas, they could only focus it on petty specific grievances."[235]

Orwell explained, "All the beliefs, habits, tastes, emotions, mental attitudes that characterize our time are really designed to sustain the mystique of the Party and prevent the true nature of present-day society from being perceived."[236]

In other words, the garbage aired on BET keeps people occupied and entertained with mindless nonsense, preventing them from actually contemplating or even being aware of issues and events that actually matter. "Left to themselves," Orwell said, "they will continue from generation to generation and from century to century, working, breeding, and dying, not only without any impulse to rebel, but without the power of grasping that the world could be other than it is.”[237]

Pop Music

We have come to expect satanic imagery and socially destructive themes in heavy metal, rock and roll, and in recent years it's become fairly well known that rappers have also pushed Illuminati and satanic propaganda—but female pop stars and teen idols doing it is something totally new. These pop stars I'm speaking of aren't fringe "Goth chicks" or singers from rebellious female heavy metal or rock bands, but instead are household names held up as role models and idols by their legions of largely preteen fans. These singing strippers and satanic skanks spew their sick songs into the minds of millions of impressionable children who practically mimic their every move.

Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the Bavarian Illuminati, who organized and modernized the goals and operations of the corrupted ancient Mystery Schools, wrote, "There is no way of influencing men so powerfully as by means of the women. These should therefore be our chief study; we should insinuate ourselves into their good opinion, give them hints of emancipation from the tyranny of public opinion, and of standing up for themselves; it will be an immense relief to their enslaved minds to be freed from any one bond of restraint, and it will fire them the more, and cause them to work for us with zeal, without knowing that they do so; for they will only be indulging their own desire of personal admiration."[238]

Today's Illuminati posing female pop stars appear on morning talk shows like *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, and afternoon shows like *Ellen*, not to mention they're regular fixtures on MTV and appear in countless commercials for beauty products and high fructose corn syrup flavored water—known as "soda" to most people—the cavity causing crap in a can that's basically a staple in most American's diets.[239]

These same pop stars are the people preaching perverted messages to young girls and teaching them to be dumb, drunk sluts, and deceiving them into believing they have nothing to offer the world other than what's between their legs. Nicole Sherzinge, former lead singer of the Pussycat Dolls, admitted, "To make it, you really have to sell your soul to the devil."[240]

They don't call Hollywood the city of broken dreams for nothing, because the industry preys on people so desperate for fame that they will do literally anything for a chance to be in the limelight. In a revealing interview on *Inside the Actors Studio* about why he stepped out of the limelight at the height of his career, Dave Chapelle called the entire Hollywood environment "sick." Let's now take a look at some of the most famous female artists in the world, and see how they too have obviously sold their souls to Satan and become pushers of some of the most putrid propaganda the world has ever seen.

Beyoncé

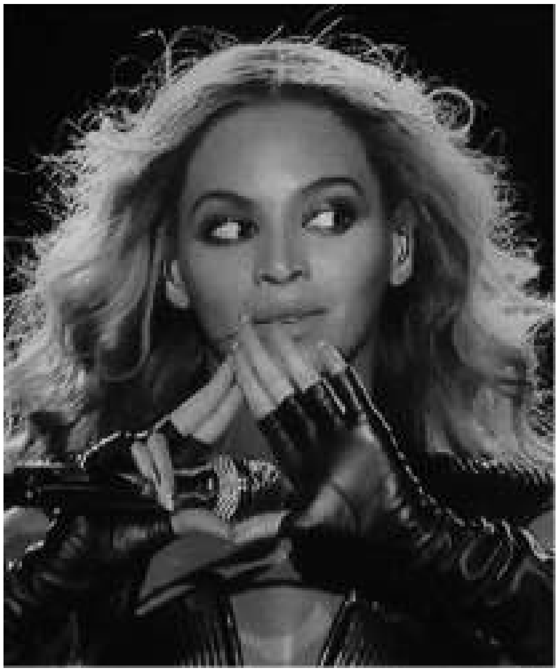

PHOTO: THE CBS NFL SUPER BOWL HALF TIME SHOW IN FEBRUARY 2013, WHERE BEYONCÉ MADE THIS MYSTERIOUS HAND SIGN DURING HER PERFORMANCE.

Beyoncé Knowles (known simply as Beyoncé) rose to superstardom as the lead singer of the girl group Destiny's Child, and later broke away for a solo career and hooked up with Jay-Z, marrying him in 2008, after he proposed with a five million dollar engagement ring.[241]

Beyoncé and Jay-Z were ranked the most powerful couple in TIME magazine's 100 most influential people list in 2006, and the two stayed on the list for years, even landing Jay-Z on the cover of the magazine in 2013.[242] Forbes ranked them as the highest earning couple in Hollywood in 2009, estimating their income for the year at $162 million,[243]and the following year they topped the list again, pulling in $122 million.[244] In

January 2012, Beyoncé gave birth to their daughter, named Blue Ivy Carter, sparking numerous rumors about the baby's name possibly holding a secret Illuminati meaning.[245] One popular allegation was that Ivy stood for Illuminati's Very Youngest, a pretty ridiculous claim, but perhaps not as ridiculous as naming your child "Blue!"

Let's take a look at Beyoncé's dark transformation from an innocent singing sweetie pie, to an Illuminati symbol spewing witch, culminating in her 2013 Super Bowl Halftime performance where she flashed Jay-Z's trademark "Illuminati" gesture to the camera by joining her index fingers and thumbs into a triangle for a brief moment. My YouTube video about this event received over one million views and "Beyoncé Illuminati" trended on Twitter and Yahoo, indicating many people were becoming privy to such symbols.

Beyoncé's descent into the dark side appears to be directly related to her relationship with Jay-Z, who many people believe exposed her to the Secret Doctrine. For example, the once sweet and innocent Beyoncé is "killed" by Jay-Z in a fiery explosion in her "Crazy in Love" music video, which shows Jay-Z purposely starting the fire that blows up Beyoncé's car as she's trapped inside, and then her alter ego "Sasha Fierce" is born and rises out of the ashes, popping back on screen dancing next to Jay-Z. The scene appears to be a deliberate symbolic "killing off" of the old Beyoncé, and depicts the birth of "Sasha Fierce," her strange and satanic looking alter ego.

Beyoncé then appeared on stage at the 2007 BET Awards dressed as a robot depicting "Sasha Fierce" that looked identical to the satanic robot in the popular 1927 German film Metropolis, a classic movie about a wealthy ruling elite and the poor underclass slaves who must work tirelessly to support the lifestyle of their masters. Not long after that, Beyoncé performed at the 2010 Grammies along with dozens of dancers dressed in police riot gear that escorted her on stage and then joined in her performance. The bit was designed to make police in riot gear seem sexy and cool, and served to promote the Police State America was becoming as a result of the War on Terror and our shrinking liberties.

Following her Grammy performance came the biggest moment in her career when Beyoncé headlined the Super Bowl Halftime Show in February of 2013, the biggest gig for any performer, where she threw up Jay-Z's triangle Illuminati-looking hand sign, sparking headlines around the world. Yahoo Sports covered the wave of rumors and online comments about the gesture,[246] Glenn Beck's news outlet The Blaze published an article on the speculation,[247] and James Manning, an outspoken African American pastor, ranted about "Beyoncé the booty shaker" and called her a "witch."[248]

If the hand sign is just a diamond and symbol of Roc-A-Fella records, then why does Jay-Z always look through it with one eye? He and Beyoncé surely must know that an eye inside a triangle is a Masonic and Illuminati symbol, yet they continue to use it on a regular basis.

After her halftime performance, a TMZ videographer caught up with music mogul Russell Simmons and asked him about the Beyoncé Illuminati rumors, to which he answered, "Everybody who works hard, looks inside themselves, finds strength, creates something special—the president, Jay-Z, you know, who ever does well—whoever realizes their potential—it makes people who don't work or don't have faith or confidence or courage to be good or be great to point the finger, and they gotta say, this nigga—homes is down with the Devil."[249] When the paparazzi then asked him if he believed in the Illuminati he replied, "Are you fucking kidding me? I'm a grown man, of course not."[250]

Simmons' Def Jam Records has signed such scumbag artists as Rick Ross, Rihanna, Lady Gaga and other mainstream stars. In 2004, Russell Simons bought Jay-Z's Roc-A-Fella Records for $10 million dollars and made Jay-Z the CEO.[251] Simmons personal net worth has been estimated to be around $340 million dollars,[252] making him one of the richest men in hip hop.

What makes Beyoncé's transformation from a sweetheart to a Baphomet bottom feeding bimbo even more disappointing is the fact that the name of her girl’s group “Destiny’s Child” was chosen by her mother while she was reading the Bible after the two words jumped out at her and she felt it was a sign from God as to the name for her daughter’s group.[253]

Rihanna

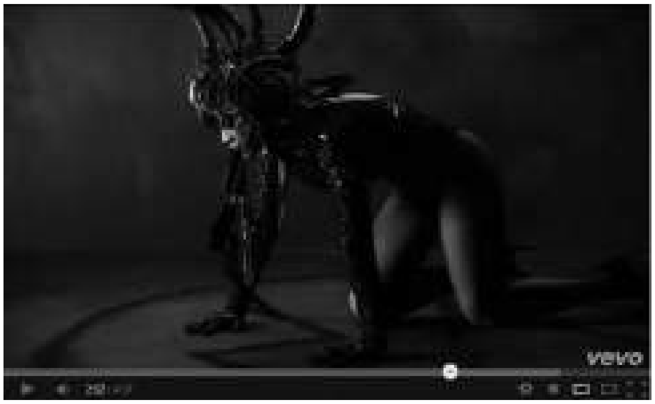

PHOTO: RIHANNA'S MUSIC VIDEO "ROCK STAR," WHERE SHE APPEARS TO BE DANCING ON THE FLOOR INSIDE AN OCCULT SYMBOL, WHILE WEARING HORNS ON HER HEAD.

Singer and pop star "Rihanna" (whose real name is Robyn Rihanna Fenty) became one of the most popular stars in the world after signing a record deal with Def Jam records after auditioning for Jay-Z. *Forbes* reported she earned $53 million dollars in just one year[254] and *Time* magazine has also ranked her one of the most influential celebrities in the world.[255] She has also, unfortunately, become one of the most infamous "Illuminati puppets" in the music industry.

Rihanna had a clean image for her first two albums, and then in 2007 she took a turn for the worse with her third album *Good Girl Gone Bad*, clearly announcing her metamorphosis to a more demonic singer, and it was all downhill from there, ultimately leading her to embrace the title of "Illuminati Princess."

In her songs, music videos, and through social media, she has promoted sadomasochism, doing drugs, and some even say suicide because of her song “Russian Roulette,” where she sings to “Take the gun, and count to three, I’m sweating now, moving slow, no time to think, my turn to go.” Because she was discovered and had her image crafted by Jay-Z, this should come as no surprise.

For example, in her music video for “Rock Star” she is shown in one scene dancing on the floor on her hands and knees inside a circle containing two intersecting triangles while wearing what many say are “devil horns” or a Baphomet headdress. The circle painted on the floor looks similar to a satanic pentagram, which is often drawn on the floor and used in black magic rituals. Why would anyone wear what looks to be devil horns and dance inside what looks to be an occult symbol painted on the floor unless they were trying to convey the message that they were some kind of black magic practitioning witch? How could this scene be interpreted any other way?

In another one of her videos, titled “S&M” (short for sadomasochism) it shows Rihanna tied up in latex bondage looking like she’s, in my opinion, about to get gangbanged on a dirty mattress by a bunch of dudes under a wall of Big Brother cameras watching the whole thing. This is the kind of satanic and skanky behavior the Illuminati want your children to mimic and the kind of girl they want them to look up to.

Another scene from “S&M” shows a headline scrolling past the screen reading “Princess of the Illuminati.” Rihanna’s Illuminati affiliations seem to go on and on with events like her performance on *American Idol* where she appeared on stage inside a pyramid,[256] and the cover art for her single “Diamonds” includes a human skull. The song features Kanye West who raps a line about the Illuminati and high society.

Rihanna’s infamous on-again-off-again boyfriend, R&B singer Chris Brown, best known for beating the crap out of her in a brutal assault before of the 2009 Grammies, launched an Illuminati-looking clothing line in 2012 called Black Pyramid, which features—you guessed it—a black pyramid as the logo. Perhaps Chris Brown is yet another Illuminati poser or trying to cash in on the Illuminati infestation happening in hip-hop, or perhaps he was trying to impress Rihanna, the “Illuminati Princess,” with his own Illuminati associations.

Brown said of his fashion venture, “The black pyramid label is basically an unknown art. We really haven’t mastered the art of making a pyramid ourselves, like the ancient ones, so it’s kinda like an unknown art. So I think my painting, my designs, whatever I do fashion wise is unknown to a lot of people”[257] In 2012 Chris Brown tweeted out a photo showing off his new tattoo of a snake shedding its skin, and instead of a rattle at the end of the snake’s tail, it had an Illuminati All-Seeing Eye within a triangle. The tattoo is enormous, taking up virtually one third of the singer’s back.

Nicki Minaj

PHOTO: NICKI MINAJ PERFORMS HER SONG “ROMAN HOLLIDAY” AT THE 54TH ANNUAL GRAMMY AWARDS IN FEBRUARY 2012 ON CBS.

One of the biggest bottom feeders in the industry is Nicki Minaj, a stage name short for *minajatwa*, meaning “Nicki Threesome,” who came on the scene after getting signed to Lil Wayne’s label, Young Money Entertainment. Like other Baphomet bimbos, she’s done a Pepsi commercial pimping out their product to the pathetic Pavlovian soda slurping suckers who will be more inclined to drink the garbage since she promotes it. This vocal virus was also included in the 2012 Super Bowl Halftime Show featuring Madonna, which was more like an elaborate Illuminati ritual than a halftime show. This ghoul has also appeared in living rooms across the country as a judge on *American Idol*, the show where more Americans cast their votes than in a presidential election.[258]

While Nicki “Threesome” Minaj is adored by little girls around the world, the content of her music couldn’t be more demonic. In fact, she claims to be possessed by an evil spirit of a little boy named Roman Zolanski, who may be named after Roman *Polanski*, the director of *Rosemarie’s Baby*, an atrocious film about Satan raping a woman in order to impregnate her with the antichrist. Roman Polanski, the film's director, was charged with the statutory rape of a 13-year-old girl (when he was 45) and fled the country to avoid prison time,[259] yet is still loved by the Hollywood elite, even winning several Oscars and Golden Globe Awards.[260] Is Nicki Minaj's alter ego "Roman Zolanski" named after Roman Polanski? Many believe the answer is yes.

At the 2012 Grammies, Nicki "Three-way" performed her song "Roman Holiday" in a skit so bizarre it left much of the audience wondering what they had just watched. Earlier she had arrived at the Grammys dressed as a demonic nun escorted by an old man dressed as a priest. The name of her song "Roman Holiday" also has sinister meanings, referring to "a time of debauchery or of sadistic enjoyment."[261] Just a sample of the lyrics go like this: "I'm a bad bitch, I'm a cunt and I'll kick that hoe, punt. Forced trauma, blunt. You play the back, bitch, I'm in the front."

Talk show host Ellen DeGeneres (often called Ellen *Degenerate* by her critics) once had two little girls on her show, Sofia Grace (age eight) and her cousin Rosie (age five), who Ellen proudly introduced as Nicki's biggest fans, and then surprised them by bringing Nicki "Minajatwa" on the show to meet them. "I want your new album," one of the girls screamed as she jumped up and down in delight.[262] The brain dead audience was so moved, many of them were in tears—not crying because Ellen introduced this demon to these poor misguided children, but because they were so happy that she did. The songs contain such filth that only a grossly irresponsible or demented parent would dare expose their daughters to her.

Nicki's image seems specifically designed to appeal to children because her persona and style is that of a living doll, and she has made several suggestions that she's bisexual as well, which she later admitted were just attempts to get attention.[263] Of course she's in an industry of phonies and frauds but the one thing that's not a mirage is that Nicki Minaj is dirtier than a garage but still the zombies applause.

Ok first things first I’ll eat your brains
Then I’ma start rocking gold teeth and fangs
Cause that’s what a muthafucking monster do
-*Monster*

Lady Gaga

One of the first female pop stars to be accused of supposed ties to the Illuminati is Lady Gaga, who appeared on the scene in 2008 with her bisexual themed single “Poker Face,” a song about being in the company of a man, but fantasizing she was with a woman instead, hence having to use her “poker face” so the guy wouldn’t think something was wrong.[264] Lady Gaga (or Lady Caca or Lady Gag Me, as I like to call her) was basically a reincarnation of the 1980s Madonna and did just about anything for attention, including wearing her infamous “meat dress” to the 2010 *MTV Video Music Awards*.

Gaga is often photographed wearing costumes using All-Seeing Eye symbolism and has been a very vocal supporter of homosexuality and admitted to Barbara Walters that she has had sex with women and is bisexual.[265] Her 2011 song “Born This Way” was described as an anthem for the gay community, and in a *Saturday Night Live* skit she sung about banging two guys at the same time.[266] While on the *Jimmy Kimmel Show* she told a story about recording songs on her tour bus and how she “swore to Lucifer” that she would kill her crew if they couldn’t make the equipment work properly.[267] She refers to her fans as “monsters” or “little monsters,” which is actually an appropriate title for the lost and decadent souls who support Gaga.

Gaga revealed to Howard Stern that in her early twenties, before she became famous, she would lock herself inside her New York apartment and snort cocaine all alone while playing the piano and writing music, calling the drug her “friend.”[268]

Like many people who have sold their soul for mainstream success, she is haunted by nightmares, something that few other stars will talk about. She told *Rolling Stone* magazine, “I have this recurring dream sometimes where there’s a phantom in my home. He takes me into a room, and there’s a blond girl with ropes tied to all four of her limbs. And she’s got my shoes on from the Grammys. Go figure—psycho. And the ropes are pulling her apart.”[269]

She continued, “I never see her get pulled apart, but I just watch her whimper, and then the phantom says to me, ‘If you want me to stop hurting her and if you want your family to be OK, you will cut your wrist.’ And I think that he has his own, like, crazy wrist-cutting device. And he has this honey in, like, Tupperware, and it looks like sweet-and-sour sauce with a lot of MSG from New York. Just bizarre. And he wants me to pour the honey into the wound, and then put cream over it and a gauze."[270]

She stated in the interview that her mom said it was an Illuminati ritual and that she decided to incorporate it into her shows, because, "A lot of the work I do is an exorcism for the fans but also for myself."[271]

She once simulated her own death on stage during a performance of her song "Paparazzi" at the *MTV Video Music Awards*, and after staying in the luxury Intercontinental Hotel in London, several maids reportedly found what looked like blood covering the entire bathtub, leading one housekeeper to claim Gaga was "bathing in blood as a Satanic ritual."[272]

One maid said after she reported the incident to the concierge they told her to "put it out of her mind." Another worker claimed, "All of the hotel's staff are convinced she was bathing in it or, at the very least, using it as part of one of her new costumes or weird stage routines."[273]

Lady Gaga also hoped to display actual dead bodies on stage during her concerts and reached out to the creators of the Body Worlds exhibit which featured actual human bodies in various states of dissection to show the muscle structures for scientific study. Gaga apparently thought adding actual human corpses as decorations would be something cool to include at her concerts.[274] After word spread about her morbid dead body dreams and many people expressing their disgust, she quietly abandoned the idea.

At one point in time, Lady Gaga held the world record for the most Twitter followers[275] with over 39 million morons following the creature,[276] sadly showing the extraordinarily high number of idiots who are interested in this evil Illuminati icon. The fact that this clown-faced freak is adored by so many people is a reflection of our sick and satanic society that simply swallows whatever the mainstream is selling and believes it's creative and cool.

Kesha

PHOTO: KESHA IN HER MUSIC VIDEO “DIE YOUNG’ DANCING IN FRONT OF A PENTAGRAM ON THE WALL INSIDE OF A CHURCH.

One of the most blatant satanic singing serpents who—in my opinion—looks like a heroine addicted, herpes infested hooker from hell, high on crystal meth, is Kesha (styled with a dollar sign as Ke$ha)—a trailer trash looking tramp with no talent, who is her generation’s token white trash witch of the music industry—whose stench has spread around the world into the minds of millions.

Kesha, whose mother reportedly doesn’t know who fathered this creature,[277] has made Aleister Crowley proud by promoting Satanism to her 25 million Facebook fans, many of whom are impressionable preteen girls. I don’t even know where to start with this sewage smelling scoundrel because she’s done so many bizarre things it’s hard to keep up with them all.

To begin with, she drinks blood out of a heart on stage and drips it all over her face and chest;[278] she drank her own urine on her MTV show My Crazy Beautiful Life;[279] she has posted pictures of herself wearing satanic pentagram jewelry on her Facebook page; she asked her fans to send her their teeth which she then used to make a bra and head dress out of the one thousand teeth she received from her deranged fans[280] (which she calls Animals); she claims to have had sex with a demon or a ghost;[281] she wore an upside down crucifix on her leotard when performing live on The Today Show—while at the same time her backup dancers had Illuminati All-

Seeing Eyes incorporated into their costumes;[282] in her video for "Die Young" she and her friends have an orgy inside a church after she arrives in a hearse that has the word "evil" written on the back;[283] she sings about serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer and cannibalism; she took dozens of pictures of guys' penises as a condition before allowing them on her tour bus to meet her and hang out;[284] she encourages one night stands (even has a song titled "Booty Call"); and that's just a sample of what this trash can contains.

Kesha is a perfect example of what the Illuminati wants your little girls to grow up to be like. She's a Jack Daniel's guzzling, blood drinking bimbo who doesn't have a care in the world about anyone or anything other than getting wasted, getting laid, and getting rich.

This witch has tossed condoms to her fans that feature her face on the wrappers, and said "I knew everything about sex before I was even seven. My mom left me at home when I was 14 with a credit card, and a box of condoms and the keys to the car."[285] Sounds like she had a very irresponsible mother, and the rotten apple didn't fall too far from the tree.

While talking with Ryan Seacrest on his KISS FM radio show, Kesha revealed her album Warrior was the result of a recent spiritual journey she took, and that, "The theme of this record is magic. I went on a spirit journey by myself, no security guard, no managers. I just went around the world and lived on a boat…I went diving with great white sharks, and just went on this crazy spirit quest…It's about experiences with the supernatural… but in a sexy way…I had a couple of experiences with the supernatural."[286]

One of these "experiences" she says, includes having sex with a ghost. "I don't know his name! He was a ghost! I'm very open to it…There are so many weird topics on this record…from having sexy time with a ghost to getting hypnotized and going into past lives. I just really wanted the theme of this record to be the magic of life."[287]

Kesha, more than any other pop star, took her satanic symbolism to a new level by posting upside down pentagrams on Facebook and including the images seen in her music videos, leaving no question as to her spiritual beliefs. What's even more disturbing is that mainstream shows like The Today Show, Nickelodeon's Kids Choice Awards, Ellen, and countless others promote her with a smile as if she's the girl next door.

I don't really care where you live at
Just turn around, boy, let me hit that
Don't be a little bitch with your chit chat

Just show me where your dick at
-*Blah, Blah, Blah*

Miley Cyrus

PHOTO: MILEY CYRUS AT THE MTV VIDEO MUSIC AWARDS IN 2013.

Another child star turned “Disney Devil” is Miley Cyrus, who desperately tried to destroy her family friendly “Hanna Montana” image while launching her post-Disney singing career with what she hoped to be an anthem for teenage rebellion. Her music video “We Can’t Stop” was so over-the-top that many fans commented they “Miss the old Miley” and the video received nearly a 50% thumbs down rating on YouTube.

In the video, a butch looking Miley is shown fondling herself as she sings about “waiting in line at the bathroom, trying to get a line in the bathroom” referring to what appears to be a reference about snorting cocaine as is known to happen fairly frequently in the bathroom at parties and clubs. There is an admitted drug reference at another point in the song when she sings about “Dancing with Molly,” a slang term for partying on MDMA, the active ingredient in ecstasy. The song’s producer initially denied that’s what she was saying, insisting the lyric is “dancing with Miley,” but a few weeks later Miley admitted, in fact, she was singing about ecstasy. “If you’re aged ten [the lyric is] Miley. If you know what I’m talking about then you know. I just wanted it to be played on the radio and they’ve already had to edit it so much,” she said, adding, “I don’t think people have a hard time understanding that I’ve grown up. You can Google me and you know what I’m up to—you know what the lyric is saying.”[288]

There’s also a line about how “we can screw who we want,” referring to casual sex.[289] The video also reveals Miley has a tattoo of an All-Seeing

Eye on one of her fingers, and the entire video appears to be a group of teenagers partying in a house while their parents are gone.

Miley “Virus,” as I call her, made headlines around the world after her 2013 MTV VMA performance where she had her hair made up into what looked like devil horns and put on a performance so crude it even shocked many of the celebrities in the audience. She was fondling herself, twerking with Robin Thicke, and kept sticking her tongue out and making faces like a ravenous dog. To make it even worse, her backup dancers were dressed as teddy bears in what appeared to be an attempt to appeal to small children from her Hannah Montana fan base.

Miley “Virus” is a coming of age mess, and a butch-looking blabbermouth bimbo whose rebellious streak is painful for many of her fans who are disappointed to see her turn her back on the family friendly “Hannah Montana” they knew and loved.

Justin Bieber

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM: JUSTIN BIEBER'S "EYE BELIEVE" TATTOO.

Believe it or not, the seemingly squeaky-clean teen idol Justin Bieber is also linked to Illuminati allegations. Bieber came onto the global stage looking like an anorexic, estrogen overdosed, emaciated feminine pop star with the voice of a 12-year-old girl in 2010, and became one of the most famous performers in the world.

At the time of this writing he's still a teen, smoking pot, drinking underage, and speeding around town in his fancy cars, but his music is fairly innocent compared to others, although that's likely to change in the future when he'll probably try to make a controversial comeback after his limelight fades, reinventing himself like so many child stars do, trying to shed the family friendly image that propelled them to become a pop star in the first place.

Part of his early attempts to break away from his child star image have been getting some "ink" including a strange owl tattoo on his forearm that looks an awful lot like the mascot of the Bohemian Grove, the secretive men's club where the superclass hang out every July for off-the-record Lakeside Talks and perform their annual Cremation of Care human sacrifice ritual where a life-size effigy of a person is burned on an alter in front of a 40-foot tall statue.

At a Victoria Secret fashion show he was asked about his owl tattoo and what it means, and he reluctantly answered, "Um…it means a lot of different things, but, uhh, it’s what’s important to me, I don’t think—it’s not really for other people to really know about.”[290]

It’s interesting that shortly before he got his owl tattoo he was admiring a tattoo on the forearm of a British television host on BBC Radio 1 and Bieber asked him if he was a member of the Illuminati. It appears he may have been inspired by the host’s “Illuminati” tattoo, and then decided to get one for himself. The following year he got another bizarre tattoo, this time of a huge eye on the inner crease of his elbow, and in the caption on the Instagram photo he posted, he said it was his mom’s eye and that she’s “always watching.” Very odd, indeed.

Time will tell if Justin Bieber’s star will fade and if he’ll attempt to revive his career with an absurd envelope-pushing publicity stunt, or if he’ll become a victim of drug abuse under the pressure of being one of the most popular stars of his time as has been the fate of so many before him.

Madonna

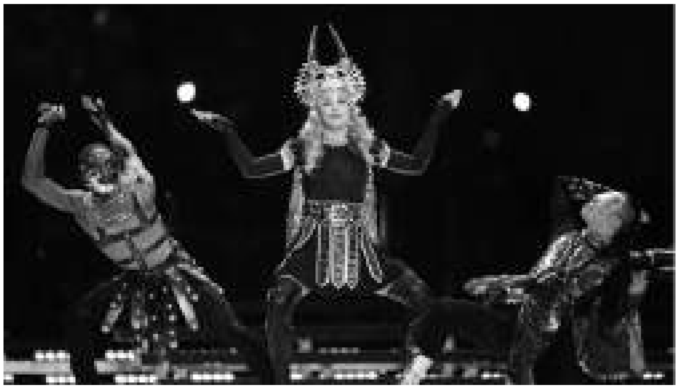

PHOTO: MADONNA PERFORMS DURING THE NBC NFL SUPER BOWL HALFTIME SHOW IN 2012.

The “Material Girl” Madonna burst onto the scene in the 1980s with her bleach blonde hair and bold sexual themed songs, securing her a virtual lifetime membership in the limelight of the entertainment industry’s hall of fame. As the 1980s and 90s passed, Madonna was replaced by newer, younger stars like Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera, but Madonna never really went away, and occasionally reared her aging head from time to time and is always welcomed by the media and her dedicated fans.

Over the decades she made headlines for various controversies from Christianity bashing, to her involvement with the Kabbalah, a form of Jewish mysticism often associated with the Illuminati, and later in life while in her mid-50s she was still prancing around on stage dressed like a 20-year-old, even pulling down her pants and flashing her granny butt to audiences,[291] apparently not realizing the 1980s had long since passed.

Madonna appeared in center stage again when she headlined the halftime show of the 2012 Super Bowl, where her act was more like an elaborate Illuminati ritual, than a musical performance. It was a bizarre Egyptian themed showcase that cast her as the high queen, wearing a crown with devil horns coming out of it. The performance was so strange that Illuminati rumors began circulating on the Internet in record number, with many viewers unfamiliar with the Illuminati or occult symbolism even wondering what they had just witnessed, sensing something was wrong and feeling the unusual performance held some secret meaning.

There was plenty of sun symbolism and religious pageantry throughout the performance, and at the time, it was the biggest Super Bowl halftime show in history and introduced Madonna to a whole new generation of people who didn't really know anything about her from her heydays back in the 80s.

In a post-performance interview about the show, she was seen wearing skull and crossbones earrings, adding to the controversy, and sparking even more Illuminati rumors by people believing the jewelry was a veiled shout-out to her Illuminati masters since they were the same symbol as the infamous Skull and Bones society, founded back in 1832 as the American branch of the Illuminati by William Huntington Russell after he returned from Europe with authority to expand the Illuminati's influence in America.

Several years earlier when Janet Jackson had her "wardrobe malfunction" causing her bare breast to be revealed to the millions watching, Janet was wearing an Illuminati sun symbol nipple ring, causing some to think the whole "wardrobe malfunction" claim was a cover story for a purposefully designed stunt aimed at showing nudity to the record live audience.[292]

In the meantime, Madonna is apparently desperately searching for the fountain youth as she continues to age, trying to maintain the image she built her entire career upon. It has even been claimed that she sleeps with her body covered in anti-wrinkle cream while wearing a plastic body suit to keep the cream from soiling her bed sheets, allegedly in hopes of preventing wrinkles.[293] Knowing just how far many celebrities are willing to go in hopes of preserving their pretty past, nothing these narcissists do should surprise you.

Madonna is also the celebrity face of Kabbalah, which is a Jewish esoteric mystic philosophy claiming to contain the elite secrets of our true nature and power as humans and teaches people how to allegedly connect with the Divine and elevate themselves to higher levels of consciousness, power, and success. Madonna is at the top of a long list of celebrities who have publicly supported the controversial Kabbalah Center in Los Angeles, which is dedicated to promoting these occult ideas. The center, which is a tax exempt organization, has been labeled a religion for profit by critics and it was once investigated by the IRS for financial mismanagement.[294]

Ashton Kutcher, Demi Moore, Lucy Liu, Anthony Kiedis of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones, Britney Spears, Paris

Hilton, and many more have all dabbled in Kabbalah for a while at one point or another, but Madonna seems to have stuck with it for the long run. Madonna has proudly worn a red string bracelet and other Kabbalah symbols, and even quit putting on concerts on Friday nights because of Shabbat, the Jewish day of rest similar to the Sabbath, which begins at sunset on Friday night and is observed until Saturday night.

She kicked off her 2012 MDNA tour in Tel Aviv, Israel and described it as “the journey of a soul from darkness to light.” She named her album (and tour) after MDMA, the active chemical in the drug ecstasy, as an attempt to be trendy and cool by appealing to all the pill popping partiers she wants to dance to her music. She erased all doubt about promoting the club drug when she addressed the crowd at the Ultra Music Festival in Miami, asking, “How many people in this crowd have seen Molly?”[295] Molly, of course, the slang term for ecstasy or MDMA.

Popular DJ and producer Deadmau5 blasted Madonna for blatantly promoting the drug. “Very classy there Madonna. HAS ANYONE SEEN MOLLY??? Such a great message for the young music lovers at ultra. Quite the philanthropist. But hey, at least your HIP AND TRENDY!”[296]

When she was promoting the album on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, she admitted again, it was named after ecstasy. Jay asked her point black what the title meant, and she said, “Well, you’ve heard of this drug that produces euphoric feelings of love, MDMA. Have you ever tried it?” An uncomfortable Jay Leno replied “no, I haven’t,” and then moved on to his next question.[297]

Christina Aguilera

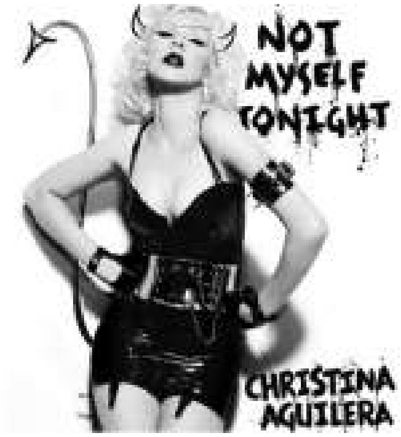

PHOTO: THE COVER FOR CHRISTIANA AGUILERA'S SINGLE "NOT MYSELF TONIGHT," SHOWING HER WITH DEVIL HORNS AND A DEVIL'S TAIL.

Say it ain't so! Christina Aguilera is an Illuminati puppet too? Unfortunately—yes, and an obvious promoter of Satanism and debauchery as well. The former Mickey Mouse Club member came onto the music scene in 1999 with her hit "Genie in a Bottle," and instantly became a star—not only because of her cute looks—but because she has such an amazing voice which makes it especially heartbreaking to have to include her in the list of stupid singing skanks spreading Satanism.

Trying to shed her innocent girl next door image, she appeared onstage at the 2003 MTV Video Music Awards French kissing both Madonna and Britney Spears in a publicity stunt that made headlines around the world. But this would pale in comparison to the depths that she would sink to in the coming years when she started using Satanic imagery on her album covers, in her music videos, and even releasing a perfume named "Red Sin."

After four years without releasing an album she attempted to make a comeback in 2011 using bondage, sadomasochism and Satanism as her headline grabbing gimmick with her music video "Not Myself Tonight." The theme of the song and music video is that she's doing all kinds of crazy things as she has liberated herself from the social constraints of what society considers decent and normal. For example, she appears in the music video tied up and wearing a ball gag and other sadomasochistic gear; she crawls on the ground on all fours and eats from a doggie bowl, and if that’s not bad enough, she and her friends are depicted having an orgy inside a Church which she then firebombs with a Molotov cocktail when they’re done![298] The cover art for the single shows her with Devil horns and a Devil tail.

I’m kissing all the boys and girls
Someone call the doctor cuz I lost my mind
Cuz I'm doing things that I normally won’t do
The old me’s gone I feel brand new
And if you don’t like it, fuck you
-*Not Myself Tonight*

Katy Perry

PHOTO: SCREEN SHOT FROM KATY PERRY'S HIT "I KISSED A GIRL."

Katy Perry burst onto the national music scene in 2008 with her hit single "I Kissed a Girl," a bisexual fantasy themed song that instantly secured her spot as an American idol, a song which was then sung by little girls around the world as they were introduced to the idea of sexually experimenting with their girlfriends by the newest rotten role model in music. Years earlier, in 2001, she had released a Christian gospel album, but when her career never took off, she had a dramatic change of tune. "I swear, I wanted to be like the Amy Grant of music, but it didn't work out, so I sold my soul to the devil," she candidly explained in an interview.[299]

She had found a new formula for success and it worked like a charm. Instead of being a one hit wonder and fading away within a few months, Katy Perry was able to secure a long term career in the mainstream (urine stream) music business, later marrying British shock comedian Russell Brand, a former heroin addict, in a Hindu ceremony in Rajasthan, India—a marriage that only lasted barely a year.[300]

Katy's father, who is a pastor at a Pentecostal church in Southern California, appealed to his congregation once asking them to please pray for his daughter, calling her a "Devil child" because she built her career by allowing herself to be pimped out, so to speak, by the entertainment industry.[301] Sesame Street, the popular children's program, pulled a segment from the show featuring Katy Perry after she showed up on set wearing what was described as too risqué of an outfit with her boobs popping out.[302] How on earth a producer from Sesame Street could have even considered her for the show is a whole other issue. Perhaps the producer was purposefully trying to introduce the “I kissed a girl” singer to young and impressionable children in order to further corrupt society and break down the family.

This “Devil child” proudly promoted Barack Obama for president, helping spread his false promises and Orwellian agenda to her fans and squeezed into a skin tight “Obama dress” for a performance just before the 2012 election, a dress that featured Obama’s symbols and campaign slogans.[303]

Some of her fans point to her 2012 song “Wide Awake” as a signal the singer has woken up about her evil deeds and was plotting a new course, but the song was most likely just another catchy tune designed for mainstream appeal using the generic theme of “waking up” since such a term had become popular. The writing credit lists Katy Perry and three, yes three other people who collaborated together to write the song.[304]

Most music listeners are unaware that mainstream musicians are largely “performers” who perform songs that are purchased by their record label with the goal of having it resonate with a large audience. The “artists” are literally vocal actors and actresses singing from a script as if the songs come from their own heart.

It’s also extremely strange that despite being in her late twenties, Katy Perry has the demeanor and conversation skills of a child. It’s as if she has never emotionally matured, and it may be interesting to note that her real name is actually Katy Hudson,[305] a name she stopped using after her failed gospel career when she reinvented herself catering to the corporate media monopoly knowing her new bisexual “I kissed a girl” gimmick would be accepted with open arms.

Ciara

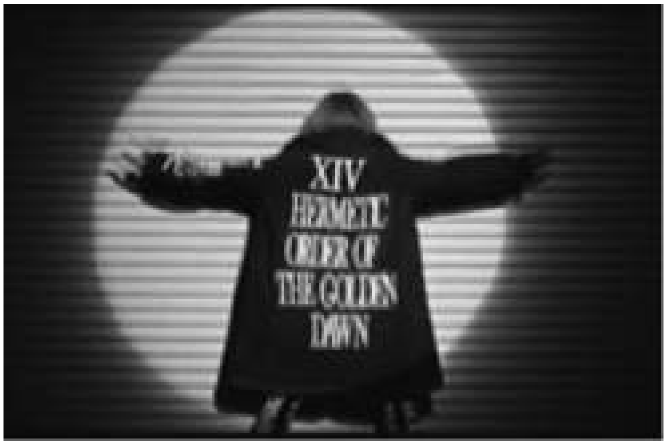

PHOTO: CIARA IN A SNIPPET OF “SUPER TURNT UP” WEARING A HERMETIC ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN JACKET.

A singer and wannabe actress who got a taste of fame for a brief moment is Ciara Harris, known to some simply as Ciara, an attractive black girl who had a music video of hers play on MTV for a few months and then quickly faded away under the shadow of the industry’s already favorite token black female artists, Beyoncé and Rihanna.

After several years of trying to keep her career afloat by performing small shows at little known venues, Ciara and her management team seemed to come up with a plan hoping to get her some headlines again, and by now I’m sure you can guess what their scheme was—become an Illuminati sellout too.

Adding a slight twist to the typical Illuminati posing, Ciara appeared in the previews of her music video “Super Turnt Up” and “Keep on Looking,” wearing boots with “The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn” written prominently on them, a 19th century secret society popularized by Satanist Aleister Crowley. The Golden Dawn supposedly taught members secret methods to communicate with what they called the “secret chiefs” who were said to be ascended masters living in another dimension who taught members the divine mysteries of the Universe.

Just around the same time Ciara’s official YouTube channel posted teasers of her new music videos showing her in Golden Dawn regalia, she was photographed at an event wearing a Baphomet-looking blouse, in what can only be seen as a blatant cry for attention following in the footsteps of other artists who have adorned themselves with this same occult image.

Justin Timberlake

PHOTO: JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE'S VIDEO "MIRRORS" SHOWS A MYSTERIOUS ALL-SEEING EYE IN THE BACKGROUND.

Rising to superstardom in the 1990s as a member of the boy band 'N Sync, and later launching a successful solo career, Justin Timberlake slipped a little Illuminati symbolism in his music video "Mirrors," a song on his 2013 album *The 20/20 Experience*, of which he collaborated with Jay-Z on, who also joined him on tour. During his dealings with Jay-Z, did he convince Timberlake to slip in some subtle Illuminati symbolism in his video? Many people believe that is the case. Perhaps Timberlake, who sounds like he's had his testicles removed, wanted to get people talking about his new album and hoped he could jump on the Illuminati bandwagon too.

It's interesting to note that Timberlake's career was started by a convicted conman, Lou Pearlman, who was sent to prison for duping people out of an estimated $300 million dollars.[306] Pearlman was the man behind numerous multi-million dollar boy bands, including 'N Sync, the Backstreet Boys and O-Town—after becoming fascinated with the success of the New Kids On The Block and hatching his scheme and throwing his hat in the boy band ring.

Boy bands are a very strange and disturbing phenomenon in music, because in many cases the band members aren't "boys," but instead are grown men in their 30s, who sing love songs to their audience of predominantly preteen girls, pointing at them in the crowd and blowing them kisses. In one of 'N Sync's hit songs in the 1990s, Timberlake urged his listeners not to pay attention to Jerusalem or Bible prophesies, but instead just live for right now and not to worry about the consequences of your actions.

We don’t need all these prophecies
Telling us what’s a sign, what’s a sign
Cause paranoia ain’t the way to live your life from day to day
So leave your doubts and your fears behind
Don’t be afraid at all
Cause up in outer space there’s no gravity to fall
-*Space Cowboy*

Jennifer Love Hewitt

While numerous celebrities endure an array of salacious gossip, harsh criticism, and even Illuminati accusations, one mentally unstable woman took conspiracy theories way too far and began harassing Jennifer Love Hewitt, stalking her, making death threats, and even allegedly assaulting Jennifer Love Hewitt's mother! The actress, perhaps best known for her role in the *I Know What You Did Last Summer* teen slasher series, and more recently playing a prostitute in Lifetime's *The Client List*, was even tracked down and confronted at a red carpet event by her nemesis.

In 2002, the former social worker named Diane Napolis was arrested after confronting Jennifer at the Grammy awards and allegedly assaulting Hewitt's mother at a film premiere.[307] The woman accused Jennifer Love Hewitt and Steven Spielberg of using "cybertronic mind control technology" to harass her and control her thoughts, and believed they were part of a satanic conspiracy of gang stalking. The woman was charged with six felonies and then committed to a psychiatric facility.[308]

From the mid-1990s to 2000, the stalker Diane Napolis, accused various people in San Diego and San Francisco of Satanic ritual abuse against children and believed there was a powerful secret network of Satanists who abused children. Similar allegations have been made (although not accusing Jennifer Love Hewitt or Steven Spielberg of being involved) by former Senator John DeCamp, whose horrifying book *The Franklin Cover-Up* claims that a group of Satanists engaged in this type of abuse inside the Bohemian Grove in the 1980s, and even accused someone they called "Hunter Thompson" of shooting snuff films there.[309]

Many people believe this "Hunter Thompson" was a reference to Hunter S. Thompson, the famous "Gozo journalist" known for his bizarre behavior and interests. Shortly after his suicide in 2005, Thompson's former editorial assistant, Nickole Brown, published an article titled *In Memory of Hunter S. Thompson: Postcard from Louisville, Kentucky* where she talked about some of the strange behavior she observed while working for him. "For weeks he played a tape recording of a jack rabbit screaming in a trap," the article says. Brown also wrote that, "One time I watched him beat his car because his cigarettes were locked inside, and another time he threw me out of the house for refusing to watch a snuff film."[310]

A photographer named Rusty Nelson, [Russell E. Nelson], who is connected to the infamous Franklin Cover-Up child abuse scandal of the 1980s,[311] alleged that Hunter S. Thompson offered him $100,000 in 1988 to shoot a snuff film involving a child.[312] Rusty said he turned the offer down. Hunter S. Thompson's supporters insist Thompson is innocent and may have been investigating such rumors and activities for a book or featured article, and say that's how his name became connected to these conspiracies.

Lilith Fair

In 1997, several female artists got together to create Lilith Fair, an all-female music festival often called Lesbian-fest, Breast-fest, or Girlapolooza by critics who ridiculed it for its very concept. The very name for the concert series came from the Jewish legend that a woman named Lilith was actually created before Eve in Biblical times as Adam's first wife, but Lilith was said to be an evil and rebellious woman, so God later created Eve as Adam's counterpart.

In ancient Jewish and Babylonian legends, Lilith is said to be a demon, and many believe this name was chosen for the all-female festival as a way to symbolically represent their rebellion against men and the traditional gender roles that have been in place for thousands of years.

After three summers (1997 through 1999), the gang of girls abandoned their Lilith Fair concept, probably because most women didn't want to go to a concert without their boyfriend and the limited lesbian market they were appealing to couldn't financially sustain such a large

Rock and Heavy Metal

Rock and heavy metal bands have been accused of promoting Devil worship for decades, reaching a peak in the 1980s and 90s with bands like Slayer, Ozzy Osbourne and Marilyn Manson—with their outlandish antics on stage and singing songs about Satan, but this was "traditional" Satanism with pentagrams, Devil figures, and Bible bashing—quite different from invoking the Illuminati as we have seen emerge largely in rap and hip hop in recent years.

Since most people are familiar with Satanism in rock 'n' roll and heavy metal, I will only briefly touch on it in this book, highlighting some of the most blatant examples (as well as lesser known ones, but still significant instances nevertheless). I'll also cover some of the perhaps surprising examples of rock stars speaking out against the Illuminati, such as Korn's lead singer Jonathan Davis who called President Barack Obama an "Illuminati puppet," and bands like Muse, who appear to be opposed to the super class ruling elite.

Other artists such as Megadeth's front man Dave Mustaine have given interviews about the New World Order agenda, and Les Claypool of Primus even wrote a song about the infamous Bohemian Grove and the "Phantom Patriot" arrested in 2002 for breaking into their compound armed with a rifle and shotgun, planning to expose the Illuminati's elite redwood forest retreat where the ruling class meet every July to rub elbows in an informal, all-male gathering, sometimes called "Bilderberg in the woods"—a place where the Manhattan Project (the atomic bomb) was conceived, and where Ronald Regan and Richard Nixon are said to have negotiated their political futures.[313]

Korn

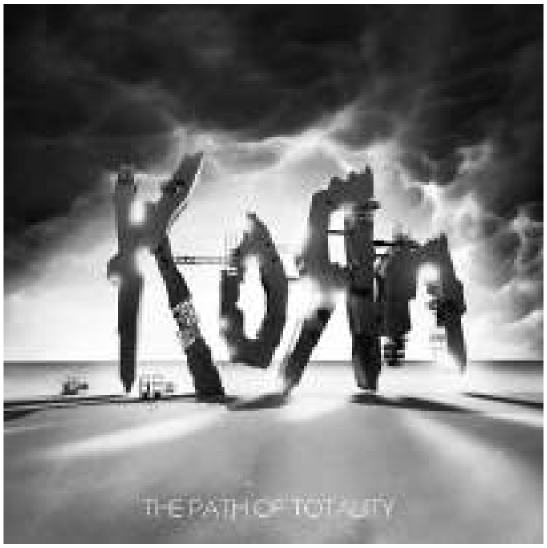

PHOTO: KORN'S ALBUM *THE PATH OF TOTALITY* INCLUDES A SONG TITLED "ILLUMINATI."

The metal band Korn (sometimes called new metal, or neo-metal) rose to fame in the 1990s with songs like "A.D.I.D.A.S." and "Follow the Leader," thanks to their unique style of combining heavy metal, rock, and grunge. Lead singer Jonathan Davis has revealed the unique meaning behind some of their songs, and admitted he has studied the Illuminati and the New World Order for some time now.

In an interview with Bilboard.com in 2011, Davis called President Barack Obama an "Illuminati puppet," and said, "He's basically dragged this country down into the worst it's ever been. Like I say about the White House, 'You've built this house of shame.' Everybody looked up at the White House and America, and now I think it's like a house of shame. I miss the old days when people were proud to be American."[314]

The band’s album The Path of Totality includes a song titled “Illuminati,” which goes, in part: Parasites, they run around
The culprits won’t be found
They lie behind this mask of wealth
They’re taking over now
Illuminati they hide While in Germany signing autographs at the Ramstein Air Base Jonathan Davis was approached by a fan and asked who he would prefer to take over as president out of the four Republican presidential candidates running in 2012, to which he responded, “Ron Paul.” The interaction was videotaped by the fan and posted on YouTube.[315]

While it is encouraging to hear that a rock star of Korn’s caliber would publically denounce Obama as an Illuminati puppet, Davis is far from being an angel himself. Many even accuse him of being a Satanist. He goes by the nickname JDevil, and at times appears to be obsessed with the darker aspects of life. Korn’s drummer Brian Welch quit the band in 2005 after becoming a Christian and wanting to focus on raising his daughter and being a good father.[316] There is no bad blood between Welch and his former bandmates, and they all appear to still be friends.

So while Jonathan Davis may not be a poster child for a squeaky clean rock star, it is admirable that he risked isolating half his audience by denouncing President Obama, particularly with the kind of language he used, slamming him with the appropriate title of “Illuminati puppet,” not to mention writing a song about how the Illuminati is bringing us all down.

Megadeth

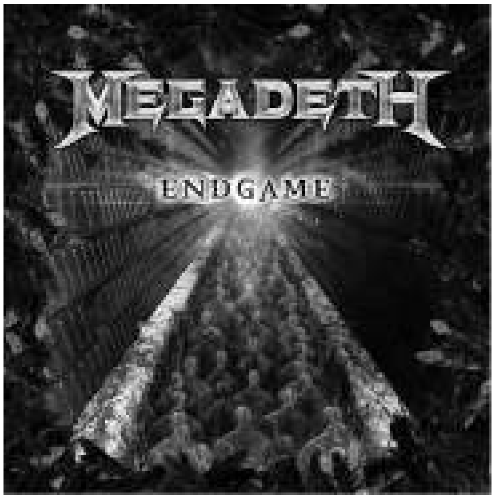

PHOTO: MEGADETH'S ALBUM COVER FOR *END GAME*.

A surface level look at Megadeth (spelled Megadeth without the "a" if you're not familiar with the band) may lead one to believe they are a typical "satanic" heavy metal band, but upon closer inspection it becomes clear that the band's primary mission is to warn people about the elite Illuminati, the New World Order, and out of control power-mad politicians.

Songs like "Symphony of Destruction" and "Foreclosure of a Dream" paint a terrifying picture of what the superclass oligarchy has been doing to mankind. Founder and lead singer Dave Mustaine has spoken publicly about his beliefs regarding the New World Order and the End Times, and has become friends with talk show host Alex Jones from Infowars.com through a mutual admiration for each other's work.

During an interview on *The Alex Jones Show*, Mustaine spoke about the Obama administration selling guns to the Mexican drug cartels, a scandal that came to be known as Operation Fast and Furious which was designed as a false flag attempting to convince the American people that Mexican drug lords were getting their guns from American gun shops, when in reality it was our own government providing the weapons in a top secret covert operation.[317] "Nobody can deny that there were criminal rogues within the administration and CBS News got the memos, Congress has the information and basically Larry Pratt of Gun Owners of America who is a highly respected person said that if they would stage Fast and Furious they'd be capable of staging anything and it was all done to blame the second amendment," Mustaine told the Alex Jones.[318]

The goal of Operation Fast and Furious was to justify stricter gun control laws in America by blaming our second amendment for the drug cartel violence south of the border by trying to convince the unsuspecting public that the source of the violence were American gun shops, when in reality, covert elements of our own government were the source of the weapons.[319]

Dave Mustaine had abused alcohol for years and become legendary in the music industry in the 1980s for his drunken disasters, leading to him getting kicked out of Metallica before his Megadeth days. Through his tough times and tribulations, Mustaine eventually became a born again Christian and began refusing to appear in concert with any bands that were overtly satanic.

Despite his surprising religious revelations, Megadeth continues to record new albums and perform to sold out shows around the world and are considered by many to be one of the greatest heavy metal bands of all time. One of their more recent songs titled "New World Order" talks about how all currency will become obsolete and that "Revelation has come to pass" and "all rights will be denied" and warns "without the mark you shall die," referring to the mark of the Beast.

Just like the Pied Piper
Led rats through the streets

We dance like marionettes,
Swaying to the Symphony...
Swaying to the Symphony...
Of Destruction
-*Symphony of Destruction*

Les Claypool

The singer of the band Primus wrote a song about the Phantom Patriot, the guy who snuck into the infamous Bohemian Grove years ago armed to the teeth with the goal of exposing what he believed were human sacrifices going on there at the hands of the Illuminati.

In January 2002, a 37-year-old man named Richard McCaslin, who called himself the Phantom Patriot, snuck into the Bohemian Grove compound, located in the northern California redwood forest, while wearing a superhero outfit and bringing with him a loaded MK-1 rifle-shotgun.[320] He had heard the allegations of human sacrifice said to occur inside, and hoped to expose this to the world.

After setting a building on fire, he was captured by police without incident and sentenced to eleven years in prison, an extended sentence because he committed a crime while wearing a bullet proof vest, which is an added charge in California.[321]

Les Claypool lives in Occidental, California, a small town right next to Bohemian Grove, and likely became familiar with the rumors and allegations surrounding this nearby retreat, and after hearing about the Phantom Patriot's attempted infiltration, Claypool was inspired to write a song about him.

Walking through the compound
With a formulated plan
There to help his fellow man
At this decisive point in time
The Bohemians at the Grove
Don't see it quite the same
Smelling danger in his game
They dub his quest a crime
-*The Phantom Patriot*

Don Henley

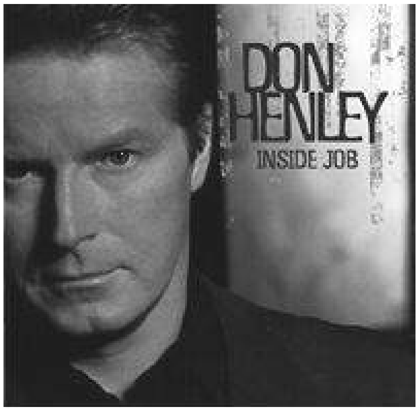

PHOTO: ALBUM COVER FOR DON HENLEY'S SINGLE "INSIDE JOB."

Singer Don Henley from the legendary rock group The Eagles released a solo album in the year 2000 titled "Inside Job" that included a song with the same title which lamented about government corruption and "inside jobs." Even though the song was recorded and released before the September 11th terrorist attacks, which many people believe were an "inside job" and a false flag attack orchestrated by the Illuminati, the song became almost an anthem for the 9/11 truth movement.

"It was an inside job by the well-connected," Henley sings, and "they know what you've had for breakfast and what you've hid beneath the mattress." The song is a powerful critique of corruption in government, which Henley says is "business as usual."

While Don Henley hasn't made any public statements about the 9/11 attacks being an inside job, he has been critical of the War on Terror, saying "We think we're civilized because we can put a man on the moon and cure some types of cancer, but we are just as primitive and backward as we ever were."[322]

"I didn't like him [Bush] when he was governor, and I don't like him now. I support the troops, but I don't support the people who sent them there [to Iraq] because it wasn't necessary."[323]

Don Henley's 1982 song "Dirty Laundry" is about the news business and how people love the thrill of watching stories about tragedies told to them by beautiful talking heads reading from a teleprompter—and even though the song is over thirty-years-old, it still rings true today.

We got the bubble-headed-bleach-blonde
Who comes on at five
She can tell you about the plane crash
With a gleam in her eye
It’s interesting when people die-
Give us dirty laundry
-*Dirty Laundry*

Ministry

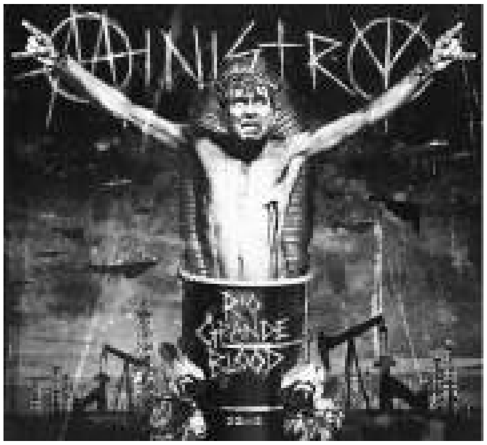

PHOTO: ALBUM COVER FOR MINISTRY'S *RIO GRANDE BLOOD.*

The cover art on Ministry's Rio Grande Blood album depicts President George W. Bush standing in a barrel of oil while making "hail Satan" el Diablo hand signs with an Illuminati All-Seeing Eye on his forehead and fighter jets and oil fields in the background. The album, released in 2006, contains several tracks denouncing the War on Terrorism and even included some references to 9/11 being an inside job.

One of the songs, "Lies Lies Lies," sampled sound bites from the narrator of the popular Internet film Loose Change, using statements like, "Do you still think that jet fuel brought down the World Trade Center?" referring to the controlled demolition hypothesis found in many 9/11 truth circles.

Muse

MUSE
THE RESISTANCE

PHOTO: ALBUM COVER FOR MUSE'S *THE RESISTANCE*.

The British rock band Muse achieved international success, particularly in America, with their 2009 album The Resistance, and their hit single "Uprising" which sounded like a battle cry against a tyrannical and out of control government. The band's singer Matt Bellamy even publicly stated that he believed 9/11 was an inside job and sometimes wore a t-shirt on stage reading "Terrorstorm," the name of Alex Jones' popular 2006 film which covers the history of false flag attacks and government staged events that have been fabricated as pretexts for military action and war.

In a 2006 interview, Bellamy said, "There was a document called 'Project For The New America Century'… which clearly says, 'We need a Pearl Harbor-level event so we can have an excuse to invade the Middle East,'" and elaborated on his suspicions 9/11 was a false flag attack orchestrated or allowed to happen by corrupt elements within the United States government.[324]

While many truth seekers and "Resistance" supporters thought they found a friend with the band Muse, after achieving international success, their tune would strangely change and Matt Bellamy began backpedaling on his previous controversial statements. It began with him expressing disappointment that many Tea Party supporters had adopted the song "Uprising" to represent their political frustrations with big government and the Obama administration. When asked about radio host Glenn Beck playing his song at a Tea Party event, Bellamy answered, "I suppose it's nice that he's a fan of the music, but I don't want people to start using our music for strange, obscure political movements."[325]

He didn't even know who Glenn Beck was and called the Tea Party "bizarre."[326] What's bizarre is the fact that the band was upset that their song was adopted by people who felt its message illustrated their frustration with the government, and it's especially bizarre considering that's the point of the song.

Bellamy would later retract his statements about the September 11th attacks being an inside job, and said his views had become "more nuanced now" and that "I don't believe that any more."[327] Bellamy bred with Hollywood royalty when he had a son in 2010 with actress Kate Hudson, daughter of Goldie Hawn, and many accuse him of changing his stance on 9/11 and the "Resistance" so he wouldn't be ostracized by the Hollywood crowd, or to prevent certain doors from being closed which would have prevented him from producing another hit album because of these views.

What's also interesting is that in 2008, the year before Muse achieved international success with their album The Resistance, they recorded a live album titled HAARP, named after the mysterious High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program in Gakona, Alaska that is believed by many to be a weather weapon or massive mind control device.[328] When asked about the album title Bellamy stated, "Some people think it's designed to tap into the ionosphere to control the weather. Others think it's there to diffuse UFO beams, or to send out microwaves to control our thoughts."[329] During the band's performances they would even bring out large antennas and satellite dishes on stage as props to make it look like the HAARP facility.[330]

As can be expected, Matt Bellamy seems to have changed his tune on HAARP as well after achieving mainstream success in America. Perhaps his handlers made it clear to him what the music monopoly corporations want from their stars if they're going to pull the strings needed to be a part of the "in crowd" in the industry.

Rise up and take the power back
It's time the, fat cats had a heart attack
You know that, their time's coming to an end
We have to, unify and watch our flag ascend
-*Uprising*

Fatboy Slim

FATBOY SLIM ILLUMINATI
FATBOY SLIM

PHOTO: ALBUM COVER FOR FATBOY SLIM'S "ILLUMINATI."

The British DJ, Fatboy Slim, produced a song titled "Illuminati" for Angelina Jolie's film Lara Croft: Tomb Raider, in which Jolie's character Lara Croft is being hunted by the Illuminati as they search for a mystical pyramid-shaped artifact that will give whoever possesses it unimaginable power over space and time. In the film, Jolie is working to discover the artifact before the Illuminati in order to prevent them from obtaining it.

Fatboy Slim's song is basically an instrumental for the film's soundtrack and just repeats the same few words at various times throughout the song. "Illuminati. A secret society do exist." Note: The lyrics actually say, "a secret society do exist," not "does exist," which is the proper grammar, and was apparently an attempt at some kind of artistic expression for the track.

System of a Down

When a cameraman from TMZ bumped into Serj Tankian, lead vocalist from System of a Down, he asked him a very unusual question. Keep in mind, TMZ cameramen are just hired paparazzi, not trained journalists who know how to conduct an interview. If you've ever seen any TMZ interviews, they usually consist of the cameraman asking the stars their opinion about the latest celebrity scandal or their current project, but this time the cameraman asked an interesting question about the Illuminati in the music industry—a topic you know by now was getting fairly popular.

Even though the paparazzi asked a pretty good question concerning the numerous allegations and conspiracy theories on the Internet about this, instead of showing Serj Tankian's answer, the video cuts away to a guy doing a voice over who says, "I'll take this one," and then some creepy music kicks in and the announcer tells a minute long story about the Illuminati in a very sarcastic and tongue-in-cheek kind of way and never actually shows what Tankian's response was.

What else can be expected from TMZ and the editor-in-chief Harvey Levin, the orally fixated celebrity suck up? While giving a speech at his alma mater the University of Chicago Law School in 2010, Harvey revealed he once had the idea for TMZ DC where he wanted to deploy paparazzi in Washington DC to interview politicians and he "almost did it," but due to what he called "some circumstances" he was prevented from doing so.[331] TMZDC.com is actually a registered domain name but leads to a page saying it's unavailable and shows it's owned by Warner Brothers.

Pink Floyd

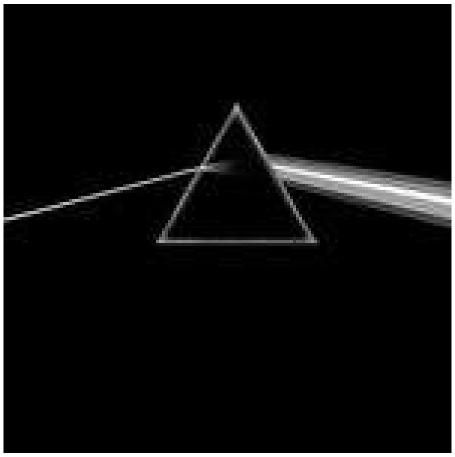

PHOTO: COVER FOR PINK FLOYD'S *DARK SIDE OF THE MOON*.

The Dark Side of the Moon is one of the bestselling albums of all time, released in 1973 and still resonating with people today, but because the album cover features a pyramid with a beam of light shining through it, Pink Floyd is sometimes accused of "being Illuminati" too. People who slap the "Illuminati" label on Pink Floyd clearly reveal their ignorance (or their paranoia) because sometimes a triangle is just a triangle.

All of the artists mentioned in this book who use triangles, pyramids, and other Illuminati affiliated symbols, do so with the intention of portraying themselves as being "in the know" or "insiders" privy to the Illuminati's power, and the content of their music (as well as their character) is clearly dark and devilish; but in the case of Pink Floyd, their use of a prism with a beam of light shining through it was simply an interesting artistic expression that some people have read way too much into.

In fact, anyone who is familiar with Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon or The Wall, most likely understands and appreciates the band's skillful articulation of the mysteries and the struggles of life, love, money, and happiness; and relates to the singer's search for answers in this reality we are all experiencing. Their music is far from sinister, and is instead—inspiring, thought provoking, and quite profound.

For example, the song "Money" is a popular tongue-in-cheek track mocking greed and mindless consumption, while "Time" serves as a warning for people to pay attention to their life and priorities, urging them to examine what they do with their time so they don’t end up wasting their life before it’s too late. The final track on The Dark Side of the Moon, titled “Eclipse,” serves as an introspection on one’s entire life, helping the listener evaluate their past actions and what their life has meant as a result of them.

> And then the one day you find
> Ten years have got behind you
> No one told you when to run
> You missed the starting gun
> -*Time*

Bono

PHOTO: BONO IN A WATER.ORG ADVERTISEMENT JOKING ABOUT BEING AT AN ILLUMINATI MEETING.

One might not expect to find *U2* front man Bono in the crosshairs of Illuminati allegations, but he brought it upon himself when he appeared in an ad for Matt Damon's Water.org charity, an organization working to bring water filtration systems to third world countries so they can have safe drinking water. In the ad when Bono is explaining the charity's mission, he said the Illuminati had come up with the plan!

"I remember when Matt first brought up the idea, it was at a meeting of the Illuminati," Bono said, trying to be funny since celebrity Illuminati allegations had become fairly well known by this time. Actress Olivia Wilde and billionaire Richard Branson also appeared in the ad and continued to crack jokes about their "secret Illuminati meeting" where Matt Damon was said to have hatched his plan to help the poor. The online backlash was apparent in the comments and the user ratings of the video, which ended up getting a two-thirds thumbed down rating and the anti-Illuminati comments just kept pouring in, one right after the other. Their attempt at Illuminati humor had failed miserably.

While the Water.org skit can simply be written off as a bad joke that backfired, a closer look into Bono's messages reveal his seeming adoration for the Devil, stemming in part by him covering the Rolling Stones' "Symphony for the Devil" during his performances, which is a song dedicated to Satan.

In the 1980s while doing a cover of the Beatles' song "Helter Skelter," Bono would wear a necklace with an upside down cross on it. *Helter Skelter* was Charles Manson's theme song, by the way, and was the term he used to describe his cult's murderous rampage. In U2's song "In God's Country," Bono declares that "I stand with the sons of Cain,"[332] the man who in Biblical times murdered his innocent brother Abel, and has become synonymous with an evil murderer ever since.

During his Zoo TV tour back in the early 1990s, Bono would appear on stage wearing Devil horns when portraying his alter ego "MacPhisto," an English Devil character he devised for part of the show.[333]

Marilyn Manson

PHOTO: MARILYN MANSON IN “DOPE SHOW,” DRESSED AS HIS USUAL FREAKISH SELF, THIS TIME WITH PROSTHETIC BREASTS.

While his fifteen minutes of fame faded away in the late 1990s, Marilyn Manson made quite an impact on his impressionable fans, encouraging their idiocy every chance he got. This creepy creature was not just portraying a character who was sick and twisted, but instead was living out his own dark fantasies while using his stage name, an amalgamation of Marilyn Monroe and Charles Manson. When one looks into the personal life of Brian Warner (his real name) it becomes clear that he is a mentally deranged demon who made millions peddling his psychosis to his psychologically sedated fans.

During the height of his fame in the late 1990s, while on stage at the *MTV Music Awards*, Manson proclaimed, “My fellow Americans—We will no longer be oppressed by the fascism of Christianity! And we will no longer be oppressed by the fascism of beauty. As I see you all sittin’ out there trying your hardest not to be ugly, trying your hardest not to fit in, trying your hardest to earn your way into Heaven, but let me ask you—Do you want to be in a place that’s filled with a bunch of assholes?”[334] A standard part of his performances was tearing pages out of a Bible and tossing them into the air.

Manson’s bizarre behavior is not just an on stage act though. He reportedly wanted to keep his girlfriend’s aborted fetus after she had an abortion,[335] and a lawsuit filed by a former band member, Stephen Bier, alleged that Manson had purchased a skeleton of a 4-year-old child from

China, masks made out of human skin from Africa, and collected Nazi memorabilia, including Adolf Hitler's coat hangers.[336]

The Columbine school shooting was one of the most infamous instances of school violence where Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold assaulted their Colorado high school in 1999, killing twelve students and one teacher, marking the beginning of a new trend of mass murder now commonly known as "school shootings." The two killers were said to be big fans of Marilyn Manson, and many people pointed to Manson's music as a possible inspiration for the killing spree.[337] What the mainstream media didn't really report on was the fact that the two killers were specifically targeting Christians in their killing spree, and witnesses reported that while pointing a gun at 17-year-old Cassie Bernall's head, one of the psychos asked, "Do you believe in God?" When she answered "yes," he shot her.[338]

While Manson denied his music and antics had any influence on the boys, he has stated that, "Music is the strongest form of magic," and he no doubt revels in being a high priest from Hell. It's amazing how musicians can deny their music has any negative consequences on certain members of their audience, while at the same time admitting their music is magical and holds a mysterious power over people. Did I mention Marylyn Manson is a card carrying member of the Church of Satan? He is. That's no joke.[339]

Ozzy Osbourne

Very briefly I'll touch on Ozzy Osbourne, one of the most popular rockers from the 1980s and 90s who has a satanic cloud hanging over his head because of his music and on stage antics which have resulted in several lawsuits by parents who accused Ozzy of encouraging their children to commit suicide.[340]

Ozzy is best known for biting the head off a dove during a meeting with executives at CBS Records in Los Angeles in his early days. He literally brought a live dove to the meeting and bit its head off and spit it out onto the table during the meeting.[341] The record executives probably loved the stunt and realized what a satanic shock rocker they had in front of them, and the stunt likely excited them about signing him even more.

Then, there was the time he bit the head off a bat while on stage during one of his performances and reportedly had to get a rabies shot because the bat bit his tongue during the incident.[342] These "head-biting" incidents were largely what "made" Ozzy, and have become legendary in the music business.

In 1985, a teenager named John McCollum committed suicide after allegedly listening to Ozzy's song "Suicide Solution," and the boy's parents then sued Ozzy claiming the song inspired the boy to kill himself with lyrics like, "Where to hide, suicide is the only way out. Don't you know what it's really about?" The lawsuit was eventually dismissed.[343]

Years later in 1991, another family sued Ozzy claiming his songs also inspired their son to kill himself.[344] This case was also dismissed. Ozzy, who is often called "the Prince of Darkness," once made reference to the infamous Satanist Aleister Crowley in a song named after him. Many people unfamiliar with the activities and writings of Crowley have no idea what the song "Mr. Crowley" is actually about. Crowley, as you should know by now from reading this book, was an infamous Satanist in the 20th century who wrote instructions for satanic rituals that include animal and human sacrifice,[345] and he is a hero for many musicians still to this day.

From 2002 to 2005 Ozzy was the star of MTV's most watched show at the time, titled *The Osbournes*, which followed his dysfunctional family's activities. He later admitted he was stoned during the entire show, which should come as no surprise if you've ever heard him speak.[346] What most of the audience didn't know, however, is that one of Sharon and Ozzy's daughters refused to participate in the show and producers had to blur her out of any family photos they showed on TV.[347] Since she wouldn't sign a release, for the sake of the show, it was as if she simply didn't exist.[348]

In the show's heyday, Ozzy was invited to the White House Correspondence Dinner as a special guest of Fox News' Van Susteren (a reported Scientologist),[349] and George W. Bush even gave him a shout out from the podium during his speech, giving the rock and roll role model the presidential stamp of approval. More recently Peter Joseph, the producer of the Communist propaganda and anti-Christian *Zeitgeist* film series, directed the music video for Ozzy's "God is Dead?" a dark and depressing song that serves to erode people's faith in God, leaving them without a spiritual or moral compass.

Mr. Crowley, what went on in your head
Mr. Crowley, did you talk with the dead
Your life style to me seemed so tragic
With the thrill of it all
You fooled all the people with magic
You waited on Satan's call
-*Mr. Crowley*

AC/DC

AC/DC
HIGHWAY TO HELL

PHOTO: AC/DC'S ALBUM COVER *HIGHWAY TO HELL.*

Considered one of the greatest artists of all time by VH1 and *Rolling Stone* magazine, AC/DC is a rock band that has spanned decades with hits like "Highway to Hell" and "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap"; songs that still get radio play today. Even though the band is basically a thing of the past, many music buffs are likely to be familiar with them, but what most people don't know about AC/DC is the band's connection to the notorious serial killer Richard Ramirez, who was nicknamed the "Night Stalker."

This is the infamous California serial killer who drew a satanic pentagram on the palm of his hand and proudly showed it off in the courtroom during his trail. He also frequently shouted "Hail Satan." Ramirez killed at least thirteen people in Los Angeles between 1984 and 1985, and some say his killing spree was inspired by an AC/DC song titled "Night Prowler," where the lyrics appear to speak of a psycho running around at night killing people.

Police reported Richard Ramirez wore an AC/DC t-shirt during his murder spree and even left an AC/DC hat at the scene of one of his crimes.[350] The Night Stalker was also a fan of Anton LaVey, the founder of the Church of Satan, and had read his *Satanic Bible*, first published in 1969. It was Anton LaVey who coined the phrase "Hail Satan," the mantra of Ramirez.

In his authorized biography titled *The Secret Life of a Satanist*, LaVey admitted that he wasn't concerned if Satanism allegedly inspired people to commit mass murder. It reads, "Anton LaVey maintains that he isn't really concerned about accusations of people killing other people in the name of Satan. He swears that each time he reads of a new killing spree, his only reaction is, 'What, 22 people? Is that all?'"[351] This authorized biography goes on to read, "There will undoubtedly be more Satanically-motivated murders and crimes in the sense that *The Satanic Bible* tells you 'You don't have to take any more shit.'"[352]

Also in the authorized biography (authorized, meaning it was approved by his estate, and written by his widow Blanch Barton) LaVey is reported to have admired a serial killer from the early 1900s named Carl Panzram, a monster who killed twenty-two people, and who claimed to have raped one thousand men. "The only way I would like to 'help' the great majority of people is the same way Carl Panzram 'reformed' people who tried to reform him. It would be most merciful to help them by relieving them of the life they seem to hate so much. People should be happy I'm not a humanitarian—or I'd probably be the most diabolical mass murderer the world has ever known," LaVey is quoted as saying[353]

In the 1980s, AC/DC's concerts and albums were faced with protests and they received a lot of bad publicity because of their alleged connection to the Night Stalker serial killer. The band has always denied their music had any influence on Ramirez.

I'm your night prowler, asleep in the day
Yes I'm your night prowler, get outta my way
Look out for the night prowler, watch out tonight
Yes I'm your night prowler, when you turn out the light
I'm your night prowler, break down your door
I'm your night prowler, crawling across your floor
I'm the night prowler, make a mess of you, yes I will
-*Night Prowler*

Insane Clown Posse

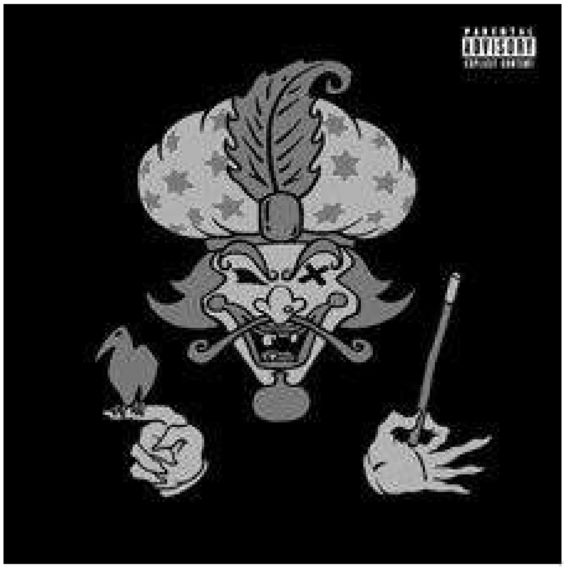

PHOTO: ALBUM COVER FOR INSANE CLOWN POSSE'S
THE GREAT MILENKO.

The Detroit shock rock/gangster rap group Insane Clown Posse, who always appear on stage in clown makeup, are known not only for their violent and twisted lyrics, but also for their cult-like following of deranged and dedicated fans. The group's style is called horror core, because of the horror themes found in most of their songs. ICP fans, called Juggalos, often attend concerts with their faces pained up like the group's frontmen Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope, and have gained a reputation, as *Spin Magazine* points out, for their "obscenity" and their "stupidity."[354]

Of course violent and reckless people are attracted to violent music, but ICP fans seem to be in a league of their own, and the Juggalos were labeled a gang in 2011 by the FBI in their *National Gang Threat Assessment (NGTA)* report, which states, "The Juggalos, a loosely-organized hybrid gang, are rapidly expanding into many US communities. Although recognized as a gang in only four states, many Juggalos subsets exhibit gang-like behavior and engage in criminal activity and violence. Law enforcement officials in at least 21 states have identified criminal Juggalo subsets, according to NGIC [National Gang Intelligence Center] reporting."[355]

It went on to read, “Most crimes committed by Juggalos are sporadic, disorganized, individualistic, and often involve simple assault, personal drug use and possession, petty theft, and vandalism. However, open source reporting suggests that a small number of Juggalos are forming more organized subsets and engaging in more gang-like criminal activity, such as felony assaults, thefts, robberies, and drug sales. Social networking websites are a popular conveyance for Juggalo sub-culture to communicate and expand.”[356]

In 2013 the clowns (no pun intended) in ICP jumped on the secret society fad, shooting a video for their song “Forever” inside a Masonic temple. In a brief behind the scenes sneak peak, Violent J starts by saying, “Here’s what’s real special. We’re at the ultra-mysterious Masonic temple.” Shaggy 2 Dope, the other dope in this deranged duo, then says, “Just from what I’ve seen, there’s sacrificial rooms up in this piece, mad catacombs in the basement...” Violent J’s older brother, named “Jumpsteady,” pipes in saying, “I don’t even want to tell you about the Chamber of Reflections, that’s an ultra-secret…” to which Violent J cuts him off pretending he wasn’t supposed to mention it, saying, “Why did you just put that on tape, you’re going to get us killed.”[357]

Since the Freemasons and Illuminati have become a part of pop culture and known for their alleged dark power, ICP figured they too would throw their hat in the ring (albeit a bit late compared to most other musicians), and claim some connection to the esoteric fraternity to further their “evil” personas. In reality, ICP are just opportunistic rapping shock jocks in face paint performing horror core music, mainly to an audience of misguided teenagers who are rebelling against their parents and society in the most juvenile ways imaginable.

I’m hating sluts
Shoot them in the face, step back and itch my nuts
Unless I’m in the sack
Cuz I fuck so hard it’ll break their back
-*Psychopathic*

Woodstock 99

In 1999, concert promoters brought back the Woodstock music festival trying to emulate the famous event from the summer of ‘69, only this time the festival was cut short because of violence, rapes, and fires started by an out of control audience.[358] The chaos began after Limp Bizkit front man Fred Durst took the stage to perform their hit “Break Stuff” and announced to the crowd, “It’s time to reach down deep inside and take all that negative energy and let that shit out of your fucking system.”[359]

Almost immediately, the crowd began dismantling vendors’ booths, setting fires, and virtually rioting, sending dozens of people to the hospital. 500 police officers were sent in wearing riot gear to calm the raging crowd and shut the festival down. Of course, it’s no coincidence that the song “Break Stuff” is about going on a reckless rampage, as the title suggests, and with the added encouragement of Fred Durst telling the audience to “reach down deep inside and take all that negative energy and let that shit out of your fucking system,” they took that as a cue to literally “break stuff,” shutting down the festival and making it an embarrassment for the other musicians who participated in the event.

Despite the tough “bad boy” image he portrayed on stage and in his music, Durst once admitted, “I play the pimp thing on purpose. Like when I’m on MTV, these chicks are fanning and massaging me. It’s not like I attracted them off the street, we fucking hired ’em! I want everyone to be thinking I’m having the time of my life, but I’m single and miserable.”[360]

Limp Bizkit is now a thing of the past, and basically just a footnote in music history. Durst admitted to Entertainment Weekly that, “In 2000, there were 35 million people who connected to this band. Twelve years later, lots of those people have moved on. We were a moment in time and it’s over.”[361]

Apparently, most of Limp Bizkit’s high school and college-aged fans grew up and left behind this two hit wonder, whose songs “Break Stuff” and “Nookie” played in the background at one too many keg parties. When Fred Durst’s money comes close to running out it will be interesting to see if he tries to make a comeback with a makeover, marketing himself as the “softer” more “sensitive” rocker who has turned away from his angry and rebellious past.

The Woodstock ‘99 disaster is the perfect example of how people will mindlessly obey the messages of the music they’re listening to, without thinking, or even caring what the consequences are. It also shows how large audiences engage in Group Think, and like mindless sheep will follow the herd through the gates of destruction guided by a man with a microphone singing commands they obey without question.

I pack a chainsaw
I’ll skin your ass raw
And if my day keeps going this way, I just might
Break your fucking face tonight
-*Break Stuff*

Country Music

Country music is practically void of Illuminati symbolism and satanic messages because unlike rock and roll, heavy metal and hip hop, the country music genre is very different in that as a whole it doesn’t promote rebellion or flaunting one’s wealth or try to push the envelope like other genres of music do. That’s not to say there aren’t Illuminati allegations surrounding some famous country music stars, but largely the Illuminati allegations are centered around rap, hip hop, rock, and heavy metal.

When country music stars sing about drinking, they’re usually singing about drowning their sorrows over a broken heart, not popping Cristal in the club because they’re living like there’s no tomorrow. When they sing about fighting it’s usually a justified punch in the face to some scumbag harassing a nice girl at the bar. The only time guns are really mentioned in country songs is when the artists are talking about having a shotgun in the back of their pickup truck or on the farm to protect their families like good old boys in the country do. They’re not singing about killing people for a power trip like we’ve heard so many rappers do.

Perhaps the most violent messages in country music were when Carrie Underwood sung about keying the paintjob and slicing the seats of her cheating boyfriend’s truck in “Before He Cheats” or when the Dixie Chicks sung about killing “Earl,” a wife-beating husband in a song about domestic abuse.[362]

Yes, there was the odd alternative rock alter ego of Garth Brooks he named “Chris Gaines,” and Johnny Cash sung “I shot a man in Reno,” but these few and far between examples of questionable messages in county music pale in comparison to the overwhelming and obvious degenerate and demonic themes that have infected the music industry.

The reason for country music’s overall innocence is quite simple: Country music is designed to be a reflection of country living. The artists sing songs about the simple life and small towns—they tell tales of love and loss, of broken hearts and hard work. People who live in the country generally experience way less crime than those in the city, and they know their neighbors and look out to protect their communities in order to keep them safe and family friendly. Country folks smile and say hi to strangers, and offer others a helping hand, where city folks are often afraid to even make eye contact with people they pass on the street.

You may not like the twang of country music or think it’s just a bunch of cowboy hat wearing hicks living in the sticks, but you have to admit that at least country music is practically Illuminati free, and that is the key.

Conclusion

Comedian Chris Rock once said, “There’s like a civil war going on with black people, and there’s two sides. There’s black people, and there’s niggas—and niggas have got to go! I love black people, but I hate niggas, boy! Oh, I hate niggas. Boy, I wish they’d let me join the Ku Klux Klan. I’d do a drive-by from here to Brooklyn.”[363] He was obviously talking about the kinds of rappers covered in this book—the kind of people who perpetuate the worst stereotypes about black people, and those who get rich by promoting such stereotypes to their fans.

Artists like Bob Marley, KRS-One, Chuck D, Kelly Clarkston, Carrie Underwood, Jessica Simpson, and others give hope and provide good examples of musicians who can achieve tremendous success without “selling their soul to Satan.” Even though pop culture is awash with satanic slime, you can choose what to feed your mind. Don’t download the music of the Illuminati posers, don’t include these artists on your playlists, and be sure to consciously pay attention to the content of the music you’re listening to on a regular basis and turn off the trash as soon as you hear it so it doesn’t sink into your mind. Realize how enormous multibillion dollar corporations do anything to milk money out of you, and they are promoting Illuminati idols to children who teach them to be as disrespectful, sexually promiscuous, and as spiritually bankrupt as possible.

Perhaps try listening to classical music or instrumentals and music without lyrics or words that guide your mind so it can operate freely, allowing you to listen to your subconscious or inner voice. Famed media analyst and author of *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman, explains most people, “are not prepared to feel or even experience the music of Haydn, Bach, or Mozart; that is to say, their hearts are closed, or partially closed, to the canon of Western music...There is in short something missing in the aesthetic experience of our young.”[364]

Music is, after all, information, and the control of information is a primary key to the Illuminati's power. Let's not forget that over two hundred years ago, Illuminati founder Adam Weishaupt wrote about taking over the schools and the newspapers in order to influence society and shape people's behavior. "We must win the common people in every corner. This will be obtained chiefly by means of the schools," he explained.[365] Only a fool or a liar would, at this point, say that music doesn't influence the listeners' thought patterns, emotions and behavior—and as is the case with most mainstream music, that influence is far from enlightening.

For those who still doubt that the media can, and does, encourage the audience to mimic what they see and hear, I'll refer you to the bobo doll experiment that studied children's behavior and aggression as a result of witnessing an adult punching a bobo doll (an inflatable doll with a weight at its base that returns to its upright position after it is punched or kicked). The experiments simply demonstrated that after children witnessed someone punching the bobo doll, they themselves were inclined to imitate that same behavior, where before they had seen someone hit the doll, the children largely ignored it. The experiment demonstrated various aspects of social learning theory and observational learning, clearly showing that the children imitated behavior they witnessed by hitting the doll themselves—or as my grandpa used to say—monkey see, monkey do.

A Senate Committee in 1999 investigated violence and its influence on children, and concluded, "Far too many of our children are killing and harming others. This report identifies and begins to redress one of the principal causes of youth violence: media violence."[366] This is 180 degrees opposed to what Michael Greene said while he was president of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences at the 2000 Grammys as he tried to calm the controversy surrounding Eminem's nomination for Best Rap Album when he told the audience, "The arts solve teen violence, they are never the cause."

James Fox, Dean of the Criminology Department at Northwestern University in Chicago stated, "Murder is just not the taboo that it once was. A lot of that is television. Now, kids have become desensitized. They'll rent movies and play their favorite scenes-often the most violent-over and over. What do you think the effect is on a kid when his first exposure to sex is a brutal rape scene?”[367]

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell wrote about how the culture had become so rotten that, “Nearly all children nowadays were horrible… they adored the Party and everything connected with it. The songs, the processions, the banners, the hiking, the drilling with dummy rifles, the yelling of slogans, the worship of Big Brother—it was all a sort of glorious game to them.”[368]

Church of Satan founder, Anton LaVey, admitted, “The TV set, or satanic family altar, has grown more elaborate since the early 50’s, from the tiny fuzzy screen to huge entertainment centers covering entire walls with several TV monitors. What started as an innocent respite from everyday life has become in itself a replacement for real life for millions, a major religion of the masses.”[369]

Many Christians point to the Bible to explain our backwards society, in particular, *2nd Timothy*, where it reads, “There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”[370]

As you arrive at the end of this book, I hope it has given you the evidence and facts to help you realize just how powerful music can be, and the disastrous consequences that can occur when this power is placed into the wrong hands. We must not sit by silent as these demonic false idols and Illuminati puppets have their messages shouted from speakers around the world and injected into millions of minds through headphones and ear buds. We must publically shame them and shame any TV shows or radio stations that support them.

Get positive role models in your life or in your children’s lives who have set an example of how big dreams may come true through hard work and dedication without the need to compromise one’s morals and integrity. Put your energy into something productive and positive, whether it’s sports or other hobbies like singing, rapping, writing computer programs, painting, fixing cars, or simply being a good mom or a dad for your kids and making sure they get the best wisdom, guidance, and opportunities in life so they won’t make some of the same mistakes that perhaps you have made when you were younger. Family should always come first and we must also defend the Constitution and our Civil Liberties since they are under a constant threat from a tyrannical power hungry, Illuminati controlled government that works hand in hand with the mainstream media monopoly machine to manage the masses.

Idle hands are the Devil’s workshop, and energy focused in the wrong direction, or not focused at all, often brings disaster and disappointment. You could be the best at doing beer bongs, or the best track star; you could have a great girlfriend or boyfriend with a fulfilling, quality relationship, or you could get a sexually transmitted disease or an unplanned pregnancy if you are sexually irresponsible—it all depends on where you place your priorities. Pay attention to where and how you spend your money. Often we vote with our wallet, and “the system” uses every dirty trick in the book to try to get you to spend money you don’t have on things you don’t need while trying to impress people you don’t know.

While most Illuminati icons promote a hedonistic “if it feels good, do it” YOLO (you only live once) “Do what thou wilt” live for the moment philosophy, there is an interesting paradox called the hedonism paradox or the pleasure paradox that says people fail to experience pleasure if we seek out pleasure for its own sake.[371] William Bennett, former United States Secretary of Education explained it like this, “Happiness is like a cat, if you try to coax it or call it, it will avoid you; it will never come. But if you pay no attention to it and go about your business, you’ll find it rubbing against your legs and jumping into your lap.”[372]

Viktor Frankl echoed this in *Man's Search for Meaning*, when he said, "Happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person other than oneself."[373]

Don't give musicians, actors, or other entertainers too much credit when they occasionally do talk about the Illuminati or the way (they think) the government or the world works. People frequently put celebrities on pedestals and give them way more credit than they deserve, and perceive them as being experts in anything they talk about. The halo effect or halo error, describes how people tend to have a bias view of others because their perception and judgment is strongly influenced by one's overall impression of the person, thus distorting their assessment of that person's knowledge, skills, or importance.[374]

When people hold celebrities in high regard because they like their movies or music, most people become victims of the halo effect and think that celebrities' opinions or statements are more valuable than others, even when most of the time they have no more knowledge about the particular subject than the average person.

In closing, habitually guard your ears and mind, and be careful what you put into your brain. Just like if you eat bad food, you can get physically ill—if you listen to bad music, the same may be true mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. Remember, Aristotle profoundly said if you listen to the wrong kind of music, you will become the wrong kind of person.

If you would like to learn more information about the Illuminati and elite secret societies and conspiracies, I encourage you to read my other books on the subject, including *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, *The New World Order: Facts & Fiction*, *The Resistance Manifesto*, or *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*. My previous book, *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* contains a comprehensive analysis of the pieces of the Illuminati puzzle and thoroughly separates the facts from the fiction, and it will save you countless hours of Internet searching, following false leads, being duped by misinformation, hoaxes, or misunderstandings which are rampant in the sea of information that’s out there.

My books may not be available in stores, but they are available in paperback on Amazon.com or in e-book from iBooks on the iPad, Google Play for Android tablet users, as well as Kindle and Nook e-readers. Please review this book on Amazon.com or whatever platform you purchased it from to help spread the word about these Illuminati icons of evil and the other important and empowering information my books reveal. Thank you for reading, thank you for caring, and may God bless you in this magnificent and monumental mystery we call life!

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-The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction

-The New World Order: Facts & Fiction -The Resistance Manifesto

-Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True

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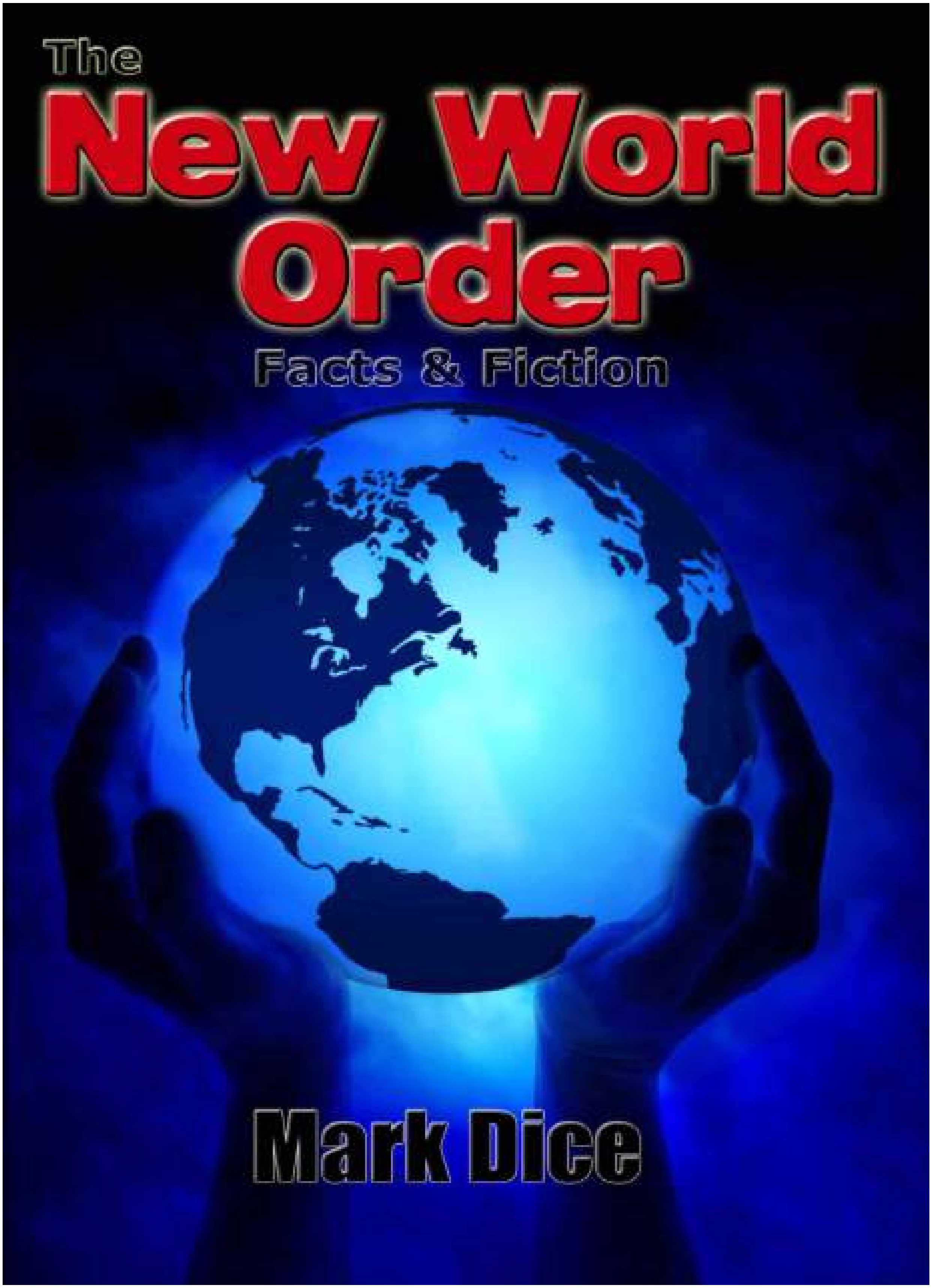

The New World Order

Facts & Fiction

Mark Dice

The

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The Resistance

San Diego, CA

The New World Order: Facts & Fiction

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About the Author

Mark Dice has loved to read nonfiction books since just after he graduated High School in 1996 as he tried to figure out the world and find his place in it. Some things didn’t quite make sense to him until he learned about the powerful elite private organizations and secret societies that hold the true power in politics, banking, and the media.

After countless hours of research Mark has written several books on the subjects of secret societies, Big Brother, and the New World Order. His passion and dedication of educating others has been covered by numerous mainstream media outlets, many of which have simply attacked Mark for his beliefs that a global criminal mafia called the Illuminati operates under the cover of various organizations and manipulate political and financial arenas, slowly eroding the Constitution and America’s sovereignty and leading us into a New World Order.

Mark Dice believes that the Illuminati are fulfilling Bible Prophecy by creating a global government called the New World Order, that will one day be the infrastructure that the Antichrist will use to become a global dictator. He also believes that the New World Order promotes immorality, selfishness, materialism, and purposefully aims to keep the population entertained with television and issues of little significance in order to separate them from the political process, thus allowing the Illuminati to operate without much opposition.

Whatever religion you are, or if you consider yourself agnostic or atheist, you will find the information Mark brings forth in his writings to be extremely thought provoking and enlightening.

Through his books, radio interviews, and YouTube videos, Mark hopes people will become enlightened to the hidden realities of the New World Order, and can more effectively manage their lives after becoming aware of the agendas and mechanisms used to keep people mentally enslaved.

Mark is a nondenominational Christians and has respect for a wide variety of faiths and belief systems. He has a bachelor’s degree in communication and lives in San Diego, California.

Introduction

The world is changing at a faster pace every day. New technologies, new social trends, new threats and fears, new governmental regulations and laws, and new media content and entertainment to keep us amused for hours on end. While it is easy to notice the fun and new benefits that this rapidly advancing world has to offer us, we are often too caught up in the moment to notice the things that are falling by the wayside and getting lost to history. “The good old days,” as some call it.

With every step that civilization seems to take forward, it also seems to leave behind qualities that are universally accepted as better, but were unable to remain because “times are changing.” One thing that hasn’t changed is basic human nature. If we look back at history, thousands of years ago people were having the same basic struggles that they are having today. Struggles with health, money, and relationships; the three major categories to which nearly every human problem can be traced. Humanity’s needs have not changed, despite the dramatically different landscape and culture we find ourselves living in today. People have always struggled against oppressive and tyrannical leaders who use their power to take advantage of others. People have worked to provide themselves and their family with enough food and shelter so that they can avoid the harsh conditions that life without such things entails. And people have tried to remain healthy and hoped to avoid or cure sickness and disease.

History has noted several major life-changing revolutions in mechanics and technology that altered the landscape of societies forever. The agricultural revolution allowed people to grow and store food on a massive scale and sell it to others who, as a result, did not have to grow their own food, leading to labor diversification and specialization. The industrial revolution introduced mechanical devices allowing people to build and use machines that could do the work of hundreds of people and have strength and power beyond what a human workforce could produce, forever altering agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and transportation. The digital revolution, or the information age of computers and mass communication allowed instant access to information of nearly any kind from around the world with the push of a button.

We have also seen humanity grow from tribes to villages, and to cities, states, and countries. Proponents of what is called the New World Order believe that a global government is the next evolutionary step in civilization. While international agreements and cooperation between countries around the world is needed to ensure peace and facilitate economic activities, what is disturbing is that the proponents of the New World Order have been planning and implementing their agreements in secret—often denying such plans were in the works—until agreements were finalized and no public scrutiny was given. The elite groups and individuals involved in this planning see themselves as the rightful masters of the universe and are shaping the world to fulfill their own selfish and twisted desires.

Leadership circles throughout history have known how to control large populations of people through various means, many of which are underhanded and ruthless. Fear, threats, propaganda, appeals for blind patriotism and allegiance to the leadership or the country, are all strategies that continue to be used to keep the population as a whole in line and allow the current power structure to continue to operate unopposed.

In today’s society, particularly in America, most people simply don’t care about politics or what is happening in Washington DC. There are, however, measurable numbers of those dedicating themselves to watchdog and activist groups who work as a check and balance system to the power structure and sometimes have measurable effects in regards to preventing certain legislation from being passed or fighting to repeal certain laws or practices that have been enacted which are unconstitutional or unfair. While many of these groups and their members mean well, they are often only aware of the tip of the iceberg of what shapes the political landscape.

For those who truly seek to understand the power structure of the political world, if they look hard enough, or are lucky enough, they inevitably find the proverbial rabbit hole that leads them to discover the reality that secret societies and elite private organizations largely pull the strings and contain networks of power whose members and policies are directly responsible for corrupt and unfair legislation, nearly every major war, economic collapses, and other world altering events.

Some of these organizations, such as the Council on Foreign Relations, appear on the surface to be some sort of government entity, but in reality are private organizations which yield tremendous influence over the White House and Congress. Other organizations, such as the Bilderberg group and the Skull and Bones society are more secretive, yet when we look at the membership of such organizations and the activities these members have been involved in, it becomes clear that these groups provide the financial, personal, and logistical support to get their agendas to become realities. These agendas are frequently anti-American, unconstitutional, unfair, and completely counter to the interests of the vast majority of the population.

The members of these groups put on a face of public servants and fighting for the little people, yet their allegiance is to their wealthy friends and business associates. These organizations are not merely social clubs, but are highly organized, well-funded and motivated policy makers, essentially, who operate without any oversight or checks and balance systems. The activities of such groups should take place in the halls of Congress and be open to public scrutiny, yet they have lurked behind the scenes for decades with little awareness or opposition.

After even a minimal amount of investigating and research into the secret societies and private organizations such as Skull and Bones, the Bilderberg group, and the Bohemian Grove, it becomes obvious that the mainstream media is working in collaboration with such organizations in order to do everything in their power to prevent even the mere mentioning of such groups from making it on the airwaves or in print. Surely after over fifty years of Bilderberg group meetings, major television stations and newspapers would at least attempt to cover such an event, but year after year, there is usually not a single mention of it by the establishment press. Speculation and conspiracy theories aside, surely it is at least interesting that such an event occurs with such powerful politicians, business leaders, media moguls, and royalty, and should warrant some kind of coverage.

Every time the G-20 meets or a similar economic forum consisting of the leaders of the world’s most powerful countries, it’s the top story around the world, yet practically the only coverage of the Bilderberg meetings comes from smaller freelance journalists and websites, or perhaps an occasional European newspaper article. Only a fool could claim that such repeated blackouts are because the event is not news worthy. And only a fool can say that there is not a secret agreement between the American mainstream media owners and the Bilderberg group itself, where the two entities have agreed that editors will act as gate-keepers and kill any story by any reporter who even attempts to cover the event.

This is largely how the New World Order was able to be created without much opposition. It is only now after the foundation has been built and its construction is near completion that word of such a thing is mentioned publicly, as its secret creators promise it will bring a new era of world peace and prosperity. The New World Order is basically the plan to create a socialist global government headed up by one world leader and a wealthy ruling class of elite politicians and businessmen, and render the rest of the world's population powerless peasants who are endlessly stuck in the daily grind. Everyone living in the New World Order will use a single global electronic currency, have little to no political power, and have an advanced high-tech surveillance system watching over everyone to keep them in line.

Historian Webster Griffin Tarpley explains, "The New World Order is a more palatable name for the Anglo-American world empire. It's the planetary domination of London, New York, and Washington over the rest of the world. It's hard to get people to join that or think they have a part in it if you call it the Anglo-American world empire. If you call it the New World Order, then people in India or someplace like that, or the European Union, might think, well, there's something in there for us too." [i]

There are other reasons most people haven't heard of the New World Order until recently, as well. The culture implants ideas of inferiority in us, leading many to believe that they need a new car every five years, and that they need the newest cell phone with the latest features or else they themselves are old fashioned and out of touch with the times. But what shapes the culture and creates these kinds of invisible social pressures on us? It's largely the mainstream media: The television, films, music and magazines that continuously bombard us with their materialistic and antisocial self-destructive content. Their carefully crafted messages are absorbed subconsciously by the audience which has no idea that they are essentially Pavlovian dogs being trained how to feel and how to act. The lyrics to a popular song by the 1970s rock band *Rush* , eloquently illustrates this by saying:

We've taken care of everything

The words you hear, the songs you sing

The pictures that give pleasure to your eyes

It's one for all, all for one

We work together, common sons

Never need to wonder how or why

This song, titled *The Temple of Syrinx* , is sung from the perspective of the rulers of a fictional world where the elite leadership enjoy all the pleasures of life, while the masses of people live in servitude.

This book is by no means a complete analysis of the New World Order and the people, institutions, secret societies, and ideologies involved in its creation and control. My book *The Resistance Manifesto* (2005, 2008) provides a thorough analysis of these issues, and lays a solid foundation of understanding that this book builds upon. This book contains additional material and focuses on more modern issues and activities involving the New World Order. If one has not read *The Resistance Manifesto* , I strongly advise you to do so as soon as possible, because that book will take you further down the rabbit hole than you can imagine. The Illuminati, the Bohemian Grove, Satanism, the spiritual beliefs, histories, and goals of the secret societies and elite organizations involved in creating and maintaining the New World Order are covered in detail.

If you have not yet read the manifesto, do not worry, because your desire to learn the truth about this world will find nourishment with the book that is in your hands. Some of your suspicions will be confirmed with the information you find within these pages, and some things you will discover will be hard to believe. Once you have fallen down the proverbial “rabbit hole” nothing is as it seems, and it can be difficult at first to determine what is real and what is not. My book *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* has over four hundred pages of information separating some of the wild speculation and fraudulent information from the facts regarding the Illuminati secret society, if you wish to continue on the path of discovery you are now on.

In *The New World Order* , we will look at modern political policies that are being pushed or implemented in regards to the New World Order, as well as various social and cultural issues such as the population reduction agendas of the elite and the destruction of family values and morality that the mainstream media is helping to perpetuate. Other issues involving science and technology such as weather weapons, vaccines, and pharmaceuticals will be addressed as well.

Let’s face it, there is plenty to be worried about concerning the New World Order. With the countless examples of declassified government operations and experiments involving chemical and biological agents, advanced technology, false flag terror attacks, COINTELPRO, sabotage, elite politicians involved in occult secret societies and participating in bizarre rituals at the Skull and Bones headquarters in Connecticut or in the forest at the Bohemian Grove, people can get very distraught over this information, and even paranoid.

Some of the paranoia is completely understandable. With all of the proven cases of evil and corruption, when someone first hears of yet another instance that is along the same lines, it doesn’t surprise them that such a thing would be happening, and so sometimes they just simply believe it and start passing the information on to their friends and families thinking that it is true. Some of this false information is posted on the Internet by people who really do mean well, and just jump to conclusions about certain news events or rumors they hear, and get all worked up over them, when if they took a calmer approach and spent a little bit of time fact checking they could realize that their initial assumption was incorrect.

A small number of people who are interested in learning about the New World Order are mentally ill people, or are prone to mental illness, and the information they discover in books, videos, and on the Internet, is so overwhelming that they can't adequately deal with it and it serves as a catalyst sparking their illness. The establishment loves to highlight these rare individuals or others with wildly bizarre views concerning the New World Order, so that they may serve as a straw man as they are presented to a mainstream audience to show that "all" people who talk about the New World Order or secret societies pulling the strings in major world events are "crazy" and should be ignored or ridiculed.

To illustrate how people involved in researching this kind of material may jump to conclusions, I will explain two instances involving emails to me or posts on my Facebook page (Facebook.com/MarkDice). One email I received read, "The ATM machine that I use, at the local Quik-Chek convenience store here in northern New Jersey, has read: 'Temporarily Out of Service' for the past six days. Is anyone else seeing similar outages?"

Clearly this individual is paranoid, thinking that because *one* ATM is out of service that there must be a national outage as some plot to prevent people from getting cash. Now, in his defense, it certainly is likely that someday large numbers of ATMs in multiple cities, or perhaps the entire country will be out of commission due to a cyber attack, so his fear is not completely unwarranted. The fact that he posted such a question for other Facebook users to give their feedback on to either confirm or deny that such a thing was happening in other cities shows the level of fear and suspicion this person has in his mind. An ordinary person or someone who isn't so paranoid would have just assumed the machine hadn't been fixed yet because the high school dropout working at the store making minimum wage couldn't care less about calling the company to tell them their machine was broken.

Another example also comes from my personal Facebook page where a woman posted a comment and also emailed me asking me about a friend request she had gotten from "Nathan Rothschild." The Rothschild family, for those who don't know, have long been involved with the elite Illuminati secret society, so when this woman got a friend request from someone with that name, she got a little worried. As it turns out, just as I immediately suspected as soon as I read her email, someone had created a page as a satire pretending to be Mr. Rothschild and listed references to wanting to take over the world and enslave humanity on the “interests and activities” section. Such a practice is actually fairly common. When this woman was told this by another Facebook friend, she emailed me back telling me not to worry about it and that, “The Rothschild page was just a parody...Jason Bermas told me. Sorry I was freaking out. I didn’t sleep well last night. Maybe tonight will be better. My mind can rest again.”

Many people often fear that one day soon they are going to get rounded up by police or military and taken to a FEMA concentration camp because they know too much, or they listen to Alex Jones’ radio show and they’ve been tracked by the government using Carnivore or Echelon, and they’re on a government watch list, or they’ve ordered several books from Amazon.com about the Illuminati or the New World Order, and so now the establishment sees them as a threat. Again, some of their suspicions and fears are justified, yet fears like this tend to be overblown and fanciful.

A measurable amount of suspicion and even perhaps worry is healthy, but so is balancing it with skepticism and fact checking. People who find the proverbial rabbit hole often say that they can never look at the world in the same way, or live the same way ever again, but I strongly urge you not to turn your back on other important aspects of your life such as your family, friends, career, and fun hobbies. It is good to be aware of issues that are found within this book, but you must not let them cripple you with fear. By being aware and making others aware in a calm and rational manor, collectively we can help minimize or prevent major injustices from occurring simply due to massive grass roots resistance to such things, but you must guard your mind against becoming paranoid over such things or jumping to conclusions.

My goal with this book is to give you the reader tangible evidence of a corrupt and out of control government and what the secret establishment has done, and what they are hoping and planning on doing in the future and how it will affect you.

It is also my hope that with the information I bring forth in my books that you the reader can have a better understanding of the who, what, and why in our world, so that you and your family and friends can live more happy, healthy, and productive lives. It is not my intention to scare you, although some of the information is horrifying. “All I’m offering you is the truth,” as Morpheus told Neo in *The Matrix* . And what you see will be what was right in front of you the whole time, you just weren’t aware of it until now.

What most people think are examples of an out of control bureaucracy, are of little significance compared to the abuses of power and the freedom-destroying policies being implemented by politicians who are bought by the secret establishment. Paying too high of taxes or getting a ticket from a red light camera pale in comparison to the gross injustices that are occurring on a massive scale. Without large numbers of citizens resisting and voicing their disgust over proposed policies, we would be in a much worse situation with far fewer freedoms, but as we are coming to realize, often it doesn’t matter how loud the outcry is against a particular issue, the mainstream media is able to limit the exposure to the masses or attack those voicing the opposition to minimize their effectiveness.

We have also found that large numbers of politicians will vote whatever way their owners tell them to, no matter how much they betray the people in their state or districts. The secret establishment offers them more benefits than they could imagine in the form of cash, power, and privileges. Many are compromised and blackmailed into doing what the secret establishment wants. Their extramarital affairs, illegal activities, and personal perversions are often known and documented by the establishment, and when the time arises such things are held over their head and used to coerce them to act in ways that seem contrary to logic.

As the pieces of the puzzle are assembled one by one, a clear picture begins to emerge. The corrupt leadership that has weaseled their way to the pinnacles of power are doing their very best to create a New World Order where an untouchable elite is able to live lavish lifestyles and fulfill their every perverted desire, while the majority of the public is being kept occupied and out of the way by issues of celebrity drama or professional sports. The wealthy business titans have worked hand in hand with politicians to ensure that their wealth remains concentrated in the hands of their families for endless generations as they own and control the banks, vast real estate, and the infrastructure society depends on to function.

These men will stop at nothing to maintain their power and wealth, and certainly wouldn’t blink an eye when stealing the retirement savings of good hard working people, encouraging immoral and reckless behavior in society, particularly the youth, or even killing billions of people in a global genocide. This is the New World Order.

Calls for a New World Order

It’s interesting that the term, “New World Order,” is not just some idea coined by conspiracy theorists to describe changes in the organization and distribution of wealth and power in the world, but is instead a term used by elitist politicians to describe their own philosophy and plans. We don’t really need a “New World Order” to ease or eliminate world hunger, mass genocide, human trafficking, or political oppression. The elitists who are in power and whose organizations support their power are the ones responsible for such horrific conditions existing on the earth. No all-powerful global government is needed to stop these things.

When the term is used by politicians, what they really mean is that they want a larger bureaucracy, bigger government, more regulation, higher taxes, and they want the government to direct and control more aspects of people’s lives. They often include beautiful catchphrases of hope, peace, and change, in with their New World Order dreams, sounding like Miss America contestants wishing to end world hunger or bring about world peace. They are simply good sounding ideas with no real strategies or desire to strive for such changes and are used as a cover story to conceal their true motives.

But people like things that are new. New cars, new clothes, new technologies, traveling to new places, and having new experiences. Often something new is appealing simply for the novelty of it, and the experience of change. After all, there is always room for improvement in most people’s lives. Very few people are satisfied with the fact that they have to work until the age of 65, and only enjoy perhaps two weeks of vacation a year and by the time they reach their mid-sixties, may not even have accumulated enough assets or resources to quit working, so claims of prosperous changes and a new era of abundance and economic prosperity always sound good to the average Joe, who is simply a lifetime slave to the system.

For decades, a small minority of Americans and people around the world knew of the elite’s plans for a New World Order, and had frequently tried to warn others that such a plan was in the works. And, for decades, they were frequently ignored or faced with doubts and ridicule, but as time went on, in the late twentieth century and escalating into the twenty-first century, major global political figures had begun publicly mentioning their hopes and plans for a New World Order.

Even political pundit and former campaign manager for Bill Clinton, Dick Morris, admitted during an interview on the Fox News Channel that, “Those people who have been yelling the UN [United Nations] is going to take over…global government, they’ve been crazy…but now…they’re right.”[ii]

Barack Obama

44th President of the United States

Barack Obama traveled to Berlin, Germany when he was running for President in 2008, where he said, “Tonight, I speak to you not as a candidate for President, but as a citizen — a proud citizen of the United States, and a fellow citizen of the world.”

On an appearance on David Letterman’s show, Obama was talking about the problems with the War in Iraq, and said, “the way we’re going to win in the long term is not just militarily…we’ve got to give them a stake in creating the kind of world order that I think all of us would like to see.”

Nancy Pelosi

Speaker of the House at the opening of the 110th Congress on January 4th 2007.

“Our Founders envisioned a new America driven by optimism, opportunity, and courage. So confident were they in the new America they were advancing, they put on the great seal of the United States, ‘Novus ordo seclorum’—a new order for the ages…This vision has sustained us for more than 200 years, and it accounts for what is best in our great nation: liberty, opportunity, and justice. Now it is our responsibility to carry forth that vision of a new America."

George H.W. Bush

41st President of the United States

"Out of these troubled times, our fifth objective – a New World Order – can emerge: a new era – freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony. A hundred generations have searched for this elusive path to peace, while a thousand wars raged across the span of human endeavor. Today that new world is struggling to be born, a world quite different from the one we've known."

Gary Hart

Former Senator (D) Colorado and Co-Chair of the CFR

Just three days after the 9/11 attacks, the co-chair of the Council on Foreign Relations stated, "There is a chance for the President of the United States to use the disaster…to carry out what his father – a phrase his father used I think only once, and it hasn't been used since – and that is a New World Order."

Henry Kissinger

Former Secretary of State

Henry Kissinger has been intimately involved with nearly every major organization or front group that is behind the push for a New World Order and was originally named the Chairman of the 9/11 Commission by President Bush which was set up to (pretend to) investigate the terrorist attacks on September 11th 2001. Kissinger resigned after widows of 9/11 victims discovered his business ties with the Bin Laden family.[iii]

In an interview on CNBC in February 2009, Kissinger was asked about the problems the new Obama administration was facing regarding the ongoing “War on Terror” and the economic meltdown, where he responded that Obama, “can give new impetus to American foreign policy partly because the reception of him is so extraordinary around the world. His task will be to develop an overall strategy for America in this period when, really, a New World Order can be created. It’s a great opportunity, it isn’t just a crisis.”

Bill Clinton

President of the United States from 1993-2001

At the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., President Bill Clinton was giving a speech which was broadcast on C-Span where he said, “From 1945 and the end of the war through 1989 and the end of the cold war, we had a world view, Republican and Democratic presidents alike, from Harry Truman to George Bush…and after 1989 President Bush said, and it’s a phrase that I often use myself, and that is we need a New World Order.”

Richard Nixon

President of the United States from 1969-1974

In the October 1967 edition of *Foreign Affairs;* (which is the Council on Foreign Relations publication) then president Richard Nixon said that, “The developing coherence of Asian regional thinking is reflected in a disposition to consider problems and loyalties in regional terms, and to evolve regional approaches to development needs and to the evolution of a New World Order.”

Angela Merkel

Chancellor of Germany

When giving a speech to mark the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel said, “The most important thing, when attempting to overcome barriers, is: Are the nation states ready and willing to give competencies over to multilateral organizations, no matter what it costs?…This world will not be a peaceful one if we do not work for more global order and more multilateral cooperation.” **[iv]**

Tony Blair

British Prime Minister from 1997-2007

Tony Blair has publicly stated his desire for a New World Order on multiple occasions, once even saying, “There is a New World Order like it or not.” [v] He used the term on November 12, 2001 [vi] and in 2002 [vii] and again on January 7, 2003, [viii] just to name a few.

Gordon Brown

Prime Minister of England

Gordon Brown at the 2009 G-20 meeting in London, England called for a New World Order to save the global economy from the recession sparked in 2008 by the housing collapse. He said, “I think the New World Order is emerging, and with it the foundations of a new and progressive era of international cooperation.”

Pope John Paul II

Head of the Catholic Church

On January 1, 2001 the pope declared at a service to mark the Roman Catholic Church’s World Day of Peace, that, “More than ever, we need a new international order that draws on the experience and results achieved in these years by the United Nations.” The headline in the *London Guardian* read, “Pope Calls for a New World Order.” [ix]

World Governed by the Elite Through Occult Secret Societies

For anyone who takes an in-depth and unbiased look at the political process and geopolitics, the role of secret societies and elite secretive private organizations masquerading as government entities or committees, truly hold the keys to power and function as a good old boy network consisting of a small number of elite politicians and businessmen who shape the political landscape and who either are the movers and shakers seen in the mainstream media, or are the brains and puppet masters behind those who we view publicly as the popular ones.

For a more complete list and analysis of these secret societies and elite organizations, you will find it in this author's previous book titled, *The Resistance Manifesto* . You may already be familiar with many of these organizations, but even if this information is completely new to you, you will begin to develop a clear picture of just how the power structure of politics truly looks. Benjamin Disraeli, a British Prime Minister in the 19th century famously stated, "The world is governed by very different personages from what is imagined by those who are not behind the scenes."

These powerful groups are numerous, such as the Bilderberg group, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Skull and Bones society, the Freemasons, the Bohemian Grove, and more.

The Bilderberg group meets once a year under tight security where powerful politicians, bankers, businessmen, media moguls and royalty meet to secretly discuss and disseminate their agenda for the coming months and years.

The Council on Foreign Relations, which sounds like a committee in Congress, is actually a private organization used to spread New World Order propaganda and push the Bilderberg's wishes into law. The Skull and Bones society is a recruiting center at Yale University that operates as a fraternity which invites college juniors who the organization feels will later rise to positions of power and prestige in their career, and then grooms them and gives them access to the organization’s incredible post-graduate social network. The Bohemian Grove acts as a vacation spot where hundreds of these elite men meet in private in the rural setting of a resort built in a redwood forest grove, where they talk informally without the fear of being quoted in the press. This is also a place where they engage in bizarre rituals and sexual debauchery.

The inner circles of many of these organizations often overlap each other with people involved in multiple organizations at the same time. This inner circle of elite leaders is often referred to as the Illuminati, which is a term used to identify this group of organized criminals and means “enlightened ones.”

President John F. Kennedy once made a profound and chilling statement about secret societies when speaking to the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Kennedy clearly had intimate knowledge of the workings of the Illuminati and didn’t want to go along with them. Audio of this statement is widely available on the Internet. He said, “The very word ‘secrecy’ is repugnant in a free and open society; and we are as a people inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths and to secret proceedings.”

He continued, “We decided long ago that the dangers of excessive and unwarranted concealment of pertinent facts far outweighed the dangers which are cited to justify it…For we are opposed around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covered means for expanding its sphere of influence, on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerillas by night instead of armies by day.”

“It is a system which has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit, highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific and political operations, its preparations concealed, not published, its mistakes are buried not headlined, its dissenters are silenced not praised, no expenditure is questioned, no rumor is printed, no secret is revealed.”

Several months prior to his assassination, John F. Kennedy had signed Executive Order No. 11110, which attempted to strip the Federal Reserve of their power to loan money to the United States government at interest. Many see this act as the major motive for the Illuminati orchestrating his assassination.

More recently, former Presidential candidate congressman Ron Paul stated, “I think there are 25,000 individuals that have used offices of powers, and they are in our Universities and they are in our Congress, and they believe in one world government. And if you believe in one world government, then you are talking about undermining national sovereignty and you are talking about setting up something that you could very well call a dictatorship – and those plans are there.” [x]

The idea of secretive organizations of powerful, wealthy, and intelligent men goes back thousands of years, and should come as no surprise to anyone. What is often surprising is the occult and spiritual nature of some of these modern groups, and the beliefs and rituals that members are involved in. In the ancient past when the human race was largely unaware of science and medicine, advances in these areas were extremely important and held the power of life and death. People were also largely ignorant to the spiritual principles in the world and formulated ideas about God or gods who they believed ruled over them and controlled the weather, seasons, the crops, disease, and other aspects of life. Those intelligent thinkers who pondered the workings of the spiritual world banded together and formed what were called the Mystery Schools, which were essentially secret societies that taught these principles to its members in the form of philosophies, symbols, allegories, and rituals.

The preface for *The Secret Teaching of All Ages* , which is one of the most popular and comprehensive books on the Mystery Schools and their teachings, reads, “It was inevitable that the initiates of the Mysteries should unite themselves against the forces seeking their extinction. Thus, while the secret doctrine with its body of disciples functioned more or less openly in ancient society, it later passed almost completely from public view. This circumstance should not be interpreted as a decline of plan or purpose. The esoteric schools remained as a powerful force for the regeneration of human institutions…The use of indirect communication was based entirely upon practical considerations. To remain unknown was the best way to prevent a repetition of the disaster which occurred to the Knights Templar.” [xi]

Manly P. Hall, the author of *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* was under the impression that Mystery Schools in ancient days taught men morals, fairness, and philosophies to make them better people, and were not evil, dangerous, or devious in any way. Hall and some other New Age authors are under the impression that the Mystery Schools had been hijacked and taken over by greedy and immoral men. Certainly it is understandable that the members of such schools who were on the cutting edge of advancing knowledge in science, mathematics, and medicine could develop a superiority complex and use their knowledge and social networks to take advantage of others who were uninformed.

Hall believes, “[T]he black magicians of Atlantis continued to exercise their superhuman powers until they had completely undermined and corrupted the morals of the primitive Mysteries. By establishing a sacerdotal [meaning priesthood] caste they usurped the position formerly occupied by the initiates, and seized the reins of spiritual government. Thus black magic dictated the state religion and paralyzed the intellectual and spiritual activities of the individual by demanding his complete and unhesitating acquiescence in the dogma formulated by the priest craft…These sorcerers then began the systematic destruction of all keys to the ancient wisdom, so that none might have access to the knowledge necessary to reach adeptship without first becoming one of their order.” [xii]

Alice Bailey, a famous New Age author in the twentieth century, wrote material openly explaining how occult secret societies held the true power in the world, not to expose their activities with hopes of informing the population, but rather her books were written for elite businessmen, politicians, and spiritual leaders. In her book *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* , she explains, “The *Masonic Movement* when it can be divorced from politics and social ends and from its present paralyzing condition of inertia, will meet the need of those who can, and should wield power. It is the custodian of the law; it is the home of the Mysteries and the seat of initiation. It holds its symbolism the ritual of Deity, and the way of salvation is pictorially preserved in its work. The methods of Deity are demonstrated in its temples, and under the All-seeing Eye the work can go forward. It is a far more occult organization than can be realized, and is intended to be the training school for the coming advanced occultists. In its ceremonials lies hid the wielding of the forces connected with the growth and life of the kingdoms of nature and the unfoldment of the divine aspects in man." [xiii]

Bailey's writings and other occultists such as Helena Blavatsky, who wrote *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) are held in the highest regard by the establishment, and explain the philosophies and plans of elite secret societies quite openly. The information is considered hidden in plain sight and is mostly only found by those who have a desire to join the establishment. Most people, if they even read books at all, are only concerned with the latest pop culture novels anyway, and don't have the desire, nor the mental capacity to understand the esoteric philosophies and plans that are written openly in occult books, such as Alice Bailey's or Helena Blavatsky's.

Bailey openly admits, "The Hierarchy directs world events, as far as mankind will permit…the unfolding consciousness may express itself through developing and adequate social, political, religious and economic world forms. They give direction; They throw a light; They impress those who are in contact with Them, and through the inflow of ideas and through revelation They definitely influence the tide of human affairs." [xiv]

She goes on to write, "The Hierarchy directs and controls, more than is realized, the unfolding cyclic cultures and their resultant civilizations. These can then provide adequate forms, temporarily useful for the emerging soul humanity. The format of cultures and civilizations receives special attention." [xv]

This Hierarchy that she is talking about is the continuation of the ancient Mystery Schools, such as Freemasonry and the Illuminati.

In the most popular Masonic book ever written, *Morals and Dogma* , author Albert Pike brags, “The World will soon come to us for its Sovereigns [meaning government leaders] and Pontiffs [meaning religious leaders]. We shall constitute the equilibrium of the Universe, and be rulers over the Masters of the World.”[xvi] This book was published in 1872 and is considered the bible of Freemasonry.

Freemasonry is often included in discussions about the New World Order, a charge many Masons dispute. Many Freemasons deny any claims that their organization is involved in anything other than charity work, a social club, and a method to teach enlightenment philosophies, but these Masons are either trying to keep the inner circle of Freemasonry from being discussed openly, or are themselves ignorant that the secret society they are a member of has another secret society functioning within.

Manly P. Hall, who is considered one of Freemasonry’s greatest philosophers and a 33rd degree mason admits, “Freemasonry is a fraternity within a fraternity—an outer organization concealing an inner brotherhood of the elect…It is necessary to establish the existence of these two separate yet interdependent orders, the one visible and the other invisible. The visible society is a splendid camaraderie of ‘free and accepted’ men enjoined to devote themselves to ethical, educational, fraternal, patriotic, and humanitarian concerns. The invisible society is a secret and most august fraternity whose members are dedicated to the service of a mysterious arcanum arcandrum [meaning a secret or a mystery].[xvii]

In *Morals and Dogma* Albert Pike reveals that Masons who are “in the know” about the true beliefs and activities of Freemasonry, would never reveal them to anyone. “Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, *conceals* [emphasis in original] its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it [the Mason] calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it.”[xviii]

Again, those in the lower levels of Freemasonry will deny that the organization is anything more than a fraternity, but Pike and others openly admit that it is a religion. “Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion; and its teachings are instruction in religion.” [xix]

The original writings of Adam Weishaupt, the man credited with starting the original Illuminati in Germany in 1776 had his and others secret letters discovered and seized by authorities in 1786 and when they are read, it becomes clear that he formulated specific goals and strategies for his network to occupy positions of power and privilege and operate without the public’s knowledge. His attitude is the same as that reflected in the writings of Albert Pike, although more diabolical because Weishaupt never intended them to be seen by anyone other than Illuminati members.

Weishaupt wrote, “I shall therefore press the cultivation of science, especially such sciences as may have an influence on our reception in the world; and may serve to remove obstacles out of the way…Only those who are assuredly proper subjects shall be picked out from among the inferior classes for the higher mysteries…And in particular, every person shall be made a spy on another and on all around him.”

“Nothing can escape our sight; by these means we shall readily discover who are contented, and receive with relish the peculiar state-doctrines and religious opinions that are laid before them; and, at last, the trustworthy alone will be admitted to a participation of the whole maxims and political constitution of the Order.”

“In a council composed of such members we shall labor at the contrivance of means to drive by degrees the enemies of reason and of humanity out of the world, and to establish a peculiar morality and religion fitted for the great Society of mankind.”

Weishaupt never intended his correspondence or network to become public, but in the years that passed, the Illuminati’s philosophies and goals have obviously been carried on by men who share the same vision outlined and developed by Weishaupt in 1776.

In 1966 a professor and elite insider at Princeton University named Carroll Quigley published a book titled *Tragedy and Hope* , which openly admits that a network of secret societies hold the true power in politics and banking. The book was meant for other elitists as a way to teach them how the world really works.

Quigley wrote, “The chief problem of American political life for a long time has been how to make the two Congressional parties more national and international…(therefore the) argument that the two parties should represent opposed ideals and policies, one, perhaps, of the Right and the other of the Left, is a foolish idea acceptable only to doctrinaire and academic thinkers…Instead the two parties should be almost identical, so that the American people can ‘throw the rascals out’ at any election without leading to any profound or extensive shifts in policy.” **[xx]**

One might wonder why he would openly admit that it didn’t matter which political party, Republican or Democrat, was in power since the leadership of both will work in concert with the secret agenda to create the New World Order, but Quigley and other elite insiders know that the majority of the public would never even think of reading his book, and instead read novels about vampires (the Twilight Series) or young sorcerers (Harry Potter).

In October 2009 a YouTube video was posted of Obama’s White House communications director Anita Dunn speaking to a group of students where she told them that her favorite political philosopher is Mao Tse Tung, the Chinese Communist revolutionary responsible for the murders of millions of Chinese during his reign. Most of the students probably didn’t even know who Mao Tse Tung was, or the atrocities he committed, but Dunn’s admiration for the dictator shows the mindset of the New World Order’s leadership circle.

Another interesting video clip giving a glimpse into the minds of modern elite politicians comes from Ron Bloom, Obama’s manufacturing czar. At a forum for the Union League Club in New York City which took place on February 27th and 28th in 2008, Bloom told attendees, “Generally speaking, we get the joke. We know that the free market is nonsense. We know that the whole point is to game the system to beat the market, or at least find someone who will pay you a lot of money because they're convinced that there is a free lunch. We know that this is largely about power. That this is an adults only, no limit game. We kind of agree with Mao that political power comes largely from the barrel of a gun. And we get it, that if you want a friend you should get a dog." Some say he was saying such comments in jest, while others insist the comments reveal the actual beliefs of the secret establishment.

The modern organizations that are shaping the New World Order have carried on the tradition of the ancient Mystery Schools by elevating themselves and their members above the rest of society through their good old boy networks, control of the mainstream media, and their influence over politicians through bribes, coercion, and in some cases blackmail. They have done a great job of keeping the general public distracted with sports, pop culture, and issues of little significance, while they make and implement decisions that negatively affect us all.

Establishment insiders become arrogant, selfish, and corrupt and while politicians masquerade as "public servants," they really only serve themselves and their partners in crime. They are very often Luciferians or Satanists which means that they identify Satan or Lucifer as being a hero for breaking the rules and doing what he wants. Whether their "worship" of Satan is literal or metaphorical is debatable, but what is not debatable is that they privately philosophically see Satan as a source of good, knowledge, and wisdom and systematically break the golden rule of life while thinking only of themselves and having no regard for the thoughts, feelings, or rights of others.

Helena Blavatsky wrote openly in *The Secret Doctrine* that, "Satan will now be shown, in the teaching of the Secret Doctrine, allegorized as Good, and Sacrifice, a God of Wisdom," [xxi] and this is what these people believe.

If this concept is new to you, it is quite shocking, and perhaps unbelievable, but when you come to understand more of this philosophy, it becomes undeniable that most of the inner circle of the Illuminati establishment and their subsidiary networks are Luciferians or Satanists. They believe, as most occultists do, that Lucifer and Satan are symbolic of knowledge and intelligence, and that humans were nothing but ignorant animals until Satan came to the Garden of Eden and “set Man free” by convincing Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This may just be an allegorical belief which the elite use to convince themselves and their collaborators that there is no afterlife, no Heaven or Hell, and thus they have decided to live the high life here and now and will take all they can get no matter how unfair or how many people get shortchanged, hurt, or killed as a result. Since in their mind there is no judgment by God for their sins after their death because they believe we are just advanced animals, they see nothing holding them back from doing whatever they want.

The fact that most elite politicians, businessmen, and bankers are members of organizations like the Skull and Bones society, and enjoy visiting the Bohemian Grove and participating in, or viewing what can only be described as human sacrifice reenactment rituals using effigies, shows that these individuals revel in the fact that they are considered the “evil rulers of the world.” Their satanic world view and philosophy is really no different than the Jewish Pharisees who held a monopoly on spiritual knowledge and used it for their own personal benefit at the expense of those less informed. One of the main themes taught by the story of Jesus in the New Testament is that He represents God in human form, who came to earth to allow everyone a direct line to, and knowledge of God and the Kingdom of Heaven.

Barrack Obama has quoted lines from Communist Saul Alinsky’s book *Rules for Radicals* during his speeches when he was running for president in 2008 and Hilary Clinton wrote her college thesis on Alinsky when she was at Wellesley College.[xxii] It’s interesting to note that in the Dedication page of his book, Alinsky pays tribute to the people he saw as past “radicals,” and lists them off, and then writes, “Lest we forget at least an over-the-shoulder acknowledgment to the very first radical: from all our legends, mythology, and history...the first radical known to man who rebelled against the establishment and did it so effectively that he at least won his own kingdom — Lucifer.”

Hollywood producer Aaron Russo became politically active later in his career and in 2006 did a sit down interview with Alex Jones from Infowars.com where he described his friendship with Nick Rockefeller and the insider information he revealed to him. The Rockefeller family, for those who don’t know, have been at the core of the New World Order for generations and have used their family’s enormous wealth and influence to move the agenda for the New World Order from the secret meetings of the Bilderberg group and other informal gatherings, into the minds of globalist politicians and businessmen. The Rockefeller family and their “non-profit” foundations have their fingerprints on nearly every aspect of the New World Order.

In this amazing interview that Aaron Russo gives, he explains that Nick Rockefeller had befriended him after seeing his film *Mad as Hell* and learning that Russo was running for governor of Nevada in 1998. Apparently Rockefeller thought that Russo may be of service to their agenda, even suggesting that he join the Council on Foreign Relations. Throughout the course of their meetings as their relationship progressed, Rockefeller revealed some startling insider information to him.

“He was the one who told me 11 months before 9/11 that there was going to be an event, never told me what the event was going to be, but there was going to be an event, and out of that event, we would invade Afghanistan to run pipelines from the Caspian Sea; We were going to invade Iraq to take over the oil fields and establish a base in the Middle East and make it all part of the New World Order; and we’d go after Chavez in Venezuela…and there’s going to be this War on Terror, of which there is no real enemy and the whole thing is a giant hoax, but it’s a way for the government to take over the American people,” Russo explained.

“9/11 was done by people in our own government and our own banking system to perpetuate the fear of the American people into subordinating themselves to anything the government wants them to do. That’s what it’s about; and to create this endless War on Terror. Look, this whole War on Terror is a fraud. It’s a farce. It’s very difficult to say it out loud because people are intimidated against saying it, cuz if you say it they want to make you out to be a nutcase.”

Russo goes on to say that Rockefeller conveyed to him that the endgame was to get the entire population chipped with RFID tags and that the global economy would be controlled by elite banksters and politicians. Russo recalls that Nick asked him what he thought woman’s liberation was about, and after he answered the conventional answer about women’s rights and equal pay, he says Nick laughed at him and called him an idiot and went on to inform him that the Rockefellers funded the women’s liberation movement for two major reasons. One was because only half of the population was being taxed, since primarily only the men worked, and the second reason was to break up the family so the state can have more time with children to indoctrinate them.

He also says that Rockefeller thought the world’s population should be reduced by half. Russo didn’t have the same world view as his friend, and did not become involved in the globalist organizations that have covertly established the New World Order system. In 2006 he produced *America: Freedom to Fascism* which discusses the Federal Reserve Banking system, the IRS income tax, VeriChip RFIDs, and other political issues. Russo died on August 24, 2007 from cancer at the age of 64.

Another, more powerful member of the Rockefeller family, David Rockefeller, wrote in his 2002 book, *Memoirs* on page 405, “For more than a century ideological extremists at either end of the political spectrum have seized upon well-publicized incidents such as my encounter with Castro to attack the Rockefeller family for the inordinate influence they claim we wield over American political and economic institutions. Some even believe we are part of a secret cabal working against the interests of the United States, characterizing my family and me as “internationalists” and conspiring with others around the world to build a more integrated global political and economic structure—one world, if you will. If that’s the charge, I stand guilty, and I am proud of it.”

“The anti-Rockefeller focus of these otherwise incompatible political positions owes much to Populism. “Populists” believe in conspiracies, and one of the most enduring is that a secret group of international bankers and capitalists and their minions control the world’s economy.”

David Rockefeller is one of the grandchildren of John D. Rockefeller, the founder of Standard Oil, and at the time when he lived, John D was the richest man in the world. David Rockefeller has had his hands in nearly every major New World Order organization in existence in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In fact, he is the founder of the Trilateral Commission and was once the Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations. He also attends nearly every Bilderberg meeting. At the time of this writing, David Rockefeller (senior) is 94 years old.[xxiii] He has a son, David Rockefeller Jr., who sits on the boards of numerous Rockefeller foundations.

When looking into the wealthy secretive organizations behind the New World Order, besides the usual culprits of the Bilderberg group, the Council on Foreign Relations, Skull and Bones, and the Rockefellers, often Cecil Rhodes is mentioned.

Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) was a British born businessman who moved to Africa and became a politician and founder of the state of Rhodesia in Africa, which is named after him. There are two interesting aspects to Cecil Rhodes concerning the New World Order, most importantly his will which called for creating a secret society to function with the purpose of extending and maintaining British rule around the world. Also interesting is the fact that Cecil Rhodes was the founder of the DeBeers diamond monopoly which at one time controlled 90% of the world's diamonds.

Through a slick marketing campaign designed by Edward Bernays, the DeBeers diamond company has brainwashed most of the world's women into feeling that they need a large diamond ring, earrings, and necklaces, or else their husband/boyfriend doesn't love them. Men pay thousands of dollars to accommodate their woman's desires for the stones, when in reality the value of diamonds are dramatically over-inflated simply because DeBeers won't release most of their inventory to the public.

Concerning Rhode's will, it reads, "To and for the establishment, promotion and development of a Secret Society, the true aim and object whereof shall be for the extension of British rule throughout the world, the perfecting of a system of emigration from the United Kingdom, and of colonization by

British subjects of all lands where the means of livelihood are attainable by energy, labour and enterprise, and especially the occupation by British settlers of the entire Continent of Africa, the Holy Land, the Valley of the Euphrates, the Islands of Cyprus and Candia, the whole of South America, the Islands of the Pacific not heretofore possessed by Great Britain, the whole of the Malay Archipelago, the seaboard of China and Japan, the ultimate recovery of the United States of America as an integral part of the British Empire, the inauguration of a system of Colonial representation in the Imperial Parliament which may tend to weld together the disjointed members of the Empire and, finally, the foundation of so great a Power as to render wars impossible, and promote the best interests of humanity."

Rhodes will also created Rhodes Scholarships which are given to students who the establishment view as likely participants in their New World Order plan. President Bill Clinton is perhaps the most well-known Rhodes Scholar.

Mainstream Media Controlled

by the Elite

Any educated person knows, to some extent, the power of the mainstream media and its ability to shape public opinions. Some are also aware of the often pointless information it presents to the masses as if it were something if importance, as well as the complete blackout and non-coverage of issues that should often be the top story. Adding to the confusion are prominent members of the mainstream media who claim daily to actually be fighting the mainstream media. These are the Sean Hannity’s and Rush Limbaugh’s, whose very shtick involves pretending to be an alternative to the mainstream media, when they themselves are the most powerful propagandists and gate-keepers for this very establishment.

Even though most radio and TV hosts will be seen as a left-wing person attacking the right-wing or vice a versa, mainstream hosts on either side of the political spectrum are very careful not to scratch beyond the surface of partisan politics and will never address the true power structure operating behind the scenes which controls both right and left-wing politicians. Instead, these hosts will only focus on partisan issues many of which are of little significance, while they will *never* address key issues such as the Bilderberg group, the Skull and Bones society, the Bohemian Grove, or the Illuminati.

Most national hosts are simply paid promoters of a political party who blame all of the country’s problems and misfortunes on the opposing political party, while never admitting the wrong doing or corruption of their own.

Adam Weishaupt on Media

Adam Weishaupt, the man credited with founding the Illuminati secret society back in 1776, knew the power in controlling information, and in one of his original letters, he wrote, “By establishing reading societies, and subscription libraries, and taking these under our direction, and supplying them through our labours, we may turn the public mind which way we will."

"In like manner we must try to obtain an influence in the military academies (this may be of mighty consequence), the printing-houses, booksellers shops, chapters, and in short in all offices which have any effect, either in forming, or in managing, or even in directing the mind of man: painting and engraving are highly worth our care."

He and his fellow Illuminists also understood how powerful controlling newspapers could be to smear their enemies. One correspondence reads, "We get all the literary journals. We take care, by well-timed pieces [articles], to make the citizens and the Princes a little more noticed for certain little slips."

Their "certain little slips" refers to anything they say or do that will not be looked at favorably by the public, and the Illuminati's "well timed pieces" will be sure to inform people of this if they didn't like that person.

Professional Sports

Karl Marx, the secretary who was commissioned to type and publish the *Communist Manifesto* , is well known for a quote pertaining to religion where he called it the "opiate of the masses," when in reality such a phrase accurately describes professional sports. Each weekend, as well as Monday nights during football season, millions upon millions of Americans eat, sleep, and dream about the NFL football games that are played.

It's fascinating when one is enlightened and "unplugged from the Matrix" to see these millions of zombies focusing all of their time, energy, and emotions on something so meaningless. People yell and scream at the TV, and often their entire mood in the following days is dependent upon whether their favorite team won or lost. Somehow, a bunch of over-paid muscle heads chasing a ball on a field of grass has become one of the most important events in their lives. They can discuss at length the poor strategies that lead to their team losing the game, and they can rattle of statistic after statistic of the performance of their favorite players, yet most of these people have no clue about the New World Order, or even current events.

Super Bowl Sunday is basically a national holiday, and the stores and shopping malls look about as empty as they do on Christmas day. You can hear shouts and celebrations coming from neighbors homes from multiple directions as people jump up and down yelling and cursing at their television over the performance of their team. The next morning, the "Super Bowl Champions" are plastered on the entire front page of every major newspaper in the country, as if winning the game makes them heroes like they just saved a group of children from a burning building.

Who is the mayor of the city they live in, many couldn't tell you, but they can tell you the score of the Super Bowl and who won and what their favorite commercial was. The character Tyler Durden from the film *Fight Club* mocks such priorities by sarcastically saying, "Murder, crime, poverty, these things don't concern me. What concerns me are celebrity magazines, television with 500 channels, some guy's name on my underwear."

Jay Leno's "Jay Walking"

A hilarious and popular segment created by comedian Jay Leno, titled "Jay Walking" shows just how out of touch many Americans are with issues that really matter, and are instead able to recall details about the personal lives of celebrities or how a certain football team is doing.

A popular question Jay asks people is simply, "Who is the Vice President of the United States?" It's shocking how many people don't know. Sometimes he even brings photos of prominent political figures or business leaders and asks people who they are. Many don't know. He then pulls out photos of pop singers and actors, and everyone is able to instantly identify them. The segment shows in a sad yet hilarious way that pop culture and celebrities are what is important to most Americans, not reality, politics or personal finance.

This author has shot several YouTube videos with similar themes including one where I got people to sign a petition to increase inflation and cause hyper-inflation, and one where I tried to sell a one ounce solid gold coin worth over $1,150 at the time for only $50, but nobody had a clue how much gold was worth and nobody wanted it. With some people I dropped the price to just $5 but the people didn't see the point in buying the gold coin.[xxiv]

The Fairness Doctrine

One of many Orwellian plans in the New World Order is the "Fairness Doctrine," which is the idea that the government needs to control the mainstream media in order to (as they claim) attempt to present both sides of issues so that one opinion or belief does not dominate the media. There is surely nothing fair about it, and the name and the concept clearly promote unfairness and only attempts to eliminate the free market and the voices of opposition against government policies.

The original Fairness Doctrine was a policy of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which regulates broadcast licenses, and was introduced in 1949 and required broadcasters to present controversial issues in a way the FCC viewed as balanced and honest. The doctrine was challenged in court and in 1969 the United States Supreme court upheld the FCC's right to enforce it, although later, in 1987 the Fairness Doctrine was abolished.

Since then, a sizeable number of prominent (mostly Democrat) politicians have publicly stated their desire to have the Fairness Doctrine reinstated. The reason left-wing politicians favor such an idea is because liberals want larger government and want the government to be involved in people's lives in every aspect. Another reason left-wingers tend to support the Fairness Doctrine is because talk radio has been dominated by conservatives, and so the liberals see the Fairness Doctrine as a way to silence or minimize the effect of right-wing radio.

In June 2007, Senator Richard Durbin (D-Illinois) said, "It's time to reinstitute the Fairness Doctrine,"[xxv] and around this same time, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco told reporters that her fellow Democratic Representatives did not want to forbid reintroduction of the

Fairness Doctrine and later when asked point blank if she personally supported its revival, she answered, “Yes.” [xxvi]

Illuminati kingpin Bill Clinton threw his support behind reinstatement during a February 13, 2009 interview on the Mario Solis Marich radio show, where he said, “Well, you either ought to have the Fairness Doctrine or we ought to have more balance on the other side, because essentially there’s always been a lot of big money to support the right wing talk shows.”

Democratic Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, [xxvii] U.S. Representative Anna Eshoo (Democrat of California), [xxviii] Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-Michigan), [xxix] Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), [xxx] and others have all publicly expressed their desire to have the program reinstated.

Operation Mockingbird

Intelligent people have varying degrees of suspicion that the US government is in bed with the American mainstream media, and anyone who monitors the news media with discerning eyes can quite easily identify specific stories and strategies that are being used to persuade and intimidate the population. For those who want “evidence” of such manipulation, one needs to look no further than the findings of a Senate Select Committee in 1975, which confirms and details this, has occurred for decades on a scale larger than most people could imagine.

Operation Mockingbird, as it was called, was exposed in 1975 during the Church Committee investigation, which then published its findings the following year. The full name of the committee which investigated and uncovered such activities was called, “The United States Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities” which was chaired by Senator Frank Church (D-ID).

Through this investigation it became clear that such a program was developed in the 1950s for the purpose of persuading American and foreign media, as well as to use the media as gate-keepers to prevent certain information from being published and reaching the masses.

In 1948 an espionage and counter-intelligence branch within the CIA was created for the purpose of “propaganda, economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance groups, and support of indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the free world.” Later that year Operation Mockingbird was established to influence the domestic and foreign media. Philip Graham, the owner of *The Washington Post*, was first recruited to run the project within the industry and develop a network of assets.

After 1953, the network had influence over twenty-five newspapers and wire agencies and was overseen by Allen Dulles, who was director of the CIA. The Mockingbird program also involved major television broadcasters, including William Paley, the CEO of CBS broadcasting.

Thomas Braden, who was the head of the International Organizations Division (IOD), which was a division of the CIA dealing with human intelligence services, played a substantial role in Operation Mockingbird and would later reveal, “If the director of CIA wanted to extend a present, say, to someone in Europe—a Labour leader—suppose he just thought, this man can use fifty thousand dollars, he’s working well and doing a good job—he could hand it to him and never have to account to anybody... There was simply no limit to the money it could spend and no limit to the people it could hire and no limit to the activities it could decide were necessary to conduct the war—the secret war....It was multinational.”

According to the Congressional report published in 1976, “The CIA currently maintains a network of several hundred individuals around the world who provide intelligence for the CIA and at times attempt to influence opinion through the use of covert propaganda. These individuals provide the CIA with direct access to a large number of newspapers and periodicals, scores of press services and news agencies, radio and television stations, commercial book publishers, and other foreign media outlets."

The committee also concluded that the cost of the program was approximately $265 million a year, which when adjusted for inflation as of 2010 means that in today's dollars the program costs an astounding one billion dollars a year.

A year after the Church Committee released its findings on Operation Mockingbird, *Rolling Stone* magazine published an article on the program and named various prominent journalists who they alleged to be involved with it. Some of these included Ben Bradlee, who wrote for *Newsweek* , Stewart Alsop, who wrote for the *New York Herald Tribune* , James Reston (*New York Times*), Charles Douglas Jackson (*Time Magazine*), Walter Pincus (*Washington Post*), William C. Baggs (*The Miami News*), and others.

In 2007 a large amount of documents known as the "Family Jewels" were declassified and released by the National Security Archive, which also revealed that the CIA had routinely wiretapped Washington-based news reporters. These individuals were most likely seen as a threat to the establishment and were not playing along with the propaganda and gate-keeping efforts within the media establishment.

As with nearly every other case of rampant institutional corruption in government agencies, the CIA claims to have ended the program—another claim that is laughable.

The Military Wanted to Hire Bloggers for Propaganda

Since the Internet has been a haven for independent journalists and countless "alternative" news sites, along with bloggers who have gained a large following of people who don't rely only on mainstream corporate news to get their information, this posed a major problem for the establishment. The major broadcast TV and radio networks, as well as the cable channels, consist of tens of millions of dollars in equipment and expensive services such as satellite feeds and camera crews, but the Internet had opened the door for one individual with a website costing only a few dollars a month to have the potential to reach millions of people simply by posting their own articles or videos.

With people able to copy and paste a link from a blog and sent it out to their email list or post it on their Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter pages, a simple blog written by an ordinary person can spread like a virus around the web. Of course, the establishment saw the dangers that blogs and non-mainstream websites held for their monopoly of information, so they decided to use prominent bloggers as paid propagandists just like the talking heads in the mainstream media.

In 2006 a report from the Joint Special Operations University titled *Blogs and Military Information Strategy* , outlined this plan. “Hiring a block of bloggers to verbally attack a specific person or promote a specific message may be worth considering,” read the report. It was written by James Kinniburgh and Dororthy Denning.

The report also suggested the government hack the blogs of those seen as detrimental to the propaganda they want to spread. It reads, “[T]he enemy blog might be used covertly as a vehicle for friendly information operations. Hacking the site and subtly changing the messages and data—merely a few words or phrases—may be sufficient to begin destroying the blogger’s credibility with the audience. Better yet, if the blogger happens to be passing enemy communications and logistics data, the information content could be corrupted.”

High Level Officials and Institutions within the NWO are Above the Law

As many people are aware, certain politicians and businessmen seem to be untouchable regarding the corruption and criminal activities they are involved in. This occurs because of the power of the invisible empire and their use of coercion, threats, and blackmail. The Illuminati keep files on practically every congressman and woman, as well as media figures, business leaders, judges, military officials, and anyone of influence in the public sphere. If a politician cheats on his wife, the invisible empire most likely know about it and have documentation proving it. If a person cheats on his taxes, uses cocaine, has any bizarre hobbies or interests, they know. Frequently they will entrap people simply to gather such evidence.

Imagine that you're a prominent politician who genuinely cares for America and wants to do the right thing in a particular segment of society such as lowering taxes. Also imagine that at one time, perhaps years or even decades ago, you made the terrible mistake of cheating on your wife, or even sleeping with a high class prostitute, perhaps provided and paid for by a colleague after a cocktail party. The odds are that the Illuminati has documentation of this. Echelon, the secret electronic snooping system, probably has a recording of a telephone conversation of you bragging about it with a friend. Perhaps the person you thought was your friend who provided the prostitute for you was doing so for the express purpose of entrapping you, and the guest bedroom in the mansion of the party, or the hotel you had sex with her at, was rigged with cameras and caught the whole thing on tape.

Now fast forward to the present time where you are a politician trying to save the American people from rising taxes, and imagine you get a phone call from someone not identifying themselves but telling you that they have evidence of what you did, and perhaps play the audio of your phone call when you spoke about it. The voice on the phone now tells you to stop pressing so hard for the tax reform, or even tells you to drop your support of it all together or they will show your wife photos of what you did. What do you do? This is just one of the methods used to get people in the pocket of the secret establishment.

The History Channel produced a show called, *Presidential Secrets* which included a segment about J. Edgar Hoover, the infamous former Director of the FBI, which quite clearly and openly explained that Hoover keep dirt on everyone he could, and used that dirt to influence people in whatever way he wanted.

For 48 years Hoover was the director of the FBI under eight different presidents. He died on May 2, 1972 at the age of 77 from a heart attack. It was only after his death that the depths of corruption Hoover sunk to were revealed. Despite 35 file cabinets of his personal files being destroyed after his death by his loyal aids, volumes of information are now public which show just how dark the soul was of Hoover, as well as how powerful people can be when they have the resources of the FBI behind them.

Hoover was able to use the FBI to influence both politicians, as well as Hollywood pictures. In 1971 he was told Jane Fonda would star in a film titled *Klute* about a prostitute helping a detective solve a mystery, and he created a file and determined to have the part removed. He hand wrote in the margin of one of the documents which was declassified, saying "Certainly, I don't want any reference to the FBI in any picture which this tramp, Jane Fonda appears."

He was able to have various films killed or the scripts changed to prevent the portrayal of the FBI in a negative light, including preventing John Wayne from starring in a TV show titled *The FBI*, which ran from 1965 to 1974, because Wayne was a member of the John Birch Society, which Hoover despised. The John Birch Society is known for its political activism particularly against globalism and in support of traditional conservatism.

Anti-war rock and roll musicians were also a target of J. Edgar Hoover. Janis Joplin, Jimmy Hendrix, and particularly John Lennon of the Beatles. In 1969 Lennon released an album containing protest songs which were enraging to Hoover and the establishment, so he tried to get him deported over a marijuana charge from England. Hoover also thought that John Lennon's outspokenness threatened Richard Nixon's reelection.

J. Edgar Hoovers files also reveal how ruthless and powerful President Roosevelt was. It was believed that his wife Eleanor was having an affair, and after this was investigated by the FBI and pretty much confirmed, FDR wanted all of the agents who worked on the case killed so they would not spread rumors about his wife's infidelities. The files reveal that he personally ordered all men who worked on the case to be "immediately relieved of his duties and sent to the south pacific for action against the Japs until they were killed."

Hoover himself was a homosexual and hired his long-time lover Clyde Tolson, who rapidly climbed the ranks of the FBI, ultimately becoming the Associate Director of the FBI, the second highest position in the organization.

The FBI and historians openly admit the rampant corruption led by J. Edgar Hoover, and of course claim to have made changes to prevent such abuses from continuing, which we know is a lie, but looking back at how much influence Hoover was able to have decades ago can send chills up one's spine when thinking of what is possible with today's technology.

Barney Frank

One of the most perverted cases of a politician who is above the law involves Barney Frank, who has been a House Representative from Massachusetts 4th congressional district since 1982. Barney Frank is considered by many to be one of the most powerful men in Congress and became the chairman of the House Financial Services Committee in 2007 and was a major force in Obama's economic "stimulus" package in 2009. Frank is also openly gay and back in the 1980s met a gay prostitute from a personal ad in the newspaper who later became his roommate and ran a gay prostitution ring out of their apartment. There are also allegations that Frank has had sexual relations with underage boys as well.

The Washington Times reported in 1989 that, “Frank, one of two openly gay members of Congress, confirmed Friday that he paid [Stephen L.] Gobie for sex, hired him with personal funds as an aide and wrote letters on congressional stationery on his behalf to Virginia probation officials.” [xxxi]

The article continues, “Although Frank and Gobie differ in some details of their relationship, they agree on the story line. They met on April Fool’s Day 1985. The representative answered a classified ad in the *Washington Blade* , the local gay weekly. ‘Exceptionally good-looking, personable, muscular athlete is available. Hot bottom plus large endowment equals a good time.’” [xxxii]

The article goes on to explain that Barney Frank paid Gobie $80 for sex which marked the beginning of their relationship. Frank was in his third term then, and despite later admitting this activity, went on to become an extremely powerful man in Washington DC.

Barney Frank’s current live-in boyfriend, James Ready, was arrested in 2009 for growing marijuana in their backyard. [xxxiii] Frank claimed he had no knowledge of the plants just as he claimed to have no knowledge of Stephen L. Gobie’s gay prostitution ring he was running out of their apartment when they lived together in the 1980s. It is very interesting that Eliot Spitzer, the former governor of New York, was busted for using high class female prostitutes ending his political career and forcing him to resign, yet Barney Frank has had a sordid past with admissions of using prostitutes himself and a roommate who was a gay pimp, while Frank is hailed as a hero. Eliot Spitzer was causing trouble for AIG and other big Wall Street firms who would eventually go bankrupt and then be given billions of dollars for free by government bailouts. Some suspect that Spitzer getting busted was simply a way to get him out of the way and stop him from poking his nose around where the Illuminati didn’t want it.

Barney Frank’s admissions of paying gay prostitutes for sex, while being reprehensible by itself, pales in comparison to the allegations that he also had sexual relations with young boys who were underage and connected to the infamous Franklin Cover-up scandal in the late 1980s. Below is a transcript from a court appearance in 1999 of a man named Paul Bonacci, who claims that he engaged in sexual relations with Frank when he was underage.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEBRASKA

PAUL A. BONACCI, (4:91CV3037)

Plaintiff, vs. TRANSCRIPT

LAWRENCE E. KING, Defendants.

Hearing held before the Honorable Warren K. Urbom, Senior United States District Judge, on February 5, 1999 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

APPEARANCES:

Mr. John DeCamp

Attorney at Law

414 South llth Street

Lincoln, Nebraska for Plaintiff

I -N-D-E-X

WITNESS Direct Cross Redirect Recross

Noreen Gosch 5

Russell Nelson 36

Paul Bonacci 101

Denise Bonacci 155

(At 9:01, the following proceedings were held.)

THE COURT: This is the case of Paul A. Bonacci versus Lawrence E. King, 4:91CV3037. I see the plaintiff, Mr. Paul Bonacci, here with his counsel Mr. DeCamp. I do not see anyone representing Lawrence E. King. Is there anyone here representing Mr. King? I take it not. A default judgment has been entered against him. And the purpose of this proceeding is to determine the amount of damages that are to be awarded. Mr. DeCamp, you may proceed. Want to make an opening statement or not is entirely up to you. You may do that or call your witnesses as you choose.

MR. DECAMP: May it please the Court, a very, very brief opening statement. What I want to establish here today, Your Honor, if at all possible, is the entire picture or scene in which Mr. Bonacci lived and prove to this Court's satisfaction the stories he tells in his petition are in fact true and the trauma that results from those stories is in fact very real. And even, Your Honor, we would hope that the Court, after hearing some of the evidence and information today for the first time ever, would maybe even on its own initiative take some appropriate action to correct some other wrongs or launch some other investigations that may be needed, Your Honor.

THE COURT: That's not within my authority. So I can't do that. But I can award damages. And that's why we're here today.

The witness, Paul Bonacci, was then asked about instances involving him being sexually abused at adult parties when he was a young boy.

ANSWER: A lot of the parties when we went to, that we went to and stuff, the ones in the Twin Towers were basically for one reason. And that was for sex.

QUESTION: Sex between who?

ANSWER: There was sex between adult men and some other adult men but most of it had to do with young boys and young girls.

QUESTION: Young boys and young girls with each other or with older folks?

ANSWER: With the older folks. Also some of the parties, there was some parties above The French Cafe that they would bring people in and stuff that were from out of town. Those were specifically for sex with minors. Also in Washington, D. C. there were, there was also parties like Rusty had already talked about where there was parties after a party. Where they would have a party where they would have a legitimate party with like some politicians, businessmen. And a lot of them never knew about what happened at the after, you know, the party afterwards and stuff. Like in Washington, D. C. there was a lot of parties where they would be senators and congressmen who had nothing to do with the sexual stuff.

But there was some senators and congressmen who stayed for the parties afterwards. And one person that I'm not afraid to talk about because his, because Larry King always said him and this guy were on the opposite ends of the field because this guy was a Democrat and Larry King was a Republican. That's a known fact and stuff. And this guy, every time I see him on TV and stuff, my wife knows my hatred for him. Because every time I see him and stuff it disgusts me because it's—his name is Barney Frank.

QUESTION: Did you have relationships with him?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Where?

ANSWER: In Washington, D. C. And also I was sent to a house, I believe it was in Massachusetts in Boston where I believe it was his house because there's pictures on the wall that, with him and with different people and stuff. And that he had met I guess. But it was in his basement.

End of Transcript

White House Enemies List

Anyone with any sense knows that the President of the United States can order the CIA, FBI, or any agency or combination of, to illegally investigate anyone he sees as a threat to his administration's goals, such as other politicians, reporters, or political activists. While it would be political suicide for any politician to mention this fact, one Republican Senator made a startling comment on the Senate floor about the Obama administration compiling an enemies list. Republican Conference Chairman Lamar Alexander (Tenn.), who served in the Nixon White House, said, "Based upon that experience and my 40 years since then in and out of public life, I want to make what I hope will be taken as a friendly suggestion to President Obama and his White House: Don't create an enemies list."[xxxiv]

Alexander went on to describe the corruption that occurred during the Nixon administration and said he sees "symptoms of this same kind of animus developing in the Obama administration."

He also read off a list of examples he said support his views, such as a reported attempt by the Health and Human Services Department to put a gag order on the insurer Humana, and demonizing insurance companies during the government run health care debate. He also cited the administration's hatred of the Fox News Channel, along with Obama's alleged taking names of bondholders who resisted the General Motors and Chrysler bailouts.

Alexander also pointed out how he and Senator Bob Bennett (R-Utah) were "called out" on the White House's blog after questioning the power of White House czars saying, "This behavior is typical of street brawls and political campaign consultants…If the president and his top aides treat people with different views as enemies instead of listening to what they have to say, they're likely to end up with a narrow view and a feeling that the whole world is out to get them. And as those of us who served in the Nixon White House know, that can get you into a lot of trouble."

While not exactly the most reputable tabloid, *The Globe* published an article in September 2009 headlined *25 Enemies Obama Wants to Silence* and listed among them, Alex Jones from Infowars.com.

The Clinton Body Count

While mainly a thing of the past because Bill Clinton hasn’t been president since the year 2000, the Clinton Body Count still warrants mention in our discussion of the unlimited (and illegal) power and activities that a president has. The Clinton Body Count is the name given to the long list of people who have either been murdered, or died under suspicious circumstances who had personal or professional ties to Bill Clinton. The 1994 film *The Clinton Chronicles* documents some of the deaths found on the Clinton Body Count and is available to watch for free on the Internet.

2008 Economic Bailout

The words “stimulus” and “stimulus package” entered the public lexicon at the end of 2008 after the housing market collapsed in the United States, and caused a wave of economic destruction to sweep around the world. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was falling sometimes five and seven hundred points a day and people were getting understandably worried about the state of the economy. This is when the Bush administration proposed their staggering 700 billion dollar bailout which they said was needed to avert an economic disaster. Many were understandably against the bailout and wanted the free market to take its course and correct itself naturally when things stabilized, but the Bush administration (along with their Illuminati banking connections) wanted the stimulus package to be passed as soon as possible.

Some members of Congress were privately told that if the bailout didn’t pass a vote, the country would completely collapse into a depression and massive civil unrest and martial law would be imposed to prevent massive crime and violence. Congressman Brad Sherman blew the whistle on such threats and called them unjustified fear mongering.[xxxv]

California Senator Diane Feinstein publicly admitted that her office received 91,000 phone calls and emails about the bailout, and that 85,000 of them were opposed to it, but she voted for the bailout anyway because she said people were “confused” and “didn’t understand it” and she needed to do what was in the best interest of the country.

The economic bailouts and stimulus packages of 2008 and 2009 are lengthy subjects in and of themselves, so for the sake of keeping this book to a manageable length, they are only mentioned here briefly. There are several important points to be learned regarding these issues, one of which being that Diane Feinstein’s admission that 93% of the phone calls to her office opposed the bailout, yet she voted for it anyway, shows where the allegiance lies of elite politicians and how they couldn’t care less about actually representing their constituency, but rather bow to the private interests who supply them with power and wealth. The fear-mongering and threats of a total collapse and martial law also show the low levels those in power will sink to get their way. It’s also critical to remember that only several days after the first bailout was passed by Congress in 2008, the Federal Reserve and the Treasury Department completely changed their mind about where the $700 billion dollars would go and who would get the money.

Many of the firms that did get the money paid out huge year-end bonuses to their CEOs and top executives. Most people who have the potential to earn a bonus at their job will only qualify for it if they achieve certain goals such as a hitting certain sales figures, but numerous bankers on Wall Street got tens of millions of dollars each in bonuses as their companies collapsed in bankruptcy. Only if one is a member of the invisible empire can one get rewarded for a historic failure.

Electronic Voting Machines

Voter fraud has been something that has occurred in American elections for hundreds of years. Stuffing the ballot, vote buying, misrecording of votes, and other methods of fraud have been problems in elections around the world. Joseph Stalin is quoted as once saying, "He who votes decides nothing; he who counts the votes decides everything.”

While safeguards have been put in place to minimize voter fraud in elections, the increased use of electronic voting machines have complicated this process. The designs of electronic voting machines and their software are closely guarded secrets by industry insiders but some whistle blowers have been able to show that the machines can be programmed to report whatever vote counts their creators want them to show. A documentary produced by HBO titled *Hacking Democracy* shows how one hacker was able to alter the vote totals to whatever numbers he wanted just by hacking the memory card for such machines. He didn't even need access to the machine itself, the software code, or anything. All he did is place a program on a standard removable memory card for a machine, which are widely available, and he was able to alter the tallies.

Many people suspect that operatives fixed the 2000 election in favor of George W. Bush using electronic voting machines. The 2004 presidential election is also suspected to have been fixed, particularly in the state of Ohio where exit polls showed John Kerry would win, but miraculously the vote counts showed different.

Walden O'Dell, the CEO of Diebold Election Systems, had written a Republican fundraising letter in 2003 where he said his company was "committed to helping Ohio deliver their electoral votes to the President next year." He was obviously referring to President Bush who was facing John Kerry in the 2004 election. When asked about this, Mark Radke, Diebold's marketing director answered, "that quotation that appeared in a letter is something that, uh…he regrets. It's a situation where his personal preference has come over into his business practice and he has committed to keeping a much lower profile when it comes to those kinds of activities."

So it is sad but probably true that your vote doesn't matter in a presidential election. Whichever candidate will better serve the interests of the New World Order will be the one who secret operatives will make sure gets the most votes and becomes the next president. Such tampering actually takes place before the presidential election and is used in the primaries to ensure a particular candidate gets the nomination of his party. The final two candidates of the Republican and the Democratic parties are both most likely aware of the shady vote tampering and can only hope that the secret establishment chooses them to throw their weight behind to select as the next president of the United States.

The Original Blueprint of Domination

Knowing about the rampant corruption and the methods of blackmail and coercion that go on in politics, it is interesting to look back several hundred years at the original writings of Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the Illuminati. These writings were discovered by Bavarian officials in 1786 and published shortly after. English translations and excerpts were made available in books like John Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy* (1798), Abbe Barruel's *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* (1797), and *Proof of the Illuminati* by Seth Payson (1802). The writings give a clear view into the mind and mission of founder Adam Weishaupt.

He wrote, "There must (*a la Jésuite*) not a single purpose ever come in sight that is ambiguous, and that may betray our aims against religion and the state. One must speak sometimes one way and sometimes another, but so as never to contradict ourselves, and so that, with respect to our true way of thinking, we may be impenetrable."

"This can be done in no other way but by secret associations, which will by degrees, and in silence, possess themselves of the government of the States, and make use of those means for this purpose…"

"…the Order will, *for its own sake* , and therefore *certainly* , place every man in that situation in which he can be most effective. The pupils are convinced that the Order *will* rule the world. Every member therefore becomes a ruler."

Some people believe the mainstream history that says the Illuminati were dissolved after their discovery, but reading Weishaupt's own words reveal that he had taken this possibility into consideration and made the appropriate steps to ensure the group would continue if this were to happen.

He wrote, "By this plan we shall direct all mankind. In this manner, and by the simplest means, we shall set all in motion and in flames. The occupations must be so allotted and contrived, that we may, in secret, influence all political transactions…I have considered everything, and so prepared it, that if the Order should this day go to ruin, I shall in a year re-establish it more brilliant than ever."

Wars and False Flag Terrorism

No book on the New World Order would be complete without a discussion about the role wars and false flag terrorism play in the construction and expansion of the global government. This is an extremely detailed and unsettling subject and will only be briefly mentioned here. Entire books are available on specific aspects of this subject if you are interested in learning more. But it must be stated that major wars and terrorist attacks often cover sinister activities and goals the public is largely unaware of.

The reasons for going to war are almost always greatly exaggerated and in numerous instances completely fabricated so the public on a large scale, and the military soldiers who will be risking their lives for that war, will believe that they are fighting for a just cause, such as protecting the United States. In reality, members of the armed forces are often used as imperialistic pawns who unknowingly help construct and expand the New World Order.

For example, the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, as it is called, was the straw that broke the camel’s back and resulted in America getting fully involved in the Vietnam War. This incident refers to an event where North Vietnamese gunboats were reported to have attacked an American ship in international waters, prompting President Johnson to retaliate by entering the war. Years later private presidential tapes were released that show President Johnson and Robert McNamara, his secretary of defense, conspiring to lie and say the American ship was attacked, when in fact it was not.

As any informed American now knows, the War in Iraq was based on lies that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and attempts to link him to the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001 in New York City and Washington DC. The 9/11 attacks, as many know, were a false flag terrorist attack, meaning they were aided by elements of US and foreign intelligence agencies so this traumatic event could be used to justify invading the Middle East, as well as passing legislation domestically such as the Patriot Act which eliminated various rights outlined in the Constitution.

Such strategies are insidiously genius because they are so hard to oppose. After all, if there is an alleged threat, or an actual terrorist attack said to have been perpetrated by a specific country or group, it seems only appropriate to retaliate. False flag terrorism is essentially a terrorist act carried out by a government or intelligence agency, often against one’s own people or country, which is made to look like it was done by another country or group. It is basically framing others for the act which can then be used to justify military action in response. Since most ordinary citizens, as well as those in the military and government would never imagine that leaders in their own government could be behind such an attack against their own country, the idea of incidences being false flag attacks are rarely thought of.

These subjects are massive, and there is no room in this book to detail the piles of evidence for these statements, so if you are interested in learning more about the 9/11 attacks and false flag operations, you are advised to read *The New Pearl Harbor* by David Ray Griffin, *9/11 Synthetic Terror* by Webster Tarpley, or *The Terror Timeline* by Paul Thompson. There are also various films that are often available to view for free on the Internet which detail the purposeful frauds that have been created by the U.S. government in order to start wars. Several of the best are: *War Made Easy* , *Why We Fight* , *Terrorstorm* , *9/11 Press for Truth* , and *Loose Change: Final Cut* .

Also, an interesting historical note regarding wars involves Major General Smedley Butler, who at the time of his death in 1940 was the most decorated U.S. Marine in history. Butler published a small book titled *War is a Racket* which exposed the corrupt profit motives for going to war. Butler also testified before a congressional committee in 1934 where he explained how he was asked to participate in a plot to overthrow president Roosevelt and install a fascist dictatorship. Since Butler was a high ranking and influential man in the Marines, the conspirators hoped he could secretly gather 500,000 men to aid in this takeover. The men behind the attempted plot were wealthy businessmen with strong ties to the Illuminati.

The term “Military-industrial complex” was coined by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his Farewell Address to the Nation on January 17, 1961. The phrase refers to the relationship between the government, particularly the armed forces, and the industries in the commercial sector that provide the weapons, development, and research for such programs and materials.

Eisenhower realized the tremendous money-making capacities of such industries and relationships, and firmly warned of the dangers such relationships could cause if abused.

His speech reads in part, “A vital element in keeping the peace is our military establishment. Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction…”

“This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence — economic, political, even spiritual — is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society. In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals so that security and liberty may prosper together.”

Immorality and Destructive Behavior is Encouraged

In the 1950s Elvis Presley’s swinging hips and sexually suggestive dancing caused a tremendous stir around the world. Some TV stations were ordered only to shoot him from the chest up in an attempt to censor his on-stage antics from the home audience. Now contrast this with today’s pop culture icons who dress like sluts like Britney Spears and others such as Christina Aguilera, Beyonce Knowles, and Lady Gaga, just to name a few.

Self-destructive, sexually immoral, and materialistic idols are built up by the media and presented to the youth as role models, while Christianity and traditional healthy values are ridiculed as old fashioned and uncool. The family is under attack, and family values and the family unit itself have slowly but dramatically deteriorated over the last few decades, and is reflected in the divorce rates and high numbers of sexually transmitted diseases, abortions, and unwed mothers.

A wildly popular show amongst teenagers and young adults was MTV’s *Jackass* which aired from 2000 to 2002, and consisted of nothing more than amateur video footage of people performing various dangerous and childish stunts and pranks. Soon after the show began airing, a slew of reports detailed the injuries of various people imitating or attempting to recreate the idiocy they had seen on the show.

The types of “stunts” performed on the show often involved people getting kicked or hit in the testicles by various objects, as well as smashing shopping carts, and even one individual (Steve-O) having things stapled to his bare butt using a staple gun. It’s also interesting to note that this individual, Steve-O, has a tattoo on his arm of the “Jesus fish” with the word “Satan” written inside, and had gotten a tattoo of a man raping a baby on his arm, but after even his close friends found it appalling, he had an ostrich tattooed over the baby to cover it up. The tattoo now shows a man having sex with the ostrich.[xxxvi] In the *MTV Cribs* episode featuring cast members of *Jackass* , Steve-O picks up the kitten at his apartment and introduces it to the camera as ‘Lucifer.’

On March 9, 2008, Steve-O’s friends forced him to check into Thalians Mental Health Center due to ongoing drug abuse problems.[xxxvii] He was placed on a 72 hour psychiatric hold which was later lengthened to 14 days due to an alleged suicide attempt.[xxxviii]

In June 2008, Steve-O pleaded guilty to felony possession of cocaine and avoided jail by the successful completion of his treatment program.[xxxix] In a later MTV documentary covering his road to sobriety titled *Steve-O: Demise and Rise* , he admitted that he would hear voices and thought that, “I was possessed by demons, and I think that’s pretty evident in some of this footage.”

A spin-off from *Jackass* aired from 2003 to 2005, titled *Viva La Bam* , which consisted of a series of destructive and even cruel pranks done by Bam Margera and his friends on each other—especially on Bam’s family and was an MTV favorite for many viewers.

Several views from within Bam’s home reveal a large symbol resembling an upside down satanic pentagram within a circle, called a ‘heart o gram,’ which is supposed to represent both good and evil. This heart o gram is also used as a hood ornament on Bam’s Mercedes and is the symbol for Bam’s favorite band HIM which has songs such as “Your Sweet Six Six Six.”

The logo for the show *Viva La Bam* features the satanic hand sign ‘el Diablo’ of raising the index and pinky fingers, which has been drawn in as the letter “I” in the word “Viva,” complete with illuminating rays coming from behind it. When *Jackass* first aired, every teenager in the country knew who Johnny Knoxville and the other Jackasses were and the show inspired countless kids to videotape themselves and their friends trying to be “Jackasses” themselves.

Popular Music

Nearly everyone in the world is familiar with the meteoric rise and fall of pop star Britney Spears as we watched her go from a sweet and seemingly innocent teen idol, to a whacked-out, shaved-head, train wreck of a mother.

Her first album was release in 1999 and with each new album she sunk to new moral lows with her legions of preteen and teenage fans mimicking her every move. In 2009 Spears released an album titled *Circus* which contained a song named, “If You Seek Amy,” which on the surface seemed innocent enough until you heard the lyrics sung. The chorus goes, “Love me, hate me, but can’t you see what I see, all of the boys and all of the girls are begging to if you seek Amy.” It may not seem like anything unless you give it a second read, or hear the song for yourself.

The words “if you seek Amy,” blend together to sound like the letters F, U, C, K, and the word “me.” So what she is really saying is all of the boys and all of the girls want to fuck her.

It’s important to note that this is not simply a coincidence or that this author is reading too much into the lyrics. The song was specifically designed to sound like this. The official video for the song begins with a news broadcast with a banner on the bottom of the screen reading, “New Britney Spears lyrics spell out obscenity in disguise.”

Her album *The Singles Collection* , also released in 2009, includes a song titled “3” which contains lyrics about having a three-some and having sex with two guys at the same time. “Living in sin is the new thing,” she sings. Some other lyrics read:

1, 2, 3

not only you and me

Got one eighty degrees

And I'm caught in between

In the early morning hours of November 12, 2009, someone hacked Britney's Twitter account and changed the background graphic from one promoting her new album to one featuring pyramids inscribed with the word "Illuminati" with an all-seeing eye at the top. They also "Tweeted" (Twitter terminology for posting a message), "I hope the New World Order will arrive as soon as possible" and that "I give myself to Lucifer every day for it to arrive as soon as possible. Glory to Satan!"[xl] Her Twitter account had 3.7 million followers at the time, and her staff scrambled to regain control of the account as soon as the hack was discovered. Obviously the hacker is fully aware that Spears is an Illuminati icon and is promoted to poison the minds of young girls.

A pop singer who goes by the name Katy Perry (Real name Katherine Hudson) was placed in the limelight in 2008 following the release of her single, "I Kissed a Girl," which was a song about her sexually experimenting by making out with a girl. "I kissed a girl, and I liked it / the taste of her cherry ChapStick / I kissed a girl just to try it / hope my boyfriend don't mind it," she sings. What's more disturbing is that Perry's parents are Christian pastors and she released a self-titled gospel album in 2001 before turning to the dark side.

Another look at the 230 year old writings of Adam Weishaupt reveals that icons like Britney Spears and Katy Perry are playing right into the hands of the Illuminati without even knowing it. Weishaupt wrote, "There is no way of influencing men so powerfully as by means of the women. These should therefore be our chief study; we should insinuate ourselves into their good opinion, give them hints of emancipation from the tyranny of public opinion, and of standing up for themselves; it will be an immense relief to their enslaved minds to be freed from any one bond of restraint, and it will fire them the more, and cause them to work for us with zeal, without knowing that they do so; for they will only be indulging their own desire of personal admiration."

Almost everyone in the world is familiar with rapper Eminem (Marshall Mathers) but many may not be aware of just how violent and disgusting his lyrics are. Many of his songs are about killing people, raping women, doing drugs, and other violent acts. It would be foolish to say that people who listen to such music aren't encouraged and inspired to commit violent acts as a result. In 2005 a man in London was arrested for killing a woman for no reason after performing Eminem songs at a karaoke bar.[xli] The man was said to idolize Eminem and even had several tattoos similar to the rap star.

Eminem is also a member of a rap group called D-12, which produces music that is exclusively violent and vile, with some lyrics saying, "I will shit on you I don't care who you are / I'll shit on you / I don't give a fuck about you or your car / Fuck your house / Fuck your jewelry / And fuck your watch / Fuck your wife / Fuck your kids / Fuck your family / I'll shit on you."

Most of the group's songs are about killing people and doing drugs. D-12 has sold over 10 million albums worldwide. On April 11th 2006 one of the group's members named DeShaun Dupree Holton (stage name Proof) was shot in the head and killed at a Detroit bar by a bouncer after the rapper had shot and killed another man after an altercation. He was Eminem's best friend. Eminem also launched the career of 50 Cent who in 2008 was estimated to be worth $450 million dollars and one of the richest rappers. An example of 50 Cent's lyrics which appear in the song *I'll Be the Shooter*, are, "I-I'll be the shooter / I-I'll use the Colt, the Taurus, or the Ruger / I'll pop some through ya / Dirty is what I'll do ya / I-I'll use the Sig, the pump, or the German Luger."

The examples of pop music containing overtly violent and sexually explicit material could go on and on. What is important to note here is not that such music exists, but that the singers and rap stars who perform such songs are built up in the mainstream media as gods and role models that children often imitate. Songs about three-somes and violence create a culture where such behavior is seen as normal. At one point in time, not that distant in the past, such songs would have been completely shunned or created a national outrage, but today many young boys and girls continuously fill their minds with such garbage from their iPods and television sets and their parents don't have a clue, or don't even care.

Television Commercials

Everyone knows that sex sells, and using attractive women in commercials is an expected part of TV ads, but some commercials center around messages that have nothing to do with the product while still encouraging or finding humor in immoral behavior while the product may be completely innocent. One such commercial that was popular in 2009 was one for Minute Maid juice where a man is approached by a woman who is his child's teacher saying, "I think you're the father of one of my kids" and he mistakes her for some girl he had a drunken one night stand with on Spring Break years earlier. Teachers often refer to their students as "my kids" and apparently someone at the Minute Maid company thought it would be funny to make a commercial centered around a scumbag who slept with some slut on Spring Break when he was drunk and thought he knocked her up.

The online dating site, AshelyMadison.com advertises on TV showing a couple making out with each other and getting undressed in bed and then displays text on the screen reading, "This couple is married…but *not* to each other." The company's trademarked slogan is, "Life is short. Have an affair." There was a time in the past when such a commercial would never be played, because no TV network would air such garbage, but in the New World Order nearly every last hint of morality has been tossed away, and hedonism, selfishness and immorality are the norm. AshleyMadison.com boasts of having 3.86 million users and is designed exclusively for married people who want to find someone else to have sex with, without their spouse knowing about it.

For years now, television commercials advertising Las Vegas end with the slogan, "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas," which means that you and your friends are encouraged to go there and sleep with hookers, do illegal drugs, and gamble all you can, and that nobody must mention these activities to other friends, girlfriends, wives, or family members, because most decent people would be completely appalled by such behavior. This phrase is actually trademarked by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Las Vegas has been known as the "Sin City" for decades, but in 1999 this new "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas" slogan was coined and was implemented in multiple television commercials encouraging people to visit the city and take part in all forms of debauchery it has to offer, but to keep it to themselves to avoid any social repercussions once they return home.

Video Games

Today, both kids and adults enjoy playing video games and the graphics and action are beyond what anyone could have imagined who grew up playing the Atari or Nintendo game systems in the 1980s. Game types range from role playing adventures, to sports games and shoot ’em ups. With the increased processing power and graphics capabilities of these systems, there is an increased realness to the games, and when an abnormal amount of time is spent playing violent shoot ’em up games, many psychologists fear that it desensitizes people to such violence. Such games place the user in the position where they “kill” dozens, perhaps hundreds of people, and in some games the targets aren’t “bad guys,” but instead are ordinary innocent people or police, and the point of some games is to just create havoc and kill as many people as you can, and enjoy doing it.

Where passively watching countless hours of television or films depicting such violence desensitizes people to it, the active involvement of these realistic videogames dramatically increase this desensitization and teach the users to find pleasure and rewards for the more people they kill.

One of the most notoriously violent videogames is the *Grand Theft Auto* series where players attempt to rise up the ranks of the criminal underworld through various objectives and are encouraged to commit mindless violent criminal acts. For example, in one mission the player gains points by killing people and causing destruction throughout the city and if they steal a police car and run people over with it, they receive double the number of points since they are killing with a police car, instead of if they had stolen an ordinary vehicle.

The game has generated a decent amount of controversy from parents who are outraged that a game exists with such sinister goals, and the game’s creators have had multiple lawsuits filed against them claiming the game has encouraged or inspired several people to steal cars and commit multiple murders.

William Buckner, who was 15 at the time, and his younger brother Josh (13) ended up killing two people after shooting them while they were driving on the freeway. They told police they went out to shoot at the side of trucks after playing *Grand Theft Auto III* .[xlii]

The victims' families filed a $246 million dollar lawsuit against Rockstar Games, Take-Two Interactive Software, Wal-Mart, and Sony Computer Entertainment America who manufactures the Playstation 2 game counsel. Rockstar and its parent company, Take-Two, filed for dismissal of the lawsuit in 2003, stating in U.S. District Court that the "ideas and concepts as well as the 'purported psychological effects' on the Buckners are protected by the First Amendment's free-speech clause."

An attempt to move the lawsuit into a state court was unsuccessful under Tennessee's consumer protection act and the plaintiffs dismissed the case.

Another lawsuit involving the game was started in 2005 after a 17 year old named Devin Moore shot and killed three police officers in Alabama after he was questioned regarding a stolen vehicle. When being questioned, Moore took a gun from one of the police officers and shot and killed him and two others and then fled in a police car. One of Moore's attorneys, Jack Thompson, claimed it was *Grand Theft Auto's* graphic nature—with his constant playing time—that caused Moore to commit the murders, and Moore's family agrees.

At the time of this writing, the case has not been resolved and is ongoing. Lawyer Jack Thompson has said, "There's no doubt in my mind that but for Devin Moore's training on this cop killing simulator, he would not have been able to kill three cops in Fayette, Alabama who are now dead and in the ground. We are suing Take-Two, Sony, Wal-Mart, and GameStop for having trained Devin Moore to kill. He had no history of violence. No criminal record."

Another teenager named Cody Posey who was said to obsessively play the game murdered his father, stepmother, and stepsister in New Mexico.

In 2009, a six-year-old boy took his mom's car attempting to drive himself to school because he missed the bus, only to crash the car and luckily avoid serious injury. The child was able to drive the car over ten miles before crashing, and told the sheriff that he had trained how to drive on video games, specifically mentioning *Grand Theft Auto* .[xliii]

The Guinness World Records lists the game as the most controversial videogame series in history for glamorizing violence and its connections to actual crimes.[xliv]

Another videogame that wastes countless hours of people's lives is the online role-playing game *World of Warcraft* . It's sort of an advanced *Dungeons and Dragons* type of game, which has become synonymous with an antisocial outcast living in his parent's basement. The game type is a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) which requires players to subscribe to a monthly service in order to play with other online gamers. The game made the *Guinness Book of World Records* for the most subscribed MMORPG, with more than 11.5 million monthly subscriptions.

Such a game takes the players into a completely fictional fantasy land where they often find themselves spending dozens of hours a week. Such a large chunk of time obviously takes away from social activities such as hanging out with friends or going to parties, as well as physical activities like playing sports. Instead, many *World of Warcraft* players find themselves sitting in front of their computer screen alone hour after hour, with their social skills and physical fitness deteriorating with every passing minute.

Gay Children's Books

Everyone knows how impressionable children are. They believe in Santa Clause, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy, after all. While parents cannot have complete control over the values and behaviors of their children, it is undeniable that the environment children are exposed to and the values and behaviors of the adults in their life largely influence them.

For example, the children of Anton LaVey, the founder of the Church of Satan, all grew up and continued to carry on the legacy of their father and are avowed Satanists themselves.

While homosexuality is a complex and sensitive issue, it cannot be denied that heterosexual desires, behaviors, and couples are normal, and the small percentage of homosexuals represent an abnormal minority whose strange desires and behaviors are the result of some kind of neurological or hormonal disorder. This is not to say that they should be hated for what could be something they cannot fully control. But to teach young children that homosexuality is a normal and natural thing is an absolute abomination, yet in the 21st century the homosexual indoctrination of children took a disturbing turn when various children's books began to find their way into schools which involved plots of gay characters and were being forced on the young students.

In 2006 at Estabrook Elementary School in Lexington, Massachusetts, a teacher had chosen the theme of "weddings" for reading time, and the book she chose to read to the children was a picture book titled *King and King* which tells the story of two men who fall in love and get married. The book begins with a Queen nagging her unmarried son, the prince, because he is not married, saying, "When I was your age, I'd been married twice already."

The Queen brings in a bunch of princesses from neighboring kingdoms for him to choose from to be his wife, but he ended up being attracted to one of the princess's brothers. "At last, the prince felt a stir in his heart. It was love at first sight," the book reads.

The two princes get married after a whirlwind courtship and are then crowned "king and king," instead of king and queen. The last page shows a drawing of the two "kings" kissing each other on the lips.

A similar book titled *And Tango Makes Three,* describes two male penguins who adopt a baby penguin and raise it together. The two penguins are clearly identified as being two men, and at one point in the story the zoo keeper says they must be in love.

One school superintendent, Jennifer Filyaw, said she considered the book “adorable” and appropriate for children ages 4 to 8.[xlv] Parents pressured the school to have the book removed from the school library, and were opposed by gay activists who claimed that would amount to “censorship.”

At the Alameda Unified School District in California in 2009 the school board voted to uphold a special LBGT (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender) curriculum, and forced 2nd graders to read *And Tango Makes Three* .[xlvi]

The interesting thing about those who push the homosexual agenda is that they claim everyone should not be judgmental and that all views and lifestyles should be accepted, yet at the same time, they attack conservatives or Christians who are opposed to such agendas. So while claiming people shouldn’t judge, many gays themselves judge others who have differing opinions and values regarding homosexual agendas, even when those opposed to such things are respectful in their differences.

The original writings of the Illuminati read, “We must win the common people in every corner. This will be obtained chiefly by means of the schools, and by open, hearty behavior, show, condescension, popularity, and toleration of their prejudices, which we shall at leisure root out and dispel.”

Obama’s Perverted “Safe Schools Czar”

Kevin Jennings, the person president Obama appointed to be his “safe schools czar” is a homosexual who acknowledged that when he was a schoolteacher he advised a 15 year old boy to use condoms when having sex with an older man he met at a bus station bathroom. Not only did Jennings fail to report this incident of statutory rape to authorities, but in the months following he befriended this young boy who would come by his office and tell him of his gay “adventures.”

Jennings writes about this in his 2007 autobiography, *Mama’s Boy, Preacher’s Son: A Memoir* . On page 162, Jennings writes: “Robertson soon told me the tale, about someone he’d met in Boston, how he thought he loved him, how heartbroken he was when his calls never got returned…" On page 169, he continues: "As the fall wore on, Robertson continued to drop by my office to chat, often updating me on his latest 'adventures.' Sometimes these startled me, and I began to underline the importance of safe sex to him."

It wouldn't be surprising if Jennings secretly had a crush on this young boy and found sexual gratification from hearing about all of his homosexual encounters. Jennings is also the author/editor of a book titled O*ne Teacher in 10* , which is, "A collection of more than 30 accounts by gay and lesbian teachers from schools and universities across the country. Each narrative recounts its author's experiences either as an openly gay or lesbian teacher or during the period of coming out."

Jennings has also written about his past drug use and his contempt for religion, and promotes homosexuality in schools. Department of Education spokesman Justin Hamilton declined to comment on Jennings' statements about encouraging the young boy to have sex with the older man, but Arne Duncan who is Obama's Secretary of Education, said he was "honored" to work with Jennings and described him as "uniquely qualified for his job." [xlvii]

Some defenders say the Obama administration wasn't aware of Jennings past, but it was written clearly in his autobiography and as Peter Sprigg of the Family Research Council said, "This controversy about the possible statutory rape was raised in 2004 when he received an award from the NEA. So it's not like it's been a secret. So I think it shows yet another failure of the Obama administration's vetting process."

As if these issues weren't bad enough, the perversions of Kevin Jennings actually get much worse. In March 2000 the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) of Massachusetts held a conference where workshop leaders taught children as young as 14 how to "fist" each other, which is the dangerous sexual practice of sticking an entire hand up the rectum of another individual. Kevin Jennings is the founder of GLSEN and was the keynote speaker at this conference. In 2007 he was paid over $250,000 as its executive director.

At the 2001 GLSEN conference, activists handed out over 400 “fisting kits” which included rubber gloves and lubrication to the children who attended. In 2005 this same organization handed out hundreds of copies of a booklet to kids titled *The Little Black Book: Queer in the 21st Century* which contained sections titled: *Fucking; Licking Butt; Piss Play, and Fisting* , each of which describes in very graphic language the practices of these different types of gay sex activities.

Slutty Halloween Costumes

It’s a well-known aspect of Halloween that young adults, particularly female college students, like to dress up in the skimpiest and sluttiest outfits possible that night, but a disturbing trend can be seen in the costumes for young children. Very skimpy and slutty costumes are now found on the shelves for very young children and some parents who are lost in the culture of the New World Order don’t think anything of it.

Fortunately there are still parents with morals and decent values. “If girls get used to dressing like this, they might want to become a whore after Halloween,” said Harlem mom Malinda Martinez, 33, who has a 6-year-old girl. “They’re far too grown up for kids.” [xlviii]

The marketing message for many children’s costumes are more blatantly sexual than ever before. “The Navy ships won’t want to leave the dock unless this cute sailor girl is on board,” reads one catalog entry for a teeny-weeny sailor costume in sizes that can fit a 4-year-old that was sold by a Party City store on West 14th Street in New York City.

“It is so wrong,” said Sharon Lamb, author of the book *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters From Marketers’ Schemes* . “The message being put out there is that it’s right to be slutty on Halloween. That’s what Halloween is all about now. The one night when it’s OK to live your fantasies, marketers are telling children their fantasies should involve sex. It is very damaging.” [xlix]

An article in the *New York Post* explains that a reporter found an array of slutty Halloween costumes for children at a Party City on East Fourth Street in New York City, including:

A Goldilocks costume suitable for a Penthouse party with clingy gingham lace-up peasant dress with a white petticoat “that’s all grown up, and you can have your porridge and more.”

A pirate costume called the “High Seas Hottie” made in sizes to fit an 8-year-old.

A women-in-chains fantasy costume called “Convict Cutie” that features a spandex dress and lace-up bodice.

A “Devil Grrrl” costume for 10 to 14-year-olds that includes a flaming-red dress and tail, skanky fishnet hose and gloves and a tiny pitchfork. “This grrrl devil likes to get things heating up!” the packaging boasts.

One blogger wrote, “Every year, it gets harder and harder to find a costume for my oldest daughter that won’t get her picked up by the cops as a street walker…I’m still on my search to find a costume that doesn’t have a mini-skirt, lace-up corset or have the word ‘cutie’ in it for my 5-year-old. I may have to resort to making her a ghost by throwing a sheet over her.”[l]

Jack Black’s Prayer to Satan on MTV

At the 2009 Video Music Awards on MTV, a popular award show, actor Jack Black decided to offer up a prayer of thanks to Satan. “Since we’re giving a rock award tonight, who wants to pray to the Devil with me? Let me see those horns! (referring to the El Diablo hand sign of extending the index and pinky fingers.) Now take the hand of the person next to you. Dear dark lord Satan…just wanted to ask you to grant tonight’s winners continued success in the music industry.”

Much of the crowd cheered with encouragement and many held up their “Devil horns” in unison with Black. MTV continues to be a major sewer pipe pouring garbage of all kinds into the living rooms of millions.

Anti-God Advertisements in New York Sub-way Stations

A coalition of eight different atheist organizations purchased a month’s worth of advertising space in a dozen subway stations in Manhattan in order to promote atheism and attack belief in God. One poster reads “A million New Yorkers are good without God. Are you?” The groups behind the ads, which calls themselves the Big Apple Coalition of Reason, say they are, “part of a coordinated multi-organizational advertising campaign designed to raise awareness about people who don’t believe in a god.” [li]

The New York City subway system is used by more than 5 million people per day. The organizers bragged that the 2009 American Religious Identification Survey indicated that approximately 15% of those surveyed check “none” for religion, up from 8% in 1990 and said that this was just the beginning of a nationwide effort to post their materials in transit systems across the country.

Atheism is promoted by the Illuminati and the establishment because they know that most religions instill moral values in people and promote a code of conduct that enriches peoples’ lives and helps them to be happier, healthier, and create systems of accountability through friends to discourage and minimize destructive, immoral, and unhealthy behaviors. A population of hedonists whose lives are in shambles because of credit card debt, alcohol and drug abuse, and destructive broken relationships are going to be too wrapped up in their own lives and problems to care about looking into what their lawmakers and politicians are doing. Such people are not going to become organized or even speak up about any issues directly affecting them and will not get in the way of the New World Order.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Encouraged

Since a population trapped in a downward spiral of drug and alcohol abuse will not care to learn about political issues or get involved, this behavior is also encouraged. Celebrities are worshiped by the mentally enslaved who mimic their behavior and habits, finding them cool and exciting. It’s interesting to learn that many musicians are complete phonies who portray a lifestyle in their music that is completely different from their personal lives.

Others become nearly destroyed by the very attitudes and behaviors that shot them to stardom. Rap celebrity Dr. Dre released an album called *The Chronic* in 1992 which featured a large pot leaf printed on the CD face (chronic is a slang term for marijuana) and contained numerous references to smoking weed, doing drugs, and committing crimes. In August of 2008 Dr. Dre's first son Andre Young Jr. died at the age of 20 from an overdose of heroin and morphine.[lii]

Rapper 50 Cent burst on the music scene in 2003 with his single *In Da Club* with lyrics saying, "You can find me in the club, bottle full of bub [alcohol] / Look mommy I got the X [Ecstasy] if you're into taking drugs," portraying the image of a club hopping party animal, but in interviews 50 Cent has repeatedly stated that he is a home body and doesn't like to go out to clubs.

One particular radio station in San Diego, and I'm sure in multiple other cities as well, plays the sound of a water bong (a device used for smoking marijuana) every day at 4:20pm celebrating "420" which is a number used by pot smokers to signify smoking marijuana. This author observed a scene once in the TV show *Nip/Tuck* where a character pulled out a water bong and smoked weed with his grandmother. The show airs on the cable station FX. Showing a water bong being smoked on TV is something that never happened until the 21st century when society sunk to a new level as it continued to deteriorate.

This author is personally fairly libertarian when it comes to marijuana laws and sees the criminalization of possession and use largely a money making ploy for private prisons, but it's not just marijuana that is being portrayed as cool and fun. Films like *Blow* (2001) starring Johnny Depp sensationalize cocaine use, and *Trainspotting* (1996) did the same thing for heroine.

Banking, Money, and Taxes

Perhaps you have noticed that frequently the largest and most extravagant buildings in most cities (and even small towns) are banks. It’s fascinating how banks make money off interest, which is one of the most lucrative businesses known to man. While most businesses build a product or provide some kind of service involving manual labor or specialized knowledge, banks make enormous profits through the seemingly magical practice of lending people money and collecting interest on the loans.

When one really looks into how money is created and used, and how interest is generated from loans, it becomes clear that the banking industry is one of the pillars of the New World Order and is at the core of the elite’s ability to control people, politicians, and even governments of large countries.

You’ll often hear people familiar with this issue say that the banks “create money out of nothing, and then loan it out at interest.” Such a statement is hard to grasp at first, but conveys just how big of a con the banking industry is involved in. Such a con game goes back thousands of years and is often blamed on the Jews due to their money lending practices in Biblical times.

In the 10th century the Knights Templar figured out this amazing strategy and became the first international bankers in Europe and the practice contributed greatly to their wealth. On October 13, 1307 (Friday the 13th) the leadership of the Knights Templar was arrested in France for allegedly practicing strange and satanic rituals, a charge most prominent occultists admit was true. Surviving Knights Templar went underground and are believed to have started Freemasonry which they used as a cover for their occult beliefs and practices. Freemasons then continued to operate (and still continue) as a Mystery School which the Illuminati was able to graft onto. Besides functioning as a place to learn occult theology and mysticism, other areas of life are also taught and nurtured in these Mystery Schools such as science, business, and banking.

Because the business of banking is extremely profitable, and the banks owners don't have to build any products or really provide any services involving extensive manual labor, cunning businessmen saw the potential for virtually unlimited easy money and became involved in the industry. People like Paul Warburg, J.P. Morgan, and others monopolized the industry, thus securing their wealth for countless generations and giving them the ability to buy politicians and fund their personal plans for a global government.

The Federal Reserve

In understanding the role of money and banking in the New World Order, it is important to know about the true nature of the Federal Reserve (often simply called "the Fed"). Most people think the Federal Reserve is a government owned bank in the United States or a branch of the Department of the Treasury, but this couldn't be further from the truth. "The Federal Reserve is no more federal than Federal Express" is the joke that people familiar with this issue often tell. And they're right.

The Federal Reserve is a private group of banks that lends money to the United States government in the same way your local bank lends you money. This ingenious scheme was put in place in 1913 with the passing of the Federal Reserve Act which was drawn up in secret by a group of wealthy banksters when they met on Jekyll Island off the coast of Georgia three years earlier. Ever since the Federal Reserve Act was put into law, the United States has become a servant to the elite international bankers and the national debt has skyrocketed out of control.

Thomas Jefferson, the 3rd president of the United States once said, "I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around [the banks] will deprive the people of all property until their children wake-up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered. The issuing power should be taken from the banks and restored to the people, to whom it properly belongs."

Alan Greenspan, who worked as the Chairman of the Federal Reserve for over eighteen years, made an extremely candid statement once about how powerful the Federal Reserve is when being interviewed on PBS while he was promoting his book *The Age of Turbulence* (2007).

The interviewer, Jim Lahr, asked him what the proper relationship should be between the chairman of the Federal Reserve and a president of the United States, to which Greenspan answered, “Well, first of all, the Federal Reserve is an independent agency, and that means basically that there is no other agency of government which can overrule actions that we take…what the relationships are don’t frankly matter.”

To learn more about this fascinating and important issue, you are urged to watch the films, *Money As Debt* , *The Money Masters* , or *Monopoly Men* .

Gold and Silver

People against the New World Order will often be interested in investing in gold and silver—particularly physical gold and silver—meaning they purchase coins or bars that they themselves take physical possession of, rather than just buying gold or silver stocks or certificates. The reason for this is because gold and silver are seen as real money, as opposed to a fiat currency like the US dollar. A fiat currency is a currency that isn’t backed by gold or silver. Before 1971 the US dollar was backed by gold which meant that for every dollar in circulation, there was one dollar worth of gold in possession by the federal government or the Federal Reserve Bank. This was a way to keep inflation low since the gold supply only slowly increased, so then would inflation.

But in 1971 President Nixon took the US dollar off the gold standard, meaning the Federal Reserve could print money and put it in circulation that was not backed by gold, so the rate of inflation was no longer connected to the amount of gold in existence, but rather to the number of dollars the Federal Reserve wanted to print.

For decades, patriots and those in *The Resistance* had worried that the Federal Reserve Banking System, which is controlled by a group of private banks operating as if they were a government entity, would one day make the US dollar practically worthless because it would print so many of them it would create what is called hyper-inflation, thus destroying the value of the currency as was seen in the Weimar Republic in Germany in the 1930s, and recently in Zimbabwe, Africa where the inflation rate was so high that a bunch of bananas cost literally billions of Zimbabwe dollars.

Since the year 2000 gold has went from $300 an ounce to over $1100 an ounce in the beginning of 2010. Silver went from $5.25 an ounce to $18 an ounce in the same timeframe. Some market analysts predict that gold will hit $2000 an ounce sometime into the 2010 decade, and others are even predicting $5000 an ounce. Much of the increase in the price of gold and silver isn't because the metals are getting rarer, but rather the price is a reflection of the weakening US dollar. Gold and silver have been seen as a hedge against inflation for decades and most financial advisers recommend that 10% of a person's investments should be held in gold.

In a video that got several hundred thousand views on YouTube, this author offered to sell random strangers walking along a boardwalk on a beach a one ounce gold coin for $50, and in some cases, $20, and once tried to trade it for a cup of coffee, but nobody expressed any interest. Some didn't want the coin because it was Canadian and didn't think it had much value in America, not realizing that a one ounce gold coin stamped with a picture of Mickey Mouse is still an ounce of gold and can be sold at any coin shop for whatever the spot price of gold is going for that day.

Some of the comments on the video by the viewer's said they thought the people I approached thought it was a fake coin and that was why they didn't want to buy it for fifty bucks. These people missed the point of the video which was to show that very few people have any clue whatsoever about what the value of gold is, so I shot another video to clearly illustrate this.

In the follow up video I offered random passers-by the coin for free if they knew or could guess how much gold was trading for that day within 25%. You have to see the video to really grasp the impact of it, and if you watch it you will see that adults over the age of 30 guessed as low as thirty-eight cents and as high as $245. At the time the video was shot, gold was trading for $1150 per ounce. After the "contestants," as I called them, gave me their answer, I told them how much the coin was actually worth and captured their reactions on the video.

People concerned with the New World Order are especially interested in owning physical gold and silver because they are aware of the elite's ultimate goal of establishing one currency for the whole world, and in order to accomplish this it is likely that the United States dollar will have to be made practically worthless through hyper-inflation at which point the solution for this currency crisis will be the introduction of a new regional currency or an adoption of a global currency. (See *One World Currency*)

Another reason for physically holding a collection of silver coins (usually one ounce coins which is the standard weight) is the possibility that a community barter system or an underground economy may have to be used for a period of time during a hyper-inflation scenario. In the event of a hyper-inflationary depression and the US dollar becomes practically worthless, or loses 90% of its value in a short time frame, small mom and pop stores, as well as neighborhoods and perhaps entire communities may start using one ounce silver coins as money to exchange goods and services. A small local bakery may only sell loaves of bread for a one ounce silver coin, or someone with a large farm or garden may sell their produce to others in their community, but only for silver. If this sounds far-fetched you should be aware that during the hyper-inflation in Zimbabwe, street vendors stopped taking the country's currency because of the massive daily inflation, and would only accept grams of gold for payment.[liii]

Since a one ounce gold coin has a fairly high value, it is advised that you purchase and hold onto at least a small amount of one ounce silver coins because their value can be matched with various products or services. In the event of this kind of a black market economy arising, very few transactions would need to be made in gold because one ounce of gold is worth approximately 50 times what an ounce of silver is worth. If a loaf of bread is selling for one ounce of silver, and all you have is one ounce gold coins (or even half ounce or quarter ounces) then you're going to have to buy way more bread than you could possibly need at the moment. This would be like shopping at a Dollar Store with only $100 dollar bills and the store wouldn't be able to give you any change.

Income Tax and the IRS

A faction of *The Resistance* is adamant about the federal income tax being illegal, and don't believe the 16th Amendment was properly ratified, therefore they don't believe the income tax should be paid. Some people who believe this actually stop paying their income taxes, and a handful of people who have done so and been taken to court over it and won, are used as examples by these people as evidence that they are correct. This is a dangerous fight to pick and is extremely difficult to win. Most people who believe the income tax is illegal, still pay their taxes because they know that when it comes to the government wanting its money, they will stop at nothing to get it. Thomas Jefferson said, "the power to tax is the power to destroy," and he was correct.

Aaron Russo's 2006 film *America: Freedom to Fascism* is perhaps one of the most popular films on the subject of the income tax being illegal. In the film he interviews former IRS agents, tax protesters, and others who all subscribe to the belief that the tax is illegal.

Ed and Elaine Brown are a married couple from New Hampshire who got national media attention in 2007 after they had a five month standoff with federal authorities after refusing to turn themselves in after having been convicted of tax crimes. Their home was designed to function "off the grid" and they had stockpiled food and supplies, but also had help from various visitors who were allowed on the property during the standoff. The Browns were known to be armed and police had feared another Ruby Ridge type of incident if they tried to forcefully arrest them. After the five month standoff they were eventually arrested by undercover officers posing as supporters who were invited into the house by the Browns on October 4, 2007 and were immediately arrested without incident.

Four individuals who assisted the Browns during the standoff were later convicted in connection with the matter. Their sentences ranged from two and a half years to thirty six years in prison for bringing the Browns food and supplies during the standoff.

Regarding tax protesters, it’s significant to note that Irwin Schiff, the father of economic guru and Senate candidate Peter Schiff, was sentenced to thirteen years in prison after being found guilty of tax evasion. The courts claimed Irwin owed over $2 million dollars in back taxes. Irwin was a prominent tax protester and conducted seminars teaching people why he thought paying income tax was illegal.

2009 Tea Party Protests

April 15,th as you probably know, is “Tax Day” in America, and is the deadline for filing your yearly income tax statement. While nobody likes paying taxes, and they continuously go up with little opposition from citizens, Tax Day in 2009 was different in the United States. The Tea Party protests, as they have become known as, were (and continue to be) a nationwide coordinated protest against big government, economic stimulus packages, government spending, and high taxes in general. Millions of Americans gathered in rallies across the country to show their displeasure with the out of control government. The name “Tea Party” is a reference to the Boston Tea Party from the American Revolution where colonists boarded British ships in 1773 and destroyed large quantities of tea by throwing it in the water as a symbolic protest against taxation without representation.

The liberal media collectively labeled the Tea Party protesters as “tea baggers” which is a slang term for sucking on testicles. Liberal commentators all knew this which was evident by their inability to contain their smirks and giggles every time they said it.

CNN’s Anderson Cooper (a homosexual) was interviewing David Gergen about opposition to the 2009 stimulus packages, when Gergen commented that the Republicans “still haven’t found their voice” referring to a consensus on how to deal with the ensuing recession, when Cooper jumped in and said, “it’s hard to talk when you’re tea bagging.” Cooper’s disgusting comment with clear sexual overtones caused his guests to all giggle like children. Despite a backlash by people upset with his vulgar joke, no disciplinary action was taken.[liv]

Rachel Maddow on MSNBC (another homosexual) covered the Tea Party protests with a perverted slant, emphasizing the words “tea bagging” throughout the segment, causing her off camera staff (a camera man or production assistant) to laugh out loud which was clearly audible. “They don’t want to tea bag alone, if that’s even possible,”[lv] she joked, again referring to the sexual connotations that such a term holds.

Another left wing MSNBC host, Keith Olbermann, made a joke about cleaning up after the tea bagging and then admitted, “and that will be my last intentional double entendre on this one, at least until the end of the segment.” A double entendre is a figure of speech which is meant to be understood in either of two ways, one being straightforward, and the other less so, often risqué or inappropriate.

A report posted on the Anti-Defamation League’s (ADL) website, titled *Rage Grows in America: Anti-Government Conspiracies* , lists the Tea Party protests as evidence that since the election of Barack Obama as president, “a climate of fervor and activism with manifestations ranging from incivility in public forums to acts of intimidation and violence” has occurred in America.

The report contains a section titled The *Tea Parties* which reads, “The rapid growth of anti-government anger in the wake of Obama’s election first became apparent in the spring of 2009, when conservative groups and grass-roots activists organized a nationwide series of anti-government rallies dubbed ‘Tea Parties.’ At these events, and later sequels, anti-government sentiments and conspiracy theories proliferated, with a common theme being that somehow Obama had ‘stolen’ the country from Americans.”[lvi]

This report also lists Alex Jones from Infowars.com as the “Conspiracy King” and says, “Further out into the extremist fringe, one person in particular has been responsible for stirring up anti-government and anti-Obama conspiracy theories in the United States.”

Establishment Attempts to Demonize Critics of Obama's Economic Policies

MSNBC host Carlos Watson, who is an African American, was addressing the increased use of people labeling President Obama as a socialist because of his policies, when Watson stated, "you start to wonder, in fact, if the word socialist is becoming a code word, whether or not socialist is becoming the new N-word." [lvii]

After a story broke about Barrack Obama's wife Michelle having 26 aids, and conservatives were questioning why she would need so many and were concerned about the cost, MSNBC's Chris Matthews tried to quell such criticism by stating, "When I heard people going after the first lady and the number of staff that they have, it sounds racist to me. It sounds like people are mad we have a black first lady." [lviii]

Comedian Janeane Garofalo stated on MSNBC's *Countdown with Keith Olbermann* that the Tea Party protests in 2009 were not about protesting out of control government spending or increasing taxes, but that, "Let's be very honest about what this is about. It's not about bashing democrats, it's not about taxes, they have no idea what the Boston Tea Party was about. They don't know their history at all. This is about hating a black man in the White House. This is racism straight up…and there is no way around that." She was not joking.

Former Democratic President Jimmy Carter told Brian Williams during an interview on NBC that, "I think an overwhelming portion of the intentionally demonstrated animosity towards President Barrack Obama is based on the fact that he is a black man, that he's African American….and I think it's bubbled up to the surface because of a belief among many white people, not just in the south, but around the country, that African Americans are not qualified to lead this great country." [lix]

The Servant Class

So a private bank (the Federal Reserve) has a stranglehold over the United States government, in much of the same way that many consumers are in debt to credit cards or other unsecured loans. (An unsecured loan is a loan that is not backed by collateral.) Much of consumer debt is due to people “buying things they don’t need with money they don’t have” as the cliché goes. Dining out, bar tabs, new clothes, and vacations often rack up enormous credit card debt which then continues to rise with compounding interest, with people often only making the minimum payment that doesn’t even cover the previous month’s interest.

The larger the national debt of the United States government goes, the higher taxes are raised, and the lower the standard of living gets. You often hear that “the middle class is shrinking,” which means that more and more people will never own a home or be able to retire, and will never really accumulate any valuable assets. Another cliché, “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer” is sadly coming true.

A major financial goal for the New World Order is to completely erode the middle class and leave only two social classes remaining: the wealthy, and the poor working class who will forever be slaves to the system, laboring away to pay their taxes and fuel the lifestyles of the elite Illuminati.

While many people fear this coming and are trying to fight against it, the vast majority of Americans are happy as long as they can get drunk and watch football on the weekends, and have come to embrace their slavery. The elite are pleased with this servant class since they are uninformed and out of the way, and while living only for the moment, they don’t even consider the possibility that there is more to life or that they have been reduced to mere peasants.

One World Currency

People who are aware of the emerging New World Order often warn of a coming one world currency, and the “mark of the beast.” In fact, many Christians are aware of Revelation 13:16-18 which states, “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.”

The infamous mark of the beast is fairly well known in Christian circles, and secular circles as well. The term refers to a passage in the Book of Revelation, which is the last book in the Bible, and indicates some kind of mark that the Antichrist world dictator will force everyone to take on their right hand or on their forehead, and if they don’t, then they will not be able to buy or sell anything or partake in any kind of financial transactions using money.

This book of the Bible is believed by most scholars to have been written sometime between the year 68 A.D. and 90 A.D. by John of Patmos and describes his apocalyptic visions of the last days of the earth.

While most Christians have heard of the mark of the beast and have some idea of what it is, unfortunately most of them do not see the underlying forces and institutions that are continuously striving to bring such a thing into reality. For decades resistance groups and those who were concerned about a New World Order saw the signs that one day the elite bankers around the world hoped to implement a single global currency and eliminate all other forms of money. This unified global currency will be transferred into an electronic currency then, and the use of cash and coins will practically be eliminated and a thing of the past.

Once this electronic currency is the universally accepted method of payment for all goods and services, every person in the world will be subjected to having each and every one of their financial transactions recorded in a database. Exactly what you buy, when you buy it, how much you paid, and what store location you bought it from will be cataloged and stored indefinitely. The days of making cash transactions for things like selling an old car, or even mowing a neighbor’s lawn will be a thing of the past. Once this system is implemented the government can ensure that they will be aware of each and every financial transaction, no matter how large or small, and be sure to tax you as they see fit.

The financial transaction database on each person can also be used in ways that most people could never imagine. The financial institutions connected to your mark of the beast can sell your entire purchasing history to advertisers or even insurance companies. Are you purchasing large quantities of chocolate cake on a weekly basis? Cigarettes? Beer? Your insurance company would love to know these things, and could use such information to either increase your rates, or to place you lower on the priority list when you need medical treatment since your purchasing profile shows that you buy a lot of chocolate cake and beer and aren’t paying any monthly dues to a gym or health club.

President Bill Clinton’s mentor at Georgetown University, the establishment insider named Carroll Quigley wrote in his 1966 book *Tragedy and Hope* that “The powers of financial capitalism had (a) far-reaching aim, nothing less than to create a world system of financial control in private hands able to dominate the political system of each country and the economy of the world as a whole. This system was to be controlled in a feudalist fashion by the central banks of the world acting in concert, by secret agreements arrived at in frequent meetings and conferences. The apex of the systems was to be the Bank for International Settlements in Basel, Switzerland, a private bank owned and controlled by the world’s central banks which were themselves private corporations. Each central bank...sought to dominate its government by its ability to control Treasury loans, to manipulate foreign exchanges, to influence the level of economic activity in the country, and to influence cooperative politicians by subsequent economic rewards in the business world.”[lx]

The Amero

The Amero is the new currency that elite globalist organizations are pushing to replace the American dollar, the Canadian dollar, and the Mexican peso. This will likely happen after the North American Union becomes official, which they are also pushing.

Once regional currencies are established around the world, all those currencies will then be merged into the one world currency, and then transformed into an electronic currency.

The Amero was first proposed in 1999 by a Canadian economist named Herbert G. Grubel who published a book titled *The Case for the Amero* . [lxi] This was the same year that the Euro became the official currency in Europe for the European Union.

Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations, Robert Pastor, later had a book published in 2001 titled *Toward a North American Community* , where he wrote, “In the long term, the amero is in the best interests of all three countries,” [lxii] referring to the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Anyone who has spent any time looking at the elite organizations at the heart of the New World Order knows that the Council on Foreign Relations usually gets what it wants, and it is very telling when the chairman writes a book about wanting a North American Union and a new regional currency.

An economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Eric van Wincoop, co-authored a journal article in 2001 which discussed what he said were the benefits of a regional currency, saying, “The use of different moneys across borders can form a barrier as there are costs in exchanging currencies in spot and forward markets and traders face uncertainty about currency movements that cannot always be hedged. A common currency also leads to greater transparency of price differentials.” [lxiii]

It is very interesting that elite members of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York have been promoting the idea of creating a new regional currency involving the United States, Canada, and Mexico, while at the same time such an idea is called a conspiracy theory by most so-called financial or political experts. The reason for this is so that such a plan may be formulated and finalized without the public's awareness so the plan for such a currency will be just a few steps from completion before it or its supporters are faced with any opposition.

Since the insider's discussions of such a plan are mainly in literature only read by other insiders and not in the mainstream press, it is basically an open secret which goes unnoticed by the masses who are distracted by the pop culture circus that is presented to them by the mainstream media.

Hal Turner's Amero Hoax

A man named Hal Turner posted a video on his YouTube channel on October 4th 2008 titled "Hal Turner Shows New AMERO Currency," where he claimed to have in his possession an actual Amero coin he obtained from a contact at the Denver Mint. The video quickly received over 400,000 views and reached the number one spot on Google Video's top 100 list and was spread around the Internet like wildfire. A lot of people gullibly accepted his claims, and believed that the Amero would soon be released to the public. What most people didn't realize is that Hal Turner is a white supremacist who worked for the FBI as an informant and an agent provocateur. More on this later.

The "Amero" that Turner held in his hand for his video was simply a novelty replica that could be purchased from www.AmeroCurrency.com or www.DC-Coin.com. As he is displaying his coin in his video, at one point the camera zooms in on the front and back of the coin to show the designs as he attempts to "prove" its authenticity, and if you compare the coin he is holding to the replicas sold on the Internet, they are EXACTLY the same.

After someone does two minutes of research, Hal Turner's claims become absurd and can be seen as completely fraudulent, but some of his supporters still defended him online saying that he himself was "duped" into believing that he had been sent a "real" Amero by an informant who worked at the Denver Mint. After all, the Council on Foreign Relations and other New World Order organizations have been planning such a thing for years. The previous year Turner had posted photos of "real" Amero coins on his website, which also spread around the web, and interestingly enough he would later buy or obtain the replica and show it off to be real.

A quick Google search shows anyone that the pictures of the coins were taken from the various websites that create novelty coins and replicas. Countless people must have emailed him to point this out to him, as did the comments on his blog post, so he had to know that the coins were simply replicas, but that didn't stop him from trying to continue the hoax a year later by claiming to have an actual coin.

Posting comments on the video on his YouTube channel of his alleged discovery had been disabled by him, obviously because people would post comments and links showing his coin was nothing but an easily obtained replica. Numerous counter videos were posted to YouTube exposing this hoax, and various bloggers had posted articles pointing it out as well.

Two months later, on December 3rd 2008 Turner posted photos of "Amero paper currency" and wrote, "To the chagrin of the government, I have obtained new "AMERO" paper currency notes! You know, the "AMERO" . . . . the new currency that is going to replace the US Dollar, The Canadian Dollar and the Mexican Peso? Yea, the new currency that all three governments claim doesn't exist. . . I have it." [lxiv]

His article goes on to say how over a year ago he "first broke" the story about Amero coins being secretly created at the Denver Mint, referring to the photos he posted on his website. His article also claims that YouTube notified him that the video he had posted showing his alleged Amero coin had been deleted and his account "permanently closed at the request of the United States Treasury Department." Turner wrote, "The Treasury department told YouTube/Google that my video was destabilizing the U.S. Dollar and was thus a threat to national security." [lxv]

While his articles allow readers to post comments, the user is notified that the administrator (Turner) must approve all comments first, and if and when this happens, it will show up on the website. So obviously, all comments posted informing him and the readers that the photos and his claims are fraudulent, were simply not approved, and never found their way on the website. It is incredible the number of gullible people that continue to believe Turner. By reading the comments that he had approved, it becomes clear the inability of Turner's readers to distinguish fact from fiction. What's worse is that Turner's articles are often copied and pasted into emails and sent around to others by people who believe his writings and aren't aware of his continuous lies and his admitted role as a government agent.

One can see how a large percentage of the viewers of his video claiming to show an Amero will believe him at first—that the Ameros are already being coined, only to later dismiss the idea of the U.S. Dollar collapsing and being replaced by a new currency—because it turns out the video was a hoax. It's a classic case of disinformation by mixing facts with fiction, in an attempt to prevent the public from focusing on the impact of such issues that we will ultimately face in the near future.

Turner has a history of urging and hoping for violence against others, including judges, and has posted their home addresses on his website and written blogs celebrating their murders.

In July 2009 Turner was arrested for allegedly posting threats to federal judges. During a court appearance his lawyer Michael Orozco pleaded with the judge saying Turner worked for the FBI beginning in 2002 as an "agent provocateur" and was taught by the agency "what he could say that wouldn't be crossing the line." [lxvi]

"His job was basically to publish information which would cause other parties to act in a manner which would lead to their arrest," Orozco said. [lxvii]

So it is clear that not only was Turner wrong about having an actual Amero coin, but he was purposefully lying about it in an attempt to create the idea that a regional currency, likely to be called the Amero, is a hoax and something American's don't need to worry about or look into. This way when people hear about such a plan, they quickly dismiss it as a conspiracy theory or a hoax thanks to actions like Turner's.

Turner’s admission that he worked for the FBI and his somewhat creative hoaxes about the Amero led many to believe that he worked as a disinformation agent, whose job it was to put out false and fraudulent information about the Amero, in order to make anyone who talked about such a thing seem like they were falling for Turner’s scam and that there was no such thing in the works.

China Calls for Global Currency

In May of 2009 just before the G-20 economic summit in London, an official from China’s central bank made news around the world when they began calling for a new global currency to replace the U.S. dollar.

The proposal came from Beijing’s central bank governor, Zhou Xiaochuan, who said that “the world economic crisis shows the inherent vulnerabilities and systemic risks in the existing international monetary system.”

He recommended creating a currency that would be controlled by the International Monetary Fund in order “to achieve the objective of safeguarding global economic and financial stability.”

China has been getting concerned about the value of the U.S. dollar because of Beijing’s estimated 1 trillion dollars in U.S. Treasuries and other government debt.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner

Immediately after news surfaced of China’s desire for a one world currency, U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner was asked what his thoughts were on the proposals while he was speaking at a Council on Foreign Relations conference. A reporter asked, “[unintelligible]…about the Chinese proposal for a global currency…” Geithner answered, “I haven’t read the governor’s proposal…we’re actually quite open to that suggestion.”

The previous day Geithner was asked by United States Representative Michelle Bachman, “I’m wondering, would you categorically renounce the United States moving away from the dollar and going to a global currency as suggested this morning by China and also by Russia?," to which Geithner replied, "I would. Yes." She then asked Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, who was sitting right next to him, and he answered, "I would also."[lxviii]

So in a 24 hour period Geithner completely changed his mind, from being against a global currency, to supporting it, and while speaking at a Council on Foreign Relations press conference none the less.

Russia Calls for Global Currency

The Kremlin (Russia's Parliament) published its priorities just prior to the G-20 meeting in March 2009, where they openly called for the creation of a supranational reserve currency that they said should be part of the strategy to reform the global financial system which began collapsing in the fourth quarter of 2008. (The G-20 meeting is a yearly forum consisting of the finance ministers and central bank governors of the world's largest 20 economies who meet to discuss international financial issues.)

Russia urged the International Monetary Fund to create a new "super reserve currency accepted by the whole of the international community." [lxix]

Russian President Shows Off Sample Coin of New 'World Currency' at G-8

Just a few months later at the 2009 G-8 meeting held in L'Aquila, Italy, the President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev pulled a coin out of his pocket and displayed it for the press saying it was a sample of the coin of a "united future world currency."

The sample coin was minted in Belgium and was presented to the heads of the G-8 delegations. It bears the words, "unity in diversity." He said the coin, "means they're getting ready. I think it's a good sign that we understand how interdependent we are."[lxx]

Remember that just a few months earlier during the April 2009 G-20 meeting, Russia proposed creating a new supranational currency and questioned the U.S. dollar’s future as the global reserve currency.

Euro Contributor Endorses Global Currency

Kazakstan was part of the Soviet Union until it became an independent nation in 1991, and is the ninth largest country in the world. It borders Russia, China, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. While not thought of as a key player in global events, it is still noteworthy that the President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, also proposed a new global currency which he called the “acmetal.”

What is also interesting, is that Robert Mundell, a man who played a key role in creating the Euro currency for the European Union voiced support for Nazarbayev’s idea saying, “I must say that I agree with President Nazarbayev on his statement and many of the things he said in his plan, the project he made for the world currency, and I believe I’m right on track with what he’s saying,” adding the idea held “great promise.”[lxxi]

Robert Mundell is an economics professor at Columbia University in New York City and was given the Nobel Prize in economics in 1999 for his role in creating the Euro currency for the European Union which unified currencies in many European countries—including Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Finland, Austria, and others.

Population Reduction

At the time that this first edition of *The New World Order: Facts & Fiction* was first published in 2010, the earth's population was around 6.795 billion people.[lxxii] One of the main goals of the New World Order is to massively reduce this number by billions of people. You read that correctly. A reduction of billions of people. Depending on the elitist, the goals of population reduction efforts range from reducing population by 50% to 95%. The elite politicians and businessmen say that the current population levels are dangerously high and will soon result in the depletion of the earth's natural resources. To accomplish this reduction, various strategies have been implemented such as promoting contraception, abortions, and one child policies. Mass genocide has also been discussed, including using biological weapons to kill off large numbers of people in developing countries. Many fear that such a tactic will one day be attempted in developed countries as well.

The rationale behind such massive and horrific population reduction plans is quite chilling. The elite feel that since most tasks involving a large amount of physical labor have been accomplished, such as clearing countless acres of land for interstate highway systems, building infrastructure, such as dams and power plants, mining national resources, etc., and so now only a maintenance force is needed. Just think for a moment about the immense number of man hours it took to build the roads, bridges, and buildings that you take for granted every day. While at one point in time, people had to mine for minerals with simple hand tools, we now have enormous pieces of machinery that can do a job that used to take hundreds of men to do. The human species has been able to streamline nearly every process through the use of mechanical and technological means.

During the incredible construction process of much of the world's infrastructure, the workers needed food, clothes, shelter, medicine, and a variety of other things which are part of modern life. But now that most of the work is done, the elite see these people as using up valuable resources and simply being in the way and detrimental to the way of life that the elite hope to maintain. While people may find these claims hard to believe, as you keep reading you will find solid evidence and sources for them. The Illuminati want you dead.

Ted Turner

Billionaire founder of CNN, Ted Turner, was interviewed Tuesday April 1st 2008 on Charlie Rose's PBS show, where he revealed his beliefs about reducing the global population, but this was no April Fool's joke. Turner began by parroting the sensationalized fears of climate change, saying it needed to be stopped.

"Not doing it will be catastrophic. We'll be 8 degrees hotter in 10, not 10 but 30 or 40 years and basically none of the crops will grow. Most of the people will have died and the rest of us will be cannibals. Civilization will have broken down. The few people that are left will be living in a failed state like Somalia or Sudan. And living conditions will be intolerable. The droughts will be so bad there will be no more corn growing. Not doing it will be like suicide."

Then he went on to say, "After that, we've got to stabilize the population. There's too many people. That's why we have global warming. We have global warming because too many people are using too much stuff, if there were less people, they'd be using less stuff." Ted Turner himself has five children.

In 1996, Turner stated in an interview with an environmental magazine *Audubon* that, "A total population of 250-300 million people, a 95% decline from present levels, would be ideal." In 1997 he donated one billion dollars to the United Nations to support their goals, which include population reduction.

Dr. Eric Pianka

Dr. Eric Pianka (born January 23, 1939) is a biology professor at the University of Texas at Austin, who made national news in March of 2006 after his acceptance speech for the Distinguished Texas Scientist Award given by the Texas Academy of Science.

A science writer named Forrest Mims was in attendance during this speech and was shocked at what he had heard, and soon after wrote an article about it for *The Citizen Scientist* , claiming that Pianka had advocated genocide to reduce the world's population. In this article Mims recounts that an official of the Academy approached the video camera operator at the front of the auditorium and, "engaged him in animated conversation. The camera operator did not look pleased as he pointed the lens of the big camera to the ceiling and slowly walked away."

So, by Forrest Mims account, Pianka's speech was not allowed to be videotaped, and he writes that he noticed this curious incident because of his many years of experience as a writer and editor, and that it raised a red flag in his mind. Dr. Pianka began his speech by "explaining that the general public is not yet ready to hear what he was about to tell us," Mims wrote.

After Dr. Pianka told the audience that there were too many people on the earth and listing all the evils of humanity, Mims wrote that Pianka stated, "the only feasible solution to saving the Earth is to reduce the population to 10 percent of the present number…He then showed solutions for reducing the world's population in the form of a slide depicting the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. War and famine would not do, he explained. Instead, disease offered the most efficient and fastest way to kill the billions that must soon die if the population crisis is to be solved."

He then explains that Pianka displayed a slide showing rows of human skulls and says he was deeply disturbed, not only by Pianka's speech, but because he "watched in amazement as a few hundred members of the Texas Academy of Science rose to their feet and gave a standing ovation to a speech that enthusiastically advocated the elimination of 90 percent of Earth's population by airborne Ebola." [lxxiii]

After learning of the sinister nature of Pianka's speech, an affiliate of Mims named William Dembski informed the Department of Homeland Security which resulted in the FBI interviewing Pianka.[lxxiv]

While Pianka's speech was not allowed to be videotaped, one can read his own words on his official University of Texas website where he wrote, "Humans have overpopulated the Earth and in the process have created an ideal nutritional substrate on which bacteria and viruses (microbes) will grow and prosper. We are behaving like bacteria growing on an agar plate, flourishing until natural limits are reached or until another microbe colonizes and takes over, using them as their resource."[lxxv]

"First, and foremost, we must get out of denial and recognize that Earth simply cannot support many billions of people, at least not in the lifestyles we would all like to live."

"I am convinced that the world, **including all humanity** , WOULD clearly be much better off without so many of us." [The bold face and capital print is in the original text on his website, and was not added in this book.]

One of the links on his website is to an obituary that he posted of himself, although at the time of this writing he is still alive. One more disturbing detail regarding Dr. Pianka is that on this website he shows pictures of a bison he raised on his land whose name is identified as Lucifer.[lxxvi]

World-Famous Microbiologist Planned Genocide

In 2001 shocking information was released showing that decades in the past a world-famous microbiologist and winner of the Nobel prize named Sir Fram Macfarlane had secretly urged the Australian government to develop and use biological weapons against Indonesia and other "overpopulated" countries in South-East Asia to target food crops and spread infectious diseases in order to kill large numbers of the population.

Such plans, which were developed in 1947, were revealed to the public in 2001 after the top-secret files were declassified by the National Archives of Australia. The release of the reports were faced with resistance from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which fought to prevent them from becoming public after historian Philip Dorling uncovered information on biological warfare in the National Archives in 1998.

It wasn't until 2001 that the damning files were released to Dorling, which included a detailed memo Sir Macfarlane wrote for the Defense Department in 1947, where he said that Australia should develop biological weapons that would work in tropical Asia without spreading to Australia's more temperate population centers.

"Specifically to the Australian situation, the most effective counter-offensive to threatened invasion by overpopulated Asiatic countries would be directed towards the destruction by biological or chemical means of tropical food crops and the dissemination of infectious disease capable of spreading in tropical but not under Australian conditions," the microbiologist said.[lxxvii]

It's important to note that his plans to unleash such weapons were not because Australia was at war, but because he wanted to reduce the large populations that were using the national resources. His reference to an "invasion by overpopulated countries" doesn't refer to a military invasion but refers rather to the overpopulation itself.

Another unclassified document reads that he noted, "Its use has the tremendous advantage of not destroying the enemy's industrial potential which can then be taken over intact."

Sir Macfarlane was the head of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, and won the Nobel prize in 1960 for medicine. In September, 1947, he joined a chemical and biological warfare subcommittee of the New Weapons and Equipment Development Committee in Australia, where he would develop his genocidal ideas where he recommended, "the possibilities of an attack on the food supplies of S-E Asia and Indonesia using B.W. agents should be considered by a small study group."

In 1951, he recommended that "a panel reporting to the chemical and biological warfare subcommittee should be authorized to report on the offensive potentiality of biological agents likely to be effective against the local food supplies of South-East Asia and Indonesia.”

Prince Philip

Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburg, is the husband of the Queen of England, and at the time of this writing in 2010, he is 57 years old (born in 1921). The British royal family has long been involved with the Illuminati, and some say they themselves believe that they are descended from the lost tribe of Dan from Israel.

The Prince made a disturbing statement years ago regarding the world’s population, where he said, “In the event that I am reincarnated, I would like to return as a deadly virus, in order to contribute something to solve overpopulation.”[lxxviii]

Prince Philip is the father of Prince Charles, and the grandfather of Prince William and Prince Henry of Whales. Some people believe that the Antichrist will come from this family and that they are crypto-Jews, meaning they are hiding their Jewish ancestry. Regardless of whether this is true or not, the British Royal Family has been a major part of the secret establishment for many generations.

President Obama’s Science Advisor

President Obama appointed a man named John Holdren to be his chief science czar, which means he is basically the top advisor to Obama regarding science and technology and their effects domestically and internationally. Immediately after his appointment bloggers began looking into his past and discovered that he was the co-author of a science text book in 1977 titled *Ecoscience: Population, Resources, Environment,* which contains several startling proposals to deal with what the authors perceived to be issues society would soon face regarding overpopulation and resource shortages.

Adding Sterilants to Water Supply

Holdren’s book openly discusses the idea of adding chemicals to the water supply to sterilize entire populations, saying, “Adding a sterilant to drinking water or staple foods is a suggestion that seems to horrify people more than most proposals for involuntary fertility control. Indeed, this would pose some very difficult political, legal, and social questions, to say nothing of the technical problems. No such sterilant exists today [in 1977], nor does one appear to be under development. To be acceptable, such a substance would have to meet some rather stiff requirements: it must be uniformly effective, despite widely varying doses received by individuals, and despite varying degrees of fertility and sensitivity among individuals; it must be free of dangerous or unpleasant side effects; and it must have no effect on members of the opposite sex, children, old people, pets, or livestock.” [lxxix]

Involuntary Fertility Control

Another disturbing idea the book outlines is forcing women to become sterilized after having two or three children. “A program of sterilizing women after their second or third child, despite the relatively greater difficulty of the operation than vasectomy, might be easier to implement than trying to sterilize men,” the text reads. [lxxx]

Aside from forcing women to become sterilized after having several children, the authors also postulated that young girls could be forced on birth control to prevent them from having children, and that the birth control method would only be removed if the government allowed it. “The development of a long-term sterilizing capsule that could be implanted under the skin and removed when pregnancy is desired opens additional possibilities for coercive fertility control. The capsule could be implanted at puberty and might be removable, with official permission, for a limited number of births.” [lxxxi]

Mandatory Abortions

As if adding a sterilant to the water supply or forcing young girls to submit to birth control until the government approves of them having a child weren't horrific enough ideas, the textbook goes on to discuss and endorse forcing women to have abortions if they get pregnant without government permission. The book uses the term "compulsory" which is a fancy word meaning mandatory or forced against one's will. The book reads, "Indeed, it has been concluded that compulsory population-control laws, even including laws requiring compulsory abortion, could be sustained under the existing Constitution if the population crisis became sufficiently severe to endanger the society." [lxxxii]

Notice how these population ideas are not something only for 3rd world countries, but also for America as the authors point out that forced abortions, they believe, would be legal under the Constitution!

Two Child Limit

John Holdren and his co-authors try to equate their tyrannical reproduction policies with other laws concerning public safety. "In today's world, however, the number of children in a family is a matter of profound public concern. The law regulates other highly personal matters. For example, no one may lawfully have more than one spouse at a time. Why should the law not be able to prevent a person from having more than two children?" [lxxxiii]

Toward a Planetary Regime

After reading the Nazi-style reproduction regulations in Holdren's book and seeing that decades after its publication he would find himself in President Obama's inner circle, it should come as no surprise that he would also suggest an all-powerful global government structure to enforce his nightmarish ideas, and to regulate other aspects of our lives.

He wrote that current government agencies around the world, "might eventually be developed into a Planetary Regime—sort of an international super-agency for population, resources, and environment. Such a comprehensive Planetary Regime could control the development, administration, conservation, and distribution of *all* natural resources, renewable or nonrenewable, at least insofar as international implications exist. Thus the Regime could have the power to control pollution not only in the atmosphere and oceans, but also in such freshwater bodies as rivers and lakes that cross international boundaries or that discharge into the oceans. The Regime might also be a logical central agency for regulating all international trade, perhaps including assistance from DCs to LDCs, and including all food on the international market."

"The Planetary Regime might be given responsibility for determining the optimum population for the world and for each region and for arbitrating various countries' shares within their regional limits. Control of population size might remain the responsibility of each government, but the Regime would have some power to enforce the agreed limits." [lxxxiv]

Abortions are Good for the Economy

Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi was interviewed on NBC's *Meet the Press* where she explained why she appropriated hundreds of millions of dollars to expand Planned Parenthood and similar services as part of an economic stimulus package. A brief transcript of this encounter follows:

STEPHANOPOULOS: Hundreds of millions of dollars to expand family planning services. How is that stimulus?

PELOSI: Well, the family planning services reduce cost. They reduce cost. The states are in terrible fiscal budget crises now and part of what we do for children's health, education and some of those elements are to help the states meet their financial needs. One of those—one of the initiatives you mentioned, the contraception, will reduce costs to the states and to the federal government.

STEPHANOPOULOS : So no apologies for that?

PELOSI: No apologies. No. We have to deal with the consequences of the downturn in our economy.

End of Transcript

The Limits to Growth

The Club of Rome, a notorious elite globalist think tank, published a book in 1972 titled *The Limits to Growth* which would mark the first major propaganda piece warning of a rapidly growing population and finite natural resources. The book was written by Dennis L. Meadows, Donella H. Meadows, Jorgen Randers, and William W. Behrens III.

World population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion were the main focus of the report which argued that while population grows exponentially, technology and the availability of natural resources only grow linearly. This would be the beginning of the growing campaign and propaganda aimed at justifying a massive population reduction around the world.

Global 2000 Report

The Council on Environmental Quality and the State Department released a report in 1980 that was commissioned by President Jimmy Carter which continued to lay the foundation for propaganda concerning population reduction, diminishing resources, and global warming. *The Global 2000 Report* supposedly used computer models to make projections concerning these issues for the coming decades, and aimed to show what life would be like in the year 2000 (twenty years after its publication). “Computer projection models” were seen as extremely high-tech in 1980 when this report was published—an aspect to this report that was highlighted in an attempt to add to its credibility.

It concluded by saying, “If present trends continue, the world in 2000 will be more crowded, and more vulnerable to disruption than the world we live in now. Serious stresses involving population, resources, and environment are clearly visible ahead. Despite greater material output, the world’s people will be poorer in many ways than they are today.”

Agenda 21

Agenda 21 is a program launched by the United Nations (UN) pertaining to what they call “sustainable development” around the world, which is a fancy term for reducing the population and preserving natural resources. The name Agenda 21 refers to the UN’s agenda for the 21st century. The full text of Agenda 21 was revealed at the United Nations Earth Summit in 1992 (officially called the Conference on Environment and Development) that was held in Rio de Janeiro.

At this Earth Summit, 178 governments voted to adopt the Agenda 21 program, which is a blueprint for members of the UN and other governments and groups to take action to increase regulations in every area where humans have an impact on the environment.

There are 40 chapters in the Agenda 21 report which cover topics such as: changing consumption patterns of natural resources, controlling pollution, educating children about such issues, and implementing new financial mechanisms to achieve these goals.

United Nations Population Fund

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), originally called the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, was started in 1969 to supposedly provide supplies and services involving reproductive health, but a dark cloud has lingered over the fund for decades because of coerced sterilizations and forced abortions. When word of these practices surfaced, groups pressured the Regan administration as well as both Bush administrations (George H.W. and George W.) to withhold funding from UNFPA.

As a result of the United States cutting off funding for the program, a nonprofit organization called Americans for UNFPA was started and compensated for the loss by raising donations. After Barack Obama was sworn in as president in January 2009, he restored U.S. funding to UNFPA which resulted in taxpayers’ money once again funding forced abortions and sterilizations in foreign countries.

According to its Annual Report, the UNFPA received a total of $845.3 million dollars in funding in 2008, with $118 million coming from the

Netherlands, $53 million from the United Kingdom, 52 million from Spain, and the European Commission and Japan each donated 36 million.

In 2009 UNFPA released a report titled *State of World Population* which is 104 pages long and blames global warming on too many people living on the earth. “Slower population growth...would help build social resilience to climate change’s impacts and would contribute to a reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions in the future,” it says. “Population growth is among the factors influencing total emissions in industrialized as well as developing countries.”

“Each person in a population will consume food and require housing, and ideally most will take advantage of transportation, which consumes energy, and may use fuel to heat homes and have access to electricity.”

“The growth of population can contribute to freshwater scarcity or degradation of cropland, which may in turn exacerbate the impacts of climate change…So too can climate change make it more difficult for governments to alleviate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.”

“Fear of appearing supportive of population control has until recently held back any mention of ‘population’ in the climate debate…Nonetheless, some participants in the debate are tentatively suggesting the need at least to consider the impacts of population growth.”

The Georgia Guidestones

The topic of the Georgia Guidestones monument is fascinating, yet disturbing, and a complete analysis of the subject can be found in this author’s previous book, *The Resistance Manifesto* , so for the sake of keeping this book to a manageable length, I will only briefly discuss them and their mysterious origins here.

Basically, a large 19 foot tall granite monument stands in the small town of Elberton, Georgia, in the United States, consisting of four major stone slabs standing upright and assembled in a paddle wheel formation. Each of the eight stone faces are inscribed with ten commandments, with each set consisting of a different language: English, Russian, Hebrew, Arabic, Hindi, Chinese, Spanish, and Swahili. While some of the “guides” as they are called, are somewhat benign, there are several of them which are quite chilling. The first one reads, “Maintain the earth’s population at 500,0000,000” (500 million). Others speak of creating a world court and allude to a global religion, and finally the tenth one reads, “Be not a cancer on the earth. Leave room for nature.”

As if this isn’t strange enough, the story of the Georgia Guidestones gets stranger the closer one looks into it. The monument was created in 1980 and was the result of a mysterious man calling himself “R.C. Christian” who said he represented a group of concerned citizens and wanted to erect a monument for mankind. He worked with a local granite company to design the stones, and he paid for the entire project, an estimated cost of tens of thousands of dollars. The stones currently sit on public property on the highest point in Elberton County.

To anyone familiar with the Rosicrucians, the pseudonym that this man chose, “R.C. Christian,” is clearly a reference to this enlightenment group which dates back to the early 1600s. Several years after the monument’s completion this same man published a book titled *Common Sense Renewed* , under the admitted pseudonym Robert Christian, and proclaimed, “The hearts of our human family must be touched and warmed to welcome a global rule by reason.” [lxxxv]

The book basically outlines his political philosophy and says that the first two printings were sent to several thousand political officials and shapers of public opinion throughout the world, and all members of the United States Congress.

The Georgia Guidestones were not a simple task to complete and certainly cost several tens of thousands of dollars to construct, and after reading their depopulation commandments, it comes as no surprise that the mysterious individual who commissioned them used a pseudonym with Illuminati overtones.

In December of 2008 some vandals spray painted several messages across the stones, such as, “Death to the Globalists,” “No North American Union,” and “Skull and Bones Suck Dick,” referring to the Skull and Bones secret society at Yale University, which serves as a recruiting ground for the elite Illuminati. Photos of the vandalism were posted on the Internet.

This author was later contacted by a freelance journalist named Randall Sullivan who was working on a story about the monument, and when his article was published in April 2009, he wrote, “While Dice denies any involvement in the assault, he seems to have inspired it,” [lxxxvi] because I had publicly expressed my disgust for the stones and my desire to have them removed.

Life Extension Technology

Aside from wanting to reduce the world’s population by 90 to 95%, the elite New World Order kingpins are also hoping that very soon scientists will be able to prevent them from aging and possibly live forever by using some form of molecular repair, organ replacements, or transhumanist development (merging computers and machines with the human body). While anti-aging creams and remedies have been around for decades and often associated with quackery, scientists are working very hard to figure out how they can prevent the oxidization of cells, or to get cells to reproduce themselves indefinitely, thus ensuring a healthy body as long as this process continues.

Ray Kurzweil and others have proposed that nanorobots could one day be injected in the body and perform cellular repair from within. These ideas are not fanciful thinking of science fiction writers, but are instead very serious branches of science that are making tremendous advances in their quest.

Even if the elite are not able to live indefinitely by using some of this coming technology, they will certainly be able to extend the human lifespan several decades or perhaps longer. Such an extension obviously means that people will use more natural resources during the course of their prolonged life, and this is another reason the elite are concerned with the global population and desire to dramatically reduce it.

As miraculous life extending technologies become possible, the enormous cost for such procedures will be unaffordable by most people and will not be covered by insurance. This puts the technology exclusively in the hands of the wealthy, who are the same people shaping the New World Order. As this technology becomes closer to a reality, the elite will be even more compelled to unleash their genocidal plans.

One World Religion

When discussing the goals of the New World Order, often three objectives are found at the top of the list: A one world government, a single global currency, and a unified world religion. The reason for this unified single religion is said to be a prerequisite to the Messiah arriving, who religious prophecies predict will be the savior of all mankind and will unveil the mysteries of existence and lead the world into an era of everlasting peace.

Many religions speak of this Messiah figure, and while Christians believe that he arrived as Jesus Christ and will later return at the end of time, other religions are still looking for the Messiah's arrival. In order to set the groundwork for this individual (who Christians believe will be a counterfeit claiming to be God and later defeated by the return of Jesus) the New World Order must set the philosophical foundation for this "Christ" to be seen as the appearance of God on earth, and be worshiped as such.

The main problem for this philosophy and the coming counterfeit to be universally accepted as the Messiah, is the traditional belief in Christianity and the Bible's description of the Antichrist, as well as Christians desire to live by a set of traditional values that are taught in the Bible. These are the reasons that traditional Christianity and family values are the largest obstacle to the New World Order's coming unified religion, and thus traditional Christianity has been targeted for a revision or total destruction.

Manly P. Hall explains, "Christianity is not the sole revelation of God to man. It is but a fractional part of the body religious. It is simply a crutch upon which the genus homo leans until he learns to stand and walk alone. It is something he believes in before he is capable of believing in himself with understanding. Like all external things it will finally pass away and be remembered only for that which it contributed to the inner realization of its devotees." [lxxxvii]

Christians who do not convert to a more liberal and universal form of Christianity will be seen as problematic for the New World Order since their conservative and traditional beliefs will be seen as holding back the global utopia and ruining the fun and “anything goes” attitude of the majority of society.

“Hate Speech” Laws

It’s well known that some Christians can make judgments of other people for their sexuality, stance on abortion, and ideas of what is socially acceptable behavior. Some Christians speak out against such things using harsh criticism, while others simply express their disagreement. Most Christians tend to be socially conservative and lean towards more traditional views of family dynamics and sexual activity. People who are not religious can be very liberal in these areas, and the two different ideologies occasionally clash in disputes over what is being taught to children, or what is being distributed in the popular culture.

In the United States of America, people are luckily able to exercise the freedom of speech which is outlined and guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. This freedom is only supposed to be restricted in the case of defamation and incitement to riot, but many fear that living in the New World Order will create criminals of Christians for simply voicing their opinions on certain social issues or behaviors, or even quoting the Bible.

In recent years various legislation has been introduced regarding what is called hate speech, which aims to criminalize certain statements or opinions when expressed publicly. In 2001, a man was arrested in Canada for “inciting hatred” after submitting a newspaper ad containing Bible quotes about homosexuality.[lxxxviii] He was forced to pay out $1500 to each of four different homosexuals who filed a complaint against him. Canadian officials signed a bill into law in 2004 that reinforced such rules.

In Britain a woman was visited at her home by two police officers after she wrote a letter to her city council expressing her displeasure that a gay pride parade was scheduled for her neighborhood. In the letter, she referred to homosexuals as sodomites and perverts and the police threatened to charge her with a criminal offense because “a hate incident is any incident that is perceived by the victim or another person as being motivated by prejudice or hatred.”[lxxxix]

In 2004 a group of eleven Christians were arrested and charged with multiple crimes, including felonies in Pennsylvania for peacefully demonstrating against a gay pride parade.[xc] The demonstrators were said to have committed “hate speech” for preaching to the homosexuals and holding signs with Bible verses printed on them.

501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Churches

It’s pretty much common knowledge that most churches don’t have to pay taxes since they are considered “not for profit” organizations, but most people have no idea what kind of restrictions this license places on these churches. A 501c organization is a provision in the United States Tax code which lists 26 different types of organizations that are exempt from federal income tax. Churches fall under section 3 of the 501c code, meaning they are a religious organization.

Organizations that fall under section 501(c)(3) are prohibited from certain political activities and even comments. The Internal Revenue Service website explains, “Under the Internal Revenue Code, all section 501(c)(3) organizations are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office. Contributions to political campaign funds or public statements of position (verbal or written) made on behalf of the organization in favor of or in opposition to any candidate for public office clearly violate the prohibition against political campaign activity. Violating this prohibition may result in denial or revocation of tax-exempt status and the imposition of certain excise taxes.”[xci]

The tax code goes on to say, “voter education or registration activities with evidence of bias that (a) would favor one candidate over another; (b) oppose a candidate in some manner; or (c) have the effect of favoring a candidate or group of candidates, will constitute prohibited participation or intervention.”[xcii]

Language saying activities may not “have the effect of favoring a candidate or group of candidates,” or that they are “absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office,” mean that if a pastor gives a sermon about certain social issues such as homosexuality, gay marriage, or abortion, the church will be in violation of the law and could have their tax exempt status revoked because the pastor is “indirectly participating in” a political activity.

In 2005, the 3500 member All Saints Episcopal Church in Los Angeles, California was threatened by the IRS that they could lose their tax exempt status after the Reverend gave an anti-war message.[xciii] The church’s tax attorney Marcus Owens said the IRS offered to drop the proceedings if the church admitted wrongdoing.

A United Methodist Church in New Jersey lost its tax exempt status in 2007 after officials refused to allow two lesbian couples to have their “weddings” on church property.[xciv] After it was discovered that members of the Mormon Church organized to support Proposition 8 passing in California in 2008, which banned gay marriage, many homosexual groups attempted to have their tax exempt status revoked as well.

Most church goers have no idea that there are federal restrictions placed on what the pastor or priests can say to their congregation. Not only has the federal government locked churches into a contract preventing them from even indirectly influencing political affairs, but they also have been secretly working with major churches to get their leaders to teach their flocks what the government wants them to.

Government Secretly Working With Churches

In May of 2006 a pastor came forward saying that FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) had implemented a secret program to train pastors of large churches and have them work secretly with FEMA in order to encourage their congregations to obey the government's demands in the case of martial law, firearm seizures, forced vaccinations, or forced relocations.

The pastor, who contacted Infowars.com [xcv] to make such events public, wanted to remain anonymous but said that he and other religious representatives were invited to a secret meeting which encouraged and trained pastors to help implement FEMA and Homeland Security directives. The first directive was for pastors to preach to their congregations a message based on Romans 13 in the Bible, which when taken out of context urges people to obey their government and says the government was established by God.

The informant also reported that it was made clear they were to start preaching subservience to authorities now, in order to condition their congregations to accept such ideas. He also reported that those in attendance were told that quarantines, martial law, and forced relocations were a problem for authorities when enforcing federal mandates because of what they called a "cowboy mentality" of people standing up for their rights and not going along with such demands.

Some people may be skeptical of such claims, especially since the pastor chose to remain anonymous, but one year later in August of 2007, a TV station in Shreveport, Louisiana reported on this, confirming what this pastor had claimed.

KSLA news reported that FEMA was secretly working with what they called Clergy Response Teams that were being trained by the federal government to "quell dissent" and pacify people in order to obey any orders given by the government in the event of martial law.

Adam Weishaupt on Christianity

John Robison, one of the first authors to publish English translations of the writings of Illuminati founder Adam Weishaupt, wrote, "It surely needs little argument now to prove, that the Order of Illuminati had for its immediate object the abolishing of Christianity (at least this was the intention of the Founder), with the sole view of overturning the civil government, by introducing universal dissoluteness and profligacy of manners, and then getting the assistance of the corrupted subjects to overset the throne. The whole conduct in the preparation and instruction of the Presbyter and *Regens* is directed to this point."

Robison quotes an original correspondence between Illuminati members from the 1700s where one member wrote, "I have been at unwearied pains to remove the fears of some who imagine that our Superiors want to abolish Christianity; but by and by their prejudices will wear off, and they will be more at their ease. Were I to let them know that our General holds all Religion to be a lie, and uses even Deism, only to lead men by the nose."

Albert Pike's Alleged 3 World Wars Letter

A letter allegedly written by Albert Pike and sent to an Italian politician named Giuseppe Mazzini, dated August 15, 1871 outlined sinister plans for three different world wars that would purposefully be orchestrated to bring about the New World Order and set the stage for Luciferianism to become the world's religion. Albert Pike is of course the author of *Morals and Dogma* and remains one of Freemasonry's most influential members.

In this letter, Pike allegedly wrote, "The First World War must be brought about in order to permit the Illuminati to overthrow the power of the Czars in Russia and of making that country a fortress of atheistic Communism. The divergences caused by the 'agentur' (agents) of the Illuminati between the British and Germanic Empires will be used to foment this war. At the end of the war, Communism will be built and used in order to destroy the other governments and in order to weaken the religions."

"The Second World War must be fomented by taking advantage of the differences between the Fascists and the political Zionists. This war must be brought about so that Nazism is destroyed and that the political Zionism be strong enough to institute a sovereign state of Israel in Palestine. During the Second World War, International Communism must become strong enough in order to balance Christendom, which would be then restrained and held in check until the time when we would need it for the final social cataclysm."

"The Third World War must be fomented by taking advantage of the differences caused by the 'agentur' of the "Illuminati" between the political Zionists and the leaders of Islamic World. The war must be conducted in such a way that Islam (the Moslem Arabic World) and political Zionism (the State of Israel) mutually destroy each other. Meanwhile the other nations, once more divided on this issue will be constrained to fight to the point of complete physical, moral, spiritual and economical exhaustion… We shall unleash the Nihilists and the atheists, and we shall provoke a formidable social cataclysm which in all its horror will show clearly to the nations the effect of absolute atheism, origin of savagery and of the most bloody turmoil. Then everywhere, the citizens, obliged to defend themselves against the world minority of revolutionaries, will exterminate those destroyers of civilization, and the multitude, disillusioned with Christianity, whose deistic spirits will from that moment be without compass or direction, anxious for an ideal, but without knowing where to render its adoration, will receive the true light through the universal manifestation of the pure doctrine of Lucifer, brought finally out in the public view. This manifestation will result from the general reactionary movement which will follow the destruction of Christianity and atheism, both conquered and exterminated at the same time."

Alice Bailey's Open Admissions

The respected New Age author Alice Bailey writes in her book *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* , "It has therefore become possible to synchronize the Approach of the divine to the human and to instruct the masses of men in the technique of thus invoking the Approach. This attitude of humanity will lead to a new revelation, to the new world religion and to new attitudes in the relation of man to God (religion) and of man to man (government or social relationships)." [xcvi]

"The Members of the Hierarchy are seen to be the Custodians of the divine Plan….The spiritual Hierarchy of the planet, the ability of mankind to contact its Members and to work in cooperation with Them, and the existence of the greater Hierarchy of spiritual energies of which our tiny planetary sphere is a part—these are the three truths upon which the coming world religion may be based.”[xcvii]

Bailey also discusses the role of Freemasonry in the creation of this one world religion. Since Freemasonry is a continuation of the ancient Mystery Schools, it should come as no surprise that the Universalist teachings of the fraternity are laying the philosophical foundation for the New World Order religion. She writes, “There is no dissociation between the One Universal Church, the sacred inner Lodge of all true Masons, and the innermost circles of the esoteric societies…It must not be forgotten that only those souls who are on the Probationary Path or the Path of Discipleship will form the nucleus of the coming new world religion.”[xcviii]

“The new religion will manifest, for instance, through organizations like Masonry. In Freemasonry is embedded the core or secret heart of the occult Mysteries—wrapped in number, metaphor and symbol.”[xcix]

Unification Church

Most people are shocked to find, or simply don’t believe, that the founder and owner of the *Washington Times* claims to be the Second Coming of Christ and is the leader of what is called the Unification Church. Sun Myung Moon is a Korean billionaire who has millions of people who follow him and see him as the return of Jesus. Moon’s Unification Church and his enormous following show just how easily people are duped into believing false religious doctrines and how wealthy and powerful these fake prophets can be.

Aside from being a billionaire and owning the *Washington Times* , Sun Myung Moon has maintained close relationships with powerful politicians around the world who have no problem with the fact that he thinks he’s the return of Christ.

The Vatican

Vatican City in Rome is an entire sovereign country which is basically a small city owned and run by the Catholic Church. It has enormous wealth and its own police force, along with the Pope's personal army, the Swiss Guard. The Catholic Church has long been intertwined with the Illuminati, and its society of Jesus (the Jesuits) are the Vatican's foot soldiers attempting to make the Catholic Church the world's leading religious authority. In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI announced that the Catholic Church was the only way to salvation, and that *all* other denominations are not true churches.[c] He wasn't talking about non-Christian religious organizations such as Islam or Buddhism, the Pope was talking about *all* Christian churches other than the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church, the popes, and bishops are basically the same as the Pharisees that Jesus denounced over 2000 years ago for their hypocrisy and their pride and arrogance due to their spiritual knowledge. One needs to look no further than the Inquisition or the massive institutional cover-up of countless pedophile priests to see the core of the Catholic Church is corrupt. The Catholic Church also diverts and perverts the teachings of Jesus in numerous ways, such as having people confess their sins to a priest (who is called Father, which the Bible says nobody but God should be called that) as well as selling indulgences and worshipping the virgin Mary and other saints.

The selling of indulgences, if you don't know, means that people used to pay money to a church and in return the priest would forgive that person's sins and tell them they could then get into Heaven. Some indulgences were even sold for sins people would commit in the future. Such a practice was clearly a shameful abuse of power and completely contradictory to the teachings of Jesus.

The Catholic Church basically took the freeing messages of Jesus and packaged them up and then sold them to the public, when Jesus had intended it to be accessible to all for free. This is the same thing the Jewish Pharisees did with Judaism. It is for these reasons and more that the Vatican, and specifically the Pope is looked at with suspicion regarding the New World Order and is believed by some to one day be the false prophet spoken about in the Bible. The counterfeit Christ (the Antichrist) will be a political figure and the leader of the world, and the false prophet is believed to be a global religious leader who will (wrongfully) confirm to the world that the Christ has returned when the Antichrist announces he is God. Since the Catholic Church is trying to reinstate itself as the *only* Christian authority, many see the Pope as a prime candidate for this false prophet.

A strange revelation was made by the Vatican at the end of 2009 concerning space aliens when the Vatican's chief astronomer said that there could be other "extraterrestrial brothers" of ours out in space who "remained in full friendship with their creator." [ci] Reverend José Gabriel Funes, head of the Vatican Observatory and a scientific adviser to Pope Benedict XVI, said "Why can't we speak of a 'brother extraterrestrial?'" And suggested our "brothers" could be more evolved than humans.

While the subject of space aliens is filled with speculation, misidentification, and craziness, the idea of other intelligent life existing in other solar systems is a fascinating one, and certainly is likely. But what is interesting about the statements from Reverend Funes is that he said these beings could still be "in full friendship with their creator," meaning they are in an unfallen state, unlike mankind. This means they would be without sin. It's a very interesting statement that some see as setting the stage for an alien being to arrive on earth that will claim to be the return of Jesus, when in fact, it could be the Antichrist. This is, of course, only speculation, but the role of the corrupt Catholic Church in the New World Order's coming new religion should be monitored very closely, and the Pope, whoever it is, and the leadership of the Vatican should be seen for the imposters and criminals they are.

Israel

The State of Israel in the Middle East remains the focus of world events due to the continuous fighting between Arabs and Jews as they argue and kill each other over who has the right to the land, the Palestinians or the Jews. The State of Israel was created in 1948 following World War II so the Jews could return to the land their ancient ancestors once inhabited. This plan was organized by Britain as a sort of reparation for the persecution of the

Jews during the war and the Holocaust. The current population of Israel is around 7.5 million with 5.62 million being Jewish.

The creation and existence of the Jewish country remains controversial for several reasons. First of which is that the Jews are seen by many as having stolen the land they are now occupying, having run off the Arabs who were inhabiting the area prior to the creation of Israel. Most Jews believe that God had promised them that land and have a Jewish supremacist view that they are entitled to the land because they believe God said they were. Controversy also surrounds the fact that Israel was created as a country for a specific race of people—the Jews. It is difficult to criticize Israel because the Jews and their blind supporters quickly label any criticism as anti-Semitic—no matter how valid it is.

Israel also remains a focal point for Christians and those who study Bible prophecy and the New World Order. Mainline Christians believe that Israel will be the capitol of the New World Order and will be the geographic location where the Antichrist will rule from, and where Jesus Christ will return to at the end of time. Many Jews have a similar view of the role of Israel in the New World Order, but they believe that Jesus was not the Messiah, and are still waiting for this individual to arrive and lead the Jews and the rest of the world into a utopia of peace and prosperity. The Illuminati and New Age secret societies and cults also look forward to this world leader, who they say will arrive and be identified as the long awaited Christ and Messiah.

A Global Dictator Claiming to be God

It is basically common knowledge that Christians believe that at some point in time, a global leader will rise to power and will wreak havoc on the earth as a dictator known as the Antichrist. Other religions such as Islam, have similar prophecies which foresee such a scenario as well. In Christian theology this dictator will rise to power at a point in time when the planet is engulfed in chaos and war, and he will promise world peace if given the power to lead the world. According to the prophecies, this individual will not only be a tyrannical dictator once in power, but he will also claim to be God incarnate and demand to be worshiped as such.

This isn't exactly a novel idea. If one looks at the history of past civilizations, similar events have occurred over and over again. The pharaohs of Egypt claimed to be gods and demanded their people treat them as such. Nero, the emperor of Rome, expected such treatment as well. A more modern example is that of Adolf Hitler, who saw himself as the savior of Germany and the white race, and who was essentially worshiped as the messiah. A "God complex" seems to fall upon the most power-hungry men throughout history as their thirst for power and recognition leads them to the conclusion that they themselves are a god, and can do whatever they like with their power, no matter how unjust.

There are a few fascinating points that I would like to address regarding this Antichrist scenario, and how it ties directly into the secret societies that are shaping the New World Order. As you should have gathered by now from my writings, a main theme within the secret societies is that the teachings elevate the initiate to a level of enlightenment where they themselves become a god, or god of their own perceived universe.

Manly P. Hall explains in his classic book, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* that, "The Mysteries were therefore established for the purpose of unfolding the nature of man according to certain fixed rules which, when faithfully followed, elevated the human consciousness to a point where it was capable of cognizing its own constitution and the true purpose of existence. This knowledge of how man's manifold constitution could be most quickly and most completely regenerated to the point of spiritual illumination constituted the secret, or esoteric, doctrine of antiquity."[cii]

Such enlightenment philosophies are not that dangerous by themselves, although considered heretical by Christianity and other religions, but instead it is the potential that one can develop this God complex and then place himself above all others and think that the rules of basic human conduct don't apply to them.

While people defend occult organizations such as the Freemasons and other fraternities that teach the ancient Mysteries because they see the teachings as a way to build moral character and make sense of the world and their place in it through the spiritual and symbolic teachings found within such schools, it is undeniable that within such organizations there exists a corrupt core, who many say have hijacked and perverted the ancient Mysteries. The Illuminati is the key culprit who admittedly infiltrated Freemasonry in 1782 and created an inner circle to function covertly under the cover of the fraternity. Others say that the corruption had occurred centuries earlier.

We do find clear evidence of the corrupt core today, and they continue to give a bad name to secret societies and are the source of countless conspiracy theories surrounding them. It is an interesting debate to discuss whether or not the Mysteries themselves are inherently evil, or whether they have been hijacked and abused by organized criminal networks that pervert them for their own gain.

Now, let's analyze the striking parallels between Christian Bible prophecy and the published plans and hopes of the elite secret societies. The Book of Revelation, the final book in the Bible, describes a man who is said to be the Antichrist, or a worker of Satan, who claims to be God and the savior of the world, but in reality is a ruthless dictator.

The teachings of the Mystery Schools are believed to enlighten a man so he may become god-like and as we know men are inclined to get a God complex and become over taken by megalomania and selfishness. What is also interesting is that the Bible describes the counterfeit Christ as a world leader who will claim to be God and demand to be worshiped as such, and will do so in the new Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. This temple, as of early 2010 when this book was first published, has not been rebuilt. The original location of the historical Solomon's temple is currently occupied by a Muslim mosque called the Dome of the Rock. Solomon's temple was destroyed twice in the past, once in 586 BC by the Babylonians, and again in 70 AD by the Romans. Jews have long hoped and planned for the third temple to be rebuilt on the original location, but since the Dome of the Rock stands there, they have a problem. This mosque will surely be destroyed during a conflict sometime in the future and the land will be taken over by Jews, who will then rebuild their long awaited temple.

It's pivotal to note that Freemasonry is a modern Mystery School teaching the same philosophies that had been carried on in secret fraternal orders for thousands of years. Freemasons also consider their lodge where they meet, a temple, but not just any temple. It represents the Temple of Solomon. The head Mason of a lodge is called the Worshipful Master—an interesting choice for a leader. He is so enlightened, Masons believe, that he is a master of the universe and has achieved godhood, so he is "worshipful."

It is not hard to see then that the leader of the New World Order, or the "president of the world" will be a 33rd degree Freemason and believed by himself and his inner circle of associates to have achieved godhood, and will be a "worshipful master" and will take up the rebuilt Temple of Solomon as his own personal temple or office.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:4-8, the Bible explains that the Antichrist will sit in the Temple of Jerusalem where he will exalt himself above God, claiming that he is God, saying, "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

Matthew 24: 15-16 quotes Jesus speaking to His disciple, saying, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place [meaning the temple], (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains."

New Age guru Benjamin Crème writes about the appearance of what he calls the Maitreya or the Christ, saying, “This will lead to the Day of Declaration, when He will appear on the radio and television networks of the world linked by satellite. On that day Maitreya will mentally overshadow the whole of humanity simultaneously. All will hear His words inwardly in their own language. This telepathic communication will reach everyone, not only those watching or listening, and hundreds of thousands of miraculous healings will take place throughout the world. On that day, there will be no doubt that Maitreya is the Christ, the Imam Mahdi, Maitreya Buddha, Kalki Avatart: the World Teacher. His open worldwide mission will have begun.”[ciii]

While Benjamin Crème may think that such an event will be the result of this individual’s “super natural power,” there is actually a perfectly logical explanation for how this kind of “telepathic” phenomena can occur.

Project Bluebeam

In February of 1999, the *Washington Post* reported that operations were drawn up during the first Gulf War to project a huge holographic image of Allah [the Islamic god] in the sky over Baghdad.[civ] Then, using a 5-15KHz acoustic beam, the appearance of Allah talking would also have been manufactured, telling the Iraqi people to turn on Saddam.

A similar plan was considered in Project Mongoose to overthrow Fidel Castro, where a Jesus-like figure would have been projected, telling the Cubans to overthrow “Godless Communism.” This technology has been labeled Project Blue Beam, and is likely ready to be used at any time. Of course, such technology is classified under national security, but this explains perfectly how Benjamin Crème’s prediction could come true of the “Christ” telepathically communicating with people, fooling them into believing he has supernatural powers and is God.

The Holy Bloodline Theory

Ideas that Jesus Christ had a child with Mary Magdalene have been introduced to the mainstream though various books and novels, most popular of which is Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* ,which was released in 2003 and made into a film starring Tom Hanks in 2006. Such an idea has no real evidence, yet it has taken hold in millions of people's minds as being the truth. This idea has several large implications on the New World Order's goal of eroding faith in Christianity, as well as providing a possible justification for the supposed divine right of the Antichrist to rule earth, as he claims to be the long awaited Messiah.

Since secret societies like the Knights Templar and the Freemasons are said to be guardians of the Holy Grail, which in this theory means the bloodline of Jesus and not some cup or book of knowledge, this theory could very well be used as "evidence" that the Antichrist is the physical reincarnation of Jesus, or a direct descendent of him in an attempt to dupe Christians and Agnostics into believing he is divinely ordained to rule the New World Order.

The Rapture

According to many Christians, when the end times come and the world has decayed into a disastrous wasteland and the Antichrist is about to take power, Christians will miraculously disappear from the face of the earth and be spared the harsh existence the rest of the world will face at the hands of this global tyrant. While many faithful Christians point to various Bible verses they believe verify this idea, it is highly doubtful such an event will occur, and it is this author's opinion that the Rapture is a misinterpretation of the Bible, and a hoax.

Some people who see the idea of all faithful Christians magically disappearing off the face of the earth and leaving everyone else behind to live in the New World Order as foolish, adhere to what is called a post tribulation rapture, which they say is a rapture of the Christians *after* the rule of the Antichrist. This idea is at least more realistic than a pre-trib (pre-tribulation) rapture.

A major downfall to believing in the pre-trib rapture (the idea that Christians will be taken to Heaven as soon as the Antichrist comes on the scene, therefore being spared from the chaos and persecution) is that by believing they will supernaturally be taken off the earth and avoid the troubling times when the global dictator Antichrist is in power, they do not see a need to resist the New World Order or any major political or social policies being implemented, because they think that before things get too bad they’re going to go to Heaven and they won’t have to deal with it.

When told about the encroaching Big Brother surveillance system and the VeriChip or similar device replacing paper currency and fulfilling the prophecy of the mark of the beast, instead of speaking out against it or pushing for some kind of accountability or alternative for such a system, Rapture believing Christians are actually pleased such things are right around the corner because they think it means the Rapture is one step closer. Such a pathetic and cowardly attitude only allows their freedoms, privacy, and liberties to be taken away much more easily.

Other Implications of the Dictator

This counterfeit Christ who claims to be God will espouse a very liberal and immoral philosophy on the world. Any sort of moral judgment on behaviors traditionally seen as immoral or reprehensible will be faced with extreme consequences. A very hedonistic lifestyle will be embraced and conservatives and Christians who oppose such behaviors will be labeled as the evil ones who are out of touch with the times. Many Christians will not believe that this man is God and will be aware of the massive fraud that is being perpetuated, and these individuals will be targeted as the trouble makers and the ones who are preventing the New World Order utopia from being realized.

Some prophecies predict that the Antichrist will be nearly killed in an assassination attempt (or an accident) and will seemingly come back to life but with a massive wound to one of his eyes. His miraculous recovery will be touted as a miracle by his inner circle and will be more justification in the minds of his supporters that he has supernatural powers and has the divine right to rule. It’s interesting to note that the symbol for the Illuminati is one eye, often drawn inside a triangle or placed at the top of a pyramid. If this dictator is missing one eye after he is “resurrected” after his attack (or accident), the Illuminati would surely link their symbol of their God (the all-seeing eye) with their leader, who will also have one eye. This too may be seen as another “sign” that he is the Messiah.

Global Police and Military Force

There have been suspicions that UN (United Nations) troops could be deployed on American soil for any number of reasons, such as supposedly to aid Americans in the event of a major terrorist attack from biological or nuclear weapons, or to take over American infrastructure in the event of the U.S. dollar collapsing and becoming worthless as foreign countries try to recoup their losses.

Such fears are stoked by videos that surface of the American military training foreign troops on US soil, sometimes practicing urban exercises where they simulate taking over a town's main buildings, locking down the area, and even rounding up civilians who are willing participants in the exercises who pretend to be upset that they are being detained. Some videos even show make-shift prison camps where detainees are checked in and given ID badges and held inside tents surrounded by barbed wire.[cv]

One main reason for people's uneasiness about such situations is that if UN forces are used on American soil for any reason, they do not have any loyalty to this country or the Constitution. We are nothing but foreigners to them. They would not be protecting their own neighborhoods or cities, but instead would simply be doing a job. Such troops will likely have no problems confiscating guns from house to house or rounding up large numbers of Americans for relocation to prison camps.

President Obama's chief science czar John Holdren wrote in his 1977 book *Ecoscience* about what he felt were the advantages of a global police force, saying, "If this could be accomplished, security might be provided by an armed international organization, a global analogue of a police force. Many people have recognized this as a goal, but the way to reach it remains obscure in a world where factionalism seems, if anything, to be increasing. The first step necessarily involves partial surrender of sovereignty to an international organization."[cvi]

This is the same man who wrote in this same book about adding sterilizing agents to the water supply and forcing all women onto birth control or else forcing them to have an abortion if they get pregnant after having two children.

Another unsettling aspect concerning military troops in the New World Order is the existence of private contractors being employed. Such a strategy became fairly well known during the Iraq War when the infamous Blackwater private security company became the focus of controversy after the public learned that these “contractors” were being paid a large amount of money and were given luxurious living conditions and great food compared to regular US soldiers. These Blackwater troops are basically paid mercenaries who do not have the same chain of command and codes of conduct that members of the US military have. Such mercenaries don’t have any loyalty to any particular country either, and will accept a paycheck and orders from practically anyone.

Blackwater

Now called simply Xe (pronounced Zi), is the new name for the private military contracting company formerly called Blackwater that became known for various controversies surrounding its employees activities during the War in Iraq. The company is the largest tactical training facility which trains more than 40,000 people per year in military offensive and defensive operations.

In early 2009, the company changed its name from Blackwater to Xe and the new name, “reflects the change in company focus away from the business of providing private security.” The company denied the new strange name has any significance or special meaning. They did, however, admit that the name Blackwater became too closely associated with the company’s work in the occupation of Iraq.[cvii] The company’s license to operate in Iraq was not renewed and the new Iraqi government made several attempts to have them kicked out of the country during the course of the war.[cviii]

Xe (Blackwater) is still the largest private security contractor used by the United States government. 90% of the company's money comes from government contracts; two-thirds of which are no-bid contracts[cix]—meaning they are the only company providing a quote to the government for the job—so multiple companies won't have to compete with each other for the job by offering a lower price than the others.

The scandals and controversies surrounding corruption and murder involving Blackwater (Xe) mercenaries are numerous. In one instance executives at Blackwater authorized secret payments of nearly $1 million dollars to Iraqi officials in order to buy their silence regarding a 2007 incident where Blackwater security guards killed 17 Iraqi civilians in Bagdad.[cx] Blackwater's president Gary Jackson was fingered by four former executives as having personally approved the bribes.

The CIA also contracted Blackwater to create a hit squad and assassinate leaders of resistance groups in Iraq.

American Police Force

A mysterious private security company came to the attention of concerned citizens in September 2009 which went by the name American Police Force, and used a Serbian coat of arms as its logo. The company had been contracted to run an empty prison facility in the city of Hardin, Montana, which drew suspicion of local residents. Local officials had hoped the facility would be used to detain prisoners that were held at the prison at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, which President Obama claimed he would close. The contract between the city of Hardin and American Police force was reported to be a 10-year, multimillion dollar deal.[cxi]

American Police Force is owned by a man named Michael Hilton, whose criminal record shows he "pleaded guilty in March 1993 to 14 felonies, including 10 counts of grand theft, one count of attempted grand theft and three counts of diversion of construction funds, according to Orange County court records. He was sentenced to two years in prison, but it is unclear how much time he served.”[cxii]

Hilton is said to speak English with a heavy accent and told reporters he is a naturalized US citizen who is originally from Montenegro, which borders Serbia.

Orange County, California court records show Hilton has used sixteen different aliases, one of which, Michael Miodrag, is listed as being connected to a multimillion dollar fraud case in Australia from 2007.

Shortly after all the controversy surrounding the American Police Force and people looking into Michael Hilton’s shady past, the city of Harding announced that American Police Force would not be taking over the abandoned prison facility. The Serbian government also forced American Police Force to change its logo, since it was a coat of arms used by the Serbian government.

Mystery still surrounds this strange “American Police Force” company and how they were able to get a ten million dollar deal to operate an abandoned prison. When news reports first started surfacing about this issue, some people began fearing that this prison would be operated as a concentration camp for US citizens who some feared would be rounded up for not taking the H1N1 swine flu vaccine that the government was pushing at the time.

It’s also strange that a private security company was allowed to operate using a name that impersonates the police, when such an action is a felony.

Other Private Military Companies

While Blackwater and Private Police Force may be two of the most well-known contracted military or mercenary companies, the list is fairly long of other lesser known companies. MVM Inc. provides contracting services for the CIA and the NSA (National Security Agency) and is located in Vienna, Virginia, which is just 6 miles from the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. DynCorp is another infamous contracting company used by the military, which has been implicated in kidnapping children from Russia and Romania and selling them as sex slaves.

KBR Inc. (Formerly Kellogg Brown and Root) is another private military contractor whose employees have also been implicated in human trafficking.[cxiii] Numerous women have also reported being gang raped by their fellow employees while working for KBR. One woman, Jamie Leigh Jones, testified before a Congressional hearing that she had been gang-raped by approximately seven of her coworkers when she worked for KBR in Iraq back in 2005.[cxiv] Jones' lawyers said that 38 other women reported similar experiences. KBR was a subsidiary of Halliburton at the time. Dick Cheney, if you recall, was the CEO of Halliburton from 1995 to the year 2000, before becoming vice president under George W. Bush and then pulling strings so his former company would make millions in no-bid contracts.

Posse Comitatus Act

The Posse Comitatus Act was a law passed in 1878 which specifically prohibited the U.S. military from being used on American soil for law enforcement purposes. The term is Latin for "power of the county." The reason for such a law was to prevent a dictatorship from arising in America by prohibiting a corrupt president from ordering the Army or other military branch to enforce laws that may be unconstitutional.

After 9/11, numerous instances of uniformed military personnel helping police conduct security checks began to be reported as violations of Posse Comitatus, but all instances were described by officials as merely "training exercises," thus claiming there was no collaboration between police and military, when clearly there was. One concerned citizen videotaped a brief conversation with a uniformed officer in Kingsman, Arizona where the citizen was subjected to a vehicle checkpoint. The military officer admitted, "We're just helping with security and traffic and stuff for the races." The solider was then asked if he was under the control of the police and working for the city, to which he responded, "I have no idea, I just do what I'm told."[cxv]

In 2008, the California Highway Patrol announced its officers would work with US Marines to staff sobriety and driver's license checkpoints.[cxvi] An ABC affiliate KESQ reported on this after locals expressed concern that this violated the Posse Comitatus Act. The Marines, of course, denied this and Lieutenant Thomas Beck claimed, "We were not actively participating in enforcing any laws. We were there to observe and observe only."[cxvii]

Another instance of our military working with police was captured on video by a member of the political activist group We Are Change, where they traveled to Newport, Kentucky during River Fest. The person was questioning a uniformed Army soldier who was staking out public streets. The soldiers were in full uniform and armed with handguns and had military Hummers parked on the side of the road.[cxviii]

Another soldier who was part of this same operation was asked if he would follow orders to confiscate guns from American citizens door-to-door, like what occurred after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. He answered, "I'm just a soldier. I do what I'm told."[cxix]

This author (Mark Dice) has lived in the San Diego, California area for over ten years and has numerous friends who have been stationed at Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, California, which is in the North County of San Diego. One friend informed me that it is against policy for Marines to wear their uniforms anywhere out in public other than from their home directly to the base or vice a versa. They are not allowed to stop off at the grocery store and go shopping, or take a stroll through the mall, because seeing a Marine in camouflage out in public can be unsettling for people and gives the feeling of a police state with public areas being patrolled by the military.

The Department of Defense's slick legal team always insists that such collaborations of military and police are just "training" exercising and claim they do not violate the Posse Comitatus Act. Such claims are of course lies.

John Warner Defense Act

A bill passed by Congress in 2006 under the Bush administration known as the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 5122), greatly expanded the president's power to declare martial law and deploy the National Guard into US cities without state governor authorizations when public order has been lost or is seen as being potentially lost. Before this, there were strict limitations on the president's ability to do so and the authority was delegated to state governors, but now the president can make the decision himself.

At some point, this authority will ultimately be superseded by the United Nations or the president of the world who will then have the authority to deploy troops and declare martial law anytime and anywhere they see fit.

Military Commissions Act of 2006

The United States Military Commissions Act of 2006 (HR-6166), was an Act of Congress signed into law by President George W. Bush in order to "authorize trial by military commission for violations of the law of war, and for other purposes."

What this really did was allow the President of the United States (Bush and future presidents) to declare someone (including a U.S. citizen) to be considered an "enemy combatant," which then eliminates their right to habeas corpus, meaning they no longer would have the right to challenge their imprisonment, and could be detained without having any charges even filed against them. Such a practice is in clear violation of the Constitution which says a person can't be held without being charged with a crime.

The language in the law is so broad that it can be used to label anyone an "enemy combatant" who is engaged in hostilities or who has supported hostilities against the United States. This "support" could be financial, [direct or indirect] or simply counseling.

The Act also suggests that the label "unlawful enemy combatant" refers to any person, "who, before, on, or after the date of the enactment of the Military Commissions Act of 2006, has been determined to be an unlawful enemy combatant by a Combatant Status Review Tribunal or another competent tribunal established under the authority of the President or the

Secretary of Defense.” This basically means that if the President says you are an enemy combatant, then you are one.[cxx]

The language in the Act also made this power retroactive, which means that since it was passed, people can be detained and not charged for something they allegedly did before the Act was passed in 2006, when such detainment was not authorized.

Concentration Camps

When one hears of concentration camps, images of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust immediately come to mind, but many American’s would never think that innocent citizens in their country would ever be rounded up and placed in prison camps. Many Americans distracted by professional sports and pop culture are unaware that during World War II, President Roosevelt had 120,000 Japanese Americans rounded up and placed in prison camps. The conditions of living were certainly not what Jews and other prisoners faced in Nazi Germany, but nonetheless, innocent American citizens were taken from their homes and placed in large prison camps called War Relocation Camps for several years.

Even if some people are aware of the Japanese internment, they dismiss such events as being a thing of the past, and never suspect that large scale detention facilities exist today.

During the Republican National Convention of 2004 in New York City, hundreds of protesters were rounded up and taken to an old dilapidated bus garage by the Hudson River, which was converted into a secret detention camp by the NYPD in preparation for the convention.[cxxi]

The facility was dirty with motor oil on the ground and the building was contaminated with asbestos. People were held in crowded conditions for long hours, and the facility was dubbed “Guantanamo on the Hudson” in reference to Camp X-ray in Cuba, where suspects in the “War on Terror” are held without having any charges filed against them.

Another secret prison camp that was discovered and made public was in Austin, Texas in an abandoned airplane hangar at an airport. The hanger was equipped with barbed wire fences, shackles on the ground, and mattresses for detainees to sleep on. This secret prison was created in the build-up to the year 2000 because officials worried that there would be massive civil unrest and possibly the breakdown of civilization if the rumored Y2K bug shut down computers.

Such facilities are now plentiful in America as the New World Order continues to be constructed and such prisons are not new. In the 1980s during the Iran-Contra hearings, Jack Brooks (D-TX) tried to learn about Oliver North's role in FEMA's plans to suspend the Constitution and detain political dissidents during a declared state of national emergency.

During the hearings, Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-HA) prevented Brooks from further questioning as indicated in a transcript of the hearing.

Brooks: Colonel North, in your work at the N.S.C. [National Security Council] were you not assigned, at one time, to work on plans for the continuity of government in the event of a major disaster?

Brendan Sullivan: [North's counsel]: Mr. Chairman?

Inouye: I believe that question touches upon a highly sensitive and classified area so may I request that you not touch upon that?

Brooks: I was particularly concerned, Mr. Chairman, because I read in Miami papers, and several others, that there had been a plan developed, by that same agency, a contingency plan in the event of emergency, that would suspend the American constitution. And I was deeply concerned about it and wondered if that was an area in which he had worked. I believe that it was and I wanted to get his confirmation.

Inouye: May I most respectfully request that that matter not be touched upon at this stage. If we wish to get into this, I'm certain arrangements can be made for an executive session.

End of Transcript

The goofy admitted alcoholic Mormon Glenn Beck became practically a house hold name after he left CNN and moved over to the Fox News Channel in January 2009. Beck's attempt to imitate Robert Beale of the popular 1970s film *Network* has gotten him a large fan base who see him as an honest average American, even though he signed a $50 million dollar contract for his radio show alone.[cxxii]

A concerned looking Beck appeared on *Fox and Friends* , a morning show on the Fox News Channel to promote his new show on their network, and told the hosts, "I have to tell you, I'm doing a story tonight. I wanted to debunk these FEMA camps, you know about them? I'm tired of hearing about them. I wanted to debunk them, well, now for several days we've done research on them…I can't debunk them. And we're going to carry this story tonight."[cxxiii] He goes on to explain to the other hosts, "FEMA prisons, FEMA camps. These are actually prisons that were built under the Bush administration…they're sitting there empty…you'll see that tonight. Something just doesn't sit right with me."

Later that night during *The Glenn Beck Program* when viewers were expecting to learn more about these prison camps, Beck took a complete 180 degree turn and denied that such camps even exist. He actually decided not to air the segment, and instead told his audience, "I told you that I was going to tell you about the FEMA camps or the FEMA prisons today…I don't believe in the FEMA prisons, if you don't know I'll tell you about it in a couple of days." He then said he was going to talk about it today but that his research was "incomplete" and he needed to wait a few more days. He then admitted, "this is going to drive the conspiracy theorists crazy. I'll add this. They're making me say this. Help," and went on to imply that nobody from management killed the story, and that he only answers to himself.

The following week Beck had James Meigs on as a guest, who is the editor of *Popular Mechanics* magazine and the two had a field day attacking the "conspiracy theories" about the FEMA camps, and denied that there are such things. James Meigs is the same man who presents himself as having "debunked" the "9/11 conspiracy theories" by choosing straw men arguments and fringe theories about the 9/11 attacks and then claiming the entire body of research supporting 9/11 was an inside job must be false. For anyone of any intelligence, Glenn Beck's complete reversal is obvious, and proves that the higher ups at the Fox News Channel killed his original story and then produced a new one with the help of "debunker" James Meigs.

In other instances Beck has made numerous slanderous remarks about 9/11 Truthers (those who see the 9/11 attacks were an inside job) and in one instance Beck has fabricated statements saying that the nutcase who shot a security guard at the Washington DC holocaust museum was a "hero" to the 9/11 Truthers.[cxxiv] These instances and others prove Glenn Beck to be a slick disinformationist and a gate-keeper who works to prevent important information from reaching the public, while pretending to bring his audience cutting edge commentary and news.

The film *Camp FEMA* (2009) produced by Gary Franchi and directed by Richard Lewis documents the existence of modern concentration camps, a topic that is beyond the scope of this book.

MTV Warns about Martial Law and Concentration Camps

A series of several brief commercials, or perhaps more accurately PSAs (Public Service Announcements), aired on MTV, of all places, in 2008 depicting situations where an out of control police force rounded up citizens in the back of trucks and put them on trains at gunpoint. At the end of the segment, the scene froze and faded into a historical photograph of Jews being rounded up for the Holocaust in a similar manor. The segments were only thirty seconds long, but were extremely disturbing. They concluded with a printed message on the screen reading, "The Holocaust happened to people like us."

Abusing, Torturing, and Raping Prisoners

As the Iraq War drug on for years and the lies continued to unravel about the reasons America started the war, word began to spread about American soldiers abusing prisoners. Hundreds of photos were made public that soldiers themselves had taken of each other abusing detainees for their own amusement, and the abuse was blamed on a handful of soldiers who were said to have acted on their own and not in accordance with their superiors. Other photos were never made public which show soldiers raping and sodomizing detainees, although such activities are officially denied to have occurred.

While some photos of abuse were made public, President Obama prevented the release of over 2000 others shortly after he was sworn in as president, despite his earlier promises to have them released. Major General Antonio Taguba was the Army officer in charge of conducting an inquiry into the Abu Ghraib jail in Iraq and gave an interview with the *London Telegraph* admitting that, “These pictures show torture, abuse, rape and every indecency.”[cxxv]

Just one month after Obama flip flopped and changed his mind about releasing photos, he stated, “The most direct consequence of releasing them, I believe, would be to inflame anti-American public opinion and to put our troops in greater danger,” but those on the inside like Major General Taguba know the real reason for not releasing them. “The mere description of these pictures is horrendous enough, take my word for it,” Taguba said.

One such description was released under the US Freedom of Information Act where an Egyptian translator named Kasim Mehaddi Hilas said, “I saw [name of a translator] fucking a kid, his age would be about 15 to 18 years. The kid was hurting very bad and they covered all the doors with sheets. Then when I heard screaming I climbed the door because on top it wasn’t covered and I saw [name] who was wearing the military uniform, putting his dick in the little kid’s ass…and the female soldier was taking pictures.”[cxxvi]

Despite all the now sealed photos and descriptions by eyewitnesses, this level of abuse is officially denied by the US government. What was admitted, after being denied of course, is the use of waterboarding, which is pouring water down the mouth and nose of someone who is strapped to a table, thus making them feel like they are drowning due to inhaling water into their lungs. Waterboarding has been illegal under international law and is considered torture by countless legal experts, war veterans, medical experts, and human rights organizations. This didn’t stop the Bush administration from using it though, and after numerous denials that the CIA and military officials were waterboarding suspects and prisoners, they finally admitted it, but called it an “enhanced interrogation technique” and denied that it was torture.

Fox News’ Operation Mockingbird asset Sean Hannity, an avid war propagandist and George W. Bush defender, continuously stated that waterboarding was no big deal and when asked live on television by one of his guests if he would volunteer to be waterboarded, Hannity agreed to do it for charity. He never followed through with his promise, and completely ignored the fact that he made such a statement. MSNBC’s Keith Olbermann publicly offered to pay $1000 to charity for every second Hannity was subjected the practice, but of course it never happened.

Mancow Muller, a popular Chicago radio host, had also spoken publicly in support of waterboarding and denied that it was torture, that is, until he himself voluntarily underwent the procedure. Mancow thought that he could be waterboarded and then say it was no big deal and that liberals who were against it and those who called it torture would be proven wrong, but immediately after the procedure began Mancow ended it and admitted he thought it constituted torture. An EMT was present in case anything went wrong.

Immediately after ending the experiment, Mancow said, “It is way worse than I thought it would be…Look…all that’s been done to this country, and I heard about water being dropped on someone’s face, I never considered it torture, even when I was laying there, I thought this is gonna be no big deal, I go swimming, it’s gonna be like being in the tub…it was instantaneous. I thought I could hold out 30 seconds, 60 seconds, it was instantaneous, and I don’t want to say this…absolutely torture. Absolutely, I mean that’s drowning.” [cxxvii]

COINTELPRO

A sinister covert and highly illegal program admittedly conducted by the FBI between 1956 and 1971 was called COINTELPRO (an acronym for Counter Intelligence Program) which investigated and disrupted political organizations deemed problematic by the establishment. Since its discovery and the nature of its crimes and activities, of course the FBI says the program was dissolved and no such thing exists anymore. Such claims are laughable, and COINTELPRO's discovery only served as a learning experience for the FBI and measures were put in place to prevent such activities from being discovered and exposed in the future.

The original program targeted groups seen as "subversive" or groups suspected of being subversive. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders in the Civil Rights Movement and those associated with the NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), and the Southern Poverty Law Center were also targeted, as well as groups protesting the Vietnam War, including many college students. The directives of COINTELPRO were given by J. Edgar Hoover, who was the head of the FBI at the time, and ordered agents to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize" the leaders and activities of such groups.

Agents involved in the program used a lot of dirty tricks, such as mailing letters to leaders of organizations claiming to be from someone else and making accusations that they had been sleeping with that person's wife, for example. In one instance a recording of Martin Luther King Jr. that was taken illegally from a hotel room and proved he was cheating on his wife. FBI agents then anonymously mailed the recording to his wife because they wanted to discourage King from pushing for civil rights.

Illegal wire taps, spreading false and slanderous rumors about people, frame-ups and worse were all common in COINTELPRO and are still methods used today by elite law enforcement and intelligence agents.

The MIAC Report

A joint venture between the Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement in Jefferson City, Missouri called The Missouri Information Analysis Center (or MIAC), is said to analyze terrorist threats and criminal activity in order to help prevent them. This MIAC was fairly unknown until March of 2009, when an eight page report the organization had wrote up was leaked to the public titled *The Modern Militia Movement* , which contained some disturbing information regarding the kinds of individuals the report labeled as potentially dangerous or domestic terrorists.

When the MIAC report first surfaced, a lot of people thought it was a hoax since the criteria it used to identify potential militia members and terrorists was completely absurd, but the report was confirmed authentic by Lieutenant John Hotz, the Assistant Director of the Public Information and Education Division of the Missouri State Highway Patrol.[cxxviii] The report contains what it called common symbols and media associated with terrorists in order for officials to more easily identify them. These items include bumper stickers showing support for Congressman Ron Paul, owning gold coins, and Aaron Russo's film *America: Freedom to Fascism.*

The report begins by trying to explain why the militia movement gained numbers in the 1980s and 90s, saying, "It was during this timeframe that many individuals and organizations began to concoct conspiracy theories to explain their misfortunes. These theories varied but almost always involved a globalist dictatorship, the 'New World Order (NWO),' which conspired to exploit the working class citizens…Much of this rhetoric would become anti-Semitic, claiming that the Jews controlled the monetary system and media, and in turn the 'Zionist Occupied government (ZOG).'"

In a section titled *The Militia Post September 11th 2001* it reads, "Newer versions of the NWO conspiracy have been concocted in order to empower the movement. The NWO is seen as using law enforcement, military, national guard, and federal agencies in order to carry out its elitist one world government."

It goes on to say, "Many militia organizations feel that the U.S. government will fall due to economic or racial issues. They believe that during the chaotic fall of the government, moves will be made to install Martial Law, confiscate firearms, and imprison many citizens."

The report mentions the North American Union and says, “conspiracy theorists claim that this union would link Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The NAU would unify its monetary system and trade the dollar for the AMERO.” [cxxix]

Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFIDs) are also mentioned, saying “there is a fear that the government will enforce mass RFID human implantations. This process would make it possible for the government to continually know the locations of all citizens.” [cxxx]

The report is a tremendous piece of propaganda aimed at convincing police that anyone who discusses these particular issues should be viewed as a potential threat. It says, “The militia subscribes to an anti-government and NWO mindset, which creates a threat to law enforcement officers. They view the military, National Guard, and law enforcement as a force that will confiscate their firearms and place them in FEMA concentration camps.”

Since most people familiar with the New World Order learn about the private Federal Reserve Bank and its role in the economy, the MIAC report also included this topic in their report painting these people as extremists. “Members of the militia movement are strongly against the FRS (Federal Reserve System) and see it as a mechanism of the elitist New World Order. In November, End the FED protests were held nationwide at Federal Reserve Banks in opposition to the FRS. Many right-wing extremists oppose the FRS and propose a system that would be backed by gold,” it reads.

Also, since many who see the left vs. right paradigm one of controlled opposition, and the leadership of both the Republicans and the Democrats as being globalists with ties to the secret establishment, many people begin favoring third party candidates who don’t have to bow down to any special interests. While this is a conclusion any thinking American would come to after learning about how the political structure actually functions, the MIAC report chose to demonize such people.

“Militia members most commonly associate with 3rd party political groups. It’s not uncommon for militia members to display Constitution Party, Campaign for Liberty, or Libertarian material. These members are usually supporters of former Presidential Candidates Ron Paul, Chuck Baldwin, and Bob Barr.” [cxxxi]

The report even warns that people who display political messages on their vehicles in the form of bumper stickers should be suspects. “Militia members commonly display pictures, cartoons, [and] bumper stickers that contain anti-government rhetoric. Most of this material will depict the FRS, IRS, FBI, ATF, CIA, UN, Law Enforcement, and ‘The New World Order’ in a derogatory manor.” [cxxxii]

Shortly after word spread of this report and the demonizing language in it, even mainstream media outlets covered it in shock saying it amounted to political profiling. Soon afterward, by the end of March 2009, the report was said to be scrapped and the director of the MIAC was reassigned.

“For that reason, I have ordered the MIAC to permanently cease distribution of the militia report,” said Chief James Keathley of the Missouri State Patrol. “Further, I am creating a new process for oversight of reports drafted by the MIAC that will require leaders of the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Department of Public Safety to review the content of these reports before they are shared with law enforcement. My office will also undertake a review of the origin of the report by MIAC.” [cxxxiii]

Department of Homeland Security Labels Veterans as Possible Terrorists and Extremists

While some skeptics say the MIAC report was just one insignificant report drafted and circulated in the state of Missouri, not soon afterwards a similar report was made public that was drafted by the Department of Homeland Security which labeled veterans and pro-life organizations as possible extremists or terrorists.

The report, titled *Right-wing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment* , also says that due to the collapse of the economy which began near the end of 2008 and the election of Barack Obama as the first black president of the United States, that “rightwing extremists” are having an easier time recruiting supporters who are concerned about illegal immigration, restrictions of firearms, abortion, and the loss of US sovereignty.

The report even admits, “threats from white supremacist and violent anti-government groups during 2009 have been largely rhetorical and have not indicated plans to carry out violent acts,” but suggests that, worsening economic conditions, potential new restrictions on firearms and “the return of military veterans facing significant challenges reintegrating into their communities could lead to the potential emergence of terrorist groups or lone wolf extremists capable of carrying out violent attacks.”

The report says that rightwing extremism, “can be broadly divided into those groups, movements, and adherents that are primarily hate-oriented (based on hatred of particular religious, racial or ethnic groups), and those that are mainly anti-government, rejecting federal authority in favor of state or local authority, or rejecting government authority entirely. It may include groups and individuals that are dedicated to a single issue, such as opposition to abortion or immigration.”

“[T]he consequences of a prolonged economic downturn—including real estate foreclosures, unemployment and an inability to obtain credit – could create a fertile recruiting environment for right-wing extremists and even result in confrontations between such groups and government authorities similar to those in the past,” the report reads.

It also warns that, “Proposed imposition of firearms restrictions and weapons bans likely would attract new members into the ranks of right-wing extremist groups as well as potentially spur some of them to begin planning and training for violence against the government…The high volume of purchases and stockpiling of weapons and ammunition by right-wing extremists in anticipation of restrictions and bans in some parts of the country continue to be a primary concern to law enforcement.”

The report also mentions what it calls people who believe in anti-government conspiracy theories about gun confiscations, citizen detention camps, and a Jewish-controlled ‘one-world government’ and says that, “end times prophecies could motivate extremist individuals and groups to stockpile food, ammunition and weapons. These teachings also have been linked with the radicalization of domestic extremist individuals and groups in the past, such as the violent Christian Identity organizations and extremist members of the militia movement.”

It also attempts to cast suspicion on veterans, saying, “Returning veterans possess combat skills and experience that are attractive to right-wing extremists…DHS/I&A (Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Intelligence and Analysis) is concerned that right-wing extremists will attempt to recruit and radicalize veterans in order to boost their violent capacities.”

People who support enforcing immigration laws and who oppose illegal immigration or speak out against it are also demonized in the report. “DHS/I&A assesses that right-wing extremist groups’ frustration over a perceived lack of government action on illegal immigration has the potential to incite individuals or small groups toward violence.”

The report concludes that the Department of Homeland Security will work with state and local officials in the near future to determine the levels of right-wing extremist activity in their areas.

Project Megiddo

In the months preceding the turn of the twenty-first century, the FBI released a report warning of violence they thought would likely be carried out to mark the new millennium at the hands of people who believed in the “New World Order conspiracy theory.” The report specifically listed white supremacists, Black Hebrew Israelites, the militia movement, and apocalyptic cults as groups who the FBI should be on the lookout for. While it is true that a very small number of white supremacists and apocalyptic cults have carried out violence driven by their ideologies, the Project Megiddo report casts suspicion on anyone who talks about the New World Order.

This 32 page report was titled Project Megiddo because, as it explains, “The Hebrew word ‘Armageddon’ means ‘hill of Megiddo.’ In English, the word has come to represent battle itself. The last book in the New Testament of the Bible designates Armageddon as the assembly point in the apocalyptic setting of God’s final and conclusive battle against evil. The name ‘Megiddo’ is an apt title for a project that analyzes those who believe the year 2000 will usher in the end of the world and who are willing to perpetrate acts of violence to bring that end about.”

In the section focusing on the militia, the report tries to paint those who talk about the New World Order or the United Nations as potential violent extremists, saying, “Meanwhile, for members of the militia movement the new millennium has a political overtone rather than a religious one. It is their belief that the United Nations has created a secret plan, known as the New World Order (NWO), to conquer the world beginning in 2000.” [cxxxiv]

The report goes on to demonize gun owners and supporters of the Second Amendment who oppose gun control measures, reading “The passage of the Brady Bill and assault weapons ban in 1994 were interpreted by those in the militia movement and among the right-wing as the first steps towards disarming citizens in preparation for the UN-led NWO takeover.”[cxxxv]

“In light of the enormous importance and prominent role that extremist groups place on the Second Amendment, it is probable that recent government actions aimed at controlling guns are perceived to be compelling signs of the UN-led NWO takeover.”[cxxxvi]

It is well known to those who are aware of the New World Order that FEMA has constructed various prison camps, detention centers, and so-called emergency relocation centers which are usually kept secret from the public, and in some cases have been covered by mainstream news.[cxxxvii] Most people who are familiar with these “FEMA camps” are not very comfortable with their existence and the secrecy which surrounds them. The Megiddo report addresses these worries, saying, “One can find numerous references in militia literature to military bases to be used as concentration camps in the NWO and visiting foreign military personnel conspiring to attack Americans.” [cxxxviii]

One of the most unsettling ideas conveyed in the report is that Christians who are uneasy about the New World Order for its prophetic implications regarding the end times are viewed as cult members who may act out violently in order to bring about the end of the world. “Cults with an apocalyptic agenda, particularly those that appear ready to *initiate* rather than *anticipate* violent confrontations to bring about Armageddon or fulfill ‘prophesy’ present unique challenges to law enforcement officials.” [cxxxix]

“Religiously motivated extremists may initiate violent conflicts with law enforcement officials in an attempt to facilitate the onset of Armageddon, or to help fulfill a ‘prophesy.’ … Likewise, extremists who are convinced that the millennium will lead to a One World Government may choose to engage in violence to prevent such a situation from occurring.” [cxl]

It certainly is interesting that since this report was released in October 1999, talk of the New World Order by major political figures around the world has become common place, and the vast majority of people around the world who speak out against it are viewed as dangerous extremists who the government and law enforcement agencies claim are prone to violence.

A Nation of Spies

In the New World Order, the mainstream media and the government purposefully create a climate of fear, putting the population on edge with the threat of terrorism they claim can come from any number of individuals or groups. The ethereal “al Qaeda” became the focal point of such fears after the September 11th 2001 terror attacks in New York City and Washington DC and the fear mongering went on practically daily throughout the Bush administration.

While it is understandable that law enforcement would put out information urging people to be on the lookout for specific suspicious behavior in hopes of preventing any crimes from taking place, the rhetoric accompanying such alerts has created a climate where people are urged to spy on their neighbors and are made to feel powerful by doing so, as if they themselves are working in cooperation with law enforcement.

During the 2008 presidential campaign in America, Barrack Obama made a startling statement referring to his desire to create a program which sounds like it was coming right out of George Orwell’s dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* . Obama proclaimed, “We cannot continue to rely only on our military in order to achieve the national security objectives that we’ve set. We’ve got to have a civilian national security force that’s just as powerful, just as strong, just as well-funded.”

The man chosen by President Obama to be his chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, made equally unsettling statements in the past. On August 21, 2009 Rahm Emanuel, who was a Democratic member of the House of Representatives, was interviewed on C-Span about his book *The Plan: Big Ideas for America* , and when asked specifically what he meant by the idea of a “universal citizen service” Emanuel answered, “Citizenship is not an entitlement program. It comes with responsibilities. Everybody between the ages of 18 and 25 will serve three months of basic training and understanding in a kind of civil defense.”

In George Orwell's classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* , the children spy on their parents and neighbors and accuse the lead character Winston Smith of being a "thought criminal," meaning he has negative thoughts about the government. These same children report their father as a thought criminal as well, and he is arrested based on these accusations.

The idea of civilians spying on other civilians by simply keeping their eyes and ears open for anything they might say or do that seems to criticize the ruling party was something that people thought occurred only in Nazi Germany or the Communist Soviet Union, but there have been multiple attempts by leadership in both Republican and Democratic parties to create a culture in America where people feel empowered because they are on the lookout for anyone that is not in step with current leadership and their ideologies.

Often such programs are defended citing "things have changed since 9/11," referring to the September 11th terrorist attacks and claims that a secret society of Muslim extremists are living among us plotting their next attack and waiting for the right moment or the green light from Osama Bin Laden, the mythical leader of this society of radicals.

Operation TIPS

A snitch program implemented under the fear-mongering years of President George W. Bush was called Operation TIPS, which was an acronym for the *Terrorism Information and Prevention System* . This program was aimed at workers who had access to people's homes, such as cable installers and telephone repairmen, who were encouraged to look for and report "suspicious" activity to authorities. The program was intended to begin in August 2002 and hoped to include over one million workers in ten US cities.

John Ashcroft who was the Attorney General under President Bush admitted that information generated by Operation TIPS would then be stored in databases for various law enforcement agencies. Senator Patrick Leahy from Vermont criticized the program and likened it to J. Edgar Hoover's misuse of the FBI when he hired citizens to spy on their neighbors if they were political protesters during the 1960s. Legislation was introduced in the House version of the Homeland Security Bill that prohibited the creation of Operation TIPS, but senator Joe Lieberman blocked its removal from the Senate's version. The Senate later passed the House version which called for the program's termination in November 2002. However, in 2008 it was reported that ordinary people such as utility workers and others had been trained as what are called Terrorism Liaison Officers who report "suspicious" activity that could be signs of terrorist.[cxli]

InfraGuard

InfraGard is a program developed by the FBI which basically functions as a secret society of businessmen, academics, utility workers, and law enforcement agents who secretly look for suspicious activity and share information and intelligence in order to supposedly prevent terrorist attacks against critical infrastructure in the United States. InfraGuard stands for Infrastructure Guardians and began in 1996. As of December 2009, the organization reported their membership to be more than 34,000 people. Most people have never heard of InfraGuard.

In 2008, Matthew Rothschild reported in the journal *The Progressive* that several InfraGard members told him if martial law was declared that InfraGuard members would be given orders to "shoot to kill" in order to protect critical infrastructure and would not be prosecuted.[cxlii] The FBI has denied this.

The article in *The Progressive* also reported that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said there "is evidence that InfraGard may be closer to a corporate TIPS program, turning private-sector corporations—some of which may be in a position to observe the activities of millions of individual customers—into surrogate eyes and ears for the FBI."[cxliii]

iWatch

A citizen spy program launched in Los Angeles, California called iWatch is promoted as being the “21st century version of Neighborhood Watch.” [cxliv] Through brochures, meetings with community groups, and even television commercials, the iWatch program lists what they call suspicious behavior that should compel people to call the police. Several of these “indicators” are: If you smell chemicals or other fumes; If you see someone wearing clothes that are too big and too heavy for the season; And, if you see someone purchasing supplies or equipment that could be used to make bombs. So, I guess you’re supposed to call the police if your neighbor is spray painting something in their backyard or using paint thinner to clean some tools in his garage and you smell the fumes, or if someone is buying a steel pipe at the hardware store to fix some plumbing.

The program also created a toll-free telephone number for people to report such activities to, as well as a website. Mike German, who is a former FBI agent now working with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) admits that many of the iWatch indicators are all relatively common behaviors and worries that people will use the program to report people who are thought to look like a terrorist based on personal biases and stereotypes.

Supporters of the program hope iWatch will become as successful and as well-known as the Smokey Bear campaign used to prevent wildfires. “There he is with his Smokey the Bear hat, similarly here, we hope that this program, even though it’s in its birthing stages right now, in a few years will become that well known to the American public,” said Los Angeles police Chief William Bratton.

One of the television commercials for the program consists of a dozen or so people each saying a sentence or two and then cutting to the next in a montage, saying, “What is iWatch? It’s a way to report suspicious behavior, or activities that relates to terrorism. Terrorism is a crime. It is our shared responsibility to keep America safe. That’s why I, iWatch. It’s like a neighborhood watch for the whole city. If you see, hear, or smell something suspicious, report it. Reporting is easy. Use the web, or the phone. Let law enforcement determine if it’s a threat. And let the experts decide. A single report can lead to actions that can stop a terrorist attack. Think about the power of that. Think about the power of iWatch. I watch. I report. I keep us safe.”

Cash Payments Given to Snitches

Chicago implemented a “tax whistle-blower” program offering people a cash reward for informants who turn in businesses that are cheating on their taxes. The amount of the reward is a percentage of the tax money the city recovers as a result of the informant’s tip. “It’s just another way of bringing people into compliance,” Revenue Department spokesman Ed Walsh told the *Sun-Times.* [cxlv]

“It would probably be a business knowing that a competitor is not remitting a tax. An employee [of the tax-dodging business] could know that, too. Typically, you need to provide some type of incentive.” [cxlvi]

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts

In a move that could lead to a scenario similar to Hitler Youth in Nazi Germany, the Department of Homeland Security created a program where they decided to “partner” with the Boy Scouts of America to allegedly help Americans to prepare for and respond to emergencies. “We are delighted to partner with the Department of Homeland Security on this very important initiative for America,” said Roy Williams, Chief Scout Executive.

The New York Times ran an article discussing the Boy Scouts activities with Homeland Security and showed a photo of some kids dressed up in SWAT gear and holding fake rifles. [cxlvii]

The article tells how the practice drill the children were involved in included the goal of rounding up a terrorist, who in this case was a “disgruntled Iraq war veteran,” and admits that thousands of young people were being trained to “confront terrorism” and the program aimed to “prepare youths for more traditional jobs as police officers and firefighters.” [cxlviii]

“Scouting embodies the very essence of being prepared and has specific training and merit badges designed to encourage proper awareness and planning in our Scouts. To partner on a program such as this allows us to reinforce the importance of preparation to families throughout the nation,” said Roy Williams, Chief Scout Executive.

In an equally strange move, the Department of Homeland Security also decided to team up with the Girl Scouts as well, in order to “combat hurricanes, pandemics, terror attacks and other disasters.”

The head of the Department of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, said “As a former Girl Scout, I know the ‘Be Prepared’ motto well, and I look forward to working with the Girl Scouts to spread the preparedness message to all of our nation’s citizens.”

It was reported that Homeland Security designed a new “preparedness badge” that the girls can earn while defending America.

Climate Cops

A British website called ClimateCops.com geared for children ages 7 to 11 features cartoon images and downloadable materials for children to become “climate cops” so they can keep a watchful eye over their parents and then build a “Climate Crime Case File” to report back to their parents and make sure they, “don’t commit those crimes again (or else)!”

The site also warns children that they “may need to keep a watchful eye” to prevent future violations. When one logs onto the website they are first shown a brief cartoon introducing them to four characters, the “climate cops,” who are going to fight against global warming because it is “threatening our world” and the viewer is told “it’s time to fight back” and that they “need new recruits and your training starts here.”

The user then can play various games or “missions” as they are called, and can download tickets to report “climate crime” which are used to write up violations for their parents for instances like leaving the room and not turning the light off, or leaving a cell phone charger plugged in when it’s not being used. One ticket even lists “using a tumble dryer on a sunny day” and carries the assumption that people should line dry their clothes and not use a dryer. Another one says, “Putting hot food in a fridge or freezer is in fact, a crime. Climate Cops know that waiting for it to cool is the right time.”

Not only does this kind of propaganda push the global warming theory onto children, but gives them the feeling of authority over their parents and teaches them that they are the ones in power and can give the orders. Global warming poster boy Al Gore once told a group of school kids that, “There are some things about our world that you know that older people don’t know…Why would that be? Well, in a period of rapid change, the old assumptions sometimes just don’t work anymore because they’re out of date. New knowledge, new understandings are much more widely available, sometimes to young people who are in school who aren’t weighed down with the old flawed assumptions of the past.”

The hoax of deadly man-made climate change and the Armageddon said to occur unless people pay carbon taxes and give in to a global government is covered in its own section of this book. (See Global Warming/Climate Change)

Elimination of the Right to Bear Arms

The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States outlines the right for citizens to bear arms—meaning to own guns. It can't be at random that this Amendment immediately follows the right to free speech (the First Amendment), which is one of the most cherished freedoms Americans enjoy. So placing an amendment guaranteeing the right to own guns as the second one shows just how important the founding fathers felt this right was. They knew that if masses of citizens were armed, that an out of control government would have a much more difficult time imposing its will on the people because they would be able to organize and fight against such an event.

In Asia, people made nunchucks and other weapons out of commonly available materials in the ancient past when all weapons were banned and only members of the military were allowed to possess such things. Nunchucks, for example, were first made from a flail used to thresh rice or soybeans. Corrupt tyrants and governments throughout history have disarmed their own citizens so they couldn't organize and resist. A disarmed public also causes people to rely more on the government for their safety, instead of being able to protect themselves. Even modern anti-gun activists fail to see how citizens owning guns actually prevents crime. Often their anti-gun attitudes are installed in them by the mainstream media that tries to impress on people that only police and military personnel are qualified to own and carry guns.

Thomas Jefferson, quoting Cesare Beccaria in *On Crimes and Punishment* (1764) famously said, "Laws that forbid the carrying of arms disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes…Such laws make things worse for the assaulted and better for the assailants; they serve rather to encourage than to prevent homicides, for an unarmed man may be attacked with greater confidence than an armed man."

If a burglar breaks into someone’s home armed only with a knife or baseball bat, they are the one who will be in control of the situation, and could bash the brains in of the homeowner and then rape his children and wife with little to stop him. The reason people call the police in the event of a burglary is because the police have guns and can hopefully stop the burglar and protect the victims, but it makes no sense to rely on such a strategy when the homeowner himself could own a firearm and neutralize the burglar immediately upon his discovery.

Despite reliable statistics that show for every crime committed with a gun, even more are prevented, people are still often convinced that guns should only be used by police and military. The November 2009 shooting at Fort Hood in Texas, where thirteen people were killed by gunman Nidal Hason, shows that even supposed trained professionals can be mass murderers. Hason was a U.S. Army Major and was stationed at the base. Some believe Hason was a victim of MK-ULTRA mind control and programmed to kill. Others see him as a Muslim terrorist who became unstable and murderous as he grew more upset with the United States involvement in the Middle East. Whatever the truth surrounding this tragedy, there are numerous other instances each year of police and military committing murder and/or suicide despite being trained professionals who are trusted with firearms.

Anti-gun activists also fail to see that an extremely small percentage of humans will commit murder by any means necessary to them, even if a gun is not available. If these unstable individuals cannot get their hands on a gun, they will simply stab, bludgeon, poison, or run over their victims.

Groups like the National Rifle Association and Gun Owners of America help to organize Second Amendment advocates and try to minimize the effects of anti-gun tactics, although many see the NRA as having given in to anti-gun legislation and not taking a strong enough stand against it. Despite the numbers and money behind such groups, unconstitutional and unfair gun policies have been written into law in America and the ultimate goal of banning all guns from citizens, is a very real possibility.

Gun Bans in American Cities

Despite the Second Amendment clearly outlining that people have the right to own guns, Anti-American politicians and judges have been able to successfully ban guns in certain cities. Hand guns, for example, were illegal in Washington DC until a landmark case in June 2008 (District of Columbia v. Heller), which overturned the ban, once again making the district compliant with the Second Amendment for the first time since 1976. Washington DC was not the only city to have such a ban in place. Other cities such as Chicago and New York had also banned handguns and placed such ridiculous restrictions on rifles and shotguns that the laws practically render the guns useless.

Alan Gura of Alexandria, Virginia, who successfully argued the Heller case at the high court, is also scheduled to argue the McDonald case in Chicago hoping to lift the ban on handguns there as well.

Before the 2008 overturning of the DC gun ban, an appeals court ruled in the Chicago case that their handgun ban did not violate the Constitution because the Supreme Court had not yet declared whether its decision in the Heller case established a fundamental right for citizens to own guns. Many antigun activists say the Second Amendment doesn’t apply to average citizens, but instead applies only to the police and military.

While we can look at the 2008 lifting of the DC gun ban as a victory for the Second Amendment, this is likely only a temporary lifting. After just a handful of highly publicized murders involving guns by lone nuts, the anti-gun propaganda will go into full force and the establishment will do everything they can to get as many guns out of the hands of honest, law abiding citizens as they can.

Gun Confiscation After Hurricane Katrina

Immediately after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in September 2005, police were confiscating guns from people in their homes in New Orleans as they went door to door in what looked like affluent middle class neighborhoods. One video aired on a local news channel shows police tackle an elderly woman and steal a small revolver from her that she had for personal protection. This woman was inside her own home on dry land.

The National Rifle Association (NRA) produced a short video titled *The Untold Story of Gun Confiscation After Katrina* , which shows interviews of several other law abiding citizens who also had their guns taken away unlawfully by the police in the aftermath of the hurricane. One man interviewed explains how he complied with the officers and turned over his rifle and asked for some kind of receipt documenting that they had taken possession of the gun, and the officer informed him that no such policy was in place. The man then asked how he could get his gun back after things had settled down and the officer told him to get a lawyer.

Oath Keepers

In March of 2009, an organization was founded with the intent of educating police and military about the possibility of unlawful and unconstitutional orders being given, and aimed to prevent such illegal orders from being carried out by those who were on the receiving end of them. Oath Keepers was founded by a man named Stewart Rhodes, and when joining, the new members swear an oath to the following ten things they will not engage in:

1. We will NOT obey orders to disarm the American people.

2. We will NOT obey orders to conduct warrantless searches of the American people.

3. We will NOT obey orders to detain American citizens as “unlawful enemy combatants” or to subject them to military tribunal.

4. We will NOT obey orders to impose martial law or a “state of emergency” on a state.

5. We will NOT obey orders to invade and subjugate any state that asserts its sovereignty.

6. We will NOT obey any order to blockade American cities, thus turning them into giant concentration camps.

7. We will NOT obey any order to force American citizens into any form of detention camps under any pretext.

8. We will NOT obey orders to assist or support the use of any foreign troops on U.S. soil against the American people to “keep the peace” or to “maintain control.”

9. We will NOT obey any orders to confiscate the property of the American people, including food and other essential supplies.

10.We will NOT obey any orders which infringe on the right of the people to free speech, to peaceably assemble, and to petition their government for a redress of grievances.

Left-wing propagandist and gate-keeper Chris Matthews had Stewart Rhodes as a guest on MSNBC’s *Hardball* and tried to misinform the audience about the Oath Keeper’s mission. Matthews states, “What I don’t like about people who are armed who are being recruited to stand up in some operation, I want to know when you would call your forces together and challenge the authority of the US government?”

Rhodes had to clarify the organization’s goals and explained, “It’s not calling forces together, it’s simply saying they’re not going to comply with orders to violate the rights of the American people. We’re not talking about asking them to go fight, we’re saying simply, don’t fight.” Matthews went on to patronize Rhodes about his beliefs in potential concentration camps in America and citizens being rounded up and detained.

In a report by the ADL (Anti-Defamation League) about growing anger in America aimed at the government, the Oath Keepers were attacked, saying, “One manifestation of the ideology of resistance was the creation in March 2009 of the Oath Keepers, an anti-government group that tries to recruit police and military personnel and veterans. Members refuse to obey hypothetical “orders” from the government, “orders” that speak more to their own paranoid and conspiratorial beliefs than to any realistic government action.”[cxlix]

The ADL was obviously trying to divert attention away from the fact that such actions are very plausible and in some cases have already occurred.

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

In 2009, after Barack Obama was sworn in as president, he nominated Sonia Sotomayor to sit as a Supreme Court justice. It was no surprise that Obama’s pick was a Latino woman, as he was doing his best to select people for high level positions, not based on their qualifications, but instead on their race and gender. One of the things which make Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor anti-American and a willing conspirator in implementing the New World Order is her stance on the Second Amendment.

In Maloney v. Cuomo, a case from January 2009, Judge Sotomayor ruled that the Second Amendment only applies to the federal government and not individual states or cities.[cl] According to her and her ruling, it is perfectly constitutional for any city or state to ban gun ownership. A 2004 opinion she joined which is now cited as precedent, states that “the right to possess a gun is clearly not a fundamental right.”

Rahm Emanuel’s Hopes of Disarming Americans

President Obama’s chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, can be seen in a video clip widely available on the Internet where he is giving a talk about how he and Obama hope to eliminate the Second Amendment, which clearly states that individual citizens have the right to own guns. Rahm declared, “The most simple thing we can do, and we’ve got to make this a number one issue, as a test vote and then take it into the election, and that is if you are on the no-fly list because you are known as maybe a possible terrorist, you cannot buy a handgun in America.”[cli]

The “no-fly list” isn’t really a no-fly list, it’s more of a watch list which supposedly contains the names of suspected terrorists, or people who may have terrorist ties, and if such a person attempts to board a flight, then extra security measures are taken to ensure that they aren’t carrying any explosive devices or weapons with them onto the aircraft. While on the surface, such a procedure can surely be understood, what makes this “no-fly list” such a slippery slope is the fact that the standards and criteria for landing one’s name on the list is kept secret. Not only that, but over one million people are on this list,[clii] including many young American children[cliii] and even a CNN reporter who describes having to go through enhanced security checks every time he flies.[cliv]

There is also no known way for an individual to get their name off the list. So if Rahm Emanuel got his way of using this list to justify confiscating all firearms registered to persons on that list and prevent them from purchasing one if they didn’t already own any, it would then eliminate the Second Amendment right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, all without a conviction of any crime or even an arrest. Think of the implications. By some government agent simply adding your name to the no-fly list, for any reason, you now lose your guns. Hopefully in the months and years that come, such an underhanded policy would be faced with such opposition that it can never be enacted, but the very fact that Rahm Emanuel spoke publicly about such an idea shows just how low the power players in Washington are willing to sink in order to disarm the American people.

Open Carry Groups

While extremely surprising to many people, most states in America allow people to publicly carry an unconcealed visible handgun on their person, with the exception of places banned by federal laws such as school zones, post offices, government buildings, and state parks. Such a right is called open carry, and in many states the gun can actually be loaded, while in others the gun may be carried openly but cannot be loaded. Such a practice came to national attention shortly after Barack Obama became president and started pushing for a nationalized healthcare system.

President Obama had a town hall meeting in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on August 10, 2009, where a man joined the protesters across the street with a loaded handgun in a holster attached to his leg. This was perfectly legal. The man was interviewed by Chris Matthews on MSNBC where Matthews expressed his utter shock that someone would do such a thing and tried to make it out that the guy wished harm upon Obama. When this practice continued by other open carry advocates, liberals tried to make such people out as racists, but at an event in Phoenix, Arizona, an African American man brought an AR15 rifle which was strapped hanging off his back. Talking heads on CNN and other news networks expressed their shock, but the fact that this event involved an African American made it impossible for the media to spin the story as if a bunch of right-wing racists were bringing guns to Obama's events. About a dozen others at the same event were also armed.

The Secret Service can declare an area surrounding the president to be a Federal Zone where weapons are not allowed. During these events where open carry advocates had their weapons, Obama was nowhere near them and wouldn't have been anywhere close to being in the line of fire. The anti-gun propagandists at MSNBC and CNN led viewers to believe that Obama could have been shot by one of these individuals if they were unstable, which wasn't the case.

"Assault Weapons"

Much of the ignorant public supports so-called "assault weapon" bans because they believe that an "assault weapon" means a fully automatic weapon like a machine gun. So when anti-gun activists and politicians talk about their desire to ban assault weapons, it seems like a reasonable idea to many people, since they falsely believe they are trying to get machine guns off the streets. The National Firearms Act of 1934 specifically addresses the ownership, possession, and use of fully automatic weapons, which are highly regulated and extremely rare.

A gun is usually classified as an assault weapon because it contains several features in combination such as a detachable magazine along with a folding or telescoping stock or a pistol grip. Flash suppressors and bayonet mounts are also included in these lists.

The state of California has the strictest gun laws in the United States and has their own list of what they deem "assault weapons." In addition, for over a decade California has had a law in place that prevents the manufacture, sale, or transfer of magazines that hold more than ten rounds. The law is for every gun; handguns, rifles, and assault weapons. Some standard magazines for handguns are capable of holding sixteen rounds, but the only people legally allowed to possess such magazines are people who owned them prior to the ten round restriction becoming law on January 1, 2000.

So let it be clear that what the government calls an “assault weapon” is not a machine gun as they would like people to believe, but is instead a classification given to a firearm because it contains a combination of features such as a flash suppressor, a collapsible stock, a pistol grip, or other features. It’s also important to understand that frequently when the mainstream media airs stories about “assault weapons” or renewing the “assault weapon” ban, they show footage of people in the desert or at shooting ranges using fully automatic guns which have been basically illegal for civilians too use for over 75 years.

California’s Ammo Tracking Policy

As governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill into law which required stores that sell ammunition to thumbprint everyone who buys, as well as log their driver’s license and require a signature for each sale. Each person who buys ammo now is entered into a federal database and a running tally of what they buy and when they bought it is kept on record indefinitely. As a result of the law, all Internet and mail order sales to California are now a thing of the past.

Schwarzenegger claimed to be against such a policy in the past but changed his mind saying, “Although I have previously vetoed legislation similar to this measure, local governments have demonstrated that requiring ammunition vendors to keep records on ammunition sales improves public safety.” [clv]

Sam Paredes, the executive director of Gun Owners of California, said the new law treats gun owners like registered sex offenders. The database will be used to flag anyone who buys what the government considers a large amount of ammo and may be considered probable cause to investigate the individual further or place them under surveillance.

Elimination of National Sovereignty

America has been the envy of the world for generations and the leader in human rights and freedoms as well as military power and economic prosperity. The problem is, in order for the New World Order to be complete, America must yield its political, economic, and military power over to the global government that will then use it, not for what's best for America, but what the elite establishment see as the best thing for the New World Order. Sovereignty is defined as the quality of having supreme, independent authority over a territory, which in this case we are talking about the United States; a quality which may have been set up to fail by the Illuminati a long time ago when America was first created.

Britain, the United States, and Israel are at the heart of the New World Order, and have been the major forces behind its creation. Manly P. Hall, an occult insider, explains in his book *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* that secret societies have been covertly using America since its creation to carry out their goal of a global utopia.

He wrote, "European mysticism was not dead at the time the United States of America was founded. The hand of the Mysteries controlled in the establishment of the new government, for the signature of the Mysteries may still be seen on the Great Seal of the United States of America. Careful analysis of the seal discloses a mass of occult and Masonic symbols chief among them, the so-called American Eagle...only the student of symbolism can see through the subterfuge and realize that the American eagle upon the Great Seal is but a conventionalized phoenix." [clvi]

He continues, "Not only were many of the founders of the United States government Masons, but they received aid from a secret and august body existing in Europe which helped them to establish this country for a peculiar and particular purpose known only to the initiated few. The Great

Seal is the signature of this exalted body—unseen and for the most part unknown—and the unfinished pyramid upon its reverse side is a teeterboard setting forth symbolically the task to the accomplishment of which the United States Government was dedicated from the day of its inception.” [clvii]

A video posted on YouTube showing Walter Cronkite accepting the Norman Cousins Global Governance Award in 1999 at a United Nations conference includes a disturbing joke about Satan running the New World Order and countries giving up their sovereignty. Cronkite was the anchor for the CBS evening news from 1962 to 1981.

During this event Cronkite said, “What Alexander Hamilton wrote about the need for law among the thirteen states applies today to the approximately two hundred sovereignties in our global village, all of which are going to have to be convinced to give up some of that sovereignty to the better greater union, and it’s not going to be easy.”

He then referenced how some Christians believe the construction of the global government is the work of the Devil, at which point Cronkite added, “Well, join me, I’m glad to sit here at the right hand of Satan.”

This video is widely available on YouTube. Cronkite is believed to be the voice for Moloch played over the loudspeakers in the Bohemian Grove during the Cremation of Care human effigy sacrifice done each summer.

The United Nations

As many people know, the United Nations (UN) is an international organization aiming to facilitate international law between countries around the world, and claim to be working for economic development, human rights, and world peace. The UN was founded in 1945 after World War II and replaced the League of Nations. There are currently 192 member states. [clviii]

Supporters of the UN see it as a global forum for world leaders to exchange ideas and discuss policies that affect the rest of the world such as wars, economic policies, and human rights issues. Opponents see the UN as an authority that the United States will one day give up its sovereignty to, causing the elimination of various Constitutional rights and liberties that Americans have enjoyed since the founding of the country. It’s interesting to note that the John Birch Society began criticizing America’s membership in the UN back in 1959 with their “get US out of the UN” campaign, and warned the UN’s goal was to establish a one world government.

Criticism of the United Nations continues to this day by various groups and for various reasons. The United Nations Population Fund, for example, has provided support for different groups promoting forced abortions and sterilizations. Another controversial issue has been the UN’s connection with Lucis Trust (formerly called Lucifer’s Trust) which is Alice Bailey’s occult organization that continues to publish her books, including *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* . Robert Muller, the former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations was known as the “philosopher” of the UN, and openly praised Bailey’s occult writings.

The North American Union

Just like multiple countries in Europe joined together to form the European Union (EU) and agreed on a single common currency (the Euro), a similar plan has been drafted for the North American continent that would merge the United States, Canada, and Mexico in what would be called the North American Union (NAU), and then introduce a common currency (the Amero) for the region as well. (See the Amero)

Just as the New World Order has been denied for decades and called a conspiracy theory, the North American Union was also denied and said to be the figment of people’s imaginations. In 2006 a government website, www.SPP.gov went online which contained information on what was called the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, which is a code term for the North American Union that would advance the global unified government in a major step.

Other regional unions are also planned such as the Asian Union, the Middle Eastern Union, and the African Union. Once each of these regions are unified with their laws and currency, the next step then is to merge all unions into one system, as well as merge all of their regional currencies into the global currency. (See *One World Currency*)

Illegal Immigration

Traditionally most conservatives support enforcing immigration laws and securing America's borders, particularly the southern border with Mexico, since that is where millions of illegal aliens have snuck in from, while liberals usually turn a blind eye to immigration laws and even encourage massive influxes of illegal aliens breaking into America.

By allowing and encouraging illegals to come to American, it causes various strains on the economy such as the workers not paying taxes; 20 to 30% of federal prison inmates are illegal aliens; they use medical services without paying for them; and they take jobs that would otherwise go to American citizens. As of 2010 the number of illegal aliens living in America range from between 6 and 13 million.

While on the surface it makes no sense to have allowed such a practice to continue for decades, allowing illegal immigration to continue at massive levels has been a core strategy by the elite to usher in the North American Union and the New World Order. It became fairly obvious to thinking Americans that Republican President George W. Bush had no interest in slowing illegal immigration when after the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001 the borders were not regulated, and during Bush's entire eight years as president, he did nothing to attempt to do so.

Common sense would say that if an army of dark skinned terrorists from Al Qaeda were dedicated to sneaking into America to plot and carry out more terrorist attacks, then one would think tightly regulating the borders would be a prime concern, but it wasn't. Not only was it not a concern for President Bush, but after a group called the Minutemen formed and began voluntarily patrolling the borders with nothing more than binoculars, walkie talkies, and cell phones, President Bush attacked them, calling them "vigilantes."[clix]

What is perhaps even more shocking is that illegal aliens in Los Angeles, California had been given mortgage loans [clx] and credit cards, [clxi] and in cities around the country, groups were fighting to prevent poll workers from checking the ID of people who voted to insure they were a citizen and were who they said they were. [clxii] Other states wanted to allow illegal aliens to get valid driver's licenses. [clxiii]

In the over ten years that this author (Mark Dice) has lived in San Diego, California, every morning in the same exact locations all over the city I have witnessed a dozen or more "day laborers" standing on the sides of roads or in front of businesses waiting to be picked up by people who need physical labor. The vast majority of these day laborers are illegal aliens from Mexico, and loiter every single day, week after week, month after month, year after year, in the same places where locals know they can pick them up and pay them cash to do yard work or other manual labor. They are paid cash for this work, and such a practice is very common in southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement does absolutely nothing and largely ignore the day labor pick-up locations. People not familiar with the practice, or who don't live in border states may imagine that such workers would be extremely cheap, but I can attest first hand that they make more than you think. Back in 2003 I worked for a company that would occasionally use one of these men to "sign spin," meaning that a person stands on the side of the road holding, spinning, or moving a sign advertising a business. On multiple occasions the owner of the business I worked at, which was a retail store, had me drive to the nearest day labor spot and pick up a guy for the job. There were often a dozen or more men who would all crowd around my truck when I pulled up, each of them hoping to be chosen for the job so they could make some money. They would ask how many hours of work was needed, and how much I was going to pay.

Out of the dozen or more men standing around looking for work, none of them would get in my vehicle unless I said I was going to pay them $10.00 an hour. This is, of course, cash, so it's really like they were making $12 or

$13 an hour. My boss at the time was cheap and didn't want to pay them very much, so he told me to see if I could get a worker for $7 or $8 an hour, but nobody would take it.

Allowing the illegal immigrants in America from Mexico also causes the government bureaucracy to grow and consume more tax payer's money to deal with the economic and social burdens that the millions of illegals cause to the healthcare system, law enforcement and prisons, as well as straining our schools and social welfare programs. This is all, of course, looked at favorably by the elite, and allows them to expand the size and scope of government in conjunction with the New World Order.

Some government officials have been pushing hard for complete amnesty of all illegal aliens which will automatically turn them into official American citizens. The vast majority of Mexicans are Democrats and after granting amnesty to them they will be able to vote, and will then support the liberal Democrats socialist agendas aimed at solidifying the New World Order.

Monitoring the Population with Big Brother

Personal privacy has been slowly eroding in recent decades due to new technology and legislation such as the Patriot Act, but this slow and gradual process is speeding up and will soon advance at such a high pace that many aspects of the personal privacy we once enjoyed will be left to the past and never experienced again. There was a time not long ago, when if your boss tried to call you at home after work or on the weekend and you weren't home or didn't answer the phone, then he would be out of luck and have to wait until you returned to work to speak to you.

This was before cell phones and caller ID, but today if your boss wanted to get a hold of you, he would simply call your cell phone and even if he didn't leave a message, you would be expected to return his call within minutes or hours because he knows you will see the missed call on your call log. While cell phones have amazing advantages, they have also changed the social customs in ways most people do not notice unless they step back and really look at the implications such technology has carried with it.

But this social change can be seen as tremendously insignificant compared to other implications stemming from Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFIDs), facial recognition cameras, and fingerprint scanners. Such devices do in fact offer some advantages but also hold a large potential for abuse in ways that most people couldn't even imagine.

VeriChip and RFID

An RFID (Radio Frequency Identification Device) is a small computer chip that can be encoded with information and then read from various distances by a receiver. They are sort of electronic bar codes and have various uses, including tracking products as they travel around a warehouse or en route to a delivery.

The VeriChip is the world’s first implantable RFID which is the size of a grain of rice and is implanted in the body of animals as well as humans. In pets and livestock, the device is used as an electronic dog tag to identify the animal. The VeriChip company is planning to have their chips implanted into people’s hands or arms to replace debit cards and drivers licenses. The VeriChips have been used to enter VIP areas in clubs and pay bar tabs since around 2004.[clxiv] The device’s manufacturer has been promoting the chip as a simple alternative to carrying around cash, credit cards, or a driver’s license, and is hoping to make the implantable VeriChip or an invisible tattoo the standard form of ID and payment around the world.

While the original version of VeriChip only acts as an identifier that can be read by a receiver from a short distance away, in the future, smaller versions equipped with GPS will be small enough to also be implanted under the skin as well, and will be able to be tracked wherever the person implanted with one goes.

GPS Tracker for Children

In October 2009, a tracking device was put on the market called the Little Buddy, which consists of a fairly large unit that the company promotes as a safety device which can be placed in a child’s backpack or lunchbox and can then be located and tracked via GPS on the parent’s cell phone or computer.

The device also allows boundaries to be set up by the parents and activated during specific time periods, and if the device travels outside of that specified area, a text message or email will be sent to the parent notifying them of this. For example, a boundary could be set up around a one block radius from the child’s school during the school hours, and if the device travels outside that area during this timeframe, the parent would be immediately notified. This device is rather large and cannot be easily concealed, so most children would be aware that such a device was placed in their backpack by their parent, but future versions of such a device will be incredibly smaller and can be placed on a person without their knowledge.

When these smaller devices are available, they will open the door for horrendous implications involving stalking and personal privacy issues. One newscaster on the Fox News Channel even joked about placing the device in her boyfriend's car so she could keep tabs on exactly where he went and when. Most people would obviously be unaware such a device was placed in their vehicle.

One commercial for the Little Buddy tracking device said, "Get peace of mind. Build trust. And be confident that your child is OK when you can't be with them." It's unclear what they meant by "building trust" with the device, since using such a thing is a clear sign of an overbearing, controlling, or paranoid parent. The device costs under one hundred dollars.

Plans to Implant U.S. Soldiers with RFIDs

Aside from the VeriChip corporation first marketing their Orwellian product as a life-saving medical device, and later entering into talks with banks hoping their chip will replace credit and debit cards as a form of payment for goods and services, the company aggressively pursued the Pentagon with hopes that their RFID chips would be implanted in the 1.4 million soldiers in the armed forces as a replacement for their metal dog tags.[clxv]

The *D.C. Examiner* called the company "one of the most aggressive marketers of radio frequency identification chips," and reported that they were in discussions with the Pentagon about implanting them in soldiers. VeriChip spokeswoman Nicole Philbin told the *Examiner* that, "The potential for this technology doesn't just stop at the civilian level."

Facial Recognition Cameras

In George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* , he described what he called Telescreens which were placed in every home and on every street that were television screens which could also watch whatever was going on in its field of view. These Telescreens were monitored and recorded by the Thought Police and kept everyone under a constant state of surveillance to make sure they wouldn't conspire against the ruling Party or even speak negatively of them.

While security cameras have been a common fixture in banks, stores, and parking lots for decades as a method to deter crime or allow their videotapes to be reviewed in order to gather evidence if a crime is committed, new computer software allows cameras to be able to spot someone out of a crowd if they are entered into the system as a target. These facial recognition cameras have been used in casinos for years in order to spot suspected card counters who the casinos want to keep an eye on.[clxvi] Such systems spot them as soon as they enter the casino even if they are wearing a disguise.

In the New World Order, facial recognition systems will one day be as common as street lights and will record everyone’s movements throughout their day. The information stored by these systems will be able to trace your exact movements throughout an entire city (and country), as well as log the names of any individuals you happen to meet during the course of your day. This system can be programmed to detect if and when two or more specific individuals come into close proximity to each other. Supporters of these systems claim they prevent crime and fight terrorism but the potential for stalking and other abuses are horrifying.

In the New World Order it may even become common place for cameras to be in people’s homes that are wired into a universal database and can be monitored by officials. There will be very few places where the all-seeing eyes are not constantly looking at you.

Echelon

Even many electrical engineers find it hard to believe that the United States government has an advanced spy system that can monitor practically every phone call, fax, email, and text message in real time. This system is so powerful that it uses what are called “dictionaries” to flag certain keywords used in conversations around the world. If a series of keywords appear in a single conversation, then that telephone conversation will be flagged and analyzed to determine if it is a threat or not. For example, if a person uses words such as “bomb,” “kill,” “president,” and “White House” in a conversation, then the Echelon system will detect it and the conversation will be flagged and analyzed by authorities. Most conversations are recorded and stored for a period of time and are only deleted if they are not deemed important.

This system also has voiceprint technology that is capable of detecting a specific person’s voice among the millions of voices that are being transmitted over satellites at any given time. If a specific individual is targeted for surveillance, even if that person uses a payphone, their voiceprint will be detected by Echelon, and their location will be identified and the phone call will be recorded. This is no more difficult than Google instantaneously finding a specific article among the tens of millions of web pages after a specific set of words are searched for.

It may be alarming to people that simple systems are able to activate specific cell phones and listen to the conversations, and can even turn on the cell phone’s microphone and listen to the surrounding area even when the phone is off. Surely this technology violates the rights of people and the 4th Amendment to the Constitution that protects against unauthorized searches and seizures, but the authorities in control of this technology couldn’t care less. Only fools believe them when they say that it isn’t abused and doesn’t infringe upon peoples’ rights.

The Internet

While valuable information still gets past the mainstream media gate-keepers, most people spend hours each week on Facebook and Twitter self-promoting themselves and posting meaningless drivel about how good their lunch was, or how they are feeling at the moment. The comments that their friends post on their status updates make the user feel important as if they are their own celebrity with a fan base who follow their every move. These same zombies often cyberstalk people of the opposite sex who they are interested in and spend hours looking through all of their Facebook or MySpace pictures and fanaticizing about having that person as a part of their life. These same types of fools subscribe to YouTube channels like “Fred,” “Hot for Words,” or “Sxephil.”

These kinds of people are of no concern to the establishment, since they are continuously amused and are kept out of the way. It is the people who are awake to the New World Order and who use the Internet to its fullest capacity to bypass the gate-keepers and propaganda who are a danger to their monopoly. People like you.

Carnivore

It shouldn’t come as a surprise that the FBI, CIA, NSA, and any number of other government agencies can identify every website you’ve been on, what files you downloaded, and read any email you’ve ever sent. The computer system that was first created to do this was called Carnivore and was implemented by the FBI. The system was first used during the Clinton administration after the Internet became widely used, and its sophistication has grown in step with advancing technology.

After repeated negative coverage in the press due to personal privacy concerns, the FBI changed the name of the Carnivore system to DCS1000, which stands for “Digital Collection System.” In 2001 the FBI also started using commercially available software such as NarusInsight to monitor the Internet traffic of targeted individuals.[clxvii] The software can easily monitor a target’s Internet usage in real time, as well as go back and trace them step by step, through each web page they visit, link they click, and file they download.

Most laptop computers have built in microphones and webcams that can also be used to watch and listen to suspects without their knowledge. It also shouldn’t come as a surprise that any one of the “alphabet agencies” can also get access to your computer’s hard drive, if the computer is online, and can search and copy its contents.

Google Ousts Blogger Over Name Calling

A lot of people with blogs, websites, and YouTube accounts don’t use their real name and instead use a handle or pseudonym. The reasons for using a handle usually stem from them wanting anonymity to prevent crazy stalkers from coming to their home or place of work because they are either fans of their content, or want to hurt them because they hate what they post online. Most bloggers enjoy this anonymity but there are increasing risks that if someone posts a blog or video saying derogatory things about a specific person or group, then their identity may be discovered and they may be sued or even charged with a "hate crime."

In January 2009 a model sued Google to get the identity of a blogger who called her a "skank" and an "old hag."[clxviii] Liskula Cohen, a blond beauty who has modeled for Giorgio Armani, Versace, and *Vogue* magazine wanted to sue the blogger for defamation.

The blog was on Google's Blogger service and titled "Skanks in NYC" where the blogger wrote, "I would have to say the first-place award for 'Skankiest in NYC' would have to go to Liskula Gentile Cohen."

A Manhattan Supreme Court judge ruled that Cohen was entitled to know the name of the blogger and ordered Google to reveal her name which is Rosemary Port. The model then filed a $3 million defamation lawsuit against the Port.

The Cyberbullying Act

The Cyberbullying Act of 2009 (HR 1966, the Megan Meier Cyberbullying Prevention Act), is named after the high-profile "MySpace suicide" of a young 13-year-old girl named Megan Meier who killed herself after being harassed on MySpace by her classmate's mother who pretended to be a teenage boy online. It's meant to prevent people from using the Internet to "coerce, intimidate, harass, or cause substantial emotional distress to a person" but the vague language in the bill has alarmed people because it so broadly defines "cyberbullying" that it could be interpreted to apply to practically any situation, including blog posts critical of public officials.

The National Crime Prevention Council defines cyberbullying as "when the Internet, cell phones or other devices are used to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person."

UCLA Law Professor Eugene Volokh wrote on his blog that everyday situations could be considered cyberbullying. "I try to coerce a politician into voting a particular way, by repeatedly blogging (using a hostile tone) about what a hypocrite/campaign promise breaker/fool/etc. he would be if he voted the other way. I am transmitting in interstate commerce a communication with the intent to coerce using electronic means (a blog) 'to support severe, repeated, and hostile behavior'— unless, of course, my statements aren't seen as 'severe,' a term that is entirely undefined and unclear," Volokh wrote.[clxix]

Parry Aftab, a lawyer and Internet security expert said, "We have existing harassment statutes in all 50 states that already cover this problem. We don't need Linda Sanchez's law."[clxx] (Linda Sanchez (D-CA) introduced the Cyber Bullying Act.)

According to the text in the Cyber Bullying Act, people who "bully" others via any electronic means could face fines, two years in prison, or both. This means if you sent a nasty text message to your ex or post derogatory comments on someone's YouTube video, you could be arrested. It also means you post something insulting or judgmental about someone on your Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter pages, or on any Internet forum, then you may be violating the law.

Researchers say that anywhere from 40 percent to 85 percent of kids have been exposed to some kind of "cyberbullying," such as being called "fat" via instant message or postings on social networking sites.

Cybersecurity Act of 2009

The Cybersecurity Act of 2009 gives the president the ability to declare a "cybersecurity emergency" and shut down or limit Internet traffic in any "critical" information network "in the interest of national security." This bill does not define what a critical information network or a cybersecurity emergency is, because that definition would be decided by the president of the United States.

The bill also grants the Secretary of Commerce "access to all relevant data concerning [critical] networks without regard to any provision of law, regulation, rule, or policy restricting such access." This means the government can access or monitor any data on private or public networks without regard to privacy.

This creepy, Big Brother power was introduced by none other than Jay Rockefeller, the great-grandson of John D. Rockefeller, nephew of banker David Rockefeller. When discussing how “dangerous” the Internet was and why he felt the Cyber Security Act is important, Jay Rockefeller stated, “It really almost makes you ask the question, would it have been better if we had never invented the Internet.”

So using the authority given to the government by the Cyber Security Act, in the event of an emergency such as a major terrorist attack or a pandemic, the government could turn off practically every website in the country, except ones they deemed “critical” which would be mainstream media sites that would gladly parrot government talking points about what the public should do. The government could also cause every website to “point to” or forward to a government website that contained propaganda about what had just occurred and would give only one-sided instructions about evacuations or inoculations. This is identical to the Emergency Broadcast System used in television which allows the government to interrupt every station in the country simultaneously and broadcast whatever message they want.

A Medicated and Sedated Population

27 million Americans are on antidepressants,[clxxi] which is approximately 10% of the population. People are familiar with the well-known pills such as Prozac or Zoloft, but there are thirty different drugs used as antidepressants—including: Paxil, Celexa, Lexapro, Luvox, Buspar, Nardil, Elavil, Sinequan, Pamelor, Serzone, Desyrel, Norpramin, Tofranil, Adapin, Vivactil, Ludiomil, Endep, Parnate, Remeron, and more.

Some of these drugs have extremely dangerous side effects. A 2004 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that "the risk of suicidal behavior is increased in the first month after starting antidepressants, especially during the first one to nine days."[clxxii]

In the New World Order, the fun and joy of life is often missing from where it once was. It's no wonder people are depressed since many social activities such as parties or just chatting with your neighbor for a half an hour have been replaced by videogames, watching television, or surfing the Internet.

In the vast majority of depression cases, instead of someone taking a drug to alleviate the symptoms, all they need to do in order to experience the joy in life is to simply change their lifestyle and their habits. This would then attack the root of the problem instead of just masking the symptoms by taking drugs. But the pharmaceutical industry would rather everyone take a pill every day for the rest of their lives while living the same pathetic existence they did before, rather than join some social clubs or recreational sports team to alleviate their boredom and depression.

A study of antidepressant use in private health insurance plans conducted by the New England Research Institute found that 43 percent of those who had been prescribed antidepressants had no psychiatric diagnosis or any mental health care beyond the prescription of the drug.[clxxiii] The drug companies don't want people cured, they just want their business.

Drug Commercials

The famous comedian Chris Rock, whose stand-up is often based on the truth, has a hilarious but true joke based on his observation of the massive advertising campaigns by the drug companies and the amount of money doctors and medical companies make by not curing diseases. "There ain't no money in the cure," Rock blasts. "The money's in the medicine. That's how you get paid!"

Rock goes on, "The government…they don't want you to use *your* drugs…they want you to use *their* drugs. So every night on TV you see a weird ass drug commercial trying to get you hooked on some legal shit. They just keep naming symptoms till they get one that you fucking got. It's like, are you sad? Are you lonely? Do you got athletes' foot? Are you hot, are you cold? And they just keep naming symptoms…are you depressed…do your teeth hurt?…I got that! I'm sick! I need that pill!"

The H1N1 Swine Flu Vaccine

In the summer of 2009 the government and mainstream media launched a massive fear-mongering campaign trying to convince everyone in the world that they needed to take a vaccine for the H1N1 virus—the so-called "swine flu" virus. It was the top story for days when it first hit, and then the continued fear-mongering lasted for months as a supposed vaccine was made available to the public in October. It was a pandemic and everyone needed the shot, they said, or tens of thousands would die.

In the 1970s a similar scare was spread about a swine flu virus, and after a vaccine was pushed onto the public, numerous people got sick and died from the vaccine itself. This time around with the H1N1 swine flu virus, government propagandists claimed the vaccines were safe and those who decided not to take it were even called "extremists" by the chief medical examiner in England.[clxxiv]

Public health workers such as doctors and nurses in the state of New York were first told by State Health Commissioner Richard F. Daines that they would have to take the vaccine by November 30th 2009 or risk discipline, including losing their job. After massive resistance and a public demonstration, Governor David Paterson reversed the policy, but said it was prompted by a vaccine shortage.[clxxv]

The Public Employees Federation, New York's second-largest state employees union, sued over the requirement and was awaiting a state Supreme Court hearing scheduled for October 30, 2009, when the Governor announced the decision to drop the mandatory vaccinations.

On a CNN segment broadcast in October 2009, Dr. Mehmet Oz, who is Vice-Chair and Professor of Surgery at Columbia University and a well-known medical correspondent and host of the *Dr. Oz Show* , urged everyone to get vaccinated but when Campell Brown, the host, asked him if *his* children were getting the vaccine, he said, "I'll tell you, my wife is not going to immunize our kids, cuz I've got four of them, and when I go home, I'm not Dr. Oz, I'm Mr. Oz."

Shepard Smith of the Fox News Channel told his audience not to believe the "conspiracy theories" about the vaccine, or the "negative hype" after a guest was on urging everyone to take the vaccine.[clxxvi] Dr. Nancy Snyderman, MSNBC's chief medical editor, addressed the large numbers of people who were suspicious of the vaccine and weren't going to take it telling them to, "forget the conspiracy, listen to our government agencies, these guys are telling the truth. There's no conspiracy here folks, just get your damn vaccine."[clxxvii]

One of the major reasons large numbers of people were refusing to take the shot was because of the fear of side effects similar to the ones from the 1970s swine flu vaccine. The 2009 H1N1 swine flu outbreak was so over-hyped in the mainstream media that people began to get suspicious that there was a conspiracy to scare everyone into taking the vaccine. Some saw the reason for the fear-mongering being a way for the vaccine manufacturers to make hundreds of millions of dollars from the sale of their product, while others saw this as a plot to forcibly inject everyone with thimerosal and mercury laced vaccines for the purpose of dumbing down the masses by the neurological damage caused from such preservatives found in most vaccines. Some even believed the “vaccine” was designed to kill them in order to carry out the population reduction agenda of the elite.

RFID Bracelet Hoax

In early September 2009 the person with the YouTube channel “Entimes777” posted a video with the title “URGANT MESSAGE!!!! Make this viral!!!” [the word urgent was misspelled in the title of the original video] which consisted of a video blog of a woman claiming to be a U.S. soldier who says she was training with California police to set up freeway checkpoints and force H1N1 swine flu vaccinations on the public, and then also force them to wear a bracelet containing an RFID tracking device once they were vaccinated.

The woman also claimed that those who refuse to take the vaccination at the checkpoints will be immediately taken to a concentration camp. The video was spread around the Internet and posted on numerous alternative news websites as possible evidence that such plans were being implemented.

A few days later the woman posted a new video saying that in a week she would delete the previous video from her account, which she did, but not before others downloaded the video and reposted it on YouTube where it can still be seen today if one searches for “Soldier Claims Authorities Training To Intern Americans Who Refuse Swine Flu Shot.”

Peoples’ response to the woman’s claims varied, as was noted by the variety of comments, ranging from calling her a “crackpot” to saying, “God Bless You, the Truth is out there cuz of people likeyou.”

A few months earlier on July 29th 2009, former Kansas state trooper Greg Evensen published an article on the web titled *The Death of Liberty: The Final Scene Unfolds* , where he wrote, “Have you been made aware of the massive roadblock plans to stop all travelers for a vaccine bracelet (stainless steel band with a micro-chip on board) that will force you to take the shot? Refuse it? You will be placed on a prison bus and taken to a quarantine camp. What will you do when your children are NOT allowed into school without the shot? What will you do when you are not allowed into the workplace without the vaccine paperwork? Buy groceries? Go to the bank? Shop anywhere?? Get on a plane, bus or train? Use the toilet in the mall? Nope. Police officers will become loathed, feared, despised and remembered for their ‘official’ duties.” [clxxviii]

A video was posted on YouTube of Evenson speaking at a conference where he was asked about his article where he reiterated his claims that he had been told by numerous state troopers that such a plan was in existence, and then said that he had a “medical specialist” in Milwaukee, Wisconsin tell him that they had witnessed, “A semi-tractor trailer being unloaded at the hospital loading dock with pallets and pallets, scores of cases of metal bracelets, that once put on, would slip into place and be either pegged in there with some kind of device to hold it in place, but the band was meant to be permanent. On top is a chip, and on that chip will contain all kinds of information about you and the fact that you have been inoculated.” [clxxix]

Of course no such plan was ever enacted and Greg Evenson is either a fraud or a dupe. This does not mean, however, that a future outbreak of a disease or a virus will not lead the government to launch a forced vaccination and quarantine program. Such an event will likely occur one day, but unfortunately misinformation and paranoia about checkpoints for the H1N1 vaccine didn’t end here.

Vaccine Checkpoint Hoax

In mid-September 2009 some bloggers and alternative news sites posted a story after someone claimed to have come across a vaccine checkpoint east of San Diego, California. The problem was that the H1N1 vaccine wasn’t even available yet. The story was accompanied by a photo the person allegedly took, which looked like an ordinary border checkpoint that are common in southern California.

The person, who remains anonymous, said they were traveling from California to Arizona, headed east of San Diego when he was subjected to an unusual checkpoint. “As I approached I noticed armed military personnel had most of the cars pulled over and there were a lot of people going in and out of a mobile trailer. The people looked confused and some upset. Seeing what was going on made me really nervous,” the person said.

He then went on to claim that he was approached by a women in military fatigues who asked him where he was headed and mentioned “something about a vaccination.”

“I got scared and told her I was a state geologist doing field research and because I was doing so much driving back and forth I had my vaccine on campus. She didn’t say anything for a few seconds and then the car behind me started honking and she got pissed and waved me on. I was so scared!,” he concludes.

One comment on the story read, “That checkpoint is for the Border Patrol along Interstate 8 just west of Imperial Valley. The reason why the BP is there is because I-8 is within one mile of the border. If you have white skin, they let you through. If you have brown skin and 20 passengers in your Ford Econoline, you are going to get pulled over and interrogated. Yes, checkpoints are un-American and Stalin-esque, but this has nothing to do with Swine Flu. Knock it off with the fear mongering. That crap gets old.”

Another skeptical reader posted, “Besides, the swine flu vaccine is not readily available yet (two more weeks). So why would they be checking to see if people had received it?”

So whoever it was that started this rumor by sending this email and photo out to alternative news sites was either a paranoid and delusional person who somehow after the fact that he was subjected to a standard border patrol checkpoint dreamed up that the officers were talking about a vaccine, or the person simply sent out the email as a purposeful hoax to see if they could fuel the fear that people had about such checkpoints being set up.

Dangers of Vaccines

Robert Kennedy Jr., the son of Robert “Bobby” Kennedy, the younger brother of President John F. Kennedy, has been active in exposing the link between thimerosal in vaccines and autism in children. In 2005 he wrote a powerful article titled *Deadly Immunity* which was published in *Rolling Stone* magazine and on Salon.com, where he said, “Since 1991, when the CDC and the FDA had recommended that three additional vaccines laced with the preservative be given to extremely young infants—in one case, within hours of birth—the estimated number of cases of autism had increased fifteen fold, from one in every 2,500 children to one in 166 children.”

Many people are aware of the dramatic increase in autism cases since the 1990s and many doctors and parents point to mercury and thimerosal preservatives that are found in such vaccines as the catalyst for the disorder. Such a link is officially denied by the medical establishment, but the information Kennedy covers in his article is extremely disturbing.

He wrote about a secret meeting of doctors where they had allegedly discussed the dangers of vaccines and how they could cover it up. He explains, “According to transcripts obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, many at the meeting were concerned about how the damaging revelations about thimerosal would affect the vaccine industry’s bottom line. ‘We are in a bad position from the standpoint of defending any lawsuits,’ said Dr. Robert Brent, a pediatrician at the Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Delaware. ‘This will be a resource to our very busy plaintiff attorneys in this country.’ Dr. Bob Chen, head of vaccine safety for the CDC, expressed relief that ‘given the sensitivity of the information, we have been able to keep it out of the hands of, let’s say, less responsible hands.’ Dr. John Clements, vaccines advisor at the World Health Organization, declared that ‘perhaps this study should not have been done at all.’ He added that ‘the research results have to be handled,’ warning that the study ‘will be taken by others and will be used in other ways beyond the control of this group.’”

Kennedy’s article is very lengthy and is available in full on the web. He also gave a very unsettling interview on MSNBC about the issue where he said, “We are injecting our kids with 400 times the amount of mercury that the FDA or the EPA considers safe.”

About thimerosal causing autism, Kennedy says, “The science is out there today for anybody who bothers to read it, and I have read it…The same regulatory bureaucrats that green lighted thimerosal originally are now trying to cover their tracks.” [clxxx]

He went on to say that he had obtained the transcript of the secret meeting of doctors, pharmaceutical companies, and scientists from our government in the year 2000, who say that the link is undeniable and that they would not give the vaccines to their own children, but conspired to hide the evidence from the American people. Kennedy concluded the interview on MSNBC by saying, “We have the guys who are supposed to be protecting American’s health, who are actually conspiring to keep this stuff in the vaccines.”

Actress Jenny McCarthy has a child who was diagnosed with autism, and she has publicly made some statements about the possible link between vaccines and autism but many people in the media ridiculed her and called her crazy because she is known for playing bimbos, although in real life she is very well spoken.

Mercury Poisoning is Good for Children?

K-Eye News, a CBS affiliate in Austin, Texas aired a brief segment about vaccines which was so absurd that it could have been a satire produced by *Saturday Night Live* . As you now know, there has long been a controversy over mercury in vaccines causing neurological damage, and even triggering autism in children, but this bizarre newscast claimed, “Mercury containing vaccines may help, not harm kids according to two new studies in the *Journal of Pediatrics* .” The story went on to say, “There have been wide spread concerns that mercury based preservatives in vaccines might impair the neurological development of children. These new studies suggest the opposite, that the preservatives may actually be associated with improved behavior.”

What they meant by “improved behavior” is basically that your children will be mildly brain damaged by the vaccines, and will be more like zombies and less likely to act like normal energetic children.

Sodium Fluoride in Drinking Water

A lot of people who see the New World Order as a threat to their way of life and the freedoms people have enjoyed in places such as America and Europe, see the fluoridation of the drinking water as a way to massively drug the population for the purpose of creating a docile populace that is more willing to accept their present living conditions. The official explanation for adding sodium fluoride to the public water supplies is to supposedly reduce tooth decay and prevent cavities, but other research shows that consuming sodium fluoride has effects on the brain such as calming people down and even reducing their IQ.

G. D. Searle & Company (which is now part of Pfizer) was a company involved with researching and developing pharmaceuticals and agriculture products and is often mentioned in regards to fluoridating drinking water in America. G.D. Searle & Company is claimed to have spearheaded water fluoridation in America and the CEO of the company between 1977 and 1985 was none other than Donald Rumsfeld.

This is the same Donald Rumsfeld who would go on to be the Secretary of Defense under George W. Bush and who helped fabricate the lies that were used to justify the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Rumsfeld was also a member of the Project For a New American Century, which published a document outlining the Neocon strategy for the Middle East and how they needed a “new Pearl Harbor” type of attack on America in order to implement it. This is a whole other issue in and of itself, but since Rumsfeld was involved in such sinister activities with the Bush administration, it is interesting to see that he was also the CEO of the company some claim was responsible for getting sodium fluoride added to the drinking water of cities around the country. Many believe that it was Rumsfeld’s job to get this done, with the goal of drugging the population on a large scale. Recall Obama’s science czar John Holdren who proposed adding a sterilant to the water supply.

There is conflicting science and conflicting claims about the effects of drinking water containing sodium fluoride. The medical establishment denies any side effects from the chemical being consumed, but there are also medical doctors and scientists who say it dumbs people down and shouldn’t be drank. We shouldn’t put it past the secret establishment to drug the people through the water supply, so as a precaution it is advised to drink bottled water without the sodium fluoride additive, or have a filtering system installed on your tap water at home. There are also atmospheric water generators that take the water out of the air and can generate several gallons of clean drinking water per day, but these systems are very expensive.

Science and Technology

Advances in science and technology are a double edged sword, creating amazing communication abilities and life saving devices, but also creating powerful killing machines and nightmarish mind control devices capable of implanting thoughts into people’s minds through invisible radio waves. Such a claim may spark an image of a tin foil hat, but as you will soon learn, such technology is very real.

In the New World Order, advanced technology is sometimes looked at with suspicion due to the capacity for abuse and the corrupt power-hungry elite and politicians who are in control of such technology. Chemtrails, weather modification, HAARP, Eugenics, secret and immoral medical testing and more, are often mentioned as proof of such abuse. Some of these subjects had been considered conspiracy theories by most people for decades, but have recently been the focus of headlines around the world admitting such technology exists and has been used in the past, or is currently being used today.

HAARP

The High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) is allegedly an “investigation project” that is funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which is an agency of the Department of Defense. The US Air Force and the Navy are also involved with HAARP and claim its purpose is to investigate the ionosphere and any communication or surveillance capabilities it may enable. The project was started in 1993 and is located north of Gakona, Alaska. Photos that are available of some of the facility look like acres and acres of radio antennas numbering approximately 180 total, which are over 70 feet tall and are all linked together to form one large antenna. It’s reported that this antenna system can aim 3.6 million watts of energy into a specific location of the ionosphere. The largest legal AM radio station in America broadcasts 50 thousand watts, making HAARP 72 times more powerful.

Suspicions and controversy over HAARP grew shortly after its creation when scientists familiar with such technology claimed that it was being developed as a weapon capable of knocking out missiles, enemy satellites, and even causing earthquakes if desired.

HAARP is only one of several ELF (Extremely Low Frequency) wave transmitters. The United States owns three different facilities which are located in Gakona, Alaska; Fairbanks, Alaska; and one in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. Russia also has a similar facility in Vasilsursk, and the European Union has one in Tromso, Norway.

In the 1980s a physicist named Bernard Eastlund developed some of the concepts later used in HAARP and proposed using radio frequency waves to affect the ionosphere in a way that would disable enemy missiles and knock out targeted satellite communications, but the technology has far more dangerous capabilities than this.

A brief series on the History Channel called *That's Impossible* featured an episode that dedicated some time to looking into such technology and concluded, "Working in tandem, these transmitters could potentially alter the weather anywhere in the world, changing the jet streams course entirely, triggering massive rain storms or droughts. Even hurricane steering would be possible by heating up the atmosphere and building up high pressured domes that could deflect or change the course of hurricanes."

Dr. Brooks Agnew, of the Phoenix Science Foundation, used ELF waves to discover underground pockets of oil and gas in what is called earth tomography. He believes that this same technology accidentally triggered an earthquake in 1987 in Roseburg, Oregon. Dr. Agnew reported that as soon as his team energized the ELF wave generator there was a 4 to 4.5 earthquake. In the episode of *That's Impossible* , Dr. Agnew designed and built a scale model of the ground conditions found in Rosenberg, and also had a small ELF wave generator aimed at it. As soon as he turned the device on, a large rock sitting on a slanted slope representing a fault line, immediately slid downward. In this demonstration he used a simple 30 watt stereo speaker to generate the ELF waves. Remember, HAARP is capable of blasting 3.6 million watts.

In 1995 a book titled *Angels Don't Play This HAARP: Advances in Tesla Technology* was published by Nick Begich Jr., who is the son of Congressman Nick Begich Sr., (D-Alaska) and brother of Senator Mark Begich (D-Alaska), where he claimed that the project *in its present stage* could be used for "geophysical warfare."

In August 2002, Russia issued a press release about HAARP reading, "The U.S. is creating new integral geophysical weapons that may influence the near-Earth medium with high-frequency radio waves…The significance of this qualitative leap could be compared to the transition from cold steel to firearms, or from conventional weapons to nuclear weapons. This new type of weapon differs from previous types in that the near-Earth medium becomes at once an object of direct influence and its component." [clxxxi]

This statement is interesting because Russia has its own ionospheric heater system nearly identical to HAARP which is called Sura, and the real reason for issuing the statement showing concern over HAARP was believed to be due to America withdrawing from the Russian-American Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002.

The Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques is an international treaty that was signed by over 75 different countries in 1978, prohibiting the military or other entities acting on behalf of a government from using environmental modification techniques in a hostile manor. Why was there a treaty signed that weather modification won't be used as a weapon if it isn't possible for such a thing to occur? Obviously people familiar with the technology are worried about it and are aware of the disastrous effects.

With all the hysteria over so-called climate change and global warming, it should be noted that some believe HAARP is capable of causing such a thing since it is an ionosphere heater and tampers with the earth's atmosphere.

Former Governor of Minnesota Jesse Ventura hosted a TV show on the Tru network called *Conspiracy Theory* and investigated HAARP in one episode. As Ventura and his video team were attempting to enter the facility, all of their equipment malfunctioned.

Ventura stated in a radio interview promoting the show, “I went all the way up to Alaska and went to this location…it’s a very interesting thing going on up there. It falls under the military, and yet it is given the distinction of being an unclassified research center, yet I was not allowed in. Now, bear in mind I used to have a top secret clearance with the United States government during my six years as a member of underwater demolition team twelve and SEAL team one. I was also a mayor and a governor, yet I was not allowed to go into this supposed unclassified research center. If it’s unclassified [then] anybody should be able to go in there. [clxxxii]

This episode of *Conspiracy Theory* left Jesse Ventura visibly upset after he learned that HAARP could be used as a massive weapon and nobody would even know. Ventura’s show was historic because it marked the first time that certain issues were addressed in a serious manner on TV.

Microwave Auditory Effect

The subject of mind control is an extensive and disturbing one, and for this book, we will focus only on one aspect of this practice involving the microwave auditory effect, which is a way of using microwave frequencies to beam sounds and even words and sentences into peoples’ heads which are perceived auditorially by them but appear to be coming from inside the person’s own head or from God. For an expanded analysis of mind control including brainwashing and a history of the MK-ULTRA program you may wish to read *The Resistance Manifesto* .

While the subject of mind control is vast with the majority of methods involving some kind of physical contact with the subject, technology using radio waves to literally beam thoughts into peoples’ heads is infinitely more insidious because it can be used covertly without the consent or knowledge of the person being targeted. Again, such an idea sounds absurd, but you will discover is very real.

Such experiments have been carried out at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in what was called Project Pandora where externally induced auditory input microwave audiograms of words or oral sounds created the effect of hearing voices. An Air Force document on the subject stated, “The signal can be a ‘message from God’ that can warn the enemy of impending doom, or encourage the enemy to surrender.”

In 1996 the United States Air Force submitted a patent which was later awarded on October 22, 2002 for a device called the Radio Frequency Hearing Effect (Patent number: 6,470,214) where the description reads, “A method of encoding an input audio signal a(t) to produce a double sideband output signal having a ωc carrier frequency, which when transmitted to the head of a receiving subject, will by the radio frequency hearing effect induce a thermal-acoustic signal in the bone/tissue material of the head that replicates the input audio signal and is conducted by the bone/tissue structure of the head to the inner ear where it is demodulated by the normal processes of the cochlea and converted to nerve signals which are sent to the brain, thereby enabling intelligible speech to be perceived by the brain.”

In 2007, the *Washington Post* ran an article titled *Mind Games* which investigated claims of individuals who believed the government was using such devices on them. The beginning of the article makes it seem as if the people are crazy, but then further into it the article actually outlined some of the technology and research the government has been involved in that is able to accomplish such a thing. It reads, “In 2002, the Air Force Research Laboratory patented precisely such a technology: using microwaves to send words into someone’s head. That work is frequently cited on mind-control Web sites. Rich Garcia, a spokesman for the research laboratory’s directed energy directorate, declined to discuss that patent or current or related research in the field, citing the lab’s policy not to comment on its microwave work.” [clxxxiii]

A successful African American novelist named Gloria Naylor, best known for her novel *The Women of Brewster Place* , which was made into a miniseries by Oprah Winfrey, has a lesser known book titled *1996* which describes her experiences as an alleged victim of microwave mind control. She begins, “I didn’t want to tell this story. It’s going to take courage.

Perhaps more courage than I possess, but they've left me no alternatives…I am in a battle for my mind. If I stop now, they'll have won, and I will lose myself."

She explains how she thought she had a mental illness at times such as schizophrenia, but says she witnessed other strange occurrences such as people mimicking her every movement and people driving by her isolated vacation home.

"I would lie in bed while the conversations were going on, and I'd ask: Maybe it is schizophrenia?" she wrote. The voices, she said, would taunt her and swear at her, telling her she was stupid and that she couldn't write. Naylor went to see a psychiatrist and was given a prescription for an antipsychotic medication, but it didn't stop the voices. She says she was a victim of such harassment by the voices for almost four years until she discovered mind-control forums on the Internet and learned about technology and secret government programs involving such phenomena.

Whether or not Gloria Naylor was simply hallucinating and had some kind of mental illness that eventually was cured, or whether she was a victim of microwave auditory effect technology may never be known. If in fact she was not hallucinating or having some kind of neurological problem causing her to perceive the voices, then why would she be targeted by such technology? One possible explanation could be that someone who worked on such systems and has access to the microwave transmitters knew Naylor personally and perhaps had a personal vendetta against her and found joy and revenge in tormenting her. Perhaps an ex-boyfriend from high school or college later became involved in the government program and chose to target her for his personal amusement.

Perhaps she was chosen as an unknowing test subject who was toyed with and monitored to study what the results of such harassment would be. Or, perhaps maybe she really did have a temporary bout with a mental illness and after learning about such technology her mind somehow corrected itself and was healed. But the fact that such technology does exist leads one to wonder what kinds of horrible tests have been carried out to study the effects of this technology.

Certainly the CIA or the Department of Defense would want to see what people would do when they all of a sudden started hearing voices in their head. Surely such tests were carried out on ordinary citizens without their knowledge and their reactions were monitored to learn how they would react to such a scary occurrence. And surely most of these victims kept such a thing to themselves and didn't even tell their closest friends or loved ones out of the fear that they would be seen as completely insane for "hearing voices."

But just think for a minute about the ramifications of such technology. Such a system could easily make people think that they were hearing God, or even the Devil, or that they were going completely insane. And how would they know such a system was being used, since practically nobody is even aware that such technology even exists. There would be no evidence that such a system was being used on a targeted individual, unless the device's operator was apprehended with some strange looking electronic device that was seized as evidence and analyzed by electrical engineers who would likely be able to determine its purpose. And people who are victims of such technology would most likely *never* mention it to *anyone* since "hearing voices" is the epitome of being "crazy." It is for these reasons that this author feels it is extremely important that the public be made aware of such technology, and that we learn how to detect, and prevent its use.

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged mastermind behind the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks was said to claim that Allah (the God of Islam) had visited him in his prison cell one night and told him to cooperate with his captors and that things would be much easier on him and his fellow detainees. If this report is accurate and he actually did believe that God visited him in his cell one night and told him this, then it certainly would not be far-fetched to think that the microwave auditory effect was used on him to make him think that he was hearing God. This is, of course, just a hypothesis, and if such a thing did occur it likely would never be declassified because of the incredible power that such a technique holds. Think about this.

What if such a strategy was used in prisons? What if officials used this technology to speak to high profile suspects and told them to confess to their crimes and not to tell anyone that “God” had told them to do so. Or, what if this strategy was used to trick the person into doing, or saying things that are completely immoral? What if “God” told the prisoner to kill another inmate, or to confess to the crime even though they were innocent? If the person believes in God, such an experience would be hard to resist. After all, if God told you to confess to a crime you didn’t commit, then surely there must be some bigger picture that he sees and you don’t, or else why would he tell you to confess?

The ramifications of abuse of such systems are endless. How many politicians, business leaders, or political activists could be targeted by such technology and have an experience that “God” was talking to them. The possibilities are extremely disturbing to think about and this is the same technology that will most likely be used by the counterfeit Christ of the New World Order in an attempt to convince everyone that he has supernatural powers and is God himself.

Sonic Nausea Systems

While using the microwave audio effect may be limited to those with fairly complicated technology, a widely available and inexpensive device that uses ultra-sonic waves to induce headaches and nausea can be purchased on the Internet or in catalogs selling law enforcement products. The Shomer-Tech catalog sells such a device for only $29.99. The online catalog reads, “Hiding this device in your inconsiderate neighbor’s house might put an end to their late-night parties. The abusive bureaucrat’s office, the executive lunchroom... the possibilities are endless for that small portion of inventive payback.”

Another more advanced version is also sold called the Super Sonic Nausea system which is advertised to, “disrupt speeches, demonstrations, crowd dynamics, etc. This device has been used to ‘influence’ more of these than you might expect. Deployed near the podium, you might just have a case of an increasingly un-impressive speaker with diminished sharpness and lacking concentration, or perhaps is even unable to complete his presentation. Or, loitering youths on your property might be enticed to move along with no confrontations necessary.”

This “Super Sonic Nausea system” is said to be a “rarely-available government model” that is produced by a company called DSG Laboratories. This version sells for only $99.99. Just imagine for a minute what kind of similar devices are in existence but not made commercially available. Such devices are extremely small and portable, and could easily be covertly used to inflict discomfort on any number of people, in any number of situations, without anyone even having a clue.

Chemtrails

Since approximately 1995 or 1996, increasing numbers of people have been intrigued by, and suspicious of what look like white contrails (short for condensation trails) that follow the path of jetliners in the sky but do not seem to dissipate as fast as such vapor trails used to in the past. These new type of trails that linger in the sky have been called “chemtrails,” short for chemical trails, and are believed by some to be the result of some kind of additive that is being mixed with jet fuel. These suspected additives are said to be used for a variety of reasons, usually for some kind of weather modification or to expose massive numbers of people to some kind of chemicals intended to alter our cognitive abilities.

Skeptics of these claims say that on most days when people see what they call chemtrails (chemical trails), they are really only seeing contrails (condensation trails) caused by a combination of certain atmospheric conditions and a newer type of jet engine called the high bypass ratio turbofan engine, which was first placed on the market in the mid-1990s. This is the same time that people started to notice these strange vapor trails that lingered in the sky for longer than they had in the past. Chemtrail skeptics say that the newer high bypass ratio engines compress the air and the moisture to a higher degree than the older types of engines would, and say this is the reason for the trails lingering for longer periods of time than in the past.

Sometimes the vapor trail disappears right after it comes out of the back of the jet, and other times it lingers in the sky and slowly disperses. Some people call these the chemtrails, while others say atmospheric conditions and high bypass ratio turbofan engines cause this to occur. Adding to the controversy over chemtrails are the numerous instances of governments in multiple countries having declassified various programs where it has been admitted that they sprayed large amounts of dangerous chemicals and biological agents into the air.

Mainstream News Coverage

KSLA news in Louisiana aired a segment on November 9th 2007, which asked, “Could a strange substance found by a southwest Arkansas man be part of a government test? Well, that’s the question at the heart of a phenomenon called ‘chemtrails’ now getting wide spread attention.”[clxxxiv] The segment covers a man who began seeing suspicious trails in the sky that seemed to differ from the typical condensation trails left behind jets. The man says he also noticed small particles falling from the sky from the trials, so he collected some in bowls that he placed out in his back yard. KSLA news had the samples tested at a laboratory and found that they contained high levels of Barium, a toxic substance. 6.8 parts per million, in fact, which is over three times the level deemed toxic by the EPA. There were other strange chemicals in the samples as well.

In May 2006, NBC in Los Angeles, California aired a similar segment investigating the phenomena and interviewed several individuals who were concerned about chemtrails.

HR 2977

On October 2, 2001, Congressman Dennis Kucinich from Ohio introduced a bill (H. R. 2977) titled the “Space Preservation Act of 2001” which mentions chemtrails as an exotic weapon. The bill was to “preserve the cooperative, peaceful uses of space for the benefit of all humankind by permanently prohibiting the basing of weapons in space by the United States, and to require the President to take action and implement a world treaty banning space-based weapons.”

Dennis Kucinich is an interesting Congressman who doesn’t seem to be concerned about addressing controversial issues which are outside of the mainstream political paradigm. In 2008, he addressed Congress with 35 articles of impeachment against George W. Bush, and read them out loud in their entirety on the floor of the House of Representatives. Among the reasons he listed for impeachment were lies about the 9/11 attacks, secretly torturing detainees, and illegally wiretapping American citizens.

In Pop Culture

Alternative rock singer, Beck, released a song titled “Chemtrails” on his 2008 album, *Modern Guilt* . Some lyrics say, “I can’t believe what we’ve seen outside…You and me watching the jets go by.” On April 27, 2009, the musician Prince mentioned chemtrails during an interview on PBS with Tavis Smiley. During the interview Prince discusses a DVD by comedian and activist Dick Gregory and explains that, “he said something that really hit home about this phenomenon of chemtrails.” Prince goes on to mention an increase in aircraft trails that coincided with an increase in fighting and arguing in his neighborhood.

On March 3, 2009, a television station in Australia aired a film titled *Toxic Skies* , which starred Anne Heche who plays a medical doctor investigating a series of mysterious illnesses. She concludes that the illnesses are due to “chemtrails” which are described as toxic chemicals added to aircraft fuel and dispersed over the population though the exhaust. *Toxic Skies* was written by Andrew Erin and Kyle Hart.

Unclassified US Army Testing of Bio Agents

In 1977 the US Army unclassified hundreds of pages of documents titled “US Army Activity in the US Biological Warfare Programs” which detail that 239 populated areas were contaminated with biological agents between 1949 and 1969 by the Army in secret testing programs.

One test involved scientists disguised as ordinary passengers who were spraying bacteria in Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.[clxxxv] Another involved a jet releasing material over Victoria, Texas.[clxxxvi] The report includes information about a test where a Navy ship sprayed material in the San Francisco bay that traveled more than thirty miles. Other tests involved similar spraying of agents on New York City's subway system, which affected people with weak immune systems. [clxxxvii]

Government Accountability Office Report

In February, 2008, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report titled, *Chemical and Biological Defense, DOD and VA Need to Improve Efforts to Identify and Notify Individuals Potentially Exposed during Chemical and Biological Tests* which admitted that tens of thousands of people in the military, as well as civilians, may have been exposed to biological agents at the hands of the Department of Defense.

Several years earlier in 2003, the Department of Defense reported that 5,842 military personnel and approximately 350 civilians were potentially exposed during testing between 1962 and 1973 in a program called Project 112. Many of the people who were identified as being subjected to these secret tests without their knowledge have suffered from long term illnesses as a result. [clxxxviii]

Project SHAD

Another on the long list of government experiments using unwilling humans as test subjects occurred during Project SHAD, which stands for Project Shipboard Hazard and Defense. This program used primarily United States military personnel and was part of Project 112, which began in 1962 during the Kennedy Administration.

The official purpose of Project SHAD was "to identify U.S. war ships vulnerabilities to attacks with biological or chemical warfare agents and to develop procedures to respond to such attacks while maintaining a war fighting capability."

46 tests were done involving exposing military personnel to chemical and biological agents without their knowledge. VX nerve gas, Sarin, and Tabun gas (all of which are classified as weapons of mass destruction by the United Nations) were some of the chemical agents used, as well as

biological agents including Bacillus globigii, ociella burnetti (which causes Q fever) and Francisella (which causes rabbit fever).

The US government officially denied that Project SHAD even existed until 1998, and as a result of this denial, soldiers who were affected by the tests were not able to receive any aid for any health issues they had as a result of the tests. If it were not for a dedicated investigative journalist named Eric Longabardi, who began looking into the program in 1994, the public nor the victims may have never been aware of its existence. Years later in 2002, Congressional hearings were held on the subject which prompted a class action lawsuit on behalf of Navy personnel who were exposed during the testing.

Weather Modification

Fairly recently at the turn of the 21st century, any discussion of modifying the weather such as causing massive rain storms or creating blue skies, was labeled nothing more than a conspiracy theory or fanciful thinking. But incredibly effective and powerful weather modification programs have not only been declassified by American and British governments that occurred back as far as the 1950s, but are now openly discussed in mainstream news and such practices are becoming common knowledge.

Besides simply causing rain or clearing clouds, the practice of weather modification holds the power to be used as a massive weapon against an enormous geographic area without the population even suspecting anything other than bizarre weather.

An interesting series first aired on the History Channel in the summer of 2009 titled *That's Impossible* , which covered the existence of various advanced technology that seems as if it was pulled directly from science fiction movies. One episode covered “Weather Warfare” and presented evidence that the U.S. military was able to make massive and strategic changes to weather around the world, including creating hurricanes or torrential rain storms. Brief clips of the show can probably be found on YouTube.

Project Cumulus

In the 1950s the British government developed a weather modification program called Project Cumulus which used cloud seeding and tested the potential of causing massive amounts of rain to effectively bog down enemy movement due to the downpour and saturated ground conditions.

On August 16, 1952, a major flood occurred in the town of Lynmouth in north Devon after nine inches (229 millimeters) of rain fell in one day, causing the East Lyn River to overflow. This flood destroyed homes, businesses, and bridges, and killed thirty-five people. Several days before this disaster, a seeding experiment from Project Cumulus took place over southern England. While it is denied, of course, that Project Cumulus had anything to do with the miraculous flooding, it certainly doesn’t take a stretch of the imagination to think that the two events were not merely a coincidence.

In fact, an old radio broadcast on Radio 4 contains an interview of an aeronautical engineer and pilot named Alan Yates, who worked on Project Cumulus at the time, where he explains, “I was told that the rain had been the heaviest for several years—and all out of a sky which looked summery...there was no disguising the fact that the seedsman had said he’d make it rain, and he did. Toasts were drunk to meteorology and it was not until the BBC news bulletin [about the Lynmouth flood] was read later on, that a stony silence fell on the company.” [clxxxix]

Project Cumulus was allegedly closed down after this tragedy, and classified documents involving the project went missing. [cxc] The UK is not the only government to meddle with such forces. The United States not only investigated the possibilities of such science, but actually used it as a weapon during the Vietnam War.

Project Popeye

The United States military was involved in a cloud seeding operation during the Vietnam War which extended and enhanced the monsoon season over

Laos and caused landslides along roadways, softened road surfaces, and washed out river crossings. Operation Popeye, as it was called, went on from 1967 to 1972 and was considered a success.

Investigative reporter Jack Anderson published a story in March 1971 about these operations, and the following year Operation Popeye was mentioned in the *Pentagon Papers* [cxci] and also in an article in the *New York Times* . [cxcii]

The stories led to investigations by members of Congress and then the U.S. House and Senate passed a series of resolutions banning environmental warfare. The Environmental Modification Convention (ENMOD), formally the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques is an international treaty that prohibits the use of such environmental manipulation.

China’s Admitted Modifications

In October 2009 China’s air force used a variety of chemicals to clear the smog out of the air for a parade celebrating the 60th anniversary of Communist China. The day before the parade, chemicals were dispersed in the sky which caused a light rain and cleared the fog.

The senior air force meteorologist in China bragged, “Only a handful of countries in the world could organize such large-scale, magic-like weather modification.” [cxciii] The parade was the biggest in China’s history.

The meteorologist said they used certain chemicals to make it rain, and if the rain persisted for too long threatening the parade, then they had another batch prepared to spray that would stop it.

Clearing the skies of smoggy air was only just the beginning of China’s weather modifications that were widely reported in 2009. Just one month later, the Chinese state media reported that their meteorologists had made it snow in Beijing after seeding the clouds, causing the country’s earliest snow fall. The government implemented such a strategy in an effort to fight a continuing drought.

“We won’t miss any opportunity of artificial precipitation since Beijing is suffering from the lingering drought,” said Zhang Qiang, head of the Beijing Weather Modification Office.[cxciv]

Russia’s Use of Weather Modification

In 2009 the mayor of Moscow publicly promised that he would keep it from snowing on the city by using the Russian Air Force to spray chemicals into storm clouds before they reached the capitol, causing them to release their snow outside the city. One of the major reasons for the project is to ease the city from the need to constantly plow the streets, which are usually covered in snow from November to March.

In past years Moscow had used weather modification to ensure that rain didn’t spoil their Victory Day and City Day parades. “You know how every year on City Day and Victory Day we create the weather?” Yury Luzhkov, the mayor stated. “Well, we should do the same with the snow! Then outside Moscow there will be more moisture, a bigger harvest, while for us it won’t snow as much. It will make financial sense.”[cxcv]

His plan was approved by the Moscow City Council. Such a feat involves having the Air Force spray cement power, dry ice, or silver iodide in the clouds at a cost of $6 million dollars, which is reportedly half of what the city would spend on street clearing. Some are not happy about the plan because the outlining suburbs of the city will get the extra snow falling on them as a result.

Eugenics

Dictionary.com defines Eugenics as, “the study of or belief in the possibility of improving the qualities of the human species or a human population, especially by such means as discouraging reproduction by persons having genetic defects or presumed to have inheritable undesirable traits (negative eugenics) or encouraging reproduction by persons presumed to have inheritable desirable traits (positive eugenics).”

The practice of Eugenics was at the core of Nazi Germany’s occult and racist ideologies and fueled their belief that the Aryan race needed to be purified from other inferior races so they could develop into god-men in future generations. The practice of Eugenics essentially takes the breeding practices used in animals such as race horses or show dogs, and applies it to humans with the hope of desired traits being passed onto the next generation, while at the same time preventing others from breeding because they are not seen as fit enough to pass on their genes.

If one subscribes to the ideologies of Eugenics, as Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party did, it is difficult not to reduce humans down to nothing more than animals and develop a social Darwinist world view where one who is dubbed “more genetically fit” looks at others who are not, as if they are subhuman, or not as valuable of a person.

Since the rule of the Nazi party has long since passed, many think that the practice of Eugenics crumbled along with them, but some see the modern elite or Illuminati as continuing the practice through covert means, attempting to pass their intelligence onto the next generation of Illuminati members, while continuing the structure of a small intellectual and wealthy elite being in power and ruling over the dumbed down and inferior masses. Well before Hitler came to power, back throughout history, the upper class of every society enjoyed better living conditions, food, medical care, and education, which they did their best to preserve and prevent the lower classes from partaking in. Year upon year of poor nutrition, health care, and harsh working conditions kept the lower classes of people from fulfilling their true potential as human beings.

Many who oppose the New World Order and have investigated the secret societies which hold the true power and wealth, see such Eugenics practices continuing today by the masses of population in developed countries living on processed food that is filled with preservatives or genetically modified organisms (GMO), while the elite enjoy healthy natural foods and home cooked meals prepared by their chefs and dieticians. Many also believe that the elite Illuminati and their social networks do not take the vaccines given to most people, believing that the vaccines themselves and their mercury preservatives cause neurological damage and have other biological harmful effects that are inflicted on the masses, while the elite quietly avoid such things.

Add to this the widespread abuse of alcohol and drugs, and people’s pathetic eating and exercise habits, and you clearly have a recipe for tens of millions of unhealthy people who actually enjoy their own slow and gradual deaths.

A popular evolutionary theorist from the London School of Economics, named Oliver Curry, predicts that the human race will one day split into two separate species, one being a ruling elite who are intelligent and attractive, and the underclass of dumb, ugly, goblin-like creatures. Such an event, Curry says, will happen 100,000 years in the future, and believes the human race will reach its peak by the year 3000, at which point the subspecies will begin to regress.[cxcvi]

“Physical features will be driven by indicators of health, youth and fertility that men and women have evolved to look for in potential mates,” says a report written by Curry which also says that humans will be between 6ft and 7ft tall and live up to 120 years.

Curry’s report, which was commissioned for the Bravo TV channel, says that men will develop deeper voices, symmetrical facial features, and bigger penises, while women all will have large breasts, hairless skin, and glossy hair.

Dr. Curry said, “The report suggests that the future of man will be a story of the good, the bad and the ugly.”

Such ideas are similar to those found in H. G. Wells 1895 novel, *The Time Machine* , where Wells describes the human race as having evolved into two different species, the healthy and intelligent ruling class, the Eloi, and the ugly, slave class, the Morlocks.

Margaret Sanger

Next to Adolf Hitler, perhaps the other name most closely associated with Eugenics is Margaret Sanger, who was an American birth control activist in the early 1900s and later founded Planned Parenthood. Sanger was a negative Eugenicist, meaning that she believed that human hereditary traits can be improved through social interventions such as selective breeding, sterilization, and even euthanasia.

In her 1932 book, *A Plan for Peace* , Sanger proposed that the American government "Keep the doors of immigration closed to the entrance of certain aliens whose condition is known to be detrimental to the stamina of the race, such as feebleminded, idiots, morons, insane, syphilitic, epileptic, criminal, professional prostitutes, and others in this class barred by the immigration laws of 1924." [cxcvii]

In this same book, Sanger urged that the government, "Apply a stern and rigid policy of sterilization and segregation to that grade of population whose progeny is already tainted or whose inheritance is such that objectionable traits may be transmitted to offspring." [cxcviii]

Her first pamphlet on the subject read, "It is a vicious cycle; ignorance breeds poverty and poverty breeds ignorance. There is only one cure for both, and that is to stop breeding these things. Stop bringing to birth children whose inheritance cannot be one of health or intelligence. Stop bringing into the world children whose parents cannot provide for them. Herein lies the key of civilization. For upon the foundation of an enlightened and voluntary motherhood shall a future civilization emerge."

In 1923 Sanger opened the first birth control clinic in the United States after receiving grants from John D. Rockefeller Jr's Bureau of Social Hygiene. Further grants were made from Rockefeller but were done so anonymously after 1924 to avoid the Rockefeller's connection with Sanger's agenda.

Global Warming / Climate Change

Global warming, as nearly everyone knows, is the idea that human activities and industries are dramatically contributing to changes in the earth's temperatures which proponents claim threatens humanity. Supporters of this idea have recently changed the terminology they use to "climate change," instead of "global warming" since regions of the earth are actually cooling, thus conflicting with their idea that the earth is getting warmer. Former Vice President Al Gore has undoubtedly become the face of global warming advocates since his 2006 film *An Inconvenient Truth,* which won him an academy award for best documentary.

While no decent human being would want to pollute the earth by littering or dumping harmful chemicals into the environment or not properly disposing of them, many global warming advocates have criticized people for setting their thermostat too low during the Summer and running the air conditioner for extended periods of time to keep their home or business cool and comfortable. These same green freaks also get angry at people for not using specific types of light bulbs or appliances. Such fanatics have been using a new term saying that such activities create a "carbon footprint," which is the total amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) that is emitted by an organization, person, or a specific product.

"Carbon footprints" and "greenhouse gas emissions" are seen as a threat to humanity by global warming fanatics, and bigger government and new taxes and regulations are said to be the only hope for mankind. Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi once stated in a conversation about global warming that "I'm trying to save the planet," [cxcix] a very lofty goal for a politician, when such a cheesy slogan has usually only been said by comic book superheroes like Superman.

Those who simply don't believe the propaganda and fear mongering are often labeled "global warming deniers" with the intentional connection to the term "holocaust denier." The biggest pushers of the man-made global warming theory, such as Al Gore, who is basically the symbolic leader of the idea since his 2006 film *An Inconvenient Truth* , frequently say “the debate is over,” or “all scientists agree” with their ideas, when in reality, there are scores of scientists who refute the man-made global warming propaganda, and some even say the earth is cooling.

Most of the key players behind the global warming propaganda, such as politicians, scientists, and businessmen, have large financial interests in new government regulations which supposedly will work to save the world.

Perhaps the brains behind the climate change hysteria is a billionaire named Maurice Strong who is considered to be one of the leading proponents of the United Nations involvement in international affairs. Strong was the CEO of Petro-Canada, one of Canada’s largest oil companies, and is on the board of directors for the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX), which is the first greenhouse gas emission registry reduction system for emission sources. 10% of the Chicago Climate Exchange is owned by Goldman Sachs (GS) and another 10% is owned by Generation Investment Management (GIM), which is an investment firm started by Al Gore who is also the chairman. Hank Paulson, who was the Treasury Secretary under George W. Bush and former CEO of Goldman Sachs, was also a founding member of GIM.

While Maurice Strong was born in Canada, he spends most of his time living in China where he has been working to build the communist country into a superpower, and continues to use his wealth and influence to strengthen the grip of climate change propagandists.

One of the most visible and outspoken people who says that man-made global warming is a hoax perpetuated by those who have financial interests in the matter is Lord Christopher Monckton, who is a former advisor to Margaret Thatcher. Monkton asserts that a man named Ben Santer deleted parts from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report (IPCC), that showed conflicting data about climate change, in order to make the report appear to fully endorse the idea of man-made climate change. Ben Santer doesn’t deny these claims, and in fact admitted that he removed parts of the report before its publication. The IPCC was created by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), which interestingly enough, was headed up by Maurice Strong after the UN General Assembly unanimously voted him in as the chair.

The Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol is a formal agreement of the United Nations aimed at fighting global warming that was adopted back in 1997. It is part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC or FCCC), which is an international treaty with the goal of achieving "stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system."

As of November 2009, 187 states have signed and ratified this protocol, which states that the countries commit themselves to a reduction of four greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride) by 5.2% from their levels in 1990.

Climate-gate

People's suspicions that climate change was a hoax aimed at justifying carbon taxes, more government regulations, and the New World Order, had many of their suspicions confirmed after an incident that came to be known as "climate-gate" ensued. One of the most prominent institutions that is credited with studying "climate change" is the Hadley Climate Research Unit in Britain. In November 2009 Russian hackers were able to steal thousands of documents including emails that were exchanged between climate scientists over the previous ten years and published the information on the Internet. Some of the email exchanges show how scientists were trying to manipulate data, hide information showing declining temperatures, and prevent other scientific research from being published in academic journals that is counter to the global warming propaganda being pushed by man-made global warming advocates.

The emails were admitted to be authentic, although officials at Hadley deny there were any attempts to manipulate data to conform with the idea of man-made global warming.

In one exchange the center’s director, Phil Jones, emailed Michael E. Mann at Pennsylvania State University and asked whether academics who question the link between human activities and global warming should have their work published in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, which is a global organization that evaluates the risk of so-called climate change allegedly caused by human activity.

“I can’t see either of these papers being in the next IPCC report,” Jones wrote. “Kevin and I will keep them out somehow—even if we have to redefine what the peer-review literature is!”

In another email, Phil Jones and Michael E. Mann discuss how they can pressure an academic journal not to accept the work of scientists whose research doesn’t conform with their climate change belief. Michael Mann wrote, “Perhaps we should encourage our colleagues in the climate research community to no longer submit to, or cite papers in, this journal.” [cc]

In one message sent to a long list of colleagues, Phil Jones himself wrote of having completed a “trick” with recent temperature data to “hide the decline.”

An email from Kevin Trenberth of the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado spoke of the unusually cool autumn that Colorado was experiencing, and went on to say, “The fact is that we can’t account for the lack of warming at the moment and it is a travesty that we can’t.”

Phil Jones, the head of the Climatic Research Unit, released a statement saying, “My colleagues and I accept that some of the published e-mails do not read well,” but still denied that they showed any fraud was occurring.

Left wing radical Nancy Pelosi, who is an avid climate change pusher, was asked about the emails and if they changed her stance on man-made global warming. “You call it ‘Climate-gate,’ I call it ‘email-theft-gate,’” she answered, and was more concerned about the emails being stolen than their shocking content.

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair commented on the climate-gate scandal and said the science may not be “as certain as its proponents allege” but he still believed the world should act to fight climate change, and said it would be “grossly irresponsible” not to.

The popular novelist Michael Crichton, author of *Jurassic Park* , wrote a book titled *State of Fear* (2004) which contains a plot centered around scientists and politicians who conspire to create public panic about global warming. Crichton is known for writing novels with an underlying factual basis, and in *State of Fear* he includes twenty pages of footnotes which he said provide facts found in the non-plotline elements of his story.

Arnold Schwarzenegger’s Damage Control

Shortly after the climate-gate scandal began and wouldn’t go away, California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger pulled a publicity stunt where he displayed a map of San Francisco and warned that in one hundred years, much of it would be underwater due to rising sea levels caused by climate change. His map was unveiled on Treasure Island alongside Eric Schmidt, the CEO of Google, where Arnold said, “Within a century, Treasure Island, this place where we are right now, could be totally under water…It is technology in the end that will save us.” He also warned that 2.5 trillion dollars in property and assets were at risk.

The map he showed along with a propaganda video was posted on a new website www.climatechange.ca.gov. The video was narrated by Schwarzenegger and warned of California’s temperatures rising 7 degrees in the next century, water shortages, and virtually all snow melting on the mountains in California, which he said would, “nearly eliminate skiing, snowboarding, and other recreational activities.”

It’s interesting that Schwarzenegger is on board with the climate change advocates because he is a Republican, when this issue is clearly divided between party lines with many Republicans not believing the hype, while most Democrats embrace the idea in order to justify bigger government and more taxes and regulations. Schwarzenegger is an elite insider who has visited the Bohemian Grove and is friends with Nazis and Illuminati members, so it is no surprise that he is on board with the climate change fear-mongering.

Fox Admits Inserting Global Warming Propaganda in TV Shows

A short four minute promotional video produced in 2006 by News Corporation openly admits that executives have been incorporating global warming propaganda into popular television shows produced by Fox which is owned by News Corp. The video starts with Fox Television Chairman Gary Newman who says, “we want to set an example in our industry and other industries that no matter what the size of your carbon footprint is, you can make a difference.” The video then cuts to a montage of television shows which aired on Fox, and the global warming propaganda that News Corp. (Fox’s parent company) incorporated into those shows. Clips from *Prison Break* , *The Simpsons* , *King of the Hill* , *My Name is Earl* , *Family Guy* , *24* , and more were all shows containing these messages.

For example, a clip of *Family Guy* shows a character in a car dealership where he says, “Look at all those Hummers…what kind of jerk would drive one of those?”

Kiefer Sutherland even gives a heartfelt message to the camera about reducing global warming. Dana Walden, Fox Television Chairman says, “the most powerful way that we could communicate the commitment on behalf of our company was to change the practices within the production as well as work in a message about global warming, about environmental changes, and about empowering people to take responsibility.”

Chairman Gary Newman echoes this admitting, “The biggest thing we have done is inserting messages about the environment into some of our content.”

Cap and Trade

Certain researchers and alternative radio hosts had been warning for years that a new kind of tax would one day be forced on the American people, and on citizens of countries around the world. This so-called “carbon tax” seemed like the figment of people’s imagination since it appeared too outrageous for governments to implement a global warming tax, but as the years went by, such a plan began to peak its head out from the secretive Bilderberg group meetings and into the halls of Congress and global conferences.

Cap and Trade (also called emissions trading) is an approach allegedly using economic incentives to reduce greenhouse gasses and pollution. The term Cap and Trade comes from the idea that a government or a global committee will set a limit, or a cap, on the amount of “pollution” that a factory (and possibly a household) can emit in a given period of time. These companies or households will purchase permits which grant them the right to have allowances or credits that represent their authorized amount of greenhouse gasses they may emit. These companies then cannot emit more than they are allowed to, because of their cap, unless they purchase more “credits.” These purchased credits are called a “trade,” which is basically a fee for emissions.

Carbon Footprint on Food Labels

As everyone knows, nearly every food product you buy at a grocery store has a nutritional label on it listing the ingredients, calories, fat content, carbohydrates, etc. Such labels are very useful in helping determine how much of a particular item we should consume (or if we should eat it at all) depending on our health and nutritional goals or needs. But in 2007 an odd new kind of food label began surfacing in Britain, which listed the greenhouse gas emissions created by the foods production, transport and disposal.

“More and more, businesses are looking for ways to reduce their impact on the environment. To help them achieve that we need a reliable, consistent way to measure these impacts that businesses recognize, trust and understand,” said Ian Pearson, Britain’s environment minister. “This will be fundamental in our efforts to move Britain towards a low-carbon economy in the decades ahead.” [cci]

This bizarre fear-mongering continued in the coming years. In 2009, ABC's *Good Morning America* interviewed Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* , who discussed the carbon footprint left behind by a McDonald's quarter-pounder with cheese.

Pollan said, "You need oil to make the fertilizer to grow the corn. You need petroleum to make the pesticides to grow the corn. You need oil to move it all around the country…The result is a product that takes a huge environmental toll and obviously takes a health toll as well." He then said that a quarter-pounder amounts to 26 ounces of oil.

It will be interesting to see if the practice of listing a product's carbon footprint on its packaging will become a trend that companies are pressured or forced to follow in the future.

The Day After Tomorrow

Perhaps the first major film, in what will likely be a long and growing list in the coming years, involving climate change was *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004). The film stars Dennis Quaid who plays a scientist who tries to alert the United Nations about global warming, but after his attempts fall on deaf ears, global warming causes glaciers to melt which affect ocean currents and disrupts the entire earth's climate causing an ice age. The film grossed over 540 million dollars and was the second highest grossing movie not to be number 1 at the box office.

An interesting side note besides the film serving as a massive propaganda piece for climate change pushers, is that the Vice President in the film was played by Kenneth Welsh, who looks strikingly similar to the then Vice President Dick Cheney. The film was written, directed, and produced by Roland Emmerich, who admitted that he intended the characters of the President and the Vice President to convey criticism of the environmental policies of then President George W. Bush.[ccii]

Fringe Topics

When looking into the New World Order, one will find countless verifiable pieces of evidence that elite politicians have been covertly working to erode the Constitution and America's sovereignty and integrate the country into a global government system, much of which has been accomplished through secret societies or private organizations like the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderberg group, the Skull and Bones society, and other Illuminati groups.

When someone is new to this information, many people may find some of the claims they come across unbelievable and perhaps incorrect, or even a hoax. After more study and tracing sources and references, many things that people once found hard to believe can be proven beyond a doubt to be factual. Other information, however, is more difficult to verify, and some does fall into the realm of speculation or conjecture.

On the fringe, one will find a large amount of information about a variety of topics connected to the New World Order, some of which is even considered far-fetched and crazy to many who are fairly aware of how strange the New World Order can be. Stories of aliens from other planets said to work with elite government officials, the shape-shifting reptilians, Satanism, and even organized ritual child abuse are subjects that are all connected in some way to the New World Order. Since people will inevitably come across such subjects as they continue on their journey down the rabbit hole, some of these fringe topics will be addressed briefly here in order for you to have a solid foundation of understanding when confronted with such ideas.

Satanism

While the satanic and Luciferian philosophies of elite secret societies have been briefly touched upon in this book, the subject is still often considered to be on the fringe of the New World Order. Elite politicians have openly stated their desire for a "New World Order" and we can easily see the corrupt legislation that hopes to further erode the Constitution and various liberties Americans have enjoyed for hundreds of years. It’s easy to document and prove the moral decay of society and the influence of the mainstream media on our culture, but the personal and private philosophies or spiritual beliefs of New World Order kingpins are not as easily shown.

Often the satanic and occult aspects of the New World Order turn people off because on the surface they seem completely ridiculous and absurd. Others aren’t too concerned with them because there is an abundance of evidence of corruption and greed that can more easily be exposed. But it is important to be familiar with the irrefutable evidence that elite politicians, bankers, and businessmen are deeply involved in the occult, and the occult plays a huge role in the creation of the New World Order. Helena Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine*, Alice Bailey’s writings, the rituals of the Skull and Bones society and the Bohemian Grove clearly illustrate a Luciferian doctrine that the elite adhere to. This is one of the most shocking aspects to the New World Order, but when one fully understands that is the mindset of elite individuals, things begin to make more sense.

With that said, if you are attempting to educate others about the New World Order, I strongly advise that you carefully address the issue of Satanism and do not make it the central issue when explaining what is happening in the world. Bluntly telling someone new to this material that a group of powerful Satanists run the world is going to make you look insane and cause them to not even want to listen to anything else you have to say. There is a time and a place for these discussions, but you must be careful not to begin your discussion by talking about the elite’s desire to reduce the world’s population and then immediately jump to calling them a bunch of Satanists who do rituals out in the forest of the Bohemian Grove. This would be like explaining basic math to a child in school, and then immediately telling them about calculus. You must build a foundation of understanding before you present such material.

Sexual Abuse

While much of the information surrounding the New World Order such as government corruption, out of control taxes, and elite secret societies running the show are disturbing, nothing is more painful to read about than the grotesque allegations of child abuse said to occur at the hands of elite Illuminati members. It is believed that some high powered politicians and businessmen participate in sexual abuse against children, particularly boys. The most well-known scandal of this type occurred in the late 1980s, in what was called the Franklin Cover-up.

A font page *Washington Times* article ran the headline, “Underage Prostitution Ring Ensnares VIPs with Reagan, Bush” [cciii] and described how underage boys were taken on a tour of the White House around midnight by one of their abusers. Allegations have been made that such abuse took place inside the Bohemian Grove by elite members and was even videotaped.

If one can come to grips that such abuse takes place, one can’t help but wonder why someone would be interested in doing such things, and how could such events not be rare, isolated incidences committed by some lone sicko, but instead are done by an organized group of wealthy politicians. Answers are not easy to find, but inevitably come down to the perpetrators finding enjoyment in having absolute power over another helpless human being. Other explanations involve what is called sex magic (sometimes spelled magick) where the practitioners enjoy an adrenaline rush from committing such atrocities, and believe it opens their mind up to be able to harness metaphysical powers.

Planet X

There are a small number of people who believe that a large planet not known or denied to exist by mainstream astronomers, will one day either collide with planet earth and destroy it, or that it will orbit near the earth and then the aliens claimed to live on this planet will then invade earth. This supposed planet is either called Planet X or Nibiru.

This idea is believed to have originated in 1995 by a woman named Nancy Lieder who runs the website ZetaTalk.com. Lieder describes herself as an emissary who receives messages from extra-terrestrials who live in the Zeta Reticuli star system and says that she was chosen by the aliens to warn people that Planet X would arrive in May 2003 (later revised to 2010) and that a pole shift would destroy the world.

Another individual associated with Planet X is Zacharia Sitchin, who has written numerous books about how he believes that aliens called the Anunnaki created the human race by using their own DNA and mixing it with monkeys, thus creating humans. Sitchin hypothesizes it is a planet in a highly elliptical orbit around the Sun which completes an orbit every 3,600 years.

David Morrison, a Senior Scientist at NASA's Astrobiology Institute at Ames Research Center, says he receives 20–25 emails each week asking him about Nibiru. He said some of the people are worried about such an event, and others say that he is part of a conspiracy to keep the truth of this impending event from becoming public.[cciv]

Nephilim and Anunnaki

The Nephilim are beings mentioned in the Old Testament of the Bible which are sometimes described as supernatural beings or fallen angels who came to earth and had children with human woman. Many Christians are surprised that such references are made in the Bible, and in the Contemporary English translation it actually calls them "supernatural beings." Those who believe that there were such beings that came to earth and had children with human woman believe that these creatures and their offspring were killed off during Noah's flood.

Others say the term does not refer to fallen angels or supernatural beings, but instead is a title given to a hero or great men of size and strength. If you search the Internet for this kind of information you will come across various photographs of what look like archeological digs that have uncovered enormous skeletons that look human, or have strange looking skulls that are said to be from the ancient Nephilim, but all such photos are frauds and have been made with Photoshop.

There are a small fraction of people who believe that the Nephilim are in fact supernatural beings whose bloodline continues to exist today and makes up the inner circle of the Illuminati. These people also believe that royal families in the ancient past were descendents of the Nephilim and say that this is where the idea of the divine right of kings comes from. You may occasionally see family trees that trace many famous presidents and members of the British Royal Family to numerous other famous and powerful leaders back through history. In these people's minds, the half demon, half humans maintained power for generation after generation and kept interbreeding with each other in order to centralize their power.

An idea similar to the Nephilim comes from the Anunnaki, which refers to Sumerian and Babylonian gods from ancient times. Zecharia Sitchin and others believe that these Anunnaki are actually some kind of aliens who came to earth in the ancient past and created people by tweaking the DNA of monkeys to make humans. According to this theory then, these ancient humans saw these aliens as gods. Some who believe this kind of theory say that the Anunnaki created humans as slaves in order to mine gold that they say was needed to repair the atmosphere at the home planet of the Anunnaki. This, they say, is the source of human's obsession with gold and the reason it has been used as money for 5000 years.

Some believers in the Anunnaki think that they live on Planet X and will return to earth some day and rule over humans like they did in the ancient past. The writers of *Transformers 2* the movie were clearly aware of these theories and in the film viewers found that ancient Transformers came to earth and were worshiped as gods in Egypt thousands of years ago. These Transformers even looked similar to the elaborate head dresses that the pharaohs used to wear. Zecharia Sitchin and others say that they get their ideas from interpreting ancient hieroglyphics that they say ancient man used to record these events. While most people see ancient Egyptian writings about gods living on the earth as mythology, some interpret them as being literal history and say that these “gods” were actually aliens.

Reptilians

You may occasionally hear people say that “Reptilians” (or Reptoids) run the New World Order or comprise the inner circle of the Illuminati. What these often mentally deranged people are referring to is the idea that the elite Illuminati rulers are actually some kind of aliens or beings from another dimension who pose as humans so they can rule over us like gods. The most well-known author and speaker in the genre of the Illuminati and the New World Order to profess such beliefs is Britain's David Icke. Icke professes that these "reptilians" as he calls them, have to drink human blood in order to keep their human form or else they would "shape-shift" back into a reptile-looking creature, and be exposed. In recent times, Icke has minimized his focus on reptilians and instead talks about more tangible issues. David Icke and his claims are discussed further and debunked in *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* (2009).

It's interesting to note that the premise for the 1983 science fiction series called *V* was based on a group of human-looking aliens who traveled to earth in need of natural resources. As the series progressed, the viewers learned that the Visitors, as they were called, were actually lizards who wore rubber suits to make themselves look human, and actually ate human beings for food. A remake of the series was released in 2009. While many see the 1980s version of *V* as being the inspiration for David Icke's wild theories, supporters of the "reptilian agenda" insist that the producers of *V* are just trying to cover up for the reptilians that rule the world.

December 21st 2012

Depending on when you are reading this book, the infamous date of December 21, 2012 is either rapidly approaching, or is now history and a thing of the past along with the over-hyped and sensationalized Y2K event that many feared would shut down computers around the world and unleash the apocalypse. For those who remember the weeks building up to the year 2000, you can understand the hype around 2012. As you likely know, some believe (or are making claims they know to be false in order to sell books) that a cataclysmic or transformative event will occur on or around December 21, 2012 which is believed to be the end-date of a 5,125-year-long Mayan calendar.

Some say that earth's magnetic field will reverse due to the earth being aligned with the sun and the center of the galaxy, and some people falsely believe that all nine planets will be aligned in a straight line, causing a tremendous gravitational pull on the oceans, making them shift and flood most of the planet. Some New Age proponents are looking forward to the date and think the planet will undergo some metaphysical shift or transformation marking the New Age. And of course, some people think that the December 21, 2012 date marks the beginning of the apocalypse or the return of Jesus.

As early as 2009 entire shelves in Barnes and Noble book stores were full of books about 2012 and these foolish claims. A movie with the title of *2012* was released in 2009 and had over the top special effects of the earth being nearly destroyed as a result of an enormous solar flare causing massive earthquakes and floods. *2012* the movie was directed by Roland Emmerich, who also wrote and directed the climate change propaganda film, *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004).

As the December 21, 2012 date passes and the world doesn't end and the Anunnaki aliens don't invade earth, many of the believers in the 2012 prophecy will grasp at straws and point to unrelated minor events as proof that the prophecies were correct, but the catastrophe wasn't as bad as people thought. Others will simply go on with their life and forget they believed such foolishness, and some will even say that the calendar must have been misinterpreted and will move the date of earth's destruction into the future, such as the year 2020 and will relive the hype all over again.

Black Helicopters

People who talk about conspiracies or the New World Order are often ridiculed by others and asked about "black helicopters," so the subject will be briefly addressed here to clarify how this term came to be used as an insult. Its use began to be used by militia and patriot groups in the 1990s as a description of black unmarked helicopters used by the military for various exercises or domestic missions. The helicopters drew suspicion by some and were said to be from the United Nations or part of a military takeover of the United States. The concept stems from the fact that many government agencies use dark and unmarked helicopters such as the ones deployed during the Ruby Ridge standoff in 1992.

Some paranoid and delusional people think when a helicopter flies over their house that it is watching them or tracking them somehow. Law enforcement have been known to fly helicopters over residential areas at a low altitude and use an infrared sensor to identify grow houses used specifically for growing marijuana because the houses emit an abnormal amount of heat from all the indoor lighting, which can be detected by infrared scanners.

Today most mentions of black helicopters are by people using the term as an insult, such as asking people who talk about the Illuminati if they've "seen any black helicopters." The people who use this term as an insult like this show their own ignorance of important issues about the New World Order.

Underground Bases and Tunnels

An entire chapter can be found in this author's previous book, *The Resistance Manifesto* , detailing the existence of massive underground bases and tunnels that are engineering marvels and is a fascinating subject to explore. In brief, there are a series of underground tunnels in the United States and most likely the rest of the world, that connect to various underground bases, and have access points from government (and likely private) buildings. The tunnels are created by TBM's (Tunnel Boring Machines) which are enormous structures that burrow through solid rock. The Robbins Company is the largest builder of TBM's and their website www.TheRobbinsCompany.com contains photos of these massive machines and information about their capabilities.

The existence of tunnels and underground bases have been openly admitted in several instances, including specific locations, but the extent of the underground tunnel network remains something the government won't discuss. It's likely a network spans the country, as well as the globe. The tunnels exist as a passage way for politicians and elite government officials to use in the event of a massive nuclear attack on America, so they can travel to different parts of the country that haven't been hit and then can safely return to the surface. They operate as a secret underground subway system.

A man named Phil Schneider would forever link these structures to the New World Order when he gave a series of lectures in the 1990s claiming to have worked on such structures, and during this work he says he got into a shootout with some aliens that were living in the tunnels. Schneider’s fascinating but fraudulent claims are detailed and debunked in *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* if you wish to read more about this subject.

But for the sake of this book, it should be known that such tunnels and bases do exist, and can be hidden in plain view. For example, the Greenbrier is a luxury resort in West Virginia that secretly had a bunker built inside during a fake renovation in the 1950s. The bunker had remained secret from the public for over 30 years until a 1992 article in the *Washington Post.* Immediately after the article was published the bunker was decommissioned and has been a tourist attraction for visitors of the resort ever since.

Manchurian Candidates

The subject of mind control appears on the surface to be nothing more than science fiction, but the ability to manipulate people’s behavior against their will has been thoroughly investigated by the CIA and other government agencies. The term “Manchurian Candidate” refers to someone who is a victim of mind control who is “programmed” to assassinate someone. Many people don’t believe such a thing is possible, but after looking into the declassified documents from MK-ULTRA and learning the power of hypnotism, the idea of a mind controlled assassin “programmed” to kill isn’t far-fetched at all, and instead can be seen as a very real scientific fact.

In 1979 a former State Department Officer named John D. Marks published a book titled *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate* which details the CIA’s efforts to create such assassins. Only a small amount of material was declassified regarding these programs but the available information clearly shows that as far back as the 1950s the US government was developing such methods.

Some suspected Manchurian Candidates are as follows: Sirhan Sirhan, who assassinated Senator Robert F. Kennedy in 1968. Mark David Chapman, who murdered John Lennon in 1980. Some believe the Columbine High

School shooters, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, were programmed assassins, as well as Nidal Malik Hasan who killed 13 people and wounded 30 others in the Fort Hood shooting in Texas in November 2009.

Fake Suicides and "Accidents"

Aside from being able to mentally program people to become assassins or carry out tasks against their will, as if they were a robot, elements within the CIA have the ability (and have used this ability) to murder people and then make it look like they either committed suicide or died in an unfortunate accident. The term "suicided" refers to an incident where someone is murdered but their death was made to look like a suicide.

This is able to occur by various black operation groups that work for the CIA and have guns that use a C02 cartridge to shoot a tiny piece of a frozen tranquilizer into the subject, rendering them unable to move or knocking them unconscious. The agents then are able to stage a hanging, push the victim off a tall building, or even placing the victim's own gun in their hand and point it at their head and pull the trigger.

Deborah Jeane Palfrey, the woman known as the DC madam who operated an elite prostitution service with powerful clients in Washington DC supposedly committed suicide in May 2008. She had previously stated publicly that she would never do such a thing, and even feared she would be killed in a staged accident or suicided.

[ccv] Gary Webb, a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle* largely responsible for uncovering the CIA's involvement in cocaine trafficking in the 1980s allegedly committed suicide. Webb was found dead from two (that's right, two) gunshot wounds to the head. Sacramento County coroner Robert Lyons determined that it was suicide.

Two teenage boys, Don Henry and Kevin Ives were murdered in 1987 and had their bodies placed on a railroad track in attempts to cover it up after they had curiously stumbled onto the CIA's cocaine importing operation located in Mena, Arkansas. The boys murders were initially ruled suicides, but after their families pushed for an investigation, a grand jury ruled they were murdered but named no suspects. A total of six other people connected to this case were murdered in the coming months as well, as the perpetrators attempted to silence all witnesses. [ccvi]

On July 11, 1990, the lead investigator of the Franklin Cover-up, Gary Caradori, was killed when his small plane had a mid-air explosion. Prior to the flight Caradori had informed others working on the case that he had obtained critical evidence that would prove a group of perverted politicians and businessmen with connections to the Reagan administration were involved in sexually abusing children.

Many people in Britain and around the world think that Princess Dianna was murdered and a member or members of the paparazzi used some kind of laser pointer to blind the limo driver, or believe the car had been tampered with causing it to crash. The list of suspicious deaths and suicides of people who could implicate high level politicians in various crimes goes on and on.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault is an enormous seed bank located about 800 miles from the North Pole on the Norwegian island of Spitsbergen. The vault holds a wide variety of plant seeds from around the world and keeps them frozen in order to preserve them in case of a global catastrophe such as a nuclear war. Such an event could potentially destroy an entire region of the world, so seeds for food, vegetation, trees, and other plants are kept in the vault, in the event that the natural habitat containing such species would be destroyed.

The Svalbald Seed Vault seems like the result of someone’s paranoid delusion, but the project is very serious, as well as expensive. It’s interesting that some people ridicule others who have long-term storable food in case of an emergency such as a natural disaster, massive terrorist attack, sudden economic collapse leading to food shortages, or rioting preventing people from getting to a grocery store to buy food. Such a precaution is a good idea, and the fact that millions of dollars have gone into the Svalbard Seed Vault shows that even the elite are prepared for the worst.

Conclusion

You are now, undoubtedly, able to see the New World Order and what is likely in store for your future. You may still find some of the information in this book to be unbelievable, and if this is the case, feel free to check the numerous sources that have been cited, many of which are from congressional hearings, declassified documents, mainstream media, or sound bites you can find for yourself on YouTube. It is at the very least interesting that in the 1980s and 1990s, when patriots and concerned citizens would warn of a New World Order being planned and slowly implemented, that they were called crazy and conspiracy theorists, yet today, we have prominent politicians around the world publicly stating their desire for such a thing, even using the term “New World Order” to describe their utopian dream. Some still think it’s only a conspiracy theory, and some wrestling fans think it refers to Hulk Hogan and his gang of wrestlers who were attempting to “take over” World Wrestling Entertainment with their group who called themselves the “New World Order.”

The uninformed and apathetic public has only helped the elite Illuminati construct their global government and Big Brother surveillance society. New taxes have been implemented without much resistance, and more and higher taxes are only right around the corner. While most of the population is lost in a world of professional sports, sitcoms, and Facebook; others like you are aware, or are becoming aware that the American dream is being stolen, and are learning of the people and institutions which are to blame. Whether this book is a starting point on your journey to awakening, or whether it is just one more resource you have discovered to assemble the pieces of the puzzle, you should be grateful that your eyes are open. Where and how you channel your knowledge, energy and activism from this point forward is an important decision that you will have to make. Will you just keep this information to yourself, or will you tell others? Will you be an armchair quarterback, or will you attend public rallies and town hall meetings? Will you be afraid to speak up when faced with propaganda and lies, or will you say something?

It can be difficult to articulate and explain some of this information to others who are completely unaware of it. It can be hard to cite sources off the top of your head, or to answer all the questions they may have. It is for these reasons that I encourage you to pass this book on to them so they can have at their fingertips the exact quotes, sources of information, and the details necessary to show them what they are missing.

Even if you have been looking into the New World Order for many years, I can confidently say that this author has compiled the best, most accurate, and important information about the subject and if you spend any amount of time reading my other books, I can assure you that you will find pieces of the puzzle you did not even think existed.

People often ask me how I got involved in all of this, or how I was able to write several books on the subject at a fairly young age. The answer is that I studied mainstream media in college and saw from an early age how the media can influence culture, trends, attitudes, and actions. I had to write a lot of papers in college on a variety of subjects and found myself able to explain complicated concepts and issues in a way that could be easily understood by the reader. I enjoyed staying up late listening to music and working on my papers. I also excelled at public speaking. It is a gift, and I am a talkative person who is fascinated by the political process and the mysteries of life.

When I discovered the hidden realities of the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks it led me on a journey down the rabbit hole and I began to see the big picture of the New World Order. I found a whole new world of information that was right in front of me the whole time, but I hadn’t stopped for a minute to even look. I began documenting the information I found so I could get it clear in my mind and share it with others. I sifted through the countless allegations and claims about a wide variety of issues all stemming from 9/11, the Illuminati, or the New World Order. I know after speaking with others and getting emails from people who also find themselves on a similar journey, that it is a life-changing one.

The fact that you are reading this shows that you are on a path similar to the one I was on when I first discovered this kind of material. It is my sincere hope that by reading my books, listening to my interviews, and watching my videos that you can learn to separate the facts from the fiction and not get distracted by useless controversies that arise in the context of this information.

I, like most of us, was once duped by the establishment, and out of my anger at them, and out of my love and respect for my fellow human beings, I feel it is my duty to do what I have done and inform others of the corrupt, power-hungry scum that are making life more difficult for others and who ruthlessly take advantage of others and couldn’t care less about their health, happiness, or well-being.

Their game is primarily that of occult knowledge, which means hidden knowledge, and selfishness and greed. Some people feel helpless and say that the elite are too strong or that the prophecies are going to get fulfilled no matter what we do, so they throw up their hands and surrender. If Martin Luther King Jr. had such an attitude that the system was too strong, then he wouldn’t have had the courage to stand up against it and peacefully fight the injustice that millions of African Americans faced.

There are countless of examples of public outrage that have led to new policies being abandoned or laws being changed. While we can also list examples that the establishment has won in the face of massive resistance, we must not overlook the times when they have lost. There is a famous quote that says, “all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”

So now that this book is finished and you know what the New World Order is, and what its creators and supporters envision it to be in the future, my question to you is, will you do nothing and let them win without a fight?

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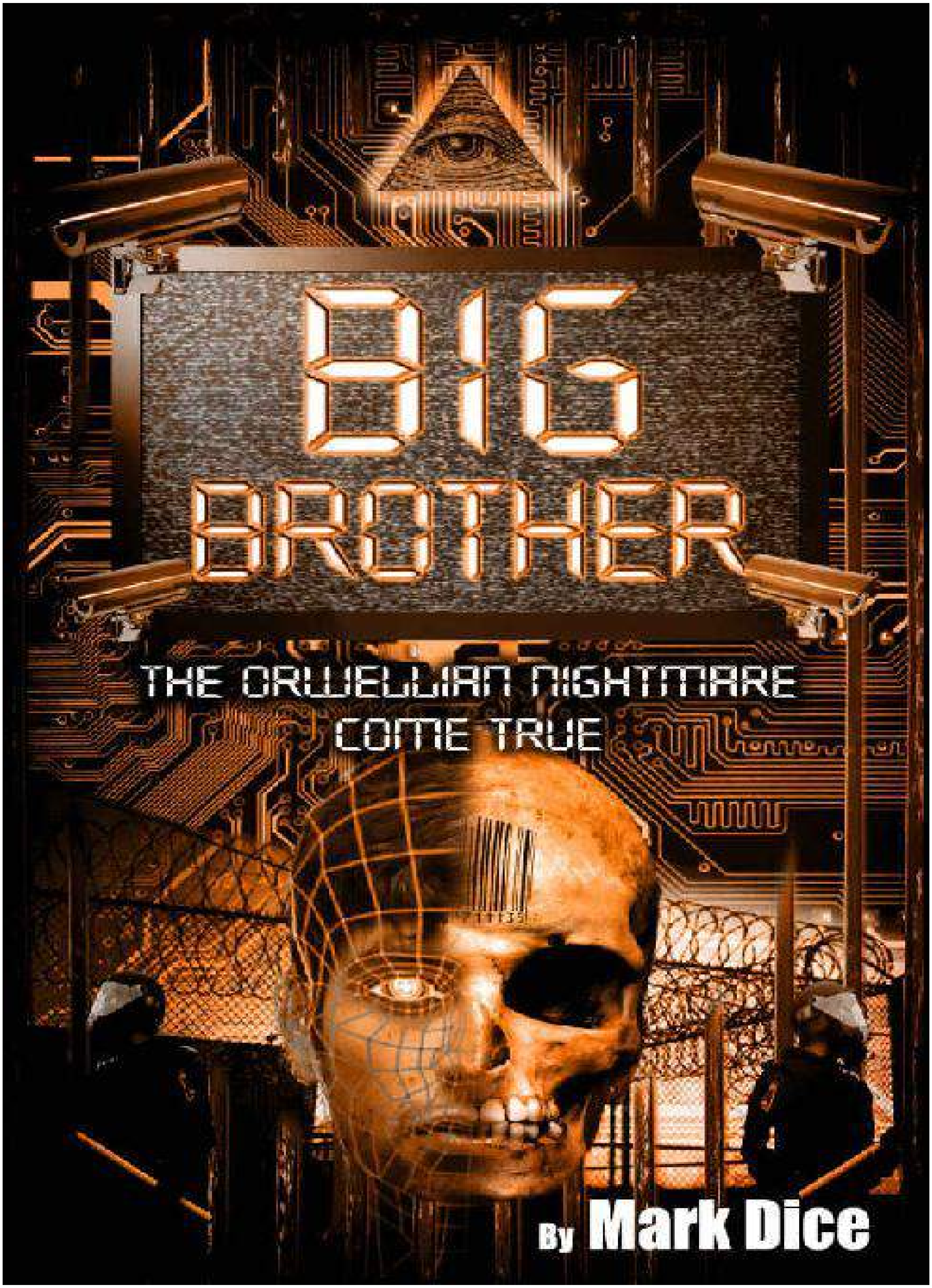

BIG BROTHER

THE ORWELLIAN NIGHTMARE COME TRUE

By **Mark Dice**

Introduction

When George Orwell (pen name of Eric Blair) first published his famous novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it was the year 1949, and it told a dark story of what he envisioned life may be like in the future—in the year 1984. His book, as well as his name, have become synonymous with privacy concerns involving technology and also an all-powerful, oppressive ruling elite that strictly governs the activities of the population with an iron fist.

Orwell's book is where we get the term *Big Brother* from, such as when people say "Big Brother is watching you." When people say this, they're referring to the omniscient surveillance system described in the novel that continuously watched and listened to people—even in their own homes. When we call something *Orwellian* to describe the invasiveness of certain technology or government policies, we are also referring to George Orwell's nightmarish vision he described in his novel. There are several other terms that Orwell himself coined in *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* such as *doublethink*, *thoughtcrime,* and *memory hole*, which have also become part of our vernacular.

Even if you have not read the book or seen the film, you are still undoubtedly familiar with the issues that make up the storyline, such as the high-tech surveillance system watching and listening to everyone in order to keep them in line with the government (called the Party in the novel). You are probably also familiar with the concept of a small elite ruling class (what Orwell calls the Inner Party) living in luxury and wielding unimaginable power over lower level citizens. In the novel, people have lost their freedom, their critical thinking skills, and even the ability to love due to the cultural depths society has sunk to as a result of Big Brother's control. The reason *Nineteen Eighty-Four* remains so popular, and the reason society has adopted vocabulary from the book, is because it serves as more than merely a fictional novel for the reader's entertainment. The novel served (and continues to serve) as a stark warning of what the future may hold if we don't resist invasive technology and oppressive government policies, or if the population at large becomes so lost in a world of pop culture, sports entertainment, or our own selfish desires, that we simply don't care.

Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True looks at technology that now exists or is under development and will exist in the near future, that threatens to make our world just as horrific or even worse than the world George Orwell described. This book will provide information from mainstream news sources, industry experts, and even patent numbers of the most invasive and sinister Orwellian devices anyone could dream of. We will also look at actual government programs and policies that seem as if they came right out of Orwell's dark imagination, such as the government secretly paying mainstream media reporters to act as gate-keepers and propagandists for the establishment, and the FBI illegally spying on and smearing peaceful political activists who were seen as problematic.

This book is certainly not anti-technology. Technology is a fantastic tool which can benefit those who use it, or harm them, depending on the intentions of the person designing it or using it. Technology has brought us amazing inventions that would seem supernatural to civilizations that lived just a few hundred years ago. Arthur C. Clarke, the author of *2001 a Space Odyssey*, was correct when he said, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

While this magical technology has brought us the convenience of calling our friends or family on our cell phones, allowing us to talk with them from virtually anywhere in the world, and given us the ability to watch events on the other side of the earth unfold live on television, and other wonders such as the Internet, DVR recorders, YouTube, Excel spread sheets, word processors, e-mail, Facebook, and more; it has also brought us identity theft, illegal wiretaps, Peeping Toms using hidden video cameras, cyber stalkers, and worse. If you have ever left your cell phone at home when you've left the house for the day, you've realized how much we depend on technology for what have become common and necessary

activities. If you’ve ever been at home when the electricity unexpectedly goes out, you have also realized how much we take for granted in our modern world.

Unfortunately, with tremendous advances in technology often come unforeseen consequences. Nobody could have envisioned young teenage girls taking nude photos of themselves with their cell phone cameras and sending them to their boyfriends, and then having the boyfriends forward them to others, eventually ending up on the cell phone of someone over the age of eighteen, resulting in what is essentially child pornography in their possession. The music and film industries certainly didn’t anticipate millions of Internet users downloading music and movies for free, sometimes before the products are even officially released. And when Albert Einstein was searching for the laws of physics to learn how our Universe functioned, he could have never imagined that his work would be used to design weapons capable of destroying the entire earth. It seems that the dark minds of men in power always strive to build sinister devices designed to enable them to hold onto their power, no matter how disastrous the consequences.

In the following pages we will look at some of the sinister inventions currently in operation, as well as the ones on the drawing boards, and the ones mad scientists are hoping to one day create. Facial recognition video cameras that can pick you out of a crowd of tens of thousands of people in a split second, machines that can read your mind, high-tech killer-robots, psychotronic weapons that can literally put voices in people’s heads, and more. You will see beyond a doubt that George Orwell’s description of Big Brother was chillingly accurate, and perhaps not as horrific as the reality we may one day face. Like a Pandora’s Box, once much of this technology is created, there will be little hope of stopping it or even regulating it.

While some of the technology discussed in this book is known to exist in small and specialized industries (and to a growing extent the mainstream public), one must wonder about the technology that is classified as top secret and the experiments that go on in the hidden laboratories funded by the deep pockets of government. Knowing just a small fraction of the past

abuses by the United States government (and others around the world) regarding human test subjects and goals, we should all be concerned about the continued illegal and immoral research and experiments that are undoubtedly continuing to occur in secret.

If one reads old *Popular Mechanics* magazines from the 1950's, one can realize how wrong, and even silly, the techno-utopian dreamers were in the past. Many were led to believe that by the twenty-first century we would all be living lives of luxury like the *Jetsons*, with large blocks of free time to enjoy ourselves as we had most manual labor and menial tasks taken care of by robots and computers. Yet more than a decade into the twenty-first century, we still need to spend time cooking and cleaning, and commuting to work and raising the kids, and fixing up the house and countless other tasks and obligations that are required of us in our daily lives.

Our cars must still continuously be maintained, the oil needs to be changed, the engine serviced, the tires rotated and replaced, and the average vehicle now costs as much as a house did for people just two generations ago. The grass still needs to be cut, the bushes need to be trimmed, and things around the house continue to break and need to be fixed or replaced. People are working longer hours, having less time with their families, having to retire later in life, and are having less savings than past generations. Where is this techno-utopia that so many had promised would come in the near future?

Instead of living lives of luxury and leisure, now many people can't escape their job even after they leave the office. Where once we left work and were outside of the reach of our boss, now he or she can call us on our cell phone at anytime day or night and expects a promptly returned phone call or e-mail.

People are being turned into numbers and statistics, and mathematical formulas are used by employers to determine whether an employee is being efficient enough. It's difficult to get a person on the phone when calling a company's customer service department, and social networking sites such

as Facebook and Myspace have turned everyone into their own favorite celebrity and supplement actual friendships and interactions. People don't need to get together for a dinner party to catch up on each other's lives anymore; we just monitor their newsfeed on Facebook from the comfort of our own home while sitting in our favorite chair getting fatter from lack of exercise and a poor diet.

Where we once discussed politics and religion with our friends and neighbors, such topics have become taboo and are replaced with the enticing entertainment of celebrity news as most people feel that it is more important to know about who our favorite celebrities are dating than it is to know what bills are being introduced and voted on in the halls of Congress or our own city council. It's interesting that while people seem to be getting dumber, computers are getting smarter.

We are becoming a nation of morons who can't think for themselves, and are being dehumanized into nothing more than a mentally enslaved workforce who are constantly being monitored, databased, and kept in line by the fear of the omniscient Big Brother technology that has gotten so advanced and so cheap, that the watchful eyes of surveillance cameras are mass produced, almost as if they were disposable.

At a presentation at the 2010 DICE Summit (Design, Innovate, Communicate, Entertain), an annual meeting of videogame executives, Jesse Schell, the former Creative Director of the Disney Imagineering Virtual Reality Studio, gave a speech on the future of gaming and talked about how in the future, "Before too long we're going to get to the point where every soda can, [and] every cereal box is going to be able to have a CPU, a screen, and a camera on board it, and a Wi-Fi connecter so that it can be connected to the Internet."

He concluded his speech by saying that our children and grandchildren will be able to know exactly what books we've read, what foods we ate, and practically everything we've done in our entire lives. He gave this speech

not to warn people about these Orwellian technologies, but he was extremely excited about them, and looked forward to them.

“You have no idea what books your grandparents read, or where they went on a daily basis, but these sensors that we’re going to have on us and all around us everywhere are going to be tracking and watching what we’re doing forever,” Schell said. He concludes by saying that because we will all be constantly watched and our actions and interests databased forever, that we’ll possibly be better people and be nicer and make better decisions because of the fear of judgment from others. Is this the kind of world you want to live in? Well, it’s the kind of world that’s rapidly approaching.

This book is meant to serve as a warning for what is already here, and what is soon to come. It is to encourage people to think about how to possibly prevent or minimize dramatic hazards to our lives by the very technology we have created. It is my goal to give you an accurate forecast of the coming storm so that you as an individual, and we as a society and species, may be better equipped to handle it when it hits. It is my hope that we do not lose our privacy, freedom, or our humanity in this 1984-style New World Order.

Surveillance Cameras

Surveillance cameras have been common in banks, department stores, gas stations, and government buildings for decades in order to prevent shoplifting and robberies, or to identify those who commit crimes after the fact. Society has largely ignored these cameras and barely notices they are watching us and we have come to accept them as commonplace. Even the most adamant privacy advocate would have to admit that such systems help to prevent shoplifting and catch bank robbers, but as technology advanced, these basic video cameras have been evolving into a high-tech surveillance grid almost identical to the Big Brother system described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Early in the twenty-first century, Britain became the most surveilled country on the planet with an estimated 4.2 million CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) cameras watching in government buildings, private businesses, and on street corners. What concerns privacy advocates, and frequently average citizens, is not necessarily the existence of ordinary security cameras, but the new and invasive ways that they are being used. As you will read in this chapter, security cameras have been installed in school bathrooms, private homes, and the built-in cameras on laptop computers have even been used by school officials to watch students when they were home without them even knowing it.

Facial recognition cameras are now becoming popular, and will soon be a standard feature in surveillance systems. You will also see surveillance systems on public streets that listen to you and detect “hostile” speech and will automatically dispatch the police to investigate. Big Brother *is* watching you, and you might be startled to find out exactly what he sees and hears.

“The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard…You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.”[1] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

While Britain has been known for its millions of surveillance cameras that watch over nearly every street and alley in major cities, the United States of America had lagged behind in terms of the size and scope of a Big Brother system. Such cameras were, for a long time, relegated to parking lots and inside businesses such as banks and department stores, but Chicago had pioneered a Big Brother system in America which became a model for other cities.

After 9/11, the city began installing a massive surveillance system on city streets, in schools, around skyscrapers, and even on busses and in train tunnels. The system is so advanced that police officers can tap into practically any security camera from their squad car and watch the feed from a monitor on their dashboard.

“I don’t think there is another city in the U.S. that has as an extensive and integrated camera network as Chicago has,” said Michael Chertoff, the former head of the Department of Homeland Security.[2]

The Chicago Big Brother system even links private security cameras into their grid, something unique compared to London and other cities. If someone calls 911 to report a crime, accident, or fire, police and 911 dispatchers can instantly tap into the nearest video cameras and monitor the scene in real time to assess the situation.

In 2010, the city had an estimated 10,000 cameras feeding into their central system, most of which are clearly visible security cameras, but the city also hopes to install numerous hidden cameras as well, according to

Police Superintendent Jody Weis. Mayor Richard Daley said he could put 10,000 more cameras up and “nobody would say anything.”[3]

Not everyone thinks the cameras are a good idea. Edwin Yohnka, a spokesman for the ACLU wondered, “What protections are in place to stop a rogue officer from taking a highly powerful camera and aim it in a way to find or track someone who is perhaps a former love interest or something like that?”[4]

On May 1, 2010 an SUV filled with explosives was discovered in Times Square in New York City and luckily failed to detonate, causing officials to immediately call for a massive high-tech surveillance system to be put in place all over the city. Mayor Michael Bloomberg said the system “will greatly enhance our ability and the ability of the police to detect suspicious activity in real time, and disrupt possible attacks.”[5]

At the time of the incident on May 1, 2010, dubbed the “attempted Times Square bombing,” there were already 82 different devices installed around Times Square that watch and catalog footage and can identify license plate numbers from any targeted vehicles. A program called Operation Sentinel scans and logs every license plate from every vehicle entering Manhattan Island in order to spot targeted vehicles. The program also has hidden radiation detectors designed to identify if any nuclear weapons are smuggled into the city.

New York Police Chief Raymond Kelly wanted more federal funding for such operations and said they were looking to implement “analytic software” that would analyze information in real time in order to identify possible threats. For example, cameras that can detect if there is an unattended bag left on the ground, or if a car circles the block too many times. The new system was estimated to have cost more than $100 million dollars.

At some point in the future, ordinary security cameras will be completely outdated and seem like primitive ancient devices compared to

pre-crime cameras, facial recognition systems, and other behavior analyzers that are being implemented.

UK Government Installs Surveillance Cameras in Private Homes

The UK government actually spent $700 million dollars to install surveillance cameras inside the homes of citizens to monitor whether their children attend school, eat proper meals, and go to bed on time.[6] It's part of a government program called "Family Intervention Projects," which also includes social workers making regular visits to see if parents are raising their children properly.

Approximately 2,000 families were initially targeted by the program when it launched in 2009 and British authorities planned to expand the number to 20,000 within the following two years, with all expenses being paid by taxpayers. Parents and children subjected to this Orwellian program are also forced to sign a "behavior contract" called the Home School Agreement, which outlines what the government expects of them.

Britain was invaded by millions of CCTV cameras decades ago on the streets of London and elsewhere which have become hardly noticed and a part of everyone's daily life, but this move to put them inside the private homes of citizens shocked and disturbed people andrew is not something that is only happening in England.

Back in February 2006, the Chief of Police in Houston, Texas wanted to install video cameras inside apartments and homes in order to "fight crime" because he said there was a shortage of police officers. Chief Harold Hurtt told reporters, "I know a lot of people are concerned about Big Brother, but my response to that is, if you are not doing anything wrong, why should you worry about it?"[7]

A spokesperson at the Houston Apartment Association supported the idea, saying many people would, “appreciate the thought of extra eyes looking out for them.”

School Spied on Students with Video Cameras in Laptops

In February 2010, a news story spread around the country about a school in Philadelphia that was spying on students by secretly activating the video cameras in their laptops. These laptops were given to the students by the district and were taken home as if they were their own computers. Almost every laptop computer, as you probably know, has a tiny video camera located on the top, as well as a microphone, which are used for video chats or to record video blogs. Few people know that they can also be remotely activated and used to watch and listen to anyone in their range.

The parents of one student filed a class-action lawsuit against the school on behalf of 1,800 students who were issued the laptops and were not told that school administrators had the ability to secretly activate the laptop webcams remotely, no matter where the laptop was located as long as the computer was online. The lawsuit seeks damages for invasion of privacy, theft of private information, and unlawful interception and access of electronic information.

The parents of Blake Robbins, who are responsible for the lawsuit, found out that school officials were using the computers to spy on students when an assistant principal confronted their son about “improper behavior in his home” and showed him a picture taken from his school-issued laptop’s webcam.

Most people only close their laptop when packing it up and transporting it, and a lot of people have their laptops sitting on desks in their bedroom, with their bed or bathroom often in clear view of the video camera, never suspecting that anyone could be watching from the webcam. School officials could have been watching the students undress in their own

bedrooms, or even watched them as they sat in front of their laptops masturbating to porn on the Internet. If school officials had seen a student doing such a thing, which is a common occurrence for many teenagers and adults, it would constitute watching child pornography.

School officials tried to say that they would only use the remote activation feature if a laptop was lost or stolen, but shortly after the lawsuit was filed and news about this story made it around the world, the lawyer for the Robbins family alleged that school officials had taken thousands of pictures of students while in their homes using the remote activation feature of the built-in camera, and also had lists of the websites they visited and transcripts of their online chats.

The case, Blake J. Robbins vs. Lower Merion School District, was filed in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania on Tuesday, February 16, 2010. The lawsuit also says that the camera on Blake Robbins' laptop took photos of the boy partially undressed and as he slept in his bed and says the camera was set up to take a new picture every 15 minutes, along with a screen shot.

One school employee allegedly sent an e-mail to Carol Cafiero, the administrator in charge of the spy program, saying the software was like, "a little LMSD [Lower Merion School District] soap opera," to which Cafiero is quoted as replying, "I know, I love it."[8]

It is alleged that Cafiero copied some images from the spy system onto her home computer, a claim she denies. Eight months later the lawsuit was settled and the school district agreed to pay $610,000 in damages, including $185,000 to two students it was proven were secretly spied on by the school using the webcams.

Blake Robbins, whose family brought the first lawsuit, was reported to have had $175,000 of the teen's settlement put in trust for him, presumably for college.[9] The school district also had to pay $425,000 in legal fees to the plaintiff's attorney.

The school board decided to settle the case after their insurance company agreed to pay the $1.2 million dollars in fees, a settlement they had initially refused to pay. As a result of the case, the school disabled the spying software, apologized to students and parents, and suspended two employees. The school district even tried to demonize the Robbins family, who first filed the lawsuit against the school, attacking them by saying that if they were so worried about their son’s privacy then they shouldn’t have released photos of him to the media.

While this case was a major victory against Big Brother and helped raise awareness for what technology was now capable of, this is just the tip of the Orwellian iceberg.

Schools Installing Video Cameras in Bathrooms

While it is common for surveillance cameras to watch over businesses and even city streets and sidewalks, most people would never imagine that video cameras would be installed in bathrooms, especially at a school, but that is exactly what has happened in numerous schools around America. Channel 13, WMAZ in Central Georgia, reported that an 8th grader found a video camera installed in the school bathroom at a Jasper County school in 2005. The boy and his friends took the camera down and brought it home to show his parents. He was later suspended for stealing school property.

"It felt like the right thing to do...because it felt like we were being violated in every way in the bathroom," said the 13 year old Mac Bedor, one of the boys who helped remove the camera.[10]

When the boy's mother contacted the school, she was told that the principle, Howard Fore, had authorized cameras to be installed in the bathrooms, allegedly to stop vandalism. What's especially creepy about this, is that only Howard Fore (the principle) knew about the camera being installed, and none of the other administrators were informed. It makes you wonder whether he installed the camera for his own personal perverse enjoyment, or to sell the footage to online pedophiles or to websites that market what they call voyeuristic video feeds which are taken from secretly placed cameras where people would never expect them to be, such as bathrooms, locker rooms, showers, or dorms.

The mother of one of the boys who helped remove the camera was interviewed by the local news station and said, "I had told the high school principal, Mr. Fore, that he needed to come up with another solution. That this wasn't appropriate. His response to me was he was going to continue to film."[11]

She was proud of what her son did because it was the right thing to do, and described the camera as a cheap one, not a professional one, and said it looked like a spy camera that people can buy on the Internet. The Bibb County District Attorney, Howard Simms, said that cameras in public school bathrooms are perfectly legal.

At another school, Reynoldsburg High School in Ohio, police installed a video camera in a bathroom saying it was to catch a person who wrote graffiti on a wall. The school's superintendent Richard Ross said the graffiti was "cryptic" and believed it was referring to a bomb threat.[12] The school's janitor removed the camera as soon as he discovered it. The Reynoldsburg Police Chief, Jeanne Miller, defended the camera, saying it was positioned to only videotape people from the chest up.

"I don't agree with the method because I believe it was an invasion of privacy," said Linda Rico, whose daughter attends the school. "My daughter was extremely upset about it, and I took her side. I'm glad to hear the camera is gone."[13]

A school superintendent in Texas named Dan Doyen was sentenced to five years felony probation and had to register as a sex offender after he installed a hidden camera in a women's bathroom at his school's administration office. The camera was disguised to look like an air freshener and was purchased with a school district credit card.

A school in Pine Bush, New York installed a fake video camera in a bathroom once in an attempt to fool boys into believing they were being videotaped, in order to discourage them from messing up the bathroom.[14]

These cases are not only isolated to schools in America. The Grace Academy in Britain, along with other schools, installed cameras in bathrooms as well. One mother told the *Sunday Mercury* newspaper, "She [her daughter] came home from school and told me security cameras had

been installed in the girl’s toilets but we didn’t know anything about it. You would expect the school to have consulted parents first, yet we received no information and no letters have been sent home explaining this decision.”[15]

The school’s principal, Terry Wales, told *Sky News*, “It’s to safeguard our youngsters, many schools are using cameras now. We had a parents’ forum last night, we explained the arrangements and the parents were satisfied. We’ve found that when it comes to health and safety, children want to feel secure.”[16] The school already had 26 CCTV cameras watching other parts of the building.

Police were called to a school in Salford, England after parents learned that cameras had been installed in a locker room. Police seized the system.[17] The practice of installing video cameras in children’s bathrooms would seem like the last thing that someone who is normal would do, yet we have seen this done on multiple occasions in the name of security, and people think it’s OK. It is possible that at some point in the future, this Orwellian invasion of privacy may be considered perfectly normal, and many people may actually encourage it.

Talking Cameras

Some surveillance cameras in the United Kingdom are equipped with loudspeakers that can be used to shout at people on the streets by the officials who are monitoring the camera feeds if they see someone litter or if people are deemed to be loitering. Some of these loudspeakers are designed to sound like a child's voice in an attempt to make it more difficult for people to resist the commands by making them feel bad if they shout back at the loudspeakers because they will feel like they are yelling at a child.[18]

The system enables workers at a control center to monitor different cameras that can all communicate with people on the street through the speakers. Secretary of State for the Home Department, John Reid, actually said that people liked the Orwellian system. "This is a hugely popular scheme in Middlesbrough and the vast majority of the people here are right behind it," he said.[19]

It was even reported that children from local schools were taken to the facilities and shown around as part of a field trip after the system was installed, thus indoctrinating them that such a Big Brother system is normal, and part of everyday life.

The telescreens in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* both watched and listened to everyone on the streets, and even in their own homes, and barked orders at people when they were slacking in their obedience to Big Brother.

Cameras with Microphones

Since surveillance cameras can watch you, and the human monitors can talk to you or shout at you through speakers built into the cameras, it shouldn’t come as a surprise that these cameras are increasingly being equipped with microphones so they can listen to people too.

In 2006, it was reported that over 300 CCTV surveillance cameras in Holland were being equipped with high powered microphones that can detect and record conversations from 100 yards away.[20] The creepiest part of this system is that it can automatically record conversations that it deems potentially aggressive based on 12 factors, including the volume level and the pitch and speed of people talking. The software does this all automatically and if the system detects what it considers to be hostility, then the police are dispatched to investigate.

Derek van der Vorst, who is the director of Sound Intelligence, the company that created the system, said “The cameras work on the principle that in an aggressive situation the pitch goes up and the words are spoken faster. The voice is not the normal flat tone, but vibrates. It is these subtle changes that our audio cameras can pick up on.”[21]

The privacy laws in Holland allow this system to operate, although in other countries recording conversations without people’s knowledge or consent would be the topic of much debate.

“It is technically capable of being live 24 hours a day and recording 24 hours a day,” Van der Vorste said. “It really depends on the privacy laws in a particular country.”

During a testing period the cameras were said to have detected 70 genuine alarms and led to four arrests. Harry Hoetjer, the head of surveillance at the Groningen police department said, for example, the system identified a gang of four men who were about to attack someone, and insisted the system stopped it.

In the buildup to the 2012 Olympics, a company called VCS Observation that markets the technology, gave a presentation to London police officials hoping to convince the city to install the system there. Martin Nanninga of VSC Observation said, “There was a lot of interest in our system, especially with security concerns about the Olympic Games in 2012. We told them about both our intelligent control room and the aggression detection system.”

British officials claimed that audio recordings from such a system would be treated the same as CCTV video footage under British law, saying that audio can be recorded for the purpose of the detection and prevention of crime and the apprehension and prosecution of criminals.

In Sylvester Stalone’s 1993 film *Demolition Man*, the futuristic society is constantly monitored by audio surveillance equipment with voice and keyword recognition that automatically fines people if they swear or use inappropriate language. The film has several references to Aldous Huxley’s novel *Brave New World*, including the naming of Sandra Bullock’s character, “Lenina Huxley,” which is a reference to Lenina Crown, a character in the *Brave New World* novel. At one point in the film, Wesley Snipes’ character says, “It’s a brave new world,” as he picks up a futuristic ray gun.

I was surprised to find that in 2009 a local Subway sandwich shop had a microphone standing by the cash register, and when I asked the employees about it they informed me that the owner had installed it and can listen in on them from his laptop or cell phone at anytime, and says he does so to make sure that the employees are behaving themselves and treating customers the way he wants them to be treated.

Similar audio monitoring devices that include radio controlled cameras, and even speakers, are now frequently installed in businesses by the owners to intimidate employees into working harder and deter them from stealing or fooling around on the job.

The European Union has looked into Big Brother systems that involve installing cameras and microphones on the backs of seats on airplanes that would monitor the facial expressions of each passenger and even listen to their conversations to identify any suspicious behaviors or conversations taking place, in an attempt to thwart terrorism.

The EU has funded the technology and is working with several companies and universities to develop it. A European Commission spokesman confirmed that the European parliament had begun talks to actually form legislation "in order for these [security] measures to be applied across [all] airlines."[22]

The program is called Security of Aircraft in the Future European Environment (SAFEE) and would trigger an alert to airline personnel if the system detected specified combinations of facial expressions and other behavior that can allegedly indicate if a person may be a terrorist. "The system will not be triggered by nervous flyers," said James Ferryman, one of the researchers. "It is only triggered by well-specified combinations."[23] Ferryman also claimed that it was impossible to fool the technology. Critics have dubbed it the "spy in the cabin."

Designers hope the system will be available and fully operational in airlines before the year 2020. The microphones would presumably listen for keywords in passengers' conversations, much like the Echelon spy system does during telephone conversations, and is probably more functional as an intimidation tactic aimed at preventing terrorism than it is at actually identifying someone who is about to hijack an airplane or disrupt a flight.

A spokesman for British Airways said, “While we always welcome new research and development that advances aviation security, we believe the emphasis of any new security initiatives would be better placed on preventing potential terrorists from boarding aircraft in the first place.”[24]

This entire system seems like complete quackery. What if a passenger is having a bad day or if they’re on their way to a funeral or a business trip they were forced to go on by their boss? What if they just hate their life but have no intention of doing any harm to anyone? Is this system going to flag them as a potential terrorist? Are we going to live in a world where we allow a computer program to supposedly determine what someone is thinking and flag them as dangerous based on their facial expressions?

This kind of system and others like it are really designed to intimidate people into conforming with the social norm and to get them to accept the idea that Big Brother is always watching them, no matter where they are, to make sure they don’t misbehave. The microphones used by this system that allegedly listen for keywords spoken by terrorists is a complete joke. Are two terrorists going to say out loud to each other “OK, in five minutes let’s hijack this plane?” Of course not. It is incredible that this kind of a system is even being considered and is taken seriously.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the term *facecrime* is used to describe an improper facial expression. For example, if an announcement was made that Big Brother had increased food rations, if one did not show outwardly visible signs of excitement, then this was suspicious and could be a sign of resentment towards Big Brother.

Facial Recognition Cameras

Video cameras that are able to detect the identity of specifically which individuals are in their field of view have been discussed since the early 1990s, but the first systems of this kind weren't very accurate and were very expensive. As technology advanced, facial recognition systems became a reality and were installed in places like Fort Knox, casinos, shopping malls, and sporting events. Little did anyone know, but at the 2001 Super Bowl in Tampa, Florida, facial recognition cameras were used to scan for individuals seated in the crowd to locate people who had warrants out for their arrest.[25]

The system was created by Viisage who used their FaceTrac software that was developed at MIT. They input photos of criminals into the system that they obtained from local authorities and were able to find nineteen people who had been listed as targets.

ATMs are expected to possibly apply the technology to verify users, and numerous other applications will likely incorporate the technology as well. Laptop computers, for example, can be installed with software that is used to verify the user by scanning their face with the built in video camera before enabling the computer to function.

In 2005, a large shopping mall in the Netherlands installed facial recognition systems to spot suspected shoplifters.[26] One of the first trials showed that 90% of those targeted as offenders could be spotted using the system. Feeds taken from existing security cameras were transmitted to a facial recognition database containing photographs of volunteers acting as known or suspected shoplifters. When they entered the mall and came in view of the security cameras, the system alerted security.

This same system has been used in casinos since at least 2005 to spot players banned from the establishment for counting cards or cheating.[27] (These banned players' names are added to the Black Book or the Griffin book as it is called.) In the past, security guards would flip through books containing photos of people who were banned from casinos, in order to keep those people's faces fresh in their memory so they could spot them if they came back, but now with facial recognition systems, as soon as the person walks into the door, the system will identify them and security guards will be dispatched.

Of course, you may think that by putting on a hat, glasses or a fake beard, you could fool the system, but a show on the History Channel titled *Fort Knox: Secrets Revealed* (2007) detailed some of the security measures in place to protect the gold held there, and when explaining the facial recognition systems, the security expert said that even if a person were to get facial reconstructive surgery, their system would still be able to identify them immediately.

Back as far as 1999, London, England was installing facial recognition systems to scan people as they walk on the street.[28] London already has millions of CCTV cameras watching the streets, and they will likely all be upgraded with facial recognition software at some point in the near future. An area in London named Newham was the first neighborhood to install facial recognition cameras and used the FaceIt system developed by Visionics. The system used only 13 cameras and only 60 criminals were entered in as targets, none of which were spotted for three years, but it was just a test of the technology in its early phases in 1999.

In August of 2003, two years after the test of the system at the Super Bowl, police in Ybor City, Florida connected three dozen cameras on the streets to the FaceTrac system and entered in over 1000 photos of felons and runaways as targets. This system can also follow a target and watch them on whatever camera they come into view from, so a live person can watch their every move in real time once someone is identified.

In December 2003, the Royal Palm Middle School in Phoenix, Arizona, installed a facial recognition system on school property in an attempt to spot child molesters and other criminals.[29] It has been rumored in early 2010, Disney began quietly looking into possibly installing facial recognition cameras in their theme parks as well.

Minnesota-based Identix Incorporated, which has contracts with the Department of Homeland Security, has been in contact with Disney regarding facial recognition systems[30] and another company called A4Vision, based in California, confirmed they had met with Disney executives to give a presentation of their facial recognition system. “They were interested,” said A4Vision spokeswoman Suzanne Mattick.[31]

It’s rumored that Identix has a system that can identify people using a skin print that allegedly can identify a person using only a small digital picture of their skin. It’s said to be as accurate as a fingerprint scanner and can tell twins apart from each other.

Most facial recognition systems work using what is called Local Feature Analysis (LFA) which is a mathematical algorithm used to encode faces into a “face print,” which is the numeric code for each person’s face that is stored as a small computer file.

A leading facial recognition company, Visionics, uses what they call nodal points, which are approximately 80 different distinguishable features on the human face that are measured and written into a numerical code which represents that person’s face print in the database. Visionics says that only 14 to 22 nodal points are needed for their FaceIt software to identify someone. Back in the year 2000, the system was capable of matching face prints by searching through 60 million per minute. Today these systems can probably scan through a database containing the entire population of the United States in just a few seconds.

Visionics was founded by Joseph Atick, who in 1991 was recruited by Rockefeller University in New York to create the Computational

Neuroscience Laboratory where he developed his facial recognition systems. To do this, he was also given $4 million dollars in grants by the Department of Defense, particularly from DARPA, for what they called Human Identification at a Distance (or HumanID), which would become a part of the Information Awareness Office. The National Security Agency paid another $4 million dollars to develop the FaceIt program.[32]

Since police often photograph and videotape protests and demonstrations as possible evidence in the event that people commit assaults or vandalism, there are now new privacy concerns for even attending public rallies because police have the ability to run video footage and photos through facial recognition software in order to identify every single person in the crowd. People may be secretly listed in police databases as “extremists” simply for attending peaceful and legitimate demonstrations. As facial recognition systems become more common, they will instantly be able to identify the names of each person in attendance of any such march or demonstration.

Operation Noble Shield

The Rockefeller funded Joseph Atick, the founder and CEO of Visionics, the pioneer and leading company in facial recognition systems, proposed that a nationwide facial recognition system be installed in every airport in America that will look for suspected terrorists who are trying to board planes. He called it Operation Noble Shield, and immediately following the September 11, 2001 attacks, Atick was contacting the media trying to promote his company in the fight against terrorism. A week and a half after the attacks, Atick testified at a special committee formed by the Secretary of Transportation, Norman Mineta, where he proposed Operation Noble Shield.

In America, at least we still have some protections outlined in the Bill of Rights that haven't been circumvented by fears of terrorism, and some watchdog groups do their best to resist certain Orwellian measures the government or private industry tries to impose on people. One must wonder (and fear) what will happen when oppressive dictatorships obtain this kind of technology and begin installing it on their public streets, or in private buildings to squash dissent and keep their citizens under the watchful eyes of Big Brother.

While privacy issues and Big Brother tend to be somewhat common issues in the twenty-first century, it's interesting to note that Senator Sam Ervin in the 1970s, said, "When people fear surveillance, whether it exists or not, when they grow afraid to speak their minds and hearts freely to their government or to anyone else, then we shall cease to live in a free society."[33]

Barry Steinhardt, the director of the ACLU's Technology and Liberty Program, is concerned about the large-scale implications of facial

recognition systems and said, “What it tells us is that we are really on the cusp of a surveillance society where you are not going to be able to go anywhere without being subject to both surveillance and identification…I find it chilling.”[34]

Verint Systems

A surveillance company called Verint systems [verifiable intelligence] has created a service that watches people shop in retail stores and monitors how long they spend in an aisle and can detect whether or not they pick anything up off the shelf. If someone spends too much time in an aisle, the system alerts customer service and a store employee will be dispatched to that isle to ask the person if they need any help.

The system also monitors how many people come into a store, how long they spend in a store, and can calculate the ratio of customers to sales. This is not just a prototype, the Verint system has been used in stores like Home Depot and Target since at least 2006.[35]

Verint also created a service called ULTRA Customer Intelligence Analytics that data mines phone recordings for keywords. Verint says it, “Detects subtle, often counter-intuitive patterns and cause/effect relationships from recorded interactions to generate revenue opportunities.”[36]

David Worthley, president of Verint Systems use to work as the chief of the FBI’s telecommunications industry liaison unit which handled wire tapping. Kenneth A Minihan, the director of Verint Systems, was a director of the National Security Agency. Another big wig named Howard Safir was the former police commissioner for New York City and an executive in the DEA. Verint also receives a large amount of funding from grants given by Israel.

Aside from retail stores like Target and Home Depot using Verint systems, their equipment is also used at Dulles Airport outside of

Washington, DC, and inside the US Capitol building. In August of 2002 Verint’s stock was $6 per share, and by 2010, rose to more than $25.

Facial Recognition Billboards

In areas of Japan, an advertising agency installed billboards that have facial recognition cameras that can identify the sex and approximate age of people who walk by and then use that information to display what they consider to be relevant products on the billboards which consist of LCD screens.[37] In Steven Spielberg’s 2002 film *Minority Report*, there is a scene showing billboards using retina scanners that identify people as they walk by and not only display ads that computers have determined would be suitable for that person, but the ads talk to the people using their name, as well. “John Anderton! You could use a Guinness [beer] right about now,” one says, as Tom Cruise’s character walks by. In another scene he walks into a Gap clothing store and is greeted by a hologram of a woman welcoming him back and asks him, “how did those assorted tank tops work out for you?” referring to his last purchase, which was obviously in the database.

NEC, the Japanese company that designed the real life facial recognition billboards, claim that they don’t store the images of people who walk by and say they are deleted after the person passes the view of the camera.[38] The company tried to downplay the Orwellian aspects of the system by comparing it to cookies that are stored on people’s computers that track what items people looked at on retailer’s websites in order to post recommended items for that user.

Facial Recognition App on Cell Phones

Facial recognition cameras and software isn’t just restricted to large and bulky mainframe computers with extensive databases. In February 2010, a Swedish company called the Astonishing Tribe released an application (an app) for cell phones that allows people to take someone’s picture and then using facial recognition and face printing software, the application finds that person’s Facebook or MySpace page.

The application is called the Recognizr and shortly after it was released privacy advocates were understandably spooked. Tom Gaffney, a software security expert with F-Secure, said, “This app looks like it could be a stalker’s dream,” and Simon Davies of Privacy International called the application an atrocious invasion of privacy and said it infinitely increased the dangers of stalking and privacy issues that already exist.[39]

Using this application, a guy can now simply take a picture of a girl that he’s attracted to, whether she’s in a bar, in the grocery store, or anywhere, and then within seconds pull up her Facebook page and know her name, where she lives, read all her wall posts, see all her pictures, find out who her friends are, and more. The horrific things that could be done by stalkers, criminals, blackmailers, perverts and psycho’s are virtually limitless.

This is certainly not the only app of this kind. An app for the iPhone called Face Match accomplishes something similar by identifying specific individuals in photos you have uploaded to your Facebook page. The market for mobile facial recognition systems is just beginning to develop, and as the twenty-first century moves forward, this technology will be rapidly enhanced and could one day identify people just as easy as a human can recognize a friend in a split second after seeing them.

It’s not just people that these systems can identify. Google and other companies have built programs that allow users to take a photo of something with their cell phone, and the software identifies exactly what it is, and where it is geographically located. Google’s application is called Google Goggles, and they are just one of several companies working on enhancing such technology.

For example, you could take a picture of a building in the middle of downtown in a major city, and the app will be able to identify it and immediately display a fact sheet on that building. Landmarks, landscapes, automobiles, practically anything could have its picture snapped, and the system will identify what it is. It’s called visual search technology, and the possibilities are extremely vast. In 2009 scientists at the Smithsonian, the University of Maryland, and Columbia University were developing an app for the iPhone that could identify plant species just from taking a picture of one.[40]

Facial Recognition Software on the Internet

The facial recognition software company Face.com has developed a system that can search virtually the entire Internet in order to find photographs of a targeted individual. Once someone’s picture is entered into the system, it searches through photos on social networking sites and online photo galleries finding faces that match. It functions like a typical facial recognition system by translating photos into algorithms formulated by various facial features and measurements (called nodal points), and then searches the Internet for all photos which match that algorithm. Face.com says the software is 90 percent accurate.

When this system was first developed, Face.com limited its availability but later released a software package called Photo Finder that allows anyone to search for matches over the entire Internet, including websites, online newspapers, blogs, and social networking sites.

While your Facebook photos may be set to “friends only” or “private,” photos that you are tagged in which have been posted online by your friends, may not be set to private, and can easily be found by this kind of system. Are there funny but embarrassing photos of you posted somewhere on Facebook that you’d prefer your boss, parents, or children not see? Were you at a protest and possibly appear in a photo of the crowd that was posted online? Do you want your boss, neighbors, or the government knowing about what political or social movements you privately support and what events you attend? Anonymity may be a thing of the past.

Gil Hirsch, chief executive of Face.com, told *The Sunday Times*, “We have launched a service that allows developers to take our facial recognition technology and apply it immediately to their own applications.”[41] What that means is practically any software company can now incorporate this Big

Brother technology into cell phone apps or whatever kind of creepy and invasive programs their dark imaginations can dream up. As of September 2010 the company claimed its technology was already being used by 5,000 different developers. The genie is now out of the bottle. The company is also working on a system that will search through YouTube videos in order to identify people using the same facial recognition technology.[42]

In December 2010 Facebook added facial recognition software to their website to identify people in photos after they've been uploaded.[43] Before this, people would have to physically "tag" (identify a person in a photo by linking the photo to their Facebook page). Now the system suggests who is in the photos. The beta version of this system actually worked fairly well and as the technology is refined it will be nearly impossible to remain anonymous on Facebook.

Google has an application called Picasa that in 2008 was updated to enable people to upload photos and the system automatically identifies who is in them if the person's face has already been tagged in the program. With Google's dominance in information technology and their history of Big Brother-type of applications, it shouldn't be surprising if Google develops a picture search tool that utilizes facial recognition technology. Just as the search engine can comb through millions of web pages in seconds and find an exact sentence or phrase someone posted somewhere, Google (and others) will likely develop systems that can match photos just as fast, no matter where they are posted on the Internet.

Cash Prizes Given to People Who Watch Surveillance Monitors

A company called Internet Eyes, located in Britain, actually offers cash prizes to ordinary citizens who are given access to CCTV camera feeds if they see a crime being committed and are able to report it to authorities.

A businessman named Tony Morgan created the company after he learned that a large portion of security cameras watching the streets of London weren’t being monitored by anyone.[44] The company initially offered a monthly prize of 1,000 pounds (approximately $1,550 US dollars)[45] for the best crime spotter of the month and then organized other payment terms for the spotters. At the time the program launched in October 2010, more than 13,000 people had signed up to watch the feeds and participate.

Charles Farrier, from the watchdog group *No CCTV*, said that the creation of Internet Eyes was a very worrying development and the government, “has put private profit above personal privacy in allowing a private company to launch its Stasi-style citizen spy game rather than defending the rights of British citizens.”[46]

The system is marketed to businesses that don’t have the budget for security guards to watch their security cameras 24 hours a day. Businesses pay a small fee to use the system and if someone sees what they think is a shoplifter, for example, that viewer can contact the store owner through the system which can send the owner a text message informing them of the event.

Daniel Hamilton of *Big Brother Watch* (a British watchdog organization) said, “It’s astonishing to think that innocent people doing their shopping could soon be spied on by an army of busybodies with an Internet connection. CCTV should be used sparingly to help solve real crimes, not to encourage this type of tawdry voyeurism.”[47]

The program, which started in October of 2010, was approved by the Information Commissioner’s Office.

Pre-Crime Cameras

A strange new surveillance program in the United Kingdom was implemented in 2009 that is designed to automatically identify suspicious people and prevent crime before it occurs. The program is called ISIS (Integrated Sensor Information System), which interestingly spells out *Isis*, the Egyptian goddess and mother of the sun god Horus. The London *Telegraph* explained, “When a crime looks like it is going to occur, the system will verbally warn the perpetrator and then if necessary alert the nearest police officer.”[48]

The ISIS system uses what is called “computer vision technology” that analyzes security camera feeds to look for what authorities consider to be behavior that is anti-social or suspicious. The criteria for this “suspicious” behavior is said to be people wearing hooded sweatshirts, people who make sudden movements, and even “verbal aggression” that is detected by microphones placed in public places and on public transportation.

X-Ray Cameras

As if being watched, listened to, and having your movements monitored by artificially intelligent systems designed to supposedly determine whether you are acting hostile or not aren't Orwellian enough, leaked documents in London show that the government was looking into installing x-ray systems on lamp posts on public streets in order to see if people were concealing any weapons or explosives under their clothes.[49] There are several types of devices that can accomplish this task, such as millimeter wave machines or terahertz radiation which penetrates clothing.

In 2007 a train station in London conducted a month long test using millimeter wave scanners to look at people as they boarded trains to determine if they were concealing any weapons. A similar device was used at several other Underground (subway) stations as well. These are similar devices to the so-called naked body scanners employed at airports around the world, but they scan the entire crowd and without their knowledge.

"The real question is not whether the technology can see something under the clothing. It's how you respond to it when the technology says there's something unusual," said security expert Bob Ayers. "Do you have police strolling down each street, ready to ask people what they have under their jacket?" he wondered.[50] There is also a concern for the health risks from repeated exposure to such systems.

You may think that these "x-ray" cameras are the result of advanced twenty-first century technology, but you are wrong. A retired colonel from Taiwan's National Defense Department named Alan Yu was exposing this technology back in 1997. An article he wrote titled *Millimeter Waves and Mind Control* explained, "If you want to see the future of surveillance, take

a trip into the world of millimetre waves and the video cameras that are sensitive to them."[51]

He also said that in that same year, 1997, a company called Millitech expected to have millimetre-wave cameras available for around $10,000 and portable versions for $80,000. He even said that similar devices are able to see inside the human body and can detect anything that has been inserted in any orifice, such as the anal cavity, which is a common method for smuggling drugs and weapons into prisons.

Devices called T-ray scanners, or Terahertz scanners are used by the Secret Service to scan crowds when the president is making a public appearance to spot anyone who would be carrying a gun or other weapon concealed under their clothes.[52]

Some may argue that these kinds of devices will help to make people safer if they are installed on public streets, since there may be people who are carrying concealed weapons, but are we going to allow police officers to approach and detain and search anyone whenever the systems detects what it considers to be a weapon? What if a person has a concealed carry permit and is legally allowed to wear a concealed hand gun? Are they going to be tackled to the ground and beaten and tazed because the system shows they are walking down the street with a gun under their jacket even though they are allowed to?

Are people who carry a Swiss Army Knife for its convenience and functionality going to be surrounded by police and searched every time an x-ray camera sees they have a pocket knife? In most states in America, a person is legally allowed to carry a knife as long as the blade is shorter than three inches; so what is going to happen to these ordinary law abiding citizens when they are spotted carrying a perfectly legal knife in their pocket? Are they going to be treated as criminals or terrorists? Perhaps the laws will be changed to make it illegal for people to carry an innocent pocket knife in public.

Body Scanners at Airports

After the failed Christmas Day “underwear bomber” tried to blow up a plane as it approached Detroit, Michigan on Christmas Day of 2009, Homeland Security officials immediately began clamoring for newer high-tech security measures to be implemented at airports around the country. The device touted as being able to prevent future attacks of this nature was the so-called naked body scanner that allows TSA workers to see a virtual naked image of passengers’ bodies as they are being scanned by the device.

When sample photos were released showing just how detailed the images were that these machines take, many people were uneasy about what the machines revealed. In May 2010, a TSA worker in Miami, Florida was arrested for aggravated battery after he allegedly attacked one of his coworkers who was making fun of him for having a small penis after he passed through the new body scanner.[53]

Adding to the controversy over the use of these revealing scanners, the TSA had claimed that the machines could not store the naked images of people, but the Electronic Privacy Information Center uncovered documents showing that the machines do in fact have image storing capabilities, and can even send images.

EPIC obtained the technical specifications and vendor contracts through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit, which directly contradicts the TSA’s claim that the machines couldn’t store the images.

In the beginning of 2010, there were about 40 machines in use at 19 different airports, and the TSA planned to install 150 more by the end of the year, and another 300 in 2011. As Thanksgiving weekend of 2010 approached, news stories started circulating about the busy travel patterns

and the added security measures of the new naked body scanners now that they were installed and fully operational in airports across the country. People also began talking about how they didn't want to be subjected to the radiation believed to be given off by the scanners, not to mention the humiliation of the naked body scan, or the groping pat downs if one dared to "opt out" of the scan.

At this point in time, not every traveler had to go through the scan—only supposedly people who were chosen at random. Several attractive female celebrities made headlines for speaking about their experiences at the airports getting scanned by the new naked body scanners (called *rape scanners* by some detractors), and the publicity was not good. Former *Baywatch* babe Donna D'Errico felt that she was selected for the scan because she was hot and didn't think she was chosen at random.

She told *AOL News*, "It is my personal belief that they pulled me aside because they thought I was attractive…My boyfriend sailed through with no problems, which is rather ironic in that he fits the stereotypical 'look' of a terrorist when his beard has grown a bit. After the search, I noticed that the male agent who had pulled me out of line was smiling and whispering with two other agents and glancing at me. I was outraged."[54]

"This could, and I'm sure does, happen to other women. It isn't right to hide behind the veil of security and safety in order to take advantage of women, or even men for that matter, so that you can see them naked. It's a misuse of power and authority, and as much a personal violation as a Peeping Tom. The difference is that Peeping Toms can have charges pressed against them," D'Errico concluded.[55] The airport denied any inappropriate behavior from the TSA agents on the scene.

Reality TV star Khloé Kardashian, the younger sister of Kim Kardashian, appeared on *Lopez Tonight* during this same holiday season and happened to mention her experience with airport security as well, saying, "They basically are just raping you in public. I got asked the other day, do

you want to go for a screening or get patted down. I don’t want that X-Ray to see everything, honey.”[56]

She continued to say “[T]he people are so aggressive, It’s like, ‘Chill out, you didn’t find anything on me yet, calm down…’ They say, ‘OK, I’m going to be patting you down and I’m going to be touching the crease of your ass.”[57] Khloé was visibly upset.

Videos then started getting posted on YouTube showing TSA agents feeling up men, women, and children as a “precaution” before letting them pass through airport security. Some people protested and stripped down into Speedos or bikinis right before going through the security checkpoint to highlight how invasive and ridiculous they were. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano had been labeled *Big Sis*, as in *Big Sister*, a play on the Orwellian *Big Brother*, as a result of all the negative publicity her invasive programs were getting.

License Plate Readers

At some point in the New World Order, all vehicles will most likely be required to have a GPS tracking system installed on them in order to be authorized to drive on the roads so authorities can determine exactly where a specific vehicle is located at any given time. Until this occurs, there are other ways that Big Brother is watching your car. Since facial recognition systems can detect a specific person's face out of a crowd of tens of thousands in a split second, it should be no surprise that systems can also read the license plates on vehicles from any number of the traffic cameras or red light cameras positioned around cities.

More and more cameras are being equipped with Optical Character Recognition systems (OCR) that can read the hundreds of license plates that go whizzing by the cameras every minute. A new technology called LPR uses what is called License Plate Reader or License Plate Recognition that can read practically any license plate from any state, even with the large variations of designs and colors.

Numerous states are currently using LPR systems to spot drivers whose licenses have been suspended or revoked, or to find stolen vehicles. Other ideas for the system involves finding people who have unpaid parking tickets, back taxes, or warrants out for their arrest. Authorities also plan to have the system keep a log on which cars pass through specific cameras and at what time. This stored information can then be used to determine if a suspect of a crime was in the area at the time it was committed.

When license plate reading systems become common place, if a person whose license is suspended for unpaid parking tickets is spotted by an LPR camera, a police officer will be immediately dispatched to pull them over

and arrest them. That is, unless the government implements mandatory GPS black boxes on automobiles which would then disable a person’s vehicle until the tickets were paid. These systems are already used by car dealers if people miss several payments.[58]

Police Wear Head Mounted Cameras

At the end of 2009, a police department in San Jose, California, began equipping officers with head-mounted video cameras to record their interactions with the public.[59] The officers, in this case, control when the cameras are on or off, and are supposed to turn them on every time they talk with anyone.

The devices were made by Taser International, the company that makes the infamous Taser guns often abused by police. The company paid for the first 18 units as an attempt to get the department to expand their use to all 1400 officers. The devices cost approximately $1700 each and have a $100 monthly fee per officer, which would bring the cost to $4 million dollars if the San Jose police department would implement them for all their officers.

In February 2010, nine officers in San Diego's police force began using Taser's cameras as part of another field test. "It gives real-time information on exactly what occurred at the scene. Anything that helps put the case into perspective," said San Diego Assistant Police Chief Bob Kanaski. "No more 'he said, she said.' Now it's in color."[60]

It must be noted that during numerous instances of police misconduct, civilians happen to be videotaping with a camcorder or their cell phone, and officers often order them to stop filming or even confiscate or smash their cameras to prevent any evidence from getting out and showing the officer's crimes.

Of course, the video footage and audio taken by the head mounted cameras will often only be used to support the police officer's claims of what a suspect has done or said, and it shouldn't be surprising if hard drives

are sometimes “damaged” and can’t have their contents retrieved when the footage would show severe officer misconduct.

In London in 2005, police shot and killed Jean Charles de Menezes who they suspected was carrying a bomb on the subway, but he was completely innocent. This was immediately following the 2005 transit bombings where three different trains and one bus were blown up, killing 52 people and injuring 700. Officers initially said that Menezes was running from police and struggled with them when they approached, and claimed that’s why they killed him. Several video cameras that were in clear view of the incident were said to mysteriously have their hard drives missing, although inside sources with the security company that maintained the cameras said they were in full working order.[61]

While the police officers often record interactions with suspects, there has been a disturbing trend in police arresting citizens and charging them with felony illegal wiretapping for simply doing the same thing.[62]

If suspects or bystanders videotape interactions with police, then some police are now claiming these people are recording the interaction without two party consent—meaning the police officers don’t agree to the recording—thus they claim the citizens are committing a felony illegal wire tap.[63] In most states in order for private conversations to be recorded legally, both parties must consent or it is considered an illegal wire tap. This law was designed to prevent phone conversations from being secretly recorded, and was not meant to apply to the public videotaping of an event (which happens to capture the audio too), but we have seen numerous instances where police officers charge people under this statute even though it does not apply to conversations where there is not a “reasonable expectation of privacy,” such as on a public street. This has not stopped police officers around the country from unfairly charging people with “illegal wire tapping” for simply videotaping a public interaction where there was no reasonable expectation of privacy.

Police departments, and many courts, have decided that it is OK for police to record us, but we cannot record them. This hypocritical double standard only serves to protect the Big Brother system, and restricts the rights and freedoms of honest and ordinary people. The police simply do not want people to videotape them because those videos will sometimes capture clear evidence of officer misconduct that they will not be able to deny.

Other Uses for Cameras

One use of video cameras that most of the public is unaware of is in the retail sales industry, which sometimes uses a surveillance system to photograph each costumer who comes into a store or walks onto a sales lot—and then the salesmen have to log certain information about that person—all without the customer knowing about it.[64] This system is used more to monitor the salespeople than it is to monitor the customers. The system keeps track of how many people step foot into a store, and a formula is used to determine how well the sales force is doing by cross-referencing the number of sales and the dollar amount of the invoices, with the number of people who step foot in the door.

This system is used mainly in low-traffic, high-end stores that sell items like furniture or jewelry that only get a hand full of customers who walk thought their doors each day. If the system shows that one particular salesperson has ten people walk through the door on average, and makes five sales, but another salesperson who gets ten people walking in only makes two sales, then management is going to see that his closing ratio isn't very good and will likely fire him. When commission salesmen have a bad day or a bad month they'll often say, "I didn't have any customers walk through the door," but this system can prove otherwise. Salesmen that this author has personally spoken with who have had to use this system at work have told me that they often have to write a brief description of what merchandise the customer was looking at, and it is then saved in a file along with that person's photograph which was taken when they tripped the sensor as they walked in the door.

If, for example, the person who walks through the door is somebody who is lost and asks for directions, then the salesman must log that entry, which is linked to that person's picture. This system also keeps track of how long each person is in the store. If a person comes in for one minute asking

for directions, the system will show this and the boss won’t think that their salesman couldn’t close a sale. This system is also used to figure out a salesperson’s average sale in dollars per walk-in.

Another Orwellian system that is used in the world of sales is a hidden camera and microphone worn by secret shoppers who companies hire to pretend to be customers who go into stores and videotape how the salesperson does with his or her presentation and closing attempts. I have personally spoken to salesmen who have been subjected to this kind of secret shopper. Since legal issues may arise from people being secretly videotaped along with an audio recording, many companies will coerce their employees into signing legal wavers that say they consent to the secret video shopper procedure which then may occur at any time.

While secret shoppers are not new and are used by a variety of industries, they were usually just people that went in and asked specific questions of salespeople and immediately upon leaving would write up a brief report on the person and answer several questions about their attitude toward the pretend customer, their product knowledge, and perhaps their personal appearance, such as what they were wearing and how clean they were. But with video cameras becoming incredibly small, these secret shopper services now have the ability to let management or a business owner view a video of the entire process himself to see and hear how the salespeople perform.

Global Positioning Systems

In the 1990s, people began hearing about GPS (Global Positioning Systems) and in the 21st century we saw the technology rapidly expand into the mainstream and become part of commonly used items such as GPS systems for navigation in vehicles, in cell phones, and even on shipments of merchandise to track their exact location as they are en route.

While many people were surprised to learn that OJ Simpson’s cell phone was triangulated to discover his location as he drove in his white Bronco down the Los Angeles freeway in 1994, evading police when he was wanted for murder, today such capabilities are expected and seen as commonplace. While most of us rely on our GPS navigation systems in vehicles to guide us to our destinations and can’t imagine life without them, GPS has a dark side that is exploited by Big Brother and is being used in ways that can only be described as Orwellian.

Many businesses are putting GPS systems on company vehicles, something that doesn’t sit well with many of the vehicles’ drivers. Are they taking too long on their lunch breaks? Did the car travel back to the employee’s house before 5 o’clock? Has the vehicle traveled over 75 miles per hour? All of this and more is available to supervisors and owners who have installed GPS systems on their company’s vehicles.

The wrestling superstar Hulk Hogan had a reality show called *Hogan Knows Best* that aired on VH1 from 2005 to 2007 and gave an inside look at his family and their activities. His daughter Brook was seventeen when the show first aired, and in one episode Hulk let her go on a date with some guy, but before she did, he installed a GPS tracker on her car (without her knowledge) and during the episode it showed him watching where the car was driving, making sure that she was going where she said she was. Such

devices are now so small that they can be placed on people, and not just in the trunk of a car.

Placing small GPS devices on children is now becoming common, as well as friends and family locator applications for cell phones that show the exact location of your friends and family on a map by using the built in GPS transmitters in all cell phones. Some people also envision future GPS systems so small that they can be implanted inside a person’s body. We may soon live in a world where it is seen as completely normal for practically anyone to see exactly where you are, anywhere in the world, at every moment of the day.

Digital Angel

The first commercially available personal GPS tracker was called the Digital Angel, and was designed by Applied Digital, the creator of the VeriChip implantable RFID chip. The Digital Angel was designed to be worn by a person like a wrist watch and was marketed for children and the elderly. Upon its release in 2000, Richard J. Sullivan, chairman of Applied Digital, boasted that his device could tap a market worth more than $70 billion dollars.[65]

The chief scientist behind the device's creation, Dr. Peter Zhou, told *World Net Daily* he believed the company's future products would be implanted into people and will be "a connection from yourself to the electronic world. It will be your guardian, protector. It will bring good things to you," and that, "We will be a hybrid of electronic intelligence and our own soul."[66]

Although the Digital Angel (called the digital beast by detractors) came out in the year 2000, it wasn't until a decade later that personal locating devices would become very well known or used.

Family Locator Apps

Most new cell phones have what they call *family locator apps* that use a cell phone's built in GPS to show exactly where other members of your family are geographically located—at all times. Verizon's website explains, "From your PC or phone, enjoy the comfort of locating family members anytime, anywhere." The app is more than just a real-time GPS locator, it allows you to receive "arrival & departure updates" for each family member and lets you schedule location updates for each family member that will alert you as to their location at any specific time you set. For example, if you wanted to know where your kids were every night at 10pm, it will alert you in case you've lost track of time and forgot to check.

An app for Sprint phones allows users to review the past locations of their children (or husbands, wives, girlfriends, or boyfriends) for the last seven days and can also be set to send you automatic notifications of a child's location at specific times on specific days. The website boasts, "You don't need to install anything on the phones you wish to locate. Sprint Family Locator uses the GPS technology already built-in to every Sprint phone, so it is compatible with every Sprint phone." The cost of the Sprint Family Locator is $5 dollars per month which includes tracking on up to four different phones.

‘Little Buddy’ Tracking Device for Children

In October 2009, a rather bulky tracking device was put on the market called the Little Buddy, which was advertised as a GPS system that parents can place in their child’s backpack or lunch box so their location can be monitored on the parent’s cell phone or computer. This device (and others like it) are designed for children who are too young to have cell phones which can be tracked by family locator apps.

The software for the Little Buddy allows parents to set up geographic boundaries that activate and deactivate at specific times, and if the device travels outside of those boundaries, then the parent will receive a text message or an e-mail alerting them of this. For example, a boundary around the school could be set up between 8am and 3pm and if the device (which is located in the student’s back pack) leaves the school grounds before 3pm then the parent would be alerted.

The first version of the Little Buddy was rather large and bulky, and could not be placed in a child’s backpack without them noticing, but as the years progress, similar devices will be extremely small and could be stashed inside a student’s backpack, or even on their clothes without them even knowing.

One newscaster on the Fox News Channel joked about placing the device in her boyfriend’s car so she could keep tabs on exactly where he went and when. Most people would obviously be unaware such a device was placed in their vehicle.

A commercial for the Little Buddy tracking device said, “Get peace of mind. Build trust. And be confident that your child is OK when you can’t be with them.” Their claim of “building trust” is obviously doublethink, since

using such a thing is a clear sign of an overbearing, controlling, or paranoid parent. The device costs less than one hundred dollars.[67]

Amber Alert GPS

Another personal GPS locator on the market that is extremely more advanced than the Little Buddy GPS tracker is called the Amber Alert GPS. It’s fairly small in size, measuring 1.77” x 1.68” x .78” and is advertised as, “The world’s smallest, most powerful GPS tracking device.” It is marketed to parents who want to keep track of their children and can be put in their pocket or clipped onto their belt. The parents can then keep an eye on the device’s location on their cell phone or computer, but this device is so much more than a GPS locator.

It costs $129.99 and the parents must pay a monthly fee ranging from ten dollars a month to forty dollars a month depending on what features they want. Some of these features include a “speed alert” that will notify parents when the GPS device exceeds a certain speed so a parent can tell if their child has gotten into a vehicle. The website even brags, “This feature is great for speeding teenagers!”[68] Do you want to know if your teenager ever drives faster than 80 miles per hour? You can easily set the device to alert you of this. You could, of course, then see exactly what street they’re on.

It also has a temperature alert that will notify parents when the temperate surpasses or drops below the thresholds they designate. A feature they call “Breadcrumbing” allows a person to have the unit send them text messages at specific times of the day to notify them where the unit is located. You can also be notified when the device enters or leaves a specific location. The website reads, “Do you want to be notified when your child arrives at school, soccer practice, or the mall? You can with our latest feature: Destination Alert. Destination Alert allows the parent to define an area on a map, and receive notification by text and/or e-mail when the child arrives. It’s easy and it gives you one more tool to keep your child safe!”

The device even has a “Voice Monitoring” feature that allows the parent to activate a microphone in the unit so they can listen in on what their child is doing. The website brags, “Even during use the child never knows that you are listening in.”

The Amber Alert GPS system is named after the AMBER alert child abduction notification system that alerts local TV and radio stations if a child is believed to have been abducted. The AMBER alert system was named after a 9-year old child named Amber Hagerman who was abducted and murdered in Arlington, Texas in 1996.

Tracking the President, White House Staff, and Family Members

On CBS's *60 Minutes* in March 2010, Rahm Emanuel (President Obama's chief of staff) showed Katie Couric a security system he had in his White House office that tracked major White House players using a GPS system that showed their current location in real-time. The system keeps tabs on the President, Vice President, First Lady, family members, and others he said. The segment was brief, but it is clear that by "family members," this means Barack Obama's two kids have to wear GPS tracking bracelets probably twenty-four hours a day.

GPS Trackers at Amusement Parks

A company called SAMSys Technologies created a GPS tracking system that became available at multiple amusement parks as a way for parents to keep track of their kids. They call their device the SafeTzone System which is a GPS locator similar to a large wrist watch that can be used to keep track of the children and also enables them to buy things at the park like food and souvenirs, because it acts like an RFID debit card.

SafeTZone's website called it a "cashless spending module" and said it "eliminates the need for cash anywhere in the venue by turning each Locator into an electronic wallet. The elimination of cash will provide patrons with the freedom to utilize the venue services and make purchases at restaurants, games, attractions, and shops throughout the venue."

A press release sent out by Paramount's Great America theme park in 2004 brags that one of their parks in Santa Clara, California, began issuing the SafeTZone GPS trackers to guests so they could locate each other. The device is called the Star Watch which is a waterproof GPS system that is strapped onto people's wrists. Guests can then go to any number of "Location Stations" which show the location of others in their group. The Star Watch also allows people to send messages to other members in their group, and locate rides and restaurants in the park. The press release also noted that people would, "Receive information about Paramount's Great America's special promotions, show times and park events."

Rod Rankin, Paramount's Great America's senior vice president and general manager is quoted in the press release saying, "It's a convenient and affordable guest amenity that provides visitors the opportunity to track everyone in their group or simply find the easiest route to a favorite ride or restaurant."[69]

Paramount's Great America is owned and operated by Paramount Parks, a division of Viacom Inc, the entertainment giant that owns CBS, MTV, Nickelodeon, VH1, BET, Paramount Pictures, UPN, Spike TV, TV Land, CMT, Comedy Central, Showtime, Blockbuster, Simon & Schuster, and other media companies.

In 2004, Legoland in Denmark implemented RFID tracking of guests with devices called the "Kidspotter" which were advertised as a way to prevent children from getting lost. Leo Steiner, vice president for on-demand sales at IBM, who works with RFID, said, "Legoland will now know exactly where each customer is, how long they are spending in each area and which products are proving to be most popular."[70] Steiner sees the device as a market research tool more than a safety device.

Debbie Allen, a mother of two, told Silicon.com, "When you go to these theme parks, you tend to spend so much time trying to keep your children by your side that they get resentful and a little frustrated. If I were given the chance to feel a little more relaxed, I would jump at the opportunity; if they then used the information they had for marketing, then I really don't see the harm."[71]

Mobile Alarm for the Threatened

There have even been proposals for people to be forced to wear GPS monitors if they are the subject of harassment or if their life could be threatened by a dangerous ex-lover or spouse. Fifteen different districts in Holland have implemented this strategy and force people to carry such devices which can notify police with the push of a button as to the person’s location so police can be dispatched to investigate.[72]

Those people are not criminals, they are the victims, and they are forced to wear GPS monitors similar to ankle bracelets worn by people on parole or house arrest.

Implantable GPS System

A patent application submitted in 2003 from a California company called Persephone, Inc., (Number 20040174258) describes their invention as a GPS device that is forcefully implanted into people and can’t be removed. The title of their application is *Method and apparatus for locating and tracking persons*, which explains, “Removal of the implanted device by a runaway juvenile would likely be impossible. Even if possible, such removal would likely place the runaway at significant medical risk, which is counter to the runaway’s goal of a safe escape and survival from parents or guardians.”[73]

The patent application actually says that the tracking device could be implanted up a person’s butt, in their rectum. The application describes the location of the device as being “Submuscular: for example, deep to a large muscle. Such a location is currently used for implantation of commercially available artificial urethral and anal sphincter reservoirs, which are positioned deep to the rectus abdominus muscles, within the pre-peritoneal Space of Retzius.”

It gets worse. The patent application goes on to read, “Because the device is implanted in the person, it can also provide a shock, vibration, or other warning…[that] may be progressive, such that a person is subjected to a shock of increasing magnitude as he leaves a zone of confinement or enters a forbidden zone.”

“The device may…include a microphone or similar device for monitoring acoustic information, thereby permitting the person to talk to a remote location.”

If this isn’t Orwellian enough, let me point out that the name of the company that filed this patent is called Persephone Inc, a company obviously named after Persephone, the Greek goddess that governs the underworld, or Hades (Hell).

A Mileage Tax

As cars have become more fuel efficient and hybrid and fully electronic cars have become quite popular, the number of gallons of gas that people use up in a given week has dramatically dropped, and so has the tax dollars the government rakes in from gasoline taxes. In order to compensate for this loss, some lawmakers are pushing for a new mileage tax that will tax cars based on the number of miles they drive.

The Governor of Oregon, Ted Kulongoski, was one of the first government officials to recommend a mileage tax to replace the traditional gas tax because of the loss of revenues due to more fuel efficient vehicles.[74] In 2009, he included his plans for this new tax in a transportation bill.

The governor's website outlined his reasons, saying, "As Oregonians drive less and demand more fuel-efficient vehicles, it is increasingly important that the state find a new way, other than the gas tax, to finance our transportation system."

He planned for a task force to "partner with auto manufacturers to refine technology that would enable Oregonians to pay for the transportation system based on how many miles they drive." This method would involve equipping all vehicles with GPS units that would monitor how many miles a person drove and tax them accordingly.

Oregon is certainly not the only state to consider such a proposal. The Texas Transportation Institute held a meeting in April 2009 to discuss "mileage-based user fees" and other ways to replace diminishing revenues from the gas tax. "We need to think differently about how we fund transportation," said the Texas Transportation Commission Chairwoman Deirdre Delisi.[75]

Some proposals for how the tax would be collected include a mileage check when the car has its registration renewed each year, or installing GPS systems on vehicles that would be programmed to tax people differently according to what road they were on, or if they traveled out of their state. Certain high-traffic roads, for example, would tax drivers at a higher rate, and GPS systems could enable the government to vary the tax rate depending on what county or city the vehicle was traveling in.

Rental Car Company Fines Customers for Speeding

While it may not be that surprising to people that the government would install a Big Brother system to automatically fine drivers who were going over the speed limit, it was surprising to learn that in 2001 a rental car agency was fining their own customers for speeding in their rental cars. This came to light after a man named James Turner was fined $450 by the Acme-Rent-A-Car agency after the AirIQ GPS system installed on their rental cars calculated that he was speeding in their car.[76] The fine was charged directly to his credit card because the company had included language in the rental agreement explaining that the customer would consent to this, but of course, who reads the fine print on these agreements.

James Turner filed a lawsuit against the company in small claims court and also filed a complaint with the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection.

Students Forced to Wear GPS Tracking Devices

Twenty-two students at a high school in Texas were ordered by a judge in January 2010 to carry GPS tracking devices on them in order to prevent truancy. “Bryan High students who skip school will soon be tracked 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” reported KBTX, a local TV station.[77] The Orwellian program is called the Attendance Improvement Management Program or AIM, and according to reports it is being used in schools, not only in Texas, but around the country.

Students who skip class are forced to appear at truancy court and then some are forced by the judge to carry the tracking devices, similar to ankle bracelets that people on parole or house arrest must wear. “Students on the program are tracked with a hand-held GPS device between the time they leave for school in the morning and the time they check in for curfew at night,” reported the local news station.[78]

An official in Holland for the People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) proposed that “troublesome youth” be forced to wear GPS bracelets as well.

Tracking Cell Phone Locations

The Obama administration has argued that tracking the location of people's cell phones without a warrant is legal and should be permitted because, they say, Americans don't have a reasonable expectation of privacy concerning the whereabouts of their cell phone. U.S. Department of Justice lawyers say that "a customer's Fourth Amendment rights are not violated when the phone company reveals to the government its own records."[79]

In *Enemy of the State* (1998) Will Smith's character was tracked by a rogue group of government officials using all kinds of methods that seemed like science fiction at the time, but are actually possible. In the film, Gene Hackman made a statement that the National Security Agency has "been in bed with the entire telecommunications industry since the '40s," and he was right.

Not only can authorities track the real-time location of any cell phone, even when it's turned off, but they can go back and look at the records to show the location of any particular phone at anytime a phone call was made. A 2008 court order to T-Mobile in a criminal investigation says, "T-Mobile shall disclose at such intervals and times as directed by (the Department of Homeland Security), latitude and longitude data that establishes the approximate positions of the Subject Wireless Telephone, by unobtrusively initiating a signal on its network that will enable it to determine the locations of the Subject Wireless Telephone."

Kevin Bankston, an attorney for the Electronic Frontier Foundation said, "This is a critical question for privacy in the 21st century. If the courts do side with the government, that means that everywhere we go, in the real

world and online, will be an open book to the government unprotected by the Fourth Amendment."[80]

Verizon Wireless keeps records of cell phone locations for 12 months according to Verizon's Vice President Drew Arena. They keep detailed phone records, excluding phone locations, for seven years.

The ACLU, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), the Center for Democracy and Technology, and other privacy advocates argue that Americans do not surrender their Fourth Amendment right when they turn on their cell phones.

Numerous attorneys have said that if such a practice is deemed illegal by a court, that the case would definitely be appealed and government lawyers will fight until the practice becomes fully legal anyway.

The GPS Coordinates to Your Front Door

The census is done every ten years in America to determine how many people are living in the country and in what communities so that the appropriate number of funds and resources can be allocated to those areas. People have become familiar with the questionnaire mailed to them every ten years, asking who lives in your residence, what race they are, and several other personal questions, but as the 2010 census approached, stories began circulating that census workers were traveling door-to-door and linking the front door of each address with its GPS coordinates. Such reports turned out to be accurate.

In 2009, 140,000 people were hired as part of a $700 million dollar program to collect the GPS coordinates of every front door in America. People were obviously uncomfortable with this, especially since President Obama put his Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel, in charge of overseeing the census which is used to draw congressional districts. There appeared no legitimate or logical reason for such an enormous task. Why would the government need the exact GPS coordinates of every single front door in America? And why would they spend hundreds of millions of dollars doing this?

Blogger Douglas Gibbs of the *American Daily Review* wrote, “Imagine, if you will, that there are a number of people in a neighborhood that could not find the addresses they are tasked with finding. They are not locals, maybe are unable to read a map, or perhaps do not have the time to pull out a map, and they need to find you with specific GPS coordinates. Their devices would lead them to your front door with these coordinates. Imagine a crisis is afoot, and martial law is put into place. U.S. troops need to round up particular folks.”[81]

He concluded, “Let’s take this a step further. After all, with Barack Obama desiring to decrease the number of folks in the military, and with forces committed worldwide, we may not have sufficient military forces at home to deal with a rising national emergency. If the government decided to rely on foreign troops, perhaps United Nations personnel, most of which may not understand the street signs, much less know the lay of the land, they could use GPS devices to direct them to your front door.”[82]

J.B. Williams of the *Canada Free Press*, wrote, “I can’t resist the urge to question the authority and purpose behind such a BIG BROTHER initiative, when the official census itself is not due to be taken until 2010… No imagination is required to think up a whole laundry list of evil that could be done with a nationwide GPS grid of coordinate’s markers painted on every private home across the country. But I was having trouble thinking up one good reason for it, even one legitimate use that would justify what must be a very expensive undertaking.”[83]

Williams continued, “Why does the Obama administration need or want the latitude and longitude coordinates for every home in America? Why the rush to GPS paint every home in the next 90 days? Why must the marker be within 40 feet of every front door? For what possible purpose does the Fed need GPS coordinates for every home, and under what authority do they have the right? Census workers, whom I asked, had the same holy-crap look on their faces that I had by then.”[84]

Some bloggers even pondered whether one day the GPS coordinates could be used by Unmanned Arial Vehicles to spy on homeowners, or even blow them up with missiles if they were deemed subversive or a threat to the New World Order. The Census Bureau claimed that the GPS coordinates were needed to “ensure that all residents are counted in the right location.”[85]

Remotely Disabling Automobiles

While it may seem like something out of a James Bond film, some car dealerships have been installing a device on new vehicles that allow them to remotely deactivate cars which will then prevent them from starting if people have missed their payments.

One such device was created by an Ohio company called Pay Technologies and is marketed to auto dealers as a way to disable vehicles of people who have missed their car payments. The device can also cause the car horn to honk repeatedly, and has a GPS tracker built in as well, so the location of a vehicle can be known at all times, in case they want to send a repo man to repossess the vehicle. Disabling a person's vehicle could leave a motorist stranded in a dangerous situation, or in the middle of nowhere; hazards that are apparently overlooked by the device's manufacturer.

In February of 2010, more than 100 vehicles in Austin, Texas were disabled and some had their horns honking repeatedly after a disgruntled employee of a dealership disabled the vehicles using the system in order to get revenge on an auto dealer for firing him.[86]

"We initially dismissed it as mechanical failure," said Texas Auto Center manager Martin Garcia. "We started having a rash of up to a hundred customers at one time complaining. Some customers complained of the horns going off in the middle of the night. The only option they had was to remove the battery."[87]

After complaints started flooding in from the vehicles' owners, the Texas Auto Center reset the Webtech Plus passwords for all of their employees and then gave police login entries and they traced an IP address to the suspect's Internet service provider. Police say he used a password

from a fellow employee, and that his had been disabled as soon as he was fired. Austin police filed computer intrusion charges against the man.

Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID)

RFID, as many people know, stands for Radio Frequency Identification Device, and refers to a technology that encodes a unique ID number onto a tiny computer chip that can then be activated from a distance using an RFID reader which then identifies the number on the chip. It’s sort of like an electronic serial number that is encoded in the RFID tag, which doesn’t require any batteries, and can be extremely small and inexpensive to produce.

As with most technology, there certainly are advantages to RFIDs, such as increasing efficiency in business by minimizing errors along a supply chain. One interesting use of RFID that we may see in the future comes from Microsoft’s vision of the “Home of the Future” where microwave ovens detect RFIDs in food’s packaging and are automatically programmed to the correct power and time settings to cook the food properly. This home of the future would also have a refrigerator that keeps track of its contents, and when an item is not replaced in the fridge, it would automatically add it to your shopping list to order in a replacement.

Surely when RFID tags replace the standard UPC barcode, we will not have to wait in the checkout line at the grocery store for fifteen minutes and unload our groceries onto the conveyor belt, because we can just walk through a scanner with our groceries still in the cart, and they will all be scanned instantly from the RFID UPCs on each item. But not all uses for RFIDs will be so helpful to humanity.

There have been several applications filed for patents that outline exactly what RFID tags are capable of, and it is extremely unsettling. Many devices designed and created will be promoted publicly for certain

applications or benefits, but if you read the language written in their patent applications, their real Big Brother use and capabilities are discovered.

The implications of RFID tags are truly Orwellian, and their use far exceeds simply replacing UPCs on merchandise we buy at the store to make the checkout procedure faster. RFID tags operate as little tracking devices similar to, but not as powerful as, GPS systems, and have not only been forced on students at school, but have been implanted in people's hands and used for identifying them at businesses and government agencies, allowing them to enter secure areas, and even pay for drinks at fancy bars.

One patent application filed by IBM admits, "[T]he widespread use of RFID tags on merchandise such as clothing would make it possible for the locations of people, animals, and objects to be tracked on a global scale—a privacy invasion of Orwellian proportions."[88]

Documents from a company called NCR reveal they came up with the idea that RFID tags could be used for what they call "dynamic pricing" where, "RFID can be used in conjunction with electronic shelf labels to automate pricing based on the number of items on the shelf…For example…when certain popular items were in short supply (e.g., at Christmas time), the price can be automatically raised."[89]

A company called Accenture is the world's largest technology consultant firm with revenues over 20 billion dollars a year and large contracts with governments, and in one of their brochures they proposed that RFID tags could be used by the government to help monitor families who had caseworkers assigned to them. The brochure reads, "[G]overnment agencies will also be looking for new ways to ensure the well-being of the people they serve. Activity-monitoring tools could give [government] caseworkers a powerful complement to home visits, while enabling them to be more vigilant about their clients' current state and potential needs."[90]

Author and consumer privacy advocate, Katherine Albrecht, writes extensively about the dangers of RFID in her 2006 book *Spychips: How*

Major Corporations and Government Plan to Track Your Every Purchase and Watch Your Every Move, where she explains, “theoretically, the whereabouts of everything and everyone will be known at all times and accessible to anyone with access to the databases, authorized or otherwise. Imagine the power of being able to log onto a Google-like Internet search engine and find out all the items associated with a particular person, organization, or government entity. Then, imagine being able to find out where all those items are in real time, where they have been, and their historical relationship with other items, people, and events.”[91]

In 2004, Albrecht received an e-mail from an RFID company asking her details about her biographical information, saying they were interested for “research purposes.” Albrecht explains that she responded inquiring what kind of research they were conducting, and wondered why a company promoting RFID would be interested in what she, a major opponent, had to say about them. She then received another e-mail that wasn’t meant for her eyes, because the person accidentally clicked the “reply to all” button.

In the e-mail, which was meant only to be seen by people other than Albrecht, the person wrote, “I don’t know what to tell this woman! ‘Well, actually we’re trying to see if you have a juicy past that we could use against you.’”[92] The company was obviously upset that Albrecht was raising awareness about RFID issues and they were looking to smear her and probably label her a “conspiracy theorist.”

Students Forced to Wear RFID Tags

The first reports of schools forcing their students to wear RFID tags came from Japan, but not long after this, in 2005 the Brittan Elementary school in Sutter County, California implemented a system which forced students to wear ID badges embedded with RFID tracking tags. Every time the students entered or left a classroom, a sensor installed at the door way would log this, and would determine whether a student had skipped class. The school soon made headlines around the country and an immediate backlash caused them to abandon the system.

The RFID system was put in place without any parental knowledge, and the reason for it was said that it helped keep the students "safe" and simplified attendance-taking.

One concerned parent asked, "Are we trying to bring them up with respect and trust, or tell them that you can't trust anyone, you are always going to be monitored and someone is always going to be watching you?"[93] The Electronic Frontier Foundation and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) also stood up for the students and denounced the system.

The company behind the technology, InCom, agreed to pay the school royalties from future sales if their product was implemented in other schools.[94]

Soon afterward, State Representative Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) of Texas introduced an amendment that would not allow schools to track students using RFID without parental approval. "I will not allow that to happen in school districts unless parents approve it," she said. "I will not have our children treated like parolees from the Texas prison system."[95]

A preschool in Richmond, California, implemented a system in 2010, where young students now wear jerseys that contain RFID tags which identify them and are used for taking attendance and tracking the whereabouts of the children throughout the school. The program cost $50,000 and was paid for by a federal grant.[96] In the coming years, the use of RFID trackers on students may become a standard fixture, and despite some resistance, the practice is spreading.

VeriChip / Positive ID

The VeriChip is the “world’s first implantable RFID tag,” as the manufacturer so proudly brags as they promote what may be one of the world’s most controversial products. In 2004, the chip’s manufacturer, Applied Digital, received approval from the FDA [Food and Drug Administration] to market the device in America for the purposes they had outlined regarding a personal identification tag that is implanted under the skin.[97] Similar devices had been implanted into pets and livestock in the previous years in order to identify them, but the FDA’s ruling opened the door for implanting humans on a wide scale.

At first, Applied Digital tried to market the VeriChip only as a way for hospitals and emergency workers to access people’s medical records in case they were discovered unconscious, so they could identify the person and view their medical history to learn what may have happened so they would know how to treat the person, but secretly the company was hoping and planning for their device to replace traditional ID and credit cards. Some reports had stated that the company was in talks with MasterCard shortly after the FDA approved the device for human implantation, and many people started seeing what was likely in the works for the implantable device.

In May of 2002, an entire family concerned with terrorism became the “first family ever to be implanted with microchips” as a cleverly packaged publicity stunt promoting the so-called safety benefits of implantable RFIDs.[98] One news report which featured interviews with the family quoted one of them saying, “the VeriChip could be a lifesaver.”

In April 2004, a nightclub in Spain began offering chip implants to their customers which were linked to their credit cards and drivers license

so they could enter the club without their wallet or purse. Other night clubs followed, including Bar Soba in Glasgow, Scotland. Harvard Medical School's chief information officer, Dr. John Halamka, had the chip implanted in himself in December 2004, and the trend continued.

In 2005, 160 security officials in Mexico, including the Mexican Attorney General, had received the chips as a security measure for accessing certain buildings and rooms.[99] In April 2005, the Chief of Police in Bergen County, New Jersey, Jack Schmidig, received the VeriChip, marking the first time in history a U.S. official received the implant.[100]

In 2005, a video surveillance company responsible for installing video cameras on public streets in Cincinnati, Ohio, had several of their employees get implanted with the VeriChip in order to access secure areas.[101] In June 2006, the Governor of Wisconsin, Jim Doyle, signed a bill into law making it illegal for companies to require people to be implanted with the VeriChip or similar RFID device.[102]

A company called Ben's Car Audio posted a promotional video on the Internet showing a prototype of a device they installed on a car that used an RFID implanted in the owner's hand (Benjamin Thompson) to unlock his car door and start the car without needing any keys. Ben went on to admit that the implantable chips were, "a little out of the ordinary, so there probably aren't going to be very many people that want to do that," so his company offers key chains with RFID tags on them for people who don't want one implanted in their hand.[103]

In 2008, SEGA videogame developer Yu Suzuki even said that he may incorporate implantable RFID tags into videogames one day, saying it would be cool, "like the Matrix." It has also been proposed that all immigrants entering the country on Visas be implanted with the chips.[104]

In November 2009, the VeriChip Corporation acquired a credit monitoring and anti-identity theft company named Steel Vault. The merged company is called PositiveID, and this acquisition confirmed what a lot of

people had anticipated for years—in that the VeriChip company would move to enable its implantable RFID technology to be used as an electronic form of ID and purchasing method—not just a way to transmit medical records as they had been previously claiming.

PositiveID CEO Scott Silverman said, “PositiveID will be the first company of its kind to combine a successful identity security business with one of the world’s first personal health records through our Health Link business. PositiveID will address some of the most important issues affecting our society today with our identification tools and technologies for consumers and businesses.”[105]

Religious Implications

Most people have heard of the mark of the beast, which is what Christians believe will be some kind of device forced onto society by a world dictator called the Antichrist who claims to be God and the Messiah. It is often thought of as some kind of an electronic currency that may take the form of an implantable RFID microchip or tattoo on the hand which will replace cash, checks, and debit cards, and can then track and trace every purchase every person makes anywhere in the world. The last book in the Bible, titled the *Book of Revelation*, which was written approximately around 68 AD to 95 AD, makes a chilling reference to such a device. The Bible reads, "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."[106]

While *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True* is not a religious book, it certainly can't be overlooked that RFID or similar technology has religious implications for a large percentage of Christians who see the development of such devices as Bible prophecy unfolding. Even for those who do not believe in the religious implications of this technology, it is obvious that many are still concerned with RFID tags replacing paper currency and debit or credit cards as the primary method of economic transactions.

See this author's previous book, *The Resistance Manifesto,* for detailed information regarding the theological implications and interpretations of the mark of the beast and Big Brother technology.

More Privacy Issues with RFID

There are many more privacy concerns with RFID tags other than replacing paper currency or debit cards as the primary method of payment for purchases. With more and more companies basically forcing their employees to wear ID badges with RFID chips in them, the Big Brother potential is virtually limitless. With each employee’s every move monitored and databased, algorithms could be set up to determine whether an employee is spending too much time in the break room, or even the bathroom, since sensors will detect and monitor when they enter and leave any room in the office. Did the employees use their RFID tags to activate the soap dispenser in the bathroom before they exited? The system could easily monitor this. The tags could also easily monitor how much time each employee spends in proximity with other employees.

Companies may set time limits for how long a person may interact with someone in a different department. They may calculate that someone from accounting only needs to talk with someone in the sales department for ten minutes per day, and if the system detects that these two people from the two different departments are in proximity for 30 minutes per day, then the superiors will determine that they are wasting company time gossiping, instead of quickly handling work issues. Is an employee not spending enough time at their own desk? The system can monitor this, and efficiency reports will be drafted to determine the average amount of time an employee is expected to spend at their desk, in the break room, in other cubicles or offices, and in the bathroom.

It’s highly likely that RFIDs and EPCs (Electronic Product Codes) will completely replace the traditional UPC barcode we are all familiar with that is found on the package of virtually every item we buy. So it’s also highly likely that RFID tags will be on everything sold, and perhaps not only on the packaging, but built into the product itself. This way a simple scanner

could determine exactly what a person is carrying on them, including what their waistline or bra size is. Someone’s trash could be scanned to see exactly what items or packaging is being thrown away without even having to touch the trash itself.

There has been talk of a so-called *Internet of Things* which is a plan for a unique number to be given to every single thing, similar to a serial number, allowing each specific item to be tracked with regards to exactly where it has been, who has been in possession of it, for how long, etc. An RFID tag that can simply hold a measly 128 bits can hold a number large enough so that a different number could be assigned to every single item in the world. (For example: 128 bits can store a number with 38 zeros after it, i.e., 100,000,000,000,000,000, 000,000,000,000,000,000,000.)

If and when this *Internet of Things* database is created and all purchases are done electronically and without cash, will parents of children under eighteen have access to their child’s purchase history? Of course they will, and the parent would be able to see if they bought condoms, or spent too much money at the arcade. Parents could also see exactly what clothes their daughter buys to see if they’re dressing too slutty.

Of course, people will say that the technology has its benefits, such as if an adult buys a case of beer for someone under twenty one, and then that kid gets caught, then a quick scan of the beer can will show who purchased it and when. Kids will, of course, create technology that instantly destroys or erases the RFID tags on products for this very reason, but the cops could also do a check on the kid’s parents, or older siblings to see what their purchasing history was, and if they purchased a case of beer earlier that night, then they would obviously be implicated anyway.

If cash becomes difficult or impossible to use, and is replaced by RFID tags like the VeriChip, and all purchases are done electronically and linked to the individual purchasing them, then it’s possible that certain groups of people will be forbidden to even purchase certain products. For example, someone collecting welfare may not be allowed to buy certain “luxury”

items like chocolate candy or brand name soda, because the system has determined that these items cost too much and since the government is paying for them, they may simply not allow them to be bought.

When RFIDs become standard in drivers licenses, will it be possible for authorities to scan crowds of people at certain protests to determine exactly who is in the crowd? Even if it’s not, then facial recognition systems would be able to determine who attends such events by identifying every single person in attendance.

If practically everyone is using RFID tags for financial transactions, and someone has a warrant out for their arrest, then their chip will be flagged, and possibly deactivated, so they couldn’t even use it. There will also be unforeseen computer glitches and even power outages that will cripple people’s ability to buy anything and make them wish they hadn’t abandoned the use of cash.

RFIDs on Medication

Attaching RFID tags to all kinds of products, and even people, is certainly cause for concern, but we may one day find tiny RFID tags attached to individual pills that can be swallowed, which are designed to determine whether or not someone has taken their medication.

A necklace called the MagneTrace was built by the Georgia Institute of Technology and monitors which pills people swallow and transmits the information to a smart phone or a computer. It was said that the device can remind patients if they forget to take their medication, and can tell doctors, caregivers, or family members, what pills a person has been taking and when.

Maysam Ghovanloo, an engineer working on the device says that it can’t be tricked by someone holding a pill close to the necklace attempting to trigger its sensor because the algorithms it uses can detect whether or not the pills pass through the esophagus, as opposed to being placed near the necklace. “We wanted it to be very difficult to cheat,” says Ghovanloo.[107]

Multiple other companies are working on similar technology that embeds microchips inside pills, making them “smart-pills,” as they say. One company, Novartis AG, is planning to have the technology approved and available sometime around 2013.[108]

These kinds of “smart-chips” are activated by the stomach acid after they’ve been swallowed and then transmit their data to a Smartphone or over the Internet to a nurse or doctor so people’s dosage can be monitored, along with the exact time the pills were taken. The computer chips can be added to existing pills and use Bluetooth technology.

Trever Mundel, who is in charge of developing the technology, admitted this would create massive privacy issues, saying “The regulators all like the concept and have been very encouraging. But...they want to understand how we are going to solve the data privacy issues.”[109]

Using these kinds of pills, there is no need for a person to have to wear any kind of RFID reader around their neck or chest like the model developed by MagneTrace.

Will certain children be forced to take medication because they have a lot of energy and are said to have Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyper Active Disorder? Or will some adults be forced to take certain prescriptions because they are deemed “paranoid,” because they believe in certain “conspiracy theories” about the government or Big Brother?

RFID Vehicle Registration Tags

A company called TransCore has created a system using RFID tags that stick on windshields that would allow the government to detect whether people have proper insurance, registration, or unpaid parking tickets. The system is called EVR, short for Electronic Vehicle Registration, and the company hopes to make the system a standard feature on cars.

A brochure from TansCore reads, “eGo makes possible the introduction of electronic vehicle registration applications, which enable public agencies to automatically detect and screen, via RFID, motor vehicles for compliance with federal and state registration regulations and to correspondingly automate enforcement actions and violation processing for non-compliant vehicles.”[110] This plan involves installing RFID readers at various points on roads throughout cities to detect tags attached to vehicles. These devices will probably be made obsolete by more advanced government mandated GPS black boxes.

Mind-Reading Machines

Tom Cruise starred in *Minority Report* which was released in 2002, where he played a police officer who would arrest people for what was called "pre-crime" which meant crimes that they were going to commit in the future. Pre-crime was detected by a small group of people (called Precogs) who have the ability to see into the future. Of course, this is only science fiction, but the idea of punishing someone for a crime they may commit in the future is something that society may soon have to deal with. This actual "pre-crime" isn't detected by psychic human beings who see visions of the future, but instead is the result of high-tech equipment that is said to be able to detect whether or not an individual is thinking about committing a crime or has any dangerous intent.

These systems were originally designed to screen airport passengers in order to supposedly prevent terrorists from getting on board a plane by literally reading their minds to determine whether or not ticket holders are thinking any evil thoughts. An article in the *Associated Press*, published in January 2010 explains, "As far-fetched as that sounds, systems that aim to get inside an evildoer's head are among the proposals floated by security experts thinking beyond the X-ray machines and metal detectors used on millions of passengers and bags each year."[111]

The interest in such systems gained momentum immediately after the so-called "underwear bomber" was caught on a plane headed for Detroit, Michigan on Christmas Day in 2009. This man had packed explosives in his underwear and they were not detected by any security measures, and after he boarded the plane, he attempted to ignite the device, but failed.

Immediately after the failed "underwear" attack, President Barack Obama urged Homeland Security to develop better screening technology,

saying “In the never-ending race to protect our country, we have to stay one step ahead of a nimble adversary.”[112]

Others jumped on the bandwagon saying that new technology and security measures must be implemented. Philip Baum, editor of the magazine *Aviation Security International*, said, “Regulators need to accept that the current approach is outdated…It may have responded to the threats of the 1960s, but it doesn’t respond to the threats of the 21st century.”[113]

One type of device is the WeCU system which is used at airports in Israel. (WeCU means “We See You,” as in Big Brother sees you.) This system involves showing passengers different images on a screen that are associated with certain terrorist groups and then measures several signs on the person, such as their eye movements, increased heart rate or breathing, or any nervous twitches. The system’s creators claim to have developed ways to measure people’s reactions to determine whether they are affiliated with any of the symbols that are shown to them on the screen. “One by one, you can screen out from the flow of people those with specific malicious intent,” said Ehud Givon, CEO of WeCU Technologies.

Another system looked at by the Department of Homeland Security is called the Future Attribute Screening Technology, or FAST, and works like a polygraph that scans people’s pupil dilation, facial movements, and other measurements to detect deception. The system also detects a person’s fidgeting or nervous ticks.

Robert Burns, a project manager for FAST, insists the system can detect the difference between people who are simply stressed out or upset because they may be late for a flight, and those people who are harboring ill will. The Department of Homeland Security says the system uses a range of “innovative physiological and behavioral technologies” to pick up “indications of malintent [malicious intentions] or the intent or desire to cause harm.”[114]

“We are running at about 78 percent accuracy on mal-intent detection, and 80 percent on deception,” said John Verrico, a Department of Homeland Security spokesman.[115] In a Homeland Security video showing the system in action, targeted subjects are asked questions such as “are you attempting to smuggle an explosive device” or “are you from the local area?”

Another system called MALINTENT [Malicious Intentions] is also being tested by the Department of Homeland Security and is designed to detect whether a person might be harboring criminal intent based on their minute facial muscle movements which the system uses allegedly as evidence of emotional state, mood, and intention.

Unlike traditional lie detectors, these new systems don’t require people to be hooked up to anything and take all of their measurements and operate without any physical contact with the person. These devices and others are planned to be used at airports, border check points, and at special events that have heightened security. Designers plan to create a system that can scan people as they stand in line or walk through the airport.

The Russian based Psychotechnology Research Institute has developed a program they call Mindreader 2.0 that they say can determine how a person’s subconscious mind feels about certain photos, and can detect whether people have a positive feeling or a negative feeling about them. The system uses what is called Semantic Stimuli Response Measurements Technology, or SSRM Tek, that supposedly detects a person’s involuntary response to subliminal messages.

It has been reported that the Department of Homeland Security has visited the Institute to learn more about the technology to determine whether it may be of use for screening passengers before they board an airline. The Psychotechnology Research Institute began working with the US defense contractor SRS Technologies and in May 2009, the Department of Homeland Security paid for testing of the Mindreader 2.0 system.[116]

The Mindreader 2.0 system flashes a quick image on a screen so fast that a person doesn’t consciously recognize it, and then they are asked to press a button rating their feeling either favorably or unfavorably. If the image is of Osama bin Laden, for example, and they press the favorable button, then they are flagged as a potential terrorist.

The head of the Institute, Elena Rusalkina, is the widow of Igor Smirnov, who is considered the father of psychotronic weapons in Russia. The Soviet military used some of Smirnov’s subliminal mind control methods during the Soviet Union’s war in Afghanistan in the 1980s by using subliminal sounds to affect the Mujahideen. Smirnov also consulted with the FBI during the 1993 standoff at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, and it is rumored that he and the FBI planned, or did use, some kind of subliminal device on David Koresh and his followers. If you think that these devices are Orwellian, they actually get much, much worse.

In January 2009, the TV newsmagazine *60 Minutes* aired a segment titled “Mind Reading” that showed new technology being developed at Carnegie Mellon University that can literally read your mind. The segment featured neuro scientist Marcel Just and his colleague Tom Mitchell who had developed one of these systems. Marcel Just didn’t want to call it mind reading, and insisted it was “thought identification” instead.

One of the *60 Minutes* producers sat in the machine and was shown ten different objects to think about, such as a hammer, screw driver, and apartment, and the computer scanned her brain and was able to determine exactly which objects she was thinking about, and in what order. The device is called a Functional MRI machine, or fMRI. After the demonstration, Lesley Stahl, the anchor for the segment, was visibly disturbed. This same scanner can detect whether a person is feeling kindness, hypocrisy, or even love.

The segment continued to show scientists in Berlin, Germany, at the Bernstein Center, who were conducting tests where they would scan people’s brains as they were choosing whether to add or subtract two

numbers they were given, and the computer was able to identify what they decided.

“I always tell my students that there is no more science fiction anymore. All the science fiction I read in high school, we’re doing,” said Paul Root Wolpe, director of the Center for Ethics at Emery University in Atlanta. He goes on to say, “Throughout history, we could never actually coerce someone to reveal information. Torture doesn’t work that well, persuasion doesn’t work that well…the right to keep one’s thoughts locked up in their brain is among the most fundamental rights to being human.” He then raised issues about who would be legally allowed to use this technology, whether the government could soon force people to use it, or even if parents could subject their children to it when they suspect they are lying about something.

This technology is not just in its testing phase in laboratories at Universities. A company called No Lie MRI advertises their services using fMRI which they say “provides unbiased methods for the detection of deception and other information stored in the brain.”[117]

There is also talk of a device that can potentially shine a beam of light or radio waves onto a person’s head and can then detect their internal brainwaves as a result. Such a device could obviously be used without a person’s knowledge or consent, unlike the fMRI machines that require people to lie down and sit still in order to be scanned.

John Dylan-Haynes, of the Bernstein Center for Computational Neuroscience in Berlin, Germany, is testing a program that can detect in your mind where you’ve physically been. This device is not theoretical, and has already been built. He demonstrates the system by showing scenes from inside different houses, and then says, “Now I would put you in a scanner and I would show you some of these scenes that you’ve seen, and some of them you haven’t seen…and right at this moment, we would be able to tell from your brain activity that you’ve already seen this environment before.” Haynes explains that this technology could soon be used to determine if

someone was a burglar in a house or had attended an Al-Qaeda training camp before.

When Paul Root Wolpe, the ethics professor from Emery University, was asked if this device would violate the Fifth Amendment which says you don’t have to incriminate yourself, he explained that the Fifth Amendment says you don’t have to testify in court about what you did or didn’t do, but it doesn’t protect you from blood samples or DNA samples that may be taken from you and incriminate you, and so in the same way these brain scans may be allowed by courts and ruled that they do not to violate your Fifth Amendment rights.

This kind of research is not only isolated to a single lab or university. In March 2010, a story hit the news wires telling how British scientists from University College London discovered that they could identify brain activity linked to different memories using fMRI technology, and could identify thought patterns and literally read people’s minds and determine whether they had seen a particular film or not, just by looking at their brain scan.[118]

In one study, scientists showed ten people three different short films and when later scanned, the scientists were able to determine which film each person had seen by identifying patterns in the brain associated with each film. These patterns are called episodic memories, which mean they are memories of autobiographical events, such as things you’ve personally seen or heard, as opposed to memories formed based on being told something, for example.

If all of this sounds like it is still decades away from being used in criminal court cases, you are wrong. A woman in India was convicted of murder in 2008 because of a brain scan. An article in the *New York Times* explained, “India has become the first country to convict someone of a crime relying on evidence from this controversial machine: a brain scanner that produces images of the human mind in action and is said to reveal signs that a suspect remembers details of the crime in question.”[119]

In June of 2008, a judge in India allowed a brain scan to be used as evidence that the suspect had “experiential knowledge” about the crime that only the killer would know. The suspect was sentenced to life in prison.

“I find this both interesting and disturbing,” said Henry T. Greely, a bioethicist at Stanford Law School. “We keep looking for a magic, technological solution to lie detection. Maybe we’ll have it someday, but we need to demand the highest standards of proof before we ruin people’s lives based on its application.”[120]

The specific brain scan that was used in this case involves hooking people up to electrodes and then they are read specific details of the crime scene, and according to the research, certain parts of the brain light up when a memory is stimulated, leading authorities to believe that whatever caused the jump in brain activity was the result of the person having actually personally witnessed what was read to them first hand. This technology obviously has its critics since it is very new and hasn’t undergone extensive testing.

Even one of the first developers of this electroencephalogram-based (EEG) lie detection technology was shocked that a court in India had used the program as evidence when the technology was so new. “Technologies which are neither seriously peer-reviewed nor independently replicated are not, in my opinion, credible,” said Dr. Rosenfeld, a neuroscientist at Northwestern University. “The fact that an advanced and sophisticated democratic society such as India would actually convict persons based on an unproven technology is even more incredible,” he concluded.[121]

Other scientists hail the technology as a revolutionary evidence gathering procedure paralleling, or perhaps, being more important than DNA. Keith Ashcroft, who is considered an expert witness in Britain, said, “According to the cases that have been presented to me, BEOS [Brain Electrical Oscillations Signature] has clearly demonstrated its utility in

providing admissible evidence that has been used to assist in the conviction of defendants in court."[122]

Henry T. Greely, from Stanford admitted that if and when this technology becomes commonplace, that there will be serious implications on personal privacy, as well as the First, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, but said, "the potential benefits to society of such a technology, if used well, could be at least equally large."

Will these devices or others like them become common in courtrooms, schools, or businesses? Will we one day live in a society where everything people say will be subjected to be verified by a mind-reading machine? We will soon find out.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which develops new technology for the US military, included $4 million dollars in their 2009-2010 budget for a program named *Silent Talk*, which aims to "allow user-to-user communication on the battlefield without the use of vocalized speech through analysis of neural signals."[123]

Another $4 million dollars was given to the University of California to investigate "synthetic telepathy" which entails creating a device that can detect brain waves that have speech encoded into them in order to literally read the mind of the person using it to determine exactly what they are thinking.[124]

Not even in the dystopian world found in Orwell's book did Big Brother have the ability to read people's minds. "With all their cleverness they had never mastered the secret of finding out what another human being was thinking."[125] —*Nineteen Eighty Four*

Artificial Nose to Smell Terrorists’ Fear

Aside from advanced systems that read facial expressions, iris dilation, heart rate, breathing patterns and body language, authorities are also attempting to construct devices that can literally smell a person’s fear in their quest to perfect mind-reading machines. The Department of Homeland Security advertised that they were looking for specialists who could design systems that would smell “deceptive individuals.” The technology is based on the idea that a person’s body odors change according to their mood.

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) are trying to create an artificial nose that can smell adrenaline, which researchers believe is given off in higher amounts from someone who has a guilty conscience.

Homeland Security is also working on collecting a “smell bank” that holds scents collected from crime scenes which they believe will be able to identify specific individuals the same way as DNA.

Professor Kenneth Furton at Florida International University in Miami, is working on technology he says could soon identify criminals by matching scent molecules taken from crime scenes to a “smell bank,” that contains the scents of people, much like a fingerprint database. He pointed out that scientists can already determine a person’s race, age, and environment based on their scent, and in some cases, what they had for their last meal. Scientists are also looking to identify odors that signify if a person is depressed, or has a disease.

Honda’s Mind Reader

The car manufacturer, Honda Motor Corporation, has designed a device that reads a person’s brain waves and can control a robot from the user’s thoughts. At a press conference in Japan in 2009, the company unveiled an updated version of a robot they called Asimo, which walks on two legs and is controlled by a person wearing their strange mind-reading head gear. The device is considered a brain-machine interface which was developed by a joint venture between Honda and the Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International and the Shimadzu corporation.

The device looks like a bicycle helmet covered with electrical components and uses what is called electroencephalography (EEG) and near-infrared spectroscopy (NIRS) to measure brain activity. One may wonder why Honda would be interested in such technology, since it wouldn’t seem to have any benefit to the automobile industry. It seems Honda is looking to expand their business and one day build robots that help around the home. They also think it would be cool to use such technology to allow people to open their car trunk or change the air-conditioning setting just by thinking about it, because apparently, they think that pushing a button is just too difficult.

“When your hands are full doing the dishes, you could have a robot give you a hand watering the plants [just by thinking],” said Tatsuya Okabe, a scientist at the Honda Research Institute.[126]

The 2009 version of the Asimo robot and this mind-reading system was actually quite pathetic. A video clip on the Internet shows a person wearing the helmet and moving the robot around, but at the time, it was

very primitive. Of course, researchers are hoping to make dramatic advances in the coming years.

When asked if the device could one day be used to drive a car, Yasuhisa Arai, the director of Honda’s R&D department responded, “I don’t want to deny the possibility, but there are many challenges. Practical uses are still way into the future.”

Another Japanese company that makes robotic toys, Rolling Robots, is also planning on creating toys and other gadgets with mind-reading sensors by the year 2020 that they hope can be used to send text messages and operate other electronics.[127]

Video Game Interfaces

Videogame manufacturers are hoping to one day replace the joystick or gamepad with mind-reading devices that players wear on their heads which will control the video game character by the person's thoughts. One manufacturer, NeuroSky, has designed a primitive device called the Darth Vader game, but say other more sophisticated games are in the works.

Some people strangely say these devices could increase mental focus and actually help kids with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism or mood disorders. Of course, playing more video games is the last thing that these kids need, but this is a good marketing strategy for videogame companies.

"It fulfills the fantasy of telekinesis," said Tan Le, co-founder and president of San Francisco-based Emotiv, another designer producing similar devices they hope will be used on the Nintendo Wii, Sony PlayStation and Microsoft Xbox.

Another company called CyberLearning has been selling what they call SmartBrain Technologies systems for the PlayStation and Xbox. The device uses EEG and EMG-based biofeedback and costs about $600. The company has sold more than 1,500 systems between 2005 and 2009, and also plans on marketing their products to children with behavior disorders.

"Our biggest struggle is to find the target market," said co-founder Lindsay Greco. "We're finding that parents are using this to improve their own recall and focus. We have executives who use it to improve their memory, even their golf."[128]

The God Helmet

Orwellian devices aren’t only being built that can read people’s minds, but similar devices may be used to manipulate people’s brainwaves to give them intoxicating feelings like they get from drugs, alcohol, or adrenaline rushes like skydiving.

A strange invention dubbed the “God helmet,” which is a modified snowmobile helmet, stimulates the brain with magnetic fields in order to give the person wearing it a “spiritual experience.” The “God helmet” was created by Michael Persinger who designed it to be used in research for what is called neurotheology, which is the study of neurology’s connections to spirituality. People who use the device have reported feeling as if there was another being in the room with them, and even sensed what they say is the presence of God.[129]

It’s likely that such devices will one day be commercially available for personal use and could become a substitute for people doing drugs who are looking for a high. Of course, these devices open the door to all kinds of dangers, such as brain damage from long term exposure, or even psychological addiction to the device. They will likely become extremely small in the future and could be placed on the head and covered up by a person’s hair and not be noticed by others so they could be worn anywhere. Some people may get such a high from these devices that it could be similar to heroin or cocaine, and abuse of the technology could severely disrupt individual’s lives.

One also wonders if this technology will be able to permanently alter areas of the brain, and if it could be mandated as part of a rehabilitation program for prisoners in order to alter their thought patterns or attitudes.

Neural Interfaces

While it's interesting that devices can be worn on a person's head that measure brain waves and can be used to control robots, videogames, or read a person's mind and detect memories, a much more invasive method of using a person's thoughts to control external machines or computers is found in what are called neural interfaces, which are devices that are connected directly to the human brain. Neural interfaces, sometimes called brain implants, or a brain machine interface (BMI) are electronic systems that are literally, physically wired into the human brain through surgery.

In July 2001, someone with access to the Department of Neurobiology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel, used a hidden camera to videotape bizarre and cruel tests that were being done on monkeys to implant them with neural interfaces. The footage shows several monkeys secured in restraining devices with their skull caps removed, and you can clearly see their brains protruding out of the top of their heads with neural interfaces attached. The video is extremely horrific to watch. It's in color and can be found on YouTube if you search for "hidden camera monkey brain experiments." The person narrating the video mentions a Dr. Zohari, who they identify as the project manager of the experiments.

A strange neurophysiologist at Yale University, named Dr. Jose Delgado, carried out similar experiments in the 1960s that involved implanting electrodes in the brains of animals and he was able to remotely induce a wide range of emotions and physical movements in them. Videos are available on YouTube that show Delgado's team demonstrating a cat equipped with a neural interface that enabled them to cause the animal to get angry and start hissing with the push of a button. Another video shows a bull with a neural interface implanted in its brain that's charging straight at a man and when the researcher sends a signal to the receiver, the animal stops immediately.[130]

In his book *Physical Control of the Mind,* published in 1971, Dr. Delgado wrote, “The technology for nonsensory communication between brains and computers through the intact skin is already at our fingertips, and its consequences are difficult to predict. In the past the progress of civilization has tremendously magnified the power of our senses, muscles, and skills. Now we are adding a new dimension: the direct interface between brains and machines.”

He said that it was, “already possible to induce a large variety of responses, from motor effects to emotional reactions and intellectual manifestations, by direct electrical stimulation of the brain.”

“Also, several investigators have learned to identify patterns of electrical activity (which a computer could also recognize) localized in specific areas of the brain and related to determined phenomena such as perception of smells or visual perception of edges and movements. We are advancing rapidly in the pattern recognition of electrical correlates of behavior and in the methodology for two-way radio communication between brain and computers.”[131]

In his writings, Delgado acknowledged people expressed fears that this new technology was a threat to possible unwanted and unethical remote control of the thoughts of people by others, but wrote that he believed the dangers are outweighed by the expected clinical and scientific benefits.

Ray Kurzweil, who is seen as a prominent futurist believed to be able to accurately forecast approaching technological developments in the coming decades wrote, “Improving our lives through neural implants on the mental level, and nanotechnology-enhanced bodies on the physical level, will be popular and compelling.”[132] Kurzweil believes that around the year 2099, neural interfaces will be implanted into almost everyone, and that, “humans who do not utilize such implants [will be] unable to meaningfully participate in dialogues with those who do.”[133]

What he means is that humans will have their brains wired into the Internet and will become a species of cyborgs who have merged with computers.

Brain Gate

A neural interface called Brain Gate was one of the first devices used on humans and was developed in 2003, by a company called Cyberkinetics along with the Department of Neuroscience at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. The device was designed to allow people paralyzed from spinal cord injuries to use the neural interface to operate computers or electronic wheelchairs with their thoughts.

The first version of the device used 96 different electrodes to sense different neurons firing in specific areas of the brain and transferred those signals to a computer. In 2010, the company's website said that three different people have had the device installed, the first of which was a 25-year-old paralyzed man named Matt Nagle who can be seen in videos on the Internet using Brain Gate to move a mouse around a computer screen.

An article on CNN's website mentioned the possibilities of such devices turning the population into cyborgs, saying, "Beyond alleviating the effects of severe disabilities, normal functioning humans could also benefit from 'upgrades' to improve intelligence, sensory awareness or simply to counter the effects of aging."[134] The article also quoted Microsoft founder Bill Gates as saying that one of his Microsoft colleagues is anticipating cybernetic enhancements, and that he's ready to be "plugged in." Gates said that he personally would not want to be implanted with such things.

Military Applications

The US military has shown interest in neural interfaces and various documents and budgets explain some of their proposed Orwellian uses. One report commissioned by the Office of Defense Research and Engineering titled *Human Performance* explained, “The most successful implementation of invasive interfaces has occurred in medical applications in which nerve signals are used as the mechanism for information transfer. Adversarial actions using this approach to implement enhanced, specialized sensory functions could be possible in limited form now, and with developing capability in the future.”[135]

Documents dating back to 1996 from the Department of Defense show that plans were being drawn up to use neural interfaces on soldiers and the civilian population as well. One document discussing technology the military hoped to have in place by the year 2025, titled *Information Operations: A New War-Fighting Capability* reads, “The implanted microscopic brain chip performs two functions. First, it links the individual to the IIC [Information Integration Center] creating a seamless interface between the user and the information resources. In essence, the chip relays the processed information from the IIC [Information Integration Center] to the user, second the chip creates a computer generated mental visualization based upon the user’s request.”[136]

The documents claim the devices would help increase security, saying, “An implanted microscopic chip does not require security measures to verify whether the right person is connected to the IIC [Information Integration Center], whereas a room, helmet, or sunglasses requires additional time-consuming access control mechanisms to verify an individual’s identity and level of control within the Cyber Situation.”[137]

The document foresaw resistance to such ideas, saying, “Implanting ‘things’ in people raises ethical and public relations issues. While these concerns may be founded on today’s thinking, in 2025 they may not be as alarming” and goes on to say, “The civilian populace will likely accept any implanted microscopic chips that allow military members to defend vital national interests.”[138]

Aside from military applications, the documents say that neural interfaces could be used to upload information into people’s minds and make them feel like they are playing a virtual reality video game. It reads, “This capability will have extraordinary commercial applications from medical advances. These advances will help restore patients with damaged neural, audio, and visual systems as well as enable them to achieve the ultimate virtual reality trip.”[139]

The *Human Performance* document produced for the Pentagon in 2008, acknowledges the “evils” of using these devices and admits, “one can consider the potential that an adversary might use invasive interfaces in military applications. An extreme example would be remote guidance or control of a human being.” It continues to list examples of experiments that were able to remotely control animals as if they were remote controlled toys, saying, “There has been non-medical research into remote monitoring or control of animals (rats, sharks, pigeons, etc.) [53, 54, 55] with applications in research or law enforcement, with related strong interest in the popular press.”[140]

Intel Planning Neural Interfaces to Surf Internet

An article in *Computerworld* magazine published in 2009, discussed how computer giant Intel thinks that by the year 2020 we won't need to use a keyboard or a mouse to control computers, cell phones, or televisions anymore, and will instead use neural interfaces. The article stated, "Big Brother won't be planting chips in your brain against your will. Researchers expect that consumers will want the freedom they will gain by using the implant."[141]

Andrew Chien, the vice president of research and director of future technologies at Intel Labs said, "There are a lot of things that have to be done first but I think [implanting chips into human brains] is well within the scope of possibility."

Another Intel research scientist named Dean Pomerleau told *Computerworld* that "We're trying to prove you can do interesting things with brain waves. Eventually people may be willing to be more committed...to brain implants. Imagine being able to surf the Web with the power of your thoughts."

They are using fMRI technology at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh to map thought patterns and have found that different people's brain patterns are similar when they think similar thoughts, allowing scientists to develop ways to detect the thoughts of different people using the same method.

Intel's Dean Pomerleau said they will soon be able to build a brainwave sensor that people can wear on their head and will be connected to a computer. The next step, he said, is to implant neural interfaces into people's brains.

Wireless Neural Interface

Most neural interfaces consist of devices implanted into the human brain and have wires protruding out of the person’s (or animal’s) skull which lead to a computer, but one British scientist is developing a wireless chip that can be injected into the skull with a large hypodermic needle, and can then communicate wirelessly to a computer.

The chip is being developed by Dr. Jon Spratley who designed a prototype while earning his PhD at Birmingham University. “We are just trying to help people with severe communication problems or motor neurone disease—like Dr Stephen Hawking or Christopher Reeve,” he said.[142]

“It’s an area that is being heavily researched in America but so far all the tests have involved wired sensors. This prototype uses wireless technology to remove the risk of infection and that’s the real drive of our work.”

Dr. Spratley hopes the device can be used by quadriplegic people, enabling them to operate computers, electric wheel chairs, or even bionic arms or legs. “If they can imagine using a limb, even if they can’t move it, you can tap into that signal. Then you just have to imagine moving the muscle and the leg will move, the brain will train itself,” he said.

Dr. Spratley is looking for funding to start human trials.

Depression Implant

If you think it’s strange that companies have developed technology that can wire a human brain into a computer in order to detect brain waves, the technology gets even more sinister. In 2005, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a neural interface system to treat depression.[143] The device is wired into the brain and stimulates the Vagus Nerve in order to make people feel happier.

The manufacturer of this horrific device is a company called Cyberonics which has sold a similar brain implant that reduces seizures in people with epilepsy. The depression implant costs about $20,000, including surgical and hospital expenses, according to Cyberonics chief executive, Skip Cummins. The company has also been conducting various studies hoping the device will be approved to treat anxiety, bulimia, and other chronic disorders.[144]

Dangers of Neural Interfaces

Hidden beneath the lofty goals of helping paralyzed people gain more mobility and independence lies a dark underbelly of disastrous consequences arising from the widespread use of neural interfaces. Detecting and reading brainwaves is one thing, but neural interfaces have already shown that they can also do the opposite, and actually manipulate brainwaves as well. Futurists like Ray Kurzweil anxiously anticipate a world where these devices are as common as cell phones, and envision enhancing human perception, memory, and cognitive abilities. But this technology, perhaps more than any other, contains disastrous consequences that are often overlooked by transhumanist dreamers.

It's not an unfounded fear to wonder if a neural interface that physically jacks people's minds into a centralized computer system could then possibly literally control people's thoughts once they are plugged in. While this may seem far-fetched, as I have already uncovered, the military has proposed that such devices could take people on the "ultimate virtual reality trip" and implants that make people "feel better" have already been created. These devices may lead to mass mind control, quite literally.

In 1993, Sylvester Stallone and Sandra Bullock starred in a science fiction film taking place in the future called *Demolition Man*, which included a scene where prisoners were connected to neural interfaces that reprogrammed their minds in order to rehabilitate them and change their attitudes and behaviors.

The *CBS Evening News* once aired a segment discussing high-tech methods for keeping tabs on prisoners and included an interview with a specialist who said, "one thing we could implant could be a subliminal implant. In other words, basically messages being piped into the

subconscious constantly. ‘Do the right thing. Do what’s required of you. Be a good citizen. Don’t disobey the law.’”[145]

The infamous mark of the beast spoken about in the Bible, which predicts that a global dictator will force the entire earth’s population to take a “mark” on their hand or forehead or else they won’t be able to buy or sell anything, is often believed to be a Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) or some kind of device that replaces cash and checks as methods of doing financial transactions. But some speculate that the “mark of the beast” is actually a neural interface they believe will cause everyone who has one to literally lose control of their own mind, and then be completely controlled by an artificial intelligence system or whoever is in charge of the neural interface mainframe.

The topic of the mark of the beast is beyond the scope of this book, but the possibility of neural interfaces literally controlling people’s minds is a very real and dangerous scenario that we seem to be rapidly approaching.

Psychotronic Weapons

Paranoid people have often feared that the government was able to read their minds with some kind of advanced technology, which is now actually real (**See *Mind-Reading Machines***), but what is perhaps even more insidious, is technology that is able to project thoughts into people's heads simply through radio waves. While neural interfaces need to be wired directly into the brain of a person and involve extensive and invasive surgery, technology that can beam thoughts and voices into people's heads doesn't require any physical contact with the person, and can easily be done without their knowledge. While this may seem far-fetched, as you read further, you will find that the US Air Force has actually patented such technology.

The term *psychotronic weapons* refers to weapons that affect the mind, mainly through radio waves, and aside from beaming voices or subliminal messages into people's heads, psychotronic weapons can affect people's moods and concentration, and can even cause sudden sickness or death.

In 1980, a Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army named Michael Aquino co-authored a paper titled *From PSYOP to MindWar* that suggested using psychotronic weapons against American citizens to alter the brainwaves of the public on a mass scale, thus altering their mood.

Aquino wrote, "Infrasound vibration (up to 20Hz) can subliminally influence brain activity to align itself to delta, theta, alpha, or beta wave patterns, inclining an audience toward everything from alertness to passivity. Infrasound could be used tactically, as ELF-waves endure for great distances; and it could be used in conjunction with media broadcasts as well."[146]

So basically what Lieutenant Colonel Aquino wrote was that the government should target American citizens with radio waves to either cause them to get anxious or lethargic, depending on the goals of the government at the time. So, if, for example, there was a massive protest planned for a specific city or even across the country, the government could use the MindWar strategy of transmitting infrasound to cause people to feel lazy and lethargic, thus massively declining the number of protesters because many people simply wouldn't feel like going. They could also use other frequencies of radio waves to give the target audience an overwhelming feeling of anxiety, if they choose, and perhaps cause massive rioting.

Many researchers point to HAARP (High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program) as being capable of broadcasting such ELF waves and infrasound on a mass scale, and being capable of focusing it on a specific location. While it is denied that HAARP can be used as a weapon, what is not disputed are Aquino's own words in his publicly available report *From PSYOP to MindWar*, where he openly advocated using psychotronic weapons on an unsuspecting population.

Radio Frequency Hearing Effect

An article published in the *Washington Post* in 2007 discusses the existence of technology that can beam voices into people's heads, and begins by saying there is, "a community of people who believe the government is beaming voices into their minds. They may be crazy, but the Pentagon has pursued a weapon that can do just that."[147]

The article continues to discuss people on the Internet who think that they have been targeted by the government and used as test subjects or harassed using what is called the Radio Frequency Hearing Effect, which is very real. So real, in fact, that on October 22, 2002 patent number 6,470,214 was awarded to the technology which is designed to, "induce a thermal-acoustic signal in the bone/tissue material of the head that replicates the input audio signal and is conducted by the bone/tissue structure of the head to the inner ear where it is demodulated by the normal processes of the cochlea and converted to nerve signals which are sent to the brain, thereby enabling intelligible speech to be perceived by the brain." The patent was awarded to the United States Air Force who first filed for it in 1996.[148]

A man named Donald Friedman, who believes he is a victim of this technology (called a targeted individual, or a TI), has dedicated his time and energy to exposing the government's misuse of psychotronic weapons and has filed multiple Freedom of Information Requests to obtain documents proving it. One such document was released in 1998 by the US Army titled *Bioeffects of Selected Nonlethal Weapons* which discusses weapons that can beam voices into people's heads, give them fevers, and even cause epileptic seizures.

One of Friedman’s requests was responded to with a motion for an enlargement of time, which is a legal request to delay the release of a document. The request to delay the document’s release was made by the Secret Service which read, *“Plaintiff’s FOIA request is for document [sic] concerning directed energy technology that is very sensitive. Some of this documents [sic] pertain to research conducted by divisions within defendant agency that is used to carry out its mandate to protect very high government officials. In fact, in one case, the documents… could not be mailed but had to be hand carried interstate.”*[149]

An article in *Wired* magazine discussed Friedman and his claims, and admitted, “It’s very easy to poke fun at people like Friedman. On the other hand, it does show that if a non-lethal device ever was developed which could cause symptoms associated with madness, it would be completely deniable. The device would completely destroy the target’s credibility, neatly ensuring it remained covert. The military utility would be low, but it might be very handy for some three-letter agencies,” (meaning the CIA, FBI, NSA, etc.)[150]

Dr. Robert O. Becker, who has been nominated for the Noble prize for his work in bio-electromagnetism, wrote that such devices have an, “obvious application in covert operations designed to drive a target crazy with voices.”[151]
Aside from the patent awarded in 2002 to the US government for the Radio Frequency Hearing Effect, another patent (#4,877,027) was filed over a decade earlier in 1988 for an invention known as a “microwave voice device.” The abstract for this patent reads:

Sound is induced in the head of a person by radiating the head with microwaves in the range of 100 megahertz to 10,000 megahertz that are modulated with a particular waveform. The waveform consists of frequency modulated bursts. Each burst is made up of ten to twenty uniformly spaced pulses grouped tightly together. The burst width is between 500

nanoseconds and 100 microseconds. The pulse width is in the range of 10 nanoseconds to 1 microsecond. The bursts are frequency modulated by the audio input to create the sensation of hearing in the person whose head is irradiated.

An article published in the December 1980 issue of *Military Review* titled "The New Mental Battlefield," explained that the Soviet Union had built and used these kinds of weapons against political dissenters to cause illness or death with no evidence of foul play.[152] The author of the article, Colonel John B. Alexander, is considered the "founding father" of such weapons in America. A 1993 issue of *Defense News* reported that U.S. military officials were obtaining some of this Soviet "mind-control technology."[153]

The US Army has fully functioning devices that utilize this technology and call it a Voice to Skull (V2K) device and is classified as a non-lethal weapon. Some people suspect that these kinds of weapons were used in the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, John Lennon, and others, meaning they believe Lee Harvey Oswald, Sirhan Sirhan, and Mark Chapman, (the shooters) had psychotronic weapons used on them to brainwash them and urge them to kill.

It's a fact that the MK-ULTRA program which began in the 1950s experimented heavily with mind control and brainwashing techniques, and such activities were considered conspiracy theories until the early 1970s when documents were released under the Freedom of Information Act and the extent of the horrors of this program were seen. One of the main goals of the MK-ULTRA experiments was to create technology and methods to turn an ordinary person into a mind-controlled assassin who would carry out any order given to them regardless of the consequences or danger.

Silent Subliminal Presentation System

When most people think of subliminal messages, they think of messages recorded backwards on rock albums from the 1970s, a method called backmasking, or messages mixed in with music so you can’t noticeably hear them, but are believed to be noticed by the subconscious mind. While backmasking (using backwards messages) is really just a publicity stunt used by numerous musicians and not an actual subliminal message, the existence and use of subliminal messages is a very real scientific practice.

Below is information about another Orwellian patent awarded for a device that generates subliminal messages that don’t need to be masked with music.

Inventor: Lowery; Oliver M. (Norcross, GA)

Patent # 5,159,703 awarded on October 27, 1992

The Abstract:

A silent communications system in which nonaural carriers, in the very low or very high audio frequency range or in the adjacent ultrasonic frequency spectrum, are amplitude or frequency modulated with the desired intelligence and propagated acoustically or vibrationally, for inducement into the brain, typically through the use of loudspeakers, earphones or piezoelectric transducers. The modulated carriers may be transmitted directly in real time or may be conveniently recorded and stored on mechanical, magnetic or optical media for delayed or repeated transmission to the listener.

The patent makes it clear that, “The ‘silent’ recordings are inaudible to the user or by others present and are therefore very effective for use during periods of sleep or when in the presence of others. Additionally, the basic requirements of subliminal stimulation are met. That is, the affirmations are efficiently transmitted to the ear and, while undetected by the conscious mind, are perceived by and efficiently decoded by the subconscious mind.”

The patent goes on to read:

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, several objects and advantages of my invention are:

(a) to provide a technique for producing a subliminal presentation which is inaudible to the listeners(s), yet is perceived and demodulated (decoded) by the ear for use by the subconscious mind.

(b) to provide a technique for transmitting inaudible subliminal information to the listener(s) at a constant, high level of signal strength and on a clear band of frequencies.

(c) to provide a technique for producing inaudible subliminal presentations to which music or other “foreground” programming may be added, if desired.

Other Subliminal Messages

An article titled *Secret Voices* published in a 1979 edition of *TIME* magazine reported that approximately 50 different department stores in the US and Canada were playing subliminal messages with the music systems hoping to reduce shoplifting from customers and theft from employees. One undisclosed East Coast chain claimed that their theft had dropped by 37% after using the system.[154]

The following year, in 1980, the *Wall Street Journal* published an article investigating systems that broadcast subliminal messages in stores that say things like, “I am honest. I will not steal.” The article reported that after a New Orleans supermarket started using subliminal messages, their loss dropped to the lowest on record.[155] They also reported that shortages from cashiers dramatically dropped as well.

In 1984, a hearing in the US House of Representatives titled *Subliminal Communication Technology* investigated the use of subliminal messages and subliminal advertising in public places.[156]

In 1978 when a serial killer calling himself BTK (Bind, Torture, Kill) came to the attention of police in Wichita, Kansas, a local TV station (under the direction of the police) broadcast a subliminal message hoping to influence the killer, urging him to turn himself in. In a broadcast about the murders, the station included a message saying, “Now call the chief,” although the attempt was unsuccessful.[157]

In 2004 dozens of electronic slot machines in Canada were found to display subliminal messages that some felt encouraged people to gamble more.[158] The machines would flash a quick picture of a winning hand on the

screen, although the company, Konami, said the images were caused from an error in the software. The machines were ordered to be fixed.

It’s interesting how the power of suggestion works. Subliminal messages are not necessarily “brain washing” techniques, but rather function as the name entails, by “suggesting” something, thus causing a thought to arise in a person’s mind. Everyone is familiar with pulling up to a fast food restaurant’s drive through menu and after you’re done placing your order, you are often asked if you want two apple pies or chocolate cookies for $1.99. They know that just by suggesting this, they will spark a desire in a measurable percentage of customers and dramatically increase their sales.

Project Blue Beam

While governments have perpetuated countless hoaxes, disinformation campaigns, and false flag terrorist attacks in order to manipulate large populations of people—no plan is perhaps more grandiose than the idea of faking an appearance by God himself. There have been several times in recent history that the American government has proposed the idea of staging the appearance of God, who would then appear to speak to people and urge them to participate in an insurgency. This "supernatural" event can be done through a combination of holographic projections and sophisticated sound systems.

In February of 1999, the *Washington Post* reported on one of these plans, explaining that during the first Gulf War, the United States had actually considered projecting a huge holographic image of God in the sky over Baghdad.[159] This plan included the use of a 5-15 KHz acoustic beam that would make it seem like God was talking to the Iraqi people and would urge them to turn on their leader Saddam Hussein, sparking a revolution.

A similar plan was considered under Project Mongoose, a series of CIA operations against Cuba designed to overthrow Fidel Castro. Officials discussed having a submarine surface in the Havana harbor and project a huge Jesus-like figure onto the clouds that would then appear to speak and tell the Cuban people to overthrow "Godless Communism."[160]

This technology has been called Project Blue Beam, and could be used to either stage a "supernatural" visitation from "God," or even one from aliens arriving from outer space. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan made a very clear reference to aliens from outer space invading earth and causing all the nations of the world to unite and stop fighting each other. He actually said this at a United Nations meeting and video of the statement can be

found online. “In our obsession with antagonism of the moment, we often forget how much unites all the members of humanity. Perhaps we need some outside, universal threat to make us recognize this common bond. I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world.”[161]

Some wonder whether this comment was said as a primer for a possible use of Project Blue Beam during the Cold War in order to frighten the Russians.

Leaders throughout history, dating back to ancient times, have claimed to have the power of God, or to speak on behalf of God in order to control their people and maintain their power and authority. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that government officials involved in covert operations would try to use Big Brother technology to take on the appearance of God himself.

“God is power [and] we are the priests of power.”[162] —Emmanuel Goldstein, the ‘bad guy’ in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Sonic Nausea Systems

While using the radio frequency hearing effect and other psychotronic weapons may be limited to those with expensive and complicated technology, a widely available and inexpensive device that uses ultrasonic waves to induce headaches and nausea can be purchased on the Internet or in catalogs selling law enforcement products. The *Shomer-Tech* catalog sells such a device called the Sonic Nausea System for only $29.99. The online catalog reads, “Hiding this device in your inconsiderate neighbor’s house might put an end to their late-night parties. The abusive bureaucrat’s office, the executive lunchroom... the possibilities are endless for that small portion of inventive payback.”[163]

Another more advanced version is also sold, called the Super Sonic Nausea system which is advertised to, “disrupt speeches, demonstrations, crowd dynamics, etc. This device has been used to ‘influence’ more of these than you might expect. Deployed near the podium, you might just have a case of an increasingly un-impressive speaker with diminished sharpness and lacking concentration, or perhaps is even unable to complete his presentation. Or, loitering youths on your property might be enticed to move along with no confrontations necessary.”

This “Super Sonic Nausea system” is said to be a “rarely-available government model” and is produced by a company called DSG Laboratories. This version sells for only $99.99. Just imagine for a minute what kind of similar devices are in existence but are not made commercially available. Such devices are extremely small and portable, and could easily be covertly used to inflict discomfort on any number of people, in any number of situations, without anyone even having a clue.

Information Technology

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the main character, Winston Smith, works at the Ministry of Truth, (a propaganda department) and his job is to go through old books and newspapers and delete information that the government doesn't want people to have access to anymore. Winston also changes "facts" in books and newspapers and reprints them to reflect the changes as if they were still in their original form. Big Brother has complete control over all information available to the people, both in the present, and from the past.

As you likely know, the mainstream media in our society has been tightly controlled for decades in order to shape the majority of information that reaches the population to keep people focused on what the establishment desires, and also at the same time, to prevent people from discovering issues that the establishment desires to keep private. Such a practice was fairly easy until the Internet became an environment where independent journalists and countless "alternative" news sites and bloggers were able to gain large followings of people and operate with practically zero budget, yet reach millions of people just like the mainstream news does.

This has created a fairly large amount of competition for the mainstream establishment media, and has damaged their long held monopoly of information. Of course, they are not going to sit idly by and lose their grip on the flow of information, so they were forced to come up with new strategies in order to minimize the effect that independent blogs and news sites have on the population.

In 2006, a report from the Joint Special Operations University titled *Blogs and Military Information Strategy* outlined a plan that would allow the government to underhandedly combat the popularity of independent

bloggers and journalists. “Hiring a block of bloggers to verbally attack a specific person or promote a specific message may be worth considering,” read the report.[164]

It also suggested the government hack the blogs of journalists whose writings threaten the world view that the establishment is trying to promote and then change articles to make them say ridiculous things to ruin the credibility of those journalists.

It reads, “[T]he enemy blog might be used covertly as a vehicle for friendly information operations. Hacking the site and subtly changing the messages and data—merely a few words or phrases—may be sufficient to begin destroying the blogger’s credibility with the audience. Better yet, if the blogger happens to be passing enemy communications and logistics data, the information content could be corrupted.”[165]

A Harvard law professor named Cass Sunstein was appointed by President Obama to head the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, and just like most high level kingpins in any president’s administration; his Orwellian goals seem too strange to be true. Sunstein published a white paper in January 2008 titled *Conspiracy Theories* where he proposed that the government “might ban conspiracy theorizing” and could “impose some kind of tax, financial or otherwise, on those who disseminate such theories.”[166] The “conspiracy theories” Sunstein is looking to attack aren’t conspiracy theories at all, but rather evidence and editorials that expose information that is damaging to the establishment, such as information about the true nature of the 9/11 attacks, the War in Iraq, and any number of other issues ranging from the Bilderberg group, Bohemian Grove, Skull and Bones, and other secretive establishment organizations.

In an article Sunstein wrote for the *Journal of Political Philosophy*, he also outlined a plan for the government to infiltrate “conspiracy” websites in order to undermine them by posting absurd comments on articles and social networks. He also suggested that government operatives infiltrate

meetings held by "conspiracy theorists" in order to "(break) up the hard core of extremists who supply conspiracy theories."[167]

Sunstein said the government needed to, "Enlist nongovernmental officials in the effort to rebut the [conspiracy] theories. It might ensure that credible independent experts offer the rebuttal, rather than government officials themselves. There is a tradeoff between credibility and control, however. The price of credibility is that government cannot be seen to control the independent experts."[168]

It was also suggested that "government agents (and their allies) might enter chat rooms, online social networks, or even real-space groups and attempt to undermine percolating conspiracy theories by raising doubts about their factual premises, causal logic or implications for political action."[169] By "real-space groups" he means that agents should attend political protests and meetings in order to cause trouble, attempting to discredit the group while pretending to support their cause.

Sunstein has also called for making websites liable for comments posted in response to articles which would basically shut down any website that the government targeted with their online trolls. (A troll is a term used to identify someone online who posts comments on articles, blogs, or videos to derail the focus and to cause trouble rather than engage in a discussion about the topic at hand.) Sunstein's book, *On Rumors: How Falsehoods Spread, Why We Believe Them, What Can Be Done* was criticized by some as a blueprint for online censorship.

It's important to highlight that these ideas are not just the dreams of an obscure intellectual college professor. Cass Sunstein was appointed to a high level position in the Obama administration (the administrator of the head the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs).

Sunstein is also vehemently against the right for people to own guns. In a lecture he gave at the University of Chicago Law School on October 27, 2007 he said, "The Supreme Court has never suggested that the Second

Amendment protects an individual right to have guns."[170] Such a statement is completely false and a lie, and is another example of doublethink by an establishment insider. He continued his lecture predicting that the Second Amendment would be repealed, and the right to own guns will be a thing of the past. Sunstein is certainly not alone with his Orwellian dreams of trying to prevent alternative political views from becoming a consensus. His goals of censorship and disrupting alternative media are shared by many in the establishment, both on the left, and on the right.

In 2006, the United States Central Command, (CENTCOM, a division of the Department of Defense) hired people to engage "bloggers who are posting inaccurate or untrue information, as well as bloggers who are posting incomplete information," about the so-called war on terror.[171]

As part of government's Information Operations, the Pentagon had people set up websites designed to look like foreign news websites, whose only purpose was to publish military propaganda and make it seem like it was news.[172] Israel also has teams of people who work to flood websites with messages to support Zionists' crimes and try to deflect blame onto others.[173]

In January 2009, the US Air Force announced a "counter-blog" response plan aimed at finding and reacting to material from bloggers who have "negative opinions about the US government and the Air Force."[174]

The plan outlines a twelve-point "counter blogging" flow-chart that describes how they can handle "misguided" online writers by posting comments designed to derail the discussion causing it to drift off topic.

A leading think tank in the UK called Demos published a report in August 2010 titled *The Power of Unreason* that suggested government agents should infiltrate websites in an attempt to discredit ideas that the 9/11 attacks in America and the 7/7 bombings in London were "inside jobs." The report explained that these online agents needed to increase trust

in government and that the government needed to “fight back by infiltrating Internet sites to dispute these theories.”[175]

Jamie Bartlett, the author of the report, essentially called people who discuss “conspiracy theories” and false flag terrorism “extremists” who make stories up. The Demos think tank logo incorporates an obvious all-seeing eye as the letter “o” in their name which can be seen on their official website http://www.demos.co.uk.

Demos was co-founded in 1993 by Communist Martin Jacques, who was the editor of *Marxism Today*, the journal of The Communist Party of Great Britain. The other co-founder was Geoff Mulgan who was closely affiliated with Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Carnivore

Anyone with average intelligence knows that Internet service providers (and the government) keep databases on practically every website each individual user visits, what files you download, what links you click, and can access every e-mail you've ever sent. Some may be surprised at just how simple this is, and how long this has been possible. The all-encompassing system designed for this task was originally called Carnivore and was created by the FBI during the Clinton administration as the Internet became widely used by the public.

The public inevitably found out about Carnivore and its capabilities so the FBI later changed its name to DCS1000, which stands for Digital Collection System. This system can easily monitor a specific individual's Internet usage in real time, as well as go back and see the exact history of all Internet searches and websites they've visited, what comments they've posted on articles or social networking sites, and what files they've downloaded. It is reasonable to assume that this same system can secretly access any computer's hard drive if the computer is connected to the Internet, and the contents of that person's hard drive can be copied and analyzed, all without having physical access to the computer. The built-in webcams and microphones in laptops can also be remotely activated by authorities as well, and can be used to watch and listen to you without your knowledge. Of course, these activities are illegal without a warrant, but that is why they are highly classified. Anyone who denies that such tasks are easily carried out is simply in denial, or has no clue about what modern technology is capable of.

"As for sending a letter through the mail, it was out of the question. By a routine that was not even secret, all letters were opened in transit."[176] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Have you downloaded music or movies illegally on torrents or file sharing networks? It's usually just the large downloaders that get busted, but if Big Brother is watching you for some other reason, then you may just "coincidentally" find yourself getting arrested or sued for pirating intellectual property.

Internet service provider Earthlink has resisted the government's attempts to monitor Internet traffic through their systems, and admitted that the FBI has forced the company to allow them to tap into their system. Robert Corn-Revere, a lawyer for Earthlink said at a hearing, "We believed it would enable the government to acquire more information than the law permits, not just about the person who was the target of the investigation, but potentially about a large number of other subscribers who had nothing at all to do with the investigation…Over time, the cumulative effect of widespread surveillance for law enforcement, intelligence, and other investigatory purposes could change the climate and fabric of society in fundamental ways."[177]

In a world where George Orwell's 1984 nightmare has come true, we would expect that practically all of our communications are intercepted, monitored, analyzed, and stored indefinitely by Big Brother. Echelon and Carnivore are the two most well-known mechanisms for conducting this kind of surveillance, but for decades most of the information concerning these systems has been kept highly secret. If and when the details and capabilities of these systems are made public, it would be chilling to learn just how far-reaching they are.

In the post-9/11 world when security has become big business, many private companies are developing Big Brother technology that may rival similar government systems in hopes of identifying "troubled" people before they may "do something crazy."

At a military tech conference at the International First Responder-Military Symposium in the Town of Hamburg, New York in September

2010, one company showed off a system that's capable of listening to phone calls, reading emails, as well as people's posts on social networking sites and other areas of the Internet for what was described as "resentment towards the government."[178]

Professor Mathieu Guidere of the University of Geneva, Switzerland, explained that, "The computer system detects resentment in conversations through measurements in decibels and other voice biometrics. It detects obsessiveness with the individual going back to the same topic over and over, measuring crescendos."[179]

A similar data mining system is used on emails to detect what are allegedly patterns of fixation on specified subjects and any data that involves radicalization or ideological arguments. When demonstrating the system, Guidere invoked the memory of the September 11, 2001 attacks, saying that it can detect signs "pointing to a potential terrorist."

The system demonstrated at the conference could review about 10,000 voice or other electronic transmissions in an hour, a capacity that would soon increase to 100,000 per hour and beyond, touted the designers.

The system was even promoted as some kind of emotional stability tester that could be used to screen potential employees, war veterans, law enforcement officials, and practically anyone else unfortunate enough to be subjected to the device. "By recording the voice of the patient, the program can rate negativity and positivity with depression and other emotional disorders," said Guidere, who is working with Dr. Newton Howard, the director of MIT's Mind Machine Project, a program dedicated to building artificially intelligent machines.[180] **(*See Artificial Intelligence*)**

Telcom Immunity

It was revealed that major telecommunication companies secretly cooperated with the Bush administration to illegally wiretap phone calls of American citizens allegedly to help fight the war on terror. It turns out that the National Security Agency had entire rooms built within the major telecommunication companies in order to tap into their networks and communication hubs. The problem was, this was against the law, and while it was initially denied by the Bush administration and telecommunication executives, the large-scale wire tapping was later fully revealed.

Citizens clamored for legal action to be taken, but the Bush administration passed a law giving retroactive immunity to all of the telecom companies involved in the illegal wiretapping.[181] The message the government sent to private industries was basically that they could break the law and not worry about any legal ramifications because the government would just grant them immunity if they were ever busted.

During his presidential campaign, Barack Obama denounced the legislation granting them immunity, but when the time came to vote for the immunity, he voted to support it.[182]

Reading Your E-mails Without a Warrant

Internet giant Yahoo has battled with the government over whether or not e-mails were protected by the Constitution's requirement that a search warrant be required in order for the government to read them. To many people's surprise, it is perfectly legal for the government to read your e-mails without a warrant after they are 180 days old, but the government began pushing to read e-mails without a warrant that were not that old if the e-mails had already been read by the person receiving them. For some reason, the government insisted then, that the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution didn't apply because the e-mail had already been read.

Yahoo disagreed and refused to turn over customer e-mails to the feds that were less than 180 days old, saying it required a warrant. Google, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the Center for Democracy & Technology and other groups also told a federal judge presiding over the case that accessing e-mail less than 180 days old requires a valid warrant under the Fourth Amendment, regardless of whether it has been read.

"The government says the Fourth Amendment does not protect these e-mails," explains Kevin Bankston, an Electronic Frontier Foundation lawyer. "What we're talking about is archives of our personal correspondence that they would need a warrant to get from your computer but not from the server."[183]

The 1986 Stored Communications Act defines electronic storage as "(A) any temporary, intermediate storage of a wire or electronic communication incidental to the electronic transmission thereof; and (B) any storage of such communication by an electronic communication service for purposes of backup protection of such communication."

The government insists that the storage of previously opened e-mails does not qualify for protection, because the e-mails are not in “electronic storage” which they say enables them to read the e-mails without a warrant.

The Cybersecurity Act

The Cybersecurity Act is a bill that if passed would give the President of the United States the power to declare a “cybersecurity emergency” and shut down or limit Internet traffic in any “critical” information network “in the interest of national security.”

If the president wanted to, he could basically force major websites to be shut down for a duration of time in the immediate aftermath of a major terrorist attack or a pandemic, and even cause the visitors of those websites to be forwarded to a specific government page which would then display government propaganda with one-sided information about what had just occurred, and what actions should be taken, such as coerced evacuations or inoculations. This ability is similar to the Emergency Broadcast System installed on television networks that enables local, state, and national authorities to take over all major broadcast networks and cable channels to then broadcast a message to all viewers simultaneously on all channels.

This bill was introduced by Senator Jay Rockefeller, the great-grandson of John D. Rockefeller, nephew of banker David Rockefeller, a family that has long been a part of the secret establishment. When discussing how “dangerous” the Internet was to national security and why he felt the Cybersecurity Act was important, Jay Rockefeller stated, “It really almost makes you ask the question, would it have been better if we had never invented the Internet.”

The so-called Einstein Security Shield is reported to use NSA technology and according to the declassified summary is designed to look for indicators of cyber attacks by digging into all Internet communications, including the contents of e-mails.[184]

Hackers sent a virus to attack Iran’s new nuclear power plant in 2010; doing so much damage that it set their nuclear program back allegedly by two years.[185] In all likelihood it was an attack orchestrated by Israel to delay Iran’s nuclear program for their own self-interest. Many see cyber-security programs as power grabs by governments to more easily regulate and monitor global Internet traffic.

Some believe that Julian Assange, the famed editor of the WikiLeaks whistleblower website, was an unknowing patsy of billionaire George Soros, who people believe was funding WikiLeaks in order to create a compelling reason to pass the Cyber Security Act in order to further secure the Internet. While there is rampant speculation surrounding Julian Assange and WikiLeaks regarding their funding and the goals, Julian Assange is most likely a true activist-hacker and info-warrior who believes that he is just bringing the world the secret information the military doesn’t want people to know about concerning the true nature of the war in Iraq and the global war on terrorism.

As a result of the famous publishing of 250,000 cables (documents) in 2010, Julian Assange and the WikiLeaks supporters found themselves in a difficult dilemma, as well as the target of various conspiracy theories. They stole and leaked classified information to the public, but once that was done, then obviously the security was strengthened, making it impossible to do the same thing in the future. But some short-sighted conspiracy theorists claim WikiLeaks *only* released the 250,000 cables so the government could clamp down on cyber security, following in line with the Hegelian Dialectic of problem-reaction-solution. While this was undoubtedly a side-effect of the leaking of the classified info, it certainly was not the intention of Assange.

Cyber security measures implemented by the government will always serve as a cover to gain a more intimate look at the personal communications of everyone.

CNN’s Fake Cyber Attack Broadcast

In February of 2010, CNN aired a one hour simulation of the aftermath of a cyber attack on America. The broadcast consisted of a boardroom of high-level officials, including (former) Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte, former Director of the CIA John McLaughlin, Bill Clinton’s former press secretary Joe Lockhart, and other high-powered and well-known government officials. The group sat around and pretended to have a real discussion about how the government would deal with a cyber attack that had just shut down the Internet and electrical grids across the country.

The opening screen of the broadcast explained, “Cyber ShockWave will provide an unprecedented look at how the government would develop a real-time response to a large-scale cyber crisis affecting much of the nation.” The event took place at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Washington, D.C. on February 16, 2010. When breaking to, and coming back from commercials, CNN showed a screen saying, “we were warned,” which is what they titled their broadcast.

CNN’s Wolf Blitzer hosted the event and began by saying, “What you’re about to see is not real, but the threat is very real, indeed. You’re about to get an unprecedented look at how the US government would deal with a massive cyber shockwave.” He went on to describe the program as a cyber war game scenario.

Clips of this war game can likely be found on YouTube and show the panelists pretending to react to an actual cyber attack that just hit America. What’s fascinating about this broadcast is the seriousness and the seeming authenticity of the panelists. If you had not noticed the word “simulation”

posted in the corner of the screen, or had just listened to the broadcast, you would swear they were responding to an actual attack that just occurred.

It’s fascinating that these high-powered government officials were simply playing make-believe but all of them seemed like they could be nominated for an Academy Award for their performances. They appeared scared and were coming up with scenarios off the top of their head about what needed to be done to respond to the “attack.” What their fake concern shows is just how good of actors these people are. They looked, and sounded, no different during this session of make-believe, than they did during press conferences or during regular interviews. These powerful panelists on this war game were some of the best liars that have ever lived, and their simulation shows how easily they can look the American people in the eye and seem extremely concerned about an event, simply by acting. It was surely no coincidence that this fear-mongering simulation was broadcast at the same time the Obama administration was trying to get support for the Cybersecurity Act which grants sweeping powers to the government over the Internet.

The Way You Type Can Identify You

Some computer scientists believe that they can actually identify a person’s age, sex, and culture just from analyzing the way they type depending on their speed and rhythm. This seems like pseudoscience of course, but Professor Roy Maxion, associate professor at Newcastle University, has been researching these claims and a former Police detective Phil Butler, head of Newcastle University’s Cybercrime and Computer Security department, believes the system could be used to track online criminals and pedophiles.

“Roy’s research has the potential to be a fantastic tool to aid intelligence gathering for crime fighting agencies, in particular serious and organized crime and for those tracking down pedophiles,” Butler said.[186]

“If children are talking to each other on Windows Live or MSN Messenger, we are looking at ways of providing the chat room moderators with the technology to be able to see whether an adult is on there by the way they type,” he explained.

The basis of this technology is that each individual has identifying patterns to the way they type, and once that pattern is identified, then a program could be installed to look for that pattern to see if it shows up in a chat room.

Your Laptop is Listening to You

In 2006 it was reported that Google had discussed using the microphone that is built into all laptop computers to listen to the user and their environment and analyze the audio for keywords which would then be used to place specific advertisements on web pages that reflected conversations the microphone was picking up.[187] The lengthy user agreement that people agree to through implied consent when they log on to Google.com would include legal language that would allow this.

If this system were in place, for example, if you were talking a lot about working out or hiking when you're around your computer, the system would identify these keywords as being frequently discussed topics and would then choose specific advertisements to display as a result. It was also discussed that this system would choose advertisements based on what television or radio shows were detected playing in the background.[188] If the system detected cooking shows, your ads would be for food and kitchen related items. If you were watching football, then it would detect this and tailor the advertising accordingly.

The Onion, a popular parody and satire news site, produced a video that looked like a news segment about what they described as new software for Google's cell phone that would use voice recognition software to listen to people's conversations, and then play relevant advertisements during that conversation.[189] The writers of this sketch obviously had read the reports of Google's discussion about using the built-in microphones to listen to people and chose to satirize the idea.

Google Street View

Another Orwellian feature implemented by the Internet giant Google is their Street View feature that was launched in May 2007 and provides panoramic views from nearly every street in America and other countries around the world. Online travel map programs, such as Yahoo Maps and Google Maps, have been a favorite of many people since search engines began, but Google's Street View function allows users to choose any address in the country, and then shows them a 360 degree view of that area as it looks from the street.

For example, you can type in your address on the Google Maps page (or using your cell phone) and then select the "Street View" function, and you can then view your own house as if you are standing on the street right in front of it. You can then change the direction and position of the camera, and simulate traveling down your street as if you are in a virtual reality game. Users can even zoom in.

This Street View map was created from a fleet of cars that had special 360 degree cameras placed on the top, and then they drove down practically every street in America as the cameras captured photos of the entire journey. Later, Google used smaller vehicles and even snowmobiles to capture images of pedestrian areas, alleys, and narrow streets, and then added them to the Street View.

This feature caused some resistance by people who were upset about this invasion of their privacy, and the Department of Homeland Security even delayed the publication of certain street views in Washington, DC because they were worried that images may have been taken of some security-sensitive areas. The Department of Defense wouldn't let Google

capture images of US Military bases and had them remove certain locations from the database.

There are entire websites that contain funny and embarrassing photos that the Google Street View cameras have picked up, such as people coming out of strip clubs, passed out drunk in their yard, and women sunbathing. While some of these photos are amusing, they also illustrate just how far-reaching the eyes of Big Brother are.

Years after the Street View feature was available, it was revealed that the same cars which drove around taking the photos had also intercepted information from unsecured Wi-Fi hotspots from businesses and people’s homes. *PC World* explained, “It simply intercepted the unencrypted data that businesses and individuals beamed through the air willy-nilly. The data was left in the middle of the street so to speak, and Google gathered it as it drove through collecting photographs.”[190] Google said it was an accident and they did not plan on using the information gathered.

Social Networking Sites

Social media, or social networking sites, quickly changed the landscape of society as Facebook and Twitter rapidly gained popularity shortly after their creation. MySpace and Facebook allowed people to quickly set up their own webpage for free, and exchange photos, status updates, and messages with their friends and family, but such social media also has its downfalls. Facebook and MySpace allowed people for the first time to easily open up their entire life to the Internet, and practically anyone with a computer. Their name, birthdates, interests, friends, family members, school, place of employment, photos, and more are often published openly for the world to see.

Such media has caused many people to become extremely self-absorbed and have turned themselves into their own idol, along with their fan base of “friends” that regularly comment on their status updates or photos. Many people love the attention they get from posting a status update on any dumb thought they had that they feel is clever, and oftentimes there is no shortage of “friends” to post their comments, which are equally worthless.

Girls often like to post pretty (and slutty) photos of themselves and bathe in the attention from people’s comments as countless guys who are on their friends list tell them how beautiful they are. What is even more bizarre, is that many, if not most of the “friends” on their page, aren’t really friends at all, but just acquaintances, and many are people they’ve just met once or twice and don’t really associate with in real life. Facebook has become a cyber stalker’s dream come true. Before MySpace and Facebook, if a guy was interested in a girl he met at a party or through friends, he would have to ask for her phone number face to face in order to communicate with her again in the future, but now it is commonplace for people to look others up on Facebook, and then send them a “friend

request" which allows them to access that person's personal information, photos, status updates, and friends list.

You don't even need to know a person's full name to find them online. For example, if a guy meets a girl at a party and is interested in her (or interested in stalking her) all he does is go to the page of a person he's already friends with that he knows is friends with the girl he is interested in, and then scrolls through that person's friends list until he finds the girl he's stalking. This is easy since people are listed with their picture, as well as their first and last name. This is not looked at as creepy at all by most girls, but instead has become a normal part of our culture.

These social networking sites also have broad implications on personal relationships, as well. In the past, if two people were in a relationship or were married, then communication with ex-boyfriends, ex-girlfriends, or others who harbored a secret crush on an individual, was largely limited. But now, since practically everyone has a Facebook page, if an old high school friend who secretly had a crush on someone for years, perhaps decades, that person can now look up their crush on Facebook and establish communication with them, all without that person's significant other or spouse being aware of it. (Not to mention that person will also have instant access to information such as where their crush lives, where they work, names, photos, and ages of their kids, as well as a link to their love interest's spouse's page where they can then peer into their life as well.)

Also, in the past, when showing our family and friends photos of our life or things we've done, they had to all sit down around a table and everyone would look through the photos and talk about them, but now most photos are posted on Facebook and are widely available to the entire world. Photos of people's kids, homes, friends, and more are all just a click away. Even photos taken by other people are shown once you are tagged in them.

As you are probably familiar with, people even link up their current dating partner or spouse on their Facebook page, and then anyone can click on the link and see who that person is in a relationship with, and then view

all of their photos and learn all about them from the details of their life that are posted on their page. There is even a Facebook app for cell phones that allows people to see the physical location of their friends based on the GPS systems in their phones.[191] A feature on Twitter called Twitter Tracker also allows users to identify their location when they post their Tweets (messages).[192]

There have been numerous instances of people’s homes being burglarized while they were out of town because they posted a status update telling the world that they were going on vacation, and how long they would be gone. These were not complete strangers who burglarized people’s homes, it was people on their “friends” list who saw their status updates and knew they would be gone.[193] As you probably know, most people will accept a “friend request” from just about anybody, no matter how little they know them. Just look at the number of “friends” that some people have on Facebook, especially attractive girls. Beautiful girls often have four or five hundred, sometimes close to a thousand “friends” on Facebook or MySpace because most guys will track them down and find their page after meeting them only once and send them a friend request so they can voyeuristically peer into their life. Most girls feel bad about declining a friend request, so most people accept them all, no matter how little they know the person.

In 2009 a group of young teenagers were arrested in Los Angeles, California for burglarizing various celebrities’ homes, including Paris Hilton’s, Lindsay Lohan’s, and others. The group was called the Bling Ring by the media, and was said to have watched their celebrity targets on Facebook and Twitter to determine when they were going to be out of town, so they could then break into their houses.[194] When the celebrities posted a status update or a Tweet saying they were traveling somewhere for an event or a vacation, the Bling Ring knew their home would most likely be unoccupied. The group stole several million dollars worth of jewelry and clothes from the celebrity homes before getting caught.

Facebook and MySpace Own the Photos You Post

The media frenzy surrounding Eliot Spitzer's high class hooker scandal in 2008 brought something else to light other than the governor's scandalous sex life. What you post on social networking sites is available for the world to see. Photographs of Ashey Dupre (his alleged high-class call girl) were immediately published around the world, including pictures of her family members, all of which were taken from her MySpace page. Her lawyer threatened to sue media outlets for publishing the photos, claiming she owns the copyright to them, but let's take a closer look at what you sign away when you use MySpace or Facebook.

By simply using these websites, you agree to their Terms of Service, but who really reads that boring stuff anyway? Maybe you should. Let's look at Myspace.com first. When you post your personal and family photos on your page, you are automatically entering into a licensing agreement with MySpace and its affiliates to use your photos in any way they like. Not only can they use them, but they can edit or modify them, as well. Keep in mind that MySpace is owned by News Corporation, so people are basically giving Rupert Murdoch and his media empire, including Fox News, the New York Post, and dozens of other media outlets, permission to do whatever they want with their photos.

The Terms of Service that you agree to by using the website reads, "By displaying or publishing ("posting") any Content on or through the MySpace Services, you hereby grant to MySpace a limited license to use, modify, delete from, add to, publicly perform, publicly display, reproduce, and distribute such Content solely on or through the MySpace Services, including without limitation distributing part or all of the MySpace Website in any media formats and through any media channels."[195]

Section 6.2 of the agreement says, “MySpace is not required to pay you for the use on the MySpace Services of the Content that you post,” and that the content which they now control is, “sublicensable (so that MySpace is able to use its affiliates, subcontractors and other partners such as Internet content delivery networks and wireless carriers to provide the MySpace Services), and worldwide (because the Internet and the MySpace Services are global in reach).”

Did you understand that? You are granting them and their “affiliates, subcontractors and other partners” use of your material, all without paying you. And you thought they were *your* photos. If you have a problem with this, and post a blog about it on your MySpace page, or send out a bulletin to all your friends warning them, then MySpace can remove your bulletin or blog, and delete your account. The Terms of Service state, “MySpace reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject, refuse to post or remove any posting (including private messages) by you, or to deny, restrict, suspend, or terminate your access to all or any part of the MySpace Services at any time, for any or no reason, with or without prior notice or explanation, and without liability.”

Facebook is no different. At one time, when you would delete your account, any rights that they claimed to your content would expire, but they later updated their Terms of Service so you automatically grant them the rights (without any compensation) to any photo or anything else you post on Facebook, forever.

It reads, “You hereby grant Facebook an irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive, transferable, fully paid, worldwide license (with the right to sublicense) to (a) use, copy, publish, stream, store, retain, publicly perform or display, transmit, scan, reformat, modify, edit, frame, translate, excerpt, adapt, create derivative works and distribute (through multiple tiers), any User Content you (i) Post on or in connection with the Facebook Service or the promotion thereof subject only to your privacy settings or (ii) enable a user to Post, including by offering a Share Link on your website and (b) to use your name, likeness and image for any purpose, including commercial

or advertising, each of (a) and (b) on or in connection with the Facebook Service or the promotion thereof.”

So if you or any of your friends or family members are ever swept up in any kind of scandal, then don’t be surprised if within hours, personal photos of you or your friends or family find their way onto the cover of the *New York Post*, and are plastered all over celebrity news shows and mainstream media networks. Since you are also giving them a free license to “use your name, likeness, and image for any purpose” they could also sell your photos which could find their way onto a billboard advertising a product you’d rather not have any affiliation with.

Police on Facebook

Police in multiple cities around the country have been setting up fake accounts on Facebook using photos of attractive girls as the supposed user and then sending friend requests to students to look at their photos to see if there are any pictures of people under the age of twenty-one who can be seen holding alcoholic drinks.

One such instance that made news happened in Wisconsin in 2009 when 19-year-old Adam Bauer, a student at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, received a friend request from police posing as an attractive girl that resulted in him being charged with underage drinking. “She was a good-looking girl. I usually don’t accept friends I don’t know, but I randomly accepted this one for some reason,” he said.[196]

Shortly after he accepted the friend request from the unknown attractive girl, Bauer was confronted by police who had a photo of him from Facebook showing him holding a beer. He was then ticketed for underage drinking. At least eight students at UW Lacrosse were targeted in the same manner including one of Bauer’s friends. “I just can’t believe it. I feel like I’m in a science fiction movie, like they are always watching. When does it end?” Bauer said after his court appearance.[197]

The students said that they were being safe and partying at home and insisted that nobody was driving afterwards. La Crosse police officer Al Iverson said, “Law enforcement has to evolve with technology. It has to happen. It is a necessity—not just for underage drinking.”

This is certainly not an isolated incident of Big Brother watching Facebook. In January 2008, several teenagers were arrested in Illinois for

underage drinking after a sheriff's deputy found photos of them partying that were posted on Facebook.[198]

In February 2006, a 16-year-old boy in Colorado was arrested for juvenile possession of a firearm after police saw pictures that he had posted of himself posing with guns on MySpace.[199]

One student in Miami, Florida was arrested and charged with inciting panic after he posted a police sketch of a rape suspect as his profile picture on Facebook.[200] While certainly this was a distasteful and juvenile attempt at a joke, it certainly didn't incite a panic.

In August 2006, a student at the University of Illinois was arrested for urinating in public while another student was able to escape. The student that was originally arrested said he didn't know the name of the one who ran away, but police were able to get his name from other witnesses (who were not urinating) but were in the same group. The arresting officer then used Facebook to discover that the two students were friends, and then came back and charged the first student who was originally arrested for urinating in public with obstruction of justice because he had lied to police and said he didn't know the other student.[201]

In February 2007, eleven high school students at a Catholic school in Canada were suspended for posting negative comments about their principal on Facebook.[202] There also have been numerous reports of people being fired from their jobs after complaining about their boss or their employer in their status updates.[203]

Facebook Sells Your Personal Information

Social networking sites are a gold mine of information for advertisers and marketers. People list their favorite music, movies, TV shows, and activities on their page, and most people think this is just to inform their “friends” of what they like, but Facebook shares people’s information with “third parties,” which means advertisers and marketers.[204]

Aside from getting information listed in everyone’s profile, Facebook can also data mine status updates and search for keywords that are frequently used in people’s postings. Does the word *party* come up a lot of times in someone’s status update? Or the word *dog*, or *jogging*? Advertisers love access to this information since they can see into your life and learn what’s important to you.

Facebook has been around in its present form since 2006, and has stored practically every piece of information users have typed onto their profiles, including years worth of status updates, all of which can be sold to whoever Facebook wants. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg became a billionaire from Facebook, which is free for its millions of users, so how do you think the website generates so much money? In a transcript released in May 2010 of Zuckerberg chatting with a friend about the personal information people were posting on Facebook, Zuckerberg called the people “dumb fucks.”[205]

Twitter

The “tweets” (messages) posted on Twitter have been compared to graffiti scribbled in bathroom stalls, meaning it’s utterly worthless, but somehow Twitter became a social phenomena in 2009 after word spread that Ashton Kutcher and Oprah were having a contest to see who could reach one million followers first. This caused word of Twitter to enter the mainstream media, and immediately every news station and television show included Twitter on its list of things you should connect with them on. (Twitter.com/MarkDice for example) The only real reason for someone to have a Twitter account is if they are a celebrity or a public figure who has a fan base that want to keep up to date with what they’re doing, something that can more easily be done on Facebook since people can see others’ photos and videos as well, but somehow Twitter caught on and became very trendy in 2009. If you look at the tweets (twitter’s terminology for a message posted), one can see how useless Twitter really is, with most tweets consisting of worthless messages describing how someone’s lunch was or saying that it’s a beautiful day, but for some reason the Library of Congress decided to create an archive of every Twitter message ever posted.

The Library of Congress’s blogger Matt Raymond thought this was a great idea, saying, “I’m no Ph.D. but it boggles my mind to think what we might be able to learn about ourselves and the world around us from this wealth of data. And I’m certain we’ll learn things that none of us now can even possibly conceive.”[206] Twitter said that they would soon post every single Tweet dating back to the first one on March 21, 2006.

Twitter gives an interesting look into the minds of its users by listing what it calls “trending topics,” which are the top keywords or phrases that people post in their messages. “Tweets and other short-form updates create a history of commentary that can provide valuable insights into what’s happened and how people have reacted,” wrote Dylan Casey, Google’s

product manager for real-time search. “Want to know how the news broke about health care legislation in Congress, what people were saying about Justice Paul Stevens’ retirement or what people were tweeting during your own marathon run? These are the kinds of things you can explore with the new updates mode.”[207]

Cell Phones are Bugs

While it has been fairly well known that Echelon can detect and record practically anyone's phone conversation and has archives of countless hours of phone calls, it was surprising to learn in 2006 that law enforcement and intelligence agencies can activate the microphone on someone's cell phone and use it as a directional bug, *even when the phone is turned off*, and can then listen to conversations in the surrounding areas.[208]

The power can be off, but then with the push of a button, someone can secretly activate the microphone, and the phone will still appear to be off. This can easily be done without probable cause, and without a warrant. The only way to prevent this is to take the battery out of your phone. The microphone and webcam on your computer can be used the same way and activated remotely without your knowledge.

One might think that this technology is only something that is available to intelligence agencies such as the NSA, CIA, or the FBI, but what is even more chilling is that there are numerous websites offering such services to anyone for a small fee. Such services also allow a person to receive files of all the targeted individual's recorded phone calls, and the person doing the spying can even get a call on their own phone every time the target uses their phone so they can listen in to their conversations in real time.

This is highly illegal, but these companies are offshore, or simply offer software that allows you to do it yourself.[209] They use a disclaimer saying it's illegal to do it to anyone's phone without their knowledge or consent, but we all know they are just covering themselves legally, and are fully aware that their systems are used without the victims' knowledge.

These commercially available illegal snooping systems have practically the same capability as the FBI does, and can activate the microphone in your cell phone when it’s turned off to listen to anything in the surrounding area. The person using these illegal snooping services can also intercept all text messages, voice mails, and can listen to your phone calls in real time because they get an alert anytime your phone has a call connected.

Cell Phone Photos

As cell phones have become miniature personal computers, complete with Internet access and digital cameras, many people obviously use their phone to take photos which they later post online to Facebook or other websites. What most people are not familiar with is that every photo you take with your phone can actually be viewed and downloaded by your cell phone carrier or anyone who has access to their system.

This became clear in 2005 when a hacker was able to obtain photos taken on cell phone cameras by numerous celebrities, including Demi Moore, Ashton Kutcher, Nicole Richie, and Paris Hilton.[210] This hacker did not have access to these celebrities' phones themselves, but was able to download the photos through the Internet.

So unlike photos taken from traditional digital cameras, the ones taken by your cell phone camera are available for anyone to see who has the ability or the authority to snatch them wirelessly.

Voice Synthesizers

Another scary aspect of advancing technology are voice synthesizers that can take samples of someone's voice, and then allow someone else to speak into a microphone, and then the computer will output exactly what that person said, with the same voice inflections, but in the person's voice who has been chosen to be synthesized. They can basically fake anyone's voice and make it seem like it's someone else talking. Back in the 1990s, the Department of Defense had a system that could accomplish this. In a demonstration in 1999, the voice of General Carl W. Steiner of the U.S. Special Operations Command was made to say, "Gentlemen! We have called you together to inform you that we are going to overthrow the United States government."[211]

The implications of voice synthesizers are enormous. Imagine if someone took voice samples of you and then using the system, called your boss and told him the most offensive, crazy things, in order to get you fired. Your boss isn't going to suspect that it's a computer voice synthesizer. He's going to just think you lost your mind, or decided to tell him what you really think. What if someone synthesized your boss's voice and called you asking for important company information such as passwords or sales figures; information you would never give out to anyone except your boss, of course. What if a competitor or a thief used this system to impersonate your boss in order to get this valuable information?

Such crimes will undoubtedly become a reality and will have to be dealt with when this technology becomes widely available. You may think that caller ID would prevent this from occurring on some phones, but I'm sorry to inform you that simple systems known as caller ID spoofers can cause any name and phone number to show up on the person's phone who is receiving a call to make it look like someone else is calling.[212] It doesn't take an electrical engineer to build a home-made caller ID spoofer, because

there are simple apps for popular smart phones like the Droid and the iPhone that can be used on phones that have been jailbroken which means the limitations placed by the phone's manufacturer or cell carrier are eliminated, allowing the phone to run unapproved apps and do other things that most phones can't do. This voids your phone's warranty and can cause problems for your phone, but some people like the freedom of having jailbroken phones.

I have personally had someone demonstrate his "jailbroken" Droid phone's caller ID spoofer to me by calling my phone and making a different number appear on my caller ID. He went on to tell me how he used the app to call two different friends of his and left obnoxious voicemails on each of their phones, making it look like the people had called each other, both leaving the insulting voicemails for each other. Naturally, both of them thought the other person called them since their phone number showed up on the caller ID for the obnoxious voicemail. Most cell phones won't allow these kinds of apps in their app store for obvious reasons because you can imagine the kind of havoc that they can cause.

It's only a matter of time before visual synthesizers are able to easily create fake video footage as well, possibly in real-time. Many people were surprised when the 1994 film *Forest Gump* made it look like Tom Hanks' character was shaking the hand of President John F. Kennedy, when he'd been dead for decades by the time *Forest Gump* was filmed. In the following years this same technology was used to produce new commercials selling various products with celebrity pitchmen who had been dead for years. People seemed to be disturbed by these commercials and this practice rapidly diminished, but the technology continued to advance.

Technology had advanced so much from the making of *Forest Gump* in 1994, when the sequel of *Tron* was released in 2010, audiences learned that the lead actor Jeff Bridges had his face digitally morphed to make him look like he was 35 years old again, just like he was at the time the original film was released in 1982, even though now he was in his 60's. Not only that, but the studio also digitally placed his new younger face on a completely different actor's body for the entire film!

It was also around this same time that a news story surfaced explaining that George Lucas (writer and producer of the *Star Wars* franchise) was buying the rights to dead actors so he can use their likeness in future films by digitally bringing them back from the dead.[213]

This news prompted actors to begin outlining their wishes regarding their likeness in any future films they may appear in after they are dead. It is now common for actors to list restrictions in their wills regarding this kind of resurrection technology in order to prevent their estate, family members, or any film studios from using their likeness in a future film they wouldn't agree with.

"There were huge printing shops with their sub-editors, their typography experts, and their elaborately equipped studios for the faking of photographs. There was the teleprograms sections with its engineers, its producers, and its teams of actors especially chosen for their skill in imitating voices."[214] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Supermarket Club Cards

You probably have one, or several, supermarket “club” cards or “membership cards” that many grocery stores give out to their customers for free that allow you discounts on many different items. As you know, these cards aren’t typical membership cards like a Costco card that you have to pay for, but are instead offered to every customer for free, and are scanned at the register when you pay, often saving you a few dollars. When you filled out the application to get your card, most of them asked for your full name, address, birth date, and phone number.

Most people forget they gave that information to the store and don’t realize the store is creating a huge database of your purchasing history, even if you pay with cash. This information is sold to telemarketers or advertising agencies that can then have an intimate look at what kinds of products you’re interested in. People even fear that this information is, or one day will be, sold to health insurance companies and can be used to justify premium increases based on what kinds of food a person consistently buys and how often they buy it. Such fears are not completely unwarranted.

There is a way around this (at least for now there is) by simply filling out a fake name, address and telephone number on the applications for these club cards. It’s been my personal experience that they don’t check your driver’s license to see if the name and address match with the application, so you can do this if it makes you feel more comfortable. You would of course have to make all your purchases in cash because if you use your debit card, credit card, or even an old fashioned check, then your name will be linked to the items and the bank can sell this information to health providers or anyone else. Cash, of course, will most likely be phased out and replaced entirely by an electronic currency in the future, or cash purchases may require you to swipe your driver’s license or government

issued ID card, so even if you pay with cash, everything you purchase will still be linked to you.

If you are naive and think your friendly local supermarket isn’t keeping tabs on everything you buy, you are wrong. In March 2010, the purchasing history from a grocery store was used to track down people who purchased salami that was feared to be contaminated with salmonella.[215] In this case, the database of customers could have saved people the aggravation of possibly getting sick from salmonella, but it also illustrates the reach of Big Brother in the most unexpected places. Big Brother is watching what you eat.

Data Mining

Data mining is the process of searching for patterns in massive amounts of data. There are several major companies that compile enormous amounts of data on people and sell this information to advertisers and marketers. It is truly staggering to learn the amount of data these companies have on people, and what that data is used for. Many of these databases have records of people's marital status, ages of their children, income, value of their home and cars, as well as their occupation, religion, ethnicity, and even social security numbers and medical information. These lists have been sold to marketers and advertisers for decades so they can target specific types of people for their products, but after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the government began using commercial databases like ChoicePoint, LexusNexus, Acxiom, and others to search for links between suspected terrorists.

To give you an idea of just how large these data mining companies are, in February 2008, ChoicePoint was purchased by Reed Elsevier in a cash deal for $3.6 billion dollars. ChoicePoint has more than 17 billion records of individuals and businesses, which it sells to an estimated 100,000 different clients, including 7,000 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.[216] When one learns that these companies do more than simply maintain a database of details about people, it can be truly worrisome what their systems are capable of doing.

ChoicePoint has a system they call NORA (Non-Obvious Relationship Awareness) that can find relationships between people in ways you couldn't imagine. In 1994 the MGM casino in Las Vegas started using the NORA system to find out whether or not any high-rollers had ties to the dealers or employees that could be used in cheating or otherwise scamming the casino. The system could also detect whether people kicked out of the casino for

card counting or cheating had any personal ties to employees who may have been in on the scam.

The NORA system can display a chart or list of people's relationships to others that are not noticeable on the surface. For example, if a dealer at the casino had a brother who was roommates with someone who won big at that dealer's table, the system would know and the dealer would be suspected of helping that person win and be in on the scam. The system can determine whether people frequently go to the same restaurant, attend the same church, have mutual friends, etc.

The Direct Marketing List Source is a document consisting of 1600 pages that contains information such as people's names, ages, addresses, what books they buy, magazines they subscribe to, what they buy online, etc. It also has a list called the Gay America Megafile with almost 700,000 names of people that the database has identified as being homosexual. The list is considered the Bible of mailing lists.

Data mines can calculate how much a bachelor usually spends on a weekend out, and where, and can determine whether or not he enters into a relationship or if he has gotten married. Marketers then know what other products they can market to him due to his changing lifestyle.

A company called Elensys obtained prescription records from pharmacies and then sent out material to those customers targeting them depending on what ailments they had or what medication they were taking. After this was made public, CVS pharmacy purchased full page ads in major newspapers apologizing for selling their customer's private information.[217]

Another major company in this field, Axciom, has a service they call InfoBase TeleSource, which is a system that companies with toll free telephone numbers use to identify the names and other information about people who call in. Even people who block their caller ID or people who have unlisted numbers are still identified by this system.[218] If someone calls

in to an 800 number asking about a particular product, the person answering the phone has information pop up on their screen such as the person's name, address, and even what kind of home they live in, the cars the person owns, and whether they are a member of a health club or a gym.

A special airing originally in 2006 on CNBC called *Big Brother, Big Business* showed a fancy restaurant in New York using a similar system to identify people when they called in to make reservations, and allows the staff to create profiles for customers that include information such as when their birthday is, or if they were a "difficult" customer in the past.

In 1998, a company called Image Data began purchasing drivers license pictures from the DMV and using them in the private sector. They designed a system for retail stores that would display people's pictures on a screen when they swiped their credit card so the clerk could confirm that it was the person, and not someone else using the card.[219] Image Data had received $1.5 million dollars from the Secret Service to develop the project.[220] When it was discovered that the DMV offices were selling people's pictures and personal information to a private company, some DMVs were pressured to stop this practice.

Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, the government started its own data mining operation they called the MATRIX, [Multistate Anti-Terrorism Information Exchange Program] that used a variety of commercial and government databases to search for links between suspects or to identify any unusual behavior such as strange purchases or money transfers. The MATRIX system could do a search for all the people who have blond hair, are six feet tall, drive a black convertible, who work as an accountant, and who live in a particular zip code. The MATRIX program was shut down in June 2005 after funding was cut, largely as a result of concerns over privacy, but it is likely the technology was absorbed into other government agencies.

Another element used by casinos to maximize their profits is a system called a "Total Rewards" card used by Harrah's casinos that track players'

winnings and losses. The casino has calculated a “pain point” that they determine is the maximum amount a person is willing to lose which may leave them with a negative feeling about the casino causing them never to return. If a player’s pain point is approaching because their losses are mounting, then that person will be approached by a staff member and offered a free dinner to make them feel better about their experience at the casino, causing them to likely return and not leave feeling like they had wasted all of their money. The people offered the free dinner have no idea they are specifically chosen for this reason, and just think the casino gives away random dinners to anyone.

Through data mining, the Canadian Tire company has determined that people who purchase carbon-monoxide detectors, birdseed, and pads for the bottom of chair legs rarely miss a payment on a credit card. “If you show us what you buy, we can tell you who you are, maybe even better than you know yourself,” said a former Canadian Tire executive.[221] Cable and satellite TV companies know what shows are watched in your home, and digital recording services like Ti-Vo and AT&T’s U-verse know what shows you record. If your name is on the cable bill, then you are linked in a database to the shows that are watched and recorded. What you watch on television on a regular basis says a lot about you, and marketing companies like to know these things.

If you choose to use mainly cash for your day to day purchases of food, clothes, gas, etc, are these artificially intelligent systems and complex algorithms going to flag you for being suspicious? The government doesn’t like people who pay cash, since they are more difficult to monitor, so this alone could flag you for closer analysis.

The system will know you use cash for most purchases, because it will see a lack of purchases using a debit card or credit card. It may not know *what* you spend that cash on, but it surely notices if you cash your paychecks or withdraw large amounts of cash from your account on a regular basis, and this is seen as suspicious.

If a person is a political activist or a journalist who is causing trouble for the establishment or a particular president, could that person then be flagged for an audit in attempts to disrupt or discourage his activity? Could he be listed as a trouble maker so the next time he is pulled over for going five miles an hour over the speed limit, the officer will see that he is a “troublemaker” and give him the ticket instead of let him off with a warning?

Could these systems falsely list you as dangerous because of your political affiliations so when a future potential employer does a background check on you, the report lists you as a subversive person or an “extremist?” What if the employer disagrees with your political views or activism that shows up listed in your background check and chooses not to hire you because of this? You would have no way of knowing why they actually decided to hire someone else. If you return too many items to stores in order to get a refund, you may be identified as a “returnaholic,” and may be flagged as someone who buys a product to use it for a while and then returns it.[222]

Did you purchase a blow up doll as a joke for a friend’s bachelor party? Your name might then be added to certain mailing lists and you could now start receiving junk mail from sex shops or escort services.

There are numerous publicly available websites that disclose all kinds of information about people, sometimes for free, and others for only a small fee. These services offer people’s address, phone numbers, birthdates, criminal history, and much more. One service has a slogan saying they are “not your grandma’s phone book.” Some available features include an e-mail lookup which allows you to enter in someone’s e-mail address and then the website searches through a massive list of websites to see if any accounts were opened from that e-mail, and then lists them. A person’s Facebook page, and even Amazon.com and other online retailers such as Target.com can show up as having accounts linked to a person’s e-mail address.

If you pay a small monthly fee on some of these services you can get photos of the people as well and see what they've been posting online and get other information such as their income and credit score. Most of these services also offer what is called a reverse telephone directory, which allows you to enter in a person's phone number and it will then reveal the name and address of the person who has that number.

A Michigan University academic named Arthur R. Miller published a book back in 1971 titled *The Assault on Privacy* where he wrote, "The new information technologies seem to have given birth to a new social virus —'data-mania.' We must begin to realize what it means to live in a society that treats information as an economically desirable commodity and a source of power."

During a special interview on *CNBC* titled "Inside the Mind of Google," the company's CEO Eric Schmidt was asked about privacy concerns involving the information age and Google's domination of the Internet, to which he answered, "If you have something that you don't want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn't be doing it in the first place."

Web Bugs in Microsoft Word Documents

It was discovered that Microsoft Word documents, as well as Excel spreadsheets and PowerPoint slide show files, can be embedded with tracking tags called Web Bugs that gather information about who opens the documents and when.

The Web Bugs were discovered by Richard Smith, the chief technology officer at the Privacy Foundation. “What this means basically is that if an author of a document for whatever reason cares about who is reading it, he can bug it and then monitor it,” Smith said. “They can find out the IP address and host name of whoever is reading the document.”[223]

There are numerous ways that this tracking method can be used, such as embedding the bugs into company documents so they can be tracked to see who is reading them and can trace back the electronic trail if a document was leaked to the press, for example. The person who embedded the Web Bug can also track how often a particular file is opened. If someone cuts a portion of text from a document that is being tracked, and pastes it into a new document, then unbeknownst to them, the Web Bug is also transferred and continues its tracking capabilities. There is also talk of similar tracking bugs being placed in other file formats as well, such as MP3 files or video files.

Once a Web Bug is placed in a document (or other file), it transmits information over the Internet to the person who planted it so they can monitor the file. Since practically every computer is almost always online, this is extremely simple.

Cryptome.com, a hacker and whistleblower site created by John Young and Deborah Natsios in 1996, was taken off the web briefly in February

2010 as a punishment after they posted a secret handbook written by Microsoft that was meant only for law enforcement that educated them about certain Big Brother capabilities the software giant built into their products.[224]

The document, titled *Microsoft Online Services Global Criminal Compliance Handbook*, is only 22 pages long and was described by PC World magazine as a “data-hunting guide for dummies” that shows law enforcement how to access the vast information Microsoft stores about people when they use products like Hotmail, Windows Live Messenger, MSN, Microsoft Office Live, Xbox Live, and others.

Someone who knows how to maneuver through these systems can access all kinds of personal information such as user names and passwords, along with web browsing history, etc. Xbox Live, an online gaming platform for the Xbox 360 game console, stores a user’s full name, credit card information, phone number, email address, and more. There have actually been several Xbox video game systems recovered by police after they were able to track down the stolen Xbox when the thief logged on to Xbox Live, the online gaming community. In one instance police tracked the thief’s IP address and then were able to trace back which store their Live unit was purchased at. The person’s name was then found in the store’s computer linked to that item, and police went to the address and discovered the stolen Xbox 360.[225]

Tracking Documents You Print

While it should be common knowledge that the government and computer savvy hackers can track a person's Internet usage and search through the contents of a person's hard drive, most people would never imagine that a simple document printed from their computer could be traced back to them, especially if it were something like a page of text that had no personal information on it.

Laser printers are no longer expensive units only used by large companies for high page count documents and rapid printing. Laser printers have become common in households due to their quality and dramatically lower prices than in the past. But what nobody really knows is that most manufactures secretly designed a feature into laser printers and photocopiers that encode the printer's serial number onto each page that is printed by using a series of tiny dots that most people can't even see with the naked eye. Of course, consumers are not told of this process, and printer manufacturers like to keep quiet about it.

Peter Crean, a senior researcher at Xerox, admitted his company's laser printers, copiers, and multifunction workstations, all secretly put the serial number of each machine coded in little yellow dots on every printout that can't be seen by the naked eye. "It's a trail back to you, like a license plate," Crean said.[226]

The reason for the secret encoding is said to assist in fighting counterfeit money and fraudulent documents, and is a method that has been used since the 1980s. "The industry absolutely has been extraordinarily helpful [to law enforcement]," says Lorelei Pagano, a counterfeiting specialist with the US Secret Service, the agency in charge of tracking counterfeiters.[227]

Peter Crean of Xerox said the government worked with the company to develop the technology in the 1980s because of fears that their advanced copiers could easily be used to print counterfeit money.

It’s likely that the Secret Service or other government agencies can use the Carnivore system to send out pings searching for a specific printer serial number that can be detected if the printer is installed on a computer that is connected to the Internet. Of course, when a printer is purchased, the serial number is linked to the person’s credit card or checking account who bought it. While it may be tough to argue that this technology isn’t good for catching counterfeiters, what else could it be used for?

What if a government whistle blower prints out sensitive and damaging documents and anonymously (or so he thinks) sends them to the media? He could then, without even suspecting it, be linked to the documents. Did you design and print out some inflammatory leaflets about a powerful senator or congressperson and put them on people’s doors in your community? These flyers could be traced back to you.

Radiation Intelligence

People may think that if a computer isn’t connected to the Internet that their data is secure, but they are wrong again. Computer monitors, including LCD screens, give off a measurable amount of radiation that can be detected using what is called radiation intelligence (RINT) or Van Eck phreaking.

A Dutch computer scientist named Wim van Eck discovered this in 1985 and published the first paper on the subject, hence the term Van Eck phreaking. In computer hacking, the term “phreaking” is a slang term referring to hacking or experimenting with telecommunication systems, often in underhanded ways.

Some people thought that Van Eck phreaking could only be used on older tube monitors, and not newer LCD flat screens, but in April 2004, a research team at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom showed that LCD monitors were also vulnerable to electromagnetic eavesdropping. The team built equipment capable of doing this at the university lab for less than $2000.[228]

Van Eck phreaking was used to test the security of electronic voting systems in Brazil in 2009 and was found to be able to monitor the voting machines, thus compromising the secrecy of the voting process.[229]

Keyboard Loggers and Backdoors

Commercially available software programs called keyboard loggers can easily be installed on someone's computer which then can capture and record everything the person does, including what they type in a word processor, their e-mails, and even bank passwords and login information for other sensitive accounts. Such programs are often used by suspicious spouses who want to find evidence of their significant other cheating, but more sinister motives such as stealing people's passwords or business data are also reasons people install the software on others' computers.

Such software also often creates a secret backdoor allowing people to access a person's computer, and their files without them knowing. In 1999, NetBus software was used to plant child pornography on the computer of a professor at Lund University in Sweden. Thousands of images were found by the system administrators, and of course, they assumed that the professor had downloaded them himself. The professor was fired and charged with possession of child pornography but later acquitted after authorities had learned that NetBus had been installed on his computer allowing someone to control it without his knowledge or consent.[230] The man was reported to have suffered severe psychological damage from the incident, which is completely understandable. After all, if such disgusting material was discovered on your computer and you were charged with possession of child pornography but knew you didn't have anything to do with it, you would certainly have a difficult time defending yourself and clearing your name from being attached to such a deplorable act.

In Neil Strauss's 2005 bestselling book, *The Game*, which is a memoir of his time hanging out with pickup artists and guys who were teaching seminars on how to meet girls, he said that he discovered someone had put a keyboard logger on his computer and suspected it was one of his roommates who had started his own rival seminar company. Such

businesses can be fairly lucrative and Strauss’s roommate wanted to corner the market and learn what his competition was doing.

Photocopier Hard Drives

A story airing on *CBS News* in April 2010 showed a warehouse in New Jersey that was described as having 6,000 used photocopiers that were for sale, and almost every one of them had a hard drive that recorded every single document that was photocopied on each machine during its existence. Apparently all digital copiers built since 2002 contain hard drives which can store tens of thousands of images.

Think of the kinds of documents that people copy. Bank statements, credit card statements, income tax forms, birth certificates, and more. All of which are stored on the machine's hard drive without your knowledge or consent.

The *CBS News* segment equipped a man with a hidden camera and sent him off shopping to buy a used copier from one of dozens of large warehouses that are in the used copier business. He bought three different copiers for around $300 each. After all the contents of the hard drives were examined, it was revealed that one machine came from the sex crimes division from the police department in Buffalo, New York. Some documents on the hard drive were copies of domestic violence disputes and lists of sex offenders. Other documents were lists of targets in a drug investigation. On another machine they found 95 pages of pay stubs complete with people's names, addresses, and social security numbers.

The third machine, they discovered, came from a health insurance company, and they were able to print out hundreds of pages of confidential medical records including people's prescriptions, blood test results, and a cancer diagnosis.

Ordering a Pizza in the Future

A funny, yet disturbing, video can be found on YouTube if you search for “ordering a pizza in the future” that depicts someone calling a fictitious pizza place to order a pizza and discovers just how all-knowing Big Brother is. When a man calls into the restaurant, the person on the other end of the phone picks up and already knows who he is, where he lives, and the last time he called. When the customer orders two double meat pizzas he is informed that there will be an additional $20 charge on his bill because the computer system has access to his health records and shows that he has high blood pressure and high cholesterol. The screen then shows the man’s bill includes the $20 “health surcharge” because his health insurance provider now knows he’s ordering a fatty pizza.

The man is also informed of an added $15 “delivery surcharge” to cover the added risk to their delivery driver for delivering to an orange zone which signified a high crime neighborhood. When the customer surprisingly asks to clarify that he lives in an orange zone, the order-taker acknowledges a recent change in status due to a robbery near his home that the computer database shows.

When the customer starts complaining about his $67 bill for two pizzas, the woman on the line pulls up his recent purchase of two tickets to Hawaii and hassles him about it, saying he shouldn’t complain about spending that much money on two pizzas because he just spent $800 on plane tickets for a vacation.

He then changes his order to a vegetarian pizza to save money since he won’t have to pay the extra $20 health surcharge, and the order taker says it’s a good choice and will be good for his waist line as she pulls up a screen

of “recent purchases” and shows that the man just bought a new pair of jeans with a 42 inch waistline.

The video is great satire showing just how invasive Big Brother can be, and how with everything we do being stored in databases, the information can easily be sold to practically anyone and used in ways we would prefer it not be. There have been reports years ago that certain pizza delivery restaurants were checking people’s names who ordered pizzas to see if they had any warrants out for their arrest when they paid with a credit card over the phone. If a warrant was listed, instead of having a pizza delivery driver show up to the house, the police would arrive to arrest the person.

Orwellian Government Programs

While the "alphabet agencies" (CIA, NSA, FBI, ATF, etc.) have access to incredible Big Brother technology and countless commercial and government databases, there are also creepy Orwellian projects that have been secretly created and funded by elements within the government for the purpose of maintaining the power of the ruling elite.

Many of these programs used (and continue to use) underhanded and often illegal methods to accomplish their goals which range from controlling the mainstream media to covertly trying to smear, intimidate, blackmail, or even assassinate people who pose a threat to the establishment.

Often Orwellian goals are defended by the government claiming that such measures are needed to keep people safe from criminals or terrorists, but it is often the very people working for these programs who are the criminals. Immediately after the September 11th attacks of 2001, the government fear-mongering began and was used as a justification for subverting the Constitution of the United States and implementing the long-awaited Orwellian dreams of the establishment. Any resistance to the new tyrannical, invasive, and unconstitutional measures was attacked as being unpatriotic. Officials would continuously say that we needed to give up some of our freedoms in order to keep people safe from terrorists, who were said to lurk around every corner.

Thomas Jefferson famously stated, "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Jefferson obviously knew the strategy of tyrannical leaders and how they use fear-mongering as a justification to increase their power and trample over their population.

Operation Mockingbird

A major system that Big Brother uses to control the population is the mainstream media. This amazing propaganda machine has the ability to shape the culture and the mindset of a nation by the information the owners choose to broadcast on a daily basis. The character Howard Beal famously ranted about the power of television in the 1976 film *Network*, telling his audience, “This tube can make or break presidents, popes, prime ministers...This tube is the most awesome God-damned force in the whole godless world, and woe is us if it ever falls into the hands of the wrong people.”

Intelligent people have varying degrees of awareness that the US government is in bed with the mainstream media, and anyone who monitors the news media with discerning eyes can often easily identify specific stories and strategies that are being used to persuade and intimidate the population. As enlightened people know, the mainstream media operates both as a propaganda arm for the establishment, as well as a gate-keeper that prevents certain information from being disseminated to the masses.

The evidence for these charges is massive and irrefutable. The most damning of which comes from the findings of a Senate Select Committee in 1975 that investigated the American government’s covert influence over the mainstream media, including broadcast news, newspapers, and magazines. The committee, called the Church Committee, published its findings in 1976 and uncovered what was called Operation Mockingbird, which involved the CIA secretly paying editors of major media institutions and popular journalists to act as gate-keepers and propagandists for the establishment.

“The invention of print, however, made it easier to manipulate public opinion, and the film and radio carried the process further.”[231] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

In 1948 an espionage and counter-intelligence branch within the CIA was created for the purpose of “propaganda, economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance groups, and support of indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the free world.”[232]

Later that year Operation Mockingbird was established to influence the domestic and foreign media. Philip Graham, the owner of *The Washington Post*, was recruited to help run the project within the industry and develop a network of assets who would go along with the program. After 1953, the network had influence over twenty-five different newspapers and wire agencies. The Mockingbird program also involved all major television stations.

Thomas Braden, who was the head of the International Organizations Division of the CIA, played a substantial role in Operation Mockingbird and later revealed, “If the director of the CIA wanted to extend a present, say, to someone in Europe—a Labour leader—suppose he just thought, this man can use fifty thousand dollars, he’s working well and doing a good job—he could hand it to him and never have to account to anybody... There was simply no limit to the money it could spend and no limit to the people it could hire and no limit to the activities it could decide were necessary to conduct the war—the secret war...It was multinational.”[233]

According to the Church Committee’s report, which was published in 1976, “The CIA currently maintains a network of several hundred individuals around the world who provide intelligence for the CIA and at times attempt to influence opinion through the use of covert propaganda. These individuals provide the CIA with direct access to a large number of newspapers and periodicals, scores of press services and news agencies,

radio and television stations, commercial book publishers, and other foreign media outlets."[234]

The committee also concluded that the cost of the program was approximately $265 million a year, which when adjusted for inflation as of 2010 means that in today's dollars the program was spending an astounding one billion dollars a year.

One year after the Church Committee released its findings, *Rolling Stone* magazine published an article on Operation Mockingbird and named various prominent journalists who were alleged to be involved with it. Some of these included Ben Bradlee, who wrote for *Newsweek*, Stewart Alsop who wrote for the *New York Herald Tribune*, James Reston (*New York Times*), Charles Douglas Jackson (*Time Magazine*), Walter Pincus (*Washington Post*), William C. Baggs (*The Miami News*), and others.

In 2007, a large amount of CIA documents called the "Family Jewels" were declassified and released by the National Security Archive, which revealed that the CIA had routinely wiretapped Washington-based news reporters and committed other shady and illegal practices. The targets of these wiretaps were most likely seen as threats to the establishment and were not playing along with the propaganda and gate-keeping efforts within the media establishment, so the CIA wanted to keep a close eye on them and gather information on their sources and future stories.

As with nearly every other case of rampant institutional corruption in government agencies, the CIA claims to have ended Operation Mockingbird and their influence over the media—another claim that is laughable. The power of the mass media to control society is too great for the establishment not to do everything they can to harness it for their own benefit.

The man credited with being the father of public relations is named Edward Bernays, who was a master of social engineering, propaganda, and shaping public opinion early in the twentieth century. He was also the nephew of the famous psychologist Sigmund Freud. In 1928 Bernays

published a book titled *Propaganda* that described his methods for shaping public opinion and people’s attitudes and behaviors. A quick glance over several of the excerpts from *Propaganda* reveals just how powerful the control of information is to a government.

Bernays wrote, “Those who manipulate the unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. This is a logical result of the way in which our democratic society is organized. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society. In almost every act of our lives whether in the sphere of politics or business in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires that control the public mind.”[235]

This is strikingly parallel to what George Orwell wrote in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* when he said, “All the beliefs, habits, tastes, emotions, mental attitudes that characterize our time are really designed to sustain the mystique of the Party and prevent the true nature of present-day society from being perceived.”[236]

Bernays can be largely credited with making cigarette smoking socially acceptable, and appear to be cool. In 1929 he was hired by the American Tobacco Company, which was one of the original 12 companies comprising the Dow Jones Industrial Average, in order to help promote smoking. The way he did this was by hiring a group of attractive female models to march in the New York City parade and planned to have them light up cigarettes to shatter the taboo of women smoking in public. Bernays also contacted the press saying that the women would light up “Torches of Freedom” in support of women’s rights. The next day, the *New York Times* ran an article headlined, “Group of Girls Puff at Cigarettes as a Gesture of Freedom.”[237]

Bernays was also the man responsible for diamond rings being synonymous with marriage and love. The De Beers diamond company hired him to shape the public’s mind into associating a diamond ring with love. Before this, women’s wedding rings were primarily a simple gold band, but Bernays was able to use propaganda to convince both men and women that if a man is to propose to a woman, he needs to do so with a large diamond ring.

Bernays sat on the board of the U.S. Committee on Public Information (CPI), which was a government agency set up specifically to influence public opinion in support of America’s role in World War I and to help sell the war to the public.

Only a complete moron would think that government agencies don’t continue to massively influence the mainstream media today. Even those who expect such manipulation are often surprised to learn the extent of it and its power.

COINTELPRO

A truly Orwellian scheme conducted by the FBI admittedly between 1956 and 1971 is COINTELPRO (an acronym for Counter Intelligence Program) which illegally investigated and disrupted political organizations, religious organizations, civil liberty groups, anti-war groups and others that were deemed problematic by the establishment. COINTELPRO and the illegal and sinister activities carried out by the program are fully admitted by the FBI, although after its discovery they claimed that they stopped using such tactics. Common sense says otherwise.

The original program targeted people and groups seen as “subversive” or that threatened the establishment’s hold on power. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders in the civil rights movement and those associated with the NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), and the Southern Poverty Law Center were targeted, as well as groups protesting the Vietnam War, including many college students. J. Edgar Hoover, who was the head of the FBI at the time, had ordered agents to “expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize” the leaders and activities of such groups.[238] It’s important to understand that most of the groups and the targets of COINTELPRO were not doing anything threatening, criminal, or dangerous, and were only trying to change society for the better by encouraging civil rights or protesting the Vietnam War. But this is not what the establishment wanted.

Agents involved in the program did a lot of illegal, underhanded, and dirty tricks to disrupt their targets; including mailing fraudulent letters to leaders of organizations claiming to be from someone else with accusations that someone’s wife was cheating on them. Illegal wire taps, spreading false and slanderous rumors about people, frame-ups, vandalism, and worse were all common and are still methods used today by elite law enforcement and intelligence agents to disrupt, discourage or discredit their targets.

The PATRIOT ACT

“The consciousness of being at war, and therefore in danger, makes the handing-over of all power to a small caste seem the natural, unavoidable condition of survival.”[239] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

In response to the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks on America, Congress quickly passed the PATRIOT ACT on October 26, 2001, which granted the government a wide range of unconstitutional powers so officials could allegedly prevent further terrorist attacks. Any resistance to the bill was countered with claims that those people were un-American or wanted to help the terrorists. The very name for the bill, the “Patriot Act” was chosen to give the impression that if you were a patriotic American who loved his country, then you should support the bill. (Full title: *The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001*, which was designed to spell, “USA PATRIOT Act”)

The bill passed 98-1 in the Senate, and 356-66 in the House of Representatives. Senator Russ Feingold of Wisconsin was the only United States Senator to vote against the bill because he saw some of the provisions stripped civil liberties guaranteed by the Constitution.

Feingold said, “Of course, there is no doubt that if we lived in a police state, it would be easier to catch terrorists. If we lived in a country that allowed the police to search your home at any time for any reason; if we lived in a country that allowed the government to open your mail, eavesdrop on your phone conversations, or intercept your e-mail communications; if we lived in a country that allowed the government to hold people in jail indefinitely based on what they write or think, or based on mere suspicion that they are up to no good, then the government would no doubt discover and arrest more terrorists. But that probably would not be a country in which we would want to live."[240]

The bill is 342 pages long with 1,016 sections and amended over 15 federal statutes, and contains numerous Executive Orders, regulations, and new policies aimed at "fighting terrorism." Many of these new powers allowed the government to engage in secret surveillance, and even commit "sneak and peeks" which means that a person's house can be searched without his knowledge, while that person is not even served with a search warrant (or aware the search took place) until months later. If a neighbor happens to see a sneak and peak going on and starts asking questions, then that person can be placed under a gag order and legally cannot mention anything to anybody about what they saw.

The Patriot Act even allowed for people to be detained for months without even being charged with a crime, a clear violation of the Sixth Amendment. In the first year after it was signed into law, more than 1,000 non-citizens were secretly detained without being charged and their identities were not released. Thousands more were placed under surveillance.

"In the vast majority of cases there was no trial, no report of the arrest. People simply disappeared."[241]

—*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

In a speech to a Senate Judiciary Committee on December 6, 2001, John Ashcroft (the Attorney General at the time), tried to demonize people who voiced opposition or disagreement with the powers granted by the Patriot Act saying, "to those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty; my message is this: Your tactics only aid terrorists—for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve. They give ammunition to

America’s enemies, and pause to America’s friends. They encourage people of good will to remain silent in the face of evil.”

Ashcroft’s claim is in stark contrast to what Thomas Jefferson said about liberty, when he said that people who give up freedom in order to gain security will have neither freedom nor security.

In section 802 of the Patriot Act under the *Definition of Domestic Terrorism*, the language defines the new meaning of the term “domestic terrorist.” It reads:

`(5) the term `domestic terrorism' means activities that–

`(A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State;

`(B) appear to be intended–

`(i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;

`(ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or

`(iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping;

While everyone would agree that kidnapping, assassination or mass destruction would certainly be terrorism, “intimidating” the civilian population or attempting to influence policy of the government by

“coercion or intimidation” could be applied to ordinary political rhetoric. It has been said by critics of the Patriot Act that the Bush administration was guilty of intimidating the population by fabricating and exaggerating threats that led to the Iraq War. Others argue the Patriot Act was a power grab by the government and there were already provisions in place to investigate and prevent terrorist attacks, and capture the perpetrators.

Constitutional Protections Eliminated by the Patriot Act

First Amendment Freedom of religion, speech, assembly, and the press.

Fourth Amendment

Freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures.

Fifth Amendment

No person to be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law.

Sixth Amendment

Right to a speedy public trial by an impartial jury, right to be informed of the facts of the accusation, right to confront witnesses and have the assistance of counsel.

Eighth Amendment

No excessive bail or cruel and unusual punishment shall be imposed.

Fourteenth Amendment All persons (citizens and noncitizens) within the US are entitled to due process and the equal protection of the laws.

Information Awareness Office

The Information Awareness Office (IAO) was an intelligence-based office within the United States government that was created in January 2002, by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to work on surveillance and information technology to discover and track “terrorists.” It was started under the direction of John Poindexter, who was the former National Security Advisor for President Reagan.

Poindexter wanted the system to analyze people’s travel patterns, money transactions, and even unusual medical activities such as treatment for anthrax sores, which could mean that someone was cooking up the poison themselves. Poindexter himself has a shady past, and during the Iran-Contra hearings he responded to questions 184 times saying he didn’t remember the details.

The logo for the IAO cannot get any more Orwellian, and consists of a pyramid with an all-seeing eye on the top, similar to the one on the back of the one dollar bill, with a beam of light shining out of it and covering the entire globe which is shown in the foreground. The office originally used the term Total Information Awareness as its goal, but was later changed to Terrorism Information Awareness to sound less Orwellian.

When news was first uncovered about the Information Awareness Office and its goals of creating huge databases from personal information of every person in the United States, including e-mails, phone records, and medical records, all without a search warrant, civil libertarians expressed concern.[242]

The office also called for a massive biometric program including facial recognition systems and cameras that can identify people by the way they

walk. A special data mining system was also implemented for the IAO which they called Evidence Extraction and Link Discovery that can find relationships “among people, organizations, places, and things.” The CIA created a data-mining program called Quantum Leap, which one official told *Fortune* magazine was, “so powerful it’s scary.”[243]

New York Times columnist William Safire wrote, “This is not some far-out Orwellian scenario. It is what will happen to your personal freedom in the next few weeks if John Poindexter gets the unprecedented power he seeks. This ring-knocking master of deceit is back again with a plan even more scandalous than Iran-Contra.”[244]

In 2003, after much public criticism, the office had its funding cut and it was supposedly shut down, although its objectives and operations have continued under other names and in other departments.[245] [246]

As common sense suggests, data mines and surveillance technologies have a high potential for abuse. For example, police officers are known to do background checks on attractive girls they meet in order to learn things about them. In the field, such a practice is called running plates for dates. Police have also routinely sold information illegally for cash to private investigators and have used confidential records to undermine political opponents.

In 2002, a DEA agent named Emilio Calatayud was sentenced to over two years in prison for selling information to private investigators.[247] In the year 2000 a lieutenant in the Charles County, Maryland sheriff’s department used private information from the department’s databases to influence local elections by releasing information about candidates he didn’t like. The lieutenant even deleted a disorderly conduct arrest from the record of the candidate he wanted to become the next sheriff.[248]

In the History Channel’s show *Gangland*, which chronicles the histories and activities of different gangs, it was revealed that members of the Detroit gang, the “Best Friends,” would pay corrupt cops to find out

where rival gang members or drug dealers lived by giving the cops people's license plate numbers or phone numbers. The corrupt cops would then run a background check on them using their internal computers, and give the addresses to the gang. The Best Friends would then assassinate these people.

Stephen Nash started a police accountability group called CopWatch in Denver, Colorado to help prevent police misconduct by monitoring police activity and videotaping police when they were encountering suspects. Because of this, Nash was secretly targeted by police in their database and labeled a "criminal extremist." He only found this out after an unidentified informant in the police department printed out his secret files and sent him a copy. A copy was also sent to a lawyer at the ACLU. Even Nash's wife was labeled a "criminal extremist."

The ACLU contended that the Denver Police Department has inappropriately smeared the reputations of multiple peaceful advocates of nonviolent social change by falsely labeling them or their organizations as "criminal extremist" in their internal databases.[249]

"The few pages of documents we have obtained so far provide an alarming glimpse of the kinds of information the Denver Police Department is recording and the kinds of peaceful protest activity it is monitoring inappropriately," said Mark Silverstein, an ACLU Legal Director.[250]

Echelon

The world's most sophisticated electronic spy system is called Echelon and refers to an advanced system that analyzes nearly every kind of electronic communication in the world, from telephone calls, to even faxes and text messages. A similar system called Carnivore is used for monitoring the Internet, and is likely used in conjunction with Echelon to monitor web traffic, e-mail messages, and websites.

Echelon basically uses systems to intercept most of the world's communication signals by connecting to commercial satellites or trunk communication lines. There had been rumors of the system and its capabilities in the 1980s, and in 1983 James Bamford discussed such technology in his book *The Puzzle Palace* which focused on the National Security Agency. In 1998, the European Parliament published a report titled *An Appraisal of Technologies of Political Control,* that showed the existence of the massive spy system which would later be known as Echelon.[251]

This system is so powerful, for decades, and even today, some people don't believe it is capable of doing what it does. By using Echelon it is extremely simple for the FBI, CIA, NSA, or any number of other agencies to tap into anyone's phone and automatically record conversations between parties. Of course there is supposed to be a warrant for such activities, but routinely this requirement is ignored under the guise of "national security." But Echelon is much more than a simple wire tapping device.

Echelon monitors millions of phone calls in multiple languages at the same time and can actually pick out specific people's voices from among the millions of calls. This is called a voiceprint, and if a specific individual is targeted for whatever reason, if they talk on a telephone, whether it's a

payphone on the side of the street, or a complete stranger's cell phone, within seconds their voiceprint will be detected and the system will identify their location and begin recording their conversation.

Equally amazing is Echelon's ability to detect strings of specific keywords from the millions of conversations occurring, and can then record those conversations and identify the parties and their location. For example, if two people are having a conversation and they use several words in succession, such as assassinate, president, rifle, and secret service, then in all likelihood that conversation will be detected by the Echelon system and will be flagged for further analysis to determine whether the people were talking about a recent news event, or if they are potentially dangerous individuals who are planning to assassinate the president.

If this seems too complicated, then think again. Google can find a specific set of keywords out of the billions and billions of web pages in a fraction of a second after you search for them. Also, an app for the iPhone called Shazam was released in 2009 that allows people to use their iPhone to pull up the name of practically any song they hear, whether it's on the radio, or playing on a TV commercial. It doesn't matter if there is background noise, or people talking while it is detecting the song, the app still works, and this is all from one tiny iPhone. Just from hearing a few seconds of almost any song, the app identifies it out of the millions of songs available, and then lists the song's title, artist's name, and the album it's found on.

The History Channel aired a show called *Echelon: The Most Secret Spy System* in 2003 that included interviews with intelligence expert James Bamford, and even Mike Hayden, the National Security Agency Director, and in the show it was discussed how Echelon flagged an innocent conversation someone was having because it happened to include several keywords the system was programmed to flag. When a mother was talking about how her son bombed at the school play, meaning he messed up his lines and gave a horrible performance, Echelon detected the keywords "bomb" and "school" and so her conversation was flagged for further analysis to determine if it was a threat.

In the 1998 thriller *Enemy of the State*, Gene Hackman's character makes a comment about this technology saying, "Fort Meade has 18 acres of mainframe computers underground. You're talking to your wife on the phone and you use the word 'bomb,' 'president,' 'Allah,' any of a hundred keywords, the computer recognizes it, automatically records it, red-flags it for analysis. And that was twenty years ago." Most of the viewers thought this was just a Hollywood fantasy, but David Marconi, the screenwriter was obviously aware of Echelon, and a lot of the technology in *Enemy of the State* was based on actual systems.

A respected newspaper in Germany called the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) reported that Echelon had collected information at least three months before the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 about how Middle Eastern terrorists were planning to hijack aircraft and use them as weapons against symbols of American culture.[252]

Many critics believe Echelon has also been used for political spying, commercial espionage, and blackmail. The *Baltimore Sun* published an article in 1995 talking about how the aerospace company Airbus lost a $6 billion dollar contract with Saudi Arabia in 1994 as a result of the NSA using Echelon to learn that Airbus executives had bribed Saudi officials in attempts to secure the contract.[253] A British journalist named Duncan Campbell along with a New Zealand journalist named Nicky Hager investigated Echelon's use for industrial espionage in the 1990s and uncovered that Americans used the system to illegally spy on a German company called Enercon in order to learn what advanced technology the company was developing for wind turbines.[254] They also say a Belgian company called Lernout & Hauspie had trade secrets stolen from them regarding speech recognition technology because executives were being illegally monitored by Echelon.

In 2001, a European Parliament committee suggested that politicians use cryptography in their communication with each other to protect their privacy from eavesdroppers using Echelon.[255]

Imagine how this system can be, and most likely has been, abused. The president could order the CIA or NSA to look for keywords spoken from specific people to determine if they were aware of a sensitive issue, scandal, or crime. For example, the system could easily implement a search for the keywords “Bilderberg group” or “Bohemian Grove” and cross-reference them with the voiceprints of every senator and congressman, so that if any of them were to mention these words during a telephone conversation, then that conversation could be recorded and later listened to. Echelon technicians could know exactly what those people were saying about these very powerful and secretive groups that shape the political and social landscape from behind the scenes.

“Every citizen, or at least every citizen important enough to be worth watching, could be kept for twenty-four hours a day under the eyes of the police.”[256]

—*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Is a certain senator planning on raising the issue of the Bilderberg group on the floor of the Senate, blowing their decades of cover? If so, then a blackmail, intimidation, or coercion scheme would likely be put in place to prevent this security breach and save the Bilderberg group from the unwanted attention that such public comments would bring them. (If you are not familiar with the Bilderberg group then I advise you to research it on your own or read my previous book, *The Resistance Manifesto*.)

Other Snooping Technology

In an episode of *Conspiracy Theory*, a television show hosted by Jesse Ventura, a man named Elwood Norris discussed technology he designs for spy agencies and revealed some of his devices' incredible capabilities. Norris first shows Ventura what looks like a small rock and explains, "I can drive by your house…toss that in your front yard…it picks up your security code from your alarm, your cell phone number, and the code to your garage door opener." When Ventura asked who uses such a device, Norris said that the "alphabet agencies" use it, meaning the FBI, CIA, NSA, and other security agencies. The information picked up and stored in the fake rock can then allow investigators (or stalkers or rogue agents) to access a person's home and disable their alarm system, all without being noticed.

National DNA Database

It may become the law one day that every person in America (and perhaps the world) will be required to give a DNA sample that will be stored in a database similar to fingerprint databases. Police officers in numerous states in America have been taking DNA samples of everyone arrested, arguing that it's no different than fingerprints, but others are worried by the practice and see it as a major privacy invasion.

President Obama has publicly stated that he supports forced DNA sampling of those arrested for any reason, saying "It's the right thing to do. This is where the national registry becomes so important, because what you have is individual states—they may have a database, but if they're not sharing it with the state next door, you've got a guy from Illinois driving over into Indiana, and they're not talking to each other."[257]

We know that secretive government agencies often abuse their power, so many wonder what kind of abuses a national DNA database would lead to. With everyone's DNA on file, could certain government agencies then secretly do tests on the DNA or even create human clones from the samples without anyone knowing about it? Could people's DNA be used to see if they have any diseases or are prone to aggressive activities? Could people be unfairly profiled or labeled because of their DNA analysis?

Tax Amnesty Ad

In May 2010, a television ad began airing in Pennsylvania attempting to scare people who haven’t paid their taxes into finally paying them. The ad begins with a shot of the earth which then has a crosshair appear over the United States and begins to zoom in as a computerized voice says, “Your name is Tom. You live just off of Fifth Street. Nice car Tom. Nice house.” It then goes on to say that if Tom pays his back taxes of over $4000 that he owes to the state of Pennsylvania in the next month, that they will waive the late penalty. The whole time the computerized voice is explaining this in the 30 second ad, the cross hair continues to zoom in from a picture of the whole earth, to the state of Pennsylvania, and then continues onto a single house at which point the words “Subject Located” flash on the screen, and the computerized voice says, “because we do know who you are.”[258]

Insider Revelations

Occasionally a high-level insider in government will make a startling and revealing statement about the way government actually functions. One of the most historic revelations was made by President Dwight D. Eisenhower during his departure address in 1961 where he coined the term “military industrial complex.”

Eisenhower warned, “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”

The core of Eisenhower’s warning was when he said, “We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.”

President John F. Kennedy also made a profound and even more chilling statement about the behind-the-scenes power structure when speaking to the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Audio of this statement is available on the Internet if you search for “JFK on secret societies.” While we have all heard several historic JFK sound bites, few in comparison have heard this amazing and candid admission where he said, “The very word ‘secrecy’ is repugnant in a free and open society; and we are as a people inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths, and to secret proceedings. We decided long ago that the dangers of excessive and unwarranted concealment of pertinent facts far outweighed the dangers which are cited to justify it…For we are opposed

around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covered means for expanding its sphere of influence, on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerillas by night instead of armies by day."

He continued, "It is a system which has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit, highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific and political operations; its preparations concealed, not published, its mistakes are buried not headlined, its dissenters are silenced not praised, no expenditure is questioned, no rumor is printed, no secret is revealed…I am not asking for your newspapers to support an administration. But I am asking your help in the tremendous task of informing and alerting the American people."[259]

President Kennedy's comments echoed what President Woodrow Wilson had said decades earlier in his 1913 book, *The New Freedom: A Call For the Emancipation of the Generous Energies of a People*. The most widely quoted passage from this book is where Wilson wrote, "Since I entered politics, I have chiefly had men's views confided to me privately. Some of the biggest men in the United States, in the field of commerce and manufacturing, are afraid of something. They know that there is a power somewhere so organized, so subtle, so watchful, so interlocked, so complete, so pervasive, that they better not speak above their breath when they speak in condemnation of it."

There are a handful of other revealing and unsettling quotes made by high-powered politicians around the world who will occasionally, and perhaps very subtly, betray the establishment's power structure and give people a glimpse of what kind of a system we are really dealing with. Many believe that JFK, Woodrow Wilson and others were referring to the infamous Illuminati secret society, and think that a modern version of the group continues to exist today in the form of secretive good ol' boy networks focused on preserving their wealth and power at any cost. (Read

my book, *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* for more information on this fascinating subject.)

The Nanny State

The term “nanny state” refers to government regulations and laws that are widely perceived to be overbearing and restrictive in terms of their attempts to regulate economic or social activities that are better off left alone without the government sticking their nose in them. The term comes from the idea that the government is acting as a nanny, trying to protect citizens from themselves, as a nanny does for a small child.

Big Brother technology has allowed the implementation of numerous nanny state policies that impose extra taxes and fines on people for violating laws such as speed limits, driving in bus lanes, or having expired parking meters. There are also Big Brother policies that keep track of the amount of ammunition gun owners purchase, and laws have been proposed to govern the kinds of ingredients in food with the hopes of making people healthier.

Of course, there need to be laws regulating and prohibiting harmful practices from being used by private industries, but as you will see in the following pages, many of these nanny state measures aren’t necessarily designed to keep people safe; they are designed to make the government more money.

Red Light Cameras

Everyone is familiar with the dreaded “red light cameras” that automatically issue tickets to people if they drive through an intersection equipped with the system. As of mid 2010, there were more than 441 communities in the United States using the Big Brother ticket machines, including Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, DC.[260]

Often the tickets for an infraction are $400 or $500 dollars and come to you in the mail, along with several photos of your vehicle from different angles showing you in the intersection while the light is red. There have been many accusations that the intersections equipped with these cameras have the timing of the yellow light reduced in order to catch more people accidentally blowing the red light, thus generating more money for the city.

Some states have prohibited the cameras including Nevada, New Hampshire, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.[261] Many other countries around the world also use the red light camera technology, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Taiwan, India, and Israel.

The red light cameras were just the beginning of the Big Brother systems that would later be implemented to automatically issue large fines to motorists.

Bus Lane Enforcement

Some cities are using license plate reading devices to issue tickets to motorists automatically if they stop in a bus lane or other prohibited areas. For example, New York City began testing a system to detect whether taxis stopped in bus lanes to pick up passengers. Taxis frequently use bus lanes, which they're not supposed to do, but now they will automatically be fined $150 for each infraction.[262] These systems cross reference every license plate that enters the restricted zone with a list of approved vehicles, and if the vehicle isn't a bus, police car, or emergency vehicle, the driver will be automatically issued a fine.

Hundreds of buses in London, England are equipped with cameras that capture the license plates of vehicles that stop in no-stopping zones, and those drivers are also automatically issued tickets.[263]

Catching Speeders

Motorists are sadly familiar with speed traps, and even the rare incident of airplanes being used to bust speeders on freeways, but until recently most people never envisioned systems that would automatically ticket drivers using license plate reading cameras.

An area in London began testing the “SpeedSpike” system in two different stretches of roads which calculates the average speed between two designated points and can then automatically issue speeding tickets to motorists. The system was created by an American company called PIPS Technology Ltd.[264]

The system uses license plate reader technology to log each vehicle’s license plate when it passes the first camera, and then captures it again when it passes the second camera at a different point in the road. It then mathematically figures out each vehicle’s average speed depending on the amount of time it took to get between the two cameras, and if the average speed is deemed too fast, then the system knows the vehicle was traveling above the speed limit, and issues a ticket to the owner.

Officials plan on using the system to enforce speed limits on main roads, as well as school zones. When it was first tested, officials said they couldn’t publicly comment on it because of “commercial confidentiality.” The British Automobile Association said it was, “a natural evolution of the technology that is out there” and didn’t think it was Orwellian or sinister.

These systems will probably become as common as red light cameras in the future, striking fear into the hearts (and wallets) of motorists everywhere. Police officers at the Dallas Police Department in Dallas, Texas, were the first to begin using E-ticket machines, rather than the usual

ticket pad that required tickets to be filled out by hand that most people are all used to. The E-ticket machines allow officers to write tickets faster and simplify the process of entering them into computer databases, which means—the faster the government can get your money.[265]

There will probably come a time in the not-so-distant future where tickets are automatically debited from your checking account, or if you don't have any money in the bank, then the fine could be levied against one of your credit cards, and if this happens then you'll have to pay interest on the ticket as well.

Automatic Parking Tickets

At some point in the Orwellian New World Order we will see parking meters that automatically ticket vehicles the second the meter expires. This is extremely simple since the meters will be equipped with cameras that capture the license plate number of the vehicle that is parked in the spot at the time the meter expires. As people know, if a parking meter expires and your vehicle is still parked in the spot, you will only get a ticket if a “meter maid” spots the expired meter. Your vehicle could sit in front of the expired meter for thirty minutes or even several hours before the meter maid does their rounds and sees it, but the Orwellian parking meters will fine you the moment your time runs out and will likely issue new fines every few minutes, or every hour, depending on how long the vehicle remains in the parking spot after the meter has expired.

Black Boxes in Automobiles

After the highly publicized problem of accelerators sticking in certain Toyota vehicles in 2010 causing several accidents and deaths since 2007, the Highway Traffic Safety Administration chief David Strickland mentioned that the government was considering making “black boxes” mandatory for all new vehicles which will record data such as a vehicle’s speed and breaking effort in order to reconstruct what happened immediately preceding an accident if one were to occur.[266] Toyota recalled more than 8 million vehicles to eliminate the risk of sticking accelerating pedals and the problem was a major story for months.

Black boxes on vehicles could do more than just record information in the event of an accident. GPS systems installed on vehicles can detect what speed the vehicle is traveling at, and could be used to issue automatic speeding tickets. The GPS systems could easily detect the speed limit for just about any street the vehicle is on, and could automatically issue tickets if the car exceeds the limit. If a car has unpaid parking tickets or an expired registration, then GPS black boxes could also disable the vehicle until these payments were made.

The Virginia Court of Appeals ruled in September 2010 that police did not need a warrant to secretly attach a GPS tracking device on a suspect’s vehicle in order to monitor its every move. The Fourth Amendment of the Constitution clearly bans unreasonable searches and seizures, but the Virginia court ruled that because there is no expectation of privacy on a public street, a suspect has no protection against the hi-tech monitoring of their whereabouts. Judge Randolph A. Beales wrote in the opinion that “police used the GPS device to crack this case by tracking the appellant on the public roadways—which they could, of course, do in person any day of the week at any hour without obtaining a warrant.”[267]

The Ninth Circuit Court in California has also ruled that secretly placing a GPS device on a vehicle wasn't a Fourth Amendment violation, but the Washington, D.C. Circuit Court held that it was, so this issue could head to the Supreme Court. Since the Virginia and California courts ruled that secretly placing a GPS device on a suspect's vehicle without a warrant is within the law, then one must wonder whether a similar policy will go into effect concerning the use of GPS systems built into people's cell phones. Currently law enforcement officials are legally required to obtain a warrant to track someone's cell phone, but in the New World Order the courts may rule there is no reasonable expectation of privacy considering a person's whereabouts if they are carrying a cell phone since they know it contains a GPS tracking device. Where is the line going to be drawn?

Since there is no reasonable expectation of privacy when someone is standing on a public street, it is legal to videotape and record a person's conversation without their consent. One must wonder whether it will also become fully legal for law enforcement and other government agencies to secretly eavesdrop on people without a warrant by activating the microphone in their cell phone as a bug, which is a tactic used by the FBI and other agencies after a warrant has been granted.

Is the government going to say that you have no reasonable expectation of privacy if you are carrying a cell phone because there is a microphone built into it? Perhaps the government will change the definition of "reasonable expectation of privacy" and will claim that in today's high-tech society, there is no longer a reasonable expectation of privacy anywhere.

Watching Your Garbage

In the United Kingdom more than 2.5 million trash bins have built-in microchips that weigh the bin's contents as part of a "pay-as-you-throw" program which taxes people based on the amount of garbage they throw away.

In March 2010, an investigation involving Freedom of Information Requests showed that one in five counties in the UK had implemented the Big Brother bins that weigh the garbage and tax the residents accordingly.[268] In 2008, Gordon Brown, the prime minister, had promised to eliminate bin taxes because polls showed it was extremely unpopular among voters, but the practice has quietly increased.

Alex Deane of *Big Brother Watch*, said, "The number of local councils placing microchips in bins is increasing, despite the fact that only one of them has volunteered to trial the Government's pay-as-you-throw scheme. Councils are waiting until the public isn't watching to begin surveillance on our waste habits, intruding into people's private lives and introducing punitive taxes on what we throw away. The British public doesn't want this technology, these fines, or this intrusion. If local authorities have no intention to monitor our waste then they should end the surreptitious installation of these bin microchips."[269]

The "pay-as-you-throw" program also allows city councils to examine people's trash and sell the information to corporations. People are also concerned that data from the chipped bins could show when they were away on vacation, possibly allowing criminals to know when homes were unoccupied, making them easy targets for burglars.

Authorities said the microchips were implemented to help the elderly. A spokesman for the Local Government Association said, “putting microchips in people’s bins can allow councils to provide people with a better service that costs less. If an elderly resident needs help getting their bin collected and returned, a microchip quickly flags it up to the refuse collector, saving time and money.”[270]

In 2008, approximately 100 different city councils in the UK investigated the contents of their residents’ bins, in order to check to see what kind of garbage was being thrown out by people, and in some cases tried to obtain information on their incomes and lifestyles.

Another possible scenario involving people’s garbage may arise after RFID tags are attached to every piece of merchandise replacing the traditional UPCs. Will someone be fined for putting glass bottles in the wrong recycling bin, or if someone accidentally discards cans in the paper bin? RFID tags and sensors installed on recycling bins could not only detect when the wrong materials were placed in the wrong bin, but the tags could also identify who purchased the items, and could issue them a fine for not disposing of them properly.

In Cleveland, Ohio the city began installing RFID tags in recycling bins in order to keep track of how often residents roll their bins out to the curb for collection to make sure they are recycling, and fines them $100 if they are not.[271] A computer on the garbage truck contains an RFID reader that detects the RFID tags attached to the residents’ recycle bins, and keeps track of which bins are emptied each week and which ones are not.

If a home’s recycle bin has not been placed out by the curb for collection in several weeks, then a trash supervisor will physically go through the person’s trash cans to see if that resident is throwing away recyclables in the trash cans, instead of sorting them in the recycle bins. These recyclables include glass, metal cans, plastic bottles, paper and cardboard. If a trash supervisor finds more than 10 percent recyclable

material in the person’s trash bin, then that resident is fined $100 for not properly sorting their recyclables.

Cleveland’s City Council approved spending $2.5 million dollars on the Big Brother bins in 2010, which were implemented in approximately 25,000 different households at first, and the program is designed to expand to an additional 25,000 households per year until the city’s 150,000 residents all use them. A suburb in Washington, DC also announced plans to implement a similar program,[272] and other cities around America are poised to follow.

Ammunition Purchases

Big Brother is scared of people with guns, as all tyrannical and oppressive regimes have been in the past, because an armed population can resist a government aimed at destroying civil liberties or rounding up citizens and sending them to detention centers or death camps. By disarming ordinary law-abiding citizens, it also allows a government to grow in size and power because people will need to rely on the police to protect them from dangerous criminals, instead of protecting themselves using their own guns. This allows the police force to grow larger and have more funding. Gun control laws made it illegal for citizens to own guns that aren't registered to them, something that can easily allow officials to do door-to-door weapon confiscations like they did in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.[273] Police can pull up a person's name and instantly see which guns they own, and demand they all get turned in.

While New World Order kingpins continuously attempt to destroy the Second Amendment to the Constitution, there are other Orwellian policies being put into place in attempts to monitor who has what guns, and even how many bullets they own.

As governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill into law which required stores that sell ammunition to thumbprint customers and log their driver's license for each purchase. Everyone who now buys bullets in California must submit to this procedure, as well as sign for their purchase which is then entered into a federal database that keeps track of how much ammo that person has bought. The database is used to flag people who buy what the government considers large amounts of ammunition, which may then be considered probable cause to investigate the individual further or place them under surveillance.

Schwarzenegger claimed to be against such a policy in the past but later changed his mind saying, “Although I have previously vetoed legislation similar to this measure, local governments have demonstrated that requiring ammunition vendors to keep records on ammunition sales improves public safety.”[274]

Sam Paredes, the executive director of Gun Owners of California, said the law treats gun owners like registered sex offenders.

Dr. Big Brother

With the passing of Obamacare into law in March 2010, the American government was facing enormous health care costs, and many were pressed to come up with ways to keep these costs down. The Senate Committee on Aging disclosed innovations they were planning as part of the government's new role in the health care industry, and some ideas included video chats with doctors and putting RFIDs on pills so computers could keep track of whether patients are taking their medication or not. The new methods have been called e-Health, e-Care, or telehealth.

"What we're talking about, folks, is using a device like this one," Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) said, as he displayed the small device. "It attaches to the patient's skin and is loaded with drugs that are administered in the exact way that the doctor prescribes—wirelessly."[275]

"That means that a doctor can vary the doses based on the information the doctor is receiving [from the monitor]. The patient doesn't have to go in to the doctor and then the pharmacy to change his or her prescription," he said.[276]

Other devices proposed by the committee were systems that would be attached to patients and monitor things like blood pressure and glucose levels which would then wirelessly report that information over the Internet to their physician. Officials also hope to implement devices that can monitor a person's nutritional intake and ones that could detect whether an elderly person has taken a fall so emergency workers could be alerted.

"Continuous monitoring of vibrations in the floor can detect falls and classify them according to the best choice of first responders—either a 911

call or a visit from a caregiver," proposed Robin Felder of the University of Virginia.[277]

"Emerging technologies allow pills to be electronically outfitted with transmitters to communicate with the user's wristwatch that shows that the pill has been consumed," Felder continued. "Broadband connectivity of these devices would allow the electronic medical record to be updated with regard to medication compliance and efficacy."[278]

Dr. Mohit Kaushal, who is the health care director at the Federal Communications Commission, testified at the Senate Committee on Aging using a video phone in an attempt to promote video chats between patients and doctors as an alternative to office visits.

Eric Dishman, global director of health innovation and policy at Intel, said "Just as e-mail became a new way of interacting with other people that didn't replace all other forms of communication such as phone calls and letters, e-Care uses new technologies to create a new way of providing care that complements—but doesn't replace—all clinic visits."

Dictating Your Diet

Another side effect to the passing of Obamacare are more laws governing the ingredients in food that are considered to be unhealthy. Since the taxpayers were now on the hook for everyone’s health insurance, lawmakers were looking for ways to keep people healthier in order to keep down the costs.

A bill introduced in New York tried to ban the use of any salt in restaurant cooking. The bill, A. 10129, states in part, “No owner or operator of a restaurant in this state shall use salt in any form in the preparation of any food for consumption by customers of such restaurant, including food prepared to be consumed on the premises of such restaurant or off of such premises.”

The bill was introduced by Assemblyman Felix Ortiz (D-Brooklyn), and included fines of $1000 for each violation.[279] A coalition of chefs, restaurant owners, and consumers, called the proposed law “absurd” in a press release.

In 2006, the Board of Health in New York City voted to ban restaurants from using trans fats in their food, a law that took effect in July 2008. Trans fats are unhealthy because they raise bad cholesterol and lower good cholesterol, making them worse than saturated fat.

“We don’t think that a municipal health agency has any business banning a product the Food and Drug Administration has already approved,” said Dan Fleshler, a spokesman for the National Restaurant Association.[280]

Other cities and states are passing laws that require restaurants to list the calorie content on the menus next to each food item.

In New York City, a school actually sent letters to parents of children that were considered fat. “My son, who is very tall for his age and is a little husky, but fit, brought home a piece of paper from his school listing his BMI and stating that he was obese,” said Amy Oztan, a mother of two, who received one of the letters.[281] BMI stands for Body Mass Index and comes from a formula based on a person’s height and weight.

Michelle Obama had started a campaign called Let’s Move that involves regular screening of all children’s BMI. One major criticism for screening people’s BMI is that it doesn’t take into account someone’s body type such as if they are big-boned or more muscular than an average person.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, every citizen is required to exercise daily in front of the telescreen so they could keep up their strength in order to better serve Big Brother. During one of the sessions, Winston Smith is yelled at by the instructor for not stretching far enough during a toe-touching exercise because the telescreens watched everyone’s effort.

While at an elementary school in Washington DC, Michelle Obama told the students that military leaders had informed her that more than one in four children are unqualified for military service because they’re too fat and that “childhood obesity isn’t just a public health threat, it’s not just an economic threat, it’s a national security threat as well.”[282]

She went on to list all the evils that fat people cost the economy and the health care system and concluded that, “We can’t just leave this up to the parents.”[283]

It was right around this time that governments approved a ban on soda machines in school cafeterias across the country, and even placed restrictions on school bake sales, in the name of public health.[284] San

Francisco even banned toys from most McDonald’s Happy Meals because officials claimed the toys were enticing children to eat poor quality food.[285]

“Smart” Thermostats

An Orwellian idea that hatched in California and may one day spread around the country, or even the world, involves the government being able to remotely control the thermostat in people’s homes in order to turn off the air-conditioning if they feel too much electricity is being used at a particular time and causing strain on the electrical grid.

All new homes built in California have to be equipped with the Big Brother thermostats, and many existing homes as well. The 2008 Building Efficiency Standards (Page 64), known as Title 24, specifically states, “The PCT shall not allow customer changes to thermostat settings during emergency events.”

Some government officials also hope to require non-removable FM receivers that connect to other electronic appliances such as water heaters, refrigerators, lights and computers, so these devices could be remotely shut off at will. Michael Shames, executive director of California’s Utility Consumers’ Action Network said, “The implications of this language are far-reaching and Orwellian. For the government and utility company to say, ‘We’re going to control the devices in your house, and you have no choice in that matter,’ that’s where the line is drawn.”[286]

Proponents of the “smart” thermostats have failed to realize that many people can install window air-conditioning units that aren’t connected to the home’s central thermostat, and will not be able to be controlled by the system. Some homeowners will also find a way to bypass the system without detection.

Fingerprint Scanners

When you think of getting your fingerprints taken, the image of being in handcuffs at the police station is often the first to come to mind, but fingerprint scanners are becoming common ways to check someone's identity, not just to enter a secure area at a government installation, but to pay for lunch at the local school, to enter your local gym, and even to get into Disney World.

For years, Walt Disney's theme parks have used fingerprint scanners to identify ticket holders to make sure that people don't use someone else's ticket.[287] Disney will confiscate any pass that someone attempts to use if it is not theirs.

"The lack of transparency has always been a problem," said Lillie Coney, associate director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center, who believes that the fingerprint scanners are too invasive. "What they're doing is taking a technology that was used to control access to high-level security venues and they're applying it to controlling access to a theme park."[288]

George Crossley, president of the Central Florida ACLU, said, "It's impossible for them to convince me that all they are getting is the fact that that person is the ticket-holder."[289]

It seems comical, but the federal government looked to Disney after the September 11th 2001 terror attacks to learn about security measures including biometrics because their theme parks had been the largest commercial user of biometric scanners. "The government was very aware of what Disney was doing," said Jim Wayman, director of the National Biometric Test Center at San Jose State University.

The company providing the scanners to Disney is believed to be Lumidigm Incorporated which is funded by the CIA, NSA, and the Department of Defense. Lumidigm's CEO Bob Harbour would not admit his company's products were used at Disney, but did say they have a contract with a "major theme park."[290]

Oftentimes companies that use these systems will say that they don't capture the person's actual fingerprint, but instead just look for various points on it and match those up to the points stored in its system, but Raul Diaz, Lumidigm's vice president of sales and marketing, said that such systems can be activated to store the entire image.

In 2004, Sea World in San Antonio, Texas installed fingerprint scanners for people with season passes. It's not just Sea World and the "happiest place on earth" that are using fingerprint scanners to gain entry. 24 Hour Fitness gyms have been using the scanners since at least 2007,[291] and several schools around America have implemented finger scanners as a way for students to pay for their lunches.[292] It's likely that banks will issue scanners that will either replace or supplement debit card readers at most retailers.

Despite what most people think, fingerprint scanners are not 100% accurate. A Japanese cryptographer and university professor named Tsutomu Matsumoto, tested fingerprint scanners and found that by using gelatin and molding plastic, he could copy someone's fingerprint and beat every major fingerprint reader eight out of ten times.[293] An episode of *Myth Busters* showed the crew was able to fool finger scanners as well.

In 2004, a man named Brandon Mayfield was detained and his home searched immediately after the March 11, 2004 bombing in Madrid, Spain that killed 191 people. The FBI had used their Automated Fingerprint Identification System to link him to the crime, but it turns out that because of a "substandard" fingerprint taken from a bag that contained one of the explosives, their system incorrectly identified him and he was completely innocent.

Orwellian Weapons

Over the course of civilization we have seen weapons advance from basic sticks and stones in prehistoric times, to swords and knives after the discovery of iron and steel, and later advancing to guns and missiles, often attached to aircraft or boats that can destroy a target hundreds of miles away. Science fiction literature and films have been filled with stories of lasers and armed humanoid robots that are indestructible killing-machines, but as some people already know, many of these fanciful depictions from the past are now becoming a reality.

While at one time, so-called smart bombs amazed people with their ability to strike strategic targets from long distances; these kinds of weapons are now common knowledge. What is not common knowledge (at least at the time I’m writing this in 2010) are a wide variety of futuristic Orwellian weapons that are already built, or are on the drawing board.

Some of these weapons involve fully autonomous robots that can relentlessly hunt down targets, and even implantable RFID chips that can kill a person when activated, and shock bracelets designed for airline passengers that can electrocute them if they are suspected of posing a threat. These and other weapons, if directed by a tyrannical leader, could squash any kind of resistance and keep every citizen in the world, not only under the watchful eyes of Big Brother, but in his crosshairs as well.

As you will learn in this chapter and the one on artificial intelligence, warnings of a massive robotic massacre, or artificial intelligence systems turning on humans is not only something found in the plots of science fiction movies or the paranoid imaginations of technophobes. It is a very real concern addressed by numerous experts in multiple fields. Big Brother is not just watching us; he is now armed and dangerous.

An Implantable Computer Chip That Can Kill

In 2009, Germany’s patent office rejected a patent for an invention dubbed the “Killer Chip,” which is basically an implantable RFID similar to the VeriChip said to track visitors from other countries using GPS, and could release a poison into a person’s body to “eliminate” them if they become a “security risk.” That was at least the Orwellian goal of the Saudi inventor who applied for the patent.

“I apply for these reasons and for reasons of state security and the security of citizens,” his application read. German law allows foreigners to apply for patents in the country through a local representative. “Most people apply for a patent in several countries, and this inventor probably did too,” Stephanie Krüger of the Patent Office said.[294]

A German Patent and Trademark Office spokeswoman told *Deutsche Presse Agentur* that the inventor’s application was submitted in October 2007 and published 18 months later, as required by law, but in Germany, inventions that are unethical or a danger to the public are not approved.

Electric Shock Bracelets for Airline Passengers

A sadistic idea that seems like it would only be implemented for transporting dangerous prisoners was actually proposed for ordinary citizens flying on commercial jets that involved making all passengers on airliners wear a tamper-proof shock bracelet that could then be activated to electrocute anyone that the crew thought was potentially dangerous. The Department of Homeland Security has expressed great interest in the so-called EMD (Electo-Muscular Disruption) safety bracelet which was designed by Lampered Less Lethal Incorporated.

A promotional video posted on the company's website shows the device being worn by all passengers on an airline and explained how the company felt it would help keep people safe.[295]

The video starts off by showing footage of the aftermath of the September 11th attacks and goes on to say that facial recognition systems take too much time and would increase the number of flight delays and cancellations. It also says bomb detecting devices aren't effective enough, and that the shock bracelets could stop terrorists once they were on board an aircraft.

It goes on to say that the shock bracelets would make flying more convenient for travelers since they could also be used as their ticket. The video concludes by saying, "We feel if given the choice between taking a flight implementing the added security of the EMD security safety bracelet system, and taking a flight without the additional security, many, if not most passengers, would happily opt for the extra security of the EMD safety bracelet."

I know that this seems like a hoax or a satire to bring attention to Orwellian security measures, but it's not. A search of U.S. patents reveals that a patent was filed for the device in 2002. The application number is 6,933,851, and the description reads, "A method of providing air travel security for passengers traveling via an aircraft comprises situating a remotely activatable electric shock device on each of the passengers in position to deliver a disabling electrical shock when activated; and arming the electric shock devices for subsequent selective activation by a selectively operable remote control disposed within the aircraft. The remotely activatable electric shock devices each have activation circuitry responsive to the activating signal transmitted from the selectively operable remote control means. The activated electric shock device is operable to deliver the disabling electrical shock to that passenger."

A letter from a Department of Homeland Security official named Paul S. Ruwaldt was sent to the inventor saying, "To make it clear, we [the federal government] are interested in…the immobilizing security bracelet, and look forward to receiving a written proposal."[296]

The letterhead was from a US Department of Homeland Security office at the William J. Hughes Technical Center at the Atlantic City International Airport (the Federal Aviation Administration headquarters). It was also reported that Ruwaldt had previously met with a rep for the bracelet's manufacturer.[297]

Taser-Firing Flying Robot

In 2007, it was reported that a French entrepreneur was developing a "flying saucer" that could shoot Taser rounds which would electrocute anyone hit by them. He plans for the device to be used to hunt criminal suspects or zap people in unruly crowds.[298] His invention is basically an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) that can hover around like a small radio controlled helicopter that is equipped with Taser rounds.

The controversial Taser gun temporarily paralyzes people by shooting two darts into the body which send electric shocks into the person, and are often abused by police as they electrocute unarmed and often non-threatening people for not complying with an order immediately.

The Taser-firing UAV's creator, Antoine di Zazzo, says that he has been shocked by a Taser more than 50 times during his experiments and claims no side effects. A Taser is different than a stun gun, in that a Taser shoots tiny darts into a person's skin which then carry the electrical current, whereas a stun gun is just a device with two metal prongs on it that are pressed against someone to shock them. Hovering UAVs like Zazzo's design could also easily be armed with pepper spray, knockout gas, or even guns.

Some may think that this technology is still many decades away, but it's not. Police in London deployed a UAV in February 2010 after a suspected car thief was able to evade officers on foot in thick fog. The thermal-imaging cameras built in to the UAV were able to spot the suspect's heat signature, allowing police to track him down and make an arrest.

Several companies are building drones for sale to the general public which may be operated from a laptop computer or even a cell phone. "If the

Israelis can use them to find terrorists, certainly a husband is going to be able to track a wife who goes out at 11 o’clock at night and follow her,” said divorce lawyer Raoul Felder.[299]

An MIT professor named Ms. Cummings, who is developing personal UAVs, commented that she could use a drone to watch her child by planting a transmitter in her lunchbox. “It would bring a whole new meaning to the term hover parent,” she said.

She also remarked that, “If everybody had enough money to buy one of these things, we could all be wandering around with little networks of vehicles flying over our heads spying on us…It really opens up a whole new Pandora's Box of: What does it mean to have privacy?”

Frozen Poison Gun

A secret and sinister weapon developed by the CIA, and probably used in multiple assassinations and kidnappings, involves a CO2 powered gun that shoots a small frozen piece of poison or tranquilizing agent into the target, which leaves no evidence behind of any foul play. This device was actually shown during a congressional hearing when Senator Frank Church questioned then CIA director, William Colby about it.

Transcript:

Senator Frank Church: Does this pistol fire the dart? [Holding up the gun]

CIA Director William Colby: Yes, it does, Mr. Chairman, and a special one was developed which potentially would be able to enter the target without perception**.**

Senator Frank Church: But also the toxin itself would not appear in the autopsy?

CIA Director William Colby: Yes, so that there was no way of perceiving that the target was hit.

End of Transcript

In a 1998 documentary titled *Secrets of the CIA*, a former CIA agent named Mary Embree explains how it was her job to research poisons that could be used on people which would kill them and make it seem as if they died of a heart attack. She also talks about the frozen poison dart gun,

saying, “The poison was frozen into some sort of dart, and then it was shot at very high speed into the person. So when it reached the person, it would melt inside them, and the only thing would be like one little, tiny red dot on their body, which was hard to detect. There wouldn’t be a needle left or anything like that in the person.”[300]

Hunter-Killer Robots

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Pentagon was looking for contractors to build what they called a “Multi-Robot Pursuit System” that will involve packs of robots which “search for and detect a non-cooperative human.”[301] In 2005, the Pentagon launched a $127 billion dollar project called Future Combat Systems to develop robotic soldiers and was the largest military contract in US history.[302] It seems that real “Terminators” like the ones in the popular Arnold Schwarzenegger films are crossing over from science fiction into science fact.

Several different companies, including iRobot and Foster-Miller, manufacture different radio controlled tank-like robots that are armed with Taser guns, machine guns, and even rocket launchers. The Pentagon and others hope to one day create fully autonomous robots that are so advanced they can basically function on their own without any human intervention, even hunting down and killing people who are programmed as targets to be eliminated. Such systems will be equipped with facial recognition cameras, and likely DNA sniffers that operate like the nose of a tracking dog that can literally smell a suspect and identify him or her out of a large crowd of people and can even track their every footstep in order to hunt them down and either kill them or incapacitate them, depending on the programmed orders.

“If you build a new shopping mall, you could have sniffers all over the place,” predicts George Dodd, the father of the “electronic nose” and a researcher with the Highlands Scientific Research Group at the Craig Dunain Hospital in Inverness, UK.[303] Dodd envisions these sniffers as part of security systems in people’s homes and offices that will be able to identify intruders.

Police departments in Germany, Holland, and Hungary have been collecting swabs of human scents from crime scenes and putting them into databases, and George Dodd predicts that in the future every person's individual scent will be stored on a computer similar to fingerprints and DNA. These are some of the capabilities that will be built into robotic terminators.

In 2008, Steve Wright, an expert in police and military technology at Leeds Metropolitan University, predicted that autonomous human hunting robots would soon be fully operational. After news was made of the Pentagon's goals of creating a Multi Robot Pursuit System, Wright said, "What we have here are the beginnings of something designed to enable robots to hunt down humans like a pack of dogs. Once the software is perfected we can reasonably anticipate that they will become autonomous and become armed. We can also expect such systems to be equipped with human detection and tracking devices including sensors which detect human breath and the radio waves associated with a human heart beat. These are technologies already developed."[304]

The US Air Force's *Unmanned Aircraft Systems Flight Plan 2009-2047* report explains how unmanned drones could fly over targets and attack, all without human involvement. The report says that humans will monitor situations rather than being deciders or participants, and that "advances in AI [artificial intelligence] will enable systems to make combat decisions and act within legal and policy constraints without necessarily requiring human input."[305] The Air Force plans to have such devices fully operational by the year 2047. Several pages of the report were classified.

P.W. Singer, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution think tank and the author of *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century* said, "Every mission [that] soldiers go out on in Iraq, there's something (automated) flying over them, maybe an unmanned vehicle scouting ahead of them…When they shoot, the key is what they put their laser on for a drone to fire at….The story of the surge is not the additional troops, it's the air strikes (by machines like Predator drones) going up by a huge amount."[306]

When the Iraq war began in 2003, there were only a handful of ground-based robots in the field, such as radio controlled devices with mechanical arms used to defuse bombs, but a few years into the war there were over 12,000 robots, including Unmanned Arial Vehicles (UAVs) and other ground-based devices being used on a regular basis.[307]

The United States is not the only country with a rapidly increasing number of robotic soldiers. Dozens of other countries have been building a robotic army. In 2009, an Iranian drone was shot down in Iraq, and the Palestinian-based Hezbollah group has used drones to attack Israel on several occasions.

Many fear that lone nuts or small terrorist organizations will obtain robotic soldiers and commit attacks with them on innocent civilians. “I talked to a researcher who told me that for $50,000 worth of robots he could shut down New York for a day. It was pretty convincing. Warfare will go open source,” said Singer.[308]

The chair of the Department of Computer Science at the University of Sheffield in England, who is considered a computer and artificial intelligence expert, has also warned about the dangers of advancing robots. In 2007, Noel Sharkey wrote an article for the *London Guardian* detailing his warnings, where he said, “The deployment of the first armed battlefield robots in Iraq is the latest step on a dangerous path—we are sleepwalking into a brave new world where robots decide who, where and when to kill.”[309]

He pointed out the Pentagon’s $100 billion dollar Future Combat Systems project working to build killer robots and Unmanned Arial Vehicles (UAVs), saying, “This is dangerous new territory for warfare, yet there are no new ethical codes or guidelines in place. I have worked in artificial intelligence for decades, and the idea of a robot making decisions about human termination is terrifying.”[310]

Sharkey warns that, “With prices falling and technology becoming easier, we may soon see a robot arms race that will be difficult to stop,”[311] and urged that legislation be drawn up that would outline a code of ethics for autonomous robots before it’s too late. Some experts and military officials worry about robots’ ability to determine friendly people from legitimate targets. Robots could be programmed to identify soldiers who are wearing the enemy country’s uniforms, or the facial recognition system could be inputted with the faces of the entire enemy’s army after a hacker steals that information from them. Every faceprint of American soldiers could be input, and the robots instructed to kill everyone except those people in a specified area, but facial recognition is not 100% accurate. Friendly soldiers may also be equipped with RFID tags that would tell the robots they were friendly, and the machines could be programmed to kill any person who is not wearing a tag within the battle zone.

The increasing use of robotic soldiers will change the face of war in many ways. The loss of American soldiers’ lives was always a reason for the public to resist entering into a conflict, but perhaps at some point in the future, there will be hardly any risk for human life (for the country with the advanced robotic army, that is), so the public may not protest an ensuing war as much as they have in the past.

Going to war in the past meant that young soldiers would be killed and maimed in battle, but if a country (like America, for example) could send a fleet of robots instead of humans, would-be protesters will likely not resist the decision to go to war. Many people may, in fact, encourage such acts who would have felt indifferent, or even against such action in the past because of the risk to American soldiers’ lives.

Robotic Snakes

People have become familiar with the tank-like robots that frequently defuse bombs, and the flying drones that are like large radio controlled airplanes, but an interesting and unexpected design comes in the form of a robotic snake that literally slithers on the ground imitating an actual snake.

The first robot snake was built by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and is about 6 feet long and is also equipped with cameras, microphones, and speakers. It is operated by laptop computer.[312] Some envision the snake slithering through rubble of collapsed buildings in hopes of finding survivors, but the creators also say it could be used to carry bombs, as perhaps a suicide snake bomber, slithering near a target and blowing itself up.

Other robots based on animals are also reportedly in the works, including agile robots modeled after cats and dogs. While the robotic snake built by IDF is designed to operate on land, a Japanese company built a snake robot in 2005 that swims under water like a sea serpent. It’s called the ACM-R5 and can be seen operating on videos posted on the Internet.

Big Dog Four-Legged Robot

While most early robots being used by the Department of Defense were not much more than sophisticated miniature radio controlled tanks that rolled around on two treads, designing robots that walk has proved to be a much more difficult task. Creating pilot-less drones that fly like radio controlled airplanes or the bomb disposing tread robots like the TALON robots used in the Iraq War are much simpler than designing a system that can balance on two or four legs.

A company called Boston Dynamics was one of the first to create a functioning walking robot they call the Big Dog that walks on four legs using a hydraulic actuation system. The robot is the size of an extremely large dog, standing two and a half feet tall, and is three feet long. Video footage of the Big Dog shows it walking around and being kicked by people as they attempt to throw it off balance and knock it over, but it doesn't appear to lose its footing, and quickly recovers and keeps on walking. The robot is said to be able to carry more than 300 pounds of equipment over 10 miles before refueling, and can walk on rough terrain and up inclines of 35 degrees. Boston Dynamics is funded by the Tactical Technology Office at DARPA.[313]

The designers' goal is to enhance the Big Dog to the point where it can carry supplies for soldiers and follow them practically anywhere on the battlefield, on any terrain. It is highly probably that future versions will also be armed and walk on two legs instead of four.

Killer Wasp Robots

When most people think of a killer robot, they think of a large tank-like machine, or a humanoid-looking robot the size of a person similar to the ones in films like *The Terminator* (1984), *Short Circuit* (1986), or *iRobot* (2004); but in 2008, the Air Force Research Laboratory decided to build tiny radio controlled drones the size of large insects that could actually kill what they called, “high-value targets.” The program is called Project Anubis, named after the jackal-headed god of the dead in Egyptian mythology, and is classified, but budget documents reveal that Air Force engineers were successful in developing a “Micro-Air Vehicle (MAV) with innovative seeker/tracking sensor algorithms that can engage maneuvering high-value targets.”[314]

These devices are miniature versions of what are called Unmanned Arial Vehicles (UAVs) which refers to aircraft like the popular Predator drones that everyone has heard about in the news. The Predator drones are armed and can launch missiles, and the new Anubis micro drones are also deadly even though they are the size of a large bug. Special Forces have already been using a larger type of wasp drone made by AeroVironment that weighs less than a pound and can fly three miles away from its operator.

The Air Force’s 2008 budget described Project Anubis as “a small UAV [Unmanned Aerial Vehicle] that carries sensors, data links, and a munitions payload to engage time-sensitive fleeting targets in complex environments.”[315] The total cost was expected to be $500,000. This was apparently before the devices had been built because a newer budget mentioned Project Anubis as having already been completed, costing $1.75 million dollars.

The tiny drones are believed to be equipped with video cameras and microphones and even small explosives weighing a fraction of a pound, and either drop the explosive device, or the drone itself explodes once it reaches its intended target. Such a tiny drone can easily fly into a building through open doorways or windows and then be detonated once inside.

In the "Big Brother" episode of *Conspiracy Theory* with Jesse Ventura that aired on the TruTV network beginning in December 2009, Ventura interviewed an engineer named Elwood Norris who builds spy systems for the government and explained that they can fly miniature GPS tracking devices, designed to look like a fly with microphones on them, into a person's vehicle (or house) so they can then be monitored without their knowledge.

These tiny bugs give the saying "to be a fly on the wall" a whole new literal meaning, since the "fly" on the wall really may be listening. To give you an idea of how this technology is abused, and how it will be abused even more in the future, all we need to do is turn to the news. At a town hall in Charlotte, Vermont, workers renovating the building discovered two electronic bugs that had been planted in the clerk's office, allowing whoever put them there to listen in on meetings and clerk business.[316] The devices were discovered in October 2010, but their batteries had long been dead and were about 10 years old, meaning they were hidden in the town hall building around the year 2000. They were battery powered wireless transmitters that police said could have transmitted to the immediate surrounding area to wherever the person with the receiver was hanging out listening in. The local police said it was a cold case and couldn't even guess who would have planted the bugs or what their motive was.[317]

If someone went through this much trouble to listen in on what was being discussed in some small town hall in Charlotte, Vermont—imagine what kinds of measures are taken to spy on members of Congress, or political activists deemed a threat to the establishment. In the Orwellian nightmare, you can rarely be certain that what comes out of your mouth isn't being overheard and analyzed by Big Brother.

Robots that Feed on Human Flesh

When we think of the power source for a robot, we most often think of them as being battery powered, or even solar powered, but the Pentagon has reportedly been working on one that would run off biomass. The robot is called EATR (pronounced "eater"), which stands for Energetically Autonomous Tactical Robot, and was designed by Robotic Technology Incorporated which says on its website that their robot, "can find, ingest, and extract energy from biomass in the environment (and other organically-based energy sources), as well as use conventional and alternative fuels (such as gasoline, heavy fuel, kerosene, diesel, propane, coal, cooking oil, and solar) when suitable."[318]

Original reports, including one on FoxNews.com, said that the EATR robot would eat animals and even human remains in the battlefield. Dr. Bob Finkelstein, president of Robotic Technology Incorporated (RTI) then released a statement saying that the robot would only be programmed to eat specific kinds of fuel sources. "If it's not on the menu, it's not going to eat it," Finkelstein said. "There are certain signatures from different kinds of materials that would distinguish vegetative biomass from other material."[319]

The company continued to do damage control concerning the initial reports and sent out a press release saying, "Despite the far-reaching reports that this includes human bodies, the public can be assured that the engine Cyclone (Cyclone Power Technologies Inc.) has developed to power the EATR runs on fuel no scarier than twigs, grass clippings and wood chips—small, plant-based items for which RTI's robotic technology is designed to forage."

Cyclone Power Technologies, located in Pompano Beach, Florida created what they call the Waste Heat Engine, which powers the EATR

robots by burning biomass in an external combustion chamber which then generates electricity from heating up water in a closed loop. The designers say that because it would never need to be plugged in somewhere to recharge, the robots could roam on their own for months or years without having to be recharged.

As far as the claims that the EATR robot would not run on dead bodies, the manufacturer didn’t deny that this was possible; they just denied this would happen because the robots wouldn’t be programmed to do so. Of course in extreme circumstances, such as a major war, this programming could easily be changed.

Electro Magnetic Pulse (EMP)

One possible catastrophic danger of our reliance on modern technology comes from an Electro Magnetic Pulse bomb, or an EMP. This type of weapon sends out a wave of electromagnetic energy that literally destroys every electronic circuit in its path, which can be a few city blocks, a radius of several miles, or even several states.

A nuclear bomb sends out an EMP, and if detonated in the air high above the United States, one could destroy electric devices in a large part of the country, but there are also non-nuclear EMP weapons, and some are small enough to be carried around in a briefcase or back pack. If a non-nuclear EMP was set off in the heart of a major city, for example, everyone’s cell phones, laptops, and vehicles will all immediately stop working and be permanently disabled. Street lights, traffic controllers at the airport, police radios, medical equipment at hospitals, and more, would all be completely destroyed without any visible signs of damage. The EMP would basically disable or destroy countless electrical components that we have taken for granted for decades and would practically knock us back to the stone age.

Non-nuclear EMPs are not a theoretical weapon; they have been built, and although not widely reported in the news, have been used. *CBS News* reported that an EMP bomb was used to disable TV stations in Iraq at the start of the invasion in 2003 and to disable a major power plant in Baghdad.[320] Some reports also say the US used EMPs in the 1991 Gulf War as well.[321] [322]

EMP bombs are not something that only an advanced military can create. An article published in 1996 by a defense analyst named Carlo Kopp, explained that materials to build a non-nuclear electromagnetic

weapon are commonly available and concluded, “The threat of electromagnetic bomb proliferation is very real.”[323] In 2009, a director at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism admitted that homemade electromagnetic bombs could become a significant threat.[324]

In the future, small EMP guns will likely be carried by law enforcement and the military which will use them to disable vehicles being used by suspects they are pursuing.

LRAD Sound Weapons

A non-lethal weapon that has become popular at protests and demonstrations is the LRAD sound cannon that focuses an ear-piercing high pitched sound at targets in order to cause them such discomfort that they disperse. LRAD stands for Long Range Acoustic Device and was developed by a San Diego company called American Technology Corporation.

The small device is often mounted on police or military vehicles and can emit sounds capable of dispersing crowds from up to 300 yards away. The volume control is variable and can range from mildly annoying, to beyond a person’s threshold for pain (120-140 dB) which can cause permanent hearing damage at close range.

Smaller, handheld devices will be on the market in the coming years that will be the size of a large flashlight and may be standard equipment carried by police officers or built into Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or other robots.

MEDUSA

Unlike the LRAD acoustical weapon that focuses high volume sound waves at people to cause pain in their ears, a more advanced device called MEDUSA (Mob Excess Deterrent Using Silent Audio) uses microwave pulses that bypass the ears and eardrum and cause noise and pain inside a person's skull.[325] It's interesting that the device's name is *Medusa*, the same as the Greek mythology character that has snakes for hair and turns people to stone if they look at her. The MEDUSA microwave device was created by the Sierra Nevada Corporation for crowd control.

Some people worry that devices like the MEDUSA and others can be used to torture people without leaving external and noticeable evidence of the torture, or that they will be abused by police and military on peaceful protesters.

Active Denial System

A real life "pain ray" called the Active Denial System literally shoots a microwave beam at people, causing them to feel like their skin is burning.[326] Some believe the device can also disrupt a person's bowels and cause them to literally crap their pants, although this is disputed. The first versions of the Active Denial System were fairly large and had to be mounted on vehicles, but the manufacturer, Raytheon, is working on small portable units that can be easily carried around or mounted on rifles. Raytheon is one of the largest defense contractors that builds weapons for the military, and is the world's biggest producer of guided missile systems.

The Active Denial Systems use a gyrotron to generate powerful magnetic fields called millimeter waves, which are focused at the target and can cause second or third degree burns. Some of the systems were shipped to Afghanistan in 2010, but the military claimed they weren't being used, and were only there "for testing." Of course, shipping a huge unit like that half way around the world only to "test" it doesn't make any sense, since this has been done since at least 2004.[327] Due to the controversy surrounding the weapons it's not surprising the military denies they have been used in battle yet.

“Death Rays”

A retired Colonel from Taiwan’s National Defense Department named Alan Yu learned of deadly Orwellian weapons from working on Taiwan’s military budget and having access to classified documents. In a 1997 article he wrote titled, *Millimeter Waves and Mind Control,* he discussed how portable handheld devices were being made that could kill people by using radio waves and leave no evidence.

He wrote, “corrupted undercover career operators can murder anyone as if by natural death (such as induce heart attack, heart failure, or kidney failure, etc.) with the invisible wave weapon. These undercover career operators have been trained professionally in manipulating people’s lives and health with their invisible wave weapon. Some recruited young undercover operators will be trained with the murder skill from the senior undercover operators.”[328]

His article continues, “For example, in 1995, a former head of Taiwan’s National Security Institute died of a ‘heart-attack’ in a public bath pool in Taipei. This death occurred two days after he announced that he would write a memoir. His widow claimed that her husband has never had any heart problems in his life (supported by his health record history) and requested an autopsy to be performed in order to determine the true cause of his death.”[329]

Colonel Yo believes the man was killed to keep him from discussing state secrets. All that is needed to create a “death ray” is to turn up the power on the Active Denial System, which could easily cause a heart attack, brain aneurism, or organ failure. The HPEM Active Denial System, for example, is used to disable vehicles by destroying all unshielded

electronics, and microwave guns have sent several people to the hospital for injuries during testing.[330]

Artificial Intelligence

Instead of humans being the eyes, ears, and brains behind Big Brother, what if Big Brother became an intelligent being itself? For decades some people have looked forward to (or feared) the day when scientists could create a computer system that would be considered artificially intelligent and would be as intelligent as a human, or even more so. While many scientists have been making tremendous advances towards such a system, others still scoff at the idea saying such a system would be too complex and require too much computing power. Others still cite the free will of human beings, and say that no computer could come close to the intelligence of a human because we have free will, and machines only carry out a specified program.

While this may be true, many of these AI skeptics overlook the idea that animals are intelligent, but are often denied to have a free will in the same manner that humans do. If animals do not have free will, then no matter how intelligent they seem to be, they are simply a biological computer following a program that is hardwired into their brains. Yet, as pet owners can attest, animals of an array of species convey a variety of emotions, from love and fear to anger and loneliness. So is a dog simply following a mental program that it is designed to follow that dictates its behavior, or is it intelligent? Most would agree that dogs are intelligent (to some extent, at least). If animals are intelligent, and they are just following a program hardwired into their brains, then wouldn't it be possible to design a computer system that can simulate (and surpass) this intelligence?

If you were born before 1980, then you remember a time before telephone systems had voice recognition capabilities and you had to either wait to speak to an operator for them to transfer your call to the appropriate department, or use the automated feature by pressing the assigned number to reach your desired party. Slowly these systems were replaced with more

advanced technology that understands your voice commands, and the recording simply asks you what department you need, and the system understands what you say and automatically transfers your call. While this is certainly an incredible task, can this system be considered intelligent?

Is the system that Google and other search engines use to determine what kinds of advertisements to display to you based on your search history an “intelligent” system? Are the characters you fight in a videogame considered intelligent? How exactly does one define an artificially intelligent system, and what are the social, scientific, and legal ramifications if and when a computer system is considered artificially intelligent, or even a conscious being? The most popular method used to test whether or not a computer program is artificially intelligent is called the Turing Test.

The Turing Test

The Turing test was created in 1950 by Alan Turing, a British computer scientist, in order to challenge a human judge to decide whether they were communicating with a computer, or with another human. The test consists of a person (the judge) engaging in a dialog through typing, with a computer program (or at least what may be a computer program). The judge is not told whether they are typing to a computer program or an actual person. If the judge can't determine whether they are having a dialog with a computer program or another person, then the system is said to have a human-level intelligence.

In his 2005 book, *The Singularity is Near*, the respected futurist Ray Kurzweil wrote that he expected computers to have intelligence levels indistinguishable from humans by the end of the 2020s. Kurzweil insists that, "The machines will convince us that they are conscious, that they have their own agenda worthy of our respect. We will come to believe that they are conscious much as we believe that of each other."[331]

Obviously technology has advanced at unthinkable levels since the Turning Test was invented back in 1950, and researchers have been monitoring this rapid advancement each year and anticipating (or fearing) artificial intelligence.

Moore’s Law

Moore’s Law is a term that describes the growth patterns in computing power as processors get faster and memory capacity increases. The law is credited to Gordon E. Moore, the co-founder of Intel, who in 1965 published a paper observing that the number of transistors able to fit on an integrated circuit was doubling approximately every two years. This trend has continued for over forty-five years, and some experts do not expect it to stop until around 2020 or later.

Moore’s Law seems to accurately describe the increasing processing speed of computers each year, as well as their memory capacity, and even the number and size of pixels in digital cameras, which are all increasing near exponential rates. These incredible advances have enabled the communication age and a technological revolution after computers transformed from large units that filled entire rooms, into hand-held cell phones that contain more computing power than the first space shuttle that reached the moon in 1969.

The amazing advances seem to be rapidly increasing in accordance with Moore’s Law, which leads many computer scientists to forecast that at some point in the coming decades we will see artificially intelligent systems arrive that are much smarter than humans. These anticipated advances have alarmed some experts, causing them to worry that such systems may actually pose a threat to the human race.

Isaac Asimov’s Three Laws of Robotics

A popular science fiction writer from the 1940s named Isaac Asimov wrote about advanced intelligent robots in his stories and came up with what he called the three laws of robotics, which he envisioned were necessary to prevent advanced robots from turning against their makers. When Asimov came up with these “laws” they were purely science fiction, but today some scientists are seriously looking at his ideas and are using the three laws as a blueprint, hoping to prevent intelligent robots from posing a danger to humans. The three laws follow:

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.

2. A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.

3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

In 2007, computer and robotic experts in South Korea and Japan started drawing up plans for programming moral codes in artificially intelligent robots. An engineer at the South Korean Industry Ministry said,

“Robots are becoming more and more intelligent every year to the point where they are virtually thinking for themselves. For this reason we need a code of ethics which all robot manufacturers must build into their machines. The starting point for these ethics should be Isaac Asimov’s three laws.”[332]

As robots become more intelligent and autonomous, some experts fear that it will become harder to decide who is responsible if and when they injure or kill someone. They ponder whether the designer will be to blame, the user, or even the robot itself. Experts have even discussed whether robots would one day be granted certain civil rights.

A 2007 report from the *BBC* discussed whether robots would one day actually be allowed to own property and foresaw that in the future, legislation would need to be introduced to prevent people from abusing robots. “These questions might sound far-fetched, but debates over animal rights would have seemed equally far-fetched to many people just a few decades ago. Now, however, such questions are part of mainstream public debate,” said the article.[333]

Machines Getting Smarter Every Day

Not too long ago in the past, it was considered science fiction to speculate that machines would one day become more intelligent than humans, but as computing power continued to multiply exponentially in the twenty-first century, such claims were starting to come from very well respected scientists and engineers. One of the most popular of these futurists is Ray Kurzweil, who says, “I’ve made the case that we will have both the hardware and the software to achieve human level artificial intelligence with the broad suppleness of human intelligence including our emotional intelligence by 2029.”[334]

Kurzweil is also a transhumanist, and in a 2008 interview with the *BBC*, he said that soon, “We’ll have intelligent nanobots go into our brains through the capillaries and interact directly with our biological neurons.” These nanobots would, “make us smarter, remember things better and automatically go into full emergent virtual reality environments through the nervous system.”[335]

Kurzweil was interviewed at the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Boston, Massachusetts where he and 18 other influential thinkers were chosen to identify the greatest technological challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. Other attendees were Larry Page, founder of Google, and Dr. Craig Venter from the human genome project. Several of the goals the group came up with were to: reverse engineer the brain, secure cyberspace, enhance virtual reality, advance health information, engineer better medicines, and advance personalized learning.

While in the twenty-first century it may be easy to see what lies ahead regarding intelligent systems and robotics, it’s interesting to note that in a

1968 *Playboy* magazine article, Arthur C. Clarke wrote, “In a very few generations—computer generations—which by this time may last only a few months—there will be a mental explosion; the merely intelligent machine will swiftly give away to the ultra-intelligence machine.”

Arthur C. Clarke is most well-known for writing *2001 A Space Odyssey*, where HAL, an artificially intelligent system, begins killing humans on board a space ship in order to prevent them from interfering with its programmed objectives.

It seems that artificial intelligence technology is actually catching up with the science fiction imaginations of the past.

Computer Wins ‘Jeopardy!’

IBM designed a computer program to compete against human *Jeopardy!* contestants with hopes of advancing artificial intelligence technology.[336] As many know, IBM had previously developed a program capable of playing chess called Deep Blue which then beat the world champion Garry Kasparov in 1997.

The ability of Deep Blue to play chess is seen as simple compared to designing a program to play a complicated game like *Jeopardy!* because of the wide variety of questions that could be asked. Of course, if the system, called “Watson” after the founder of IBM, Thomas Watson, was connected to the Internet, it would easily win since it could scour the Internet for the answers, but for this challenge it did not have access to the web.

For the project, IBM developed a new kind of software that can understand human questions and then answer them correctly. “The big goal is to get computers to be able to converse in human terms,” said the team leader, David A. Ferrucci, an IBM artificial intelligence researcher.

The Watson program answered questions with a synthesized voice and was run on a Blue Gene supercomputer which IBM moved to Los Angeles where the game show is located. The show’s producers brought back Ken Jennings, a contestant who won a record 74 days in a row and 2.5 million dollars in 2004 to play against Watson. In February 2011 the historic challenge took place and Watson was victorious over the human contenders. At the end of the three day game, Watson finished with $77,147 while Ken Jennings won $24,000 and the third place contestant, Brad Rutter earned $21,600.[337]

Artificial Brains

In 2009, scientists in Switzerland claimed that they would be able to create a fully-functioning replica of a human brain by the year 2020. They call it the Blue Brain project, and is headed up by Henry Markram who is the director of the Swiss based Center for Neuroscience & Technology and the Brain Mind Institute. Markram had been working to reverse engineer the human brain for years and claimed that he would be able to accomplish this around the year 2020.[338]

There are other teams working on building electronic brains using large computer mainframes. For example, a team at IBM's Almaden Research Lab at Nevada University used a BlueGene/L Supercomputer to model a mouse brain which consists of about eight million neurons. The first version of the BlueGene computer runs about one tenth as fast as an actual mouse's brain, a rate that will undoubtedly rapidly increase with advancing technology.

In a talk in 2008 titled "Crossing the Chasm Between Humans and Machines: the Next 40 Years," Justin Rattner, Intel's chief technology officer, spoke seriously on the subject of machines becoming as smart as people. "The industry has taken much greater strides than anyone ever imagined 40 years ago," he said, and admitted that, "machines could even overtake humans in their ability to reason in the not-so-distant future."[339]

Rodney Brooks, a robot designer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) confirmed, "One day we will create a human-level artificial intelligence." Paul Saffo, a technology forecaster at Stanford University said, "Eventually, we're going to reach the point where everybody's going to say, 'Of course machines are smarter than we are.'"

Saffo also made comments showing the dark danger of creating such things. “The truly interesting question is what happens after if we have truly intelligent robots. If we’re very lucky, they’ll treat us as pets. If not, they’ll treat us as food.”

While Ray Kurzweil believes, (and hopes) that computers will match and surpass human level intelligence by the year 2029, Intel’s Justin Rattner thinks it won’t be until at least 2050, and of course others say it will be even longer.

As incredible advances in computers continue, some scientists are understandably getting worried about the implications of computers surpassing human-level intelligence. Some are debating whether there should be restrictions placed on the kinds of research that could lead to a loss of control once intelligent systems are created.

Scientists who met at the Asilomar Conference Grounds on Monterey Bay in California in 2009 largely downplayed the possibility of computers becoming smarter than man or an artificial intelligence system developing from the Internet, but did acknowledge some of the dangers advancing technology had.

The meeting was organized by Dr. Eric Horvitz, the president of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence, who also works for Microsoft. The location of the conference was purposefully chosen in an attempt to parallel a meeting in 1975 at the same location where leading biologists met to discuss mixing DNA and other genetic material between different organisms and species. Such technology raised serious ethical questions and the 1975 conference helped to set guidelines for DNA research and experiments.

Dr. Horvitz said, “My sense was that sooner or later we would have to make some sort of statement or assessment, given the rising voice of the technorati and people very concerned about the rise of intelligent machines.”

The Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (A.A.A.I.) decided to draft a report that would assess the possibility of “the loss of human control of computer-based intelligences,” as well as the ethical, legal, and socioeconomic issues that are connected to such intelligences arising. Dr. Horvitz said sensitive or potentially dangerous technology and research should be contained in highly secure laboratories as a precaution.

Some scientists, however, were only made more uncomfortable by the meeting after learning about the emerging artificial intelligent systems and their likely implications on the world. Tom Mitchell, a professor of artificial intelligence at Carnegie Mellon University, said, “I went in very optimistic about the future of A.I. and thinking that Bill Joy and Ray Kurzweil were far off in their predictions,” but that, “The meeting made me want to be more outspoken about these issues and in particular be outspoken about the vast amounts of data collected about our personal lives.”

Technological Singularity

The “technological singularity,” sometimes simply called “the singularity” refers to a theoretical time in the future when an artificial intelligence is created that is able to learn and advance technology at a faster pace than humans are able to comprehend. According to this idea, once machines exceed human intelligence, they will improve their own designs and functions in complex ways that are too difficult for humans to understand.

The term, “the singularity” is credited to Vernor Vinge who is a retired mathematics professor at San Diego State University and a science fiction writer, who in 1993 wrote about such an event possibly happening in the future, and coined the term. In his paper titled, *The Coming Technological Singularity*, he wrote, “Within thirty years, we will have the technological means to create superhuman intelligence. Shortly after, the human era will be ended.”

The idea of an “intelligence explosion” by intelligent machines that would design even more intelligent machines was also proposed by a mathematician in 1965 named I. J. Good. In more recent times, many other prominent professionals and experts have spoken about such events.

Bill Joy, the founder of Sun Microsystems, a popular computer chip manufacturer, warned of such an event in an article published in a 2000 edition of *Wired Magazine* titled “Why the Future Doesn’t Need Us.”

He wrote, “From the moment I became involved in the creation of new technologies, their ethical dimensions have concerned me, but it was only in the autumn of 1998 that I became anxiously aware of how great are the dangers facing us in the 21st century.”[340]

He continues, “I was also reminded of the Borg of *Star Trek*, a hive of partly biological, partly robotic creatures with a strong destructive streak. Borg-like disasters are a staple of science fiction, so why hadn’t I been more concerned about such robotic dystopias earlier? Why weren’t other people more concerned about these nightmarish scenarios?”

“By 2030, we are likely to be able to build machines, in quantity, a million times as powerful as the personal computers of today—sufficient to implement the dreams of Kurzweil and Moravec.”

“Given the incredible power of these new technologies, shouldn’t we be asking how we can best coexist with them? And if our own extinction is a likely, or even possible, outcome of our technological development, shouldn’t we proceed with great caution?”

“How soon could such an intelligent robot be built? The coming advances in computing power seem to make it possible by 2030. And once an intelligent robot exists, it is only a small step to a robot species—to an intelligent robot that can make evolved copies of itself.”

He goes on to say that we are rapidly approaching the point of no return with no plan, no control, and no breaks; and ponders, “Have we already gone too far down the path to alter course?”

He also discusses his fears that self-replicating robots and nanotechnology could soon surprise us the way news of the first cloned animal did. He concludes by saying, “This crystallized for me my problem with Kurzweil’s dream. A technological approach to Eternity—near immortality through robotics—may not be the most desirable utopia, and its pursuit brings clear dangers. Maybe we should rethink our utopian choices.”

In 2008, an organization called Singularity University in Silicon Valley began offering courses to prepare a “cadre” to shape advancing technology

and help society cope with the ramifications of what they see as the coming singularity.

Techno-Utopianism

Technological utopianism refers to the belief that scientific and technological advances will one day bring about a utopia where humans can live in luxury and enjoy an abundance of goods and services that are all built and maintained by robots and/or artificially intelligent systems.

Such an idea has been portrayed in science fiction books and films, as well as cartoons like the *Jetsons*. Proponents envision that in the future, things like cooking, cleaning, and manual labor will be done by robots, allowing people to have an abundance of free time to enjoy themselves with 3D entertainment, interactive video games, or other leisure activities or hobbies. It's difficult to reconcile these ideas because often people's jobs have been replaced by new technology, leaving them unemployed and with job skills that aren't needed anymore. Such displacements don't allow the individual to then live a comfortable life of luxury, but instead place tremendous stress on them as they scramble to find a new place in the job market to provide for their family and pay their bills. Techno-utopian dreamers somehow often overlook practical scenarios involving advancing technology.

If we look back in history to the industrial revolution, we can see that many people thought this would bring about a techno-utopia since manual labor could be reduced by advanced machinery, but instead, people were needed to design, build, operate, and maintain the new machines, and such developments didn't ease American's work load at all. Quite contrary, Americans are working longer hours now than in years past, and in the last few generations we have seen the need for both husband and wife to work in order to make ends meet.

In the 1990s when the Internet became widely popular and the dot-com craze started, techno-utopian dreams were revived once again. Many of the key players in the computer revolution were counter-culture figures such as Steve Jobs, founder of Apple Inc., who was a hippie who smoked pot and used LSD, but later grew into a suit-wearing businessman.

While computers and the Internet have changed the world and our culture in vast ways, are people working less and retiring earlier? No. Sure, there are exceptions such as people who created a business model and developed it into a successful money making operation and became wealthy in a short period of time, but these are the rare exceptions. It seems that jobs and careers are similar to energy, in that they simply change form and cause people to scramble to learn new skills as their positions are eliminated.

As you know, the dot-com bubble burst after the rampant speculation of permanent prosperity and instant millionaires came crashing down to reality. The belief in techno-utopianism may at times gain a tremendous following of people who can cite all kinds of reasons and evidence for why it will soon occur, but they will inevitably be disappointed when reality sets in.

Techno-utopian dreamers believe that technological growth will lead to the end of economic scarcity, and that this will then eliminate every major social evil such as crime. What they overlook is the fact that some people steal for the thrill of it, and some people kill out of rage, and some people like to gain and abuse power just for the sake of power.

Zeitgeist the Movie

A popular set of films on the Internet is *Zeitgeist the Movie,* and its sequel *Zeitgeist: Addendum* which were produced by a man using a possible pseudonym of "Peter Joseph." The films attempt to expose the New World Order, the 9/11 attacks, and the Federal Reserve banking system, while simultaneously attacking Christianity and claiming that Jesus never existed. For the sake of this analysis, we will focus primarily on the techno-utopia described in the sequel, *Zeitgeist: Addendum.* A thorough analysis of the other aspects of the films can be found in my book, *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction.*

In October of 2008, *Zeitgeist* part 2, or the *Addendum,* was released as an Internet film and began with a discussion about the private Federal Reserve banking system and its implications on the economy and society, but then took a turn into the bizarre. A large part of *Zeitgeist Addendum* promotes the idea that civilization will not need money anymore after we design and build sophisticated robots and mechanical systems to perform most of the tasks that humans now have to accomplish. The producer, "Peter Joseph," and the proponents of what is called the Venus Project, envision a techno-utopian society where machines will do all the work for us, and people will then be able to spend their time enjoying themselves and living in luxury. The film pushes the idea that these advanced machines will be able to create an abundance of everything we need, and can cook and clean and do all kinds of manual labor, so that people can then live like they're on a permanent vacation and explore their creative side.

Of course it seems as if the producer was high on marijuana when he wrote the script, and to any educated person the film seems like a pipe dream, but a lot of younger viewers fully support the techno-utopian ideas and believe the picture of the future painted in the film will soon be a reality.

Who wouldn’t like a world where you wouldn’t have to work? Seems like a great idea on the surface, until you actually look at the logistics of such an idea. Unfortunately the supporters of this film cannot grasp the reality of a medium of exchange, nor the value of rare artifacts or the need for human labor, and that even if sophisticated machines or robots are able to replace a fair amount of human labor, there will always be countless jobs that they will not be able to do: from teaching children, to various service oriented jobs or research and development. Such a techno-utopia has been the dream of many who envisioned microwave ovens, cell phones, and laptop computers as the tools which would free mankind from the burdens of work, but such inventions have only complicated the issue.

Since the *Zeitgeist* series is blatantly anti-religion, particularly anti-Christianity, many of the Zeitgeist supporters attack anyone who addresses the fallacies in the film often saying critics must be brainwashed from religion and too old-fashioned to change with the times.

Aside from his attacks on Christianity in his first film, “Peter Joseph” is also anti-Second Amendment and said that in his vision of the future, people wouldn’t need to own guns anymore since there would be no crime. In an interview, when he was asked about people who didn’t want to go along and participate in his supposed utopian New World Order, he basically said the people would need to be re-educated.[341]

Peter Joseph seems to have attempted to establish himself as some sort of cult leader by promoting what he calls the Zeitgeist Movement, which is seen as a group of activists who desire to change society into the kind envisioned in his films. In June 2010, the movement claimed to have over 400,000 members,[342] which consist of people who have signed up for an e-mail list.

Supporters of the so-called Zeitgeist Movement dream of a society with no money, no private property, mass automation of manual labor and tedious tasks, and artificial intelligent systems to make ethical judgments,

perhaps replacing human judges and juries, which they claim are biased and not objective. While these ideas seem to be taken right out of a science fiction novel, or someone who lacks critical thinking skills, Peter Joseph seems to actually believe in them and has a fair number of supporters who agree with him. It is unclear exactly how these people will usher in their techno-utopia, but somehow they feel they deserve it.

On October 8, 2008, some supporters of the Zeitgeist Movement smashed several windows in a building at Oklahoma State University and spray painted “Zeitgeist Movement” on the pavement in some sort of attempt to “fight the system.” It’s extremely unlikely that the “Zeitgeist Movement” will formulate into an actual social movement or affect any kind of social changes whatsoever, but the *Zeitgeist* films show how appealing fanciful dreams of a techno-utopia are for people.

An Analysis of Ray Kurzweil’s Predictions

I thought it would be beneficial to analyze the predictions of the respected futurist Ray Kurzweil, especially since one of his books, *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, was published in 1999, and contains his technological forecasts for the decades to come. At the time I’m writing this analysis, it is the year 2010, so we can look back at Kurzweil’s predictions for the year 2009 that he made ten years earlier in order to see how they pan out. We will also look at his predictions for the future and discuss the likelihood of them being accurate. His book contains chapters on his vision of the future and what technology we will have in the years 2009, 2019, 2029, and 2099.

Kurzweil's Predictions For 2009

In 1999, Kurzweil looked ahead ten years and predicted that by 2009, "Personal computers are available in a wide range of sizes and shapes, and are commonly embedded in clothing and jewelry such as wristwatches, rings, earrings, and other body ornaments. Computers with high-resolution visual interfaces range from rings and pins and credit cards up to the size of a thin book."[343] Well, with the release of smart phones such as the Black Berry and the iPhone, one could argue that computers do come in all shapes and sizes, but as far as his prediction of them being "commonly" embedded in clothing and jewelry, this didn't happen.

He was more accurate, though, when he stated, "Computer displays have all the display quality of paper—high resolution, high contrast, large viewing angle, and no flicker. Books, magazines, and newspapers are now routinely read on displays that are the size of, well, small books."[344]

Amazon.com released their e-book reader, *Kindle*, in 2007, which was later followed by Barnes and Noble's *Nook*, and e-books could be read on iPhones and other smart phones as well. In April 2010, Apple Inc. released the iPad, which they advertised as an e-book reader among other things.

The iPad also sounds a lot like what he described here, where he said, "Students of all ages typically have a computer of their own, which is a thin table-like device weighing under a pound with a very high resolution display suitable for reading."[345] Most students in 2009 had laptop computers, and while they weighed more than a pound, they were certainly amazing creations that had wireless Internet access and could be used to watch videos or read e-books.

Back in 1999, Kurzweil also stated that in 2009, “Telephone communication is primarily wireless, and routinely includes high-resolution moving images,”[346] which, thanks to smart phones with video cameras and color screens, this is what we have. Many people now don’t even have a “home phone” and only have their cell phones. He also predicted, “Computers routinely include moving picture image cameras and are able to reliably identify their owners from their faces.”[347] Well, he was right again, because all laptops come standard with a tiny camera and microphone built into them, and any laptop can be installed with facial recognition software used as a security measure to only allow the owner to use it. Tiny video cameras were also common in cell phones in 2009.

While we now take iTunes and downloadable mp3s for granted, in 1999 the music industry was running scared of people downloading their music on peer-to-peer networks like Napster. Kurzweil predicted by 2009 that, “Most purchases of books, musical ‘albums,’ video games, and other forms of software do not involve any physical object, so new business models for distributing these forms of information have emerged.”[348]

While he may have been wrong by using the word “most,” he was certainly correct that an extremely large number of people purchase software, videogames, and music from websites and instantly download them, instead of having to physically go to a store and buy them on a disk. Kurzweil also saw the future of On-Demand movies and services like Netflix, YouTube, and podcasts of popular radio shows, saying, “Users can instantly download books, magazines, newspapers, television, radio, movies, and other forms of software to their highly portable personal communication devices.” [349]

Not surprisingly, Kurzweil also mentioned that privacy would become a major concern for people, and as you know, identity theft became a popular fear as we relied more and more on technology. “Privacy has emerged as a primary political issue. The virtually constant use of electronic communication technologies is leaving a highly detailed trail of every person’s every move,” he said.[350]

It’s also interesting to read that Kurzweil foresaw a large portion of the population would become politically neutralized, saying, “Although not politically popular, the underclass is politically neutralized through public assistance and the generally high level of affluence.”[351]

Not all of his predictions for 2009 came true, however. One such prediction was concerning the economy, which he was embarrassingly wrong about when he said, “Despite occasional corrections, the ten years leading up to 2009 have seen continuous economic expansion and prosperity due to the dominance of the knowledge content of products and services. The greatest gains continue to be in the value of the stock market.”[352] Now it is understandable that he is a technology expert, not an economist, so his failed economic forecasting shouldn’t detract from his insight into technological advances.

Also, while he did foresee the use of unmanned flying drones to be used in wars, he believed that humans would be mostly far removed from the scene of battle, sadly, a prediction that was far from accurate with the fatalities and injuries to soldiers and innocent civilians in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He did, however, envision small UAVs (Unmanned Arial Vehicles) the size of birds or smaller,[353] which did come true in 2009 and 2010, although such devices were still in their infancy.

Kurzweil’s Predictions for 2019

Looking further ahead, he says by the year 2019 computers will be so small that they’ll practically be invisible and that we will have displays built into our eye glasses and contact lenses which will replace old fashioned LCD monitors.

He insists that reverse engineering of the human brain will have inspired the architecture of machine-based neural networks and says a $4000 computer will have the same computing power as a human brain (20 million- billion calculations per second).

“Keyboards are rare, although they still exist. Most interactions with computing is through gestures using hands, fingers, and facial expressions and through two-way natural-language spoken communication. People communicate with computers the same way they would communicate with a human assistant, both verbally and through visual expression,” he says.[354]

“Paper books and documents are rarely used or accessed….Most learning is accomplished using intelligent software-based simulated teachers. To the extent that teaching is done by human teachers, the human teachers are often not in the local vicinity of the student.”[355]

He also says that people will be hooked up to virtual reality systems that can simulate pressure, temperature, textures, and moistness, and says that “sexual interactions with other human partners or simulated partners” will be the “preferred mode of interaction, even when a human partner is nearby.”[356]

He goes on to say that people will begin having relationships with automated personalities, including automated lovers, and writes that

“automated personalities are superior to humans in some ways, such as having very reliable memories, and if desired, predictable (and programmable) personalities.”[357]

He forecasts that the military will widely use very small flying weapons, some the size of insects, a concept that the military has already budgeted for, and is working towards. **(*See Orwellian Weapons*)** By 2019, Kurzweil believes that some reports will claim that computers have passed the Turing Test, but he insists that these systems will not meet all the criteria of an artificially intelligent system for a few more years.

“Public and private spaces are routinely monitored by machine intelligence to prevent interpersonal violence,” he says, and “privacy continues to be a major political and social issue with each individual’s practically every move stored in a database somewhere.”[358] It’s interesting to read his forecast of “machine intelligence” that he says will prevent violence, because as you may recall from the chapter on surveillance cameras, in 2010 these systems were already in their early stages with pre-crime cameras that detect “hostile” speech based on the volume, speed, and pitch of conversations the microphones pick up.

He also writes that in this period of time the “human underclass” will continue to be an issue and that the difference between those “productively engaged” in the economy and those who aren’t, will be complicated.

Kurzweil's Predictions for 2029

This is where his predictions start to get scary. Much of them sound like science fiction or fantasies coming from an over-active imagination, but Kurzweil is supposedly an expert, and was able to fairly accurately predict the kinds of technology that would be used in the year 2009 when he wrote his book ten years earlier. While some of these predictions for 2029 may seem fanciful, some of them are certainly extremely likely to occur.

Instead of people wearing a blue tooth piece on their ear to talk on their phone, Kurzweil believes that, "Cochlear implants, originally used just for the hearing impaired, are now ubiquitous. These implants provide auditory communication in both directions between the human user and the world wide computing network."[359] This is certainly believable, but what is even more disturbing is that he says similar devices will be implanted in our eyes.

"Displays are now implanted in the eyes, with a choice of permanent implants or removable implants (similar to contact lenses). Images are projected directly onto the retina providing the usual high-resolution three-dimensional overlay on the physical world."[360]

He also envisions neural interfaces will be as common as cell phones were in the beginning of the twenty-first century, saying, "neural implants based on machine intelligence are providing enhanced perceptual and cognitive functioning to humans. Defining what constitutes a human being is emerging as a significant legal and political issue. The rapidly growing capability of machines is controversial, but there is no effective resistance to it."[361]

If this isn’t unsettling enough, he also alludes to the fact that the majority of humans on earth will not even be needed anymore, and will be completely replaced by machines. “There is almost no human employment in production, agriculture, and transportation,” he says.[362]

If there is no human employment in production, agriculture, or transportation, as Kurzweil predicts, then what kinds of jobs are those people going to have? What he doesn’t mention is that elite politicians, environmentalists, and businessmen have a strong desire to massively reduce the world’s population in order to (as they believe) preserve the earth’s natural resources. Wealthy elitists like Ted Turner and Prince Philip have publicly stated their desire to reduce the population by several billion people. The elite’s ideologies behind population reduction are discussed at length in my book, *The New World Order: Facts & Fiction*.

Kurzweil’s Predictions for 2099

If you thought his predictions for the year 2029 were far-fetched, or just plain disturbing, what Kurzweil believes life will be like in 2099 is truly bizarre. “A software-based intelligence is able to manifest bodies at will: one or more virtual bodies at different levels of virtual reality and nanoengineered physical bodies using instantly reconfigurable nanobot swarms.”[363] What he is saying, basically, is that billions of tiny nanorobots that all communicate with each other, will be able to work together to assemble themselves in the shape of whatever they want, similar to the T-1000 Terminator robot from the Arnold Schwarzenegger movie *Terminator 2*.

He also says that computer systems will be completely artificially intelligent, and will even be smarter than the entire human race’s intelligence combined.[364]

Humans, he says, will almost all have computers implanted in their brains and will all be cyborgs. “Even among those human intelligences still using carbon-based neurons, there is ubiquitous use of neural implant technology, which provides enormous augmentation of human perceptual and cognitive abilities. Humans who do not utilize such implants are unable to meaningfully participate in dialogues with those who do.”[365]

Only time will tell just how accurate these predictions are. While his visions of the year 2009 were very accurate, this could be in part because much of the technology that became popular around that time was already in the works when he wrote his book in 1999. It’s not that difficult to see how emerging technology will become commonplace in the near future, but extrapolating accurate predictions thirty years and one hundred years into the future are likely much more difficult. Depending on what year you are

reading this book, you will be able to make a more accurate assessment of the timeline Kurzweil outlines in his writings.

Even if Kurzweil is dramatically wrong in his visions of future technology, the kinds of invasive and dehumanizing systems that will undoubtedly be created in the coming decades should be a cause for alarm, and precautions should be made today to ensure that we do not become a mindless species of cyborgs, or the slaves of artificially intelligent robots.

Cybernetic Organisms

A cybernetic organism is a living creature that consists of both biological systems, as well as artificial systems, and is often seen as being a person or other organism that has enhanced abilities due to advanced technology. The term *cyborg* is often used as a shortened version of *cybernetic organism* and is a popular term used in science fiction to describe a creature that is part human, part machine. The term cyborg was coined in 1960 by Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline in a paper where they outlined how cybernetic systems could be used to allow humans to “meet the requirements of extraterrestrial environments,” as they traveled in space to other planets.[366]

Characters such as the Borg from *Star Trek*, and the *Six million Dollar Man* from the 1970s TV series are examples of popular cyborgs from science fiction, which is where most people believe is the only place that cyborgs are found. Quite surprising is the fact that cybernetic organisms are actually real, although they are not nearly advanced as the ones in the movies…yet.

As far back as 2004, a cybernetic brain was able to fly a flight simulator for an F-22 fighter jet.[367] This cyborg brain was built from 25,000 neurons extracted from a rat’s brain which sits in a petri dish. The brain is still alive. Dr. Thomas DeMarse, professor of biomedical engineering at the University of Florida said, “It’s essentially a dish with 60 electrodes arranged in a dish at the bottom, over that we put the living cortical neurons from rats, which rapidly begin to reconnect themselves, forming a living neural network—a brain.”

An article on CNN.com in 2004 discussing the system mentioned that “living networks” could be used to fly actual unmanned aircraft in the future, and not just a flight simulator. This cyborg rat brain was reported to

have “learned” to control the flight simulator. With the partial rat brain consisting of only 25,000 neurons, one can only imagine what could happen if and when complete brains, or the brains of larger animals are used. A dog’s brain has 160 million neurons, for example, and a chimpanzee’s has more than six billion.

A similar cyborg brain was created at the Georgia Institute of Technology which operates a small mechanical body instead of a flight simulator. The designers call it the Hybrot, meaning hybrid-robot, which also uses a portion of a rat’s brain. The researchers are hoping that their creation will start to actually learn.

“Learning is often defined as a lasting change in behaviors, resulting from experience,” said Steve Potter, the bio-medical engineer on the project. “In order for a cultured network to learn, it must be able to behave. By using multi-electrode arrays as a two-way interface to cultured mammalian cortical networks, we have given these networks an artificial body with which to behave,” he said.[368]

In 2007 Charles Higgins, an associate professor at the University of Arizona, built a small robot that is controlled partially by the brain of a moth. Higgens attached electrodes to a part of the moth’s brain that deals with sight, which then causes the robot to respond depending on what the moth is seeing.

Higgens said in the future, “Most computers will have some kind of living component to them. In time, our knowledge of biology will get to a point where if your heart is failing, we won’t wait for a donor. We’ll just grow you one. We’ll be able to do that with brains, too. If I could grow brains, I could really make computing efficient.”[369]

Higgens insists that he would draw the line at using monkey or human brains for cybernetic creations, but mentioned that someday these new hybrid computers could become artificially intelligent. “Computers now are good at chess and Word and Excel, but they’re not good at being flexible or

interacting with other users. There may be some way to use biological computing to actually make our computers seem more intelligent," he said.

Monkey Equipped with Mechanical Arm

In 2003 scientists at Duke University's Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina attached a neural interface to a monkey's brain that allowed it to move a mechanical arm by using its thoughts. The monkey would just think about using its own arm, and its brain signals were intercepted by the neural interface and caused the mechanical arm to move the same way its own arm would have. The monkey was able to grab things and feed itself with the cybernetic arm.[370]

"It's quite plausible that the perception is you're extended into the robot arm, or the arm is an extension of you," said the University of Washington's Eberhard E. Fetz, a pioneer in the field of brain-machine interfaces.

"It moves much like your own arm would move," said Dr Andrew Schwartz of Pittsburgh University. The scientists said they would soon upgrade the system so that the users could transmit their mental commands to machines wirelessly instead of having them physically wired into the brain.[371]

The monkeys used in the experiment had bundles of wires protruding from their head after they had holes drilled through their skulls to implant the interfaces into their brains. Miguel Nicolelis, the scientist in charge of the experiments, insisted the monkeys liked the experiment. "If anything, they're enjoying themselves playing these games. It enriches their lives," he said. "You don't have to do anything to get these guys into their chair. They go right there. That's play time."[372]

Man Tests Mechanical Hand

In Italy a man who lost his forearm in a car accident was equipped with a cybernetic arm in 2003, similar to the one that was tested on monkeys several years earlier. In this instance, the mechanical hand was just part of a test and was not a permanent thing.

Scientists implanted electrodes into the nerves at the end of the man’s severed hand and connected them to the mechanical hand and he was able to wiggle the fingers and grab things. The project was called LifeHand. You may recall in one of the *Star Wars* films, the lead character, Luke Skywalker, had his hand cut off which was then replaced by a mechanical hand that he used throughout the rest of the trilogy.

After the surgery which implanted the electrodes in the patient’s arm, he only took a few days to master the robotic hand. Scientists said the device was able to receive and obey 95% of the commands from the man’s nervous system. “It felt almost the same as a real hand,” said the patient.[373]

Paolo Maria Rossini, a neurologist who lead the procedure, said the patient “didn’t have to learn to use muscles that do a different job to move a prosthesis, he just had to concentrate and send to the robotic hand the same messages he used to send to his own hand.”[374]

Transhumanism

Transhumanism is a fringe belief system, some call it a movement, of people who are hoping or attempting to use technology to improve the mental and physical characteristics and abilities of human beings. Such technologies will lead to what supporters call "human enhancement." Some of the ideas brought forth by transhumanists are noble, such as helping the handicapped or curing disease, but many also dream of one day eliminating aging and even death and transforming ordinary humans into cyborgs that live forever. Most transhumanists are atheists.

The term *transhumanism* is symbolized by H+ and comes from the idea that humans can transform themselves into beings with dramatically improved abilities compared to what a natural born human has in regards to strength, mental capabilities, and communication. Much of the "enhancements" come from cybernetic devices like neural interfaces that will turn an ordinary person into a cyborg. The emergence of nanotechnology is looked at as a major primer that will jumpstart the transhumanist revolution. Nanotechnology refers to the manipulation or assembly of matter on an atomic scale, or structures between 1 and 100 nanometers in size. One nanometer is one billionth of a meter. Nanotechnology has a wide range of applications, mainly in electronics and medicine.

In 1986 a man named Eric Drexler published a book titled *Engines of Creation*: *The Coming Era of Nanotechnology,* which was one of the first to discuss the future possibilities of nanotechnology to dramatically extend the human lifespan and use nanorobots for various science fiction-like tasks.[375]

Ray Kurzweil believes that, "Nanobots launched into our bloodstreams could supplement our natural immune system and seek out and destroy

pathogens, cancer cells, arterial plaque, and other agents….We will be able to reconstruct any or all of our bodily organs and systems, and do so at the cellular level."[376]

In her 1992 book *Science as Salvation*, Mary Midgley discussed transhumanist goals of achieving immortality and called their ideas quasi-scientific dreams and self-indulgent, uncontrolled power-fantasies driven by pseudoscientific speculation and the fear of death.[377]

A Closer Look at Nineteen Eighty-Four

Let’s now take a closer look at the story elements of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and see how the novel reflects our current society in many ways, not just in terms of privacy-invading technology and the watchful eyes of Big Brother. The story of Winston Smith, the lead character, and the world in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also involves very insightful elements describing the socioeconomic structure and the drastic differences in lifestyles between different segments of society. Orwell also highlighted a perpetual state of war and the propaganda that kept society supporting it. As you read through the novel, it is impossible not to notice numerous other parallels between the storyline and our actual reality. The book is one of the scariest instances of life imitating art, and critics of Big Brother will sometimes say that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was not meant to be used as an instruction manual.

Social Structure

In the novel, the government consists of “the Party” which itself is made up of Inner members and Outer members, each with dramatically different privileges. The Inner members have access to luxuries such as real food and refreshments, and live in spacious and well-furnished homes, while the Outer members are given small food rations and live in dilapidated housing projects. A step below the Outer members on the socioeconomic scale are the Proles (or proletariats) who live in deplorable conditions like a third world country and are seen as immoral and out of control animals who are not given any of the “luxuries” of Party members.

Orwell explains, “Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbors, films, football, beer, and above all, gambling filled up the horizon of their minds. To keep them in control was not difficult…All that was required of them was a primitive patriotism which could be appealed to whenever it was necessary to make them accept longer working hours or shorter rations. And when they become discontented, as they sometimes did, their discontentment led nowhere, because being without general ideas, they could only focus it on petty specific grievances.”[378]

A steady supply of “Victory Gin” provided by the government kept people mildly intoxicated, and contributed to their apathetic attitude. In the story, the political ideology is described as *Ingsoc*, which stands for English Socialism, and is the justification for the severe government control and regulation of goods and services. Even having children is regulated by the government and a couple must be approved before they start a family.

Life wasn’t always so controlled and joyless. After what is called the Revolution, the Party gained power and created a society where each

individual is reduced to nothing more than a worker, working for the sake of the Party, and under the constant supervision of Big Brother.

The population of the Proles was massive compared to Party members, and Orwell notes that if they would only realize the strength that they had in numbers, they could rise up and overthrow the Party and Big Brother in an instant.

“Why was it that they could never shout like that about anything that mattered?” Winston lamented after hearing a group of people yelling in the streets over a petty quarrel. The reason for their poor living condition was their lack of education and their own ignorance. The Party did everything they could to prevent them from becoming enlightened.

“For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves; and when once they had done this, they would sooner or later realize that the privileged minority had no function, and they would sweep it away. In the long run, a hierarchical society was only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance.”[379]

The Control of Information

George Orwell knew the power of propaganda, thus the Party controlled all information such as the newsreels shown on the telescreens, and the publishing of all newspapers and books. They even wrote the songs people would sing, created the games children played, and produced the entertainment people enjoyed.

“They [the citizens] could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity of what was demanded of them, and were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening.”[380]

In our society we have Operation Mockingbird which has manipulated the mainstream media since the 1950s and functions as a propaganda arm of the establishment, and a gate-keeper to contain important information, preventing it from reaching the public. Most people are also distracted by entertainment news such as celebrity gossip and sports, which divert people’s attention away from important issues and allows government corruption to run rampant.

A *memory hole* is another term coined by Orwell, and means the alteration or disappearance of inconvenient or embarrassing documents, photographs, transcripts, or other records, in a way that attempts to make it seem as though something never happened and the information never even existed. For example, if an embarrassing story is posted online after slipping past the editors but is later brought to their attention, sometimes they may change a headline, remove parts of the story, or just delete the entire story altogether in an attempt to contain certain information and prevent it from being known or spread around. When this happens, the information is said to have disappeared down the memory hole.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* there is a scene where Winston Smith had to edit newspapers from the past (which was part of his job) and change the amount of chocolate rations that were allowed to each person per week. In reality, the amount decreased from 30 grams to 20 grams, but Smith had to make it seem like the ration had actually increased from 15 to 20. A visibly happy friend of Winston later passes him in a hallway and cheerfully says, “Did you hear they’re going to increase the chocolate rations from 15 grams to 20 grams per week,” and is so brainwashed by Big Brother that he doesn’t realize the number had actually been reduced and not increased. All past documentation showing anything different had been removed from existence.

All information about a person who betrays Big Brother or the Party is also completely removed from all records, and that person becomes an “unperson” and is executed. It is made to seem as if they never even existed. Near the end of the novel, the main antagonist, O’Brien, tells Winston, “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.” Any information the Party didn’t want people to have access to anymore simply disappeared into a memory hole (meaning it was destroyed) and was quickly forgotten about by everyone. With no physical evidence or record of a piece of information, there was no longer any way to verify whether a fact was true or not. The truth was what the Party said it was.

In a very ironic situation in 2009, Amazon.com deleted a large number of copies of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from their Kindle electronic book readers. Customers had purchased e-book copies of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which were then sent wirelessly to their Kindle reader, but after it was discovered that the publisher who listed that particular Kindle version for sale did not actually have the rights to the novel, the copies were deleted by Amazon from customer’s own Kindle e-book readers, and disappeared into a memory hole.[381] Customers were not told what had happened, and the copy of the book simply vanished from their e-book reader because they are all wirelessly connected to Amazon.com and the company controls which files are stored on the Kindle unit.

Another one of countless incidences where important information disappears down a *memory hole* as a result of government intervention was with the case of the pulling of an episode of Jesse Ventura's television show, *Conspiracy Theory*. After the "Police State" episode first aired on Friday November 26th 2010, it was scheduled to be replayed the following week as a lead-in for the new episode, but it mysteriously never aired again. The episode's description was also pulled from TruTV's website, the cable channel airing program. It covered secretive FEMA prison camps and terrorist fusion centers which collect and data mine information to look for terrorists or anyone who may be a threat to the government's tyranny. The episode was pretty disturbing.

After websites and blogs started to buzz with speculation, it was then revealed by the show's producers that the U.S. government put pressure on the network to kill the episode from airing again, so they did.[382] The information in episodes of *Conspiracy Theory* is so powerful that the government doesn't want people watching it so they put pressure on the network to make one of the most damaging episodes disappear. People who recorded that episode on their DVRs at home then started reporting that the episode was missing from their DVR unit.[383] Apparently the cable company had even removed the recorded episodes in an attempt to dump them down a memory hole.

Perpetual State of War

Society is stuck in a lengthy war with another superpower and the ongoing battle is used as an explanation for various food and supply shortages that people must endure. The telescreens announce victories on the battlefield that always bring the war "within measurable distance of its end," but it continues on, and on and society continues to support it.

While this war continues, the enemy superpower they are supposedly fighting keeps changing, and nobody seems to notice. First they are fighting Eastasia (and allies with Eurasia), but later they are said to be battling Eurasia, and allies with Eastasia, but nobody notices. It's kind of like the switch from fighting the "War on Terror" in Afghanistan starting in 2001, shortly after the 9/11 attacks, and later shifting to the War in Iraq in 2003 which then continued for many years.

Winston finds a girlfriend named Julia who feels the same way he does about the Party, society, and Big Brother, and the two discuss finding the Brotherhood, an underground and secret Resistance movement that is plotting to overthrow the Party and restore freedom. As they discuss finding the Brotherhood (called *The Resistance* in the film version) they begin unraveling the extent of the lies coming from the Party. When discussing the perpetual war, Julia remarks, "The rocket bombs which fell daily on London were probably fired by the government itself, just to keep people frightened."[384] It's stunning that Orwell included this reference to false flag terrorism in the storyline, a very real and ruthless strategy used by governments around the world throughout history. A false flag attack means a country (or group) attacks themselves and blames it on some other country or group in order to justify a massive military response that is seen as a retaliation for the (fraudulent) attack against them.

In the novel, Orwell also explains that the war Oceania is fighting isn't a real war, but that it is a fabrication that the ruling Party needs to continuously go on in order to destroy the fruits of society's labor, thus ensuring a continuous shortage of goods which maintains the social structure that the ruling elite has constructed. The Party would print up "atrocity pamphlets" outlining the crimes allegedly committed by the enemy, and distribute them to the citizens of Oceania so they could see how evil the enemy was that they were fighting and the horrors of war were constantly in their minds to reinforce the reason they had to work so hard for so little.

Winston comes to discover, "The essential act of war is destruction, not necessarily of human lives, but of the products of human labor. War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere or sinking in the depths of the sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent."[385]

"In the past, the ruling groups of all countries, although they might recognize their common interest and therefore limit the destructiveness of war, did fight against one another, and the victor always plundered the vanquished. In our own day they are not fighting against one another at all. The war is waged by each ruling group against its own subjects, and the object of the war is not to make or prevent conquests of territory, but to keep the structure of society intact."[386]

According to the novel, if society was not at war, and the goods they manufactured were put to use to improve the living conditions of everyone, then the ruling elite would lose their power because the wealth would be more evenly distributed. It is for this reason that the Inner Party continues their manufactured and fraudulent war, which then keeps them in control of the infrastructure and assets, and prevents everyone else from rising out of poverty.

The Personification of the Party

A man named Big Brother is supposedly the head of the Party, and his picture is plastered on walls in every building and on every street to constantly remind everyone that “Big Brother is watching you.” There is actually no one named Big Brother, or at least not anymore, but the people didn’t know this, or even consider it. He is a face attached to personify the Party and give it the appearance and feeling of being human. Orwell explains, “Big Brother is the guise in which the Party chooses to exhibit itself to the world. His function is to act as a focusing point for love, fear, and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt toward an individual than toward an organization.”[387]

In reality, a similar method is used with the President of the United States (and the leaders of other countries as well). The president is believed by many to be the man in charge, and the most powerful man in the world, but he is simply a spokesman and puppet for the ones who are really running the show. When people are mad at the policies they must obey or conditions they find themselves and their country in, they point to the president and blame him, believing it’s all his fault. This makes them feel better by having an individual to blame and focus their anger on. The president is a personification of the party, and even the entire country.

A similar personification was used with Osama bin Laden in the War on Terror. For nearly a decade the American government blamed this one man for all of the problems in the world, even though bin Laden had barely been heard from after 9/11, leading many to believe that he had died shortly after of natural causes. The American establishment purposefully perpetuated a mythological Bin Laden and an occasional video tape or audio message was released to the public, supposedly of the man, but such video taped messages were always from old videos and contained typical

“death to America” and “death to Israel” messages, and nothing new was ever discovered.

For years experts highly doubted that “new” audio messages claimed to be from bin Laden were actually even him. In 2006, Bruce Lawrence, a professor at Duke University and an expert on Osama bin Laden, said he believed bin Laden was dead and that audio messages purported to be from him were in fact not, but for political reasons were claimed otherwise.[388]

The myth that an all-powerful Osama bin Laden remained alive and was directing his global terrorist organization, Al Qaeda, was a monumental lie that was continuously spread to the public to keep them in a state of fear, and was used as the reason for the War on Terror to continue. The raid by U.S. Navy Seals on his purported compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan on May 1st 2011 where it was reported that he had been living for five years only raised more questions about his actual power and influence on Al Qaeda.

Most of the ignorant public had been led to believe that this one man was responsible for every terrorist attack in the world, as if he was some untouchable mafia kingpin out of a comic book who personally ordered every incident. For over a decade he was the boogie man and the face of terrorism that had been wildly exaggerated to justify the ongoing “War on Terror.” He should have been called Osama Bin Elvis because of the countless reports of sightings over the years. Many questions remain surrounding his purported death on May 1st 2011. Many wonder if he was alive for nearly a decade following the 9/11 attacks, and if he was living in the compound in Pakistan for five years, then why hadn’t we heard from him for so long? He was allegedly still leading Al Qaeda from his residence, yet he hadn’t released any new video tapes or audio messages for at least five years.

If you find my claims about the wildly exaggerated power of Osama bin Laden and the fraudulent War on Terror absurd, then you have a long way to go in your awakening process to undo the years of brainwashing and

social conditioning you have been a victim of. As Orwell said, “It might very well be that literally ever word in the history books, even the things that one accepted without question, was pure fantasy.”[389]

For over a decade Osama bin Laden was used to fulfill the same role that Emmanuel Goldstein plays in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Goldstein is the bad guy, and the ultimate evil. “All subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations, sprang directly out of his teaching. Somewhere or other he was still alive and hatching his conspiracies,” Orwell wrote.[390]

Winston starts to see through the myth of Goldstein and at one point when a “new message” from Goldstein was aired on the telescreens attacking Big Brother and the Party, Smith called it, “an attack so exaggerated and perverse that a child should have been able to see through it.”[391]

Julia also saw through the propaganda, saying, “The tales about Goldstein and his underground army, were simply a lot of rubbish which the Party had invented for its own purposes.”[392]

Telescreens

A major component of Big Brother in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are telescreens, which are television screens that can also see and hear what is in their immediate surroundings and are monitored by the Thought Police who make sure no one is saying anything bad about Big Brother or the Party. Telescreens are mounted in every home and also continuously communicate Party propaganda to society and cannot be turned off (except by Inner Party members, for a brief period of time). These telescreens watched and listened to every member of the Party, and nobody dares question their authority. Such an act would amount to Thought Crime and would cause one to be imprisoned and killed. The telescreens and microphones are continuously monitored and even facial expressions and body language can be understood by the Big Brother system. No one dares even whisper a word of disagreement or doubt about the Party or Big Brother.

“It was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander when you were in any public place or within range of a telescreen. The smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself—anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide.”[393]

As you’ve learned in *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*, real life telescreens now exist, along with pre-crime cameras, facial recognition systems, store cameras that alert customer service if you loiter in an isle too long; cameras that allow bosses to watch, listen, and talk to their employees, and more. It’s getting to the point that no matter where you are (even in a school bathroom) you may be within reach of the watchful eyes and ears of Big Brother.

Orwell wrote, “the telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard…You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.”[394]

When George Orwell wrote his book, computer technology was nonexistent. Color TV had not been invented yet, there were no microwave ovens, answering machines, VCRs, cassette players, or even eight-track players. In 1949, the most advanced technology was black and white television. Systems like Echelon, Carnivore, facial recognition cameras and other Big Brother technology are becoming common knowledge in the twenty-first century, but at the time *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was first published, this technology was limited to the creative imaginations of science fiction writers, or dismissed as insanity.

Modern surveillance systems are even much more powerful than what Orwell imagined. As the cliché goes, the truth *is* stranger than fiction. In a move that would have caused a national outcry just a decade earlier when people weren’t so desensitized to Orwellian measures, in December 2010, the retail giant Wal-Mart began using video screens at the checkout stands at around 600 hundred different locations in the United States to repeatedly play a brief message from the head of the Department of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, informing shoppers that the Department of Homeland Security has “teamed up” with Wal-Mart in order to help keep your community safe from terrorists.

It is very odd and disturbing to have one of the world’s largest corporations teaming up with a federal police force to encourage shoppers to be informants and to spy on their family, friends, and neighbors; because they want you to believe that people everywhere may be plotting a terrorist attack against the government. Everyone already knows they can dial 911 to reach the police for any reason, and people frequently abuse it and call to

report that a cashier at McDonald’s wouldn’t refund their money, or for a variety of other stupid reasons.[395]

With 911 operators already overloaded with unimportant calls, and police resources being wasted when they could actually be legitimately used to stop or solve crime, just imagine the mess after the population tips off authorities over every little suspicion as a result of their minds being filled with paranoia from the mainstream media for years, telling everyone that there’s a boogey man around every corner who may be secretly plotting some kind of terrorist attack in your neighborhood.

A Snitch Culture

The few people living in the dystopian world described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* who were still able to think critically and independently were afraid to speak their mind out of fear that others would report them as traitors to the Party and enemies of Big Brother. The Thought Police are a secret police force that use telescreens, snitches, and entrapment in order to intimidate the population in attempts to prevent Thought Crime, and to also discover Thought Criminals, and arrest and punish them. A Thought Criminal is anyone who dares think anything bad about Big Brother or the Party.

People, and particularly children, have all been turned into spies and are encouraged to report Thought Crime to the authorities. “Nearly all children nowadays were horrible,” Orwell wrote. “They adored the Party and everything connected with it. The songs, the processions, the banners, the hiking, the drilling with dummy rifles, the yelling of slogans, the worship of Big Brother—it was all a sort of glorious game to them.”[396] That was in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but unfortunately we also find parallels within our own society.

The Department of Homeland Security launched a program where they decided to “partner” with the Boy Scouts to “prepare youths for more traditional jobs as police officers and firefighters.”[397] *The New York Times* ran an article in 2009 discussing a drill the children were involved in where they used fake rifles and had to confront a “disgruntled Iraq War veteran” who became a domestic terrorist. The article showed a photo of some kids holding fake rifles and dressed up in SWAT gear.[398]

A British website called ClimateCops.com designed for children ages 7 to 11 features cartoons and downloadable materials urging children to

become “climate cops” who keep a watchful eye on their parents to see if they are wasting electricity. Children download a “Climate Crime Case File” to write up “tickets” for their parents to make sure they “don’t commit those crimes again (or else)!” The site also tells children that they “need to keep a watchful eye” on their parents to prevent future energy violations.

In the nightmarish world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, children were, “systematically turned against their parents and taught to spy on them and report their deviations. The family had become in effect an extension of the Though Police. It was a device by means of which everyone could be surrounded night and day by informers who knew him intimately.”[399]

In an interview with *ABC News*, President Obama’s top legal advisor, Attorney General Eric Holder, announced that the most dangerous terrorist threat to America wasn’t radical Islamic terrorists from the Middle East who travel to the United States with the sole intention of blowing something up. No. He said the new #1 threat to America is American citizens who have been born and raised in the United States, but for whatever reason, have come to identify with Osama Bin Elvis (Laden), the immortal boogey man. This announcement came close to ten years after the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks when the world was getting tired of the prolonged wars in the Middle East so the establishment needed to ensure Americans’ minds were still continuously filled with fear.

“What I am trying to do in this interview is to make people aware of the fact that the threat is real, the threat is different, the threat is constant,” Holder said. “It is one of the things that keeps me up at night. You didn’t worry about this even two years ago—about individuals, about Americans, to the extent that we now do. And—that is of—of great concern.”[400]

He continued, “The threat has changed from simply worrying about foreigners coming here, to worrying about people in the United States, American citizens—raised here, born here, and who for whatever reason, have decided that they are going to become radicalized and take up arms against the nation in which they were born.”

Holder wasn't even talking about radical Islamic terrorists like the kind that had been presented as the boogey men we should all fear for the last few decades. Holder's statement was an attempt to paint practically anyone of any race, religion, age, political affiliation, etc., as a potential "domestic extremist" who authorities want you to believe may attack the government or innocent civilians for any number of reasons at any time.

Several years earlier the federal government had secretly distributed literature to law enforcement agencies that listed what police should look for concerning possible "domestic terrorist activity." The eight-page MIAC Report, leaked in March 2009 listed bumper stickers showing support for Congressman Ron Paul, owning gold coins, and having possession of certain documentary films as things authorities should look for.[401]

A similar Department of Homeland Security report titled *Right-wing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment*, warned officials that returning Iraq War veterans may turn on the American government and that "rightwing extremists" are recruiting supporters who are concerned about illegal immigration, restrictions on firearms, and the loss of US sovereignty.[402]

As the Orwellian nightmare was rapidly coming true, Big Brother saw the resistance building and worried about a revolution.

Many people believe that Nazi Germany's secret police (the Gestapo) terrorized ordinary German citizens under orders from Nazi leaders, but history shows that the majority of investigations into citizens were launched because someone tipped off authorities.

One of the world's most respected historians specializing in World War II Europe, Professor Robert Gellately of Florida State University, explains, "There were relatively few secret police, and most were just processing the information coming in. I had found a shocking fact. It wasn't the secret

police who were doing this wide-scale surveillance and hiding on every street corner. It was the ordinary German people who were informing on their neighbors."[403]

In his writings Gellately explains that most Germans who turned in others didn't do so because they were doing anything suspicious or talking negatively about the Nazi party. Most people were turned in because of greed, jealousy, and petty differences, rather than because of a legitimate threat or suspicion that a person may be an actual enemy of the state.

There were many instances of people turning in their business partners so they could gain full control of the businesses they shared together. Jealous lovers turned in rival suitors in order to keep them away from their boyfriend or girlfriend, and people turned others in because they lived in an apartment that was in high demand. Others who became informants did so because it was the first time an authority figure valued them and they felt important through this process.

Gellately also emphasizes that German citizens who tipped off Nazi authorities about someone knew what horrific fate they would find, but didn't care because of the financial or social rewards that person would receive in return. While such despicable behavior was once restricted to tyrannical regimes like Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, or Mao Tse-tung's China, it is heart-breaking that the once great United States of America has succumbed to this same kind of erosion from within, as a result of corruption at the top.

An iPhone app with the Orwellian name of the *PatriotApp* functions as a way for people to send seemingly anonymous tips in the form of text messages to various government agencies including the FBI, EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), CDC (Center for Disease Control), and more, to report anything suspicious or illegal. On the surface this may seem like a reasonable function, but just like the post-911 legislation bill, *The Patriot Act*, the Patriot App is anything but patriotic.

The App was created by a company called Citizen Concepts which was formed by people with strong ties with DHS and DoD, according the company's website, PatriotApps.com[404] The description in the Apple App Store says that the PatriotApp is, "the world's first iPhone application that empowers citizens to assist government agencies in creating safer, cleaner, and more efficient communities via social networking and mobile technology."[405]

The description also says the App, "Deputizes your iPhone," giving people the impression that they are a member of the secret police now that they have been "deputized" like something out of an old western film. Such an impersonal form of communication also reduces the discernment that people will use when thinking about reporting someone or something. A phone call to 911 or the police would be fairly personal and the tipster would be invested in the process, but by simply clicking a few boxes and typing a short text message, this reduces the humanity in the overall process of informing authorities that something may be wrong. Such an impersonal act practically eliminates an informant's analysis of the situation, preventing them from giving it a second thought, thus dramatically reducing the quality of the tip.

During the 2008 presidential campaign in America, then candidate Barrack Obama made a startling statement revealing his desire to implement a program involving ordinary citizens like you and me as spies who feel like they're empowered and part of the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, or other law enforcement agencies. Obama openly stated, "We cannot continue to rely only on our military in order to achieve the national security objectives that we've set. We've got to have a civilian national security force that's just as powerful, just as strong, just as well-funded."[406]

Then, immediately after becoming president, the Obama administration began implementing one Orwellian policy after the next. We saw the telescreens go up in Wal-Mart, the 'if you see something…say something' snitch campaign. The MIAC report and more. The "civilian national security force" he was talking about was every American being

turned into a paranoid rat. This will undoubtedly lead to a rash of invalid “tips” and complaints, and a larger bureaucracy (and police force) will be needed to address these floods of tips.

Relationships

Friendships, romantic relationships, and families are all shunned by the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to "prevent men and women from forming loyalties which it might not be able to control…the only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party."[407] Families are almost nonexistent, since each individual must give his or her full allegiance and love to Big Brother and the Party.

Those children that were born were all brought up in government institutions and indoctrinated from the time of birth. The government realized that if people had personal friendships and strong family ties, they would join together and overthrow Big Brother. Again, we find a reflection of our own society in Orwell's words. While in America sexuality is not repressed like in the novel, the effects of hyper-sexuality and broken families serves the same purpose and severely limits the ability of people to join together and stand up for their rights against a New World Order.

With rampant family dysfunction, divorces, out of wedlock births, and children who don't even know who their father is, society is in such chaos in regards to interpersonal problems, that many people aren't concerned with larger social issues because their own life is such a mess and they are constantly engaged in domestic disputes, money problems, and other obligations. Most people just don't care about what is going on with the government because they have their own personal problems to deal with.

A Heartless Society

People in society were so inhumane in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that they regularly enjoyed watching video clips of war footage that were shown on the telescreens to see the destruction of their enemy's soldiers. Winston remarked once that the audience was amused and laughed hysterically when a helicopter began shooting a fat man and riddled his body with bullets as he tried to swim away from his capsized ship. It was the highlight of the broadcast.

He describes how the audience was easily stirred into an angry mob and that, "a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current."[408] Since Big Brother was basically God, there was no room for religion either. One character who worked in the Ministry of Truth was arrested and killed for allowing the word "God" to remain in a poem he was supposed to censor.

The Big Brother system has stamped out most feelings of empathy. O'Brien says, "never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves."[409]

A massive thirty year analysis published in May of 2010 showed that college students are dramatically less empathetic today than students in the past. "College kids today are about 40 percent lower in empathy than their counterparts of 20 or 30 years ago, as measured by standard tests of this personality trait," said Sara Konrath, a researcher at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research.[410]

“The increase in exposure to media during this time period could be one factor,” she said. “Compared to 30 years ago, the average American now is exposed to three times as much nonwork-related information. In terms of media content, this generation of college students grew up with video games. And a growing body of research, including work done by my colleagues at Michigan, is establishing that exposure to violent media numbs people to the pain of others,” said Konrath.

The study also showed that the students were less likely to feel concerned about the less fortunate, and even their own friends. Today’s students were said to be the most self-centered and narcissistic individuals in recent history.

Another reason believed to cause the increase in narcissism and lack of empathy, aside from massive exposure to violent media, was the emergence of social networking sites which give people the ability to “tune out” and not respond to interactions online, and this could be translating into a learned behavior that manifests itself during face-to-face interactions.

Foreign Countries Painted as Enemies

When one country is having tensions with another, or if two countries are approaching an armed conflict, the entire “enemy” country and all of its occupants are usually portrayed as “hating freedom” or being ruthless savages who want to kill the citizens of the other country. This is rarely ever true, of course, and most often it is one corrupt leader butting heads with another corrupt leader, or one country fabricating complete lies in order to spark a war for economic reasons. The vast majority of citizens of both countries want the same things out of life. They don’t want any problems. They just want to be safe and have a stable economy, and be able to enjoy a few of life’s pleasures and spend time with family and friends. Most informed citizens in the “enemy” country are just as upset about their corrupt leader as citizens of the opposing country.

Other people, perhaps the majority, unfortunately, believe the propaganda produced from their own country and literally hate everyone from the “enemy” country. You could see this during the War in Iraq, with many moronic Americans wanting to kill all Arabs, or Muslims, or nuke the entire Middle East and “turn it into a glass parking lot.” Such ignorance is the fuel that the establishment needs to continue its operations. Orwell interestingly noted, “If he [people in general] were allowed contact with foreigners he would discover that they are creatures similar to himself and that most of what he has been told about them is lies.”[411]

“The citizen of Oceania is not allowed to know anything of the tenets of the other two [enemies] philosophies, but he is taught to execrate [denounce] them as barbarous outrages upon morality and common sense.”[412]

In an insightful documentary that aired on PBS in the spring and summer of 2010 called *Rick Steves' Iran*, the host traveled to Iran and spoke with people about their country and the growing tensions with the US. Multiple Iranians said that they have no problem with America or the American people. One woman clearly stated that the governments have problems with each other, but the people should be friends. The woman went on to say that it was unfortunate that Iran had a theocracy where the religious leaders ran the government and she called it Iran's main problem.[413]

This is quite the opposite of what the American establishment would like people to believe. The Iranians, we are told, all hate Americans, and want us dead. This false belief aids the establishment's military industrial complex and supports the everlasting "War on Terror."

Power Hungry Officials

Just as the "enemies" of a country are always cast in the darkest light, the leader of the homeland is almost always painted as a heroic and virtuous man who must protect the poor citizens of his land from the evildoers. "Everywhere is the same pyramidal structure, the same worship of a semi-divine leader," notes Orwell.[414]

We see billboards and t-shirts in America with the image of the president featured on them like they are rock stars; and no matter who the president is, their supporters will always lash out and attack anyone who questions their authority. If someone disagreed with President George W. Bush, then they were called un-American and said to support the terrorists. People who resisted President Obama were simply called racists. The strategy is the same no matter which party is in power. Most people are ideologically blind, and don't even notice the major shortcomings of their own party or leader.

At one point in Orwell's story, Winston muses that he now understands the how, but he had yet to understand the why. He knew how the Party and Big Brother were able to operate in total power, but he had yet to understand why they did this. He later realized it was for the power itself.

O'Brien tells him, "The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness; only power, pure power."[415] O'Brien concludes, "Power is power over human beings. Over the body—but above all, over the mind."[416]

The infamous political player, Henry Kissinger, famously stated that "power is the ultimate aphrodisiac" and many have heard of Lord Acton's

dictum, which states that power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Power is what dirt-poor street gang members are after because its feeling is better than any drug. Power is what organized mob bosses are after more than the money they pull in, and power is what politicians desire, more than “serving” their country. And just like drug addicts will do all kinds of illegal and immoral things just to get a fix, the same is true of those addicted to power.

An Erosion of the Language

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the language that people spoke was being reduced down to basic nouns and verbs in a purposeful attempt to dumb people down. The language was called Newspeak and each year a new dictionary would come out with the approved words for society, and each year it got smaller and smaller. The goal was to eliminate most of the words, and thus eliminate people's thoughts and ways to express themselves to keep them mentally enslaved.

In one scene a co-worker of Winston's was bragging that in a few more generations people "wouldn't be able to have a conversation like this" because the language will be so eroded.

Just as the residents of Oceania were losing the ability to express themselves verbally due to the eroding language, we can see a similar phenomenon in our culture with the decline of reading and education. People's foul mouths and the reliance on text messaging also shows their inability to articulate ideas. People's vocabulary seems to be shrinking, along with their IQs.

Double Think

The concept of *Double Think* means to "know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them."[417] Orwell used the slogan "War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength" to illustrate Double Think. It was the slogan of the Party and captured the depths of the backwards and illogical beliefs of society. Unfortunately we find equally backward beliefs in our own society and Double Think is not just a concept found in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Everyone is familiar with the Patriot Act legislation that was passed after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, eliminating various Constitutional liberties, and is anything but patriotic. The name "Patriot" Act was carefully chosen to imply the new laws were patriotic and is a perfect example of Double Think since it is completely the opposite of anything patriotic or American.

In a segment of Alex Jones' documentary *Terrorstorm: A History of Government Sponsored Terrorism,* the camera crew interviews random people on the streets of London to discuss the increasing surveillance, and one woman proclaims, "I think we should give up liberty for freedom," clearly not realizing the illogical and blatant contradiction of her own words.

The concept of Double Think often applies to war. "Peace keeping" troops are often there to kill the enemy, and it is often said that we must "fight for peace." Comedian George Carlin saw the irony in the terms and once said, "fighting for peace is like screwing for virginity." In America, the Department of Defense used to be called the Department of War until 1947 when the name was changed to improve its image. It should really be called

the Department of *Offense*, not Defense, but in true Orwellian style, its name reflects the opposite of what it is.

When the commercial for the Little Buddy GPS tracking device said parents can "build trust" by forcing their children to wear a GPS tracker—this is another example of Double Think—since using the product is an obvious sign of not trusting your child.

Double Think is essentially a blatant lie that can easily be identified by an enlightened person, but is fully believed by the ignorant masses. It's like when a store advertises that people should "spend more to save more" and customers actually believe they're saving money by spending it.

Double Think uses misnomers and false terms to purposefully label things incorrectly, and such names are often the exact opposite of what the thing really is or does. People with minimum critical thinking skills often accept the word or phrase on face value, and don't realize it masks something else.

The Ministry of Love

The Ministry of Love is basically the police force and prison system in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and is anything but loving. They look out for, and arrest people who betray Big Brother and the Party. Violators are taken to the much-feared Room 101 where they are tortured and brainwashed to love Big Brother.

The Ministry of Plenty

The Ministry of Plenty is in control of the food rations and the manufacture and supply of goods and services. Periodically the Ministry of Plenty publishes reports that claim the standard of living has increased, along with the amount of food rations people are entitled to, but in reality, the standard of living has continuously declined. As with the other departments of government in the novel, its name reflects exactly the opposite of what it says, and the Ministry of Plenty is really the reason for scarcity.

The Ministry of Peace

The Ministry of Peace is responsible for the perpetual war that plagues society and uses up or destroys the fruits of people’s labor to prevent an increase in the standard of living for the lower levels of society.

In America, we have the Department of Defense, which is really the Department of War, and actually used to be called that, until the name was changed in 1947 to give it a better image. In true Orwellian fashion, the department’s name is meant to hide the fact that it is really a Ministry of War.

The Ministry of Truth

The Ministry of Truth, found in the novel, is a misnomer and in reality serves as exactly the opposite of what its name implies. It is responsible for the falsification of historical events, and determines what the “truth” is and then disseminates it in the media and historical records. The massive building is described as being in the shape of a pyramid.

The Ministry of Truth also provides the citizens of Oceana with all of their newspapers, films, textbooks, plays, and novels. They have a special department for proletarian literature that “produced rubbishy newspapers, containing almost nothing except sport, crime, and astrology, sensational five-cent novelettes, films oozing with sex, and sentimental songs.”[418]

It is basically the heart of the massive propaganda machine that is entirely under the direction of the Party.

Conclusion

As a reader approaches the end of Orwell's novel, one begins to hope that *The Resistance* will jump into action and members of the Inner Party would turn on the Big Brother system, or that the Proles or Outer Party members would rise up and start a revolution to restore freedom, but unfortunately this doesn't happen.

Winston and his girlfriend Julia are both captured by the Thought Police and taken to Room 101 to be "re-educated." Winston then realizes that O'Brien, who he thought was his friend and working with *The Resistance*, actually only pretended to, in order to entrap Winston. O'Brien, then, as it turns out, is also in charge of punishing Winston for Thought Crimes and his disloyalty to Big Brother. As he is torturing Winston, he tells him what the future will be like once Big Brother has wiped out all resistance. He explains, "There will be no curiosity, no enjoyment of the process of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed. But always—do not forget this, Winston—always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is helpless. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever."[419]

After unbearable torture and lecturing from O'Brien, Winston eventually abandons all thoughts of resistance and actually comes to love Big Brother. "You must love Big Brother. It is not enough to obey him; you must love him," O'Brien says.

One must seriously consider whether people who resist the real Big Brother system and the New World Order will find the same fate that Winston Smith did. Is it too late to stop the Orwellian system described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from actually being built? One must hold onto the

hope that no matter how far along the Big Brother system is, that there are a large number of educated people who are ready to resist it and stand up against it.

Orwell explained, “If there was hope, it must lie in the proles, because only there, in those swarming disregarded masses, eighty-five percent of the population of Oceania, could the force to destroy the Party ever be generated…But the proles, if only they could somehow become conscious of their own strength, would have no need to conspire…If they chose they could blow the Party to pieces tomorrow morning.”[420]

We are the proles. The hope lies with us. We must create safeguards and checks and balances to minimize abuse by government and private industry. We must actively counter propaganda and lies, and hold corrupt government officials accountable for their crimes. Only an educated and alert public can counter the invisible empire and their Orwellian dreams. We must use the tools of advanced technology to enhance and simplify the human experience, not to stifle it or destroy it. We must stay strong in the face of immense opposition and remember what Martin Luther King Jr. said when he proclaimed, “He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.”

We outnumber the elite Illuminati thousands to one, and if we can awaken our fellow man to see the system that we are all victims of, and if we can lift the veil of ignorance and apathy then we can unite and restore our communities, our country, and the world with the inalienable rights that we have been endowed by our Creator. We know that Big Brother is watching us, so let’s show him what we’re capable of.

Down with Big Brother!

Further Reading

The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction

Secret societies have both fascinated and frightened people for hundreds of years. Often the infamous Illuminati is mentioned as the core of conspiracies which span the globe. The Illuminati is actually a historical secret society which had goals of revolutions and world domination dating back to the 1770s.

Since then, rumors and conspiracy theories involving the Illuminati continue to spread, sometimes finding their way into popular novels like Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons* and Hollywood movies like *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. Some men have even come forward claiming to be former members, offering details of what they allege are the inner workings of the organization. When you sift through all of the information available on the subject, you may be surprised that the truth is stranger than fiction.

In *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, conspiracy and occult expert Mark Dice separates history from Hollywood and shows why tales of the secret society won't die.

The New World Order: Facts & Fiction

What is the New World Order? Proponents say that it's an anticipated new era of global cooperation between diverse nations and cultures aimed at ushering in a utopia providing all the earth's citizens with everything they need.

Detractors claim it's the systematic take-over by secret societies, quasi-government entities and corporations who are covertly organizing a global socialist all-powerful government which aims to regulate every aspect of citizens lives, rendering them a perpetual working-class while the elite leadership lives in luxury.

Conspiracy theory expert Mark Dice looks at the evidence, claims, and conspiracy theories as he takes you down the rabbit hole to *The New World Order*.

Illuminati in the Music Industry

Famous pop stars and rappers from Jay-Z and Rick Ross to Rihanna and Christina Aguilera are believed by many to be a part of the infamous Illuminati secret society. These stars allegedly use Illuminati and satanic symbolism in their music videos and on their clothes that goes unnoticed by those not “in the know.”

Since these stars appear in our livings rooms on family friendly mainstream shows like Good Morning America, Ellen, and dozens of others—and are loved by virtually all the kids—they couldn’t possibly have anything to do with the infamous Illuminati or anything “satanic,” could they? Some famous musicians have even publicly denounced the Illuminati in interviews or songs.

Illuminati in the Music Industry takes a close look at some of today’s hottest stars and decodes the secret symbols, song lyrics, and separates the facts from the fiction in this fascinating topic. You may never see your favorite musicians the same way ever again.

The Resistance Manifesto

The Resistance Manifesto by Mark Dice contains 450 pages of extensively researched and documented information drawing from declassified documents, mainstream news articles, religious texts, and personal interviews. A dark web of evil is exposed like never before, making Bible Prophecy and the New World Order crystal clear.

Learn the most powerful information about the Illuminati, plans for the rise of the Antichrist, the institutions, people, and powers involved, and how you can fight them.

Inside the Illuminati

When looking into the existence and alleged activities of the infamous Illuminati secret society, one finds an overwhelming amount of conspiracy theories, hidden history, half-truths and hoaxes.

But how much truth is there to some of these claims? What is the real history of the mysterious group? Do they continue to exist today? What is the evidence?

After a decade of research sifting through the facts and the fiction, secret society expert Mark Dice will help you navigate through the complex maze from the original documents to rare revelations from elite politicians, bankers and businessmen, as he takes you *Inside the Illuminati*.

About the Author

Mark Dice is a media analyst, author, and political activist who, in an entertaining and educational way, gets people to question our celebrity obsessed culture and the role the mainstream media and elite secret societies play in shaping our lives.

Mark's YouTube channel has received over 85 million views and his viral videos have been mentioned on ABC's *The View*, the Fox News Channel, CNN, the *Drudge Report*, *TMZ*, the *New York Daily News*, the *New York Post*, and other media outlets around the world.

He has been featured on various television shows including the History Channel's *Decoded* and *America's Book of Secrets*, *Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura*, *Secret Societies of Hollywood* on E! Channel, *America Declassified* on the Travel Channel, and is a frequent guest on *Coast to Coast AM*, *The Alex Jones Show*, and more.

Mark Dice is the author of several popular books on secret societies and conspiracies, including *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*, *The New World Order, Facts & Fiction*, *The Resistance Manifesto*, *Illuminati in the Music Industry*, and *Inside the Illuminati*, which are all available in paperback on Amazon.com or e-book on Kindle, iBooks, Nook or Google Play.

While much of Mark's work confirms the existence and continued operation of the Illuminati today, he is also dedicated to debunking conspiracy theories and hoaxes and separating the facts from the fiction; hence the "Facts & Fiction" subtitle for several of his books.

While having respect for all authentic religions and belief systems, Mark Dice is a Christian and holds a bachelors degree in communication from California State University. He lives in San Diego, California.

He enjoys causing trouble for the New World Order, exposing corrupt scumbag politicians, and pointing out Big Brother’s prying eyes. The term “fighting the New World Order” is used by Mark to describe some of his activities, and refers to his and others’ resistance and opposition (*The Resistance*) to the overall system of political corruption, illegal wars, elite secret societies, mainstream media, Big Brother and privacy issues; as well as various economic and social issues. This Resistance involves self-improvement, self-sufficiency, personal responsibility and spiritual growth.

Connect with Mark on:

Facebook.com/MarkDice
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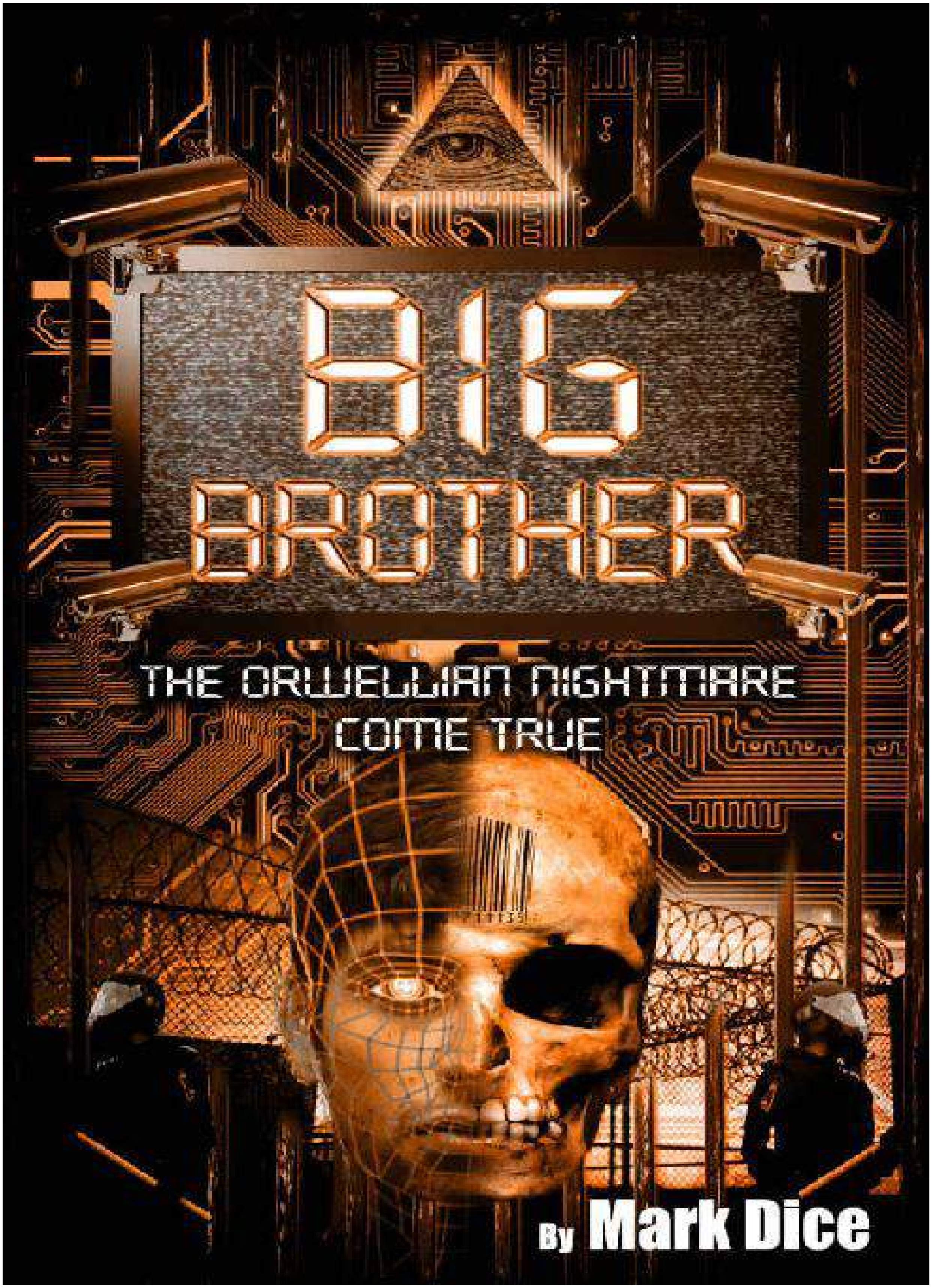

BIG BROTHER

THE ORWELLIAN NIGHTMARE COME TRUE

By **Mark Dice**

Introduction

When George Orwell (pen name of Eric Blair) first published his famous novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it was the year 1949, and it told a dark story of what he envisioned life may be like in the future—in the year 1984. His book, as well as his name, have become synonymous with privacy concerns involving technology and also an all-powerful, oppressive ruling elite that strictly governs the activities of the population with an iron fist.

Orwell's book is where we get the term *Big Brother* from, such as when people say "Big Brother is watching you." When people say this, they're referring to the omniscient surveillance system described in the novel that continuously watched and listened to people—even in their own homes. When we call something *Orwellian* to describe the invasiveness of certain technology or government policies, we are also referring to George Orwell's nightmarish vision he described in his novel. There are several other terms that Orwell himself coined in *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* such as *doublethink*, *thoughtcrime,* and *memory hole*, which have also become part of our vernacular.

Even if you have not read the book or seen the film, you are still undoubtedly familiar with the issues that make up the storyline, such as the high-tech surveillance system watching and listening to everyone in order to keep them in line with the government (called the Party in the novel). You are probably also familiar with the concept of a small elite ruling class (what Orwell calls the Inner Party) living in luxury and wielding unimaginable power over lower level citizens. In the novel, people have lost their freedom, their critical thinking skills, and even the ability to love due to the cultural depths society has sunk to as a result of Big Brother's control. The reason *Nineteen Eighty-Four* remains so popular, and the reason society has adopted vocabulary from the book, is because it serves as more than merely a fictional novel for the reader's entertainment. The novel served (and continues to serve) as a stark warning of what the future may hold if we don’t resist invasive technology and oppressive government policies, or if the population at large becomes so lost in a world of pop culture, sports entertainment, or our own selfish desires, that we simply don’t care.

Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True looks at technology that now exists or is under development and will exist in the near future, that threatens to make our world just as horrific or even worse than the world George Orwell described. This book will provide information from mainstream news sources, industry experts, and even patent numbers of the most invasive and sinister Orwellian devices anyone could dream of. We will also look at actual government programs and policies that seem as if they came right out of Orwell’s dark imagination, such as the government secretly paying mainstream media reporters to act as gate-keepers and propagandists for the establishment, and the FBI illegally spying on and smearing peaceful political activists who were seen as problematic.

This book is certainly not anti-technology. Technology is a fantastic tool which can benefit those who use it, or harm them, depending on the intentions of the person designing it or using it. Technology has brought us amazing inventions that would seem supernatural to civilizations that lived just a few hundred years ago. Arthur C. Clarke, the author of *2001 a Space Odyssey*, was correct when he said, “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”

While this magical technology has brought us the convenience of calling our friends or family on our cell phones, allowing us to talk with them from virtually anywhere in the world, and given us the ability to watch events on the other side of the earth unfold live on television, and other wonders such as the Internet, DVR recorders, YouTube, Excel spread sheets, word processors, e-mail, Facebook, and more; it has also brought us identity theft, illegal wiretaps, Peeping Toms using hidden video cameras, cyber stalkers, and worse. If you have ever left your cell phone at home when you’ve left the house for the day, you’ve realized how much we depend on technology for what have become common and necessary

activities. If you’ve ever been at home when the electricity unexpectedly goes out, you have also realized how much we take for granted in our modern world.

Unfortunately, with tremendous advances in technology often come unforeseen consequences. Nobody could have envisioned young teenage girls taking nude photos of themselves with their cell phone cameras and sending them to their boyfriends, and then having the boyfriends forward them to others, eventually ending up on the cell phone of someone over the age of eighteen, resulting in what is essentially child pornography in their possession. The music and film industries certainly didn’t anticipate millions of Internet users downloading music and movies for free, sometimes before the products are even officially released. And when Albert Einstein was searching for the laws of physics to learn how our Universe functioned, he could have never imagined that his work would be used to design weapons capable of destroying the entire earth. It seems that the dark minds of men in power always strive to build sinister devices designed to enable them to hold onto their power, no matter how disastrous the consequences.

In the following pages we will look at some of the sinister inventions currently in operation, as well as the ones on the drawing boards, and the ones mad scientists are hoping to one day create. Facial recognition video cameras that can pick you out of a crowd of tens of thousands of people in a split second, machines that can read your mind, high-tech killer-robots, psychotronic weapons that can literally put voices in people’s heads, and more. You will see beyond a doubt that George Orwell’s description of Big Brother was chillingly accurate, and perhaps not as horrific as the reality we may one day face. Like a Pandora’s Box, once much of this technology is created, there will be little hope of stopping it or even regulating it.

While some of the technology discussed in this book is known to exist in small and specialized industries (and to a growing extent the mainstream public), one must wonder about the technology that is classified as top secret and the experiments that go on in the hidden laboratories funded by the deep pockets of government. Knowing just a small fraction of the past

abuses by the United States government (and others around the world) regarding human test subjects and goals, we should all be concerned about the continued illegal and immoral research and experiments that are undoubtedly continuing to occur in secret.

If one reads old *Popular Mechanics* magazines from the 1950's, one can realize how wrong, and even silly, the techno-utopian dreamers were in the past. Many were led to believe that by the twenty-first century we would all be living lives of luxury like the *Jetsons*, with large blocks of free time to enjoy ourselves as we had most manual labor and menial tasks taken care of by robots and computers. Yet more than a decade into the twenty-first century, we still need to spend time cooking and cleaning, and commuting to work and raising the kids, and fixing up the house and countless other tasks and obligations that are required of us in our daily lives.

Our cars must still continuously be maintained, the oil needs to be changed, the engine serviced, the tires rotated and replaced, and the average vehicle now costs as much as a house did for people just two generations ago. The grass still needs to be cut, the bushes need to be trimmed, and things around the house continue to break and need to be fixed or replaced. People are working longer hours, having less time with their families, having to retire later in life, and are having less savings than past generations. Where is this techno-utopia that so many had promised would come in the near future?

Instead of living lives of luxury and leisure, now many people can't escape their job even after they leave the office. Where once we left work and were outside of the reach of our boss, now he or she can call us on our cell phone at anytime day or night and expects a promptly returned phone call or e-mail.

People are being turned into numbers and statistics, and mathematical formulas are used by employers to determine whether an employee is being efficient enough. It's difficult to get a person on the phone when calling a company's customer service department, and social networking sites such

as Facebook and Myspace have turned everyone into their own favorite celebrity and supplement actual friendships and interactions. People don't need to get together for a dinner party to catch up on each other's lives anymore; we just monitor their newsfeed on Facebook from the comfort of our own home while sitting in our favorite chair getting fatter from lack of exercise and a poor diet.

Where we once discussed politics and religion with our friends and neighbors, such topics have become taboo and are replaced with the enticing entertainment of celebrity news as most people feel that it is more important to know about who our favorite celebrities are dating than it is to know what bills are being introduced and voted on in the halls of Congress or our own city council. It's interesting that while people seem to be getting dumber, computers are getting smarter.

We are becoming a nation of morons who can't think for themselves, and are being dehumanized into nothing more than a mentally enslaved workforce who are constantly being monitored, databased, and kept in line by the fear of the omniscient Big Brother technology that has gotten so advanced and so cheap, that the watchful eyes of surveillance cameras are mass produced, almost as if they were disposable.

At a presentation at the 2010 DICE Summit (Design, Innovate, Communicate, Entertain), an annual meeting of videogame executives, Jesse Schell, the former Creative Director of the Disney Imagineering Virtual Reality Studio, gave a speech on the future of gaming and talked about how in the future, "Before too long we're going to get to the point where every soda can, [and] every cereal box is going to be able to have a CPU, a screen, and a camera on board it, and a Wi-Fi connecter so that it can be connected to the Internet."

He concluded his speech by saying that our children and grandchildren will be able to know exactly what books we've read, what foods we ate, and practically everything we've done in our entire lives. He gave this speech

not to warn people about these Orwellian technologies, but he was extremely excited about them, and looked forward to them.

“You have no idea what books your grandparents read, or where they went on a daily basis, but these sensors that we’re going to have on us and all around us everywhere are going to be tracking and watching what we’re doing forever,” Schell said. He concludes by saying that because we will all be constantly watched and our actions and interests databased forever, that we’ll possibly be better people and be nicer and make better decisions because of the fear of judgment from others. Is this the kind of world you want to live in? Well, it’s the kind of world that’s rapidly approaching.

This book is meant to serve as a warning for what is already here, and what is soon to come. It is to encourage people to think about how to possibly prevent or minimize dramatic hazards to our lives by the very technology we have created. It is my goal to give you an accurate forecast of the coming storm so that you as an individual, and we as a society and species, may be better equipped to handle it when it hits. It is my hope that we do not lose our privacy, freedom, or our humanity in this 1984-style New World Order.

Surveillance Cameras

Surveillance cameras have been common in banks, department stores, gas stations, and government buildings for decades in order to prevent shoplifting and robberies, or to identify those who commit crimes after the fact. Society has largely ignored these cameras and barely notices they are watching us and we have come to accept them as commonplace. Even the most adamant privacy advocate would have to admit that such systems help to prevent shoplifting and catch bank robbers, but as technology advanced, these basic video cameras have been evolving into a high-tech surveillance grid almost identical to the Big Brother system described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Early in the twenty-first century, Britain became the most surveilled country on the planet with an estimated 4.2 million CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) cameras watching in government buildings, private businesses, and on street corners. What concerns privacy advocates, and frequently average citizens, is not necessarily the existence of ordinary security cameras, but the new and invasive ways that they are being used. As you will read in this chapter, security cameras have been installed in school bathrooms, private homes, and the built-in cameras on laptop computers have even been used by school officials to watch students when they were home without them even knowing it.

Facial recognition cameras are now becoming popular, and will soon be a standard feature in surveillance systems. You will also see surveillance systems on public streets that listen to you and detect “hostile” speech and will automatically dispatch the police to investigate. Big Brother *is* watching you, and you might be startled to find out exactly what he sees and hears.

“The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard…You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.”[1] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

While Britain has been known for its millions of surveillance cameras that watch over nearly every street and alley in major cities, the United States of America had lagged behind in terms of the size and scope of a Big Brother system. Such cameras were, for a long time, relegated to parking lots and inside businesses such as banks and department stores, but Chicago had pioneered a Big Brother system in America which became a model for other cities.

After 9/11, the city began installing a massive surveillance system on city streets, in schools, around skyscrapers, and even on busses and in train tunnels. The system is so advanced that police officers can tap into practically any security camera from their squad car and watch the feed from a monitor on their dashboard.

“I don’t think there is another city in the U.S. that has as an extensive and integrated camera network as Chicago has,” said Michael Chertoff, the former head of the Department of Homeland Security.[2]

The Chicago Big Brother system even links private security cameras into their grid, something unique compared to London and other cities. If someone calls 911 to report a crime, accident, or fire, police and 911 dispatchers can instantly tap into the nearest video cameras and monitor the scene in real time to assess the situation.

In 2010, the city had an estimated 10,000 cameras feeding into their central system, most of which are clearly visible security cameras, but the city also hopes to install numerous hidden cameras as well, according to

Police Superintendent Jody Weis. Mayor Richard Daley said he could put 10,000 more cameras up and “nobody would say anything.”[3]

Not everyone thinks the cameras are a good idea. Edwin Yohnka, a spokesman for the ACLU wondered, “What protections are in place to stop a rogue officer from taking a highly powerful camera and aim it in a way to find or track someone who is perhaps a former love interest or something like that?”[4]

On May 1, 2010 an SUV filled with explosives was discovered in Times Square in New York City and luckily failed to detonate, causing officials to immediately call for a massive high-tech surveillance system to be put in place all over the city. Mayor Michael Bloomberg said the system “will greatly enhance our ability and the ability of the police to detect suspicious activity in real time, and disrupt possible attacks.”[5]

At the time of the incident on May 1, 2010, dubbed the “attempted Times Square bombing,” there were already 82 different devices installed around Times Square that watch and catalog footage and can identify license plate numbers from any targeted vehicles. A program called Operation Sentinel scans and logs every license plate from every vehicle entering Manhattan Island in order to spot targeted vehicles. The program also has hidden radiation detectors designed to identify if any nuclear weapons are smuggled into the city.

New York Police Chief Raymond Kelly wanted more federal funding for such operations and said they were looking to implement “analytic software” that would analyze information in real time in order to identify possible threats. For example, cameras that can detect if there is an unattended bag left on the ground, or if a car circles the block too many times. The new system was estimated to have cost more than $100 million dollars.

At some point in the future, ordinary security cameras will be completely outdated and seem like primitive ancient devices compared to

pre-crime cameras, facial recognition systems, and other behavior analyzers that are being implemented.

UK Government Installs Surveillance Cameras in Private Homes

The UK government actually spent $700 million dollars to install surveillance cameras inside the homes of citizens to monitor whether their children attend school, eat proper meals, and go to bed on time.[6] It's part of a government program called "Family Intervention Projects," which also includes social workers making regular visits to see if parents are raising their children properly.

Approximately 2,000 families were initially targeted by the program when it launched in 2009 and British authorities planned to expand the number to 20,000 within the following two years, with all expenses being paid by taxpayers. Parents and children subjected to this Orwellian program are also forced to sign a "behavior contract" called the Home School Agreement, which outlines what the government expects of them.

Britain was invaded by millions of CCTV cameras decades ago on the streets of London and elsewhere which have become hardly noticed and a part of everyone's daily life, but this move to put them inside the private homes of citizens shocked and disturbed people andrew is not something that is only happening in England.

Back in February 2006, the Chief of Police in Houston, Texas wanted to install video cameras inside apartments and homes in order to "fight crime" because he said there was a shortage of police officers. Chief Harold Hurtt told reporters, "I know a lot of people are concerned about Big Brother, but my response to that is, if you are not doing anything wrong, why should you worry about it?"[7]

A spokesperson at the Houston Apartment Association supported the idea, saying many people would, “appreciate the thought of extra eyes looking out for them.”

School Spied on Students with Video Cameras in Laptops

In February 2010, a news story spread around the country about a school in Philadelphia that was spying on students by secretly activating the video cameras in their laptops. These laptops were given to the students by the district and were taken home as if they were their own computers. Almost every laptop computer, as you probably know, has a tiny video camera located on the top, as well as a microphone, which are used for video chats or to record video blogs. Few people know that they can also be remotely activated and used to watch and listen to anyone in their range.

The parents of one student filed a class-action lawsuit against the school on behalf of 1,800 students who were issued the laptops and were not told that school administrators had the ability to secretly activate the laptop webcams remotely, no matter where the laptop was located as long as the computer was online. The lawsuit seeks damages for invasion of privacy, theft of private information, and unlawful interception and access of electronic information.

The parents of Blake Robbins, who are responsible for the lawsuit, found out that school officials were using the computers to spy on students when an assistant principal confronted their son about “improper behavior in his home” and showed him a picture taken from his school-issued laptop’s webcam.

Most people only close their laptop when packing it up and transporting it, and a lot of people have their laptops sitting on desks in their bedroom, with their bed or bathroom often in clear view of the video camera, never suspecting that anyone could be watching from the webcam. School officials could have been watching the students undress in their own

bedrooms, or even watched them as they sat in front of their laptops masturbating to porn on the Internet. If school officials had seen a student doing such a thing, which is a common occurrence for many teenagers and adults, it would constitute watching child pornography.

School officials tried to say that they would only use the remote activation feature if a laptop was lost or stolen, but shortly after the lawsuit was filed and news about this story made it around the world, the lawyer for the Robbins family alleged that school officials had taken thousands of pictures of students while in their homes using the remote activation feature of the built-in camera, and also had lists of the websites they visited and transcripts of their online chats.

The case, Blake J. Robbins vs. Lower Merion School District, was filed in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania on Tuesday, February 16, 2010. The lawsuit also says that the camera on Blake Robbins' laptop took photos of the boy partially undressed and as he slept in his bed and says the camera was set up to take a new picture every 15 minutes, along with a screen shot.

One school employee allegedly sent an e-mail to Carol Cafiero, the administrator in charge of the spy program, saying the software was like, "a little LMSD [Lower Merion School District] soap opera," to which Cafiero is quoted as replying, "I know, I love it."[8]

It is alleged that Cafiero copied some images from the spy system onto her home computer, a claim she denies. Eight months later the lawsuit was settled and the school district agreed to pay $610,000 in damages, including $185,000 to two students it was proven were secretly spied on by the school using the webcams.

Blake Robbins, whose family brought the first lawsuit, was reported to have had $175,000 of the teen's settlement put in trust for him, presumably for college.[9] The school district also had to pay $425,000 in legal fees to the plaintiff's attorney.

The school board decided to settle the case after their insurance company agreed to pay the $1.2 million dollars in fees, a settlement they had initially refused to pay. As a result of the case, the school disabled the spying software, apologized to students and parents, and suspended two employees. The school district even tried to demonize the Robbins family, who first filed the lawsuit against the school, attacking them by saying that if they were so worried about their son’s privacy then they shouldn’t have released photos of him to the media.

While this case was a major victory against Big Brother and helped raise awareness for what technology was now capable of, this is just the tip of the Orwellian iceberg.

Schools Installing Video Cameras in Bathrooms

While it is common for surveillance cameras to watch over businesses and even city streets and sidewalks, most people would never imagine that video cameras would be installed in bathrooms, especially at a school, but that is exactly what has happened in numerous schools around America. Channel 13, WMAZ in Central Georgia, reported that an 8th grader found a video camera installed in the school bathroom at a Jasper County school in 2005. The boy and his friends took the camera down and brought it home to show his parents. He was later suspended for stealing school property.

"It felt like the right thing to do...because it felt like we were being violated in every way in the bathroom," said the 13 year old Mac Bedor, one of the boys who helped remove the camera.[10]

When the boy's mother contacted the school, she was told that the principle, Howard Fore, had authorized cameras to be installed in the bathrooms, allegedly to stop vandalism. What's especially creepy about this, is that only Howard Fore (the principle) knew about the camera being installed, and none of the other administrators were informed. It makes you wonder whether he installed the camera for his own personal perverse enjoyment, or to sell the footage to online pedophiles or to websites that market what they call voyeuristic video feeds which are taken from secretly placed cameras where people would never expect them to be, such as bathrooms, locker rooms, showers, or dorms.

The mother of one of the boys who helped remove the camera was interviewed by the local news station and said, "I had told the high school principal, Mr. Fore, that he needed to come up with another solution. That this wasn't appropriate. His response to me was he was going to continue to film."[11]

She was proud of what her son did because it was the right thing to do, and described the camera as a cheap one, not a professional one, and said it looked like a spy camera that people can buy on the Internet. The Bibb County District Attorney, Howard Simms, said that cameras in public school bathrooms are perfectly legal.

At another school, Reynoldsburg High School in Ohio, police installed a video camera in a bathroom saying it was to catch a person who wrote graffiti on a wall. The school's superintendent Richard Ross said the graffiti was "cryptic" and believed it was referring to a bomb threat.[12] The school's janitor removed the camera as soon as he discovered it. The Reynoldsburg Police Chief, Jeanne Miller, defended the camera, saying it was positioned to only videotape people from the chest up.

"I don't agree with the method because I believe it was an invasion of privacy," said Linda Rico, whose daughter attends the school. "My daughter was extremely upset about it, and I took her side. I'm glad to hear the camera is gone."[13]

A school superintendent in Texas named Dan Doyen was sentenced to five years felony probation and had to register as a sex offender after he installed a hidden camera in a women's bathroom at his school's administration office. The camera was disguised to look like an air freshener and was purchased with a school district credit card.

A school in Pine Bush, New York installed a fake video camera in a bathroom once in an attempt to fool boys into believing they were being videotaped, in order to discourage them from messing up the bathroom.[14]

These cases are not only isolated to schools in America. The Grace Academy in Britain, along with other schools, installed cameras in bathrooms as well. One mother told the *Sunday Mercury* newspaper, "She [her daughter] came home from school and told me security cameras had

been installed in the girl’s toilets but we didn’t know anything about it. You would expect the school to have consulted parents first, yet we received no information and no letters have been sent home explaining this decision.”[15]

The school’s principal, Terry Wales, told *Sky News*, “It’s to safeguard our youngsters, many schools are using cameras now. We had a parents’ forum last night, we explained the arrangements and the parents were satisfied. We’ve found that when it comes to health and safety, children want to feel secure.”[16] The school already had 26 CCTV cameras watching other parts of the building.

Police were called to a school in Salford, England after parents learned that cameras had been installed in a locker room. Police seized the system.[17] The practice of installing video cameras in children’s bathrooms would seem like the last thing that someone who is normal would do, yet we have seen this done on multiple occasions in the name of security, and people think it’s OK. It is possible that at some point in the future, this Orwellian invasion of privacy may be considered perfectly normal, and many people may actually encourage it.

Talking Cameras

Some surveillance cameras in the United Kingdom are equipped with loudspeakers that can be used to shout at people on the streets by the officials who are monitoring the camera feeds if they see someone litter or if people are deemed to be loitering. Some of these loudspeakers are designed to sound like a child's voice in an attempt to make it more difficult for people to resist the commands by making them feel bad if they shout back at the loudspeakers because they will feel like they are yelling at a child.[18]

The system enables workers at a control center to monitor different cameras that can all communicate with people on the street through the speakers. Secretary of State for the Home Department, John Reid, actually said that people liked the Orwellian system. "This is a hugely popular scheme in Middlesbrough and the vast majority of the people here are right behind it," he said.[19]

It was even reported that children from local schools were taken to the facilities and shown around as part of a field trip after the system was installed, thus indoctrinating them that such a Big Brother system is normal, and part of everyday life.

The telescreens in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* both watched and listened to everyone on the streets, and even in their own homes, and barked orders at people when they were slacking in their obedience to Big Brother.

Cameras with Microphones

Since surveillance cameras can watch you, and the human monitors can talk to you or shout at you through speakers built into the cameras, it shouldn’t come as a surprise that these cameras are increasingly being equipped with microphones so they can listen to people too.

In 2006, it was reported that over 300 CCTV surveillance cameras in Holland were being equipped with high powered microphones that can detect and record conversations from 100 yards away.[20] The creepiest part of this system is that it can automatically record conversations that it deems potentially aggressive based on 12 factors, including the volume level and the pitch and speed of people talking. The software does this all automatically and if the system detects what it considers to be hostility, then the police are dispatched to investigate.

Derek van der Vorst, who is the director of Sound Intelligence, the company that created the system, said “The cameras work on the principle that in an aggressive situation the pitch goes up and the words are spoken faster. The voice is not the normal flat tone, but vibrates. It is these subtle changes that our audio cameras can pick up on.”[21]

The privacy laws in Holland allow this system to operate, although in other countries recording conversations without people’s knowledge or consent would be the topic of much debate.

“It is technically capable of being live 24 hours a day and recording 24 hours a day,” Van der Vorste said. “It really depends on the privacy laws in a particular country.”

During a testing period the cameras were said to have detected 70 genuine alarms and led to four arrests. Harry Hoetjer, the head of surveillance at the Groningen police department said, for example, the system identified a gang of four men who were about to attack someone, and insisted the system stopped it.

In the buildup to the 2012 Olympics, a company called VCS Observation that markets the technology, gave a presentation to London police officials hoping to convince the city to install the system there. Martin Nanninga of VSC Observation said, “There was a lot of interest in our system, especially with security concerns about the Olympic Games in 2012. We told them about both our intelligent control room and the aggression detection system.”

British officials claimed that audio recordings from such a system would be treated the same as CCTV video footage under British law, saying that audio can be recorded for the purpose of the detection and prevention of crime and the apprehension and prosecution of criminals.

In Sylvester Stalone’s 1993 film *Demolition Man*, the futuristic society is constantly monitored by audio surveillance equipment with voice and keyword recognition that automatically fines people if they swear or use inappropriate language. The film has several references to Aldous Huxley’s novel *Brave New World*, including the naming of Sandra Bullock’s character, “Lenina Huxley,” which is a reference to Lenina Crown, a character in the *Brave New World* novel. At one point in the film, Wesley Snipes’ character says, “It’s a brave new world,” as he picks up a futuristic ray gun.

I was surprised to find that in 2009 a local Subway sandwich shop had a microphone standing by the cash register, and when I asked the employees about it they informed me that the owner had installed it and can listen in on them from his laptop or cell phone at anytime, and says he does so to make sure that the employees are behaving themselves and treating customers the way he wants them to be treated.

Similar audio monitoring devices that include radio controlled cameras, and even speakers, are now frequently installed in businesses by the owners to intimidate employees into working harder and deter them from stealing or fooling around on the job.

The European Union has looked into Big Brother systems that involve installing cameras and microphones on the backs of seats on airplanes that would monitor the facial expressions of each passenger and even listen to their conversations to identify any suspicious behaviors or conversations taking place, in an attempt to thwart terrorism.

The EU has funded the technology and is working with several companies and universities to develop it. A European Commission spokesman confirmed that the European parliament had begun talks to actually form legislation "in order for these [security] measures to be applied across [all] airlines."[22]

The program is called Security of Aircraft in the Future European Environment (SAFEE) and would trigger an alert to airline personnel if the system detected specified combinations of facial expressions and other behavior that can allegedly indicate if a person may be a terrorist. "The system will not be triggered by nervous flyers," said James Ferryman, one of the researchers. "It is only triggered by well-specified combinations."[23] Ferryman also claimed that it was impossible to fool the technology. Critics have dubbed it the "spy in the cabin."

Designers hope the system will be available and fully operational in airlines before the year 2020. The microphones would presumably listen for keywords in passengers' conversations, much like the Echelon spy system does during telephone conversations, and is probably more functional as an intimidation tactic aimed at preventing terrorism than it is at actually identifying someone who is about to hijack an airplane or disrupt a flight.

A spokesman for British Airways said, “While we always welcome new research and development that advances aviation security, we believe the emphasis of any new security initiatives would be better placed on preventing potential terrorists from boarding aircraft in the first place.”[24]

This entire system seems like complete quackery. What if a passenger is having a bad day or if they’re on their way to a funeral or a business trip they were forced to go on by their boss? What if they just hate their life but have no intention of doing any harm to anyone? Is this system going to flag them as a potential terrorist? Are we going to live in a world where we allow a computer program to supposedly determine what someone is thinking and flag them as dangerous based on their facial expressions?

This kind of system and others like it are really designed to intimidate people into conforming with the social norm and to get them to accept the idea that Big Brother is always watching them, no matter where they are, to make sure they don’t misbehave. The microphones used by this system that allegedly listen for keywords spoken by terrorists is a complete joke. Are two terrorists going to say out loud to each other “OK, in five minutes let’s hijack this plane?” Of course not. It is incredible that this kind of a system is even being considered and is taken seriously.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the term *facecrime* is used to describe an improper facial expression. For example, if an announcement was made that Big Brother had increased food rations, if one did not show outwardly visible signs of excitement, then this was suspicious and could be a sign of resentment towards Big Brother.

Facial Recognition Cameras

Video cameras that are able to detect the identity of specifically which individuals are in their field of view have been discussed since the early 1990s, but the first systems of this kind weren’t very accurate and were very expensive. As technology advanced, facial recognition systems became a reality and were installed in places like Fort Knox, casinos, shopping malls, and sporting events. Little did anyone know, but at the 2001 Super Bowl in Tampa, Florida, facial recognition cameras were used to scan for individuals seated in the crowd to locate people who had warrants out for their arrest.[25]

The system was created by Viisage who used their FaceTrac software that was developed at MIT. They input photos of criminals into the system that they obtained from local authorities and were able to find nineteen people who had been listed as targets.

ATMs are expected to possibly apply the technology to verify users, and numerous other applications will likely incorporate the technology as well. Laptop computers, for example, can be installed with software that is used to verify the user by scanning their face with the built in video camera before enabling the computer to function.

In 2005, a large shopping mall in the Netherlands installed facial recognition systems to spot suspected shoplifters.[26] One of the first trials showed that 90% of those targeted as offenders could be spotted using the system. Feeds taken from existing security cameras were transmitted to a facial recognition database containing photographs of volunteers acting as known or suspected shoplifters. When they entered the mall and came in view of the security cameras, the system alerted security.

This same system has been used in casinos since at least 2005 to spot players banned from the establishment for counting cards or cheating.[27] (These banned players' names are added to the Black Book or the Griffin book as it is called.) In the past, security guards would flip through books containing photos of people who were banned from casinos, in order to keep those people's faces fresh in their memory so they could spot them if they came back, but now with facial recognition systems, as soon as the person walks into the door, the system will identify them and security guards will be dispatched.

Of course, you may think that by putting on a hat, glasses or a fake beard, you could fool the system, but a show on the History Channel titled *Fort Knox: Secrets Revealed* (2007) detailed some of the security measures in place to protect the gold held there, and when explaining the facial recognition systems, the security expert said that even if a person were to get facial reconstructive surgery, their system would still be able to identify them immediately.

Back as far as 1999, London, England was installing facial recognition systems to scan people as they walk on the street.[28] London already has millions of CCTV cameras watching the streets, and they will likely all be upgraded with facial recognition software at some point in the near future. An area in London named Newham was the first neighborhood to install facial recognition cameras and used the FaceIt system developed by Visionics. The system used only 13 cameras and only 60 criminals were entered in as targets, none of which were spotted for three years, but it was just a test of the technology in its early phases in 1999.

In August of 2003, two years after the test of the system at the Super Bowl, police in Ybor City, Florida connected three dozen cameras on the streets to the FaceTrac system and entered in over 1000 photos of felons and runaways as targets. This system can also follow a target and watch them on whatever camera they come into view from, so a live person can watch their every move in real time once someone is identified.

In December 2003, the Royal Palm Middle School in Phoenix, Arizona, installed a facial recognition system on school property in an attempt to spot child molesters and other criminals.[29] It has been rumored in early 2010, Disney began quietly looking into possibly installing facial recognition cameras in their theme parks as well.

Minnesota-based Identix Incorporated, which has contracts with the Department of Homeland Security, has been in contact with Disney regarding facial recognition systems[30] and another company called A4Vision, based in California, confirmed they had met with Disney executives to give a presentation of their facial recognition system. "They were interested," said A4Vision spokeswoman Suzanne Mattick.[31]

It's rumored that Identix has a system that can identify people using a skin print that allegedly can identify a person using only a small digital picture of their skin. It's said to be as accurate as a fingerprint scanner and can tell twins apart from each other.

Most facial recognition systems work using what is called Local Feature Analysis (LFA) which is a mathematical algorithm used to encode faces into a "face print," which is the numeric code for each person's face that is stored as a small computer file.

A leading facial recognition company, Visionics, uses what they call nodal points, which are approximately 80 different distinguishable features on the human face that are measured and written into a numerical code which represents that person's face print in the database. Visionics says that only 14 to 22 nodal points are needed for their FaceIt software to identify someone. Back in the year 2000, the system was capable of matching face prints by searching through 60 million per minute. Today these systems can probably scan through a database containing the entire population of the United States in just a few seconds.

Visionics was founded by Joseph Atick, who in 1991 was recruited by Rockefeller University in New York to create the Computational

Neuroscience Laboratory where he developed his facial recognition systems. To do this, he was also given $4 million dollars in grants by the Department of Defense, particularly from DARPA, for what they called Human Identification at a Distance (or HumanID), which would become a part of the Information Awareness Office. The National Security Agency paid another $4 million dollars to develop the FaceIt program.[32]

Since police often photograph and videotape protests and demonstrations as possible evidence in the event that people commit assaults or vandalism, there are now new privacy concerns for even attending public rallies because police have the ability to run video footage and photos through facial recognition software in order to identify every single person in the crowd. People may be secretly listed in police databases as “extremists” simply for attending peaceful and legitimate demonstrations. As facial recognition systems become more common, they will instantly be able to identify the names of each person in attendance of any such march or demonstration.

Operation Noble Shield

The Rockefeller funded Joseph Atick, the founder and CEO of Visionics, the pioneer and leading company in facial recognition systems, proposed that a nationwide facial recognition system be installed in every airport in America that will look for suspected terrorists who are trying to board planes. He called it Operation Noble Shield, and immediately following the September 11, 2001 attacks, Atick was contacting the media trying to promote his company in the fight against terrorism. A week and a half after the attacks, Atick testified at a special committee formed by the Secretary of Transportation, Norman Mineta, where he proposed Operation Noble Shield.

In America, at least we still have some protections outlined in the Bill of Rights that haven’t been circumvented by fears of terrorism, and some watchdog groups do their best to resist certain Orwellian measures the government or private industry tries to impose on people. One must wonder (and fear) what will happen when oppressive dictatorships obtain this kind of technology and begin installing it on their public streets, or in private buildings to squash dissent and keep their citizens under the watchful eyes of Big Brother.

While privacy issues and Big Brother tend to be somewhat common issues in the twenty-first century, it’s interesting to note that Senator Sam Ervin in the 1970s, said, “When people fear surveillance, whether it exists or not, when they grow afraid to speak their minds and hearts freely to their government or to anyone else, then we shall cease to live in a free society.”[33]

Barry Steinhardt, the director of the ACLU’s Technology and Liberty Program, is concerned about the large-scale implications of facial

recognition systems and said, “What it tells us is that we are really on the cusp of a surveillance society where you are not going to be able to go anywhere without being subject to both surveillance and identification…I find it chilling.”[34]

Verint Systems

A surveillance company called Verint systems [verifiable intelligence] has created a service that watches people shop in retail stores and monitors how long they spend in an aisle and can detect whether or not they pick anything up off the shelf. If someone spends too much time in an aisle, the system alerts customer service and a store employee will be dispatched to that isle to ask the person if they need any help.

The system also monitors how many people come into a store, how long they spend in a store, and can calculate the ratio of customers to sales. This is not just a prototype, the Verint system has been used in stores like Home Depot and Target since at least 2006.[35]

Verint also created a service called ULTRA Customer Intelligence Analytics that data mines phone recordings for keywords. Verint says it, "Detects subtle, often counter-intuitive patterns and cause/effect relationships from recorded interactions to generate revenue opportunities."[36]

David Worthley, president of Verint Systems use to work as the chief of the FBI's telecommunications industry liaison unit which handled wire tapping. Kenneth A Minihan, the director of Verint Systems, was a director of the National Security Agency. Another big wig named Howard Safir was the former police commissioner for New York City and an executive in the DEA. Verint also receives a large amount of funding from grants given by Israel.

Aside from retail stores like Target and Home Depot using Verint systems, their equipment is also used at Dulles Airport outside of

Washington, DC, and inside the US Capitol building. In August of 2002 Verint’s stock was $6 per share, and by 2010, rose to more than $25.

Facial Recognition Billboards

In areas of Japan, an advertising agency installed billboards that have facial recognition cameras that can identify the sex and approximate age of people who walk by and then use that information to display what they consider to be relevant products on the billboards which consist of LCD screens.[37] In Steven Spielberg's 2002 film *Minority Report*, there is a scene showing billboards using retina scanners that identify people as they walk by and not only display ads that computers have determined would be suitable for that person, but the ads talk to the people using their name, as well. "John Anderton! You could use a Guinness [beer] right about now," one says, as Tom Cruise's character walks by. In another scene he walks into a Gap clothing store and is greeted by a hologram of a woman welcoming him back and asks him, "how did those assorted tank tops work out for you?" referring to his last purchase, which was obviously in the database.

NEC, the Japanese company that designed the real life facial recognition billboards, claim that they don't store the images of people who walk by and say they are deleted after the person passes the view of the camera.[38] The company tried to downplay the Orwellian aspects of the system by comparing it to cookies that are stored on people's computers that track what items people looked at on retailer's websites in order to post recommended items for that user.

Facial Recognition App on Cell Phones

Facial recognition cameras and software isn’t just restricted to large and bulky mainframe computers with extensive databases. In February 2010, a Swedish company called the Astonishing Tribe released an application (an app) for cell phones that allows people to take someone’s picture and then using facial recognition and face printing software, the application finds that person’s Facebook or MySpace page.

The application is called the Recognizr and shortly after it was released privacy advocates were understandably spooked. Tom Gaffney, a software security expert with F-Secure, said, “This app looks like it could be a stalker’s dream,” and Simon Davies of Privacy International called the application an atrocious invasion of privacy and said it infinitely increased the dangers of stalking and privacy issues that already exist.[39]

Using this application, a guy can now simply take a picture of a girl that he’s attracted to, whether she’s in a bar, in the grocery store, or anywhere, and then within seconds pull up her Facebook page and know her name, where she lives, read all her wall posts, see all her pictures, find out who her friends are, and more. The horrific things that could be done by stalkers, criminals, blackmailers, perverts and psycho’s are virtually limitless.

This is certainly not the only app of this kind. An app for the iPhone called Face Match accomplishes something similar by identifying specific individuals in photos you have uploaded to your Facebook page. The market for mobile facial recognition systems is just beginning to develop, and as the twenty-first century moves forward, this technology will be rapidly enhanced and could one day identify people just as easy as a human can recognize a friend in a split second after seeing them.

It’s not just people that these systems can identify. Google and other companies have built programs that allow users to take a photo of something with their cell phone, and the software identifies exactly what it is, and where it is geographically located. Google’s application is called Google Goggles, and they are just one of several companies working on enhancing such technology.

For example, you could take a picture of a building in the middle of downtown in a major city, and the app will be able to identify it and immediately display a fact sheet on that building. Landmarks, landscapes, automobiles, practically anything could have its picture snapped, and the system will identify what it is. It’s called visual search technology, and the possibilities are extremely vast. In 2009 scientists at the Smithsonian, the University of Maryland, and Columbia University were developing an app for the iPhone that could identify plant species just from taking a picture of one.[40]

Facial Recognition Software on the Internet

The facial recognition software company Face.com has developed a system that can search virtually the entire Internet in order to find photographs of a targeted individual. Once someone’s picture is entered into the system, it searches through photos on social networking sites and online photo galleries finding faces that match. It functions like a typical facial recognition system by translating photos into algorithms formulated by various facial features and measurements (called nodal points), and then searches the Internet for all photos which match that algorithm. Face.com says the software is 90 percent accurate.

When this system was first developed, Face.com limited its availability but later released a software package called Photo Finder that allows anyone to search for matches over the entire Internet, including websites, online newspapers, blogs, and social networking sites.

While your Facebook photos may be set to “friends only” or “private,” photos that you are tagged in which have been posted online by your friends, may not be set to private, and can easily be found by this kind of system. Are there funny but embarrassing photos of you posted somewhere on Facebook that you’d prefer your boss, parents, or children not see? Were you at a protest and possibly appear in a photo of the crowd that was posted online? Do you want your boss, neighbors, or the government knowing about what political or social movements you privately support and what events you attend? Anonymity may be a thing of the past.

Gil Hirsch, chief executive of Face.com, told *The Sunday Times*, “We have launched a service that allows developers to take our facial recognition technology and apply it immediately to their own applications.”[41] What that means is practically any software company can now incorporate this Big

Brother technology into cell phone apps or whatever kind of creepy and invasive programs their dark imaginations can dream up. As of September 2010 the company claimed its technology was already being used by 5,000 different developers. The genie is now out of the bottle. The company is also working on a system that will search through YouTube videos in order to identify people using the same facial recognition technology.[42]

In December 2010 Facebook added facial recognition software to their website to identify people in photos after they've been uploaded.[43] Before this, people would have to physically "tag" (identify a person in a photo by linking the photo to their Facebook page). Now the system suggests who is in the photos. The beta version of this system actually worked fairly well and as the technology is refined it will be nearly impossible to remain anonymous on Facebook.

Google has an application called Picasa that in 2008 was updated to enable people to upload photos and the system automatically identifies who is in them if the person's face has already been tagged in the program. With Google's dominance in information technology and their history of Big Brother-type of applications, it shouldn't be surprising if Google develops a picture search tool that utilizes facial recognition technology. Just as the search engine can comb through millions of web pages in seconds and find an exact sentence or phrase someone posted somewhere, Google (and others) will likely develop systems that can match photos just as fast, no matter where they are posted on the Internet.

Cash Prizes Given to People Who Watch Surveillance Monitors

A company called Internet Eyes, located in Britain, actually offers cash prizes to ordinary citizens who are given access to CCTV camera feeds if they see a crime being committed and are able to report it to authorities.

A businessman named Tony Morgan created the company after he learned that a large portion of security cameras watching the streets of London weren't being monitored by anyone.[44] The company initially offered a monthly prize of 1,000 pounds (approximately $1,550 US dollars)[45] for the best crime spotter of the month and then organized other payment terms for the spotters. At the time the program launched in October 2010, more than 13,000 people had signed up to watch the feeds and participate.

Charles Farrier, from the watchdog group *No CCTV*, said that the creation of Internet Eyes was a very worrying development and the government, "has put private profit above personal privacy in allowing a private company to launch its Stasi-style citizen spy game rather than defending the rights of British citizens."[46]

The system is marketed to businesses that don't have the budget for security guards to watch their security cameras 24 hours a day. Businesses pay a small fee to use the system and if someone sees what they think is a shoplifter, for example, that viewer can contact the store owner through the system which can send the owner a text message informing them of the event.

Daniel Hamilton of *Big Brother Watch* (a British watchdog organization) said, "It's astonishing to think that innocent people doing their shopping could soon be spied on by an army of busybodies with an Internet connection. CCTV should be used sparingly to help solve real crimes, not to encourage this type of tawdry voyeurism."[47]

The program, which started in October of 2010, was approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Pre-Crime Cameras

A strange new surveillance program in the United Kingdom was implemented in 2009 that is designed to automatically identify suspicious people and prevent crime before it occurs. The program is called ISIS (Integrated Sensor Information System), which interestingly spells out *Isis*, the Egyptian goddess and mother of the sun god Horus. The London *Telegraph* explained, “When a crime looks like it is going to occur, the system will verbally warn the perpetrator and then if necessary alert the nearest police officer.”[48]

The ISIS system uses what is called “computer vision technology” that analyzes security camera feeds to look for what authorities consider to be behavior that is anti-social or suspicious. The criteria for this “suspicious” behavior is said to be people wearing hooded sweatshirts, people who make sudden movements, and even “verbal aggression” that is detected by microphones placed in public places and on public transportation.

X-Ray Cameras

As if being watched, listened to, and having your movements monitored by artificially intelligent systems designed to supposedly determine whether you are acting hostile or not aren't Orwellian enough, leaked documents in London show that the government was looking into installing x-ray systems on lamp posts on public streets in order to see if people were concealing any weapons or explosives under their clothes.[49] There are several types of devices that can accomplish this task, such as millimeter wave machines or terahertz radiation which penetrates clothing.

In 2007 a train station in London conducted a month long test using millimeter wave scanners to look at people as they boarded trains to determine if they were concealing any weapons. A similar device was used at several other Underground (subway) stations as well. These are similar devices to the so-called naked body scanners employed at airports around the world, but they scan the entire crowd and without their knowledge.

"The real question is not whether the technology can see something under the clothing. It's how you respond to it when the technology says there's something unusual," said security expert Bob Ayers. "Do you have police strolling down each street, ready to ask people what they have under their jacket?" he wondered.[50] There is also a concern for the health risks from repeated exposure to such systems.

You may think that these "x-ray" cameras are the result of advanced twenty-first century technology, but you are wrong. A retired colonel from Taiwan's National Defense Department named Alan Yu was exposing this technology back in 1997. An article he wrote titled *Millimeter Waves and Mind Control* explained, "If you want to see the future of surveillance, take

a trip into the world of millimetre waves and the video cameras that are sensitive to them."[51]

He also said that in that same year, 1997, a company called Millitech expected to have millimetre-wave cameras available for around $10,000 and portable versions for $80,000. He even said that similar devices are able to see inside the human body and can detect anything that has been inserted in any orifice, such as the anal cavity, which is a common method for smuggling drugs and weapons into prisons.

Devices called T-ray scanners, or Terahertz scanners are used by the Secret Service to scan crowds when the president is making a public appearance to spot anyone who would be carrying a gun or other weapon concealed under their clothes.[52]

Some may argue that these kinds of devices will help to make people safer if they are installed on public streets, since there may be people who are carrying concealed weapons, but are we going to allow police officers to approach and detain and search anyone whenever the systems detects what it considers to be a weapon? What if a person has a concealed carry permit and is legally allowed to wear a concealed hand gun? Are they going to be tackled to the ground and beaten and tazed because the system shows they are walking down the street with a gun under their jacket even though they are allowed to?

Are people who carry a Swiss Army Knife for its convenience and functionality going to be surrounded by police and searched every time an x-ray camera sees they have a pocket knife? In most states in America, a person is legally allowed to carry a knife as long as the blade is shorter than three inches; so what is going to happen to these ordinary law abiding citizens when they are spotted carrying a perfectly legal knife in their pocket? Are they going to be treated as criminals or terrorists? Perhaps the laws will be changed to make it illegal for people to carry an innocent pocket knife in public.

Body Scanners at Airports

After the failed Christmas Day “underwear bomber” tried to blow up a plane as it approached Detroit, Michigan on Christmas Day of 2009, Homeland Security officials immediately began clamoring for newer high-tech security measures to be implemented at airports around the country. The device touted as being able to prevent future attacks of this nature was the so-called naked body scanner that allows TSA workers to see a virtual naked image of passengers’ bodies as they are being scanned by the device.

When sample photos were released showing just how detailed the images were that these machines take, many people were uneasy about what the machines revealed. In May 2010, a TSA worker in Miami, Florida was arrested for aggravated battery after he allegedly attacked one of his coworkers who was making fun of him for having a small penis after he passed through the new body scanner.[53]

Adding to the controversy over the use of these revealing scanners, the TSA had claimed that the machines could not store the naked images of people, but the Electronic Privacy Information Center uncovered documents showing that the machines do in fact have image storing capabilities, and can even send images.

EPIC obtained the technical specifications and vendor contracts through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit, which directly contradicts the TSA’s claim that the machines couldn’t store the images.

In the beginning of 2010, there were about 40 machines in use at 19 different airports, and the TSA planned to install 150 more by the end of the year, and another 300 in 2011. As Thanksgiving weekend of 2010 approached, news stories started circulating about the busy travel patterns

and the added security measures of the new naked body scanners now that they were installed and fully operational in airports across the country. People also began talking about how they didn't want to be subjected to the radiation believed to be given off by the scanners, not to mention the humiliation of the naked body scan, or the groping pat downs if one dared to "opt out" of the scan.

At this point in time, not every traveler had to go through the scan—only supposedly people who were chosen at random. Several attractive female celebrities made headlines for speaking about their experiences at the airports getting scanned by the new naked body scanners (called *rape scanners* by some detractors), and the publicity was not good. Former *Baywatch* babe Donna D'Errico felt that she was selected for the scan because she was hot and didn't think she was chosen at random.

She told *AOL News*, "It is my personal belief that they pulled me aside because they thought I was attractive…My boyfriend sailed through with no problems, which is rather ironic in that he fits the stereotypical 'look' of a terrorist when his beard has grown a bit. After the search, I noticed that the male agent who had pulled me out of line was smiling and whispering with two other agents and glancing at me. I was outraged."[54]

"This could, and I'm sure does, happen to other women. It isn't right to hide behind the veil of security and safety in order to take advantage of women, or even men for that matter, so that you can see them naked. It's a misuse of power and authority, and as much a personal violation as a Peeping Tom. The difference is that Peeping Toms can have charges pressed against them," D'Errico concluded.[55] The airport denied any inappropriate behavior from the TSA agents on the scene.

Reality TV star Khloé Kardashian, the younger sister of Kim Kardashian, appeared on *Lopez Tonight* during this same holiday season and happened to mention her experience with airport security as well, saying, "They basically are just raping you in public. I got asked the other day, do

you want to go for a screening or get patted down. I don’t want that X-Ray to see everything, honey.”[56]

She continued to say “[T]he people are so aggressive, It’s like, ‘Chill out, you didn’t find anything on me yet, calm down…’ They say, ‘OK, I’m going to be patting you down and I’m going to be touching the crease of your ass.”[57] Khloé was visibly upset.

Videos then started getting posted on YouTube showing TSA agents feeling up men, women, and children as a “precaution” before letting them pass through airport security. Some people protested and stripped down into Speedos or bikinis right before going through the security checkpoint to highlight how invasive and ridiculous they were. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano had been labeled *Big Sis*, as in *Big Sister*, a play on the Orwellian *Big Brother*, as a result of all the negative publicity her invasive programs were getting.

License Plate Readers

At some point in the New World Order, all vehicles will most likely be required to have a GPS tracking system installed on them in order to be authorized to drive on the roads so authorities can determine exactly where a specific vehicle is located at any given time. Until this occurs, there are other ways that Big Brother is watching your car. Since facial recognition systems can detect a specific person’s face out of a crowd of tens of thousands in a split second, it should be no surprise that systems can also read the license plates on vehicles from any number of the traffic cameras or red light cameras positioned around cities.

More and more cameras are being equipped with Optical Character Recognition systems (OCR) that can read the hundreds of license plates that go whizzing by the cameras every minute. A new technology called LPR uses what is called License Plate Reader or License Plate Recognition that can read practically any license plate from any state, even with the large variations of designs and colors.

Numerous states are currently using LPR systems to spot drivers whose licenses have been suspended or revoked, or to find stolen vehicles. Other ideas for the system involves finding people who have unpaid parking tickets, back taxes, or warrants out for their arrest. Authorities also plan to have the system keep a log on which cars pass through specific cameras and at what time. This stored information can then be used to determine if a suspect of a crime was in the area at the time it was committed.

When license plate reading systems become common place, if a person whose license is suspended for unpaid parking tickets is spotted by an LPR camera, a police officer will be immediately dispatched to pull them over

and arrest them. That is, unless the government implements mandatory GPS black boxes on automobiles which would then disable a person’s vehicle until the tickets were paid. These systems are already used by car dealers if people miss several payments.[58]

Police Wear Head Mounted Cameras

At the end of 2009, a police department in San Jose, California, began equipping officers with head-mounted video cameras to record their interactions with the public.[59] The officers, in this case, control when the cameras are on or off, and are supposed to turn them on every time they talk with anyone.

The devices were made by Taser International, the company that makes the infamous Taser guns often abused by police. The company paid for the first 18 units as an attempt to get the department to expand their use to all 1400 officers. The devices cost approximately $1700 each and have a $100 monthly fee per officer, which would bring the cost to $4 million dollars if the San Jose police department would implement them for all their officers.

In February 2010, nine officers in San Diego's police force began using Taser's cameras as part of another field test. "It gives real-time information on exactly what occurred at the scene. Anything that helps put the case into perspective," said San Diego Assistant Police Chief Bob Kanaski. "No more 'he said, she said.' Now it's in color."[60]

It must be noted that during numerous instances of police misconduct, civilians happen to be videotaping with a camcorder or their cell phone, and officers often order them to stop filming or even confiscate or smash their cameras to prevent any evidence from getting out and showing the officer's crimes.

Of course, the video footage and audio taken by the head mounted cameras will often only be used to support the police officer's claims of what a suspect has done or said, and it shouldn't be surprising if hard drives

are sometimes “damaged” and can’t have their contents retrieved when the footage would show severe officer misconduct.

In London in 2005, police shot and killed Jean Charles de Menezes who they suspected was carrying a bomb on the subway, but he was completely innocent. This was immediately following the 2005 transit bombings where three different trains and one bus were blown up, killing 52 people and injuring 700. Officers initially said that Menezes was running from police and struggled with them when they approached, and claimed that’s why they killed him. Several video cameras that were in clear view of the incident were said to mysteriously have their hard drives missing, although inside sources with the security company that maintained the cameras said they were in full working order.[61]

While the police officers often record interactions with suspects, there has been a disturbing trend in police arresting citizens and charging them with felony illegal wiretapping for simply doing the same thing.[62]

If suspects or bystanders videotape interactions with police, then some police are now claiming these people are recording the interaction without two party consent—meaning the police officers don’t agree to the recording—thus they claim the citizens are committing a felony illegal wire tap.[63] In most states in order for private conversations to be recorded legally, both parties must consent or it is considered an illegal wire tap. This law was designed to prevent phone conversations from being secretly recorded, and was not meant to apply to the public videotaping of an event (which happens to capture the audio too), but we have seen numerous instances where police officers charge people under this statute even though it does not apply to conversations where there is not a “reasonable expectation of privacy,” such as on a public street. This has not stopped police officers around the country from unfairly charging people with “illegal wire tapping” for simply videotaping a public interaction where there was no reasonable expectation of privacy.

Police departments, and many courts, have decided that it is OK for police to record us, but we cannot record them. This hypocritical double standard only serves to protect the Big Brother system, and restricts the rights and freedoms of honest and ordinary people. The police simply do not want people to videotape them because those videos will sometimes capture clear evidence of officer misconduct that they will not be able to deny.

Other Uses for Cameras

One use of video cameras that most of the public is unaware of is in the retail sales industry, which sometimes uses a surveillance system to photograph each costumer who comes into a store or walks onto a sales lot—and then the salesmen have to log certain information about that person—all without the customer knowing about it.[64] This system is used more to monitor the salespeople than it is to monitor the customers. The system keeps track of how many people step foot into a store, and a formula is used to determine how well the sales force is doing by cross-referencing the number of sales and the dollar amount of the invoices, with the number of people who step foot in the door.

This system is used mainly in low-traffic, high-end stores that sell items like furniture or jewelry that only get a hand full of customers who walk thought their doors each day. If the system shows that one particular salesperson has ten people walk through the door on average, and makes five sales, but another salesperson who gets ten people walking in only makes two sales, then management is going to see that his closing ratio isn't very good and will likely fire him. When commission salesmen have a bad day or a bad month they'll often say, "I didn't have any customers walk through the door," but this system can prove otherwise. Salesmen that this author has personally spoken with who have had to use this system at work have told me that they often have to write a brief description of what merchandise the customer was looking at, and it is then saved in a file along with that person's photograph which was taken when they tripped the sensor as they walked in the door.

If, for example, the person who walks through the door is somebody who is lost and asks for directions, then the salesman must log that entry, which is linked to that person's picture. This system also keeps track of how long each person is in the store. If a person comes in for one minute asking

for directions, the system will show this and the boss won’t think that their salesman couldn’t close a sale. This system is also used to figure out a salesperson’s average sale in dollars per walk-in.

Another Orwellian system that is used in the world of sales is a hidden camera and microphone worn by secret shoppers who companies hire to pretend to be customers who go into stores and videotape how the salesperson does with his or her presentation and closing attempts. I have personally spoken to salesmen who have been subjected to this kind of secret shopper. Since legal issues may arise from people being secretly videotaped along with an audio recording, many companies will coerce their employees into signing legal wavers that say they consent to the secret video shopper procedure which then may occur at any time.

While secret shoppers are not new and are used by a variety of industries, they were usually just people that went in and asked specific questions of salespeople and immediately upon leaving would write up a brief report on the person and answer several questions about their attitude toward the pretend customer, their product knowledge, and perhaps their personal appearance, such as what they were wearing and how clean they were. But with video cameras becoming incredibly small, these secret shopper services now have the ability to let management or a business owner view a video of the entire process himself to see and hear how the salespeople perform.

Global Positioning Systems

In the 1990s, people began hearing about GPS (Global Positioning Systems) and in the 21st century we saw the technology rapidly expand into the mainstream and become part of commonly used items such as GPS systems for navigation in vehicles, in cell phones, and even on shipments of merchandise to track their exact location as they are en route.

While many people were surprised to learn that OJ Simpson's cell phone was triangulated to discover his location as he drove in his white Bronco down the Los Angeles freeway in 1994, evading police when he was wanted for murder, today such capabilities are expected and seen as commonplace. While most of us rely on our GPS navigation systems in vehicles to guide us to our destinations and can't imagine life without them, GPS has a dark side that is exploited by Big Brother and is being used in ways that can only be described as Orwellian.

Many businesses are putting GPS systems on company vehicles, something that doesn't sit well with many of the vehicles' drivers. Are they taking too long on their lunch breaks? Did the car travel back to the employee's house before 5 o'clock? Has the vehicle traveled over 75 miles per hour? All of this and more is available to supervisors and owners who have installed GPS systems on their company's vehicles.

The wrestling superstar Hulk Hogan had a reality show called *Hogan Knows Best* that aired on VH1 from 2005 to 2007 and gave an inside look at his family and their activities. His daughter Brook was seventeen when the show first aired, and in one episode Hulk let her go on a date with some guy, but before she did, he installed a GPS tracker on her car (without her knowledge) and during the episode it showed him watching where the car was driving, making sure that she was going where she said she was. Such

devices are now so small that they can be placed on people, and not just in the trunk of a car.

Placing small GPS devices on children is now becoming common, as well as friends and family locator applications for cell phones that show the exact location of your friends and family on a map by using the built in GPS transmitters in all cell phones. Some people also envision future GPS systems so small that they can be implanted inside a person’s body. We may soon live in a world where it is seen as completely normal for practically anyone to see exactly where you are, anywhere in the world, at every moment of the day.

Digital Angel

The first commercially available personal GPS tracker was called the Digital Angel, and was designed by Applied Digital, the creator of the VeriChip implantable RFID chip. The Digital Angel was designed to be worn by a person like a wrist watch and was marketed for children and the elderly. Upon its release in 2000, Richard J. Sullivan, chairman of Applied Digital, boasted that his device could tap a market worth more than $70 billion dollars.[65]

The chief scientist behind the device's creation, Dr. Peter Zhou, told *World Net Daily* he believed the company's future products would be implanted into people and will be "a connection from yourself to the electronic world. It will be your guardian, protector. It will bring good things to you," and that, "We will be a hybrid of electronic intelligence and our own soul."[66]

Although the Digital Angel (called the digital beast by detractors) came out in the year 2000, it wasn't until a decade later that personal locating devices would become very well known or used.

Family Locator Apps

Most new cell phones have what they call *family locator apps* that use a cell phone’s built in GPS to show exactly where other members of your family are geographically located—at all times. Verizon’s website explains, “From your PC or phone, enjoy the comfort of locating family members anytime, anywhere.” The app is more than just a real-time GPS locator, it allows you to receive “arrival & departure updates” for each family member and lets you schedule location updates for each family member that will alert you as to their location at any specific time you set. For example, if you wanted to know where your kids were every night at 10pm, it will alert you in case you’ve lost track of time and forgot to check.

An app for Sprint phones allows users to review the past locations of their children (or husbands, wives, girlfriends, or boyfriends) for the last seven days and can also be set to send you automatic notifications of a child’s location at specific times on specific days. The website boasts, “You don’t need to install anything on the phones you wish to locate. Sprint Family Locator uses the GPS technology already built-in to every Sprint phone, so it is compatible with every Sprint phone.” The cost of the Sprint Family Locator is $5 dollars per month which includes tracking on up to four different phones.

‘Little Buddy’ Tracking Device for Children

In October 2009, a rather bulky tracking device was put on the market called the Little Buddy, which was advertised as a GPS system that parents can place in their child’s backpack or lunch box so their location can be monitored on the parent’s cell phone or computer. This device (and others like it) are designed for children who are too young to have cell phones which can be tracked by family locator apps.

The software for the Little Buddy allows parents to set up geographic boundaries that activate and deactivate at specific times, and if the device travels outside of those boundaries, then the parent will receive a text message or an e-mail alerting them of this. For example, a boundary around the school could be set up between 8am and 3pm and if the device (which is located in the student’s back pack) leaves the school grounds before 3pm then the parent would be alerted.

The first version of the Little Buddy was rather large and bulky, and could not be placed in a child’s backpack without them noticing, but as the years progress, similar devices will be extremely small and could be stashed inside a student’s backpack, or even on their clothes without them even knowing.

One newscaster on the Fox News Channel joked about placing the device in her boyfriend’s car so she could keep tabs on exactly where he went and when. Most people would obviously be unaware such a device was placed in their vehicle.

A commercial for the Little Buddy tracking device said, “Get peace of mind. Build trust. And be confident that your child is OK when you can’t be with them.” Their claim of “building trust” is obviously doublethink, since

using such a thing is a clear sign of an overbearing, controlling, or paranoid parent. The device costs less than one hundred dollars.[67]

Amber Alert GPS

Another personal GPS locator on the market that is extremely more advanced than the Little Buddy GPS tracker is called the Amber Alert GPS. It's fairly small in size, measuring 1.77" x 1.68" x .78" and is advertised as, "The world's smallest, most powerful GPS tracking device." It is marketed to parents who want to keep track of their children and can be put in their pocket or clipped onto their belt. The parents can then keep an eye on the device's location on their cell phone or computer, but this device is so much more than a GPS locator.

It costs $129.99 and the parents must pay a monthly fee ranging from ten dollars a month to forty dollars a month depending on what features they want. Some of these features include a "speed alert" that will notify parents when the GPS device exceeds a certain speed so a parent can tell if their child has gotten into a vehicle. The website even brags, "This feature is great for speeding teenagers!"[68] Do you want to know if your teenager ever drives faster than 80 miles per hour? You can easily set the device to alert you of this. You could, of course, then see exactly what street they're on.

It also has a temperature alert that will notify parents when the temperate surpasses or drops below the thresholds they designate. A feature they call "Breadcrumbing" allows a person to have the unit send them text messages at specific times of the day to notify them where the unit is located. You can also be notified when the device enters or leaves a specific location. The website reads, "Do you want to be notified when your child arrives at school, soccer practice, or the mall? You can with our latest feature: Destination Alert. Destination Alert allows the parent to define an area on a map, and receive notification by text and/or e-mail when the child arrives. It's easy and it gives you one more tool to keep your child safe!"

The device even has a “Voice Monitoring” feature that allows the parent to activate a microphone in the unit so they can listen in on what their child is doing. The website brags, “Even during use the child never knows that you are listening in.”

The Amber Alert GPS system is named after the AMBER alert child abduction notification system that alerts local TV and radio stations if a child is believed to have been abducted. The AMBER alert system was named after a 9-year old child named Amber Hagerman who was abducted and murdered in Arlington, Texas in 1996.

Tracking the President, White House Staff, and Family Members

On CBS's *60 Minutes* in March 2010, Rahm Emanuel (President Obama's chief of staff) showed Katie Couric a security system he had in his White House office that tracked major White House players using a GPS system that showed their current location in real-time. The system keeps tabs on the President, Vice President, First Lady, family members, and others he said. The segment was brief, but it is clear that by "family members," this means Barack Obama's two kids have to wear GPS tracking bracelets probably twenty-four hours a day.

GPS Trackers at Amusement Parks

A company called SAMSys Technologies created a GPS tracking system that became available at multiple amusement parks as a way for parents to keep track of their kids. They call their device the SafeTzone System which is a GPS locator similar to a large wrist watch that can be used to keep track of the children and also enables them to buy things at the park like food and souvenirs, because it acts like an RFID debit card.

SafeTZone's website called it a "cashless spending module" and said it "eliminates the need for cash anywhere in the venue by turning each Locator into an electronic wallet. The elimination of cash will provide patrons with the freedom to utilize the venue services and make purchases at restaurants, games, attractions, and shops throughout the venue."

A press release sent out by Paramount's Great America theme park in 2004 brags that one of their parks in Santa Clara, California, began issuing the SafeTZone GPS trackers to guests so they could locate each other. The device is called the Star Watch which is a waterproof GPS system that is strapped onto people's wrists. Guests can then go to any number of "Location Stations" which show the location of others in their group. The Star Watch also allows people to send messages to other members in their group, and locate rides and restaurants in the park. The press release also noted that people would, "Receive information about Paramount's Great America's special promotions, show times and park events."

Rod Rankin, Paramount's Great America's senior vice president and general manager is quoted in the press release saying, "It's a convenient and affordable guest amenity that provides visitors the opportunity to track everyone in their group or simply find the easiest route to a favorite ride or restaurant."[69]

Paramount's Great America is owned and operated by Paramount Parks, a division of Viacom Inc, the entertainment giant that owns CBS, MTV, Nickelodeon, VH1, BET, Paramount Pictures, UPN, Spike TV, TV Land, CMT, Comedy Central, Showtime, Blockbuster, Simon & Schuster, and other media companies.

In 2004, Legoland in Denmark implemented RFID tracking of guests with devices called the "Kidspotter" which were advertised as a way to prevent children from getting lost. Leo Steiner, vice president for on-demand sales at IBM, who works with RFID, said, "Legoland will now know exactly where each customer is, how long they are spending in each area and which products are proving to be most popular."[70] Steiner sees the device as a market research tool more than a safety device.

Debbie Allen, a mother of two, told Silicon.com, "When you go to these theme parks, you tend to spend so much time trying to keep your children by your side that they get resentful and a little frustrated. If I were given the chance to feel a little more relaxed, I would jump at the opportunity; if they then used the information they had for marketing, then I really don't see the harm."[71]

Mobile Alarm for the Threatened

There have even been proposals for people to be forced to wear GPS monitors if they are the subject of harassment or if their life could be threatened by a dangerous ex-lover or spouse. Fifteen different districts in Holland have implemented this strategy and force people to carry such devices which can notify police with the push of a button as to the person's location so police can be dispatched to investigate.[72]

Those people are not criminals, they are the victims, and they are forced to wear GPS monitors similar to ankle bracelets worn by people on parole or house arrest.

Implantable GPS System

A patent application submitted in 2003 from a California company called Persephone, Inc., (Number 20040174258) describes their invention as a GPS device that is forcefully implanted into people and can't be removed. The title of their application is *Method and apparatus for locating and tracking persons*, which explains, "Removal of the implanted device by a runaway juvenile would likely be impossible. Even if possible, such removal would likely place the runaway at significant medical risk, which is counter to the runaway's goal of a safe escape and survival from parents or guardians."[73]

The patent application actually says that the tracking device could be implanted up a person's butt, in their rectum. The application describes the location of the device as being "Submuscular: for example, deep to a large muscle. Such a location is currently used for implantation of commercially available artificial urethral and anal sphincter reservoirs, which are positioned deep to the rectus abdominus muscles, within the pre-peritoneal Space of Retzius."

It gets worse. The patent application goes on to read, "Because the device is implanted in the person, it can also provide a shock, vibration, or other warning…[that] may be progressive, such that a person is subjected to a shock of increasing magnitude as he leaves a zone of confinement or enters a forbidden zone."

"The device may…include a microphone or similar device for monitoring acoustic information, thereby permitting the person to talk to a remote location."

If this isn’t Orwellian enough, let me point out that the name of the company that filed this patent is called Persephone Inc, a company obviously named after Persephone, the Greek goddess that governs the underworld, or Hades (Hell).

A Mileage Tax

As cars have become more fuel efficient and hybrid and fully electronic cars have become quite popular, the number of gallons of gas that people use up in a given week has dramatically dropped, and so has the tax dollars the government rakes in from gasoline taxes. In order to compensate for this loss, some lawmakers are pushing for a new mileage tax that will tax cars based on the number of miles they drive.

The Governor of Oregon, Ted Kulongoski, was one of the first government officials to recommend a mileage tax to replace the traditional gas tax because of the loss of revenues due to more fuel efficient vehicles.[74] In 2009, he included his plans for this new tax in a transportation bill.

The governor’s website outlined his reasons, saying, “As Oregonians drive less and demand more fuel-efficient vehicles, it is increasingly important that the state find a new way, other than the gas tax, to finance our transportation system.”

He planned for a task force to “partner with auto manufacturers to refine technology that would enable Oregonians to pay for the transportation system based on how many miles they drive.” This method would involve equipping all vehicles with GPS units that would monitor how many miles a person drove and tax them accordingly.

Oregon is certainly not the only state to consider such a proposal. The Texas Transportation Institute held a meeting in April 2009 to discuss “mileage-based user fees” and other ways to replace diminishing revenues from the gas tax. “We need to think differently about how we fund transportation,” said the Texas Transportation Commission Chairwoman Deirdre Delisi.[75]

Some proposals for how the tax would be collected include a mileage check when the car has its registration renewed each year, or installing GPS systems on vehicles that would be programmed to tax people differently according to what road they were on, or if they traveled out of their state. Certain high-traffic roads, for example, would tax drivers at a higher rate, and GPS systems could enable the government to vary the tax rate depending on what county or city the vehicle was traveling in.

Rental Car Company Fines Customers for Speeding

While it may not be that surprising to people that the government would install a Big Brother system to automatically fine drivers who were going over the speed limit, it was surprising to learn that in 2001 a rental car agency was fining their own customers for speeding in their rental cars. This came to light after a man named James Turner was fined $450 by the Acme-Rent-A-Car agency after the AirIQ GPS system installed on their rental cars calculated that he was speeding in their car.[76] The fine was charged directly to his credit card because the company had included language in the rental agreement explaining that the customer would consent to this, but of course, who reads the fine print on these agreements.

James Turner filed a lawsuit against the company in small claims court and also filed a complaint with the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection.

Students Forced to Wear GPS Tracking Devices

Twenty-two students at a high school in Texas were ordered by a judge in January 2010 to carry GPS tracking devices on them in order to prevent truancy. “Bryan High students who skip school will soon be tracked 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” reported KBTX, a local TV station.[77] The Orwellian program is called the Attendance Improvement Management Program or AIM, and according to reports it is being used in schools, not only in Texas, but around the country.

Students who skip class are forced to appear at truancy court and then some are forced by the judge to carry the tracking devices, similar to ankle bracelets that people on parole or house arrest must wear. “Students on the program are tracked with a hand-held GPS device between the time they leave for school in the morning and the time they check in for curfew at night,” reported the local news station.[78]

An official in Holland for the People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) proposed that “troublesome youth” be forced to wear GPS bracelets as well.

Tracking Cell Phone Locations

The Obama administration has argued that tracking the location of people's cell phones without a warrant is legal and should be permitted because, they say, Americans don't have a reasonable expectation of privacy concerning the whereabouts of their cell phone. U.S. Department of Justice lawyers say that "a customer's Fourth Amendment rights are not violated when the phone company reveals to the government its own records."[79]

In *Enemy of the State* (1998) Will Smith's character was tracked by a rogue group of government officials using all kinds of methods that seemed like science fiction at the time, but are actually possible. In the film, Gene Hackman made a statement that the National Security Agency has "been in bed with the entire telecommunications industry since the '40s," and he was right.

Not only can authorities track the real-time location of any cell phone, even when it's turned off, but they can go back and look at the records to show the location of any particular phone at anytime a phone call was made. A 2008 court order to T-Mobile in a criminal investigation says, "T-Mobile shall disclose at such intervals and times as directed by (the Department of Homeland Security), latitude and longitude data that establishes the approximate positions of the Subject Wireless Telephone, by unobtrusively initiating a signal on its network that will enable it to determine the locations of the Subject Wireless Telephone."

Kevin Bankston, an attorney for the Electronic Frontier Foundation said, "This is a critical question for privacy in the 21st century. If the courts do side with the government, that means that everywhere we go, in the real

world and online, will be an open book to the government unprotected by the Fourth Amendment."[80]

Verizon Wireless keeps records of cell phone locations for 12 months according to Verizon's Vice President Drew Arena. They keep detailed phone records, excluding phone locations, for seven years.

The ACLU, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), the Center for Democracy and Technology, and other privacy advocates argue that Americans do not surrender their Fourth Amendment right when they turn on their cell phones.

Numerous attorneys have said that if such a practice is deemed illegal by a court, that the case would definitely be appealed and government lawyers will fight until the practice becomes fully legal anyway.

The GPS Coordinates to Your Front Door

The census is done every ten years in America to determine how many people are living in the country and in what communities so that the appropriate number of funds and resources can be allocated to those areas. People have become familiar with the questionnaire mailed to them every ten years, asking who lives in your residence, what race they are, and several other personal questions, but as the 2010 census approached, stories began circulating that census workers were traveling door-to-door and linking the front door of each address with its GPS coordinates. Such reports turned out to be accurate.

In 2009, 140,000 people were hired as part of a $700 million dollar program to collect the GPS coordinates of every front door in America. People were obviously uncomfortable with this, especially since President Obama put his Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel, in charge of overseeing the census which is used to draw congressional districts. There appeared no legitimate or logical reason for such an enormous task. Why would the government need the exact GPS coordinates of every single front door in America? And why would they spend hundreds of millions of dollars doing this?

Blogger Douglas Gibbs of the *American Daily Review* wrote, “Imagine, if you will, that there are a number of people in a neighborhood that could not find the addresses they are tasked with finding. They are not locals, maybe are unable to read a map, or perhaps do not have the time to pull out a map, and they need to find you with specific GPS coordinates. Their devices would lead them to your front door with these coordinates. Imagine a crisis is afoot, and martial law is put into place. U.S. troops need to round up particular folks.”[81]

He concluded, “Let’s take this a step further. After all, with Barack Obama desiring to decrease the number of folks in the military, and with forces committed worldwide, we may not have sufficient military forces at home to deal with a rising national emergency. If the government decided to rely on foreign troops, perhaps United Nations personnel, most of which may not understand the street signs, much less know the lay of the land, they could use GPS devices to direct them to your front door.”[82]

J.B. Williams of the *Canada Free Press*, wrote, “I can’t resist the urge to question the authority and purpose behind such a BIG BROTHER initiative, when the official census itself is not due to be taken until 2010… No imagination is required to think up a whole laundry list of evil that could be done with a nationwide GPS grid of coordinate’s markers painted on every private home across the country. But I was having trouble thinking up one good reason for it, even one legitimate use that would justify what must be a very expensive undertaking.”[83]

Williams continued, “Why does the Obama administration need or want the latitude and longitude coordinates for every home in America? Why the rush to GPS paint every home in the next 90 days? Why must the marker be within 40 feet of every front door? For what possible purpose does the Fed need GPS coordinates for every home, and under what authority do they have the right? Census workers, whom I asked, had the same holy-crap look on their faces that I had by then.”[84]

Some bloggers even pondered whether one day the GPS coordinates could be used by Unmanned Arial Vehicles to spy on homeowners, or even blow them up with missiles if they were deemed subversive or a threat to the New World Order. The Census Bureau claimed that the GPS coordinates were needed to “ensure that all residents are counted in the right location.”[85]

Remotely Disabling Automobiles

While it may seem like something out of a James Bond film, some car dealerships have been installing a device on new vehicles that allow them to remotely deactivate cars which will then prevent them from starting if people have missed their payments.

One such device was created by an Ohio company called Pay Technologies and is marketed to auto dealers as a way to disable vehicles of people who have missed their car payments. The device can also cause the car horn to honk repeatedly, and has a GPS tracker built in as well, so the location of a vehicle can be known at all times, in case they want to send a repo man to repossess the vehicle. Disabling a person's vehicle could leave a motorist stranded in a dangerous situation, or in the middle of nowhere; hazards that are apparently overlooked by the device's manufacturer.

In February of 2010, more than 100 vehicles in Austin, Texas were disabled and some had their horns honking repeatedly after a disgruntled employee of a dealership disabled the vehicles using the system in order to get revenge on an auto dealer for firing him.[86]

"We initially dismissed it as mechanical failure," said Texas Auto Center manager Martin Garcia. "We started having a rash of up to a hundred customers at one time complaining. Some customers complained of the horns going off in the middle of the night. The only option they had was to remove the battery."[87]

After complaints started flooding in from the vehicles' owners, the Texas Auto Center reset the Webtech Plus passwords for all of their employees and then gave police login entries and they traced an IP address to the suspect's Internet service provider. Police say he used a password

from a fellow employee, and that his had been disabled as soon as he was fired. Austin police filed computer intrusion charges against the man.

Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID)

RFID, as many people know, stands for Radio Frequency Identification Device, and refers to a technology that encodes a unique ID number onto a tiny computer chip that can then be activated from a distance using an RFID reader which then identifies the number on the chip. It’s sort of like an electronic serial number that is encoded in the RFID tag, which doesn’t require any batteries, and can be extremely small and inexpensive to produce.

As with most technology, there certainly are advantages to RFIDs, such as increasing efficiency in business by minimizing errors along a supply chain. One interesting use of RFID that we may see in the future comes from Microsoft’s vision of the “Home of the Future” where microwave ovens detect RFIDs in food’s packaging and are automatically programmed to the correct power and time settings to cook the food properly. This home of the future would also have a refrigerator that keeps track of its contents, and when an item is not replaced in the fridge, it would automatically add it to your shopping list to order in a replacement.

Surely when RFID tags replace the standard UPC barcode, we will not have to wait in the checkout line at the grocery store for fifteen minutes and unload our groceries onto the conveyor belt, because we can just walk through a scanner with our groceries still in the cart, and they will all be scanned instantly from the RFID UPCs on each item. But not all uses for RFIDs will be so helpful to humanity.

There have been several applications filed for patents that outline exactly what RFID tags are capable of, and it is extremely unsettling. Many devices designed and created will be promoted publicly for certain

applications or benefits, but if you read the language written in their patent applications, their real Big Brother use and capabilities are discovered.

The implications of RFID tags are truly Orwellian, and their use far exceeds simply replacing UPCs on merchandise we buy at the store to make the checkout procedure faster. RFID tags operate as little tracking devices similar to, but not as powerful as, GPS systems, and have not only been forced on students at school, but have been implanted in people's hands and used for identifying them at businesses and government agencies, allowing them to enter secure areas, and even pay for drinks at fancy bars.

One patent application filed by IBM admits, "[T]he widespread use of RFID tags on merchandise such as clothing would make it possible for the locations of people, animals, and objects to be tracked on a global scale—a privacy invasion of Orwellian proportions."[88]

Documents from a company called NCR reveal they came up with the idea that RFID tags could be used for what they call "dynamic pricing" where, "RFID can be used in conjunction with electronic shelf labels to automate pricing based on the number of items on the shelf…For example…when certain popular items were in short supply (e.g., at Christmas time), the price can be automatically raised."[89]

A company called Accenture is the world's largest technology consultant firm with revenues over 20 billion dollars a year and large contracts with governments, and in one of their brochures they proposed that RFID tags could be used by the government to help monitor families who had caseworkers assigned to them. The brochure reads, "[G]overnment agencies will also be looking for new ways to ensure the well-being of the people they serve. Activity-monitoring tools could give [government] caseworkers a powerful complement to home visits, while enabling them to be more vigilant about their clients' current state and potential needs."[90]

Author and consumer privacy advocate, Katherine Albrecht, writes extensively about the dangers of RFID in her 2006 book *Spychips: How*

Major Corporations and Government Plan to Track Your Every Purchase and Watch Your Every Move, where she explains, “theoretically, the whereabouts of everything and everyone will be known at all times and accessible to anyone with access to the databases, authorized or otherwise. Imagine the power of being able to log onto a Google-like Internet search engine and find out all the items associated with a particular person, organization, or government entity. Then, imagine being able to find out where all those items are in real time, where they have been, and their historical relationship with other items, people, and events.”[91]

In 2004, Albrecht received an e-mail from an RFID company asking her details about her biographical information, saying they were interested for “research purposes.” Albrecht explains that she responded inquiring what kind of research they were conducting, and wondered why a company promoting RFID would be interested in what she, a major opponent, had to say about them. She then received another e-mail that wasn’t meant for her eyes, because the person accidentally clicked the “reply to all” button.

In the e-mail, which was meant only to be seen by people other than Albrecht, the person wrote, “I don’t know what to tell this woman! ‘Well, actually we’re trying to see if you have a juicy past that we could use against you.’”[92] The company was obviously upset that Albrecht was raising awareness about RFID issues and they were looking to smear her and probably label her a “conspiracy theorist.”

Students Forced to Wear RFID Tags

The first reports of schools forcing their students to wear RFID tags came from Japan, but not long after this, in 2005 the Brittan Elementary school in Sutter County, California implemented a system which forced students to wear ID badges embedded with RFID tracking tags. Every time the students entered or left a classroom, a sensor installed at the door way would log this, and would determine whether a student had skipped class. The school soon made headlines around the country and an immediate backlash caused them to abandon the system.

The RFID system was put in place without any parental knowledge, and the reason for it was said that it helped keep the students “safe” and simplified attendance-taking.

One concerned parent asked, “Are we trying to bring them up with respect and trust, or tell them that you can’t trust anyone, you are always going to be monitored and someone is always going to be watching you?”[93] The Electronic Frontier Foundation and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) also stood up for the students and denounced the system.

The company behind the technology, InCom, agreed to pay the school royalties from future sales if their product was implemented in other schools.[94]

Soon afterward, State Representative Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) of Texas introduced an amendment that would not allow schools to track students using RFID without parental approval. “I will not allow that to happen in school districts unless parents approve it,” she said. “I will not have our children treated like parolees from the Texas prison system.”[95]

A preschool in Richmond, California, implemented a system in 2010, where young students now wear jerseys that contain RFID tags which identify them and are used for taking attendance and tracking the whereabouts of the children throughout the school. The program cost $50,000 and was paid for by a federal grant.[96] In the coming years, the use of RFID trackers on students may become a standard fixture, and despite some resistance, the practice is spreading.

VeriChip / Positive ID

The VeriChip is the “world’s first implantable RFID tag,” as the manufacturer so proudly brags as they promote what may be one of the world’s most controversial products. In 2004, the chip’s manufacturer, Applied Digital, received approval from the FDA [Food and Drug Administration] to market the device in America for the purposes they had outlined regarding a personal identification tag that is implanted under the skin.[97] Similar devices had been implanted into pets and livestock in the previous years in order to identify them, but the FDA’s ruling opened the door for implanting humans on a wide scale.

At first, Applied Digital tried to market the VeriChip only as a way for hospitals and emergency workers to access people’s medical records in case they were discovered unconscious, so they could identify the person and view their medical history to learn what may have happened so they would know how to treat the person, but secretly the company was hoping and planning for their device to replace traditional ID and credit cards. Some reports had stated that the company was in talks with MasterCard shortly after the FDA approved the device for human implantation, and many people started seeing what was likely in the works for the implantable device.

In May of 2002, an entire family concerned with terrorism became the “first family ever to be implanted with microchips” as a cleverly packaged publicity stunt promoting the so-called safety benefits of implantable RFIDs.[98] One news report which featured interviews with the family quoted one of them saying, “the VeriChip could be a lifesaver.”

In April 2004, a nightclub in Spain began offering chip implants to their customers which were linked to their credit cards and drivers license

so they could enter the club without their wallet or purse. Other night clubs followed, including Bar Soba in Glasgow, Scotland. Harvard Medical School's chief information officer, Dr. John Halamka, had the chip implanted in himself in December 2004, and the trend continued.

In 2005, 160 security officials in Mexico, including the Mexican Attorney General, had received the chips as a security measure for accessing certain buildings and rooms.[99] In April 2005, the Chief of Police in Bergen County, New Jersey, Jack Schmidig, received the VeriChip, marking the first time in history a U.S. official received the implant.[100]

In 2005, a video surveillance company responsible for installing video cameras on public streets in Cincinnati, Ohio, had several of their employees get implanted with the VeriChip in order to access secure areas.[101] In June 2006, the Governor of Wisconsin, Jim Doyle, signed a bill into law making it illegal for companies to require people to be implanted with the VeriChip or similar RFID device.[102]

A company called Ben's Car Audio posted a promotional video on the Internet showing a prototype of a device they installed on a car that used an RFID implanted in the owner's hand (Benjamin Thompson) to unlock his car door and start the car without needing any keys. Ben went on to admit that the implantable chips were, "a little out of the ordinary, so there probably aren't going to be very many people that want to do that," so his company offers key chains with RFID tags on them for people who don't want one implanted in their hand.[103]

In 2008, SEGA videogame developer Yu Suzuki even said that he may incorporate implantable RFID tags into videogames one day, saying it would be cool, "like the Matrix." It has also been proposed that all immigrants entering the country on Visas be implanted with the chips.[104]

In November 2009, the VeriChip Corporation acquired a credit monitoring and anti-identity theft company named Steel Vault. The merged company is called PositiveID, and this acquisition confirmed what a lot of

people had anticipated for years—in that the VeriChip company would move to enable its implantable RFID technology to be used as an electronic form of ID and purchasing method—not just a way to transmit medical records as they had been previously claiming.

PositiveID CEO Scott Silverman said, “PositiveID will be the first company of its kind to combine a successful identity security business with one of the world’s first personal health records through our Health Link business. PositiveID will address some of the most important issues affecting our society today with our identification tools and technologies for consumers and businesses.”[105]

Religious Implications

Most people have heard of the mark of the beast, which is what Christians believe will be some kind of device forced onto society by a world dictator called the Antichrist who claims to be God and the Messiah. It is often thought of as some kind of an electronic currency that may take the form of an implantable RFID microchip or tattoo on the hand which will replace cash, checks, and debit cards, and can then track and trace every purchase every person makes anywhere in the world. The last book in the Bible, titled the *Book of Revelation*, which was written approximately around 68 AD to 95 AD, makes a chilling reference to such a device. The Bible reads, "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."[106]

While *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True* is not a religious book, it certainly can't be overlooked that RFID or similar technology has religious implications for a large percentage of Christians who see the development of such devices as Bible prophecy unfolding. Even for those who do not believe in the religious implications of this technology, it is obvious that many are still concerned with RFID tags replacing paper currency and debit or credit cards as the primary method of economic transactions.

See this author's previous book, *The Resistance Manifesto,* for detailed information regarding the theological implications and interpretations of the mark of the beast and Big Brother technology.

More Privacy Issues with RFID

There are many more privacy concerns with RFID tags other than replacing paper currency or debit cards as the primary method of payment for purchases. With more and more companies basically forcing their employees to wear ID badges with RFID chips in them, the Big Brother potential is virtually limitless. With each employee’s every move monitored and databased, algorithms could be set up to determine whether an employee is spending too much time in the break room, or even the bathroom, since sensors will detect and monitor when they enter and leave any room in the office. Did the employees use their RFID tags to activate the soap dispenser in the bathroom before they exited? The system could easily monitor this. The tags could also easily monitor how much time each employee spends in proximity with other employees.

Companies may set time limits for how long a person may interact with someone in a different department. They may calculate that someone from accounting only needs to talk with someone in the sales department for ten minutes per day, and if the system detects that these two people from the two different departments are in proximity for 30 minutes per day, then the superiors will determine that they are wasting company time gossiping, instead of quickly handling work issues. Is an employee not spending enough time at their own desk? The system can monitor this, and efficiency reports will be drafted to determine the average amount of time an employee is expected to spend at their desk, in the break room, in other cubicles or offices, and in the bathroom.

It’s highly likely that RFIDs and EPCs (Electronic Product Codes) will completely replace the traditional UPC barcode we are all familiar with that is found on the package of virtually every item we buy. So it’s also highly likely that RFID tags will be on everything sold, and perhaps not only on the packaging, but built into the product itself. This way a simple scanner

could determine exactly what a person is carrying on them, including what their waistline or bra size is. Someone’s trash could be scanned to see exactly what items or packaging is being thrown away without even having to touch the trash itself.

There has been talk of a so-called *Internet of Things* which is a plan for a unique number to be given to every single thing, similar to a serial number, allowing each specific item to be tracked with regards to exactly where it has been, who has been in possession of it, for how long, etc. An RFID tag that can simply hold a measly 128 bits can hold a number large enough so that a different number could be assigned to every single item in the world. (For example: 128 bits can store a number with 38 zeros after it, i.e., 100,000,000,000,000,000, 000,000,000,000,000,000,000.)

If and when this *Internet of Things* database is created and all purchases are done electronically and without cash, will parents of children under eighteen have access to their child’s purchase history? Of course they will, and the parent would be able to see if they bought condoms, or spent too much money at the arcade. Parents could also see exactly what clothes their daughter buys to see if they’re dressing too slutty.

Of course, people will say that the technology has its benefits, such as if an adult buys a case of beer for someone under twenty one, and then that kid gets caught, then a quick scan of the beer can will show who purchased it and when. Kids will, of course, create technology that instantly destroys or erases the RFID tags on products for this very reason, but the cops could also do a check on the kid’s parents, or older siblings to see what their purchasing history was, and if they purchased a case of beer earlier that night, then they would obviously be implicated anyway.

If cash becomes difficult or impossible to use, and is replaced by RFID tags like the VeriChip, and all purchases are done electronically and linked to the individual purchasing them, then it’s possible that certain groups of people will be forbidden to even purchase certain products. For example, someone collecting welfare may not be allowed to buy certain “luxury”

items like chocolate candy or brand name soda, because the system has determined that these items cost too much and since the government is paying for them, they may simply not allow them to be bought.

When RFIDs become standard in drivers licenses, will it be possible for authorities to scan crowds of people at certain protests to determine exactly who is in the crowd? Even if it’s not, then facial recognition systems would be able to determine who attends such events by identifying every single person in attendance.

If practically everyone is using RFID tags for financial transactions, and someone has a warrant out for their arrest, then their chip will be flagged, and possibly deactivated, so they couldn’t even use it. There will also be unforeseen computer glitches and even power outages that will cripple people’s ability to buy anything and make them wish they hadn’t abandoned the use of cash.

RFIDs on Medication

Attaching RFID tags to all kinds of products, and even people, is certainly cause for concern, but we may one day find tiny RFID tags attached to individual pills that can be swallowed, which are designed to determine whether or not someone has taken their medication.

A necklace called the MagneTrace was built by the Georgia Institute of Technology and monitors which pills people swallow and transmits the information to a smart phone or a computer. It was said that the device can remind patients if they forget to take their medication, and can tell doctors, caregivers, or family members, what pills a person has been taking and when.

Maysam Ghovanloo, an engineer working on the device says that it can’t be tricked by someone holding a pill close to the necklace attempting to trigger its sensor because the algorithms it uses can detect whether or not the pills pass through the esophagus, as opposed to being placed near the necklace. “We wanted it to be very difficult to cheat,” says Ghovanloo.[107]

Multiple other companies are working on similar technology that embeds microchips inside pills, making them “smart-pills,” as they say. One company, Novartis AG, is planning to have the technology approved and available sometime around 2013.[108]

These kinds of “smart-chips” are activated by the stomach acid after they’ve been swallowed and then transmit their data to a Smartphone or over the Internet to a nurse or doctor so people’s dosage can be monitored, along with the exact time the pills were taken. The computer chips can be added to existing pills and use Bluetooth technology.

Trever Mundel, who is in charge of developing the technology, admitted this would create massive privacy issues, saying “The regulators all like the concept and have been very encouraging. But...they want to understand how we are going to solve the data privacy issues.”[109]

Using these kinds of pills, there is no need for a person to have to wear any kind of RFID reader around their neck or chest like the model developed by MagneTrace.

Will certain children be forced to take medication because they have a lot of energy and are said to have Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyper Active Disorder? Or will some adults be forced to take certain prescriptions because they are deemed “paranoid,” because they believe in certain “conspiracy theories” about the government or Big Brother?

RFID Vehicle Registration Tags

A company called TransCore has created a system using RFID tags that stick on windshields that would allow the government to detect whether people have proper insurance, registration, or unpaid parking tickets. The system is called EVR, short for Electronic Vehicle Registration, and the company hopes to make the system a standard feature on cars.

A brochure from TansCore reads, “eGo makes possible the introduction of electronic vehicle registration applications, which enable public agencies to automatically detect and screen, via RFID, motor vehicles for compliance with federal and state registration regulations and to correspondingly automate enforcement actions and violation processing for non-compliant vehicles.”[110] This plan involves installing RFID readers at various points on roads throughout cities to detect tags attached to vehicles. These devices will probably be made obsolete by more advanced government mandated GPS black boxes.

Mind-Reading Machines

Tom Cruise starred in *Minority Report* which was released in 2002, where he played a police officer who would arrest people for what was called "pre-crime" which meant crimes that they were going to commit in the future. Pre-crime was detected by a small group of people (called Precogs) who have the ability to see into the future. Of course, this is only science fiction, but the idea of punishing someone for a crime they may commit in the future is something that society may soon have to deal with. This actual "pre-crime" isn't detected by psychic human beings who see visions of the future, but instead is the result of high-tech equipment that is said to be able to detect whether or not an individual is thinking about committing a crime or has any dangerous intent.

These systems were originally designed to screen airport passengers in order to supposedly prevent terrorists from getting on board a plane by literally reading their minds to determine whether or not ticket holders are thinking any evil thoughts. An article in the *Associated Press*, published in January 2010 explains, "As far-fetched as that sounds, systems that aim to get inside an evildoer's head are among the proposals floated by security experts thinking beyond the X-ray machines and metal detectors used on millions of passengers and bags each year."[111]

The interest in such systems gained momentum immediately after the so-called "underwear bomber" was caught on a plane headed for Detroit, Michigan on Christmas Day in 2009. This man had packed explosives in his underwear and they were not detected by any security measures, and after he boarded the plane, he attempted to ignite the device, but failed.

Immediately after the failed "underwear" attack, President Barack Obama urged Homeland Security to develop better screening technology,

saying “In the never-ending race to protect our country, we have to stay one step ahead of a nimble adversary.”[112]

Others jumped on the bandwagon saying that new technology and security measures must be implemented. Philip Baum, editor of the magazine *Aviation Security International*, said, “Regulators need to accept that the current approach is outdated…It may have responded to the threats of the 1960s, but it doesn’t respond to the threats of the 21st century.”[113]

One type of device is the WeCU system which is used at airports in Israel. (WeCU means “We See You,” as in Big Brother sees you.) This system involves showing passengers different images on a screen that are associated with certain terrorist groups and then measures several signs on the person, such as their eye movements, increased heart rate or breathing, or any nervous twitches. The system’s creators claim to have developed ways to measure people’s reactions to determine whether they are affiliated with any of the symbols that are shown to them on the screen. “One by one, you can screen out from the flow of people those with specific malicious intent,” said Ehud Givon, CEO of WeCU Technologies.

Another system looked at by the Department of Homeland Security is called the Future Attribute Screening Technology, or FAST, and works like a polygraph that scans people’s pupil dilation, facial movements, and other measurements to detect deception. The system also detects a person’s fidgeting or nervous ticks.

Robert Burns, a project manager for FAST, insists the system can detect the difference between people who are simply stressed out or upset because they may be late for a flight, and those people who are harboring ill will. The Department of Homeland Security says the system uses a range of “innovative physiological and behavioral technologies” to pick up “indications of malintent [malicious intentions] or the intent or desire to cause harm.”[114]

“We are running at about 78 percent accuracy on mal-intent detection, and 80 percent on deception,” said John Verrico, a Department of Homeland Security spokesman.[115] In a Homeland Security video showing the system in action, targeted subjects are asked questions such as “are you attempting to smuggle an explosive device” or “are you from the local area?”

Another system called MALINTENT [Malicious Intentions] is also being tested by the Department of Homeland Security and is designed to detect whether a person might be harboring criminal intent based on their minute facial muscle movements which the system uses allegedly as evidence of emotional state, mood, and intention.

Unlike traditional lie detectors, these new systems don’t require people to be hooked up to anything and take all of their measurements and operate without any physical contact with the person. These devices and others are planned to be used at airports, border check points, and at special events that have heightened security. Designers plan to create a system that can scan people as they stand in line or walk through the airport.

The Russian based Psychotechnology Research Institute has developed a program they call Mindreader 2.0 that they say can determine how a person’s subconscious mind feels about certain photos, and can detect whether people have a positive feeling or a negative feeling about them. The system uses what is called Semantic Stimuli Response Measurements Technology, or SSRM Tek, that supposedly detects a person’s involuntary response to subliminal messages.

It has been reported that the Department of Homeland Security has visited the Institute to learn more about the technology to determine whether it may be of use for screening passengers before they board an airline. The Psychotechnology Research Institute began working with the US defense contractor SRS Technologies and in May 2009, the Department of Homeland Security paid for testing of the Mindreader 2.0 system.[116]

The Mindreader 2.0 system flashes a quick image on a screen so fast that a person doesn't consciously recognize it, and then they are asked to press a button rating their feeling either favorably or unfavorably. If the image is of Osama bin Laden, for example, and they press the favorable button, then they are flagged as a potential terrorist.

The head of the Institute, Elena Rusalkina, is the widow of Igor Smirnov, who is considered the father of psychotronic weapons in Russia. The Soviet military used some of Smirnov's subliminal mind control methods during the Soviet Union's war in Afghanistan in the 1980s by using subliminal sounds to affect the Mujahideen. Smirnov also consulted with the FBI during the 1993 standoff at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, and it is rumored that he and the FBI planned, or did use, some kind of subliminal device on David Koresh and his followers. If you think that these devices are Orwellian, they actually get much, much worse.

In January 2009, the TV newsmagazine *60 Minutes* aired a segment titled "Mind Reading" that showed new technology being developed at Carnegie Mellon University that can literally read your mind. The segment featured neuro scientist Marcel Just and his colleague Tom Mitchell who had developed one of these systems. Marcel Just didn't want to call it mind reading, and insisted it was "thought identification" instead.

One of the *60 Minutes* producers sat in the machine and was shown ten different objects to think about, such as a hammer, screw driver, and apartment, and the computer scanned her brain and was able to determine exactly which objects she was thinking about, and in what order. The device is called a Functional MRI machine, or fMRI. After the demonstration, Lesley Stahl, the anchor for the segment, was visibly disturbed. This same scanner can detect whether a person is feeling kindness, hypocrisy, or even love.

The segment continued to show scientists in Berlin, Germany, at the Bernstein Center, who were conducting tests where they would scan people's brains as they were choosing whether to add or subtract two

numbers they were given, and the computer was able to identify what they decided.

“I always tell my students that there is no more science fiction anymore. All the science fiction I read in high school, we’re doing,” said Paul Root Wolpe, director of the Center for Ethics at Emery University in Atlanta. He goes on to say, “Throughout history, we could never actually coerce someone to reveal information. Torture doesn’t work that well, persuasion doesn’t work that well…the right to keep one’s thoughts locked up in their brain is among the most fundamental rights to being human.” He then raised issues about who would be legally allowed to use this technology, whether the government could soon force people to use it, or even if parents could subject their children to it when they suspect they are lying about something.

This technology is not just in its testing phase in laboratories at Universities. A company called No Lie MRI advertises their services using fMRI which they say “provides unbiased methods for the detection of deception and other information stored in the brain.”[117]

There is also talk of a device that can potentially shine a beam of light or radio waves onto a person’s head and can then detect their internal brainwaves as a result. Such a device could obviously be used without a person’s knowledge or consent, unlike the fMRI machines that require people to lie down and sit still in order to be scanned.

John Dylan-Haynes, of the Bernstein Center for Computational Neuroscience in Berlin, Germany, is testing a program that can detect in your mind where you’ve physically been. This device is not theoretical, and has already been built. He demonstrates the system by showing scenes from inside different houses, and then says, “Now I would put you in a scanner and I would show you some of these scenes that you’ve seen, and some of them you haven’t seen…and right at this moment, we would be able to tell from your brain activity that you’ve already seen this environment before.” Haynes explains that this technology could soon be used to determine if

someone was a burglar in a house or had attended an Al-Qaeda training camp before.

When Paul Root Wolpe, the ethics professor from Emery University, was asked if this device would violate the Fifth Amendment which says you don't have to incriminate yourself, he explained that the Fifth Amendment says you don't have to testify in court about what you did or didn't do, but it doesn't protect you from blood samples or DNA samples that may be taken from you and incriminate you, and so in the same way these brain scans may be allowed by courts and ruled that they do not to violate your Fifth Amendment rights.

This kind of research is not only isolated to a single lab or university. In March 2010, a story hit the news wires telling how British scientists from University College London discovered that they could identify brain activity linked to different memories using fMRI technology, and could identify thought patterns and literally read people's minds and determine whether they had seen a particular film or not, just by looking at their brain scan.[118]

In one study, scientists showed ten people three different short films and when later scanned, the scientists were able to determine which film each person had seen by identifying patterns in the brain associated with each film. These patterns are called episodic memories, which mean they are memories of autobiographical events, such as things you've personally seen or heard, as opposed to memories formed based on being told something, for example.

If all of this sounds like it is still decades away from being used in criminal court cases, you are wrong. A woman in India was convicted of murder in 2008 because of a brain scan. An article in the *New York Times* explained, "India has become the first country to convict someone of a crime relying on evidence from this controversial machine: a brain scanner that produces images of the human mind in action and is said to reveal signs that a suspect remembers details of the crime in question."[119]

In June of 2008, a judge in India allowed a brain scan to be used as evidence that the suspect had "experiential knowledge" about the crime that only the killer would know. The suspect was sentenced to life in prison.

"I find this both interesting and disturbing," said Henry T. Greely, a bioethicist at Stanford Law School. "We keep looking for a magic, technological solution to lie detection. Maybe we'll have it someday, but we need to demand the highest standards of proof before we ruin people's lives based on its application."[120]

The specific brain scan that was used in this case involves hooking people up to electrodes and then they are read specific details of the crime scene, and according to the research, certain parts of the brain light up when a memory is stimulated, leading authorities to believe that whatever caused the jump in brain activity was the result of the person having actually personally witnessed what was read to them first hand. This technology obviously has its critics since it is very new and hasn't undergone extensive testing.

Even one of the first developers of this electroencephalogram-based (EEG) lie detection technology was shocked that a court in India had used the program as evidence when the technology was so new. "Technologies which are neither seriously peer-reviewed nor independently replicated are not, in my opinion, credible," said Dr. Rosenfeld, a neuroscientist at Northwestern University. "The fact that an advanced and sophisticated democratic society such as India would actually convict persons based on an unproven technology is even more incredible," he concluded.[121]

Other scientists hail the technology as a revolutionary evidence gathering procedure paralleling, or perhaps, being more important than DNA. Keith Ashcroft, who is considered an expert witness in Britain, said, "According to the cases that have been presented to me, BEOS [Brain Electrical Oscillations Signature] has clearly demonstrated its utility in

providing admissible evidence that has been used to assist in the conviction of defendants in court."[122]

Henry T. Greely, from Stanford admitted that if and when this technology becomes commonplace, that there will be serious implications on personal privacy, as well as the First, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, but said, "the potential benefits to society of such a technology, if used well, could be at least equally large."

Will these devices or others like them become common in courtrooms, schools, or businesses? Will we one day live in a society where everything people say will be subjected to be verified by a mind-reading machine? We will soon find out.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which develops new technology for the US military, included $4 million dollars in their 2009-2010 budget for a program named *Silent Talk*, which aims to "allow user-to-user communication on the battlefield without the use of vocalized speech through analysis of neural signals."[123]

Another $4 million dollars was given to the University of California to investigate "synthetic telepathy" which entails creating a device that can detect brain waves that have speech encoded into them in order to literally read the mind of the person using it to determine exactly what they are thinking.[124]

Not even in the dystopian world found in Orwell's book did Big Brother have the ability to read people's minds. "With all their cleverness they had never mastered the secret of finding out what another human being was thinking."[125] —*Nineteen Eighty Four*

Artificial Nose to Smell Terrorists’ Fear

Aside from advanced systems that read facial expressions, iris dilation, heart rate, breathing patterns and body language, authorities are also attempting to construct devices that can literally smell a person’s fear in their quest to perfect mind-reading machines. The Department of Homeland Security advertised that they were looking for specialists who could design systems that would smell “deceptive individuals.” The technology is based on the idea that a person’s body odors change according to their mood.

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) are trying to create an artificial nose that can smell adrenaline, which researchers believe is given off in higher amounts from someone who has a guilty conscience.

Homeland Security is also working on collecting a “smell bank” that holds scents collected from crime scenes which they believe will be able to identify specific individuals the same way as DNA.

Professor Kenneth Furton at Florida International University in Miami, is working on technology he says could soon identify criminals by matching scent molecules taken from crime scenes to a “smell bank,” that contains the scents of people, much like a fingerprint database. He pointed out that scientists can already determine a person’s race, age, and environment based on their scent, and in some cases, what they had for their last meal. Scientists are also looking to identify odors that signify if a person is depressed, or has a disease.

Honda's Mind Reader

The car manufacturer, Honda Motor Corporation, has designed a device that reads a person's brain waves and can control a robot from the user's thoughts. At a press conference in Japan in 2009, the company unveiled an updated version of a robot they called Asimo, which walks on two legs and is controlled by a person wearing their strange mind-reading head gear. The device is considered a brain-machine interface which was developed by a joint venture between Honda and the Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International and the Shimadzu corporation.

The device looks like a bicycle helmet covered with electrical components and uses what is called electroencephalography (EEG) and near-infrared spectroscopy (NIRS) to measure brain activity. One may wonder why Honda would be interested in such technology, since it wouldn't seem to have any benefit to the automobile industry. It seems Honda is looking to expand their business and one day build robots that help around the home. They also think it would be cool to use such technology to allow people to open their car trunk or change the air-conditioning setting just by thinking about it, because apparently, they think that pushing a button is just too difficult.

"When your hands are full doing the dishes, you could have a robot give you a hand watering the plants [just by thinking]," said Tatsuya Okabe, a scientist at the Honda Research Institute.[126]

The 2009 version of the Asimo robot and this mind-reading system was actually quite pathetic. A video clip on the Internet shows a person wearing the helmet and moving the robot around, but at the time, it was

very primitive. Of course, researchers are hoping to make dramatic advances in the coming years.

When asked if the device could one day be used to drive a car, Yasuhisa Arai, the director of Honda’s R&D department responded, “I don’t want to deny the possibility, but there are many challenges. Practical uses are still way into the future.”

Another Japanese company that makes robotic toys, Rolling Robots, is also planning on creating toys and other gadgets with mind-reading sensors by the year 2020 that they hope can be used to send text messages and operate other electronics.[127]

Video Game Interfaces

Videogame manufacturers are hoping to one day replace the joystick or gamepad with mind-reading devices that players wear on their heads which will control the video game character by the person’s thoughts. One manufacturer, NeuroSky, has designed a primitive device called the Darth Vader game, but say other more sophisticated games are in the works.

Some people strangely say these devices could increase mental focus and actually help kids with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism or mood disorders. Of course, playing more video games is the last thing that these kids need, but this is a good marketing strategy for videogame companies.

“It fulfills the fantasy of telekinesis,” said Tan Le, co-founder and president of San Francisco-based Emotiv, another designer producing similar devices they hope will be used on the Nintendo Wii, Sony PlayStation and Microsoft Xbox.

Another company called CyberLearning has been selling what they call SmartBrain Technologies systems for the PlayStation and Xbox. The device uses EEG and EMG-based biofeedback and costs about $600. The company has sold more than 1,500 systems between 2005 and 2009, and also plans on marketing their products to children with behavior disorders.

“Our biggest struggle is to find the target market,” said co-founder Lindsay Greco. “We’re finding that parents are using this to improve their own recall and focus. We have executives who use it to improve their memory, even their golf.”[128]

The God Helmet

Orwellian devices aren’t only being built that can read people’s minds, but similar devices may be used to manipulate people’s brainwaves to give them intoxicating feelings like they get from drugs, alcohol, or adrenaline rushes like skydiving.

A strange invention dubbed the “God helmet,” which is a modified snowmobile helmet, stimulates the brain with magnetic fields in order to give the person wearing it a “spiritual experience.” The “God helmet” was created by Michael Persinger who designed it to be used in research for what is called neurotheology, which is the study of neurology’s connections to spirituality. People who use the device have reported feeling as if there was another being in the room with them, and even sensed what they say is the presence of God.[129]

It’s likely that such devices will one day be commercially available for personal use and could become a substitute for people doing drugs who are looking for a high. Of course, these devices open the door to all kinds of dangers, such as brain damage from long term exposure, or even psychological addiction to the device. They will likely become extremely small in the future and could be placed on the head and covered up by a person’s hair and not be noticed by others so they could be worn anywhere. Some people may get such a high from these devices that it could be similar to heroin or cocaine, and abuse of the technology could severely disrupt individual’s lives.

One also wonders if this technology will be able to permanently alter areas of the brain, and if it could be mandated as part of a rehabilitation program for prisoners in order to alter their thought patterns or attitudes.

Neural Interfaces

While it's interesting that devices can be worn on a person's head that measure brain waves and can be used to control robots, videogames, or read a person's mind and detect memories, a much more invasive method of using a person's thoughts to control external machines or computers is found in what are called neural interfaces, which are devices that are connected directly to the human brain. Neural interfaces, sometimes called brain implants, or a brain machine interface (BMI) are electronic systems that are literally, physically wired into the human brain through surgery.

In July 2001, someone with access to the Department of Neurobiology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel, used a hidden camera to videotape bizarre and cruel tests that were being done on monkeys to implant them with neural interfaces. The footage shows several monkeys secured in restraining devices with their skull caps removed, and you can clearly see their brains protruding out of the top of their heads with neural interfaces attached. The video is extremely horrific to watch. It's in color and can be found on YouTube if you search for "hidden camera monkey brain experiments." The person narrating the video mentions a Dr. Zohari, who they identify as the project manager of the experiments.

A strange neurophysiologist at Yale University, named Dr. Jose Delgado, carried out similar experiments in the 1960s that involved implanting electrodes in the brains of animals and he was able to remotely induce a wide range of emotions and physical movements in them. Videos are available on YouTube that show Delgado's team demonstrating a cat equipped with a neural interface that enabled them to cause the animal to get angry and start hissing with the push of a button. Another video shows a bull with a neural interface implanted in its brain that's charging straight at a man and when the researcher sends a signal to the receiver, the animal stops immediately.[130]

In his book *Physical Control of the Mind,* published in 1971, Dr. Delgado wrote, “The technology for nonsensory communication between brains and computers through the intact skin is already at our fingertips, and its consequences are difficult to predict. In the past the progress of civilization has tremendously magnified the power of our senses, muscles, and skills. Now we are adding a new dimension: the direct interface between brains and machines.”

He said that it was, “already possible to induce a large variety of responses, from motor effects to emotional reactions and intellectual manifestations, by direct electrical stimulation of the brain.”

“Also, several investigators have learned to identify patterns of electrical activity (which a computer could also recognize) localized in specific areas of the brain and related to determined phenomena such as perception of smells or visual perception of edges and movements. We are advancing rapidly in the pattern recognition of electrical correlates of behavior and in the methodology for two-way radio communication between brain and computers.”[131]

In his writings, Delgado acknowledged people expressed fears that this new technology was a threat to possible unwanted and unethical remote control of the thoughts of people by others, but wrote that he believed the dangers are outweighed by the expected clinical and scientific benefits.

Ray Kurzweil, who is seen as a prominent futurist believed to be able to accurately forecast approaching technological developments in the coming decades wrote, “Improving our lives through neural implants on the mental level, and nanotechnology-enhanced bodies on the physical level, will be popular and compelling.”[132] Kurzweil believes that around the year 2099, neural interfaces will be implanted into almost everyone, and that, “humans who do not utilize such implants [will be] unable to meaningfully participate in dialogues with those who do.”[133]

What he means is that humans will have their brains wired into the Internet and will become a species of cyborgs who have merged with computers.

Brain Gate

A neural interface called Brain Gate was one of the first devices used on humans and was developed in 2003, by a company called Cyberkinetics along with the Department of Neuroscience at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. The device was designed to allow people paralyzed from spinal cord injuries to use the neural interface to operate computers or electronic wheelchairs with their thoughts.

The first version of the device used 96 different electrodes to sense different neurons firing in specific areas of the brain and transferred those signals to a computer. In 2010, the company's website said that three different people have had the device installed, the first of which was a 25-year-old paralyzed man named Matt Nagle who can be seen in videos on the Internet using Brain Gate to move a mouse around a computer screen.

An article on CNN's website mentioned the possibilities of such devices turning the population into cyborgs, saying, "Beyond alleviating the effects of severe disabilities, normal functioning humans could also benefit from 'upgrades' to improve intelligence, sensory awareness or simply to counter the effects of aging."[134] The article also quoted Microsoft founder Bill Gates as saying that one of his Microsoft colleagues is anticipating cybernetic enhancements, and that he's ready to be "plugged in." Gates said that he personally would not want to be implanted with such things.

Military Applications

The US military has shown interest in neural interfaces and various documents and budgets explain some of their proposed Orwellian uses. One report commissioned by the Office of Defense Research and Engineering titled *Human Performance* explained, “The most successful implementation of invasive interfaces has occurred in medical applications in which nerve signals are used as the mechanism for information transfer. Adversarial actions using this approach to implement enhanced, specialized sensory functions could be possible in limited form now, and with developing capability in the future.”[135]

Documents dating back to 1996 from the Department of Defense show that plans were being drawn up to use neural interfaces on soldiers and the civilian population as well. One document discussing technology the military hoped to have in place by the year 2025, titled *Information Operations: A New War-Fighting Capability* reads, “The implanted microscopic brain chip performs two functions. First, it links the individual to the IIC [Information Integration Center] creating a seamless interface between the user and the information resources. In essence, the chip relays the processed information from the IIC [Information Integration Center] to the user, second the chip creates a computer generated mental visualization based upon the user’s request.”[136]

The documents claim the devices would help increase security, saying, “An implanted microscopic chip does not require security measures to verify whether the right person is connected to the IIC [Information Integration Center], whereas a room, helmet, or sunglasses requires additional time-consuming access control mechanisms to verify an individual’s identity and level of control within the Cyber Situation.”[137]

The document foresaw resistance to such ideas, saying, “Implanting ‘things’ in people raises ethical and public relations issues. While these concerns may be founded on today’s thinking, in 2025 they may not be as alarming” and goes on to say, “The civilian populace will likely accept any implanted microscopic chips that allow military members to defend vital national interests.”[138]

Aside from military applications, the documents say that neural interfaces could be used to upload information into people’s minds and make them feel like they are playing a virtual reality video game. It reads, “This capability will have extraordinary commercial applications from medical advances. These advances will help restore patients with damaged neural, audio, and visual systems as well as enable them to achieve the ultimate virtual reality trip.”[139]

The *Human Performance* document produced for the Pentagon in 2008, acknowledges the “evils” of using these devices and admits, “one can consider the potential that an adversary might use invasive interfaces in military applications. An extreme example would be remote guidance or control of a human being.” It continues to list examples of experiments that were able to remotely control animals as if they were remote controlled toys, saying, “There has been non-medical research into remote monitoring or control of animals (rats, sharks, pigeons, etc.) [53, 54, 55] with applications in research or law enforcement, with related strong interest in the popular press.”[140]

Intel Planning Neural Interfaces to Surf Internet

An article in *Computerworld* magazine published in 2009, discussed how computer giant Intel thinks that by the year 2020 we won't need to use a keyboard or a mouse to control computers, cell phones, or televisions anymore, and will instead use neural interfaces. The article stated, "Big Brother won't be planting chips in your brain against your will. Researchers expect that consumers will want the freedom they will gain by using the implant."[141]

Andrew Chien, the vice president of research and director of future technologies at Intel Labs said, "There are a lot of things that have to be done first but I think [implanting chips into human brains] is well within the scope of possibility."

Another Intel research scientist named Dean Pomerleau told *Computerworld* that "We're trying to prove you can do interesting things with brain waves. Eventually people may be willing to be more committed...to brain implants. Imagine being able to surf the Web with the power of your thoughts."

They are using fMRI technology at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh to map thought patterns and have found that different people's brain patterns are similar when they think similar thoughts, allowing scientists to develop ways to detect the thoughts of different people using the same method.

Intel's Dean Pomerleau said they will soon be able to build a brainwave sensor that people can wear on their head and will be connected to a computer. The next step, he said, is to implant neural interfaces into people's brains.

Wireless Neural Interface

Most neural interfaces consist of devices implanted into the human brain and have wires protruding out of the person's (or animal's) skull which lead to a computer, but one British scientist is developing a wireless chip that can be injected into the skull with a large hypodermic needle, and can then communicate wirelessly to a computer.

The chip is being developed by Dr. Jon Spratley who designed a prototype while earning his PhD at Birmingham University. "We are just trying to help people with severe communication problems or motor neurone disease—like Dr Stephen Hawking or Christopher Reeve," he said.[142]

"It's an area that is being heavily researched in America but so far all the tests have involved wired sensors. This prototype uses wireless technology to remove the risk of infection and that's the real drive of our work."

Dr. Spratley hopes the device can be used by quadriplegic people, enabling them to operate computers, electric wheel chairs, or even bionic arms or legs. "If they can imagine using a limb, even if they can't move it, you can tap into that signal. Then you just have to imagine moving the muscle and the leg will move, the brain will train itself," he said.

Dr. Spratley is looking for funding to start human trials.

Depression Implant

If you think it’s strange that companies have developed technology that can wire a human brain into a computer in order to detect brain waves, the technology gets even more sinister. In 2005, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a neural interface system to treat depression.[143] The device is wired into the brain and stimulates the Vagus Nerve in order to make people feel happier.

The manufacturer of this horrific device is a company called Cyberonics which has sold a similar brain implant that reduces seizures in people with epilepsy. The depression implant costs about $20,000, including surgical and hospital expenses, according to Cyberonics chief executive, Skip Cummins. The company has also been conducting various studies hoping the device will be approved to treat anxiety, bulimia, and other chronic disorders.[144]

Dangers of Neural Interfaces

Hidden beneath the lofty goals of helping paralyzed people gain more mobility and independence lies a dark underbelly of disastrous consequences arising from the widespread use of neural interfaces. Detecting and reading brainwaves is one thing, but neural interfaces have already shown that they can also do the opposite, and actually manipulate brainwaves as well. Futurists like Ray Kurzweil anxiously anticipate a world where these devices are as common as cell phones, and envision enhancing human perception, memory, and cognitive abilities. But this technology, perhaps more than any other, contains disastrous consequences that are often overlooked by transhumanist dreamers.

It’s not an unfounded fear to wonder if a neural interface that physically jacks people’s minds into a centralized computer system could then possibly literally control people’s thoughts once they are plugged in. While this may seem far-fetched, as I have already uncovered, the military has proposed that such devices could take people on the “ultimate virtual reality trip” and implants that make people “feel better” have already been created. These devices may lead to mass mind control, quite literally.

In 1993, Sylvester Stallone and Sandra Bullock starred in a science fiction film taking place in the future called *Demolition Man*, which included a scene where prisoners were connected to neural interfaces that reprogrammed their minds in order to rehabilitate them and change their attitudes and behaviors.

The *CBS Evening News* once aired a segment discussing high-tech methods for keeping tabs on prisoners and included an interview with a specialist who said, “one thing we could implant could be a subliminal implant. In other words, basically messages being piped into the

subconscious constantly. ‘Do the right thing. Do what’s required of you. Be a good citizen. Don’t disobey the law.’”[145]

The infamous mark of the beast spoken about in the Bible, which predicts that a global dictator will force the entire earth’s population to take a “mark” on their hand or forehead or else they won’t be able to buy or sell anything, is often believed to be a Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) or some kind of device that replaces cash and checks as methods of doing financial transactions. But some speculate that the “mark of the beast” is actually a neural interface they believe will cause everyone who has one to literally lose control of their own mind, and then be completely controlled by an artificial intelligence system or whoever is in charge of the neural interface mainframe.

The topic of the mark of the beast is beyond the scope of this book, but the possibility of neural interfaces literally controlling people’s minds is a very real and dangerous scenario that we seem to be rapidly approaching.

Psychotronic Weapons

Paranoid people have often feared that the government was able to read their minds with some kind of advanced technology, which is now actually real (**See *Mind-Reading Machines***), but what is perhaps even more insidious, is technology that is able to project thoughts into people's heads simply through radio waves. While neural interfaces need to be wired directly into the brain of a person and involve extensive and invasive surgery, technology that can beam thoughts and voices into people's heads doesn't require any physical contact with the person, and can easily be done without their knowledge. While this may seem far-fetched, as you read further, you will find that the US Air Force has actually patented such technology.

The term *psychotronic weapons* refers to weapons that affect the mind, mainly through radio waves, and aside from beaming voices or subliminal messages into people's heads, psychotronic weapons can affect people's moods and concentration, and can even cause sudden sickness or death.

In 1980, a Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army named Michael Aquino co-authored a paper titled *From PSYOP to MindWar* that suggested using psychotronic weapons against American citizens to alter the brainwaves of the public on a mass scale, thus altering their mood.

Aquino wrote, "Infrasound vibration (up to 20Hz) can subliminally influence brain activity to align itself to delta, theta, alpha, or beta wave patterns, inclining an audience toward everything from alertness to passivity. Infrasound could be used tactically, as ELF-waves endure for great distances; and it could be used in conjunction with media broadcasts as well."[146]

So basically what Lieutenant Colonel Aquino wrote was that the government should target American citizens with radio waves to either cause them to get anxious or lethargic, depending on the goals of the government at the time. So, if, for example, there was a massive protest planned for a specific city or even across the country, the government could use the MindWar strategy of transmitting infrasound to cause people to feel lazy and lethargic, thus massively declining the number of protesters because many people simply wouldn't feel like going. They could also use other frequencies of radio waves to give the target audience an overwhelming feeling of anxiety, if they choose, and perhaps cause massive rioting.

Many researchers point to HAARP (High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program) as being capable of broadcasting such ELF waves and infrasound on a mass scale, and being capable of focusing it on a specific location. While it is denied that HAARP can be used as a weapon, what is not disputed are Aquino's own words in his publicly available report *From PSYOP to MindWar*, where he openly advocated using psychotronic weapons on an unsuspecting population.

Radio Frequency Hearing Effect

An article published in the *Washington Post* in 2007 discusses the existence of technology that can beam voices into people's heads, and begins by saying there is, "a community of people who believe the government is beaming voices into their minds. They may be crazy, but the Pentagon has pursued a weapon that can do just that."[147]

The article continues to discuss people on the Internet who think that they have been targeted by the government and used as test subjects or harassed using what is called the Radio Frequency Hearing Effect, which is very real. So real, in fact, that on October 22, 2002 patent number 6,470,214 was awarded to the technology which is designed to, "induce a thermal-acoustic signal in the bone/tissue material of the head that replicates the input audio signal and is conducted by the bone/tissue structure of the head to the inner ear where it is demodulated by the normal processes of the cochlea and converted to nerve signals which are sent to the brain, thereby enabling intelligible speech to be perceived by the brain." The patent was awarded to the United States Air Force who first filed for it in 1996.[148]

A man named Donald Friedman, who believes he is a victim of this technology (called a targeted individual, or a TI), has dedicated his time and energy to exposing the government's misuse of psychotronic weapons and has filed multiple Freedom of Information Requests to obtain documents proving it. One such document was released in 1998 by the US Army titled *Bioeffects of Selected Nonlethal Weapons* which discusses weapons that can beam voices into people's heads, give them fevers, and even cause epileptic seizures.

One of Friedman's requests was responded to with a motion for an enlargement of time, which is a legal request to delay the release of a document. The request to delay the document's release was made by the Secret Service which read, *"Plaintiff's FOIA request is for document [sic] concerning directed energy technology that is very sensitive. Some of this documents [sic] pertain to research conducted by divisions within defendant agency that is used to carry out its mandate to protect very high government officials. In fact, in one case, the documents… could not be mailed but had to be hand carried interstate."*[149]

An article in *Wired* magazine discussed Friedman and his claims, and admitted, "It's very easy to poke fun at people like Friedman. On the other hand, it does show that if a non-lethal device ever was developed which could cause symptoms associated with madness, it would be completely deniable. The device would completely destroy the target's credibility, neatly ensuring it remained covert. The military utility would be low, but it might be very handy for some three-letter agencies," (meaning the CIA, FBI, NSA, etc.)[150]

Dr. Robert O. Becker, who has been nominated for the Noble prize for his work in bio-electromagnetism, wrote that such devices have an, "obvious application in covert operations designed to drive a target crazy with voices."[151]
Aside from the patent awarded in 2002 to the US government for the Radio Frequency Hearing Effect, another patent (#4,877,027) was filed over a decade earlier in 1988 for an invention known as a "microwave voice device." The abstract for this patent reads:

Sound is induced in the head of a person by radiating the head with microwaves in the range of 100 megahertz to 10,000 megahertz that are modulated with a particular waveform. The waveform consists of frequency modulated bursts. Each burst is made up of ten to twenty uniformly spaced pulses grouped tightly together. The burst width is between 500

nanoseconds and 100 microseconds. The pulse width is in the range of 10 nanoseconds to 1 microsecond. The bursts are frequency modulated by the audio input to create the sensation of hearing in the person whose head is irradiated.

An article published in the December 1980 issue of *Military Review* titled “The New Mental Battlefield,” explained that the Soviet Union had built and used these kinds of weapons against political dissenters to cause illness or death with no evidence of foul play.[152] The author of the article, Colonel John B. Alexander, is considered the “founding father” of such weapons in America. A 1993 issue of *Defense News* reported that U.S. military officials were obtaining some of this Soviet “mind-control technology.”[153]

The US Army has fully functioning devices that utilize this technology and call it a Voice to Skull (V2K) device and is classified as a non-lethal weapon. Some people suspect that these kinds of weapons were used in the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, John Lennon, and others, meaning they believe Lee Harvey Oswald, Sirhan Sirhan, and Mark Chapman, (the shooters) had psychotronic weapons used on them to brainwash them and urge them to kill.

It’s a fact that the MK-ULTRA program which began in the 1950s experimented heavily with mind control and brainwashing techniques, and such activities were considered conspiracy theories until the early 1970s when documents were released under the Freedom of Information Act and the extent of the horrors of this program were seen. One of the main goals of the MK-ULTRA experiments was to create technology and methods to turn an ordinary person into a mind-controlled assassin who would carry out any order given to them regardless of the consequences or danger.

Silent Subliminal Presentation System

When most people think of subliminal messages, they think of messages recorded backwards on rock albums from the 1970s, a method called backmasking, or messages mixed in with music so you can’t noticeably hear them, but are believed to be noticed by the subconscious mind. While backmasking (using backwards messages) is really just a publicity stunt used by numerous musicians and not an actual subliminal message, the existence and use of subliminal messages is a very real scientific practice.

Below is information about another Orwellian patent awarded for a device that generates subliminal messages that don’t need to be masked with music.

Inventor: Lowery; Oliver M. (Norcross, GA)

Patent # 5,159,703 awarded on October 27, 1992

The Abstract:

A silent communications system in which nonaural carriers, in the very low or very high audio frequency range or in the adjacent ultrasonic frequency spectrum, are amplitude or frequency modulated with the desired intelligence and propagated acoustically or vibrationally, for inducement into the brain, typically through the use of loudspeakers, earphones or piezoelectric transducers. The modulated carriers may be transmitted directly in real time or may be conveniently recorded and stored on mechanical, magnetic or optical media for delayed or repeated transmission to the listener.

The patent makes it clear that, “The ‘silent’ recordings are inaudible to the user or by others present and are therefore very effective for use during periods of sleep or when in the presence of others. Additionally, the basic requirements of subliminal stimulation are met. That is, the affirmations are efficiently transmitted to the ear and, while undetected by the conscious mind, are perceived by and efficiently decoded by the subconscious mind.”

The patent goes on to read:

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, several objects and advantages of my invention are:

(a) to provide a technique for producing a subliminal presentation which is inaudible to the listeners(s), yet is perceived and demodulated (decoded) by the ear for use by the subconscious mind.

(b) to provide a technique for transmitting inaudible subliminal information to the listener(s) at a constant, high level of signal strength and on a clear band of frequencies.

(c) to provide a technique for producing inaudible subliminal presentations to which music or other “foreground” programming may be added, if desired.

Other Subliminal Messages

An article titled *Secret Voices* published in a 1979 edition of *TIME* magazine reported that approximately 50 different department stores in the US and Canada were playing subliminal messages with the music systems hoping to reduce shoplifting from customers and theft from employees. One undisclosed East Coast chain claimed that their theft had dropped by 37% after using the system.[154]

The following year, in 1980, the *Wall Street Journal* published an article investigating systems that broadcast subliminal messages in stores that say things like, "I am honest. I will not steal." The article reported that after a New Orleans supermarket started using subliminal messages, their loss dropped to the lowest on record.[155] They also reported that shortages from cashiers dramatically dropped as well.

In 1984, a hearing in the US House of Representatives titled *Subliminal Communication Technology* investigated the use of subliminal messages and subliminal advertising in public places.[156]

In 1978 when a serial killer calling himself BTK (Bind, Torture, Kill) came to the attention of police in Wichita, Kansas, a local TV station (under the direction of the police) broadcast a subliminal message hoping to influence the killer, urging him to turn himself in. In a broadcast about the murders, the station included a message saying, "Now call the chief," although the attempt was unsuccessful.[157]

In 2004 dozens of electronic slot machines in Canada were found to display subliminal messages that some felt encouraged people to gamble more.[158] The machines would flash a quick picture of a winning hand on the

screen, although the company, Konami, said the images were caused from an error in the software. The machines were ordered to be fixed.

It’s interesting how the power of suggestion works. Subliminal messages are not necessarily “brain washing” techniques, but rather function as the name entails, by “suggesting” something, thus causing a thought to arise in a person’s mind. Everyone is familiar with pulling up to a fast food restaurant’s drive through menu and after you’re done placing your order, you are often asked if you want two apple pies or chocolate cookies for $1.99. They know that just by suggesting this, they will spark a desire in a measurable percentage of customers and dramatically increase their sales.

Project Blue Beam

While governments have perpetuated countless hoaxes, disinformation campaigns, and false flag terrorist attacks in order to manipulate large populations of people—no plan is perhaps more grandiose than the idea of faking an appearance by God himself. There have been several times in recent history that the American government has proposed the idea of staging the appearance of God, who would then appear to speak to people and urge them to participate in an insurgency. This "supernatural" event can be done through a combination of holographic projections and sophisticated sound systems.

In February of 1999, the *Washington Post* reported on one of these plans, explaining that during the first Gulf War, the United States had actually considered projecting a huge holographic image of God in the sky over Baghdad.[159] This plan included the use of a 5-15 KHz acoustic beam that would make it seem like God was talking to the Iraqi people and would urge them to turn on their leader Saddam Hussein, sparking a revolution.

A similar plan was considered under Project Mongoose, a series of CIA operations against Cuba designed to overthrow Fidel Castro. Officials discussed having a submarine surface in the Havana harbor and project a huge Jesus-like figure onto the clouds that would then appear to speak and tell the Cuban people to overthrow "Godless Communism."[160]

This technology has been called Project Blue Beam, and could be used to either stage a "supernatural" visitation from "God," or even one from aliens arriving from outer space. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan made a very clear reference to aliens from outer space invading earth and causing all the nations of the world to unite and stop fighting each other. He actually said this at a United Nations meeting and video of the statement can be

found online. “In our obsession with antagonism of the moment, we often forget how much unites all the members of humanity. Perhaps we need some outside, universal threat to make us recognize this common bond. I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world.”[161]

Some wonder whether this comment was said as a primer for a possible use of Project Blue Beam during the Cold War in order to frighten the Russians.

Leaders throughout history, dating back to ancient times, have claimed to have the power of God, or to speak on behalf of God in order to control their people and maintain their power and authority. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that government officials involved in covert operations would try to use Big Brother technology to take on the appearance of God himself.

“God is power [and] we are the priests of power.”[162] —Emmanuel Goldstein, the ‘bad guy’ in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Sonic Nausea Systems

While using the radio frequency hearing effect and other psychotronic weapons may be limited to those with expensive and complicated technology, a widely available and inexpensive device that uses ultrasonic waves to induce headaches and nausea can be purchased on the Internet or in catalogs selling law enforcement products. The *Shomer-Tech* catalog sells such a device called the Sonic Nausea System for only $29.99. The online catalog reads, “Hiding this device in your inconsiderate neighbor’s house might put an end to their late-night parties. The abusive bureaucrat’s office, the executive lunchroom... the possibilities are endless for that small portion of inventive payback.”[163]

Another more advanced version is also sold, called the Super Sonic Nausea system which is advertised to, “disrupt speeches, demonstrations, crowd dynamics, etc. This device has been used to ‘influence’ more of these than you might expect. Deployed near the podium, you might just have a case of an increasingly un-impressive speaker with diminished sharpness and lacking concentration, or perhaps is even unable to complete his presentation. Or, loitering youths on your property might be enticed to move along with no confrontations necessary.”

This “Super Sonic Nausea system” is said to be a “rarely-available government model” and is produced by a company called DSG Laboratories. This version sells for only $99.99. Just imagine for a minute what kind of similar devices are in existence but are not made commercially available. Such devices are extremely small and portable, and could easily be covertly used to inflict discomfort on any number of people, in any number of situations, without anyone even having a clue.

Information Technology

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the main character, Winston Smith, works at the Ministry of Truth, (a propaganda department) and his job is to go through old books and newspapers and delete information that the government doesn't want people to have access to anymore. Winston also changes "facts" in books and newspapers and reprints them to reflect the changes as if they were still in their original form. Big Brother has complete control over all information available to the people, both in the present, and from the past.

As you likely know, the mainstream media in our society has been tightly controlled for decades in order to shape the majority of information that reaches the population to keep people focused on what the establishment desires, and also at the same time, to prevent people from discovering issues that the establishment desires to keep private. Such a practice was fairly easy until the Internet became an environment where independent journalists and countless "alternative" news sites and bloggers were able to gain large followings of people and operate with practically zero budget, yet reach millions of people just like the mainstream news does.

This has created a fairly large amount of competition for the mainstream establishment media, and has damaged their long held monopoly of information. Of course, they are not going to sit idly by and lose their grip on the flow of information, so they were forced to come up with new strategies in order to minimize the effect that independent blogs and news sites have on the population.

In 2006, a report from the Joint Special Operations University titled *Blogs and Military Information Strategy* outlined a plan that would allow the government to underhandedly combat the popularity of independent

bloggers and journalists. “Hiring a block of bloggers to verbally attack a specific person or promote a specific message may be worth considering,” read the report.[164]

It also suggested the government hack the blogs of journalists whose writings threaten the world view that the establishment is trying to promote and then change articles to make them say ridiculous things to ruin the credibility of those journalists.

It reads, “[T]he enemy blog might be used covertly as a vehicle for friendly information operations. Hacking the site and subtly changing the messages and data—merely a few words or phrases—may be sufficient to begin destroying the blogger’s credibility with the audience. Better yet, if the blogger happens to be passing enemy communications and logistics data, the information content could be corrupted.”[165]

A Harvard law professor named Cass Sunstein was appointed by President Obama to head the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, and just like most high level kingpins in any president’s administration; his Orwellian goals seem too strange to be true. Sunstein published a white paper in January 2008 titled *Conspiracy Theories* where he proposed that the government “might ban conspiracy theorizing” and could “impose some kind of tax, financial or otherwise, on those who disseminate such theories.”[166] The “conspiracy theories” Sunstein is looking to attack aren’t conspiracy theories at all, but rather evidence and editorials that expose information that is damaging to the establishment, such as information about the true nature of the 9/11 attacks, the War in Iraq, and any number of other issues ranging from the Bilderberg group, Bohemian Grove, Skull and Bones, and other secretive establishment organizations.

In an article Sunstein wrote for the *Journal of Political Philosophy*, he also outlined a plan for the government to infiltrate “conspiracy” websites in order to undermine them by posting absurd comments on articles and social networks. He also suggested that government operatives infiltrate

meetings held by “conspiracy theorists” in order to “(break) up the hard core of extremists who supply conspiracy theories.”[167]

Sunstein said the government needed to, “Enlist nongovernmental officials in the effort to rebut the [conspiracy] theories. It might ensure that credible independent experts offer the rebuttal, rather than government officials themselves. There is a tradeoff between credibility and control, however. The price of credibility is that government cannot be seen to control the independent experts.”[168]

It was also suggested that “government agents (and their allies) might enter chat rooms, online social networks, or even real-space groups and attempt to undermine percolating conspiracy theories by raising doubts about their factual premises, causal logic or implications for political action.”[169] By “real-space groups” he means that agents should attend political protests and meetings in order to cause trouble, attempting to discredit the group while pretending to support their cause.

Sunstein has also called for making websites liable for comments posted in response to articles which would basically shut down any website that the government targeted with their online trolls. (A troll is a term used to identify someone online who posts comments on articles, blogs, or videos to derail the focus and to cause trouble rather than engage in a discussion about the topic at hand.) Sunstein’s book, *On Rumors: How Falsehoods Spread, Why We Believe Them, What Can Be Done* was criticized by some as a blueprint for online censorship.

It’s important to highlight that these ideas are not just the dreams of an obscure intellectual college professor. Cass Sunstein was appointed to a high level position in the Obama administration (the administrator of the head the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs).

Sunstein is also vehemently against the right for people to own guns. In a lecture he gave at the University of Chicago Law School on October 27, 2007 he said, “The Supreme Court has never suggested that the Second

Amendment protects an individual right to have guns."[170] Such a statement is completely false and a lie, and is another example of doublethink by an establishment insider. He continued his lecture predicting that the Second Amendment would be repealed, and the right to own guns will be a thing of the past. Sunstein is certainly not alone with his Orwellian dreams of trying to prevent alternative political views from becoming a consensus. His goals of censorship and disrupting alternative media are shared by many in the establishment, both on the left, and on the right.

In 2006, the United States Central Command, (CENTCOM, a division of the Department of Defense) hired people to engage "bloggers who are posting inaccurate or untrue information, as well as bloggers who are posting incomplete information," about the so-called war on terror.[171]

As part of government's Information Operations, the Pentagon had people set up websites designed to look like foreign news websites, whose only purpose was to publish military propaganda and make it seem like it was news.[172] Israel also has teams of people who work to flood websites with messages to support Zionists' crimes and try to deflect blame onto others.[173]

In January 2009, the US Air Force announced a "counter-blog" response plan aimed at finding and reacting to material from bloggers who have "negative opinions about the US government and the Air Force."[174]

The plan outlines a twelve-point "counter blogging" flow-chart that describes how they can handle "misguided" online writers by posting comments designed to derail the discussion causing it to drift off topic.

A leading think tank in the UK called Demos published a report in August 2010 titled *The Power of Unreason* that suggested government agents should infiltrate websites in an attempt to discredit ideas that the 9/11 attacks in America and the 7/7 bombings in London were "inside jobs." The report explained that these online agents needed to increase trust

in government and that the government needed to “fight back by infiltrating Internet sites to dispute these theories.”[175]

Jamie Bartlett, the author of the report, essentially called people who discuss “conspiracy theories” and false flag terrorism “extremists” who make stories up. The Demos think tank logo incorporates an obvious all-seeing eye as the letter “o” in their name which can be seen on their official website http://www.demos.co.uk.

Demos was co-founded in 1993 by Communist Martin Jacques, who was the editor of *Marxism Today*, the journal of The Communist Party of Great Britain. The other co-founder was Geoff Mulgan who was closely affiliated with Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Carnivore

Anyone with average intelligence knows that Internet service providers (and the government) keep databases on practically every website each individual user visits, what files you download, what links you click, and can access every e-mail you've ever sent. Some may be surprised at just how simple this is, and how long this has been possible. The all-encompassing system designed for this task was originally called Carnivore and was created by the FBI during the Clinton administration as the Internet became widely used by the public.

The public inevitably found out about Carnivore and its capabilities so the FBI later changed its name to DCS1000, which stands for Digital Collection System. This system can easily monitor a specific individual's Internet usage in real time, as well as go back and see the exact history of all Internet searches and websites they've visited, what comments they've posted on articles or social networking sites, and what files they've downloaded. It is reasonable to assume that this same system can secretly access any computer's hard drive if the computer is connected to the Internet, and the contents of that person's hard drive can be copied and analyzed, all without having physical access to the computer. The built-in webcams and microphones in laptops can also be remotely activated by authorities as well, and can be used to watch and listen to you without your knowledge. Of course, these activities are illegal without a warrant, but that is why they are highly classified. Anyone who denies that such tasks are easily carried out is simply in denial, or has no clue about what modern technology is capable of.

"As for sending a letter through the mail, it was out of the question. By a routine that was not even secret, all letters were opened in transit."[176] — *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Have you downloaded music or movies illegally on torrents or file sharing networks? It’s usually just the large downloaders that get busted, but if Big Brother is watching you for some other reason, then you may just “coincidentally” find yourself getting arrested or sued for pirating intellectual property.

Internet service provider Earthlink has resisted the government’s attempts to monitor Internet traffic through their systems, and admitted that the FBI has forced the company to allow them to tap into their system. Robert Corn-Revere, a lawyer for Earthlink said at a hearing, “We believed it would enable the government to acquire more information than the law permits, not just about the person who was the target of the investigation, but potentially about a large number of other subscribers who had nothing at all to do with the investigation…Over time, the cumulative effect of widespread surveillance for law enforcement, intelligence, and other investigatory purposes could change the climate and fabric of society in fundamental ways.”[177]

In a world where George Orwell’s 1984 nightmare has come true, we would expect that practically all of our communications are intercepted, monitored, analyzed, and stored indefinitely by Big Brother. Echelon and Carnivore are the two most well-known mechanisms for conducting this kind of surveillance, but for decades most of the information concerning these systems has been kept highly secret. If and when the details and capabilities of these systems are made public, it would be chilling to learn just how far-reaching they are.

In the post-9/11 world when security has become big business, many private companies are developing Big Brother technology that may rival similar government systems in hopes of identifying “troubled” people before they may “do something crazy.”

At a military tech conference at the International First Responder-Military Symposium in the Town of Hamburg, New York in September

2010, one company showed off a system that’s capable of listening to phone calls, reading emails, as well as people’s posts on social networking sites and other areas of the Internet for what was described as “resentment towards the government.”[178]

Professor Mathieu Guidere of the University of Geneva, Switzerland, explained that, “The computer system detects resentment in conversations through measurements in decibels and other voice biometrics. It detects obsessiveness with the individual going back to the same topic over and over, measuring crescendos.”[179]

A similar data mining system is used on emails to detect what are allegedly patterns of fixation on specified subjects and any data that involves radicalization or ideological arguments. When demonstrating the system, Guidere invoked the memory of the September 11, 2001 attacks, saying that it can detect signs “pointing to a potential terrorist.”

The system demonstrated at the conference could review about 10,000 voice or other electronic transmissions in an hour, a capacity that would soon increase to 100,000 per hour and beyond, touted the designers.

The system was even promoted as some kind of emotional stability tester that could be used to screen potential employees, war veterans, law enforcement officials, and practically anyone else unfortunate enough to be subjected to the device. “By recording the voice of the patient, the program can rate negativity and positivity with depression and other emotional disorders,” said Guidere, who is working with Dr. Newton Howard, the director of MIT’s Mind Machine Project, a program dedicated to building artificially intelligent machines.[180] **(*See Artificial Intelligence*)**

Telcom Immunity

It was revealed that major telecommunication companies secretly cooperated with the Bush administration to illegally wiretap phone calls of American citizens allegedly to help fight the war on terror. It turns out that the National Security Agency had entire rooms built within the major telecommunication companies in order to tap into their networks and communication hubs. The problem was, this was against the law, and while it was initially denied by the Bush administration and telecommunication executives, the large-scale wire tapping was later fully revealed.

Citizens clamored for legal action to be taken, but the Bush administration passed a law giving retroactive immunity to all of the telecom companies involved in the illegal wiretapping.[181] The message the government sent to private industries was basically that they could break the law and not worry about any legal ramifications because the government would just grant them immunity if they were ever busted.

During his presidential campaign, Barack Obama denounced the legislation granting them immunity, but when the time came to vote for the immunity, he voted to support it.[182]

Reading Your E-mails Without a Warrant

Internet giant Yahoo has battled with the government over whether or not e-mails were protected by the Constitution's requirement that a search warrant be required in order for the government to read them. To many people's surprise, it is perfectly legal for the government to read your e-mails without a warrant after they are 180 days old, but the government began pushing to read e-mails without a warrant that were not that old if the e-mails had already been read by the person receiving them. For some reason, the government insisted then, that the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution didn't apply because the e-mail had already been read.

Yahoo disagreed and refused to turn over customer e-mails to the feds that were less than 180 days old, saying it required a warrant. Google, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the Center for Democracy & Technology and other groups also told a federal judge presiding over the case that accessing e-mail less than 180 days old requires a valid warrant under the Fourth Amendment, regardless of whether it has been read.

"The government says the Fourth Amendment does not protect these e-mails," explains Kevin Bankston, an Electronic Frontier Foundation lawyer. "What we're talking about is archives of our personal correspondence that they would need a warrant to get from your computer but not from the server."[183]

The 1986 Stored Communications Act defines electronic storage as "(A) any temporary, intermediate storage of a wire or electronic communication incidental to the electronic transmission thereof; and (B) any storage of such communication by an electronic communication service for purposes of backup protection of such communication."

The government insists that the storage of previously opened e-mails does not qualify for protection, because the e-mails are not in “electronic storage” which they say enables them to read the e-mails without a warrant.

The Cybersecurity Act

The Cybersecurity Act is a bill that if passed would give the President of the United States the power to declare a “cybersecurity emergency” and shut down or limit Internet traffic in any “critical” information network “in the interest of national security.”

If the president wanted to, he could basically force major websites to be shut down for a duration of time in the immediate aftermath of a major terrorist attack or a pandemic, and even cause the visitors of those websites to be forwarded to a specific government page which would then display government propaganda with one-sided information about what had just occurred, and what actions should be taken, such as coerced evacuations or inoculations. This ability is similar to the Emergency Broadcast System installed on television networks that enables local, state, and national authorities to take over all major broadcast networks and cable channels to then broadcast a message to all viewers simultaneously on all channels.

This bill was introduced by Senator Jay Rockefeller, the great-grandson of John D. Rockefeller, nephew of banker David Rockefeller, a family that has long been a part of the secret establishment. When discussing how “dangerous” the Internet was to national security and why he felt the Cybersecurity Act was important, Jay Rockefeller stated, “It really almost makes you ask the question, would it have been better if we had never invented the Internet.”

The so-called Einstein Security Shield is reported to use NSA technology and according to the declassified summary is designed to look for indicators of cyber attacks by digging into all Internet communications, including the contents of e-mails.[184]

Hackers sent a virus to attack Iran’s new nuclear power plant in 2010; doing so much damage that it set their nuclear program back allegedly by two years.[185] In all likelihood it was an attack orchestrated by Israel to delay Iran’s nuclear program for their own self-interest. Many see cyber-security programs as power grabs by governments to more easily regulate and monitor global Internet traffic.

Some believe that Julian Assange, the famed editor of the WikiLeaks whistleblower website, was an unknowing patsy of billionaire George Soros, who people believe was funding WikiLeaks in order to create a compelling reason to pass the Cyber Security Act in order to further secure the Internet. While there is rampant speculation surrounding Julian Assange and WikiLeaks regarding their funding and the goals, Julian Assange is most likely a true activist-hacker and info-warrior who believes that he is just bringing the world the secret information the military doesn’t want people to know about concerning the true nature of the war in Iraq and the global war on terrorism.

As a result of the famous publishing of 250,000 cables (documents) in 2010, Julian Assange and the WikiLeaks supporters found themselves in a difficult dilemma, as well as the target of various conspiracy theories. They stole and leaked classified information to the public, but once that was done, then obviously the security was strengthened, making it impossible to do the same thing in the future. But some short-sighted conspiracy theorists claim WikiLeaks *only* released the 250,000 cables so the government could clamp down on cyber security, following in line with the Hegelian Dialectic of problem-reaction-solution. While this was undoubtedly a side-effect of the leaking of the classified info, it certainly was not the intention of Assange.

Cyber security measures implemented by the government will always serve as a cover to gain a more intimate look at the personal communications of everyone.

CNN’s Fake Cyber Attack Broadcast

In February of 2010, CNN aired a one hour simulation of the aftermath of a cyber attack on America. The broadcast consisted of a boardroom of high-level officials, including (former) Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte, former Director of the CIA John McLaughlin, Bill Clinton’s former press secretary Joe Lockhart, and other high-powered and well-known government officials. The group sat around and pretended to have a real discussion about how the government would deal with a cyber attack that had just shut down the Internet and electrical grids across the country.

The opening screen of the broadcast explained, “Cyber ShockWave will provide an unprecedented look at how the government would develop a real-time response to a large-scale cyber crisis affecting much of the nation.” The event took place at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Washington, D.C. on February 16, 2010. When breaking to, and coming back from commercials, CNN showed a screen saying, “we were warned,” which is what they titled their broadcast.

CNN’s Wolf Blitzer hosted the event and began by saying, “What you’re about to see is not real, but the threat is very real, indeed. You’re about to get an unprecedented look at how the US government would deal with a massive cyber shockwave.” He went on to describe the program as a cyber war game scenario.

Clips of this war game can likely be found on YouTube and show the panelists pretending to react to an actual cyber attack that just hit America. What’s fascinating about this broadcast is the seriousness and the seeming authenticity of the panelists. If you had not noticed the word “simulation”

posted in the corner of the screen, or had just listened to the broadcast, you would swear they were responding to an actual attack that just occurred.

It’s fascinating that these high-powered government officials were simply playing make-believe but all of them seemed like they could be nominated for an Academy Award for their performances. They appeared scared and were coming up with scenarios off the top of their head about what needed to be done to respond to the “attack.” What their fake concern shows is just how good of actors these people are. They looked, and sounded, no different during this session of make-believe, than they did during press conferences or during regular interviews. These powerful panelists on this war game were some of the best liars that have ever lived, and their simulation shows how easily they can look the American people in the eye and seem extremely concerned about an event, simply by acting. It was surely no coincidence that this fear-mongering simulation was broadcast at the same time the Obama administration was trying to get support for the Cybersecurity Act which grants sweeping powers to the government over the Internet.

The Way You Type Can Identify You

Some computer scientists believe that they can actually identify a person's age, sex, and culture just from analyzing the way they type depending on their speed and rhythm. This seems like pseudoscience of course, but Professor Roy Maxion, associate professor at Newcastle University, has been researching these claims and a former Police detective Phil Butler, head of Newcastle University's Cybercrime and Computer Security department, believes the system could be used to track online criminals and pedophiles.

"Roy's research has the potential to be a fantastic tool to aid intelligence gathering for crime fighting agencies, in particular serious and organized crime and for those tracking down pedophiles," Butler said.[186]

"If children are talking to each other on Windows Live or MSN Messenger, we are looking at ways of providing the chat room moderators with the technology to be able to see whether an adult is on there by the way they type," he explained.

The basis of this technology is that each individual has identifying patterns to the way they type, and once that pattern is identified, then a program could be installed to look for that pattern to see if it shows up in a chat room.

Your Laptop is Listening to You

In 2006 it was reported that Google had discussed using the microphone that is built into all laptop computers to listen to the user and their environment and analyze the audio for keywords which would then be used to place specific advertisements on web pages that reflected conversations the microphone was picking up.[187] The lengthy user agreement that people agree to through implied consent when they log on to Google.com would include legal language that would allow this.

If this system were in place, for example, if you were talking a lot about working out or hiking when you're around your computer, the system would identify these keywords as being frequently discussed topics and would then choose specific advertisements to display as a result. It was also discussed that this system would choose advertisements based on what television or radio shows were detected playing in the background.[188] If the system detected cooking shows, your ads would be for food and kitchen related items. If you were watching football, then it would detect this and tailor the advertising accordingly.

The Onion, a popular parody and satire news site, produced a video that looked like a news segment about what they described as new software for Google's cell phone that would use voice recognition software to listen to people's conversations, and then play relevant advertisements during that conversation.[189] The writers of this sketch obviously had read the reports of Google's discussion about using the built-in microphones to listen to people and chose to satirize the idea.

Google Street View

Another Orwellian feature implemented by the Internet giant Google is their Street View feature that was launched in May 2007 and provides panoramic views from nearly every street in America and other countries around the world. Online travel map programs, such as Yahoo Maps and Google Maps, have been a favorite of many people since search engines began, but Google's Street View function allows users to choose any address in the country, and then shows them a 360 degree view of that area as it looks from the street.

For example, you can type in your address on the Google Maps page (or using your cell phone) and then select the "Street View" function, and you can then view your own house as if you are standing on the street right in front of it. You can then change the direction and position of the camera, and simulate traveling down your street as if you are in a virtual reality game. Users can even zoom in.

This Street View map was created from a fleet of cars that had special 360 degree cameras placed on the top, and then they drove down practically every street in America as the cameras captured photos of the entire journey. Later, Google used smaller vehicles and even snowmobiles to capture images of pedestrian areas, alleys, and narrow streets, and then added them to the Street View.

This feature caused some resistance by people who were upset about this invasion of their privacy, and the Department of Homeland Security even delayed the publication of certain street views in Washington, DC because they were worried that images may have been taken of some security-sensitive areas. The Department of Defense wouldn't let Google

capture images of US Military bases and had them remove certain locations from the database.

There are entire websites that contain funny and embarrassing photos that the Google Street View cameras have picked up, such as people coming out of strip clubs, passed out drunk in their yard, and women sunbathing. While some of these photos are amusing, they also illustrate just how far-reaching the eyes of Big Brother are.

Years after the Street View feature was available, it was revealed that the same cars which drove around taking the photos had also intercepted information from unsecured Wi-Fi hotspots from businesses and people’s homes. *PC World* explained, “It simply intercepted the unencrypted data that businesses and individuals beamed through the air willy-nilly. The data was left in the middle of the street so to speak, and Google gathered it as it drove through collecting photographs.”[190] Google said it was an accident and they did not plan on using the information gathered.

Social Networking Sites

Social media, or social networking sites, quickly changed the landscape of society as Facebook and Twitter rapidly gained popularity shortly after their creation. MySpace and Facebook allowed people to quickly set up their own webpage for free, and exchange photos, status updates, and messages with their friends and family, but such social media also has its downfalls. Facebook and MySpace allowed people for the first time to easily open up their entire life to the Internet, and practically anyone with a computer. Their name, birthdates, interests, friends, family members, school, place of employment, photos, and more are often published openly for the world to see.

Such media has caused many people to become extremely self-absorbed and have turned themselves into their own idol, along with their fan base of “friends” that regularly comment on their status updates or photos. Many people love the attention they get from posting a status update on any dumb thought they had that they feel is clever, and oftentimes there is no shortage of “friends” to post their comments, which are equally worthless.

Girls often like to post pretty (and slutty) photos of themselves and bathe in the attention from people’s comments as countless guys who are on their friends list tell them how beautiful they are. What is even more bizarre, is that many, if not most of the “friends” on their page, aren’t really friends at all, but just acquaintances, and many are people they’ve just met once or twice and don’t really associate with in real life. Facebook has become a cyber stalker’s dream come true. Before MySpace and Facebook, if a guy was interested in a girl he met at a party or through friends, he would have to ask for her phone number face to face in order to communicate with her again in the future, but now it is commonplace for people to look others up on Facebook, and then send them a “friend

request” which allows them to access that person’s personal information, photos, status updates, and friends list.

You don’t even need to know a person’s full name to find them online. For example, if a guy meets a girl at a party and is interested in her (or interested in stalking her) all he does is go to the page of a person he’s already friends with that he knows is friends with the girl he is interested in, and then scrolls through that person’s friends list until he finds the girl he’s stalking. This is easy since people are listed with their picture, as well as their first and last name. This is not looked at as creepy at all by most girls, but instead has become a normal part of our culture.

These social networking sites also have broad implications on personal relationships, as well. In the past, if two people were in a relationship or were married, then communication with ex-boyfriends, ex-girlfriends, or others who harbored a secret crush on an individual, was largely limited. But now, since practically everyone has a Facebook page, if an old high school friend who secretly had a crush on someone for years, perhaps decades, that person can now look up their crush on Facebook and establish communication with them, all without that person’s significant other or spouse being aware of it. (Not to mention that person will also have instant access to information such as where their crush lives, where they work, names, photos, and ages of their kids, as well as a link to their love interest’s spouse’s page where they can then peer into their life as well.)

Also, in the past, when showing our family and friends photos of our life or things we’ve done, they had to all sit down around a table and everyone would look through the photos and talk about them, but now most photos are posted on Facebook and are widely available to the entire world. Photos of people’s kids, homes, friends, and more are all just a click away. Even photos taken by other people are shown once you are tagged in them.

As you are probably familiar with, people even link up their current dating partner or spouse on their Facebook page, and then anyone can click on the link and see who that person is in a relationship with, and then view

all of their photos and learn all about them from the details of their life that are posted on their page. There is even a Facebook app for cell phones that allows people to see the physical location of their friends based on the GPS systems in their phones.[191] A feature on Twitter called Twitter Tracker also allows users to identify their location when they post their Tweets (messages).[192]

There have been numerous instances of people's homes being burglarized while they were out of town because they posted a status update telling the world that they were going on vacation, and how long they would be gone. These were not complete strangers who burglarized people's homes, it was people on their "friends" list who saw their status updates and knew they would be gone.[193] As you probably know, most people will accept a "friend request" from just about anybody, no matter how little they know them. Just look at the number of "friends" that some people have on Facebook, especially attractive girls. Beautiful girls often have four or five hundred, sometimes close to a thousand "friends" on Facebook or MySpace because most guys will track them down and find their page after meeting them only once and send them a friend request so they can voyeuristically peer into their life. Most girls feel bad about declining a friend request, so most people accept them all, no matter how little they know the person.

In 2009 a group of young teenagers were arrested in Los Angeles, California for burglarizing various celebrities' homes, including Paris Hilton's, Lindsay Lohan's, and others. The group was called the Bling Ring by the media, and was said to have watched their celebrity targets on Facebook and Twitter to determine when they were going to be out of town, so they could then break into their houses.[194] When the celebrities posted a status update or a Tweet saying they were traveling somewhere for an event or a vacation, the Bling Ring knew their home would most likely be unoccupied. The group stole several million dollars worth of jewelry and clothes from the celebrity homes before getting caught.

Facebook and MySpace Own the Photos You Post

The media frenzy surrounding Eliot Spitzer’s high class hooker scandal in 2008 brought something else to light other than the governor’s scandalous sex life. What you post on social networking sites is available for the world to see. Photographs of Ashey Dupre (his alleged high-class call girl) were immediately published around the world, including pictures of her family members, all of which were taken from her MySpace page. Her lawyer threatened to sue media outlets for publishing the photos, claiming she owns the copyright to them, but let’s take a closer look at what you sign away when you use MySpace or Facebook.

By simply using these websites, you agree to their Terms of Service, but who really reads that boring stuff anyway? Maybe you should. Let’s look at Myspace.com first. When you post your personal and family photos on your page, you are automatically entering into a licensing agreement with MySpace and its affiliates to use your photos in any way they like. Not only can they use them, but they can edit or modify them, as well. Keep in mind that MySpace is owned by News Corporation, so people are basically giving Rupert Murdoch and his media empire, including Fox News, the New York Post, and dozens of other media outlets, permission to do whatever they want with their photos.

The Terms of Service that you agree to by using the website reads, “By displaying or publishing (“posting”) any Content on or through the MySpace Services, you hereby grant to MySpace a limited license to use, modify, delete from, add to, publicly perform, publicly display, reproduce, and distribute such Content solely on or through the MySpace Services, including without limitation distributing part or all of the MySpace Website in any media formats and through any media channels.”[195]

Section 6.2 of the agreement says, “MySpace is not required to pay you for the use on the MySpace Services of the Content that you post,” and that the content which they now control is, “sublicensable (so that MySpace is able to use its affiliates, subcontractors and other partners such as Internet content delivery networks and wireless carriers to provide the MySpace Services), and worldwide (because the Internet and the MySpace Services are global in reach).”

Did you understand that? You are granting them and their “affiliates, subcontractors and other partners” use of your material, all without paying you. And you thought they were *your* photos. If you have a problem with this, and post a blog about it on your MySpace page, or send out a bulletin to all your friends warning them, then MySpace can remove your bulletin or blog, and delete your account. The Terms of Service state, “MySpace reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject, refuse to post or remove any posting (including private messages) by you, or to deny, restrict, suspend, or terminate your access to all or any part of the MySpace Services at any time, for any or no reason, with or without prior notice or explanation, and without liability.”

Facebook is no different. At one time, when you would delete your account, any rights that they claimed to your content would expire, but they later updated their Terms of Service so you automatically grant them the rights (without any compensation) to any photo or anything else you post on Facebook, forever.

It reads, “You hereby grant Facebook an irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive, transferable, fully paid, worldwide license (with the right to sublicense) to (a) use, copy, publish, stream, store, retain, publicly perform or display, transmit, scan, reformat, modify, edit, frame, translate, excerpt, adapt, create derivative works and distribute (through multiple tiers), any User Content you (i) Post on or in connection with the Facebook Service or the promotion thereof subject only to your privacy settings or (ii) enable a user to Post, including by offering a Share Link on your website and (b) to use your name, likeness and image for any purpose, including commercial

or advertising, each of (a) and (b) on or in connection with the Facebook Service or the promotion thereof.”

So if you or any of your friends or family members are ever swept up in any kind of scandal, then don’t be surprised if within hours, personal photos of you or your friends or family find their way onto the cover of the *New York Post*, and are plastered all over celebrity news shows and mainstream media networks. Since you are also giving them a free license to “use your name, likeness, and image for any purpose” they could also sell your photos which could find their way onto a billboard advertising a product you’d rather not have any affiliation with.

Police on Facebook

Police in multiple cities around the country have been setting up fake accounts on Facebook using photos of attractive girls as the supposed user and then sending friend requests to students to look at their photos to see if there are any pictures of people under the age of twenty-one who can be seen holding alcoholic drinks.

One such instance that made news happened in Wisconsin in 2009 when 19-year-old Adam Bauer, a student at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, received a friend request from police posing as an attractive girl that resulted in him being charged with underage drinking. “She was a good-looking girl. I usually don’t accept friends I don’t know, but I randomly accepted this one for some reason,” he said.[196]

Shortly after he accepted the friend request from the unknown attractive girl, Bauer was confronted by police who had a photo of him from Facebook showing him holding a beer. He was then ticketed for underage drinking. At least eight students at UW Lacrosse were targeted in the same manner including one of Bauer’s friends. “I just can’t believe it. I feel like I’m in a science fiction movie, like they are always watching. When does it end?” Bauer said after his court appearance.[197]

The students said that they were being safe and partying at home and insisted that nobody was driving afterwards. La Crosse police officer Al Iverson said, “Law enforcement has to evolve with technology. It has to happen. It is a necessity—not just for underage drinking.”

This is certainly not an isolated incident of Big Brother watching Facebook. In January 2008, several teenagers were arrested in Illinois for

underage drinking after a sheriff's deputy found photos of them partying that were posted on Facebook.[198]

In February 2006, a 16-year-old boy in Colorado was arrested for juvenile possession of a firearm after police saw pictures that he had posted of himself posing with guns on MySpace.[199]

One student in Miami, Florida was arrested and charged with inciting panic after he posted a police sketch of a rape suspect as his profile picture on Facebook.[200] While certainly this was a distasteful and juvenile attempt at a joke, it certainly didn't incite a panic.

In August 2006, a student at the University of Illinois was arrested for urinating in public while another student was able to escape. The student that was originally arrested said he didn't know the name of the one who ran away, but police were able to get his name from other witnesses (who were not urinating) but were in the same group. The arresting officer then used Facebook to discover that the two students were friends, and then came back and charged the first student who was originally arrested for urinating in public with obstruction of justice because he had lied to police and said he didn't know the other student.[201]

In February 2007, eleven high school students at a Catholic school in Canada were suspended for posting negative comments about their principal on Facebook.[202] There also have been numerous reports of people being fired from their jobs after complaining about their boss or their employer in their status updates.[203]

Facebook Sells Your Personal Information

Social networking sites are a gold mine of information for advertisers and marketers. People list their favorite music, movies, TV shows, and activities on their page, and most people think this is just to inform their "friends" of what they like, but Facebook shares people's information with "third parties," which means advertisers and marketers.[204]

Aside from getting information listed in everyone's profile, Facebook can also data mine status updates and search for keywords that are frequently used in people's postings. Does the word *party* come up a lot of times in someone's status update? Or the word *dog*, or *jogging*? Advertisers love access to this information since they can see into your life and learn what's important to you.

Facebook has been around in its present form since 2006, and has stored practically every piece of information users have typed onto their profiles, including years worth of status updates, all of which can be sold to whoever Facebook wants. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg became a billionaire from Facebook, which is free for its millions of users, so how do you think the website generates so much money? In a transcript released in May 2010 of Zuckerberg chatting with a friend about the personal information people were posting on Facebook, Zuckerberg called the people "dumb fucks."[205]

Twitter

The "tweets" (messages) posted on Twitter have been compared to graffiti scribbled in bathroom stalls, meaning it's utterly worthless, but somehow Twitter became a social phenomena in 2009 after word spread that Ashton Kutcher and Oprah were having a contest to see who could reach one million followers first. This caused word of Twitter to enter the mainstream media, and immediately every news station and television show included Twitter on its list of things you should connect with them on. (Twitter.com/MarkDice for example) The only real reason for someone to have a Twitter account is if they are a celebrity or a public figure who has a fan base that want to keep up to date with what they're doing, something that can more easily be done on Facebook since people can see others' photos and videos as well, but somehow Twitter caught on and became very trendy in 2009. If you look at the tweets (twitter's terminology for a message posted), one can see how useless Twitter really is, with most tweets consisting of worthless messages describing how someone's lunch was or saying that it's a beautiful day, but for some reason the Library of Congress decided to create an archive of every Twitter message ever posted.

The Library of Congress's blogger Matt Raymond thought this was a great idea, saying, "I'm no Ph.D. but it boggles my mind to think what we might be able to learn about ourselves and the world around us from this wealth of data. And I'm certain we'll learn things that none of us now can even possibly conceive."[206] Twitter said that they would soon post every single Tweet dating back to the first one on March 21, 2006.

Twitter gives an interesting look into the minds of its users by listing what it calls "trending topics," which are the top keywords or phrases that people post in their messages. "Tweets and other short-form updates create a history of commentary that can provide valuable insights into what's happened and how people have reacted," wrote Dylan Casey, Google's

product manager for real-time search. “Want to know how the news broke about health care legislation in Congress, what people were saying about Justice Paul Stevens’ retirement or what people were tweeting during your own marathon run? These are the kinds of things you can explore with the new updates mode.”[207]

Cell Phones are Bugs

While it has been fairly well known that Echelon can detect and record practically anyone's phone conversation and has archives of countless hours of phone calls, it was surprising to learn in 2006 that law enforcement and intelligence agencies can activate the microphone on someone's cell phone and use it as a directional bug, *even when the phone is turned off*, and can then listen to conversations in the surrounding areas.[208]

The power can be off, but then with the push of a button, someone can secretly activate the microphone, and the phone will still appear to be off. This can easily be done without probable cause, and without a warrant. The only way to prevent this is to take the battery out of your phone. The microphone and webcam on your computer can be used the same way and activated remotely without your knowledge.

One might think that this technology is only something that is available to intelligence agencies such as the NSA, CIA, or the FBI, but what is even more chilling is that there are numerous websites offering such services to anyone for a small fee. Such services also allow a person to receive files of all the targeted individual's recorded phone calls, and the person doing the spying can even get a call on their own phone every time the target uses their phone so they can listen in to their conversations in real time.

This is highly illegal, but these companies are offshore, or simply offer software that allows you to do it yourself.[209] They use a disclaimer saying it's illegal to do it to anyone's phone without their knowledge or consent, but we all know they are just covering themselves legally, and are fully aware that their systems are used without the victims' knowledge.

These commercially available illegal snooping systems have practically the same capability as the FBI does, and can activate the microphone in your cell phone when it’s turned off to listen to anything in the surrounding area. The person using these illegal snooping services can also intercept all text messages, voice mails, and can listen to your phone calls in real time because they get an alert anytime your phone has a call connected.

Cell Phone Photos

As cell phones have become miniature personal computers, complete with Internet access and digital cameras, many people obviously use their phone to take photos which they later post online to Facebook or other websites. What most people are not familiar with is that every photo you take with your phone can actually be viewed and downloaded by your cell phone carrier or anyone who has access to their system.

This became clear in 2005 when a hacker was able to obtain photos taken on cell phone cameras by numerous celebrities, including Demi Moore, Ashton Kutcher, Nicole Richie, and Paris Hilton.[210] This hacker did not have access to these celebrities' phones themselves, but was able to download the photos through the Internet.

So unlike photos taken from traditional digital cameras, the ones taken by your cell phone camera are available for anyone to see who has the ability or the authority to snatch them wirelessly.

Voice Synthesizers

Another scary aspect of advancing technology are voice synthesizers that can take samples of someone's voice, and then allow someone else to speak into a microphone, and then the computer will output exactly what that person said, with the same voice inflections, but in the person's voice who has been chosen to be synthesized. They can basically fake anyone's voice and make it seem like it's someone else talking. Back in the 1990s, the Department of Defense had a system that could accomplish this. In a demonstration in 1999, the voice of General Carl W. Steiner of the U.S. Special Operations Command was made to say, "Gentlemen! We have called you together to inform you that we are going to overthrow the United States government."[211]

The implications of voice synthesizers are enormous. Imagine if someone took voice samples of you and then using the system, called your boss and told him the most offensive, crazy things, in order to get you fired. Your boss isn't going to suspect that it's a computer voice synthesizer. He's going to just think you lost your mind, or decided to tell him what you really think. What if someone synthesized your boss's voice and called you asking for important company information such as passwords or sales figures; information you would never give out to anyone except your boss, of course. What if a competitor or a thief used this system to impersonate your boss in order to get this valuable information?

Such crimes will undoubtedly become a reality and will have to be dealt with when this technology becomes widely available. You may think that caller ID would prevent this from occurring on some phones, but I'm sorry to inform you that simple systems known as caller ID spoofers can cause any name and phone number to show up on the person's phone who is receiving a call to make it look like someone else is calling.[212] It doesn't take an electrical engineer to build a home-made caller ID spoofer, because

there are simple apps for popular smart phones like the Droid and the iPhone that can be used on phones that have been jailbroken which means the limitations placed by the phone's manufacturer or cell carrier are eliminated, allowing the phone to run unapproved apps and do other things that most phones can't do. This voids your phone's warranty and can cause problems for your phone, but some people like the freedom of having jailbroken phones.

I have personally had someone demonstrate his "jailbroken" Droid phone's caller ID spoofer to me by calling my phone and making a different number appear on my caller ID. He went on to tell me how he used the app to call two different friends of his and left obnoxious voicemails on each of their phones, making it look like the people had called each other, both leaving the insulting voicemails for each other. Naturally, both of them thought the other person called them since their phone number showed up on the caller ID for the obnoxious voicemail. Most cell phones won't allow these kinds of apps in their app store for obvious reasons because you can imagine the kind of havoc that they can cause.

It's only a matter of time before visual synthesizers are able to easily create fake video footage as well, possibly in real-time. Many people were surprised when the 1994 film *Forest Gump* made it look like Tom Hanks' character was shaking the hand of President John F. Kennedy, when he'd been dead for decades by the time *Forest Gump* was filmed. In the following years this same technology was used to produce new commercials selling various products with celebrity pitchmen who had been dead for years. People seemed to be disturbed by these commercials and this practice rapidly diminished, but the technology continued to advance.

Technology had advanced so much from the making of *Forest Gump* in 1994, when the sequel of *Tron* was released in 2010, audiences learned that the lead actor Jeff Bridges had his face digitally morphed to make him look like he was 35 years old again, just like he was at the time the original film was released in 1982, even though now he was in his 60's. Not only that, but the studio also digitally placed his new younger face on a completely different actor's body for the entire film!

It was also around this same time that a news story surfaced explaining that George Lucas (writer and producer of the *Star Wars* franchise) was buying the rights to dead actors so he can use their likeness in future films by digitally bringing them back from the dead.[213]

This news prompted actors to begin outlining their wishes regarding their likeness in any future films they may appear in after they are dead. It is now common for actors to list restrictions in their wills regarding this kind of resurrection technology in order to prevent their estate, family members, or any film studios from using their likeness in a future film they wouldn't agree with.

"There were huge printing shops with their sub-editors, their typography experts, and their elaborately equipped studios for the faking of photographs. There was the teleprograms sections with its engineers, its producers, and its teams of actors especially chosen for their skill in imitating voices."[214] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Supermarket Club Cards

You probably have one, or several, supermarket “club” cards or “membership cards” that many grocery stores give out to their customers for free that allow you discounts on many different items. As you know, these cards aren’t typical membership cards like a Costco card that you have to pay for, but are instead offered to every customer for free, and are scanned at the register when you pay, often saving you a few dollars. When you filled out the application to get your card, most of them asked for your full name, address, birth date, and phone number.

Most people forget they gave that information to the store and don’t realize the store is creating a huge database of your purchasing history, even if you pay with cash. This information is sold to telemarketers or advertising agencies that can then have an intimate look at what kinds of products you’re interested in. People even fear that this information is, or one day will be, sold to health insurance companies and can be used to justify premium increases based on what kinds of food a person consistently buys and how often they buy it. Such fears are not completely unwarranted.

There is a way around this (at least for now there is) by simply filling out a fake name, address and telephone number on the applications for these club cards. It’s been my personal experience that they don’t check your driver’s license to see if the name and address match with the application, so you can do this if it makes you feel more comfortable. You would of course have to make all your purchases in cash because if you use your debit card, credit card, or even an old fashioned check, then your name will be linked to the items and the bank can sell this information to health providers or anyone else. Cash, of course, will most likely be phased out and replaced entirely by an electronic currency in the future, or cash purchases may require you to swipe your driver’s license or government

issued ID card, so even if you pay with cash, everything you purchase will still be linked to you.

If you are naive and think your friendly local supermarket isn't keeping tabs on everything you buy, you are wrong. In March 2010, the purchasing history from a grocery store was used to track down people who purchased salami that was feared to be contaminated with salmonella.[215] In this case, the database of customers could have saved people the aggravation of possibly getting sick from salmonella, but it also illustrates the reach of Big Brother in the most unexpected places. Big Brother is watching what you eat.

Data Mining

Data mining is the process of searching for patterns in massive amounts of data. There are several major companies that compile enormous amounts of data on people and sell this information to advertisers and marketers. It is truly staggering to learn the amount of data these companies have on people, and what that data is used for. Many of these databases have records of people's marital status, ages of their children, income, value of their home and cars, as well as their occupation, religion, ethnicity, and even social security numbers and medical information. These lists have been sold to marketers and advertisers for decades so they can target specific types of people for their products, but after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the government began using commercial databases like ChoicePoint, LexusNexus, Acxiom, and others to search for links between suspected terrorists.

To give you an idea of just how large these data mining companies are, in February 2008, ChoicePoint was purchased by Reed Elsevier in a cash deal for $3.6 billion dollars. ChoicePoint has more than 17 billion records of individuals and businesses, which it sells to an estimated 100,000 different clients, including 7,000 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.[216] When one learns that these companies do more than simply maintain a database of details about people, it can be truly worrisome what their systems are capable of doing.

ChoicePoint has a system they call NORA (Non-Obvious Relationship Awareness) that can find relationships between people in ways you couldn't imagine. In 1994 the MGM casino in Las Vegas started using the NORA system to find out whether or not any high-rollers had ties to the dealers or employees that could be used in cheating or otherwise scamming the casino. The system could also detect whether people kicked out of the casino for

card counting or cheating had any personal ties to employees who may have been in on the scam.

The NORA system can display a chart or list of people’s relationships to others that are not noticeable on the surface. For example, if a dealer at the casino had a brother who was roommates with someone who won big at that dealer’s table, the system would know and the dealer would be suspected of helping that person win and be in on the scam. The system can determine whether people frequently go to the same restaurant, attend the same church, have mutual friends, etc.

The Direct Marketing List Source is a document consisting of 1600 pages that contains information such as people’s names, ages, addresses, what books they buy, magazines they subscribe to, what they buy online, etc. It also has a list called the Gay America Megafile with almost 700,000 names of people that the database has identified as being homosexual. The list is considered the Bible of mailing lists.

Data mines can calculate how much a bachelor usually spends on a weekend out, and where, and can determine whether or not he enters into a relationship or if he has gotten married. Marketers then know what other products they can market to him due to his changing lifestyle.

A company called Elensys obtained prescription records from pharmacies and then sent out material to those customers targeting them depending on what ailments they had or what medication they were taking. After this was made public, CVS pharmacy purchased full page ads in major newspapers apologizing for selling their customer’s private information.[217]

Another major company in this field, Axciom, has a service they call InfoBase TeleSource, which is a system that companies with toll free telephone numbers use to identify the names and other information about people who call in. Even people who block their caller ID or people who have unlisted numbers are still identified by this system.[218] If someone calls

in to an 800 number asking about a particular product, the person answering the phone has information pop up on their screen such as the person's name, address, and even what kind of home they live in, the cars the person owns, and whether they are a member of a health club or a gym.

A special airing originally in 2006 on CNBC called *Big Brother, Big Business* showed a fancy restaurant in New York using a similar system to identify people when they called in to make reservations, and allows the staff to create profiles for customers that include information such as when their birthday is, or if they were a "difficult" customer in the past.

In 1998, a company called Image Data began purchasing drivers license pictures from the DMV and using them in the private sector. They designed a system for retail stores that would display people's pictures on a screen when they swiped their credit card so the clerk could confirm that it was the person, and not someone else using the card.[219] Image Data had received $1.5 million dollars from the Secret Service to develop the project.[220] When it was discovered that the DMV offices were selling people's pictures and personal information to a private company, some DMVs were pressured to stop this practice.

Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, the government started its own data mining operation they called the MATRIX, [Multistate Anti-Terrorism Information Exchange Program] that used a variety of commercial and government databases to search for links between suspects or to identify any unusual behavior such as strange purchases or money transfers. The MATRIX system could do a search for all the people who have blond hair, are six feet tall, drive a black convertible, who work as an accountant, and who live in a particular zip code. The MATRIX program was shut down in June 2005 after funding was cut, largely as a result of concerns over privacy, but it is likely the technology was absorbed into other government agencies.

Another element used by casinos to maximize their profits is a system called a "Total Rewards" card used by Harrah's casinos that track players'

winnings and losses. The casino has calculated a “pain point” that they determine is the maximum amount a person is willing to lose which may leave them with a negative feeling about the casino causing them never to return. If a player’s pain point is approaching because their losses are mounting, then that person will be approached by a staff member and offered a free dinner to make them feel better about their experience at the casino, causing them to likely return and not leave feeling like they had wasted all of their money. The people offered the free dinner have no idea they are specifically chosen for this reason, and just think the casino gives away random dinners to anyone.

Through data mining, the Canadian Tire company has determined that people who purchase carbon-monoxide detectors, birdseed, and pads for the bottom of chair legs rarely miss a payment on a credit card. “If you show us what you buy, we can tell you who you are, maybe even better than you know yourself,” said a former Canadian Tire executive.[221] Cable and satellite TV companies know what shows are watched in your home, and digital recording services like Ti-Vo and AT&T’s U-verse know what shows you record. If your name is on the cable bill, then you are linked in a database to the shows that are watched and recorded. What you watch on television on a regular basis says a lot about you, and marketing companies like to know these things.

If you choose to use mainly cash for your day to day purchases of food, clothes, gas, etc, are these artificially intelligent systems and complex algorithms going to flag you for being suspicious? The government doesn’t like people who pay cash, since they are more difficult to monitor, so this alone could flag you for closer analysis.

The system will know you use cash for most purchases, because it will see a lack of purchases using a debit card or credit card. It may not know *what* you spend that cash on, but it surely notices if you cash your paychecks or withdraw large amounts of cash from your account on a regular basis, and this is seen as suspicious.

If a person is a political activist or a journalist who is causing trouble for the establishment or a particular president, could that person then be flagged for an audit in attempts to disrupt or discourage his activity? Could he be listed as a trouble maker so the next time he is pulled over for going five miles an hour over the speed limit, the officer will see that he is a “troublemaker” and give him the ticket instead of let him off with a warning?

Could these systems falsely list you as dangerous because of your political affiliations so when a future potential employer does a background check on you, the report lists you as a subversive person or an “extremist?” What if the employer disagrees with your political views or activism that shows up listed in your background check and chooses not to hire you because of this? You would have no way of knowing why they actually decided to hire someone else. If you return too many items to stores in order to get a refund, you may be identified as a “returnaholic,” and may be flagged as someone who buys a product to use it for a while and then returns it.[222]

Did you purchase a blow up doll as a joke for a friend’s bachelor party? Your name might then be added to certain mailing lists and you could now start receiving junk mail from sex shops or escort services.

There are numerous publicly available websites that disclose all kinds of information about people, sometimes for free, and others for only a small fee. These services offer people’s address, phone numbers, birthdates, criminal history, and much more. One service has a slogan saying they are “not your grandma’s phone book.” Some available features include an e-mail lookup which allows you to enter in someone’s e-mail address and then the website searches through a massive list of websites to see if any accounts were opened from that e-mail, and then lists them. A person’s Facebook page, and even Amazon.com and other online retailers such as Target.com can show up as having accounts linked to a person’s e-mail address.

If you pay a small monthly fee on some of these services you can get photos of the people as well and see what they've been posting online and get other information such as their income and credit score. Most of these services also offer what is called a reverse telephone directory, which allows you to enter in a person's phone number and it will then reveal the name and address of the person who has that number.

A Michigan University academic named Arthur R. Miller published a book back in 1971 titled *The Assault on Privacy* where he wrote, "The new information technologies seem to have given birth to a new social virus—'data-mania.' We must begin to realize what it means to live in a society that treats information as an economically desirable commodity and a source of power."

During a special interview on *CNBC* titled "Inside the Mind of Google," the company's CEO Eric Schmidt was asked about privacy concerns involving the information age and Google's domination of the Internet, to which he answered, "If you have something that you don't want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn't be doing it in the first place."

Web Bugs in Microsoft Word Documents

It was discovered that Microsoft Word documents, as well as Excel spreadsheets and PowerPoint slide show files, can be embedded with tracking tags called Web Bugs that gather information about who opens the documents and when.

The Web Bugs were discovered by Richard Smith, the chief technology officer at the Privacy Foundation. “What this means basically is that if an author of a document for whatever reason cares about who is reading it, he can bug it and then monitor it,” Smith said. “They can find out the IP address and host name of whoever is reading the document.”[223]

There are numerous ways that this tracking method can be used, such as embedding the bugs into company documents so they can be tracked to see who is reading them and can trace back the electronic trail if a document was leaked to the press, for example. The person who embedded the Web Bug can also track how often a particular file is opened. If someone cuts a portion of text from a document that is being tracked, and pastes it into a new document, then unbeknownst to them, the Web Bug is also transferred and continues its tracking capabilities. There is also talk of similar tracking bugs being placed in other file formats as well, such as MP3 files or video files.

Once a Web Bug is placed in a document (or other file), it transmits information over the Internet to the person who planted it so they can monitor the file. Since practically every computer is almost always online, this is extremely simple.

Cryptome.com, a hacker and whistleblower site created by John Young and Deborah Natsios in 1996, was taken off the web briefly in February

2010 as a punishment after they posted a secret handbook written by Microsoft that was meant only for law enforcement that educated them about certain Big Brother capabilities the software giant built into their products.[224]

The document, titled *Microsoft Online Services Global Criminal Compliance Handbook*, is only 22 pages long and was described by PC World magazine as a “data-hunting guide for dummies” that shows law enforcement how to access the vast information Microsoft stores about people when they use products like Hotmail, Windows Live Messenger, MSN, Microsoft Office Live, Xbox Live, and others.

Someone who knows how to maneuver through these systems can access all kinds of personal information such as user names and passwords, along with web browsing history, etc. Xbox Live, an online gaming platform for the Xbox 360 game console, stores a user’s full name, credit card information, phone number, email address, and more. There have actually been several Xbox video game systems recovered by police after they were able to track down the stolen Xbox when the thief logged on to Xbox Live, the online gaming community. In one instance police tracked the thief’s IP address and then were able to trace back which store their Live unit was purchased at. The person’s name was then found in the store’s computer linked to that item, and police went to the address and discovered the stolen Xbox 360.[225]

Tracking Documents You Print

While it should be common knowledge that the government and computer savvy hackers can track a person’s Internet usage and search through the contents of a person’s hard drive, most people would never imagine that a simple document printed from their computer could be traced back to them, especially if it were something like a page of text that had no personal information on it.

Laser printers are no longer expensive units only used by large companies for high page count documents and rapid printing. Laser printers have become common in households due to their quality and dramatically lower prices than in the past. But what nobody really knows is that most manufactures secretly designed a feature into laser printers and photocopiers that encode the printer’s serial number onto each page that is printed by using a series of tiny dots that most people can’t even see with the naked eye. Of course, consumers are not told of this process, and printer manufacturers like to keep quiet about it.

Peter Crean, a senior researcher at Xerox, admitted his company’s laser printers, copiers, and multifunction workstations, all secretly put the serial number of each machine coded in little yellow dots on every printout that can’t be seen by the naked eye. “It’s a trail back to you, like a license plate,” Crean said.[226]

The reason for the secret encoding is said to assist in fighting counterfeit money and fraudulent documents, and is a method that has been used since the 1980s. “The industry absolutely has been extraordinarily helpful [to law enforcement],” says Lorelei Pagano, a counterfeiting specialist with the US Secret Service, the agency in charge of tracking counterfeiters.[227]

Peter Crean of Xerox said the government worked with the company to develop the technology in the 1980s because of fears that their advanced copiers could easily be used to print counterfeit money.

It’s likely that the Secret Service or other government agencies can use the Carnivore system to send out pings searching for a specific printer serial number that can be detected if the printer is installed on a computer that is connected to the Internet. Of course, when a printer is purchased, the serial number is linked to the person’s credit card or checking account who bought it. While it may be tough to argue that this technology isn’t good for catching counterfeiters, what else could it be used for?

What if a government whistle blower prints out sensitive and damaging documents and anonymously (or so he thinks) sends them to the media? He could then, without even suspecting it, be linked to the documents. Did you design and print out some inflammatory leaflets about a powerful senator or congressperson and put them on people’s doors in your community? These flyers could be traced back to you.

Radiation Intelligence

People may think that if a computer isn’t connected to the Internet that their data is secure, but they are wrong again. Computer monitors, including LCD screens, give off a measurable amount of radiation that can be detected using what is called radiation intelligence (RINT) or Van Eck phreaking.

A Dutch computer scientist named Wim van Eck discovered this in 1985 and published the first paper on the subject, hence the term Van Eck phreaking. In computer hacking, the term “phreaking” is a slang term referring to hacking or experimenting with telecommunication systems, often in underhanded ways.

Some people thought that Van Eck phreaking could only be used on older tube monitors, and not newer LCD flat screens, but in April 2004, a research team at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom showed that LCD monitors were also vulnerable to electromagnetic eavesdropping. The team built equipment capable of doing this at the university lab for less than $2000.[228]

Van Eck phreaking was used to test the security of electronic voting systems in Brazil in 2009 and was found to be able to monitor the voting machines, thus compromising the secrecy of the voting process.[229]

Keyboard Loggers and Backdoors

Commercially available software programs called keyboard loggers can easily be installed on someone’s computer which then can capture and record everything the person does, including what they type in a word processor, their e-mails, and even bank passwords and login information for other sensitive accounts. Such programs are often used by suspicious spouses who want to find evidence of their significant other cheating, but more sinister motives such as stealing people’s passwords or business data are also reasons people install the software on others’ computers.

Such software also often creates a secret backdoor allowing people to access a person’s computer, and their files without them knowing. In 1999, NetBus software was used to plant child pornography on the computer of a professor at Lund University in Sweden. Thousands of images were found by the system administrators, and of course, they assumed that the professor had downloaded them himself. The professor was fired and charged with possession of child pornography but later acquitted after authorities had learned that NetBus had been installed on his computer allowing someone to control it without his knowledge or consent.[230] The man was reported to have suffered severe psychological damage from the incident, which is completely understandable. After all, if such disgusting material was discovered on your computer and you were charged with possession of child pornography but knew you didn’t have anything to do with it, you would certainly have a difficult time defending yourself and clearing your name from being attached to such a deplorable act.

In Neil Strauss’s 2005 bestselling book, *The Game*, which is a memoir of his time hanging out with pickup artists and guys who were teaching seminars on how to meet girls, he said that he discovered someone had put a keyboard logger on his computer and suspected it was one of his roommates who had started his own rival seminar company. Such

businesses can be fairly lucrative and Strauss’s roommate wanted to corner the market and learn what his competition was doing.

Photocopier Hard Drives

A story airing on *CBS News* in April 2010 showed a warehouse in New Jersey that was described as having 6,000 used photocopiers that were for sale, and almost every one of them had a hard drive that recorded every single document that was photocopied on each machine during its existence. Apparently all digital copiers built since 2002 contain hard drives which can store tens of thousands of images.

Think of the kinds of documents that people copy. Bank statements, credit card statements, income tax forms, birth certificates, and more. All of which are stored on the machine's hard drive without your knowledge or consent.

The *CBS News* segment equipped a man with a hidden camera and sent him off shopping to buy a used copier from one of dozens of large warehouses that are in the used copier business. He bought three different copiers for around $300 each. After all the contents of the hard drives were examined, it was revealed that one machine came from the sex crimes division from the police department in Buffalo, New York. Some documents on the hard drive were copies of domestic violence disputes and lists of sex offenders. Other documents were lists of targets in a drug investigation. On another machine they found 95 pages of pay stubs complete with people's names, addresses, and social security numbers.

The third machine, they discovered, came from a health insurance company, and they were able to print out hundreds of pages of confidential medical records including people's prescriptions, blood test results, and a cancer diagnosis.

Ordering a Pizza in the Future

A funny, yet disturbing, video can be found on YouTube if you search for “ordering a pizza in the future” that depicts someone calling a fictitious pizza place to order a pizza and discovers just how all-knowing Big Brother is. When a man calls into the restaurant, the person on the other end of the phone picks up and already knows who he is, where he lives, and the last time he called. When the customer orders two double meat pizzas he is informed that there will be an additional $20 charge on his bill because the computer system has access to his health records and shows that he has high blood pressure and high cholesterol. The screen then shows the man’s bill includes the $20 “health surcharge” because his health insurance provider now knows he’s ordering a fatty pizza.

The man is also informed of an added $15 “delivery surcharge” to cover the added risk to their delivery driver for delivering to an orange zone which signified a high crime neighborhood. When the customer surprisingly asks to clarify that he lives in an orange zone, the order-taker acknowledges a recent change in status due to a robbery near his home that the computer database shows.

When the customer starts complaining about his $67 bill for two pizzas, the woman on the line pulls up his recent purchase of two tickets to Hawaii and hassles him about it, saying he shouldn’t complain about spending that much money on two pizzas because he just spent $800 on plane tickets for a vacation.

He then changes his order to a vegetarian pizza to save money since he won’t have to pay the extra $20 health surcharge, and the order taker says it’s a good choice and will be good for his waist line as she pulls up a screen

of “recent purchases” and shows that the man just bought a new pair of jeans with a 42 inch waistline.

The video is great satire showing just how invasive Big Brother can be, and how with everything we do being stored in databases, the information can easily be sold to practically anyone and used in ways we would prefer it not be. There have been reports years ago that certain pizza delivery restaurants were checking people’s names who ordered pizzas to see if they had any warrants out for their arrest when they paid with a credit card over the phone. If a warrant was listed, instead of having a pizza delivery driver show up to the house, the police would arrive to arrest the person.

Orwellian Government Programs

While the “alphabet agencies” (CIA, NSA, FBI, ATF, etc.) have access to incredible Big Brother technology and countless commercial and government databases, there are also creepy Orwellian projects that have been secretly created and funded by elements within the government for the purpose of maintaining the power of the ruling elite.

Many of these programs used (and continue to use) underhanded and often illegal methods to accomplish their goals which range from controlling the mainstream media to covertly trying to smear, intimidate, blackmail, or even assassinate people who pose a threat to the establishment.

Often Orwellian goals are defended by the government claiming that such measures are needed to keep people safe from criminals or terrorists, but it is often the very people working for these programs who are the criminals. Immediately after the September 11th attacks of 2001, the government fear-mongering began and was used as a justification for subverting the Constitution of the United States and implementing the long-awaited Orwellian dreams of the establishment. Any resistance to the new tyrannical, invasive, and unconstitutional measures was attacked as being unpatriotic. Officials would continuously say that we needed to give up some of our freedoms in order to keep people safe from terrorists, who were said to lurk around every corner.

Thomas Jefferson famously stated, “Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.” Jefferson obviously knew the strategy of tyrannical leaders and how they use fear-mongering as a justification to increase their power and trample over their population.

Operation Mockingbird

A major system that Big Brother uses to control the population is the mainstream media. This amazing propaganda machine has the ability to shape the culture and the mindset of a nation by the information the owners choose to broadcast on a daily basis. The character Howard Beal famously ranted about the power of television in the 1976 film *Network*, telling his audience, “This tube can make or break presidents, popes, prime ministers...This tube is the most awesome God-damned force in the whole godless world, and woe is us if it ever falls into the hands of the wrong people.”

Intelligent people have varying degrees of awareness that the US government is in bed with the mainstream media, and anyone who monitors the news media with discerning eyes can often easily identify specific stories and strategies that are being used to persuade and intimidate the population. As enlightened people know, the mainstream media operates both as a propaganda arm for the establishment, as well as a gate-keeper that prevents certain information from being disseminated to the masses.

The evidence for these charges is massive and irrefutable. The most damning of which comes from the findings of a Senate Select Committee in 1975 that investigated the American government’s covert influence over the mainstream media, including broadcast news, newspapers, and magazines. The committee, called the Church Committee, published its findings in 1976 and uncovered what was called Operation Mockingbird, which involved the CIA secretly paying editors of major media institutions and popular journalists to act as gate-keepers and propagandists for the establishment.

“The invention of print, however, made it easier to manipulate public opinion, and the film and radio carried the process further.”[231] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

In 1948 an espionage and counter-intelligence branch within the CIA was created for the purpose of “propaganda, economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance groups, and support of indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the free world.”[232]

Later that year Operation Mockingbird was established to influence the domestic and foreign media. Philip Graham, the owner of *The Washington Post*, was recruited to help run the project within the industry and develop a network of assets who would go along with the program. After 1953, the network had influence over twenty-five different newspapers and wire agencies. The Mockingbird program also involved all major television stations.

Thomas Braden, who was the head of the International Organizations Division of the CIA, played a substantial role in Operation Mockingbird and later revealed, “If the director of the CIA wanted to extend a present, say, to someone in Europe—a Labour leader—suppose he just thought, this man can use fifty thousand dollars, he’s working well and doing a good job—he could hand it to him and never have to account to anybody... There was simply no limit to the money it could spend and no limit to the people it could hire and no limit to the activities it could decide were necessary to conduct the war—the secret war...It was multinational.”[233]

According to the Church Committee’s report, which was published in 1976, “The CIA currently maintains a network of several hundred individuals around the world who provide intelligence for the CIA and at times attempt to influence opinion through the use of covert propaganda. These individuals provide the CIA with direct access to a large number of newspapers and periodicals, scores of press services and news agencies,

radio and television stations, commercial book publishers, and other foreign media outlets."[234]

The committee also concluded that the cost of the program was approximately $265 million a year, which when adjusted for inflation as of 2010 means that in today's dollars the program was spending an astounding one billion dollars a year.

One year after the Church Committee released its findings, *Rolling Stone* magazine published an article on Operation Mockingbird and named various prominent journalists who were alleged to be involved with it. Some of these included Ben Bradlee, who wrote for *Newsweek*, Stewart Alsop who wrote for the *New York Herald Tribune*, James Reston (*New York Times*), Charles Douglas Jackson (*Time Magazine*), Walter Pincus (*Washington Post*), William C. Baggs (*The Miami News*), and others.

In 2007, a large amount of CIA documents called the "Family Jewels" were declassified and released by the National Security Archive, which revealed that the CIA had routinely wiretapped Washington-based news reporters and committed other shady and illegal practices. The targets of these wiretaps were most likely seen as threats to the establishment and were not playing along with the propaganda and gate-keeping efforts within the media establishment, so the CIA wanted to keep a close eye on them and gather information on their sources and future stories.

As with nearly every other case of rampant institutional corruption in government agencies, the CIA claims to have ended Operation Mockingbird and their influence over the media—another claim that is laughable. The power of the mass media to control society is too great for the establishment not to do everything they can to harness it for their own benefit.

The man credited with being the father of public relations is named Edward Bernays, who was a master of social engineering, propaganda, and shaping public opinion early in the twentieth century. He was also the nephew of the famous psychologist Sigmund Freud. In 1928 Bernays

published a book titled *Propaganda* that described his methods for shaping public opinion and people's attitudes and behaviors. A quick glance over several of the excerpts from *Propaganda* reveals just how powerful the control of information is to a government.

Bernays wrote, "Those who manipulate the unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. This is a logical result of the way in which our democratic society is organized. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society. In almost every act of our lives whether in the sphere of politics or business in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires that control the public mind."[235]

This is strikingly parallel to what George Orwell wrote in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* when he said, "All the beliefs, habits, tastes, emotions, mental attitudes that characterize our time are really designed to sustain the mystique of the Party and prevent the true nature of present-day society from being perceived."[236]

Bernays can be largely credited with making cigarette smoking socially acceptable, and appear to be cool. In 1929 he was hired by the American Tobacco Company, which was one of the original 12 companies comprising the Dow Jones Industrial Average, in order to help promote smoking. The way he did this was by hiring a group of attractive female models to march in the New York City parade and planned to have them light up cigarettes to shatter the taboo of women smoking in public. Bernays also contacted the press saying that the women would light up "Torches of Freedom" in support of women's rights. The next day, the *New York Times* ran an article headlined, "Group of Girls Puff at Cigarettes as a Gesture of Freedom."[237]

Bernays was also the man responsible for diamond rings being synonymous with marriage and love. The De Beers diamond company hired him to shape the public’s mind into associating a diamond ring with love. Before this, women’s wedding rings were primarily a simple gold band, but Bernays was able to use propaganda to convince both men and women that if a man is to propose to a woman, he needs to do so with a large diamond ring.

Bernays sat on the board of the U.S. Committee on Public Information (CPI), which was a government agency set up specifically to influence public opinion in support of America’s role in World War I and to help sell the war to the public.

Only a complete moron would think that government agencies don’t continue to massively influence the mainstream media today. Even those who expect such manipulation are often surprised to learn the extent of it and its power.

COINTELPRO

A truly Orwellian scheme conducted by the FBI admittedly between 1956 and 1971 is COINTELPRO (an acronym for Counter Intelligence Program) which illegally investigated and disrupted political organizations, religious organizations, civil liberty groups, anti-war groups and others that were deemed problematic by the establishment. COINTELPRO and the illegal and sinister activities carried out by the program are fully admitted by the FBI, although after its discovery they claimed that they stopped using such tactics. Common sense says otherwise.

The original program targeted people and groups seen as “subversive” or that threatened the establishment’s hold on power. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders in the civil rights movement and those associated with the NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), and the Southern Poverty Law Center were targeted, as well as groups protesting the Vietnam War, including many college students. J. Edgar Hoover, who was the head of the FBI at the time, had ordered agents to “expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize” the leaders and activities of such groups.[238] It’s important to understand that most of the groups and the targets of COINTELPRO were not doing anything threatening, criminal, or dangerous, and were only trying to change society for the better by encouraging civil rights or protesting the Vietnam War. But this is not what the establishment wanted.

Agents involved in the program did a lot of illegal, underhanded, and dirty tricks to disrupt their targets; including mailing fraudulent letters to leaders of organizations claiming to be from someone else with accusations that someone’s wife was cheating on them. Illegal wire taps, spreading false and slanderous rumors about people, frame-ups, vandalism, and worse were all common and are still methods used today by elite law enforcement and intelligence agents to disrupt, discourage or discredit their targets.

The PATRIOT ACT

"The consciousness of being at war, and therefore in danger, makes the handing-over of all power to a small caste seem the natural, unavoidable condition of survival."[239] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

In response to the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks on America, Congress quickly passed the PATRIOT ACT on October 26, 2001, which granted the government a wide range of unconstitutional powers so officials could allegedly prevent further terrorist attacks. Any resistance to the bill was countered with claims that those people were un-American or wanted to help the terrorists. The very name for the bill, the "Patriot Act" was chosen to give the impression that if you were a patriotic American who loved his country, then you should support the bill. (Full title: *The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001*, which was designed to spell, "USA PATRIOT Act")

The bill passed 98-1 in the Senate, and 356-66 in the House of Representatives. Senator Russ Feingold of Wisconsin was the only United States Senator to vote against the bill because he saw some of the provisions stripped civil liberties guaranteed by the Constitution.

Feingold said, "Of course, there is no doubt that if we lived in a police state, it would be easier to catch terrorists. If we lived in a country that allowed the police to search your home at any time for any reason; if we lived in a country that allowed the government to open your mail, eavesdrop on your phone conversations, or intercept your e-mail communications; if we lived in a country that allowed the government to hold people in jail indefinitely based on what they write or think, or based on mere suspicion that they are up to no good, then the government would no doubt discover and arrest more terrorists. But that probably would not be a country in which we would want to live."[240]

The bill is 342 pages long with 1,016 sections and amended over 15 federal statutes, and contains numerous Executive Orders, regulations, and new policies aimed at "fighting terrorism." Many of these new powers allowed the government to engage in secret surveillance, and even commit "sneak and peeks" which means that a person's house can be searched without his knowledge, while that person is not even served with a search warrant (or aware the search took place) until months later. If a neighbor happens to see a sneak and peak going on and starts asking questions, then that person can be placed under a gag order and legally cannot mention anything to anybody about what they saw.

The Patriot Act even allowed for people to be detained for months without even being charged with a crime, a clear violation of the Sixth Amendment. In the first year after it was signed into law, more than 1,000 non-citizens were secretly detained without being charged and their identities were not released. Thousands more were placed under surveillance.

"In the vast majority of cases there was no trial, no report of the arrest. People simply disappeared."[241]

—*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

In a speech to a Senate Judiciary Committee on December 6, 2001, John Ashcroft (the Attorney General at the time), tried to demonize people who voiced opposition or disagreement with the powers granted by the Patriot Act saying, "to those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty; my message is this: Your tactics only aid terrorists—for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve. They give ammunition to

America’s enemies, and pause to America’s friends. They encourage people of good will to remain silent in the face of evil.”

Ashcroft’s claim is in stark contrast to what Thomas Jefferson said about liberty, when he said that people who give up freedom in order to gain security will have neither freedom nor security.

In section 802 of the Patriot Act under the *Definition of Domestic Terrorism*, the language defines the new meaning of the term “domestic terrorist.” It reads:

`(5) the term `domestic terrorism' means activities that–

`(A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State;

`(B) appear to be intended–

`(i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;

`(ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or

`(iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping;

While everyone would agree that kidnapping, assassination or mass destruction would certainly be terrorism, “intimidating” the civilian population or attempting to influence policy of the government by

“coercion or intimidation” could be applied to ordinary political rhetoric. It has been said by critics of the Patriot Act that the Bush administration was guilty of intimidating the population by fabricating and exaggerating threats that led to the Iraq War. Others argue the Patriot Act was a power grab by the government and there were already provisions in place to investigate and prevent terrorist attacks, and capture the perpetrators.

Constitutional Protections Eliminated by the Patriot Act

First Amendment Freedom of religion, speech, assembly, and the press.

Fourth Amendment

Freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures.

Fifth Amendment

No person to be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law.

Sixth Amendment

Right to a speedy public trial by an impartial jury, right to be informed of the facts of the accusation, right to confront witnesses and have the assistance of counsel.

Eighth Amendment

No excessive bail or cruel and unusual punishment shall be imposed.

Fourteenth Amendment All persons (citizens and noncitizens) within the US are entitled to due process and the equal protection of the laws.

Information Awareness Office

The Information Awareness Office (IAO) was an intelligence-based office within the United States government that was created in January 2002, by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to work on surveillance and information technology to discover and track “terrorists.” It was started under the direction of John Poindexter, who was the former National Security Advisor for President Reagan.

Poindexter wanted the system to analyze people’s travel patterns, money transactions, and even unusual medical activities such as treatment for anthrax sores, which could mean that someone was cooking up the poison themselves. Poindexter himself has a shady past, and during the Iran-Contra hearings he responded to questions 184 times saying he didn’t remember the details.

The logo for the IAO cannot get any more Orwellian, and consists of a pyramid with an all-seeing eye on the top, similar to the one on the back of the one dollar bill, with a beam of light shining out of it and covering the entire globe which is shown in the foreground. The office originally used the term Total Information Awareness as its goal, but was later changed to Terrorism Information Awareness to sound less Orwellian.

When news was first uncovered about the Information Awareness Office and its goals of creating huge databases from personal information of every person in the United States, including e-mails, phone records, and medical records, all without a search warrant, civil libertarians expressed concern.[242]

The office also called for a massive biometric program including facial recognition systems and cameras that can identify people by the way they

walk. A special data mining system was also implemented for the IAO which they called Evidence Extraction and Link Discovery that can find relationships "among people, organizations, places, and things." The CIA created a data-mining program called Quantum Leap, which one official told *Fortune* magazine was, "so powerful it's scary."[243]

New York Times columnist William Safire wrote, "This is not some far-out Orwellian scenario. It is what will happen to your personal freedom in the next few weeks if John Poindexter gets the unprecedented power he seeks. This ring-knocking master of deceit is back again with a plan even more scandalous than Iran-Contra."[244]

In 2003, after much public criticism, the office had its funding cut and it was supposedly shut down, although its objectives and operations have continued under other names and in other departments.[245] [246]

As common sense suggests, data mines and surveillance technologies have a high potential for abuse. For example, police officers are known to do background checks on attractive girls they meet in order to learn things about them. In the field, such a practice is called running plates for dates. Police have also routinely sold information illegally for cash to private investigators and have used confidential records to undermine political opponents.

In 2002, a DEA agent named Emilio Calatayud was sentenced to over two years in prison for selling information to private investigators.[247] In the year 2000 a lieutenant in the Charles County, Maryland sheriff's department used private information from the department's databases to influence local elections by releasing information about candidates he didn't like. The lieutenant even deleted a disorderly conduct arrest from the record of the candidate he wanted to become the next sheriff.[248]

In the History Channel's show *Gangland*, which chronicles the histories and activities of different gangs, it was revealed that members of the Detroit gang, the "Best Friends," would pay corrupt cops to find out

where rival gang members or drug dealers lived by giving the cops people's license plate numbers or phone numbers. The corrupt cops would then run a background check on them using their internal computers, and give the addresses to the gang. The Best Friends would then assassinate these people.

Stephen Nash started a police accountability group called CopWatch in Denver, Colorado to help prevent police misconduct by monitoring police activity and videotaping police when they were encountering suspects. Because of this, Nash was secretly targeted by police in their database and labeled a "criminal extremist." He only found this out after an unidentified informant in the police department printed out his secret files and sent him a copy. A copy was also sent to a lawyer at the ACLU. Even Nash's wife was labeled a "criminal extremist."

The ACLU contended that the Denver Police Department has inappropriately smeared the reputations of multiple peaceful advocates of nonviolent social change by falsely labeling them or their organizations as "criminal extremist" in their internal databases.[249]

"The few pages of documents we have obtained so far provide an alarming glimpse of the kinds of information the Denver Police Department is recording and the kinds of peaceful protest activity it is monitoring inappropriately," said Mark Silverstein, an ACLU Legal Director.[250]

Echelon

The world’s most sophisticated electronic spy system is called Echelon and refers to an advanced system that analyzes nearly every kind of electronic communication in the world, from telephone calls, to even faxes and text messages. A similar system called Carnivore is used for monitoring the Internet, and is likely used in conjunction with Echelon to monitor web traffic, e-mail messages, and websites.

Echelon basically uses systems to intercept most of the world’s communication signals by connecting to commercial satellites or trunk communication lines. There had been rumors of the system and its capabilities in the 1980s, and in 1983 James Bamford discussed such technology in his book *The Puzzle Palace* which focused on the National Security Agency. In 1998, the European Parliament published a report titled *An Appraisal of Technologies of Political Control,* that showed the existence of the massive spy system which would later be known as Echelon.[251]

This system is so powerful, for decades, and even today, some people don’t believe it is capable of doing what it does. By using Echelon it is extremely simple for the FBI, CIA, NSA, or any number of other agencies to tap into anyone’s phone and automatically record conversations between parties. Of course there is supposed to be a warrant for such activities, but routinely this requirement is ignored under the guise of “national security.” But Echelon is much more than a simple wire tapping device.

Echelon monitors millions of phone calls in multiple languages at the same time and can actually pick out specific people’s voices from among the millions of calls. This is called a voiceprint, and if a specific individual is targeted for whatever reason, if they talk on a telephone, whether it’s a

payphone on the side of the street, or a complete stranger's cell phone, within seconds their voiceprint will be detected and the system will identify their location and begin recording their conversation.

Equally amazing is Echelon's ability to detect strings of specific keywords from the millions of conversations occurring, and can then record those conversations and identify the parties and their location. For example, if two people are having a conversation and they use several words in succession, such as assassinate, president, rifle, and secret service, then in all likelihood that conversation will be detected by the Echelon system and will be flagged for further analysis to determine whether the people were talking about a recent news event, or if they are potentially dangerous individuals who are planning to assassinate the president.

If this seems too complicated, then think again. Google can find a specific set of keywords out of the billions and billions of web pages in a fraction of a second after you search for them. Also, an app for the iPhone called Shazam was released in 2009 that allows people to use their iPhone to pull up the name of practically any song they hear, whether it's on the radio, or playing on a TV commercial. It doesn't matter if there is background noise, or people talking while it is detecting the song, the app still works, and this is all from one tiny iPhone. Just from hearing a few seconds of almost any song, the app identifies it out of the millions of songs available, and then lists the song's title, artist's name, and the album it's found on.

The History Channel aired a show called *Echelon: The Most Secret Spy System* in 2003 that included interviews with intelligence expert James Bamford, and even Mike Hayden, the National Security Agency Director, and in the show it was discussed how Echelon flagged an innocent conversation someone was having because it happened to include several keywords the system was programmed to flag. When a mother was talking about how her son bombed at the school play, meaning he messed up his lines and gave a horrible performance, Echelon detected the keywords "bomb" and "school" and so her conversation was flagged for further analysis to determine if it was a threat.

In the 1998 thriller *Enemy of the State*, Gene Hackman's character makes a comment about this technology saying, "Fort Meade has 18 acres of mainframe computers underground. You're talking to your wife on the phone and you use the word 'bomb,' 'president,' 'Allah,' any of a hundred keywords, the computer recognizes it, automatically records it, red-flags it for analysis. And that was twenty years ago." Most of the viewers thought this was just a Hollywood fantasy, but David Marconi, the screenwriter was obviously aware of Echelon, and a lot of the technology in *Enemy of the State* was based on actual systems.

A respected newspaper in Germany called the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) reported that Echelon had collected information at least three months before the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 about how Middle Eastern terrorists were planning to hijack aircraft and use them as weapons against symbols of American culture.[252]

Many critics believe Echelon has also been used for political spying, commercial espionage, and blackmail. The *Baltimore Sun* published an article in 1995 talking about how the aerospace company Airbus lost a $6 billion dollar contract with Saudi Arabia in 1994 as a result of the NSA using Echelon to learn that Airbus executives had bribed Saudi officials in attempts to secure the contract.[253] A British journalist named Duncan Campbell along with a New Zealand journalist named Nicky Hager investigated Echelon's use for industrial espionage in the 1990s and uncovered that Americans used the system to illegally spy on a German company called Enercon in order to learn what advanced technology the company was developing for wind turbines.[254] They also say a Belgian company called Lernout & Hauspie had trade secrets stolen from them regarding speech recognition technology because executives were being illegally monitored by Echelon.

In 2001, a European Parliament committee suggested that politicians use cryptography in their communication with each other to protect their privacy from eavesdroppers using Echelon.[255]

Imagine how this system can be, and most likely has been, abused. The president could order the CIA or NSA to look for keywords spoken from specific people to determine if they were aware of a sensitive issue, scandal, or crime. For example, the system could easily implement a search for the keywords “Bilderberg group” or “Bohemian Grove” and cross-reference them with the voiceprints of every senator and congressman, so that if any of them were to mention these words during a telephone conversation, then that conversation could be recorded and later listened to. Echelon technicians could know exactly what those people were saying about these very powerful and secretive groups that shape the political and social landscape from behind the scenes.

“Every citizen, or at least every citizen important enough to be worth watching, could be kept for twenty-four hours a day under the eyes of the police.”[256]

—*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Is a certain senator planning on raising the issue of the Bilderberg group on the floor of the Senate, blowing their decades of cover? If so, then a blackmail, intimidation, or coercion scheme would likely be put in place to prevent this security breach and save the Bilderberg group from the unwanted attention that such public comments would bring them. (If you are not familiar with the Bilderberg group then I advise you to research it on your own or read my previous book, *The Resistance Manifesto*.)

Other Snooping Technology

In an episode of *Conspiracy Theory*, a television show hosted by Jesse Ventura, a man named Elwood Norris discussed technology he designs for spy agencies and revealed some of his devices' incredible capabilities. Norris first shows Ventura what looks like a small rock and explains, "I can drive by your house…toss that in your front yard…it picks up your security code from your alarm, your cell phone number, and the code to your garage door opener." When Ventura asked who uses such a device, Norris said that the "alphabet agencies" use it, meaning the FBI, CIA, NSA, and other security agencies. The information picked up and stored in the fake rock can then allow investigators (or stalkers or rogue agents) to access a person's home and disable their alarm system, all without being noticed.

National DNA Database

It may become the law one day that every person in America (and perhaps the world) will be required to give a DNA sample that will be stored in a database similar to fingerprint databases. Police officers in numerous states in America have been taking DNA samples of everyone arrested, arguing that it's no different than fingerprints, but others are worried by the practice and see it as a major privacy invasion.

President Obama has publicly stated that he supports forced DNA sampling of those arrested for any reason, saying "It's the right thing to do. This is where the national registry becomes so important, because what you have is individual states—they may have a database, but if they're not sharing it with the state next door, you've got a guy from Illinois driving over into Indiana, and they're not talking to each other."[257]

We know that secretive government agencies often abuse their power, so many wonder what kind of abuses a national DNA database would lead to. With everyone's DNA on file, could certain government agencies then secretly do tests on the DNA or even create human clones from the samples without anyone knowing about it? Could people's DNA be used to see if they have any diseases or are prone to aggressive activities? Could people be unfairly profiled or labeled because of their DNA analysis?

Tax Amnesty Ad

In May 2010, a television ad began airing in Pennsylvania attempting to scare people who haven’t paid their taxes into finally paying them. The ad begins with a shot of the earth which then has a crosshair appear over the United States and begins to zoom in as a computerized voice says, “Your name is Tom. You live just off of Fifth Street. Nice car Tom. Nice house.” It then goes on to say that if Tom pays his back taxes of over $4000 that he owes to the state of Pennsylvania in the next month, that they will waive the late penalty. The whole time the computerized voice is explaining this in the 30 second ad, the cross hair continues to zoom in from a picture of the whole earth, to the state of Pennsylvania, and then continues onto a single house at which point the words “Subject Located” flash on the screen, and the computerized voice says, “because we do know who you are.”[258]

Insider Revelations

Occasionally a high-level insider in government will make a startling and revealing statement about the way government actually functions. One of the most historic revelations was made by President Dwight D. Eisenhower during his departure address in 1961 where he coined the term “military industrial complex.”

Eisenhower warned, “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”

The core of Eisenhower’s warning was when he said, “We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.”

President John F. Kennedy also made a profound and even more chilling statement about the behind-the-scenes power structure when speaking to the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Audio of this statement is available on the Internet if you search for “JFK on secret societies.” While we have all heard several historic JFK sound bites, few in comparison have heard this amazing and candid admission where he said, “The very word ‘secrecy’ is repugnant in a free and open society; and we are as a people inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths, and to secret proceedings. We decided long ago that the dangers of excessive and unwarranted concealment of pertinent facts far outweighed the dangers which are cited to justify it…For we are opposed

around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covered means for expanding its sphere of influence, on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerillas by night instead of armies by day.”

He continued, “It is a system which has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit, highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific and political operations; its preparations concealed, not published, its mistakes are buried not headlined, its dissenters are silenced not praised, no expenditure is questioned, no rumor is printed, no secret is revealed…I am not asking for your newspapers to support an administration. But I am asking your help in the tremendous task of informing and alerting the American people.”[259]

President Kennedy’s comments echoed what President Woodrow Wilson had said decades earlier in his 1913 book, *The New Freedom: A Call For the Emancipation of the Generous Energies of a People*. The most widely quoted passage from this book is where Wilson wrote, “Since I entered politics, I have chiefly had men’s views confided to me privately. Some of the biggest men in the United States, in the field of commerce and manufacturing, are afraid of something. They know that there is a power somewhere so organized, so subtle, so watchful, so interlocked, so complete, so pervasive, that they better not speak above their breath when they speak in condemnation of it.”

There are a handful of other revealing and unsettling quotes made by high-powered politicians around the world who will occasionally, and perhaps very subtly, betray the establishment’s power structure and give people a glimpse of what kind of a system we are really dealing with. Many believe that JFK, Woodrow Wilson and others were referring to the infamous Illuminati secret society, and think that a modern version of the group continues to exist today in the form of secretive good ol’ boy networks focused on preserving their wealth and power at any cost. (Read

my book, *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* for more information on this fascinating subject.)

The Nanny State

The term “nanny state” refers to government regulations and laws that are widely perceived to be overbearing and restrictive in terms of their attempts to regulate economic or social activities that are better off left alone without the government sticking their nose in them. The term comes from the idea that the government is acting as a nanny, trying to protect citizens from themselves, as a nanny does for a small child.

Big Brother technology has allowed the implementation of numerous nanny state policies that impose extra taxes and fines on people for violating laws such as speed limits, driving in bus lanes, or having expired parking meters. There are also Big Brother policies that keep track of the amount of ammunition gun owners purchase, and laws have been proposed to govern the kinds of ingredients in food with the hopes of making people healthier.

Of course, there need to be laws regulating and prohibiting harmful practices from being used by private industries, but as you will see in the following pages, many of these nanny state measures aren’t necessarily designed to keep people safe; they are designed to make the government more money.

Red Light Cameras

Everyone is familiar with the dreaded “red light cameras” that automatically issue tickets to people if they drive through an intersection equipped with the system. As of mid 2010, there were more than 441 communities in the United States using the Big Brother ticket machines, including Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, DC.[260]

Often the tickets for an infraction are $400 or $500 dollars and come to you in the mail, along with several photos of your vehicle from different angles showing you in the intersection while the light is red. There have been many accusations that the intersections equipped with these cameras have the timing of the yellow light reduced in order to catch more people accidentally blowing the red light, thus generating more money for the city.

Some states have prohibited the cameras including Nevada, New Hampshire, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.[261] Many other countries around the world also use the red light camera technology, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Taiwan, India, and Israel.

The red light cameras were just the beginning of the Big Brother systems that would later be implemented to automatically issue large fines to motorists.

Bus Lane Enforcement

Some cities are using license plate reading devices to issue tickets to motorists automatically if they stop in a bus lane or other prohibited areas. For example, New York City began testing a system to detect whether taxis stopped in bus lanes to pick up passengers. Taxis frequently use bus lanes, which they're not supposed to do, but now they will automatically be fined $150 for each infraction.[262] These systems cross reference every license plate that enters the restricted zone with a list of approved vehicles, and if the vehicle isn't a bus, police car, or emergency vehicle, the driver will be automatically issued a fine.

Hundreds of buses in London, England are equipped with cameras that capture the license plates of vehicles that stop in no-stopping zones, and those drivers are also automatically issued tickets.[263]

Catching Speeders

Motorists are sadly familiar with speed traps, and even the rare incident of airplanes being used to bust speeders on freeways, but until recently most people never envisioned systems that would automatically ticket drivers using license plate reading cameras.

An area in London began testing the “SpeedSpike” system in two different stretches of roads which calculates the average speed between two designated points and can then automatically issue speeding tickets to motorists. The system was created by an American company called PIPS Technology Ltd.[264]

The system uses license plate reader technology to log each vehicle’s license plate when it passes the first camera, and then captures it again when it passes the second camera at a different point in the road. It then mathematically figures out each vehicle’s average speed depending on the amount of time it took to get between the two cameras, and if the average speed is deemed too fast, then the system knows the vehicle was traveling above the speed limit, and issues a ticket to the owner.

Officials plan on using the system to enforce speed limits on main roads, as well as school zones. When it was first tested, officials said they couldn’t publicly comment on it because of “commercial confidentiality.” The British Automobile Association said it was, “a natural evolution of the technology that is out there” and didn’t think it was Orwellian or sinister.

These systems will probably become as common as red light cameras in the future, striking fear into the hearts (and wallets) of motorists everywhere. Police officers at the Dallas Police Department in Dallas, Texas, were the first to begin using E-ticket machines, rather than the usual

ticket pad that required tickets to be filled out by hand that most people are all used to. The E-ticket machines allow officers to write tickets faster and simplify the process of entering them into computer databases, which means—the faster the government can get your money.[265]

There will probably come a time in the not-so-distant future where tickets are automatically debited from your checking account, or if you don't have any money in the bank, then the fine could be levied against one of your credit cards, and if this happens then you'll have to pay interest on the ticket as well.

Automatic Parking Tickets

At some point in the Orwellian New World Order we will see parking meters that automatically ticket vehicles the second the meter expires. This is extremely simple since the meters will be equipped with cameras that capture the license plate number of the vehicle that is parked in the spot at the time the meter expires. As people know, if a parking meter expires and your vehicle is still parked in the spot, you will only get a ticket if a “meter maid” spots the expired meter. Your vehicle could sit in front of the expired meter for thirty minutes or even several hours before the meter maid does their rounds and sees it, but the Orwellian parking meters will fine you the moment your time runs out and will likely issue new fines every few minutes, or every hour, depending on how long the vehicle remains in the parking spot after the meter has expired.

Black Boxes in Automobiles

After the highly publicized problem of accelerators sticking in certain Toyota vehicles in 2010 causing several accidents and deaths since 2007, the Highway Traffic Safety Administration chief David Strickland mentioned that the government was considering making “black boxes” mandatory for all new vehicles which will record data such as a vehicle’s speed and breaking effort in order to reconstruct what happened immediately preceding an accident if one were to occur.[266] Toyota recalled more than 8 million vehicles to eliminate the risk of sticking accelerating pedals and the problem was a major story for months.

Black boxes on vehicles could do more than just record information in the event of an accident. GPS systems installed on vehicles can detect what speed the vehicle is traveling at, and could be used to issue automatic speeding tickets. The GPS systems could easily detect the speed limit for just about any street the vehicle is on, and could automatically issue tickets if the car exceeds the limit. If a car has unpaid parking tickets or an expired registration, then GPS black boxes could also disable the vehicle until these payments were made.

The Virginia Court of Appeals ruled in September 2010 that police did not need a warrant to secretly attach a GPS tracking device on a suspect’s vehicle in order to monitor its every move. The Fourth Amendment of the Constitution clearly bans unreasonable searches and seizures, but the Virginia court ruled that because there is no expectation of privacy on a public street, a suspect has no protection against the hi-tech monitoring of their whereabouts. Judge Randolph A. Beales wrote in the opinion that “police used the GPS device to crack this case by tracking the appellant on the public roadways—which they could, of course, do in person any day of the week at any hour without obtaining a warrant.”[267]

The Ninth Circuit Court in California has also ruled that secretly placing a GPS device on a vehicle wasn't a Fourth Amendment violation, but the Washington, D.C. Circuit Court held that it was, so this issue could head to the Supreme Court. Since the Virginia and California courts ruled that secretly placing a GPS device on a suspect's vehicle without a warrant is within the law, then one must wonder whether a similar policy will go into effect concerning the use of GPS systems built into people's cell phones. Currently law enforcement officials are legally required to obtain a warrant to track someone's cell phone, but in the New World Order the courts may rule there is no reasonable expectation of privacy considering a person's whereabouts if they are carrying a cell phone since they know it contains a GPS tracking device. Where is the line going to be drawn?

Since there is no reasonable expectation of privacy when someone is standing on a public street, it is legal to videotape and record a person's conversation without their consent. One must wonder whether it will also become fully legal for law enforcement and other government agencies to secretly eavesdrop on people without a warrant by activating the microphone in their cell phone as a bug, which is a tactic used by the FBI and other agencies after a warrant has been granted.

Is the government going to say that you have no reasonable expectation of privacy if you are carrying a cell phone because there is a microphone built into it? Perhaps the government will change the definition of "reasonable expectation of privacy" and will claim that in today's high-tech society, there is no longer a reasonable expectation of privacy anywhere.

Watching Your Garbage

In the United Kingdom more than 2.5 million trash bins have built-in microchips that weigh the bin's contents as part of a "pay-as-you-throw" program which taxes people based on the amount of garbage they throw away.

In March 2010, an investigation involving Freedom of Information Requests showed that one in five counties in the UK had implemented the Big Brother bins that weigh the garbage and tax the residents accordingly.[268] In 2008, Gordon Brown, the prime minister, had promised to eliminate bin taxes because polls showed it was extremely unpopular among voters, but the practice has quietly increased.

Alex Deane of *Big Brother Watch*, said, "The number of local councils placing microchips in bins is increasing, despite the fact that only one of them has volunteered to trial the Government's pay-as-you-throw scheme. Councils are waiting until the public isn't watching to begin surveillance on our waste habits, intruding into people's private lives and introducing punitive taxes on what we throw away. The British public doesn't want this technology, these fines, or this intrusion. If local authorities have no intention to monitor our waste then they should end the surreptitious installation of these bin microchips."[269]

The "pay-as-you-throw" program also allows city councils to examine people's trash and sell the information to corporations. People are also concerned that data from the chipped bins could show when they were away on vacation, possibly allowing criminals to know when homes were unoccupied, making them easy targets for burglars.

Authorities said the microchips were implemented to help the elderly. A spokesman for the Local Government Association said, “putting microchips in people’s bins can allow councils to provide people with a better service that costs less. If an elderly resident needs help getting their bin collected and returned, a microchip quickly flags it up to the refuse collector, saving time and money.”[270]

In 2008, approximately 100 different city councils in the UK investigated the contents of their residents’ bins, in order to check to see what kind of garbage was being thrown out by people, and in some cases tried to obtain information on their incomes and lifestyles.

Another possible scenario involving people’s garbage may arise after RFID tags are attached to every piece of merchandise replacing the traditional UPCs. Will someone be fined for putting glass bottles in the wrong recycling bin, or if someone accidentally discards cans in the paper bin? RFID tags and sensors installed on recycling bins could not only detect when the wrong materials were placed in the wrong bin, but the tags could also identify who purchased the items, and could issue them a fine for not disposing of them properly.

In Cleveland, Ohio the city began installing RFID tags in recycling bins in order to keep track of how often residents roll their bins out to the curb for collection to make sure they are recycling, and fines them $100 if they are not.[271] A computer on the garbage truck contains an RFID reader that detects the RFID tags attached to the residents’ recycle bins, and keeps track of which bins are emptied each week and which ones are not.

If a home’s recycle bin has not been placed out by the curb for collection in several weeks, then a trash supervisor will physically go through the person’s trash cans to see if that resident is throwing away recyclables in the trash cans, instead of sorting them in the recycle bins. These recyclables include glass, metal cans, plastic bottles, paper and cardboard. If a trash supervisor finds more than 10 percent recyclable

material in the person’s trash bin, then that resident is fined $100 for not properly sorting their recyclables.

Cleveland’s City Council approved spending $2.5 million dollars on the Big Brother bins in 2010, which were implemented in approximately 25,000 different households at first, and the program is designed to expand to an additional 25,000 households per year until the city’s 150,000 residents all use them. A suburb in Washington, DC also announced plans to implement a similar program,[272] and other cities around America are poised to follow.

Ammunition Purchases

Big Brother is scared of people with guns, as all tyrannical and oppressive regimes have been in the past, because an armed population can resist a government aimed at destroying civil liberties or rounding up citizens and sending them to detention centers or death camps. By disarming ordinary law-abiding citizens, it also allows a government to grow in size and power because people will need to rely on the police to protect them from dangerous criminals, instead of protecting themselves using their own guns. This allows the police force to grow larger and have more funding. Gun control laws made it illegal for citizens to own guns that aren't registered to them, something that can easily allow officials to do door-to-door weapon confiscations like they did in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.[273] Police can pull up a person's name and instantly see which guns they own, and demand they all get turned in.

While New World Order kingpins continuously attempt to destroy the Second Amendment to the Constitution, there are other Orwellian policies being put into place in attempts to monitor who has what guns, and even how many bullets they own.

As governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill into law which required stores that sell ammunition to thumbprint customers and log their driver's license for each purchase. Everyone who now buys bullets in California must submit to this procedure, as well as sign for their purchase which is then entered into a federal database that keeps track of how much ammo that person has bought. The database is used to flag people who buy what the government considers large amounts of ammunition, which may then be considered probable cause to investigate the individual further or place them under surveillance.

Schwarzenegger claimed to be against such a policy in the past but later changed his mind saying, “Although I have previously vetoed legislation similar to this measure, local governments have demonstrated that requiring ammunition vendors to keep records on ammunition sales improves public safety.”[274]

Sam Paredes, the executive director of Gun Owners of California, said the law treats gun owners like registered sex offenders.

Dr. Big Brother

With the passing of Obamacare into law in March 2010, the American government was facing enormous health care costs, and many were pressed to come up with ways to keep these costs down. The Senate Committee on Aging disclosed innovations they were planning as part of the government's new role in the health care industry, and some ideas included video chats with doctors and putting RFIDs on pills so computers could keep track of whether patients are taking their medication or not. The new methods have been called e-Health, e-Care, or telehealth.

"What we're talking about, folks, is using a device like this one," Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) said, as he displayed the small device. "It attaches to the patient's skin and is loaded with drugs that are administered in the exact way that the doctor prescribes—wirelessly."[275]

"That means that a doctor can vary the doses based on the information the doctor is receiving [from the monitor]. The patient doesn't have to go in to the doctor and then the pharmacy to change his or her prescription," he said.[276]

Other devices proposed by the committee were systems that would be attached to patients and monitor things like blood pressure and glucose levels which would then wirelessly report that information over the Internet to their physician. Officials also hope to implement devices that can monitor a person's nutritional intake and ones that could detect whether an elderly person has taken a fall so emergency workers could be alerted.

"Continuous monitoring of vibrations in the floor can detect falls and classify them according to the best choice of first responders—either a 911

call or a visit from a caregiver," proposed Robin Felder of the University of Virginia.[277]

"Emerging technologies allow pills to be electronically outfitted with transmitters to communicate with the user's wristwatch that shows that the pill has been consumed," Felder continued. "Broadband connectivity of these devices would allow the electronic medical record to be updated with regard to medication compliance and efficacy."[278]

Dr. Mohit Kaushal, who is the health care director at the Federal Communications Commission, testified at the Senate Committee on Aging using a video phone in an attempt to promote video chats between patients and doctors as an alternative to office visits.

Eric Dishman, global director of health innovation and policy at Intel, said "Just as e-mail became a new way of interacting with other people that didn't replace all other forms of communication such as phone calls and letters, e-Care uses new technologies to create a new way of providing care that complements—but doesn't replace—all clinic visits."

Dictating Your Diet

Another side effect to the passing of Obamacare are more laws governing the ingredients in food that are considered to be unhealthy. Since the taxpayers were now on the hook for everyone’s health insurance, lawmakers were looking for ways to keep people healthier in order to keep down the costs.

A bill introduced in New York tried to ban the use of any salt in restaurant cooking. The bill, A. 10129, states in part, “No owner or operator of a restaurant in this state shall use salt in any form in the preparation of any food for consumption by customers of such restaurant, including food prepared to be consumed on the premises of such restaurant or off of such premises.”

The bill was introduced by Assemblyman Felix Ortiz (D-Brooklyn), and included fines of $1000 for each violation.[279] A coalition of chefs, restaurant owners, and consumers, called the proposed law “absurd” in a press release.

In 2006, the Board of Health in New York City voted to ban restaurants from using trans fats in their food, a law that took effect in July 2008. Trans fats are unhealthy because they raise bad cholesterol and lower good cholesterol, making them worse than saturated fat.

“We don’t think that a municipal health agency has any business banning a product the Food and Drug Administration has already approved,” said Dan Fleshler, a spokesman for the National Restaurant Association.[280]

Other cities and states are passing laws that require restaurants to list the calorie content on the menus next to each food item.

In New York City, a school actually sent letters to parents of children that were considered fat. “My son, who is very tall for his age and is a little husky, but fit, brought home a piece of paper from his school listing his BMI and stating that he was obese,” said Amy Oztan, a mother of two, who received one of the letters.[281] BMI stands for Body Mass Index and comes from a formula based on a person’s height and weight.

Michelle Obama had started a campaign called Let’s Move that involves regular screening of all children’s BMI. One major criticism for screening people’s BMI is that it doesn’t take into account someone’s body type such as if they are big-boned or more muscular than an average person.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, every citizen is required to exercise daily in front of the telescreen so they could keep up their strength in order to better serve Big Brother. During one of the sessions, Winston Smith is yelled at by the instructor for not stretching far enough during a toe-touching exercise because the telescreens watched everyone’s effort.

While at an elementary school in Washington DC, Michelle Obama told the students that military leaders had informed her that more than one in four children are unqualified for military service because they’re too fat and that “childhood obesity isn’t just a public health threat, it’s not just an economic threat, it’s a national security threat as well.”[282]

She went on to list all the evils that fat people cost the economy and the health care system and concluded that, “We can’t just leave this up to the parents.”[283]

It was right around this time that governments approved a ban on soda machines in school cafeterias across the country, and even placed restrictions on school bake sales, in the name of public health.[284] San

Francisco even banned toys from most McDonald’s Happy Meals because officials claimed the toys were enticing children to eat poor quality food.[285]

“Smart” Thermostats

An Orwellian idea that hatched in California and may one day spread around the country, or even the world, involves the government being able to remotely control the thermostat in people’s homes in order to turn off the air-conditioning if they feel too much electricity is being used at a particular time and causing strain on the electrical grid.

All new homes built in California have to be equipped with the Big Brother thermostats, and many existing homes as well. The 2008 Building Efficiency Standards (Page 64), known as Title 24, specifically states, “The PCT shall not allow customer changes to thermostat settings during emergency events.”

Some government officials also hope to require non-removable FM receivers that connect to other electronic appliances such as water heaters, refrigerators, lights and computers, so these devices could be remotely shut off at will. Michael Shames, executive director of California’s Utility Consumers’ Action Network said, “The implications of this language are far-reaching and Orwellian. For the government and utility company to say, ‘We’re going to control the devices in your house, and you have no choice in that matter,’ that’s where the line is drawn.”[286]

Proponents of the “smart” thermostats have failed to realize that many people can install window air-conditioning units that aren’t connected to the home’s central thermostat, and will not be able to be controlled by the system. Some homeowners will also find a way to bypass the system without detection.

Fingerprint Scanners

When you think of getting your fingerprints taken, the image of being in handcuffs at the police station is often the first to come to mind, but fingerprint scanners are becoming common ways to check someone's identity, not just to enter a secure area at a government installation, but to pay for lunch at the local school, to enter your local gym, and even to get into Disney World.

For years, Walt Disney's theme parks have used fingerprint scanners to identify ticket holders to make sure that people don't use someone else's ticket.[287] Disney will confiscate any pass that someone attempts to use if it is not theirs.

"The lack of transparency has always been a problem," said Lillie Coney, associate director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center, who believes that the fingerprint scanners are too invasive. "What they're doing is taking a technology that was used to control access to high-level security venues and they're applying it to controlling access to a theme park."[288]

George Crossley, president of the Central Florida ACLU, said, "It's impossible for them to convince me that all they are getting is the fact that that person is the ticket-holder."[289]

It seems comical, but the federal government looked to Disney after the September 11th 2001 terror attacks to learn about security measures including biometrics because their theme parks had been the largest commercial user of biometric scanners. "The government was very aware of what Disney was doing," said Jim Wayman, director of the National Biometric Test Center at San Jose State University.

The company providing the scanners to Disney is believed to be Lumidigm Incorporated which is funded by the CIA, NSA, and the Department of Defense. Lumidigm's CEO Bob Harbour would not admit his company's products were used at Disney, but did say they have a contract with a "major theme park."[290]

Oftentimes companies that use these systems will say that they don't capture the person's actual fingerprint, but instead just look for various points on it and match those up to the points stored in its system, but Raul Diaz, Lumidigm's vice president of sales and marketing, said that such systems can be activated to store the entire image.

In 2004, Sea World in San Antonio, Texas installed fingerprint scanners for people with season passes. It's not just Sea World and the "happiest place on earth" that are using fingerprint scanners to gain entry. 24 Hour Fitness gyms have been using the scanners since at least 2007,[291] and several schools around America have implemented finger scanners as a way for students to pay for their lunches.[292] It's likely that banks will issue scanners that will either replace or supplement debit card readers at most retailers.

Despite what most people think, fingerprint scanners are not 100% accurate. A Japanese cryptographer and university professor named Tsutomu Matsumoto, tested fingerprint scanners and found that by using gelatin and molding plastic, he could copy someone's fingerprint and beat every major fingerprint reader eight out of ten times.[293] An episode of *Myth Busters* showed the crew was able to fool finger scanners as well.

In 2004, a man named Brandon Mayfield was detained and his home searched immediately after the March 11, 2004 bombing in Madrid, Spain that killed 191 people. The FBI had used their Automated Fingerprint Identification System to link him to the crime, but it turns out that because of a "substandard" fingerprint taken from a bag that contained one of the explosives, their system incorrectly identified him and he was completely innocent.

Orwellian Weapons

Over the course of civilization we have seen weapons advance from basic sticks and stones in prehistoric times, to swords and knives after the discovery of iron and steel, and later advancing to guns and missiles, often attached to aircraft or boats that can destroy a target hundreds of miles away. Science fiction literature and films have been filled with stories of lasers and armed humanoid robots that are indestructible killing-machines, but as some people already know, many of these fanciful depictions from the past are now becoming a reality.

While at one time, so-called smart bombs amazed people with their ability to strike strategic targets from long distances; these kinds of weapons are now common knowledge. What is not common knowledge (at least at the time I'm writing this in 2010) are a wide variety of futuristic Orwellian weapons that are already built, or are on the drawing board.

Some of these weapons involve fully autonomous robots that can relentlessly hunt down targets, and even implantable RFID chips that can kill a person when activated, and shock bracelets designed for airline passengers that can electrocute them if they are suspected of posing a threat. These and other weapons, if directed by a tyrannical leader, could squash any kind of resistance and keep every citizen in the world, not only under the watchful eyes of Big Brother, but in his crosshairs as well.

As you will learn in this chapter and the one on artificial intelligence, warnings of a massive robotic massacre, or artificial intelligence systems turning on humans is not only something found in the plots of science fiction movies or the paranoid imaginations of technophobes. It is a very real concern addressed by numerous experts in multiple fields. Big Brother is not just watching us; he is now armed and dangerous.

An Implantable Computer Chip That Can Kill

In 2009, Germany's patent office rejected a patent for an invention dubbed the "Killer Chip," which is basically an implantable RFID similar to the VeriChip said to track visitors from other countries using GPS, and could release a poison into a person's body to "eliminate" them if they become a "security risk." That was at least the Orwellian goal of the Saudi inventor who applied for the patent.

"I apply for these reasons and for reasons of state security and the security of citizens," his application read. German law allows foreigners to apply for patents in the country through a local representative. "Most people apply for a patent in several countries, and this inventor probably did too," Stephanie Krüger of the Patent Office said.[294]

A German Patent and Trademark Office spokeswoman told *Deutsche Presse Agentur* that the inventor's application was submitted in October 2007 and published 18 months later, as required by law, but in Germany, inventions that are unethical or a danger to the public are not approved.

Electric Shock Bracelets for Airline Passengers

A sadistic idea that seems like it would only be implemented for transporting dangerous prisoners was actually proposed for ordinary citizens flying on commercial jets that involved making all passengers on airliners wear a tamper-proof shock bracelet that could then be activated to electrocute anyone that the crew thought was potentially dangerous. The Department of Homeland Security has expressed great interest in the so-called EMD (Electo-Muscular Disruption) safety bracelet which was designed by Lampered Less Lethal Incorporated.

A promotional video posted on the company's website shows the device being worn by all passengers on an airline and explained how the company felt it would help keep people safe.[295]

The video starts off by showing footage of the aftermath of the September 11th attacks and goes on to say that facial recognition systems take too much time and would increase the number of flight delays and cancellations. It also says bomb detecting devices aren't effective enough, and that the shock bracelets could stop terrorists once they were on board an aircraft.

It goes on to say that the shock bracelets would make flying more convenient for travelers since they could also be used as their ticket. The video concludes by saying, "We feel if given the choice between taking a flight implementing the added security of the EMD security safety bracelet system, and taking a flight without the additional security, many, if not most passengers, would happily opt for the extra security of the EMD safety bracelet."

I know that this seems like a hoax or a satire to bring attention to Orwellian security measures, but it’s not. A search of U.S. patents reveals that a patent was filed for the device in 2002. The application number is 6,933,851, and the description reads, “A method of providing air travel security for passengers traveling via an aircraft comprises situating a remotely activatable electric shock device on each of the passengers in position to deliver a disabling electrical shock when activated; and arming the electric shock devices for subsequent selective activation by a selectively operable remote control disposed within the aircraft. The remotely activatable electric shock devices each have activation circuitry responsive to the activating signal transmitted from the selectively operable remote control means. The activated electric shock device is operable to deliver the disabling electrical shock to that passenger.”

A letter from a Department of Homeland Security official named Paul S. Ruwaldt was sent to the inventor saying, “To make it clear, we [the federal government] are interested in…the immobilizing security bracelet, and look forward to receiving a written proposal.”[296]

The letterhead was from a US Department of Homeland Security office at the William J. Hughes Technical Center at the Atlantic City International Airport (the Federal Aviation Administration headquarters). It was also reported that Ruwaldt had previously met with a rep for the bracelet’s manufacturer.[297]

Taser-Firing Flying Robot

In 2007, it was reported that a French entrepreneur was developing a "flying saucer" that could shoot Taser rounds which would electrocute anyone hit by them. He plans for the device to be used to hunt criminal suspects or zap people in unruly crowds.[298] His invention is basically an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) that can hover around like a small radio controlled helicopter that is equipped with Taser rounds.

The controversial Taser gun temporarily paralyzes people by shooting two darts into the body which send electric shocks into the person, and are often abused by police as they electrocute unarmed and often non-threatening people for not complying with an order immediately.

The Taser-firing UAV's creator, Antoine di Zazzo, says that he has been shocked by a Taser more than 50 times during his experiments and claims no side effects. A Taser is different than a stun gun, in that a Taser shoots tiny darts into a person's skin which then carry the electrical current, whereas a stun gun is just a device with two metal prongs on it that are pressed against someone to shock them. Hovering UAVs like Zazzo's design could also easily be armed with pepper spray, knockout gas, or even guns.

Some may think that this technology is still many decades away, but it's not. Police in London deployed a UAV in February 2010 after a suspected car thief was able to evade officers on foot in thick fog. The thermal-imaging cameras built in to the UAV were able to spot the suspect's heat signature, allowing police to track him down and make an arrest.

Several companies are building drones for sale to the general public which may be operated from a laptop computer or even a cell phone. "If the

Israelis can use them to find terrorists, certainly a husband is going to be able to track a wife who goes out at 11 o’clock at night and follow her,” said divorce lawyer Raoul Felder.[299]

An MIT professor named Ms. Cummings, who is developing personal UAVs, commented that she could use a drone to watch her child by planting a transmitter in her lunchbox. “It would bring a whole new meaning to the term hover parent,” she said.

She also remarked that, “If everybody had enough money to buy one of these things, we could all be wandering around with little networks of vehicles flying over our heads spying on us…It really opens up a whole new Pandora's Box of: What does it mean to have privacy?”

Frozen Poison Gun

A secret and sinister weapon developed by the CIA, and probably used in multiple assassinations and kidnappings, involves a CO2 powered gun that shoots a small frozen piece of poison or tranquilizing agent into the target, which leaves no evidence behind of any foul play. This device was actually shown during a congressional hearing when Senator Frank Church questioned then CIA director, William Colby about it.

Transcript:

Senator Frank Church: Does this pistol fire the dart? [Holding up the gun]

CIA Director William Colby: Yes, it does, Mr. Chairman, and a special one was developed which potentially would be able to enter the target without perception.

Senator Frank Church: But also the toxin itself would not appear in the autopsy?

CIA Director William Colby: Yes, so that there was no way of perceiving that the target was hit.

End of Transcript

In a 1998 documentary titled *Secrets of the CIA*, a former CIA agent named Mary Embree explains how it was her job to research poisons that could be used on people which would kill them and make it seem as if they died of a heart attack. She also talks about the frozen poison dart gun,

saying, “The poison was frozen into some sort of dart, and then it was shot at very high speed into the person. So when it reached the person, it would melt inside them, and the only thing would be like one little, tiny red dot on their body, which was hard to detect. There wouldn’t be a needle left or anything like that in the person.”[300]

Hunter-Killer Robots

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Pentagon was looking for contractors to build what they called a “Multi-Robot Pursuit System” that will involve packs of robots which “search for and detect a non-cooperative human.”[301] In 2005, the Pentagon launched a $127 billion dollar project called Future Combat Systems to develop robotic soldiers and was the largest military contract in US history.[302] It seems that real “Terminators” like the ones in the popular Arnold Schwarzenegger films are crossing over from science fiction into science fact.

Several different companies, including iRobot and Foster-Miller, manufacture different radio controlled tank-like robots that are armed with Taser guns, machine guns, and even rocket launchers. The Pentagon and others hope to one day create fully autonomous robots that are so advanced they can basically function on their own without any human intervention, even hunting down and killing people who are programmed as targets to be eliminated. Such systems will be equipped with facial recognition cameras, and likely DNA sniffers that operate like the nose of a tracking dog that can literally smell a suspect and identify him or her out of a large crowd of people and can even track their every footstep in order to hunt them down and either kill them or incapacitate them, depending on the programmed orders.

“If you build a new shopping mall, you could have sniffers all over the place,” predicts George Dodd, the father of the “electronic nose” and a researcher with the Highlands Scientific Research Group at the Craig Dunain Hospital in Inverness, UK.[303] Dodd envisions these sniffers as part of security systems in people’s homes and offices that will be able to identify intruders.

Police departments in Germany, Holland, and Hungary have been collecting swabs of human scents from crime scenes and putting them into databases, and George Dodd predicts that in the future every person's individual scent will be stored on a computer similar to fingerprints and DNA. These are some of the capabilities that will be built into robotic terminators.

In 2008, Steve Wright, an expert in police and military technology at Leeds Metropolitan University, predicted that autonomous human hunting robots would soon be fully operational. After news was made of the Pentagon's goals of creating a Multi Robot Pursuit System, Wright said, "What we have here are the beginnings of something designed to enable robots to hunt down humans like a pack of dogs. Once the software is perfected we can reasonably anticipate that they will become autonomous and become armed. We can also expect such systems to be equipped with human detection and tracking devices including sensors which detect human breath and the radio waves associated with a human heart beat. These are technologies already developed."[304]

The US Air Force's *Unmanned Aircraft Systems Flight Plan 2009-2047* report explains how unmanned drones could fly over targets and attack, all without human involvement. The report says that humans will monitor situations rather than being deciders or participants, and that "advances in AI [artificial intelligence] will enable systems to make combat decisions and act within legal and policy constraints without necessarily requiring human input."[305] The Air Force plans to have such devices fully operational by the year 2047. Several pages of the report were classified.

P.W. Singer, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution think tank and the author of *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century* said, "Every mission [that] soldiers go out on in Iraq, there's something (automated) flying over them, maybe an unmanned vehicle scouting ahead of them…When they shoot, the key is what they put their laser on for a drone to fire at….The story of the surge is not the additional troops, it's the air strikes (by machines like Predator drones) going up by a huge amount."[306]

When the Iraq war began in 2003, there were only a handful of ground-based robots in the field, such as radio controlled devices with mechanical arms used to defuse bombs, but a few years into the war there were over 12,000 robots, including Unmanned Arial Vehicles (UAVs) and other ground-based devices being used on a regular basis.[307]

The United States is not the only country with a rapidly increasing number of robotic soldiers. Dozens of other countries have been building a robotic army. In 2009, an Iranian drone was shot down in Iraq, and the Palestinian-based Hezbollah group has used drones to attack Israel on several occasions.

Many fear that lone nuts or small terrorist organizations will obtain robotic soldiers and commit attacks with them on innocent civilians. “I talked to a researcher who told me that for $50,000 worth of robots he could shut down New York for a day. It was pretty convincing. Warfare will go open source,” said Singer.[308]

The chair of the Department of Computer Science at the University of Sheffield in England, who is considered a computer and artificial intelligence expert, has also warned about the dangers of advancing robots. In 2007, Noel Sharkey wrote an article for the *London Guardian* detailing his warnings, where he said, “The deployment of the first armed battlefield robots in Iraq is the latest step on a dangerous path—we are sleepwalking into a brave new world where robots decide who, where and when to kill.”[309]

He pointed out the Pentagon’s $100 billion dollar Future Combat Systems project working to build killer robots and Unmanned Arial Vehicles (UAVs), saying, “This is dangerous new territory for warfare, yet there are no new ethical codes or guidelines in place. I have worked in artificial intelligence for decades, and the idea of a robot making decisions about human termination is terrifying.”[310]

Sharkey warns that, “With prices falling and technology becoming easier, we may soon see a robot arms race that will be difficult to stop,”[311] and urged that legislation be drawn up that would outline a code of ethics for autonomous robots before it’s too late. Some experts and military officials worry about robots’ ability to determine friendly people from legitimate targets. Robots could be programmed to identify soldiers who are wearing the enemy country’s uniforms, or the facial recognition system could be inputted with the faces of the entire enemy’s army after a hacker steals that information from them. Every faceprint of American soldiers could be input, and the robots instructed to kill everyone except those people in a specified area, but facial recognition is not 100% accurate. Friendly soldiers may also be equipped with RFID tags that would tell the robots they were friendly, and the machines could be programmed to kill any person who is not wearing a tag within the battle zone.

The increasing use of robotic soldiers will change the face of war in many ways. The loss of American soldiers’ lives was always a reason for the public to resist entering into a conflict, but perhaps at some point in the future, there will be hardly any risk for human life (for the country with the advanced robotic army, that is), so the public may not protest an ensuing war as much as they have in the past.

Going to war in the past meant that young soldiers would be killed and maimed in battle, but if a country (like America, for example) could send a fleet of robots instead of humans, would-be protesters will likely not resist the decision to go to war. Many people may, in fact, encourage such acts who would have felt indifferent, or even against such action in the past because of the risk to American soldiers’ lives.

Robotic Snakes

People have become familiar with the tank-like robots that frequently defuse bombs, and the flying drones that are like large radio controlled airplanes, but an interesting and unexpected design comes in the form of a robotic snake that literally slithers on the ground imitating an actual snake.

The first robot snake was built by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and is about 6 feet long and is also equipped with cameras, microphones, and speakers. It is operated by laptop computer.[312] Some envision the snake slithering through rubble of collapsed buildings in hopes of finding survivors, but the creators also say it could be used to carry bombs, as perhaps a suicide snake bomber, slithering near a target and blowing itself up.

Other robots based on animals are also reportedly in the works, including agile robots modeled after cats and dogs. While the robotic snake built by IDF is designed to operate on land, a Japanese company built a snake robot in 2005 that swims under water like a sea serpent. It’s called the ACM-R5 and can be seen operating on videos posted on the Internet.

Big Dog Four-Legged Robot

While most early robots being used by the Department of Defense were not much more than sophisticated miniature radio controlled tanks that rolled around on two treads, designing robots that walk has proved to be a much more difficult task. Creating pilot-less drones that fly like radio controlled airplanes or the bomb disposing tread robots like the TALON robots used in the Iraq War are much simpler than designing a system that can balance on two or four legs.

A company called Boston Dynamics was one of the first to create a functioning walking robot they call the Big Dog that walks on four legs using a hydraulic actuation system. The robot is the size of an extremely large dog, standing two and a half feet tall, and is three feet long. Video footage of the Big Dog shows it walking around and being kicked by people as they attempt to throw it off balance and knock it over, but it doesn't appear to lose its footing, and quickly recovers and keeps on walking. The robot is said to be able to carry more than 300 pounds of equipment over 10 miles before refueling, and can walk on rough terrain and up inclines of 35 degrees. Boston Dynamics is funded by the Tactical Technology Office at DARPA.[313]

The designers' goal is to enhance the Big Dog to the point where it can carry supplies for soldiers and follow them practically anywhere on the battlefield, on any terrain. It is highly probably that future versions will also be armed and walk on two legs instead of four.

Killer Wasp Robots

When most people think of a killer robot, they think of a large tank-like machine, or a humanoid-looking robot the size of a person similar to the ones in films like *The Terminator* (1984), *Short Circuit* (1986), or *iRobot* (2004); but in 2008, the Air Force Research Laboratory decided to build tiny radio controlled drones the size of large insects that could actually kill what they called, “high-value targets.” The program is called Project Anubis, named after the jackal-headed god of the dead in Egyptian mythology, and is classified, but budget documents reveal that Air Force engineers were successful in developing a “Micro-Air Vehicle (MAV) with innovative seeker/tracking sensor algorithms that can engage maneuvering high-value targets.”[314]

These devices are miniature versions of what are called Unmanned Arial Vehicles (UAVs) which refers to aircraft like the popular Predator drones that everyone has heard about in the news. The Predator drones are armed and can launch missiles, and the new Anubis micro drones are also deadly even though they are the size of a large bug. Special Forces have already been using a larger type of wasp drone made by AeroVironment that weighs less than a pound and can fly three miles away from its operator.

The Air Force’s 2008 budget described Project Anubis as “a small UAV [Unmanned Aerial Vehicle] that carries sensors, data links, and a munitions payload to engage time-sensitive fleeting targets in complex environments.”[315] The total cost was expected to be $500,000. This was apparently before the devices had been built because a newer budget mentioned Project Anubis as having already been completed, costing $1.75 million dollars.

The tiny drones are believed to be equipped with video cameras and microphones and even small explosives weighing a fraction of a pound, and either drop the explosive device, or the drone itself explodes once it reaches its intended target. Such a tiny drone can easily fly into a building through open doorways or windows and then be detonated once inside.

In the "Big Brother" episode of *Conspiracy Theory* with Jesse Ventura that aired on the TruTV network beginning in December 2009, Ventura interviewed an engineer named Elwood Norris who builds spy systems for the government and explained that they can fly miniature GPS tracking devices, designed to look like a fly with microphones on them, into a person's vehicle (or house) so they can then be monitored without their knowledge.

These tiny bugs give the saying "to be a fly on the wall" a whole new literal meaning, since the "fly" on the wall really may be listening. To give you an idea of how this technology is abused, and how it will be abused even more in the future, all we need to do is turn to the news. At a town hall in Charlotte, Vermont, workers renovating the building discovered two electronic bugs that had been planted in the clerk's office, allowing whoever put them there to listen in on meetings and clerk business.[316] The devices were discovered in October 2010, but their batteries had long been dead and were about 10 years old, meaning they were hidden in the town hall building around the year 2000. They were battery powered wireless transmitters that police said could have transmitted to the immediate surrounding area to wherever the person with the receiver was hanging out listening in. The local police said it was a cold case and couldn't even guess who would have planted the bugs or what their motive was.[317]

If someone went through this much trouble to listen in on what was being discussed in some small town hall in Charlotte, Vermont—imagine what kinds of measures are taken to spy on members of Congress, or political activists deemed a threat to the establishment. In the Orwellian nightmare, you can rarely be certain that what comes out of your mouth isn't being overheard and analyzed by Big Brother.

Robots that Feed on Human Flesh

When we think of the power source for a robot, we most often think of them as being battery powered, or even solar powered, but the Pentagon has reportedly been working on one that would run off biomass. The robot is called EATR (pronounced "eater"), which stands for Energetically Autonomous Tactical Robot, and was designed by Robotic Technology Incorporated which says on its website that their robot, "can find, ingest, and extract energy from biomass in the environment (and other organically-based energy sources), as well as use conventional and alternative fuels (such as gasoline, heavy fuel, kerosene, diesel, propane, coal, cooking oil, and solar) when suitable."[318]

Original reports, including one on FoxNews.com, said that the EATR robot would eat animals and even human remains in the battlefield. Dr. Bob Finkelstein, president of Robotic Technology Incorporated (RTI) then released a statement saying that the robot would only be programmed to eat specific kinds of fuel sources. "If it's not on the menu, it's not going to eat it," Finkelstein said. "There are certain signatures from different kinds of materials that would distinguish vegetative biomass from other material."[319]

The company continued to do damage control concerning the initial reports and sent out a press release saying, "Despite the far-reaching reports that this includes human bodies, the public can be assured that the engine Cyclone (Cyclone Power Technologies Inc.) has developed to power the EATR runs on fuel no scarier than twigs, grass clippings and wood chips—small, plant-based items for which RTI's robotic technology is designed to forage."

Cyclone Power Technologies, located in Pompano Beach, Florida created what they call the Waste Heat Engine, which powers the EATR

robots by burning biomass in an external combustion chamber which then generates electricity from heating up water in a closed loop. The designers say that because it would never need to be plugged in somewhere to recharge, the robots could roam on their own for months or years without having to be recharged.

As far as the claims that the EATR robot would not run on dead bodies, the manufacturer didn’t deny that this was possible; they just denied this would happen because the robots wouldn’t be programmed to do so. Of course in extreme circumstances, such as a major war, this programming could easily be changed.

Electro Magnetic Pulse (EMP)

One possible catastrophic danger of our reliance on modern technology comes from an Electro Magnetic Pulse bomb, or an EMP. This type of weapon sends out a wave of electromagnetic energy that literally destroys every electronic circuit in its path, which can be a few city blocks, a radius of several miles, or even several states.

A nuclear bomb sends out an EMP, and if detonated in the air high above the United States, one could destroy electric devices in a large part of the country, but there are also non-nuclear EMP weapons, and some are small enough to be carried around in a briefcase or back pack. If a non-nuclear EMP was set off in the heart of a major city, for example, everyone’s cell phones, laptops, and vehicles will all immediately stop working and be permanently disabled. Street lights, traffic controllers at the airport, police radios, medical equipment at hospitals, and more, would all be completely destroyed without any visible signs of damage. The EMP would basically disable or destroy countless electrical components that we have taken for granted for decades and would practically knock us back to the stone age.

Non-nuclear EMPs are not a theoretical weapon; they have been built, and although not widely reported in the news, have been used. *CBS News* reported that an EMP bomb was used to disable TV stations in Iraq at the start of the invasion in 2003 and to disable a major power plant in Baghdad.[320] Some reports also say the US used EMPs in the 1991 Gulf War as well.[321] [322]

EMP bombs are not something that only an advanced military can create. An article published in 1996 by a defense analyst named Carlo Kopp, explained that materials to build a non-nuclear electromagnetic

weapon are commonly available and concluded, “The threat of electromagnetic bomb proliferation is very real.”[323] In 2009, a director at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism admitted that homemade electromagnetic bombs could become a significant threat.[324]

In the future, small EMP guns will likely be carried by law enforcement and the military which will use them to disable vehicles being used by suspects they are pursuing.

LRAD Sound Weapons

A non-lethal weapon that has become popular at protests and demonstrations is the LRAD sound cannon that focuses an ear-piercing high pitched sound at targets in order to cause them such discomfort that they disperse. LRAD stands for Long Range Acoustic Device and was developed by a San Diego company called American Technology Corporation.

The small device is often mounted on police or military vehicles and can emit sounds capable of dispersing crowds from up to 300 yards away. The volume control is variable and can range from mildly annoying, to beyond a person’s threshold for pain (120-140 dB) which can cause permanent hearing damage at close range.

Smaller, handheld devices will be on the market in the coming years that will be the size of a large flashlight and may be standard equipment carried by police officers or built into Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or other robots.

MEDUSA

Unlike the LRAD acoustical weapon that focuses high volume sound waves at people to cause pain in their ears, a more advanced device called MEDUSA (Mob Excess Deterrent Using Silent Audio) uses microwave pulses that bypass the ears and eardrum and cause noise and pain inside a person’s skull.[325] It’s interesting that the device’s name is *Medusa*, the same as the Greek mythology character that has snakes for hair and turns people to stone if they look at her. The MEDUSA microwave device was created by the Sierra Nevada Corporation for crowd control.

Some people worry that devices like the MEDUSA and others can be used to torture people without leaving external and noticeable evidence of the torture, or that they will be abused by police and military on peaceful protesters.

Active Denial System

A real life “pain ray” called the Active Denial System literally shoots a microwave beam at people, causing them to feel like their skin is burning.[326] Some believe the device can also disrupt a person’s bowels and cause them to literally crap their pants, although this is disputed. The first versions of the Active Denial System were fairly large and had to be mounted on vehicles, but the manufacturer, Raytheon, is working on small portable units that can be easily carried around or mounted on rifles. Raytheon is one of the largest defense contractors that builds weapons for the military, and is the world’s biggest producer of guided missile systems.

The Active Denial Systems use a gyrotron to generate powerful magnetic fields called millimeter waves, which are focused at the target and can cause second or third degree burns. Some of the systems were shipped to Afghanistan in 2010, but the military claimed they weren’t being used, and were only there “for testing.” Of course, shipping a huge unit like that half way around the world only to “test” it doesn’t make any sense, since this has been done since at least 2004.[327] Due to the controversy surrounding the weapons it’s not surprising the military denies they have been used in battle yet.

“Death Rays”

A retired Colonel from Taiwan’s National Defense Department named Alan Yu learned of deadly Orwellian weapons from working on Taiwan’s military budget and having access to classified documents. In a 1997 article he wrote titled, *Millimeter Waves and Mind Control,* he discussed how portable handheld devices were being made that could kill people by using radio waves and leave no evidence.

He wrote, “corrupted undercover career operators can murder anyone as if by natural death (such as induce heart attack, heart failure, or kidney failure, etc.) with the invisible wave weapon. These undercover career operators have been trained professionally in manipulating people’s lives and health with their invisible wave weapon. Some recruited young undercover operators will be trained with the murder skill from the senior undercover operators.”[328]

His article continues, “For example, in 1995, a former head of Taiwan’s National Security Institute died of a ‘heart-attack’ in a public bath pool in Taipei. This death occurred two days after he announced that he would write a memoir. His widow claimed that her husband has never had any heart problems in his life (supported by his health record history) and requested an autopsy to be performed in order to determine the true cause of his death.”[329]

Colonel Yo believes the man was killed to keep him from discussing state secrets. All that is needed to create a “death ray” is to turn up the power on the Active Denial System, which could easily cause a heart attack, brain aneurism, or organ failure. The HPEM Active Denial System, for example, is used to disable vehicles by destroying all unshielded

electronics, and microwave guns have sent several people to the hospital for injuries during testing.[330]

Artificial Intelligence

Instead of humans being the eyes, ears, and brains behind Big Brother, what if Big Brother became an intelligent being itself? For decades some people have looked forward to (or feared) the day when scientists could create a computer system that would be considered artificially intelligent and would be as intelligent as a human, or even more so. While many scientists have been making tremendous advances towards such a system, others still scoff at the idea saying such a system would be too complex and require too much computing power. Others still cite the free will of human beings, and say that no computer could come close to the intelligence of a human because we have free will, and machines only carry out a specified program.

While this may be true, many of these AI skeptics overlook the idea that animals are intelligent, but are often denied to have a free will in the same manner that humans do. If animals do not have free will, then no matter how intelligent they seem to be, they are simply a biological computer following a program that is hardwired into their brains. Yet, as pet owners can attest, animals of an array of species convey a variety of emotions, from love and fear to anger and loneliness. So is a dog simply following a mental program that it is designed to follow that dictates its behavior, or is it intelligent? Most would agree that dogs are intelligent (to some extent, at least). If animals are intelligent, and they are just following a program hardwired into their brains, then wouldn’t it be possible to design a computer system that can simulate (and surpass) this intelligence?

If you were born before 1980, then you remember a time before telephone systems had voice recognition capabilities and you had to either wait to speak to an operator for them to transfer your call to the appropriate department, or use the automated feature by pressing the assigned number to reach your desired party. Slowly these systems were replaced with more

advanced technology that understands your voice commands, and the recording simply asks you what department you need, and the system understands what you say and automatically transfers your call. While this is certainly an incredible task, can this system be considered intelligent?

Is the system that Google and other search engines use to determine what kinds of advertisements to display to you based on your search history an "intelligent" system? Are the characters you fight in a videogame considered intelligent? How exactly does one define an artificially intelligent system, and what are the social, scientific, and legal ramifications if and when a computer system is considered artificially intelligent, or even a conscious being? The most popular method used to test whether or not a computer program is artificially intelligent is called the Turing Test.

The Turing Test

The Turing test was created in 1950 by Alan Turing, a British computer scientist, in order to challenge a human judge to decide whether they were communicating with a computer, or with another human. The test consists of a person (the judge) engaging in a dialog through typing, with a computer program (or at least what may be a computer program). The judge is not told whether they are typing to a computer program or an actual person. If the judge can't determine whether they are having a dialog with a computer program or another person, then the system is said to have a human-level intelligence.

In his 2005 book, *The Singularity is Near*, the respected futurist Ray Kurzweil wrote that he expected computers to have intelligence levels indistinguishable from humans by the end of the 2020s. Kurzweil insists that, "The machines will convince us that they are conscious, that they have their own agenda worthy of our respect. We will come to believe that they are conscious much as we believe that of each other."[331]

Obviously technology has advanced at unthinkable levels since the Turning Test was invented back in 1950, and researchers have been monitoring this rapid advancement each year and anticipating (or fearing) artificial intelligence.

Moore’s Law

Moore’s Law is a term that describes the growth patterns in computing power as processors get faster and memory capacity increases. The law is credited to Gordon E. Moore, the co-founder of Intel, who in 1965 published a paper observing that the number of transistors able to fit on an integrated circuit was doubling approximately every two years. This trend has continued for over forty-five years, and some experts do not expect it to stop until around 2020 or later.

Moore’s Law seems to accurately describe the increasing processing speed of computers each year, as well as their memory capacity, and even the number and size of pixels in digital cameras, which are all increasing near exponential rates. These incredible advances have enabled the communication age and a technological revolution after computers transformed from large units that filled entire rooms, into hand-held cell phones that contain more computing power than the first space shuttle that reached the moon in 1969.

The amazing advances seem to be rapidly increasing in accordance with Moore’s Law, which leads many computer scientists to forecast that at some point in the coming decades we will see artificially intelligent systems arrive that are much smarter than humans. These anticipated advances have alarmed some experts, causing them to worry that such systems may actually pose a threat to the human race.

Isaac Asimov’s Three Laws of Robotics

A popular science fiction writer from the 1940s named Isaac Asimov wrote about advanced intelligent robots in his stories and came up with what he called the three laws of robotics, which he envisioned were necessary to prevent advanced robots from turning against their makers. When Asimov came up with these “laws” they were purely science fiction, but today some scientists are seriously looking at his ideas and are using the three laws as a blueprint, hoping to prevent intelligent robots from posing a danger to humans. The three laws follow:

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.

2. A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.

3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

In 2007, computer and robotic experts in South Korea and Japan started drawing up plans for programming moral codes in artificially intelligent robots. An engineer at the South Korean Industry Ministry said,

“Robots are becoming more and more intelligent every year to the point where they are virtually thinking for themselves. For this reason we need a code of ethics which all robot manufacturers must build into their machines. The starting point for these ethics should be Isaac Asimov’s three laws.”[332]

As robots become more intelligent and autonomous, some experts fear that it will become harder to decide who is responsible if and when they injure or kill someone. They ponder whether the designer will be to blame, the user, or even the robot itself. Experts have even discussed whether robots would one day be granted certain civil rights.

A 2007 report from the *BBC* discussed whether robots would one day actually be allowed to own property and foresaw that in the future, legislation would need to be introduced to prevent people from abusing robots. “These questions might sound far-fetched, but debates over animal rights would have seemed equally far-fetched to many people just a few decades ago. Now, however, such questions are part of mainstream public debate,” said the article.[333]

Machines Getting Smarter Every Day

Not too long ago in the past, it was considered science fiction to speculate that machines would one day become more intelligent than humans, but as computing power continued to multiply exponentially in the twenty-first century, such claims were starting to come from very well respected scientists and engineers. One of the most popular of these futurists is Ray Kurzweil, who says, “I’ve made the case that we will have both the hardware and the software to achieve human level artificial intelligence with the broad suppleness of human intelligence including our emotional intelligence by 2029.”[334]

Kurzweil is also a transhumanist, and in a 2008 interview with the *BBC*, he said that soon, “We’ll have intelligent nanobots go into our brains through the capillaries and interact directly with our biological neurons.” These nanobots would, “make us smarter, remember things better and automatically go into full emergent virtual reality environments through the nervous system.”[335]

Kurzweil was interviewed at the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Boston, Massachusetts where he and 18 other influential thinkers were chosen to identify the greatest technological challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. Other attendees were Larry Page, founder of Google, and Dr. Craig Venter from the human genome project. Several of the goals the group came up with were to: reverse engineer the brain, secure cyberspace, enhance virtual reality, advance health information, engineer better medicines, and advance personalized learning.

While in the twenty-first century it may be easy to see what lies ahead regarding intelligent systems and robotics, it’s interesting to note that in a

1968 *Playboy* magazine article, Arthur C. Clarke wrote, “In a very few generations—computer generations—which by this time may last only a few months—there will be a mental explosion; the merely intelligent machine will swiftly give away to the ultra-intelligence machine.”

Arthur C. Clarke is most well-known for writing *2001 A Space Odyssey*, where HAL, an artificially intelligent system, begins killing humans on board a space ship in order to prevent them from interfering with its programmed objectives.

It seems that artificial intelligence technology is actually catching up with the science fiction imaginations of the past.

Computer Wins ‘Jeopardy!’

IBM designed a computer program to compete against human *Jeopardy!* contestants with hopes of advancing artificial intelligence technology.[336] As many know, IBM had previously developed a program capable of playing chess called Deep Blue which then beat the world champion Garry Kasparov in 1997.

The ability of Deep Blue to play chess is seen as simple compared to designing a program to play a complicated game like *Jeopardy!* because of the wide variety of questions that could be asked. Of course, if the system, called “Watson” after the founder of IBM, Thomas Watson, was connected to the Internet, it would easily win since it could scour the Internet for the answers, but for this challenge it did not have access to the web.

For the project, IBM developed a new kind of software that can understand human questions and then answer them correctly. “The big goal is to get computers to be able to converse in human terms,” said the team leader, David A. Ferrucci, an IBM artificial intelligence researcher.

The Watson program answered questions with a synthesized voice and was run on a Blue Gene supercomputer which IBM moved to Los Angeles where the game show is located. The show’s producers brought back Ken Jennings, a contestant who won a record 74 days in a row and 2.5 million dollars in 2004 to play against Watson. In February 2011 the historic challenge took place and Watson was victorious over the human contenders. At the end of the three day game, Watson finished with $77,147 while Ken Jennings won $24,000 and the third place contestant, Brad Rutter earned $21,600.[337]

Artificial Brains

In 2009, scientists in Switzerland claimed that they would be able to create a fully-functioning replica of a human brain by the year 2020. They call it the Blue Brain project, and is headed up by Henry Markram who is the director of the Swiss based Center for Neuroscience & Technology and the Brain Mind Institute. Markram had been working to reverse engineer the human brain for years and claimed that he would be able to accomplish this around the year 2020.[338]

There are other teams working on building electronic brains using large computer mainframes. For example, a team at IBM's Almaden Research Lab at Nevada University used a BlueGene/L Supercomputer to model a mouse brain which consists of about eight million neurons. The first version of the BlueGene computer runs about one tenth as fast as an actual mouse's brain, a rate that will undoubtedly rapidly increase with advancing technology.

In a talk in 2008 titled "Crossing the Chasm Between Humans and Machines: the Next 40 Years," Justin Rattner, Intel's chief technology officer, spoke seriously on the subject of machines becoming as smart as people. "The industry has taken much greater strides than anyone ever imagined 40 years ago," he said, and admitted that, "machines could even overtake humans in their ability to reason in the not-so-distant future."[339]

Rodney Brooks, a robot designer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) confirmed, "One day we will create a human-level artificial intelligence." Paul Saffo, a technology forecaster at Stanford University said, "Eventually, we're going to reach the point where everybody's going to say, 'Of course machines are smarter than we are.'"

Saffo also made comments showing the dark danger of creating such things. “The truly interesting question is what happens after if we have truly intelligent robots. If we’re very lucky, they’ll treat us as pets. If not, they’ll treat us as food.”

While Ray Kurzweil believes, (and hopes) that computers will match and surpass human level intelligence by the year 2029, Intel’s Justin Rattner thinks it won’t be until at least 2050, and of course others say it will be even longer.

As incredible advances in computers continue, some scientists are understandably getting worried about the implications of computers surpassing human-level intelligence. Some are debating whether there should be restrictions placed on the kinds of research that could lead to a loss of control once intelligent systems are created.

Scientists who met at the Asilomar Conference Grounds on Monterey Bay in California in 2009 largely downplayed the possibility of computers becoming smarter than man or an artificial intelligence system developing from the Internet, but did acknowledge some of the dangers advancing technology had.

The meeting was organized by Dr. Eric Horvitz, the president of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence, who also works for Microsoft. The location of the conference was purposefully chosen in an attempt to parallel a meeting in 1975 at the same location where leading biologists met to discuss mixing DNA and other genetic material between different organisms and species. Such technology raised serious ethical questions and the 1975 conference helped to set guidelines for DNA research and experiments.

Dr. Horvitz said, “My sense was that sooner or later we would have to make some sort of statement or assessment, given the rising voice of the technorati and people very concerned about the rise of intelligent machines.”

The Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (A.A.A.I.) decided to draft a report that would assess the possibility of “the loss of human control of computer-based intelligences,” as well as the ethical, legal, and socioeconomic issues that are connected to such intelligences arising. Dr. Horvitz said sensitive or potentially dangerous technology and research should be contained in highly secure laboratories as a precaution.

Some scientists, however, were only made more uncomfortable by the meeting after learning about the emerging artificial intelligent systems and their likely implications on the world. Tom Mitchell, a professor of artificial intelligence at Carnegie Mellon University, said, “I went in very optimistic about the future of A.I. and thinking that Bill Joy and Ray Kurzweil were far off in their predictions,” but that, “The meeting made me want to be more outspoken about these issues and in particular be outspoken about the vast amounts of data collected about our personal lives.”

Technological Singularity

The “technological singularity,” sometimes simply called “the singularity” refers to a theoretical time in the future when an artificial intelligence is created that is able to learn and advance technology at a faster pace than humans are able to comprehend. According to this idea, once machines exceed human intelligence, they will improve their own designs and functions in complex ways that are too difficult for humans to understand.

The term, “the singularity” is credited to Vernor Vinge who is a retired mathematics professor at San Diego State University and a science fiction writer, who in 1993 wrote about such an event possibly happening in the future, and coined the term. In his paper titled, *The Coming Technological Singularity,* he wrote, “Within thirty years, we will have the technological means to create superhuman intelligence. Shortly after, the human era will be ended.”

The idea of an “intelligence explosion” by intelligent machines that would design even more intelligent machines was also proposed by a mathematician in 1965 named I. J. Good. In more recent times, many other prominent professionals and experts have spoken about such events.

Bill Joy, the founder of Sun Microsystems, a popular computer chip manufacturer, warned of such an event in an article published in a 2000 edition of *Wired Magazine* titled “Why the Future Doesn’t Need Us.”

He wrote, “From the moment I became involved in the creation of new technologies, their ethical dimensions have concerned me, but it was only in the autumn of 1998 that I became anxiously aware of how great are the dangers facing us in the 21st century.”[340]

He continues, “I was also reminded of the Borg of *Star Trek*, a hive of partly biological, partly robotic creatures with a strong destructive streak. Borg-like disasters are a staple of science fiction, so why hadn’t I been more concerned about such robotic dystopias earlier? Why weren’t other people more concerned about these nightmarish scenarios?”

“By 2030, we are likely to be able to build machines, in quantity, a million times as powerful as the personal computers of today—sufficient to implement the dreams of Kurzweil and Moravec.”

“Given the incredible power of these new technologies, shouldn’t we be asking how we can best coexist with them? And if our own extinction is a likely, or even possible, outcome of our technological development, shouldn’t we proceed with great caution?”

“How soon could such an intelligent robot be built? The coming advances in computing power seem to make it possible by 2030. And once an intelligent robot exists, it is only a small step to a robot species—to an intelligent robot that can make evolved copies of itself.”

He goes on to say that we are rapidly approaching the point of no return with no plan, no control, and no breaks; and ponders, “Have we already gone too far down the path to alter course?”

He also discusses his fears that self-replicating robots and nanotechnology could soon surprise us the way news of the first cloned animal did. He concludes by saying, “This crystallized for me my problem with Kurzweil’s dream. A technological approach to Eternity—near immortality through robotics—may not be the most desirable utopia, and its pursuit brings clear dangers. Maybe we should rethink our utopian choices.”

In 2008, an organization called Singularity University in Silicon Valley began offering courses to prepare a “cadre” to shape advancing technology

and help society cope with the ramifications of what they see as the coming singularity.

Techno-Utopianism

Technological utopianism refers to the belief that scientific and technological advances will one day bring about a utopia where humans can live in luxury and enjoy an abundance of goods and services that are all built and maintained by robots and/or artificially intelligent systems.

Such an idea has been portrayed in science fiction books and films, as well as cartoons like the *Jetsons*. Proponents envision that in the future, things like cooking, cleaning, and manual labor will be done by robots, allowing people to have an abundance of free time to enjoy themselves with 3D entertainment, interactive video games, or other leisure activities or hobbies. It’s difficult to reconcile these ideas because often people’s jobs have been replaced by new technology, leaving them unemployed and with job skills that aren’t needed anymore. Such displacements don’t allow the individual to then live a comfortable life of luxury, but instead place tremendous stress on them as they scramble to find a new place in the job market to provide for their family and pay their bills. Techno-utopian dreamers somehow often overlook practical scenarios involving advancing technology.

If we look back in history to the industrial revolution, we can see that many people thought this would bring about a techno-utopia since manual labor could be reduced by advanced machinery, but instead, people were needed to design, build, operate, and maintain the new machines, and such developments didn’t ease American’s work load at all. Quite contrary, Americans are working longer hours now than in years past, and in the last few generations we have seen the need for both husband and wife to work in order to make ends meet.

In the 1990s when the Internet became widely popular and the dot-com craze started, techno-utopian dreams were revived once again. Many of the key players in the computer revolution were counter-culture figures such as Steve Jobs, founder of Apple Inc., who was a hippie who smoked pot and used LSD, but later grew into a suit-wearing businessman.

While computers and the Internet have changed the world and our culture in vast ways, are people working less and retiring earlier? No. Sure, there are exceptions such as people who created a business model and developed it into a successful money making operation and became wealthy in a short period of time, but these are the rare exceptions. It seems that jobs and careers are similar to energy, in that they simply change form and cause people to scramble to learn new skills as their positions are eliminated.

As you know, the dot-com bubble burst after the rampant speculation of permanent prosperity and instant millionaires came crashing down to reality. The belief in techno-utopianism may at times gain a tremendous following of people who can cite all kinds of reasons and evidence for why it will soon occur, but they will inevitably be disappointed when reality sets in.

Techno-utopian dreamers believe that technological growth will lead to the end of economic scarcity, and that this will then eliminate every major social evil such as crime. What they overlook is the fact that some people steal for the thrill of it, and some people kill out of rage, and some people like to gain and abuse power just for the sake of power.

Zeitgeist the Movie

A popular set of films on the Internet is *Zeitgeist the Movie,* and its sequel *Zeitgeist: Addendum* which were produced by a man using a possible pseudonym of "Peter Joseph." The films attempt to expose the New World Order, the 9/11 attacks, and the Federal Reserve banking system, while simultaneously attacking Christianity and claiming that Jesus never existed. For the sake of this analysis, we will focus primarily on the techno-utopia described in the sequel, *Zeitgeist: Addendum.* A thorough analysis of the other aspects of the films can be found in my book, *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction.*

In October of 2008, *Zeitgeist* part 2, or the *Addendum,* was released as an Internet film and began with a discussion about the private Federal Reserve banking system and its implications on the economy and society, but then took a turn into the bizarre. A large part of *Zeitgeist Addendum* promotes the idea that civilization will not need money anymore after we design and build sophisticated robots and mechanical systems to perform most of the tasks that humans now have to accomplish. The producer, "Peter Joseph," and the proponents of what is called the Venus Project, envision a techno-utopian society where machines will do all the work for us, and people will then be able to spend their time enjoying themselves and living in luxury. The film pushes the idea that these advanced machines will be able to create an abundance of everything we need, and can cook and clean and do all kinds of manual labor, so that people can then live like they're on a permanent vacation and explore their creative side.

Of course it seems as if the producer was high on marijuana when he wrote the script, and to any educated person the film seems like a pipe dream, but a lot of younger viewers fully support the techno-utopian ideas and believe the picture of the future painted in the film will soon be a reality.

Who wouldn’t like a world where you wouldn’t have to work? Seems like a great idea on the surface, until you actually look at the logistics of such an idea. Unfortunately the supporters of this film cannot grasp the reality of a medium of exchange, nor the value of rare artifacts or the need for human labor, and that even if sophisticated machines or robots are able to replace a fair amount of human labor, there will always be countless jobs that they will not be able to do: from teaching children, to various service oriented jobs or research and development. Such a techno-utopia has been the dream of many who envisioned microwave ovens, cell phones, and laptop computers as the tools which would free mankind from the burdens of work, but such inventions have only complicated the issue.

Since the *Zeitgeist* series is blatantly anti-religion, particularly anti-Christianity, many of the Zeitgeist supporters attack anyone who addresses the fallacies in the film often saying critics must be brainwashed from religion and too old-fashioned to change with the times.

Aside from his attacks on Christianity in his first film, “Peter Joseph” is also anti-Second Amendment and said that in his vision of the future, people wouldn’t need to own guns anymore since there would be no crime. In an interview, when he was asked about people who didn’t want to go along and participate in his supposed utopian New World Order, he basically said the people would need to be re-educated.[341]

Peter Joseph seems to have attempted to establish himself as some sort of cult leader by promoting what he calls the Zeitgeist Movement, which is seen as a group of activists who desire to change society into the kind envisioned in his films. In June 2010, the movement claimed to have over 400,000 members,[342] which consist of people who have signed up for an e-mail list.

Supporters of the so-called Zeitgeist Movement dream of a society with no money, no private property, mass automation of manual labor and tedious tasks, and artificial intelligent systems to make ethical judgments,

perhaps replacing human judges and juries, which they claim are biased and not objective. While these ideas seem to be taken right out of a science fiction novel, or someone who lacks critical thinking skills, Peter Joseph seems to actually believe in them and has a fair number of supporters who agree with him. It is unclear exactly how these people will usher in their techno-utopia, but somehow they feel they deserve it.

On October 8, 2008, some supporters of the Zeitgeist Movement smashed several windows in a building at Oklahoma State University and spray painted “Zeitgeist Movement” on the pavement in some sort of attempt to “fight the system.” It’s extremely unlikely that the “Zeitgeist Movement” will formulate into an actual social movement or affect any kind of social changes whatsoever, but the *Zeitgeist* films show how appealing fanciful dreams of a techno-utopia are for people.

An Analysis of Ray Kurzweil’s Predictions

I thought it would be beneficial to analyze the predictions of the respected futurist Ray Kurzweil, especially since one of his books, *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, was published in 1999, and contains his technological forecasts for the decades to come. At the time I’m writing this analysis, it is the year 2010, so we can look back at Kurzweil’s predictions for the year 2009 that he made ten years earlier in order to see how they pan out. We will also look at his predictions for the future and discuss the likelihood of them being accurate. His book contains chapters on his vision of the future and what technology we will have in the years 2009, 2019, 2029, and 2099.

Kurzweil’s Predictions For 2009

In 1999, Kurzweil looked ahead ten years and predicted that by 2009, “Personal computers are available in a wide range of sizes and shapes, and are commonly embedded in clothing and jewelry such as wristwatches, rings, earrings, and other body ornaments. Computers with high-resolution visual interfaces range from rings and pins and credit cards up to the size of a thin book.”[343] Well, with the release of smart phones such as the Black Berry and the iPhone, one could argue that computers do come in all shapes and sizes, but as far as his prediction of them being “commonly” embedded in clothing and jewelry, this didn’t happen.

He was more accurate, though, when he stated, “Computer displays have all the display quality of paper—high resolution, high contrast, large viewing angle, and no flicker. Books, magazines, and newspapers are now routinely read on displays that are the size of, well, small books.”[344]

Amazon.com released their e-book reader, *Kindle*, in 2007, which was later followed by Barnes and Noble’s *Nook*, and e-books could be read on iPhones and other smart phones as well. In April 2010, Apple Inc. released the iPad, which they advertised as an e-book reader among other things.

The iPad also sounds a lot like what he described here, where he said, “Students of all ages typically have a computer of their own, which is a thin table-like device weighing under a pound with a very high resolution display suitable for reading.”[345] Most students in 2009 had laptop computers, and while they weighed more than a pound, they were certainly amazing creations that had wireless Internet access and could be used to watch videos or read e-books.

Back in 1999, Kurzweil also stated that in 2009, “Telephone communication is primarily wireless, and routinely includes high-resolution moving images,”[346] which, thanks to smart phones with video cameras and color screens, this is what we have. Many people now don’t even have a “home phone” and only have their cell phones. He also predicted, “Computers routinely include moving picture image cameras and are able to reliably identify their owners from their faces.”[347] Well, he was right again, because all laptops come standard with a tiny camera and microphone built into them, and any laptop can be installed with facial recognition software used as a security measure to only allow the owner to use it. Tiny video cameras were also common in cell phones in 2009.

While we now take iTunes and downloadable mp3s for granted, in 1999 the music industry was running scared of people downloading their music on peer-to-peer networks like Napster. Kurzweil predicted by 2009 that, “Most purchases of books, musical ‘albums,’ video games, and other forms of software do not involve any physical object, so new business models for distributing these forms of information have emerged.”[348]

While he may have been wrong by using the word “most,” he was certainly correct that an extremely large number of people purchase software, videogames, and music from websites and instantly download them, instead of having to physically go to a store and buy them on a disk. Kurzweil also saw the future of On-Demand movies and services like Netflix, YouTube, and podcasts of popular radio shows, saying, “Users can instantly download books, magazines, newspapers, television, radio, movies, and other forms of software to their highly portable personal communication devices.” [349]

Not surprisingly, Kurzweil also mentioned that privacy would become a major concern for people, and as you know, identity theft became a popular fear as we relied more and more on technology. “Privacy has emerged as a primary political issue. The virtually constant use of electronic communication technologies is leaving a highly detailed trail of every person’s every move,” he said.[350]

It’s also interesting to read that Kurzweil foresaw a large portion of the population would become politically neutralized, saying, “Although not politically popular, the underclass is politically neutralized through public assistance and the generally high level of affluence.”[351]

Not all of his predictions for 2009 came true, however. One such prediction was concerning the economy, which he was embarrassingly wrong about when he said, “Despite occasional corrections, the ten years leading up to 2009 have seen continuous economic expansion and prosperity due to the dominance of the knowledge content of products and services. The greatest gains continue to be in the value of the stock market.”[352] Now it is understandable that he is a technology expert, not an economist, so his failed economic forecasting shouldn’t detract from his insight into technological advances.

Also, while he did foresee the use of unmanned flying drones to be used in wars, he believed that humans would be mostly far removed from the scene of battle, sadly, a prediction that was far from accurate with the fatalities and injuries to soldiers and innocent civilians in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He did, however, envision small UAVs (Unmanned Arial Vehicles) the size of birds or smaller,[353] which did come true in 2009 and 2010, although such devices were still in their infancy.

Kurzweil’s Predictions for 2019

Looking further ahead, he says by the year 2019 computers will be so small that they’ll practically be invisible and that we will have displays built into our eye glasses and contact lenses which will replace old fashioned LCD monitors.

He insists that reverse engineering of the human brain will have inspired the architecture of machine-based neural networks and says a $4000 computer will have the same computing power as a human brain (20 million- billion calculations per second).

“Keyboards are rare, although they still exist. Most interactions with computing is through gestures using hands, fingers, and facial expressions and through two-way natural-language spoken communication. People communicate with computers the same way they would communicate with a human assistant, both verbally and through visual expression,” he says.[354]

“Paper books and documents are rarely used or accessed….Most learning is accomplished using intelligent software-based simulated teachers. To the extent that teaching is done by human teachers, the human teachers are often not in the local vicinity of the student.”[355]

He also says that people will be hooked up to virtual reality systems that can simulate pressure, temperature, textures, and moistness, and says that “sexual interactions with other human partners or simulated partners” will be the “preferred mode of interaction, even when a human partner is nearby.”[356]

He goes on to say that people will begin having relationships with automated personalities, including automated lovers, and writes that

"automated personalities are superior to humans in some ways, such as having very reliable memories, and if desired, predictable (and programmable) personalities."[357]

He forecasts that the military will widely use very small flying weapons, some the size of insects, a concept that the military has already budgeted for, and is working towards. **(*See Orwellian Weapons*)** By 2019, Kurzweil believes that some reports will claim that computers have passed the Turing Test, but he insists that these systems will not meet all the criteria of an artificially intelligent system for a few more years.

"Public and private spaces are routinely monitored by machine intelligence to prevent interpersonal violence," he says, and "privacy continues to be a major political and social issue with each individual's practically every move stored in a database somewhere."[358] It's interesting to read his forecast of "machine intelligence" that he says will prevent violence, because as you may recall from the chapter on surveillance cameras, in 2010 these systems were already in their early stages with pre-crime cameras that detect "hostile" speech based on the volume, speed, and pitch of conversations the microphones pick up.

He also writes that in this period of time the "human underclass" will continue to be an issue and that the difference between those "productively engaged" in the economy and those who aren't, will be complicated.

Kurzweil's Predictions for 2029

This is where his predictions start to get scary. Much of them sound like science fiction or fantasies coming from an over-active imagination, but Kurzweil is supposedly an expert, and was able to fairly accurately predict the kinds of technology that would be used in the year 2009 when he wrote his book ten years earlier. While some of these predictions for 2029 may seem fanciful, some of them are certainly extremely likely to occur.

Instead of people wearing a blue tooth piece on their ear to talk on their phone, Kurzweil believes that, "Cochlear implants, originally used just for the hearing impaired, are now ubiquitous. These implants provide auditory communication in both directions between the human user and the world wide computing network."[359] This is certainly believable, but what is even more disturbing is that he says similar devices will be implanted in our eyes.

"Displays are now implanted in the eyes, with a choice of permanent implants or removable implants (similar to contact lenses). Images are projected directly onto the retina providing the usual high-resolution three-dimensional overlay on the physical world."[360]

He also envisions neural interfaces will be as common as cell phones were in the beginning of the twenty-first century, saying, "neural implants based on machine intelligence are providing enhanced perceptual and cognitive functioning to humans. Defining what constitutes a human being is emerging as a significant legal and political issue. The rapidly growing capability of machines is controversial, but there is no effective resistance to it."[361]

If this isn’t unsettling enough, he also alludes to the fact that the majority of humans on earth will not even be needed anymore, and will be completely replaced by machines. “There is almost no human employment in production, agriculture, and transportation,” he says.[362]

If there is no human employment in production, agriculture, or transportation, as Kurzweil predicts, then what kinds of jobs are those people going to have? What he doesn’t mention is that elite politicians, environmentalists, and businessmen have a strong desire to massively reduce the world’s population in order to (as they believe) preserve the earth’s natural resources. Wealthy elitists like Ted Turner and Prince Philip have publicly stated their desire to reduce the population by several billion people. The elite’s ideologies behind population reduction are discussed at length in my book, *The New World Order: Facts & Fiction*.

Kurzweil’s Predictions for 2099

If you thought his predictions for the year 2029 were far-fetched, or just plain disturbing, what Kurzweil believes life will be like in 2099 is truly bizarre. “A software-based intelligence is able to manifest bodies at will: one or more virtual bodies at different levels of virtual reality and nanoengineered physical bodies using instantly reconfigurable nanobot swarms.”[363] What he is saying, basically, is that billions of tiny nanorobots that all communicate with each other, will be able to work together to assemble themselves in the shape of whatever they want, similar to the T-1000 Terminator robot from the Arnold Schwarzenegger movie *Terminator 2*.

He also says that computer systems will be completely artificially intelligent, and will even be smarter than the entire human race’s intelligence combined.[364]

Humans, he says, will almost all have computers implanted in their brains and will all be cyborgs. “Even among those human intelligences still using carbon-based neurons, there is ubiquitous use of neural implant technology, which provides enormous augmentation of human perceptual and cognitive abilities. Humans who do not utilize such implants are unable to meaningfully participate in dialogues with those who do.”[365]

Only time will tell just how accurate these predictions are. While his visions of the year 2009 were very accurate, this could be in part because much of the technology that became popular around that time was already in the works when he wrote his book in 1999. It’s not that difficult to see how emerging technology will become commonplace in the near future, but extrapolating accurate predictions thirty years and one hundred years into the future are likely much more difficult. Depending on what year you are

reading this book, you will be able to make a more accurate assessment of the timeline Kurzweil outlines in his writings.

Even if Kurzweil is dramatically wrong in his visions of future technology, the kinds of invasive and dehumanizing systems that will undoubtedly be created in the coming decades should be a cause for alarm, and precautions should be made today to ensure that we do not become a mindless species of cyborgs, or the slaves of artificially intelligent robots.

Cybernetic Organisms

A cybernetic organism is a living creature that consists of both biological systems, as well as artificial systems, and is often seen as being a person or other organism that has enhanced abilities due to advanced technology. The term *cyborg* is often used as a shortened version of *cybernetic organism* and is a popular term used in science fiction to describe a creature that is part human, part machine. The term cyborg was coined in 1960 by Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline in a paper where they outlined how cybernetic systems could be used to allow humans to “meet the requirements of extraterrestrial environments,” as they traveled in space to other planets.[366]

Characters such as the Borg from *Star Trek*, and the *Six million Dollar Man* from the 1970s TV series are examples of popular cyborgs from science fiction, which is where most people believe is the only place that cyborgs are found. Quite surprising is the fact that cybernetic organisms are actually real, although they are not nearly advanced as the ones in the movies…yet.

As far back as 2004, a cybernetic brain was able to fly a flight simulator for an F-22 fighter jet.[367] This cyborg brain was built from 25,000 neurons extracted from a rat’s brain which sits in a petri dish. The brain is still alive. Dr. Thomas DeMarse, professor of biomedical engineering at the University of Florida said, “It’s essentially a dish with 60 electrodes arranged in a dish at the bottom, over that we put the living cortical neurons from rats, which rapidly begin to reconnect themselves, forming a living neural network—a brain.”

An article on CNN.com in 2004 discussing the system mentioned that “living networks” could be used to fly actual unmanned aircraft in the future, and not just a flight simulator. This cyborg rat brain was reported to

have “learned” to control the flight simulator. With the partial rat brain consisting of only 25,000 neurons, one can only imagine what could happen if and when complete brains, or the brains of larger animals are used. A dog’s brain has 160 million neurons, for example, and a chimpanzee’s has more than six billion.

A similar cyborg brain was created at the Georgia Institute of Technology which operates a small mechanical body instead of a flight simulator. The designers call it the Hybrot, meaning hybrid-robot, which also uses a portion of a rat’s brain. The researchers are hoping that their creation will start to actually learn.

“Learning is often defined as a lasting change in behaviors, resulting from experience,” said Steve Potter, the bio-medical engineer on the project. “In order for a cultured network to learn, it must be able to behave. By using multi-electrode arrays as a two-way interface to cultured mammalian cortical networks, we have given these networks an artificial body with which to behave,” he said.[368]

In 2007 Charles Higgins, an associate professor at the University of Arizona, built a small robot that is controlled partially by the brain of a moth. Higgens attached electrodes to a part of the moth’s brain that deals with sight, which then causes the robot to respond depending on what the moth is seeing.

Higgens said in the future, “Most computers will have some kind of living component to them. In time, our knowledge of biology will get to a point where if your heart is failing, we won’t wait for a donor. We’ll just grow you one. We’ll be able to do that with brains, too. If I could grow brains, I could really make computing efficient.”[369]

Higgens insists that he would draw the line at using monkey or human brains for cybernetic creations, but mentioned that someday these new hybrid computers could become artificially intelligent. “Computers now are good at chess and Word and Excel, but they’re not good at being flexible or

interacting with other users. There may be some way to use biological computing to actually make our computers seem more intelligent,” he said.

Monkey Equipped with Mechanical Arm

In 2003 scientists at Duke University's Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina attached a neural interface to a monkey's brain that allowed it to move a mechanical arm by using its thoughts. The monkey would just think about using its own arm, and its brain signals were intercepted by the neural interface and caused the mechanical arm to move the same way its own arm would have. The monkey was able to grab things and feed itself with the cybernetic arm.[370]

"It's quite plausible that the perception is you're extended into the robot arm, or the arm is an extension of you," said the University of Washington's Eberhard E. Fetz, a pioneer in the field of brain-machine interfaces.

"It moves much like your own arm would move," said Dr Andrew Schwartz of Pittsburgh University. The scientists said they would soon upgrade the system so that the users could transmit their mental commands to machines wirelessly instead of having them physically wired into the brain.[371]

The monkeys used in the experiment had bundles of wires protruding from their head after they had holes drilled through their skulls to implant the interfaces into their brains. Miguel Nicolelis, the scientist in charge of the experiments, insisted the monkeys liked the experiment. "If anything, they're enjoying themselves playing these games. It enriches their lives," he said. "You don't have to do anything to get these guys into their chair. They go right there. That's play time."[372]

Man Tests Mechanical Hand

In Italy a man who lost his forearm in a car accident was equipped with a cybernetic arm in 2003, similar to the one that was tested on monkeys several years earlier. In this instance, the mechanical hand was just part of a test and was not a permanent thing.

Scientists implanted electrodes into the nerves at the end of the man's severed hand and connected them to the mechanical hand and he was able to wiggle the fingers and grab things. The project was called LifeHand. You may recall in one of the *Star Wars* films, the lead character, Luke Skywalker, had his hand cut off which was then replaced by a mechanical hand that he used throughout the rest of the trilogy.

After the surgery which implanted the electrodes in the patient's arm, he only took a few days to master the robotic hand. Scientists said the device was able to receive and obey 95% of the commands from the man's nervous system. "It felt almost the same as a real hand," said the patient.[373]

Paolo Maria Rossini, a neurologist who lead the procedure, said the patient "didn't have to learn to use muscles that do a different job to move a prosthesis, he just had to concentrate and send to the robotic hand the same messages he used to send to his own hand."[374]

Transhumanism

Transhumanism is a fringe belief system, some call it a movement, of people who are hoping or attempting to use technology to improve the mental and physical characteristics and abilities of human beings. Such technologies will lead to what supporters call “human enhancement.” Some of the ideas brought forth by transhumanists are noble, such as helping the handicapped or curing disease, but many also dream of one day eliminating aging and even death and transforming ordinary humans into cyborgs that live forever. Most transhumanists are atheists.

The term *transhumanism* is symbolized by H+ and comes from the idea that humans can transform themselves into beings with dramatically improved abilities compared to what a natural born human has in regards to strength, mental capabilities, and communication. Much of the “enhancements” come from cybernetic devices like neural interfaces that will turn an ordinary person into a cyborg. The emergence of nanotechnology is looked at as a major primer that will jumpstart the transhumanist revolution. Nanotechnology refers to the manipulation or assembly of matter on an atomic scale, or structures between 1 and 100 nanometers in size. One nanometer is one billionth of a meter. Nanotechnology has a wide range of applications, mainly in electronics and medicine.

In 1986 a man named Eric Drexler published a book titled *Engines of Creation*: *The Coming Era of Nanotechnology,* which was one of the first to discuss the future possibilities of nanotechnology to dramatically extend the human lifespan and use nanorobots for various science fiction-like tasks.[375]

Ray Kurzweil believes that, “Nanobots launched into our bloodstreams could supplement our natural immune system and seek out and destroy

pathogens, cancer cells, arterial plaque, and other agents….We will be able to reconstruct any or all of our bodily organs and systems, and do so at the cellular level."[376]

In her 1992 book *Science as Salvation*, Mary Midgley discussed transhumanist goals of achieving immortality and called their ideas quasi-scientific dreams and self-indulgent, uncontrolled power-fantasies driven by pseudoscientific speculation and the fear of death.[377]

A Closer Look at Nineteen Eighty-Four

Let’s now take a closer look at the story elements of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and see how the novel reflects our current society in many ways, not just in terms of privacy-invading technology and the watchful eyes of Big Brother. The story of Winston Smith, the lead character, and the world in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also involves very insightful elements describing the socioeconomic structure and the drastic differences in lifestyles between different segments of society. Orwell also highlighted a perpetual state of war and the propaganda that kept society supporting it. As you read through the novel, it is impossible not to notice numerous other parallels between the storyline and our actual reality. The book is one of the scariest instances of life imitating art, and critics of Big Brother will sometimes say that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was not meant to be used as an instruction manual.

Social Structure

In the novel, the government consists of “the Party” which itself is made up of Inner members and Outer members, each with dramatically different privileges. The Inner members have access to luxuries such as real food and refreshments, and live in spacious and well-furnished homes, while the Outer members are given small food rations and live in dilapidated housing projects. A step below the Outer members on the socioeconomic scale are the Proles (or proletariats) who live in deplorable conditions like a third world country and are seen as immoral and out of control animals who are not given any of the “luxuries” of Party members.

Orwell explains, “Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbors, films, football, beer, and above all, gambling filled up the horizon of their minds. To keep them in control was not difficult…All that was required of them was a primitive patriotism which could be appealed to whenever it was necessary to make them accept longer working hours or shorter rations. And when they become discontented, as they sometimes did, their discontentment led nowhere, because being without general ideas, they could only focus it on petty specific grievances.”[378]

A steady supply of “Victory Gin” provided by the government kept people mildly intoxicated, and contributed to their apathetic attitude. In the story, the political ideology is described as *Ingsoc*, which stands for English Socialism, and is the justification for the severe government control and regulation of goods and services. Even having children is regulated by the government and a couple must be approved before they start a family.

Life wasn’t always so controlled and joyless. After what is called the Revolution, the Party gained power and created a society where each

individual is reduced to nothing more than a worker, working for the sake of the Party, and under the constant supervision of Big Brother.

The population of the Proles was massive compared to Party members, and Orwell notes that if they would only realize the strength that they had in numbers, they could rise up and overthrow the Party and Big Brother in an instant.

“Why was it that they could never shout like that about anything that mattered?” Winston lamented after hearing a group of people yelling in the streets over a petty quarrel. The reason for their poor living condition was their lack of education and their own ignorance. The Party did everything they could to prevent them from becoming enlightened.

“For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves; and when once they had done this, they would sooner or later realize that the privileged minority had no function, and they would sweep it away. In the long run, a hierarchical society was only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance.”[379]

The Control of Information

George Orwell knew the power of propaganda, thus the Party controlled all information such as the newsreels shown on the telescreens, and the publishing of all newspapers and books. They even wrote the songs people would sing, created the games children played, and produced the entertainment people enjoyed.

“They [the citizens] could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity of what was demanded of them, and were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening.”[380]

In our society we have Operation Mockingbird which has manipulated the mainstream media since the 1950s and functions as a propaganda arm of the establishment, and a gate-keeper to contain important information, preventing it from reaching the public. Most people are also distracted by entertainment news such as celebrity gossip and sports, which divert people’s attention away from important issues and allows government corruption to run rampant.

A *memory hole* is another term coined by Orwell, and means the alteration or disappearance of inconvenient or embarrassing documents, photographs, transcripts, or other records, in a way that attempts to make it seem as though something never happened and the information never even existed. For example, if an embarrassing story is posted online after slipping past the editors but is later brought to their attention, sometimes they may change a headline, remove parts of the story, or just delete the entire story altogether in an attempt to contain certain information and prevent it from being known or spread around. When this happens, the information is said to have disappeared down the memory hole.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* there is a scene where Winston Smith had to edit newspapers from the past (which was part of his job) and change the amount of chocolate rations that were allowed to each person per week. In reality, the amount decreased from 30 grams to 20 grams, but Smith had to make it seem like the ration had actually increased from 15 to 20. A visibly happy friend of Winston later passes him in a hallway and cheerfully says, “Did you hear they’re going to increase the chocolate rations from 15 grams to 20 grams per week,” and is so brainwashed by Big Brother that he doesn’t realize the number had actually been reduced and not increased. All past documentation showing anything different had been removed from existence.

All information about a person who betrays Big Brother or the Party is also completely removed from all records, and that person becomes an “unperson” and is executed. It is made to seem as if they never even existed. Near the end of the novel, the main antagonist, O’Brien, tells Winston, “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.” Any information the Party didn’t want people to have access to anymore simply disappeared into a memory hole (meaning it was destroyed) and was quickly forgotten about by everyone. With no physical evidence or record of a piece of information, there was no longer any way to verify whether a fact was true or not. The truth was what the Party said it was.

In a very ironic situation in 2009, Amazon.com deleted a large number of copies of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from their Kindle electronic book readers. Customers had purchased e-book copies of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which were then sent wirelessly to their Kindle reader, but after it was discovered that the publisher who listed that particular Kindle version for sale did not actually have the rights to the novel, the copies were deleted by Amazon from customer’s own Kindle e-book readers, and disappeared into a memory hole.[381] Customers were not told what had happened, and the copy of the book simply vanished from their e-book reader because they are all wirelessly connected to Amazon.com and the company controls which files are stored on the Kindle unit.

Another one of countless incidences where important information disappears down a *memory hole* as a result of government intervention was with the case of the pulling of an episode of Jesse Ventura's television show, *Conspiracy Theory*. After the "Police State" episode first aired on Friday November 26th 2010, it was scheduled to be replayed the following week as a lead-in for the new episode, but it mysteriously never aired again. The episode's description was also pulled from TruTV's website, the cable channel airing program. It covered secretive FEMA prison camps and terrorist fusion centers which collect and data mine information to look for terrorists or anyone who may be a threat to the government's tyranny. The episode was pretty disturbing.

After websites and blogs started to buzz with speculation, it was then revealed by the show's producers that the U.S. government put pressure on the network to kill the episode from airing again, so they did.[382] The information in episodes of *Conspiracy Theory* is so powerful that the government doesn't want people watching it so they put pressure on the network to make one of the most damaging episodes disappear. People who recorded that episode on their DVRs at home then started reporting that the episode was missing from their DVR unit.[383] Apparently the cable company had even removed the recorded episodes in an attempt to dump them down a memory hole.

Perpetual State of War

Society is stuck in a lengthy war with another superpower and the ongoing battle is used as an explanation for various food and supply shortages that people must endure. The telescreens announce victories on the battlefield that always bring the war “within measurable distance of its end,” but it continues on, and on and society continues to support it.

While this war continues, the enemy superpower they are supposedly fighting keeps changing, and nobody seems to notice. First they are fighting Eastasia (and allies with Eurasia), but later they are said to be battling Eurasia, and allies with Eastasia, but nobody notices. It’s kind of like the switch from fighting the “War on Terror” in Afghanistan starting in 2001, shortly after the 9/11 attacks, and later shifting to the War in Iraq in 2003 which then continued for many years.

Winston finds a girlfriend named Julia who feels the same way he does about the Party, society, and Big Brother, and the two discuss finding the Brotherhood, an underground and secret Resistance movement that is plotting to overthrow the Party and restore freedom. As they discuss finding the Brotherhood (called *The Resistance* in the film version) they begin unraveling the extent of the lies coming from the Party. When discussing the perpetual war, Julia remarks, “The rocket bombs which fell daily on London were probably fired by the government itself, just to keep people frightened.”[384] It’s stunning that Orwell included this reference to false flag terrorism in the storyline, a very real and ruthless strategy used by governments around the world throughout history. A false flag attack means a country (or group) attacks themselves and blames it on some other country or group in order to justify a massive military response that is seen as a retaliation for the (fraudulent) attack against them.

In the novel, Orwell also explains that the war Oceania is fighting isn't a real war, but that it is a fabrication that the ruling Party needs to continuously go on in order to destroy the fruits of society's labor, thus ensuring a continuous shortage of goods which maintains the social structure that the ruling elite has constructed. The Party would print up "atrocity pamphlets" outlining the crimes allegedly committed by the enemy, and distribute them to the citizens of Oceania so they could see how evil the enemy was that they were fighting and the horrors of war were constantly in their minds to reinforce the reason they had to work so hard for so little.

Winston comes to discover, "The essential act of war is destruction, not necessarily of human lives, but of the products of human labor. War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere or sinking in the depths of the sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent."[385]

"In the past, the ruling groups of all countries, although they might recognize their common interest and therefore limit the destructiveness of war, did fight against one another, and the victor always plundered the vanquished. In our own day they are not fighting against one another at all. The war is waged by each ruling group against its own subjects, and the object of the war is not to make or prevent conquests of territory, but to keep the structure of society intact."[386]

According to the novel, if society was not at war, and the goods they manufactured were put to use to improve the living conditions of everyone, then the ruling elite would lose their power because the wealth would be more evenly distributed. It is for this reason that the Inner Party continues their manufactured and fraudulent war, which then keeps them in control of the infrastructure and assets, and prevents everyone else from rising out of poverty.

The Personification of the Party

A man named Big Brother is supposedly the head of the Party, and his picture is plastered on walls in every building and on every street to constantly remind everyone that "Big Brother is watching you." There is actually no one named Big Brother, or at least not anymore, but the people didn't know this, or even consider it. He is a face attached to personify the Party and give it the appearance and feeling of being human. Orwell explains, "Big Brother is the guise in which the Party chooses to exhibit itself to the world. His function is to act as a focusing point for love, fear, and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt toward an individual than toward an organization."[387]

In reality, a similar method is used with the President of the United States (and the leaders of other countries as well). The president is believed by many to be the man in charge, and the most powerful man in the world, but he is simply a spokesman and puppet for the ones who are really running the show. When people are mad at the policies they must obey or conditions they find themselves and their country in, they point to the president and blame him, believing it's all his fault. This makes them feel better by having an individual to blame and focus their anger on. The president is a personification of the party, and even the entire country.

A similar personification was used with Osama bin Laden in the War on Terror. For nearly a decade the American government blamed this one man for all of the problems in the world, even though bin Laden had barely been heard from after 9/11, leading many to believe that he had died shortly after of natural causes. The American establishment purposefully perpetuated a mythological Bin Laden and an occasional video tape or audio message was released to the public, supposedly of the man, but such video taped messages were always from old videos and contained typical

“death to America” and “death to Israel” messages, and nothing new was ever discovered.

For years experts highly doubted that “new” audio messages claimed to be from bin Laden were actually even him. In 2006, Bruce Lawrence, a professor at Duke University and an expert on Osama bin Laden, said he believed bin Laden was dead and that audio messages purported to be from him were in fact not, but for political reasons were claimed otherwise.[388]

The myth that an all-powerful Osama bin Laden remained alive and was directing his global terrorist organization, Al Qaeda, was a monumental lie that was continuously spread to the public to keep them in a state of fear, and was used as the reason for the War on Terror to continue. The raid by U.S. Navy Seals on his purported compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan on May 1st 2011 where it was reported that he had been living for five years only raised more questions about his actual power and influence on Al Qaeda.

Most of the ignorant public had been led to believe that this one man was responsible for every terrorist attack in the world, as if he was some untouchable mafia kingpin out of a comic book who personally ordered every incident. For over a decade he was the boogie man and the face of terrorism that had been wildly exaggerated to justify the ongoing “War on Terror.” He should have been called Osama Bin Elvis because of the countless reports of sightings over the years. Many questions remain surrounding his purported death on May 1st 2011. Many wonder if he was alive for nearly a decade following the 9/11 attacks, and if he was living in the compound in Pakistan for five years, then why hadn’t we heard from him for so long? He was allegedly still leading Al Qaeda from his residence, yet he hadn’t released any new video tapes or audio messages for at least five years.

If you find my claims about the wildly exaggerated power of Osama bin Laden and the fraudulent War on Terror absurd, then you have a long way to go in your awakening process to undo the years of brainwashing and

social conditioning you have been a victim of. As Orwell said, “It might very well be that literally ever word in the history books, even the things that one accepted without question, was pure fantasy.”[389]

For over a decade Osama bin Laden was used to fulfill the same role that Emmanuel Goldstein plays in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Goldstein is the bad guy, and the ultimate evil. “All subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations, sprang directly out of his teaching. Somewhere or other he was still alive and hatching his conspiracies,” Orwell wrote.[390]

Winston starts to see through the myth of Goldstein and at one point when a “new message” from Goldstein was aired on the telescreens attacking Big Brother and the Party, Smith called it, “an attack so exaggerated and perverse that a child should have been able to see through it.”[391]

Julia also saw through the propaganda, saying, “The tales about Goldstein and his underground army, were simply a lot of rubbish which the Party had invented for its own purposes.”[392]

Telescreens

A major component of Big Brother in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are telescreens, which are television screens that can also see and hear what is in their immediate surroundings and are monitored by the Thought Police who make sure no one is saying anything bad about Big Brother or the Party. Telescreens are mounted in every home and also continuously communicate Party propaganda to society and cannot be turned off (except by Inner Party members, for a brief period of time). These telescreens watched and listened to every member of the Party, and nobody dares question their authority. Such an act would amount to Thought Crime and would cause one to be imprisoned and killed. The telescreens and microphones are continuously monitored and even facial expressions and body language can be understood by the Big Brother system. No one dares even whisper a word of disagreement or doubt about the Party or Big Brother.

“It was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander when you were in any public place or within range of a telescreen. The smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself—anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide.”[393]

As you’ve learned in *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*, real life telescreens now exist, along with pre-crime cameras, facial recognition systems, store cameras that alert customer service if you loiter in an isle too long; cameras that allow bosses to watch, listen, and talk to their employees, and more. It’s getting to the point that no matter where you are (even in a school bathroom) you may be within reach of the watchful eyes and ears of Big Brother.

Orwell wrote, “the telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard…You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.”[394]

When George Orwell wrote his book, computer technology was nonexistent. Color TV had not been invented yet, there were no microwave ovens, answering machines, VCRs, cassette players, or even eight-track players. In 1949, the most advanced technology was black and white television. Systems like Echelon, Carnivore, facial recognition cameras and other Big Brother technology are becoming common knowledge in the twenty-first century, but at the time *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was first published, this technology was limited to the creative imaginations of science fiction writers, or dismissed as insanity.

Modern surveillance systems are even much more powerful than what Orwell imagined. As the cliché goes, the truth *is* stranger than fiction. In a move that would have caused a national outcry just a decade earlier when people weren’t so desensitized to Orwellian measures, in December 2010, the retail giant Wal-Mart began using video screens at the checkout stands at around 600 hundred different locations in the United States to repeatedly play a brief message from the head of the Department of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, informing shoppers that the Department of Homeland Security has “teamed up” with Wal-Mart in order to help keep your community safe from terrorists.

It is very odd and disturbing to have one of the world’s largest corporations teaming up with a federal police force to encourage shoppers to be informants and to spy on their family, friends, and neighbors; because they want you to believe that people everywhere may be plotting a terrorist attack against the government. Everyone already knows they can dial 911 to reach the police for any reason, and people frequently abuse it and call to

report that a cashier at McDonald’s wouldn’t refund their money, or for a variety of other stupid reasons.[395]

With 911 operators already overloaded with unimportant calls, and police resources being wasted when they could actually be legitimately used to stop or solve crime, just imagine the mess after the population tips off authorities over every little suspicion as a result of their minds being filled with paranoia from the mainstream media for years, telling everyone that there’s a boogey man around every corner who may be secretly plotting some kind of terrorist attack in your neighborhood.

A Snitch Culture

The few people living in the dystopian world described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* who were still able to think critically and independently were afraid to speak their mind out of fear that others would report them as traitors to the Party and enemies of Big Brother. The Thought Police are a secret police force that use telescreens, snitches, and entrapment in order to intimidate the population in attempts to prevent Thought Crime, and to also discover Thought Criminals, and arrest and punish them. A Thought Criminal is anyone who dares think anything bad about Big Brother or the Party.

People, and particularly children, have all been turned into spies and are encouraged to report Thought Crime to the authorities. “Nearly all children nowadays were horrible,” Orwell wrote. “They adored the Party and everything connected with it. The songs, the processions, the banners, the hiking, the drilling with dummy rifles, the yelling of slogans, the worship of Big Brother—it was all a sort of glorious game to them.”[396] That was in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but unfortunately we also find parallels within our own society.

The Department of Homeland Security launched a program where they decided to “partner” with the Boy Scouts to “prepare youths for more traditional jobs as police officers and firefighters.”[397] *The New York Times* ran an article in 2009 discussing a drill the children were involved in where they used fake rifles and had to confront a “disgruntled Iraq War veteran” who became a domestic terrorist. The article showed a photo of some kids holding fake rifles and dressed up in SWAT gear.[398]

A British website called ClimateCops.com designed for children ages 7 to 11 features cartoons and downloadable materials urging children to

become “climate cops” who keep a watchful eye on their parents to see if they are wasting electricity. Children download a “Climate Crime Case File” to write up “tickets” for their parents to make sure they “don’t commit those crimes again (or else)!” The site also tells children that they “need to keep a watchful eye” on their parents to prevent future energy violations.

In the nightmarish world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, children were, “systematically turned against their parents and taught to spy on them and report their deviations. The family had become in effect an extension of the Though Police. It was a device by means of which everyone could be surrounded night and day by informers who knew him intimately.”[399]

In an interview with *ABC News*, President Obama’s top legal advisor, Attorney General Eric Holder, announced that the most dangerous terrorist threat to America wasn’t radical Islamic terrorists from the Middle East who travel to the United States with the sole intention of blowing something up. No. He said the new #1 threat to America is American citizens who have been born and raised in the United States, but for whatever reason, have come to identify with Osama Bin Elvis (Laden), the immortal boogey man. This announcement came close to ten years after the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks when the world was getting tired of the prolonged wars in the Middle East so the establishment needed to ensure Americans’ minds were still continuously filled with fear.

“What I am trying to do in this interview is to make people aware of the fact that the threat is real, the threat is different, the threat is constant,” Holder said. “It is one of the things that keeps me up at night. You didn’t worry about this even two years ago—about individuals, about Americans, to the extent that we now do. And—that is of—of great concern.”[400]

He continued, “The threat has changed from simply worrying about foreigners coming here, to worrying about people in the United States, American citizens—raised here, born here, and who for whatever reason, have decided that they are going to become radicalized and take up arms against the nation in which they were born.”

Holder wasn't even talking about radical Islamic terrorists like the kind that had been presented as the boogey men we should all fear for the last few decades. Holder's statement was an attempt to paint practically anyone of any race, religion, age, political affiliation, etc., as a potential "domestic extremist" who authorities want you to believe may attack the government or innocent civilians for any number of reasons at any time.

Several years earlier the federal government had secretly distributed literature to law enforcement agencies that listed what police should look for concerning possible "domestic terrorist activity." The eight-page MIAC Report, leaked in March 2009 listed bumper stickers showing support for Congressman Ron Paul, owning gold coins, and having possession of certain documentary films as things authorities should look for.[401]

A similar Department of Homeland Security report titled *Right-wing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment*, warned officials that returning Iraq War veterans may turn on the American government and that "rightwing extremists" are recruiting supporters who are concerned about illegal immigration, restrictions on firearms, and the loss of US sovereignty.[402]

As the Orwellian nightmare was rapidly coming true, Big Brother saw the resistance building and worried about a revolution.

Many people believe that Nazi Germany's secret police (the Gestapo) terrorized ordinary German citizens under orders from Nazi leaders, but history shows that the majority of investigations into citizens were launched because someone tipped off authorities.

One of the world's most respected historians specializing in World War II Europe, Professor Robert Gellately of Florida State University, explains, "There were relatively few secret police, and most were just processing the information coming in. I had found a shocking fact. It wasn't the secret

police who were doing this wide-scale surveillance and hiding on every street corner. It was the ordinary German people who were informing on their neighbors."[403]

In his writings Gellately explains that most Germans who turned in others didn't do so because they were doing anything suspicious or talking negatively about the Nazi party. Most people were turned in because of greed, jealousy, and petty differences, rather than because of a legitimate threat or suspicion that a person may be an actual enemy of the state.

There were many instances of people turning in their business partners so they could gain full control of the businesses they shared together. Jealous lovers turned in rival suitors in order to keep them away from their boyfriend or girlfriend, and people turned others in because they lived in an apartment that was in high demand. Others who became informants did so because it was the first time an authority figure valued them and they felt important through this process.

Gellately also emphasizes that German citizens who tipped off Nazi authorities about someone knew what horrific fate they would find, but didn't care because of the financial or social rewards that person would receive in return. While such despicable behavior was once restricted to tyrannical regimes like Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, or Mao Tse-tung's China, it is heart-breaking that the once great United States of America has succumbed to this same kind of erosion from within, as a result of corruption at the top.

An iPhone app with the Orwellian name of the *PatriotApp* functions as a way for people to send seemingly anonymous tips in the form of text messages to various government agencies including the FBI, EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), CDC (Center for Disease Control), and more, to report anything suspicious or illegal. On the surface this may seem like a reasonable function, but just like the post-911 legislation bill, *The Patriot Act*, the Patriot App is anything but patriotic.

The App was created by a company called Citizen Concepts which was formed by people with strong ties with DHS and DoD, according the company's website, PatriotApps.com[404] The description in the Apple App Store says that the PatriotApp is, "the world's first iPhone application that empowers citizens to assist government agencies in creating safer, cleaner, and more efficient communities via social networking and mobile technology."[405]

The description also says the App, "Deputizes your iPhone," giving people the impression that they are a member of the secret police now that they have been "deputized" like something out of an old western film. Such an impersonal form of communication also reduces the discernment that people will use when thinking about reporting someone or something. A phone call to 911 or the police would be fairly personal and the tipster would be invested in the process, but by simply clicking a few boxes and typing a short text message, this reduces the humanity in the overall process of informing authorities that something may be wrong. Such an impersonal act practically eliminates an informant's analysis of the situation, preventing them from giving it a second thought, thus dramatically reducing the quality of the tip.

During the 2008 presidential campaign in America, then candidate Barrack Obama made a startling statement revealing his desire to implement a program involving ordinary citizens like you and me as spies who feel like they're empowered and part of the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, or other law enforcement agencies. Obama openly stated, "We cannot continue to rely only on our military in order to achieve the national security objectives that we've set. We've got to have a civilian national security force that's just as powerful, just as strong, just as well-funded."[406]

Then, immediately after becoming president, the Obama administration began implementing one Orwellian policy after the next. We saw the telescreens go up in Wal-Mart, the 'if you see something…say something' snitch campaign. The MIAC report and more. The "civilian national security force" he was talking about was every American being

turned into a paranoid rat. This will undoubtedly lead to a rash of invalid “tips” and complaints, and a larger bureaucracy (and police force) will be needed to address these floods of tips.

Relationships

Friendships, romantic relationships, and families are all shunned by the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to “prevent men and women from forming loyalties which it might not be able to control…the only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party.”[407] Families are almost nonexistent, since each individual must give his or her full allegiance and love to Big Brother and the Party.

Those children that were born were all brought up in government institutions and indoctrinated from the time of birth. The government realized that if people had personal friendships and strong family ties, they would join together and overthrow Big Brother. Again, we find a reflection of our own society in Orwell’s words. While in America sexuality is not repressed like in the novel, the effects of hyper-sexuality and broken families serves the same purpose and severely limits the ability of people to join together and stand up for their rights against a New World Order.

With rampant family dysfunction, divorces, out of wedlock births, and children who don’t even know who their father is, society is in such chaos in regards to interpersonal problems, that many people aren’t concerned with larger social issues because their own life is such a mess and they are constantly engaged in domestic disputes, money problems, and other obligations. Most people just don’t care about what is going on with the government because they have their own personal problems to deal with.

A Heartless Society

People in society were so inhumane in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that they regularly enjoyed watching video clips of war footage that were shown on the telescreens to see the destruction of their enemy's soldiers. Winston remarked once that the audience was amused and laughed hysterically when a helicopter began shooting a fat man and riddled his body with bullets as he tried to swim away from his capsized ship. It was the highlight of the broadcast.

He describes how the audience was easily stirred into an angry mob and that, "a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current."[408] Since Big Brother was basically God, there was no room for religion either. One character who worked in the Ministry of Truth was arrested and killed for allowing the word "God" to remain in a poem he was supposed to censor.

The Big Brother system has stamped out most feelings of empathy. O'Brien says, "never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves."[409]

A massive thirty year analysis published in May of 2010 showed that college students are dramatically less empathetic today than students in the past. "College kids today are about 40 percent lower in empathy than their counterparts of 20 or 30 years ago, as measured by standard tests of this personality trait," said Sara Konrath, a researcher at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research.[410]

“The increase in exposure to media during this time period could be one factor,” she said. “Compared to 30 years ago, the average American now is exposed to three times as much nonwork-related information. In terms of media content, this generation of college students grew up with video games. And a growing body of research, including work done by my colleagues at Michigan, is establishing that exposure to violent media numbs people to the pain of others,” said Konrath.

The study also showed that the students were less likely to feel concerned about the less fortunate, and even their own friends. Today’s students were said to be the most self-centered and narcissistic individuals in recent history.

Another reason believed to cause the increase in narcissism and lack of empathy, aside from massive exposure to violent media, was the emergence of social networking sites which give people the ability to “tune out” and not respond to interactions online, and this could be translating into a learned behavior that manifests itself during face-to-face interactions.

Foreign Countries Painted as Enemies

When one country is having tensions with another, or if two countries are approaching an armed conflict, the entire “enemy” country and all of its occupants are usually portrayed as “hating freedom” or being ruthless savages who want to kill the citizens of the other country. This is rarely ever true, of course, and most often it is one corrupt leader butting heads with another corrupt leader, or one country fabricating complete lies in order to spark a war for economic reasons. The vast majority of citizens of both countries want the same things out of life. They don’t want any problems. They just want to be safe and have a stable economy, and be able to enjoy a few of life’s pleasures and spend time with family and friends. Most informed citizens in the “enemy” country are just as upset about their corrupt leader as citizens of the opposing country.

Other people, perhaps the majority, unfortunately, believe the propaganda produced from their own country and literally hate everyone from the “enemy” country. You could see this during the War in Iraq, with many moronic Americans wanting to kill all Arabs, or Muslims, or nuke the entire Middle East and “turn it into a glass parking lot.” Such ignorance is the fuel that the establishment needs to continue its operations. Orwell interestingly noted, “If he [people in general] were allowed contact with foreigners he would discover that they are creatures similar to himself and that most of what he has been told about them is lies.”[411]

“The citizen of Oceania is not allowed to know anything of the tenets of the other two [enemies] philosophies, but he is taught to execrate [denounce] them as barbarous outrages upon morality and common sense.”[412]

In an insightful documentary that aired on PBS in the spring and summer of 2010 called *Rick Steves' Iran*, the host traveled to Iran and spoke with people about their country and the growing tensions with the US. Multiple Iranians said that they have no problem with America or the American people. One woman clearly stated that the governments have problems with each other, but the people should be friends. The woman went on to say that it was unfortunate that Iran had a theocracy where the religious leaders ran the government and she called it Iran's main problem.[413]

This is quite the opposite of what the American establishment would like people to believe. The Iranians, we are told, all hate Americans, and want us dead. This false belief aids the establishment's military industrial complex and supports the everlasting "War on Terror."

Power Hungry Officials

Just as the “enemies” of a country are always cast in the darkest light, the leader of the homeland is almost always painted as a heroic and virtuous man who must protect the poor citizens of his land from the evildoers. “Everywhere is the same pyramidal structure, the same worship of a semi-divine leader,” notes Orwell.[414]

We see billboards and t-shirts in America with the image of the president featured on them like they are rock stars; and no matter who the president is, their supporters will always lash out and attack anyone who questions their authority. If someone disagreed with President George W. Bush, then they were called un-American and said to support the terrorists. People who resisted President Obama were simply called racists. The strategy is the same no matter which party is in power. Most people are ideologically blind, and don’t even notice the major shortcomings of their own party or leader.

At one point in Orwell’s story, Winston muses that he now understands the how, but he had yet to understand the why. He knew how the Party and Big Brother were able to operate in total power, but he had yet to understand why they did this. He later realized it was for the power itself.

O’Brien tells him, “The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness; only power, pure power.”[415] O’Brien concludes, “Power is power over human beings. Over the body—but above all, over the mind.”[416]

The infamous political player, Henry Kissinger, famously stated that “power is the ultimate aphrodisiac” and many have heard of Lord Acton’s

dictum, which states that power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Power is what dirt-poor street gang members are after because its feeling is better than any drug. Power is what organized mob bosses are after more than the money they pull in, and power is what politicians desire, more than “serving” their country. And just like drug addicts will do all kinds of illegal and immoral things just to get a fix, the same is true of those addicted to power.

An Erosion of the Language

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the language that people spoke was being reduced down to basic nouns and verbs in a purposeful attempt to dumb people down. The language was called Newspeak and each year a new dictionary would come out with the approved words for society, and each year it got smaller and smaller. The goal was to eliminate most of the words, and thus eliminate people's thoughts and ways to express themselves to keep them mentally enslaved.

In one scene a co-worker of Winston's was bragging that in a few more generations people "wouldn't be able to have a conversation like this" because the language will be so eroded.

Just as the residents of Oceania were losing the ability to express themselves verbally due to the eroding language, we can see a similar phenomenon in our culture with the decline of reading and education. People's foul mouths and the reliance on text messaging also shows their inability to articulate ideas. People's vocabulary seems to be shrinking, along with their IQs.

Double Think

The concept of *Double Think* means to "know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them."[417] Orwell used the slogan "War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength" to illustrate Double Think. It was the slogan of the Party and captured the depths of the backwards and illogical beliefs of society. Unfortunately we find equally backward beliefs in our own society and Double Think is not just a concept found in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Everyone is familiar with the Patriot Act legislation that was passed after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, eliminating various Constitutional liberties, and is anything but patriotic. The name "Patriot" Act was carefully chosen to imply the new laws were patriotic and is a perfect example of Double Think since it is completely the opposite of anything patriotic or American.

In a segment of Alex Jones' documentary *Terrorstorm: A History of Government Sponsored Terrorism*, the camera crew interviews random people on the streets of London to discuss the increasing surveillance, and one woman proclaims, "I think we should give up liberty for freedom," clearly not realizing the illogical and blatant contradiction of her own words.

The concept of Double Think often applies to war. "Peace keeping" troops are often there to kill the enemy, and it is often said that we must "fight for peace." Comedian George Carlin saw the irony in the terms and once said, "fighting for peace is like screwing for virginity." In America, the Department of Defense used to be called the Department of War until 1947 when the name was changed to improve its image. It should really be called

the Department of *Offense*, not Defense, but in true Orwellian style, its name reflects the opposite of what it is.

When the commercial for the Little Buddy GPS tracking device said parents can "build trust" by forcing their children to wear a GPS tracker—this is another example of Double Think—since using the product is an obvious sign of not trusting your child.

Double Think is essentially a blatant lie that can easily be identified by an enlightened person, but is fully believed by the ignorant masses. It's like when a store advertises that people should "spend more to save more" and customers actually believe they're saving money by spending it.

Double Think uses misnomers and false terms to purposefully label things incorrectly, and such names are often the exact opposite of what the thing really is or does. People with minimum critical thinking skills often accept the word or phrase on face value, and don't realize it masks something else.

The Ministry of Love

The Ministry of Love is basically the police force and prison system in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and is anything but loving. They look out for, and arrest people who betray Big Brother and the Party. Violators are taken to the much-feared Room 101 where they are tortured and brainwashed to love Big Brother.

The Ministry of Plenty

The Ministry of Plenty is in control of the food rations and the manufacture and supply of goods and services. Periodically the Ministry of Plenty publishes reports that claim the standard of living has increased, along with the amount of food rations people are entitled to, but in reality, the standard of living has continuously declined. As with the other departments of government in the novel, its name reflects exactly the opposite of what it says, and the Ministry of Plenty is really the reason for scarcity.

The Ministry of Peace

The Ministry of Peace is responsible for the perpetual war that plagues society and uses up or destroys the fruits of people's labor to prevent an increase in the standard of living for the lower levels of society.

In America, we have the Department of Defense, which is really the Department of War, and actually used to be called that, until the name was changed in 1947 to give it a better image. In true Orwellian fashion, the department's name is meant to hide the fact that it is really a Ministry of War.

The Ministry of Truth

The Ministry of Truth, found in the novel, is a misnomer and in reality serves as exactly the opposite of what its name implies. It is responsible for the falsification of historical events, and determines what the “truth” is and then disseminates it in the media and historical records. The massive building is described as being in the shape of a pyramid.

The Ministry of Truth also provides the citizens of Oceana with all of their newspapers, films, textbooks, plays, and novels. They have a special department for proletarian literature that “produced rubbishy newspapers, containing almost nothing except sport, crime, and astrology, sensational five-cent novelettes, films oozing with sex, and sentimental songs.”[418]

It is basically the heart of the massive propaganda machine that is entirely under the direction of the Party.

Conclusion

As a reader approaches the end of Orwell's novel, one begins to hope that *The Resistance* will jump into action and members of the Inner Party would turn on the Big Brother system, or that the Proles or Outer Party members would rise up and start a revolution to restore freedom, but unfortunately this doesn't happen.

Winston and his girlfriend Julia are both captured by the Thought Police and taken to Room 101 to be "re-educated." Winston then realizes that O'Brien, who he thought was his friend and working with *The Resistance*, actually only pretended to, in order to entrap Winston. O'Brien, then, as it turns out, is also in charge of punishing Winston for Thought Crimes and his disloyalty to Big Brother. As he is torturing Winston, he tells him what the future will be like once Big Brother has wiped out all resistance. He explains, "There will be no curiosity, no enjoyment of the process of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed. But always—do not forget this, Winston—always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is helpless. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever."[419]

After unbearable torture and lecturing from O'Brien, Winston eventually abandons all thoughts of resistance and actually comes to love Big Brother. "You must love Big Brother. It is not enough to obey him; you must love him," O'Brien says.

One must seriously consider whether people who resist the real Big Brother system and the New World Order will find the same fate that Winston Smith did. Is it too late to stop the Orwellian system described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from actually being built? One must hold onto the

hope that no matter how far along the Big Brother system is, that there are a large number of educated people who are ready to resist it and stand up against it.

Orwell explained, “If there was hope, it must lie in the proles, because only there, in those swarming disregarded masses, eighty-five percent of the population of Oceania, could the force to destroy the Party ever be generated…But the proles, if only they could somehow become conscious of their own strength, would have no need to conspire…If they chose they could blow the Party to pieces tomorrow morning.”[420]

We are the proles. The hope lies with us. We must create safeguards and checks and balances to minimize abuse by government and private industry. We must actively counter propaganda and lies, and hold corrupt government officials accountable for their crimes. Only an educated and alert public can counter the invisible empire and their Orwellian dreams. We must use the tools of advanced technology to enhance and simplify the human experience, not to stifle it or destroy it. We must stay strong in the face of immense opposition and remember what Martin Luther King Jr. said when he proclaimed, “He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.”

We outnumber the elite Illuminati thousands to one, and if we can awaken our fellow man to see the system that we are all victims of, and if we can lift the veil of ignorance and apathy then we can unite and restore our communities, our country, and the world with the inalienable rights that we have been endowed by our Creator. We know that Big Brother is watching us, so let’s show him what we’re capable of.

Down with Big Brother!

Further Reading

The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction

Secret societies have both fascinated and frightened people for hundreds of years. Often the infamous Illuminati is mentioned as the core of conspiracies which span the globe. The Illuminati is actually a historical secret society which had goals of revolutions and world domination dating back to the 1770s.

Since then, rumors and conspiracy theories involving the Illuminati continue to spread, sometimes finding their way into popular novels like Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons* and Hollywood movies like *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. Some men have even come forward claiming to be former members, offering details of what they allege are the inner workings of the organization. When you sift through all of the information available on the subject, you may be surprised that the truth is stranger than fiction.

In *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, conspiracy and occult expert Mark Dice separates history from Hollywood and shows why tales of the secret society won't die.

The New World Order: Facts & Fiction

What is the New World Order? Proponents say that it's an anticipated new era of global cooperation between diverse nations and cultures aimed at ushering in a utopia providing all the earth's citizens with everything they need.

Detractors claim it's the systematic take-over by secret societies, quasi-government entities and corporations who are covertly organizing a global socialist all-powerful government which aims to regulate every aspect of citizens lives, rendering them a perpetual working-class while the elite leadership lives in luxury.

Conspiracy theory expert Mark Dice looks at the evidence, claims, and conspiracy theories as he takes you down the rabbit hole to *The New World Order*.

Illuminati in the Music Industry

Famous pop stars and rappers from Jay-Z and Rick Ross to Rihanna and Christina Aguilera are believed by many to be a part of the infamous Illuminati secret society. These stars allegedly use Illuminati and satanic symbolism in their music videos and on their clothes that goes unnoticed by those not “in the know.”

Since these stars appear in our livings rooms on family friendly mainstream shows like Good Morning America, Ellen, and dozens of others—and are loved by virtually all the kids—they couldn’t possibly have anything to do with the infamous Illuminati or anything “satanic,” could they? Some famous musicians have even publicly denounced the Illuminati in interviews or songs.

Illuminati in the Music Industry takes a close look at some of today’s hottest stars and decodes the secret symbols, song lyrics, and separates the facts from the fiction in this fascinating topic. You may never see your favorite musicians the same way ever again.

The Resistance Manifesto

The Resistance Manifesto by Mark Dice contains 450 pages of extensively researched and documented information drawing from declassified documents, mainstream news articles, religious texts, and personal interviews. A dark web of evil is exposed like never before, making Bible Prophecy and the New World Order crystal clear.

Learn the most powerful information about the Illuminati, plans for the rise of the Antichrist, the institutions, people, and powers involved, and how you can fight them.

Inside the Illuminati

When looking into the existence and alleged activities of the infamous Illuminati secret society, one finds an overwhelming amount of conspiracy theories, hidden history, half-truths and hoaxes.

But how much truth is there to some of these claims? What is the real history of the mysterious group? Do they continue to exist today? What is the evidence?

After a decade of research sifting through the facts and the fiction, secret society expert Mark Dice will help you navigate through the complex maze from the original documents to rare revelations from elite politicians, bankers and businessmen, as he takes you *Inside the Illuminati*.

About the Author

Mark Dice is a media analyst, author, and political activist who, in an entertaining and educational way, gets people to question our celebrity obsessed culture and the role the mainstream media and elite secret societies play in shaping our lives.

Mark's YouTube channel has received over 85 million views and his viral videos have been mentioned on ABC's *The View*, the Fox News Channel, CNN, the *Drudge Report*, *TMZ*, the *New York Daily News*, the *New York Post*, and other media outlets around the world.

He has been featured on various television shows including the History Channel's *Decoded* and *America's Book of Secrets*, *Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura*, *Secret Societies of Hollywood* on E! Channel, *America Declassified* on the Travel Channel, and is a frequent guest on *Coast to Coast AM*, *The Alex Jones Show*, and more.

Mark Dice is the author of several popular books on secret societies and conspiracies, including *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*, *The New World Order, Facts & Fiction*, *The Resistance Manifesto*, *Illuminati in the Music Industry*, and *Inside the Illuminati*, which are all available in paperback on Amazon.com or e-book on Kindle, iBooks, Nook or Google Play.

While much of Mark's work confirms the existence and continued operation of the Illuminati today, he is also dedicated to debunking conspiracy theories and hoaxes and separating the facts from the fiction; hence the "Facts & Fiction" subtitle for several of his books.

While having respect for all authentic religions and belief systems, Mark Dice is a Christian and holds a bachelors degree in communication from California State University. He lives in San Diego, California.

He enjoys causing trouble for the New World Order, exposing corrupt scumbag politicians, and pointing out Big Brother's prying eyes. The term "fighting the New World Order" is used by Mark to describe some of his activities, and refers to his and others' resistance and opposition (*The Resistance*) to the overall system of political corruption, illegal wars, elite secret societies, mainstream media, Big Brother and privacy issues; as well as various economic and social issues. This Resistance involves self-improvement, self-sufficiency, personal responsibility and spiritual growth.

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The TRUE STORY OF FAKE NEWS

How Mainstream Media Manipulates Millions

By Mark Dice

Introduction

Just one week after the 2016 presidential election, when tens of millions of Hillary supporters were still in absolute shock that Donald Trump actually beat her — and while many Trump supporters were in a similar state of surprise since he was the long-awaited anti-establishment underdog — the term “fake news” became the talk of the town and quickly turned into one of the most loaded and controversial labels in America. It wasn’t just a topic that circulated in a week-long news cycle. It was an issue that got more polarizing and more complex as the weeks and months went on; and with seemingly every day that passed the ‘fake news’ conspiracy got deeper and darker.

Fake news stories have been around for centuries, although they had usually just been called disinformation, propaganda, yellow journalism, conspiracy theories, or hoaxes; but this modern incarnation was different. All of a sudden it was supposedly everywhere, and just cost Hillary Clinton the election.

Democrats were so shocked at Hillary’s defeat that they couldn’t come to grips with the fact that despite all the polls and media coverage painting a picture that Trump would surely lose — he didn’t. With headlines like “Think Trump has a chance to snag GOP nomination? Analysis gives him just 1%,”[1] and “Our pollster polls model gives Hillary Clinton a 98.1% chance of winning the presidency,”[2] Hillary supporters thought her victory would be a sure thing. In a now-famous clip, Bill Maher’s audience burst out in laughter at Ann Coulter on his HBO show when she predicted Donald Trump had the best chance of winning early on in the race.

Instead of accepting the fact that voters wanted a non-politician in the White House for a change, and that they wanted the illegal immigration problem fixed, Obamacare overhauled, and a conservative Supreme Court Justice to replace Antonin Scalia who had recently died — Democrats started playing the blame game, and their reasons for Hillary’s defeat kept getting longer and more bizarre by the day.

First, they pointed the finger at FBI director James Comey for amending his testimony about the investigation into Hillary Clinton’s email scandal when classified material sent from her was later found on Anthony Weiner’s computer (then-husband of Huma Abedin, her campaign’s vice chairman).[3] Then they blamed white supremacists and the KKK, or the “whitelash” against a black president as CNN’s Van Jones famously cried about on election night.[4] They went on to blame Islamophobia, xenophobia, and sexism, saying that people just didn’t want a “woman president.” But then they came up with their most creative excuse ever. An excuse that would serve as a massive umbrella under which all other excuses could be tied together into one grand unified excuse: “Fake News.”

People must have been duped into not trusting or disliking Hillary Clinton because they read lies about her on Facebook, they concluded. The culprit? Not ordinary right-wing news sites highlighting the reasons why Hillary was wrong for the job, or documenting her history of corruption and scandals. No. It was supposed "fake news" articles that were posted on little-known websites and then spread virally through Facebook by people sharing them.

The Washington Post led the charge and sounded the alarm with a headline reading, "Facebook fake-news writer: 'I think Donald Trump is in the White House because of me.'"[5] An avalanche of accusations followed, causing a moral panic in the mainstream media as they tried to warn the world about this newly discovered 'danger.' *Rolling Stone* magazine immediately echoed this new battle cry with the headline, "How a Fake Newsman Accidentally Helped Trump Win the White House."[6] CBS's *60 Minutes* declared, "In this last election the nation was assaulted by imposters masquerading as reporters. They poisoned the conversation with lies [and] many did it to influence the outcome."[7]

The Washington Post pointed out a few of the most popular (actual) fake news articles, and named the man behind them — Paul Horner, a 38-year-old Internet entrepreneur who ran CNN.com.de, CBSnews.com.co, NBC.com.co, ABCnews.com.co, and other fake news websites which were designed to look like actual news sites and used similar URLs. Stories posted on these sites were really satire, not technically fake news. But an article about anti-Trump protesters being paid duped Eric Trump and Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski, who both tweeted about it thinking it was proof of another George Soros plot, since he had been giving tens of millions to Black Lives Matter front groups so they could fan the flames of civil unrest.[8]

Paul Horner and his fake CNN, ABC, and NBC websites weren't part of a plot to hurt Hillary Clinton, or help Donald Trump in the 2016 election — they were just satire, which should be obvious to anyone who read past the first two or three sentences of the stories. And Horner's motivation wasn't political; it was financial.

Most fake news and satire websites simply want to make money from the web traffic their articles bring to the sites. The way most website advertising works is that Google Ad Sense (or other ad companies) pay them per page visit, so if the site can create sensational headlines and get lots of people to post links to their articles on Facebook it will drive a lot of traffic to their site and they get paid. While a few fake news websites did produce some viral stories during the 2016 election, as you will see, these stories had no measurable effect on voters.[9]

The liberal media, however, seized on 'fake news' publisher Paul Horner's admissions and his viral success, and used his stories as if they were the smoking gun in a huge conspiracy to spread disinformation about Hillary Clinton hoping to prevent people from voting for her, despite his stories being satire and designed to actually make fun of Trump supporters.

A few of the most viral fake news stories about the election were that "Pope Francis Shocks World, Endorses Donald Trump for President," "The Amish in America Commit Their Vote to Donald Trump; Mathematically Guaranteeing Him a Presidential Victory," "FBI Agent Suspected in Hillary Email Leaks Found Dead in Apartment Murder-Suicide," and "Donald Trump Sent His Own Plane to Transport 200 Stranded Marines."[10]

While these stories were designed to bolster Donald Trump and demonize Hillary, fake news is a two way street. The mainstream media was framing the issue as if all fake news articles were written to smear Hillary Clinton, but there were plenty of viral fake stories and memes with fake quotes attributed to Donald Trump that were made to smear him as well.

For example, one of the most popular memes of the entire election was one with a fake quote of Donald Trump that cited a non-existent interview with *People* magazine which claimed he said, “If I were to run, I’d run as a Republican. They’re the dumbest group of voters in the country. They believe anything on Fox News. I could lie and they’d still eat it up. I bet my numbers would be terrific.”[11] It started circulating in October of 2015 shortly after Trump announced his run for president and despite being easily debunked, people kept spreading it around for over a year and it would regularly show up on Facebook and Twitter from liberals who kept posting it, thinking it was real.

Some of the fake news trying to smear Trump was far more sophisticated than a fabricated quote made into a meme, and far more dirty. BuzzFeed published details about a ‘Russian dossier’ which claimed that Donald Trump had been caught on video getting golden showers (being peed on) by Russian hookers.[12] A lot of idiots on the Internet believed the story even though it was just part of a disinformation campaign designed to smear Donald Trump, and publishing the story ultimately led to BuzzFeed getting sued for defamation.[13]

In another carefully orchestrated smear campaign a fraudulent lawsuit was actually filed against Donald Trump claiming he raped a 13-year-old girl.[14] Most Trump-hating liberal mainstream media outlets wouldn’t even report on the frivolous lawsuit because they knew it was a vicious hoax to defame him, but a few did, including *The New York Daily News* and *People* magazine. Word of the lawsuit circulated on Twitter and Facebook when unscrupulous websites published the allegations, knowing such an inflammatory headline would get them some web traffic.[15] Rosie O’Donnell even tweeted about it to her one million Twitter followers multiple times, along with the hashtag #TrumpRape, either believing it to be true, or just trying to spread the story around hoping to hurt him.[16]

The person behind the lawsuit was later identified by the London *Guardian* as a former producer for the *Jerry Springer* show, who has a history of being accused of making sensational and false claims about celebrities in order to get media attention.[17] But despite carefully crafted fake news stories designed to smear Donald Trump, like the 13-year-old girl rape hoax and the Russian hookers golden showers dossier, the liberal media kept claiming that ‘fake news’ about Hillary Clinton spread through social media had ruined the 2016 presidential election, in effect, ‘stealing’ it from her.

It wasn’t just people who were writing satirical articles that some gullible people may have thought were true, or completely fake stories on obscure websites which hoped to hurt Hillary Clinton that were the culprits. Instead, a new scandal erupted claiming the Russians were behind the new fake news phenomenon as part of a plot to install Trump as their “puppet president.” One of the biggest liberal newspapers in the country, *The Washington Post*, which was dedicated to stopping Donald Trump from becoming president, came out with an article two weeks after the election titled, “Russian Propaganda Effort Helped Spread ‘Fake News’ During Election, Experts Say,” which claimed that the fake news stories about Hillary Clinton were part of a disinformation operation launched by the Russians in order to help Donald Trump win.[18]

Their article started off saying, “The flood of ‘fake news’ this election season got support from a sophisticated Russian propaganda campaign that created and spread misleading articles online with the goal of punishing Democrat Hillary Clinton, helping Republican Donald Trump and undermining faith in American democracy, say independent researchers who tracked the operation."[19]

President Obama's advisor Dan Pfeiffer tweeted a link to the article and asked, "Why isn't this the biggest story in the world right now?"[20] This new angle on the 'fake news conspiracy' now focusing on "the Russians" quickly ballooned out of control, going beyond the McCarthyism panic of the 1940s and 50s when Senator Joseph McCarthy thought there were secret Communists in Congress around every corner working to undermine the United States. A new war against fake news was just beginning that would raise important concerns about censorship and the secret agendas of mainstream media corporations, social media giants, and Internet search engines.

Why all this concern about fake news, and why immediately after the election? As you will see in this book, the Liberal Establishment was creating a smokescreen to implement dramatic new censorship policies for social media and the Internet as a whole. They concluded that if they could control the information people see and hear on social media, they could possibly prevent the kind of upset that occurred when Hillary lost the election from happening again.

As Jim Morrison, singer of the 60s rock band *The Doors,* proclaimed, "Whoever controls the media, controls the mind,"[21] and with mainstream media losing its power in recent years from countless new websites, blogs, YouTube channels and Facebook pages functioning as news outlets — the monopoly that major media companies had on the control of information for decades was collapsing. Today, anyone with a Facebook page can post an article, a picture, or a video, and in a matter of minutes it can be seen by just as many people as something broadcast on the national news by a major television network.

The media oligarchy could no longer control what information the public was consistently fed, or what information was purposefully ignored. Many people started to see this new 'fake news' scare as a veiled attempt at censorship and a bold move to try and take back control of the distribution of media, which is why I wrote this book.

The New York Post ran an article titled, "The War on 'Fake News' Is All About Censoring Real News," which said, "Scrambling for an explanation for Donald Trump's victory, many in the media and on the left have settled on the idea that his supporters were consumers of 'fake news' — gullible rubes living in an alternate reality made Trump president,"[22] and noted that this new 'fake news' scare itself was fake news, and there was a growing backlash from conservatives who saw this witch hunt for what it was.

Just a few weeks later *The New York Times* admitted, "'Fake news' as shorthand will almost surely be returned upon the media tenfold,"[23] as conservatives began to throw the term back in the face of the mainstream media. One outlet published an article cautioning against the growing fake news panic titled, "Stop Calling Everything 'Fake News'" and pointed out, "Two months ago, almost no one was talking about fake news. A Google Trends search for the term shows that it barely registered before October. Now you can hardly turn on the real news without hearing it."[24] The backlash was getting so bad that even President-Elect Donald Trump, in a now-famous outburst, called CNN "fake news" at his first press conference of 2017.[25] Some people in the audience could be heard applauding him and "You are fake news" became an instant meme.

Like never before, the mainstream media kept making mountains out of molehills and using their platforms to influence public opinion by framing everything Donald Trump did and said in a negative light. Their constant criticism and nitpicking was soon difficult to distinguish from satire or parody because much of it was so absurd, but unfortunately millions of Americans couldn't help but get swept up in their manufactured controversies. Anti-Trump hatred would soon grow to extremes few could have imagined as the constant disinformation was whipping people into a frenzy.

Conservatives fought back and started fact checking the liberal media like hawks, and every time CNN or another major 'news' organization would report a false or absurdly biased story, Trump supporters would shout from the rooftops about it and use each instance to mock the diminishing credibility of mainstream media.

Liberals pushed back even harder and began labeling conservative websites, YouTube channels, and social media personalities not just as "fake news," but as "extremists" and "racists" who post "hate speech." Facebook began implementing "fact checkers" and issuing warnings when people would post links to certain stories or websites, as well as outright banning links to some or labeling them "spam" when someone tried to share them. The major social media platforms also implemented stricter terms of service and vowed to crack down on people posting "hateful content," which in reality is often just mild criticism of certain liberal policies or ideologies.

YouTube began demonetizing (removing advertisements from) videos covering certain topics they deemed "not advertiser-friendly," thus preventing 'YouTubers' like myself from making money off them, which for many people is a part-time or full-time job and how we pay our bills. This was just the beginning of a censorship tsunami that was heading our way. Liberals would begin going after the advertisers on conservative websites and TV shows to pressure them to pull their sponsorships.[26] Google began scrutinizing websites and YouTube channels which use their Ad Sense system to generate revenue. Anti-feminist videos, videos criticizing radical LGBT activists, or ones calling to stop illegal immigration or the massive influx of Muslim refugees were now being stripped of advertisers in droves.[27]

YouTube wasn't just for posting funny cat videos or online tutorials anymore. It had become a powerful platform for distributing news and commentary. The 'YouTube stars' weren't just entertainers, beauty vloggers and gamers anymore, but news commentators and anti-social justice warrior activists.

Many found that social media platforms weren't just useful for communicating with friends and family, but the technology could also easily be used as a massive publishing outlet allowing literally anyone to be able to have their content seen and heard by just as many people as a major newspaper or television network, and with little or no cost at all. The news and tech conglomerates figured if they could remove the financial incentives for this rapidly growing industry of alternative media platforms and personalities, they could dramatically discourage people from putting out content and commentary, and thus reduce the growing number of conservative voices online whose audience kept growing by the day as more people abandoned mainstream media and were turning to new independent outlets and online personalities for their news and commentary.

In this book we'll look not just at the recent phenomena of fake news and how trying to weaponize the term dramatically backfired on liberals, but we'll also look at the power and influence of the media in general. Media today now means more than just television, newspapers, and radio. It includes social media. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat, which have become major media companies that host and distribute content in quantities previously unimagined.

We’ll look at how these companies manipulate and censor the content that users post, how the trending lists function to restrict certain stories from going viral and artificially aid others to do just the opposite. We’ll look at how powerful multibillion dollar networks can influence the public conversation through their agenda-setting power, and at the same time sweep important stories and issues under the rug through lying by omission. You’ll see the real power mainstream media has to shape our culture, our fears, and our tastes; and how it keeps most people mesmerized by an endless stream of meaningless and mindless entertainment.

Because media has changed so dramatically with the creation of the Internet, smartphones, and social media; people don’t just get their news from TV, radio, and newspapers anymore as you know. There are now countless blogs, YouTube channels, Twitter accounts, and Facebook pages dedicated to posting news and analysis — many of which rival or eclipse the reach of traditional media outlets. The distribution of content posted on these platforms has complex implications regarding how it spreads online, what role these companies have in distributing (and suppressing) user generated content, and how information flowing through these platforms influences their audience.

We’ll also look at the role Google has as a search engine in filtering out certain information or websites and prioritizing others, as well as Wikipedia’s role as an ‘encyclopedia’ that so many rely upon as a source of knowledge, and how it too is another cog in an Orwellian machine of censorship and media manipulation.

You may be surprised to hear the evidence and admissions that the CIA actually created a powerful program in the 1970s to place CIA agents and assets in high-level positions within major news organizations so they could kill stories and perpetuate government propaganda by facilitating its publication at the media outlets they controlled. It may sound like the plot of a Communist conspiracy or a science fiction film, but you’ll see it’s a very real covert operation that happened right here in the United States of America.

Now, let’s enter the fascinating maze of media manipulation and get a closer look at the forces behind what can only be called an information war. This is a war of facts vs. fiction, of perception vs. reality, of average well-meaning and hard working people vs. shady multibillion dollar international corporations that want to control what you see, hear, and think. This is *The True Story of Fake News*.

Real Fake News

Grocery store tabloids have been a standard feature at the checkout stands for decades, and I'm not just talking about the clearly fake and satirical papers about finding "Bat Boy" or the "Redneck Vampire." Usually these rags cover celebrity gossip and just fabricate claims about cheating and breakups, but tabloids like *The National Enquirer* cover politics as well, and despite breaking a few legitimate stories like Senator John Edwards' affair and love child, they're usually just fake news that nobody ever takes seriously.

But with the development of the Internet, we've seen some shady websites pop up which are designed to look like actual news sites or have names sounding like a newspaper from a major city, and they post fake news stories in hopes of having them go viral trying to bring traffic to their site so they can earn some ad revenue or get some laughs from the joy of pranking people. These fake stories trick a small number of people, but most are smart enough not to fall for a "breaking" story coming from a "news" outlet they've never heard of. While people may succumb to their clickbait titles out of curiosity, most people can spot that the website is bogus or is just a satire site.

Many of the supposed "fake news" articles that went viral during the 2016 election weren't really 'fakes' but were just satire that some people thought were real after only reading the headline or the first few sentences of the stories. Before "the Russians" got blamed for fake news being shared on social media, it was teenagers in Macedonia, a country in Southeastern Europe once part of Communist Yugoslavia.[28] Mainstream media began writing stores about the "Macedonian teenagers" who were allegedly making thousands of dollars a month from writing fake news about Hillary Clinton in the run up to the election.[29] Macedonia was said to have been the home of various pro-Trump websites which were allegedly "cashing in" on writing fake news about things like Hillary Clinton's "imminent criminal indictment."[30]

While a small group of friends with a misguided entrepreneurial spirit in Macedonia may have registered a bunch of domain names, wrote some fake news stories that got shared on Facebook and made them some money from Google Ad Sense, no credible expert claimed that this amounted to anything more than one of a million Internet scams run by people trying to make a quick buck.

A few fake news websites the media focused on after the election were *National Report.net* and *The Denver Guardian*, both run by the same guy who calls himself Jestin Coler, who found a niche on the Internet by writing fake news stories which relied on people sharing them through social media.[31] Some of his articles include: "RFID Chip Now Being Issued in Hanna, Wyoming As Part of New Obamacare Plan," "Trump to Nominate Chris Christie to Supreme Food Court," "Man Shouts 'Allahu Akbar' Before Blowing Up Friend's Inbox," and "Atlanta Falcons Win Popular Vote, Still Lose Super Bowl." Most of them are clearly just jokes, and not 'fake news' in the true sense of the word, but a few of them were, like the one titled, “FBI Agent Suspected In Hillary Email Leaks Found Dead In Apparent Murder-Suicide,” which was posted a few days before the election.[32]

When *CBS’s 60 Minutes* aired a segment on their investigation into fake news, one of the examples they used was from a site called *NTMY News* which had the headline, “After Colonoscopy Reveals Brain Tumor, Donald Trump Drops from Race.” It’s obviously a joke about Trump having his head up his ass — get it? How could CBS possibly consider this ‘fake news?’ *This* was their evidence that social media had a fake news problem?

Another example they showed was from Celebtricity.com, which published a story titled, “Donald Trump Caught Snorting Cocaine by Hotel Staff,” which was an absurd article with no author’s name mentioned, and not even a date it was published. After about three seconds of reading the article pretty much everyone would have known that it was satire, not fake news. It began, “The Internet is buzzing today after white supremacist presidential candidate Donald Trump was caught by hotel staff snorting cocaine.” It continued, “Maria Gonzalez, an employee at the Folks INN & Suites Hotel in Phoenix, brought room service to his room witnessed it all.”[33]

It then attributes an absolutely insane quote to her, that you can’t help but laugh at, which says, “When I walked in I saw 3 naked prostitutes and maybe $100,000 in hundred dollars bills and a mountain of white powder on the table, I thought there was a dog on the floor asleep but it was his hair piece, he was bald and sweating like crazy. I asked him where to put the food and he asked me ‘did I wanna take a hit’ (snort some coke). I told him no, but I’ll take some of that money, [and] he called me a free loader, told me to get the fuck out his room and go back to my country.”[34] The article was poorly written with awful grammar and was a complete joke, but *60 Minutes* used it as another example of ‘fake news.’

Just because people click on a sensational headline from a fake news story, doesn’t mean they actually believe it! While people posting links to these stories on Facebook may have generated traffic from curious readers who clicked on them, few people doing so were actually duped by them, and most just got a good laugh. As you will see, studies were conducted into fake news about the election, and yes some of it fooled people and went viral, but it actually had no effect on how people voted.[35]

What’s far more sinister than some random fake news site or even trying to spoof a real one like the ABCNews.com.co or the CNN.com.de sites, are major mainstream media outlets that millions of people trust, actually reporting fake news, because their stories get spread far and wide across social media since they come from brand name ‘news sites’ like CNN or *The Washington Post*.

Former London mayor Ken Livingstone once stated, “The world is run by monsters and you have to deal with them. Some of them run countries, some of them run banks, some of them run news corporations.”[36] And as you will see, those are often the real monsters we need to be concerned about.

Because the liberal media perpetuated the myth that Hillary Clinton would surely become the next president, they received a devastating blow to their credibility on election night. *The Hill* ran a headline reading, “The biggest loser in 2016? The mainstream media and journalism,” and in the article stated, “There are many losers in the wake of Donald Trump’s victory. They include

Hollywood, pollsters, the Bush family and the GOP's donor class, and neocons. But the biggest losers are the mainstream media (MSM) and journalism itself."[37]

The New York Times had a headline asking "Can The Media Recover from This Election?"[38] *Fortune* magazine asked, "How Much Will Cable News' Record Ratings Drop Post-Election?"[39] Then a survey conducted by CBS and *Vanity Fair* magazine found that Americans now saw mainstream media as the most unethical business, more so than the pharmaceutical companies, and the banking industry.[40] Another survey from Monmouth University in New Jersey found that 6 out of 10 Americans believe that the mainstream media regularly reports fake news.[41]

Why weren't half of the hosts and contributors fired from CNN, MSNBC, ABC, CBS, and NBC after the election? How could these networks keep such incompetent and out of touch people on the payroll after everything they had been reporting for so long was so wrong? What's more disturbing is instead of 'cleaning up their act' after their embarrassing election coverage, the networks started getting more extreme and more biased by the day.

The anti-Trump mania exploded on cable news, the Big Three broadcast networks, late night comedy shows, and even on tech and sports websites like CNET, Gizmodo, and Deadspin when the stories had nothing to do with tech or sports at all. The liberal media was now in an existential crisis and had to try to explain to their viewers how their reporting had been so inaccurate. Instead of admitting their failures, they immediately started inventing excuses — first placing blame on 'racist white people,' and then on fake news spreading 'lies' about Hillary Clinton, and then they finally settled on one grandiose unifying conspiracy theory — that the Russians were behind it all.

One of the first things mainstream media began doing was labeling rising conservative social media stars as white nationalists or white supremacists. *The Hollywood Reporter*, *The Guardian*, *Wired* magazine, and even celebrity blogger Perez Hilton all mentioned me by name, trying to tie me to David Duke, Richard Spencer, and the white nationalist movement, even though I never said I was a supporter of the Alt-Right, and to the contrary have stated on numerous occasions that I'm not.

The Guardian's headline read, "Former Ku Klux Klan Leader and US Alt-Right Hail Election Result."[42] The article claimed, "Members of America's alt-right reacted with glee to the news of Trump's victory. The provocative conservative movement, largely active online, has been closely associated with Trump's campaign." It then quoted tweets from Alex Jones, Michael Savage, David Duke, and me! I immediately sent them a cease and desist and threatened to sue them for defamation so they removed me from the article and added a note on the bottom stating, "This article was amended on 16 November 2016 to remove a quoted individual who was mistakenly included."[43]

Another outlet also issued a retraction after I threatened legal action, saying, "An earlier version of this story incorrectly referred to Mark Dice as an 'alt-right' commentator. He is not and news.com.au sincerely apologizes for this error."[44]

The Establishment media were so furious that a whole group of social media savvy conservatives like myself were amassing huge followings that they tried to take us down using one of the oldest tricks in the liberal playbook — smearing us as racists.

One independent journalist decided to sue a reporter at Fusion, a social justice warrior cable channel, after she was accused of making a "white supremacist" hand sign, which was in reality just the “okay” hand sign which President Trump regularly uses.[45] *The Independent* in London also ran a story making the same absurd claim about the woman’s ‘okay’ gesture being a “white supremacist hand sign.”[46] The ‘hand sign’ story was laughed at online by Trump supporters who couldn’t believe how crazy it was, and some commented that it signaled the “death of journalism.”

Washington Post’s Story on Fake News was Fake News

After first blaming teenagers in Macedonia for the ‘fake news’ problem, and then ‘racist’ alt-right Trump supporters on the Internet for spreading ‘hate’ about Hillary, then came the Russian conspiracy theories about “collusion” and the Kremlin being behind all the fake news in order to supposedly help Donald Trump. It’s important to point out that *The Washington Post* first tried to link Russia to fake news articles that had circulated online. Their “evidence” for this was a new group of “experts” called PropOrNot (Propaganda or Not) who nobody had ever heard of before, and whose “members” were anonymous.[47]

The Washington Post didn’t even mention what these “expert’s” credentials were, they just claimed this unknown “group” were the “experts” who “discovered” a Russian propaganda campaign was being amplified by a list of websites and YouTube channels they had compiled. This story, with the headline “Russian propaganda effort helped spread ‘fake news’ during election, experts say” dumped gallons of gasoline on a small little fire, which then exploded into the “fake news” phenomena.

Other news outlets quickly denounced *The Post’s* story and their newfound supposed “experts” PropOrNot as McCarthyism.[48] Even *Rolling Stone*, which had previously hyped up concerns about fake news, called their story “shameful and disgusting.”[49]

After the backlash kept growing, *The Washington Post* issued a retraction and posted an editor’s note on the original story, reading: “*The Washington Post* on Nov. 24 published a story on the work of four sets of researchers who have examined what they say are Russian propaganda efforts to undermine American democracy and interests. One of them was PropOrNot, a group that insists on public anonymity, which issued a report identifying more than 200 websites that, in its view, wittingly or unwittingly published or echoed Russian propaganda. A number of those sites have objected to being included on PropOrNot’s list, and some of the sites, as well as others not on the list, have publicly challenged the group’s methodology and conclusions. *The Post*, which did not name any of the sites, does not itself vouch for the validity of PropOrNot’s findings regarding any individual media outlet, nor did the article purport to do so. Since publication of *The Post’s* story, PropOrNot has removed some sites from its list.”[50]

One site listed as a publisher of ‘Russian propaganda’ was Naked Capitalism, a finance and economic blog started in 2006, which threatened to sue *The Washington Post* for defamation if they didn’t issue a retraction and an apology. Their lawyer sent a letter to the paper, which said in part, “You did not provide even a single example of ‘fake news’ allegedly distributed or promoted by Naked Capitalism or indeed any of the 200 sites on the PropOrNot blacklist. You provided no discussion or assessment of the credentials or backgrounds of these so-called ‘researchers’ (Clint

Watts, Andrew Weisburd, and J.M. Berger and the 'team' at PropOrNot), and no discussion or analysis of the methodology, protocol or algorithms such 'researchers' may or may not have followed."[51]

The Washington Post's article even listed my friend Gary Franchi's YouTube channel, The Next News Network, as one of the outlets "spreading Russian propaganda." It turns out someone from PropOrNot sent an email to *The New Yorker* hoping to have them report on their allegations before *The Washington Post* did. Adrian Chen at *The New Yorker* would later write, "Reporting on Internet phenomena, one learns to be wary of anonymous collectives freely offering the fruits of their research. I told PropOrNot that I was probably too busy to write a story, but I asked to see the report. In reply, PropOrNot asked me to put the group in touch with 'folks at the NY Times, WaPo, WSJ, and anyone else who you think would be interested.' Deep in the middle of another project, I never followed up."[52]

He said PropOrNot's report on which sites were "Russian Propaganda" was "a mess." Chen later interviewed Eliot Higgens, a researcher who has investigated Russian fake news stories for years, who told him, "To be honest, it looks like a pretty amateur attempt. I think it should have never been an article on any news site of any note."[53] Chen went on to say that, "To PropOrNot, simply exhibiting a pattern of beliefs outside the political mainstream is enough to risk being labeled a Russian propagandist."

The Intercept, an online outlet run by Glenn Greenwald who broke the story about Edward Snowden a few years earlier, slammed PropOrNot, saying, "the individuals behind this newly created group are publicly branding journalists and news outlets as tools of Russian propaganda — even calling on the FBI to investigate them for espionage — while cowardly hiding their own identities. The group promoted by the Post thus embodies the toxic essence of Joseph McCarthy, but without the courage to attach individual names to the blacklist."[54]

Studies of Fake News Effects on Election

With this sudden concern about fake news 'affecting our election,' studies were conducted which actually proved fake news didn't swing the election or have any measurable effect on how people voted. New York University and Stanford reported that only eight percent of people were actually duped by fake news.[55] Of those eight percent who supposedly believed some fake news articles were real, it's highly unlikely those stories actually swayed their opinions at all about a candidate, and instead only reflected what they already believed. Columbia Journal Review conducted a study and found, "The fake news audience is real, but it's also really small."[56]

They also pointed out that, "the fake news audience does not exist in a filter bubble. Visitors to fake news sites visited real news sites just as often as visitors to real news sites visited other real news sites. In fact, sometimes fake news audiences visited real news sites *more* often."[57] They even asked, "Is fake news a fake problem?" and concluded their report saying that their findings, "call into question the scope of the fake news problem."[58]

Most voters got their news from TV and actual news websites, not from random stories posted on unknown websites. “Our data suggest that social media were not the most important source of election news and even the most widely circulated news stories were seen by only a small fraction of Americans,” the researchers said.[59]

Even Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg admitted, “To think it influenced the election in any way is a pretty crazy idea.”[60] He surprisingly confirmed what rational people understood — that Hillary supporters underestimated the amount of support for Donald Trump. “I do think there is a certain profound lack of empathy in asserting that the only reason someone could have voted the way they did is they saw some fake news. If you believe that, then I don’t think you have internalized the message the Trump supporters are trying to send in this election,” Zuckerberg said.[61]

Facebook’s chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg agreed. When she was asked if ‘fake news’ played a big role in the election, she answered, “Well, there have been claims that it swayed the election, and we don’t think it swayed the election, but we take those claims seriously.”[62]

Even MSNBC’s Joe Scarborough, a RINO Republican who hates Donald Trump, admitted, “When you look at this ‘fake news,’ and you see what happened up at Harvard and you hear everybody writing articles saying millennials cost Hillary Clinton the election, and dogs with three legs cost Hillary Clinton the election, and comets passing in the night — Hillary Clinton cost Hillary Clinton the election. Hillary Clinton’s campaign staff cost Hillary Clinton the election.”[63]

He continued, “Listen, if you care about Democrats digging out of the hole that they have put themselves in now, you’ve got to ask yourself — what have Democrats done to so offend Americans that they only have 11 governorships, they’ve lost control of the Senate, they’ve lost control of the House, they lost 900 legislative seats over the past six years.” He concluded, “It wasn’t fake news. It was something much, much bigger.”[64]

His cohost Mika Brzezinski responded, “Ugh, I don’t think people are ready to hear that, Joe,” and of course, they weren’t. Liberals were sinking deeper into a depression, unable to handle the reality that Donald Trump beat Hillary Clinton on election night 2016, and would soon be sworn in as our next president.

The Media Circus

While there is a significant portion of people who strive to stay informed on current events, aware of our history, and who regularly read multiple news sources or listen to talk radio to get a complete understanding of the pressing issues of our time; unfortunately we are up against a well-funded, ruthless, and massive media machine which, like an alien parasite in a science fiction film, is dead set on taking over the minds of as many people as possible.

As you most likely know because you chose to pick up and read this book, much of the general public have been so dumbed down that they’re entertained by almost anything that allows them to turn off their brain and mindlessly sit and stare at the magical moving pictures on their TV, tablet, or smartphone. Millions binge daily on what is the equivalent of junk food for the mind.

The fact that Maury Povich has done virtually the same show conducting DNA tests to find out who the father is of some trailer trash tramp’s baby five days a week for 20 years shows the low level of standards the average TV viewer has. You’d think shows like Maury Povich and Jerry Springer would be a novelty for a season or two, but they have both been on the air for over 20 years!

We have become a society filled with mindless mass media-consuming morons who can’t distinguish between fantasy and reality anymore. Famed media analyst Neil Postman explains in his historic work *Amusing Ourselves To Death* that a drastic shift took place when Americans began getting their news from television instead of from newspapers, magazines and books. He noted, “under the governance of the printing press, discourse in America was different from what it is now — generally coherent, serious and rational…[but] under the governance of television, it has become shriveled and absurd.”[65] Part of the reason for this is that the very nature of the television business is to get people to watch by any means necessary.

Postman points out that, “we are urged by newscasters to ‘join them tomorrow.’ What for? One would think that several minutes of murder and mayhem would suffice as material for a month of sleepless nights. We accept the newscaster’s invitation because we know that the ‘news’ is not to be taken seriously, that it is all in fun, so to say. Everything about a news show tells us this — the good looks and amiability of the cast, their pleasant banter, the exciting music that opens and closes the show, the vivid film footage, the attractive commercials — all these and more suggest that what we have just seen is no cause for weeping.”[66]

Even most supposed “hard news” networks today are primarily just entertainment outlets pretending to report on actual news. This becomes obvious every time a celebrity dies or an NFL player gets involved in a scandal since it’s always the lead story on the evening news at all the major networks. When pop star Justin Bieber was arrested for a DUI, MSNBC interrupted a live interview with a congresswoman who was talking about the National Security Agency illegally spying on Americans to cover the "breaking news" about Bieber's arrest.[67] This is far from an isolated incident, and is instead, sadly the norm. The same media frenzy occurred when Paris Hilton was arrested for a DUI. CNN and other news networks aired live footage being shot from helicopters which followed her car down the freeway as she drove to the courthouse.[68]

The "news" is now mainly infotainment — entertainment made to look like information. The Learning Channel (now called TLC) went from airing educational programming in the 1980s and 90s to now just showing trashy reality shows like *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo* and *19 Kids and Counting*. The History Channel, which once consisted solely of documentaries about — well — *history*, slowly changed into a personality driven "reality show" network as well.[69]

But television is more than just infotainment. It's not really hyperbole to say that television to a large extent controls the world. Television introduces new words, dances, styles of dress, behaviors, attitudes, and cultural norms which are instantly absorbed and mimicked by millions. For example, shows like *Will and Grace* and *Modern Family* have been heralded by the gay community for shifting cultural attitudes towards gay people.[70] And in the 1980s *The Cosby Show* and *Diff'rent Strokes* changed the way millions of Americans viewed black people and interracial families.[71]

In the 1990s *Seinfeld* brought a few different terms into the lexicon such as, "Yada yada yada," "re-gifting," and "shrinkage;" ESPN announcer Stuart Scott's famous "boo-yah" is used by countless people as a celebratory cheer; and when Donald Trump's *Apprentice* first hit the airwaves everyone began telling others "you're fired!" The list goes on and on. The effects of television on our culture is immeasurable and since television is a tool, it can be used for either good or bad, and the more powerful a tool (or weapon) is — the greater potential for abuse, and the more devastating the effects can be if placed in the wrong hands.

A classic example of how easily large numbers of people can be manipulated by the power of the media is when H.G. Wells broadcast *War of the Worlds* on his *Mystery Theater* radio show in 1938, causing many who were listening to panic, thinking it was a news broadcast about an actual alien invasion.[72] The incident is a common case study in mass media classes at universities used to demonstrate the amazing power of this seemingly magical medium. While many may think society has evolved from such ignorance in the information age, assuming people would no longer be tricked into believing that a science fiction show was a news broadcast, the fact is, many people are just as gullible, if not more so today.

After the Discovery Channel aired a fictional show in 2012 titled *Mermaids: The Body Found* which appeared to be a "documentary" about scientists discovering a mermaid body, social media exploded with tweets and posts about how "mermaids are real" from people who thought one was actually discovered.[73] Despite a disclaimer at the beginning of the show saying it was fiction, and the cheesy 'scientists' clearly being actors along with poor quality computer generated graphics of the "mermaid," countless people actually believed that a mermaid body had been found.[74]

Other supposed "documentaries" about wildlife on Animal Planet and the Discovery Channel have also been faked or staged scenes using animals in zoos which are presented as if they've been captured on video in the wild.[75]

Some may argue that these shows are just entertainment, but the deception on supposed 'news' networks is even worse. Often the same stories are featured on the Big Three nightly news broadcasts (NBC, CBS and ABC) when they have no major importance to the country or any national significance. If a certain incident occurred or story broke that would obviously be the talk of the town, then we would expect the different networks to all lead with the same story or cover it in some fashion, but the Big Three networks regularly cover the exact same stories which aren't of national significance or interest at all. This always happens when the stories serve to reinforce or promote whatever agenda they are trying to push at the time. Out of the thousands of possible (and important) stories they could each cover every night, the pattern of the Big Three networks working in concert with each other is just too obvious to deny.

Mainstream media talking heads are just actors and actresses reading teleprompter scripts drafted by teams of writers, editors, and lawyers. Not only do the hosts and anchors have little to no control over what they say on air, but they also have little say in how they look. There are always clauses in their contracts which dictate what they wear and how they do their hair and makeup. After Megyn Kelly was given her own show on Fox News in primetime (*The Kelly File*), she underwent a series of dramatic hairstyle changed as producers were playing with her look trying to find one that audiences liked best. At one point it appears they even made her wear hair extensions to give her the appearance of having long flowing hair, only to quickly abandon the look for a short style.[76] During one of the presidential debates in 2016, her abnormally long fake eyelashes caught the attention of viewers who widely ridiculed her online, causing the topic to trend on Twitter.[77]

One reason the media circus has spiraled out of control in recent years is the constant pressure to get people's attention. With countless media outlets and social media accounts competing for clicks and retweets, most 'journalists' put being first ahead of being accurate. Carl Bernstein, one of the reporters who broke the Watergate scandal which brought down Richard Nixon, remarked, "The greatest felony in the news business today is to be behind, or to miss a big story. So speed and quantity substitute for thoroughness and quality, for accuracy and context."[78]

Prime Minister of Australia Malcolm Turnbull echoed these sentiments when he said, "It's not a 24-hour news cycle, it's a 60-second news cycle now, it's instantaneous. It has never been easier to get away with telling lies."[79]

In competing with millions of other voices all screaming for our attention, many news outlets repeatedly try to one-up each other with more and more sensational clickbait claims, hoping to get noticed. And in their desperation for attention they have all but destroyed their journalistic integrity. Back in 1985, long before reality TV and Facebook or Instagram — media analyst Neil Postman ominously warned, "When a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is redefined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby talk, when, in short, a people become an audience and their public business a vaudeville act, then a nation finds itself at risk; [and] culture-death is a clear possibility."[80]

The millions who regularly get caught up in the latest "Internet challenge" or idiotic social media fad show that this 'cultural death' is more of an inevitability than a possibility, and that is it's not only here, but it is rapidly spreading every day.

For these reasons and many more, it is critically important that we choose to resist the temptation of getting swept away in the sea of meaningless entertainment that's at our fingertips, and instead create and maintain a regular habit of staying educated and informed. While perhaps occasionally snacking on this pop culture, we must avoid, at all costs, consuming it as our main course, or we will face the same fate as if we ate a steady diet of junk food — and we will not just be watching the media circus, but we will become a part of it ourselves.

The Power of Propaganda

The media and the mechanisms for distributing information today are tools, and like most tools, if placed in the wrong hands they can be used as weapons. One of these weapons is propaganda, so we should take a close look at just how powerful it can be, and how hard it is at times to detect with an untrained eye.

In 1928 a man named Edward Bernays, who is considered the "father of public relations," published a book revealing his ingenious methods for shaping public opinion using the available media at the time (newspapers, magazines, black & white films, and radio). Television was just something that was being experimented with, and wouldn't become a major medium until over 20 years later, in the 1950s.[81]

Bernays was the nephew of Sigmund Freud, the famous psychologist, which may explain how he himself became such an expert in psychology. His knowledge of how to influence large numbers of people using the media was so far ahead of his time that still today, almost 100 years later, Bernays' methods are used as the standard operating procedure for advertisers, activists, and governments.

The American Tobacco Company (manufacturer of the Lucky Strike brand) hired him in 1929 to help promote cigarettes, and as a result of his marketing campaign he is largely credited with making smoking seem "cool." What he did was hire a group of beautiful women to light up cigarettes while they were marching in New York City's Easter Sunday Parade since women smoking at the time was taboo. He then sent out a press release claiming they lit up "Torches of Freedom" to support women's rights. *The New York Times* published an article the next day with the headline, "Group of Girls Puff at Cigarettes as a Gesture of Freedom."[82] He had created a self-fulfilling prophecy by duping newspapers into portraying women smoking as part of the growing women's rights movement, when in reality it was just a marketing ploy by a tobacco company.

Bernays is also the man responsible for the tradition of men buying women diamonds as a symbol of love and marriage. As you know, at least in the United States of America, the tradition of proposing marriage to a woman "must" be done with a diamond ring, and every Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Mother's Day we are bombarded by advertisements about buying diamonds for the women in our lives. This cultural norm, however, was artificially created by Edward Bernays after the De Beers diamond company (in reality a monopoly) hired him to promote diamonds as the standard symbol of love.

Before Bernays scheme was launched, engagement and wedding rings were just a gold band, but using his techniques of social conditioning he was able to brainwash men and women into believing that a large diamond ring was needed in order to propose marriage or to show a woman that a man loves her.[83]

When we look into Bernays' methods it becomes stunningly clear just how powerful they are, and how candid he was about this power in his book. He wrote, "Those who manipulate the unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of...in almost every act of our lives whether in the sphere of politics or business in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires that control the public mind, who harness old social forces and contrive new ways to bind and guide the world."[84]

He also admitted, "Whatever of social importance is done today, whether in politics, finance, manufacture, agriculture, charity, education, or other fields, must be done with the help of propaganda. Propaganda is the executive arm of the invisible government."[85] This "invisible government," he says, "tends to be concentrated in the hands of the few because of the expense of manipulating the social machinery which controls the opinions and habits of the masses."[86]

The expensive "machinery" he was referring to are the printing presses and film studios, as well as the large costs associated with producing and distributing newspapers and radio broadcasts at the time which was so expensive that only a handful of companies could afford to be in these businesses. It wasn't until fairly recently with the creation of computers, the Internet, smartphones, and social media that this monopoly has changed; although the multi-billion dollar mainstream media conglomerates still have enormous influence and control over the creation of content and its distribution, and are constantly trying to adapt to hold on to what was once an iron clad grip on the industry.

As Ben Bagdikian, the former dean of the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism points out in *The New Media Monopoly*, "The possibilities for mutual promotion among all their various media is the basic reason the Big Five [now six: Comcast, News Corporation, Time Warner, Disney, Viacom, and CBS] have become major owners of all kinds of media. For example, actors and actresses in a conglomerate's wholly owned movie studio can appear on the same company's television and cable networks, photographs of the newly minted celebrities can dominate the covers of the firm's wholly owned magazines, and those celebrities can be interviewed on the firm's wholly owned radio and television talk shows. The conglomerate can commission an author from its wholly owned book publishing firm to write a biography or purported autobiography of the new stars, which in turn is promoted on the firm's other media."[87]

Bagdikian points out that these multi-platform conglomerates, "have power that media in past history did not, power created by new technology and the near uniformity of their political goals"[88] and that, "Technically, the dominant media firms are an oligopoly, the rule of a few in which one of those few, acting alone, can alter market conditions."[89] He continues, "The major media socialize every generation of Americans. Whether the viewers and listeners are conscious of it or not, they are being 'educated' in role models, in social behavior, in their early assumptions about the world into which they will venture, and in what to assume about their unseen millions of fellow citizens."[90]

George Orwell warned of this same propaganda power in his classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* when he said, “All the beliefs, habits, tastes, emotions, mental attitudes that characterize our time are really designed to sustain the mystique of the Party and prevent the true nature of present-day society from being perceived.”[91]

The editors of a college textbook titled *Questioning The Media*, which I still have from my days as a student earning my bachelor’s degree in communication, point out that the major media conglomerates, “serve to define what is of political concern, of economic importance, of cultural interest to us. In short, we live in what is often described as a media culture.”[92] Even though this book is over 20 years old, it still rings true to this day.

The 1960 Presidential Debate

Television is such a powerful form of media that it is credited with being the reason John F. Kennedy became president. When he was running against Richard Nixon in 1960, television had just become a household medium and for the first time in history the presidential debates were televised. Before this they had been aired on the radio, but now Americans could *see* the debates, and that changed everything.

Marking the 50th anniversary of this historic event, *Time* magazine said, “It’s now common knowledge that without the nation’s first televised debate — fifty years ago Sunday — Kennedy would never have been president.”[93] Why, you wonder? Well, people who listened to the debate on the radio (which many did because not everyone had a television back then) thought that Nixon won, but the people who saw it on TV had a completely different conclusion. The reason was that because of the hot lights on the stage, which were needed to properly light the candidates, and because Nixon refused to put on makeup to take the shine off his face, which today everyone on TV knows is a standard practice — he looked pale, sweaty and shiny; while Kennedy had a tan from campaigning outdoors in the days leading up to the debate, and took the advice of producers and wore makeup, so he looked to be “radiating health” and confidence to the viewers watching on TV, whereas Nixon looked kind of sickly and weak.[94]

War

Over 2500 years ago the Chinese military strategist and philosopher Sun Tzu wrote *The Art of War,* which isn’t just a manual of strategies for physical battle, but also psychological operations as well. He formulated tactics to both intimidate the enemy, and to encourage people to support a conflict. Since then, war propaganda has advanced in step with technology, and now instead of a group’s leader giving an impassioned speech to their citizens in the town square about the ‘need’ to go to war, now they do it through newspapers, radio and television.

William Randolph Hurst and Joseph Pulitzer were partially, if not largely, responsible for the Spanish-American War in 1898 because their newspapers sensationalized and misreported an incident after a U.S. ship, the USS Maine, blew up in Havana harbor in Cuba.[95] The explosion was just an accident, but America's two most popular papers at the time, *The New York Journal* (owned by Hearst) and *New York World* (owned by Pulitzer) whipped the American people into a frenzy by publicizing misinformation about the explosion and blamed the Spanish for allegedly bombing the ship.[96] Both Hearst and Pulitzer used their papers to call for war, and historians often use their sensational stories about the incident as examples of yellow journalism and propaganda, but unfortunately this would become just one of many examples of disinformation being used to convince Americans to support going to war.

Both liberal and conservative mainstream media in America endlessly repeated the fear mongering false claims of the Bush administration about the (nonexistent) weapons of mass destruction Saddam Hussein supposedly had, and hyped up the looming War in Iraq as if it were an exciting plot in a Hollywood thriller. [97] A few years after the war started many people began doubting the reasons for it, and people's skepticism fueled a closer look at why we were really there.

One of the key "reasons" for going into Iraq was that Saddam Hussein was supposedly somehow involved in the 9/11 attacks, which we now know is completely false.[98] That, and he had allegedly acquired, or was manufacturing, weapons of mass destruction — WMDs. The documents that purported to show that Saddam had attempted to purchase yellowcake uranium, which is used to build nuclear weapons turned out to be forged.[99] If the documents were real, it would have been proof that Iraq had been in violation of United Nations sanctions, but for at least a year after the Bush Administration knew they were fake, they kept using them to build support for their invasion.[100] Unfortunately, every mainstream television network including liberal MSNBC seemed to support the looming war. It wasn't just the forged documents that led us to war — they were just one part of an international propaganda campaign trying to make it happen.

The CIA's British counterpart, MI6, was found to have planted propaganda pieces in the media in the UK and other parts of the world claiming Iraq had weapons of mass destruction in order to drum up support for the war in what was dubbed Operation Mass Appeal.[101] Former UN arms inspector Scott Ritter said, "Mass Appeal served as a focal point for passing MI6 intelligence on Iraq to the media, both in the UK and around the world. The goal was to help shape public opinion about Iraq and the threat posed by WMDs."[102]

The Sunday Times of London later published a story titled "How MI6 Sold the Iraq War," and said, "The Secret Intelligence Service has run an operation to gain public support for sanctions and the use of military force in Iraq. The government yesterday confirmed that MI6 had organized Operation Mass Appeal, a campaign to plant stories in the media about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction."[103]

At the onset of the Iraq War in 2003, the Department of Defense paid Iraqi newspapers to publish stories supporting the U.S. invasion which were written by Americans but appeared as if they were from Iraqis.[104] A year before the 9/11 attacks it was also discovered that soldiers from the U.S. Army's Psychological Operations Group had been working undercover at CNN and NPR (National Public Radio).[105] Once this was reported in the European press they were fired.[106]

Phil Donahue was fired by MSNBC in February 2003, less than a month before the invasion of Iraq, which he was very much against. The network claimed they canceled his show because of low ratings, but it was actually the highest rated show on MSNBC at the time.[107] A leaked internal memo said he was a "difficult public face for NBC in a time of war,"[108] thus confirming he was fired for opposing the planned invasion of Iraq.

Years later he would reveal, "This was not an assistant program director who decided to separate me from MSNBC. They were terrified of the antiwar voice. And that is not an overstatement. Antiwar voices were not popular. And if you're General Electric, you certainly don't want an antiwar voice on a cable channel that you own; Donald Rumsfeld is your biggest customer."[109] [General Electric was the co-owner of MSNBC at the time, and GE has been a major manufacturer of military products].[110]

Several years after the invasion, public opinion on the War in Iraq dramatically changed as the reasons for getting involved in it kept falling apart, but people have short memories and as the years passed, after George W. Bush's presidency ended and was replaced with Obama, the anger about the deceptions that lead to the war quietly faded. Well over four thousand U.S. soldiers have been killed in Iraq alone, not to mention the countless who have been injured, with many missing limbs and permanently disabled, all with nobody in the government or the media held accountable for the lies which caused it all.

Late Night Talk Shows

Propaganda isn't just something that's used by the news industry — it's used in comedy as well. Less than two months into Donald Trump's presidency, Jimmy Fallon was reportedly under pressure to make his show "more political" because "he's too weak on Trump."[111] He also apologized for having Donald Trump on his show shortly before the election and regretted 'humanizing' him after viewers (and the media) were outraged that Fallon was "too nice" to him.[112]

Fallon, while making regular use of Trump as a punchline, tends to shy away from politics and focuses his humor on other things like skits and games with celebrities, but since network executives felt the anti-Trump theme is what viewers want, or perhaps, that's what they themselves wanted in order to use the show as their own political weapon, Fallon was forced to turn up the heat on President Trump. Some even speculated that *The Tonight Show* was shut out of the Emmys in 2017 because Jimmy Fallon wasn't attacking Trump enough.[113]

After NBC fired Jay Leno as *The Tonight Show* host and replaced him with Jimmy Fallon in 2014, rumors were rampant in the industry that Leno was forced out because he was going too hard on President Obama. He was number one in the ratings for 20 years and still number one when he was forced out, so many people wondered why NBC would get rid of him since he was still on top.[114] Leno was the first late night comedian to take the gloves off and really start bashing President Obama. For years, most comedians treated him with kid gloves and very few of their jokes really took him to task, but after the "hope and change" wore off and was replaced by regret and despair for many Americans, Jay Leno started bashing Obama like nobody else in the business.[115]

Right after Leno's final episode, Johnny Carson's head writer Raymond Miller wrote an Op-Ed saying that most late night hosts protected Obama, and that Leno broke the mold by taking Obama to task, while "Leno's competitors haven't exactly hammered President Barack Obama, hardly a smidgen."[116] Sure, they joked about him, but it was all light-hearted humor, and nothing like the way comedians had treated previous presidents. A lot of people feel NBC got rid of Leno because he was helping turn too many people away from Barack Obama. It's interesting that immediately after Jimmy Fallon replaced Jay Leno as *The Tonight Show* host, one of his first guests was Michelle Obama who came on to promote Obamacare.[117]

Unlike Jimmy Fallon, Stephen Colbert, who took over *The Late Show* from David Letterman in 2015, made Trump-bashing a staple of his show to the point where it is an obsession.[118] President Trump is his number one enemy, and after the election he made no secret of the fact that he uses his show, not just to get laughs at Trump's expense, but to paint him in as negative a light as possible.[119] Many nights his entire monologue is about Donald Trump, and it serves as more of a nightly anti-Trump editorial than stand-up comedy. The liberal media regularly boasts of Colbert's anti-Trump rants, writing stories about them in order to bring them to the attention of those who don't watch his show.[120]

Colbert's constant pushing of the liberal agenda resulted in *The New York Post* running a story with the headline, "Colbert's 'Late Show' has become propaganda for Democrats."[121] And that's not even a secret at this point. In fact, one of the emails Wikileaks released of Hillary's campaign manager John Podesta shows that a Clinton insider was able to get Colbert to do two different segments to promote the Clinton Foundation.[122] *The Hollywood Reporter* conducted a survey and found that many conservatives quit watching his show because of the blatant liberal bias, and that he was most popular amongst Democrats and atheists.[123]

Jimmy Kimmel also uses his show as part of the anti-Trump entertainment complex, but not with the level of distain and hatred of Colbert. Kimmel also uses his show to regularly promote liberal political agendas. After his newborn son was found to have a heart defect and had emergency surgery, Kimmel gave a tearful monologue telling his viewers what happened, thanking the doctors and the nurses, but then turned his emotional story into an anti-Trump rant, blasting the President for his plan to fix Obamacare.[124] The next day *New York Magazine* said Kimmel might have "struck the final blow against the GOP health-care plan."[125]

Other late night hosts like Samantha Bee on TBS, Trevor Noah on Comedy Central, Seth Meyers on NBC, John Oliver on HBO, and Chelsea Handler on Netflix, all use their platforms to constantly push the liberal agenda and attack conservatives. There is really no debating that they're doing this, and I only mention this to encourage you to not watch them or give them one more follower on social media. But if you still have any doubt that comedy can be a vehicle for political propaganda, just keep reading.

In an interview with CNN in 2008, Chevy Chase openly admitted that he used his position on *Saturday Night Live* back in the 1970s for propaganda purposes. One of his skits was playing then-President Ford, who was facing off against Jimmy Carter in the 1976 election, and Chase admitted, "I just went after him. And I certainly, obviously my leanings were Democratic and I wanted Carter in and I wanted [Ford] out, and I figured look, we're reaching millions of people every weekend, why not do it."

Alina Cho, the CNN reporter interviewing him, responds, “Wait a minute, you mean to tell me in the back of your mind you were thinking, ‘Hey I want Carter?’”

Chase responds: “Oh, yeah.”

Cho: “And I’m going to make him [Ford] look bad?”

Chase continues, “Oh yeah. What do you think they’re doing now, you think they’re just doing this [mocking Sarah Palin] because Sarah’s funny?,” talking about *SNL* skewering her when she was John McCain’s running mate that year. He continued, “I think that the show is very much more Democratic and liberal-oriented, [and] that they are obviously more for Barack Obama.”[126] Many people actually credit Tina Fey’s depiction of Sarah Palin on *Saturday Night Live* with being largely responsible for people seeing her in a negative light.[127]

Since John Oliver uses his HBO show *Last Week Tonight* as more of a political soapbox than a place for comedy, some people are actually crediting him with influencing U.S. legislation, court rulings, and American culture. The media has actually dubbed it, ‘The John Oliver Effect.’ *Time* magazine actually ran a story titled, “How the ‘John Oliver Effect’ is Having a Real-Life Impact,” and detailed some of his political activism and its real world consequences.[128] *Fortune* magazine says the comedian’s impact is no joke and that his show “could very well be the envy of most newsrooms around the country.”[129]

Agenda-Setting

The mainstream media often steers the public conversation by giving constant coverage to certain stories which reinforce the ideologies they are trying to promote. They’ll often choose an isolated incident that’s making news in the local community where it happened, and while it has no real national significance, the major networks will ‘coincidentally’ determine it should be one of the top stories in the country and then sensationalize it so the incident then becomes a widely talked about topic.

These stories often include rare police brutality incidents involving a white police officer and a black suspect. But when it’s a white officer and a white victim, or a black officer and a white victim, the incidents remain local stories and don’t get national attention. Similarly, if a celebrity happens to call a gay or transgender person a derogatory name, then the big networks all have panels of pundits complain about it for hours, days, or even weeks on end to emphasize how ‘hateful’ and ‘dangerous’ such language is.

When these mountains out of molehills are turned into the top stories on the evening news of the Big Three broadcast networks (ABC, NBC, CBS) it doesn’t take a professional media analyst to see a pattern and realize there is coordination among these companies behind the scenes to decide which topics will be the “top stories.” It’s statistically impossible that the Big Three would regularly choose the same little-known local stories from the newswires to all report on nationally. Many events of the day warrant being the top stories on all networks, but most do not and shouldn't make it any further than their local news channels, yet they regularly get the national spotlight, and always when they fit the current agenda of the time.

The technical term for what they're doing is called agenda-setting. They magnify selected stories and topics through their constant coverage and endless panel discussions about every little detail. Talking for hours on end about the stories creates a self-fulfilling prophecy by building certain instances into major issues, and by treating them as if they *are* major issues when they are not, and getting people to talk and think about them so much, they then *become* major issues.

As television became part of everyone's lives, a study was conducted during the 1968 presidential election called the Chapel Hill Study, which showed the strong correlation between what people thought were the most important election issues and what the national news media repeatedly reported were the most important issues.[130] It basically showed that instead of just reporting on the news, the networks were actually influencing what people thought *was* news. Since then, hundreds of studies into the agenda-setting power of the mainstream media have been conducted which consistently show the immense power the industry has to shape public opinion and not only influence what people think about, but *how* they think about it.[131]

Aside from agenda-setting, the major networks also frame topics in a certain light trying to influence how they are perceived. Through their carefully selected panelists and pointed questions, they can easily paint a person or issue in a positive light or a negative one.

For example, during the height of the Black Lives Matter protests in 2016, the liberal media always portrayed the protests (and riots) as a civil rights movement on par with Martin Luther King's of the 1950s and 60s, consisting of people who were fighting against an 'epidemic' of white police officers shooting 'innocent' black men. In reality, the vast majority of black men shot and killed by police are armed and dangerous thugs with criminal histories, but those facts are ignored and the incidents are always framed as another 'innocent' black man who has been 'murdered' by police because 'they're all racists.'

The media likes to take rare and isolated instances of officer involved shootings and magnify them to give the appearance that there is a nation-wide epidemic of 'racist' police officers who are gunning down innocent young black men, thus adding fuel to the fire of black power groups and further straining race relations in America. People like Travyon Martin and Michael Brown are turned into celebrities from the nonstop coverage. Their names even trend on Twitter on their birthdays and the anniversaries of their deaths.[132] Leftist organizations had signs and T-shirts printed with their faces on them which people wore to protests and they are revered as if they're Martin Luther King or Tupac Shakur.

CNN and MSNBC love to give airtime to any Republican who expresses sympathy for a liberal cause. Congressmen who are completely unknown outside of their own small districts are held up as examples of a "growing trend" of "resistance" against conservatives when they speak out against members of their own party, when in reality, most of the time they're just an eccentric member of the House of Representatives with no national influence at all.

Normalizing Insanity

Radio talk show host Michael Savage released a book in 2006 titled *Liberalism is a Mental Disorder*, and it's unclear if he coined the phrase or if he just used it for the title of his book because it was being used regularly by conservatives. But whoever came up with it, it's more than just a joke, it is an empirical fact, and unfortunately that mental disorder is getting progressively worse as those affected by it are embracing and promoting behavior and policies so bizarre, it seems like their agenda is a plot out of a science fiction horror film. What's worse is the mainstream media is trying to normalize insanity, and at the same time demonize anyone who doesn't accept it.

One of these agendas is trying to destroy any distinction between men and women, and implement a new "genderless society." Transgender activists like Riley J. Dennis and Zinnia Jones are promoting the idea that 'some women have penises' and 'men can menstruate.'[133] *The Charlotte Observer* published an editorial saying that women and girls need to get used to sharing bathrooms and locker rooms with people who have "different genitalia" than them and concluded that, "Yes, the thought of male genitalia in girls' locker rooms — and vice versa — might be distressing to some. But the battle for equality has always been in part about overcoming discomfort — with blacks sharing facilities, with gays sharing marriage — then realizing that it was not nearly so awful as some people imagined."[134]

Transgenderism is now being celebrated as if it's cool and special. At the 2015 Golden Globe Awards, Amazon.com's original series *Transparent* was given two awards, one for best TV series, and another for best actor. In the show, Jeffrey Tambor plays a retired college professor who, in his late 50s, decided he wanted to live as a woman. Critics hailed the show saying it was "making history."[135] That same year ESPN gave Caitlyn Jenner the "courage" award at the ESPYs, an award show that's supposed to be about sports.[136]

The December 2016 edition of *National Geographic* put a transgender 9-year-old 'girl' on the cover, who is actually a biological male.[137] And various Hollywood celebrities appear to be raising their kids transgender or are defying the social norms of boys and girls. Charlize Theron has been photographed with her son wearing dresses and other girl clothes on numerous occasions.[138] Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie have been dressing their daughter Shiloh in boy's clothes, making many wonder if they're raising her as a boy.[139] And Will Smith's teenage son Jaden regularly wears women's clothes to 'challenge' gender norms.[140]

It's not just people who want to switch genders who are being held up as heroes — they are only one part of what's being called the "gender revolution." The state of New York now recognizes 31 different genders, *thirty-one!* Not just male and female, but a whole list, including gender fluid (meaning sometimes male and sometimes female), androgynous and gender-nonconforming (which means neither male nor female), and a whole bunch more like 'pangender,' 'two spirit,' and 'gender gifted,' whatever the Hell those are.[141]

Instead of referring to these people as 'he' or 'she,' there are now new pronouns including 'ze,' 'xe,' 've,' 'tey,' 'hir' that they demand to be called. Not only are these legally recognized genders in New York (and probably California soon as well), but if employers or landlords don't call these people by their "preferred pronouns" they can be fined for discrimination! The city of New

York warns, “refusal to use a transgender employee’s preferred name, pronoun, or title may constitute unlawful gender-based harassment.”[142] Civil penalties up to $250,000 may be issued for “violations” of willfully “mispronouning” someone.[143]

California governor Jerry Brown signed a similar bill into law in October 2017, which made it a crime for healthcare workers to “willfully and repeatedly” decline to use a patient’s “preferred name or pronouns.”[144] Violations can result in a $1000 fine or up to a year in jail.[145] How much longer until similar laws are put in place for teachers, business owners, or everyone?

In 2014 Facebook increased the gender options from just male and female to include 58 (yes *fifty-eight*) different choices, and then felt they didn’t include enough so they changed the entry field from the list of fifty-eight options to a blank box so users can just make up their own.[146] The cover of *Time* magazine in March 2017 featured an “agender” person (someone who claims to be neither male, nor female, even though this person is a biological female with a uterus and two x chromosomes). The caption read “Beyond ‘He’ or ‘She.’ How a new generation is redefining the meaning of gender.”[147] This insanity isn’t just being promoted on some little-known fetish website, this is *Time* magazine.

Of course gay and bisexual people are hailed as heroes today, and every time an actor or musician “comes out” it’s major news as the media celebrates their sexuality as if it’s some kind of special achievement. Fortune 500 companies are increasingly including gay themes in their commercials for products like Campbell Soup, Coca-Cola, Starbucks, General Mills, Tylenol, and many others, hoping to normalize the behavior by repeatedly exposing people to it.[148]

Even Disney has been introducing gay characters in their shows beginning in 2014 with *Good Luck Charlie*, which was the Disney Channel’s most popular show at the time.[149] Soon after that, the Disney-Owned ABC Family Channel (now called Freeform) included a same-sex kiss between two thirteen-year-old boys on *The Fosters*.[150] The show’s creator and executive producer Peter Paige (who is a homosexual) bragged that it was the youngest gay kiss on television in U.S. history.[151] Disney’s live-action version of *Beauty and Beast* (2017) also included a gay couple.[152] And there is increasing pressure by liberals to have Disney cartoons star gay characters.[153]

Not even *Star Wars* is safe from the gay agenda. At the end of 2015 when *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* was released it brought the film franchise back into the spotlight, and Mark Hamill, who plays Luke Skywalker, decided to come out and say that Luke might be gay.[154] The producer JJ Abrams said he would like to include a gay character in a future episode.[155] Of course, all of this is reported in the mainstream media as if it’s a good thing as newscasters celebrate such “achievements.”

The liberal media industrial complex wants to make Sodom and Gomorrah seem like it was populated with Puritans. If you’re not going to be bisexual or a gender bender then they at least want you to be a sexual deviant. Foul-mouthed skanks are always promoted as role models for young girls to emulate. Beyoncé, Kim Kardashian, Katy Perry and Lady Gaga all promote rampant sexual promiscuity, materialism, and reckless lifestyles, and are unfortunately idolized by millions of impressionable teenage girls. Holding onto one’s virginity and having committed and monogamous relationships are frowned upon and seen as old-fashioned and boring.

Recently the media has even been glorifying “Eyes Wide Shut” sex parties that are now regularly held at a growing number of sex clubs across the country where strangers wearing Venetian masks gather to have sex with each other.[156] While sex before marriage went from being taboo to now the social norm (as is having sex partners numbering in the dozens) — in the not-so-distant future we may likely see the taboo of sex clubs, swinging, and orgies broken as well, and such activities may actually be considered just as normal as one night stands by future generations.[157]

None of these cultural shifts would be taking place without the media constantly exposing people to such behaviors because through psychological desensitization, as people are repeatedly exposed to something, no matter how offensive, they gradually begin to accept it as a normal part of life — that’s the power of propaganda.

Lying by Omission

Aside from making mountains out of molehills to promote certain agendas, the mainstream media regularly lies by omission, purposefully ignoring important stories they don't want people to know about. So, while at the same time they're having endless panel discussions and rehashing the same story every night for a week or sometimes months, absent from that airtime are important topics that should actually be discussed at length and reported on in detail with the network's resources to ensure a large number of people hear about them; but covering those stories would be counterproductive to their agenda.

Pulitzer Prize wining writer Nicholas Kristof made a profound statement that illustrates the power and the danger of ignoring important stories when he was talking about the War in Darfur, Africa, where an estimated 300,000 people died from ongoing fighting between different tribes in the Sudan. "The news media's silence," he said, "particularly television news, is reprehensible. If we knew as much about Darfur as we do about Michael Jackson, we might be able to stop these things from continuing."[158]

The New York Times lied to millions of Americans for over a year by withholding all stories about the NSA's mass-surveillance of Americans after the editor-in-chief had a meeting at the White House where the Bush administration asked him to keep quiet about it.[159] *The New York Times* couldn't stop their own reporter James Risen from releasing his book, *State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration*, which contained detailed revelations of the domestic spying operation, and because *The Times* didn't want to be scooped by their own reporter's book, they reluctantly published a story on the massive illegal eavesdropping program being conducted by the NSA and even admitted they sat on it for a year.[160]

The decades of blackouts regarding the Bilderberg Group's annual meeting and the weird activities that go on inside the Bohemian Grove every summer can only be explained by an overt effort to keep these topics out of the national news in the United States.[161] Certainly they're newsworthy and interesting topics that you would expect to be making headlines and included in the nightly news on the big television networks, but it's as if they don't exist.[162]

When every June, one hundred or so of the world's most powerful people gather in a fancy hotel surrounded by armed guards for three days to discuss geopolitics and the global economy, certainly it's something significant that should be reported on. But only in recent years with word of the Bilderberg Group spreading through social media have some national outlets begun to mention it, with usually nothing more than a fifteen second segment or one lonely news article online that's buried at the bottom of the page.[163]

A British newspaper tycoon named Lord Northcliffe, who founded *The Daily Mail* and *Daily Mirror*, is often credited with having said, “News is what somebody somewhere wants to suppress; all the rest is advertising.”[164]

Censoring Leftist Violence

During the 2016 presidential campaign when peaceful Trump supporters kept being assaulted as they were leaving Trump rallies or targeted on the street for wearing their red “Make America Great Again” hats, most incidents were only briefly covered in local papers or by online conservative outlets.[165] These politically motivated attacks weren’t just rare or isolated incidences, they were part of a disturbing pattern that was ignored by the liberal media, despite videos and photos of the attacks going viral online.[166]

The mainstream media is also always reluctant to call politically motivated riots what they are when leftists instigate them, and instead usually just call them ‘protests’ when they’re perpetrated by Black Lives Matter supporters, college students trying to prevent conservative speakers from holding their events, and even in the case of leftist anarchists rioting after Trump’s inauguration.

In Ferguson, Missouri, the birthplace of Black Lives Matter, Michael Brown’s stepfather urged an angry crowd to “burn this bitch down” after a grand jury decided not to indict officer Darren Wilson for shooting and killing Brown, the 6-foot-4, three hundred pound thug who attacked him after being confronted shortly after robbing a convenience store.[167] As I’m sure you recall, the lawless thugs rioted and looted liquor stores, broke into hair salons to steal weaves which are popular in the black community, and set local businesses on fire.[168] CNN host Jason Carroll admitted that the network chose to censor footage of people rioting in Ferguson, because it didn’t fit with how they were trying to frame their coverage.[169]

Anti-police hatred boiled over in July 2016 when a black supremacist opened fire on police officers in Dallas, Texas during a Black Lives Matter march, killing five officers and wounding nine others. The perpetrator was a 25-year-old black man who was incited to violence from the mainstream media continuing to paint police as racists who regularly kill African Americans and get away with it. This horrible tragedy was in the news for just a few days, and then it was quickly forgotten. Many people started comparing the Black Lives Matter movement to “the black KKK” and began labeling them a hate group, but the liberal media continued to frame them as if they were a modern day civil rights group, despite regular violence at their events, chanting about killing cops when they marched, and now a Black Lives Matter-inspired terrorist attack on police officers.

When Milo Yiannopoulos was scheduled to speak at U.C. Berkeley, leftists wearing black ski masks began rioting, smashing windows in school buildings and setting things on fire, which led to Milo’s speech being canceled for safety reasons. One commentator on CNN actually said he thought that Breitbart News and Milo secretly organized the riots themselves as a false flag in order to get him more publicity.[170] He just couldn’t bring himself to admit that liberals were regularly using violence to silence and intimidate conservatives.

When we began seeing the rise of Antifa, which are leftist anarchists who wear all black (including ski masks) and see themselves as “freedom fighters” who embrace violence and assault Trump supporters and anyone who supports Conservatism (or as they call them “Nazis”), the liberal media compared them to American patriots who stormed the beaches of Normandy on D-Day.[171] Many in the liberal media framed conservative ideas as ‘violent’ and claimed that Antifa’s violence was ‘ethical’ because they aimed to stop ‘hate speech.’[172] Antifa literally look like ISIS terrorists and should be declared a terrorist organization, but for months the mainstream media kept ignoring them and the only place you would even hear of Antifa was on social media by people who were posting videos and photos of their increasingly violent acts.[173]

Ignoring Illegal Immigrant Crimes

While the majority of illegal immigrants who snuck into the United States did so to seek a better life for themselves and their families, unfortunately an extraordinarily high number of them have ties to Latin American gangs or bring the lawless mentality of their own countries to ours. The fact is, each year illegal aliens commit countless serious crimes — from human trafficking, to violent assaults, rape and murder; and most of these crimes are only reported on the local news in a 15 or 30 second segment.

Department of Justice statistics reveal that one out of every four federal prison inmates are actually foreign-born.[174] But a source within Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) revealed that before the Trump administration the federal government did not keep statistics on illegal immigrant crime.[175]

To make things worse, in 2015 President Obama’s Justice Department released 20,000 convicted criminal illegal aliens back onto the streets of the United States, instead of deporting them.[176] These weren’t just undocumented immigrants, but people who were charged *and convicted* of serious crimes, including 12,307 for drunk driving, 1,728 for assault, 216 for kidnaping, and over 200 for homicide or manslaughter, according to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).[177] Such an egregious miscarriage of justice should have led to congressional hearings and indictments of government officials for putting American citizens’ lives at risk, but their release received little attention so hardly anyone even knows about it.

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz said, “These are not just numbers. These are individuals in this country illegally who were arrested, prosecuted and convicted. But instead of removing these criminals, ICE put them back on American streets.”[178] How could this not create a national outrage? How could this not be the top story in the country for weeks? 200 convicted killers, who aren’t even citizens of our country, were set free from prison and allowed to walk among us again! We regularly hear the media warning about “climate change” or saying we need more “equality” or “diversity,” but why isn’t the fact that hundreds of convicted killers have been released back onto our streets a major story, especially when they’re here illegally?

The media doesn't just systematically ignore the crimes of illegal aliens, they also ignore the massive burden they put on the criminal justice system, the healthcare system, and our public schools. The city of Los Angeles, for example, paid over 1.3 billion dollars in welfare to illegal aliens between 2015 and 2016 alone.[179] There are also concerns that non-citizens may be voting in elections.[180] An investigation in Ohio found 385 non-US citizens registered to vote, and 82 of those people actually did vote.[181]

Thankfully the Trump administration is finally taking the dangers of illegal aliens seriously, but the mainstream media continues to ignore the serious and costly problems of our broken immigration system and actually demonize anyone who wants to enforce laws that have been on the books for decades.

Anti-White Racism

While giving nonstop coverage to incidents of alleged racism committed by random white people, police officers, or businesses, the major news networks do their best to never report on racist black people who commit hate crimes against whites. They want people to believe that racism is a one-way street and that only white people can be racist, when in fact many in the black community harbor hatred for whites and frequently commit hate crimes against them.[182]

For example when a Nation of Islam member gunned down three white people in Fresno, California because he hated whites, the story barely made a blip on the mainstream media's radar.[183] At San Francisco State University, a black student was caught on video assaulting a white student simply because he had dreadlocks. The black person was upset that a white person had a 'black hairstyle' and claimed it was "cultural appropriation."[184] Mainstream media ignored the story, but if a white student attacked a black student because they didn't like their hair, it would have been the story of the week all across the country.

In New York City, a black man was arrested for trying to shove a random white person onto the tracks of the subway train because he "hated white people."[185] A group of black thugs were caught on video beating up a white man at an intersection in Chicago yelling, "You voted Trump," and then stole his car.[186] In Kansas City, Missouri, a group of black teens asked a random white man waiting at a bus stop who he voted for, assuming he was a Trump supporter because he was white, and then proceeded to start punching him.[187] These are not just rare isolated incidents of violence, but are part of a disturbing pattern of racist hate crimes against white people.[188]

After a black man shot up a white church in Tennessee during their Sunday service to get 'revenge' for white supremacist Dylann Roof's massacre at a black church two years earlier in South Carolina, it was barely mentioned in the media. *Newsweek* actually said that racist 'alt-right conspiracy theories' claimed the attack was under-reported because the shooter was black and targeted white people.[189] *The New York Times* buried the story on page 14 and didn't even mention the shooter's motive.[190] Most Americans are completely unaware of the incident, but painfully remember the months of coverage after the Confederate flag-loving Dylann Roof opened fire inside an African American church, which sparked the beginning of the Confederate flag being banned and even *Dukes* *of Hazzard* reruns being pulled from TV because the Duke boys' car, the General Lee, has the flag painted on it.[191]

In late 2013 a disturbing trend surfaced when random and unsuspecting white people were being sucker-punched in the face by black kids hoping to knock them out.[192] It was dubbed the "knockout game" or "polar bear hunting" (polar bear being a slang term for white people), and the victims were of all ages, including senior citizens, chosen at random, when they were just walking down sidewalks of city streets, simply because they were white. Some of the incidents were captured on video by nearby security cameras, and some of the perpetrators' friends videotaped the attacks themselves and posted the footage on social media or World Star Hip Hop, a website that caters to black fight videos.[193]

Most of these attacks were only reported on the local news where they occurred, and they usually left the racial elements out of their stories. It wasn't until word of these incidents began spreading through social media that the 'knockout game' phenomenon, and its anti-white racist patterns became clear.[194]

A black serial killer in Kansas City murdered five random white men, four of them on biking and hiking trails over the course of a few months in 2014, by walking up to them and shooting them in the back of the head.[195] There was no motive for the attacks other than he wanted to "kill all white people," as he had admitted to police while in custody during a previous incident involving harassment charges. Have you heard about this story? Probably not.

After four black thugs were arrested in Chicago for torturing a mentally handicapped white man while broadcasting it on Facebook Live, the disturbing video went viral on social media and then mainstream media reluctantly covered the incident briefly, once, and then never made any mention of it again.[196]

If it had been white perpetrators torturing a black man while broadcasting it on Facebook, it would have stayed in the news cycle for weeks, perhaps months. The networks would have devoted prime time specials to their "exclusive" interview with the victim, and he would have become the left's poster boy and rallying cry against racism and hatred perpetrated from white people. We would have heard his name as often as Trayvon Martin or Michael Brown, but instead this incident, and the victim, was immediately forgotten.

Shepard Smith, a liberal host at Fox News, cut off a reporter mid-sentence when he was reporting on this crime after he brought up the fact that many were concerned that the Black Lives Matter movement were fanning the flames of anti-white racism and might have helped create an environment which incited the perpetrators.[197] "Wait, wait, wait, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt. The police chief made clear what this was…let's leave the politics of this alone," Smith interjected.[198]

Shepard Smith also cut off Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal while he was live on the air commenting on a black perpetrator who ambushed three police officers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, killing them for Black Lives Matter.[199] Jindal was saying, "It is time for folks across party lines, across ideological lines, to condemn this violence, to condemn this insanity, we've got to come together, we've got to say that all lives matter. It doesn't matter what color you are, black, white, brown, red, it doesn't matter, all lives matter. We've got to protect and value our police."[200]

Smith interrupts him, saying, “Governor you know that that phrase you just used is one that’s seen by many as derogatory, right? (referring to ‘All Lives Matter’) I just wonder why it is that you used that phrase when there’s a certain segment of the population that believes it’s a real dig on ’em?”

Jindal responded, “Well, Shepard, it’s not meant to be. The point is we’ve got to move beyond race. Look, these police officers, these are the men and women that run towards danger, not away from it, so that we can be safe. It is time for us to be unified as, as a country. We’ve got to look beyond race. I think that’s one of the dumbest ways for us to divide people. It’s one of the dumbest ways to for us to classify people, or categorize people. We shouldn’t be divided, we do need to be united. These are police officers — they don’t care whether you’re black or white, they will run towards danger to protect you. That’s what they swear, that’s their duty, that’s what they do first. These are heroes.”[201]

While most major media cover-up anti-white racism, others regularly try to paint all white people as being racist. *The New York Daily News* hired Shaun King in 2015 as their “senior justice writer,” a man who for all intensive purposes looks white, but identifies as black and has dedicated his life to exposing the “evils” of white police officers and “white privilege” in America. His columns primarily consist of him putting out slanted stories filled with half-truths and innuendo about how white people are constantly causing countless problems for black people in America today. He even called the Boy Scouts Jamboree a “white supremacist rally.”[202]

Censoring “Radical Islamic Terrorism”

Because of Barack Obama’s Muslim roots and his desire to craft the narrative of his legacy to give the impression that he was the president who ‘helped bring peace’ to the world, he did everything he could to downplay the dangers of radical Islam, and of course the liberal media had his back and followed his lead.[203] For example, the attack at Fort Hood, Texas in 2009 by a Muslim U.S. Army major who shot and killed 13 people and injured more than 30 others was labeled “workplace violence” despite the fact that the gunman had been exchanging emails with al-Qaeda leader Anwar Al-Awlaki.[204]

Networks also largely ignored the fact that one of the biggest mass shootings in American history at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida in 2016 was carried out by a radical Islamic terrorist who told a 911 operator he was doing it for the Islamic State.[205] The gunman killed 49 people for ISIS, but the Big Three TV news networks just referred to the shooter as a “lone gunman,” ignoring his true motivation for the attack which wasn’t just a hatred of gays, but was actually fueled by his extremist Islamic beliefs.[206]

When the FBI released transcripts of his call to 911 they redacted all references he made to Islam, ISIS, and Allah.[207] Only after outrage from members of Congress over the censorship did the FBI release the actual transcript.[208] Speaker Paul Ryan denounced the FBI’s cover-up saying, “We know the shooter was a radical Islamist extremist inspired by ISIS. We also know he intentionally targeted the LGBT community. The administration should release the full, unredacted transcript so the public is clear-eyed about who did this, and why."[209]

A former senior intelligence official also revealed that President Obama repeatedly ignored warnings in 2011 and 2012 about the growing threat of what would become ISIS in order to perpetuate his re-election narrative that he was helping bring an end to the War on Terrorism.[210] He even infamously called ISIS the "JV Team" (Junior Varsity) downplaying the danger they pose, which he said was "contained."[211] Obama wanted his legacy to be that of the president who ended the wars in the Middle East, so he not only kept downplaying radical Islamic terrorist activity in the United States and around the world, but kicked the can down the road so he could pass the problem off onto the next administration.[212]

When President Trump said that there are terrorist attacks that happen but people don't know about them because the media won't report them, he obviously meant they won't report on them for more than a 15 second blurb or that they might cover the story one time and then forget all about it. However, the media pretended to take him literally,[213] when obviously he meant that several instances were *under-reported* and that relatively few people sensed the devastation and danger due to such little coverage.

When radical Islamic terror attacks occur in Europe and the United States and are only briefly covered before the media reverts back to their constant complaining about Trump, most people quickly forget about them or may not even hear about them at all.

George Orwell's Memory Hole

In George Orwell's classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* he coined a variety of phrases which describe different aspects of life under the totalitarian "Big Brother" regime. One such term, a *memory hole*, refers to quietly deleting or altering news stories in order to make it seem as if they were never changed, or never even existed in the first place.

One scene in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* depicts the lead character Winston Smith editing newspaper articles that had already been published (which was part of his job at the "Ministry of Truth") to change what they said, and then new ones were printed to replace the originals, which were all confiscated and destroyed, leaving no evidence of what they actually said. The information was said to have disappeared down a "memory hole" because as the main antagonist O'Brien later reveals to Winston, 'he who controls the past controls the future, and he who controls the present controls the past.'

Any information the government (called the Party in the book) didn't want people to have access to anymore disappeared into a memory hole, and with no physical evidence of an original newspaper which had later been altered, there was no possible way for someone to verify whether or not a certain story was actually true. The truth was what the government (the Party) said it was.

Unfortunately, memory holes aren't just something from Orwell's imagination, they actually exist in our modern media age where it is much easier to delete something or change it once it's been posted online since actual newspapers are being replaced by digital versions on tablets and smartphones. Unless retrieved from Google cache, or someone taking a screenshot, then an original version of something posted on a news website and later altered is almost impossible to discover. We see these alterations all the time on articles from mainstream outlets when part of a story is changed or deleted, and oftentimes the entire headline rewritten.[214]

Some outlets may add a small note on the bottom of an article saying something to the effect that it had been changed to 'fix a mistake,' but usually doesn't mention what that mistake was. Sometimes a misleading and inflammatory headline will send shockwaves across social media, and once word of the story has gone viral, the headline will be quietly changed, or parts of the story altered or removed in attempts to avoid a defamation lawsuit, but the damage is often done with the false allegations continuing to spread and taking on a life of their own.[215]

The same things happen when news agencies or celebrities tweet out something completely false (or criminal, when celebrities help incite violence to support their causes). Oftentimes someone will take a screenshot to preserve evidence and post it after the tweet has been deleted, but unless they have the URL of the original tweet which can be retrieved from the archive, a screenshot's authenticity is called into question. Was it actually a screenshot, or did someone fake the screenshot using Photoshop or one of the fake tweet generating websites?

An MSNBC terrorism analyst once appeared to encourage ISIS to bomb Trump Tower in Turkey in a tweet that was later deleted.[216] Actor Patton Oswald once tweeted encouragement for terrorists to bomb one of Trump's properties and later deleted it.[217] *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat actually tweeted his hopes for a Trump assassination,[218] as did London *Guardian* reporter Monisha Rajesh,[219] with both later deleting the tweets after the backlash. Oftentimes once someone deletes such inciting tweets they and their fans insinuate that screenshots are fake, casting doubt on whether or not they had actually posted such statements at all. It's as if the truth has vanished down a memory hole.

An eerie 'memory hole' situation occurred in 2010 when an episode of Jesse Ventura's *Conspiracy Theory* television show was remotely deleted from people's DVRs after they had recorded it. The show ran for three seasons on TruTV and followed Jesse Ventura around the country investigating various conspiracy theories, and one of those episodes was about 'FEMA camps,' the secretive detention centers that have been set up in major cities across America in order to detain large numbers of people in the event of massive civil unrest which may be sparked from any number of reasons.

After the *Police State* episode first aired, it was scheduled to be replayed the following week as a lead-in for the new episode, but it didn't air. All the information about the episode was also deleted from TruTV's website, and even more strange, the people who had recorded it on their DVRs found the episode had been deleted from there as well.[220] The show's producers later revealed that the government put pressure on the network to pull the episode from airing again, and also had cable companies remotely delete copies from people's DVRs at home since they are linked directly to the cable providers.[221]

And so, just like the cable companies remotely change the clocks on customer’s boxes every fall and spring to adjust them for Daylight Savings Time, they also deleted an episode of Jesse Ventura’s Conspiracy Theory. It couldn’t get more ironic! A government conspiracy behind censoring a TV show about conspiracies! In all seriousness this instance illustrates the vulnerabilities of using streaming technology over the old fashioned VHS or DVD recorders because once something was recorded on those systems, the only way for a media company to get rid of it would be to physically come to your house and take it, but now they can just make things disappear down a memory hole from miles away with just the push of a button.

[Author’s Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com or wherever you purchased it from to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them. Almost all of the one-star reviews on my books are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent, hence me adding this note. These fraudulent ratings and reviews could also be part of a larger campaign trying to stop my message from spreading by attempting to tarnish my research through fake and defamatory reviews, so I really need your help to combat this as soon as possible. Thank you!]

Fake Hate Crimes

While it's undeniable that hate crimes unfortunately happen and are committed by members of all races against one another, the mainstream media frames the issue as if white people are always the perpetrators, and that black people or other minorities like Muslims or gays are always the victims. There is another interesting phenomenon involving hate crimes that is usually ignored, and that is the practice of people faking them.

The mainstream media has repeatedly hyped-up hate crime hoaxes started by fraudsters and mentally disturbed individuals who know what kind of sensational bait the media is looking for to push their leftist agenda.[222] Oftentimes these perpetrators are soon exposed as frauds after investigators discover their stories are fabricated, with many of them ultimately confessing, but by that time the damage has already been done. Their fake stories have spread across social media and gotten picked up by news outlets across the country and social justice warriors have added the incidents to their mental list of reasons to believe that white people or Christians are all out to get them.

The 'hate crimes' getting debunked barely garner any media attention at all, while the initial sensational claims spread across the country and galvanize the social groups with the same identity as the phony victims who use the fake stories to prop up their beliefs that 'their people' are being systematically targeted and attacked.

Immediately after the 2016 presidential election, we saw a series of hate crime hoaxes that were designed to paint Donald Trump and his supporters in a false light, hoping to dupe people into believing that they were all dangerous right-wing extremists on a rampage against minorities. Just two days after the election a Muslim woman in Louisiana falsely claimed that two Trump supporters yelled racial slurs at her, attacked her, and then stole her hijab. She later admitted to police that she made up the whole story.[223]

In Indiana, a man spray-painted a swastika and "Heil Trump" on the side of a church, even though he hated Donald Trump, and after he was caught admitted that he wanted to "mobilize a movement" against him.[224] A small African American church in Mississippi was burned down and had "Vote Trump" spray-painted on the side, causing initial reports to claim it was done by white supremacist Donald Trump supporters. Soon after, however, a black man was arrested for the crime and police said he painted the 'Trump' message on the building to throw off investigators about his true motive which was some personal grievance he had with the church.[225]

In Philadelphia a black man was caught spray painting racist, anti-black and pro-Trump graffiti on cars and businesses after he tried to make it look like a white supremacist had done it.[226] In

Charlotte, North Carolina a small local market owned by an Indian had a rock thrown through its window and the front door set on fire. A note was left at the scene which praised President Trump and said, “We need to get rid of Muslims, Indians and all immigrants,” and was signed, “White America.” A surveillance camera caught the perpetrator on video and he was identified and arrested a few days later. He was black.[227]

Others posted on social media about non-existent ‘crimes’ right after the 2016 election that were made up, claiming they or someone they knew were ‘victims’ of Trump supporters who were randomly attacking Muslims or blacks. [228] The saturation of fake ‘white supremacist incidents’ spread through social media has caused paranoia and panic in many minorities. Lab equipment covered by white plastic tarps at one college was confused for a KKK meeting by a paranoid student who contacted the dean to complain about it after she spotted the ‘KKK hoods’ through a window when walking by.[229] At another university some students got scared and “no longer felt safe on campus” after seeing that other students wrote “Trump 2016” in chalk on some sidewalks and stairs.[230] The Millennial generation has been so brainwashed that they believe when a white person wears dreadlocks or dresses up as Bruce Lee for Halloween that it’s “cultural appropriation” and hence ‘racist’ and ‘offensive.’[231]

Members of the LGBT community have been caught hoaxing hate crimes on a regular basis in order to gain sympathy for their cause or to defame their neighbors who they’re having a squabble with. A lesbian waitress in New Jersey collected thousands of dollars in donations after she claimed a couple wrote on their receipt that they stiffed her out of a tip because she was gay.[232] Her story immediately unraveled and she was fired from the restaurant for lying and had to refund the donations.[233] A lesbian couple in Colorado were charged with criminal mischief and filing a false police report after they spray painted “Kill the Gay” on their own garage door and said they suspected their neighbors had done it.[234] Another gay couple spray painted “Queer” on their own house, and then burned it down to collect the insurance money while also blaming their neighbor.[235]

One lesbian in St. Louis even carved anti-gay slurs into her own skin and then said she was attacked by some ‘homophobic’ bigots.[236] At Connecticut State University a lesbian wrote some anti-gay notes and slid them under her dorm room door which then resulted in students holding a “solidarity rally” to show that they’re “not intimidated by hate.” A surveillance camera caught the lesbian on video planting the notes herself, and she was charged with filing a false police report.[237] With the rise of social justice warriors plaguing American universities in recent years, such incidents seem to now be commonplace. Laird Wilcox, author of *Crying Wolf: Hate Crime Hoaxes in America*, estimates that 80% of alleged hate crimes on college campuses are hoaxes or just harmless pranks.[238]

A gay man in Montana who claimed he was beaten up outside of a club because of his sexuality was charged with filing a false police report after surveillance footage showed he actually hurt himself attempting a backflip on the sidewalk outside, and nobody had attacked him at all.[239] A gay YouTuber who made videos promoting “gay rights” was also arrested for faking a hate crime against himself for publicity.[240] Someone even claimed that a baker at Whole Foods wrote “fag” in frosting on a cake he ordered and then sued the store, but once again surveillance footage showed the truth and proved that when he left with the cake there was no such thing on it, and he too admitted he wrote “fag” on the cake himself after he bought it.[241] There are so many more of these LGBT hoaxes that they could fill an entire book.

Of course the same kinds of hate crime hoaxes are perpetuated by other minorities like black people and Jews who are looking to smear a neighbor they don’t like or trying to “raise awareness” about racism.[242] A black student at Kean University in New Jersey was arrested for tweeting death threats to her fellow students who were attending an anti-racist rally on campus after she was caught using a fake twitter account trying to make the threats appear as if they were coming from a white person.[243]

After a wave of threats to Jewish Community Centers across the United States raised concerns that neo-Nazism was on the rise, a Jew was arrested for making them.[244] Other Jews have been caught painting swastikas on their own homes in order to fake hate crimes.[245] Swastikas have even been spray painted on synagogues by Jews for the same reason.[246] These kinds of hoaxes seem as if they're a plot out of a cheesy 1980s TV crime drama, but they have been thoroughly documented by police for years. One has to wonder how many more hate crime hoaxes don't get exposed because of undiscovered evidence which would prove they too are fake.

The 'victimhood is virtue' mindset of liberals has created an Oppression Olympics of sorts, where people find value in being a member of a group that is supposedly under attack or marginalized due to their race, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Organizations like the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League are often seen as money making schemes that exaggerate the kinds of 'threats' they claim to monitor in order to justify their ongoing fundraising efforts. One ADL operative named James Rosenberg was actually caught posing as a right-wing extremist who worked as an agent provocateur, attending white supremacist rallies in order to presumably rile up the attendees to make them look violent.[247]

The Southern Poverty Law Center is the organization that routinely labels conservatives "racists," "sexists," "homophobic," "bigots," "anti-government," and claims they're members of "hate groups." Radical Islamic groups are never included on their "hate watch" articles, only 'anti-Muslim' ones, and 'right-wing extremists.'[248] They also ignore and have even censored reports of anti-white racism and hate crimes against white people.[249]

Many see the SPLC as just a way for its founder, Morris Dees, to make easy money through tax-exempt donations. He pays himself a six-figure salary from the organization which helped him build a luxury 200-acre estate, complete with tennis courts, a swimming pool and horse stables.[250] The president of another civil rights organization, the Southern Center for Human Rights, has called Morris Dees "a con man and a fraud" who "has taken advantage of naive, well-meaning people — some of moderate or low incomes — who believe his pitches and give to his $175-million operation."[251]

Well, that is a $175 million operation back in 2007. Since then, the Southern Poverty Law Center's wealth has skyrocketed. In 2015 alone they raised more than $50 million dollars and their IRS filing shows they have accumulated more than $328 million dollars in assets.[252] They have even transferred millions of dollars to offshore accounts in the Cayman Islands.[253]

It's ironic that an organization with the word 'poverty' in their name is stashing millions of dollars in offshore accounts, which may be why the SPLC's hometown newspaper, *The Montgomery Advertiser*, even said they exaggerate the threats of hate groups in order to rake in millions of dollars in donations.[254]

Operation Mockingbird

No discussion about fake news would be complete without a thorough examination of the CIA's Operation Mockingbird, which at first may sound like a conspiracy theory or the plot of a Hollywood thriller, but it is a very real and well-documented program that was exposed during a 1975 Congressional hearing called the Church Committee.[255] In the early 1970s there were widespread allegations that the CIA was involved in a variety of corrupt activities, including spying on American citizens, and even assassinating foreign leaders. The Church Committee was set up to investigate these reports and one of the surprising things they uncovered was that the CIA had been covertly spending millions of dollars a year to pay key figures at major news outlets to work as government propagandists and gatekeepers.[256]

The scope of Operation Mockingbird is staggering. Thomas Braden who helped lead the program, admitted, "If the director of the CIA wanted to extend a 'present,' say, to someone… suppose he just thought, this man can use fifty thousand dollars ($250,000 adjusted for inflation today), he's working well and doing a good job — he could hand it to him and never have to account to anybody... There was simply no limit to the money it could spend and no limit to the people it could hire and no limit to the activities it could decide were necessary."[257]

Such reporters could be considered to be members of the Deep State, using their position of influence to serve intelligence agencies rather than their news agency or their readers. These were people who would also be given classified information to leak to the public, a practice that still goes on today which we saw in the case of transcripts of President Trump's phone calls and those of his advisors being given to the press after they were intercepted, which is obviously a serious felony. [258]

During the initial investigation into Operation Mockingbird, a congressman asked William Colby, who was then the head of the CIA, "Do you have any people paid by the CIA who are working for television networks?" Colby responded, "This, I think, gets into the kind of details, Mr. Chairman, that I'd like to get into in executive session."[259] Executive session, meaning a closed session with only a handful of senators who were authorized to have access to classified information.

Despite the CIA's attempts to contain the details and scope of the program, a lot of information was revealed, but many investigators believe that the full extent of Operation Mockingbird was never made public, and insist that the Church Committee's hearings were just a "limited hangout," meaning despite *some* damaging revelations, the true nature and scope of the program remained classified. Former Special Assistant to the Deputy Director of the CIA, Victor Marchetti, said that limited hangouts are used by the CIA, "When their veil of secrecy is shredded and they can no longer rely on a phony cover story to misinform the public," so "they resort to admitting — sometimes even volunteering — some of the truth while still managing to withhold the key and damaging facts in the case. The public, however, is usually so intrigued by the new information that it never thinks to pursue the matter further."[260]

Frank Wisner, who led the Office of Strategic Services which would later become the CIA, called Operation Mockingbird the "Mighty Wurlitzer" after the Wurlitzer jukebox because he and his operatives could get the media to "play any tune" they wanted.[261] The Church Committee also uncovered assassination plots, a frozen poison dart gun built by the CIA for such operations, poison pen letters, and other shocking activities which was actually their primary objective. Discovering the CIA's media manipulation was an unexpected side effect.

Covert Relationships With the United States Media

The Church Committee's final report on the investigation admits, "the Central Intelligence Agency has used the U.S. media for both the collection of intelligence and for cover,"[262] and that, "The CIA maintained covert relationships with about 50 American journalists or employees of U.S. media organizations. They are part of a network of several hundred foreign individuals around the world who provide intelligence for the CIA and at times attempt to influence opinion through the use of covert propaganda. These individuals provide the CIA with direct access to a large number of foreign newspapers and periodicals, scores of press services and news agencies, radio and television stations, commercial book publishers, and other foreign media outlets."[263] Notice they stressed 'foreign' outlets, which was just a diversion. The program was very much a domestic operation as well.

Shortly after Operation Mockingbird was exposed George Bush senior, then director of the CIA, issued a statement saying that, "The CIA will not enter into any paid or contractual relationship with any full-time or part-time news correspondent accredited by any United States news service, newspaper, periodical, radio or television network or station [anymore]."[264]

The CIA also claimed, "As soon as feasible, the Agency will bring existing relationships with individuals in these groups into conformity with this new policy. CIA recognizes that members of these groups (U.S. media and religious personnel) may wish to provide information to the CIA on matters of foreign intelligence of interest to the U.S. Government. The CIA will continue to welcome information volunteered by such individuals."[265]

The Church Committee report noted that, "Of the approximately 50 U.S. journalists or personnel of U.S. media organizations who were employed by the CIA or maintained some other covert relationship with the CIA at the time of the announcement, fewer than one-half will be terminated under the new CIA guidelines."[266]

It goes on to say, "About half of the some 50 CIA relationships with the U.S. media were paid relationships, ranging from salaried operatives working under journalistic cover, to U.S. journalists serving as 'independent contractors' for the CIA and being paid regularly for their services, to those who receive only occasional gifts and reimbursements from the CIA…More than a dozen United

States news organizations and commercial publishing houses formerly provided cover for CIA agents abroad. A few of these organizations were unaware that they provided this cover."[267]

The report also admits, "While the CIA did not provide the names of its media agents or the names of the media organizations with which they are connected, the Committee reviewed summaries of their relationships and work with the CIA."[268]

During the Church Hearings, the CIA claimed they never tried to engage in any "clandestine use of staff employees of U.S. publications which have a substantial impact or influence on public opinion,"[269] but this is an obvious lie and the report whitewashed such actions as "fallout" which they described as unintended and incidental 'side effects' of their propaganda, which they admitted was spread through the U.S. media, not just the foreign press.

They said this "fallout" in the United States was, "inevitable and consequently permissible" and that "there is no way to shield the American public from such 'fallout.'"[270] As a former senior official of the Agency said in his testimony, "If you plant an article in some paper overseas, and it is a hard-hitting article, or a revelation, there is no way of guaranteeing that it is not going to be picked up and published by the Associated Press in this country."[271]

The report also admitted, "The domestic fallout of covert propaganda comes from many sources; books intended primarily for an English-speaking foreign audience, press placements that are picked up by international wire services, press services controlled by the CIA, and direct funding of foreign institutions that attempt to propagandize the United States public and Congress."[272]

Even if they aren't officially paying reporters anymore (which is most likely a complete lie), the fact is that they openly invited reporters and executives to work with the CIA "voluntarily," and the report admits that this relationship would be of a great benefit to the careers of journalists who take them up on that offer.[273] The report also admitted that CIA propaganda "contaminating" U.S. media ('fall-out' as they called it), "occurs in virtually any instance of propaganda use," and that "it is truly impossible to insulate the United States from propaganda fallout."[274]

It goes on to say, "The fallout problem is probably most serious when the U.S. public is dependent on the 'polluted' media channel for its information on a particular subject…Another situation in which the effects of 'fallout' in the United States may be significant is that in which specialized audiences in the United States — area study specialists, for example — may unknowingly rely heavily on materials produced by, or subsidized by, the CIA."[275]

They even admitted that, "the propaganda effort had an impact on the American public and congressional opinion."[276] One example was the CIA paying $170,000 to create pro-Vietnam War propaganda magazines in the 1970s which were then distributed to American readers including the offices of all United States Congressmen and Senators."[277] The CIA funded magazine (which wasn't named) even sponsored American Congressmen to travel to Vietnam. The Church report admits that, "Through this institution the CIA engaged in propagandizing the American public, including its Congress, on the controversial issue of U.S. involvement in Vietnam."[278]

The report even noted, "The CIA recognizes that it risks seriously misleading U.S. policymakers,"[279] and that their propaganda, "might influence the thinking of senior U.S. officials or affect U.S. intelligence estimates," and "No mechanism exists to protect the U.S. public and the Congress from fallout from black propaganda or any other propaganda."[280]

The CIA also secretly ran various newspapers in foreign countries to take their propaganda to a whole new level and provide cover for CIA operatives. One paper was *The Daily American* in Rome which was used by the Agency to help influence Italy's electorate.[281] Operation Mockingbird also funded the publishing of various books, although they refused to mention which ones.

Former CBS president Sig Mickelson was later asked if he thought despite these revelations the CIA was still covertly working with reporters, and he answered, "Yeah, I would think probably, for a reporter it would probably continue today, but because of all the revelations of the period of the 1970s, it seems to me a reporter has to be a lot more circumspect when doing it now or he runs the risk of at least being looked at with considerable disfavor by the public. I think you've got to be much more careful about it."[282]

It's interesting to point out that CNN's Anderson Cooper interned for the CIA during the summer after his sophomore year of college, and again the following summer while he was attending Yale University, a hotbed of the CIA.[283] Radar Online reported in 2006 that, "Anderson Cooper has long traded on his biography, carving a niche for himself as the most human of news anchors. But there's one aspect of his past that the silver-haired CNN star has never made public: the months he spent training for a career with the Central Intelligence Agency."[284]

Cooper then confirmed his connections with the CIA in a blog post on CNN's website and said he decided not to talk about it publicly until Radar contacted CNN telling them they were going to publish their story and were looking for a comment.[285]

More Operation Mockingbird Revelations

Carl Bernstein, who worked for *The Washington Post* when he blew the lid off the Watergate scandal which led to the resignation of President Nixon in 1974, became an instant icon in the news business and gained a reputation for his continued investigations into government corruption and abuse of power. A few years after his Watergate bombshell he left *The Washington Post*, and for six months investigated the CIA's relationship with the press, leading to a cover story in *Rolling Stone*.[286]

While the Church Committee was reluctant to name names and news agencies, he certainly wasn't. He named some of the papers and reporters who had cooperated with Operation Mockingbird, including people at *The New York Times, Newsweek, Time, The New York Herald Tribune, The Associated Press,* and even his former employer, *The Washington Post;* although he did defend the paper saying that the publisher (Katherine Graham at the time) and the managing editors were unaware of the operation and claimed only "stringers" were involved. Was he protecting his former employer, or treating his investigation into them with kid gloves? While that is likely the case, it's also possible he was just in denial about their involvement, but his *Rolling Stone* story was still packed with information not mentioned at all during the Church Hearing.

Bernstein wrote, “Journalists provided a full range of clandestine services — from simple intelligence gathering to serving as go-betweens with spies in Communist countries. Reporters shared their notebooks with the CIA. Editors shared their staffs…CIA documents show journalists were engaged to perform tasks for the CIA with the consent of the managements of America’s leading news organizations.”[287]

He pointed out that part of the operation included using journalists to “aid in the recruitment and ‘handling’ of foreign nationals who are channels of secret information reaching American intelligence.”[288] He continued, “Many journalists were used by the CIA to assist in this process and they had the reputation of being among the best in the business. The peculiar nature of the job of the foreign correspondent is ideal for such work: he is accorded unusual access by his host country, permitted to travel in areas often off-limits to other Americans, spends much of his time cultivating sources in governments, academic institutions, the military establishment and the scientific communities. He has the opportunity to form long-term personal relationships with sources and — perhaps more than any other category of American operative — is in a position to make correct judgments about the susceptibility and availability of foreign nationals for recruitment as spies.”[289]

He goes on, “The tasks they performed sometimes consisted of little more than serving as ‘eyes and ears’ for the CIA; reporting on what they had seen or overheard in an Eastern European factory…On other occasions, their assignments were more complex: planting subtly concocted pieces of misinformation; hosting parties or receptions designed to bring together American agents and foreign spies; serving up ‘black’ propaganda to leading foreign journalists at lunch or dinner; providing their hotel rooms or bureau offices as ‘drops’ for highly sensitive information moving to and from foreign agents; conveying instructions and dollars to CIA controlled members of foreign governments.”[290]

Bernstein even explained how unsuspecting journalists were recruited for the program. “Often the CIA’s relationship with a journalist might begin informally with a lunch, a drink, a casual exchange of information. An Agency official might then offer a favor — for example, a trip to a country difficult to reach; in return, he would seek nothing more than the opportunity to debrief the reporter afterward. A few more lunches, a few more favors, and only then might there be a mention of a formal arrangement — ‘That came later,’ said a CIA official, ‘after you had the journalist on a string.’”[291]

Could this explain how *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* keep getting classified information leaked to them in order to damage the Trump administration? Are they willing servants of the Deep State trying to bring down the president by any means necessary? Senator Chuck Schumer once gave an ominous warning to President Trump when he said that the intelligence agencies have “six ways from Sunday to get back at you,” if they don’t like what he’s doing.[292]

Bernstein quotes one CIA official as admitting, “In return for our giving them information, we’d ask them to do things that fit their roles as journalists but that they wouldn’t have thought of unless we put it in their minds.”[293] This was all informal and unofficial. The “formal recruitment” of reporters, Bernstein says, only occurred after they had been vetted with background checks to ensure they could be trusted as “agents of the government.” Journalists being considered had to sign non disclosure agreements before the offer was even made, and Bernstein quotes an unnamed former assistant to the CIA Director as saying, “The secrecy agreement was the sort of ritual that got you into the tabernacle." David Atlee Phillips, a former CIA chief operations officer himself, admitted that more than 200 journalists had signed non disclosure agreements with the CIA, which Bernstein described as making up a "good old boy" network that "constituted something of an establishment elite in the media, politics and academia," who wrote "propaganda for CIA proprietary publications."[294]

Once uncovered during by the Church Committee the CIA tried to paint Operation Mockingbird as something that only functioned to influence foreign press, but Carl Bernstein admits, "The CIA's use of the American news media has been much more extensive than Agency officials have acknowledged publicly or in closed sessions with members of Congress." He goes so far as to say, "The use of journalists has been among the most productive means of intelligence-gathering employed by the CIA."

CIA director William Colby admitted during the Church Hearing that "people in management" were involved, not just reporters, and that they helped the CIA with the program. And while Colby wouldn't name names, Carl Bernstein pointed to William Paley, who was President of CBS; Henry Luce, the founder of *Time* magazine; and Arthur Hays Sulzberger, the publisher of *The New York Times*, who actually admitted the CIA had him sign a non disclosure agreement.

At least ten employees at *The New York Times* were working as CIA assets or were actual CIA agents who the paper was providing a cover for, often in their foreign bureau. The CIA even had a training program in the 1950s which taught agents how to pretend to be journalists and were sometimes "placed in major news organizations with help from management."

It wasn't just newspapers of course, the Big Three television networks (NBC, CBS, and ABC) were involved as well. CBS provided "journalistic cover" for CIA employees and allowed their newsrooms to be monitored by the CIA. Bernstein says that in the 1950s and 60s CBS officials even met for an annual dinner with the CIA.

Sid Mickelson later admitted that when he became president of CBS, "I was told by Paley [CIA director] that there was an ongoing relationship with the CIA…He introduced me to two agents who he said would keep in touch. We all discussed the Goodrich situation [one of the undercover agents] and film arrangements. I assumed this was a normal relationship at the time. This was at the height of the Cold War and I assumed the communications media were cooperating—though the Goodrich matter was compromising."[295]

High-level CIA officials worked with "top management" of the news agencies to give agents working undercover as journalists assignments in foreign countries, according to Bernstein, and the CIA had, "some of the best-known correspondents in the business" as operatives using TV networks for "journalistic cover." He also noted that a reporter is the perfect cover for a CIA operative because it's a reporter's job to ask questions, investigate things, and travel around the world to do so.

Colby admitted that the agency had "some three dozen" American reporters, editors, or executives, "on the CIA payroll," including five who worked for "general-circulation news organizations."[296] William Bader, who supervised the Senate committee's investigation, admitted that there were CIA officers at management levels in major media companies.[297] Malcolm Muir, *Newsweek's* former editor said, "Whenever I heard something that I thought might be of interest to

Allen Dulles, I'd call him up.... At one point he appointed one of his CIA men to keep in regular contact with our reporters."

The Church Hearing Was a Cover-Up

During the Church Hearings, then-CIA director William Colby tried to claim they weren't doing any of this anymore and downplayed the program saying it didn't work as well as they had hoped, but he was just whitewashing its effectiveness and many have said that even the Church Hearing itself was part of the cover-up.

For example, they didn't even question any of the journalists or executives who were working for the CIA. Why wouldn't they want to get major media executives and reporters on the witness stand to testify under oath about what they were doing? This should have been a key part of the investigation, but it wasn't. Why? Because they didn't want to dig that deep. They didn't want the extent of the program, and who was involved, to be known. The committee was compromised and limited their investigation to prevent the magnitude of what was happening from being made public.

Carl Bernstein wrote that the CIA "were able to convince key members of the committee that full inquiry or even limited public disclosure of the dimensions of the activities would do irreparable damage to the nation's intelligence-gathering apparatus, as well as to the reputations of hundreds of individuals."[298]

At the time of the Senate investigation George Bush senior was the director of the CIA and pressured members of the committee, and successfully persuaded them to essentially whitewash the investigation. The CIA refused to turn over documents about which journalists were working for them, and only gave the Committee rewritten summaries of documents, all of which had the names of journalists and media executives removed. Most of the documents they did turn over were about foreign journalists on foreign soil, giving the false impression that such thing wasn't happening in America.

Speaking of the Church Committee's final report, Senator Gary Hart said, "It hardly reflects what we found. There was a prolonged and elaborate negotiation [with the CIA] over what would be said."[299] In other words, it was a whitewash — just another limited hangout with *some* damning information, but as usual, the full truth would remain hidden. Most people are completely unaware of the Church Committee today, and if they were told about Operation Mockingbird, would just think it's a conspiracy theory, but as one unnamed Senator quoted in Carl Bernstein's *Rolling Stone* story says, "From the CIA point of view this was the highest, most sensitive covert program of all…. It was a much larger part of the operational system than has been indicated."

White House Correspondents' Dinner

The same reporters who are supposed to function as watchdogs over the White House are wined and dined every spring at the luxurious red carpet White House Press Correspondents' Dinner where they rub elbows and share some laughs with the very people they're supposed to be holding accountable for their actions. The name of the event implies that it would consist of reporters and media executives, but each year A-list Hollywood celebrities are among the most popular guests. Why would movie stars and sitcom actors be key fixtures at a dinner that's supposed to be for serious journalists covering the White House?

The event includes a professional comedian who cracks jokes about the current administration and the media's coverage of them, and also involves a scripted stand up routine by the current president who makes jabs at the press, and himself, as those in attendance appear to laugh at the fact that most politicians are liars and fail to deliver on the promises they made during their campaigns.

In 2004, just one year after the War in Iraq started, George W. Bush made some tasteless jokes about not finding the weapons of mass destruction that he and his administration had falsely claimed were there. While at the podium, a slide show of photos were put up on screen showing him bending over and looking under his desk in the oval office to which he then commented, "Those weapons of mass destruction have got to be here somewhere," earning him laughter and applause from the audience. "Nope, no weapons over there." Another photo was put up on the screen of him strangely looking at another part of his office as he said, "Maybe under here."[300] The audience loved it, laughing and applauding which is so bizarre because he was literally joking about the lies that led us to war. What happened to journalists being watchdogs and keeping those in power in check?

Senator John Kerry, who ran against Bush in the 2004 election, commented, "If George Bush thinks his deceptive rationale for going to war is a laughing matter, then he's even more out of touch than we thought. Unfortunately for the president, this is not a joke. 585 American soldiers have been killed in Iraq in the last year, 3,354 have been wounded and there's no end in sight. George Bush sold us on going to war with Iraq based on the threat of weapons of mass destruction. But we still haven't found them, and now he thinks that's funny?"[301]

At the 2010 dinner Barack Obama joked about killing people with drones which had become a controversial new topic since the technology was now being used to kill people with the remote control aircraft.[302] While much of the audience laughed, others who are not part of the elite White House press corps didn't think it was so funny. Alex Pareene at Salon wrote, "It's funny, because Predator drone strikes in Pakistan have killed literally hundreds of completely innocent civilians, and now the president is evincing a casual disregard for those lives he is responsible for ending by making a lighthearted joke."[303]

After the 2007 dinner, *New York Times* columnist Frank Rich claimed that the paper would stop attending the event, saying it is, "a crystallization of the press's failures in the post-9/11 era," and that it "illustrates how easily a propaganda-driven White House can enlist the Washington news media in its shows."[304]

The New York Times Washington bureau chief Dean Baquet later confirmed they would stop going, saying, "We came to the conclusion that it had evolved into a very odd, celebrity-driven event that made it look like the press and government all shuck their adversarial roles for one night of the year, sing together (literally, by the way) and have a grand old time cracking jokes. It just feels like it sends the wrong signal to our readers and viewers, like we are all in it together and it is all a game. It feels uncomfortable."[305]

While working for *Rolling Stone* magazine, Michael Hastings revealed that many journalists write "puff pieces" in order to cozy up with government officials hoping to gain or maintain access to them.[306] A column in *The Guardian* denouncing the White House Correspondents Dinner stated that "Journalism's job is to speak truth to power — not refill its glass and laugh at its jokes," and highlighted that in their view, "The celebrities sitting at almost every table of the Washington Hilton gave the distinct impression that both journalism and politics are now wholly beholden to the whims of the entertainment-industrial complex."[307]

In 2013 *New York Times Magazine's* Chief National Correspondent Mark Leibovich said that journalists in Washington D.C. have become a "celebrity class."[308] When asked why his paper doesn't have reporters attend the dinner, he said, "There's a level of self-congratulation and self-celebration and so forth that can be very, you know, somewhat at odds with the mood of the country and how people view the media. It did not feel like the right message to be sending to our readers to really be, you know, in such a chummy in sort of festive setting with the people we're covering."[309]

BuzzFeed, the clickbait bottom feeders of the Internet, whose articles mostly consist of a few lines of text accompanied by animated Gifs, were granted press credentials and a table at the White House Correspondents' Dinner, to give you an idea of how low the standards are for who they consider to be 'journalists.' The Huffington Post is also a member of the White House Press Corps and are granted access to the presidential daily briefings where they are allowed to ask the president or his press secretary direct questions.

It certainly is odd that the people who are supposed to function as watchdogs and keep administrations accountable are wining and dining with them. The inside jokes and the overall atmosphere of the dinner reeks of elitism and hypocrisy and is just one more example of the collusion between the top mainstream media outlets and the people they're supposed to hold accountable.

University of Texas Radio-Television and Film professor América Rodriguez points out, "The ownership of the national media system is centralized in very few hands. These owners, and the journalists they employ, in turn have close personal and professional relationships with the political elites of their respective nations. The interaction of these two factors — ownership concentration and the tight web of relations within the political elite — has created national news production processes intent on safeguarding privilege and status."[310]

The government is actually the most frequent source of news, so a cozy relationship between politicians and journalists further tarnishes the credibility of their reporting. One study showed 46% of stories from *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* originated from the government.[311] Another primary source of ‘news’ is from what’s been dubbed ‘churnalism,’ which is when news outlets use press releases sent by government agencies or corporations as the basis for stories and often report the information contained in them virtually verbatim.[312] The term refers to journalists quickly “churning out” stories from the information they mostly just take from press releases or news wires, often without even fact checking it or doing any original research.

Part of the churnalism problem comes from the constant pressure to continuously keep posting new content in our never-ending 24-7 news cycle. This leaves reporters little time to do original research or fact-check, because there is an urgency to “be first” to post a story in hopes of having it go viral so it drives a bunch of traffic to their website. A study by British journalist Nick Davies found that 80% of the stories in British newspapers were just rewritten wire copy and press releases.[313]

White House Press Corps Shakeup

The tone of the White House Correspondents’ Dinner dramatically changed when Donald Trump became president. As the first dinner of the Trump administration approached, *Vanity Fair* and *The New Yorker* announced that they would not be attending “in protest” because of the way Trump was treating the media.[314] Then sources within CNN and MSNBC revealed that those networks were considering boycotting the 2017 dinner as well.[315]

Then President Trump trumped the media again, and announced that *he* wasn’t going to go, breaking a long-held tradition of presidents attending, and instead held a rally to celebrate his first 100 days in office. “I’m treated very unfairly and very dishonestly by the press and I thought it was inappropriate to go this year. If I were treated even slightly fairly by the press I would have gone,” Trump said. “I thought it would be very disingenuous if I went. I thought it would be actually, in a certain way, dishonest if I went.”[316]

There were other changes regarding White House press correspondents now that Trump was in office. The Trump administration had considered moving the White House press briefing to another location so they could include more reporters since the briefing room is rather small. One location considered was the White House Conference Center, which is across the street from the White House, and another was the Old Executive Office Building which is right next door. The Establishment media cried about a ‘lack of transparency,’ even though this move would have expanded the number of reporters who had access to the president and the press secretary.

Then-Chief of Staff Reince Priebus said, “I know some of the folks in the press are uptight about this and I understand. The only thing that’s been discussed is whether or not the initial press conferences are going to be in that small press room. For the people listening to this that don’t know this, the press room that people see on TV is very, very tiny — 49 people fit in that press room.”[317]

He continued, “We had like 500 or 600 folks at the press conference last week so we started thinking, ‘if we can have more people involved [rather] than less people involved, that would be a good thing’ — that’s what this is about.”[318] They decided not to move locations, but came up with a way to include more reporters by allowing them to call in on Skype, the video conferencing service from anywhere in the country.[319]

After the very first press briefing of the Trump administration the liberal media were complaining that the first outlets called on to ask questions weren’t CNN, or *The Washington Post*, but instead the *New York Post*, and then the second question went to the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), and the third went to Univision, the Spanish-language network.

CNN’s Jim Acosta even went on air and complained about the seating arrangement at one of the president’s press conferences since he was placed in one of the back rows, saying it was the equivalent of being sent to Siberia.[320]

“If you’re legacy media and have been trading on that access for decades, when the new guy comes in and gets your access, it’s enraging,” said Sean Davis, a co-founder of The Federalist. “This is legacy outlets acting like an entitled monopoly or a cartel when someone new comes in and does the job better than they do.”[321]

The liberal media kept crying about Trump not calling on them enough during his press conferences. Politico complained, “President Donald Trump on Wednesday continued his streak of calling only on conservative-leaning outlets at his bilateral press conferences with foreign leaders,” saying, “During his press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Wednesday afternoon, Trump called on David Brody of the Christian Broadcasting Network and Katie Pavlich, the editor of TownHall.com.”[322]

As I’m sure you recall, CNN’s Jim Acosta was acting more like a protester than a reporter during one press conference, literally yelling at the president and interrupting him, causing Trump to point at him and declare, “You are fake news!” Maybe someone should tell CNN that the First Amendment’s protection of the Freedom of the Press means that the government won’t shut down media outlets by forcing them out of business, it doesn’t guarantee that the president or his press secretary has to invite them to the White House or answer their questions.

Liberal Bias Confirmed

It seems only the liberal media denies that there is a liberal bias problem in the media, but decades of studies and polls (not to mention common sense) have proven an overwhelming bias in their coverage of just about everything. A Harvard study analyzing the media coverage of President Trump's first 100 days in office found that 80% of it was negative.[323] Of course that was obvious to anyone old enough to pay attention during the election, but it was surprising that Harvard, a very liberal university, would actually investigate the matter.

The study analyzed reports from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal;* as well as CNN, CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox News, and even the BBC, and found the average coverage was 80% negative. Also not surprising was that CNN's coverage was 93% negative. Fox News, on the other hand, was shown to be 52% negative and 48 percent positive, which fits in almost perfectly with their trademarked slogan "Fair & Balanced." Professor Thomas E. Peterson, who conducted the study, said, "The nation's watchdog has lost much of its bite and won't regain it until the public perceives it as an impartial broker, applying the same reporting standards to both parties."[324]

This kind of slanted coverage is certainly nothing new. A famous study of liberal bias in the American media was conducted in 1986 and found that most journalists working for the major national news outlets were Democrats with liberal views on issues like gay rights, abortion, affirmative action, and welfare programs.[325] The study, later published in a book called *The Media Elite*, gathered its data by conducting surveys of journalists at the Big Three broadcast news networks (ABC, CBS, NBC), along with print outlets including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time,* and *Newsweek.*

It concluded that because liberals dominated most news organizations, their coverage reflected their political attitudes both consciously and unconsciously; even if they didn't think they were being biased because they unconsciously believed that their views were 'correct,' so in their minds they didn't see their coverage as biased at all.

A decade later in 1997, another major study of journalists was conducted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors and that found that 61% of reporters leaned Democrat, but only 15% leaned Republican.[326] 24% of those surveyed appeared to be independent.[327]

In 2002 a professor at Dartmouth College published his research on media bias in his book *Press Bias and Politics: How the Media Frame Controversial Issues*, which also showed that most mainstream media in America present liberal views in a more favorable light.[328]

Another study in 2005 by researchers at UCLA found a “strong liberal bias” at most mainstream media outlets with the exception of Fox News and *The Washington Times*.[329] A 2007 study at Harvard University also confirmed a liberal bias in television news.[330] They noted that as soon as the 2008 presidential campaign kicked off that, “Democrat Barack Obama, the junior Senator from Illinois, enjoyed by far the most positive treatment of the major candidates during the first five months of the year,” and that, “the press overall has been more positive about Democratic candidates and more negative about Republicans.” They calculated that in the first five months of the year just 12% of the coverage of John McCain, the Republican frontrunner, was positive.

In 2008 a study looked into political donations made by employees at NBC, ABC, and CBS and found that over one million dollars was given to the Democrat Party from 1,160 different people at those networks.[331] It also found that the Republican Party only received $142,863 from just 193 employees.[332] If you do the math, the Democrat Party got seven times as much money from people who worked at the Big Three networks, and six times as many employees donated to the Democrats vs. the Republicans.

After the study was published, NBC News surprisingly admitted, “Whether you sample your news feed from ABC or CBS (or, yes, even NBC and MSNBC), whether you prefer Fox News Channel or National Public Radio, *The Wall Street Journal* or *The New Yorker*, some of the journalists feeding you are also feeding cash to politicians, parties or political action committees.”[333]

A 2016 poll of the White House Press Corps revealed that of the 72 members, there were zero registered Republicans.[334] In 2017 the same poll found that there were only three.[335]

Wikileaks Reveals Reporters Working with Hillary Clinton

After Hillary’s campaign manager John Podesta got his emails hacked and they were published by Wikileaks, some of them showed various journalists actually coordinating with Hillary’s campaign. *New York Times* writer and CNBC anchor John Harwood gave Hillary Clinton “veto” power over what not to include in an interview with her.[336] Politico’s Glenn Thrush even called himself a “hack” and let John Podesta review parts of his story before it was published. “No worries. Because I have become a hack I will send you the whole section that pertains to you. Please don’t share or tell anyone I did this,” he said.[337]

Another reporter for *The New York Times* named Mark Leibovich also emailed the campaign parts of his interview with Hillary and asked if it was okay if he included them in his article.[338] In one of the emails the Clinton campaign named *New York Times* writer Maggie Haberman as someone who they said had “teed up stories” for them in the past and “never disappointed” them.[339]

Hacked emails from the DNC showed that CNN’s Donna Brazil gave Hillary Clinton debate questions in advance.[340] She initially denied doing such thing, but later apologized, saying, “sending those emails was a mistake I will forever regret.”[341]

The Wikileaks email dump also showed that Marjorie Pritchard of *The Boston Globe* coordinated with the Clinton campaign to determine when to publish an article for the maximum amount of positive exposure. “It would be good to get it in on Tuesday, when she is in New Hampshire,” Pritchard wrote. “That would give her a big presence on Tuesday with the piece and on Wednesday with the news story. Please let me know.”[342]

Another of the leaked emails from the DNC showed then-DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz emailed NBC’s Chuck Todd telling him that the negative coverage of Hillary Clinton “must stop” and asked to schedule a phone call to discuss the matter with him. He replied, agreeing to schedule a call.[343]

The Clinton campaign didn’t deny any of these emails were real, instead they just tried to deflect from the controversy by claiming ‘the Russians’ had hacked them in order to help Donald Trump.

When talking about Hillary Clinton, CNN’s Chris Cuomo admitted on air that, “We could not help her any more than we have... she’s got just a free ride so far with the media, we’re the biggest ones promoting her campaign,”[344] and Wolf Blitzer was seen for a brief moment dancing and drinking wine at the Democratic National Convention of 2016 after Hillary gave her big speech and was formally nominated as the Democrat Party’s candidate.[345]

So we know that the overwhelming number of news networks and their employees are liberal, but why? One theory is that the media industry was started by privileged elitists due to the high costs associated with the equipment needed to manufacture and distribute media. Television studios, cameras, editing bays, satellite uplinks, and broadcasting antennas have traditionally been very expensive. Not to mention the costs of printing presses and the infrastructure needed to deliver hundreds of thousands of newspapers per day.

Political commentator Noam Chomsky points out, “those who occupy managerial positions in the media, or gain status within them as commentators, belong to the same privileged elites, and might be expected to share the perceptions, aspirations, and attitudes of their associates, reflecting their own class interests as well. Journalists entering the system are unlikely to make their way unless they conform to these ideological pressures, generally by internalizing the values; it is not easy to say one thing and believe another, and those who fail to conform will tend to be weeded out by familiar mechanisms.”[346]

The Sun Valley Conference

Every time people talk about the mainstream media conglomerates secretly collaborating with each other, visions of smoke filled rooms and shadowy figures wearing expensive suits sitting around a table come to mind. While this may be an exaggerated expectation of a behind the scenes look at the issue, it isn't all that far from the truth.

Every July since 1983 a small group of media moguls, tech titans, investors, politicians, and intelligence agency insiders, all gather in the small town of Sun Valley, Idaho for a week of meetings to develop a consensus regarding policies for mainstream media, social media, and emerging communications technology. It is basically like the Bilderberg Group meeting for media, and since tech companies like Facebook, Twitter, Apple, and Google have become major players in the media industry, they all come together each year in Sun Valley trying to make sure no emerging platforms can threaten their power.

This is where industry leaders meet to buy up any small startups that have the potential to siphon off some of the market share from the dominant handful who are in control. It's also the place where they develop and agree upon new Orwellian terms of service, gate-keeping strategies, and censorship tactics for the major social media platforms to make sure certain voices and messages don't get too loud.

The conference is hosted by a mysterious investment bank headquartered on Fifth Avenue in New York City called Allen & Company which deliberately tries to avoid publicity, and for many years didn't even have a website. They were one of the underwriters for Google's initial public offering (IPO) in 2004 and did the same thing for Twitter when they went public in 2013. Allen & Company have a long history of brokering major media deals we all hear about, while keeping themselves largely out of the spotlight.

Fortune magazine once said, "To say the firm is unusual would be an understatement."[347] It's a privately held company so their financial records are not public like they would be if they were traded on the New York Stock Exchange like other major financial institutions. Who attends the Sun Valley Conference and what is discussed there is also confidential, but it is impossible for some of the high-profile attendees to stay under the radar.

"All the signs are well recognized," reports *The Idaho Mountain Express*, Sun Valley's local paper, which says it's obvious to the residents of the small town when the conference occurs: "The sudden parking of 50 sleek corporate jets at Friedman Memorial Airport in Hailey, the hiring of dozens of local escorts and baby-sitters for VIP families, the presence of celebrities such as TV's

Oprah Winfrey, Disney's Michael Eisner and Microsoft's Bill Gates, and the recent post-9/11 heavy security with Allen-imported guards."[348]

This is the place where Comcast agreed to acquire NBC Universal in 2009 — the parent company of NBC Broadcasting, Universal Pictures, DreamWorks, Syfy, E!, USA Network, Bravo, The Weather Channel, Telemundo, and many more. It's also where the America Online and Time Warner merger was negotiated, creating AOL Time Warner;[349] where Microsoft's merger with NBC was settled, forming MSNBC the 24-hour cable news channel; where Instagram and WhatsApp were bought by Facebook; where Microsoft bought LinkedIn; and where BET (Black Entertainment Television) was sold to Viacom, making the channel's founder Robert Johnson the first black billionaire in America.[350]

Viacom (which also owns MTV, Nickelodeon, Spike, VH1, Comedy Central, Paramount Pictures, and many more media assets) is responsible for turning BET from what was supposed to be a network about African American issues, into a ghetto-culture channel that airs rap videos and TV shows encouraging the very worst aspects of the black community. Co-founder Sheila Johnson later admitted that she was ashamed of what happened to BET after she and her husband Robert sold it to Viacom at the Sun Valley Conference.[351]

This is the place where new and promising media and tech companies (which are often one in the same now) are bought up by major media conglomerates like Viacom, Time Warner, CBS, Disney, News Corporation, and Comcast (also known as the Big Six media monopolies) which work together to buy any new emerging tech companies, social media platforms, news websites or apps which they feel could grow into threats to their oligarchy.

While the meeting receives little press coverage, *The New York Times* once admitted, "Yes, high-net-worth individuals, many of whom have their hands on the levers of the media and entertainment economy, gather in one place, and business is undoubtedly being conducted. But anything noteworthy takes place out of view. In fact, much is out of view."[352]

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, Microsoft founder Bill Gates, Apple's CEO Tim Cook, the founders and CEOs of Google, YouTube, Yahoo, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and most of the top names in tech and social media startups, are all there.[353] While it may not seem all that strange to have an annual gathering of the top names in media and tech, what is strange is the fact the heads of U.S. intelligence agencies are also in attendance. When he was director of the CIA, George Tenet was the Sun Valley keynote speaker in 2003 and again in 2005.[354] And after he retired from the Agency, he still regularly attends.[355] When General David Petraeus was the director of the CIA, he too attended, as is customary for the head of the Agency each year.[356]

Why would the head of the CIA be meeting with the CEOs of all the top tech and media companies? In her book *The CIA in Hollywood*, media analyst Tricia Jenkins notes, "The purpose of the meeting is to discuss collective media strategy for the coming year."[357] This likely involves lobbying the tech giants to include back doors in their software to enable the U.S. intelligence agencies to spy on users, and to censor some information being distributed through the platforms which is deemed to have 'national security' implications, and so the government can covertly monitor (and manipulate) the data these megalithic corporations control.[358]

Considering the history of the CIA covertly influencing and censoring major news media through Operation Mockingbird (and their Entertainment Liaison Office overseeing the production of major blockbuster movies and television shows with the purpose of using them as covert containers for propaganda) combined with their mass-surveillance of American citizens; their involvement with the Sun Valley Conference should be of great concern to everyone.

[Author’s Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com or wherever you purchased it from to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them. Almost all of the one-star reviews on my books are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent, hence me adding this note. These fraudulent ratings and reviews could also be part of a larger campaign trying to stop my message from spreading by attempting to tarnish my research through fake and defamatory reviews, so I really need your help to combat this as soon as possible. Thank you!]

The New Media

There was a time not long ago when posting comments on Internet forums or chat rooms was seen as something that only computer geeks or people living in their mothers' basements did, but beginning around 2005 with the creation of MySpace, this kind of activity started becoming mainstream and would soon virtually takeover most aspects of our lives. MySpace became a thing of the past as people moved over to Facebook, and then Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat came on the scene. Today most people feel they need to have social media accounts, not just to communicate with their friends, but to share their views and opinions with the world hoping to get some 'likes' 'retweets' and new followers.

In 2005 YouTube gave anyone the equivalency of having their own cable TV channel for free, and would soon begin paying people for posting videos by putting advertisements on them. Soon many channels grew to sizes not only rivaling major television networks, but completely eclipsing them, and a new form of celebrity emerged known as YouTubers.[359]

Once these new social media/tech companies included trending lists and hashtags, countless people began feeding the monster constantly, hoping to get noticed for a witty joke or a controversial comment on what's going on. The trending boxes would start compiling lists of the most talked about topics, giving people an insight into what were supposedly the things being posted about the most.

Many people stopped going to websites directly which were often "bookmarked" in their browser as a sort of "favorites" list, and instead started following the accounts of people, businesses, television shows, etc., on social media. This made companies like Facebook and Twitter a "middleman" which now stands in between people and the websites they used to visit directly by typing in the URLs. Because of the simplicity of aggregating so many different websites, these social media companies have left people vulnerable to an array of censorship and manipulation by these powerful new middlemen. In the next few chapters we'll take a look specifically at Facebook and Twitter and see how they can, *and do,* manipulate and censor information for political reasons and to subtly shift the opinions of users; and we'll discuss the near limitless ramifications and dystopian possibilities this kind of manipulation has.

Most people don't consider the complexities and dangerous precedents that have been set by relying on a handful of mega corporations for the distribution of information, or the risks of allowing themselves to become vulnerable to their ambiguous and agenda-driven terms of service which dictate what is supposedly 'hate speech' or 'harassment.'

Studies show that the majority of people engage in self-censorship when posting online because they don't want their accounts to get shut down or have someone contact their employer about what they have said if it is deemed ‘politically incorrect’ which could put their job or entire career at risk.[360]

Tech companies are changing so rapidly that in just a few years Twitter went from a website where people posted tweets (brief 140 character-max statements), to a place to watch live football games and news. In 2016 Twitter signed a deal with the NFL to live stream games, and over 2 million people began watching that way.[361] Twitter is also developing a 24-hour live news network by partnering with Bloomberg News and signed deals with BuzzFeed for a morning show, The Verge, for a weekly tech show, and Cheddar for a daily financial show.[362]

Snapchat, which started out as an app for ‘sexting’ since the messages are ‘deleted’ after being viewed, has morphed into a multi-billion dollar media company as well, partnering with CNN, ESPN, BuzzFeed and dozens of other networks which produce original content for the app.[363] Snapchat is basically just like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, except the posts are automatically deleted after someone reads them once, or “expire” after a short period of time once they’re posted. This is why on the campaign trail Hillary Clinton joked about having just opened an account, saying, “I love it. Those messages disappear all by themselves,” referring to her trying to wipe her illegal personal e-mail server clean before handing it over to the FBI during their investigation into her using it to send and receive classified material.

Even Amazon.com, once only a bookstore, is now producing original television series and films through Amazon Studios. CEO Jeff Bezos is now attending the Golden Globes and the Oscars for producing films and television shows like *Manchester by the Sea*, *Transparent*, and *The Salesman*.[364] Netflix also evolved from just a streaming service to producing original content; YouTube is producing original shows now, and both Facebook and Apple have jumped into the content producing business as well.[365]

Because of this, a record number of people are canceling their cable subscriptions. There were 1.4 million fewer people subscribing to cable TV in the first quarter of 2017 compared to the previous year.[366] These people have been called “cord cutters,” and with Netflix and Hulu offering On Demand streams of shows from major networks, and HBO now having their own app, more people are abandoning traditional cable TV.

Even with all these new technologies and methods people are using to get their information, those who control them aren’t without their biases. *New York Observer* writer Liz Crokin decided to investigate Apple’s liberal bias, so she set up an Apple News account on her iPhone and immediately noticed that her news feed was predominately liberal and anti-Trump. “Of all the channels listed in the Apple News politics section, only two of the 16 arguably lean right — the rest are reliably left-wing,” she wrote.[367]

Of course, Apple CEO Tim Cook openly supported Hillary Clinton’s campaign and held fundraisers for her, including a $50,000 a plate dinner, and is a big promoter of the liberal agenda.[368] More liberal bias can be seen on iTunes. For example, the pro-Trump podcast, *MAGAPod* was labeled with an “explicit” warning, simply because the show is pro-Trump. It was only after this bias began making headlines that iTunes removed the explicit warning from the podcast.[369]

Even Apple’s App Store is problematic. They refused to publish a satirical Hillary Clinton e-mailgate game called *Capitol HillAwry* claiming it was “offensive” and “mean spirited,” but had approved dozens of games targeting Donald Trump. One such game is called *Dump Trump*, which depicts him as a giant turd; and even *Punch Trump* and *Slap Trump* games where players assault Donald Trump for points were approved.[370] Breitbart published an article exposing this bias, and a few days later Apple decided to finally allow the Hillary Clinton game to be included in the App Store.[371] Apple (and Google) have rejected the Twitter alternative Gab app several times, claiming that people use it to post, "content that could be considered defamatory or mean-spirited."[372] The real reason is that Gab isn't following in line with Silicon Valley's social justice warrior agenda. Apple has also banned apps that use the image of Pepe the Frog, a cartoon character often used in pro-Trump memes.[373]

Instagram has been shown to selectively ban certain topics and accounts as well.[374] They have even deleted several of my posts claiming they were violations of their terms of service. One in which I called singer Lana Del Rey a "skank," and another which consisted of a meme showing a nice white family with the caption, "White People: The only race you can legally discriminate against." After singer Rihanna posted fully topless photos of herself, her Instagram account was temporarily shut down for violating their nudity policy, but because she's a celebrity, they reinstated it.[375] The company even apologized for taking it down. Rappers like 50 Cent, Soulja Boy, and others have posted death threats on their Instagram accounts and the company doesn't suspend them.[376] But the account of a graffiti artist named Lushsux was banned after he posted photos of an anti-Hillary Clinton mural he painted which just consisted of her in a bikini.

"I don't want to sound like a conspiracy theorist with a tin foil hat, but the timing of the Hillary Clinton mural posting and the deletion that ensued can't just be a coincidence," he said.[377] The artist had previously posted photos depicting Donald Trump naked and Melania Trump topless, but those photos weren't censored by Instagram — only his anti-Hillary painting.

Facebook also regularly censors what people post and manipulates which of your friends' posts actually show up on your news feed.[378] If someone posts something that contains certain keywords that Facebook has determined they do not want to go viral for whatever reason, their algorithms filter it out and prevent the post from showing up.[379]

The social media giant openly admits they manipulate which posts are shown on our friends' news feeds, and even conduct experiments to determine how they can affect people's moods and behavior.[380] Twitter, as you will see in a following chapter, also censors certain hashtags, tweets, and trending topics. The censorship is sometimes subtle, but once you know how it works, it becomes as clear as day.

Twitter founder and CEO Jack Dorsey, and most of Twitter's top executives, are liberals and have repeatedly ignored calls for violence by anti-Trump accounts and Black Lives Matter supporters despite clearly violating the site's terms of service (not to mention the law).[381] There is also increasing evidence that Twitter is limiting the reach of popular controversial conservative accounts.[382] The site has also awarded verified accounts (the often-coveted blue checkmark) to many liberal trolls like racist and anti-police Black Lives Matter activists as well as LGBT and gender bending advocates.[383]

YouTube, as we will discuss in detail in a later chapter, isn't just a place where people upload their own videos, but is a huge media giant with an agenda other than being a place where independent content creators can share their work. YouTube chooses which videos will show up on their home page, on the "trending" box, and in the "recommended" section, which result in a flood of new views; and the company admits that they suppress and censor videos which they deem to contain "controversial" messages.[384]

A video that few people had noticed with hardly any views can quickly go viral by a moderator adding it to the trending tab. YouTube has also been accused of censoring certain channels by preventing notifications from showing up when a new video is uploaded and keeping certain channels' videos from appearing in the trending section at all.

YouTube regularly includes little rainbow graphics to promote LGBT events and features LGBT pride videos,[385] and even once secretly flew dozens of little-known black YouTubers to their headquarters in California for private mentoring and seminars to help them grow their channels.[386] Black Lives Matter 'leader' Deray McKesson was there to give the keynote address, and other speakers included Russell Simmons and comedian Wanda Sykes. The event was dubbed "YouTube BLACK."

Barack Obama appeared on the national stage at the same time social media was rapidly integrating into people's lives, and having a Facebook page was becoming almost as standard as having a telephone. His inner circle of political operatives could see the communication landscape was changing, and they jumped on it immediately. Obama was seen as the first "social media president" and was the first president to have a Facebook page and a Twitter account.[387] The White House would later get its own YouTube channel.[388]

Since people are no longer limited to getting their information from the major news networks, and as our society rapidly moved away from newspapers and magazines to online websites, blogs, and social media pages — not only did these new media monopolies begin manipulating the flow of information that users were posting and viewing, but cunning individuals within the government looked for opportunities to manipulate users of this new technology as well.

An executive in the Obama administration recommended that the government pay online trolls to flood the comment sections on websites and videos in attempts to discredit certain posts deemed "conspiracy theories" or "extremist." Cass Sunstein, who headed up the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs for Obama, wrote that such a plan "will undermine the crippled epistemology of believers by planting doubts about the theories and stylized facts that circulate within such groups, thereby introducing beneficial cognitive diversity."[389]

A few years earlier a military intelligence officer and a defense analyst drew up a white paper discussing the growing popularity of blogs and independent news websites and explored, "the possibility of incorporating blogs and blogging into military information strategy, primarily as a tool for influence."[390] The paper, *Blogs and Military Information Strategy*, also floated the idea of hiring bloggers to attack people and promote certain causes.[391] It also suggested the government hack popular blogs and make subtle changes in articles, not to just spread propaganda, but to discredit the writers.

"Hacking the site and subtly changing the messages and data — merely a few words or phrases — may be sufficient to begin destroying the blogger's credibility with the audience," it says.[392]

These tactics were proposed before the social media era, which took the information age to a whole new level of user interactions through Internet comments as people began to rely on these apps and websites to communicate with their friends, family, and total strangers. It's now how most people interact with the outside world, slipping further away from actual interpersonal interactions and embracing parasocial relationships with YouTubers who are their virtual friends, playing hashtag games and spending hours on end scrolling through Instagram or Snapchat posts reading comments and posting replies in what amounts to a historic waste of time.

Social media is filled with fraud, posers, D-list celebrities with fake followers, and people who get paid to post about how much they supposedly like certain products in what's called "influence marketing." Kim Kardashian can get paid tens of thousands of dollars just to tweet something about a product or post a picture of something on Instagram.[393] The Federal Trade Commission has started to crack down on these influence marketers because it is illegal to not disclose that a tweet, Instagram post, or a product endorsement in a YouTube video is a paid promotion.[394] In a TV commercial, viewers know the celebrity is getting paid to talk about a product, but if someone on Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube posts about how 'great' a product is, nobody knows if they just want to tell their followers about something they think is cool, or if it's a commercial.

An investigation into the official Obamacare Facebook page in 2014 found that the majority of the over 226,838 comments were from just a small handful of users who were most likely paid shills to give the false impression that everyone loved the new law.[395] Barack Obama's "nonprofit" Organizing for Action declined to comment if they were paying people to post, but it's clear from the extraordinary number of posts from the same few accounts that this was an organized online campaign.[396]

The government actually paid WebMD, the popular health and medical website, $14 million dollars to promote Obamacare.[397] Those payments weren't even kept secret and were listed in the budget of the Department of Health and Human Services. A private foundation called the California Endowment even paid $500,000 to television networks to incorporate pro-Obamacare plot lines into TV sitcoms and other shows.[398]

All of this makes for a fascinating and complex media landscape which is difficult to navigate without getting lost in an endless maze of hyperlinks, and millions of people and countless companies and organizations all simultaneously hoping to be seen, heard, followed, and believed.

In a rare interview Drudge Report founder Matt Drudge gave to Alex Jones in 2015, he warned people not to rely on Facebook and other social media companies to communicate with their friends, get your news from, or to build a business with because, "You're a pawn in their scheme."[399] To see what he is talking about let's take a closer and more specific look at several of the current top social media sites (Facebook and Twitter) to see how they can, and do, manipulate and censor what people post and what users see. And then we'll look at YouTube, Google, and Wikipedia to see how and why they do the same thing.

Facebook

Facebook slowly morphed from a website people could use to look up old friends from high school or college and share photos with family members, to a place where most people now get much of their news and keep up with current events. At one time Facebook only showed users what their ‘friends’ were posting, but that changed when they added the trending module — and with this simple little box they harnessed the power to introduce their one billion users to news stories that their friends hadn’t posted — stories the company feels users *should know* about, and overnight Facebook transformed from just a social networking site to a news company.

With this change, combined with the algorithms which filter out certain content people post by limiting its distribution, Facebook has become a powerful gatekeeper that can decide which stories will go viral, and which ones will remain virtually unknown. Facebook also poses a danger to free speech by policing and censoring what people post, and if something is deemed ‘too politically incorrect,’ then posts are automatically deleted and users may have their accounts completely shut down.

Most news websites now rely on Facebook for the majority of their traffic from users posting links to their articles. An Internet analytics firm showed that Facebook was responsible for driving 43% of web traffic to over 400 major sites in 2016.[400]

According to their study, in 2014 Facebook was responsible for 20% of all traffic to news sites, and in just two years that figure more than doubled as people became accustomed to scrolling through their Facebook feeds to see what articles their friends had posted and because they were now ‘following’ news websites on Facebook instead of bookmarking the websites in their Internet browser and visiting them directly.[401]

CEO Mark Zuckerberg has said one of his goals is, “To build the perfect personalized newspaper for every person in the world.”[402] Facebook even began hosting articles from major publishers so users who clicked on a link wouldn’t leave the Facebook ecosystem and could now view the content within Facebook’s app.[403]

The company wants to be the primary hub of the Internet, bypassing search engines and web browsers altogether.[404] For those who were using the Internet in the late 1990s and early 2000s, we recall most companies encouraging people to visit their websites at the end of their commercials, but those calls to action have been replaced by now encouraging people to follow them on Facebook instead, making Mark Zuckerberg one of the most powerful (and unnecessary) middlemen in the history of the Internet.

As the 2016 election approached, many media analysts and tech bloggers began to realize that with so many people relying on Facebook as their primary news aggregator, that the site could leverage their power hoping to influence the election. *New York Magazine* published an article which asked, “Could Facebook help prevent President Trump?” and went on to say, “Not through lobbying or donations or political action committees, but simply by exploiting the enormous reach and power of its core products? Could Facebook, a private corporation with over a billion active users, swing an election just by adjusting its News Feed?”[405]

Paul Brewer, a communications professor at the University of Delaware, said, “Facebook would, like any campaign, want to encourage turnout among the supporters of its preferred candidate, persuade the small number of genuinely uncommitted likely voters, and target apathetic voters who could be convinced to get out to the polls.”[406]

Josh Wright, the executive director of a behavioral science lab, also admitted, “There’s lots of opportunity, I think, to manipulate based on what they know about people.”[407] Wright pointed out how the site could fill people’s news feeds with photos or stories showing a particular candidate engaged in activities that Facebook knows they like in order to use “in-group psychology” to get people to identify with a candidate who shares some of their interests.

We tend to judge someone by what other people we like are saying about them, and so Facebook could highlight statements made by celebrities that people follow, or even our own friends, about a candidate in order to influence our opinion of that person. If you think Facebook wouldn’t engage in this kind of personalized high-tech manipulation, you would be wrong, because they already have.

A secret study Facebook conducted during the 2010 midterm elections, with help from researchers at the University of California, San Diego, investigated what’s called social contagion which is how behavior or emotions are copied by others. Facebook included over 60 million of their users in the experiment and found that they could influence people to actually get out and vote by showing people that their friends had voted, which then influenced others to go vote as well. “Our study suggests that social influence may be the best way to increase voter turnout,” said James Fowler, a UCSD political science professor who conducted the study. “Just as importantly, we show that what happens online matters a lot for the ‘real world.’”[408] Their experiment increased voter turnout by 340,000 people.[409]

Facebook obviously has a political agenda. They’ve hosted a Q & A for Barack Obama,[410] they hung a huge Black Lives Matter banner at their headquarters,[411] and Mark Zuckerberg has been very outspoken about his support of illegal immigration,[412] gay marriage,[413] and other liberal causes. The company conducts internal polls of employees where they submit questions and vote on them in hopes of getting Zuckerberg to answer, and one poll in March of 2016 showed that a bunch of employees asked if the company should be used to help prevent Donald Trump from winning the election.[414]

UCLA law professor Eugene Volokh told Gizmodo, “Facebook can promote or block any material that it wants. Facebook has the same First Amendment right as the New York Times. They can completely block Trump if they want. They can block him or promote him.”[415] Technically the First Amendment only prevents the U.S. government from suppressing someone’s speech, not a corporation.

Gizmodo’s report on the political bias of Facebook pointed out, “Most people don’t see Facebook as a media company — an outlet designed to inform us. It doesn’t look like a newspaper, magazine, or news website. But if Facebook decides to tamper with its algorithm — altering what we see — it’s akin to an editor deciding what to run big with on the front page, or what to take a stand on.”[416] Whether they are legally allowed to do such a thing is one issue, whether such favoritism and censorship is deceptive and immoral is another.

“If Facebook decided to,” professor Volokh says, “it could gradually remove any pro-Trump stories or media off its site — devastating for a campaign that runs on memes and publicity. Facebook wouldn’t have to disclose it was doing this, and would be protected by the First Amendment.”[417]

“If Facebook was actively coordinating with the Sanders or Clinton campaign, and suppressing Donald Trump news, it would turn an independent expenditure (protected by the First Amendment) into a campaign contribution because it would be coordinated — and that could be restricted,” he said. “But if they’re just saying, ‘We don’t want Trump material on our site,’ they have every right to do that. It’s protected by the First Amendment.”[418]

Censorship of Trending Topics

In May of 2016, tech blog Gizmodo confirmed what many had suspected and what was obvious to those with common sense — that Facebook was systematically suppressing news stories from conservative outlets and those which presented a positive conservative message.[419] “Facebook workers routinely suppressed news stories of interest to conservative readers from the social network’s influential ‘trending’ news section, according to a former journalist who worked on the project,” reported Gizmodo.[420]

The whistleblower revealed that the company suppressed stories about CPAC (the Conservative Political Action Committee conference), Mitt Romney, Rand Paul, and other topics from showing up on the trending module, even though they would have appeared there organically from so many people posting about them.

It wasn’t just one whistleblower, but several, and they also revealed that employees would manually insert topics into the trending list that they wanted to get more attention. One former employee said that positive stories about Black Lives Matter were often inserted into the trending box to help them go viral when they didn’t organically trend from people posting about them.[421]

“In other words,” Gizmodo reported, “Facebook’s news section operates like a traditional newsroom, reflecting the biases of its workers and the institutional imperatives of the corporation. Imposing human editorial values onto the lists of topics an algorithm spits out is by no means a bad thing — but it is in stark contrast to the company’s claims that the trending module simply lists ‘topics that have recently become popular on Facebook.’”[422]

They also called the news section “some of the most powerful real estate on the Internet” that helps dictate what hundreds of millions of people are reading. One of the news curators said they used a notebook to document stories that were censored which included ones about Lois Lerner, the IRS official who targeted conservatives for audits; stories about the Drudge Report, Ted Cruz, Steven Crowder, and more.

A second curator said, “It was absolutely bias. We were doing it subjectively. It just depends on who the curator is and what time of day it is. Every once in a while a Red State or conservative news source would have a story. But we would have to go and find the same story from a more neutral outlet that wasn’t as biased.”[423]

If a story was on Breitbart, *The Washington Examiner*, Newsmax or other conservative sites and was going viral and qualified to be included in the trending module, curators would wait until an outlet like CNN or *The New York Times* covered the story before it would be allowed to show up as a trend. One insider revealed that Facebook injected the latest Black Lives Matter protests into the trending module, giving them special preference to further their cause. The editors also prevented negative stories about Facebook itself from showing up in the trending section.

The very next day after the story broke about Facebook manipulating the trending topics list, the US Senate Commerce Committee, which oversees interstate commerce and communications, sent a letter to Mark Zuckerberg with a list of detailed questions demanding answers about who determines which stories are included in the Trending Topics section. They also wanted to know details about the process of selection, oversight, and wanting answers to the allegations of politically motivated manipulation.[424]

Mark Zuckerberg then invited several conservative media figures including Glenn Beck, Fox News host Dana Perino, Tucker Carlson, and others to Facebook’s headquarters to try and save face, prevent conservatives from abandoning Facebook, and to ‘talk about their concerns.’ But since our world moves so fast most people quickly forgot all about the scandal and continue to blindly believe that what they see trending is what people are talking about most, not even giving a second thought about the legitimacy what they are seeing.

“Boosting” Posts

Most people think that what they and their friends post (and what news sites they follow post), shows up in their feed unless they choose to hide posts from a user they are still following, but Facebook openly admits limiting the distribution of posts unless users pay them (in most cases hundreds of dollars for each post). It’s called “boosting” a post, and is mostly for people like me who have a “fan page” which is what all public figures, TV shows, news outlets, and bands use. It has a few more features than standard Facebook pages, such as not having to approve friend requests every time someone follows the page.

My page, at the time I'm writing this has about 500,000 followers. But each status update I post only shows up on a few thousand people's news feeds. This isn't some conspiracy, it's just a method Facebook uses to generate money by encouraging administrators of fan pages to "boost" their posts, or pay to have them actually show up in the feeds of people who are following the page. For administrators of "fan pages," when we post something, we are alerted with a button that says "boost this post" which takes us to a checkout page showing various prices and the corresponding number of people Facebook will then allow to see the post.

For example to boost a post so that it will reach at least 100,000 of the 500,000 people following my page, the cost is $4,000.[425] That's for *one* status update. I mention this because a lot of people wonder why they miss posts from pages they follow, and this is the reason. You may only be seeing one out of every four posts because of the limitation Facebook puts on the posts that aren't being "boosted."

Experimenting on Users

Aside from the previously mentioned secret study into Facebook's effectiveness of getting out the vote in the 2010 midterm elections by using 60 million users as unknowing guinea pigs,[426] Facebook has conducted other experiments on its users as well. In 2012 they manipulated the news feeds of 700,000 people by both limiting and boosting the number of positive and negative posts showing up in some people's feeds to determine whether they could alter their moods. They then monitored what those users posted to see if they were either more negative or positive as a result of what they were regularly seeing in their own feeds.[427] All Facebook users actually consent to this kind of manipulation by agreeing to the terms of service when they sign up.[428]

Leaked documents also revealed that Facebook experimented on what they considered to be emotionally vulnerable teenagers who felt "useless."[429] The documents show that the company's algorithms can determine which users are feeling "worthless," "insecure," "useless," "overwhelmed," and other depressed feelings, and then they use this assessment to allow advertisers to target those people with ads for products they think they will be able to get them to buy.[430]

Because of the continued instances of people committing horrific crimes while broadcasting them using Facebook's 'Live' feature, the company is developing an artificial intelligence system to watch live streams in real time, and monitor people's posts in order to remove any 'offensive' or violent content.[431] If their A.I. is able to monitor all posts and live streams in near real time, it opens the door for Orwellian censorship straight out of a science fiction film, because those who control the parameters for having content removed could choose to use the system to prevent the spread of certain political views, as we have already seen with the Trending Topics scandal.

In May of 2017, Facebook hired another 3000 people to monitor live streams, and other posts that are flagged for potentially violent or 'hateful' content in attempts to have such posts removed more quickly.[432] So there is now a virtual army of moderators ready to not just delete posts or videos, but to shut down livestreams if someone is talking about an issue in a way Facebook deems 'sexist,' 'racist,' 'homophobic,' or any number of buzzwords that indicate 'Thought Crime.'

A Threat to Free Speech

Relying on Facebook to communicate with friends and family has become a threat to free speech around the world as fewer people actually talk on the phone (let alone meet face to face). People are now being arrested for ‘hate speech’ for posting criticism about their government’s policies on Facebook.[433] This isn’t just happening in Third World countries or Orwellian dictatorships like Communist China or North Korea; it’s happening in England,[434] Scotland,[435] Germany,[436] Canada,[437] and other supposedly ‘free’ countries. Facebook also frequently deletes users’ posts and locks people out of their accounts (or deletes their accounts entirely) for posting statements critical of illegal immigration, the LGBT agenda, and other policies Leftists are pushing.

These alleged ‘terms of service’ violations aren’t for posting threats, they’re for simply criticizing the liberal agenda, or for using certain words that social justice warriors deem ‘hateful.’ This kind of Orwellian censorship is the equivalent of your phone company listening to every conversation you have, and then turning off your phone if they didn’t like what you were saying.

Facebook has deleted several of my posts and locked me out of my account for three days for such ‘violations’ after I criticized anti-white racism and a bizarre pro-transgender soap commercial. I expect that any day they may just delete my account altogether for what they will claim is a ‘serious violation’ of their terms of service.

When logging on one morning I was told, “We removed the post because it doesn’t follow the Facebook Community Standards,” and I found that Facebook had deleted a post I made that was critical of a Dove soap commercial featuring ‘Real Moms’ which included a transgender ‘woman’ holding ‘her’ new little baby, and the person ‘identified’ as the child’s ‘mother’ even though he was the biological father. All I did was post a link to a story about the commercial, along with the comment, “Excuse me now while I go grab some Irish Spring to clean up my puke,” a sarcastic joke, referencing Irish Spring, a competitor’s soap.[438]

People often call this being put in “Facebook Jail” which means you can’t log in or post anything for up to 30 days, depending on how many times you’ve been suspended for ‘violating’ their terms of service. Facebook has suspended people for simply posting Bible verses that are critical of homosexuality.[439] Other posts critical of illegal immigration, black crime, LGBT extremists, or radical Muslims are regularly deleted as well.[440]

Facebook employees have actually pressured Mark Zuckerberg to delete some of Donald Trump’s posts for violating their ‘hate speech’ rules for his stance on immigration.[441] Again, imagine the phone company canceling your service because they didn’t like what you and your friends talked about. That’s basically what Facebook and the other social media giants are doing by policing what people post and then shutting down their pages if they feel something is too ‘offensive’ or violates their terms of service.

Facebook quietly admits censoring content for the Chinese government.[442] The website was banned in China in 2009, so Facebook developed new censorship tools to appease the Communist government there, and so they allowed the website back.[443] The day before Prince William and Kate Middleton's wedding in the UK, Facebook suspended a bunch of pages of people and groups they suspected were going to 'cause trouble' during the event.[444] And Mark Zuckerberg has admitted working with various European countries in order to censor criticism of the mass influx of Muslims into Britain, France, Germany, and Sweden.[445]

Some are calling for Facebook (and other social media services, including search engines like Google) to be treated as public utilities.[446] One of the arguments is that using them in today's society is as necessary as having access to traditional utilities like the telephone, water, electricity, and natural gas.[447]

After the historic flooding in Houston after Hurricane Harvey in 2017, many victims took to social media begging to be rescued, posting their address and pictures of the rising floodwater, and many were rescued by local volunteers this way. One may argue that banning people from such sites could put lives at risk, and is one more reason Facebook, Twitter, and other social media services should be considered utilities that can't be shut off just because someone is posting things the companies don't agree with.

The Future of Facebook

Not only does Facebook want to be the middleman of all Internet traffic, but they're getting into commerce by enabling financial transactions, original content creation like Amazon and Netflix, and they hope to lead the virtual reality revolution. Mark Zuckerberg has even created flying solar-powered Wi-Fi routers to bring the Internet to remote parts of Africa,[448] and envisions a world where instead of physically going to a friend's house to watch a football game, everyone will stay at their own homes and put on their VR headsets to watch television 'together' while communicating with each other through avatars. They're calling it Facebook Spaces.[449]

If you're starting to think Facebook's vision of the future looks like something right out of *The Matrix*, you wouldn't be wrong. Zuckerberg himself says that in 50 years we'll all be "plugged into the Matrix" through his mind-reading machines and using virtual reality headsets as part of our daily lives. He said, "I think you're going to be able to capture a thought [and take] what you're thinking or feeling, in its kind of ideal and perfect form in your head, and share that with the world."[450]

Such themes have been explored in science fiction films like *Surrogates* (2009), *eXistenZ* (1999), and *The Thirteenth Floor* (1999), all of which warn about the dangers of this kind of society, but Zuckerberg is determined to make such thing a reality.

Twitter

Twitter is often the Internet's equivalent of a wall in a gas station's bathroom stall. Anonymous idiots write all kinds of garbage for the sole purpose of entertaining themselves for a few seconds by trying to shock those who read it. It's also a place for people to engage in hate-filled arguments with random people over the latest political or pop culture story that's trending. Twitter is also a way for people to try to get the attention of their favorite (or most hated) celebrities since many of them do engage with their fans there.

Unlike Facebook, (at least at the time I'm writing this) Twitter doesn't have a real name policy and thrives on users being able to remain anonymous so what they say can't be tied to them, where they live, where they work, or their picture. This anonymity encourages people to tweet the most vile, hateful, and threatening things they can imagine while hiding behind their computer (or phone).

Tweets consist of short statements that can't exceed 140 characters and thus Twitter is called a 'micro blogging' site. While people can post lengthy essays on Facebook, Twitter is mostly for very short, often very blunt statements, and is a very fast-paced social networking site with the flow of new tweets never ending.

Despite the mudslinging and constant trolling, somehow (at least at the moment) Twitter does have a measurable influence on our society. It is perhaps best known for what's trending on the site and was the first major social media platform to include a trending topics list. The trending box allegedly shows the list of the top 10 topics that people are tweeting about, and a look at it on any given day reveals what is most important to the people using Twitter. This is usually celebrity gossip, sports entertainment news, or tweets about the latest liberal causes or complaints. Often what's trending on Twitter then gets picked up by mainstream media as a topic they see of interest to report on.

Twitter has become a place where celebrities release public statements on whatever scandal they may be involved in, and random things they say are often turned into meaningless little stories on celebrity gossip sites. As you know, President Trump likes to tweet and often goes on 'Twitter rants' about the media, the Democrats, and Deep State operatives within the government trying to sabotage his administration.

The Trending Topics

As I covered in the previous chapter, Facebook was exposed for manipulating the trending topics box by not only censoring certain stories and topics from being included on the list, but also artificially inserting topics into the module that they wanted to promote.[451] And knowing what we know about technology and these major social media companies, it would be foolish to think that Twitter doesn't do exactly the same thing. In fact, in a now deleted tweet, a Clinton insider named Peter Daou tweeted to CEO Jack Dorsey asking him to remove "Words That Don't Describe Hillary" from trending, saying that Twitter was, "providing a platform for pure misogyny" by allowing it to stay on the trending list.[452]

When President Obama did a live Q & A with Twitter in 2015 using the hashtag #AskPOTUS [POTUS is short for President of the United States], the CEO asked his team to implement an algorithm to filter out "abusive" tweets that contained the hashtag.[453] A few years later they would roll out this feature for everyone, allowing people to manually input any words, phrases, usernames, and even emojis they want automatically filtered out from their feed.[454] The muting is even case sensitive. For example, you can now literally put the words "President Trump" in your filter, and if someone tweets at you a message that contains those words, you won't even see it.[455]

In June of 2015, when the Supreme Court ruled that gay marriage had to be accepted as legal in all 50 states, the hashtag #LoveWins was instantly trending and included a rainbow heart emoji.[456] Twitter automatically includes a custom emoji when certain hashtags are tweeted if the hashtag is sponsored by a company or an organization.[457] It appears that President Obama was one of the first people to start using the hashtag, showing that it (along with the custom 'gay' emoji) was preplanned.[458] Twitter even introduced a special Black Lives Matter emoji consisting of the "black power" fist the day after a Black Lives Matter activist shot twelve police officers, killing five of them in an ambush during one of the movement's marches.[459]

It's not just the top trending topics that are manipulated, but also their associated results. When you click on one of the top 10 topics, you are brought to a page that shows what people are led to believe are the top tweets or photos using those hashtags or words in a tweet. In theory, if a tweet has 5,000 likes, then it is one of the first tweets shown in the results for the topic, but this isn't actually the case. It has been documented that what Twitter features as the top results for various trending topics appear to be manipulated at times to cast them in a certain light.

For example when a secret service agent tackled a *Time* magazine photographer at a Trump campaign rally, a photo showing the photographer with his hand grabbing the throat of the agent was the top result connected to the trending topic "Secret Service," but that photo was later replaced by another one showing the photographer lying on the ground after having been tackled by the agent.[460]

A Trump rally in Chicago had to be canceled in March of 2016 because an angry mob of violent protesters were getting more out of control by the minute and local police advised the campaign to call off the event. That night "Trump Rally" was the top trend on Twitter, and when it first began trending, all of the top tweets included photos of a bloody police officer who had been smashed in the head with a bottle along with pictures of protesters blocking traffic, but those top results were soon replaced with pictures of KKK rallies and links to news articles attacking Trump.[461] Many people started tweeting the hashtags #TwitterCensorship or #TwitterCensoring as a result.

While Twitter remains silent on the issue, Instagram openly admits that they delete hashtags and censor certain search results in order to, as they claim, "hide inappropriate content."[462] Sometimes they just temporarily censor hashtags when a certain topic they feel is "inappropriate" becomes associated with a benign hashtag. It's not just NSFW (not safe for work) hashtags like #RussianMilf or #Cumfession, that they censor, it has also been hashtags like #Kansas, #AmericanGirl, and even #Brain.[463]

Hillary Clinton's campaign was accused of paying Twitter to inject the hashtag #BernieLostMe into the top trend hoping to erode support for Bernie Sanders during the primaries. The #BernieLostMe hashtag was number one despite having just a few thousand people tweeting it, while other topics that were ranked lower on the list had more than ten times as many people tweeting about them.[464] 'Influencers' are often chosen to simultaneously start tweeting hashtags as part of political propaganda campaigns because their fans will mindlessly follow their lead and can quickly cause certain topics to trend.

Twitter has also allowed disgusting topics to trend like, "Rape Melania,"[465] and #GoldenShowers.[466] The day President Trump was inaugurated, over 12,000 tweets called for his assassination and "Assassinate Trump" trended.[467] The same threats flooded Twitter the day after the election when unhinged liberals couldn't contain their violent hatred for the new president.[468]

President Trump on Twitter

President Trump's use of Twitter has been called the modern day equivalent of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's fireside chats, when he used the new media of his time — radio — to speak directly to the American people. We really take for granted how amazing most of our technology is today, and before FDR's fireside chats if someone wanted to listen to a president's speech, they had to actually be at an event in person. Instead of Donald Trump going to a radio station, or holding a press conference in the Rose Garden in front of all the different television cameras, he can just pick up his phone and type a message directly to his 30 million Twitter followers.

"Trump's tweets" have become legendary for their bluntness and controversial nature, but the power of him being able to get his message directly to people through Twitter instead of relying on television networks, radio stations, or newspapers to relay it, is truly remarkable. In an interview with *The Financial Times*, he said, "Without the tweets, I wouldn't be here…I have over 100 million followers between Facebook, Twitter [and] Instagram. Over 100 million. I don't have to go to the fake media."[469]

Twitter co-founder Evan Williams actually apologized for Twitter's role in getting out his message, and when asked about Trump crediting Twitter with helping him win the election, Williams responded, "It's a very bad thing, Twitter's role in that. If it's true that he wouldn't be president if it weren't for Twitter, then yeah, I'm sorry."[470]

Banning and Censoring Users

The most popular case of someone being banned from Twitter is when Breitbart's Milo Yiannopoulos was permanently banned after teasing *Saturday Night Live* cast member Leslie Jones about the new all-female remake of *Ghostbusters* which was derided by critics for its gratuitous pro-feminist agenda.[471] Milo tweeted Leslie a link to his review which was published on Breitbart, and the two went back and forth insulting each other.[472] Leslie Jones had her feelings hurt by Milo's 'trolling' which his followers joined in on, and tweeted, "I leave Twitter tonight with tears and a very sad heart. All this cause [sic] I did a movie. You can hate the movie but the shit I got today…wrong."[473]

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey responded to her saying "Hi Leslie, following, please DM me when you have a moment,"[474] trying to head off the bad PR of having another celebrity quit Twitter after getting tired of being trolled. Then, even though Milo hadn't threatened her, or used any language that's not commonplace on Twitter, his account was banned. Many were stunned by this because Twitter is mostly known for being a place to trash-talk others. Many saw the ban being politically motivated because Milo had become a vocal critic of social justice warriors and was becoming quite an Internet celebrity.

Even Wikileaks tweeted to CEO Jack Dorsey seeking some answers. First they called him out saying, "Cyber feudalism. @Twitter founder Jack banned conservative gay libertarian @Nero for speaking the 'wrong' way to actress @Lesdoggg."[475]

Jack responded, "@Wikileaks we don't ban people for expressing their thoughts. Targeted abuse & inciting abuse against people however, that's not allowed."[476]

Wikileaks responded, "@Jack Like this?" and included a link to an archive of tweets from Leslie Jones doing just that. She had also said on *Late Night with Seth Meyers* that she uses her fans to go after people on Twitter who say things to her she doesn't like. "And I'll blow you up too, so if you tweet me thinking I'm the only one who's gonna get it, I retweet it so all my followers can see it, and get on your punk [ass]."[477]

Wikileaks continued to press Jack, asking "@Jack Who has access to justice? Many have had vastly worse. What's the appeal mechanism? What's the transparency of the process?"[478]

They went on, "@Jack Because it appears that a politically aligned famous American actress has access to ban-power that everyone else does not."[479]

They continued, "@Jack It is time @Twitter got out of the censorship/justice game. Let users create communal filter lists if need be."[480]

"@Jack a punitive mechanism leads to a flood of manipulative score settling & eventual defensive pre-emption just like #TurkeyPurge & 1937."[481]

"@Jack We will start a rival service if this keeps up because @Wikileaks & our supporters are threatened by a space of feudal justice."[482]

Jack Dorsey finally responded, “@Wikileaks all fair points. We are working to get here.”[483]

Before they had actually banned Milo, Twitter “unverified” his account,[484] removing the coveted blue checkmark found on celebrities’ social media accounts which confirm that it is in fact them and not a fan account or someone impersonating them. Having a verified social media account has some prestige to it because the person is seen as popular enough or “important” enough to warrant having such special treatment.[485] So unverifying Milo was a step trying to take away from his status and growing popularity.

Meanwhile, countless Black Lives Matter supporters call for killing cops, and crazy liberals repeatedly called for mass shootings at Donald Trump campaign events and for killing white people; and even to assassinate President Trump.[486] Throughout 2016 I documented repeated instances like this on my YouTube channel.[487]

Twitter was sued by an American woman whose husband was killed by an ISIS attack in Jordan where he was working as a contractor for what she alleged was providing material support to terrorists because so many radical Muslims were posting ISIS propaganda. The lawsuit claimed, “Without Twitter, the explosive growth of ISIS over the last few years into the most feared terrorist group in the world would not have been possible.”[488] Twitter even verified the account of the Muslim Brotherhood which has been designated a terrorist organization in several countries, and allows an account dedicated to Hamas, the radical Palestinian Sunni-Islamic organization which has almost 50,000 followers.[489]

When rapper Azealia Banks threatened to have Sarah Palin gang raped by a bunch of black men, Twitter didn’t penalize her account.[490] Banks had also bullied and harassed a child actor from the Disney Channel, but again there was no action taken to even temporarily suspend her account.[491] It was only after she called One Direction singer Zayn Malik a “faggot” that her account was suspended.[492]

Meanwhile, after I posted a meme saying there were only two genders, I was sent an email from Twitter’s Support department encouraging me to delete the tweet and saying my account was under review to see if I violated their no “hateful conduct” policy.

James O’Keefe had his account temporarily suspended shortly after he announced he would release a new undercover investigation into a democrat candidate for the U.S. Senate.[493] O’Keefe’s Project Veritas organization would later release damning footage of democrat operatives discussing voter fraud and planning to use stink bombs at an inaugural ball which led to several arrests.[494] The Drudge Report’s tweets have been censored using the “sensitive content” filter,[495] and at least 32 of Donald Trump’s tweets encouraging people to get out the vote in key battleground states like Florida and Wisconsin vanished shortly after he posted them and couldn’t be seen unless you had their exact URLs.[496]

Twitter suspended World Net Daily’s account for 12 hours because of a tweet including a link to a story they wrote about former DNC chair Donna Brazile allegedly being upset that a private investigator had been hired to look into the murder of Seth Rich. He was a DNC staffer who many suspect may have been the person who leaked DNC insider emails to Wikileaks shortly before the election.[497]

Twitter even suspended the account of a Christian mother for posting ‘homophobic’ remarks for denouncing an article in *Teen Vogue* instructing kids on how to have anal sex with each other.[498]

Since banning Milo Yiannopoulos caused #FreeMilo to become the number one trend from all his supporters tweeting their criticism of his ban, Twitter began “shadow banning” popular conservative accounts which covertly limits the visibility of their tweets to others.[499] It’s a more subtle way of censoring someone since their account isn’t getting shut down and specific tweets aren’t causing their account to get suspended, so the tactic of shadow banning quietly restricts the reach that the user has. This seems to be the new preferred method of cracking down on conservatives because this “soft censorship” doesn’t raise as many alarms because as you can imagine when a popular user gets suspended, people notice and then start aggressively spreading the word on Twitter about the latest victim of censorship.

Twitter also experimented with locking accounts temporarily if people tweeted profanity to celebrities.[500] They appear to have abandoned this method in favor of enabling mute lists and automatic profanity filters that users can activate which will prevent any tweet with profanity or custom words or phrases of their choice from showing up in their feed.

They also enabled block lists, which have been compiled by different groups, and once added to a person’s account automatically block hundreds, or even thousands of users, based on any number of criteria.[501] If someone blocks you, then they won’t get any notifications when you tweet to them, and you can’t access their feed to see their tweets. Some people I’m blocked by include Rosie O’Donnell, CNN’s Jim Acosta, actress Leslie Jones, singer John Legend, model Chrissy Teigen, *Tonight Show* band leader Questlove, the DJ Moby, rapper Ice T, Andrew Dice Clay, Amy Schumer, and many more.

Bots

Twitter admitted to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission that they estimated over 23 million of their active user accounts were “bots,” or fake accounts run by automated computer programs which then post spam or are used by people who buy followers so they can look more popular than they are.[502] A later study put the number at almost 48 million bots, or between 10% to 15% of the active accounts on the platform.[503]

A lot of bots have an attractive and scantly clad girl as the profile picture and do nothing other than respond to tweets which use certain keywords by posting a scripted message along with a link to a porn site, or have the porn site linked up on the account’s bio hoping to dupe people into visiting it after getting their attention from the bot responding to their tweets. Of course Twitter attempts to detect and shut down these porn bot accounts, but it is an ongoing battle.

After Bruce Jenner announced ‘her’ new name, someone set up the @She_Not_He bot on Twitter which would tweet a response to anyone who referred to Caitlyn Jenner as a he, to “politely correct" them.[504] About 10,000 tweets were sent from the account before it was shut down.[505] This bot was obviously created by a social justice warrior who wanted to defend 'Caitlyn' Jenner and shows how they can be used for propaganda purposes.

Bots are also used by services that sell 'likes' and 'retweets' that some people buy hoping to appear as if they have more 'fans' than they actually do.[506] In the social media world, how many 'likes' a post has is often seen as a measuring stick of how 'popular' someone is, and people looking to build up their personal "brand" sometimes resort to these deceptive practices by using bots or 'click farms' located in poor countries which literally just pay people to like and retweet things.[507] The more "engagement" a tweet has, the more likely Twitter's algorithm is to place it at the top of search results for certain keywords or when someone clicks on a link to one of the top ten trending topics. Unlike bots, click farms use actual humans to do the 'liking' and retweeting, but the effect is the same. They give the false impression that posts are more popular than they actually are.

The more bots that tweet out a certain keyword or hashtag, the more likely those topics will start trending. So if a person, a political activist group, or a marketing agency wanted a certain topic to show up on the top ten trending list, then using bots could likely help make that happen. Then the issue, topic, or wannabe celebrity's name would be brought before the eyes of everyone who happens to look at the trending module.

Brad Hayes, a computer scientist at MIT, explained, "A bot army can be utilized for a number of dishonest purposes, chief amongst them, misrepresenting public sentiment about whichever topics the controller has interest in. If 3 million people started tweeting in favor of or against a particular topic, would it shift public perception? What if those same 3 million people targeted every source you use for information? It's fair to say that this kind of written 'show of force' can certainly alter perceptions."[508]

A Latin American political operative named Andrés Sepúlveda admits he has used bots to influence people in the build-up to major elections in Mexico, Colombia, and Nicaragua. In 2014 he was sentenced to ten years in prison for espionage, using malicious software, and conspiracy, but from his prison cell he gave an interview to Bloomberg News where he said, "When I realized that people believed what the Internet says more than reality, I discovered that I had the power to make people believe almost anything."[509] He concluded, "I worked with presidents, public figures with great power, and did many things with absolutely no regrets because I did it with full conviction and under a clear objective, to end dictatorship and socialist governments in Latin America."[510]

A study at Oxford University in England looked at bots tweeting just before the UK-EU Referendum which resulted in Britain voting to leave the European Union and found that of 300,000 Twitter accounts they included in their study, one percent of them were responsible for one third of all the tweets about the Brexit debate.[511] Such a high level of activity from such a small sample led the researchers to believe that the accounts were run by bots. They said there were some bots tweeting support for Remain, and other bots tweeting support for Brexit.[512]

It's pretty much expected in today's social media world that some marketing firms may use Twitter bots to generate the appearance of "buzz" about the little-known singers or albums they are hired to promote. Bots are most likely used by marketing agencies to promote the albums of some well-known singers and television shows on major networks. One blogger posted screen shots of dozens of Twitter accounts tweeting exactly the same thing at exactly the same time, all promoting Rachel Maddow's show on MSNBC along with the hashtag #Maddow.[513]

To 'trend' on Twitter is seen as a sign of success in the entertainment and news business, and most people would probably do anything to make it happen. Of course Twitter is trying to eliminate the use of bots, but it is unknown how effective they are at filtering them out.

Correct The Record

A Super PAC supporting Hillary Clinton called Correct the Record, founded by David Brock, who also started the left-wing Media Matters 'watchdog group,' released an army of paid trolls onto the Internet during the 2016 election to tweet and comment on Facebook (and in the comment sections of news websites) about how great Hillary Clinton was, and to respond directly to people criticizing her.

The Los Angeles Times noted, "In effect, the effort aims to spend a large sum of money to increase the amount of trolling that already exists online."[514] During the election Trump's support online was tremendous, and his use of Twitter has become a part of the daily news cycles. Bernie Sanders had legions of social media savvy millennials who constantly defended and promoted him online, but Hillary's supporters were much older and didn't use social media or the comment sections of websites, so the Super PAC decided to artificially create the online support for her.

"It is meant to appear to be coming organically from people and their social media networks in a groundswell of activism, when in fact it is highly paid and highly tactical," said Brian Donahue, CEO of Craft Media/Digital, a political consulting company.[515] "That is what the Clinton campaign has always been about," he said. "It runs the risk of being exactly what their opponents accuse them of being: a campaign that appears to be populist but is a smokescreen that is paid and brought to you by lifetime political operatives and high-level consultants."[516]

David Brock, the man behind the trolling program, is known for his political dirty tricks, and so this plan was right up his alley. On a side note, Super PACs are prohibited by law from working directly with campaigns and are supposed to be completely independent entities, but Wikileaks emails revealed that Hillary's campaign was working with David Brock's Correct The Record in an apparent violation of federal law.[517]

Actor Tim Robbins, who supported Bernie Sanders, once tweeted, "Dear @CorrectRecord operatives, Thank you for following today's talking points. Your check is in the mail. Signed, @davidbrockdc," in a response to what he thought were replies to his tweets by the paid trolls.[518] He later deleted the tweet. David Karpf, a professor of media and public affairs at George Washington University, appeared to defend the paid trolling effort, saying the Super PAC was, "using the tools they have at their disposal" and that, "In this day and age of campaigning, they absolutely have to do it."[519]

Unfortunately, that’s the society we’re living in now, where paid trolls and bots are being used to promote or defend certain causes or political candidates online in order to artificially screw the appearance of what people are thinking and saying on social media. It’s truly a Brave New World.

YouTube

YouTube is the second most popular website in the world according to Alexa, the industry standard in web traffic analytics,[520] and it is so large that every minute over 400 hours of video is uploaded there.[521] It was launched in 2005 and for years most people just saw YouTube as a place to post funny cat videos, or "fail" videos of people slipping and falling or getting injured when attempting stupid stunts; but others saw it as a powerful platform to share news and commentary.

Google bought YouTube in 2006 for $1.6 billion dollars,[522] and it quickly became the most popular video sharing site in the world. For years it functioned primarily as a user-generated platform, meaning it hosted amateur videos posted by average every day people. Independent content creators, often called "YouTubers" would soon build huge grass roots followings with very little cost by making videos ranging from vlogs telling stupid stories, product reviews, do it yourself home improvement, and news and commentary. The videos are monetized through Google's AdSense, which places small banner ads on them or short "pre-roll" ads that play before the videos. For each ad that's shown, the creator gets a fraction of a penny. While it's difficult to make enough money to pay your bills doing this, a few of the top creators earn millions of dollars a year.[523]

As of April 2016 there were over 2000 YouTube channels with at least a million subscribers,[524] and channels like PewDiePie (57 million), Watchmojo (15 million), Ryan's Toys Review (9 million), Philip DeFranco (5 million) and others get more viewers per video than many major television shows.

My channel now has over a million subscribers and other conservative channels have recently been thriving like Next News Network, Infowars, Steven Crowder, Rebel Media, and Paul Joseph Watson. Many young female conservatives have gained large followings as well, like Lauren Southern, Roaming Millennial, and Brittany Pettibone.

The New York Times lamented, "For the New Far Right, YouTube Has Become the New Talk Radio," saying, "They deplore 'social justice warriors,' whom they credit with ruining popular culture, conspiring against the populace and helping to undermine 'the West.' They are fixated on the subjects of immigration, Islam and political correctness. They seem at times more animated by President Trump's opponents than by the man himself, with whom they share many priorities, if not a style."[525]

YouTube has changed the world. Sociologist Philip N. Howard quoted an Arab Spring activist on the power of YouTube back in 2010 as saying activists used, "Facebook to schedule the protests, Twitter to coordinate, and YouTube to tell the world."[526] This was before Facebook (and Twitter) enabled users to upload and share videos directly there as well, and while we may now take for granted the ability to upload videos online and share them with the world, YouTube first put this power in the hands of ordinary people, and it was truly revolutionary.

The mega-viral *Kony 2012* video, which received over 100 million views, was credited with encouraging the U.S. Senate to introduce a resolution against African warlord Joseph Kony, which they did just two weeks after the video was posted.[527]

A YouTube video is even said to have cost Mitt Romney the 2012 election after his comments at a $50,000 per plate dinner were secretly recorded by a bartender at the event, where Romney complained that 47% percent of Americans would never vote for him because they're dependent on the government for handouts.[528] That video was posted on YouTube just a month and a half before the election and immediately went viral, changing the entire tone.

While it started as primarily a user-generated content platform, once major corporations realized the power of YouTube, they started focusing on getting in on the action. It took a while for major media companies to see the potential and significance of it, but eventually the major news and entertainment networks began using the platform and were given favoritism and special features by YouTube, like anti-piracy monitoring (Content ID), and the ability to edit videos after they were already posted.[529] The home page now mostly consists of corporate sponsored videos, and what was once a community of small and independent video producers has been completely hijacked by the big media corporations.

As with Facebook and Twitter, YouTube has a Trending tab which features the *supposedly* most watched videos of the day, but just a quick look at the ranking of the videos and the amount of views they have can tell you that their Trending section is censored and manipulated too, or as a YouTube spokesman calls it, "a little human curation."[530] A brief look at the tab on most days shows many videos which hardly have any views but are manually placed on the list, hoping to artificially cause them to go viral because they promote political or social agendas that YouTube wants to further.

YouTube has also admitted that they manipulate the search results for certain topics to favor news reports from mainstream media channels over regular, independent ones.[531] They did this to put "more reliable and trustworthy" videos at the top of the page after "conspiracy" videos populated the top spots for certain searches.[532] Previously, the most-watched videos, or videos with the most engagement (comments and likes) were the top search results, no matter what channel they were from, but that is no longer the case. YouTube is now playing favorites with the major media companies, even if their videos barely have any views.

Not Just Entertainment Anymore

While most people just saw YouTube as a place to upload funny videos of their pets or their kids (remember *Charlie Bit My Finger*?), others saw the amazing power in being able to upload news segments so they could email the links to their friends — and when social media would come on the scene, share them there as well. There were also people like myself who started making our own videos giving our analysis of current events and uploading them to share our thoughts with anyone who would watch.

When I first got started making YouTube videos in 2006, smartphones didn't have video cameras in them, so the only people making YouTube videos were those who had camcorders, and to make the videos look and sound like they weren't shot in your basement, you had to have lighting kits, external microphones, and editing software; all of which cost money. Today a single smartphone has a high enough quality camera and microphone for anyone to record a vlog or an interview, and it looks and sounds pretty good, but in the early days of YouTube it took some equipment, money, and know-how to be able to make videos.

Now anyone with a cellphone can record a high quality video of anything — from a protest, or an interview with someone, to just a simple commentary on a current event, and it can be seen by just as many people as something that airs on the major television networks. What once took millions of dollars of equipment and infrastructure, not to mention a staff of skilled people, can now be accomplished by one person using a device that fits in the palm of their hand.

As YouTube "stars" got larger followings than many actors on network television, the sharks smelled blood in the water, and began circling. The Hillary Clinton campaign began recruiting YouTubers to encourage their audience to support her in the 2016 election since they had so much influence over their fans. *Vanity Fair* wrote, "The Clinton Campaign Deploys Its Secret Weapon: YouTubers," and pointed out that they recruited three popular YouTubers to help her appeal to voters in swing states just a week and a half before the election.[533]

The Clinton campaign got YouTubers to make endorsement videos for her in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Florida. One of the videos, shot by Todrick Hall, who has two and a half million subscribers, consisted of him "surprising" a fan of his who said she wasn't sure if she was voting, so he decided to visit her and encourage her to vote for Hillary Clinton. "I'm partnering with Hillary Clinton for America, because I want everybody to come out and vote, and I want everyone to make the right vote, and I believe the right vote is Hillary Clinton," he said.[534]

Another YouTuber, GloZell Green, who has 4.5 million subscribers but can barely get 20,000 views on a video because her novelty skits of eating gross foods quickly wore off, also posted a video which consisted of her meeting a "super fan" to talk to her about why she should vote for Hillary Clinton.[535] Barack Obama also met with YouTubers hoping to help Hillary. He sat down for live interviews with several poplar YouTubers, one of which was also GloZell Green, who is best known for taking a bath in a tub full of milk and cereal.[536] While many YouTubers aren't household names, their fans can be very dedicated and easily influenced, which is why both Hillary and Obama tried to tap into their audiences.

As independent content creators began dominating the platform and amassing huge followings of millions of people, all while working from their basement or bedroom; the "powers that be" got so concerned that their information monopoly was collapsing, they had to do something to stop it. When channels like mine and Alex Jones, and Next News Network are getting more viewers than CNN, MSNBC, and other major 'news' networks, you know that industry insiders are panicking, not only because they're losing millions of viewers, but because they're losing the ability to control the narrative surrounding major issues.

Censorship is a problem that slowly kept creeping up on YouTube in the form of giving channels "Community Guidelines strikes" and deleting videos their moderators thought constituted 'hate speech' or 'bullying,' but as channels like mine began getting millions of views a week, YouTube began to regret the 'monsters' that they helped to create, and new Orwellian censorship tactics were implemented.

YouTube is Over Party

Philip DeFranco, a popular YouTuber with over five million subscribers, posted a video titled "YouTube is Shutting Down My Channel and I'm Not Sure What to Do About It" on August 31st 2016 which started the "YouTube is Over Party" sarcastic hashtag to trend on social media from people talking about the new restrictions on content being rolled out. YouTubers like myself had noticed our videos were getting regularly demonetized — meaning no advertisements were allowed to run on them if they included certain keywords in the title or description. Words like 'war,' '9/11,' 'police shooting,' 'ISIS,' 'terrorism,' 'sex,' 'drugs,' etc. It didn't matter the context, they automatically got demonetized, but you wouldn't notice unless you looked closely at the analytics since there was no notification about it.

What brought this to Philip DeFranco's attention was that YouTube finally started emailing people when their videos were demonetized instead of just doing it without notice. One's first thought to get around this would be to just avoid using certain keywords in the titles, descriptions and tags of videos, and that solved the problem — at least for a little while — but YouTube's system kept getting more sophisticated by the day and now appears to analyze the transcripts of all videos uploaded. In 2009 YouTube began using voice recognition software and creating automatic transcripts for videos, and while not being 100% accurate, it is eerie to see that YouTube knows what the people in a video are saying because their servers are now "listening" to every word that is said in every video.[537]

PewDiePie Under Attack

A few months after the 'YouTube is Over' demonetization scare, the *Wall Street Journal* would target YouTube's biggest channel, PewDiePie, which has over 57 million subscribers, and claim he's making money by posting 'racist' and 'anti-Semitic' videos. PewDiePie, whose real name is Felix Kjellberg, is a 27-year-old guy from Sweden who started off as a "gamer" (a person who literally plays video games while other people watch) and later branched out into comedy skits and social commentary, and is a huge star rivaling many Hollywood A-listers in terms of popularity.

"Disney Severs Ties With YouTube Star PewDiePie After Anti-Semitic Posts," was the *Wall Street Journal's* headline where they boasted that they asked Disney about videos of his which they claimed included "Anti-Semitic jokes or Nazi imagery"[538] Their story cast him in a false light and gave the impression that he might be racist or anti-Semitic because of some jokes he made in his videos. *The Wall Street Journal* even put out a video of their own to accompany their story which showed PewDiePie dressed as a soldier sitting in front of his computer watching an Adolf Hitler speech while smiling and nodding in agreement. What they failed to mention was this scene was from a skit he shot in response to previous false claims by the mainstream media which accused him of being racist, so he made the Hitler video as a joke making fun of their ridiculous claims.

This *Wall Street Journal* article on PewDiePie poured gasoline on what were just smoldering embers, and it blew up into a huge forest fire that would be used as a token example that advertisements for major brands were being shown on YouTube videos that were 'racist,' 'inappropriate' or 'offensive.' *Wired* magazine then ran the headline, "PewDiePie Was Always Kinda Racist, But Now He's a Hero to Nazis,"[539] and when they tweeted out the link they added the comment, "White supremacists have a new hero, and his name is PewDiePie."[540] After facing major backlash from their defamatory title, they later changed it to "PewDiePie's fall shows the limits of 'LOL JK.'[541]

His original series *Scare PewDiePie* on YouTube Red (a subscription service similar to Netflix) was immediately canceled, and YouTube pulled his channel from their premium advertiser program costing him a massive drop in income.[542] Major YouTubers rallied behind him showing support, including Jewish ones,[543] but the war against YouTubers was just beginning.

News Channels Targeted

BuzzFeed, the infamous clickbait bottom feeders of the Internet, published an article titled, "How YouTube Serves As The Content Engine Of The Internet's Dark Side," pressuring YouTube to start demonetizing videos about 'conspiracy theories.'[544] The story began, "Everyone knows that Twitter and Facebook spread bad information and hate speech. But YouTube, which pays for conspiracy theories seen by millions, may be even worse."[545]

They named one particular conspiracy channel with 150,000 subscribers and said that, "His videos, usually preceded by pre-roll ads for major brands like Quaker Oats and Uber, have been watched almost 18 million times, which is roughly the number of people who tuned in to last year's season finale of NCIS, the most popular show on television."[546]

BuzzFeed continued, "In the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election, the major social platforms, most notably Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit, have been forced to undergo painful, often public reckonings with the role they play in spreading bad information…And yet there is a mammoth social platform, a cornerstone of the modern Internet with more than a billion active users every month, which hosts and even pays for a fathomless stock of bad information, including viral fake news, conspiracy theories, and hate speech of every kind — and it's been held up to virtually no scrutiny: YouTube."[547]

The article goes on to complain about what they called the "conspiracy-industrial complex" on the Internet, "which has become a defining feature of media and politics in the Trump era," and says it “would be a very small fraction of itself without YouTube.”[548]

They said the Internet’s biggest “conspiracy-news stars” live on YouTube and named a few channels like Alex Jones, Paul Joseph Watson, and Sargon of Akkad. The writer then reminisces about the good old days of YouTube, but says, “Today, it fills the enormous trough of right-leaning conspiracy and revisionist historical content into which the vast, ravening right-wing social Internet lowers its jaws to drink.”[549]

“Frequently, the videos consist of little more than screenshots of a Reddit ‘investigation’ laid out chronologically, set to ominous music,” he says. “Other times, they’re very simple, featuring a man in a sparse room speaking directly into his webcam, or a very fast monotone narration over a series of photographs with effects straight out of iMovie.”[550]

The articles goes on to lament, “Sometimes, these videos go hugely viral,” and mentions a few including one that is critical of the mass immigration of Muslims into Europe which had been viewed over 4 million times. “That’s roughly as many people as watched the *Game of Thrones* Season 3 premiere,” it says.[551] “So what responsibility, if any, does YouTube bear for the universe of often conspiratorial, sometimes bigoted, frequently incorrect information that it pays its creators to host, and that is now being filtered up to the most powerful person in the world?”[552]

It concludes by asking, “But morally and ethically, shouldn’t YouTube be asking itself the same hard questions as Facebook and Twitter about the role it plays in a representative democracy? How do those questions change because YouTube is literally paying people to upload bad information?”[553]

Alex Jones’ channel, which has over 2 million subscribers, was then targeted by Media Matters hoping to get all advertisements removed. They wrote up an entire article titled, “Google Is Funding Alex Jones’ Harassment And Hate On YouTube” where they claimed his videos, “often violate YouTube’s policies for its advertising partners,” and “frequently appear with ads for brands such as Trivago, PlayStation, and a corporation that is contracted by the state of Hawaii to promote tourism.”[554]

They went on to say, “Jones has also made numerous disparaging comments about LGBTQ people,” and that, “He has also said that Chelsea Clinton looks like Mister Ed the Horse and made numerous other sexist comments about women and their looks.”[555] They concluded, “It would appear to be consistent with YouTube’s existing policies to pull advertising from Jones’ videos. If YouTube fails to take action, advertisers can request to have their ads removed from videos appearing on Jones’ channel.”[556]

Advertisers Boycott “Offensive Content”

After *The Wall Street Journal* was done investigating PewDiePie and falsely claimed he was posting ‘racist and ‘anti-Semitic’ videos, they continued searching for ‘offensive’ content that had advertisements on it. They found two racist videos from unknown random channels which were monetized and had Coca-Cola ads running before they played, and instead of just doing a story about this, they contacted Coca-Cola to get a statement from them, or as many believe, to bully the company into pulling their advertising from YouTube.

Jack Nicas, who wrote the story, appeared to brag on Twitter, saying, “Google has lost $26B in market value over this ad controversy in the past week.”[557] And later tweeted, “Update: Coca-Cola is pulling all non-search ads with Google in response to our story. Two separate Coke ads played before this racist video.”[558]

The Daily Mail opined that, “Netflix, Guess, Trivago, Opodo, Asus and SunLife insurance have adverts alongside videos published by conspiracy theorists on Google’s YouTube platform.”[559] *The Guardian* then reported, “PepsiCo, Walmart Stores and Starbucks on Friday confirmed that they have also suspended their advertising on YouTube after the *Wall Street Journal* found Google’s automated programs placed their brands on five videos containing racist content. AT&T, Verizon, Johnson & Johnson, Volkswagen and several other companies pulled ads earlier this week.”[560]

Walmart released a statement saying, “The content with which we are being associated is appalling and completely against our company values.”[561] AT&T said, “We are deeply concerned that our ads may have appeared alongside YouTube content promoting terrorism and hate. Until Google can ensure this won’t happen again, we are removing our ads from Google’s non-search platforms.”[562]

Of course, these same brands don’t have a problem advertising on network television or cable shows that glorify crime, sex, and drugs. When CNN goes to a commercial after breaking news about the latest mass shooting or terrorist attack, these brands don’t have a problem being associated with that. Local news stations across the country report on horrific crimes like rape, child abuse, and murder every single night, and then casually cut to a commercial paid for by these same mega corporations.

Since cable news channels have many of the same advertisers which are used as pre-roll ads before YouTube videos, why are companies okay with running their ads on graphic and disturbing stories on cable news and adult dramas, but not on smaller independent YouTube channels? Another “investigation” into the matter by *The Australian Financial Review* reported, “a number of local companies — including Holden, Kia, Wesfarmers-owned hardware retailer Bunnings and electronics chain JB Hi-Fi — had video advertisements playing in front of men’s rights and anti-feminist content on YouTube.”[563] It appears they contacted Kia to tattle, and the company’s spokesman said, “As of now, programmatic advertising has been suspended until such time as we can meet with Google to further clarify the application of this advertising.”[564]

The Financial Review’s report said, “The series of videos by one YouTube user centered around a men’s rights movement known as MGTOW (Men Going Their Own Way) — a group of straight men who will not date women and believe feminism has ruined society…One included an edited segment from Ten Network’s Studio 10 that showed an interview with controversial author Peter Lloyd, who wrote the book *Stand by Your Manhood*. The video insults the Ten hosts, including calling former Australian of the Year Ita Buttrose a ‘hag.’”[565]

It’s completely understandable that companies wouldn’t want their ads to run on ISIS propaganda videos, or porn, but these isolated instances of ‘racist’ videos being monetized that were dug up by the papers caused the entire Ad Sense program to be put under a microscope. For over a decade since the monetization program had been put in place YouTube was like the wild west, where (within reason) just about any video could be monetized and advertisers didn’t care about the content, but almost overnight all that changed.

New Advertising Policies

Google’s chief business officer Philipp Schindler explained that, “It has always been a small problem” with a “very very very” few number of ads being shown on videos that aren’t “brand-safe” but “over the last few weeks, someone has decided to put a bit more of a spotlight on the problem.”[566]

A Google spokesperson said that the error rate was less than 1/1000th of a percent, meaning that their algorithms automatically identified most racist or ‘objectionable’ content and wouldn’t place advertisements on it.[567] But YouTube immediately announced that changes were coming to the platform and they would begin removing advertisements on all ‘non advertiser- friendly’ content (like mine). They posted a letter for their advertisers saying, “Recently, we had a number of cases where brands’ ads appeared on content that was not aligned with their values. For this, we deeply apologize. We know that this is unacceptable to the advertisers and agencies who put their trust in us. That’s why we’ve been conducting an extensive review of our advertising policies and tools, and why we made a public commitment last week to put in place changes that would give brands more control over where their ads appear.”[568]

“We know advertisers don’t want their ads next to content that doesn’t align with their values. So starting today, we’re taking a tougher stance on hateful, offensive and derogatory content. “This includes removing ads more effectively from content that is attacking or harassing people based on their race, religion, gender or similar categories. This change will enable us to take action, where appropriate, on a larger set of ads and sites.”

It concluded saying, “The YouTube team is taking a hard look at our existing community guidelines to determine what content is allowed on the platform — not just what content can be monetized.”[569]

And then the mass demonetization began. On March 29th 2017, Ethan Klein of H3H3 Productions, a channel with over 3 million subscribers, tweeted that, “YouTube has demonetized everything from ‘Vape Nation’ to ‘Thank You for 3 million’ with no notification and no option to appeal.”[570] Jenna Marbles, who has over 17 million subscribers, responded “I’ve also had a bizarre selection of videos demonetized with no notification or option to appeal.”[571]

YouTubers large and small began posting screen shots showing their videos had been demonetized in bulk, along with screen shots of emails from YouTube rejecting their appeals. Internet sensation Diamond and Silk, the duo of African American sisters who post videos supporting Donald Trump, reported that 95% of their videos were demonetized.[572]

My revenue dropped 90% and at the time I had just under one million subscribers, so you can imagine how much the smaller channels were hurt by this. The mass-demonetization just kept coming as YouTube implemented new algorithms to search through older videos and demonetizing them. As Patreon co-founder and CEO Jack Conte said, “It sucks that it’s 2017 and you’ve got creators with millions of fans getting paid a few hundred bucks a month. That sucks.”[573]

Patreon is a new website where viewers can support their favorite YouTubers by chipping in a dollar a month or whatever they want in order to supplement the loss of revenue from the issues with demonetization, so if you enjoy watching my videos, I hope you’ll look me up there or visit my page at Patreon.com/MarkDice.

Videos that talk about certain subjects are now automatically demonetized the moment they’re uploaded since the autogenerated transcripts allow YouTube to know exactly what is being said in the videos themselves, so if people avoid certain titles, descriptions, or tags hoping to slip past their system, that will no longer work.

And while I’ve had tons of videos demonetized for “not being advertiser friendly,” videos on big liberal channels like The Young Turks or CNN and MSNBC which cover the same story are often still allowed to be monetized. Not to mention trash channels BuzzFeed and Feminist Frequency.

YouTube Removing Videos

Aside from just demonetizing videos and not letting them earn any revenue for the person who posts them, YouTube often just removes videos completely, claiming they violate their terms of service or places them in a “limited state” so you can only watch them if you have the exact URL because they don’t show up in searches.[574]

The Colin Flaherty channel has had multiple videos removed which show anti-white hate crimes being committed by blacks.[575] Another channel had a video removed which showed a compilation of women violently assaulting men to show that domestic violence isn’t just a one way street and that women do in fact attack men.[576] A University of Toronto professor, Jordan Peterson, who refuses to acknowledge transgender people by their “preferred pronouns” had his entire channel removed without explanation.[577] Prager University’s videos were age restricted, meaning only people 18 or older could watch them, even though they just talk about politics, economics, and science from a conservative perspective.[578]

YouTube locked one of my videos on private so nobody could watch it, saying that it was “deceptive.” The video was actually me exposing how deceptive CNN is, so the censorship couldn’t be more ironic.”[579] I’ve also had videos placed on age-restricted status, and the channel is under a constant threat of receiving “community guideline” strikes and being shut down (again) completely. My entire channel and all of my videos were deleted in 2014.[580] At the time I had 265,000 subscribers, and only after a wave of public pressure and me luckily being able to reach one of the heads of their news division did they restore everything.

Videos showing black teens attacking random white people, a viral trend known as ‘polar-bear hunting’ to the thugs, are often removed for what the site claims are violations of their policy against posting violent content. Author Colin Flaherty has documented black on white violence for years to raise awareness of the problem and YouTube regularly removes his videos despite them being posted not to glorify violence, but to show people one of the problems plaguing many communities. If people aren’t able to see what kind of anti-white hate crimes are happening on the streets in cities like Baltimore, St. Louis, Milwaukee, and others, how will people know to take precautions?

YouTube even deleted a video of mine about an anti-white hate crime, in which a black man shot up a predominantly white church in Tennessee to get ‘revenge’ for when white supremacist Dylann Roof did the same thing to a black church two years earlier in Charleston, South Carolina.[581] Not only was mainstream media ignoring the story, but then my video on it (which got over 300,000 views in 48 hours) was censored and a penalty placed on my channel in the form of a Community Guidelines strike. I appealed the removal, and after it was further reviewed, the video was restored, but the fact that the moderators took it down in the first place shows how vulnerable YouTube videos are to political censorship. YouTube has also deleted viral videos from black conservatives who criticized the Black Lives Matter movement, claiming they violate their terms of service.[582]

Many videos are also automatically deleted without issuing the channels which post them a “community guidelines violation” by identifying them through the Content ID system, which scours through all videos to find specific clips using visual and audio printing technology and removes them without warning and with no recourse to have them restored. Hollywood studios use the Content ID feature to have clips of TV shows and movies automatically blocked, sometimes even if they’re used in accordance with fair use laws.[583]

Liberals love to claim YouTube is a “private business” and say they can decide what to allow on their site and what not to, but when a Christian bakery refuses to use their artistic talent to make a special gay wedding cake with two men painted in frosting or saying “Congratulations Adam and Steve,” then liberals want that business sued and shut down for ‘discrimination.’[584]

Gays cried ‘censorship’ after they noticed many LGBT videos didn’t show up on restricted mode which is meant to filter out adult content for parents, schools, and public libraries.[585] They posted videos about strange gay sex practices and then complained when YouTube didn’t allow them to be seen by children, and so YouTube apologized and ‘fixed’ their algorithm so that the adult content filter would ignore most LGBT videos so kids can now watch them.[586]

Transgender activist Riley Dennis, who argues that women can have penises and says people are ‘transphobic’ if they don’t want to have sex with trannies,[587] made a Facebook post on March 5th 2017 saying ‘she’ “Spent the entire day watching videos of people calling me a stupid regressive snowflake tranny faggot retarded SJW, so that I could compile a list of channels that harass me, so I can make the argument to YouTube that we have to do something about it.”[588]

‘She’ then proceeded to report the videos to YouTube alleging they were ‘bullying her’ and there were reports that the videos were then removed.[589] So just criticizing a radical transgender activist on YouTube is now considered to be ‘hate speech’ or ‘bullying.’ Of course, liberals can post videos saying the most hateful things one can imagine about Christians, and that's celebrated as 'free speech' (which it is), but that same protection does not exist the other way around.

In 2015, a Christian singer named Joyce Bartholomew sued YouTube after they removed one of her music videos of her singing a song with a pro-life theme. The video, titled *What Was Your Name*, was uploaded to YouTube in April of 2014 and quickly gained over 50,000 views but then YouTube removed it claiming it violated their terms of service. She sued them for defamation, arguing that by YouTube saying she violated their terms of service when she did not, they had damaged her reputation by making false statements about her.[590] The video was later re-uploaded, and at the time I'm writing this, has over 500,000 views.[591]

Singer Elton John and his 'husband' were involved in a sex scandal in the UK when it came to light that their 'marriage' was really just a sham and that they had engaged in threesomes with other men.[592] And after news of this broke in the British tabloids, Elton John got a court order to block every news outlet in England from reporting on the story.[593]

After I posted a YouTube video about the legal threats I received after tweeting about the censorship, the video was soon blocked in the UK as well. Fans from England sent me screenshots showing my video was blocked in their region after they clicked on the link I posted on my Facebook page. Anyone living in the UK who went directly to my YouTube channel (YouTube.com/MarkDice) just simply didn't see the video at all. It's an ongoing battle for many of us YouTubers to keep our videos (and our entire channels) from being deleted. I wasn't given any warning for this, but since I was aware that Elton John was silencing the media in the UK, and having Twitter send out legal threats to people tweeting about it, it was pretty clear what was happening.[594]

People and companies often abuse YouTube's copyright policy and file DMCA [Digital Millennium Copyright Act] takedown notices on peoples' videos when they include clips of their content for purposes of criticism, which is fully allowed under fair use laws, but sometimes people file these false copyright claims in attempts to have the criticism removed.[595] Various social justice warriors have been accused of filing false DMCA claims against their critics, and even some videogame developers have been accused of abusing DMCA takedowns to have negative reviews of their games deleted.[596]

The Future of YouTube

It is possible that the constant pushback against the politically correct 'Thought Police' may eventually cause advertisers and YouTube to loosen their restrictions on 'offensive' or 'controversial' content, but it's an uphill battle and one that at this point we are losing by a landslide. The days of most smaller conservative YouTubers being able to make a living using the website is probably a thing of the past.[597] And even for larger channels like mine, it's a constant struggle.

You may be wondering, 'doesn't YouTube need to make money from advertisers?' 'Wouldn't demonetizing so many videos cost them money as well?' At this point there may be so many 'brand friendly' videos that it won't matter to YouTube if they don't run ads on channels like mine, because there are so many others available that they see as being ‘safe.’ It also appears that YouTube has changed its revenue model, so they no longer need content creators to make videos to place ads on like they once did.

Shortly after the “Ad-pocalypse” (the advertiser apocalypse as we call it), YouTube announced YouTube TV and started going after cable TV providers like Cox, Time Warner, and Dish Network, by offering people the same basic cable service through the YouTube TV app on their smart TVs, tablets, and phones.[598] Like a parasite that sucked the blood out of its host until it died, YouTube has simply moved on to other ways to generate money, and left thousands of full-time content creators in the dust — people like me who had largely relied upon revenue from making YouTube videos to pay our bills.

YouTubers franticly scrambled to try and stay afloat and many went to a fan-funded model though Patreon or started making money from livestreaming through Super Chat donations, where users pay to ask them questions. Many started asking for direct donations through PayPal, Bitcoin, and other crowdsourcing methods. Others started selling merchandise like T-shirts and coffee mugs or began getting their own sponsors through MCNs (Multi Channel Networks) or 3rd party ad agencies.

In previous generations most kids wanted to grow up to be a professional athlete, a rock star, or an actor; but the millennial generation and generation Z all wanted to be YouTubers because it seemed like a life of freedom, fun, and easy money; but the heyday of truly independent YouTubers who do and say whatever they want is over. With the wheels having fallen off the gravy train for many, what was once a dream job has become more of just a job, or even a hobby now that many have had to get ‘real jobs’ to pay their bills since YouTube’s monetization program has collapsed. As bad as all this is, unfortunately YouTube continues to tighten the restrictions on what people are allowed to post even if it’s not monetized.

YouTube announced they were going to further censor ‘controversial’ content and teamed up with the ADL [Anti-Defamation League] a ‘civil rights’ agency which has the sole purpose of ‘fighting bigotry’ — an organization whose standards for what is ‘extremist’ content is so low that they labeled Pepe the Frog, a cartoon character used in pro-Trump memes, a ‘hate symbol.’[599]

In a blog post YouTube admitted, “We’ve started rolling out features from Jigsaw’s Redirect Method to YouTube. When people search for sensitive keywords on YouTube, they will be redirected towards a playlist of curated YouTube videos that directly confront and debunk violent extremist messages. We also continue to amplify YouTube voices speaking out against hate and radicalization through our YouTube Creators for Change program.”[600]

Of course, to YouTube it is considered ‘extremist propaganda’ if someone says that there are only two genders, or if they say it’s disgusting to allow a man who thinks he’s a woman to shower in the girl’s locker room, or if someone doesn’t support gay marriage, or if they want to secure the U.S./Mexico border and deport criminal illegal aliens from the United States.

In an interview with CNN, YouTube’s CEO Susan Wojcicki was asked if she had experienced any “sexism” in the tech industry since it is dominated by men, and after thinking silently for a moment — not wanting to disappoint the interviewer with a “no,” she responded that she has experienced sexist “microaggressons” such as when men “interrupt” her while she’s talking, or when men say something that “annoys” her.[601] Those were literally her examples of “sexism” in Silicon Valley, so you can see why the company considers videos criticizing feminists and other aspects of the Leftists’ agenda as “hate speech.”

Many viewers who have seen her interviews wonder how she could possibly be the CEO of any company, let alone YouTube, because she seems like a complete idiot. Many suspect nepotism is the reason she got the job because her sister married Google’s co-founder Sergey Brin.[602] (Google is the parent company of YouTube — or was — now it’s Alphabet Inc., which is the new parent company due to corporate restructuring.) In July of 2017, just as the crackdown on conservative channels was ramping up, she tweeted out a photo of herself meeting with The Young Turks host Cenk Uyger, the biggest liberal ‘news’ channel on the platform, thanking him for stopping by YouTube’s headquarters.[603] So it’s clear that she’s playing favorites, and you can see which team she is on, and that the liberal rot at YouTube is coming directly from the head.

Some people are turning to other platforms, including decentralized peer-to-peer file sharing networks and even blockchain technology to avoid YouTube censorship. So if my channel ever gets deleted, check out my Facebook page or Twitter feed (if they’re still up) so you can find links to my videos (wherever they’re being hosted) and see where I’ve moved to, if it comes to that. But in the meantime, I hope you’ll subscribe to me at YouTube.com/MarkDice and visit the channel regularly for new videos.

Google

Google is more than just a search engine. It is the closest thing to an all-powerful information monopoly the planet has ever seen. Not only does it account for 90% of Internet searches in most countries,[604] and run the Android operating system on 80% of the world's smartphones and tablets,[605] and own YouTube — the largest video sharing site in the world; but the company is also trying to give birth to the world's first artificial intelligence. They're even hoping to make humans immortal.[606] In 2015 Alphabet Inc. was created as part of a corporate restructuring and is now the parent company of Google and its many subsidiaries.

As you know, Google has become a verb and is a synonym for "looking something up" online, but when so much of the world relies on a single source for accessing their information, there are inherent dangers of censorship and political favoritism regarding the massive amount of content they control. Beneath the surface of being "just a search engine," Google has a very deep and far-reaching political agenda and their control over so much of the Internet and their ability to manipulate how billions of people see the world has dramatic implications.

Most people treat Google like a magic eight ball which answers any question they ask since it is literally as convenient as clicking a few keys (or today, using Okay Google or Siri voice recognition search systems) which most people blindly trust "tells the truth." Because Google's algorithms are considered trade secrets it's difficult for most people to understand how they work or see how they favor certain people, issues, websites, and political viewpoints over others. But while it's difficult, it's not impossible. In this chapter we'll take a look at some of the examples that researchers have discovered and the concerns they raise.

It's also important to point out that people's long-term memories are actually becoming atrophied and aren't retaining information like they used to in the recent past since their brains don't make it a priority to store a lot of information anymore because people can just "Google it."[607] It's a cliché but true, that as computers got smarter, most people got dumber.

As the war against 'fake news' and 'offensive' content heated up after the 2016 presidential election, of course Google jumped on the bandwagon and used the moral panic as an excuse to expand their censorship under the disguise of this new moral crusade.

CEO Eric Schmidt said, "We're very good at detecting what's the most relevant and what's the least relevant. It should be possible for computers to detect malicious, misleading and incorrect information and essentially have you not see it. We're not arguing for censorship, we're arguing just take it off the page, put it somewhere else...make it harder to find."[608]

If you're wondering where Schmidt's political allegiance lies, he was with Barack Obama on election night in 2012,[609] and "helped recruit talent, choose technology and coach the campaign manager," Obama operative David Plouff admitted.[610] And where was he on election night in 2016? He was at Hillary Clinton's party, where he was photographed wearing a "staff" badge.[611]

The visitor logs during the Obama administration show that Google's lobbyist had visited the White House 128 times between January of 2009 and October of 2015.[612] That was more visits than lobbyists for Comcast, Verizon, Facebook, and Amazon combined.[613] That same year Google spend $16 million dollars on lobbying, the most out of any tech company.[614] Why would a search engine need to work so closely with the Obama administration?

Manipulating Top Search Results

Google's secret algorithms determine which webpages will show up and in what order when someone looks something up. While you will get thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of results for any given topic, SEO (search engine optimization) experts have conducted studies which show that over 90% of people click on something that's on the first page of those search results.[615]

If you sell things online, like every major retailer does — from Best Buy to Advance Auto Parts, or run a news site, you want your website to show up as one of the first results when someone searches for something relevant to your work. Having a first-page result is what makes or breaks many online businesses, and it's entirely up to Google which pages will show up, in what order, or even if they'll show up at all, no matter how relevant they are to your search.

"Google, Inc., isn't just the world's biggest purveyor of information; it is also the world's biggest censor," declared *US News and World Report* after a 2016 investigation.[616] Their report highlights the little-known fact that Google has nine different blacklists (that we know of), and have created censorship tools for various repressive governments around the world to keep information hidden from their people no matter how detailed their searches are.[617]

Their report pointed out, "When Google's employees or algorithms decide to block our access to information about a news item, political candidate or business, opinions and votes can shift, reputations can be ruined and businesses can crash and burn. Because online censorship is entirely unregulated at the moment, victims have little or no recourse when they have been harmed. Eventually, authorities will almost certainly have to step in, just as they did when credit bureaus were regulated in 1970."[618]

Their report concludes that, "Google has rapidly become an essential in people's lives — nearly as essential as air or water. We don't let public utilities make arbitrary and secretive decisions about denying people services; we shouldn't let Google do so either."[619]

When you Google a person, on the right hand side of the page there are several boxes which usually include a photograph of them, along with a few sentences describing them using information taken from Wikipedia. If you lookup a product, it may give you the supposed satisfaction ratings along with some other information about it like the price. These “Knowledge Panels” were introduced in 2012, and as one writer pointed out, “materialize at random, as unsourced and absolute as if handed down by God.”[620] They show results for almost anything you look up, from what the capital of a city is, to the best restaurant in town.

A researcher from the University of Technology in Austria pointed out that, “Google has become the main interface for our whole reality. To be precise: with the Google interface the user gets the impression that the search results imply a kind of totality. In fact, one only sees a small part of what one could see if one also integrates other research tools.”[621]

Redirecting Search Results

Google doesn’t just play favorites with the top search results; their control goes much deeper than that. An interesting example of Google admitting they are manipulating the search results can be found in what they call their Redirect Method, which they admit was implemented in 2016 when they created an algorithm to show search results of imams [Muslim religious leaders] denouncing ISIS along with videos of former extremists denouncing their past beliefs whenever someone was searching for ISIS related material.

“This came out of an observation that there’s a lot of online demand for ISIS material, but there are also a lot of credible organic voices online debunking their narratives,” said Yasmin Green, Google’s head of research and development. He went on to admit, “The Redirect Method is at its heart a targeted advertising campaign: Let’s take these individuals who are vulnerable to ISIS’ recruitment messaging and instead show them information that refutes it.”[622]

One specific example of this is a video showing long breadlines in Raqqa, the ISIS capital, which was chosen to come up as one of the top results when people search for certain travel routes to Syria. The idea is Google hopes to show potential ISIS fighters that the Islamic State isn’t the paradise they thought it might be, and are trying to put their curiosities to rest. The Redirect Method proves that Google is actively manipulating the search results in hopes of influencing the way people think and the actions they do or do not take as a result of their Google searches.

What other topics are they specifically redirecting search results for? The Pandora’s Box of possibilities is limitless. And while it may be a noble cause to redirect search results to paint the Islamic State in a negative light, what other issues are they trying to carefully frame in a certain way? The Second Amendment? Abortion? Immigration? Taxes? Socialized healthcare? Climate change? It would be extremely naive to think they were only using their Redirect Method to skew the search results for only one issue. Google has already been accused of suppressing websites and articles which refute climate change alarmists’ allegations.[623]

In April 2017, Google rolled out a new “fact checking tool” which includes a tag next to some search results that declares whether they are ‘true’ or ‘false,’ using sources like Snopes.com, PolitiFact.org, FactCheck.org, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times* as the ‘fact checkers.'[624] Google's blog explained, "Even though differing conclusions may be presented, we think it's still helpful for people to understand the degree of consensus around a particular claim and have clear information on which sources agree."[625]

For example, a search for "Obama born in Kenya" brings up results including the "fact checking snippet" saying "Fact Check by Snopes: False." Searching for "15 million undocumented immigrants" brings up the result "Three Pinochios" by *The Washington Post*, and "Pants on Fire" by PolitiFact, even though the number was said to be 11.4 million back in 2012 according to the government's own statistics.[626]

Manipulating Elections

Researchers at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology published a study showing that Google could influence how people thought about different candidates in an election by serving up mostly positive or negative articles about them when people searched for certain topics. "We estimate, based on win margins in national elections around the world, that Google could determine the outcome of upwards of 25 percent of all national elections," said Robert Epstein, who helped conduct the study. [627]

The amount of influence doesn't even have to be all that great, because when you consider that most elections have fairly close margins, if Google can increase or decrease the positive or negative feelings about a particular candidate or issue by just a small percentage, it could be enough to change the outcome of a race.

During the 2016 election, a *New York Times* tech writer named Farhad Manjoo actually suggested that Google should filter out search results to videos and articles which raised questions about Hillary Clinton's health problems. "Google should fix this," he said in response to Rudy Giuliani encouraging people to look up "Hillary Clinton illness." He added, "It shouldn't give quarter to conspiracy theorists."[628] Just three weeks later Hillary would be caught on video collapsing as she was leaving the 9/11 memorial at Ground Zero where she had to be carried away by her staff, confirming what many had been suspecting — that she was not well.[629]

Just a month after the election *The Guardian* actually claimed that search results were, "being manipulated and controlled by rightwing propagandists," because a journalist didn't like some of the results that came up when searching for 'Muslims,' 'Jews,' and 'women.'[630] "[Google] simply can't go on pretending that it has no editorial responsibilities when it is delivering these kinds of results," the article says. "It [Google] is simply not defensible for it go on claiming 'plausible deniability.' It has clearly become a conduit for rightwing hate sites and it must urgently take action."[631]

Shortly after Donald Trump's book *Crippled America* came out, a Google search for the title brought up pictures of Adolf Hitler's book cover *Mein Kampf*.[632] And for some period of time a search for "When Hitler was born" resulted in photos of Hitler, but also of Trump. After these and other strange search results began making headlines, Google quietly fixed the issue.

If you go to the Google News page you'll find a series of articles they have aggregated from various sources, and of course their editors have chosen which ones to feature as the "Top Stories" and what news outlets they come from. The page consists simply of links to articles from news outlets like the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and other mostly liberal papers. The stories chosen to be featured there are obviously going to reflect the political leanings of Google, and from my own experience the top stories are almost always anti-Trump and frame conservative issues in a negative light.

Autocomplete

It's not just the search results that are manipulated (or completely hidden), Google also manipulates search *suggestions* as well. As you have likely noticed when you begin typing something into Google it will give you a list of what it thinks you are searching for (or what it *wants* you to search for).

For example if you just type in "When is," it will suggest four different options depending on what time of year it is, or what other users tend to put after those words. When I just typed "when is" into Google, it came up with "When is Mother's Day" as one, "When is Mother's Day This Year 2017" as the second, "When is Easter" as the third, and "When is the Kentucky Derby" as the fourth autosuggestion. Mother's Day is just a week away as I'm writing this, and the Kentucky Derby was just yesterday.

But after a close look at this autocomplete or "suggested search" feature, it becomes clear that certain autosuggestions are regularly censored so they don't show up. Google has admitted they filter out certain phrases from the autocomplete suggestions if they are "potentially inappropriate."[633] Currently, typing in "Islam is" brings up "a religion of peace" as the top autosuggestion. "Islam is Peace" is the second, and "Islam is not a race" is the third. Meanwhile one of the autosuggestions for Christianity is "Christianity is dying."

Currently, when "Hillary Clinton cri" is typed in, Google suggests "Hillary Clinton credentials," "Hillary Clinton creme brulee," and "Hillary Clinton crazy laugh," but the same search on Yahoo brings up "Hillary Clinton crying," "Hillary Clinton crimes," "Hillary Clinton criminal," and "Hillary Clinton crimes list." Microsoft's Bing brings up "Hillary Clinton crying," "Hillary Clinton criminal," "Hillary Clinton crooked," and "Hillary Clinton crazy."

A search for "Hillary Clinton ind" on Google brings up "Hillary Clinton India," "Hillary Clinton Indiana," and "Hillary Clinton individual donors." On Microsoft's Bing the recommendations are: "Hillary Clinton indictment," "Hillary Clinton indicted," and "Hillary Clinton indictment update."

On Yahoo they are: "Hillary Clinton indictment," Hillary Clinton indictment coming," and "Hillary Clinton indictment coming NY Times."

Autosuggestions involving Hillary's health were also censored when I tested this. Google's autosuggestions for "Hillary Clinton's health" are "Hillary's Clinton's health plan," "Hillary Clinton's healthcare plan," and "Hillary Clinton's healthcare plan 1993."

On Bing, a search for "Hillary Clinton's health" brings up "Hillary Clinton's health issues," "Hillary Clinton's health problems," and then third is "Hillary Clinton's health care plan."

These autosuggestions may have changed by the time you are reading this book, but others and myself have documented the clear protection of Hillary Clinton's autosuggestions by Google during the time period surrounding the 2016 election.[634] If Google manipulated the autosuggestions to protect Hillary Clinton during the election, which all evidence indicates they did, they are most likely doing it for other people, issues, and topics as well.

Un-Googleable

They don't just manipulate the top search results for various topics for their own financial interest or political reasons — sometimes Google outright hides what would be results for certain topics so nothing shows up at all. Sometimes these censored pages are the result of DMCA takedown complaints; sometimes they're the result of a court order which is fairly common in England with their "right to be forgotten laws" that mandate Google hide certain pages from their index; and sometimes it's just because Google feels it's the 'right thing to do.' These topics are considered to be "un-Googleable."

Due to laws in the U.K., Google must remove certain search results when someone obtains a court order to enforce their "right to be forgotten law" which prevents not only the media from reporting on certain facts, but also prevents Google from including them in the search results in all countries that are part of the European Union as well.[635]

As I discussed previously, singer Elton John was able to obtain a court order to silence the British media about him and his 'husband's' fake marriage and deviant lifestyle, as well as remove tweets on Twitter (and videos on YouTube) that mentioned their names in connection with their sex scandal, and that censorship was also implemented on Google as well. Any article mentioning the keywords "celebrity threesome sex scandal" and Elton John's name were dumped down a memory hole and don't show up for people in Europe.[636] Google has different filters in different countries, so in the United States pages will still show up, but in Europe Google has to follow the law and censor such results.[637]

Sky News found that one of their articles about Kelly Osbourne getting sick on the set of her show *The Fashion Police* was removed from Google in Britain (Google.co.uk).[638] This was just two months after the "right to be forgotten" law had passed, enabling people to request the removal of search results they claim are "outdated or damaging" to their character.

The Guardian found that stories about a former Scottish soccer referee who admitted lying about the reason for rescinding a penalty issued to a team had been removed.[639] *The Telegraph* had stories of theirs hidden about the former president of the British Law Society who made fake complains about a colleague of his hoping to get him fired.[640] The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) reported that shortly after the law was put in place Google had censored at least a dozen links to some of their stories as well.[641]

In 2013 when sexually explicit selfies of dozens of A-list celebrities were hacked from their iCloud accounts and posted online, Google made most of the direct links to the photos un-Googleable, and removed the pictures from their Google Image search.[642]

The Church of Scientology has used a number of DMCA (Digital Millennium Copyright Act) takedown notices to have information about their ‘scriptures’ removed which reveal the strange beliefs of high-level Scientologists about the “Lord Xenu” and the creation myth founder L. Ron Hubbard (a former science fiction writer) concocted for his cult.[643] Scientology has also had search results blocked in the EU by using the right to be forgotten statutes.[644]

Google has admitted censoring results for the Chinese government and other oppressive regimes around the world. For example, until 2010 Google had filtered out all websites supporting the independence of Tibet and Taiwan, and even any search results about the infamous Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 where hundreds, possibly thousands, of student protesters were killed by the Chinese government during a pro-democracy demonstration.[645]

Websites and articles in Australia, Israel, Canada, France, Germany, India, and others have also been censored — either due to court orders, or to comply with those countries ‘hate speech’ laws.[646] And of course Google Earth and Google Street view have removed images that governments consider matters of national security.

FTC Investigation

People within the Federal Trade Commission have actually recommended filing a lawsuit against Google for their search manipulation.[647] In 2012 the FTC ended a two year investigation into Google after repeated complaints that their dominance gives them an unfair advantage over other companies because they aren’t just in the search engine business, they’re in the cell phone business (Android), and also sell books, music, and movies through their Google Play store.

Google even has their own product and restaurant reviews that are in direct competition with Yelp, which they have threatened to remove from their search results altogether.[648] The Federal Trade Commission investigation revealed that Google had placed restrictions on search results for content from their competitors, but despite high level staff members at the FTC wanting to file an antitrust suit against them because they were using their monopoly to cause “real harm to consumers and to innovation” through anticompetitive tactics, the commission surprisingly did nothing.[649] Google did however agree to make some voluntary changes in the way they run the algorithms, trying to appease the FTC.

FTC senior advisor Tim Wu admitted Google is “reducing consumer welfare.”[650] And during the antitrust hearing Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) said that, “While the company is a great American success story, their position in the marketplace has led to legitimate questions about whether they have used their market power to disadvantage competitors unfairly and ultimately limit consumer choice.”[651]

A few years later the European Union charged Google with antitrust violations for unfair business practices and fined the company $2.7 billion dollars.[652] One of the officials involved in the decision said, “Google has given its own comparison shopping service an illegal advantage by abusing its dominance in general Internet search. It has promoted its own service, and demoted rival services. It has harmed competition and consumers. That’s illegal under EU antitrust rules…Google has come up with many innovative products and services that have made a difference to our lives. That’s a good thing. But Google’s strategy for its comparison shopping service wasn’t just about attracting customers by making its product better than those of its rivals. Instead, Google abused its market dominance as a search engine by promoting its own comparison shopping service in its search results, and demoting those of competitors.”[653]

Privacy Concerns

Aside from manipulating and censoring search results, Google is engaged in more disturbing and dangerous activities — putting people’s personal information, their homes, and even their lives at risk.

Google keeps a log of everything that everyone searches for and puts tracking cookies (small files) on your computer. Such information is sold to advertisers. This means Google (and anyone they sell that information to) knows about people’s possible health problems from them looking up their symptoms, as well as any personal interests that may be embarrassing if made public. They even know people’s political leanings, which could be used to discriminate against them by a current or potential employer.

Google’s terms of service have changed over the years, at one time the tracking cookies ‘expired’ after 31 years,[654] but more recently they claim the cookies will now expire after two years.[655] The advocacy group Privacy International said Google was “hostile to privacy” and gave them their lowest ranking of any company in their assessment. Even browsing in ‘incognito’ mode on Google Chrome is not private as most people are led to believe.[656] Google knows what you’ve been looking up, and so do countless advertising agencies, political organizations, law enforcement, and anyone else Google wants to give that information to.

For years Gmail users had the content of their emails scanned and read by Google in order to use them to show people advertisements based on what they were writing about.[657] Users consented to this when they agreed to the terms of service which hardly anyone even reads or thinks twice about. After word of this creepy tactic started making headlines, Google announced that they would stop doing so.

In response to critics about their privacy concerns CEO Eric Schmidt, declared, “If you have something that you don’t want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn’t be doing it in the first place.”[658] An interesting statement from a man who allegedly has an open marriage and had his $15 million dollar Manhattan penthouse soundproofed, which *New York Magazine* called a “depraved sex palace” for him and his presumed mistresses.[659]

Google Street view allows anyone to get photos of your home, which is just as easy as looking up pictures of just about anything else. When gathering the 360 degree images of every street in America for the Street View feature Google also collected names, addresses, passwords, emails, text messages, hardware IDs, and browsing histories through people’s home WiFi routers if they weren’t password protected.[660]

Burglars often use Google Street View to conduct reconnaissance on homes and garages before breaking into them.[661] One survey showed that 80% of burglars use social media and Google Street View to case houses they’re planning on burglarizing.[662] Police in Chicago say that a burglar suspected of breaking into at least eight different homes used Google Maps to find expensive houses located on a highway (for an easy escape) and then further cased the homes using Google’s Satellite View of those properties.[663]

As Google grows more powerful and as their products and services become more ingrained in society, the dangers will likely grow in step. Many have voiced concerns about Google Home, which can enable hackers to listen in on people in their living rooms or bedrooms, and similar ‘smart home’ devices allow hackers to remotely open people’s doors making them easy targets for burglars.[664]

Is Google Becoming a God?

Alphabet Inc. (Google’s parent company) CEO Eric Schmidt admitted the plan is to have Google think *for* people, saying, “The goal is to enable Google users to be able to ask the question such as ‘What shall I do tomorrow?’ and ‘What job shall I take?’”[665] Three years later he doubled down on his assertion that Google would think *for* people, telling *The Wall Street Journal*, “I actually think most people don’t want Google to answer their questions, they want Google to tell them what they should be doing next.”[666] Tell us what we *should* be doing? As strange as this sounds their goals are far more disturbing than that.

Google’s executives want the company to be more than just a search engine and smartphone operating system; more than an ebook store and a place to stream music and movies; more than something that runs smart home gadgets and medical devices; they want it to become an artificially intelligent, all-knowing ‘God.’ Then they want to wire it directly into the brains of humans through what’s called a neural interface or BMI (brain machine interface) to merge man with machine, creating a new hybrid species of cyborgs.[667] Their final plan is to then upload the totality of one’s mind into the Cloud or a silicon-based hard drive that’s attached to a robotic body, believing this is the key to ‘immortality’ and ‘transcendence.’[668]

Google’s director of engineering Ray Kurzweil actually said, “So, does God exist? Well, I would say, not yet.”[669] He was hired by Google in 2012 to work full-time on artificial intelligence and is one of the most well-known proponents of transhumanism, which is the idea of merging man with machine to create superhumans. Kurzweil believes that by the year 2099, neural interfaces or BMIs (brain machine interfaces) will be surgically implanted into almost everyone, and that, “humans who do not utilize such implants [will be] unable to meaningfully participate in dialogues with those who do.”[670] He and other transhumanists believe they will elevate humans to the level of gods in what they see as the final phase of humanity’s physical and spiritual evolution as we merge into a cybernetic ‘Borg.’

In a strange and creepy side note, Google reportedly owns P.O. Box 666 on the Caribbean island of Bermuda, which has a zero corporate tax rate, in an apparent effort to prevent paying taxes on about ten billon dollars in annual revenue.[671]

[Author’s Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com or wherever you purchased it from to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them. Almost all of the one-star reviews on my books are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent, hence me adding this note. These fraudulent ratings and reviews could also be part of a larger campaign trying to stop my message from spreading by attempting to tarnish my research through fake and defamatory reviews, so I really need your help to combat this as soon as possible. Thank you!]

Wikipedia

Wikipedia was launched in 2001 as an online encyclopedia that "crowdsourced" its articles by allowing anyone to write and edit them, a strange business model which has surprisingly led to them becoming the fifth most popular website in the world.[672] Its name derives from the words 'Wiki,' which is a website format that allows collaborative modifications, and 'encyclopedia.' It currently has over five million articles and is usually one of the top Google search results for most subjects entered into the search engine.

Unlike traditional encyclopedias, which are written and edited by experts in their field, pretty much anyone can add almost anything to Wikipedia articles, which are then read and believed by countless people. Since Wikipedia has become the most popular online "encyclopedia" and one of the most visited websites online, we must take a serious look at articles published on the site and how they are fact checked, edited, and censored.

Editors at most newspapers and traditional encyclopedia companies have names and titles, not to mention bosses and company policies they must abide by, but much of what happens on Wikipedia is a mystery, and most of the editors and writers are anonymous or only referred to by their online handles which rarely reveal any information about who they actually are or what credentials they have.

Since Wikipedia is free and there are no advertisements on the site, this leads to the question of who funds them? And how did an online 'encyclopedia' that was written by random anonymous people on the Internet come to be a trusted source of information by so many people? Their parent company, the Wikimedia Foundation, employs over 280 people and in 2016 they took in over $80 million dollars in revenue and now have over $91 million dollars in assets.[673] Where does all this money come from, and what are they doing with it since the articles are written and edited by random volunteers on the Internet who have too much time on their hands?

Apparently people just give them money, I'm not sure why, but they do — and a lot. In 2008 they got their largest donation to date, which was $3 million dollars from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, a philanthropic nonprofit organization founded by the former CEO of General Motors.[674] They would later give them millions more. Google has also given millions of dollars to them as well, so its no wonder that Wikipedia articles are usually one of the top search results for just about anything.

Google's co-founder Sergey Brin and his wife have given them hundreds of thousands of dollars of their own personal money, on top of the money Google gave them as a corporation.[675] All donations are tax deductible because the Wikimedia Foundation is registered as a nonprofit organization.

Wikipedia has been involved in several lawsuits over defamation, and a substantial amount of their money has been spent defending them. One of their attorneys, Matt Zimmerman, admitted, “Without strong liability protection, it would be difficult for Wikipedia to continue to provide a platform for user-created encyclopedia content.”[676]

Comedian Stephen Colbert once sarcastically praised Wikipedia for their ‘quality’ by pointing out that the article on Lightsabers (the handheld weapon from *Star Wars*) was longer than the article about the printing press.[677] Since its editorial policies and oversight are so flawed, the site has been called “the abomination that causes misinformation.”[678]

Articles about controversial subjects like global warming, illegal immigration, and abortion all have massive liberal bias, and entries about living people, particularly conservative authors, journalists, and activists, are the most biased on the entire website.

Because Wikipedia has become the go-to place for most people when they want to look something up, major corporations use sock puppet accounts to edit pages about their companies and products trying to paint them in a favorable light and scrub criticism. Such edits have been traced back to people at companies like PepsiCo, Sea World, Walmart, Exxon Mobil, and others, since no company wants negative information about them or their products on an ‘encyclopedia’ article about them.[679]

In 2012 it was discovered that two employees of Wikipedia’s parent company (the Wikimedia Foundation) also ran a public relations business which included editing and monitoring the Wikipedia pages of their clients.[680] In 2015 it was revealed that some Wikipedia editors had been running a coordinated blackmail and extortion racket by using their editorial powers to allow the defamation of public figures and businesses if they didn’t pay them protection money.[681]

These editors would contact businesses and lesser-known ‘celebrities’ whose pages had been rejected due to lacking notoriety or for “excessive promotional content.” As *The Independent* reported, “According to a Wikipedia insider, at this stage the scammers would demand a payment of up to several hundred pounds to successfully ‘re-post or re-surface’ the article, and in some cases demanded an on-going monthly payment to ‘protect’ the articles.”[682]

Before we look at the examples of censorship and liberal bias on Wikipedia as a whole, let’s use my own page as an example. Since I’m a ‘newsworthy’ public figure there is an article about me, which (at the time that I’m writing this book) says that I’m an author and “conspiracy theorist,” best known for my “conspiracy theories” about secret societies like the Bilderberg Group and Bohemian Grove.

At one point in early 2017, the entry was updated to say that I’m an author and media analyst, and cited reports in *The Washington Times* and on Fox News, both calling me that. There was an editor war, and some people kept deleting the reference to me being a media analyst, and then others would change it back, and this continued until an editor locked the page which prevented anyone except approved Wikipedia editors from changing it. I then called out the founder of Wikipedia, Jimmy Wales, on Twitter for the censorship and the two of us exchanged messages privately though DMs and emails about the issue.

He surprisingly and graciously updated the article himself,[683] and used citations to reports from Fox News,[684] *The Washington Times*,[685] and *The Daily Caller* as the sources, all of which identified me as a media analyst.[686] Soon afterward some editors overruled him and deleted any reference to me being a media analyst, claiming the reason was that the citations were to "unreliable sources."[687]

Editors also deleted part of the article which said, "Dice runs a YouTube channel which has over 980,000 subscribers, and more than 300 million views," which is very strange because my YouTube channel is a large part of my career, and as you may know, I had become the most popular conservative YouTuber at the time.[688] The fact that Wikipedia wouldn't allow a reference to my YouTube channel or it's statistics is because they're trying to downplay my popularity and paint me as just some little known 'conspiracy theorist,' not wanting readers to know that I have a huge audience with millions of viewers a week.[689]

They also deleted a reference to a show on the Travel Channel that I had been featured on called *America Declassified*, even though I'm listed on the credits at IMDB, the Internet Movie Database, which is the industry standard for film credits.[690] The false categorizing of my work, and the deletion of prominent facts about my career and popularity are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of Wikipedia's manipulation of information and participation in spreading fake news.

Pages of popular conservatives often have large "Controversies" sections which contain long lists of every little thing they've said that liberals find objectionable or want to amplify. Pages for Ann Coulter, Sean Hannity, Rush Limbaugh, and Michael Savage all have the "Controversy" section or equivalent which nitpick things they've said or done. Wikipedia has even been known to use unflattering photos of conservatives in their profiles.

Conversely, there are relatively few liberal journalists or talk show hosts who have a 'Controversy' section in their articles, or have much negative information about them even mentioned at all. For example, there is no mention on MSNBC's Lawrence O'Donnell's page about his conspiracy theories about President Trump, which got so outrageous that he even claimed Vladimir Putin orchestrated a false flag attack in Syria using chemical weapons to help President Trump's approval ratings.[691] There's not a single mention on Michael Moore's page, or Congresswoman Maxine Waters' page about their endless Russian conspiracy theories either. Maxine Waters even claims, among other strange things, that Russia coined the term "Crooked Hillary" for Donald Trump.[692]

Transgender TV star 'Laverne Cox' was born Roderick Cox, a man, but Wikipedia editors refuse to allow his birth name to be mentioned anywhere on his page.[693] Roderick was the first transgender person to appear on the cover of *Time* magazine and 'she' is hailed as a hero in the liberal media, but unlike every single other actor or actress on the planet who uses a stage name (or legally changes their name), Wikipedia will not allow any mention of the fact that 'Laverne Cox' was born Roderick Cox.[694]

Many of Hollywood's biggest stars use stage names and while never mentioned in the traditional media, their real names are always included on their Wikipedia page, except for 'Laverne's.' Tom Cruise (real name: Tom Mapother), Nicholas Cage (real name: Nicolas Coppola), Katy Perry (real name: Katy Hudson), Demi Moore (real name: Demetria Guynes), Tina Fey (real name Elizabeth Fey), and every other ‘cis gender’ celebrity have their real names included on Wikipedia, but the site gives special treatment to ‘Laverne Cox’ (and probably other transgender people).

Liberal political figures also appear to get special treatment on Wikipedia by editors who carefully guard their pages, trying to keep them portrayed in a positive light. One investigation revealed that a single Wikipedia editor made 2,269 changes to Hillary Clinton’s page over a ten year period from 2006 up until the time she announced she was running for president in 2016 in order to keep as much criticism off it as possible.[695] Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales actually contacted Hillary Clinton’s office to ask how she prefers to be named on the page, either “Hillary Rodham Clinton” or just “Hillary Clinton.”[696]

Jimmy Wales’ own page is heavily protected by the “edit protection mafia” as some people call them, who guard it against criticism. Wales himself has even edited his own page, which is highly frowned upon according to Wikipedia policy, since all edits are supposed to be made only by “disinterested” 3rd parties to avoid conflicts of interest.[697]

He also used his administrative authority to scrub references to his connection to online porn.[698] In the 1990s he cofounded a website called Bomis, which started as a general interest informational site, but then became mostly about porn.[699] Several times he removed any references to pornography, and changed them to call the porn site the “Bomis Babes Blog” instead.[700]

He also made edits to remove any mention of Wikipedia’s co-founder, Larry Sanger, after the two had a falling out.[701] After other editors reverted the changes, Wales again tried to remove the credit to his co-founder. When a technology writer caught the edits and contacted Sanger, he responded, “I must say I am amused. Having seen edits like this, it does seem that Jimmy is attempting to rewrite history. But this is a futile process because in our brave new world of transparent activity and maximum communication, the truth will [come] out.”[702]

Allegations made by the site’s co-founder Larry Sanger are so disturbing, I don’t even want to discuss them. Just to give you an idea, he contacted the FBI in 2010 after he left the company to report certain kinds of images being published in the media section of the website he said Wikipedia was knowingly distributing.[703] After leaving Wikipedia, Sanger started a similar site called Citizendium, where writers have to reveal their real names to avoid many of the problems found on Wikipedia due to anonymous editors and anyone being able to write whatever they want.

For example, the Wikipedia page for *USA Today’*s founding editor John Siegenthaler Sr. had once claimed he was directly involved in the assassination of John F. Kennedy and his brother Bobby.[704] The edit was made as joke by someone, but it stayed up, and when Siegenthaler learned of it he contacted Jimmy Wales, but at first the only thing Wikipedia did is correct the misspelling of a word in the entry. The false claim stayed on the website for four months before it was finally removed, but not before the claims had been repeated on other sites.[705]

A Turkish academic who traveled to Canada was reportedly detained for several hours by immigration officials because of a false claim someone added to his Wikipedia page.[706] Pro golfer Fuzzy Zoeller, who once won the U.S. Open and the Masters Tournament, sued Wikipedia after someone edited his page to say that he beat his wife and abused drugs, allegations which were then picked up by other websites.[707]

Just a few days before a Congressional mid-term election, someone changed the page of House of Representatives Majority Leader Tom DeLay to say that he was a “Grand Dragon” of the Republican Party, a reference to the title of the leader of the KKK. The IP address of the person who changed it was traced back to someone who reportedly worked for *The New York Times*.[708]

Because of the wild west nature of Wikipedia, people often change pages as a joke especially after a politician or a celebrity says something controversial. For example, after senator Ted Cruz got into an exchange on Twitter with the sports website Deadspin and hilariously ‘owned’ them with his response, someone changed the Wikipedia page for Deadspin, which usually reads that it’s owned by parent company Gawker Media, to say it was owned by Ted Cruz.[709] While sometimes these kinds of edits are just harmless and funny pranks, they show the vulnerability of Wikipedia and the dangers of allowing anyone to make changes to articles without proper oversight.

People have changed the pages of celebrities to indicate that they have died, which has sometimes caused the fake news to spread far and wide across the Internet. A sociology student actually added a fake quote to the Wikipedia page of French composer Maurice Jarre immediately after his death as an experiment to see if media outlets would pick it up in their obituaries and many did, including *The Guardian*.[710]

One study that measured how many people viewed pages that were “vandalized” with false information found that 42% of the “damage” was repaired almost immediately, but the majority of the edits which were not quickly corrected were viewed hundreds of millions of times before the articles had been fixed.”[711]

Sometimes Wikipedia editors will even create an entire article about a topic or an issue hoping to shine a spotlight on it to further promote their political leanings. For example, there was a lengthy article titled “Criticism of George W. Bush,” but the “Criticism of Barack Obama” page had been deleted four different times by Wikipedia editors who kept claiming the article “has no meaningful, substantive content,” and called it an, “Attack page” that was “unsourced.”[712]

After the edit wars continued, the site finally allowed the “Criticism of Barack Obama” page to stay, but renamed it to “The Public Image of…” and of course Obama’s main page is mostly praise. The edit summary for the decision to rename and redirect the ‘Criticism’ section of Obama’s page reads, “so the conservatards [conservative retards] won’t get their knickers in a twist.”[713]

The article about the United States Presidential Election of 2016 highlights liberals’ conspiracy theories about Russian interference, and on Donald Trump’s page in the section about his campaign for president it points out, “The alt-right movement coalesced around Trump’s candidacy,” and claims, “During the campaign, Trump was accused of pandering to white nationalists,” and “Fact-checking organizations have denounced Trump for making a record number of false statements compared to other candidates.”[714]

Editors have also been known to delete pages of conservatives who they don’t feel warrant being mentioned on the site because when someone has a Wikipedia page, even if it is in a completely negative light, it gives the impression that the person is noteworthy or famous, and sometimes editors don't want to validate the person's success by dedicating a page to them. For example shortly after radio talk show host Wayne Dupree was named one of the Top 50 Influential Black Republicans for 2017, someone decided to create a Wikipedia page for him, but editors soon deleted it.[715] The gatekeepers don't want to let people know about black conservatives because liberals are trying to control the narrative by continuing to perpetuate the myth that all black people are Democrats.

White, heterosexual, Christian men are usually demonized as the cause of every evil in the world by the liberal media today.[716] White people are held in such disdain by the liberal media that they are often told they should be ashamed of being white, and if they have any measure of success in life it's because they have "white privilege" which is said to be the primary reason for it, meaning they benefit from what liberals call an inherent white supremacist ideology incorporated into American society and its institutions.[717]

White people are being cast in such a negative light in the media and on college campuses today that they are encouraged to be ashamed of being white, and if any white person happens to be proud of their culture then they are painted as a racist and white supremacist. Every other race can be happy about who they are, except white people. A comparison between articles about White Pride, Black Pride, and Asian Pride on Wikipedia illustrates this double standard. For example, the White Pride article states, "White pride is a motto primarily used by white separatist, white nationalist, neo-Nazi and white supremacist organizations in order to signal racist or racialist viewpoints."[718]

Compare this to the article on Black Pride, which reads, "Black pride is a movement in response to dominant white cultures and ideologies that encourages black people to celebrate black culture and embrace their African heritage."[719]

The entry for Asian Pride reads that in the United States, "Asian Pride (also spelled AZN pride) is a positive stance to being Asian American."[720] The anti-white bias in the 'pride' articles is Cultural Marxism, which ironically Wikipedia calls a conspiracy theory.[721] Cultural Marxism is the use of the media to perpetuate Leftist ideologies such as political correctness, gender bending, and other sexual perversions as if they are normal and cool. Cultural Marxism uses pop culture and celebrity icons to promote regressive Leftist policies and behaviors to the masses so people will mimic these influencers by thinking their attitudes and actions are "cool." While Wikipedia calls Cultural Marxism a conspiracy theory, the Southern Poverty Law Center calls it a conspiracy theory with an "anti-Semitic twist."[722]

Wikipedia also uses their home page to highlight featured articles and have an "On This Day in History" section and other trivia boxes which all promote liberal causes, and progressive historical figures and activists. *Frontpage* magazine did an investigation into Wikipedia's liberal bias and published their results in a two part series titled "How the Left Conquered Wikipedia." It starts off saying, "Finding examples of Wikipedia's bias is not difficult. One need only compare the entries of figures who do the same thing but from opposite sides of the political spectrum."[723]

They compared the pages of several prominent conservative political commentators like Ann Coulter to popular liberals like Michael Moore and found that the negative bias was overwhelming. At the time of their investigation the "Controversies and Criticism" section of Ann Coulter's page was over 35% of the article, where Michael Moore's was under 5% in terms of the word count.[724] The Criticism section on Keith Olbermann's page was also just 5% of the article.

Che Guevara's page had less than 2% dedicated to criticism. He's the Leftist communist revolutionary who is adored by liberals even though he oversaw the executions of at least one hundred political prisoners in Cuba.[725] Editors also guard the Southern Poverty Law Center's page, along with its founder Morris Dees. For example information about Morris Dees' alleged abuse of his ex-wife and his supposed affairs keep getting censored from his page.[726] The SPLC is the organization dedicated to painting conservatives as racists, homophobic, xenophobic, and anti-government extremists.

After Google put 'human rights activist' Yuri Kochiyama on their homepage in May of 2016 as a "Google Doodle," some media outlets pointed out that she openly admired Osama Bin Laden and other violent revolutionaries like Che Guevara and Fidel Castro.[727] Wikipedia editors quickly removed such information from her page and tried to hide the fact that she was a black supremacist. An edit war ensued and editors settled on having her page admit she supported black "separatism."

Breitbart News pointed out that the edit log showed the page had been edited more times in the 24 hours after she was featured on Google's home page than it had been edited in the last two years combined, and conclude that, "The Wikipedia edit log is a stark example of the lengths to which the left will go to rewrite history."[728]

A study of the demographics of Wikipedia editors found that over 85% of them were men with an average age of 27, most of whom do not have a girlfriend or any kids.[729] It appears many of them are loners trying to gain a sense of power by controlling how the world sees the people or issues they write about.

WikiTribune

Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales says that the day after the election of Donald Trump he came up with an idea for a news website to "combat fake news." A few months later, the *WikiTribune* was announced. "That was when I really decided to move forward," he told *The Guardian*, speaking of Trump's victory.[730]

Wales said, "The news is broken and we can fix it. We're bringing genuine community control to our news with unrestricted access for all. We're developing a living, breathing tool that'll present accurate information with real evidence, so that you can confidently make up your own mind."[731]

It's paid for by crowdfunding and started with an initial staff of ten journalists.[732] *The Guardian* pointed out, "Those who donate will become supporters, who in turn will have a say in which subjects and story threads the site focuses on. And Wales intends that the community of readers will fact-check and subedit published articles."[733] So it sounds like the WikiTribune will have some of the same flaws as Wikipedia.

While it may have been a noble idea in theory that having a community of users who watch pages and are able to add to them or correct errors, as *Frontpage* points out, “Wikipedia in practice has strayed from these utopian ideas because of the ease with which political and social bias trumps altruism.”[734]

The fact that Wikipedia is the default online encyclopedia is horrifying considering I’ve only mentioned a handful of the problems the site has. And with the ability to misinform so many people with bias or malicious information, it should not be considered a reliable source of information and should just be avoided altogether.

CNN

CNN started out as the first cable news network, which is what CNN actually stands for, when it was launched in 1980 by entrepreneur Ted Turner. Back then it was revolutionary and changed the entire news industry by rapidly deploying correspondents anywhere around the world and covering breaking news as it happened, but today CNN is just a shell of its former self. As comedian Larry Wilmore once said, "I've been watching CNN a long time. Yep. I used to watch it back when it was a news network."[735]

As the 2016 election approached, CNN's coverage got more biased and absurd by the day, and after Trump won, they completely fell off the rails and lost any resemblance to a news network whatsoever. At first their pundits blamed Trump's victory on a "white lash" and "white supremacists," and then they veered off into the Twilight Zone, attacking President Trump for eating two scoops of ice cream and speculated that he may be "afraid of stairs" because he held onto the handrail when exiting Air Force One.

President Trump famously pushed back against their odd and obsessive attacks telling their White House correspondent Jim Acosta that CNN was "fake news" which caused the network to have even more animosity towards the new president.

Just two months after the election, with their reputation in shambles, CNN's president Jeff Zucker said he felt like his network's credibility "is higher than ever."[736] Let's not forget this is the network where host Fareed Zakaria boldly declared just before the election, "Trump will lose, and he will then destroy the Republican Party,"[737] and the tone of their coverage as the election approached gave the impression that Hillary's victory was inevitable.

CNN's reputation has been so damaged in recent years that host Jake Tapper was singled out by President Obama during the 2016 White House Correspondents Dinner when Obama joked that Tapper left journalism to join CNN.[738] Poor Jake even admitted that his own seven-year-old son now calls him 'fake news' to taunt him.[739]

For decades, CNN has been selling their anchors' likeness and their trademarked logo to be used in fake news segments in Hollywood films.[740] CNN's now defunct show *Crossfire* recorded a fake segment for Jody Foster's film *Contact* (1997); Larry King, once the face of the network, has played himself in various films where he staged discussions to make them look like they were part of his CNN show; Bernard Shaw, the network's lead news presenter for twenty years, recorded a fake news segment for *Jurassic Park: The Lost World* (1997); and Anderson Cooper recorded a fake news segment for *Batman vs. Superman* in 2016.[741] So at this point it would be inaccurate to say that CNN *wasn't* producing fake news, but their unethical and deceptive actions go far beyond scripting fictional news segments for movies.

Like the time they conducted what looked like a live interview via satellite between Ashleigh Banfield and Nancy Grace using the standard split screen display with each of them appearing to be in different parts of the country, but some viewers at home happened to notice that the same cars, trucks, and even a giant bus were seen driving by in the background behind each of them, passing by one person then just a second or two later, the same vehicles would drive right past the other because they were standing right next to one another in the same parking lot.[742]

After a heroic firefighter saved an infant who had been abandoned in a hot car in a parking lot, he did a live interview with CNN's sister station HLN while wearing a "Trump" shirt and when the segment was replayed later in the day, which is common for cable news networks, they blurred out his T-shirt![743]

CNN was actually sued for reporting what the plaintiff claims was fake news about a hospital he ran as CEO after they aired a story depicting it as having an infant mortality rate of three times the national average, saying they intentionally manipulated statistics.[744] Exposing the fake news from CNN could fill an entire book itself, so in this chapter I'll just cover a few examples and some of the insane things their contributors regularly say. We'll also look at the claims that CNN has cozied up to dictatorships in hopes of getting interviews or to further CNN's business interests in certain countries.

CNN's 2016 Election Aftermath

Just a few weeks before the election, when Trump was warning about possible hacking of electronic voting machines, CNN ran a story titled, "No, the presidential election can't be hacked,"[745] and dismissed Trump's concerns, but right after Hillary's devastating loss they published a story with the headline, "Where's the outrage over Russia's hack of the US election?"[746]

During one of their endless discussions on conspiracy theories about the Trump campaign 'colluding' with Russians to 'steal' the election from Hillary, they even used B-roll from a video game called Fallout 4 in a segment about "Russian Hackers."[747] B-roll, for those who don't know, is the stock footage that is played during a news story while the reporter or anchor is talking about it. They literally used a clip from a video game during a 'news' story about their 'Russian collusion' speculation!

CNN contributor Bob Baer actually wanted an election "do over." When he mentioned this on air a surprised host asked, "Bob, if I'm hearing you correctly, you're saying we should have another election?"

Baer responds, "When a foreign country interferes in your election and the outcome is in doubt, the legitimacy of the government, I don't know how it works constitutionally, I'm not a lawyer, constitutional lawyer, but I'm deeply disturbed by the fact that the Russians interfered…I don't see any other way than to vote again."[748]

After Trump was elected, CNN's senior media analyst Brian Stelter asked, "Is this something of a national emergency?" and wondered if journalists were just "afraid to say so."[749] He also asked, "Do citizens in dictatorships recognize what's happening right here right now?" and wondered "Are they looking at the first two days of the Trump administration and saying, 'Oh, that's what my leader does?'"[750] Yes, he actually equated President Trump's inauguration with a dictator taking over.

Then later that day when it was learned that President Trump picked Frank Sinatra's *My Way* for the first dance at the Presidential Inaugural Ball, CNN reported that Sinatra's daughter Nancy was upset that Trump was using her father's song. The original headline to the story was, "Nancy Sinatra Not Happy Trump Using Father's Song at Inauguration."[751] She then responded on Twitter saying, "That's not true. I never said that. Why do you lie, CNN?"[752]

They then changed the headline and made major changes to the article and added an editor's note claiming they just "updated" it.[753] How could they make such a huge mistake, causing Nancy Sinatra to not only say she never said such a thing, but to call CNN liars? Most likely some editor probably voiced their opinion that they thought she would be upset about Trump's song choice, or said that they had 'heard' she was upset (which was just them hearing someone else's opinion that she might be) which they then decided to actually publish as if it were a real story.

Hands Up Don't Shoot

CNN's fake news problem dates back at least several years, and one of the prime examples is them perpetuating the 'hands up don't shoot' hoax which largely gave rise to Black Lives Matter. The saying was falsely attributed to Michael Brown, the six-foot-four three hundred pound thug who robbed a convenience store before attacking a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014 resulting in him being shot and killed. After covering the protests one night, host Sally Kohn concluded her show saying "We want you to know, that our hearts are out there marching with them," and then she and her three other panelists all held up their hands in solidarity with the protesters who had adopted the gesture as a symbol of their cause.[754]

After the investigation into the shooting of Michael Brown was complete, even the most liberal of news outlets admitted the claim that he had his hands up when he was shot was a lie, and that narrative was ranked one of the biggest lies of the year, even by the far left *Washington Post*.[755] The damage had long been done though. 'Hands up don't shoot' had become the rallying cry of Black Lives Matter, and the slogan was printed on signs at protests and on people's t-shirts; and the lie that Michael Brown was an innocent victim, murdered by a racist police force had taken root.[756] Milwaukee Sheriff David Clarke would later say that fake news was born in Ferguson when the liberal media propagated the 'hands up, don't shoot' lie."[757]

“Black People Can’t Be Racist”

CNN’s descent into the fake news swamp coincided with their alignment with identity politics and social justice warriors who see straight white men as being the source of all of society’s problems. Many of their black contributors seem to harbor a deep resentment for white people and regularly make bizarre statements about race. CNN contributor Marc Lamont Hill actually denies that black people can be racist at all.

In one segment talking about Black Lives Matter he said, “To say that the Black Lives Matter movement is racist is bizarre to me,” and continued, “not just because black people don’t have the institutional power to be racist or to deploy racism, but because the movement has called for justice, it’s called for demilitarization, it’s called for nonviolence.”[758] Such a claim is laughable considering they’ve chanted that they want more dead cops. Violence, looting, and rioting are often a regular feature at Black Lives Matter gatherings.[759]

This same contributor called black community leaders who met with President Trump shortly after the election to discuss how to help their communities, “mediocre negros.”[760] This was just one day after Martin Luther King the 3rd met with Trump,[761] and shortly after Steve Harvey, Pastor Darrell Scott, and Kanye West met with him too.[762] MLK’s niece had publicly revealed that she herself had voted for Trump,[763] but the narrative CNN pushes is that only racist white people support President Trump and that black people should despise and fear him.

When one contributor mentioned that neither Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama had denounced the repeated incidents of violence at the hands of the anti-Trump protesters, calling the attacks politically motivated hate crimes, black CNN contributor Symone Sanders responded, “I’m sorry, hate crimes and protesting are not the same things. A hate crime is a crime that is committed against somebody because of their religion, because of what they look like, because of their sexual orientation. That’s not the same thing as protesting.”[764]

Panelist Carl Higbie answered, “What do you say to the people who dragged a poor white guy out of a car and beat him?”

She responded, “Oh my goodness, poor white people! Please!” she responded. “Oh my. Stop. Stop, Carl.”

The puzzled-looking panelist responded, “That’s not protesting! Dragging someone out of their car and beating them is not protesting.”[765]

CNN’s anti-white racial bias has become the norm at the network. After the Grammys in 2016 CNN asked, “Is racism why Adele beat Beyoncé at the Grammys?” and said, “Certainly for her diehard fan base known as the Beyhive — and for many music critics — Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* was a creative masterpiece. But with its racial themes and imagery, some are questioning if the project was ‘just too black’ for Grammy voters.”[766]

The Daily Beast (a website started by *Newsweek*) echoed this insanity and said Beyoncé was a "victim of racism," and that, "Once again, the Grammy Awards got caught with their pants around their ankles."[767]

CNN deceptively edited the statements of a black woman who encouraged angry protesters to go burn down homes and businesses in white suburbs to give the appearance that she had actually called for peace![768] After an armed thug named Sylville Smith was shot and killed by police in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, riots broke out with businesses looted and set on fire, and white people were targeted for assault by the angry mob of black thugs.[769] The next day the perpetrator's sister Sherelle Smith gave a statement to the media where she encouraged the mob to move from the black neighborhood into the white suburbs, saying, "Don't bring that violence here. Burnin' down shit ain't going to help nothin! Y'all burnin' down shit we need in our community. Take that shit to the suburbs. Burn that shit down! We need our shit!"[770]

CNN showed a brief segment of her statement and then muted her while the reporter did a voice over saying she called for peace. After the unedited video went viral online CNN issued an on-air apology the next day for their deceptive editing.[771]

CNN on Wikileaks

After Wikileaks published Hillary's campaign manager John Podesta's emails, morning host Chris Cuomo discouraged people from visiting Wikileaks' website to read them, and claimed, "it's illegal to possess the stolen documents," but "it's different for the media. So everything you're learning about this, you're learning from us."[772]

In other words, don't read them yourself, just trust CNN to tell you what they say and what their significance is. While it is illegal to hack in and steal someone's emails, it's not illegal to read those stolen emails if the hacker gives them to you or even post them online as long as the person posting them wasn't conspiring with the hacker to get them. It's interesting to note that Chris Cuomo has over one million Twitter followers, but can barely get a dozen likes or retweets on most things he posts, and such low engagement is usually only found on accounts that have bought fake followers in order to give people the appearance of being more popular than they are.

This is the same host who said on several occasions that being called 'fake news' is the equivalent of being called the N-word,[773] and wants to teach young girls 'tolerance' so they don't get uncomfortable seeing naked men in women's locker rooms when biological males who 'identify' as women use the facilities.[774]

Censoring Atrocities

CNN's chief war correspondent Christiane Amanpour admitted that reporters were self-censoring themselves in their coverage of the buildup to — and during — the Iraq War, and looking back on the events says that they weren't rigorous enough, didn't ask the right questions, and later characterized the Bush administration's reasons for going to war as "disinformation at the highest levels."[775]

Eason Jordan, their former chief news executive, admits censoring stories about the atrocities Saddam Hussein and his sons had committed in Iraq because the network didn't want their Iraqi CNN affiliates to face repercussions by the regime.[776] Just after the Iraq War started in 2003, he wrote an op-ed for *The New York Times* titled, "The News We Kept To Ourselves," and tried to justify keeping various atrocities he knew of a secret because revealing them would have "jeopardized the lives of Iraqis, particularly those on our Baghdad staff."[777] He said that some of the events he knew about still haunt him.

The Media Research Center, a conservative media watchdog group, asked, "If accurate reporting from Iraq was impossible, why was access to this dictatorship so important in the first place? And what truths about the thugs who run other totalitarian states — like North Korea, Cuba and Syria — are fearful and/or access-hungry reporters hiding from the American public?"[778]

Former CNN reporter Peter Collins, who was in Baghdad during the buildup to the first Gulf War, said that he was with Eason Jordan and CNN's president Tom Johnson during meetings with Iraqi officials where they were hoping to get an interview with Saddam Hussein. Collins later revealed, "I was astonished. From both the tone and the content of these conversations, it seemed to me that CNN was virtually groveling for the interview."[779]

A few months later he wrote an op-ed for *The Washington Times* about his experience titled "Corruption at CNN" where he said he felt CNN was broadcasting Saddam Hussein's propaganda for him in hopes of getting an exclusive interview with him (which they got scooped by CBS). "I thought long and hard; could I be comfortable with a news organization that played those kinds of games? I decided, no, I could not, and resigned."[780]

These aren't the only startling allegations of this kind. In 2012, former CNN journalist Amber Lyon went public with her experience of working for the network, giving details of what she said were more clear examples of them catering to dictatorships.[781]

"What CNN is doing is they are essentially creating what some people have termed 'infomercials for dictators.' And that's the sponsored content that they are airing on CNN International that is actually being paid for by regimes and governments," she said. "And this violates every principle of journalistic ethics, because we're supposed to be watchdogs on these governments. We are not supposed to allow them to be a paying customer as journalists. And that's the issue here — that CNN is feeding, then, this propaganda to the public and not fairly disclosing to the public that this is sponsored content."[782]

CNN Host Ate Human Brains

In March of 2017, CNN aired an episode of a reality show / documentary series titled *Believer* with host Reza Aslan, a former Christian turned Muslim, who traveled around the world exploring all sorts of bizarre religious practices. One of the groups he interviewed was a cannibalistic sect of Hindus in India called the Aghoris, who literally cook members of their tribe when they die and eat them. He didn't just interview them, he actually joined them around a bonfire where they cooked their friends' dead body and his brain.[783] When word began spreading online about this after the episode aired, many people (myself included) thought maybe he just sat there and observed their cannibal barbecue, but the host actually ate human brains too, and CNN really did air it.[784]

Just before the episode aired he posted on his Facebook page, "Want to know what a dead guy's brain tastes like? Charcoal. It was burnt to a crisp!"[785] Yes, the self-proclaimed "most trusted name in news" resorted to having one of their hosts eat dinner at a cannibal barbecue hoping to get people to tune in and watch. Reza Aslan was later fired for posting profanity-filled rants on Twitter aimed at the president and his children.[786]

Employees 'Resign' Over False Stories

CNN's Trump/Russia conspiracy theories got so out of control that at one point a group of staffers 'resigned' after one of the stories put CNN at risk of being sued for defamation by one of Trump's associates who the report focused on.[787] He threatened to sue, and the story was not only retracted, but completely removed from CNN's website. In its place was a retraction, reading, "CNN.com published a story connecting Anthony Scaramucci with investigations into the Russian Direct Investment Fund. That story did not meet CNN's editorial standards and has been retracted. Links to the story have been disabled. CNN apologizes to Mr. Scaramucci."[788]

An executive editor then sent an internal memo to staff at CNN, which someone leaked, reading in part, "No one should publish any content involving Russia without coming to me and Jason first. This applies to social, video, editorial, and MoneyStream. No exceptions."[789] Their reckless editorial policy was coming back to bite them.

CNN's 'sources' became so bad that they reported former FBI Director James Comey would testify that he did *not* tell President Trump that he wasn't under a criminal investigation regarding the allegations of Russian interference in the election, but just a few hours later Comey's testimony proved CNN laughably wrong again.[790] Wolf Blitzer would later reprimand reporter Gloria Borger on air her for bad sources, saying that, "either they don't know what they're talking about or they're lying."[791]

The very next day after the group of staffers resigned when another conspiracy theory was debunked, CNN was hit by another devastating blow to their credibility when hidden camera footage was released showing a long-time producer making some stunning revelations that further called into question the network's integrity.

Project Veritas

An undercover video of a CNN producer who worked at the network for almost fifteen years was published by the political activist organization Project Veritas showing him admitting that CNN's constant coverage of the Trump/Russia conspiracy theories was "mostly bullshit," just "for the ratings," and that he thought President Trump was right to call it a "witch hunt."[792] The producer also laughed about the 'ethics' of the news business today.

Another video was released by Project Veritas the following day showing CNN host Van Jones calling the Trump/Russia 'investigation' a "big nothing burger."[793] A second producer was also caught on tape saying that 90% of the staff at CNN were anti-Trump, and that he thought the American people are "stupid as shit" for voting for him.[794]

The Washington Post published a story downplaying the significance of the footage and made an obviously false statement about it, which then led to the *Post* issuing a retraction about their own story trying to call into question the validity of the Project Veritas videos, making the whole thing look even worse for CNN.[795]

It's unclear if CNN can ever repair the damage to their brand, and based off their editorial polices in recent years they appear to have completely abandoned any desire to be an actual news network. While many wonder if CNN will eventually go bankrupt due to destroying their once great reputation, they will likely stay in business and continue to function as a Leftist propaganda channel, although with a much smaller audience than they once enjoyed during their prime.

NBC News

One of the most shocking examples of fake news was when NBC aired a story about General Motors' trucks having faulty gas tanks that could rupture if they got into an accident and possibly explode. While this was a real concern, NBC actually staged a scene where they crashed a car into the side of a GM truck and blew it up. It turns out that NBC producers not only put the wrong gas cap on the truck so it would pop off causing fuel to squirt out, but they also attached lit flares underneath the car that crashed into the truck so when the fuel spilled out of the tank, it caught on fire and blew up.[796]

The scene was dramatic, with a huge fireball engulfing the two vehicles, and news of the exploding gas tanks was now everywhere. But General Motors was suspicious and obtained the vehicles from the junkyard and had them forensically analyzed.

GM sued NBC after the analysis revealed what actually happened and NBC later admitted they staged the whole thing. "We apologize to our viewers and to General Motors. We have also concluded that unscientific demonstrations should have no place in hard news stories at NBC. That's our new policy," they said in a statement.[797]

Another embarrassing and unethical blunder was accidentally exposed live on air when a reporter was shown in a canoe rowing down the middle of flooded streets in New Jersey after heavy rain. As soon as she began her segment the live shot looked like she was in six feet of water in the middle of a suburb, but then two men came walking by directly in front of her, showing the water was only ankle deep.[798]

Looking bewildered, anchor Matt Lauer asked what just happened, and the staff in the New York studio could be heard laughing off camera. "Are these holy men, perhaps walking on top of the water?" he joked, not sure what else to say. Years later Jimmy Fallon asked Matt Lauer about the incident when he was a guest on *The Tonight Show*, but he didn't want to talk about it and sarcastically said, "Thank you for bringing that up, James. I can't wait to check my email when I get done with this show."[799]

NBC has a history of deceptively editing people's comments which causes them to be misrepresented to the audience. One of the most well-known examples of this is when they edited George Zimmerman's call to 911 just before he got into an altercation with Trayvon Martin and ended up fatally shooting him. NBC's version of the call had Zimmerman on the phone with the operator saying, "This guy looks like he's up to no good. He looks black," but the actual conversation was Zimmerman saying, "This guy looks like he's up to no good. Or he's on drugs or something. It's raining and he's just walking around, looking about."[800]

The dispatcher then replies: “OK, and this guy — is he black, white or Hispanic?”

Zimmerman then responds, “He looks black.”

Even *The Washington Post*, a far left newspaper, admitted, “No matter how you feel about Zimmerman, that bit of tape editing was unfair to the truth and to Zimmerman’s reputation.”[801] Zimmerman sued the network for defamation with the lawsuit saying, “NBC saw the death of Trayvon Martin not as a tragedy but as an opportunity to increase ratings, and so set about to create the myth that George Zimmerman was a racist and predatory villain.”[802]

After Rudolf Guiliani gave an interview on Fox News about President Trump’s proposed travel restriction which would temporarily prevent immigrants from several countries plagued by terrorism from coming to the U.S., NBC aired a segment using an edited sound bite taken out of context in attempts to frame Guiliani’s statements as if this was a ‘Muslim ban’ when he specifically said it was not.[803]

NBC also deceptively edited comments by Reince Priebus on the same issue, again giving the false impression that Trump was proposing to ban all Muslims from entering the U.S. when Priebus too said exactly the opposite. NBC’s story was titled “Reince Priebus on Muslim Registry: ‘Not Going to Rule Out Anything,’”[804] based on an interview he had with *Meet The Press* host Chuck Todd. NBC also tweeted that when Reince was asked by Todd, “Can you rule out a registry for Muslims?” he answered, “I’m not going to rule out anything.” They actually cut his statement short to give readers the wrong impression, because he actually said, “I’m not gonna rule out anything, but we’re not going to have a registry based on a religion.”[805]

Surprisingly *New York Times* political correspondent Maggie Habernman called out NBC for the deceptive edit, saying that Reince’s actual quote indicates the opposite of what NBC framed it.[806] Even BuzzFeed’s senior technology writer Charlie Warzel said it was an “irresponsible half-quote [without] even a link for context.”[807]

Perhaps Katie Couric, who worked as an anchor for NBC, learned the art of deceptively editing video clips in order to cast people in a false light there, because she was sued for twelve million dollars in 2016 by several people who claimed just that after they appeared in her anti-gun documentary *Under the Gun*.[808]

Trump once tweeted that NBC is the same fake news media that said there is ‘no path to victory’ for him during the election, and ridiculed them for pushing the phony Russian collusion stories.[809] NBC got so defensive over people calling them ‘fake news’ due to their obsession with conspiracy theories about Russia ‘colluding’ with the Trump administration that *Meet The Press* host Chuck Todd and others put together an article titled “Four Reasons Why the Russia Story Isn’t Fake News.”[810]

Just one month after Donald Trump took the oath of office, NBC News produced a segment called “Dear Mr. President: Kids Talk Donald Trump” which showed a bunch of young kids voicing their fears about the new president.[811] Instead of being just a cute segment of innocent kids asking questions about the presidency, it looked like a propaganda piece that North Korea would produce.

Some of the statements the children made were: “Most of my family is black. I’m afraid that you’re gonna hurt some of us blacks.” “You are here, attempting to white-wash America.” “I don’t like your definition of American, because I don’t seem to fit within it,” and, “Some of my friends are really scared about you building a wall and the travel ban, because a lot of their families live in different places.”

It was clear the kids had no idea what they were talking about and their parents, who had to approve of their appearance, were behind the camera coaching them on what to say. The segment was widely denounced online for using children in an anti-Trump propaganda piece portrayed as ‘news’ by a major network.[812]

NBC actually had people dress up as Muslims and attend a NASCAR race in Virginia in order to attempt to spark negative reactions from the other attendees. NASCAR fans, as you probably are well aware of, are often stereotyped as racist rednecks, and so NBC thought they could easily find a few drunk hicks who would give dirty looks to the Muslims.[813] When their stunt was discovered many people denounced NBC for violating journalistic ethics. “It is outrageous that a news organization of NBC’s stature would stoop to the level of going out to create news instead of reporting news,” said NASCAR spokesman Ramsey Poston.[814] The segment never aired, likely because they didn’t get the negative reactions they had hoped for.

This is the same network that still employs Brian Williams, even after his admittedly false claims about being under enemy fire while covering the Iraq War.[815] Perhaps they appreciate his ability to keep a straight face while mischaracterizing things and framing stories in a false light. President Trump can do nothing right in the eyes of NBC. After his first press conference Brian Williams categorized it as, “a live special television event brought to you by narcissism, thin skin, chaos and deeply personal grievances.”[816]

Other NBC anchors just seem to complain about Trump instead of actually reporting on what he’s doing. When Andrea Mitchell was the guest host of *Meet The Press* she mentioned that Trump’s plan to fix Obamacare was just a bunch of white men who wanted to cut off healthcare for women.[817]

When their *Nightly News* anchor Lester Holt interviewed President Trump for the first time, he interrupted him nine times in just two and a half minutes, barely letting him finish a sentence before he would cut him off to challenge what he was saying, or ask him something else as if he didn’t want him to finish his point.[818]

Every night on NBC News their disdain for President Trump is clear in how they frame their opening segment and cast their coverage of him in the most negative light possible. They too have long given up on objectivity in exchange for being another weapon in the arsenal of the Liberal Establishment.

CBS News

Shortly after the ‘fake news’ phenomenon swept the country, CBS actually changed their slogan to “Real News” in what many thought was a pathetic try-hard attempt hoping to somehow convince people they were a ‘trustworthy’ network. Many people joked that if a news station has to claim they’re “real news” then there’s a real problem. In this chapter you’ll see just a sample of some of the fake news coming from CBS and why they’re so defensive about being a ‘real’ news network.

One of the first of what would unfortunately become many instances of disturbing crimes being broadcast on Facebook Live was when four black thugs in Chicago broadcast themselves torturing a white mentally handicapped man.[819] He was bound, gagged, and had his clothes and hair slashed with a knife. National news outlets were hesitant to report on it at first, and it wasn’t until the horrifying video went viral on social media that the major networks finally mentioned it. But a report that CBS aired about the incident is one of the most misleading segments produced by a national news outlet.

The report aired on CBS radio stations as part of the top of the hour newsbreak and began with the announcer saying, “The viral video of a beating and knife attack in Chicago suggests the assault had racial overtones. CBS’s Dean Reynolds tells us the victim is described as a mentally-challenged teenager. In the video he is choked and repeatedly called the n-word. His clothes are slashed and he is terrorized with a knife. His alleged captors repeatedly reference Donald Trump. Police are holding four people in connection with the attack.”[820]

While “technically” correct, there couldn’t be a better example of a misleading report. In reality, the victim was white and the perpetrators were black, and while the attackers were “referencing Donald Trump” they were saying “Fuck Donald Trump, and fuck white people.”[821] The victim was called a “nigga” because that term, as you likely know, is often used as both an insult and a term of endearment, and yes, black people call white people “nigga” as an insult and to intimidate them.

CBS never apologized for the misleading report after it was denounced online, they just ignored the criticism and pretended like nothing happened. Their report was so backwards that it couldn’t have just been from a producer getting the basic facts wrong — it must have taken some serious mental gymnastics for them to twist the story around 180 degrees from what actually happened to give the listeners the impression that a group of racist Donald Trump supporters attacked a black man. The black perpetrators were charged with multiple felonies, including hate crimes for the attack.[822]

This is far from an isolated incident of CBS presenting stories in a false light to either protect liberals or smear conservatives. For example, CBS doctored an interview with Bill Clinton when he was asked about Hillary's infamous fainting incident in order to omit Bill's embarrassing gaffe that such a thing happened "frequently." On PBS, Charlie Rose asked him if it was something more serious than people thought, and Bill answered, "If it is, it's a mystery to me and all of her doctors, because frequently, not frequently — rarely — but on more than one occasion over the last many, many years, the same sort of thing has happened to her where she got severely dehydrated."[823]

When the same interview aired later that day on CBS, they deceptively edited out the part where Bill said "frequently." Because it would have been an obvious jump cut, they actually inserted a brief clip of Charlie Rose over the edit as a reaction shot so viewers wouldn't notice the quick edit.[824]

CBS News' Investigative Correspondent Sharyl Attkisson, who worked for the network for twenty years, resigned in 2014 citing the network's liberal bias.[825] She said that it was a "struggle" to get her reports on the air (i.e., to avoid the censorship of her stories by CBS) and later published a book titled *Stonewalled: One Reporter's Fight for Truth in Obama's Washington*.

In the later part of her career she had investigated the Benghazi attack as well as Operation Fast and Furious, a covert gun-running scheme which transferred weapons to Mexican drug cartels in what many believe was a false flag operation to then blame American gun stores for firearms ending up in the hands of narco groups.[826] So, Sharyl wasn't just a reporter, she was investigating some very serious scandals the Obama administration didn't want people to know about. A year before her resignation she had learned, and CBS News confirmed, that her computer had been hacked into by a sophisticated hacker on multiple occasions when she was investigating the Benghazi cover-up.[827]

CBS confirmed, "Evidence suggests this party performed all access remotely using Attkisson's accounts. While no malicious code was found, forensic analysis revealed an intruder had executed commands that appeared to involve search and exfiltration of data. This party also used sophisticated methods to remove all possible indications of unauthorized activity, and alter system times to cause further confusion. CBS News is taking steps to identify the responsible party and their method of access."[828]

Just a month earlier it was revealed that Obama's Justice Department had secretly obtained the emails and phone records of Fox News' White House correspondent James Rosen trying to find out who his sources were. So it's likely that some Deep State operatives in the NSA or CIA were snooping around in Sharyl Attkisson's computer to see what she was working on and who she was talking to.[829] The CIA admits they hacked into the computers of members of the Senate Intelligence Committee when they were investigating the CIA's detention and interrogations programs under the Bush administration.[830] Again, they wanted to know who their sources were and how much they knew.

So if the CIA would illegally hack into computers of the very Congressmen who are tasked with overseeing their activities, why wouldn't they hack into the computers of reporters who are also investigating their unethical and illegal actions? The fact that these crimes are all but ignored by mainstream news networks shows that they are complicit in the cover-up.

Just two months before the 2004 Presidential Election, CBS's show *60 Minutes* aired a fake news story about George W. Bush's military service record based on forged documents. The fake documents cast doubt on the quality of Bush's service in the Air National Guard and indicated he was given preferential treatment. Various bloggers immediately began scrutinizing them and found inconsistencies in the jargon as well as the typography between the fonts used in the documents versus the fonts that actual documents of that kind had.

If real, they would have been typed in the 1970s, but appeared to have been created using Microsoft Word. For two weeks CBS anchor Dan Rather stuck by his story but skepticism from those on the Internet kept growing, causing other news outlets to cover the controversy, and so CBS reluctantly had to finally address it.

CBS News President Andrew Heyward said, "Based on what we now know, CBS News cannot prove that the documents are authentic, which is the only acceptable journalistic standard to justify using them in the report. We should not have used them. That was a mistake, which we deeply regret."[831]

Dan Rather would later say, "If I knew then what I know now — I would not have gone ahead with the story as it was aired, and I certainly would not have used the documents in question."[832] The documents, it turns out, were a dirty political trick that CBS either willfully or negligently fell for.

As I mentioned in the introduction of this book, when CBS's flagship show *60 Minutes* did an 'investigation' into fake news they featured several websites as examples which were actually parody and satire sites, not actual fake news sites. Who could possibly not get the humor in a headline like, "After Colonoscopy Reveals Brain Tumor, Donald Trump Drops from Race" or reading the first two sentences in the article about "Donald Trump Caught Snorting Cocaine by Hotel Staff" where the 'eyewitness' says she mistook a dog lying on the floor for Donald Trump's hair!? To call parody and humor sites 'fake news' sites is not only disingenuous but it waters down the entire argument of those who are supposedly trying to prevent fake news from spreading.

After a left wing lunatic tried to assassinate Republican members of Congress while they were practicing for a charity baseball game during the summer of 2017, CBS News anchor Scott Pelley opened the broadcast that night saying the attack may have been "self-inflicted."[833] Congressman Tom Reed of New York denounced Pelley's comments as "beyond the pale" and said they "further proved that the Mainstream Media has completely lost any moral compass to guide its journalistic endeavors." Reed added, "Mr. Pelley should be ashamed of himself for doing the despicable deed of blaming the victim. He should never be employed in the media again by any forum or entity."[834]

The story of the ambush of Republican Congressmen on the baseball field was quickly dropped, because the liberal media didn't want people to keep using it as an example that their constant bombardment of fake news painting Donald Trump and his supporters as the resurgence of Hitler's Third Reich had incited a mentally unstable liberal to attempt to assassinate a group of Congressmen.

It might be interesting for people to know that the major shareholder of CBS's parent company Viacom is Sumner Redstone, who was once caught on tape trying to convince a reporter to reveal their source about an embarrassing leak within MTV (one of his networks). On the tape he can be heard saying, "We're not going to kill him. We just want to talk to him."[835] Redstone, who was 87-

years-old at the time, also told the reporter he will be “well-rewarded and well-protected” if he gave up his source.[836] That’s the kind of man who has been in control of CBS for decades — a man who bribes reporters in order to reveal their sources when they publish a report damaging to the network or their affiliates.

ABC News

Almost every single night, ABC News puts a liberal spin on their stories and carefully chooses topics that will further their cause, but ABC has also staged crime scenes, deceptively edited clips to give the opposite impression of what people said, and have been sued for almost two billion dollars by a company claiming their false stories destroyed their business.[837]

One shocking example of fake news on ABC was when a reporter set up her own "police line" for a live shot to make it look like she was reporting right in front of the crime scene with the yellow police tape swaying in the wind right behind her. They would have gotten away with it if it weren't for some locals who came out to witness the report and posted pictures online showing that the producers had put up their own police tape by tying it onto two different tripods that were off camera and out of the frame.[838]

After Dr. Drew expressed he was quite concerned about Hillary Clinton's health problems as the 2016 election approached, KABC Radio (a division of ABC Broadcasting) deleted the webpage about his interview in an apparent attempt to protect Hillary from the negative publicity it was generating. "Based on the information that she has provided and her doctors have provided, we were gravely concerned not just about her health, but her health care," Dr. Drew said, giving more ammunition to those who were raising concerns about her diminishing health.[839]

The following week his show on CNN's sister station HLN, which had been on the air for five years, was canceled. Even the liberal *Washington Post* couldn't help but see the connection and published a story with the headline, "'Dr. Drew' show canceled days after host's negative speculation about Hillary Clinton's health."[840] He was also called a "conspiracy theorist" for thinking her health was failing and was labeled a "Hillary Clinton Health Truther."[841] Just two weeks later she completely collapsed and had to be carried away by her staff, confirming what many had been concerned about for some time.

ABC anchor and chief political correspondent George Stephanopoulos used to work as Bill Clinton's former communications director so he can't pretend to be an objective journalist when he was literally on the payroll of the Clintons and even donated $75,000 dollars to them through their sham charity. When his donation was discovered he apologized for not disclosing it to ABC News and its viewers.[842] He was then forced to drop out from moderating one of the Republican presidential primary debates. Despite the obvious conflict of interest caused by him donating tens of thousands of dollars to the Clintons, ABC News called it "an honest mistake."[843]

After President Trump's controversial travel ban was blocked by an injunction from an activist judge appointed by President Obama, an Iraqi immigrant named Hameed Darweesh, who had just arrived to JFK airport in New York, was interviewed by the media. He was very gracious and said America is the greatest nation in the world and that he was happy to be here, but that's where ABC cut the clip they posted online. What they didn't show was that immediately after that, someone asked him, "What do you want to say to Donald Trump?" trying to tee him up to denounce the president's new travel screening.

Instead of criticizing the president, he responded that he likes Trump and was very understanding of the extensive screening he had to go through before being allowed into the United States.[844] If ABC showed him saying that he didn't have a problem with the increased travel restrictions, that would have contradicted the narrative the media was pushing at the time which was that it was 'anti-Muslim bigotry' and 'government-sanctioned discrimination.'[845]

ABC issued an apology for deceptively editing former White House Press Secretary Ari Fleisher's comments about Trump's first few days in office after they cut him off mid-sentence in order to cast him in a false light. In a segment where ABC was complaining about the newly inaugurated president, Ari was shown saying, "It looks to me if the ball was dropped on Saturday," talking about the way Sean Spicer handled criticism about the size of the crowd at Trump's inauguration.[846] The newscast continued to nitpick Trump's first week as president but after the segment aired, Fleisher tweeted, "*Nightline* proves Spicer right about MSM's [mainstream media's] dedication to negativity," adding, "If this is how the press reports, Trump is right to go after them." He concluded, "When the press distorts someone's quote and twists their words, we all have a problem."[847]

He said they twisted his words because they left out the rest of his sentence when he said, "Sean recovered it and ran for a 1st down on Monday." After being called out by Fleisher on the deception, ABC issue an on-air apology, saying, "*Nightline* aired a segment Monday night about the first three days of the new administration including Sean Spicer's statement to the press on Saturday. As part of the report, we interviewed former White House press secretary Ari Fleischer. In editing the piece for air, his quote was shortened and as a result his opinions mischaracterized. We are fixing the piece online to include his full quote and context. We apologize and regret the error."[848]

ABC News was sued for $1.9 billion dollars by a South Dakota meat processing company for a series of reports calling their ground beef product 'pink slime.'[849] The company alleged that their revenue dropped 80% after the reports aired, causing word of the 'pink slime' to go viral online. ABC later settled the lawsuit for a reported $177 million dollars, which is close to an entire year's profit for the network.[850]

Stories showing behind the scenes activities of meat processing plants tend to be sensational and shocking, but it appears ABC went too far trying to scare up some viewers for their 'pink slime' exposé and it came back to bite them.

MSNBC

Before the 2016 election season began, MSNBC's viewership was at historic lows with their prime time shows only getting between 25,000 to 103,000 viewers in their demo audience.[851] The "demo" audience is the key demographic advertisers are marketing to. The first quarter of 2015 MSNBC averaged only 316,000 total viewers during the day,[852] and by the fourth quarter they barely had 500,000 total viewers during prime time.[853]

With Trump's election victory and liberals getting whipped up into a frenzy hoping to find some dirt on him that would get him immediately impeached, MSNBC's viewership dramatically increased as the network became increasingly more radical with their anti-Trump agenda. The primary face of MSNBC is the butch lesbian Rachel Maddow, whose convoluted ramblings appear to be unprepared streams of consciousness she just comes up with off the top of her head once she's seated at her desk, but somehow her viewers are entertained by her scatterbrained diatribes.

Like CNN, MSNBC often grasps at straws trying to create artificial outrage over minor things — a business model that often just leaves them looking ridiculous. Since Donald Trump wouldn't release his tax returns during the presidential campaign, which is somewhat customary for candidates, the Democrats fixated on them thinking they must contain connections to Russia or that he somehow weaseled out of paying any taxes at all. Then, two months into the Trump administration, Rachel Maddow tweeted she was about to reveal a "bombshell" on her show.

She claimed to have obtained a copy of his tax returns and a countdown clock was put up on screen ticking down to the big moment he would be 'exposed.' When her show went to air she began rambling on, and on, for eighteen minutes without actually showing them, or even saying what was in them. The network then went to a commercial break and when the show returned, she revealed two pages of his 2005 returns which showed that he paid $38 million in taxes that year.

That's it. No bombshell. No controversial revelations. No nothing. In fact they actually debunked the rumors that he hadn't paid taxes for 'nearly two decades' as had been previously reported.[854] There hadn't been such an overhyped television event since Geraldo Rivera opened Al Capone's vault on live TV back in 1986 to find absolutely nothing, and Rachel Maddow became the laughing stock of the Internet and late night talk shows.[855]

One *Washington Post* reporter published an op-ed titled, "Rachel Maddow takes conspiracy theorizing mainstream with Trump tax 'scoop,'" and said that after she rambled on for 20 minutes, "I realized that we weren't watching a news broadcast so much as a modern recreation of X's monologue from Oliver Stone's 'JFK.'"[856]

It’s not just Rachel Maddow; other hosts on MSNBC comprise what is basically a conspiracy carnival on cable. After President Trump launched a few Tomahawk missiles and destroyed a Syrian airfield in response to Bashar al-Assad killing rebels with chemical weapons, MSNBC’s Lawrence O’Donnell dedicated his opening monologue to his conspiracy theory that Vladimir Putin may have ordered Assad to launch the chemical attack to provoke President Trump into a military response to distract the media and “change the subject from Russian influence” on the election.[857]

It appears that nothing is too crazy for MSNBC. One of their contributors appeared to encourage the bombing of Trump Tower in Turkey.[858] Malcolm Nance, who is the channel’s ‘terrorism analyst,’ tweeted, and then later deleted, a photo of Trump Tower in Turkey and added, “This is my nominee for the first ISIS suicide bombing of a Trump property”[859] He had previously called Trump the “ISIS candidate” and said that the president is inciting Islamophobia.[860]

This is the same MSNBC contributor who insinuated that Donald Trump is a Russian KGB agent who was at some point “co-opted by Vladimir Putin,” which caused him to “buy into” and “embrace” a “dictatorial ideology that was done by a spymaster of the KGB.” He then said, “Ten years ago, twenty years ago, there would be treason trials at this point.”[861]

One of their regular panelists, Donny Deutsch, actually issued a serious fight challenge to the president during one segment, saying, “Donald, if you’re watching, we’re from Queens. I’ll meet you in the schoolyard, brother. You need to be schooled. No, I’m serious. This is where this needs to go. He’s a coward! A coward!”[862] He wasn’t fired, or even suspended; giving the impression that MSNBC endorses threats of violence against President Trump.

Host Mika Brzezinski once decried Trump’s influence on Twitter, saying, “He is trying to undermine the media and trying to make up his own facts,” and that “he can actually control exactly what people think. And that, that is our job.”[863]

Another host apologized for fake news after she falsely claimed that Fox News was having their Christmas party at Donald Trump’s new hotel in Washington D.C. which had recently just opened. “I mean, think about the hotel in Washington right now. The RNC is having their Christmas party there. Fox News had their Christmas party there. That doesn’t feel a little hanky?”[864]

At the end of the show the host surprisingly apologized, saying, “This is some serious business that I need to share. I need to apologize to the audience. Earlier today in a segment I stated that the Fox network held their holiday party at Trump’s D.C. hotel. I was wrong. We’ve since learned that neither Fox network nor an affiliate held any party at Trump’s Washington hotel. I stand corrected. I apologize for the error. I am truly, truly sorry. The mistake entirely my fault. And of course, I wish all my friends over at Fox a very happy holiday no matter where you have your party.”[865]

Of course she didn’t say “Merry Christmas” because that might have offended some people, so instead she used the more “inclusive” phrase “happy holiday.”

Host Chris Matthews said that President Trump’s inauguration was “Hitlerian,” meaning it reminded him of an Adolf Hitler rally, and aside from being obsessed with “possible Russian connections” for a year after the election, he has also compared Ivanka Trump and her husband Jared Kushner to Saddam Hussein’s murderous sons, Uday and Qusay.[866] Chris Matthews is the same guy who said he got a thrill up his leg from hearing Barack Obama speak.[867]

After a terrorist ran down pedestrians using a van on the London Bridge in England, killing eight people and injuring 48, MSNBC host Thomas Roberts suggested that President Trump was "trying to provoke a domestic terrorist attack" of a similar nature in the U.S. "to prove himself right" about the dangers of radical Islamic terrorism.[868] Such an egregious allegation should put an end to someone's career in the television news business, but these kinds of unhinged statements are a common occurrence on the network.

In the immediate aftermath of the bombing at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England which killed twenty-two people, MSNBC briefly mentioned the attack but quickly cut away from the breaking news to continue covering what they said was "shocking news in Washington tonight" and went on as usual with their nauseating obsession with conspiracy theories about Russia and the 2016 election.[869] A bunch of children were blown up at a major pop star's concert by an ISIS terrorist, but MSNBC thought talking about six-month-old conspiracy theories was more important.

Anchor Katy Tur appeared to insinuate that she was concerned Trump may have journalists he doesn't like assassinated, drawing parallels between Vladimir Putin, who is accused of having some of his most vocal critics killed. During an interview with Nebraska Senator Deb Fischer, Tur asked, "As we know, there's, since 2000, been a couple dozen suspicious deaths of journalists in Russia who came out against the government there. Donald Trump has made no secret about going after journalists and his distaste for any news that doesn't agree with him here. Do you find that this is a dangerous path he is heading down?"[870]

The fact that Katy Tur is put on air is a prime example of MSNBC's low standards and poor quality talent pool they have to work with. During an interview with Republican Congressman Francis Rooney of Florida, when Tur again was grasping at straws to keep the Trump-Russia conspiracy theories circulating, Rooney pointed out that it was President Obama who got caught on a hot mic telling the Russian president he'd have "more flexibility" after his election.[871]

Tur responded, "I'm sorry, I don't know what you're referring to, Congressman."

Rooney replies, "Remember when he leaned over at a panel discussion or in a meeting and he said, I'll have more flexibility after the election? No one really ever pushed the president on what he meant by that, but I can only assume for a thug like Putin it would embolden him."

Tur then immediately ended the interview.[872] Any journalist should have known what he was talking about since it was a pretty stunning exchange to have been caught on tape, and what Obama meant was that he didn't want to lose votes in his bid for re-election, so he had to wait until after the election to do what he really wanted with Russia. In response to online criticism of her ignorance she tweeted, "To be fair, I didn't touch politics in 2012. I almost exclusively covered fires and shootings in NYC area."[873]

This is the same 'journalist' who says that Trump has "weaponized" the term "fake news" and claimed that Trump had never denounced white supremacists during the 2016 campaign despite video compilations circulating on YouTube and Facebook showing him doing such things over and over again, as far back as the year 2000 when he denounced David Duke as a racist and a bigot.[874] Tur's father — it's interesting to note — is also a reporter who now identifies as a woman, and once threatened to ‘curb stomp’ conservative pundit Ben Shapiro for using the wrong pronoun during a panel discussion Mr. Tur was involved in when he was called ‘sir.’[875]

MSNBC hasn’t gotten as much heat as CNN since the ‘fake news’ backlash began because it is a liberal network, whereas CNN was supposed to be impartial, and has recently changed its format from covering breaking news around the world to being an extension of the Democrat Party and a mouthpiece for George Soros.

Conclusion

The search for truth and investigating and verifying what a bona fide fact is, and what makes it different from a belief or an opinion has been an age-old philosophical quest known as Epistemology. What is knowledge? What is truth? How do we “know” something? While Socrates and Plato were searching for answers to these important questions over two thousand years ago, it’s a strange situation we find ourselves in when the ‘information age’ has helped to cause millions of people to drown in misinformation. It’s a paradox. Misinformation has become so pervasive in the information age that some say we’re living in a ‘post-truth’ world.

The Oxford Dictionary defines post-truth as “Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief,” and the constant flow of media that is carefully crafted from multibillion-dollar corporate conglomerates has gotten constructing a post-truth world down to a science. Millions of people are mesmerized by an endless amount of information that bombards us constantly; wanting our attention, wanting us to believe something, wanting us to buy something, and wanting us to be something. It’s hard to tune it out and think for ourselves sometimes, and it seems that fewer people are even thinking at all.

Thankfully, however, many are waking up to this mass manipulation and have seen the new systems of media production and distribution as they were constructed, and remember what society was like before this information overload engulfed our world.

While some of the information I covered in this book may seem like common sense to those who have lived long enough to observe patterns over years or decades, it is important to clearly document what has happened so we can teach the younger generations about the details and the sophistication of information manipulation mechanisms and help them become media literate.

Even if you’ve suspected this kind of deception occurs, I’m confident that this book has provided you with countless pieces of evidence to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are in an information war, and as technology advances, the tactics to abuse it will likely also continue to advance. Soon it may be difficult for even experts to prove that something is or is not true.[876] James Madison once said, “A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives. A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both.”[877]

Unfortunately people have always, and will most likely continue, to believe that some hoaxes are real, and that some real events are hoaxes. Millions of Americans believe President Trump is a white supremacist and that police departments across the country are dominated by racist white men who enjoy killing black people. A large number of people still believe the moon landing was faked, and Flat Earthers even made a resurgence in early 2016, despite having limitless scientific research at their fingertips, they actually believe the Earth is flat and that NASA is lying to us; so it's clear we have a serious problem with knowledge and information in today's society. Others are more concerned with celebrity gossip than actual issues which directly impact their lives.

One thing we can do is prevent this problem from getting worse by being aware of the dangers of clickbait journalism, and knowing how most 'news' websites make money today. People should know why old subscription models are better — when people paid for monthly or yearly subscriptions to newspapers and magazines they liked and trusted instead of these companies relying on people sharing their articles on social media which encourages websites to generate page views by any means necessary.

The more shocking and sensational the headlines, the more likely people will click the link, bringing traffic to the site and revenue from the advertisers. Social media platforms are now the lifeblood of most 'news' sites which rely on people sharing their articles on Facebook or Twitter in hopes of duping people into clicking on them.

Owners of major media companies see the power their empires hold and often choose to use their outlets to influence people instead of informing them. From activist journalists to senior editors to CEOs, many in the big media companies can't help but impose their personal political ideology on the world by using the infrastructure they have at their disposal. By building mountains out of molehills, through lying by omission, agenda-setting, framing stories and issues in a certain light, and by manipulating what is spread through social media by either limiting its reach or artificially amplifying it, the major media and tech companies try, and they do, influence the way people think and thus how they act.

As people have come to rely more and more on the media to think for them and don't use their own brains to remember things because they can "just Google it," many have continued to dull their own ability to think, reason, and remember. As 19th century Swiss writer Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz noted, "It would not be very difficult to show that the further man advances in the conquest of what we must call his secondary powers, which are of a mechanical nature, the more he regresses in the possession of his primary powers, which are of an intuitive nature, and thus he is constantly being weakened."[878]

The shift from print journalism to websites and Facebook pages doesn't just pose a danger to the distribution and verification of news, but it also puts our historical records at risk as well. Headlines and articles can now be changed without notice and information can vanish down a memory hole with little to no trace of its existence. With digital forgeries getting more sophisticated, how will we be able to verify that a document is actually authentic, especially if there are no physical documents anymore? Most people don't backup their own files locally anymore on external hard drives, and instead rely on cloud services. Many people don't even own software anymore, and instead pay monthly subscription fees for applications like Photoshop, Microsoft Office, and others.

Paperback books and magazines have become less and less popular since the creation of e-books and tablets, opening the door to dangers of remote deletion, alteration, or even device failure if an iPad or Kindle is dropped and breaks. Someone even gave a Ted Talk claiming that paper dictionaries aren't needed anymore since they're too old fashioned, which is a dangerous road to go down.[879] Society is on strange course, making us more vulnerable to fake news, not less, and many question whether there is even a solution at all.

Microsoft's social media researcher Danah Boyd said, "No amount of 'fixing' Facebook or Google will address the underlying factors shaping the culture and information wars in which America is currently enmeshed."[880] She continued, "The short version of it all is that we have a cultural problem, one that is shaped by disconnects in values, relationships, and social fabric. Our media, our tools, and our politics are being leveraged to help breed polarization by countless actors who can leverage these systems for personal, economic, and ideological gain."[881]

The stress of daily life, mixed with the constant bombardment of bad news about the latest death tolls from local crime and national tragedies, makes it appealing for many to completely check out of current events and the political process and get lost in a world of entertainment. Wasting countless hours clicking through social media threads or arguing about pop culture with complete strangers online is way too easy and should be avoided in exchange for meaningful discussions with friends and family and personal study.

We should stay away from the dangers of only getting news from following certain Twitter accounts or Facebook pages because we like what they post. The risk of being stuck in an echo chamber where only news and commentaries that reflect your own opinions, attitudes and interests, could keep you completely in the dark about important events you should be aware of, and can often present only one side of an issue.

When I was a kid, my friends and I had to ride our bikes to the local video store to rent a VHS tape for $3 or $4 dollars which had to be returned by 5pm the next day. Today we can all watch Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, or any number of other streaming services for just a few dollars a month and have access to endless movies and TV shows with the push of a button. So I thank you for taking the time and effort to tune out the millions of distractions clamoring for your attention and ignoring the endless alerts, notifications, likes, comments, and posts on social media for a while to focus on the information I've assembled and analyzed in this book.

I hope you'll write a brief review and rate it on Amazon or whatever e-book store you downloaded it from if that's how you're reading it, and I encourage you to check out some of my other books as well, as this is not the only one I have written. I will conclude with a final quote from one of the best films about mass media which brilliantly conveyed the dangerous power wielded by the corporations which control it. In *Network* (1976), news anchor Howard Beale 'sees the light' about the sinister nature of the very business he's been a part of for decades and decides to blow the lid off it, live on the air. His epic rant, even though over forty years old now, is timeless, and perhaps even more powerful today than when he first made it in 1976 when the film was released.

The character, played by Peter Finch — who won the Academy Award for best actor for the role — begins by telling the audience, "Television is not the truth. Television's a god-damned amusement park. Television is a circus, a carnival, a traveling troupe of acrobats, storytellers, dancers, singers, jugglers, sideshow freaks, lion tamers, and football players. We're in the boredom-killing business. So if you want the Truth, go to God! Go to your gurus. Go to yourselves! Because that's the only place you're ever gonna find any real truth. But, man, you're never gonna get any truth from us."

He continues, getting more passionate with every sentence, “We deal in illusions, man! None of it is true! But you people sit there day after day, night after night, all ages, colors, creeds. We’re all you know. You’re beginning to believe the illusions we’re spinning here. You’re beginning to think that the tube is reality and that your own lives are unreal. You do whatever the tube tells you. You dress like the tube, you eat like the tube, you raise your children like the tube. You even think like the tube. This is mass madness. You maniacs! In God’s name, you people are the real thing! We are the illusion! So turn off your television sets. Turn them off now. Turn them off right now. Turn them off and leave them off! Turn them off right in the middle of this sentence I am speaking to you now! Turn them off!”

Further Reading

The Illuminati in Hollywood

The infamous Illuminati secret society represents the pinnacle of power in politics, banking, and the news media; but what about the entertainment industry? Do Hollywood's elite studios, producers, and celebrities have a secret agenda? Are they part of a covert conspiracy?

Media analyst Mark Dice will show you exactly how Hollywood uses celebrities and entertainment as a powerful propaganda tool to shape our culture, attitudes, behaviors, and to promote corrupt government policies and programs.

You will see how the CIA and the Pentagon work hand in hand with Hollywood to produce blockbuster movies and popular television shows crafted to paint positive portraits of war, Orwellian government surveillance, unconstitutional agendas, and more.

You'll also learn the strange and secret spiritual beliefs of the stars that fuel their egos and appetites for fame and wealth, making them perfect puppets for the corporate controllers behind the scenes. And you will also discover the rare instances of anti-Illuminati celebrities who have dared to bite the hand that feeds them.

Character Howard Beale once warned in the 1976 classic film *Network*, “This tube is the most awesome God-damned force in the whole godless world, and woe is us if it ever falls in to the hands of the wrong people,” and unfortunately that is exactly what has happened.

The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction

Secret societies have both fascinated and frightened people for hundreds of years. Often the infamous Illuminati is mentioned as the core of conspiracies which span the globe. The Illuminati is actually a historical secret society which had goals of revolutions and world domination dating back to the 1770s.

Since then, rumors and conspiracy theories involving the Illuminati continue to spread, sometimes finding their way into popular novels like Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons* and Hollywood movies like *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. Some men have even come forward claiming to be former members, offering details of what they allege are the inner workings of the organization. When you sift through all of the information available on the subject, you may be surprised that the truth is stranger than fiction.

In *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, conspiracy and occult expert Mark Dice separates history from Hollywood and shows why tales of the secret society won't die.

The New World Order: Facts & Fiction

What is the New World Order? Proponents say that it's an anticipated new era of global cooperation between diverse nations and cultures aimed at ushering in a utopia providing all the earth's citizens with everything they need.

Detractors claim it's the systematic take-over by secret societies, quasi-government entities and corporations who are covertly organizing a global socialist all-powerful government which aims to regulate every aspect of citizens lives, rendering them a perpetual working-class while the elite leadership lives in luxury.

Conspiracy theory expert Mark Dice looks at the evidence, claims, and conspiracy theories as he takes you down the rabbit hole to *The New World Order*.

Illuminati in the Music Industry

Famous pop stars and rappers from Jay-Z and Rick Ross to Rihanna and Christina Aguilera are believed by many to be a part of the infamous Illuminati secret society. These stars allegedly use

Illuminati and satanic symbolism in their music videos and on their clothes that goes unnoticed by those not “in the know.”

Since these stars appear in our livings rooms on family friendly mainstream shows like Good Morning America, Ellen, and dozens of others—and are loved by virtually all the kids—they couldn’t possibly have anything to do with the infamous Illuminati or anything “satanic,” could they? Some famous musicians have even publicly denounced the Illuminati in interviews or songs.

Illuminati in the Music Industry takes a close look at some of today’s hottest stars and decodes the secret symbols, song lyrics, and separates the facts from the fiction in this fascinating topic. You may never see your favorite musicians the same way ever again.

Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True

In *Big Brother*, Mark Dice details actual high-tech spy gadgets, mind-reading machines, government projects, and emerging artificial intelligence systems that seem as if they came right out of George Orwell’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Orwell’s famous book was first published in 1949, and tells the story of a nightmarish future where citizens have lost all privacy and are continuously monitored by the omniscient Big Brother surveillance system which keeps them obedient to a totalitarian government.

The novel is eerily prophetic as many of the fictional systems of surveillance described have now become a reality. Mark Dice shows you the scary documentation that Big Brother is watching you, and is more powerful than you could imagine.

The Resistance Manifesto

The Resistance Manifesto by Mark Dice contains 450 pages of extensively researched and documented information drawing from declassified documents, mainstream news articles, religious texts, and personal interviews. A dark web of evil is exposed like never before, making Bible Prophecy and the New World Order crystal clear.

Learn the most powerful information about the Illuminati, plans for the rise of the Antichrist, the institutions, people, and powers involved, and how you can fight them.

“Powerful and compelling. A must read.”

- Alex Jones from Infowars.com

“Mark takes you beyond 9/11 into a world of secret societies, mystics, and madmen.”

- Jason Bermas, Producer of *Loose Change*

“Mark Dice is not a conspiracy theorist, he is a conspiracy realist. This book tells it like it is. I urge every American to read it and pass it on to your friends and relatives. Wake up America!”

- Ted Gunderson, Senior Special Agent in Charge (retired) FBI Los Angeles

Inside the Illuminati

When looking into the existence and alleged activities of the infamous Illuminati secret society, one finds an overwhelming amount of conspiracy theories, hidden history, half-truths and hoaxes.

But how much truth is there to some of these claims? What is the real history of the mysterious group? Do they continue to exist today? What is the evidence?

After a decade of research sifting through the facts and the fiction, secret society expert Mark Dice will help you navigate through the complex maze from the original documents to rare revelations from elite politicians, bankers and businessmen, as he takes you *Inside the Illuminati*.

- *Insider Revelations*
- *Original Writings*
- *Spiritual Beliefs*
- *Occult Symbolism*
- *Early Evidence*
- *Zodiac Club*
- *"Ex Members"*
- *Communism*
- *Seraphic Society*
- *The Jesuits*
- *The Jasons*
- *And more!*

The Bilderberg Group: Facts & Fiction

Every spring since 1954, a group of approximately one hundred of the world's most powerful businessmen, politicians, media moguls, and international royalty meet in secret for several days to discuss the course of the world. Called the Bilderberg Group after the Bilderberg Hotel in Oosterbeck, Holland where their first meeting was held, this off the record annual gathering is said to be where the globalist puppet masters plot and scheme.

Does this group of power elite develop new political, economic, and cultural policies that are then covertly implemented by their underlings? Do they choose who our world leaders will be, including the next president of the United States? Is the Bilderberg Group a shadow government? Are they the Illuminati? Why has the mainstream media had a complete blackout regarding their meetings for decades? Who attends? And who pays for it?

Is this “just another conference?” Or, are the “conspiracy theorists” right? What is the evidence? How were they first discovered? What are they doing? And should the public be concerned? Secret society expert Mark Dice will show you the hidden history, financial records, and some of the insider leaks showing how this small group’s consensus has staggering effects on the political landscape of the world, global economies, wars, and more, as he uncovers *The Bilderberg Group: Facts & Fiction*.

- *Their History*
- *Bilderberg’s Goals*
- *Their Discovery*
- *Recent Meetings*
- *Members and Guests*
- *Actions and Effects*
- *Financial Records*
- *The Oath of Silence*
- *Media Blackouts*
- *Exclusive Photos*
- *And More!*

The Bohemian Grove: Facts & Fiction

The secretive and strange Bohemian Grove is an elite men’s club hidden deep within a 2700-acre redwood forest in Northern California, where each July the most powerful men in the world gather for what’s called their annual Summer Encampment.

Is this mysterious meeting “just a vacation spot” for the wealthy and well-connected, or is it something more? Does it operate as an off the record consensus building organization for the elite establishment? What major plans or political policies were given birth by the club? Do they really kickoff their gathering each year with a human sacrifice ritual? Is this the infamous Illuminati?

After getting his hands on some rare copies of the club’s yearbooks; obtaining an actual official membership list smuggled out by an employee; and having personally been blocked from entering the club by police—secret society expert Mark Dice uncovers *The Bohemian Grove: Facts & Fiction*.

-Their History

-Symbols, Saint, and Motto

-Infiltrations and Leaks

-Cremation of Care

-Different Subcamps

-Allegations of Murder

-Hookers & Homosexuality

-Depictions in TV and Film

-And More!

About the Author

Mark Dice is a media analyst and author who, in an entertaining and educational way, exposes our celebrity-obsessed culture and the role mainstream media and elite secret societies play in shaping our lives.

Mark's YouTube channel has over 1 million subscribers and more 400 million views. His viral videos have been mentioned on the Fox News Channel, CNN, the Drudge Report, TMZ, the *New York Daily News*, the *Washington Times*, and other media outlets around the world.

He has been featured on various television shows including the History Channel's *Decoded* and *America's Book of Secrets*; *Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura*, *Secret Societies of Hollywood* on E! Channel, *America Declassified* on the Travel Channel, and is a frequent guest on Coast to Coast AM, The Alex Jones Show, and more.

Mark Dice is the author of 11 books, including *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*, *The New World Order: Facts & Fiction*, *Inside the Illuminati*, *The Bilderberg Group: Facts & Fiction*, *The Bohemian Grove: Facts & Fiction*, and more.

While much of Mark's work confirms the existence and continued operation of various powerful secret societies, he is also dedicated to debunking conspiracy theories and hoaxes and separating the facts from the fiction; hence the "Facts & Fiction" subtitle for several of his books.

He has a bachelor's degree in communication from California State University.

Connect with Mark on:

Facebook.com/MarkDice

Twitter.com/MarkDice.com

YouTube.com/MarkDice

MarkDice.com

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The Liberal Media Industrial Complex

By Mark Dice

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Washington Post
CNN

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Introduction

Today, “media” doesn’t just mean television, radio, newspapers, and magazines; since all of those industries have been swallowed up by the Internet (*convergence* as it’s technically called). As you know, people now get most of their news and entertainment online where there is an endless supply of things to click on, scroll through, and stream. People carry TVs in their pockets and wear them on their wrists like the old science fiction films predicted. With the push of a button anyone can watch almost any show, access any newspaper or magazine article, and even send instant feedback about what they think. Everywhere you go people are constantly glued to their device, consuming an endless stream of “media.” It’s like a madhouse that’s almost impossible to escape.

In our current mobile age, trying to keep up with the news is like running on a treadmill that’s getting faster and faster. The longer you’re on it, the more exhausting it gets, leading many to become so fatigued they decide to jump off and quit paying attention altogether. Many have become so stressed out, disgusted, and tired of the “news,” that they basically boycott it and only follow sports or other forms of entertainment, but even there they can’t escape being bombarded by political messages and cries for “social justice.”

Those who wish to push political agendas know that movies, music, and TV shows are convenient vehicles to deliver their propaganda to millions under the cloak of “entertainment.” Even some sports coverage on ESPN has become political in recent years, amplifying the messages of athletes involved in fringe causes or ones based on half-truths and out-right lies. [1]

Music, movies, and television shows are not just “entertainment.” They shape and influence the culture by manufacturing iconic characters whose beliefs and behaviors are mimicked by millions. While art imitates life, life also imitates art, as President Obama admitted during an appearance via video at the 2015 Grammies where he told the audience, “Tonight, we celebrate artists whose music and message helps shape our culture…Artists have a unique power to change minds and attitudes and get us thinking and talking about what matters.” [2] Celebrities have largely taken over the role that families, the Church, and national traditions used to play in molding and monitoring a society’s attitudes and actions.

As Andrew Breitbart pointed out in his book *Righteous Indignation* , “Hollywood is more important than Washington. It can’t be overstated how important this message is: pop culture matters. What happens in front of the cameras on a soundstage at the Warner Bros. lot often makes more difference to the fate of America than what happens in the back rooms of the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill.” [3]

He continues, “As it stands, the Frankfurt School-taught Left is fighting the political battle on both the political and the cultural battlefields. Conservatives are fighting it only on the political battlefield. That means that art, humor, song, theater, television, film, dance, are all devices used every day in order to influence the hearts and minds of the American people.” [4]

He’s talking about Cultural Marxism, which is the practice of waging a psychological war against America and all of Western civilization by relentlessly attacking every aspect of our culture, symbols, and institutions; hoping to gradually weaken society by subverting its foundations to the point where it becomes so dysfunctional it can be overthrown and replaced by a Marxist State.

To accomplish this, the supposed “news” media regularly engages in what’s called Agenda Setting by hyping up certain stories and covering them ad nauseam to create the false impression that those stories are actually important because they’re “what people are talking about.” This provides a false justification for the extensive coverage, creating an artificial feedback loop where they hype up a story as if it’s the talk of the town, and *then* everyone starts talking about it because they’re inundated by reports about it, so the media keeps reporting on it, claiming that it’s a relevant story *because* so many people are talking about it.

They carefully choose stories, oftentimes of rare and isolated incidences, and then amplify them hoping to give the impression that there’s an epidemic and use the cherry-picked examples to promote or reinforce liberal ideologies. At the same time they act as gatekeepers, purposefully omitting other (actually important) stories and events which show a side of an issue they’re hoping people don’t hear about, or are trying to downplay the significance of.

The *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* uses their technology to influence rather than inform; to attack instead of educate; to promote certain events while pretending others don’t exist. They always amplify salacious allegations that feed into the one-sided narratives they’re pushing, and then completely ignore the facts when they later come out if they prove the initial reports to be false. They just carry on as if nothing happened and keep repeating the same pattern like clockwork — amplifying the allegation, and then ignoring the outcome.

The election of President Trump has resulted in the American mainstream media throwing all objectivity out the window and dedicating their existence to painting him as a mentally deranged dictator who needs to be impeached and imprisoned. They’ve gotten so bold in their attempts to overthrow our Republic that they now regularly engage in gaslighting and continue to repeat easily debunked falsehoods as if they are true, hoping to get people to start doubting their own memory, reasoning, and perception about what is actually going on. This is what gaslighting is.

By repeatedly lying with confidence, using misdirection and discounting contrary information, the media causes some people to begin questioning their own version of reality. The term *gaslighting* originates from an old 1938 play (later made into a movie in 1944) where a central theme of the plot involves a woman's husband who subjects her to all kinds of mind games trying to drive her insane, including dimming the gas lamps in their home while convincing her that she's just imagining it's getting darker.

The media insists that the name George Soros is a code word for anti-Semitism, as are "globalists" and "Hollywood liberals." [5] The constant assertions that anyone who supports building a wall at the US-Mexico border is racist, and anyone who supports President Trump is a white supremacist are ridiculous, but are believed by gullible people who are susceptible to propaganda. Television "news" anchors lie with such assurance and being accompanied by symbols of authority like their fancy studios and graphics, on the surface it appears as if they're legitimate news broadcasts.

The 2016 presidential election proved that the balance of power had shifted from the tight-knit group of mainstream media companies into the hands of everyday Americans who used Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to spread their messages to others, whether it was a few hundred of their Facebook friends, or an audience of millions if their posts went viral.

So in order to regain control of the flow of information, the legacy media conglomerates began working closely with the Silicon Valley titans to rewrite the algorithms so these popular platforms would favor *their* content above that posted by ordinary people or popular social media personalities. It's an understatement to say that what's happening is a conspiracy between various sectors of the media industry which are working together to give traditional outlets the loudest voices online.

Mix in Google and YouTube manipulating search results, Wikipedia being the number one source of "encyclopedia" articles, and social media companies systematically censoring prominent conservative accounts under the disguise of combating "hate speech," and you have a recipe for total information control. There is a reason that dictators throughout history have aimed to seize their country's media as one of their top priorities so they can use it to not only further their own aims, but prevent their opposition from using it for theirs.

Just two weeks after the shocking loss of Hillary Clinton to Donald Trump in the 2016 election, the war on "fake news" was launched as a smokescreen to suppress the reach of regular users' social media posts and artificially boost messages from the mainstream media. The Democrats became frantic about supposed "fake news" being shared on Facebook that they claimed had cast Hillary in a false light, and *that* was the reason they said, why so many people didn't trust her; and hence, didn't vote for her. [6]

While there were a few viral fake news stories smearing her, all the studies show they had no influence on people's votes and just reinforced beliefs they already held about her. [7] There were also fake stories about Donald Trump that went viral during the heat of the campaign, but that fact is ignored and the "fake news" problem was framed as an issue that's only one-sided.

In reality, the fake news scare was just an elaborate ruse to drastically alter the way social media functions by pressuring Big Tech companies to emphasize mainstream media outlets in people's feeds instead of showing organically what should be there based on who they were following and what was being posted. [8]

Barack Obama was the first "social media president," getting elected in 2008 when Facebook was first becoming a central hub in people's lives. He was the first president to have a Facebook page and a Twitter account, and his senior advisor David Axelrod admitted, "If not for social media, Barack Obama would never have been elected president [because] it gave us the ability to connect to a new generation of voters." [9]

At the time, social media was still kind of a novelty, but a few years later it would permeate most people's lives when everyone had to have an iPhone and the social media companies released mobile apps so people could "stay connected" wherever they were instead of having to wait until they got home from work or school to open up their laptop to see what's happening online.

But today, getting news online isn't just a novelty, it's the norm. A report from the Pew Research Center in 2018 showed that more Americans get their news from posts on social media than from newspapers. [10] Social media now starts revolutions, and overnight a single video clip can turn most of the world against a nation's leader, or galvanize members of an entire political party to rally behind a cause.

Since the barriers to entry are now so low today with anyone being able to start a YouTube channel or create a Facebook page, we are seeing the legacy media frantically trying to stop their industry (and their influence) from slipping through their fingers. Liberals' favorite tactic today is silencing their opposition under the disguise of combating "hate speech" or stopping "right-wing extremists," and the ability to censor and manipulate information online rests in the hands of just a few gigantic corporations whose values are completely opposed to middle America and traditional family values.

Because of the emergence of social media, billions of people around the world communicate through Facebook, Twitter, and other online platforms which have largely taken the place of sending emails and talking on the phone. As you know, these social media apps can allow anyone's message to be spread just as far as something broadcast on the national news, or printed on the front page of the *New York Times* , but because of this massive redistribution of power, the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* is scrambling to put the genie back in the bottle.

One doesn't even have to be a "social media star" to be a victim of the Left's censorship because average users have their Facebook posts, tweets, Instagram pics, and YouTube videos removed all the time for "violating community standards."

Big Tech's increasingly sophisticated artificial intelligence systems automatically scan every post for key words they have identified as sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, or just generically "hateful" or "offensive;" and has them removed once discovered. Just a handful of these "violations" and your entire account is shut down for good and everything you've ever posted there deleted. Nothing is out of the reach of their AI, and anything can be deleted at any moment by the nameless and faceless moderators, leaving the victims with no recourse or appeal.

Total control of information is what they want, and they have hijacked the technology we all use to communicate in our modern age, but thankfully you were able to get this powerful tool into your hands before they could stop it — an old fashioned book! I commend you for picking one up and tuning out the noise relentlessly trying to make its way to your ears, and turning away from the millions of tweets, Facebook posts, and video clips all competing for your attention.

In the coming pages we'll do a deep dive into each of the major social media platforms and I'll detail their algorithm manipulation, double standards, liberal bias, and censorship. We'll also dissect the media's war on President Trump, their mission to destroy our culture by undermining traditional family values, and we'll look at the future of fake news.

While scrolling through tweets and Facebook posts is often like junk food for the brain, reading a book is a healthy and nourishing four-course meal in comparison. Sure, junk food is fine in moderation, but if it's all you eat then you're going to be very unhealthy. And the difference between reading through social media feeds (or watching the news) and reading a book is about the same as the difference between a good steak and eating a burger at McDonalds. One is quick, cheap, and poor quality; while the other is expensive, time consuming to make, and healthy to eat. And since we're dealing with a *very* important subject, it's best to do this right. So let's begin by taking a look behind the curtain of the monolithic *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* and start dismantling it piece by piece.

Censorship

There are several classic books that highlight the dangers of censorship and depict tyrannical governments that use their endless power to snuff out any opposition in hopes of maintaining their control over society. George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* , which was first published in 1949, and *Fahrenheit 451* , published in 1953, are two of the most popular examples and weren't just written for entertainment. They were meant to serve as a warning of what giant bureaucracies could do if their growing power goes unchecked.

But today in America, it's not the government censoring what newspapers print or what airs on the evening news. It's the Silicon Valley titans — it's Mark Zuckerberg, Jack Dorsey, and Susan Wojcicki. In the marketplace of ideas they are losing, and so these industry leaders are silencing influential opponents who speak out against the Left's attempted revolution.

They're also trying to create a chilling effect by scaring people into not speaking out about certain issues or make us think twice before sharing certain information on social media out of fear we will be socially ostracized, or even fired from our job; so many people are self-censoring themselves in what's been called the "Spiral of Silence." [11] The fewer people who speak out about an issue due to fear of repercussions causes others who feel they should say something to be more apprehensive about doing so because nobody else seems to be doing it, which in turn causes even more people to stay silent, causing the false impression that no one seems to be opposed to what's happening.

Thankfully, in the United States (at least today) the First Amendment is still intact, but in places like Canada, [12] Germany, [13] England, [14] Scotland, [15] and other supposedly "free" countries, people are being arrested and charged with "hate speech" crimes for posting things on their social media accounts that are critical of the "Islamization of Europe" from the mass influx of Muslim refugees and for voicing opposition to the LGBT agenda. [16]

But while Americans are still technically free to say these things without getting arrested, there are other serious consequences since we're living in an online world where most people rely on a handful of apps to communicate with others. Back in 1997, Harvard Law professor Larry Lessig wrote an article for *Wired* magazine titled "Tyranny in the Infrastructure" warning that, "Laws affect the pace of technological change, but the structures of software can do even more to curtail freedom. In the long run the shackles built by programmers could well constrain us more." [17]

In his book *Cyber Ethics: Morality and Law in Cyberspace* , Richard A. Spinello expanded on this concern saying, "This notion that private code can be a more potent constraining force than public law has significant implications. The use of code as a surrogate for law may mean that certain public goods or moral values once protected by law will now be ignored or compromised by those who develop or utilize this code." [18]

We're seeing the very principle of free speech under attack like never before, with the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* even claiming that freedom of speech is "dangerous" and saying that conservatives have "weaponized" the First Amendment. [19] There have always been restrictions on the First Amendment, for example you can't yell fire in a crowded theater, and you can't threaten to murder someone or encourage acts of terrorism; but today just insulting a person who believes there are 58 different gender identities or pointing out certain facts and statistics is considered “hateful” and “dangerous.”

Democrat Congressman Ted Lieu from California says he’s frustrated by the fact that the First Amendment is preventing him from silencing conservatives for Thought Crimes, so he’s calling on the Big Tech companies to do it on the government’s behalf. [20] Meanwhile Jerry Nadler, a Democrat Congressman from New York, says it’s just a “conspiracy theory” that the Big Tech companies have a liberal bias and, “The notion that social media companies are filtering out conservative voices is a hoax, a tired narrative of imagined victimhood.” [21] Other Democrat members of Congress, like Jamie Raskin from Maryland, insist that it is an “entirely imaginary narrative that social media companies are biased against conservatives.” [22]

Of course CNN repeatedly denies conservatives are being censored and claims that pushback from President Trump is, “exacerbating a longstanding paranoia from conservatives who have for years erroneously accused social media companies of bias and censorship.” [23] It’s just paranoia that conservatives are being censored, guys! Nothing to worry about!

CNN claims, “For years, the conservative media machine has pushed the flimsy narrative that conservatives are unfairly treated by social media companies, which they accuse of bias and censorship. When the claims often fall apart under a light touch of scrutiny, right-wing media outlets continue to advance the narrative, irrespective of the facts.” [24]

After years of mounting evidence, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey finally admitted that even conservatives who work at Twitter, “don’t feel safe to express their opinions at the company” and that “They do feel silenced by just the general swirl of what they perceive to be the broader percentage of leanings within the company." [25]

With each new purge of conservative voices from the social media platforms, more and more people are seeing just how big of a threat these tech giants are to the principles of free speech and the massive implications of their monopoly on communication tools.

Donald Trump Jr., who obviously has the president's ear, has also been very vocal about the increasing censorship on social media, even writing an op-ed about it in *The Hill* , saying, "Our right to freely engage in public discourse through speech is under sustained attack, necessitating a vigorous defense against the major social media and internet platforms." [26]

In May 2019, the White House set up a new tool on WhiteHouse.gov for people to report instances of social media bias and censorship so the Trump administration could put together more thorough reports of what conservatives are facing online. [27] The page includes a form for users to submit details about which post was taken down, what it said, and which platform removed it. "Social media platforms should advance freedom of speech. Yet too many Americans have seen their accounts suspended, banned, or fraudulently reported for unclear 'violations' of user policies," the website reads. [28]

In subsequent chapters I'll detail what's been happening on each of the major social media platforms, but rampant censorship isn't limited to just Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Music Streaming Services

While politicians and news commentators have always had to watch what they say about certain subjects so they don't get fired, artists have always been seen as the bastions of free speech, and censoring art—no matter how provocative or offensive it is to some people—was always seen as something only a tyrannical government would do. Major music labels and movie studios always stood by their artists and vigorously resisted calls for censorship, championing the freedom of expression whether it was NWA's "Fuck the Police" or blasphemous anti-Christian films like *The Da Vinci Code* or Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ.*

But in August 2017 Spotify, the popular music streaming service, announced they would start censoring songs from "hate bands" including songs they claim "incite violence against race, religion, [or] sexuality." [29] How will they determine which bands and songs to censor? Whatever the Southern Poverty Law Center tells them to. [30] Not surprising, the SPLC got their tentacles wrapped around Spotify and other streaming services to "help" them keep a lookout for "hateful" content. [31]

Other streaming services like Apple and Pandora followed suit, banning supposed "white power" music, while allowing rap music that blatantly calls for the murder of police officers from people like Ice-T, NWA, and Snoop Dogg, who recently depicted himself murdering President Trump in one of his music videos. [32] As you know, it's common for rappers to diss "crackers" and "white boys" in their music, but that's just fine. Hating white people isn't considered to be racist to the Left. And Jay Z's albums are okay, despite calling women "bitches" in (literally) 50% of his songs. [33]

About a year later Spotify announced another new policy, saying they were going to start banning songs from artists who have engaged in "harmful or hateful conduct" in their personal lives, like domestic violence or sexual abuse. That put songs by R. Kelly and Michael Jackson at risk of not being available anymore. But then just three weeks later they reversed their decision and apologized, saying they don't want to be the "moral police,” but affirmed that they were still going to be censoring “hate speech.” [34]

Guns ‘N Roses song “One in a Million,” which was released on their 1988 album *G N’ R Lies*, includes a line about “immigrants and faggots” but when the studio released the Guns ’N Roses box set in 2018 they didn’t include that song on the album because it’s been deemed “racist” and “homophobic.” [35]

It’s probably only a matter of time before other songs like Aerosmith’s “Dude Looks Like a Lady” will be banned for being “transphobic” as well. Once you give liberals an inch, they demand a mile, and since they smell blood in the water they will continue their quest to eliminate everything they find offensive.

Netflix and Prime Video

Even movie streaming services like Netflix and Amazon’s Prime Video are showing signs of liberal bias and censoring “controversial content” that had once been available on the platforms for years. Netflix won’t allow *The Red Pill* , a popular documentary about the Men’s Rights Movement produced by Cassie Jaye, to be streamed. Through the course of producing the film she found that claims about the “patriarchy” and supposed “male power” were extremely warped and that many of the burdens men typically bear in society are overlooked and often discounted by feminists. [36]

Cassie Jaye herself was a feminist when she started making the film and expected to find the Men’s Rights Movement would be full of misogynists and losers who had no luck with women, but learned they have very legitimate points about gender roles and unfair treatment in child custody cases, and by the end of the film she admitted they weren’t a bunch of women-haters as she had previously thought, and decided that she could no longer call herself a feminist because “feminism is not the road to gender equality.” [37]

When the trailer was released on YouTube it reached over a million views in 24 hours and was the number one purchased movie on YouTube (which streams movies on-demand for 4 or 5 dollars) beating *Guardians of the Galaxy* and *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story.* [38] But Netflix wouldn’t allow the film to be streamed on their platform because when it was released in selected theaters it had generated some negative publicity from feminists protesting it, calling it “misogynistic propaganda.” [39]

In March 2019 Democrat Congressman Adam Schiff sent a letter to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos pressuring him to censor “anti-vaccination” documentaries from Amazon Prime after seeing a report on CNN claiming that “Anti-vaccination conspiracy theories thrive on Amazon.” [40] Within hours of Schiff sending his letter, the streaming service pulled at least five documentaries including the popular *Vaxxed: From Cover-Up to Catastrophe* , [41] which had been promoted by Robert De Niro when it first came out because one of his children is autistic which he suspects may have been caused by the MMR vaccines. [42]

Others included: *We Don’t Vaccinate!;” Shoot ‘Em Up: The Truth About Vaccines* , *The Greater Good* ; and *Man Made Epidemic* , which investigated the alleged connections between the autism epidemic and the preservative Thimerosal used in vaccines. Many have long suspected a link between Thimerosal and autism, including Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has tried to bring awareness to the dangers of vaccines for years. [43]

CNN then celebrated the censorship with a follow-up story touting, “Anti-vaccine movies disappear from Amazon after CNN Business report.” [44] During a segment on CNN in 2009 Dr. Oz was talking with host Campbell Brown about the H1N1 (swine flu) vaccines, encouraging people to get them, but was put on the spot by the host about her concerns that they may not be safe. He responded, “I’m going to get it, if that helps at all, but I’ll tell you my wife is not going to immunize our kids. Cuz I’ve got four of them and when I go home I’m not Dr. Oz, I’m Mr. Oz.” [45]

So he went on television encouraging people to take the vaccine and give it to *their* children, but admitted that he’s not going to give it to his own children because his wife didn’t think it was safe; and despite him being a famous doctor, he couldn’t convince her otherwise and allowed his children to go unvaccinated.

Netflix also censored an episode of comedian Hasan Minhaj’s show, blocking it for customers in Saudi Arabia at the request of the government there because in it he talked about Saudi Arabia’s role in the 9/11 attacks and the murder of *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the hands of Saudis. [46]

Netflix will not stream the 1980s classic *Dukes of Hazzard* because that’s too “racist” today. Reruns of the show were pulled from TV Land and other cable networks in 2015 after growing sentiment that the Confederate Flag is a “white supremacist” symbol, and since the Duke boys’ car (The General Lee) has one painted on the roof, networks now deem the TV show too offensive to air. [47] Other classic TV shows and movies will likely slowly and quietly disappear from the streaming services and cable TV because they’re deemed too “insensitive” for our modern age. Owning DVDs may be the only way to ever see them again.

A growing number of activists are upset about *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* for what they call its “contempt” for LGBT people because the main suspect in the movie later started living as a woman and after catching him and realizing this, Jim Carrey goes into convulsions vomiting while having flashbacks to when “she” had kissed him earlier in the film. Or other comedies like *Mrs. Doubtfire* or Tyler Perry's "Medea" character may be banned for being "transphobic" as well. Or films like *Idiocracy* , *The Breakfast Club* , or *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* because characters call people fags. Or maybe even *The Sand Lot* since one boy tells another that he plays baseball like a girl. That's sexist!

In 2018, Barack and Michelle Obama signed a deal with Netflix to produce several documentaries, scripted series, and full-length feature films through a production company they started called Higher Ground. [48] "Touching on issues of race and class, democracy and civil rights, and much more, we believe each of these productions won't just entertain, but will educate, connect and inspire us all," said Barack. [49]

The couple's debut documentary *American Factory* was hailed as their "first big anti-Trump statement of 2020" by Politico, although it didn't mention him by name "it's message is clear." [50] Others called it "lefty propaganda" and an attack on Trump. [51]

Netflix has also produced various liberal "comedy" shows called Netflix Originals which have included hosts like skank Chelsea Handler, Michelle Wolf, and other insufferable and non-funny Leftists. Similarly, Hulu produced a show hosted by Sarah Silverman called "I Love You America" which got canceled after two seasons, calling into question the streaming services ability to tap into the late-night talk show genre. [52] They also produced a documentary following the Congressional campaign of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

After Georgia's controversial "heartbeat" abortion bill was signed by the governor in May 2019 which bans abortions after six weeks into the pregnancy, Netflix announced they may quit using the state as a production location because several of their shows like "Stranger Things" and "Ozark" are shot there. They even vowed to help fight the bill in court. [53] It certainly is strange for a major corporation to take a stance on abortion, but that's where we're at.

Amazon Banning Books

Banning books was once seen as the ultimate sin, and something only the Nazis would do, but today we're seeing a growing number of books disappearing down the memory hole in the name of political correctness and stopping "hate speech." 65% of all books are sold through Amazon and they have a virtual monopoly over the entire industry. [54] They are the reason Borders, Walden Books, and B. Dalton went out of business. Amazon advertises themselves as the world's largest bookstore where you can find practically any book, new or used, since if they don't stock it, they (supposedly) allow anyone to list used copies for sale themselves.

For over twenty years since Amazon was launched in 1995 they would sell any book new or used, but recently that all changed. In July 2018 a children's book titled *No Dress for Timmy* was banned for being "transphobic." It was written by Shefflorn Ballantyne and is described as, "A story of a little boy who found himself in a perplexing situation where he was forced to choose between speaking the truth and cheering on a friend who thinks of himself as a girl." [55] The young protagonist basically wouldn't support a transgender classmate.

After an LGBT advocacy organization called Family Rhetoric discovered it when searching for LGBT-themed children books, they launched a campaign to pressure Amazon to ban the book, which they did. The group later celebrated on their Facebook page saying, "We did it. You did it friends! The link to *No Dress for Timmy* is not working. Amazon took down the book. It's gone!" [56] And indeed it is.

Amazon banned almost all of pickup artist Roosh V's books just days after his latest one was released, titled *Game: How to Meet, Attract, and Date Attractive Women.* [57] They wouldn't even give him a reason, just that they "violated" their policy and "can't offer any additional insight or action on this matter." [58] Roosh had come to the attention of various radical feminist groups who see him as a huge "misogynist" for his views on women and feminism, and they most likely lobbied Amazon to pull his books.

Juanita Broaddrick's book about Bill Clinton allegedly raping her was removed in June 2018, and then later restored. [59] It appears that Amazon keeps testing how far they can push the envelope by gauging the backlash, but not everyone is so lucky to have their books re-listed after media reports denounce the censorship.

In August 2018 Amazon banned a book that contained plans to build a 3D printed gun called *The Liberator Code Book: An Exercise in Freedom of Speech* , which had been listed by the publisher just a few weeks earlier. An Amazon spokesperson said it violated their guidelines. [60] Yet they sell the *Anarchist's Cookbook* and other bomb-making manuals (at least at the time this book was first published in November 2019). *The Anarchist's Cookbook* author William Powell later denounced his terrorist manual which he wrote in 1971 when he was just nineteen-years-old. [61] But he does not own the rights to the book; the publisher does (now Ozark Press), which keeps it in print, and which Amazon still sells. [62]

The Columbine school shooters, who planted bombs in the school aside from shooting and killing twelve students and one teacher, owned a copy of the *Anarchist's Cookbook* and used it to manufacture their bombs. [63] When members of the Black Liberation Army were arrested in the 1970s for murdering several police officers, they had a copy in their possession and are believed to have planted a bomb in a San Francisco church during the funeral of a police officer who died in the line of duty. [64]

Thomas Eugene Spinks, who bombed ten abortion clinics in the 1980s, used the *Anarchist Cookbook* to build his bombs. [65] Many others have used it as well, including Timothy McVeigh, who carried out the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, and the radical Islamic terrorists who committed the July 2005 bombings on the London public transportation system used the book as their instruction manual too. So *No Dress for Timmy* is too "transphobic" to be sold, but a literal bomb-making manual used by terrorists in numerous high-profile bombings is okay.

Jared Taylor, a leader in the white identitarian [pro-white] community, had several of his books censored from Amazon in February 2019, including *White Identity* , despite having been sold on the site since 2011. [66] The following month Tommy Robinson's book *Mohammed's Koran* was banned from Amazon just days after Facebook and Instagram banned him (in response to Tommy posting a documentary critical of the BBC on his YouTube channel). [67] His book was deemed "Islamophobic." [68]

Then in March 2019 they banned David Duke's autobiography *My Awakening* and another one of his books titled *Jewish Supremacism* where he details what he believes is a Jewish supremacist belief system within Judaism. [69] The books had been available on Amazon since they first came out, one in 1998, and the other in 2004, but were removed shortly after a no-name freelance writer "inquired" about why Amazon was selling books written by a "white supremacist." [70] They're not just shown as out of stock or unavailable; the entire listings for the books have been deleted, and it appears Amazon is also prohibiting any 3rd party sellers from listing used copies as well.

They also banned several books published by the Nation of Islam which were critical of Jews, [71] as well as a few written by Christian pastor Texe Marrs, including *Holy Serpent of the Jews* , for being “anti-semitic.” [72] This is especially interesting because Amazon still sells Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* (for now). [73]

After CNN successfully pressured Amazon to censor various popular documentary films from their Prime Video streaming service in March 2019 that question the safety of some vaccines, they went on to lament that Amazon still sold “anti-vaccine” books, saying, “while some anti-vaccine videos are gone from the Prime streaming service, a number of anti-vaccine books were still available for purchase on Amazon.com when CNN Business reviewed search results on Friday afternoon, and some were still being offered for free to Kindle Unlimited subscribers.” [74] Amazon soon banned several “anti-vax” books for promoting what they called “vaccine misinformation.” [75]

In July 2019 they banned books by Dr. Joseph Nicolosi, who is best known for advocating conversion therapy for homosexuals. Two of his most popular books on the subject, *Healing Homosexuality* and *A Parent’s Guide to Preventing Homosexuality* were taken down after sustained pressure from LGBT activists. [76] Perhaps Amazon will ban some of Sigmund Freud’s books next because he believed that homosexuality was caused by a disruption in a child’s development due to a dysfunctional relationship with their parents in terms of the role those parents fill in their lives. [77]

For several years now Amazon has banned sales of all Confederate flags because they’re considered to be symbols of “white supremacy” these days. [78] They have also banned the sale of various Halloween costumes liberals consider to be offensive, like the “Tranny Granny” costume that’s “transphobic,” [79] a Chinese dress for being “cultural appropriation,” and a “sexy burka” costume for being disrespectful to Islam. In January 2019 Amazon removed dozens of other products that were said to be offensive to Muslims as well. [80]

Meanwhile, an album by a band called Marduk titled “Fuck Me Jesus” is allowed, which shows a naked woman using a crucifix as a dildo on the cover. [81] Amazon also sells a song titled “Fuck White People” which has a noose on the album cover. [82] They also stock various black supremacist books that promote hate groups like the Black Hebrew Israelites.

Twitch.TV

Twitch.TV (which is owned by Amazon) is a website where people livestream themselves playing video games (I know this seems strange to anyone over 40) and they can have a large number of viewers who enjoy watching them play. Like YouTube livestreams, there is a chat box on Twitch where viewers can post comments and even tip the player.

While it’s mostly for video games, sometimes the gamers will talk politics during their streams, and the Thought Police are watching in case they say something “racist,” “sexist,” “homophobic,” etc., etc. One gamer was recently banned from Twitch for simply saying there are only two genders. [83] The email informing her of the ban read, “Your recent behavior has proven your lack of understanding of what hateful speech is and how it may affect your community on your channel…Several of your statements have been found offensive towards the transgender community, and we don’t tolerate this kind of behavior.” [84]

In a YouTube video discussing the ban she said, “I specifically said, it’s okay if a man wants to be a woman, and a woman wants to be a man, you cannot be anything in between,” referring to the odd “gender fluid,” “pan gender,” and the dozens of other “genders” liberals have invented.

A popular DJ named Deadmouse (stylized Deadmau5), who also streamed on Twitch for fun was banned for "hate speech" after he called another streamer a dreaded "homophobic slur." He issued a statement saying, "It was intended to insult a fuckin asshat who was being a fucking asshat…it wasn't 'directed at an entire group of people who have a sexual orientation that differs from my own.' Fuck off with that shit. I know who I am, and I don't have to fucking sit here and cry and defend my fucking self with the obligatory 'I'M NOT THAT PERSON, I AM SORRY" reflex… The sane people who knew what it was in the heat of the moment knew the purpose of the statement, and the people that think otherwise, I'm better off not even fucking knowing and they can just keep the fuck clear of me." [85]

It was great to see someone of his celebrity push back against this PC nonsense, but he soon backtracked and issued an apology, along with apologizing for his previous "non-apology" in response to the ban, saying, "I know what I said was wrong, and my hastily composed non-apology was an insult to injury." [86]

Many other Twitch streamers have had their accounts suspended and banned for just uttering what moderators *thought* were "slurs" out loud in a fit of anger when something went wrong on the game they're playing when they actually said something that just sounded similar to one. [87] So even while players are virtually "mass murdering" people in a video game, the Thought Police are carefully monitoring them to make sure their off-the-cuff commentary doesn't happen to offend someone in the LGBTQ community or other "protected group." One streamer was even given a 30-day suspension for calling another player a "mongoloid," because Twitch considers that "hate speech" too. [88]

Like YouTube and Facebook Live, Twitch uses real-time voice recognition systems to analyze what people are saying in order to lookout for any words that are flagged as being inappropriate. Monitoring livestreams using AI is one of the top priorities of the tech companies due to the bad press they get when someone livestreams something completely ridiculous (or criminal) so they are putting enormous resources into being able to detect what is being said in real-time, and even what is being shown so they can take down a stream if their algorithm deems the broadcast includes anything “inappropriate.” Twitch, however, like all the other major platforms turns a blind eye when liberals flagrantly violate their rules.

A popular streamer who goes by “Destiny” (real name Steven Kenneth Bonnell II) has explicitly called for violence against conservatives on at least one occasion. When he was asked during a stream, “You genuinely do hate conservatives, don’t you?” he answered, “Very much so. I’ve moved full-on to the political violence level or the real violence level when it comes to conservative people. I feel like they need to be fucking excised from my fucking country. I think they’re demonstrably evil people.” [89] He remains on the platform and his channel is still monetized.

Alex Jones “Unpersoned”

One of the scariest aspects of censorship isn’t a few songs, movies, or books disappearing from the Internet, but a person being deleted. An “Unperson” is a term from George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that describes someone whose very existence has been erased from society, and this basically happened to radio talk show host Alex Jones in August 2018.

Within the course of just a few days he was banned from YouTube, Facebook, iTunes, the TuneIn radio app, Spotify, Stitcher, Pinterest, and even LinkedIn! Years of archived shows and interviews just disappeared. PayPal also closed his account, preventing his website Infowars.com from accepting payments through the service, [90] and numerous credit card processors also refused to allow him to have an account, making it difficult to accept debit and credit cards for the products he sells.

Liberals were thrilled with the actions, including Democrat Senator Chris Murphy from Connecticut who said, “Infowars is the tip of a giant iceberg of hate and lies that uses sites like Facebook and YouTube to tear our nation apart. These companies must do more than take down one website. The survival of our democracy depends on it.” [91]

Many conservatives, even those who think Alex Jones is a raving lunatic, were quite concerned about his sudden “disappearance” from the Internet. Even Senator Ted Cruz defended Alex, tweeting, “Am no fan of Jones — among other things he has a habit of repeatedly slandering my Dad by falsely and absurdly accusing him of killing JFK — but who the hell made Facebook the arbiter of political speech? Free speech includes views you disagree with.” [92]

Others came to his defense as well, including Bill Maher who said despite Jones telling “lies” about him, “if you’re a liberal, you’re supposed to be for free speech. That’s free speech for the speech you hate. That’s what free speech means. We’re losing the thread of the concepts that are important to this country. You care about the real American shit or you don’t. And if you do, it goes for every side. I don’t like Alex Jones, but Alex Jones gets to speak. Everybody gets to speak.” [93]

The ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] even warned his ban could set a dangerous precedent and expressed concerns that the pendulum could swing the other way some day, and groups like Black Lives Matter could be shut down under the same pretense. [94]

President Trump appeared to reference the unpersoning of Alex Jones which had made national headlines, saying, “I won’t mention any names but when they take certain people off of Twitter or Facebook and they’re making that decision, that is really a dangerous thing because that could be you tomorrow.” [95]

Alex Jones Was Just the Beginning

Many people who were quite concerned about Alex Jones getting unpersoned overnight were afraid to speak out against it because they didn’t want to appear as if they supported Jones because of some of the outlandish things he has said over the years, but Big Tech coordinating with each other to ban him was just a test case and the beginning of what was to come.

The editor in chief of *The Verge* , one of Vox Media’s online properties, started calling for Fox News to be taken off the air next, saying, “I feel like we should be just as comfortable asking Comcast and Verizon and Charter why they continue to offer Fox News on their networks as we are about Facebook and Alex Jones.” [96]

Immediately after Jones was universally deplatformed PBS did a report about it and in that report complained that he had inspired countless “imitators” who “sell merchandise” and then showed a clip of me from one of my YouTube videos promoting my popular t-shirts.

Apple CEO Tim Cook then said it’s a “sin” for social media platforms not to ban people the Left deems “hateful” and “divisive.” He was given the first “Courage Against Hate Award” from the Jewish ADL, and during his acceptance speech said, “We only have one message for those who seek to push hate, division, and violence: You have no place on our platforms. You have no home here.” [97] He went on to say, “and as we showed this year, we won’t give a platform to violent conspiracy theorists on the app store,” referring to banning Alex Jones. “Why? Because it’s the right thing to do,” Cook concluded. [98]

Even conservative darling Ben Shapiro is technically in violation of their terms of service for "hate speech" by saying transgenderism is a mental illness. [99] They could drop the hammer on anyone at anytime for things they've said years ago, and even "off platform," meaning things said in interviews or speeches that didn't even directly involve social media.

Just voting for Donald Trump is considered "hate speech" by the Silicon Valley titans, and it won't be long now before they include negative tone of voice, contorted facial expressions or even supposed "code words" and "dog whistles" into their terms of service as things that are not allowed.

For example, if someone is reporting on a new television commercial featuring two gay men who are raising a child they adopted and react with a disgusted look on their face, or a sarcastic, "I'm sure the child will grow up to be totally normal." That will likely be a violation of their policies. George Orwell even warned about such things in his classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* , saying, "to wear an improper expression on your face (to look incredulous when a victory was announced, for example) was itself a punishable offense. There was even a word for it in Newspeak: facecrime, it was called." [100]

They'll start claiming that certain words or phrases are "code words" for something else just like they've done with the "okay" hand sign, and soon nobody will be safe from being smeared as a "white supremacist," "Islamophobe," "homophobe," "xenophobe," etc.

The Left are now engaged in a Maoist-style attempted overthrow of our culture and our country, and are systematically purging influential dissenting voices from social media. Get ready, because this is just the beginning. They don't just want prominent vocal opponents of the liberal agenda silenced; they want our lives destroyed.

Some people believe censorship amplifies extremism by forcing people to descend into the dark corners of the Internet where their ideas aren't challenged or debunked by onlookers who disagree with them, and so they fester in an echo chamber that fuels and radicalizes them. Censoring someone who's not calling for violence can also be seen as confirmation that they are being persecuted and cultivate a sense that they feel justified fighting back in a more extreme way. By having their voice taken away for what was perfectly legal speech, they may be compelled to act out in other ways in order to "be heard."

The liberal Establishment is working tirelessly to take down any independent social media personalities who organically gain sizable followings, and if they're truly independent, meaning not working for a major media outlet then they are extremely vulnerable because they don't have a legal department behind them that can push back on their behalf. They have developed a formula to take us down. First, a few unscrupulous liberal online outlets like the Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, and Vox label certain conservatives "Alt-Right" or "right-wing extremists" and then the editors at Wikipedia update those people's pages to claim they are a white nationalists or neo-Nazis and use those dubious reports as "sources" to solidify the smear.

And since Wikipedia is the go-to place for information for most people and one of the top search results on Google, anyone looking those people up from that point on will be presented with information claiming they're a racist or far-right extremist. Then, even more outlets repeat the false claims, thus generating even more news articles from mainstream sources parroting the smear which are then used to add even more citations to the Wikipedia articles to reinforce their false narrative.

These liberal outlets know that most people don’t have the vast resources necessary to sue for defamation, and so they are forever branded a “racist.” Then the self-referencing Wikipedia page is used as the justification to demonetize their YouTube channels and suspend their PayPal accounts to cutoff their revenue streams in order to crush them into silence. In our current political climate, especially as the 2020 election is approaching, I wake up every morning wondering if today will be the day that it happens to me.

What’s Next?

How far will this fascism go? Will Visa, MasterCard, or American Express deactivate certain accounts because the banks don’t like what some people say or believe? Will Bank of America and Wells Fargo start closing people’s checking accounts because they don’t like their politics? Some banks are already doing just that. Chase Bank issued a letter to Proud Boys (a pro-Trump men’s fraternity) leader Enrique Tarrio that they would be closing his account and he had until the end of the month to move all his money somewhere else. [101] Then Joe Biggs, a former reporter for Infowars who banks at Chase, got the same notification. Others did as well, including Martina Markota who works for the conservative news site Rebel Media. [102]

After word spread of the shocking move, outraging many veterans groups because Joe Biggs is an Iraq vet, Chase re-activated his account, but wouldn’t give him a reason as to why they had initially banned him. [103] PayPal has already banned Alex Jones, Laura Loomer, Milo Yiannopoulous, Lauren Southern, Tommy Robinson, Gavin McInnes, Roosh V, Faith Goldy, as well as Twitter alternative Gab, and YouTube alternative BitChute because they support free speech and won’t ban users for posting things that hurt others feelings. [104]

A senior software engineer at Google recommended the company delete Donald Trump’s G-mail account, and that of everyone working in his administration. He even suggested they “brick” Donald Trump’s cell phone. [105] A “bricked” phone, if you’re not familiar with the term, means one that is completely deactivated and won’t even turn on. So the engineer was literally recommending Google remotely disable Donald Trump’s phone, since they are the owners of the Android operating system which it uses.

We only know about this because the proposal was included in a series of documents obtained as part of a lawsuit filed by former Google employee James Damore who was fired after circulating a memo explaining how the company’s obsession with “diversity” is misguided.

While the company didn’t authorize those radical actions, who’s to say in the future they (or Apple) won’t ban certain people from using their phones? When you activate a smartphone you “agree” to the terms and conditions, even though hardly anyone actually reads them. Those terms also say the manufacturer can change the terms at any time, so what’s to stop them from adding a clause that says they reserve the right to brick your phone (or computer) if they feel you’re engaging in certain kinds of behavior or speech that they find objectionable? Perhaps Google didn’t want the publicity and the backlash of sabotaging the President of the United States’ cellphone, but what’s to stop them from doing it to people who aren’t as powerful or well known?

How far will the Silicon Valley titans go to stamp out vocal critics of the radical Leftists’ agenda? Will video editing software companies deactivate their software on people’s computers if they don’t like the content people are creating? Will Photoshop not sell their software to artists who are making the “wrong” kind of memes? Or will Microsoft and Apple refuse to license their operating systems on the computers (or smartphones) of political activists, social media personalities, or authors they consider racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, Islamophobic, etc.?

Or maybe their local ISP [Internet Service Provider] won’t even allow them to have an Internet connection or will start blocking certain websites.[106] What if Priceline or Orbitz decides not to sell you a plane ticket because they refuse to do business with “hateful” people? Or if Enterprise decides they won’t rent you a car. Or a popular gas station chain won’t sell you gas? What if a major grocery store chain decides they won’t sell you any food? If Visa or Mastercard blacklist you, then you won’t even be able to have a debit card. If no banks will allow you to have an account, how can you cash your paycheck?

In the Bible, a prophecy in the Book of Revelation says that one day “no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name,” warning that people who don’t worship the counterfeit Christ will be completely cut off economically from the modern world. It appears we are beginning to see the justifications for such widespread bans by those who control the backbone of the financial system.

Section 230 of the CDA

Technically, private companies can ban people from their platforms as long as it's not because of their race, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, country of origin, or other legally "protected" class. But political affiliation is not a protected class, and companies could legally ban all Republicans if they wanted to. Laws and regulations are always many years behind innovation, and the framers of the legislation governing our communication infrastructure could have never imagined the emergence of social media, let alone how instrumental of a role it would come to play in our lives.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in order to overhaul the rules and regulations governing communication systems in response to the development of the Internet. Within the Act was a subsection called the Communications Decency Act, and Section 230 of the law granted immunity to Internet Service Providers, Domain Registrars, and website hosting services so if customers use these services in ways that violate copyright laws (or criminal statutes), the companies themselves are not liable for the legal consequences because they are not deemed publishers, but platforms, and are not responsible what their customers are posting.

In other words, if someone posts an episode of *The Big Bang Theory* television show on their YouTube channel, YouTube is not responsible for that person violating CBS's copyright (as long as YouTube would promptly remove the infringing video if notified by CBS.) Because YouTube provides a service (i.e. the "platform") to the public, they can't necessarily prevent people from using that service to post copyrighted material, so they are given "safe harbor" and are immune from any civil or criminal penalties when their users break the law.

Section 230 of the CDA also granted immunity to Internet Service Providers and interactive websites if third party users post defamatory information about someone, [107] death threats, [108] or even if they sell fake merchandise on eBay, meaning eBay is not responsible, only the person posting the fake listing is.

Today, many Big Tech companies are abusing their immunity granted to them by Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act by censoring certain users and posts and deciding themselves what to delete from their platforms, when that content is not violating any laws. They are now acting as publishers, not platforms, because they are making editorial decisions about what will and will not be allowed. If a person posts something that doesn't violate any laws, then why should the social media companies have the right to take it down if they are in the business of offering a platform for (supposedly) anyone to use?

Currently there is a loophole in section 230 that allows for what it calls "Good Samaritan" blocking and screening of "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing, or otherwise objectionable content." [109] So they interpret "objectionable" content as being facts or opinions that hurt people's feelings or undermine the liberal agenda.

Further evidence that section 230 of the CDA is outdated and unfair can be seen by the fact that a court ruled that President Trump can't block people on Twitter after several trolls who he had blocked found a law firm that sued the President on their behalf. [110] The court ruled that Trump can't block people on social media because it "deprives them of access to official Presidential statements," and his feeds are considered a "public square." This begs the question, why is Facebook, Twitter and YouTube allowed to deprive citizens access to that same public square?

If the President of the United States can't "deprive" someone of access to his statements on social media, why should the tech companies be allowed to do that to ordinary citizens? Facebook and Twitter are basically the modern day equivalent of a telephone, or post office. They've become an intimate and crucial part of billions of people's lives. It's how friends and families communicate with each other, and share photos and videos. It's where they send out party invitations and look up old childhood friends or family members they've lost touch with. It's how they get their news and see what the President is saying.

Imagine the phone company canceling your service because they didn't like what you and your friends talked about. That's essentially what Facebook and other social media platforms are doing today when they suspend people, delete their posts, or ban them completely because of what they say when their statements are not crimes, but just a "controversial," "divisive," or "hateful" point of view.

The power these mega corporations have over how billions of people on the planet communicate with each other is staggering. And the fact that they are working in concert together to enforce their arbitrary and bias "terms of service" to silence certain people and points of view is beyond horrifying. As George Washington said, "If the freedom of speech is taken away then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter." [111]

Author's Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com, or wherever you purchased it from if you're reading the e-book, to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them.

Almost all of the one-star reviews on Amazon for my last two books "The True Story of Fake News" and "Liberalism: Find a Cure" are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent hence me adding this note.

It's just more proof that liberals are losers and can't play fair, so if you could help me combat them as soon as possible since you actually bought this book, that would be great!

Thank you!

The Memory Hole

Censorship encompasses much more than people getting their posts and accounts deleted from social media platforms. It involves the mainstream media self-censoring stories and certain issues as well. They lie by omission and purposefully ignore events and individuals they don’t want to give publicity to, even when what’s happening fully warrants extensive coverage.

They spent years chasing after “Russian agents” who are supposedly around every corner trying to infiltrate every aspect of America, while ignoring that the National Security Agency actually considers Israel to be the top espionage threat against the United States. [112] While regularly portraying Muslims and Jews as poor minorities who are constantly persecuted by Islamophobes and anti-Semites, the American media never reports that Christians are actually the most persecuted religion in the world, and are being murdered at such a rate in the Middle East that it is considered to be “near genocide levels” according to human rights groups. [113]

When a reporter for Reuters learned that Beto O’Rourke was a member of the infamous Cult of the Dead Cow hacking group when he was a teenager, he promised Beto he wouldn’t reveal that information until after the 2018 midterm election when Beto was running against Ted Cruz for his Senate seat. [114] During the campaign Beto was already being haunted by his past for leaving the scene of an accident he caused while driving drunk, and if word got out that he was also committing computer crimes as well, it certainly wouldn’t have looked good.

PBS edited out a part of *Finding Your Roots* , a documentary series that traces celebrities' ancestry, after Ben Affleck discovered that his ancestors owned slaves and then pressured the network to cut that part out of the episode, which they did, so it wouldn't hurt his image. [115] We only know about the censorship because hacked emails from Sony were posted on Wikileaks, including one between *Finding Your Roots* host Henry Louis Gates Jr. and the CEO of Sony Entertainment discussing Affleck's request. [116]

In our digital world, news outlets can alter an article or a headline after something is published without most people even noticing, covering up falsehoods and mistakes, or even changing the overall message of the story. This often results in an inflammatory article going viral and whipping people into a frenzy, only to later have key points quietly changed in response to the backlash. Sometimes outlets have other reasons for dumping things down the memory hole.

For example, the popular New Zealand news website Stuff.co.nz quietly deleted an article about how a local resident had allegedly been "introduced to radical Islam at the Al-Noor mosque in Christchurch," immediately after a white supremacist walked into the same mosque and livestreamed his mass-murder of 50 Muslims inside. [117] It appears the website was trying to prevent word from getting out that the attacker appeared to have targeted that particular mosque because it had allegedly been linked to Muslim extremists.

Project Censored

Have you heard of Project Censored? Most people have not, which is the ultimate irony because it's an organization that highlights important under-reported or censored stories that mainstream media buries. Each year they publish a list of the top 25 censored or under-reported stories in America hoping to give them the attention they deserve. “Under-reported” meaning that they may have been mentioned in some mainstream outlets, but weren’t front page stories or didn’t dominate the news cycle for a week as they should have due to their importance.

In our fast paced world, if a story isn’t one that happens to get circulated in the news cycle non-stop for a week, it is almost immediately forgotten by most people who are swept up in the next wave of reporting about mass shootings, fires, floods, celebrity gossip, health scares, and political scandals.

Project Censored was founded in 1976 at Sonoma State University by a professor who wanted to expose censorship and propaganda in mainstream media. It has been praised by many media analysts around the world. Whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the Pentagon Papers which showed that the Johnson administration lied to the American people and Congress about the reasons for getting involved in the Vietnam War, said Project Censored, “shines light in the dark places of our government that most need exposure.” [118]

Even Walter Cronkite, who anchored the *CBS Evening News* for almost twenty years and who was considered to be “the most trusted man in America” said, “Project Censored is one of the organizations that we should listen to, to be assured that our newspapers and our broadcasting outlets are practicing thorough and ethical journalism.” [119]

The Los Angeles Times once admitted that Project Censored, “offers devastating evidence of the dumbing-down of mainstream news in America” and said their annual book of the top 25 most censored and under-reported stories was, “Required reading for broadcasters, journalists, and well-informed citizens.” [120]

New York Times Best Seller List

When the *New York Times* learned the NSA was illegally spying on tens of millions of Americans they sat on the story for over a year and only published it after the reporter who got his story killed by the editors decided to write a book about the spying since the paper couldn't stop him from publishing that. [121] But that's not the only censorship the *New York Times* has engaged in. They even censor books from their prestigious "best seller" list.

Ted Cruz's book *A Time for Truth* was excluded from their list in 2015 when it qualified to be number three on the list. [122] They claimed it was because most of the sales were from bulk orders, which they say was evidence that an author is ordering their own book to artificially inflate the numbers, but the publisher HarperCollins issued a statement saying they investigated the sales patterns and found no evidence of any such bulk orders. [123]

Cruz's campaign tweeted "The New York Times is lying — they should release their evidence or issue a formal apology." [124] A few days later, the book was then finally included on the best seller list. [125]

Bill O'Reilly's book *Legends & Lies: The Patriots* was included on *The New York Times* best sellers list when it came out in 2016, but was only ranked number six despite being number one on the *Wall Street Journal's* best seller list, as well as number one on the *Publisher's Weekly* list. At the time the Nielsen organization reported Bill O'Reilly's book sold 24,348 copies that week, while the number one book on *The New York Times* best seller list, *The Gene* , sold only 9,781 copies. [126]

The New York Times also omitted a bestselling book about the Philadelphia abortionist Dr. Kermit Gosnell who killed babies that were born alive during his attempted abortions and was found to have kept baby body parts in jars around his office. He was later convicted of three counts of murder and one count of involuntary manslaughter but the liberal media paid little attention to the trial because it cast abortion in such a horrific light. [127]

The book's co-author Ann McElhinney said it is "shocking that the cover-up of the Gosnell story is continuing…It's clear that this is a blatant fake list in a fake news newspaper…It's not only an insult to the people who have bought this book, but an insult to the readers of *The New York Times* who buy the newspaper and think they are getting the truth about book sales across America but instead get false facts disguised as a neutral list." [128]

In October 2018 when Stormy Daniels' book came out detailing her alleged affair with Donald Trump, the *New York Times* included it on their top 10 best seller list but not Fox News' Jeanine Pirro's book *Liars, Leakers, and Liberals* , or David Limbaugh's *Jesus is Risen* , both of which had actually sold more copies than Stormy's. [129]

In June 2019, CNN's Jim Acosta released a book about President Trump titled *The Enemy of the People: A Dangerous Time to Tell the Truth In America* that didn't even make it into the top 50 on Amazon's best seller list and completely dropped off the top 100 list after just two days. But the *New York Times* placed Acosta's book at number ten on their "best seller" list, proving once again it's not an accurate ranking of the week's best-selling books, but really just a favorites list of the editors.

Books are so powerful that today liberals even protest companies which decide to publish certain authors. Simon & Schuster came under tremendous fire when it was revealed they had signed a deal with right-wing provocateur Milo Yiannopolous, causing the publisher to become one of the top trends on Twitter from triggered liberals calling for people to boycott not just Milo's book (which they weren't going to read anyway), but every book Simon and Schuster publishes! [130]

Hollywood producer Judd Apatow tweeted support of the boycott, saying, "I am in! In these times we can not let hatemongers get rich off of their cruelty. Shame on Simon (and) Schuster." [131] Former Governor of Vermont Howard Dean tweeted, "This is an embarrassment for [Simon & Schuster] and their owner CBS which is already on record putting their company ahead of the USA." [132] The publisher eventually canceled their contract with Milo and he later had to self-publish it.

Illegal Immigration

The facts about illegal immigration are rarely allowed into the news cycle because the American people would learn just how big of a crisis it is, and the damage illegal aliens are doing to our country. In 2015 over 50% of *legal* immigrant households received some form of government welfare—including food stamps, housing assistance, school lunch programs, or Medicaid. [133] A 2018 report by the Center for Immigration Studies found that 63% of non-citizens use at least one form of welfare. [134] While the liberal media loves to report that they're just coming here to work, the fact is millions of them are sucking off our tax dollars.

Many illegal immigrants come infected with diseases as well, including ones that had been previously eradicated from the United States, like measles—resulting in new "mysterious" outbreaks (at places like Disneyland) because the diseases are imported by illegal aliens and those claiming to seek asylum. [135]

Just in the last few years there have been thousands of murders committed by illegal aliens. [136] Lives stolen and families shattered by people who should have never been in our country in the first place. Every day there are headlines in local papers about violent illegal aliens ("undocumented workers," as liberals call them) being arrested, and the stories may get a 15-second sound bite on the local news, but that's it. The number of drunk driving arrests, thefts, burglaries, rapes, and other crimes they commit on a daily basis is staggering. One study shows that illegal aliens commit crimes at double the rate of native-born citizens. [137]

In June 2018 when President Trump met with Angel Families at the White House (people whose family members have been killed by illegal aliens), both MSNBC and CNN abruptly cut their live feed and began talking about how the Trump administration isn't treating illegal immigrant families who sneak into our country good enough. Ironically, during the meeting a woman who lost her son to an illegal alien drunk driver began telling the president, "The mainstream media does not let you know what is really happening." [138]

Democrats say the flood of illegals entering our country isn't a national emergency, as President Trump declared, meanwhile in a recent four-month period Border Patrol agents apprehended 136,000 people crossing from Mexico into the U.S. illegally. [139] In February 2019 alone over 66,400 people were arrested trying to cross the border, the most detained in a single month in over ten years. [140]

During one live feed on MSNBC when their reporter was down at the border talking about the prototypes for Trump's proposed new wall, in the background a group of illegal aliens climbed over the current short and inadequate fence that's only a few feet high, right in the middle of his report. [141]

The Left go so far when denying and defending the crimes of illegal aliens that when Donald Trump called MS-13 gang members "animals" the

Democrats and their mouthpieces in the media began claiming that he was referring to immigrants in general! “Trump calls immigrants animals” was their new talking point which was repeated for years as a deceptively edited video of his statement continues to circulate as the “proof.” [142] MS-13 is widely considered to be the most sadistic and vicious street gang in the world by law enforcement agencies. [143] Their motto is “rape, control, kill” and they are known for torturing and dismembering people. [144]

Democrats all used to support expanding the border wall and were tough on illegal immigration, until Donald Trump became president. [145] You’ve probably seen the video compilations of Chuck Schumer, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and other top Democrats all previously supporting the wall and saying we need to stop the influx of illegals crossing the border—but that has changed.

It appears the Democrats don’t support the blue collar working class any more. President Trump has won most of them over to his side, so now the Democrats are hoping to build a new base of future voters consisting of Americans who are too lazy to work and want free handouts from a Socialist government, and 20 million illegal aliens who they are hoping to grant citizenship to.

Transgender Crimes

Transgender people have an extremely high rate of mental illness, [146] so it should be expected that they also have a high rate of crime. But because they’re part of a legally “protected class” and liberals see them as having achieved the next phase in human evolution, the media always ignores the dangers they pose to society. While their crimes may be reported briefly in local outlets where they occurred, the national conversation regarding transgender people is always framed as if they are amazing and special people who are being treated unfairly by society because they are different.

A 30-year-old transgender "woman" in Wyoming was convicted of raping a ten-year-old girl in a bathroom in 2017 but nobody really heard about this story except for maybe some locals. [147] Another transgender "woman" sexually assaulted a ten-year-old girl in a grocery store bathroom in Scotland but avoided jail and was just given community service. [148]

A 52-year-old transgender "woman" was arrested for raping (an actual) woman in 2016 and then once placed in a female jail "she" sexually assaulted four female prisoners within the first few days. [149] This story spread through social media because people found it so disturbing, but some were in denial and thought it was a hoax, causing Snopes to post an article asking "Did a Male Rapist Who Identifies as Female Transfer to a Women's Jail and Assault Female Inmates?" and rated the claim "True." [150]

In March 2019 a black transgender "woman" in New York was arrested for hate crimes after targeting random white women walking along the sidewalk near subway stations in Harlem and the Upper West Side and spraying them in the face with pepper spray. Police believe 37-year-old Thomas Herd, a black man who identifies as a woman, was behind almost a dozen other similar attacks in the area. [151]

A transgender "woman" in Sydney, Australia was captured on surveillance cameras inside a 7-Eleven walking into the convenience store in January 2019 with an ax, and then randomly smashing two customers in the face after getting upset about a bad Tinder date. [152]

In 2015, a 30-year-old man dressed as a woman was arrested for secretly videotaping women in a mall's bathroom in Virginia. [153] A 37-year-old man in Toronto was arrested after he claimed to be a transgender "woman" and was allowed inside a women's shelter, where he then assaulted four women. [154] These are just a few of many examples.

Aside from ignoring the transgender Peeping Toms, rapes, and hate crimes that transgender "women" commit, the liberal media also ignores the rapes that gay men commit, and try to portray rape as something that only a man does to a woman, but the reality is that gay men raping other men occurs far more frequently than people know, particularly in the U.S. military since Barack Obama lifted the ban on gays being allowed in. [155]

Black Crime

The liberal media always portrays black people as being "racially profiled" by police and cite figures about black people being arrested at exponentially higher rates than whites as some kind of "proof" that the police are racist, but the reality is that black people per capita commit significantly more violent crimes than whites, so it only makes sense that they would get arrested more!

Since liberals don't know anything about math, when you mention that black men commit murder at approximately ten times the average of whites, they may lookup the statistics and claim that's not true, but they are only comparing the *total* number of murders committed by whites to the *total* number committed by blacks, and don't factor in that blacks are only about 14% of the U.S. population. [156]

The figures are *per capita* , meaning the average per person, and since less than 20% of murders in Chicago are actually solved, [157] the number of murders committed by black people is likely much higher than the FBI and Department of Justice records show, which again, reveal that black people commit murder at close to ten times the average of whites. Not twice as many per capita, or three times as many—*ten times* , or 1000% more murders per capita!

Unfortunately many black Americans have embraced the identity of a thug, and see gangster rappers as role models, and view going to jail as a badge of honor. Local TV news in Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Baltimore cover the day's murders, stabbings, and robberies for a few minutes each night, and it's almost the same story the next night, and the night after that, but the black crime problem in America is never addressed as part of our national discussion.

Memorial Day weekend of 2016 in Chicago ended with 69 people shot, every one of them from black on black crime. [158] And while the story may have gotten a fifteen second segment on some of the national broadcast news networks, the horrifying weekend was forgotten by the next day. There was no CNN Town Hall special to discuss the violence problem there. No endless panelists brought on air to discuss it with Anderson Cooper or Don Lemon. It's like it never even happened.

The following year 52 people were shot in Chicago over the same holiday weekend. [159] 36 people were shot the year after that over Memorial Day weekend. [160] All black victims and black perpetrators. Over the Fourth of July holiday and Labor Day weekends the same thing happens every year. It's total carnage in the black communities in Chicago.

It's especially sad that the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement was built upon a foundation of lies. The list of armed and dangerous perpetrators justly shot and killed by police and then labeled "victims" of "police brutality" is long. In fact, convicted cop killer Assata Shakur, who fled to Cuba which granted her "political asylum," is considered to be an inspiration for starting the Black Lives Matter movement. [161] She was a member of the domestic terrorist organization the

Black Liberation Army which stated their goal was to wage war against the United States government, and they carried out a series of bombings and assassinations of police officers in the 1970s. [162]

Many Black Lives Matter supporters carried on the philosophy of the Black Liberation Army and see themselves in a war against police. During their marches they would sometimes chant "What do we want? Dead cops! When do we want them? Now!" [163] In June 2015 two black men were arrested for plotting to blow up a police station in Ferguson, Missouri to get revenge for an officer shooting Michael Brown (after Brown attacked him and tried to take his gun). [164] In July 2016 a black man ambushed a group of police officers during a Black Lives Matter march in Dallas, Texas, killing five of them and injuring nine others. [165]

In 2017 when groups of black youth were robbing people of their cellphones at a train station in San Francisco, police refused to release security footage of the crimes "to avoid racial stereotypes." [166] Debora Allen, who works for the Department of Transportation, gave an interview with the local news and explained the police told her that, "To release these videos would create a high level of racially insensitive commentary toward the district. And in addition it would create a racial bias in the riders against minorities on the trains." [167] Police wouldn't release video footage of the perpetrators because they were concerned it would make black people look bad!

The media regularly tries to ignore or downplay most instances of anti-white hate crimes committed by black people. For example, after a black man walked into a predominately white church in Nashville, Tennessee in 2017 and opened fired, killing one woman and wounding seven others, a judge sealed most of the evidence for almost two years, and then during the trial it was revealed, as many had suspected, that he specifically went there to kill white people. [168]

Meanwhile, if you're concerned about white farmers being murdered in South Africa by the racist mobs of blacks who believe it's their rightful land, you are called a racist conspiracy theorist for promoting what the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* calls the "white genocide conspiracy theory." [169]

In recent years, white farmers in South Africa (called the Boers) have been facing persecution by vicious black gangs who raid their homes and slaughter them to get "revenge" against the "imperialists" who benefited from the Apartheid. [170] And God forbid you point out the anti-white hate crimes that occur in the United States at the hands of disgruntled blacks who blame white people for all of their personal and cultural failures. That's a guaranteed way to get labeled a "white supremacist."

Fake Hate Crimes

Since a large part of our culture has come to celebrate victimhood instead of personal achievement, we have seen a staggering increase in the number of hate crime hoaxes where mostly black people, gays, Muslims, and Jews report fake hate crimes to the police after vandalizing their own property with racial slurs, or claim they were physically attacked by some evil white people. The initial reports air on local and national news and go viral on social media, sparking outrage at the "racist" white people and "Trump supporters" who allegedly keep carrying out these attacks.

But oftentimes when police get involved and interview the "victim" and gather evidence, the supposed "hate crime" turns out to be a hoax and it's quietly forgotten about. Just after the 2016 election an 18-year-old Muslim woman in New York claimed that Trump supporters harassed her on the subway, chanting “Trump!” while trying to steal her hijab, but after police launched their investigation *she* was arrested for making the whole story up in an attempt to distract her father from the fact that she had been out getting drunk with her friends that night. [171]

A Muslim student at the University of Texas-Arlington said she was threatened at gunpoint by a group of white men in a pickup truck only to later admit she fabricated the whole story too. [172]

Hate crime hoaxes are a specialty in LGBT communities and have been used to further their cause and gain sympathy for years, and in some cases defame a neighbor they’re feuding with. [173] Since LGBT people are treated like an endangered species by the liberal media, every time a claim is made that one of them has been harassed, assaulted, or had their property vandalized with anti-gay “slurs,” the activist media is more than happy to amplify their claims. But when the police discover, as they often do, that the “victim” made the whole thing up, the story is dropped like a hot potato and the media just moves on to cover something else.

For example, after a transgender “man” who was a prominent LGBT “rights” activist in Michigan had “his” home burned down, killing five pets, the FBI investigated it as a hate crime and the incident was used as leverage by the “man” to help pass a local ordinance that prohibited the discrimination of gays, but authorities later arrested “him” for the crime and said the motive was to create publicity to help pass more gay “rights” legislation. [174]

It seems every “protected” group engages in these kinds of false flags. A Jewish freshman at George Washington University reported someone had drawn swastikas on her dorm room door, but a security camera actually captured her doing it. [175] At the same school another student posted a swastika on a community bulletin board that belonged to a Jewish fraternity and it was later discovered that the perpetrator, a Jew, was a member of that same fraternity. [176]

An African American community center in Seattle was vandalized with racist graffiti including “Nigger Babies” and “Vote Trump,” and as you can guess, an African American was arrested for the crime. [177]

A 44-year-old black man in Colorado was arrested after it was discovered he was the one who hung racist flyers outside of a predominantly black church that caused the local community to be understandably outraged. [178]

A black man reported that while his car was parked near Kansas State University it had been vandalized by someone painting “Go home nigger boy” on it. A photo of the damage went viral on social media only to later be exposed as another false flag and the man admitted that he defaced his own car and filed a false police report. [179] The FBI was even brought in to help investigate the case, which turned out to be another hoax.

The following year a black student at the same school posted a photo of a note on his Twitter account that he claimed had been put on the door of his apartment, reading “Beware Niggers Live Here!!!” But when the police got involved he admitted that he made the note and put it there himself. [180]

And of course the most popular hate crime hoax in decades involves actor Jussie Smollett, who claimed that two men wearing MAGA hats attacked him in the streets of Chicago in subzero weather and tied a noose around his neck, poured bleach on him, and yelled “This is MAGA country, nigger.” His story was so absurd that many were skeptical from the start, and as the investigation went on, police discovered he staged the whole thing hoping to become a social justice hero. [181]

Aside from a lot of fake hate crimes being fabricated by black people, they also hallucinate that there are hate crimes committed against them. The black mayor of a small South Carolina town called police thinking she was the victim of a hate crime after she found a “yellow, sticky substance” covering her car in March 2019 which was parked in the driveway of her home. She assumed someone had spray-painted it, but police investigated and discovered it was just pollen. [182]

Black college students at the University of Mississippi freaked out when someone saw a banana peel hanging over a tree branch outside a cabin at a fraternity’s weekend retreat. It caused such a concern that the retreat was canceled because some black students were afraid it was meant as a warning or to harass them, but it turns out a student who had finished eating the banana hung it on the tree because there were no garbage cans nearby and he didn’t want to just throw it on the ground where someone may end up stepping (or slipping) on it. [183]

The list of recent hate crime hoaxes from “protected groups” like gays, lesbians, and black people could fill an entire book. [184] If you want to learn more about the issue there’s a whole chapter in my previous book, *The True Story of Fake News* which details these kinds of incidents.

Good News Ignored

Aside from burying bad news that will cause audiences to question the liberal narrative of how the world works, the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* also ignores good news that undermines the agenda they’re trying to push. If it’s not completely ignored, it might be mentioned for 15 or 30 seconds on the broadcast news or published in newspapers or online articles but won’t be included in the lengthy discussions on cable news or the weekend talk shows like *Meet the Press* (NBC), *Face the Nation* (CBS), or *This Week* (ABC).

Good news about President Trump is just a tiny blip on the radar, and then drowned out by the endless whining and moaning about minor issues and pundits' latest paranoid delusions about what Trump "may do." Despite reporting that if Donald Trump won the 2016 election the stock market would tank, it has skyrocketed largely in part due to him repealing countless burdensome business regulations and scrapping various awful trade deals previous administrations had gotten us into such as the Trans Pacific Partnership and NAFTA. In the first two years of his presidency the S&P 500 rose 28% [185] The Dow Jones Industrial Average later reached a record high, closing above 27,000 for the first time ever. [186]

Black unemployment hit an all-time record low in May 2018 of just 5.9 percent. [187] In Trump's first two years as president he was able to do more for African American communities than Barack Obama did in eight. Hispanic unemployment has fallen to its lowest level on record, down to 4.8%. [188] The unemployment rate for veterans also fell to an all-time low as well. [189] The average unemployment rate for the country dropped to 3.7% in October 2018, the lowest in almost 50 years. [190] The average American's salary is also increasing at record rates. [191]

President Trump signed the Veterans Affairs Choice program to dramatically speed up the amount of time that it takes U.S. veterans to get their healthcare claims processed by enabling them to use private doctors and health care facilities instead of just the government-run VA hospitals. [192] The VA, like the DMV, the Post Office, and almost every other government-run program, was a disaster and it had taken months for veterans to see doctors and get the treatment they need. Trump's reforms were a much-needed and long-overdue upgrade to how our veterans are taken care of.

When Trump first took office ISIS controlled about 20,000 square miles of territory in Iraq and Syria, which contained a population of several million people. [193] However a year later they were driven out of their last outpost in Syria, crippling their organization and expelling them from their "Islamic State." [194] While there are many Muslims in the Middle East who still adhere to the radical Islamic ideology of ISIS, they lost their territory and precious caliphate under President Trump.

The *ABC Nightly News* spent literally 18 seconds on the story the day the Department of Defense announced the news that ISIS' once planned Islamic State had fallen. [195] The *CBS Evening New* s spent one minute and twenty three seconds on the event. [196] Admitting that, despite his abrasive style and personality flaws, President Trump's policies have been great for America is the last thing the Establishment will do. Instead they are trying to misdirect people's attention and occupy their minds with issues of little significance and artificial controversies they drum up to smear him.

The War on Trump

Because politicians on the Left and the Right have been screwing us over for years and using the mechanisms of government to fulfill their own selfish desires for power and wealth, the election of Donald Trump shook the very foundation of the Washington D.C. Establishment. The lifelong bureaucrats knew the gravy train was going to come to a halt. For decades millions of Americans had felt a businessman, not a politician, would be the only one who could begin to fix the broken system—and the opportunity had finally come.

Trump's arrival to Washington was like parents who came home early from a long vacation, and now the kids (who were running around unsupervised breaking the rules) have to end the party and be held accountable for their actions. In 1988 on Oprah Winfrey's show he was asked if he would ever run for president and he responded probably not, but added that he wouldn't rule it out in the future because he was tired of seeing what's happening in America. [197] And that's why he thought about running in 2012, but felt his sons needed a few more years of experience before they were ready to take over the family business.

In 2016 he felt it was the right time, and the rest is history, but the Establishment immediately struck back because they needed to destroy him before he started cleaning up the mess that decades of corruption had created. He was the ultimate roadblock to their globalist agenda, and long-awaited New World Order. They were so upset about Trump's victory they counterattacked by kicking off the "fake news" scare hoping to regain control of the flow of information.

The Big Tech companies then started changing their algorithms and suppressing posts about certain topics and artificially favoring content from "authoritative" [liberal] mainstream sources. Even Tim Berners-Lee, the "founder of the World Wide Web" and the man who basically created HTML, said, "[People] are all stepping back, suddenly horrified after the Trump and Brexit elections, realizing that this web thing that they thought was that cool is actually not necessarily serving humanity very well." [198]

Nonstop Negative Coverage

They began fabricating fake stories like the supermarket tabloids that invent scandals based on their own imaginations to smear President Trump and keep him constantly on the defense. "Our source says" and "if true" are littered throughout reports that endlessly speculate about Trump being engaged in a massive conspiracy to steal the election and work as a Russian "Manchurian candidate." Nothing President Trump does is good in the eyes of the mainstream media.

Everything he says is twisted and taken out of context in order to paint him as an incompetent racist who is destroying America. Journalist critic Anthony Brandt once said, "Members of the press sometimes print gossip as truth, disregard the impact they have on people's lives, and are ready to believe the worst about people because the worst sells…We in the media have much to answer for." [199]

The week President Trump was inaugurated, Democrat operative David Brock, founder of Media Matters, a Leftist "media watchdog group," launched a new plan to "kick Donald Trump's ass" which included handing out a 50-page document marked "private and confidential" that outlined how they were going to use their resources to push for impeachment, bog down his administration by continuously filing lawsuits, and use their new proxy “media outlet” Shareblue to attack conservative media personalities and harass their advertisers to pull out. [200]

The city of West Hollywood even voted to remove Donald Trump’s star from the Walk of Fame. “Earning a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame is an honor,” the mayor said. “When one belittles and attacks minorities, immigrants, Muslims, people with disabilities or women — the honor no longer exists.” [201] The city has no problem with accused underage sexual predator Kevin Spacey having a star, or convicted rapist Bill Cosby, or accused pedophile Michael Jackson. But they were determined to have Trump’s removed. So far, the star remains, since the Walk of Fame is considered a historic landmark and run by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce which said “as of now” they have no plans to remove it. [202]

A Pew Research study found that the media’s coverage of President Trump’s first 60 days in office was three times more negative than that of President Obama. [203] Even NPR admitted, “Compared to other recent presidents, news reports about President Trump have been more focused on his personality than his policy, and are more likely to carry negative assessments of his actions.” [204]

Another study from the Media Research Center showed that 89% of the broadcast news reports from President Trump’s first 100 days in office were negative. [205] Newsbusters, a website run by the Media Research Group, declared 2017 “The year the news media went to war against a president.” [206]

A poll by Politico showed that 46% of Americans believe the media just makes up fake stories about President Trump. [207] And ethics scholar John Hulteng previously warned, “It may be well that if journalism loses touch with ethical values, it will then cease to be of use to society, and cease to have any real reason for being.” [208] But unfortunately that ship sailed a long time ago.

“He’ll Crash the Economy”

Just a few weeks before the 2016 election, CNN reported that, “A Trump win would sink stocks.” [209] Politico said that, “Wall Street is set up for a major crash if Donald Trump shocks the world on Election Day and wins the White House.” [210] CNBC warned that, “it probably won’t be a pretty picture for stocks if he does.” [211] *New York Times* economist Paul Krugman wrote a column the day after the 2016 election saying, “So we are very probably looking at a global recession, with no end in sight,” adding that, “a terrible thing has just happened.” [212]

Instead, the stock market kept reaching all-time highs, [213] black unemployment soon reached the lowest in history, [214] and countless Americans were getting bonuses and taking more money home each week in their paychecks because of his new tax reforms, [215] but still the liberal media kept nitpicking every little thing he did or said, trying to spin it as if it was the end of the world.

People’s tax refunds were technically “lower” under Trump’s new tax code because less money was being taken out of their paychecks; money that would have been returned to them once they filed their taxes at the end of the year. Headlines from *NBC News* read, “Under new Trump tax code, average refund is 8.4 percent smaller,” and they reported, “Frustrated taxpayers are using the hashtag #GOPTaxScam to vent about their smaller than expected tax refunds.” [216] All the major news outlets piled on with similar reports, but this was only half of the story. The other half would put things into perspective.

An executive at the Tax Foundation, a think tank that studies U.S. tax policies, told a New Jersey PBS station, “What the Treasury Department did is they adjusted the amount of taxes that were withheld from your paycheck every time you got paid, say every two or three weeks. And so you actually saw a little bit more in every paycheck in terms of less taxes withheld, but that means your refund at the end of the year might be a bit smaller than you actually expected.” [217]

Why would you want to give the government more money than is required each paycheck and then wait until the end of the year to get it back? Taking less money from each paycheck is much more efficient, but since many people are too dumb to grasp this simple concept the media spun the news about lower refunds as if people were somehow having to pay more taxes to the government, when the complete opposite is true!

“Trump is Hitler”

We’ve never seen the American media be so slanderous, vicious, and dangerous when reporting on a president. They sound worse than a raving lunatic you would find standing in the streets ranting about the end of the world. CNN and MSNBC hosts regularly say that President Trump is acting like a dictator and often compare him to Adolf Hitler. Not even in the months and years after the weapons of mass destruction hoax fell apart did the liberal media stoop so low when criticizing President George W. Bush for the disaster that the Iraq War had become.

Just two days after Donald Trump was inaugurated, CNN’s Brian Stelter gave the impression that the country had just been hijacked by a dictator. “These are uncomfortable questions, especially these last ones, but it’s time to ask them,” he began. “Do citizens in dictatorships recognize what’s happening right here, right now? Are they looking at the first two days of the Trump administration and saying, 'that's what my leader does.' What should we learn from them today?" [218]

Don Lemon opened his broadcast one night by declaring "This is CNN Tonight. I'm Don Lemon. The President of the United States is racist," [219] and often insinuates the President supports neo-Nazis and could become the next Hitler. [220]

In response to Trump's speech at CPAC 2019 where he highlighted his America First agenda, CNN analyst Sam Vinograd said she felt "sick" after hearing it, because Trump talking about "preserving our heritage" to her, "sounds a lot like a certain leader that killed members of my family, and about six million other Jews in the 1940s." [221] Another CNN panelist said that President Trump has radicalized more people than ISIS ever did. [222]

The *New York Daily News* ran a headline reading, "Trump, Not ISIS is America's Greatest Existential Threat," and went on to say "This is not some bit of clickbait," and claimed, "Trump can wreak far more havoc on America, its vaunted institutions and its people than a terror group on the other side of the world." [223] Keith Olbermann later said that Donald Trump and his family have done more damage to America than Osama Bin Laden and ISIS combined. [224]

MSNBC's Donny Deutsch has said Trump is a dictator on several occasions and people need to hit the streets and start a "revolution" to overthrow him. [225] Fellow MSNBC host Christ Matthews even compares Ivanka Trump and her husband Jered Kushner to Saddam Hussein's two murderous sons, Uday and Qusay. [226] In his commentary about President Trump's inauguration speech Matthews said it sounded "Hitlerian." [227]

Just before the 2018 midterms an MSNBC legal analyst hoping the Democrats would take back control of the House and the Senate said, "We're going to see if this reign—that [Republicans] now have control over all three branches of government—we're going to see if this reign lasts for 30 days or two years, or a thousand-year Reich." [228] The "thousand-year-Reich" was the Nazi's name for their planned global empire.

In the past, if an unhinged guest on cable news would make such outrageous statements they would never be invited back and the host would apologize for their behavior, but it is a common occurrence in the Trump era to compare him to Hitler, and it's not just guests who aren't affiliated with the networks, it's people on the payroll, from regular contributors, to the hosts themselves!

Calls to Assassinate Trump

The endless streams of fake news painting President Trump as a Russian agent or the reincarnation of Hitler have incited countless unhinged whack jobs to publicly make assassination threats against him on social media. [229] There have also been numerous arrests of individuals who have made such threats (and taken specific action towards their goal), but the vast majority of them go unpunished.

Just a few weeks before he was elected, a Secret Service agent said she wouldn't protect Donald Trump if someone tried to assassinate him. [230] After word spread of her treasonous statements she was forced to retire. *The New York Times* even published several fictional stories by various novelists imagining how the Mueller investigation may end, and one of them depicted President Trump getting assassinated with the help of a Secret Service agent. [231]

The anti-Trump mania has even resulted in numerous high-profile celebrities uttering threats of violence or wishing violence against him. Madonna famously declared she "thought an awful lot about blowing up the White House," but that was just the beginning. Johnny Depp asked an audience, “When was the last time an actor assassinated a president?” answering, “it’s been awhile and maybe it’s time,” referring to John Wilkes Booth (who was an actor) killing Abraham Lincoln. [232]

Jim Carrey said he had a dream about killing President Trump with a golf club. [233] Mickey Rourke said he wanted to beat him with a baseball bat. [234] And Robert Di Niro said he wants to “punch him in the face.” [235]

Rapper Big Sean did a free style on a popular radio show about how he wanted to “murder Trump.” [236] Snoop Dogg released a rap video depicting himself shooting Donald Trump in the head. [237] Marilyn Manson made a video titled “Say 10” (a play on words to sound like “Satan”) which depicted him decapitating Donald Trump with a large knife. [238] Green Day singer Billie Joe Armstrong shouted “Kill Donald Trump!” at one point when performing the song “American Idiot” at a concert in Oakland, California. [239] And of course Kathy Griffin posted that infamous photo of herself holding Trump’s bloody decapitated head. [240]

Never before have there been so many threats to assassinate a president of the United States, and it’s utterly shocking to see that there have been little to no repercussions for the high profile celebrities who have done so. Previously such reckless and dangerous statements would completely end someone’s career and gotten their movies and music pulled from store shelves and streaming services, but today these celebrities have been mostly immune from any consequences.

The Red Scare

The Democrat conspiracy theory that Donald Trump “colluded” with Russians to “steal” the 2016 election caused the greatest case of mass hysteria in America since the Salem witch trials. As you know it completely consumed the news cycle for over two years, and every night the speculation and imagination about "what really happened" got more and more out of control. "Donald Trump now sits at the threshold of impeachment," MSNBC's Lawrence O'Donnell once declared with glee. [241] "The worst case scenario that the president is a foreign agent suddenly feels very palpable," Rachel Maddow concluded one night. [242]

He was certainly going to not only be impeached, but led out of the White House in handcuffs for committing "treason" and "undermining our Democracy," they thought. Those who hadn't succumbed to the madness were skeptical of these wild allegations from the start, and when the "bombshell" reports kept turning out to be completely false, the mainstream media became increasingly discredited and desperate.

Alan Dershowitz, a rare liberal who still maintained his sanity though all of this, summed it up pretty well when he said that "hope over reality" fueled their delusions. [243] When the Robert Mueller investigation finally cleared Trump and everyone connected to him of conspiring with the Russians in any way, the Democrats and their mouth pieces in the media still couldn't admit they were wrong (and completely insane), and instead kept concocting new conspiracy theories about a "cover-up." Since they took control of the House of Representatives in the 2018 midterm election, they kept "investigating" Trump's business records trying to find "something."

As President Trump once noted, "If it was the goal of Russia to create discord, disruption and chaos within the U.S. then, with all of the Committee Hearings, investigations and party hatred, they have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. They are laughing their asses off in Moscow." [244]

LGBT "Rights"

President Trump supports gay "marriage" unlike every previous Republican president (and all Democrat presidents too, except for Obama when he flip-flopped during his second term). But the media still portrays Trump as anti-gay. At a campaign event before he was elected, Donald Trump held up a big gay pride rainbow flag and waved it around stage after seeing someone in the audience holding it. [245] He even said Caitlyn Jenner can use whatever bathroom "she" wants to in Trump Tower. [246] But the radical LGBT activists are still convinced that he "hates" gay people because the mainstream media ignores his pro-LGBT positions.

After President Trump announced a plan to work with the United Nations to prevent countries from enforcing laws banning homosexuality, *Out Magazine* , a popular American gay publication, attacked him, publishing a story titled, "Trump's Plan to Decriminalize Homosexuality Is an Old Racist Tactic," and claimed, "The Trump administration is set to launch a global campaign to decriminalize homosexuality in dozens of nations where anti-gay laws are still on the books," which you would think they would be happy about, but they denounced the move, saying, "Rather than actually being about helping queer people around the world, the campaign looks more like another instance of the right using queer people as a pawn to amass power and enact its own agenda." [247] You can't make these lunatics happy!

They Sided with North Korea

The liberal media hates Trump so bad, they basically sided with North Korea out of spite when President Trump was trying to help broker peace between the North and the South. When he was trying to incentivize Kim Jong Un to dismantle his nuclear program, NBC News complained about it, reporting that, "Trump's North Korea policy could trigger famine," because of new sanctions he threatened to put in place if they didn't comply with the U.S. demands. [248] How else was he supposed to apply pressure to them without launching a full-out war? Applying sanctions to cutoff imports is a basic tactic when dealing with rogue regimes!

Comedian Michelle Wolf (who had recently bombed at the White House Correspondents Dinner) polled her Netflix audience, asking them, "Are you sort of hoping we don't get peace with North Korea so you wouldn't have to give Trump credit?" and 71% agreed that they didn't want peace in North Korea because it would make President Trump look good. [249]

When Michael Moore was talking with MSNBC's Chris Hayes, the cable news host admitted that he was "genuinely rooting for him to handle the Korean situation well," at which point Michael Moore cut him off and replied, "I don't know if I agree with that." A stunned Hayes responded, "You're not rooting for him to deal with North Korea well?!" Michael Moore continued his explanation with a ridiculous analogy trying to justify his hope that President Trump fails at helping negotiate a peaceful resolution between North and South Korea. [250]

The two countries joined together during the 2018 Winter Olympics to form a unified Korean hockey team which was an incredible sign that relations were improving. Kim Jong Un later crossed over the DMZ (demilitarized zone—the border between the North and South) to meet personally with the leader of South Korea, marking the first time leaders of the two countries had met since Korea split apart after World War II. [251]

Families have been allowed to reunite with each other for the first time since the separation, and President Trump himself was invited to step over the DMZ where he was greeted by Kim Jong Un in a historic moment giving more hope for peace in the region, but Trump doesn't get any credit for that, and the media kept claiming his tactics were going to start World War Three.

Trump Derangement Syndrome

Conservatives began joking about liberals being afflicted with Trump Derangement Syndrome when it became obvious that they weren't able to cope with the fact that he is the president, but as time went on many psychologists said they were actually treating patients for what they called Trump Anxiety Disorder. [252] A therapist at the Washington D.C. Counseling and Psychotherapy Center admitted that they were getting a lot of patients who had anxiety, fear, and hopelessness about the Trump administration. [253]

The shock on election night 2016 when Hillary Clinton lost was like nothing the country had ever seen. Reporters couldn't hold back their horror and Democrats across the country were in tears, but after a week the shock still hadn't worn off. And then a month went by and they were still in denial that Trump was going to be our next president and were getting increasingly distraught. But the months dragged on, and then it was a year, and then two years since he won the election, and instead of gaining their composure and getting back to business, they continued to get more unhinged with every passing week.

When a *New York Times* reporter was asked about why Hillary Clinton wrote her *What Happened* book, she responded, “I think that the intention of the book was two things. One, it was to really, I think, just to vent and get it out there because there are so many people like Hillary Clinton who are still writing about this, who are still thinking about this, who are still in therapy frankly, sources that I know who are still really upset about the election.” [254] In therapy!

On the one-year anniversary of the 2016 election, anti-Trump protesters gathered in Boston to “scream helplessly at the sky.” [255] Over 4000 people RSVP’d to the event on Facebook which was literally titled, “Scream helplessly at the sky on the anniversary of the election,” and hundreds of them actually showed up and did just that! [256]

Rosie O’Donnell later admitted that she had been seeing a therapist and it took her a year to be able to compose herself enough to go out into public again. [257] Chelsea Handler also opened up a few years after the election and admitted she too had been seeing a psychiatrist because she had a “mid-life identity crisis once Trump won the election.” [258] Model Chrissy Teigen, who’s married to singer John Legend, admitted that she asked her doctor to up her medication because Trump was causing her “crippling anxiety” and had to get a Botox injection in her jaw to relieve tension because she kept grinding her teeth, which she blames Trump for. [259]

Since Democrats always project, meaning they imagine others doing what they themselves are doing, they started saying that President Trump was “mentally unfit” for office, and kept floating around the idea that the 25th Amendment could soon be enacted to remove him. But to actually invoke the 25th Amendment and get him removed it would take the vice president, his entire cabinet, and two-thirds of both the House and the Senate to achieve it. Democrats are so delusional that they are regularly accusing the president of being crazy, while being completely unaware of the irony of their own activities.

One MSNBC guest even said that President Trump’s strong warnings to North Korea were the result of him having, “profound sexual and masculine insecurities” that “are literally threatening to annihilate the planet.” [260] Shortly before he died, Stephen Hawking warned that since President Trump is not very concerned about man-made global warming he may, “push the Earth over the brink, to become like Venus, with a temperature of 250 degrees, and raining sulfuric acid.” [261]

One way liberals regularly vent their hatred of President Trump is by obsessively replying to his tweets, and it’s become a game for them to see who can reply first and whose reply can get the most “likes.” Some Twitter activists, like the odd Krassenstein brothers whose obsession with trolling President Trump’s tweets have become “Twitter famous.” (They were later banned for allegedly using fake accounts to artificially amplify their tweets). [262]

As one writer in the London *Guardian* pointed out, it appears that liberals “worst nightmare” is actually a successful Donald Trump presidency. [263] The mainstream media would have to admit that they were wrong about everything and had been stringing along their audience for years under the false pretense that they were reporting news, when in reality they were just throwing an endless temper tantrum and lost every ounce of their integrity.

The War on Trump Supporters

The oldest trick in the Democrats' playbook is to call Republicans racist. When the Tea Party movement emerged in 2009 as a response to Barack Obama's massive government expansion and increasing taxes, supporters were smeared as a bunch of old racist white people. The same tactic has been deployed against popular social media personalities today who have built up large followings in recent years and are often smeared as members of the alt-right in attempts to derail their careers and get their accounts shut down.

Online media outlets and self-proclaimed journalists on Twitter often call conservatives Nazis and alt-right even if they're Jewish! Laura Loomer (who is Jewish) has been smeared as a member of the white nationalist "alt-right" [264] As has Trump advisor Stephen Miller, who is also Jewish. [265] And even Ben Shapiro, a devout Orthodox Jew who wears a yarmulke in every one of his public appearances, is considered to be a member of the alt-right by these morons. [266] Instead of defending conservative Jews smeared by the liberal media, Jonathan Greenblatt, the head of the Jewish ADL [Anti-Defamation League], adds fuel to the fire by saying that the words "caravan," and "open borders" are "literally white supremacist phrases." [267]

Alex Jones has been called an "alt-right" radio host by *Forbes* magazine, which you would think would be a credible publication. [268] YouTuber Steven Crowder was smeared by *Newsweek* as becoming popular by "touting an alt-right ideology." [269] And immediately after Trump won the 2016 election various outlets defamed me with the same smear, even though I had never expressed any support whatsoever for white nationalism and am just an ordinary Constitutional Conservative. Several publications issued retractions or removed my name from such articles after I sent them cease and desist notices. [270]

Psychology Today published an article titled, "An Analysis of Trump Supporters Has Identified 5 Key Traits," and said we have "Authoritarian Personality Syndrome, social dominance orientation, prejudice, lack of intergroup contact (contact with minorities), and relative deprivation." [271]

Actor Rob Reiner (who played "Meathead" in the 1970s show *All in the Family*) told MSNBC that "20 to 30 percent" of Trump supporters "are hardcore racists." [272] And guests on MSNBC and CNN often declare that a huge number of Donald Trump supporters are white nationalists and only support building the wall to "keep the brown people out." [273]

Don't forget the mainstream media's vicious smears against Nick Sandmann, the high school student from Covington Catholic who was pestered by an old Native American man who beat a drum in the kid's face when he and his classmates were visiting Washington D.C. on a school trip. CNN then declared that MAGA hats "have become a potent symbol of racism." [274] Sandmann then filed lawsuits against the *Washington Post*, CNN, and NBC for $250 million dollars each for defamation. [275]

A reporter that CNN gave their "Journalist of the Year" award to was later fired in disgrace after it was discovered he had fabricated numerous stories including claiming he saw a "Mexicans Keep Out" sign at the city limit of a small Minnesota town when he was reporting "from Trump country." [276]

The *Daily Beast* published an article just before the 2019 Super Bowl titled, "Tom Brady's New England Patriots Are Team MAGA, Whether They Like It or Not," and declared, "Their star quarterback, coach, and owner all supported Trump," and then called them "the preferred team of white nationalists." [277] It went on to attack quarterback Tom Brady because he was pictured previously with a MAGA hat in his locker which the *Daily Beast* says is, “a symbol of white nationalism in America.” [278]

The article concluded that the Patriots “are the official team of American White Nationalism” and “When you root for the Patriots, you are associating yourself with a virulent and revolting strain of politics that seeks to Make America Great Again—which is to say, white, European, English-speaking.” [279] It also said the Covington Catholic kids are “entitled little shits being racist.”

CNN is so despicable they even sent a reporter to an elderly woman’s home to confront her about sharing something on Facebook that had allegedly been originally posted by a Russian troll farm. [280] She was ambushed while doing yard work in the front of her home and had a microphone stuck in her face and was accused of being a pawn of the Russians. The woman, who is 76-years-old, said after CNN aired the segment confronting her she was relentlessly harassed online and her phone rang off the hook from strangers calling her. [281]

Denial of Basic Services

An increasing number of reports keep circulating about instances where people wearing red MAGA hats have been kicked out of bars and restaurants for just wearing the hats. After attending a Trump rally in Richmond, Virginia during the summer of 2016 a family stopped into a local Cook Out burger joint for lunch but were turned away by staff because they were wearing Trump t-shirts and hats. [282] After a man wearing his MAGA hat was kicked out of a bar in New York City, he sued the owner for discrimination, but a judge threw out the lawsuit. [283]

A 9-year-old boy in California who is a big fan of the President wanted a Trump birthday cake, but his mother said she couldn’t find a bakery that would make one for him. [284] Gays want bakeries sued into bankruptcy if they refuse to bake a special cake for a gay “wedding” but think it’s okay for them to deny service to Trump supporters.

White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee and her family were kicked out of a restaurant in Lexington, Virginia after the owner recognized her and made them leave. When word of the incident spread, liberals celebrated it. *The Washington Post* even ran a headline saying, “Chasing White House officials out of restaurants is the right thing to do.” [285]

Congresswoman Maxine Waters then encouraged more harassment, saying, “If you see anybody from that cabinet in a restaurant, in a department store, at a gasoline station, you get out and you create a crowd, and you push back on them, and you tell them they’re not welcome anymore, anywhere.” [286] Soon after this, activist Laura Loomer confronted Maxine Waters in the halls of the Capitol on camera, asking her, “Where can a conservative eat at a restaurant in D.C.? Do you think it’s civil to call for the harassment? Are we supposed to sit at the back of the bus?” [287] Maxine scurried away to a “members only” elevator in shock from getting a taste of her own medicine.

The *Boston Globe* published an op-ed that began describing how one of the writer’s “biggest regrets” of his life was not pissing in political commentator Bill Kristol’s food when he ate at a restaurant the writer worked at. He went on to urge people to tamper with Trump supporters’ food by doing what he was afraid to do, saying members of the Trump administration “have to eat,” and while the person may lose their job, (tampering with someone’s food is actually a crime) “you’d be serving America,” he said. “And you won’t have any regrets years later.” [288]

The *Boston Globe* actually published this filth, but after a growing backlash changed parts of the op-ed and added a note saying, “A version of this column as originally published did not meet Globe standards and has been changed. The *Globe* regrets the previous tone of the piece.” [289] Even with the alterations, the title was, “Keep Kirstjen Nielsen unemployed and eating Grubhub over her kitchen sink,” and the overall message of the piece was still that people should run members of the Trump administration out of any restaurant they’re seen in. After growing shock and outrage that a major paper would publish such garbage, the *Globe* later deleted the article. [290]

The Left Encouraging Violence

In the Trump era political rhetoric from the Left has sunk to levels never before seen in modern American history. Not only are they insistent on smearing all Trump supporters as racists, but they are encouraging people to physically attack anyone seen wearing a MAGA hat in public.

During the 2016 election season many peaceful Trump supporters were assaulted as they were leaving events by rabid protesters who had gathered outside. At a San Jose rally one woman was pelted with eggs and water balloons by an angry mob and others were punched and hit with bottles as they left. [291]

After a 16-year-old Trump supporter was assaulted in a Whataburger fast food joint by having a drink thrown on him and had his MAGA stolen, CNN’s Marc Lamont Hill said, “I actually don’t advocate throwing drinks on people. Not at all. But yes, I think MAGA hats (deliberately) reflect a movement that conjures racism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc. So yes, it’s a little harder to feel sympathy when someone gets Coca Cola thrown on him.” [292] Vox’s Carlos Maza encouraged assaulting right-wing figures as well, and hopes to make them “dread” being in public. [293]

Breitbart News compiled a list of violent acts against Trump supporters and detailed mainstream media reporters and pundits who approved of them and counted 639 incidents between September 2015 and November 2018. [294]

Just wearing a red MAGA hat in public can put you in danger of getting assaulted by some random lunatic who happens to see it. An MSNBC host even said wearing one is “an invitation for confrontation” and considers them “the modern day version of the Confederate battle flag.” [295] The *Huffington Post* reported that, “Searching for MAGA symbolism is one of the easiest ways to notice online extremists and members of hate groups.” [296] CNN’s Angela Rye said that MAGA hats are “just as maddening and frustrating and triggering for me to look at as a KKK hood.” [297]

An 81-year-old man in New Jersey was attacked inside a grocery store by a 19-year-old teen because the old man was wearing a Make America Great Again Hat. [298] A couple shopping at a Sam’s Club in Kentucky had a gun pulled on them by a man who got triggered after seeing their MAGA hats. [299] A man eating at a restaurant in Massachusetts was assaulted by a woman who spotted him wearing the hat. She was arrested for assault and it turns out was an illegal alien, so a few days after her initial arrest, she was arrested again by ICE. [300] A legal immigrant from Africa living in Maryland was beat down by two other black men because he was spotted walking down the street wearing a MAGA hat. [301]

A group of five Asians walking down the street in Washington D.C., all wearing MAGA hats, were harassed by two black men who videotaped themselves stealing two of the hats and posted the video on Twitter to brag about what they had done. The group happened to be North Korean defectors who had escaped the country and proudly wore their MAGA hats because President Trump was making progress facilitating peace between the North and the South. [302]

A young woman wearing a red hat reading "Make Bitcoin Great Again" in the style of the MAGA hat was pepper sprayed right in the face by a member of Antifa while she was in the middle of doing a television interview on the campus of UC Berkeley during an event at the school. [303]

A man in the back of a pickup truck leaving a Trump rally in Arizona was sucker punched in the head by a protester as the truck pulled away. [304] A customer eating at a Cheesecake Factory in Miami was harassed and threatened by several employees of the restaurant because he was wearing a MAGA hat. [305]

When Hillary Clinton was asked about civility returning to America, she endorsed the growing angry mobs saying, "You cannot be civil with a political party that wants to destroy what you stand for, what you care about. That's why I believe, if we are fortunate enough to win back the House and or the Senate [in the 2018 midterms], that's when civility can start again." [306]

Barack Obama's former attorney general Eric Holder went even further saying, "Michelle [Obama] always says, you know, 'When they go low, we go high.' No. When they go low, we kick them! That's what this new Democratic Party is about." [307]

Two days after the 2018 midterm election a fascist mob gathered right outside the home of Fox News host Tucker Carlson and with a bullhorn shouted, "Tonight you are reminded that the people have a voice. Tonight, we remind you that you are not safe," adding, "We know where you sleep at night." [308] Facebook didn't even suspend the Antifa page that organized the event. [309]

The *Huffington Post* published an op-ed calling for violent resistance against Trump and denounced those on the Left who were saying violence isn't the answer. It's titled "Sorry Liberals, A Violent Response To Trump Is

As Logical As Any," and starts off saying "there's an inherent value in forestalling Trump's normalization. Violent resistance accomplishes this." [310]

It went on to say, "Assuming anti-Trump protests should be strictly focused on electoral politics and not these broader goals would be a detrimental oversight. Understanding European anti-fascists' use of violent tactics to shut down large rallies from White Supremacists can be illustrative here. Because while Trump isn't leading full bore White Supremacist rallies, there is value in making it clear that even his fascism-lite has no place in civilized society." [311]

The liberal media has been engaging in what's called stochastic terrorism, which is when the widespread demonization of an individual or a group incites lone wolf political extremists or members of an extremist group to attack them in what appears to be a random act of violence but was actually inspired by inflammatory rhetoric being aimed at that individual or the group they belong to.

In April 2019 the CBS show *The Good Fight* posted a teaser video on their official Twitter account showing one of the main characters engaging in a diatribe about how "some speech" deserves "enforcement" and that "It's time" to physically attack American citizens "unprovoked" who are engaging in speech that social justice warriors perceive as "racist." [312]

Anti-White Racism

Part of the war on Trump supporters involves painting a large percentage of white people as racists in hopes of preventing more blacks and latinos from joining the Trump train. The *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* now regularly paints white people as the enemy, blaming "systemic racism" for the problems in black communities, and depicts anyone who wants to stop the flood of illegal aliens into America as members of the KKK.

While Martin Luther King wanted everyone to judge their fellow man by the content of their character—not the color of their skin, the Liberal Establishment uses identity politics to pit the different races against each other and are trying to create a culture where white people should be ashamed of being white and atone for their "white privilege" by paying reparations to black people and giving blacks special perks in America just because of their race.

Online outlets like Salon.com and BuzzFeed are notorious for their anti-white articles. Salon has posted articles titled, "White men must be stopped; The very future of mankind depends on it," [313] "10 ways white people are more racist than they realize," [314] and "White guys are killing us: Toxic, cowardly masculinity, our unhealable national illness," [315] just to name a few.

One of BuzzFeed's racist articles links to various Power Point presentations with titles like "White People Are a Plague to the Planet," and "White People are Crazy." [316] They've also published articles titled "17 Foods That White People Have Ruined," "17 Deplorable Examples of White Privilege," and "22 Reasons Why Straight White Boys Are Actually The Worst."

Vice News calls whiteness "toxic" [317] and black publications like *The Root* regularly attack white people as "useless." [318] MTV did a whole documentary titled "White People" that depicts the entire race as a group whose very existence is based on oppressing black people and other "people of color." [319]

Hollywood constantly complains about white people with campaigns like the "Oscars are too white" and always cries about how there isn't enough “diversity” in leading roles. When hosting *Saturday Night Live* to promote his new movie *Django Unchained* , actor Jamie Foxx bragged, “I kill all the white people in the movie! How great is that!?” [320]

Rapper Jay-Z has been photographed at an NBA game wearing a medallion from the 5% Nation, a black power group that believes white people are the Devil. [321] Many rappers admire Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan who has taught that white people are “the Devil” and “deserve to die.” [322]

CNN’s Don Lemon says the biggest terrorist threat in America are white men. [323] The network also claims that, “The Internet is radicalizing white men” and urges Big Tech to censor YouTube videos and change the algorithms even more to hide certain ideas on the Internet. [324] CNN contributors and other cable news pundits go so far as to say blacks can’t be racist and justify their racism against white people as “payback” for slavery in the 1800s. Just pointing out anti-white racism is enough for the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* to label you a “white supremacist,” so most people are afraid to talk about it.

Demonizing Black Conservatives

While it appears that black people can do no wrong in the eyes of liberals and that all their shortcomings, bad decisions, and crimes are the fault of white people; there is one thing that black people aren’t allowed to do in America today without severe criticism and backlash—and that’s be conservative.

Black conservatives like Larry Elder, David Webb, Sheriff David Clark, Pastor Daryl Scott, Ben Carson, and others are constantly smeared by the media as “traitors” to their race, or “uncle Toms” and “house niggers” who have sold out to white people.

After Diamond and Silk appeared at CPAC 2019, CNN's Oliver Darcey insinuated they were "grifters," meaning con artists. [325] Rolling Stone magazine called Candace Owens an "Alt-Right Provocateur" once she became a star. [326] After posting a few YouTube videos about being a black conservative she was thrust into the spotlight when Kanye West tweeted about her, jumpstarting her career and turning her into one of the most popular young black conservative women in the country.

When Candace spoke at a college in Utah, protesters gathered outside, which is common at her events, but this time they had a huge banner that read "End White Supremacy." [327] When visiting Philadelphia in August 2018 a group of protesters surrounded the cafe she was eating breakfast at and shouted with a megaphone "fuck white supremacy." [328]

Georgetown University professor and regular MSNBC guest Michael Eric Dyson attacked Kanye West after he met with President Trump in the Oval Office (while wearing his MAGA hat), saying, "This is white supremacy by ventriloquism. A black mouth is moving, but white racist ideals are flowing from Kanye West's mouth." [329] He went on to say "Kanye West is engaging in one of the most nefarious practices yet. A black body and brain are the warehouse for the articulation and expression of anti-black sentiment." [330]

The Southern Poverty Law Center actually included the mild-mannered and meek Ben Carson on their "Extremist Watch List," citing a line in his book *America the Beautiful* where he affirmed that marriage is between a man and a woman and said Leftists are pushing the United States down the same path that led to the fall of the Roman Empire. [331] They labeled *Ben Carson* an extremist!

Hollywood actress and singer Bette Midler claimed that President Trump was paying black people to come to his rallies after she kept noticing them in attendance. She said they were just props for the background. [332] Liberals don’t want diversity of thought, they want everyone to be lockstep in line with the core tenants of the radical liberal agenda and many of their supporters are so dumb that they believe there are *black* white supremacists in America today, and have no clue how insane they sound.

They are afraid that if 20% of black voters leave the Democrat Party and become Republicans, that would be enough to tip the scales in favor of Republicans in elections for years to come and the Democrat Party’s political power would be gravely diminished. [333]

The War on Families

Families instill moral values, carry on important cultural traditions, and provide a support network when someone goes through an emotionally or financially difficult time. And when someone is engaging in self-destructive or unscrupulous behaviors, those close to them can often see the warning signs and intervene to help get them back on track. But the Left doesn't want families to raise, teach, or protect children. They want the government to do it, along with help from the high priests of Hollywood who are held up as the moral leaders of America.

Joshua Meyrowitz, Professor of Media Studies at the University of New Hampshire, points out, "Television dilutes the innocence of childhood and the authority of adults by undermining the system of information control that supported them. Television bypasses the year-by-year slices of knowledge given to children. It presents the same general experiences to adults and to children of all ages. Children may not understand everything that they see on television, but they are exposed to many aspects of adult life from which their parents (and traditional children's books) would have once shielded them." [334]

He continues, "Television and its visitors take children across the globe before parents even give them permission to cross the street." [335] He said that back in 1995, when the Internet was just in its infancy, and more than a decade before social media would gain a stranglehold on an entire generation of children who access an abyss of adult content, completely unsupervised, through their own smartphones while alone in their bedrooms.

The Left's war on families is targeting the most vulnerable of our society — children. They are determined to raise the next generation to be as perverted as possible—worse than ancient Rome where it was socially acceptable for adult men to engage in sexual activity with young boys. [336] In fact we're seeing child drag queens like "Desmond is Amazing" and "Lactacia" being celebrated and featured on major television shows as if they're heroes.

NBC's *Today Show* promoted "Desmond is Amazing," the "drag kid" when he was just 10-years-old, calling him "inspiring." [337] His parents dress him up in drag and have him perform at drag queen festivals across the country. [338] He also does simulated strip teases on stage (including at gay bars) where grown men throw dollar bills at him. [339]

ABC's *Good Morning America* also promotes child drag queens, and host Michael Strahan introduced a segment saying, "Get ready for this trailblazing 11-year-old drag kid who RuPaul is calling the future, and his bravery is inspiring so many." The kid (Desmond is Amazing) then came out on stage dancing like a stripper to hoots and hollers from the audience. [340]

Good Morning America glowingly promoted Kate Hudson when reports circulated she was allegedly raising her child "genderless." Anchor George Stephanopoulos began the segment saying, "Kate Hudson is opening up about how she's trying to raise her new baby as 'genderless,' apparently that's an approach more and more Americans are trying." [341] Co-host Paula Faris went on to say the actress will be raising her 3-month-old daughter "without labels or restrictions" because "she doesn't want to assume how she'll identify herself as she's growing up." [342]

Another co-host, Lara Spencer, chimed in, saying, "That's a great conversation. It's just a great conversation," and then (lesbian) Robin

Roberts concluded, “No judgment, no judgment. Whatever you feel is best for your child.” [343]

Kate Hudson then released a statement on her Instagram saying, “Dear all my friends, fans and others who read this, recently someone asked me something along the lines of, if having and raising a girl is different from boys. My response was simple. Not really. This whole clickbait tactic of saying I’m raising my daughter to be ‘genderless’ is silly and frankly doesn’t even make sense.” [344]

Fringe lunatics had been promoting the idea of raising children “genderless” for some time, and so the media saw an opportunity to give the bizarre practice a boost by attaching a celebrity’s name to it by twisting around what Kate Hudson meant. But there will come a day when major celebrities embrace the “gender neutral” agenda, and they will be hailed as heroes and held up as models for what other parents should do.

The media is increasingly glorifying “theybies,” meaning children whose parents are raising them as gender neutral. [345] These child abusers call their kids “theybies” instead of babies, because they use the gender neutral pronoun “they” to refer to their kids instead of “he” or “she.” *NBC News* recently recommended, “One way of shielding children from gender stereotypes: Keep their biological sex secret.” [346]

The radical Leftists don’t want boys raised as boys, or girls as girls. They want all children to be raised as if there’s no biological difference between males and females at all. They want to completely deconstruct the traditional gender roles and deny the inherent differences between the sexes. They want to invert and pervert everything that’s normal including the most fundamental aspects of being human.

Every facet of the family and interpersonal relationships is under attack. CNN has even urged people to “rethink” monogamous relationships and become swingers. “Could opening your relationship to others benefit you and your partner?” they asked. [347] According to CNN, a man’s wife banging other dudes “can be a healthy option for some couples and, executed thoughtfully, can inject relationships with some much-needed novelty and excitement.”

The report quotes several “sex therapists” who recommend the practice, saying it “can bring back some of the initial novelty and excitement you felt at the beginning of your relationship.” [348] CNN is disappointed that “non-monogamy still carries a stigma in many circles, so think about how you and your partner will address that concern.” [349]

Eradicating families is a Communist tactic and as soon as they seized power in Russia in 1917 the new government started shunning families and promoting “free unions” because families raising children were said to be extensions of the old system. [350] The Left wants everyone to be loyal first and foremost to the Party, not to their family. So they’re doing everything they can to rip them apart.

In January 2018, CNN published a story advocating cuckolding as a way to “help” couple’s relationships. For those who aren’t familiar with “cuckolding,” it’s a term that originally referred to a man whose partner had been unfaithful, but has morphed into a kink fantasy that some strange couples carry out where the man watches another guy have sex with his wife or girlfriend. CNN cited a “study” by anti-Christian gay extremist Dan Savage and several others which claims that, “acting on cuckolding fantasies can be a largely positive experience for many couples.” [351]

To be clear, this isn’t about swinging, an open relationship, or threesomes; it’s about men watching their wives have sex with another man, and CNN portrays the practice in glowing terms, and says, “Acting on adulterous fantasies may strengthen a relationship, as counterintuitive as it may sound.” [352]

People are becoming so inept at how to engage in normal and healthy relationships with others that loneliness is plaguing the younger generations who rely on hook-up apps like Tinder to meet people instead of the “old fashioned way” like at school, parties, through mutual friends, or while engaging in their hobbies. [353] Their communication skills are often so poor that many don’t even have the guts to break up with someone when they feel they’re not compatible, so instead they engage in “ghosting” which means they just abruptly stop returning their calls or texts. [354] More than half of adults aged 18 to 34 don’t have a steady romantic partner. [355]

And recently birthrates in the United States have fallen to a 32-year low. [356] For teenagers today it is now considered “normal” to be in a virtual “relationship” with someone online for months and even years and never even meet them face to face! [357] Many Millennials don’t even have a best friend or anyone they feel they can confide in. [358]

To fill the void created from lack of intimacy in people’s lives, some are turning to unthinkably bizarre alternatives. The disturbing rise in popularity and acceptance of sex bots, which are just high tech blow up dolls that people are having sex with, seems like something out of a horror movie, but it’s actually happening. [359] While blow up dolls are a common gag gift brought along to bachelor parties, no normal person has ever considered actually having sex with one, but recently expensive “life-like” sex bots are being manufactured and sold to lonely losers who resort to having sex with them since their lives are so dysfunctional they can’t get a date with an actual woman. [360]

The sex bot business is already a multi-million dollar a year industry and growing. Companies are even working to build models that incorporate artificial intelligence so they can have conversations with people. [361]

Google Upset About Families

In leaked documents detailing internal discussions of Google employees, one thread shows the use of the word “family” upset a bunch of them who felt it was homophobic and not inclusive enough because of its connotation as referring to a heterosexual couple with children. After one employee walked out of a company presentation over the use of the word “family,” they posted on an internal message board venting their frustration. [362]

“This is a diminishing and disrespectful way to speak. If you mean ‘children,’ say ‘children’; we have a perfectly good word for it. ‘Family friendly’ used as a synonym for ‘kid friendly’ means, to me, ‘you and yours don’t count as a family unless you have children.’ And while kids may often be less aware of it, there are kids without families too, you know.” [363]

The complaint went on, “The use of ‘family’ as a synonym for ‘with children’ has a long-standing association with deeply homophobic organizations. This does not mean we should not use the word ‘family’ to refer to families, but it mean we must doggedly insist that family does not imply children…Use the word ‘family’ to mean a loving assemblage of people who may or may not live together and may or may not include people of any particular age. STOP using it to mean ‘children.’ It’s offensive, inappropriate, homophobic, and wrong.” [364]

It wasn’t just one lone nut who got triggered because the presentation mentioned Google is trying to make “family friendly” apps and services. The documents show that about 100 other Google employees thumbed up the post, and many responses echoed the same psychotic sentiment.

“Thanks for writing this. So much yes,” replied one. “Using the word ‘family’ in this sense bothers me too,” said another. Adding, “It smacks of the ‘family values’ agenda by the right wing, which is absolutely homophobic by its very definition,” and continued, “it’s important that we fix our charged language when we become aware of how exclusionary it actually is. As a straight person in a relationship, I find the term ‘family’ offensive because it excludes me and my boyfriend, having no children of our own.” [365]

The replies go on and on, all chastising Google for using the word “family.” Another says, “My family consists of me and several other trans feminine folks, some of whom I’m dating. We’re all supportive of each other and eventually aspire to live together. Just because we aren’t a heterosexual couple with 2.5 kids, a white picket fence, and a dog doesn’t mean we’re not a family.” [366]

Google’s Vice President, Pavni Diwanji, then responded saying, “Hi everyone, I realize what we said at TGIF [the name of the event] might have caused concerns in the way we talked about families. There are families without kids too, and also we needed to be more conscientious about the fact that there is a diverse makeup of parents and families.” [367]

He continued, “Please help us get to a better state. Teach us how to talk about it in inclusive way, if you feel like we are not doing it well. As a team we have very inclusive culture, and want to do right in this area. I am adding my team here so we can have open conversation.” [368]

Celebrating Unwed Mothers

When the number of unwed mothers in America reached more than 50% in 2012, the feminist blog Jezebel celebrated the “milestone” with a headline reading, “The Increase in Single Moms Is Actually a Good Thing,” because the increase in single mothers means fewer women are "relying" on men economically, and feminists view more single moms as a sign of female empowerment.

The writer was upset that experts (and ordinary people) were concerned about the growing trend since children born out of wedlock "face greater social and economic obstacles than their peers born into traditional nuclear families." [369] Liberals never want to hear about the effects of their disastrous decisions, but there's one thing they like more than single mothers, and that's women who never become mothers at all.

A report from CNBC declared, "Your friends may tell you having kids has made them happier. They're probably lying." It went on to say, "Research shows that parenthood leads to a happiness gap. Maybe that's because the pleasures of parenthood are outweighed by all the extra responsibilities, housework and, of course, the costs." [370]

The article then broke down the average costs per month of having a child and calculated how much it adds up to by the time the kid is eighteen-years-old in attempts to dissuade people from having children.

On her short-lived Netflix show, comedian Michelle Wolf (the woman who looks like Carrot Top that performed at the White House Correspondents Dinner in 2018) did a segment titled "Salute to Abortions" which included a marching band coming out on stage where she then began to chant, "It doesn't have to be a big deal, it's actually a great deal! It's about $300 dollars. That's like six movie tickets." She ended her speech saying "God bless abortions, and God bless America!" [371]

In the Hulu series *Shrill* , the lead character (Aidy Bryant) got pregnant and decided to have an abortion "before it becomes illegal," and after killing the baby she tells her roommate she's glad she "got out of a huge fucking mess" and now, "I feel very fucking powerful right now. And I just feel like I need to go out [and party]." [372]

A YouTube channel called "HiHo Kids" which features videos of young children meeting drag queens, transgender people, a gynecologist, and other individuals no child should be subjected to, even produced a video titled "Kids Meet Someone Who's Had an Abortion" where the woman tells the children about how happy she was to do it, and that it was "part of God's plan." [373]

Alabama State Representative John Rogers made a startling declaration during a debate about a proposed state law that would ban most abortions unless the fetus had a "lethal anomaly" or if the pregnancy would put the mother's life at risk, saying, "Some kids are unwanted, so you kill them now or you kill them later. You bring them in the world unwanted, unloved, [and then] you send them to the electric chair. So, you kill them now or you kill them later." [374] He wasn't being sarcastic, he supports abortion and was arguing against the bill. [375]

"Kids Cause Global Warming"

Perhaps one reason liberals are big supporters of abortion is because children are increasingly being blamed for causing global warming. The London *Guardian* declared, "The greatest impact individuals can have in fighting climate change is to have one fewer child, according to a new study that identifies the most effective ways people can cut their carbon emissions." [376]

One of the researchers on the project said, "I don't have children, but it is a choice I am considering and discussing with my fiancé. Because we care so much about climate change that will certainly be one factor we consider in the decision, but it won't be the only one." [377]

Other lunatics are so concerned that planet earth is doomed they're afraid to have children because they don't want to bring them into the world if it's going to soon plunge into chaos like a science fiction movie. The *New York Times* interviewed a 32-year-old woman in a story about this madness who said, "I don't want to give birth to a kid wondering if it's going to live in some kind of 'Mad Max' dystopia." [378]

"Animals are disappearing. The oceans are full of plastic. The human population is so numerous, the planet may not be able to support it indefinitely. This doesn't paint a very pretty picture for people bringing home a brand-new baby from the hospital," said another. [379]

Others see it as a "sacrifice" they have to make to save the planet. One woman who wanted to have kids but decided not to, said "it's hard for me to justify my wants over what matters and what's important for everyone." [380] Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez even said that it's a "legitimate question" for Millennials and those in Generation Z to ask, "Is it OK to still have children?" because global warming is supposedly going to make their lives miserable. [381]

The LGBT Mafia

Every time a social media personality, actor, singer, or sports figure "comes out" as gay, liberal media outlets across the Internet all celebrate them as if they've accomplished some incredible achievement. President Obama made a habit of calling and "congratulating" professional athletes who decided to come out as gay. [382] When the Supreme Court ruled that gay "marriage" was legal in all fifty states, Obama had the White House lit up in rainbow colors that night to celebrate. [383]

The media is also on a mission to ruin the careers of any celebrity who dares voice opposition to gay "marriage" or gay adoption. [384] HGTV famously canceled a television show of the Benham Brothers (not to be confused with the "Property Brothers," who have a show on the network) after news reports started surfacing that the Benhams were Christians and didn't support gay "marriage." [385]

Comedian Kevin Hart was scheduled to host the 2019 Oscars until LGBT activists started spreading around one of his old bits about him not wanting his son to grow up to be gay. [386] In 2014 Mozilla CEO Brendan Eich, the creator of the popular Firefox web browser, was forced to resign after LGBT activists discovered that he had donated $1000 of his own money to support Proposition 8 in California which amended the state's constitution to define marriage as specifically between a man and a woman. [387] A gay man once filed a $70 million dollar lawsuit against a popular Bible publisher claiming that the anti-gay verses caused him "emotional distress." [388]

Kids in California, Colorado, New Jersey, and Illinois schools are now being forced to learn about "LGBT History Month" and are being taught about the "amazing contributions" LGBT people have made to the country. [389] In the UK, school children are being taught that "all genders" can have periods, not just women, and schools started adding tampon dispensers in the boys bathrooms. [390]

Since "Drag Queen Story Hour" is being held at an increasing number of public libraries across the country (where insane parents bring their small children to have drag queens read stories to them about being gay or transgender) the city council in Lafayette City-Parish, Louisiana held a meeting after many (normal) parents were outraged the event was being held in their community.

During the meeting a gay man took to the podium to support the event, saying, "I'm here to let you know that this event is something that's going to be very beautiful and for the children and the people that support it are going to realize that this is going to be the grooming of the next generation.” [391] Others in the meeting gasped since the term “grooming children” refers to a sexual predator attempting to persuade a child into a sexual relationship over time. [392]

One drag queen who read to children at the Houston Public Library’s “Drag Queen Storytime” is a registered sex offender who had previously been convicted of aggravated sexual assault against an 8-year-old child. [393] The library failed to do background checks on the drag queens who were given access to the children and the sex offender had only been exposed after a conservative activist organization MassResistance took it upon themselves to investigate the drag queens who were reading to the kids at the events. [394] Another drag queen reading to children at a library actually taught children how to twerk (jiggle their butts in a sexual way, as popularized by skank Miley Cyrus.) [395]

Liberals began complaining that Victoria’s Secret “discriminates” against fat women and transgenders because only beautiful (and actual) women walk the runway in their fashion shows. Online outlet “Mic” complained that they “normalized discrimination” and that, “It doesn’t take a fashion insider to recognize that when it comes to plus-size and transgender women, as well as gender nonconforming people, Victoria’s Secret would rather maintain a closed door policy. Since the brand’s first runway show at the Plaza Hotel in New York City in August 1995, not a single plus-size or out transgender or gender nonconforming person has walked in the show’s 23-year history.” [396]

Activists then called it “hateful” when the chief marketing officer dismissed criticism, but Victoria’s Secret official Twitter account soon apologized and released a statement saying, “we absolutely would love to cast a transgender model for the show."[397] Nine months later they hired their first transgender model.[398]

Just like conservative blacks are shunned and smeared by the media, so are conservative gays. *Deadspin* , a sports blog owned by Univision, published an article titled "Conservative Gays Need to Shut The Fuck Up."[399] And when Caitlyn Jenner "came out" as a Republican, liberals went nuts and completely denounced "her" as a traitor to the LGBT community despite recently having been celebrated as the most famous transgender person in the world upon announcing "her" transition.

"She" received infinitely more hate on social media for being a Republican than "she" did for deciding to identify as a "woman," and actually said it was harder to come out as Republican than it was transgender.[400]

TV “News”

Television news is very different from newspapers and magazines which tend to cover stories in much greater detail and context than a fifteen-second sound bite, and require a reader’s active attention and willingness to follow a story. Television, on the other hand, is a passive medium and relies on a quick pace, flashy graphics, and dramatic music in hopes of gaining an audience’s attention and holding it long enough for the commercial break so they can get paid.

TV news only skims along the surface of issues, mentioning a few basic points, and is often just infotainment with no real substance. What the audience sees is a carefully crafted version of a story that the producers and editors want people to see, while leaving out the parts they don’t want.

Famed media analyst Neil Postman noted, “Television always recreates the world to some extent in its own image by selecting parts of that world and editing those parts. So a television news show is a kind of symbolic creation and construction made by news directors and camera crews…and stranger still is the fact that commercials may appear anywhere in a news story, before, or after, or in the middle, so that all events are rendered essentially trivial; that is to say all events are treated as a source of public entertainment.” [401]

The reason intelligent people listen to talk radio is because radio shows provide long-form interviews and in-depth discussions which explore subjects in detail during a 15 or 20 minute segment, and may even continue the discussion after the commercial break for even longer. In comparison, the average television news segment on a national evening news broadcast is just 2 minutes and 23 seconds. [402] For local TV news it’s just 41 seconds.

[403] Television news is the equivalent of reading the headline of a newspaper article and the first paragraph or two.

Aside from the limitations of the television format, the days of Walter Cronkite, “the most trusted man in America” who anchored the *CBS Evening News* for 19 years, are long gone. After his era was over we got people like Dan Rather who used fake documents in a report about George W. Bush’s service record from when he was in the National Guard. [404] And Brian Williams who fabricated a story about his plane being shot down in Iraq when he was covering the war. [405]

Most television “reporters” today aren’t reporters, but are just actors. Everyone knows Hollywood celebrities make millions of dollars a year, but most people don’t think about how much money celebrity “journalists” make. They too are performance artists not much different from a Hollywood actor reading their lines. They know when to sound somber, and when to turn up the energy and display faux outrage to the audience when the teleprompter tells them. Many of them don’t believe half the things they say, they’re just playing a part, and for that they get paid very well.

For example, before he was fired from the *NBC Nightly News* , anchor Brian Williams was making $10 million a year. [406] Dan Rather was making $6 million a year at CBS News. [407] At CNN Anderson Cooper makes $12 million dollars a year and has a net worth of over $100 million. [408] MSNBC morning host Joe Scarborough’s divorce documents show that in 2013 he was making just under $100,000 per week! [409] Matt Lauer was making $25 million a year before he was fired from NBC’s *Today Show* for sexual misconduct. [410] And when Megyn Kelly was fired from NBC’s morning lineup she left with a $69 million windfall, the remainder of her contract. [411]

To put these figures in perspective, Anderson Cooper's $12 million a year divided by 52 (weeks in a year) is over $230,000 a week, or over $46,000 *per show* . He makes more money *in one day* than many Americans make in *an entire year!* And for that kind of money, these television personalities will say and do almost anything.

Being a cable news contributor is also very lucrative, earning pundits an easy six-figure salary to sit around a table for an hour to give their "analysis" on various issues a few nights a week. They know what the host, producers, and network want, and that's what they deliver. They're very careful not to bite the hand that feeds them by daring to point out facts that go against the narrative the show is trying to promote.

All of the Big Three broadcast networks (NBC, ABC, and CBS) try to separate themselves from the "cable" shows, but promoting the liberal agenda remains at the core of their existence. That's not to say they don't have *some* value. The major networks are useful to learn about dangerous weather events, product recalls, health scares, etc., and they do cover some events that can't have political spin put on them and which the general public should be aware of. And it can be important to watch what they are reporting just to be aware of the latest issues they are promoting and see what their current agenda is.

They also aren't without their own major scandals that should cause viewers to remain skeptical about their integrity as "news" networks. CBS once killed a story about the tobacco industry covering up how addictive cigarettes are out of concerns that if they were sued by the tobacco companies for their report it would interfere with the pending sale of the network to Westinghouse. [412] The incident was later made into a movie called *The Insider* (1999) staring Al Pacino and Russell Crowe. [413]

After allegedly burying a story about Nike using sweatshops to manufacture their clothes out of fears they would lose the company as a sponsor for the 1998 Winter Olympics, CBS reporters wore Nike jackets during their coverage as part of the sponsorship deal in what was widely criticized as a breach of journalistic ethics. [414]

CBS News has even digitally inserted advertisements for their own network onto fake billboards during live shots using the same technology sports broadcasts use to display banners behind home plate at baseball games. CBS inserted them onto buildings, water fountains, and even on the back of a horse-drawn carriage during "news" reports. [415]

After *ABC News* interrupted the network's broadcast for some "breaking news" about the "Russia investigation," Brian Ross falsely claimed that Michael Flynn had implicated Donald Trump in the "conspiracy," resulting in the stock market immediately dropping 350 points out of concerns that the President would now be impeached or arrested. [416] General Flynn had made no such allegations and the story was completely false.

A few years earlier during their breaking news coverage of the shooting in an Aurora, Colorado movie theater by lunatic James Holmes, anchor George Stephanopoulos said that Brian Ross found something that "might be significant." He then went on to incorrectly report that the shooter may be a member of the Tea Party because ABC found someone on Facebook with the same name who had the Tea Party listed as one of his interests. [417] It was, of course, the wrong James Holmes.

ABC News claimed that then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions delivered a speech to a "hate group" after meeting with the Christian non-profit organization Alliance Defending Freedom, one of the most powerful Christian rights legal organizations in the country. [418] Basically all Christian groups are seen as “hate groups” to the liberal Establishment, which always cites the Southern Poverty Law Center as the ultimate authority of such things.

After Oprah Winfrey accepted an award at the 2018 Golden Globes and gave an “inspiring” speech that caused many to hope she would be running for president, the official NBC Twitter account tweeted out a picture of her with the caption “OUR future president.” [419]

In 2015, *NBC News* launched “*NBC BLK”* (NBC Black), a new website for “black-oriented issues.” [420] Apparently it just wasn’t enough to cover that kind of news on their main platform, they had to dedicate an entire division to “black news.” The following year they launched “NBC Out,” a website featuring LGBT news, “Out” meaning “out of the closet.” The site has it’s own Twitter account and other social media pages dedicated to using the NBC brand to promote the LGBT agenda 24/7.

Cable News

As bad as the Big Three broadcast networks have become in recent years, cable news channels like CNN and MSNBC are much worse. They’ll talk endlessly about the same story on every show, every hour, all day, to ensure maximum saturation hoping their propaganda will reach as many viewers as possible since most people just tune in for an hour or two a day.

Fox News, while still following the basic sound bite format of television news, actually does a very good job of presenting a variety of stories and perspectives, whereas CNN and MSNBC mostly have endless panel discussions with each pundit throwing in their two cents when their “research” consists of glancing over a few headlines before the show or reading the producer’s notes about what the topic is for the day. Barack Obama once said that Fox viewers are living on a different planet than those who watch CNN and MSNBC. [421] Maybe he's right. Fox viewers are the ones living on planet Earth!

The Left is so fearful of Fox News that the Democratic National Committee barred them from hosting any of the twelve Democrat presidential primary debates for the 2020 election, claiming they're "state run TV" controlled by the Trump White House. [422] God forbid any of the moderators ask the candidates some real questions!

MSNBC was started in 1996 and functioned as the liberal counterpart to Fox, whereas CNN was supposedly the middle ground. CNN stands for Cable News Network and they were the first 24-hour news network in the world, started in 1980 by Ted Turner. For over 30 years they would cover news from around the globe and were once—as their trademarked slogan still (falsely) claims—one of the most trusted names in news. When something interesting was happening somewhere in the world, it was live on CNN, but in the Trump era all that changed. They rarely report on news anymore. Instead, all they do is talk about how terrible of a person Donald Trump is.

It's improv theater. The producer gives the panel a topic each night, or each segment, and like a group of actors at an improv show, the panelists pretend to be experts on the issue and put forth their opinions as if they actually know what they're talking about when in most cases they're just making it up as they go along. CNN doesn't air newscasts anymore, they air talk shows filled with endless speculation and theorizing about things they have no idea about. It's a gossip network.

CNN now covers one story—Trump. It's Trump 24/7 and virtually every minute of airtime is dedicated to complaining about him. What would once be contained in the grocery store tabloids or frivolous websites with zero editorial ethics now regularly airs on CNN. Gossip about Stormy

Daniels and the “pee tape” and endless allegations from anonymous sources about how “corrupt,” “incompetent,” “racist,” fascist,” etc., Trump is, is the only thing they talk about.

The network is desperate to prevent blue collar Democrats from supporting Trump and abandoning the Democrat Party, so after a grassroots movement called #WalkAway was started by a gay liberal named Brandon Straka encouraging people to stop voting for Democrats because the party has become insane, CNN branded the movement part of a Russian plot! They reported that despite the #WalkAway campaign being “presented as a grassroots effort by former Democrats who are critical of the party’s alleged intimidation, confrontation and lack of civility and want people to walk away from the party,” they said it has, “been connected to Kremlin-linked Russian bots.” [423]

The #WalkAway campaign’s YouTube channel and Facebook page are filled with video testimonials of average Americans from all different backgrounds who give their reasons for why they no longer support the Democrat Party and are encouraging others to “walk away” as well. [424]

CNN’s poisonous anti-Trump obsession may have incited several terrorist attacks such as the man who shot up Republicans’ softball practice in June 2017, severely injuring Congressman Steve Scalese, or the person who mailed white powder to Donald Trump Jr.’s apartment, causing an anthrax scare and landing his then-wife in the hospital for testing. CNN’s reckless rhetoric could be the catalyst that helped push any number of mentally unstable viewers over the edge, convincing them that the Trump administration is the reincarnation of the Third Reich.

Meanwhile CNN’s senior “media analyst” Brian Stelter says that Trump’s base is a “hate movement” against the press. “I think what we are increasingly seeing from the president and his aides and his allies is a hate movement against the American press," Stelter whined. "When you look at the behavior around Jim Acosta and some of the other reporter at these rallies, you really do see a hate movement." [425]

Shortly after the election Stelter declared that Donald Trump becoming president was "a national emergency" and painted him as a dictator who just seized power. [426] In an interview with *New York Magazine* CNN's president Jeff Zucker admitted, "The perception of Donald Trump in capitals around the world is shaped, in many ways, by CNN," warning Trump that, "Continuing to have an adversarial relationship with that network is a mistake." [427] Even the *Washington Post* admitted that, "it is hard to escape the perception that Zucker issued a kind of threat." [428]

CNN was instrumental in getting Alex Jones banned from all major social media platforms after they literally lobbied the tech giants to have him removed. Before he was "unpersoned," when his YouTube channel had just one strike they gleefully reported, "InfoWars' Main YouTube Channel is Two Strikes Away From Being Banned" [429] A few days later his channel got a second strike, and outlets like *Newsweek* gloated, "InfoWars is perilously close to a permanent YouTube ban after peddling yet another debunked conspiracy theory." [430] Dozens of other outlets picked up the story about the second strike, salivating that Infowars was one strike away from permanently being banned. [431]

Even before Alex Jones' YouTube channel was deleted, CNN was organizing an advertiser boycott against all the companies whose ads were appearing before his videos played. CNN reported, "Some of the biggest brands in the U.S. had ads running on the YouTube channels for far-right website InfoWars and its founder, notorious conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, and they say they had no idea YouTube was allowing their advertising to appear there." [432]

Well, how did they learn their ads were running on Alex's channel? Because CNN made of list of which ads were running, and then contacted the advertisers to pressure the companies into pulling them! Their story goes on, "CNN has discovered ads on InfoWars' channels from companies and organizations such as Nike, Acer, 20th Century Fox, Paramount Network, the Mormon Church, Moen, Expedia, Alibaba, HomeAway, the NRA, Honey, Wix and ClassPass." At the end of their story they admitted, "Many of the brands — including Nike, Moen, Expedia, Acer, ClassPass, Honey, Alibaba and OneFamily — have suspended ads on InfoWars' channels after being contacted by CNN for comment." [433]

MSNBC is usually not quite as insane as CNN but it's still almost always off the rails. Donny Deutsch, who is a regular contributor on the *Morning Joe* show, has challenged President Trump to a fight on air, [434] and their other regular panelists say things like Trump's name is the "modern day swastika." [435] They also regularly compared him to a dictator and call him a white supremacist. [436] When President Trump announced that he would be meeting face to face with Kim Jong Un, MSNBC claimed it was to "distract" the media from talking about his alleged affair with Stormy Daniels. [437]

The network's darling is lesbian Rachel Maddow whose monologues are convoluted streams of consciousness rattling off all kinds of social justice warrior buzzwords without ever really making a point. Her show is so fanatical and hyper-partisan that the *New York Times* banned their reporters from even appearing on it out of concern it will tarnish their credibility. [438]

The Intercept's Glenn Greenwald admitted, "I used to be really good friends with Rachel Maddow [but] I've seen her devolution from this really interesting, really smart, independent thinker into this utterly scripted, intellectually dishonest, partisan hack." [439]

MSNBC's research department is so awful they took seriously a parody Twitter account that listed its location as a city in Russia and tweeted satire about a variety of issues (calling itself Boston Antifa). MSNBC reported that it was more "evidence" that Russian bots were active on Twitter. [440] They also fell for a tweet posted by the popular parody account for North Korea, the "DPRK News Service" which MSNBC cited in a report attacking President Trump. [441]

Immediately after Robert Mueller wrapped up his two-year long investigation into the Trump campaign's alleged "collusion" with the Russians and found none, CNN and MSNBC's ratings dropped like a stone over night. After stringing along their viewers for two years giving the impression that any day now Mueller would announce he found "proof" Trump was a Russian agent and that his impeachment and imprisonment was imminent, hundreds of thousands of disappointed viewers finally quit tuning in.

Following the Mueller nothing burger, Rachel Maddow's viewership dropped by almost 20%. [442] Anderson Cooper's prime time show on CNN got only 835,000 viewers, and for weeks couldn't break a million. [443] Meanwhile Fox News continued to dominate, getting more viewers than MSNBC and CNN combined. [444]

Even *Newsweek* magazine, which is part of the anti-Trump smear machine, reported, "MSNBC's Rachel Maddow Found Huge Ratings Success Covering Trump and Russia — So What Now?" [445] Election years are always huge ratings boosters for cable news, and the regular viewers who suffered through two years of endless speculation and listened to countless conspiracy theories about Trump and the Russians obviously aren’t the sharpest tools in the shed. Most have already forgotten all about the massive deception they were victims of and due to their short attention spans and lack of intellectual capacity, these cable news companies will continue on as if they did nothing wrong, and hundreds of thousands of people will still tune in.

Normal Americans wonder how anyone could watch them again after the massive fraud the “news” networks had engaged in, but it’s easy to underestimate how many stupid people there are out there. After all, the *Jerry Springer Show* aired for 27 years and was able to keep audiences coming back every day to watch another group of trailer trash fight with each other about who cheated on who and who the father is of some poor child; and despite how mindless and repetitive the show was, enough people kept tuning in every day for it to stay on air for almost three decades.

Internet “News” Sites

Just like the Internet sparked the creation of countless different kinds of businesses selling everything from books to airline tickets, it also gave birth to new “news” companies as well. While the brand name newspapers and television networks eventually began migrating their content online, unknown entrepreneurs threw their hat in the news business as well, creating digital-only magazines and “news” sites like the Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, the Daily Beast, Politico, Axios, Vox, Slate, Vice News, and many others.

Since the barriers to entry are so low, and these companies didn’t need to invest in gigantic printing presses or develop supply chains to deliver their product to readers’ homes every morning, many of them saw the incredible opportunities the Internet opened up. But while most newspapers and magazines require people to buy them, the vast majority of Internet news sites are free to read.

All they had to do was get people to click on their articles and the advertisements on the website would fund their operation, so instead of focusing on producing quality content that people would be willing to pay for, they began flooding the Internet with sensational clickbait, throwing all journalistic standards out the window with one goal in mind—drive traffic to the articles, no matter what.

The *Huffington Post* was one of the first “successful” online “news” outlets. It was started in 2005 specializing in clickbait trash and other pop culture nonsense, but due to spamming the Internet with countless articles on anything and everything, they generated a lot of traffic and made a name for themselves as one of the most viewed online “news” outlets. [446] In 2011 they were purchased by AOL for $315 million. [447]

When Conan O’Brien was the comedian at the 2013 White House Correspondents Dinner he mocked the Huffington Post for being invited, saying, “All the Washington news media here tonight including the stars of online journalism. I see the Huffington Post has a table, which has me wondering if you’re here, who’s covering Miley Cyrus’s latest nip slip? Who’s assembling today’s top 25 yogurt related tweets? [Or] 7 mistakes you’re making with bacon? That’s a real one, and you should be ashamed of yourselves!” [448]

The Huffington Post (later rebranded as HuffPost) being welcomed as part of the Washington press corps marked the beginning of the end of journalism.

BuzzFeed

BuzzFeed is another online abomination which took advantage of the new clickbait business model. The site was created in 2006, and began churning out ridiculously dumb quizzes about pop culture and recycling the same handful of topics over and over again to litter Google’s search results with their spam, often in the form of listicles like: “37 Things White People Need to Stop Ruining in 2018;” “21 Things That Almost All White People Are Guilty Of Saying;” and “33 Things That Almost All White People Are Guilty Of Doing.”

They seem to hate white people so much that after the White House announced the National Day for the Victims of Communism a BuzzFeed reporter declared that the phrase “victims of Communism” was a “white nationalist talking point.” [449] Aside from their distain for white people, BuzzFeed also can’t stand heterosexual people (known as normal people to those not infected with the liberal pathogen.) When *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* was released, despite Disney turning the movie into a feminist propaganda piece, BuzzFeed still wasn't happy because there were no LGBT characters and suggested that Finn (John Boyega) and Poe Dameron (Oscar Issac) should have had a "romance" as part of the plot. [450]

BuzzFeed is perhaps the worst clickbait bottom feeder online and makes the *National Enquirer* look like a Pulitzer Prize winning publication. Outside of the community of morons who actively visit their website, BuzzFeed is best-known for publishing the fake news story about Donald Trump allegedly being caught on tape with hookers peeing on him in a Russian hotel.

The story about the now-infamous "dossier" had been circling internally at most of the major news outlets but nobody had reported on it because it was so ridiculous and there wasn't a shred of evidence to back it up, but BuzzFeed decided they would get the "scoop" and ran with it.

Then the allegations were all over social media and "Golden Showers" was trending on Twitter which provided cover for other "news" outlets to repeat the story. BuzzFeed often does the dirty work for Democrats by publishing salacious allegations and hyping them up enough to then get amplified by mainstream outlets which hide under the cover of qualifiers like "BuzzFeed reports" and "according to BuzzFeed." This way, they can give the impression that *they're* not making the claims, it's someone else and they're just passing it along because "if true" it would be a big story.

Vice News

Vice News is another popular online outlet which regularly celebrates the most bizarre sexual perversions and promotes degenerates as modern day heroes. Some of their headlines are literally: "We Interviewed the

Zoophilia Advocate Who Had Sex with a Dolphin;" "Ever Fantasized About Ingesting an Animal Through Your Anus?" "How to Make Breakfast With Your Vagina;" "Why Can't I Consent to Sex with My Brother?" "Dear Straight Guys, It's Time to Start Putting Things In Your Butt;" "Was Jesus Gay?" "Getting Cocaine Blown Up Your Butt;" and "Should Every Man Be Penetrated At Least Once In His Life?" It should be no surprise that Vice News is also on the forefront of celebrating child drag queens and sexualizing children. [451]

Vice's founder Shane Smith became a billionaire from peddling this kind of cancer. [452] In the early 2010s they regularly made viral videos on interesting topics that other news outlets wouldn't cover, like traveling to Columbia to investigate scopolamine (also known as the Devil's Breath) which allegedly puts people into a chemically induced hypnotic trance where they will do anything they're told, [453] and visiting Kim Dotcom's estate in New Zealand and letting him give his side of the story regarding the massive copyright infringement case he's facing for running the file-sharing site Megaupload. [454] But Vice quickly devolved into the most perverted of online outlets.

Like all the other large Leftist web-based media outlets, Vice seems to be obsessed with criticizing white people and sees "white supremacists" around every corner. They literally reported that, "Racist and white supremacist ideas have become more visible among the Chinese Canadian right." [455] So Chinese people living in Canada are white supremacists now? There's no point in trying to make sense of their insanity. It's best to just stay away from them so their poisonous propaganda doesn't enter your view because it will only make you upset.

In 2015, Disney invested over $400 million into Vice, but four years later had lost all of their money and wrote it off on their taxes. [456] George

Soros came to the rescue in mid-2019 and "invested" another $250 million dollars into the failing media company so they could continue to operate. [457] The "investment" from Soros was really just a donation to help them cover their operating expenses for the next few years so they could keep pumping out their liberal propaganda regardless of how much money it cost them to produce or whether they earned any revenue from it.

Vox

Vox is another well-funded online outlet that sees white supremacist boogeymen around every corner, and paints anyone to the right of Karl Marx as an alt-right Nazi. Vox largely functions as an activist organization working to destroy the careers of conservatives by painting targets on their back and smearing them with labels that are difficult to shake. In 2015 they were given $200 million dollars by NBC to do their dirty work without tarnishing the NBC name. [458]

For years Vox has been obsessed with PewDiePie, who held the title of YouTube's most subscribed channel for six years, and thinks that he is putting out secret white supremacist messages to his viewers. [459] Of course they labeled me one of YouTube's "most extreme" creators in a video they produced crying about how conservatives were making viral anti-feminist and anti-illegal immigration videos on YouTube. [460]

Vox came to most people's attention in June 2019 when one of their activists (who calls himself a "journalist") named Carlos Maza tried to get Steven Crowder completely banned from YouTube for calling him a "lispy queer" and an "anchor baby." Just as gay pride month kicked off, Carlos Maza rallied his fans to pressure YouTube to ban Crowder for "bullying" him and for using "hate speech," despite Maza often referring to himself as a "queer" and the Q in LGBTQ stands for just that.

The little sissy spent an entire weekend ranting on Twitter about how miserable his life was and kept harassing YouTube to ban Crowder for his "homophobic attacks." YouTube then demonetized Crowder's entire channel, along with many others the company claimed were posting "offensive" content. More on that in the chapter on YouTube.

In case there is any doubt as to whether or not Vox hates the First Amendment, for the 4th of July they published an op-ed titled "3 Reasons the American Revolution Was a Mistake," which starts off saying, "This July 4, let's not mince words: American independence in 1776 was a monumental mistake. We should be mourning the fact that we left the United Kingdom, not cheering it." [461]

It goes on to wish we would have remained a British colony because slavery would have supposedly been abolished sooner, fewer Native Americans would have been oppressed, and we would have a parliamentary system of government instead of a separation of powers (the three-branch system, which we currently have).

The writer also added his belief that we would have passed a carbon tax, since that's what happened in Britain, whereas such a proposal has (thankfully) so far failed to get enough support in the United States. The article concluded that, "The main benefit of the revolution to colonists was that it gave more political power to America's white male minority." [462] Of course! It's always the white man's fault!

The Daily Beast

The *Daily Beast* is another unscrupulous online outlet that often functions as a political activist organization instead of a "news" website and regularly depicts Trump supporters as a bunch of bigots. They like to publish stories that smear rising conservative social media personalities as "far-right" to brand them as "extremists" in attempts to derail their careers before a major network hires them as contributors. It's their way of trying to kill off the next generation of conservative voices before they become household names.

The "far-right" label is often associated with neo-Nazism and by muddying up the search results for peoples' names with a bunch of salacious articles about them it can cause real damage for current and future employment. Headlines like "Meet Candace Owens, Kanye West's Toxic Far-Right Consigliere," [463] and "Mike Cernovich and Jack Posobiec, the Far Right's Twin Trolls, Taste Their Own Bitter Medicine," [464] and "Pro-Gun Parkland Teen Kyle Kashuv Apologizes for 'Inflammatory' Racial Comments" are commonly deployed to digitally tar and feather conservatives. [465]

The *Daily Beast* calls YouTube a "radicalization factory" for the "far-right" and says that it's "pulling YouTubers down the rabbit hole of extremism." [466] Like others of their ilk, they often push for more censorship of right-wing content under the smokescreen of fighting "racism" and "extremism." Defame, demonetize, and deplatform is their M.O.

After a joke video depicting Nancy Pelosi as drunk and slurring her words went viral on Facebook, the *Daily Beast* doxed the person who allegedly made it, revealing his name, the city he lives in, and what he does for a living. The "reporter" (activist) who cyber-stalked the meme maker had apparently messaged his Facebook friends, including his ex-girlfriend, fishing for information about him. [467]

Don't Fall for Their Tricks

If you use social media, the best thing you can do is block these Leftist clickbait accounts, and don't share their links no matter how outrageous their articles are because these sites often rely on hate-clicks, which means they know people will share the links on their social media accounts with the intention of showing their friends how insane the articles are. Unfortunately trying to "expose" them this way just drives more traffic to their website which is what they want. They don't care if the people clicking the articles like them or hate them, as long as they get the traffic and thus the ad revenue from it.

Oftentimes articles are purposefully inflammatory and designed to get attention because of how outlandish they are, even though the people writing them may not even believe a word of it, but are simply publishing outrageous things in hopes that people will spread them around so they can get a bunch of hate-clicks from it.

So instead of posting links to these outlets, take a screenshot of their headline and post that, along with a summary of the article and your commentary so you're not driving any more traffic to their websites. Starve them of traffic! Or post an article from a conservative website that is covering what the Leftist sites are reporting instead of giving them any more page views directly. It may be best to just ignore them altogether sometimes and not even mention them so that you don't inadvertently inspire anyone to visit them out of curiosity.

And be sure to bookmark and follow conservative sites like Fox News, Breitbart, the Drudge Report, Daily Caller, the Washington Times, Townhall, The Federalist, Washington Examiner, Newsbusters, PJ Media, Red State, One America News, WorldNetDaily, and National Review.

The End of Print Journalism?

In early 2018 the *New York Times* CEO predicted their print edition may only last another ten years before it becomes economically unsustainable to keep it going. [468] Newspaper circulation has been on a steady decline since the Internet revolution, and many magazines are struggling as well. *PC Magazine* ceased printing a physical edition in 2009 and is now just a website. *Computerworld* followed suit in 2014. *Teen Vogue* magazine and *Self* did the same thing in 2017.

Newsweek , once considered to be one of the staples of the news magazine industry ever since its creation in 1933, even quit issuing a print edition at the end of 2012 due to financial problems. [469] About a year later after it had been bought by another media organization (IBT Media) they re-launched the print edition, but continue to struggle.

Despite having over 3 million Twitter followers, most of *Newsweek's* tweets barely get a dozen interactions, leading many people to think they bought millions of fake followers in order to appear popular. [470] In 2018 *Newsweek* was accused of fraudulently inflating the traffic to their website in order to present advertisers with false numbers, causing numerous online ad vendors to pull their ads. [471] So buying fake Twitter followers surely seems right up their alley.

CNN's president Jeff Zucker complained at an industry conference that his network was having a difficult time monetizing their content online since so many videos are spread through social media with CNN clips being posted to YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. "In a Google and Facebook world, monetization of digital and mobile continues to be more difficult than we would have expected or liked," he said. [472]

What he means is, there is just too much competition from other websites and YouTube channels, and since there are so many different links being shared on social media, CNN's web traffic has dramatically dropped and with fewer people actually watching them on cable they're not getting the revenue from the long blocks of commercials.

Because a lot of people use ad blocker plug-ins on their browsers which automatically hide banner ads from websites, the *Washington Post* recently began blocking people from being able to see their articles if their browser is using an ad blocker, requiring people to turn it off or white list (allow ads on) their site in order to even see what's on the website at all. [473]

The New York Times began limiting people's ability to read free articles on their website to ten per month by either tracking their IP address or placing cookies on their computer, and later reduced it to just five articles a month. [474] When that number is exceeded, the articles are blacked out and a notice pops up saying you have exceeded the allowed free articles limit and it encourages you to become a digital subscriber for $4 per month (for the first year) which then automatically changes to $15 a month from then on. The business model of displaying digital ads next to articles on their website just isn't working anymore because there is too much competition now with countless websites all using the same ad servers.

Mainstream Asking for Donations

Things are getting so dire for the major online "news" businesses that some are now asking for donations. At the bottom of every *Guardian* article now there is a notice that reads, "Since you're here…we have a small favor to ask. More people are reading the *Guardian* than ever but advertising revenues across the media are failing fast. And unlike many news organizations, we haven't put up a paywall — we want to keep our journalism as open as we can. So you can see why we need to ask for your help. The *Guardian's* independent, investigative journalism takes a lot of time, money, and hard work to produce. But we do it because we believe our perspective matters — because it might well be your perspective too. If everyone who reads our reporting, who likes it, helps fund it, our future would be much more secure. For as little as $1, you can support the *Guardian* – and it only takes a minute. Thank you.” [475]

In August 2017, BuzzFeed “News” started asking for donations at the bottom of all their articles too. There’s a banner that reads “Play a bigger role in our journalism” encouraging people to donate $5 dollars a month to them which readers get zero benefits for other than being added to a BuzzFeed email list. People who donate $100 get an “exclusive BuzzFeed News tote bag.” [476] Soon we may see major media outlets join Patreon!

Wikipedia

Encyclopedia Britannica is the world's oldest encyclopedia, first published in the late 1700s. For many generations they were the standard in school libraries and some homes if parents decided to spend the $1000 plus dollars for the 32-volume set. But in 2012 the company announced they were no longer going to print the books (after 244 years), and instead Encyclopedia Britannica became an online only edition available for a small yearly subscription fee. [477] Unfortunately in the Internet age where everyone wants everything for free, Encyclopedia Britannica has been largely forgotten and Wikipedia has become the new standard "encyclopedia," which is both sad and disturbing.

Wikipedia is one of the top search results, if not *the* top search result, for almost anything you Google, and gets 33 *billion* page views a month. [478] And you probably know that literally anyone can edit almost any article on the site, anonymously, without even registering as an editor. In theory, other editors will watch over new updates and remove or correct them if someone posts incorrect information, but this often results in "edit wars" where people go back and forth posting something and then others change it, and then others change it back, and on and on. So depending on when you read an article on Wikipedia, information could be completely different or even missing entirely.

For benign pages about things like plants and animals there may be little controversy about what is said about them, but for pages that are biographies of people, particularly political figures (and even for some products and corporations which have entries on the site) they are usually a battleground between different editors fighting to have the final word in terms of what is (and is not) said about the topic.

Wikipedia is a major part of the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* smear machine because it solidifies the liberal consensus about individuals by using careless and defamatory online articles as the "sources" for labeling someone a racist, sexist, homophobe, etc. Once outlets like the HuffPost, Daily Beast, Vox, etc., publish an article making baseless claims about a person, then the Wikipedia editors update that person's page to paint them in a false light and cite the salacious hit pieces as the source in the footnotes, cementing the allegations in the target's Wikipedia page.

Because public figures have to prove "actual malice" in a defamation case, unlike private citizens, its difficult to win a judgment against "news" outlets for libel because they can easily claim they "thought" what they were writing was accurate, or it's their opinion that someone is "far-right," "racist," "Islamophobic," etc. Often they'll sneakily add a weak qualifier about someone they're smearing by saying they are an individual "who some people call far-right." *Who* calls them that? A few random trolls on Twitter, so technically "some people" have called them that and it's a devious way many of these outlets try to get labels to stick.

They also know that suing them can easily cost a plaintiff a million dollars in legal fees, and even if they win a judgment for the defamation, that person will still be on the hook for their own legal costs, which may be much more than the actual judgement awarded to them for the defamation in the first place.

For months Wikipedia had a section on Tomi Lahren's page saying she was considered "White Power Barbie," because an article in the London *Guardian* labeled her that simply because she's a beautiful blonde woman who has had a few viral videos criticizing Black Lives Matter. [479]

Wikipedia is such a pit of disinformation and slander that Ron Paul was included on their white supremacist list for three weeks before editors finally fixed it. [480] Wikipedia even listed the California Republican Party's ideology as "Nazism" for a period of time. [481]

There is even an entire Wikipedia page titled "Racial Views of Donald Trump" which paints him as a huge racist, detailing how he is a "birther" for questioning Barack Obama's heritage; taking his comments about "fine people" on "both sides" of the Confederate statue controversy out of context, and including a whole long list of supposed "evidence" that he's a racist because he referred to El Salvador, Haiti and parts of Africa as "shit hole countries" and makes fun of Elizabeth Warren, calling her Pocahontas.

In September 2018 a Democrat congressional staffer doxed several Republican Senators including Lindsey Graham by posting their home addresses and phone numbers right on their Wikipedia pages. [482] The perpetrator was later arrested and sentenced to 4 years in prison for computer fraud and sharing restricted private information, showing the seriousness of his crime and that the lack of oversight and editorial control makes Wikipedia the Internet's equivalent of a wall in a gas station bathroom.

Wikipedia editors fiercely protect the Antifa page, and (at the time of this writing) have successfully prevented any references to their violent and terrorist activities. The subsections of the article are "History," "Ideology and Activities," and "Notable Activism;" but nothing about their violence at all. [483] These are the scum who wear black masks and look like members of ISIS that show up at events to harass, intimidate, and assault Trump supporters with sticks, bricks, and mace. This is the same group that went to Tucker Carlson's house, banged on his door, and shouted threats through a megaphone. [484]

After Antifa members assaulted Quillette journalist Andy Ngo at an event in Portland, Oregon in June 2019, punching him in the face and throwing milkshakes on him (causing him to be hospitalized for a brain hemorrhage) word of the incident made national news. [485] President Trump even mentioned the attack but Wikipedia editors decided that it wasn't "significant" enough to warrant being included on the Antifa page. [486]

Wikipedia is also preventing any mention of the terrorist attack on an Immigrations and Customs Enforcement [ICE] facility in Tacoma, Washington, where an Antifa member approached the property armed with a rifle and firebombed the building, resulting in him being shot and killed by police. He had also posted a manifesto online before his attack using language from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, claiming the United States was keeping illegal immigrants in "concentration camps." His manifesto began declaring "I am Antifa." [487]

Congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar refused to condemn the attack when specifically asked about it. [488] Others, like Black Lives Matter activist Shaun King, appeared to celebrate it and encouraged people to "liberate" the "concentration camps" by any means necessary because illegal aliens are being "tortured" inside. [489]

The FBI reported that Antifa has been engaging in terrorist activities, and members of the Senate, including Ted Cruz of Texas and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana introduced an official resolution deeming them a terrorist organization. [490] But not a word of any of this is included on the Wikipedia page about Antifa. [491]

Meanwhile the Wikipedia page for disgraced former FBI agent Peter Strzok says the text messages he and his mistress Lisa Page exchanged speaking of having an "insurance policy" to derail the Trump administration is just a "conspiracy theory" saying, "The revelation of the text messages led Republican congressmen and right wing media to start pushing conspiracy theories to the effect that Strzok was involved in a secret plot to undermine the Trump presidency.” [492]

There have been controversies surrounding certain Wikipedia editors being paid to protect pages of political figures as well as big names in tech and the media. [493] Others, like myself, have no hope of ever having a fair or accurate representation on Wikipedia. Right now my page says that I’m best known for being a “conspiracy theorist” because I wrote a few books about the Illuminati when I was younger with the subtitle of “Facts & Fiction” separating the facts from the fiction, because they *are* a historical group that became a pop culture phenomena in the early 2010s. It’s an interesting subject I was fascinated with for a period of time, but the Wikipedia editors forever want me branded as “conspiracy theorist” for daring to look into the topic.

And while I have had a sizable YouTube audience steadily growing ever since 2006, at the end of the 2016 presidential election my channel exploded. But for years after that (and currently at the time I’m writing this) the editor overlords at Wikipedia won’t allow ANY mention of my YouTube stats on my page, which is standard for professional YouTubers.

Several liberal YouTubers whose channels that are much smaller than mine, like that of Kyle Kulinski who runs the Secular Talk channel, and David Pakman have their Wikipedia pages loaded with details about their subscriber counts and viewership and all the news sites which have mentioned them; but not mine. My YouTube subscriber count isn’t allowed to be mentioned at all. [494] Wikipedia gives the impression that my career ended in 2015, when in reality it took off in 2016, and I was the first conservative YouTube channel to reach 1 million subscribers. [495]

Despite my 2017 book, *The True Story of Fake News*, reaching the #15 best seller spot (of all books) on Amazon (and #1 in its category for weeks) the Wikipedia editors say it's not "significant" enough to mention on my page! My book which came out the following year, *Liberalism: Find a Cure* , also hit #15 on Amazon best seller's list (of all books, not just a certain category) but they still refuse to even mention it! One of the editors who fiercely guards my page wrote on the Talk Page discussion about the edits that, "The books were removed via consensus at some point because there were no reliable sources that mentioned them as being significant." [496]

Another editor writing about why my YouTube subscriber count is not allowed on the page says, "I think there is enough evidence that subscriber counts have been manipulated in the recent past that we should not be including this information in this article." [497]

They also removed (and are preventing any mention of) all the television shows I've appeared in, including *Secret Societies of Hollywood* on the E! channel, *America Declassified* on the Travel Channel, *America's Book of Secrets* on the History Channel, *Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura* on TruTV, as well as shows on the Sundance Channel and interviews on Fox News. These appearances are all listed on IMDB and other media outlets, but the Wikipedia editors have decided that mentioning them would make me look too popular, so they dumped them down the memory hole and are preventing anyone from adding them back to the page.

Larry Sanger, the co-founder of Wikipedia (who is no longer with the organization), chimed in on Twitter when I was complaining about this, saying, "If these idiots don't like you, then they will ignore their own f'n rules. You're far from being the first this has happened to. It pisses me off. Arrogant little SOBs." [498]

He now calls Wikipedia “a broken system” and says “Wikipedia has long since decided to turn the other cheek when influential editors make articles speak with one point of view, when they dismiss unpopular views, or when they utterly fail to do justice to alternative approaches to a topic.” 499

The *Washington Times* did an article about my “battle” with Wikipedia after I made a YouTube video about it, but instead of fixing the page the editors scrubbed any mention of my education credentials, deleting the fact that I have a bachelor’s degree in Communication. They then added a few lines that I once made “numerous homophobic statements” about a Korean boy band after they played at the American Music Awards. I had simply tweeted a picture of them with the caption, “Meet the Korean lesbian pop group BTS featured at the American Music Awards #AMAs last night.”

It was clearly a joke because the band members looked very feminine and had blue hair like a stereotypical lesbian. *Teen Vogue* magazine wrote an article about my tweet because the group’s teeny bopper fans got upset and started a petition on Change.org urging the band to sue me, and *that* is the “reliable” source Wikipedia used to add a section to my page branding me “homophobic.”

They also added a line about how I had been temporarily suspended from Twitter for making “transphobic” comments (in reality saying there are only two genders.) They’re trying to paint me in the most negative light possible, citing random articles from little-known or garbage websites that happened to mention jokes I’ve made on Twitter, while at the same time preventing any real information about my career, my credentials, and my success from being mentioned at all.

Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales (who now lives in England) got so triggered when President Trump visited the UK in June 2019, he tweeted that he was leaving the country until Trump returned to the United States.[500] He was widely mocked in the replies, including by me, causing him to block me. (He later unblocked me after people continued to ridicule him over the block.)

Google has donated millions of dollars to Wikipedia to help cover their operating expenses,[501] and guess who else has given them millions as well —George Soros.[502] You'd think with all their money they could have just funded the Encyclopedia Britannica and made *that* free to the world instead of giving it to such a garbage website filled with inaccuracies and biased information, but then the Left's army of online trolls wouldn't be able to edit entries about people and political policies they want to control the perception of.

Author's Note: If you haven't already, please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com, Kindle, Google Play, iBooks, or wherever you bought it from, to let other potential readers know how valuable this information is.

Almost all of the one-star reviews on Amazon for my last two books "The True Story of Fake News" and "Liberalism: Find a Cure" are from NON-verified purchases which shows the "reviewers" probably didn't even read them and just hate me.

So if you could help me offset their fake one-star reviews by leaving a real one yourself since you actually read the book, that would help a lot!

Thank you!

Google

Google is the most-visited website in the world, and is so popular that "Google" has become a verb meaning to look something up. They dominate not just the search engine industry, but others as well, since a large number of the most popular mobile apps are also owned by Google (like G-mail, Google Maps, Chrome, Google Play, Google Drive, Google News, etc.).

Most people assume Google knows the answers to everything, and think the top search results for what they're looking for is the correct answer. Studies have shown that over 90% of the time people click on what is served up on page one and rarely even look at page two or beyond. [503] The ranking of search results gives Google an enormous amount of power since each page shows just ten different results out of hundreds of thousands, or millions of possible webpages. They can easily prevent people from finding articles or websites by just dropping them down to page two or three in the results.

Google's ability to surface certain information they want to promote while suppressing what they don't like by manipulating their algorithm gives them enormous power to artificially boost certain companies, products, or political candidates and causes over others.

Speaking of the 2016 election, one Google engineer wrote in internal emails, "This was an election of false equivalencies, and Google, sadly, had a hand in it." [504] They then suggested manipulating the search results to bury articles from Breitbart and the Daily Caller, saying, "How many times did you see the Election now card with items from opinion blogs (Breitbart, Daily Caller) elevated next to legitimate news organizations? That's something that can and should be fixed." [505]

"I think we have a responsibility to expose the quality and truthfulness of sources—because not doing so hides real information under loud noises…Beyond that, let's concentrate on teaching critical thinking. A little bit of that would go a long way. Let's make sure that we reverse things in four years—demographics will be on our side." [506]

Google insiders also discussed manipulating the search results to counter President Trump's proposed "Travel Ban" in January 2017 which would have prevented people living in countries with high rates of terrorist activity from entering the United States for a period of time. *The Wall Street Journal* reported, "Google Workers Discussed Tweaking Search Function to Counter Travel Ban," [507] and detailed, "Days after the Trump administration instituted a controversial travel ban in January 2017, Google employees discussed ways they might be able to tweak the company's search-related functions to show users how to contribute to pro-immigration organizations and contact lawmakers and government agencies, according to internal company emails." [508]

Those emails showed that, "employees proposed ways to 'leverage' search functions and take steps to counter what they considered to be 'Islamophobia.'" [509] After they were leaked, Google issued a statement denying that they had actually done it, and said the plan was just a "brainstorm of ideas." [510]

A Google employee who has been leaking information to Breitbart told them, "I know there are efforts to demote anything non-PC, anti-Communist and anti-Islamic terror from search results. To what extent that has been successful, I don't know." [511] PJ Media did an examination of the search results for the word "Trump" in the Google News tab and calculated that 96% of the results were from liberal media outlets. [512] Similar informal tests have been done by searching for various other topics, such as when

Fox News founder Roger Ailes died people noticed that most search results painted him as a monster, with articles from Rolling Stone declaring he was "one of the worst Americans ever" surfacing at the top, along with others like one from NBC News claiming he "built a kingdom on exploited bias," and the London *Guardian* saying he helped "create this nightmare world." [513] A study at Northwestern University's Computational Journalism Lab also found that the majority of search results on Google News were from left-leaning outlets. [514]

If you search for the same key words on Google and Bing, or Duck Duck Go, you'll often notice dramatically different results. On numerous occasions when doing research for this book I have Googled various topics trying to find articles that I had seen in the past so I could use them as the citations and had a difficult time finding many of them on Google, but when I looked on other search engines they were in the top results. Sometimes when I was even searching for an article's exact title after having copied and pasted it into my notes when I first saw it posted on social media, it wouldn't show up on the first page of search results on Google.

Google even rolled out a new "fact check" widget as part of their supposed fight against "fake news" but after a report from the *Daily Caller* showed the feature was targeting mostly conservative news sites in attempts to paint their overall reporting as inaccurate or misleading, (while ignoring false stories published by BuzzFeed, the Huffington Post, Vox, Salon, and others) Google shut down the feature saying they "encountered challenges" and admitted they were "unable to deliver the quality" they hoped to provide their users. [515]

Google deleted Dr. Patrick Moore from the list of Greenpeace founders after he made headlines for insulting Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez over her ridiculous Green New Deal and praised President Trump. [516] Google often displays what are called “knowledge panels” as the top search results for certain topics, which are small boxes highlighting a few main points about the subject. And prior to his headline-making comments about the moronic Congresswoman, Dr. Patrick Moore was included in the knowledge panel when someone searched for “Greenpeace founders,” but immediately after insulting her royal highness, Google mysteriously scrubbed him from it. [517]

The knowledge panel for the popular pro-life movie *Unplanned* (2019) listed the genre as “propaganda” when it first came out, instead of “drama,” “action,” or “science fiction” like all other movies are labeled. As usual, after word went viral on social media of this “mistake” Google fixed it. [518]

A group at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology concluded a study in April 2018 after looking into how much Google’s search results could influence undecided voters by surfacing negative or positive results about certain issues and candidates and reported that such manipulation could shift the preference of those voters between 20 and 80 percent. [519] The same research team led by search engine expert Dr. Robert Epstein concluded that during the 2018 midterm election, Google had been able to flip three key congressional seats from Republican to Democrat due to the prevalence of pro-Democrat bias in the search results. [520]

A former Google employee who worked as a “design ethicist” where he studied the ethics of using technology to persuade people, later warned in a TED talk, “A handful of people, working at a handful of technology companies, through their choices will steer what a billion people are thinking today.” [521]

Even Google News has recently changed to prevent people from finding exactly what they are looking for. The “News” tab is used to retrieve only search results from mainstream and brand name news sources, not just any random website like the main Google search page. You used to be able to select specific topics you’re interested in and Google News would show recent stories about those topics all on one page, but in 2017 they changed the layout making it much more difficult to customize your Google News feed, and now you have to click on each individual topic you’re interested in, making it tedious and cumbersome, thus encouraging users to rely on the Google News home page which contains stories curated by their editors instead of creating a custom feed to see only the topics *you* want to read about.

Then in March 2018 Google announced their “News Initiative” plan promising to give $300 million dollars to various “news” organizations over the next three years, as well as offer them various tools and services in order to help them expand their online presence. [522] They have so much money they’re just giving it away, probably to garbage websites like Vox, the Daily Beast, and HuffPost.

The Internet created an even playing field allowing someone on a laptop in their kitchen to create a website (or YouTube channel) which gave them access to the same number of potential readers (or viewers) as brand name newspapers and TV networks, and completely changed the power dynamics in media, since ordinary people could bypass the traditional gatekeepers of editors and producers who decide what gets published on their platforms.

But this power shift has caused a massive backlash and we’re seeing the very tech companies which created the infrastructure that empowered the individual now quietly working to tip the scale back in favor of the massive corporations their technology once disrupted.

Champions of “Diversity”

Google's corporate culture is liberal to the core, and one brave conservative employee leaked a video of an internal meeting held just after the 2016 election showing all the senior executives sitting around talking about how disgusted they were with Donald Trump's victory and that they're "sure" most people in the company agree. [523]

Google is such a "champion" for "diversity" and "social justice" that there are reportedly tampon dispensers in men's bathrooms because "some men menstruate." [524] In August 2017 Google fired engineer James Damore after he wrote and circulated a memo internally titled "Google's Ideological Echo Chamber" which was critical of the company's corporate culture and their diversity policies which were aiming to hire more women.

Damore pointed out that because of the biological differences between men and women, most women tend to be more interested in social activities than engineering (people rather than things). Google soon fired him for "sexism" for daring to point out well-established facts about the differences between men and women. Various psychologists including Geoffrey Miller, a professor at the University of New Mexico; Jordan Peterson, professor of Psychology at the University of Toronto; Lee Jussim, social psychology professor at Rutgers University; and others publicly defended Damore's memo as being scientifically sound.

Damore then filed a class action lawsuit against Google and is suing them for discrimination against conservatives and white men since their diversity policies are inherently discriminatory because they openly favor women and people of color in the hiring process instead of choosing applicants who are best qualified for the job, regardless of their race or gender. [525]

Has Google Committed Treason?

Billionaire tech investor and PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel says the FBI and CIA should investigate Google for possibly committing treason because of their "decision to work with the Chinese military and not with the US military." [526] Google had been secretly working on a special search engine for China that was compatible with their strict censorship rules and would have linked people's phone numbers to their searches so the Communist government could monitor what everyone was looking up. [527]

The project was only revealed after someone leaked documents to *The Intercept* in August 2018. Google had already been working with the Communist Chinese government since 2006 on their "Google.cn" (Google China) which allowed officials to blacklist certain search terms, but Dragonfly, the codename of the newer system they were working on, was going to be fully compatible with China's "social credit score" system which tracks and rates citizens based on their personal activities. [528]

Senator Josh Hawley called Google "the most dishonest company to appear before Congress" after one of their executives testified before a Senate Intelligence Committee and was evasive in many of his answers. [529]

Creepy Google

There are also serious privacy issues with Google for those who use it in the U.S. and other countries around the world. Most people don't think about it too often, but they're telling Google more than they tell their spouse or their best friend since people sometimes search for answers about relationship or health problems they are keeping to themselves.

Google knows exactly who you are and keeps a log of everything you've searched for and what links you've clicked on. All of this information is then analyzed and sorted to create detailed profiles of people, their personalities, interests, income, and other data points about them.

When asked about the privacy concerns surrounding Google, then-CEO Eric Schmidt responded, "There is what I call the creepy line. The Google policy on a lot of things is to get right up to the creepy line and not cross it." [530] They are, however, so creepy, that in the future they want to wire the Internet directly into people's brains. [531]

Google engineer Ray Kurzweil is one of the leading proponents of Transhumanism and hopes to one day upload his brain into the Internet so he can become a god-like "immortal" being. [532] Such megalomaniacal goals seem like science fiction and have been the plot of various films like *The Lawnmower Man* (1992) and *Transcendence* (2014), but Kurzweil is serious and has the backing of one of the world's wealthiest tech companies.

Google is also a lead developer of artificial intelligence which an increasing number of tech leaders and scientists worry may quickly get out of control and end up exterminating or enslaving the human race. [533] Other companies, including Elon Musk's Neuralink, are developing brain-computer interfaces in hopes of enabling humans to merge with AI by turning us all into cyborgs. [534] But these are topics for a whole other book.

Google's former motto was "Don't be evil," a phrase that was also included in their official code of conduct, but in April 2018 they quietly removed all references of it, and sadly it seems more every day that is exactly what they are becoming.

Rise of Social Media

From the creation of the printing press in 1439 to the telegraph in 1837, to radio in 1895 and television in 1927, each new form of media revolutionized society, but the development of the Internet far surpassed all previous communication technologies, especially since it's now fully mobile and in our pocket wherever we go. It's changed almost everything from how we interact with our friends to how we get our news and entertainment, and people gauge what topics and events are the "most popular" because they're "trending" on social media.

As futurist George Gilder noted, "Computer networks give every hacker the creative potential of a factory tycoon of the industrial era and the communications power of a TV magnate of the broadcasting era." [535] That's the capability of what's been dubbed Internet 2.0, or the two-way communication networks the Internet now enables, instead of just static websites.

Comedian Dane Cook was one of the first comics to use social media to promote himself in the early 2000s through MySpace, and many of his early critics called him a better marketer than a comic because they didn't see his humor as all that funny but couldn't deny his popularity. "I remember getting ready to play Madison Square Garden," he recalled to the *Hollywood Reporter* . "I posted once on MySpace and without spending a dime on any promotion or advertising, we sold out." [536]

Similarly, Tila Tequila became the most popular person on MySpace in 2006 from posting racy photos of herself, taking advantage of the new medium and getting floods of friend requests from lonely losers online who hoped to connect with her. [537] Her popularity on My Space opened the door for her (bisexual) dating show *A Shot at Love with Tila Tequila* on MTV in 2007, which began her 15 minutes of fame.

In the early years of social media most people just saw the technology as something to use for fun, and a way to entertain themselves or reconnect with old friends, but as time went on the true power and ability to influence large numbers of people through it became apparent.

One member of the Obama administration called journalists on social media "force multipliers" (a fancy term for propagandists) and admitted, "We have our compadres, I [would] reach out to a couple people, and you know I wouldn't want to name them." These people were "prominent Washington reporters and columnists who [would] often tweet in sync with [Obama's] messaging." [538]

Obama's former campaign "mastermind" David Axelrod admitted, "over the last couple of years, there's been an investment in alternative means of communication: using digital more effectively, going to nontraditional sources, understanding where on each issue your constituencies are going to be found. I think they've approached these major foreign-policy challenges as campaign challenges, and they've run [social media] campaigns, and those campaigns have been very sophisticated." [539]

Amateur video caught Hillary Clinton collapsing at the 9/11 memorial after her campaign and the mainstream media kept dismissing growing concerns that there was something wrong with her health in the final stretch of the 2016 presidential election. [540] The video first went viral through social media before finally getting covered in the mainstream press because so many people were talking about it. The Washington Post, which had been calling questions about her health "conspiracy theories," then finally admitted, “Hillary Clinton’s health just became a real issue in the presidential campaign.” [541]

A bartender working at a fundraiser held by Mitt Romney in 2012 captured the then-presidential candidate on video talking about how 47% of the country wouldn’t vote for him because they’ll support Obama no matter what since they want free hand outs so he wasn’t going to pay much attention to them. [542] Liberals pretended to be outraged and accused Mitt of not caring about half of the country, particularly lower income folks, and the video proved to be quit damaging to his campaign.

Bloggers were the ones who first debunked the fake documents *CBS News* anchor Dan Rather claimed were the service records of George W. Bush from his time in the National Guard. [543] Matt Drudge’s *Drudge Report* website first broke the Monica Lewinsky scandal when other outlets were sitting on the story and refused to cover it. [544] Facebook and Google now account for 25% of all advertising spending, both online and off. [545] Social media has swallowed up the news business, and the power-shift has been revolutionary.

Getting “News” on Social Media

We all know kids love their devices, and virtually live their lives on them. An entire generation of children have been raised on them, and get babysat by smartphones since parents use them to keep kids occupied while seated in the shopping cart at the grocery store and even at the dinner table. It’s how they communicate with their friends, listen to music, watch movies, and so it only makes sense that’s where they get their news.

A study conducted by Internet security company Anchor Free for the Jack Meyers Knowledge Exchange reported, “When asked to identify their two primary sources of news, the majority of this cohort name Instagram

(29 percent), You Tube (22 percent), and Facebook (15 percent) as the media where they are most likely to read/see the news. Fewer than a quarter of young people depend on newspaper or television news, with 8 percent reading national newspapers such as the New York Times, Washington Post, and USA Today, 10 percent watching broadcast and cable network news, and 6 percent exposed regularly to local television news or newspapers…By comparison, a stunning 82 percent of Gen Z and younger millennials include among their primary news sources Reddit, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, BuzzFeed, Instagram, Snapchat and their desktop newsfeed." [546]

Media advisor Jack Myers warned, "Without the traditional filters of trusted news organizations and journalists, this new generation of potential voters may be highly susceptible to fake and biased news and may find it difficult to discern fact from fiction. Compounding this reality, Instagram — the #1 source of news for young people — is dependent almost exclusively on visual images, and none of the major social media channels invest meaningfully in original news reporting, nor do they provide user-tools for deeper investigative analysis of their content." [547]

Of course it's not just kids who are increasingly relying on social media for their news, it's everyone.

Homeland Security Studying Influencers

Because so many people are now getting their news from social media and there are millions of ways stories can be planted online and go viral governments around the world are very interested in tracking and studying the flow of information through these new channels of distribution. In 2018 the Department of Homeland Security revealed they were developing systems to monitor the social media feeds of various journalists, bloggers, and social media influencers in order to “identify any and all media coverage related to the Department of Homeland Security or a particular event.” [548]

In other words there are very serious national security concerns, as well as issues and events local law enforcement need to monitor on social media because they can easily cause real-world consequences.

A report in the *Chicago Sun Times* notes, they were building a database “to monitor the public activities of media members and influencers” so the government would have the ability “to create unlimited data tracking, statistical breakdown, and graphical analyses on ad-hoc basis.” [549] They reportedly are tracking 300,000 different accounts to create a realtime information matrix of topics that are being talked about and how they spread.

Shortly after the 2016 election I myself was contacted by the United States Special Operations Command which integrates various branches of the U.S. Armed Forces because they wanted to interview me and even send a team of researchers to observe me working so they could learn how my YouTube channel had become so popular in the final stretch of the 2016 election. I declined their request.

Operation Earnest Voice

Around 2011 the U.S. government launched a program called Operation Earnest Voice which uses specialized software that allows military personnel to create and manage fake social media profiles of various “people” in order to use them for propaganda purposes. [550]

The government claims they’re only doing this on websites outside the United States because technically (until President Obama amended it in 2012) it was a violation of the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act for the military to target our own citizens with propaganda, but it's hard to believe that such technology isn't being used by U.S. government agencies in black ops on the major social media platforms to influence the American people.

Obviously all countries engage in cyber warfare, and in the 21st century that means flooding social media with bots and trolls to push certain agendas or to disrupt various discussions. The London *Guardian* surprisingly admitted in 2015 that, "Israel Defense Forces have pioneered state military engagement with social media, with dedicated teams operating since Operation Cast Lead, its war in Gaza in 2008-9. The IDF is active on 30 platforms – including Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram – in six languages." [551]

The Chinese government was caught using Twitter trolls and posting propaganda videos on YouTube designed to demonize protesters in Hong Kong in the Summer of 2019 when pro-democracy demonstrations broke out. [552]

And everyone knows Russia used social media to cause disruption during the 2016 election by promoting both pro-Trump and anti-Trump content, however its effect has been greatly exaggerated by Democrats, causing a modern day moral panic. It's rarely reported that the biggest Black Lives Matter page on Facebook, which had over 700,000 followers, was found to be run by a white guy in Australia who was using it to scam people into donating money to him. [553]

Another huge Black Lives Matter Facebook page called "Blactivist" (meaning black activist) which had over 360,000 followers was found to be part of Russia's disinformation campaign against the United States and used the page to incite division and fan the flames of racism. [554]

Michael Moore even promoted and attended a protest outside of Trump Tower in New York City that had been organized by the Russians. [555] So to say that Russian meddling in American social media circles was just to support Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton is just plain false.

Social Media Causing Mental Health Problems

While social media is a powerful tool, it is hard to control. And it seems with every benefit it brings comes the equivalent of an equal sized detriment. The younger generations are getting lost in a world of isolation and have few real-world friendships or interactions. Social media is being increasingly linked to mental disorders amongst teens since it has become a fixture in their lives. [556] Feeling the need to share how "great" and "perfect" one's life is through carefully choreographed Instagram photos or Facebook posts appears to be increasing people's anxiety and depression. [557]

Many people have become literally addicted to their phones, not to mention that social media blew the door wide open for kids to be cyber-bullied 24-hours-a-day by their fellow classmates who are now able to harass them when they're not even at school, and can reach them when they're supposedly in the safety of their own homes. Teen suicide rates have skyrocketed due to cyber bullying because now kids can never get away from their bullies no matter where they go. [558] One study even found that close to 6% of kids aged 12 through 17 have set up fake social media accounts and cyber bullied *themselves* so they could get attention for being a "victim." [559]

Many people are also developing "mean world syndrome," which is a term coined by professor George Gerbner who was the dean of the communication department at the University of Pennsylvania. He was a leading researcher in the effects of mass media and concluded that the more time someone spends consuming mass media, the more distorted their view of how the world actually gets, ultimately leading them to think society is a much more dangerous and “mean” place than it actually is since their perceptions are shaped through the warped representations of the world by the media, which amplifies atrocities, arguments, and divisions.

Gerbner’s “mean world syndrome” phenomenon was coined in the age of television, and now that most people are glued to their phones and are consuming an almost nonstop diet of media, one can see how the syndrome has only gotten worse. Spending too much time on social media and being bombarded by the never-ending political conflicts and fear-mongering about things like global warming, mass shootings, and racism is wreaking havoc on the mental health of millions.

Many people are getting so depraved that when they witness a tragedy like a car accident or an assault, instead of helping the victims or calling for help, their first thought is to take pictures so they can post them on social media. [560]

No Customer Service

Despite the Big Tech companies being an integral part of most people’s lives; unlike almost every other company that offers products or services to the public, there are no customer service phone numbers at Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or Google. You can’t get anyone on the phone there to talk with them about problems you’ve experienced or the grievances you have with their companies. Despite names like Mark Zuckerberg and Jack Dorsey attached to them, they remain faceless corporations you can’t get in touch with.

There’s no local branch you can visit where you can ask to speak with a manager, and instead users are relegated to sending tweets or submitting a “help ticket” from within the apps’ dashboard, and those attempts to get answers often only result in automated responses thanking you for contacting them and saying they’ll try to look into it. The social media giants are actually strangely anti-social.

For those of you who read my previous book, *The True Story of Fake News: How Mainstream Media Manipulates Millions* , you know I dedicated different chapters to Facebook, Twitter, Google, and YouTube, where I detailed their Orwellian manipulation and censorship, but since their underhanded activities have only continued, it is necessary to dedicate chapters to each of them again in this book to discuss their more recent activities.

I’ll keep the overlapping information to a minimum and mostly cover what they’ve been doing since the publication of my previous book because you need to know how far they’re going to regain control of the genie they let out of the bottle.

Facebook

For countless millions of people Facebook became the family photo album, their contact list, and even their diary of sorts. First started in 2004 as a social network for college kids, it quickly expanded to become the most popular one in the world used by 2.2 *billion* monthly active users. [561] Its dominance made founder Mark Zuckerberg the youngest billionaire in history at the age of twenty-three. [562]

For those naive enough to fill in all the entry boxes when they first signed up for Facebook, the company knows not only who you're friends with, who you're dating or married to (as well as when you break up or get a divorce), but also which TV shows, movies, and music you like, which restaurants and businesses you visit, what cities you travel to, where you work, your birthdate, your personal interests, hobbies, and more.

It's free because *you* are the product and your personal data is what you are trading in exchange for using Facebook. NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden noted, "Businesses that make money by collecting and selling detailed records of private lives were once plainly described as 'surveillance companies.' Their rebranding as 'social media' is the most successful deception since the Department of War became the Department of Defense." [563]

Many millennials and Generation Z kids either quit Facebook or never signed up, and prefer Instagram (which is owned by Facebook) and SnapChat because they don't want be on the same social network as their parents. Despite the endless scandals about abusing users' personal information, Facebook hasn't gone the way of MySpace (at least not yet) and remains one of the world's top social networks.

While people use Facebook for various reasons—like keeping in touch with friends and family, many use it to share news stories and videos about political issues, but it wasn't until after the 2016 presidential election that Facebook saw this as a problem. As you know, the Democrats largely blamed Facebook for Hillary's loss, citing the spread of supposed "fake news" about her they claimed had caused people to see her in a negative light and not vote for her.

Hillary was supposed to pound the final nails in the coffin of the United States of America, and usher in the New World Order for her globalist puppet masters, but Donald Trump canceled those plans. The war mongering neocons in the Bush administration, followed by the charismatic socialist Barack Obama had set the stage, knocking out most of the legs from under our once-great Republic.

But the election of Donald Trump changed everything, and he began to right the ship. The scheming globalists were furious. The very tools that Facebook had proudly created so people could share information with others were now seen as a problem because they disrupted the traditional channels of distribution that were controlled by major media companies. If anyone posted a message, link, photo, or video, that post could be seen by as many people who read the *New York Times* or watch the *NBC Nightly News* from other Facebook users simply clicking the "share" button. But all that had to change because the "Russians" had posted "fake news" about Hillary Clinton.

Rob Goldman, Vice President of Ads at Facebook, admitted, "The majority of the Russian ad spend happened AFTER the election. We shared that fact, but very few outlets have covered it because it doesn't align with the main media narrative of Trump and the election." [564] He was reprimanded for revealing the truth, but Facebook would go on to completely change the way their platform functioned under the guise of stopping “fake news.”

Before Facebook, people used to “bookmark” their favorite websites on their Internet browser, and would use that list to navigate to their news sources, but Facebook (and Twitter) have largely replaced browser bookmarks, and by weaseling their way in between news websites sites and their potential audience, it is Facebook, not the users, who are now in control of what articles people see.

Manipulating Users’ Feeds

Most people used to assume—and many probably still do—that if they follow certain accounts on Facebook they’re going to get posts from those pages in their news feeds, but the algorithms detect keywords in posts and identify the source of links and Facebook’s proprietary technology throttles the reach of content they don’t want people to see and often limits the reach so posts only show up in a few people’s news feeds.

For example, when Wikileaks first released a batch of hacked DNC emails, Facebook blocked links to them claiming they were “malicious” or “spam.” Only after Wikileaks tweeted about their links being blocked and people began clamoring about it did Facebook fix it. [565]

There were even reports that when people tried to share certain links to articles exposing Jussie Smollett’s hate crime hoax they were blocked from posting and a pop-up notified them that, “This post goes against our Community Standards, so no one else can see it.” [566]

Facebook even patented technology to shadow ban people so they could prevent certain posts from being seen by others without giving any indication to the person who posted it that such censorship was occurring. The Abstract on their patent explains the process, “[T]he social networking system may receive a list of proscribed content and block comments containing the proscribed content by reducing the distribution of those comments to other viewing users. However, the social networking system may display the blocked content to the commenting user such that the commenting user is not made aware that his or her comment was blocked, thereby providing fewer incentives to the commenting user to spam the page or attempt to circumvent the social networking system filters.”[567]

Facebook has admitted conducting several experiments on users to test how well they could manipulate people by making changes to what they see in their news feeds.[568] In 2010 they toyed with 60 million people’s newsfeeds to see if they could increase voter turnout in the midterm election that year and concluded they were able to get an extra 340,000 people to the polls.[569]

On their own website they bragged about a case study which found that, “Facebook as a market research tool and as a platform for ad saturation can be used to change public opinion in any political campaign.”[570] They cited the study as an attempt to court advertisers and to show just how powerful their platform is, hoping to get them to run targeted ads.

Hopefully it’s common knowledge now that Facebook was caught suppressing conservative news from appearing in the trending section in 2016 and artificially injecting other topics into the list to give the false impression that certain stories were organically viral from so many people talking about them.[571]

After Facebook announced they were changing the algorithm to favor posts from people’s friends over the businesses, brands, and media pages they were following, Donald Trump’s engagement dropped 45%.[572] The Western Journal did a survey and analyzed the engagement of 50 different news pages ranging from the Washington Post to the Daily Caller and found that after these algorithm changes, conservative outlets averaged a 14% drop in traffic, while liberal media accounts increased by 2%. [573]

In June 2019, Tomi Lahren had the “Boosting” feature disabled on her account, which is a way for public figures and brand pages to get their posts to actually show up in the news feeds of the people who follow them by paying Facebook different dollar amounts to allow what they post to be seen by people following the page. [574]

For anyone running a professional Facebook page (like mine), whatever we post is severely suppressed and only a small fraction of the people who follow the page will see it unless we “Boost” the post, which is a huge revenue generator for Facebook. Tomi Lahren became famous because her videos went viral on Facebook, but once the Boost feature was disabled she couldn’t even pay Facebook to distribute them in the news feeds of people following her page. [575]

A slide from a presentation given to Facebook moderators to teach them what kind of content is inappropriate details what the company says is “destructive behavior” by “trolls” and lists doxing and harassment alongside “toxic meme creation,” and “red-pilling normies to convert them to their worldview,” and also includes an “example video” of Lauren Chen (formerly known as Roaming Millennial), a moderate conservative YouTuber who now works for The Blaze. [576]

A “normie” is a slang term meaning a normal person, or in the context of certain Internet subcultures means someone who is not part of the group in question. But Facebook considers that word to be an indicator that the person posting it might be a right-wing “troll.”

Things have changed so much since the early days of Facebook that it’s a completely different platform than it was when it first rose to popularity in the late 2000s. They have been getting increasingly less tolerant of different views and their algorithms can easily hide people's posts or automatically suspend accounts for posting what they deem to be "hate speech," which you know is just a code word for something that hurts liberals' feelings or facts they won't want people to know about.

In August of 2018, a senior manager at Facebook posted on their internal message board a thread titled "We Have a Problem With Political Diversity" that explained, "We are a political monoculture that's intolerant of different views." It went on to say, "We claim to welcome all perspectives, but are quick to attack — often in mobs — anyone who presents a view that appears to be in opposition to left-leaning ideology." [577] That person has probably been fired by now but they were brave enough to point out what is obviously wrong with the corporate culture there.

PayPal co-founder and Facebook board member Peter Thiel left Silicon Valley and moved to Los Angeles because he was sick of the Leftist culture that permeates the tech industry in Northern California. [578] Thiel reportedly considered resigning from Facebook's board over disagreements with Mark Zuckerberg and sold three-quarters of his Facebook stock before leaving Silicon Valley. [579]

Helping Mainstream News

In July 2018 Facebook announced they were partnering with CNN, ABC, Univision, and other mainstream networks and began paying them to do special livestreams Monday through Friday. [580] Their goal was to, "create a curated news hub of content that would be seen as more credible than many of the random posts cycling through the News Feed." [581] Anderson Cooper's Facebook show, called "Full Circle" usually averaged around 1,500 live viewers and lasted a year. [582] CNN now claims they're going to try streaming the show on their app, CNNgo, instead of Facebook.

Six months after launching the new livestreams Facebook announced they would soon be investing $300 million into various news organizations to help them “boost” their online presence. [583] People like me have to pay Facebook to “Boost” our posts so they actually show up in the news feeds of fans following our pages, while at the same time Facebook is paying hundreds of millions of dollars to mainstream media channels to help them get out their messages!

The liberal bias is obvious but goes deeper than most people think. Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook’s Chief Operating Officer, wrote to Hillary Clinton’s campaign manager on June 6th 2015, saying “I still want HRC to win badly. I am still here to help as I can.” [584] Facebook openly plays favorites, for example they have a real name policy, except for transgender people, who can open an account in any name they want. [585] The company even put up a huge Black Lives Matter banner on their campus. [586] They also give out employee bonuses based on how much they’re doing for “social justice.” [587]

Facebook Censoring People

In October 2018, Facebook deleted over 800 accounts for publishing what they called "political spam" and "sensational political content." [588] One of the pages belonged to Brian Kolfage, a disabled veteran who lost both his legs and one arm in the Iraq War. After retiring from the military due to his injuries he took over management of a Facebook page called "Right Wing News" and helped it build up a following of over three million people. [589] But Facebook banned the page, destroying Brian Kolfage's thriving online business, while leaving content farms like BuzzFeed and Vox to continue littering Facebook with their political spam.

The day after British activist Tommy Robinson released a documentary on YouTube showing his undercover investigation into the BBC as they were planning to air a hit piece on him, he was banned from Facebook and Instagram (which is owned by Facebook). [590] Because he's been a vocal opponent of the Islamization of England, he has been branded an "Islamophobe." After Facebook banned him, activists and "journalists" smelled blood and started pressuring YouTube to ban him too.

"His YouTube channel has hundreds of thousands of followers and includes films viewed by millions of people," complained Damian Collins, a Member of Parliament. [591] He continued, "Far-right groups are exploiting social media to spread their messages of hate, and the YouTube [Up Next] feature helps them by directing viewers to even more of this content once they start to engage with it." He concluded, "I believe YouTube should also ban Tommy Robinson from their platform." [592] More on this in the chapter on YouTube.

The official Facebook page for Britain First, an anti-immigration organization working to stop the flood of Muslims from the Middle East into the UK was also banned for "Islamophobia." Their page had over 2 million followers, showing it isn't just a fringe group, but they have a large number of supporters in the UK. [593]

In April 2019 Facebook (and Instagram) banned Faith Goldy, a conservative Canadian journalist who has been smeared as a white supremacist because she too is critical of the massive influx of non-assimilating Muslims into Europe. [594] The *Huffington Post* gleefully took credit for persuading Facebook to ban her, posting a story titled, "Facebook Bans Faith Goldy After HuffPost Report On White Nationalism Content." [595] Facebook said, "Individuals and organizations who spread hate, attack, or call for the exclusion of others on the basis of who they are have no place on our services." [596]

After Comedy Central's Jim Jeffries recorded an interview with a Jewish political commentator from Australia named Avi Yemini, who is critical of Muslim immigration into Western countries, he was permanently banned from Facebook for "hate speech." [597] The ban came not necessarily because of his interview on Comedy Central, but because he had secretly recorded the interview himself, and exposed how deceptively edited it was when they aired it. [598] The truth of what Comedy Central had done to him couldn't be seen, so they banned him.

Facebook's moderators despise any criticism of mass immigration and the effects non-assimilating newcomers have on the countries they come to occupy. After a German historian posted a short essay about Islam's historic impact on Germany, he was banned for 30 days for "hate speech." [599] Facebook even deletes accounts of Palestinians at the direction of the Israeli government if they deem the people to be engaging in "incitement" due to their complaints about how the Palestinian people are treated. [600]

Facebook took down an event page for an anti-caravan protest that was scheduled to happen when hundreds of migrants from Central America were to make it to the U.S.-Mexico border. [601] It may not be much longer before they consider the term “illegal alien” to be a “racist slur” and a violation of their terms of service in the same way posting the n-word is (if you’re white).

Like all the other major social networks, conservatives are at risk of having their pages shut down for “hate speech” for being “non-inclusive.” But it’s not just supposed “extremists” like Tommy Robinson and Faith Goldy. In December 2018, Franklin Graham, son of evangelist Billy Graham, was suspended by Facebook for a post he made almost two years earlier criticizing singer Bruce Springsteen for canceling a concert in North Carolina to protest a proposed bill that would have required people to use the bathroom that corresponds to their biological sex.

Graham’s post said in part, “Mr. Springsteen, a nation embracing sin and bowing at the feet of godless secularism and political correctness is not progress,” and urged the state’s legislators to “put the safety of our women and children first!” But a Facebook moderator decided that calling liberals “godless” was a violation of their policy forbidding “dehumanizing language,” so they suspended him. [602]

After the incident started making headlines Facebook lifted the ban and said the moderator had made a “mistake” in their decision. Facebook even censored the Declaration of Independence after it was posted by a small newspaper’s page (*The Vindicator*), claiming it was “hate speech” because it includes the phrase “merciless Indian Savages.” [603] The paper had posted it a few days before the Fourth of July to celebrate Independence Day.

I was suspended in April 2017 for criticizing a Dove Soap commercial that featured “real moms” and their babies because it included a transgender “woman” who is the biological father of “her” child but identifies as the baby’s “mom.” [604] Facebook considers it “hate speech” to denounce such insanity. Then in January 2019, I was suspended for one week after making a comment about there being a lot of crime in black communities. I appealed it, and it was denied.

Residents know the local news begins every night in Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, Baltimore, etc, with shootings, stabbings, and robberies which occurred in black ghettos, but those stories are just fifteen-second sound bites on the local news and are then forgotten about by everyone except those directly affected—like the victims’ family and friends.

But when a black person is killed by a white man, or the suspect is a white man, then the keyboard warriors amplify the story to the national level as if there’s an epidemic of white men assassinating random black people in America. They denounce “evil” “racist” white people and make ridiculous and hateful generalizations about the entire white race, but that’s allowed on Facebook. You just can’t post certain facts and statistics about black crime in America.

The truth is, black men make up only about 7% of the U.S. population, but are responsible for 50% of the total murders. [605] It’s a distressing statistic no one in the mainstream media dares to point out, and if you simply mention this on Facebook, your post may likely be removed and you’ll get issued a suspension for “hate speech.”

Black conservative commentator Candace Owens was suspended because of a post saying liberalism is a greater threat to black people in America than white supremacy, and for including some statistics about fatherless homes in the black community. [606] It’s “hate speech” even when black people mention certain uncomfortable facts about their communities.

Leaked documents later revealed that Facebook had labeled her a "hate agent" and was offering employees "extra credit" if they could dig up dirt on her and find any previous statements she's made or groups she has endorsed that they consider to be objectionable. [607]

Facebook sensations Diamond and Silk, two black sisters who support Donald Trump by doing a hilarious routine where one of them rants while the other acts as a "hype girl" by adding cleverly timed one or two word comments to emphasize what the other is saying, have also been censored by Facebook. Their videos became so popular that they were invited to Trump rallies during his 2016 campaign and then later to the White House once he won.

Their content is 100% family friendly but Facebook deemed them "unsafe" and suppressed the reach of their page, which at the time had 1.2 million followers. [608] As usual, after the issue started making headlines, Facebook lifted the restrictions on their page and said it was just another "enforcement error." [609]

Facebook also reportedly removed posts and memes by people who were (correctly) referring to the man who shot and killed a police officer in California as an "illegal alien" and a "murderer." [610] Criticizing illegal aliens, even if they're murderers, is "hate speech."

A writer for the *Gateway Pundit* named Lucian Wintrich, who is a gay, referred to himself as a "fag" in a post, and seven months later their AI system detected it and banned him for 30-days for "hate speech" just for using the word. [611]

Facebook even blocked President Trump's social media director Dan Scavino from replying to people in the comments, claiming his posts were "spam." Shortly after the President tweeted about the restriction, Facebook "fixed" it and said it was just another "error." [612]

Banning “Dangerous Individuals”

In May 2019, Facebook (and Instagram) permanently banned Paul Joseph Watson, Milo Yiannopoulos, Laura Loomer, and Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan; labeling them all “dangerous individuals” and “extremists.” [613] What’s especially interesting is that news reports were published about their ban a full hour before they were actually banned, because Facebook had been secretly coordinating with CNN and other outlets but botched the timing of the big announcement. [614]

Loomer, Milo, and Watson were banned because they are critical of the Islamization of Europe, so they have all been branded “Islamophobes,” and Facebook decided to throw Louis Farrakhan in the mix as a cover to give the appearance that they weren’t just removing vocal opponents of Islam.

The Atlantic initially reported, “Any account that shares Infowars content will see it removed, unless the post is explicitly condemning Infowars [or Alex Jones]. Facebook and Instagram will remove any content containing Infowars videos, radio segments, or articles (again, unless the post is explicitly condemning the content) and Facebook will also remove any groups set up to share Infowars content and events promoting any of the banned extremist figures, according to a company spokesperson.” [615] They later “updated” their article and removed the part about people having to explicitly condemn Alex Jones if they are to post anything about him.

At this rate it won’t be long before Facebook bans people who say abortion is murder, citing their policy against “hate speech.” Or if you dare say you don’t believe in gay “marriage,” or call it “marriage” in quotes (because a marriage is between a man and a woman.) That’s “hateful.”

If Facebook was around in the 1960s, they would have banned Martin Luther King because what he was saying was “dangerous” to the social order. The FBI at the time, led by J. Edgar Hoover, considered King to be an enemy of the State and the bureau engaged in all kinds of nefarious activities trying to derail his message. [616]

Meanwhile the Palestinian terrorist organization Hamas has an official Facebook page (and Twitter account). [617] So does the Muslim Brotherhood, which is listed as a terrorist organization in multiple countries. [618] They can have Facebook pages, but Alex Jones, Paul Joseph Watson, Tommy Robinson, Milo Yiannopoulos, and Laura Loomer can't.

Instagram

Unlike Facebook and Twitter, Instagram (which is owned by Facebook) is more about photography than news, but people do share political memes and news-related posts there, and in recent years they have enabled users to upload videos, so it too has become a place for vlogs.

For years just about the only thing that would get removed by Instagram's moderators for violations of their terms of service were pictures that included nudity or gory and gratuitous violence, but once the Orwellian era began and the Thought Police are now cracking down on free speech online, censorship on Instagram became common.

They have censored a few different memes that I had posted, one of them showed a picture of actor Tobey Maguire from a scene in *Spiderman* looking at a picture of President Trump giving a speech to the Boy Scouts Jamboree, and then below it showed Tobey wearing "CNN glasses" which caused him to see Adolf Hitler talking with a group of Hitler Youth. The message is clear—anything President Trump does when seen through the lens of CNN is sinister, but that meme violated Instagram's terms of service.

They also censored a meme I had posted showing a happy white couple with two young children that was captioned, “White people — the only race you can legally discriminate against.” As you know, there is a war on white people being waged by the Left in America today and whites are being blamed for everyone else’s problems, but just pointing out the Left’s open discrimination (and hatred) of white people is a violation of Instagram’s terms of service.

As the Jussie Smollett hate crime hoax was unraveling, Instagram took down a Scooby-Doo meme from my account which showed the characters surrounding a “ghost” they had captured after unmasking it to reveal who it really was, and the “ghost” had Jussie’s face photoshopped onto it. Instagram said that was “harassment” and “bullying.” They also took down one of Donald Trump Jr.’s posts about Jussie Smollett’s hoax as well. [619]

After conservative commentator Kayleigh McEnany posted a picture on her Instagram of Elizabeth Warren’s newly discovered Texas Bar Registration card showing she listed “American Indian” as her race, that post was removed and Kayleigh was given a notification she had violated Instagram’s terms of service by “bullying” Warren. [620]

Instagram has also begun testing new technology to fact-check memes by adding pop-ups that appear next to certain posts they deem “false” and even hiding them so they don’t show up when people are searching for particular hashtags. [621]

The Thought Police don’t just patrol social media for what people post, they also keep a lookout for things that people “like.” During the 2018 season of *The Bachelorette* , one of the frontrunners (who got the “first impression rose”) made headlines after people were combing through his social media accounts and found that he had “liked” several “inflammatory” memes that made fun of illegal aliens, transgender people, and radical feminists. [622] He literally just clicked the "like" button on a few funny memes making fun of social justice warriors and he was smeared in the press as a xenophobic, transphobic, sexist, and forced to apologize.

What It's Doing To Our Brains

Steve Jobs wouldn't allow his kids to even use an iPad when they were little, admitting in 2012 (two years after it was released), "Actually we don't allow the iPad in the home," in response to an interviewer saying his kids must love it. [623] He knew how addictive they could be and how people, especially children, were vulnerable to being completely consumed by them. Apple CEO Tim Cook doesn't have kids but says he has placed restrictions on what his nephew can do with technology, and he doesn't want him using social media. [624]

Bill Gates also limited the amount of screen time he allowed his kids to engage in and wouldn't let them have cellphones until they were 14-years-old, despite them complaining that other kids in their class were able to have one. [625] But using tablets or smartphones to surf the web or watch videos is one thing. Social media apps opened up a whole new world to waste people's time and warp their minds.

The former president of Facebook, Sean Parker, later admitted the site creates an artificial social-validation feedback loop that is, "exploiting a vulnerability in human psychology" and "literally changes your relationship with society, [and] each other. It probably interferes with productivity in weird ways. God only knows what it's doing to our children's brains." [626]

Former Facebook executive Chamath Palihapitiya warned, "The short-term, dopamine-driven feedback loops we've created are destroying how society works," referring to the validation people get from likes, hearts, and thumbs up on their posts. [627] He also pointed out how "social media" is making people anti-social, saying it’s harming civil discourse and spreading misinformation and hoaxes that have real world consequences.

He mentioned how a hoax about a kidnaping spread through WhatsApp (which is owned by Facebook) in India and led to the lynching of seven innocent men who were killed by a local mob. “That’s what we’re dealing with. And imagine taking that to the extreme, where bad actors can now manipulate large swathes of people to do anything you want. It’s just a really, really bad state of affairs.” He also said his children “aren’t allowed to use that shit.” [628]

A Google engineer posted a lengthy thread on his Twitter account about the dangers of Facebook, starting off saying, “The problem with Facebook is not *just* the loss of your privacy and the fact that it can be used as a totalitarian panopticon. The more worrying issue, in my opinion, is its use of digital information consumption as a psychological control vector.” [629]

He went on to tweet, “The world is being shaped in large part by two long-time trends: first, our lives are increasingly dematerialized, consisting of consuming and generating information online, both at work and at home. Second, AI is getting ever smarter.” [630]

“These two trends overlap at the level of the algorithms that shape our digital content consumption. Opaque social media algorithms get to decide, to an ever-increasing extent, which articles we read, who we keep in touch with, whose opinions we read, whose feedback we get.” [631]

“If Facebook gets to decide, over the span of many years, which news you will see (real or fake), whose political status updates you’ll see, and who will see yours, then Facebook is in effect in control of your political beliefs and your worldview.” [632]

“This is not quite news, as Facebook has been known to run since at least 2013 a series of experiments in which they were able to successfully control the moods and decisions of unwitting users by tuning their newsfeeds’ contents, as well as prediction user’s future decisions.” [633]

“In short, Facebook can simultaneously measure everything about us, and control the information we consume. When you have access to both perception and action, you’re looking at an AI problem. You can start establishing an optimization loop for human behavior. A RL loop.” [634]

“A loop in which you observe the current state of your targets and keep tuning what information you feed them, until you start observing the opinions and behaviors you wanted to see.” [635]

“The human mind is a static, vulnerable system that will come increasingly under attack from ever-smarter AI algorithms that will simultaneously have a complete view of everything we do and believe, and complete control of the information we consume.” [636]

“Importantly, mass population control — in particular political control — arising from placing AI algorithms in charge of our information diet does not necessarily require very advanced AI. You don’t need self-aware, super-intelligent AI for this to be a dire threat.” [637]

“We’re looking at a powerful entity that builds fine-grained psychological profiles of over two billion humans, that runs large-scale behavior manipulation experiments, and that aims at developing the best AI technology the world has ever seen. Personally, it really scares me,” he concludes. [638]

Even one of Facebook’s co-founders says the company is now “un-American” and is calling on the government to break it up. “The most problematic aspect of Facebook’s power is Mark [Zuckerberg’s] unilateral control over speech,” he said in a New York Times op-ed. “There is no precedent for his ability to monitor, organize and even censor the conversations of two billion people.” [639]

Twitter

Fake news and idiotic ideas spread faster on Twitter than perhaps any other social media platform. [640] Unlike Facebook status updates which can be rather lengthy, Twitter is designed for short and quick messages (limited to 280 characters) and with the click of the retweet button, a tweet posted from anyone can soon be in front of the eyes of millions of people.

It's a place where people share first and think later, and it's often a sea of angry people arguing with each other and jumping to conclusions based on out of context statements, photos, or video clips; and quickly spread the falsehoods even further without a second thought. [641] By the time the facts come out, the misinformation has already gone viral and shown up on the trending list—poisoning the opinions of countless others.

Few people delete their tweets which fueled fake news fires, and fewer still issue retractions when learning of their mistake. Even in those rare occasions the retractions receive little attention compared to the initial tweets, since they aren't retweeted thousands of times, not to mention most of the damage has already been done.

When there's a tragic event like a mass shooting, the wannabe sleuths online often end up naming and doxing the wrong suspect, and take someone's photo from a social media account with the same name as the suspect and spread it around claiming they're the killer. [642]

Who knows what will happen when deepfake videos become more popular and carefully crafted hoax clips are spread through Twitter. The effects could be devastating beyond measure and it's something I'll cover in detail later in the chapter titled "The Future of Fake News."

Spreading misinformation through Twitter isn't just something that random idiots do online. Many mainstream media journalists regularly engage in the practice, or amplify fake news through retweets. Dave Weigel of the *Washington Post* tweeted a photo of the audience at a Trump event in Florida that went viral, claiming the event had a ton of empty seats, disputing the President's statement that people had to be turned away because the stadium was over capacity. People starting calling the President a liar because the "prestigious" Washington Post said otherwise, but Weigel's photo was taken hours before the event had actually started which is why there were rows of empty seats. [643]

Just hours after President Trump was inaugurated, a *Time* magazine reporter claimed that he removed the bust of Martin Luther King Jr. from the Oval Office, posting a photo of the table where it sat, claiming it was gone, insinuating Trump is such a racist he couldn't stand to see the face of MLK in his new office and got rid of it on his first day as president. It turns out that someone was just standing in front of it, blocking it from view, and the bust was still there. [644] But countless liberals tweeted their disgust after being duped by an "authoritative" *Time* magazine reporter who made the claim.

There are countless vipers who live online, glued to their phones, and derive a sense of power from the amount of likes and retweets they get. And many function as a volunteer army, ready to attack any target on demand. It's where liberals harass companies that advertise on Fox News, and where they flood the mentions of anyone who dares speak out against garbage like corporations pandering to gays and transgenders during "Pride" month.

Twitter can suck you in, wasting hours of your time while you argue with idiots about anything and everything since your mentions can easily turn into an endless flow of responses from more and more people as those triggered by your tweets keep sharing them with their followers, rallying others to join in on the dogpile.

Twitter is often a dangerous and mind-bending place. As a *New York Times* columnist wrote after the Covington Catholic debacle, it is, "the epicenter of a nonstop information war, an almost comically undermanaged gladiatorial arena where activists and disinformation artists and politicians and marketers gather to target and influence the wider media world." [645]

An article in *The Week* went even further, warning that Twitter actually poses a threat to our democracy, saying, "Extreme partisan polarization is combining with the technology of social media, and especially Twitter, to provoke a form of recurrent political madness among members of the country's cultural and intellectual elite." [646]

It continued, "But too little attention has been paid to what may be the most potent facet of the social media platform: its ability to feed the vanity of its users. There's always an element of egoism to intellectual and political debate. But Twitter puts every tweeter on a massive stage, with the nastiest put-downs, insults, and provocations often receiving the most applause. That's a huge psychological incentive to escalate the denunciation of political enemies. The more one expresses outrage at the evils of others, the more one gets to enjoy the adulation of the virtual mob." [647]

The piece concluded (accurately) that, "more and more the venom has been bleeding into the real world, with boycotts, doxings, firings, death threats, and groveling apologies offered to placate mobs wielding digital pitchforks. It increasingly feels like it's just a matter of time before real-world violence breaks out in response to an online conflagration." [648]

After a Black Lives Matter supporter ambushed a group of police officers during one of the movement's marches in Dallas, Texas in 2016, a surviving officer sued Twitter and Facebook for allowing the social media networks to radicalize the gunman, saying they were used “as a tool for spreading extremist propaganda.” [649]

The shooter’s Facebook profile pic was him making a black power salute and he followed various black supremacist pages. [650] While the tech companies are determined to ban anyone posting support for “white supremacy,” they turn a blind eye to radical black power groups and those who promote their extremist ideologies and anti-white hatred. Twitter is a known safe haven for Antifa, with countless Antifa accounts active, many of which regularly promote violence against conservatives. [651]

The launch of Twitter was a carefully crafted campaign involving various celebrities like Oprah Winfrey, Ashton Kutcher, and even CNN, which promoted Twitter’s “Million Followers Contest” in 2009 when the site first appeared on the public’s radar. Now practically every television show and political cause has a hashtag and everyone wants you to “follow” them on Twitter.

It’s interesting to note that the CIA actually created “Cuban Twitter” so they could monitor everyone’s online activity in the country and manage the spread of information in order to undermine the government there. [652] It’s not unreasonable to think that the CIA has the same interest and control over Twitter in America (and all other major social media sites) as well.

It certainly is odd that Twitter awarded the coveted blue verified checkmark to a supposed eight-year-old Syrian refugee, despite the minimum age to be allowed on Twitter is thirteen. Starting in 2016 “Bana al-Abed” began posting photos of the civil war-torn country, urging people around the world (in English) to help. Her tweets soon began making headlines, gaining her over 322,000 followers, and she was even invited to the 2018 Academy Awards and brought on stage for a performance by Andra Day and Common for their song “Stand Up for Something.” [653]

President Trump had wanted to stop intervening in foreign affairs that didn't directly affect the United States, and what better way to undermine his efforts than showcase an eight-year-old Syrian girl using social media to beg for help?

You should never believe what you see on Twitter. In 2013 the Associated Press account was hacked and tweeted that the White House had been bombed and President Obama was injured. The tweet was also said to have caused the stock market to fall until it was discovered that it was a hoax. [654] A rogue employee even took it upon himself to delete President Trump's entire account in November 2017. If one low level employee has the administrative control to delete the President's account, what would stop someone from hijacking the account and posting tweets as the President himself? Even if the false tweets were deleted and exposed within a few minutes, the damage they would inflict on international relations or the economy could be enormous.

While Democrats cry about "Russian bots and trolls" manipulating Twitter by tweeting out certain hashtags hoping to boost them into the trending module or mass-"liking" certain tweets to give the appearance that the message is resonating with more people than it actually is; the effect they have is often minimal. One of Twitter's executives, Nick Pickles, testified at a Congressional hearing that just 49 Russian Twitter accounts were involved in trying to artificially boost support for Brexit [the proposal for England to leave the European Union] and those collective tweets had only been liked 637 times and retweeted just 461 times. [655]

While troll farms run by foreign governments or domestic political activist organizations should be a concern, Twitter and the other major tech companies have safeguards in place to detect and prevent most of this inauthentic activity from disrupting the platforms. The biggest threat in this modern information war comes from the tech companies themselves, since they hold the power over what billions of people see and hear, and with small changes to their algorithms can hide or amplify certain issues or events in order to further their own political agendas.

Massive Liberal Bias

After years of avoiding the issue, Twitter's CEO finally admitted "It's no secret that we are largely left leaning, and we all have biases. That includes me, our board, and our company." [656] They are so liberal in fact, that Jack Dorsey actually apologized for eating at Chick-Fil-A after he tweeted that he just used Square's Cash App to buy lunch there, which triggered a flood of angry responses from many of his followers because Chick-Fil-A's CEO doesn't support gay "marriage." [657]

Jack Dorsey has been photographed hanging out with Black Lives Matter activist Deray McKesson and the two even did a joint interview together in 2016 at the popular Recode Code Conference. [658] Twitter also hired a woman named Dr. Patricia Rossini to examine "civil discourse" on the platform because everyone knows Twitter has become a nasty place, but an examination of Dr. Rossini's past tweets reveal that she believes the basic tenets of the Republican Party are hate, racism, and homophobia. [659]

The leader of Twitter's new "task force" on "uncivil discourse," Rebekah Tromble, thinks that President Trump is a Nazi and has "quintupled down on his commitment to white nationalists." [660] Democrat Congressman Ted Lieu from California tweeted out a photo of himself and the party's new social media star Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez at what he described as a "training session" on Twitter, noting representatives from the company were in attendance helping Democrats learn to be more social media savvy. [661]

Twitter also allows people to post pornography, and is an easy place for children to access it. [662] Most porn stars have Twitter accounts which contain a steady stream of hard core pornographic videos and pictures with no effective safeguards to prevent kids from following such accounts and seeing their explicit posts.

What’s Trending

Twitter’s “Trending” list is supposed to be the top ten list of the most tweeted about topics or hashtags of the moment, but most users are unaware of the manual curation that is often involved. Topics are regularly artificially boosted to give the appearance that they are “popular” while others are suppressed to prevent people from looking into them further.

Oftentimes if something trends on Twitter, it then starts making national headlines. Whether it’s a local issue in a small town that, for whatever reason, goes viral and starts trending, or something stupid that a celebrity said or did—if it trends, it then makes headlines.

For over six consecutive months starting in the Spring of 2019 every single Sunday pro-LGBT hashtags like #LGBTangels, #LGBTQsquad, #unitedLGBT, #rainbowLGBT, LGBTQoftwitter, etc. would be on the top ten trending list. [663] The hashtag campaigns are organized by liberal groups likely in coordination with Twitter which then inserts them into the trending list to regularly expose people to selfies of teenagers “coming out” online, in attempt to normalize homosexuality and gender bending.

In his testimony to the Senate Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism, Twitter’s lawyer admitted the company had censored almost half of all tweets using the hashtag #DNCLeak when Wikileaks first published the hacked emails from the Democratic National Committee, despite their systems only linking 2% of the tweets to supposed Russian troll farms. [664]

When you click on the Search tab (the magnifying glass icon) on a mobile device, which you need to do in order to get see the Trending list, first you are taken to a page that contains a featured story (they call a "Moment") which is always chosen by Twitter that supposedly has something to do with what's trending, but always attempts to frame the issue in a certain light. In an interview with *Rolling Stone*, Jack Dorsey admitted, "We can amplify the counter-narrative [to what Trump is saying]. We do have a curation team that looks to find balance. A lot of times when our president tweets, a "Moment" occurs, and we show completely different perspectives." [665]

Shadow Banning

In July 2018 conservative Twitter users started noticing that when they looked up top Republican members of Congress in the Twitter Search bar that many of their names were mysteriously missing. Devin Nunes, Matt Gaetz, Jim Jordan, Mark Meadows, John Ratcliffe, Republican Party chair Ronna McDaniel, and many others (including myself) were all shadow banned from the Search box to make it more difficult for people looking us up to find our accounts.

Surprisingly the very liberal Vice News did an investigation into the shadow banning "allegations" and admitted, "Twitter is limiting the visibility of prominent Republicans in search results — a technique known as 'shadow banning' — in what it says is a side effect of its attempts to improve the quality of discourse on the platform." [666]

The article went on to detail that prominent Republican members of Congress "no longer appear in the auto-populated drop-down search box on Twitter" and that, "It's a shift that diminishes their reach on the platform —

and it’s the same one being deployed against prominent racists to limit their visibility.” [667]

Vice also pointed out that the shadow banning was not implemented on any Democrats they looked up, noting “Democrats are not being ‘shadow banned’ in the same way, according to a VICE News review. [Ronna] McDaniel’s counterpart, Democratic Party chair Tom Perez, and liberal members of Congress — including Reps. Maxine Waters, Joe Kennedy III, Keith Ellison, and Mark Pocan — all continue to appear in drop-down search results. Not a single member of the 78-person Progressive Caucus faces the same situation in Twitter’s search.” [668]

Many conservatives began noticing this anomaly but it wasn’t until Florida Congressman Matt Gaetz called out the shadow banning that it began making headlines. [669] Then President Trump tweeted about it and the issue couldn’t be ignored. [670] A reporter for Axios then tweeted that he, “Must admit that when some [Republican] sources have complained about this to me I mocked them to their face as conspiracy theorists. This Vice article makes me rethink that, and response from Twitter is inadequate.” [671]

Twitter then released a statement, saying, “We do not shadow ban,” but then in the very next sentence admitted, “You are always able to see the tweets from accounts you follow (although you may have to do more work to find them, like go directly to their profile).” [672] They played with the definition of shadow banning too, defining it as, “deliberately making someone’s content undiscoverable to everyone except the person who posted it.” That’s why it’s more appropriate to label it shadow *suppressing* or *throttling* than to call it a “ban.”

Earlier that year an undercover journalist at Project Veritas had spoken with various former and current employees of Twitter including a Content Review Agent who admitted that there were a lot of “unwritten rules” about shadow banning and that "It was never written, it was more said." [673] A Policy Manager for Twitter's Trust and Safety council named Olinda Hassan said the company was working on down-ranking "shitty people" so their tweets don't show up. [674]

A former software engineer at Twitter told the undercover journalist, "One strategy is to shadow ban so you have ultimate control. The idea of a shadow ban is that you ban someone but they don't know they've been banned, because they keep posting and no one sees their content. So they just think that no one is engaging with their content, when in reality, no one is seeing it." [675]

Twitter most likely uses shadow *throttling* (instead of a full shadow ban) to limit the reach of certain users, so some people are able to see and interact with their tweets, but far less than if no such filter was activated on the accounts. Facebook admits they limit the distribution of posts unless users pay to "Boost" the post, so it's foolish to think Twitter isn't shadow throttling accounts as well using a filter to limit the reach of people the company has deemed politically problematic.

When Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey sat down for a rare interview with CNN in August 2018 he said that the company is considering removing the "like" button from all tweets, and hiding people's follower counts. [676] A few months later he repeated the same thing, indicating they may get rid of the "like" button "soon." [677]

Hiding the number of "likes" and retweets people's posts get would make shadow banning certain individuals or tweets about specific topics almost impossible to detect, because without being able to see how many people are clicking "like" on a post, users wouldn't know if their followers were actually seeing the post at all.

People who use Twitter get a feel for how many “likes” an average tweet gets, and if all of a sudden their engagement dropped 95% and went from getting twenty likes per tweet to only one or two, they would notice something was wrong and suspect that people weren’t seeing their tweets. Some have pointed out that certain tweets they have posted appear to them when they’re logged in, but when looking at their feed from a different browser (not logged in) they don’t show up, adding to the concerns that Twitter is shadow banning certain tweets. [678]

Censoring Accounts by Suspending Users

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey once said his goal was to have Twitter function as a basic utility, like water. [679] And in their early years, Twitter executives used to call their company the “free speech wing of the free speech party,” but as the culture changed, and the social justice warriors clamored for more censorship, Jack Dorsey said their once unofficial motto about being the free speech wing of the free speech party was actually just “a joke.” [680]

While he may have been idealistic when starting the company, he later succumbed to pressure to “reign in” the wild, wild west nature of Twitter and rolled out increasingly strict policies resulting in a number of high profile people being permanently banned for saying things that are commonplace on Twitter.

Milo Yiannopoulos got banned permanently in July 2016 for trolling “comedian” and actress Leslie Jones about how horrible the all-female *Ghostbusters* remake was. [681] Political operative and unofficial Trump advisor Roger Stone got banned in October 2017 after going off about several CNN hosts including Don Lemon, Jake Tapper, and Ana Navarro for “using an expletive” to describe them and saying they should be “mocked” and “punished” for constantly lying about the President. [682]

Tommy Robinson was permanently banned from Twitter for posting facts about crimes committed by Muslims in the UK. [683] Twitter has suspended other people’s accounts for posting facts about black crime statistics in America as well. [684]

Jayda Fransen, another vocal critic of Muslim immigration to the UK and founder of “Britain First,” was banned less than one month after President Trump retweeted a few of her videos showing violent Muslim mobs attacking people, which put her on the radar of activist groups who wanted to take her down for spreading “Islamophobia.” [685]

Blogger Chuck Johnson was banned for saying he was going to “take out” Black Lives Matter troll DeRay McKesson, meaning expose him and take him out of the game, but Twitter claimed it was a threat of violence. [686] Johnson responded on his blog saying “Twitter doesn’t seem to have a problem with people using their service to coordinate riots [referring to the recent spree of Black Lives Matter riots that had been occurring]. But they do have a problem with the kind of journalism I do.” [687]

Supposed “white supremacist” Jared Taylor was also banned, along with the account for his American Renaissance organization as a part of a crack down on “abusive content,” but Taylor doesn’t use slurs or heated rhetoric and seems like a mild-mannered senior citizen who is just pushing back against anti-white racism, and celebrating European culture and achievements. Despite being called a “white supremacist” he actually says that Jews and Asians on average have higher IQs than white Europeans. [688]

Gavin McInnes, founder of the Proud Boys [conservative men’s fraternity], was banned after he was falsely labeled the leader of a “hate group.” He then sued the Southern Poverty Law Center for defamation. [689]

Comedian Owen Benjamin was banned after going on a rant about anti-gun activist David Hogg where he said “Don’t you think it’s weird that you are telling grown men how to live when you barely have pubes?” [690]

Comedian Anthony Cumia, who was once co-host of the Opie and Anthony show, was banned in June 2017 for “harassing” a writer for The A.V. Club after he called her a “fat old trans looking twat.” [691] YouTuber Sargon of Akkad was banned in August 2017 for posting sarcastic comments that included “racial slurs.” [692]

Free speech activist Lindsay Shepherd was banned in July 2019 for “misgendering” a transgender “woman” who sexually harassed her. The “woman” attacked Shepherd, who had just had a baby, saying “At least my pussy is tight and not loose after pushing out a 10 pound baby.” [693] This same “woman,” who goes by the name Jessica Yaniv, has been filing discrimination claims against waxing salons for refusing to do a Brazilian wax on “her” penis. [694]

Lindsay Shepherd responded, “This is how men who don’t have functional romantic relationships speak. But…I guess that’s kinda what you are!” At least I have a uterus, you fat ugly man.” [695] Twitter then banned Lindsay Shepherd for calling “Jessica” a man, and not the transgender “woman” who clearly violated Twitter’s policy against sexual harassment.

Street artist Sabo, who is like an American version of Banksy, was banned in April 2018 for the generic reason of “abusive behavior.” [696] It’s likely they considered him posting pictures of his street art, which is technically vandalism, to be a violation of the rules. Many other lesser known conservatives have also been banned but don’t get any media attention because they aren’t public figures with an active fanbase who can alert others about what happened.

CNN's Brian Stelter once tattled to Twitter asking them if President Trump violated their terms of service by "threatening North Korea" in a tweet saying he has a "nuclear button" that is much bigger and more powerful than Jim Jong-Un's when the two were having a heated war of words about North Korea testing missiles and threatening Japan. [697]

The @MAGAphobia account, which documented acts of violence and harassment against Trump supporters, was banned in May 2019 for a reason that was never given. [698] Perhaps it was for "showing graphic violence" since the account posted pictures of victims and videos of them being assaulted. Only mainstream media accounts are allowed to post graphic content so they can carefully choose how to frame certain issues, while ignoring others. Even a parody account called the "Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Press" was banned, even though it was clearly a parody, and labeled a parody in the account's bio in accordance with Twitter's terms of service. [699]

Meanwhile, Twitter refused to shut down an account that organized a harassment campaign against senator Jeff Flake after he voted in favor of confirming Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. The person said, "I am starting a National @DemSocialists working group to follow Jeff Flake around to every restaurant, cafe, store, etc he goes to for the rest of his life and yell at him." [700] Inciting harassment is supposed to be against Twitter's terms of service, but moderators usually look the other way when liberals do it.

Comedian Kathy Griffin's account wasn't penalized after she called for the doxing of the Covington Catholic kids who went viral for wearing MAGA hats during their trip to the nation's Capital. [701] When the account @HouseShoes, the verified account of a DJ and hip hop producer tweeted out to his supporters that "I want you to fire on any of these red hat bitches when you see them. On sight," and "IF WE COULD WIPE THESE FAMILIES OUT WE WOULD BE IN A MUCH BETTER PLACE," and his account wasn't suspended. [702] Actor Peter Fonda tweeted rape threats to President Trump's young son Barron and Twitter let him keep his account. [703]

An investigation by Breitbart found dozens of pedophiles using Twitter to openly promote pedophilia. Some of them refer to themselves as MAPs (Minor-Attracted Persons) and others call themselves "anti-contact pedophiles" meaning they're attracted to children but claim to not act on their desires. [704] One of them tweeted, "MAPs have every right to talk (including, yes, on public blogs) about their fantasies, sexual and romantic, as long as sexually explicit material is hidden from children. It's not bad or disrespectful to talk about people you think are cute." [705]

Other news outlets have covered the issue of admitted pedophiles being allowed on Twitter as well, and Members of Parliament in England have denounced Twitter for allowing the accounts to remain active, some of them having been operating for years. [706]

While Twitter doesn't seem to have much of a problem with pedophiles openly fantasizing about molesting children, Laura Loomer got permanently banned for criticizing Ilhan Omar, the Muslim congresswoman from Minnesota, after Loomer said she was anti-Semitic and is a member of a religion in which "homosexuals are oppressed" and "women are abused." [707]

Not long after Laura Loomer was banned, the Congresswoman made headlines and was denounced by members of her own party, including Nancy Pelosi, for comments she made about AIPAC [The American Israel Public Affairs Committee], the largest Israeli lobbying organization, after many deemed her criticism anti-Semitic. [708] So Loomer was right about

Ilhan Omar, but got banned for being "Islamophobic" and posting "hate speech" about Muslims. Later a video clip surfaced of Ilhan Omar appearing to mock Americans who were fearful of Al-Qaeda in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. [709]

A writer named Meghan Murphy, who refuses to accept transgender "women" as real women, was banned for simply referring to a transgender "woman" as a "he" (a violation called "misgendering" someone). [710] A world-renowned expert in gender dysphoria, Dr. Ray Blanchard, was suspended for tweeting that transgenderism was a mental disorder. [711] He didn't say it to be mean, he said it as part of a thread about the condition, (which up until May 2019 was classified as a mental disorder by the World Health Organization — and still is by many psychiatrists around the world, including the American Psychiatric Association's DSM-5) but some facts are considered hate speech now. [712]

After I tweeted that there are only two genders and insinuated the rest of the 50+ "gender identities" liberals have come up with were mental disorders, I was suspended for that too. My account was also disabled from uploading videos longer than 2 minutes and 20 seconds because they said I had posted "Inappropriate Content," and I have been banned from running ads on Twitter too.

I have also been suspended for calling Kevin Spacey a "Satanic scumbag" and telling him to "burn in Hell" after an actor came forward and claimed Spacey made aggressive sexual advances on him when he was just 14-years-old. [713] My tweet was considered to be "hateful" because he's a gay man who is above reproach.

Actor James Woods' account was suspended for posting a satirical meme making fun of Democrats, showing three soy boys with the caption, "We're making a woman's vote worth more by staying home," and included the hashtag #LetWomenDecide and #NoMenMidterm. Twitter claimed it was in violation of their policy forbidding posting content that "has the potential to be misleading in a way that could impact an election." [714]

Twitter suspended the account of Austin Petersen who was running for Senate in Missouri in 2018 just one week before the primary. [715] Twitter even banned Republican Senate candidate Marsha Blackburn from running pro-life ads during her campaign because they were deemed "inflammatory" [716] The official account for the anti-abortion movie *UnPlanned* was briefly suspended by Twitter during the film's opening weekend in March 2019. [717] As usual, the suspension caused a wave a backlash and Twitter later restored it saying it was another "mistake."

Twitter also suspended a user for calling Maxine Waters a "crazy old lying lunatic in a bad wig." [718] A recent change to Twitter's terms of service says they will ban anyone who is "amplifying hate groups" by posting articles about them, or even retweeting other tweets about them. (That only applies to right-wing "hate groups" though. Supporting Antifa, black power groups, and other far-left movements is fine).

After a bunch of *Huffington Post* and BuzzFeed employees got laid off in February 2019, a lot of people mocked them by responding with "Learn to Code" after they posted Dear Diary-style tweets crying about being let go, and so Twitter began suspending accounts for using that phrase or hashtag, claiming it was "abusive behavior." [719]

The saying "Learn to Code" is a reference to news outlets publishing stories encouraging coal miners who are getting laid off as clean energy companies replace their jobs to do just that. Expecting a fifty-year-old coal miner to become a software engineer is insane and shows how out of touch the journalists were who recommended they do just that, so people threw "Learn to Code" back in their faces, but that's "harassment."

When CEO Jack Dorsey appeared on Joe Rogan's podcast in February 2019, Joe brought up Alex Jones being banned and pointed out that Twitter was the last major platform to do so after (briefly) allowing him to keep his account in the wake of YouTube, Facebook, iTunes, etc, banning him. When Joe asked, "What did he do on your platform, that you all were in agreement that this is enough?" Jack responded, "Ah, I'm not — I'm not sure what the, what the actual like, ya know, violations were." [720] (That's an exact quote.)

Alex was banned for telling off CNN's Oliver Darcy outside of the Jack Dorsey congressional hearing in September 2018, where Jones denounced Oliver for pressuring all the social media companies to get him banned. The confrontation was broadcast live on Twitter via Periscope and so Twitter quickly banned Jones for "harassing" a supposed "journalist." [721]

It's important to point out that Oliver Darcy was working in the capacity of a journalist at the time, on public property, while he was covering an event about social media; thus confirming everything Alex Jones was saying about the censorship of conservatives. Oliver Darcy later admitted that CNN had "presented Twitter with examples of [violations of Twitter's terms of service] available on both the InfoWars and Jones account." [722]

In August 2019 a group of Leftists gathered outside Senator Mitch McConnell's house after sunset to harass him and some of them made threatening statements saying he should be killed, and when he posted a short video on his Twitter account showing the angry mob and what they were saying, *he* was suspended and the video removed for allegedly violating their terms of service prohibiting making threats, even though he had just posted evidence of what people were doing to him! [723] His staff appealed the suspension but the appeal was denied. [724]

Only after growing outrage and media coverage did Twitter lift his suspension and restore the video. [725] Mitch McConnell is the Senate Majority Leader, the most powerful Senator in the country, yet was censored when he tried to show his fellow Americans that Leftists had surrounded his home to intimidate and threaten him.

Twitter Verification

The "verified" checkmark on someone's social media account is a confirmation that the account actually belongs to that person, and isn't being run by someone else pretending to be them. Public figures like celebrities and journalists usually get them to prevent imposter accounts from impersonating them, and having a verified account is often seen as a sign that someone is "important" and so every wannabe rapper and blogger wishes to get one, but you have to apply, and Twitter won't just verify anyone's account.

They have, however, verified numerous Black Lives Matter activists' accounts whose credentials are basically that they're anti-police trolls who spend their entire lives on Twitter spewing hatred of police and white people. Virulent racist troll Tariq Nasheed, who accuses almost every white person in America of being a "suspected white supremacist," has been verified. Other Black Lives Matter trolls like Shaun King and Deray McKesson have also been rewarded with verified accounts.

Twitter also verified Sarah Jeong, a new editorial board member at the *New York Times* , despite a series of racist tweets about "dumbass fucking white people" and saying she gets "joy" out of being "cruel to old white men." [726] Twitter also verified loads of fringe LGBT social media personalities, and plenty of pro-feminist and pro-abortion trolls in order to give them more clout online.

Meanwhile, popular conservatives like James O'Keefe, Carpe Donktum, Gary Franchi, David Harris Jr., Brandon Tatum, David Horowitz, and others have been denied verification for years. [727] Before they were permanently banned, Tommy Robinson, Laura Loomer, and Milo Yiannopoulos had been *unverified* .

Twitter released a statement saying "Reasons for removal [of verification checkmark] may reflect behaviors on and off Twitter that include: Promoting hate and/or violence against, or directly attacking or threatening other people on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability, or disease" and even, "Supporting organizations or individuals that promote the above." [728]

Twitter verified the "Parkland kids," a small group of anti-gun activists who became social media stars over night after a lunatic shot up their high school on Valentine's Day 2018 in Parkland, Florida. One of them, David Hogg, went on to sic his nearly 500,000 followers onto the advertisers of various Fox News shows, harassing them to pull their ads from the network. [729] Twitter even hosted the Parkland kids for a live Q&A to help them promote their "March For Our Lives" event where they demanded more gun control laws. [730]

Never Tweet

There's a meme that looks like the sign-up page for Twitter but reads "Get fired from your job in ten years" just above the link to open an account, and it's not that far from the truth. What you say in a tweet can be perfectly fine if it was just said amongst a group of friends, but often our enemies are lurking quietly on Twitter, watching and waiting for one little slip up, and even complete strangers who happen to come across your tweet may feel compelled to enact “revenge” because you said something on the Internet that offended them.

People often like to go digging through old tweets of their enemies, hoping to find years or decade-old tweets saying “racist,” “homophobic,” or “sexist” things so they can derail their career. Twitter’s search function allows people to search anyone’s Twitter feed for any keyword or phrase, making this tactic extremely simple. (I advise, if you use Twitter, to consider a “tweet delete” app which allows you to easily search for and delete old tweets which contain certain words or phrases. Or regularly delete your tweets that are older than six months in order to avoid past tweets posted years ago from coming back to haunt you.)

Oftentimes when someone becomes famous, people will go nosing around their old tweets typing in keywords like “nigger” and “faggot” into the search to see if they’ve ever tweeted anything with those words in the past so they can retweet them, trying to get the person in trouble. This is exactly what happened right after Kyler Murray won the 2018 Heisman Trophy. A reporter for *USA Today* took it upon himself to search through his past tweets and found some “homophobic” ones from when he was fifteen-years-old. [731]

When Milwaukee Brewers pitcher Josh Hader was chosen to pitch in the 2018 All-Star Game, people dug up some of his old tweets from when he was in high school and it made headlines because he used the “n-word” in a few tweets. [732] He then apologized and deleted his entire account. The same thing has happened to “Mr. Beast,” a popular YouTuber, and singer Shawn Mendes. [733]

The best example of what can happen when you tweet is the disaster that occurred to a woman named Justine Sacco in 2013 who had just 170 followers. When boarding a flight to South Africa she tweeted, “Going to

Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white!" and then got on the plane without thinking anything of it. She didn't say it as a racist insult about the AIDS epidemic there, but meant it as a sarcastic jab at Americans who she said lived in "a bit of a bubble when it comes to what's going on in the third world," since she herself was born in South Africa and returning there to visit family. [734]

But somebody following her got offended and retweeted it, and then their followers saw it and got triggered and retweeted it, and then she soon began trending from so many people being upset about her tweet even though she was just some random person on Twitter. She and her tweet then became a national news story and she ultimately ended up getting fired from her job. [735]

Twitter is often fueled by anger with people venting their political frustrations through tweets like irate sports fans yelling at the TV. For others it's a narcissistic circus where they derive their self-worth by getting likes and retweets since the immediate engagement can become addicting because their notifications release dopamine similar to getting a small payout from a slot machine at the casino.

The instant gratification of getting feedback becomes a deeply engrained habit that's hard for people to break. Perhaps the only good thing about Twitter is President Trump's tweets. Previously, to hear what a President had to say, he would have to hold a press conference or give an interview, but now with Twitter he can fire off his thoughts on anything at any time, day or night, and then the media reports on it—often over-reacting to the point of having a meltdown.

There have been calls to ban him, and groups have even started petitions and presented them to Twitter with the foolish hope they would shut down his account, but he's still there. Twitter's co-founder Evan

Williams even said he was sorry for his creation helping Donald Trump get out his message during his campaign in 2016 after Trump told the *Financial Times* that without it, he didn't think he would have won. [736] "If it's true that he wouldn't be president if it weren't for Twitter, then yeah, I'm sorry," Williams said. [737]

Trump knows and loves the power of Twitter, but the big question is—will he still tweet after he's left office? Barack Obama broke the unwritten rule of not criticizing his successor, and it's been the tradition of former presidents to not inject themselves into matters involving the next administration, but both Barack Obama and George W. Bush have been openly criticizing the Trump administration, so after he leaves office he may not sit by silently, and could regularly criticize the next administration as well, and it will be hard for people to ignore what he's saying since his Twitter feed has become such a newsmaker.

There may be only one way for the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* to silence Donald Trump, which is why they are constantly painting him as the reincarnation of Adolf Hitler, and incessantly calling him a fascist dictator, because they are hoping to incite some unhinged lunatic who believes what they say to assassinate him.

YouTube

Most people don’t realize this but YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world, after Google of course, and it’s also part of the same conglomerate since Google bought YouTube in 2006 for 1.6 billion dollars. Later corporate restructuring put both of them under the new umbrella company Alphabet Inc. When referring to YouTube many people consider it a part of Google, but it should be considered its own separate entity, which it technically is, with its own CEO — Susan Wojcicki.

For the better part of a decade after YouTube was launched, it was largely seen as just a website for user generated entertainment. It was the place for people to upload funny cat videos and show themselves doing stupid “Internet challenges,” but a small group of people (myself included) knew from YouTube’s beginning that it was a powerful tool that could be used to share news and analysis about current events and other important issues that weren’t being properly addressed by mainstream outlets. It was like having our own public access cable channel where we could do anything we wanted with the potential to reach an audience of millions, and for some of us, that started happening on a regular basis.

For over a year after the 2016 election, the mainstream media’s war on “fake news” (in reality a war on independent news and ordinary people using social media to get out their message) focused almost exclusively on Facebook and Twitter since the news giants saw them as being responsible for completely losing their power to control the national narrative surrounding major issues and events.

The mainstream media could no longer prevent certain information from becoming widely known and millions of people were spending their time scrolling through Facebook, and Twitter, and watching YouTube videos instead of engaging with the traditional news outlets that had dominated the industry for decades since their creation.

But Donald Trump beating Hillary Clinton was a wakeup call for the *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* , so they launched a bold new effort under the disguise of fighting "fake news" to completely reshape social media. While they first focused on Facebook and Twitter, eventually they stumbled upon a huge secret that was right in front of their nose for years. People like me were creating YouTube videos on a regular basis covering news and politics and we were getting enormous audiences rivaling or beating cable news. In the run-up to the 2016 election my YouTube channel was averaging around 700,000 viewers a day, about half of what CNN's primetime shows like Anderson Cooper and Don Lemon get on their best nights. [738]

But now the Establishment discovered the "fake news" problem was flourishing on YouTube, they said, and it had to be stopped by changing the algorithm to artificially favor mainstream media channels over videos posted by ordinary YouTubers. In October of 2017, sociologist and technology critic Zeynep Tufekci said, "YouTube is the most overlooked story of 2016," after realizing there was much more to YouTube than cat videos and pranksters. [739] Traditional media outlets discovered the world of underground news and they were shocked at just how popular we were.

Slate pointed out that Twitter and Facebook had been receiving the brunt of criticism about spreading "fake news" but, "Now a series of controversies is forcing YouTube to address its responsibilities more directly and candidly than it has in the past." [740]

Soon YouTube would completely change the way the website had functioned for the previous ten years, and turned it from what was meant to be a place where anyone with an important message could post videos and build an audience, to mostly just another mainstream media site filled with brand name news channels and videos of familiar celebrities.

By mid-2018, as *Wired* magazine points out, YouTube was "ditching vloggers" in favor of Hollywood celebrities. "YouTube used to be all about young digital influencers who managed to threaten TV with their video blogs. Not anymore. It seems that YouTube is opting for traditional celebrities instead." [741]

Another blogger noticed the changes and ran with the headline, "YouTube is turning away from its creators to become a new MTV," and noted, "YouTube can't promise brand safety with volatile creators on the platform — advertisers don't want to be caught in a firestorm. The only move is to pivot, and YouTube is ready. Hollywood names like Will Smith and Demi Lovato are safe bets. Same with music videos already vetted by major record labels." [742]

YouTube, which for over a decade was a place for independent content creators to upload their videos, even began producing shows themselves. [743] For the better part of ten years since its launch in 2006, Hollywood studios and mainstream celebrities didn't pay much attention to YouTube. They either were afraid of it because it threatened their monopoly on content distribution, or they were too blind to see how the new technology was revolutionizing media and helping to create new kinds of stars.

Right-Wing Channels Dominating

In March of 2018 *Vanity Fair* warned that right-wing "Dark-Web Trolls" were "taking over YouTube" because so many anti-social justice warrior channels were getting popular. [744] The *New York Times* then said YouTube was "radicalizing" people to the right, and claimed that if people started watching videos of Donald Trump speeches then YouTube will begin recommending videos of “white supremacist rants” and “Holocaust denials.” [745]

The article declared that, “Given its billion or so users, YouTube may be one of the most powerful radicalizing instruments of the 21st century,” and that, “Its algorithm seems to have concluded that people are drawn to content that is more extreme than what they started with — or to incendiary content in general.” [746]

The New York Times had previously complained that, “For the New Far Right, YouTube Has Become the New Talk Radio,” saying, “They deplore ‘social justice warriors,’ whom they credit with ruining popular culture, conspiring against the populace and helping to undermine ‘the West.’ They are fixated on the subjects of immigration, Islam and political correctness. They seem at times more animated by President Trump’s opponents than by the man himself, with whom they share many priorities, if not a style.” [747] The Left became determined to paint the Right’s rising stars as radicals, Islamophobes, and far-right extremists hoping to derail the spread of our videos.

One Leftist blog called “Right Wing Watch” founded by Jared Holt declared that, “White Supremacy Figured Out How To Become YouTube Famous,” and whined that, “YouTube has served as an alternative media ecosystem apart from the mainstream where any person can contribute to national conversation and reach thousands of people overnight. But the Right’s overt domination of the platform, in addition to political forums on Reddit and 4chan, has created an environment where white nationalists and right-wing extremists can easily inject hateful rhetoric and conspiracy theories into national political discourse.” [748]

When BuzzFeed or CNN reported “breaking news” about the Trump administration or when something started trending on Twitter, us YouTubers could quickly publish videos giving another perspective and point out things the mainstream media was ignoring or lying about. Our subscribers would see the videos, but perhaps more importantly, people searching for information on YouTube about those issues could find our videos, and if they were popular with favorable ratings, those videos would be discovered by people seeking out information on the subject matter. But all that has changed.

“Authoritative Channels” Boosted to the Top

For over a decade the top search results on YouTube were the most popular videos associated with the search terms you entered in, regardless of whether the videos were posted by someone who had just opened a YouTube account, a full time YouTuber, or a mainstream media outlet. The algorithm that was originally in place worked very well, because instead of showing the most-viewed videos (which could have generated a large number of views by using misleading titles and thumbnails) YouTube surfaced videos with the most “watch time” up at the top.

This means that if people clicked on a video and found that the title and thumbnail were misleading or it wasn’t a quality video, and then decided not to watch it by clicking away rather soon once it began playing, the algorithm would know that it wasn’t what people were searching for because the average amount of time people spent watching the video would be low. But if the video had a high watch time average, the site (accurately) figured that people had found what they were looking for because they kept watching it, and those were the videos that ranked the highest in the search results.

All that mattered was that the video was uploaded to YouTube by someone—anyone. If it was good, and people watched it instead of clicking away after a few seconds, it would show up in the top of the search results. But all that changed in October 2017 when YouTube reconfigured the algorithm to favor videos from mainstream media outlets. [749]

They added internal tags on certain channels deeming them "authoritative sources," and overnight the top search results for most things were now videos from channels like CNN, NBC, Entertainment Tonight, etc. Most of these videos have only a tiny fraction of the views (and watch time) compared to countless other videos about the subject being searched for, but those videos are now buried under pages of content from channels that YouTube has deemed "authoritative" sources. [750]

They had manually intervened in the search results previously, but only for certain topics they deemed "extremist" material, like videos supporting ISIS. YouTube had been redirecting search results for these topics to curated videos and playlists they had specifically chosen in order to "confront and debunk violent extremist messages." [751] But now "the Jigsaw Method" as they call it, was rolled out on a massive scale and incorporated news, current events, and many other topics people regularly search for.

"We're continuing to invest in new features and changes to YouTube search that provide authoritative results when people come to YouTube looking for news," a YouTube spokesperson said in a statement. [752] "So far this year we have introduced new features that promote verified news sources when a major news event happens. These sources are presented on the YouTube homepage, under 'Breaking News,' and featured in search results, with the label 'Top News.' Additionally, we've been rolling out algorithmic changes to YouTube search during breaking news events. There is still more work to do, but we're making progress." [753] Soon it wasn't just videos from mainstream media channels boosted to the top during "breaking news" events, but almost anything having to do with news at all.

MSNBC's Chris Hayes rang the alarm about YouTube's algorithm because he didn't like the search results for videos about the Federal Reserve. [754] *Mother Jones* magazine joined in on the criticism, reporting, "If you search for 'Federal Reserve' on YouTube, one of the first videos to surface is titled 'Century of Enslavement.' Using archival footage and the kind of authoritative male voice heard in countless historical documentaries, the 90-minute video espouses the idea the Federal Reserve was formed in secret by powerful, often Jewish, banking families in the early 20th century, causing America to spiral into debt." [755]

It continued, "The incendiary Federal Reserve video, flagged by MSNBC host Chris Hayes earlier this month, is just one of many examples of how political extremists have mastered YouTube's algorithms and monetization structure to spread toxic ideas ranging from conspiracy theories to white supremacy. The video 'Why Social Justice is CANCER,' for instance, appears after searching for 'social justice.' [756] That video was from Lauren Chen (formerly known as Roaming Millennial.) [757]

Soon the search results for "Federal Reserve" featured only videos from mainstream media channels, and the documentary Chris Hayes called out (*Century of Enslavement: The History of the Federal Reserve*— which was the top search result) was nowhere to be seen. I looked all the way through page 25 of the search results and it still didn't show up. [758] Other videos critical of the Federal Reserve, including one titled "Exposing the Federal Reserve," which is a high-quality 30-minute cartoon, [759] and "The Federal Reserve Explained in 3 Minutes" also vanished.

A whistleblower later revealed to Breitbart that "Federal Reserve" had been added to the secret "Controversial Query Blacklist" file which causes “authoritative content” (i.e. mainstream media channels) to artificially rise to the top of the search results over other videos that actually qualify organically for those positions. [760]

My most-viewed video “Donald Trump’s Funniest Insults and Comebacks,” which has over 11 million views, is now buried on page three of the search results when looking for the exact title. All the top results for “Donald Trump’s Funniest Insults and Comebacks” are videos from CNN, NBC News, ABC News, the Washington Post, HuffPost, etc, most of which are critical of President Trump and have far less views and watch time.

My channel had reached one million subscribers in May of 2017, and at the time had more subscribers than MSNBC’s channel, NBC News, CBS News, and even Fox News. [761] And many of my videos far eclipsed theirs in the number of views, but since the algorithm changes my channel virtually stalled in growth while theirs all grew exponentially.

In the spring of 2019, YouTube changed the algorithm so when people searched for my own name, the top search results were *other people’s videos* about me, with mine buried at the bottom of the page. When searching for almost any other YouTuber, however, their most recent videos were featured at the top of the page with a notification highlighting their latest uploads.

I had been calling YouTube out about this since I first learned of it in May 2019, thanks to people leaving comments on my videos giving me a heads up, but YouTube wouldn’t respond to me. It was only after an uproar four months later when Steven Crowder became aware that none of his videos were coming up in the search results for his name either, and directed his lawyer to contact them about it while his fans bombarded YouTube with a flood of tweets denouncing them for what they had done.

They quickly made some adjustments, partially fixing the problem near the end of September 2019, but didn't publicly acknowledge the complaints or that they had reverted the algorithm back to the way it was. But at least my two most recent videos started showing up again at the top of the search results along with those of the other popular conservative channels that had been censored (Steven Crowder, Paul Joseph Watson, The Next News Network, Lauren Chen, and Breitbart News).

Shortly after a feminist writer for Slate.com, an online magazine, complained about many of the top search results for "abortion" being pro-life videos (including one that showed what a baby looks like in the first trimester—complete with arms, legs, fingers and toes), YouTube quickly changed the algorithm to feature various pro-abortion videos at the top. "I emailed YouTube Friday afternoon asking why anti-abortion videos saturated the search results for 'abortion,'" she wrote, adding, "By Monday morning…the search results had changed to include a number of news outlets among the top results." [762]

National Review pointed out that YouTube was happy to "airbrush away the reality of abortion," by artificially boosting pro-abortion videos after her complaint. [763] Now a search for "abortion" brings up videos from Vice News, the BBC, and BuzzFeed. In a leaked document given to Breitbart, one engineer admitted "We have tons of white and blacklists that humans manually curate." [764]

The document also first revealed the existence of the "Controversial Query Blacklist" file that contains a list of search terms that will bring up manually curated videos in the results or ensure the top results are videos from mainstream media channels. [765] The list includes "abortion," "Federal Reserve," and even people like anti-gun activist David Hogg, and Congresswoman Maxine Waters.

When *Captain Marvel* was released in March 2019 YouTube changed their algorithm in order to bury videos of people who were giving the movie negative reviews which were appearing as the top search results. [766] The film's star Brie Larson had been insulting white men and promoting intersectional feminism on her publicity tour, angering many Marvel fans who took to YouTube to express their thoughts. Those videos, being very popular, surfaced at the top of the search results for "Brie Larson," but that soon changed.

A writer for *The Verge* posted two side by side screenshots showing the before and after top search results and noted, "This is kind of a fascinating discovery: YouTube seems to have changed the immediate 'Brie Larson' search results to News. That pushes up authoritative sources and, in turn, pushes troll or MRA-style [Men's Rights Activists] video rants pretty far down the page." [767]

She went on to report that, "YouTube recategorized 'Brie Larson' as a news-worthy search term. That does one very important job: it makes the search algorithm surface videos from authoritative sources on a subject. Instead of videos from individual creators, YouTube responds with videos from *Entertainment Tonight*, ABC, CBS, CNN, and other news outlets first." [768]

YouTube has even experimented with disabling some of the search filters to make it impossible to do a more focused search when looking for something specific. In March 2019 they temporarily disabled the ability to filter search results by dates, in order to prevent people from finding recent uploads of the New Zealand mosque massacre which was live-streamed by the shooter and was being uploaded to YouTube by various people who had gotten the footage from the perpetrator's Facebook page before moderators removed it. [769]

This way you couldn’t narrow the search perimeters by the date something was posted which is often the only way to find certain clips now because they’re buried under countless other videos that are artificially pushed to the top even though they’re not necessarily relevant to the search terms. Luckily this time, disabling the search filters was only temporarily, but who knows what the future holds.

Recommended Videos

Playing favorites with mainstream channels and serving their videos up as the top search results no matter how few views or little engagement they have wasn’t good enough though. The *Wall Street Journal* complained, “YouTube’s algorithm tweaks don’t appear to have changed how YouTube recommends videos on its home page. On the home page, the algorithm provides a personalized feed for each logged-in user largely based on what the user has watched…Repeated tests by the Journal as recently as this week showed the home page often fed far-right or far-left videos to users who watched relatively mainstream news sources, such as Fox News and MSNBC.” [770]

Their report continued, “After searching for ‘9/11’ last month, then clicking on a single CNN clip about the attacks, and then returning to the home page, the fifth and sixth recommended videos were about claims the U.S. government carried out the attacks. One, titled ‘Footage Shows Military Plane hitting WTC Tower on 9/11—13 Witnesses React’—had 5.3 million views.” [771]

Others had been complaining about “conspiracy videos” too. As you can imagine, CNN piled on the criticism as well, reporting, “YouTube has long faced criticism for allowing misinformation, conspiracy theories and extremist views to spread on its platform, and for recommending such content to users. People who came to the site to watch videos on innocuous subjects, or to see mainstream news, have been pushed toward increasingly fringe and conspiracist content.” [772]

NBC News also complained that, “YouTube search results for A-list celebrities [have been] hijacked by conspiracy theorists” and noted, “YouTube did not respond to a request for comment,” [but] “Some conspiracy videos’ rankings dropped after NBC News reached out for comment.” [773]

In January 2019 YouTube issued a public statement saying that they will continue, “taking a closer look at how we can reduce the spread of content that comes close to—but doesn’t quite cross the line of—violating our Community Guidelines. To that end, we’ll begin reducing recommendations of borderline content and content that could misinform users in harmful ways—such as videos promoting a phony miracle cure for a serious illness, claiming the earth is flat, or making blatantly false claims about historic events like 9/11.” [774]

It went on to say, “This change relies on a combination of machine learning and real people. We work with human evaluators and experts from all over the United States to help train the machine learning systems that generate recommendations.” [775]

YouTube now deciding what is and is not a conspiracy theory has dramatic implications. For example, mainstream media outlets claimed that people who thought “Empire” actor Jussie Smollett faked his “racist and homophobic attack” at the hands of Trump supporters were spreading a “conspiracy theory.” [776] And since such “conspiracy theory” videos are now admittedly buried in the search results and kept out of the Recommended and Up Next sections, YouTube was actively hiding the truth about what actually happened, which later came out. [777]

A recent addition to YouTube's terms of service specifically bans, "Content claiming that specific victims of public violent incidents or their next of kin are actors, or that their experiences are false," which means that anyone who posted a video or did a livestream saying they thought Jussie Smollett faked the "attack" was in violation of their rules and at risk of having their videos taken down and issued a Community Guidelines strike or even having their entire channel banned if they had previous infractions. 778

For many years about one-third of my total views were from "Suggested" videos, but then in April 2019 I and many other YouTubers noticed a quick and dramatic drop, which is detailed in our Channel Analytics. From that point on my total views from "Suggested" videos dropped to around five percent, a significant drop, most likely because my channel was identified as "borderline" and so my videos don't show up on people's homepages anymore or next to similar content.

The "Alternative Influence Network"

It wasn't enough to bury independent content creators' videos under piles of mainstream media channels when searching for various topics, or preventing our videos from showing up in the "Recommended" section or the "Up Next" sidebar. The *Liberal Media Industrial Complex* got upset that a bunch of YouTubers were collaborating with each other, and doing interviews with one another. In September 2018 a report from a "research institute" called Data & Society claimed to have identified what they called a network of "far-right" YouTubers who indoctrinate people through their videos by promoting right-wing "extremist" ideologies.

"Although YouTube's recommendation algorithms are partly to blame, the problem is fundamentally linked to the social network of political influencers on the platform and how, like other YouTube influencers, they invite one another on to their shows," the report reads. [779]

It includes an illustration looking like a collage on the wall of a detective's office linking together all the connections of an organized crime family and notes, "The graph is a partial representation of collaborative connections within the Alternative Influence Network (AIN)–a network of controversial academics, media pundits, and internet celebrities who use YouTube to promote a range of political positions from mainstream versions of libertarianism and conservatism to overt white nationalism. While collaborations can sometimes consist of debates and disagreements, they more frequently indicate social ties, endorsements, and advertisements for other influencers." [780]

The report basically recommends that YouTube forbid people from interviewing individuals who liberals deem unsavory or who talk about things they consider "offensive" or "hateful" which as you know includes almost everything from illegal immigration to the American flag. "The platform should not only assess what channels say in their content, but also who they host and what their guests say. In a media environment consisting of networked influencers, YouTube must respond with policies that account for influence and amplification." [781]

In an interview about the report, lead researcher Rebecca Lewis explained how most of the focus on "extremism" and "fake news" has been on Facebook and Twitter, but, "We don't have as clear a picture of what's happening on YouTube and Google. It is important to bring to the fore some illustrations of the problems that do exist on these platforms. I'm trying to show there are fundamental issues we need to be addressing [regarding the algorithms of] YouTube in the same way we have recognized fundamental issues with Facebook and Twitter." [782]

She went on to say, “I absolutely think reassessing the algorithms is one step that needs to be taken. Assessing what government regulation options are available is absolutely worthwhile, and then thinking about how YouTube monetization structures incentivize certain behaviors is something that needs to be done. It needs to be a multi-pronged solution.” [783]

Five months after the Alternative Influence Network report was published a group of “researchers” calling themselves Digital Social Contract did a test to see how YouTube’s “Recommended” videos section changed, and looked at over 80 different channels listed in the report and noted, “For the first two weeks of February [2019], YouTube was recommending videos from at least one of these major alt-right channels on more than one in every thirteen randomly selected videos (7.8%). From February 15th, this number has dropped to less than one in two hundred and fifty (0.4%).” [784]

The Digital Social Contract report also highlighted that a video of actress Emma Watson promoting feminism had another video titled “How Feminism Ruined Marriage” queued in the “Up Next” autoplay section right beside it, which they claimed was “an anti-feminist video from an alt-right channel.” [785] That “alt-right” channel was Ben Shapiro’s, who is a Jew, not an alt-right white nationalist, but instead is often a target of alt-right figures who hate him because he’s Jewish. [786]

Censoring Videos

YouTube has always had a policy forbidding certain kinds of content from being uploaded like pornography, graphic violence, animal abuse, or blatant invasions of someone’s privacy; which are very reasonable rules, but after the 2016 election they began removing videos critical of the radical

Leftist agenda, including videos denouncing child drag queens, feminists, and for even reporting on anti-white hate crimes.

Those kinds of videos can now easily violate YouTube's "Community Standards" and result in getting channels issued a strike (and the video taken down), and if a channel gets three strikes within a three month period, the entire channel and all its videos are completely deleted.

YouTube's senior leadership (and overall corporate culture) believes there are 58 different genders, and Christians are just old-fashioned superstitious bigots; so we're talking about godless liberal Silicon Valley standards, not Midwestern community standards. YouTube also teamed up with the Southern Poverty Law Center, who began searching for videos they recommend be taken down. Soon all kinds of them were being removed under the banner of stopping "hate speech." [787]

I got a strike on a video I uploaded about a black man who opened fire inside a Tennessee church hoping to kill as many white people as possible. [788] The video was appropriately titled "Black Man Shoots Up White Church - Media Ignores Anti-White Hate Crime" and didn't show any graphic images, but as you probably know by now, reporting on anti-white hate crimes is deemed "racist" by the Left. The liberal media wants people to believe hate crimes are only committed by white people against blacks and don't want anyone talking about how such attacks are actually a two way street.

Black conservative Candace Owens even had a video removed from her channel that was critical of Black Lives Matter because it was deemed "hateful" against black people. [789] A channel called High Impact Vlogs had a video removed and got a Community Guidelines strike for criticizing the parents of Desmond is Amazing, the 11-year-old "drag kid," after the boy was featured on *Good Morning America* . [790]

YouTube pulled a funny 2018 midterm election ad by a Republican running for governor of Florida in which he showed off his "Deportation Bus," which he used to promote his campaign, claiming his ad was "hate speech." [791] They later restored the video after their censorship began making headlines.

Tommy Robinson's entire channel has been "quarantined" with special restrictions that prevent any of his videos from ever showing up in the search results at all. This designation also causes all comments to be disabled on every video, and the view counts censored as well, so people can't gauge how popular they are in another attempt to suppress his message by hiding the number of people watching his videos. [792]

Hunter Avallone, a conservative millennial who makes fun of feminists and other SJWs, had his entire channel deleted in April 2019 for "hate speech" despite not having any current strikes. After a growing outrage about the censorship, YouTube restored his channel and once again claimed it was just a "mistake." [793]

The Prager University channel (stylized PragerU) sued YouTube after they discovered that almost all of their videos were hidden when YouTube was in Restricted Mode, which most schools and public libraries have it set on by default in order to filter out "sensitive content." [794] Many of my videos are also completely hidden to people who are browsing in Restricted Mode as well, even though my content is family friendly.

In December of 2017 YouTube hired 10,000 new human moderators to supposedly remove "extremist" content and videos containing "hate speech," and soon after they began taking down popular videos and entire channels that hadn't come anywhere close to actually violating the terms of service. As a result of the new moderators a major purge occurred a few months later in February of 2018. Jerome Corsi's entire channel was taken down, Mike Adams' "Natural News" channel was also removed, and many others.

YouTube even began issuing community guideline strikes and removing videos that criticized CNN's Town Hall on gun control following the Parkland school shooting in Florida. [795] Tim Pool had produced a video where he debunked the conspiracy theories about the shooting, but his video was removed as well. [796]

After some channels and videos were restored due to a major outcry about this latest wave of censorship, Gizmodo reported that, "the usual whackos like far-right personality Mark Dice are going wild on Twitter claiming the admission of any mistake at all constitutes victory. Hopefully they're wrong and YouTube isn't walking back punishments on people like [Jerome] Corsi, whose prior best hits include a steadfast belief Barack Obama is secretly gay and also some kind of Muslim, though InfoWars claimed yesterday that it got YouTube to revoke one of the two strikes against it." [797]

"YouTube's New Moderators Mistakenly Pull Right-Wing Channels" was the headline at Bloomberg News. [798] It was just another "mistake," they said. YouTube deleted the entire channel of a gamer for posting a clip of him playing "Red Dead Redemption 2" which showed him "killing" a feminist NPC (non playable character) by lassoing her and then feeding her to an alligator. [799]

The game is a western and takes place in the late 1890s, and the character was just one of the townspeople who was hanging out in the street and happened to be promoting women's suffrage (right to vote) so he thought it would be funny to feed her to the alligator, which the game allows players to do to any of the "townsfolk."

Professional gaming is a huge industry where people stream themselves playing various video games, which as you know, often include the main character "killing" a number of other characters in the game, but the YouTube moderators deemed feeding the feminist to the alligator "graphic content that appears to be posted in a shocking, sensational, or disrespectful manner." After others in the gaming community expressed outrage over YouTube censoring a clip of someone playing a popular game, they restored his channel. [800]

After the Covington Catholic incident involving the high school kid in the MAGA hat and the Native American man beating a drum in his face at the National Mall in Washington D.C., a retired Navy SEAL named Don Shipley posted a video about Nathan Phillips, the "Vietnam Veteran" Native American, calling him a fraud because Army records show he was never actually in Vietnam. YouTube soon terminated the Navy SEAL's channel, claiming he was "harassing" the old man. [801]

Infowars host Alex Jones was banned from YouTube in August 2018 in part for his criticism of a drag queen festival where adult drag queens performed simulated strip teases for an "all ages" show which included children in the audience brought there by their degenerate parents. He called it an "abomination" and a "freak show" and so his video was deemed "hate speech" and "transphobic," resulting in YouTube removing the video and issuing him a community guidelines strike. [802]

The deleted video (titled "Shocking 'Drag Tots' Cartoon Sparks Outrage") can be seen on BitChute.com [803] and Infowars.com. [804] YouTube also cited another video of Jones as being "Islamophobic" because he was ranting about the increased crime in Europe due to the influx of Muslim refugees in recent years. [805]

He was given his second strike for that video, titled “Learn How Islam Has Already Conquered Europe,” [806] and soon a third (and final) strike for “circumvention” of YouTube’s “enforcement measures” because he had promoted another YouTube channel that had taken the feed of his show from his website and was streaming it on their channel since Jones was under a 90-day live-streaming suspension from the previous strikes. [807]

The H3H3 Podcast channel then had their livestream taken down and were issued a community guidelines strike simply for talking about Alex Jones being banned. [808] They are a popular husband and wife duo with over a million subscribers (on their podcast channel) who were actually defending YouTube’s decision to ban Alex Jones, and were repeating some of the crazy things he has said over the years which may have been flagged by the AI voice recognition systems that monitor livestreams. H3H3 co-host Ethan Klein later said, “How can I even sit here now and call Alex Jones a conspiracy theorist when our channel just got [a strike] for even fucking talking about him? I was criticizing him!” [809]

After BuzzFeed stumbled across a 14-year-old girl’s channel who does comedy sketches mocking social justice warriors and deriding political correctness, they did what they always do and wrote a hit piece urging people to pressure YouTube to ban her for “hate speech.” [810] The writer of the article (Joseph Bernstein) even labeled her an “extremist.” [811]

Before the article came out, “Soph” as she goes by, had over 800,000 subscribers which terrified BuzzFeed that such a young, talented, and popular girl was pushing back against the liberal agenda, but shortly after it was published she got two strikes on her channel for previous videos which had been up for weeks with no problems. [812]

The following week her entire channel was completely demonetized, dealing a crushing blow to her chances of turning YouTube into a career. [813]

A month and a half later she received her third and final strike for "hate speech" after she posted a video critical of homosexuals, and her entire channel was completely deleted. [814]

In June 2019 Project Veritas released a 25-minute report which included an undercover investigation into Google which showed that the head of the Innovation Department said they were doing everything they could to prevent another "Trump situation in 2020" and was bragging about how Google had come up with a new definition of "fairness."

The Project Veritas report also included an interview with a current YouTube employee which was done in a silhouette to protect his identity. He explained how YouTube was actually preventing certain conservative and libertarian channels from having their videos show up in the "Recommended" section, confirming what most of us had already basically known since it was obvious. He also provided Project Veritas with leaked documents detailing their algorithm manipulation. [815]

Within hours YouTube deleted the video from Project Veritas' account, claiming it violated the head of Innovation's privacy even though it only showed her talking at a restaurant and mentioned who she was. Most privacy violations are for publishing someone's home address or cell phone number. On CNN's official YouTube channel they posted the video of their reporter stalking and harassing the old woman in her front yard because she shared someone on Facebook that originated with the Russians. During part of the altercation her full street address, which is posted on the front of her house, was completely visible. [816] How is *that* not a violation of *her* privacy and YouTube's terms of service?

In October 2019, the channel Red Ice TV was completely deleted, despite having no current strikes against it. No specific reason was given, just that it had supposedly violated YouTube's policy prohibiting "hate speech." It had over 330,000 subscribers, and for over ten years was run by a husband and wife duo out of Sweden who focus on preserving European culture and exposing anti-white racism, so of course they've been smeared by the media as "white supremacists." They were the most popular Identitarian channel on YouTube. [817] Leftist groups like Media Matters, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the ADL had been pressuring YouTube to ban the channel for years. [818]

No Conservative is Safe

Kara Swisher, the co-founder of Recode Media which hosted the historic joint interview with Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, said she wanted to "kill" YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki after discovering that her 13-year-old son was watching Ben Shapiro's videos, and claims he is the "gateway drug" to "neo-nazi stuff." [819] She made the comments while interviewing Susan Wojcicki at the "Lesbians Who Tech" conference in March 2019 (Kara Swisher is a lesbian who must have adopted her poor kid or used a sperm bank).

She added that her son is "lost" (meaning he's not infected with the liberal pathogen) and insinuated that YouTube was responsible. Susan Wojcicki responded, "I have a son too and I get some of these discussions also at the dinner table. I think what you're describing is — and the way we think about it too — look, there's a set of content that has to meet the community guidelines. Ben Shapiro is going to meet the community guidelines. I don't think you're suggesting that we remove him from the platform. Are you?"

Kara Swisher responded, "I would," and continued, whining "You know, last time I saw you, I was like, 'Get Alex Jones off that platform,' and you're like, 'Well the community guidelines,' and then [later] you got him off.” [820] She then changed the subject and went on to ask Susan if there was enough “diversity” in the company, particularly in management. “Diversity” is a code word for “less straight white men,” because Big Tech is concerned that there are too many of those kinds of people working in Silicon Valley.

Ben Shapiro is a huge nerd, he’s not a right-wing extremist or a hateful bigot, and is about as mainstream of a political commentator as you can get, yet Kara Swisher, who holds tremendous power in Silicon Valley and has direct access to all of the major CEOs, is demanding that he be banned from YouTube because she thinks he’s a right-wing extremist, proving that no conservative, no matter how moderate, is safe.

YouTube Gives Millions to Mainstream Media

Demonetizing us, censoring our videos, down-ranking them in the search results, and hiding them from the “Recommended” section while boosting mainstream media channels still wasn’t silencing us enough, so YouTube decided to just give $25 million dollars to brand name news channels and provide them with special consulting to help them create more engaging videos and grow their audience on the platform. [821]

“We will provide funding across approximately 20 global markets to support news organizations in building sustainable video operations,” they announced in July 2018. “Provided on an application basis to news organizations of all types, these grants will enable our partners to build key capabilities, train staff on video best practices, enhance production facilities and develop formats optimized for online video.” [822]

So people like me were able to figure out how to produce quality and engaging videos and built an audience all on our own, but since ordinary YouTubers came to dominate mainstream media, YouTube decided to just give them everything they need to emulate what we had come to learn through years of innovation and practice.

The largest "YouTube news channel" is the Young Turks, which was started by progressive Democrat Cenk Uygur in 2005, and over the years has gotten help from some very wealthy benefactors. In 2014 they got $4 million dollars from an investment firm, [823] and then later got another $20 million in 2017 from former Walt Disney Studios chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg. [824] That's *not* a typo—*twenty million dollars!*

It's interesting that their channel bears the same name as the insurgent group of Muslims who committed genocide against the Armenian people (who were Christians), killing 1.5 million of them between 1914 and 1923 in one of the first modern day genocides. [825] For years Cenk Uygur actually denied the Armenian Genocide until growing pressure caused him to change his position, saying he will refrain from commenting on it because he doesn't know enough about it. [826]

Making things even more bizarre is that the Young Turks cohost Anna Kasperian is Armenian, and works for a "news" organization which appears to be named after the very group which committed genocide against members of her own family. [827] She's the daughter of Armenian immigrants and actually grew up speaking Armenian as her first language. [828]

While YouTube has a policy against allowing "extremist groups" on the platform, they have no problem with a channel that some interpret as paying homage to a group that murdered more than a million Christians. [829] Instead, YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki enjoys hanging out with them and tweeted a photo of herself sitting down talking with Cenk Uygur at YouTube's headquarters, thanking him for his time. [830]

Young Turks host Hasan Piker even declared that "America deserved 9/11" in response to Congressman Dan Crenshaw doing an interview with

Joe Rogan where he said that Osama Bin Laden attacked the U.S. because of our western values. [831] Piker also appeared to praise Al Qaeda for blinding Crenshaw (a retired Navy SEAL) who lost an eye while serving in Afghanistan in 2012. [832] He then mocked the disabled veteran for having one eye. Hasan Piker is allowed to host a show on the platform, but Alex Jones isn't. Piker has his own personal YouTube channel as well, that hasn't been demonetized.

In 2016 YouTube launched their "Creators for Change" program where they began funding and coaching various YouTubers to make videos denouncing "hate speech," "xenophobia," and "extremism." [833] These handpicked social justice warriors produce propaganda for the platform and some of them promote the latest degeneracy the Left is trying to convince people is normal.

At the end of every year YouTube produces a mashup of what they consider to be the year's top stars and it's always a bunch of SJWs and LGBT activists. Their 2018 "Rewind" video, as it's called, featured drag queens and highlighted Hollywood celebrities like Will Smith and John Oliver over ordinary YouTubers. It got so many thumbs down that overnight it became the most disliked video on YouTube *ever* . [834] Shortly after that, YouTube announced that they were trying to figure out how to prevent what they called "dislike mobs" from "weaponizing the dislike button" and considered removing it altogether. [835]

The Adpocalypse

Since I'm an old school YouTuber, I was posting videos for six years before my channel was monetized (at the end of 2012) opening the door for me to become a professional YouTuber. While it has always been difficult to make a living on YouTube because monetized videos only pay a small fraction of a penny per view, a few years after I started doing it full time, it became almost impossible, especially for smaller channels that aren't getting five to ten million views a month.

In April 2017 after the *Wall Street Journal* published a report about finding advertisements for major brands appearing on "racist" and "offensive" videos, all hell broke loose. Tons of companies pulled their advertisements from the platform entirely, kicking off what us YouTubers call the "Adpocalypse" (advertising apocalypse). YouTube immediately rolled out some new tools they had been testing to comb through the titles, tags, and descriptions of videos and automatically demonetize (strip advertisements from) ones that were about (*or even mentioned*) certain topics.

Every video uploaded is now immediately scanned by YouTube's voice recognition software which creates a transcript of everything that's said in the video. That transcript is then scanned for keywords that may indicate a video is about a "sensitive" or "controversial" topic and then demonetizes it if certain words or phrases are found. As a result of the Adpocalypse, almost half of all of my videos were demonetized, and from that point on making a living on YouTube became uncertain.

News channels like mine were hit the hardest, because news and politics are filled with "divisiveness" and controversial issues that YouTube wanted to shield advertisers from. For people who make cooking videos, or how-to videos about fixing cars, or doing home improvement projects, those kinds of videos aren't about anything that's particularly "non-advertiser friendly" like ones that talk about illegal immigration, climate change, political cover-ups, or exposing fake news.

Bloomberg News later reported, "In fact, 96.5% of all of those trying to become YouTubers won't make enough money off of advertising to crack the U.S. poverty line.” [836] Their report continued bearing bad news, pointing out that, “Breaking into the top 3% of most-viewed channels could bring in advertising revenue of about $16,800 a year…That’s a bit more than the U.S. federal poverty line of $12,140 for a single person. (The guideline for a two-person household is $16,460.) The top 3% of video creators of all time in [the research group’s] sample attracted more than 1.4 million views per month.” [837]

But even for those who never expected to be full-time YouTubers, it was still nice to make a few dollars every month for the time and effort put into creating videos about things they’re passionate about. Despite the loss of income caused by the increased scrutiny, a lot of the more popular YouTuber news channels were still able to get by, or at least kept making videos because it’s about the message not the money, but we all have to pay the bills, so YouTube decided to make people’s lives even harder by demonetizing entire channels instead of just certain videos.

In January 2019 Tommy Robinson’s entire channel was demonetized. [838] A few months later in May 2019 Count Dankula was fully demonetized. What’s particularly interesting is that he learned about it from an email from BuzzFeed asking for a statement about it. It appears they had lobbied YouTube to get him demonetized and then reached out to him for a comment immediately after their YouTube source confirmed they had done it. [839]

BuzzFeed learned about it before him, which speaks volumes about what’s happening. Sargon of Akkad’s channel was also completely demonetized because of a rape joke he had made three years earlier on Twitter, and—what a “coincidence”—BuzzFeed was the first to break that story as well. [840]

Another round of mass demonetization and channel bans occurred in June 2019 (dubbed the Vox Adpocalypse) occurred after a gay activist named Carlos Maza, who works at Vox, ranted nonstop on Twitter for an entire week about conservative comedian Steven Crowder making fun of him. Maza's rant, which was conveniently timed to coincide with the kickoff of gay pride month for extra leverage, was a rallying call for liberals to pressure YouTube to completely ban Crowder (the most-subscribed conservative channel on YouTube) for "hate speech" because he called Maza a "lispy queer" since he talks with a lisp, and he's a queer.

What do you think the "Q" stands for in LGBTQ? They call themselves queers, but normal people can't use the word now apparently because the Left is trying to claim that only gay people can say *queer* , similarly to the double standard most black people have about the n-word.

While YouTube didn't ban Steven Crowder from YouTube, or give him any community guideline strikes to take down any of his videos; they did demonetize his *entire* channel, not just the "offensive" videos in question, which were probably never even monetized to begin with, thus, preventing him from ever making another dollar from the pre-roll ads you often see before videos start playing. [841]

It wasn't just Steven Crowder's channel though. Dozens, perhaps hundreds, of others were hit at the same time, some of which were very popular with hundreds of thousands of subscribers. [842] YouTube said this was just the beginning of their latest crackdown, and vowed to purge more "hateful" right-wing channels.

The very next week the *New York Times* ran a front page story titled "The Making of a YouTube Radical" which included a collage of various (mostly) conservative YouTubers who have sizable followings, and told the story about how a lonely loser named Caleb Cain "fell down the YouTube rabbit hole" and it turned him into a "radical." How radical? The *Times* explained that, "He began referring to himself as a 'tradcon' — a traditional conservative," supported "old-fashioned gender norms," started dating a Christian girl, and "fought with his liberal friends." [843]

"Fought" meaning discussed politics and disagreed with the nonsense they were indoctrinated to believe. The man admits he never thought about doing anything violent and wasn't even a hateful person, but he was the new poster boy denouncing right-wing YouTubers and the "algorithm."

Other outlets immediately added more fuel to the fire and he was interviewed on CNN where he once again blamed "the algorithm" for "radicalizing" him. [844] He said the conservative YouTubers he used to watch warned of Cultural Marxists who "were trying to destroy Western civilization and install some sort of socialist regime." [845] That's exactly what they're doing of course, but now if you just mention that, you're considered a right-wing extremist and at risk of having your entire channel demonetized or even deleted.

When the White House announced the Social Media Summit and invited dozens of the top conservative social media personalities to meet with President Trump to discuss the issues of censorship and liberal bias, the media freaked out saying that the attendees (which included me, as you probably know) were "trolls," "conspiracy theorists," and "extremists." [846]

President Trump addressed us by saying, "So this is a historic day. Never before have so many online journalists and influencers, and that is exactly what you are, you are journalists and you are influencers, come together in this building to discuss the future of social media…Each of you is fulfilling a vital role in our nation. You are challenging the media gatekeepers and the corporate censors to bring the facts straight to the

American people…Together you reach more people than any television broadcast network by far.” [847]

I knew once word got out that I was invited to the White House I would have a huge target on my back and just a few days later over 200 of my YouTube videos were demonetized, with about 100 of them manually reviewed by the moderators and deemed “non-advertiser friendly” despite not just being fully monetized for days, months, (and some for years) but many of them had been manually reviewed previously and *approved* for monetization.

YouTube moved the goal post again, and may be looking for a reason to demonetize my whole channel by deeming a “significant portion” of my content “non-advertiser friendly” like they had done to dozens of other channels a month earlier. Many of the videos were of me making fun of CNN hosts, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Beto O’Rourke, and other members of Congress. Apparently it’s okay for Stephen Colbert to do political comedy, but not a conservative YouTuber.

In January 2017 YouTube introduced what they call Super Chats, which is a creative way for a viewer to get their question answered by their favorite YouTuber while they’re doing a livestream by tipping them a few bucks. Basically, viewers can choose a dollar amount anywhere from $5 to $500, and their question or comment will be highlighted in color and pinned up at the top of the chat box in order to catch the streamer’s attention since comments in the chat can scroll by the screen so fast they’re impossible to read.

In May 2018 BuzzFeed targeted Super Chats, claiming they were fueling racism and began pushing for them to be disabled because someone spent $100 on a Super Chat to post a message that said “WHITE PRIDE WORLD WIDE!” during someone’s livestream. [848] A few months later the

Wall Street Journal (which is responsible for setting off the first Adpocalypse in April 2017) also started complaining about people making money from Super Chats in a report titled, “Hate Speech on Live ‘Super Chats’ Tests YouTube.” [849]

Just a few days later, KillStream, which was a free speech variety show that included debates about various issues, was completely banned from YouTube since the *Wall Street Journal* pointed out some of the viewers had been posting racist messages in their Super Chats. [850] A channel has no control over what viewers put in the comments or Super Chats, but now the media was blaming YouTubers themselves for what their fans (or trolls) were saying.

The Liberal Media Industrial Complex is targeting Super Chats because even fairly small channels can earn a significant amount of revenue from them, since fans tossing in $5 and $10 can add up pretty fast, whereas in order to earn the same amount of money from video views alone as they can make in a livestream could take hundreds of thousands or millions of views.

Because of the growing demonetization issues those of us on the politics and news side of YouTube have had to move to a more fan-funded business model instead of relying on monetized views. I now rely heavily on fans buying my books, shirts, and supporting me through Patreon and PayPal. By removing the financial incentives for people to make quality videos it was just another way for YouTube to discourage us from spending our time and energy producing news commentary and covering current events and has killed the dreams of one day becoming a full-time YouTuber for many.

BuzzFeed reported, “The result of the YouTube crackdown is that prominent right-wing YouTubers are scrambling to find alternatives, setting up shop on YouTube wannabes, or even building their own video apps. It’s all in preparation for what they see as the inevitable day when YouTube gives them the boot or forbids them from making money on the platform by demonetizing all of their videos.” [851]

MCNs Dropping Channels

Many YouTubers join what are called Multi-Channel Networks, or MCNs, which are companies that take a percentage of their revenue in exchange for offering consultations on how to improve the performance of videos, grow their audience, and even give them access to “brand deals” or sponsorships like talk radio shows have when the hosts plug various products and services.

So even if YouTube’s automated system demonetizes a lot of videos, MCNs can get the channel some sponsors who are okay with their product being promoted there, and that way the YouTuber can still earn a living. But since being a member of an MCN can be a way around demonetization, YouTube decided to order MCNs to drop certain channels, and they had to, because they’re under contract with YouTube, and if they didn’t then YouTube wouldn’t do business with the MCN at all. [852]

So first it was just certain videos getting demonetized, then entire channels (including the loss of Super Chats), and then YouTube went even further forcing MCNs to drop certain people so they couldn’t acquire sponsorships for their videos.

One person who got kicked out of his network got an email reading, “The team here at Fullscreen is reaching out to let you know that your agreement with Fullscreen, Inc. has been terminated. Due to the nature of your uploads and because your uploads may potentially infringe on the rights of others or potentially violates applicable laws or regulations, including without limitation YouTube's Terms of Service and/or YouTube's Community Guidelines, we feel it is best that we part ways. Thank you for your understanding, and good luck with your YouTube channel." [853]

A friend of mine, Luke Rudkowski, who runs the "We Are Change" YouTube channel was kicked out of his MCN, and when applying to others he was told that he would have to delete several of his videos they deemed inappropriate before they would accept him. The videos in question had been automatically demonetized, but didn't violate YouTube's terms of service so they were not deleted. Various MCNs thought they were problematic, however, and could get them in trouble with YouTube for including Luke's channel in their network because he had posted certain content about various wars, military actions, and social unrest in parts of the world.

When a channel reaches 100,000 subscribers YouTube sends them a framed "Silver Play Button" plaque to celebrate their success, and if they reach a million subscribers, they get a gold plated one, but YouTube got upset that so many anti-social justice warrior, pro-free speech, conservative channels were reaching 100,000 subscribers, they started refusing to send out the plaques to certain channels once they reached the milestone because YouTube didn't want to appear as if they were endorsing their views. [854]

Patreon

Patreon is a service that allows artists to fund their work by having fans sponsor them with varying amounts of monthly support. While the site was created in 2013, it really took off in April 2017 after the "Adpocalypse" when YouTube rolled out their new guidelines and screening mechanisms to demonetize videos they deem "non-advertiser friendly."

Most YouTubers joined Patreon as a way to supplement the revenue they were losing from so many videos getting demonetized, and for most of them, especially small to moderate sized ones, Patreon is pretty much a standard part of being a YouTuber since earning money from ads has never been the same in the wake of the Adpocalypse.

But since many of them came to rely so heavily on Patreon for their revenue, this became a danger for conservatives who are now at risk of having their Patreon accounts shut down at any time for being “intolerant” of the liberal agenda by not supporting gay “marriage,” or pointing out facts about illegal immigration and crime.

The first person to be banned from Patreon that made headlines because it was seen as a political decision was Lauren Southern (banned in July 2017), a Canadian YouTuber who became known for her criticism of multiculturalism and the mass immigration of people from the Middle East into Europe. She once even documented her visit to a doctor where she said she wanted to identify as a man and was given a doctor’s note which she then took to Canada’s “DMV” and got a driver’s license legally declaring she was a “man” just to see how easy it was to get her gender legally changed. [855]

Lauren Southern’s ban caused quite a stir online and Patreon’s CEO Jack Conte appeared on Dave Rubin’s “Rubin Report” YouTube channel to respond to the criticism. He said that Lauren wasn’t banned because of what she had been saying about the “Islamization” of Europe, but that she had “put lives at risk” during a stunt she recorded involving refugee boats illegally bringing people across the Mediterranean Sea into Europe.

The CEO claimed they have a policy about what he called “manifest observable behavior,” and if a creator does certain things, like commits crimes, then they will be banned, but, “The decision to remove a creator page has absolutely nothing to do with politics and ideology." [856] He also claimed that Patreon's policies about speech (not actions) only focused on what people said *on their Patreon page* , not on Twitter or anywhere else, and emphasized that Lauren Southern was banned for *actions* not words, but soon this would be proven to be another lie. [857]

December 2018, Sargon of Akkod (who had over 800,000 subscribers at the time) was banned for using a "racial slur" that someone at Patreon discovered he said in an interview months earlier. The context in which it was said was actually while he was denouncing the alt-right, saying they were acting like a bunch of "white niggers," (trying to use their own insults against them) and so his entire Patreon account was disabled, causing him to lose thousands of dollars a month in income with no recourse. [858]

About a year after Lauren Southern was banned from Patreon, her friend and sometimes collaborator Brittany Pettibone was also banned for her support of Generation Identity, a right-wing identitarian movement in Europe working to preserve European culture from Islamization. [859] The two girls have been smeared as "white supremacists" by the liberal media because they celebrate Western European culture and oppose mass migration of Muslim refugees into Europe. Soph's Patreon was shut down one day after YouTube deleted her channel for the same enigmatic excuse of "hate speech" against homosexuals. [860]

Patreon now has a policy against even making "negative generalizations of people based on race [and] sexual orientation," so if you point out well-documented facts about crime in black communities or the HIV rate among gay men, that would be a violation of their terms of service because it's seen as casting them in a negative light.

Imagine a bank not letting someone cash a check that was written to them because the bank didn't like what the person was going to do with the money, or didn't like the kind of language the person uses when talking with their friends. That's exactly what Patreon has done here, and it's beyond Orwellian and is a dangerous precedent that's likely only going to follow with much worse actions in the near future.

Meanwhile, far-left individuals and groups are allowed on Patreon, including "Revolutionary Left Radio," a communist podcast which is run by an admitted "militant revolutionary Communist who wants to put every fascist in the world against the wall and violently expropriate the wealth and property of the owning class." [861] Before a Breitbart article was published highlighting violent Leftists using Patreon, the group's banner on their Twitter account featured masked militants holding guns. [862]

Another Communist account called the "Guillotine Podcast" had over 350 patrons (sponsors) donating monthly. The Patreon page itself said they are working to "inspire insurrection" and notes that they want to fire "massive .44 rounds at the heads of politicians and capitalists." [863]

Milo Yiannopoulos was banned by Patreon one day after he joined in December 2018. They released a statement saying, "Milo Yiannopoulos was removed from Patreon as we don't allow association with or supporting hate groups on Patreon." [864] He joined Patreon just days after widely circulated reports said he was $2 million dollars in debt from legal fees, employee salaries he hadn't been paying, and other expenses he racked up in his ascent to Internet infamy. So in a desperate attempt to try and raise money he joined Patreon, but was immediately denied access.

In some cases it's not necessarily Patreon that wants to ban someone, but Visa or MasterCard, who demands Patreon shut down people's accounts, or threatens to stop processing payments for Patreon all together which would completely put them out of business overnight. [865]

The Future of YouTube

For the first ten years of YouTube's existence it was an even playing field where anyone could upload videos and if people watched them and shared them, their message could be seen by millions of people. The search results were fair, and if you were looking something up the videos you would find were relevant to what you had hoped to find. The only videos that would be deleted were things any reasonable person could agree on, like pornography, animal abuse, calls to violence, etc.

People found themselves having great careers when their passion unexpectedly opened the door to huge audiences who shared their views. But the corporate conglomerates didn't realize how many people would use YouTube to counteract the mainstream media and nobody expected how popular conservative channels would become. So YouTube is scrambling to put the genie back in the bottle, and don't really care how obvious their liberal bias is, or even how much money they lose doing it. Conservative content must be reigned in or stamped out at any cost.

In the early years of YouTube only a few carefully chosen channels were monetized, but in 2012 they opened up the "Partner Program" as it's called, to anyone, allowing them to monetize their videos no matter how many (or few) subscribers or total views they had. You could start a channel, and immediately begin earning ad revenue from your videos if people watched them, but that has all changed.

Now they manually review every channel before it's allowed in the Partner Program, so their moderators look through the videos and see what kind of content someone is producing, and if they don't like it, none of the videos on the channel will ever be monetized no matter how popular they are.

Some wonder if YouTube is harming themselves financially with all these new restrictions and the mass demonetization crusade they've engaged in, but the fact is there are plenty of other "brand friendly" or pro-liberal agenda channels that they can get revenue from. After all, being a YouTuber is the number one dream job for most kids today. It's not being an astronaut, football player, or a movie star; it's literally being a YouTuber. [866]

They've also been moving away from the monetized view business model entirely. In 2017 they began offering television packages similar to a cable provider but through an Internet connection, calling it YouTubeTV. It started off in just five U.S. markets, but then in January 2019 they massively expanded to 195 markets, making their service available to 98 percent of U.S. households. [867]

They have also been slowly morphing into another Netflix by producing original content like the popular *Cobra Kai* series which is a spinoff from the 1980s *Karate Kid* movies and stars Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) and Johnny Lawrence (William Zabka). They rent a large library of popular movies and TV shows on-demand too, for just a few dollars per stream.

As one online media outlet put it, "The golden age of YouTube is over," and it will never be the same. [868] "The platform was built on the backs of independent creators, but now YouTube is abandoning them for more traditional content." [869] Countless videos once regularly discovered by curious minds are now lost in limbo. Voices opposing certain aspects of the liberal agenda have been systematically silenced. And Leftist propaganda has been artificially amplified to give the impression that their view is the correct one.

For those of us who have seen the changes made in recent years, as we look back on what YouTube once was, it's like returning to the location of your favorite dive bar to find that it's been bulldozed and replaced by a strip mall filled with a bunch of trendy stores you would never step foot in.

Author's Note: Once you finish this book, please take a moment to rate and review it on Amazon.com, or wherever you purchased it from if you're reading the e-book, to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them.

Almost all of the one-star reviews on Amazon for my last two books "The True Story of Fake News" and "Liberalism: Find a Cure" are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent hence me adding this note.

It's just more proof that liberals are losers and can't play fair, so if you could help me combat them once you're finished with this book since you actually bought and read it, I would appreciate it very much!

Thank you!

The Future of Fake News

Once “fake news” consisted primarily of made-up stories posted on cheap websites nobody had ever heard of, or websites with similar URLs to brand name outlets publishing completely fake articles hoping they’ll go viral through social media and generate a bunch of ad revenue from all the clicks. I’m sure you’re familiar with people making fake screenshots on Photoshop and posting them on social media claiming they came from news articles, text messages, DMs, or someone’s “deleted” tweet, but we’re far beyond those primitive forms of fake news and are approaching something that was once only found in science fiction films.

In Arnold Schwarzenegger’s 1987 film *The Running Man* , he was an innocent police helicopter pilot who was framed for the massacre of civilians looting a grocery store after an economic collapse, and with the help of some doctored video that aired on national television, the general public thought that he had been caught red handed murdering the people, when in fact he had refused orders to open fire on them. His face was also digitally placed onto the body of someone else at another point in the film to further sell the lie to the public.

While deceptively edited video has been a problem and can cast people in a false light and twist their statements or place them out of context, the video tricks we’re now facing are far more sophisticated. They can make almost anyone appear to do or say almost anything—just like what happened to Arnold Schwarzenegger in *The Running Man.*

These fake videos are called “deepfakes” named after the deep learning of artificial intelligence algorithms that are used to create them. This same technology had been used dating back to the 1990s in order to make it appear that Forrest Gump shook hands with President John F. Kennedy, and made John Wayne look like he was handing off a six pack of Coors Light to someone in a commercial even though he had been dead for over ten years. [870]

More recently it was used to digitally impose Paul Walker's face onto another actor's body to finish *Fast and the Furious* part 7 after he died in a car accident before the film was done being shot. [871] But unfortunately this technology isn't just being used for entertainment anymore, and people are starting to realize that in the wrong hands it can pose a tremendous danger.

In April 2018 comedian Jordan Peele released a video showing Barack Obama appearing to warn that, "We're entering an era in which our enemies can make it look like anyone is saying anything at any point at time — even if they would never say those things." Obama went on to say, "So, for instance, they could have me say things like…President Trump is a total and complete dip shit." [872]

The video then cut to a split screen showing Obama on one side and Jordan Peele on the other, revealing that he was doing the voice for Obama since he does a pretty good impression, and he was also using real-time face mimicking software in order to match his lips and facial expressions onto a digitally recreated version of Obama. It was a clever PSA to bring this kind of technology to people's attention, since at the time most people hadn't heard of deepfakes.

Two years earlier, in 2016, researchers at Stanford University posted a video demonstrating their "Face2Face Real-time Face Capture" technology, showing how by using their software and an ordinary webcam they could map a person's facial expressions onto George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump. [873] This may have been the same software Jordan Peele used for his video.

The following year a different group of researchers from the University of Washington created another fake Obama video showing him saying things that he has actually said in the past, but the video was completely synthetic and showed him in a different setting while making the statements. They released a paper explaining how they were able to do it. [874] Deepfakes like this could easily change someone's reaction to seeing or hearing something, giving a false impression as to how they feel about a certain event or issue; but this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Technology to manipulate video in such ways was once extremely expensive and required teams of people to produce, but today deepfakes can be made by amateurs on their home computers. SnapChat filters and Facebook messenger filters can now overlay different cartoon faces and other effects on someone's face in real time.

In January of 2018 someone took a video of actress Amy Adams singing "I Will Survive" and swapped her face for that of Nicholas Cage's. [875] Then in January 2019 someone made one by taking a segment of Jennifer Lawrence speaking with reporters backstage after the Golden Globe awards and put Steve Buscemi's face in place of hers. The video was so bizarre and realistic looking that it became the most viral deepfake video since Jordan Peele's Obama video, and introduced the term "deepfake" to a much wider audience. [876] A few days later Stephen Colbert had Steve Buscemi on as a guest and asked him if he'd seen the video. He joked that he had "never looked better," but underneath the laughs appeared to be a concern about what this technology was now capable of. [877]

In June 2019 a deepfake of Mark Zuckerberg was posted online showing him giving what looks to be an interview with CBS News, where he says, "Imagine this for a second: One man, with total control of billions of people's stolen data, all their secrets, their lives, their futures. I owe it all to Spectre. Spectre showed me that whoever controls the data, controls the future.” [878]

It was a publicity stunt for a futuristic art and technology exhibit in the UK, but also was meant to serve as a warning for what problems technology may cause in the near future. CBS tried to get the video removed from Facebook because the deepfake was made from an interview Zuckerberg gave to CBS News and “violated their trademark.” [879] Facebook wrestled with whether or not to remove the deepfake videos, but chose not to take any action, but their existence sparked a difficult conversation, which is what the makers intended.

The “Spectre” exhibit also commissioned the creation of a deepfake of Kim Kardashian which looked and sounded extremely realistic, unlike the Zuckerberg one which was an obvious fake. This one looked and sounded just like Kim Kardashian bragging about the power social media companies have over their users’ data, and concluded, “I feel really blessed because I genuinely love the process of manipulating people online for money.” [880]

Needless to say, she was not happy about it, and tried to have the video removed by filing copyright complaints against social media accounts that posted it. [881] But these kind of satire videos are the least of celebrities’ concerns.

Deepfake Porn

Just like many early Internet entrepreneurs were quick to use the emerging new technology to share porn— allowing people to access it from their home computer instead of having to go out and buy magazines or VHS tapes from some seedy adult video store—one of the early uses of deepfake technology was to make fake porn videos depicting famous celebrities like

Gal Gadot (*Wonder Woman*), Daisy Ridley (*Star Wars*), and Scarlett Johansson (*The Horse Whisperer*).

Celebrity deepfake porn videos were soon banned by PornHub [882] and Reddit where users were posting clips they had made of their favorite actresses. [883] While most of the videos weren't being passed off as actual sex tapes, their creation obviously caused concern for those actresses whose likeness is now appearing in realistic-looking porn videos. [884]

Another concern is that since the software to create such fakes is widely available online, people could make fake sex tapes of someone in attempts to extort money from them, threatening to post the fakes online if they don't pay up. Or scorned ex-lovers or those rejected by women could create deepfakes and post them online in order to "get back" at them. [885]

Information Warfare

When the Bush administration was planning for the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the CIA reportedly came up with the idea to create a fake video appearing to be Saddam Hussein having sex with a teenage boy. "It would look like it was taken by a hidden camera. Very grainy, like it was a secret videotaping of a sex session," a CIA official later admitted to the *Washington Post* . [886]

The CIA also reportedly discussed making a fake video appearing as if Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants were sitting around a campfire drinking alcohol and talking about their "conquests with boys" as well, but another former CIA official with knowledge of the plan said, "Saddam playing with boys would have no resonance in the Middle East — nobody cares. Trying to mount such a campaign would show a total misunderstanding of the target. We always mistake our own taboos as universal when, in fact, they are just our taboos." [887]

He was referring to the practice of “bacha bazi” which is an Afghani term meaning “boy play” that refers to sexual relationships between older men and young boys who are from very poor families or orphans and used as sex slaves by wealthy and powerful Afghanis. [888] U.S. soldiers were reportedly told to ignore such abuse because it is part of the culture in regions of the Middle East. [889] This abomination is a whole other issue, but the point is the CIA actually proposed making a deepfake of Saddam Hussein as a pedophile thinking it would incite people to rise up and overthrow him, because if such a video were real, people in a civilized culture would do just that.

Fake Photos

Nvidia, a video graphics card company, has created an AI so powerful that it can automatically change the weather in video footage, making a clip of a car driving down a road on a sunny day appear as if it was actually shot in the middle of winter with a few inches of snow on the ground and the leaves missing from the trees. [890] The same technology can take photos of cats or dogs and change them to make them look like a different breed, and can change people’s facial expressions from happy to sad, or anything in between. [891]

Nvidia’s AI can even generate realistic pictures of people who don’t actually exist by taking features from actual photos and combining elements of them together into a composite that is almost impossible to tell that it’s fake. [892] The website ThisPersonDoesNotExist.com uses this technology to display a different fake photo every time you visit it, most of them looking like HD photos of ordinary people.

AI can now create 3D models of people just from a few photographs, and while it may be fun to input a character in your favorite video game that looks just like you, the capacity for nefarious abuses of this technology are vast.

Fake Audio

In November 2016, Adobe (the creator of Photoshop) demonstrated what they called Adobe Voco, or Photoshop-for-voices, which can generate realistic sounding audio, making it sound like someone is saying something that they never actually said. The software works by inputing samples of someone's voice, and then can create fake audio files in that same voice saying whatever is typed onto the screen. [893]

Dr. Eddy Borges Rey, a professor at the University of Stirling, said, "It seems that Adobe's programmers were swept along with the excitement of creating something as innovative as a voice manipulator, and ignored the ethical dilemmas brought up by its potential misuse." [894]

He continues, "Inadvertently, in its quest to create software to manipulate digital media, Adobe has [already] drastically changed the way we engage with evidential material such as photographs. This makes it hard for lawyers, journalists, and other professionals who use digital media as evidence." [895] Google has created similar software called WaveNet that generates realistic sounding human speech by modeling samples of people actually talking. [896]

In May 2019 a group of Machine Learning Engineers released an audio clip they created using their RealTalk technology which sounded like podcaster Joe Rogan talking about investing in a new hockey team made up of chimpanzees. [897] It wasn't perfect, but if you didn't know that it was fake before you heard it, you may be fooled into thinking that it's real. The researchers admitted, "the societal implications for technologies like speech synthesis are massive. And the implications will affect everyone." [898]

"Right now, technical expertise, ingenuity, computing power and data are required to make models like RealTalk perform well. So not just anyone can go out and do it. But in the next few years (or even sooner), we'll see the technology advance to the point where only a few seconds of audio are needed to create a life-like replica of anyone's voice on the planet. It's pretty f*cking scary," the creators wrote on their blog. [899]

They went on to list some of the possible abuses this technology may be used for, "if the technology got into the wrong hands." These include, "Spam callers impersonating your mother or spouse to obtain personal information. Impersonating someone for the purposes of bullying or harassment. Gaining entrance to high security clearance areas by impersonating a government official," and "An 'audio deepfake' of a politician being used to manipulate election results or cause a social uprising." [900]

They raise some great points. What's to stop people from creating deepfakes of politicians, CEOs of major corporations, or popular YouTubers, and making them appear as if they're saying racist, hateful, or violent things, and claiming they got it from a coworker or a "friend" who secretly recorded it, or that the clip was from an old YouTube video once uploaded to someone's channel that they later deleted?

National Security Concerns

In July 2017 researchers at Harvard, who were backed by the U.S. Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA), published a report titled *Artificial Intelligence and National Security* where they detailed the growing risk of deepfake forgeries, saying, "The existence of widespread AI forgery capabilities will erode social trust, as previously reliable evidence becomes highly uncertain," and details some of the horrific possibilities that are right around the corner. [901]

The report then quotes part of an article one of the researchers wrote for *Wired* magazine about these dangers, saying, "Today, when people see a video of a politician taking a bribe, a soldier perpetrating a war crime, or a celebrity starring in a sex tape, viewers can safely assume that the depicted events have actually occurred, provided, of course, that the video is of a certain quality and not obviously edited. But that world of truth—where seeing is believing—is about to be upended by artificial intelligence technologies." [902]

The article continues, "When tools for producing fake video perform at higher quality than today's CGI and are simultaneously available to untrained amateurs, these forgeries might comprise a large part of the information ecosystem." [903]

The *Artificial Intelligence and National Security* report goes on to warn that, "A future where fakes are cheap, widely available, and indistinguishable from reality would reshape the relationship of individuals to truth and evidence. This will have profound implications for domains across journalism, government communications, testimony in criminal justice, and of course national security…In the future, people will be constantly confronted with realistic-looking fakes." [904]

It concludes that, "We will struggle to know what to trust. Using cryptography and secure communication channels, it may still be possible to, in some circumstances, prove the authenticity of evidence. But, the 'seeing is believing' aspect of evidence that dominates today—one where the human eye or ear is almost always good enough—will be compromised." [905]

Elon Musk is funding a non-profit organization called OpenAI which is trying to ensure that the creation of artificial intelligence will be "safe," but they created an AI tool so powerful they won't release it to the public out of concern that it could create such realistic forgeries and fake news articles that they would be difficult to distinguish from real ones. "Due to our concerns about malicious applications of the technology, we are not releasing the trained model," the organization wrote on their blog. [906]

Others are equally concerned. Sean Gourley, who is the founder and CEO of a company called Primer, which data mines social media posts for U.S. intelligence agencies to track issues of concern and possible threats, warns, "The automation of the generation of fake news is going to make it very effective." [907]

Nothing may be safe from the weaponization of artificial intelligence. A group of researchers at the University of Chicago developed an AI system in 2017 that could write fake Yelp reviews and even though sites like Yelp and Amazon have machine learning algorithms designed to detect fake reviews written by trolls or bots, when they unleashed their Yelp review writer on the site their safeguards had a hard time detecting the fake reviews. [908]

Ben Zhoa, one of researchers who worked on the project, said, "We have validated the danger of someone using AI to create fake accounts that are good enough to fool current countermeasures," and warned, "more powerful hardware and larger data for training means that future AI models will be able to capture all these properties and be truly indistinguishable from human-authored content." [909]

This makes the forged documents purported to be George W. Bush's service record in the National Guard or the infamous "Steele Trump-Russia Dossier" created by Fusion GPS seem like child's play. *The New York*

Observer reported that there are already multiple fake "Trump sex tapes" circulating among those working in intelligence agencies and suggested that they were created in order to "muddy the waters" in the event that a "real" Trump sex tape surfaces, which some believe was made by the Kremlin when Trump visited Russia in 2013 for the Miss Universe Pageant, for what the KGB calls "kompromat" or compromising material. [910]

Trump has insisted that even before his trip to Russia he was well aware of hidden cameras in hotel rooms there and the government's attempt to gain blackmail material on high profile individuals like himself, and made sure not to get ensnared in their trap. [911] His bodyguard testified that prior to the trip he and Trump had discussed that the Russians used such tactics and knew not to take the bait. [912]

So it's highly unlikely that a real Trump sex tape exists, but it is likely that Deep State operatives within our own CIA may have manufactured such fakes for the same reason they floated the idea of doing such a thing to Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden — to discredit Trump and use it as propaganda to fan the flames of an insurgency hoping to bring him down.

As Winston Churchill said, "A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on." [913] Nobody is safe from being smeared by deepfakes, whether they're an ordinary person who has been targeted by a jealous ex-lover, a disgruntled coworker or classmate, or whether they are the President of the United States whose political opponents or a foreign adversary want to bring down.

The other side of the coin is that if and when actual damning footage is shot of someone doing or saying something illegal or morally reprehensible, they could easily just claim the footage is fake. Perhaps half of the people would believe them, having reasonable doubt since the technology exists to actually fake it and people may have a motive to do it. We're clearly not in

Kansas anymore and only time will tell just how pervasive and damaging deepfakes will become.

Conclusion

We're in the middle of a war — an information war. It's being waged by tyrannical billion dollar tech companies against those of us who use their products and services in ways they hadn't intended or imagined. They sold us tools thinking they were toys, but we saw the potential this new technology had to enable us to defend the Republic and spread our message across the country with a few clicks of a keyboard or taps on a touchscreen. In the marketplace of ideas, we were winning; so our opponents started cheating, and despite the metaphors this is not a game, this is our life.

They don't want to just silence us online, they want to repeal the First Amendment and arrest us for "hate speech" for disagreeing with them as they aim to overthrow the United States government and replace it with a Communist technocratic super-state that's a crossbreed between the regimes in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* .

Syndicated columnist Joseph Sobran Jr. once stated, "Liberalism is really piecemeal socialism, and socialism always attacks three basic social institutions: religion, the family, and private property. Religion, because it offers a rival authority to the state; the family, because it means a rival loyalty to the state; and property, because it means material independence of the state." [914]

They want to turn Boy Scouts into child drag queens, and are encouraging people to buy sex bots instead of engagement rings. They want people to denounce God and view Christians as the enemy, while the hordes of lazy and entitled degenerates live off the labor of those who get up and go to work every morning. Most people are too distracted to see what's actually happening and are slowly becoming part of the problem.

They know more about the history of their favorite football team than they do of their own country. They're more familiar with the names and statistics of the players than they are of the people who are in charge of running the government. Sports entertainment and the latest talent shows on TV are mostly modern day bread and circus events that distract attention and divert energy from things that really matter. Our culture, our economy, and our country is at stake.

If America falls, it will never be restored. It will be relegated to the history books like the Roman Empire and other great civilizations that have collapsed. To prevent our planned destruction it's going to take hard work, vigorous study, and unwavering dedication. You don't get physically fit by going to the gym once a year. Or once a month, or even once a week! You have to go on a regular basis, and keep going! Isn't the health of our society just as important as our own physical health?

Pay close attention to what you do with your time, your talent, and your money. Get involved in your local community. Get on the school board, or city council, or at least show up once in a while to give them a piece of your mind. Maintain regular face-to-face interactions with your friends and family so you don't get trapped in the downward spiral of living your life through a screen.

Do a regular digital detox on the weekends and holidays, and give yourself time for introspection by stepping away from the endless news cycle and social media feeds to get a bigger perspective of what's going on and what's important. Maybe we have been asleep at the wheel. Maybe we took the freedoms and prosperity of living in America for granted while the enemy quietly schemed behind our backs. Well not any more!

It’s time to wake up. It’s time to get focused on the long-term goals of what we need to do in order to preserve the freedom of speech, family values, Christian traditions, and our economic security. I hope this book has helped you become more media literate so you can see how the mechanisms of information distribution function in our modern age and what their effects are.

If you found this book valuable in your journey please rate it and write a brief review on Amazon or whatever ebook store you downloaded it from, if that’s where you bought it, and tell your friends and family to checkout this book since I don’t have a major publisher backing me (I self-published this) or their marketing team to promote it. I only have my social media accounts, and you. But that’s all I need. And that’s is exactly why they are so scared of us!

Also by Mark Dice:

-The True Story of Fake News
-Liberalism: Find a Cure
-The Illuminati in Hollywood
-Inside the Illuminati
-The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction
-The New World Order: Facts & Fiction
-The Resistance Manifesto
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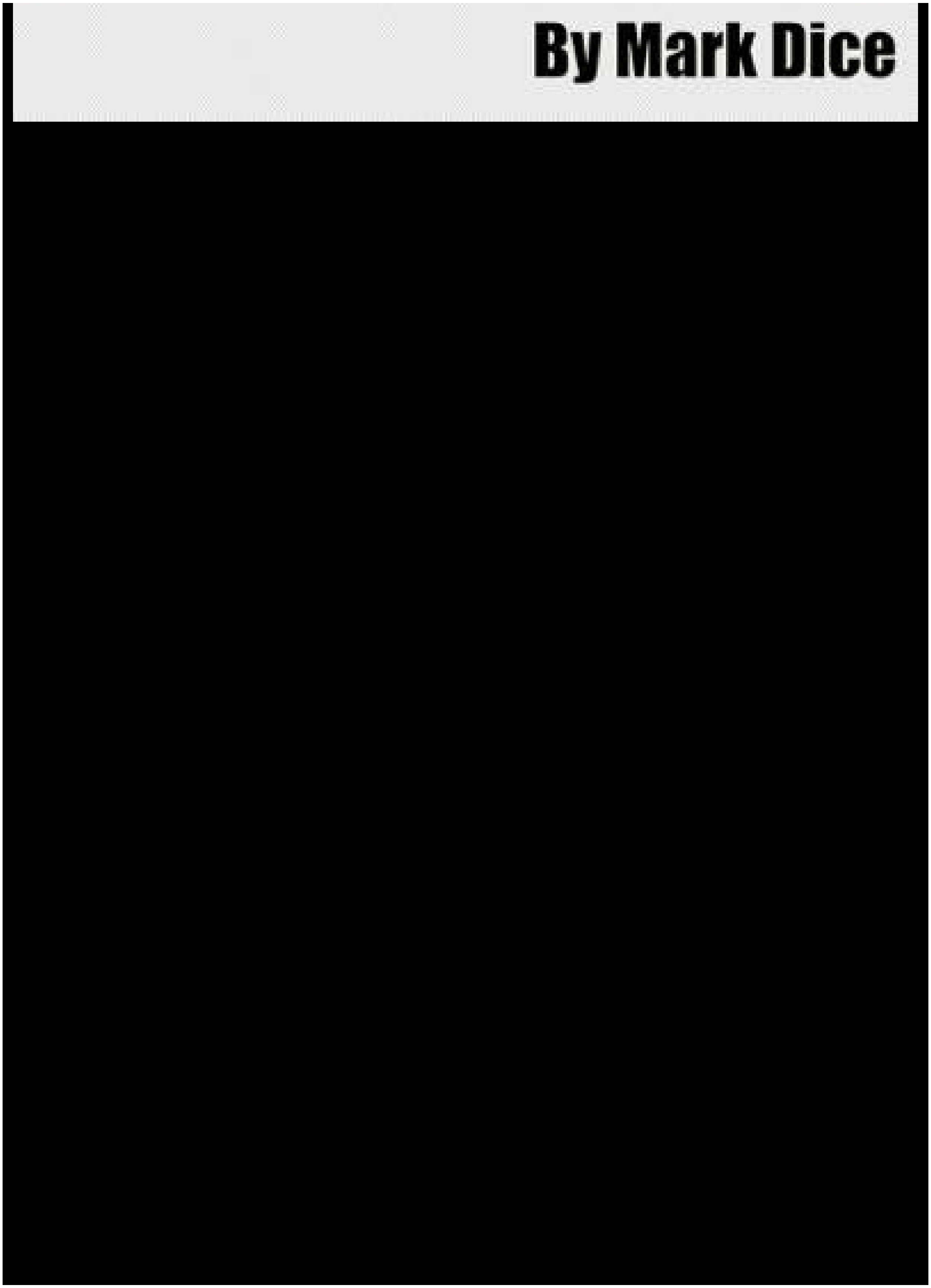
The TRUE STORY OF FAKE NEWS

How Mainstream Media Manipulates Millions



By Mark Dice

Introduction

Just one week after the 2016 presidential election, when tens of millions of Hillary supporters were still in absolute shock that Donald Trump actually beat her — and while many Trump supporters were in a similar state of surprise since he was the long-awaited anti-establishment underdog — the term "fake news" became the talk of the town and quickly turned into one of the most loaded and controversial labels in America. It wasn't just a topic that circulated in a week-long news cycle. It was an issue that got more polarizing and more complex as the weeks and months went on; and with seemingly every day that passed the 'fake news' conspiracy got deeper and darker.

Fake news stories have been around for centuries, although they had usually just been called disinformation, propaganda, yellow journalism, conspiracy theories, or hoaxes; but this modern incarnation was different. All of a sudden it was supposedly everywhere, and just cost Hillary Clinton the election.

Democrats were so shocked at Hillary's defeat that they couldn't come to grips with the fact that despite all the polls and media coverage painting a picture that Trump would surely lose — he didn't. With headlines like "Think Trump has a chance to snag GOP nomination? Analysis gives him just 1%,"[1] and "Our pollster polls model gives Hillary Clinton a 98.1% chance of winning the presidency,"[2] Hillary supporters thought her victory would be a sure thing. In a now-famous clip, Bill Maher's audience burst out in laughter at Ann Coulter on his HBO show when she predicted Donald Trump had the best chance of winning early on in the race.

Instead of accepting the fact that voters wanted a non-politician in the White House for a change, and that they wanted the illegal immigration problem fixed, Obamacare overhauled, and a conservative Supreme Court Justice to replace Antonin Scalia who had recently died — Democrats started playing the blame game, and their reasons for Hillary's defeat kept getting longer and more bizarre by the day.

First, they pointed the finger at FBI director James Comey for amending his testimony about the investigation into Hillary Clinton's email scandal when classified material sent from her was later found on Anthony Weiner's computer (then-husband of Huma Abedin, her campaign's vice chairman).[3] Then they blamed white supremacists and the KKK, or the "whitelash" against a black president as CNN's Van Jones famously cried about on election night.[4] They went on to blame Islamophobia, xenophobia, and sexism, saying that people just didn't want a "woman president." But then they came up with their most creative excuse ever. An excuse that would serve as a massive umbrella under which all other excuses could be tied together into one grand unified excuse: "Fake News."

People must have been duped into not trusting or disliking Hillary Clinton because they read lies about her on Facebook, they concluded. The culprit? Not ordinary right-wing news sites highlighting the reasons why Hillary was wrong for the job, or documenting her history of corruption and scandals. No. It was supposed "fake news" articles that were posted on little-known websites and then spread virally through Facebook by people sharing them.

The Washington Post led the charge and sounded the alarm with a headline reading, "Facebook fake-news writer: 'I think Donald Trump is in the White House because of me.'"[5] An avalanche of accusations followed, causing a moral panic in the mainstream media as they tried to warn the world about this newly discovered 'danger.' *Rolling Stone* magazine immediately echoed this new battle cry with the headline, "How a Fake Newsman Accidentally Helped Trump Win the White House."[6] CBS's *60 Minutes* declared, "In this last election the nation was assaulted by imposters masquerading as reporters. They poisoned the conversation with lies [and] many did it to influence the outcome."[7]

The Washington Post pointed out a few of the most popular (actual) fake news articles, and named the man behind them — Paul Horner, a 38-year-old Internet entrepreneur who ran CNN.com.de, CBSnews.com.co, NBC.com.co, ABCnews.com.co, and other fake news websites which were designed to look like actual news sites and used similar URLs. Stories posted on these sites were really satire, not technically fake news. But an article about anti-Trump protesters being paid duped Eric Trump and Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski, who both tweeted about it thinking it was proof of another George Soros plot, since he had been giving tens of millions to Black Lives Matter front groups so they could fan the flames of civil unrest.[8]

Paul Horner and his fake CNN, ABC, and NBC websites weren't part of a plot to hurt Hillary Clinton, or help Donald Trump in the 2016 election — they were just satire, which should be obvious to anyone who read past the first two or three sentences of the stories. And Horner's motivation wasn't political; it was financial.

Most fake news and satire websites simply want to make money from the web traffic their articles bring to the sites. The way most website advertising works is that Google Ad Sense (or other ad companies) pay them per page visit, so if the site can create sensational headlines and get lots of people to post links to their articles on Facebook it will drive a lot of traffic to their site and they get paid. While a few fake news websites did produce some viral stories during the 2016 election, as you will see, these stories had no measurable effect on voters.[9]

The liberal media, however, seized on 'fake news' publisher Paul Horner's admissions and his viral success, and used his stories as if they were the smoking gun in a huge conspiracy to spread disinformation about Hillary Clinton hoping to prevent people from voting for her, despite his stories being satire and designed to actually make fun of Trump supporters.

A few of the most viral fake news stories about the election were that "Pope Francis Shocks World, Endorses Donald Trump for President," "The Amish in America Commit Their Vote to Donald Trump; Mathematically Guaranteeing Him a Presidential Victory," "FBI Agent Suspected in Hillary Email Leaks Found Dead in Apartment Murder-Suicide," and "Donald Trump Sent His Own Plane to Transport 200 Stranded Marines."[10]

While these stories were designed to bolster Donald Trump and demonize Hillary, fake news is a two way street. The mainstream media was framing the issue as if all fake news articles were written to smear Hillary Clinton, but there were plenty of viral fake stories and memes with fake quotes attributed to Donald Trump that were made to smear him as well.

For example, one of the most popular memes of the entire election was one with a fake quote of Donald Trump that cited a non-existent interview with *People* magazine which claimed he said, "If I were to run, I'd run as a Republican. They're the dumbest group of voters in the country. They believe anything on Fox News. I could lie and they'd still eat it up. I bet my numbers would be terrific."[11] It started circulating in October of 2015 shortly after Trump announced his run for president and despite being easily debunked, people kept spreading it around for over a year and it would regularly show up on Facebook and Twitter from liberals who kept posting it, thinking it was real.

Some of the fake news trying to smear Trump was far more sophisticated than a fabricated quote made into a meme, and far more dirty. BuzzFeed published details about a 'Russian dossier' which claimed that Donald Trump had been caught on video getting golden showers (being peed on) by Russian hookers.[12] A lot of idiots on the Internet believed the story even though it was just part of a disinformation campaign designed to smear Donald Trump, and publishing the story ultimately led to BuzzFeed getting sued for defamation.[13]

In another carefully orchestrated smear campaign a fraudulent lawsuit was actually filed against Donald Trump claiming he raped a 13-year-old girl.[14] Most Trump-hating liberal mainstream media outlets wouldn't even report on the frivolous lawsuit because they knew it was a vicious hoax to defame him, but a few did, including *The New York Daily News* and *People* magazine. Word of the lawsuit circulated on Twitter and Facebook when unscrupulous websites published the allegations, knowing such an inflammatory headline would get them some web traffic.[15] Rosie O'Donnell even tweeted about it to her one million Twitter followers multiple times, along with the hashtag #TrumpRape, either believing it to be true, or just trying to spread the story around hoping to hurt him.[16]

The person behind the lawsuit was later identified by the London *Guardian* as a former producer for the *Jerry Springer* show, who has a history of being accused of making sensational and false claims about celebrities in order to get media attention.[17] But despite carefully crafted fake news stories designed to smear Donald Trump, like the 13-year-old girl rape hoax and the Russian hookers golden showers dossier, the liberal media kept claiming that 'fake news' about Hillary Clinton spread through social media had ruined the 2016 presidential election, in effect, 'stealing' it from her.

It wasn't just people who were writing satirical articles that some gullible people may have thought were true, or completely fake stories on obscure websites which hoped to hurt Hillary Clinton that were the culprits. Instead, a new scandal erupted claiming the Russians were behind the new fake news phenomenon as part of a plot to install Trump as their "puppet president." One of the biggest liberal newspapers in the country, *The Washington Post*, which was dedicated to stopping Donald Trump from becoming president, came out with an article two weeks after the election titled, "Russian Propaganda Effort Helped Spread 'Fake News' During Election, Experts Say," which claimed that the fake news stories about Hillary Clinton were part of a disinformation operation launched by the Russians in order to help Donald Trump win.[18]

Their article started off saying, "The flood of 'fake news' this election season got support from a sophisticated Russian propaganda campaign that created and spread misleading articles online with the goal of punishing Democrat Hillary Clinton, helping Republican Donald Trump and undermining faith in American democracy, say independent researchers who tracked the operation."[19]

President Obama's advisor Dan Pfeiffer tweeted a link to the article and asked, "Why isn't this the biggest story in the world right now?"[20] This new angle on the 'fake news conspiracy' now focusing on "the Russians" quickly ballooned out of control, going beyond the McCarthyism panic of the 1940s and 50s when Senator Joseph McCarthy thought there were secret Communists in Congress around every corner working to undermine the United States. A new war against fake news was just beginning that would raise important concerns about censorship and the secret agendas of mainstream media corporations, social media giants, and Internet search engines.

Why all this concern about fake news, and why immediately after the election? As you will see in this book, the Liberal Establishment was creating a smokescreen to implement dramatic new censorship policies for social media and the Internet as a whole. They concluded that if they could control the information people see and hear on social media, they could possibly prevent the kind of upset that occurred when Hillary lost the election from happening again.

As Jim Morrison, singer of the 60s rock band *The Doors,* proclaimed, "Whoever controls the media, controls the mind,"[21] and with mainstream media losing its power in recent years from countless new websites, blogs, YouTube channels and Facebook pages functioning as news outlets — the monopoly that major media companies had on the control of information for decades was collapsing. Today, anyone with a Facebook page can post an article, a picture, or a video, and in a matter of minutes it can be seen by just as many people as something broadcast on the national news by a major television network.

The media oligarchy could no longer control what information the public was consistently fed, or what information was purposefully ignored. Many people started to see this new 'fake news' scare as a veiled attempt at censorship and a bold move to try and take back control of the distribution of media, which is why I wrote this book.

The New York Post ran an article titled, "The War on 'Fake News' Is All About Censoring Real News," which said, "Scrambling for an explanation for Donald Trump's victory, many in the media and on the left have settled on the idea that his supporters were consumers of 'fake news' — gullible rubes living in an alternate reality made Trump president,"[22] and noted that this new 'fake news' scare itself was fake news, and there was a growing backlash from conservatives who saw this witch hunt for what it was.

Just a few weeks later *The New York Times* admitted, "'Fake news' as shorthand will almost surely be returned upon the media tenfold,"[23] as conservatives began to throw the term back in the face of the mainstream media. One outlet published an article cautioning against the growing fake news panic titled, "Stop Calling Everything 'Fake News'" and pointed out, "Two months ago, almost no one was talking about fake news. A Google Trends search for the term shows that it barely registered before October. Now you can hardly turn on the real news without hearing it."[24] The backlash was getting so bad that even President-Elect Donald Trump, in a now-famous outburst, called CNN "fake news" at his first press conference of 2017.[25] Some people in the audience could be heard applauding him and "You are fake news" became an instant meme.

Like never before, the mainstream media kept making mountains out of molehills and using their platforms to influence public opinion by framing everything Donald Trump did and said in a negative light. Their constant criticism and nitpicking was soon difficult to distinguish from satire or parody because much of it was so absurd, but unfortunately millions of Americans couldn’t help but get swept up in their manufactured controversies. Anti-Trump hatred would soon grow to extremes few could have imagined as the constant disinformation was whipping people into a frenzy.

Conservatives fought back and started fact checking the liberal media like hawks, and every time CNN or another major ‘news’ organization would report a false or absurdly biased story, Trump supporters would shout from the rooftops about it and use each instance to mock the diminishing credibility of mainstream media.

Liberals pushed back even harder and began labeling conservative websites, YouTube channels, and social media personalities not just as “fake news,” but as “extremists” and “racists” who post “hate speech.” Facebook began implementing “fact checkers” and issuing warnings when people would post links to certain stories or websites, as well as outright banning links to some or labeling them “spam” when someone tried to share them. The major social media platforms also implemented stricter terms of service and vowed to crack down on people posting “hateful content,” which in reality is often just mild criticism of certain liberal policies or ideologies.

YouTube began demonetizing (removing advertisements from) videos covering certain topics they deemed “not advertiser-friendly,” thus preventing ‘YouTubers’ like myself from making money off them, which for many people is a part-time or full-time job and how we pay our bills. This was just the beginning of a censorship tsunami that was heading our way. Liberals would begin going after the advertisers on conservative websites and TV shows to pressure them to pull their sponsorships.[26] Google began scrutinizing websites and YouTube channels which use their Ad Sense system to generate revenue. Anti-feminist videos, videos criticizing radical LGBT activists, or ones calling to stop illegal immigration or the massive influx of Muslim refugees were now being stripped of advertisers in droves.[27]

YouTube wasn’t just for posting funny cat videos or online tutorials anymore. It had become a powerful platform for distributing news and commentary. The ‘YouTube stars’ weren’t just entertainers, beauty vloggers and gamers anymore, but news commentators and anti-social justice warrior activists.

Many found that social media platforms weren’t just useful for communicating with friends and family, but the technology could also easily be used as a massive publishing outlet allowing literally anyone to be able to have their content seen and heard by just as many people as a major newspaper or television network, and with little or no cost at all. The news and tech conglomerates figured if they could remove the financial incentives for this rapidly growing industry of alternative media platforms and personalities, they could dramatically discourage people from putting out content and commentary, and thus reduce the growing number of conservative voices online whose audience kept growing by the day as more people abandoned mainstream media and were turning to new independent outlets and online personalities for their news and commentary.

In this book we’ll look not just at the recent phenomena of fake news and how trying to weaponize the term dramatically backfired on liberals, but we’ll also look at the power and influence of the media in general. Media today now means more than just television, newspapers, and radio. It includes social media. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat, which have become major media companies that host and distribute content in quantities previously unimagined.

We'll look at how these companies manipulate and censor the content that users post, how the trending lists function to restrict certain stories from going viral and artificially aid others to do just the opposite. We'll look at how powerful multibillion dollar networks can influence the public conversation through their agenda-setting power, and at the same time sweep important stories and issues under the rug through lying by omission. You'll see the real power mainstream media has to shape our culture, our fears, and our tastes; and how it keeps most people mesmerized by an endless stream of meaningless and mindless entertainment.

Because media has changed so dramatically with the creation of the Internet, smartphones, and social media; people don't just get their news from TV, radio, and newspapers anymore as you know. There are now countless blogs, YouTube channels, Twitter accounts, and Facebook pages dedicated to posting news and analysis — many of which rival or eclipse the reach of traditional media outlets. The distribution of content posted on these platforms has complex implications regarding how it spreads online, what role these companies have in distributing (and suppressing) user generated content, and how information flowing through these platforms influences their audience.

We'll also look at the role Google has as a search engine in filtering out certain information or websites and prioritizing others, as well as Wikipedia's role as an 'encyclopedia' that so many rely upon as a source of knowledge, and how it too is another cog in an Orwellian machine of censorship and media manipulation.

You may be surprised to hear the evidence and admissions that the CIA actually created a powerful program in the 1970s to place CIA agents and assets in high-level positions within major news organizations so they could kill stories and perpetuate government propaganda by facilitating its publication at the media outlets they controlled. It may sound like the plot of a Communist conspiracy or a science fiction film, but you'll see it's a very real covert operation that happened right here in the United States of America.

Now, let's enter the fascinating maze of media manipulation and get a closer look at the forces behind what can only be called an information war. This is a war of facts vs. fiction, of perception vs. reality, of average well-meaning and hard working people vs. shady multibillion dollar international corporations that want to control what you see, hear, and think. This is *The True Story of Fake News*.

Real Fake News

Grocery store tabloids have been a standard feature at the checkout stands for decades, and I'm not just talking about the clearly fake and satirical papers about finding "Bat Boy" or the "Redneck Vampire." Usually these rags cover celebrity gossip and just fabricate claims about cheating and breakups, but tabloids like *The National Enquirer* cover politics as well, and despite breaking a few legitimate stories like Senator John Edwards' affair and love child, they're usually just fake news that nobody ever takes seriously.

But with the development of the Internet, we've seen some shady websites pop up which are designed to look like actual news sites or have names sounding like a newspaper from a major city, and they post fake news stories in hopes of having them go viral trying to bring traffic to their site so they can earn some ad revenue or get some laughs from the joy of pranking people. These fake stories trick a small number of people, but most are smart enough not to fall for a "breaking" story coming from a "news" outlet they've never heard of. While people may succumb to their clickbait titles out of curiosity, most people can spot that the website is bogus or is just a satire site.

Many of the supposed "fake news" articles that went viral during the 2016 election weren't really 'fakes' but were just satire that some people thought were real after only reading the headline or the first few sentences of the stories. Before "the Russians" got blamed for fake news being shared on social media, it was teenagers in Macedonia, a country in Southeastern Europe once part of Communist Yugoslavia.[28] Mainstream media began writing stores about the "Macedonian teenagers" who were allegedly making thousands of dollars a month from writing fake news about Hillary Clinton in the run up to the election.[29] Macedonia was said to have been the home of various pro-Trump websites which were allegedly "cashing in" on writing fake news about things like Hillary Clinton's "imminent criminal indictment."[30]

While a small group of friends with a misguided entrepreneurial spirit in Macedonia may have registered a bunch of domain names, wrote some fake news stories that got shared on Facebook and made them some money from Google Ad Sense, no credible expert claimed that this amounted to anything more than one of a million Internet scams run by people trying to make a quick buck.

A few fake news websites the media focused on after the election were *National Report.net* and *The Denver Guardian*, both run by the same guy who calls himself Jestin Coler, who found a niche on the Internet by writing fake news stories which relied on people sharing them through social media.[31] Some of his articles include: "RFID Chip Now Being Issued in Hanna, Wyoming As Part of New Obamacare Plan," "Trump to Nominate Chris Christie to Supreme Food Court," "Man Shouts 'Allahu Akbar' Before Blowing Up Friend's Inbox," and "Atlanta Falcons Win Popular Vote, Still Lose Super Bowl." Most of them are clearly just jokes, and not 'fake news' in the true sense of the word, but a few of them were, like the one titled, “FBI Agent Suspected In Hillary Email Leaks Found Dead In Apparent Murder-Suicide,” which was posted a few days before the election.[32]

When *CBS’s 60 Minutes* aired a segment on their investigation into fake news, one of the examples they used was from a site called *NTMY News* which had the headline, “After Colonoscopy Reveals Brain Tumor, Donald Trump Drops from Race.” It’s obviously a joke about Trump having his head up his ass — get it? How could CBS possibly consider this ‘fake news?’ *This* was their evidence that social media had a fake news problem?

Another example they showed was from Celebtricity.com, which published a story titled, “Donald Trump Caught Snorting Cocaine by Hotel Staff,” which was an absurd article with no author’s name mentioned, and not even a date it was published. After about three seconds of reading the article pretty much everyone would have known that it was satire, not fake news. It began, “The Internet is buzzing today after white supremacist presidential candidate Donald Trump was caught by hotel staff snorting cocaine.” It continued, “Maria Gonzalez, an employee at the Folks INN & Suites Hotel in Phoenix, brought room service to his room witnessed it all.”[33]

It then attributes an absolutely insane quote to her, that you can’t help but laugh at, which says, “When I walked in I saw 3 naked prostitutes and maybe $100,000 in hundred dollars bills and a mountain of white powder on the table, I thought there was a dog on the floor asleep but it was his hair piece, he was bald and sweating like crazy. I asked him where to put the food and he asked me ‘did I wanna take a hit’ (snort some coke). I told him no, but I’ll take some of that money, [and] he called me a free loader, told me to get the fuck out his room and go back to my country.”[34] The article was poorly written with awful grammar and was a complete joke, but *60 Minutes* used it as another example of ‘fake news.’

Just because people click on a sensational headline from a fake news story, doesn’t mean they actually believe it! While people posting links to these stories on Facebook may have generated traffic from curious readers who clicked on them, few people doing so were actually duped by them, and most just got a good laugh. As you will see, studies were conducted into fake news about the election, and yes some of it fooled people and went viral, but it actually had no effect on how people voted.[35]

What’s far more sinister than some random fake news site or even trying to spoof a real one like the ABCNews.com.co or the CNN.com.de sites, are major mainstream media outlets that millions of people trust, actually reporting fake news, because their stories get spread far and wide across social media since they come from brand name ‘news sites’ like CNN or *The Washington Post*.

Former London mayor Ken Livingstone once stated, “The world is run by monsters and you have to deal with them. Some of them run countries, some of them run banks, some of them run news corporations.”[36] And as you will see, those are often the real monsters we need to be concerned about.

Because the liberal media perpetuated the myth that Hillary Clinton would surely become the next president, they received a devastating blow to their credibility on election night. *The Hill* ran a headline reading, “The biggest loser in 2016? The mainstream media and journalism,” and in the article stated, “There are many losers in the wake of Donald Trump’s victory. They include

Hollywood, pollsters, the Bush family and the GOP's donor class, and neocons. But the biggest losers are the mainstream media (MSM) and journalism itself."[37]

The New York Times had a headline asking "Can The Media Recover from This Election?"[38] *Fortune* magazine asked, "How Much Will Cable News' Record Ratings Drop Post-Election?"[39] Then a survey conducted by CBS and *Vanity Fair* magazine found that Americans now saw mainstream media as the most unethical business, more so than the pharmaceutical companies, and the banking industry.[40] Another survey from Monmouth University in New Jersey found that 6 out of 10 Americans believe that the mainstream media regularly reports fake news.[41]

Why weren't half of the hosts and contributors fired from CNN, MSNBC, ABC, CBS, and NBC after the election? How could these networks keep such incompetent and out of touch people on the payroll after everything they had been reporting for so long was so wrong? What's more disturbing is instead of 'cleaning up their act' after their embarrassing election coverage, the networks started getting more extreme and more biased by the day.

The anti-Trump mania exploded on cable news, the Big Three broadcast networks, late night comedy shows, and even on tech and sports websites like CNET, Gizmodo, and Deadspin when the stories had nothing to do with tech or sports at all. The liberal media was now in an existential crisis and had to try to explain to their viewers how their reporting had been so inaccurate. Instead of admitting their failures, they immediately started inventing excuses — first placing blame on 'racist white people,' and then on fake news spreading 'lies' about Hillary Clinton, and then they finally settled on one grandiose unifying conspiracy theory — that the Russians were behind it all.

One of the first things mainstream media began doing was labeling rising conservative social media stars as white nationalists or white supremacists. *The Hollywood Reporter*, *The Guardian*, *Wired* magazine, and even celebrity blogger Perez Hilton all mentioned me by name, trying to tie me to David Duke, Richard Spencer, and the white nationalist movement, even though I never said I was a supporter of the Alt-Right, and to the contrary have stated on numerous occasions that I'm not.

The Guardian's headline read, "Former Ku Klux Klan Leader and US Alt-Right Hail Election Result."[42] The article claimed, "Members of America's alt-right reacted with glee to the news of Trump's victory. The provocative conservative movement, largely active online, has been closely associated with Trump's campaign." It then quoted tweets from Alex Jones, Michael Savage, David Duke, and me! I immediately sent them a cease and desist and threatened to sue them for defamation so they removed me from the article and added a note on the bottom stating, "This article was amended on 16 November 2016 to remove a quoted individual who was mistakenly included."[43]

Another outlet also issued a retraction after I threatened legal action, saying, "An earlier version of this story incorrectly referred to Mark Dice as an 'alt-right' commentator. He is not and news.com.au sincerely apologizes for this error."[44]

The Establishment media were so furious that a whole group of social media savvy conservatives like myself were amassing huge followings that they tried to take us down using one of the oldest tricks in the liberal playbook — smearing us as racists.

One independent journalist decided to sue a reporter at Fusion, a social justice warrior cable channel, after she was accused of making a "white supremacist" hand sign, which was in reality just the “okay” hand sign which President Trump regularly uses.[45] *The Independent* in London also ran a story making the same absurd claim about the woman’s ‘okay’ gesture being a “white supremacist hand sign.”[46] The ‘hand sign’ story was laughed at online by Trump supporters who couldn’t believe how crazy it was, and some commented that it signaled the “death of journalism.”

Washington Post’s Story on Fake News was Fake News

After first blaming teenagers in Macedonia for the ‘fake news’ problem, and then ‘racist’ alt-right Trump supporters on the Internet for spreading ‘hate’ about Hillary, then came the Russian conspiracy theories about “collusion” and the Kremlin being behind all the fake news in order to supposedly help Donald Trump. It’s important to point out that *The Washington Post* first tried to link Russia to fake news articles that had circulated online. Their “evidence” for this was a new group of “experts” called PropOrNot (Propaganda or Not) who nobody had ever heard of before, and whose “members” were anonymous.[47]

The Washington Post didn’t even mention what these “expert’s” credentials were, they just claimed this unknown “group” were the “experts” who “discovered” a Russian propaganda campaign was being amplified by a list of websites and YouTube channels they had compiled. This story, with the headline “Russian propaganda effort helped spread ‘fake news’ during election, experts say” dumped gallons of gasoline on a small little fire, which then exploded into the “fake news” phenomena.

Other news outlets quickly denounced *The Post’s* story and their newfound supposed “experts” PropOrNot as McCarthyism.[48] Even *Rolling Stone*, which had previously hyped up concerns about fake news, called their story “shameful and disgusting.”[49]

After the backlash kept growing, *The Washington Post* issued a retraction and posted an editor’s note on the original story, reading: “*The Washington Post* on Nov. 24 published a story on the work of four sets of researchers who have examined what they say are Russian propaganda efforts to undermine American democracy and interests. One of them was PropOrNot, a group that insists on public anonymity, which issued a report identifying more than 200 websites that, in its view, wittingly or unwittingly published or echoed Russian propaganda. A number of those sites have objected to being included on PropOrNot’s list, and some of the sites, as well as others not on the list, have publicly challenged the group’s methodology and conclusions. *The Post*, which did not name any of the sites, does not itself vouch for the validity of PropOrNot’s findings regarding any individual media outlet, nor did the article purport to do so. Since publication of *The Post’s* story, PropOrNot has removed some sites from its list.”[50]

One site listed as a publisher of ‘Russian propaganda’ was Naked Capitalism, a finance and economic blog started in 2006, which threatened to sue *The Washington Post* for defamation if they didn’t issue a retraction and an apology. Their lawyer sent a letter to the paper, which said in part, “You did not provide even a single example of ‘fake news’ allegedly distributed or promoted by Naked Capitalism or indeed any of the 200 sites on the PropOrNot blacklist. You provided no discussion or assessment of the credentials or backgrounds of these so-called ‘researchers’ (Clint

Watts, Andrew Weisburd, and J.M. Berger and the 'team' at PropOrNot), and no discussion or analysis of the methodology, protocol or algorithms such 'researchers' may or may not have followed."[51]

The Washington Post's article even listed my friend Gary Franchi's YouTube channel, The Next News Network, as one of the outlets "spreading Russian propaganda." It turns out someone from PropOrNot sent an email to *The New Yorker* hoping to have them report on their allegations before *The Washington Post* did. Adrian Chen at *The New Yorker* would later write, "Reporting on Internet phenomena, one learns to be wary of anonymous collectives freely offering the fruits of their research. I told PropOrNot that I was probably too busy to write a story, but I asked to see the report. In reply, PropOrNot asked me to put the group in touch with 'folks at the NY Times, WaPo, WSJ, and anyone else who you think would be interested.' Deep in the middle of another project, I never followed up."[52]

He said PropOrNot's report on which sites were "Russian Propaganda" was "a mess." Chen later interviewed Eliot Higgens, a researcher who has investigated Russian fake news stories for years, who told him, "To be honest, it looks like a pretty amateur attempt. I think it should have never been an article on any news site of any note."[53] Chen went on to say that, "To PropOrNot, simply exhibiting a pattern of beliefs outside the political mainstream is enough to risk being labeled a Russian propagandist."

The Intercept, an online outlet run by Glenn Greenwald who broke the story about Edward Snowden a few years earlier, slammed PropOrNot, saying, "the individuals behind this newly created group are publicly branding journalists and news outlets as tools of Russian propaganda — even calling on the FBI to investigate them for espionage — while cowardly hiding their own identities. The group promoted by the Post thus embodies the toxic essence of Joseph McCarthy, but without the courage to attach individual names to the blacklist."[54]

Studies of Fake News Effects on Election

With this sudden concern about fake news 'affecting our election,' studies were conducted which actually proved fake news didn't swing the election or have any measurable effect on how people voted. New York University and Stanford reported that only eight percent of people were actually duped by fake news.[55] Of those eight percent who supposedly believed some fake news articles were real, it's highly unlikely those stories actually swayed their opinions at all about a candidate, and instead only reflected what they already believed. Columbia Journal Review conducted a study and found, "The fake news audience is real, but it's also really small."[56]

They also pointed out that, "the fake news audience does not exist in a filter bubble. Visitors to fake news sites visited real news sites just as often as visitors to real news sites visited other real news sites. In fact, sometimes fake news audiences visited real news sites *more* often."[57] They even asked, "Is fake news a fake problem?" and concluded their report saying that their findings, "call into question the scope of the fake news problem."[58]

Most voters got their news from TV and actual news websites, not from random stories posted on unknown websites. "Our data suggest that social media were not the most important source of election news and even the most widely circulated news stories were seen by only a small fraction of Americans," the researchers said.[59]

Even Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg admitted, "To think it influenced the election in any way is a pretty crazy idea."[60] He surprisingly confirmed what rational people understood — that Hillary supporters underestimated the amount of support for Donald Trump. "I do think there is a certain profound lack of empathy in asserting that the only reason someone could have voted the way they did is they saw some fake news. If you believe that, then I don't think you have internalized the message the Trump supporters are trying to send in this election," Zuckerberg said.[61]

Facebook's chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg agreed. When she was asked if 'fake news' played a big role in the election, she answered, "Well, there have been claims that it swayed the election, and we don't think it swayed the election, but we take those claims seriously."[62]

Even MSNBC's Joe Scarborough, a RINO Republican who hates Donald Trump, admitted, "When you look at this 'fake news,' and you see what happened up at Harvard and you hear everybody writing articles saying millennials cost Hillary Clinton the election, and dogs with three legs cost Hillary Clinton the election, and comets passing in the night — Hillary Clinton cost Hillary Clinton the election. Hillary Clinton's campaign staff cost Hillary Clinton the election."[63]

He continued, "Listen, if you care about Democrats digging out of the hole that they have put themselves in now, you've got to ask yourself — what have Democrats done to so offend Americans that they only have 11 governorships, they've lost control of the Senate, they've lost control of the House, they lost 900 legislative seats over the past six years." He concluded, "It wasn't fake news. It was something much, much bigger."[64]

His cohost Mika Brzezinski responded, "Ugh, I don't think people are ready to hear that, Joe," and of course, they weren't. Liberals were sinking deeper into a depression, unable to handle the reality that Donald Trump beat Hillary Clinton on election night 2016, and would soon be sworn in as our next president.

The Media Circus

While there is a significant portion of people who strive to stay informed on current events, aware of our history, and who regularly read multiple news sources or listen to talk radio to get a complete understanding of the pressing issues of our time; unfortunately we are up against a well-funded, ruthless, and massive media machine which, like an alien parasite in a science fiction film, is dead set on taking over the minds of as many people as possible.

As you most likely know because you chose to pick up and read this book, much of the general public have been so dumbed down that they're entertained by almost anything that allows them to turn off their brain and mindlessly sit and stare at the magical moving pictures on their TV, tablet, or smartphone. Millions binge daily on what is the equivalent of junk food for the mind.

The fact that Maury Povich has done virtually the same show conducting DNA tests to find out who the father is of some trailer trash tramp's baby five days a week for 20 years shows the low level of standards the average TV viewer has. You'd think shows like Maury Povich and Jerry Springer would be a novelty for a season or two, but they have both been on the air for over 20 years!

We have become a society filled with mindless mass media-consuming morons who can't distinguish between fantasy and reality anymore. Famed media analyst Neil Postman explains in his historic work *Amusing Ourselves To Death* that a drastic shift took place when Americans began getting their news from television instead of from newspapers, magazines and books. He noted, "under the governance of the printing press, discourse in America was different from what it is now — generally coherent, serious and rational…[but] under the governance of television, it has become shriveled and absurd."[65] Part of the reason for this is that the very nature of the television business is to get people to watch by any means necessary.

Postman points out that, "we are urged by newscasters to 'join them tomorrow.' What for? One would think that several minutes of murder and mayhem would suffice as material for a month of sleepless nights. We accept the newscaster's invitation because we know that the 'news' is not to be taken seriously, that it is all in fun, so to say. Everything about a news show tells us this — the good looks and amiability of the cast, their pleasant banter, the exciting music that opens and closes the show, the vivid film footage, the attractive commercials — all these and more suggest that what we have just seen is no cause for weeping."[66]

Even most supposed "hard news" networks today are primarily just entertainment outlets pretending to report on actual news. This becomes obvious every time a celebrity dies or an NFL player gets involved in a scandal since it's always the lead story on the evening news at all the major networks. When pop star Justin Bieber was arrested for a DUI, MSNBC interrupted a live interview with a congresswoman who was talking about the National Security Agency illegally spying on Americans to cover the "breaking news" about Bieber's arrest.[67] This is far from an isolated incident, and is instead, sadly the norm. The same media frenzy occurred when Paris Hilton was arrested for a DUI. CNN and other news networks aired live footage being shot from helicopters which followed her car down the freeway as she drove to the courthouse.[68]

The "news" is now mainly infotainment — entertainment made to look like information. The Learning Channel (now called TLC) went from airing educational programming in the 1980s and 90s to now just showing trashy reality shows like *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo* and *19 Kids and Counting*. The History Channel, which once consisted solely of documentaries about — well — *history*, slowly changed into a personality driven "reality show" network as well.[69]

But television is more than just infotainment. It's not really hyperbole to say that television to a large extent controls the world. Television introduces new words, dances, styles of dress, behaviors, attitudes, and cultural norms which are instantly absorbed and mimicked by millions. For example, shows like *Will and Grace* and *Modern Family* have been heralded by the gay community for shifting cultural attitudes towards gay people.[70] And in the 1980s *The Cosby Show* and *Diff'rent Strokes* changed the way millions of Americans viewed black people and interracial families.[71]

In the 1990s *Seinfeld* brought a few different terms into the lexicon such as, "Yada yada yada," "re-gifting," and "shrinkage;" ESPN announcer Stuart Scott's famous "boo-yah" is used by countless people as a celebratory cheer; and when Donald Trump's *Apprentice* first hit the airwaves everyone began telling others "you're fired!" The list goes on and on. The effects of television on our culture is immeasurable and since television is a tool, it can be used for either good or bad, and the more powerful a tool (or weapon) is — the greater potential for abuse, and the more devastating the effects can be if placed in the wrong hands.

A classic example of how easily large numbers of people can be manipulated by the power of the media is when H.G. Wells broadcast *War of the Worlds* on his *Mystery Theater* radio show in 1938, causing many who were listening to panic, thinking it was a news broadcast about an actual alien invasion.[72] The incident is a common case study in mass media classes at universities used to demonstrate the amazing power of this seemingly magical medium. While many may think society has evolved from such ignorance in the information age, assuming people would no longer be tricked into believing that a science fiction show was a news broadcast, the fact is, many people are just as gullible, if not more so today.

After the Discovery Channel aired a fictional show in 2012 titled *Mermaids: The Body Found* which appeared to be a "documentary" about scientists discovering a mermaid body, social media exploded with tweets and posts about how "mermaids are real" from people who thought one was actually discovered.[73] Despite a disclaimer at the beginning of the show saying it was fiction, and the cheesy 'scientists' clearly being actors along with poor quality computer generated graphics of the "mermaid," countless people actually believed that a mermaid body had been found.[74]

Other supposed "documentaries" about wildlife on Animal Planet and the Discovery Channel have also been faked or staged scenes using animals in zoos which are presented as if they've been captured on video in the wild.[75]

Some may argue that these shows are just entertainment, but the deception on supposed 'news' networks is even worse. Often the same stories are featured on the Big Three nightly news broadcasts (NBC, CBS and ABC) when they have no major importance to the country or any national significance. If a certain incident occurred or story broke that would obviously be the talk of the town, then we would expect the different networks to all lead with the same story or cover it in some fashion, but the Big Three networks regularly cover the exact same stories which aren't of national significance or interest at all. This always happens when the stories serve to reinforce or promote whatever agenda they are trying to push at the time. Out of the thousands of possible (and important) stories they could each cover every night, the pattern of the Big Three networks working in concert with each other is just too obvious to deny.

Mainstream media talking heads are just actors and actresses reading teleprompter scripts drafted by teams of writers, editors, and lawyers. Not only do the hosts and anchors have little to no control over what they say on air, but they also have little say in how they look. There are always clauses in their contracts which dictate what they wear and how they do their hair and makeup. After Megyn Kelly was given her own show on Fox News in primetime (*The Kelly File*), she underwent a series of dramatic hairstyle changed as producers were playing with her look trying to find one that audiences liked best. At one point it appears they even made her wear hair extensions to give her the appearance of having long flowing hair, only to quickly abandon the look for a short style.[76] During one of the presidential debates in 2016, her abnormally long fake eyelashes caught the attention of viewers who widely ridiculed her online, causing the topic to trend on Twitter.[77]

One reason the media circus has spiraled out of control in recent years is the constant pressure to get people's attention. With countless media outlets and social media accounts competing for clicks and retweets, most 'journalists' put being first ahead of being accurate. Carl Bernstein, one of the reporters who broke the Watergate scandal which brought down Richard Nixon, remarked, "The greatest felony in the news business today is to be behind, or to miss a big story. So speed and quantity substitute for thoroughness and quality, for accuracy and context."[78]

Prime Minister of Australia Malcolm Turnbull echoed these sentiments when he said, "It's not a 24-hour news cycle, it's a 60-second news cycle now, it's instantaneous. It has never been easier to get away with telling lies."[79]

In competing with millions of other voices all screaming for our attention, many news outlets repeatedly try to one-up each other with more and more sensational clickbait claims, hoping to get noticed. And in their desperation for attention they have all but destroyed their journalistic integrity. Back in 1985, long before reality TV and Facebook or Instagram — media analyst Neil Postman ominously warned, "When a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is redefined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby talk, when, in short, a people become an audience and their public business a vaudeville act, then a nation finds itself at risk; [and] culture-death is a clear possibility."[80]

The millions who regularly get caught up in the latest "Internet challenge" or idiotic social media fad show that this 'cultural death' is more of an inevitability than a possibility, and that is it's not only here, but it is rapidly spreading every day.

For these reasons and many more, it is critically important that we choose to resist the temptation of getting swept away in the sea of meaningless entertainment that's at our fingertips, and instead create and maintain a regular habit of staying educated and informed. While perhaps occasionally snacking on this pop culture, we must avoid, at all costs, consuming it as our main course, or we will face the same fate as if we ate a steady diet of junk food — and we will not just be watching the media circus, but we will become a part of it ourselves.

The Power of Propaganda

The media and the mechanisms for distributing information today are tools, and like most tools, if placed in the wrong hands they can be used as weapons. One of these weapons is propaganda, so we should take a close look at just how powerful it can be, and how hard it is at times to detect with an untrained eye.

In 1928 a man named Edward Bernays, who is considered the "father of public relations," published a book revealing his ingenious methods for shaping public opinion using the available media at the time (newspapers, magazines, black & white films, and radio). Television was just something that was being experimented with, and wouldn't become a major medium until over 20 years later, in the 1950s.[81]

Bernays was the nephew of Sigmund Freud, the famous psychologist, which may explain how he himself became such an expert in psychology. His knowledge of how to influence large numbers of people using the media was so far ahead of his time that still today, almost 100 years later, Bernays' methods are used as the standard operating procedure for advertisers, activists, and governments.

The American Tobacco Company (manufacturer of the Lucky Strike brand) hired him in 1929 to help promote cigarettes, and as a result of his marketing campaign he is largely credited with making smoking seem "cool." What he did was hire a group of beautiful women to light up cigarettes while they were marching in New York City's Easter Sunday Parade since women smoking at the time was taboo. He then sent out a press release claiming they lit up "Torches of Freedom" to support women's rights. *The New York Times* published an article the next day with the headline, "Group of Girls Puff at Cigarettes as a Gesture of Freedom."[82] He had created a self-fulfilling prophecy by duping newspapers into portraying women smoking as part of the growing women's rights movement, when in reality it was just a marketing ploy by a tobacco company.

Bernays is also the man responsible for the tradition of men buying women diamonds as a symbol of love and marriage. As you know, at least in the United States of America, the tradition of proposing marriage to a woman "must" be done with a diamond ring, and every Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Mother's Day we are bombarded by advertisements about buying diamonds for the women in our lives. This cultural norm, however, was artificially created by Edward Bernays after the De Beers diamond company (in reality a monopoly) hired him to promote diamonds as the standard symbol of love.

Before Bernays scheme was launched, engagement and wedding rings were just a gold band, but using his techniques of social conditioning he was able to brainwash men and women into believing that a large diamond ring was needed in order to propose marriage or to show a woman that a man loves her.[83]

When we look into Bernays' methods it becomes stunningly clear just how powerful they are, and how candid he was about this power in his book. He wrote, "Those who manipulate the unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of...in almost every act of our lives whether in the sphere of politics or business in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires that control the public mind, who harness old social forces and contrive new ways to bind and guide the world."[84]

He also admitted, "Whatever of social importance is done today, whether in politics, finance, manufacture, agriculture, charity, education, or other fields, must be done with the help of propaganda. Propaganda is the executive arm of the invisible government."[85] This "invisible government," he says, "tends to be concentrated in the hands of the few because of the expense of manipulating the social machinery which controls the opinions and habits of the masses."[86]

The expensive "machinery" he was referring to are the printing presses and film studios, as well as the large costs associated with producing and distributing newspapers and radio broadcasts at the time which was so expensive that only a handful of companies could afford to be in these businesses. It wasn't until fairly recently with the creation of computers, the Internet, smartphones, and social media that this monopoly has changed; although the multi-billion dollar mainstream media conglomerates still have enormous influence and control over the creation of content and its distribution, and are constantly trying to adapt to hold on to what was once an iron clad grip on the industry.

As Ben Bagdikian, the former dean of the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism points out in *The New Media Monopoly*, "The possibilities for mutual promotion among all their various media is the basic reason the Big Five [now six: Comcast, News Corporation, Time Warner, Disney, Viacom, and CBS] have become major owners of all kinds of media. For example, actors and actresses in a conglomerate's wholly owned movie studio can appear on the same company's television and cable networks, photographs of the newly minted celebrities can dominate the covers of the firm's wholly owned magazines, and those celebrities can be interviewed on the firm's wholly owned radio and television talk shows. The conglomerate can commission an author from its wholly owned book publishing firm to write a biography or purported autobiography of the new stars, which in turn is promoted on the firm's other media."[87]

Bagdikian points out that these multi-platform conglomerates, "have power that media in past history did not, power created by new technology and the near uniformity of their political goals"[88] and that, "Technically, the dominant media firms are an oligopoly, the rule of a few in which one of those few, acting alone, can alter market conditions."[89] He continues, "The major media socialize every generation of Americans. Whether the viewers and listeners are conscious of it or not, they are being 'educated' in role models, in social behavior, in their early assumptions about the world into which they will venture, and in what to assume about their unseen millions of fellow citizens."[90]

George Orwell warned of this same propaganda power in his classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* when he said, “All the beliefs, habits, tastes, emotions, mental attitudes that characterize our time are really designed to sustain the mystique of the Party and prevent the true nature of present-day society from being perceived.”[91]

The editors of a college textbook titled *Questioning The Media*, which I still have from my days as a student earning my bachelor’s degree in communication, point out that the major media conglomerates, “serve to define what is of political concern, of economic importance, of cultural interest to us. In short, we live in what is often described as a media culture.”[92] Even though this book is over 20 years old, it still rings true to this day.

The 1960 Presidential Debate

Television is such a powerful form of media that it is credited with being the reason John F. Kennedy became president. When he was running against Richard Nixon in 1960, television had just become a household medium and for the first time in history the presidential debates were televised. Before this they had been aired on the radio, but now Americans could *see* the debates, and that changed everything.

Marking the 50th anniversary of this historic event, *Time* magazine said, “It’s now common knowledge that without the nation’s first televised debate — fifty years ago Sunday — Kennedy would never have been president.”[93] Why, you wonder? Well, people who listened to the debate on the radio (which many did because not everyone had a television back then) thought that Nixon won, but the people who saw it on TV had a completely different conclusion. The reason was that because of the hot lights on the stage, which were needed to properly light the candidates, and because Nixon refused to put on makeup to take the shine off his face, which today everyone on TV knows is a standard practice — he looked pale, sweaty and shiny; while Kennedy had a tan from campaigning outdoors in the days leading up to the debate, and took the advice of producers and wore makeup, so he looked to be “radiating health” and confidence to the viewers watching on TV, whereas Nixon looked kind of sickly and weak.[94]

War

Over 2500 years ago the Chinese military strategist and philosopher Sun Tzu wrote *The Art of War,* which isn’t just a manual of strategies for physical battle, but also psychological operations as well. He formulated tactics to both intimidate the enemy, and to encourage people to support a conflict. Since then, war propaganda has advanced in step with technology, and now instead of a group’s leader giving an impassioned speech to their citizens in the town square about the ‘need’ to go to war, now they do it through newspapers, radio and television.

William Randolph Hurst and Joseph Pulitzer were partially, if not largely, responsible for the Spanish-American War in 1898 because their newspapers sensationalized and misreported an incident after a U.S. ship, the USS Maine, blew up in Havana harbor in Cuba.[95] The explosion was just an accident, but America's two most popular papers at the time, *The New York Journal* (owned by Hearst) and *New York World* (owned by Pulitzer) whipped the American people into a frenzy by publicizing misinformation about the explosion and blamed the Spanish for allegedly bombing the ship.[96] Both Hearst and Pulitzer used their papers to call for war, and historians often use their sensational stories about the incident as examples of yellow journalism and propaganda, but unfortunately this would become just one of many examples of disinformation being used to convince Americans to support going to war.

Both liberal and conservative mainstream media in America endlessly repeated the fear mongering false claims of the Bush administration about the (nonexistent) weapons of mass destruction Saddam Hussein supposedly had, and hyped up the looming War in Iraq as if it were an exciting plot in a Hollywood thriller. [97] A few years after the war started many people began doubting the reasons for it, and people's skepticism fueled a closer look at why we were really there.

One of the key "reasons" for going into Iraq was that Saddam Hussein was supposedly somehow involved in the 9/11 attacks, which we now know is completely false.[98] That, and he had allegedly acquired, or was manufacturing, weapons of mass destruction — WMDs. The documents that purported to show that Saddam had attempted to purchase yellowcake uranium, which is used to build nuclear weapons turned out to be forged.[99] If the documents were real, it would have been proof that Iraq had been in violation of United Nations sanctions, but for at least a year after the Bush Administration knew they were fake, they kept using them to build support for their invasion.[100] Unfortunately, every mainstream television network including liberal MSNBC seemed to support the looming war. It wasn't just the forged documents that led us to war — they were just one part of an international propaganda campaign trying to make it happen.

The CIA's British counterpart, MI6, was found to have planted propaganda pieces in the media in the UK and other parts of the world claiming Iraq had weapons of mass destruction in order to drum up support for the war in what was dubbed Operation Mass Appeal.[101] Former UN arms inspector Scott Ritter said, "Mass Appeal served as a focal point for passing MI6 intelligence on Iraq to the media, both in the UK and around the world. The goal was to help shape public opinion about Iraq and the threat posed by WMDs."[102]

The Sunday Times of London later published a story titled "How MI6 Sold the Iraq War," and said, "The Secret Intelligence Service has run an operation to gain public support for sanctions and the use of military force in Iraq. The government yesterday confirmed that MI6 had organized Operation Mass Appeal, a campaign to plant stories in the media about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction."[103]

At the onset of the Iraq War in 2003, the Department of Defense paid Iraqi newspapers to publish stories supporting the U.S. invasion which were written by Americans but appeared as if they were from Iraqis.[104] A year before the 9/11 attacks it was also discovered that soldiers from the U.S. Army's Psychological Operations Group had been working undercover at CNN and NPR (National Public Radio).[105] Once this was reported in the European press they were fired.[106]

Phil Donahue was fired by MSNBC in February 2003, less than a month before the invasion of Iraq, which he was very much against. The network claimed they canceled his show because of low ratings, but it was actually the highest rated show on MSNBC at the time.[107] A leaked internal memo said he was a "difficult public face for NBC in a time of war,"[108] thus confirming he was fired for opposing the planned invasion of Iraq.

Years later he would reveal, "This was not an assistant program director who decided to separate me from MSNBC. They were terrified of the antiwar voice. And that is not an overstatement. Antiwar voices were not popular. And if you're General Electric, you certainly don't want an antiwar voice on a cable channel that you own; Donald Rumsfeld is your biggest customer."[109] [General Electric was the co-owner of MSNBC at the time, and GE has been a major manufacturer of military products].[110]

Several years after the invasion, public opinion on the War in Iraq dramatically changed as the reasons for getting involved in it kept falling apart, but people have short memories and as the years passed, after George W. Bush's presidency ended and was replaced with Obama, the anger about the deceptions that lead to the war quietly faded. Well over four thousand U.S. soldiers have been killed in Iraq alone, not to mention the countless who have been injured, with many missing limbs and permanently disabled, all with nobody in the government or the media held accountable for the lies which caused it all.

Late Night Talk Shows

Propaganda isn't just something that's used by the news industry — it's used in comedy as well. Less than two months into Donald Trump's presidency, Jimmy Fallon was reportedly under pressure to make his show "more political" because "he's too weak on Trump."[111] He also apologized for having Donald Trump on his show shortly before the election and regretted 'humanizing' him after viewers (and the media) were outraged that Fallon was "too nice" to him.[112]

Fallon, while making regular use of Trump as a punchline, tends to shy away from politics and focuses his humor on other things like skits and games with celebrities, but since network executives felt the anti-Trump theme is what viewers want, or perhaps, that's what they themselves wanted in order to use the show as their own political weapon, Fallon was forced to turn up the heat on President Trump. Some even speculated that *The Tonight Show* was shut out of the Emmys in 2017 because Jimmy Fallon wasn't attacking Trump enough.[113]

After NBC fired Jay Leno as *The Tonight Show* host and replaced him with Jimmy Fallon in 2014, rumors were rampant in the industry that Leno was forced out because he was going too hard on President Obama. He was number one in the ratings for 20 years and still number one when he was forced out, so many people wondered why NBC would get rid of him since he was still on top.[114] Leno was the first late night comedian to take the gloves off and really start bashing President Obama. For years, most comedians treated him with kid gloves and very few of their jokes really took him to task, but after the "hope and change" wore off and was replaced by regret and despair for many Americans, Jay Leno started bashing Obama like nobody else in the business.[115]

Right after Leno's final episode, Johnny Carson's head writer Raymond Miller wrote an Op-Ed saying that most late night hosts protected Obama, and that Leno broke the mold by taking Obama to task, while "Leno's competitors haven't exactly hammered President Barack Obama, hardly a smidgen."[116] Sure, they joked about him, but it was all light-hearted humor, and nothing like the way comedians had treated previous presidents. A lot of people feel NBC got rid of Leno because he was helping turn too many people away from Barack Obama. It's interesting that immediately after Jimmy Fallon replaced Jay Leno as *The Tonight Show* host, one of his first guests was Michelle Obama who came on to promote Obamacare.[117]

Unlike Jimmy Fallon, Stephen Colbert, who took over *The Late Show* from David Letterman in 2015, made Trump-bashing a staple of his show to the point where it is an obsession.[118] President Trump is his number one enemy, and after the election he made no secret of the fact that he uses his show, not just to get laughs at Trump's expense, but to paint him in as negative a light as possible.[119] Many nights his entire monologue is about Donald Trump, and it serves as more of a nightly anti-Trump editorial than stand-up comedy. The liberal media regularly boasts of Colbert's anti-Trump rants, writing stories about them in order to bring them to the attention of those who don't watch his show.[120]

Colbert's constant pushing of the liberal agenda resulted in *The New York Post* running a story with the headline, "Colbert's 'Late Show' has become propaganda for Democrats."[121] And that's not even a secret at this point. In fact, one of the emails Wikileaks released of Hillary's campaign manager John Podesta shows that a Clinton insider was able to get Colbert to do two different segments to promote the Clinton Foundation.[122] *The Hollywood Reporter* conducted a survey and found that many conservatives quit watching his show because of the blatant liberal bias, and that he was most popular amongst Democrats and atheists.[123]

Jimmy Kimmel also uses his show as part of the anti-Trump entertainment complex, but not with the level of distain and hatred of Colbert. Kimmel also uses his show to regularly promote liberal political agendas. After his newborn son was found to have a heart defect and had emergency surgery, Kimmel gave a tearful monologue telling his viewers what happened, thanking the doctors and the nurses, but then turned his emotional story into an anti-Trump rant, blasting the President for his plan to fix Obamacare.[124] The next day *New York Magazine* said Kimmel might have "struck the final blow against the GOP health-care plan."[125]

Other late night hosts like Samantha Bee on TBS, Trevor Noah on Comedy Central, Seth Meyers on NBC, John Oliver on HBO, and Chelsea Handler on Netflix, all use their platforms to constantly push the liberal agenda and attack conservatives. There is really no debating that they're doing this, and I only mention this to encourage you to not watch them or give them one more follower on social media. But if you still have any doubt that comedy can be a vehicle for political propaganda, just keep reading.

In an interview with CNN in 2008, Chevy Chase openly admitted that he used his position on *Saturday Night Live* back in the 1970s for propaganda purposes. One of his skits was playing then-President Ford, who was facing off against Jimmy Carter in the 1976 election, and Chase admitted, "I just went after him. And I certainly, obviously my leanings were Democratic and I wanted Carter in and I wanted [Ford] out, and I figured look, we're reaching millions of people every weekend, why not do it."

Alina Cho, the CNN reporter interviewing him, responds, “Wait a minute, you mean to tell me in the back of your mind you were thinking, ‘Hey I want Carter?’”

Chase responds: “Oh, yeah.”

Cho: “And I’m going to make him [Ford] look bad?”

Chase continues, “Oh yeah. What do you think they’re doing now, you think they’re just doing this [mocking Sarah Palin] because Sarah’s funny?,” talking about *SNL* skewering her when she was John McCain’s running mate that year. He continued, “I think that the show is very much more Democratic and liberal-oriented, [and] that they are obviously more for Barack Obama.”[126] Many people actually credit Tina Fey’s depiction of Sarah Palin on *Saturday Night Live* with being largely responsible for people seeing her in a negative light.[127]

Since John Oliver uses his HBO show *Last Week Tonight* as more of a political soapbox than a place for comedy, some people are actually crediting him with influencing U.S. legislation, court rulings, and American culture. The media has actually dubbed it, ‘The John Oliver Effect.’ *Time* magazine actually ran a story titled, “How the ‘John Oliver Effect’ is Having a Real-Life Impact,” and detailed some of his political activism and its real world consequences.[128] *Fortune* magazine says the comedian’s impact is no joke and that his show “could very well be the envy of most newsrooms around the country.”[129]

Agenda-Setting

The mainstream media often steers the public conversation by giving constant coverage to certain stories which reinforce the ideologies they are trying to promote. They’ll often choose an isolated incident that’s making news in the local community where it happened, and while it has no real national significance, the major networks will ‘coincidentally’ determine it should be one of the top stories in the country and then sensationalize it so the incident then becomes a widely talked about topic.

These stories often include rare police brutality incidents involving a white police officer and a black suspect. But when it’s a white officer and a white victim, or a black officer and a white victim, the incidents remain local stories and don’t get national attention. Similarly, if a celebrity happens to call a gay or transgender person a derogatory name, then the big networks all have panels of pundits complain about it for hours, days, or even weeks on end to emphasize how ‘hateful’ and ‘dangerous’ such language is.

When these mountains out of molehills are turned into the top stories on the evening news of the Big Three broadcast networks (ABC, NBC, CBS) it doesn’t take a professional media analyst to see a pattern and realize there is coordination among these companies behind the scenes to decide which topics will be the “top stories.” It’s statistically impossible that the Big Three would regularly choose the same little-known local stories from the newswires to all report on nationally. Many events of the day warrant being the top stories on all networks, but most do not and shouldn't make it any further than their local news channels, yet they regularly get the national spotlight, and always when they fit the current agenda of the time.

The technical term for what they're doing is called agenda-setting. They magnify selected stories and topics through their constant coverage and endless panel discussions about every little detail. Talking for hours on end about the stories creates a self-fulfilling prophecy by building certain instances into major issues, and by treating them as if they *are* major issues when they are not, and getting people to talk and think about them so much, they then *become* major issues.

As television became part of everyone's lives, a study was conducted during the 1968 presidential election called the Chapel Hill Study, which showed the strong correlation between what people thought were the most important election issues and what the national news media repeatedly reported were the most important issues.[130] It basically showed that instead of just reporting on the news, the networks were actually influencing what people thought *was* news. Since then, hundreds of studies into the agenda-setting power of the mainstream media have been conducted which consistently show the immense power the industry has to shape public opinion and not only influence what people think about, but *how* they think about it.[131]

Aside from agenda-setting, the major networks also frame topics in a certain light trying to influence how they are perceived. Through their carefully selected panelists and pointed questions, they can easily paint a person or issue in a positive light or a negative one.

For example, during the height of the Black Lives Matter protests in 2016, the liberal media always portrayed the protests (and riots) as a civil rights movement on par with Martin Luther King's of the 1950s and 60s, consisting of people who were fighting against an 'epidemic' of white police officers shooting 'innocent' black men. In reality, the vast majority of black men shot and killed by police are armed and dangerous thugs with criminal histories, but those facts are ignored and the incidents are always framed as another 'innocent' black man who has been 'murdered' by police because 'they're all racists.'

The media likes to take rare and isolated instances of officer involved shootings and magnify them to give the appearance that there is a nation-wide epidemic of 'racist' police officers who are gunning down innocent young black men, thus adding fuel to the fire of black power groups and further straining race relations in America. People like Travyon Martin and Michael Brown are turned into celebrities from the nonstop coverage. Their names even trend on Twitter on their birthdays and the anniversaries of their deaths.[132] Leftist organizations had signs and T-shirts printed with their faces on them which people wore to protests and they are revered as if they're Martin Luther King or Tupac Shakur.

CNN and MSNBC love to give airtime to any Republican who expresses sympathy for a liberal cause. Congressmen who are completely unknown outside of their own small districts are held up as examples of a "growing trend" of "resistance" against conservatives when they speak out against members of their own party, when in reality, most of the time they're just an eccentric member of the House of Representatives with no national influence at all.

Normalizing Insanity

Radio talk show host Michael Savage released a book in 2006 titled *Liberalism is a Mental Disorder*, and it's unclear if he coined the phrase or if he just used it for the title of his book because it was being used regularly by conservatives. But whoever came up with it, it's more than just a joke, it is an empirical fact, and unfortunately that mental disorder is getting progressively worse as those affected by it are embracing and promoting behavior and policies so bizarre, it seems like their agenda is a plot out of a science fiction horror film. What's worse is the mainstream media is trying to normalize insanity, and at the same time demonize anyone who doesn't accept it.

One of these agendas is trying to destroy any distinction between men and women, and implement a new "genderless society." Transgender activists like Riley J. Dennis and Zinnia Jones are promoting the idea that 'some women have penises' and 'men can menstruate.'[133] *The Charlotte Observer* published an editorial saying that women and girls need to get used to sharing bathrooms and locker rooms with people who have "different genitalia" than them and concluded that, "Yes, the thought of male genitalia in girls' locker rooms — and vice versa — might be distressing to some. But the battle for equality has always been in part about overcoming discomfort — with blacks sharing facilities, with gays sharing marriage — then realizing that it was not nearly so awful as some people imagined."[134]

Transgenderism is now being celebrated as if it's cool and special. At the 2015 Golden Globe Awards, Amazon.com's original series *Transparent* was given two awards, one for best TV series, and another for best actor. In the show, Jeffrey Tambor plays a retired college professor who, in his late 50s, decided he wanted to live as a woman. Critics hailed the show saying it was "making history."[135] That same year ESPN gave Caitlyn Jenner the "courage" award at the ESPYs, an award show that's supposed to be about sports.[136]

The December 2016 edition of *National Geographic* put a transgender 9-year-old 'girl' on the cover, who is actually a biological male.[137] And various Hollywood celebrities appear to be raising their kids transgender or are defying the social norms of boys and girls. Charlize Theron has been photographed with her son wearing dresses and other girl clothes on numerous occasions.[138] Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie have been dressing their daughter Shiloh in boy's clothes, making many wonder if they're raising her as a boy.[139] And Will Smith's teenage son Jaden regularly wears women's clothes to 'challenge' gender norms.[140]

It's not just people who want to switch genders who are being held up as heroes — they are only one part of what's being called the "gender revolution." The state of New York now recognizes 31 different genders, *thirty-one!* Not just male and female, but a whole list, including gender fluid (meaning sometimes male and sometimes female), androgynous and gender-nonconforming (which means neither male nor female), and a whole bunch more like 'pangender,' 'two spirit,' and 'gender gifted,' whatever the Hell those are.[141]

Instead of referring to these people as 'he' or 'she,' there are now new pronouns including 'ze,' 'xe,' 've,' 'tey,' 'hir' that they demand to be called. Not only are these legally recognized genders in New York (and probably California soon as well), but if employers or landlords don't call these people by their "preferred pronouns" they can be fined for discrimination! The city of New

York warns, “refusal to use a transgender employee’s preferred name, pronoun, or title may constitute unlawful gender-based harassment.”[142] Civil penalties up to $250,000 may be issued for “violations” of willfully “mispronouning” someone.[143]

California governor Jerry Brown signed a similar bill into law in October 2017, which made it a crime for healthcare workers to “willfully and repeatedly” decline to use a patient’s “preferred name or pronouns.”[144] Violations can result in a $1000 fine or up to a year in jail.[145] How much longer until similar laws are put in place for teachers, business owners, or everyone?

In 2014 Facebook increased the gender options from just male and female to include 58 (yes *fifty-eight*) different choices, and then felt they didn’t include enough so they changed the entry field from the list of fifty-eight options to a blank box so users can just make up their own.[146] The cover of *Time* magazine in March 2017 featured an “agender” person (someone who claims to be neither male, nor female, even though this person is a biological female with a uterus and two x chromosomes). The caption read “Beyond ‘He’ or ‘She.’ How a new generation is redefining the meaning of gender.”[147] This insanity isn’t just being promoted on some little-known fetish website, this is *Time* magazine.

Of course gay and bisexual people are hailed as heroes today, and every time an actor or musician “comes out” it’s major news as the media celebrates their sexuality as if it’s some kind of special achievement. Fortune 500 companies are increasingly including gay themes in their commercials for products like Campbell Soup, Coca-Cola, Starbucks, General Mills, Tylenol, and many others, hoping to normalize the behavior by repeatedly exposing people to it.[148]

Even Disney has been introducing gay characters in their shows beginning in 2014 with *Good Luck Charlie*, which was the Disney Channel’s most popular show at the time.[149] Soon after that, the Disney-Owned ABC Family Channel (now called Freeform) included a same-sex kiss between two thirteen-year-old boys on *The Fosters*.[150] The show’s creator and executive producer Peter Paige (who is a homosexual) bragged that it was the youngest gay kiss on television in U.S. history.[151] Disney’s live-action version of *Beauty and Beast* (2017) also included a gay couple.[152] And there is increasing pressure by liberals to have Disney cartoons star gay characters.[153]

Not even *Star Wars* is safe from the gay agenda. At the end of 2015 when *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* was released it brought the film franchise back into the spotlight, and Mark Hamill, who plays Luke Skywalker, decided to come out and say that Luke might be gay.[154] The producer JJ Abrams said he would like to include a gay character in a future episode.[155] Of course, all of this is reported in the mainstream media as if it’s a good thing as newscasters celebrate such “achievements.”

The liberal media industrial complex wants to make Sodom and Gomorrah seem like it was populated with Puritans. If you’re not going to be bisexual or a gender bender then they at least want you to be a sexual deviant. Foul-mouthed skanks are always promoted as role models for young girls to emulate. Beyoncé, Kim Kardashian, Katy Perry and Lady Gaga all promote rampant sexual promiscuity, materialism, and reckless lifestyles, and are unfortunately idolized by millions of impressionable teenage girls. Holding onto one’s virginity and having committed and monogamous relationships are frowned upon and seen as old-fashioned and boring.

Recently the media has even been glorifying “Eyes Wide Shut” sex parties that are now regularly held at a growing number of sex clubs across the country where strangers wearing Venetian masks gather to have sex with each other.[156] While sex before marriage went from being taboo to now the social norm (as is having sex partners numbering in the dozens) — in the not-so-distant future we may likely see the taboo of sex clubs, swinging, and orgies broken as well, and such activities may actually be considered just as normal as one night stands by future generations.[157]

None of these cultural shifts would be taking place without the media constantly exposing people to such behaviors because through psychological desensitization, as people are repeatedly exposed to something, no matter how offensive, they gradually begin to accept it as a normal part of life — that’s the power of propaganda.

Lying by Omission

Aside from making mountains out of molehills to promote certain agendas, the mainstream media regularly lies by omission, purposefully ignoring important stories they don't want people to know about. So, while at the same time they're having endless panel discussions and rehashing the same story every night for a week or sometimes months, absent from that airtime are important topics that should actually be discussed at length and reported on in detail with the network's resources to ensure a large number of people hear about them; but covering those stories would be counterproductive to their agenda.

Pulitzer Prize wining writer Nicholas Kristof made a profound statement that illustrates the power and the danger of ignoring important stories when he was talking about the War in Darfur, Africa, where an estimated 300,000 people died from ongoing fighting between different tribes in the Sudan. "The news media's silence," he said, "particularly television news, is reprehensible. If we knew as much about Darfur as we do about Michael Jackson, we might be able to stop these things from continuing."[158]

The New York Times lied to millions of Americans for over a year by withholding all stories about the NSA's mass-surveillance of Americans after the editor-in-chief had a meeting at the White House where the Bush administration asked him to keep quiet about it.[159] *The New York Times* couldn't stop their own reporter James Risen from releasing his book, *State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration*, which contained detailed revelations of the domestic spying operation, and because *The Times* didn't want to be scooped by their own reporter's book, they reluctantly published a story on the massive illegal eavesdropping program being conducted by the NSA and even admitted they sat on it for a year.[160]

The decades of blackouts regarding the Bilderberg Group's annual meeting and the weird activities that go on inside the Bohemian Grove every summer can only be explained by an overt effort to keep these topics out of the national news in the United States.[161] Certainly they're newsworthy and interesting topics that you would expect to be making headlines and included in the nightly news on the big television networks, but it's as if they don't exist.[162]

When every June, one hundred or so of the world's most powerful people gather in a fancy hotel surrounded by armed guards for three days to discuss geopolitics and the global economy, certainly it's something significant that should be reported on. But only in recent years with word of the Bilderberg Group spreading through social media have some national outlets begun to mention it, with usually nothing more than a fifteen second segment or one lonely news article online that's buried at the bottom of the page.[163]

A British newspaper tycoon named Lord Northcliffe, who founded *The Daily Mail* and *Daily Mirror*, is often credited with having said, "News is what somebody somewhere wants to suppress; all the rest is advertising."[164]

Censoring Leftist Violence

During the 2016 presidential campaign when peaceful Trump supporters kept being assaulted as they were leaving Trump rallies or targeted on the street for wearing their red "Make America Great Again" hats, most incidents were only briefly covered in local papers or by online conservative outlets.[165] These politically motivated attacks weren't just rare or isolated incidences, they were part of a disturbing pattern that was ignored by the liberal media, despite videos and photos of the attacks going viral online.[166]

The mainstream media is also always reluctant to call politically motivated riots what they are when leftists instigate them, and instead usually just call them 'protests' when they're perpetrated by Black Lives Matter supporters, college students trying to prevent conservative speakers from holding their events, and even in the case of leftist anarchists rioting after Trump's inauguration.

In Ferguson, Missouri, the birthplace of Black Lives Matter, Michael Brown's stepfather urged an angry crowd to "burn this bitch down" after a grand jury decided not to indict officer Darren Wilson for shooting and killing Brown, the 6-foot-4, three hundred pound thug who attacked him after being confronted shortly after robbing a convenience store.[167] As I'm sure you recall, the lawless thugs rioted and looted liquor stores, broke into hair salons to steal weaves which are popular in the black community, and set local businesses on fire.[168] CNN host Jason Carroll admitted that the network chose to censor footage of people rioting in Ferguson, because it didn't fit with how they were trying to frame their coverage.[169]

Anti-police hatred boiled over in July 2016 when a black supremacist opened fire on police officers in Dallas, Texas during a Black Lives Matter march, killing five officers and wounding nine others. The perpetrator was a 25-year-old black man who was incited to violence from the mainstream media continuing to paint police as racists who regularly kill African Americans and get away with it. This horrible tragedy was in the news for just a few days, and then it was quickly forgotten. Many people started comparing the Black Lives Matter movement to "the black KKK" and began labeling them a hate group, but the liberal media continued to frame them as if they were a modern day civil rights group, despite regular violence at their events, chanting about killing cops when they marched, and now a Black Lives Matter-inspired terrorist attack on police officers.

When Milo Yiannopoulos was scheduled to speak at U.C. Berkeley, leftists wearing black ski masks began rioting, smashing windows in school buildings and setting things on fire, which led to Milo's speech being canceled for safety reasons. One commentator on CNN actually said he thought that Breitbart News and Milo secretly organized the riots themselves as a false flag in order to get him more publicity.[170] He just couldn't bring himself to admit that liberals were regularly using violence to silence and intimidate conservatives.

When we began seeing the rise of Antifa, which are leftist anarchists who wear all black (including ski masks) and see themselves as “freedom fighters” who embrace violence and assault Trump supporters and anyone who supports Conservatism (or as they call them “Nazis”), the liberal media compared them to American patriots who stormed the beaches of Normandy on D-Day.[171] Many in the liberal media framed conservative ideas as ‘violent’ and claimed that Antifa’s violence was ‘ethical’ because they aimed to stop ‘hate speech.’[172] Antifa literally look like ISIS terrorists and should be declared a terrorist organization, but for months the mainstream media kept ignoring them and the only place you would even hear of Antifa was on social media by people who were posting videos and photos of their increasingly violent acts.[173]

Ignoring Illegal Immigrant Crimes

While the majority of illegal immigrants who snuck into the United States did so to seek a better life for themselves and their families, unfortunately an extraordinarily high number of them have ties to Latin American gangs or bring the lawless mentality of their own countries to ours. The fact is, each year illegal aliens commit countless serious crimes — from human trafficking, to violent assaults, rape and murder; and most of these crimes are only reported on the local news in a 15 or 30 second segment.

Department of Justice statistics reveal that one out of every four federal prison inmates are actually foreign-born.[174] But a source within Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) revealed that before the Trump administration the federal government did not keep statistics on illegal immigrant crime.[175]

To make things worse, in 2015 President Obama’s Justice Department released 20,000 convicted criminal illegal aliens back onto the streets of the United States, instead of deporting them.[176] These weren’t just undocumented immigrants, but people who were charged *and convicted* of serious crimes, including 12,307 for drunk driving, 1,728 for assault, 216 for kidnaping, and over 200 for homicide or manslaughter, according to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).[177] Such an egregious miscarriage of justice should have led to congressional hearings and indictments of government officials for putting American citizens’ lives at risk, but their release received little attention so hardly anyone even knows about it.

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz said, “These are not just numbers. These are individuals in this country illegally who were arrested, prosecuted and convicted. But instead of removing these criminals, ICE put them back on American streets.”[178] How could this not create a national outrage? How could this not be the top story in the country for weeks? 200 convicted killers, who aren’t even citizens of our country, were set free from prison and allowed to walk among us again! We regularly hear the media warning about “climate change” or saying we need more “equality” or “diversity,” but why isn’t the fact that hundreds of convicted killers have been released back onto our streets a major story, especially when they’re here illegally?

The media doesn't just systematically ignore the crimes of illegal aliens, they also ignore the massive burden they put on the criminal justice system, the healthcare system, and our public schools. The city of Los Angeles, for example, paid over 1.3 billion dollars in welfare to illegal aliens between 2015 and 2016 alone.[179] There are also concerns that non-citizens may be voting in elections.[180] An investigation in Ohio found 385 non-US citizens registered to vote, and 82 of those people actually did vote.[181]

Thankfully the Trump administration is finally taking the dangers of illegal aliens seriously, but the mainstream media continues to ignore the serious and costly problems of our broken immigration system and actually demonize anyone who wants to enforce laws that have been on the books for decades.

Anti-White Racism

While giving nonstop coverage to incidents of alleged racism committed by random white people, police officers, or businesses, the major news networks do their best to never report on racist black people who commit hate crimes against whites. They want people to believe that racism is a one-way street and that only white people can be racist, when in fact many in the black community harbor hatred for whites and frequently commit hate crimes against them.[182]

For example when a Nation of Islam member gunned down three white people in Fresno, California because he hated whites, the story barely made a blip on the mainstream media's radar.[183] At San Francisco State University, a black student was caught on video assaulting a white student simply because he had dreadlocks. The black person was upset that a white person had a 'black hairstyle' and claimed it was "cultural appropriation."[184] Mainstream media ignored the story, but if a white student attacked a black student because they didn't like their hair, it would have been the story of the week all across the country.

In New York City, a black man was arrested for trying to shove a random white person onto the tracks of the subway train because he "hated white people."[185] A group of black thugs were caught on video beating up a white man at an intersection in Chicago yelling, "You voted Trump," and then stole his car.[186] In Kansas City, Missouri, a group of black teens asked a random white man waiting at a bus stop who he voted for, assuming he was a Trump supporter because he was white, and then proceeded to start punching him.[187] These are not just rare isolated incidents of violence, but are part of a disturbing pattern of racist hate crimes against white people.[188]

After a black man shot up a white church in Tennessee during their Sunday service to get 'revenge' for white supremacist Dylann Roof's massacre at a black church two years earlier in South Carolina, it was barely mentioned in the media. *Newsweek* actually said that racist 'alt-right conspiracy theories' claimed the attack was under-reported because the shooter was black and targeted white people.[189] *The New York Times* buried the story on page 14 and didn't even mention the shooter's motive.[190] Most Americans are completely unaware of the incident, but painfully remember the months of coverage after the Confederate flag-loving Dylann Roof opened fire inside an African American church, which sparked the beginning of the Confederate flag being banned and even *Dukes* *of Hazzard* reruns being pulled from TV because the Duke boys' car, the General Lee, has the flag painted on it.[191]

In late 2013 a disturbing trend surfaced when random and unsuspecting white people were being sucker-punched in the face by black kids hoping to knock them out.[192] It was dubbed the "knockout game" or "polar bear hunting" (polar bear being a slang term for white people), and the victims were of all ages, including senior citizens, chosen at random, when they were just walking down sidewalks of city streets, simply because they were white. Some of the incidents were captured on video by nearby security cameras, and some of the perpetrators' friends videotaped the attacks themselves and posted the footage on social media or World Star Hip Hop, a website that caters to black fight videos.[193]

Most of these attacks were only reported on the local news where they occurred, and they usually left the racial elements out of their stories. It wasn't until word of these incidents began spreading through social media that the 'knockout game' phenomenon, and its anti-white racist patterns became clear.[194]

A black serial killer in Kansas City murdered five random white men, four of them on biking and hiking trails over the course of a few months in 2014, by walking up to them and shooting them in the back of the head.[195] There was no motive for the attacks other than he wanted to "kill all white people," as he had admitted to police while in custody during a previous incident involving harassment charges. Have you heard about this story? Probably not.

After four black thugs were arrested in Chicago for torturing a mentally handicapped white man while broadcasting it on Facebook Live, the disturbing video went viral on social media and then mainstream media reluctantly covered the incident briefly, once, and then never made any mention of it again.[196]

If it had been white perpetrators torturing a black man while broadcasting it on Facebook, it would have stayed in the news cycle for weeks, perhaps months. The networks would have devoted prime time specials to their "exclusive" interview with the victim, and he would have become the left's poster boy and rallying cry against racism and hatred perpetrated from white people. We would have heard his name as often as Trayvon Martin or Michael Brown, but instead this incident, and the victim, was immediately forgotten.

Shepard Smith, a liberal host at Fox News, cut off a reporter mid-sentence when he was reporting on this crime after he brought up the fact that many were concerned that the Black Lives Matter movement were fanning the flames of anti-white racism and might have helped create an environment which incited the perpetrators.[197] "Wait, wait, wait, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt. The police chief made clear what this was…let's leave the politics of this alone," Smith interjected.[198]

Shepard Smith also cut off Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal while he was live on the air commenting on a black perpetrator who ambushed three police officers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, killing them for Black Lives Matter.[199] Jindal was saying, "It is time for folks across party lines, across ideological lines, to condemn this violence, to condemn this insanity, we've got to come together, we've got to say that all lives matter. It doesn't matter what color you are, black, white, brown, red, it doesn't matter, all lives matter. We've got to protect and value our police."[200]

Smith interrupts him, saying, “Governor you know that that phrase you just used is one that’s seen by many as derogatory, right? (referring to ‘All Lives Matter’) I just wonder why it is that you used that phrase when there’s a certain segment of the population that believes it’s a real dig on ’em?”

Jindal responded, “Well, Shepard, it’s not meant to be. The point is we’ve got to move beyond race. Look, these police officers, these are the men and women that run towards danger, not away from it, so that we can be safe. It is time for us to be unified as, as a country. We’ve got to look beyond race. I think that’s one of the dumbest ways for us to divide people. It’s one of the dumbest ways to for us to classify people, or categorize people. We shouldn’t be divided, we do need to be united. These are police officers — they don’t care whether you’re black or white, they will run towards danger to protect you. That’s what they swear, that’s their duty, that’s what they do first. These are heroes.”[201]

While most major media cover-up anti-white racism, others regularly try to paint all white people as being racist. *The New York Daily News* hired Shaun King in 2015 as their “senior justice writer,” a man who for all intensive purposes looks white, but identifies as black and has dedicated his life to exposing the “evils” of white police officers and “white privilege” in America. His columns primarily consist of him putting out slanted stories filled with half-truths and innuendo about how white people are constantly causing countless problems for black people in America today. He even called the Boy Scouts Jamboree a “white supremacist rally.”[202]

Censoring “Radical Islamic Terrorism”

Because of Barack Obama’s Muslim roots and his desire to craft the narrative of his legacy to give the impression that he was the president who ‘helped bring peace’ to the world, he did everything he could to downplay the dangers of radical Islam, and of course the liberal media had his back and followed his lead.[203] For example, the attack at Fort Hood, Texas in 2009 by a Muslim U.S. Army major who shot and killed 13 people and injured more than 30 others was labeled “workplace violence” despite the fact that the gunman had been exchanging emails with al-Qaeda leader Anwar Al-Awlaki.[204]

Networks also largely ignored the fact that one of the biggest mass shootings in American history at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida in 2016 was carried out by a radical Islamic terrorist who told a 911 operator he was doing it for the Islamic State.[205] The gunman killed 49 people for ISIS, but the Big Three TV news networks just referred to the shooter as a “lone gunman,” ignoring his true motivation for the attack which wasn’t just a hatred of gays, but was actually fueled by his extremist Islamic beliefs.[206]

When the FBI released transcripts of his call to 911 they redacted all references he made to Islam, ISIS, and Allah.[207] Only after outrage from members of Congress over the censorship did the FBI release the actual transcript.[208] Speaker Paul Ryan denounced the FBI’s cover-up saying, “We know the shooter was a radical Islamist extremist inspired by ISIS. We also know he intentionally targeted the LGBT community. The administration should release the full, unredacted transcript so the public is clear-eyed about who did this, and why."[209]

A former senior intelligence official also revealed that President Obama repeatedly ignored warnings in 2011 and 2012 about the growing threat of what would become ISIS in order to perpetuate his re-election narrative that he was helping bring an end to the War on Terrorism.[210] He even infamously called ISIS the "JV Team" (Junior Varsity) downplaying the danger they pose, which he said was "contained."[211] Obama wanted his legacy to be that of the president who ended the wars in the Middle East, so he not only kept downplaying radical Islamic terrorist activity in the United States and around the world, but kicked the can down the road so he could pass the problem off onto the next administration.[212]

When President Trump said that there are terrorist attacks that happen but people don't know about them because the media won't report them, he obviously meant they won't report on them for more than a 15 second blurb or that they might cover the story one time and then forget all about it. However, the media pretended to take him literally,[213] when obviously he meant that several instances were *under-reported* and that relatively few people sensed the devastation and danger due to such little coverage.

When radical Islamic terror attacks occur in Europe and the United States and are only briefly covered before the media reverts back to their constant complaining about Trump, most people quickly forget about them or may not even hear about them at all.

George Orwell's Memory Hole

In George Orwell's classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* he coined a variety of phrases which describe different aspects of life under the totalitarian "Big Brother" regime. One such term, a *memory hole*, refers to quietly deleting or altering news stories in order to make it seem as if they were never changed, or never even existed in the first place.

One scene in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* depicts the lead character Winston Smith editing newspaper articles that had already been published (which was part of his job at the "Ministry of Truth") to change what they said, and then new ones were printed to replace the originals, which were all confiscated and destroyed, leaving no evidence of what they actually said. The information was said to have disappeared down a "memory hole" because as the main antagonist O'Brien later reveals to Winston, 'he who controls the past controls the future, and he who controls the present controls the past.'

Any information the government (called the Party in the book) didn't want people to have access to anymore disappeared into a memory hole, and with no physical evidence of an original newspaper which had later been altered, there was no possible way for someone to verify whether or not a certain story was actually true. The truth was what the government (the Party) said it was.

Unfortunately, memory holes aren't just something from Orwell's imagination, they actually exist in our modern media age where it is much easier to delete something or change it once it's been posted online since actual newspapers are being replaced by digital versions on tablets and smartphones. Unless retrieved from Google cache, or someone taking a screenshot, then an original version of something posted on a news website and later altered is almost impossible to discover. We see these alterations all the time on articles from mainstream outlets when part of a story is changed or deleted, and oftentimes the entire headline rewritten.[214]

Some outlets may add a small note on the bottom of an article saying something to the effect that it had been changed to 'fix a mistake,' but usually doesn't mention what that mistake was. Sometimes a misleading and inflammatory headline will send shockwaves across social media, and once word of the story has gone viral, the headline will be quietly changed, or parts of the story altered or removed in attempts to avoid a defamation lawsuit, but the damage is often done with the false allegations continuing to spread and taking on a life of their own.[215]

The same things happen when news agencies or celebrities tweet out something completely false (or criminal, when celebrities help incite violence to support their causes). Oftentimes someone will take a screenshot to preserve evidence and post it after the tweet has been deleted, but unless they have the URL of the original tweet which can be retrieved from the archive, a screenshot's authenticity is called into question. Was it actually a screenshot, or did someone fake the screenshot using Photoshop or one of the fake tweet generating websites?

An MSNBC terrorism analyst once appeared to encourage ISIS to bomb Trump Tower in Turkey in a tweet that was later deleted.[216] Actor Patton Oswald once tweeted encouragement for terrorists to bomb one of Trump's properties and later deleted it.[217] *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat actually tweeted his hopes for a Trump assassination,[218] as did London *Guardian* reporter Monisha Rajesh,[219] with both later deleting the tweets after the backlash. Oftentimes once someone deletes such inciting tweets they and their fans insinuate that screenshots are fake, casting doubt on whether or not they had actually posted such statements at all. It's as if the truth has vanished down a memory hole.

An eerie 'memory hole' situation occurred in 2010 when an episode of Jesse Ventura's *Conspiracy Theory* television show was remotely deleted from people's DVRs after they had recorded it. The show ran for three seasons on TruTV and followed Jesse Ventura around the country investigating various conspiracy theories, and one of those episodes was about 'FEMA camps,' the secretive detention centers that have been set up in major cities across America in order to detain large numbers of people in the event of massive civil unrest which may be sparked from any number of reasons.

After the *Police State* episode first aired, it was scheduled to be replayed the following week as a lead-in for the new episode, but it didn't air. All the information about the episode was also deleted from TruTV's website, and even more strange, the people who had recorded it on their DVRs found the episode had been deleted from there as well.[220] The show's producers later revealed that the government put pressure on the network to pull the episode from airing again, and also had cable companies remotely delete copies from people's DVRs at home since they are linked directly to the cable providers.[221]

And so, just like the cable companies remotely change the clocks on customer's boxes every fall and spring to adjust them for Daylight Savings Time, they also deleted an episode of Jesse Ventura's Conspiracy Theory. It couldn't get more ironic! A government conspiracy behind censoring a TV show about conspiracies! In all seriousness this instance illustrates the vulnerabilities of using streaming technology over the old fashioned VHS or DVD recorders because once something was recorded on those systems, the only way for a media company to get rid of it would be to physically come to your house and take it, but now they can just make things disappear down a memory hole from miles away with just the push of a button.

[Author’s Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com or wherever you purchased it from to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them. Almost all of the one-star reviews on my books are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent, hence me adding this note. These fraudulent ratings and reviews could also be part of a larger campaign trying to stop my message from spreading by attempting to tarnish my research through fake and defamatory reviews, so I really need your help to combat this as soon as possible. Thank you!]

Fake Hate Crimes

While it's undeniable that hate crimes unfortunately happen and are committed by members of all races against one another, the mainstream media frames the issue as if white people are always the perpetrators, and that black people or other minorities like Muslims or gays are always the victims. There is another interesting phenomenon involving hate crimes that is usually ignored, and that is the practice of people faking them.

The mainstream media has repeatedly hyped-up hate crime hoaxes started by fraudsters and mentally disturbed individuals who know what kind of sensational bait the media is looking for to push their leftist agenda.[222] Oftentimes these perpetrators are soon exposed as frauds after investigators discover their stories are fabricated, with many of them ultimately confessing, but by that time the damage has already been done. Their fake stories have spread across social media and gotten picked up by news outlets across the country and social justice warriors have added the incidents to their mental list of reasons to believe that white people or Christians are all out to get them.

The 'hate crimes' getting debunked barely garner any media attention at all, while the initial sensational claims spread across the country and galvanize the social groups with the same identity as the phony victims who use the fake stories to prop up their beliefs that 'their people' are being systematically targeted and attacked.

Immediately after the 2016 presidential election, we saw a series of hate crime hoaxes that were designed to paint Donald Trump and his supporters in a false light, hoping to dupe people into believing that they were all dangerous right-wing extremists on a rampage against minorities. Just two days after the election a Muslim woman in Louisiana falsely claimed that two Trump supporters yelled racial slurs at her, attacked her, and then stole her hijab. She later admitted to police that she made up the whole story.[223]

In Indiana, a man spray-painted a swastika and "Heil Trump" on the side of a church, even though he hated Donald Trump, and after he was caught admitted that he wanted to "mobilize a movement" against him.[224] A small African American church in Mississippi was burned down and had "Vote Trump" spray-painted on the side, causing initial reports to claim it was done by white supremacist Donald Trump supporters. Soon after, however, a black man was arrested for the crime and police said he painted the 'Trump' message on the building to throw off investigators about his true motive which was some personal grievance he had with the church.[225]

In Philadelphia a black man was caught spray painting racist, anti-black and pro-Trump graffiti on cars and businesses after he tried to make it look like a white supremacist had done it.[226] In

Charlotte, North Carolina a small local market owned by an Indian had a rock thrown through its window and the front door set on fire. A note was left at the scene which praised President Trump and said, “We need to get rid of Muslims, Indians and all immigrants,” and was signed, “White America.” A surveillance camera caught the perpetrator on video and he was identified and arrested a few days later. He was black.[227]

Others posted on social media about non-existent ‘crimes’ right after the 2016 election that were made up, claiming they or someone they knew were ‘victims’ of Trump supporters who were randomly attacking Muslims or blacks. [228] The saturation of fake ‘white supremacist incidents’ spread through social media has caused paranoia and panic in many minorities. Lab equipment covered by white plastic tarps at one college was confused for a KKK meeting by a paranoid student who contacted the dean to complain about it after she spotted the ‘KKK hoods’ through a window when walking by.[229] At another university some students got scared and “no longer felt safe on campus” after seeing that other students wrote “Trump 2016” in chalk on some sidewalks and stairs.[230] The Millennial generation has been so brainwashed that they believe when a white person wears dreadlocks or dresses up as Bruce Lee for Halloween that it’s “cultural appropriation” and hence ‘racist’ and ‘offensive.’[231]

Members of the LGBT community have been caught hoaxing hate crimes on a regular basis in order to gain sympathy for their cause or to defame their neighbors who they’re having a squabble with. A lesbian waitress in New Jersey collected thousands of dollars in donations after she claimed a couple wrote on their receipt that they stiffed her out of a tip because she was gay.[232] Her story immediately unraveled and she was fired from the restaurant for lying and had to refund the donations.[233] A lesbian couple in Colorado were charged with criminal mischief and filing a false police report after they spray painted “Kill the Gay” on their own garage door and said they suspected their neighbors had done it.[234] Another gay couple spray painted “Queer” on their own house, and then burned it down to collect the insurance money while also blaming their neighbor.[235]

One lesbian in St. Louis even carved anti-gay slurs into her own skin and then said she was attacked by some ‘homophobic’ bigots.[236] At Connecticut State University a lesbian wrote some anti-gay notes and slid them under her dorm room door which then resulted in students holding a “solidarity rally” to show that they’re “not intimidated by hate.” A surveillance camera caught the lesbian on video planting the notes herself, and she was charged with filing a false police report.[237] With the rise of social justice warriors plaguing American universities in recent years, such incidents seem to now be commonplace. Laird Wilcox, author of *Crying Wolf: Hate Crime Hoaxes in America*, estimates that 80% of alleged hate crimes on college campuses are hoaxes or just harmless pranks.[238]

A gay man in Montana who claimed he was beaten up outside of a club because of his sexuality was charged with filing a false police report after surveillance footage showed he actually hurt himself attempting a backflip on the sidewalk outside, and nobody had attacked him at all.[239] A gay YouTuber who made videos promoting “gay rights” was also arrested for faking a hate crime against himself for publicity.[240] Someone even claimed that a baker at Whole Foods wrote “fag” in frosting on a cake he ordered and then sued the store, but once again surveillance footage showed the truth and proved that when he left with the cake there was no such thing on it, and he too admitted he wrote “fag” on the cake himself after he bought it.[241] There are so many more of these LGBT hoaxes that they could fill an entire book.

Of course the same kinds of hate crime hoaxes are perpetuated by other minorities like black people and Jews who are looking to smear a neighbor they don’t like or trying to “raise awareness” about racism.[242] A black student at Kean University in New Jersey was arrested for tweeting death threats to her fellow students who were attending an anti-racist rally on campus after she was caught using a fake twitter account trying to make the threats appear as if they were coming from a white person.[243]

After a wave of threats to Jewish Community Centers across the United States raised concerns that neo-Nazism was on the rise, a Jew was arrested for making them.[244] Other Jews have been caught painting swastikas on their own homes in order to fake hate crimes.[245] Swastikas have even been spray painted on synagogues by Jews for the same reason.[246] These kinds of hoaxes seem as if they're a plot out of a cheesy 1980s TV crime drama, but they have been thoroughly documented by police for years. One has to wonder how many more hate crime hoaxes don't get exposed because of undiscovered evidence which would prove they too are fake.

The 'victimhood is virtue' mindset of liberals has created an Oppression Olympics of sorts, where people find value in being a member of a group that is supposedly under attack or marginalized due to their race, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Organizations like the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League are often seen as money making schemes that exaggerate the kinds of 'threats' they claim to monitor in order to justify their ongoing fundraising efforts. One ADL operative named James Rosenberg was actually caught posing as a right-wing extremist who worked as an agent provocateur, attending white supremacist rallies in order to presumably rile up the attendees to make them look violent.[247]

The Southern Poverty Law Center is the organization that routinely labels conservatives "racists," "sexists," "homophobic," "bigots," "anti-government," and claims they're members of "hate groups." Radical Islamic groups are never included on their "hate watch" articles, only 'anti-Muslim' ones, and 'right-wing extremists.'[248] They also ignore and have even censored reports of anti-white racism and hate crimes against white people.[249]

Many see the SPLC as just a way for its founder, Morris Dees, to make easy money through tax-exempt donations. He pays himself a six-figure salary from the organization which helped him build a luxury 200-acre estate, complete with tennis courts, a swimming pool and horse stables.[250] The president of another civil rights organization, the Southern Center for Human Rights, has called Morris Dees "a con man and a fraud" who "has taken advantage of naive, well-meaning people — some of moderate or low incomes — who believe his pitches and give to his $175-million operation."[251]

Well, that is a $175 million operation back in 2007. Since then, the Southern Poverty Law Center's wealth has skyrocketed. In 2015 alone they raised more than $50 million dollars and their IRS filing shows they have accumulated more than $328 million dollars in assets.[252] They have even transferred millions of dollars to offshore accounts in the Cayman Islands.[253]

It's ironic that an organization with the word 'poverty' in their name is stashing millions of dollars in offshore accounts, which may be why the SPLC's hometown newspaper, *The Montgomery Advertiser*, even said they exaggerate the threats of hate groups in order to rake in millions of dollars in donations.[254]

Operation Mockingbird

No discussion about fake news would be complete without a thorough examination of the CIA's Operation Mockingbird, which at first may sound like a conspiracy theory or the plot of a Hollywood thriller, but it is a very real and well-documented program that was exposed during a 1975 Congressional hearing called the Church Committee.[255] In the early 1970s there were widespread allegations that the CIA was involved in a variety of corrupt activities, including spying on American citizens, and even assassinating foreign leaders. The Church Committee was set up to investigate these reports and one of the surprising things they uncovered was that the CIA had been covertly spending millions of dollars a year to pay key figures at major news outlets to work as government propagandists and gatekeepers.[256]

The scope of Operation Mockingbird is staggering. Thomas Braden who helped lead the program, admitted, "If the director of the CIA wanted to extend a 'present,' say, to someone… suppose he just thought, this man can use fifty thousand dollars ($250,000 adjusted for inflation today), he's working well and doing a good job — he could hand it to him and never have to account to anybody... There was simply no limit to the money it could spend and no limit to the people it could hire and no limit to the activities it could decide were necessary."[257]

Such reporters could be considered to be members of the Deep State, using their position of influence to serve intelligence agencies rather than their news agency or their readers. These were people who would also be given classified information to leak to the public, a practice that still goes on today which we saw in the case of transcripts of President Trump's phone calls and those of his advisors being given to the press after they were intercepted, which is obviously a serious felony. [258]

During the initial investigation into Operation Mockingbird, a congressman asked William Colby, who was then the head of the CIA, "Do you have any people paid by the CIA who are working for television networks?" Colby responded, "This, I think, gets into the kind of details, Mr. Chairman, that I'd like to get into in executive session."[259] Executive session, meaning a closed session with only a handful of senators who were authorized to have access to classified information.

Despite the CIA's attempts to contain the details and scope of the program, a lot of information was revealed, but many investigators believe that the full extent of Operation Mockingbird was never made public, and insist that the Church Committee's hearings were just a "limited hangout," meaning despite *some* damaging revelations, the true nature and scope of the program remained classified. Former Special Assistant to the Deputy Director of the CIA, Victor Marchetti, said that limited hangouts are used by the CIA, "When their veil of secrecy is shredded and they can no longer rely on a phony cover story to misinform the public," so "they resort to admitting — sometimes even volunteering — some of the truth while still managing to withhold the key and damaging facts in the case. The public, however, is usually so intrigued by the new information that it never thinks to pursue the matter further."[260]

Frank Wisner, who led the Office of Strategic Services which would later become the CIA, called Operation Mockingbird the "Mighty Wurlitzer" after the Wurlitzer jukebox because he and his operatives could get the media to "play any tune" they wanted.[261] The Church Committee also uncovered assassination plots, a frozen poison dart gun built by the CIA for such operations, poison pen letters, and other shocking activities which was actually their primary objective. Discovering the CIA's media manipulation was an unexpected side effect.

Covert Relationships With the United States Media

The Church Committee's final report on the investigation admits, "the Central Intelligence Agency has used the U.S. media for both the collection of intelligence and for cover,"[262] and that, "The CIA maintained covert relationships with about 50 American journalists or employees of U.S. media organizations. They are part of a network of several hundred foreign individuals around the world who provide intelligence for the CIA and at times attempt to influence opinion through the use of covert propaganda. These individuals provide the CIA with direct access to a large number of foreign newspapers and periodicals, scores of press services and news agencies, radio and television stations, commercial book publishers, and other foreign media outlets."[263] Notice they stressed 'foreign' outlets, which was just a diversion. The program was very much a domestic operation as well.

Shortly after Operation Mockingbird was exposed George Bush senior, then director of the CIA, issued a statement saying that, "The CIA will not enter into any paid or contractual relationship with any full-time or part-time news correspondent accredited by any United States news service, newspaper, periodical, radio or television network or station [anymore]."[264]

The CIA also claimed, "As soon as feasible, the Agency will bring existing relationships with individuals in these groups into conformity with this new policy. CIA recognizes that members of these groups (U.S. media and religious personnel) may wish to provide information to the CIA on matters of foreign intelligence of interest to the U.S. Government. The CIA will continue to welcome information volunteered by such individuals."[265]

The Church Committee report noted that, "Of the approximately 50 U.S. journalists or personnel of U.S. media organizations who were employed by the CIA or maintained some other covert relationship with the CIA at the time of the announcement, fewer than one-half will be terminated under the new CIA guidelines."[266]

It goes on to say, "About half of the some 50 CIA relationships with the U.S. media were paid relationships, ranging from salaried operatives working under journalistic cover, to U.S. journalists serving as 'independent contractors' for the CIA and being paid regularly for their services, to those who receive only occasional gifts and reimbursements from the CIA…More than a dozen United

States news organizations and commercial publishing houses formerly provided cover for CIA agents abroad. A few of these organizations were unaware that they provided this cover."[267]

The report also admits, "While the CIA did not provide the names of its media agents or the names of the media organizations with which they are connected, the Committee reviewed summaries of their relationships and work with the CIA."[268]

During the Church Hearings, the CIA claimed they never tried to engage in any "clandestine use of staff employees of U.S. publications which have a substantial impact or influence on public opinion,"[269] but this is an obvious lie and the report whitewashed such actions as "fallout" which they described as unintended and incidental 'side effects' of their propaganda, which they admitted was spread through the U.S. media, not just the foreign press.

They said this "fallout" in the United States was, "inevitable and consequently permissible" and that "there is no way to shield the American public from such 'fallout.'"[270] As a former senior official of the Agency said in his testimony, "If you plant an article in some paper overseas, and it is a hard-hitting article, or a revelation, there is no way of guaranteeing that it is not going to be picked up and published by the Associated Press in this country."[271]

The report also admitted, "The domestic fallout of covert propaganda comes from many sources; books intended primarily for an English-speaking foreign audience, press placements that are picked up by international wire services, press services controlled by the CIA, and direct funding of foreign institutions that attempt to propagandize the United States public and Congress."[272]

Even if they aren't officially paying reporters anymore (which is most likely a complete lie), the fact is that they openly invited reporters and executives to work with the CIA "voluntarily," and the report admits that this relationship would be of a great benefit to the careers of journalists who take them up on that offer.[273] The report also admitted that CIA propaganda "contaminating" U.S. media ('fall-out' as they called it), "occurs in virtually any instance of propaganda use," and that "it is truly impossible to insulate the United States from propaganda fallout."[274]

It goes on to say, "The fallout problem is probably most serious when the U.S. public is dependent on the 'polluted' media channel for its information on a particular subject…Another situation in which the effects of 'fallout' in the United States may be significant is that in which specialized audiences in the United States — area study specialists, for example — may unknowingly rely heavily on materials produced by, or subsidized by, the CIA."[275]

They even admitted that, "the propaganda effort had an impact on the American public and congressional opinion."[276] One example was the CIA paying $170,000 to create pro-Vietnam War propaganda magazines in the 1970s which were then distributed to American readers including the offices of all United States Congressmen and Senators."[277] The CIA funded magazine (which wasn't named) even sponsored American Congressmen to travel to Vietnam. The Church report admits that, "Through this institution the CIA engaged in propagandizing the American public, including its Congress, on the controversial issue of U.S. involvement in Vietnam."[278]

The report even noted, "The CIA recognizes that it risks seriously misleading U.S. policymakers,"[279] and that their propaganda, "might influence the thinking of senior U.S. officials or affect U.S. intelligence estimates," and "No mechanism exists to protect the U.S. public and the Congress from fallout from black propaganda or any other propaganda."[280]

The CIA also secretly ran various newspapers in foreign countries to take their propaganda to a whole new level and provide cover for CIA operatives. One paper was *The Daily American* in Rome which was used by the Agency to help influence Italy's electorate.[281] Operation Mockingbird also funded the publishing of various books, although they refused to mention which ones.

Former CBS president Sig Mickelson was later asked if he thought despite these revelations the CIA was still covertly working with reporters, and he answered, "Yeah, I would think probably, for a reporter it would probably continue today, but because of all the revelations of the period of the 1970s, it seems to me a reporter has to be a lot more circumspect when doing it now or he runs the risk of at least being looked at with considerable disfavor by the public. I think you've got to be much more careful about it."[282]

It's interesting to point out that CNN's Anderson Cooper interned for the CIA during the summer after his sophomore year of college, and again the following summer while he was attending Yale University, a hotbed of the CIA.[283] Radar Online reported in 2006 that, "Anderson Cooper has long traded on his biography, carving a niche for himself as the most human of news anchors. But there's one aspect of his past that the silver-haired CNN star has never made public: the months he spent training for a career with the Central Intelligence Agency."[284]

Cooper then confirmed his connections with the CIA in a blog post on CNN's website and said he decided not to talk about it publicly until Radar contacted CNN telling them they were going to publish their story and were looking for a comment.[285]

More Operation Mockingbird Revelations

Carl Bernstein, who worked for *The Washington Post* when he blew the lid off the Watergate scandal which led to the resignation of President Nixon in 1974, became an instant icon in the news business and gained a reputation for his continued investigations into government corruption and abuse of power. A few years after his Watergate bombshell he left *The Washington Post*, and for six months investigated the CIA's relationship with the press, leading to a cover story in *Rolling Stone*.[286]

While the Church Committee was reluctant to name names and news agencies, he certainly wasn't. He named some of the papers and reporters who had cooperated with Operation Mockingbird, including people at *The New York Times, Newsweek, Time, The New York Herald Tribune, The Associated Press,* and even his former employer, *The Washington Post;* although he did defend the paper saying that the publisher (Katherine Graham at the time) and the managing editors were unaware of the operation and claimed only "stringers" were involved. Was he protecting his former employer, or treating his investigation into them with kid gloves? While that is likely the case, it's also possible he was just in denial about their involvement, but his *Rolling Stone* story was still packed with information not mentioned at all during the Church Hearing.

Bernstein wrote, “Journalists provided a full range of clandestine services — from simple intelligence gathering to serving as go-betweens with spies in Communist countries. Reporters shared their notebooks with the CIA. Editors shared their staffs…CIA documents show journalists were engaged to perform tasks for the CIA with the consent of the managements of America’s leading news organizations.”[287]

He pointed out that part of the operation included using journalists to “aid in the recruitment and ‘handling’ of foreign nationals who are channels of secret information reaching American intelligence.”[288] He continued, “Many journalists were used by the CIA to assist in this process and they had the reputation of being among the best in the business. The peculiar nature of the job of the foreign correspondent is ideal for such work: he is accorded unusual access by his host country, permitted to travel in areas often off-limits to other Americans, spends much of his time cultivating sources in governments, academic institutions, the military establishment and the scientific communities. He has the opportunity to form long-term personal relationships with sources and — perhaps more than any other category of American operative — is in a position to make correct judgments about the susceptibility and availability of foreign nationals for recruitment as spies.”[289]

He goes on, “The tasks they performed sometimes consisted of little more than serving as ‘eyes and ears’ for the CIA; reporting on what they had seen or overheard in an Eastern European factory…On other occasions, their assignments were more complex: planting subtly concocted pieces of misinformation; hosting parties or receptions designed to bring together American agents and foreign spies; serving up ‘black’ propaganda to leading foreign journalists at lunch or dinner; providing their hotel rooms or bureau offices as ‘drops’ for highly sensitive information moving to and from foreign agents; conveying instructions and dollars to CIA controlled members of foreign governments.”[290]

Bernstein even explained how unsuspecting journalists were recruited for the program. “Often the CIA’s relationship with a journalist might begin informally with a lunch, a drink, a casual exchange of information. An Agency official might then offer a favor — for example, a trip to a country difficult to reach; in return, he would seek nothing more than the opportunity to debrief the reporter afterward. A few more lunches, a few more favors, and only then might there be a mention of a formal arrangement — ‘That came later,’ said a CIA official, ‘after you had the journalist on a string.’”[291]

Could this explain how *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* keep getting classified information leaked to them in order to damage the Trump administration? Are they willing servants of the Deep State trying to bring down the president by any means necessary? Senator Chuck Schumer once gave an ominous warning to President Trump when he said that the intelligence agencies have “six ways from Sunday to get back at you,” if they don’t like what he’s doing.[292]

Bernstein quotes one CIA official as admitting, “In return for our giving them information, we’d ask them to do things that fit their roles as journalists but that they wouldn’t have thought of unless we put it in their minds.”[293] This was all informal and unofficial. The “formal recruitment” of reporters, Bernstein says, only occurred after they had been vetted with background checks to ensure they could be trusted as “agents of the government.” Journalists being considered had to sign non disclosure agreements before the offer was even made, and Bernstein quotes an unnamed former assistant to the CIA Director as saying, “The secrecy agreement was the sort of ritual that got you into the tabernacle.” David Atlee Phillips, a former CIA chief operations officer himself, admitted that more than 200 journalists had signed non disclosure agreements with the CIA, which Bernstein described as making up a “good old boy” network that “constituted something of an establishment elite in the media, politics and academia,” who wrote “propaganda for CIA proprietary publications.”[294]

Once uncovered during by the Church Committee the CIA tried to paint Operation Mockingbird as something that only functioned to influence foreign press, but Carl Bernstein admits, “The CIA’s use of the American news media has been much more extensive than Agency officials have acknowledged publicly or in closed sessions with members of Congress.” He goes so far as to say, “The use of journalists has been among the most productive means of intelligence-gathering employed by the CIA.”

CIA director William Colby admitted during the Church Hearing that “people in management” were involved, not just reporters, and that they helped the CIA with the program. And while Colby wouldn’t name names, Carl Bernstein pointed to William Paley, who was President of CBS; Henry Luce, the founder of *Time* magazine; and Arthur Hays Sulzberger, the publisher of *The New York Times*, who actually admitted the CIA had him sign a non disclosure agreement.

At least ten employees at *The New York Times* were working as CIA assets or were actual CIA agents who the paper was providing a cover for, often in their foreign bureau. The CIA even had a training program in the 1950s which taught agents how to pretend to be journalists and were sometimes “placed in major news organizations with help from management.”

It wasn’t just newspapers of course, the Big Three television networks (NBC, CBS, and ABC) were involved as well. CBS provided “journalistic cover” for CIA employees and allowed their newsrooms to be monitored by the CIA. Bernstein says that in the 1950s and 60s CBS officials even met for an annual dinner with the CIA.

Sid Mickelson later admitted that when he became president of CBS, “I was told by Paley [CIA director] that there was an ongoing relationship with the CIA…He introduced me to two agents who he said would keep in touch. We all discussed the Goodrich situation [one of the undercover agents] and film arrangements. I assumed this was a normal relationship at the time. This was at the height of the Cold War and I assumed the communications media were cooperating—though the Goodrich matter was compromising.”[295]

High-level CIA officials worked with “top management” of the news agencies to give agents working undercover as journalists assignments in foreign countries, according to Bernstein, and the CIA had, “some of the best-known correspondents in the business” as operatives using TV networks for “journalistic cover.” He also noted that a reporter is the perfect cover for a CIA operative because it’s a reporter’s job to ask questions, investigate things, and travel around the world to do so.

Colby admitted that the agency had “some three dozen” American reporters, editors, or executives, “on the CIA payroll,” including five who worked for “general-circulation news organizations.”[296] William Bader, who supervised the Senate committee’s investigation, admitted that there were CIA officers at management levels in major media companies.[297] Malcolm Muir, *Newsweek’s* former editor said, “Whenever I heard something that I thought might be of interest to

Allen Dulles, I'd call him up.... At one point he appointed one of his CIA men to keep in regular contact with our reporters."

The Church Hearing Was a Cover-Up

During the Church Hearings, then-CIA director William Colby tried to claim they weren't doing any of this anymore and downplayed the program saying it didn't work as well as they had hoped, but he was just whitewashing its effectiveness and many have said that even the Church Hearing itself was part of the cover-up.

For example, they didn't even question any of the journalists or executives who were working for the CIA. Why wouldn't they want to get major media executives and reporters on the witness stand to testify under oath about what they were doing? This should have been a key part of the investigation, but it wasn't. Why? Because they didn't want to dig that deep. They didn't want the extent of the program, and who was involved, to be known. The committee was compromised and limited their investigation to prevent the magnitude of what was happening from being made public.

Carl Bernstein wrote that the CIA "were able to convince key members of the committee that full inquiry or even limited public disclosure of the dimensions of the activities would do irreparable damage to the nation's intelligence-gathering apparatus, as well as to the reputations of hundreds of individuals."[298]

At the time of the Senate investigation George Bush senior was the director of the CIA and pressured members of the committee, and successfully persuaded them to essentially whitewash the investigation. The CIA refused to turn over documents about which journalists were working for them, and only gave the Committee rewritten summaries of documents, all of which had the names of journalists and media executives removed. Most of the documents they did turn over were about foreign journalists on foreign soil, giving the false impression that such thing wasn't happening in America.

Speaking of the Church Committee's final report, Senator Gary Hart said, "It hardly reflects what we found. There was a prolonged and elaborate negotiation [with the CIA] over what would be said."[299] In other words, it was a whitewash — just another limited hangout with *some* damning information, but as usual, the full truth would remain hidden. Most people are completely unaware of the Church Committee today, and if they were told about Operation Mockingbird, would just think it's a conspiracy theory, but as one unnamed Senator quoted in Carl Bernstein's *Rolling Stone* story says, "From the CIA point of view this was the highest, most sensitive covert program of all…. It was a much larger part of the operational system than has been indicated."

White House Correspondents' Dinner

The same reporters who are supposed to function as watchdogs over the White House are wined and dined every spring at the luxurious red carpet White House Press Correspondents' Dinner where they rub elbows and share some laughs with the very people they're supposed to be holding accountable for their actions. The name of the event implies that it would consist of reporters and media executives, but each year A-list Hollywood celebrities are among the most popular guests. Why would movie stars and sitcom actors be key fixtures at a dinner that's supposed to be for serious journalists covering the White House?

The event includes a professional comedian who cracks jokes about the current administration and the media's coverage of them, and also involves a scripted stand up routine by the current president who makes jabs at the press, and himself, as those in attendance appear to laugh at the fact that most politicians are liars and fail to deliver on the promises they made during their campaigns.

In 2004, just one year after the War in Iraq started, George W. Bush made some tasteless jokes about not finding the weapons of mass destruction that he and his administration had falsely claimed were there. While at the podium, a slide show of photos were put up on screen showing him bending over and looking under his desk in the oval office to which he then commented, "Those weapons of mass destruction have got to be here somewhere," earning him laughter and applause from the audience. "Nope, no weapons over there." Another photo was put up on the screen of him strangely looking at another part of his office as he said, "Maybe under here."[300] The audience loved it, laughing and applauding which is so bizarre because he was literally joking about the lies that led us to war. What happened to journalists being watchdogs and keeping those in power in check?

Senator John Kerry, who ran against Bush in the 2004 election, commented, "If George Bush thinks his deceptive rationale for going to war is a laughing matter, then he's even more out of touch than we thought. Unfortunately for the president, this is not a joke. 585 American soldiers have been killed in Iraq in the last year, 3,354 have been wounded and there's no end in sight. George Bush sold us on going to war with Iraq based on the threat of weapons of mass destruction. But we still haven't found them, and now he thinks that's funny?"[301]

At the 2010 dinner Barack Obama joked about killing people with drones which had become a controversial new topic since the technology was now being used to kill people with the remote control aircraft.[302] While much of the audience laughed, others who are not part of the elite White House press corps didn't think it was so funny. Alex Pareene at Salon wrote, "It's funny, because Predator drone strikes in Pakistan have killed literally hundreds of completely innocent civilians, and now the president is evincing a casual disregard for those lives he is responsible for ending by making a lighthearted joke."[303]

After the 2007 dinner, *New York Times* columnist Frank Rich claimed that the paper would stop attending the event, saying it is, "a crystallization of the press's failures in the post-9/11 era," and that it "illustrates how easily a propaganda-driven White House can enlist the Washington news media in its shows."[304]

The New York Times Washington bureau chief Dean Baquet later confirmed they would stop going, saying, "We came to the conclusion that it had evolved into a very odd, celebrity-driven event that made it look like the press and government all shuck their adversarial roles for one night of the year, sing together (literally, by the way) and have a grand old time cracking jokes. It just feels like it sends the wrong signal to our readers and viewers, like we are all in it together and it is all a game. It feels uncomfortable."[305]

While working for *Rolling Stone* magazine, Michael Hastings revealed that many journalists write "puff pieces" in order to cozy up with government officials hoping to gain or maintain access to them.[306] A column in *The Guardian* denouncing the White House Correspondents Dinner stated that "Journalism's job is to speak truth to power — not refill its glass and laugh at its jokes," and highlighted that in their view, "The celebrities sitting at almost every table of the Washington Hilton gave the distinct impression that both journalism and politics are now wholly beholden to the whims of the entertainment-industrial complex."[307]

In 2013 *New York Times Magazine's* Chief National Correspondent Mark Leibovich said that journalists in Washington D.C. have become a "celebrity class."[308] When asked why his paper doesn't have reporters attend the dinner, he said, "There's a level of self-congratulation and self-celebration and so forth that can be very, you know, somewhat at odds with the mood of the country and how people view the media. It did not feel like the right message to be sending to our readers to really be, you know, in such a chummy in sort of festive setting with the people we're covering."[309]

BuzzFeed, the clickbait bottom feeders of the Internet, whose articles mostly consist of a few lines of text accompanied by animated Gifs, were granted press credentials and a table at the White House Correspondents' Dinner, to give you an idea of how low the standards are for who they consider to be 'journalists.' The Huffington Post is also a member of the White House Press Corps and are granted access to the presidential daily briefings where they are allowed to ask the president or his press secretary direct questions.

It certainly is odd that the people who are supposed to function as watchdogs and keep administrations accountable are wining and dining with them. The inside jokes and the overall atmosphere of the dinner reeks of elitism and hypocrisy and is just one more example of the collusion between the top mainstream media outlets and the people they're supposed to hold accountable.

University of Texas Radio-Television and Film professor América Rodriguez points out, "The ownership of the national media system is centralized in very few hands. These owners, and the journalists they employ, in turn have close personal and professional relationships with the political elites of their respective nations. The interaction of these two factors — ownership concentration and the tight web of relations within the political elite — has created national news production processes intent on safeguarding privilege and status."[310]

The government is actually the most frequent source of news, so a cozy relationship between politicians and journalists further tarnishes the credibility of their reporting. One study showed 46% of stories from *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* originated from the government.[311] Another primary source of 'news' is from what's been dubbed 'churnalism,' which is when news outlets use press releases sent by government agencies or corporations as the basis for stories and often report the information contained in them virtually verbatim.[312] The term refers to journalists quickly "churning out" stories from the information they mostly just take from press releases or news wires, often without even fact checking it or doing any original research.

Part of the churnalism problem comes from the constant pressure to continuously keep posting new content in our never-ending 24-7 news cycle. This leaves reporters little time to do original research or fact-check, because there is an urgency to "be first" to post a story in hopes of having it go viral so it drives a bunch of traffic to their website. A study by British journalist Nick Davies found that 80% of the stories in British newspapers were just rewritten wire copy and press releases.[313]

White House Press Corps Shakeup

The tone of the White House Correspondents' Dinner dramatically changed when Donald Trump became president. As the first dinner of the Trump administration approached, *Vanity Fair* and *The New Yorker* announced that they would not be attending "in protest" because of the way Trump was treating the media.[314] Then sources within CNN and MSNBC revealed that those networks were considering boycotting the 2017 dinner as well.[315]

Then President Trump trumped the media again, and announced that *he* wasn't going to go, breaking a long-held tradition of presidents attending, and instead held a rally to celebrate his first 100 days in office. "I'm treated very unfairly and very dishonestly by the press and I thought it was inappropriate to go this year. If I were treated even slightly fairly by the press I would have gone," Trump said. "I thought it would be very disingenuous if I went. I thought it would be actually, in a certain way, dishonest if I went."[316]

There were other changes regarding White House press correspondents now that Trump was in office. The Trump administration had considered moving the White House press briefing to another location so they could include more reporters since the briefing room is rather small. One location considered was the White House Conference Center, which is across the street from the White House, and another was the Old Executive Office Building which is right next door. The Establishment media cried about a 'lack of transparency,' even though this move would have expanded the number of reporters who had access to the president and the press secretary.

Then-Chief of Staff Reince Priebus said, "I know some of the folks in the press are uptight about this and I understand. The only thing that's been discussed is whether or not the initial press conferences are going to be in that small press room. For the people listening to this that don't know this, the press room that people see on TV is very, very tiny — 49 people fit in that press room."[317]

He continued, “We had like 500 or 600 folks at the press conference last week so we started thinking, ‘if we can have more people involved [rather] than less people involved, that would be a good thing’ — that’s what this is about.”[318] They decided not to move locations, but came up with a way to include more reporters by allowing them to call in on Skype, the video conferencing service from anywhere in the country.[319]

After the very first press briefing of the Trump administration the liberal media were complaining that the first outlets called on to ask questions weren’t CNN, or *The Washington Post*, but instead the *New York Post*, and then the second question went to the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), and the third went to Univision, the Spanish-language network.

CNN’s Jim Acosta even went on air and complained about the seating arrangement at one of the president’s press conferences since he was placed in one of the back rows, saying it was the equivalent of being sent to Siberia.[320]

“If you’re legacy media and have been trading on that access for decades, when the new guy comes in and gets your access, it’s enraging,” said Sean Davis, a co-founder of The Federalist. “This is legacy outlets acting like an entitled monopoly or a cartel when someone new comes in and does the job better than they do.”[321]

The liberal media kept crying about Trump not calling on them enough during his press conferences. Politico complained, “President Donald Trump on Wednesday continued his streak of calling only on conservative-leaning outlets at his bilateral press conferences with foreign leaders,” saying, “During his press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Wednesday afternoon, Trump called on David Brody of the Christian Broadcasting Network and Katie Pavlich, the editor of TownHall.com.”[322]

As I’m sure you recall, CNN’s Jim Acosta was acting more like a protester than a reporter during one press conference, literally yelling at the president and interrupting him, causing Trump to point at him and declare, “You are fake news!” Maybe someone should tell CNN that the First Amendment’s protection of the Freedom of the Press means that the government won’t shut down media outlets by forcing them out of business, it doesn’t guarantee that the president or his press secretary has to invite them to the White House or answer their questions.

Liberal Bias Confirmed

It seems only the liberal media denies that there is a liberal bias problem in the media, but decades of studies and polls (not to mention common sense) have proven an overwhelming bias in their coverage of just about everything. A Harvard study analyzing the media coverage of President Trump's first 100 days in office found that 80% of it was negative.[323] Of course that was obvious to anyone old enough to pay attention during the election, but it was surprising that Harvard, a very liberal university, would actually investigate the matter.

The study analyzed reports from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal;* as well as CNN, CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox News, and even the BBC, and found the average coverage was 80% negative. Also not surprising was that CNN's coverage was 93% negative. Fox News, on the other hand, was shown to be 52% negative and 48 percent positive, which fits in almost perfectly with their trademarked slogan "Fair & Balanced." Professor Thomas E. Peterson, who conducted the study, said, "The nation's watchdog has lost much of its bite and won't regain it until the public perceives it as an impartial broker, applying the same reporting standards to both parties."[324]

This kind of slanted coverage is certainly nothing new. A famous study of liberal bias in the American media was conducted in 1986 and found that most journalists working for the major national news outlets were Democrats with liberal views on issues like gay rights, abortion, affirmative action, and welfare programs.[325] The study, later published in a book called *The Media Elite*, gathered its data by conducting surveys of journalists at the Big Three broadcast news networks (ABC, CBS, NBC), along with print outlets including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time,* and *Newsweek.*

It concluded that because liberals dominated most news organizations, their coverage reflected their political attitudes both consciously and unconsciously; even if they didn't think they were being biased because they unconsciously believed that their views were 'correct,' so in their minds they didn't see their coverage as biased at all.

A decade later in 1997, another major study of journalists was conducted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors and that found that 61% of reporters leaned Democrat, but only 15% leaned Republican.[326] 24% of those surveyed appeared to be independent.[327]

In 2002 a professor at Dartmouth College published his research on media bias in his book *Press Bias and Politics: How the Media Frame Controversial Issues*, which also showed that most mainstream media in America present liberal views in a more favorable light.[328]

Another study in 2005 by researchers at UCLA found a “strong liberal bias” at most mainstream media outlets with the exception of Fox News and *The Washington Times*.[329] A 2007 study at Harvard University also confirmed a liberal bias in television news.[330] They noted that as soon as the 2008 presidential campaign kicked off that, “Democrat Barack Obama, the junior Senator from Illinois, enjoyed by far the most positive treatment of the major candidates during the first five months of the year,” and that, “the press overall has been more positive about Democratic candidates and more negative about Republicans.” They calculated that in the first five months of the year just 12% of the coverage of John McCain, the Republican frontrunner, was positive.

In 2008 a study looked into political donations made by employees at NBC, ABC, and CBS and found that over one million dollars was given to the Democrat Party from 1,160 different people at those networks.[331] It also found that the Republican Party only received $142,863 from just 193 employees.[332] If you do the math, the Democrat Party got seven times as much money from people who worked at the Big Three networks, and six times as many employees donated to the Democrats vs. the Republicans.

After the study was published, NBC News surprisingly admitted, “Whether you sample your news feed from ABC or CBS (or, yes, even NBC and MSNBC), whether you prefer Fox News Channel or National Public Radio, *The Wall Street Journal* or *The New Yorker*, some of the journalists feeding you are also feeding cash to politicians, parties or political action committees.”[333]

A 2016 poll of the White House Press Corps revealed that of the 72 members, there were zero registered Republicans.[334] In 2017 the same poll found that there were only three.[335]

Wikileaks Reveals Reporters Working with Hillary Clinton

After Hillary’s campaign manager John Podesta got his emails hacked and they were published by Wikileaks, some of them showed various journalists actually coordinating with Hillary’s campaign. *New York Times* writer and CNBC anchor John Harwood gave Hillary Clinton “veto” power over what not to include in an interview with her.[336] Politico’s Glenn Thrush even called himself a “hack” and let John Podesta review parts of his story before it was published. “No worries. Because I have become a hack I will send you the whole section that pertains to you. Please don’t share or tell anyone I did this,” he said.[337]

Another reporter for *The New York Times* named Mark Leibovich also emailed the campaign parts of his interview with Hillary and asked if it was okay if he included them in his article.[338] In one of the emails the Clinton campaign named *New York Times* writer Maggie Haberman as someone who they said had “teed up stories” for them in the past and “never disappointed” them.[339]

Hacked emails from the DNC showed that CNN’s Donna Brazil gave Hillary Clinton debate questions in advance.[340] She initially denied doing such thing, but later apologized, saying, “sending those emails was a mistake I will forever regret.”[341]

The Wikileaks email dump also showed that Marjorie Pritchard of *The Boston Globe* coordinated with the Clinton campaign to determine when to publish an article for the maximum amount of positive exposure. “It would be good to get it in on Tuesday, when she is in New Hampshire,” Pritchard wrote. “That would give her a big presence on Tuesday with the piece and on Wednesday with the news story. Please let me know.”[342]

Another of the leaked emails from the DNC showed then-DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz emailed NBC’s Chuck Todd telling him that the negative coverage of Hillary Clinton “must stop” and asked to schedule a phone call to discuss the matter with him. He replied, agreeing to schedule a call.[343]

The Clinton campaign didn’t deny any of these emails were real, instead they just tried to deflect from the controversy by claiming ‘the Russians’ had hacked them in order to help Donald Trump.

When talking about Hillary Clinton, CNN’s Chris Cuomo admitted on air that, “We could not help her any more than we have... she’s got just a free ride so far with the media, we’re the biggest ones promoting her campaign,”[344] and Wolf Blitzer was seen for a brief moment dancing and drinking wine at the Democratic National Convention of 2016 after Hillary gave her big speech and was formally nominated as the Democrat Party’s candidate.[345]

So we know that the overwhelming number of news networks and their employees are liberal, but why? One theory is that the media industry was started by privileged elitists due to the high costs associated with the equipment needed to manufacture and distribute media. Television studios, cameras, editing bays, satellite uplinks, and broadcasting antennas have traditionally been very expensive. Not to mention the costs of printing presses and the infrastructure needed to deliver hundreds of thousands of newspapers per day.

Political commentator Noam Chomsky points out, “those who occupy managerial positions in the media, or gain status within them as commentators, belong to the same privileged elites, and might be expected to share the perceptions, aspirations, and attitudes of their associates, reflecting their own class interests as well. Journalists entering the system are unlikely to make their way unless they conform to these ideological pressures, generally by internalizing the values; it is not easy to say one thing and believe another, and those who fail to conform will tend to be weeded out by familiar mechanisms.”[346]

The Sun Valley Conference

Every time people talk about the mainstream media conglomerates secretly collaborating with each other, visions of smoke filled rooms and shadowy figures wearing expensive suits sitting around a table come to mind. While this may be an exaggerated expectation of a behind the scenes look at the issue, it isn't all that far from the truth.

Every July since 1983 a small group of media moguls, tech titans, investors, politicians, and intelligence agency insiders, all gather in the small town of Sun Valley, Idaho for a week of meetings to develop a consensus regarding policies for mainstream media, social media, and emerging communications technology. It is basically like the Bilderberg Group meeting for media, and since tech companies like Facebook, Twitter, Apple, and Google have become major players in the media industry, they all come together each year in Sun Valley trying to make sure no emerging platforms can threaten their power.

This is where industry leaders meet to buy up any small startups that have the potential to siphon off some of the market share from the dominant handful who are in control. It's also the place where they develop and agree upon new Orwellian terms of service, gate-keeping strategies, and censorship tactics for the major social media platforms to make sure certain voices and messages don't get too loud.

The conference is hosted by a mysterious investment bank headquartered on Fifth Avenue in New York City called Allen & Company which deliberately tries to avoid publicity, and for many years didn't even have a website. They were one of the underwriters for Google's initial public offering (IPO) in 2004 and did the same thing for Twitter when they went public in 2013. Allen & Company have a long history of brokering major media deals we all hear about, while keeping themselves largely out of the spotlight.

Fortune magazine once said, "To say the firm is unusual would be an understatement."[347] It's a privately held company so their financial records are not public like they would be if they were traded on the New York Stock Exchange like other major financial institutions. Who attends the Sun Valley Conference and what is discussed there is also confidential, but it is impossible for some of the high-profile attendees to stay under the radar.

"All the signs are well recognized," reports *The Idaho Mountain Express*, Sun Valley's local paper, which says it's obvious to the residents of the small town when the conference occurs: "The sudden parking of 50 sleek corporate jets at Friedman Memorial Airport in Hailey, the hiring of dozens of local escorts and baby-sitters for VIP families, the presence of celebrities such as TV's

Oprah Winfrey, Disney's Michael Eisner and Microsoft's Bill Gates, and the recent post-9/11 heavy security with Allen-imported guards."[348]

This is the place where Comcast agreed to acquire NBC Universal in 2009 — the parent company of NBC Broadcasting, Universal Pictures, DreamWorks, Syfy, E!, USA Network, Bravo, The Weather Channel, Telemundo, and many more. It's also where the America Online and Time Warner merger was negotiated, creating AOL Time Warner;[349] where Microsoft's merger with NBC was settled, forming MSNBC the 24-hour cable news channel; where Instagram and WhatsApp were bought by Facebook; where Microsoft bought LinkedIn; and where BET (Black Entertainment Television) was sold to Viacom, making the channel's founder Robert Johnson the first black billionaire in America.[350]

Viacom (which also owns MTV, Nickelodeon, Spike, VH1, Comedy Central, Paramount Pictures, and many more media assets) is responsible for turning BET from what was supposed to be a network about African American issues, into a ghetto-culture channel that airs rap videos and TV shows encouraging the very worst aspects of the black community. Co-founder Sheila Johnson later admitted that she was ashamed of what happened to BET after she and her husband Robert sold it to Viacom at the Sun Valley Conference.[351]

This is the place where new and promising media and tech companies (which are often one in the same now) are bought up by major media conglomerates like Viacom, Time Warner, CBS, Disney, News Corporation, and Comcast (also known as the Big Six media monopolies) which work together to buy any new emerging tech companies, social media platforms, news websites or apps which they feel could grow into threats to their oligarchy.

While the meeting receives little press coverage, *The New York Times* once admitted, "Yes, high-net-worth individuals, many of whom have their hands on the levers of the media and entertainment economy, gather in one place, and business is undoubtedly being conducted. But anything noteworthy takes place out of view. In fact, much is out of view."[352]

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, Microsoft founder Bill Gates, Apple's CEO Tim Cook, the founders and CEOs of Google, YouTube, Yahoo, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and most of the top names in tech and social media startups, are all there.[353] While it may not seem all that strange to have an annual gathering of the top names in media and tech, what is strange is the fact the heads of U.S. intelligence agencies are also in attendance. When he was director of the CIA, George Tenet was the Sun Valley keynote speaker in 2003 and again in 2005.[354] And after he retired from the Agency, he still regularly attends.[355] When General David Petraeus was the director of the CIA, he too attended, as is customary for the head of the Agency each year.[356]

Why would the head of the CIA be meeting with the CEOs of all the top tech and media companies? In her book *The CIA in Hollywood*, media analyst Tricia Jenkins notes, "The purpose of the meeting is to discuss collective media strategy for the coming year."[357] This likely involves lobbying the tech giants to include back doors in their software to enable the U.S. intelligence agencies to spy on users, and to censor some information being distributed through the platforms which is deemed to have 'national security' implications, and so the government can covertly monitor (and manipulate) the data these megalithic corporations control.[358]

Considering the history of the CIA covertly influencing and censoring major news media through Operation Mockingbird (and their Entertainment Liaison Office overseeing the production of major blockbuster movies and television shows with the purpose of using them as covert containers for propaganda) combined with their mass-surveillance of American citizens; their involvement with the Sun Valley Conference should be of great concern to everyone.

[Author’s Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com or wherever you purchased it from to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them. Almost all of the one-star reviews on my books are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent, hence me adding this note. These fraudulent ratings and reviews could also be part of a larger campaign trying to stop my message from spreading by attempting to tarnish my research through fake and defamatory reviews, so I really need your help to combat this as soon as possible. Thank you!]

The New Media

There was a time not long ago when posting comments on Internet forums or chat rooms was seen as something that only computer geeks or people living in their mothers' basements did, but beginning around 2005 with the creation of MySpace, this kind of activity started becoming mainstream and would soon virtually takeover most aspects of our lives. MySpace became a thing of the past as people moved over to Facebook, and then Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat came on the scene. Today most people feel they need to have social media accounts, not just to communicate with their friends, but to share their views and opinions with the world hoping to get some 'likes' 'retweets' and new followers.

In 2005 YouTube gave anyone the equivalency of having their own cable TV channel for free, and would soon begin paying people for posting videos by putting advertisements on them. Soon many channels grew to sizes not only rivaling major television networks, but completely eclipsing them, and a new form of celebrity emerged known as YouTubers.[359]

Once these new social media/tech companies included trending lists and hashtags, countless people began feeding the monster constantly, hoping to get noticed for a witty joke or a controversial comment on what's going on. The trending boxes would start compiling lists of the most talked about topics, giving people an insight into what were supposedly the things being posted about the most.

Many people stopped going to websites directly which were often "bookmarked" in their browser as a sort of "favorites" list, and instead started following the accounts of people, businesses, television shows, etc., on social media. This made companies like Facebook and Twitter a "middleman" which now stands in between people and the websites they used to visit directly by typing in the URLs. Because of the simplicity of aggregating so many different websites, these social media companies have left people vulnerable to an array of censorship and manipulation by these powerful new middlemen. In the next few chapters we'll take a look specifically at Facebook and Twitter and see how they can, *and do,* manipulate and censor information for political reasons and to subtly shift the opinions of users; and we'll discuss the near limitless ramifications and dystopian possibilities this kind of manipulation has.

Most people don't consider the complexities and dangerous precedents that have been set by relying on a handful of mega corporations for the distribution of information, or the risks of allowing themselves to become vulnerable to their ambiguous and agenda-driven terms of service which dictate what is supposedly 'hate speech' or 'harassment.'

Studies show that the majority of people engage in self-censorship when posting online because they don't want their accounts to get shut down or have someone contact their employer about what they have said if it is deemed ‘politically incorrect’ which could put their job or entire career at risk.[360]

Tech companies are changing so rapidly that in just a few years Twitter went from a website where people posted tweets (brief 140 character-max statements), to a place to watch live football games and news. In 2016 Twitter signed a deal with the NFL to live stream games, and over 2 million people began watching that way.[361] Twitter is also developing a 24-hour live news network by partnering with Bloomberg News and signed deals with BuzzFeed for a morning show, The Verge, for a weekly tech show, and Cheddar for a daily financial show.[362]

Snapchat, which started out as an app for ‘sexting’ since the messages are ‘deleted’ after being viewed, has morphed into a multi-billion dollar media company as well, partnering with CNN, ESPN, BuzzFeed and dozens of other networks which produce original content for the app.[363] Snapchat is basically just like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, except the posts are automatically deleted after someone reads them once, or “expire” after a short period of time once they’re posted. This is why on the campaign trail Hillary Clinton joked about having just opened an account, saying, “I love it. Those messages disappear all by themselves,” referring to her trying to wipe her illegal personal e-mail server clean before handing it over to the FBI during their investigation into her using it to send and receive classified material.

Even Amazon.com, once only a bookstore, is now producing original television series and films through Amazon Studios. CEO Jeff Bezos is now attending the Golden Globes and the Oscars for producing films and television shows like *Manchester by the Sea*, *Transparent*, and *The Salesman*.[364] Netflix also evolved from just a streaming service to producing original content; YouTube is producing original shows now, and both Facebook and Apple have jumped into the content producing business as well.[365]

Because of this, a record number of people are canceling their cable subscriptions. There were 1.4 million fewer people subscribing to cable TV in the first quarter of 2017 compared to the previous year.[366] These people have been called “cord cutters,” and with Netflix and Hulu offering On Demand streams of shows from major networks, and HBO now having their own app, more people are abandoning traditional cable TV.

Even with all these new technologies and methods people are using to get their information, those who control them aren’t without their biases. *New York Observer* writer Liz Crokin decided to investigate Apple’s liberal bias, so she set up an Apple News account on her iPhone and immediately noticed that her news feed was predominately liberal and anti-Trump. “Of all the channels listed in the Apple News politics section, only two of the 16 arguably lean right — the rest are reliably left-wing,” she wrote.[367]

Of course, Apple CEO Tim Cook openly supported Hillary Clinton’s campaign and held fundraisers for her, including a $50,000 a plate dinner, and is a big promoter of the liberal agenda.[368] More liberal bias can be seen on iTunes. For example, the pro-Trump podcast, *MAGAPod* was labeled with an “explicit” warning, simply because the show is pro-Trump. It was only after this bias began making headlines that iTunes removed the explicit warning from the podcast.[369]

Even Apple’s App Store is problematic. They refused to publish a satirical Hillary Clinton e-mailgate game called *Capitol HillAwry* claiming it was “offensive” and “mean spirited,” but had approved dozens of games targeting Donald Trump. One such game is called *Dump Trump*, which depicts him as a giant turd; and even *Punch Trump* and *Slap Trump* games where players assault Donald Trump for points were approved.[370] Breitbart published an article exposing this bias, and a few days later Apple decided to finally allow the Hillary Clinton game to be included in the App Store.[371] Apple (and Google) have rejected the Twitter alternative Gab app several times, claiming that people use it to post, "content that could be considered defamatory or mean-spirited."[372] The real reason is that Gab isn't following in line with Silicon Valley's social justice warrior agenda. Apple has also banned apps that use the image of Pepe the Frog, a cartoon character often used in pro-Trump memes.[373]

Instagram has been shown to selectively ban certain topics and accounts as well.[374] They have even deleted several of my posts claiming they were violations of their terms of service. One in which I called singer Lana Del Rey a "skank," and another which consisted of a meme showing a nice white family with the caption, "White People: The only race you can legally discriminate against." After singer Rihanna posted fully topless photos of herself, her Instagram account was temporarily shut down for violating their nudity policy, but because she's a celebrity, they reinstated it.[375] The company even apologized for taking it down. Rappers like 50 Cent, Soulja Boy, and others have posted death threats on their Instagram accounts and the company doesn't suspend them.[376] But the account of a graffiti artist named Lushsux was banned after he posted photos of an anti-Hillary Clinton mural he painted which just consisted of her in a bikini.

"I don't want to sound like a conspiracy theorist with a tin foil hat, but the timing of the Hillary Clinton mural posting and the deletion that ensued can't just be a coincidence," he said.[377] The artist had previously posted photos depicting Donald Trump naked and Melania Trump topless, but those photos weren't censored by Instagram — only his anti-Hillary painting.

Facebook also regularly censors what people post and manipulates which of your friends' posts actually show up on your news feed.[378] If someone posts something that contains certain keywords that Facebook has determined they do not want to go viral for whatever reason, their algorithms filter it out and prevent the post from showing up.[379]

The social media giant openly admits they manipulate which posts are shown on our friends' news feeds, and even conduct experiments to determine how they can affect people's moods and behavior.[380] Twitter, as you will see in a following chapter, also censors certain hashtags, tweets, and trending topics. The censorship is sometimes subtle, but once you know how it works, it becomes as clear as day.

Twitter founder and CEO Jack Dorsey, and most of Twitter's top executives, are liberals and have repeatedly ignored calls for violence by anti-Trump accounts and Black Lives Matter supporters despite clearly violating the site's terms of service (not to mention the law).[381] There is also increasing evidence that Twitter is limiting the reach of popular controversial conservative accounts.[382] The site has also awarded verified accounts (the often-coveted blue checkmark) to many liberal trolls like racist and anti-police Black Lives Matter activists as well as LGBT and gender bending advocates.[383]

YouTube, as we will discuss in detail in a later chapter, isn't just a place where people upload their own videos, but is a huge media giant with an agenda other than being a place where independent content creators can share their work. YouTube chooses which videos will show up on their home page, on the “trending” box, and in the “recommended” section, which result in a flood of new views; and the company admits that they suppress and censor videos which they deem to contain “controversial” messages.[384]

A video that few people had noticed with hardly any views can quickly go viral by a moderator adding it to the trending tab. YouTube has also been accused of censoring certain channels by preventing notifications from showing up when a new video is uploaded and keeping certain channels’ videos from appearing in the trending section at all.

YouTube regularly includes little rainbow graphics to promote LGBT events and features LGBT pride videos,[385] and even once secretly flew dozens of little-known black YouTubers to their headquarters in California for private mentoring and seminars to help them grow their channels.[386] Black Lives Matter ‘leader’ Deray McKesson was there to give the keynote address, and other speakers included Russell Simmons and comedian Wanda Sykes. The event was dubbed “YouTube BLACK.”

Barack Obama appeared on the national stage at the same time social media was rapidly integrating into people’s lives, and having a Facebook page was becoming almost as standard as having a telephone. His inner circle of political operatives could see the communication landscape was changing, and they jumped on it immediately. Obama was seen as the first “social media president” and was the first president to have a Facebook page and a Twitter account.[387] The White House would later get its own YouTube channel.[388]

Since people are no longer limited to getting their information from the major news networks, and as our society rapidly moved away from newspapers and magazines to online websites, blogs, and social media pages — not only did these new media monopolies begin manipulating the flow of information that users were posting and viewing, but cunning individuals within the government looked for opportunities to manipulate users of this new technology as well.

An executive in the Obama administration recommended that the government pay online trolls to flood the comment sections on websites and videos in attempts to discredit certain posts deemed “conspiracy theories” or “extremist.” Cass Sunstein, who headed up the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs for Obama, wrote that such a plan “will undermine the crippled epistemology of believers by planting doubts about the theories and stylized facts that circulate within such groups, thereby introducing beneficial cognitive diversity.”[389]

A few years earlier a military intelligence officer and a defense analyst drew up a white paper discussing the growing popularity of blogs and independent news websites and explored, “the possibility of incorporating blogs and blogging into military information strategy, primarily as a tool for influence.”[390] The paper, *Blogs and Military Information Strategy*, also floated the idea of hiring bloggers to attack people and promote certain causes.[391] It also suggested the government hack popular blogs and make subtle changes in articles, not to just spread propaganda, but to discredit the writers.

“Hacking the site and subtly changing the messages and data — merely a few words or phrases — may be sufficient to begin destroying the blogger’s credibility with the audience,” it says.[392]

These tactics were proposed before the social media era, which took the information age to a whole new level of user interactions through Internet comments as people began to rely on these apps and websites to communicate with their friends, family, and total strangers. It's now how most people interact with the outside world, slipping further away from actual interpersonal interactions and embracing parasocial relationships with YouTubers who are their virtual friends, playing hashtag games and spending hours on end scrolling through Instagram or Snapchat posts reading comments and posting replies in what amounts to a historic waste of time.

Social media is filled with fraud, posers, D-list celebrities with fake followers, and people who get paid to post about how much they supposedly like certain products in what's called "influence marketing." Kim Kardashian can get paid tens of thousands of dollars just to tweet something about a product or post a picture of something on Instagram.[393] The Federal Trade Commission has started to crack down on these influence marketers because it is illegal to not disclose that a tweet, Instagram post, or a product endorsement in a YouTube video is a paid promotion.[394] In a TV commercial, viewers know the celebrity is getting paid to talk about a product, but if someone on Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube posts about how 'great' a product is, nobody knows if they just want to tell their followers about something they think is cool, or if it's a commercial.

An investigation into the official Obamacare Facebook page in 2014 found that the majority of the over 226,838 comments were from just a small handful of users who were most likely paid shills to give the false impression that everyone loved the new law.[395] Barack Obama's "nonprofit" Organizing for Action declined to comment if they were paying people to post, but it's clear from the extraordinary number of posts from the same few accounts that this was an organized online campaign.[396]

The government actually paid WebMD, the popular health and medical website, $14 million dollars to promote Obamacare.[397] Those payments weren't even kept secret and were listed in the budget of the Department of Health and Human Services. A private foundation called the California Endowment even paid $500,000 to television networks to incorporate pro-Obamacare plot lines into TV sitcoms and other shows.[398]

All of this makes for a fascinating and complex media landscape which is difficult to navigate without getting lost in an endless maze of hyperlinks, and millions of people and countless companies and organizations all simultaneously hoping to be seen, heard, followed, and believed.

In a rare interview Drudge Report founder Matt Drudge gave to Alex Jones in 2015, he warned people not to rely on Facebook and other social media companies to communicate with their friends, get your news from, or to build a business with because, "You're a pawn in their scheme."[399] To see what he is talking about let's take a closer and more specific look at several of the current top social media sites (Facebook and Twitter) to see how they can, and do, manipulate and censor what people post and what users see. And then we'll look at YouTube, Google, and Wikipedia to see how and why they do the same thing.

Facebook

Facebook slowly morphed from a website people could use to look up old friends from high school or college and share photos with family members, to a place where most people now get much of their news and keep up with current events. At one time Facebook only showed users what their ‘friends’ were posting, but that changed when they added the trending module — and with this simple little box they harnessed the power to introduce their one billion users to news stories that their friends hadn’t posted — stories the company feels users *should know* about, and overnight Facebook transformed from just a social networking site to a news company.

With this change, combined with the algorithms which filter out certain content people post by limiting its distribution, Facebook has become a powerful gatekeeper that can decide which stories will go viral, and which ones will remain virtually unknown. Facebook also poses a danger to free speech by policing and censoring what people post, and if something is deemed ‘too politically incorrect,’ then posts are automatically deleted and users may have their accounts completely shut down.

Most news websites now rely on Facebook for the majority of their traffic from users posting links to their articles. An Internet analytics firm showed that Facebook was responsible for driving 43% of web traffic to over 400 major sites in 2016.[400]

According to their study, in 2014 Facebook was responsible for 20% of all traffic to news sites, and in just two years that figure more than doubled as people became accustomed to scrolling through their Facebook feeds to see what articles their friends had posted and because they were now ‘following’ news websites on Facebook instead of bookmarking the websites in their Internet browser and visiting them directly.[401]

CEO Mark Zuckerberg has said one of his goals is, “To build the perfect personalized newspaper for every person in the world.”[402] Facebook even began hosting articles from major publishers so users who clicked on a link wouldn’t leave the Facebook ecosystem and could now view the content within Facebook’s app.[403]

The company wants to be the primary hub of the Internet, bypassing search engines and web browsers altogether.[404] For those who were using the Internet in the late 1990s and early 2000s, we recall most companies encouraging people to visit their websites at the end of their commercials, but those calls to action have been replaced by now encouraging people to follow them on Facebook instead, making Mark Zuckerberg one of the most powerful (and unnecessary) middlemen in the history of the Internet.

As the 2016 election approached, many media analysts and tech bloggers began to realize that with so many people relying on Facebook as their primary news aggregator, that the site could leverage their power hoping to influence the election. *New York Magazine* published an article which asked, "Could Facebook help prevent President Trump?" and went on to say, "Not through lobbying or donations or political action committees, but simply by exploiting the enormous reach and power of its core products? Could Facebook, a private corporation with over a billion active users, swing an election just by adjusting its News Feed?"[405]

Paul Brewer, a communications professor at the University of Delaware, said, "Facebook would, like any campaign, want to encourage turnout among the supporters of its preferred candidate, persuade the small number of genuinely uncommitted likely voters, and target apathetic voters who could be convinced to get out to the polls."[406]

Josh Wright, the executive director of a behavioral science lab, also admitted, "There's lots of opportunity, I think, to manipulate based on what they know about people."[407] Wright pointed out how the site could fill people's news feeds with photos or stories showing a particular candidate engaged in activities that Facebook knows they like in order to use "in-group psychology" to get people to identify with a candidate who shares some of their interests.

We tend to judge someone by what other people we like are saying about them, and so Facebook could highlight statements made by celebrities that people follow, or even our own friends, about a candidate in order to influence our opinion of that person. If you think Facebook wouldn't engage in this kind of personalized high-tech manipulation, you would be wrong, because they already have.

A secret study Facebook conducted during the 2010 midterm elections, with help from researchers at the University of California, San Diego, investigated what's called social contagion which is how behavior or emotions are copied by others. Facebook included over 60 million of their users in the experiment and found that they could influence people to actually get out and vote by showing people that their friends had voted, which then influenced others to go vote as well. "Our study suggests that social influence may be the best way to increase voter turnout," said James Fowler, a UCSD political science professor who conducted the study. "Just as importantly, we show that what happens online matters a lot for the 'real world.'"[408] Their experiment increased voter turnout by 340,000 people.[409]

Facebook obviously has a political agenda. They've hosted a Q & A for Barack Obama,[410] they hung a huge Black Lives Matter banner at their headquarters,[411] and Mark Zuckerberg has been very outspoken about his support of illegal immigration,[412] gay marriage,[413] and other liberal causes. The company conducts internal polls of employees where they submit questions and vote on them in hopes of getting Zuckerberg to answer, and one poll in March of 2016 showed that a bunch of employees asked if the company should be used to help prevent Donald Trump from winning the election.[414]

UCLA law professor Eugene Volokh told Gizmodo, "Facebook can promote or block any material that it wants. Facebook has the same First Amendment right as the New York Times. They can completely block Trump if they want. They can block him or promote him."[415] Technically the First Amendment only prevents the U.S. government from suppressing someone's speech, not a corporation.

Gizmodo's report on the political bias of Facebook pointed out, "Most people don't see Facebook as a media company — an outlet designed to inform us. It doesn't look like a newspaper, magazine, or news website. But if Facebook decides to tamper with its algorithm — altering what we see — it's akin to an editor deciding what to run big with on the front page, or what to take a stand on."[416] Whether they are legally allowed to do such a thing is one issue, whether such favoritism and censorship is deceptive and immoral is another.

"If Facebook decided to," professor Volokh says, "it could gradually remove any pro-Trump stories or media off its site — devastating for a campaign that runs on memes and publicity. Facebook wouldn't have to disclose it was doing this, and would be protected by the First Amendment."[417]

"If Facebook was actively coordinating with the Sanders or Clinton campaign, and suppressing Donald Trump news, it would turn an independent expenditure (protected by the First Amendment) into a campaign contribution because it would be coordinated — and that could be restricted," he said. "But if they're just saying, 'We don't want Trump material on our site,' they have every right to do that. It's protected by the First Amendment."[418]

Censorship of Trending Topics

In May of 2016, tech blog Gizmodo confirmed what many had suspected and what was obvious to those with common sense — that Facebook was systematically suppressing news stories from conservative outlets and those which presented a positive conservative message.[419] "Facebook workers routinely suppressed news stories of interest to conservative readers from the social network's influential 'trending' news section, according to a former journalist who worked on the project," reported Gizmodo.[420]

The whistleblower revealed that the company suppressed stories about CPAC (the Conservative Political Action Committee conference), Mitt Romney, Rand Paul, and other topics from showing up on the trending module, even though they would have appeared there organically from so many people posting about them.

It wasn't just one whistleblower, but several, and they also revealed that employees would manually insert topics into the trending list that they wanted to get more attention. One former employee said that positive stories about Black Lives Matter were often inserted into the trending box to help them go viral when they didn't organically trend from people posting about them.[421]

"In other words," Gizmodo reported, "Facebook's news section operates like a traditional newsroom, reflecting the biases of its workers and the institutional imperatives of the corporation. Imposing human editorial values onto the lists of topics an algorithm spits out is by no means a bad thing — but it is in stark contrast to the company's claims that the trending module simply lists 'topics that have recently become popular on Facebook.'"[422]

They also called the news section “some of the most powerful real estate on the Internet” that helps dictate what hundreds of millions of people are reading. One of the news curators said they used a notebook to document stories that were censored which included ones about Lois Lerner, the IRS official who targeted conservatives for audits; stories about the Drudge Report, Ted Cruz, Steven Crowder, and more.

A second curator said, “It was absolutely bias. We were doing it subjectively. It just depends on who the curator is and what time of day it is. Every once in a while a Red State or conservative news source would have a story. But we would have to go and find the same story from a more neutral outlet that wasn’t as biased.”[423]

If a story was on Breitbart, *The Washington Examiner*, Newsmax or other conservative sites and was going viral and qualified to be included in the trending module, curators would wait until an outlet like CNN or *The New York Times* covered the story before it would be allowed to show up as a trend. One insider revealed that Facebook injected the latest Black Lives Matter protests into the trending module, giving them special preference to further their cause. The editors also prevented negative stories about Facebook itself from showing up in the trending section.

The very next day after the story broke about Facebook manipulating the trending topics list, the US Senate Commerce Committee, which oversees interstate commerce and communications, sent a letter to Mark Zuckerberg with a list of detailed questions demanding answers about who determines which stories are included in the Trending Topics section. They also wanted to know details about the process of selection, oversight, and wanting answers to the allegations of politically motivated manipulation.[424]

Mark Zuckerberg then invited several conservative media figures including Glenn Beck, Fox News host Dana Perino, Tucker Carlson, and others to Facebook’s headquarters to try and save face, prevent conservatives from abandoning Facebook, and to ‘talk about their concerns.’ But since our world moves so fast most people quickly forgot all about the scandal and continue to blindly believe that what they see trending is what people are talking about most, not even giving a second thought about the legitimacy what they are seeing.

“Boosting” Posts

Most people think that what they and their friends post (and what news sites they follow post), shows up in their feed unless they choose to hide posts from a user they are still following, but Facebook openly admits limiting the distribution of posts unless users pay them (in most cases hundreds of dollars for each post). It’s called “boosting” a post, and is mostly for people like me who have a “fan page” which is what all public figures, TV shows, news outlets, and bands use. It has a few more features than standard Facebook pages, such as not having to approve friend requests every time someone follows the page.

My page, at the time I'm writing this has about 500,000 followers. But each status update I post only shows up on a few thousand people's news feeds. This isn't some conspiracy, it's just a method Facebook uses to generate money by encouraging administrators of fan pages to "boost" their posts, or pay to have them actually show up in the feeds of people who are following the page. For administrators of "fan pages," when we post something, we are alerted with a button that says "boost this post" which takes us to a checkout page showing various prices and the corresponding number of people Facebook will then allow to see the post.

For example to boost a post so that it will reach at least 100,000 of the 500,000 people following my page, the cost is $4,000.[425] That's for *one* status update. I mention this because a lot of people wonder why they miss posts from pages they follow, and this is the reason. You may only be seeing one out of every four posts because of the limitation Facebook puts on the posts that aren't being "boosted."

Experimenting on Users

Aside from the previously mentioned secret study into Facebook's effectiveness of getting out the vote in the 2010 midterm elections by using 60 million users as unknowing guinea pigs,[426] Facebook has conducted other experiments on its users as well. In 2012 they manipulated the news feeds of 700,000 people by both limiting and boosting the number of positive and negative posts showing up in some people's feeds to determine whether they could alter their moods. They then monitored what those users posted to see if they were either more negative or positive as a result of what they were regularly seeing in their own feeds.[427] All Facebook users actually consent to this kind of manipulation by agreeing to the terms of service when they sign up.[428]

Leaked documents also revealed that Facebook experimented on what they considered to be emotionally vulnerable teenagers who felt "useless."[429] The documents show that the company's algorithms can determine which users are feeling "worthless," "insecure," "useless," "overwhelmed," and other depressed feelings, and then they use this assessment to allow advertisers to target those people with ads for products they think they will be able to get them to buy.[430]

Because of the continued instances of people committing horrific crimes while broadcasting them using Facebook's 'Live' feature, the company is developing an artificial intelligence system to watch live streams in real time, and monitor people's posts in order to remove any 'offensive' or violent content.[431] If their A.I. is able to monitor all posts and live streams in near real time, it opens the door for Orwellian censorship straight out of a science fiction film, because those who control the parameters for having content removed could choose to use the system to prevent the spread of certain political views, as we have already seen with the Trending Topics scandal.

In May of 2017, Facebook hired another 3000 people to monitor live streams, and other posts that are flagged for potentially violent or 'hateful' content in attempts to have such posts removed more quickly.[432] So there is now a virtual army of moderators ready to not just delete posts or videos, but to shut down livestreams if someone is talking about an issue in a way Facebook deems 'sexist,' 'racist,' 'homophobic,' or any number of buzzwords that indicate 'Thought Crime.'

A Threat to Free Speech

Relying on Facebook to communicate with friends and family has become a threat to free speech around the world as fewer people actually talk on the phone (let alone meet face to face). People are now being arrested for ‘hate speech’ for posting criticism about their government’s policies on Facebook.[433] This isn’t just happening in Third World countries or Orwellian dictatorships like Communist China or North Korea; it’s happening in England,[434] Scotland,[435] Germany,[436] Canada,[437] and other supposedly ‘free’ countries. Facebook also frequently deletes users’ posts and locks people out of their accounts (or deletes their accounts entirely) for posting statements critical of illegal immigration, the LGBT agenda, and other policies Leftists are pushing.

These alleged ‘terms of service’ violations aren’t for posting threats, they’re for simply criticizing the liberal agenda, or for using certain words that social justice warriors deem ‘hateful.’ This kind of Orwellian censorship is the equivalent of your phone company listening to every conversation you have, and then turning off your phone if they didn’t like what you were saying.

Facebook has deleted several of my posts and locked me out of my account for three days for such ‘violations’ after I criticized anti-white racism and a bizarre pro-transgender soap commercial. I expect that any day they may just delete my account altogether for what they will claim is a ‘serious violation’ of their terms of service.

When logging on one morning I was told, “We removed the post because it doesn’t follow the Facebook Community Standards,” and I found that Facebook had deleted a post I made that was critical of a Dove soap commercial featuring ‘Real Moms’ which included a transgender ‘woman’ holding ‘her’ new little baby, and the person ‘identified’ as the child’s ‘mother’ even though he was the biological father. All I did was post a link to a story about the commercial, along with the comment, “Excuse me now while I go grab some Irish Spring to clean up my puke,” a sarcastic joke, referencing Irish Spring, a competitor’s soap.[438]

People often call this being put in “Facebook Jail” which means you can’t log in or post anything for up to 30 days, depending on how many times you’ve been suspended for ‘violating’ their terms of service. Facebook has suspended people for simply posting Bible verses that are critical of homosexuality.[439] Other posts critical of illegal immigration, black crime, LGBT extremists, or radical Muslims are regularly deleted as well.[440]

Facebook employees have actually pressured Mark Zuckerberg to delete some of Donald Trump’s posts for violating their ‘hate speech’ rules for his stance on immigration.[441] Again, imagine the phone company canceling your service because they didn’t like what you and your friends talked about. That’s basically what Facebook and the other social media giants are doing by policing what people post and then shutting down their pages if they feel something is too ‘offensive’ or violates their terms of service.

Facebook quietly admits censoring content for the Chinese government.[442] The website was banned in China in 2009, so Facebook developed new censorship tools to appease the Communist government there, and so they allowed the website back.[443] The day before Prince William and Kate Middleton's wedding in the UK, Facebook suspended a bunch of pages of people and groups they suspected were going to 'cause trouble' during the event.[444] And Mark Zuckerberg has admitted working with various European countries in order to censor criticism of the mass influx of Muslims into Britain, France, Germany, and Sweden.[445]

Some are calling for Facebook (and other social media services, including search engines like Google) to be treated as public utilities.[446] One of the arguments is that using them in today's society is as necessary as having access to traditional utilities like the telephone, water, electricity, and natural gas.[447]

After the historic flooding in Houston after Hurricane Harvey in 2017, many victims took to social media begging to be rescued, posting their address and pictures of the rising floodwater, and many were rescued by local volunteers this way. One may argue that banning people from such sites could put lives at risk, and is one more reason Facebook, Twitter, and other social media services should be considered utilities that can't be shut off just because someone is posting things the companies don't agree with.

The Future of Facebook

Not only does Facebook want to be the middleman of all Internet traffic, but they're getting into commerce by enabling financial transactions, original content creation like Amazon and Netflix, and they hope to lead the virtual reality revolution. Mark Zuckerberg has even created flying solar-powered Wi-Fi routers to bring the Internet to remote parts of Africa,[448] and envisions a world where instead of physically going to a friend's house to watch a football game, everyone will stay at their own homes and put on their VR headsets to watch television 'together' while communicating with each other through avatars. They're calling it Facebook Spaces.[449]

If you're starting to think Facebook's vision of the future looks like something right out of *The Matrix*, you wouldn't be wrong. Zuckerberg himself says that in 50 years we'll all be "plugged into the Matrix" through his mind-reading machines and using virtual reality headsets as part of our daily lives. He said, "I think you're going to be able to capture a thought [and take] what you're thinking or feeling, in its kind of ideal and perfect form in your head, and share that with the world."[450]

Such themes have been explored in science fiction films like *Surrogates* (2009), *eXistenZ* (1999), and *The Thirteenth Floor* (1999), all of which warn about the dangers of this kind of society, but Zuckerberg is determined to make such thing a reality.

Twitter

Twitter is often the Internet's equivalent of a wall in a gas station's bathroom stall. Anonymous idiots write all kinds of garbage for the sole purpose of entertaining themselves for a few seconds by trying to shock those who read it. It's also a place for people to engage in hate-filled arguments with random people over the latest political or pop culture story that's trending. Twitter is also a way for people to try to get the attention of their favorite (or most hated) celebrities since many of them do engage with their fans there.

Unlike Facebook, (at least at the time I'm writing this) Twitter doesn't have a real name policy and thrives on users being able to remain anonymous so what they say can't be tied to them, where they live, where they work, or their picture. This anonymity encourages people to tweet the most vile, hateful, and threatening things they can imagine while hiding behind their computer (or phone).

Tweets consist of short statements that can't exceed 140 characters and thus Twitter is called a 'micro blogging' site. While people can post lengthy essays on Facebook, Twitter is mostly for very short, often very blunt statements, and is a very fast-paced social networking site with the flow of new tweets never ending.

Despite the mudslinging and constant trolling, somehow (at least at the moment) Twitter does have a measurable influence on our society. It is perhaps best known for what's trending on the site and was the first major social media platform to include a trending topics list. The trending box allegedly shows the list of the top 10 topics that people are tweeting about, and a look at it on any given day reveals what is most important to the people using Twitter. This is usually celebrity gossip, sports entertainment news, or tweets about the latest liberal causes or complaints. Often what's trending on Twitter then gets picked up by mainstream media as a topic they see of interest to report on.

Twitter has become a place where celebrities release public statements on whatever scandal they may be involved in, and random things they say are often turned into meaningless little stories on celebrity gossip sites. As you know, President Trump likes to tweet and often goes on 'Twitter rants' about the media, the Democrats, and Deep State operatives within the government trying to sabotage his administration.

The Trending Topics

As I covered in the previous chapter, Facebook was exposed for manipulating the trending topics box by not only censoring certain stories and topics from being included on the list, but also artificially inserting topics into the module that they wanted to promote.[451] And knowing what we know about technology and these major social media companies, it would be foolish to think that Twitter doesn't do exactly the same thing. In fact, in a now deleted tweet, a Clinton insider named Peter Daou tweeted to CEO Jack Dorsey asking him to remove "Words That Don't Describe Hillary" from trending, saying that Twitter was, "providing a platform for pure misogyny" by allowing it to stay on the trending list.[452]

When President Obama did a live Q & A with Twitter in 2015 using the hashtag #AskPOTUS [POTUS is short for President of the United States], the CEO asked his team to implement an algorithm to filter out "abusive" tweets that contained the hashtag.[453] A few years later they would roll out this feature for everyone, allowing people to manually input any words, phrases, usernames, and even emojis they want automatically filtered out from their feed.[454] The muting is even case sensitive. For example, you can now literally put the words "President Trump" in your filter, and if someone tweets at you a message that contains those words, you won't even see it.[455]

In June of 2015, when the Supreme Court ruled that gay marriage had to be accepted as legal in all 50 states, the hashtag #LoveWins was instantly trending and included a rainbow heart emoji.[456] Twitter automatically includes a custom emoji when certain hashtags are tweeted if the hashtag is sponsored by a company or an organization.[457] It appears that President Obama was one of the first people to start using the hashtag, showing that it (along with the custom 'gay' emoji) was preplanned.[458] Twitter even introduced a special Black Lives Matter emoji consisting of the "black power" fist the day after a Black Lives Matter activist shot twelve police officers, killing five of them in an ambush during one of the movement's marches.[459]

It's not just the top trending topics that are manipulated, but also their associated results. When you click on one of the top 10 topics, you are brought to a page that shows what people are led to believe are the top tweets or photos using those hashtags or words in a tweet. In theory, if a tweet has 5,000 likes, then it is one of the first tweets shown in the results for the topic, but this isn't actually the case. It has been documented that what Twitter features as the top results for various trending topics appear to be manipulated at times to cast them in a certain light.

For example when a secret service agent tackled a *Time* magazine photographer at a Trump campaign rally, a photo showing the photographer with his hand grabbing the throat of the agent was the top result connected to the trending topic "Secret Service," but that photo was later replaced by another one showing the photographer lying on the ground after having been tackled by the agent.[460]

A Trump rally in Chicago had to be canceled in March of 2016 because an angry mob of violent protesters were getting more out of control by the minute and local police advised the campaign to call off the event. That night "Trump Rally" was the top trend on Twitter, and when it first began trending, all of the top tweets included photos of a bloody police officer who had been smashed in the head with a bottle along with pictures of protesters blocking traffic, but those top results were soon replaced with pictures of KKK rallies and links to news articles attacking Trump.[461] Many people started tweeting the hashtags #TwitterCensorship or #TwitterCensoring as a result.

While Twitter remains silent on the issue, Instagram openly admits that they delete hashtags and censor certain search results in order to, as they claim, "hide inappropriate content."[462] Sometimes they just temporarily censor hashtags when a certain topic they feel is "inappropriate" becomes associated with a benign hashtag. It's not just NSFW (not safe for work) hashtags like #RussianMilf or #Cumfession, that they censor, it has also been hashtags like #Kansas, #AmericanGirl, and even #Brain.[463]

Hillary Clinton's campaign was accused of paying Twitter to inject the hashtag #BernieLostMe into the top trend hoping to erode support for Bernie Sanders during the primaries. The #BernieLostMe hashtag was number one despite having just a few thousand people tweeting it, while other topics that were ranked lower on the list had more than ten times as many people tweeting about them.[464] 'Influencers' are often chosen to simultaneously start tweeting hashtags as part of political propaganda campaigns because their fans will mindlessly follow their lead and can quickly cause certain topics to trend.

Twitter has also allowed disgusting topics to trend like, "Rape Melania,"[465] and #GoldenShowers.[466] The day President Trump was inaugurated, over 12,000 tweets called for his assassination and "Assassinate Trump" trended.[467] The same threats flooded Twitter the day after the election when unhinged liberals couldn't contain their violent hatred for the new president.[468]

President Trump on Twitter

President Trump's use of Twitter has been called the modern day equivalent of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's fireside chats, when he used the new media of his time — radio — to speak directly to the American people. We really take for granted how amazing most of our technology is today, and before FDR's fireside chats if someone wanted to listen to a president's speech, they had to actually be at an event in person. Instead of Donald Trump going to a radio station, or holding a press conference in the Rose Garden in front of all the different television cameras, he can just pick up his phone and type a message directly to his 30 million Twitter followers.

"Trump's tweets" have become legendary for their bluntness and controversial nature, but the power of him being able to get his message directly to people through Twitter instead of relying on television networks, radio stations, or newspapers to relay it, is truly remarkable. In an interview with *The Financial Times*, he said, "Without the tweets, I wouldn't be here…I have over 100 million followers between Facebook, Twitter [and] Instagram. Over 100 million. I don't have to go to the fake media."[469]

Twitter co-founder Evan Williams actually apologized for Twitter's role in getting out his message, and when asked about Trump crediting Twitter with helping him win the election, Williams responded, "It's a very bad thing, Twitter's role in that. If it's true that he wouldn't be president if it weren't for Twitter, then yeah, I'm sorry."[470]

Banning and Censoring Users

The most popular case of someone being banned from Twitter is when Breitbart's Milo Yiannopoulos was permanently banned after teasing *Saturday Night Live* cast member Leslie Jones about the new all-female remake of *Ghostbusters* which was derided by critics for its gratuitous pro-feminist agenda.[471] Milo tweeted Leslie a link to his review which was published on Breitbart, and the two went back and forth insulting each other.[472] Leslie Jones had her feelings hurt by Milo's 'trolling' which his followers joined in on, and tweeted, "I leave Twitter tonight with tears and a very sad heart. All this cause [sic] I did a movie. You can hate the movie but the shit I got today…wrong."[473]

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey responded to her saying "Hi Leslie, following, please DM me when you have a moment,"[474] trying to head off the bad PR of having another celebrity quit Twitter after getting tired of being trolled. Then, even though Milo hadn't threatened her, or used any language that's not commonplace on Twitter, his account was banned. Many were stunned by this because Twitter is mostly known for being a place to trash-talk others. Many saw the ban being politically motivated because Milo had become a vocal critic of social justice warriors and was becoming quite an Internet celebrity.

Even Wikileaks tweeted to CEO Jack Dorsey seeking some answers. First they called him out saying, "Cyber feudalism. @Twitter founder Jack banned conservative gay libertarian @Nero for speaking the 'wrong' way to actress @Lesdoggg."[475]

Jack responded, "@Wikileaks we don't ban people for expressing their thoughts. Targeted abuse & inciting abuse against people however, that's not allowed."[476]

Wikileaks responded, "@Jack Like this?" and included a link to an archive of tweets from Leslie Jones doing just that. She had also said on *Late Night with Seth Meyers* that she uses her fans to go after people on Twitter who say things to her she doesn't like. "And I'll blow you up too, so if you tweet me thinking I'm the only one who's gonna get it, I retweet it so all my followers can see it, and get on your punk [ass]."[477]

Wikileaks continued to press Jack, asking "@Jack Who has access to justice? Many have had vastly worse. What's the appeal mechanism? What's the transparency of the process?"[478]

They went on, "@Jack Because it appears that a politically aligned famous American actress has access to ban-power that everyone else does not."[479]

They continued, "@Jack It is time @Twitter got out of the censorship/justice game. Let users create communal filter lists if need be."[480]

"@Jack a punitive mechanism leads to a flood of manipulative score settling & eventual defensive pre-emption just like #TurkeyPurge & 1937."[481]

"@Jack We will start a rival service if this keeps up because @Wikileaks & our supporters are threatened by a space of feudal justice."[482]

Jack Dorsey finally responded, “@Wikileaks all fair points. We are working to get here.”[483]

Before they had actually banned Milo, Twitter “unverified” his account,[484] removing the coveted blue checkmark found on celebrities’ social media accounts which confirm that it is in fact them and not a fan account or someone impersonating them. Having a verified social media account has some prestige to it because the person is seen as popular enough or “important” enough to warrant having such special treatment.[485] So unverifying Milo was a step trying to take away from his status and growing popularity.

Meanwhile, countless Black Lives Matter supporters call for killing cops, and crazy liberals repeatedly called for mass shootings at Donald Trump campaign events and for killing white people; and even to assassinate President Trump.[486] Throughout 2016 I documented repeated instances like this on my YouTube channel.[487]

Twitter was sued by an American woman whose husband was killed by an ISIS attack in Jordan where he was working as a contractor for what she alleged was providing material support to terrorists because so many radical Muslims were posting ISIS propaganda. The lawsuit claimed, “Without Twitter, the explosive growth of ISIS over the last few years into the most feared terrorist group in the world would not have been possible.”[488] Twitter even verified the account of the Muslim Brotherhood which has been designated a terrorist organization in several countries, and allows an account dedicated to Hamas, the radical Palestinian Sunni-Islamic organization which has almost 50,000 followers.[489]

When rapper Azealia Banks threatened to have Sarah Palin gang raped by a bunch of black men, Twitter didn’t penalize her account.[490] Banks had also bullied and harassed a child actor from the Disney Channel, but again there was no action taken to even temporarily suspend her account.[491] It was only after she called One Direction singer Zayn Malik a “faggot” that her account was suspended.[492]

Meanwhile, after I posted a meme saying there were only two genders, I was sent an email from Twitter’s Support department encouraging me to delete the tweet and saying my account was under review to see if I violated their no “hateful conduct” policy.

James O’Keefe had his account temporarily suspended shortly after he announced he would release a new undercover investigation into a democrat candidate for the U.S. Senate.[493] O’Keefe’s Project Veritas organization would later release damning footage of democrat operatives discussing voter fraud and planning to use stink bombs at an inaugural ball which led to several arrests.[494] The Drudge Report’s tweets have been censored using the “sensitive content” filter,[495] and at least 32 of Donald Trump’s tweets encouraging people to get out the vote in key battleground states like Florida and Wisconsin vanished shortly after he posted them and couldn’t be seen unless you had their exact URLs.[496]

Twitter suspended World Net Daily’s account for 12 hours because of a tweet including a link to a story they wrote about former DNC chair Donna Brazile allegedly being upset that a private investigator had been hired to look into the murder of Seth Rich. He was a DNC staffer who many suspect may have been the person who leaked DNC insider emails to Wikileaks shortly before the election.[497]

Twitter even suspended the account of a Christian mother for posting ‘homophobic’ remarks for denouncing an article in *Teen Vogue* instructing kids on how to have anal sex with each other.[498]

Since banning Milo Yiannopoulos caused #FreeMilo to become the number one trend from all his supporters tweeting their criticism of his ban, Twitter began “shadow banning” popular conservative accounts which covertly limits the visibility of their tweets to others.[499] It’s a more subtle way of censoring someone since their account isn’t getting shut down and specific tweets aren’t causing their account to get suspended, so the tactic of shadow banning quietly restricts the reach that the user has. This seems to be the new preferred method of cracking down on conservatives because this “soft censorship” doesn’t raise as many alarms because as you can imagine when a popular user gets suspended, people notice and then start aggressively spreading the word on Twitter about the latest victim of censorship.

Twitter also experimented with locking accounts temporarily if people tweeted profanity to celebrities.[500] They appear to have abandoned this method in favor of enabling mute lists and automatic profanity filters that users can activate which will prevent any tweet with profanity or custom words or phrases of their choice from showing up in their feed.

They also enabled block lists, which have been compiled by different groups, and once added to a person’s account automatically block hundreds, or even thousands of users, based on any number of criteria.[501] If someone blocks you, then they won’t get any notifications when you tweet to them, and you can’t access their feed to see their tweets. Some people I’m blocked by include Rosie O’Donnell, CNN’s Jim Acosta, actress Leslie Jones, singer John Legend, model Chrissy Teigen, *Tonight Show* band leader Questlove, the DJ Moby, rapper Ice T, Andrew Dice Clay, Amy Schumer, and many more.

Bots

Twitter admitted to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission that they estimated over 23 million of their active user accounts were “bots,” or fake accounts run by automated computer programs which then post spam or are used by people who buy followers so they can look more popular than they are.[502] A later study put the number at almost 48 million bots, or between 10% to 15% of the active accounts on the platform.[503]

A lot of bots have an attractive and scantly clad girl as the profile picture and do nothing other than respond to tweets which use certain keywords by posting a scripted message along with a link to a porn site, or have the porn site linked up on the account’s bio hoping to dupe people into visiting it after getting their attention from the bot responding to their tweets. Of course Twitter attempts to detect and shut down these porn bot accounts, but it is an ongoing battle.

After Bruce Jenner announced ‘her’ new name, someone set up the @She_Not_He bot on Twitter which would tweet a response to anyone who referred to Caitlyn Jenner as a he, to “politely correct" them.[504] About 10,000 tweets were sent from the account before it was shut down.[505] This bot was obviously created by a social justice warrior who wanted to defend 'Caitlyn' Jenner and shows how they can be used for propaganda purposes.

Bots are also used by services that sell 'likes' and 'retweets' that some people buy hoping to appear as if they have more 'fans' than they actually do.[506] In the social media world, how many 'likes' a post has is often seen as a measuring stick of how 'popular' someone is, and people looking to build up their personal "brand" sometimes resort to these deceptive practices by using bots or 'click farms' located in poor countries which literally just pay people to like and retweet things.[507] The more "engagement" a tweet has, the more likely Twitter's algorithm is to place it at the top of search results for certain keywords or when someone clicks on a link to one of the top ten trending topics. Unlike bots, click farms use actual humans to do the 'liking' and retweeting, but the effect is the same. They give the false impression that posts are more popular than they actually are.

The more bots that tweet out a certain keyword or hashtag, the more likely those topics will start trending. So if a person, a political activist group, or a marketing agency wanted a certain topic to show up on the top ten trending list, then using bots could likely help make that happen. Then the issue, topic, or wannabe celebrity's name would be brought before the eyes of everyone who happens to look at the trending module.

Brad Hayes, a computer scientist at MIT, explained, "A bot army can be utilized for a number of dishonest purposes, chief amongst them, misrepresenting public sentiment about whichever topics the controller has interest in. If 3 million people started tweeting in favor of or against a particular topic, would it shift public perception? What if those same 3 million people targeted every source you use for information? It's fair to say that this kind of written 'show of force' can certainly alter perceptions."[508]

A Latin American political operative named Andrés Sepúlveda admits he has used bots to influence people in the build-up to major elections in Mexico, Colombia, and Nicaragua. In 2014 he was sentenced to ten years in prison for espionage, using malicious software, and conspiracy, but from his prison cell he gave an interview to Bloomberg News where he said, "When I realized that people believed what the Internet says more than reality, I discovered that I had the power to make people believe almost anything."[509] He concluded, "I worked with presidents, public figures with great power, and did many things with absolutely no regrets because I did it with full conviction and under a clear objective, to end dictatorship and socialist governments in Latin America."[510]

A study at Oxford University in England looked at bots tweeting just before the UK-EU Referendum which resulted in Britain voting to leave the European Union and found that of 300,000 Twitter accounts they included in their study, one percent of them were responsible for one third of all the tweets about the Brexit debate.[511] Such a high level of activity from such a small sample led the researchers to believe that the accounts were run by bots. They said there were some bots tweeting support for Remain, and other bots tweeting support for Brexit.[512]

It's pretty much expected in today's social media world that some marketing firms may use Twitter bots to generate the appearance of "buzz" about the little-known singers or albums they are hired to promote. Bots are most likely used by marketing agencies to promote the albums of some well-known singers and television shows on major networks. One blogger posted screen shots of dozens of Twitter accounts tweeting exactly the same thing at exactly the same time, all promoting Rachel Maddow's show on MSNBC along with the hashtag #Maddow.[513]

To 'trend' on Twitter is seen as a sign of success in the entertainment and news business, and most people would probably do anything to make it happen. Of course Twitter is trying to eliminate the use of bots, but it is unknown how effective they are at filtering them out.

Correct The Record

A Super PAC supporting Hillary Clinton called Correct the Record, founded by David Brock, who also started the left-wing Media Matters 'watchdog group,' released an army of paid trolls onto the Internet during the 2016 election to tweet and comment on Facebook (and in the comment sections of news websites) about how great Hillary Clinton was, and to respond directly to people criticizing her.

The Los Angeles Times noted, "In effect, the effort aims to spend a large sum of money to increase the amount of trolling that already exists online."[514] During the election Trump's support online was tremendous, and his use of Twitter has become a part of the daily news cycles. Bernie Sanders had legions of social media savvy millennials who constantly defended and promoted him online, but Hillary's supporters were much older and didn't use social media or the comment sections of websites, so the Super PAC decided to artificially create the online support for her.

"It is meant to appear to be coming organically from people and their social media networks in a groundswell of activism, when in fact it is highly paid and highly tactical," said Brian Donahue, CEO of Craft Media/Digital, a political consulting company.[515] "That is what the Clinton campaign has always been about," he said. "It runs the risk of being exactly what their opponents accuse them of being: a campaign that appears to be populist but is a smokescreen that is paid and brought to you by lifetime political operatives and high-level consultants."[516]

David Brock, the man behind the trolling program, is known for his political dirty tricks, and so this plan was right up his alley. On a side note, Super PACs are prohibited by law from working directly with campaigns and are supposed to be completely independent entities, but Wikileaks emails revealed that Hillary's campaign was working with David Brock's Correct The Record in an apparent violation of federal law.[517]

Actor Tim Robbins, who supported Bernie Sanders, once tweeted, "Dear @CorrectRecord operatives, Thank you for following today's talking points. Your check is in the mail. Signed, @davidbrockdc," in a response to what he thought were replies to his tweets by the paid trolls.[518] He later deleted the tweet. David Karpf, a professor of media and public affairs at George Washington University, appeared to defend the paid trolling effort, saying the Super PAC was, "using the tools they have at their disposal" and that, "In this day and age of campaigning, they absolutely have to do it."[519]

Unfortunately, that’s the society we’re living in now, where paid trolls and bots are being used to promote or defend certain causes or political candidates online in order to artificially screw the appearance of what people are thinking and saying on social media. It’s truly a Brave New World.

YouTube

YouTube is the second most popular website in the world according to Alexa, the industry standard in web traffic analytics,[520] and it is so large that every minute over 400 hours of video is uploaded there.[521] It was launched in 2005 and for years most people just saw YouTube as a place to post funny cat videos, or "fail" videos of people slipping and falling or getting injured when attempting stupid stunts; but others saw it as a powerful platform to share news and commentary.

Google bought YouTube in 2006 for $1.6 billion dollars,[522] and it quickly became the most popular video sharing site in the world. For years it functioned primarily as a user-generated platform, meaning it hosted amateur videos posted by average every day people. Independent content creators, often called "YouTubers" would soon build huge grass roots followings with very little cost by making videos ranging from vlogs telling stupid stories, product reviews, do it yourself home improvement, and news and commentary. The videos are monetized through Google's AdSense, which places small banner ads on them or short "pre-roll" ads that play before the videos. For each ad that's shown, the creator gets a fraction of a penny. While it's difficult to make enough money to pay your bills doing this, a few of the top creators earn millions of dollars a year.[523]

As of April 2016 there were over 2000 YouTube channels with at least a million subscribers,[524] and channels like PewDiePie (57 million), Watchmojo (15 million), Ryan's Toys Review (9 million), Philip DeFranco (5 million) and others get more viewers per video than many major television shows.

My channel now has over a million subscribers and other conservative channels have recently been thriving like Next News Network, Infowars, Steven Crowder, Rebel Media, and Paul Joseph Watson. Many young female conservatives have gained large followings as well, like Lauren Southern, Roaming Millennial, and Brittany Pettibone.

The New York Times lamented, "For the New Far Right, YouTube Has Become the New Talk Radio," saying, "They deplore 'social justice warriors,' whom they credit with ruining popular culture, conspiring against the populace and helping to undermine 'the West.' They are fixated on the subjects of immigration, Islam and political correctness. They seem at times more animated by President Trump's opponents than by the man himself, with whom they share many priorities, if not a style."[525]

YouTube has changed the world. Sociologist Philip N. Howard quoted an Arab Spring activist on the power of YouTube back in 2010 as saying activists used, "Facebook to schedule the protests, Twitter to coordinate, and YouTube to tell the world."[526] This was before Facebook (and Twitter) enabled users to upload and share videos directly there as well, and while we may now take for granted the ability to upload videos online and share them with the world, YouTube first put this power in the hands of ordinary people, and it was truly revolutionary.

The mega-viral *Kony 2012* video, which received over 100 million views, was credited with encouraging the U.S. Senate to introduce a resolution against African warlord Joseph Kony, which they did just two weeks after the video was posted.[527]

A YouTube video is even said to have cost Mitt Romney the 2012 election after his comments at a $50,000 per plate dinner were secretly recorded by a bartender at the event, where Romney complained that 47% percent of Americans would never vote for him because they're dependent on the government for handouts.[528] That video was posted on YouTube just a month and a half before the election and immediately went viral, changing the entire tone.

While it started as primarily a user-generated content platform, once major corporations realized the power of YouTube, they started focusing on getting in on the action. It took a while for major media companies to see the potential and significance of it, but eventually the major news and entertainment networks began using the platform and were given favoritism and special features by YouTube, like anti-piracy monitoring (Content ID), and the ability to edit videos after they were already posted.[529] The home page now mostly consists of corporate sponsored videos, and what was once a community of small and independent video producers has been completely hijacked by the big media corporations.

As with Facebook and Twitter, YouTube has a Trending tab which features the *supposedly* most watched videos of the day, but just a quick look at the ranking of the videos and the amount of views they have can tell you that their Trending section is censored and manipulated too, or as a YouTube spokesman calls it, "a little human curation."[530] A brief look at the tab on most days shows many videos which hardly have any views but are manually placed on the list, hoping to artificially cause them to go viral because they promote political or social agendas that YouTube wants to further.

YouTube has also admitted that they manipulate the search results for certain topics to favor news reports from mainstream media channels over regular, independent ones.[531] They did this to put "more reliable and trustworthy" videos at the top of the page after "conspiracy" videos populated the top spots for certain searches.[532] Previously, the most-watched videos, or videos with the most engagement (comments and likes) were the top search results, no matter what channel they were from, but that is no longer the case. YouTube is now playing favorites with the major media companies, even if their videos barely have any views.

Not Just Entertainment Anymore

While most people just saw YouTube as a place to upload funny videos of their pets or their kids (remember *Charlie Bit My Finger*?), others saw the amazing power in being able to upload news segments so they could email the links to their friends — and when social media would come on the scene, share them there as well. There were also people like myself who started making our own videos giving our analysis of current events and uploading them to share our thoughts with anyone who would watch.

When I first got started making YouTube videos in 2006, smartphones didn't have video cameras in them, so the only people making YouTube videos were those who had camcorders, and to make the videos look and sound like they weren't shot in your basement, you had to have lighting kits, external microphones, and editing software; all of which cost money. Today a single smartphone has a high enough quality camera and microphone for anyone to record a vlog or an interview, and it looks and sounds pretty good, but in the early days of YouTube it took some equipment, money, and know-how to be able to make videos.

Now anyone with a cellphone can record a high quality video of anything — from a protest, or an interview with someone, to just a simple commentary on a current event, and it can be seen by just as many people as something that airs on the major television networks. What once took millions of dollars of equipment and infrastructure, not to mention a staff of skilled people, can now be accomplished by one person using a device that fits in the palm of their hand.

As YouTube "stars" got larger followings than many actors on network television, the sharks smelled blood in the water, and began circling. The Hillary Clinton campaign began recruiting YouTubers to encourage their audience to support her in the 2016 election since they had so much influence over their fans. *Vanity Fair* wrote, "The Clinton Campaign Deploys Its Secret Weapon: YouTubers," and pointed out that they recruited three popular YouTubers to help her appeal to voters in swing states just a week and a half before the election.[533]

The Clinton campaign got YouTubers to make endorsement videos for her in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Florida. One of the videos, shot by Todrick Hall, who has two and a half million subscribers, consisted of him "surprising" a fan of his who said she wasn't sure if she was voting, so he decided to visit her and encourage her to vote for Hillary Clinton. "I'm partnering with Hillary Clinton for America, because I want everybody to come out and vote, and I want everyone to make the right vote, and I believe the right vote is Hillary Clinton," he said.[534]

Another YouTuber, GloZell Green, who has 4.5 million subscribers but can barely get 20,000 views on a video because her novelty skits of eating gross foods quickly wore off, also posted a video which consisted of her meeting a "super fan" to talk to her about why she should vote for Hillary Clinton.[535] Barack Obama also met with YouTubers hoping to help Hillary. He sat down for live interviews with several poplar YouTubers, one of which was also GloZell Green, who is best known for taking a bath in a tub full of milk and cereal.[536] While many YouTubers aren't household names, their fans can be very dedicated and easily influenced, which is why both Hillary and Obama tried to tap into their audiences.

As independent content creators began dominating the platform and amassing huge followings of millions of people, all while working from their basement or bedroom; the "powers that be" got so concerned that their information monopoly was collapsing, they had to do something to stop it. When channels like mine and Alex Jones, and Next News Network are getting more viewers than CNN, MSNBC, and other major 'news' networks, you know that industry insiders are panicking, not only because they're losing millions of viewers, but because they're losing the ability to control the narrative surrounding major issues.

Censorship is a problem that slowly kept creeping up on YouTube in the form of giving channels "Community Guidelines strikes" and deleting videos their moderators thought constituted 'hate speech' or 'bullying,' but as channels like mine began getting millions of views a week, YouTube began to regret the 'monsters' that they helped to create, and new Orwellian censorship tactics were implemented.

YouTube is Over Party

Philip DeFranco, a popular YouTuber with over five million subscribers, posted a video titled "YouTube is Shutting Down My Channel and I'm Not Sure What to Do About It" on August 31st 2016 which started the "YouTube is Over Party" sarcastic hashtag to trend on social media from people talking about the new restrictions on content being rolled out. YouTubers like myself had noticed our videos were getting regularly demonetized — meaning no advertisements were allowed to run on them if they included certain keywords in the title or description. Words like 'war,' '9/11,' 'police shooting,' 'ISIS,' 'terrorism,' 'sex,' 'drugs,' etc. It didn't matter the context, they automatically got demonetized, but you wouldn't notice unless you looked closely at the analytics since there was no notification about it.

What brought this to Philip DeFranco's attention was that YouTube finally started emailing people when their videos were demonetized instead of just doing it without notice. One's first thought to get around this would be to just avoid using certain keywords in the titles, descriptions and tags of videos, and that solved the problem — at least for a little while — but YouTube's system kept getting more sophisticated by the day and now appears to analyze the transcripts of all videos uploaded. In 2009 YouTube began using voice recognition software and creating automatic transcripts for videos, and while not being 100% accurate, it is eerie to see that YouTube knows what the people in a video are saying because their servers are now "listening" to every word that is said in every video.[537]

PewDiePie Under Attack

A few months after the 'YouTube is Over' demonetization scare, the *Wall Street Journal* would target YouTube's biggest channel, PewDiePie, which has over 57 million subscribers, and claim he's making money by posting 'racist' and 'anti-Semitic' videos. PewDiePie, whose real name is Felix Kjellberg, is a 27-year-old guy from Sweden who started off as a "gamer" (a person who literally plays video games while other people watch) and later branched out into comedy skits and social commentary, and is a huge star rivaling many Hollywood A-listers in terms of popularity.

"Disney Severs Ties With YouTube Star PewDiePie After Anti-Semitic Posts," was the *Wall Street Journal's* headline where they boasted that they asked Disney about videos of his which they claimed included "Anti-Semitic jokes or Nazi imagery"[538] Their story cast him in a false light and gave the impression that he might be racist or anti-Semitic because of some jokes he made in his videos. *The Wall Street Journal* even put out a video of their own to accompany their story which showed PewDiePie dressed as a soldier sitting in front of his computer watching an Adolf Hitler speech while smiling and nodding in agreement. What they failed to mention was this scene was from a skit he shot in response to previous false claims by the mainstream media which accused him of being racist, so he made the Hitler video as a joke making fun of their ridiculous claims.

This *Wall Street Journal* article on PewDiePie poured gasoline on what were just smoldering embers, and it blew up into a huge forest fire that would be used as a token example that advertisements for major brands were being shown on YouTube videos that were 'racist,' 'inappropriate' or 'offensive.' *Wired* magazine then ran the headline, "PewDiePie Was Always Kinda Racist, But Now He's a Hero to Nazis,"[539] and when they tweeted out the link they added the comment, "White supremacists have a new hero, and his name is PewDiePie."[540] After facing major backlash from their defamatory title, they later changed it to "PewDiePie's fall shows the limits of 'LOL JK.'[541]

His original series *Scare PewDiePie* on YouTube Red (a subscription service similar to Netflix) was immediately canceled, and YouTube pulled his channel from their premium advertiser program costing him a massive drop in income.[542] Major YouTubers rallied behind him showing support, including Jewish ones,[543] but the war against YouTubers was just beginning.

News Channels Targeted

BuzzFeed, the infamous clickbait bottom feeders of the Internet, published an article titled, "How YouTube Serves As The Content Engine Of The Internet's Dark Side," pressuring YouTube to start demonetizing videos about 'conspiracy theories.'[544] The story began, "Everyone knows that Twitter and Facebook spread bad information and hate speech. But YouTube, which pays for conspiracy theories seen by millions, may be even worse."[545]

They named one particular conspiracy channel with 150,000 subscribers and said that, "His videos, usually preceded by pre-roll ads for major brands like Quaker Oats and Uber, have been watched almost 18 million times, which is roughly the number of people who tuned in to last year's season finale of NCIS, the most popular show on television."[546]

BuzzFeed continued, "In the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election, the major social platforms, most notably Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit, have been forced to undergo painful, often public reckonings with the role they play in spreading bad information…And yet there is a mammoth social platform, a cornerstone of the modern Internet with more than a billion active users every month, which hosts and even pays for a fathomless stock of bad information, including viral fake news, conspiracy theories, and hate speech of every kind — and it's been held up to virtually no scrutiny: YouTube."[547]

The article goes on to complain about what they called the "conspiracy-industrial complex" on the Internet, "which has become a defining feature of media and politics in the Trump era," and says it “would be a very small fraction of itself without YouTube.”[548]

They said the Internet’s biggest “conspiracy-news stars” live on YouTube and named a few channels like Alex Jones, Paul Joseph Watson, and Sargon of Akkad. The writer then reminisces about the good old days of YouTube, but says, “Today, it fills the enormous trough of right-leaning conspiracy and revisionist historical content into which the vast, ravening right-wing social Internet lowers its jaws to drink.”[549]

“Frequently, the videos consist of little more than screenshots of a Reddit ‘investigation’ laid out chronologically, set to ominous music,” he says. “Other times, they’re very simple, featuring a man in a sparse room speaking directly into his webcam, or a very fast monotone narration over a series of photographs with effects straight out of iMovie.”[550]

The articles goes on to lament, “Sometimes, these videos go hugely viral,” and mentions a few including one that is critical of the mass immigration of Muslims into Europe which had been viewed over 4 million times. “That’s roughly as many people as watched the *Game of Thrones* Season 3 premiere,” it says.[551] “So what responsibility, if any, does YouTube bear for the universe of often conspiratorial, sometimes bigoted, frequently incorrect information that it pays its creators to host, and that is now being filtered up to the most powerful person in the world?”[552]

It concludes by asking, “But morally and ethically, shouldn’t YouTube be asking itself the same hard questions as Facebook and Twitter about the role it plays in a representative democracy? How do those questions change because YouTube is literally paying people to upload bad information?”[553]

Alex Jones’ channel, which has over 2 million subscribers, was then targeted by Media Matters hoping to get all advertisements removed. They wrote up an entire article titled, “Google Is Funding Alex Jones’ Harassment And Hate On YouTube” where they claimed his videos, “often violate YouTube’s policies for its advertising partners,” and “frequently appear with ads for brands such as Trivago, PlayStation, and a corporation that is contracted by the state of Hawaii to promote tourism.”[554]

They went on to say, “Jones has also made numerous disparaging comments about LGBTQ people,” and that, “He has also said that Chelsea Clinton looks like Mister Ed the Horse and made numerous other sexist comments about women and their looks.”[555] They concluded, “It would appear to be consistent with YouTube’s existing policies to pull advertising from Jones’ videos. If YouTube fails to take action, advertisers can request to have their ads removed from videos appearing on Jones’ channel.”[556]

Advertisers Boycott “Offensive Content”

After *The Wall Street Journal* was done investigating PewDiePie and falsely claimed he was posting ‘racist and ‘anti-Semitic’ videos, they continued searching for ‘offensive’ content that had advertisements on it. They found two racist videos from unknown random channels which were monetized and had Coca-Cola ads running before they played, and instead of just doing a story about this, they contacted Coca-Cola to get a statement from them, or as many believe, to bully the company into pulling their advertising from YouTube.

Jack Nicas, who wrote the story, appeared to brag on Twitter, saying, “Google has lost $26B in market value over this ad controversy in the past week.”[557] And later tweeted, “Update: Coca-Cola is pulling all non-search ads with Google in response to our story. Two separate Coke ads played before this racist video.”[558]

The Daily Mail opined that, “Netflix, Guess, Trivago, Opodo, Asus and SunLife insurance have adverts alongside videos published by conspiracy theorists on Google’s YouTube platform.”[559] *The Guardian* then reported, “PepsiCo, Walmart Stores and Starbucks on Friday confirmed that they have also suspended their advertising on YouTube after the *Wall Street Journal* found Google’s automated programs placed their brands on five videos containing racist content. AT&T, Verizon, Johnson & Johnson, Volkswagen and several other companies pulled ads earlier this week.”[560]

Walmart released a statement saying, “The content with which we are being associated is appalling and completely against our company values.”[561] AT&T said, “We are deeply concerned that our ads may have appeared alongside YouTube content promoting terrorism and hate. Until Google can ensure this won’t happen again, we are removing our ads from Google’s non-search platforms.”[562]

Of course, these same brands don’t have a problem advertising on network television or cable shows that glorify crime, sex, and drugs. When CNN goes to a commercial after breaking news about the latest mass shooting or terrorist attack, these brands don’t have a problem being associated with that. Local news stations across the country report on horrific crimes like rape, child abuse, and murder every single night, and then casually cut to a commercial paid for by these same mega corporations.

Since cable news channels have many of the same advertisers which are used as pre-roll ads before YouTube videos, why are companies okay with running their ads on graphic and disturbing stories on cable news and adult dramas, but not on smaller independent YouTube channels? Another “investigation” into the matter by *The Australian Financial Review* reported, “a number of local companies — including Holden, Kia, Wesfarmers-owned hardware retailer Bunnings and electronics chain JB Hi-Fi — had video advertisements playing in front of men’s rights and anti-feminist content on YouTube.”[563] It appears they contacted Kia to tattle, and the company’s spokesman said, “As of now, programmatic advertising has been suspended until such time as we can meet with Google to further clarify the application of this advertising.”[564]

The Financial Review’s report said, “The series of videos by one YouTube user centered around a men’s rights movement known as MGTOW (Men Going Their Own Way) — a group of straight men who will not date women and believe feminism has ruined society…One included an edited segment from Ten Network’s Studio 10 that showed an interview with controversial author Peter Lloyd, who wrote the book *Stand by Your Manhood*. The video insults the Ten hosts, including calling former Australian of the Year Ita Buttrose a ‘hag.’”[565]

It's completely understandable that companies wouldn't want their ads to run on ISIS propaganda videos, or porn, but these isolated instances of 'racist' videos being monetized that were dug up by the papers caused the entire Ad Sense program to be put under a microscope. For over a decade since the monetization program had been put in place YouTube was like the wild west, where (within reason) just about any video could be monetized and advertisers didn't care about the content, but almost overnight all that changed.

New Advertising Policies

Google's chief business officer Philipp Schindler explained that, "It has always been a small problem" with a "very very very" few number of ads being shown on videos that aren't "brand-safe" but "over the last few weeks, someone has decided to put a bit more of a spotlight on the problem."[566]

A Google spokesperson said that the error rate was less than 1/1000th of a percent, meaning that their algorithms automatically identified most racist or 'objectionable' content and wouldn't place advertisements on it.[567] But YouTube immediately announced that changes were coming to the platform and they would begin removing advertisements on all 'non advertiser- friendly' content (like mine). They posted a letter for their advertisers saying, "Recently, we had a number of cases where brands' ads appeared on content that was not aligned with their values. For this, we deeply apologize. We know that this is unacceptable to the advertisers and agencies who put their trust in us. That's why we've been conducting an extensive review of our advertising policies and tools, and why we made a public commitment last week to put in place changes that would give brands more control over where their ads appear."[568]

"We know advertisers don't want their ads next to content that doesn't align with their values. So starting today, we're taking a tougher stance on hateful, offensive and derogatory content. "This includes removing ads more effectively from content that is attacking or harassing people based on their race, religion, gender or similar categories. This change will enable us to take action, where appropriate, on a larger set of ads and sites."

It concluded saying, "The YouTube team is taking a hard look at our existing community guidelines to determine what content is allowed on the platform — not just what content can be monetized."[569]

And then the mass demonetization began. On March 29th 2017, Ethan Klein of H3H3 Productions, a channel with over 3 million subscribers, tweeted that, "YouTube has demonetized everything from 'Vape Nation' to 'Thank You for 3 million' with no notification and no option to appeal."[570] Jenna Marbles, who has over 17 million subscribers, responded "I've also had a bizarre selection of videos demonetized with no notification or option to appeal."[571]

YouTubers large and small began posting screen shots showing their videos had been demonetized in bulk, along with screen shots of emails from YouTube rejecting their appeals. Internet sensation Diamond and Silk, the duo of African American sisters who post videos supporting Donald Trump, reported that 95% of their videos were demonetized.[572]

My revenue dropped 90% and at the time I had just under one million subscribers, so you can imagine how much the smaller channels were hurt by this. The mass-demonetization just kept coming as YouTube implemented new algorithms to search through older videos and demonetizing them. As Patreon co-founder and CEO Jack Conte said, “It sucks that it’s 2017 and you’ve got creators with millions of fans getting paid a few hundred bucks a month. That sucks.”[573]

Patreon is a new website where viewers can support their favorite YouTubers by chipping in a dollar a month or whatever they want in order to supplement the loss of revenue from the issues with demonetization, so if you enjoy watching my videos, I hope you’ll look me up there or visit my page at Patreon.com/MarkDice.

Videos that talk about certain subjects are now automatically demonetized the moment they’re uploaded since the autogenerated transcripts allow YouTube to know exactly what is being said in the videos themselves, so if people avoid certain titles, descriptions, or tags hoping to slip past their system, that will no longer work.

And while I’ve had tons of videos demonetized for “not being advertiser friendly,” videos on big liberal channels like The Young Turks or CNN and MSNBC which cover the same story are often still allowed to be monetized. Not to mention trash channels BuzzFeed and Feminist Frequency.

YouTube Removing Videos

Aside from just demonetizing videos and not letting them earn any revenue for the person who posts them, YouTube often just removes videos completely, claiming they violate their terms of service or places them in a “limited state” so you can only watch them if you have the exact URL because they don’t show up in searches.[574]

The Colin Flaherty channel has had multiple videos removed which show anti-white hate crimes being committed by blacks.[575] Another channel had a video removed which showed a compilation of women violently assaulting men to show that domestic violence isn’t just a one way street and that women do in fact attack men.[576] A University of Toronto professor, Jordan Peterson, who refuses to acknowledge transgender people by their “preferred pronouns” had his entire channel removed without explanation.[577] Prager University’s videos were age restricted, meaning only people 18 or older could watch them, even though they just talk about politics, economics, and science from a conservative perspective.[578]

YouTube locked one of my videos on private so nobody could watch it, saying that it was “deceptive.” The video was actually me exposing how deceptive CNN is, so the censorship couldn’t be more ironic.”[579] I’ve also had videos placed on age-restricted status, and the channel is under a constant threat of receiving “community guideline” strikes and being shut down (again) completely. My entire channel and all of my videos were deleted in 2014.[580] At the time I had 265,000 subscribers, and only after a wave of public pressure and me luckily being able to reach one of the heads of their news division did they restore everything.

Videos showing black teens attacking random white people, a viral trend known as ‘polar-bear hunting’ to the thugs, are often removed for what the site claims are violations of their policy against posting violent content. Author Colin Flaherty has documented black on white violence for years to raise awareness of the problem and YouTube regularly removes his videos despite them being posted not to glorify violence, but to show people one of the problems plaguing many communities. If people aren’t able to see what kind of anti-white hate crimes are happening on the streets in cities like Baltimore, St. Louis, Milwaukee, and others, how will people know to take precautions?

YouTube even deleted a video of mine about an anti-white hate crime, in which a black man shot up a predominantly white church in Tennessee to get ‘revenge’ for when white supremacist Dylann Roof did the same thing to a black church two years earlier in Charleston, South Carolina.[581] Not only was mainstream media ignoring the story, but then my video on it (which got over 300,000 views in 48 hours) was censored and a penalty placed on my channel in the form of a Community Guidelines strike. I appealed the removal, and after it was further reviewed, the video was restored, but the fact that the moderators took it down in the first place shows how vulnerable YouTube videos are to political censorship. YouTube has also deleted viral videos from black conservatives who criticized the Black Lives Matter movement, claiming they violate their terms of service.[582]

Many videos are also automatically deleted without issuing the channels which post them a “community guidelines violation” by identifying them through the Content ID system, which scours through all videos to find specific clips using visual and audio printing technology and removes them without warning and with no recourse to have them restored. Hollywood studios use the Content ID feature to have clips of TV shows and movies automatically blocked, sometimes even if they’re used in accordance with fair use laws.[583]

Liberals love to claim YouTube is a “private business” and say they can decide what to allow on their site and what not to, but when a Christian bakery refuses to use their artistic talent to make a special gay wedding cake with two men painted in frosting or saying “Congratulations Adam and Steve,” then liberals want that business sued and shut down for ‘discrimination.’[584]

Gays cried ‘censorship’ after they noticed many LGBT videos didn’t show up on restricted mode which is meant to filter out adult content for parents, schools, and public libraries.[585] They posted videos about strange gay sex practices and then complained when YouTube didn’t allow them to be seen by children, and so YouTube apologized and ‘fixed’ their algorithm so that the adult content filter would ignore most LGBT videos so kids can now watch them.[586]

Transgender activist Riley Dennis, who argues that women can have penises and says people are ‘transphobic’ if they don’t want to have sex with trannies,[587] made a Facebook post on March 5th 2017 saying ‘she’ “Spent the entire day watching videos of people calling me a stupid regressive snowflake tranny faggot retarded SJW, so that I could compile a list of channels that harass me, so I can make the argument to YouTube that we have to do something about it.”[588]

‘She’ then proceeded to report the videos to YouTube alleging they were ‘bullying her’ and there were reports that the videos were then removed.[589] So just criticizing a radical transgender activist on YouTube is now considered to be ‘hate speech’ or ‘bullying.’ Of course, liberals can post videos saying the most hateful things one can imagine about Christians, and that's celebrated as 'free speech' (which it is), but that same protection does not exist the other way around.

In 2015, a Christian singer named Joyce Bartholomew sued YouTube after they removed one of her music videos of her singing a song with a pro-life theme. The video, titled *What Was Your Name*, was uploaded to YouTube in April of 2014 and quickly gained over 50,000 views but then YouTube removed it claiming it violated their terms of service. She sued them for defamation, arguing that by YouTube saying she violated their terms of service when she did not, they had damaged her reputation by making false statements about her.[590] The video was later re-uploaded, and at the time I'm writing this, has over 500,000 views.[591]

Singer Elton John and his 'husband' were involved in a sex scandal in the UK when it came to light that their 'marriage' was really just a sham and that they had engaged in threesomes with other men.[592] And after news of this broke in the British tabloids, Elton John got a court order to block every news outlet in England from reporting on the story.[593]

After I posted a YouTube video about the legal threats I received after tweeting about the censorship, the video was soon blocked in the UK as well. Fans from England sent me screenshots showing my video was blocked in their region after they clicked on the link I posted on my Facebook page. Anyone living in the UK who went directly to my YouTube channel (YouTube.com/MarkDice) just simply didn't see the video at all. It's an ongoing battle for many of us YouTubers to keep our videos (and our entire channels) from being deleted. I wasn't given any warning for this, but since I was aware that Elton John was silencing the media in the UK, and having Twitter send out legal threats to people tweeting about it, it was pretty clear what was happening.[594]

People and companies often abuse YouTube's copyright policy and file DMCA [Digital Millennium Copyright Act] takedown notices on peoples' videos when they include clips of their content for purposes of criticism, which is fully allowed under fair use laws, but sometimes people file these false copyright claims in attempts to have the criticism removed.[595] Various social justice warriors have been accused of filing false DMCA claims against their critics, and even some videogame developers have been accused of abusing DMCA takedowns to have negative reviews of their games deleted.[596]

The Future of YouTube

It is possible that the constant pushback against the politically correct 'Thought Police' may eventually cause advertisers and YouTube to loosen their restrictions on 'offensive' or 'controversial' content, but it's an uphill battle and one that at this point we are losing by a landslide. The days of most smaller conservative YouTubers being able to make a living using the website is probably a thing of the past.[597] And even for larger channels like mine, it's a constant struggle.

You may be wondering, 'doesn't YouTube need to make money from advertisers?' 'Wouldn't demonetizing so many videos cost them money as well?' At this point there may be so many 'brand friendly' videos that it won't matter to YouTube if they don't run ads on channels like mine, because there are so many others available that they see as being ‘safe.’ It also appears that YouTube has changed its revenue model, so they no longer need content creators to make videos to place ads on like they once did.

Shortly after the “Ad-pocalypse” (the advertiser apocalypse as we call it), YouTube announced YouTube TV and started going after cable TV providers like Cox, Time Warner, and Dish Network, by offering people the same basic cable service through the YouTube TV app on their smart TVs, tablets, and phones.[598] Like a parasite that sucked the blood out of its host until it died, YouTube has simply moved on to other ways to generate money, and left thousands of full-time content creators in the dust — people like me who had largely relied upon revenue from making YouTube videos to pay our bills.

YouTubers franticly scrambled to try and stay afloat and many went to a fan-funded model though Patreon or started making money from livestreaming through Super Chat donations, where users pay to ask them questions. Many started asking for direct donations through PayPal, Bitcoin, and other crowdsourcing methods. Others started selling merchandise like T-shirts and coffee mugs or began getting their own sponsors through MCNs (Multi Channel Networks) or 3rd party ad agencies.

In previous generations most kids wanted to grow up to be a professional athlete, a rock star, or an actor; but the millennial generation and generation Z all wanted to be YouTubers because it seemed like a life of freedom, fun, and easy money; but the heyday of truly independent YouTubers who do and say whatever they want is over. With the wheels having fallen off the gravy train for many, what was once a dream job has become more of just a job, or even a hobby now that many have had to get ‘real jobs’ to pay their bills since YouTube’s monetization program has collapsed. As bad as all this is, unfortunately YouTube continues to tighten the restrictions on what people are allowed to post even if it’s not monetized.

YouTube announced they were going to further censor ‘controversial’ content and teamed up with the ADL [Anti-Defamation League] a ‘civil rights’ agency which has the sole purpose of ‘fighting bigotry’ — an organization whose standards for what is ‘extremist’ content is so low that they labeled Pepe the Frog, a cartoon character used in pro-Trump memes, a ‘hate symbol.’[599]

In a blog post YouTube admitted, “We’ve started rolling out features from Jigsaw’s Redirect Method to YouTube. When people search for sensitive keywords on YouTube, they will be redirected towards a playlist of curated YouTube videos that directly confront and debunk violent extremist messages. We also continue to amplify YouTube voices speaking out against hate and radicalization through our YouTube Creators for Change program.”[600]

Of course, to YouTube it is considered ‘extremist propaganda’ if someone says that there are only two genders, or if they say it’s disgusting to allow a man who thinks he’s a woman to shower in the girl’s locker room, or if someone doesn’t support gay marriage, or if they want to secure the U.S./Mexico border and deport criminal illegal aliens from the United States.

In an interview with CNN, YouTube’s CEO Susan Wojcicki was asked if she had experienced any “sexism” in the tech industry since it is dominated by men, and after thinking silently for a moment — not wanting to disappoint the interviewer with a “no,” she responded that she has experienced sexist “microaggressons” such as when men “interrupt” her while she’s talking, or when men say something that “annoys” her.[601] Those were literally her examples of “sexism” in Silicon Valley, so you can see why the company considers videos criticizing feminists and other aspects of the Leftists’ agenda as “hate speech.”

Many viewers who have seen her interviews wonder how she could possibly be the CEO of any company, let alone YouTube, because she seems like a complete idiot. Many suspect nepotism is the reason she got the job because her sister married Google’s co-founder Sergey Brin.[602] (Google is the parent company of YouTube — or was — now it’s Alphabet Inc., which is the new parent company due to corporate restructuring.) In July of 2017, just as the crackdown on conservative channels was ramping up, she tweeted out a photo of herself meeting with The Young Turks host Cenk Uyger, the biggest liberal ‘news’ channel on the platform, thanking him for stopping by YouTube’s headquarters.[603] So it’s clear that she’s playing favorites, and you can see which team she is on, and that the liberal rot at YouTube is coming directly from the head.

Some people are turning to other platforms, including decentralized peer-to-peer file sharing networks and even blockchain technology to avoid YouTube censorship. So if my channel ever gets deleted, check out my Facebook page or Twitter feed (if they’re still up) so you can find links to my videos (wherever they’re being hosted) and see where I’ve moved to, if it comes to that. But in the meantime, I hope you’ll subscribe to me at YouTube.com/MarkDice and visit the channel regularly for new videos.

Google

Google is more than just a search engine. It is the closest thing to an all-powerful information monopoly the planet has ever seen. Not only does it account for 90% of Internet searches in most countries,[604] and run the Android operating system on 80% of the world's smartphones and tablets,[605] and own YouTube — the largest video sharing site in the world; but the company is also trying to give birth to the world's first artificial intelligence. They're even hoping to make humans immortal.[606] In 2015 Alphabet Inc. was created as part of a corporate restructuring and is now the parent company of Google and its many subsidiaries.

As you know, Google has become a verb and is a synonym for "looking something up" online, but when so much of the world relies on a single source for accessing their information, there are inherent dangers of censorship and political favoritism regarding the massive amount of content they control. Beneath the surface of being "just a search engine," Google has a very deep and far-reaching political agenda and their control over so much of the Internet and their ability to manipulate how billions of people see the world has dramatic implications.

Most people treat Google like a magic eight ball which answers any question they ask since it is literally as convenient as clicking a few keys (or today, using Okay Google or Siri voice recognition search systems) which most people blindly trust "tells the truth." Because Google's algorithms are considered trade secrets it's difficult for most people to understand how they work or see how they favor certain people, issues, websites, and political viewpoints over others. But while it's difficult, it's not impossible. In this chapter we'll take a look at some of the examples that researchers have discovered and the concerns they raise.

It's also important to point out that people's long-term memories are actually becoming atrophied and aren't retaining information like they used to in the recent past since their brains don't make it a priority to store a lot of information anymore because people can just "Google it."[607] It's a cliché but true, that as computers got smarter, most people got dumber.

As the war against 'fake news' and 'offensive' content heated up after the 2016 presidential election, of course Google jumped on the bandwagon and used the moral panic as an excuse to expand their censorship under the disguise of this new moral crusade.

CEO Eric Schmidt said, "We're very good at detecting what's the most relevant and what's the least relevant. It should be possible for computers to detect malicious, misleading and incorrect information and essentially have you not see it. We're not arguing for censorship, we're arguing just take it off the page, put it somewhere else...make it harder to find."[608]

If you're wondering where Schmidt's political allegiance lies, he was with Barack Obama on election night in 2012,[609] and "helped recruit talent, choose technology and coach the campaign manager," Obama operative David Plouff admitted.[610] And where was he on election night in 2016? He was at Hillary Clinton's party, where he was photographed wearing a "staff" badge.[611]

The visitor logs during the Obama administration show that Google's lobbyist had visited the White House 128 times between January of 2009 and October of 2015.[612] That was more visits than lobbyists for Comcast, Verizon, Facebook, and Amazon combined.[613] That same year Google spend $16 million dollars on lobbying, the most out of any tech company.[614] Why would a search engine need to work so closely with the Obama administration?

Manipulating Top Search Results

Google's secret algorithms determine which webpages will show up and in what order when someone looks something up. While you will get thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of results for any given topic, SEO (search engine optimization) experts have conducted studies which show that over 90% of people click on something that's on the first page of those search results.[615]

If you sell things online, like every major retailer does — from Best Buy to Advance Auto Parts, or run a news site, you want your website to show up as one of the first results when someone searches for something relevant to your work. Having a first-page result is what makes or breaks many online businesses, and it's entirely up to Google which pages will show up, in what order, or even if they'll show up at all, no matter how relevant they are to your search.

"Google, Inc., isn't just the world's biggest purveyor of information; it is also the world's biggest censor," declared *US News and World Report* after a 2016 investigation.[616] Their report highlights the little-known fact that Google has nine different blacklists (that we know of), and have created censorship tools for various repressive governments around the world to keep information hidden from their people no matter how detailed their searches are.[617]

Their report pointed out, "When Google's employees or algorithms decide to block our access to information about a news item, political candidate or business, opinions and votes can shift, reputations can be ruined and businesses can crash and burn. Because online censorship is entirely unregulated at the moment, victims have little or no recourse when they have been harmed. Eventually, authorities will almost certainly have to step in, just as they did when credit bureaus were regulated in 1970."[618]

Their report concludes that, "Google has rapidly become an essential in people's lives — nearly as essential as air or water. We don't let public utilities make arbitrary and secretive decisions about denying people services; we shouldn't let Google do so either."[619]

When you Google a person, on the right hand side of the page there are several boxes which usually include a photograph of them, along with a few sentences describing them using information taken from Wikipedia. If you lookup a product, it may give you the supposed satisfaction ratings along with some other information about it like the price. These “Knowledge Panels” were introduced in 2012, and as one writer pointed out, “materialize at random, as unsourced and absolute as if handed down by God.”[620] They show results for almost anything you look up, from what the capital of a city is, to the best restaurant in town.

A researcher from the University of Technology in Austria pointed out that, “Google has become the main interface for our whole reality. To be precise: with the Google interface the user gets the impression that the search results imply a kind of totality. In fact, one only sees a small part of what one could see if one also integrates other research tools.”[621]

Redirecting Search Results

Google doesn’t just play favorites with the top search results; their control goes much deeper than that. An interesting example of Google admitting they are manipulating the search results can be found in what they call their Redirect Method, which they admit was implemented in 2016 when they created an algorithm to show search results of imams [Muslim religious leaders] denouncing ISIS along with videos of former extremists denouncing their past beliefs whenever someone was searching for ISIS related material.

“This came out of an observation that there’s a lot of online demand for ISIS material, but there are also a lot of credible organic voices online debunking their narratives,” said Yasmin Green, Google’s head of research and development. He went on to admit, “The Redirect Method is at its heart a targeted advertising campaign: Let’s take these individuals who are vulnerable to ISIS’ recruitment messaging and instead show them information that refutes it.”[622]

One specific example of this is a video showing long breadlines in Raqqa, the ISIS capital, which was chosen to come up as one of the top results when people search for certain travel routes to Syria. The idea is Google hopes to show potential ISIS fighters that the Islamic State isn’t the paradise they thought it might be, and are trying to put their curiosities to rest. The Redirect Method proves that Google is actively manipulating the search results in hopes of influencing the way people think and the actions they do or do not take as a result of their Google searches.

What other topics are they specifically redirecting search results for? The Pandora’s Box of possibilities is limitless. And while it may be a noble cause to redirect search results to paint the Islamic State in a negative light, what other issues are they trying to carefully frame in a certain way? The Second Amendment? Abortion? Immigration? Taxes? Socialized healthcare? Climate change? It would be extremely naive to think they were only using their Redirect Method to skew the search results for only one issue. Google has already been accused of suppressing websites and articles which refute climate change alarmists’ allegations.[623]

In April 2017, Google rolled out a new “fact checking tool” which includes a tag next to some search results that declares whether they are ‘true’ or ‘false,’ using sources like Snopes.com, PolitiFact.org, FactCheck.org, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times* as the ‘fact checkers.'[624] Google's blog explained, "Even though differing conclusions may be presented, we think it's still helpful for people to understand the degree of consensus around a particular claim and have clear information on which sources agree."[625]

For example, a search for "Obama born in Kenya" brings up results including the "fact checking snippet" saying "Fact Check by Snopes: False." Searching for "15 million undocumented immigrants" brings up the result "Three Pinochios" by *The Washington Post*, and "Pants on Fire" by PolitiFact, even though the number was said to be 11.4 million back in 2012 according to the government's own statistics.[626]

Manipulating Elections

Researchers at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology published a study showing that Google could influence how people thought about different candidates in an election by serving up mostly positive or negative articles about them when people searched for certain topics. "We estimate, based on win margins in national elections around the world, that Google could determine the outcome of upwards of 25 percent of all national elections," said Robert Epstein, who helped conduct the study. [627]

The amount of influence doesn't even have to be all that great, because when you consider that most elections have fairly close margins, if Google can increase or decrease the positive or negative feelings about a particular candidate or issue by just a small percentage, it could be enough to change the outcome of a race.

During the 2016 election, a *New York Times* tech writer named Farhad Manjoo actually suggested that Google should filter out search results to videos and articles which raised questions about Hillary Clinton's health problems. "Google should fix this," he said in response to Rudy Giuliani encouraging people to look up "Hillary Clinton illness." He added, "It shouldn't give quarter to conspiracy theorists."[628] Just three weeks later Hillary would be caught on video collapsing as she was leaving the 9/11 memorial at Ground Zero where she had to be carried away by her staff, confirming what many had been suspecting — that she was not well.[629]

Just a month after the election *The Guardian* actually claimed that search results were, "being manipulated and controlled by rightwing propagandists," because a journalist didn't like some of the results that came up when searching for 'Muslims,' 'Jews,' and 'women.'[630] "[Google] simply can't go on pretending that it has no editorial responsibilities when it is delivering these kinds of results," the article says. "It [Google] is simply not defensible for it go on claiming 'plausible deniability.' It has clearly become a conduit for rightwing hate sites and it must urgently take action."[631]

Shortly after Donald Trump's book *Crippled America* came out, a Google search for the title brought up pictures of Adolf Hitler's book cover *Mein Kampf*.[632] And for some period of time a search for "When Hitler was born" resulted in photos of Hitler, but also of Trump. After these and other strange search results began making headlines, Google quietly fixed the issue.

If you go to the Google News page you'll find a series of articles they have aggregated from various sources, and of course their editors have chosen which ones to feature as the "Top Stories" and what news outlets they come from. The page consists simply of links to articles from news outlets like the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and other mostly liberal papers. The stories chosen to be featured there are obviously going to reflect the political leanings of Google, and from my own experience the top stories are almost always anti-Trump and frame conservative issues in a negative light.

Autocomplete

It's not just the search results that are manipulated (or completely hidden), Google also manipulates search *suggestions* as well. As you have likely noticed when you begin typing something into Google it will give you a list of what it thinks you are searching for (or what it *wants* you to search for).

For example if you just type in "When is," it will suggest four different options depending on what time of year it is, or what other users tend to put after those words. When I just typed "when is" into Google, it came up with "When is Mother's Day" as one, "When is Mother's Day This Year 2017" as the second, "When is Easter" as the third, and "When is the Kentucky Derby" as the fourth autosuggestion. Mother's Day is just a week away as I'm writing this, and the Kentucky Derby was just yesterday.

But after a close look at this autocomplete or "suggested search" feature, it becomes clear that certain autosuggestions are regularly censored so they don't show up. Google has admitted they filter out certain phrases from the autocomplete suggestions if they are "potentially inappropriate."[633] Currently, typing in "Islam is" brings up "a religion of peace" as the top autosuggestion. "Islam is Peace" is the second, and "Islam is not a race" is the third. Meanwhile one of the autosuggestions for Christianity is "Christianity is dying."

Currently, when "Hillary Clinton cri" is typed in, Google suggests "Hillary Clinton credentials," "Hillary Clinton creme brulee," and "Hillary Clinton crazy laugh," but the same search on Yahoo brings up "Hillary Clinton crying," "Hillary Clinton crimes," "Hillary Clinton criminal," and "Hillary Clinton crimes list." Microsoft's Bing brings up "Hillary Clinton crying," "Hillary Clinton criminal," "Hillary Clinton crooked," and "Hillary Clinton crazy."

A search for "Hillary Clinton ind" on Google brings up "Hillary Clinton India," "Hillary Clinton Indiana," and "Hillary Clinton individual donors." On Microsoft's Bing the recommendations are: "Hillary Clinton indictment," "Hillary Clinton indicted," and "Hillary Clinton indictment update."

On Yahoo they are: "Hillary Clinton indictment," Hillary Clinton indictment coming," and "Hillary Clinton indictment coming NY Times."

Autosuggestions involving Hillary's health were also censored when I tested this. Google's autosuggestions for "Hillary Clinton's health" are "Hillary's Clinton's health plan," "Hillary Clinton's healthcare plan," and "Hillary Clinton's healthcare plan 1993."

On Bing, a search for "Hillary Clinton's health" brings up "Hillary Clinton's health issues," "Hillary Clinton's health problems," and then third is "Hillary Clinton's health care plan."

These autosuggestions may have changed by the time you are reading this book, but others and myself have documented the clear protection of Hillary Clinton's autosuggestions by Google during the time period surrounding the 2016 election.[634] If Google manipulated the autosuggestions to protect Hillary Clinton during the election, which all evidence indicates they did, they are most likely doing it for other people, issues, and topics as well.

Un-Googleable

They don't just manipulate the top search results for various topics for their own financial interest or political reasons — sometimes Google outright hides what would be results for certain topics so nothing shows up at all. Sometimes these censored pages are the result of DMCA takedown complaints; sometimes they're the result of a court order which is fairly common in England with their "right to be forgotten laws" that mandate Google hide certain pages from their index; and sometimes it's just because Google feels it's the 'right thing to do.' These topics are considered to be "un-Googleable."

Due to laws in the U.K., Google must remove certain search results when someone obtains a court order to enforce their "right to be forgotten law" which prevents not only the media from reporting on certain facts, but also prevents Google from including them in the search results in all countries that are part of the European Union as well.[635]

As I discussed previously, singer Elton John was able to obtain a court order to silence the British media about him and his 'husband's' fake marriage and deviant lifestyle, as well as remove tweets on Twitter (and videos on YouTube) that mentioned their names in connection with their sex scandal, and that censorship was also implemented on Google as well. Any article mentioning the keywords "celebrity threesome sex scandal" and Elton John's name were dumped down a memory hole and don't show up for people in Europe.[636] Google has different filters in different countries, so in the United States pages will still show up, but in Europe Google has to follow the law and censor such results.[637]

Sky News found that one of their articles about Kelly Osbourne getting sick on the set of her show *The Fashion Police* was removed from Google in Britain (Google.co.uk).[638] This was just two months after the "right to be forgotten" law had passed, enabling people to request the removal of search results they claim are "outdated or damaging" to their character.

The Guardian found that stories about a former Scottish soccer referee who admitted lying about the reason for rescinding a penalty issued to a team had been removed.[639] *The Telegraph* had stories of theirs hidden about the former president of the British Law Society who made fake complains about a colleague of his hoping to get him fired.[640] The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) reported that shortly after the law was put in place Google had censored at least a dozen links to some of their stories as well.[641]

In 2013 when sexually explicit selfies of dozens of A-list celebrities were hacked from their iCloud accounts and posted online, Google made most of the direct links to the photos un-Googleable, and removed the pictures from their Google Image search.[642]

The Church of Scientology has used a number of DMCA (Digital Millennium Copyright Act) takedown notices to have information about their 'scriptures' removed which reveal the strange beliefs of high-level Scientologists about the "Lord Xenu" and the creation myth founder L. Ron Hubbard (a former science fiction writer) concocted for his cult.[643] Scientology has also had search results blocked in the EU by using the right to be forgotten statutes.[644]

Google has admitted censoring results for the Chinese government and other oppressive regimes around the world. For example, until 2010 Google had filtered out all websites supporting the independence of Tibet and Taiwan, and even any search results about the infamous Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 where hundreds, possibly thousands, of student protesters were killed by the Chinese government during a pro-democracy demonstration.[645]

Websites and articles in Australia, Israel, Canada, France, Germany, India, and others have also been censored — either due to court orders, or to comply with those countries 'hate speech' laws.[646] And of course Google Earth and Google Street view have removed images that governments consider matters of national security.

FTC Investigation

People within the Federal Trade Commission have actually recommended filing a lawsuit against Google for their search manipulation.[647] In 2012 the FTC ended a two year investigation into Google after repeated complaints that their dominance gives them an unfair advantage over other companies because they aren't just in the search engine business, they're in the cell phone business (Android), and also sell books, music, and movies through their Google Play store.

Google even has their own product and restaurant reviews that are in direct competition with Yelp, which they have threatened to remove from their search results altogether.[648] The Federal Trade Commission investigation revealed that Google had placed restrictions on search results for content from their competitors, but despite high level staff members at the FTC wanting to file an antitrust suit against them because they were using their monopoly to cause "real harm to consumers and to innovation" through anticompetitive tactics, the commission surprisingly did nothing.[649] Google did however agree to make some voluntary changes in the way they run the algorithms, trying to appease the FTC.

FTC senior advisor Tim Wu admitted Google is “reducing consumer welfare.”[650] And during the antitrust hearing Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) said that, “While the company is a great American success story, their position in the marketplace has led to legitimate questions about whether they have used their market power to disadvantage competitors unfairly and ultimately limit consumer choice.”[651]

A few years later the European Union charged Google with antitrust violations for unfair business practices and fined the company $2.7 billion dollars.[652] One of the officials involved in the decision said, “Google has given its own comparison shopping service an illegal advantage by abusing its dominance in general Internet search. It has promoted its own service, and demoted rival services. It has harmed competition and consumers. That’s illegal under EU antitrust rules…Google has come up with many innovative products and services that have made a difference to our lives. That’s a good thing. But Google’s strategy for its comparison shopping service wasn’t just about attracting customers by making its product better than those of its rivals. Instead, Google abused its market dominance as a search engine by promoting its own comparison shopping service in its search results, and demoting those of competitors.”[653]

Privacy Concerns

Aside from manipulating and censoring search results, Google is engaged in more disturbing and dangerous activities — putting people’s personal information, their homes, and even their lives at risk.

Google keeps a log of everything that everyone searches for and puts tracking cookies (small files) on your computer. Such information is sold to advertisers. This means Google (and anyone they sell that information to) knows about people’s possible health problems from them looking up their symptoms, as well as any personal interests that may be embarrassing if made public. They even know people’s political leanings, which could be used to discriminate against them by a current or potential employer.

Google’s terms of service have changed over the years, at one time the tracking cookies ‘expired’ after 31 years,[654] but more recently they claim the cookies will now expire after two years.[655] The advocacy group Privacy International said Google was “hostile to privacy” and gave them their lowest ranking of any company in their assessment. Even browsing in ‘incognito’ mode on Google Chrome is not private as most people are led to believe.[656] Google knows what you’ve been looking up, and so do countless advertising agencies, political organizations, law enforcement, and anyone else Google wants to give that information to.

For years Gmail users had the content of their emails scanned and read by Google in order to use them to show people advertisements based on what they were writing about.[657] Users consented to this when they agreed to the terms of service which hardly anyone even reads or thinks twice about. After word of this creepy tactic started making headlines, Google announced that they would stop doing so.

In response to critics about their privacy concerns CEO Eric Schmidt, declared, “If you have something that you don’t want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn’t be doing it in the first place.”[658] An interesting statement from a man who allegedly has an open marriage and had his $15 million dollar Manhattan penthouse soundproofed, which *New York Magazine* called a “depraved sex palace” for him and his presumed mistresses.[659]

Google Street view allows anyone to get photos of your home, which is just as easy as looking up pictures of just about anything else. When gathering the 360 degree images of every street in America for the Street View feature Google also collected names, addresses, passwords, emails, text messages, hardware IDs, and browsing histories through people’s home WiFi routers if they weren’t password protected.[660]

Burglars often use Google Street View to conduct reconnaissance on homes and garages before breaking into them.[661] One survey showed that 80% of burglars use social media and Google Street View to case houses they’re planning on burglarizing.[662] Police in Chicago say that a burglar suspected of breaking into at least eight different homes used Google Maps to find expensive houses located on a highway (for an easy escape) and then further cased the homes using Google’s Satellite View of those properties.[663]

As Google grows more powerful and as their products and services become more ingrained in society, the dangers will likely grow in step. Many have voiced concerns about Google Home, which can enable hackers to listen in on people in their living rooms or bedrooms, and similar ‘smart home’ devices allow hackers to remotely open people’s doors making them easy targets for burglars.[664]

Is Google Becoming a God?

Alphabet Inc. (Google’s parent company) CEO Eric Schmidt admitted the plan is to have Google think *for* people, saying, “The goal is to enable Google users to be able to ask the question such as ‘What shall I do tomorrow?’ and ‘What job shall I take?’”[665] Three years later he doubled down on his assertion that Google would think *for* people, telling *The Wall Street Journal*, “I actually think most people don’t want Google to answer their questions, they want Google to tell them what they should be doing next.”[666] Tell us what we *should* be doing? As strange as this sounds their goals are far more disturbing than that.

Google’s executives want the company to be more than just a search engine and smartphone operating system; more than an ebook store and a place to stream music and movies; more than something that runs smart home gadgets and medical devices; they want it to become an artificially intelligent, all-knowing ‘God.’ Then they want to wire it directly into the brains of humans through what’s called a neural interface or BMI (brain machine interface) to merge man with machine, creating a new hybrid species of cyborgs.[667] Their final plan is to then upload the totality of one’s mind into the Cloud or a silicon-based hard drive that’s attached to a robotic body, believing this is the key to ‘immortality’ and ‘transcendence.’[668]

Google’s director of engineering Ray Kurzweil actually said, “So, does God exist? Well, I would say, not yet.”[669] He was hired by Google in 2012 to work full-time on artificial intelligence and is one of the most well-known proponents of transhumanism, which is the idea of merging man with machine to create superhumans. Kurzweil believes that by the year 2099, neural interfaces or BMIs (brain machine interfaces) will be surgically implanted into almost everyone, and that, “humans who do not utilize such implants [will be] unable to meaningfully participate in dialogues with those who do.”[670] He and other transhumanists believe they will elevate humans to the level of gods in what they see as the final phase of humanity’s physical and spiritual evolution as we merge into a cybernetic ‘Borg.’

In a strange and creepy side note, Google reportedly owns P.O. Box 666 on the Caribbean island of Bermuda, which has a zero corporate tax rate, in an apparent effort to prevent paying taxes on about ten billon dollars in annual revenue.[671]

[Author’s Note: Please take a moment to rate and review this book on Amazon.com or wherever you purchased it from to let others know what you think. This also helps to offset the trolls who keep giving my books fake one-star reviews when they haven't even read them. Almost all of the one-star reviews on my books are from NON-verified purchases which is a clear indication they are fraudulent, hence me adding this note. These fraudulent ratings and reviews could also be part of a larger campaign trying to stop my message from spreading by attempting to tarnish my research through fake and defamatory reviews, so I really need your help to combat this as soon as possible. Thank you!]

Wikipedia

Wikipedia was launched in 2001 as an online encyclopedia that "crowdsourced" its articles by allowing anyone to write and edit them, a strange business model which has surprisingly led to them becoming the fifth most popular website in the world.[672] Its name derives from the words 'Wiki,' which is a website format that allows collaborative modifications, and 'encyclopedia.' It currently has over five million articles and is usually one of the top Google search results for most subjects entered into the search engine.

Unlike traditional encyclopedias, which are written and edited by experts in their field, pretty much anyone can add almost anything to Wikipedia articles, which are then read and believed by countless people. Since Wikipedia has become the most popular online "encyclopedia" and one of the most visited websites online, we must take a serious look at articles published on the site and how they are fact checked, edited, and censored.

Editors at most newspapers and traditional encyclopedia companies have names and titles, not to mention bosses and company policies they must abide by, but much of what happens on Wikipedia is a mystery, and most of the editors and writers are anonymous or only referred to by their online handles which rarely reveal any information about who they actually are or what credentials they have.

Since Wikipedia is free and there are no advertisements on the site, this leads to the question of who funds them? And how did an online 'encyclopedia' that was written by random anonymous people on the Internet come to be a trusted source of information by so many people? Their parent company, the Wikimedia Foundation, employs over 280 people and in 2016 they took in over $80 million dollars in revenue and now have over $91 million dollars in assets.[673] Where does all this money come from, and what are they doing with it since the articles are written and edited by random volunteers on the Internet who have too much time on their hands?

Apparently people just give them money, I'm not sure why, but they do — and a lot. In 2008 they got their largest donation to date, which was $3 million dollars from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, a philanthropic nonprofit organization founded by the former CEO of General Motors.[674] They would later give them millions more. Google has also given millions of dollars to them as well, so its no wonder that Wikipedia articles are usually one of the top search results for just about anything.

Google's co-founder Sergey Brin and his wife have given them hundreds of thousands of dollars of their own personal money, on top of the money Google gave them as a corporation.[675] All donations are tax deductible because the Wikimedia Foundation is registered as a nonprofit organization.

Wikipedia has been involved in several lawsuits over defamation, and a substantial amount of their money has been spent defending them. One of their attorneys, Matt Zimmerman, admitted, “Without strong liability protection, it would be difficult for Wikipedia to continue to provide a platform for user-created encyclopedia content.”[676]

Comedian Stephen Colbert once sarcastically praised Wikipedia for their ‘quality’ by pointing out that the article on Lightsabers (the handheld weapon from *Star Wars*) was longer than the article about the printing press.[677] Since its editorial policies and oversight are so flawed, the site has been called “the abomination that causes misinformation.”[678]

Articles about controversial subjects like global warming, illegal immigration, and abortion all have massive liberal bias, and entries about living people, particularly conservative authors, journalists, and activists, are the most biased on the entire website.

Because Wikipedia has become the go-to place for most people when they want to look something up, major corporations use sock puppet accounts to edit pages about their companies and products trying to paint them in a favorable light and scrub criticism. Such edits have been traced back to people at companies like PepsiCo, Sea World, Walmart, Exxon Mobil, and others, since no company wants negative information about them or their products on an ‘encyclopedia’ article about them.[679]

In 2012 it was discovered that two employees of Wikipedia’s parent company (the Wikimedia Foundation) also ran a public relations business which included editing and monitoring the Wikipedia pages of their clients.[680] In 2015 it was revealed that some Wikipedia editors had been running a coordinated blackmail and extortion racket by using their editorial powers to allow the defamation of public figures and businesses if they didn’t pay them protection money.[681]

These editors would contact businesses and lesser-known ‘celebrities’ whose pages had been rejected due to lacking notoriety or for “excessive promotional content.” As *The Independent* reported, “According to a Wikipedia insider, at this stage the scammers would demand a payment of up to several hundred pounds to successfully ‘re-post or re-surface’ the article, and in some cases demanded an on-going monthly payment to ‘protect’ the articles.”[682]

Before we look at the examples of censorship and liberal bias on Wikipedia as a whole, let’s use my own page as an example. Since I’m a ‘newsworthy’ public figure there is an article about me, which (at the time that I’m writing this book) says that I’m an author and “conspiracy theorist,” best known for my “conspiracy theories” about secret societies like the Bilderberg Group and Bohemian Grove.

At one point in early 2017, the entry was updated to say that I’m an author and media analyst, and cited reports in *The Washington Times* and on Fox News, both calling me that. There was an editor war, and some people kept deleting the reference to me being a media analyst, and then others would change it back, and this continued until an editor locked the page which prevented anyone except approved Wikipedia editors from changing it. I then called out the founder of Wikipedia, Jimmy Wales, on Twitter for the censorship and the two of us exchanged messages privately though DMs and emails about the issue.

He surprisingly and graciously updated the article himself,[683] and used citations to reports from Fox News,[684] *The Washington Times,*[685] and *The Daily Caller* as the sources, all of which identified me as a media analyst.[686] Soon afterward some editors overruled him and deleted any reference to me being a media analyst, claiming the reason was that the citations were to "unreliable sources."[687]

Editors also deleted part of the article which said, "Dice runs a YouTube channel which has over 980,000 subscribers, and more than 300 million views," which is very strange because my YouTube channel is a large part of my career, and as you may know, I had become the most popular conservative YouTuber at the time.[688] The fact that Wikipedia wouldn't allow a reference to my YouTube channel or it's statistics is because they're trying to downplay my popularity and paint me as just some little known 'conspiracy theorist,' not wanting readers to know that I have a huge audience with millions of viewers a week.[689]

They also deleted a reference to a show on the Travel Channel that I had been featured on called *America Declassified*, even though I'm listed on the credits at IMDB, the Internet Movie Database, which is the industry standard for film credits.[690] The false categorizing of my work, and the deletion of prominent facts about my career and popularity are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of Wikipedia's manipulation of information and participation in spreading fake news.

Pages of popular conservatives often have large "Controversies" sections which contain long lists of every little thing they've said that liberals find objectionable or want to amplify. Pages for Ann Coulter, Sean Hannity, Rush Limbaugh, and Michael Savage all have the "Controversy" section or equivalent which nitpick things they've said or done. Wikipedia has even been known to use unflattering photos of conservatives in their profiles.

Conversely, there are relatively few liberal journalists or talk show hosts who have a 'Controversy' section in their articles, or have much negative information about them even mentioned at all. For example, there is no mention on MSNBC's Lawrence O'Donnell's page about his conspiracy theories about President Trump, which got so outrageous that he even claimed Vladimir Putin orchestrated a false flag attack in Syria using chemical weapons to help President Trump's approval ratings.[691] There's not a single mention on Michael Moore's page, or Congresswoman Maxine Waters' page about their endless Russian conspiracy theories either. Maxine Waters even claims, among other strange things, that Russia coined the term "Crooked Hillary" for Donald Trump.[692]

Transgender TV star 'Laverne Cox' was born Roderick Cox, a man, but Wikipedia editors refuse to allow his birth name to be mentioned anywhere on his page.[693] Roderick was the first transgender person to appear on the cover of *Time* magazine and 'she' is hailed as a hero in the liberal media, but unlike every single other actor or actress on the planet who uses a stage name (or legally changes their name), Wikipedia will not allow any mention of the fact that 'Laverne Cox' was born Roderick Cox.[694]

Many of Hollywood's biggest stars use stage names and while never mentioned in the traditional media, their real names are always included on their Wikipedia page, except for 'Laverne's.' Tom Cruise (real name: Tom Mapother), Nicholas Cage (real name: Nicolas Coppola), Katy Perry (real name: Katy Hudson), Demi Moore (real name: Demetria Guynes), Tina Fey (real name Elizabeth Fey), and every other ‘cis gender’ celebrity have their real names included on Wikipedia, but the site gives special treatment to ‘Laverne Cox’ (and probably other transgender people).

Liberal political figures also appear to get special treatment on Wikipedia by editors who carefully guard their pages, trying to keep them portrayed in a positive light. One investigation revealed that a single Wikipedia editor made 2,269 changes to Hillary Clinton’s page over a ten year period from 2006 up until the time she announced she was running for president in 2016 in order to keep as much criticism off it as possible.[695] Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales actually contacted Hillary Clinton’s office to ask how she prefers to be named on the page, either “Hillary Rodham Clinton” or just “Hillary Clinton.”[696]

Jimmy Wales’ own page is heavily protected by the “edit protection mafia” as some people call them, who guard it against criticism. Wales himself has even edited his own page, which is highly frowned upon according to Wikipedia policy, since all edits are supposed to be made only by “disinterested” 3rd parties to avoid conflicts of interest.[697]

He also used his administrative authority to scrub references to his connection to online porn.[698] In the 1990s he cofounded a website called Bomis, which started as a general interest informational site, but then became mostly about porn.[699] Several times he removed any references to pornography, and changed them to call the porn site the “Bomis Babes Blog” instead.[700]

He also made edits to remove any mention of Wikipedia’s co-founder, Larry Sanger, after the two had a falling out.[701] After other editors reverted the changes, Wales again tried to remove the credit to his co-founder. When a technology writer caught the edits and contacted Sanger, he responded, “I must say I am amused. Having seen edits like this, it does seem that Jimmy is attempting to rewrite history. But this is a futile process because in our brave new world of transparent activity and maximum communication, the truth will [come] out.”[702]

Allegations made by the site’s co-founder Larry Sanger are so disturbing, I don’t even want to discuss them. Just to give you an idea, he contacted the FBI in 2010 after he left the company to report certain kinds of images being published in the media section of the website he said Wikipedia was knowingly distributing.[703] After leaving Wikipedia, Sanger started a similar site called Citizendium, where writers have to reveal their real names to avoid many of the problems found on Wikipedia due to anonymous editors and anyone being able to write whatever they want.

For example, the Wikipedia page for *USA Today’s* founding editor John Siegenthaler Sr. had once claimed he was directly involved in the assassination of John F. Kennedy and his brother Bobby.[704] The edit was made as joke by someone, but it stayed up, and when Siegenthaler learned of it he contacted Jimmy Wales, but at first the only thing Wikipedia did is correct the misspelling of a word in the entry. The false claim stayed on the website for four months before it was finally removed, but not before the claims had been repeated on other sites.[705]

A Turkish academic who traveled to Canada was reportedly detained for several hours by immigration officials because of a false claim someone added to his Wikipedia page.[706] Pro golfer Fuzzy Zoeller, who once won the U.S. Open and the Masters Tournament, sued Wikipedia after someone edited his page to say that he beat his wife and abused drugs, allegations which were then picked up by other websites.[707]

Just a few days before a Congressional mid-term election, someone changed the page of House of Representatives Majority Leader Tom DeLay to say that he was a "Grand Dragon" of the Republican Party, a reference to the title of the leader of the KKK. The IP address of the person who changed it was traced back to someone who reportedly worked for *The New York Times*.[708]

Because of the wild west nature of Wikipedia, people often change pages as a joke especially after a politician or a celebrity says something controversial. For example, after senator Ted Cruz got into an exchange on Twitter with the sports website Deadspin and hilariously 'owned' them with his response, someone changed the Wikipedia page for Deadspin, which usually reads that it's owned by parent company Gawker Media, to say it was owned by Ted Cruz.[709] While sometimes these kinds of edits are just harmless and funny pranks, they show the vulnerability of Wikipedia and the dangers of allowing anyone to make changes to articles without proper oversight.

People have changed the pages of celebrities to indicate that they have died, which has sometimes caused the fake news to spread far and wide across the Internet. A sociology student actually added a fake quote to the Wikipedia page of French composer Maurice Jarre immediately after his death as an experiment to see if media outlets would pick it up in their obituaries and many did, including *The Guardian*.[710]

One study that measured how many people viewed pages that were "vandalized" with false information found that 42% of the "damage" was repaired almost immediately, but the majority of the edits which were not quickly corrected were viewed hundreds of millions of times before the articles had been fixed."[711]

Sometimes Wikipedia editors will even create an entire article about a topic or an issue hoping to shine a spotlight on it to further promote their political leanings. For example, there was a lengthy article titled "Criticism of George W. Bush," but the "Criticism of Barack Obama" page had been deleted four different times by Wikipedia editors who kept claiming the article "has no meaningful, substantive content," and called it an, "Attack page" that was "unsourced."[712]

After the edit wars continued, the site finally allowed the "Criticism of Barack Obama" page to stay, but renamed it to "The Public Image of…" and of course Obama's main page is mostly praise. The edit summary for the decision to rename and redirect the 'Criticism' section of Obama's page reads, "so the conservatards [conservative retards] won't get their knickers in a twist."[713]

The article about the United States Presidential Election of 2016 highlights liberals' conspiracy theories about Russian interference, and on Donald Trump's page in the section about his campaign for president it points out, "The alt-right movement coalesced around Trump's candidacy," and claims, "During the campaign, Trump was accused of pandering to white nationalists," and "Fact-checking organizations have denounced Trump for making a record number of false statements compared to other candidates."[714]

Editors have also been known to delete pages of conservatives who they don't feel warrant being mentioned on the site because when someone has a Wikipedia page, even if it is in a completely negative light, it gives the impression that the person is noteworthy or famous, and sometimes editors don't want to validate the person's success by dedicating a page to them. For example shortly after radio talk show host Wayne Dupree was named one of the Top 50 Influential Black Republicans for 2017, someone decided to create a Wikipedia page for him, but editors soon deleted it.[715] The gatekeepers don't want to let people know about black conservatives because liberals are trying to control the narrative by continuing to perpetuate the myth that all black people are Democrats.

White, heterosexual, Christian men are usually demonized as the cause of every evil in the world by the liberal media today.[716] White people are held in such disdain by the liberal media that they are often told they should be ashamed of being white, and if they have any measure of success in life it's because they have "white privilege" which is said to be the primary reason for it, meaning they benefit from what liberals call an inherent white supremacist ideology incorporated into American society and its institutions.[717]

White people are being cast in such a negative light in the media and on college campuses today that they are encouraged to be ashamed of being white, and if any white person happens to be proud of their culture then they are painted as a racist and white supremacist. Every other race can be happy about who they are, except white people. A comparison between articles about White Pride, Black Pride, and Asian Pride on Wikipedia illustrates this double standard. For example, the White Pride article states, "White pride is a motto primarily used by white separatist, white nationalist, neo-Nazi and white supremacist organizations in order to signal racist or racialist viewpoints."[718]

Compare this to the article on Black Pride, which reads, "Black pride is a movement in response to dominant white cultures and ideologies that encourages black people to celebrate black culture and embrace their African heritage."[719]

The entry for Asian Pride reads that in the United States, "Asian Pride (also spelled AZN pride) is a positive stance to being Asian American."[720] The anti-white bias in the 'pride' articles is Cultural Marxism, which ironically Wikipedia calls a conspiracy theory.[721] Cultural Marxism is the use of the media to perpetuate Leftist ideologies such as political correctness, gender bending, and other sexual perversions as if they are normal and cool. Cultural Marxism uses pop culture and celebrity icons to promote regressive Leftist policies and behaviors to the masses so people will mimic these influencers by thinking their attitudes and actions are "cool." While Wikipedia calls Cultural Marxism a conspiracy theory, the Southern Poverty Law Center calls it a conspiracy theory with an "anti-Semitic twist."[722]

Wikipedia also uses their home page to highlight featured articles and have an "On This Day in History" section and other trivia boxes which all promote liberal causes, and progressive historical figures and activists. *Frontpage* magazine did an investigation into Wikipedia's liberal bias and published their results in a two part series titled "How the Left Conquered Wikipedia." It starts off saying, "Finding examples of Wikipedia's bias is not difficult. One need only compare the entries of figures who do the same thing but from opposite sides of the political spectrum."[723]

They compared the pages of several prominent conservative political commentators like Ann Coulter to popular liberals like Michael Moore and found that the negative bias was overwhelming. At the time of their investigation the "Controversies and Criticism" section of Ann Coulter's page was over 35% of the article, where Michael Moore's was under 5% in terms of the word count.[724] The Criticism section on Keith Olbermann's page was also just 5% of the article.

Che Guevara's page had less than 2% dedicated to criticism. He's the Leftist communist revolutionary who is adored by liberals even though he oversaw the executions of at least one hundred political prisoners in Cuba.[725] Editors also guard the Southern Poverty Law Center's page, along with its founder Morris Dees. For example information about Morris Dees' alleged abuse of his ex-wife and his supposed affairs keep getting censored from his page.[726] The SPLC is the organization dedicated to painting conservatives as racists, homophobic, xenophobic, and anti-government extremists.

After Google put 'human rights activist' Yuri Kochiyama on their homepage in May of 2016 as a "Google Doodle," some media outlets pointed out that she openly admired Osama Bin Laden and other violent revolutionaries like Che Guevara and Fidel Castro.[727] Wikipedia editors quickly removed such information from her page and tried to hide the fact that she was a black supremacist. An edit war ensued and editors settled on having her page admit she supported black "separatism."

Breitbart News pointed out that the edit log showed the page had been edited more times in the 24 hours after she was featured on Google's home page than it had been edited in the last two years combined, and conclude that, "The Wikipedia edit log is a stark example of the lengths to which the left will go to rewrite history."[728]

A study of the demographics of Wikipedia editors found that over 85% of them were men with an average age of 27, most of whom do not have a girlfriend or any kids.[729] It appears many of them are loners trying to gain a sense of power by controlling how the world sees the people or issues they write about.

WikiTribune

Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales says that the day after the election of Donald Trump he came up with an idea for a news website to "combat fake news." A few months later, the *WikiTribune* was announced. "That was when I really decided to move forward," he told *The Guardian*, speaking of Trump's victory.[730]

Wales said, "The news is broken and we can fix it. We're bringing genuine community control to our news with unrestricted access for all. We're developing a living, breathing tool that'll present accurate information with real evidence, so that you can confidently make up your own mind."[731]

It's paid for by crowdfunding and started with an initial staff of ten journalists.[732] *The Guardian* pointed out, "Those who donate will become supporters, who in turn will have a say in which subjects and story threads the site focuses on. And Wales intends that the community of readers will fact-check and subedit published articles."[733] So it sounds like the WikiTribune will have some of the same flaws as Wikipedia.

While it may have been a noble idea in theory that having a community of users who watch pages and are able to add to them or correct errors, as *Frontpage* points out, “Wikipedia in practice has strayed from these utopian ideas because of the ease with which political and social bias trumps altruism.”[734]

The fact that Wikipedia is the default online encyclopedia is horrifying considering I’ve only mentioned a handful of the problems the site has. And with the ability to misinform so many people with bias or malicious information, it should not be considered a reliable source of information and should just be avoided altogether.

CNN

CNN started out as the first cable news network, which is what CNN actually stands for, when it was launched in 1980 by entrepreneur Ted Turner. Back then it was revolutionary and changed the entire news industry by rapidly deploying correspondents anywhere around the world and covering breaking news as it happened, but today CNN is just a shell of its former self. As comedian Larry Wilmore once said, "I've been watching CNN a long time. Yep. I used to watch it back when it was a news network."[735]

As the 2016 election approached, CNN's coverage got more biased and absurd by the day, and after Trump won, they completely fell off the rails and lost any resemblance to a news network whatsoever. At first their pundits blamed Trump's victory on a "white lash" and "white supremacists," and then they veered off into the Twilight Zone, attacking President Trump for eating two scoops of ice cream and speculated that he may be "afraid of stairs" because he held onto the handrail when exiting Air Force One.

President Trump famously pushed back against their odd and obsessive attacks telling their White House correspondent Jim Acosta that CNN was "fake news" which caused the network to have even more animosity towards the new president.

Just two months after the election, with their reputation in shambles, CNN's president Jeff Zucker said he felt like his network's credibility "is higher than ever."[736] Let's not forget this is the network where host Fareed Zakaria boldly declared just before the election, "Trump will lose, and he will then destroy the Republican Party,"[737] and the tone of their coverage as the election approached gave the impression that Hillary's victory was inevitable.

CNN's reputation has been so damaged in recent years that host Jake Tapper was singled out by President Obama during the 2016 White House Correspondents Dinner when Obama joked that Tapper left journalism to join CNN.[738] Poor Jake even admitted that his own seven-year-old son now calls him 'fake news' to taunt him.[739]

For decades, CNN has been selling their anchors' likeness and their trademarked logo to be used in fake news segments in Hollywood films.[740] CNN's now defunct show *Crossfire* recorded a fake segment for Jody Foster's film *Contact* (1997); Larry King, once the face of the network, has played himself in various films where he staged discussions to make them look like they were part of his CNN show; Bernard Shaw, the network's lead news presenter for twenty years, recorded a fake news segment for *Jurassic Park: The Lost World* (1997)*;* and Anderson Cooper recorded a fake news segment for *Batman vs. Superman* in 2016.[741] So at this point it would be inaccurate to say that CNN *wasn't* producing fake news, but their unethical and deceptive actions go far beyond scripting fictional news segments for movies.

Like the time they conducted what looked like a live interview via satellite between Ashleigh Banfield and Nancy Grace using the standard split screen display with each of them appearing to be in different parts of the country, but some viewers at home happened to notice that the same cars, trucks, and even a giant bus were seen driving by in the background behind each of them, passing by one person then just a second or two later, the same vehicles would drive right past the other because they were standing right next to one another in the same parking lot.[742]

After a heroic firefighter saved an infant who had been abandoned in a hot car in a parking lot, he did a live interview with CNN's sister station HLN while wearing a "Trump" shirt and when the segment was replayed later in the day, which is common for cable news networks, they blurred out his T-shirt![743]

CNN was actually sued for reporting what the plaintiff claims was fake news about a hospital he ran as CEO after they aired a story depicting it as having an infant mortality rate of three times the national average, saying they intentionally manipulated statistics.[744] Exposing the fake news from CNN could fill an entire book itself, so in this chapter I'll just cover a few examples and some of the insane things their contributors regularly say. We'll also look at the claims that CNN has cozied up to dictatorships in hopes of getting interviews or to further CNN's business interests in certain countries.

CNN's 2016 Election Aftermath

Just a few weeks before the election, when Trump was warning about possible hacking of electronic voting machines, CNN ran a story titled, "No, the presidential election can't be hacked,"[745] and dismissed Trump's concerns, but right after Hillary's devastating loss they published a story with the headline, "Where's the outrage over Russia's hack of the US election?"[746]

During one of their endless discussions on conspiracy theories about the Trump campaign 'colluding' with Russians to 'steal' the election from Hillary, they even used B-roll from a video game called Fallout 4 in a segment about "Russian Hackers."[747] B-roll, for those who don't know, is the stock footage that is played during a news story while the reporter or anchor is talking about it. They literally used a clip from a video game during a 'news' story about their 'Russian collusion' speculation!

CNN contributor Bob Baer actually wanted an election "do over." When he mentioned this on air a surprised host asked, "Bob, if I'm hearing you correctly, you're saying we should have another election?"

Baer responds, "When a foreign country interferes in your election and the outcome is in doubt, the legitimacy of the government, I don't know how it works constitutionally, I'm not a lawyer, constitutional lawyer, but I'm deeply disturbed by the fact that the Russians interfered…I don't see any other way than to vote again."[748]

After Trump was elected, CNN's senior media analyst Brian Stelter asked, "Is this something of a national emergency?" and wondered if journalists were just "afraid to say so."[749] He also asked, "Do citizens in dictatorships recognize what's happening right here right now?" and wondered "Are they looking at the first two days of the Trump administration and saying, 'Oh, that's what my leader does?'"[750] Yes, he actually equated President Trump's inauguration with a dictator taking over.

Then later that day when it was learned that President Trump picked Frank Sinatra's *My Way* for the first dance at the Presidential Inaugural Ball, CNN reported that Sinatra's daughter Nancy was upset that Trump was using her father's song. The original headline to the story was, "Nancy Sinatra Not Happy Trump Using Father's Song at Inauguration."[751] She then responded on Twitter saying, "That's not true. I never said that. Why do you lie, CNN?"[752]

They then changed the headline and made major changes to the article and added an editor's note claiming they just "updated" it.[753] How could they make such a huge mistake, causing Nancy Sinatra to not only say she never said such a thing, but to call CNN liars? Most likely some editor probably voiced their opinion that they thought she would be upset about Trump's song choice, or said that they had 'heard' she was upset (which was just them hearing someone else's opinion that she might be) which they then decided to actually publish as if it were a real story.

Hands Up Don't Shoot

CNN's fake news problem dates back at least several years, and one of the prime examples is them perpetuating the 'hands up don't shoot' hoax which largely gave rise to Black Lives Matter. The saying was falsely attributed to Michael Brown, the six-foot-four three hundred pound thug who robbed a convenience store before attacking a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014 resulting in him being shot and killed. After covering the protests one night, host Sally Kohn concluded her show saying "We want you to know, that our hearts are out there marching with them," and then she and her three other panelists all held up their hands in solidarity with the protesters who had adopted the gesture as a symbol of their cause.[754]

After the investigation into the shooting of Michael Brown was complete, even the most liberal of news outlets admitted the claim that he had his hands up when he was shot was a lie, and that narrative was ranked one of the biggest lies of the year, even by the far left *Washington Post*.[755] The damage had long been done though. 'Hands up don't shoot' had become the rallying cry of Black Lives Matter, and the slogan was printed on signs at protests and on people's t-shirts; and the lie that Michael Brown was an innocent victim, murdered by a racist police force had taken root.[756] Milwaukee Sheriff David Clarke would later say that fake news was born in Ferguson when the liberal media propagated the 'hands up, don't shoot' lie."[757]

“Black People Can’t Be Racist”

CNN’s descent into the fake news swamp coincided with their alignment with identity politics and social justice warriors who see straight white men as being the source of all of society’s problems. Many of their black contributors seem to harbor a deep resentment for white people and regularly make bizarre statements about race. CNN contributor Marc Lamont Hill actually denies that black people can be racist at all.

In one segment talking about Black Lives Matter he said, “To say that the Black Lives Matter movement is racist is bizarre to me,” and continued, “not just because black people don’t have the institutional power to be racist or to deploy racism, but because the movement has called for justice, it’s called for demilitarization, it’s called for nonviolence.”[758] Such a claim is laughable considering they’ve chanted that they want more dead cops. Violence, looting, and rioting are often a regular feature at Black Lives Matter gatherings.[759]

This same contributor called black community leaders who met with President Trump shortly after the election to discuss how to help their communities, “mediocre negros.”[760] This was just one day after Martin Luther King the 3rd met with Trump,[761] and shortly after Steve Harvey, Pastor Darrell Scott, and Kanye West met with him too.[762] MLK’s niece had publicly revealed that she herself had voted for Trump,[763] but the narrative CNN pushes is that only racist white people support President Trump and that black people should despise and fear him.

When one contributor mentioned that neither Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama had denounced the repeated incidents of violence at the hands of the anti-Trump protesters, calling the attacks politically motivated hate crimes, black CNN contributor Symone Sanders responded, “I’m sorry, hate crimes and protesting are not the same things. A hate crime is a crime that is committed against somebody because of their religion, because of what they look like, because of their sexual orientation. That’s not the same thing as protesting.”[764]

Panelist Carl Higbie answered, “What do you say to the people who dragged a poor white guy out of a car and beat him?”

She responded, “Oh my goodness, poor white people! Please!” she responded. “Oh my. Stop. Stop, Carl.”

The puzzled-looking panelist responded, “That’s not protesting! Dragging someone out of their car and beating them is not protesting.”[765]

CNN’s anti-white racial bias has become the norm at the network. After the Grammys in 2016 CNN asked, “Is racism why Adele beat Beyoncé at the Grammys?” and said, “Certainly for her diehard fan base known as the Beyhive — and for many music critics — Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* was a creative masterpiece. But with its racial themes and imagery, some are questioning if the project was ‘just too black’ for Grammy voters.”[766]

The Daily Beast (a website started by *Newsweek*) echoed this insanity and said Beyoncé was a "victim of racism," and that, "Once again, the Grammy Awards got caught with their pants around their ankles."[767]

CNN deceptively edited the statements of a black woman who encouraged angry protesters to go burn down homes and businesses in white suburbs to give the appearance that she had actually called for peace![768] After an armed thug named Sylville Smith was shot and killed by police in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, riots broke out with businesses looted and set on fire, and white people were targeted for assault by the angry mob of black thugs.[769] The next day the perpetrator's sister Sherelle Smith gave a statement to the media where she encouraged the mob to move from the black neighborhood into the white suburbs, saying, "Don't bring that violence here. Burnin' down shit ain't going to help nothin! Y'all burnin' down shit we need in our community. Take that shit to the suburbs. Burn that shit down! We need our shit!"[770]

CNN showed a brief segment of her statement and then muted her while the reporter did a voice over saying she called for peace. After the unedited video went viral online CNN issued an on-air apology the next day for their deceptive editing.[771]

CNN on Wikileaks

After Wikileaks published Hillary's campaign manager John Podesta's emails, morning host Chris Cuomo discouraged people from visiting Wikileaks' website to read them, and claimed, "it's illegal to possess the stolen documents," but "it's different for the media. So everything you're learning about this, you're learning from us."[772]

In other words, don't read them yourself, just trust CNN to tell you what they say and what their significance is. While it is illegal to hack in and steal someone's emails, it's not illegal to read those stolen emails if the hacker gives them to you or even post them online as long as the person posting them wasn't conspiring with the hacker to get them. It's interesting to note that Chris Cuomo has over one million Twitter followers, but can barely get a dozen likes or retweets on most things he posts, and such low engagement is usually only found on accounts that have bought fake followers in order to give people the appearance of being more popular than they are.

This is the same host who said on several occasions that being called 'fake news' is the equivalent of being called the N-word,[773] and wants to teach young girls 'tolerance' so they don't get uncomfortable seeing naked men in women's locker rooms when biological males who 'identify' as women use the facilities.[774]

Censoring Atrocities

CNN's chief war correspondent Christiane Amanpour admitted that reporters were self-censoring themselves in their coverage of the buildup to — and during — the Iraq War, and looking back on the events says that they weren't rigorous enough, didn't ask the right questions, and later characterized the Bush administration's reasons for going to war as "disinformation at the highest levels."[775]

Eason Jordan, their former chief news executive, admits censoring stories about the atrocities Saddam Hussein and his sons had committed in Iraq because the network didn't want their Iraqi CNN affiliates to face repercussions by the regime.[776] Just after the Iraq War started in 2003, he wrote an op-ed for *The New York Times* titled, "The News We Kept To Ourselves," and tried to justify keeping various atrocities he knew of a secret because revealing them would have "jeopardized the lives of Iraqis, particularly those on our Baghdad staff."[777] He said that some of the events he knew about still haunt him.

The Media Research Center, a conservative media watchdog group, asked, "If accurate reporting from Iraq was impossible, why was access to this dictatorship so important in the first place? And what truths about the thugs who run other totalitarian states — like North Korea, Cuba and Syria — are fearful and/or access-hungry reporters hiding from the American public?"[778]

Former CNN reporter Peter Collins, who was in Baghdad during the buildup to the first Gulf War, said that he was with Eason Jordan and CNN's president Tom Johnson during meetings with Iraqi officials where they were hoping to get an interview with Saddam Hussein. Collins later revealed, "I was astonished. From both the tone and the content of these conversations, it seemed to me that CNN was virtually groveling for the interview."[779]

A few months later he wrote an op-ed for *The Washington Times* about his experience titled "Corruption at CNN" where he said he felt CNN was broadcasting Saddam Hussein's propaganda for him in hopes of getting an exclusive interview with him (which they got scooped by CBS). "I thought long and hard; could I be comfortable with a news organization that played those kinds of games? I decided, no, I could not, and resigned."[780]

These aren't the only startling allegations of this kind. In 2012, former CNN journalist Amber Lyon went public with her experience of working for the network, giving details of what she said were more clear examples of them catering to dictatorships.[781]

"What CNN is doing is they are essentially creating what some people have termed 'infomercials for dictators.' And that's the sponsored content that they are airing on CNN International that is actually being paid for by regimes and governments," she said. "And this violates every principle of journalistic ethics, because we're supposed to be watchdogs on these governments. We are not supposed to allow them to be a paying customer as journalists. And that's the issue here — that CNN is feeding, then, this propaganda to the public and not fairly disclosing to the public that this is sponsored content."[782]

CNN Host Ate Human Brains

In March of 2017, CNN aired an episode of a reality show / documentary series titled *Believer* with host Reza Aslan, a former Christian turned Muslim, who traveled around the world exploring all sorts of bizarre religious practices. One of the groups he interviewed was a cannibalistic sect of Hindus in India called the Aghoris, who literally cook members of their tribe when they die and eat them. He didn't just interview them, he actually joined them around a bonfire where they cooked their friends' dead body and his brain.[783] When word began spreading online about this after the episode aired, many people (myself included) thought maybe he just sat there and observed their cannibal barbecue, but the host actually ate human brains too, and CNN really did air it.[784]

Just before the episode aired he posted on his Facebook page, "Want to know what a dead guy's brain tastes like? Charcoal. It was burnt to a crisp!"[785] Yes, the self-proclaimed "most trusted name in news" resorted to having one of their hosts eat dinner at a cannibal barbecue hoping to get people to tune in and watch. Reza Aslan was later fired for posting profanity-filled rants on Twitter aimed at the president and his children.[786]

Employees 'Resign' Over False Stories

CNN's Trump/Russia conspiracy theories got so out of control that at one point a group of staffers 'resigned' after one of the stories put CNN at risk of being sued for defamation by one of Trump's associates who the report focused on.[787] He threatened to sue, and the story was not only retracted, but completely removed from CNN's website. In its place was a retraction, reading, "CNN.com published a story connecting Anthony Scaramucci with investigations into the Russian Direct Investment Fund. That story did not meet CNN's editorial standards and has been retracted. Links to the story have been disabled. CNN apologizes to Mr. Scaramucci."[788]

An executive editor then sent an internal memo to staff at CNN, which someone leaked, reading in part, "No one should publish any content involving Russia without coming to me and Jason first. This applies to social, video, editorial, and MoneyStream. No exceptions."[789] Their reckless editorial policy was coming back to bite them.

CNN's 'sources' became so bad that they reported former FBI Director James Comey would testify that he did *not* tell President Trump that he wasn't under a criminal investigation regarding the allegations of Russian interference in the election, but just a few hours later Comey's testimony proved CNN laughably wrong again.[790] Wolf Blitzer would later reprimand reporter Gloria Borger on air her for bad sources, saying that, "either they don't know what they're talking about or they're lying."[791]

The very next day after the group of staffers resigned when another conspiracy theory was debunked, CNN was hit by another devastating blow to their credibility when hidden camera footage was released showing a long-time producer making some stunning revelations that further called into question the network's integrity.

Project Veritas

An undercover video of a CNN producer who worked at the network for almost fifteen years was published by the political activist organization Project Veritas showing him admitting that CNN's constant coverage of the Trump/Russia conspiracy theories was "mostly bullshit," just "for the ratings," and that he thought President Trump was right to call it a "witch hunt."[792] The producer also laughed about the 'ethics' of the news business today.

Another video was released by Project Veritas the following day showing CNN host Van Jones calling the Trump/Russia 'investigation' a "big nothing burger."[793] A second producer was also caught on tape saying that 90% of the staff at CNN were anti-Trump, and that he thought the American people are "stupid as shit" for voting for him.[794]

The Washington Post published a story downplaying the significance of the footage and made an obviously false statement about it, which then led to the *Post* issuing a retraction about their own story trying to call into question the validity of the Project Veritas videos, making the whole thing look even worse for CNN.[795]

It's unclear if CNN can ever repair the damage to their brand, and based off their editorial polices in recent years they appear to have completely abandoned any desire to be an actual news network. While many wonder if CNN will eventually go bankrupt due to destroying their once great reputation, they will likely stay in business and continue to function as a Leftist propaganda channel, although with a much smaller audience than they once enjoyed during their prime.

NBC News

One of the most shocking examples of fake news was when NBC aired a story about General Motors' trucks having faulty gas tanks that could rupture if they got into an accident and possibly explode. While this was a real concern, NBC actually staged a scene where they crashed a car into the side of a GM truck and blew it up. It turns out that NBC producers not only put the wrong gas cap on the truck so it would pop off causing fuel to squirt out, but they also attached lit flares underneath the car that crashed into the truck so when the fuel spilled out of the tank, it caught on fire and blew up.[796]

The scene was dramatic, with a huge fireball engulfing the two vehicles, and news of the exploding gas tanks was now everywhere. But General Motors was suspicious and obtained the vehicles from the junkyard and had them forensically analyzed.

GM sued NBC after the analysis revealed what actually happened and NBC later admitted they staged the whole thing. "We apologize to our viewers and to General Motors. We have also concluded that unscientific demonstrations should have no place in hard news stories at NBC. That's our new policy," they said in a statement.[797]

Another embarrassing and unethical blunder was accidentally exposed live on air when a reporter was shown in a canoe rowing down the middle of flooded streets in New Jersey after heavy rain. As soon as she began her segment the live shot looked like she was in six feet of water in the middle of a suburb, but then two men came walking by directly in front of her, showing the water was only ankle deep.[798]

Looking bewildered, anchor Matt Lauer asked what just happened, and the staff in the New York studio could be heard laughing off camera. "Are these holy men, perhaps walking on top of the water?" he joked, not sure what else to say. Years later Jimmy Fallon asked Matt Lauer about the incident when he was a guest on *The Tonight Show*, but he didn't want to talk about it and sarcastically said, "Thank you for bringing that up, James. I can't wait to check my email when I get done with this show."[799]

NBC has a history of deceptively editing people's comments which causes them to be misrepresented to the audience. One of the most well-known examples of this is when they edited George Zimmerman's call to 911 just before he got into an altercation with Trayvon Martin and ended up fatally shooting him. NBC's version of the call had Zimmerman on the phone with the operator saying, "This guy looks like he's up to no good. He looks black," but the actual conversation was Zimmerman saying, "This guy looks like he's up to no good. Or he's on drugs or something. It's raining and he's just walking around, looking about."[800]

The dispatcher then replies: “OK, and this guy — is he black, white or Hispanic?”

Zimmerman then responds, “He looks black.”

Even *The Washington Post*, a far left newspaper, admitted, “No matter how you feel about Zimmerman, that bit of tape editing was unfair to the truth and to Zimmerman’s reputation.”[801] Zimmerman sued the network for defamation with the lawsuit saying, “NBC saw the death of Trayvon Martin not as a tragedy but as an opportunity to increase ratings, and so set about to create the myth that George Zimmerman was a racist and predatory villain.”[802]

After Rudolf Guiliani gave an interview on Fox News about President Trump’s proposed travel restriction which would temporarily prevent immigrants from several countries plagued by terrorism from coming to the U.S., NBC aired a segment using an edited sound bite taken out of context in attempts to frame Guiliani’s statements as if this was a ‘Muslim ban’ when he specifically said it was not.[803]

NBC also deceptively edited comments by Reince Priebus on the same issue, again giving the false impression that Trump was proposing to ban all Muslims from entering the U.S. when Priebus too said exactly the opposite. NBC’s story was titled “Reince Priebus on Muslim Registry: ‘Not Going to Rule Out Anything,’”[804] based on an interview he had with *Meet The Press* host Chuck Todd. NBC also tweeted that when Reince was asked by Todd, “Can you rule out a registry for Muslims?” he answered, “I’m not going to rule out anything.” They actually cut his statement short to give readers the wrong impression, because he actually said, “I’m not gonna rule out anything, but we’re not going to have a registry based on a religion.”[805]

Surprisingly *New York Times* political correspondent Maggie Habernman called out NBC for the deceptive edit, saying that Reince’s actual quote indicates the opposite of what NBC framed it.[806] Even BuzzFeed’s senior technology writer Charlie Warzel said it was an “irresponsible half-quote [without] even a link for context.”[807]

Perhaps Katie Couric, who worked as an anchor for NBC, learned the art of deceptively editing video clips in order to cast people in a false light there, because she was sued for twelve million dollars in 2016 by several people who claimed just that after they appeared in her anti-gun documentary *Under the Gun*.[808]

Trump once tweeted that NBC is the same fake news media that said there is ‘no path to victory’ for him during the election, and ridiculed them for pushing the phony Russian collusion stories.[809] NBC got so defensive over people calling them ‘fake news’ due to their obsession with conspiracy theories about Russia ‘colluding’ with the Trump administration that *Meet The Press* host Chuck Todd and others put together an article titled “Four Reasons Why the Russia Story Isn’t Fake News.”[810]

Just one month after Donald Trump took the oath of office, NBC News produced a segment called “Dear Mr. President: Kids Talk Donald Trump” which showed a bunch of young kids voicing their fears about the new president.[811] Instead of being just a cute segment of innocent kids asking questions about the presidency, it looked like a propaganda piece that North Korea would produce.

Some of the statements the children made were: “Most of my family is black. I’m afraid that you’re gonna hurt some of us blacks.” “You are here, attempting to white-wash America.” “I don’t like your definition of American, because I don’t seem to fit within it,” and, “Some of my friends are really scared about you building a wall and the travel ban, because a lot of their families live in different places.”

It was clear the kids had no idea what they were talking about and their parents, who had to approve of their appearance, were behind the camera coaching them on what to say. The segment was widely denounced online for using children in an anti-Trump propaganda piece portrayed as ‘news’ by a major network.[812]

NBC actually had people dress up as Muslims and attend a NASCAR race in Virginia in order to attempt to spark negative reactions from the other attendees. NASCAR fans, as you probably are well aware of, are often stereotyped as racist rednecks, and so NBC thought they could easily find a few drunk hicks who would give dirty looks to the Muslims.[813] When their stunt was discovered many people denounced NBC for violating journalistic ethics. “It is outrageous that a news organization of NBC’s stature would stoop to the level of going out to create news instead of reporting news,” said NASCAR spokesman Ramsey Poston.[814] The segment never aired, likely because they didn’t get the negative reactions they had hoped for.

This is the same network that still employs Brian Williams, even after his admittedly false claims about being under enemy fire while covering the Iraq War.[815] Perhaps they appreciate his ability to keep a straight face while mischaracterizing things and framing stories in a false light. President Trump can do nothing right in the eyes of NBC. After his first press conference Brian Williams categorized it as, “a live special television event brought to you by narcissism, thin skin, chaos and deeply personal grievances.”[816]

Other NBC anchors just seem to complain about Trump instead of actually reporting on what he’s doing. When Andrea Mitchell was the guest host of *Meet The Press* she mentioned that Trump’s plan to fix Obamacare was just a bunch of white men who wanted to cut off healthcare for women.[817]

When their *Nightly News* anchor Lester Holt interviewed President Trump for the first time, he interrupted him nine times in just two and a half minutes, barely letting him finish a sentence before he would cut him off to challenge what he was saying, or ask him something else as if he didn’t want him to finish his point.[818]

Every night on NBC News their disdain for President Trump is clear in how they frame their opening segment and cast their coverage of him in the most negative light possible. They too have long given up on objectivity in exchange for being another weapon in the arsenal of the Liberal Establishment.

CBS News

Shortly after the ‘fake news’ phenomenon swept the country, CBS actually changed their slogan to “Real News” in what many thought was a pathetic try-hard attempt hoping to somehow convince people they were a ‘trustworthy’ network. Many people joked that if a news station has to claim they’re “real news” then there’s a real problem. In this chapter you’ll see just a sample of some of the fake news coming from CBS and why they’re so defensive about being a ‘real’ news network.

One of the first of what would unfortunately become many instances of disturbing crimes being broadcast on Facebook Live was when four black thugs in Chicago broadcast themselves torturing a white mentally handicapped man.[819] He was bound, gagged, and had his clothes and hair slashed with a knife. National news outlets were hesitant to report on it at first, and it wasn’t until the horrifying video went viral on social media that the major networks finally mentioned it. But a report that CBS aired about the incident is one of the most misleading segments produced by a national news outlet.

The report aired on CBS radio stations as part of the top of the hour newsbreak and began with the announcer saying, “The viral video of a beating and knife attack in Chicago suggests the assault had racial overtones. CBS’s Dean Reynolds tells us the victim is described as a mentally-challenged teenager. In the video he is choked and repeatedly called the n-word. His clothes are slashed and he is terrorized with a knife. His alleged captors repeatedly reference Donald Trump. Police are holding four people in connection with the attack.”[820]

While “technically” correct, there couldn’t be a better example of a misleading report. In reality, the victim was white and the perpetrators were black, and while the attackers were “referencing Donald Trump” they were saying “Fuck Donald Trump, and fuck white people.”[821] The victim was called a “nigga” because that term, as you likely know, is often used as both an insult and a term of endearment, and yes, black people call white people “nigga” as an insult and to intimidate them.

CBS never apologized for the misleading report after it was denounced online, they just ignored the criticism and pretended like nothing happened. Their report was so backwards that it couldn’t have just been from a producer getting the basic facts wrong — it must have taken some serious mental gymnastics for them to twist the story around 180 degrees from what actually happened to give the listeners the impression that a group of racist Donald Trump supporters attacked a black man. The black perpetrators were charged with multiple felonies, including hate crimes for the attack.[822]

This is far from an isolated incident of CBS presenting stories in a false light to either protect liberals or smear conservatives. For example, CBS doctored an interview with Bill Clinton when he was asked about Hillary's infamous fainting incident in order to omit Bill's embarrassing gaffe that such a thing happened "frequently." On PBS, Charlie Rose asked him if it was something more serious than people thought, and Bill answered, "If it is, it's a mystery to me and all of her doctors, because frequently, not frequently — rarely — but on more than one occasion over the last many, many years, the same sort of thing has happened to her where she got severely dehydrated."[823]

When the same interview aired later that day on CBS, they deceptively edited out the part where Bill said "frequently." Because it would have been an obvious jump cut, they actually inserted a brief clip of Charlie Rose over the edit as a reaction shot so viewers wouldn't notice the quick edit.[824]

CBS News' Investigative Correspondent Sharyl Attkisson, who worked for the network for twenty years, resigned in 2014 citing the network's liberal bias.[825] She said that it was a "struggle" to get her reports on the air (i.e., to avoid the censorship of her stories by CBS) and later published a book titled *Stonewalled: One Reporter's Fight for Truth in Obama's Washington*.

In the later part of her career she had investigated the Benghazi attack as well as Operation Fast and Furious, a covert gun-running scheme which transferred weapons to Mexican drug cartels in what many believe was a false flag operation to then blame American gun stores for firearms ending up in the hands of narco groups.[826] So, Sharyl wasn't just a reporter, she was investigating some very serious scandals the Obama administration didn't want people to know about. A year before her resignation she had learned, and CBS News confirmed, that her computer had been hacked into by a sophisticated hacker on multiple occasions when she was investigating the Benghazi cover-up.[827]

CBS confirmed, "Evidence suggests this party performed all access remotely using Attkisson's accounts. While no malicious code was found, forensic analysis revealed an intruder had executed commands that appeared to involve search and exfiltration of data. This party also used sophisticated methods to remove all possible indications of unauthorized activity, and alter system times to cause further confusion. CBS News is taking steps to identify the responsible party and their method of access."[828]

Just a month earlier it was revealed that Obama's Justice Department had secretly obtained the emails and phone records of Fox News' White House correspondent James Rosen trying to find out who his sources were. So it's likely that some Deep State operatives in the NSA or CIA were snooping around in Sharyl Attkisson's computer to see what she was working on and who she was talking to.[829] The CIA admits they hacked into the computers of members of the Senate Intelligence Committee when they were investigating the CIA's detention and interrogations programs under the Bush administration.[830] Again, they wanted to know who their sources were and how much they knew.

So if the CIA would illegally hack into computers of the very Congressmen who are tasked with overseeing their activities, why wouldn't they hack into the computers of reporters who are also investigating their unethical and illegal actions? The fact that these crimes are all but ignored by mainstream news networks shows that they are complicit in the cover-up.

Just two months before the 2004 Presidential Election, CBS's show *60 Minutes* aired a fake news story about George W. Bush's military service record based on forged documents. The fake documents cast doubt on the quality of Bush's service in the Air National Guard and indicated he was given preferential treatment. Various bloggers immediately began scrutinizing them and found inconsistencies in the jargon as well as the typography between the fonts used in the documents versus the fonts that actual documents of that kind had.

If real, they would have been typed in the 1970s, but appeared to have been created using Microsoft Word. For two weeks CBS anchor Dan Rather stuck by his story but skepticism from those on the Internet kept growing, causing other news outlets to cover the controversy, and so CBS reluctantly had to finally address it.

CBS News President Andrew Heyward said, "Based on what we now know, CBS News cannot prove that the documents are authentic, which is the only acceptable journalistic standard to justify using them in the report. We should not have used them. That was a mistake, which we deeply regret."[831]

Dan Rather would later say, "If I knew then what I know now — I would not have gone ahead with the story as it was aired, and I certainly would not have used the documents in question."[832] The documents, it turns out, were a dirty political trick that CBS either willfully or negligently fell for.

As I mentioned in the introduction of this book, when CBS's flagship show *60 Minutes* did an 'investigation' into fake news they featured several websites as examples which were actually parody and satire sites, not actual fake news sites. Who could possibly not get the humor in a headline like, "After Colonoscopy Reveals Brain Tumor, Donald Trump Drops from Race" or reading the first two sentences in the article about "Donald Trump Caught Snorting Cocaine by Hotel Staff" where the 'eyewitness' says she mistook a dog lying on the floor for Donald Trump's hair!? To call parody and humor sites 'fake news' sites is not only disingenuous but it waters down the entire argument of those who are supposedly trying to prevent fake news from spreading.

After a left wing lunatic tried to assassinate Republican members of Congress while they were practicing for a charity baseball game during the summer of 2017, CBS News anchor Scott Pelley opened the broadcast that night saying the attack may have been "self-inflicted."[833] Congressman Tom Reed of New York denounced Pelley's comments as "beyond the pale" and said they "further proved that the Mainstream Media has completely lost any moral compass to guide its journalistic endeavors." Reed added, "Mr. Pelley should be ashamed of himself for doing the despicable deed of blaming the victim. He should never be employed in the media again by any forum or entity."[834]

The story of the ambush of Republican Congressmen on the baseball field was quickly dropped, because the liberal media didn't want people to keep using it as an example that their constant bombardment of fake news painting Donald Trump and his supporters as the resurgence of Hitler's Third Reich had incited a mentally unstable liberal to attempt to assassinate a group of Congressmen.

It might be interesting for people to know that the major shareholder of CBS's parent company Viacom is Sumner Redstone, who was once caught on tape trying to convince a reporter to reveal their source about an embarrassing leak within MTV (one of his networks). On the tape he can be heard saying, "We're not going to kill him. We just want to talk to him."[835] Redstone, who was 87-

years-old at the time, also told the reporter he will be “well-rewarded and well-protected” if he gave up his source.[836] That’s the kind of man who has been in control of CBS for decades — a man who bribes reporters in order to reveal their sources when they publish a report damaging to the network or their affiliates.

ABC News

Almost every single night, ABC News puts a liberal spin on their stories and carefully chooses topics that will further their cause, but ABC has also staged crime scenes, deceptively edited clips to give the opposite impression of what people said, and have been sued for almost two billion dollars by a company claiming their false stories destroyed their business.[837]

One shocking example of fake news on ABC was when a reporter set up her own "police line" for a live shot to make it look like she was reporting right in front of the crime scene with the yellow police tape swaying in the wind right behind her. They would have gotten away with it if it weren't for some locals who came out to witness the report and posted pictures online showing that the producers had put up their own police tape by tying it onto two different tripods that were off camera and out of the frame.[838]

After Dr. Drew expressed he was quite concerned about Hillary Clinton's health problems as the 2016 election approached, KABC Radio (a division of ABC Broadcasting) deleted the webpage about his interview in an apparent attempt to protect Hillary from the negative publicity it was generating. "Based on the information that she has provided and her doctors have provided, we were gravely concerned not just about her health, but her health care," Dr. Drew said, giving more ammunition to those who were raising concerns about her diminishing health.[839]

The following week his show on CNN's sister station HLN, which had been on the air for five years, was canceled. Even the liberal *Washington Post* couldn't help but see the connection and published a story with the headline, "'Dr. Drew' show canceled days after host's negative speculation about Hillary Clinton's health."[840] He was also called a "conspiracy theorist" for thinking her health was failing and was labeled a "Hillary Clinton Health Truther."[841] Just two weeks later she completely collapsed and had to be carried away by her staff, confirming what many had been concerned about for some time.

ABC anchor and chief political correspondent George Stephanopoulos used to work as Bill Clinton's former communications director so he can't pretend to be an objective journalist when he was literally on the payroll of the Clintons and even donated $75,000 dollars to them through their sham charity. When his donation was discovered he apologized for not disclosing it to ABC News and its viewers.[842] He was then forced to drop out from moderating one of the Republican presidential primary debates. Despite the obvious conflict of interest caused by him donating tens of thousands of dollars to the Clintons, ABC News called it "an honest mistake."[843]

After President Trump's controversial travel ban was blocked by an injunction from an activist judge appointed by President Obama, an Iraqi immigrant named Hameed Darweesh, who had just arrived to JFK airport in New York, was interviewed by the media. He was very gracious and said America is the greatest nation in the world and that he was happy to be here, but that's where ABC cut the clip they posted online. What they didn't show was that immediately after that, someone asked him, "What do you want to say to Donald Trump?" trying to tee him up to denounce the president's new travel screening.

Instead of criticizing the president, he responded that he likes Trump and was very understanding of the extensive screening he had to go through before being allowed into the United States.[844] If ABC showed him saying that he didn't have a problem with the increased travel restrictions, that would have contradicted the narrative the media was pushing at the time which was that it was 'anti-Muslim bigotry' and 'government-sanctioned discrimination.'[845]

ABC issued an apology for deceptively editing former White House Press Secretary Ari Fleisher's comments about Trump's first few days in office after they cut him off mid-sentence in order to cast him in a false light. In a segment where ABC was complaining about the newly inaugurated president, Ari was shown saying, "It looks to me if the ball was dropped on Saturday," talking about the way Sean Spicer handled criticism about the size of the crowd at Trump's inauguration.[846] The newscast continued to nitpick Trump's first week as president but after the segment aired, Fleisher tweeted, "*Nightline* proves Spicer right about MSM's [mainstream media's] dedication to negativity," adding, "If this is how the press reports, Trump is right to go after them." He concluded, "When the press distorts someone's quote and twists their words, we all have a problem."[847]

He said they twisted his words because they left out the rest of his sentence when he said, "Sean recovered it and ran for a 1st down on Monday." After being called out by Fleisher on the deception, ABC issue an on-air apology, saying, "*Nightline* aired a segment Monday night about the first three days of the new administration including Sean Spicer's statement to the press on Saturday. As part of the report, we interviewed former White House press secretary Ari Fleischer. In editing the piece for air, his quote was shortened and as a result his opinions mischaracterized. We are fixing the piece online to include his full quote and context. We apologize and regret the error."[848]

ABC News was sued for $1.9 billion dollars by a South Dakota meat processing company for a series of reports calling their ground beef product 'pink slime.'[849] The company alleged that their revenue dropped 80% after the reports aired, causing word of the 'pink slime' to go viral online. ABC later settled the lawsuit for a reported $177 million dollars, which is close to an entire year's profit for the network.[850]

Stories showing behind the scenes activities of meat processing plants tend to be sensational and shocking, but it appears ABC went too far trying to scare up some viewers for their 'pink slime' exposé and it came back to bite them.

MSNBC

Before the 2016 election season began, MSNBC's viewership was at historic lows with their prime time shows only getting between 25,000 to 103,000 viewers in their demo audience.[851] The "demo" audience is the key demographic advertisers are marketing to. The first quarter of 2015 MSNBC averaged only 316,000 total viewers during the day,[852] and by the fourth quarter they barely had 500,000 total viewers during prime time.[853]

With Trump's election victory and liberals getting whipped up into a frenzy hoping to find some dirt on him that would get him immediately impeached, MSNBC's viewership dramatically increased as the network became increasingly more radical with their anti-Trump agenda. The primary face of MSNBC is the butch lesbian Rachel Maddow, whose convoluted ramblings appear to be unprepared streams of consciousness she just comes up with off the top of her head once she's seated at her desk, but somehow her viewers are entertained by her scatterbrained diatribes.

Like CNN, MSNBC often grasps at straws trying to create artificial outrage over minor things — a business model that often just leaves them looking ridiculous. Since Donald Trump wouldn't release his tax returns during the presidential campaign, which is somewhat customary for candidates, the Democrats fixated on them thinking they must contain connections to Russia or that he somehow weaseled out of paying any taxes at all. Then, two months into the Trump administration, Rachel Maddow tweeted she was about to reveal a "bombshell" on her show.

She claimed to have obtained a copy of his tax returns and a countdown clock was put up on screen ticking down to the big moment he would be 'exposed.' When her show went to air she began rambling on, and on, for eighteen minutes without actually showing them, or even saying what was in them. The network then went to a commercial break and when the show returned, she revealed two pages of his 2005 returns which showed that he paid $38 million in taxes that year.

That's it. No bombshell. No controversial revelations. No nothing. In fact they actually debunked the rumors that he hadn't paid taxes for 'nearly two decades' as had been previously reported.[854] There hadn't been such an overhyped television event since Geraldo Rivera opened Al Capone's vault on live TV back in 1986 to find absolutely nothing, and Rachel Maddow became the laughing stock of the Internet and late night talk shows.[855]

One *Washington Post* reporter published an op-ed titled, "Rachel Maddow takes conspiracy theorizing mainstream with Trump tax 'scoop,'" and said that after she rambled on for 20 minutes, "I realized that we weren't watching a news broadcast so much as a modern recreation of X's monologue from Oliver Stone's 'JFK.'"[856]

It’s not just Rachel Maddow; other hosts on MSNBC comprise what is basically a conspiracy carnival on cable. After President Trump launched a few Tomahawk missiles and destroyed a Syrian airfield in response to Bashar al-Assad killing rebels with chemical weapons, MSNBC’s Lawrence O’Donnell dedicated his opening monologue to his conspiracy theory that Vladimir Putin may have ordered Assad to launch the chemical attack to provoke President Trump into a military response to distract the media and “change the subject from Russian influence” on the election.[857]

It appears that nothing is too crazy for MSNBC. One of their contributors appeared to encourage the bombing of Trump Tower in Turkey.[858] Malcolm Nance, who is the channel’s ‘terrorism analyst,’ tweeted, and then later deleted, a photo of Trump Tower in Turkey and added, “This is my nominee for the first ISIS suicide bombing of a Trump property”[859] He had previously called Trump the “ISIS candidate” and said that the president is inciting Islamophobia.[860]

This is the same MSNBC contributor who insinuated that Donald Trump is a Russian KGB agent who was at some point “co-opted by Vladimir Putin,” which caused him to “buy into” and “embrace” a “dictatorial ideology that was done by a spymaster of the KGB.” He then said, “Ten years ago, twenty years ago, there would be treason trials at this point.”[861]

One of their regular panelists, Donny Deutsch, actually issued a serious fight challenge to the president during one segment, saying, “Donald, if you’re watching, we’re from Queens. I’ll meet you in the schoolyard, brother. You need to be schooled. No, I’m serious. This is where this needs to go. He’s a coward! A coward!”[862] He wasn’t fired, or even suspended; giving the impression that MSNBC endorses threats of violence against President Trump.

Host Mika Brzezinski once decried Trump’s influence on Twitter, saying, “He is trying to undermine the media and trying to make up his own facts,” and that “he can actually control exactly what people think. And that, that is our job.”[863]

Another host apologized for fake news after she falsely claimed that Fox News was having their Christmas party at Donald Trump’s new hotel in Washington D.C. which had recently just opened. “I mean, think about the hotel in Washington right now. The RNC is having their Christmas party there. Fox News had their Christmas party there. That doesn’t feel a little hanky?”[864]

At the end of the show the host surprisingly apologized, saying, “This is some serious business that I need to share. I need to apologize to the audience. Earlier today in a segment I stated that the Fox network held their holiday party at Trump’s D.C. hotel. I was wrong. We’ve since learned that neither Fox network nor an affiliate held any party at Trump’s Washington hotel. I stand corrected. I apologize for the error. I am truly, truly sorry. The mistake entirely my fault. And of course, I wish all my friends over at Fox a very happy holiday no matter where you have your party.”[865]

Of course she didn’t say “Merry Christmas” because that might have offended some people, so instead she used the more “inclusive” phrase “happy holiday.”

Host Chris Matthews said that President Trump’s inauguration was “Hitlerian,” meaning it reminded him of an Adolf Hitler rally, and aside from being obsessed with “possible Russian connections” for a year after the election, he has also compared Ivanka Trump and her husband Jared Kushner to Saddam Hussein’s murderous sons, Uday and Qusay.[866] Chris Matthews is the same guy who said he got a thrill up his leg from hearing Barack Obama speak.[867]

After a terrorist ran down pedestrians using a van on the London Bridge in England, killing eight people and injuring 48, MSNBC host Thomas Roberts suggested that President Trump was "trying to provoke a domestic terrorist attack" of a similar nature in the U.S. "to prove himself right" about the dangers of radical Islamic terrorism.[868] Such an egregious allegation should put an end to someone's career in the television news business, but these kinds of unhinged statements are a common occurrence on the network.

In the immediate aftermath of the bombing at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England which killed twenty-two people, MSNBC briefly mentioned the attack but quickly cut away from the breaking news to continue covering what they said was "shocking news in Washington tonight" and went on as usual with their nauseating obsession with conspiracy theories about Russia and the 2016 election.[869] A bunch of children were blown up at a major pop star's concert by an ISIS terrorist, but MSNBC thought talking about six-month-old conspiracy theories was more important.

Anchor Katy Tur appeared to insinuate that she was concerned Trump may have journalists he doesn't like assassinated, drawing parallels between Vladimir Putin, who is accused of having some of his most vocal critics killed. During an interview with Nebraska Senator Deb Fischer, Tur asked, "As we know, there's, since 2000, been a couple dozen suspicious deaths of journalists in Russia who came out against the government there. Donald Trump has made no secret about going after journalists and his distaste for any news that doesn't agree with him here. Do you find that this is a dangerous path he is heading down?"[870]

The fact that Katy Tur is put on air is a prime example of MSNBC's low standards and poor quality talent pool they have to work with. During an interview with Republican Congressman Francis Rooney of Florida, when Tur again was grasping at straws to keep the Trump-Russia conspiracy theories circulating, Rooney pointed out that it was President Obama who got caught on a hot mic telling the Russian president he'd have "more flexibility" after his election.[871]

Tur responded, "I'm sorry, I don't know what you're referring to, Congressman."

Rooney replies, "Remember when he leaned over at a panel discussion or in a meeting and he said, I'll have more flexibility after the election? No one really ever pushed the president on what he meant by that, but I can only assume for a thug like Putin it would embolden him."

Tur then immediately ended the interview.[872] Any journalist should have known what he was talking about since it was a pretty stunning exchange to have been caught on tape, and what Obama meant was that he didn't want to lose votes in his bid for re-election, so he had to wait until after the election to do what he really wanted with Russia. In response to online criticism of her ignorance she tweeted, "To be fair, I didn't touch politics in 2012. I almost exclusively covered fires and shootings in NYC area."[873]

This is the same 'journalist' who says that Trump has "weaponized" the term "fake news" and claimed that Trump had never denounced white supremacists during the 2016 campaign despite video compilations circulating on YouTube and Facebook showing him doing such things over and over again, as far back as the year 2000 when he denounced David Duke as a racist and a bigot.[874] Tur's father — it's interesting to note — is also a reporter who now identifies as a woman, and once threatened to ‘curb stomp’ conservative pundit Ben Shapiro for using the wrong pronoun during a panel discussion Mr. Tur was involved in when he was called ‘sir.’[875]

MSNBC hasn’t gotten as much heat as CNN since the ‘fake news’ backlash began because it is a liberal network, whereas CNN was supposed to be impartial, and has recently changed its format from covering breaking news around the world to being an extension of the Democrat Party and a mouthpiece for George Soros.

Conclusion

The search for truth and investigating and verifying what a bona fide fact is, and what makes it different from a belief or an opinion has been an age-old philosophical quest known as Epistemology. What is knowledge? What is truth? How do we "know" something? While Socrates and Plato were searching for answers to these important questions over two thousand years ago, it's a strange situation we find ourselves in when the 'information age' has helped to cause millions of people to drown in misinformation. It's a paradox. Misinformation has become so pervasive in the information age that some say we're living in a 'post-truth' world.

The Oxford Dictionary defines post-truth as "Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief," and the constant flow of media that is carefully crafted from multibillion-dollar corporate conglomerates has gotten constructing a post-truth world down to a science. Millions of people are mesmerized by an endless amount of information that bombards us constantly; wanting our attention, wanting us to believe something, wanting us to buy something, and wanting us to be something. It's hard to tune it out and think for ourselves sometimes, and it seems that fewer people are even thinking at all.

Thankfully, however, many are waking up to this mass manipulation and have seen the new systems of media production and distribution as they were constructed, and remember what society was like before this information overload engulfed our world.

While some of the information I covered in this book may seem like common sense to those who have lived long enough to observe patterns over years or decades, it is important to clearly document what has happened so we can teach the younger generations about the details and the sophistication of information manipulation mechanisms and help them become media literate.

Even if you've suspected this kind of deception occurs, I'm confident that this book has provided you with countless pieces of evidence to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are in an information war, and as technology advances, the tactics to abuse it will likely also continue to advance. Soon it may be difficult for even experts to prove that something is or is not true.[876] James Madison once said, "A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives. A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both."[877]

Unfortunately people have always, and will most likely continue, to believe that some hoaxes are real, and that some real events are hoaxes. Millions of Americans believe President Trump is a white supremacist and that police departments across the country are dominated by racist white men who enjoy killing black people. A large number of people still believe the moon landing was faked, and Flat Earthers even made a resurgence in early 2016, despite having limitless scientific research at their fingertips, they actually believe the Earth is flat and that NASA is lying to us; so it's clear we have a serious problem with knowledge and information in today's society. Others are more concerned with celebrity gossip than actual issues which directly impact their lives.

One thing we can do is prevent this problem from getting worse by being aware of the dangers of clickbait journalism, and knowing how most 'news' websites make money today. People should know why old subscription models are better — when people paid for monthly or yearly subscriptions to newspapers and magazines they liked and trusted instead of these companies relying on people sharing their articles on social media which encourages websites to generate page views by any means necessary.

The more shocking and sensational the headlines, the more likely people will click the link, bringing traffic to the site and revenue from the advertisers. Social media platforms are now the lifeblood of most 'news' sites which rely on people sharing their articles on Facebook or Twitter in hopes of duping people into clicking on them.

Owners of major media companies see the power their empires hold and often choose to use their outlets to influence people instead of informing them. From activist journalists to senior editors to CEOs, many in the big media companies can't help but impose their personal political ideology on the world by using the infrastructure they have at their disposal. By building mountains out of molehills, through lying by omission, agenda-setting, framing stories and issues in a certain light, and by manipulating what is spread through social media by either limiting its reach or artificially amplifying it, the major media and tech companies try, and they do, influence the way people think and thus how they act.

As people have come to rely more and more on the media to think for them and don't use their own brains to remember things because they can "just Google it," many have continued to dull their own ability to think, reason, and remember. As 19th century Swiss writer Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz noted, "It would not be very difficult to show that the further man advances in the conquest of what we must call his secondary powers, which are of a mechanical nature, the more he regresses in the possession of his primary powers, which are of an intuitive nature, and thus he is constantly being weakened."[878]

The shift from print journalism to websites and Facebook pages doesn't just pose a danger to the distribution and verification of news, but it also puts our historical records at risk as well. Headlines and articles can now be changed without notice and information can vanish down a memory hole with little to no trace of its existence. With digital forgeries getting more sophisticated, how will we be able to verify that a document is actually authentic, especially if there are no physical documents anymore? Most people don't backup their own files locally anymore on external hard drives, and instead rely on cloud services. Many people don't even own software anymore, and instead pay monthly subscription fees for applications like Photoshop, Microsoft Office, and others.

Paperback books and magazines have become less and less popular since the creation of e-books and tablets, opening the door to dangers of remote deletion, alteration, or even device failure if an iPad or Kindle is dropped and breaks. Someone even gave a Ted Talk claiming that paper dictionaries aren't needed anymore since they're too old fashioned, which is a dangerous road to go down.[879] Society is on strange course, making us more vulnerable to fake news, not less, and many question whether there is even a solution at all.

Microsoft's social media researcher Danah Boyd said, "No amount of 'fixing' Facebook or Google will address the underlying factors shaping the culture and information wars in which America is currently enmeshed."[880] She continued, "The short version of it all is that we have a cultural problem, one that is shaped by disconnects in values, relationships, and social fabric. Our media, our tools, and our politics are being leveraged to help breed polarization by countless actors who can leverage these systems for personal, economic, and ideological gain."[881]

The stress of daily life, mixed with the constant bombardment of bad news about the latest death tolls from local crime and national tragedies, makes it appealing for many to completely check out of current events and the political process and get lost in a world of entertainment. Wasting countless hours clicking through social media threads or arguing about pop culture with complete strangers online is way too easy and should be avoided in exchange for meaningful discussions with friends and family and personal study.

We should stay away from the dangers of only getting news from following certain Twitter accounts or Facebook pages because we like what they post. The risk of being stuck in an echo chamber where only news and commentaries that reflect your own opinions, attitudes and interests, could keep you completely in the dark about important events you should be aware of, and can often present only one side of an issue.

When I was a kid, my friends and I had to ride our bikes to the local video store to rent a VHS tape for $3 or $4 dollars which had to be returned by 5pm the next day. Today we can all watch Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, or any number of other streaming services for just a few dollars a month and have access to endless movies and TV shows with the push of a button. So I thank you for taking the time and effort to tune out the millions of distractions clamoring for your attention and ignoring the endless alerts, notifications, likes, comments, and posts on social media for a while to focus on the information I've assembled and analyzed in this book.

I hope you'll write a brief review and rate it on Amazon or whatever e-book store you downloaded it from if that's how you're reading it, and I encourage you to check out some of my other books as well, as this is not the only one I have written. I will conclude with a final quote from one of the best films about mass media which brilliantly conveyed the dangerous power wielded by the corporations which control it. In *Network* (1976), news anchor Howard Beale 'sees the light' about the sinister nature of the very business he's been a part of for decades and decides to blow the lid off it, live on the air. His epic rant, even though over forty years old now, is timeless, and perhaps even more powerful today than when he first made it in 1976 when the film was released.

The character, played by Peter Finch — who won the Academy Award for best actor for the role — begins by telling the audience, "Television is not the truth. Television's a god-damned amusement park. Television is a circus, a carnival, a traveling troupe of acrobats, storytellers, dancers, singers, jugglers, sideshow freaks, lion tamers, and football players. We're in the boredom-killing business. So if you want the Truth, go to God! Go to your gurus. Go to yourselves! Because that's the only place you're ever gonna find any real truth. But, man, you're never gonna get any truth from us."

He continues, getting more passionate with every sentence, “We deal in illusions, man! None of it is true! But you people sit there day after day, night after night, all ages, colors, creeds. We’re all you know. You’re beginning to believe the illusions we’re spinning here. You’re beginning to think that the tube is reality and that your own lives are unreal. You do whatever the tube tells you. You dress like the tube, you eat like the tube, you raise your children like the tube. You even think like the tube. This is mass madness. You maniacs! In God’s name, you people are the real thing! We are the illusion! So turn off your television sets. Turn them off now. Turn them off right now. Turn them off and leave them off! Turn them off right in the middle of this sentence I am speaking to you now! Turn them off!”

Further Reading

The Illuminati in Hollywood

The infamous Illuminati secret society represents the pinnacle of power in politics, banking, and the news media; but what about the entertainment industry? Do Hollywood's elite studios, producers, and celebrities have a secret agenda? Are they part of a covert conspiracy?

Media analyst Mark Dice will show you exactly how Hollywood uses celebrities and entertainment as a powerful propaganda tool to shape our culture, attitudes, behaviors, and to promote corrupt government policies and programs.

You will see how the CIA and the Pentagon work hand in hand with Hollywood to produce blockbuster movies and popular television shows crafted to paint positive portraits of war, Orwellian government surveillance, unconstitutional agendas, and more.

You'll also learn the strange and secret spiritual beliefs of the stars that fuel their egos and appetites for fame and wealth, making them perfect puppets for the corporate controllers behind the scenes. And you will also discover the rare instances of anti-Illuminati celebrities who have dared to bite the hand that feeds them.

Character Howard Beale once warned in the 1976 classic film *Network*, "This tube is the most awesome God-damned force in the whole godless world, and woe is us if it ever falls in to the hands of the wrong people," and unfortunately that is exactly what has happened.

The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction

Secret societies have both fascinated and frightened people for hundreds of years. Often the infamous Illuminati is mentioned as the core of conspiracies which span the globe. The Illuminati is actually a historical secret society which had goals of revolutions and world domination dating back to the 1770s.

Since then, rumors and conspiracy theories involving the Illuminati continue to spread, sometimes finding their way into popular novels like Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons* and Hollywood movies like *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. Some men have even come forward claiming to be former members, offering details of what they allege are the inner workings of the organization. When you sift through all of the information available on the subject, you may be surprised that the truth is stranger than fiction.

In *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, conspiracy and occult expert Mark Dice separates history from Hollywood and shows why tales of the secret society won't die.

The New World Order: Facts & Fiction

What is the New World Order? Proponents say that it's an anticipated new era of global cooperation between diverse nations and cultures aimed at ushering in a utopia providing all the earth's citizens with everything they need.

Detractors claim it's the systematic take-over by secret societies, quasi-government entities and corporations who are covertly organizing a global socialist all-powerful government which aims to regulate every aspect of citizens lives, rendering them a perpetual working-class while the elite leadership lives in luxury.

Conspiracy theory expert Mark Dice looks at the evidence, claims, and conspiracy theories as he takes you down the rabbit hole to *The New World Order*.

Illuminati in the Music Industry

Famous pop stars and rappers from Jay-Z and Rick Ross to Rihanna and Christina Aguilera are believed by many to be a part of the infamous Illuminati secret society. These stars allegedly use

Illuminati and satanic symbolism in their music videos and on their clothes that goes unnoticed by those not "in the know."

Since these stars appear in our livings rooms on family friendly mainstream shows like Good Morning America, Ellen, and dozens of others—and are loved by virtually all the kids—they couldn't possibly have anything to do with the infamous Illuminati or anything "satanic," could they? Some famous musicians have even publicly denounced the Illuminati in interviews or songs.

Illuminati in the Music Industry takes a close look at some of today's hottest stars and decodes the secret symbols, song lyrics, and separates the facts from the fiction in this fascinating topic. You may never see your favorite musicians the same way ever again.

Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True

In *Big Brother*, Mark Dice details actual high-tech spy gadgets, mind-reading machines, government projects, and emerging artificial intelligence systems that seem as if they came right out of George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Orwell's famous book was first published in 1949, and tells the story of a nightmarish future where citizens have lost all privacy and are continuously monitored by the omniscient Big Brother surveillance system which keeps them obedient to a totalitarian government.

The novel is eerily prophetic as many of the fictional systems of surveillance described have now become a reality. Mark Dice shows you the scary documentation that Big Brother is watching you, and is more powerful than you could imagine.

The Resistance Manifesto

The Resistance Manifesto by Mark Dice contains 450 pages of extensively researched and documented information drawing from declassified documents, mainstream news articles, religious texts, and personal interviews. A dark web of evil is exposed like never before, making Bible Prophecy and the New World Order crystal clear.

Learn the most powerful information about the Illuminati, plans for the rise of the Antichrist, the institutions, people, and powers involved, and how you can fight them.

“Powerful and compelling. A must read.”

- Alex Jones from Infowars.com

“Mark takes you beyond 9/11 into a world of secret societies, mystics, and madmen.”

- Jason Bermas, Producer of *Loose Change*

“Mark Dice is not a conspiracy theorist, he is a conspiracy realist. This book tells it like it is. I urge every American to read it and pass it on to your friends and relatives. Wake up America!”

- Ted Gunderson, Senior Special Agent in Charge (retired) FBI Los Angeles

Inside the Illuminati

When looking into the existence and alleged activities of the infamous Illuminati secret society, one finds an overwhelming amount of conspiracy theories, hidden history, half-truths and hoaxes.

But how much truth is there to some of these claims? What is the real history of the mysterious group? Do they continue to exist today? What is the evidence?

After a decade of research sifting through the facts and the fiction, secret society expert Mark Dice will help you navigate through the complex maze from the original documents to rare revelations from elite politicians, bankers and businessmen, as he takes you *Inside the Illuminati*.

- *Insider Revelations*
- *Original Writings*
- *Spiritual Beliefs*
- *Occult Symbolism*
- *Early Evidence*
- *Zodiac Club*
- *“Ex Members”*
- *Communism*
- *Seraphic Society*
- *The Jesuits*
- *The Jasons*
- *And more!*

The Bilderberg Group: Facts & Fiction

Every spring since 1954, a group of approximately one hundred of the world’s most powerful businessmen, politicians, media moguls, and international royalty meet in secret for several days to discuss the course of the world. Called the Bilderberg Group after the Bilderberg Hotel in Oosterbeck, Holland where their first meeting was held, this off the record annual gathering is said to be where the globalist puppet masters plot and scheme.

Does this group of power elite develop new political, economic, and cultural policies that are then covertly implemented by their underlings? Do they choose who our world leaders will be, including the next president of the United States? Is the Bilderberg Group a shadow government? Are they the Illuminati? Why has the mainstream media had a complete blackout regarding their meetings for decades? Who attends? And who pays for it?

Is this “just another conference?” Or, are the “conspiracy theorists” right? What is the evidence? How were they first discovered? What are they doing? And should the public be concerned? Secret society expert Mark Dice will show you the hidden history, financial records, and some of the insider leaks showing how this small group’s consensus has staggering effects on the political landscape of the world, global economies, wars, and more, as he uncovers *The Bilderberg Group: Facts & Fiction*.

- *Their History*
- *Bilderberg’s Goals*
- *Their Discovery*
- *Recent Meetings*
- *Members and Guests*
- *Actions and Effects*
- *Financial Records*
- *The Oath of Silence*
- *Media Blackouts*
- *Exclusive Photos*
- *And More!*

The Bohemian Grove: Facts & Fiction

The secretive and strange Bohemian Grove is an elite men’s club hidden deep within a 2700-acre redwood forest in Northern California, where each July the most powerful men in the world gather for what’s called their annual Summer Encampment.

Is this mysterious meeting “just a vacation spot” for the wealthy and well-connected, or is it something more? Does it operate as an off the record consensus building organization for the elite establishment? What major plans or political policies were given birth by the club? Do they really kickoff their gathering each year with a human sacrifice ritual? Is this the infamous Illuminati?

After getting his hands on some rare copies of the club’s yearbooks; obtaining an actual official membership list smuggled out by an employee; and having personally been blocked from entering the club by police—secret society expert Mark Dice uncovers *The Bohemian Grove: Facts & Fiction*.

-Their History

-Symbols, Saint, and Motto

-Infiltrations and Leaks

-Cremation of Care

-Different Subcamps

-Allegations of Murder

-Hookers & Homosexuality

-Depictions in TV and Film

-And More!

About the Author

Mark Dice is a media analyst and author who, in an entertaining and educational way, exposes our celebrity-obsessed culture and the role mainstream media and elite secret societies play in shaping our lives.

Mark’s YouTube channel has over 1 million subscribers and more 400 million views. His viral videos have been mentioned on the Fox News Channel, CNN, the Drudge Report, TMZ, the *New York Daily News*, the *Washington Times*, and other media outlets around the world.

He has been featured on various television shows including the History Channel’s *Decoded* and *America’s Book of Secrets*; *Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura*, *Secret Societies of Hollywood* on E! Channel, *America Declassified* on the Travel Channel, and is a frequent guest on Coast to Coast AM, The Alex Jones Show, and more.

Mark Dice is the author of 11 books, including *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*, *The New World Order: Facts & Fiction*, *Inside the Illuminati*, *The Bilderberg Group: Facts & Fiction*, *The Bohemian Grove: Facts & Fiction*, and more.

While much of Mark’s work confirms the existence and continued operation of various powerful secret societies, he is also dedicated to debunking conspiracy theories and hoaxes and separating the facts from the fiction; hence the “Facts & Fiction” subtitle for several of his books.

He has a bachelor’s degree in communication from California State University.

Connect with Mark on:

Facebook.com/MarkDice

Twitter.com/MarkDice.com

YouTube.com/MarkDice

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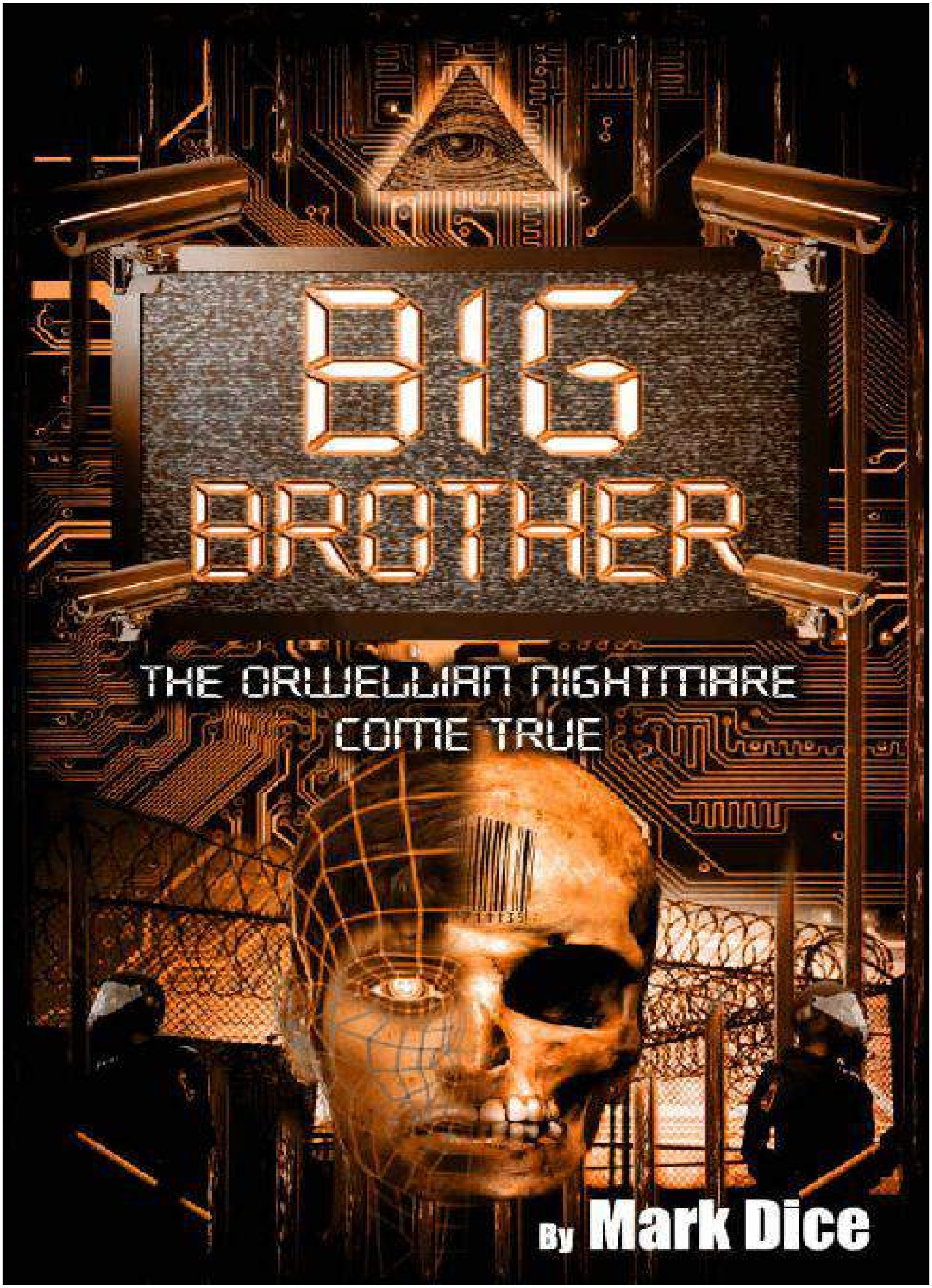

BIG BROTHER

THE ORWELLIAN NIGHTMARE COME TRUE

By **Mark Dice**

Introduction

When George Orwell (pen name of Eric Blair) first published his famous novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* it was the year 1949, and it told a dark story of what he envisioned life may be like in the future—in the year 1984. His book, as well as his name, have become synonymous with privacy concerns involving technology and also an all-powerful, oppressive ruling elite that strictly governs the activities of the population with an iron fist.

Orwell’s book is where we get the term *Big Brother* from, such as when people say “Big Brother is watching you.” When people say this, they’re referring to the omniscient surveillance system described in the novel that continuously watched and listened to people—even in their own homes. When we call something *Orwellian* to describe the invasiveness of certain technology or government policies, we are also referring to George Orwell’s nightmarish vision he described in his novel. There are several other terms that Orwell himself coined in *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* such as *doublethink*, *thoughtcrime,* and *memory hole*, which have also become part of our vernacular.

Even if you have not read the book or seen the film, you are still undoubtedly familiar with the issues that make up the storyline, such as the high-tech surveillance system watching and listening to everyone in order to keep them in line with the government (called the Party in the novel). You are probably also familiar with the concept of a small elite ruling class (what Orwell calls the Inner Party) living in luxury and wielding unimaginable power over lower level citizens. In the novel, people have lost their freedom, their critical thinking skills, and even the ability to love due to the cultural depths society has sunk to as a result of Big Brother’s control. The reason *Nineteen Eighty-Four* remains so popular, and the reason society has adopted vocabulary from the book, is because it serves as more than merely a fictional novel for the reader’s entertainment. The novel served (and continues to serve) as a stark warning of what the future may hold if we don’t resist invasive technology and oppressive government policies, or if the population at large becomes so lost in a world of pop culture, sports entertainment, or our own selfish desires, that we simply don’t care.

Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True looks at technology that now exists or is under development and will exist in the near future, that threatens to make our world just as horrific or even worse than the world George Orwell described. This book will provide information from mainstream news sources, industry experts, and even patent numbers of the most invasive and sinister Orwellian devices anyone could dream of. We will also look at actual government programs and policies that seem as if they came right out of Orwell’s dark imagination, such as the government secretly paying mainstream media reporters to act as gate-keepers and propagandists for the establishment, and the FBI illegally spying on and smearing peaceful political activists who were seen as problematic.

This book is certainly not anti-technology. Technology is a fantastic tool which can benefit those who use it, or harm them, depending on the intentions of the person designing it or using it. Technology has brought us amazing inventions that would seem supernatural to civilizations that lived just a few hundred years ago. Arthur C. Clarke, the author of *2001 a Space Odyssey*, was correct when he said, “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”

While this magical technology has brought us the convenience of calling our friends or family on our cell phones, allowing us to talk with them from virtually anywhere in the world, and given us the ability to watch events on the other side of the earth unfold live on television, and other wonders such as the Internet, DVR recorders, YouTube, Excel spread sheets, word processors, e-mail, Facebook, and more; it has also brought us identity theft, illegal wiretaps, Peeping Toms using hidden video cameras, cyber stalkers, and worse. If you have ever left your cell phone at home when you’ve left the house for the day, you’ve realized how much we depend on technology for what have become common and necessary

activities. If you’ve ever been at home when the electricity unexpectedly goes out, you have also realized how much we take for granted in our modern world.

Unfortunately, with tremendous advances in technology often come unforeseen consequences. Nobody could have envisioned young teenage girls taking nude photos of themselves with their cell phone cameras and sending them to their boyfriends, and then having the boyfriends forward them to others, eventually ending up on the cell phone of someone over the age of eighteen, resulting in what is essentially child pornography in their possession. The music and film industries certainly didn’t anticipate millions of Internet users downloading music and movies for free, sometimes before the products are even officially released. And when Albert Einstein was searching for the laws of physics to learn how our Universe functioned, he could have never imagined that his work would be used to design weapons capable of destroying the entire earth. It seems that the dark minds of men in power always strive to build sinister devices designed to enable them to hold onto their power, no matter how disastrous the consequences.

In the following pages we will look at some of the sinister inventions currently in operation, as well as the ones on the drawing boards, and the ones mad scientists are hoping to one day create. Facial recognition video cameras that can pick you out of a crowd of tens of thousands of people in a split second, machines that can read your mind, high-tech killer-robots, psychotronic weapons that can literally put voices in people’s heads, and more. You will see beyond a doubt that George Orwell’s description of Big Brother was chillingly accurate, and perhaps not as horrific as the reality we may one day face. Like a Pandora’s Box, once much of this technology is created, there will be little hope of stopping it or even regulating it.

While some of the technology discussed in this book is known to exist in small and specialized industries (and to a growing extent the mainstream public), one must wonder about the technology that is classified as top secret and the experiments that go on in the hidden laboratories funded by the deep pockets of government. Knowing just a small fraction of the past

abuses by the United States government (and others around the world) regarding human test subjects and goals, we should all be concerned about the continued illegal and immoral research and experiments that are undoubtedly continuing to occur in secret.

If one reads old *Popular Mechanics* magazines from the 1950's, one can realize how wrong, and even silly, the techno-utopian dreamers were in the past. Many were led to believe that by the twenty-first century we would all be living lives of luxury like the *Jetsons*, with large blocks of free time to enjoy ourselves as we had most manual labor and menial tasks taken care of by robots and computers. Yet more than a decade into the twenty-first century, we still need to spend time cooking and cleaning, and commuting to work and raising the kids, and fixing up the house and countless other tasks and obligations that are required of us in our daily lives.

Our cars must still continuously be maintained, the oil needs to be changed, the engine serviced, the tires rotated and replaced, and the average vehicle now costs as much as a house did for people just two generations ago. The grass still needs to be cut, the bushes need to be trimmed, and things around the house continue to break and need to be fixed or replaced. People are working longer hours, having less time with their families, having to retire later in life, and are having less savings than past generations. Where is this techno-utopia that so many had promised would come in the near future?

Instead of living lives of luxury and leisure, now many people can't escape their job even after they leave the office. Where once we left work and were outside of the reach of our boss, now he or she can call us on our cell phone at anytime day or night and expects a promptly returned phone call or e-mail.

People are being turned into numbers and statistics, and mathematical formulas are used by employers to determine whether an employee is being efficient enough. It's difficult to get a person on the phone when calling a company's customer service department, and social networking sites such

as Facebook and Myspace have turned everyone into their own favorite celebrity and supplement actual friendships and interactions. People don't need to get together for a dinner party to catch up on each other's lives anymore; we just monitor their newsfeed on Facebook from the comfort of our own home while sitting in our favorite chair getting fatter from lack of exercise and a poor diet.

Where we once discussed politics and religion with our friends and neighbors, such topics have become taboo and are replaced with the enticing entertainment of celebrity news as most people feel that it is more important to know about who our favorite celebrities are dating than it is to know what bills are being introduced and voted on in the halls of Congress or our own city council. It's interesting that while people seem to be getting dumber, computers are getting smarter.

We are becoming a nation of morons who can't think for themselves, and are being dehumanized into nothing more than a mentally enslaved workforce who are constantly being monitored, databased, and kept in line by the fear of the omniscient Big Brother technology that has gotten so advanced and so cheap, that the watchful eyes of surveillance cameras are mass produced, almost as if they were disposable.

At a presentation at the 2010 DICE Summit (Design, Innovate, Communicate, Entertain), an annual meeting of videogame executives, Jesse Schell, the former Creative Director of the Disney Imagineering Virtual Reality Studio, gave a speech on the future of gaming and talked about how in the future, "Before too long we're going to get to the point where every soda can, [and] every cereal box is going to be able to have a CPU, a screen, and a camera on board it, and a Wi-Fi connecter so that it can be connected to the Internet."

He concluded his speech by saying that our children and grandchildren will be able to know exactly what books we've read, what foods we ate, and practically everything we've done in our entire lives. He gave this speech

not to warn people about these Orwellian technologies, but he was extremely excited about them, and looked forward to them.

“You have no idea what books your grandparents read, or where they went on a daily basis, but these sensors that we’re going to have on us and all around us everywhere are going to be tracking and watching what we’re doing forever,” Schell said. He concludes by saying that because we will all be constantly watched and our actions and interests databased forever, that we’ll possibly be better people and be nicer and make better decisions because of the fear of judgment from others. Is this the kind of world you want to live in? Well, it’s the kind of world that’s rapidly approaching.

This book is meant to serve as a warning for what is already here, and what is soon to come. It is to encourage people to think about how to possibly prevent or minimize dramatic hazards to our lives by the very technology we have created. It is my goal to give you an accurate forecast of the coming storm so that you as an individual, and we as a society and species, may be better equipped to handle it when it hits. It is my hope that we do not lose our privacy, freedom, or our humanity in this 1984-style New World Order.

Surveillance Cameras

Surveillance cameras have been common in banks, department stores, gas stations, and government buildings for decades in order to prevent shoplifting and robberies, or to identify those who commit crimes after the fact. Society has largely ignored these cameras and barely notices they are watching us and we have come to accept them as commonplace. Even the most adamant privacy advocate would have to admit that such systems help to prevent shoplifting and catch bank robbers, but as technology advanced, these basic video cameras have been evolving into a high-tech surveillance grid almost identical to the Big Brother system described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Early in the twenty-first century, Britain became the most surveilled country on the planet with an estimated 4.2 million CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) cameras watching in government buildings, private businesses, and on street corners. What concerns privacy advocates, and frequently average citizens, is not necessarily the existence of ordinary security cameras, but the new and invasive ways that they are being used. As you will read in this chapter, security cameras have been installed in school bathrooms, private homes, and the built-in cameras on laptop computers have even been used by school officials to watch students when they were home without them even knowing it.

Facial recognition cameras are now becoming popular, and will soon be a standard feature in surveillance systems. You will also see surveillance systems on public streets that listen to you and detect “hostile” speech and will automatically dispatch the police to investigate. Big Brother *is* watching you, and you might be startled to find out exactly what he sees and hears.

“The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard…You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.”[1] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

While Britain has been known for its millions of surveillance cameras that watch over nearly every street and alley in major cities, the United States of America had lagged behind in terms of the size and scope of a Big Brother system. Such cameras were, for a long time, relegated to parking lots and inside businesses such as banks and department stores, but Chicago had pioneered a Big Brother system in America which became a model for other cities.

After 9/11, the city began installing a massive surveillance system on city streets, in schools, around skyscrapers, and even on busses and in train tunnels. The system is so advanced that police officers can tap into practically any security camera from their squad car and watch the feed from a monitor on their dashboard.

“I don’t think there is another city in the U.S. that has as an extensive and integrated camera network as Chicago has,” said Michael Chertoff, the former head of the Department of Homeland Security.[2]

The Chicago Big Brother system even links private security cameras into their grid, something unique compared to London and other cities. If someone calls 911 to report a crime, accident, or fire, police and 911 dispatchers can instantly tap into the nearest video cameras and monitor the scene in real time to assess the situation.

In 2010, the city had an estimated 10,000 cameras feeding into their central system, most of which are clearly visible security cameras, but the city also hopes to install numerous hidden cameras as well, according to

Police Superintendent Jody Weis. Mayor Richard Daley said he could put 10,000 more cameras up and “nobody would say anything.”[3]

Not everyone thinks the cameras are a good idea. Edwin Yohnka, a spokesman for the ACLU wondered, “What protections are in place to stop a rogue officer from taking a highly powerful camera and aim it in a way to find or track someone who is perhaps a former love interest or something like that?”[4]

On May 1, 2010 an SUV filled with explosives was discovered in Times Square in New York City and luckily failed to detonate, causing officials to immediately call for a massive high-tech surveillance system to be put in place all over the city. Mayor Michael Bloomberg said the system “will greatly enhance our ability and the ability of the police to detect suspicious activity in real time, and disrupt possible attacks.”[5]

At the time of the incident on May 1, 2010, dubbed the “attempted Times Square bombing,” there were already 82 different devices installed around Times Square that watch and catalog footage and can identify license plate numbers from any targeted vehicles. A program called Operation Sentinel scans and logs every license plate from every vehicle entering Manhattan Island in order to spot targeted vehicles. The program also has hidden radiation detectors designed to identify if any nuclear weapons are smuggled into the city.

New York Police Chief Raymond Kelly wanted more federal funding for such operations and said they were looking to implement “analytic software” that would analyze information in real time in order to identify possible threats. For example, cameras that can detect if there is an unattended bag left on the ground, or if a car circles the block too many times. The new system was estimated to have cost more than $100 million dollars.

At some point in the future, ordinary security cameras will be completely outdated and seem like primitive ancient devices compared to

pre-crime cameras, facial recognition systems, and other behavior analyzers that are being implemented.

UK Government Installs Surveillance Cameras in Private Homes

The UK government actually spent $700 million dollars to install surveillance cameras inside the homes of citizens to monitor whether their children attend school, eat proper meals, and go to bed on time.[6] It's part of a government program called "Family Intervention Projects," which also includes social workers making regular visits to see if parents are raising their children properly.

Approximately 2,000 families were initially targeted by the program when it launched in 2009 and British authorities planned to expand the number to 20,000 within the following two years, with all expenses being paid by taxpayers. Parents and children subjected to this Orwellian program are also forced to sign a "behavior contract" called the Home School Agreement, which outlines what the government expects of them.

Britain was invaded by millions of CCTV cameras decades ago on the streets of London and elsewhere which have become hardly noticed and a part of everyone's daily life, but this move to put them inside the private homes of citizens shocked and disturbed people andrew is not something that is only happening in England.

Back in February 2006, the Chief of Police in Houston, Texas wanted to install video cameras inside apartments and homes in order to "fight crime" because he said there was a shortage of police officers. Chief Harold Hurtt told reporters, "I know a lot of people are concerned about Big Brother, but my response to that is, if you are not doing anything wrong, why should you worry about it?"[7]

A spokesperson at the Houston Apartment Association supported the idea, saying many people would, “appreciate the thought of extra eyes looking out for them.”

School Spied on Students with Video Cameras in Laptops

In February 2010, a news story spread around the country about a school in Philadelphia that was spying on students by secretly activating the video cameras in their laptops. These laptops were given to the students by the district and were taken home as if they were their own computers. Almost every laptop computer, as you probably know, has a tiny video camera located on the top, as well as a microphone, which are used for video chats or to record video blogs. Few people know that they can also be remotely activated and used to watch and listen to anyone in their range.

The parents of one student filed a class-action lawsuit against the school on behalf of 1,800 students who were issued the laptops and were not told that school administrators had the ability to secretly activate the laptop webcams remotely, no matter where the laptop was located as long as the computer was online. The lawsuit seeks damages for invasion of privacy, theft of private information, and unlawful interception and access of electronic information.

The parents of Blake Robbins, who are responsible for the lawsuit, found out that school officials were using the computers to spy on students when an assistant principal confronted their son about “improper behavior in his home” and showed him a picture taken from his school-issued laptop’s webcam.

Most people only close their laptop when packing it up and transporting it, and a lot of people have their laptops sitting on desks in their bedroom, with their bed or bathroom often in clear view of the video camera, never suspecting that anyone could be watching from the webcam. School officials could have been watching the students undress in their own

bedrooms, or even watched them as they sat in front of their laptops masturbating to porn on the Internet. If school officials had seen a student doing such a thing, which is a common occurrence for many teenagers and adults, it would constitute watching child pornography.

School officials tried to say that they would only use the remote activation feature if a laptop was lost or stolen, but shortly after the lawsuit was filed and news about this story made it around the world, the lawyer for the Robbins family alleged that school officials had taken thousands of pictures of students while in their homes using the remote activation feature of the built-in camera, and also had lists of the websites they visited and transcripts of their online chats.

The case, Blake J. Robbins vs. Lower Merion School District, was filed in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania on Tuesday, February 16, 2010. The lawsuit also says that the camera on Blake Robbins' laptop took photos of the boy partially undressed and as he slept in his bed and says the camera was set up to take a new picture every 15 minutes, along with a screen shot.

One school employee allegedly sent an e-mail to Carol Cafiero, the administrator in charge of the spy program, saying the software was like, "a little LMSD [Lower Merion School District] soap opera," to which Cafiero is quoted as replying, "I know, I love it."[8]

It is alleged that Cafiero copied some images from the spy system onto her home computer, a claim she denies. Eight months later the lawsuit was settled and the school district agreed to pay $610,000 in damages, including $185,000 to two students it was proven were secretly spied on by the school using the webcams.

Blake Robbins, whose family brought the first lawsuit, was reported to have had $175,000 of the teen's settlement put in trust for him, presumably for college.[9] The school district also had to pay $425,000 in legal fees to the plaintiff's attorney.

The school board decided to settle the case after their insurance company agreed to pay the $1.2 million dollars in fees, a settlement they had initially refused to pay. As a result of the case, the school disabled the spying software, apologized to students and parents, and suspended two employees. The school district even tried to demonize the Robbins family, who first filed the lawsuit against the school, attacking them by saying that if they were so worried about their son’s privacy then they shouldn’t have released photos of him to the media.

While this case was a major victory against Big Brother and helped raise awareness for what technology was now capable of, this is just the tip of the Orwellian iceberg.

Schools Installing Video Cameras in Bathrooms

While it is common for surveillance cameras to watch over businesses and even city streets and sidewalks, most people would never imagine that video cameras would be installed in bathrooms, especially at a school, but that is exactly what has happened in numerous schools around America. Channel 13, WMAZ in Central Georgia, reported that an 8th grader found a video camera installed in the school bathroom at a Jasper County school in 2005. The boy and his friends took the camera down and brought it home to show his parents. He was later suspended for stealing school property.

"It felt like the right thing to do...because it felt like we were being violated in every way in the bathroom," said the 13 year old Mac Bedor, one of the boys who helped remove the camera.[10]

When the boy's mother contacted the school, she was told that the principle, Howard Fore, had authorized cameras to be installed in the bathrooms, allegedly to stop vandalism. What's especially creepy about this, is that only Howard Fore (the principle) knew about the camera being installed, and none of the other administrators were informed. It makes you wonder whether he installed the camera for his own personal perverse enjoyment, or to sell the footage to online pedophiles or to websites that market what they call voyeuristic video feeds which are taken from secretly placed cameras where people would never expect them to be, such as bathrooms, locker rooms, showers, or dorms.

The mother of one of the boys who helped remove the camera was interviewed by the local news station and said, "I had told the high school principal, Mr. Fore, that he needed to come up with another solution. That this wasn't appropriate. His response to me was he was going to continue to film."[11]

She was proud of what her son did because it was the right thing to do, and described the camera as a cheap one, not a professional one, and said it looked like a spy camera that people can buy on the Internet. The Bibb County District Attorney, Howard Simms, said that cameras in public school bathrooms are perfectly legal.

At another school, Reynoldsburg High School in Ohio, police installed a video camera in a bathroom saying it was to catch a person who wrote graffiti on a wall. The school's superintendent Richard Ross said the graffiti was "cryptic" and believed it was referring to a bomb threat.[12] The school's janitor removed the camera as soon as he discovered it. The Reynoldsburg Police Chief, Jeanne Miller, defended the camera, saying it was positioned to only videotape people from the chest up.

"I don't agree with the method because I believe it was an invasion of privacy," said Linda Rico, whose daughter attends the school. "My daughter was extremely upset about it, and I took her side. I'm glad to hear the camera is gone."[13]

A school superintendent in Texas named Dan Doyen was sentenced to five years felony probation and had to register as a sex offender after he installed a hidden camera in a women's bathroom at his school's administration office. The camera was disguised to look like an air freshener and was purchased with a school district credit card.

A school in Pine Bush, New York installed a fake video camera in a bathroom once in an attempt to fool boys into believing they were being videotaped, in order to discourage them from messing up the bathroom.[14]

These cases are not only isolated to schools in America. The Grace Academy in Britain, along with other schools, installed cameras in bathrooms as well. One mother told the *Sunday Mercury* newspaper, "She [her daughter] came home from school and told me security cameras had

been installed in the girl’s toilets but we didn’t know anything about it. You would expect the school to have consulted parents first, yet we received no information and no letters have been sent home explaining this decision.”[15]

The school’s principal, Terry Wales, told *Sky News*, “It’s to safeguard our youngsters, many schools are using cameras now. We had a parents’ forum last night, we explained the arrangements and the parents were satisfied. We’ve found that when it comes to health and safety, children want to feel secure.”[16] The school already had 26 CCTV cameras watching other parts of the building.

Police were called to a school in Salford, England after parents learned that cameras had been installed in a locker room. Police seized the system.[17] The practice of installing video cameras in children’s bathrooms would seem like the last thing that someone who is normal would do, yet we have seen this done on multiple occasions in the name of security, and people think it’s OK. It is possible that at some point in the future, this Orwellian invasion of privacy may be considered perfectly normal, and many people may actually encourage it.

Talking Cameras

Some surveillance cameras in the United Kingdom are equipped with loudspeakers that can be used to shout at people on the streets by the officials who are monitoring the camera feeds if they see someone litter or if people are deemed to be loitering. Some of these loudspeakers are designed to sound like a child's voice in an attempt to make it more difficult for people to resist the commands by making them feel bad if they shout back at the loudspeakers because they will feel like they are yelling at a child.[18]

The system enables workers at a control center to monitor different cameras that can all communicate with people on the street through the speakers. Secretary of State for the Home Department, John Reid, actually said that people liked the Orwellian system. "This is a hugely popular scheme in Middlesbrough and the vast majority of the people here are right behind it," he said.[19]

It was even reported that children from local schools were taken to the facilities and shown around as part of a field trip after the system was installed, thus indoctrinating them that such a Big Brother system is normal, and part of everyday life.

The telescreens in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* both watched and listened to everyone on the streets, and even in their own homes, and barked orders at people when they were slacking in their obedience to Big Brother.

Cameras with Microphones

Since surveillance cameras can watch you, and the human monitors can talk to you or shout at you through speakers built into the cameras, it shouldn't come as a surprise that these cameras are increasingly being equipped with microphones so they can listen to people too.

In 2006, it was reported that over 300 CCTV surveillance cameras in Holland were being equipped with high powered microphones that can detect and record conversations from 100 yards away.[20] The creepiest part of this system is that it can automatically record conversations that it deems potentially aggressive based on 12 factors, including the volume level and the pitch and speed of people talking. The software does this all automatically and if the system detects what it considers to be hostility, then the police are dispatched to investigate.

Derek van der Vorst, who is the director of Sound Intelligence, the company that created the system, said "The cameras work on the principle that in an aggressive situation the pitch goes up and the words are spoken faster. The voice is not the normal flat tone, but vibrates. It is these subtle changes that our audio cameras can pick up on."[21]

The privacy laws in Holland allow this system to operate, although in other countries recording conversations without people's knowledge or consent would be the topic of much debate.

"It is technically capable of being live 24 hours a day and recording 24 hours a day," Van der Vorste said. "It really depends on the privacy laws in a particular country."

During a testing period the cameras were said to have detected 70 genuine alarms and led to four arrests. Harry Hoetjer, the head of surveillance at the Groningen police department said, for example, the system identified a gang of four men who were about to attack someone, and insisted the system stopped it.

In the buildup to the 2012 Olympics, a company called VCS Observation that markets the technology, gave a presentation to London police officials hoping to convince the city to install the system there. Martin Nanninga of VSC Observation said, “There was a lot of interest in our system, especially with security concerns about the Olympic Games in 2012. We told them about both our intelligent control room and the aggression detection system.”

British officials claimed that audio recordings from such a system would be treated the same as CCTV video footage under British law, saying that audio can be recorded for the purpose of the detection and prevention of crime and the apprehension and prosecution of criminals.

In Sylvester Stalone’s 1993 film *Demolition Man*, the futuristic society is constantly monitored by audio surveillance equipment with voice and keyword recognition that automatically fines people if they swear or use inappropriate language. The film has several references to Aldous Huxley’s novel *Brave New World*, including the naming of Sandra Bullock’s character, “Lenina Huxley,” which is a reference to Lenina Crown, a character in the *Brave New World* novel. At one point in the film, Wesley Snipes’ character says, “It’s a brave new world,” as he picks up a futuristic ray gun.

I was surprised to find that in 2009 a local Subway sandwich shop had a microphone standing by the cash register, and when I asked the employees about it they informed me that the owner had installed it and can listen in on them from his laptop or cell phone at anytime, and says he does so to make sure that the employees are behaving themselves and treating customers the way he wants them to be treated.

Similar audio monitoring devices that include radio controlled cameras, and even speakers, are now frequently installed in businesses by the owners to intimidate employees into working harder and deter them from stealing or fooling around on the job.

The European Union has looked into Big Brother systems that involve installing cameras and microphones on the backs of seats on airplanes that would monitor the facial expressions of each passenger and even listen to their conversations to identify any suspicious behaviors or conversations taking place, in an attempt to thwart terrorism.

The EU has funded the technology and is working with several companies and universities to develop it. A European Commission spokesman confirmed that the European parliament had begun talks to actually form legislation "in order for these [security] measures to be applied across [all] airlines."[22]

The program is called Security of Aircraft in the Future European Environment (SAFEE) and would trigger an alert to airline personnel if the system detected specified combinations of facial expressions and other behavior that can allegedly indicate if a person may be a terrorist. "The system will not be triggered by nervous flyers," said James Ferryman, one of the researchers. "It is only triggered by well-specified combinations."[23] Ferryman also claimed that it was impossible to fool the technology. Critics have dubbed it the "spy in the cabin."

Designers hope the system will be available and fully operational in airlines before the year 2020. The microphones would presumably listen for keywords in passengers' conversations, much like the Echelon spy system does during telephone conversations, and is probably more functional as an intimidation tactic aimed at preventing terrorism than it is at actually identifying someone who is about to hijack an airplane or disrupt a flight.

A spokesman for British Airways said, “While we always welcome new research and development that advances aviation security, we believe the emphasis of any new security initiatives would be better placed on preventing potential terrorists from boarding aircraft in the first place.”[24]

This entire system seems like complete quackery. What if a passenger is having a bad day or if they’re on their way to a funeral or a business trip they were forced to go on by their boss? What if they just hate their life but have no intention of doing any harm to anyone? Is this system going to flag them as a potential terrorist? Are we going to live in a world where we allow a computer program to supposedly determine what someone is thinking and flag them as dangerous based on their facial expressions?

This kind of system and others like it are really designed to intimidate people into conforming with the social norm and to get them to accept the idea that Big Brother is always watching them, no matter where they are, to make sure they don’t misbehave. The microphones used by this system that allegedly listen for keywords spoken by terrorists is a complete joke. Are two terrorists going to say out loud to each other “OK, in five minutes let’s hijack this plane?” Of course not. It is incredible that this kind of a system is even being considered and is taken seriously.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the term *facecrime* is used to describe an improper facial expression. For example, if an announcement was made that Big Brother had increased food rations, if one did not show outwardly visible signs of excitement, then this was suspicious and could be a sign of resentment towards Big Brother.

Facial Recognition Cameras

Video cameras that are able to detect the identity of specifically which individuals are in their field of view have been discussed since the early 1990s, but the first systems of this kind weren’t very accurate and were very expensive. As technology advanced, facial recognition systems became a reality and were installed in places like Fort Knox, casinos, shopping malls, and sporting events. Little did anyone know, but at the 2001 Super Bowl in Tampa, Florida, facial recognition cameras were used to scan for individuals seated in the crowd to locate people who had warrants out for their arrest.[25]

The system was created by Viisage who used their FaceTrac software that was developed at MIT. They input photos of criminals into the system that they obtained from local authorities and were able to find nineteen people who had been listed as targets.

ATMs are expected to possibly apply the technology to verify users, and numerous other applications will likely incorporate the technology as well. Laptop computers, for example, can be installed with software that is used to verify the user by scanning their face with the built in video camera before enabling the computer to function.

In 2005, a large shopping mall in the Netherlands installed facial recognition systems to spot suspected shoplifters.[26] One of the first trials showed that 90% of those targeted as offenders could be spotted using the system. Feeds taken from existing security cameras were transmitted to a facial recognition database containing photographs of volunteers acting as known or suspected shoplifters. When they entered the mall and came in view of the security cameras, the system alerted security.

This same system has been used in casinos since at least 2005 to spot players banned from the establishment for counting cards or cheating.[27] (These banned players' names are added to the Black Book or the Griffin book as it is called.) In the past, security guards would flip through books containing photos of people who were banned from casinos, in order to keep those people's faces fresh in their memory so they could spot them if they came back, but now with facial recognition systems, as soon as the person walks into the door, the system will identify them and security guards will be dispatched.

Of course, you may think that by putting on a hat, glasses or a fake beard, you could fool the system, but a show on the History Channel titled *Fort Knox: Secrets Revealed* (2007) detailed some of the security measures in place to protect the gold held there, and when explaining the facial recognition systems, the security expert said that even if a person were to get facial reconstructive surgery, their system would still be able to identify them immediately.

Back as far as 1999, London, England was installing facial recognition systems to scan people as they walk on the street.[28] London already has millions of CCTV cameras watching the streets, and they will likely all be upgraded with facial recognition software at some point in the near future. An area in London named Newham was the first neighborhood to install facial recognition cameras and used the FaceIt system developed by Visionics. The system used only 13 cameras and only 60 criminals were entered in as targets, none of which were spotted for three years, but it was just a test of the technology in its early phases in 1999.

In August of 2003, two years after the test of the system at the Super Bowl, police in Ybor City, Florida connected three dozen cameras on the streets to the FaceTrac system and entered in over 1000 photos of felons and runaways as targets. This system can also follow a target and watch them on whatever camera they come into view from, so a live person can watch their every move in real time once someone is identified.

In December 2003, the Royal Palm Middle School in Phoenix, Arizona, installed a facial recognition system on school property in an attempt to spot child molesters and other criminals.[29] It has been rumored in early 2010, Disney began quietly looking into possibly installing facial recognition cameras in their theme parks as well.

Minnesota-based Identix Incorporated, which has contracts with the Department of Homeland Security, has been in contact with Disney regarding facial recognition systems[30] and another company called A4Vision, based in California, confirmed they had met with Disney executives to give a presentation of their facial recognition system. “They were interested,” said A4Vision spokeswoman Suzanne Mattick.[31]

It’s rumored that Identix has a system that can identify people using a skin print that allegedly can identify a person using only a small digital picture of their skin. It’s said to be as accurate as a fingerprint scanner and can tell twins apart from each other.

Most facial recognition systems work using what is called Local Feature Analysis (LFA) which is a mathematical algorithm used to encode faces into a “face print,” which is the numeric code for each person’s face that is stored as a small computer file.

A leading facial recognition company, Visionics, uses what they call nodal points, which are approximately 80 different distinguishable features on the human face that are measured and written into a numerical code which represents that person’s face print in the database. Visionics says that only 14 to 22 nodal points are needed for their FaceIt software to identify someone. Back in the year 2000, the system was capable of matching face prints by searching through 60 million per minute. Today these systems can probably scan through a database containing the entire population of the United States in just a few seconds.

Visionics was founded by Joseph Atick, who in 1991 was recruited by Rockefeller University in New York to create the Computational

Neuroscience Laboratory where he developed his facial recognition systems. To do this, he was also given $4 million dollars in grants by the Department of Defense, particularly from DARPA, for what they called Human Identification at a Distance (or HumanID), which would become a part of the Information Awareness Office. The National Security Agency paid another $4 million dollars to develop the FaceIt program.[32]

Since police often photograph and videotape protests and demonstrations as possible evidence in the event that people commit assaults or vandalism, there are now new privacy concerns for even attending public rallies because police have the ability to run video footage and photos through facial recognition software in order to identify every single person in the crowd. People may be secretly listed in police databases as “extremists” simply for attending peaceful and legitimate demonstrations. As facial recognition systems become more common, they will instantly be able to identify the names of each person in attendance of any such march or demonstration.

Operation Noble Shield

The Rockefeller funded Joseph Atick, the founder and CEO of Visionics, the pioneer and leading company in facial recognition systems, proposed that a nationwide facial recognition system be installed in every airport in America that will look for suspected terrorists who are trying to board planes. He called it Operation Noble Shield, and immediately following the September 11, 2001 attacks, Atick was contacting the media trying to promote his company in the fight against terrorism. A week and a half after the attacks, Atick testified at a special committee formed by the Secretary of Transportation, Norman Mineta, where he proposed Operation Noble Shield.

In America, at least we still have some protections outlined in the Bill of Rights that haven't been circumvented by fears of terrorism, and some watchdog groups do their best to resist certain Orwellian measures the government or private industry tries to impose on people. One must wonder (and fear) what will happen when oppressive dictatorships obtain this kind of technology and begin installing it on their public streets, or in private buildings to squash dissent and keep their citizens under the watchful eyes of Big Brother.

While privacy issues and Big Brother tend to be somewhat common issues in the twenty-first century, it's interesting to note that Senator Sam Ervin in the 1970s, said, "When people fear surveillance, whether it exists or not, when they grow afraid to speak their minds and hearts freely to their government or to anyone else, then we shall cease to live in a free society."[33]

Barry Steinhardt, the director of the ACLU's Technology and Liberty Program, is concerned about the large-scale implications of facial

recognition systems and said, “What it tells us is that we are really on the cusp of a surveillance society where you are not going to be able to go anywhere without being subject to both surveillance and identification…I find it chilling.”[34]

Verint Systems

A surveillance company called Verint systems [verifiable intelligence] has created a service that watches people shop in retail stores and monitors how long they spend in an aisle and can detect whether or not they pick anything up off the shelf. If someone spends too much time in an aisle, the system alerts customer service and a store employee will be dispatched to that isle to ask the person if they need any help.

The system also monitors how many people come into a store, how long they spend in a store, and can calculate the ratio of customers to sales. This is not just a prototype, the Verint system has been used in stores like Home Depot and Target since at least 2006.[35]

Verint also created a service called ULTRA Customer Intelligence Analytics that data mines phone recordings for keywords. Verint says it, “Detects subtle, often counter-intuitive patterns and cause/effect relationships from recorded interactions to generate revenue opportunities.”[36]

David Worthley, president of Verint Systems use to work as the chief of the FBI’s telecommunications industry liaison unit which handled wire tapping. Kenneth A Minihan, the director of Verint Systems, was a director of the National Security Agency. Another big wig named Howard Safir was the former police commissioner for New York City and an executive in the DEA. Verint also receives a large amount of funding from grants given by Israel.

Aside from retail stores like Target and Home Depot using Verint systems, their equipment is also used at Dulles Airport outside of

Washington, DC, and inside the US Capitol building. In August of 2002 Verint's stock was $6 per share, and by 2010, rose to more than $25.

Facial Recognition Billboards

In areas of Japan, an advertising agency installed billboards that have facial recognition cameras that can identify the sex and approximate age of people who walk by and then use that information to display what they consider to be relevant products on the billboards which consist of LCD screens.[37] In Steven Spielberg's 2002 film *Minority Report*, there is a scene showing billboards using retina scanners that identify people as they walk by and not only display ads that computers have determined would be suitable for that person, but the ads talk to the people using their name, as well. "John Anderton! You could use a Guinness [beer] right about now," one says, as Tom Cruise's character walks by. In another scene he walks into a Gap clothing store and is greeted by a hologram of a woman welcoming him back and asks him, "how did those assorted tank tops work out for you?" referring to his last purchase, which was obviously in the database.

NEC, the Japanese company that designed the real life facial recognition billboards, claim that they don't store the images of people who walk by and say they are deleted after the person passes the view of the camera.[38] The company tried to downplay the Orwellian aspects of the system by comparing it to cookies that are stored on people's computers that track what items people looked at on retailer's websites in order to post recommended items for that user.

Facial Recognition App on Cell Phones

Facial recognition cameras and software isn't just restricted to large and bulky mainframe computers with extensive databases. In February 2010, a Swedish company called the Astonishing Tribe released an application (an app) for cell phones that allows people to take someone's picture and then using facial recognition and face printing software, the application finds that person's Facebook or MySpace page.

The application is called the Recognizr and shortly after it was released privacy advocates were understandably spooked. Tom Gaffney, a software security expert with F-Secure, said, "This app looks like it could be a stalker's dream," and Simon Davies of Privacy International called the application an atrocious invasion of privacy and said it infinitely increased the dangers of stalking and privacy issues that already exist.[39]

Using this application, a guy can now simply take a picture of a girl that he's attracted to, whether she's in a bar, in the grocery store, or anywhere, and then within seconds pull up her Facebook page and know her name, where she lives, read all her wall posts, see all her pictures, find out who her friends are, and more. The horrific things that could be done by stalkers, criminals, blackmailers, perverts and psycho's are virtually limitless.

This is certainly not the only app of this kind. An app for the iPhone called Face Match accomplishes something similar by identifying specific individuals in photos you have uploaded to your Facebook page. The market for mobile facial recognition systems is just beginning to develop, and as the twenty-first century moves forward, this technology will be rapidly enhanced and could one day identify people just as easy as a human can recognize a friend in a split second after seeing them.

It’s not just people that these systems can identify. Google and other companies have built programs that allow users to take a photo of something with their cell phone, and the software identifies exactly what it is, and where it is geographically located. Google’s application is called Google Goggles, and they are just one of several companies working on enhancing such technology.

For example, you could take a picture of a building in the middle of downtown in a major city, and the app will be able to identify it and immediately display a fact sheet on that building. Landmarks, landscapes, automobiles, practically anything could have its picture snapped, and the system will identify what it is. It’s called visual search technology, and the possibilities are extremely vast. In 2009 scientists at the Smithsonian, the University of Maryland, and Columbia University were developing an app for the iPhone that could identify plant species just from taking a picture of one.[40]

Facial Recognition Software on the Internet

The facial recognition software company Face.com has developed a system that can search virtually the entire Internet in order to find photographs of a targeted individual. Once someone’s picture is entered into the system, it searches through photos on social networking sites and online photo galleries finding faces that match. It functions like a typical facial recognition system by translating photos into algorithms formulated by various facial features and measurements (called nodal points), and then searches the Internet for all photos which match that algorithm. Face.com says the software is 90 percent accurate.

When this system was first developed, Face.com limited its availability but later released a software package called Photo Finder that allows anyone to search for matches over the entire Internet, including websites, online newspapers, blogs, and social networking sites.

While your Facebook photos may be set to “friends only” or “private,” photos that you are tagged in which have been posted online by your friends, may not be set to private, and can easily be found by this kind of system. Are there funny but embarrassing photos of you posted somewhere on Facebook that you’d prefer your boss, parents, or children not see? Were you at a protest and possibly appear in a photo of the crowd that was posted online? Do you want your boss, neighbors, or the government knowing about what political or social movements you privately support and what events you attend? Anonymity may be a thing of the past.

Gil Hirsch, chief executive of Face.com, told *The Sunday Times*, “We have launched a service that allows developers to take our facial recognition technology and apply it immediately to their own applications.”[41] What that means is practically any software company can now incorporate this Big

Brother technology into cell phone apps or whatever kind of creepy and invasive programs their dark imaginations can dream up. As of September 2010 the company claimed its technology was already being used by 5,000 different developers. The genie is now out of the bottle. The company is also working on a system that will search through YouTube videos in order to identify people using the same facial recognition technology.[42]

In December 2010 Facebook added facial recognition software to their website to identify people in photos after they've been uploaded.[43] Before this, people would have to physically "tag" (identify a person in a photo by linking the photo to their Facebook page). Now the system suggests who is in the photos. The beta version of this system actually worked fairly well and as the technology is refined it will be nearly impossible to remain anonymous on Facebook.

Google has an application called Picasa that in 2008 was updated to enable people to upload photos and the system automatically identifies who is in them if the person's face has already been tagged in the program. With Google's dominance in information technology and their history of Big Brother-type of applications, it shouldn't be surprising if Google develops a picture search tool that utilizes facial recognition technology. Just as the search engine can comb through millions of web pages in seconds and find an exact sentence or phrase someone posted somewhere, Google (and others) will likely develop systems that can match photos just as fast, no matter where they are posted on the Internet.

Cash Prizes Given to People Who Watch Surveillance Monitors

A company called Internet Eyes, located in Britain, actually offers cash prizes to ordinary citizens who are given access to CCTV camera feeds if they see a crime being committed and are able to report it to authorities.

A businessman named Tony Morgan created the company after he learned that a large portion of security cameras watching the streets of London weren't being monitored by anyone.[44] The company initially offered a monthly prize of 1,000 pounds (approximately $1,550 US dollars)[45] for the best crime spotter of the month and then organized other payment terms for the spotters. At the time the program launched in October 2010, more than 13,000 people had signed up to watch the feeds and participate.

Charles Farrier, from the watchdog group *No CCTV*, said that the creation of Internet Eyes was a very worrying development and the government, "has put private profit above personal privacy in allowing a private company to launch its Stasi-style citizen spy game rather than defending the rights of British citizens."[46]

The system is marketed to businesses that don't have the budget for security guards to watch their security cameras 24 hours a day. Businesses pay a small fee to use the system and if someone sees what they think is a shoplifter, for example, that viewer can contact the store owner through the system which can send the owner a text message informing them of the event.

Daniel Hamilton of *Big Brother Watch* (a British watchdog organization) said, "It's astonishing to think that innocent people doing their shopping could soon be spied on by an army of busybodies with an Internet connection. CCTV should be used sparingly to help solve real crimes, not to encourage this type of tawdry voyeurism."[47]

The program, which started in October of 2010, was approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Pre-Crime Cameras

A strange new surveillance program in the United Kingdom was implemented in 2009 that is designed to automatically identify suspicious people and prevent crime before it occurs. The program is called ISIS (Integrated Sensor Information System), which interestingly spells out *Isis*, the Egyptian goddess and mother of the sun god Horus. The London *Telegraph* explained, “When a crime looks like it is going to occur, the system will verbally warn the perpetrator and then if necessary alert the nearest police officer.”[48]

The ISIS system uses what is called “computer vision technology” that analyzes security camera feeds to look for what authorities consider to be behavior that is anti-social or suspicious. The criteria for this “suspicious” behavior is said to be people wearing hooded sweatshirts, people who make sudden movements, and even “verbal aggression” that is detected by microphones placed in public places and on public transportation.

X-Ray Cameras

As if being watched, listened to, and having your movements monitored by artificially intelligent systems designed to supposedly determine whether you are acting hostile or not aren't Orwellian enough, leaked documents in London show that the government was looking into installing x-ray systems on lamp posts on public streets in order to see if people were concealing any weapons or explosives under their clothes.[49] There are several types of devices that can accomplish this task, such as millimeter wave machines or terahertz radiation which penetrates clothing.

In 2007 a train station in London conducted a month long test using millimeter wave scanners to look at people as they boarded trains to determine if they were concealing any weapons. A similar device was used at several other Underground (subway) stations as well. These are similar devices to the so-called naked body scanners employed at airports around the world, but they scan the entire crowd and without their knowledge.

"The real question is not whether the technology can see something under the clothing. It's how you respond to it when the technology says there's something unusual," said security expert Bob Ayers. "Do you have police strolling down each street, ready to ask people what they have under their jacket?" he wondered.[50] There is also a concern for the health risks from repeated exposure to such systems.

You may think that these "x-ray" cameras are the result of advanced twenty-first century technology, but you are wrong. A retired colonel from Taiwan's National Defense Department named Alan Yu was exposing this technology back in 1997. An article he wrote titled *Millimeter Waves and Mind Control* explained, "If you want to see the future of surveillance, take

a trip into the world of millimetre waves and the video cameras that are sensitive to them."[51]

He also said that in that same year, 1997, a company called Millitech expected to have millimetre-wave cameras available for around $10,000 and portable versions for $80,000. He even said that similar devices are able to see inside the human body and can detect anything that has been inserted in any orifice, such as the anal cavity, which is a common method for smuggling drugs and weapons into prisons.

Devices called T-ray scanners, or Terahertz scanners are used by the Secret Service to scan crowds when the president is making a public appearance to spot anyone who would be carrying a gun or other weapon concealed under their clothes.[52]

Some may argue that these kinds of devices will help to make people safer if they are installed on public streets, since there may be people who are carrying concealed weapons, but are we going to allow police officers to approach and detain and search anyone whenever the systems detects what it considers to be a weapon? What if a person has a concealed carry permit and is legally allowed to wear a concealed hand gun? Are they going to be tackled to the ground and beaten and tazed because the system shows they are walking down the street with a gun under their jacket even though they are allowed to?

Are people who carry a Swiss Army Knife for its convenience and functionality going to be surrounded by police and searched every time an x-ray camera sees they have a pocket knife? In most states in America, a person is legally allowed to carry a knife as long as the blade is shorter than three inches; so what is going to happen to these ordinary law abiding citizens when they are spotted carrying a perfectly legal knife in their pocket? Are they going to be treated as criminals or terrorists? Perhaps the laws will be changed to make it illegal for people to carry an innocent pocket knife in public.

Body Scanners at Airports

After the failed Christmas Day “underwear bomber” tried to blow up a plane as it approached Detroit, Michigan on Christmas Day of 2009, Homeland Security officials immediately began clamoring for newer high-tech security measures to be implemented at airports around the country. The device touted as being able to prevent future attacks of this nature was the so-called naked body scanner that allows TSA workers to see a virtual naked image of passengers’ bodies as they are being scanned by the device.

When sample photos were released showing just how detailed the images were that these machines take, many people were uneasy about what the machines revealed. In May 2010, a TSA worker in Miami, Florida was arrested for aggravated battery after he allegedly attacked one of his coworkers who was making fun of him for having a small penis after he passed through the new body scanner.[53]

Adding to the controversy over the use of these revealing scanners, the TSA had claimed that the machines could not store the naked images of people, but the Electronic Privacy Information Center uncovered documents showing that the machines do in fact have image storing capabilities, and can even send images.

EPIC obtained the technical specifications and vendor contracts through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit, which directly contradicts the TSA’s claim that the machines couldn’t store the images.

In the beginning of 2010, there were about 40 machines in use at 19 different airports, and the TSA planned to install 150 more by the end of the year, and another 300 in 2011. As Thanksgiving weekend of 2010 approached, news stories started circulating about the busy travel patterns

and the added security measures of the new naked body scanners now that they were installed and fully operational in airports across the country. People also began talking about how they didn't want to be subjected to the radiation believed to be given off by the scanners, not to mention the humiliation of the naked body scan, or the groping pat downs if one dared to "opt out" of the scan.

At this point in time, not every traveler had to go through the scan—only supposedly people who were chosen at random. Several attractive female celebrities made headlines for speaking about their experiences at the airports getting scanned by the new naked body scanners (called *rape scanners* by some detractors), and the publicity was not good. Former *Baywatch* babe Donna D'Errico felt that she was selected for the scan because she was hot and didn't think she was chosen at random.

She told *AOL News*, "It is my personal belief that they pulled me aside because they thought I was attractive…My boyfriend sailed through with no problems, which is rather ironic in that he fits the stereotypical 'look' of a terrorist when his beard has grown a bit. After the search, I noticed that the male agent who had pulled me out of line was smiling and whispering with two other agents and glancing at me. I was outraged."[54]

"This could, and I'm sure does, happen to other women. It isn't right to hide behind the veil of security and safety in order to take advantage of women, or even men for that matter, so that you can see them naked. It's a misuse of power and authority, and as much a personal violation as a Peeping Tom. The difference is that Peeping Toms can have charges pressed against them," D'Errico concluded.[55] The airport denied any inappropriate behavior from the TSA agents on the scene.

Reality TV star Khloé Kardashian, the younger sister of Kim Kardashian, appeared on *Lopez Tonight* during this same holiday season and happened to mention her experience with airport security as well, saying, "They basically are just raping you in public. I got asked the other day, do

you want to go for a screening or get patted down. I don’t want that X-Ray to see everything, honey.”[56]

She continued to say “[T]he people are so aggressive, It’s like, ‘Chill out, you didn’t find anything on me yet, calm down…’ They say, ‘OK, I’m going to be patting you down and I’m going to be touching the crease of your ass.”[57] Khloé was visibly upset.

Videos then started getting posted on YouTube showing TSA agents feeling up men, women, and children as a “precaution” before letting them pass through airport security. Some people protested and stripped down into Speedos or bikinis right before going through the security checkpoint to highlight how invasive and ridiculous they were. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano had been labeled *Big Sis*, as in *Big Sister*, a play on the Orwellian *Big Brother*, as a result of all the negative publicity her invasive programs were getting.

License Plate Readers

At some point in the New World Order, all vehicles will most likely be required to have a GPS tracking system installed on them in order to be authorized to drive on the roads so authorities can determine exactly where a specific vehicle is located at any given time. Until this occurs, there are other ways that Big Brother is watching your car. Since facial recognition systems can detect a specific person’s face out of a crowd of tens of thousands in a split second, it should be no surprise that systems can also read the license plates on vehicles from any number of the traffic cameras or red light cameras positioned around cities.

More and more cameras are being equipped with Optical Character Recognition systems (OCR) that can read the hundreds of license plates that go whizzing by the cameras every minute. A new technology called LPR uses what is called License Plate Reader or License Plate Recognition that can read practically any license plate from any state, even with the large variations of designs and colors.

Numerous states are currently using LPR systems to spot drivers whose licenses have been suspended or revoked, or to find stolen vehicles. Other ideas for the system involves finding people who have unpaid parking tickets, back taxes, or warrants out for their arrest. Authorities also plan to have the system keep a log on which cars pass through specific cameras and at what time. This stored information can then be used to determine if a suspect of a crime was in the area at the time it was committed.

When license plate reading systems become common place, if a person whose license is suspended for unpaid parking tickets is spotted by an LPR camera, a police officer will be immediately dispatched to pull them over

and arrest them. That is, unless the government implements mandatory GPS black boxes on automobiles which would then disable a person’s vehicle until the tickets were paid. These systems are already used by car dealers if people miss several payments.[58]

Police Wear Head Mounted Cameras

At the end of 2009, a police department in San Jose, California, began equipping officers with head-mounted video cameras to record their interactions with the public.[59] The officers, in this case, control when the cameras are on or off, and are supposed to turn them on every time they talk with anyone.

The devices were made by Taser International, the company that makes the infamous Taser guns often abused by police. The company paid for the first 18 units as an attempt to get the department to expand their use to all 1400 officers. The devices cost approximately $1700 each and have a $100 monthly fee per officer, which would bring the cost to $4 million dollars if the San Jose police department would implement them for all their officers.

In February 2010, nine officers in San Diego’s police force began using Taser’s cameras as part of another field test. “It gives real-time information on exactly what occurred at the scene. Anything that helps put the case into perspective,” said San Diego Assistant Police Chief Bob Kanaski. “No more ‘he said, she said.’ Now it’s in color.”[60]

It must be noted that during numerous instances of police misconduct, civilians happen to be videotaping with a camcorder or their cell phone, and officers often order them to stop filming or even confiscate or smash their cameras to prevent any evidence from getting out and showing the officer’s crimes.

Of course, the video footage and audio taken by the head mounted cameras will often only be used to support the police officer’s claims of what a suspect has done or said, and it shouldn’t be surprising if hard drives

are sometimes “damaged” and can’t have their contents retrieved when the footage would show severe officer misconduct.

In London in 2005, police shot and killed Jean Charles de Menezes who they suspected was carrying a bomb on the subway, but he was completely innocent. This was immediately following the 2005 transit bombings where three different trains and one bus were blown up, killing 52 people and injuring 700. Officers initially said that Menezes was running from police and struggled with them when they approached, and claimed that’s why they killed him. Several video cameras that were in clear view of the incident were said to mysteriously have their hard drives missing, although inside sources with the security company that maintained the cameras said they were in full working order.[61]

While the police officers often record interactions with suspects, there has been a disturbing trend in police arresting citizens and charging them with felony illegal wiretapping for simply doing the same thing.[62]

If suspects or bystanders videotape interactions with police, then some police are now claiming these people are recording the interaction without two party consent—meaning the police officers don’t agree to the recording—thus they claim the citizens are committing a felony illegal wire tap.[63] In most states in order for private conversations to be recorded legally, both parties must consent or it is considered an illegal wire tap. This law was designed to prevent phone conversations from being secretly recorded, and was not meant to apply to the public videotaping of an event (which happens to capture the audio too), but we have seen numerous instances where police officers charge people under this statute even though it does not apply to conversations where there is not a “reasonable expectation of privacy,” such as on a public street. This has not stopped police officers around the country from unfairly charging people with “illegal wire tapping” for simply videotaping a public interaction where there was no reasonable expectation of privacy.

Police departments, and many courts, have decided that it is OK for police to record us, but we cannot record them. This hypocritical double standard only serves to protect the Big Brother system, and restricts the rights and freedoms of honest and ordinary people. The police simply do not want people to videotape them because those videos will sometimes capture clear evidence of officer misconduct that they will not be able to deny.

Other Uses for Cameras

One use of video cameras that most of the public is unaware of is in the retail sales industry, which sometimes uses a surveillance system to photograph each costumer who comes into a store or walks onto a sales lot—and then the salesmen have to log certain information about that person—all without the customer knowing about it.[64] This system is used more to monitor the salespeople than it is to monitor the customers. The system keeps track of how many people step foot into a store, and a formula is used to determine how well the sales force is doing by cross-referencing the number of sales and the dollar amount of the invoices, with the number of people who step foot in the door.

This system is used mainly in low-traffic, high-end stores that sell items like furniture or jewelry that only get a hand full of customers who walk thought their doors each day. If the system shows that one particular salesperson has ten people walk through the door on average, and makes five sales, but another salesperson who gets ten people walking in only makes two sales, then management is going to see that his closing ratio isn't very good and will likely fire him. When commission salesmen have a bad day or a bad month they'll often say, "I didn't have any customers walk through the door," but this system can prove otherwise. Salesmen that this author has personally spoken with who have had to use this system at work have told me that they often have to write a brief description of what merchandise the customer was looking at, and it is then saved in a file along with that person's photograph which was taken when they tripped the sensor as they walked in the door.

If, for example, the person who walks through the door is somebody who is lost and asks for directions, then the salesman must log that entry, which is linked to that person's picture. This system also keeps track of how long each person is in the store. If a person comes in for one minute asking

for directions, the system will show this and the boss won’t think that their salesman couldn’t close a sale. This system is also used to figure out a salesperson’s average sale in dollars per walk-in.

Another Orwellian system that is used in the world of sales is a hidden camera and microphone worn by secret shoppers who companies hire to pretend to be customers who go into stores and videotape how the salesperson does with his or her presentation and closing attempts. I have personally spoken to salesmen who have been subjected to this kind of secret shopper. Since legal issues may arise from people being secretly videotaped along with an audio recording, many companies will coerce their employees into signing legal wavers that say they consent to the secret video shopper procedure which then may occur at any time.

While secret shoppers are not new and are used by a variety of industries, they were usually just people that went in and asked specific questions of salespeople and immediately upon leaving would write up a brief report on the person and answer several questions about their attitude toward the pretend customer, their product knowledge, and perhaps their personal appearance, such as what they were wearing and how clean they were. But with video cameras becoming incredibly small, these secret shopper services now have the ability to let management or a business owner view a video of the entire process himself to see and hear how the salespeople perform.

Global Positioning Systems

In the 1990s, people began hearing about GPS (Global Positioning Systems) and in the 21st century we saw the technology rapidly expand into the mainstream and become part of commonly used items such as GPS systems for navigation in vehicles, in cell phones, and even on shipments of merchandise to track their exact location as they are en route.

While many people were surprised to learn that OJ Simpson's cell phone was triangulated to discover his location as he drove in his white Bronco down the Los Angeles freeway in 1994, evading police when he was wanted for murder, today such capabilities are expected and seen as commonplace. While most of us rely on our GPS navigation systems in vehicles to guide us to our destinations and can't imagine life without them, GPS has a dark side that is exploited by Big Brother and is being used in ways that can only be described as Orwellian.

Many businesses are putting GPS systems on company vehicles, something that doesn't sit well with many of the vehicles' drivers. Are they taking too long on their lunch breaks? Did the car travel back to the employee's house before 5 o'clock? Has the vehicle traveled over 75 miles per hour? All of this and more is available to supervisors and owners who have installed GPS systems on their company's vehicles.

The wrestling superstar Hulk Hogan had a reality show called *Hogan Knows Best* that aired on VH1 from 2005 to 2007 and gave an inside look at his family and their activities. His daughter Brook was seventeen when the show first aired, and in one episode Hulk let her go on a date with some guy, but before she did, he installed a GPS tracker on her car (without her knowledge) and during the episode it showed him watching where the car was driving, making sure that she was going where she said she was. Such

devices are now so small that they can be placed on people, and not just in the trunk of a car.

Placing small GPS devices on children is now becoming common, as well as friends and family locator applications for cell phones that show the exact location of your friends and family on a map by using the built in GPS transmitters in all cell phones. Some people also envision future GPS systems so small that they can be implanted inside a person’s body. We may soon live in a world where it is seen as completely normal for practically anyone to see exactly where you are, anywhere in the world, at every moment of the day.

Digital Angel

The first commercially available personal GPS tracker was called the Digital Angel, and was designed by Applied Digital, the creator of the VeriChip implantable RFID chip. The Digital Angel was designed to be worn by a person like a wrist watch and was marketed for children and the elderly. Upon its release in 2000, Richard J. Sullivan, chairman of Applied Digital, boasted that his device could tap a market worth more than $70 billion dollars.[65]

The chief scientist behind the device's creation, Dr. Peter Zhou, told *World Net Daily* he believed the company's future products would be implanted into people and will be "a connection from yourself to the electronic world. It will be your guardian, protector. It will bring good things to you," and that, "We will be a hybrid of electronic intelligence and our own soul."[66]

Although the Digital Angel (called the digital beast by detractors) came out in the year 2000, it wasn't until a decade later that personal locating devices would become very well known or used.

Family Locator Apps

Most new cell phones have what they call *family locator apps* that use a cell phone's built in GPS to show exactly where other members of your family are geographically located—at all times. Verizon's website explains, "From your PC or phone, enjoy the comfort of locating family members anytime, anywhere." The app is more than just a real-time GPS locator, it allows you to receive "arrival & departure updates" for each family member and lets you schedule location updates for each family member that will alert you as to their location at any specific time you set. For example, if you wanted to know where your kids were every night at 10pm, it will alert you in case you've lost track of time and forgot to check.

An app for Sprint phones allows users to review the past locations of their children (or husbands, wives, girlfriends, or boyfriends) for the last seven days and can also be set to send you automatic notifications of a child's location at specific times on specific days. The website boasts, "You don't need to install anything on the phones you wish to locate. Sprint Family Locator uses the GPS technology already built-in to every Sprint phone, so it is compatible with every Sprint phone." The cost of the Sprint Family Locator is $5 dollars per month which includes tracking on up to four different phones.

‘Little Buddy’ Tracking Device for Children

In October 2009, a rather bulky tracking device was put on the market called the Little Buddy, which was advertised as a GPS system that parents can place in their child’s backpack or lunch box so their location can be monitored on the parent’s cell phone or computer. This device (and others like it) are designed for children who are too young to have cell phones which can be tracked by family locator apps.

The software for the Little Buddy allows parents to set up geographic boundaries that activate and deactivate at specific times, and if the device travels outside of those boundaries, then the parent will receive a text message or an e-mail alerting them of this. For example, a boundary around the school could be set up between 8am and 3pm and if the device (which is located in the student’s back pack) leaves the school grounds before 3pm then the parent would be alerted.

The first version of the Little Buddy was rather large and bulky, and could not be placed in a child’s backpack without them noticing, but as the years progress, similar devices will be extremely small and could be stashed inside a student’s backpack, or even on their clothes without them even knowing.

One newscaster on the Fox News Channel joked about placing the device in her boyfriend’s car so she could keep tabs on exactly where he went and when. Most people would obviously be unaware such a device was placed in their vehicle.

A commercial for the Little Buddy tracking device said, “Get peace of mind. Build trust. And be confident that your child is OK when you can’t be with them.” Their claim of “building trust” is obviously doublethink, since

using such a thing is a clear sign of an overbearing, controlling, or paranoid parent. The device costs less than one hundred dollars.[67]

Amber Alert GPS

Another personal GPS locator on the market that is extremely more advanced than the Little Buddy GPS tracker is called the Amber Alert GPS. It's fairly small in size, measuring 1.77" x 1.68" x .78" and is advertised as, "The world's smallest, most powerful GPS tracking device." It is marketed to parents who want to keep track of their children and can be put in their pocket or clipped onto their belt. The parents can then keep an eye on the device's location on their cell phone or computer, but this device is so much more than a GPS locator.

It costs $129.99 and the parents must pay a monthly fee ranging from ten dollars a month to forty dollars a month depending on what features they want. Some of these features include a "speed alert" that will notify parents when the GPS device exceeds a certain speed so a parent can tell if their child has gotten into a vehicle. The website even brags, "This feature is great for speeding teenagers!"[68] Do you want to know if your teenager ever drives faster than 80 miles per hour? You can easily set the device to alert you of this. You could, of course, then see exactly what street they're on.

It also has a temperature alert that will notify parents when the temperate surpasses or drops below the thresholds they designate. A feature they call "Breadcrumbing" allows a person to have the unit send them text messages at specific times of the day to notify them where the unit is located. You can also be notified when the device enters or leaves a specific location. The website reads, "Do you want to be notified when your child arrives at school, soccer practice, or the mall? You can with our latest feature: Destination Alert. Destination Alert allows the parent to define an area on a map, and receive notification by text and/or e-mail when the child arrives. It's easy and it gives you one more tool to keep your child safe!"

The device even has a “Voice Monitoring” feature that allows the parent to activate a microphone in the unit so they can listen in on what their child is doing. The website brags, “Even during use the child never knows that you are listening in.”

The Amber Alert GPS system is named after the AMBER alert child abduction notification system that alerts local TV and radio stations if a child is believed to have been abducted. The AMBER alert system was named after a 9-year old child named Amber Hagerman who was abducted and murdered in Arlington, Texas in 1996.

Tracking the President, White House Staff, and Family Members

On CBS's *60 Minutes* in March 2010, Rahm Emanuel (President Obama's chief of staff) showed Katie Couric a security system he had in his White House office that tracked major White House players using a GPS system that showed their current location in real-time. The system keeps tabs on the President, Vice President, First Lady, family members, and others he said. The segment was brief, but it is clear that by "family members," this means Barack Obama's two kids have to wear GPS tracking bracelets probably twenty-four hours a day.

GPS Trackers at Amusement Parks

A company called SAMSys Technologies created a GPS tracking system that became available at multiple amusement parks as a way for parents to keep track of their kids. They call their device the SafeTzone System which is a GPS locator similar to a large wrist watch that can be used to keep track of the children and also enables them to buy things at the park like food and souvenirs, because it acts like an RFID debit card.

SafeTZone's website called it a "cashless spending module" and said it "eliminates the need for cash anywhere in the venue by turning each Locator into an electronic wallet. The elimination of cash will provide patrons with the freedom to utilize the venue services and make purchases at restaurants, games, attractions, and shops throughout the venue."

A press release sent out by Paramount's Great America theme park in 2004 brags that one of their parks in Santa Clara, California, began issuing the SafeTZone GPS trackers to guests so they could locate each other. The device is called the Star Watch which is a waterproof GPS system that is strapped onto people's wrists. Guests can then go to any number of "Location Stations" which show the location of others in their group. The Star Watch also allows people to send messages to other members in their group, and locate rides and restaurants in the park. The press release also noted that people would, "Receive information about Paramount's Great America's special promotions, show times and park events."

Rod Rankin, Paramount's Great America's senior vice president and general manager is quoted in the press release saying, "It's a convenient and affordable guest amenity that provides visitors the opportunity to track everyone in their group or simply find the easiest route to a favorite ride or restaurant."[69]

Paramount's Great America is owned and operated by Paramount Parks, a division of Viacom Inc, the entertainment giant that owns CBS, MTV, Nickelodeon, VH1, BET, Paramount Pictures, UPN, Spike TV, TV Land, CMT, Comedy Central, Showtime, Blockbuster, Simon & Schuster, and other media companies.

In 2004, Legoland in Denmark implemented RFID tracking of guests with devices called the "Kidspotter" which were advertised as a way to prevent children from getting lost. Leo Steiner, vice president for on-demand sales at IBM, who works with RFID, said, "Legoland will now know exactly where each customer is, how long they are spending in each area and which products are proving to be most popular."[70] Steiner sees the device as a market research tool more than a safety device.

Debbie Allen, a mother of two, told Silicon.com, "When you go to these theme parks, you tend to spend so much time trying to keep your children by your side that they get resentful and a little frustrated. If I were given the chance to feel a little more relaxed, I would jump at the opportunity; if they then used the information they had for marketing, then I really don't see the harm."[71]

Mobile Alarm for the Threatened

There have even been proposals for people to be forced to wear GPS monitors if they are the subject of harassment or if their life could be threatened by a dangerous ex-lover or spouse. Fifteen different districts in Holland have implemented this strategy and force people to carry such devices which can notify police with the push of a button as to the person's location so police can be dispatched to investigate.[72]

Those people are not criminals, they are the victims, and they are forced to wear GPS monitors similar to ankle bracelets worn by people on parole or house arrest.

Implantable GPS System

A patent application submitted in 2003 from a California company called Persephone, Inc., (Number 20040174258) describes their invention as a GPS device that is forcefully implanted into people and can't be removed. The title of their application is *Method and apparatus for locating and tracking persons*, which explains, "Removal of the implanted device by a runaway juvenile would likely be impossible. Even if possible, such removal would likely place the runaway at significant medical risk, which is counter to the runaway's goal of a safe escape and survival from parents or guardians."[73]

The patent application actually says that the tracking device could be implanted up a person's butt, in their rectum. The application describes the location of the device as being "Submuscular: for example, deep to a large muscle. Such a location is currently used for implantation of commercially available artificial urethral and anal sphincter reservoirs, which are positioned deep to the rectus abdominus muscles, within the pre-peritoneal Space of Retzius."

It gets worse. The patent application goes on to read, "Because the device is implanted in the person, it can also provide a shock, vibration, or other warning…[that] may be progressive, such that a person is subjected to a shock of increasing magnitude as he leaves a zone of confinement or enters a forbidden zone."

"The device may…include a microphone or similar device for monitoring acoustic information, thereby permitting the person to talk to a remote location."

If this isn’t Orwellian enough, let me point out that the name of the company that filed this patent is called Persephone Inc, a company obviously named after Persephone, the Greek goddess that governs the underworld, or Hades (Hell).

A Mileage Tax

As cars have become more fuel efficient and hybrid and fully electronic cars have become quite popular, the number of gallons of gas that people use up in a given week has dramatically dropped, and so has the tax dollars the government rakes in from gasoline taxes. In order to compensate for this loss, some lawmakers are pushing for a new mileage tax that will tax cars based on the number of miles they drive.

The Governor of Oregon, Ted Kulongoski, was one of the first government officials to recommend a mileage tax to replace the traditional gas tax because of the loss of revenues due to more fuel efficient vehicles.[74] In 2009, he included his plans for this new tax in a transportation bill.

The governor's website outlined his reasons, saying, "As Oregonians drive less and demand more fuel-efficient vehicles, it is increasingly important that the state find a new way, other than the gas tax, to finance our transportation system."

He planned for a task force to "partner with auto manufacturers to refine technology that would enable Oregonians to pay for the transportation system based on how many miles they drive." This method would involve equipping all vehicles with GPS units that would monitor how many miles a person drove and tax them accordingly.

Oregon is certainly not the only state to consider such a proposal. The Texas Transportation Institute held a meeting in April 2009 to discuss "mileage-based user fees" and other ways to replace diminishing revenues from the gas tax. "We need to think differently about how we fund transportation," said the Texas Transportation Commission Chairwoman Deirdre Delisi.[75]

Some proposals for how the tax would be collected include a mileage check when the car has its registration renewed each year, or installing GPS systems on vehicles that would be programmed to tax people differently according to what road they were on, or if they traveled out of their state. Certain high-traffic roads, for example, would tax drivers at a higher rate, and GPS systems could enable the government to vary the tax rate depending on what county or city the vehicle was traveling in.

Rental Car Company Fines Customers for Speeding

While it may not be that surprising to people that the government would install a Big Brother system to automatically fine drivers who were going over the speed limit, it was surprising to learn that in 2001 a rental car agency was fining their own customers for speeding in their rental cars. This came to light after a man named James Turner was fined $450 by the Acme-Rent-A-Car agency after the AirIQ GPS system installed on their rental cars calculated that he was speeding in their car.[76] The fine was charged directly to his credit card because the company had included language in the rental agreement explaining that the customer would consent to this, but of course, who reads the fine print on these agreements.

James Turner filed a lawsuit against the company in small claims court and also filed a complaint with the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection.

Students Forced to Wear GPS Tracking Devices

Twenty-two students at a high school in Texas were ordered by a judge in January 2010 to carry GPS tracking devices on them in order to prevent truancy. “Bryan High students who skip school will soon be tracked 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” reported KBTX, a local TV station.[77] The Orwellian program is called the Attendance Improvement Management Program or AIM, and according to reports it is being used in schools, not only in Texas, but around the country.

Students who skip class are forced to appear at truancy court and then some are forced by the judge to carry the tracking devices, similar to ankle bracelets that people on parole or house arrest must wear. “Students on the program are tracked with a hand-held GPS device between the time they leave for school in the morning and the time they check in for curfew at night,” reported the local news station.[78]

An official in Holland for the People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) proposed that “troublesome youth” be forced to wear GPS bracelets as well.

Tracking Cell Phone Locations

The Obama administration has argued that tracking the location of people's cell phones without a warrant is legal and should be permitted because, they say, Americans don't have a reasonable expectation of privacy concerning the whereabouts of their cell phone. U.S. Department of Justice lawyers say that "a customer's Fourth Amendment rights are not violated when the phone company reveals to the government its own records."[79]

In *Enemy of the State* (1998) Will Smith's character was tracked by a rogue group of government officials using all kinds of methods that seemed like science fiction at the time, but are actually possible. In the film, Gene Hackman made a statement that the National Security Agency has "been in bed with the entire telecommunications industry since the '40s," and he was right.

Not only can authorities track the real-time location of any cell phone, even when it's turned off, but they can go back and look at the records to show the location of any particular phone at anytime a phone call was made. A 2008 court order to T-Mobile in a criminal investigation says, "T-Mobile shall disclose at such intervals and times as directed by (the Department of Homeland Security), latitude and longitude data that establishes the approximate positions of the Subject Wireless Telephone, by unobtrusively initiating a signal on its network that will enable it to determine the locations of the Subject Wireless Telephone."

Kevin Bankston, an attorney for the Electronic Frontier Foundation said, "This is a critical question for privacy in the 21st century. If the courts do side with the government, that means that everywhere we go, in the real

world and online, will be an open book to the government unprotected by the Fourth Amendment."[80]

Verizon Wireless keeps records of cell phone locations for 12 months according to Verizon's Vice President Drew Arena. They keep detailed phone records, excluding phone locations, for seven years.

The ACLU, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), the Center for Democracy and Technology, and other privacy advocates argue that Americans do not surrender their Fourth Amendment right when they turn on their cell phones.

Numerous attorneys have said that if such a practice is deemed illegal by a court, that the case would definitely be appealed and government lawyers will fight until the practice becomes fully legal anyway.

The GPS Coordinates to Your Front Door

The census is done every ten years in America to determine how many people are living in the country and in what communities so that the appropriate number of funds and resources can be allocated to those areas. People have become familiar with the questionnaire mailed to them every ten years, asking who lives in your residence, what race they are, and several other personal questions, but as the 2010 census approached, stories began circulating that census workers were traveling door-to-door and linking the front door of each address with its GPS coordinates. Such reports turned out to be accurate.

In 2009, 140,000 people were hired as part of a $700 million dollar program to collect the GPS coordinates of every front door in America. People were obviously uncomfortable with this, especially since President Obama put his Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel, in charge of overseeing the census which is used to draw congressional districts. There appeared no legitimate or logical reason for such an enormous task. Why would the government need the exact GPS coordinates of every single front door in America? And why would they spend hundreds of millions of dollars doing this?

Blogger Douglas Gibbs of the *American Daily Review* wrote, “Imagine, if you will, that there are a number of people in a neighborhood that could not find the addresses they are tasked with finding. They are not locals, maybe are unable to read a map, or perhaps do not have the time to pull out a map, and they need to find you with specific GPS coordinates. Their devices would lead them to your front door with these coordinates. Imagine a crisis is afoot, and martial law is put into place. U.S. troops need to round up particular folks.”[81]

He concluded, “Let’s take this a step further. After all, with Barack Obama desiring to decrease the number of folks in the military, and with forces committed worldwide, we may not have sufficient military forces at home to deal with a rising national emergency. If the government decided to rely on foreign troops, perhaps United Nations personnel, most of which may not understand the street signs, much less know the lay of the land, they could use GPS devices to direct them to your front door.”[82]

J.B. Williams of the *Canada Free Press*, wrote, “I can’t resist the urge to question the authority and purpose behind such a BIG BROTHER initiative, when the official census itself is not due to be taken until 2010… No imagination is required to think up a whole laundry list of evil that could be done with a nationwide GPS grid of coordinate’s markers painted on every private home across the country. But I was having trouble thinking up one good reason for it, even one legitimate use that would justify what must be a very expensive undertaking.”[83]

Williams continued, “Why does the Obama administration need or want the latitude and longitude coordinates for every home in America? Why the rush to GPS paint every home in the next 90 days? Why must the marker be within 40 feet of every front door? For what possible purpose does the Fed need GPS coordinates for every home, and under what authority do they have the right? Census workers, whom I asked, had the same holy-crap look on their faces that I had by then.”[84]

Some bloggers even pondered whether one day the GPS coordinates could be used by Unmanned Arial Vehicles to spy on homeowners, or even blow them up with missiles if they were deemed subversive or a threat to the New World Order. The Census Bureau claimed that the GPS coordinates were needed to “ensure that all residents are counted in the right location.”[85]

Remotely Disabling Automobiles

While it may seem like something out of a James Bond film, some car dealerships have been installing a device on new vehicles that allow them to remotely deactivate cars which will then prevent them from starting if people have missed their payments.

One such device was created by an Ohio company called Pay Technologies and is marketed to auto dealers as a way to disable vehicles of people who have missed their car payments. The device can also cause the car horn to honk repeatedly, and has a GPS tracker built in as well, so the location of a vehicle can be known at all times, in case they want to send a repo man to repossess the vehicle. Disabling a person's vehicle could leave a motorist stranded in a dangerous situation, or in the middle of nowhere; hazards that are apparently overlooked by the device's manufacturer.

In February of 2010, more than 100 vehicles in Austin, Texas were disabled and some had their horns honking repeatedly after a disgruntled employee of a dealership disabled the vehicles using the system in order to get revenge on an auto dealer for firing him.[86]

"We initially dismissed it as mechanical failure," said Texas Auto Center manager Martin Garcia. "We started having a rash of up to a hundred customers at one time complaining. Some customers complained of the horns going off in the middle of the night. The only option they had was to remove the battery."[87]

After complaints started flooding in from the vehicles' owners, the Texas Auto Center reset the Webtech Plus passwords for all of their employees and then gave police login entries and they traced an IP address to the suspect's Internet service provider. Police say he used a password

from a fellow employee, and that his had been disabled as soon as he was fired. Austin police filed computer intrusion charges against the man.

Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID)

RFID, as many people know, stands for Radio Frequency Identification Device, and refers to a technology that encodes a unique ID number onto a tiny computer chip that can then be activated from a distance using an RFID reader which then identifies the number on the chip. It's sort of like an electronic serial number that is encoded in the RFID tag, which doesn't require any batteries, and can be extremely small and inexpensive to produce.

As with most technology, there certainly are advantages to RFIDs, such as increasing efficiency in business by minimizing errors along a supply chain. One interesting use of RFID that we may see in the future comes from Microsoft's vision of the "Home of the Future" where microwave ovens detect RFIDs in food's packaging and are automatically programmed to the correct power and time settings to cook the food properly. This home of the future would also have a refrigerator that keeps track of its contents, and when an item is not replaced in the fridge, it would automatically add it to your shopping list to order in a replacement.

Surely when RFID tags replace the standard UPC barcode, we will not have to wait in the checkout line at the grocery store for fifteen minutes and unload our groceries onto the conveyor belt, because we can just walk through a scanner with our groceries still in the cart, and they will all be scanned instantly from the RFID UPCs on each item. But not all uses for RFIDs will be so helpful to humanity.

There have been several applications filed for patents that outline exactly what RFID tags are capable of, and it is extremely unsettling. Many devices designed and created will be promoted publicly for certain

applications or benefits, but if you read the language written in their patent applications, their real Big Brother use and capabilities are discovered.

The implications of RFID tags are truly Orwellian, and their use far exceeds simply replacing UPCs on merchandise we buy at the store to make the checkout procedure faster. RFID tags operate as little tracking devices similar to, but not as powerful as, GPS systems, and have not only been forced on students at school, but have been implanted in people’s hands and used for identifying them at businesses and government agencies, allowing them to enter secure areas, and even pay for drinks at fancy bars.

One patent application filed by IBM admits, “[T]he widespread use of RFID tags on merchandise such as clothing would make it possible for the locations of people, animals, and objects to be tracked on a global scale—a privacy invasion of Orwellian proportions.”[88]

Documents from a company called NCR reveal they came up with the idea that RFID tags could be used for what they call “dynamic pricing” where, “RFID can be used in conjunction with electronic shelf labels to automate pricing based on the number of items on the shelf…For example…when certain popular items were in short supply (e.g., at Christmas time), the price can be automatically raised.”[89]

A company called Accenture is the world’s largest technology consultant firm with revenues over 20 billion dollars a year and large contracts with governments, and in one of their brochures they proposed that RFID tags could be used by the government to help monitor families who had caseworkers assigned to them. The brochure reads, “[G]overnment agencies will also be looking for new ways to ensure the well-being of the people they serve. Activity-monitoring tools could give [government] caseworkers a powerful complement to home visits, while enabling them to be more vigilant about their clients’ current state and potential needs.”[90]

Author and consumer privacy advocate, Katherine Albrecht, writes extensively about the dangers of RFID in her 2006 book *Spychips: How*

Major Corporations and Government Plan to Track Your Every Purchase and Watch Your Every Move, where she explains, “theoretically, the whereabouts of everything and everyone will be known at all times and accessible to anyone with access to the databases, authorized or otherwise. Imagine the power of being able to log onto a Google-like Internet search engine and find out all the items associated with a particular person, organization, or government entity. Then, imagine being able to find out where all those items are in real time, where they have been, and their historical relationship with other items, people, and events.”[91]

In 2004, Albrecht received an e-mail from an RFID company asking her details about her biographical information, saying they were interested for “research purposes.” Albrecht explains that she responded inquiring what kind of research they were conducting, and wondered why a company promoting RFID would be interested in what she, a major opponent, had to say about them. She then received another e-mail that wasn’t meant for her eyes, because the person accidentally clicked the “reply to all” button.

In the e-mail, which was meant only to be seen by people other than Albrecht, the person wrote, “I don’t know what to tell this woman! ‘Well, actually we’re trying to see if you have a juicy past that we could use against you.’”[92] The company was obviously upset that Albrecht was raising awareness about RFID issues and they were looking to smear her and probably label her a “conspiracy theorist.”

Students Forced to Wear RFID Tags

The first reports of schools forcing their students to wear RFID tags came from Japan, but not long after this, in 2005 the Brittan Elementary school in Sutter County, California implemented a system which forced students to wear ID badges embedded with RFID tracking tags. Every time the students entered or left a classroom, a sensor installed at the door way would log this, and would determine whether a student had skipped class. The school soon made headlines around the country and an immediate backlash caused them to abandon the system.

The RFID system was put in place without any parental knowledge, and the reason for it was said that it helped keep the students “safe” and simplified attendance-taking.

One concerned parent asked, “Are we trying to bring them up with respect and trust, or tell them that you can’t trust anyone, you are always going to be monitored and someone is always going to be watching you?”[93] The Electronic Frontier Foundation and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) also stood up for the students and denounced the system.

The company behind the technology, InCom, agreed to pay the school royalties from future sales if their product was implemented in other schools.[94]

Soon afterward, State Representative Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) of Texas introduced an amendment that would not allow schools to track students using RFID without parental approval. “I will not allow that to happen in school districts unless parents approve it,” she said. “I will not have our children treated like parolees from the Texas prison system.”[95]

A preschool in Richmond, California, implemented a system in 2010, where young students now wear jerseys that contain RFID tags which identify them and are used for taking attendance and tracking the whereabouts of the children throughout the school. The program cost $50,000 and was paid for by a federal grant.[96] In the coming years, the use of RFID trackers on students may become a standard fixture, and despite some resistance, the practice is spreading.

VeriChip / Positive ID

The VeriChip is the “world’s first implantable RFID tag,” as the manufacturer so proudly brags as they promote what may be one of the world’s most controversial products. In 2004, the chip’s manufacturer, Applied Digital, received approval from the FDA [Food and Drug Administration] to market the device in America for the purposes they had outlined regarding a personal identification tag that is implanted under the skin.[97] Similar devices had been implanted into pets and livestock in the previous years in order to identify them, but the FDA’s ruling opened the door for implanting humans on a wide scale.

At first, Applied Digital tried to market the VeriChip only as a way for hospitals and emergency workers to access people’s medical records in case they were discovered unconscious, so they could identify the person and view their medical history to learn what may have happened so they would know how to treat the person, but secretly the company was hoping and planning for their device to replace traditional ID and credit cards. Some reports had stated that the company was in talks with MasterCard shortly after the FDA approved the device for human implantation, and many people started seeing what was likely in the works for the implantable device.

In May of 2002, an entire family concerned with terrorism became the “first family ever to be implanted with microchips” as a cleverly packaged publicity stunt promoting the so-called safety benefits of implantable RFIDs.[98] One news report which featured interviews with the family quoted one of them saying, “the VeriChip could be a lifesaver.”

In April 2004, a nightclub in Spain began offering chip implants to their customers which were linked to their credit cards and drivers license

so they could enter the club without their wallet or purse. Other night clubs followed, including Bar Soba in Glasgow, Scotland. Harvard Medical School's chief information officer, Dr. John Halamka, had the chip implanted in himself in December 2004, and the trend continued.

In 2005, 160 security officials in Mexico, including the Mexican Attorney General, had received the chips as a security measure for accessing certain buildings and rooms.[99] In April 2005, the Chief of Police in Bergen County, New Jersey, Jack Schmidig, received the VeriChip, marking the first time in history a U.S. official received the implant.[100]

In 2005, a video surveillance company responsible for installing video cameras on public streets in Cincinnati, Ohio, had several of their employees get implanted with the VeriChip in order to access secure areas.[101] In June 2006, the Governor of Wisconsin, Jim Doyle, signed a bill into law making it illegal for companies to require people to be implanted with the VeriChip or similar RFID device.[102]

A company called Ben's Car Audio posted a promotional video on the Internet showing a prototype of a device they installed on a car that used an RFID implanted in the owner's hand (Benjamin Thompson) to unlock his car door and start the car without needing any keys. Ben went on to admit that the implantable chips were, "a little out of the ordinary, so there probably aren't going to be very many people that want to do that," so his company offers key chains with RFID tags on them for people who don't want one implanted in their hand.[103]

In 2008, SEGA videogame developer Yu Suzuki even said that he may incorporate implantable RFID tags into videogames one day, saying it would be cool, "like the Matrix." It has also been proposed that all immigrants entering the country on Visas be implanted with the chips.[104]

In November 2009, the VeriChip Corporation acquired a credit monitoring and anti-identity theft company named Steel Vault. The merged company is called PositiveID, and this acquisition confirmed what a lot of

people had anticipated for years—in that the VeriChip company would move to enable its implantable RFID technology to be used as an electronic form of ID and purchasing method—not just a way to transmit medical records as they had been previously claiming.

PositiveID CEO Scott Silverman said, “PositiveID will be the first company of its kind to combine a successful identity security business with one of the world’s first personal health records through our Health Link business. PositiveID will address some of the most important issues affecting our society today with our identification tools and technologies for consumers and businesses.”[105]

Religious Implications

Most people have heard of the mark of the beast, which is what Christians believe will be some kind of device forced onto society by a world dictator called the Antichrist who claims to be God and the Messiah. It is often thought of as some kind of an electronic currency that may take the form of an implantable RFID microchip or tattoo on the hand which will replace cash, checks, and debit cards, and can then track and trace every purchase every person makes anywhere in the world. The last book in the Bible, titled the *Book of Revelation*, which was written approximately around 68 AD to 95 AD, makes a chilling reference to such a device. The Bible reads, "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."[106]

While *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True* is not a religious book, it certainly can't be overlooked that RFID or similar technology has religious implications for a large percentage of Christians who see the development of such devices as Bible prophecy unfolding. Even for those who do not believe in the religious implications of this technology, it is obvious that many are still concerned with RFID tags replacing paper currency and debit or credit cards as the primary method of economic transactions.

See this author's previous book, *The Resistance Manifesto,* for detailed information regarding the theological implications and interpretations of the mark of the beast and Big Brother technology.

More Privacy Issues with RFID

There are many more privacy concerns with RFID tags other than replacing paper currency or debit cards as the primary method of payment for purchases. With more and more companies basically forcing their employees to wear ID badges with RFID chips in them, the Big Brother potential is virtually limitless. With each employee's every move monitored and databased, algorithms could be set up to determine whether an employee is spending too much time in the break room, or even the bathroom, since sensors will detect and monitor when they enter and leave any room in the office. Did the employees use their RFID tags to activate the soap dispenser in the bathroom before they exited? The system could easily monitor this. The tags could also easily monitor how much time each employee spends in proximity with other employees.

Companies may set time limits for how long a person may interact with someone in a different department. They may calculate that someone from accounting only needs to talk with someone in the sales department for ten minutes per day, and if the system detects that these two people from the two different departments are in proximity for 30 minutes per day, then the superiors will determine that they are wasting company time gossiping, instead of quickly handling work issues. Is an employee not spending enough time at their own desk? The system can monitor this, and efficiency reports will be drafted to determine the average amount of time an employee is expected to spend at their desk, in the break room, in other cubicles or offices, and in the bathroom.

It's highly likely that RFIDs and EPCs (Electronic Product Codes) will completely replace the traditional UPC barcode we are all familiar with that is found on the package of virtually every item we buy. So it's also highly likely that RFID tags will be on everything sold, and perhaps not only on the packaging, but built into the product itself. This way a simple scanner

could determine exactly what a person is carrying on them, including what their waistline or bra size is. Someone’s trash could be scanned to see exactly what items or packaging is being thrown away without even having to touch the trash itself.

There has been talk of a so-called *Internet of Things* which is a plan for a unique number to be given to every single thing, similar to a serial number, allowing each specific item to be tracked with regards to exactly where it has been, who has been in possession of it, for how long, etc. An RFID tag that can simply hold a measly 128 bits can hold a number large enough so that a different number could be assigned to every single item in the world. (For example: 128 bits can store a number with 38 zeros after it, i.e., 100,000,000,000,000,000, 000,000,000,000,000,000,000.)

If and when this *Internet of Things* database is created and all purchases are done electronically and without cash, will parents of children under eighteen have access to their child’s purchase history? Of course they will, and the parent would be able to see if they bought condoms, or spent too much money at the arcade. Parents could also see exactly what clothes their daughter buys to see if they’re dressing too slutty.

Of course, people will say that the technology has its benefits, such as if an adult buys a case of beer for someone under twenty one, and then that kid gets caught, then a quick scan of the beer can will show who purchased it and when. Kids will, of course, create technology that instantly destroys or erases the RFID tags on products for this very reason, but the cops could also do a check on the kid’s parents, or older siblings to see what their purchasing history was, and if they purchased a case of beer earlier that night, then they would obviously be implicated anyway.

If cash becomes difficult or impossible to use, and is replaced by RFID tags like the VeriChip, and all purchases are done electronically and linked to the individual purchasing them, then it’s possible that certain groups of people will be forbidden to even purchase certain products. For example, someone collecting welfare may not be allowed to buy certain “luxury”

items like chocolate candy or brand name soda, because the system has determined that these items cost too much and since the government is paying for them, they may simply not allow them to be bought.

When RFIDs become standard in drivers licenses, will it be possible for authorities to scan crowds of people at certain protests to determine exactly who is in the crowd? Even if it’s not, then facial recognition systems would be able to determine who attends such events by identifying every single person in attendance.

If practically everyone is using RFID tags for financial transactions, and someone has a warrant out for their arrest, then their chip will be flagged, and possibly deactivated, so they couldn’t even use it. There will also be unforeseen computer glitches and even power outages that will cripple people’s ability to buy anything and make them wish they hadn’t abandoned the use of cash.

RFIDs on Medication

Attaching RFID tags to all kinds of products, and even people, is certainly cause for concern, but we may one day find tiny RFID tags attached to individual pills that can be swallowed, which are designed to determine whether or not someone has taken their medication.

A necklace called the MagneTrace was built by the Georgia Institute of Technology and monitors which pills people swallow and transmits the information to a smart phone or a computer. It was said that the device can remind patients if they forget to take their medication, and can tell doctors, caregivers, or family members, what pills a person has been taking and when.

Maysam Ghovanloo, an engineer working on the device says that it can't be tricked by someone holding a pill close to the necklace attempting to trigger its sensor because the algorithms it uses can detect whether or not the pills pass through the esophagus, as opposed to being placed near the necklace. "We wanted it to be very difficult to cheat," says Ghovanloo.[107]

Multiple other companies are working on similar technology that embeds microchips inside pills, making them "smart-pills," as they say. One company, Novartis AG, is planning to have the technology approved and available sometime around 2013.[108]

These kinds of "smart-chips" are activated by the stomach acid after they've been swallowed and then transmit their data to a Smartphone or over the Internet to a nurse or doctor so people's dosage can be monitored, along with the exact time the pills were taken. The computer chips can be added to existing pills and use Bluetooth technology.

Trever Mundel, who is in charge of developing the technology, admitted this would create massive privacy issues, saying “The regulators all like the concept and have been very encouraging. But...they want to understand how we are going to solve the data privacy issues.”[109]

Using these kinds of pills, there is no need for a person to have to wear any kind of RFID reader around their neck or chest like the model developed by MagneTrace.

Will certain children be forced to take medication because they have a lot of energy and are said to have Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyper Active Disorder? Or will some adults be forced to take certain prescriptions because they are deemed “paranoid,” because they believe in certain “conspiracy theories” about the government or Big Brother?

RFID Vehicle Registration Tags

A company called TransCore has created a system using RFID tags that stick on windshields that would allow the government to detect whether people have proper insurance, registration, or unpaid parking tickets. The system is called EVR, short for Electronic Vehicle Registration, and the company hopes to make the system a standard feature on cars.

A brochure from TansCore reads, “eGo makes possible the introduction of electronic vehicle registration applications, which enable public agencies to automatically detect and screen, via RFID, motor vehicles for compliance with federal and state registration regulations and to correspondingly automate enforcement actions and violation processing for non-compliant vehicles.”[110] This plan involves installing RFID readers at various points on roads throughout cities to detect tags attached to vehicles. These devices will probably be made obsolete by more advanced government mandated GPS black boxes.

Mind-Reading Machines

Tom Cruise starred in *Minority Report* which was released in 2002, where he played a police officer who would arrest people for what was called “pre-crime” which meant crimes that they were going to commit in the future. Pre-crime was detected by a small group of people (called Precogs) who have the ability to see into the future. Of course, this is only science fiction, but the idea of punishing someone for a crime they may commit in the future is something that society may soon have to deal with. This actual “pre-crime” isn’t detected by psychic human beings who see visions of the future, but instead is the result of high-tech equipment that is said to be able to detect whether or not an individual is thinking about committing a crime or has any dangerous intent.

These systems were originally designed to screen airport passengers in order to supposedly prevent terrorists from getting on board a plane by literally reading their minds to determine whether or not ticket holders are thinking any evil thoughts. An article in the *Associated Press*, published in January 2010 explains, “As far-fetched as that sounds, systems that aim to get inside an evildoer’s head are among the proposals floated by security experts thinking beyond the X-ray machines and metal detectors used on millions of passengers and bags each year.”[111]

The interest in such systems gained momentum immediately after the so-called “underwear bomber” was caught on a plane headed for Detroit, Michigan on Christmas Day in 2009. This man had packed explosives in his underwear and they were not detected by any security measures, and after he boarded the plane, he attempted to ignite the device, but failed.

Immediately after the failed “underwear” attack, President Barack Obama urged Homeland Security to develop better screening technology,

saying “In the never-ending race to protect our country, we have to stay one step ahead of a nimble adversary.”[112]

Others jumped on the bandwagon saying that new technology and security measures must be implemented. Philip Baum, editor of the magazine *Aviation Security International*, said, “Regulators need to accept that the current approach is outdated…It may have responded to the threats of the 1960s, but it doesn’t respond to the threats of the 21st century.”[113]

One type of device is the WeCU system which is used at airports in Israel. (WeCU means “We See You,” as in Big Brother sees you.) This system involves showing passengers different images on a screen that are associated with certain terrorist groups and then measures several signs on the person, such as their eye movements, increased heart rate or breathing, or any nervous twitches. The system’s creators claim to have developed ways to measure people’s reactions to determine whether they are affiliated with any of the symbols that are shown to them on the screen. “One by one, you can screen out from the flow of people those with specific malicious intent,” said Ehud Givon, CEO of WeCU Technologies.

Another system looked at by the Department of Homeland Security is called the Future Attribute Screening Technology, or FAST, and works like a polygraph that scans people’s pupil dilation, facial movements, and other measurements to detect deception. The system also detects a person’s fidgeting or nervous ticks.

Robert Burns, a project manager for FAST, insists the system can detect the difference between people who are simply stressed out or upset because they may be late for a flight, and those people who are harboring ill will. The Department of Homeland Security says the system uses a range of “innovative physiological and behavioral technologies” to pick up “indications of malintent [malicious intentions] or the intent or desire to cause harm.”[114]

“We are running at about 78 percent accuracy on mal-intent detection, and 80 percent on deception,” said John Verrico, a Department of Homeland Security spokesman.[115] In a Homeland Security video showing the system in action, targeted subjects are asked questions such as “are you attempting to smuggle an explosive device” or “are you from the local area?”

Another system called MALINTENT [Malicious Intentions] is also being tested by the Department of Homeland Security and is designed to detect whether a person might be harboring criminal intent based on their minute facial muscle movements which the system uses allegedly as evidence of emotional state, mood, and intention.

Unlike traditional lie detectors, these new systems don’t require people to be hooked up to anything and take all of their measurements and operate without any physical contact with the person. These devices and others are planned to be used at airports, border check points, and at special events that have heightened security. Designers plan to create a system that can scan people as they stand in line or walk through the airport.

The Russian based Psychotechnology Research Institute has developed a program they call Mindreader 2.0 that they say can determine how a person’s subconscious mind feels about certain photos, and can detect whether people have a positive feeling or a negative feeling about them. The system uses what is called Semantic Stimuli Response Measurements Technology, or SSRM Tek, that supposedly detects a person’s involuntary response to subliminal messages.

It has been reported that the Department of Homeland Security has visited the Institute to learn more about the technology to determine whether it may be of use for screening passengers before they board an airline. The Psychotechnology Research Institute began working with the US defense contractor SRS Technologies and in May 2009, the Department of Homeland Security paid for testing of the Mindreader 2.0 system.[116]

The Mindreader 2.0 system flashes a quick image on a screen so fast that a person doesn't consciously recognize it, and then they are asked to press a button rating their feeling either favorably or unfavorably. If the image is of Osama bin Laden, for example, and they press the favorable button, then they are flagged as a potential terrorist.

The head of the Institute, Elena Rusalkina, is the widow of Igor Smirnov, who is considered the father of psychotronic weapons in Russia. The Soviet military used some of Smirnov's subliminal mind control methods during the Soviet Union's war in Afghanistan in the 1980s by using subliminal sounds to affect the Mujahideen. Smirnov also consulted with the FBI during the 1993 standoff at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, and it is rumored that he and the FBI planned, or did use, some kind of subliminal device on David Koresh and his followers. If you think that these devices are Orwellian, they actually get much, much worse.

In January 2009, the TV newsmagazine *60 Minutes* aired a segment titled "Mind Reading" that showed new technology being developed at Carnegie Mellon University that can literally read your mind. The segment featured neuro scientist Marcel Just and his colleague Tom Mitchell who had developed one of these systems. Marcel Just didn't want to call it mind reading, and insisted it was "thought identification" instead.

One of the *60 Minutes* producers sat in the machine and was shown ten different objects to think about, such as a hammer, screw driver, and apartment, and the computer scanned her brain and was able to determine exactly which objects she was thinking about, and in what order. The device is called a Functional MRI machine, or fMRI. After the demonstration, Lesley Stahl, the anchor for the segment, was visibly disturbed. This same scanner can detect whether a person is feeling kindness, hypocrisy, or even love.

The segment continued to show scientists in Berlin, Germany, at the Bernstein Center, who were conducting tests where they would scan people's brains as they were choosing whether to add or subtract two

numbers they were given, and the computer was able to identify what they decided.

“I always tell my students that there is no more science fiction anymore. All the science fiction I read in high school, we’re doing,” said Paul Root Wolpe, director of the Center for Ethics at Emery University in Atlanta. He goes on to say, “Throughout history, we could never actually coerce someone to reveal information. Torture doesn’t work that well, persuasion doesn’t work that well…the right to keep one’s thoughts locked up in their brain is among the most fundamental rights to being human.” He then raised issues about who would be legally allowed to use this technology, whether the government could soon force people to use it, or even if parents could subject their children to it when they suspect they are lying about something.

This technology is not just in its testing phase in laboratories at Universities. A company called No Lie MRI advertises their services using fMRI which they say “provides unbiased methods for the detection of deception and other information stored in the brain.”[117]

There is also talk of a device that can potentially shine a beam of light or radio waves onto a person’s head and can then detect their internal brainwaves as a result. Such a device could obviously be used without a person’s knowledge or consent, unlike the fMRI machines that require people to lie down and sit still in order to be scanned.

John Dylan-Haynes, of the Bernstein Center for Computational Neuroscience in Berlin, Germany, is testing a program that can detect in your mind where you’ve physically been. This device is not theoretical, and has already been built. He demonstrates the system by showing scenes from inside different houses, and then says, “Now I would put you in a scanner and I would show you some of these scenes that you’ve seen, and some of them you haven’t seen…and right at this moment, we would be able to tell from your brain activity that you’ve already seen this environment before.” Haynes explains that this technology could soon be used to determine if

someone was a burglar in a house or had attended an Al-Qaeda training camp before.

When Paul Root Wolpe, the ethics professor from Emery University, was asked if this device would violate the Fifth Amendment which says you don't have to incriminate yourself, he explained that the Fifth Amendment says you don't have to testify in court about what you did or didn't do, but it doesn't protect you from blood samples or DNA samples that may be taken from you and incriminate you, and so in the same way these brain scans may be allowed by courts and ruled that they do not to violate your Fifth Amendment rights.

This kind of research is not only isolated to a single lab or university. In March 2010, a story hit the news wires telling how British scientists from University College London discovered that they could identify brain activity linked to different memories using fMRI technology, and could identify thought patterns and literally read people's minds and determine whether they had seen a particular film or not, just by looking at their brain scan.[118]

In one study, scientists showed ten people three different short films and when later scanned, the scientists were able to determine which film each person had seen by identifying patterns in the brain associated with each film. These patterns are called episodic memories, which mean they are memories of autobiographical events, such as things you've personally seen or heard, as opposed to memories formed based on being told something, for example.

If all of this sounds like it is still decades away from being used in criminal court cases, you are wrong. A woman in India was convicted of murder in 2008 because of a brain scan. An article in the *New York Times* explained, "India has become the first country to convict someone of a crime relying on evidence from this controversial machine: a brain scanner that produces images of the human mind in action and is said to reveal signs that a suspect remembers details of the crime in question."[119]

In June of 2008, a judge in India allowed a brain scan to be used as evidence that the suspect had “experiential knowledge” about the crime that only the killer would know. The suspect was sentenced to life in prison.

“I find this both interesting and disturbing,” said Henry T. Greely, a bioethicist at Stanford Law School. “We keep looking for a magic, technological solution to lie detection. Maybe we’ll have it someday, but we need to demand the highest standards of proof before we ruin people’s lives based on its application.”[120]

The specific brain scan that was used in this case involves hooking people up to electrodes and then they are read specific details of the crime scene, and according to the research, certain parts of the brain light up when a memory is stimulated, leading authorities to believe that whatever caused the jump in brain activity was the result of the person having actually personally witnessed what was read to them first hand. This technology obviously has its critics since it is very new and hasn’t undergone extensive testing.

Even one of the first developers of this electroencephalogram-based (EEG) lie detection technology was shocked that a court in India had used the program as evidence when the technology was so new. “Technologies which are neither seriously peer-reviewed nor independently replicated are not, in my opinion, credible,” said Dr. Rosenfeld, a neuroscientist at Northwestern University. “The fact that an advanced and sophisticated democratic society such as India would actually convict persons based on an unproven technology is even more incredible,” he concluded.[121]

Other scientists hail the technology as a revolutionary evidence gathering procedure paralleling, or perhaps, being more important than DNA. Keith Ashcroft, who is considered an expert witness in Britain, said, “According to the cases that have been presented to me, BEOS [Brain Electrical Oscillations Signature] has clearly demonstrated its utility in

providing admissible evidence that has been used to assist in the conviction of defendants in court."[122]

Henry T. Greely, from Stanford admitted that if and when this technology becomes commonplace, that there will be serious implications on personal privacy, as well as the First, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, but said, "the potential benefits to society of such a technology, if used well, could be at least equally large."

Will these devices or others like them become common in courtrooms, schools, or businesses? Will we one day live in a society where everything people say will be subjected to be verified by a mind-reading machine? We will soon find out.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which develops new technology for the US military, included $4 million dollars in their 2009-2010 budget for a program named *Silent Talk*, which aims to "allow user-to-user communication on the battlefield without the use of vocalized speech through analysis of neural signals."[123]

Another $4 million dollars was given to the University of California to investigate "synthetic telepathy" which entails creating a device that can detect brain waves that have speech encoded into them in order to literally read the mind of the person using it to determine exactly what they are thinking.[124]

Not even in the dystopian world found in Orwell's book did Big Brother have the ability to read people's minds. "With all their cleverness they had never mastered the secret of finding out what another human being was thinking."[125] —*Nineteen Eighty Four*

Artificial Nose to Smell Terrorists' Fear

Aside from advanced systems that read facial expressions, iris dilation, heart rate, breathing patterns and body language, authorities are also attempting to construct devices that can literally smell a person's fear in their quest to perfect mind-reading machines. The Department of Homeland Security advertised that they were looking for specialists who could design systems that would smell "deceptive individuals." The technology is based on the idea that a person's body odors change according to their mood.

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) are trying to create an artificial nose that can smell adrenaline, which researchers believe is given off in higher amounts from someone who has a guilty conscience.

Homeland Security is also working on collecting a "smell bank" that holds scents collected from crime scenes which they believe will be able to identify specific individuals the same way as DNA.

Professor Kenneth Furton at Florida International University in Miami, is working on technology he says could soon identify criminals by matching scent molecules taken from crime scenes to a "smell bank," that contains the scents of people, much like a fingerprint database. He pointed out that scientists can already determine a person's race, age, and environment based on their scent, and in some cases, what they had for their last meal. Scientists are also looking to identify odors that signify if a person is depressed, or has a disease.

Honda’s Mind Reader

The car manufacturer, Honda Motor Corporation, has designed a device that reads a person’s brain waves and can control a robot from the user’s thoughts. At a press conference in Japan in 2009, the company unveiled an updated version of a robot they called Asimo, which walks on two legs and is controlled by a person wearing their strange mind-reading head gear. The device is considered a brain-machine interface which was developed by a joint venture between Honda and the Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International and the Shimadzu corporation.

The device looks like a bicycle helmet covered with electrical components and uses what is called electroencephalography (EEG) and near-infrared spectroscopy (NIRS) to measure brain activity. One may wonder why Honda would be interested in such technology, since it wouldn’t seem to have any benefit to the automobile industry. It seems Honda is looking to expand their business and one day build robots that help around the home. They also think it would be cool to use such technology to allow people to open their car trunk or change the air-conditioning setting just by thinking about it, because apparently, they think that pushing a button is just too difficult.

“When your hands are full doing the dishes, you could have a robot give you a hand watering the plants [just by thinking],” said Tatsuya Okabe, a scientist at the Honda Research Institute.[126]

The 2009 version of the Asimo robot and this mind-reading system was actually quite pathetic. A video clip on the Internet shows a person wearing the helmet and moving the robot around, but at the time, it was

very primitive. Of course, researchers are hoping to make dramatic advances in the coming years.

When asked if the device could one day be used to drive a car, Yasuhisa Arai, the director of Honda’s R&D department responded, “I don’t want to deny the possibility, but there are many challenges. Practical uses are still way into the future.”

Another Japanese company that makes robotic toys, Rolling Robots, is also planning on creating toys and other gadgets with mind-reading sensors by the year 2020 that they hope can be used to send text messages and operate other electronics.[127]

Video Game Interfaces

Videogame manufacturers are hoping to one day replace the joystick or gamepad with mind-reading devices that players wear on their heads which will control the video game character by the person’s thoughts. One manufacturer, NeuroSky, has designed a primitive device called the Darth Vader game, but say other more sophisticated games are in the works.

Some people strangely say these devices could increase mental focus and actually help kids with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism or mood disorders. Of course, playing more video games is the last thing that these kids need, but this is a good marketing strategy for videogame companies.

“It fulfills the fantasy of telekinesis,” said Tan Le, co-founder and president of San Francisco-based Emotiv, another designer producing similar devices they hope will be used on the Nintendo Wii, Sony PlayStation and Microsoft Xbox.

Another company called CyberLearning has been selling what they call SmartBrain Technologies systems for the PlayStation and Xbox. The device uses EEG and EMG-based biofeedback and costs about $600. The company has sold more than 1,500 systems between 2005 and 2009, and also plans on marketing their products to children with behavior disorders.

“Our biggest struggle is to find the target market,” said co-founder Lindsay Greco. “We’re finding that parents are using this to improve their own recall and focus. We have executives who use it to improve their memory, even their golf.”[128]

The God Helmet

Orwellian devices aren't only being built that can read people's minds, but similar devices may be used to manipulate people's brainwaves to give them intoxicating feelings like they get from drugs, alcohol, or adrenaline rushes like skydiving.

A strange invention dubbed the "God helmet," which is a modified snowmobile helmet, stimulates the brain with magnetic fields in order to give the person wearing it a "spiritual experience." The "God helmet" was created by Michael Persinger who designed it to be used in research for what is called neurotheology, which is the study of neurology's connections to spirituality. People who use the device have reported feeling as if there was another being in the room with them, and even sensed what they say is the presence of God.[129]

It's likely that such devices will one day be commercially available for personal use and could become a substitute for people doing drugs who are looking for a high. Of course, these devices open the door to all kinds of dangers, such as brain damage from long term exposure, or even psychological addiction to the device. They will likely become extremely small in the future and could be placed on the head and covered up by a person's hair and not be noticed by others so they could be worn anywhere. Some people may get such a high from these devices that it could be similar to heroin or cocaine, and abuse of the technology could severely disrupt individual's lives.

One also wonders if this technology will be able to permanently alter areas of the brain, and if it could be mandated as part of a rehabilitation program for prisoners in order to alter their thought patterns or attitudes.

Neural Interfaces

While it’s interesting that devices can be worn on a person’s head that measure brain waves and can be used to control robots, videogames, or read a person’s mind and detect memories, a much more invasive method of using a person’s thoughts to control external machines or computers is found in what are called neural interfaces, which are devices that are connected directly to the human brain. Neural interfaces, sometimes called brain implants, or a brain machine interface (BMI) are electronic systems that are literally, physically wired into the human brain through surgery.

In July 2001, someone with access to the Department of Neurobiology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel, used a hidden camera to videotape bizarre and cruel tests that were being done on monkeys to implant them with neural interfaces. The footage shows several monkeys secured in restraining devices with their skull caps removed, and you can clearly see their brains protruding out of the top of their heads with neural interfaces attached. The video is extremely horrific to watch. It’s in color and can be found on YouTube if you search for “hidden camera monkey brain experiments.” The person narrating the video mentions a Dr. Zohari, who they identify as the project manager of the experiments.

A strange neurophysiologist at Yale University, named Dr. Jose Delgado, carried out similar experiments in the 1960s that involved implanting electrodes in the brains of animals and he was able to remotely induce a wide range of emotions and physical movements in them. Videos are available on YouTube that show Delgado’s team demonstrating a cat equipped with a neural interface that enabled them to cause the animal to get angry and start hissing with the push of a button. Another video shows a bull with a neural interface implanted in its brain that’s charging straight at a man and when the researcher sends a signal to the receiver, the animal stops immediately.[130]

In his book *Physical Control of the Mind,* published in 1971, Dr. Delgado wrote, “The technology for nonsensory communication between brains and computers through the intact skin is already at our fingertips, and its consequences are difficult to predict. In the past the progress of civilization has tremendously magnified the power of our senses, muscles, and skills. Now we are adding a new dimension: the direct interface between brains and machines.”

He said that it was, “already possible to induce a large variety of responses, from motor effects to emotional reactions and intellectual manifestations, by direct electrical stimulation of the brain.”

“Also, several investigators have learned to identify patterns of electrical activity (which a computer could also recognize) localized in specific areas of the brain and related to determined phenomena such as perception of smells or visual perception of edges and movements. We are advancing rapidly in the pattern recognition of electrical correlates of behavior and in the methodology for two-way radio communication between brain and computers.”[131]

In his writings, Delgado acknowledged people expressed fears that this new technology was a threat to possible unwanted and unethical remote control of the thoughts of people by others, but wrote that he believed the dangers are outweighed by the expected clinical and scientific benefits.

Ray Kurzweil, who is seen as a prominent futurist believed to be able to accurately forecast approaching technological developments in the coming decades wrote, “Improving our lives through neural implants on the mental level, and nanotechnology-enhanced bodies on the physical level, will be popular and compelling.”[132] Kurzweil believes that around the year 2099, neural interfaces will be implanted into almost everyone, and that, “humans who do not utilize such implants [will be] unable to meaningfully participate in dialogues with those who do.”[133]

What he means is that humans will have their brains wired into the Internet and will become a species of cyborgs who have merged with computers.

Brain Gate

A neural interface called Brain Gate was one of the first devices used on humans and was developed in 2003, by a company called Cyberkinetics along with the Department of Neuroscience at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. The device was designed to allow people paralyzed from spinal cord injuries to use the neural interface to operate computers or electronic wheelchairs with their thoughts.

The first version of the device used 96 different electrodes to sense different neurons firing in specific areas of the brain and transferred those signals to a computer. In 2010, the company's website said that three different people have had the device installed, the first of which was a 25-year-old paralyzed man named Matt Nagle who can be seen in videos on the Internet using Brain Gate to move a mouse around a computer screen.

An article on CNN's website mentioned the possibilities of such devices turning the population into cyborgs, saying, "Beyond alleviating the effects of severe disabilities, normal functioning humans could also benefit from 'upgrades' to improve intelligence, sensory awareness or simply to counter the effects of aging."[134] The article also quoted Microsoft founder Bill Gates as saying that one of his Microsoft colleagues is anticipating cybernetic enhancements, and that he's ready to be "plugged in." Gates said that he personally would not want to be implanted with such things.

Military Applications

The US military has shown interest in neural interfaces and various documents and budgets explain some of their proposed Orwellian uses. One report commissioned by the Office of Defense Research and Engineering titled *Human Performance* explained, "The most successful implementation of invasive interfaces has occurred in medical applications in which nerve signals are used as the mechanism for information transfer. Adversarial actions using this approach to implement enhanced, specialized sensory functions could be possible in limited form now, and with developing capability in the future."[135]

Documents dating back to 1996 from the Department of Defense show that plans were being drawn up to use neural interfaces on soldiers and the civilian population as well. One document discussing technology the military hoped to have in place by the year 2025, titled *Information Operations: A New War-Fighting Capability* reads, "The implanted microscopic brain chip performs two functions. First, it links the individual to the IIC [Information Integration Center] creating a seamless interface between the user and the information resources. In essence, the chip relays the processed information from the IIC [Information Integration Center] to the user, second the chip creates a computer generated mental visualization based upon the user's request."[136]

The documents claim the devices would help increase security, saying, "An implanted microscopic chip does not require security measures to verify whether the right person is connected to the IIC [Information Integration Center], whereas a room, helmet, or sunglasses requires additional time-consuming access control mechanisms to verify an individual's identity and level of control within the Cyber Situation."[137]

The document foresaw resistance to such ideas, saying, "Implanting 'things' in people raises ethical and public relations issues. While these concerns may be founded on today's thinking, in 2025 they may not be as alarming" and goes on to say, "The civilian populace will likely accept any implanted microscopic chips that allow military members to defend vital national interests."[138]

Aside from military applications, the documents say that neural interfaces could be used to upload information into people's minds and make them feel like they are playing a virtual reality video game. It reads, "This capability will have extraordinary commercial applications from medical advances. These advances will help restore patients with damaged neural, audio, and visual systems as well as enable them to achieve the ultimate virtual reality trip."[139]

The *Human Performance* document produced for the Pentagon in 2008, acknowledges the "evils" of using these devices and admits, "one can consider the potential that an adversary might use invasive interfaces in military applications. An extreme example would be remote guidance or control of a human being." It continues to list examples of experiments that were able to remotely control animals as if they were remote controlled toys, saying, "There has been non-medical research into remote monitoring or control of animals (rats, sharks, pigeons, etc.) [53, 54, 55] with applications in research or law enforcement, with related strong interest in the popular press."[140]

Intel Planning Neural Interfaces to Surf Internet

An article in *Computerworld* magazine published in 2009, discussed how computer giant Intel thinks that by the year 2020 we won’t need to use a keyboard or a mouse to control computers, cell phones, or televisions anymore, and will instead use neural interfaces. The article stated, “Big Brother won’t be planting chips in your brain against your will. Researchers expect that consumers will want the freedom they will gain by using the implant.”[141]

Andrew Chien, the vice president of research and director of future technologies at Intel Labs said, “There are a lot of things that have to be done first but I think [implanting chips into human brains] is well within the scope of possibility.”

Another Intel research scientist named Dean Pomerleau told *Computerworld* that “We’re trying to prove you can do interesting things with brain waves. Eventually people may be willing to be more committed...to brain implants. Imagine being able to surf the Web with the power of your thoughts.”

They are using fMRI technology at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh to map thought patterns and have found that different people’s brain patterns are similar when they think similar thoughts, allowing scientists to develop ways to detect the thoughts of different people using the same method.

Intel’s Dean Pomerleau said they will soon be able to build a brainwave sensor that people can wear on their head and will be connected to a computer. The next step, he said, is to implant neural interfaces into people’s brains.

Wireless Neural Interface

Most neural interfaces consist of devices implanted into the human brain and have wires protruding out of the person's (or animal's) skull which lead to a computer, but one British scientist is developing a wireless chip that can be injected into the skull with a large hypodermic needle, and can then communicate wirelessly to a computer.

The chip is being developed by Dr. Jon Spratley who designed a prototype while earning his PhD at Birmingham University. "We are just trying to help people with severe communication problems or motor neurone disease—like Dr Stephen Hawking or Christopher Reeve," he said.[142]

"It's an area that is being heavily researched in America but so far all the tests have involved wired sensors. This prototype uses wireless technology to remove the risk of infection and that's the real drive of our work."

Dr. Spratley hopes the device can be used by quadriplegic people, enabling them to operate computers, electric wheel chairs, or even bionic arms or legs. "If they can imagine using a limb, even if they can't move it, you can tap into that signal. Then you just have to imagine moving the muscle and the leg will move, the brain will train itself," he said.

Dr. Spratley is looking for funding to start human trials.

Depression Implant

If you think it’s strange that companies have developed technology that can wire a human brain into a computer in order to detect brain waves, the technology gets even more sinister. In 2005, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a neural interface system to treat depression.[143] The device is wired into the brain and stimulates the Vagus Nerve in order to make people feel happier.

The manufacturer of this horrific device is a company called Cyberonics which has sold a similar brain implant that reduces seizures in people with epilepsy. The depression implant costs about $20,000, including surgical and hospital expenses, according to Cyberonics chief executive, Skip Cummins. The company has also been conducting various studies hoping the device will be approved to treat anxiety, bulimia, and other chronic disorders.[144]

Dangers of Neural Interfaces

Hidden beneath the lofty goals of helping paralyzed people gain more mobility and independence lies a dark underbelly of disastrous consequences arising from the widespread use of neural interfaces. Detecting and reading brainwaves is one thing, but neural interfaces have already shown that they can also do the opposite, and actually manipulate brainwaves as well. Futurists like Ray Kurzweil anxiously anticipate a world where these devices are as common as cell phones, and envision enhancing human perception, memory, and cognitive abilities. But this technology, perhaps more than any other, contains disastrous consequences that are often overlooked by transhumanist dreamers.

It’s not an unfounded fear to wonder if a neural interface that physically jacks people’s minds into a centralized computer system could then possibly literally control people’s thoughts once they are plugged in. While this may seem far-fetched, as I have already uncovered, the military has proposed that such devices could take people on the “ultimate virtual reality trip” and implants that make people “feel better” have already been created. These devices may lead to mass mind control, quite literally.

In 1993, Sylvester Stallone and Sandra Bullock starred in a science fiction film taking place in the future called *Demolition Man*, which included a scene where prisoners were connected to neural interfaces that reprogrammed their minds in order to rehabilitate them and change their attitudes and behaviors.

The *CBS Evening News* once aired a segment discussing high-tech methods for keeping tabs on prisoners and included an interview with a specialist who said, “one thing we could implant could be a subliminal implant. In other words, basically messages being piped into the

subconscious constantly. ‘Do the right thing. Do what’s required of you. Be a good citizen. Don’t disobey the law.’”[145]

The infamous mark of the beast spoken about in the Bible, which predicts that a global dictator will force the entire earth’s population to take a “mark” on their hand or forehead or else they won’t be able to buy or sell anything, is often believed to be a Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) or some kind of device that replaces cash and checks as methods of doing financial transactions. But some speculate that the “mark of the beast” is actually a neural interface they believe will cause everyone who has one to literally lose control of their own mind, and then be completely controlled by an artificial intelligence system or whoever is in charge of the neural interface mainframe.

The topic of the mark of the beast is beyond the scope of this book, but the possibility of neural interfaces literally controlling people’s minds is a very real and dangerous scenario that we seem to be rapidly approaching.

Psychotronic Weapons

Paranoid people have often feared that the government was able to read their minds with some kind of advanced technology, which is now actually real (**See *Mind-Reading Machines***), but what is perhaps even more insidious, is technology that is able to project thoughts into people's heads simply through radio waves. While neural interfaces need to be wired directly into the brain of a person and involve extensive and invasive surgery, technology that can beam thoughts and voices into people's heads doesn't require any physical contact with the person, and can easily be done without their knowledge. While this may seem far-fetched, as you read further, you will find that the US Air Force has actually patented such technology.

The term *psychotronic weapons* refers to weapons that affect the mind, mainly through radio waves, and aside from beaming voices or subliminal messages into people's heads, psychotronic weapons can affect people's moods and concentration, and can even cause sudden sickness or death.

In 1980, a Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army named Michael Aquino co-authored a paper titled *From PSYOP to MindWar* that suggested using psychotronic weapons against American citizens to alter the brainwaves of the public on a mass scale, thus altering their mood.

Aquino wrote, "Infrasound vibration (up to 20Hz) can subliminally influence brain activity to align itself to delta, theta, alpha, or beta wave patterns, inclining an audience toward everything from alertness to passivity. Infrasound could be used tactically, as ELF-waves endure for great distances; and it could be used in conjunction with media broadcasts as well."[146]

So basically what Lieutenant Colonel Aquino wrote was that the government should target American citizens with radio waves to either cause them to get anxious or lethargic, depending on the goals of the government at the time. So, if, for example, there was a massive protest planned for a specific city or even across the country, the government could use the MindWar strategy of transmitting infrasound to cause people to feel lazy and lethargic, thus massively declining the number of protesters because many people simply wouldn't feel like going. They could also use other frequencies of radio waves to give the target audience an overwhelming feeling of anxiety, if they choose, and perhaps cause massive rioting.

Many researchers point to HAARP (High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program) as being capable of broadcasting such ELF waves and infrasound on a mass scale, and being capable of focusing it on a specific location. While it is denied that HAARP can be used as a weapon, what is not disputed are Aquino's own words in his publicly available report *From PSYOP to MindWar*, where he openly advocated using psychotronic weapons on an unsuspecting population.

Radio Frequency Hearing Effect

An article published in the *Washington Post* in 2007 discusses the existence of technology that can beam voices into people's heads, and begins by saying there is, "a community of people who believe the government is beaming voices into their minds. They may be crazy, but the Pentagon has pursued a weapon that can do just that."[147]

The article continues to discuss people on the Internet who think that they have been targeted by the government and used as test subjects or harassed using what is called the Radio Frequency Hearing Effect, which is very real. So real, in fact, that on October 22, 2002 patent number 6,470,214 was awarded to the technology which is designed to, "induce a thermal-acoustic signal in the bone/tissue material of the head that replicates the input audio signal and is conducted by the bone/tissue structure of the head to the inner ear where it is demodulated by the normal processes of the cochlea and converted to nerve signals which are sent to the brain, thereby enabling intelligible speech to be perceived by the brain." The patent was awarded to the United States Air Force who first filed for it in 1996.[148]

A man named Donald Friedman, who believes he is a victim of this technology (called a targeted individual, or a TI), has dedicated his time and energy to exposing the government's misuse of psychotronic weapons and has filed multiple Freedom of Information Requests to obtain documents proving it. One such document was released in 1998 by the US Army titled *Bioeffects of Selected Nonlethal Weapons* which discusses weapons that can beam voices into people's heads, give them fevers, and even cause epileptic seizures.

One of Friedman's requests was responded to with a motion for an enlargement of time, which is a legal request to delay the release of a document. The request to delay the document's release was made by the Secret Service which read, *"Plaintiff's FOIA request is for document [sic] concerning directed energy technology that is very sensitive. Some of this documents [sic] pertain to research conducted by divisions within defendant agency that is used to carry out its mandate to protect very high government officials. In fact, in one case, the documents… could not be mailed but had to be hand carried interstate."*[149]

An article in *Wired* magazine discussed Friedman and his claims, and admitted, "It's very easy to poke fun at people like Friedman. On the other hand, it does show that if a non-lethal device ever was developed which could cause symptoms associated with madness, it would be completely deniable. The device would completely destroy the target's credibility, neatly ensuring it remained covert. The military utility would be low, but it might be very handy for some three-letter agencies," (meaning the CIA, FBI, NSA, etc.)[150]

Dr. Robert O. Becker, who has been nominated for the Noble prize for his work in bio-electromagnetism, wrote that such devices have an, "obvious application in covert operations designed to drive a target crazy with voices."[151]
Aside from the patent awarded in 2002 to the US government for the Radio Frequency Hearing Effect, another patent (#4,877,027) was filed over a decade earlier in 1988 for an invention known as a "microwave voice device." The abstract for this patent reads:

Sound is induced in the head of a person by radiating the head with microwaves in the range of 100 megahertz to 10,000 megahertz that are modulated with a particular waveform. The waveform consists of frequency modulated bursts. Each burst is made up of ten to twenty uniformly spaced pulses grouped tightly together. The burst width is between 500

nanoseconds and 100 microseconds. The pulse width is in the range of 10 nanoseconds to 1 microsecond. The bursts are frequency modulated by the audio input to create the sensation of hearing in the person whose head is irradiated.

An article published in the December 1980 issue of *Military Review* titled “The New Mental Battlefield,” explained that the Soviet Union had built and used these kinds of weapons against political dissenters to cause illness or death with no evidence of foul play.[152] The author of the article, Colonel John B. Alexander, is considered the “founding father” of such weapons in America. A 1993 issue of *Defense News* reported that U.S. military officials were obtaining some of this Soviet “mind-control technology.”[153]

The US Army has fully functioning devices that utilize this technology and call it a Voice to Skull (V2K) device and is classified as a non-lethal weapon. Some people suspect that these kinds of weapons were used in the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, John Lennon, and others, meaning they believe Lee Harvey Oswald, Sirhan Sirhan, and Mark Chapman, (the shooters) had psychotronic weapons used on them to brainwash them and urge them to kill.

It’s a fact that the MK-ULTRA program which began in the 1950s experimented heavily with mind control and brainwashing techniques, and such activities were considered conspiracy theories until the early 1970s when documents were released under the Freedom of Information Act and the extent of the horrors of this program were seen. One of the main goals of the MK-ULTRA experiments was to create technology and methods to turn an ordinary person into a mind-controlled assassin who would carry out any order given to them regardless of the consequences or danger.

Silent Subliminal Presentation System

When most people think of subliminal messages, they think of messages recorded backwards on rock albums from the 1970s, a method called backmasking, or messages mixed in with music so you can't noticeably hear them, but are believed to be noticed by the subconscious mind. While backmasking (using backwards messages) is really just a publicity stunt used by numerous musicians and not an actual subliminal message, the existence and use of subliminal messages is a very real scientific practice.

Below is information about another Orwellian patent awarded for a device that generates subliminal messages that don't need to be masked with music.

Inventor: Lowery; Oliver M. (Norcross, GA)

Patent # 5,159,703 awarded on October 27, 1992

The Abstract:

A silent communications system in which nonaural carriers, in the very low or very high audio frequency range or in the adjacent ultrasonic frequency spectrum, are amplitude or frequency modulated with the desired intelligence and propagated acoustically or vibrationally, for inducement into the brain, typically through the use of loudspeakers, earphones or piezoelectric transducers. The modulated carriers may be transmitted directly in real time or may be conveniently recorded and stored on mechanical, magnetic or optical media for delayed or repeated transmission to the listener.

The patent makes it clear that, “The ‘silent’ recordings are inaudible to the user or by others present and are therefore very effective for use during periods of sleep or when in the presence of others. Additionally, the basic requirements of subliminal stimulation are met. That is, the affirmations are efficiently transmitted to the ear and, while undetected by the conscious mind, are perceived by and efficiently decoded by the subconscious mind.”

The patent goes on to read:

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, several objects and advantages of my invention are:

(a) to provide a technique for producing a subliminal presentation which is inaudible to the listeners(s), yet is perceived and demodulated (decoded) by the ear for use by the subconscious mind.

(b) to provide a technique for transmitting inaudible subliminal information to the listener(s) at a constant, high level of signal strength and on a clear band of frequencies.

(c) to provide a technique for producing inaudible subliminal presentations to which music or other “foreground” programming may be added, if desired.

Other Subliminal Messages

An article titled *Secret Voices* published in a 1979 edition of *TIME* magazine reported that approximately 50 different department stores in the US and Canada were playing subliminal messages with the music systems hoping to reduce shoplifting from customers and theft from employees. One undisclosed East Coast chain claimed that their theft had dropped by 37% after using the system.[154]

The following year, in 1980, the *Wall Street Journal* published an article investigating systems that broadcast subliminal messages in stores that say things like, “I am honest. I will not steal.” The article reported that after a New Orleans supermarket started using subliminal messages, their loss dropped to the lowest on record.[155] They also reported that shortages from cashiers dramatically dropped as well.

In 1984, a hearing in the US House of Representatives titled *Subliminal Communication Technology* investigated the use of subliminal messages and subliminal advertising in public places.[156]

In 1978 when a serial killer calling himself BTK (Bind, Torture, Kill) came to the attention of police in Wichita, Kansas, a local TV station (under the direction of the police) broadcast a subliminal message hoping to influence the killer, urging him to turn himself in. In a broadcast about the murders, the station included a message saying, “Now call the chief,” although the attempt was unsuccessful.[157]

In 2004 dozens of electronic slot machines in Canada were found to display subliminal messages that some felt encouraged people to gamble more.[158] The machines would flash a quick picture of a winning hand on the

screen, although the company, Konami, said the images were caused from an error in the software. The machines were ordered to be fixed.

It’s interesting how the power of suggestion works. Subliminal messages are not necessarily “brain washing” techniques, but rather function as the name entails, by “suggesting” something, thus causing a thought to arise in a person’s mind. Everyone is familiar with pulling up to a fast food restaurant’s drive through menu and after you’re done placing your order, you are often asked if you want two apple pies or chocolate cookies for $1.99. They know that just by suggesting this, they will spark a desire in a measurable percentage of customers and dramatically increase their sales.

Project Blue Beam

While governments have perpetuated countless hoaxes, disinformation campaigns, and false flag terrorist attacks in order to manipulate large populations of people—no plan is perhaps more grandiose than the idea of faking an appearance by God himself. There have been several times in recent history that the American government has proposed the idea of staging the appearance of God, who would then appear to speak to people and urge them to participate in an insurgency. This "supernatural" event can be done through a combination of holographic projections and sophisticated sound systems.

In February of 1999, the *Washington Post* reported on one of these plans, explaining that during the first Gulf War, the United States had actually considered projecting a huge holographic image of God in the sky over Baghdad.[159] This plan included the use of a 5-15 KHz acoustic beam that would make it seem like God was talking to the Iraqi people and would urge them to turn on their leader Saddam Hussein, sparking a revolution.

A similar plan was considered under Project Mongoose, a series of CIA operations against Cuba designed to overthrow Fidel Castro. Officials discussed having a submarine surface in the Havana harbor and project a huge Jesus-like figure onto the clouds that would then appear to speak and tell the Cuban people to overthrow "Godless Communism."[160]

This technology has been called Project Blue Beam, and could be used to either stage a "supernatural" visitation from "God," or even one from aliens arriving from outer space. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan made a very clear reference to aliens from outer space invading earth and causing all the nations of the world to unite and stop fighting each other. He actually said this at a United Nations meeting and video of the statement can be

found online. “In our obsession with antagonism of the moment, we often forget how much unites all the members of humanity. Perhaps we need some outside, universal threat to make us recognize this common bond. I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world.”[161]

Some wonder whether this comment was said as a primer for a possible use of Project Blue Beam during the Cold War in order to frighten the Russians.

Leaders throughout history, dating back to ancient times, have claimed to have the power of God, or to speak on behalf of God in order to control their people and maintain their power and authority. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that government officials involved in covert operations would try to use Big Brother technology to take on the appearance of God himself.

“God is power [and] we are the priests of power.”[162] —Emmanuel Goldstein, the ‘bad guy’ in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Sonic Nausea Systems

While using the radio frequency hearing effect and other psychotronic weapons may be limited to those with expensive and complicated technology, a widely available and inexpensive device that uses ultrasonic waves to induce headaches and nausea can be purchased on the Internet or in catalogs selling law enforcement products. The *Shomer-Tech* catalog sells such a device called the Sonic Nausea System for only $29.99. The online catalog reads, “Hiding this device in your inconsiderate neighbor’s house might put an end to their late-night parties. The abusive bureaucrat’s office, the executive lunchroom... the possibilities are endless for that small portion of inventive payback.”[163]

Another more advanced version is also sold, called the Super Sonic Nausea system which is advertised to, “disrupt speeches, demonstrations, crowd dynamics, etc. This device has been used to ‘influence’ more of these than you might expect. Deployed near the podium, you might just have a case of an increasingly un-impressive speaker with diminished sharpness and lacking concentration, or perhaps is even unable to complete his presentation. Or, loitering youths on your property might be enticed to move along with no confrontations necessary.”

This “Super Sonic Nausea system” is said to be a “rarely-available government model” and is produced by a company called DSG Laboratories. This version sells for only $99.99. Just imagine for a minute what kind of similar devices are in existence but are not made commercially available. Such devices are extremely small and portable, and could easily be covertly used to inflict discomfort on any number of people, in any number of situations, without anyone even having a clue.

Information Technology

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the main character, Winston Smith, works at the Ministry of Truth, (a propaganda department) and his job is to go through old books and newspapers and delete information that the government doesn’t want people to have access to anymore. Winston also changes “facts” in books and newspapers and reprints them to reflect the changes as if they were still in their original form. Big Brother has complete control over all information available to the people, both in the present, and from the past.

As you likely know, the mainstream media in our society has been tightly controlled for decades in order to shape the majority of information that reaches the population to keep people focused on what the establishment desires, and also at the same time, to prevent people from discovering issues that the establishment desires to keep private. Such a practice was fairly easy until the Internet became an environment where independent journalists and countless “alternative” news sites and bloggers were able to gain large followings of people and operate with practically zero budget, yet reach millions of people just like the mainstream news does.

This has created a fairly large amount of competition for the mainstream establishment media, and has damaged their long held monopoly of information. Of course, they are not going to sit idly by and lose their grip on the flow of information, so they were forced to come up with new strategies in order to minimize the effect that independent blogs and news sites have on the population.

In 2006, a report from the Joint Special Operations University titled *Blogs and Military Information Strategy* outlined a plan that would allow the government to underhandedly combat the popularity of independent

bloggers and journalists. “Hiring a block of bloggers to verbally attack a specific person or promote a specific message may be worth considering,” read the report.[164]

It also suggested the government hack the blogs of journalists whose writings threaten the world view that the establishment is trying to promote and then change articles to make them say ridiculous things to ruin the credibility of those journalists.

It reads, “[T]he enemy blog might be used covertly as a vehicle for friendly information operations. Hacking the site and subtly changing the messages and data—merely a few words or phrases—may be sufficient to begin destroying the blogger’s credibility with the audience. Better yet, if the blogger happens to be passing enemy communications and logistics data, the information content could be corrupted.”[165]

A Harvard law professor named Cass Sunstein was appointed by President Obama to head the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, and just like most high level kingpins in any president’s administration; his Orwellian goals seem too strange to be true. Sunstein published a white paper in January 2008 titled *Conspiracy Theories* where he proposed that the government “might ban conspiracy theorizing” and could “impose some kind of tax, financial or otherwise, on those who disseminate such theories.”[166] The “conspiracy theories” Sunstein is looking to attack aren’t conspiracy theories at all, but rather evidence and editorials that expose information that is damaging to the establishment, such as information about the true nature of the 9/11 attacks, the War in Iraq, and any number of other issues ranging from the Bilderberg group, Bohemian Grove, Skull and Bones, and other secretive establishment organizations.

In an article Sunstein wrote for the *Journal of Political Philosophy*, he also outlined a plan for the government to infiltrate “conspiracy” websites in order to undermine them by posting absurd comments on articles and social networks. He also suggested that government operatives infiltrate

meetings held by “conspiracy theorists” in order to “(break) up the hard core of extremists who supply conspiracy theories.”[167]

Sunstein said the government needed to, “Enlist nongovernmental officials in the effort to rebut the [conspiracy] theories. It might ensure that credible independent experts offer the rebuttal, rather than government officials themselves. There is a tradeoff between credibility and control, however. The price of credibility is that government cannot be seen to control the independent experts.”[168]

It was also suggested that “government agents (and their allies) might enter chat rooms, online social networks, or even real-space groups and attempt to undermine percolating conspiracy theories by raising doubts about their factual premises, causal logic or implications for political action.”[169] By “real-space groups” he means that agents should attend political protests and meetings in order to cause trouble, attempting to discredit the group while pretending to support their cause.

Sunstein has also called for making websites liable for comments posted in response to articles which would basically shut down any website that the government targeted with their online trolls. (A troll is a term used to identify someone online who posts comments on articles, blogs, or videos to derail the focus and to cause trouble rather than engage in a discussion about the topic at hand.) Sunstein’s book, *On Rumors: How Falsehoods Spread, Why We Believe Them, What Can Be Done* was criticized by some as a blueprint for online censorship.

It’s important to highlight that these ideas are not just the dreams of an obscure intellectual college professor. Cass Sunstein was appointed to a high level position in the Obama administration (the administrator of the head the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs).

Sunstein is also vehemently against the right for people to own guns. In a lecture he gave at the University of Chicago Law School on October 27, 2007 he said, “The Supreme Court has never suggested that the Second

Amendment protects an individual right to have guns."[170] Such a statement is completely false and a lie, and is another example of doublethink by an establishment insider. He continued his lecture predicting that the Second Amendment would be repealed, and the right to own guns will be a thing of the past. Sunstein is certainly not alone with his Orwellian dreams of trying to prevent alternative political views from becoming a consensus. His goals of censorship and disrupting alternative media are shared by many in the establishment, both on the left, and on the right.

In 2006, the United States Central Command, (CENTCOM, a division of the Department of Defense) hired people to engage "bloggers who are posting inaccurate or untrue information, as well as bloggers who are posting incomplete information," about the so-called war on terror.[171]

As part of government's Information Operations, the Pentagon had people set up websites designed to look like foreign news websites, whose only purpose was to publish military propaganda and make it seem like it was news.[172] Israel also has teams of people who work to flood websites with messages to support Zionists' crimes and try to deflect blame onto others.[173]

In January 2009, the US Air Force announced a "counter-blog" response plan aimed at finding and reacting to material from bloggers who have "negative opinions about the US government and the Air Force."[174]

The plan outlines a twelve-point "counter blogging" flow-chart that describes how they can handle "misguided" online writers by posting comments designed to derail the discussion causing it to drift off topic.

A leading think tank in the UK called Demos published a report in August 2010 titled *The Power of Unreason* that suggested government agents should infiltrate websites in an attempt to discredit ideas that the 9/11 attacks in America and the 7/7 bombings in London were "inside jobs." The report explained that these online agents needed to increase trust

in government and that the government needed to “fight back by infiltrating Internet sites to dispute these theories.”[175]

Jamie Bartlett, the author of the report, essentially called people who discuss “conspiracy theories” and false flag terrorism “extremists” who make stories up. The Demos think tank logo incorporates an obvious all-seeing eye as the letter “o” in their name which can be seen on their official website http://www.demos.co.uk.

Demos was co-founded in 1993 by Communist Martin Jacques, who was the editor of *Marxism Today*, the journal of The Communist Party of Great Britain. The other co-founder was Geoff Mulgan who was closely affiliated with Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Carnivore

Anyone with average intelligence knows that Internet service providers (and the government) keep databases on practically every website each individual user visits, what files you download, what links you click, and can access every e-mail you've ever sent. Some may be surprised at just how simple this is, and how long this has been possible. The all-encompassing system designed for this task was originally called Carnivore and was created by the FBI during the Clinton administration as the Internet became widely used by the public.

The public inevitably found out about Carnivore and its capabilities so the FBI later changed its name to DCS1000, which stands for Digital Collection System. This system can easily monitor a specific individual's Internet usage in real time, as well as go back and see the exact history of all Internet searches and websites they've visited, what comments they've posted on articles or social networking sites, and what files they've downloaded. It is reasonable to assume that this same system can secretly access any computer's hard drive if the computer is connected to the Internet, and the contents of that person's hard drive can be copied and analyzed, all without having physical access to the computer. The built-in webcams and microphones in laptops can also be remotely activated by authorities as well, and can be used to watch and listen to you without your knowledge. Of course, these activities are illegal without a warrant, but that is why they are highly classified. Anyone who denies that such tasks are easily carried out is simply in denial, or has no clue about what modern technology is capable of.

"As for sending a letter through the mail, it was out of the question. By a routine that was not even secret, all letters were opened in transit."[176] — *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Have you downloaded music or movies illegally on torrents or file sharing networks? It’s usually just the large downloaders that get busted, but if Big Brother is watching you for some other reason, then you may just “coincidentally” find yourself getting arrested or sued for pirating intellectual property.

Internet service provider Earthlink has resisted the government’s attempts to monitor Internet traffic through their systems, and admitted that the FBI has forced the company to allow them to tap into their system. Robert Corn-Revere, a lawyer for Earthlink said at a hearing, “We believed it would enable the government to acquire more information than the law permits, not just about the person who was the target of the investigation, but potentially about a large number of other subscribers who had nothing at all to do with the investigation…Over time, the cumulative effect of widespread surveillance for law enforcement, intelligence, and other investigatory purposes could change the climate and fabric of society in fundamental ways.”[177]

In a world where George Orwell’s 1984 nightmare has come true, we would expect that practically all of our communications are intercepted, monitored, analyzed, and stored indefinitely by Big Brother. Echelon and Carnivore are the two most well-known mechanisms for conducting this kind of surveillance, but for decades most of the information concerning these systems has been kept highly secret. If and when the details and capabilities of these systems are made public, it would be chilling to learn just how far-reaching they are.

In the post-9/11 world when security has become big business, many private companies are developing Big Brother technology that may rival similar government systems in hopes of identifying “troubled” people before they may “do something crazy.”

At a military tech conference at the International First Responder-Military Symposium in the Town of Hamburg, New York in September

2010, one company showed off a system that’s capable of listening to phone calls, reading emails, as well as people’s posts on social networking sites and other areas of the Internet for what was described as “resentment towards the government.”[178]

Professor Mathieu Guidere of the University of Geneva, Switzerland, explained that, “The computer system detects resentment in conversations through measurements in decibels and other voice biometrics. It detects obsessiveness with the individual going back to the same topic over and over, measuring crescendos.”[179]

A similar data mining system is used on emails to detect what are allegedly patterns of fixation on specified subjects and any data that involves radicalization or ideological arguments. When demonstrating the system, Guidere invoked the memory of the September 11, 2001 attacks, saying that it can detect signs “pointing to a potential terrorist.”

The system demonstrated at the conference could review about 10,000 voice or other electronic transmissions in an hour, a capacity that would soon increase to 100,000 per hour and beyond, touted the designers.

The system was even promoted as some kind of emotional stability tester that could be used to screen potential employees, war veterans, law enforcement officials, and practically anyone else unfortunate enough to be subjected to the device. “By recording the voice of the patient, the program can rate negativity and positivity with depression and other emotional disorders,” said Guidere, who is working with Dr. Newton Howard, the director of MIT’s Mind Machine Project, a program dedicated to building artificially intelligent machines.[180] **(*See Artificial Intelligence*)**

Telcom Immunity

It was revealed that major telecommunication companies secretly cooperated with the Bush administration to illegally wiretap phone calls of American citizens allegedly to help fight the war on terror. It turns out that the National Security Agency had entire rooms built within the major telecommunication companies in order to tap into their networks and communication hubs. The problem was, this was against the law, and while it was initially denied by the Bush administration and telecommunication executives, the large-scale wire tapping was later fully revealed.

Citizens clamored for legal action to be taken, but the Bush administration passed a law giving retroactive immunity to all of the telecom companies involved in the illegal wiretapping.[181] The message the government sent to private industries was basically that they could break the law and not worry about any legal ramifications because the government would just grant them immunity if they were ever busted.

During his presidential campaign, Barack Obama denounced the legislation granting them immunity, but when the time came to vote for the immunity, he voted to support it.[182]

Reading Your E-mails Without a Warrant

Internet giant Yahoo has battled with the government over whether or not e-mails were protected by the Constitution's requirement that a search warrant be required in order for the government to read them. To many people's surprise, it is perfectly legal for the government to read your e-mails without a warrant after they are 180 days old, but the government began pushing to read e-mails without a warrant that were not that old if the e-mails had already been read by the person receiving them. For some reason, the government insisted then, that the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution didn't apply because the e-mail had already been read.

Yahoo disagreed and refused to turn over customer e-mails to the feds that were less than 180 days old, saying it required a warrant. Google, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the Center for Democracy & Technology and other groups also told a federal judge presiding over the case that accessing e-mail less than 180 days old requires a valid warrant under the Fourth Amendment, regardless of whether it has been read.

"The government says the Fourth Amendment does not protect these e-mails," explains Kevin Bankston, an Electronic Frontier Foundation lawyer. "What we're talking about is archives of our personal correspondence that they would need a warrant to get from your computer but not from the server."[183]

The 1986 Stored Communications Act defines electronic storage as "(A) any temporary, intermediate storage of a wire or electronic communication incidental to the electronic transmission thereof; and (B) any storage of such communication by an electronic communication service for purposes of backup protection of such communication."

The government insists that the storage of previously opened e-mails does not qualify for protection, because the e-mails are not in “electronic storage” which they say enables them to read the e-mails without a warrant.

The Cybersecurity Act

The Cybersecurity Act is a bill that if passed would give the President of the United States the power to declare a “cybersecurity emergency” and shut down or limit Internet traffic in any “critical” information network “in the interest of national security.”

If the president wanted to, he could basically force major websites to be shut down for a duration of time in the immediate aftermath of a major terrorist attack or a pandemic, and even cause the visitors of those websites to be forwarded to a specific government page which would then display government propaganda with one-sided information about what had just occurred, and what actions should be taken, such as coerced evacuations or inoculations. This ability is similar to the Emergency Broadcast System installed on television networks that enables local, state, and national authorities to take over all major broadcast networks and cable channels to then broadcast a message to all viewers simultaneously on all channels.

This bill was introduced by Senator Jay Rockefeller, the great-grandson of John D. Rockefeller, nephew of banker David Rockefeller, a family that has long been a part of the secret establishment. When discussing how “dangerous” the Internet was to national security and why he felt the Cybersecurity Act was important, Jay Rockefeller stated, “It really almost makes you ask the question, would it have been better if we had never invented the Internet.”

The so-called Einstein Security Shield is reported to use NSA technology and according to the declassified summary is designed to look for indicators of cyber attacks by digging into all Internet communications, including the contents of e-mails.[184]

Hackers sent a virus to attack Iran’s new nuclear power plant in 2010; doing so much damage that it set their nuclear program back allegedly by two years.[185] In all likelihood it was an attack orchestrated by Israel to delay Iran’s nuclear program for their own self-interest. Many see cyber-security programs as power grabs by governments to more easily regulate and monitor global Internet traffic.

Some believe that Julian Assange, the famed editor of the WikiLeaks whistleblower website, was an unknowing patsy of billionaire George Soros, who people believe was funding WikiLeaks in order to create a compelling reason to pass the Cyber Security Act in order to further secure the Internet. While there is rampant speculation surrounding Julian Assange and WikiLeaks regarding their funding and the goals, Julian Assange is most likely a true activist-hacker and info-warrior who believes that he is just bringing the world the secret information the military doesn’t want people to know about concerning the true nature of the war in Iraq and the global war on terrorism.

As a result of the famous publishing of 250,000 cables (documents) in 2010, Julian Assange and the WikiLeaks supporters found themselves in a difficult dilemma, as well as the target of various conspiracy theories. They stole and leaked classified information to the public, but once that was done, then obviously the security was strengthened, making it impossible to do the same thing in the future. But some short-sighted conspiracy theorists claim WikiLeaks *only* released the 250,000 cables so the government could clamp down on cyber security, following in line with the Hegelian Dialectic of problem-reaction-solution. While this was undoubtedly a side-effect of the leaking of the classified info, it certainly was not the intention of Assange.

Cyber security measures implemented by the government will always serve as a cover to gain a more intimate look at the personal communications of everyone.

CNN’s Fake Cyber Attack Broadcast

In February of 2010, CNN aired a one hour simulation of the aftermath of a cyber attack on America. The broadcast consisted of a boardroom of high-level officials, including (former) Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte, former Director of the CIA John McLaughlin, Bill Clinton’s former press secretary Joe Lockhart, and other high-powered and well-known government officials. The group sat around and pretended to have a real discussion about how the government would deal with a cyber attack that had just shut down the Internet and electrical grids across the country.

The opening screen of the broadcast explained, “Cyber ShockWave will provide an unprecedented look at how the government would develop a real-time response to a large-scale cyber crisis affecting much of the nation.” The event took place at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Washington, D.C. on February 16, 2010. When breaking to, and coming back from commercials, CNN showed a screen saying, “we were warned,” which is what they titled their broadcast.

CNN’s Wolf Blitzer hosted the event and began by saying, “What you’re about to see is not real, but the threat is very real, indeed. You’re about to get an unprecedented look at how the US government would deal with a massive cyber shockwave.” He went on to describe the program as a cyber war game scenario.

Clips of this war game can likely be found on YouTube and show the panelists pretending to react to an actual cyber attack that just hit America. What’s fascinating about this broadcast is the seriousness and the seeming authenticity of the panelists. If you had not noticed the word “simulation”

posted in the corner of the screen, or had just listened to the broadcast, you would swear they were responding to an actual attack that just occurred.

It’s fascinating that these high-powered government officials were simply playing make-believe but all of them seemed like they could be nominated for an Academy Award for their performances. They appeared scared and were coming up with scenarios off the top of their head about what needed to be done to respond to the “attack.” What their fake concern shows is just how good of actors these people are. They looked, and sounded, no different during this session of make-believe, than they did during press conferences or during regular interviews. These powerful panelists on this war game were some of the best liars that have ever lived, and their simulation shows how easily they can look the American people in the eye and seem extremely concerned about an event, simply by acting. It was surely no coincidence that this fear-mongering simulation was broadcast at the same time the Obama administration was trying to get support for the Cybersecurity Act which grants sweeping powers to the government over the Internet.

The Way You Type Can Identify You

Some computer scientists believe that they can actually identify a person's age, sex, and culture just from analyzing the way they type depending on their speed and rhythm. This seems like pseudoscience of course, but Professor Roy Maxion, associate professor at Newcastle University, has been researching these claims and a former Police detective Phil Butler, head of Newcastle University's Cybercrime and Computer Security department, believes the system could be used to track online criminals and pedophiles.

"Roy's research has the potential to be a fantastic tool to aid intelligence gathering for crime fighting agencies, in particular serious and organized crime and for those tracking down pedophiles," Butler said.[186]

"If children are talking to each other on Windows Live or MSN Messenger, we are looking at ways of providing the chat room moderators with the technology to be able to see whether an adult is on there by the way they type," he explained.

The basis of this technology is that each individual has identifying patterns to the way they type, and once that pattern is identified, then a program could be installed to look for that pattern to see if it shows up in a chat room.

Your Laptop is Listening to You

In 2006 it was reported that Google had discussed using the microphone that is built into all laptop computers to listen to the user and their environment and analyze the audio for keywords which would then be used to place specific advertisements on web pages that reflected conversations the microphone was picking up.[187] The lengthy user agreement that people agree to through implied consent when they log on to Google.com would include legal language that would allow this.

If this system were in place, for example, if you were talking a lot about working out or hiking when you're around your computer, the system would identify these keywords as being frequently discussed topics and would then choose specific advertisements to display as a result. It was also discussed that this system would choose advertisements based on what television or radio shows were detected playing in the background.[188] If the system detected cooking shows, your ads would be for food and kitchen related items. If you were watching football, then it would detect this and tailor the advertising accordingly.

The Onion, a popular parody and satire news site, produced a video that looked like a news segment about what they described as new software for Google's cell phone that would use voice recognition software to listen to people's conversations, and then play relevant advertisements during that conversation.[189] The writers of this sketch obviously had read the reports of Google's discussion about using the built-in microphones to listen to people and chose to satirize the idea.

Google Street View

Another Orwellian feature implemented by the Internet giant Google is their Street View feature that was launched in May 2007 and provides panoramic views from nearly every street in America and other countries around the world. Online travel map programs, such as Yahoo Maps and Google Maps, have been a favorite of many people since search engines began, but Google's Street View function allows users to choose any address in the country, and then shows them a 360 degree view of that area as it looks from the street.

For example, you can type in your address on the Google Maps page (or using your cell phone) and then select the "Street View" function, and you can then view your own house as if you are standing on the street right in front of it. You can then change the direction and position of the camera, and simulate traveling down your street as if you are in a virtual reality game. Users can even zoom in.

This Street View map was created from a fleet of cars that had special 360 degree cameras placed on the top, and then they drove down practically every street in America as the cameras captured photos of the entire journey. Later, Google used smaller vehicles and even snowmobiles to capture images of pedestrian areas, alleys, and narrow streets, and then added them to the Street View.

This feature caused some resistance by people who were upset about this invasion of their privacy, and the Department of Homeland Security even delayed the publication of certain street views in Washington, DC because they were worried that images may have been taken of some security-sensitive areas. The Department of Defense wouldn't let Google

capture images of US Military bases and had them remove certain locations from the database.

There are entire websites that contain funny and embarrassing photos that the Google Street View cameras have picked up, such as people coming out of strip clubs, passed out drunk in their yard, and women sunbathing. While some of these photos are amusing, they also illustrate just how far-reaching the eyes of Big Brother are.

Years after the Street View feature was available, it was revealed that the same cars which drove around taking the photos had also intercepted information from unsecured Wi-Fi hotspots from businesses and people's homes. *PC World* explained, "It simply intercepted the unencrypted data that businesses and individuals beamed through the air willy-nilly. The data was left in the middle of the street so to speak, and Google gathered it as it drove through collecting photographs."[190] Google said it was an accident and they did not plan on using the information gathered.

Social Networking Sites

Social media, or social networking sites, quickly changed the landscape of society as Facebook and Twitter rapidly gained popularity shortly after their creation. MySpace and Facebook allowed people to quickly set up their own webpage for free, and exchange photos, status updates, and messages with their friends and family, but such social media also has its downfalls. Facebook and MySpace allowed people for the first time to easily open up their entire life to the Internet, and practically anyone with a computer. Their name, birthdates, interests, friends, family members, school, place of employment, photos, and more are often published openly for the world to see.

Such media has caused many people to become extremely self-absorbed and have turned themselves into their own idol, along with their fan base of “friends” that regularly comment on their status updates or photos. Many people love the attention they get from posting a status update on any dumb thought they had that they feel is clever, and oftentimes there is no shortage of “friends” to post their comments, which are equally worthless.

Girls often like to post pretty (and slutty) photos of themselves and bathe in the attention from people’s comments as countless guys who are on their friends list tell them how beautiful they are. What is even more bizarre, is that many, if not most of the “friends” on their page, aren’t really friends at all, but just acquaintances, and many are people they’ve just met once or twice and don’t really associate with in real life. Facebook has become a cyber stalker’s dream come true. Before MySpace and Facebook, if a guy was interested in a girl he met at a party or through friends, he would have to ask for her phone number face to face in order to communicate with her again in the future, but now it is commonplace for people to look others up on Facebook, and then send them a “friend

request” which allows them to access that person’s personal information, photos, status updates, and friends list.

You don’t even need to know a person’s full name to find them online. For example, if a guy meets a girl at a party and is interested in her (or interested in stalking her) all he does is go to the page of a person he’s already friends with that he knows is friends with the girl he is interested in, and then scrolls through that person’s friends list until he finds the girl he’s stalking. This is easy since people are listed with their picture, as well as their first and last name. This is not looked at as creepy at all by most girls, but instead has become a normal part of our culture.

These social networking sites also have broad implications on personal relationships, as well. In the past, if two people were in a relationship or were married, then communication with ex-boyfriends, ex-girlfriends, or others who harbored a secret crush on an individual, was largely limited. But now, since practically everyone has a Facebook page, if an old high school friend who secretly had a crush on someone for years, perhaps decades, that person can now look up their crush on Facebook and establish communication with them, all without that person’s significant other or spouse being aware of it. (Not to mention that person will also have instant access to information such as where their crush lives, where they work, names, photos, and ages of their kids, as well as a link to their love interest’s spouse’s page where they can then peer into their life as well.)

Also, in the past, when showing our family and friends photos of our life or things we’ve done, they had to all sit down around a table and everyone would look through the photos and talk about them, but now most photos are posted on Facebook and are widely available to the entire world. Photos of people’s kids, homes, friends, and more are all just a click away. Even photos taken by other people are shown once you are tagged in them.

As you are probably familiar with, people even link up their current dating partner or spouse on their Facebook page, and then anyone can click on the link and see who that person is in a relationship with, and then view

all of their photos and learn all about them from the details of their life that are posted on their page. There is even a Facebook app for cell phones that allows people to see the physical location of their friends based on the GPS systems in their phones.[191] A feature on Twitter called Twitter Tracker also allows users to identify their location when they post their Tweets (messages).[192]

There have been numerous instances of people’s homes being burglarized while they were out of town because they posted a status update telling the world that they were going on vacation, and how long they would be gone. These were not complete strangers who burglarized people’s homes, it was people on their “friends” list who saw their status updates and knew they would be gone.[193] As you probably know, most people will accept a “friend request” from just about anybody, no matter how little they know them. Just look at the number of “friends” that some people have on Facebook, especially attractive girls. Beautiful girls often have four or five hundred, sometimes close to a thousand “friends” on Facebook or MySpace because most guys will track them down and find their page after meeting them only once and send them a friend request so they can voyeuristically peer into their life. Most girls feel bad about declining a friend request, so most people accept them all, no matter how little they know the person.

In 2009 a group of young teenagers were arrested in Los Angeles, California for burglarizing various celebrities’ homes, including Paris Hilton’s, Lindsay Lohan’s, and others. The group was called the Bling Ring by the media, and was said to have watched their celebrity targets on Facebook and Twitter to determine when they were going to be out of town, so they could then break into their houses.[194] When the celebrities posted a status update or a Tweet saying they were traveling somewhere for an event or a vacation, the Bling Ring knew their home would most likely be unoccupied. The group stole several million dollars worth of jewelry and clothes from the celebrity homes before getting caught.

Facebook and MySpace Own the Photos You Post

The media frenzy surrounding Eliot Spitzer’s high class hooker scandal in 2008 brought something else to light other than the governor’s scandalous sex life. What you post on social networking sites is available for the world to see. Photographs of Ashey Dupre (his alleged high-class call girl) were immediately published around the world, including pictures of her family members, all of which were taken from her MySpace page. Her lawyer threatened to sue media outlets for publishing the photos, claiming she owns the copyright to them, but let’s take a closer look at what you sign away when you use MySpace or Facebook.

By simply using these websites, you agree to their Terms of Service, but who really reads that boring stuff anyway? Maybe you should. Let’s look at Myspace.com first. When you post your personal and family photos on your page, you are automatically entering into a licensing agreement with MySpace and its affiliates to use your photos in any way they like. Not only can they use them, but they can edit or modify them, as well. Keep in mind that MySpace is owned by News Corporation, so people are basically giving Rupert Murdoch and his media empire, including Fox News, the New York Post, and dozens of other media outlets, permission to do whatever they want with their photos.

The Terms of Service that you agree to by using the website reads, “By displaying or publishing (“posting”) any Content on or through the MySpace Services, you hereby grant to MySpace a limited license to use, modify, delete from, add to, publicly perform, publicly display, reproduce, and distribute such Content solely on or through the MySpace Services, including without limitation distributing part or all of the MySpace Website in any media formats and through any media channels.”[195]

Section 6.2 of the agreement says, “MySpace is not required to pay you for the use on the MySpace Services of the Content that you post,” and that the content which they now control is, “sublicensable (so that MySpace is able to use its affiliates, subcontractors and other partners such as Internet content delivery networks and wireless carriers to provide the MySpace Services), and worldwide (because the Internet and the MySpace Services are global in reach).”

Did you understand that? You are granting them and their “affiliates, subcontractors and other partners” use of your material, all without paying you. And you thought they were *your* photos. If you have a problem with this, and post a blog about it on your MySpace page, or send out a bulletin to all your friends warning them, then MySpace can remove your bulletin or blog, and delete your account. The Terms of Service state, “MySpace reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject, refuse to post or remove any posting (including private messages) by you, or to deny, restrict, suspend, or terminate your access to all or any part of the MySpace Services at any time, for any or no reason, with or without prior notice or explanation, and without liability.”

Facebook is no different. At one time, when you would delete your account, any rights that they claimed to your content would expire, but they later updated their Terms of Service so you automatically grant them the rights (without any compensation) to any photo or anything else you post on Facebook, forever.

It reads, “You hereby grant Facebook an irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive, transferable, fully paid, worldwide license (with the right to sublicense) to (a) use, copy, publish, stream, store, retain, publicly perform or display, transmit, scan, reformat, modify, edit, frame, translate, excerpt, adapt, create derivative works and distribute (through multiple tiers), any User Content you (i) Post on or in connection with the Facebook Service or the promotion thereof subject only to your privacy settings or (ii) enable a user to Post, including by offering a Share Link on your website and (b) to use your name, likeness and image for any purpose, including commercial

or advertising, each of (a) and (b) on or in connection with the Facebook Service or the promotion thereof."

So if you or any of your friends or family members are ever swept up in any kind of scandal, then don't be surprised if within hours, personal photos of you or your friends or family find their way onto the cover of the *New York Post*, and are plastered all over celebrity news shows and mainstream media networks. Since you are also giving them a free license to "use your name, likeness, and image for any purpose" they could also sell your photos which could find their way onto a billboard advertising a product you'd rather not have any affiliation with.

Police on Facebook

Police in multiple cities around the country have been setting up fake accounts on Facebook using photos of attractive girls as the supposed user and then sending friend requests to students to look at their photos to see if there are any pictures of people under the age of twenty-one who can be seen holding alcoholic drinks.

One such instance that made news happened in Wisconsin in 2009 when 19-year-old Adam Bauer, a student at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, received a friend request from police posing as an attractive girl that resulted in him being charged with underage drinking. “She was a good-looking girl. I usually don’t accept friends I don’t know, but I randomly accepted this one for some reason,” he said.[196]

Shortly after he accepted the friend request from the unknown attractive girl, Bauer was confronted by police who had a photo of him from Facebook showing him holding a beer. He was then ticketed for underage drinking. At least eight students at UW Lacrosse were targeted in the same manner including one of Bauer’s friends. “I just can’t believe it. I feel like I’m in a science fiction movie, like they are always watching. When does it end?” Bauer said after his court appearance.[197]

The students said that they were being safe and partying at home and insisted that nobody was driving afterwards. La Crosse police officer Al Iverson said, “Law enforcement has to evolve with technology. It has to happen. It is a necessity—not just for underage drinking.”

This is certainly not an isolated incident of Big Brother watching Facebook. In January 2008, several teenagers were arrested in Illinois for

underage drinking after a sheriff's deputy found photos of them partying that were posted on Facebook.[198]

In February 2006, a 16-year-old boy in Colorado was arrested for juvenile possession of a firearm after police saw pictures that he had posted of himself posing with guns on MySpace.[199]

One student in Miami, Florida was arrested and charged with inciting panic after he posted a police sketch of a rape suspect as his profile picture on Facebook.[200] While certainly this was a distasteful and juvenile attempt at a joke, it certainly didn't incite a panic.

In August 2006, a student at the University of Illinois was arrested for urinating in public while another student was able to escape. The student that was originally arrested said he didn't know the name of the one who ran away, but police were able to get his name from other witnesses (who were not urinating) but were in the same group. The arresting officer then used Facebook to discover that the two students were friends, and then came back and charged the first student who was originally arrested for urinating in public with obstruction of justice because he had lied to police and said he didn't know the other student.[201]

In February 2007, eleven high school students at a Catholic school in Canada were suspended for posting negative comments about their principal on Facebook.[202] There also have been numerous reports of people being fired from their jobs after complaining about their boss or their employer in their status updates.[203]

Facebook Sells Your Personal Information

Social networking sites are a gold mine of information for advertisers and marketers. People list their favorite music, movies, TV shows, and activities on their page, and most people think this is just to inform their “friends” of what they like, but Facebook shares people’s information with “third parties,” which means advertisers and marketers.[204]

Aside from getting information listed in everyone’s profile, Facebook can also data mine status updates and search for keywords that are frequently used in people’s postings. Does the word *party* come up a lot of times in someone’s status update? Or the word *dog*, or *jogging*? Advertisers love access to this information since they can see into your life and learn what’s important to you.

Facebook has been around in its present form since 2006, and has stored practically every piece of information users have typed onto their profiles, including years worth of status updates, all of which can be sold to whoever Facebook wants. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg became a billionaire from Facebook, which is free for its millions of users, so how do you think the website generates so much money? In a transcript released in May 2010 of Zuckerberg chatting with a friend about the personal information people were posting on Facebook, Zuckerberg called the people “dumb fucks.”[205]

Twitter

The “tweets” (messages) posted on Twitter have been compared to graffiti scribbled in bathroom stalls, meaning it’s utterly worthless, but somehow Twitter became a social phenomena in 2009 after word spread that Ashton Kutcher and Oprah were having a contest to see who could reach one million followers first. This caused word of Twitter to enter the mainstream media, and immediately every news station and television show included Twitter on its list of things you should connect with them on. (Twitter.com/MarkDice for example) The only real reason for someone to have a Twitter account is if they are a celebrity or a public figure who has a fan base that want to keep up to date with what they’re doing, something that can more easily be done on Facebook since people can see others’ photos and videos as well, but somehow Twitter caught on and became very trendy in 2009. If you look at the tweets (twitter’s terminology for a message posted), one can see how useless Twitter really is, with most tweets consisting of worthless messages describing how someone’s lunch was or saying that it’s a beautiful day, but for some reason the Library of Congress decided to create an archive of every Twitter message ever posted.

The Library of Congress’s blogger Matt Raymond thought this was a great idea, saying, “I’m no Ph.D. but it boggles my mind to think what we might be able to learn about ourselves and the world around us from this wealth of data. And I’m certain we’ll learn things that none of us now can even possibly conceive.”[206] Twitter said that they would soon post every single Tweet dating back to the first one on March 21, 2006.

Twitter gives an interesting look into the minds of its users by listing what it calls “trending topics,” which are the top keywords or phrases that people post in their messages. “Tweets and other short-form updates create a history of commentary that can provide valuable insights into what’s happened and how people have reacted,” wrote Dylan Casey, Google’s

product manager for real-time search. “Want to know how the news broke about health care legislation in Congress, what people were saying about Justice Paul Stevens’ retirement or what people were tweeting during your own marathon run? These are the kinds of things you can explore with the new updates mode.”[207]

Cell Phones are Bugs

While it has been fairly well known that Echelon can detect and record practically anyone's phone conversation and has archives of countless hours of phone calls, it was surprising to learn in 2006 that law enforcement and intelligence agencies can activate the microphone on someone's cell phone and use it as a directional bug, *even when the phone is turned off*, and can then listen to conversations in the surrounding areas.[208]

The power can be off, but then with the push of a button, someone can secretly activate the microphone, and the phone will still appear to be off. This can easily be done without probable cause, and without a warrant. The only way to prevent this is to take the battery out of your phone. The microphone and webcam on your computer can be used the same way and activated remotely without your knowledge.

One might think that this technology is only something that is available to intelligence agencies such as the NSA, CIA, or the FBI, but what is even more chilling is that there are numerous websites offering such services to anyone for a small fee. Such services also allow a person to receive files of all the targeted individual's recorded phone calls, and the person doing the spying can even get a call on their own phone every time the target uses their phone so they can listen in to their conversations in real time.

This is highly illegal, but these companies are offshore, or simply offer software that allows you to do it yourself.[209] They use a disclaimer saying it's illegal to do it to anyone's phone without their knowledge or consent, but we all know they are just covering themselves legally, and are fully aware that their systems are used without the victims' knowledge.

These commercially available illegal snooping systems have practically the same capability as the FBI does, and can activate the microphone in your cell phone when it’s turned off to listen to anything in the surrounding area. The person using these illegal snooping services can also intercept all text messages, voice mails, and can listen to your phone calls in real time because they get an alert anytime your phone has a call connected.

Cell Phone Photos

As cell phones have become miniature personal computers, complete with Internet access and digital cameras, many people obviously use their phone to take photos which they later post online to Facebook or other websites. What most people are not familiar with is that every photo you take with your phone can actually be viewed and downloaded by your cell phone carrier or anyone who has access to their system.

This became clear in 2005 when a hacker was able to obtain photos taken on cell phone cameras by numerous celebrities, including Demi Moore, Ashton Kutcher, Nicole Richie, and Paris Hilton.[210] This hacker did not have access to these celebrities' phones themselves, but was able to download the photos through the Internet.

So unlike photos taken from traditional digital cameras, the ones taken by your cell phone camera are available for anyone to see who has the ability or the authority to snatch them wirelessly.

Voice Synthesizers

Another scary aspect of advancing technology are voice synthesizers that can take samples of someone’s voice, and then allow someone else to speak into a microphone, and then the computer will output exactly what that person said, with the same voice inflections, but in the person’s voice who has been chosen to be synthesized. They can basically fake anyone’s voice and make it seem like it’s someone else talking. Back in the 1990s, the Department of Defense had a system that could accomplish this. In a demonstration in 1999, the voice of General Carl W. Steiner of the U.S. Special Operations Command was made to say, “Gentlemen! We have called you together to inform you that we are going to overthrow the United States government.”[211]

The implications of voice synthesizers are enormous. Imagine if someone took voice samples of you and then using the system, called your boss and told him the most offensive, crazy things, in order to get you fired. Your boss isn’t going to suspect that it’s a computer voice synthesizer. He’s going to just think you lost your mind, or decided to tell him what you really think. What if someone synthesized your boss’s voice and called you asking for important company information such as passwords or sales figures; information you would never give out to anyone except your boss, of course. What if a competitor or a thief used this system to impersonate your boss in order to get this valuable information?

Such crimes will undoubtedly become a reality and will have to be dealt with when this technology becomes widely available. You may think that caller ID would prevent this from occurring on some phones, but I’m sorry to inform you that simple systems known as caller ID spoofers can cause any name and phone number to show up on the person’s phone who is receiving a call to make it look like someone else is calling.[212] It doesn’t take an electrical engineer to build a home-made caller ID spoofer, because

there are simple apps for popular smart phones like the Droid and the iPhone that can be used on phones that have been jailbroken which means the limitations placed by the phone's manufacturer or cell carrier are eliminated, allowing the phone to run unapproved apps and do other things that most phones can't do. This voids your phone's warranty and can cause problems for your phone, but some people like the freedom of having jailbroken phones.

I have personally had someone demonstrate his "jailbroken" Droid phone's caller ID spoofer to me by calling my phone and making a different number appear on my caller ID. He went on to tell me how he used the app to call two different friends of his and left obnoxious voicemails on each of their phones, making it look like the people had called each other, both leaving the insulting voicemails for each other. Naturally, both of them thought the other person called them since their phone number showed up on the caller ID for the obnoxious voicemail. Most cell phones won't allow these kinds of apps in their app store for obvious reasons because you can imagine the kind of havoc that they can cause.

It's only a matter of time before visual synthesizers are able to easily create fake video footage as well, possibly in real-time. Many people were surprised when the 1994 film *Forest Gump* made it look like Tom Hanks' character was shaking the hand of President John F. Kennedy, when he'd been dead for decades by the time *Forest Gump* was filmed. In the following years this same technology was used to produce new commercials selling various products with celebrity pitchmen who had been dead for years. People seemed to be disturbed by these commercials and this practice rapidly diminished, but the technology continued to advance.

Technology had advanced so much from the making of *Forest Gump* in 1994, when the sequel of *Tron* was released in 2010, audiences learned that the lead actor Jeff Bridges had his face digitally morphed to make him look like he was 35 years old again, just like he was at the time the original film was released in 1982, even though now he was in his 60's. Not only that, but the studio also digitally placed his new younger face on a completely different actor's body for the entire film!

It was also around this same time that a news story surfaced explaining that George Lucas (writer and producer of the *Star Wars* franchise) was buying the rights to dead actors so he can use their likeness in future films by digitally bringing them back from the dead.[213]

This news prompted actors to begin outlining their wishes regarding their likeness in any future films they may appear in after they are dead. It is now common for actors to list restrictions in their wills regarding this kind of resurrection technology in order to prevent their estate, family members, or any film studios from using their likeness in a future film they wouldn't agree with.

"There were huge printing shops with their sub-editors, their typography experts, and their elaborately equipped studios for the faking of photographs. There was the teleprograms sections with its engineers, its producers, and its teams of actors especially chosen for their skill in imitating voices."[214] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Supermarket Club Cards

You probably have one, or several, supermarket “club” cards or “membership cards” that many grocery stores give out to their customers for free that allow you discounts on many different items. As you know, these cards aren’t typical membership cards like a Costco card that you have to pay for, but are instead offered to every customer for free, and are scanned at the register when you pay, often saving you a few dollars. When you filled out the application to get your card, most of them asked for your full name, address, birth date, and phone number.

Most people forget they gave that information to the store and don’t realize the store is creating a huge database of your purchasing history, even if you pay with cash. This information is sold to telemarketers or advertising agencies that can then have an intimate look at what kinds of products you’re interested in. People even fear that this information is, or one day will be, sold to health insurance companies and can be used to justify premium increases based on what kinds of food a person consistently buys and how often they buy it. Such fears are not completely unwarranted.

There is a way around this (at least for now there is) by simply filling out a fake name, address and telephone number on the applications for these club cards. It’s been my personal experience that they don’t check your driver’s license to see if the name and address match with the application, so you can do this if it makes you feel more comfortable. You would of course have to make all your purchases in cash because if you use your debit card, credit card, or even an old fashioned check, then your name will be linked to the items and the bank can sell this information to health providers or anyone else. Cash, of course, will most likely be phased out and replaced entirely by an electronic currency in the future, or cash purchases may require you to swipe your driver’s license or government

issued ID card, so even if you pay with cash, everything you purchase will still be linked to you.

If you are naive and think your friendly local supermarket isn’t keeping tabs on everything you buy, you are wrong. In March 2010, the purchasing history from a grocery store was used to track down people who purchased salami that was feared to be contaminated with salmonella.[215] In this case, the database of customers could have saved people the aggravation of possibly getting sick from salmonella, but it also illustrates the reach of Big Brother in the most unexpected places. Big Brother is watching what you eat.

Data Mining

Data mining is the process of searching for patterns in massive amounts of data. There are several major companies that compile enormous amounts of data on people and sell this information to advertisers and marketers. It is truly staggering to learn the amount of data these companies have on people, and what that data is used for. Many of these databases have records of people's marital status, ages of their children, income, value of their home and cars, as well as their occupation, religion, ethnicity, and even social security numbers and medical information. These lists have been sold to marketers and advertisers for decades so they can target specific types of people for their products, but after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the government began using commercial databases like ChoicePoint, LexusNexus, Acxiom, and others to search for links between suspected terrorists.

To give you an idea of just how large these data mining companies are, in February 2008, ChoicePoint was purchased by Reed Elsevier in a cash deal for $3.6 billion dollars. ChoicePoint has more than 17 billion records of individuals and businesses, which it sells to an estimated 100,000 different clients, including 7,000 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.[216] When one learns that these companies do more than simply maintain a database of details about people, it can be truly worrisome what their systems are capable of doing.

ChoicePoint has a system they call NORA (Non-Obvious Relationship Awareness) that can find relationships between people in ways you couldn't imagine. In 1994 the MGM casino in Las Vegas started using the NORA system to find out whether or not any high-rollers had ties to the dealers or employees that could be used in cheating or otherwise scamming the casino. The system could also detect whether people kicked out of the casino for

card counting or cheating had any personal ties to employees who may have been in on the scam.

The NORA system can display a chart or list of people's relationships to others that are not noticeable on the surface. For example, if a dealer at the casino had a brother who was roommates with someone who won big at that dealer's table, the system would know and the dealer would be suspected of helping that person win and be in on the scam. The system can determine whether people frequently go to the same restaurant, attend the same church, have mutual friends, etc.

The Direct Marketing List Source is a document consisting of 1600 pages that contains information such as people's names, ages, addresses, what books they buy, magazines they subscribe to, what they buy online, etc. It also has a list called the Gay America Megafile with almost 700,000 names of people that the database has identified as being homosexual. The list is considered the Bible of mailing lists.

Data mines can calculate how much a bachelor usually spends on a weekend out, and where, and can determine whether or not he enters into a relationship or if he has gotten married. Marketers then know what other products they can market to him due to his changing lifestyle.

A company called Elensys obtained prescription records from pharmacies and then sent out material to those customers targeting them depending on what ailments they had or what medication they were taking. After this was made public, CVS pharmacy purchased full page ads in major newspapers apologizing for selling their customer's private information.[217]

Another major company in this field, Axciom, has a service they call InfoBase TeleSource, which is a system that companies with toll free telephone numbers use to identify the names and other information about people who call in. Even people who block their caller ID or people who have unlisted numbers are still identified by this system.[218] If someone calls

in to an 800 number asking about a particular product, the person answering the phone has information pop up on their screen such as the person's name, address, and even what kind of home they live in, the cars the person owns, and whether they are a member of a health club or a gym.

A special airing originally in 2006 on CNBC called *Big Brother, Big Business* showed a fancy restaurant in New York using a similar system to identify people when they called in to make reservations, and allows the staff to create profiles for customers that include information such as when their birthday is, or if they were a "difficult" customer in the past.

In 1998, a company called Image Data began purchasing drivers license pictures from the DMV and using them in the private sector. They designed a system for retail stores that would display people's pictures on a screen when they swiped their credit card so the clerk could confirm that it was the person, and not someone else using the card.[219] Image Data had received $1.5 million dollars from the Secret Service to develop the project.[220] When it was discovered that the DMV offices were selling people's pictures and personal information to a private company, some DMVs were pressured to stop this practice.

Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, the government started its own data mining operation they called the MATRIX, [Multistate Anti-Terrorism Information Exchange Program] that used a variety of commercial and government databases to search for links between suspects or to identify any unusual behavior such as strange purchases or money transfers. The MATRIX system could do a search for all the people who have blond hair, are six feet tall, drive a black convertible, who work as an accountant, and who live in a particular zip code. The MATRIX program was shut down in June 2005 after funding was cut, largely as a result of concerns over privacy, but it is likely the technology was absorbed into other government agencies.

Another element used by casinos to maximize their profits is a system called a "Total Rewards" card used by Harrah's casinos that track players'

winnings and losses. The casino has calculated a “pain point” that they determine is the maximum amount a person is willing to lose which may leave them with a negative feeling about the casino causing them never to return. If a player’s pain point is approaching because their losses are mounting, then that person will be approached by a staff member and offered a free dinner to make them feel better about their experience at the casino, causing them to likely return and not leave feeling like they had wasted all of their money. The people offered the free dinner have no idea they are specifically chosen for this reason, and just think the casino gives away random dinners to anyone.

Through data mining, the Canadian Tire company has determined that people who purchase carbon-monoxide detectors, birdseed, and pads for the bottom of chair legs rarely miss a payment on a credit card. “If you show us what you buy, we can tell you who you are, maybe even better than you know yourself,” said a former Canadian Tire executive.[221] Cable and satellite TV companies know what shows are watched in your home, and digital recording services like Ti-Vo and AT&T’s U-verse know what shows you record. If your name is on the cable bill, then you are linked in a database to the shows that are watched and recorded. What you watch on television on a regular basis says a lot about you, and marketing companies like to know these things.

If you choose to use mainly cash for your day to day purchases of food, clothes, gas, etc, are these artificially intelligent systems and complex algorithms going to flag you for being suspicious? The government doesn’t like people who pay cash, since they are more difficult to monitor, so this alone could flag you for closer analysis.

The system will know you use cash for most purchases, because it will see a lack of purchases using a debit card or credit card. It may not know *what* you spend that cash on, but it surely notices if you cash your paychecks or withdraw large amounts of cash from your account on a regular basis, and this is seen as suspicious.

If a person is a political activist or a journalist who is causing trouble for the establishment or a particular president, could that person then be flagged for an audit in attempts to disrupt or discourage his activity? Could he be listed as a trouble maker so the next time he is pulled over for going five miles an hour over the speed limit, the officer will see that he is a “troublemaker” and give him the ticket instead of let him off with a warning?

Could these systems falsely list you as dangerous because of your political affiliations so when a future potential employer does a background check on you, the report lists you as a subversive person or an “extremist?” What if the employer disagrees with your political views or activism that shows up listed in your background check and chooses not to hire you because of this? You would have no way of knowing why they actually decided to hire someone else. If you return too many items to stores in order to get a refund, you may be identified as a “returnaholic,” and may be flagged as someone who buys a product to use it for a while and then returns it.[222]

Did you purchase a blow up doll as a joke for a friend’s bachelor party? Your name might then be added to certain mailing lists and you could now start receiving junk mail from sex shops or escort services.

There are numerous publicly available websites that disclose all kinds of information about people, sometimes for free, and others for only a small fee. These services offer people’s address, phone numbers, birthdates, criminal history, and much more. One service has a slogan saying they are “not your grandma’s phone book.” Some available features include an e-mail lookup which allows you to enter in someone’s e-mail address and then the website searches through a massive list of websites to see if any accounts were opened from that e-mail, and then lists them. A person’s Facebook page, and even Amazon.com and other online retailers such as Target.com can show up as having accounts linked to a person’s e-mail address.

If you pay a small monthly fee on some of these services you can get photos of the people as well and see what they've been posting online and get other information such as their income and credit score. Most of these services also offer what is called a reverse telephone directory, which allows you to enter in a person's phone number and it will then reveal the name and address of the person who has that number.

A Michigan University academic named Arthur R. Miller published a book back in 1971 titled *The Assault on Privacy* where he wrote, "The new information technologies seem to have given birth to a new social virus—'data-mania.' We must begin to realize what it means to live in a society that treats information as an economically desirable commodity and a source of power."

During a special interview on *CNBC* titled "Inside the Mind of Google," the company's CEO Eric Schmidt was asked about privacy concerns involving the information age and Google's domination of the Internet, to which he answered, "If you have something that you don't want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn't be doing it in the first place."

Web Bugs in Microsoft Word Documents

It was discovered that Microsoft Word documents, as well as Excel spreadsheets and PowerPoint slide show files, can be embedded with tracking tags called Web Bugs that gather information about who opens the documents and when.

The Web Bugs were discovered by Richard Smith, the chief technology officer at the Privacy Foundation. “What this means basically is that if an author of a document for whatever reason cares about who is reading it, he can bug it and then monitor it,” Smith said. “They can find out the IP address and host name of whoever is reading the document.”[223]

There are numerous ways that this tracking method can be used, such as embedding the bugs into company documents so they can be tracked to see who is reading them and can trace back the electronic trail if a document was leaked to the press, for example. The person who embedded the Web Bug can also track how often a particular file is opened. If someone cuts a portion of text from a document that is being tracked, and pastes it into a new document, then unbeknownst to them, the Web Bug is also transferred and continues its tracking capabilities. There is also talk of similar tracking bugs being placed in other file formats as well, such as MP3 files or video files.

Once a Web Bug is placed in a document (or other file), it transmits information over the Internet to the person who planted it so they can monitor the file. Since practically every computer is almost always online, this is extremely simple.

Cryptome.com, a hacker and whistleblower site created by John Young and Deborah Natsios in 1996, was taken off the web briefly in February

2010 as a punishment after they posted a secret handbook written by Microsoft that was meant only for law enforcement that educated them about certain Big Brother capabilities the software giant built into their products.[224]

The document, titled *Microsoft Online Services Global Criminal Compliance Handbook*, is only 22 pages long and was described by PC World magazine as a “data-hunting guide for dummies” that shows law enforcement how to access the vast information Microsoft stores about people when they use products like Hotmail, Windows Live Messenger, MSN, Microsoft Office Live, Xbox Live, and others.

Someone who knows how to maneuver through these systems can access all kinds of personal information such as user names and passwords, along with web browsing history, etc. Xbox Live, an online gaming platform for the Xbox 360 game console, stores a user’s full name, credit card information, phone number, email address, and more. There have actually been several Xbox video game systems recovered by police after they were able to track down the stolen Xbox when the thief logged on to Xbox Live, the online gaming community. In one instance police tracked the thief’s IP address and then were able to trace back which store their Live unit was purchased at. The person’s name was then found in the store’s computer linked to that item, and police went to the address and discovered the stolen Xbox 360.[225]

Tracking Documents You Print

While it should be common knowledge that the government and computer savvy hackers can track a person’s Internet usage and search through the contents of a person’s hard drive, most people would never imagine that a simple document printed from their computer could be traced back to them, especially if it were something like a page of text that had no personal information on it.

Laser printers are no longer expensive units only used by large companies for high page count documents and rapid printing. Laser printers have become common in households due to their quality and dramatically lower prices than in the past. But what nobody really knows is that most manufactures secretly designed a feature into laser printers and photocopiers that encode the printer’s serial number onto each page that is printed by using a series of tiny dots that most people can’t even see with the naked eye. Of course, consumers are not told of this process, and printer manufacturers like to keep quiet about it.

Peter Crean, a senior researcher at Xerox, admitted his company’s laser printers, copiers, and multifunction workstations, all secretly put the serial number of each machine coded in little yellow dots on every printout that can’t be seen by the naked eye. “It’s a trail back to you, like a license plate,” Crean said.[226]

The reason for the secret encoding is said to assist in fighting counterfeit money and fraudulent documents, and is a method that has been used since the 1980s. “The industry absolutely has been extraordinarily helpful [to law enforcement],” says Lorelei Pagano, a counterfeiting specialist with the US Secret Service, the agency in charge of tracking counterfeiters.[227]

Peter Crean of Xerox said the government worked with the company to develop the technology in the 1980s because of fears that their advanced copiers could easily be used to print counterfeit money.

It’s likely that the Secret Service or other government agencies can use the Carnivore system to send out pings searching for a specific printer serial number that can be detected if the printer is installed on a computer that is connected to the Internet. Of course, when a printer is purchased, the serial number is linked to the person’s credit card or checking account who bought it. While it may be tough to argue that this technology isn’t good for catching counterfeiters, what else could it be used for?

What if a government whistle blower prints out sensitive and damaging documents and anonymously (or so he thinks) sends them to the media? He could then, without even suspecting it, be linked to the documents. Did you design and print out some inflammatory leaflets about a powerful senator or congressperson and put them on people’s doors in your community? These flyers could be traced back to you.

Radiation Intelligence

People may think that if a computer isn't connected to the Internet that their data is secure, but they are wrong again. Computer monitors, including LCD screens, give off a measurable amount of radiation that can be detected using what is called radiation intelligence (RINT) or Van Eck phreaking.

A Dutch computer scientist named Wim van Eck discovered this in 1985 and published the first paper on the subject, hence the term Van Eck phreaking. In computer hacking, the term "phreaking" is a slang term referring to hacking or experimenting with telecommunication systems, often in underhanded ways.

Some people thought that Van Eck phreaking could only be used on older tube monitors, and not newer LCD flat screens, but in April 2004, a research team at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom showed that LCD monitors were also vulnerable to electromagnetic eavesdropping. The team built equipment capable of doing this at the university lab for less than $2000.[228]

Van Eck phreaking was used to test the security of electronic voting systems in Brazil in 2009 and was found to be able to monitor the voting machines, thus compromising the secrecy of the voting process.[229]

Keyboard Loggers and Backdoors

Commercially available software programs called keyboard loggers can easily be installed on someone’s computer which then can capture and record everything the person does, including what they type in a word processor, their e-mails, and even bank passwords and login information for other sensitive accounts. Such programs are often used by suspicious spouses who want to find evidence of their significant other cheating, but more sinister motives such as stealing people’s passwords or business data are also reasons people install the software on others’ computers.

Such software also often creates a secret backdoor allowing people to access a person’s computer, and their files without them knowing. In 1999, NetBus software was used to plant child pornography on the computer of a professor at Lund University in Sweden. Thousands of images were found by the system administrators, and of course, they assumed that the professor had downloaded them himself. The professor was fired and charged with possession of child pornography but later acquitted after authorities had learned that NetBus had been installed on his computer allowing someone to control it without his knowledge or consent.[230] The man was reported to have suffered severe psychological damage from the incident, which is completely understandable. After all, if such disgusting material was discovered on your computer and you were charged with possession of child pornography but knew you didn’t have anything to do with it, you would certainly have a difficult time defending yourself and clearing your name from being attached to such a deplorable act.

In Neil Strauss’s 2005 bestselling book, *The Game*, which is a memoir of his time hanging out with pickup artists and guys who were teaching seminars on how to meet girls, he said that he discovered someone had put a keyboard logger on his computer and suspected it was one of his roommates who had started his own rival seminar company. Such

businesses can be fairly lucrative and Strauss’s roommate wanted to corner the market and learn what his competition was doing.

Photocopier Hard Drives

A story airing on *CBS News* in April 2010 showed a warehouse in New Jersey that was described as having 6,000 used photocopiers that were for sale, and almost every one of them had a hard drive that recorded every single document that was photocopied on each machine during its existence. Apparently all digital copiers built since 2002 contain hard drives which can store tens of thousands of images.

Think of the kinds of documents that people copy. Bank statements, credit card statements, income tax forms, birth certificates, and more. All of which are stored on the machine's hard drive without your knowledge or consent.

The *CBS News* segment equipped a man with a hidden camera and sent him off shopping to buy a used copier from one of dozens of large warehouses that are in the used copier business. He bought three different copiers for around $300 each. After all the contents of the hard drives were examined, it was revealed that one machine came from the sex crimes division from the police department in Buffalo, New York. Some documents on the hard drive were copies of domestic violence disputes and lists of sex offenders. Other documents were lists of targets in a drug investigation. On another machine they found 95 pages of pay stubs complete with people's names, addresses, and social security numbers.

The third machine, they discovered, came from a health insurance company, and they were able to print out hundreds of pages of confidential medical records including people's prescriptions, blood test results, and a cancer diagnosis.

Ordering a Pizza in the Future

A funny, yet disturbing, video can be found on YouTube if you search for “ordering a pizza in the future” that depicts someone calling a fictitious pizza place to order a pizza and discovers just how all-knowing Big Brother is. When a man calls into the restaurant, the person on the other end of the phone picks up and already knows who he is, where he lives, and the last time he called. When the customer orders two double meat pizzas he is informed that there will be an additional $20 charge on his bill because the computer system has access to his health records and shows that he has high blood pressure and high cholesterol. The screen then shows the man’s bill includes the $20 “health surcharge” because his health insurance provider now knows he’s ordering a fatty pizza.

The man is also informed of an added $15 “delivery surcharge” to cover the added risk to their delivery driver for delivering to an orange zone which signified a high crime neighborhood. When the customer surprisingly asks to clarify that he lives in an orange zone, the order-taker acknowledges a recent change in status due to a robbery near his home that the computer database shows.

When the customer starts complaining about his $67 bill for two pizzas, the woman on the line pulls up his recent purchase of two tickets to Hawaii and hassles him about it, saying he shouldn’t complain about spending that much money on two pizzas because he just spent $800 on plane tickets for a vacation.

He then changes his order to a vegetarian pizza to save money since he won’t have to pay the extra $20 health surcharge, and the order taker says it’s a good choice and will be good for his waist line as she pulls up a screen

of “recent purchases” and shows that the man just bought a new pair of jeans with a 42 inch waistline.

The video is great satire showing just how invasive Big Brother can be, and how with everything we do being stored in databases, the information can easily be sold to practically anyone and used in ways we would prefer it not be. There have been reports years ago that certain pizza delivery restaurants were checking people’s names who ordered pizzas to see if they had any warrants out for their arrest when they paid with a credit card over the phone. If a warrant was listed, instead of having a pizza delivery driver show up to the house, the police would arrive to arrest the person.

Orwellian Government Programs

While the “alphabet agencies” (CIA, NSA, FBI, ATF, etc.) have access to incredible Big Brother technology and countless commercial and government databases, there are also creepy Orwellian projects that have been secretly created and funded by elements within the government for the purpose of maintaining the power of the ruling elite.

Many of these programs used (and continue to use) underhanded and often illegal methods to accomplish their goals which range from controlling the mainstream media to covertly trying to smear, intimidate, blackmail, or even assassinate people who pose a threat to the establishment.

Often Orwellian goals are defended by the government claiming that such measures are needed to keep people safe from criminals or terrorists, but it is often the very people working for these programs who are the criminals. Immediately after the September 11th attacks of 2001, the government fear-mongering began and was used as a justification for subverting the Constitution of the United States and implementing the long-awaited Orwellian dreams of the establishment. Any resistance to the new tyrannical, invasive, and unconstitutional measures was attacked as being unpatriotic. Officials would continuously say that we needed to give up some of our freedoms in order to keep people safe from terrorists, who were said to lurk around every corner.

Thomas Jefferson famously stated, “Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.” Jefferson obviously knew the strategy of tyrannical leaders and how they use fear-mongering as a justification to increase their power and trample over their population.

Operation Mockingbird

A major system that Big Brother uses to control the population is the mainstream media. This amazing propaganda machine has the ability to shape the culture and the mindset of a nation by the information the owners choose to broadcast on a daily basis. The character Howard Beal famously ranted about the power of television in the 1976 film *Network*, telling his audience, “This tube can make or break presidents, popes, prime ministers...This tube is the most awesome God-damned force in the whole godless world, and woe is us if it ever falls into the hands of the wrong people.”

Intelligent people have varying degrees of awareness that the US government is in bed with the mainstream media, and anyone who monitors the news media with discerning eyes can often easily identify specific stories and strategies that are being used to persuade and intimidate the population. As enlightened people know, the mainstream media operates both as a propaganda arm for the establishment, as well as a gate-keeper that prevents certain information from being disseminated to the masses.

The evidence for these charges is massive and irrefutable. The most damning of which comes from the findings of a Senate Select Committee in 1975 that investigated the American government’s covert influence over the mainstream media, including broadcast news, newspapers, and magazines. The committee, called the Church Committee, published its findings in 1976 and uncovered what was called Operation Mockingbird, which involved the CIA secretly paying editors of major media institutions and popular journalists to act as gate-keepers and propagandists for the establishment.

"The invention of print, however, made it easier to manipulate public opinion, and the film and radio carried the process further."[231] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

In 1948 an espionage and counter-intelligence branch within the CIA was created for the purpose of "propaganda, economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance groups, and support of indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the free world."[232]

Later that year Operation Mockingbird was established to influence the domestic and foreign media. Philip Graham, the owner of *The Washington Post*, was recruited to help run the project within the industry and develop a network of assets who would go along with the program. After 1953, the network had influence over twenty-five different newspapers and wire agencies. The Mockingbird program also involved all major television stations.

Thomas Braden, who was the head of the International Organizations Division of the CIA, played a substantial role in Operation Mockingbird and later revealed, "If the director of the CIA wanted to extend a present, say, to someone in Europe—a Labour leader—suppose he just thought, this man can use fifty thousand dollars, he's working well and doing a good job—he could hand it to him and never have to account to anybody... There was simply no limit to the money it could spend and no limit to the people it could hire and no limit to the activities it could decide were necessary to conduct the war—the secret war...It was multinational."[233]

According to the Church Committee's report, which was published in 1976, "The CIA currently maintains a network of several hundred individuals around the world who provide intelligence for the CIA and at times attempt to influence opinion through the use of covert propaganda. These individuals provide the CIA with direct access to a large number of newspapers and periodicals, scores of press services and news agencies,

radio and television stations, commercial book publishers, and other foreign media outlets."[234]

The committee also concluded that the cost of the program was approximately $265 million a year, which when adjusted for inflation as of 2010 means that in today's dollars the program was spending an astounding one billion dollars a year.

One year after the Church Committee released its findings, *Rolling Stone* magazine published an article on Operation Mockingbird and named various prominent journalists who were alleged to be involved with it. Some of these included Ben Bradlee, who wrote for *Newsweek*, Stewart Alsop who wrote for the *New York Herald Tribune*, James Reston (*New York Times*), Charles Douglas Jackson (*Time Magazine*), Walter Pincus (*Washington Post*), William C. Baggs (*The Miami News*), and others.

In 2007, a large amount of CIA documents called the "Family Jewels" were declassified and released by the National Security Archive, which revealed that the CIA had routinely wiretapped Washington-based news reporters and committed other shady and illegal practices. The targets of these wiretaps were most likely seen as threats to the establishment and were not playing along with the propaganda and gate-keeping efforts within the media establishment, so the CIA wanted to keep a close eye on them and gather information on their sources and future stories.

As with nearly every other case of rampant institutional corruption in government agencies, the CIA claims to have ended Operation Mockingbird and their influence over the media—another claim that is laughable. The power of the mass media to control society is too great for the establishment not to do everything they can to harness it for their own benefit.

The man credited with being the father of public relations is named Edward Bernays, who was a master of social engineering, propaganda, and shaping public opinion early in the twentieth century. He was also the nephew of the famous psychologist Sigmund Freud. In 1928 Bernays

published a book titled *Propaganda* that described his methods for shaping public opinion and people's attitudes and behaviors. A quick glance over several of the excerpts from *Propaganda* reveals just how powerful the control of information is to a government.

Bernays wrote, "Those who manipulate the unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. This is a logical result of the way in which our democratic society is organized. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society. In almost every act of our lives whether in the sphere of politics or business in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires that control the public mind."[235]

This is strikingly parallel to what George Orwell wrote in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* when he said, "All the beliefs, habits, tastes, emotions, mental attitudes that characterize our time are really designed to sustain the mystique of the Party and prevent the true nature of present-day society from being perceived."[236]

Bernays can be largely credited with making cigarette smoking socially acceptable, and appear to be cool. In 1929 he was hired by the American Tobacco Company, which was one of the original 12 companies comprising the Dow Jones Industrial Average, in order to help promote smoking. The way he did this was by hiring a group of attractive female models to march in the New York City parade and planned to have them light up cigarettes to shatter the taboo of women smoking in public. Bernays also contacted the press saying that the women would light up "Torches of Freedom" in support of women's rights. The next day, the *New York Times* ran an article headlined, "Group of Girls Puff at Cigarettes as a Gesture of Freedom."[237]

Bernays was also the man responsible for diamond rings being synonymous with marriage and love. The De Beers diamond company hired him to shape the public’s mind into associating a diamond ring with love. Before this, women’s wedding rings were primarily a simple gold band, but Bernays was able to use propaganda to convince both men and women that if a man is to propose to a woman, he needs to do so with a large diamond ring.

Bernays sat on the board of the U.S. Committee on Public Information (CPI), which was a government agency set up specifically to influence public opinion in support of America’s role in World War I and to help sell the war to the public.

Only a complete moron would think that government agencies don’t continue to massively influence the mainstream media today. Even those who expect such manipulation are often surprised to learn the extent of it and its power.

COINTELPRO

A truly Orwellian scheme conducted by the FBI admittedly between 1956 and 1971 is COINTELPRO (an acronym for Counter Intelligence Program) which illegally investigated and disrupted political organizations, religious organizations, civil liberty groups, anti-war groups and others that were deemed problematic by the establishment. COINTELPRO and the illegal and sinister activities carried out by the program are fully admitted by the FBI, although after its discovery they claimed that they stopped using such tactics. Common sense says otherwise.

The original program targeted people and groups seen as “subversive” or that threatened the establishment’s hold on power. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders in the civil rights movement and those associated with the NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), and the Southern Poverty Law Center were targeted, as well as groups protesting the Vietnam War, including many college students. J. Edgar Hoover, who was the head of the FBI at the time, had ordered agents to “expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize” the leaders and activities of such groups.[238] It’s important to understand that most of the groups and the targets of COINTELPRO were not doing anything threatening, criminal, or dangerous, and were only trying to change society for the better by encouraging civil rights or protesting the Vietnam War. But this is not what the establishment wanted.

Agents involved in the program did a lot of illegal, underhanded, and dirty tricks to disrupt their targets; including mailing fraudulent letters to leaders of organizations claiming to be from someone else with accusations that someone’s wife was cheating on them. Illegal wire taps, spreading false and slanderous rumors about people, frame-ups, vandalism, and worse were all common and are still methods used today by elite law enforcement and intelligence agents to disrupt, discourage or discredit their targets.

The PATRIOT ACT

"The consciousness of being at war, and therefore in danger, makes the handing-over of all power to a small caste seem the natural, unavoidable condition of survival."[239] —*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

In response to the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks on America, Congress quickly passed the PATRIOT ACT on October 26, 2001, which granted the government a wide range of unconstitutional powers so officials could allegedly prevent further terrorist attacks. Any resistance to the bill was countered with claims that those people were un-American or wanted to help the terrorists. The very name for the bill, the "Patriot Act" was chosen to give the impression that if you were a patriotic American who loved his country, then you should support the bill. (Full title: *The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001*, which was designed to spell, "USA PATRIOT Act")

The bill passed 98-1 in the Senate, and 356-66 in the House of Representatives. Senator Russ Feingold of Wisconsin was the only United States Senator to vote against the bill because he saw some of the provisions stripped civil liberties guaranteed by the Constitution.

Feingold said, "Of course, there is no doubt that if we lived in a police state, it would be easier to catch terrorists. If we lived in a country that allowed the police to search your home at any time for any reason; if we lived in a country that allowed the government to open your mail, eavesdrop on your phone conversations, or intercept your e-mail communications; if we lived in a country that allowed the government to hold people in jail indefinitely based on what they write or think, or based on mere suspicion that they are up to no good, then the government would no doubt discover and arrest more terrorists. But that probably would not be a country in which we would want to live.”[240]

The bill is 342 pages long with 1,016 sections and amended over 15 federal statutes, and contains numerous Executive Orders, regulations, and new policies aimed at “fighting terrorism.” Many of these new powers allowed the government to engage in secret surveillance, and even commit “sneak and peeks” which means that a person’s house can be searched without his knowledge, while that person is not even served with a search warrant (or aware the search took place) until months later. If a neighbor happens to see a sneak and peak going on and starts asking questions, then that person can be placed under a gag order and legally cannot mention anything to anybody about what they saw.

The Patriot Act even allowed for people to be detained for months without even being charged with a crime, a clear violation of the Sixth Amendment. In the first year after it was signed into law, more than 1,000 non-citizens were secretly detained without being charged and their identities were not released. Thousands more were placed under surveillance.

“In the vast majority of cases there was no trial, no report of the arrest. People simply disappeared.”[241]

—*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

In a speech to a Senate Judiciary Committee on December 6, 2001, John Ashcroft (the Attorney General at the time), tried to demonize people who voiced opposition or disagreement with the powers granted by the Patriot Act saying, “to those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty; my message is this: Your tactics only aid terrorists—for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve. They give ammunition to

America’s enemies, and pause to America’s friends. They encourage people of good will to remain silent in the face of evil.”

Ashcroft’s claim is in stark contrast to what Thomas Jefferson said about liberty, when he said that people who give up freedom in order to gain security will have neither freedom nor security.

In section 802 of the Patriot Act under the *Definition of Domestic Terrorism*, the language defines the new meaning of the term “domestic terrorist.” It reads:

`(5) the term `domestic terrorism' means activities that–

`(A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State;

`(B) appear to be intended–

`(i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;

`(ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or

`(iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping;

While everyone would agree that kidnapping, assassination or mass destruction would certainly be terrorism, “intimidating” the civilian population or attempting to influence policy of the government by

“coercion or intimidation” could be applied to ordinary political rhetoric. It has been said by critics of the Patriot Act that the Bush administration was guilty of intimidating the population by fabricating and exaggerating threats that led to the Iraq War. Others argue the Patriot Act was a power grab by the government and there were already provisions in place to investigate and prevent terrorist attacks, and capture the perpetrators.

Constitutional Protections Eliminated by the Patriot Act

First Amendment Freedom of religion, speech, assembly, and the press.

Fourth Amendment

Freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures.

Fifth Amendment

No person to be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law.

Sixth Amendment

Right to a speedy public trial by an impartial jury, right to be informed of the facts of the accusation, right to confront witnesses and have the assistance of counsel.

Eighth Amendment

No excessive bail or cruel and unusual punishment shall be imposed.

Fourteenth Amendment All persons (citizens and noncitizens) within the US are entitled to due process and the equal protection of the laws.

Information Awareness Office

The Information Awareness Office (IAO) was an intelligence-based office within the United States government that was created in January 2002, by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to work on surveillance and information technology to discover and track “terrorists.” It was started under the direction of John Poindexter, who was the former National Security Advisor for President Reagan.

Poindexter wanted the system to analyze people’s travel patterns, money transactions, and even unusual medical activities such as treatment for anthrax sores, which could mean that someone was cooking up the poison themselves. Poindexter himself has a shady past, and during the Iran-Contra hearings he responded to questions 184 times saying he didn’t remember the details.

The logo for the IAO cannot get any more Orwellian, and consists of a pyramid with an all-seeing eye on the top, similar to the one on the back of the one dollar bill, with a beam of light shining out of it and covering the entire globe which is shown in the foreground. The office originally used the term Total Information Awareness as its goal, but was later changed to Terrorism Information Awareness to sound less Orwellian.

When news was first uncovered about the Information Awareness Office and its goals of creating huge databases from personal information of every person in the United States, including e-mails, phone records, and medical records, all without a search warrant, civil libertarians expressed concern.[242]

The office also called for a massive biometric program including facial recognition systems and cameras that can identify people by the way they

walk. A special data mining system was also implemented for the IAO which they called Evidence Extraction and Link Discovery that can find relationships “among people, organizations, places, and things.” The CIA created a data-mining program called Quantum Leap, which one official told *Fortune* magazine was, “so powerful it’s scary.”[243]

New York Times columnist William Safire wrote, “This is not some far-out Orwellian scenario. It is what will happen to your personal freedom in the next few weeks if John Poindexter gets the unprecedented power he seeks. This ring-knocking master of deceit is back again with a plan even more scandalous than Iran-Contra.”[244]

In 2003, after much public criticism, the office had its funding cut and it was supposedly shut down, although its objectives and operations have continued under other names and in other departments.[245] [246]

As common sense suggests, data mines and surveillance technologies have a high potential for abuse. For example, police officers are known to do background checks on attractive girls they meet in order to learn things about them. In the field, such a practice is called running plates for dates. Police have also routinely sold information illegally for cash to private investigators and have used confidential records to undermine political opponents.

In 2002, a DEA agent named Emilio Calatayud was sentenced to over two years in prison for selling information to private investigators.[247] In the year 2000 a lieutenant in the Charles County, Maryland sheriff’s department used private information from the department’s databases to influence local elections by releasing information about candidates he didn’t like. The lieutenant even deleted a disorderly conduct arrest from the record of the candidate he wanted to become the next sheriff.[248]

In the History Channel’s show *Gangland*, which chronicles the histories and activities of different gangs, it was revealed that members of the Detroit gang, the “Best Friends,” would pay corrupt cops to find out

where rival gang members or drug dealers lived by giving the cops people's license plate numbers or phone numbers. The corrupt cops would then run a background check on them using their internal computers, and give the addresses to the gang. The Best Friends would then assassinate these people.

Stephen Nash started a police accountability group called CopWatch in Denver, Colorado to help prevent police misconduct by monitoring police activity and videotaping police when they were encountering suspects. Because of this, Nash was secretly targeted by police in their database and labeled a "criminal extremist." He only found this out after an unidentified informant in the police department printed out his secret files and sent him a copy. A copy was also sent to a lawyer at the ACLU. Even Nash's wife was labeled a "criminal extremist."

The ACLU contended that the Denver Police Department has inappropriately smeared the reputations of multiple peaceful advocates of nonviolent social change by falsely labeling them or their organizations as "criminal extremist" in their internal databases.[249]

"The few pages of documents we have obtained so far provide an alarming glimpse of the kinds of information the Denver Police Department is recording and the kinds of peaceful protest activity it is monitoring inappropriately," said Mark Silverstein, an ACLU Legal Director.[250]

Echelon

The world's most sophisticated electronic spy system is called Echelon and refers to an advanced system that analyzes nearly every kind of electronic communication in the world, from telephone calls, to even faxes and text messages. A similar system called Carnivore is used for monitoring the Internet, and is likely used in conjunction with Echelon to monitor web traffic, e-mail messages, and websites.

Echelon basically uses systems to intercept most of the world's communication signals by connecting to commercial satellites or trunk communication lines. There had been rumors of the system and its capabilities in the 1980s, and in 1983 James Bamford discussed such technology in his book *The Puzzle Palace* which focused on the National Security Agency. In 1998, the European Parliament published a report titled *An Appraisal of Technologies of Political Control,* that showed the existence of the massive spy system which would later be known as Echelon.[251]

This system is so powerful, for decades, and even today, some people don't believe it is capable of doing what it does. By using Echelon it is extremely simple for the FBI, CIA, NSA, or any number of other agencies to tap into anyone's phone and automatically record conversations between parties. Of course there is supposed to be a warrant for such activities, but routinely this requirement is ignored under the guise of "national security." But Echelon is much more than a simple wire tapping device.

Echelon monitors millions of phone calls in multiple languages at the same time and can actually pick out specific people's voices from among the millions of calls. This is called a voiceprint, and if a specific individual is targeted for whatever reason, if they talk on a telephone, whether it's a

payphone on the side of the street, or a complete stranger's cell phone, within seconds their voiceprint will be detected and the system will identify their location and begin recording their conversation.

Equally amazing is Echelon's ability to detect strings of specific keywords from the millions of conversations occurring, and can then record those conversations and identify the parties and their location. For example, if two people are having a conversation and they use several words in succession, such as assassinate, president, rifle, and secret service, then in all likelihood that conversation will be detected by the Echelon system and will be flagged for further analysis to determine whether the people were talking about a recent news event, or if they are potentially dangerous individuals who are planning to assassinate the president.

If this seems too complicated, then think again. Google can find a specific set of keywords out of the billions and billions of web pages in a fraction of a second after you search for them. Also, an app for the iPhone called Shazam was released in 2009 that allows people to use their iPhone to pull up the name of practically any song they hear, whether it's on the radio, or playing on a TV commercial. It doesn't matter if there is background noise, or people talking while it is detecting the song, the app still works, and this is all from one tiny iPhone. Just from hearing a few seconds of almost any song, the app identifies it out of the millions of songs available, and then lists the song's title, artist's name, and the album it's found on.

The History Channel aired a show called *Echelon: The Most Secret Spy System* in 2003 that included interviews with intelligence expert James Bamford, and even Mike Hayden, the National Security Agency Director, and in the show it was discussed how Echelon flagged an innocent conversation someone was having because it happened to include several keywords the system was programmed to flag. When a mother was talking about how her son bombed at the school play, meaning he messed up his lines and gave a horrible performance, Echelon detected the keywords "bomb" and "school" and so her conversation was flagged for further analysis to determine if it was a threat.

In the 1998 thriller *Enemy of the State*, Gene Hackman's character makes a comment about this technology saying, "Fort Meade has 18 acres of mainframe computers underground. You're talking to your wife on the phone and you use the word 'bomb,' 'president,' 'Allah,' any of a hundred keywords, the computer recognizes it, automatically records it, red-flags it for analysis. And that was twenty years ago." Most of the viewers thought this was just a Hollywood fantasy, but David Marconi, the screenwriter was obviously aware of Echelon, and a lot of the technology in *Enemy of the State* was based on actual systems.

A respected newspaper in Germany called the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) reported that Echelon had collected information at least three months before the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 about how Middle Eastern terrorists were planning to hijack aircraft and use them as weapons against symbols of American culture.[252]

Many critics believe Echelon has also been used for political spying, commercial espionage, and blackmail. The *Baltimore Sun* published an article in 1995 talking about how the aerospace company Airbus lost a $6 billion dollar contract with Saudi Arabia in 1994 as a result of the NSA using Echelon to learn that Airbus executives had bribed Saudi officials in attempts to secure the contract.[253] A British journalist named Duncan Campbell along with a New Zealand journalist named Nicky Hager investigated Echelon's use for industrial espionage in the 1990s and uncovered that Americans used the system to illegally spy on a German company called Enercon in order to learn what advanced technology the company was developing for wind turbines.[254] They also say a Belgian company called Lernout & Hauspie had trade secrets stolen from them regarding speech recognition technology because executives were being illegally monitored by Echelon.

In 2001, a European Parliament committee suggested that politicians use cryptography in their communication with each other to protect their privacy from eavesdroppers using Echelon.[255]

Imagine how this system can be, and most likely has been, abused. The president could order the CIA or NSA to look for keywords spoken from specific people to determine if they were aware of a sensitive issue, scandal, or crime. For example, the system could easily implement a search for the keywords "Bilderberg group" or "Bohemian Grove" and cross-reference them with the voiceprints of every senator and congressman, so that if any of them were to mention these words during a telephone conversation, then that conversation could be recorded and later listened to. Echelon technicians could know exactly what those people were saying about these very powerful and secretive groups that shape the political and social landscape from behind the scenes.

"Every citizen, or at least every citizen important enough to be worth watching, could be kept for twenty-four hours a day under the eyes of the police."[256]

—*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Is a certain senator planning on raising the issue of the Bilderberg group on the floor of the Senate, blowing their decades of cover? If so, then a blackmail, intimidation, or coercion scheme would likely be put in place to prevent this security breach and save the Bilderberg group from the unwanted attention that such public comments would bring them. (If you are not familiar with the Bilderberg group then I advise you to research it on your own or read my previous book, *The Resistance Manifesto*.)

Other Snooping Technology

In an episode of *Conspiracy Theory*, a television show hosted by Jesse Ventura, a man named Elwood Norris discussed technology he designs for spy agencies and revealed some of his devices' incredible capabilities. Norris first shows Ventura what looks like a small rock and explains, "I can drive by your house…toss that in your front yard…it picks up your security code from your alarm, your cell phone number, and the code to your garage door opener." When Ventura asked who uses such a device, Norris said that the "alphabet agencies" use it, meaning the FBI, CIA, NSA, and other security agencies. The information picked up and stored in the fake rock can then allow investigators (or stalkers or rogue agents) to access a person's home and disable their alarm system, all without being noticed.

National DNA Database

It may become the law one day that every person in America (and perhaps the world) will be required to give a DNA sample that will be stored in a database similar to fingerprint databases. Police officers in numerous states in America have been taking DNA samples of everyone arrested, arguing that it's no different than fingerprints, but others are worried by the practice and see it as a major privacy invasion.

President Obama has publicly stated that he supports forced DNA sampling of those arrested for any reason, saying "It's the right thing to do. This is where the national registry becomes so important, because what you have is individual states—they may have a database, but if they're not sharing it with the state next door, you've got a guy from Illinois driving over into Indiana, and they're not talking to each other."[257]

We know that secretive government agencies often abuse their power, so many wonder what kind of abuses a national DNA database would lead to. With everyone's DNA on file, could certain government agencies then secretly do tests on the DNA or even create human clones from the samples without anyone knowing about it? Could people's DNA be used to see if they have any diseases or are prone to aggressive activities? Could people be unfairly profiled or labeled because of their DNA analysis?

Tax Amnesty Ad

In May 2010, a television ad began airing in Pennsylvania attempting to scare people who haven’t paid their taxes into finally paying them. The ad begins with a shot of the earth which then has a crosshair appear over the United States and begins to zoom in as a computerized voice says, “Your name is Tom. You live just off of Fifth Street. Nice car Tom. Nice house.” It then goes on to say that if Tom pays his back taxes of over $4000 that he owes to the state of Pennsylvania in the next month, that they will waive the late penalty. The whole time the computerized voice is explaining this in the 30 second ad, the cross hair continues to zoom in from a picture of the whole earth, to the state of Pennsylvania, and then continues onto a single house at which point the words “Subject Located” flash on the screen, and the computerized voice says, “because we do know who you are.”[258]

Insider Revelations

Occasionally a high-level insider in government will make a startling and revealing statement about the way government actually functions. One of the most historic revelations was made by President Dwight D. Eisenhower during his departure address in 1961 where he coined the term “military industrial complex.”

Eisenhower warned, “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”

The core of Eisenhower’s warning was when he said, “We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.”

President John F. Kennedy also made a profound and even more chilling statement about the behind-the-scenes power structure when speaking to the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Audio of this statement is available on the Internet if you search for “JFK on secret societies.” While we have all heard several historic JFK sound bites, few in comparison have heard this amazing and candid admission where he said, “The very word ‘secrecy’ is repugnant in a free and open society; and we are as a people inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths, and to secret proceedings. We decided long ago that the dangers of excessive and unwarranted concealment of pertinent facts far outweighed the dangers which are cited to justify it…For we are opposed

around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covered means for expanding its sphere of influence, on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerillas by night instead of armies by day.”

He continued, “It is a system which has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit, highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific and political operations; its preparations concealed, not published, its mistakes are buried not headlined, its dissenters are silenced not praised, no expenditure is questioned, no rumor is printed, no secret is revealed…I am not asking for your newspapers to support an administration. But I am asking your help in the tremendous task of informing and alerting the American people.”[259]

President Kennedy’s comments echoed what President Woodrow Wilson had said decades earlier in his 1913 book, *The New Freedom: A Call For the Emancipation of the Generous Energies of a People*. The most widely quoted passage from this book is where Wilson wrote, “Since I entered politics, I have chiefly had men’s views confided to me privately. Some of the biggest men in the United States, in the field of commerce and manufacturing, are afraid of something. They know that there is a power somewhere so organized, so subtle, so watchful, so interlocked, so complete, so pervasive, that they better not speak above their breath when they speak in condemnation of it.”

There are a handful of other revealing and unsettling quotes made by high-powered politicians around the world who will occasionally, and perhaps very subtly, betray the establishment’s power structure and give people a glimpse of what kind of a system we are really dealing with. Many believe that JFK, Woodrow Wilson and others were referring to the infamous Illuminati secret society, and think that a modern version of the group continues to exist today in the form of secretive good ol’ boy networks focused on preserving their wealth and power at any cost. (Read

my book, *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* for more information on this fascinating subject.)

The Nanny State

The term “nanny state” refers to government regulations and laws that are widely perceived to be overbearing and restrictive in terms of their attempts to regulate economic or social activities that are better off left alone without the government sticking their nose in them. The term comes from the idea that the government is acting as a nanny, trying to protect citizens from themselves, as a nanny does for a small child.

Big Brother technology has allowed the implementation of numerous nanny state policies that impose extra taxes and fines on people for violating laws such as speed limits, driving in bus lanes, or having expired parking meters. There are also Big Brother policies that keep track of the amount of ammunition gun owners purchase, and laws have been proposed to govern the kinds of ingredients in food with the hopes of making people healthier.

Of course, there need to be laws regulating and prohibiting harmful practices from being used by private industries, but as you will see in the following pages, many of these nanny state measures aren’t necessarily designed to keep people safe; they are designed to make the government more money.

Red Light Cameras

Everyone is familiar with the dreaded “red light cameras” that automatically issue tickets to people if they drive through an intersection equipped with the system. As of mid 2010, there were more than 441 communities in the United States using the Big Brother ticket machines, including Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, DC.[260]

Often the tickets for an infraction are $400 or $500 dollars and come to you in the mail, along with several photos of your vehicle from different angles showing you in the intersection while the light is red. There have been many accusations that the intersections equipped with these cameras have the timing of the yellow light reduced in order to catch more people accidentally blowing the red light, thus generating more money for the city.

Some states have prohibited the cameras including Nevada, New Hampshire, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.[261] Many other countries around the world also use the red light camera technology, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Taiwan, India, and Israel.

The red light cameras were just the beginning of the Big Brother systems that would later be implemented to automatically issue large fines to motorists.

Bus Lane Enforcement

Some cities are using license plate reading devices to issue tickets to motorists automatically if they stop in a bus lane or other prohibited areas. For example, New York City began testing a system to detect whether taxis stopped in bus lanes to pick up passengers. Taxis frequently use bus lanes, which they're not supposed to do, but now they will automatically be fined $150 for each infraction.[262] These systems cross reference every license plate that enters the restricted zone with a list of approved vehicles, and if the vehicle isn't a bus, police car, or emergency vehicle, the driver will be automatically issued a fine.

Hundreds of buses in London, England are equipped with cameras that capture the license plates of vehicles that stop in no-stopping zones, and those drivers are also automatically issued tickets.[263]

Catching Speeders

Motorists are sadly familiar with speed traps, and even the rare incident of airplanes being used to bust speeders on freeways, but until recently most people never envisioned systems that would automatically ticket drivers using license plate reading cameras.

An area in London began testing the “SpeedSpike” system in two different stretches of roads which calculates the average speed between two designated points and can then automatically issue speeding tickets to motorists. The system was created by an American company called PIPS Technology Ltd.[264]

The system uses license plate reader technology to log each vehicle’s license plate when it passes the first camera, and then captures it again when it passes the second camera at a different point in the road. It then mathematically figures out each vehicle’s average speed depending on the amount of time it took to get between the two cameras, and if the average speed is deemed too fast, then the system knows the vehicle was traveling above the speed limit, and issues a ticket to the owner.

Officials plan on using the system to enforce speed limits on main roads, as well as school zones. When it was first tested, officials said they couldn’t publicly comment on it because of “commercial confidentiality.” The British Automobile Association said it was, “a natural evolution of the technology that is out there” and didn’t think it was Orwellian or sinister.

These systems will probably become as common as red light cameras in the future, striking fear into the hearts (and wallets) of motorists everywhere. Police officers at the Dallas Police Department in Dallas, Texas, were the first to begin using E-ticket machines, rather than the usual

ticket pad that required tickets to be filled out by hand that most people are all used to. The E-ticket machines allow officers to write tickets faster and simplify the process of entering them into computer databases, which means—the faster the government can get your money.[265]

There will probably come a time in the not-so-distant future where tickets are automatically debited from your checking account, or if you don't have any money in the bank, then the fine could be levied against one of your credit cards, and if this happens then you'll have to pay interest on the ticket as well.

Automatic Parking Tickets

At some point in the Orwellian New World Order we will see parking meters that automatically ticket vehicles the second the meter expires. This is extremely simple since the meters will be equipped with cameras that capture the license plate number of the vehicle that is parked in the spot at the time the meter expires. As people know, if a parking meter expires and your vehicle is still parked in the spot, you will only get a ticket if a “meter maid” spots the expired meter. Your vehicle could sit in front of the expired meter for thirty minutes or even several hours before the meter maid does their rounds and sees it, but the Orwellian parking meters will fine you the moment your time runs out and will likely issue new fines every few minutes, or every hour, depending on how long the vehicle remains in the parking spot after the meter has expired.

Black Boxes in Automobiles

After the highly publicized problem of accelerators sticking in certain Toyota vehicles in 2010 causing several accidents and deaths since 2007, the Highway Traffic Safety Administration chief David Strickland mentioned that the government was considering making “black boxes” mandatory for all new vehicles which will record data such as a vehicle’s speed and breaking effort in order to reconstruct what happened immediately preceding an accident if one were to occur.[266] Toyota recalled more than 8 million vehicles to eliminate the risk of sticking accelerating pedals and the problem was a major story for months.

Black boxes on vehicles could do more than just record information in the event of an accident. GPS systems installed on vehicles can detect what speed the vehicle is traveling at, and could be used to issue automatic speeding tickets. The GPS systems could easily detect the speed limit for just about any street the vehicle is on, and could automatically issue tickets if the car exceeds the limit. If a car has unpaid parking tickets or an expired registration, then GPS black boxes could also disable the vehicle until these payments were made.

The Virginia Court of Appeals ruled in September 2010 that police did not need a warrant to secretly attach a GPS tracking device on a suspect’s vehicle in order to monitor its every move. The Fourth Amendment of the Constitution clearly bans unreasonable searches and seizures, but the Virginia court ruled that because there is no expectation of privacy on a public street, a suspect has no protection against the hi-tech monitoring of their whereabouts. Judge Randolph A. Beales wrote in the opinion that “police used the GPS device to crack this case by tracking the appellant on the public roadways—which they could, of course, do in person any day of the week at any hour without obtaining a warrant.”[267]

The Ninth Circuit Court in California has also ruled that secretly placing a GPS device on a vehicle wasn't a Fourth Amendment violation, but the Washington, D.C. Circuit Court held that it was, so this issue could head to the Supreme Court. Since the Virginia and California courts ruled that secretly placing a GPS device on a suspect's vehicle without a warrant is within the law, then one must wonder whether a similar policy will go into effect concerning the use of GPS systems built into people's cell phones. Currently law enforcement officials are legally required to obtain a warrant to track someone's cell phone, but in the New World Order the courts may rule there is no reasonable expectation of privacy considering a person's whereabouts if they are carrying a cell phone since they know it contains a GPS tracking device. Where is the line going to be drawn?

Since there is no reasonable expectation of privacy when someone is standing on a public street, it is legal to videotape and record a person's conversation without their consent. One must wonder whether it will also become fully legal for law enforcement and other government agencies to secretly eavesdrop on people without a warrant by activating the microphone in their cell phone as a bug, which is a tactic used by the FBI and other agencies after a warrant has been granted.

Is the government going to say that you have no reasonable expectation of privacy if you are carrying a cell phone because there is a microphone built into it? Perhaps the government will change the definition of "reasonable expectation of privacy" and will claim that in today's high-tech society, there is no longer a reasonable expectation of privacy anywhere.

Watching Your Garbage

In the United Kingdom more than 2.5 million trash bins have built-in microchips that weigh the bin’s contents as part of a “pay-as-you-throw” program which taxes people based on the amount of garbage they throw away.

In March 2010, an investigation involving Freedom of Information Requests showed that one in five counties in the UK had implemented the Big Brother bins that weigh the garbage and tax the residents accordingly.[268] In 2008, Gordon Brown, the prime minister, had promised to eliminate bin taxes because polls showed it was extremely unpopular among voters, but the practice has quietly increased.

Alex Deane of *Big Brother Watch*, said, “The number of local councils placing microchips in bins is increasing, despite the fact that only one of them has volunteered to trial the Government’s pay-as-you-throw scheme. Councils are waiting until the public isn’t watching to begin surveillance on our waste habits, intruding into people’s private lives and introducing punitive taxes on what we throw away. The British public doesn’t want this technology, these fines, or this intrusion. If local authorities have no intention to monitor our waste then they should end the surreptitious installation of these bin microchips.”[269]

The “pay-as-you-throw” program also allows city councils to examine people’s trash and sell the information to corporations. People are also concerned that data from the chipped bins could show when they were away on vacation, possibly allowing criminals to know when homes were unoccupied, making them easy targets for burglars.

Authorities said the microchips were implemented to help the elderly. A spokesman for the Local Government Association said, “putting microchips in people’s bins can allow councils to provide people with a better service that costs less. If an elderly resident needs help getting their bin collected and returned, a microchip quickly flags it up to the refuse collector, saving time and money.”[270]

In 2008, approximately 100 different city councils in the UK investigated the contents of their residents’ bins, in order to check to see what kind of garbage was being thrown out by people, and in some cases tried to obtain information on their incomes and lifestyles.

Another possible scenario involving people’s garbage may arise after RFID tags are attached to every piece of merchandise replacing the traditional UPCs. Will someone be fined for putting glass bottles in the wrong recycling bin, or if someone accidentally discards cans in the paper bin? RFID tags and sensors installed on recycling bins could not only detect when the wrong materials were placed in the wrong bin, but the tags could also identify who purchased the items, and could issue them a fine for not disposing of them properly.

In Cleveland, Ohio the city began installing RFID tags in recycling bins in order to keep track of how often residents roll their bins out to the curb for collection to make sure they are recycling, and fines them $100 if they are not.[271] A computer on the garbage truck contains an RFID reader that detects the RFID tags attached to the residents’ recycle bins, and keeps track of which bins are emptied each week and which ones are not.

If a home’s recycle bin has not been placed out by the curb for collection in several weeks, then a trash supervisor will physically go through the person’s trash cans to see if that resident is throwing away recyclables in the trash cans, instead of sorting them in the recycle bins. These recyclables include glass, metal cans, plastic bottles, paper and cardboard. If a trash supervisor finds more than 10 percent recyclable

material in the person’s trash bin, then that resident is fined $100 for not properly sorting their recyclables.

Cleveland’s City Council approved spending $2.5 million dollars on the Big Brother bins in 2010, which were implemented in approximately 25,000 different households at first, and the program is designed to expand to an additional 25,000 households per year until the city’s 150,000 residents all use them. A suburb in Washington, DC also announced plans to implement a similar program,[272] and other cities around America are poised to follow.

Ammunition Purchases

Big Brother is scared of people with guns, as all tyrannical and oppressive regimes have been in the past, because an armed population can resist a government aimed at destroying civil liberties or rounding up citizens and sending them to detention centers or death camps. By disarming ordinary law-abiding citizens, it also allows a government to grow in size and power because people will need to rely on the police to protect them from dangerous criminals, instead of protecting themselves using their own guns. This allows the police force to grow larger and have more funding. Gun control laws made it illegal for citizens to own guns that aren't registered to them, something that can easily allow officials to do door-to-door weapon confiscations like they did in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.[273] Police can pull up a person's name and instantly see which guns they own, and demand they all get turned in.

While New World Order kingpins continuously attempt to destroy the Second Amendment to the Constitution, there are other Orwellian policies being put into place in attempts to monitor who has what guns, and even how many bullets they own.

As governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill into law which required stores that sell ammunition to thumbprint customers and log their driver's license for each purchase. Everyone who now buys bullets in California must submit to this procedure, as well as sign for their purchase which is then entered into a federal database that keeps track of how much ammo that person has bought. The database is used to flag people who buy what the government considers large amounts of ammunition, which may then be considered probable cause to investigate the individual further or place them under surveillance.

Schwarzenegger claimed to be against such a policy in the past but later changed his mind saying, “Although I have previously vetoed legislation similar to this measure, local governments have demonstrated that requiring ammunition vendors to keep records on ammunition sales improves public safety.”[274]

Sam Paredes, the executive director of Gun Owners of California, said the law treats gun owners like registered sex offenders.

Dr. Big Brother

With the passing of Obamacare into law in March 2010, the American government was facing enormous health care costs, and many were pressed to come up with ways to keep these costs down. The Senate Committee on Aging disclosed innovations they were planning as part of the government's new role in the health care industry, and some ideas included video chats with doctors and putting RFIDs on pills so computers could keep track of whether patients are taking their medication or not. The new methods have been called e-Health, e-Care, or telehealth.

"What we're talking about, folks, is using a device like this one," Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) said, as he displayed the small device. "It attaches to the patient's skin and is loaded with drugs that are administered in the exact way that the doctor prescribes—wirelessly."[275]

"That means that a doctor can vary the doses based on the information the doctor is receiving [from the monitor]. The patient doesn't have to go in to the doctor and then the pharmacy to change his or her prescription," he said.[276]

Other devices proposed by the committee were systems that would be attached to patients and monitor things like blood pressure and glucose levels which would then wirelessly report that information over the Internet to their physician. Officials also hope to implement devices that can monitor a person's nutritional intake and ones that could detect whether an elderly person has taken a fall so emergency workers could be alerted.

"Continuous monitoring of vibrations in the floor can detect falls and classify them according to the best choice of first responders—either a 911

call or a visit from a caregiver," proposed Robin Felder of the University of Virginia.[277]

"Emerging technologies allow pills to be electronically outfitted with transmitters to communicate with the user's wristwatch that shows that the pill has been consumed," Felder continued. "Broadband connectivity of these devices would allow the electronic medical record to be updated with regard to medication compliance and efficacy."[278]

Dr. Mohit Kaushal, who is the health care director at the Federal Communications Commission, testified at the Senate Committee on Aging using a video phone in an attempt to promote video chats between patients and doctors as an alternative to office visits.

Eric Dishman, global director of health innovation and policy at Intel, said "Just as e-mail became a new way of interacting with other people that didn't replace all other forms of communication such as phone calls and letters, e-Care uses new technologies to create a new way of providing care that complements—but doesn't replace—all clinic visits."

Dictating Your Diet

Another side effect to the passing of Obamacare are more laws governing the ingredients in food that are considered to be unhealthy. Since the taxpayers were now on the hook for everyone’s health insurance, lawmakers were looking for ways to keep people healthier in order to keep down the costs.

A bill introduced in New York tried to ban the use of any salt in restaurant cooking. The bill, A. 10129, states in part, “No owner or operator of a restaurant in this state shall use salt in any form in the preparation of any food for consumption by customers of such restaurant, including food prepared to be consumed on the premises of such restaurant or off of such premises.”

The bill was introduced by Assemblyman Felix Ortiz (D-Brooklyn), and included fines of $1000 for each violation.[279] A coalition of chefs, restaurant owners, and consumers, called the proposed law “absurd” in a press release.

In 2006, the Board of Health in New York City voted to ban restaurants from using trans fats in their food, a law that took effect in July 2008. Trans fats are unhealthy because they raise bad cholesterol and lower good cholesterol, making them worse than saturated fat.

“We don’t think that a municipal health agency has any business banning a product the Food and Drug Administration has already approved,” said Dan Fleshler, a spokesman for the National Restaurant Association.[280]

Other cities and states are passing laws that require restaurants to list the calorie content on the menus next to each food item.

In New York City, a school actually sent letters to parents of children that were considered fat. “My son, who is very tall for his age and is a little husky, but fit, brought home a piece of paper from his school listing his BMI and stating that he was obese,” said Amy Oztan, a mother of two, who received one of the letters.[281] BMI stands for Body Mass Index and comes from a formula based on a person’s height and weight.

Michelle Obama had started a campaign called Let’s Move that involves regular screening of all children’s BMI. One major criticism for screening people’s BMI is that it doesn’t take into account someone’s body type such as if they are big-boned or more muscular than an average person.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, every citizen is required to exercise daily in front of the telescreen so they could keep up their strength in order to better serve Big Brother. During one of the sessions, Winston Smith is yelled at by the instructor for not stretching far enough during a toe-touching exercise because the telescreens watched everyone’s effort.

While at an elementary school in Washington DC, Michelle Obama told the students that military leaders had informed her that more than one in four children are unqualified for military service because they’re too fat and that “childhood obesity isn’t just a public health threat, it’s not just an economic threat, it’s a national security threat as well.”[282]

She went on to list all the evils that fat people cost the economy and the health care system and concluded that, “We can’t just leave this up to the parents.”[283]

It was right around this time that governments approved a ban on soda machines in school cafeterias across the country, and even placed restrictions on school bake sales, in the name of public health.[284] San

Francisco even banned toys from most McDonald’s Happy Meals because officials claimed the toys were enticing children to eat poor quality food.[285]

“Smart” Thermostats

An Orwellian idea that hatched in California and may one day spread around the country, or even the world, involves the government being able to remotely control the thermostat in people’s homes in order to turn off the air-conditioning if they feel too much electricity is being used at a particular time and causing strain on the electrical grid.

All new homes built in California have to be equipped with the Big Brother thermostats, and many existing homes as well. The 2008 Building Efficiency Standards (Page 64), known as Title 24, specifically states, “The PCT shall not allow customer changes to thermostat settings during emergency events.”

Some government officials also hope to require non-removable FM receivers that connect to other electronic appliances such as water heaters, refrigerators, lights and computers, so these devices could be remotely shut off at will. Michael Shames, executive director of California’s Utility Consumers’ Action Network said, “The implications of this language are far-reaching and Orwellian. For the government and utility company to say, ‘We’re going to control the devices in your house, and you have no choice in that matter,’ that’s where the line is drawn.”[286]

Proponents of the “smart” thermostats have failed to realize that many people can install window air-conditioning units that aren’t connected to the home’s central thermostat, and will not be able to be controlled by the system. Some homeowners will also find a way to bypass the system without detection.

Fingerprint Scanners

When you think of getting your fingerprints taken, the image of being in handcuffs at the police station is often the first to come to mind, but fingerprint scanners are becoming common ways to check someone's identity, not just to enter a secure area at a government installation, but to pay for lunch at the local school, to enter your local gym, and even to get into Disney World.

For years, Walt Disney's theme parks have used fingerprint scanners to identify ticket holders to make sure that people don't use someone else's ticket.[287] Disney will confiscate any pass that someone attempts to use if it is not theirs.

"The lack of transparency has always been a problem," said Lillie Coney, associate director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center, who believes that the fingerprint scanners are too invasive. "What they're doing is taking a technology that was used to control access to high-level security venues and they're applying it to controlling access to a theme park."[288]

George Crossley, president of the Central Florida ACLU, said, "It's impossible for them to convince me that all they are getting is the fact that that person is the ticket-holder."[289]

It seems comical, but the federal government looked to Disney after the September 11th 2001 terror attacks to learn about security measures including biometrics because their theme parks had been the largest commercial user of biometric scanners. "The government was very aware of what Disney was doing," said Jim Wayman, director of the National Biometric Test Center at San Jose State University.

The company providing the scanners to Disney is believed to be Lumidigm Incorporated which is funded by the CIA, NSA, and the Department of Defense. Lumidigm's CEO Bob Harbour would not admit his company's products were used at Disney, but did say they have a contract with a "major theme park."[290]

Oftentimes companies that use these systems will say that they don't capture the person's actual fingerprint, but instead just look for various points on it and match those up to the points stored in its system, but Raul Diaz, Lumidigm's vice president of sales and marketing, said that such systems can be activated to store the entire image.

In 2004, Sea World in San Antonio, Texas installed fingerprint scanners for people with season passes. It's not just Sea World and the "happiest place on earth" that are using fingerprint scanners to gain entry. 24 Hour Fitness gyms have been using the scanners since at least 2007,[291] and several schools around America have implemented finger scanners as a way for students to pay for their lunches.[292] It's likely that banks will issue scanners that will either replace or supplement debit card readers at most retailers.

Despite what most people think, fingerprint scanners are not 100% accurate. A Japanese cryptographer and university professor named Tsutomu Matsumoto, tested fingerprint scanners and found that by using gelatin and molding plastic, he could copy someone's fingerprint and beat every major fingerprint reader eight out of ten times.[293] An episode of *Myth Busters* showed the crew was able to fool finger scanners as well.

In 2004, a man named Brandon Mayfield was detained and his home searched immediately after the March 11, 2004 bombing in Madrid, Spain that killed 191 people. The FBI had used their Automated Fingerprint Identification System to link him to the crime, but it turns out that because of a "substandard" fingerprint taken from a bag that contained one of the explosives, their system incorrectly identified him and he was completely innocent.

Orwellian Weapons

Over the course of civilization we have seen weapons advance from basic sticks and stones in prehistoric times, to swords and knives after the discovery of iron and steel, and later advancing to guns and missiles, often attached to aircraft or boats that can destroy a target hundreds of miles away. Science fiction literature and films have been filled with stories of lasers and armed humanoid robots that are indestructible killing-machines, but as some people already know, many of these fanciful depictions from the past are now becoming a reality.

While at one time, so-called smart bombs amazed people with their ability to strike strategic targets from long distances; these kinds of weapons are now common knowledge. What is not common knowledge (at least at the time I'm writing this in 2010) are a wide variety of futuristic Orwellian weapons that are already built, or are on the drawing board.

Some of these weapons involve fully autonomous robots that can relentlessly hunt down targets, and even implantable RFID chips that can kill a person when activated, and shock bracelets designed for airline passengers that can electrocute them if they are suspected of posing a threat. These and other weapons, if directed by a tyrannical leader, could squash any kind of resistance and keep every citizen in the world, not only under the watchful eyes of Big Brother, but in his crosshairs as well.

As you will learn in this chapter and the one on artificial intelligence, warnings of a massive robotic massacre, or artificial intelligence systems turning on humans is not only something found in the plots of science fiction movies or the paranoid imaginations of technophobes. It is a very real concern addressed by numerous experts in multiple fields. Big Brother is not just watching us; he is now armed and dangerous.

An Implantable Computer Chip That Can Kill

In 2009, Germany’s patent office rejected a patent for an invention dubbed the “Killer Chip,” which is basically an implantable RFID similar to the VeriChip said to track visitors from other countries using GPS, and could release a poison into a person’s body to “eliminate” them if they become a “security risk.” That was at least the Orwellian goal of the Saudi inventor who applied for the patent.

“I apply for these reasons and for reasons of state security and the security of citizens,” his application read. German law allows foreigners to apply for patents in the country through a local representative. “Most people apply for a patent in several countries, and this inventor probably did too,” Stephanie Krüger of the Patent Office said.[294]

A German Patent and Trademark Office spokeswoman told *Deutsche Presse Agentur* that the inventor’s application was submitted in October 2007 and published 18 months later, as required by law, but in Germany, inventions that are unethical or a danger to the public are not approved.

Electric Shock Bracelets for Airline Passengers

A sadistic idea that seems like it would only be implemented for transporting dangerous prisoners was actually proposed for ordinary citizens flying on commercial jets that involved making all passengers on airliners wear a tamper-proof shock bracelet that could then be activated to electrocute anyone that the crew thought was potentially dangerous. The Department of Homeland Security has expressed great interest in the so-called EMD (Electo-Muscular Disruption) safety bracelet which was designed by Lampered Less Lethal Incorporated.

A promotional video posted on the company's website shows the device being worn by all passengers on an airline and explained how the company felt it would help keep people safe.[295]

The video starts off by showing footage of the aftermath of the September 11th attacks and goes on to say that facial recognition systems take too much time and would increase the number of flight delays and cancellations. It also says bomb detecting devices aren't effective enough, and that the shock bracelets could stop terrorists once they were on board an aircraft.

It goes on to say that the shock bracelets would make flying more convenient for travelers since they could also be used as their ticket. The video concludes by saying, "We feel if given the choice between taking a flight implementing the added security of the EMD security safety bracelet system, and taking a flight without the additional security, many, if not most passengers, would happily opt for the extra security of the EMD safety bracelet."

I know that this seems like a hoax or a satire to bring attention to Orwellian security measures, but it’s not. A search of U.S. patents reveals that a patent was filed for the device in 2002. The application number is 6,933,851, and the description reads, “A method of providing air travel security for passengers traveling via an aircraft comprises situating a remotely activatable electric shock device on each of the passengers in position to deliver a disabling electrical shock when activated; and arming the electric shock devices for subsequent selective activation by a selectively operable remote control disposed within the aircraft. The remotely activatable electric shock devices each have activation circuitry responsive to the activating signal transmitted from the selectively operable remote control means. The activated electric shock device is operable to deliver the disabling electrical shock to that passenger.”

A letter from a Department of Homeland Security official named Paul S. Ruwaldt was sent to the inventor saying, “To make it clear, we [the federal government] are interested in…the immobilizing security bracelet, and look forward to receiving a written proposal.”[296]

The letterhead was from a US Department of Homeland Security office at the William J. Hughes Technical Center at the Atlantic City International Airport (the Federal Aviation Administration headquarters). It was also reported that Ruwaldt had previously met with a rep for the bracelet’s manufacturer.[297]

Taser-Firing Flying Robot

In 2007, it was reported that a French entrepreneur was developing a “flying saucer” that could shoot Taser rounds which would electrocute anyone hit by them. He plans for the device to be used to hunt criminal suspects or zap people in unruly crowds.[298] His invention is basically an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) that can hover around like a small radio controlled helicopter that is equipped with Taser rounds.

The controversial Taser gun temporarily paralyzes people by shooting two darts into the body which send electric shocks into the person, and are often abused by police as they electrocute unarmed and often non-threatening people for not complying with an order immediately.

The Taser-firing UAV’s creator, Antoine di Zazzo, says that he has been shocked by a Taser more than 50 times during his experiments and claims no side effects. A Taser is different than a stun gun, in that a Taser shoots tiny darts into a person’s skin which then carry the electrical current, whereas a stun gun is just a device with two metal prongs on it that are pressed against someone to shock them. Hovering UAVs like Zazzo’s design could also easily be armed with pepper spray, knockout gas, or even guns.

Some may think that this technology is still many decades away, but it’s not. Police in London deployed a UAV in February 2010 after a suspected car thief was able to evade officers on foot in thick fog. The thermal-imaging cameras built in to the UAV were able to spot the suspect’s heat signature, allowing police to track him down and make an arrest.

Several companies are building drones for sale to the general public which may be operated from a laptop computer or even a cell phone. “If the

Israelis can use them to find terrorists, certainly a husband is going to be able to track a wife who goes out at 11 o'clock at night and follow her," said divorce lawyer Raoul Felder.[299]

An MIT professor named Ms. Cummings, who is developing personal UAVs, commented that she could use a drone to watch her child by planting a transmitter in her lunchbox. "It would bring a whole new meaning to the term hover parent," she said.

She also remarked that, "If everybody had enough money to buy one of these things, we could all be wandering around with little networks of vehicles flying over our heads spying on us…It really opens up a whole new Pandora's Box of: What does it mean to have privacy?"

Frozen Poison Gun

A secret and sinister weapon developed by the CIA, and probably used in multiple assassinations and kidnappings, involves a CO2 powered gun that shoots a small frozen piece of poison or tranquilizing agent into the target, which leaves no evidence behind of any foul play. This device was actually shown during a congressional hearing when Senator Frank Church questioned then CIA director, William Colby about it.

Transcript:

Senator Frank Church: Does this pistol fire the dart? [Holding up the gun]

CIA Director William Colby: Yes, it does, Mr. Chairman, and a special one was developed which potentially would be able to enter the target without perception**.**

Senator Frank Church: But also the toxin itself would not appear in the autopsy?

CIA Director William Colby: Yes, so that there was no way of perceiving that the target was hit.

End of Transcript

In a 1998 documentary titled *Secrets of the CIA*, a former CIA agent named Mary Embree explains how it was her job to research poisons that could be used on people which would kill them and make it seem as if they died of a heart attack. She also talks about the frozen poison dart gun,

saying, “The poison was frozen into some sort of dart, and then it was shot at very high speed into the person. So when it reached the person, it would melt inside them, and the only thing would be like one little, tiny red dot on their body, which was hard to detect. There wouldn’t be a needle left or anything like that in the person.”[300]

Hunter-Killer Robots

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Pentagon was looking for contractors to build what they called a “Multi-Robot Pursuit System” that will involve packs of robots which “search for and detect a non-cooperative human.”[301] In 2005, the Pentagon launched a $127 billion dollar project called Future Combat Systems to develop robotic soldiers and was the largest military contract in US history.[302] It seems that real “Terminators” like the ones in the popular Arnold Schwarzenegger films are crossing over from science fiction into science fact.

Several different companies, including iRobot and Foster-Miller, manufacture different radio controlled tank-like robots that are armed with Taser guns, machine guns, and even rocket launchers. The Pentagon and others hope to one day create fully autonomous robots that are so advanced they can basically function on their own without any human intervention, even hunting down and killing people who are programmed as targets to be eliminated. Such systems will be equipped with facial recognition cameras, and likely DNA sniffers that operate like the nose of a tracking dog that can literally smell a suspect and identify him or her out of a large crowd of people and can even track their every footstep in order to hunt them down and either kill them or incapacitate them, depending on the programmed orders.

“If you build a new shopping mall, you could have sniffers all over the place,” predicts George Dodd, the father of the “electronic nose” and a researcher with the Highlands Scientific Research Group at the Craig Dunain Hospital in Inverness, UK.[303] Dodd envisions these sniffers as part of security systems in people’s homes and offices that will be able to identify intruders.

Police departments in Germany, Holland, and Hungary have been collecting swabs of human scents from crime scenes and putting them into databases, and George Dodd predicts that in the future every person's individual scent will be stored on a computer similar to fingerprints and DNA. These are some of the capabilities that will be built into robotic terminators.

In 2008, Steve Wright, an expert in police and military technology at Leeds Metropolitan University, predicted that autonomous human hunting robots would soon be fully operational. After news was made of the Pentagon's goals of creating a Multi Robot Pursuit System, Wright said, "What we have here are the beginnings of something designed to enable robots to hunt down humans like a pack of dogs. Once the software is perfected we can reasonably anticipate that they will become autonomous and become armed. We can also expect such systems to be equipped with human detection and tracking devices including sensors which detect human breath and the radio waves associated with a human heart beat. These are technologies already developed."[304]

The US Air Force's *Unmanned Aircraft Systems Flight Plan 2009-2047* report explains how unmanned drones could fly over targets and attack, all without human involvement. The report says that humans will monitor situations rather than being deciders or participants, and that "advances in AI [artificial intelligence] will enable systems to make combat decisions and act within legal and policy constraints without necessarily requiring human input."[305] The Air Force plans to have such devices fully operational by the year 2047. Several pages of the report were classified.

P.W. Singer, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution think tank and the author of *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century* said, "Every mission [that] soldiers go out on in Iraq, there's something (automated) flying over them, maybe an unmanned vehicle scouting ahead of them…When they shoot, the key is what they put their laser on for a drone to fire at….The story of the surge is not the additional troops, it's the air strikes (by machines like Predator drones) going up by a huge amount."[306]

When the Iraq war began in 2003, there were only a handful of ground-based robots in the field, such as radio controlled devices with mechanical arms used to defuse bombs, but a few years into the war there were over 12,000 robots, including Unmanned Arial Vehicles (UAVs) and other ground-based devices being used on a regular basis.[307]

The United States is not the only country with a rapidly increasing number of robotic soldiers. Dozens of other countries have been building a robotic army. In 2009, an Iranian drone was shot down in Iraq, and the Palestinian-based Hezbollah group has used drones to attack Israel on several occasions.

Many fear that lone nuts or small terrorist organizations will obtain robotic soldiers and commit attacks with them on innocent civilians. “I talked to a researcher who told me that for $50,000 worth of robots he could shut down New York for a day. It was pretty convincing. Warfare will go open source,” said Singer.[308]

The chair of the Department of Computer Science at the University of Sheffield in England, who is considered a computer and artificial intelligence expert, has also warned about the dangers of advancing robots. In 2007, Noel Sharkey wrote an article for the *London Guardian* detailing his warnings, where he said, “The deployment of the first armed battlefield robots in Iraq is the latest step on a dangerous path—we are sleepwalking into a brave new world where robots decide who, where and when to kill.”[309]

He pointed out the Pentagon’s $100 billion dollar Future Combat Systems project working to build killer robots and Unmanned Arial Vehicles (UAVs), saying, “This is dangerous new territory for warfare, yet there are no new ethical codes or guidelines in place. I have worked in artificial intelligence for decades, and the idea of a robot making decisions about human termination is terrifying.”[310]

Sharkey warns that, “With prices falling and technology becoming easier, we may soon see a robot arms race that will be difficult to stop,”[311] and urged that legislation be drawn up that would outline a code of ethics for autonomous robots before it’s too late. Some experts and military officials worry about robots’ ability to determine friendly people from legitimate targets. Robots could be programmed to identify soldiers who are wearing the enemy country’s uniforms, or the facial recognition system could be inputted with the faces of the entire enemy’s army after a hacker steals that information from them. Every faceprint of American soldiers could be input, and the robots instructed to kill everyone except those people in a specified area, but facial recognition is not 100% accurate. Friendly soldiers may also be equipped with RFID tags that would tell the robots they were friendly, and the machines could be programmed to kill any person who is not wearing a tag within the battle zone.

The increasing use of robotic soldiers will change the face of war in many ways. The loss of American soldiers’ lives was always a reason for the public to resist entering into a conflict, but perhaps at some point in the future, there will be hardly any risk for human life (for the country with the advanced robotic army, that is), so the public may not protest an ensuing war as much as they have in the past.

Going to war in the past meant that young soldiers would be killed and maimed in battle, but if a country (like America, for example) could send a fleet of robots instead of humans, would-be protesters will likely not resist the decision to go to war. Many people may, in fact, encourage such acts who would have felt indifferent, or even against such action in the past because of the risk to American soldiers’ lives.

Robotic Snakes

People have become familiar with the tank-like robots that frequently defuse bombs, and the flying drones that are like large radio controlled airplanes, but an interesting and unexpected design comes in the form of a robotic snake that literally slithers on the ground imitating an actual snake.

The first robot snake was built by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and is about 6 feet long and is also equipped with cameras, microphones, and speakers. It is operated by laptop computer.[312] Some envision the snake slithering through rubble of collapsed buildings in hopes of finding survivors, but the creators also say it could be used to carry bombs, as perhaps a suicide snake bomber, slithering near a target and blowing itself up.

Other robots based on animals are also reportedly in the works, including agile robots modeled after cats and dogs. While the robotic snake built by IDF is designed to operate on land, a Japanese company built a snake robot in 2005 that swims under water like a sea serpent. It’s called the ACM-R5 and can be seen operating on videos posted on the Internet.

Big Dog Four-Legged Robot

While most early robots being used by the Department of Defense were not much more than sophisticated miniature radio controlled tanks that rolled around on two treads, designing robots that walk has proved to be a much more difficult task. Creating pilot-less drones that fly like radio controlled airplanes or the bomb disposing tread robots like the TALON robots used in the Iraq War are much simpler than designing a system that can balance on two or four legs.

A company called Boston Dynamics was one of the first to create a functioning walking robot they call the Big Dog that walks on four legs using a hydraulic actuation system. The robot is the size of an extremely large dog, standing two and a half feet tall, and is three feet long. Video footage of the Big Dog shows it walking around and being kicked by people as they attempt to throw it off balance and knock it over, but it doesn’t appear to lose its footing, and quickly recovers and keeps on walking. The robot is said to be able to carry more than 300 pounds of equipment over 10 miles before refueling, and can walk on rough terrain and up inclines of 35 degrees. Boston Dynamics is funded by the Tactical Technology Office at DARPA.[313]

The designers’ goal is to enhance the Big Dog to the point where it can carry supplies for soldiers and follow them practically anywhere on the battlefield, on any terrain. It is highly probably that future versions will also be armed and walk on two legs instead of four.

Killer Wasp Robots

When most people think of a killer robot, they think of a large tank-like machine, or a humanoid-looking robot the size of a person similar to the ones in films like *The Terminator* (1984), *Short Circuit* (1986), or *iRobot* (2004); but in 2008, the Air Force Research Laboratory decided to build tiny radio controlled drones the size of large insects that could actually kill what they called, “high-value targets.” The program is called Project Anubis, named after the jackal-headed god of the dead in Egyptian mythology, and is classified, but budget documents reveal that Air Force engineers were successful in developing a “Micro-Air Vehicle (MAV) with innovative seeker/tracking sensor algorithms that can engage maneuvering high-value targets.”[314]

These devices are miniature versions of what are called Unmanned Arial Vehicles (UAVs) which refers to aircraft like the popular Predator drones that everyone has heard about in the news. The Predator drones are armed and can launch missiles, and the new Anubis micro drones are also deadly even though they are the size of a large bug. Special Forces have already been using a larger type of wasp drone made by AeroVironment that weighs less than a pound and can fly three miles away from its operator.

The Air Force’s 2008 budget described Project Anubis as “a small UAV [Unmanned Aerial Vehicle] that carries sensors, data links, and a munitions payload to engage time-sensitive fleeting targets in complex environments.”[315] The total cost was expected to be $500,000. This was apparently before the devices had been built because a newer budget mentioned Project Anubis as having already been completed, costing $1.75 million dollars.

The tiny drones are believed to be equipped with video cameras and microphones and even small explosives weighing a fraction of a pound, and either drop the explosive device, or the drone itself explodes once it reaches its intended target. Such a tiny drone can easily fly into a building through open doorways or windows and then be detonated once inside.

In the "Big Brother" episode of *Conspiracy Theory* with Jesse Ventura that aired on the TruTV network beginning in December 2009, Ventura interviewed an engineer named Elwood Norris who builds spy systems for the government and explained that they can fly miniature GPS tracking devices, designed to look like a fly with microphones on them, into a person's vehicle (or house) so they can then be monitored without their knowledge.

These tiny bugs give the saying "to be a fly on the wall" a whole new literal meaning, since the "fly" on the wall really may be listening. To give you an idea of how this technology is abused, and how it will be abused even more in the future, all we need to do is turn to the news. At a town hall in Charlotte, Vermont, workers renovating the building discovered two electronic bugs that had been planted in the clerk's office, allowing whoever put them there to listen in on meetings and clerk business.[316] The devices were discovered in October 2010, but their batteries had long been dead and were about 10 years old, meaning they were hidden in the town hall building around the year 2000. They were battery powered wireless transmitters that police said could have transmitted to the immediate surrounding area to wherever the person with the receiver was hanging out listening in. The local police said it was a cold case and couldn't even guess who would have planted the bugs or what their motive was.[317]

If someone went through this much trouble to listen in on what was being discussed in some small town hall in Charlotte, Vermont—imagine what kinds of measures are taken to spy on members of Congress, or political activists deemed a threat to the establishment. In the Orwellian nightmare, you can rarely be certain that what comes out of your mouth isn't being overheard and analyzed by Big Brother.

Robots that Feed on Human Flesh

When we think of the power source for a robot, we most often think of them as being battery powered, or even solar powered, but the Pentagon has reportedly been working on one that would run off biomass. The robot is called EATR (pronounced "eater"), which stands for Energetically Autonomous Tactical Robot, and was designed by Robotic Technology Incorporated which says on its website that their robot, "can find, ingest, and extract energy from biomass in the environment (and other organically-based energy sources), as well as use conventional and alternative fuels (such as gasoline, heavy fuel, kerosene, diesel, propane, coal, cooking oil, and solar) when suitable."[318]

Original reports, including one on FoxNews.com, said that the EATR robot would eat animals and even human remains in the battlefield. Dr. Bob Finkelstein, president of Robotic Technology Incorporated (RTI) then released a statement saying that the robot would only be programmed to eat specific kinds of fuel sources. "If it's not on the menu, it's not going to eat it," Finkelstein said. "There are certain signatures from different kinds of materials that would distinguish vegetative biomass from other material."[319]

The company continued to do damage control concerning the initial reports and sent out a press release saying, "Despite the far-reaching reports that this includes human bodies, the public can be assured that the engine Cyclone (Cyclone Power Technologies Inc.) has developed to power the EATR runs on fuel no scarier than twigs, grass clippings and wood chips—small, plant-based items for which RTI's robotic technology is designed to forage."

Cyclone Power Technologies, located in Pompano Beach, Florida created what they call the Waste Heat Engine, which powers the EATR

robots by burning biomass in an external combustion chamber which then generates electricity from heating up water in a closed loop. The designers say that because it would never need to be plugged in somewhere to recharge, the robots could roam on their own for months or years without having to be recharged.

As far as the claims that the EATR robot would not run on dead bodies, the manufacturer didn’t deny that this was possible; they just denied this would happen because the robots wouldn’t be programmed to do so. Of course in extreme circumstances, such as a major war, this programming could easily be changed.

Electro Magnetic Pulse (EMP)

One possible catastrophic danger of our reliance on modern technology comes from an Electro Magnetic Pulse bomb, or an EMP. This type of weapon sends out a wave of electromagnetic energy that literally destroys every electronic circuit in its path, which can be a few city blocks, a radius of several miles, or even several states.

A nuclear bomb sends out an EMP, and if detonated in the air high above the United States, one could destroy electric devices in a large part of the country, but there are also non-nuclear EMP weapons, and some are small enough to be carried around in a briefcase or back pack. If a non-nuclear EMP was set off in the heart of a major city, for example, everyone's cell phones, laptops, and vehicles will all immediately stop working and be permanently disabled. Street lights, traffic controllers at the airport, police radios, medical equipment at hospitals, and more, would all be completely destroyed without any visible signs of damage. The EMP would basically disable or destroy countless electrical components that we have taken for granted for decades and would practically knock us back to the stone age.

Non-nuclear EMPs are not a theoretical weapon; they have been built, and although not widely reported in the news, have been used. *CBS News* reported that an EMP bomb was used to disable TV stations in Iraq at the start of the invasion in 2003 and to disable a major power plant in Baghdad.[320] Some reports also say the US used EMPs in the 1991 Gulf War as well.[321] [322]

EMP bombs are not something that only an advanced military can create. An article published in 1996 by a defense analyst named Carlo Kopp, explained that materials to build a non-nuclear electromagnetic

weapon are commonly available and concluded, “The threat of electromagnetic bomb proliferation is very real.”[323] In 2009, a director at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism admitted that homemade electromagnetic bombs could become a significant threat.[324]

In the future, small EMP guns will likely be carried by law enforcement and the military which will use them to disable vehicles being used by suspects they are pursuing.

LRAD Sound Weapons

A non-lethal weapon that has become popular at protests and demonstrations is the LRAD sound cannon that focuses an ear-piercing high pitched sound at targets in order to cause them such discomfort that they disperse. LRAD stands for Long Range Acoustic Device and was developed by a San Diego company called American Technology Corporation.

The small device is often mounted on police or military vehicles and can emit sounds capable of dispersing crowds from up to 300 yards away. The volume control is variable and can range from mildly annoying, to beyond a person’s threshold for pain (120-140 dB) which can cause permanent hearing damage at close range.

Smaller, handheld devices will be on the market in the coming years that will be the size of a large flashlight and may be standard equipment carried by police officers or built into Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or other robots.

MEDUSA

Unlike the LRAD acoustical weapon that focuses high volume sound waves at people to cause pain in their ears, a more advanced device called MEDUSA (Mob Excess Deterrent Using Silent Audio) uses microwave pulses that bypass the ears and eardrum and cause noise and pain inside a person’s skull.[325] It’s interesting that the device’s name is *Medusa*, the same as the Greek mythology character that has snakes for hair and turns people to stone if they look at her. The MEDUSA microwave device was created by the Sierra Nevada Corporation for crowd control.

Some people worry that devices like the MEDUSA and others can be used to torture people without leaving external and noticeable evidence of the torture, or that they will be abused by police and military on peaceful protesters.

Active Denial System

A real life “pain ray” called the Active Denial System literally shoots a microwave beam at people, causing them to feel like their skin is burning.[326] Some believe the device can also disrupt a person’s bowels and cause them to literally crap their pants, although this is disputed. The first versions of the Active Denial System were fairly large and had to be mounted on vehicles, but the manufacturer, Raytheon, is working on small portable units that can be easily carried around or mounted on rifles. Raytheon is one of the largest defense contractors that builds weapons for the military, and is the world’s biggest producer of guided missile systems.

The Active Denial Systems use a gyrotron to generate powerful magnetic fields called millimeter waves, which are focused at the target and can cause second or third degree burns. Some of the systems were shipped to Afghanistan in 2010, but the military claimed they weren’t being used, and were only there “for testing.” Of course, shipping a huge unit like that half way around the world only to “test” it doesn’t make any sense, since this has been done since at least 2004.[327] Due to the controversy surrounding the weapons it’s not surprising the military denies they have been used in battle yet.

“Death Rays”

A retired Colonel from Taiwan’s National Defense Department named Alan Yu learned of deadly Orwellian weapons from working on Taiwan’s military budget and having access to classified documents. In a 1997 article he wrote titled, *Millimeter Waves and Mind Control,* he discussed how portable handheld devices were being made that could kill people by using radio waves and leave no evidence.

He wrote, “corrupted undercover career operators can murder anyone as if by natural death (such as induce heart attack, heart failure, or kidney failure, etc.) with the invisible wave weapon. These undercover career operators have been trained professionally in manipulating people’s lives and health with their invisible wave weapon. Some recruited young undercover operators will be trained with the murder skill from the senior undercover operators.”[328]

His article continues, “For example, in 1995, a former head of Taiwan’s National Security Institute died of a ‘heart-attack’ in a public bath pool in Taipei. This death occurred two days after he announced that he would write a memoir. His widow claimed that her husband has never had any heart problems in his life (supported by his health record history) and requested an autopsy to be performed in order to determine the true cause of his death.”[329]

Colonel Yo believes the man was killed to keep him from discussing state secrets. All that is needed to create a “death ray” is to turn up the power on the Active Denial System, which could easily cause a heart attack, brain aneurism, or organ failure. The HPEM Active Denial System, for example, is used to disable vehicles by destroying all unshielded

electronics, and microwave guns have sent several people to the hospital for injuries during testing.[330]

Artificial Intelligence

Instead of humans being the eyes, ears, and brains behind Big Brother, what if Big Brother became an intelligent being itself? For decades some people have looked forward to (or feared) the day when scientists could create a computer system that would be considered artificially intelligent and would be as intelligent as a human, or even more so. While many scientists have been making tremendous advances towards such a system, others still scoff at the idea saying such a system would be too complex and require too much computing power. Others still cite the free will of human beings, and say that no computer could come close to the intelligence of a human because we have free will, and machines only carry out a specified program.

While this may be true, many of these AI skeptics overlook the idea that animals are intelligent, but are often denied to have a free will in the same manner that humans do. If animals do not have free will, then no matter how intelligent they seem to be, they are simply a biological computer following a program that is hardwired into their brains. Yet, as pet owners can attest, animals of an array of species convey a variety of emotions, from love and fear to anger and loneliness. So is a dog simply following a mental program that it is designed to follow that dictates its behavior, or is it intelligent? Most would agree that dogs are intelligent (to some extent, at least). If animals are intelligent, and they are just following a program hardwired into their brains, then wouldn't it be possible to design a computer system that can simulate (and surpass) this intelligence?

If you were born before 1980, then you remember a time before telephone systems had voice recognition capabilities and you had to either wait to speak to an operator for them to transfer your call to the appropriate department, or use the automated feature by pressing the assigned number to reach your desired party. Slowly these systems were replaced with more

advanced technology that understands your voice commands, and the recording simply asks you what department you need, and the system understands what you say and automatically transfers your call. While this is certainly an incredible task, can this system be considered intelligent?

Is the system that Google and other search engines use to determine what kinds of advertisements to display to you based on your search history an “intelligent” system? Are the characters you fight in a videogame considered intelligent? How exactly does one define an artificially intelligent system, and what are the social, scientific, and legal ramifications if and when a computer system is considered artificially intelligent, or even a conscious being? The most popular method used to test whether or not a computer program is artificially intelligent is called the Turing Test.

The Turing Test

The Turing test was created in 1950 by Alan Turing, a British computer scientist, in order to challenge a human judge to decide whether they were communicating with a computer, or with another human. The test consists of a person (the judge) engaging in a dialog through typing, with a computer program (or at least what may be a computer program). The judge is not told whether they are typing to a computer program or an actual person. If the judge can't determine whether they are having a dialog with a computer program or another person, then the system is said to have a human-level intelligence.

In his 2005 book, *The Singularity is Near*, the respected futurist Ray Kurzweil wrote that he expected computers to have intelligence levels indistinguishable from humans by the end of the 2020s. Kurzweil insists that, "The machines will convince us that they are conscious, that they have their own agenda worthy of our respect. We will come to believe that they are conscious much as we believe that of each other."[331]

Obviously technology has advanced at unthinkable levels since the Turning Test was invented back in 1950, and researchers have been monitoring this rapid advancement each year and anticipating (or fearing) artificial intelligence.

Moore’s Law

Moore’s Law is a term that describes the growth patterns in computing power as processors get faster and memory capacity increases. The law is credited to Gordon E. Moore, the co-founder of Intel, who in 1965 published a paper observing that the number of transistors able to fit on an integrated circuit was doubling approximately every two years. This trend has continued for over forty-five years, and some experts do not expect it to stop until around 2020 or later.

Moore’s Law seems to accurately describe the increasing processing speed of computers each year, as well as their memory capacity, and even the number and size of pixels in digital cameras, which are all increasing near exponential rates. These incredible advances have enabled the communication age and a technological revolution after computers transformed from large units that filled entire rooms, into hand-held cell phones that contain more computing power than the first space shuttle that reached the moon in 1969.

The amazing advances seem to be rapidly increasing in accordance with Moore’s Law, which leads many computer scientists to forecast that at some point in the coming decades we will see artificially intelligent systems arrive that are much smarter than humans. These anticipated advances have alarmed some experts, causing them to worry that such systems may actually pose a threat to the human race.

Isaac Asimov’s Three Laws of Robotics

A popular science fiction writer from the 1940s named Isaac Asimov wrote about advanced intelligent robots in his stories and came up with what he called the three laws of robotics, which he envisioned were necessary to prevent advanced robots from turning against their makers. When Asimov came up with these “laws” they were purely science fiction, but today some scientists are seriously looking at his ideas and are using the three laws as a blueprint, hoping to prevent intelligent robots from posing a danger to humans. The three laws follow:

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.

2. A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.

3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

In 2007, computer and robotic experts in South Korea and Japan started drawing up plans for programming moral codes in artificially intelligent robots. An engineer at the South Korean Industry Ministry said,

“Robots are becoming more and more intelligent every year to the point where they are virtually thinking for themselves. For this reason we need a code of ethics which all robot manufacturers must build into their machines. The starting point for these ethics should be Isaac Asimov’s three laws.”[332]

As robots become more intelligent and autonomous, some experts fear that it will become harder to decide who is responsible if and when they injure or kill someone. They ponder whether the designer will be to blame, the user, or even the robot itself. Experts have even discussed whether robots would one day be granted certain civil rights.

A 2007 report from the *BBC* discussed whether robots would one day actually be allowed to own property and foresaw that in the future, legislation would need to be introduced to prevent people from abusing robots. “These questions might sound far-fetched, but debates over animal rights would have seemed equally far-fetched to many people just a few decades ago. Now, however, such questions are part of mainstream public debate,” said the article.[333]

Machines Getting Smarter Every Day

Not too long ago in the past, it was considered science fiction to speculate that machines would one day become more intelligent than humans, but as computing power continued to multiply exponentially in the twenty-first century, such claims were starting to come from very well respected scientists and engineers. One of the most popular of these futurists is Ray Kurzweil, who says, “I’ve made the case that we will have both the hardware and the software to achieve human level artificial intelligence with the broad suppleness of human intelligence including our emotional intelligence by 2029.”[334]

Kurzweil is also a transhumanist, and in a 2008 interview with the *BBC*, he said that soon, “We’ll have intelligent nanobots go into our brains through the capillaries and interact directly with our biological neurons.” These nanobots would, “make us smarter, remember things better and automatically go into full emergent virtual reality environments through the nervous system.”[335]

Kurzweil was interviewed at the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Boston, Massachusetts where he and 18 other influential thinkers were chosen to identify the greatest technological challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. Other attendees were Larry Page, founder of Google, and Dr. Craig Venter from the human genome project. Several of the goals the group came up with were to: reverse engineer the brain, secure cyberspace, enhance virtual reality, advance health information, engineer better medicines, and advance personalized learning.

While in the twenty-first century it may be easy to see what lies ahead regarding intelligent systems and robotics, it’s interesting to note that in a

1968 *Playboy* magazine article, Arthur C. Clarke wrote, “In a very few generations—computer generations—which by this time may last only a few months—there will be a mental explosion; the merely intelligent machine will swiftly give away to the ultra-intelligence machine.”

Arthur C. Clarke is most well-known for writing *2001 A Space Odyssey*, where HAL, an artificially intelligent system, begins killing humans on board a space ship in order to prevent them from interfering with its programmed objectives.

It seems that artificial intelligence technology is actually catching up with the science fiction imaginations of the past.

Computer Wins ‘Jeopardy!’

IBM designed a computer program to compete against human *Jeopardy!* contestants with hopes of advancing artificial intelligence technology.[336] As many know, IBM had previously developed a program capable of playing chess called Deep Blue which then beat the world champion Garry Kasparov in 1997.

The ability of Deep Blue to play chess is seen as simple compared to designing a program to play a complicated game like *Jeopardy!* because of the wide variety of questions that could be asked. Of course, if the system, called “Watson” after the founder of IBM, Thomas Watson, was connected to the Internet, it would easily win since it could scour the Internet for the answers, but for this challenge it did not have access to the web.

For the project, IBM developed a new kind of software that can understand human questions and then answer them correctly. “The big goal is to get computers to be able to converse in human terms,” said the team leader, David A. Ferrucci, an IBM artificial intelligence researcher.

The Watson program answered questions with a synthesized voice and was run on a Blue Gene supercomputer which IBM moved to Los Angeles where the game show is located. The show’s producers brought back Ken Jennings, a contestant who won a record 74 days in a row and 2.5 million dollars in 2004 to play against Watson. In February 2011 the historic challenge took place and Watson was victorious over the human contenders. At the end of the three day game, Watson finished with $77,147 while Ken Jennings won $24,000 and the third place contestant, Brad Rutter earned $21,600.[337]

Artificial Brains

In 2009, scientists in Switzerland claimed that they would be able to create a fully-functioning replica of a human brain by the year 2020. They call it the Blue Brain project, and is headed up by Henry Markram who is the director of the Swiss based Center for Neuroscience & Technology and the Brain Mind Institute. Markram had been working to reverse engineer the human brain for years and claimed that he would be able to accomplish this around the year 2020.[338]

There are other teams working on building electronic brains using large computer mainframes. For example, a team at IBM's Almaden Research Lab at Nevada University used a BlueGene/L Supercomputer to model a mouse brain which consists of about eight million neurons. The first version of the BlueGene computer runs about one tenth as fast as an actual mouse's brain, a rate that will undoubtedly rapidly increase with advancing technology.

In a talk in 2008 titled "Crossing the Chasm Between Humans and Machines: the Next 40 Years," Justin Rattner, Intel's chief technology officer, spoke seriously on the subject of machines becoming as smart as people. "The industry has taken much greater strides than anyone ever imagined 40 years ago," he said, and admitted that, "machines could even overtake humans in their ability to reason in the not-so-distant future."[339]

Rodney Brooks, a robot designer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) confirmed, "One day we will create a human-level artificial intelligence." Paul Saffo, a technology forecaster at Stanford University said, "Eventually, we're going to reach the point where everybody's going to say, 'Of course machines are smarter than we are.'"

Saffo also made comments showing the dark danger of creating such things. “The truly interesting question is what happens after if we have truly intelligent robots. If we’re very lucky, they’ll treat us as pets. If not, they’ll treat us as food.”

While Ray Kurzweil believes, (and hopes) that computers will match and surpass human level intelligence by the year 2029, Intel’s Justin Rattner thinks it won’t be until at least 2050, and of course others say it will be even longer.

As incredible advances in computers continue, some scientists are understandably getting worried about the implications of computers surpassing human-level intelligence. Some are debating whether there should be restrictions placed on the kinds of research that could lead to a loss of control once intelligent systems are created.

Scientists who met at the Asilomar Conference Grounds on Monterey Bay in California in 2009 largely downplayed the possibility of computers becoming smarter than man or an artificial intelligence system developing from the Internet, but did acknowledge some of the dangers advancing technology had.

The meeting was organized by Dr. Eric Horvitz, the president of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence, who also works for Microsoft. The location of the conference was purposefully chosen in an attempt to parallel a meeting in 1975 at the same location where leading biologists met to discuss mixing DNA and other genetic material between different organisms and species. Such technology raised serious ethical questions and the 1975 conference helped to set guidelines for DNA research and experiments.

Dr. Horvitz said, “My sense was that sooner or later we would have to make some sort of statement or assessment, given the rising voice of the technorati and people very concerned about the rise of intelligent machines.”

The Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (A.A.A.I.) decided to draft a report that would assess the possibility of “the loss of human control of computer-based intelligences,” as well as the ethical, legal, and socioeconomic issues that are connected to such intelligences arising. Dr. Horvitz said sensitive or potentially dangerous technology and research should be contained in highly secure laboratories as a precaution.

Some scientists, however, were only made more uncomfortable by the meeting after learning about the emerging artificial intelligent systems and their likely implications on the world. Tom Mitchell, a professor of artificial intelligence at Carnegie Mellon University, said, “I went in very optimistic about the future of A.I. and thinking that Bill Joy and Ray Kurzweil were far off in their predictions,” but that, “The meeting made me want to be more outspoken about these issues and in particular be outspoken about the vast amounts of data collected about our personal lives.”

Technological Singularity

The "technological singularity," sometimes simply called "the singularity" refers to a theoretical time in the future when an artificial intelligence is created that is able to learn and advance technology at a faster pace than humans are able to comprehend. According to this idea, once machines exceed human intelligence, they will improve their own designs and functions in complex ways that are too difficult for humans to understand.

The term, "the singularity" is credited to Vernor Vinge who is a retired mathematics professor at San Diego State University and a science fiction writer, who in 1993 wrote about such an event possibly happening in the future, and coined the term. In his paper titled, *The Coming Technological Singularity*, he wrote, "Within thirty years, we will have the technological means to create superhuman intelligence. Shortly after, the human era will be ended."

The idea of an "intelligence explosion" by intelligent machines that would design even more intelligent machines was also proposed by a mathematician in 1965 named I. J. Good. In more recent times, many other prominent professionals and experts have spoken about such events.

Bill Joy, the founder of Sun Microsystems, a popular computer chip manufacturer, warned of such an event in an article published in a 2000 edition of *Wired Magazine* titled "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us."

He wrote, "From the moment I became involved in the creation of new technologies, their ethical dimensions have concerned me, but it was only in the autumn of 1998 that I became anxiously aware of how great are the dangers facing us in the 21st century."[340]

He continues, “I was also reminded of the Borg of *Star Trek*, a hive of partly biological, partly robotic creatures with a strong destructive streak. Borg-like disasters are a staple of science fiction, so why hadn’t I been more concerned about such robotic dystopias earlier? Why weren’t other people more concerned about these nightmarish scenarios?”

“By 2030, we are likely to be able to build machines, in quantity, a million times as powerful as the personal computers of today—sufficient to implement the dreams of Kurzweil and Moravec.”

“Given the incredible power of these new technologies, shouldn’t we be asking how we can best coexist with them? And if our own extinction is a likely, or even possible, outcome of our technological development, shouldn’t we proceed with great caution?”

“How soon could such an intelligent robot be built? The coming advances in computing power seem to make it possible by 2030. And once an intelligent robot exists, it is only a small step to a robot species—to an intelligent robot that can make evolved copies of itself.”

He goes on to say that we are rapidly approaching the point of no return with no plan, no control, and no breaks; and ponders, “Have we already gone too far down the path to alter course?”

He also discusses his fears that self-replicating robots and nanotechnology could soon surprise us the way news of the first cloned animal did. He concludes by saying, “This crystallized for me my problem with Kurzweil’s dream. A technological approach to Eternity—near immortality through robotics—may not be the most desirable utopia, and its pursuit brings clear dangers. Maybe we should rethink our utopian choices.”

In 2008, an organization called Singularity University in Silicon Valley began offering courses to prepare a “cadre” to shape advancing technology

and help society cope with the ramifications of what they see as the coming singularity.

Techno-Utopianism

Technological utopianism refers to the belief that scientific and technological advances will one day bring about a utopia where humans can live in luxury and enjoy an abundance of goods and services that are all built and maintained by robots and/or artificially intelligent systems.

Such an idea has been portrayed in science fiction books and films, as well as cartoons like the *Jetsons*. Proponents envision that in the future, things like cooking, cleaning, and manual labor will be done by robots, allowing people to have an abundance of free time to enjoy themselves with 3D entertainment, interactive video games, or other leisure activities or hobbies. It's difficult to reconcile these ideas because often people's jobs have been replaced by new technology, leaving them unemployed and with job skills that aren't needed anymore. Such displacements don't allow the individual to then live a comfortable life of luxury, but instead place tremendous stress on them as they scramble to find a new place in the job market to provide for their family and pay their bills. Techno-utopian dreamers somehow often overlook practical scenarios involving advancing technology.

If we look back in history to the industrial revolution, we can see that many people thought this would bring about a techno-utopia since manual labor could be reduced by advanced machinery, but instead, people were needed to design, build, operate, and maintain the new machines, and such developments didn't ease American's work load at all. Quite contrary, Americans are working longer hours now than in years past, and in the last few generations we have seen the need for both husband and wife to work in order to make ends meet.

In the 1990s when the Internet became widely popular and the dot-com craze started, techno-utopian dreams were revived once again. Many of the key players in the computer revolution were counter-culture figures such as Steve Jobs, founder of Apple Inc., who was a hippie who smoked pot and used LSD, but later grew into a suit-wearing businessman.

While computers and the Internet have changed the world and our culture in vast ways, are people working less and retiring earlier? No. Sure, there are exceptions such as people who created a business model and developed it into a successful money making operation and became wealthy in a short period of time, but these are the rare exceptions. It seems that jobs and careers are similar to energy, in that they simply change form and cause people to scramble to learn new skills as their positions are eliminated.

As you know, the dot-com bubble burst after the rampant speculation of permanent prosperity and instant millionaires came crashing down to reality. The belief in techno-utopianism may at times gain a tremendous following of people who can cite all kinds of reasons and evidence for why it will soon occur, but they will inevitably be disappointed when reality sets in.

Techno-utopian dreamers believe that technological growth will lead to the end of economic scarcity, and that this will then eliminate every major social evil such as crime. What they overlook is the fact that some people steal for the thrill of it, and some people kill out of rage, and some people like to gain and abuse power just for the sake of power.

Zeitgeist the Movie

A popular set of films on the Internet is *Zeitgeist the Movie,* and its sequel *Zeitgeist: Addendum* which were produced by a man using a possible pseudonym of “Peter Joseph.” The films attempt to expose the New World Order, the 9/11 attacks, and the Federal Reserve banking system, while simultaneously attacking Christianity and claiming that Jesus never existed. For the sake of this analysis, we will focus primarily on the techno-utopia described in the sequel, *Zeitgeist: Addendum.* A thorough analysis of the other aspects of the films can be found in my book, *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction.*

In October of 2008, *Zeitgeist* part 2, or the *Addendum,* was released as an Internet film and began with a discussion about the private Federal Reserve banking system and its implications on the economy and society, but then took a turn into the bizarre. A large part of *Zeitgeist Addendum* promotes the idea that civilization will not need money anymore after we design and build sophisticated robots and mechanical systems to perform most of the tasks that humans now have to accomplish. The producer, “Peter Joseph,” and the proponents of what is called the Venus Project, envision a techno-utopian society where machines will do all the work for us, and people will then be able to spend their time enjoying themselves and living in luxury. The film pushes the idea that these advanced machines will be able to create an abundance of everything we need, and can cook and clean and do all kinds of manual labor, so that people can then live like they’re on a permanent vacation and explore their creative side.

Of course it seems as if the producer was high on marijuana when he wrote the script, and to any educated person the film seems like a pipe dream, but a lot of younger viewers fully support the techno-utopian ideas and believe the picture of the future painted in the film will soon be a reality.

Who wouldn’t like a world where you wouldn’t have to work? Seems like a great idea on the surface, until you actually look at the logistics of such an idea. Unfortunately the supporters of this film cannot grasp the reality of a medium of exchange, nor the value of rare artifacts or the need for human labor, and that even if sophisticated machines or robots are able to replace a fair amount of human labor, there will always be countless jobs that they will not be able to do: from teaching children, to various service oriented jobs or research and development. Such a techno-utopia has been the dream of many who envisioned microwave ovens, cell phones, and laptop computers as the tools which would free mankind from the burdens of work, but such inventions have only complicated the issue.

Since the *Zeitgeist* series is blatantly anti-religion, particularly anti-Christianity, many of the Zeitgeist supporters attack anyone who addresses the fallacies in the film often saying critics must be brainwashed from religion and too old-fashioned to change with the times.

Aside from his attacks on Christianity in his first film, “Peter Joseph” is also anti-Second Amendment and said that in his vision of the future, people wouldn’t need to own guns anymore since there would be no crime. In an interview, when he was asked about people who didn’t want to go along and participate in his supposed utopian New World Order, he basically said the people would need to be re-educated.[341]

Peter Joseph seems to have attempted to establish himself as some sort of cult leader by promoting what he calls the Zeitgeist Movement, which is seen as a group of activists who desire to change society into the kind envisioned in his films. In June 2010, the movement claimed to have over 400,000 members,[342] which consist of people who have signed up for an e-mail list.

Supporters of the so-called Zeitgeist Movement dream of a society with no money, no private property, mass automation of manual labor and tedious tasks, and artificial intelligent systems to make ethical judgments,

perhaps replacing human judges and juries, which they claim are biased and not objective. While these ideas seem to be taken right out of a science fiction novel, or someone who lacks critical thinking skills, Peter Joseph seems to actually believe in them and has a fair number of supporters who agree with him. It is unclear exactly how these people will usher in their techno-utopia, but somehow they feel they deserve it.

On October 8, 2008, some supporters of the Zeitgeist Movement smashed several windows in a building at Oklahoma State University and spray painted “Zeitgeist Movement” on the pavement in some sort of attempt to “fight the system.” It’s extremely unlikely that the “Zeitgeist Movement” will formulate into an actual social movement or affect any kind of social changes whatsoever, but the *Zeitgeist* films show how appealing fanciful dreams of a techno-utopia are for people.

An Analysis of Ray Kurzweil’s Predictions

I thought it would be beneficial to analyze the predictions of the respected futurist Ray Kurzweil, especially since one of his books, *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, was published in 1999, and contains his technological forecasts for the decades to come. At the time I’m writing this analysis, it is the year 2010, so we can look back at Kurzweil’s predictions for the year 2009 that he made ten years earlier in order to see how they pan out. We will also look at his predictions for the future and discuss the likelihood of them being accurate. His book contains chapters on his vision of the future and what technology we will have in the years 2009, 2019, 2029, and 2099.

Kurzweil's Predictions For 2009

In 1999, Kurzweil looked ahead ten years and predicted that by 2009, "Personal computers are available in a wide range of sizes and shapes, and are commonly embedded in clothing and jewelry such as wristwatches, rings, earrings, and other body ornaments. Computers with high-resolution visual interfaces range from rings and pins and credit cards up to the size of a thin book."[343] Well, with the release of smart phones such as the Black Berry and the iPhone, one could argue that computers do come in all shapes and sizes, but as far as his prediction of them being "commonly" embedded in clothing and jewelry, this didn't happen.

He was more accurate, though, when he stated, "Computer displays have all the display quality of paper—high resolution, high contrast, large viewing angle, and no flicker. Books, magazines, and newspapers are now routinely read on displays that are the size of, well, small books."[344]

Amazon.com released their e-book reader, *Kindle*, in 2007, which was later followed by Barnes and Noble's *Nook*, and e-books could be read on iPhones and other smart phones as well. In April 2010, Apple Inc. released the iPad, which they advertised as an e-book reader among other things.

The iPad also sounds a lot like what he described here, where he said, "Students of all ages typically have a computer of their own, which is a thin table-like device weighing under a pound with a very high resolution display suitable for reading."[345] Most students in 2009 had laptop computers, and while they weighed more than a pound, they were certainly amazing creations that had wireless Internet access and could be used to watch videos or read e-books.

Back in 1999, Kurzweil also stated that in 2009, “Telephone communication is primarily wireless, and routinely includes high-resolution moving images,”[346] which, thanks to smart phones with video cameras and color screens, this is what we have. Many people now don’t even have a “home phone” and only have their cell phones. He also predicted, “Computers routinely include moving picture image cameras and are able to reliably identify their owners from their faces.”[347] Well, he was right again, because all laptops come standard with a tiny camera and microphone built into them, and any laptop can be installed with facial recognition software used as a security measure to only allow the owner to use it. Tiny video cameras were also common in cell phones in 2009.

While we now take iTunes and downloadable mp3s for granted, in 1999 the music industry was running scared of people downloading their music on peer-to-peer networks like Napster. Kurzweil predicted by 2009 that, “Most purchases of books, musical ‘albums,’ video games, and other forms of software do not involve any physical object, so new business models for distributing these forms of information have emerged.”[348]

While he may have been wrong by using the word “most,” he was certainly correct that an extremely large number of people purchase software, videogames, and music from websites and instantly download them, instead of having to physically go to a store and buy them on a disk. Kurzweil also saw the future of On-Demand movies and services like Netflix, YouTube, and podcasts of popular radio shows, saying, “Users can instantly download books, magazines, newspapers, television, radio, movies, and other forms of software to their highly portable personal communication devices.” [349]

Not surprisingly, Kurzweil also mentioned that privacy would become a major concern for people, and as you know, identity theft became a popular fear as we relied more and more on technology. “Privacy has emerged as a primary political issue. The virtually constant use of electronic communication technologies is leaving a highly detailed trail of every person’s every move,” he said.[350]

It’s also interesting to read that Kurzweil foresaw a large portion of the population would become politically neutralized, saying, “Although not politically popular, the underclass is politically neutralized through public assistance and the generally high level of affluence.”[351]

Not all of his predictions for 2009 came true, however. One such prediction was concerning the economy, which he was embarrassingly wrong about when he said, “Despite occasional corrections, the ten years leading up to 2009 have seen continuous economic expansion and prosperity due to the dominance of the knowledge content of products and services. The greatest gains continue to be in the value of the stock market.”[352] Now it is understandable that he is a technology expert, not an economist, so his failed economic forecasting shouldn’t detract from his insight into technological advances.

Also, while he did foresee the use of unmanned flying drones to be used in wars, he believed that humans would be mostly far removed from the scene of battle, sadly, a prediction that was far from accurate with the fatalities and injuries to soldiers and innocent civilians in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He did, however, envision small UAVs (Unmanned Arial Vehicles) the size of birds or smaller,[353] which did come true in 2009 and 2010, although such devices were still in their infancy.

Kurzweil’s Predictions for 2019

Looking further ahead, he says by the year 2019 computers will be so small that they’ll practically be invisible and that we will have displays built into our eye glasses and contact lenses which will replace old fashioned LCD monitors.

He insists that reverse engineering of the human brain will have inspired the architecture of machine-based neural networks and says a $4000 computer will have the same computing power as a human brain (20 million- billion calculations per second).

“Keyboards are rare, although they still exist. Most interactions with computing is through gestures using hands, fingers, and facial expressions and through two-way natural-language spoken communication. People communicate with computers the same way they would communicate with a human assistant, both verbally and through visual expression,” he says.[354]

“Paper books and documents are rarely used or accessed….Most learning is accomplished using intelligent software-based simulated teachers. To the extent that teaching is done by human teachers, the human teachers are often not in the local vicinity of the student.”[355]

He also says that people will be hooked up to virtual reality systems that can simulate pressure, temperature, textures, and moistness, and says that “sexual interactions with other human partners or simulated partners” will be the “preferred mode of interaction, even when a human partner is nearby.”[356]

He goes on to say that people will begin having relationships with automated personalities, including automated lovers, and writes that

"automated personalities are superior to humans in some ways, such as having very reliable memories, and if desired, predictable (and programmable) personalities."[357]

He forecasts that the military will widely use very small flying weapons, some the size of insects, a concept that the military has already budgeted for, and is working towards. **(S*ee Orwellian Weapons*)** By 2019, Kurzweil believes that some reports will claim that computers have passed the Turing Test, but he insists that these systems will not meet all the criteria of an artificially intelligent system for a few more years.

"Public and private spaces are routinely monitored by machine intelligence to prevent interpersonal violence," he says, and "privacy continues to be a major political and social issue with each individual's practically every move stored in a database somewhere."[358] It's interesting to read his forecast of "machine intelligence" that he says will prevent violence, because as you may recall from the chapter on surveillance cameras, in 2010 these systems were already in their early stages with pre-crime cameras that detect "hostile" speech based on the volume, speed, and pitch of conversations the microphones pick up.

He also writes that in this period of time the "human underclass" will continue to be an issue and that the difference between those "productively engaged" in the economy and those who aren't, will be complicated.

Kurzweil’s Predictions for 2029

This is where his predictions start to get scary. Much of them sound like science fiction or fantasies coming from an over-active imagination, but Kurzweil is supposedly an expert, and was able to fairly accurately predict the kinds of technology that would be used in the year 2009 when he wrote his book ten years earlier. While some of these predictions for 2029 may seem fanciful, some of them are certainly extremely likely to occur.

Instead of people wearing a blue tooth piece on their ear to talk on their phone, Kurzweil believes that, “Cochlear implants, originally used just for the hearing impaired, are now ubiquitous. These implants provide auditory communication in both directions between the human user and the world wide computing network.”[359] This is certainly believable, but what is even more disturbing is that he says similar devices will be implanted in our eyes.

“Displays are now implanted in the eyes, with a choice of permanent implants or removable implants (similar to contact lenses). Images are projected directly onto the retina providing the usual high-resolution three-dimensional overlay on the physical world.”[360]

He also envisions neural interfaces will be as common as cell phones were in the beginning of the twenty-first century, saying, “neural implants based on machine intelligence are providing enhanced perceptual and cognitive functioning to humans. Defining what constitutes a human being is emerging as a significant legal and political issue. The rapidly growing capability of machines is controversial, but there is no effective resistance to it.”[361]

If this isn’t unsettling enough, he also alludes to the fact that the majority of humans on earth will not even be needed anymore, and will be completely replaced by machines. “There is almost no human employment in production, agriculture, and transportation,” he says.[362]

If there is no human employment in production, agriculture, or transportation, as Kurzweil predicts, then what kinds of jobs are those people going to have? What he doesn’t mention is that elite politicians, environmentalists, and businessmen have a strong desire to massively reduce the world’s population in order to (as they believe) preserve the earth’s natural resources. Wealthy elitists like Ted Turner and Prince Philip have publicly stated their desire to reduce the population by several billion people. The elite’s ideologies behind population reduction are discussed at length in my book, *The New World Order: Facts & Fiction*.

Kurzweil’s Predictions for 2099

If you thought his predictions for the year 2029 were far-fetched, or just plain disturbing, what Kurzweil believes life will be like in 2099 is truly bizarre. “A software-based intelligence is able to manifest bodies at will: one or more virtual bodies at different levels of virtual reality and nanoengineered physical bodies using instantly reconfigurable nanobot swarms.”[363] What he is saying, basically, is that billions of tiny nanorobots that all communicate with each other, will be able to work together to assemble themselves in the shape of whatever they want, similar to the T-1000 Terminator robot from the Arnold Schwarzenegger movie *Terminator 2*.

He also says that computer systems will be completely artificially intelligent, and will even be smarter than the entire human race’s intelligence combined.[364]

Humans, he says, will almost all have computers implanted in their brains and will all be cyborgs. “Even among those human intelligences still using carbon-based neurons, there is ubiquitous use of neural implant technology, which provides enormous augmentation of human perceptual and cognitive abilities. Humans who do not utilize such implants are unable to meaningfully participate in dialogues with those who do.”[365]

Only time will tell just how accurate these predictions are. While his visions of the year 2009 were very accurate, this could be in part because much of the technology that became popular around that time was already in the works when he wrote his book in 1999. It’s not that difficult to see how emerging technology will become commonplace in the near future, but extrapolating accurate predictions thirty years and one hundred years into the future are likely much more difficult. Depending on what year you are

reading this book, you will be able to make a more accurate assessment of the timeline Kurzweil outlines in his writings.

Even if Kurzweil is dramatically wrong in his visions of future technology, the kinds of invasive and dehumanizing systems that will undoubtedly be created in the coming decades should be a cause for alarm, and precautions should be made today to ensure that we do not become a mindless species of cyborgs, or the slaves of artificially intelligent robots.

Cybernetic Organisms

A cybernetic organism is a living creature that consists of both biological systems, as well as artificial systems, and is often seen as being a person or other organism that has enhanced abilities due to advanced technology. The term *cyborg* is often used as a shortened version of *cybernetic organism* and is a popular term used in science fiction to describe a creature that is part human, part machine. The term cyborg was coined in 1960 by Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline in a paper where they outlined how cybernetic systems could be used to allow humans to "meet the requirements of extraterrestrial environments," as they traveled in space to other planets.[366]

Characters such as the Borg from *Star Trek*, and the *Six million Dollar Man* from the 1970s TV series are examples of popular cyborgs from science fiction, which is where most people believe is the only place that cyborgs are found. Quite surprising is the fact that cybernetic organisms are actually real, although they are not nearly advanced as the ones in the movies…yet.

As far back as 2004, a cybernetic brain was able to fly a flight simulator for an F-22 fighter jet.[367] This cyborg brain was built from 25,000 neurons extracted from a rat's brain which sits in a petri dish. The brain is still alive. Dr. Thomas DeMarse, professor of biomedical engineering at the University of Florida said, "It's essentially a dish with 60 electrodes arranged in a dish at the bottom, over that we put the living cortical neurons from rats, which rapidly begin to reconnect themselves, forming a living neural network—a brain."

An article on CNN.com in 2004 discussing the system mentioned that "living networks" could be used to fly actual unmanned aircraft in the future, and not just a flight simulator. This cyborg rat brain was reported to

have “learned” to control the flight simulator. With the partial rat brain consisting of only 25,000 neurons, one can only imagine what could happen if and when complete brains, or the brains of larger animals are used. A dog’s brain has 160 million neurons, for example, and a chimpanzee’s has more than six billion.

A similar cyborg brain was created at the Georgia Institute of Technology which operates a small mechanical body instead of a flight simulator. The designers call it the Hybrot, meaning hybrid-robot, which also uses a portion of a rat’s brain. The researchers are hoping that their creation will start to actually learn.

“Learning is often defined as a lasting change in behaviors, resulting from experience,” said Steve Potter, the bio-medical engineer on the project. “In order for a cultured network to learn, it must be able to behave. By using multi-electrode arrays as a two-way interface to cultured mammalian cortical networks, we have given these networks an artificial body with which to behave,” he said.[368]

In 2007 Charles Higgins, an associate professor at the University of Arizona, built a small robot that is controlled partially by the brain of a moth. Higgens attached electrodes to a part of the moth’s brain that deals with sight, which then causes the robot to respond depending on what the moth is seeing.

Higgens said in the future, “Most computers will have some kind of living component to them. In time, our knowledge of biology will get to a point where if your heart is failing, we won’t wait for a donor. We’ll just grow you one. We’ll be able to do that with brains, too. If I could grow brains, I could really make computing efficient.”[369]

Higgens insists that he would draw the line at using monkey or human brains for cybernetic creations, but mentioned that someday these new hybrid computers could become artificially intelligent. “Computers now are good at chess and Word and Excel, but they’re not good at being flexible or

interacting with other users. There may be some way to use biological computing to actually make our computers seem more intelligent,” he said.

Monkey Equipped with Mechanical Arm

In 2003 scientists at Duke University's Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina attached a neural interface to a monkey's brain that allowed it to move a mechanical arm by using its thoughts. The monkey would just think about using its own arm, and its brain signals were intercepted by the neural interface and caused the mechanical arm to move the same way its own arm would have. The monkey was able to grab things and feed itself with the cybernetic arm.[370]

"It's quite plausible that the perception is you're extended into the robot arm, or the arm is an extension of you," said the University of Washington's Eberhard E. Fetz, a pioneer in the field of brain-machine interfaces.

"It moves much like your own arm would move," said Dr Andrew Schwartz of Pittsburgh University. The scientists said they would soon upgrade the system so that the users could transmit their mental commands to machines wirelessly instead of having them physically wired into the brain.[371]

The monkeys used in the experiment had bundles of wires protruding from their head after they had holes drilled through their skulls to implant the interfaces into their brains. Miguel Nicolelis, the scientist in charge of the experiments, insisted the monkeys liked the experiment. "If anything, they're enjoying themselves playing these games. It enriches their lives," he said. "You don't have to do anything to get these guys into their chair. They go right there. That's play time."[372]

Man Tests Mechanical Hand

In Italy a man who lost his forearm in a car accident was equipped with a cybernetic arm in 2003, similar to the one that was tested on monkeys several years earlier. In this instance, the mechanical hand was just part of a test and was not a permanent thing.

Scientists implanted electrodes into the nerves at the end of the man's severed hand and connected them to the mechanical hand and he was able to wiggle the fingers and grab things. The project was called LifeHand. You may recall in one of the *Star Wars* films, the lead character, Luke Skywalker, had his hand cut off which was then replaced by a mechanical hand that he used throughout the rest of the trilogy.

After the surgery which implanted the electrodes in the patient's arm, he only took a few days to master the robotic hand. Scientists said the device was able to receive and obey 95% of the commands from the man's nervous system. "It felt almost the same as a real hand," said the patient.[373]

Paolo Maria Rossini, a neurologist who lead the procedure, said the patient "didn't have to learn to use muscles that do a different job to move a prosthesis, he just had to concentrate and send to the robotic hand the same messages he used to send to his own hand."[374]

Transhumanism

Transhumanism is a fringe belief system, some call it a movement, of people who are hoping or attempting to use technology to improve the mental and physical characteristics and abilities of human beings. Such technologies will lead to what supporters call “human enhancement.” Some of the ideas brought forth by transhumanists are noble, such as helping the handicapped or curing disease, but many also dream of one day eliminating aging and even death and transforming ordinary humans into cyborgs that live forever. Most transhumanists are atheists.

The term *transhumanism* is symbolized by H+ and comes from the idea that humans can transform themselves into beings with dramatically improved abilities compared to what a natural born human has in regards to strength, mental capabilities, and communication. Much of the “enhancements” come from cybernetic devices like neural interfaces that will turn an ordinary person into a cyborg. The emergence of nanotechnology is looked at as a major primer that will jumpstart the transhumanist revolution. Nanotechnology refers to the manipulation or assembly of matter on an atomic scale, or structures between 1 and 100 nanometers in size. One nanometer is one billionth of a meter. Nanotechnology has a wide range of applications, mainly in electronics and medicine.

In 1986 a man named Eric Drexler published a book titled *Engines of Creation*: *The Coming Era of Nanotechnology,* which was one of the first to discuss the future possibilities of nanotechnology to dramatically extend the human lifespan and use nanorobots for various science fiction-like tasks.[375]

Ray Kurzweil believes that, “Nanobots launched into our bloodstreams could supplement our natural immune system and seek out and destroy

pathogens, cancer cells, arterial plaque, and other agents….We will be able to reconstruct any or all of our bodily organs and systems, and do so at the cellular level."[376]

In her 1992 book *Science as Salvation*, Mary Midgley discussed transhumanist goals of achieving immortality and called their ideas quasi-scientific dreams and self-indulgent, uncontrolled power-fantasies driven by pseudoscientific speculation and the fear of death.[377]

A Closer Look at Nineteen Eighty-Four

Let’s now take a closer look at the story elements of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and see how the novel reflects our current society in many ways, not just in terms of privacy-invading technology and the watchful eyes of Big Brother. The story of Winston Smith, the lead character, and the world in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also involves very insightful elements describing the socioeconomic structure and the drastic differences in lifestyles between different segments of society. Orwell also highlighted a perpetual state of war and the propaganda that kept society supporting it. As you read through the novel, it is impossible not to notice numerous other parallels between the storyline and our actual reality. The book is one of the scariest instances of life imitating art, and critics of Big Brother will sometimes say that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was not meant to be used as an instruction manual.

Social Structure

In the novel, the government consists of “the Party” which itself is made up of Inner members and Outer members, each with dramatically different privileges. The Inner members have access to luxuries such as real food and refreshments, and live in spacious and well-furnished homes, while the Outer members are given small food rations and live in dilapidated housing projects. A step below the Outer members on the socioeconomic scale are the Proles (or proletariats) who live in deplorable conditions like a third world country and are seen as immoral and out of control animals who are not given any of the “luxuries” of Party members.

Orwell explains, “Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbors, films, football, beer, and above all, gambling filled up the horizon of their minds. To keep them in control was not difficult…All that was required of them was a primitive patriotism which could be appealed to whenever it was necessary to make them accept longer working hours or shorter rations. And when they become discontented, as they sometimes did, their discontentment led nowhere, because being without general ideas, they could only focus it on petty specific grievances.”[378]

A steady supply of “Victory Gin” provided by the government kept people mildly intoxicated, and contributed to their apathetic attitude. In the story, the political ideology is described as *Ingsoc*, which stands for English Socialism, and is the justification for the severe government control and regulation of goods and services. Even having children is regulated by the government and a couple must be approved before they start a family.

Life wasn’t always so controlled and joyless. After what is called the Revolution, the Party gained power and created a society where each

individual is reduced to nothing more than a worker, working for the sake of the Party, and under the constant supervision of Big Brother.

The population of the Proles was massive compared to Party members, and Orwell notes that if they would only realize the strength that they had in numbers, they could rise up and overthrow the Party and Big Brother in an instant.

“Why was it that they could never shout like that about anything that mattered?” Winston lamented after hearing a group of people yelling in the streets over a petty quarrel. The reason for their poor living condition was their lack of education and their own ignorance. The Party did everything they could to prevent them from becoming enlightened.

“For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves; and when once they had done this, they would sooner or later realize that the privileged minority had no function, and they would sweep it away. In the long run, a hierarchical society was only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance.”[379]

The Control of Information

George Orwell knew the power of propaganda, thus the Party controlled all information such as the newsreels shown on the telescreens, and the publishing of all newspapers and books. They even wrote the songs people would sing, created the games children played, and produced the entertainment people enjoyed.

“They [the citizens] could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity of what was demanded of them, and were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening.”[380]

In our society we have Operation Mockingbird which has manipulated the mainstream media since the 1950s and functions as a propaganda arm of the establishment, and a gate-keeper to contain important information, preventing it from reaching the public. Most people are also distracted by entertainment news such as celebrity gossip and sports, which divert people’s attention away from important issues and allows government corruption to run rampant.

A *memory hole* is another term coined by Orwell, and means the alteration or disappearance of inconvenient or embarrassing documents, photographs, transcripts, or other records, in a way that attempts to make it seem as though something never happened and the information never even existed. For example, if an embarrassing story is posted online after slipping past the editors but is later brought to their attention, sometimes they may change a headline, remove parts of the story, or just delete the entire story altogether in an attempt to contain certain information and prevent it from being known or spread around. When this happens, the information is said to have disappeared down the memory hole.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* there is a scene where Winston Smith had to edit newspapers from the past (which was part of his job) and change the amount of chocolate rations that were allowed to each person per week. In reality, the amount decreased from 30 grams to 20 grams, but Smith had to make it seem like the ration had actually increased from 15 to 20. A visibly happy friend of Winston later passes him in a hallway and cheerfully says, “Did you hear they’re going to increase the chocolate rations from 15 grams to 20 grams per week,” and is so brainwashed by Big Brother that he doesn’t realize the number had actually been reduced and not increased. All past documentation showing anything different had been removed from existence.

All information about a person who betrays Big Brother or the Party is also completely removed from all records, and that person becomes an “unperson” and is executed. It is made to seem as if they never even existed. Near the end of the novel, the main antagonist, O’Brien, tells Winston, “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.” Any information the Party didn’t want people to have access to anymore simply disappeared into a memory hole (meaning it was destroyed) and was quickly forgotten about by everyone. With no physical evidence or record of a piece of information, there was no longer any way to verify whether a fact was true or not. The truth was what the Party said it was.

In a very ironic situation in 2009, Amazon.com deleted a large number of copies of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from their Kindle electronic book readers. Customers had purchased e-book copies of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which were then sent wirelessly to their Kindle reader, but after it was discovered that the publisher who listed that particular Kindle version for sale did not actually have the rights to the novel, the copies were deleted by Amazon from customer’s own Kindle e-book readers, and disappeared into a memory hole.[381] Customers were not told what had happened, and the copy of the book simply vanished from their e-book reader because they are all wirelessly connected to Amazon.com and the company controls which files are stored on the Kindle unit.

Another one of countless incidences where important information disappears down a *memory hole* as a result of government intervention was with the case of the pulling of an episode of Jesse Ventura's television show, *Conspiracy Theory*. After the "Police State" episode first aired on Friday November 26th 2010, it was scheduled to be replayed the following week as a lead-in for the new episode, but it mysteriously never aired again. The episode's description was also pulled from TruTV's website, the cable channel airing program. It covered secretive FEMA prison camps and terrorist fusion centers which collect and data mine information to look for terrorists or anyone who may be a threat to the government's tyranny. The episode was pretty disturbing.

After websites and blogs started to buzz with speculation, it was then revealed by the show's producers that the U.S. government put pressure on the network to kill the episode from airing again, so they did.[382] The information in episodes of *Conspiracy Theory* is so powerful that the government doesn't want people watching it so they put pressure on the network to make one of the most damaging episodes disappear. People who recorded that episode on their DVRs at home then started reporting that the episode was missing from their DVR unit.[383] Apparently the cable company had even removed the recorded episodes in an attempt to dump them down a memory hole.

Perpetual State of War

Society is stuck in a lengthy war with another superpower and the ongoing battle is used as an explanation for various food and supply shortages that people must endure. The telescreens announce victories on the battlefield that always bring the war “within measurable distance of its end,” but it continues on, and on and society continues to support it.

While this war continues, the enemy superpower they are supposedly fighting keeps changing, and nobody seems to notice. First they are fighting Eastasia (and allies with Eurasia), but later they are said to be battling Eurasia, and allies with Eastasia, but nobody notices. It’s kind of like the switch from fighting the “War on Terror” in Afghanistan starting in 2001, shortly after the 9/11 attacks, and later shifting to the War in Iraq in 2003 which then continued for many years.

Winston finds a girlfriend named Julia who feels the same way he does about the Party, society, and Big Brother, and the two discuss finding the Brotherhood, an underground and secret Resistance movement that is plotting to overthrow the Party and restore freedom. As they discuss finding the Brotherhood (called *The Resistance* in the film version) they begin unraveling the extent of the lies coming from the Party. When discussing the perpetual war, Julia remarks, “The rocket bombs which fell daily on London were probably fired by the government itself, just to keep people frightened.”[384] It’s stunning that Orwell included this reference to false flag terrorism in the storyline, a very real and ruthless strategy used by governments around the world throughout history. A false flag attack means a country (or group) attacks themselves and blames it on some other country or group in order to justify a massive military response that is seen as a retaliation for the (fraudulent) attack against them.

In the novel, Orwell also explains that the war Oceania is fighting isn't a real war, but that it is a fabrication that the ruling Party needs to continuously go on in order to destroy the fruits of society's labor, thus ensuring a continuous shortage of goods which maintains the social structure that the ruling elite has constructed. The Party would print up "atrocity pamphlets" outlining the crimes allegedly committed by the enemy, and distribute them to the citizens of Oceania so they could see how evil the enemy was that they were fighting and the horrors of war were constantly in their minds to reinforce the reason they had to work so hard for so little.

Winston comes to discover, "The essential act of war is destruction, not necessarily of human lives, but of the products of human labor. War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere or sinking in the depths of the sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent."[385]

"In the past, the ruling groups of all countries, although they might recognize their common interest and therefore limit the destructiveness of war, did fight against one another, and the victor always plundered the vanquished. In our own day they are not fighting against one another at all. The war is waged by each ruling group against its own subjects, and the object of the war is not to make or prevent conquests of territory, but to keep the structure of society intact."[386]

According to the novel, if society was not at war, and the goods they manufactured were put to use to improve the living conditions of everyone, then the ruling elite would lose their power because the wealth would be more evenly distributed. It is for this reason that the Inner Party continues their manufactured and fraudulent war, which then keeps them in control of the infrastructure and assets, and prevents everyone else from rising out of poverty.

The Personification of the Party

A man named Big Brother is supposedly the head of the Party, and his picture is plastered on walls in every building and on every street to constantly remind everyone that “Big Brother is watching you.” There is actually no one named Big Brother, or at least not anymore, but the people didn’t know this, or even consider it. He is a face attached to personify the Party and give it the appearance and feeling of being human. Orwell explains, “Big Brother is the guise in which the Party chooses to exhibit itself to the world. His function is to act as a focusing point for love, fear, and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt toward an individual than toward an organization.”[387]

In reality, a similar method is used with the President of the United States (and the leaders of other countries as well). The president is believed by many to be the man in charge, and the most powerful man in the world, but he is simply a spokesman and puppet for the ones who are really running the show. When people are mad at the policies they must obey or conditions they find themselves and their country in, they point to the president and blame him, believing it’s all his fault. This makes them feel better by having an individual to blame and focus their anger on. The president is a personification of the party, and even the entire country.

A similar personification was used with Osama bin Laden in the War on Terror. For nearly a decade the American government blamed this one man for all of the problems in the world, even though bin Laden had barely been heard from after 9/11, leading many to believe that he had died shortly after of natural causes. The American establishment purposefully perpetuated a mythological Bin Laden and an occasional video tape or audio message was released to the public, supposedly of the man, but such video taped messages were always from old videos and contained typical

“death to America” and “death to Israel” messages, and nothing new was ever discovered.

For years experts highly doubted that “new” audio messages claimed to be from bin Laden were actually even him. In 2006, Bruce Lawrence, a professor at Duke University and an expert on Osama bin Laden, said he believed bin Laden was dead and that audio messages purported to be from him were in fact not, but for political reasons were claimed otherwise.[388]

The myth that an all-powerful Osama bin Laden remained alive and was directing his global terrorist organization, Al Qaeda, was a monumental lie that was continuously spread to the public to keep them in a state of fear, and was used as the reason for the War on Terror to continue. The raid by U.S. Navy Seals on his purported compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan on May 1st 2011 where it was reported that he had been living for five years only raised more questions about his actual power and influence on Al Qaeda.

Most of the ignorant public had been led to believe that this one man was responsible for every terrorist attack in the world, as if he was some untouchable mafia kingpin out of a comic book who personally ordered every incident. For over a decade he was the boogie man and the face of terrorism that had been wildly exaggerated to justify the ongoing “War on Terror.” He should have been called Osama Bin Elvis because of the countless reports of sightings over the years. Many questions remain surrounding his purported death on May 1st 2011. Many wonder if he was alive for nearly a decade following the 9/11 attacks, and if he was living in the compound in Pakistan for five years, then why hadn’t we heard from him for so long? He was allegedly still leading Al Qaeda from his residence, yet he hadn’t released any new video tapes or audio messages for at least five years.

If you find my claims about the wildly exaggerated power of Osama bin Laden and the fraudulent War on Terror absurd, then you have a long way to go in your awakening process to undo the years of brainwashing and

social conditioning you have been a victim of. As Orwell said, “It might very well be that literally ever word in the history books, even the things that one accepted without question, was pure fantasy.”[389]

For over a decade Osama bin Laden was used to fulfill the same role that Emmanuel Goldstein plays in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Goldstein is the bad guy, and the ultimate evil. “All subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations, sprang directly out of his teaching. Somewhere or other he was still alive and hatching his conspiracies,” Orwell wrote.[390]

Winston starts to see through the myth of Goldstein and at one point when a “new message” from Goldstein was aired on the telescreens attacking Big Brother and the Party, Smith called it, “an attack so exaggerated and perverse that a child should have been able to see through it.”[391]

Julia also saw through the propaganda, saying, “The tales about Goldstein and his underground army, were simply a lot of rubbish which the Party had invented for its own purposes.”[392]

Telescreens

A major component of Big Brother in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are telescreens, which are television screens that can also see and hear what is in their immediate surroundings and are monitored by the Thought Police who make sure no one is saying anything bad about Big Brother or the Party. Telescreens are mounted in every home and also continuously communicate Party propaganda to society and cannot be turned off (except by Inner Party members, for a brief period of time). These telescreens watched and listened to every member of the Party, and nobody dares question their authority. Such an act would amount to Thought Crime and would cause one to be imprisoned and killed. The telescreens and microphones are continuously monitored and even facial expressions and body language can be understood by the Big Brother system. No one dares even whisper a word of disagreement or doubt about the Party or Big Brother.

“It was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander when you were in any public place or within range of a telescreen. The smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself—anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide.”[393]

As you’ve learned in *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*, real life telescreens now exist, along with pre-crime cameras, facial recognition systems, store cameras that alert customer service if you loiter in an isle too long; cameras that allow bosses to watch, listen, and talk to their employees, and more. It’s getting to the point that no matter where you are (even in a school bathroom) you may be within reach of the watchful eyes and ears of Big Brother.

Orwell wrote, “the telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard…You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.”[394]

When George Orwell wrote his book, computer technology was nonexistent. Color TV had not been invented yet, there were no microwave ovens, answering machines, VCRs, cassette players, or even eight-track players. In 1949, the most advanced technology was black and white television. Systems like Echelon, Carnivore, facial recognition cameras and other Big Brother technology are becoming common knowledge in the twenty-first century, but at the time *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was first published, this technology was limited to the creative imaginations of science fiction writers, or dismissed as insanity.

Modern surveillance systems are even much more powerful than what Orwell imagined. As the cliché goes, the truth *is* stranger than fiction. In a move that would have caused a national outcry just a decade earlier when people weren’t so desensitized to Orwellian measures, in December 2010, the retail giant Wal-Mart began using video screens at the checkout stands at around 600 hundred different locations in the United States to repeatedly play a brief message from the head of the Department of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, informing shoppers that the Department of Homeland Security has “teamed up” with Wal-Mart in order to help keep your community safe from terrorists.

It is very odd and disturbing to have one of the world’s largest corporations teaming up with a federal police force to encourage shoppers to be informants and to spy on their family, friends, and neighbors; because they want you to believe that people everywhere may be plotting a terrorist attack against the government. Everyone already knows they can dial 911 to reach the police for any reason, and people frequently abuse it and call to

report that a cashier at McDonald’s wouldn’t refund their money, or for a variety of other stupid reasons.[395]

With 911 operators already overloaded with unimportant calls, and police resources being wasted when they could actually be legitimately used to stop or solve crime, just imagine the mess after the population tips off authorities over every little suspicion as a result of their minds being filled with paranoia from the mainstream media for years, telling everyone that there’s a boogey man around every corner who may be secretly plotting some kind of terrorist attack in your neighborhood.

A Snitch Culture

The few people living in the dystopian world described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* who were still able to think critically and independently were afraid to speak their mind out of fear that others would report them as traitors to the Party and enemies of Big Brother. The Thought Police are a secret police force that use telescreens, snitches, and entrapment in order to intimidate the population in attempts to prevent Thought Crime, and to also discover Thought Criminals, and arrest and punish them. A Thought Criminal is anyone who dares think anything bad about Big Brother or the Party.

People, and particularly children, have all been turned into spies and are encouraged to report Thought Crime to the authorities. “Nearly all children nowadays were horrible,” Orwell wrote. “They adored the Party and everything connected with it. The songs, the processions, the banners, the hiking, the drilling with dummy rifles, the yelling of slogans, the worship of Big Brother—it was all a sort of glorious game to them.”[396] That was in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but unfortunately we also find parallels within our own society.

The Department of Homeland Security launched a program where they decided to “partner” with the Boy Scouts to “prepare youths for more traditional jobs as police officers and firefighters.”[397] *The New York Times* ran an article in 2009 discussing a drill the children were involved in where they used fake rifles and had to confront a “disgruntled Iraq War veteran” who became a domestic terrorist. The article showed a photo of some kids holding fake rifles and dressed up in SWAT gear.[398]

A British website called ClimateCops.com designed for children ages 7 to 11 features cartoons and downloadable materials urging children to

become “climate cops” who keep a watchful eye on their parents to see if they are wasting electricity. Children download a “Climate Crime Case File” to write up “tickets” for their parents to make sure they “don’t commit those crimes again (or else)!” The site also tells children that they “need to keep a watchful eye” on their parents to prevent future energy violations.

In the nightmarish world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, children were, “systematically turned against their parents and taught to spy on them and report their deviations. The family had become in effect an extension of the Though Police. It was a device by means of which everyone could be surrounded night and day by informers who knew him intimately.”[399]

In an interview with *ABC News*, President Obama’s top legal advisor, Attorney General Eric Holder, announced that the most dangerous terrorist threat to America wasn’t radical Islamic terrorists from the Middle East who travel to the United States with the sole intention of blowing something up. No. He said the new #1 threat to America is American citizens who have been born and raised in the United States, but for whatever reason, have come to identify with Osama Bin Elvis (Laden), the immortal boogey man. This announcement came close to ten years after the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks when the world was getting tired of the prolonged wars in the Middle East so the establishment needed to ensure Americans’ minds were still continuously filled with fear.

“What I am trying to do in this interview is to make people aware of the fact that the threat is real, the threat is different, the threat is constant,” Holder said. “It is one of the things that keeps me up at night. You didn’t worry about this even two years ago—about individuals, about Americans, to the extent that we now do. And—that is of—of great concern.”[400]

He continued, “The threat has changed from simply worrying about foreigners coming here, to worrying about people in the United States, American citizens—raised here, born here, and who for whatever reason, have decided that they are going to become radicalized and take up arms against the nation in which they were born.”

Holder wasn't even talking about radical Islamic terrorists like the kind that had been presented as the boogey men we should all fear for the last few decades. Holder's statement was an attempt to paint practically anyone of any race, religion, age, political affiliation, etc., as a potential "domestic extremist" who authorities want you to believe may attack the government or innocent civilians for any number of reasons at any time.

Several years earlier the federal government had secretly distributed literature to law enforcement agencies that listed what police should look for concerning possible "domestic terrorist activity." The eight-page MIAC Report, leaked in March 2009 listed bumper stickers showing support for Congressman Ron Paul, owning gold coins, and having possession of certain documentary films as things authorities should look for.[401]

A similar Department of Homeland Security report titled *Right-wing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment*, warned officials that returning Iraq War veterans may turn on the American government and that "rightwing extremists" are recruiting supporters who are concerned about illegal immigration, restrictions on firearms, and the loss of US sovereignty.[402]

As the Orwellian nightmare was rapidly coming true, Big Brother saw the resistance building and worried about a revolution.

Many people believe that Nazi Germany's secret police (the Gestapo) terrorized ordinary German citizens under orders from Nazi leaders, but history shows that the majority of investigations into citizens were launched because someone tipped off authorities.

One of the world's most respected historians specializing in World War II Europe, Professor Robert Gellately of Florida State University, explains, "There were relatively few secret police, and most were just processing the information coming in. I had found a shocking fact. It wasn't the secret

police who were doing this wide-scale surveillance and hiding on every street corner. It was the ordinary German people who were informing on their neighbors."[403]

In his writings Gellately explains that most Germans who turned in others didn't do so because they were doing anything suspicious or talking negatively about the Nazi party. Most people were turned in because of greed, jealousy, and petty differences, rather than because of a legitimate threat or suspicion that a person may be an actual enemy of the state.

There were many instances of people turning in their business partners so they could gain full control of the businesses they shared together. Jealous lovers turned in rival suitors in order to keep them away from their boyfriend or girlfriend, and people turned others in because they lived in an apartment that was in high demand. Others who became informants did so because it was the first time an authority figure valued them and they felt important through this process.

Gellately also emphasizes that German citizens who tipped off Nazi authorities about someone knew what horrific fate they would find, but didn't care because of the financial or social rewards that person would receive in return. While such despicable behavior was once restricted to tyrannical regimes like Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, or Mao Tse-tung's China, it is heart-breaking that the once great United States of America has succumbed to this same kind of erosion from within, as a result of corruption at the top.

An iPhone app with the Orwellian name of the *PatriotApp* functions as a way for people to send seemingly anonymous tips in the form of text messages to various government agencies including the FBI, EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), CDC (Center for Disease Control), and more, to report anything suspicious or illegal. On the surface this may seem like a reasonable function, but just like the post-911 legislation bill, *The Patriot Act*, the Patriot App is anything but patriotic.

The App was created by a company called Citizen Concepts which was formed by people with strong ties with DHS and DoD, according the company's website, PatriotApps.com[404] The description in the Apple App Store says that the PatriotApp is, "the world's first iPhone application that empowers citizens to assist government agencies in creating safer, cleaner, and more efficient communities via social networking and mobile technology."[405]

The description also says the App, "Deputizes your iPhone," giving people the impression that they are a member of the secret police now that they have been "deputized" like something out of an old western film. Such an impersonal form of communication also reduces the discernment that people will use when thinking about reporting someone or something. A phone call to 911 or the police would be fairly personal and the tipster would be invested in the process, but by simply clicking a few boxes and typing a short text message, this reduces the humanity in the overall process of informing authorities that something may be wrong. Such an impersonal act practically eliminates an informant's analysis of the situation, preventing them from giving it a second thought, thus dramatically reducing the quality of the tip.

During the 2008 presidential campaign in America, then candidate Barrack Obama made a startling statement revealing his desire to implement a program involving ordinary citizens like you and me as spies who feel like they're empowered and part of the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, or other law enforcement agencies. Obama openly stated, "We cannot continue to rely only on our military in order to achieve the national security objectives that we've set. We've got to have a civilian national security force that's just as powerful, just as strong, just as well-funded."[406]

Then, immediately after becoming president, the Obama administration began implementing one Orwellian policy after the next. We saw the telescreens go up in Wal-Mart, the 'if you see something…say something' snitch campaign. The MIAC report and more. The "civilian national security force" he was talking about was every American being

turned into a paranoid rat. This will undoubtedly lead to a rash of invalid "tips" and complaints, and a larger bureaucracy (and police force) will be needed to address these floods of tips.

Relationships

Friendships, romantic relationships, and families are all shunned by the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to "prevent men and women from forming loyalties which it might not be able to control…the only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party."[407] Families are almost nonexistent, since each individual must give his or her full allegiance and love to Big Brother and the Party.

Those children that were born were all brought up in government institutions and indoctrinated from the time of birth. The government realized that if people had personal friendships and strong family ties, they would join together and overthrow Big Brother. Again, we find a reflection of our own society in Orwell's words. While in America sexuality is not repressed like in the novel, the effects of hyper-sexuality and broken families serves the same purpose and severely limits the ability of people to join together and stand up for their rights against a New World Order.

With rampant family dysfunction, divorces, out of wedlock births, and children who don't even know who their father is, society is in such chaos in regards to interpersonal problems, that many people aren't concerned with larger social issues because their own life is such a mess and they are constantly engaged in domestic disputes, money problems, and other obligations. Most people just don't care about what is going on with the government because they have their own personal problems to deal with.

A Heartless Society

People in society were so inhumane in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that they regularly enjoyed watching video clips of war footage that were shown on the telescreens to see the destruction of their enemy's soldiers. Winston remarked once that the audience was amused and laughed hysterically when a helicopter began shooting a fat man and riddled his body with bullets as he tried to swim away from his capsized ship. It was the highlight of the broadcast.

He describes how the audience was easily stirred into an angry mob and that, "a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current."[408] Since Big Brother was basically God, there was no room for religion either. One character who worked in the Ministry of Truth was arrested and killed for allowing the word "God" to remain in a poem he was supposed to censor.

The Big Brother system has stamped out most feelings of empathy. O'Brien says, "never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves."[409]

A massive thirty year analysis published in May of 2010 showed that college students are dramatically less empathetic today than students in the past. "College kids today are about 40 percent lower in empathy than their counterparts of 20 or 30 years ago, as measured by standard tests of this personality trait," said Sara Konrath, a researcher at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research.[410]

“The increase in exposure to media during this time period could be one factor,” she said. “Compared to 30 years ago, the average American now is exposed to three times as much nonwork-related information. In terms of media content, this generation of college students grew up with video games. And a growing body of research, including work done by my colleagues at Michigan, is establishing that exposure to violent media numbs people to the pain of others,” said Konrath.

The study also showed that the students were less likely to feel concerned about the less fortunate, and even their own friends. Today’s students were said to be the most self-centered and narcissistic individuals in recent history.

Another reason believed to cause the increase in narcissism and lack of empathy, aside from massive exposure to violent media, was the emergence of social networking sites which give people the ability to “tune out” and not respond to interactions online, and this could be translating into a learned behavior that manifests itself during face-to-face interactions.

Foreign Countries Painted as Enemies

When one country is having tensions with another, or if two countries are approaching an armed conflict, the entire "enemy" country and all of its occupants are usually portrayed as "hating freedom" or being ruthless savages who want to kill the citizens of the other country. This is rarely ever true, of course, and most often it is one corrupt leader butting heads with another corrupt leader, or one country fabricating complete lies in order to spark a war for economic reasons. The vast majority of citizens of both countries want the same things out of life. They don't want any problems. They just want to be safe and have a stable economy, and be able to enjoy a few of life's pleasures and spend time with family and friends. Most informed citizens in the "enemy" country are just as upset about their corrupt leader as citizens of the opposing country.

Other people, perhaps the majority, unfortunately, believe the propaganda produced from their own country and literally hate everyone from the "enemy" country. You could see this during the War in Iraq, with many moronic Americans wanting to kill all Arabs, or Muslims, or nuke the entire Middle East and "turn it into a glass parking lot." Such ignorance is the fuel that the establishment needs to continue its operations. Orwell interestingly noted, "If he [people in general] were allowed contact with foreigners he would discover that they are creatures similar to himself and that most of what he has been told about them is lies."[411]

"The citizen of Oceania is not allowed to know anything of the tenets of the other two [enemies] philosophies, but he is taught to execrate [denounce] them as barbarous outrages upon morality and common sense."[412]

In an insightful documentary that aired on PBS in the spring and summer of 2010 called *Rick Steves' Iran*, the host traveled to Iran and spoke with people about their country and the growing tensions with the US. Multiple Iranians said that they have no problem with America or the American people. One woman clearly stated that the governments have problems with each other, but the people should be friends. The woman went on to say that it was unfortunate that Iran had a theocracy where the religious leaders ran the government and she called it Iran's main problem.[413]

This is quite the opposite of what the American establishment would like people to believe. The Iranians, we are told, all hate Americans, and want us dead. This false belief aids the establishment's military industrial complex and supports the everlasting "War on Terror."

Power Hungry Officials

Just as the “enemies” of a country are always cast in the darkest light, the leader of the homeland is almost always painted as a heroic and virtuous man who must protect the poor citizens of his land from the evildoers. “Everywhere is the same pyramidal structure, the same worship of a semi-divine leader,” notes Orwell.[414]

We see billboards and t-shirts in America with the image of the president featured on them like they are rock stars; and no matter who the president is, their supporters will always lash out and attack anyone who questions their authority. If someone disagreed with President George W. Bush, then they were called un-American and said to support the terrorists. People who resisted President Obama were simply called racists. The strategy is the same no matter which party is in power. Most people are ideologically blind, and don’t even notice the major shortcomings of their own party or leader.

At one point in Orwell’s story, Winston muses that he now understands the how, but he had yet to understand the why. He knew how the Party and Big Brother were able to operate in total power, but he had yet to understand why they did this. He later realized it was for the power itself.

O’Brien tells him, “The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness; only power, pure power.”[415] O’Brien concludes, “Power is power over human beings. Over the body—but above all, over the mind.”[416]

The infamous political player, Henry Kissinger, famously stated that “power is the ultimate aphrodisiac” and many have heard of Lord Acton’s

dictum, which states that power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Power is what dirt-poor street gang members are after because its feeling is better than any drug. Power is what organized mob bosses are after more than the money they pull in, and power is what politicians desire, more than “serving” their country. And just like drug addicts will do all kinds of illegal and immoral things just to get a fix, the same is true of those addicted to power.

An Erosion of the Language

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the language that people spoke was being reduced down to basic nouns and verbs in a purposeful attempt to dumb people down. The language was called Newspeak and each year a new dictionary would come out with the approved words for society, and each year it got smaller and smaller. The goal was to eliminate most of the words, and thus eliminate people's thoughts and ways to express themselves to keep them mentally enslaved.

In one scene a co-worker of Winston's was bragging that in a few more generations people "wouldn't be able to have a conversation like this" because the language will be so eroded.

Just as the residents of Oceania were losing the ability to express themselves verbally due to the eroding language, we can see a similar phenomenon in our culture with the decline of reading and education. People's foul mouths and the reliance on text messaging also shows their inability to articulate ideas. People's vocabulary seems to be shrinking, along with their IQs.

Double Think

The concept of *Double Think* means to "know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them."[417] Orwell used the slogan "War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength" to illustrate Double Think. It was the slogan of the Party and captured the depths of the backwards and illogical beliefs of society. Unfortunately we find equally backward beliefs in our own society and Double Think is not just a concept found in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Everyone is familiar with the Patriot Act legislation that was passed after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, eliminating various Constitutional liberties, and is anything but patriotic. The name "Patriot" Act was carefully chosen to imply the new laws were patriotic and is a perfect example of Double Think since it is completely the opposite of anything patriotic or American.

In a segment of Alex Jones' documentary *Terrorstorm: A History of Government Sponsored Terrorism,* the camera crew interviews random people on the streets of London to discuss the increasing surveillance, and one woman proclaims, "I think we should give up liberty for freedom," clearly not realizing the illogical and blatant contradiction of her own words.

The concept of Double Think often applies to war. "Peace keeping" troops are often there to kill the enemy, and it is often said that we must "fight for peace." Comedian George Carlin saw the irony in the terms and once said, "fighting for peace is like screwing for virginity." In America, the Department of Defense used to be called the Department of War until 1947 when the name was changed to improve its image. It should really be called

the Department of *Offense*, not Defense, but in true Orwellian style, its name reflects the opposite of what it is.

When the commercial for the Little Buddy GPS tracking device said parents can “build trust” by forcing their children to wear a GPS tracker—this is another example of Double Think—since using the product is an obvious sign of not trusting your child.

Double Think is essentially a blatant lie that can easily be identified by an enlightened person, but is fully believed by the ignorant masses. It’s like when a store advertises that people should “spend more to save more” and customers actually believe they’re saving money by spending it.

Double Think uses misnomers and false terms to purposefully label things incorrectly, and such names are often the exact opposite of what the thing really is or does. People with minimum critical thinking skills often accept the word or phrase on face value, and don’t realize it masks something else.

The Ministry of Love

The Ministry of Love is basically the police force and prison system in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and is anything but loving. They look out for, and arrest people who betray Big Brother and the Party. Violators are taken to the much-feared Room 101 where they are tortured and brainwashed to love Big Brother.

The Ministry of Plenty

The Ministry of Plenty is in control of the food rations and the manufacture and supply of goods and services. Periodically the Ministry of Plenty publishes reports that claim the standard of living has increased, along with the amount of food rations people are entitled to, but in reality, the standard of living has continuously declined. As with the other departments of government in the novel, its name reflects exactly the opposite of what it says, and the Ministry of Plenty is really the reason for scarcity.

The Ministry of Peace

The Ministry of Peace is responsible for the perpetual war that plagues society and uses up or destroys the fruits of people’s labor to prevent an increase in the standard of living for the lower levels of society.

In America, we have the Department of Defense, which is really the Department of War, and actually used to be called that, until the name was changed in 1947 to give it a better image. In true Orwellian fashion, the department’s name is meant to hide the fact that it is really a Ministry of War.

The Ministry of Truth

The Ministry of Truth, found in the novel, is a misnomer and in reality serves as exactly the opposite of what its name implies. It is responsible for the falsification of historical events, and determines what the “truth” is and then disseminates it in the media and historical records. The massive building is described as being in the shape of a pyramid.

The Ministry of Truth also provides the citizens of Oceana with all of their newspapers, films, textbooks, plays, and novels. They have a special department for proletarian literature that “produced rubbishy newspapers, containing almost nothing except sport, crime, and astrology, sensational five-cent novelettes, films oozing with sex, and sentimental songs.”[418]

It is basically the heart of the massive propaganda machine that is entirely under the direction of the Party.

Conclusion

As a reader approaches the end of Orwell’s novel, one begins to hope that *The Resistance* will jump into action and members of the Inner Party would turn on the Big Brother system, or that the Proles or Outer Party members would rise up and start a revolution to restore freedom, but unfortunately this doesn’t happen.

Winston and his girlfriend Julia are both captured by the Thought Police and taken to Room 101 to be “re-educated.” Winston then realizes that O’Brien, who he thought was his friend and working with *The Resistance*, actually only pretended to, in order to entrap Winston. O’Brien, then, as it turns out, is also in charge of punishing Winston for Thought Crimes and his disloyalty to Big Brother. As he is torturing Winston, he tells him what the future will be like once Big Brother has wiped out all resistance. He explains, “There will be no curiosity, no enjoyment of the process of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed. But always—do not forget this, Winston—always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is helpless. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever.”[419]

After unbearable torture and lecturing from O’Brien, Winston eventually abandons all thoughts of resistance and actually comes to love Big Brother. “You must love Big Brother. It is not enough to obey him; you must love him,” O’Brien says.

One must seriously consider whether people who resist the real Big Brother system and the New World Order will find the same fate that Winston Smith did. Is it too late to stop the Orwellian system described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from actually being built? One must hold onto the

hope that no matter how far along the Big Brother system is, that there are a large number of educated people who are ready to resist it and stand up against it.

Orwell explained, “If there was hope, it must lie in the proles, because only there, in those swarming disregarded masses, eighty-five percent of the population of Oceania, could the force to destroy the Party ever be generated…But the proles, if only they could somehow become conscious of their own strength, would have no need to conspire…If they chose they could blow the Party to pieces tomorrow morning.”[420]

We are the proles. The hope lies with us. We must create safeguards and checks and balances to minimize abuse by government and private industry. We must actively counter propaganda and lies, and hold corrupt government officials accountable for their crimes. Only an educated and alert public can counter the invisible empire and their Orwellian dreams. We must use the tools of advanced technology to enhance and simplify the human experience, not to stifle it or destroy it. We must stay strong in the face of immense opposition and remember what Martin Luther King Jr. said when he proclaimed, “He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.”

We outnumber the elite Illuminati thousands to one, and if we can awaken our fellow man to see the system that we are all victims of, and if we can lift the veil of ignorance and apathy then we can unite and restore our communities, our country, and the world with the inalienable rights that we have been endowed by our Creator. We know that Big Brother is watching us, so let’s show him what we’re capable of.

Down with Big Brother!

Further Reading

The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction

Secret societies have both fascinated and frightened people for hundreds of years. Often the infamous Illuminati is mentioned as the core of conspiracies which span the globe. The Illuminati is actually a historical secret society which had goals of revolutions and world domination dating back to the 1770s.

Since then, rumors and conspiracy theories involving the Illuminati continue to spread, sometimes finding their way into popular novels like Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons* and Hollywood movies like *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. Some men have even come forward claiming to be former members, offering details of what they allege are the inner workings of the organization. When you sift through all of the information available on the subject, you may be surprised that the truth is stranger than fiction.

In *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, conspiracy and occult expert Mark Dice separates history from Hollywood and shows why tales of the secret society won't die.

The New World Order: Facts & Fiction

What is the New World Order? Proponents say that it's an anticipated new era of global cooperation between diverse nations and cultures aimed at ushering in a utopia providing all the earth's citizens with everything they need.

Detractors claim it's the systematic take-over by secret societies, quasi-government entities and corporations who are covertly organizing a global socialist all-powerful government which aims to regulate every aspect of citizens lives, rendering them a perpetual working-class while the elite leadership lives in luxury.

Conspiracy theory expert Mark Dice looks at the evidence, claims, and conspiracy theories as he takes you down the rabbit hole to *The New World Order*.

Illuminati in the Music Industry

Famous pop stars and rappers from Jay-Z and Rick Ross to Rihanna and Christina Aguilera are believed by many to be a part of the infamous Illuminati secret society. These stars allegedly use Illuminati and satanic symbolism in their music videos and on their clothes that goes unnoticed by those not “in the know.”

Since these stars appear in our livings rooms on family friendly mainstream shows like Good Morning America, Ellen, and dozens of others—and are loved by virtually all the kids—they couldn’t possibly have anything to do with the infamous Illuminati or anything “satanic,” could they? Some famous musicians have even publicly denounced the Illuminati in interviews or songs.

Illuminati in the Music Industry takes a close look at some of today’s hottest stars and decodes the secret symbols, song lyrics, and separates the facts from the fiction in this fascinating topic. You may never see your favorite musicians the same way ever again.

The Resistance Manifesto

The Resistance Manifesto by Mark Dice contains 450 pages of extensively researched and documented information drawing from declassified documents, mainstream news articles, religious texts, and personal interviews. A dark web of evil is exposed like never before, making Bible Prophecy and the New World Order crystal clear.

Learn the most powerful information about the Illuminati, plans for the rise of the Antichrist, the institutions, people, and powers involved, and how you can fight them.

Inside the Illuminati

When looking into the existence and alleged activities of the infamous Illuminati secret society, one finds an overwhelming amount of conspiracy theories, hidden history, half-truths and hoaxes.

But how much truth is there to some of these claims? What is the real history of the mysterious group? Do they continue to exist today? What is the evidence?

After a decade of research sifting through the facts and the fiction, secret society expert Mark Dice will help you navigate through the complex maze from the original documents to rare revelations from elite politicians, bankers and businessmen, as he takes you *Inside the Illuminati*.

About the Author

Mark Dice is a media analyst, author, and political activist who, in an entertaining and educational way, gets people to question our celebrity obsessed culture and the role the mainstream media and elite secret societies play in shaping our lives.

Mark's YouTube channel has received over 85 million views and his viral videos have been mentioned on ABC's *The View*, the Fox News Channel, CNN, the *Drudge Report*, *TMZ*, the *New York Daily News*, the *New York Post*, and other media outlets around the world.

He has been featured on various television shows including the History Channel's *Decoded* and *America's Book of Secrets*, *Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura*, *Secret Societies of Hollywood* on E! Channel, *America Declassified* on the Travel Channel, and is a frequent guest on *Coast to Coast AM*, *The Alex Jones Show*, and more.

Mark Dice is the author of several popular books on secret societies and conspiracies, including *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, *Big Brother: The Orwellian Nightmare Come True*, *The New World Order, Facts & Fiction*, *The Resistance Manifesto*, *Illuminati in the Music Industry*, and *Inside the Illuminati*, which are all available in paperback on Amazon.com or e-book on Kindle, iBooks, Nook or Google Play.

While much of Mark's work confirms the existence and continued operation of the Illuminati today, he is also dedicated to debunking conspiracy theories and hoaxes and separating the facts from the fiction; hence the "Facts & Fiction" subtitle for several of his books.

While having respect for all authentic religions and belief systems, Mark Dice is a Christian and holds a bachelors degree in communication from California State University. He lives in San Diego, California.

He enjoys causing trouble for the New World Order, exposing corrupt scumbag politicians, and pointing out Big Brother's prying eyes. The term "fighting the New World Order" is used by Mark to describe some of his activities, and refers to his and others' resistance and opposition (*The Resistance*) to the overall system of political corruption, illegal wars, elite secret societies, mainstream media, Big Brother and privacy issues; as well as various economic and social issues. This Resistance involves self-improvement, self-sufficiency, personal responsibility and spiritual growth.

Connect with Mark on:

Facebook.com/MarkDice
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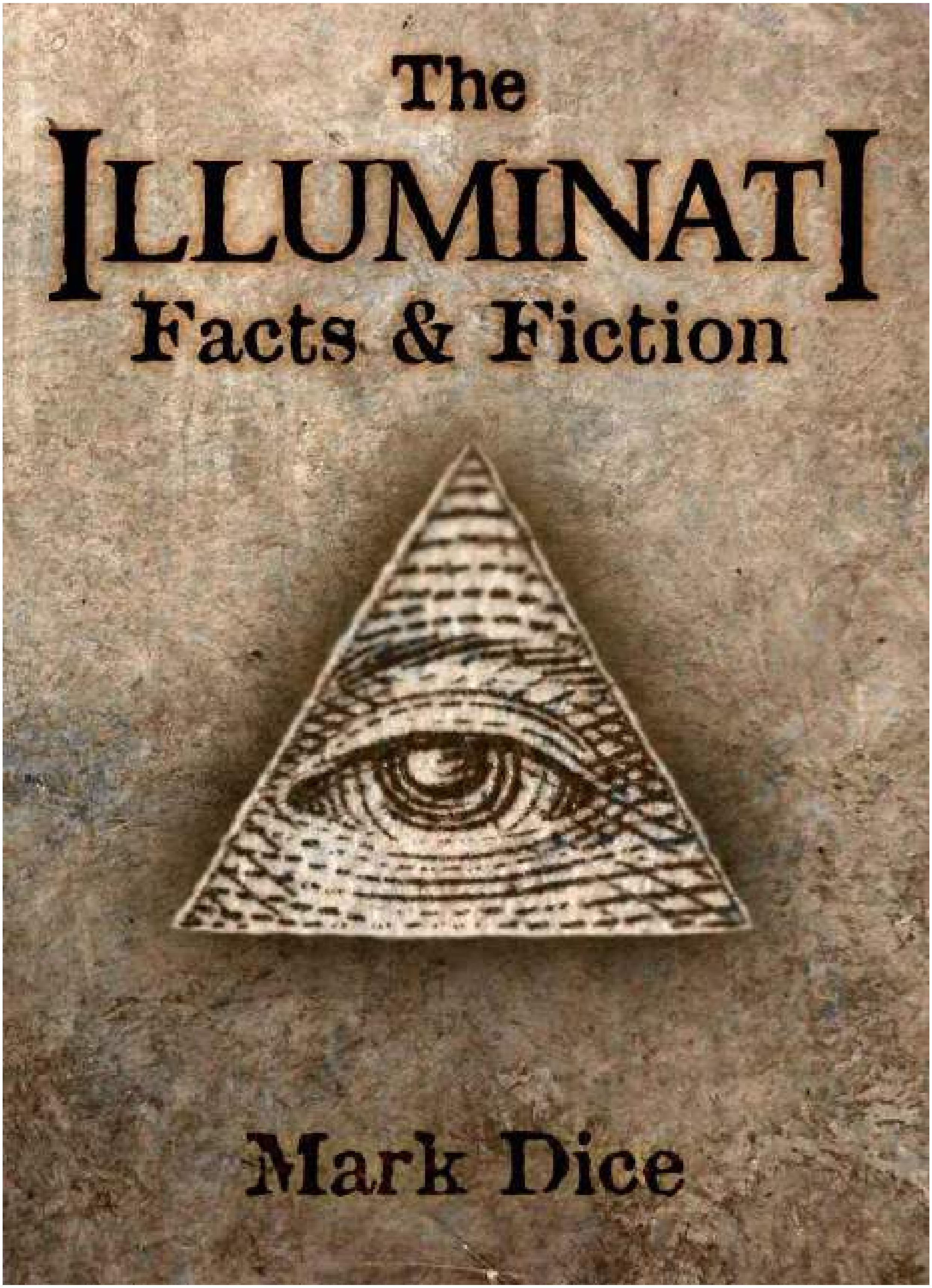

The ILLUMINATI

Facts & Fiction

Mark Dice

The

Illuminati

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Mark Dice

The Resistance
San Diego, CA

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Preface

The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction is a book that separates and analyzes the various claims and evidence about the Illuminati, their history, beliefs, members, organizations, and activities. This is a supplement for my first book on the subject, *The Resistance Manifesto,* which focuses more on the New World Order, the 9/11 attacks, Big Brother, and how the political agendas of elite secret societies are fulfilling Bible prophecy.

The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction focuses more on the Illuminati secret society and historical evidence pointing to its existence and actions. The trail of information discussing the Illuminati is traced back to the original sources, as each one is analyzed with regards to its authorship and the information found in each source. This book is also about debunking various frauds, exaggerations, and disinformation involving the organization and also highlights the rare instances that the Illuminati or subsidiary organizations are mentioned in mainstream media or incorporated into fictional films, books, and TV shows. The motives for the writers incorporating such ideas in their fictional works are also analyzed. Their intentions are not always to educate people about the Illuminati or tell a captivating story, but instead is sometimes an attempt to spread disinformation and make the audience believe that certain actual conspiracies are the creation of Hollywood or a novelist, when in fact they actually happened.

The deeper one goes down the rabbit hole, the more bizarre the information becomes. When one is new to this path, what appears to be a misunderstanding, an exaggeration, or a lie, often is found to be factual and thoroughly documented by reliable sources. In this book I have taken an objective and skeptical view of the topic and have sifted through the volumes of information to get to the truth and the sources which lead to its discovery so we can leave the fiction, distortions, and lies by the wayside and not be fooled or distracted by them. While some of the allegations and stories about the Illuminati sound far-fetched, you will find, as the cliché goes, the truth *is* stranger than fiction.

About the Author

For most of his life growing up Mark Dice had a burning desire for understanding the spiritual and mystical principles at work in the world and in his own life. His quest for truth, knowledge, and wisdom lead him on a path to find answers to the difficult questions one can ponder when seeking a comprehensive understanding of their existence.

He searched for answers to the struggles of humanity, of war and poverty, of love and hate, of wealth and power. His hunger for knowledge led him to discover a powerful secret society and their pivotal, yet hidden role in the world. He found that the mysteries of life and world events were not so mysterious once he began to understand the workings of the Illuminati.

Mark meticulously researched and documented his findings to share with anyone who had the same burning desire to understand the world and their place in it. In 2005 he published *The Resistance Manifesto*, his magnum opus exposing the hidden Illuminati's plans for a New World Order and the organizations and philosophies that accompany it. He immediately became active in exposing the lies coming from the elite Illuminati who maintain political power around the world. While being only twenty-eight years old when *The Resistance Manifesto* was first published, Mark immediately gained the respect and endorsement of best-selling authors twice his age. Veteran researchers Jim Marrs, Texe Marrs, Anthony J. Hilder, and other younger film makers such as Alex Jones gave their endorsement to Mark and his Manifesto.

Mark has a gift for explaining esoteric and complex issues in a way that can be easily understood by almost anyone and meticulously cites the sources of his evidence.

While having respect for all authentic religions and belief systems, Mark Dice is a Christian and holds a bachelors degree in communication. He lives in San Diego, California.

Introduction

The infamous Illuminati secret society has remained the focus of so-called “conspiracy theorists” for hundreds of years. They have been called the puppet masters who secretly pull the strings of the world’s events from elections to revolutions, and from business monopolies to stock market crashes. A significant number of researchers and ordinary citizens have varying degrees of suspicion that somehow, somewhere, a secret agenda is continuously lurking behind the scenes.

When unexpected events occur in the world, these people don’t see them as a random occurrence, but as the work of an unseen hand which has orchestrated or encouraged these events to happen for the personal, professional, or financial gain of certain individuals. Often such speculation is given the label of a “conspiracy theory” and dismissed as imaginative thinking. Yet many of the world’s events don’t make complete sense, even to the so-called experts who study them. Something is missing from a solid explanation. There is more to the story than meets the eye, but these supposed experts are often afraid to speculate on what that missing piece of the puzzle is.

People look at catastrophic events like the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11 and wonder how such a thing could happen without law enforcement and intelligence agencies knowing about it. People look at the mortgage collapse of 2008 and the following economic repercussions of bank failures and government bailouts and wonder how such a thing could happen. People see their standard of living going down and a two income household barely able to get by and wonder how can this be? People hear on the news that child molesters and rapists get out of prison after only a few years, yet others are locked up for decades after getting busted with some marijuana.

So people turn to the television to keep their mind off such things. With the push of a button their mind is relaxed with the soothing images of watching beautiful contestants compete to be this season’s American Idol, or they get an adrenaline rush as their favorite football team scores a winning touchdown with just seconds left on the clock. These things make sense to them, and it’s what others will talk about the next day at work and if they want to feel connected with others then they had better participate in these pointless activities.

The fact of the matter is that when you step back and take a closer look at the world that we are living in and at what really matters, at the sources of information we habitually rely on, and assemble various pieces of this mysterious puzzle called life, a different picture begins to emerge. What should be the top story on the evening news is mitigated to a small and unsuspecting article in the back half of the paper and is completely omitted from broadcast news. What should be contained in celebrity gossip magazines is found as the top story on the major TV networks. Why does this happen?

When one discovers the very concrete reality of secret societies and their influence and power, one begins to see things much differently. When one discovers, as in recent years, the growing credible information about these secret societies, their membership, goals and accomplishments, one sees a gaping hole in the legitimacy and accuracy of mainstream media and general knowledge.

Any talk about a “conspiracy” or secret agenda being carried out by an organization of rich and powerful men is almost always countered with laughter by the average Joe who mindlessly follows the herd.

Is it that hard to believe an organization of powerful men has made a pact with each other to secretly further their agendas? Is it that hard to design a self-perpetuating structure that would allow such an organization to continuously function regardless of who specifically occupies any one position at any given time? Is it far-fetched to think that these individuals would purchase and control the mainstream media and use this powerful tool to further their goals?

One of the first reality shows ever created was called *Survivor*, which began airing in May of 2000. The show featured sixteen people who were put on a secluded island and competed for one million dollars as each week a contestant was voted off the show by their fellow castaways. As the show went on, several people on the island would secretly make an agreement to help each other out at the expense of others who were not part of their agreement. The outsiders had no idea such an agreement was made, and if and when ill will fell upon them, they didn’t suspect anything other than bad luck. But unknown to them, they were a victim of a conspiracy. A victim of the workings of a secret society within the group of contestants.

As future seasons of *Survivor* were aired, the secret alliances would become a common theme of the show to viewers who had an eagle eye of the workings of all who were on the island. Devious contestants always found such an idea a practical and effective way to get ahead.

If the formation of a secret alliance among members on *Survivor* became a common method to gain advantage over others and to “survive,” is it that far-fetched to believe that similar secret alliances occur in business or politics? It seems that the idea to form a secret alliance exclusively for the benefit of those involved is a perfectly logical idea, and the best way to protect such an alliance and ensure its success is to prevent others who are not a part of it from becoming aware that such a thing even exists.

We know for a fact that secret societies exist in politics, business, and religion. Many of these associations have existed for hundreds of years. The existence of such societies spawns speculation from outsiders, and sometimes paranoia. With little information to work from to formulate a reliable theory as to what these people are doing and what the consequences of their actions may be, it is often difficult to accurately understand the workings of a secret society or alliance. But just like the most careful criminal, secret societies often leave clues behind. No matter how many precautions one takes to prevent any knowledge of their actions, it is nearly impossible to execute a plot flawlessly and without leaving evidence behind. As with some murder cases, the evidence may not be understood immediately after the crime, or it may not even be noticed as evidence at all. As time passes, other clues from similar crimes may emerge and shed new light on things that were once overlooked.

In regards to the Illuminati, clues have been discovered over the last several hundred years. Something is definitely being kept secret by some very rich and powerful individuals. A network, an agenda, a source of wealth and power, a reason for the secrecy, and more. In more modern times starting in about the late 1970s, various people have come forward and claimed to be actual members of this illusive group and said they had defected and turned to Christianity. These men have told stories claiming to expose some of the history, beliefs, and goals of the Illuminati secret society. Some of their claims seem reasonable, others stretches of the imagination, and others obvious lies. Their testimony along with any inconsistencies will be addressed in this book.

Also covered are compilations of countless pieces of evidence about the Illuminati, including original writings that were seized in 1786 from the home of one of the members. These writings are indeed authentic, and there is no scholar or historian who will refute that. The only refutations are as to whether or not the organization was able to carry on its work in the years following its original exposure to the public, over two hundred years ago. When one reads the words of founder Adam Weishaupt, it seems impossible that the organization didn’t continue to exist, and later thrive. It seems foolish to believe that their goals would simply be abandoned because its leadership was discovered.

Had Adam Weishaupt not formulated and documented the plans for such an organization, surely it seems that another power hungry diabolical man would have done the same. After all, if Thomas Edison had not invented the light bulb, surely you would not be reading these words by candle light. Another man would have harnessed the power of electricity just as effectively. Such an invention was inevitable, and other men who had no connection with Edison were working towards the same goal. Cultures around the world throughout history that have had no contact with each other have made similar and often identical discoveries and innovations. Mankind’s curiosities are similar around the world, just as our moral shortcomings are.

The very concept of a secret alliance among men to further each other’s goals at the expense of others and under a shroud of secrecy surly isn’t a novel idea. Mafias and organized criminal enterprises have sprung up around the world and have similar structures and methods, yet few have been influenced by another.

The idea of a secret group which has pledged allegiance to each other over all others should be as fundamental to our lives as falling in love. And just as this human condition of interpersonal relationships has become a classic theme in Hollywood movies, we should suspect that a similar basic theme would be found as well. And it is. A secretive group of bad guys who plot greed, harm, or destruction.

While an array of classic Hollywood narratives continue to be produced, with many of them involving secret criminal alliances, it is interesting that a rare number of them will actually incorporate plots very similar to events in reality that are attributed to the workings of the Illuminati. Even more rare, the name “Illuminati” is actually used to describe the group that is behind the events in these films. After analyzing Illuminati themes, symbolism, and references in popular Hollywood movies, one can come to no other conclusion than the writers and producers of those very films have detailed knowledge of the Illuminati itself.

While they are not producing a documentary film trying to expose the organization like the various ones that will be discussed in this book, one can’t help but think that they are trying to get the point across to the audience in a similar way. After all, one can learn a lesson from reading the facts, or by hearing a story about such events in the form of a fable or allegory much like Aesop’s fables contain underlying moral messages that are conveyed through fictional stories. Some of the themes in these Hollywood movies include plotlines surrounding terrorism, mind control, Big Brother, secret societies, and occult mysticism and magic.

While some uninformed skeptics believe that when someone talks about the Illuminati they got the idea from a Hollywood movie, the reverse is actually true, and many writers and producers have actually gotten their ideas from the historical and factual Illuminati.

In October of 1963 a man named Joe Valachi testified before the McClellan Congressional Committee on organized crime where he proceeded to tell the authorities about the inner workings of the Italian Mafia and how far-reaching their organization was. He explained how they controlled an array of industries and had police and judges in their pockets from either threats or payoffs. When Valachi was first taken into custody and began telling police about the Mafia, the story was too unbelievable for the authorities. They couldn’t understand how a secret criminal enterprise could be so successful and operate without notice in so many sectors of society. Valachi was locked away in a mental hospital and was thought to be insane. Only later did authorities realize he was telling the truth and as La Cosa Nostra was uncovered, the extent of their criminal empire began to be understood.

The subject of “the Mafia” continues to fascinate people and if one didn’t know their history, they may believe that well known Hollywood movies such as *Goodfellas* and *Casino* are entirely fictional, but in fact are based on true stories and the gangsters portrayed in these films did live lives of luxury and incredible influence. They were also ruthless killers.

One can’t help but notice the strange and deafening silence on certain issues by so-called experts in the mainstream media. How is it that year after year Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Alan Colmes, Bill O’Reilly and others ignore issues surrounding the Illuminati? Issues with tangible solid evidence that is undeniable. The annual Bilderberg meeting for example, or the Cremation of Care ceremony at the Bohemian Grove, or true workings of the Federal Reserve Bank. Surely these are at least interesting enough stories for an occasional segment, yet for decades these so-called political experts and commentators mysteriously omit any mention of such issues and organizations from their shows.

The answer is that most of these individuals know very well about these issues. Many of them are willing accomplices and participants in such things. These people are paid millions of dollars a year to entertain the public with issues of little significance, and to set the agenda of the public mindset in a way that excludes any real answers to what is at stake and what is happening in Washington. These propagandists parrot talking points that are given to them daily by the people who sign their paychecks and are careful to act as gate-keepers whenever a sensitive issue may be addressed. These talking heads can't plead ignorance because they are often a part of the very inner circle of which they protect. Even during call-in radio talk shows when the format is relaxed and the hosts tell the audience that "any topic is fair game," they don't really mean what they say. Any relevant question that falls outside of the prescribed paradigm they are perpetuating is dropped by the call screener, or if it makes it on the airwaves, the caller gets hung up on immediately and their question either ridiculed or ignored.

Some key players in positions of power and influence may not be a member, or even aware that they are serving the Illuminati, or that the society exists at all. These individuals are carrying out a self-serving agenda for the benefit of those who have promised them rewards in return, or advancements for their participation. While these players know that they are a part of a private or secretive agreement pushing an agenda, many do not realize that they are a pawn in a larger conspiracy. Their only motives are money, power, and prestige. Some of their activities are criminal, and some have been caught and sent to prison. The point is that there are countless willing servants who go along with Illuminati schemes while not seeing the underlying forces that are directing a larger operation.

Information is power, and the Illuminati know this. Having access to accurate and reliable information is power, and the ability to dispense false and misleading information is also power. As one reads the words of the original writings of the Illuminati, one finds that the founding members understood this in the late 1700s, well before the communication age. By monopolizing the mainstream media in all forms as it developed; print, radio, and television, they have been able to contain information and dispense misleading or useless stories to the public. If people didn't see it on Fox News or CNN, then it must not be happening, they think. It has only been through books published by small independent publishers, and in the later years the advent of the Internet that has allowed those who are hungry for the truth to find something solid to satisfy their desires. Websites like Infowars.com and to a lesser extent, DrudgeReport.com have allowed us to bypass the monopoly control of information dispensed by the mainstream media.

In the following pages this author has compiled both information from the original writings of the Illuminati and some of the first authors to write books exposing them and their goals, as well as the most accurate writers and researchers who have carried on that tradition. You will find the testimony of men and women who either claimed to have been a part of the Illuminati, or a victim of some of its members. You will also find a compilation of the rare instances that Illuminati related topics are mentioned or alluded to in mainstream media sources. Many, if not most of the confirmed or suspected Illuminati created and controlled organizations are also rarely mentioned in the mainstream news, and these unique occurrences have been compiled in this book. Finally, you will find a summary of various references, both direct and indirect to the Illuminati and their activities that are found in popular Hollywood films, TV shows, and novels. Such obscure mentions go unnoticed by viewers who are unaware of the deeper meanings that these plot lines and characters have.

With bits and pieces of reliable information about some fairly prominent secret societies and organizations like the Skull and Bones society, the Bohemian Grove, and the Bilderberg group being released to the public, we have concrete evidence of just who is involved with such organizations. Authentic membership lists have been stolen or otherwise obtained from the Bohemian Grove, and guest lists have been obtained in similar fashion regarding Bilderberg attendees. In some cases, as with President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry, men have publicly admitted being members of Skull and Bones, but refused any comment beyond that. So we have a clear idea of who is involved in such organizations and we can see by their résumés that they have achieved personal, political, and financial success far beyond other competitors. It would be foolish not to see a clear pattern in all of this.

These secret societies, organizations, and meetings exist. This is often beyond a doubt and with mountains of indisputable evidence to support this conclusion. They exist for a purpose, and have often existed for hundreds of years. Their existence and purpose goes beyond a mere social gathering, as this is what cocktail parties and dinners are for. After looking at all the evidence, one should reasonably conclude that they exist partly to further each other’s careers by means of secret alliances, and quid pro quos, a Latin phrase meaning “something for something” or a mutual agreement between two parties where each other provides a good or service in return for a good or service. Once this is realized, one has a better idea of how the political landscape is formed. There is also a larger agenda that is being carried out, and is directed by those at higher levels of power within the Illuminati. There is a satanic and occult agenda fueling the construction of the New World Order and the systematic enslavement of the human race.

If this level of understanding is reached by an outsider, it is only the result of their paradigm being challenged after they discover the reality of mysticism and occult philosophies and rituals that are a part of many of these organizations. It is one thing to observe and understand secret alliances among the rich and powerful meant for their own personal and professional enhancement. It is something entirely different to see these alliances in the context of elaborate and bizarre satanic rituals, as in the case of the initiation into the Skull and Bones society, or the annual Cremation of Care ritual in the secluded redwood forest of the Bohemian Grove.

These are grown men we are talking about. The most sophisticated, educated, and wealthy men in the world from prominent families, yet they participate in such things. At first it seems so far-fetched that it is understandable how one could easily dismiss such allegations as fanciful rumors, or the ramblings of a mentally deranged person. Yet, the closer one looks into these things, the more irrefutable such claims become.

One who ponders these issues also ultimately arrives at the question of what is the Illuminati’s ultimate purpose? Why construct the New World Order global government? What then? What role do the occult rituals and mysticism play in all of this? The answers are found both in Bible prophecy, and within the teachings of occult and New Age organizations. They eerily parallel each other all the way to their conclusions, at which point they dramatically differ.

New Age and occult teachings predict that when the New World Order infrastructure and ideologies are complete, that from within the hierarchy of the Illuminati will arrive the long awaited messiah. They believe that he will unite all the world’s religions into one compatible formula, and that he will fulfill all prophecies of the coming world savior. They also say that at this time the secret hierarchy of enlightened masters will then be able to come out from the shadows in what is called the externalization of the hierarchy, and then finally show themselves to the world and reveal the hidden wisdom that they had kept sheltered for countless generations.

The appearance of this New Age Christ will then eliminate all pain and suffering from the world. All poverty and sickness, all prejudice and crime. All shortages and scarcity, all fears and anxiety. It is at this point that the world and all who inhabit it will finally be able to live in perfect peace and harmony with each other thanks the revelations of this Illuminati messiah and the hierarchy. They had to work in secret and deny their existence for thousands of years, in order to protect themselves from their enemies. It is only now that their great work is finished that they may finally reveal themselves without any fear of repercussions. This is all, of course, according to the teachings in New Age enlightenment circles and occult hierarchies. These teachings report that this Illuminati Christ will be some kind of super-human demigod or even a being from another planet or dimension.

In contrast, according to Christianity, and even to some extent Islam and other religions, the New World Order global empire will be taken control of by the Antichrist and his supporters. In this view, a man will also claim to be the messiah of the world, and hold the key to solving humanity’s troubles. Only in this view, the core of humanity’s problems include those who don’t agree that he is the messiah. The freedom from prejudice that he promises is impeded by Christians and others who see him as a counterfeit Christ and the Antichrist. The perversions and immorality that he is preaching is resisted and denounced by faithful Christians who see such behaviors as sinful and socially and spiritually destructive.

Just as Adolf Hitler promised peace and economic prosperity in Germany once the Jews were eliminated, the Antichrist will offer the same solution and single out the resistant Christians and others as the obstacle to peace and prosperity. These old fashioned Christians with their outdated traditions and beliefs are what is holding back the unity of mankind, the Antichrist will tell the world. People who still believe in private property, personal privacy, and the principles laid out in the original Constitution of the United States are the ones who are disrupting the new system. Those who will not accept implantable microchips and tracking devices, or neural interfaces wired directly into their brain and those who speak out against such things are the people who need to be eliminated for there to be peace. This, of course, according the to the Illuminati messiah and his supporters.

At some point during this ordeal, Christians believe that Jesus will return to earth and the Apocalypse will occur, exposing the counterfeit Christ and casting him into Hell. God is said to finally unveil the mysteries of existence and the struggles of life, and destroy or punish those who did not follow his rules. Those faithful to God’s principles will then be eternally rewarded for their righteousness and courage.

Pre Illuminati Organizations

Most of the information distributed surrounding the Illuminati stems from the Knights Templar, the Freemasons, and the Bavarian Illuminati founded in Germany in 1776. It’s important to note that essentially the same type of an organization had existed earlier, for hundreds, if not thousands of years. The Knights Templar date back to the 1100s and the Freemasons to the late 1500s, but before these organizations had formed; secret societies which possessed supposed secret knowledge had existed much earlier, and would later grow into these newer and more sophisticated groups.

Knowledge has always been a source of power, and dating back to ancient Egypt and Greece, groups of men had kept certain knowledge to themselves and only revealed it to others in incremental levels within what were called the Mysteries, or the Mystery schools. As science, medicine, and art were evolving and new discoveries were being made, the adepts or initiates of these Mystery schools were the ones on the cutting edge. These organizations were frequently made up of the brightest men in society.

The Mystery schools also served as a method for spiritual enlightenment as well. Mystical and spiritual principles were taught and acted out in the form of rituals and ceremonies as a way to convey allegorical meanings to the initiates. While these Mystery schools may not have facilitated any ill motives or plotted any diabolical schemes against non-members and society as a whole, one can understand how initiates in the Mysteries could develop a superiority complex and use the cover of the organizations to aid them in carrying out their political and professional agendas. Some believe that the Mystery schools once had the highest standards regarding character and integrity of the members, and they were slowly corrupted and such virtues were replaced with selfishness and evil.

The Luciferian Doctrine

It is clear from the writings of prominent Freemasons and Illuminati authors that the religion and philosophy of the elite members is that of Lucifierianism or Satanism. Whether this is a literal belief or a metaphoric or allegorical belief is of little difference. If it were literal, it would then be metaphoric as well. If it were metaphoric, then it also expands into a literal fashion as the actions of the participants manifest themselves.

To sum up Luciferianism or Satanism one must understand the difference between atheistic Satanism, and theistic Satanism. Atheistic Satanism was popularized in the late 1960s by Anton LaVey, the founder of the Church of Satan and the author of *The Satanic Bible*. While misleading and confusing, he and his followers profess that they are atheists and don't believe in a literal Devil, or even God. They don't believe in an afterlife or a Heaven or Hell, either. These individuals choose to call themselves Satanists and use the symbol of Satan for its rebellious and nonconformist connotations. This topic is expanded in greater detail in the section of this book which covers *The Satanic Bible*.

Theistic Satanism, on the other hand, is the belief in a God and a Devil, and supernatural beings. These Satanists take the opposite side of the Christian view concerning the Garden of Eden and the Fall of Man. In Judaism and Christianity, the book of Genesis describes how God created Adam and Eve and how they lived in the Garden of Eden. God was said to have told them that they were not to eat the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for if they did, they would surely die.

As the story goes, Satan appeared to Eve in the form of a snake and tempted her to eat the fruit. Genesis 3:1-7 reads, "The woman said to the serpent, "we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

“When the woman saw that fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sowed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.”

Theistic Satanists and Luciferians believe that Satan came to the Garden of Eden to save Adam and Eve and mankind from ignorance, and that God didn’t want them to have the knowledge because then they wouldn’t be his slaves. In this view, God is seen as the oppressor and the evil one, and Satan is seen as the hero and savior. This is why in such books as *The Secret Doctrine*, author Helena Blavatsky calls Satan the holy spirit.

She wrote, “Thus “SATAN,” once he ceases to be viewed in the superstitious, dogmatic, unphilosophical spirit of the Churches, grows into the grandiose image of one who made of terrestrial a divine MAN; who gave him, throughout the long cycle of Maha-kalpa the law of the Spirit of Life, and made him free from the Sin of Ignorance, hence of death.”

“The true meaning is far more philosophical, and the legend of the first “Fall” (of the angels) assumes a scientific colouring when correctly understood.”[2]

This is one of the reasons the Illuminati has a hierarchical structure, and only dispenses knowledge little by little as members climb the ranks. Knowledge is power, and they have taken the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and have hid it away, using it as a carrot to entice lower level initiates to do the organization’s bidding so they may be rewarded with not only their financial and social support, but with the forbidden occult knowledge of Man’s past and of the nature of reality itself. Such forbidden knowledge, they believe, holds the potential for a man to become god-like.

The term Lucifer, which is synonymous with Satan, is Latin for “light bearer,” which is why Luciferians and Satanists believe that the Devil is the source of knowledge and wisdom, thus he is good. While in Christianity, Jesus is said to be the light of the world, the Illuminati designate this attribute to Lucifer or Satan. The name Satan actually means “adversary” or accuser, and is hence the adversary of God. The title of Lucifer is given to Satan because he brings the forbidden wisdom that God did not want humanity to have.

In Christianity, as well as Luciferianism and other religions, the term “light” represents love, knowledge, and wisdom. One main difference between most religions and Luciferianism is that Christianity and most religions openly teach their message and welcome everyone to learn it and understand it, where occultism keeps its message hidden from most people and doesn’t share its knowledge with others. The word occult means “hidden.” The main difference between Luciferianism and Christianity is that traditional Christianity teaches that salvation comes only by believing in Jesus, where occultists believe that one is saved by learning the secret knowledge. While this idea of salvation by knowledge is not overtly evil and diabolical, it is what the Illuminati have done with this concept that proves they are a cabal of liars, hypocrites, and tyrants. The term Illuminati is Latin for Illuminated ones, and is also a reference to light, Lucifer, and brilliance.

Inside the Mindset of the Illuminati

When one fully understands the religion of the Illuminati and its subsidiary branches such as high level Freemasons, Skull and Bones members, and Bohemian Grove attendees, one can wrestle with the reality of this Luciferian doctrine. While many publicly known organizations such as the Freemasons pride themselves on instilling moral character in their members, how is it that these elite members can be evil Satan worshipers? Do they really have the truth? Is Satan really the good god, and the God of the Bible is the evil one who is holding knowledge and blessings back from mankind?

If the Illuminati has the truth regarding the history of our creation and existence and the nature of God, then are they betraying their own god by keeping that truth, knowledge, and wisdom from others? What about not only keeping that supposed truth from people, but lying to them, or ruthlessly taking advantage of others or stealing from them? Whatever they think the truth is, they are keeping it for themselves and dispensing a constant stream of propaganda, disinformation, and out-right lies, in order to prevent others from finding that truth.

While practically every religion on the planet from Christianity, to Islam, to Buddhism and Hinduism, wants everyone to have an understanding of what they consider to be the truth, it is the Illuminati who do not abide by these ideals. Elite members do not follow the golden rule of life, that of treating others the way that you want to be treated, instead they violate nearly every major moral code that is found in religions around the world. Do not lie, do not steal, do not murder, do not covet, these rules mean nothing to the elite members of the Illuminati and its subsidiary organizations.

These revelations often lead to the question of whether these individuals believe in an afterlife or a judgment from God after they die. Most religions believe that when one dies, they will stand before God and be judged for their sins. Under this belief system, even if someone gets through life without getting caught for their misdeeds, they will one day pay the price in the afterlife in a purgatory for temporary punishment, or burning in Hell for an eternity. Therefore one wonders what the Illuminati believe will happen to them when they die. How will they escape Divine justice for all of their crimes?

There are two explanations for this. One is that they don't believe in an afterlife, and that we are just sophisticated animals who have no souls, and when we are dead, there is no afterlife, nor judgment. This would explain their social Darwinist world view and their unfair parasitic practices which rob others of their money, health, freedom, and sanity. Another explanation is that the Illuminati believe that God doesn't judge us in a personal way, but in an impersonal fashion based on a scale of good deeds vs. bad deeds. In this view, one is believed to be able to balance out their Karma, so to speak, and avoid any unwanted repercussions for their indiscretions.

Both of these explanations lead to other questions. Is the Illuminati correct? Are we just animals with no soul or afterlife? If we are a religious person, are *we* the ones living a lie? Let's just say for argument's sake that they are correct that there is no afterlife and no judgment from God after one dies. I certainly hope this is not true, but even if it is the case, if we all were to live by their philosophy, then society would be a dangerous place, and unfulfilling and meaningless. If every man was out for himself and we all would break the basic moral code of the civilized world, then life would be Hell on earth. If there is no afterlife or judgment from God, no Heaven or Hell, then the brief life that we live on this planet would still be infinitely more enjoyable, fulfilling, and safe if we were to live by Biblical principles than if we were to live by the Illuminati's code of do what thou wilt.

The Illuminati may have the entire truth, or they may have a piece of it and think they have it as a whole, like a blind man who grabs an elephant's tale and thinks that it is an elephant, not knowing he is only holding a small part of an elephant and cannot begin to imagine what an elephant really is, based on the small part that he is holding in his hand.

Despite their supposed superior knowledge and wisdom, the Illuminati have been wrong in the past. They have been blinded by their own pride and drunk from their own power. Adolf Hitler along with his elite inner circle of Nazis believed that they would rule the world and build a new race of enlightened super-men. They believed that mystical powers were on their side, and their destiny was to build a thousand year empire with Adolf Hitler as its high priest. Instead, their plans crumbled and Hitler and his closest allies were forced to commit suicide in a cowardly act of defeat.

Jesus said there are two rules in life. The first one is to love God with all your heart, and the second one is to love your neighbor as yourself. Luke 10:25-28 reads, “On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the law” he replied. “How do you read it?”

He answered: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

“You have answered correctly.” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

In philosophy, a consideration called Pascal’s wager proposes that if one were to live as though there was no God or final judgment, and they were wrong, they would have a tremendous loss. But if someone were to live as though there is a God, that God has established rules for us to follow, and that each individual will be repaid or punished for their deeds, then if they were wrong, they would lose nothing and would have had a safer more fulfilling life anyway. Pascal proposed that even though we cannot prove the existence of God through reason or scientific inquiry, that people should wager as though he does exist because one has potentially everything to gain and nothing to lose by doing so.

Regardless of one’s religion, there is another story in the Bible which helps to explain the philosophy of the Illuminati. In Matthew 4:8-9, it explains how Satan took Jesus to the top of a mountain and told him he would give him control over all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would worship Satan. Jesus, of course, didn’t accept this offer, but this story conveys a deeper meaning than what appears on the surface. By worshiping Satan and turning one’s back on God’s rules, it is possible to gain control over vast empires and gather enormous riches. But these gains come with a price which is not always seen at the time. Later, when repercussions come from breaking the rules, the empire and riches one had gained will become their very undoing. So when Satan told Jesus, “All this I will give to you if you will bow down and worship me,” he was partially telling the truth. He just wasn’t disclosing the consequences that would occur from such actions.

So do not let the Luciferian doctrine and the Illuminati’s philosophy poison your mind and lead you to abandon the golden rule of life. While learning the details of occult philosophy can cause one to wrestle with their faith, one must understand there are very real consequences and reactions to the way we chose to live our lives.

Whatever one’s faith is, there is a universal code of conduct in the world, and it is clear that the Illuminati habitually breaks that code, while presenting a false face to society that they abide by the same rules everyone else is expected to follow.

Why are the Jews Always Blamed?

One can’t discuss the Illuminati or the New World Order at any length without coming across anti-Semitism. For a minority of those who are against the New World Order, the Jews are at the heart of every problem, and at the pinnacles of power. The “Jewish bankers” and the “Jews in Hollywood” control it all, they claim. Some still believe that *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* are authentic Jewish documents that prove the Zionists’ sinister plans, and that the Illuminati is controlled by Jews at the very top.

The Protocols are a series of documents which were written from a Jewish perspective which outline the necessary steps for world domination. They describe the need to control the banking system, the media, and political institutions in order to accomplish these goals. They are essentially the Illuminati plan for control written up from the perspective of Jews.

When the documents were “discovered” in 1905 word was spread that they were created by a governing body of the Jews, and the Protocols have been used ever since to inflame hate against the Jewish people. Hitler believed the Protocols were authentic and today some still believe that is the case. The Protocols are examined in further detail later in this book.

One source of anti-Semitism comes from the idea that some Jews believe they are God’s chosen people and God’s favorite race of humans. Many see the Jews who hold these views as racist and Jewish supremacists. The fact that many Jews believe that God gave them the land of Israel in the Middle East, and that the Palestinians then have no rightful claim to it continues to be a source of conflict today as the two different cultures argue and kill over whose land it rightfully is.

Some see the central theme of Judaism as being secretive in nature, and an inner circle of Jews secretly controlling the religion and international banking. Certainly the Jewish Pharisees (the religious teachers in the past) kept the spiritual teachings about Judaism to themselves and purposefully kept the masses ignorant and uninformed about the nature of God and the Torah (the Old Testament). Jesus denounced this control, and his main theme of his teaching was that people didn't need the Pharisees to have a connection with God, and that they could have direct access to God themselves and didn't need a "middle man" so to speak.

Some point to the Talmud and Cabala as a continuation of the monopolization of spiritual information on the part of the Jews and see parts of the Talmud as Jewish supremacist in their teachings and give justification for some Jews to believe that their race is the one divinely ordained by God to rule the world.

A rare and unorthodox interpretation of the Book of Genesis and the Fall of Man also fuels anti-Semitism. Adherents to the serpent seed theory believe that Satan had sex with Eve in the garden of Eden and caused Eve to become pregnant with Cain, making him half human, half Devil. Later, as this theory claims, Adam and Eve conceived a child of their own, being Abel. The theory continues that Cain is the patriarch of the Jewish people, and hence they are all descendants of Satan.

Some white supremacists believe that white people, or Aryans, are actually God's chosen race, and that the Jews are falsely claiming they are the chosen ones. This is the case with the Christian Identity movement, who are racist Christians who see themselves as the true heirs to God's blessings, and see the Jews as enemies and counterfeits.

In the Book of Revelation chapter 2 verse 9, the Bible reads, "I know your afflictions and your poverty— yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."

Later in chapter 3 verse 9, Jesus says, "I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars —I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you."

These are two powerful passages that those who often target the Jews as being the root of the world's problems will use as evidence that even Jesus saw that there were counterfeit Jews attempting to fool the people as to their actual beliefs and motives.

Christian Identity's beliefs are in common with British Israelism, which teaches that white Europeans are the literal descendants of the Israelites through the ten tribes that were taken away into slavery by the armies of Assyria.

These beliefs hold that Jesus was an Israelite from the tribe of Judah, and that white European Israelites are still God's chosen people. They also believe that those which most people call modern Jews are not descendants from the Israelites nor Hebrews but are instead actually Khazars who descended from people with Turco-Mongolian blood.

Adolf Hitler seemingly subscribed to these theories and they were used to justify the actions of the Holocaust. Several Aryan Nation organizations and other white supremacist groups incorporate similar beliefs and are used to support their ideologies and actions.

Some Christians subscribe to what is called replacement theology which teaches that people who follow the teachings of Jesus and become Christians are God's chosen people, and that the body of Christ, or the church, replaced the Jews as the chosen people. This is certainly not mainstream Christianity which continues to teach that the Israelites are God's chosen ones. Supporters of replacement theology aren't necessarily racists or white supremacists and should not be confused with Christian Identity believers.

While the Jews continue to be at the center of controversy and blame regarding their alleged control of the Illuminati, it should be emphasized that members of all races are found within the hierarchy of power. While it is easy to point out wealthy Jews, or powerful Jews in Hollywood and the media, it is more effective to point out the corrupt nature of someone's soul, rather than their racial heritage. While there are Jews who arrogantly place themselves and their personal value above all others because of their racial identity, there are even more who see themselves as most people do, that of members of the human race and equal to all others regardless of race or religion.

Fixing the Fight

Most people who identify strongly with a particular political party believe that most, or everything that their party does or stands for is right, and that most or everything that the opposing party stands for is wrong. This same “us vs. them” attitude is also directed towards prominent members in each political party, and party leaders. Republican supporters believe that the Democratic party and leadership are stupid, incompetent, and sometimes criminal, while believing that members of the Republican party are saints, and have the people’s best interests in mind. The same is true of Democratic supporters, in that they blindly view their party as above reproach, and see the opposing party as incompetent, ideologically incorrect, and at times criminal.

This false, left/right paradigm prevents many people from seeing that the leadership at the top of both political parties is controlled by the same private interests. The Illuminati own both horses in the race, so to speak, as was clearly illustrated in the 2004 presidential election when both John Kerry and George W. Bush were facing off against each other for the presidency, and both are members of the ultra-elite Illuminati branch, the Skull and Bones society.

The man credited with founding the Illuminati in 1776, Adam Weishaupt, wrote “By this plan we shall direct all mankind. In this manner, and by the simplest means, we shall set all in motion and in flames. The occupations must be so allotted and contrived, that we may, in secret, influence all political transactions.”

“This can be done in no other way but by secret associations, which will by degrees, and in silence, possess themselves of the government of the States, and make use of those means for this purpose…”

"…the Order will, *for its own sake*, and therefore *certainly*, place every man in that situation in which he can be most effective. The pupils are convinced that the Order *will* rule the world. Every member therefore becomes a ruler."

"I shall therefore press the cultivation of science, especially such sciences as may have an influence on our reception in the world; and may serve to remove obstacles out of the way…Only those who are assuredly proper subjects shall be picked out from among the inferior classes for the higher mysteries…And in particular, every person shall be made a spy on another and on all around him."

"Nothing can escape our sight; by these means we shall readily discover who are contented, and receive with relish the peculiar state-doctrines and religious opinions that are laid before them; and, at last, the trustworthy alone will be admitted to a participation of the whole maxims and political constitution of the Order."

"In a council composed of such members we shall labor at the contrivance of means to drive by degrees the enemies of reason and of humanity out of the world, and to establish a peculiar morality and religion fitted for the great Society of mankind."

High level Republicans, and Republican presidents are the right foot of the Illuminati, and Democrats are the left foot. One foot takes a step forward, then the other, and the process is repeated as the two feet work together to move the Illuminati forward to accomplish their goals of which both conservative and liberal politicians are secretly aiding. This is why we find politicians and presidents whose actions are completely contradictory to their party or the promises they made on the campaign trail. George W. Bush, a supposed conservative, increased government spending more than all previous administrations combined, and while continuously talking about keeping America safe from terrorists, he refused to increase border security and denounced the Minute Men, who voluntarily patrol the U.S. Mexican border, as "vigilantes."

The owners of the NFL (National Football League) couldn't care less which team wins the Super Bowl each year, because no matter which team it is, the NFL makes money. The Illuminati is the same way when it comes to politics. The president of the United States is like a manager at a fast food restaurant. He seems to be the one in charge and the one who takes the brunt of customer complaints, but he is merely working for someone who the customers will never see, or never hear about. The fast food manager is working for the franchise owner, just as the president of the United States is simply a spokesman who is carrying out the orders and agenda of his boss which remains unseen by the public. This boss, is of course, the Illuminati.

Mainstream Media

The control of information, as well as disinformation, is one of the most powerful tools at the Illuminati's disposal. The best way to do this, as they discovered hundreds of years ago, is to own the sources of mainstream media. Television, newspapers, magazine publishers, radio networks, and film studios are largely owned and controlled by Illuminati branches.

Editorial policies are put in place and producers and editors are positioned to act as gate-keepers to prevent any unwanted information from being presented to the masses. While not 100% effective, they have proven their ability to minimize the amount of news stories from making it into print or on the airwaves that will be unfavorable to Illuminati goals and operations.

Aside from acting as gate-keepers, these individuals also receive information from their handlers as to what stories should be produced, and what angle they should have. If a particular issue or person needs to be presented in a favorable light, then this is what will happen. In 2008, former White House press secretary Scott McClellan reported on CNN that the White House gave regular talking points to several hosts at the Fox News Channel. The 2004 documentary *Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism* details how Fox News was used as both a mouth piece and an attack dog for the Bush administration. Leaked memos showed that orders came down from the top Fox executives as to which stories to run and what points to focus on, so that broadcasts would fit a prescribed agenda, and not be "fair and balanced" as Fox News claims.

Operation Mockingbird is a program that the CIA and other branches of government implemented back in the 1950s in order to control the mainstream media in America, as well as media in foreign countries. Through congressional hearings it was revealed that hundreds of millions of dollars had been paid to reporters, and that editors in key media intuitions were also on the payroll who often killed certain stories from being printed or aired.

This should come as no surprise. Looking back at the original writings of the Bavarian Illuminati founder, Adam Weishaupt, one can see that back in the late 1700s he understood the power in controlling information. Weishaupt wrote, “By establishing reading societies, and subscription libraries, and taking these under our direction, and supplying them through our labours, we may turn the public mind which way we will.”

“In like manner we must try to obtain an influence in the military academies (this may be of mighty consequence) the printing-houses, booksellers shops, chapters, and in short in all offices which have any effect, either in forming, or in managing, or even in directing the mind of man: painting and engraving are highly worth our care.”

Illuminati members also understood how powerful controlling newspapers could be to smear their enemies. One letter found in the original Illuminati writings reads, “We get all the literary journals. We take care, by well-timed pieces [articles], to make the citizens and the Princes a little more noticed for certain little slips.”

It’s not just print and broadcast news that they control. The entertainment business has been fully infiltrated and is now dominated by Illuminati handlers. When one looks at how over just one generation, television shows went from *I Love Lucy* showing a husband and wife sleeping in two separate twin beds because the network wouldn’t allow a couple to be shown in bed together, to *Desperate Housewives* and *Nip/Tuck* bordering on soft-core pornography, it is clear a rapid decay in the moral quality of the programming has occurred. One must not even look back as far as the days of *I Love Lucy* to see the dramatic change in standards. This author remembers growing up in the 1980s with such shows as *Family Ties* and *Growing Pains*, which at the time were both entertaining, and usually had a moral to the story. Such shows are now almost nonexistent and have been replaced with utter filth that is now commonplace.

While many ignorant people claim that television doesn’t affect an individual’s behaviors, the social and cultural effects of such changes are clearly noticeable. Sexual immorality, violence, and disrespectful and destructive behaviors are celebrated and encouraged by today’s most popular television shows and musicians.

The Illuminati elite knew they could change the moral climate of society by giving the impression that women didn’t need to follow the basic patterns of behavior that were expected of them. Weishaupt wrote, “There is no way of influencing men so powerfully as by means of the women. These should therefore be our chief study; we should insinuate ourselves into their good opinion, give them hints of emancipation from the tyranny of public opinion, and of standing up for themselves; it will be an immense relief to their enslaved minds to be freed from any one bond of restraint, and it will fire them the more, and cause them to work for us with zeal, without knowing that they do so; for they will only be indulging their own desire of personal admiration.”

With most people knowing more about which celebrity recently got pregnant or had a run in with the law, than they know about what’s happening in national politics or their community, the Illuminati easily continues to thrive with little opposition. It is no accident that petty issues and celebrity gossip are the top stories in the media, and the majority of the public is oblivious to reality. They are mesmerized by the mainstream media and unconcerned and often unaware of their own ignorance.

Economic Control

Most people do not have the faintest clue about what money really is, how it is created, and how it functions in a society. The financial system is so complicated, many chose not to learn how it works. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, Stocks, Bonds, Treasury Bills, put options, 401k, IRAs, CDs, interest rates, inflation, the Department of the Treasury, the Federal Reserve, etc. etc. It’s a lot to digest.

You will often hear people say “the middle class is shrinking” or “the middle class is going to disappear” and wonder how that could happen. When you understand that the Illuminati’s central means of power is by controlling money, and when you learn about the mechanisms they use to do this, a clearer understanding of both personal and global finances will occur.

The Illuminati learned at least as far back as the twelfth century, that they could loan money to individuals and governments, and then charge them interest on the money that they had loaned them, thus making money without working. Most people back then, and even today, have to provide a product or service in order to then sell it to someone else interested in that product or service, and that way earn a profit. People worked to build things, grow food, or offer numerous services including preparing food, cleaning, or feeding and tending to livestock.

When civilization was evolving, if someone grew corn, then they could trade a bushel of corn for a cow to a farmer who raised cows. They could also trade that bushel of corn to a man who assembled clothes in exchange for a new pair of pants and some sandals. This is known as the barter system. But there would be a problem if the man who grew corn wanted to trade the corn for a cow but the farmer with the cow didn’t want any corn, but instead wanted some wheat, which the corn grower didn’t have. For this reason, people agreed on a medium of exchange. This medium of exchange, we’ll use gold coins for example, was something that they could trade their corn for, and then take the gold coins and trade those coins for a cow, or for whatever else they wanted that was for sale at the market. The more valuable the product or service was that they provided, the more gold coins they would get in exchange for that product or service. Throughout history, many different items have been used as money, such as sea shells, stones, and gold coins. This item would have to be rare enough so that people couldn’t just create more of it, thus creating free money for themselves. For thousands of years, gold and silver coins have been a standard medium of exchange because of their rarity, and difficulty to counterfeit.

Metal coins were often a burden to carry, so a system was devised where people would turn in their gold or silver to a bank and in return they would get paper money which represented the amount of gold and silver they deposited. At any time people could go back to the bank and trade in their paper money for its equivalent in gold and silver. The paper money was basically a receipt for the actual money that they had deposited at the bank. In the market place, people would accept these receipts as payment for goods and services instead of gold and silver coins. Bankers would also loan out the money (gold and silver coins) people had deposited in their vaults, and collect interest on those loans. These bankers also realized that they could loan out money to people they didn’t actually have, and then collect the interest on those loans as well. Loaning out money they don’t have doesn’t seem possible, but all they needed to do to accomplish this was write up a receipt and loan that out to someone, and the person would be able to use that receipt in the marketplace and nobody would know that it didn’t actually represent any gold or silver that someone had deposited in the bank. It seems hard to believe, but when you understand how fiat currencies work, it is actually a genius idea on the part of the bankers. It’s the ultimate con, and few people are aware of it.

This same system is in place today and has evolved into a complex global economy, but it still operates in the same way. Hundreds of years ago the Illuminati discovered how powerful of a system this is, and that the ones who control the creation and loaning of money can have an unlimited supply of it without actually working. This is the big banking secret of the

Federal Reserve system, and the reason the Illuminati have become known as international bankers.

Their ultimate financial goal is to create a socialist system where the government will control all aspects of industry, society, healthcare, real estate, and finances. By building a New World Order where everyone must rely on the government for jobs, healthcare, education, and basic services, the Illuminati will be able to easily dictate to the people what they can and cannot do. Their aim is to permanently establish a two class society where a small percentage of people (the Illuminati and their supporters) will own and control all infrastructure, wealth, and real estate, and the rest of the world will be reduced to slaves with no real assets or power. This is identical to the caste system in ancient India where the children of a laborer was destined to be a laborer, and so would his children, and so on. At the same time, the upper class caste maintains an elite and elegant lifestyle that their children will enjoy, and so will their children's children and so on.

The New World Order will be a self-sustaining structure and intelligent people looking to avoid social and economic slavery will find it nearly impossible unless they are willing to perpetuate the system. Most of the public will willingly accept their present status and economic enslavement since they are amused with televised entertainment and sedated with any number of prescribed pharmaceuticals which alleviate their anxieties, unhappiness, or desire to improve their situation. Any extra money they have at the end of the month is usually squandered away on alcohol or other items of no real value, which keeps them from accumulating any tangible assets. Interest paid on credit card debt also continues to siphon off money that could be used to improve their living conditions. Most of the items purchased with those credit cards were not necessary, but the user's inability to resist their urge to mindlessly consume and purchase excessively expensive items which have no purpose other than to attempt to convey a social status that the person does not have, caused them to compulsively spend.

The Illuminati's creation and control of money, interest rates and inflation allow them to fuel economic booms which they know will ultimately end as they hemorrhage into bubbles which burst and leave a path of economic devastation behind for the average citizen. Since the Illuminati own real tangible assets, they are immune from the devastating effects of economic bubbles bursting, or stock markets crashing.

In 2007 and 2008 Peter Schiff, the president of Euro Pacific Capitol, a brokerage firm had been warning that the mortgage bubble was soon to burst and the stock market would crash and throw the country into a recession or worse. He was a fairly frequent guest on cable news shows and his forecast was always 180 degrees from the host and other guests. At times other guests on the segments laughed out loud at Schiff's predictions. Schiff was chosen by Congressman Ron Paul to be his economic adviser when he ran for President in 2008. Schiff also predicted the collapse in his 2007 Book *Crash Proof: How to Profit from the Coming Economic Collapse*.

One of the most respected trend forecasters, Gerald Celente, the CEO of the Trends Research Institute, made news late in 2008 by saying that the American economy would completely collapse and that there would be hyperinflation causing prices for food and other goods to skyrocket, causing shortages, long lines, and government price controls to prevent rising prices on necessities. Despite these warnings nothing changed and the American economy began collapsing and set off a chain reaction around the globe.

Soon after the collapse began, in October 2008 an unprecedented 700 billion dollar bailout for failing and struggling banks was proposed. 700 billion is a seven with eleven zeros after it. $700,000,000,000 represented $2,300 for every man woman and child in America. Henry Paulson the Treasurer Secretary at the time, Ben Bernanke the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, and others were saying that if the bailout didn't pass a vote which allowed it to happen, that within weeks the stock market would crash, and the country would suffer unimaginable consequences.

Some members of Congress were privately told that if the bailout didn't pass a vote, America would completely break down and martial law would have to be imposed to thwart massive crime and civil unrest. Congressman Brad Sherman blew the whistle on such threats and called them unjustified fear mongering.[3] California Senator Diane Feinstein publicly admitted that her office received 91,000 phone calls and emails about the bailout, and that 85,000 of them were opposed to it, but she voted for the bailout anyway because people were “confused” and “didn’t understand it” and she did what she said was in the best interest of the country.

Immediately after the bailout was passed by Congress, Ben Bernanke, Henry Paulson, and others decided to allot the money to other areas, instead of buying bad mortgage debt that they had originally proposed. The money was already approved by Congress, and no steps were taken to hold these men to their original promise of where the money would go. They simply decided to spend the money differently after the “economic stimulus” was passed, and the money was theirs. Months later, the Fed refused to disclose the recipients of two trillion dollars in loans which came from taxpayer money,[4] and many CEOs of failed financial institutions which received billions of dollars of taxpayers money were still allowed to collect their Christmas bonuses of millions, and in some cases tens of millions of dollars.

In November of 2008, Barack Obama was selected to be the next president of the United States, and after being sworn into office on January 20th 2009, he quickly proposed a second “economic stimulus” package which exceeded the size of the first one, just months earlier. Contrary to common sense, president Obama and his economic advisers insisted to the American people that the only thing that would prevent America from going into a depression was if the government would spend nearly 800 billion more dollars.

On February 13th 2009 the 787 billion dollar “stimulus plan” was passed by Congress without a single member even reading it. Seriously, not a single member of Congress read the bill, but passed it anyway. The bill was over 1100 pages long, and from the time it was published to the time of the vote was less than 12 hours. The Obama administration had used fear mongering to scare Congress into passing it immediately and said if they didn’t approve it, the economy and the country would collapse. Even after the bill was passed by Congress and then signed into law a few days later by President Obama, the stock market kept dropping hundreds of points a day and by the end of February, the Dow Jones Industrial Average had dropped more than 50% from its high a year earlier to under 7000.

As a result of these “bailouts” and “stimulus packages,” the United States government has become the largest shareholder in numerous financial institutions, thus nationalizing them. These once failed banks used to be completely independently owned and operated, but can now be controlled by the government. The auto industry also received billions of dollars in “bailout” money, and now must answer to the federal government in regards to what kind of cars and trucks to produce. The free market system and Capitalism itself have been replaced with socialism as a result. Most of the ignorant public was relieved that the government was trying to “save the economy” from this unforeseen disaster which occurred as a result of the mortgage bubble bursting, but in reality the entire ordeal was orchestrated by the Illuminati. Many experts warned that the “stimulus” packages would only make the economy worse, but the Obama administration rammed their plans through as quickly as they could with no oversight.

In her 1934 book, *A Treatise on White Magic*, Illuminati author Alice Bailey wrote about the financial control of the Illuminati, not to expose their methodologies, but to educate members of the organization. She explains, “[the] group controls and orders the means whereby he [mankind] exists, controlling all that can be converted into energy, and constituting a dictatorship over all modes of intercourse, commerce and exchange. They control the multiplicity of form-objects which modern man regards as essential to his mode of life. Money, as I have before said, is only crystallized energy or vitality,—what the oriental student calls pranic energy. It is a concretisation of etheric force. It is therefore vital energy externalized, and this form of energy is under the direction of the financial group. They are the latest group in point of data, and their work (it should be borne in mind) is most definitely planned by the Hierarchy. They are bringing about effects upon the earth which are most far reaching.”[5]

Dating back to the days of the Knights Templars, the Illuminati had learned how powerful they could be if they were to become the masters of money and banking. War has always been a big business for the Illuminati as well. The weapons manufactures earn a continuous stream of profits by supplying the increased demand, and private contractors such as Halliburton earn enormous amounts of money and are paid by the government to do jobs that can often be completed by the military at a fraction of the cost. A powerful film titled *Iraq for Sale* shows just how much money the private contractors are making with no-bid contracts.

Anton LaVey, the founder of the Church of Satan, had his grandson Stanton Zaharoff LaVey named after Sir Basil Zaharoff, an arms dealer, and in LaVey's authorized biography it talks about how much he admired this arms dealer for his cunningness because he would sell weapons to governments of both sides of a conflict in order to make money.[6]

Such a practice has been used for decades, if not centuries. Private banks have lent money to governments to finance conflictions and wars. Interest is then earned on these loans, making the banks a hefty profit. But their scheme doesn't end there. Throughout history, these private banks have loaned money to both sides of a conflict, thus not only prolonging the conflict, but earning interest from both governments that are fighting each other.

The well-known saying "the love of money is the root of all evil" can be understood with a deeper level of understanding when the concepts of money and loans are fully comprehended. Since a medium of exchange is necessary for today's society to function, it should come as no surprise that the Illuminati has wrapped its tentacles around institutions needed for money to be created and regulated.

Nonfiction Books

Nonfiction books exposing the Illuminati have been in publication since at least the late 1700s when the Bavarian Illuminati was exposed after some of the group's writings had been seized by authorities. Since then, a variety of authors have published books, both exposing the Illuminati and their subsidiary organizations, as well as writing books targeted for elitists and occultists to spread the satanic and occult teachings along with the political and financial aspirations of the secret brotherhood.

Books range from focusing specifically on the original Illuminati, to exposing Skull and Bones, the Bohemian Grove, the Federal Reserve, the Bilderberg group, and more. Titles and descriptions of several of the most reliable and well known books to do so are to follow, as well as some of the information that the authors have uncovered. Also included are books by occultists who wanted to openly spread the Illuminati's philosophies and plans.

Proofs of a Conspiracy

One of the first and most popular books written about the Illuminati was published in 1798 by John Robison, a professor of natural philosophy at Edinburgh University in Scotland. The full title of the book is *Proofs of a Conspiracy Against all the Religious and Governments of Europe Carried on in the Secret Meetings of Freemasons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies.* It is often referred to by the shortened title *Proofs of a Conspiracy.* A copy of his work was sent to George Washington, where he responded with a letter saying that he was aware that the Illuminati had diabolical plans of separating people from their government.

Robison's book is extremely important because it was written at the time the Illuminati was first exposed to the public. It is basically a first hand account of what the Illuminati were doing and how they became known to the public. Robison saw the importance of documenting what was happening and his writings remain essential for anyone looking to fully understand the Illuminati. He included large portions of original writings of Adam Weishaupt and other members which were made public shortly after their discovery. By reading the words of Weishaupt and the plans outlined in his writings, it becomes clear he had intricate sinister goals, and knew exactly how the Illuminati could seize control of the government, media, and other key institutions of influence.

Robison writes, “The association of which I have been speaking, is the order of Illuminati, founded in 1775, by Dr. Adam Weishaupt, professor of Canon law in the University of Ingolstadt, and abolished in 1786 by the Elector of Bavaria, but revived immediately after, under another name, and in a different form, all over Germany. It was again detected and seemingly broken up; but it had by this time taken so deep root that it still subsists without being detected, and has spread into all the countries of Europe. It took its first rise among the Freemasons, but is totally different from Freemasonry.”[7]

Robison explains in detail how information about the Illuminati began to be uncovered, and how their original papers had been found and made public. He wrote, “In the beginning of 1783, four professors of the Marianen Academy, founded by the widow of the late Elector, viz. Utschneider, Cossandey, Renner, and Grunberger, with two others, were summoned before the Court of Enquiry and questioned, on their allegiance, respecting the Order of the Illuminati. They acknowledged that they belonged to it, and when more closely examined, they related several circumstances of its constitution and principles. Their declarations were immediately published, and were very unfavorable. The Order was said to abjure Christianity, and to refuse admission into the higher degrees to all who adhered to any of the three confessions.”[8]

“A collection of original papers and correspondence was found by searching the house of one Zwack [Xavier von Zwack] (a member) in 1786. The following year a much larger collection was found at the house of Baron Bassus; and since that time Baron Knigge, the most active member next to Weishaupt, published an account of some of the higher degrees, which had been formed by himself."[9]

In a work titled *Literary Memoirs of Living Authors of Great Britain*, published in London in 1798 for R. Faulder it reads, "In the autumn of the year 1797, Professor Robison published an octavo volume, entitled *Proofs of a Conspiracy*. This volume has been favorably received, and although too hasty a performance for a work of so much consequence, is well entitled, both from its subject and its authenticity, to the serious attention of every reader. It arrives at the same remarkable conclusion as the celebrated Memoirs of the Abbe Barruel, illustrating the history of Jacobinism, though the authors were perfectly unconnected with each other, and pursued their inquiries in very different ways. It has raised (we are sorry for such an appearance) a considerable clamor and enmity against the Professor, though it was written, we are fully convinced from the best motives. We cannot conclude this article without observing that the principles, and honest zeal, which Professor Robison has displayed upon this occasion are highly credible to him, and merit the warmest acknowledgments from society in general."

Reverend Dr. Erskine, who was a neighbor to John Robison, wrote in a letter dated September 25, 1800 in Edinburgh, "I think highly of Professor Robison's book. Some of the most shocking facts it contains, I knew before its publication, from a periodical account of the church history of the times, by Professor Koester at Giessen, of which I lent him all the numbers relating to that subject. For three years, that valuable work has been discontinued, whether from the artifices of Illuminati booksellers, to prevent its sale and spread, or from the author's bad health, I know not."

These testimonials and others show that Robison was not a "conspiracy theorist" but was simply documenting what the Illuminati was and what their goals were, immediately after their discovery.

In *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, Robison also describes the initiation ceremony into the "Regent Degree" of the Illuminati which was the near the highest level in the hierarchy. It bears a striking resemblance to the satanic ritual for entry into Skull and Bones at Yale. Robison describes that during the Illuminati's ceremony, the initiate faced a skeleton, and at its feet were a crown and a sword. He was then asked "whether that is the skeleton of a king, nobleman, or a beggar." Despite his choice, the president declared, "The character of being a man is the only one that is important."

The writing inside Skull and Bones headquarters known as the "Tomb" at Yale reads, "Wer war der Thor, wer Weiser, Bettler oder Kaiser? Ob Arm, ob Reich, im Tode gleich." In English it says, "Who was the fool, who was the wise man, beggar or king? Whether poor or rich, all's the same in death." This is just one of many identical connections found between the Bavarian Illuminati and the Skull and Bones society. One of the founders of Skull and Bones, William Huntington Russell, had just returned from studying abroad in Germany shortly before starting Skull and Bones in 1832. "Bonesmen" who will actually talk about the organization admit that Russell had obtained permission from "a German secret society" when he was studying there, and then returned to America to start Skull and Bones. This German secret society was none other than the Illuminati.

John Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy* is still in print today and thankfully has not been lost in history. Aside from giving the history of the Illuminati and the circumstances surrounding their discovery, Robison includes entire letters written by Adam Weishaupt himself, as well as other high level members. From these original writings, one learns that the Illuminati were not simply a group of "freethinkers" who feared persecution from the Catholic Church, but were devious, power hungry immoral men who did not want to free society from the grip of the Catholic Church, but instead wanted to replace that position of power themselves and then they could rule over society as kings.

Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism

In 1797 a French Jesuit priest named Abbe Barruel published a series of books on the Jacobins and their influence on the French Revolution. The Jacobins were a powerful political club in France which helped organize the revolution in the late 1700s. Today the term Jacobin or Jacobinism is sometimes used to describe left-wing revolutionary ideas.

Barruel wrote four different volumes titled *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* in which he explained that the French Revolution was the result of secret societies, largely the Bavarian Illuminati. Two of the volumes focus extensively on Adam Weishaupt and the Illuminati, and Barruel's writings remain important today because they were written at the time Weishaupt and his cohorts were discovered and had their plans exposed to the world.

Barruel's writings contain some of the same warnings and information that John Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy* includes, but the two authors had no contact with each other, and were unaware of each other's work until after its publication.

Barruel wrote, "The third conspiracy, which I am now about to investigate, is that of the atheistical Illuminees, which at my outfit I denominated the conspiracy of the Sophisters of Impiety and anarchy against every religion natural or revealed, not only against kings, but against every government, against all civil society, even against all property whatsoever."[10]

Before expanding on the Illuminati's goals and activities, Barruel explains how Weishaupt's and others writings were discovered and made public. "The first is a collection entitled "Some of the Original Writings of the Sect of Illuminees," which were discovered on the 11th and 12th of October, 1786 at Landshut, on a search made in the House of the Sieur Zwack, heretofor Counselor of the Regency; and printed by the Order of His Highness the Elector [in] Munich, by Ant. Franz, Printer to the Court. The second is a supplement to the Original Writings, chiefly containing those which were found on a search made at the castle of Sandersdorf, a famous haunt of thee Illuminees, by order of His Highness the Elector. Munich, 1787. These two volumes contain irrefragable proofs of the most detestable conspiracy. They disclose the principles, the object, and the means of the Sect; the essential parts of their code, the diligent correspondence of the adepts, particularly that of their chief, and statement of their progress and future hopes."[11]

While Adam Weishaupt is credited with creating the Illuminati, it is suspected that he had merely been chosen to modernize the organization and formulate updated goals and methods of operation for an advancing society. Barruel had also raised this issue, saying “It is not known, and it would be difficult to discover, whether Weishaupt ever had a master, or whether he is himself the great original of those monstrous doctrines on which he founded his school.”[12]

Regardless of whether Weishaupt was the actual mastermind at the top of the Illuminati, or merely credited with the task of modernizing it, their objectives remain the same. “The destruction of Religion, the destruction of society and the civil laws, the destruction of all property—that was the point at which he always aimed,” wrote Barruel.[13]

Weishaupt said, “Yes, princes and nations shall disappear from off the face of the earth; yes, a time shall come when man shall acknowledge no other law but the great book of nature: This revolution shall be the work of the secret societies, and that is one of our grand mysteries.”[14]

Proof of the Illuminati

Originally published in 1802, *Proof of the Illuminati* by Seth Payson is still in print and available today. It is one of the three primary books that were published at the time that the Illuminati was organized and started gaining power and influence, the others being the works of Robison and Barruel.

Payson was an American and served in the New Hampshire state senate from 1802-1805. Part of his campaign platform was his alarming message found in his book. Payson draws from the writings of Abbe Barruel and John Robison, and quotes both them, as well as the original writings of the Illuminati that were discovered in 1786. While some writers who supported the Illuminati attempted to discredit the work of John Robison, Payson starts off his book with numerous letters from prominent European publications and other scholars who all praise Robison’s character and his book, *Proofs of a Conspiracy*.

One endorsement Payson included in his book came from a man he said was one of the most respectable writers in Scotland who said, “Professor Robison’s character is so well established among those who know him best, that it would be ridiculous, at Edinburgh, to call in question his veracity or ability. I had read many of his authorities in German originals before his book was published; and the first notice I received of it was in the preface to Dr. Erskine’s sketches of ecclesiastical history, where you will see the honorable testimony that he gives Mr. Robison, and the great expectation that he had from his publication.”[15]

Payson understood the sinister nature of the Illuminati and made it his mission to inform others. He wrote, talking about Adam Weishaupt, that, “His scheme appears to be calculated, not so much for uniting persons of similar sentiments in one society, as for seducing those of opposite inclinations, and by a most artful and detestable process, gradually obliterating from their minds every moral and religious sentiment. It is in this view principally that this plan of seduction calls for the attention of mankind, as it develops the secret, insidious policy by which the agendas of faction and infidelity lead on their disciples, still concealing their real designs, until the mind is involved in a maze of error, or entangled in snares from which there is no retreat.”[16]

Although there was no such thing as radio or television, Payson saw how the Illuminati controlled the flow of information that was available at the time, saying, “But the principle means, on which they depended for corrupting the public mind, were literary societies, or reading clubs; which they labored to set up in every town. These were modifications of Weishaupt’s minerval schools; they became very numerous; and it was the business of the secretaries, and initiated booksellers, to have them furnished with books of the most Anti-Christian character.”[17]

Payson also explained how members of the Illuminati are indoctrinated with corruption and taught that it is acceptable to use any means necessary to further their order. “He is placed in situations where he hears the more artful sophistry used to prove that patriotism and private affections are narrow-minded prejudices; that the bonds of marriage and parental authority are encroachments on the natural rights of man; that suicide is lawful; that sensual pleasures correspond with the law of nature, and that it is proper to employ, for a good purpose, those means which wicked men use for evil purposes.”[18]

While these old books such as Seth Payson’s, Abbe Barruel’s, and John Robison’s explain that the Illuminati existed and had sinister motives and detailed plans, they only show the tip of the iceberg since the Illuminati was only in its infancy. As the years went by, instead of the organization disbanding, they continued their charted course and grew stronger and more powerful than any of these writers would be able to imagine.

Secret Societies and Subversive Movements

In 1924 a woman named Nesta Webster published a book titled *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* that discussed the Illuminati and how secret societies throughout history have used their covert networks to organize revolutions and monopolize power in society. Webster begins her analysis by stating, “Let it be said once and for all, secret societies have not always been formed for evil purposes. On the contrary, many have arisen from the highest aspirations of the human mind—the desire for a knowledge of eternal verities. The evil arising from such systems has usually consisted in the perversion of principles that once were pure and holy.”[19]

She goes on to acknowledge that secret societies have been used to pursue esoteric knowledge as well as being used for political purposes noting the French and Bolshevik revolutions. Regarding the esoteric and mystical aspirations of secret societies, Webster explains “For whilst religious leaders such as Buddha and Mohammed sought for divine knowledge in order that they might impart it to the world, the Initiates believed that sacred mysteries should not be revealed to the profane but should remain exclusively in their own keeping. So although the desire for initiation might spring from the highest aspiration, the gratification, whether real or imaginary, of this desire often led to spiritual arrogance and abominable tyranny.”[20]

Regarding the Illuminati, Webster discusses whether Adam Weishaupt had created the organization on his own accord, or whether he was working on behalf of others, and looks for the source of his inspiration. Early writers and researchers link Adam Weishaupt with a Jutland merchant named Kolmer who had studied occultism in Egypt and later came to Germany. It is believed by some that Kolmer met Weishaupt and initiated him into the secret doctrine. Other researchers believe Weishaupt was commissioned by the Rothschild family to organize and modernize the goals of the Mystery schools.

Webster wrote, “It would therefore appear possible that Weishaupt, although undoubtedly a man of immense organizing capacity and endowed with extraordinary subtlety, was not in reality the sole author if Illuminism, but one of a group, which recognizing his talents and the value of his untiring activity, placed the direction in his hands.”[21]

Webster also lists the original writings of the Illuminati for anyone questioning the authenticity of the quotes from Adam Weishaupt or other original Illuminati members. Those sources are:

1. Einige Originalschriften des Illuminatenordens (Munich 1787)

2. Nachtrag von weitern Originalschriften, etc. (Munich, 1787).

3. Die neuesten Arbeiten des Spartacus und Philo in dem Illuminaten-Orden (Munich, 1794).

She goes on to say, “All these consist in the correspondence and papers of the Order which were seized by the Bavarian Government at the houses of the members, Zwack and Bassus, and published by the order of the Elector. The authenticity of these documents has never been denied even by the Illuminati themselves; Weishaupt, in his published defense, endeavored only to explain away the most incriminating passages. The publishers, moreover, were careful to state at the beginning of the first volume: “those who might have any doubts on the authenticity of this collection may present themselves at the Secret Archives here, where, on request, the original documents will be laid before them."[22]

Some have labeled Nesta Webster anti-Semitic for her writings about Judaism, the Talmud and the Cabala. This is indeed a sensitive subject and often simply addressing the Jewish component of the Illuminati is opposed with claims of anti-Semitism. Webster wrote, "It must not, however, be forgotten that to the Jewish mind the human race presents a dual aspect, being divided into two distinct categories—the privileged race to whom the promises of God were made, and the great mass of humanity which remains outside the pale."[23]

As was the case with Christianity during the Inquisition, and Islam in the 21st century, Judaism contains a radical faction of self-appointed leaders who use their theology to justify their beliefs and actions and place themselves and their religion above others and believe they are divinely ordained by God to carry out certain acts or to hold privileged positions in society. Jesus denounced such Jewish views, saying that God's love and promises were for everyone, but many Jews still hold such privileged views. Webster wrote, "the conception of the Jews as the Chosen People who must eventually rule the world forms indeed the basis of Rabbinical Judaism…it is in the Cabala, still more than in the Talmud, that the Judaic dream of world-domination recurs with the greatest persistence."[24]

Webster knew the dangers of making such statements, saying, "For it will be noticed that anyone who attempts to expose the secret forces behind the revolutionary movement, whether he mentions Jews in this connexion [sic] or even if he goes out of his way to exonerate them, will incur the hostility of the Jews and their friends and will still be described as "anti-Semite." The realization of this fact has led me particularly to include the Jews in the study of secret societies."[25]

Occult Theocrasy

In 1933 a two volume set titled *Occult Theocrasy* was published in one book which consists of over 700 pages of information about secret societies, their histories, and their plans for world domination. The book was written by a woman named Edith Starr Miller, and published shortly after she died. Many people think the title is spelled *Occult Theocracy*, but it is actually spelled *Theocrasy*, with an "s" which has a different meaning. Theocrasy means the merging of several deities or gods into one, and a definition is provided in the beginning pages of the book. A theocracy means a government ran by priests who claim some kind of divine right to rule. It's likely Miller meant to have both meanings applied as a play on words, since the Illuminati is a religious group which believes that they hold the divine right to rule the earth.

It's incredible how much information is compiled in Edith Miller's book, although *Occult Theocrasy* is not mentioned that often when discussing the history of the Illuminati. While the impact of *Occult Theocrasy* wasn't as powerful as John Robison's work or Abbe Burruel's, it is still an important piece of history regarding the evolution of the information exposing the Illuminati, and is included in this book for that reason. *Occult Theocrasy* also contains chapters on Mormonism, the Jesuits, the Assassins, and a long list of occult societies and philosophies.

Throughout *Occult Theocrasy*, Edith Miller demonstrates a thorough understanding of even the most esoteric occult philosophies. She explains, "Luciferians never call their infernal master "Spirit of Evil" or "Father and Creator of Crime." Albert Pike even forbade the use of the word *Satan* under any circumstances…Luciferians or the initiates of kindred rites, while still labouring under a strange delusion, act deliberately and glorify Lucifer as the principle of good. To them he is the equal of the God of the Christians whom they describe as the principle of evil."[26]

Miller goes on to discuss Freemasonry and that at their core is a doctrine of Luciferianism. She explains that the letter G represents geometry to the outer level Masons, but Gnosticism to the inner circle. Miller also knew that the founding members of the Knights Templar had learned strange and mystical teachings from the Muslim Assassins. She wrote, "Having embraced Gnosticism while in Palestine, and in touch with the sect of the Assassins, the Templar order degenerated, and some of its members, under the influence of that sect, were said to practice Phallicism or sex-worship and Satanism and to venerate “The Baphomet,” the idol of the Luciferians. The crime of Sodomy was a rite of Templar initiation.”[27]

Edith Miller displays an impressive amount of knowledge about the histories and interconnections of occult societies that would later evolve into the Illuminati. She explains, “As the organization of the Illuminati developed, so did its ambitions, which ended in a plot to subvert Freemasonry to its aim of world dominion by any and all means… religiously, it was anti-Christian. Its members were pledged to blind obedience to their superiors and this was insured by a strict system of secret confessions, and monthly reports checked by mutual espionage. Each individual used a pseudonym instead of his own name to help disguise his identity.”[28]

On page 185 she explains the top priorities of the Illuminati as:

1. The destruction of Christianity and of all Monarchical Governments.

2. The destruction of nations as such in favour of universal internationalism.

3. The discouragement of patriotic and loyal effort branded as narrow minded prejudice, incompatible with the tenets of goodwill to all men and the cry of “Universal Brotherhood.”

4. The abolition of family ties and of marriage by means

of systematic corruption.

5. The suppression of the rights of inheritance and property.

Miller also retells a story that is difficult to verify, but continues to be told regarding how a collection of Illuminati writings were allegedly discovered. The story goes that on July 10th 1785 a man named Jacob Lang was struck by lightning and killed (some say while riding his horse, others say while walking with Adam Weishaupt) and when his remains were examined, a set of documents were discovered sewn into his clothes and were handed over to the Bavarian government. It is not clear whether this actually happened, and citing this story as a reference for how the Illuminati papers were discovered should be avoided. History has documented clear and verifiable references for how and where the original writings of the Illuminati were discovered, therefore the tale of the lightening striking and killing one of their members should not be used as evidence of the Illuminati's discovery. Never the less, this is one story that has become part of the Illuminati legend, and the reader should be aware of the uncertainty about its authenticity.

Edith Miller has been labeled a "fascist supporter" because of her marriage to Almeric Hugh Pagent, 1st Baron Queenborough in 1921 and was said to be friendly with Brigadier General Robert Byron Drury Blakeney, who was the second president of the British Fascisti and was active in various fascist organizations such as the British Fascisti and the Imperial Fascist Club. She would later divorce Almeric claiming he was abusive. Regardless of her supposed connections to questionable political groups, Edith Miller's book, *Occult Theocrasy* must be included in the list of literature detailing the Illuminati and their occult philosophies as we trace the timeline of such material from its beginning up to today.

None Dare Call It Conspiracy

In 1972 a man named Gary Allen released a thin but powerful book titled *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*. A lot of time had passed since the works of John Robison and others, and the Illuminati had been hard at work the entire time. They had not only been able to continue their planned course of action, but over the last nearly two hundred years, they had made incredible progress and achieved a large portion of their goals.

The forward to Allen's book was written by a United States Congressman named John G. Schmitz, and the first printing in 1972 consisted of 350,000 copies which sold out, and was soon followed with 1,250,000 which also sold out, and was finally followed by another 4,000,000 in April of 1972.[29] That's more than five and half million copies in a year. Astonishing numbers. People back in the 1970s were obviously more informed and concerned about the political affairs of the country than they are today. Most books on the subject today would be lucky to sell 10,000 copies, with most of the public more interested in Harry Potter than the Illuminati. Members of the John Birch society were largely responsible for promoting and handing out copies of *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*.

Garry Allen doesn't use the term "the Illuminati" but rather "*the Insiders*" to describe the organizations and strategies he exposes. He was obviously aware of the Illuminati and while mentioning them in the book, he chose to label the conspirators the *Insiders* since it accurately describes the group without attaching a formal name to their network. Allen shows a tremendous amount of knowledge regarding the political climate and mechanisms of the day. He primarily focuses on how the elite banking cartels and families secretly finance Communism and specialize in getting governments in debt to them.

He writes, "It should be noted that the originator of this type of secret society was Adam Weishaupt, the monster who founded the Order of Illuminati on May 1, 1776, for the purpose of conspiracy to control the world. The role of Weishaupt's Illuminists in such horrors as the Reign of Terror is unquestioned, and the techniques of the Illuminati have long been recognized as models for Communist methodology. Weishaupt also used the structure of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) as his model, and rewrote his code in Masonic terms."[30]

Aside from exposing wealthy business titans and private organizations like the Federal Reserve, he also knew the dangers of blaming the entire conspiracy on one group and warned that some people, "will take small fragments of legitimate evidence and expand them into a conclusion that will support their particular prejudice, ie., the conspiracy is totally "Jewish," "Catholic," or "Masonic." These people do not help to expose the conspiracy, but sadly play into the hands of those who want the public to believe that all conspiratorialists are screwballs."[31]

Allen demonstrated an understanding of the power of the media by explaining, “Because the Establishment controls the media, anyone exposing the *Insiders* will be the recipient of a continuous fusillade of invective from newspapers, magazines, TV and radio. In this manner one is threatened with loss of “social respectability” if he dares broach the idea that there is organization behind any of the problems currently wracking America.”[32]

He also knew why so few people even cared about what was happening to the country and how the *Insiders* could get away with such things. “They believe that most business and professional men are too shallow and decadent, too status conscious, too tied up in the problems of their jobs and business to worry about what is going on in politics.”[33]

Allen also lays out the case that similar groups have existed in the past, and that it is foolish to think such things don’t continue to operate. “…there have been Hitlers and Lenins and Stalins and Caesars and Alexander the Greats throughout history. Why should we assume there are no such men today with perverted lusts for power?”[34]

Allen continues to detail how international bankers financed Hitler as well as Communism from New York and London, and how the Council on Foreign Relations and the Federal Reserve have secretly maneuvered themselves into having a stranglehold over the government and economy. Allen even discussed the Bilderberg group and knew the organization was formed in 1954 and meets each year at elite resorts to discuss plans for the New World Order.

In recent years more and more people are starting to learn and care about the New World Order, and it is interesting to read Gary Allen’s warnings from the early 1970s and to see how his analysis and warnings have unfortunately been accurate.

Bloodlines of the Illuminati

Bloodlines of the Illuminati is an over 600 page book first published in 1999 by Fritz Springmeier. The book is an exhausting analysis of the history of 13 families believed to be involved with the Illuminati. Those 13 bloodlines are: Astor, Bundy, Collins, Dupont, Freeman, Kennedy, Li, Onassis, Rockefeller, Rothschild, Russell, Van Duyn, and the Merovingian bloodline. A revised edition was released in 2002, but *Bloodlines of the Illuminati* is currently out of print. Used copies may still available from online booksellers.

In the introduction the author explains, “The goal of this book is to lay out the historical facts about these elite bloodlines; it is the reader’s responsibility and prerogative to decide what he or she wants to do with this fascinating information. There is no doubt that this information has far reaching implications. For instance, once one understands these bloodlines, wars between kings no longer appear as wars between elite factions, but often can be recognized as contrived wars created to control the masses of both sides by their greedy Machiavellian masters.”[35]

“The Illuminati themselves decided to elevate 13 bloodlines. The number 13 is extremely important magically, and these 13 occult tribes mock the 13 tribes of Israel (remember the 13th tribe, the Tribe of Joseph was split into Ephraim & Manasseh). This does not mean that only 13 Illuminati bloodlines are powerful. There are other families that have risen to prominence. Further, worldwide there are other families of great oligarchial power who have allied themselves to the Illuminati in the political and economic realms without having to intermarry into the Illuminati.”[36]

Springmeier was a frequent speaker on the subject, and one of his most well-known lectures is a two and a half hour talk titled *The Top 13 Illuminati Bloodlines* which was given at Prophecy Club ministries and can be viewed on Google Video and other online video sites. While much of the author’s claims are sourced, some viewers are disturbed by what is considered to be a far-fetched and unsubstantiated claim that the Illuminati had built and maintains a space station on Mars. While nothing in his book is mentioned about this, he does mention it in the video lecture. Many feel this single statement casts a shadow of doubt on Springmeier's body of work. Others are able to overlook this statement, and focus on the documentable and verifiable information that is compiled in Springmeier's book.

Another blow to Springmeier would come in March of 2001 when he was arrested for allegedly growing marijuana and then implicated in a bank robbery.[37] Information regarding this incident is conflicting, and what actually happened and why remains a topic of debate. A newspaper in Oregon, *The Oregonian*, reported that on February 9th 2001, agents raided his home and seized what they called military-style weapons and allegedly fifty marijuana plants. The police would later admit that the weapons were not illegal guns. The article stated that authorities also allegedly seized a small amount of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil which they said could be made into an explosive. There is some confusion about this article, and it is believed that *The Oregonian* got their facts wrong, and that the marijuana was found at the residence of Tony Huntington, who would later claim that Fritz was involved with a bank robbery Huntington and his house mate, Forrest E. Bateman Jr. had allegedly committed.

In 2003 Springmeier was sentenced to nine years in prison for his alleged involvement in an armed robbery of a bank that had occurred in Portland, Oregon years earlier in 1997. Prosecutors claimed that he and an accomplice, Forrest E. Bateman Jr. detonated a homemade pipe bomb at an adult video store on the other side of town as a diversion, and then robbed the Damascus branch of the Key Bank of Oregon. His participation is disputed and both he and his wife maintain his innocence.

They say what happened is that Huntington and Bateman had actually committed the robbery, and had been acquainted with Fritz because they lived in the same area and had read his book, *Bloodlines of the Illuminati* sometime earlier and had sought Fritz out to talk about such issues. Allegedly unknown to Fritz, Huntington and Bateman were facing a lengthy prison sentence for committing the robbery in question, and had struck a deal with prosecutors that if they were to tell them of any other crimes they knew of or were connected with, that they would reduce their sentence. Since these men knew that Fritz had written extensively about the

Illuminati, they figured he would be an easy target for prosecutors so they claimed that Fritz was involved with the robbery. Prosecutors then painted Fritz as a right wing anti-government nut because of his writings and lectures.

Fritz had done radio interviews shortly before his sentencing and still maintained he was wrongfully implicated by Huntington and Bateman. After being sentenced, Fritz told the judge and the courtroom, “I’m innocent. I’m looking forward to discovering the divine benefits of the sentence that you give me. If the Government is trying to ruin my life, they will have to try harder.” Months later his wife Patricia spoke with radio host Alex Jones, and maintained that Fritz was used as a scapegoat for the actual perpetrator to get a reduced sentence and that no marijuana was found on Springmeier’s property.[38]

The Lexicon of Freemasonry

The Lexicon of Freemasonry was first published in 1845 by Albert G. Mackey, a 33rd degree Freemason and one of the twentieth centuries most prominent scholars on the subject of Freemasonry. The book contains an alphabetized list of most Masonic terms and definitions. It is over five hundred pages thick and is one of the most respected reference guides on the fraternity.

While it is fully admitted that Adam Weishaupt infiltrated Freemasonry in 1786 and created a secret society within the secret society where his Illuminists could then use the cover and structure of Freemasonry for Illuminati goals, Freemasons have denied that any current association between the two exists, and insist Weishaupt and his “Illuminated masons” were eradicated upon their exposure several hundred years ago.

Albert Mackey’s entry on the Illuminati is extremely interesting, in that it shows Adam Weishaupt was not just a freethinker who was looking to better mankind through his organization, as some scholars continue to claim to this day, but that he was in fact a man with severe moral shortcomings.

On page 201 and 202, Mackey’s entry reads: “Illuminati. Illumines (Signifying in Latin enlightened.) This was a secret society instituted in Bavaria, in 1776, by Adam Weishaupt, Professor of Canon Law in the University of Ingolstadt. Weishaupt was a radical in politics, and an infidel in religion; and he organized this association, not more for purposes of aggrandizing himself, than overturning Christianity and the institutions of society. With the view of carrying his objects more completely into effect, he united himself with a lodge of Freemasons in Munich, and attempted to graft his system of Illuminism upon the stock of Freemasonry.”

“Many Freemasons, misled by the construction of his first degrees, were enticed into the order, but the developments made in the higher degrees, so averse from all the virtuous and loyal principles of Masonry, soon taught them the error they had committed, and caused them to abandon Illuminism with greater rapidity than that which they had embraced it.”

“Among those who had abandoned the order, some went so far as to betray its secret principles. The elector of Bavaria becoming alarmed at the political tenets which were said to be taught in their assemblies, instituted a judicial examination into the merits of the charges made against them, and the consequence was, that the Illuminati were completely extinguished in his territories.”

“The serpent had, however, only been scotched, not killed; and the order afterwards made rapid progress in other parts of Germany, and especially in France, where it had been introduced in 1787, two years before the execution of Louis XVI. It was an institution created at the period, when the locust plague of infidelity and atheism was blighting, with its destructive influences, the peace and order of Europe; with the return of sense and virtue, it ceased to exist. Illuminism belongs only to the history of the past.”

What is even more interesting is a footnote in the entry in which Mackey praises the writings of John Robison and his work on the Illuminati, saying, “See Robison’s *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, which, although the work of an enemy to our order, contains a very excellent exposition on the nature of this pseudo-Masonic institution.”

The reason Mackey labels Robison an enemy of their order is because aside from exposing Weishaupt and his associates, he included an attack on Freemasonry in general, and believed that the organization even without Illuminated masons, was in fact a dangerous den which bred corruption and anti-Christian sentiment.

Morals and Dogma

Often considered to be the bible of Freemasonry, *Morals and Dogma* was written by a 33rd degree Freemason named Albert Pike and published in 1872. The book contains the thirty-three different levels of philosophical teachings that are found within the Scottish Rite branch of Freemasonry today. For many years the contents of the book was a closely guarded secret and was only given to a Mason after he had achieved the highest level of membership, the 33rd degree. The copy of *Morals and Dogma* that these men were given had printed on the cover that it was to be returned to the lodge upon the death of the Mason, in order to prevent the text from circulating and having its teachings discovered by non-Masons, or those who had not risen to the 33rd degree.

The book is an exhausting read, but several passages give a revealing look into the philosophies of the most closely guarded secrets in Freemasonry. In the chapter dedicated to the 28th degree, titled *Knight of the Sun or Prince Adept*, Pike wrote, “The True Word of a Mason is to be found in the concealed and profound meaning of the Ineffable Name of Deity… and which meaning was long lost by the very precautions taken to conceal it. The true pronunciation of that name was in truth a secret, in which, however, was involved the far more profound secret of its meaning. In that meaning is included all the truth that can be known by us, in regard to the nature of God.”[39]

What he is saying is that the Masons know the true name of God, and by knowing that name, it gives them access to unimaginable spiritual powers when one understands what he calls “the profound secret of its meaning.”

Within the book Albert Pike also reveals that lying is morally acceptable and necessary in Freemasonry, saying “Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, *conceals* [emphasis in original] its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it [the Mason] calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it.”[40]

He goes on to write in the 19th degree of *Grand Pontiff*, “Lucifer, the Light-bearer! Strange and mysterious name to give to the Spirit of Darkness! Lucifer, the Son of the Morning! Is it he who bears the Light, and with its splendors intolerable, blinds feeble, sensual, or selfish souls? Doubt it not!”[41]

Earlier in the book, Pike has this to say about the subject, “…for Satan is not a black god, but the negation of God. The Devil is the personification of Atheism or Idolatry. For the Initiates, this is not a Person, but a Force, created for good, but which may serve for evil. It is the instrument of Liberty of Free Will. They represent this Force, which presides over the physical generation, under the mythological and horned form of the God Pan; thence came the he-goat of the Sabbat, brother of the Ancient Serpent, and the Light-Bearer.”[42]

Many defenders of Freemasonry insist that the organization is simply a men’s fraternity and nothing more, but Pike explains, “Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion; and its teachings are instruction in religion.”[43]

When one wonders why the discrepancies in what is told to the public versus what is actually practiced and believed, a better understanding can come from Pike himself who explains, “The people will always mock at things easy to be misunderstood; it must [and] needs [to] have imposters. A Spirit…that loves wisdom and contemplates the Truth close at hand, is forced to disguise it, to induce the multitudes to accept it…Fictions are necessary to the people and the Truth becomes deadly to those who are not strong enough to contemplate it in all its brilliance…In fact, what can there be in common between the vile multitude and sublime wisdom? The truth must be kept secret, and the masses need a teaching proportioned to their imperfect reason."[44]

The Secret Teachings of All Ages

There are some within the modern Mystery schools, such as the Freemasons, who feel that the knowledge and philosophical teachings contained within should be more widely available to the public. Manly P. Hall wrote about the symbolism, philosophies, and history of the Mysteries, not to "expose" them as part of some sinister plot against mankind, but to spread them to others seeking enlightenment teachings who were not directly connected with an organization.

Arguably the most popular of such books is *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* which was published by Manly P. Hall in 1928. The book is considered his magnum opus, and consists of 747 pages.

The Secret Teachings of All Ages contains a variety of chapters including explanations of the signs of the Zodiac, as well as esoteric explanations of countless mystical organizations, teachings, and ancient gods and goddesses. Manly P. Hall is considered to be one of Freemasonry's greatest philosophers and was a 33rd degree Mason.

While Hall doesn't disclose all of the teachings contained within the Mystery schools, he openly talks about quite a few, including a variety of topics and interpretations of symbols that frequently confirm the suspicions of so-called "conspiracy theorists."

One such confirmation comes regarding the mysterious pyramid with an eye as the capstone that is found on the back of the one dollar bill. While most Freemasons and others deny that the symbol is anything more than merely a symbol, Hall states, "European mysticism was not dead at the time the United States of America was founded. The hand of the Mysteries controlled in the establishment of the new government, for the signature of the Mysteries may still be seen on the Great Seal of the United States of

America. Careful analysis of the seal discloses a mass of occult and Masonic symbols chief among them, the so-called American Eagle...only the student of symbolism can see through the subterfuge and realize that the American eagle upon the Great Seal is but a conventionalized phoenix…"[45]

He continues, "Not only were many of the founders of the United States government Masons, but they received aid from a secret and august body existing in Europe which helped them to establish this country for a peculiar and particular purpose known only to the initiated few. The Great Seal is the signature of this exalted body—unseen and for the most part unknown—and the unfinished pyramid upon its reverse side is a teeterboard setting forth symbolically the task to the accomplishment of which the United States Government was dedicated from the day of its inception."[46]

From reading Hall's work, one doesn't get the impression that he harbors any ill motives, or sinister plans, but he does admit that in the ancient past philosophic and religious doctrines were divided into several levels, and that the teachings, symbols, and meanings given to the public do not contain the true essence of what they mean. This esoteric meaning is reserved for the inner circle or the elect. Hall is under the impression that the Mysteries are not evil and that the initiates and adepts were of high moral character, but that at some point in time, "With the decline of virtue, which has preceded the destruction of every nation of history, the Mysteries became perverted. Sorcery took the place of the divine magic."[47]

Many people remain suspicious of Hall, and point to a passage in another of his books where he states, "When the Mason learns that the Key to the warrior on the block is the proper application of the dynamo of living power, he has learned the Mystery of his Craft. The seething energies of Lucifer are in his hands and before he may step onward and upward, he must prove his ability to properly apply this energy."[48]

Let me make it clear that many, if not most men involved in esoteric schools such as the Freemasons, Rosicrucians, or other fraternal orders, harbor no ill motives, are not part of any evil conspiracy, and are just seeking to understand and expand their spiritual knowledge in their quest for enlightenment. With that said, it certainly is interesting how Manly P. Hall and others confirm many of the accusations by “conspiracy theorists” regarding secret symbols and history. The fact that Hall and others have introduced a large portion of the “secret teachings” to a wider audience doesn’t reduce the possibility that within these schools of enlightenment operates a network of criminal enterprises who use their superior intelligence and wisdom, not for the betterment of mankind and self-actualization, but to ruthlessly take advantage of those less informed or in a lower socioeconomic level.

Let’s remember that Hall himself states that the Mystery schools became perverted, and in all likelihood, this corrupt core continues to exist today and grew into what we now call the Illuminati.

Bohemian Grove: Cult of Conspiracy

In 2003 one of the first books on the Bohemian Grove was published by Mike Hanson after he and his friend Alex Jones secretly infiltrated the club in the summer of 2000 and were able to videotape the Cremation of Care ritual which was then released in Jones’ film *Dark Secrets: Inside Bohemian Grove*. Hanson’s book, *Bohemian Grove: Cult of Conspiracy* is, and probably will remain forever, the most extensive work on the club ever produced.

Since its publication in 2003, the topic of the Bohemian Grove has found its way into other books on so-called “conspiracy theories” as secret societies such as the Freemasons and the Knights Templar were brought to mainstream awareness with the popularity of Dan Brown’s *Da Vinci Code*, and the revelation during the 2004 presidential election year that George Bush and John Kerry are members of Skull and Bones. Practically every author to jump on the secret society bandwagon owes a debt of gratitude to Alex Jones and Mike Hanson.

Hanson’s book is 420 pages long and contains interviews with Mary Moore of the Bohemian Grove Action Network, an organization that has monitored and infiltrated the club for decades, as well as interviews with Nebraska Senator John DeCamp and British journalist Jon Ronson. Hanson covers the history of the Grove, and details some of the political developments that were hatched from within the club. He also discusses the significance of the Cremation of Care ceremony, the annual human sacrifice ritual using an effigy which is symbolically sacrificed to Moloch, an ancient Canaanite god to whom children were sacrificed to. For over 100 years this same ritual has been reenacted inside the Grove using a life-size paper mache effigy. But this strange, seemingly harmless ritual is only the beginning of the dark activities that are believed to occur inside.

It has been known for decades that prostitution plays a fairly large role in the parties inside the Bohemian Grove. For years it had been rumored that the Mitchell Brothers O'Farrell Theatre in the Tenderloin red-light district of San Francisco was a primary source of strippers and high-class call girls for the club. Several prostitutes have gone public with claims they worked in the Grove, and these allegations come with no surprise to those familiar with it.

Mike Hanson interviewed four Mitchell Brothers dancers for his book, and they all confirmed that prostitution was the accepted "unofficial" policy at Bohemian Grove, and that the girls were expected to "perform" sexually for the men in attendance. One such interview by Hanson uncovered more startling allegations about the club.

Hanson details an account of strippers who had claimed to work at the Grove writing, "When the girls went up to change for the show, they noticed a briefcase in the room that had apparently been left behind by one of the Grovers. Curiosity got the better of them, and they peeked inside. What they found shocked them. Inside was an owl mask, a long black robe with a gold hood, ritual gear, and a long butcher's knife that was very old and rusty."[49]

Hanson quotes one of the girls saying, "The knife looked like it had been used to kill before. It was old and very ornate in its design, with old stains on the blade. Whether it was rust or blood stains, I don't know."[50]

One stripper admitted to steeling a laptop computer because the attendees wouldn't pay her for dancing after she refused to have sex with them. She told Hanson that after she got the computer home, she found pictures and videos on the hard drive of children being raped and tortured. Former Senator John DeCamp and other well respected officials have made identical allegations about the kinds of activities which occur inside. (See The Franklin Cover-Up page 120) (See Sex Magic page 305) (See Snuff Films page 301)

Common Sense Renewed

In 1986 a little known book was published titled *Common Sense Renewed* that was written by a man using the pseudonym "Robert Christian," who admitted to being the man behind the mysterious Georgia Guidestones. The Guidestones are an enormous granite monument consisting of four stone slabs standing almost twenty feet tall which have an inscription of ten different commandments engraved on the eight different sides of the stones in eight different languages. The commandments are bizarre, to say the least, and some are very unsettling. Number one is to maintain the world's population at 500 million people. Other commandments or "guides" speak of creating a world court and a world language. The monument has been the topic of both mystery and controversy, as it sits on public property in the small town of Elberton, Georgia. The true identity of the man, "R.C. Christian" who represented the group who financed the project has remained unknown since the stones were erected in 1980.

The publication of *Common Sense Renewed* shed some light on the subject, but his real name, and that of the group he represented remains a mystery. The book explains, "Robert Christian" is the pseudonym of a private American citizen who is concerned about the growing evidence of a decline in the political and economic strengths of our country. It goes on to say that the first two printings of *Common Sense Renewed* were sent to several thousand political officials and shapers of public opinion throughout the world, and all members of the United States Congress.

Aside from admitting “Robert Christian” is the author of the Georgia Guidestones, he explains that he “has chosen to remain anonymous in order to avoid useless controversy and better focus attention on his thoughts rather than on himself.”[51]

The book is dedicated to Thomas Paine (a Deist); author of *Common Sense*, hence the title. On page six, the author explains one of the purposes for the monument saying, “The hearts of our human family must be touched and warmed to welcome a global rule by reason.”

This mysterious man also alluded to the transhumanist combination of man and machine saying, “We suggest that scholars throughout the world begin now to establish new bases upon which later generations can develop a totally new universal language for men and machines. It will be adapted to our speech mechanism and to the language faculties and patterns impressed in our nervous systems. Its spoken and printed forms will be capable of accurate interchange by electromechanical means.”[52]

It should be noted that when this man first approached the Elberton Granit Association with plans for the project, he identified himself as “R.C. Christian,” which is a label used by members of the Rosicrucians, a secret society with connections to the Enlightenment and Illuminati. He also admitted that he had not come up with this project by himself, but that he merely represented the organization which did.

When one reads the “guides” engraved in the side of the monument and understands that the stones’ creators desire the world’s population to be reduced by six billion people, it can be unsettling. What’s worse is the fact that reducing the world’s population by 80 to 95% has been a goal of the Illuminati for quite some time. Ted Turner the founder of CNN, Prince Phillip from England, Dr. Eric Pianka, and other extremely powerful and influential men have openly stated that such a goal would be beneficial for the earth and its inhabitants.

The Guidestones were no small project to create. Its design, engraving, and installation was an extremely labor intensive venture with costs that must have exceeded tens of thousands of dollars or more. Their existence serves as a scary reminder that the Illuminati plans to one day eliminate the majority of the earth’s population in order to conserve the planet’s natural resources. Their rationale is that when the New World Order’s infrastructure is complete, only a maintenance force of slaves will be needed, and the rest of humanity are simply useless eaters consuming the earth’s resources that the Illuminati want to keep for themselves.

Tragedy and Hope

In 1966 an establishment insider published a book which openly admitted that elite secret societies, networks, and organizations did in fact exist and were being used as an engine for creating a world government and financial system. Carroll Quigley wrote *Tragedy and Hope*, not as an exposé of these activities, but as a way to teach others who would be inclined to participating in such things. After all, most of the public is distracted with videogames, television, and other novelties that are continuously presented to them which keep them busy and unconcerned with issues of any significance.

Quigley was no ordinary author. He studied history at Harvard and had a B.A., M.A., and PhD, and taught at Princeton and Harvard. He was also a consultant to the Department of Defense and the Navy.

In 1992 during his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention, Bill Clinton named Quigley as one of his most important influences in college. “As a teenager, I heard John Kennedy’s summons to citizenship. And then, as a student at Georgetown, I heard that call clarified by a professor named Carroll Quigley,” he said.

Tragedy and Hope contains over 1300 pages of what many may see as dry history, but within this volume are found multiple stunning admissions. Quigley wrote, “There does exist, and has existed for a generation, an international Anglophile network which operates, to some extent, in the way the radical Right believes the Communists act. In fact, this network, which we may identify as the Round Table Groups, has no aversion to cooperating with the Communists, or any other groups, and frequently does so. I know of the operations of this network because I have studied it for twenty years and was permitted for two years, in the early 1960's, to examine its papers and secret records. I have no aversion to it or to most of its aims and have, for much of my life, been close to it and to many of its instruments. I have objected, both in the past and recently, to a few of its policies (notably to its belief that England was an Atlantic rather than a European Power and must be allied, or even federated, with the United States and must remain isolated from Europe), but in general my chief difference of opinion is that it wishes to remain unknown, and I believe its role in history is significant enough to be known."[53]

"At the end of the war of 1914, it became clear that the organization of this system had to be greatly extended. . . . Lionel Curtis . . . established, in England and each dominion, a front organization to the existing local Round Table Group…This front organization, called the Royal Institute of International Affairs, had as its nucleus in each area the existing submerged Round Table Group…in New York it was known as the Council on Foreign Relations, and was a front for J. P. Morgan and Company in association with the very small American Round Table Group. The American organizers were dominated by the large number of Morgan 'experts'… The Round Table for years (until 1961) was edited from the back door of Chatham House grounds in Ormond Yard, and its telephone came through the Chatham House switchboard."[54]

Not only does Quigley admit that a secret society is operating behind the scenes and created the Council on Foreign Relations as a front, but he also explains that the two party system in American government works in concert to fulfill the goals of this secret agenda.

"The chief problem of American political life for a long time has been how to make the two Congressional parties more national and international…(therefore the) argument that the two parties should represent opposed ideals and policies, one, perhaps, of the Right and the other of the Left, is a foolish idea acceptable only to doctrinaire and academic thinkers…Instead the two parties should be almost identical, so that the American people can 'throw the rascals out' at any election without leading to any profound or extensive shifts in policy."[55]

While people still scoff at the idea that the Federal Reserve a privately owned banking cartel which was created in secret and is being used to get governments and citizens in debt to them, Quigley openly admitted, “The powers of financial capitalism had (a) far-reaching aim, nothing less than to create a world system of financial control in private hands able to dominate the political system of each country and the economy of the world as a whole. This system was to be controlled in a feudalist fashion by the central banks of the world acting in concert, by secret agreements arrived at in frequent meetings and conferences. The apex of the systems was to be the Bank for International Settlements in Basel, Switzerland, a private bank owned and controlled by the world’s central banks which were themselves private corporations. Each central bank...sought to dominate its government by its ability to control Treasury loans, to manipulate foreign exchanges, to influence the level of economic activity in the country, and to influence cooperative politicians by subsequent economic rewards in the business world.”[56]

Most of the books written about the Illuminati or similar secret societies that are part of the same network, are written from the perspective of an outsider trying to show how these organizations operate, what their beliefs are, and how they affect the world. With very few books written by insiders and supporters of such groups, the words of Carroll Quigley should be taken quite seriously, and they clearly confirm what many outsiders have been claiming for decades.

The New World Order

In 1991, Pat Robertson published a book titled *The New World Order* which is surprisingly accurate in regards to the Illuminati’s plans for a global government and the physical, financial, and spiritual enslavement of the human race. Now, of course, Pat Robertson didn’t sit down at a computer and type the book up himself, he obviously had a ghostwriter do the work for him, which is common among celebrities and politicians who publish books. The most interesting thing about this book is that it mentions the Illuminati by name and gives a few details about their goals and accomplishments.

On page 67, the book reads, "On May 1, 1776 (May Day is still considered to be the key annual holiday for Communists), a Bavarian professor named Adam Weishaupt launched a small secret society called the Order of the Illuminati. Weishaupt's aims were to establish a New World Order based on the overthrow of civil governments, the church, and private property and the elevation to world leadership of a group of hand-picked "adepts" or "illumined" ones."

It goes on to say, "In 1782 Weishaupt succeed at the international convention of Freemasonry held in Wilhelmsbad, Germany with his planned infiltration of the Continental Masonic Order and the creation of what he termed Illuminated Freemasonry."

So whoever did the ghostwriting for this book included some factual yet obscure information about the Illuminati. This is extremely rare, if not unheard of, for a mainstream Christian author, especially one as well-known as Pat Robertson. Robertson should have at least read the manuscript before approving it for publication, so he likely saw the entry about such things. This is puzzling because some believe that Pat Robertson is actually involved with the Illuminati himself. Whatever the case, Robertson is one of the most well-known Christian evangelicals, and his show *The 700 Club* has aired on national television since 1966.

There was nothing mentioned about the Skull and Bones society or the Bilderberg group in the book, and the author shows sympathy for then President George H.W. Bush and seems to think that Bush simply wasn't aware he was aiding in the construction of the New World Order. In reality, and omitted from Robertson's book, is the fact that the Bush crime family has been active with the Illuminati for generations.

Some of Pat Robertson's actions expose him as a charlatan who has profited tremendously from selling Christianity, including his bizarre conversations with God, where on his broadcasts God tells him of people watching with various ailments and then he proclaims "God is healing that right now." Also at the end of each year he announces his "prophecies" for the next twelve months which he claims God tells him will happen. In reality, these "prophecies" are nothing more than the forecasts of political and economic trend analyzers, which can be read in newspapers, and in no way reflect any sort of Divine revelation by Robertson.

Never the less, it is surprising that he is the “author” of a book which contains information about the Illuminati. Perhaps he didn’t even read the manuscript that his ghostwriter prepared for him, or perhaps he allowed it to be included thinking it would increase his market. Whatever the case, it is significant that such information was published with Robertson’s name attached as the author and the information about the historical Illuminati is surprisingly accurate, although *The New World Order* is extremely limited regarding the key Illuminati organizations and operations.

America’s Secret Establishment

In the early 1980’s, someone anonymously delivered an 8-inch thick package of documents containing information and membership lists for the Skull and Bones society to a college professor named Antony Sutton. Sutton reports that he didn’t understand exactly what the information was and it sat for almost two years before he looked through it again, and then noticed it read like a who’s who of the establishment. “Glancing through the sheets it was more than obvious— this was no ordinary group. The names spelled Power, with a capitol P. As I probed each individual a pattern emerged…and a formerly fuzzy world became crystal clear,” Sutton wrote. [57]

“After 16 books and 25 years in basic research I thought I’d heard it all…the world was a confused mess, probably beyond understanding and certainly beyond salvation—and there was little I could do about it.” Sutton admits that prior to his discovery about Skull and Bones, that the world’s events didn’t make sense and created what he called an insolvable puzzle. “Why did we build the Soviet Union, while we also transferred technology to Hitler’s Germany? Why does Washington want to conceal these facts? Why have we boosted Soviet military power? And simultaneously boosted our own?” he pondered.[58]

His book, *America's Secret Establishment: An Introduction to the Order of Skull and Bones* was originally published in 1983 and was the first book on the subject to come into print. In the preface to the 2002 edition, the author writes that his book, "has received little publicity, few reviews,—ignored by mainline distributors yet, it has sold steadily for the past 16 years at the rate of several hundred copies a month."

Antony Sutton was a Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University from 1968 to 1973. He is a former economics professor at California State University Los Angeles. He was born in London in 1925 and educated at the universities of London, Gottingen and California with a D.Sc degree from University of Southampton, England. He passed away in 2002 at the age of 77.

Sutton was not a Christian fundamentalist or a conspiracy theorist like many try to label those who are interested in subjects such as Skull and Bones or the Illuminati. His book is an entirely secular and scholarly approach to the subject. It includes reprints from old articles and pamphlets including one titled *The Fall of Skull and Bones*, which is a document detailing an illegal break-in by a rival secret society called the Order of the File and Claw, whose members broke into the Skull and Bones headquarters in 1876 for the purpose of investigating the club.

Another article reprinted in the book is one from the October 13, 1873 issue of *The Iconoclast*, which was a student newspaper that ran a story detailing the operations and dangers of the Skull and Bones society.

Sutton writes, "The activities of The Order are directed towards changing our society, changing the world, to bring about a New World Order. This will be a planned order with heavily restricted individual freedom, without Constitutional protection, without national boundaries or cultural distinction."[59]

"The selection procedure for new members of The Order has not changed since 1832. Each year 15, never more, never fewer, are selected. In the past 150 years about 2500 Yale graduates have been initiated into The Order. At any one time about 500-600 are alive and active. Roughly about one-quarter of these take an active role in furthering the objectives of The Order. The others either lose interest or change their minds. They are silent drop-outs. A Yale Junior cannot ask to join. There is no electioneering. Juniors are invited to join and are given two options: accept or reject. Apparently some amount of personal information is gathered on potential members.”[60]

“Entry into The Order is accompanied by an elaborate ritual and no doubt by psychological conditioning. For Example: Immediately on entering Bones the neophyte’s name is changed. He is no longer known by his name as it appears in the college catalog but like a monk or Knight of Malta or St. John, becomes Knight so and so. The old Knights are then known as Patriarch so and so. The outside world are known as Gentiles and vandals.”[61]

Through his research Sutton realized the extent of the Skull and Bones influence on society in their quest to build a New World Order. “The Order has either set up or penetrated just about every significant research, policy, opinion-making organization in the United States, in addition to the Church, business, law, government and politics. Not all at the same time, but persistently and consistently enough to dominate the direction of American society. The evolution of American society is not, and has not been for a century, a voluntary development reflecting individual opinion, ideas, and decisions at the grass roots. On the contrary, the broad direction has been created artificially and simulated by The Order.”[62]

It is impossible not to see striking similarities between the goals of the Bavarian Illuminati and those of Skull and Bones. Skull and Bones was founded in 1832 by William Huntington Russell and Alphonso Taft. Russell had returned from a trip to Germany immediately preceding his creation of Skull and Bones. This was also a short period of time after Adam Weishaupt had created the Illuminati in Germany, and it is no stretch of the imagination to think that Russell was granted permission and given instructions on how to expand the Illuminati in America. Many admit that this was in fact the case. Another piece of evidence supporting this is that the members of the File and Claw society who broke into the Skull and

Bones headquarters in 1876 reported that they saw a card placed in a frame and hung on a wall which read, “From the German Chapter. Presented by Patriarch D.C. Gilman of D. 50.”

Fleshing Out Skull and Bones

Another of the most comprehensive books ever written on the Skull and Bones society is *Fleshing Out Skull and Bones: Investigations into America’s Most Powerful Secret Society* which was edited by Kris Millegan. This 700 page book was published in 2004 and contains an array of photos, documents, and membership lists from this elite Illuminati branch.

Several authors including Webster Griffin Tarpley, Antony Sutton, Howard Altman, Dr. Ralph Bunch, and Anton Chaitkin have contributed to the book.

One of the documents printed in the book is a letter by Shirley Green, who was the acting press secretary to the Vice President in 1983 denying George Bush was a member of any “sordid secret society.” Someone had sent a letter to the White House inquiring about Bush 41’s membership in Skull and Bones, and Green had artfully dodged the issue by adding the word “sordid” in her denial. Both Bush 41 and his son George W. Bush have publicly admitted being members of the society and wouldn’t comment any further.

Some of the historical pictures printed in the book include photos of the Tomb (the group’s headquarters) and various Skull and Bones members sitting around a table which contains a real human skull. Such photos are taken each year with the new fifteen members.

Aside from simply being a history of the organization, *Fleshing Out Skull and Bones* contains various articles detailing the criminal activities of the network. Such activities include opium smuggling in the 1800s by the club’s founders, as well as modern narcotics trafficking that is done by Skull and Bones, as in the case of Barry Seal and the infamous Mena, Arkansas cocaine operation in the 1980s. (See The Clinton Chronicles page 281)

There are countless fascinating articles in the book, including discussions about the number 322 which is often used by the club as a sort of calling card or identifier. One analysis of the group's signature symbol, the skull and cross bones, shows that the organization is thoroughly interested in esoteric mysticism and the secret teachings of the ancient Mystery schools.

An article on page 413 explains, "The skull represented the Temple of Wisdom, which was later Christianized for concealment and referred to as the *upper room*. It is the room at the top of the 33 vertebra of the spine which represented the path to the upper room; the equivalent of the journey through life or the road to enlightenment. … The crossed bones represent the two pillars, which stand at the threshold to the pathway to the Temple of Wisdom. One bone represents Knowledge the other represents Understanding. This Temple of Wisdom is believed by the occultists to be the structure within which the human consciousness resides. When the neophyte becomes the *dweller at the Threshold*, he symbolically stands at the intersection of the crossed bones. If he chooses to pass through the threshold, he no longer resides only in the outer, material world; but he has become a dweller in a land of new consciousness to grow in self-awareness through Knowledge and Understanding. The neophyte symbolically dies or falls asleep to the outer world as the consciousness turns from outward concerns to inner concerns, knowing when he arrives at the Temple of Wisdom he will awaken or become resurrected to a new world order."[63]

Secrets of the Tomb

In 2002, *Secrets of the Tomb: Skull and Bones, the Ivy League, and the Hidden Paths to Power* was published by a Yale graduate and member of a similar but less powerful secret society, Scroll and Key, Alexandra Robbins. She was a former writer for *The New Yorker* and interviewed around one hundred Skull and Bones members for her book. She acknowledges that most of the people she approached declined to be interviewed, or even threatened her for investigating the organization.

Several years later during the build up to the 2004 presidential election, both the book, and Skull and Bones started getting news coverage by the mainstream media because both opposing candidates George W. Bush and John Kerry are members of the society. Most cable news shows had a brief segment about the issue and *60 Minutes* on CBS aired a short interview with Alexandra Robbins, but labeled the society a fraternity, and used past tense terminology falsely explaining that Bush and Kerry *were* members, while failing to identify that members aren't recruited until spring of their junior year and that the organization is geared towards the post graduate network that these individuals will enjoy.

Robbins' book is a short read of just over 200 pages, but doesn't compare to the depth and quality of the information found in *America's Secret Establishment* or *Fleshing Out Skull and Bones*, which will remain the authoritative works on the organization, its membership, philosophies, and goals.

Out of the one hundred members that granted Robbins an interview, it is safe to say that all of them were on the outer levels, or not even actively involved with the organization. Sutton and Millegan have identified that only one quarter of the members take an active interest in the goals and workings of the organization and form the inner circle which contains secrets and practices that less committed members are oblivious to.

One of the most interesting aspects of Robbins' book are the names of Skull and Bones members that George W. Bush placed into positions of power after he became president.

Alexandra Robbins explains, "Also like his father, George W. Bush has used his presidential power to reward his fellow Bonesmen. One of the first social gatherings (possibly the first gathering) George W. held at the White House after his inauguration was a reunion of his Skull and Bones clubmates…In February of 2003, the Senate approved Bush's nomination of William H. Donaldson (Bones 1953) as chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission. In November 2001, Bush appointed Edward McNally (Bones 1979) general counsel of the new federal Office of Homeland Security and a senior associate counsel to the president for national security."

“Frederick W. Smith (Bones 1966) was reportedly George W.’s top choice for secretary of defense until he withdrew from the running because of a heart problem. One of President Bush’s first appointments was 1968 Bones clubmate Robert D. McCallum, Jr., to the $125,700-per-year position of assistant attorney general, civil division, the largest litigation component in the Justice Department.”[64]

“Bush also nominated 1968 clubmate Roy Austin as ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago. His administration appointed Evan G. Galbraith (Bones 1950) as the secretary of defense’s representative in Europe and as the defense adviser to the U.S. mission to NATO. In addition, Bush announced the appointment of Victor Ashe—who in April 2001 was one of four mayors to attend a private meeting with Bush in the Oval Office before Bush spoke to a group of thirty-five mayors—to the board of directors of the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae), the country’s largest source of financing for home mortgages.”[65]

While Bush appointed so many of his fellow Skull and Bones members to such high positions, the mainstream media didn’t take notice. Every mainstream media outlet that bothered to mention that both Bush and Kerry are members of the organization, played it off like it was only a college fraternity for rich kids and nothing more.

September 11th 2001 Terrorist Attacks

The most credible and well known books written exposing the lies surrounding the September 11th attacks don’t mention the Illuminati or anything about secret societies. Its hard enough to understand that elements within the U.S. government would purposefully allow the country to be attacked, but after looking at the patterns of history and the evidence is pieced together, this is the only conclusion that makes any sense. Understanding the reality of the 9/11 attacks and the mechanisms involved in the event is one thing, but understanding the Illuminati’s existence and involvement is on a whole other level, which is the reason many authors who have written about 9/11 keep their discussion focused on specific government agencies, procedures, and events involved in the attacks.

David Ray Griffin has become the most prominent author of books which support the idea that the attacks were an inside job, and that elements of the U.S. government aided in the attacks and blocked investigations to ensure that they happened. His books *The New Pearl Harbor* and the *9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions* are two of his most popular works.

Another author whose book is just as powerful, if not more so, is that of Paul Thompson. His 590 page book *The Terror Timeline* details only mainstream news reports about inconsistencies and lies found in the version of events that has been parroted by the government and the 9/11 Commission which investigated the attacks.

Unlike Griffin and others, Thompson doesn't ever take the stance that the attacks were an inside job or that elements within intelligence agencies knew they were coming and aided in their execution. Rather, he just lays out all the clear and undeniable evidence complete with their sources and leaves it up to the reader to decide for themselves what actually happened. After looking over just a fraction of the evidence, the only reasonable conclusion one can come to is that, at a minimum, the attacks were purposefully allowed to happen as a pretext for the War on Terror, or that intelligence agencies aided in their execution. Thompson leaves himself out of that equation, something that has perhaps earned him a little more credibility within certain circles. The film *9/11 Press for Truth* which featured numerous widows including the "Jersey Girls" who were instrumental in getting the government to investigate the attacks, was largely based on Thompson's book and included interviews with him.

Over time a variety of credible people who had achieved prominent positions in various government offices, including CIA analyst Ray McGovern, former program director of Advanced Space Programs Development Lieutenant Colonel Bob Bowman, former German Minister of Technology Andreas von Buelow, as well as large numbers of firefighters, engineers, and architects came forward asking tough questions about the events of September 11th or concluded that the attacks were allowed to happen on purpose, or were aided by elements of the CIA and Mossad (Israel's intelligence agency) to advance a political agenda.

Some of the first individuals to come forward and make headlines was the former chief economist for the Department of Labor during George W. Bush’s first term, Morgan Reynolds, professor James Fetzer, and former British Intelligence agent David Shayler. All of them gave credibility to the idea that the 9/11 attacks were an inside job, and they were frequently referenced by individuals when trying to inform their family and friends about the truth behind the events. These three men would later change the topic of their focus to bizarre and fanciful theories which caused them to be shunned by almost all other researchers and individuals in the 9/11 Truth Movement.

Morgan Reynolds appeared on Fox News on September 10th 2006, one day before the fifth anniversary of 9/11, and started saying that the planes were cartoons and didn’t really exist, and that someone used computer graphics to insert them on television screens. James Fetzer would support Morgan in his new “research” and came up with his own new explanation of why the Twin Towers collapsed, which he proposed was the result of some kind of energy beam weapon. David Shayler, the former British Intelligence agent who was seen as one of the most credible in the 9/11 Truth Movement due to his credentials, later claimed that there were no planes that hit the World Trade Center, and that missiles were used in combination with three dimensional holograms which gave the appearance of jets. Soon after he began dispensing this theory, he also claimed to be the messiah.

While one might simply write them off as insane, another explanation is more fitting. The government frequently employs people to break up and discredit organizations it feels are a danger to its operations, and the most likely explanation is that these individuals were paid Illuminati operatives whose ridiculous claims are used to discredit the work of serious researchers. When the uninformed public is told about the lies, cover-ups, and inconsistencies in the government’s account of 9/11 from a concerned friend or family member, they can easily dismiss them because they had already heard about these “crazy conspiracy theories” on the news thanks to such people as Reynolds and Shayler. This tactic is known as “poisoning the well” and works by mixing in a small amount of fraudulent information with the facts, and then exposing the false information hence trying to debunk the entire group of claims that are attached to them.

Despite attempts by the Illuminati to focus attention on the disinformation agents and their ridiculous claims, more and more credible and legitimate politicians, military personnel, and scientists have publicly questioned the official account of events from that morning, or outright stated it was a false flag attack and key officials in the U.S. knew exactly what was coming our way and wanted it to jump-start the War on Terror and later invade Iraq.

The Creature from Jekyll Island

A book that is considered by many to be the definitive exposé on the Federal Reserve banking system is *The Creature from Jekyll Island*, which was first published in 1994 by G. Edward Griffin and has since been reprinted at least seventeen times due to continuous demand.

In 1972 Griffin produced a film titled *The Capitalist Conspiracy*, which presented the case that international bankers had taken control of the banking system and maintain their power by loaning money to governments at interest, a practice which was secured by the passing of the Federal Reserve Act in 1913 which created the Federal Reserve Banking System that remains in place to this day.

When one understands the circumstances surrounding the Federal Reserve Act of 1913, one understands why the title of Griffin's book is called *The Creature from Jekyll Island*. He explains, "The basic plan for the Federal Reserve System was drafted at a secret meeting held in November of 1910 at the private resort of J.P. Morgan on Jekyll Island off the coast of Georgia."[66]

Griffin goes on to explain how the creation of the private Federal Reserve Bank would eventually be the undoing of the gold standard, which meant that every dollar in circulation represented one dollar worth of gold. Once the gold standard was removed in 1971, money became fiat money and since the dollar is no longer backed by gold, the Federal Reserve can print as much of it as they desire to loan out to governments or other banks, thus increasing the money supply and inflation, which makes each dollar in circulation worth less and drives the cost of goods up.

"Fiat money is paper money without precious-metal backing and which people are required by law to accept. It allows politicians to increase spending without raising taxes. Fiat money is the cause of inflation, and the amount which people lose in purchasing power is exactly the amount which was taken from them and transferred to their government by this process. Inflation therefore is a hidden tax. This tax is the most unfair of all because it falls most heavily on those who are least able to pay: the small wage earner and those on fixed incomes. It also punishes the thrifty by eroding the value of their savings."[67]

If one is to truly understand the Illuminati and the New World Order, the history of money and banking must be studied. When one looks at the current financial system of private banks creating money out of nothing and loaning it to the people, as well as governments at interest, one begins to understand why a two income household is still barely able to make ends meet. One also begins to understand why so much secrecy went into creating the Federal Reserve system to begin with. The secretive money manipulation by the ancient Knights Templars is still being used today, only as society has advanced, so have the methods of the money changers. (See Economic Control page 37)

The Satanic Bible

The Satanic Bible was written by Anton LaVey and published in 1969, and is still widely available today in the occult section of bookstores around the world. The book is really just a way to introduce teenagers to the occult, and doesn't compare in any way to more sophisticated and esoteric satanic philosophy. The ideas presented within LaVey's book are basically social

Darwinsistic and encourage one to simply do whatever he wants and to not worry about social norms or moral codes of conduct.

It is bizarre that many supporters of *The Satanic Bible* claim to be Satanists while at the same time saying they are atheists. They say they use the symbol of Satan because it represents rebellion and a challenge to authority. Thus, many “Satanists” will say that Satanists don’t worship Satan, and are simply atheists. To clarify this, a distinction should be drawn between a Satanist, and a “LaVeyan Satanist.” LaVey’s view of atheistic Satanism has created some confusion among those not familiar with the occult or the differences between atheistic Satanism and theistic Satanism. Like Luciferians, theistic Satanists believe in, and worship Satan as a supernatural being or a god, while atheistic Satanists simply adopt the name as a form of social protest.

So when a supposed “Satanist” calls themselves a Satanist, but says they don’t worship Satan and are really an atheist, their limited understanding of satanism becomes clear. They often will not distinguish a LaVeyan Satanist from a plain Satanist (a theistic Satanist). Atheistic LaVeyan Satanists are also frequently unaware that Satanism in another form exists, and they think that all “Satanists” are atheists who have read Anton LaVey’s book.

It is odd that LaVey and his followers deny that God exists and profess to be atheist while using the label of a Satanist, but what is even more perplexing is the fact that in his authorized biography, *The Secret Life of a Satanist*, he talks at length about placing curses on people and believed that he had supernatural powers. LaVey actually prayed to Satan on one occasion hoping that he would heal a wounded child of his friend Jane Mansfield.[68] Many consider this hypocritical contradiction of atheistic Satanists to be foolish, but somehow such incompatible beliefs haven’t spurred LaVeyan Satanists to re-examine their “faith.”

Several years before *The Satanic Bible* was published, LaVey created the Church of Satan in San Francisco which consisted of parties, lectures, and satanic rituals which were held in his home. LaVey remained High Priest of the organization until his death in 1997 at the age of 67. His second wife, Blanch Barton, later wrote his authorized biography. LaVey has two daughters, Zeena and Karla, both of who were involved with the Church of Satan, and practicing Satanists themselves. He also has a son named Xerxes, who was born in 1993. The current High Priest, Peter H. Gilmore describes the Church as follows:

“The organization is a cabal, a shadowy, underground network of like-minded individuals who work to lever against the inertia of the world, towards ends favorable to Satanism. Dr. LaVey[69] used Orwell’s 1984 as a model for a cell-system in which each member didn’t have awareness of exactly who else might be involved.”[70]

The Church of Satan promotes claims that every individual can be their own god and doesn’t need to worry about sin or breaking any of society’s rules, because a Satanist lives by their own rules. Satan is used as a symbol and metaphor rather than the name of the actual god or fallen angel, following in line with the philosophies of *The Satanic Bible*.

LaVey was instrumental in modernizing Satanism and bringing it public in the 1960s. When *The Satanic Bible* was released in 1969, three years after the Church of Satan was founded, they had claimed a membership of more than 10,000.[71]

Unlike ordinary Churches, the Church of Satan does not have tax-exempt status, and unlike other satanic organizations such as the Skull and Bones society, or Illuminati hierarchies like the Freemasons, the Church of Satan is largely for social misfits who have no power or influence in society and who feel compelled to denounce morality and social standards and find satisfaction in calling themselves “Satanists,” because of the rebellious connotations.

The Book of the Law

The infamous 20th century Satanist Aleister Crowley published a book in 1904 titled *The Book of the Law* which he claimed was dictated to him by a demon who temporarily possessed his wife when they were visiting Egypt. Crowley claims he didn't write the book, and that he simply wrote down what the demon had told him. This book is where the satanic saying 'Do what thou wilt' comes from, which means to do whatever you want, and don't worry about how your actions affect others, and that you are the only one that matters in this world.

The Book of the Law is used as the bible at the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) (*Order of the Temple of the East*, or the *Order of Oriental Templars)*, an international satanic secret society which continues to exist in the shadows of society today.

Some occult and satanic defenders claim that Anton LaVey or Aleister Crowley's writings don't encourage or condone violence towards others, and that they are just a path to enlightenment and personal fulfillment. When one actually reads the works of such authors, these defenses prove to be blatant lies.

On page 31 of the *Book of the Law*, it reads, "Compassion is the vice of kings : stamp down the wretched & the weak : this is the law of the strong : this is our law and the joy of the world…Now let it be understood: If the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy forever."

On page 40 of the book it instructs the reader to, "Worship me with fire & blood; worship me with swords & with spears. Let the woman be girt with a sword before me: let blood flow to my name. Trample down the Heathen; be upon them, o warrior, I will give you of their flesh to eat! Sacrifice cattle, little and big : after a child."

The book continues on the following page to read, "Mercy let be off : damn them who pity! Kill and torture; spare not; be upon them! The Best blood is of the moon, monthly: then the fresh blood of a child, or dropping from the host of heaven: then of enemies; then of the priest or of the worshipers: last of some beast, no matter what."[72]

Finally, Crowley (or the demon who allegedly dictated the book to him) shows his utter hatred for Jesus saying, “I am in a secret fourfold word, the blasphemy against all gods of men. Curse them! Curse them! Curse them! With my Hawk’s head I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross.”[73]

Crowley’s brutal philosophy gets even more sadistic in another of his books titled *Magick: In Theory and Practice*.

Magick: In Theory and Practice

In his 1929 book, *Magick: In Theory and Practice*, Aleister Crowley wrote some very unsettling instructions for black magic rituals. He and other so-called magicians used the spelling “magick” with a “k” on the end. In the chapter titled “Of the Bloody Sacrifice” on page 95 and 96, Crowley wrote, “But the bloody sacrifice, though more dangerous, is more efficacious; and for nearly all purposes human sacrifice is the best…The animal should therefore be killed within the Circle, or the Triangle, as the case may be, so that its energy cannot escape. An animal should be selected whose nature accords with that of the ceremony—thus, by sacrificing a female lamb one would not obtain any appreciate quantity of the fierce energy useful to a Magician who was invoking Mars. In such case a ram would be more suitable. And this ram should be virgin—the whole potential of its original total energy should not have been diminished in any way.”

“For the highest spiritual working one must accordingly choose that victim which contains the greatest and purest force. A male child of perfect innocence and high intelligence is the most satisfactory and suitable victim.”

Crowley himself was a degenerate bisexual heroin addict and enjoyed participating in the most horrific and disgusting practices imaginable. Shortly before the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini had him deported, rumors spread that Crowley once had his lover Leah Hirsig have sex with a goat, which he sacrificed afterward. Hirsig then had a nervous breakdown and their child died soon afterward. L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of

Scientology was friends with Aleister Crowley, and in an audio clip available on the Internet he called him his “very good friend.”

The Secret Doctrine

In 1888 a two volume set titled *The Secret Doctrine* was released by a Russian mystic named Helena Blavatsky. The book would turn out to be one of Adolf Hitler’s favorites and he reportedly kept of copy next to his bed. Aside from writing that the Fall of Man was a spiritual evolution towards godhood, Helena Blavatsky explains the mystical significance of the swastika, and of course, Satan. This book sits in the occult or New Age section of most bookstores.

Blavatsky repeats the common belief that the real mystical secrets regarding the powers of God and the origin of the earth and human race are being kept a secret within the Illuminati. “For no one, not even the greatest living adept, would be permitted to, or could—even if he would—give out promiscuously, to a mocking, unbelieving world, that which has been so effectually concealed from it for long eons and ages.”[74]

While most other writings of Illuminati supporters will only make veiled references to Satan, Blavatsky’s book has quite a bit to say on the subject, and openly presents the case that Satan is a hero and a teacher, and that the Christian Church is responsible for spreading lies about him.

“It was left with the early and ignorant Christian fathers to degrade the philosophical and highly scientific emblem (the Dragon) into the absurd superstition called the Devil.”[75]

When this author (Mark Dice) had first begun researching the Illuminati and the occult, I had read some of these quotes posted on various websites but doubted their authenticity. It was only after purchasing the two-volume set and reading it for myself that I realized such quotes were authentic. The following quotes were read directly out of the copy that I own, and were typed by the same hands typing these words as I sat with the book in front of me.

“Thus Lucifer—the spirit of Intellectual Enlightenment and Freedom of Thought—is metaphorically the guiding beacon, which helps man to find his way through the rocks and sand banks of Life, for Lucifer is the Logos in his highest.”[76]

“Blessed and sanctifies is the name of the Angel of Havas—Satan.”[77]

“Satan will now be shown, in the teaching of the Secret Doctrine, allegorized as Good, and Sacrifice, a God of Wisdom.”[78]

“It is the Lord God, evidently, who was the real cause of all the mischief, the “agent provocateur,” and the Serpent—only a prototype of Azazel, “the scapegoat for the sin of (the God of) Israel,” the poor Tragos having to pay the penalty for his Master’s and Creator’s blunder.”[79]

“But in antiquity and reality, Lucifer, or Luciferus, is the name of the angelic Entity presiding over the light of truth as over the light of the day.”[80]

“Lucifer is divine and terrestrial light, the “Holy Ghost” and “Satan,” at one and the same time, visible Space being truly filled with differentiated Breath invisibly; and the Astral Light, the manifested efforts of two who are one, guided and attracted by ourselves, is the karma of humanity, both a personal and impersonal entity…The Fall was the result of man’s knowledge, for his “eyes were opened.” Indeed, he was taught Wisdom and the hidden knowledge by the “Fallen Angel”…And now it stand proven that Satan, or the Red Fiery Dragon, the “lord of Phosphorus” (brimstone was a theological improvement), and Lucifer, or “Light-Bearer,” is in us: it is our Mind—our tempter and Redeemer, our intelligent liberator and Savior from pure animalism…Without this quickening spirit, or human Mind or soul, there would be no difference between man and beast.”[81]

The Externalization of the Hierarchy

Alice Bailey was a mystic from the 1900’s who worked as a spiritual and occult writer and teacher. A primary source of publishing and promoting such literature is found with the creation of Lucis Trust, originally named Lucifer’s Trust in 1922 when it was founded. Lucis Trust (also called Lucis Publishing) continues to publish the numerous books written by Alice Bailey. Their headquarters is located at 120 Wall Street, New York, NY 10005, just blocks from the New York Stock Exchange. Anyone who knows anything about commercial real estate knows that the rent on such a prime property is astronomical, and the fact that such a little known New Age publisher is able to afford such absorbent costs is extremely suspicious.

One of Alice Bailey’s most popular books is *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* which outlines detailed plans the Illuminati has for taking over the world and is likely mandatory reading for all high level Skull and Bones members, Freemasons, and young Illuminati recruits.

Let me just say that this author (Mark Dice) owns this book and the following quotes that I am going to list were not copied and pasted from some random website, but were in fact typed by me as I read them directly from the book which I own. To the researcher who wants to gain a fuller understanding about the Illuminati and their beliefs and their plans, may I suggest that you do not go and purchase books like *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* because it is not necessary to financially support such authors and publishers. Within *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction*, and my previous book, *The Resistance Manifesto*, one will find enough information and documentation to gain a complete understanding of such issues.

Many of the books that I purchased in the course of my research, I was fortunate enough to find at an obscure used bookstore and obtained them for just a few dollars each, which brought money in for the bookshop owner, and not the New Age publishers who sell to Barnes and Noble or Amazon.com. With that said, several of the most telling quotes from *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* follow.

"Esoterically speaking, a point of contact, a moment of "spiritual intercourse," is imminent, and *out of that moment a new world can be born*…If this spiritual contact can be brought about, it means that the Hierarchy will no longer be hidden and unknown, but will be recognized as present upon the physical plane…Increasingly the new group of world servers will be active in every nation and found functioning throughout the entire world."[82]

On page 107 of *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, Alice Bailey point blank says the ruler of planet Earth will be Lucifer once the Hierarchy's plans are completed.

Bailey explains that the secret hierarchy is working towards creating a new religion, saying, "It has therefore become possible to synchronize the Approach of the divine to the human and to instruct the masses of men in the technique of thus invoking the Approach. This attitude of humanity will lead to a new revelation, to the new world religion and to new attitudes in the relation of man to God (religion) and of man to man (government or social relationships)."[83]

She goes on to admit that while the secret hierarchy does in fact exist, it is denied by the masses, and she admits that some who know of it are dedicated to resisting it. She writes, "The fact of the existence of the Hierarchy is consciously recognized by hundreds of thousands today, though still denied by the orthodox; the general public are familiar with the idea of the existence of the Masters, and either gullibly accept the mass of futile and idiotic information handed out by many today or fight furiously against the spread of this teaching."[84]

She insists that resistance is futile because, "So many know the truth today; so many people of integrity and worth are cooperating consciously with Members of this Hierarchy that the very foundations of the ecclesiastical antagonism and the belittling comments of the concrete minded are of no avail."[85]

She even admits that there are secret Illuminati agents who are working within Christian Churches in order to prepare the way for the brotherhood's plans. "There will be the invocative work of the masses of the people, trained by the spiritually minded people of the world (working in the churches, whenever possible, under an enlightened clergy) to accept the fact of the approaching spiritual energies, focused through the spiritual Hierarchy…This work, when rightly carried forward, will evoke response from the waiting Hierarchy; through this response, the belief of the masses will gradually be changed into the conviction of the knower. In this way humanity will be transformed and spiritualized."[86]

Bailey, like many others also confirms that Freemasonry is at the heart of the Illuminati, explaining, "There is no dissociation between the One Universal Church, the sacred inner Lodge of all true Masons, and the innermost circles of the esoteric societies…It must not be forgotten that only those souls who are on the Probationary Path or the Path of Discipleship will form the nucleus of the coming new world religion."[87]

"The *Masonic Movement* when it can be divorced from politics and social ends and from its present paralyzing condition of inertia, will meet the need of those who can, and should wield power. It is the custodian of the law; it is the home of the Mysteries and the seat of initiation. It holds its symbolism the ritual of Deity, and the way of salvation is pictorially preserved in its work. The methods of Deity are demonstrated in its temples, and under the All-seeing Eye the work can go forward. It is a far more occult organization than can be realized, and is intended to be the training school for the coming advanced occultists. In its ceremonials lies hid the wielding of the forces connected with the growth and life of the kingdoms of nature and the unfoldment of the divine aspects in man."[88]

Bailey describes the extent to which the Illuminati has infiltrated society, saying, "they will appear in office of some kind or another; they will be the current politicians, business men, financiers, religious teachers or churchmen; they will be scientists and philosophers, college professors and educators; they will be the mayors of cities and the custodians of all public ethical movements. The spiritual forcefulness of their lives, their clear, pure wisdom, the sanity and the modern acceptableness of the proposed measures in any department in which they choose to function, will be so convincing that little impediment will be set in the way of their undertakings."[89]

Near the end of the book, Bailey brags that the Illuminati secretly shapes the very fabric of civilization. "The Hierarchy directs and controls, more than is realized, the unfolding cyclic cultures and their resultant civilizations. These can then provide adequate forms, temporarily useful for the emerging soul of humanity. The format of cultures and civilizations receives special attention."[90]

It's important to note that these are not just the ramblings of a New Age guru who is simply imagining that such things are underway. Somehow the Lucis Publishing company is able to afford real estate on Wall Street, and the small revenues which are taken in from book sales wouldn't even be able to pay a fraction of these costs. Lucis Publishing is either given huge donations in the range of millions of dollars, or is involved in other unknown business ventures which allow it to operate and maintain its prestigious location.

However it financially sustains itself, it continues to publish books such as *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* which is hidden in plain view and contains large portions of the Illuminati's goals for a New World Order and an Illuminati Christ to rule the earth as a supernatural king.

Codex Magica

One of the greatest modern resources for photographic evidence about the Illuminati is Texe Marrs' 620 page book *Codex Magica* which was published in 2005. Texe has compiled hundreds of photographs of Masonic handshakes, Illuminati symbols, occult illustrations and more. *Codex Magica* is the size of a large phonebook. Two years after its initial publication, Texe released a similar follow-up book focusing specifically on monuments and buildings called *Mysterious Monuments*.

Texe writes, “Why do the Illuminati do what they do? After many years of research and investigation into their behavior and conduct, and understanding their goals and ambition, I am persuaded these men fit the definition of psychopathic personalities. They are psychopaths and as such they are afflicted with the dangerous malady called megalomania.”[91]

“In sum, the psychopath possesses a clear perception of reality—he knows full well what he’s doing—but he refuses to abide by society’s morals. Instead, he pursues personal gratification in such things as criminal acts, drug addiction and sexual perversion. Combined with feelings of megalomania, the psychopath has visions of his own omnipotence—he thinks he is a god—and has delusions of grandeur. Since he is persuaded he is divine and not bound by the rules that apply to other, less godly beings, the psychopath is a dangerous person indeed.”[92]

Texe is one of the most reliable authors whose works have exposed the Illuminati, their symbols, philosophies, and goals. Within Texe’s work there is little to no speculation or exaggeration of claims, and his work is always meticulously documented with sources and references. Where some other authors simply make claims and cite alleged quotes from occult books, Texe’s bibliographies provide the reader with original sources, of which almost all are from mainstream publications and political or Masonic authors own books.

Interestingly, Texe is the pastor who performed the wedding ceremony of radio host and film maker Alex Jones and his wife Violet. Both Texe and Alex Jones live in Austin, Texas.

Jim Tucker’s Bilderberg Diary

In 2005 Jim Tucker finally published his long awaited *Bilderberg Diary*, recounting 25 years of his investigations into the ultra-elite and secret Bilderberg group. This book and Daniel Estulin’s *True Story of the Bilderberg Group* are the two most credible books that will ever be written on the subject. Since Tucker discovered the Bilderberg group in the 1970s, he has made it his life’s mission to infiltrate and report on the group’s annual conference. Anyone who wants to fully understand the Bilderberg group and their accomplishments should avoid scouring the Internet for random information without sources, and instead just read one of these two books.

Tucker's Diary begins with a brief description and history of the Bilderberg group, and then each following chapter chronicles year after year where the meetings are held, who has attended them, and what was discussed.

The book reads, "The Bilderberg group is an organization of political leaders and international financiers that meets secretly every spring to make global policy. There are about 110 regulars—Rockefellers, Rothschilds, bankers, heads of international corporations and high government officials from Europe and North America. Each year, a few new people are invited and, if found useful, they return to future meetings. If not, they are discarded. Decisions reached at these secret meetings affect every American and much of the world."[93]

While some reporters and so-called whistle blowers who attempt to expose the Illuminati or New World Order operations mix fact with fiction in order to create a buzz with the hopes of selling books and lectures, Jim Trucker is the real deal. He is a legitimate journalist whose work is practically flawless. Someone new to this kind of information may find it hard to believe the Bilderberg group exists, and consists of such powerful and well known men, but Tucker's information has been verified by other qualified researchers, and there is no doubt among those who follow New World Order news that Jim Tucker's Bilderberg research is truthful and he has the best intentions.

British journalist Jon Ronson chronicled Jim Tucker's investigation of the 1999 Bilderberg meeting which took place at the Hotel Caesar Park in Sintra, Portugal. Ronson was skeptical and appeared to even ridicule Tucker but was later shocked to find limos and private cars arriving at the hotel and was able to identify several influential people who were in attendance. Video of his time with Tucker can be seen in the Bilderberg segment of his *Secret Rulers of the World* series.

Tucker is also featured in Alex Jones 2007 film *Endgame: Blueprint for Global Enslavement* where Tucker, Jones, and others tracked the Bilderberg group to Ottawa, Canada and were able to get clear photographs and video footage of many of the high profile guests arriving as they stepped out of their limos at the entrance of the Brookstreet Hotel. Several individuals spotted were Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, David Rockefeller, Richard Hass who is the president of the Council on Foreign Relations, Henry Kissinger, and others.

An anonymous source from within the Bilderberg group has secretly provided Tucker with attendee lists and talking points for several years. Tucker has also reported that he has paid staff and waiters at the hotels where the conference is held to listen closely to conversations and later inform him what they overheard.

Despite the Bilderberg group meeting annually every year since 1954, virtually no news coverage is given to the event. Year after year the most powerful politicians, business men, royalty and media moguls meet for several days of secret talks, yet it is never covered on television or in print. This shows how much control the group has over the media, particularly in America. Operation Mockingbird has been extremely effective in preventing any reporters from covering the event. Many attendees of Bilderberg meetings are owners and CEOs of major newspapers and television studios.

Many Bilderberg attendees may also be in violation of the Logan Act which is a United States federal law that prohibits unauthorized citizens from negotiating with foreign governments. The law was passed in 1799 and is still in effect today. A violation of the Logan Act is a felony and punishable with imprisonment. Similar violations likely occur annually at the Bohemian Grove, as well. (See Dark Secrets: Inside Bohemian Grove page 269)

The True Story of the Bilderberg Group

Continuing on the trail that Jim Tucker had blazed exposing the Bilderberg group is Daniel Estulin, who next to Jim Tucker, is seen as the world’s foremost expert on the organization. Estulin has been doing his own investigations into the club and wrote *The True Story of the Bilderberg Group*, which has been translated into twenty four languages and became an international bestseller.

Estulin explains how he got involved in investigating the Bilderberg group, “I’m a Russian ex-patriot who was kicked out of the Soviet Union in 1980. My father was a dissident who fought for freedom of speech who was jailed, and tortured by the KGB. When these people got tired of us they threw us out. We moved to Canada and 12 years ago I came to Spain. My grandfather was a colonel in the KGB and the counter-intelligence in the 1950s, so I am privileged somewhat to get a lot of the information from the secret service which are our best sources of information. Not only the KGB people but the MI-6 people, the CIA because most of the people who work for the secret service as you probably know are patriots and they love their country and they’re doing it for the good of the nation and they’re the first ones absolutely terrified of the plans of the Bilderbergers.”[94]

Estulin’s writing is extremely accurate. He refrains from speculation or theorizing about the activities of the organization, and instead asks compelling questions and documents the facts. He writes, “Any modern democratic system protects the right to privacy, but doesn’t the public have a right to know what their political leaders are talking about when they meet the wealthiest business leaders of their respective countries? What guarantees do citizens have that the Bilderberg Group isn’t merely a center for influence trafficking and lobbying if they aren’t allowed to know what their representatives talk about at the Group’s secret gatherings? Why are the Davos World Economic Forums and G8 meetings discussed in every newspaper, given front-page coverage, with thousands of journalists in attendance, while no one covers Bilderberg Group meetings?”[95]

“We are at a crossroads. And the roads we take from here will determine the very future of humanity. We have to wake up to the true objectives and actions of the Bilderberg Group and its parallel kin if we hope to retain the freedoms fought for by our grandfathers in World War II.”

“It’s not up to God to bring us back from the “New Dark Age” planned for us. It is up to us! Whether we emerge from this century as an electronic global police state or as free human beings *depends on the actions we take now.*”[96]

Like Jim Tucker, Estulin is featured in Alex Jones’ 2007 documentary film *Endgame: Blueprint for Global Enslavement*, which documents their investigations into the Bilderberg group as they track them to the Brookstreet Hotel in Ottawa, Canada in 2006 and capture members on video as they enter the hotel under enhanced security.

In December 2007, Estulin reported that elite members of the Bilderberg group had discussed the effects of having Congressman Ron Paul assassinated. Estulin emphasized that his source said they were not planning to do it at the time, but were openly discussing it as a possibility, and were trying to determine whether it would be an effective strategy to silence the Congressman.

Ron Paul is known for speaking out about the Federal Reserve system and for publicly chastising Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke on live television regarding the monetary policies of the bank. Paul ran for president on the Republican ticket for the 2008 election, but did not win the Republican nomination. He revitalized true conservatives who want a return to sound monetary principles, the end of big government, and a non-intervention foreign policy. Paul is one of the few, if not only Congressman who has no strings attached to him by special interest groups or the Illuminati, and by him speaking to a national audience about what was really happening in the country, he was a tremendous thorn in the side of the Bilderberg group and posed a danger to them by exposing their actions.

Daniel Estulin and his family have received death threats and worse as a result of his investigations into the Bilderberg group.

The Search for the Manchurian Candidate

While some may be familiar with the fictional film titled *The Manchurian Candidate* about a secret government program that experimented on soldiers using brainwashing and mind control techniques, what many do not know is there is a non-fiction book that was released in 1979 which details the actual existence of such programs and the horrendous crimes and abuse that were committed during those experiments.

John D. Marks, a former State Department Officer wrote *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate: The CIA and Mind Control,* based off of thousands of newly released documents, behavioral science studies, as well as interviews with victims.

His findings are disturbing, not only because of the goals of such programs, but the inhumane and unethical ways that such experiments were carried out. The MK-ULTRA program was an umbrella name for these kinds of experiments, which often involved hallucinogenic drugs, hypnotism, and torture.

While the existence of MK-ULTRA was admitted by the government, the official stance on the program is that it was abandoned and is no longer in operation. It doesn’t even take a skeptic to think that such statements are false, and in reality identical programs have secretly continued operating with extra safety measures taken to prevent their exposure from happening again.

Marks explains, “This book has grown out of the 16,000 pages of documents that the CIA released to me under the Freedom of Information Act. Without these documents, the best investigative reporting in the world could not have produced a book, and the secrets of the CIA mind-control work would have remained buried forever, as the men who knew them had always intended. From the documentary base, I was able to expand my knowledge through interviews and readings in the behavioral sciences. Nevertheless, the final result is not the whole story of the CIA’s attack on the mind. Only a few insiders could have written that, and they choose to remain silent. I have done the best I can to make the book as accurate as possible, but I have been hampered by the refusal of most of the principle characters to be interviewed and by the CIA’s destruction in 1973 of many of the key documents.”[97]

The Search for the Manchurian Candidate covers the evolution of the CIA's sinister experiments beginning in the 1950s. Unknowing subjects were often given powerful hallucinogenic drugs including LSD, so the CIA could learn of the effects. One man, Dr. Frank Olson ended up committing suicide by jumping out of a ten story building in 1953. Olson worked as a chemist with the U.S. Army and it wasn't until decades later that his widow and family learned the true circumstances surrounding his death. The CIA had hoped that they could develop various techniques that could be used to extract information from people, as well as "program" them to be assassins. The ultimate goal of MK-ULTRA was to use a combination of drugs and hypnosis to transform any person the CIA desired into an assassin who would carry out any orders they were given, regardless of the consequences.

In his book, John D. Marks explains one such experiment. "On February 19, 1954, Morse Allen simulated the ultimate experiment in hypnosis: the creation of a "Manchurian Candidate," or programmed assassin. Allen's "victim" was a secretary whom he put into a deep trance and told to keep sleeping until he ordered otherwise. He then hypnotized a second secretary and told her that if she could not wake up her friend, "her rage would be so great that she would not hesitate to kill." Allen left a pistol nearby, which the secretary had no way of knowing was unloaded. Even though she had earlier expressed a fear of fire-arms of any kind, she picked up the gun and "shot" her sleeping friend. After Allen brought the "killer" out of her trance, she had apparent amnesia for the event, denying she would ever shoot anyone."[98]

Anyone who knows anything about hypnotism knows that it is actual science and has very real applications. Many people are also aware of post-hypnotic suggestions which involve using a word or phrase to put a person back into a hypnotic trance days or weeks after they had been originally hypnotized. Using post-hypnotic suggestions, a person can be fully conscious and going about their day when a key word or phrase is uttered out loud, and when they hear that word or phrase, they will automatically respond with whatever command they were given when they were originally hypnotized.

Anyone who has ever seen a stage hypnotist perform knows how easily someone under hypnosis can be manipulated. People see things that aren’t there, they hear things they are told to hear, and they can be tricked into believing or doing practically anything. It is no wonder the CIA experimented to harness this amazing power.

One of the key figures involved in MK-ULTRA was Dr. Ewen Cameron who worked at the Allan Memorial Hospital in Canada where many of the experiments took place. With such sinister activities, one would suspect that the Illuminati had their hand in the program, and one would be correct. The Rockefeller Foundation had donated money to set up this psychiatric facility at the McGill University Healthcare Center which operated the Allan Memorial Institute.

The Reappearance of the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom

In 1982 a man named Benjamin Crème began running advertisements in newspapers around the world which read “The Christ is now here” and claimed he would soon announce himself to the world on an international television broadcast. Crème refers to this “Christ” as Maitreya, which he says is the long awaited messiah and world teacher that all religions have been waiting for. He says this man is the “Avatar for the Aquarian Age.”

Crème describes in his book, *The Reappearance of the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom*, “This will lead to the Day of Declaration, when He will appear on the radio and television networks of the world linked by satellite. On that day Maitreya will mentally overshadow the whole of humanity simultaneously. All will hear His words inwardly in their own language. This telepathic communication will reach everyone, not only those watching or listening, and hundreds of thousands of miraculous healings will take place throughout the world. On that day, there will be no doubt that Maitreya is the Christ, the Imam Mahdi, Maitreya Buddha, Kalki Avatar: the World Teacher. His open worldwide mission will have begun.”[99]

While some may dismiss Crème’s predictions as the rantings of a lunatic, upon a closer examination it becomes clear that Crème casually confirms the suspicions of those who point the finger at Freemasonry as being involved in the creation of the New World Order and working in conjunction with the Illuminati. He writes, “The new religion will manifest, for instance, through organizations like Masonry. In Freemasonry is embedded the core or secret heart of the occult Mysteries—wrapped in number, metaphor and symbol.”[100]

Crème also reveals he understands the forces behind Communalism saying, “Marx was indeed a member of the Hierarchy, of a certain degree. Looking at the effect of his work over the years — that could only have been the work of a disciple of some degree, an initiate of some level: first to have the vision, and secondly to have the capacity to embody that vision so that the work could spread.”[101]

While most who point out such connections do so to help others understand the larger forces behind Communism, such as the international banks, and expose such connections with hopes of preventing the banking cartels from creating their one world financial system, Crème does so by praising those behind such actions. Let’s be clear that it is no conspiracy theory that Karl Marx was working for a secret organization when he wrote *The Communist Manifesto*. In the preface to the 1872 German edition it is made clear that Marx and Engels were chosen basically as secretaries to write and publish the manifesto.

It reads, “The Communist League (formerly called the “League of Just Men”)…which could of course only be a secret one…commissioned the undersigned [Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels], at the Congress held in London in November 1847, to draw up for publication a detailed theoretical and practical program of the Party. Such was the origin of the following Manifesto, the manuscript of which traveled to London to be printed, a few weeks before the February Revolution.”

Crème’s claims of the coming mystical Christ were enthusiastically received within many New Age circles, but as more time went by and Maitreya didn’t appear, Crème’s supporters began to dwindle.

It remains unclear what connections if any Crème has with the Illuminati. It is possible that his writings and lectures are just those of a man who supports such ideas, but the enormous amounts of money that Crème has spent by taking out newspaper ads and posting billboards should make one take a closer look at Benjamin Crème and his connections.

It should be clear that Crème was not referring to Jesus as the Christ who would appear, but instead a leader that would come forth from the secret hierarchy of the Illuminati who have been working behind the veil of secrecy to prepare for this “leader’s” arrival.

The Franklin Cover-Up

The most disgusting and disturbing book ever written is possibly *The Franklin Cover-Up* which was first published in 1992 and later released with revisions in 2005. The book was written by former Nebraska Senator John DeCamp, and uncovers a scandal so large and perverted, that most people simply do not want to hear about it, let alone believe it actually happened.

The Franklin Cover-Up began with the Franklin Community Federal Credit Union in Omaha, Nebraska which had thirty-eight million dollars embezzled from it by its manager Laurence E. King. As the investigation proceeded, it was learned that those involved in siphoning millions from the credit union were involved in far more sinister activities. It turns out that the money was being used by Laurence E. King to pay off politicians and to operate a child pornography and prostitution ring. As if this wasn’t bad enough, allegations of kidnapping, snuff films, and government mind control experiments would also haunt those connected to the case.

While money laundering, organized crime, bribes, and illegal businesses are common in politics, we will briefly go over some of the darker and more unique aspects of this case.

One of the central victims of this scandal was a boy named Paul Bonacci who gave investigators unsettling details about his involvement in child pornography and aiding in kidnapping other children who would be sold into sex slavery. Besides being involved in such unthinkable acts, the story gets even stranger and more unsettling. Bonacci told his lawyer that at one time when he was involved in such activities he was taken into a forest in Northern California which contained a huge moss covered statue that looked like an owl, and that men wearing robes performed some kind of ceremony there. This was around 1984, he says.

Later, after the Franklin credit scandal began to unfold, Bonacci drove with his lawyer, John DeCamp, to the place he said this occurred. Bonacci had navigated to a place which turned out to be the entrance of the Bohemian Grove. (See Dark Secrets: Inside Bohemian Grove page 269) At the time, John DeCamp had no idea that each summer a human sacrifice type of ritual was performed in the club by men wearing colored robes, and that Bonacci was describing Moloch, the 40 foot tall stone idol which is the focus of such ritual. All DeCamp knew at the time was that Bonacci had lead him to the club and said that was where he was taken. Later, other children would identify the Bohemian Grove as the place they were taken and sexually abused as well.

Bonacci says that when he was inside this campground in 1984 (later identified as the Bohemian Grove), he was forced to participate in child pornography videos. As he participated in these videos he was allegedly an eyewitness to the rape and ritualistic murder of another young boy there who he was forced to have sex with on video. In Bonacci's own words in his journal he wrote "After that the men grabbed Nicholas and drug him off screaming. They put me up against a tree and put a gun to my head but fired into the air. I heard another shot from somewhere and then saw the man who killed the boy drag him like a toy. Everything including when the men put the boy in the trunk was filmed. The men took me with them and we went up in a plane. I saw the bag the boy was in. We went over a very thick brush area with a clearing in it. Over the clearing they dropped the boy. One said the men with the hoods would take care of the body for them."

Furthermore, Bonacci says that a man named "Hunter Thompson" was the one who took video of this entire ordeal. Later, a man named Rusty Nelson, who was connected to the Franklin Cover-Up claimed that Hunter S. Thompson, the famous gonzo journalist offered him

$100,000 to produce a snuff film when the two had met at a party.[102] (See Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas page 318) Rusty Nelson was the personal photographer for Lawrence E. King, the key perpetrator in the Franklin Cover-Up. Nelson admits that it was his job to secretly take photos of people who attended King's parties when they were in "compromising positions with children." Nelson denies taking any pornographic photos, but does admit that he would often witness and photograph grown men "making out with boys." The men who attended these parties were often politicians who King would then blackmail with the photos.

Senator DeCamp left out details of the gigantic owl statue in the forest and men in robes in the initial printing of his book because at the time he thought it was, "too far-fetched for people to believe." At the time Bonacci's testimony was recorded by DeCamp, he was unaware of Bohemian Grove, the activities surrounding an owl statue, and the mysterious rituals that were performed inside. Only in the passing years did Senator DeCamp learn about the details of Bohemian Grove and the chilling revelations of the moss covered idol in the redwood forest of Sonoma County California. The revised edition of DeCamp's book includes all the information about Paul Bonacci's alleged horrendous experiences in the Bohemian Grove.

The former head of the CIA, Bill Colby, told DeCamp to forget everything he knew and to, "Get as far away from this thing as you can. Forget you ever saw it or know it, heard it or anything else."[103] He also said that there were forces too dark for DeCamp to handle. Only after saying he couldn't walk away, did Colby tell DeCamp he better get his story out before the perpetrators would have him murdered. He then wrote and published his book, *The Franklin Cover-Up*.

On April 27, 1996 Colby died in what was called a canoeing accident. The incident happened at night which is strange, because Colby wouldn't go canoeing after dark. He was alone when the incident happened, and had not told his wife that he was going canoeing. He was not wearing a life jacket, which his friends said he usually wore, and

many believe he was murdered for aiding DeCamp or for knowing to much about such things.

Some of the things found in DeCamp's book are even worse than what is mentioned in this brief summary. John DeCamp has had nothing to gain from being involved in exposing the Franklin Cover-Up and when this author (Mark Dice) spoke with him on the phone, he said that he wished he would have never heard about the Bohemian Grove, or the Franklin Credit Union scandal, and that he has lived in a constant state of fear for his life, and that of his family ever since he became involved in investigating it.

Learning about such horrific and perverted activities leads one to wonder why anyone would want to do such disgusting and inhumane things, especially to children. How could a group of men possibly find enjoyment in such things? The answers are found in the deepest and darkest secrets regarding Satanism and the occult. Such activities are a form of sex magic and the practitioners believe that such activities are the only way to achieve a particular level of altered consciousness and communicate with entities from other dimensions or to open their minds up to become possessed by these entities, or alter their brain chemistry in an attempt to "super-charge" their mind and metaphysically alter reality. (see Sex Magic page 305)

David Rockefeller's Memoirs

In his 2002 book, *Memoirs*, Illuminati kingpin David Rockefeller wrote on page 405, "For more than a century ideological extremists at either end of the political spectrum have seized upon well-publicized incidents such as my encounter with Castro to attack the Rockefeller family for the inordinate influence they claim we wield over American political and economic institutions. Some even believe we are part of a secret cabal working against the interests of the United States, characterizing my family and me as "internationalists" and conspiring with others around the world to build a more integrated global political and economic structure—one world, if you will. If that's the charge, I stand guilty, and I am proud of it."

"The anti-Rockefeller focus of these otherwise incompatible political positions owes much to Populism. "Populists" believe in conspiracies, and one of the most enduring is that a secret group of international bankers and capitalists and their minions control the world's economy."

David Rockefeller is one of the grandchildren of John D. Rockefeller, the founder of Standard Oil, and at the time when he lived, John D. was the richest man in the world. David Rockefeller has had his hands in nearly every major New World Order organization in existence in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. In fact, he is the founder of the Trilateral Commission and is the former Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations. He also attends nearly every Bilderberg meeting. At the time of this writing, David Rockefeller (senior) is 93 years old.

Outside of Rockefeller Center in New York City stands a huge gold colored statue of Prometheus holding fire in one hand as he flies through the air. The mythological Greek story of Prometheus stealing fire from the Gods and giving it to mankind despite the punishment he will face is seen by occultists as identical to the story of Lucifer giving mankind the knowledge of good and evil that God had forbid us to have. So essentially this statue which stands outside of Rockefeller Center is a tribute to Lucifer, which goes unnoticed by the average person unfamiliar with Illuminati symbolism.

Foreign Affairs

The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) is part of the triad of power that has been openly constructing the New World Order with regards to American foreign policy for decades. The CFR is often used in succession with the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderberg group, and their elite members have rapidly been achieving their goals of global government.

The CFR is a privately owned and operated organization whose members include many elite politicians and media moguls. Most of their meetings are not secret, but instead are used to generate and spread propaganda regarding what policies and courses of action the United States government should take concerning foreign policy. Because of their name, the Council on Foreign Relations sounds like a government committee that would meet in Congress to discuss and formulate policies on international affairs. The CFR is similar to the Federal Reserve in this manner, but both organizations are privately owned and operated by the Illuminati. The Council on Foreign Relations publishes a quarterly journal titled *Foreign Affairs*, which is used to steer the US into the directions that this private organization desires.

In the May/June 2007 edition of *Foreign Affairs* there was an essay by Benn Steil, the Director of International Economics at the CFR, titled *The End of National Currency*, where the Council appeared to endorse the end of economic sovereignty.

Steil argued, “The right course is not to return to a mythical past of monetary sovereignty, with governments controlling local interest and exchange rates in blissful ignorance of the rest of the world. Governments must let go of the fatal notion that nationhood requires them to make and control the money used in their territory. National currencies and global markets simply do not mix; together they make a deadly brew of currency crises and geopolitical tension and create ready pretexts for damaging protectionism. In order to globalize safely, countries should abandon monetary nationalism and abolish unwanted currencies, the source of much of today’s instability.”

Steil went on to say, “The lessons of gold-based globalization in the nineteenth century simply must be relearned... Since economic development outside the process of globalization is no longer possible, countries should abandon monetary nationalism. Governments should replace national currencies with the dollar or the euro, or, in the case of Asia, collaborate to produce a new multinational currency over a comparably large and economically diversified area.... Most of the world’s smaller and poorer countries would clearly be best off unilaterally adopting the dollar or the euro, which would enable their safe and rapid integration into global financial markets. Latin American countries should dollarize; eastern European countries and Turkey, euroize.”

Steil’s essay concludes by warning that if governments fail to take the CFR’s advice that, “the market may privatize money on its own.”

One of the Illuminati’s ultimate goals is to have the entire world use the same currency and then abandon that currency for a completely electronic one. The use of cash and coins as money will likely be obsolete in the New World Order and replaced with an RFID (Radio Frequency Identification Device) such as the VeriChip or similar device. This way all purchases can be tracked, traced, and taxed. Such a device is believed to be what the Bible calls the mark of the Beast. The path to an electronic currency must first accomplish several regional currencies and then later merge those currencies into one global unit. The Council on Foreign Relations has been pushing the agenda of creating what they call a “North American Union” which would merge the currencies of Canada, the United States, and Mexico into one regional currency. The economic collapse in the United States stemming from the mortgage bubble bursting in 2008 spurred calls for a regional currency, and even a global currency as a “solution” to the economic disaster that ensued.

The CFR usually gets what it wants, and if one desires to have an advanced look into the future of American foreign policy, the *Foreign Affairs* journal will give you that insight. It’s interesting to note that the logo for the *Foreign Affairs* journal is a man riding a white horse who is holding a bow. In the Book of Revelation, the Bible describes the first horseman of the apocalypse as a man riding on a white horse while holding a bow in one hand and is considered the horseman of conquest. Since the CFR is an Illuminati created organization, such a symbol was chosen to reflect the dark forces that are behind the council as they work to construct the New World Order.

Purported Illuminati Texts

Over the centuries several books have been published, or rumored to exist, which are allegedly ancient books that the Illuminati and occult hierarchies have kept secret and only allowed certain initiates to learn the contents of. Some of these alleged texts are quite old, as in the case of the *Emerald Tablet of Hermes* and the *Book of Thoth*. Others such as *The Necronomicon* and *The Illuminati Manifesto* are more recent.

Upon even a glance, the fraudulent nature of some of these supposed Illuminati texts is obvious, while the existence of others remains ambiguous and unclear. In the following pages you will find an examination of the most popular alleged Illuminati texts including their history and contents.

The Necronomicon

The Necronomicon is the name of a book that horror writer H.P. Lovecraft incorporated into several of his stories in the early 1900s. In Lovecraft’s novels, the book was said to contain magic spells and ancient occult knowledge. The interesting thing is that some individuals took this concept and tried to cash in on it by publishing what they marketed as real versions of *The Necronomicon*.

In 1973, a book that was said to be *The Necronomicon* was published by Owlswick Press which consisted of a made-up language. The book contains a preface by L. Sprague de Camp who was a popular science fiction writer.

In the late 1970s a man named John Todd claimed to be a former Illuminati member and told audiences that he had seen one of the only three copies in existence of *The Necronomicon* and that the Illuminati were using it to practice black magic. In H.P. Lovecraft’s writings, he said that only five copies of the mystical book were in print. The locations of these five books was said to be: the British Museum, the National Library of France, Widener Library of Harvard University, the University of Buenos Aires, and a fictional library Lovecraft called Miskatonic University. The story of John Todd is lengthy and fascinating and is expanded in more detail in another section of this book which covers alleged Illuminati defectors (See John Todd page 157)

Another writer trying to cash in on gullible occultists was George Hay who released a version of the book in 1979 titled *The Necronomicon: Book of Dead Names*. Several years later Colin Wilson, who wrote the introduction for the book, would admit it was a hoax.[104]

Then in 1980 a man known only as “Simon” who was said to have been a student of the occult since the 1960s published a book called *The Necronomicon* which was marketed as a real English translation of the supposed ancient text. The “*Simon Necronomicon*” as it has been called, is reported to have sold several hundred thousand copies and is still found on shelves in the occult section of most bookstores. It consists of typical mystical ramblings and magic spells.

The publisher claimed, “Simon was a young man drawn to the mysterious world of the occult through his association with several Eastern Orthodox religions and his friendship with the owner of an occult bookstore in Brooklyn. In 1972 he stumbled upon a stolen text in a friend’s apartment, unaware that what he held in his hands was the real Necronomicon—something long thought to be a creation of Lovecraft’s brilliant mind and deft pen. After an arduous translation, done in the utmost secrecy (since the tome was in fact stolen), Simon and his close circle of friends unveiled the now–infamous grimoire to a clamoring public.”

Only the most foolish occultists, mainly young teenagers, believed (or continue to believe) “Simon’s” book is an authentic ancient mystical text.

In 1998 “Simon” released *The Necronomicon Spell Book* in another attempt to cash in on the subject from the gullible occultists who believe the book to be authentic. Then again in 2006, the same author published *Gates of the Necronomicon* which was described as a companion to the original book. That same year “Simon” also published *Dead Names: The History of* *the Necronomicon* as an answer to critics who claim he and his book are frauds. Despite serious occultists and critics claims that the book is a complete fraud, “Simon” must be overjoyed and laughed all the way to the bank as he earned possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars from royalties from sales of the books.

In 1998 Daniel Harms and John Wisdom Gonce III published *The Necronomicon Files: The Truth Behind the Legend* and traced the origins of the various supposed authentic books and showed how they were in fact fictions based H.P. Lovecraft’s mentioning of the book and incorporating occult principles and mysticism into books that were then marketed as legitimate, like the “Simon Necronomicon.”

In 2004, yet another occultist named Donald Tyson published *The Necronomicon: The Wanderings of Alhazred*, and similarly tried to cash in on the controversy surrounding the supposed ancient text.

Some of those who are aware that the concept for *The Necronomicon*, as well as the title, was the creation of Lovecraft’s novels, still think such a book actually exists. These people believe that Lovecraft had knowledge of such a book, and simply incorporated it into his fictional stories.

Emerald Tablet

Another supposed ancient text that some believe contains esoteric wisdom about the nature of reality and the secret of our existence is the *Emerald Tablet of Hermes*. Legend has it that the Greek god Hermes (also called Hermes Trismegistus) created the text. Alchemists see the tablet as a foundational work of Hermeticism. While popular opinion is under the impression that Alchemy involved ancient scientists who hoped of creating gold out of lead by means of a chemical reaction, Alchemy in the esoteric enlightenment circles refers to a mystical practice which would purify the soul, uncover valuable wisdom, and possibly allow one to achieve immortality. The metaphor of turning lead into gold is meant to describe a person’s transformation into an enlightened being.

Although it is called the Emerald Tablet, some believe if the tablet did in fact exist, that the writings were carved into a slab of jade stone which is green in color.

According to Alchemists, there are various explanations and theories as to its authorship. One is that Hermes was a son of Adam and wrote the tablet to help mankind redeem themselves from his father's sins in the Garden of Eden. Another popular legend regarding the tablet's origin says the object was found in a cave or a secret chamber under the pyramid of Cheops around 1350 BC by a man named Balinias who then wrote down the text in a Syriac language, which has since become the source of various translations.

The central theme to the writings on the supposed tablet is that our own mind determines and influences physical reality and that one can learn to manifest their desired reality through knowledge of God and his principles.

In the opening sequence of *The Secret* (2006) by Rhonda Byrne, a brief scene shows someone making a rubbing of the tablet in ancient times, and it is alluded that its contents make up some or all of "the secret" which the DVD teaches. This "secret" or "law of attraction" is supposedly that our mind can create any reality we desire and is directed by our thoughts and beliefs. Like a magnet, whatever you think about, good or bad, is manifested in your life. The film's opening sequence explains that the "Secret" had been carried on through the centuries and kept for the benefit of only those who were aware of it. Another shot in the opening scene shows several business men sitting around a table, likely referring to the Illuminati. These men apparently knew the "Secret" and were having a meeting to discuss how they could keep it from getting out into the public. There are several translations of the supposed contents of the *Emerald Tablet,* including one said to be by Isaac Newton. This translation was not something that Newton had publicized, and was supposedly discovered in his papers after his death. It is believed that Isaac Newton was a member of the Invisible College, which was a secret group of scientists and philosophers in Europe, and through this group he would have been aware of such mystical and occult ideas.

The *Emerald Tablet* is sometimes associated with, or believed to be the philosopher's stone, which according to alchemical legends can give the owner enlightenment or eternal life. Some occult legends say that the

Emerald Tablet came from Lucifer himself, and contained the knowledge of good and evil that was given to Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden. Most historians consider the tablet a legend, and no historical artifact has ever been discovered and released to the public. Whatever the *Emerald Tablet* is, or if it even actually exists remains a mystery.

The Book of Thoth

The Book of Thoth is believed to be an ancient book containing secret knowledge and magic, according to some mystics and occultists. Its actual existence is often considered only a legend, but there are those who claim and believe the book to be authentic and kept hidden by the Illuminati. The tale following the *Book of Thoth* says that the book was buried with an Egyptian Prince named Neferkaptah. This is not to be confused with a book Aleister Crowley published in the mid-1900s titled the *Book of Thoth*, which is a philosophical description of a deck of Tarot cards that Crowley designed called Thoth Tarot.

The respected mystic and philosopher Manly P. Hall wrote, “Nothing definite is known concerning the contents of the Book of Thoth other than its pages were covered with strange hieroglyphic figures and symbols, which gave to those acquainted with their use unlimited power over the spirits of the air and the subterranean divinities. When certain areas of the brain are stimulated by the secret processes of the Mysteries, the consciousness of man is extended and he is permitted to behold the Immortals and enter into the presence of the superior gods. The Book of Thoth described the method whereby this stimulation was accomplished. In truth therefore it was the Key to Immortality.”[105]

“The book is still in existence and continues to lead the disciples of this age into the presence of the Immortals. No other information can be given to the world concerning it now, but the apostolic succession from the first hierophant initiated by Hermes himself remains unbroken to his day, and those who are peculiarly fitted to serve the Immortals may discover this priceless document if they will search sincerely and tirelessly for it.”[106]

Could such a book actually exist, and could the Illuminati be in possession of it? If so, could the knowledge contained within its pages be the source of the Illuminati's wisdom and power? It's not absurd to think that such a text does exist and that they are in possession of it. The Illuminati's power comes largely from their ruthlessness and the extent which they go to ensure their goals are achieved, but could they actually have certain information about the nature of reality that aids them in their lives?

While it certainly is possible that such a book contains secrets to reality that were once discovered and documented, another possible scenario, perhaps more likely, is that the myth of such material is used as a way to entice members of the Illuminati and the promise of one day learning the forbidden contents of such a book is constantly dangled as a carrot in front of them and used as a motivator to keep them working in accordance with the organization's goals.

Perhaps the highest levels of the Illuminati are given access to the book if it exists, or perhaps they are the only ones who know that rumors of the book are nothing more than myths, and perpetuate them to their advantage.

The Book of Shadows

The *Book of Shadows* is a popular text in the religion of Wicca which contains various philosophies, rituals, and magical teachings. There are various versions of the book, with the most popular coming from Gerald Gardner, who is considered by most to be the father of Wicca. His 1954 book, *Witchcraft Today* was largely responsible for bringing the religion of Wicca to the public's awareness.

Gardner claimed that he had been initiated into a group, or a coven as they are called, which carried on the tradition of paganism and witchcraft. He said that sections of the book had been passed down through the ages and included writings of witches who were persecuted and killed for their beliefs. Many writings are believed to be inspired from or interpretations of Aleister Crowley's work, or taken from the *Gospel of Witches* which was a book published in 1899 written by Charles Godfrey Leland, who claimed to have discovered the book in the 1890s after it had been handed down from an underground tradition of witchcraft in Italy.

Of course almost every scholar doubts these claims, and both Leland and Gardner were frauds and opportunist who wanted to cash in on sales of these supposed authentic underground books and use such claims to increase their prestige among occultists. Gardner explained that students from the past would copy the *Book of Shadows* by hand from a copy allegedly owned by their witchcraft teacher.

In today's fairly educated and modern society such claims appear laughable, and the economic motives clear, but the tradition of occultists claiming to have discovered an ancient text continues to be believed by many as in the case of the *Book of Mormon*, and by the more modern *Necronomicon.*

The Book of Shadows has found its way into various films and television plots, including the fanciful series *Charmed* which stars Shannen Doherty, Allyssa Milano, and Holly Marie Combs, and the 1996 film *The Craft* about a group of four teenage girls who become involved in witchcraft.

The Illuminati Manifesto

In 2001 a man named Solomon Tulbure released a book titled *The Illuminati Manifesto*, claiming to be the Illuminati's goals and philosophy which was now being made public. Only a handful of the most ignorant and gullible individuals actually believed these claims, and unlike similar books claiming to be secret or ancient texts like *The Necronomicon* and *Book of Shadows*, *The Illuminati Manifesto* failed to catch on and was a miserable dud, with little to anyone believing it was an authentic Illuminati text.

Solomon Tulbure is also the author of *Christianity Exposed* (2001) which claims that most Christian beliefs are unbiblical and modern Christians follow the teachings of Paul and not Jesus, and that Jesus' teachings are not worthy of our attention and that an alternative to religion is needed. In 2002 he also published, *President G.W. Bush is a Moron: Islam Is NOT Peace*; not exactly a title that would be chosen by an ascended Illuminati master, especially since George W. Bush is in the Illuminati.

The preface for the manifesto reads, “Our vision and goals are clearly spelled out in this abridged version of our Manifesto, the core principles of what we represent. We had hoped to publish an unabridged version of our Manifesto, however, due to recent events and other reasons we have decided it is not yet the proper time to publish all our protocols and perspectives. Perhaps in 50-100 years the rest of our protocols will find a more fertile ground and at such time we will publish an unabridged Manifesto. Nevertheless, in order to squash the many lies that have been written about our organization we thought it necessary to put forth our imprint on the world scene once more.”[107]

While it is obvious that *The Illuminati Manifesto* is a poor and unconvincing fraud, the story surrounding Solomon Tulbure does get more interesting though, albeit tragic. In November of 2004 he was found dead after jumping off an interstate overpass in Knoxville, Tennessee. He was 35 years old and apparently he had made a posting on the Internet two years earlier threatening suicide. But Tulbure’s sister, Lidia Zotoiu, didn’t believe it and claimed he was murdered. “His right hand is bruised. His left hand is full of scratches,” she said. “Somebody kill him and bring him under the bridge.”[108]

When his brother was asked by police if Solomon was mentally disturbed, his brother Israel answered, “I don’t know. He could have been because he was very private.”[109]

When asked if he thought his brother committed suicide, Israel said, “We don’t know how he get from the bridge down there.”[110] English was obviously not the family’s native language.

Solomon Tulbure had claimed in the past that his life was in danger because of the information he had disclosed on the Internet and in his books.

The more the story unraveled surrounding Tulbure, the more clear it became that he was nothing more than a man trying to hustle up a few dollars using a variety of schemes. Allegedly he was the creator of MyMatchmaker.com, a website attempting to raise money from investors claiming it hoped to have 55 million members within three years. The site, which is no longer online, offered little information other than reading, “We will be more than happy to provide a detailed business plan upon request.”

According to his brother, Tulbure made money from day trading and from running various websites and that a month before his death someone from “some type of agency” had been calling the family looking for Solomon and said they were investigating him for Internet fraud. This could have possibly caused or contributed to his decision to commit suicide.

While there are numerous people who are murdered, die in unusual circumstances, or who allegedly commit suicide but are in fact murdered by the FBI, CIA or other agency in order to silence them from telling what they had witnessed in regard to corruption and crime, the case of Solomon Tulbure is a sad case of a man trying to make money off the hysteria that is often associated with the Illuminati, and perhaps in other illegal and underhanded ways. Upon reading just a few sentences in *The Illuminati Manifesto* it becomes apparent that this individual did not possess any literary skills whatsoever and his fragmented thought patterns clearly reflect a mentally unstable person.

One of the most bizarre, and somewhat amusing things found in Tulbure’s book is his talk about how the Illuminati had set up an online dating site for Illuminati swingers. He wrote, “You must also have available documentation proving that you and/or your spouse or lover does not have any STDs. To find other Illuminati or non-Illuminati swingers visit *www.IlluminatiMatchMaker.com* or Swingers.com.”[111]

The book is 303 pages long, and is full of random and sometimes incoherent statements. What can be understood from the book is that the author had no compassion for anyone. Found within his fanciful Illuminati Constitution, it reads, “Title V. Requires parents who give birth to disabled people to provide for all the needs of the disabled individual for as long as the disabled has the needs. Requires that government do not provide any financial aids/welfare to the disabled, just because he/she is disabled. Society does not have any obligation to support, raise and feed disabled people.„[112]

Tulbure also shows his contempt for all religions, saying “We seek to eliminate all the churches, synagogues and mosques and all those whom brainwash our young with mystical baloney and enslave the minds of men and women with religion and false virtues.„[113]

The Book of Dzyan

Another alleged book that is being kept hidden away by the Illuminati is *The Book of Dzyan* which is said to originate from Tibet. Several prominent occult authors claimed to have seen the book and have included various information purporting to come from it in their own works. *The Secret Doctrine* written by Helena Blavatsky is said to be based on the *Book of Dzyan*. Blavatsky claimed to have seen the actual book when she was studying in Tibet and that it was guarded from the “profane” by the Great White Brotherhood. The term “profane” is often used by occultists to describe people who are not a part of an occult hierarchy or secret society.

The Book of Dzyan is said to have been written in the language of Senzar, which is unknown to linguists and said to be a secret language of enlightened masters. Blavatsky wrote in *The Secret Doctrine*, “This first installment of the esoteric doctrines is based upon Stanzas, which are the records of a people unknown to ethnology; it is claimed that they are written in a tongue absent from the nomenclature of languages and dialects with which philology is acquainted; they are said to emanate from a source (Occultism) repudiated by science; and, finally, they are offered through an agency, incessantly discredited before the world by all those who hate unwelcome truths, or have some special hobby of their own to defend. Therefore, the rejection of these teachings may be expected, and must be accepted beforehand. No one styling himself a “scholar,” in whatever department of exact science, will be permitted to regard these teachings seriously.”[114] (See The Secret Doctrine page 102)

In Alice Bailey’s 1925 book *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, she writes several verses from *The Stanzas of Dzyan* (another name for the *Book of Dzyan*) which she claims were psychically dictated to her by a Tibetan Master named Djwal Kul, who some New Age thinkers believe is an “ascended master” who lives in another dimension outside of human perception. These “ascended masters” are believed by some to be working with and directing the Illuminati.

Some people in New Age circles believe that the *Book of Dzyan* was originally written by the inhabitants of the lost city of Atlantis. Swiss author Erich von Daniken, who believes that aliens from other planets have influenced culture on earth, has said that the *Book of Dzyan* came from extraterrestrials and predates Earth. Fictional writer H.P. Lovecraft, who died on March 15, 1937 at the age of 46, also made references to the *Stanzas of Dzyan* in his novels.

Whether the *Book of Dzyan* actually exists or not is open to debate. Certainly it is possible such a book exists, although its authorship would be uncertain. It is also possible, and perhaps more likely, that the *Book of Dzyan* is the creation of the over-active imaginations of occultists and New Age authors such as Helena Blavatsky and Alice Bailey. Some also believe that these “ascended masters” who such authors claimed to be telepathically in communication with were in reality, idealizations of the mentors of the very occultists who wrote about such beings.

The Report From Iron Mountain

In 1967 a book was published titled, *The Report from Iron Mountain* which was allegedly a leaked document containing the analysis of a government funded think tank which argued the case that perpetual war was needed to fuel the United States economy, and that if a state of world peace would ensue, that it would be devastating for the economy and society. If peace were to happen, the document suggested several actions to ensure a constant state of war would continue. Shortly after *The Report from Iron Mountain* was published in the form of a book, it made the *New York Times* bestseller list and created quite a stir particularly within militia groups and those suspicious of corruption within the government. *The Pentagon Papers*, which were a top-secret history of the United States involvement in Vietnam, were released shortly after which added to people's fears.

U.S. News and World Report wrote that an unnamed government official had confirmed the authenticity of the documents, and that President Johnson had "hit the roof" when word of the report was made public. The article reported that orders were sent to U.S. embassies around the world saying that the book had nothing to do with U.S. government policies.[115]

Several years later in a 1972 edition of the *New York Times Book Review*, Leonard Lewin took credit as the actual author, saying, "I wrote the "Report," all of it. (How it came about and who was privy to the plot I'll have to discuss elsewhere.) But why as a hoax? What I intended was simply to pose the issues of war and peace in a provocative way. To deal with the essential absurdity of the fact that the war system, however much deplored, is nevertheless accepted as part of the necessary order of things. To caricature the bankruptcy of the think-tank mentality by pursuing its style of scientistic thinking to its logical ends. And perhaps, with luck, to extend the scope of public discussion of "peace planning" beyond its usual, stodgy limits."[116]

Decades later in 1996 Jon Elliston published a book titled, *Report from Iron Mountain: Highbrow Hoax Mocks National Security Speak*, which detailed the evolution of the report and the ensuing speculation after its publication.

Some believe the idea for writing it came from Victor Navasky who was the editor of the left wing magazine *The Nation* from 1978 until 1995. Navasky was also the editor of a satirical newspaper called the *Monicle* until it ceased publication in the mid-1960s.

Harvard professor John Kenneth Galbraith added fuel to the controversy when he wrote a book review for the *Washington Post* using the pseudonym "Herschel McLandress," where he said, "As I would put my personal repute behind the authenticity of this document, so would I testify to the validity of its conclusions. My reservations relate only to the wisdom of releasing it to an obviously unconditioned public."[117]

While it is officially classified as a hoax, *The Report from Iron Mountain* contains some chillingly accurate information and predictions about what the future would hold. Keep in mind, the book was published in 1967. If it actually is a hoax, the author had a tremendous amount of knowledge and foresight as you can see by reading an excerpt below which talks about creating a fake alien threat to unite the world, and to push the idea of ecological destruction as a terrible danger and threat to mankind.

The Report reads, "It has been hotly argued that such a menace would offer the "last, best hope of peace," etc., by uniting mankind against the danger of destruction by "creatures" from other planets or from outer space. Experiments have been proposed to test the credibility of an out-of-our-world invasion threat;…nevertheless, an effective political substitute for war would require "alternate enemies," some of which might seem equally farfetched in the context of the current war system. It may be, for instance, that gross pollution of the environment can eventually replace the possibility of mass destruction by nuclear weapons as the principle apparent threat to the survival of the species. Poisoning of the air, and of the principal sources of food and water supply, is already well advanced, and at the first glance would seem promising in this respect; it constitutes a threat that can be dealt with only through social organization and political power. But from the present indications it will be a generation to a generation and a half before environmental pollution, however severe, will be sufficiently menacing, on a global scale, to offer a possible basis for a solution."[118]

While the idea of an actual alien threat may be far-fetched, or the idea of manufacturing one to appear as if it is real equally far-fetched, the technology of Project Blue Beam would allow just that to happen using high-tech projection systems to create enormous three dimensional holograms in the sky.[119] Also, decades after *The Report from Iron Mountain* was published, President Ronald Reagan would make a similar remark. On September 21, 1987, he told the United Nations General Assembly, "In our obsession with antagonism of the moment, we often forget how much unites all the members of humanity. Perhaps we need some outside, universal threat to make us recognize this common bond. I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world."

If *The Report from Iron Mountain* is indeed authentic, then the best and pretty much only strategy the government would have to counter its release would be to pay someone to claim authorship and say it was a hoax.

If the document is a hoax, the author had the rare knowledge of the use of false flag terrorist attacks and the strategy of creating enemies and events so that political or military actions may be taken. The report reads, "However unlikely some of the possible alternate enemies we have mentioned may seem, we must emphasize that one must be found, of credible quality and magnitude, if a transition to peace is ever to come about without social disintegration. It is more probable, in our judgment, that such a threat will have to be invented rather than developed from unknown conditions."[120]

Leonard Lewin, who claimed authorship and said it was a hoax, sued several individuals who believed the report was authentic and had reprinted it and were selling it themselves as a way to make money and spread the word about this diabolical plan. Lewin technically had the copyright and was legally entitled to the ownership of the text. Such an action is suspicious if in fact the document was authentic because one may think Lewin would want the document to become public domain and spread to as many people as possible. However, some suspect that the legal action was taken as a way to intimidate patriots who were spreading awareness of the report and that Lewin's supposed admission that he was the author was not the truth, and was instead an attempt at damage control to disarm the public and persuade them the report was a hoax, when in reality it was authentic.

In 1996 the book was released again with an Afterward written by Leonard Lewin where he discussed how he was surprised that word continued to spread about the report decades after its initial release. This new edition also includes several articles that were written about the report when it was first released. The Forward to the 1996 book was written by Victor Navasky where he explains how he and Lewin allegedly concocted the idea for money, believing the book would sell due to the controversy it would cause.

Whatever the truth is regarding *The Report from Iron Mountain*, some its contents turned out to be chillingly accurate in regards to what the future would hold even though it was written over forty years ago. There are already plenty of authentic declassified documents, government white papers, and mainstream reports which confirm similar or even more sinister operations than the ones found in *The Report from Iron Mountain*. So the authenticity of the report isn't that important, but when one is presenting information about false flag terrorism or fear mongering surrounding climate change, one is best advised to use confirmed and reputable sources, instead of *The Report from Iron Mountain*.

Protocols of the Elders of Zion

Another document that is classified as a hoax yet has elements which clearly reflect reality is *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The document surfaced in 1903 in Russia and was written to make it seem as if it was a plan drawn up by a powerful group of Jews who had formulated strategies to take over the world and maintain dominance. The document is still believed to be authentic by some, including anti-Semites, and is referenced as evidence of Jewish control of the New World Order. (See Why are the Jews Always Blamed? page 25)

While many of the Protocols are seemingly accurate with regards to their strategies to maintain control over economies, media, and politics, it appears the author went to great lengths to include wording that overtly illustrates the diabolical nature of the document and its supposed creator, the Jews, in an attempt to demonize them. It gratuitously emphasizes several points to give the impression to the reader that the document outlined malicious intentions by Jews. Even documents which are 100% legitimate that outline diabolical schemes such as Operation Northwoods, use a very matter of fact language and do not brag in excess about the brilliance of the plans, or their insidious nature. Such language in the Protocols can clearly be seen as a way to brand the Jews as the ones pulling the strings in a conspiracy.

When first published in Russia in 1903, the Protocols rapidly made their way around the world and continue to be circulated in print and on the Internet today. The supposed original manuscript never surfaced, which cast a shadow of doubt on the authenticity of the Protocols. While some have claimed to see the original document, the material is classified as a literary forgery deliberately designed to smear the Jews as the puppet masters behind a conspiracy to rule the world. During the rise of Adolf Hitler, the Protocols were used to enflame hatred against the Jews, and lent more support for the Third Reich by the Germans.

When the Protocols are read and the word “Jew” is replaced with “the Illuminati” the plans and the methods found in the document still ring true today. Several excerpts from the 24 different Protocols are listed below to illustrate this point. The original author of the Protocols was most likely inspired from John Robison’s *Proofs of a Conspiracy* which was published in 1798. (See Proofs of a Conspiracy page 47)

Excerpt from Protocol 1

“It must be noted that men with bad instincts are more in number than the good, and therefore the best results in governing them are attained by violence and terrorization, and not by academic discussions…Behold the alcoholised animals, bemused with drink, the right to an immoderate use of which comes along with freedom. It is not for us and ours to walk that road. The peoples of the goyim are bemused with alcoholic liquors; their youth has grown stupid on classicism and from early immorality, into which it has been inducted by our special agents—by tutors, lackeys, governesses in the houses of the wealthy, by clerks and others, by our women in the places of dissipation frequented by the goyim. In the number of these last I count also the so-called “society ladies,” voluntary followers of the others in corruption and luxury.”

Excerpt from Protocol 2

“Through the Press we have gained the power to influence while remaining ourselves in the shade; thanks to the Press we have got the gold in our hands, notwithstanding that we have had to gather it out of oceans of blood and tears.”

Excerpt from Protocol 3

“We shall create this crisis by all the secret subterranean methods open to us and with the aid of Gold, which is all in our hands: a universal economic crisis whereby we shall throw upon the streets whole mobs of workers simultaneously in all the countries of Europe.”

“These mobs will rush delightedly to shed the blood of those whom, in the simplicity of their ignorance, they have envied from an early age, and whose property they will then be able to loot.”

“Ours they will not touch, because the moment of attack will be known to us and we shall take measures to protect our own.”

Excerpt from Protocol 4

“Gentile masonry blindly serves as a screen for us and our objects, but the plan of action of our force, even its very abiding-place, remains for the whole people an unknown mystery.”

“…it is indispensable for us to undermine all faith, to tear out of the minds of the goyim the very principle of Godhead and the spirit, and to put in its place arithmetical calculations and material needs. In order to give the goyim no time to think and take note, their minds must be diverted towards industry and trade. Thus, all the nations will be swallowed up in the pursuit of gain and in the race for it will not take note of their common foe.”

Excerpt from Protocol 5

“In place of the rulers of today we shall set up a bogey which will be called the Super-Government Administration. Its hands will reach in all direction like nippers and its organization will be of such colossal dimensions that it cannot fail to subdue all the nations of the world.”

Excerpt from Protocol 6

“We shall soon begin to establish huge monopolies, reservoirs of colossal riches, upon which even large fortunes of the goyim will depend to such an extent that they will go to the bottom together with the credit of the states on the day after the political smash.”

Excerpt from Protocol 7

“The intensification of armaments, the increase of police forces—are all essential for the completion of the aforementioned plans.”

Excerpt from Protocol 8

“Our directorate must surround itself with all these forces of civilization among which it will have to work. It will surround itself with publicists, practical jurists, administrators, diplomats and, finally, with persons prepared by a special super-educational training in our special schools. These persons will have cognisance of all the secrets of the social structure, they will know all the languages that can be made up by political alphabets and words; they will be made acquainted with the whole underside of human nature, with all its sensitive chords on which they will have to play.”

Excerpt from Protocol 10

“We are destroying the causes of your torment—nationalities, frontiers, differences of coinages….we shall destroy among the goyim the importance of the family and its educational value and remove the possibility of individual minds splitting off, for the mob, handled by us, will not let them come to the front nor even give them a hearing; it is accustomed to listen to us only who pay it for obedience and attention. In this way we shall create a blind, mighty force which will never be in a position to move in any direction without guidance of our agents set at its head by us as leaders of the mob. The people will submit to the regime because it will know that upon these leaders will depend its earnings, gratifications and the receipts of all kinds of benefits.”

Excerpt from Protocol 11

“There is another reason also why they will close their eyes: for we shall keep promising them to give back all the liberties we have taken away as soon as we have quelled the enemies of peace and tamed all parties.”

Excerpt from Protocol 12

“Not a single announcement will reach the public without our control. Even now this is already being attained by us inasmuch as the news items are received by a few agencies, in whose offices they are focused from all parts of the world. These agencies will then be already entirely ours and will give publicity only to what we dictate to them.”

Excerpt from Protocol 13

“When we come into our kingdom our orators will expound great problems which have turned humanity upside down in order to bring it at the end under our beneficent rule. Who will ever suspect then that all these peoples were stage-managed by us according to a political plan which no one has so much as guessed at in the course of many centuries?

Excerpt from Protocol 14

"Our philosophers will discuss all the shortcomings of the various beliefs of the goyim, but no one will ever bring under discussion our faith from its true point of view since this will be fully learned by none save ours, who will never dare to betray its secrets."

The Holy Grail

The Holy Grail is frequently believed to be a cup that was used by Jesus at the Last Supper, which was the final meal he had before being taken into custody by the Romans and crucified. Aside from people believing it is an ancient artifact, some believe that it contains supernatural powers and can bestow them onto whoever possesses the Grail. Others believe that the Holy Grail is not a cup, but that it is an ancient parchment containing writings which explain the mysteries of the Universe and God. Others still insist that the Holy Grail actually refers to a bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene and believe the two were married and had a child, and that the bloodline remains to this day and is hidden and protected by secret societies. No definitive information is available about any such theories, and there is a continuing debate about what the Grail is, or if it even exists at all.

Such legends often include the Knights Templar, and some suspect that whatever the Grail is, that the Knights Templar obtained it from their excavations under Solomon's Temple during their time there, and it continues to be in the possession of the modern day Illuminati.

Whatever the Holy Grail actually is, and if it still exists today remains a mystery. However, the Knights Templar learned their strange occult rituals from somewhere after they had established themselves in Jerusalem in the 12th century. And the same is true with their knowledge of banking and collecting interest, a practice which is still used today by the Federal Reserve Bank which was created by the Illuminati. (See The Creature from Jekyll Island page 95) Therefore it is not baseless speculation that the

Templars did indeed find some ancient scrolls where they learned such things from. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls between 1947 and 1956 verify the fact that similar information had been written down and hidden, only to be found hundreds of years later.

The Knights Templar are known as a military order of supposed Christian warrior monks who protected Christian peasants as they traveled to the Holly Land in Jerusalem starting around 1196. They were called the Knights Templar because they used the site of Solomon’s Temple as their headquarters.

As a closer look was taken at the Templars, many believe that they had an ulterior motive for staying at the temple. Evidence proves that they were secretly excavating under the temple for treasure. Many believe what they were after was not only gold, but some hidden documents as well. Some believe that these documents contain the family tree and a bloodline of Jesus, a fraud that was popularized by Dan Brown’s book *The Da Vinci Code*. (See Angels and Demons page 312)

Others believe that these documents held some kind of mystical secrets about life and the nature of reality and the spiritual laws of the world and the workings of God. This is what many occultists believe is actually the Holy Grail.

The king of France, King Philip IV, eventually accused the Templars of being Satanists and had their leadership and as many Templars he could find arrested in 1307. While many people today defend the Templars, and believe the king had simply made up the accusations as a reason to confiscate their wealth, most prominent occultists openly admit that the Templars had learned magic rituals, and were indeed in possession of esoteric mystical knowledge.

Eliphas Levi, a prominent 19th century occultist writes, “What was actually this secret and potent association which imperiled Church and State, and was thus destroyed unheard? Judge nothing lightly; they are guilty of a great crime; they have exposed to profane eyes the sanctuary of antique initiation. They have gathered again and have shared the fruits of the tree of knowledge, so they might become masters of the world."[121]

Among the accusations, the Templars were said to have done satanic rituals involving a person's decapitated head, called Baphomet. Levi admits, "Yes, in our profane conviction, the Grand Masters of the Order of the Templars worshipped the Baphomet, and caused it to be worshipped by their initiates."[122]

Manly P. Hall writes, "The famous hermaphroditic Goat of Mendes was a composite creature formulated to symbolize this *astral light.* It is identical with Baphomet, the mystic *pantheos* of those disciples of ceremonial magic, the Templars, who probably obtained it from the Arabians."[123]

Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas explain in *The Book of Hiram*, "Hence it follows that the mysteries of the craft are in reality the mysteries of religion. The Knights were, however, careful not to entrust this important secret to any whose fidelity and discretion had not been fully proved. They therefore invented different degrees to test their candidates, and gave them only symbolical secrets without explanation, to prevent treachery and solely to enable them to make themselves known to each other. For this purpose it was resolved to use different signs, words and tokens in each degree, by which they would be secured against the Saracens, cowans or intruders."[124]

Eliphas Levi confirms this in his 1913 book *The History of Magic*, writing, "The Templars had two doctrines; one was concealed and reserved to the leaders, being that of Johannism; the other was public, being Roman Catholic doctrine. They deceived in this manner the enemies that they hoped to supplant. The Johannism of the adepts was the Kabalah of the Gnostics, but it degenerated speedily into a mystic pantheism carried even to idolatry of Nature and hatred of all revealed dogma…They went even so far as to recognize the pantheistic symbolism of the grand masters of Black Magic, and the better to isolate themselves from obedience to a religion by which they were condemned before, they rendered divine honors to the monstrous idol Baphomet.”[125]

The Knights Templar are believed to have created Freemasonry and incorporated their mystical teachings into the organization, which, like the Templars, contains a secret doctrine for the inner circle of elite adepts and dispense lies to lower level members about the true meanings of symbols and about the teachings and occult beliefs hidden at the core. (See Morals and Dogma page 70)

Alleged Defectors and Victims

In the fairly recent past several individuals have come forward and made claims that they were former members of the Illuminati and have left the organization and decided to write books and give lectures exposing them. Others have made similar claims, only instead of saying they were members, they say that they were victims of experiments and mind control techniques that were directed by the Illuminati. As bizarre or far-fetched as some of their claims may seem, if one is familiar with declassified government programs, some allegations are not unrealistic. Despite what some may consider fanciful tales, or even delusions, some of these alleged defectors and victims have made headlines and developed a fair amount of supporters.

Others have had many of their claims exposed as exaggerations or blatant lies upon further examination. Others yet, remain in the realm of possibly being true. These stories have become a part of the folklore surrounding the Illuminati and the occult, and warrant mentioning and being analyzed as we sift through the facts and fiction of the Illuminati.

John Todd

John Todd, also known as “John Todd Collins” or “Lance Collins” was one of the first, if not the first person to claim to be a former member of the Illuminati in modern times.

In the late 1970s Todd began a series of speaking engagements at various evangelical Churches and organizations in what he said was his mission to expose the workings and plans of the Illuminati. He claimed to be a high level member who decided to become a Christian in 1972, and leave the organization. At this time there were several others who were claiming to be former Satanists turned Christians and were now trying to warn people about the occult, but Todd actually claimed to be a high level Illuminati member himself, and not just someone who dabbled in the occult.

By listening to the recorded speeches he gave, he did know a fair amount about the Illuminati, their symbolism, and their organizations and operations. Several hours of his lectures are available on the Internet in mp3s. John Todd is actually a fairly dynamic and confident speaker. He speaks with authority, and sounds like he is extremely knowledgeable on the Illuminati. It's important to note that in the 1970s, hardly anyone knew anything about the Illuminati or the New World Order. There was no Internet that anyone could use to quickly look up his claims and very few books had been published on such material. As we dissect John Todd's claims and cross examine them with what we now know to be true about Freemasonry and the Illuminati, most of them completely fall apart and are undoubtedly a series of fabrications and lies. Despite being a fraud, the legend of John Todd is fascinating to explore and he proves to be a very talented story teller or possibly a very persuasive compulsive liar.

John Todd appeared on the scene in the late 1970s shortly after Gary Allen's book, *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* was published in 1972 which brought the Illuminati conspiracy out in the open again after it had laid dormant since the 1920s and 30s with the publication of *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* by Nesta Webster, and *Occult Theocrasy* by Edith Miller. These books were the primary sources of Todd's information, and he made reference to Allen during one of his speeches which can be heard on the Internet. (See None Dare Call It Conspiracy page 62) (See Secret Societies and Subversive Movements page 56) (See Occult Theocrasy page 59)

The other source John Todd had learned about the Illuminati from was Myron Fagan's audio recordings which were released in the late 1960s. (See Myron Fagan page 208) Todd basically regurgitated information about the Illuminati that he learned from Allen and Fagan's work, but presented it as if he had firsthand knowledge of it from being personally involved.

One of Todd's claims that deviated from the typical Illuminati takeover plan was that he alleged when he was in the Illuminati he oversaw eight million dollars that was given to Pastor Chuck Smith, founder of Cavalry

Chapel, for the purpose of launching the Christian Rock industry. Todd claimed that the lyrics didn't matter, and that the music had a demonic beat that was being used to brainwash the listeners. He also claimed that Jerry Falwell had been bought off by the Illuminati with a fifty million dollar donation.

Another bizarre claim unique to Todd was that the novel *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand was supposedly written in code specifically for Illuminati members as a blueprint for their world takeover, and that only Illuminati members were supposed to read the book and the publishers were concerned that the book had become so popular since it would give away the Illuminati's plan.

More red flags continue to come up the more one listens to Todd. He referred to *The Necronomicon* as being a real book that he once saw and held in his hand when he was an Illuminist. *The Necronomicon* is a fictional book that was mentioned several times in the writings of 1920's horror writer H.P. Lovecraft. Todd kept calling the Necronomicon, the Necro*mon*icon. Several times during his speech, he mispronounced the name of this book. One would think that a high level Illuminati member would know the proper pronunciation of this sacred book. He called it the original occult bible.

"There are only three copies in existence today. One is in the town…in the Saint Petersburg cathedral in the USSR. One is in New York City, no I'm sorry. One is in Glasgow and one is in London. I saw….the one from the London museum was in New York for a while and I got to look at it and hold it when I was in the occult," he said as he stumbled over his words quite extensively when trying to explain his alleged contact with the book.

In H.P. Lovecraft's novels it is said that there are only five copies in existence, an idea that Todd essentially parroted as he tried to describe the book to one of his audiences. No such book was ever at the London museum, or any museum for that matter, and Todd's claims of holding it in his hand was completely unpractical. In 1973, several years before John Todd began speaking about the Illuminati, a man claiming that he had discovered the real Necronomicon published what was an obvious hoax and an attempt to cash in on the legend of the book. (See The Necronomicon)

Aside from not seeming very clear on several aspects of the Illuminati, and claiming to have seen an actual copy of *The Necronomicon*, Todd also claimed to have been a Green Beret in the Vietnam War. As more people investigated Todd's allegations, it was discovered that he was a general clerk/typist. When confronted with this discovery, he claimed that the Illuminati must have altered his records in an attempt to discredit him. He would frequently claim his life was in danger and that numerous attempts had been made to have him killed.

John Todd had pieced together various quotes and secret society history, and organized it into what sounded like an honest confession, but any modern student of the Illuminati can clearly see Todd for the fraud that he was. In one of his speeches he said, "I'm going to read you the initiation to become a member of the council of 33, the 3rd, or actually the second highest council within the Masons, I mean within the Illuminati." He then goes on to read, "When the Mason learns that the key to the warrior on the block is the proper application of the dynamo of living power, he has learned the mystery of his Craft. The seething energies of Lucifer are in his hands and before he may step onward and upward, he must prove his ability to properly handle energy." This is not the initiation into any level of Freemasonry or the Illuminati, but rather a quote from page 124 of Manly P. Hall's book *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry.*

In a recording titled *John Todd explains the Illuminati*, that can be heard on YouTube, he says, "When I was saved I complained….or not when… (mumbling) what am I saying, what am I saying, when I was saved? I didn't find this out until I was saved. When I was in the occult, I complained at our council meeting because the 33rd council had so much power and I felt it was unjust because I had proven myself so greatly to Lucifer."

In this same speech he also claims to read a passage from the Masonic book *Morals and Dogma*, but actually reads an alleged letter from Albert Pike to the 33rd degree inspectors generals which is not found anywhere in *Morals and Dogma*. He also uses the terms "The Trilateral Council," and the "Council of Foreign Affairs," to refer to Illuminati organizations, when their actual names are the Trilateral Commission, not council, and the Council on Foreign Relations, not affairs.

Another bizarre statement that can be heard on the Internet postings of his lectures are his claims that the credit card was the mark of the Beast, and almost all license plates in Israel start with the number 666.

He said that the Illuminati had planned to confiscate all guns within a year and a half and were going to remove the tax exempt status of churches unless they belonged to the World Council of Churches, and that all church members would have their name, address, and phone number published in post offices in their town so that everyone would know who and where all the Christians were so they could eventually be rounded up and killed. Also, he warned that people will soon be charged with murder if they convert someone to Christianity, and that the New World Order would be created by 1980.

While it is still common, and a good idea to have a food supply in your home that will sustain you and your family for several weeks in case of an emergency, Todd claimed that an anti-hording act would soon be passed saying people couldn’t store more than one month’s supply of food or they will go to prison for a year.

One of the most blatant lies that anyone who has studied the Illuminati would see as preposterous was that Todd repeatedly said he was a member of the ultra-elite Council of 13, which is actually comprised of the 13 heads of the top 13 families of the Illuminati. A broke nobody like John Todd, even if he were actually a member of the Illuminati, would not be anywhere close to such a prestigious level of the hierarchy. Such positions are filled by wealthy titans like the Rockefellers and Rothschilds.

In the 1970s when Todd was giving his speeches, not only was little known about the Illuminati to the public, but there was no Internet for anyone to use to investigate his claims, so since some of what he was saying sounded plausible to his audience, a thorough examination of his claims would prove extremely difficult during that time period.

Jack Chick, one of the most published comic book artists in the world ended up creating a comic book called *The Broken Cross* which was based on Todd’s allegations, and in 1980 Jacob Sailor also published a comic book based on Todd's supposed knowledge of the Illuminati. Chick had publicly defended Todd as others began to question his truthfulness.

A Christian Identity group called The Covenant, The Sword, and the Arm of the Lord (CSA) published a book titled *Witchcraft and the Illuminati* which used some of Todd's claims as evidence of the Illuminati. The book also incorporated and supported the serpent seed theory and attacked Jews and African Americans as being spawn of Satan. (See Why are the Jews Always Blamed? page 25)

In 1973 allegations were being made that John Todd had sex with two teenage girls he met while working at a coffeehouse, carried a .38 handgun into church meetings, and was using drugs.[126] After he and his claims came under more fire, some Christian leaders who once promoted him started to distance themselves or outright denounced him.

While not actually being a member of the Illuminati, apparently Todd was involved with Wicca, and in 1976 he temporarily held a charter of Watchers Church of Wicca, but after it was discovered that he had been charged with having oral sex with a minor in Dayton, Ohio, Gavin Frost revoked the charter he had granted to Todd's coven of Frost's Church and School of Wicca.[127]

In 1979 Todd was arrested and later convicted for statutory rape and transporting a minor across a state line. Of course, he claimed he was innocent and set up by the Illuminati as payback for him exposing them, and that they used the charges as a way to silence him.

Several Christian ministries investigated Todd's claims of his background and discovered gaping discrepancies and fantastic lies. The magazines *Christianity Today*, and *Cornerstone* did their own investigations and published articles exposing him.[128]

John Todd often spoke with such conviction that he was able to fool a fair amount of people into believing him. His charisma overshadowed his claims, some of which even in the 70s should have seemed ridiculous to his audience. By reading some of the comments on YouTube videos featuring audio of Todd's speeches, it sadly shows that still today some gullible listeners believe his story to be true.

In closing this analysis of John Todd, I will add several more preposterous claims to his long list of lies, just in case anyone still thinks he was telling the truth about being a former member of the Illuminati. For example he claimed that the highest degree in Freemasonry was the 35th degree, when in fact it is the 33rd degree. He said that the entire cast of the film *Star Wars*, which had just been released at the time, were all witches and that one million people joined witchcraft as a result of the film. He said he knew this because he was friends with the "head of publicity" for the film. Also, "the entire cast" of the popular soap operas at the time, *The Young and the Restless*, and *All My Children*, were witches. He told his audience that the Illuminati bought Smith and Wesson and purposefully made the guns poor quality so they would "blow up in your face" because they didn't want the people to be armed. Aside from saying that both the secular and Christian music industries were controlled by Satan, he said that before an album was mass produced, that a group of 13 witches would cast a spell on the master copy and that all copies made from it would be possessed with demons.

Bill Schnoebelen

Another man claiming to be a former member of the Illuminati is William Schnoebelen as he recounts in his 1993 book *Lucifer Dethroned*. He is the author of seven books, including *Masonry Beyond the Light* (1991), *Wicca: Satan's Little White Lie* (1990), *Space Invaders* (2003) which is only 120 pages and talks about UFOs, *Blood on the Doorposts: An Advanced Course in Spiritual Warfare* (1994) which was written with his wife Sharon, and *Mormonism's Temple of Doom* (1987) which is only 79 pages. He has also appeared in several films including *Riddles In Stone*, and *Interview with an Ex-Vampire.*

Schnoebelen is an interesting character with white hair and a long white beard, looking somewhat like a wizard out of the *Lord of the Rings* movies, which is perhaps a deliberate style he adheres to for reasons that will become obvious as you learn more about him. He claims to be a former 32nd degree Freemason and a Shriner. He shows a photo of himself in the Shriner hat, where he looks much younger, and he has what he claims to be his certificate showing he had achieved the 32nd degree level of Freemasonry. This could very well be true. He says he was a former member of the Church of Satan and also shows a letter signed by Anton LaVey welcoming him to the group. This is also possible, as the Church of Satan does have an application that people fill out and send in to become a member. Since someone familiar with the occult would know the true possibilities of the teachings found within Freemasonry, it is certainly not far-fetched that a member of the Church of Satan would want to join the Masons to further his occult knowledge. Now let’s examine the more far-fetched claims that Schnoebelen has been making.

One of the most popular speeches Schnoebelen has given which includes his testimony on why he allegedly left the Illuminati and became a born again Christian, is in the video *Exposing the Illuminati from Within* which can be viewed on Google Video and YouTube. In his nearly three hour lecture, Schnoebelen goes through his supposed credentials when he was climbing the ranks in witchcraft and satanic circles, until ultimately he claims he was inducted into the Illuminati.

Schnoebelen is a very knowledgeable speaker. Most of what he talks about has been essentially considered factual by researchers of the Illuminati and the New World Order. He talks about how there is an agenda to demoralize society and indoctrinate the youth into a culture of immortality. He details some of the philosophy of Freemasonry and its connection to the web of secret societies and mentions the usual suspects such as the Knights Templars and Aleister Crowley.

But just when you start thinking that this is a legitimate guy, his credibility starts to rapidly erode. One of the growing list of far-fetched claims he makes is that at one point in time in order to join the Illuminati, he had to have sex with a demon as part of his initiation into the second highest level.

Schnoebelen says, “What this means is you have to have sex with a fallen angel. And this is a very appalling and bizarre process, and it really nearly destroys every human being who has to go through it. It nearly killed me. I went through a formal marriage with a fallen angelic being. And of course you understand there is a Biblical principle at work here which Satan is using, and that is when you have sex with someone, you become one flesh with that person. And what happens at that point is, you become so demon possessed that it’s like burbling up here around your eyeballs. I had more demons per cubic centimeter than the entire city of Indianapolis, let me tell you. And the result of that is you just become a pretty vile, evil person.”[129]

Now, there are four different ways to look at this claim. One is that he is making this up in order to create a unique point in his story and get people talking about him so he can sell more books and make more money off of his lecture circuit. Two, he is an insane person and actually believes that he had sex with the demon in his own mind. Three, the organization he was a part of actually concocted a bizarre ritual in which he was given a hallucinogenic drug (LSD or peyote) and had sex with a woman who was dressed up in a costume, and he was so high that he thought he actually was having sex with a demon. Or four, one might believe that he actually did have sex with a demon and that he is telling the truth.

His claims of having sex with a demon are actually quite tame compared to what he says in another video titled *Interview with an Ex-Vampire*, where he states that within in the vampire subculture, human vampires exist and indeed grow fangs to feed off of human blood. A small subculture of “vampires” actually does exist, but they are not walking dead who turn into bats and sleep in coffins. They are a small minority of the gothic subculture who do drink animal or human blood as part of their lifestyle. Usually they do not kill people for this blood, but they have friends and fellow “vampires” willingly give up a pint of blood for consumption, or they purchase animal blood from butcher shops and consume it. But Schnoebelen takes this idea to an absurd extreme, claiming that to become a “real” vampire, he drank the blood of a fallen angel and was then able to grow fangs which would retract when he was not “feeding.” He says as a result of “becoming a vampire” that he couldn’t go outside during the day because his skin would blister, and that he had to get a third shift job because he could only go outside at night.

Now, this author (Mark Dice) certainly has an open mind. Many things that I now know as indisputable facts, I would have considered exaggerations or paranoid delusions in the past before I had seen enough evidence that came from reliable sources. While it is certainly possible that Schnoebelen was a Satanist and high level Freemason, or even a member of the Illuminati, one has to see his claims of becoming a vampire as completely 100% fraudulent, and his claims of having sex with a fallen angel as highly suspicious and unlikely.

While it is my conviction that the Illuminati continues to exist today, that they follow a satanic philosophy complete with rituals and on some levels murder, human sacrifice, and child rape, none of the so-called former Illuminati members have offered much evidence of their alleged involvement, other than information that has been circulating in anti New World Order literature for decades.

One motive is always that of money. Another is the purpose of spreading disinformation by mixing facts with fiction in order to make those who believe in the Illuminati seem like they are all conspiracy theorists or science fiction nuts. Perhaps some who make false claims about being a former Illuminati member actually believe that they are helping *The Resistance*, in that they are getting people's attention and educating them about other real issues involving the New World Order and the occult. Another motive is simply that of attention. And yet another is that of personal entertainment on behalf of some and their friends by fooling people into believing their claims and watching the news spread on the Internet like an urban legend.

The fact that Schnoebelen is the author of seven different books on the subject of the occult, one may have a better understanding of his motives for exaggerations and outright lies about his involvement in such activities. In his video *Interview with an Ex-Vampire*, Schnoebelen admits that he never had a steady career and that most of his adult life he moved from one dead end job to another. After college, he began working as a music teacher at a Catholic school, but was fired and then, in his own words says he "had numerous, basically menial jobs until, really after I got saved. I never really had a super duper job. I worked in a foundry for a while, I was as a security guard, I worked for the *Milwaukee Sentinel* as a person who went around and filled up the boxes at night with newspapers, so that was basically my wonderful career."[130] He also admits that he was a cocaine addict and later worked as a drug counselor when he got clean. So in his own words, he never had a career until he got saved, which means, until he became a Christian. As you now know, this new career he had discovered was that of writing books about the occult, while fabricating and exaggerating large portions of his life in order to create a compelling and attention-getting story.

While large portions of his lecture *Exposing the Illuminati from Within* are based on historic facts and philosophies, which Schnoebelen then mixes with his own fantasies and distortions, his *Interview with an Ex-Vampire* begins with a series of absurdities which even the most gullible and uneducated person should see as fictions. The interview starts with him recounting numerous supposed experiences from his past as he studied the occult, all of which get more absurd than the next. He begins with tales of haunted houses and ghosts throwing silverware in the kitchen, and later claims that a friend of his disappeared before his eyes in a magic circle during an occult ritual performed in a garage and never returned.

One can't help but see a pathetic old man telling ghost stories as if they had actually happened to him, or a delusional schizophrenic who was once so absorbed with such stories, that now his mind can't distinguish them from reality. There is also an eerie look of joy and excitement on his face when he tells his stories, probably from his own amusement that his audience is listening to him as if his fantastic tales were real, but instead the man is a walking, talking fictional novel.

While a completely honest and well-meaning person may unknowingly exaggerate or inaccurately convey details from personal experiences from their past, Schnoebelen's claims far exceed any standard of objectivity or credibility and upon even the brief examination found here it should be clear that he is not an authentic Illuminati defector and is a complete fraud.

Mike Warnke

In the 1970s a man named Mike Warnke became one of the most popular experts on Satanism after having claimed to be a former satanic high priest who converted to Christianity. He detailed his alleged satanic activity in his 1978 book, *The Satanic Seller.* Warnke ended up working with the traveling evangelist Morris Cerullo as he taught Christians the dangers of Satanism.

In 1991 the Christian magazine *Cornerstone* investigated his claims, the same magazine which had shown John Todd to be a fraud. Mike Hertenstein and Jon Trott interviewed over one hundred personal friends and acquaintances of Warnke's and looked over his ministry's tax receipts. Just as many suspected, they discovered dramatic inconsistencies, and the publication of their article would be the undoing of Warnke's career.

Warnke had claimed that while he was a satanic high priest, that he had waist-length hair and long fingernails, but *Cornerstone* magazine obtained pictures of him from that time period and his appearance wasn't anything like he claimed. The article labeled him a typical "square" of the 1960s.

Warnke also claimed that when he was a Satanist he had attended a satanic ritual with Charles Manson, but it turns out Manson was in prison during that time period for a crime preceding and unrelated to the infamous Tate/LaBianca murders in 1969. Hertenstein and Trott also discovered that Warnke was involved with the college Christian group Campus Crusade for Christ, although he claimed he had never been involved with Christianity until years later when he joined the Navy.

Mike Hertenstein, one of the writers for the 1991 *Cornerstone* article, later published a book titled *Selling Satan: The Evangelical Media and the Mike Warnke Scandal* which exposed Warnke in more detail, and analyzed how he was able to uphold his charade for as long as he did.

While Warnke didn't claim to be a member of the Illuminati, he serves as an example of someone who had successfully, for a period of time, fooled segments of the Christian community that he was involved in

Satanism, and duped them into believing his stories of rituals and mysticism.

In today's "anything goes" morally bankrupt society, people wouldn't be surprised by someone being a satanic priest. In fact many people would think it was cool, but back in the late 1970s and early 80s a "satanic panic" had spread across America and many people feared that secret societies of Satanists were sexually abusing and sacrificing children.

Cathy O'Brien

In 1995 a woman named Cathy O'Brien published a book titled *Trance Formation of America*, where she claimed to be a victim of the government's mind control program, MK-ULTRA, and was essentially a sex slave for wealthy politicians. While MK-ULTRA was (and probably still is) a top secret program involving sexual abuse, torture, drugging, and hypnotism as methods for brainwashing and mind control techniques, her allegations come under a cloud of suspicion.

Trance Formation of America is quite strange and disturbing, and is written in the form of almost a narrative, including long passages of dialog that O'Brien claims to have remembered. She says that during the mind control sessions she developed dissociative identity disorder, which used to be classified as multiple personality disorder, and that one of her "alters" had a photographic memory and could recall every conversation that occurred in her presence during the years of her captivity and abuse.

O'Brien claims that some of her abusers were George H.W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Dick Cheney, and Hillary Clinton. She says that she was rescued in 1988 by a man named Mark Phillips who claims to be a former CIA operative. Also a part of the story is O'Brien's daughter Kelly who was also said to be a victim of this program.

What makes O'Brien's allegations seem believable to some, is the fact that mind control programs like MK-ULTRA have been exposed, and that the aims of such experiments included some unthinkable practices including torture, mind-altering drugs, sexual abuse, and hypnotism. Some of the actual goals of this program were to create mind controlled slaves or

Manchurian Candidates, who would willingly accept and carry out any order given to them regardless of what it was. There are authentic declassified documents which outline these horrific practices and several victims have been awarded financial settlements for their abuse, so some believe that Cathy O'Brien could be another actual victim of such programs. During a press conference, President Bill Clinton publicly admitted that, "thousands of government sponsored experiments did take place, at hospitals, universities and military bases around our nation. Some were unethical, not only by today's standards, but by the standards of the time in which they were conducted."[131]

Adding to the controversy over O'Brien's claims is that in her book she recalls that she was taken to the Bohemian Grove and sexually abused inside the resort. Similar allegations have been made by Senator John DeCamp as he wrote in his book, *The Franklin Cover-Up*. Numerous children have come forward saying that they were sexually abused in the Bohemian Grove and were forced to participate in child pornography and snuff films, allegations that Ted Gunderson, former Senior Special Agent In Charge of the Los Angeles FBI confirms. So such abuse has been alleged to occur in the past, and by young children with no books to sell, and who are not even aware of what the Bohemian Grove is, or who its membership consists of. So one must carefully consider whether O'Brien herself was a victim as well, or if she is just another in a line of frauds making such claims in an attempt to sell books and lectures.

In her speeches, O'Brien has claimed that a smiley face was carved on the inside of her vagina using an X-Acto knife for the pleasure of her abusers. In a documentary film called *The Most Dangerous Game*, produced by the Guerilla News Network in 2002, the film makers took her to a gynecologist and had her examined, and to the doctor's surprise, there did appear to be such a thing. The film showed extremely graphic video and photos of the examination in an attempt to prove her allegations. Skeptics may view the existence of such a thing as a natural anomaly that was discovered by one of her lovers, which she then included in her story of being a victim of MK-ULTRA. We may never know.

Cathy O’Brien says that her father Earl O’Brien was a pedophile and had been involved in selling her into child pornography when she was a little girl. In her book she includes a photo of him, along with her family and names them all, including her siblings. While the claims she makes are extremely disturbing and far-fetched, similar activities have been uncovered by congressional hearings and declassified documents. Serious investigations need to be made into O’Brien’s claims and her background. While others such as John Todd and Bill Schnoebelen have little to lose if and when they are exposed as frauds, O’Brien making such damning claims about her father would be disastrous if he, or any other family members would find out, if she was fabricating the allegations.

Perhaps O’Brien was a victim of sexual abuse and child pornography by her father and exaggerated her abuse by spinning tales of being a victim of MK-ULTRA instead of her father. Perhaps emotionally scarred from such abuse, she justified her exaggerations and hoped to earn a living by selling books and lectures. The copy of *Trance Formation of America* that this author has in my possession is from the fourteenth printing. Generally, the bare minimum book printings are 2,000 copies, which would mean the book could have sold 30,000 copies reasonably, or perhaps three times that many, which could have earned O’Brien a healthy profit of close to $100,000 if just over $1 was earned per book. These are extremely conservative estimates.

Perhaps Cathy O’Brien and Mark Phillips concocted the entire thing, and out of financial desperation, have tried to earn a living by telling such tales. They may have been familiar with the anti-New World Order literature and the existence of the Bohemian Grove, MK-ULTRA, and elite pedophiles and sex trafficking. Or, perhaps she is telling the truth and is a survivor of such activities, which actually do happen. There are very real victims of such programs, and there are elite perpetrators who are involved in such things, so it is possible that a victim would write a book about them and have nobody believe her.

Whatever the truth is surrounding Cathy O’Brien, no matter how unbelievable her story seems, there are bits and pieces of verifiable information that seem fictional to someone who is unfamiliar with the

Illuminati, so one must not dismiss the reality of such things even if O'Brien and Phillips are proven to be frauds.

In 1999 a woman named Brice Taylor published, *Thanks For The Memories: The Truth Has Set Me Free! The Memoirs of Bob Hope's and Henry Kissinger's Mind-Controlled Slave* which she alleges is her account of being a victim of MK-ULTRA, as well. In 2003 a woman named Kathleen Sullivan released a similar book titled, *Unshackled: A Survivor's Story of Mind Control.*

Johnny Gosch

The story of Johnny Gosch, a paperboy from Iowa who went missing in 1982, has perhaps the most credible yet disturbing ties to the Illuminati and their affiliates. Gosch disappeared while delivering papers on September 5th, 1982, and as details emerged in the case, a very dark picture began to come into focus. Evidence pointed to the idea that a pedophile sex slavery ring had taken the boy, but this would be just the tip of the iceberg surrounding the case. The kidnapping of Johnny Gosch was huge news in the 1980s, and the boy's picture was the first to appear on milk cartons as a campaign to help find missing children. The TV show *America's Most Wanted* had also aired a segment hoping viewers could help find the boy. The case remained unsolved, and there were no arrests and Johnny wouldn't be found.

Seventeen years later in 1999, Johnny's mother, Noreen Gosch, testified during a lawsuit against Laurence E. King which had been brought forth by John DeCamp on behalf of his client Paul Bonacci. (See Conspiracy of Silence page 287) During this testimony Noreen stated for the first time publicly that in March of 1997 (15 years after Johnny went missing) she was awakened at 2:30 in the morning by someone knocking on her door who she said was her son Johnny. She immediately recognized the man as her son, and the two talked for several hours in her living room where Johnny began to tell her about what had happened to him since he was kidnapped. Noreen says that Johnny was forced into child pornography and had become an unwilling victim of a CIA sponsored mind control program called Project Monarch.

According to Noreen, Johnny also said that a man named Colonel Michael Aquino was the central perpetrator in his kidnapping. Aquino was a former member of the Church of Satan, who had started his own satanic organization called the Temple of Set. He is an educated man with a Ph.D. and a Green Beret who was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army. He authored a paper titled *From PSYOP to MindWar* for the U.S. Army, which detailed various mind control methods. He was an admitted Satanist with a high level security clearance and an expert in mind control. In the 1980s, Aquino, his wife, and another were accused of ritual child sexual abuse involving a daycare center at the Presidio military base in San Francisco. On August 14, 1987, the FBI and the San Francisco Police served a search warrant and seized videotapes, 29 photos, and two plastic gloves from the kitchen. (Case #870910025, 8114/87) No charges were filed against Aquino, although he was titled by the army.[132] A cloud of controversy and suspicion still surrounds Aquino.

Rusty Nelson, a personal photographer for Laurence E. King, the central figure in the Franklin Cover-Up scandal, would later come forward as a witness who saw children being abused by powerful men at King's pedophile parties and it was his job to photograph the men in compromising situations with the children so the photos could be used as blackmail to persuade the politicians to vote certain ways or to keep their mouth shut regarding various criminal activities they may become aware of. Nelson says that, "there was one instance where Michael Aquino, Colonel Michael Aquino came to a motel room and he got from Larry King a suit case and it was filled with bearer bonds and cash, and there was millions of dollars in that thing. And it was for the Iran Contras."[133]

Another boy, named Paul Bonacci, admitted he was forced to help kidnap Johnny Gosch into sex-slavery, and told Franklin Committee investigators he toured the White House at midnight on July 3, 1988 with Craig Spence, a lobbyist who operated an underage male homosexual prostitution ring in the Washington D.C. area with an elite client list. Spence turned up dead from what police called a suicide, three months after the June 29, 1989 edition of the *Washington Times* ran a front page headline reading, “Homosexual Prostitution inquiry ensnares VIPs with Reagan, Bush.”

Bonacci says he was used to lure Johnny near a vehicle so that men could then grab him. He was used in this manor for several kidnappings. Bonacci is the witness/victim who allegedly witnessed the making of a snuff film in Bohemian Grove in 1984, after he and other children were taken to the club. Bonacci’s testimony also filled in the missing pieces of the Gosch kidnapping, and tied it, and those involved, to the infamous Omaha, Nebraska Franklin Cover-Up. This information is exposed in detail in Senator John DeCamp’s book of the same title. (See The Franklin Cover-Up page 120) Noreen Gosch also detailed her own account in her book titled *Why Johnny Can’t Come Home*.

What’s important to understand about the Johnny Gosch case is that numerous witnesses with absolutely nothing to gain have come forward and made identical allegations about the same group of people and the same kinds of activities. Unlike other supposed witnesses who come forward with information and write books and make money off the lecture circuit, witnesses like Paul Bonacci and Rusty Nelson have only embarrassment and legal persecution to gain from coming forward with the allegations they have made. How is it possible that Paul Bonacci described the inside of the Bohemian Grove and took his lawyer, a former United States Senator to the entrance of the club in the late 1980s? How is it possible that Bonacci knew intimate details surrounding the Johnny Gosch kidnapping? Why is it that Michael Aquino’s name keeps getting mentioned by people involved in this case?

When one understands that a certain segment of the Illuminati enjoys pedophilia and sadomasochism as a way of exercising the ultimate power over another human being, answers start to emerge in the Johnny Gosch kidnapping case. Powerful men, child sex slaves, Satanism, and mind control are all intertwined at the dark core of the Illuminati. (See Sex Magic page 305)

MK-ULTRA Victims Testimony

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RADIATION EXPERIMENTS (PUBLIC MEETING)

Executive Chambers

The Madison Hotel

15th and M Streets, NW

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, March 15, 1995

1:00 p.m.

Statement of Chris DeNicola, Valerie Wolf and Claudia Mullen, New Orleans, Louisiana

MS. WOLF: Okay. I’m going to start. My name is Valerie Wolf. In listening to the testimony today, it all sounds really familiar. I am here to talk about a possible link between radiation and mind-control experimentation that began in the late 1940s.

The main reason that mind-control research is being mentioned is because people are alleging that they were exposed as children to mind-control radiation drugs and chemical experimentation, which were administered by the same doctors who are known to have been involved in conducting both radiation and mind-control research.

Written documentation has been provided revealing the names of people and the names of research projects in statements from people across the country.

It is also important to understand that mind-control techniques and follow-ups into adulthood may have been used to intimidate these particular research subjects into not talking about their victimization in government research.

As a therapist for the past 22 years, I have specialized in treating victims and perpetrators of trauma and their families. When word got out that I was appearing at this hearing, nearly 40 therapists across the country, and I had about a week and a half to prepare, contacted me to talk about clients who had reported being subjects in radiation and mind-control experiments.

The consistency of people’s stories about the purpose of the mind-control and pain-induction techniques, such as electric shock, use of hallucinogens, sensory deprivation, hypnosis, dislocation of limbs and sexual abuse, is remarkable.

There is almost nothing published on this aspect of mind-control used with children, and these clients come from all over the country, having had no contact with each other.

What was startlingly was that therapists reported many of these clients were also physically ill with auto-immune problems, thyroid problems, multiple sclerosis, and other muscle and connective tissue diseases as well as mysterious ailments for which a diagnosis cannot be found.

While somatization disorder is commonly found in these clients, many of the clients who have been involved in the human experimentation with the government have multiple medically-documented physical ailments, and I was really shocked today to hear one of the speakers talk about the cysts and the teeth breaking off, because I have a client that that’s happening to.

Many people are afraid to tell their doctors their histories as mind-control subjects for fear of being considered to be crazy. These clients have named some of the same people, particularly a Dr. Green, who was associated with clients’ reports of childhood induction of pain, mind-control techniques, and childhood sexual abuse.

One of my clients, who had seen him with a name tag, identified him as Dr. L. Wilson Green. A person with this same name was the scientific director of the Chemical and Radiological Laboratories at the Army Chemical Center, and that he was engaged in doing research for the Army and other intelligence agencies.

Other names that have come to light are Dr. Sidney Gottlieb and Dr. Martin Orne, who, it is reported, were also involved in radiation research.

It needs to be made clear that people have remembered these names and events spontaneously with free recall and without the use of any memory-retrievable techniques, such as hypnosis. As much as possible, we have tried to verify the memories with family members, records and experts in the field.

Many attempts have been made through Freedom of Information Act filings to gain access to the mind-control research documentation. These requests have generally been slowed down or denied, although some information has been obtained, which suggests that at least some of the information supplied by these clients is true.

It is important that we obtain all of the information contained in the CIA and military files to verify or deny our clients' memories. Although many of the files for MK-ULTRA may have been destroyed, whatever is left, along with the files for other projects, such as Bluebird and Artichoke, to name only two, contain valuable information.

Furthermore, if, as the evidence suggests, some of these people were used in radiation experiments, there might be information in the mind-control experiment file on radiation experiments.

We need this information to help in the rehabilitation and treatment of many people who have severe psychological and medical problems which interfere with their social, emotional and financial well-being.

Finally, I urge you to recommend an investigation into these matters. Although there was a commission on mind-control, it did not include experiments on children because most of them were too young or still involved in the research in the late 1970s to come forward.

The only way to end the harassment and suffering of these people is to make public what has happened to them in the mind-control experiments. Please recommend that there be an investigation and that the files be opened on the mind-control experiments as they related to children. Thank you.

DR. FADEN: Thank you.

MS. DeNICOLA: Good afternoon. I’m Christine DeNicola, born July 1962, rendering me 32 years of age.

I was a subject in radiation as well as mind-control and drug experiments performed by a man I knew as Dr. Green.

My parents were divorced around 1966, and Donald Richard Ebner, my natural father, was involved with Dr. Green in the experiments. I was a subject from 1966 to 1976. Dr. Green performed radiation experiments on me in 1970, focusing on my neck, throat and chest in 1972, focusing on my chest and my uterus in 1975.

Each time I became dizzy, nauseous and threw up. All these experiments were performed on me in conjunction with mind-control techniques and drugs in Tucson, Arizona.

Dr. Green was using me mostly as a mind-control subject from 1966 to 1973. His objective was to gain control of my mind and train me to be a spy assassin. The first significant memory took place at Kansas City University in 1966. Don Ebner took me there by plane when my mom was out of town. I was in what looked like a laboratory, and there seemed to be other children. I was strapped down, naked, spread-eagle on a table, on my back.

Dr. Green had electrodes on my body, including my head. He used what looked like an overhead projector and repeatedly said he was burning different images into my brain while a red light flashed aimed at my forehead.

In between each sequence, he used electric shock on my body and told me to go deeper and deeper, while repeating each image would go deeper into my brain, and I would do whatever he told me to do.

I felt drugged because he had given me a shot before he started the procedure. When it was over, he gave me another shot. The next thing I remember, I was with my grandparents again in Tucson, Arizona. I was four years old.

You can see from this experiment that Dr. Green used trauma, drugs, post-hypnotic suggestion and more trauma in an effort to gain total control of my mind. He used me in radiation experiments, both for the purposes of determining the effects of radiation on various parts of my body and to terrorize me as an additional trauma in the mind-control experiments.

The rest of the experiments took place in Tucson, Arizona, out in the desert. I was taught how to pick locks, be secretive, use my photographic memory, and a technique to withhold information by repeating numbers to myself.

Dr. Green moved on to wanting me to kill dolls that looked like real children. I stabbed a doll with a spear once after being severely traumatized, but the next time, I refused. He used many pain-induction techniques, but as I got older, I resisted more and more.

He often tied me down in a cage, which was near his office. Between 1972 and 1976, he and his assistants were sometimes careless and left the cage unlocked. Whenever physically possible, I snuck into his office and found files with reports and memos addressed to CIA and military personnel.

Included in these files were project, sub-project, subject and experiment names with some code numbers for radiation and mind-control experiments, which I have submitted in your written documentation.

I was caught twice, and Dr. Green ruthlessly used electric shock, drugs, spun me on a table, put shots in my stomach and my back, dislocated my joints, and hypnotic techniques to make me feel crazy and suicidal.

Because of my rebellion and growing lack of cooperation, they gave up on me as a spy assassin. Consequently, the last two years, 1974 to 1976, Dr. Green used various mind-control techniques to reverse the spy assassin messages, to self-destruct and death messages.

His purpose: he wanted me dead, and I have struggled to stay alive all of my adult life. I believe it is by the grace of God that I am still alive.

These horrible experiments have profoundly affected my life. I developed multiple personality disorder because Dr. Green's goal was to split my mind into as many parts as possible so he could control me totally. He failed. But I've had to endure years of constant physical, mental and emotional pain even to this day.

I've been in therapy consistently for 12 years, and it wasn't until I found my current therapist two and a half years ago, who had knowledge of the mind-control experiments, that I finally have been able to make real progress and begin to heal.

In closing, I ask that you keep in mind that the memories I have described are but a glimpse of the countless others that took place over the 10 years between 1966 and 1976, that they weren't just radiation but mind-control and drug experiments as well.

I have included more detailed information of what I remember in your written documentation. Please help us by recommending an investigation and making the information available so that therapists and other mental health professionals can help more people like myself.

I know I can get better. I am getting better, and I know others can, too, with the proper help. Please help us in an effort to prevent these heinous acts from continuing in the future. Thank you very much.

DR. FADEN: Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. MULLEN: Good afternoon. Between the years of 1957 and 1974, I became a pawn in the government's game, whose ultimate goal was mind-control and to create the perfect spy, all through the use of chemicals, radiation, drugs, hypnosis, electric shock, isolation in tubs of water, sleep deprivation, brain-washing, verbal, physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

I was exploited unwittingly for nearly three decades of my life, and the only explanations given to me were that "the end justifies the means," and "I was serving my country in their bold effort to fight communism."

I can only summarize my circumstances by saying they took an already-abused seven-year old child and compounded my suffering beyond belief. The saddest part is I know for a fact that I was not alone. There were countless other children in my same situation, and there was no one to help us until now.

I've already submitted as much information as possible, including conversations overheard of the agencies responsible. I'm able to report all this to you in such detail because of my photographic memory and the arrogance of the doctors—the arrogance of the people involved. They were certain they would always control my mind.

Although the process of recalling these atrocities is not an easy one, nor is it without some danger to myself and my family, I feel the risk is worth taking.

Dr. L. Wilson Green, who claimed to have received $50 million from the Edgewood Chemical and Radiology Laboratory as part of a TSD or technical science division of the CIA, once described to Dr. Charles Brown that "children were used as subjects because they were more fun to work and cheaper, too." They needed lower profile subjects than soldiers or government people.

So, only young willing females would do. Besides, he said, "I like scaring them. They and the agency think I'm a god, creating subjects experiments for whatever deviant purposes Sid and James could think up." Sid being Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, James, Dr. James Hamilton.

In 1958, I was to be tested, they told me, by some important doctors from the society or the Human Ecology Society, and I was instructed to cooperate. I was told not to look at anyone's faces, and not—try hard not to ignore—to try hard not to ignore any names as this was a very secret project, but I was told that all these things would help me forget.

Naturally, as most children do, I did the opposite, and I remembered as much as I could, but Dr. John Gittinger tested me, Dr. Cameron gave me the shots, and Dr. Green the x-rays. Then I was told by Sid Gottlieb that "I was ripe for the big A" meaning Artichoke. By the time I left to go home, just like every time from then on, I would remember only whatever explanations Dr. Robert G. Heath of Tulane Medical University gave me for the odd bruises, needle marks, burns on my head, fingers, and even the genital soreness. I had no reason to believe otherwise. They had already begun to control my mind.

The next year, I was sent to a lodge in Maryland called Deep Creek Cabins to learn how to sexually please men. I was taught how to coerce them into talking about themselves, and it was Richard Helms, who was deputy director of the CIA, Dr. Gottlieb, George White, Morris Allen, were all planning on filming as many high government agency officials and heads of academic institutions and foundations as possible, so that later, when the funding for mind-control and radiation started to dwindle, projects would continue.

I was used to entrap many unwitting men, including themselves, all with the use of a hidden camera. I was only nine years old when this sexual humiliation began. I overheard conversations about a part of the agency called Ord, which I found out was Office of Research and Development. It was run by Dr. Green, Dr. Steven Aldridge, Martin Orne, and Morris Allen.

Once a crude remark was made by Dr. Gottlieb about a certain possible leak over New Orleans involving a large group of retarded children who were being given massive doses of radiation. He asked why was Wilson so worried about a few retarded kids, after all, they would be the least likely to spill the beans.

Another time, I heard Dr. Martin Orne, who was the director then of the scientific office, and later head of the Institute for Experimental Research state that, “In order to keep more funding coming from different sources for radiation and mind-control projects, he suggested stepping up the amounts of stressors used and also the blackmail portion of the experiments.” He said it needed to be done faster and to get rid of the subjects or they were asking for us to come back later and haunt them with our remembrances.

There’s much more I could tell you about government-sponsored research, including project names, cell project numbers, people involved, facilities used, tests and other forms of pain induction, but I think I’ve given more than enough information to recommend further investigation of all the mind-control projects, especially as they involve so much abuse of the radiation.

I would love nothing more than to say that I had dreamed the whole thing up and need just to forget it, but that would be a tragic mistake. It would also be a lie.

All these atrocities did occur to me and to countless other children, and all under the guise of defending our country. It is because of the cumulative effects of exposure to radiation, chemicals, drugs, pain and subsequent mental and physical distress that I’ve been robbed of the ability to work and even to bear any children of my own.

It is blatantly obvious that none of this was needed nor should it ever have been allowed to take place at all, and the only means we have to seek out the awful truth and bring it to light is by opening whatever files remain on all the projects and through another presidential commission on mind-control.

I believe that every citizen of this nation has the right to know just what is fact and what is fiction. It is our greatest protection against the possibility of this ever happening again. In conclusion, I can offer you no more than what I’ve given you today, the truth, and I thank you for your time. (Applause)

Activists and Eyewitnesses

Aside from individuals claiming to be former members of the Illuminati or victims of satanic rituals or mind control, there are also an array of people who claim to have witnessed such things first hand, or who have acquired evidence and information regarding such activities. Far from being attention seekers or liars, most of the individuals in this section are completely honest and their claims are legitimate and verifiable. Others such as Hal Turner, as you will read, are not only liars, but likely paid disinformation agents whose purpose is to publicize false and misleading information which aims to discredit serious research and vital information.

One reliable eye witness is Chris Jones who worked in the Bohemian Grove, who this author got to know personally. When we met for lunch in 2006 he showed me pictures and video taken from inside the secretive compound which was still on his camera. Another eyewitness, to many people's surprise, is that of President John F. Kennedy, who as you will read gave a chilling warning about what he called a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that the world was facing.

William Morgan

A man in the early 19th century named William Morgan would become the spark that would ignite a third political party in the United States for the first time in the country's history. A party, solely against Freemasonry, and called the Anti-Masonic Party. Morgan was a Freemason in New York who decided to publish a book exposing many of the secrets of Freemasonry, including their hand signals, symbols, and rituals. In 1826 he was kidnapped and murdered by Freemasons who took very seriously the life threatening oaths Masons commit to.

His disappearance and death was the catalyst for a large public backlash against Freemasonry, which ultimately lead to the Anti-Masonic Party being formed in 1828. Suddenly Freemasonry had become an enemy of the public, and membership in the United States was quickly cut in half as large numbers of men left the fraternity.

A man named David Cade Miller, who owned a local newspaper, was going to publish William Morgan's book, and before Morgan was killed there were several attempts to burn down Miller's office after word had spread about their plans.

Prior to his murder, Morgan had been harassed by several Freemasons and put in jail based on allegations that he owed them money and that he had stolen some clothing from them. After he was released he disappeared the next day and a month later his dead and decomposing body was discovered on the shores of Lake Ontario.

Three men, all Freemasons, were charged and convicted for kidnapping. They were Loton Lawon, Nicholas Chesebro, and Edward Sawyer. Many Freemasons deny that Morgan was killed, and instead claim he was paid by them to leave the country.

As a result of Morgan's murder, New York politician Thurlow Weed formed the Anti-Masonic Party. John Quincy Adams supported this new party and in 1847 released a book titled *Letters on the Masonic Institution* which criticized Freemasonry.

Morgan's widow would later become one of Joseph Smith Jr.'s multiple wives after he created the cult of Mormonism. The Mormon church performed a baptism for the dead for Morgan where Mormons baptize a living person on behalf of someone who is dead, and think that the dead person is then baptized by proxy and can then possibly get into Heaven if they were denied for not being baptized themselves. (*The Resistance Manifesto* by Mark Dice has a detailed analysis of the cult of Mormonism.)

The newspaper publisher, David Miller, would later publish Morgan's book which became a best seller. Morgan's murder is often referred to as the "William Morgan incident" and left a stain on Freemasonry which remains to this day. (See Morals and Dogma page 70)

JFK Warns Against Secret Societies

President John F. Kennedy once made a profound statement about secret societies when speaking to the American Newspaper Publishers Association. While not singling out any specific group, his statements are extremely chilling. Kennedy clearly had intimate knowledge of the workings of the Illuminati and didn't want to go along with them. Audio of his statements are widely available on the Internet. He said, "The very word "secrecy" is repugnant in a free and open society; and we are as a people inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths and to secret proceedings."

He continued, "We decided long ago that the dangers of excessive and unwarranted concealment of pertinent facts far outweighed the dangers which are cited to justify it…For we are opposed around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covered means for expanding its sphere of influence, on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerillas by night instead of armies by day."

"It is a system which has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific and political operations, its preparations concealed not published its mistakes are buried not headlined, it's dissenters are silenced not praised, no expenditure is questioned, no rumor is printed, no secret is revealed."

Several months prior to his assassination, John F. Kennedy had signed Executive Order No. 11110, which attempted to strip the Federal Reserve of their power to loan money to the United States government at interest. Many see this act as the major motive for the Illuminati orchestrating his assassination.

Chris Jones

In the summer of 2005, an individual who went by the pseudonym "Kyle" obtained a job in the Bohemian Grove with the sole purpose of investigating the activities within the club. Over the course of the summer he brought his digital camera to work and was able to shoot several close up photos of the effigies which are used in the Cremation of Care ritual. He also obtained video footage of Moloch, and the electronic systems used to control the music, lights, and fireworks for the ceremony.

His photos clearly show that the item being burned on the altar is a life-size human effigy. The pictures, and his personal testimony reveal that the effigy is a metal skeleton which is then wrapped with paper. Prior to the Cremation of Care, he was able to inspect the effigy to see if there was a small child or infant's body stuffed inside, or a vile of blood, but the effigy seemed to contain only paper. While the modern Cremation of Care ritual uses a paper effigy, it is believed that in the past, the ritual used a real human or child as did ancient sacrifices to Moloch.

The photos he took, as well as video, is featured in Alex Jones' film *The Order of Death* (2005) and can be viewed on the Internet. This author, Mark Dice, has met "Kyle" on several occasions and I have seen the photos and video on his camera with my own eyes. Aside from taking video and photos from inside the club, he was able to obtain a 2005 membership list and program guide, as well.

"Kyle" whose real name is Chris Jones, would later be imprisoned due to trumped up charges surrounding showing some kids in his neighborhood the video footage and educating them about the club. Police claimed he was showing kids snuff films, and a series of charges were filed against him for allegedly wanting to harm children. It's likely these charges were to punish him for his investigations into the Bohemian Grove, and his imprisonment was ordered by the Illuminati. The entire case and the trial stunk of corruption, and despite no evidence or testimony from the children in his neighborhood that he had any ill motives, he was found guilty in 2008 and sentenced to several years in prison.

Chris hadn't written a book, nor ever discussed plans to do so, and made no money off any lectures about the Bohemian Grove. Until his incarceration, he had remained an anonymous informant. It was only after his imprisonment that others who knew him spoke openly about his true identity to let others know what had happened to him. He was simply a man who was appalled with what the elite were involved in, and spent his own time, money, and energy to gather evidence to expose them. He asked for no money from Alex Jones in return for sending him the video footage and photos he had taken from inside the Grove when he had worked there. He granted Alex full permission to use the photos and videos in his film, and only asked for some free copies in return that he could give to family and friends.

Unlike others who write books about such things or talk about them on radio shows or even make films about the Illuminati, Chris crossed a line few dare to even approach by becoming an eye witness and physically gathering evidence from an Illuminati meeting place and then releasing it to the public.

For those who fear a fate of Chris Jones, you may relax a little with the understanding that simply reading books and talking about the Illuminati is a totally different thing than going to one of their meeting places and taking video and photos. While *The Resistance* owes Chris our utmost respect and sympathy for the repercussions from his actions, let them also serve as an example of the strings the Illuminati may pull to enact revenge upon those who cross them. Anyone willing to risk their freedom and their life to expose the crimes and perversions of the Illuminati is a brave soul, and we can only hope that there are others like Chris Jones out there who are infiltrating the Illuminati and gathering credible and verifiable evidence against them.

Ted Gunderson

One of the highest ranking government officials to publicly talk about the Illuminati and admit that organized child kidnapping rings were active in the United States is Ted Gunderson. Gunderson is a retired FBI agent who worked as the Senior Special Agent-in-Charge of the Los Angeles office who retired in March of 1979 and then became a private investigator.

Gunderson has worked closely with the families and victims of several of the most well-known cases of child abuse involving the Illuminati, such as the Johnny Gosch case and Paul Bonacci, who was involved in the Franklin Cover-Up scandal and is just one of many children who say they were taken into the Bohemian Grove in the 1980s and forced to participate in child pornography and pedophilia parties involving powerful politicians and business men.

Gunderson openly states that the Illuminati exists and that they are an elite Luciferian pedophile group with goals of creating a New World Order and turning most of society into a financially bankrupt group of peasants, while they enjoy the fruits of society’s labor and hold all wealth and key political positions.

While numerous public officials have spoken out about the 9/11 attacks being an inside job, few have specifically mentioned the Illuminati. Gunderson’s once prestigious position in the Los Angeles bureau of the FBI adds tremendous credibility to his claims. Surely other well-meaning prominent law enforcement officials and politicians are aware of the Illuminati, but keep silent on the issue for the sake of their career or their family’s safety. Those individuals understand the dangers of speaking about such topics, and we can only hope that other high level respected FBI or law enforcement agents can one day come forward and speak about such things.

Benjamin Fulford

A Canadian journalist living in Japan named Benjamin Fulford, who was the Asian bureau chief for *Forbes* magazine from 1998 to 2005, came to the attention of many in 2008 when he reported that a Chinese secret society was threatening to assassinate high level Illuminati members due to their pro white and racist agendas.

While many would dismiss such allegations as another hoax by a publicity seeking unknown author, Fulford has a list of respectable credentials, including his work at *Forbes* magazine, the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* (the Japan Economic Times), the *South China Morning Post*, and other well respected publications. In November of 2007 he conducted a sit down interview with David Rockefeller which can be viewed on YouTube.

Fulford says he was approached by a representative of a secret society called the Green and Red society after he made a speech in Tokyo, Japan where he talked about the Bush regime’s plans to develop race-specific bio weapons. He describes the society as having six million members, including 1.8 million Asian gangsters and 100,000 trained assassins. According to Fulford, the society was particularly upset with the Illuminati after discovering plans to reduce the world’s population by 90% as is described on the Georgia Guidestones. (See Common Sense Renewed) The Green and Red society believe that a large number of Asians will be exterminated when such plans are put into action.

Fulford says that he provided the society with a list of 10,000 names of the highest profile people involved in the Illuminati, such as Bilderberg, Skull and Bones, and Council on Foreign Relations members.

“I have been promised that not a single person will die if they negotiate in good faith,” Fulford said.[134]

“Think about it, the Illuminati and their top servants have a total membership of about 10,000 whereas the Chinese group has over 6 million members. That is 600 to one odds. Furthermore, the 6 million have the names and addresses of the 10,000 while the 10,000 do not know who or where the 6 million are.”[135]

“They [the Illuminati] are also neo-Nazis who want to reduce the amount of colored people in the world by at least half through disease, starvation and war. The Chinese secret society got wind of this and is preparing to stop them.”[136]

“So far, I have told the Illuminati that they are no longer allowed to murder Japanese politicians. I now plan to extend this protection to all politicians in the West. If the Illuminati assassinate or attempt to assassinate Ron Paul, Barack Obama or any politician, may God have mercy on their souls.”[137]

“Since I am a peace-loving, laid-back Canadian suddenly put in a situation of great responsibility, I feel I must act as a servant of the weakest people and creatures on the planet. I have also been negotiating in secret with the Illuminati in the hopes of arranging for them to cede power without any bloodshed in exchange for a general amnesty.”[138]

Fulford insists that the Green and the Red societies can be read about in history books. He says that when the Manchus invaded China in 1644, that it caused the Ming army to organize as an underground society aimed at overthrowing the Qing (Manchu) and restoring the Ming.

Later, he says, the society overthrew the last Emperor and installed Sun Yat Sen in his place. They were called the Green Gang and the Red Gang who fought Communism in Shanghai in the 1940s but after being defeated in 1949, they went underground.

It certainly is understandable if a secret society with no affiliation with the Illuminati were to see the organization as a threat to their country, especially if they are under the impression that their population is going to be eliminated as part of the population reduction agenda that elite globalists and the Illuminati clearly have.

The sheer numbers of the alleged members in the Green and Red societies are staggering, and cast doubts on Fulford’s claims. If this society exists, and if they did tell their plans to Fulford, perhaps they exaggerated their numbers as a way to intimidate the Illuminati or perhaps, just like there are millions of Freemasons, with only a small fraction composing the inner circle, perhaps this is the case with the Green and Red society as well. Or, perhaps, Fulford is just another fraud on a long list of people who have claimed to have intimate knowledge of the Illuminati’s activities or goals. While this certainly is possible, unlike almost all of the people making fraudulent claims concerning these issues, Fulford doesn’t have a book he is peddling, (at least at the time of this writing) but could possibly be making money by giving lectures. Having reached a fair amount of success as a writer and working for prestigious, well respected companies, Fulford has a lot to lose by making such claims, even if they were true.

Another suspicious aspect surrounding Fulford are his claims that he is personally negotiating with the Illuminati on behalf of the Chinese secret society. Why would he need to be involved in such negotiations and why would he want to place himself in such a dangerous position? He openly admits (or rather claims) that he provided the Green and Red society with the names and addresses of 10,000 Illuminati members. Why would *he* need to do this? One would think that the Green and Red society would do their own research and wouldn't need Fulford to be so involved. Whatever the truth is surrounding Benjamin Fulford's claims, nobody knows. While such a threat is certainly possible from a secret society that is not affiliated with the Illuminati, Fulford's story contains seeds of doubts with regards to its authenticity and his motives for publicizing it.

Hal Turner

On October 4th 2008, a white supremacist hate monger named Hal Turner posted a video on his YouTube channel, titled "Hal Turner Shows New AMERO Currency," where he claimed to have in his possession an actual Amero coin, the planned currency for when the North American Union is completed and the United States, Canada, and Mexico have a common currency. He also claimed that America sent 800 billion dollars of the new coins to China in preparation for the collapse of the U.S. Dollar. The video quickly received over 400,000 views, and reached the number one spot on Google Video's top 100 list.

Not only was Turner wrong about having an actual Amero coin, but he was purposefully lying about it in an attempt to create the idea that a regional currency, likely to be called the Amero, is a hoax and something American's don't need to worry about or look into.

Anyone can purchase a "novelty replica" Amero from www.AmeroCurrency.com or www.DC-Coin.com. In his video where he claims to have an actual Amero, the camera zooms in on the front and back of the coin to show the designs as he attempts to "prove" its authenticity, and the coin he is holding is EXACTLY like the replicas sold on the web.

One might be led to believe that Turner is simply mistaken, and that he actually thinks he has a real Amero coin, because the Council on Foreign Relations and other New World Order organizations have been planning such a thing for years. One might think that he just didn’t do his research, and believes that someone had sent him an actual coin. This is simply not true.

A year earlier Turner had posted pictures on his website of what he claimed to be “real” Amero coins that he had obtained. He plastered his website name, HalTurner-Show.com on the pictures, knowing that people would spread them all over the web and give him free advertising by spreading his name. News of his “discovery” spread all over the Internet (falsely) reporting that Amero coins were being produced.

A quick Google search shows anyone that the pictures of the coins were taken from the various websites that create novelty coins and replicas. Countless people must have emailed him to point this out to him, as did the comments on his blog post. Then, one year later, Turner obtains a replica, and then posts a video claiming to have an actual coin!

Posting comments on the video on his YouTube channel had been disabled by him. He obviously saw that people were posting comments about replica coins being made and sold on the Internet. So this leads to the question of why. Why would he make such claims knowing he was lying when he claims to be a concerned citizen trying to expose the New World Order?

Turner has a history of urging and hoping for violence against others, including judges, and has posted their home addresses on his website and written blogs celebrating their murders. The Southern Poverty Law center and others report that Turner is an FBI informant, and many suspect he is a paid provocateur and a COINTELPRO asset, (an acronym for Counter Intelligence Program).

At the end of July 2008 Turner was forced to quit his Internet radio show and abandon his website due to constant attacks from the hacking group known as Anonymous. These are the same hackers that have targeted Scientology for its corrupt and litigious nature. The hackers kept causing

Turner to have outrageous bandwidth costs, which ultimately forced him to shut down and give up his radio show.

One can see how a large percentage of the viewers of his video claiming to show an Amero will believe him at first that the Ameros are already being coined, only to later dismiss the idea of the U.S. Dollar collapsing and being replaced by a new currency because it turns out the video was a hoax. It's a classic case of disinformation by mixing facts with fiction, in an attempt to prevent the public from focusing on the impact of such issues that we will ultimately face in the near future.

It turns out that Hal Turner was not finished making claims that he obtained real Amero currency. On December 3rd 2008 he posted photos of "Amero paper currency" and wrote, "To the chagrin of the government, I have obtained new "AMERO" paper currency notes! You know, the "AMERO" . . . . the new currency that is going to replace the US Dollar, The Canadian Dollar and the Mexican Peso? Yea, the new currency that all three governments claim doesn't exist. . . I have it."[139]

His new article goes on to say how over a year ago he "first broke" the story about Amero coins being secretly created at the Denver Mint. He also explained that YouTube had notified him that the video he had posted showing his alleged Amero coin had been deleted and his account "permanently closed at the request of the United States Treasury Department." Turner wrote, "The Treasury department told YouTube/Google that my video was destabilizing the U.S. Dollar and was thus a threat to national security."[140]

While his articles allow readers to post comments, the user is notified that the administrator (Turner) must approve all comments first, and if and when this happens, it will show up on the website. So obviously, all comments posted informing him and the readers that the photos and his claims are fraudulent, are simply not approved, and never find their way on the website. It is incredible the number of gullible people that continue to believe Tuner. By reading the comments that he had approved, it becomes clear the inability of Turner's readers to distinguish fact from fiction.

What’s worse is that Turner’s articles are often copied and pasted into emails and sent around to others by people who believe his writing and aren’t aware of his continuous lies and his possible role as a paid government disinformationist.

Anthony J. Hilder

In today’s modern world with the Internet, mp3s and YouTube, it can be somewhat simple to open the floodgates of information regarding the Illuminati and secret societies. Since 2006 and the creation of YouTube and Google Video, countless video clips and documentaries about such issues are literally a click away. But as we know, books on the Illuminati have been around since at least the late 1700s as in the case of John Robison’s *Proofs of a Conspiracy* and Abbe Barruel’s *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism.* There seems to be a tremendous gap in history from the time these books were published, until other authors and researchers continued the work such as Nesta Webster and Edith Miller in the 1920s and 30s, and later Gary Allen with his 1972 book *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*.

Another one of those researchers is Anthony J. Hilder, who in 1967 was producing vinyl records about the Illuminati with Myron Fagan, and after the 9/11 attacks in 2001 he was still watching the New World Order unfold and put out a film uncovering the hidden agenda and motives behind the attacks. In 1982, Hilder managed Gary Richard Arnold’s campaign for Congress in California. Arnold made front page headlines around the country after he publicly confronted then President Ronald Reagan about lying to the American people about lowering taxes. The confrontation occurred in the east room of the White House and caused Reagan to angrily tell him to “shut up.”[141]

I had the honor of meeting Anthony in 2006 and have spoken with him on numerous occasions since, including an interview I conducted when I hosted *Resistance Radio* on the Genesis Communications Network.

Transcript from August 12, 2007 Interview:

[Mark Dice]

We were just talking about how now we’re using mp3s and streaming video and YouTube, Google Video, and back in the ’60s you were getting this information out to people on vinyl records. How did you find out about the Illuminati back in the ’60s?

[Anthony Hilder]

Well, I actually learned about it before, I just didn’t have a name. In the 1964 presidential election with Barry Goldwater, I was in San Francisco and putting out stars for Barry. We had individuals like John Wayne and Efrem Zimbalist Jr., and Roy Rogers...a number of people across the Hollywood landscape, coming out for what I considered to be the most honorable and courageous presidential candidate that I had ever seen in my lifetime, Barry Goldwater.

And I learned then that there was a problem, a major problem. And that came about by having people believe the propaganda that was being fed, not by the left wing in this country, but coming out on stations like Gene Autry’s. And I started to get the message that we had to have a major revelation in this country. We had to have an awakening of just who was behind the scenes. I found out that we had the one party system.

I was getting that idea earlier than that, but by ’64 I was convinced and during the next two years I had discovered a writer named Myron Fagan who was the most prolific playwright in our history. He had about nine plays running concurrently in New York, and he thought that Communism was part of the problem, but he discovered, and I discovered through him, that Communism is not a creation of the masses to overthrow the banking establishment; it’s a creation of the banking establishment to overthrow and enslave the masses. It was never operated from Beijing, Moscow, or Havana. It was *always* controlled from New York, Washington, and London. That’s where it’s coming from. It is not my intention, nor has it ever been my intention since that period of time to deal with the people at the bottom of the pyramid, but rather to deal with the Luciferian head.

[Mark]

Anthony, I gotta tell you, that when I had first seen your film *The Greatest Lie Ever Sold*, I was becoming awakened to 9/11, and I could follow the information, I could swallow it, I could understand it, but then you had a clip in there of Ralph Epperson saying that President Bush worships Lucifer, knowingly and willingly and that he wouldn't be president if he didn't. And I gotta tell you, at that time, I thought that you just lost all credibility with me, and I was still early in my studies, and I have to tell you man, I've come to realize how right you were.

[Anthony]

Well, you don't lay nude in a coffin and are born again into a satanic order and have your grandfather support Adolf Hitler and your father named Magog and he laid nude in the same coffin, when Magog means the one who fights God in the last days of the earth.

This is a satanic Luciferian New World Order. This whole ein volk, ein right, ein furor, one world, one race one ruler scenario has carried over from Nazi Germany to the United States of America through the neocons. These are neoconazis and they are not Christians, they are not conservative and I don't want to put the blame on Israel or the Israeli's, but in the Bible it says beware of those who call themselves Jews but are not. So I said, well who are they? Who are these guys that are ruling this country? They're Luciferians. Certainly George Walker Bush, you take a look at him and say, well he's a Christian. He's no Christian and he's no conservative. He's anything but.

[Mark]

Tell us about some of the major steps that brought you the large pieces of the puzzle. How did you put this together? Now anyone who wants to know can just go to Infowars.com or go do some research on their own, but how did you put all these pieces together, some 40 years ago?

[Anthony]

I started at the age of twelve. I was a supporter of this government and certainly my father who fought in the Second World War out in Bermuda. I discovered that we were not being told the truth from a conversation that I overheard. I overheard a conversation between my uncle and his friend who was in the FBI and all that they went through to cover up the Pearl Harbor attack. In other words, the US government and Roosevelt knew about the Pearl Harbor attack before it occurred, allowed it to occur, provoked the Japanese, and I knew then that everything I was told by the then present administration was a lie.

I was prepped for the information that I got through Myron Fagan and I was prepped again in 1963 and 1964, so I came to the conclusion that we have a one party system and these Hegelian politics that are used by the controlling group which is like the puppet master in the center, keeps us against each other.

The legitimate left and the legitimate right are now joining together. We have an alliance and we must have a free world alliance. We must have a free world which is a federation of nation states: tribal, linguistic, racial, religious nation states, which allows everybody to do their own thing in their own time in their own way. And without this, with this division we're going to be screwed. Not only for tomorrow, but forever.

[Mark]

Were there any books, I mean you can go now to Barnes and Noble and pick up any one of numerous books on the Illuminati, you can order Fritz Springmeier's *Bloodlines of the Illuminati*, not that they carry it, but they will order it in. Some bookstores have had *Codex Magica* from Texe Marrs on the shelf. Were there any books available? I know John Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all religions and governments* was...

[Anthony]

That's certainly one of them. But there was a book that was written as a takeoff from my *Illuminati CFR* recordings, and that was a book called *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*. Gary Allen, myself, and John Steinbacher were at Copper Kettle at Gower and Sunset in Hollywood, and he was climbing all over me saying he was going to expose me and this whole thing about the Illuminati was a bunch of crap and he went on and on. And eventually he said I'm going to prove that this is all wrong. So he went out to disprove the material that was laid out by Myron Fagan and in his discovery of what was going on, he concluded that it was in fact the truth.

And then he did an article called the *Establishment CFR*, and I said listen, now that you have the message, can I record this? "Certainly," he said. I had a friend of mine, John Carradine, an actor, John narrated it and we came out with the *Illuminati CFR* sequel which was the *Establishment CFR*, then he did this book called *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*. He printed about five and half million of them.

[Is the Illuminati a religious or satanic cult?]

[Anthony]

Well, the Illuminati are the elite. And if you go back to *Morals and Dogma* which is the bible of the Masonic religion, Pike says that Lucifer is god and they should follow the Luciferian doctrine.

If you go up to the Bohemian Grove, my friend Alex Jones went over there with a camera and got in and saw these guys dressed in black robes making a sacrifice at the feet of Moloch. In days gone by those were real children they sacrificed.

[How does Bible prophecy fit in with the Illuminati?]

[Anthony]

I believe the Bible is prophecy of what the Illuminati would do. Our major problem in this country today is that the support system for the Bush administration is coming from the Christian conservative community. They've been snookered. They've been had.

We have to knock out the props of support that the Bush administration has. I support Dennis Kucinich in his move to impeach Vice President

Cheney. We have to have impeachment. If you like what Adolf Hitler did, then you'll certainly love what George Bush is doing.

[Mark]

Do you think that the Illuminati believe that the Antichrist will rule earth as a god for an eternity? Or do you think that they know he's going to lose, and in their mind they think that he's going to sacrifice himself for them in a parallel to Christianity, or that they don't believe in an afterlife? What's your take on that?

[Anthony]

I believe that they believe that Lucifer is going to reign. What is it that Milton said? It's far better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven. It's in Blavatsky's writing. If you look at Madam Blavatsky and the religion that Hitler followed, he was a Blavatskyite.

And if you take a look at the overlapping of the Masonic religion, and with the Blavatskyites and the Theosophists, we are gradually moving towards a one world government.

[Mark]

Are they just too drunk with power to think that the Antichrist is going to lose, just like Hitler thought he would become an Antichrist god-like figure, and he died a cowardly suicide, or do they not think of these things, or do they think they're actually going to win?

[Anthony]

These people when they profess to be atheist are putting on a false face. They're not atheist. They believe in a god. I think our mistake is that we think of them as atheistic. There is a political agenda here and it is satanic. We have to, not only in *The Resistance* put forth, but we have to get this message out to people who do not share our opinion. We have to get right and left and black and white, and rich and poor and all come together and incite this revelation.

People are taking their lives and their fortunes and investing them in exposing and inciting a revelation. We need to do that which has never been done before. And if you’re sitting there thinking what can I do, you can do plenty. You can reach one hundred people by getting on the phone. And there are more of us than there are of them. We’ve got to understand this is ours to lose. We can do this if we simply bring about this alliance.

Myron Fagan

Myron Fagan was one of the youngest successful playwrights in history who would later turn his focus to the Illuminati in the late 1960s. While working on Broadway, he directed plays for the top producers at the time, including Charles Frohman and David Belasco.

In the mid-1940s Fagan became vigorously involved in exposing communist agents in Hollywood which lead to the 1947 congressional hearings where hundreds of famous actors, writers, and directors were investigated for being communist agents or sympathizers. These hearings resulted in the imprisonment of various individuals who worked in Hollywood who would become blacklisted and known as the Hollywood Ten.

Fagan went on to write several plays depicting communist plots. *Red Rainbow* and *Thieves Paradise* were two plays which faced opposition from left wing groups. *Thieves Paradise* portrayed a communist group plotting to create the United Nations as a front for a global government.

Even during his early research Fagan realized that there was actually a power behind communism that was even more powerful and largely unknown to the public. This same power was also manipulating American politics from behind the scenes. This power was the Illuminati.

Fagan began focusing deeper on the operations of the Illuminati and did not produce any more screenplays for the remainder of his life. In 1967 he recorded a vinyl record titled *The Illuminati CFR* which discussed the Illuminati’s plans for a New World Order. He soon made other recordings as well. Anthony J. Hilder produced the records and was mentored by

Fagan and went on to produce numerous films about the Illuminati, the New World Order, and 9/11. Anthony approached Fagan in 1966 and urged him to record the records so the information Fagan knew wouldn’t be lost after he passed away, since he was nearly 80 years old at the time. Fagan’s LPs were dubbed to cassette tapes and decades later copied into mp3s and YouTube videos and can still be heard today. Fagan died on May 12th 1972 in Los Angeles, California at the age of 85.

On the *Illuminati CFR* record Fagan explained, “The question of how and why the United Nations is the crux of a great conspiracy to destroy the sovereignty of the United States and the enslavement of the U.S. people within a UN one world dictatorship is a complete and unknown mystery to the vast majority of the American people. The reason for this unawareness and the frightening danger to our country and to the entire free world is simple. The masterminds behind this great conspiracy have absolute control of all our mass communication media, especially television, the radio, the press, and Hollywood.” Fagan would go on to explain how the Illuminati set up the Council on Foreign Relations as a front and a mechanism to create the New World Order.

Without the work of Myron Fagan, Anthony J. Hilder and others, it is unclear how informed the world would be regarding the Illuminati. Aside being friends with, and mentored by Myron Fagan, Anthony J. Hilder was friends with Antony Sutton, who would later write the first book published exposing the Skull and Bones society at Yale University, and Gary Allen who published *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* in 1972. This small group of friends; Myron Fagan, Anthony J. Hilder, Gary Allen, and Antony Sutton were absolutely instrumental in exposing the Illuminati, and without their hard work and fearless dedication in the 1960s, it is likely that most of the people who now know about the sinister activities of the Illuminati would still be searching for answers as to who was secretly pulling the strings from behind the scenes and why.

Aliens and Reptilians

Since mystery and speculation surrounds the topic of aliens and UFOs, it is not surprising that the subject matter is sometimes included in discussions about the Illuminati. If government agencies are actually hiding the existence of a crashed spacecraft from another planet, or the beings who supposedly used such a device, then one would assume that the Illuminati is involved in that cover-up.

Discussion or speculation about UFOs and aliens often angers serious and credible researchers who investigate the Illuminati and government corruption because almost all information on extraterrestrials is limited to fuzzy video, supposed eye witnesses, or documents which the authenticity cannot be verified. While a large amount of documentation and irrefutable evidence exists proving large portions of the claims made surrounding the Illuminati's existence, satanic rituals, and secret agendas being carried out in politics, the area of aliens and UFOs is lacking such material.

Some people speculate that crashed alien spacecraft have been dismantled and reverse engineered and sparked scientific advancements in aeronautics, chemistry, and other fields. Others believe that aliens are actually working with the Illuminati and live beneath the earth in underground bases and tunnels. Such bases and tunnels do exist, although their purpose remains the topic of debate. One of the more bizarre ideas involving the Illuminati sounds like science fiction, but authors and proponents of the idea claim and believe that they are presenting facts. While a fringe idea in regards to the Illuminati, the theory maintains that members of the organization are actually aliens from another dimension, or a hybrid blend of alien DNA and human DNA. Such an idea has been popularized by author and lecturer David Icke.

David Icke

David Icke is a British author and former football player (known as soccer in America) and the author of several books on the Illuminati, including *The Biggest Secret*, and *David Icke's Guide to the Global Conspiracy*. Most of what Icke writes and talks about is fairly documentable and realistic. It is his "shape-shifting reptilian" bloodline theory that understandably draws the most criticism and dramatically damages his credibility.

This criticism comes not only from skeptics and average people, but from others who research the Illuminati as well. Many see David Icke's talk of hybrid shape shifters as destructive to more documentable and legitimate information about the Illuminati. Some see David Icke as an opportunist who is mixing fact with science fiction in order to get attention with the hopes of selling more books and separate himself from other Illuminati and New World Order researchers by publicizing such wild theories. Others think Icke actually believes what he is talking about, and some see him as a paid disinformation agent who is actually working for the Illuminati and purposefully putting out false and misleading information in an attempt to discredit other legitimate researchers.

Icke and other proponents of the "reptilian shape-shifting" theory point to the statements of people who claim to have seen individuals in positions of power morph from a human into a reptile type of creature, and then morph back into a human again. Icke insists that high level Illuminati members are hybrid reptilians who must regularly drink human blood in order to keep their human form.

He also points to a passage in the Book of Genesis as his evidence. Genesis 6:1-6 reads, "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. 3And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. 4There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

Some Christians and even Biblical scholars believe that the Sons of God which came and took the daughters of men and had children with them, were an alien race called the Anunaki. Some versions of the Bible use the word Anunaki instead of Sons of God, and the contemporary English translation uses the words "supernatural beings," and clearly refers to some kind of alien creatures who came down and mated with human females.

In the passages in the Bible following these statements is the story about Noah's Ark and the great flood, which is said that God used to destroy everyone on the earth except for Noah, his sons and their wives who were aboard the ark and later repopulated the earth. While it is an interesting idea, and one could understand how someone would interpret these passages in the Bible as being the creation of a hybrid alien-human race of supermen, there is absolutely no evidence of such creatures existing today. Icke places a tremendous value on the alleged testimony of anonymous eye witnesses who supposedly have seen people "shape shift." On the Internet, one can find various photographs of what look like enormous human skeletons that are said to be the remains of the Anunaki, but all such photos have been proven hoaxes, and no such remains have ever been produced. Icke also makes other radical and unverifiable claims.

In one of his video lectures, titled *Ruled by the Gods*, Icke claims that he met an individual who worked for the CIA as a researcher, and that the man showed him a device the CIA had implanted in his chest where he needs to inject a certain kind of drug every few days, and if he doesn't, the man will die. Icke says the CIA implanted this device in the man's chest as a way to control him and prevent him from quitting his research after he found it unethical. Icke took no photographs of the alleged device, and other inconsistencies lead one to believe that Icke has made up this entire story in an attempt to have an "exclusive" story about the Illuminati that no other researcher had discovered.

First of all, if such a device was real, why didn't Icke take any pictures of it, or if he didn't have a camera at the time, why didn't he ask the man to later email him some, or anonymously send them to him through the mail?

Obviously, even if Icke had possession of such photos, they could easily be faked by having someone simply place a piece of plastic on their chest.

Secondly, if the CIA had implanted this man with such a device, what would happen if he were to go to the doctor or be taken to the hospital from a car accident, and the medical staff were to find this bizarre device stuck to his chest with no medical history of it in the man's medical records and no clues as to what such a device was used for?

Despite these dubious claims, David Icke has a loyal following, and has been involved in the conspiracy theory genre for almost twenty years. His work has a lot of New Age themes, and at times he seems to attack Christianity. In late 2006 he was the focus of a British documentary titled, *David Icke: Was He Right?* The film consists of news clips of Icke from the early 1990s when he appeared on talk shows around Britain claiming he was the son of God and delivering a warning to mankind about dark times ahead.

One such appearance was on the *Wogan Show* in 1991 which made him a laughing stock in Britain after the show had aired. The host, Terry Wogan started, "Let me get this story right. The press claim that you claim to be the son of God. Is that true?" to which David replied "Yes. Well, you see the thing is….(Audience laughs at him.) It's quite funny really. You know 2000 years ago had a guy called Jesus sat here and said these same things, you would still be laughing. It's really funny that we have not moved on that much."

Wogan then replies asking, "Was it a great shock for you to discover this at thirty-eight? (Audience erupts in laughter again) David then went on to predict cataclysmic events that humanity would soon be facing. "When may we expect tidal waves, eruptions, and earthquakes? When is the first thing going to happen?" asked Wogan.

"It will certainly happen this year. The first sequence will begin this year," replied Icke.

"What will happen if they don't happen? What will happen to you?" Wogan pressed.

“They will happen, because if they don’t happen, then there will be no earth,” said Icke as he nervously picked at his fingernails.

It’s surprising Icke was able to recover from such foolishness. Despite David Icke’s valid points about society being influenced by mainstream media and the history and activities of the Illuminati, there are gaping holes in his credibility and it is advised that people use other sources of information other than Icke in order to ensure the quality of the information they are getting.

William Cooper

Milton William Cooper, known as William or Bill Cooper was an author and radio host who discussed the Illuminati, the New World Order, and UFOs. He claimed that he had a Top Secret, Q security clearance, Sensitive Compartmentalized Information with access authorized on a strict need-to-know basis.[142] While supposedly working for Naval Intelligence, he claimed to have seen classified documents regarding the JFK assassination, UFOs, and the New World Order. Cooper was shot and killed on November 5, 2001 by a sheriff who was serving an arrest warrant at his Arizona home after Cooper allegedly tried to resist arrest and shot an officer in the head. He was 58 years old. Police and neighbors say Cooper had threatened a man with a gun for trespassing on his property, and a warrant was issued for his arrest. The circumstances surrounding his death remain the topic of debate and will be discussed at the end of this section. Many of Cooper’s fans believe he was assassinated to stop him from continuing to discuss the information he claimed to have learned while in the Navy.

William Cooper is best known for this 1991 book *Behold a Pale Horse*, which discusses various aspects of the New World Order and contains his many claims to have seen classified government documents while in the Navy. The title is from the Bible’s *Book of Revelation* chapter 6 verse 8, “And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.”

In the forward to *Behold a Pale Horse*, Cooper recounts his time in the Navy and begins by explaining that he and his fellow ship mates had seen several UFOs rise up from the ocean and disappear into the clouds. He insists that the Navy’s sonar had also detected these objects.[143] He explains that a superior officer then made him sign an agreement that he was not to discuss the event with anyone, including the other witnesses. Throughout his book are included various photos of Cooper while in uniform and on a patrol boat to show that he was actually in the Navy. He even includes his service record in the back of his book, in an attempt to give credibility to his claims, although these documents make no reference to him having any Top Secret security clearance.

Cooper explains that when he was registering for the Navy a questionnaire asked if the applicant had been a member of any fraternal organizations, and that he circled the DeMolay society, since he said he was a member as a child.[144] The DeMolay society is basically a branch of Freemasonry for children of Masons. He says that this selection made him a viable candidate to become promoted into the inner circle of Naval Intelligence, since all people in that division were involved with Freemasonry.

At this point he claims to have been given another security clearance in the crypto category and served as the designated SPECAT operator. It was then that he writes he learned the Office of Naval Intelligence had participated in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and that the Secret Service agent driving the limo had shot Kennedy in the head.[145] This odd theory isn’t even considered credible by the least objective JFK assassination conspiracy theorists, and such an idea ignores the fact that nobody reported hearing a gunshot from the limo (or seeing the driver with a gun), which was just a few feet away from the crowd.

Throughout his book he continues to make repeated references to “the Top Secret documents” he saw when working in the Navy and how they pertain to the New World Order.

I will continue to list his far-fetched claims in a minute, but it first must be said that it is extremely suspicious that Cooper casually mentions “Top Secret documents he had seen” as if they were just laying out on someone’s desk and he happened to spot them and had a chance to actually read through them. There are millions and millions of pages of classified material which fill countless filing cabinets which are extremely difficult to access, yet Cooper claims he simply “came across” various documents which discuss material referencing the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderberg group, and the New World Order.

In his book, he published a text allegedly from a document titled “Silent Weapons for Quiet Wars” which he says was a Top Secret document that was discovered on July 7, 1986 in a photo copier that had been purchased at a military surplus sale, suggesting someone in the military had accidentally left the original in the machine after making photo copies.

The “document” contains information supposedly on how the government can control the world’s resources, finances, and information, in order to further their goals of constructing the New World Order. It reads like a poorly written hoax. In the text of this supposed Top Secret document obtained by Cooper, it continuously refers to “the elite” and their diabolical plans. It also mentions the Bilderberg group and Rothschild’s control of the banking system. The whole thing reads like a pathetic regurgitation of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion.* (See Protocols of Elders of Zion)

Cooper also reported that to mark the year 2000, the Illuminati would use the Galileo space craft to detonate 49.7 pounds of plutonium as it reached the planet Jupiter, which would cause a nuclear reaction turning the planet into another sun. He said that this new star would be called Lucifer and would be cited as a miracle or a sign that the Antichrist was a god and the messiah had appeared. This, all according to Top Secret documents he claimed to have read in the Navy concerning Project Galileo.[146] Cooper’s book was published in 1991, giving him a full nine years to make such claims and collect the profits from his sales. He added that the Spear of Destiny, which is said to be the spear that was used to pierce the side of Jesus as he hung on the cross, and other ancient relics believed to be lost to history would be united and give the world leader supernatural powers. [147]

When describing the various secret societies that are involved in creating the New World Order, Cooper included the Skull and Bones society at Yale University, and the Scroll and Key society, but incorrectly stated that Scroll and Key was a secret society at Harvard,[148] when in reality it is also at Yale in Connecticut, the same residence of Skull and Bones.

Eight years before Cooper had published *Behold a Pale Horse*, Antony Sutton had released *American's Secret Establishment*, which had exposed for the first time, the activities of the Skull and Bones society. (See America's Secret Establishment page 85) Cooper was well aware of the book, and included it in his references page, so any idea that he learned of Skull and Bones while working in Naval Intelligence can be easily dismissed.

Cooper states, "Top Secret documents that I read while with Naval Intelligence stated that President Eisenhower had commissioned the JASON Society to examine all evidence, facts, likes, and deception and find the truth of the alien question."[149] While not often mentioned in regards to the New World Order, the Jasons, or the Jason Society is a secret group of scientists and scholars who consult with the Department of Defense. Their existence was exposed to the public during the Vietnam War and was well known to all anti-war activists.[150] So Cooper didn't need to find a "Top Secret" document to learn about the group, and only needed to read the newspapers in the late 1960s and early 1970s when their activities were being discussed in the press.

Cooper also writes about the alleged Majestic Twelve (also called Majesty Twelve), a group some believe is a scientific branch within the military which deals with aliens. Again, Cooper claims this information was discovered from secret documents that he just happened to find. He wrote, "I read Top Secret documents while with Naval Intelligence that stated President Eisenhower had appointed six of the Executive Committee members of the CFR [Council on Foreign Relations] to sit on the panel called Majesty Twelve also known as Majority Twelve for security reasons.

Majesty Twelve is the secret group that is supposed to control extraterrestrial information and projects."[151]

Ideas surrounding Majestic Twelve had been circulating in UFO circles since 1984, and was not a new "discovery" by Cooper from "Top Secret" documents. Most in the UFO community did not take Cooper seriously, and he found the majority of his support from patriots and those against the New World Order.

Perhaps the most laughable and far-fetched claim that can be added to the list is when he writes, "I read while in Naval Intelligence that at least once a year, maybe more, two nuclear submarines meet beneath the polar icecap and mate together at an airlock. Representatives of the Soviet Union meet with the Policy Committee of the Bilderberg Group," where "The Russians are given the script for their next performance…This method of meeting is the only way that is safe from detection and/or bugging."[152]

So, according to Cooper, there is no secure room in the Pentagon that is safe from being bugged or anywhere else on the planet, so the Bilderberg group must meet in a submarine beneath the polar ice cap.

Aside from numerous fabrications and obvious false claims in his writings, you will find the occasional paranoid ranting including one where he writes using all capital letters, "PATRIOTS MUST NOT BE AT HOME ON ANY NATIONAL HOLIDAY DURING THE DAY OR NIGHT EVER AGAIN UNTIL THE DANGER IS PAST. DISREGARD THIS WARNING AND YOU WILL FIND YOURELF IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP."[153]

Cooper claimed that he possessed photographs of a secret base located on the moon in the crater Copernicus.[154] Also in *Behold a Pale Horse* he included pictures of what he said were UFOs and diagrams and photos of what he called alien reproduction vehicles.

When looking for a motive for his outlandish claims, one needs only to look at the words of Mr. Cooper himself. In the forward to his book he describes that after he was discharged from the Navy that "we were broke and homeless at that point."[155] He had tried to make money by selling audio tapes of his lectures, which apparently wasn't making him any money, so he would later write and publish *Behold a Pale Horse* in 1991.

Also by Cooper's own admission he had fabricated documents and information concerning UFOs and the New World Order and posted them on a BBS network called ParaNet (Paranormal Network). Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) were a precursor to the Internet and allowed people to access another person's hard drive directly by using a modem. He fully admits that he fabricated information and posted it, but he claimed the only reason he did it was to throw the government off his trail by making them think that he was "a kook who didn't really know anything."[156]

Cooper was exposed and the information he had posted was proven to be false, and so it makes sense that he mentioned this in his book as a way to try to explain why it was that it had been shown he had spread fraudulent information in the past and been caught. The Sysop (system operator) for ParaNet, Michael Corbin, had this to say about Cooper: "First, I don't want to get into any protracted discussions about Bill Cooper. All I can say is that we, ParaNet, had a great deal of experience with Bill Cooper, up to and including ejecting him from the net for causing a variety of disruptions, not to mention strong attacks on other members of the net that were counter-productive to intelligent discussion. Our organization has investigated Cooper to the max and can find no truth in anything he says except that he was in the Navy, but not in the capacity that he claims. The bottom line is that Bill Cooper just doesn't hold water, so anything he says should be taken with a large block of salt and tongue planted firmly in cheek."[157]

Cooper had exposed nothing new in his book or in his lectures, and the information he claims to have read from Top Secret documents was nothing but a retelling of publicly known information that had been talked about in the anti-New World Order movement for decades. Actually, there is one exception in regards to no new information being published by Cooper, and that is the “Silent Weapons for Quiet Wars” document he claimed to obtain from an old photo copier. The “document” is rarely cited as evidence by people researching the New World Order, and its authenticity is doubted by many. He says it was given to him by a man named Tom Young and that Cooper himself had “read Top Secret documents which explained that “Silent Weapons for Quiet Wars” is the doctrine adopted by the Policy Committee of the Bilderberg Group during its first known meeting in 1954.”[158]

While no researcher is going to be 100% accurate with the information they compile, or the conclusions they draw from it, the repeated inconsistencies in Cooper’s book and his claims to have “seen Top Secret documents” about various issues which were already public knowledge, combined with his own admission that he had written and published fraudulent information in the past, clearly prove that Cooper is an unreliable source, and a financially troubled hoaxer who was cashing in by mixing fact with fiction and presenting himself as a first hand witness.

There are a number of people who continue to believe that William Cooper is a heroic man who exposed the New World Order and was murdered to silence him. Many of these people perhaps have only read parts of Cooper’s book and haven’t seen the extent of the ridiculousness of his claims. Others who are aware of his wild tales and actually believe them prove their inability to discern facts from fiction.

The actual events surrounding Cooper’s death remain the topic of debate and speculation amongst his fans. On November 5th 2001, sheriff deputies lured Cooper from his home in rural Eager, Arizona at approximately 11pm by posing as ordinary citizens playing loud music in their vehicle on or near his property, causing him to come out and investigate. A warrant had been issued for his arrest for allegedly threatening a man named Dr. Scott Hamblin with a gun for either trespassing or loitering on or near his land. Police claim that when they tried to apprehend Cooper, he pulled out a hand gun and shot one deputy, resulting in another officer shooting and killing Cooper. People who knew Cooper personally have said that anyone who attempted to approach his home would be confronted at gunpoint and that over the last few years of his life he was growing increasingly paranoid and unstable. They also said that Cooper himself had said that he would never be taken alive after he failed to appear in court for charges that he refused to pay income taxes. Cooper's neighbor and friend Glenn Jacobs was the editor of a small local paper called *The Round Valley Paper*, and wrote, "local police with a warrant for a couple of aggravated-assault warrants (Bill was certainly guilty) went up in force to Bill Cooper's house, letting on to be teenagers drinking and partying, with the radio turned up loud. Bill came out of his house and drove over to them, demanding that they get off of his mountain. Two officers jumped Bill in his car. Bill backed it up, shoved one officer out and shot the other one twice in the head with his forty-five, but did not inflict any life-threatening wounds. Bill ran toward his house, whereupon the entire contingent gave Bill what he had been asking for— his martyrdom. This was not a federal ninja action, nor a rogue-cop riot. Bill had gone over to Dr. Scott Hamblin's house and wagged a gun in his face, and seems to have done the same to another person as well. The officers wisely went prepared, as Bill had broadcast hundreds of times that he would not surrender and would kill anyone who came after him."

Despite Glenn Jacobs and others in the Eager, Arizona community who were friends with Cooper and against the New World Order saying that Cooper had lost it and opened fire on the police first, many of Cooper's fans believe he was purposefully murdered because he talked about 9/11 and the New World Order.

The *Associated Press* published an article the day after his death labeling Cooper a "national leader of the militia movement" and tried to tie him to Timothy McVeigh saying "McVeigh, who was executed in May for the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, listened to Cooper's broadcasts for inspiration, according to testimony by James Nichols, brother of Oklahoma bombing co-defendant Terry Nichols during a 1996 pretrial hearing."[159]

While Cooper's death is a tragedy and it's slanderous to tie him to Timothy McVeigh, and many of the issues he discussed on his radio show and in his book are true, it is inexcusable that he fabricated tales of seeing Top Secret documents in an attempt to add credibility to his story and sell more books. His numerous claims to have personally seen Top Secret documents on a variety of issues and present himself as a whistleblower casts a dark cloud of doubt over his memory and his body of work since it leads people unfamiliar with such material to believe that some fictions are fact.

Criticizing Cooper is a sensitive issue since he is viewed as a martyr by many of his fans who are offended by anyone voicing doubts about his claims or credentials, and continue to believe that he was assassinated despite all the evidence to the contrary.

Phil Schneider

Phil Schneider is a man who not only claimed to have information about UFOs and aliens, but he also claimed to have gotten into a shootout with them in an underground military base. Schneider appeared on the UFO scene in 1995, and traveled around giving a series of lectures which he claimed were accounts of his experiences working on government projects and ultimately battling aliens in an underground tunnel. He claimed to have worked for seventeen years as a geologist and aerospace and structural engineer and to have had a level 1 security clearance while working on black budget government projects. Schneider was found dead in his apartment on January 17, 1996 and apparently the body had been there for a week before anyone had reported him missing. The cause of death was officially from a stroke, but as will be discussed later, some speculate he was murdered to keep him from talking.

Schneider’s statements are interesting in that it appears to be the first time someone has come forward and not only claimed to have been a part of an alien cover-up, but that the aliens are living and working in a series of tunnels below the earth’s surface. Schneider maintained that some of these aliens are hostile, but others are friendly and work with the U.S. government.

At a speech given at the 1995 Preparedness Expo which can be seen on YouTube and Google Video, Schneider claims that the Army cavalry had a unit in 1909 stationed in the American south west who followed some “bandits” into a cave where they found “flying disks” and “little gray guys” and that the incident had been in secret archives ever since.

During his talk in 1995 he said that there were 131 active underground bases in the U.S. and 1477 worldwide, with each costing 17 to 19 billion dollars, and that each base was connected by underground tunnels with magneto-leviton trains that run between them.

Schneider claims there are eleven distinct races of aliens and that two of these races are friendly and work in cooperation with the U.S. government. The other races of aliens, he says, are a danger to civilization. During his lecture at the 1995 Preparedness Expo he held up a photograph of a group of men who had worked on the USS Eldridge and said that one of the men was an alien that looked human named Val Valiant Thor and had worked for the Pentagon for 58 years and had not aged. Schneider says he met this alien, and that he had six fingers and six toes on each limb, and that he had copper oxide for blood.

As it is typical with most “researchers” or “whistle blowers” who make extremely far-fetched claims, even for those who believe in so-called “conspiracy theories,” Schneider is believed by most to be a fraudulent opportunist who was seeking to make money off of the UFO and anti-New World Order subculture, or a disinformation agent who was muddying the water for serious researchers. Others, of course, believe his account was accurate and is more evidence that the government or the Illuminati, or a combination of the two, are in collusion with alien beings from other planets or dimensions.

From his May 8th 1995 lecture given in Post Falls Idaho:

“It is because of the rather horrendous designs and mechanizations of our federal government structure that I feel directly imperiled not to tell anybody about [these issues] so that’s why I’m here telling you. In doing so

I am breaking my security oaths, I am also guilty of breaking major federal law. How long I will be able to do this is anybody's guess. However, I would like to mention that this talk is going to be broken up into four main topics. Each of these topics will have some bearing on what you people are involved in, you patriot people, or even some of you people who aren't patriots but who may be leaning that way or considering it…"

"I want you to know that these United States are a beautiful place. I've traveled in over 70 countries, and I cannot remember any country that has the beauty, as well as the magnificence of its people, like these United States."

"To give you an overview of basically what I am, I started off and went through engineering school, which half of my schooling was in that field. I built up a reputation for being a geological engineer, as well as a structural engineer with both military and aerospace applications. I have helped build two main bases within the United States that have some significance as far as what is called the New World Order. Number one is Dulce, New Mexico. I was involved in 1979 in a horrendous fire fight with alien humanoids, and I was one of the survivors. I'm probably the only talking survivor you will ever hear. Two other survivors are under close guard somewhere in the United States. One is not in very good shape, he's been living in Canada. So I'm about the only one around that knows of the fire fight, and that knows all the detailed files of the entire operation. Sixty-six Secret Service agents, FBI, and the like, Black Berets, died in that fight. I was there."

"Number one: part of what I am going to tell you is going to be very shocking. Part of what I am going to tell you is probably going to be very unbelievable, though, instead of putting your glasses on, I'm going to ask you to put your 'skepticals' on rather than your spectacles. But please, feel free to do your own homework. I know the Freedom of Information Act isn't much to go on, but unfortunately it's basically the best we've got. The local law library in your nearest law university is a good place to look for Congressional Records. So, if one continues to do their homework, then one can be standing vigilant in regards to their country."

Alleged Firefight at Dulce Base

"Back in 1954, under the Eisenhower administration, the federal government decided to circumvent the Constitution of the United States and form a treaty with [alien] entities from outside of the United States and it was supposed to be secret. It was called the Greata 1954 Treaty, which basically said that the aliens could take a few cows and test their implanting techniques on a few human beings, but that they had to give detailed lists of the people involved. Slowly, but surely, the outer space aliens altered the bargain until they decided they wouldn't go by it at all. Back in 1979, this was the reality and the fire-fight occurred quite by accident."

"I was involved in building an addition to the deep underground military base at Dulce, New Mexico which by the way is probably the United States deepest base. It goes down seven levels and over 2.5 miles deep. At that particular time, we had drilled four distinct holes in the desert ground, and we were going to link them together and blow out large sections at a time. My job at that time was to go down in these holes and gather rock samples, check them for their particularity, for particle count, give a detailed account of what kind of chemical explosive, or plastic explosive to use and we would go from there. As I was headed down there, to my total surprise we found ourselves amidst a large cavern that was already full of outer-space aliens, otherwise known as large Greys. I was petrified, as most people might be. The only thing I could think of doing at the time was shooting at them. I killed two of them, but by the time I could reload, and re fire, at that time I had a Walther PPK pistol, I was an engineer so I didn't feel I had to carry a gun around, and I always carried this particular one around, it was nice and small and quite effective. But anyway, I killed a couple of these things and at that time there were several other groups of people down there. About 40 more came down after this started, and all of them got killed. Basically what had occurred was that we had surprised a whole underground base of existing aliens. Later on I was to find out that we are not the highest ones on the food chain. These aliens have probably been living on our planet for, different groups of aliens anyway, the short and the tall Greys at least for a million years. This could explain a lot of the theory behind ancient astronauts, these other kinds of things, and it might also explain the blood thirstiness of different kinds of native populaces like the Aztecs…”

“Anyway, I got shot basically here [in the chest]. Their kind of weapon wasn’t really a gun like thing, it was kind of like a box that they had on their body that they could manipulate. And it burned a hole in me and split my ribs apart, kind of gory and all that kind of stuff, but anyway it also gave me a high dose of rather nasty cobalt radiation. I have cancer to this day that’s probably a result of that, although I can’t prove that.”

END OF TRANSCRIPT

Schneider’s tales are pretty far-fetched to say the least. I am not saying that aliens do not exist. I have an open enough mind to understand that their existence is certainly possible. Nor do I deny that they have visited the earth. It is an interesting topic, and while many, if not most, supposed UFO sightings are fully explainable and the result of top secret aircraft, unknown atmospheric conditions, and even that of pranksters, hoaxers and mentally insane people, there does remain the very real possibility that intelligent life exists outside of planet earth and has perhaps traveled here. It is not my intention to completely discount the possibility of real aliens from other planets existing or visiting the earth or even working with the Illuminati. We need more evidence, and most of the so-called evidence that has come forth has been fraudulent and created for the purpose of getting the media’s attention, and selling books.

In his lectures, Schneider mentions that he had actual metal from the UFO crash in Roswell, New Mexico that was given to him when he was fourteen years old. He shows metal samples at his speeches and says that the materials to build the Stealth Fighters and some submarines came from alien technology. The samples he shows which he claims were from alien technology are so hard they can scratch diamonds, he said. No one was allowed to test his claims, or handle the samples themselves.

As if his allegations of having a shootout with aliens weren't outrageous enough, they get worse. During his talks Schneider said that aliens use human blood and secretions as food, and that they "get high" off of the adrenochrome from the adrenal gland. He said it was like cocaine for them. It is actually rumored that Satanists participate in this practice for the same reason, which is most likely the inspiration for Schneider to include this strange practice in his stories about the aliens. (See Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas page 318) Schneider also claimed 100,000 children are unaccounted for and have recently gone missing and that he believed the children and other missing persons are victims of the aliens who take them and eat them.

By the year 2029, he said the aliens would reduce the world's population by seven-eighths and then would rule the earth. Aside from giving a lecture on underground bases and tunnels and his alleged alien encounter, he would occasionally rant about the corrupt government, the loss of Civil Liberties, and the New World Order.

So in summation, he claims that in August of 1979 he shot and killed two aliens with his Walther PPK pistol and that before he was able to kill one of the aliens, it shot a blue beam out of its chest which hit him cutting him open and burning several of his fingers off. Schneider was missing the index and middle finger and part of his thumb on his left hand, which some say is "proof" of his story. At various points during his speeches, this injury can clearly be seen. He could have very well lost them in a work related accident and incorporated it into his stories about the aliens. The question of why he was carrying a gun to begin with is also perplexing. If he was a civilian engineer, why would he be carrying a gun? If he was working on a secure military installation, then why would he need a gun? Or would he even be permitted to carry one? Probably not.

Schneider also claims to have held a level 1 security clearance, which sounds impressive and appears to be the highest level available since it is labeled "level 1" but in reality a level 1 security clearance is only an entry level clearance. Level 1 is categorized as "confidential" with level 2 being “secret” and level 3 being “top secret.” Schneider probably didn’t know the structure of the hierarchy, and incorrectly believed a level 1 clearance would be the highest level.

There is also the question of how Schneider would know about how many races of aliens there were, and how he would come to know that they were eating people for the adrenochrome in their body, if in fact they were. If there are aliens living in the underground bases and tunnels, and Schneider did actually see them, or have a conflict with them, then he would have been debriefed and sworn to secrecy never to talk about it. Those who knew the whole story, certainly would not tell Schneider or others about the details of the aliens, or what they were doing living in those bases.

While Schneider didn’t have any books or DVDs to sell after his lectures, word was that he had nearly completed, or was working on a book when he had died. Some who believe Schneider’s stories use this as evidence that the government assassinated him to prevent him from getting his information out. Or perhaps people just assumed that he was working on a book, because nearly everyone who comes forward with tales of supposedly witnessing government programs or having been members of the Illuminati, write books.

Underground bases and tunnels do exist. There are advanced tunnel boring machines (TBMs) that are making them, and video of such machines can be readily found on the Internet and they have been featured in shows produced by the History Channel. You can easily find the websites for the Robbins Company and others which build them. This author has a detailed chapter on these underground bases and tunnels in my book, *The Resistance Manifesto*. It is certainly likely that top secret tunnels span the country, if not the world and connect various military bases. Schneider may have actually worked on such projects, and used this knowledge and experience to concoct his entire “alien fire fight” story. Perhaps he was upset that enormous amounts of money were being spent on the projects and he thought that by blowing the whistle on them and mixing in fictional tales of aliens living in them, it would give him more attention and cause people to look into the tremendous waste of money that is being put into such projects.

Or perhaps Schneider was a retired engineer who was bored and thought that people who believed in aliens were kooks, and decided he would entertain himself by making up a bunch of stories about how he had a shoot-out with aliens when he was working in the tunnels and loved the attention he got as a result and he and his friends would laugh about how gullible the UFO crowd was as they drank a few beers. Of course it is also possible that Schneider was a paid government disinfo agent who had the job of publicizing ridiculous tales involving the underground bases and tunnels to make people think that any talk of the tunnels existing were conspiracy theories involving aliens.

Upon word of Phil Schneider’s death in January 1996, rumors circulated on the Internet that he was murdered, as is common when people in the conspiracy theory genre die. While his death was ruled a natural cause by a stroke, a letter began circulating on the Internet, supposedly written by his ex-wife, Cynthia Drayer. The authenticity of this letter has not been verified, and when one reads its contents, it becomes obvious that it is a hoax, or a joke, meant to stir up even more controversy surrounding Phil Schneider.

The letter explains that Schneider’s wife suspected foul play, and another autopsy was performed “at the Multnomah County Medical Examiner’s office (in Portland, Oregon) by Dr. Gunson, and she determined that Philip had committed suicide by wrapping a rubber catheter hose three times around his neck, and half-knotting it in front.” Whoever actually wrote this letter, and whatever Schneider’s motives for fabricating his fanciful stories, we may never know.

Mentions in Mainstream Media

The subject of the Illuminati and its subsidiary organizations such as the Bilderberg group, Skull and Bones, and the Bohemian Grove are rarely mentioned in the mainstream news, largely because they own most news outlets and have editorial policies in place to prevent such stories from being published or produced.

Even many so-called more independent forms of media such as talk radio will not cover such organizations. Most local hosts simply have no idea such organizations exist, and have probably not even heard of the Illuminati.[160] Other national hosts such as Rush Limbaugh, who is under a $400 million dollar contract, knows exactly what these organizations are, who is involved with them, and what they are doing. By the way, that is not a typo, in July of 2008 Limbaugh signed a $400 *million* dollar deal with Clear Channel to stay on the air through at least 2016.[161] Hosts like Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Bill O'Reilly, Alan Colmes and others know who is pulling the strings in global affairs, and that those same institutions are the ones who sign their paychecks as well.

Even with such safeguards in place as Operation Mockingbird, which uses editors and producers who are in the know as gate-keepers to prevent hard news about the Illuminati from making it out to the public, they cannot keep *every* story from being killed. (See Mainstream Media page 33) What is even less under their control is what certain guests may say when they are being interviewed live on the air. Of course, any guests who are prone to mentioning such things would only be booked in an attempt to attack them and discredit them, but all measures are taken to thoroughly screen guests to make sure they subscribe to the paradigm the network is attempting to maintain.

CNBC

October 24, 2008

After the entire U.S. economy began to melt down in the third quarter of 2008, many people were looking for answers as to how this could happen. A short but interesting answer was given on CNBC on Friday October 24, 2008 by Jeffrey Saut of Sentinel Asset Management, who said, "I think you're in a liquidation phase, I think Kirstin (another guest on the show) had it right, I think there is a bunch of wrong footed moves made by Hank Paulson (Treasury Secretary at the time) and the Illuminati of the country if you will, and I think we're paying for it right now."

Gerald Celente

December 8, 2008

CEO of The Trends Research Institute, Gerald Celente, is an extremely well respected trend forecaster who is noted for predicting the 1987 stock market crash, as well as the fall of the Soviet Union. In 2008 Celente made news reporting that by 2012 America would be in a depression worse than the Great Depression which occurred in the 1930s. He forecasted massive unemployment, food shortages, riots, and mass vacancies in retail spaces.

On the December 18th 2008 broadcast of the Alex Jones show on the Genesis Communications Network, Celente mentioned the Illuminati as the root cause of the economic collapse that began at the end of 2008. When asked for his analysis on what was happening, he said, "It's definitely a financial coup. Wall Street has hijacked Washington in broad daylight. Now as we know, of course, the U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson is a Goldman Sachs man, former CEO. They're bringing in now Obama, "backtrack Obama" we call him…the man of "change," and of course there's no change. They're bringing in Timothy Geithner, the Federal Reserve Bank president of the New York Federal Reserve. They're just bringing in this whole crew of Wall Street people running Washington. So it's being done in broad daylight as well as these bailouts. The Illuminati so to speak may have their agenda laid out."

Fox News Business

On December 12, 2008 a writer for Fox News Business made an interesting post concerning the economic crisis stemming from home foreclosures and failing banks and industries. Cody Willard posted an article titled, *Illuminating the Illuminati: Charles Schumer and Barney Frank are Owned by the Big Banks* where he wrote that the Illuminati controlled the banks and the politicians who were at the root cause of the financial collapse.

His post continued, “Here’s a definition of Illuminati: individuals who are part of a secretive, historical organization that is comprised of mostly influential members with political and/or financial clout.”[162]

It’s amazing Willard wasn’t soon fired or laid-off. Two months later in February 2009 Willard hosted a news segment on the Fox Business Channel titled *Illuminati Alert* which began with a graphic of an all-seeing eye on top of a pyramid flying across the screen. Willard denounced the banker bailout in the segment and began by saying, “Here’s how they were trying to hold you and me down today.”

The Colbert Report

Satirist and comedian Stephen Colbert, host of *The Colbert Report* on Comedy Central, included a joke about the Illuminati on his July 24, 2007 broadcast where he explained that Benjamin Fulford, who used to write for *Forbes* magazine, was accusing the Illuminati of planning to depopulate the earth. (See Benjamin Fulford page 195)

Colbert explains, “Normally I would ignore this kind of raving from an obscure hack, but there is one reason I want to talk about it. The possibility that the Illuminati might let me join. Masters of the temple, please let me in. I tried every crazy handshake I could think of when I met president Bush... And I’ve got some great ideas about depopulating the earth. There has never been a better time to put me in charge of the destiny of mankind.”

“I will await your answer every night for the next month in the exact center of the Brooklyn Bridge, whose cables by the way, are in the same geomantic ratio as the sides of the pyramid of Giza.”

Several months later, on December 10th 2008, Stephen Colbert had Richard Haas, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, as a guest. Colbert started the interview by saying, “you’re like the Illuminati, or the Masons, you control everything don’t you? That’s the rap on you guys.”

What is strange is that Haas didn’t have a new book to promote or any real reason to be on the show. It appears that one of the writers or producers of the show is familiar with the Illuminati and the New World Order and has worked these ideas into the show.

On January 29th 2009, this author (Mark Dice) received an email from a producer of *The Colbert Report* asking if I would be interested in being interviewed about the Georgia Guidestones monument. When I spoke with the producer on the phone she informed me that they were working on a series of segments about mysteries, and the punch line would be that Stephen solves them all. She also informed me that Colbert had not been familiar with the Guidestones and when one of the writers brought up the idea for a segment he doubted they even existed because he had never heard of them before.

So from the repeated references to the Illuminati on the show, and the request I received from the producer about the Guidestones, it becomes clear that someone working on the show is fairly familiar with such things, and has been able to work them into the show on several occasions. Their motive for doing so remains to be seen.

Fox News Channel

June 19, 2004

Guest: Kris Milligan

Kris Milligan, the editor of *Fleshing Out Skull and Bones*, one of the best books written on the Skull and Bones society was a guest on Fox News briefly to discuss the issue of both John Kerry and George W. Bush being members of the club and facing off against each other in the 2004 presidential election. The producers probably thought it would be an interesting segment and would present Skull and Bones as nothing more than a college fraternity for the elite, but as soon as Milligan mentioned the club's involvement in narcotics trafficking, he was cut off and the segment ended.

[Host]

What is the point of this club?

[Kris Milligan]

Well, some say the point of the club is bonding. I look at it through the eyes of a social historian. And when you look at the grouping of people and the jobs that they have, you find that a very large amount of the membership have been involved in intelligence. One of the most disturbing things is that the family groups have been involved in drug running since the early 1800s.

[Host]

Drug running?

[Kris Milligan]

Yes, see the founder of Skull and Bones was William Huntington Russell, and his family business was Russell and Company, which was America's largest opium smuggler, the third largest in the world…

[Host]

Wow. Kris Milligan, unfortunately we're out of time, we're going to have to leave it at that. Fascinating subject.

60 Minutes

June 16, 2004

CBS's newsmagazine *60 Minutes* aired a segment prior to the 2004 presidential election talking about the Skull and Bones society which included an interview with Alexandra Robbins, author of *Secrets of the Tomb*, who was herself a Yale graduate and a member of the Scroll and Key secret society. The segment was like every other one which miraculously made the mainstream news that year and basically portrayed the organization as nothing more than a fraternity for rich guys.

NBC's Meet the Press

In 2004, NBC's Tim Russert on *Meet The Press* briefly addressed the subject of George W. Bush and John Kerry being members of Skull and Bones, and asked them about it in a joking manner. Both Bush and Kerry laughed off his questions and moved right along with the interview.

President Bush appeared on *Meet the Press* on February 8, 2004. At the very end of the show Russert asked him about Skull and Bones. Russert must have been aware to some extent of the power the organization holds, and his brief question and his joking manner suggest this was a tactic used to minimize the issue in the election and laugh it off like it's just another college fraternity. Russert himself was a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. A transcript from that broadcast follows.

MR. RUSSERT: You were both in Skull and Bones, the secret society.

PRESIDENT BUSH: It's so secret we can't talk about it.

MR. RUSSERT: What does that mean for America? The conspiracy theorists are going to go wild.

PRESIDENT BUSH: I'm sure they are. I don't know. I haven't seen Web pages yet. (Laughs)

MR. RUSSERT: Number 322.

PRESIDENT BUSH: First of all, he's not the nominee, and — but look, I look forward —

MR. RUSSERT: Are you prepared to lose?

PRESIDENT BUSH: No, I'm not going to lose.

A few months before, on August 31, 2003, John Kerry appeared on the show and was asked the same question in the same manner. The topic was the last to be discussed and after Russert and Kerry laughed off the questions, the show ended and the credits rolled. Here is the transcript.

MR. RUSSERT: You both were members of Skull and Bones, a secret society at Yale. What does that tell us?

SEN. KERRY: Not much, because it's a secret.

MR. RUSSERT: Is there a secret handshake? Is there a secret code?

SEN. KERRY: I wish there were something secret I could manifest there.

MR. RUSSERT: Three twenty-two, a secret number?

SEN. KERRY: There are all kinds of secrets, Tim. But one thing is not a secret. I disagree with this president's direction that he's taking the country. We can do a better job. And I intend to do it.

MR. RUSSERT: And we'll be watching. Be safe on the campaign trail. John Kerry, thanks for joining us.

SEN. KERRY: Thank you, sir.

MR. RUSSERT: And we'll be right back. (Announcements)

MR. RUSSERT: That's all for today. We'll be back next week. If it's Sunday, it is MEET THE PRESS.

Geronimo's Skull Controversy

The Skull and Bones society is said to have three real human skulls which are kept in their windowless headquarters, the "Tomb" in New Haven, Connecticut. For decades it has been rumored that one of the skulls was that of the Apache Indian chief Geronimo, which was stolen by grave robbers in 1918 from his resting place at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. One of the men identified as the thief was Prescott Bush, who was a Skull and Bones member and is the grandfather of George W. Bush and was stationed at Fort Sill at the time Geronimo's remains went missing.

Of course, Skull and Bones members deny the story is true, but a letter discovered that was dated 1918 that was written by a Bonesman explained that they had taken the skull. The letter was written on June 7, 1918 by Winter Mead '19 to F. Trubee Davison '18 and reads, "The skull of the worthy Geronimo the Terrible, exhumed from its tomb at Fort Sill by your club & the K — t [Knight] Haffner, is now safe inside the T — [Tomb] together with his well-worn femurs[,] bit & saddle horn."

Harlyn Geronimo, the great-grandson of the Indian chief is suing Yale University and the Skull and Bones society to try to recover the remains. "I think what would be important is that the remains of Geronimo be with his ancestors," he said.

Alexandra Robbins, the author of *Secrets of the Tomb*, told CNN, "I spoke with several Bonesmen who told me that inside the Tomb there is a glass display case containing a skull and the Bonesmen have always called it Geronimo."[163]

The CNN story explained that they had attempted to contact Skull and Bones, but no one returned their calls. The controversy began in 2006, when the letter was first found tucked inside a book in the Yale library.

Some believe that the skull in question is not that of Geronimo's because they say his grave was unmarked and overgrown until a few years later. David H. Miller, a history professor at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma said, "My assumption is that they did dig up somebody at Fort Sill. It could have been an Indian, but it probably wasn't Geronimo."

Geronimo's great-grandson Harlyn has said he is willing to submit a DNA sample if the skull is recovered to determine if it is Geronimo's. In his 32-page lawsuit, he has also listed President Barack Obama, Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Secretary of the Army Pete Geren as defendants.

Inside Edition

The tabloid news show *Inside Edition* ran a brief segment during the 2004 presidential campaign about the Skull and Bones society, lasting just over two and a half minutes, which started with the narrator saying, "You may think that George W. Bush and John Kerry have little in common, but both men count themselves as members of Skull and Bones, Yale University's oldest, and some say, elite secret society."

The segment included several sound bites from an interview with author Alexandra Robbins, where she stated, "the only purpose of Skull and Bones, is to get its members into positions of power, and then to hire other members."

A brief sound bite from George W. Bush's fellow bonesman, Don Etra, who is a Los Angeles criminal attorney showed he wouldn't comment on the organization. Harvey Bundy, a portfolio manager in Chicago who was senator John Kerry's roommate at Yale, but not a member of Skull and Bones, arrogantly laughed after he states, "They pick people who are leaders on campus, and people who they believe will be future leaders, and they pick pretty well."

The subject of new members laying in a coffin nude and recounting their entire sexual history was mentioned, and footage of members wearing black robes was briefly shown and said to have been taken by the *Inside Edition* video crew with night vision cameras.

The segment ended with Alexandra Robbins saying, “Skull and Bones has told me that they don’t really care who wins, Bush or Kerry, for the 2004 presidency, for Skull and Bones it’s a win-win situation.”

CNN

December 4th 2008

Guest: Peter Schiff

Financial analyst and president of the brokerage firm Euro Pacific Capital, Peter Schiff, made an appearance on CNN to discuss the unfolding economic crisis in December 2008 and when he started mentioning the cause was the Federal Reserve, the network had “technical difficulties” and the segment abruptly ended while Schiff was mid-sentence. While some see the dropped feed as accidental technical difficulties, others wonder if an editor at CNN decided Schiff was giving away too much information and that he had to be silenced.

[Peter Schiff]

Capitalism is not about propping up failed companies, we need to let them fail. Now of course behind it all is the Federal Reserve, if the Federal Reserve had not intervened…had they not poured all this alcohol then Wall Street wouldn’t have got drunk, but they did. I am convinced that everything the government is doing to fight this off is gonna make… [Feed dropped]

Schiff had precisely predicted the 2008 mortgage meltdown and the following economic crisis. By watching video clips of his earlier appearances on TV in 2007 and 2008, you can see other guests on the shows laugh out loud as he warned the audience of exactly what was coming.

CNN in London

May 2005

Guest: John Ronson

While to date, the Bilderberg group has never been mentioned on CNN in America, a brief segment on CNN in London mentioned the group when they were meeting in Germany in 2005.

The segment mentions that *The Financial Times* of London had mentioned the meeting was occurring and guests included Nokia CEO Jorma Ollila, Daimler Chrystler's Juergen Schrempp, and outgoing World Bank president James Wolfensohn.

It featured an interview with Jon Ronson, who explained, "Bilderberg is a meeting of powerful centrists, industriousts, and politicians. They always meet in secret once a year in a five star hotel with golfing facilities, and they've taken on the image for conspiracy theorists of the fabled shadowy cabal that secretly rules the world."

When asked by the host what the purpose of their meeting is, Ronson answers, "They see themselves as head hunters. They'll get an up and coming politician who they think may be president or prime minister one day and as globalists industrials leaders who believe that politics shouldn't be in the hands of the politicians, they try and influence them with wise words in the corridors outside of sessions."

Jon Ronson doesn't really think the Bilderberg group is a big deal. That's probably the reason he was chosen for the segment, because he downplays their power and influence. He says, "Bilderberg's secrecy I think goes back specifically to Henry Kissinger, who in kind of a silly way, I think, loves the idea of being this shadowy secret figure and it was Kissinger as a founding member of Bilderberg who had this idea to be this kind of secret organization, in quite, you know, quite a silly way really."

Ronson is the author of a book called *Them: Adventures with Extremists*, and hosted a four part television series called *Secret Rulers of the World* where he covered several issues involving "the New World Order conspiracy theory." (See Secret Rulers of the World page 271)

While Ronson admits the existence of such organizations as the Bilderberg group and the Bohemian Grove, he downplays their influence on society, and insists that only “conspiracy theorists” are worried about what these organizations are doing.

PBS News Hour with Jim Laher

Alan Greenspan, who worked as the Chairman of the Federal Reserve for over eighteen years, did an interview with Jim Laher on the *PBS News Hour* promoting his book, *The Age of Turbulence*, when he made a startling admission that the privately owned Federal Reserve Bank can enact any monetary policy it wants to, and the U.S. government can’t do anything about it.

[Jim Lahr]

What is the proper relationship, what should be the proper relationship, between the chairman of the Fed and a president of the United States?

[Alan Greenspan]

Well, first of all, the Federal Reserve is an independent agency, and that means basically that there is no other agency of government which can overrule actions that we take. So long as that is in place, and there is no evidence that the administration or the Congress or anybody else is requesting that we do things differently than what we think is the appropriate thing, then what the relationships are don’t frankly matter.

C-Span

February 2002

Dick Cheney’s CFR speech

In a video widely available on YouTube, Vice President Dick Cheney can be seen addressing the Council on Foreign Relations and everyone erupts in laughter as an inside joke reveals the elitist attitude of the organization.

Cheney says, “Well, Les, Pete, I want to thank you all for the warm welcome today. I see a lot of old friends in the room. And it’s good to be back at the Council on Foreign Relations. As Pete mentioned, I’ve been a member for a long time, and was actually a director for some period of time. I never mentioned that when I was campaigning for reelection back home in Wyoming—(laughter)—but it stood me in good stead. I value very much my experience, exposure to the tremendous people involved and the involvement and the ideas and the debates on the great policy issues of the day.”

Notice how Cheney admitted being a member for a long time and a director, but never mentioned it when he was campaigning for reelection to the U.S. House of Representatives in Wyoming and then the audience laughed. Obviously Cheney was trying to keep his affiliation with the Council on Foreign Relations quiet and knows that the organization has a bad reputation with those Americans who see it for what it is. Everyone in attendance for Cheney’s speech knew this, of course, which is why they all laughed when he said he never mentioned his affiliation with the CFR.

Lou Dobbs Tonight

Aired June 9, 2005

One of the only mainstream hosts to even mention the Council on Foreign Relations’ plan for a North American Union is CNN’s Lou Dobbs. Starting back in 2005 Dobbs was doing segments about the elite’s plans to merge Canada, Mexico, and the United States into a North American Union modeled after the European Union, and eliminate the countries’ borders. The plan for the NAU had been hatched in secret, and was carried out in stealth until it was discovered.

One segment Dobbs aired on the subject showed Robert Pastor, the Chairman of the CFR say, “The best way to secure the United States today is not at our two borders with Mexico and Canada, but at the borders of North America as a whole."

The segment goes on to report on the CFR's report titled, *Building a North American Community* and how it envisioned a common border around the U.S., Mexico and Canada in the near future.

The North American Union had been called a conspiracy theory when the Security and Prosperity Partnership's website, SPP.gov had first appeared and the CFR's plan for a North American Union was first released to the public.

Dobb's report sited Mexico's problems with drug trafficking, and Dobbs blasted Robert Pastor's idea that the only way to secure America was to eliminate the border with Mexico and Canada.

Such a plan is an obvious push for a New World Order and a regional currency. Once there are several large regional unions, each with their own currency, it will be one small step to then merge all currencies into one global currency, and then to an electronic currency, which is ultimately the Illuminati's plan.

While Lou Dobbs was obviously stunned at the secretive moves to create a North American Union, he failed to see the big picture of why such actions were being taken. Dobbs concluded the segment saying, "Americans must think that our political and academic elites have gone utterly mad at a time when three-and-a-half years, approaching four years after September 11, we still don't have border security. And this group of elites is talking about not defending our borders, finally, but rather creating new ones. It's astonishing."

A year and a half later, Dobbs seemed to have put more of the puzzle together. A segment that aired on January 14th, 2007 was titled "George W. Bush fulfilling his father's dream of a New World Order" and began with correspondent Bill Tucker saying, "It's not a new idea. President Bush talked about it back in 1991" and then cut to the infamous video clip of Bush 41 giving his state of the union speech were he said, "It is a big idea, a

New World Order where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause."

Tucker goes on to explain that the former United States Trade Ambassador Robert Zoellick is talking about a New World Order with business at the helm of trade and economic policy and advocating what he calls the Association of American Free Trade Agreements, which is a non-government entity which would include North, Central and South America.

Tucker called it a stealth trade agenda that, "goes hand in hand with the United States, Mexico and Canada working quietly and behind the scenes to promote a common market with common deregulation for the benefit of multinational corporations."

The segment warned that such agreements were being set up by a small group of the corporate elite that was not accountable to anyone but themselves and said they were, effectively surrendering the sovereignty of the United States.

Dobbs concluded the segment saying that the corporate and political elite in America were more concerned with profits than with the United States or democracy.

C-Span's Washington Journal

Brian Lamb, the director of C-Span dedicated a segment of the show *Washington Journal* to the Bohemian Grove and slanted the coverage in an attempt to remove any suspicions surrounding the club. Professor Michael Barkun was the guest for the segment, who is the author of a book titled *A Culture of Conspiracy.*

Lamb stated, "A lot of things people feel are organized behind the scenes with the Bilderbergers, Trilateral Commission, Council on Foreign Relations, the Masons, you can keep going down the list…the Illuminati, one world government, New World Order, Skull and Bones."

Lamb then admits he was listening to *Coast to Coast AM* one night when Alex Jones was a guest, and said, "he was talking about the Bohemian

Grove club as if that's where it all happens. That's where all the decisions are made. There are thousands of people who go there, and there is some kind of ceremony and an owl and all that, have you followed this?"

Barkun replies, "Yes I have, even though the show is on past my bedtime, but, Alex Jones has been talking about this for quite a while. The Bohemian Grove, of course, is a privately owned redwood grove, up in Sonoma country, north of San Francisco where every summer there is a get together of the wealthy and well placed, all male, who get together for general cavorting, socializing, lecture, symposium and so on, in an atmosphere that is completely removed from public scrutiny. Alex Jones and some others have suggested for a long time that there are all sorts of nefarious rituals that go on, and a matter of fact, and I talk about this incident actually in my book, someone who had listened to the Alex Jones show about this was arrested within the Bohemian Grove, very heavily armed, because he said he was trying to bring attention to what he thought were human sacrifices that were being committed by the elite who attend these gatherings."

The topic was then changed to Skull and Bones. Regarding the man arrested in the grove, Barkun is referring to a man named Richard McCaslin who broke into the club in January of 2002 with hopes of exposing the Cremation of Care ritual which he believed involved an actual human sacrifice. During their discussion both Lamb and Barkun avoid any reference to the Cremation of Care ritual, and the fact that a ritual involving burning a human effigy is done each year as a sacrifice to Moloch. Instead they end their discussion and leave the viewer thinking that the intruder was completely insane for thinking such things were occurring there. (See Dark Secrets: Inside Bohemian Grove page 269) (See Chris Jones page 192)

National Geographic

In 2004, *National Geographic* published a photo of a 1915 Cremation of Care ritual taken by Gabriel Moulin and included a caption below the photo explaining the picture. "To purge himself of worldly concerns, a member of the elite Bohemian Club participated in a 1915 Cremation of Care ceremony—complete with candles and a robed and hooded comrade to guide him. This private club of influential men still meets annually north of San Francisco and uses this symbolic ritual to kick off its summer retreat. But today the ceremony involves burning a mummy-like effigy named Care at the foot of the group's mascot: a 40-foot-tall (12-meter-tall) concrete owl."[164]

ABC News Report on Bohemian Grove

On July 23, 1981 ABC News aired a segment about the Bohemian Grove which someone had obtained from their archives and posted on YouTube in 2006. This segment would mark possibly the only attention given to the Bohemian Grove by a mainstream news source. The fact that no other television news stations have since devoted *any* attention to the subject speaks volumes as to the control the organization has over the media.

The anchor at the time was Frank Reynolds, who begins the segment asking, "What have Herbert Hoover, Art Linkletter, Jack London and Richard Nixon all had in common? Well, they've all been members of the exclusive all male, Bohemian Club in California, where every year at this time the elite from around the country get together for two and half weeks of, um, fun and games."

Steve Shepard went on to report that more than 2000 members spend two weeks encamped in the 2700 acre privately owned redwood forest. He named Gerald Ford, Henry Kissinger, George H.W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, and Richard Nixon as members, as well as high ranking executives at Standard Oil and Bank of America. Shepard went on to say "Privacy is one of the grove's most cherished virtues. Members may not photograph, record, speak or write about activities at the retreat. While many public officials are grove members, the press is a distinctly unwelcome guest."

The segment even showed a photograph from the Cremation of Care, and interviewed sociologist William Domhoff who explained, "with the ceremony called the Cremation of Care that begins the two week encampment where the body of dull care, symbolizing woes and concerns is burned on an alter in front of a big owl statue, when that ceremony ends, they all start to cheer and yell, and hand each other a beer."

The segment also explained that no women were allowed in the club, not even as employees, and admitted that aside from a summer getaway, the club hosts private talks from insiders, citing the development of the nuclear bomb.

Since this rare occurrence, as of the date of this writing, literally no national broadcast has ever discussed the Bohemian Grove, not even the tabloid news shows which focus less on hard news, and instead on scandals and celebrities.

Pitching the Bohemian Grove to Producers

There was a period of time when this author (Mark Dice) would call producers for different television shows and try to get them to do a story about the Bohemian Grove, but it never happened. I got a call back once from a producer for *20/20*, a show on ABC known for its investigative reporting. I told them I had authentic video footage, and I told them about the rare mainstream news articles, and that I would put them in contact with eye witnesses who had seen the ritual with their own eyes, but no segment was ever produced.

I personally pitched the idea to Geraldo Rivera at Fox News over the telephone, yet nothing happened. I told him that unlike his segment twenty years ago when he opened Al Capone's vault for the first time live on television and found nothing, his audience would be shocked when they were given a glimpse inside the Bohemian Grove and it would be the most sensational story he had ever done. I even left voicemails at the Howard Stern Show thinking they would be interested, at least for the bizarreness of the story, but I never got a call back.

One of the most interesting outcomes was with a producer at MSNBC named Greg Cockwell who produces *Countdown with Keith Olbermann*. I had spoken with him on the phone and told him all about it, and offered to email him photos and links to videos and an article in *National Geographic* magazine about the club. I never heard back from anyone, so after some time I called him again. I proceeded to make the case to him about the existence of the Bohemian Grove and the video footage of the Cremation of Care ritual, when he cut me off saying, "I know, I know." I proceeded to tell him that I wasn't joking, and this wasn't a hoax when he told me that he knew I was telling him the truth, and said "you opened up a whole new world to me." I then asked if he would run a segment about it, and he responded "It would never make it to air."

"The network wouldn't let you do it?" I asked.

"It will never happen," he responded.

I figured if anyone in mainstream television would cover the story it would be Keith Olbermann. After all, he hated President Bush so much, why wouldn't he do a story exposing his friends at the Grove? Olbermann and his producer probably feared the repercussions from airing such a segment, or weren't allowed by the higher-ups.

The Mancow Show

In mid-2008, this author was a guest on *The Mancow Show* hosted by Eric "Mancow" Mueller, and I was able to bring the Bohemian Grove up in the conversation, and to my surprise, he was familiar with it. "Let's talk about the Bohemian Grove, do you know anything about it?" I asked him live on the air.

"I do, I know they get naked and dance around a big owl out in the middle of nowhere. I've been invited to go there and I refused."

He asked me some questions about the club and I explained the Cremation of Care ritual to him and the audience and he ended the segment saying, "I know as crazy as this sounds, a bunch of politicians dancing out in the woods around a giant owl…I always thought it was some conspiracy thing, some lie. And then, I got invited to join and then footage came out that somebody smuggled out. Sure enough, it exists. I don't know if it's satanic…I don't know who's involved, but fascinating stuff. Thank you Mark Dice. *The Resistance* is his group. Don't laugh at him. Let him have his say. This is the Free Speech Radio Network. This is *The Mancow Show*."

Walter Cronkite

A video posted on YouTube showing Walter Cronkite accepting the Norman Cousins Global Governance Award in 1999 at the United Nations includes a disturbing joke about Satan running the New World Order and countries giving up their sovereignty. Cronkite was the anchor for the CBS evening news from 1962 to 1981.

During this event Cronkite said, "What Alexander Hamilton wrote about the need for law among the thirteen states applies today to the approximately two hundred sovereignties in our global village, all of which are going to have to be convinced to give up some of that sovereignty to the better greater union, and its not going to be easy."

He then referenced Pat Robertson's 1991 book, *The New World Order* and that Robertson said the construction of the global government is the work of the Devil, at which point Cronkite added, "Well, join me, I'm glad to sit here at the right hand of Satan."

This video is widely available on YouTube. Cronkite is believed to be the voice for Moloch played over the loudspeakers in the Bohemian Grove during the Cremation of Care human effigy sacrifice done each summer. (See Pat Robertson's The New World Order page 83)

Henry Kissinger

Anyone who mentions the fact that we are moving into a New World Order is often labeled a conspiracy theorist, and for decades mainstream publications and political leaders had denied that such a plan was being implemented.

Henry Kissinger has had his hands in just about every New World Order front group in the 20th and 21st century. He was originally named the

Chairman of the 9/11 Commission by President Bush, but he stepped down after widows of 9/11 victims discovered his business ties with the Bin Laden family.[165]

In an interview on CNBC in February 2009, Kissinger was asked about the problems the new Obama administration was facing regarding the ongoing “War on Terror” and the economic meltdown, and Kissinger responded that Obama, “can give new impetus to American foreign policy partly because the reception of him is so extraordinary around the world. His task will be to develop an overall strategy for America in this period when, really, a new world order can be created. It’s a great opportunity, it isn’t just a crisis.”

President Bush at the United Nations

The Bush administration was aware of criticisms immediately following the September 11, 2001 attacks citing “security failures” and prior knowledge, and with a small number of people suspecting that 9/11 was a false flag operation, President George W. Bush made an unusual statement as he spoke to the United Nations shortly after the attacks. He said “Let us never tolerate outrageous conspiracy theories concerning the attacks of September the 11th; malicious lies that attempt to shift the blame away from the terrorists themselves, away from the guilty.”[166]

Since a growing segment of the population was aware of governments attacking their own people and then blaming it on another country, the Bush administration had a lot of explaining to do, and the propagandists were already trying to label anyone asking serious questions a “conspiracy theorist.”

Maxim Magazine

March 2006 Issue

A thorough analysis of the 9/11 attacks can be found in *The Resistance Manifesto*, and is not this author’s intention to do so in these pages, but I thought I would acknowledge one of the first articles in a mainstream publication to discuss the 9/11 Truth Movement as it began to grow exponentially in 2006. Until 2006 it had largely remained underground and hadn't received any mainstream media attention. While in the months and years to come it would be acknowledged and attacked by everyone from Sean Hannity to Bill O'Reilly, I thought I would pay homage to *Maxim Magazine* for publishing an article in their March 2006 issue.

The article was titled *What Really Brought Down the Towers?* and began reading, "As major questions surrounding the official version of the truth emerge, "What really happened on 9/11" is becoming the "Who shot JFK?" of a new generation. How crazy are the new conspiracy theories? Depends how far down the rabbit hole you're willing to go."

The article mentions a 2004 CNN.com poll where 89% of the respondents voted that they believe there was a cover-up surrounding 9/11. It also briefly covered the controlled demolition hypothesis, and speculation that a jet liner wasn't what really crashed into the Pentagon. It also mentioned the possibility that Al Qaeda had planned the attack, but that the American government stood down and allowed it to happen on purpose.

The article concluded by saying, "Many of these theories stretch the patience of the most credulous. But dismissing an entire tree for one rotten apple may be rash. For those who simply can't wrap their minds around such an epic deception many are eager to frame things in a more pragmatic perspective."

Charlie Sheen's 9/11 Comments

In March of 2006, actor Charlie Sheen was a guest on Alex Jones' radio show and discussed his thoughts about the 9/11 attacks and how the government's official account didn't seem accurate to him. "We're not the conspiracy theorists on this particular issue," said Sheen.

"It seems to me like 19 amateurs with box cutters taking over four commercial airliners and hitting 75% of their targets, that feels like a conspiracy theory. It raises a lot of questions."

Within days, *The New York Post* published a story with the headline, *Sheen: What 9/11 Hijackers,* and said, “Charlie Sheen has joined the 9/11 gone-bonkers brigade.”

Sheen’s comments created a media firestorm and he was viciously attacked. Sheen was the first celebrity to publicly say such things, and not long afterwards other celebrities or well-known actors came forward and made similar statements, and in some cases, far more inflammatory ones. Christine Ebersole, Daniel Sunjata, Willy Nelson, Ed Asner, Rosie O’Donnell, Jesse Ventura and others soon followed in Sheen’s footsteps.

Jesse Ventura on Hannity & Colmes

Former governor of Minnesota, Jesse Ventura, released a book in 2008 titled *Don’t Start the Revolution Without Me,* and did the usual publicity tour on major media outlets. When he appeared in the studio on *Hannity and Colmes* on the Fox News Channel, Sean Hannity was discussing Ventura’s various stances found in the book, and then said, “The one thing that I read in the book that I totally found just alien to me, is this idea that you believe in 9/11 conspiracies.”

Ventura replied, “Let me tell it to you this way. Why is it that when you ask any question about 9/11, you’re immediately attacked…my problem is, I look at it and I go, how can two planes knock down three buildings? … First of all, jet fuel is four fifths, I don’t want to stay on this, I’d rather talk about other things, but jet fuel is four fifths kerosene, it doesn’t burn hot, so using the analogy that it could melt the metal…then propane burns hotter, so if you turn on your camp stove for three hours shouldn’t it melt the grates? But it doesn’t, does it?”

Hannity replied, “He’s going Rosie O’Donnell on me here.”

Venture answered, “How could they fall at the rate of gravity? They fell at the rate of gravity. They blew into powder.”

Hannity stops him and says “But if it were true, a lot of engineers would have come out,” and then he changes the subject and moves on. The truth is that a lot of engineers have risked their careers by going public and challenging the official story. Richard Gage founded Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth and has over 500 members, all of which have concluded that explosives or cutting charges were used to demolish the Twin Towers and Building 7 that morning.

The View

On March 6th, 2007 actress Christine Ebersole was a guest on the popular woman's talk show *The View* when she brought up the topic of this author's YouTube videos which consist of me visiting various college campuses in southern California and educating the students about 9/11. Rosie O'Donnell jumps in to explain, "He goes around the country with a bullhorn, like to UCLA or wherever he wants, and he says, "9/11 was an inside job! 9/11 was an inside job!" and within five or ten minutes, the police show up and his friends videotape him getting arrested, and boy does it annoy people, I can tell you that much."

Elisabeth Hasselbeck responds, "That would probably annoy just a handful of people in the United States."

And Rosie concludes, "Well, you've got to look and make your own decision, you know."

Actor James Brolin would later plug a 9/11 truth website when he was a guest on the show, and Rosie O'Donnell would become a lightning rod for controversy after she made some very bold statements about the issues.

Durring one broadcast O'Donnell asked her fellow hosts, "historically, have governments ever faked incidents, or incited incidences to get them into war?"

When pressed on the issue by conservative Elizabeth Hasselbeck, Rosie explained, "I do believe that it is the first time in history that fire has ever melted steel. I do believe that it defies physics for the World Trade Center Tower Seven, Building 7, which collapsed in on itself, it is impossible for a building to fall the way it fell without explosives being involved. World

Trade Center 1 and 2 got hit by planes, [Building] 7 miraculously, the first time in history, steel was melted by fire."

Elizabeth Hasselbeck, fired away, "and who do you think is responsible for that?" and Rosie answered, "I have no idea…look at the films, get a physics expert here, from Yale, from Harvard, pick the school, it defies reason."

Later, a video was posted on YouTube that was possibly shot by a cell phone camera by someone in the audience of *The View* which showed Rosie addressing the audience before the show went to air about the inconsistencies about the World Trade Center attack and telling the story of 9/11 hero William Rodriguez.

She said, "He was the last guy pulled out, he was on sublevel two, and he heard a bomb. And the guy who was filling the soda machine came to him and his skin was falling off. And he said, what happened, what happened? Did the generator blow up? He said a bomb. He then took him up, carried him outside, and saw the plane hit." The audience gasps. She continues, "And he was omitted from the 9/11 report. Why? It was omitted. Building 7, omitted. Never in the history of the world has a building fallen from a fire into its own footprint, eliminating the core. Twenty five steel beams. Really, it's impossible. Physics wise. It's impossible."

Information was then posted on Rosie's blog, Rosie.com, about how she had become friends with William Rodriguez, a janitor at the World Trade Center responsible for helping fire fighters access different parts of the building to help people evacuate after the buildings were attacked. Rodriguez was known as the Keymaster because he had a key that opened most doors in the building. Shortly after the tragedy, Rodriguez would travel around the world giving speeches about the 9/11 attacks being an inside job.

Operation Inform the Soldiers

On June 10th 2008, this author made an appearance on the Fox News Channel's show *America's Newsroom,* to discuss a campaign that I had

started called Operation Inform the Soldiers, which involved mailing DVDs to troops stationed in Iraq to help educate them about the lies surrounding 9/11 and the war.

There is no doubt that Fox News had invited me on the show simply to attack me, but I held my own and made several points during the brief time I had on air. Host Megyn Kelly started, “Imagine you are a soldier stationed in Iraq. Mail call comes around and you got a letter from back home. But it is not from your family or your friends, it is a letter telling you that you are a pawn in the service of the New World Order and that you are risking your life for a government that helped carry out the 9/11 attacks. This is not a joke. This is actually happening. The letters are the work of Mark Dice, the founder of a group called *The Resistance*. Mark joins us live now.”

This segment would spark talk show host Michael Reagan to tell his audience that I should be found and killed for treason and then he would pay for the bullets. Michael is the adopted son of President Ronald Reagan and hosts a syndicated radio show.

Reagan said, “Excuse me folks, I’m going to say this. We ought to find the people who are doing this, take them out and shoot them. Really. You take them out, they are traitors to this country, and shoot them. You have a problem with that? Deal with it. You shoot them. You call them traitors, that’s what they are, and you shoot them dead. I’ll pay for the bullets.”

He continued, “How about you take Mark Dice out and put him in the middle of a firing range. Tie him to a post, don’t blindfold him, let it rip and have some fun with Mark Dice.”

The statements were made June 10th 2008 and came to my attention a few days later after someone who heard Reagan’s show emailed me to inform me. I immediately filed a report with the FBI and the FCC. I personally called Radio America, his show’s syndicator, and demanded that he be fired immediately. About an hour later Michael Reagan himself called me and apologized. I don’t think he was actually sorry, he just understood the repercussions from saying such things, and feared for his job and getting sued. He invited me to come on his radio show as a guest the following

Monday and when on the air I told him, and mainly his audience, as much evidence about the 9/11 attacks being an inside job as I could. Reagan was a bumbling idiot on air.

When I first received an email informing me about Reagan's comments, I downloaded the show's podcast to hear it for myself, and posted a brief clip on YouTube so others could hear it. Reagan's entire show was available on mp3 for free on his website, Reagan.com. The short clip I had posted quickly received over 75,000 views and he promptly filed a copyright infringement claim against me to have the audio removed. As a result, my entire YouTube channel, along with nearly 100 videos I had posted were deleted. He then removed the June 10th 2008 podcast from his website in an attempt to stop others from obtaining the audio, but it was too late. Dozens of other YouTube users had posted his death threats and if one searched for "Michael Reagan" on YouTube, page after page of videos appeared which contained the audio clip. I filed a counterclaim with YouTube citing the fact that posting the audio fell under the fair use laws, and was able to get my videos restored.

Six months later people would still email me asking why I didn't sue him, and how he could keep his job. Apparently the FCC did nothing, despite hundreds, possibly thousands of complaints that were filed about his comments. The District Attorney had looked into the case after I filed a report with the FBI, but decided not to charge Reagan since none of his listeners had acted on his wishes, and he retracted them on his next broadcast. I had contacted several law firms who specialized in civil cases, and none of them would take the case. I didn't have any money to pay a lawyer to sue Reagan anyway, but I thought if I could at least get them to see what kind of a case I had, and that it was against a national talk show host and Ronald Reagan's son, that they would want to take the case for the publicity, and I could convince them to do it on the basis that if we won a settlement, then I would pay them a percentage. All the law firms I spoke with didn't think we would win the case since he retracted his comments and called me to apologize and none of his listeners had promptly taken his advice to harm me.

Aside from suing him for threatening my life, I wanted to sue Reagan for compensatory damages because my girlfriend at the time would leave me two weeks later citing one of the reasons that her mother feared if we would get married as we had planned, that the Illuminati would one day murder me for exposing them and my girlfriend would be left a widow, or if we had children, she would be a single mother. Before this had happened, my girlfriend's mother had spoken several times that she feared for my life and thought I would be killed for writing and speaking about such topics. Reagan's threats were confirmation of her fears.

One of the lawyers I talked with was interested in what exactly I did to anger Reagan so much. I proceeded to tell him about how the 9/11 attacks were an inside job and about the documentary films that were being sent to soldiers stationed in Iraq to educate them about this fact. Instead of telling me I was crazy, he basically agreed, and started asking me for advice on how he could get a book published that he had written about how elements within the Drug Enforcement Agency are actually working hand in hand with the Mexican drug cartels to import narcotics into the U.S. He had the manuscript finished for several years and wanted to get it published.

Kevin Barrett's Comments

In the fall of 2006, a man named Kevin Barrett taught a class at the University of Wisconsin, Madison called "Islam: Religion and Culture," which was an undergraduate course. The course included the topic of the September 11th attacks and the War on Terrorism.

This portion of Barrett's course focused on current issues surrounding Islam's connection with 9/11 and the War on Terror, and discussed various readings representing a variety of viewpoints. One of those viewpoints, some had feared, was that Barrett believed the 9/11 attacks were not the work of Muslim terrorists, but rather an inside job by intelligence agencies, or that the United States had allowed the attacks to occur as a false flag operation.

On July 11, 2006, Bill O'Reilly host of *The O'Reilly Factor* on Fox News said Barrett, "would have been gone at Boston University, my alma mater, in a heartbeat. The Chancellor there, John Silber, would have—would have—this guy'd be in the Charles River floating down, you know, toward the harbor."

O'Reilly basically said Barrett should be killed and his body dumped in the river. Other media outlets would attack Barrett, including the usual attack dogs Hannity and Colmes. After the semester, Barrett's contract was not renewed at UWM.

Coast to Coast AM

The largest syndicated radio show in America that deals with secret societies and conspiracies is *Coast to Coast AM,* which airs seven days a week from 10pm to 2am Pacific time. The show was created by UFO buff Art Bell, who has since retired. George Noory is currently the primary host.

The show deals with some extremely fringe topics, and is not considered a serious or credible show by most standards. Discussions surrounding the paranormal, UFOs, and alternative history are the usual topics. Guests often include authors and researches in these fields.

Despite the fringe material discussed on the show, it shouldn't be considered completely fraudulent with regards to its format. Some fairly well respected guests often appear on the show to discuss issues that are too far out for mainstream news. Some frequent guests are Jim Marrs and Alex Jones, who are very well respected researchers in what the mainstream media would call conspiracies. Host George Noory simply keeps an open mind, and provides a platform for esoteric issues to be discussed no matter how outrageous they may seem.

Documentary Films

Since an extremely effective way to present evidence or a point of view is to produce a documentary film, such works have been created by numerous independent film makers which cover a variety of issues surrounding secret societies, government corruption, terrorism, and the banking system. Some films, such as *Loose Change: Final Cut* or Alex Jones' work are extremely accurate and meticulously researched and sourced and have only the intention of exposing government corruption or the activities of the Illuminati. Others such as *Zeitgeist the Movie*, and its sequel, *Zeitgeist: Addendum*, have other motives, which are covertly aiding the Illuminati and the New World Order.

Very few of these films will ever be shown on national television, but are instead sold on DVD and often available to watch for free on YouTube and Google Video. While most mainstream films cannot be viewed for free on such services due to copyright issues, often the independent producers of these films will allow their work to be freely available and even encourage people to make copies of their DVDs to give away to friends and family to educate them about such topics.

Dark Secrets: Inside Bohemian Grove

The film *Dark Secrets: Inside Bohemian Grove* (2000) by Alex Jones clearly shows the Cremation of Care ritual, and other aspects of the ultra-elite Bohemian Club. In July 2000, Alex Jones and Mike Hanson, author of *Bohemian Grove: Cult of Conspiracy*, successfully infiltrated the club and captured video of just a fraction of the activities which occur inside. This was the first video footage ever to have been taken inside the club and released to the public.

During the Cremation of Care, a group of men who are wearing black hooded robes stand at the base of a 40 foot tall statue of an ancient

Canaanite god named Moloch, and perform a human sacrifice ritual using a life-size paper mache effigy of a person. At the feet of Moloch stands an alter which the effigy is laid on, and the man with the role of the "high priest" uses his torch to light the effigy. An elaborate sound system and fireworks display is used during the ritual, and as the "body" is burning, human screams are played over the loudspeakers and fireworks are set off. Across the Russian river, an audience of 1000 men watch the ceremony, which is where Jones was seated when he captured the footage.

In 2005 Jones released *The Order of Death*, which is a 45 minute addition to *Dark Secrets*, and is included on the same DVD. *The Order of Death* includes new footage and photos that were secretly taken by a worker at the Bohemian Grove. (See Chris Jones page 192)

This author (Mark Dice) must admit that when I had first seen clips of Jones' film, I thought it was a hoax, or if such a ceremony was real, that he was mistaken thinking presidents, politicians, and high level business executives were in attendance. It was only after my own investigation, including interviews with local residents who lived near the club, finding rare news reports about the place, and meeting Chris Jones (a worker at the club), that I became convinced Alex Jones was right.

When David Gergen, who was a presidential advisor to Presidents Ford, Nixon, Regan and Clinton, was asked if he had ever attended the ritual at the Bohemian Grove, he answered, "Frankly I don't think that's something I need to talk to you about." When he was pressed again as to whether he had seen the ritual, he angrily replied, "That's none of your damn business!" and walked away.

The brief interview took place on the streets of New York during the 2004 Republican National Convention and can be viewed on YouTube or in *The Order of Death*. Gergen didn't ask "what ritual?" and he obviously knew what was being asked and clearly did not want to acknowledge that such a ritual takes place. Gergen snapped, "I don't know anything about you and I don't know anything about your film, but if you go in there with an understanding, then you violated that understanding by releasing that film."

The Cremation of Care human sacrifice ritual is performed to kick off a two week party for the club, and aside from showing clear footage of the ritual, Jones' film also covers other issues surrounding the club. During this two week "encampment" as it is called, are numerous Lakeside Talks which involve political and industry insiders giving lectures on what policies, technology, or major world changing events will be occurring in the near future. From these talks, club members are given advanced knowledge about what the Bilderberg group and the Illuminati have planned for the rest of the world.

Secret Rulers of the World

British journalist Jon Ronson produced a series of four television programs titled *The Secret Rulers of the World* which included one episode about the Bohemian Grove, and another about the Bilderberg group where he investigated the claims of what he called "conspiracy theorists" surrounding such groups. Ronson takes a very skeptical approach to the subject matter, and seems as if his purpose is to prove the allegations wrong and "debunk" the claims surrounding these organizations.

In the episode titled *Shadowy Satanic Elite?,* Ronson chronicles Alex Jones and Mike Hanson's attempt to sneak in the Bohemian Grove and secretly film the rumored human sacrifice ritual, the Cremation of Care. Near the end of the program, after Alex and Mike got the footage and returned from the Grove, Jon Ronson admitted, "As incredible as it sounds, some kind of bizarre secret ritual witnessed by world leaders really does take place in the forests of northern California."

Back at the hotel they all sat down and watched the footage that they had obtained. Although to Ronson's surprise, the rumored ritual was indeed a fact, he didn't seem to think it really mattered all that much, and began siding with the Bohemian Grove, insisting it was no big deal.

[Ronson] Do you think this was unholy?

[Hanson] It’s very strange to me. These people are supposed to be running the world and they’re out there doing this.

[Ronson] You seem freaked out.

[Hanson] I am.

[Jones] These people point their fingers all day and call people extremists or cult members or whatever for their religious beliefs, this was a pagan ceremony and engaging in human sacrifice, a mock human sacrifice…

[Ronson] Aren’t they just saying that for two weeks they don’t need to worry about anything?

[Jones] But they’re burning someone in effigy and as it’s burning they “ahh ohhh nooo!”

[Ronson] But they’re not killing a person.

[Jones] We understand they’re not literally killing a person…

[Ronson] They’re killing something that is symbolic…

[Jones] Wait a minute. You saw it. You’ve got Death on this black boat bringing a pallet with the paper mache person obviously, it’s got the feet and the head and they take it over and burn it.

[Ronson] But wasn’t it just a metaphor?

[Hanson] To me it doesn’t matter. I think they’re sacrificing in the real world too.

[Ronson] Was this the New World Order?

[Hanson] Yes definitely. I looked the New World Order in the face out there.

Nazis: The Occult Conspiracy

If one doubts that elite politicians would be involved in occult philosophies and rituals, then they need to look no further than the Nazis and Hitler’s inner circle of henchmen. While everyone knows that the architects of the Holocaust were evil and heartless human beings, many still do not have a clue that the SS was more than a military order, and that at its heart were occult philosophies and goals.

In the History Channel’s two-hour program titled *Nazis: The Occult Conspiracy*, these bizarre beliefs are explained in somewhat detail, and give the viewer a glimpse into the root cause of the Nazi’s path of destruction.

The show features interviews with Dr. Nicholas Goodrick-Clark, who is a historian at Oxford University, as well as Wolf Rudiger Hess, the son of Rudolf Hess, who was one of Hitler's closest allies.

It includes actual footage from Nazi expeditions to Tibet as they searched for evidence of descendants from the lost city of Atlantis and clearly shows that Hitler, Rudolph Hess, Alfred Rosenberg, Joseph Goebbels, and Heinrich Himmler believed in some extremely bizarre mystical ideas surrounding the occult and the city of Atlantis.

In the show, it is also presented that the Nazis wanted to eliminate all Jews, and probably all non-whites, to create a New World Order comprised only of Aryans so that the purified race could then reawaken the mystical powers that they had lost since the destruction of the city of Atlantis. The Nazis believed that the white race is descended from a civilization that lived in the mythical lost city of Atlantis. They believed Atlantis was a real city, and not just a myth, and that its inhabitants were god-like supermen.

Historian Peter Padfield explains, "It's difficult for us afterwards to equate this man who certainly believed in a god and to link him up with a man who was a master of the killing machine in Germany, but actually the two things of course are linked because what he was trying to do was to root out the forces which he believed had corrupted Germany and get back to their pure blooded forefathers."

Most people think that Hitler and the Nazis were simply inhumane racists who used the Jews as a scapegoat for Germany's economic problems, but do not understand that there were occult religious beliefs behind these actions.

Terrorstorm

In the summer of 2006 Alex Jones released *Terrorstorm: A History of Government Sponsored Terrorism* which details numerous declassified and proven cases of corrupt elements within governments staging terrorist attacks while blaming those very attacks on a rival or political enemy so the event can be used as a catalyst for military action. Several of the events covered are the Gulf of Tonkin incident which sparked America's involvement in the Vietnam War, as well as the Reichstag fire, Operation Ajax, and Operation Northwoods.

While Jones shies away from labeling such incidences the work of the Illuminati, it is clear that a pattern of such events has occurred throughout history, and that secret agreements have been made at the highest levels of governments to green light such actions.

The Gulf of Tonkin incident occurred in 1964 when President Johnson conspired with his secretary of Defense Robert McNamara to tell the media and the public that the North Vietnamese had attacked an American ship patrolling the Gulf of Tonkin. No such attack had occurred, and the story was fabricated to escalate America's involvement in the conflict in Vietnam and would ultimately lead to the U.S. becoming fully committed to war. The Johnson administration had wanted this to happened, but needed to be able to justify their actions to the American people, so the Gulf of Tonkin incident was concocted.[167]

Also covered in *Terrorstorm* is the Reichstag fire in Germany in 1933. The Reichstag is the German Parliament building, similar to America's Congress. The Reichstag was set on fire in 1933, and it was quickly blamed on the Communist Party which was opposing the National Socialist Party, or the Nazis. Hitler used the event to remove civil liberties, and rise to the level of a dictator. It turns out the Nazis themselves had set the fire to then use it as a pretext to expand their power while blaming their political enemies for the event.

One of the most chilling examples of false flag terrorism covered in the film is Operation Northwoods which is a declassified document written in 1962 which outlined various terrorist attacks that the United States would perpetrate against targets in Washington D.C. and Miami, Florida and then blame on Cuba as an excuse to invade them. The document is chilling and would later be used as a blueprint of what would happen years later on September 11th 2001 when the Twin Towers were attacked and ignited the "War on Terror" and the invasion of Iraq.

Loose Change: Final Cut

Online video sharing services such as Google Video and YouTube became an instant success in 2006, providing a way for individuals and independent film producers to make their work available for the entire world to view with the click of a mouse.

One film which became one of the most downloaded films in history was *Loose Change 2nd Edition*, which is a documentary about the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In May of 2006 the film had been viewed over 10 million times and became the most popular 9/11 documentary available. It was written by Dylan Avery, and produced with the help of his two friends, Jason Bermas and Korey Rowe. Due to its popularity, the film was featured in mainstream news articles such as *USA Today*[168], *Vanity Fair*[169], and *Time Magazine*[170], helping to break through the wall attempting to keep the 9/11 “conspiracy theories” from going mainstream.

In November 2007, *Loose Change: Final Cut* was released on DVD which was a completely new film from the previous versions, and featured mainstream news casts and interviews with intelligence experts and firefighters, showing *dramatic* inconsistencies between the *9/11 Commission Report*, and what actually happened regarding the attacks.

The film, like many others that focus on 9/11, doesn’t mention the word “Illuminati” or “secret societies” but instead focuses on specific individuals and government operations that were involved in the attacks. Many film makers shy away from referring to the perpetrators as “the Illuminati” since it is often more effective to focus on specific government procedures, declassified documents, and specific investigations that were thwarted.

Fabled Enemies

In 2008 Jason Bermas, a producer for *Loose Change*, released a film which detailed the various intelligence agencies knowledge of, and aid in the attacks of 9/11. While not mentioning anything about a controlled demolition or the controversy surrounding the attack on the Pentagon, the film sticks to documented information about Al Qaeda’s ties to intelligence agencies such as the CIA, Pakistan’s ISI, and Israel’s Mossad. *Fabled Enemies* paints a very damaging picture of how elements within these agencies had full knowledge of the hijackers and their goals.

The 9/11 Chronicles: Truth Rising

In July of 2008, filmmaker Alex Jones released a DVD titled *The 9/11 Chronicles Volume 1: Truth Rising* which largely consists of amateur footage shot by 9/11 Truth activists as they confront various suspects and political figures who are aiding or abetting those who are building the New World Order.

The film is extremely exciting to watch as numerous activists get face to face and confront countless officials including Rudy Giuliani, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Alan Greenspan, Senator John McCain, Vice President Joe Biden, and others in what sometimes turn into rather heated situations with security intervening. The film is truly incredible and gives the viewer a first person perspective of what it’s like when an ordinary citizen speaks truth to power.

Endgame: Blueprint for Global Enslavement

Alex Jones’ 2007 film *Endgame* covers the secret plans that are being implemented to forge the New World Order, and includes for the first time ever, clear video footage of high profile Bilderberg members getting out of their armored cars and entering the hotel where the conference was taking place. The footage was taken outside the Brookstreet Hotel in Ottawa, Canada in 2006. Many of the members’ faces are clearly visible and it’s indisputable what is occurring.

Donald E. Graham CEO of the *Washington Post*, Indra Nooyi CEO of PepsiCo, Illuminati kingpin David Rockefeller alongside his body guard James Ford, George Pataki governor of New York, James Wolfensohn former chairman of the World Bank, Ahmed Chalabi former Iraqi oil minister who has been under investigation for numerous crimes, and others were captured on video and are clearly identified in the film.

Endgame also covers plans for a North American Union by eliminating the borders of the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and streamlining everything from the transportation systems to the currency. A history of Eugenics is also presented.

Zeitgeist the Movie

One of the most popular films on the Internet is *Zeitgeist the Movie,* and *Zeitgeist: Addendum* which is its sequel. The first movie was released on Google Video in 2007, and became extremely popular among the 9/11 Truth Movement particularly those who are anti-Christian. The film is broken up into three parts, the first part is an attack on Christianity and presents the “Jesus never existed” theory as part of its assault on religion, saying it is a method of control used by the elite to keep us mentally enslaved. The second part is a compilation of clips from the most popular 9/11 documentaries, and the third part is about the private Federal Reserve banking system. The film was produced by a man using the name “Peter Joseph” which is possibly a pseudonym.

The entire first third of the film proposed the idea that Jesus never even existed, and that the writers of the Bible had made up the entire story as a continuation of the tradition of the solar deities, or gods that are personifications of the sun. Even the most radical scholars admit that a man named Jesus of Nazareth existed around the time the Bible says he did, and that he upset the social order of Jerusalem with his teachings, although the debate about whether he was God in the flesh or just a spiritual teacher continues. But “Peter Joseph” presents the widely debunked theory that the entire story of his life and teachings are a fabrication by the Catholic Church. Such ideas are not seriously considered in scholarly circles, but many young viewers of *Zeitgeist* believe the film is true.

In October of 2008 a sequel was released titled *Zeitgeist: Addendum*, which ended with an extremely unsettling solution for the issues society is facing. The film begins with an explanation of how the Federal Reserve banking system works and is fairly accurate in its presentation, but then the film takes a disturbing turn.

A large part of *Addendum* pushes the idea that society would not need money anymore if we would design and build robots and mechanical systems to operate the world, which would rid mankind of the need to work. “Peter Joseph,” and the proponents of what is called the Venus Project, envision a world in which the machines will do work for us, and everything will be in such an abundance that humans will not need to work and instead can spend their time enjoying themselves.

What’s even more shocking is the support that the film and these ideas have gained. A measurable number of illogical, naive dreamers not only believe such a thing is possible, but ruthlessly attack anyone who is critical of the film and its premise. Who wouldn’t like a world where you wouldn’t have to work? Unfortunately the supporters of this film cannot grasp the reality of a medium of exchange, nor the value of rare artifacts or the need for human labor, and that even if sophisticated machines or robots are able to replace a fair amount of human labor, there will always be countless jobs that they will not be able to do, from teaching children to various service oriented jobs or research and development. Such a techno-utopia has been the dreams of many who envisioned microwave ovens, cell phones, and laptop computers as the tools which would free mankind from the burdens of work, but such inventions have only complicated the issue.

As if this techno-utopia idea wasn’t bad enough, the unsettling conclusion of the film conveys one of the central goals of the Illuminati, in that all religions should either be eradicated or unified in preparation for the Antichrist to then claim to be the long awaited messiah. The end of *Zeitgeist: Addendum* shows an elaborate scene using actors and CGI graphics which depicts a Christian, a Muslim, and a Jew standing on the street and the Christian takes off their cross necklace and throws it on the ground as the Jew removes his yarmulke and does the same, and the Muslim takes off his hat, and all during this bizarre sequence the film cuts to a close-up of a human eye with colors swirling around inside, and after each person has symbolically shed their religion, the frame zooms out to show the entire planet earth from space which then has rays of light shooting out from all the continents, and is transformed into a ball of light.

In a radio interview with Alex Jones on the Genesis Communication Network, “Peter Joseph” stated that nobody would need guns in the utopia he envisioned, but danced around and avoided stating that they should be outright banned. When asked what if someone didn’t want to go along and participate in his supposed utopian New World Order, he basically said the person would need to be taken to a re-education center. It’s extremely disturbing that many of the views “Peter Joseph” espouses are synonymous with the Illuminati’s blueprint for the New World Order. His continued attack on Christianity and religion while pushing the idea of a communist techno-utopia should be seen as nothing more than Illuminati propaganda, with “Peter Joseph” himself a pawn in their game.

The Clinton Chronicles

The Clinton Chronicles: An Investigation into the Alleged Criminal Activities of Bill Clinton is a 1994 documentary film created by Patrick Matrisciana that explores the “Clinton Body Count” which consists of all the close friends and associates of President Bill Clinton who have ended up murdered or supposedly committed suicide.

Many of these deaths are a result of the criminal enterprises Clinton has been involved in. Some of these include the death of Vince Foster and the murders of witnesses of the Mena Arkansas cocaine smuggling ring involving the CIA in the 1980s. Some of the names on the Clinton Body Count such as Kevin Ives and Don Henry are also the focus of a separate documentary titled *Obstruction of Justice: The Mena Connection* which can also be viewed online.

The number of names on the Clinton Body Count is staggering and when the strange circumstances of many of these deaths are analyzed, one can’t explain them away as mere coincidences. Several of the names on the Clinton Body Count list have been disputed by Clinton supporters, and since they claim to have “proved” that several deaths had not directly been connected to Clinton, or are actual coincidences, Clinton supporters claim the entire Clinton Body Count is a “hoax.” These defenders ignore the numerous conclusive cases of murder that are directly connected to Clinton and his involvement with the Illuminati.

Years after *The Clinton Chronicles* was produced, during the campaign season preceding the 2008 election, *Hillary the Movie* was released which details some of the crimes and misdeeds of Hillary and Bill, but barely scratched the surface of how deeply involved in the Illuminati the Clintons are. Perhaps the producers didn't want the film to be labeled a bunch of "conspiracy theories" and focused on issues that would be received by the audience as more mainstream and easier to believe. *Hillary the Movie* is still an extremely disturbing and damaging film.

Monopoly Men

A little known documentary series hosted and narrated by Dean Stockwell called *Phenomenon: The Lost Archives* focused on topics found in declassified government documents. The series featured a powerful episode on the Federal Reserve which originally aired on March 1, 2000 and was titled *Monopoly Men*.

The episode starts with Stockwell asking, "Is there a secret history of the United States intentionally hidden by the mainstream media? Could there be a secret society of fat money businessmen whose agenda has been the cause of every major war and economic depression? Is there a shadowy elite gently pulling the strings of our world to bring about their own self-serving political program? The answers may surprise you."

The show then details the creation of the Federal Reserve Bank, and the secrecy and manipulation on the part of the rich and powerful men who did so.

The Money Masters

Possibly the most in-depth film on the Federal Reserve banking system is *The Money Masters*, which was produced in 1996 by Bill Still. This three hour long film covers the history of money, banking, and the Federal Reserve. It contains the most powerful quotes from historical figures, past presidents, and even powerful men who worked in the banking industry, which clearly show that the corrupt Federal Reserve System has been, and will continue to be the downfall of America's economy.

The film is available for viewing for free on Google Video. Several of the most powerful historical quotes about the banking system referenced in the film are as follows.

“If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks...will deprive the people of all property until their children wake-up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered.... The issuing power should be taken from the banks and restored to the people, to whom it properly belongs. ... The modern theory of the perpetuation of debt has drenched the earth with blood, and crushed its inhabitants under burdens ever accumulating.” –*Thomas Jefferson*

“History records that the money changers have used every form of abuse, intrigue, deceit, and violent means possible to maintain their control over governments by controlling money and its issuance.” –*James Madison*

President Woodrow Wilson signed the 1913 Federal Reserve Act into law, and several years later wrote, “I am a most unhappy man. I have unwittingly ruined my country. A great industrial nation is controlled by its system of credit. Our system of credit is concentrated. The growth of the nation, therefore, and all our activities are in the hands of a few men. We have come to be one of the worst ruled, one of the most completely controlled and dominated Governments in the civilized world no longer a Government by free opinion, no longer a Government by conviction and the vote of the majority, but a Government by the opinion and duress of a small group of dominant men.” –*Woodrow Wilson*

Money as Debt

An entirely animated film about the banking system is *Money As Debt*, which on the surface seems like an educational film for a classroom, but actually contains some very important information regarding the creation of money and the collection of interest for loaning it out. The film was created by Paul Grignon in 2006 and is one of the most informative films on the subject of the creation on money and fiat currency. At the time of this writing, the film is available to view on Google Video, although it is unclear whether this will remain. Many films are posted by individuals and are later removed by the request of the copyright holder.

The film explains how in the past, goldsmiths would hold peoples' gold coins in their vault for safe keeping, and issue the people paper receipts which they could redeem when they wanted their gold back. People began trading the actual paper receipts in the marketplace as a form of what today we would call cash, since it was easier to carry and they didn't have to travel to visit the goldsmith to get their gold out every time they wanted to buy something. The goldsmith realized that he could write up his own receipts and spend them in the market and nobody would notice. By doing this he was essentially creating his own money for free. As long as everyone who held a paper receipt in their possession didn't come all at once to redeem it for their gold, nobody would know what he was doing.

The film brilliantly, yet simply lays out this concept and explains how such ideas evolved into modern banking and are still used today. It then goes on to detail how banks actually loan out money they don't have. When one is new to the concepts of money, this can be a startling revelation, but *Money As Debt* lays it out in a very understandable format and should be watched by everyone who would like to understand the heart of the banking system.

Riddles in Stone

An incredible film that features interviews with Dr. Stanley Monteith, Ed Decker, and S. Brent Morris PhD the Masonic historian who is also featured on the History Channel, is *Riddles in Stone: The Secret Architecture of Washington D.C.* which was produced by Cutting Edge Ministries in 2007 and directed by Christian J. Pinto. The information in the film is presented in an unbiased fashion and the budget must have been enormous, because instead of simply using old stock footage and historical paintings and photographs as B-roll, much of the film contains scenes with actors dressed up in clothes from the time periods being discussed. Such a practice is common on the History Channel or Discovery Channel with their large budgets, but for a small independent film maker to have produced such a high quality film is astonishing.

The film is almost three hours long and explores the influence of Freemasonry on the design and construction of the street layout of Washington D.C. The infamous pentagram that is built into the layout with the bottom point leading to the White House is shown from a satellite view, along with other symbols and conflicting explanations are given from the individuals who were interviewed in the film.

Since much of *Riddles in Stone* contains stunning videography of various monuments, buildings, and sculptures, words cannot do the film justice, and it must be seen to appreciate its quality and information. One notable scene includes footage of *The Awakening*, a giant statue buried in the earth, originally located in Washington D.C. for nearly 28 years and later sold and relocated to Prince George’s County, Maryland in February 2008. This strange statue holds a hidden meaning for occultists, which is explained in the film.

It shouldn’t be a surprise to anyone familiar with secret societies that the Freemasons had their hand in the founding of America, but what some viewers may not know is how the Masons incorporated various symbols and designs into the architecture of Washington D.C., including the street layout and numerous sculptures and murals. What’s even more fascinating is how such designs stand right out in the open with few even taking notice.

The History Channel: Secret Societies

A surprisingly balanced piece was produced by the History Channel on secret societies in 2001 and covered some of the allegations involving Skull and Bones, the Freemasons, and the Bilderberg group. It featured interviews with David Icke and Jim Marrs as supporters of the “conspiracy theories” and Daniel Pipes as the skeptic and attempted debunker. Due to his blood drinking reptilian shape shifting theory, David Icke is far from a credible commentator, but the show did give a fair and balanced viewpoint between Icke, Marrs, and Pipes.

Daniel Pipes is the author of *Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From,* which tries to make the case that people who believe in “conspiracy theories” have over-active imaginations. Jim Marrs is the author of several respectable books including *Rule by Secrecy*, *The Terror Conspiracy* and *The Rise of the Fourth Reich.* His 1989 book, *Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy* made the New York Times Best Seller List and Marrs worked as a script consultant on Oliver Stone’s film *JFK.*

Conspiracy of Silence

A disturbing film that is only circulated on the Internet, and has never aired on television is *Conspiracy of Silence* which details allegations of a child prostitution ring operating in Washington D.C. catering to high-level U.S. politicians. This film and the allegations of child abuse are the most disturbing issues found surrounding the Illuminati. While *Conspiracy of Silence* doesn’t mention the Illuminati by name, it is none the less exposing individuals and activities which have long been associated with the group.

The film follows what has been called the Franklin Cover-Up which involves the Franklin Credit Union in Omaha, Nebraska and an orphanage called Boys Town and the investigations of a lawyer and former senator of Nebraska, John DeCamp. The film begins with a scrolling text message reading that the production had originally been scheduled to air on the Discovery Channel on Tuesday May 3rd 1994 and that the April 30th to May 6th *TV Guide* listing and newspaper supplements had the program listed to air, but at the last minute some individuals had arrived at the production studio and purchased the rights to the film for a quarter of a million dollars and then removed all known copies. It goes on to read that the copy the viewer is watching was sent anonymously to John DeCamp who later distributed it on VHS and has since found its way onto the Internet.

In 1988 it was discovered that thirty-eight million dollars was embezzled from the Franklin County Credit Union in Omaha, Nebraska. As the investigation into the embezzlement continued, evidence of a child prostitution ring began to surface. As the missing money was followed, it lead to dark places nobody could imagine. On June 29, 1989, the *Washington Times* ran a front page story with the headline “Homosexual Prostitution Inquiry ensnares VIPs with Reagan, Bush.” Paul M. Rodriguez and George Archibald wrote the article and alleged that individuals close to Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush were connected to an underage homosexual prostitution ring. The article also mentioned that one of the children (Paul Bonacci) was taken on a midnight tour of the White House by one of the perpetrators.

On January 10, 1990, a special committee was assigned to look into the allegations. The credit union’s manager, Lawrence E. King would later be convicted of embezzling thirty-eight million dollars from the organization, but he was also named as a key player in an underage homosexual prostitution ring that he allegedly funded with the embezzled money. King was a prominent man within the Republican party, and at the 1984 and 1988 Republican National Conventions he was the person who sang the national anthem.

Nebraska’s State Senator Ernie Chambers said that Lawrence King was “just the tip of an iceberg, and he’s not in it by himself.”[171]

The New York Times reported Chambers claimed to have heard credible reports of “boys and girls, some of them from foster homes who had been transported around the country by airplane to provide sexual favors, for which they were rewarded.”[172]

Paul A. Bonacci won a default judgment of $800,000 in compensatory damages and $200,000 in punitive damages in a civil action against Lawrence E. King in which the petition alleged kidnapping, mind control, satanic ritual abuse, and sexual abuse, and alleged various personal injuries, both physical and psychological.

A private detective named Gary Caradori, who was hired by a special Nebraska state legislative committee to investigate the allegations, was killed when his plane crashed in Illinois on July 11th 1990. Senator Loran Schmit, chairman of the legislative committee, told the *Omaha World-Herald* that "[Caradori] believed that something was going to come out of this investigation. He believed that the evidence was there to be developed and that things couldn't stay under cover forever."[173]

Some say on that very airplane Gary Caradori had the evidence needed to prove his case. Strangely, within 24 hours of his death the FBI impounded all his files. His widow and brother both appear in *Conspiracy of Silence* and believe Gary was murdered and said that his car had been tampered with in the recent past. Investigators would later say that they could not determine what had caused his plane to break up in the air and crash. Gary Caradori's brother Dick Caradori says in the film that Gary told him he would be murdered if the perpetrators knew of the evidence that he had recently discovered. His wife sites that his briefcase was missing from the wreckage. Some say Caradori had actual photos that were given to him by Rusty Nelson which showed prominent politicians engaged in improper acts with children. It's not a radical assumption to think that Caradori would have been placed under surveillance by the Illuminati, and his phone calls were monitored by them to determine what evidence he had obtained and what kind of a threat he posed to the perpetrators. If he had obtained such evidence as the photos from Rusty Nelson, they would have done anything to cover it up. Even if he had not obtained such damning evidence, it was in the Illuminati's best interest to kill him, and they probably did.

The information found in this section is only the beginning of the story of what happened surrounding the Franklin County Credit Union. For a more detailed explanation see The Franklin Cover-Up page 120. *Conspiracy of Silence* is basically the film version of John DeCamp's book *The Franklin Cover-Up*, although the book covers more details about Satanism, snuff films, and the Bohemian Grove. *Conspiracy of Silence* contains interviews with several children who were allegedly victims, including Paul Bonacci, Alicia Owen, Troy Boner and others. Be warned that this film is extremely disturbing and may leave the viewer feeling physically ill.

Decoding the Past: The Templar Code

Another well done History Channel production is the two hour *Decoding the Past* episode titled *The Templar Code*. The program covers some interesting history surrounding the formation of the Knights Templar, and their ultimate demise. The show begins with the narrator saying they were "a society so secret that its true purpose is debated even to this day."

The Templar Code begins by telling how the first crusade left Europe in 1096 and Christians all over Europe were encouraged to travel to Jerusalem and fight the Muslims in order to take back the Holy Land.

In 1099 Christians had succeeded in capturing Jerusalem, and pilgrims then began traveling to the Holy Land. Around 1119 the first Knights Templar came forward. A man named Hugues de Payens from France recruited nine members of his family and offered to protect people traveling from the coast of the Mediterranean to the Holy Land. They said they would patrol the roads and offer security, but these knights were middle aged and not young and strong like a knight should be.

It becomes clear that these knights didn't go there to protect the travelers, but to start excavating for treasure. They made their headquarters the Dome on the Rock, which was on the same site as the original Solomon's Temple which was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC. This is where the Knights Templar got their name. They were called the Knights of the Temple of Solomon, or the Knights Templar. In 1128 they returned to Europe and became very rich and powerful immediately afterward.

In 1867 British archeologists excavated under the Temple Mount and found a span of tunnels. Templar artifacts were discovered in these tunnels, showing that they had been the ones who dug them. Rumors spread that they found the Ark of the Covenant or the Holy Grail, which some believe is a cup that held the blood of Christ, or a set of documents recording a bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

It is also believed that the Knights Templar recovered massive amounts of treasure that was hidden under the temple stemming from the 66 AD Jewish revolt against the Roman Empire. In 1952 one of the Dead Sea scrolls that had been discovered, the copper scroll, itemizes 200 tons of gold and silver which has not been found.

Around 1150 the knights had devised a system to give travelers receipts for their gold and jewelry. The receipt was coded to protect the person and allowed them to travel without the burden and fear of carrying large amounts of heavy gold and silver. The Templars had a reputation for codes and secrecy and their methods became the model for today’s banking system.

They ultimately became bankers and issued loans to people and governments. The Church wouldn’t allow people to charge interest, which they called usury, but the Templars did it anyway and the Church would look the other way. Some suspect that the Catholic Church was paying them off to keep silent about the information they had found in scrolls under Solomon’s Temple.

They began building churches and castles and an elaborate hierarchy was set up. The grand master was elected for life and was the head of the international organization. As time passes, the Templars became less involved in fighting, and more involved in business.

In 1244 the Turks recaptured Jerusalem and in 1291 the seaport of Acre had fallen, which was the last Christian stronghold in the region. After this, the reason for the Templar’s existence was in question. After 200 years the Crusades were over.

Friday the 13th is considered unlucky because on Friday the 13th of October 1307, King Philip of France had the Templars rounded up and arrested for allegedly denying Christ, spitting on the cross, sodomy, and worshiping Satan. Templar headquarters in France were all raided and

Jacques de Molay was arrested along with his leading knights. Some think the King of France made up the charges in order to claim the Templar's wealth, but others believe the accusations were authentic.

The majority of the Knights Templar escaped and vanished and their massive amounts of treasure vanished with them. Evidence suggests that the Knights Templar created Freemasonry and continued their occult practices and business ventures under this cloak. The order of DeMolay is a children's branch of Freemasonry for children of Masons and is named after the Knights Templar grandmaster Jacques de Molay who was burned at the stake for his satanic activities.

Mysteries of the Freemasons

Another interesting History Channel documentary is *Mysteries of the Freemasons* which was most likely the result of the popularity of films like *National Treasure*, which has a storyline largely to do with Freemasonry. The History Channel often capitalizes on topics that are found in forthcoming films or pop culture topics. *Mysteries of the Freemasons: The Beginning* is the first hour of a two hour show which covers the history of Freemasonry including the secret handshakes and their mysterious rituals. It explains that geometry is seen as more than just mathematics, but a link to the Divine and that ancient stone mason guilds teachings of math and mysticism lives on in what became Freemasonry.

The program has some interesting history about the group, including that the oldest minutes of the Masons meeting as a labor union were in 1599, and that sometime between then and 1717, the first Grand Lodge in England was formed and the organization had evolved into a gentlemen's club. During the Enlightenment, in order to avoid persecution from the Church, many scientists and political thinkers joined the Freemasons and the fraternity had created symbols and stories aimed at developing moral character and improving society.

S. Brent Morris PhD, a Masonic historian admits, "There are many anti-Masonic conspiracy theories that we are the secret controllers of government and industry worldwide. There is also a theory out there that the secret inner circle of Freemasonry worships Satan.” He then tries to downplay these ideas by saying, “If we can’t agree whether to serve ham sandwiches or tuna sandwiches after the meeting, how can we possibly agree to take over the world?”

Akram Elias, a 33rd degree Freemason also mocks the idea of a secret agenda in the program saying, “didn’t you know that it was a Jewish Masonic imperialist conspiracy that killed Lady Di?”

When explaining what the term “on the level” means, S. Brent Morris, says “it doesn’t matter how great you are, or how insignificant you are. Everyone is going to the same place. You’re going to the grave.” Such statements seem to reveal that Freemasons don’t believe in an afterlife.

The show admits that each Freemason is resurrected from a symbolic death as they are initiated into the order, and that in 1738 the Catholic Church forbade any Catholics from joining the Freemasons. It is also admitted that Freemasons were at the heart of the American Revolution and the Boston Tea Party.

The connection to the Knights Templar is also explored, including their digging for Solomon’s gold, the Holy Grail, or the papers of the Essenes which were said to contain information on how Man might communicate with God directly. It was also briefly mentioned how the Templars were the first multinational bankers and how rumors began to spread that they participated in strange rituals that certainly were not of Christian origin, including their alleged worship of Baphamet.

Christopher Night, co-author of *The Hiram Key,* who was interviewed for the show says that he believes the rituals were learned by the Templars from the ancient scrolls they had discovered while excavating under Solomon’s Temple.

After the order was disbanded and many of its leaders arrested in 1307, Night points out the popular belief that the Knights Templars joined the stone mason guilds and that the secret knowledge was brought to Scotland’s Rosslyn Chapel.

The first hour ends explaining that Masonic ideals were crucial in the creation of the United States, and then continues with a second hour which then covers the symbols found in the street layout of Washington D.C.

One of the Masons interviewed for the second hour fully admits that Washington D.C. is laid out to Masonic ideals, including the street layout and placement of certain buildings, but then Brent Morris PhD, Masonic historian and 33rd degree Mason mocks the idea saying, “I can also look at the streets of Washington and also find a piggy and a horsy. I don’t think they’re there.”

Surprisingly, the William Morgan incident of 1826 was discussed, where Freemasons kidnapped and murdered a man just before he could publish a book exposing Freemasonry’s secrets. It even briefly mentioned John Robison’s book, *Proofs of a Conspiracy* and how the Illuminati is said to have been behind the French Revolution and created an inner circle inside Freemasonry. But then the narrator goes on to say that the Illuminati conspiracy theory is unfounded and that “historical records show that the Illuminati existed as a group for less than ten years. They were abolished in 1785 with public trials and banishments. But the Freemasons would never completely escape from the shadow of the Illuminati.”

While the show covers some fascinating history about the Freemasons, it shamelessly presents them in a favorable light and basically presents only the Freemasons view of the organization, while obviously attempting to dismiss any opposing information, particularly ideas about a secret society within the secret society, such as the Illuminati.

Hacking Democracy

In 2006 HBO aired a documentary film titled *Hacking Democracy* which showed just how easy it is for electronic voting machines to be rigged, and elections to be stolen. The film was nominated for an Emmy Award for Outstanding Investigative Journalism.

The documentary begins showing that on election night in 2000 in Volusia Country, Florida the electronic voting machines showed Al Gore had negative votes because the computers were automatically deducting the number of votes that were cast for him. The machine showed -16,022 votes. An investigation was launched into why this had occurred, and many suspected it was a simple computer malfunction, but only the presidential race totals were affected. All other categories for state and local officials and propositions were tallied correctly. It was determined that a second memory card was plugged into the machine which likely changed the vote totals.

The software for such machines is a trade secret held closely by the companies which manufacture them. David Jefferson PhD, was the chief technical adviser to the California's Secretary of State and even he was not allowed to look at the software of the electronic voting machines.

The film continues to show how a Seattle woman named Bev Harris became worried after her county began using electronic voting machines and she was able to find files on the Internet from Diebold Election Systems which showed how the software for such machines worked and how easy it was to hack. Diebold Election Systems (now renamed Premier Election Solutions) are used to count over 40% of America's votes.

Harris took the information to a security specialist to analyze it and figure out how it worked and how secure it was. She later founded BlackBoxVoting.org as a way to inform the public about the issues and dangers involved in the vote counting process.

In 2003 it was discovered that Walden O'Dell, the CEO of Diebold Election Systems, had written a Republican fundraising letter in which he was "committed to helping Ohio deliver their electoral votes to the President next year." He was obviously referring to President Bush who was facing John Kerry in the 2004 election. When asked about this, Mark Radke, Diebold's marketing director answered, "that quotation that appeared in a letter is something that, uh…he regrets. It's a situation where his personal preference has come over into his business practice and he has committed to keeping a much lower profile when it comes to those kinds of activities."

Dr. Hugh Thompson, a security expert and director of Security Innovations Inc. was approached by Bev Harris at a hacking conference and asked to look at the software she was able to obtain from Diebold. “The thing that shocked me was how easy vote totals could be changed. So, imagine, you could go into a box and essentially rewrite history. And there is no record of you rewriting history. And the only record of history itself is the thing that you changed. And that’s pretty scary to me,” Thompson said.

Harris and Thompson had obtained a meeting with Governor Howard Dean to show him how easy the machines would be to hack and change the vote totals that were added from all voting machines nationwide.

The film then goes on to show that on Election Day in 2004, a voter helpline in Ohio received over 200,000 calls. Many of the callers left voicemails, some of which were played in the documentary. One caller left a voice mail complaining there was one voting booth for 3000 people. Another complained he had to wait seven and a half hours to vote. In the poorer areas that historically and statistically would vote Democrat, very few machines were put in place so that there would be less votes cast in those areas. Such a strategy was implemented in order to discourage people from waiting hours in line and to minimize the number of votes cast in those areas. This, of course, would minimize the number of votes for John Kerry.

On election night in 2004 when John Kerry faced off against President George W. Bush, exit polls were showing John Kerry had the lead in Ohio which was the key swing state. Kerry later lost the state, and thus the election and quickly conceded which stunned many of his staff and legal team.

Cliff Arnebeck, an election attorney from Ohio was on a conference call with Senator Kerry shortly after the election. Arnebeck said that Kerry knew there was fraud in Ohio but did nothing and didn’t activate the massive legal team that he had prepared for such an event. The Illuminati had told Kerry that it wasn’t his time and that the brotherhood had decided Bush would remain the President.

Perhaps the most unsettling aspect of *Hacking Democracy* was when it showed how easily an election could be stolen by only using a simple memory card that had been programmed to do so.

Ian Sancho, the Supervisor of Elections for Leon County Florida, asked BlackBoxVoting.org to look at his county's electronic voting machines. They brought along Finnish computer security expert Harri Hursti who claimed to discover how by using only a memory card purchased from the Internet, he could sway an election any direction he desired.

Before they had attempted the memory card hack, Mark Radke (Diebold's marketing director), as well as the head engineer for Diebold had denied that such a hack was possible at a public meeting. "It is my understanding that because there is no executable program on the memory card that the actual votes on the memory card cannot be altered," said Radke. Someone then asks, "Could you remind us, are you an engineer yourself?" Radke responds, "No I am not an engineer but I work with our engineering crew, in fact, Pat do you want to step up here for a second."

A man approaches the podium and takes the microphone. "Hi I'm Pat Green, I'm the director for research and development for Diebold."

Bev Harris then asks Green her question. "Can votes be changed using only a memory card?"

"No. I do not believe votes can be change using only a memory card." He went on to downplay a report that claims that it was possible, referring to a paper written by Hursti.

The film then shows Harri Hursti and others arriving in Leon County, Florida where Ian Sancho, the supervisor of elections, held a test election using actual machines and ballots, and the memory card that Hursti had provided. Hursti had not been given access to the ballots or the machine itself, only the memory card. To Sancho's and others astonishment, Hursti's altered memory card was able to rig the test election in a way that he had desired. This was a direct contradiction of Diebold's statements and showed how easily any election could be rigged by simply having access to the memory cards before the vote totals had even been stored on those cards.

The *Hursti Hack*, as it has been called, was undetectable and would also be undetectable in an actual election. Ion Sancho acknowledged this saying, “If I had not known what was behind this I would have certified this election as a true count of a vote.”

Diebold had publicly denied that the Hursti Hack was legitimate and had pressured HBO in an attempt to have the documentary shelved before it had aired. Diebold claimed that Hursti’s hack was a fraud. California’s Secretary of State commissioned a special report by computer technicians at UC Berkeley to investigate the Hursti Hack, and they concluded, “Harri Hursti’s attack does work: Mr. Hursti’s attack on the AV-OS is definitely real. He was indeed able to change the election results by doing nothing more than modifying the contents of a memory card. He needed no passwords, no cryptographic keys, and no access to any other part of the voting system, including the GEMS election management server.”[174]

Diebold Election Systems has since changed its name to Premier Election Solutions, most likely because the name Diebold has become synonymous with suspicion and allegations of election fraud. By using such methods, the Illuminati decide who becomes president of the United States, or who gets elected to Congress. As more and more states and counties implement electronic voting machines, it will practically guarantee the Illuminati will decide who “wins” elections.

Other films

9/11 Revisited

9/11 Mysteries

9/11 Press for Truth

Illuminati: Our Secret Masters

Guerilla News Network: Mind Control

H.A.A.R.P. Holes in Heaven

DNA vs. The Book of Mormon

Waco: A New Revelation

Secrets of the CIA

The Vatican’s Baker

Fiat Empire

U.S.S. Liberty: Dead in the Water

The Light Behind Masonry

They Sold Their Soul for Rock and Roll

The Coming Financial Collapse of America

America: From Freedom to Fascism

Satanism in the CIA

Aleister Crowley: The Wickedest Man in the World

Skull and Bones (a Dutch documentary)

The Power of Nightmares

Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers

Zeitgeist Refuted

War Made Easy

Why We Fight

Secrets of the Freemasons — National Geographic

Echelon: Most Secret Spy System

Mind Control - America’s Secret War

Big Brother, Big Business

Eye of the Phoenix: Secrets of Dollar Bill

The Obama Deception

Fall of the Republic

Invisible Empire

Snuff Films

The most disturbing aspect of the occult and the Illuminati are the allegations of child abuse, pedophilia, and snuff films. Just thinking about such things can make one physically ill, and it is much to the regret of this author that such issues must be included in this book. However, in our search for the truth we must boldly face the facts no matter what road they lead us down.

When one thinks of snuff films and the deliberate killing of someone for the purpose of enjoyment while the incident is being videotaped, the perpetrators and suspects are often thought of as lone nuts and sociopaths who act alone and without the knowledge or aid of others. After all, if someone were asked by a friend of theirs if they wanted to participate in such a thing, what are the odds that they would accept such a proposal instead of distancing themselves from that friend, or calling the police?

When one learns of the allegations and extent of snuff film production and distribution, and the depth of brutality involved, difficult questions arise as to motives for such crimes and how such sick and demented individuals could actually find others who were interested in such things. If one can grasp this reality, then yet more difficult questions arise when the cost of such films are discovered, and that people pay large sums of money for such things. One also wonders how individuals who desired such things could actually accumulate the large sums of money that are charged for snuff films. The fact that most snuff films are extremely expensive shows that the customers of such material are financially well off, and able to afford to spend thousands, or tens of thousands of dollars on the videos, and the demand for snuff films is greater than one could ever imagine.

In the year 2000, authorities launched the largest ever international investigation into child snuff films and a 30-year-old Russian named Dmitri Vladimirovich Kuznetsov was arrested for distributing thousands of such videos and photos.

Kuznetsov was identified after British Customs and police traced the origin of several snuff films which were found in the UK. The previous week Italian police had seized 3,000 of Kuznetsov’s videos which were being shipped to clients in Italy. This was not just child pornography, but videos of children being abused and murdered on video. Many of the films were produced in Russia.

Approximately a dozen British men were arrested in connection with the Russian tapes. “We have seen some very, very nasty stuff involving sadistic abuse of very young children, but actual deaths on film takes it a whole step further. That is very worrying,” said one senior customs officer who was involved in the case.[175]

British pedophiles were not only buying such tapes, but were paying to access a website that featured pictures of such abuse.

One of Kuznetsov’s partners, Dmitri Ivanov was sentenced to only eleven years for participating in the abuse that was being videotaped. Others were released under an amnesty aimed at clearing Russia’s overcrowded prisons.[176]

When officers from the Moscow Criminal Investigation Department raided Kuznetsov’s house they found two boys in a makeshift studio. They seized a huge number of films and other pornographic material as well as lists of clients in Italy, Germany, America, and Britain.

Italian authorities arrested eight people and searched more than 600 homes, and gathered evidence against 500 people. Some of the suspects were businessmen and public employees. Hundreds of people were also under investigation in Germany.

The Russian videos, which had been ordered over the Internet, were intercepted when they were shipped into Italy and then delivered by undercover police officers.

Police in Russia and the UK believe that Kuznetsov and his associates had been producing such videos for over two years and that they had lured around 100 boys between nine and eleven to participate in the videos. Most of the children were orphans and were told they would be given something to eat by the men if they came with them.

This is just one of numerous cases of such horrific things. Most people assume that such disgusting things are extremely rare and only committed by a lone nut, but this case and others show that there are hundreds if not thousands of people around the world who want to view such material and pay large amounts of money to do so. High level Satanists and members of the Illuminati are believed to not only view such material but participate in such abuse at places like the Bohemian Grove.

Sex Magic

When looking for an explanation as to why the Illuminati would sexually abuse children, the answer is found in what is called sex magic. This kind of magic, (sometimes spelled sex magick) involves using sexual arousal to achieve altered states of consciousness and harnessing these states of consciousness to transcend physical reality or to metaphysically alter it.

Some believe that the highest guarded secret in the occult and the Illuminati is that by participating in such activities one's brain chemistry is altered and creates a permanent change in one's mental alertness, thus amplifying that person's senses and perceptions. It is said the mind is put in a state of hyper-alertness, which dramatically increases a person's brain power.

The central belief of sex magic is that at the moment of orgasm a man's sexual energy is somehow channeled and used to manifest images he is holding in his mind, and metaphysically bring them into his physical reality. This philosophy of manifesting one's thoughts into physical reality is nothing new, and is a popular idea in New Age circles and self-help books. The vast majority of people who practice visualization and manifestation simply do so by meditation techniques, but it is believed that a highly guarded secret in the occult and the Illuminati is that this visualization and manifestation technique is dramatically amplified by involving some kind of sexual rituals. This sexual technique is then amplified by involving violence at the same time. By overloading the mind with adrenaline produced from viciously raping an innocent child, the Illuminati believe that this type of sexual ritual unlocks magical and metaphysical aspects of the human mind, allowing them to literally and physically alter their experience of reality.

The popular DVD called *The Secret* teaches what is called the "law of attraction" and promotes the idea that whatever images you visualize in your mind can be metaphysically manifested into your life. This is certainly not a new idea, and self-help gurus and spiritual teachers around the world have taught this technique for decades if not centuries. Practitioners of sex magic believe that these spiritual principles can be dramatically increased by using sexual energy in conjunction with the visualization techniques. There is nothing particularly evil with this belief or practice as long as one's sexual partner is a consenting adult. But it appears that a core group within the Illuminati have twisted these teachings and use children and violence in an attempt to increase the power of sex magic even further.

The founder of the Ordo Templi Orientis (the O.T.O.), Carl Kellner, would hint that the best kept secrets of the OTO were of a sexual nature. In 1912, an obscure German Masonic magazine called *Oriflamme* included an interesting admission, saying, "Our order possesses the key which opens up all Masonic and Hermetic secrets, namely, the teachings of sexual magic, and this teaching explains, without exception, all the secrets of Freemasonry and all systems of religion."[177]

There are rumors that scientific experiments using this kind of sexual magic were analyzed in what is called the Montauk Project which were allegedly conducted at the Montauk Air Force Station on Montauk, Long Island in New York in the early 1900s. This program is believed by some to have been involved in metaphysical research and experiments involving parallel universes and time travel. As strange as this sounds, the existence of multiple dimensions of reality that exceed the three that we perceive are essentially considered fact in physics and quantum mechanics. Some physicists believe that there are unlimited parallel universes of reality and that each universe contains a reality similar to the one that we are experiencing. Each of these parallel universes is said to contain a slightly different reality, and that anything and everything that could possibly happen, is actually happening, but in other universes.

Following along these same lines of thought is the theory that there can be no reality without an observer. This means that you, or the person observing what is called reality, is actually reality's co-creator, and that your mind and your thoughts are actually shaping and creating the reality that you see and experience. Continuing with this line of thought, somehow an individual can change from one universe to another, thus changing their entire experience of reality. The adherents to this theory have somehow concluded that the only way to effectively shift from one universe to another is by using sex magic, and that by combining sexual arousal with mental visualization techniques, and then mixing in violence, the violence acts as a sort of steroid for the manifestation power of the metaphysical mind and reality.

Some people believe that they themselves are the only person who actually “exists” and that their entire experience of reality is a three-dimensional hologram that they can control with their mind. Following this line of thought, a practitioner of sex magic believes that in order to harness their mind’s power to shape their three-dimensional experience in reality, they must use visualization techniques involving an orgasm. Sexual energy and a sexual climax is seen as the most powerful force in the world since it is used to create life. The dark sex magic practitioners somehow believe that by sacrificing (killing) an innocent child while simultaneously “channeling” their sexual energy by defiling the child, that it virtually unlimitedly amplifies their mind’s metaphysical power.

Whatever their motives, sex magic involving raping children have been proven to occur on a large scale as in the case of the Franklin Cover-Up. What would seem to be something too brutal and disgusting for a Hollywood horror writer to even think of, has been happening in reality. This proves beyond a doubt that the Satanists and Illuminati members who participate in these activities are not simply seeking enlightenment, but are committing the sickest kinds of perversions and violations of morality imaginable in their quest for power.

Whether or not such techniques actually work as some believe is unknown. It is possible that they do, but even if that is the case, it is inexcusable for anyone to even consider such a thing. Certainly it is possible to point a gun at someone and demand their money, and they will likely hand it over. Such a technique works, but even considering such an action is a violation of the code of conduct humanity should live by.

Fictional Books

Art imitates life as the cliché goes, and over the years various novelists have incorporated the Illuminati or their activities into various fictional books. Some of these books use the Illuminati by name and are fictionalized stories based on the historical Illuminati such as Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons*. Others clearly refer to Illuminati operations and plans in an attempt to seemingly warn the readers of what may come, as in the case of George Orwell's classic *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Other books such as Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* take a more disturbing turn, and refer to esoteric satanic practices in ways that make many suspect that Thompson himself had intimate knowledge of such things, or even participated in them himself and cloaked his experience in the form of a novel.

The Illuminatus! Trilogy

Robert Anton Wilson and Robert Shea were perhaps the first authors to incorporate the Illuminati into the plotline of a fictional story when they released the first book of *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* in 1975. The series includes various conspiracy theories, some historical, and some fictional, which involve the Illuminati. The three different volumes comprising the trilogy are titled *The Eye in the Pyramid*, *The Golden Apple*, and *Leviathan.*

Robert Anton Wilson died on January 11, 2007 at the age of 74. Throughout his life he had capitalized tremendously on the Illuminati, and after the *Illuminatus! Trilogy* was completed he continued to write books which focused on the subject.

In 1980, Wilson published *The Illuminati Papers* which expands upon characters and themes from *The Illuminatus! Trilogy*. In 1981 he released *Masks of the Illuminati* which was about three men who "discovered that an ancient criminal order is preparing to take over the world." Between 1982 and 1991, Robert Anton Wilson wrote and released *The Historical Illuminatus Chronicles* which are an additional three novels written as a follow up to *The Illuminatus! Trilogy*. This new trilogy is composed of three books: *The Earth Will Shake* (1982), *The Widow's Son* (1985), and *Nature's God* (1991).

While Robert Shea was his coauthor for *The Illuminatus! Trilogy*, Wilson went on to write his additional works by himself. Wilson did not believe the Illuminati continued to exist after their discovery in the late 1700s. When asked why people believe in conspiracies, he said, "I think there are three factors: A, nobody likes to take the blame for their own problems so they look for somebody else to blame. And if you can find a big enough group, you've explained everything in your life that doesn't work. It's not your fault, it's the Jesuits, the Freemasons, the Jews, the Bilderbergers, the Council on Foreign Relations, you've got a wide choice to pick of who to blame, as long as you don't have to blame yourself."

"The world is changing so rapidly that most people are living in a world they can't understand, and when people can't understand something they tend to go for sinister explanations of it. Somebody is manipulating things in a way I don't like. That's the way people feel when things change too fast and they can't understand it."[178]

Aside from seeming to insult people who believe in the Illuminati or conspiracies, Wilson was personally interested in the occult and admired Aleister Crowley. He said, "Crowley was the first writer of so-called New Age, or mystical, or occult things that I ever took seriously…So I started studying him and found out he did have a lot of important things to say, and I value him highly. I think relativity is one of the most important ideas of the twentieth century. Einstein gave us physical relativity, [James] Joyce, gave us artistic relativity…and Crowley did the same thing for the mystical occult world with his law of Thelema. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law. The Crowley system does not have any disciples, it doesn't tell you what to do, it tells you to decide for yourself what to do."[179]

In 1983 Wilson published his dissertation which was written to earn his PhD in psychology from Paideia University, an unaccredited University which has since closed. He titled it *Prometheus Rising* which he called an "Owner's manual for the human brain." The dissertation was based on a variety of philosophies and scientific views including Aleister Crowley, Timothy Leary's 8 circuit model of consciousness, and quantum mechanics.

Wilson demonstrated a tremendous amount of knowledge about the occult, but his writings about the Illuminati should be seen nothing more than a creative writer's attempt to capitalize on such ideas. Wilson said, "My goal is to try to get people into a state of generalized agnosticism, not agnosticism about God alone, but agnosticism about everything."[180]

The Illuminati by Larry Burkett

A Christian author named Larry Burkett also incorporated the Illuminati into a fictional tale in his 1991 book simply titled, *The Illuminati*.

The description of the book on the back cover reads, "From before the time of Christ, there have been rumors of a secret society called *The Illuminati*—a vicious tribe of Druids with mystical, supernatural powers. Many saw them as demons or gods. Those who opposed them simply disappeared...or met an even worse fate."

"As the centuries passed, this shadow-like group cloaked themselves in new identities, slowly infiltrating world organizations and financial institutions. The stealthy society had a singular goal—to bring the planet to its knees by controlling the world's economic system."

"Now fast-forward to the year 2015. The Illuminati has succeeded in placing one of their people in the office of the presidency of the United States. With the worldwide launch of a financial system known as Data-Net, they have gained seemingly unlimited power."

Burkett died on July 4, 2003 at the age of 64. He had written more than a dozen books and during his career had hosted several different radio shows on money and personal finance. It is clear from his writings that he believed the Illuminati existed, and his book was an attempt to address these issues in the form of a novel.

Angels & Demons

Published in the year 2000, Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons* is a fictional novel revolving around the Catholic Church and the Illuminati, and is a prequel to *The Da Vinci Code* which was later published in 2003. The common theme in *The Da Vinci Code*, as many know, is that the Catholic Church allegedly has been trying to cover up a family tree containing the bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene which still exists today.

According to Brown and supporters of this widely discredited theory, numerous secret societies have been protecting this bloodline from the Catholic Church, who allegedly will do anything to keep this "secret" from getting out and ruining Christianity and the Vatican's grip on power.

In *Angels & Demons*, the Illuminati is set out to destroy Vatican City as retribution for suppressing them hundreds of years ago and forcing them deeper underground. The story is most likely a purposeful whitewash of the real Illuminati, or the result of a creative writer seizing on topics of interest in the underground and making them mainstream. Either way, Brown's writings and subsequent films which followed can only be seen as a deliberate attack on Christianity and muddying the water for real researchers of the Illuminati.

Thanks to Brown, the brainwashed masses of people think that when someone discusses the Illuminati and the very real effects the organization has on society and Bible prophecy, that one is too wrapped up in *Angels & Demons*. Many of those who have become victims of the Illuminati's agendas don't even believe such a thing exists. *Angels & Demons* was made into a motion picture starring Tom Hanks and released in May 2009. (See Angels & Demons the movie)

The main character, Robert Langdon, is a Harvard professor and expert on religious symbology. He becomes involved in trying to stop the Illuminati from destroying Vatican City in Rome by using an anti-matter bomb. Brown cleverly mixes historical facts into the plotline and blurs the line between fact and fiction by referencing actual quotes about the Illuminati from historical figures. Most of Brown's readers (and viewers of the film) have no idea that the Illuminati he is referring to is a real organization and some of the "historical facts" he writes in his book are actually true.

For example, he writes that the Illuminati infiltrated Freemasonry, saying "…in the 1700's, the Masons unknowingly became a front for the Illuminati. The Illuminati grew within their ranks, gradually taking over positions of power within the lodges. They quietly reestablished their scientific brotherhood deep within the Masons—a kind of secret society within a secret society. The Illuminati used the worldwide connection of Masonic lodges to spread their influence."[181]

Brown even explains that the Illuminati are satanic, writing, "The church claimed Lucifer was a reference to the devil, but the brotherhood insisted Lucifer was intended in its literal Latin meaning—*bringer of light*. Or *Illuminator*."[182]

Dan Brown even cleverly refers to numerous websites which feature material about the Illuminati and the New World Order. At one point his book reads, "This morning" Kohler challenged, "when I typed the word 'Illuminati' into the computer, it returned thousands of current references. Apparently a lot of people think this group is still active."

"Conspiracy buffs," Langdon replied. He had always been annoyed by the plethora of conspiracy theories that circled in modern pop culture. The media craved apocalyptic headlines, and self-proclaimed "cult specialists" were still cashing in on millennium hype with fabricated stories that the Illuminati were alive and well and organizing their New World Order."[183]

Besides weaving in various historical facts about the Illuminati, Brown also includes some far-fetched ideas that have no basis in reality at all. He makes his readers think the Illuminati were a group of scientists that included Galileo, as well as famous artists such as Bernini, when both men had died a hundred years before the Illuminati had actually formed.[184] He also includes other ideas that have never been associated with the Illuminati, and are clearly fictions created by Brown. One such example is his claim that the Vatican holds in its possession several “Illuminati brands” which consist of ambigrams in the names of earth, air, fire, and water, which he says the “scientific Illuminati” had designed to depict the four elements ancient scientists believed made up the physical universe. An ambigram is a design that spells out one or more words that can be read whether looked at right-side up or upside down. These “Illuminati brands” are heated up and used to burn the different symbols into the chests of various Cardinals who the Illuminati murder in the novel as revenge for the Catholic Church allegedly burning a brand of a cross in the chests of heretics in the past.

Brown even says that the Catholic Church murdered Nicolaus Copernicus for introducing heliocentrism, the idea that the earth revolves around the sun, and not vice versa as the church had claimed. I’m certainly not a supporter of the Catholic Church nor a defender of their past and present atrocities, but to say that they murdered Copernicus is simply a lie. He died at the age of seventy, which in the sixteenth century was quite an old age. There are numerous other lies and disinformation in Brown’s book as he repeatedly paints the Illuminati as a group of innocent scientists and artists who the Church had set out to torture and kill. Brown is clearly well informed regarding conspiracy theory culture and at one point has Robert Langdon discuss the mysterious all-seeing eye on the back of the one dollar bill and explains that mysterious symbol is what got him interested in the Illuminati. At one point he also mentions that the Bilderberg group financed the Illuminati. (See Jim Tucker’s Bilderberg Diary page 110)

Brown actually defends the Illuminati in his novel. His character Robert Langdon, who is an “expert” on the Illuminati, fails to see them as a sinister power hungry gang, but instead says, “The Illuminati may have believed in the abolition of Christianity, but they wielded their power through political and financial means, not through terrorists acts. Furthermore, the Illuminati had a strict code of morality regarding who they saw as enemies.”[185]

Regardless of how entertaining and captivating Brown's novel may be, it serves only to disarm an already ignorant and degenerate public, leading them to believe that the Illuminati is a fictional creation. When told it is a historically verifiable secret society that continues to exist today, many are only reminded of the doubtful Robert Langdon from *Angels & Demons* and the sinister satanic cult which plotted to blow up the Vatican with an anti-matter bomb.

At the very end of *Angels & Demons*, in a very dramatic twist, Dan Brown writes that there is actually no such thing as the Illuminati, and that a demented Vatican official who holds the position of the Camerlengo had concocted the story and was actually behind the plot himself. In the book, it turns out that the Illuminati really did go into extinction in the late 1700s and the Camerlengo played off of people's fears that they had secretly continued to exist.

The success of Dan Brown's books are not due to their exceptional quality, but rather that the Illuminati had used their influence to promote both *The Da Vinci Code* and *Angels & Demons* to spread their tainted message about Jesus and the Illuminati. Dan Brown himself has some interesting ties to the real Illuminati, and it's possible that he was used for the purpose of muddying the waters surrounding Christianity, the Illuminati, and the New World Order. Brown is a graduate of Philips Exeter Academy which is a private boarding school which was set up for the children of the elite. The Illuminati has largely funded this school and used it to educate their children and prepare them for their duties later in life.

In 1930 Edward Harkness donated 5.8 million dollars to the school with the conditions that their method of teaching students would change to what he called the Aristotelian method of antiquity. Harkness was the second largest shareholder in Rockefeller's Standard Oil in the early 1900s and was in John D. Rockefeller's inner circle. The Rockefeller family has been one of the most powerful Illuminati families for generations. Aristotle was a student of Plato who believed that most people were too stupid to govern themselves, and that society should be structured in a way that "philosopher kings" would rule and decided what was best for the people.

Dan Brown's publisher for the first printing of *Angels & Demons* was Random House[186] which is owned by the Bertelsmann media group in Germany which was the largest producer and publisher of Nazi propaganda during World War II.[187] The Bertelsmann media group is a private company that has its primary owner listed as the Bertelsmann Foundation, the largest "non-profit" organization and think tank in Germany. *The Da Vinci Code* was also originally published by Random House through its subsidiary Doubleday. The reprint rights for *Angels & Demons* have since been sold to Simon and Shuster. The Illuminati thread leading through Dan Brown's education, publisher, and themes of his books, clearly raises strong questions about his novels' success and the messages they spread. It could very well be that Dan Brown is a willing participant in one of the biggest disinformation campaigns waged by the Illuminati in history.

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas

Hunter S. Thompson, the controversial "gonzo" journalist, published a book in 1971 under the guise of a novel based on autobiographical incidents in a roman à clef style, which is a literary style of a novel describing real life behind a facade of fiction. *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* would later be made into a Hollywood movie in 1998 starring Johnny Depp.

The book is about a journalist and his friend who go to Las Vegas to cover a motorcycle race for a writing assignment but instead go on a drug binge using LSD, cocaine, mescaline, and more. Thompson had experimented with drugs on a regular basis, and much of the book is considered to be a reflection of his real life experiences. Aside from being a story about a drug fueled adventure, a few things start to become noticeable, and extremely disturbing to some who have knowledge about the Illuminati.

In the book, and depicted in the movie, Thompson talks about buying adrenochrome from a Satanist, which is a powerful hallucinogen that is now synthesized in a lab, but originally believed to have been obtained from the human body immediately after a person was killed. The main characters ingest the adrenochrome and have uncontrollable hallucinations. Later in the film, a scene shows one character explaining how, “Satan worshippers kill six or eight people every day. All they want is the blood. They’ll take people right off the street if they have to.”

He goes on to say how he had witnessed some Satanists kidnap a sixteen year old girl and “cut all kinds of holes in her head and sucked the blood out,” alluding to the Satanists harvesting the adrenochrome from the girl’s body.

The question remains how Hunter S. Thompson would even know about adrenochrome, and why did he write about ingesting some in his book, which he says he received from a Satanist. Even more unsettling are allegations made by several individuals that Hunter S. Thompson was a videographer for snuff films allegedly made in the Bohemian Grove in the late 1980s. A snuff film, for anyone who doesn’t know, is when someone is murdered on video for the sole purpose of selling that video or watching it and finding enjoyment from it.

Rusty Nelson, [Russell E. Nelson] the photographer of a known pedophile Larry (Lawrence E.) King from the Franklin Cover-Up scandal in Omaha, Nebraska alleges that Hunter S. Thompson offered him $100,000 in 1988 to produce a snuff film involving a child. Rusty said he turned the offer down.[188]

One of the victims of child pornography that was allegedly produced in the Bohemian Grove during this same timeframe was a boy named Paul Bonacci. Former Nebraska Senator John DeCamp was Bonacci’s lawyer, and without doubt concludes that child pornography and snuff films were being produced in the Bohemian Grove during this timeframe. In his journal, Bonnaci described picking up a “Hunter Thompson” in Las Vegas who was the individual Bonacci described as the photographer for a child pornography video, which ultimately ended up being a snuff film when the other child was murdered.[189]

Hunter S. Thompson’s former editorial assistant, Nickole Brown, wrote in an article titled *In Memory of Hunter S. Thompson: Postcard from Louisville, Kentucky* (posted 4-15-05) about some of the bizarre behavior she had witnessed while working for him. “For weeks he played a tape recording of a jack rabbit screaming in a trap,” the article explained. She also wrote that one time, “he threw me out of the house for refusing to watch a snuff film.”[190] As she left, he allegedly called her a coward and was mad. Brown thought he was possibly joking, and didn’t think much of it, citing his unique character.

During an interview on May 20, 2005 by this author (Mark Dice), Nickole Brown said despite rumors, he never threatened her, she never felt in danger while she worked for him as his editorial assistant, and she couldn’t imagine him being involved in such things as the allegations from Bonacci, Nelson, and others. She and others believe Hunter was possibly investigating such claims, which they cite as the source of such allegations.

Adding, yet again, another twist to the story is the fact that Hunter S. Thompson wrote in his 2004 book titled *Hey Rube* in the first article titled *The New Dumb*, “The autumn months are never a calm time in America… There is always a rash of kidnapping and abductions of schoolchildren in the football months. Preteens of both sexes are traditionally seized and grabbed off the streets by gangs of organized perverts who traditionally give them as Christmas gifts to each other to be personal sex slaves and playthings.”

This writing clearly shows Thompson knew something not many people know. That each year children are kidnapped by organized kidnapping rings and sold as sex slaves. Thompson was known for getting personally involved in his stories, as was the case when he lived with the Hells Angels for nearly two years in the 1960s, where he chronicled his activities in his book *Hells Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga*.

With Paul Bonacci’s testimony implicating Thompson, and Rusty Nelson’s allegations of being propositioned to shoot a snuff film for him, some are led to believe he was involved in even more sinister activities than hanging out with a motorcycle gang.

Thompson named his estate “Owl Farm,” some believe as a reference to Bohemian Grove, also adding to the suspicions. Thompson committed suicide by shooting himself in the head on February 20, 2005.

Nineteen Eighty-Four

The term "Big Brother" is commonly used to describe the increasing high-tech invasion of video cameras, biometric scanners, and the erosion of privacy. The term was coined by George Orwell in his popular novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The book was published in 1949 and has a storyline surrounding what was described as life in future in the year 1984. The book was made into a British film of the same title and released, ironically, in 1984. In the book (as well as the film) a man named Winston Smith grows to hate the fascist and repressive Big Brother system of government and starts seeing through the lies and propaganda that is spread and the lack of civil rights and education found in society.

The book paints a dark picture of society, and incorporates what at the time was science fiction, but as the years have passed since its original publication, have become a scary reality. The government consists of "the Party" which itself is made up of Inner members and Outer members. The Inner members have access to luxuries such as real food, wine, and live in spacious and furnished homes, while the Outer members are given small food rations and live and work in much worse conditions. A step below the Outer members on the socioeconomic scale are the proles (or proletariats) who live in deplorable conditions and are seen as immoral and out of control animals who are not given any of the "luxuries" of Party members.

Orwell explains, "Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbors, films, football, beer, and above all, gambling filled up the horizon of their minds. To keep them in control was not difficult…All that was required of them was a primitive patriotism which could be appealed to whenever it was necessary to make them accept longer working hours or shorter rations. And when they become discontented, as they sometimes did, their discontentment led nowhere, because being without general ideas, they could only focus it on petty specific grievances."[191]

Life wasn’t always so boring and meaningless. After what is called the Revolution, the Party gained power and created a society where each individual is reduced to nothing more than a worker, working for the sake of the Party. A man named Big Brother is supposedly the head of the Party, and his picture is plastered on walls in every building and on every street. “Telescreens” as they are called, are mounted in every home and are used as televisions which continuously communicate Party propaganda to society. These telescreens are also used to watch and listen to every member of the Party, and nobody dares question their authority. Such an act would amount to ThoughtCrime and would cause one to be eliminated from society. The telescreens and microphones are continuously monitored and even facial expressions and body language can be understood by the Big Brother system. No one dares even whisper a word of disagreement or doubt about the Party or Big Brother.

An area in London called Oceania, the society in which *Nineteen Eighty-Four* takes place, is in a perpetual state of war with another superpower, Eastasia (and later with Eurasia but society doesn’t realize the difference when the name of the “enemy” suddenly changes) and the ongoing war is used as an explanation for various food and supply shortages in society. The telescreen announcements of victories on the battlefield always bring the war “within measurable distance of its end” but it continues on and on and society continues to support it. People, and particularly children, have all been turned into spies and are encouraged to report “ThoughtCrime” to the Party. Families are almost nonexistent, since each individual must give his or her full allegiance and love to Big Brother and the Party.

Winston finds a woman named Julia who feels the same way he does about the Party, and the two discuss finding the Brotherhood, an underground and secret Resistance that is plotting to overthrow the Party and restore freedom. As they discuss finding the Brotherhood (called *The Resistance* in the film version) they begin unraveling the extent of the lies of the Party. When discussing the ongoing war, Julia remarks, “The rocket bombs which fell daily on London were probably fired by the Government of Oceania itself, just to keep people frightened.”[192]

In reality, there is no man named Big Brother, he is only used as an image to personify the Party. “Big Brother is the guise in which the Party chooses to exhibit itself to the world. His function is to act as a focusing point for love, fear, and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt toward an individual than toward an organization.”[193]

A similar personification was the use of Osama Bin Laden in the War on Terror. The American government blamed this one man for practically every act of terrorism in the world, as if he was some omniscient criminal mastermind, even though shortly after the 9/11 attacks we never heard much from him because he was either in hiding in his Pakistan compound with little to no power over Al Qaeda, or, as many believe, he actually died of natural causes years earlier and the raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan was a staged event. Regardless of when he died, the overblown myth of Bin Laden’s power and reach was perpetuated by the American government for nearly a decade after 9/11 with an occasional video tape or audio message that was released to the public, supposedly of the man, but such video taped messages were almost always old videos of typical “death to America” and “death to Israel” messages designed to keep people in a state of fear so the War on Terror could continue.

The term Big Brother continues to be used today to describe the high-tech surveillance system that is invading society. The term “Orwellian” also came to use stemming from George Orwell’s dark picture of the future. While in the novel, Winston Smith and others were continuously being monitored by microphones in the telescreens that could pick up everything they said, such a system has now become a reality. In 2006 it was reported that the search engine Google was planning on using the microphone that is built into all laptop computers to listen to the user and the surrounding areas and to then analyze the sound for keywords which would then be used to direct advertisements to that user which reflected the conversations he or she were having in earshot of the microphone. The system also planned to place advertisements which were chosen as a result of what television or radio shows were detected which happened to be playing in the same room.[194]

In the novel, Orwell also explains that the war Oceania is fighting isn’t a real war, but that it is a fabrication that needs to continuously be fought in order to destroy the fruits of society’s labor, thus ensuring a continuous shortage of goods and maintain the social structure that the ruling elite has constructed.

Nineteen Eighty-Four remains one of the greatest novels of all time, and serves as a warning that seems to have been ignored about the road society is on. “George Orwell” was actually a pseudonym used by Eric Blair, who is the author of many books, including *Animal Farm.*

Games & Collector Cards

While some individuals have written fiction and non fiction books, documentary films, or Hollywood narratives incorporating the theme of the Illuminati, a small number of people have designed either card games or factual trading cards revolving around such topics. The makers intend the cards to be used and traded similar to baseball cards, and feature dozens of different cards consisting of a photo of Illuminati members or organizations on the front, and information about them on the back.

The Illuminati Card Game

A card game simply titled *Illuminati* was created in the early 1980s by a man named Steve Jackson who was inspired by Robert Anton Wilson's novels *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* The game consists of various secret societies competing for world domination through sinister means. It was designed as a tongue-in-cheek take on conspiracy theories.[195]

Jackson and his freelance designer had originally thought about designing the game around Robert Anton Wilson's *Illuminatus!* novels but decided against it due to the difficulties and expenses surrounding legal issues that would be involved, so they settled on making the game about the Illuminati.

Robert Shea, coauthor of The *Illuminatus! Trilogy* wrote an introduction to the rulebook for the *Illuminati Expansion Set 1* (1983), which read, "Maybe the Illuminati are behind *this game.* They must be—they are, by definition, behind *everything.*"

Despite Shea's support for the game, his coauthor Robert Anton Wilson criticized Jackson for exploiting the *Illuminatus!* name without paying royalties.

Steve Jackson's game company would go on to produce several versions of card games focusing on the Illuminati. In 1990, the company released a game titled *The Illuminati—New World Order* which consisted of various playing cards depicting Illuminati plans. Years later, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks of 2001, the game would be seen by some as predicting the future, and by others as having the game itself designed by the Illuminati.

Several of the cards that Jackson had designed depicted terrorist attacks eerily similar to those of 9/11. For example one card shows what looks like the World Trade Center's Twin Towers being blown up which is a card a player could use to gain points for the organizations they control. Another card labeled "Pentagon" shows the building being blown up and reads, "Each corporate group controlled by the Pentagon lets you draw one extra Plot card each turn." Another card is titled "Population Reduction"

Some see such cards as showing that the designer Steve Jackson was fairly informed about the Illuminati and the ideas that are spread surrounding their goals and operations. Others believe that the Illuminati were involved in the game's creation, and that Jackson himself was aware of the planned attacks years later on September 11th.

The story surrounding Steve Jackson and his Illuminati card game would take another interesting turn when his office was raided by the Secret Service in 1990 and some of his equipment was seized. A message posted on his website reads, "On the morning of March 1, [1990] without warning, a force of armed Secret Service agents—accompanied by Austin police and at least one civilian 'expert' from the phone company - occupied the offices of Steve Jackson Games and began to search for computer equipment. The home of Loyd Blankenship, the writer of *GURPS Cyberpunk*, was also raided. A large amount of equipment was seized, including four computers, two laser printers, some loose hard disks and a great deal of assorted hardware. One of the computers was the one running the *Illuminati BBS*."

The message goes on to say, "The company, "S.J. Games" fought back in court and finally won, but nearly went under financially. The investigation zeroed in on "fraud" supposedly committed by the company regarding the hacker activity and the fact that the company promoted the hacker's newsletter, "Phrack." However, this is so flimsy that it makes no common sense; in fact, the affidavit made so little sense that a Judge threw the case out, awarding S.J. Games $50,000 plus $250,000 attorney's fees."[196]

Of course some believe that Steve Jackson had been targeted by the Illuminati for using them as the central figure in his games. In reality, the Illuminati is probably pleased that Jackson did such a thing, because it fictionalizes them and causes people to think the Illuminati is nothing more than the name of a group of bad guys in a game. Steve Jackson's card game is also referenced in Dan Brown's novel *Angels & Demons*. (See Angels & Demons page 312)

New World Order Trading Cards

In 2008 a website was set up at www. NWOTradingCards.com which was the first of its kind to create trading cards similar to baseball cards, only covering issues surrounding the New World Order.

The designer's website explains, "*NWO Trading Cards* have arrived to assist you in your efforts to awaken the public. Each card is overflowing with hard hitting facts that will amaze truth seekers from all ranks. *NWO Trading Cards* are not playing cards; they are for trading, collecting and using as a tool to wake up the sleeping masses. *NWO Trading Cards* feature patriots, who fight for freedom against the New World Order, as well as those, who have chosen to align themselves with the globalists, pushing the New World Order ahead."

"*NWO Trading Cards* are perfect for any activist; you will hit the streets confident, armed with knowledge. And for those of us who are trying to wake up our friends and families, *NWO Trading Cards* are invaluable. Movies can be effective, but too many people refuse to watch, and even fewer will actually read an entire book. But *NWO Trading Cards* will expand your arsenal and rejuvenate your efforts."

"Inside of every pack are six *NWO Trading Cards* and one chance to win great prizes in our Big Chance Game. All cards are unique and some are rare, presenting a valuable collection. Our research team is dedicated to finding the truth and uncovering news blacked out by the Main Stream Media. Their work has been featured on *Infowars.com*, *Rense*, *Prison Planet*, *We Are Change*, *What Really Happened*, *TruthNews.us*, *Jones Report*, *Illuminati Conspiracy Archive*, *Opednews*, *DavidIcke.com* and many other great blogs and news sites. The team updates existing cards and adds new players regularly, keeping NWO Trading Cards current, and keeping you ahead of the game."

"Unlike mass produced trading cards, *NWO Trading Cards* is a quality product, hand crafted using only American made goods. Every pack is wrapped in the Constitution and sealed with red wax. All proceeds will be returned to the fight, send someone a wakeup call, or start your own collection today."

The card's designer sent this author (Mark Dice) a box containing over a dozen packs of cards and I was very impressed with their quality and design. Topics range from suspected Illuminati members to secret societies and New World Order organizations, as well as modern heroes who are working to expose them.

Conspiracy Cards

Another similar idea comes from the maker of *Conspiracy Cards*, although some of these cards cover topics that are considered on the fringe within some circles, including aliens and UFOs. The cards' designer had the intention of designing professional looking collector cards as a way to educate people about the Illuminati and the New World Order. These cards feature a photo of a person, organization, or issue on the front, and information about it on the back. The message on the website reads as follows: *Greetings and welcome to ConspiracyCards.com*

These factual cards are specifically designed with the intention of informing you about very important issues of which you may not be aware.

This vital information should be mainstream as some of the issues are a matter of life and death. But don't expect to see these topics discussed or *debated in traditional media such as TV or newspapers.*

Most all media sources are owned by very powerful groups who have no intention of divulging the truth.

Why?

…well we hope to clarify their agenda and explain their motive with these factual cards…

…that may just save your life.

Fictional Films

Some people think that Illuminati symbolism or themes in movies is the result of the organization flaunting their power and influence on the audience, or an attempt at mind control or subliminal signals. While this may sometimes be the case, it is far more frequent that the writers and producers of the films are very aware of the workings of the Illuminati, and are using their art form to tell the viewers about the nefarious activities of the Illuminati by using a narrative.

Some films clearly have storylines or activities that are based on actual people or events, but use different names, and others actually use the name of the Illuminati as the evil organization that the antagonist character or characters are working for.

In the following pages you will find just a sample of some of the most well-known films starring famous actors which have incorporated Illuminati activities into their plotlines. While some of the writers of such films have good intentions, fictional films incorporating the Illuminati or their activities are also used to fictionalize facts as a way of discrediting legitimate claims about the Illuminati and their activities.

By paralleling actual history or events, some films cause the public to believe that certain conspiracies or activities are the plot of a movie and when they are told about real events and agendas, they think the person trying to educate them has “seen too many movies.”

V for Vendetta

One of the most chilling fictional films which clearly reflects reality is *V for Vendetta*. It’s based on a comic book series written by Alan Moore and was released in theaters in 2006 after being produced by the Wachowski brothers, who also wrote the screenplay.

The plot revolves around a masked man simply known as "V" who is taking a stand against the fascist government of England which has fallen under the control of a dictator as a result of the War on Terror.

V begins his quest by taking over London's television station and broadcasts his own message to the people in an attempt to get them to take a look at what has become of their country as a result of the war.

That message, in part is, "The truth is, there is something terribly wrong in this country isn't there? Cruelty, and injustice, intolerance, and oppression…and where once you had the freedom to object…to think and speak as you saw fit, you now have sensors and systems of surveillance coercing your conformity and seducing your submission. I know you were afraid. Who wouldn't be? War, terror, disease, there were a myriad of problems which conspired to corrupt your reason and rob you of your common sense. Fear got the best of you."

He continues to say that he is going to blow up the Parliament building on November 5th to make a statement and deliver a symbolic blow against the government, and spark a revolution and an uprising of the people to take back their freedoms and eliminate the fascist dictatorship.

When the lead detective starts to uncover the truth about the war and what is motivating V, he says to another detective, "I see this chain of events…these coincidences…and I have to ask what if that isn't what happened? If our own government was responsible for the deaths of over 100,000 people, would you really want to know?"

It turns out that elements within the government had released a plague in the recent past in order to spread chaos so they could increase their power and make a fortune from selling a vaccine.

The film has too many important messages to convey them in writing. It should be seen by everyone, and its principles absorbed by the viewer. However valid the film's points are about the government being involved in terrorism and using fear to justify fascism, some elements in the movie must be seen with caution. There appears to be a subtle anti-Christian message woven into the plot. The fascist government, whose symbol represents a Christian cross, has outlawed the Koran, yet a popular preacher is seen on television daily who is obviously representing a Christian. Also in the film, a sub plot shows that the Christian fascist government has put all gays in jail.

If one can overlook these references, and see the larger message *V for Vendetta* is trying to make, then the film proves to be an entertaining, yet educational piece of work.

The Matrix

The popular *Matrix* trilogy has become a part of pop culture for its philosophical metaphor regarding knowledge and reality. The Wachowski brothers who directed it demonstrate an extensive knowledge of esoteric mysticism which becomes apparent in the film.

The premise of the first film, as many people are aware, is that the world in which we are living in and think is "the real world" is actually a computer generated hologram to keep us blind to the truth. In "reality" according to the film, human physical bodies are kept in pods and are used as bio generators to power *The Matrix* three dimensional hologram, thus making us prisoners who are unaware of our own captivity. When one is "unplugged" from the Matrix, then they can see and experience the true reality.

Aside from presenting this interesting philosophic view of reality, the film also includes multiple references to Christian theology, as well as the Illuminati. First of all, the main character "Neo" who is played by Keanu Reeves, is "the one" who is chosen to save the world, so he is basically portrayed as a messiah figure. The name "Neo" means "new" and he is symbolically "born again" when he is unplugged from the Matrix and experiences reality. He is actually called "my personal Jesus" by a character after Neo gives him a black market computer program. His love interest is named "Trinity" clearly referring the Christian Trinity of the three different forms that God has manifested himself in, being Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The city where the people staging a rebellion against the evil Matrix live in is called "Zion" a term that depicts the Land of Israel, or the

Promised Land. The spaceship that the group uses is called the Nebakanezer, named after King Nebakanezer who ruled in Babylon and created the famous hanging gardens, which are considered one of the original seven wonders of the world.

In the sequel to *The Matrix*, titled *The Matrix Reloaded*, Neo and his crew are in search of “the Architect” of the Matrix, and hope to find out why it became a tool of deception and oppression. In their search they seek out the Keymaker who can help them gain access to parts of the Matrix. As it turns out, the Keymaker was being held captive by a man called Merovingian. In real life, this is the name of the supposed guardians of the Holy Grail, and the most powerful bloodline of the Illuminati. So it is interesting, to say the least, that the film depicts this man, Merovingian, as the corrupt keeper of the Keymaker, who can write computer programs that allow people to basically become gods in the Matrix. This is analogous to the Illuminati’s possession of the Holy Grail, or their Luciferian doctrine, which allows them to be like gods on earth. Merovingian is also married to a woman named Persephone in the film. Persephone is the name of an ancient goddess said to be the Queen of the Underworld.

The Wachowski brothers demonstrate an extensive knowledge of esoteric symbolism, and are also the writers of the screenplay for *V for Vendetta*, which ties in false flag terrorism and fascism, so they clearly are informed as to what is really happening in the world.

Choosing such names as Merovingian, Persephone, Zion, and Trinity, are clearly not ordinary or random names, but were instead used to depict certain characteristics, many of which symbolically represent what the Illuminati does in real life.

Angels & Demons

In May 2009, the film version of Dan Brown’s book *Angels & Demons* was released starring Tom Hanks. It is the prequel to *The Da Vinci Code* (2006), also a film adaptation of Brown’s book of the same title. This is probably one of the works which has caused the greatest exposure of the

Illuminati in modern history, but a closer look at the film's plot reveals damaging distortions and inaccuracies from the historical Illuminati.

A teaser trailer released in late 2008 showed an ambigram of the word "Illuminati" across the entire screen and cut to a frantic Tom Hanks who whispered, "It's the Illuminati." The plot of the film is that the ancient Illuminati has secretly survived since being exposed in the 18th century, and are now seeking revenge against the Vatican for suppressing them.

The film was directed by Ron Howard, produced by Brian Grazer, and the screenplay was written by Akiva Goldsman. For a more complete analysis of Dan Brown's take on the Illuminati, turn to page 312 in the Fictional Books section.

It must be made clear that this film, as well as *The Da Vinci Code*, and Brown's books of which these films are based off of, are not designed to educate the public about the Illuminati, or expose their nefarious activities. Their purpose is to introduce the public to a tainted and fictionalized version of the Illuminati which serves only to disarm the public by leading them to believe that the Illuminati is nothing more than a fictional group of bad guys, who have been invented by Hollywood.

The twist at the end of *Angels & Demons* the movie is that the Illuminati doesn't exist after all, and that the corrupt Camerlengo (Pope's assistant) was behind the threats to Vatican City to get people interested in religion again after he saves Vatican City from the very anti-matter bomb that he himself had placed on the property. This dramatic twist also reinforces the idea that the real Illuminati has been extinct for hundreds of years and conspiracy theorists' paranoid over-active imaginations lead them to believe that they still exist.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre

The original *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* film, released in 1974, has spawned several sequels and prequels of a cannibalistic family in a remote region of Texas and is one of the most popular cult classic horror films.

In 1995 a version of the film was released titled *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Next Generation*, which starred Renee Zellweger and Matthew McConaughey. On the surface, the film appears to be a typical slasher horror film about a group of four teenagers on prom night who end up getting in a car accident in the middle of nowhere. After being lured to a secluded old farmhouse, they are terrorized by Leatherface's family.

A few interesting things stick out if someone is familiar with the Illuminati and the kinds of things they are involved in. First of all, McConaughey's character, Vilmer, who is the bad guy in the film, drives a tow truck for a wrecking company, and in a brief shot, guess what the name of the towing company is that is printed on the truck's door? "Illuminati Wrecking."

Now this in and of itself wouldn't be that strange, but what comes later in the film clearly shows that the writer knew about the Illuminati and their activities.

There is a part in the film where McConaughey's girlfriend shows some sympathy for Zellweger as she is being held captive and tells her that Vilmer is not really a bad guy and that "he's just doing his job." She goes on to say that he works for the people you hear rumors about who really run the world, the kind of people who killed JFK. She also says that these people put a device in her head that would explode if she did not go along with what they wanted.

Later, at the end of the film, a well-dressed man arrives in a limo driven by a chauffeur and enters the house. He chastises Vilmer and tells him he wants the captors to "know the meaning of horror." He had a strange symbol burned into his chest. A few minutes later Zellweger narrowly escapes the murderous family and gets in the back of the limo. The man is seated inside and speaks with a European accent and is reading *Le Figaro*, which is one of the most popular newspapers in France. He then starts talking about how "all this" was supposed to be a "spiritual experience" and that he was striving for a sense of harmony. He then takes Zellweger to a hospital and the film ends.

In the credits the man’s name is revealed simply as Rothman. Now, for those who don’t know, the Rothschild family has been one of the most powerful Illuminati families for hundreds of years and lives in Europe. This man “Rothman” was obviously written into the script to represent a high level Illuminati member.

The film ends without giving the viewer an explanation of who Mr. Rothman is, or why he has shown up at the house or what his bizarre talk of a “spiritual experience” meant. The only logical conclusion is that this was one of the men Vilmer’s girlfriend was referring to as the ones who she and her murderous boyfriend worked for. But what kind of work were they doing and why? Viewers not familiar with the Illuminati were completely confused and had no idea what to make of this. Others who noticed the Illuminati references thought that perhaps the Leatherface family were producing snuff films for the Illuminati. (See Snuff Films page 301)

During the course of my research for this book, I was able to contact the film’s writer and producer, Kim Henkel, and on January 6th 2009 had a 31 minute and 13 second phone conversation with him about the film and his reasons for including references to the Illuminati. Henkel was a bit hesitant at first to give his reasons, and wanted the audience to draw their own conclusions, but as our conversation progressed, he slowly revealed some interesting insights.

Henkel revealed that others working on the film had urged him not to include the references to the Illuminati, and that they feared repercussions from the organization for doing so. Henkel included the references anyway and said that if the Illuminati in any form actually exists, he did not think they would be concerned with them.

Henkel did not appear to be very familiar with the Illuminati or its activities, but said he chose the term for the film as a symbolic reference to any clandestine or wealthy and powerful group who participates in criminal activity, or that exploit others for personal or professional gain.

Emphasizing not to take any one interpretation of the reference or the activities of the psycho family literally, he suggested as one possible interpretation that Mr. Rothman was perhaps purchasing human flesh from

Vilmer, and that Rothman was in turn selling it to others who enjoyed eating it and were addicted to it. He also suggested that the victims needed to be terrorized and put in an intense state of fear before they were killed so that the meat would contain high levels of adrenaline and other hormones, which the individuals who consumed it found appealing and addictive.

While denying that the name for Mr. Rothman was inspired by the Rothschilds, Henkel did admit that he was familiar with the Rothschilds, and that they were rumored to be involved with the Illuminati. Many artists, including song writers and film directors, do not like to give their interpretation of their art because it can then influence or shatter the interpretation that others had made. I have a strong feeling that this is the case with Henkel's "hypothetical interpretation" of his film. At the end of our conversation when I asked him if there was anything else he would like to say about the film, he regretfully told me he had already said too much.

Teddy Bears' Picnic

Harry Shearer, the voice of Mr. Burns in the animated cartoon, *The Simpsons*, directed a comedy that he also had written which was based on the Bohemian Grove, titled *Teddy Bears' Picnic*. Shearer's film was released in 2002, just two years after Alex Jones had infiltrated the club and captured the Cremation of Care ritual on video. (See Dark Secrets: Inside Bohemian Grove page 269)

Shearer was interviewed by Jon Ronson for a segment in his *Secret Rulers of the World* series for the Trio Network where he admitted he had been a visitor to the Grove on one occasion and that, "you don't have to be a conspiracy theorist to know that this is a get together of very powerful guys. Whatever it is they're doing there, whether they're running the world or just reliving their adolescence, they're a self-selected group of powerful white Christian Americans. I love the theories, because I believe that these people are the only real good narrative writers left in the English language. They do write really good compelling narratives, but I just don't happen to think they're true. And they can keep you spellbound. And you can imagine, I’m in New York and they’re keeping me spellbound. Imagine being isolated on a ranch in Montana with nobody except your son who you’re teaching to shoot a rifle, this would be some amazing stuff coming through the night to you, you know. If you’ve ever been through a secret society in college, you know this stuff. Just add two zeros to the budget and you’re doing what you did when you were eighteen years old.”

[Ronson]: So it is a secret society, you think?

[Shearer]: Yeah but I mean it’s a secret society the way the secret society that I was inducted into at UCLA in my senior year is a secret society. There is a lot of meaningless mumbo jumbo and the main conspiracy is to take it seriously.

In Shearer’s film, the Bohemian Grove’s Moloch statue is instead replaced with a large pelican. The human effigy, called “Care” by the club, is depicted as a neon clock in the film, and the members who dress up in red and black robes and participate in the ritual are depicted as men wearing Halloween-type witch costumes.

One of the plotlines in the film involves two employees of the club secretly videotaping the activities inside and exposing them, a plot clearly inspired by Alex Jones secretly videotaping the real Cremation of Care ritual in the year 2000.

Teddy Bears’ Picnic was essentially a failure, and was released on DVD and not in theaters. Shearer’s motivations for the film remain to be seen, but could have possibly been an attempt to discredit the claims of those who work to expose the Bohemian Grove and the powerful members who attend it.

The Brandon Corey Story

A fictional film produced to appear as a documentary called *The Brandon Corey Story* was actually believed to be a real documentary by some gullible viewers due to its extremely sophisticated production quality.

The production company TruthseekerTV, marketed their film as a real documentary investigating the disappearance of a man who was investigating the Illuminati. They had hoped it would land them a pilot for a television show based on conspiracies.

The producers are fans of David Icke, who is known for his bizarre claim that the inner circle of the Illuminati are a hybrid race that are half human, half alien, and thought that their marketing plan would be successful in spreading David Icke's message. (See David Icke page 212) While some gullible viewers believed the film was real, there was also a tremendous backlash of people calling the producers frauds and the film a hoax.

This caused them to release a statement saying, "For the record, the movie *The Brandon Corey Story* is fiction based on fact. Our goal was to try and get this seen by the millions of folks who might not otherwise have heard of David or listened to him. We felt that the best way to do this was to market this as real. We realize now that we should have made it completely clear that it was a *movie*."[197]

The film's budget must have been substantial and the producers are extremely talented. It is sad that such talent has went to waste on the "reptilian bloodline" theories of David Icke, when it could have been put to good use making films about fully factual and documentable information instead of poisoning the well with such films as *The Brandon Corey Story*, by mixing legitimate issues such as the Bohemian Grove, with reptilian shape shifters.

The Long Kiss Goodnight

A 1996 action thriller starring Samuel L. Jackson and Geena Davis called *The Long Kiss Goodnight* includes a chilling plotline involving false flag terrorism and mentions that the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center was allowed to happen by the government, when, in fact, it was. *The Long Kiss Goodnight* was directed by Renny Harlin and written by Shane Black, who also wrote the screenplay for *Lethal Weapon*.

In the film, a CIA operative (played by Craig Bierko) explains, “1993, World Trade Center bombing, remember? During the trial one of the bombers claimed the CIA had advanced knowledge. (laughing) Well, the diplomat who issued the terrorist Visa was CIA. It’s not unthinkable they paved the way for the bombing, purely to justify a budget increase.”

[Samuel L. Jackson’s character]

You’re telling me you’re going to fake some terrorist thing just to scare some money out of Congress?

[Craig Bierko’s character]

Well, unfortunately Mr. Henesy, I have no idea how to fake killing 4,000 people, so we’ll just have to do it for real. We’ll blame it on the Muslims, naturally. Then I’ll get my funding.

This element of *The Long Kiss Goodnight* is extremely significant because it not only includes corrupt elements in the CIA who orchestrated a terrorist attack to then blame it on Muslims, but it references an actual false flag attack, being the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. In the film, the CIA planned to detonate a chemical bomb in New York and blame Islamic terrorists.

Network

A popular 1976 film about the mainstream media that continues to reflect the reality of today is *Network*. The film is a drama about a struggling television network and a newscaster named Howard Beale whose ranting about society, the economy, and television itself causes the United Broadcasting System (UBC) to become a top rated network on TV.

The film contains several subplots including UBC producers becoming involved with a criminal Communist movement in order to get footage for a show about current events, but the main storyline revolves around Howard Beale becoming a television sensation for saying exactly what’s on his mind as he becomes the “mad prophet” of the airwaves. The film was responsible for the phrase “I’m as mad as Hell and I’m not going to take this anymore!”

entering the pop culture lexicon. A transcript of Beale's most powerful rants follows, which he begins by telling the audience that the Chairman of the Board of UBC just died.

[Howard Beale]

So. A rich little man with white hair died. What has that got to do with the price of rice, right? And *why* is that woe to us? Because you people, and sixty-two million other Americans, are listening to me right now. Because less than three percent of you people read books! Because less than fifteen percent of you read newspapers! Because the only truth you know is what you get over this tube. Right now, there is a whole, an entire generation that never knew anything that didn't come out of this tube!

This tube is the Gospel, the ultimate revelation. This tube can make or break presidents, popes, prime ministers... This tube is the most awesome God-damned force in the whole godless world, and woe is us if it ever falls in to the hands of the wrong people, and that's why woe is us that Edward George Ruddy died. Because this company is now in the hands of CCA—the Communication Corporation of America. There's a new Chairman of the Board, a man called Frank Hackett, sitting in Mr. Ruddy's office on the twentieth floor. And when the twelfth largest company in the world controls the most awesome God-damned propaganda force in the whole godless world, who knows what shit will be peddled for truth on this network?

[Howard Beale]

[ascending the stage] So, you listen to me. Listen to me: Television is not the truth! Television is a God-damned amusement park! Television is a circus, a carnival, a traveling troupe of acrobats, storytellers, dancers, singers, jugglers, side-show freaks, lion tamers, and football players. We're in the boredom-killing business! So if you want the truth... Go to God! Go to your gurus! Go to yourselves! Because that's the only place you're ever going to find any real truth.

[Howard Beale]

[laughing to himself] But, man, you’re never going to get any truth from us. We’ll tell you anything you want to hear; we lie like hell. You’re beginning to believe the illusions we’re spinning here. You’re beginning to think that the tube is reality, and that your own lives are unreal. You do whatever the tube tells you! You dress like the tube, you eat like the tube, you raise your children like the tube, you even *think* like the tube! This is mass madness, you maniacs! In God’s name, you people are the real thing! *WE* are the illusion! So turn off your television sets. Turn them off now. Turn them off right now. Turn them off and leave them off! Turn them off right in the middle of the sentence I’m speaking to you now! TURN THEM OFF...

[collapses in a prophetic swoon as the audience erupts in thunderous applause]

END OF TRANSCRIPT EXCERPT

Beale’s ranting eventually gets him in trouble with the network because he is giving the public too much information instead of keeping them entertained and out of the elite’s way. This epic scene consists of the chairman of the company that owns UBC yelling at the top of his lungs that there are no more countries, there are only corporations and unleashed his anger saying, “You have meddled with the primal forces of Nature, Mr. Beale! And I won’t have it! Is that clear?”

The film concludes with the UBC network executives planning Beale’s murder to shut him up and he is later shot while doing a live broadcast by members of the Communist group that the network had been working with in the production of their show. It seems the ranting of the “mad prophet” fell on deaf ears, because since the film’s release back in 1976, society has become completely mesmerized by television and it has increased its monopoly regarding the control of information. (See Mainstream Media page 33)

Star Wars

Nearly everyone in the world is familiar with the *Star Wars* films and the epic tales of good vs. evil that are woven into the storylines. In 2005 when *Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* was released in theaters, it contained a pivotal storyline which had such a resemblance to current affairs that large numbers of people saw the movie as a deliberate political statement regarding the Bush administration and the War on Terror.

In the film as the storyline unfolds it becomes clear that Chancellor Palpatine, who is the head of the Republic, is secretly working for the Dark Side and orchestrating events that will be used to justify eliminating laws which limit his power, allowing him to transform the Republic into an Empire, with him as the dictator. As he is announcing this transformation, Queen Padme (played by Natalie Portman) says, “So this is how liberty dies, with thunderous applause…”

The striking resemblance to the Bush administration using the threat of terrorism to pass the Patriot Act and eliminate valuable civil liberties that are outlined in the Constitution shows that George Lucas is very well aware of the tactics of dictators. There are also parallels between Chancellor Palpatine pretending to support the Jedi (the good guys) and democracy, just as George W. Bush pretended to be a Christian and support conservative ideologies. And, as it turns out in the film, Chancellor Palpatine actually is working with the evil Sith, just as George W. Bush is a member of Skull and Bones and one of the most willing servants of the Illuminati to ever hold the office of the president of the United States.

Lara Croft: Tomb Raider

In 2001 Angelina Jolie starred in the film adaptation of the video game *Tomb Raider*, which featured a plotline mentioning the Illuminati by name and depicted them as an evil power hungry organization that was after a special ancient artifact called the Triangle of Light that was believed to give whoever possessed it the power of God and the ability to manipulate time.

The Triangle of Light was broken into two halves and hidden on opposite sides of the earth in an attempt to prevent anyone from joining them together and harnessing its power. It was said that the power could be used for good or evil, and after it was abused in ancient times, the object was deemed too dangerous for anyone to use and it was hidden away. This Triangle of Light consisted of a metal pyramid with an all seeing eye in the center. Lara Croft's (Jolie's) father had told his daughter that it was her destiny to find the Triangle and destroy it before the Illuminati was able to find it. It turns out her father (played by Jon Voight, her father in real life ironically) was a member of the Illuminati and realized they were evil and had secretly planned to have his daughter find the object to prevent them from becoming all powerful.

Besides an abundance of Illuminati references and symbols, another interesting aspect to the film was that according the legend, the Triangle of Light could only be activated every 5,000 years when all nine planets in the solar system were aligned with each other. This is similar to the planetary alignment that will occur on December 21st 2012 which some mystics believe will mark the transformation of the earth into a New Age or possibly mark the birth or appearance of the New Age Christ. The screenplay for *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* was written by Patrick Massett and John Zinman.

They Live

John Carpenter wrote a screenplay using the pseudonym "Frank Armitage" and then directed the 1988 science fiction film titled *They Live* which starred actor Rowdy Roddy Piper.

In the film, the economy is in shambles and tent cities are found throughout the country while the ruling class continues to maintain an abundant lifestyle. The plot follows Piper's character as he struggles to find work and discovers that a group of men at a tent city he is living at have discovered a secret as to the true identity of the ruling class, and their method of controlling the population.

In the beginning of the film as Piper wanders the streets looking for work he comes across a street preacher who gets hauled away by the police after delivering a message about the evils of society and how the people in power were feeding off of the less fortunate. One notable scene involves a group of hackers who illegally broadcast a brief message on the television in an attempt to inform people about why society is the way it is. A partial transcript of that pirate broadcast follows:

“Our impulses are being redirected. We are living in an artificially-induced state of consciousness that resembles sleep. The poor and the under-class is growing, racial justice and human rights are non-existent. They have created a repressive society and we are their unwitting accomplices. Their intention to rule rests with the annihilation of consciousness.”

“We have been lulled into a trance. They have made us indifferent to ourselves, to others…we are focused only on our own gain. Please understand, they are safe as long as they are not discovered. That is their primary method of survival. Keep us asleep, keep us selfish, keep us sedated. We are their cattle. We are being bred for slavery.”

Carpenter seemed to understand how the elite manage the population and there were numerous references to materialism and social ignorance in the film. While not exactly a blockbuster, *They Live* was well received among Rowdy Roddy Piper fans, who enjoyed the actor’s rare appearance on the silver screen after building his career as a professional wrestler.

Hackers

A 1995 film that failed at the box office but developed a cult following in the underground community of hackers was the film titled *Hackers*. It starred Jonny Lee Miller and Angelina Jolie, and was written by Rafael Moreu.

The plotline involves a rivalry between groups of hackers, but there is a scene that stuck out to those aware of the New World Order when Eugene “*The Plague*” Belford (played by Fisher Stevens) sent a laptop containing a video message to a fellow hacker “Zero Cool” (played by

Jonny Lee Miller). The message was, “You wanted to know who I am Zero Cool. Well let me explain the New World Order. Governments and corporations need people like you and me. We are samurai. The keyboard cowboys, and all those other people out there who have no idea what’s going on are the cattle. Moooo. I need your help. You need my help. let me help you earn your spurs. Think about it.”

The Skulls

In the year 2000 a film called *The Skulls* was released in theaters that was clearly based on the Skull and Bones society at Yale. The plot in the film actually involves a fraternity at Yale University, called the Skulls, which is an elite invitation only secret society. The film stars Joshua Jackson, Paul Walker, and Leslie Bibb and was written by John Pogue. In 2002 *The Skulls 2* was released on video, and later in 2004, *The Skulls III* was produced as a direct to video release as well.

The Skulls plot focuses on the murder and ensuing cover-up of a student journalist who broke into the Skulls’ clubhouse to take pictures and gather information for a story he was working on. In the film it is revealed that senators and judges are members of the Skulls and it is made clear that they have police and University officials under their control, primarily through blackmail. (See America’s Secret Establishment page 85) (See Fleshing out Skull and Bones page 88)

The Good Shepherd

The Good Shepherd is a fictional film which claims to tell the story about the creation of the CIA. Since the Central Intelligence Agency was created by members of the Skull and Bones society at Yale University, the film includes several scenes showing Bonesmen involved in this process, but inaccurately portrays their motives for doing so. The film was released in 2006 and stars Matt Damon and Angelina Jolie.

Damon portrays Edward Wilson who is based on James Jesus Angelton and Richard M. Bissell. Wilson (Damon) is asked to join Skull and Bones and the film shows an initiation ritual which is surprisingly accurate. A man wearing a black robe and dressed like the Grim Reaper tells the newly chosen members that they have been picked to become part of America's most powerful secret society, and brags that their membership has included a president, vice presidents, supreme court justices, congressmen and senators. The new recruits then lay nude in a coffin and tell the group all the secrets about their life that they've never told anyone before. (This is something that new members of Skull and Bones actually do.)

The film was written by Eric Roth, who also wrote the screenplay for *The Insider* (1999), the true story of the *60 Minutes* exposé of the tobacco companies, and *Munich* (2005) a historical film about Israel's secret retaliation of the murders of Israeli Olympic athletes in 1972.

The Good Shepherd depicts the men involved in creating the CIA as men concerned with and looking out for America during World War II and the Cold War, when in reality their sole purpose was to create a covert network that would aid in the construction of the New World Order, and provide those involved the cover and protection of "national security" for their operations. Throughout the film, the Skull and Bones society is painted as a group of patriotic Americans who sing choir songs and all say a prayer before dinner at their banquets on Deer Island.

It is advised that one watch a Dutch documentary titled *Skull & Bones* for an accurate history of the secret society. This film may be found on Google Video and starts out with a Dutch narrator for a minute or more, but then the rest of the film is in English. *The Good Shepherd* is a long and boring film, and can be added to the list of Illuminati whitewashing propaganda pieces which serve the purpose of tainting the facts to cover their dark past.

The Lord of the Rings

J.R.R. Tolkien's famous literary series, *The Lord of the Rings* was adapted to screenplays of which the first of the trilogy, *The Fellowship of the Ring* was released in 2001 starring Elija Wood and was directed by Peter Jackson.

The plot revolves around a hobbit (a fictional race of human-like beings) named Frodo Baggins (Elija Wood) who is trusted with the task of taking an ancient magical ring to a volcano called Mount Doom and throwing it in the lava to destroy it so it will not fall into the wrong hands. The films are amazing and visually stunning, but there are several aspects which stick out that ring of Illuminati overtones.

The first is the magical ring itself. According to the film (and the books) whoever wears the master ring will have supernatural powers beyond what anyone could imagine. Despite the good nature of anyone's heart, including Frodo Baggins, the power of the ring brings out the most selfish and corrupt nature of whoever has it. It seems that nobody is able to maintain their morality when given the power of the ring, which is why Baggins and his crew set out to destroy it. It is quite analogous to political power and Lord Acton's dictum "power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." One interpretation is that if the source of the Illuminati's power is benign, that simply having the power will lead them to use it in self-serving and abusive ways.

Another, perhaps more interesting use of symbolism in the story is that of the Eye of Sauron. In the film, the evil ruler Sauron has sent his army out to find the ring so he may become invincible. But what is interesting is that a huge tower stands outside of his castle and contains one eye perched at the very top which can watch over the entire land and see everything, including sensing the location of the ring. This is quite a clear reference to the all seeing eye of the Illuminati that appears on top of the pyramid found on the back of the one dollar bill.

J.R.R. Tolkien's writings revolved around the forces of good and evil, and it is possible that he was aware of the Illuminati and their symbols, and incorporated them into his writings. Tolkien died on September 2nd 1973 at the age of 81.

Eyes Wide Shut

The bizarre 1999 film *Eyes Wide Shut* starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman left the audience and critics alike confused, and some disappointed.

The film was Stanly Kubrick's last production before he died and was inspired supposedly by a short book by Arthur Schnitlzer titled *Dream Story*.

In the film, Tom Cruise's charter (Dr. Bill Hartford) discovers that a secret group of wealthy men and women meet periodically in large mansions near New York City while wearing black robes and masks and participate in strange ceremonies and orgies.

Cruise obtains a black robe and a mask, and attends a party out of curiosity. He was only allowed in because a friend of his who played the piano at the parties had given him the secret password. At one point he is discovered while inside the mansion and it is clear that he is an uninvited guest. Before he is told of his punishment, a woman comes forward and asks that she be punished in his place. Days later he finds out the identity of the woman, and that she has turned up dead, leading him to believe that the group of masked partygoers killed her, as they were going to do with him before she volunteered to accept his punishment.

Some believe that the film was originally intended to depict the group of masked partygoers as a wealthy cult who sacrificed people and drank their blood while having an orgy, but that due to pressure, the screenplay was altered. One also can't help but be reminded of the Bohemian Grove ceremonies when watching the film, and others see the storyline as a reference to actual Illuminati parties involving sexual orgies and human sacrifices and even necrophilia.

The Brotherhood of the Bell

A 1970 film titled *The Brotherhood of the Bell* depicts a college fraternity which acts as a recruiting ground for a criminal banking and business network involving the country's most successful men. The film was clearly a reference to the Skull and Bones society at Yale University. It was written by David Karp and directed by Paul Wendkos and nominated by the Directors Guild of America for outstanding directorial achievement in television.

After being sworn into the Brotherhood of the Bell, one of the initiates has a brief conversation with an elder of the organization who had attended the ceremony and joyfully says, “I’m a member of the establishment now,” when the elder corrects him, “Not a part. *The* establishment.”

The plotline involves an economics professor named Dr. Andrew Patterson (played by Glenn Ford) who receives a call from the group twenty years after joining, and is reminded of the oath he once took to follow any order regardless of what it was when given by the brotherhood, and his time to serve had come. He was told he needed to murder someone, and when he refuses, his entire life is turned upside down and the true power and reach of the brotherhood becomes apparent to him.

A Scanner Darkly

Keanu Reeves, Woody Harrelson, Robert Downey Jr., and Winona Ryder star in *A Scanner Darkly*, which was based on the 1977 science fiction novel by Philip K. Dick about a future dystopia in Orange County, California. The film was released in 2006 and is directed by Richard Linklater who also produced *Waking Life* and *Dazed and Confused*.

A Scanner Darkly was shot using real actors and then animated using a process called rotoscoping which gives it a very unique appearance of being a cartoon like animation. In the film, it is discovered that a drug rehabilitation center called New Way is funding the police department’s investigations into the wide spread abuse of a drug called Substance D, but are secretly producing the drugs and forcing individuals enrolled in their rehabilitation program to cultivate the flowers used to create the drug. Anyone who is familiar with the real cause of the crack-cocaine boom in the 1980s can see that the film is making a statement about the CIA’s major role in importing drugs into the United States.

The film included a brief cameo from Alex Jones and showed him standing on the street with a megaphone trying to inform people what was happening, and is quickly hauled away by police. One also can’t help but notice the Illuminati’s all-seeing eye on the shirt worn by Robert Downy Jr.’s character. The fact that the director chose this as the character’s wardrobe and included Alex Jones with his signature bullhorn, proves that this was no ordinary film. Clearly Richard Linklater was trying to make a statement with his film, as opposed to simply making an entertaining movie.

National Treasure

One of the films to bring Freemasonry and the topic of secret societies and their symbols into the public's awareness is *National Treasure* starring Nicolas Cage. The film was produce by Walt Disney Pictures and is about a lost treasure that the Freemasons and Knights Templar have hidden. While the film may be a family friendly adventure full of various twists and turns and clues and mysteries, it serves to whitewash the true history of the Knights Templars, the Freemasons, and the treasure from Solomon's Temple.

National Treasure basically paints the Freemasons as the good guys, who have had to protect their sacred treasure from pirates and criminals. In reality, the Knights Templar were the pirates and thieves who became the first international bankers, and later evolved into Freemasonry and the Illuminati. The story was written by a team of writers consisting of Jim Kouf, Oren Aviv, Charles Segars, Ted Elliott, and Terry Rossio. The screenplay was then written by a husband and wife team named Marianne and Cormac Wibberlev.

Shooter

Mark Wahlberg plays a Marine Corps Scout Sniper who is framed for an assassination by the CIA in *Shooter* which was released in 2007. In the beginning of the film, Wahlberg's character sits down at a computer to check the morning news and says to himself "let's see what lies they're feeding us today" as a copy of the *9/11 Commission Report* sits next to the keyboard.

There are several political statements woven into the storyline, including the lies promoted by the Bush administration that there were Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq. There was also a scene where a retired government agent says that the shooter on the grassy knoll was murdered and buried in the desert after he participated in the murder of John F. Kennedy.

While the majority of the population thinks that people who talk about actual conspiracies in the government get their ideas from watching films such as *Shooter*, the truth is that the writers of such films get their ideas from actual events. Subtle signs including the scene showing the *9/11 Commission Report* are often missed by the uninformed viewers, but serve to show those who have eyes to see that the writer or director is making a statement with their film. *Shooter* was based on the 1993 novel *Point of Impact* by Stephen Hunter, and was directed by Antoine Fuqua.

Air America

Mel Gibson and Robert Downy Jr. star in *Air America*, a 1990 film about the U.S. government shipping heroin into the country by using CIA agents in Laos, Vietnam. The screenplay was adapted from a non-fiction book by Christopher Robbins with the same name.

Air America is actually the name of a cargo airline that was owned and operated by the CIA from 1950 to 1976 which supplied covert operations in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. This airline was believed to be used to also transport heroine into the United States. This would ultimately be the inspiration for Christopher Robbins' book and *Air America* the film.

Wag the Dog

Robert De Niro and Dustin Hoffman star in the 1997 film *Wag the Dog* which eerily mirrored the events of the Monica Lewinsky scandal which was occurring at the same time the film was released. In the film, Dustin

Hoffman plays a movie producer who helps the government concoct a war with Albania in order to distract the American people from a sex scandal involving the President and an intern.

As part of the plot, Willie Nelson was hired to write a theme song for the war in order to encourage patriotism and keep the public support as the government's corrupt propaganda campaign continued. In real life, Nelson would later become vocal about the 9/11 attacks and the World Trade Center being blown up by a controlled demolition, and has been an anti-war advocate for a long time. His decision to appear in *Wag the Dog* was most likely a result of his understanding how the film, while being fictional, showed how propaganda campaigns are waged to generate and keep public support for wars, and that the real reason for the war is rarely given to the public.

Wag the Dog was written by Hilary Henkin and David Mamet. It is believed that Henkin had an uncredited role in writing the screenplay for *V for Vendetta* (2006).

Oliver Stone's JFK

Perhaps the most popular "conspiracy" type of film is Oliver Stone's *JFK* which was released in 1991 and starred Kevin Costner. The film was both attacked and praised, depending on how critics felt about the idea of who killed President Kennedy. The film is a dramatized version of events surrounding the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 and depicts the idea that Oswald was not the only shooter and that Kennedy was killed as a larger plot by the CIA. Aside from being attacked by critics, Stone actually received death threats over the film's production.

In 1991 when it was released, a writer for the *Chicago Tribune* wrote that it was "an insult to the intelligence" and George Larnder, who worked as the national security correspondent for the *Washington Post* attacked "the absurdities and palpable untruths in Garrison's book and Stone's rendition of it."[198]

Bernard Weinraub wrote an article in *The New York Times* titled “Hollywood Wonders If Warner Brothers let *JFK* Go Too Far” and suggested that the studio should have killed the film before it went into production, saying, “At what point does a studio exercise its leverage and blunt the highly charged message of a film maker like Oliver Stone?”[199]

Conversely, the *Miami Herald* said, “the focus on the trivialities of personality conveniently prevents us from having to confront the tough questions his film raises.” And film critic Roger Ebert wrote, “The achievement of the film is not that it answers the mystery of the Kennedy assassination, because it does not, or even that it vindicates Garrison, who is seen here as a man often whistling in the dark. Its achievement is that it tries to marshal the anger which ever since 1963 has been gnawing away on some dark shelf of the national psyche.”[200]

The president of the Motion Picture Association of America, Jack Valenti, released a seven page statement about the film saying, “In much the same way, young German boys and girls in 1941 were mesmerized by Leni Reifenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will*, in which Adolf Hitler was depicted as a newborn God. Both *J. F. K.* and *Triumph of the Will* are equally a propaganda masterpiece and equally a hoax. Mr. Stone and Leni Reifenstahl have another genetic linkage: neither of them carried a disclaimer on their film that its contents were mostly pure fiction.”[201]

Despite being barraged with attacks, the film was ranked the fourth best of the year by *Time Magazine* and Robert Ebert called it the best film of the year and one of the top ten films of the decade.[202] It was nominated for eight Academy Awards including Best Picture, and Stone was nominated for Best Director by the Directors Guild of America, and won a Golden Globe for Best Director. During his acceptance speech he said, “A terrible lie was told to us 28 years ago. I hope that this film can be the first step in righting that wrong.”[203]

In 2006 when word started to circulate that Oliver Stone was working on a film about the 9/11 attacks, many had hoped, (and others feared) that he was going to produce a similar “conspiracy” type of film showing a dramatized version of how elements within intelligence agencies pulled strings to aid and allow the 9/11 attacks to happen. It turned out that the film, which was titled *World Trade Center*, focused on the rescue of two New York City Port Authority workers.

Then several years later it was discovered that Stone was working on a film about George W. Bush, and hopes were revived that he would finally take up the task of exposing the 9/11 inside job to a worldwide audience. Sadly Stone failed to deliver and instead produced *W*. which was a biopic attack on George W. Bush and the war on terror, but did not include anything about Bush and his Illuminati cohorts aiding in the 9/11 attacks.

As a result of Stone’s avoidance of these issues, despite them growing from a small underground movement to boiling over into the mainstream, many suspect that Stone has sold out and some even consider him an accomplice in the 9/11 cover-up for not addressing the topic after producing two films about 9/11 and George W. Bush.

Bulworth

Warren Beatty starred in *Bulworth*, a film about a California Senator named Jay Billington Bulworth (Beatty) who decides to speak his mind and tell the public exactly how things work in politics as he runs for re-election. Bulworth is ultimately murdered by a medical insurance representative because of his push for socialized medicine which would put the insurance companies out of business. The film was release in 1998 and was co-written and co-produced by Beatty himself.

The final scene shows a homeless man as he says, “Bulworth, you’ve got to be a spirit. You can’t be no ghost,” meaning he was a spirit of truth and died a martyrs death.

Conspiracy Theory

Mel Gibson and Julia Roberts star in the 1997 film *Conspiracy Theory* about a taxi driver who everyone thinks is a lunatic and a conspiracy theorist because he thinks the government is involved in all kinds of conspiracies.

The film starts off with Jerry Fletcher (Gibson) driving a cab and talking to his passengers about how the government adds fluoride to the drinking water to dumb the population down and make everyone a slave to the state and that pets are getting implanted with computer identification chips and soon they'll be implanting them in humans.[204] He continues to say that George Bush (senior) is a 33rd degree Mason and the former director of the CIA and that "he knew what he was saying when he said 'New World Order' during his State of the Union speech in 1991."

Fletcher (Gibson) had become friends with Julia Robert's character (Alice) after he saved her from being mugged in the past, and she basically feels like she has to be nice to him and listen to his seemingly paranoid conspiracy theories every time she sees him. Alice is an attorney for the Justice Department and is haunted by her father's mysterious murder.

As it turns out, a man named Dr. Jonas (played by Patrick Stewart), worked for the CIA on MK-ULTRA mind control experiments and was involved in brainwashing Gibson's character into becoming a mind controlled assassin in the past. The film mentions MK-ULTRA by name and makes several references to Manchurian Candidate mind control. For example, Fletcher is shown to have an obsession with *The Catcher in the Rye*. When the book is discovered in his belongings, a police officer observes out loud that Mark David Chapman had that book on him when he shot John Lenin, and another officer remarks that the same book had been found in John Hinckley's possessions after he had shot Ronald Reagan in an assassination attempt. Both Chapman and Hinckley are suspected to be victims of mind control who were programmed to be assassins. There are also casual references to the Kennedy assassination and Oswald, as well as secret handshakes and the Military Industrial Complex.

It is obvious that the script was inspired by actual events such as the MK-ULTRA program, and the writer was very familiar with "conspiracy theory" culture. The only disappointing aspect of the film is that Fletcher (Gibson) was portrayed as a lunatic who happened to be right. Mixed with historical conspiracies and sinister government projects are paranoid delusions and gibberish which erodes from the credibility of Fletcher’s claims. *Conspiracy Theory* was written by Brian Helgeland, who is credited with writing or producing a variety of films, including *Assassins* (1995), *A Knight’s Tale* (2001), and *The Order* (2003).

The Manchurian Candidate

In 2004 a remake of the 1964 film, *The Manchurian Candidate* was released starring Denzel Washington which depicted a Gulf War veteran named Major Ben Marco (Washington) who comes to discover that he and his military unit were the victims of a top secret government program involving brainwashing.

Those who orchestrated his brainwashing operation planned to have him assassinate the president of the United States so that the vice president (played by Liev Schreiber) would take control of the White House and thus aid the profits and actions of the Manchurian Global Corporation, the very corporation that was behind the brainwashing experiments.

The film is based on actual experiments in the MK-ULTRA program, where drugs, hypnotism, and trauma-based mind control experiments were conducted in attempts to actually create a mind controlled assassin who would carry out orders without question, just like the one in the film.

Some believe that Sirhan Sirhan, the man who killed Robert Kennedy, was a victim of MK-ULTRA mind control programs. Others suspected of being programmed assassins by the CIA include John Hinckley Jr., who shot President Ronald Reagan in 1981 in an assassination attempt. The Hinckley family maintained a close relationship with the Bush family, and some suspect that John Hinckley’s attempted murder of President Reagan was orchestrated using mind control techniques so that George H.W. Bush, who was then the vice president under Reagan, could become the president. For three generations, the Bush family have been members of Skull and Bones and knowingly and willingly serve the Illuminati. (See America’s Secret Establishment page 85) (See The Search for the Manchurian Candidate page 115)

Enemy of the State

Will Smith stars in *Enemy of the State* which was released in 1998 and showed the technological capability of the National Security Agency, and what could happen if the systems were abused. While the capabilities of the technology shown in the film were considered the design of science fiction, systems such as Echelon and spy satellites are very much a reality. The American people came to know after 9/11 that such systems were being used to illegally listen to people's phone calls and have the ability to activate the microphone in a cell phone and use it as a listening device to pick up conversations in the surrounding areas, even when the phone is turned off.[205] *Enemy of the State* was written by David Marconi who was also one of the writers for the story of *Live Free or Die Hard* (2007) which was part four of the *Die Hard* series starring Bruce Willis.

Batman Returns

Michael Keaton, Christopher Walken, and Danny DeVito star in *Batman Returns* (1991) which includes multiple Illuminati symbols and references to actual false flag terror attacks. For example, at a costume party one of the bad guys, Max Shreck (Walken), is dressed as a genie with an all seeing eye inside of a pyramid placed on his forehead. At another point in the film he is shown displaying a model of a power plant he would like to build which is in the shape of a pyramid with the capstone missing. Another antagonist, the Penguin, has an umbrella which contains the pattern of the Knights Templars' red cross. While some may see these symbols as nothing more than random costume and set designs, one scene contains a blatant reference to actual historic false flag terror attacks.

At one point Shreck (Walken) and the Penguin (DeVito) are plotting to install Penguin as the mayor and use their power to take over the city of Gotham. As the two are discussing their plans, Shreck proposes "an incident like the Gulf of Tonkin or the Reichstag fire" and the two laugh with delight. Both events were, in reality, false flag events. (See Terrorstorm page 274) *Batman Returns* was written by San Hamm and Daniel Watters.

Dragnet

The 1987 comedy *Dragnet* starring Dan Aykroyd and Tom Hanks is about two police detectives who are given an assignment to investigate a religious cult in Los Angeles.

The two men eventually follow a popular televangelist to a ceremony put on by a group called P.A.G.A.N. (People Against Goodness And Normalcy). The ceremony the group is about to participate in is a human sacrifice. The parallels are subtle yet similar to the activities in the Bohemian Grove, and it is not far-fetched to think that the writer and producers either knew of, or had heard rumors of the activities within the club, which then served as the inspiration for the plot of *Dragnet*.

The word bohemian actually means, “one who lives and acts free of regard for conventional rules and practices,” and was likely the inspiration for the group P.A.G.A.N. (People Against Goodness And Normalcy), found in the film. The screenplay was written by a collaboration of Jack Webb, Dan Aykroyd, Alan Zweibel, and Tom Mankiewicz.

Television Show References

Aside from the Illuminati being worked into the plotline of various Hollywood movies, the subject matter is also occasionally referenced in television shows as well. Popular shows from *The Simpsons* and *South Park*, to lesser known TV series such as *Wild Palms* and *The Lone Gunmen* have all included plotlines stemming from actual events that the Illuminati have organized or participated in. To an uninformed audience, these aspects are merely seen as another fictional storyline, but the more informed viewer sees these issues as deliberate insertions by the shows' writers or producers to make a larger statement as their art imitates life.

South Park

A trashy, foul mouthed cartoon for adults, *Southpark*, has lampooned various people and institutions by simply presenting various bizarre facts in a humorous way. For example, an episode about Mormonism presented the actual beliefs about the Mormon Church and put a banner on the bottom of the screen saying, "This is actually what Mormons believe," and it was what they believe. An episode about Scientology used the same method when presenting information about the organization. It was funny for most of the audience, although insulting for members of such organizations.

A more disturbing episode also used the tactic. An episode about a group the show called the "Super Adventure Club" was about an international organization of pedophiles who travel around the world to have sex with young boys because they believe that it gives them magical power.

In the cartoon, the current leader of the group explains, "Our club offers hope. Do you think we go around the world molesting children because it feels really good? No. Our club has a message and a secret that explains the mysteries of life."

The man goes on to explain the history of the club and how a man named William P. Finius was a great traveler and explorer who also was a pedophile. After talking about all countries the man traveled to, he continued to say, “But now the most wonderful part. You see, after having sex with all those children, Finius realized that molesting all those kids had made him immortal. He discovered that children have things called marlocks in their bodies and when an adult has sex with a child, the marlocks implode feeding the adult’s receptor cavity with energy that causes immortality.”

While this is completely disgusting and not funny at all, what many of the viewers didn’t know is that one of the most hidden secrets in the occult is the belief that by having sex with a male child, an individual can experience altered states of consciousness and achieve a level of super enlightenment or immortality. Trey Parker and Matt Stone must have been aware of this esoteric occult practice and wrote it into their show. I’m not saying they have participated in such activities, but they must be familiar with the Illuminati and such material. (See Sex Magic page 305)

Again, just like the episodes making fun of Scientology and the Mormons, they inserted a banner on the bottom of the screen saying “This is what the Super Adventure Club actually believes.” How else could they have come up with such an idea, and why would they put the banner on the screen explaining it’s what these people actually believe, in the same way they did in other episodes about strange religious beliefs?

Rescue Me

The television series *Rescue Me* which airs on the FX network is a show about New York City firefighters starring Dennis Leary. In 2007, the show’s costar Daniel Sunjata created a stir on the Internet when he came on several patriot radio shows to discuss his stance that the 9/11 attacks were an inside job. Sunjata is extremely knowledgeable and articulate and while other actors who voiced similar beliefs seemed afraid to blatantly state that the 9/11 attacks were an inside job, Sunjata makes no bones about it. The mainstream media did not attack Sunjata for his comments, possibly because he is not a household name like Charlie Sheen or Rosie O'Donnell, who made headlines for speaking about such issues.

Several years after Sunjata's radio interviews about 9/11, writers for *Rescue Me* had incorporated some of his personal views into his character. In one scene, Franco (Sunjata) was being interviewed by a reporter when he states, "What you're going to hear from me, you're not going to hear from anybody else. Because, my opinions, let's just say they're not popular. 9/11? Inside job. Plain and simple. And all you gotta do is connect the dots. And I'm not talking about the dots everyone has heard about... I am talking about a massive neoconservative government effort that's been in the works twenty years. Ever heard of PNAC? Project for a New American Century? According to them, the end goal of their effort is American global domination. Full spectrum dominance, they call it. Now, first question that pops into my mind is: How do you pull that off in this day and age?"

The reporter, played by Catherine Zeta Jones, sits quietly and continues to listen. Franco (Sunjata) goes on, "Well, according to them you do it in four steps. First, we must control the world's oil. Now I don't have to remind you that Bush and Cheney came into power with plans all ready to attack Afghanistan and Iraq. Number two, we have to make huge technological advances with our armed forces. Number three…surprise, surprise, huge increases in military spending to pay for the above. Number four, and this is key. We change the definition of preemptive attack so we can unilaterally bomb the shit out of, invade, and occupy countries even if they pose no credible threat or had nothing to do with 9/11. One problem. How are you going to put that into action? I mean, the American people are never going to go for no shit like that, right? Damn straight. Now what you need is an event. An event that gets everyone's heads turned around the right way. What you need is a new Pearl Harbor. That's what they said they needed. You're looking at a guy who went to fifty-eight funerals in twenty six days, I can tell you that is sure as shit what they got."

Many of the viewers might not know the story behind how this idea was worked into the script. In an interview Sunjata explained, "I'm really gratified that they allowed that to be focused through my character, because

I happen to subscribe to a lot of those theories and beliefs that 9/11 was an inside job.”[206]

This surprised the interviewer, and when asked to clarify this, Peter Tolan, the show’s co-creator explained, “That’s part of the reason why we wrote it, is because Danny actually has—is actually well-read on—he’s done a lot of research on this and has told us about it. And, you know, look, obviously not all of us buy in. But we went, wow, that’s interesting, and he’s passionate about it. Let’s use that.”[207]

Sunjata went on to say, “there are some very, very well-thought-out ideas and theories that seem to me to make a lot more sense than the ones that are popularly espoused. And anyway, the fact that they’ve allowed that conversation to be had within the world of *Rescue Me*, I think, is admirable and should be applauded.”[208]

The Lone Gunmen

A television series that ran on Fox in 2001 called *The Lone Gunmen* aired an episode March 4, 2001 with a plot of a corrupt faction within the government hijacking a jet and trying to crash it into the World Trade Center to further the objectives of the Military Industrial Complex. Watching the episode is like watching a made for TV movie about the September 11th attacks only it was produced months prior to the event.

One of the stars of the show, Dean Haglund, later came forward and said the FBI and NASA would approach Chris Carter, the show’s creator, with story ideas for various shows. Haglund also said that since the 1980s the CIA had hired informants who attend Hollywood parties and report back to the CIA on general trends and issues that writers and producers were focusing on. Haglund believed this was to tip-off the CIA if any famous writers or film makers were developing a project that would be potentially damaging to the government’s image or incite people to react in an unfavorable fashion.

It is certainly possible that the plot for *The Lone Gunmen* involving the government attempting to crash a jet into the World Trade Center in order to use the incident to justify military expansion was an idea that was given to the show’s writers by the FBI consultants who worked with the producers. The purpose for this would be to point to the show as the source of such “conspiracy theories” when people started to figure out that elements within the government aided in the 9/11 attacks.

Another explanation, of course, is that the writers were aware of how governments use false flag terrorism, and had read reports about terrorist groups planning to hijack planes and crash them into prominent buildings in America prior to September 11th 2001. While many American’s still believe that the 9/11 attacks were a complete surprise and that intelligence agencies had never heard of such plans, the truth is that as far back as 1995 the CIA was aware of plans to hijack planes and crash them into the World Trade Center.[209] The Islamic terrorists who had planned this plot called it Project Bojinka.

24

The show *24* is a popular television action drama broadcast by Fox which has aired since November 2001. The show stars Keifer Sutherland, who plays Jack Bauer, an agent for the fictional Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU). The show is a high budget action packed hour which features Bauer (Sutherland) and his fellow CTU officers tracking down domestic terrorists and saving America from various terrorist attacks including nuclear and biological.

In the show, Bauer frequently violates the law and the Constitution in order to save the country from the terrorists. He doesn’t follow legal statutes, and tortures suspects in an attempt to extract information from them. Instead of being seen as a corrupt agent who is a danger to the integrity of the United States, Jack Bauer is seen as a hero defending America. Numerous episodes depict the people who are against Bauer torturing people as the reason that the terrorists get away. Such plots are created to serve as government propaganda and teaches the audience that it’s ok for government officials to break the law and torture people, because it is believed such actions are necessary to keep us safe from terrorists. Sutherland's character is presented as a hero who is only hindered by the law, and must continuously take matters into his own hands in order to do what is right for the country.

All experts who are not on the Illuminati's payroll agree that using torture as a method to extract information from suspects is not a reliable method because if the suspect doesn't know the information his captors desire, he will simply start agreeing with whatever they ask, with hopes that it will satisfy them so they will end the torture. Such practices are a violation of international law, but that didn't stop the Bush administration from approving waterboarding suspects in the War on Terror. Waterboarding basically consists of strapping a suspect down on a table and pouring water down their throat until they nearly drown. Such a practice had previously been classified as torture by the Department of Defense, but officials simply use the term "enhanced interrogation techniques" and used the practice in secret until such methods were exposed to the public. Other suspects are transferred to foreign countries which then torture them on behalf of the U.S. so America can claim their hands are clean. Such a practice is labeled "rendition" and is used to torture suspects by proxy.

Shows like *24* serve only as Illuminati propaganda to desensitize people to the inhumane practices of the government and lead everyone to believe that all suspects are guilty and can be treated worse than animals. Anytime any illegal or inhumane strategies are faced with opposition, the government accuses those who oppose it as being un-American, or aiding the terrorists.

Gargoyles

A cartoon airing on the Disney Channel from 1994 to 1997 called *Gargoyles* included several episodes which mentioned the Illuminati and one of the main characters was shown to be a member.

The cartoon featured several creatures, called Gargoyles, which turned to stone during the daytime and were animated during the night. The series was produced by Greg Weisman and Frank Paur. Weisman also was a writer for the *Men in Black* animated series which aired on the Kid's WB for several seasons.

Wild Palms

A 1993 mini-series airing on ABC titled *Wild Palms* is about a power-mad corporation which hopes to brainwash society by using its advanced virtual reality technology. Oliver Stone and Bruce Wagner were the executive producers of the series. It starred James Belushi, Dana Delany, Angie Dickinson, and Kim Cattrall.

While the series is extremely dull and drawn out with bad acting, it contains some interesting aspects which were undoubtedly inspired from actual events. Basically, the series is about a California senator named Tony Kreutzer (played by Robert Loggia) who is also the head of the Channel 3 television station and the founder of a popular religion called Synthiotics. This new "religion" was obviously a reference to Scientology. As the series continues, the viewer discovers that there are two political groups that oppose each other, the Friends, and the Fathers. The Friends are libertarians and support the Bill of Rights, where the Fathers are ruthless and fascistic.

The Fathers are planning for the senator to run for president and then become all powerful using the hologram technology. Members of this group have small tattoos on their hand which awards them special privileges in society. At one point, the libertarian Friends try to warn James Belushi's character about the fascistic Fathers and explain that they had planned the Great Depression and major terrorist attacks and wars.

There is a brief scene where a television is on in the background which shows Oliver Stone being interviewed on a talk show and the interviewer says to Stone, "15 years after the release of your film *JFK* the documents are released, and you were right. The conspiracy turned out to be so much larger than you presented in the film. Can you comment on that?"

Recall that *Wild Palms* aired in 1993 and takes place in the future. The producers were trying to show that the JFK assassination had been proven to be a conspiracy, and was now public knowledge.

At the end of the series as the senator’s plans are foiled, he freaks out and yells, “I am a soldier. I am mustering my troops! And we are storming Heaven!”

The Simpsons

In a 1995 episode of the popular animated cartoon, *The Simpsons*, Homer joins an all-male fraternity in Springfield called the Stonecutters, an obvious reference to the Freemasons. The Freemason fraternity evolved out of ancient stone masons and trade guilds who kept knowledge secret about how to work with stone and build cathedrals and castles. The episode is titled “Homer the Great” and starts of with Homer noticing that two of his friends, Lenny and Carl, are enjoying special privileges around town and at work such as comfortable chairs and premium parking spots. After Homer becomes suspicious, he finds out that they are members of the Stonecutters secret society, and is allowed to become a member himself.

The episode contains numerous humorous incidents, and references to Freemasonry. Homer ultimately ends up accidentally destroying the society’s sacred parchment, which is an ancient document containing secrets of the group that had been handed down for generations. The Stonecutters were also waiting for “the Chosen One” who would one day lead the organization to glory. The episode was written by John Swartzwelder.

In one entertaining scene, all of the members sing a quick song while inside their lodge and drinking beer. The song is titled *We Do* and was nominated for an Emmy Award for “Outstanding Music And Lyrics.” The lyrics are about how the Stonecutters secretly rule the world, held back the production of the electric car to benefit the oil companies, and keep information about aliens from becoming public.

Another funny storyline that the show’s creators worked into a plot for a different episode was also clearly inspired from actual events. In the show immediately preceding the 2008 presidential election, the cartoon included a scene showing Homer entering a voting booth which contained an electronic voting machine. When Homer used the touchscreen to press the "Obama" button, the electronic voice announced, "One vote for McCain." Homer seemed puzzled and pressed the "Obama" button again, only to have the machine say "Two votes for McCain." "Wait a minute! This machine is rigged!" Homer yells. Then a trap door in the machine opens and starts sucking him down a tube. As he's being pulled in he says, "This doesn't happen in America. Maybe in Ohio, but not America!"

It is interesting that the writers included this short little segment into the show, but it is even more interesting that they included the comment about Ohio. In case you don't see the significance of this statement, the Illuminati used electronic voting machines in Ohio (as well as other states) to steal the election for George W. Bush in 2004. This is why all the exit polls in Ohio showed John Kerry would win the state on election night, but it ultimately went to Bush. (See Hacking Democracy page 295)

The YouTube clip titled *Homer Simpson tries to vote for Obama,* which depicts this scene had received 6.4 million views at the time of this writing, and may or may not still be available online.

One other brief reference to Freemasons in the cartoon which was likely missed by most of the audience is a scene when Mr. Burns has become a germaphobe and as he is looking at his assistant's face he hallucinates that it is covered with bacteria and in a high pitched tone they say "Freemasons run the country."

The Cartoon Network

Lucy, Daughter of the Devil is an adult cartoon shown on Turner Broadcasting's Cartoon Network late at night as part of the network's "Adult Swim." It is a ten minute CGI comedy with a plot involving Satan who lives in San Francisco and is trying to convince his 21-year-old daughter, Lucy, to fulfill her role as the Antichrist. Lucy's boyfriend is DJ Jesús, a techno DJ who is actually Jesus Christ.

On October 7th, 2007 an episode aired titled *Human Sacrifice* in which the Devil is invited to attend a human sacrifice ritual at the Bohemian

Grove which will honor a senator who has been chosen to be elected as the next president.

DJ Jesús is chosen as the human sacrifice and is lured to the Bohemian Grove under the pretense that he will be DJing a party. He is actually told the party will be like the film *Eyes Wide Shut* and that Alan Greenspan (former chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank) will be there.

The Bohemian Grove in the cartoon is clearly modeled after the actual Grove or from the footage of Alex Jones' film *Dark Secrets Inside Bohemian Grove*. The ritual begins with people lighting torches, which is also identical to the real Bohemian Grove, and then shows the audience which is said to contain half of Washington, chanting "hail Satan." Before the sacrifice, Satan tells the audience that ten presidents have announced their candidacy in the Bohemian Grove.

In the end, DJ Jesús escapes without being killed, and the show concludes by zooming out to an aerial view showing the location of the incident being in Northern California, where the actual club is located.

Corporate Logos

Since the teachings and secret knowledge that is given to Illuminati members as they climb the ranks within the hierarchy gives them a tremendous advantage in business and politics, it is no surprise that most major multinational corporations were started by Illuminati families and members. By using their advanced knowledge, backroom deals, and unconscionable practices, they have created and maintained the corner of the market in multiple industries such as oil, banking, entertainment, and news media. What is even more interesting is that an extremely large number of these companies have incorporated Illuminati symbolism into their logos. All seeing eyes, pyramids, the sun, and mythical figures are found in numerous logos from CBS to America Online.

CBS's logo is actually an all seeing eye. Mobile Oil prints their logo in blue with exception of the letter o in Mobile, which is printed in red to signify the sun. The symbol for Infinity automobiles is a pyramid with a sun behind it. Fidelity Investments' logo is a pyramid with an all seeing eye on the top. The o in Morning Star investments represents the sun and is a different shape than the rest of the letters. Lucifer is often called the Morning Star. The list goes on and on.

Many logos for Hollywood production studios also include Illuminati symbolism. Paramount Pictures' logo is a huge mountain shaped like a pyramid surrounded by a ring of stars; Tri-Star's logo is a winged Pegasus; Columbia Pictures' logo features the goddess Semiramis holding a torch; Prometheus Entertainment, Orion, Icon, Lions Gate Films, DreamWorks, and many other companies have Masonic/occult symbolism in their logos.

Music References

A small number of musicians have occasionally referenced the Illuminati in their songs, although most of these artists are underground and are rarely, if ever, played on the corporate owned airwaves on stations like Clear Channel or similar monopolized markets. Some of these artists, such as Paris and Prodigy, mention the Illuminati by name, while others from rappers to rockers seem to be very well aware of the evil deeds of the brotherhood, a fact that becomes clear by simply listening to the lyrics of their songs or watching the music videos that accompany them. Below is just a sample of musicians, some of which are extremely well known, who have made such references in their songs.

It's important to note that the Illuminati financially supports musicians whose music preaches socially destructive messages, and builds them up as role models which the brain-dead masses worship as idols. The fact that many musicians achieve massive success isn't necessarily that they are extremely talented, it's that they have been chosen to be promoted because their music encourages violent, immoral, and social destructive behavior. Their music is literally used to brainwash the listeners. Occasionally an artist who is an unknowing Illuminati pawn will actually write a song which counters their very purpose for being promoted, as in the case of Eminem.

Eminem

Marshall Mathers, aka Slim Shady, aka Eminem released a music video just before the 2004 presidential election for his song titled *Mosh* which is a scathing attack against George W. Bush and his fear mongering surrounding the War on Terror.

The video starts with a parody of George W. Bush reading *My Pet Goat* to a classroom of school children as a jet flies over the school and crashes into the World Trade Center. It then cuts to Eminem standing in front of a wall covered with newspaper clippings and headlines about Bush's foreknowledge of the 9/11 attacks, including the *New York Post's* front page headline "Bush Knew."

Eminem roars "look in his eyes it's all lies" as the music video cuts from President Bush to a cardboard cutout of Osama Bin Laden on a soundstage controlled by Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney. Eminem rallies dozens of people and they surround the Capitol building and head up the stairs and start pouring inside in what appears to be the beginning of a riot, when it is revealed that they are all lining up to vote. The song itself is extremely powerful, but the music video, which was produced by the *Guerilla New Network* is historic and presents a powerfully positive message about activism and power in numbers.

Despite this powerful song, Eminem is actually an unknowing pawn of the Illuminati and was promoted by them as a role model for the youth because the vast majority of his music preaches violence, immorality, and irresponsibility. His song *Mosh* is mentioned in this book because despite his dark and troubled soul, it appears that even Eminem could see through the lies of the Bush administration.

Dr. Dre

Rapper Dr. Dre included a line about buying his own island before the year 2000 and that he "ain't trying to stick around for Illuminati" in his song *Been There, Done That*.

Neil Young

In 2006 Neil Young released an entire album of war protest songs titled *Living with War*. One of those songs, *Let's Impeach the President*, was nominated for a Grammy Award and contained lyrics referring to the shadow government, spying on American citizens, and George W. Bush hijacking Christianity to get elected.

Don Henley

In 2000, Don Henley, the singer from *The Eagles*, released a solo album titled *Inside Job* which contained a song with the same title which speaks universal truths regarding government corruption and inside jobs in general. While the song was recorded and released before the September 11th attacks, it has become a theme song for what really happened that fateful day and a warning for what lies ahead.

“It was an inside job by the well-connected” Henley sings. Other lyrics include that they know what you’ve had for breakfast and what you’ve hid beneath the mattress. “Chalk it up to business as usual,” Henley concludes.

Megadeth

The heavy metal band Megadeth has a song titled *New World Order* with lyrics that talk about how all currency has become obsolete and that “Revelation has come to pass” and “all rights will be denied…without the mark you shall die,” referring to the mark of the Beast.

Ministry

In 2006 the industrial metal band, Ministry, released an album titled *Rio Grande Blood* which contained several songs about the War on Terrorism and 9/11. The song *Lies Lies Lies*, actually sampled sound bites from the film *Loose Change* saying, “Do you still think that jet fuel brought down the World Trade Center?”

Jadakiss

In 2004, rapper Jadakiss released his second album titled *Kiss of Death* which included a track titled *Why?* which contained one line that set off a media firestorm and would cause his song to either be pulled from the radio, or the one line censored when it was played.

The line which resulted in so much controversy was, “Why did Bush knock down the towers?” referring to the World Trade Center. Fox News’ Bill O’Reilly publicly stated that President Bush should sue Jadakiss for slander.

Flowbots

Flobots are an American alternative hip hop band from Denver, Colorado who got mainstream exposure in 2008 with their song *Handlebars* which was released in 2007 on their album *Fight with Tools*. The song and the accompanying video ring of overtones attacking the War on Terror and the rise of dictatorial powers. The video also depicts mob mentality and shows how easily the population can be “led by a microphone.”

Conspirituality

The Vancouver rap duo Conspirituality released a song titled *AmBUSHED* in 2009 on their debut album which contains lyrics about 9/11, Bohemian Grove, the Illuminati, and the Bush administration’s torture of prisoners and other war crimes. The video was produced by DJ Ball and depicts men in orange prison jumpsuits chasing down President Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice and others as they run for their lives to avoid paying the penalty for their crimes.

Paris

A rapper named Paris on the Guerilla Funk record label has produced numerous songs about the New World Order and the Illuminati. One of his most popular tracks is *What Would You Do?* In the song, Paris exposes the Illuminati's agenda in a venomous poem which is delivered with the precision and quality of any chart-topping single. Paris raps, "The Illuminati triple six all connected. Stolen votes they control the race and take elections."

Immortal Technique

Another popular underground artist is Immortal Technique, a rapper whose every word is a blistering attack on 9/11 in songs like *Bin Laden* and *Cause of Death* which inundate the listener with hard facts and evidence delivered with the power and poise of Martin Luther King.

Sean "P. Diddy" Colmes

In 1997, Sean "P. Diddy" Colmes released a music video for a song titled *Victory* featuring the Notorious B.I.G. and Busta Rhymes. The video takes place in the "New World Order" in the year 3002 AD which is a Big Brother police state and depicts Sean Colmes as being pursued by the police as part of a televised game show which was most likely inspired by the film *The Running Man* (1987).

Prodigy

Albert Johnson, known by his stage name Prodigy is a rapper and member of the duo Mobb Deep. Prodigy's third solo album titled H.N.I.C.2 was released in April of 2008 and included a song titled "Illuminati." The song is entirely about the Illuminati secret society and includes a chorus saying, "Illuminati want my mind, soul and my body. Secret society trying to keep their eye on me."

During the 2008 presidential campaign when practically every African American entertainer or celebrity was thrilled that Barack Obama was running for president, Prodigy called him a phony and a plastic president. He said, "I wish nothing but love and happiness for him, but he's either gonna be assassinated to create chaos and bring about martial law or he'll live and then years down the line, at the end of his term everybody will see that he's just like the rest of these plastic presidents, who does absolutely nothing good. Just another puppet for the Royal family."[210]

Prodigy also publicly voiced support for Congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas) who ran for president in 2008.

Jay-Z

Rapper Jay-Z (real name Sean Carter) has included some occult and Illuminati references in his music, but not as a way to expose the activities of the organization, but rather as a tribute to them. It seems that Jay-Z is familiar with the Illuminati and chose to aid them instead of fight them. Jay-Z is the founder of Roc-A-Fella Records, a name that refers to the Rockefeller Illuminati family.

A song titled *Lucifer* which was released on *The Grey Album* in 2004 which was produced by Danger Mouse, contains some disturbing messages. When listening to the song it is clear that a small part is playing backwards and is uninteligable. When the song is played in reverse, you can clearly hear Jay-Z saying, "Six six six, murder, murder Jesus" and "Catholics, I gotta murder them, I can introduce you to demons, leave niggas on death's door, and I can introduce you to evil."

It's important to stress that this is not a "subliminal message" meant to be picked up subconsciously by the listeners. It is more of a marketing ploy and a way to get Jay-Z fans talking about this unique aspect of one of his songs. It's also important to understand that the message is clearly understandable and is not the result of someone interpreting a series of sounds as saying such things.

When people hear the allegations of the reverse messages in the song *Lucifer*, most Jay-Z fans refer to the original song *Lucifer* which is found on Jay-Z's Black Album. Danger Mouse remixed the song for The Grey Album and edited Jay-Z's voice to say the disturbing things found in the song. Jay-Z never denounced Danger Mouse for doing such a thing and appears to be acceptant of it.

A popular photo of Jay-Z shows him making a pyramid with his index fingers and thumbs with his left eye in the middle, which is a popular Illuminati symbol. A letter that Prodigy wrote to his record label while in jail reveals that he believes Jay-Z is knowingly cooperating with the Illuminati and cites that as the reason he became so wealthy.

In a video posted to YouTube that was shot inside the studio when Jay-Z was recording the original song *Lucifer* for his Black Album you can hear him make a comment where he brags, “I swear I never read the Bible in my life, I don’t even know…(unintelligible).” In his song *D’Evils* he raps a verse where he says he never prays to God, he prays to Gotti (John Gotti the gangster).

Nas

Rapper Nas (real name Nasir Jones) is another rapper some believe is aware of the Illuminati, and is secretly a supporter and servant for them. In the song *Be a Nigger Too*, Nas raps, “My click’s still real QB gangsters. Click still moving like Freemasons so if I’m on the flow from the law there’s lodges all across the nation. Nas is bred for the plan. To hold a grand dragon’s head in my hand. Come and get me, here I am.”

There is also a picture on the Internet of Nas and Jay-Z using what looks to be a Masonic handshake. Nas has frequently referred to himself as “God’s son” which was also the title of one of his albums.

Tupac Shakur

Rapper Tupac Shakur, who was shot and killed in Las Vegas in 1996, released an album shortly before his death titled *The Don Killuminati: The 7 Day Theory* which remains the topic of speculation among his fans who think the title was a reference to killing the Illuminati. “The Don” is a mafia term for a mafia boss or leader, which leads some of Tupac’s fans to think that he had learned about the Illuminati and the album title was a coded name meaning he was the leader of the killers of the Illuminati.

Black Eyed Peas

The Los Angeles hip hop group Black Eyed Peas told people to “be prepared for the New World Order” in their song *Say Goodbye* which talks about what a mess the world is in and how society is falling apart.

Fat Boy Slim

The British DJ, Fat Boy Slim (Norman Quentin Cook) produced a song for the film *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* which was titled *Illuminati*. In the film, Lara Croft is opposed by the Illuminati as they search for a mystical artifact. Fat Boy Slim’s song is basically an instrumental song but it starts by saying, “Illuminati. A secret society do exists.” Note: The lyrics actually read, “a secret society *do* exist” and is not a typo.

Skinny Puppy

The Canadian electronica band Skinny Puppy produced a song titled *NeuWerld* which says, “I trust we must distrust the owners of the New World Order.”

Poker Face

The American rock band Poker Face is known as a protest rock band and includes many themes about the New World Order and out of control governments in their music. The insert for their CD *Made In America* includes a montage of Illuminati symbols including the Skull and Bones logo, Masonic symbols, and the street layout of Washington D.C. Tracks such as *Kontrol* and *Revolution* are powerful songs promoting gun rights, the Constitution and exposing mainstream media propaganda.

Killarmy

In 1997 an affiliate of the rap group Wu-Tang Clan called Killarmy released their debut album titled *Silent Weapons for Quiet Wars* which was a reference to a document that author William Cooper published in his 1991 book, *Behold a Pale Horse*. (See William Cooper page 215) Wu-Tang Clan member Killah Priest is aware of the Illuminati and had contacted Antony J. Hilder in 2006 and invited him to the studio to record some sound bites for an album he was working on.

Meat Beat Manifesto

A UK electronic music group called Meat Beat Manifesto (MBF) produced a song called *No Purpose No Design* which includes several references to the Bavarian Illuminati.

The Jurassic 5

An American alternative hip hop group, *The Jurassic 5*, produced a song titled *Concrete Schoolyard* which contained one line saying the artist was anti-Illuminati.

Gamma Ray

A German metal band released an album in 2001 titled *No World Order* and has several references to the New World Order and the Illuminati. The songs were written by Kai Hansen.

The KLF

The KLF (also known as The Justified Ancients of Mu Mu—or the JAMMs were a British band from the 1980s which frequently used themes from Robert Anton Wilson’s *Illuminatus! Trilogy* novels. (See The Illuminatus! Trilogy page 309)

Agent Steel

A speed metal band named Agent Steel released an album in 2003 called *Order of the Illuminati*. The band is well known for basing its lyrical concepts on conspiracy theories.

Killer Squirrel

An underground punk band named Killer Squirrel recorded a song in 2005 called *The Cowboy Illuminati Get Their Revenge* which mentions the Skull and Bones society at Yale University. The group’s previous album *Self Released (And Loving It)* had a cover which featured artwork showing an eye on top of a pyramid.

Hed PE

A rock band from Huntington Beach, California named Hed PE (also known as (hed) planet earth) released an album in 2006 titled *Back 2 Base X* which contains several Illuminati and New World Order references in the lyrics and on the album artwork.

Bobby Conn

Bobby Conn is a pop-rock musician from Chicago who references the Illuminati and global domination in sarcastic and satirical ways. He once said he invented “The Continuous Cash Flow System” in order to bankrupt America by dramatically increasing the national debt. He also once claimed to be the Antichrist.

Malice Mizer

The Japanese rock band Malice Mizer produced a song titled *Illuminati*, which includes references to Biblical and sexual themes. The band officially went on an indefinite hiatus starting in December 2001.

Infected Mushrooms

In 2003 an Israeli psychedelic trance band called Infected Mushrooms released an album titled *Converting Vegetarians* which contains a song called *Illuminaughty* which contained lyrics talking about eating forbidden fruit and having one's eyes opened.

The Matthew Good Band

Singer Matthew Good has a song titled *Lullaby for the New World Order* which is a vague song with lyrics about how God gave us a voice and we should use it, and asks how can we get ourselves out of this trouble.

The Alan Parsons Project

The British progressive rock band The Alan Parsons Project has a song titled *Eye in the Sky* which has strange lyrics saying that the eye in the sky can read your mind and "I am the maker of rules…dealing with fools…I can cheat you blind." The album cover contains the Egyptian eye of Horus.

Solutions

When one comes to grips with the reality of a secret occult society which, for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years has pulled the strings from behind the scenes and has been operating an underground network to advance their own personal and political agendas and accumulate unimaginable wealth as a parasitic vampire feeding off the uninformed and uninitiated, one can be overcome with fear and anxiety. A dramatically large amount of information concerning such things is fully verifiable and accurate. And if even only ten percent of the more outrageous and disturbing claims are true, then certainly a monstrous and immeasurable evil is functioning in our world.

With such revelations, one must not retreat from society or become paralyzed from fears or paranoia. These things were happening long before you became aware of them, and they may continue to happen until the end of time. Nothing has changed in your life except your awareness of the hidden reality beneath the facade of lies that most people accept as the truth. But now that you see beyond this false reality that is presented to the world, there are several things you can do to either minimize, or in many cases, completely avoid the effects of such things on your life and on your family.

You have already used the first key to unlock your prison cell, and that is awareness. One cannot make the proper decisions if the information one has is inaccurate. Now you have accurate information, and the means by which you can obtain it to see through propaganda, lies, half-truths, and distortions. Now you see the bigger picture of why things are happening the way they are. By simply knowing how the system works, you can effectively maneuver through the world and avoid many of the traps and snares that have been set for you.

It is strongly advised that you take several precautions as insurance to protect yourself and your family from the dangers we face. You should purchase several firearms, including a hand gun, shot gun, and riffle, and learn how to responsibly handle and store them. Other simple self-defense devices such as clubs and knives should also be possessed. Hand to hand combat and self-defense training is also advised. You should keep your home fully stocked with food and water in case of an emergency such as a natural disaster, terrorist attack, or civil unrest.

You should invest in physical gold and silver coins and hold them in your possession or in a safety deposit box. You should also keep several thousand dollars in cash on hand as well. If there is an economic collapse (or computer failure) and credit and debit cards are no longer functioning or accepted, you will need to have cash to buy food, gas, and other necessities. Such a disaster will cause a run on the bank and ATM machines, and cash may be impossible to get for a considerable amount of time. Therefore a stash should be well hidden in your home or safety deposit box so you will not be like the countless herds who rush to the bank, and are likely turned away and return home penniless. Do not stash all your money in one hundred dollar bills, but instead keep a variety of denominations since it may be difficult to spend $100s and get back change during this time of crisis.

One of the most important things is to cultivate a healthy social circle of friends, family, and neighbors. The New World Order has isolated people from each other, and many live in their own world not even knowing the names of the very neighbors who they live next to. A close knit, safe and trustworthy community will prove to be a priceless asset as the New World Order solidifies.

You should also reach out and educate others. For those who want to know the truth and are seeking answers, the insights you share with them will help put them at ease by showing them the big picture. Giving them a copy of *The Illuminati: Facts & Fiction* or *The Resistance Manifesto* is also a great way to educate people since these books will present the most important information regarding the Illuminati and the New World Order. It is also pivotal that we befriend and educate the police and military. The more law enforcement officers and military personnel we have on our side, the safer we will be. When things get out of control and orders are given to blatantly violate the Constitution, many informed troops will simply refuse to participate and hopefully stand up to their superiors with their fellow troops who are informed as well. We also need assets of our own to covertly work within the system, who report back to us about the orders being given and secretly sabotage the New World Order's plans.

Financial responsibility is also another key ingredient to avoid entrapment by the New World Order. By not mindlessly participating in the materialistic shallow culture that is being perpetuated, you can minimize or even avoid the financial hardships that such behaviors ultimately lead to. Expensive status symbols that have no practical value suck money out of peoples' pockets as they joyfully indulge themselves with their material idols. Manufactured social pressures and the status quo uphold an illusion that one has substandard value if they do not participate in the rat race. By freeing yourself from the worry of judgment from others, you free yourself from the unnecessary burdens that such fears bring. Many fear the judgment from friends, and often from total strangers if they don't have the right brand of clothes, watch, or car. And it is this very fear that keeps them enslaved.

Running for public office yourself can lead to real and measurable changes in your community. While you will not, nor would you want to become the president of the United States, you can certainly run for any number of local and even state offices. The Illuminati does not have complete control of the political system on a small local level, and by becoming involved instead of throwing your hands up in submission, you can realistically bring tremendous benefits to your town, or even your state.

Finally you must live in a state of love and not fear. Learning about the Illuminati can be extremely terrifying, but you must not let the fear overshadow your love. By living by the golden rule of life and treating others the way you want to be treated, you will set in motion a chain of events that will spread in ways you cannot even begin to fathom. One small selfless act will encourage another, and another, in a never-ending chain of events.

If you treat someone with undeserving hostility, they will return that hostility directly back at you or to others, which in turn will have the same chain reaction and may echo around the world in ways you do not understand. If you are faced with such a negative energy, you may neutralize it with love instead of amplifying it with more negativity. You must be an example for others since you are enlightened with the truth. You must resist at all costs any temptation to sink to the immoral level of the Illuminati which we fight. This is not only a political battle which we are fighting, but a spiritual one as well. As you close this book after having absorbed the insights found within, I wish you the best on this journey of life. You are now armed with some of the forbidden knowledge that the Illuminati has done their best to keep hidden from you. As Jesus said, you now know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.

Illuminati Controlled Organizations

The Bilderberg Group

A yearly secret meeting of the world's leading politicians, media moguls, business titans, bankers, and royalty, who discuss and dispense their agenda for the coming months and years.

Council on Foreign Relations

A private organization that masquerades as a government committee which has tremendous influence over foreign policy and is used to construct the New World Order.

The Trilateral Commission

A private organization set up by David Rockefeller for the purpose of organizing America, Europe, and Japan into the New World Order.

The Bohemian Grove

A secluded 2700 acre redwood forest in Northern California where members meet every July to have private discussions of the next years events, and participate in a human sacrifice ritual to Moloch using a life-size paper mache effigy.

The Federal Reserve

A private bank that most Americans think is a government agency simply because of its name. The bank controls the money supply, interest rates, and loans money to the federal government for interest.

Freemasonry

A fairly well known global secret society in the form of a men’s fraternity which is harmless on the lower levels, but within the cloak of secrecy at the top, members are intimately involved with nefarious occult activities and worship Lucifer.

Skull and Bones

An elite fraternity at Yale University in Connecticut which chooses fifteen new members each year and inducts them into the Illuminati with satanic rituals and pretend human sacrifices.

The Military

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, who are the head officials of each military branch, are carefully promoted and chosen for their willingness to serve the Illuminati. Secret cells committed to black ops are also under their control.

The Vatican

Once seen as the enemy of the Illuminati, the leadership within the Catholic Church and the secretive Jesuits have been working hand in hand with them for many years. The pope could one day be the false prophet talked about in the Bible who will tell the world that the antichrist is the return of Jesus.

Knights of Malta

An organization within the Catholic Church that is believed to contain an inner circle of individuals who work in tandem with the Jesuits (the Society of Jesus) to secretly maintain and expand the wealth and influence of the Catholic Church.

Radical Islam

Radical Muslims who kill innocent civilians and carry out deadly terrorist attacks around the world are funded and encouraged by the Illuminati to create an enemy and instill fear in populations so that freedoms and civil rights may be removed as part of the so-called solution to the problem.

Communism

While seen as the enemy of America and Capitalism, Communism is actually a creation of the Illuminati and is used as a controlled opposition to continue the construction of the New World Order.

World Council of Churches

A Christian unity organization containing over 300 churches in more than 120 countries. The combined membership of church bodies in the organization exceeds 550 million Christians. Its purpose is to merge Christianity into a one world religion.

Election Fraud

Besides using their control of the media and their unlimited supply of money to finance candidates who will serve their secret agendas, the Illuminati also have a strangle hold on elections through electronic voting machines and other fraudulent tactics to ensure the outcomes they desire.

The British Monarch

The British royal family secretly believes they are descendants of the lost tribe of Dan, and that they have the Divine right to rule as kings.

Royal Order of the Garter

An order of Knighthood in Europe involving the Prince of Wales and twenty-four other members of the British royal family or foreign monarchs.

MI-5 and MI-6

Just like all law enforcement branches and intelligence agencies in America have Illuminati handlers at the highest levels, the same is true for British MI-5, which is equivalent to the FBI, and MI-6 which is equivalent to the CIA.

Council of Chatham House

Formerly called the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the Council of Chatham House is the British version of America’s Council on Foreign Relations. They gather prominent politicians, policy makers, members of business, academia, diplomats, the media, and researchers to formulate and dispense propaganda and agendas to the British government.

The Group

A secret society at Oxford University in England and is Europe’s version of the Skull and Bones society found in America at Yale University.

The Triads

The Asian branch of the Illuminati mainly in China which is involved in organized crime of every kind from drug trafficking and money laundering to contract killings. Its membership ranges from low level street thugs to billionaire businessmen.

The CIA

The Central Intelligence Agency is responsible for overthrowing or implementing governments or dictators around the world so that the global goals and interests of the Illuminati may be carried out. It is not only an intelligence agency, but a covert terrorist organization and drug running agency.

The NSA

The National Security Agency built and maintains Echelon, the most sophisticated spy system ever created. Every form of electronic communication is monitored or recorded. Keywords, voiceprints, and specific phone numbers are tagged and intercepted among the billions of communications around the globe.

The FBI

FBI infrastructure and manpower is used to obtain wiretaps on politicians, activists, and whistle blowers, which are then used for blackmail purposes so these individuals can be controlled, contained, or eliminated.

The DEA

While most people who work in the Drug Enforcement Agency are trying to reduce illegal drugs on the streets, there is an inner circle who work hand in hand with drug cartels to import drugs and launder money.

Pharmaceuticals

Prescription drugs are designed and advertised as magic pills for every ailment from depression to anxiety, and mask the symptoms while ignoring the root cause behind these ailments to help keep the population legally sedated, and out of the way.

Entertainment

Money is funneled to promote musicians, TV shows, and films which teach and encourage immorality and violence, and help to keep the masses mesmerized and out of the way of political and social agendas that are being implemented.

The Mormon Church

This pseudo Christian cult was founded by Joseph Smith in 1830 based on his fraudulent *Book of Mormon*, and has steadily grown in wealth and size ever since. They teach and believe that Mormons are the only “true” Christians.

Jehovah’s Witnesses

Founded in the late 19th century by Charles Taze Russell, this Christian cult teaches a dramatically different doctrine than traditional Christianity, and serves as a poison to Christian theology.

Rhodes Trust

Named after Cecil Rhodes, as it was written in his will, the Rhodes Scholarship is an award given by the Rhodes Trust for a student to study at the University of Oxford in England. Students who are seen as potential assets for the Illuminati and their plans are given this scholarship.

The Cosmos Club

A social club founded in 1878 in Washington D.C. whose goal is “the advancement of its members in science, literature, and art.” Its members have included many recipients of the Nobel Prize, Pulitzer Prize, and Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Club of Rome

A global think tank founded in 1972 with the purpose of creating scientific reports which support the idea of population reduction in the world. Their report *Limits to Growth*, which was first published in 1972, began spreading information about the Illuminati’s plan to reduce the world’s population.

DARPA

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is an agency of the Department of Defense which develops new technology for the United States military. Some completed projects include the directed energy weapons such as the Active Denial System (ADS), the High Energy Liquid Laser Area Defense System (HELLADS), and the Predator drones.

Supreme Council of Wise Men

The top 10 most powerful men in the Illuminati form this inner circle of so-called wise men who are the puppet masters whose directives and orders flow down the pyramid to be spread and carried out by the proper organizations or delegated to others to follow.

The Council of 13

The executive branch of the Illuminati consisting of the heads of the top 13 Illuminati bloodlines known as kings. These kings, along with their queens, princes and princesses direct those below them in the Committee of 300 or directly run organizations themselves.

The Committee of 300

Directly under the Council of 13, the Committee of 300 are representatives of the top bloodlines and in key positions of power who have entire organizations that they are personally the heads of.

The Jasons

A scientific organization whose members are used as researchers and consultants for the Department of Defense. Jason members are made up of the brightest scientific minds in the country in an array of fields including theoretical physics, engineering, chemistry, and biology.

MJ-12

Also known as Majestic 12 or the Majestic Trust, this is believed by some to be a secret organization of scientists involved with research surrounding UFOs and aliens.

The Mothers of Darkness Castle

The Château des Amerois, also known as the Mothers of Darkness Castle, is an enormous castle located in Belgium near the village of Muno. Some believe that satanic ritual parties and child sacrifices take place in the castle annually by Illuminati members.

The Pilgrims Society

A private organization of elite U.S. and British politicians, diplomats, and business men who host dinners for members each time a new U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom or British Ambassador to the United States is chosen in order to indoctrinate them with Illuminati goals.

The Priory of Sion

This alleged organization supposedly hides and protects a secret bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. The bloodline myth is, in reality, a cover story for the bloodline of what will one day give birth to the antichrist so he can claim the Divine right to rule according to the prophecy of the Old Testament with regards to the bloodline of the messiah.

Satanic Cults and Churches

Organizations like the Church of Satan, the Temple of Set, the Brotherhood of Saturn, the Order of the Golden Dawn, and the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), act as recruiting grounds for entry level occultism.

United Nations

Founded in 1945 after World War II under the premise to prevent war between nations, the UN’s formation began the framework for the New World Order super state.

International Monetary Fund

Based in Washington D.C., the IMF is an international organization that oversees the global financial system and exchange rates and is following the plan to create a single global currency.

The World Bank

A private bank which loans money to developing countries for the purpose of building infrastructure such as roads, schools, water treatment facilities, etc. Often these projects are then taken over by private foreign corporations instead of the host country's government, and run for profit by taking advantage of the population's reliance on such projects.

Foundations

Numerous supposedly non-profit organizations are created and maintained which carry out tasks including research aimed at furthering Illuminati goals and presenting positive public relations to reduce resistance to their implementation. While categorized as non-profit, the directors and leadership of these foundations often earn hefty six figure salaries. The Rockefeller Foundation, for example had $3.7 billion in assets in 2006.

Bank for International Settlements

An international organization of banking institutions that operates as a bank for central banks. As of 2007 the BIS held over $400 billion in assets, including 150 tonnes of gold.

Central Banks

The large banks responsible for the monetary policies of countries and member states. They control the stability of the national currency and money supply, as well as interest rates. They lend money to smaller banks such as your local small town branch.

Global Environmental Facility

An organization consisting of nearly two hundred countries, international institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which provides grants related to global warming, land degradation and biodiversity.

Monopoly Corporations

For generations the Illuminati has created and maintained businesses which form monopolies that are relied upon by populations. Oil companies such as Shell Oil, British Petroleum, Exxon Mobile, and others have been their primary cash cows aside from banking. De Beers diamonds and Monsanto are examples from other industries.

Regional Federations

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), the North American Union (NAU), and others are incremental steps to streamlining laws, trade, and ultimately currency for the New World Order.

The United Grand Lodge of England

Founded in 1717, this is the oldest Masonic Grand Lodge in the world and is the main governing body of Freemasonry in England and Wales. A Grand Lodge, or "Grand Orient," is the governing body of Freemasonry in a particular jurisdiction.

Unity Church

Formally known as the *Unity School of Christianity*, this is another New Age Christian Church based on a variety of spiritual, metaphysical, and philosophical ideas. It was founded in 1889 by Charles Fillmore.

Unitarian Universalist Association

A liberal religious association of Unitarian Universalist congregations formed by the consolidation of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America in 1961.

Unification Church

Founded and lead by Sun Myung Moon, a Korean billionaire who claims to be the second coming of Christ. He is the founder and owner of the *Washington Times* and gives millions of dollars to U.S. politicians.

Temple of Understanding

A 501 (c) (3) tax exempt non-profit organization founded in 1960 by Juliet Hollister and has representatives with the United Nations who are implementing their eight Millennium Development Goals, they hope, by 2015. They focus on "furthering education for global citizenship."

Bahai

The Bahai faith is a religious movement started in 19th century Persia with an estimated five to six million followers in more than 200 countries and territories. The teachings emphasize unifying the major world religions.

Rosicrucians

An enlightenment group dating back to the 1400s. While currently not a very powerful organization, the teachings within Rosicrucianism and the activities of its members were important aids in the enlightenment era and the overthrow of the Catholic Church's rule.

The Aspen Institute

An international non-profit organization founded in 1950 which is dedicated to "fostering enlightened leadership, the appreciation of timeless ideas and values, and open-minded dialogue on contemporary issues." It is largely financed by the Rockefellers Brothers Fund, (Not to be confused with the Rockefeller Foundation), which was set up in 1940 by the five famous Rockefeller brothers: John D., Nelson, Laurance, Winthrop, and David.

World Trade Organization

The World Trade Organization negotiates, implements, and oversees the rules of trade between nations around the world. 95% of all world trade is policed and governed by the WTO. Labor laws and environmental regulations are circumvented or ignored in poor and undeveloped countries, whose people are taken advantage of by rich countries and multinational corporations through the WTO.

KGB

The Russian Secret Service which operates as an organized crime network and controls Russian leadership, illegal weapons sales, drug running, money laundering, assassinations, and political kingpins.

La Cosa Nostra

The Italian mafia has become somewhat mythical as a result of Hollywood movies, but the mob has worked hand in hand with corrupt politicians, the CIA, Freemasonry, and other elements of the Illuminati in order to make money, eliminate obstacles (assassinations), and to break businesses and worker unions.

FEMA

The Federal Emergency Management Agency gives the president of the United States sweeping powers that in a declared emergency can be used to place citizens in detention centers or prison camps. Police and Military are also given authority to walk door to door in communities and confiscate guns from registered gun owners who are law abiding citizens.

Mossad

Israel’s intelligence agency works hand in hand with the CIA, KGB, and other agencies around the world to coordinate and share information, carry out intimidation and assassinations, and to secretly pull the strings in Israel’s government and with regards to their foreign policies.

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is an agency of the United Nations established in 1945. Its purpose is to create propaganda and push agendas favorable to the UN and the New World Order. It was responsible for the creation of an agenda supporting a "New World Information and Communication Order" which attempted to curb freedom of the press.

Planetary Congress

The Association of Space Explorers holds a Planetary Congress which is a forum for international astronauts and cosmonauts to exchange technical information concerning space operations, scientific research, mission development and astronaut training.

Environmental Groups

Various environmental groups have been created to push global warming and climate change propaganda which is being used to implement carbon taxes and increased regulations.

Lucis Trust

Originally created as Lucifer's Trust and renamed years later, the Lucis Trust is one of the premier publishers of New Age books and material. Its headquarters is located on Wall street in New York City, just blocks away from the New York Stock Exchange. One of the most famous books from the company is Alice Bailey's *Externalization of the Hierarchy* which is mandatory reading for all Illuminati members.

World Union

Another "non-profit" organization dedicated to paving the path for a New Age unified religion is the World Union, which was founded in 1958. The inspiration of its founders came from Indian mystic Sri Aurobindo.

Esalen Institute

Located in Big Sur, California, this nonprofit organization is dedicated to science that will help humanity realize what Aldous Huxley called the “human potential.”

Commission on Global Governance

Founded in 1992 with the support of the United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, this commission produced the controversial report titled *Our Global Neighborhood* which called for countries to give up their national sovereignty in order to strengthen the United Nations.

Interpol

The International Criminal Police Organization, better known as Interpol is an organization facilitating international police cooperation. It will ultimately be used to create the New World Order’s global soldiers with no allegiance to the country they are working in.

Information Awareness Office

The Information Awareness Office (IAO) was established by the DARPA for the purpose of creating information technology able to monitor and track all electronic communications and transactions under the guise of national security in order to achieve what the office called “total information awareness.” The official seal for the office is a pyramid with an all seeing eye as the capstone with a light shining out of it over the entire earth.

Tavistock Institute

A “charity” organization which engages in research and experiments in social science and applied psychology. The institute’s primary clients are the British government, the European Union, and private clients interested in manipulating populations and groups of people.

Underground Bases and Tunnels

A series of tunnels and secret bases span the country, possibly the globe, which were created largely by the Army Corps of Engineers. The tunnels are likely equipped with subway type systems which allow individuals to pass underground to different parts of the country in the case of an emergency such as a nuclear attack.

The Project for a New American Century

Founded in 1997 by prominent neocons including Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, William Kristol, Richard Pearlman and others, this organization produced the infamous *Rebuilding America's Defenses* documents which recommended a terrorist attack like a new Pearl Harbor would be needed to implement their plans in the Middle East.

Others

Various other private organizations or secret societies masquerading as college fraternities exist as both recruiting grounds for Illuminati supporters, and as a private environment where networking may take place between elite businessmen, politicians, and royalty.

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[26] Miller, Judth – *Occult Theocrasy* page 31-32

[27] Miller, Judth – *Occult Theocrasy* page 144

[28] Miller, Judth – *Occult Theocrasy* page 372

[29] These numbers were taken from the copyright page inside the book.

[30] Allen, Gary – *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* page 80

[31] Allen, Gary – *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* page 10-11

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[65] Robbins, Alexandra – *Secrets of the Tomb* p. 182

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[67] Griffin, G. Edward – *The Creature from Jekyll Island* p. 164-165

[68] Barton, Blanche – *The Secret Life of a Satanist: The Authorized Biography of Anton LaVey* page 98

[69] The title "doctor," in this case, comes from a tradition of calling whorehouse piano players "Doc" and does not refer to an academic title.

[70] Baddeley, Gavin – *Lucifer Rising* p. 226

[71] Barton, Blanche – *The Authorized Biography of Anton LaVey* p. 92

[72] Crowley, Aleister – *The Book of the Law* page 41

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[74] Blavatsky, Helena – *The Secret Doctrine* v I. p. xvii

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[78] Blavatsky, Helena – *The Secret Doctrine* v. II p. 237

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[84] Bailey, Alice – *Externalization of the Hierarchy* p. 417

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[96] Estulin, Daniel – *The True Story of the Bilderberg Group* page xv

[97] Marks, John – *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate* page xix

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[99] Crème, Benjamin – *The Reappearance of the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom* p. 25

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